



MELBOURNE ARTS PRECINCT

BLUEPRINT





CONTENTS

02 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

04 CREATING A BLUEPRINT

06 OUR VISION

08 COLLABORATION

10 A NEW FOCUS

12 THE BROADER CITY CONTEXT

14 EVOLUTION OF A PRECINCT

16 OUR RICH HERITAGE

18 THE VALUE OF AN ARTS CLUSTER

20 THE PRECINCT TODAY

22 THE PRECINCT DEFINED

24 STRENGTHS

26 CHALLENGES

28 TRANSFORMING THE ARTS PRECINCT

30 WHAT WE'D ALL LIKE TO SEE

32 INSPIRATION AND ASPIRATION

34 BLUEPRINT STRATEGIES

36 BRING LIFE TO THE STREETS

38 CREATE A MELBOURNE EXPERIENCE

40 MORE TO SEE AND DO

42 MAKE CONNECTIONS

44 THE PRECINCT NOW AND TRANSFORMED

48 REALISING THE VISION

50 FRAMEWORK FOR DELIVERY

52 WORKING GROUP RECOMMENDATIONS

54 HISTORY OF THE BLUEPRINT PROCESS

55 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

56 REFERENCES

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In May 2011 the State Government of Victoria initiated the Melbourne Arts Precinct Blueprint with a \$500,000 commitment to deliver a road map for the future development of the Arts Precinct.

The project leveraged additional funding through the Commonwealth Government's Liveable Cities program of \$400,000 with additional in-kind support from the City of Melbourne and University of Melbourne.

Collaboration across governments and arts organisations has been the signature of the Blueprint process. The Blueprint has been formulated by a stakeholder-led Arts Precinct Working Group which came together to articulate a shared vision for the Melbourne Arts Precinct and to identify opportunities to breathe new life into the area.

The vision mapped out by the Working Group is for a connected Arts Precinct that is a must-see part of Melbourne, known for its distinctive character and vibrant arts experiences.

The Blueprint sets out a range of strategies to achieve this vision, grouped around four themes - bring life to the streets, create a 'Melbourne' experience, more to see and do, and make connections. These strategies propose a range of actions to bring the dynamism and creativity of the Arts Precinct's artistic community out into the streets.

The Blueprint is supported by a combination of in-depth research and bold, visionary thinking about what the Arts Precinct might look like over the next fifty years. This work has included:

- Analysing geospatial and census data to establish a picture of the Arts Precinct today
- Traffic and mobility studies to model pedestrian, public transport, cycling and motorist behaviour
- A cultural facilities audit to identify gaps in the cultural infrastructure landscape
- Stakeholder engagement through arts organisation forums, interviews with Arts Precinct workers, students and artists, and on-the-street 'vox pops'
- High level economic and commercial advice outlining the distinct characteristics of the area, supplemented by governance advice based on international best-practice arts precinct benchmarks.

This evidence base guided the development of two companion documents that underpin the Blueprint:

- An Architectural Framework, intended as a guide to big picture thinking and to act as a conversation starter through a range of propositional, large scale projects
- An Urban Design Framework suggesting meaningful street level changes in the urban realm to act as the glue that binds the Arts Precinct together.



Based on this work, the Working Group has recommended that:

Recommendation 1: The Blueprint's vision be acknowledged by all three levels of government.

Recommendation 2: Appropriate mechanisms be established to ensure the co-ordinated implementation of the Blueprint vision.

Recommendation 3: A 'Melbourne Arts Precinct' destination marketing strategy be developed and implemented.

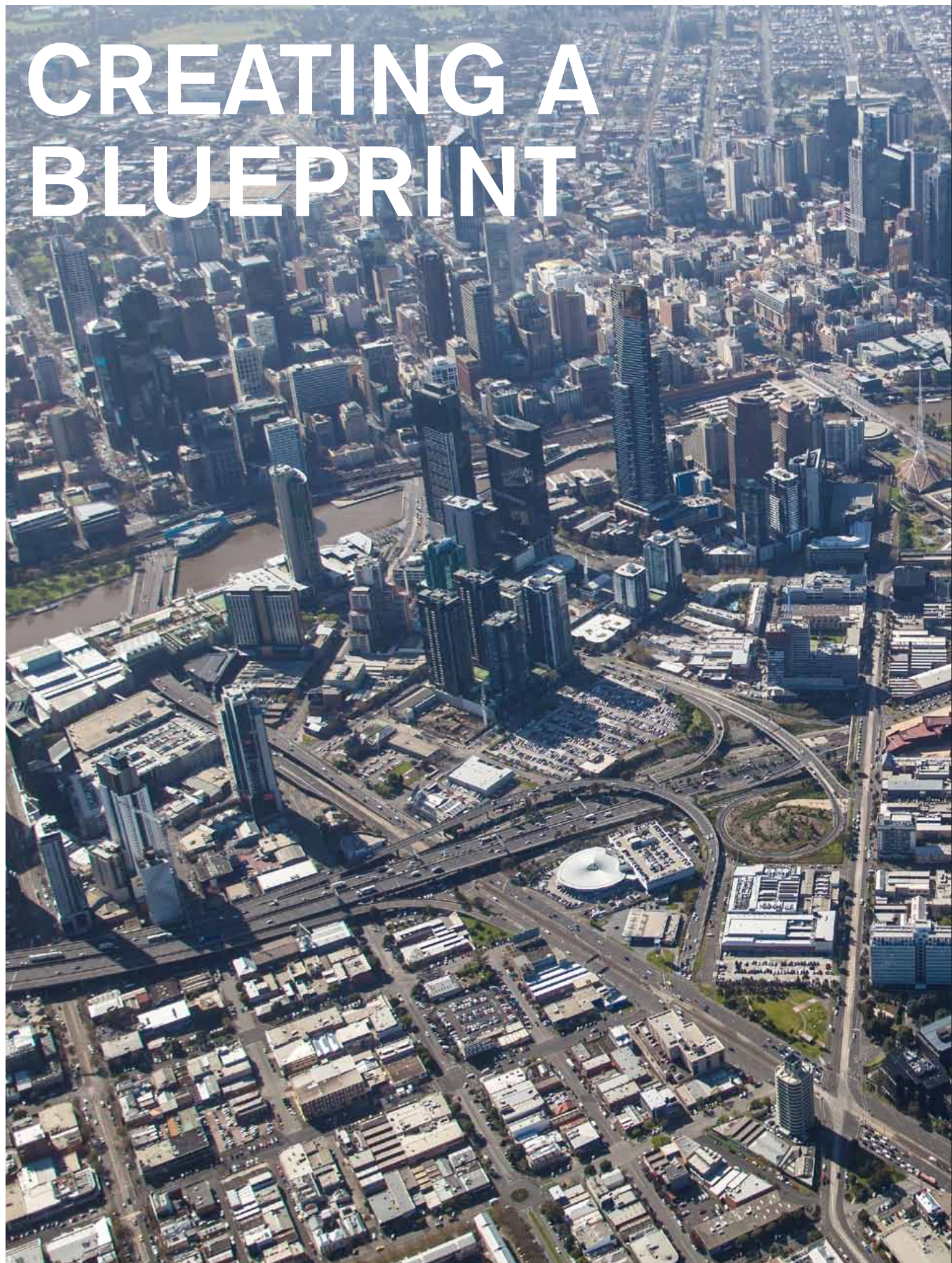
Recommendation 4: Resources be provided to develop a rolling program of public programming, events and festival activity for the Arts Precinct.

Recommendation 5: The State Government establish an arts advisory panel to be consulted for all future development proposals within the designated Arts Precinct area.

Recommendation 6: An Arts Precinct Public Realm Plan be developed by the City of Melbourne.

Recommendation 7: Government identify and resources an organisation, or organisations, to develop and deliver on strategic opportunities identified in the Blueprint.

CREATING A BLUEPRINT





OUR VISION

The Blueprint is an opportunity to develop the Melbourne Arts Precinct into one of the worlds leading arts and cultural districts. The Blueprint for the Melbourne Arts Precinct maps out ways in which arts facilities, located in the area on the southern bank of the Yarra, can be enhanced to provide a lively, unique and specifically arts-focused environment.

The precinct has the potential to be a vibrant and active place to be; a tourism destination, a cultural mecca, and an exciting place to live, work and play.

The location of the precinct is significant; sited south of Melbourne's central business district, and west of the most significant landscaped area of the Botanic Gardens and open parklands, it borders areas that have been set aside for intense future development.

The area has been transformed over time from an industrial, marshy landscape to an area of urban development with significant buildings housing institutions (not all of them used for arts purposes).

With the further development of a substantial residential and educational institutional population, the precinct has the ingredients necessary to be a thriving and activated area at all times.

Imagine a fully integrated and activated precinct; where arts institution programs are complementary to each other. Where activity and interest is generated both within the arts institutions and in the public areas that bind the institutions together; where the following themes and objectives are achieved and evident;

- A place that achieves high quality urban design and amenity in both the public and private realm
- A place where the co-location of cultural arts facilities encourages artistic endeavour
- A place that provides collaborative governance for the Arts Precinct's arts and cultural organisations.



Elements of these attributes exist today; however, despite the investment the community has made in the precinct both in terms of arts organisations and public expenditure and in terms of extensive private development, the precinct does not achieve the potential warranted by this substantial level of investment.

Melbourne's status as a most 'liveable city' will be strengthened by an activated and energised arts precinct. Reinvigoration of this area will give Melbourne the arts precinct it deserves and bring the rewards that come from engagement with the arts to a broader audience.

The cluster of arts organisations in the Southbank area provides a vibrant cultural and community hub. However, these organisations currently act independently in terms of their physical structures; each has an independent method of management and there is limited co-ordination between organisations in terms of programming or interaction with the public realm.

This vision will only be achieved through all levels of government agreeing and co-operating to facilitate the creation of this special place. Local government, through the Melbourne City Council, has an important ongoing role to play in the implementation of projects in the public realm such as street closures, urban design improvements and management of the public realm.

The State and Federal Governments have invested in substantial land holdings and in the physical fabric and operation of arts institutions and have a significant responsibility to provide for ongoing growth for major arts institutions both within and around the precinct.

The successful management of the precinct will need to seamlessly integrate the staged implementation of the Blueprint and programming of precinct events. The Governance structure that is employed to manage the precinct is a key factor in determining the enduring success of the precinct.

Yvonne von Hartel AM

Chair of the Arts Precinct Working Group

COLLABORATION

'The Blueprint' – a road map for arts organisations and all levels of government to achieve the shared vision of a vibrant and connected Melbourne Arts Precinct.

Vibrant and connected

The Blueprint has emerged from the thoughts and ambitions of the many stakeholders who want the Melbourne Arts Precinct to thrive. It seeks to lay down a strategic framework to deliver the vision over time.

The Blueprint has been driven by a stakeholder-led Arts Precinct Working Group. Project funding was provided by the State and Federal Governments, with additional support from the City of Melbourne and University of Melbourne.

The Arts Precinct is home to a talented community of people including nationally significant arts organisations, iconic arts venues, the Victorian base of the national broadcaster and elite arts training institutions.

This is complemented by a growing residential and visitor population, all of who have an interest in seeing the Arts Precinct reach its potential and prosper.

To ensure longevity and success, the Blueprint must work in concert with all levels of government and a range of stakeholders to develop integrated approaches. The collective goal of the Blueprint is to establish processes that move beyond a generic, top down approach and embed place-specific initiatives in local, state and national planning.

This integrated activity will also enable arts organisations to work together and with their communities to promote and program the Arts Precinct as a whole. The creative energy of these organisations will be brought out from behind the walls and into the streets, drawing local and tourist visitation into Melbourne's cultural heart.

The Blueprint design charette in 2012



Yvonne von Hartel, Chair of the Working Group
John Denton (right)



Peter Elliott (right),
Peter Elliott Architects



Rob Adams,
Director of City Design at the City of Melbourne



Working Group member organisations

Arts Centre Melbourne
Arts Victoria
The Australian Ballet

Australian Centre for Contemporary Art
City of Melbourne
Melbourne Symphony Orchestra

National Gallery of Victoria
Office of the Victorian Government Architect
University of Melbourne

Unlocking opportunities

There is no single solution that will transform the Arts Precinct's landscape overnight. To be successful, the Arts Precinct's transformation will happen incrementally at all scales.

In order to create the Blueprint the Working Group sought to develop a meaningful understanding of the Arts Precinct through stakeholder consultation, traffic and mobility studies, an arts facility audit and a combination of geospatial and economic analysis.

This work supported precinct and governance benchmarking and site analysis, leading to the development of the Melbourne Arts Precinct Urban Design Framework and Architectural Framework.

These companion documents suggest ideas and strategies to enhance the Arts Precinct, from small but meaningful street level interventions to larger capital and urban realm projects. The frameworks embody guiding principles for the future development of the Arts Precinct.

In reimagining this part of Melbourne, it is crucial that the conversations started through the Blueprint process continue. In particular, it will be vital to deliver on the Blueprint's ambitions in ways that will integrate the Arts Precinct with the bigger metropolitan picture.

The Metropolitan Planning Strategy emphasises opportunities to boost Melbourne's distinctiveness, competitiveness and liveability. The Blueprint reflects many of the Metropolitan Planning Strategy's key principles, in particular:

- Connecting, managing and growing Melbourne's central city
- Enhancing Melbourne's identity and liveability;
- Developing a globally connected and competitive city of distinctive neighbourhoods;
- Growing the central city as a core location of the knowledge economy and as a tourism hub;
- Developing partnerships and agreements through shared responsibility; and
- Developing good governance structure and processes to champion long-term objectives.



Penny Hutchinson,
Former Director AV



Geoffrey London,
State Government Architect



John Wardle,
John Wardle Architects

A NEW FOCUS

The Blueprint builds on a foundation of studies, design concepts and planning strategies that have been undertaken in the last decade to realise a new direction for the Arts Precinct.

Strong foundations

Past studies of the Arts Precinct have tended to focus on issues associated within a narrowly defined area. The Working Group looked beyond the confines of previous studies to understand the influence of nearby attractions in order to consider the visitor experience as a whole.

The current study area considered the parkland areas to the east of St Kilda Road incorporating Melbourne's most prized gardens and public spaces; Kings Domain, Queen Victoria Gardens, Alexandra Gardens, Royal Botanic Gardens, Government House and the Shrine of Remembrance.

The Arts Precinct is a natural extension of other successful public spaces including Birrarung Marr and the Alexandra Gardens. It also connects across the Yarra Waterfront to Federation Square, home of NGV Australia and the Australian Centre for the Moving Image.

To the immediate north of the Arts Precinct is Melbourne's 24-hour CBD, linking to the urban renewal precinct at Federation Square East. The emergent suburbs of Fishermen's Bend and E-Gate are to the west, connecting to the rapidly growing Docklands waterfront. The southern end of the Arts Precinct meets the vibrant creative and residential community of South Melbourne, connecting the CBD to the bay.

With this relational understanding in place, the Blueprint turns its attention to the area behind the river front. This is where arts organisations and arts education facilities have congregated and where further strategic thought is now needed for the area to reach its potential.

