



YARRA RIVER PRECINCT

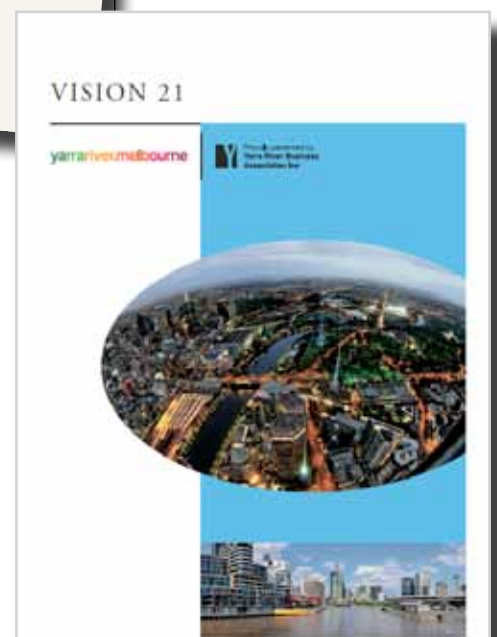
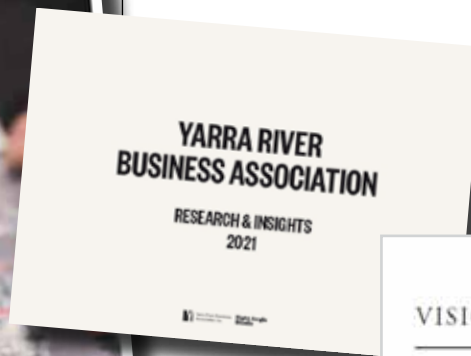
Five Year Strategic Plan: 2021-2026

STRATEGIC PLAN

This 5 year strategic plan for the Yarra River Business Association (YRBA) aligns with key findings from two seminal documents: the 2021 member/stakeholder survey conducted by Right Angle Studio for the Association, and the 2019 report from the Yarra River Big Ideas Forum, facilitated on behalf of the Association by ARUP Australia. Both documents are appended to this strategy.

The Right Angle Studio examination provided a deep-dive into the aspirations and needs of our members and stakeholders. It asked interviewees to reflect upon the work of the YRBA during its first 20 years of operation, and to articulate what they needed and expected from a grass-roots business association, especially to assist them recover from the economic affect of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The ARUP Australia report from the Big Ideas Forum reflects a broader vision for the precinct, especially with regard to infrastructure development. Many of the findings from the forum heavily influenced the City Council's Yarra River-Birrarung strategy, released in December 2019. While the projects identified through the ARUP report are beyond the remit and resourcing of this Association, it does help to steer the Association's advocacy work, which is a role highly valued by the Association's membership.



INDEX

Executive Summary	4
Background	6
Our Community	7
Our Services	10
Member Development	11
Economic Snapshot	12
Governance	14
Key Issues 2021-2026	16
Key Opportunities 2021-2026	18
The Precinct in 2026	19
YRBA's Strategic Directional Aspirations 2021-2026	20
Sphere of Influence	24
Appendices	26

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

During 2021 the Yarra River Business Association (YRBA) reviewed its role and operation, especially in light of the challenges to local businesses presented by the global pandemic.

The Association commissioned a ‘deep-dive’ survey of its membership and its key stakeholders. The findings from that survey, plus the infrastructure recommendations that emerged from YRBA’s 2019 Yarra River Big Ideas Forum, have been used to create the Association’s strategic plan 2021-2026. The key recommendations from this plan will underpin the annual action plans developed by the business association.

What you told us

70% of business members said that they derived ‘some’ or ‘a lot’ of benefit from belonging to YRBA

33% of members most valued the marketing work of YRBA, while another 33% most valued its advocacy work

60% of members were emotionally invested in YRBA and would be disappointed or devastated by its loss

88% of members said the area would, or may, suffer without the YRBA

50% of members said that \$200 p.a. was a good value membership fee, while a further 25% said it would still be good value at \$300 p.a.

