

Lord Mayor, Councillors.

Tony Penna, Southbank Residents Group.

Southbank Residents Group supports the application by The Upmarket.

We are delighted and very excited about this proposal.

I was in attendance at this meeting 4 weeks ago and heard the passionate submissions from both sides. I left the meeting feeling this was potentially a divisive community issue, despite seeing initial benefits to Sturt street and the wider Southbank community.

Post this meeting and the media coverage it received, Southbank Residents Group has received emails from the community expressing their support for activating Sturt street through The Upmarket proposal. During this time, I never received one email from the community or any of our members opposing the application.

I also conducted my own community discussions and every single person I spoke to was in support of the concept and its benefit to activating Sturt street. I never spoke to a single person who was against this application.

Despite this, I have no illusions that for some residents there may be some inconveniences of such a market. Whether that be reduced access to street parking or an increase in street activity, we are never going to please everyone, but it appears this will only be seen as an inconvenience to a relative small number of residents.

My research has shown overwhelming support by the majority of Southbankians, even within the immediate vicinity of The Upmarket site, including some residents in the Melbournian and Sovereign complexes.

Within the Southbank Structure Plan 2010, Sturt street is referred to as the 'cultural spine' of the Southbank arts precinct. I further draw Councils attention to the recently released Melbourne Arts Precinct Blueprint. I could quote and quote from this document as to what it says needs to happen on Sturt street, but I trust Councillors are very familiar with this document and they would know that The Upmarket proposal fits exactly with what the blueprint says is necessary.

I also draw the Councils attention to the Southbank Community Plan 2004, The Southbank Plan 2007 and finally the Southbank Structure Plan 2010 which also endorses the principles of street activation and that Sturt street lacks life and is in immediate need of attention.

All these reports conclude this needs to be addressed, going back as far as 2004, 10 years ago, and we still have a Sturt street which is dead and boring.

It is an arts precinct, therefore we should not be expecting the street to remain lifeless, but we should be encouraging and supporting such proposals especially when they are from the private sector. Most residents acknowledge they live in the middle of the arts precinct and as such would expect nothing less. Earlier we heard from a gentleman who said such events were not foreshadowed when choosing to live there. All those reports should have indicated to residents to be preparing for activation for the last 10 years.

It would be a travesty to Southbank, but particularly to Sturt street should Council not approve this application, but instead would make a mockery of Councils' very own plans, reports and findings. If this is not able to be approved then what message would that send to others who might like to contribute to the activation of Sturt street?