Southbank is one Melbourne's fastest growing inner city suburbs. In 2011 the population of Southbank was estimated to be 11,235 and forecast to reach 21,100 by 2021. This is an increase of nearly 10,000 people and almost double the current population.

EdgRESEARCH

The suburb of Southbank employs the second highest number of creative industry employees in the state, after the CBD..

EdgRESEARCH

Attention to detail

The development of the Blueprint has been informed by an evidence based approach, to arrive at a clear understanding of the Arts Precinct and its surrounds.

Research was gathered on the current trends and influences impacting on the Arts Precinct and combined with expert advice and analysis on a broad range of issues. Significant planning documents such as the *Southbank Structure Plan 2010* and the *Southbank Plan 2006*, also informed strategic thinking.

The study area was defined to include the core arts and education facilities that are a feature of this area and its links to the surrounding suburbs. Within this boundary, data was collected to assist the Working Group in its processes for assembling the Blueprint. Studies were commissioned to collect new relevant data including:

- Detailed study of precinct land use ownership, demographics;
- Transport and mobility modelling;
- Arts facilities audit;
- Architectural framework;
- Urban design framework;
- Economic, commercial and governance studies.










Arts related organisations

- 01 Australian Centre for the Moving Image
- 02 The Ian Potter Centre: NGV Australia
- 03 Artplay
- 04 Signal
- 05 Arts Centre Melbourne
- 06 Opera Australia
- 07 Arts Victoria
 - The Australian Ballet
 - The Australian Ballet School
- 08 NGV: International
- 09 Sidney Myer Music Bowl
- 10 Iwaki Auditorium
- 11 ABC Southbank Centre
- 12 Melbourne Recital Centre
- 13 Melbourne Theatre Company Southbank Theatre
- 14 Victorian College of the Arts
- 15 The Boyd School Studios
- 16 Australian Centre for Contemporary Art
- 17 Chunky Move
- 18 Malthouse Theatre
- 19 Victorian College of the Arts Secondary School
- 20 Melbourne Theatre Company HQ

Landmarks

- 21 Federation Square
- 22 Flinders Street Station
- 23 Southgate Arts and Leisure Precinct
- 24 Melbourne Cricket Ground
- 25 Rod Laver Arena
- 26 Melbourne Aquarium
- 27 Melbourne Exhibition and Convention Centre
- 28 Crown Casino and Entertainment Complex
- 29 Victoria Barracks
- 30 Government House
- 31 Sturt Street Reserve
- 32 Shrine of Remembrance
- 33 South Melbourne Market
- 34 Domain Interchange
- 35 South Melbourne Town Hall

Key

-  Study area
-  Arts related organisations
-  Landmarks
-  Tram lines
-  Other opportunity sites
-  No public access
-  Gardens

THE BROADER CITY CONTEXT

Tourism is Victoria's largest export, with cultural tourism attracting increasing numbers of international and domestic visitors.

KPMG

Over the last three decades Melbourne has transformed into a vibrant and sophisticated city by embracing the river and nurturing the laneways and arcades that give the city its fine grain.

A well-planned city

Cities rise and fall to meet the needs of their inhabitants, but Melbourne is an example where forward thinking people actively planned the way they wanted the city to evolve.

Hoddle's grid of wide, elegant streets set Melbourne up for the boom times of the gold rush and then, over a century later, the urban renaissance of the 1980s, 1990s and 2000s when the drift to the suburbs was halted and a car dominated 'dead centre' was transformed into one of the world's most stylish, sophisticated and liveable cities.



Melbourne's commitment to strategic planning principles has served the city well, underpinned by a belief in the intrinsic value of the public realm and the civic good that flows from well-planned streets and public spaces.

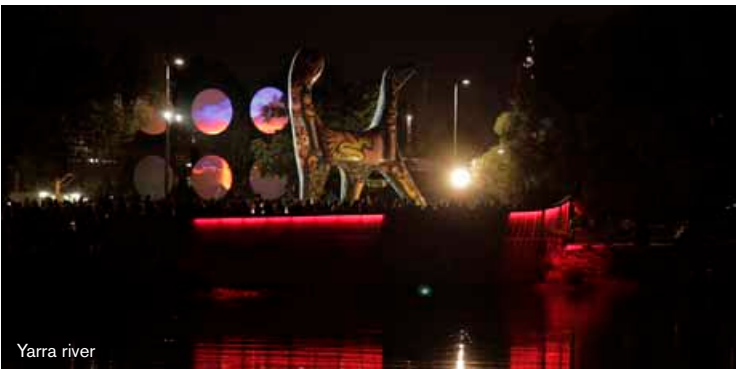
Now, driven by a growing residential and visitor population, the city continues to evolve, developing strong links to the university and medical precincts to the north, the Sports Precinct to the east, the riverfront and Docklands to the west and the Arts Precinct to the south.



Centre Place, Melbourne



Southbank promenade



Yarra river

A view to the future

Over the last 30 years Southbank has transformed from car yards and factories to one of Melbourne's fastest growing residential and business areas with one of the highest concentrations of arts and cultural organisations in the world.

There is a unanimous view among residents, students, visitors and workers that the area needs to be better connected to its neighbourhood and that with more atmosphere and street life, the area would become more welcoming and dynamic.

Consultation with Southbank business owners, residents, students, state and local government agencies informs the Blueprint. This shared vision imagines a place that is inclusive, creative, enjoyable and an authentic 'Melbourne' experience.

Strategic planning in the Arts Precinct follows the same principles that have guided the renaissance in the CBD since the 1980s: to encourage mixed-use development; to increase density; to create better connections between the city and adjacent areas; to build on existing local character; and to improve and activate the public realm.

The well-planned city, with its services, transport connections, recreation areas, parks and gardens, universities, and cultural places didn't happen by accident. The Blueprint continues the tradition of forward thinking that started with Hoddle and continues today through thoughtful and strategic planning and the active involvement of the people of Melbourne who are passionate about their city's growth and development.

EVOLUTION OF A PRECINCT

Southbank's natural swampy environment encouraged development which was best suited to mixed industrial and transport uses. This form of development has left its imprint on the character of the area trapped between the barriers of St Kilda Road, Kingsway and the river.



The original circus site water slide projected onto the Australian Ballet building

The City of Melbourne

The City is the main planning authority for Docklands, Southbank and the fast-developing City North.

The city's Postcode 3000 policy is often cited as example of policy leadership in urban planning. Aimed at increasing residential development in the city centre and St Kilda Rd, the campaign championed New York-style apartment living in spacious old city buildings and warehouses.

The City of Melbourne is also the custodian of the city's parks and gardens – all 480 hectares of internationally acclaimed greenery. Since 1837, many buildings have been raised and razed within the original 'town reserve' bounded by Victoria Street, Hoddle Street and the Yarra River, but the streets and parks – the public realm – remain intact and resolutely protected.

While good fortune played its part, the open spaces, the Parisian-style boulevards, the landmark buildings, the sports grounds, the riverside promenades, the iconic trams and the arts facilities are the result of strategic planning and partnerships with residents and ratepayers.

The City of Melbourne is the owner and manager of the Queen Victoria Market, the last 19th century market in the city and its most visited tourist attraction.

The city is now home to almost 99,000 residents. Similarly, the city embraced the closure of Swanston Street to cars, the renaissance of the city's restaurants and cafes through deregulation of licensing laws, and the development of an arts and entertainment precinct along the Yarra River.

The City of Melbourne defines its vision for Victoria's capital city as a city for people; a creative city; a prosperous city; a knowledge city; an eco-city and a connected city.

The City has been and will continue to be responsible for managing the public realm in the Arts Precinct, in collaboration with other stakeholders.

Urban renewal

The development of Southbank is largely the result of urban renewal programs implemented by successive Victorian Governments since the 1980s. The area has developed rapidly, starting with the construction of the Yarra River promenade in 1990 which served to reposition Melbourne's relationship with the Yarra River.

Construction of the Westgate Freeway, CityLink, Southgate, Crown Entertainment Complex, the Melbourne Exhibition Centre and significant residential development all happened within this short period.



Princes Bridge and the future site of Hamer Hall, 1960

Southbank now accommodates a mixture of land uses dominated by commercial and entertainment activities along the river, with high-density housing to the south. Southbank also accommodates commuter and freight arterial roads.

Yarra River

The original Southbank Promenade, as designed in 1990, represented a significant shift in Melbourne's attitude to the river.

In early years of European settlement the river was a dumping ground for industrial waste. While this practice ceased in the 1880s it took time to change the view that the river's water quality was a valuable asset. Efforts to reconnect the CBD with the Yarra commenced in the 1990s with the construction of the Southbank Bridge in 1992.

The Yarra River waterway, riverbanks and promenades are now important public spaces, providing places for casual recreation, walking, cycling, as well as being a vital part of Melbourne's community celebrations, being the primary destination for the city's public events like New Year's Eve and Moomba.

Increasingly the Yarra River is being viewed as a valuable connection to Melbourne's Docklands and Port Phillip Bay, with transport services being introduced that will see the river's role as a city waterway further enhanced.

Roads and transport

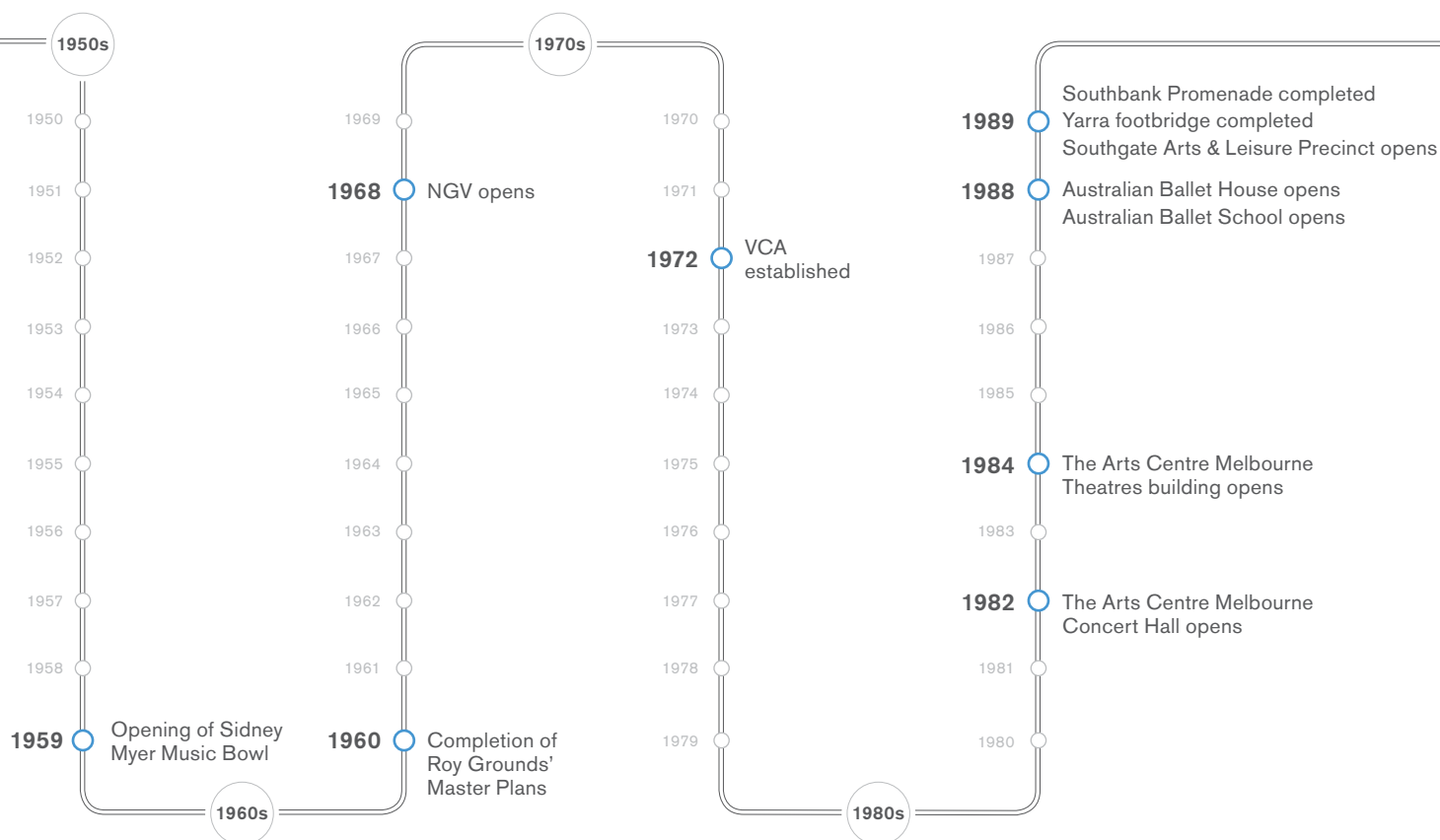
St Kilda Road is the busiest tram route in the world and the No1 tram from East Coburg to South Melbourne runs through Sturt Street. Melbourne's iconic Flinders Street Station is also within walking distance of the Arts Precinct. These routes connect arts patrons to the greater public transport network.

The legacy of the Southbank area's past as a manufacturing and warehousing area is seen today in the network of roads that intersect the precinct.

The proliferation of busy roads leads to a number of problems including a sense of disconnection from the city and the riverfront, a concentration of carparks and a lack of amenity for pedestrians and cyclists.

Significantly for the Arts Precinct, CityLink's Domain Tunnel portal is directly beneath Sturt Street and a network of on and off-ramps alienates a large parcel of land to the west of Sturt Street.

OUR RICH HERITAGE



While the arts presence dates to the nineteenth century, it gained a permanent foothold in Southbank in 1946 when Wirths Park was reserved for cultural purposes. Today this former circus site is the site of Arts Centre Melbourne and the National Gallery of Victoria.

Arts Centre Melbourne

Arts Centre Melbourne is a major cultural institution and a primary focus for the performing arts in Victoria. Since the 1870s the Arts Centre site in St Kilda Road has been a place for arts, culture and entertainment.

In the early 1900s the Arts Centre site was home to a permanent circus called Olympia. Wirth Brothers Circus took over the site in 1907. During the 1920s a new Green Mill Dance Hall replaced a Jazz Pavilion and the Olympia Dance Palace.

The Arts Centre Melbourne Concert Hall was opened in 1982 and the Theatres Building opened in 1984. The Concert Hall was renamed Hamer Hall by former premier Steve Bracks in honour of Sir Rupert Hamer in 1994. It was Sir Rupert's vision that saw the building brought into being.