65% of the membership said they would be, or might be, prepared to pay for greater member services

What you said you especially valued

YRBA’s advocacy work to achieve better services and infrastructure

YRBA’s business networking events and opportunities

YRBA’s internal communication, especially engagement through e-bulletins and personal contact

The transition to, and growth of, YRBA’s digital marketing

What you said you wanted from YRBA

Better define what the Yarra River Precinct is, and what the YRBA stands for

Clearly communicate the services offered – and benefits of – YRBA membership

Better delineate YRBA’s marketing, advocacy and business servicing roles

More effectively communicate the results of YRBA’s advocacy work

Deliver trends and actionable information to the membership

Provide more opportunity to be involved in decision making processes

More diversity on the YRBA Board

More transparency about how YRBA operates

Reduce the Southbank focus

Promote the precinct as a whole, rather than individual businesses

A better understanding of YRBA’s digital strategy

Diversify YRBA’s networking opportunities, especially industry-specific events

What infrastructure improvements you said you wanted

More open and green space in the precinct, embracing community wellness, connectivity, safety and sensitive river edge activation

Soften hard segments of landscape into more permeable and accessible spaces, enabling people to dwell and reflect on the river’s edges

Greater connectivity, such as bridging the green spaces and a waterway public transport system

Acknowledgement of the wealth of Indigenous culture and heritage embodied in the precinct

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

How YRBA plans to meet your needs in 2021-26

Advocacy

Work closely with the City of Melbourne and government agencies to build the Greenline vision for the Yarra northbank and to play an active role in development of its component projects

Work with the Southbank Residents Association to begin Council implementation of the City Road masterplan

Attempt to influence State Government regarding the evolution of the arts precinct's 'reimagining' project, to ensure it integrates with the river and City Road, Southbank

Encourage and facilitate activation of the waterway, including a more equitable environment for commercial river operators

Marketing & Communication

Continue to build awareness of the Yarra River Precinct as a key tourism, hospitality and cultural tourism asset of Melbourne

Re-examine the brand, positioning and geographic boundaries, to create a precinct that is better defined to members and consumers

Improve presentation and communication of the membership offer and benefits

Examine appropriate communication channels to better target information to member businesses

Strengthen precinct business understanding and appreciation of the Resident 3006 community, so that it becomes an underpinning market for many of them

Work with relevant agencies to strengthen the maritime theming of the western end of the precinct

Business support

Provide more bespoke business mentoring and assistance through linkages to tailored and nuanced support services

Increase awareness of YRBA's digital marketing activities and encourage better synergy with members' own social media activity

Membership & Governance

Re-examine the mission statement and key purposes of YRBA, to better align the organisation with the needs of the maturing precinct

Review YRBA's member development strategy to achieve a sustainable membership base of around 200 businesses

Increase communication and transparency re governance, including greater diversity on YRBA Board and its committees

Continue sound governance, including addressing succession planning for key personnel

By 2026

We want to see a business and tourism precinct fully recovered from the economic ravages of the global pandemic, featuring a range of maturely run businesses that play an active role in YRBA's governance and networking. The Yarra northbank will be well on its way to achieving the Greenline vision, the arts precinct will start to be integrated with Southbank and City Road, and the precinct's western end will be a must-see maritime heritage themed sub-precinct.

BACKGROUND

YRBA was established by the City of Melbourne and (the then) Tourism Victoria in 1998 to provide a voice for the emerging Southbank tourist precinct. Originally called the Yarra Tourism Association, the Association re-branded to a business association in 2008, which better reflected the breadth of the work it was undertaking. In 2015 the Association moved from a largely networking and advocacy group to also being a business-to-consumer organisation, with a commensurate increase in digital marketing activity.

A board of ten representatives from precinct businesses and organisations steers the Association. Day-to-day activity is undertaken by a part time executive officer and a contracted social media manager. YRBA also provides corporate services to the South Wharf Association.