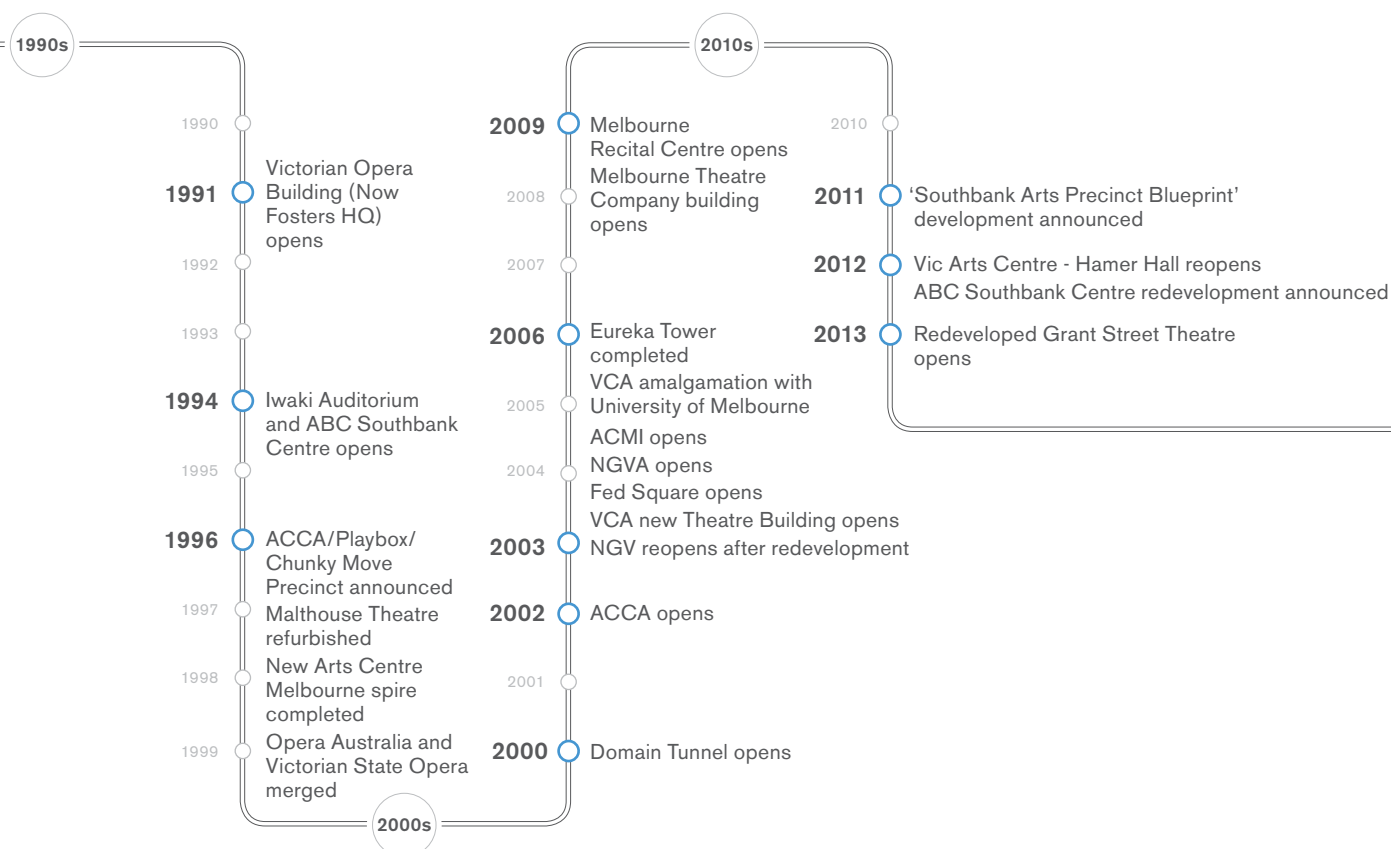
The Royal Botanic Gardens

The vision of large botanical garden beside the Yarra blossomed under the guidance of well regarded botanists Ferdinand von Mueller and WR Guilfoyle from 1857 onwards.

Built around an old creek valley, the gardens are now the 'green lungs' of Melbourne, a tranquil oasis and a popular meeting place on the edge of a thriving, bustling, modern city. Around two million people visit the gardens each year to marvel at the 50,000 plants and 10,000 plant species growing there.

The track around the perimeter of the Royal Botanic Gardens is also one of Melbourne's landmarks. The Tan is a 3.8km path originally used by horse riders but now a very popular walking and jogging track. In 1959, the Sidney Myer Music Bowl opened in the gardens.

Since the 1990s the Royal Botanic Gardens have played host to Melbourne's Moonlight Cinema and summer theatre productions. The Gardens are also now home to Moomba and part of White Night Melbourne.



The vision that Kenneth Myer and Roy Grounds and other civic leaders shared and built on in the 1950s and 1960s is almost complete. The venues that line St Kilda Road are beautifully presented but behind these addresses a task remains. It's time to put the finishing touches to the Melbourne Arts Precinct.

The Shrine of Remembrance

The Shrine of Remembrance is the focal point in a direct line of sight from Swanston Street and St Kilda Road, Melbourne's important civic and ceremonial streets. It is the destination of important public commemorations such as the Anzac Day march. Views of the Shrine are protected in Melbourne's planning scheme.

Designed in the style of a Greek mausoleum, the Shrine of Remembrance was created to meet the needs of a grieving community after the extensive loss of life in World War I.

Of the 89,000 Victorians who served abroad, 19,000 did not return. Built between 1928 and 1934 – largely through public subscription – the Shrine provided a place where Victorians could honour and preserve the memories of those they had lost.

Its exterior is imposing and majestic. Its interior is designed to allow a narrow beam of light to shine like a laser onto a central plaque of remembrance within. The Shrine is currently undergoing redevelopment, to be completed in 2015.

Victoria Barracks

The Victoria Barracks were built in the 1850s to house the colonial government's soldiers and officers. During World War II the imposing bluestone building became the headquarters of the Australian War Cabinet. The site is of great historical significance and sits opposite the Shrine of Remembrance and the Domain Parklands.

Victoria Barracks – currently a walled citadel with no public access or engagement with its neighbourhood – has the potential to become a vibrant part of the Arts Precinct in much the same way that Hyde Park Barracks in Sydney and the Abbotsford Convent in Melbourne have been converted to public and community use.

Redevelopment could include preservation of heritage elements. Opened up, the grounds and barracks could host markets, festivals and other outdoor events and new pedestrian pathways would lead from Street Kilda Road to Wells Street and beyond, integrating the site into the arts precinct and the civic spine of St Kilda Road.

THE VALUE OF AN ARTS CLUSTER

The basic concept upon which the college is built is that young artists intending to enter careers as practitioners in their various fields are best assisted to achieve their ambitions in a milieu of continuous artistic activity and endeavour of a fully professional nature.

Victorian College of the Arts Bill
preamble 1981

The co-location of arts venues, organisations and educational facilities creates a critical mass of ideas and creative energy.

The National Gallery of Victoria

The NGV holds a very special place in Victorians' hearts. It is embraced with real affection as a central part of our cultural life. Founded in 1861, the NGV is Australia's oldest public art gallery.

The NGV opened on St Kilda Road in 1968 as the first stage of a combined gallery and arts centre complex. The master plan produced by Melbourne architect Roy Grounds placed the Gallery at the southern end of the site, with the northern end reserved for the construction of a theatre and concert hall (now Arts Centre Melbourne).

The NGV currently holds over 70,000 works of art with a collection valued at over \$4b. Its international collection covers works from Rembrandt to Picasso and in the Australian collection from von Guerard to Nolan. The Australian collection is housed at the Ian Potter Centre at Federation Square, opened in 2003.

In 2011, the Gallery's 150th anniversary, 1.55 million people visited the galleries and took part in the celebrations. In 2012 the Gallery regained its position as the most visited museum or gallery in the country and became the 25th most visited in the world, based on the Arts Newspaper's annual survey of global museum attendances. In 2013, with a rapidly expanding contemporary collection and the opening of 'Melbourne Now', the NGV stands poised on the brink of a new era.

Arts education and the VCA

The Victorian College of the Arts had its origins in the National Gallery School, which was founded in 1867. Originally called the School of Art, the school's graduates went on to become some of Australia's most significant artists and include Fred McCubbin, Rupert Bunney, Arthur Boyd, Clara Southern, Margaret Preston, Joy Hester and Fred Williams.

The Victorian College of the Arts started to consolidate in the former police and military buildings along St Kilda Road in the 1970s. Inspired by the idea of positive synergies between arts students and arts professionals, successive Victorian and Commonwealth governments encouraged the expansion of the College.

The VCA is lauded for its commitment to intensive studio-based and practice-led teaching in the disciplines of art, contemporary music, dance, film and television, music theatre, production and theatre. Recent alumni include Callum Morton, Sally Smart, Patricia Piccinini, Adam Elliot and Ricky Swallow.

Drawing upon its strong history, the College enjoys a reputation as a forward-looking school that prepares artists for lifelong fulfilment in their chosen field. In 2007 the College became a faculty of the University of Melbourne, further enhancing its reputation.



Arts organisations and opportunities for development

The VCA is now on the cusp of a new era, with the planned co-location of the music school from its Parkville campus to Southbank.

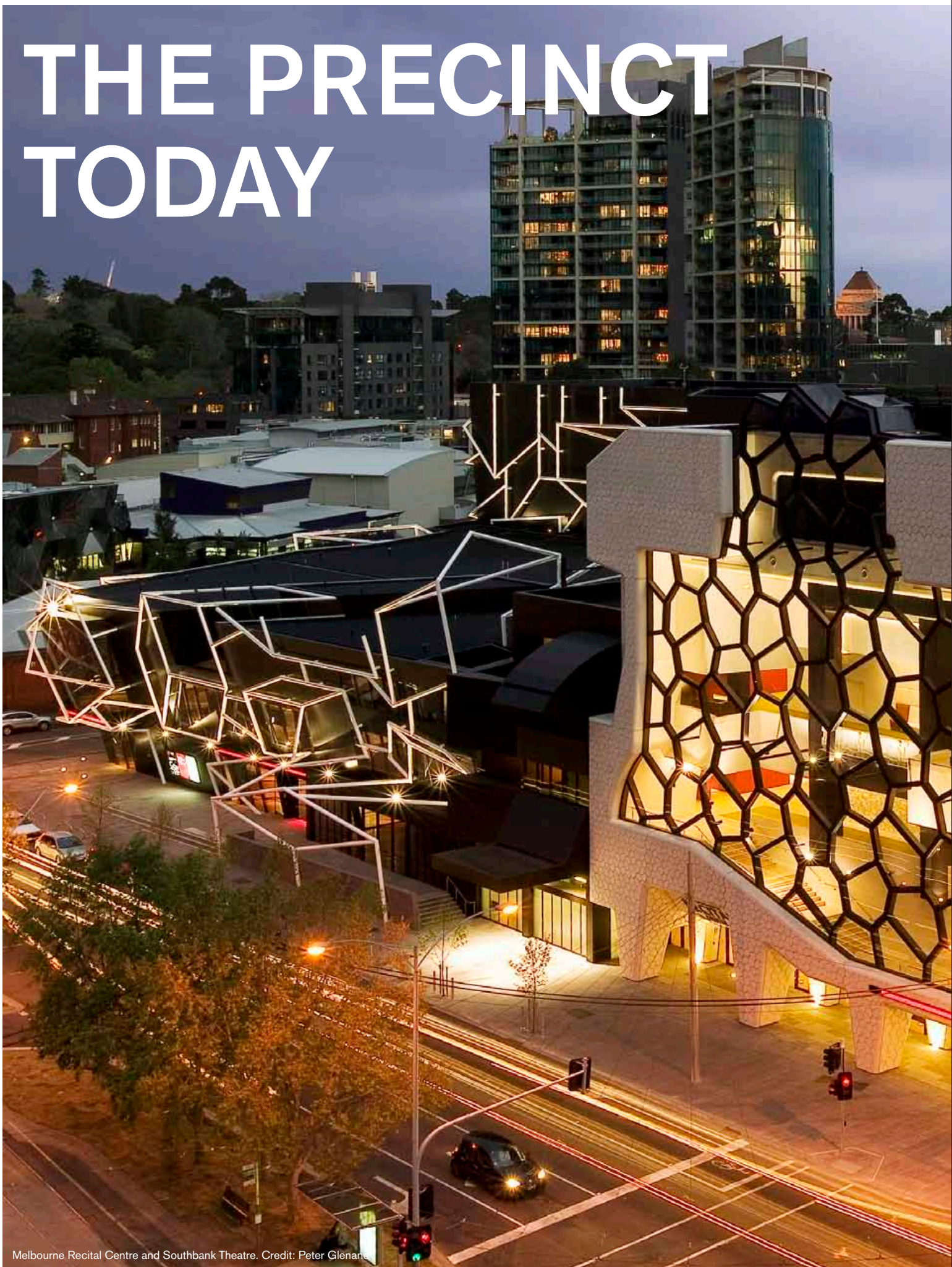
The Police Stables are located in the heart of the campus, on the corner of Dodds and Grant streets. Adaptive re-use of this building could breathe new life into the Arts Precinct, connecting the two halves of the campus.

The Arts Precinct is also home to the Victorian College of the Arts Secondary School and the Australian Ballet School. Students aged nine and upwards from a range of creative disciplines have the opportunity to work side-by-side with some of the nation's most inspiring arts professionals.

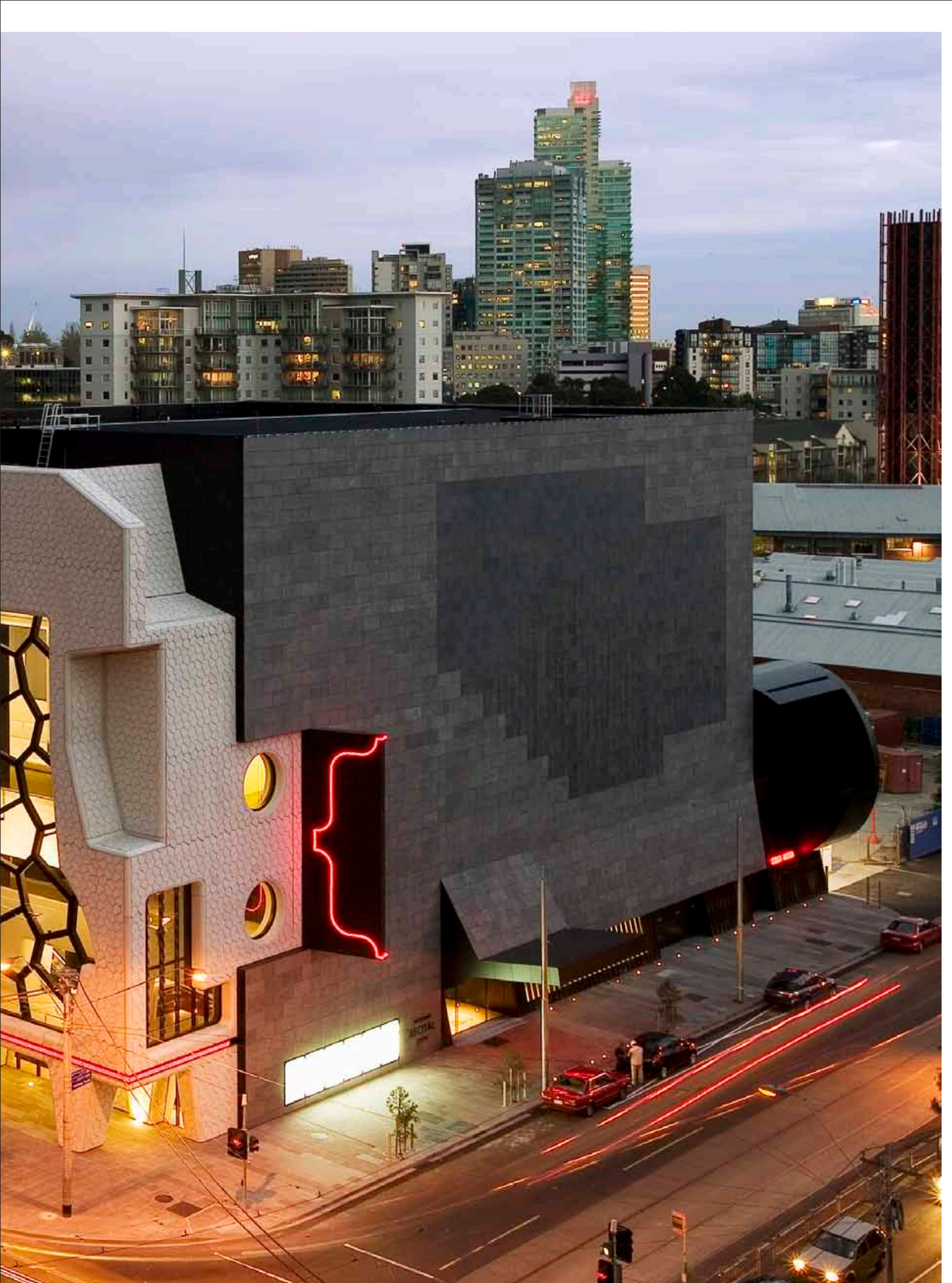
Key

- Civic spine
- Arts related organisations
- Landmarks
- Tram lines
- Other opportunity sites
- No public access
- Gardens

THE PRECINCT TODAY



Melbourne Recital Centre and Southbank Theatre. Credit: Peter Glenane



THE PRECINCT DEFINED

The total area of the precinct is 64 hectares. Of this land, approximately 25 hectares or 39% is devoted to roads or to land for CityLink.

City of Melbourne

28% of households in Southbank do not own cars. At the metropolitan level, only 9% of households do not own a car.

URBANTRANS

Past efforts to consolidate and build a sense of place for the Arts Precinct have focused on Sturt Street. The Blueprint defines the Arts Precinct as a broader area, providing opportunities for consolidation as a major visitor destination through connections to the gardens, Flinders Street Station, Federation Square and South Melbourne.

A strategic position

In simple terms, we need to define the Arts Precinct. Being consistent and clear about the Arts Precinct's location is an important foundation to build on for future initiatives.

A physical definition of the Melbourne Arts Precinct has emerged through the Blueprint design process:

- The Sturt Street arts cluster provides a logical central spine. Its intersection with Kingsway provides the Precinct's southern entrance. A comfortable 1km walk towards the city leads to the Arts Centre as the natural northern gateway.
- St Kilda Road, Melbourne's iconic boulevard, provides a civic and elegant eastern edge.
- City Road and Kingsway define the Arts Precinct's extent to the north and west.
- Coventry Street defines the southern boundary.

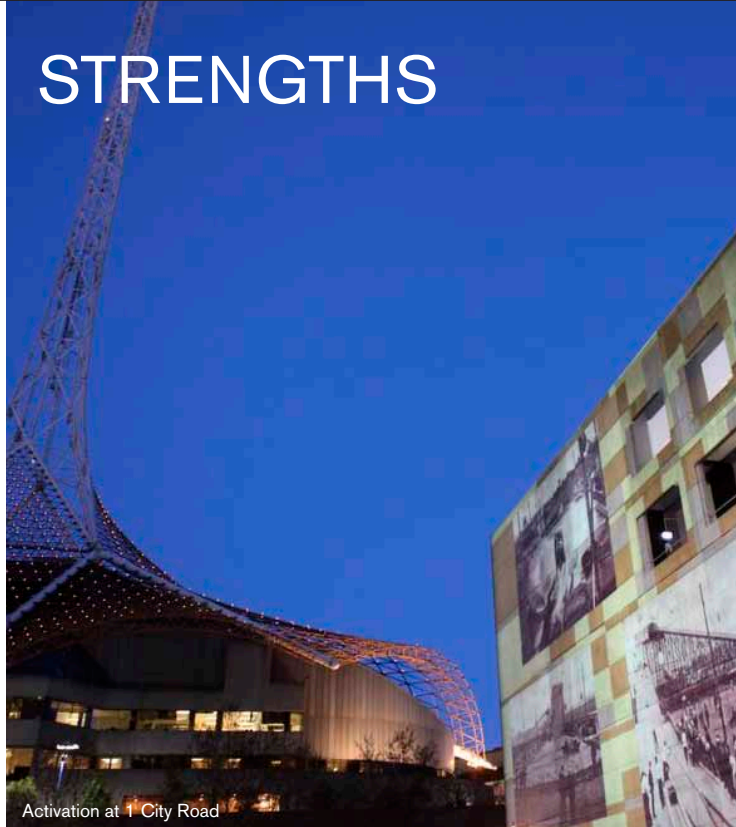




The Arts Precinct

Key	
	Civic spine
	Precinct public realm
	Precinct
	Arts related organisations
	Landmarks
	Other opportunity sites
	Other precinct buildings
	Tram lines
	No public access
	Gardens

STRENGTHS



SITES WITH POTENTIAL

Although Southbank's urban renewal has been under way for several decades, a number of large sites within the Precinct are relatively undeveloped, representing significant future opportunities to realise Precinct goals.

Undeveloped Crown land sites, such as number 1 City Road, present the option for significant future development. Other vacant sites are ripe for commercial development with arts-related outcomes. For example, additional hospitality and retail businesses could complement the arts experience.

Opportunities to reconfigure the use of CityLink land along Sturt Street also exist. While there are constraints, careful consideration could result in major benefits along the western edge of the Arts Precinct.

Potential sites for complementary future development include the Police Stables, Victoria Barracks and the Fosters building.

LOCATIONS AND LINKS

The Precinct is home to major arts venues such as the Arts Centre, Hamer Hall and the NGV and is also a short walk from many of Melbourne's other major visitor destinations. The area's proximity to vibrant surrounding areas like Southgate and Federation Square emphasise the Precinct's potential to be better connected to its neighbours.

The Arts Precinct is minutes from Flinders Street Station and is well served by frequent tram services up and down St Kilda Road, the busiest tram route in the world.

The Precinct adjoins the Domain Parklands – one of Melbourne's prime open spaces – and it's a natural extension of the entertainment and conference venues along the Yarra. It also sits next to South Melbourne, a lively inner suburb complete with strips of shops and cafes and South Melbourne Market.

12.4ha

The amount of land in the Precinct that is used by arts related organisations including Crown or freehold land.

48%

The proportion of Southbank residents who walk to work. Another 4 per cent cycle. At the metropolitan level only 5 per cent of people walk or cycle to work.



PEOPLE

The people who live, study, work and visit the area are a great asset and the lifeblood of the area. The artists, dancers and musicians are a creative and dynamic force who can contribute to making the area a more vibrant and dynamic place by day and night.

There is also potential to attract more visitors and tourists to the area through many small projects that would create the 'fine grain' and atmosphere missing at the moment.

On an average day there are 141,100 people in the study area – 13,100 residents, 46,000 workers and 82,000 visitors. The residential population is expected to double by 2031. These students and residents are potentially patrons of cafes, bars and shops that could emerge in the Precinct.

The Precinct is under-utilised in Melbourne's calendar of cultural events but is ideally located to attract festival patrons to satellite activities or major new initiatives like the White Night Festival.

11.4 billion

Annual economic contribution the arts and cultural sectors make to State GDP.

ARTS AND LEARNING

Some of the country's most established and innovative arts institutions are co-located in the Arts Precinct, benefitting from collaboration and the sharing of resources.

While each institution has its own entrance or courtyard, performance spaces, or vestibules to congregate, harnessing these assets means that more people can visit the area with more frequent access to intimate spaces, function and meeting rooms, and gallery spaces.

The decision to locate the Victorian College of the Arts alongside the NGV and Arts Centre Melbourne was an early pointer to the vision of an integrated arts precinct. Victoria's premier school for the training of talented young dancers and musicians is located in the Arts Precinct, as is the Australian Ballet School. The Australian National Academy of Music close by in South Melbourne is Australia's only national performance based music training institution. The Victorian College of the Arts Secondary School welcomes children between 11 and 18, providing the opportunity for specialist training alongside a high quality academic education.

The co-location of ACCA, the Chunky Move Dance Company and the Malthouse Theatre have created opportunities for productive education partnerships and collaboration.

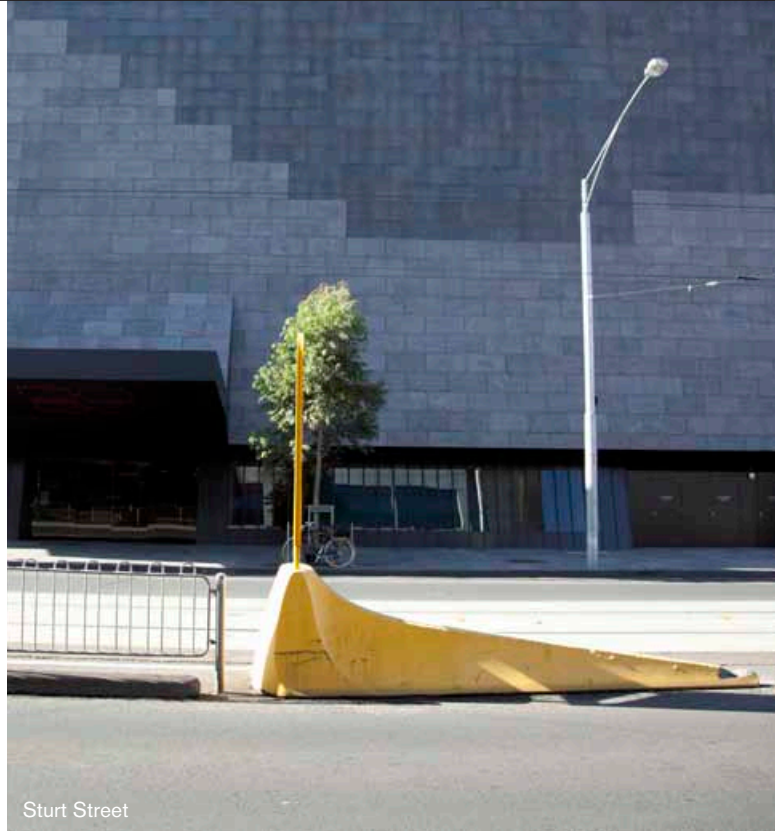
30,000

The number of people who can be seated in the Arts Precinct in quality performance venues at any one time.

CHALLENGES



ACCA forecourt. Credit: Andrew Curtis



Sturt Street

INWARD-LOOKING INSTITUTIONS LACK OF STREET LIFE

Arts organisations have a specialised role and mandate to display, conserve and perform within their own governance structures. This means that each institution has its own plans and priorities. A by-product of this brief is a tendency to be inwardly focused.

As a result, programming is undertaken independently of the broader Precinct and there is no collective approach to attracting large events, co-ordinating opening hours, or the marketing and promotion of the Precinct as a destination.

While there is a great willingness for organisations to collaborate, physical barriers exist.

The high bluestone walls of the NGV reinforce the idea that valuable works of art are kept inside. Organisations can appear isolated even though they share the same neighbourhood. Improving and activating the public realm in the Precinct would remove the sense of isolation that prevails.

The Precinct would benefit from co-ordinated marketing so that the idea of a 'precinct' emerges with patrons lingering after an event or exhibition. The result would be that each organisation improves its sustainability and accessibility.

There is no street life without people and people need to see a reason to visit an area whether it be to shop, be entertained, to eat and drink or to engage with the arts day and night, inside and outside.

The fact of the matter is that high numbers of pedestrians bypass the Precinct, sensing a lack of places of interest, inactive street frontages, and an area criss-crossed by busy roads. Anchor destinations like the Malthouse Theatre and the Melbourne Recital Centre/MTC are by definition internal spaces. Their focus is on what happens inside, not outside.

The area brims with arts students, musicians and arts workers but there is a noticeable lack of retail and hospitality outlets to support their interests.

An active and vibrant precinct can be achieved by creating opportunities for new entrepreneurs, community arts organisations, street events, festivals, markets, pop up cafes and workshops. This will ensure the Arts Precinct is a welcoming place, a creative place and a truly Melbourne experience for visitors.

45,700

The number of people employed in Southbank. The majority of these 720 businesses constitute arts and recreation services.

1,956

The approximate number of pedestrians who walk across Princess Bridge during morning peak hour.



LACK OF SHARED IDENTITY

Unlike other city destinations like Chinatown, Lygon Street and Brunswick street, the Arts Precinct is not in the average person's consciousness as a destination in its own right.

There has been an absence of a shared vision for the area, partially due to the lack of a dedicated precinct marketing plan. Arts organisations have been encouraged to establish in the neighbourhood, but no single body is charged with the overall branding or marketing of the area.

An online 'one stop shop' and networked mobile platform would engage audiences in new ways, providing information about Arts Precinct programs, activities and wayfinding through a single access point.

One of the successes of the Sports Precinct is the way that the whole area works co-operatively and collectively around major events like the Australian Open and Australian Rules Football at the MCG.

Similarly, by hosting a co-ordinated arts event celebrating the qualities of the precinct, a new precinct identity would emerge as patrons became familiar with the features and character of the area.

29

The average age of a person living in Southbank. Overall, the age profile of residents is relatively young, from 18-35 years old.

URBAN BARRIERS

Large landholdings and single use sites have not allowed Melbourne's unique urban character to grow and develop in the Arts Precinct. Impermeable blocks are poles apart from the small shop frontages and niches that have given Melbourne its reputation for bars and cafes in the back alleys and laneways.

The stakeholders acknowledge a lack of 'fine grain' in the way the area presents to the public. This is in part a legacy of the warehouses and manufacturing companies who set up here in the early days of Melbourne on relatively cheap land with good access to the city, South Melbourne and the ports.

Other urban barriers are high-rise developments to the north of the Precinct. This in turn isolates a predominantly low rise Arts Precinct.