To commemorate its 21st anniversary, YRBA produced a document ‘VISION 21’, which, when considered alongside the Big Ideas Forum report (2019) and the member/stakeholder survey (2021), provides the organisation with clear direction of where it wishes to head during the period 2021-2026. Vision 21 is appended to this strategy.

The mission statement of the YRBA is:

“To complete the physical and psychological integration of the Lower Yarra River and its immediate environs as Melbourne’s leading tourism and recreation hub, and to confirm the Precinct as the natural meeting place for Melburnians”.

The purposes of the association are to:

- facilitate the development of the Yarra River Precinct as Melbourne’s natural meeting place for tourists and conference delegates,
- position and communicate the Yarra River and its environs as an integrated tourism and recreation precinct; part of the broader Melbourne ‘experience’,
- advocate for a high standard of infrastructure to service the visitor and recreational market, and to enhance the experience for them,
- support the economic development of precinct businesses by providing them with a collective voice, particularly through strategic planning at the local and state levels.

The mission statement and purposes of the Association will be examined, and possibly updated, early in the period 2021-26, to better align YRBA with the changing needs of the precinct and its member businesses.

OUR 'COMMUNITY'

The Yarra River Precinct has evolved considerably since the Association's inception in 1998. From being an area of Melbourne that attracted little attention, it is now at the forefront of the city's tourism and hospitality experience. Evolving steadily from a small number of visitor 'nodes', the Association has helped to guide the precinct into an integrated visitor destination. The only remaining large scale challenge is the sensitive development of the precinct's northbank.

Precinct businesses, too, have evolved into entities of considerable maturity. Many of them have their own strategic planning and marketing teams.

They have established their own contacts and partners to assist them with their marketing and individual advocacy.

Likewise, the role of the business association has evolved. The amount of 'hand-holding' required in the earlier days has all but disappeared, as the businesses take their place among the most prominent in the Victorian tourism industry. Consequently, whilst 91% of member/stakeholders state that networking opportunities afforded by YRBA are important to them, less than 30% regularly make use of them.

'Networking' to many members is now simply the ability to quickly speak to YRBA for advice or just to be 'pointed in the right direction' (2021 member/stakeholder survey).

Approximately 75% of the membership is involved in tourism and hospitality related business, with the remainder encompassing various business service industries, including the arts. Like any member-based organisation, there are differing levels of engagement and interaction among YRBA's members.



OUR 'COMMUNITY'

The 2021 member survey divided the YRBA community into three broad groups: Committed Conservatives; Proactive Progressives, and Curious Casuals (a definition of these groups is featured in the diagram below). The largest membership group is the Curious Casuals, whose major motivation for joining is often to gain short term benefits to help drive business growth.

Unfortunately, this cohort is the most under-engaged in YRBA activities, especially networking and professional development opportunities.

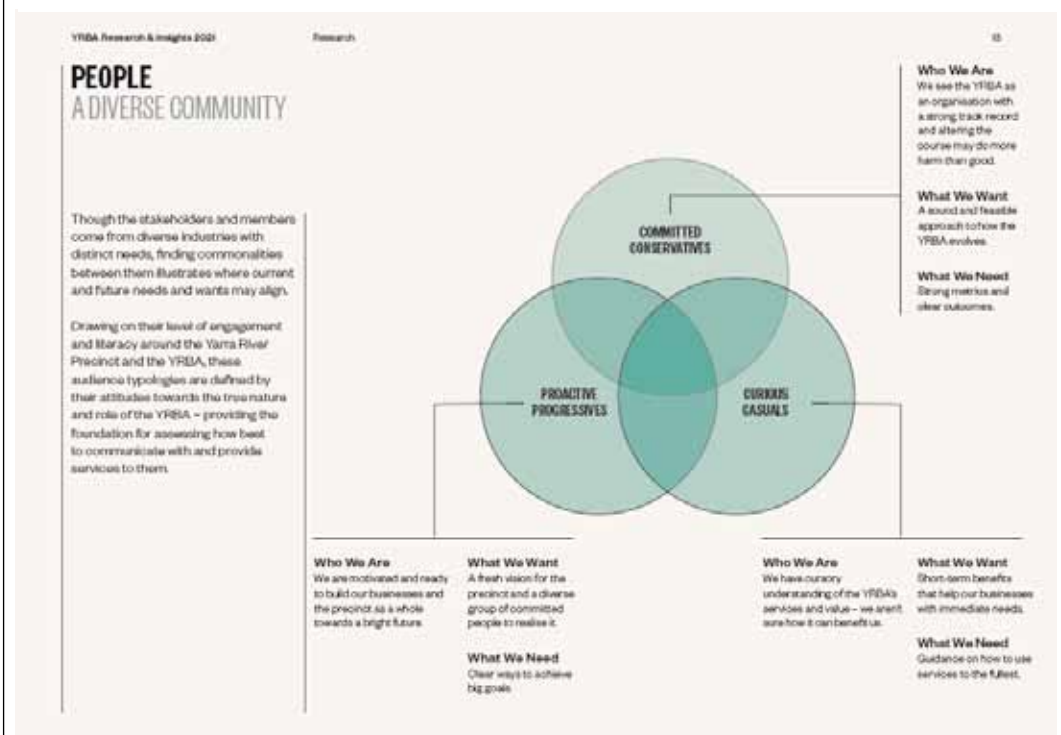
More tailor-made support services may be a way to better service this member sector, although the cost-effectiveness of trying to service these typically ephemeral memberships may not support the resource allocation.

The 2021 member/ stakeholder survey revealed that the advocacy and marketing work undertaken by YRBA is equally recognised and valued by the membership.

The loss of Melbourne's regional tourism body Destination Melbourne in

2019 and the absorption of Tourism Victoria into the super government body of Visit Victoria has made YRBA's grass roots marketing role even more important to ensure that the precinct retains its prominence.

However, the role of YRBA as the 'primary' promoter of the precinct has diminished somewhat over the years. Precinct imagery now features prominently in promotion for the city, state and nation. Moreover, member businesses now all recognise the need to promote themselves as



OUR 'COMMUNITY'

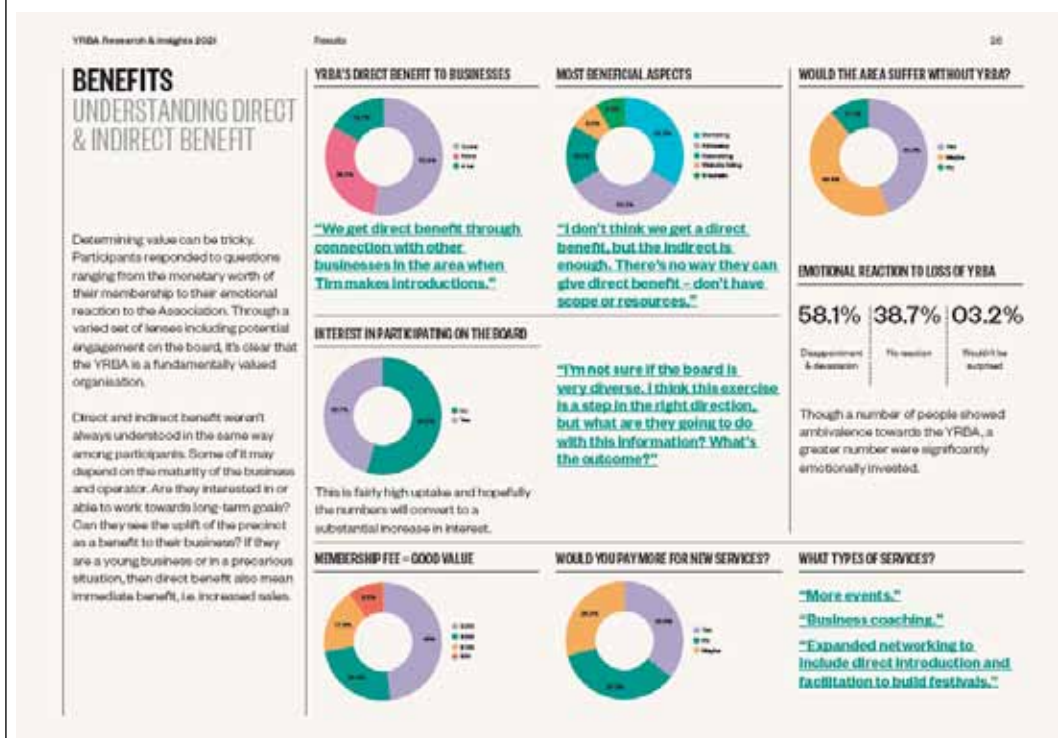
part of the wider Yarra River experience.