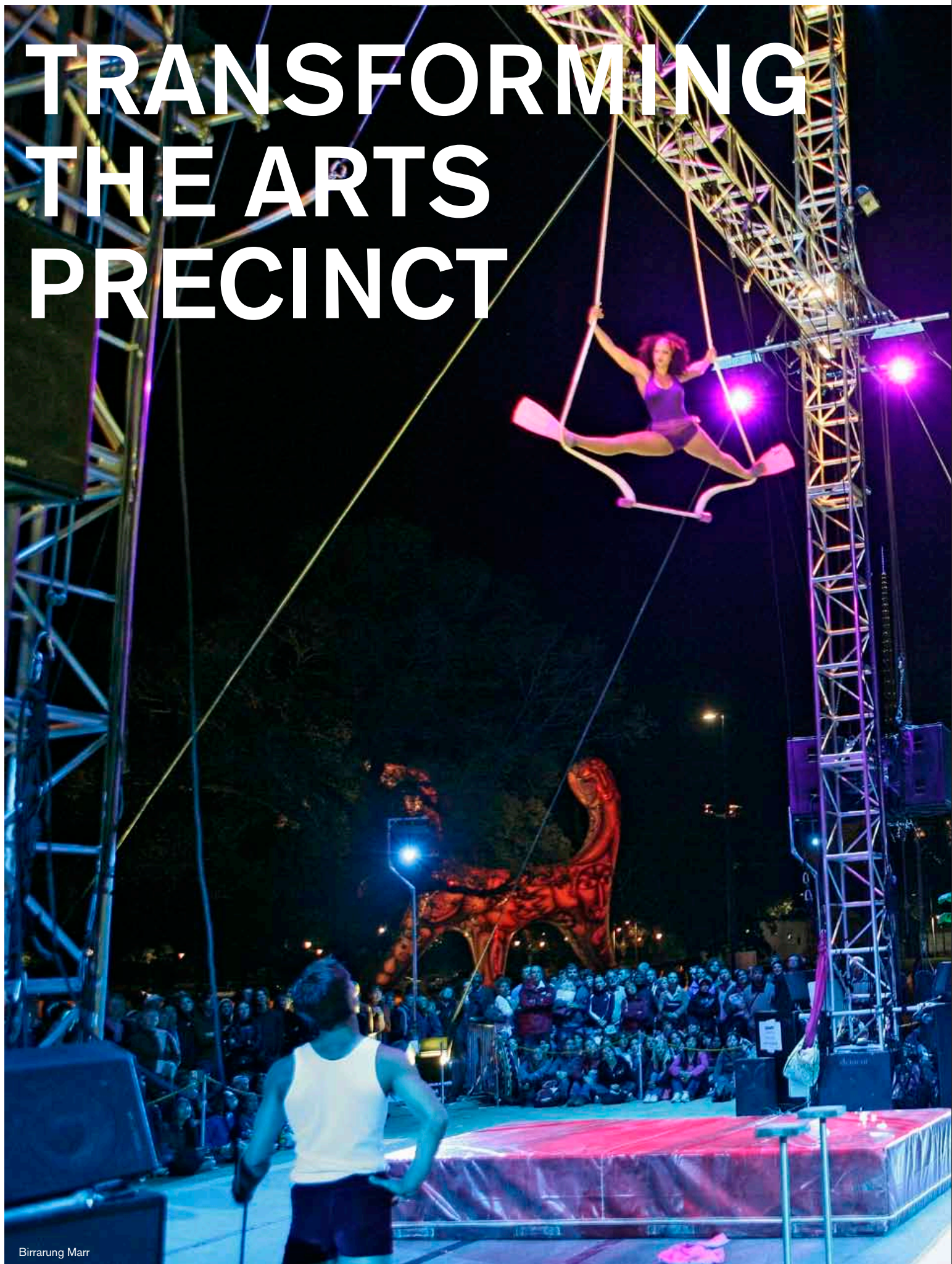
The impact of CityLink on and off ramps effectively takes the west side of Sturt Street out of play while arterial roads like City Road and Kingsway isolate the area from the riverfront and South Melbourne.

This has resulted in an area isolated from the thriving heart of the city, that is difficult to navigate, and lacks the ties that bind other parts of the city to a bigger and more rewarding experience.

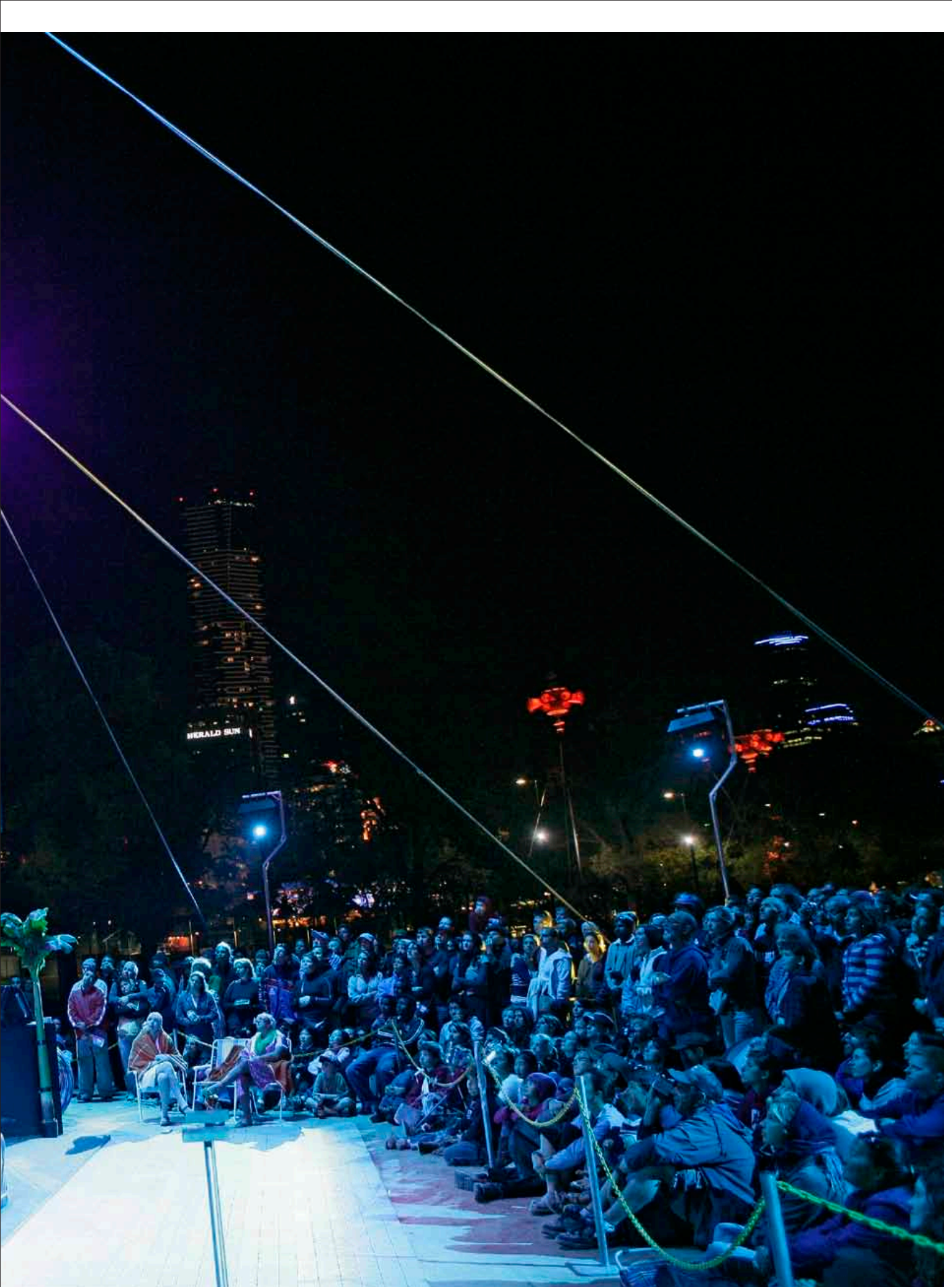
25,000

The number of car parks in Southbank, despite the fact that most people who live in the area don't own a car. In comparison, the similarly sized suburb of Docklands has 13,500 car parks. 63,000 car parks service the entire CBD.

TRANSFORMING THE ARTS PRECINCT



Birrarung Marr



WHAT WE'D ALL LIKE TO SEE



The Blueprint conducted a series of stakeholder engagement interviews between 2012 and 2013 from almost 1,000 residents, students and visitors to the area. This is what they had to say.

BRING LIFE TO THE STREETS

'Make the Precinct an arts community.'

'A place for everyone is a valid aspiration; it inspires inclusivity.'

'We need independent art and affordable, accessible spaces.'

'Making Southbank available across all demographic groups and breaking down the elitist vibe of the arts.'

'There aren't too many public spaces in Melbourne where you can just go on a weekend with your family and be immersed in free art.'

'I love pop up entertainment... I don't know what to expect when I go there but I know I'm going to love it.'

'Southbank needs to be less highbrow. At most of the events there is no one between the ages of 25 and 50 – we definitely need to attract that age group.'

CREATE A MELBOURNE EXPERIENCE

'Subsidised square metres for artists, and commercial spaces be placed together to ensure a mix of different groups and to get more people in the arts'

'New experiences, new things - seeing something that you can't see anywhere else.'

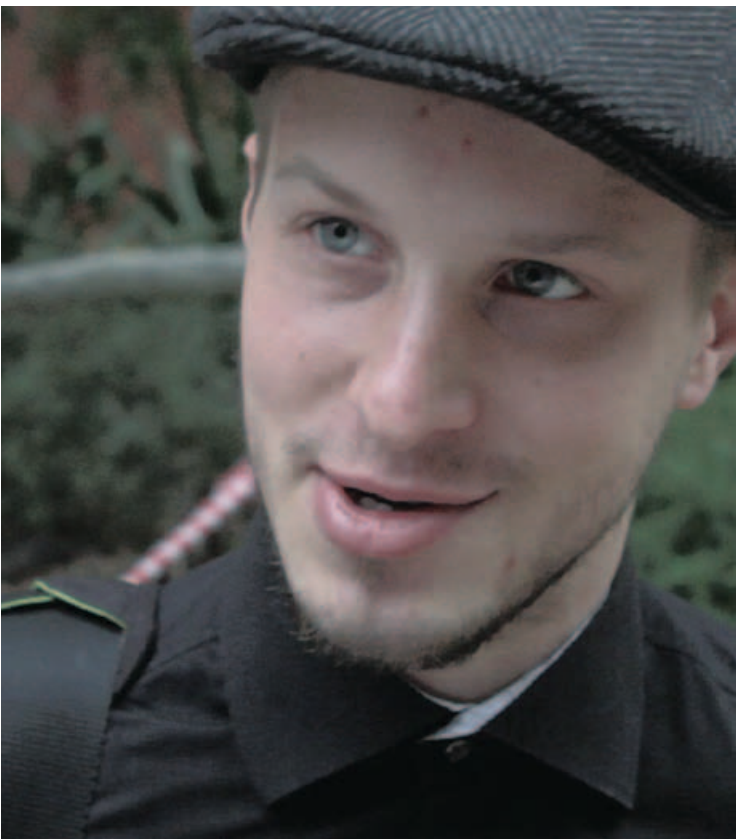
'I like the idea of the immediate, the temporary and the small scale contrasted with the institutions.'

'Opposites can be anything - arts or people and it can mean across arts too. It could mean that a painter is inspired by a drum performance.'

'Nice to have a space in the city to sit down and enjoy the surrounds.'

'Rough it up a bit, allow some graffiti - less token, more heart'

'A place that Melburnians can hang out in.'



MORE TO SEE AND DO

- 'A place that attracts more creativity and not just about those already here.'
- 'Where we can show off what we do to one another.'
- 'Include everything from the starting to the star.'
- 'More places to sit so people can chat and enjoy other people's energy.'
- 'There should be more cheap things...because I can bring my kids along and it's not too expensive.'
- 'Would be nice if the precinct allowed for smaller performance spaces and made it easier for smaller groups to hang out.'
- 'More cafes on Sturt Street. More things to see on Sturt Street. Like bars, individual shops, arty shops or a pop up space that changes every three months and is reflective of the art community.'
- 'Buskers, a market more often than once a week (pop up) with art or good quality crafts made by local artists.'

MAKE CONNECTIONS

- 'Remove the barriers for independent organic art to take place.'
- 'Southbank needs more accessible spaces for independent artists.'
- 'Imagine the precinct as the most creative, energised and universally accessible arts district in Australia and internationally. How amazing to design and bequest the best of inclusive art zones and creativity to all Victorians...'
- 'We need areas that bring people together, rather than allow them to do their own thing.'
- 'I like the idea of taking the art out of the galleries and making it public art and part of the place. This means that art is more financially and culturally more accessible. I like the idea of wandering along and having something to look at.'
- 'Provide appropriate accommodation options and facilities, services.'

INSPIRATION AND ASPIRATION



The Blueprint's aspiration is for a vibrant and connected Arts Precinct. As the Blueprint initiatives blossom, Melbourne's Arts Precinct will grow and evolve into a place with atmosphere, personality, heart and soul. In response to feedback from stakeholders, residents and visitors, the Blueprint has identified what is missing and where fantastic opportunities lie.

Bring life to the streets

With goodwill and inspiration, the streets around the Arts Precinct could host a rolling program of visual arts, performing arts, music and new or experimental art mediums.

But to do this we need to make improvements so that pedestrians moving through the Arts Precinct can have a better and safer experience.

As Melbourne's festival program expands, the area has great potential to be part of the White Night Festival, Next Wave, Melbourne International Arts Festival, L'Oreal Melbourne Fashion Festival, Melbourne Music Week, Melbourne International Jazz Festival and the Melbourne International Comedy Festival.

The Arts Precinct could host its own major festival, drawing from the talents of artists and performers who call the Arts Precinct home.

Create a Melbourne experience

Success will be the creation of a quintessentially 'Melbourne' experience. The Arts Precinct will have its own distinctive look and feel, but it will be joined to the bustling, creative body of the city and will be a vibrant place by day and night. The area will cater for all ages and interests and be known for free events, outdoor performances, outdoor film screenings, cafes and bars.

A rolling program of cultural and commercial activity that fosters a distinctive sense of place could be largely delivered through existing programs run by the City of Melbourne and Arts Victoria, or by engaging a community arts organisation or individuals with specialist skills.

By creating new links and opening up laneways, visitors will start to see the things that people know and love about the CBD with its fine grain and secret pockets.



More to see and do

Small scale performance stages and a 'culture of permission' would see VCA and the Australian National Academy of Music students join professional musicians in impromptu jazz sessions; a program of workshops run by well-regarded artists and performers might see flamenco dance explained; a program of events including outdoor performances, public art, design markets and public dance classes would draw Melburnians and visitors to the area for affordable, but highly professional, entertainment.

As far as possible the transformation of the Arts Precinct would take a hands-off approach, enabling opportunities for artists and creative entrepreneurs. It will be a place for people to pause and reflect, and witness the spontaneity of the creative process.

Embedding these ideas in the planning system will mean that new development opportunities will enable many of these activities to evolve and grow over time, whether they be large or small initiatives.

Make connections

Success will be an Arts Precinct that people walk to without significant obstacles and with clear wayfinding; it will be a place of contrasts, where high-art meets the grassroots; it will be known for pop up culture and businesses and as an arts and creativity incubator; it will relate to the walkways and alleyways of the CBD that gives Melbourne its fine grain.

The area would be greener with pocket parks, and a greater sense of pedestrian space as a result of road closures, enabling the Arts Precinct's individual personality to emerge.

It will be easier for people to get from one place to another and to combine many different activities into a single day or evening.

BLUEPRINT STRATEGIES

Taking a strategic approach will enable a vibrant and connected Arts Precinct to emerge. Actions will include improving transport and pedestrian access, public realm interventions, support for pop up projects and unlocking obstacles to creative entrepreneurship.

A strategic approach

While our venerable arts institutions grandly address St Kilda Road and contribute to the boulevard's status as Melbourne's civic spine, newer theatres and galleries are tucked in behind and along Sturt Street, and do not feature on Melbourne's collective 'mental map'.

To create a 'vibrant and connected precinct' we need to seamlessly integrate with the rest of the city. It might seem counter intuitive to define the Arts Precinct and then focus on the area outside it, but it will be these links that give the Arts Precinct a sense of connectedness to its surroundings.

These will be the routes that you take when you want to combine a number of activities in one visit – a trip to the South Melbourne Market followed by a quick coffee in Sturt Street and a jog around the Tan.

These links are the ones that you don't notice as you take a shortcut down a Melbourne laneway and stumble upon a busker performing in a little space you didn't even know existed.

These connections will encourage casual, ad hoc interactions as people rediscover the amazing destinations that are hiding on their doorstep.

For the Arts Precinct this means building or enhancing links to the Domain Gardens, South Melbourne, the Yarra River and beyond to the CBD, Federation Square, Birrarung Marr and even the Sports Precinct.

The Blueprint's approach has been informed by the Melbourne Arts Precinct Urban Design and Architectural Frameworks. These propositional frameworks suggest a raft of projects, from the small and simple to the bold and city-changing, that can be used as a guide towards fulfilling the Blueprint's aspirations.

Bring life to the streets

Traffic calming and minor street closures will make the Arts Precinct's streets 'pedestrian-friendly' enabling the area's potential as a grassroots arts hub to emerge.

Create a Melbourne experience

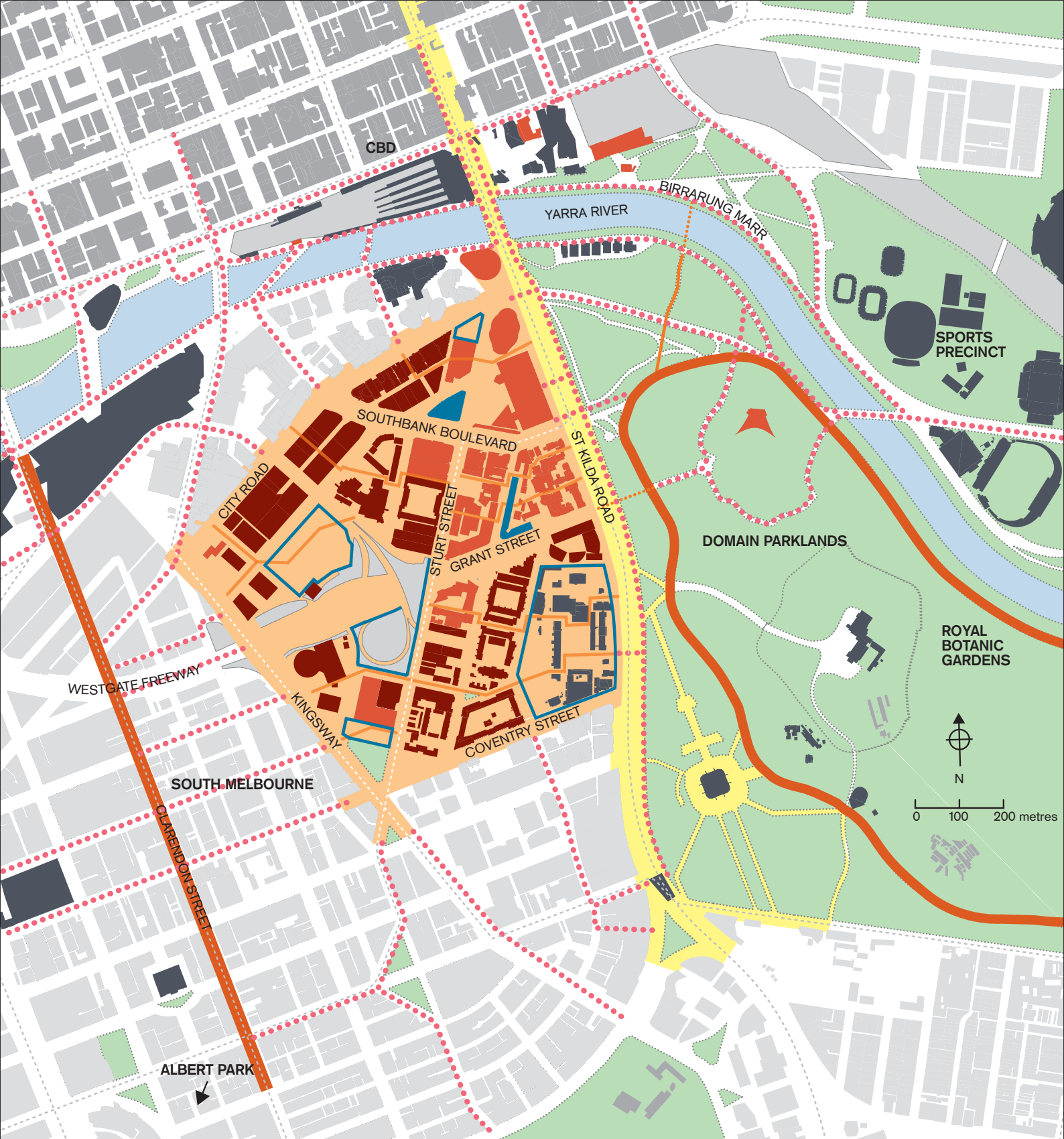
Melbourne is known for the quality of its public realm, the intricate lanes, and the way we love to use these spaces to gather, celebrate and relax. The 'fine grain' of the CBD can be re-created here.

More to see and do













Encouraging the development of vacant sites will help to enliven and activate the overall area. We will also find ways to feed the appetite for temporary transformations of under-utilised spaces with pop up bars, retail and creative events.

Make connections

Existing connections will be enhanced and missing links will be built. Walking, pedalling, 'tramming', commuting, socialising and moving around the area will be improved.



Key

- | | | | |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------|
|  | Civic spine |  | Tram lines |
|  | Precinct public realm |  | No public access |
|  | Precinct |  | Gardens |
|  | Arts related organisations |  | External links |
|  | Landmarks |  | External destinations |
|  | Other opportunity sites | | |
|  | Other precinct buildings | | |

BRING LIFE TO THE STREETS



An artist's impression of The Melbourne Recital Centre on Sturt Street (before and after) demonstrates how White Night or other festivals could bring people into the precinct for an evening of entertainment on streets closed to traffic.



The Arts Precinct is characterised by a concentration of creative industry workers and arts students, but it offers little at the end of the working day or after college. The end result is a precinct by name only. It lacks the identity and reputation of precincts in other cities around the world.

A vibrant place by day and night

Streets that are busy and vibrant generate a buzz that draws people in. For the Arts Precinct to thrive, more attention needs to be given to the pedestrian experience.

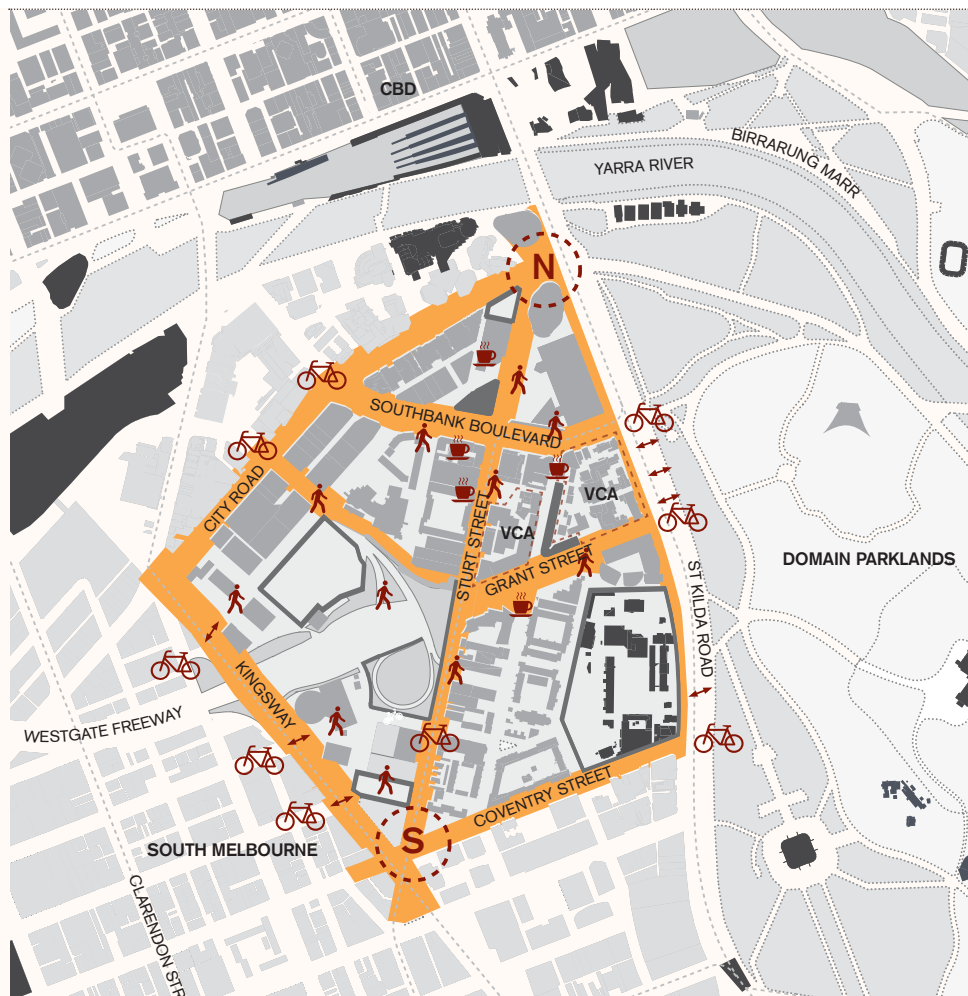
Sturt Street has the raw ingredients to join the handful of Melbourne streets that are a destination in their own right. Like Lygon, Brunswick, Chapel and Smith, Sturt Street could be a sought-after place to be known for its 'culture of permission' that translates into street music, street food, outdoor furniture, performances and performers.

Complementing Melbourne's civic spine (St Kilda Road), Sturt Street could be reimagined as the arts spine. At the northern end is the Arts Centre, while the southern entrance at Kingsway is imagined as a landmark gateway.

Between these 'book ends' kerbside cafes, galleries and shops will fill with the ebb and flow of student life as the number of arts students expands and residents and workers join the mix. Opportunities to cultivate Melbourne's laneway scene south of the Yarra also exist. For example in Fawkner Street the ground floor of private buildings could be reconfigured to carve a pedestrian path and create space for cafes and bars.

The task will be to encourage development that 'talks to the street', so that visitors find their own places in the area, whether that be an outdoor table at a sidewalk cafe or a bookshop deep within one of the old warehouses.

ACTIONS – BRING LIFE TO THE STREETS



Create Precinct gateways

Open up connections at Precinct's northern 'gateway' at Arts Centre Melbourne to invite discovery from the River promenade, gardens and Princes Bridge



Develop landmark site that punctuates the Sturt Street south intersection with Kingsway as a major entry point to the Arts Precinct



Create cycling routes

Provide convenient and safe cycling routes accessible to all front doors along these key streets

Provide more secure cycling parking throughout the Arts Precinct



Create new pedestrian crossings

Provide convenient and safe pedestrian crossings into and out of the precinct across Kingsway and St Kilda Road



Improve Precinct's key streets

Reduce car dominance and improve pedestrian experience



Create more active small scale ground floor uses that draw people to visit and wander, such as cafes, shops, temporary art displays

Sturt Street

Create a high quality design treatment to the view west along Grant Street to contain the visual and acoustic presence of the CityLink tunnel portal and reduce its overall impact on the pedestrian experience

Find ways to open up and energise VCA's frontage to embrace Sturt Street and encourage the students to venture beyond the campus

City Road

Work with VicRoads to calm traffic and improve pedestrian and cyclist amenity, including provision of more safe and convenient crossings

Southbank Boulevard

Consolidate roadway to create public spaces within the street adjacent to MRC, Southbank Theatre and ABC Southbank Centre

Grant Street

Integrate public spaces to promote Grant Street as a green link to Domain Parklands, and provide a central gathering space for the Arts Precinct

St Kilda Road

Extend tree lighting to Shrine as part of measures to ensure future designs for St Kilda Road reflect presence of Precinct



Continue to focus on pedestrian amenity in particular section from Princes Bridge to Southbank Boulevard. Provide additional pedestrian crossings



Kingsway

Provide east-west crossings for pedestrians and cyclists, and create a safer and more enjoyable pedestrian environment along the eastern side of the street

Power Street

Provide pedestrian and cycle access between Sturt Street and City Road. Consider future relocation of the CityLink off ramp so that the area can be used by pedestrians and cyclists

CREATE A MELBOURNE EXPERIENCE



Fawcner Street before (above) and after (right). The laneway with cold brick walls and garage doors is transformed into an inviting place with public art and a specialist bookshop.



People are the missing ingredient of the Arts Precinct. Creating great public spaces for people to meet, perform, socialise, eat and drink will add this corner of the city to Melbourne's already formidable line up of places and spaces with energy and vitality.

Places and spaces for people

In the world's most liveable city, and the arts capital of Australia, it is surprising that such a well-located extension of the CBD has not already been incorporated into the 'Melbourne experience'.

Melbourne is loved for the quality of its public realm, its public open spaces, its accessible streets and its intricate, connecting lanes.