Therefore, with a very mature business community, with the precinct now an integral part of the Melbourne tourism and hospitality experience, and with much infrastructure already completed, the key question for the Association in 2021 was its continuing relevance and need within the local business community.

This question was put directly to more than 50 interviewees in the 2021 survey.

Nearly 70% said that the work of YRBA is of some—or a lot of—benefit to their own business. 88% said the area would, or probably would, suffer without the YRBA. Fifty (50%) per cent said they felt that the annual fee of \$200 represented good value to them and another 25% felt that an increase to \$300 would also represent value to them. 46% of members surveyed said they would be interested in taking a role in the decision-making of the Association.

While the YRBA needs to nuance its role and its member offer to align with new markets and updated ways of communication, there is clearly still a stated need for a local, coal-face organisation that speaks on behalf of the precinct businesses. With this ringing endorsement, the Association can confidently plan for the next five year cycle.

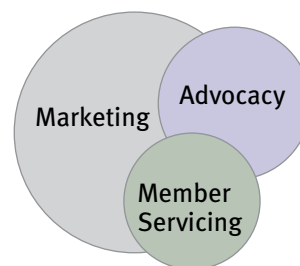


OUR SERVICES

Despite the wide array of roles performed by YRBA and the range of services it offers, the knowledge of such services is only marginal among a portion of the membership base. However, these services are highly valued by those who are aware of them.

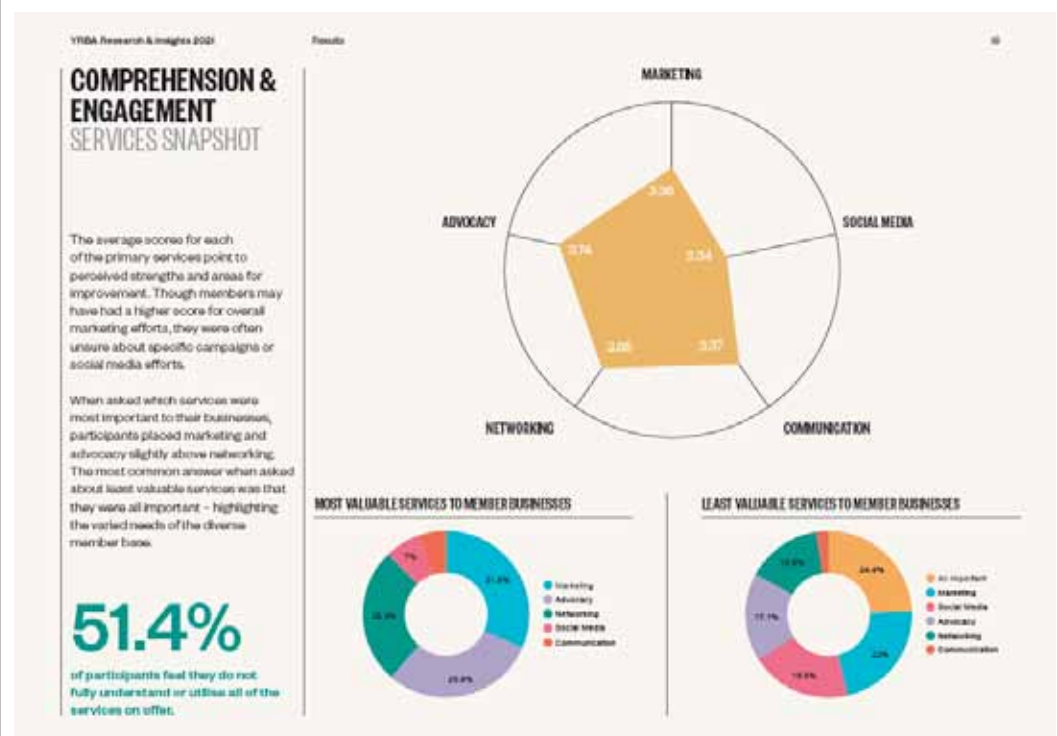
A preference for 'advocacy' and 'networking' rated highly with the membership. Marketing and communication ranked slightly lower, but still strongly. Despite considerable resources devoted to social media activity during

recent years, its awareness and use by members is low. This creates a major opportunity during the cycle of this plan to raise awareness of this important service and to better engage with businesses on making use of it.



Above: The key emphasis of YRBA's work during 2021-2026

The Yarra River Business Association is primarily a member-services organisation and one of the priority needs is to promote the precinct. Product development is a key aspect of marketing and, therefore, advocacy work to ensure new and improved infrastructure will remain an integral part of YRBA's operations.



MEMBER DEVELOPMENT

The Yarra River Precinct is home to almost 1,000 commercial businesses, employing nearly 50,000 people (2019 figures), yet the Association's membership stubbornly hovers between 150-160 businesses every financial year.

There is some perception that the Association primarily services hospitality venues of the Southbank to South Wharf river strip. Certainly, its public-facing promotional materials overtly emphasise this sector of the precinct because it has the greatest relevance to the consumer. However, the core business membership of the Association understands and appreciates the wider role of the YRBA.

A high level of membership retention has been a feature of the Association throughout its 23 year history, although it's expected that this may alter as a result of the pandemic's economic fallout.

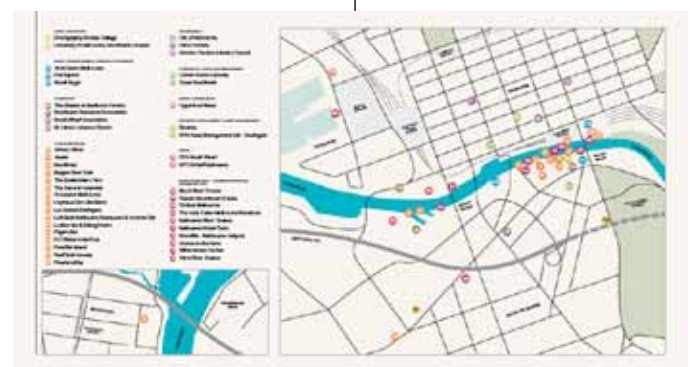
Right: Cluster map of YRBA member businesses 2021. The predominant cluster still remains the Southbank/Southgate hub, with a growing business community in South Wharf.

Membership development during the next cycle could capitalise on the rapidly growing accommodation sector of City Road, especially when that thoroughfare becomes more pedestrian and visitor-friendly. Progress on the redevelopment of City Road would assist YRBA to promote 'ant-trails' between the river and its hinterland.

The YRBA Board has made the decision not to devote major resources to membership development, but rather to value-add memberships to the businesses that are engaged with the wider precinct and appreciate the benefit of the broader promotion of the area. For this reason, the Association no longer pursues Crown Melbourne for membership of its many businesses and services, because of Crown's inward focus and lack of engagement with the precinct.