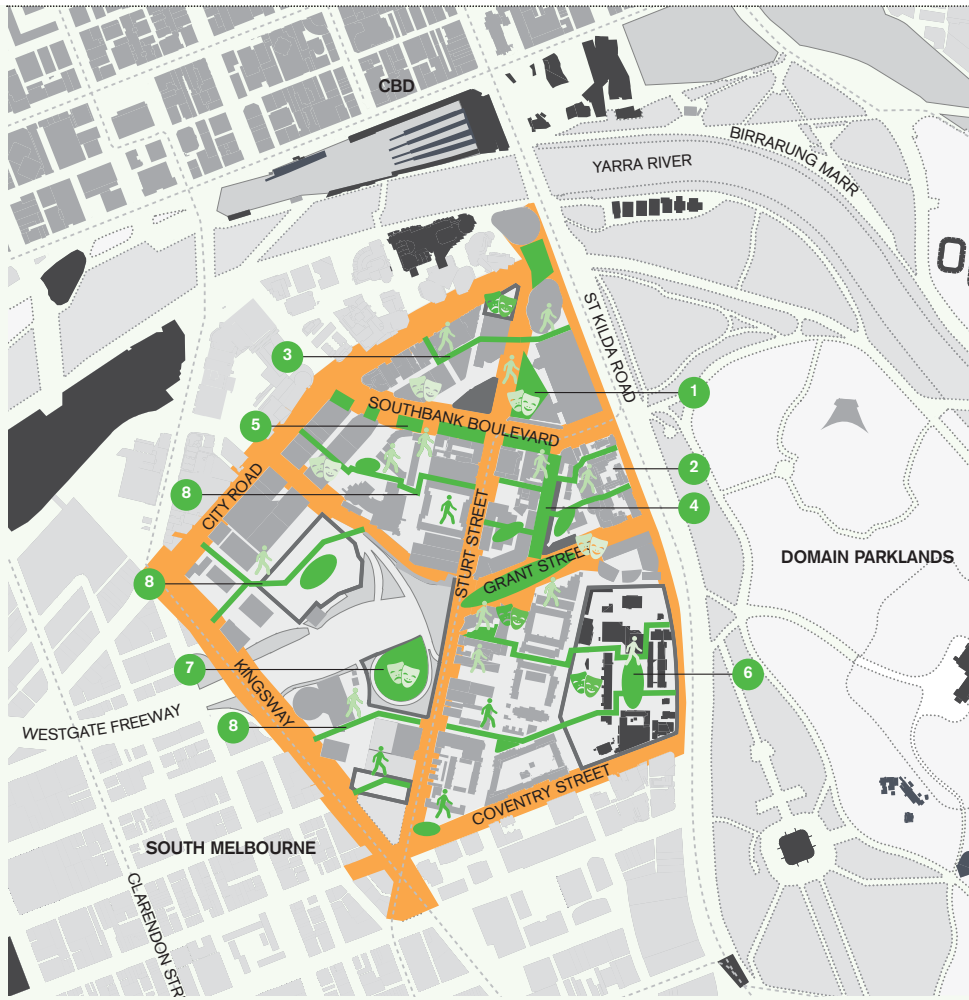
Some of the Arts Precinct's existing public spaces will be revamped to meet today's demands. Many of the Arts Precinct's hidden spaces will be opened up to the public, while new spaces will be created by widening footpaths or closing underutilised streets.

A challenge will be to create 'fine grain' in the large building envelopes in the Arts Precinct. There are worthy templates in Melbourne and elsewhere of building make overs where cosy, people-friendly rooms and snugs have been created in redevelopments.

Melbourne is more than streets and lanes. Melbourne is a successful contemporary city because its inhabitants have embraced its unique spaces and landscapes to gather, celebrate and relax.

Melburnians are not daunted by the hidden or the undiscovered – it's what we thrive on.

ACTIONS – CREATE A MELBOURNE EXPERIENCE



Create detail and fine grain



Attract people to new and 'found' public spaces and laneways within the Precinct

Open up hidden public spaces, repurpose little used courtyards, reclaim roadway:

- 1 NGV garden
- 2 VCA campus renewal
- 3 Fawkner Street
- 4 Dodds Street
- 5 Southbank Boulevard
- 6 Victoria Barracks

Create new pathways through the Precinct's 'urban barriers'



6 Victoria Barracks



7 CityLink area



8 Large landholdings



Program outdoor performance areas and temporary events collaboratively as a precinct offer



Encourage temporary activities that generate street life and build Precinct's reputation as a vibrant destination (eg. Markets, pop up shops, special events etc.)

MORE TO SEE AND DO



The vacant site at 1 City Road (above) has been temporarily transformed into a sustainable free open air arts space and gathering place. With a bit of imagination this kind of activity could be seen precinct-wide.



'Testing Grounds' at 1 City Road, October 2013 until April 2014



Rather than seeing the Arts Precinct as a space lacking a landmark building or entrance archway, the area should be a place where a hundred flowers bloom. Vacant sites can host a wealth of things to see and do and new developments can contribute to the experience on the ground.

Opportunities both large and small

Major projects will provide game-changing chances to create impact, but the combined effect of one hundred small projects will be just as important to the Arts Precinct's future vitality.

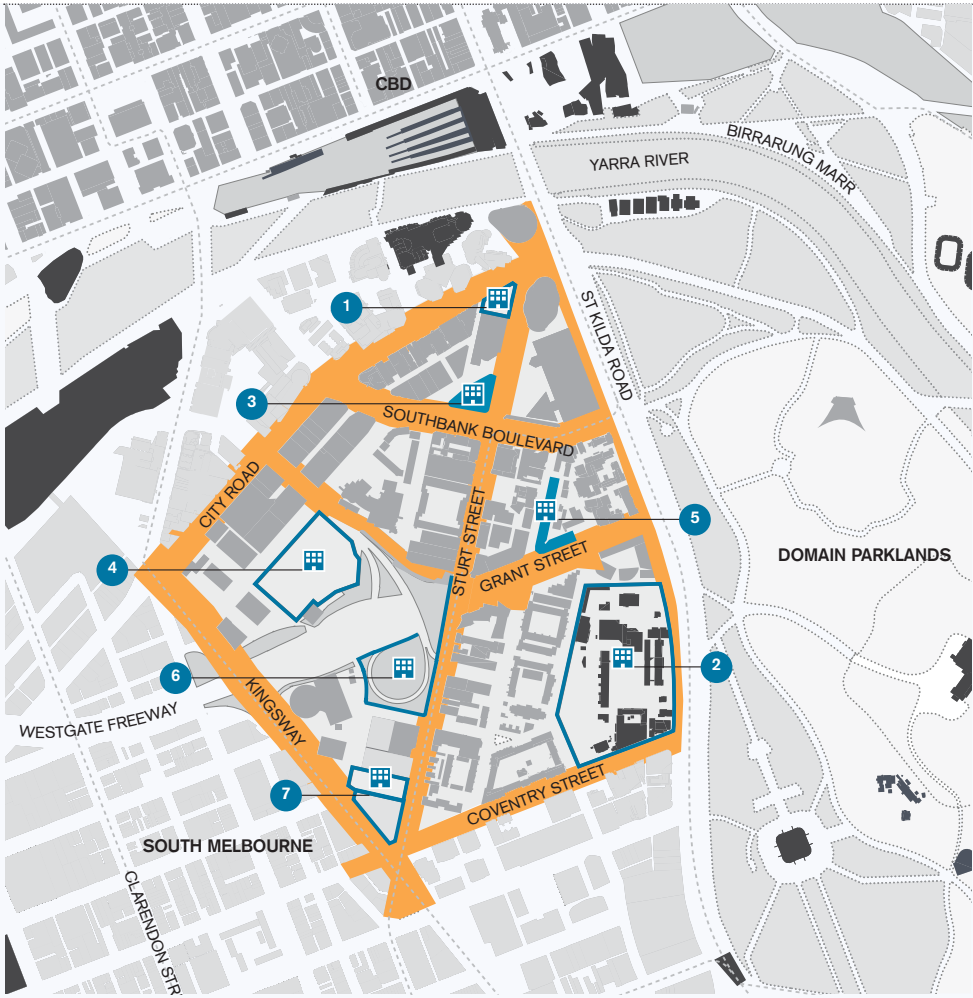
It should be a place where creativity flourishes alongside entrepreneurial initiative; where a New Orleans-style jazz band performs in the street; where a spring day finds a student string quartet practising under a peppercorn tree near the Malthouse Theatre.

A vibrant precinct needs lots of activity – every day, into the evening and sometimes well into the night. Where there are opportunities to develop under-used or vacant sites, the Precinct's appetite for activity will be a drawcard for business owners and visitors.

Development opportunities that bring life and vibrancy to the Precinct will be pursued. Short-term creative and enterprising use of dormant spaces will be encouraged and extended hours, street art exhibitions and events like the VCA Open Day will bring more people into the area.

A space with such creative potential will embrace concepts like micro-financing, development of container clusters on closed streets and the possibility of providing small site specific grants to activate spaces. A guiding principle should be a 'culture of permission' accompanied by a spirit of adventure.

ACTIONS – MORE TO SEE AND DO



Urban renewal of opportunity sites

Encourage complementary redevelopment of vacant and opportunity sites:

- 1 Y Site@ 1 City Road
- 2 Victoria Barracks
- 3 Fosters Building
- 4 Kavanagh Street Car park
- 5 Police Stables


Encourage reconfiguration of under-used open space to better support needs of Precinct:

- 6 CityLink off ramp
- 7 Sturt Street Reserve and MTC carpark


Temporary road closures to allow for 'street lab' style experimentation

Precinct programming & initiatives

-  Temporary initiatives in precinct buildings and spaces
-  Actively facilitate the co-ordinated temporary conversion of spaces for short-term arts use: studios, events spaces, galleries, workshops, performance spaces, street events

-  Encourage '100 small projects' concept to take hold by creating a precinct owned mechanism for review and funding of small scale initiatives by precinct entrepreneurs

Undertake destination marketing activities that include collaborations between existing arts institutions to create new visitor attractions

-  Work with local property owners to activate dead frontages through temporary events or by incorporating active uses that open up blank walls

MAKE CONNECTIONS



Dodds street (above) is currently more like a dead end street rather than a link from the VCA campus to ACCA and beyond. An artist's impression (above right) illustrates how a regular farmer's market could give visitors a new experience right near ACCA, the Malthouse, the MTC and the MRC. A design lab in Dodds Street explored potential uses for the space (right)



Dodds Street design lab, September 2013



The idea of a connected precinct involves opening up many of the barriers that currently discourage people from moving freely. With small changes, visitors will be better able to plan a day or spontaneously discover what is on offer as they meander through the streets and laneways.

A welcoming precinct with a sense of identity

What we now call the Melbourne Arts Precinct was once a busy centre for manufacturers and wholesalers. Streets like Sturt Street and City Road were major thoroughfares linking the city with the port of Melbourne.

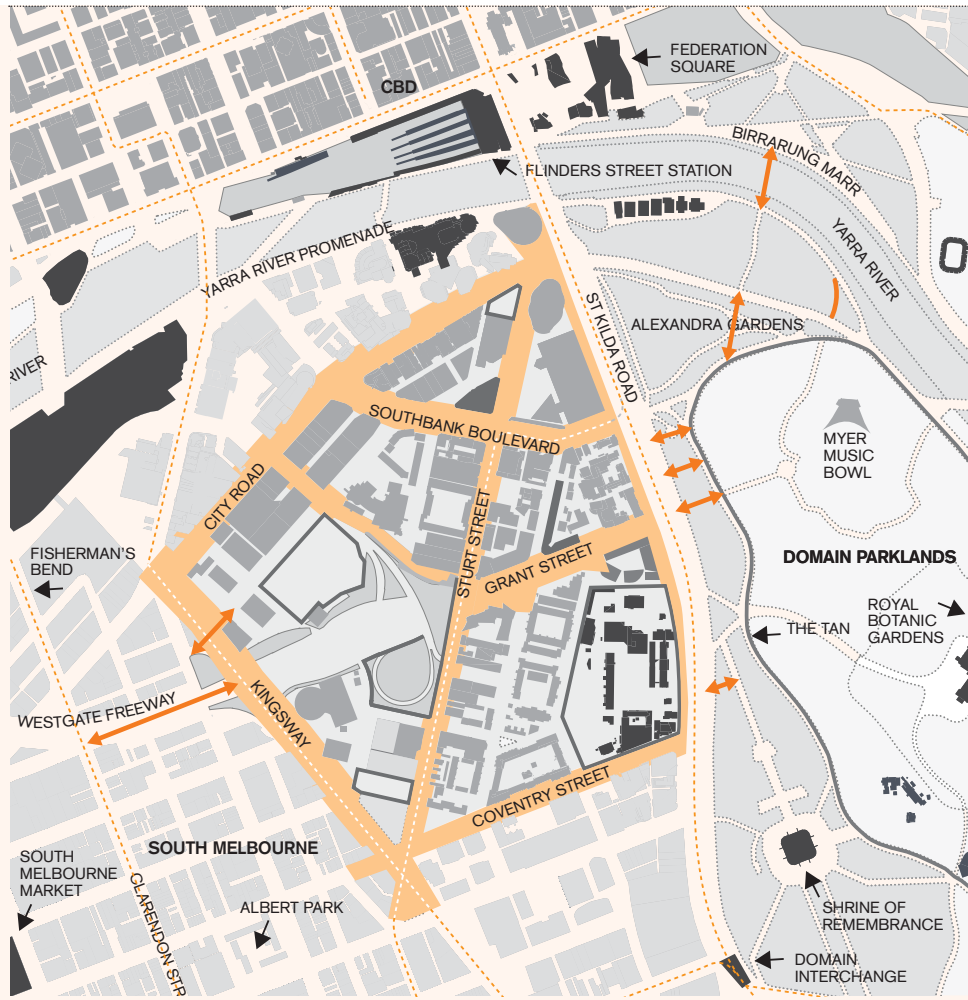
The Arts Precinct is a short walk to some of Melbourne's best visitor attractions. Better connections will encourage people to walk to the Precinct and plan a journey that could include the Yarra River promenade, Domain Gardens, South Melbourne, St Kilda Road and Domain Interchange (the site of the proposed Melbourne Metro station). A future pedestrian river crossing at Birrarung Marr will link the southern and northern banks of the Yarra.

Making the Precinct more pedestrian friendly will mean breaking down some internal barriers. Although it occupies a major entry point to the Precinct, the VCA campus is internally focused and doesn't encourage passers-by to venture in and explore. The adaptive re-use of the heritage Police Stables building on Dodds Street represents a major opportunity to create a cohesive, walkable precinct and encourage greater connections throughout the campus and beyond.

The Blueprint envisages the campus opened up to pedestrians and redesigned so that it engages with visitors and maximises its pivotal location.

Better signage on the streets and branded place markers or pointers, as well as digital wayfinding, will also help people move around the Arts Precinct to find a gallery or a cafe, a bookshop or a theatre. A co-ordinated approach to navigation and journey planning will also mean people can include a precinct visit on their way to another destination or on their way back.

ACTIONS – MAKE CONNECTIONS



Precinct identity

Build strong precinct identity and public awareness through destination marketing and co-ordinated online presence that includes digital tours, what's on listings, integrated journey/visitor planning guides and more

Getting around



Walking

Create a series of clearly signposted and streamlined journeys to the Precinct through wayfinding and improved connections

Yarra River promenade

North of the river (Federation Square, Flinders Street Station, Birrarung Marr)

Domain Parklands, including direct links to Alexandra Gardens, Sidney Myer Music Bowl and the Tan

Shrine of Remembrance

Royal Botanic Gardens

Domain interchange

South Melbourne, including South Melbourne Market, creative industries warehouse district and Clarendon Street

Albert Park

Fisherman's Bend

Public transport

Explore opportunities to increase use of existing tram lines (adding to the network, re-routing, increasing frequency)

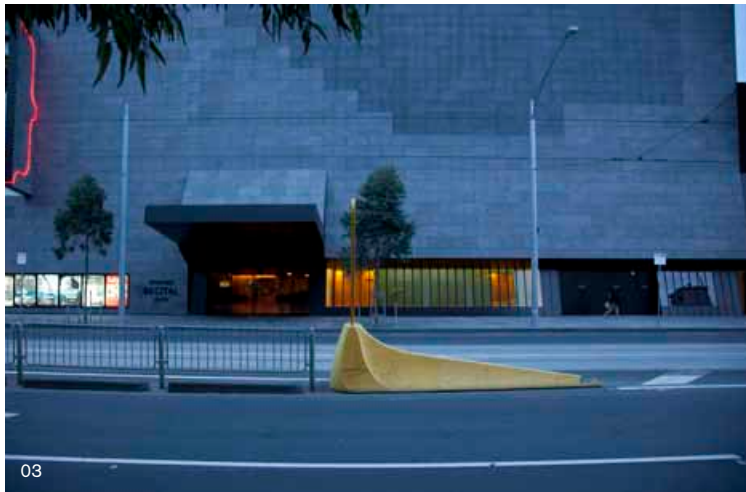
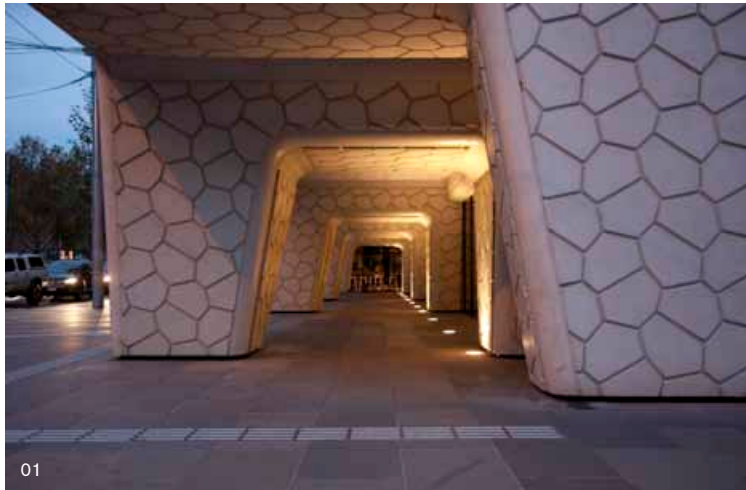
Promote Flinders Street station as Precinct train station. Show arts audiences that train travel is a safe, easy option as the Precinct's welcoming reputation grows.

Promote future metro station at Domain Interchange as alternative Precinct train connection by wayfinding and improved pedestrian links

Cycling

Provide safe, convenient and accessible cycling routes along all connecting streets into and out of the Precinct

THE PRECINCT NOW



- 01 Melbourne Recital Centre, south-east corner Southbank Boulevard and Sturt Street
- 02 Fawkner Street north side
- 03 Melbourne Recital Centre, east side of Sturt Street
- 04 ABC Building, south-west corner Southbank Boulevard and Sturt Street
- 05 Southbank Boulevard looking east to Sturt Street and Melbourne Recital Centre
- 06 Mounted Police stables, corner Dodds and Grant Streets

THE PRECINCT TRANSFORMED



Artist's impressions: Nick King

- 01 Public art throughout the Arts Precinct
- 02 Small business opportunities and street performances
- 03 Encourage festival activity to engage with the Arts Precinct
- 04 Informal gathering spaces that invite people to linger
- 05 Reclaiming roads by increasing green space
- 06 Connecting the VCA campus to the street and to the community

THE PRECINCT NOW



01



02



03



04



05



06

- 01 Public space beside ACCA, Grant Street looking east
- 02 VCA buildings and MTC Summer Theatre, Dodds Street looking north
- 03 Carpark on Sturt Street
- 04 Fawknor Street north side
- 05 The 1 City Road site, corner City Road and Sturt Street
- 06 Fawknor Street looking towards Fanning Street

THE PRECINCT TRANSFORMED



Artist's impressions: Nick King

- 01 Public programming for all ages in public spaces
- 02 Farmers' markets and temporary activities
- 03 Hospitality options in the heart of the Arts Precinct
- 04 Art in unexpected places
- 05 Creative use of vacant spaces that engage visitors and residents
- 06 Life to laneways in Southbank by encouraging fine grain uses

REALISING THE VISION



Credit: John Gollings



FRAMEWORK FOR DELIVERY



Credit: NGV

The Blueprint recognises the economic and community benefit in reinvigorating the Arts Precinct as an open, accessible and integrated hub.

The combined economic, cultural and community value of co-located arts institutions cannot only enhance the artistic life of the city but also have direct impacts on creative industries, tourism and liveability. Strategically prioritising development needs, leveraging pooled resources to unlock investment opportunity and activating the streets and public areas will generate increased activity, visitation and investment. These benefits can only be fully realised through co-ordinated intervention.

PricewaterhouseCoopers economic analysis of the Arts Precinct supports planned, co-ordinated investment to unlock economic and community potential. Appropriate leadership and delivery mechanisms will be required to support the kinds of developments and activations proposed in the Blueprint. Establishing governance frameworks that allow stakeholders to work together to prioritise the future operational and physical development will optimise resources and capitalise on key opportunities.

PricewaterhouseCoopers conducted national and international cultural precinct benchmarking to test a range of governance scenarios. Benchmarking demonstrated that the most effective mechanisms for delivering on precinct-wide objectives combined the following characteristics:

- The creation of formal foundations for co-operative and co-ordinated working arrangements between key stakeholders, ensuring continuity;

- Responsibility for delivery and accountability is allocated to the leadership of a specific organisation or organisations; and
- These bodies are empowered and resourced to deliver on objectives, and are accountable for progress.

While government funding will be sought for certain public benefit projects, it is also critical that any proposed delivery framework is financially self-sustaining beyond initial seed funding.

Pooling resources to broker joint investment opportunities will form a key element of future funding. PricewaterhouseCoopers initial high level assessment indicates that while further investigation is warranted, opportunities exist to derive a commercial return from strategic sites. Other funding mechanisms, including development levies and user charges, have the potential to add value capture. This could substantially cross-subsidise other priority development and activation projects while minimising the impact on the State's budget.

The delivery framework must also take into account emergent government thinking, particularly in relation to the evolving Metropolitan Planning Strategy. The contiguous roll out of these strategies and policies will support a cohesive, considered way forward.



Credit: David Simmonds



Credit: Jeff Busby



Credit: Jeff Busby



Credit: John Tsiavis

WORKING GROUP RECOMMENDATIONS

Although the Blueprint is valuable as a manifestation of a stakeholder-led process to determine a shared vision, its true value lies in its ability to galvanize this support to commence the Arts Precinct's transformation.

It is critical that the Blueprint is supported by a clear understanding of the steps required to put in place the relevant delivery structures it proposes. The Working Group proposes the following recommendations:

Recommendation 1: The Blueprint's vision be acknowledged by all three levels of government.

To move forward, all three levels of government (City of Melbourne, Victorian State Government and the Australian Federal Government) must acknowledge the Blueprint, support in principle its vision and acknowledge the implications on future funding allocations.

Recommendation 2: Appropriate mechanisms be established to ensure the co-ordinated implementation of the Blueprint vision.

There needs to be recognition of the need for specific intervention in future public and private development for the Arts Precinct. The Blueprint proposes adopting a collaborative governance model that can co-ordinate the intervention required. The initial phase of implementation of the Blueprint could be guided by the Working Group, with the capacity to co-opt additional Working Group members as required.

Recommendation 3: A 'Melbourne Arts Precinct' destination marketing strategy be developed and implemented.

The Blueprint recognises that to stand out as a significant visitor destination, the Arts Precinct requires a strong and consistent sense of identity. Building the Arts Precinct brand is an important early move that will signal the adoption of the Blueprint. It will also enable organisations to assist in the promotion of the Arts Precinct by integrating this into their normal marketing activities.

Recommendation 4: Resources be provided to develop a rolling program of public programming, events and festival activity for the Arts Precinct.

The Blueprint highlights the importance of a program of curated and informal activities to unite the programs of individual Arts Precinct institutions. A cleverly designed and curated public program will work alongside the Arts Precinct's branding strategy to build on the area's distinctive identity and cement the Arts Precinct in the public consciousness as a vibrant, 24-hour destination.

Recommendation 5: The State Government establish an arts advisory panel to be consulted for all future development proposals within the designated Arts Precinct area.

A number of future development sites are located within the Arts Precinct. Given Southbank's status as one of Melbourne's fastest growing suburbs, it is likely that progress on these sites will be made within the next ten years.

There is an opportunity to influence future development to embrace the vision of the Blueprint by creating an appropriate mechanism to negotiate for specific Arts Precinct outcomes as part of the development planning process. This could be achieved by appointing an arts advisory panel, with specialist knowledge of the Arts Precinct. The advisory panel would operate as a consultative group to Government.



Recommendation 6: An Arts Precinct Public Realm Plan be developed by the City of Melbourne.

The Blueprint identifies many public realm improvements at a conceptual level. Initiatives within streetscapes could be prioritised and implemented as part of the City of Melbourne's ongoing capital works program. In order to further progress this work, it is recommended that a detailed Public Realm Plan be prepared by the City of Melbourne for Council endorsement. The Plan could then act as a 10 year master plan to guide the City's investment in the Arts Precinct public realm.

Recommendation 7: Government identifies and resources an organisation, or organisations, to develop and deliver on strategic opportunities identified in the Blueprint.

The Blueprint identifies a number of strategic opportunity sites within the Arts Precinct. Further work is needed from all three levels of government to verify these opportunities. In order to advance this work an organisation or organisations will be required to develop investment and development modelling to enable evaluation and prioritisation against Blueprint goals, develop business cases, identify delivery models, source funding, negotiate delivery and development agreements, and manage implementation.

HISTORY OF THE BLUEPRINT PROCESS



The former Premier and Minister for the Arts announced funding of \$500,000 to prepare a Blueprint for the future of the Arts Precinct. In May 2011 the Working Group was formed as a result of this announcement at a meeting of interested arts organisations which was held at Government House.

In November 2011 the then Premier announced the appointment of a Chair of the Working Group, Yvonne von Hartel AM, and the Working Group was expanded to include Arts Victoria.

In January 2011, Arts Victoria, on behalf of the Working Group, prepared a successful application for additional funding of \$400,000 under the Commonwealth Liveable Cities program.

A Secretariat to the Working Group representing the Melbourne City Council, the University of Melbourne and Arts Victoria, has met fortnightly to develop the Blueprint. The Working Group has met monthly to review progress and to endorse and support actions proposed by the Secretariat.

The Blueprint process commenced with commissioned research from:

- EdgRESEARCH on land ownership, land usage and precinct characteristics,
- Positive Solutions on arts facilities utilisation and needs,
- UrbanTrans into precinct traffic considerations.

The Working Group approved guiding principles for the redevelopment of the Arts Precinct. These principles were informed by a community consultation process led by Capire with groups that included representatives of arts organisations, residents and visitors to the Arts Precinct.

The Working Group commissioned Pricewaterhouse Coopers to prepare an Economic, Financial and Governance report to support the Blueprint. This work will be used to guide more in-depth investment modelling into the future and explore governance options.

The design components of the Blueprint were generated through a month long design charette. The charette was led by Peter Elliott Architects, who were commissioned to prepare an Architectural Framework, and John Wardle Architects who were commissioned to prepare the Urban Design Framework for the Arts Precinct.

The charette process included working sessions and presentations to the Working Group and design sessions with the Design Team and Secretariat. At the conclusion of the charette, draft ideas were developed for distinct major projects and '100 small projects' (the 'glue' that will bind the precinct together).

The Architectural, Urban Design and Economic and Governance teams then finalised their reports. Further consultation was then held with stakeholders to confirm that the identified criteria had been addressed in the Blueprint.

The final Blueprint, prepared with the assistance of Streamer design and communication, has been prepared in both printed and electronic formats.

The Working Group endorsed the final Blueprint for submission to Government.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Working Group acknowledges the ongoing support of the Premier of Victoria, Dr. Denis Napthine, MP and the Minister for the Arts, The Hon. Heidi Victoria, MP.

The Working Group would also like to acknowledge the former Premier and Minister for the Arts, The Hon. Ted Baillieu, for his vision and support.

Working Group participants past and present

Chair

Yvonne von Hartel AM

ACCA

John Denton

Arts Victoria

Penny Hutchinson, Andrew Abbott

The Australian Ballet

Jim Cousins AO

City of Melbourne

Prof Rob Adams AM

The Melbourne Symphony Orchestra Pty Ltd

Wayne Box, Andre Gremillet

National Gallery of Victoria

Dr Gerard Vaughan AM, Tony Ellwood,
Naomi Milgrom AO

The University of Melbourne

Prof Glyn Davis AC

Victorian Arts Centre Trust

Janet Whiting, Tom Harley

Victorian Government Architect

Geoffrey London

Secretariat Members

Arts Victoria

Christopher Dupé
Bree Trevena

City of Melbourne

Fiona Whitworth

The University of Melbourne

Alex Lawlor

Others involved

Land and site information

EDG Research:

Dr Serryn Eagleson

Arts facility utilisation

Positive Solutions:

David Fishel

Traffic and mobility research

UrbanTrans:

Stephen Pelosi

Jose Mantilla

Community consultation

Capire:

Amy Hubbard

Eleanor Howe

Graphic and communication design

Streamer design and communication:

Kate Scott

Bill Nicholson

Nick King (before and after images)

Architecture Framework

Peter Elliott Architecture:

Peter Elliott

Sean van der Velden

Urban Design Framework

John Wardle Architects:

John Wardle

Meaghan Dwyer

Economics and governance evaluation

PricewaterhouseCoopers:

David Stephens

Jackie Funder

Alan Herman

Ashwin Mathur

Airlie Trescowthick

Assistance to the Secretariat

peckvonhartel:

Kerri Cavalieri

Michelle Eades

City of Melbourne:

Scott Adams

REFERENCES

Key reports commissioned through the Blueprint process:

Peter Elliott Architecture *Southbank Arts Precinct Architectural Design Blueprint 2013*

John Wardle Architects *Southbank Arts Precinct Urban Design Framework 2013*

PricewaterhouseCoopers *Southbank Arts Precinct Economics, Commercial and Governance Analysis 2013*

Supported by:

Capire *Southbank Arts Precinct Consultation Feedback Report 2012*

Capire *Y-Site Activation Consultation Feedback Report 2012*

Capire *Second Stage Engagement Report 2013*

EdgRESEARCH *Southbank Arts Precinct: Population, Space Use and Economic Activity 2012*

Positive Solutions *Southbank Arts Precinct Cultural Facilities Audit 2012*

UrbanTrans *Southbank Arts Precinct Traffic Analysis 2012*

KPMG *Economic Impact of the Victorian Arts and Cultural Sector 2013*

Victorian State Government *Securing Victoria's Economy: Planning, Building, Delivery 2012*

City of Melbourne *Southbank Structure Plan 2010*

DPCD *Southbank Plan 2006*