A reasonable target for membership development during the next five year cycle would be to reach a sustainable 200 business base. This would not only strengthen the credibility of Association's 'voice' for the precinct, but would also enable it to capitalise on the business development incentives to be introduced from Year 3 of the 2021-2025 Council precinct program.

However, YRBA is aware that membership levels may fluctuate during the pandemic recovery and because of the Southgate redevelopment. This may temporarily reduce the number of businesses operating in that venue.



ECONOMIC SNAPSHOT

Any economic analysis undertaken in 2021 will be heavily influenced by the severe downturn experienced since March 2020. While there is evidence that the domestic economy may rebound strongly, the key factors of the downturn continue to significantly impact the Yarra River Precinct and are expected to do so until possibly 2023-24:

1. Complete loss of inbound tourism (estimated to account for between 30-40% of visitation and related trade in the precinct.)
2. Substantial loss of business events and related activity from the precinct.
3. Substantial loss of major events and related activity, including a major downturn in arts/ cultural events.
4. Up to 80% downturn in workplace attendance throughout the precinct. The nearly 1,000 commercial establishments supporting 47,000 jobs within the precinct has a direct and dramatic impact, particularly on weekday lunch trade and after-work socialising.

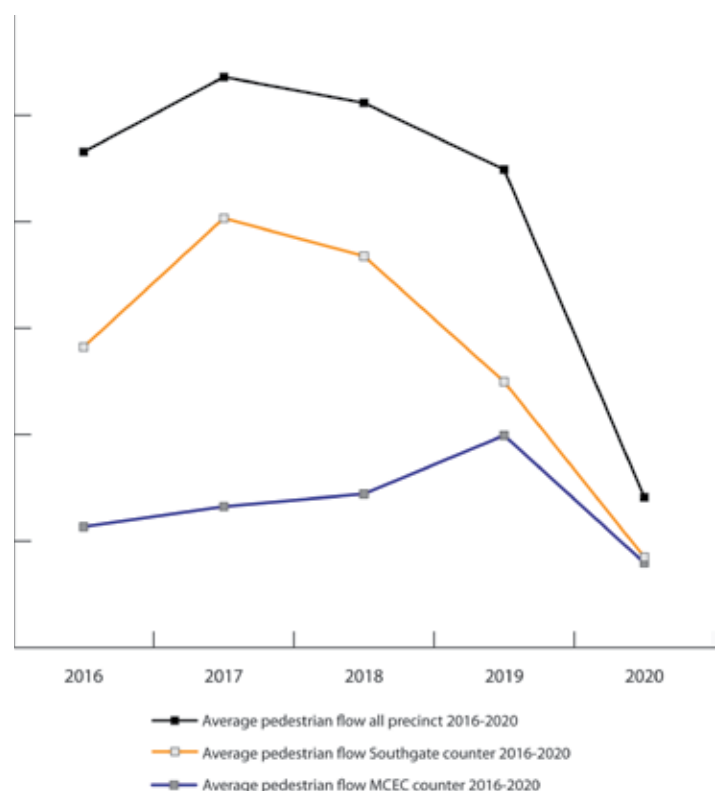
With only 20-40% of corporate workers having returned by mid 2021 and signs of a generational shift away from office attendance, this is expected to be highly impactful.

5. The ongoing reluctance of Melburnians to return to previous hospitality patterns and habits in 2021. This is expected to last until at least the first quarter 2022, when widespread vaccination may have restored a portion of that lost confidence.

However, the longer term trend of Greater Melbourne's residents in discovering and enjoying more localised food and beverage offerings may create an ongoing downturn for the viability of the precinct, especially for Southbank and South Wharf hospitality venues.

The precinct's major indicators of pedestrian activity are the city of Melbourne's pedestrian counters located at the southern end of Evan Walker Bridge and on Clarendon Street near the

PEDESTRIAN FLOW YARRA RIVER PRECINCT 2016-2020



ECONOMIC SNAPSHOT

Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre.

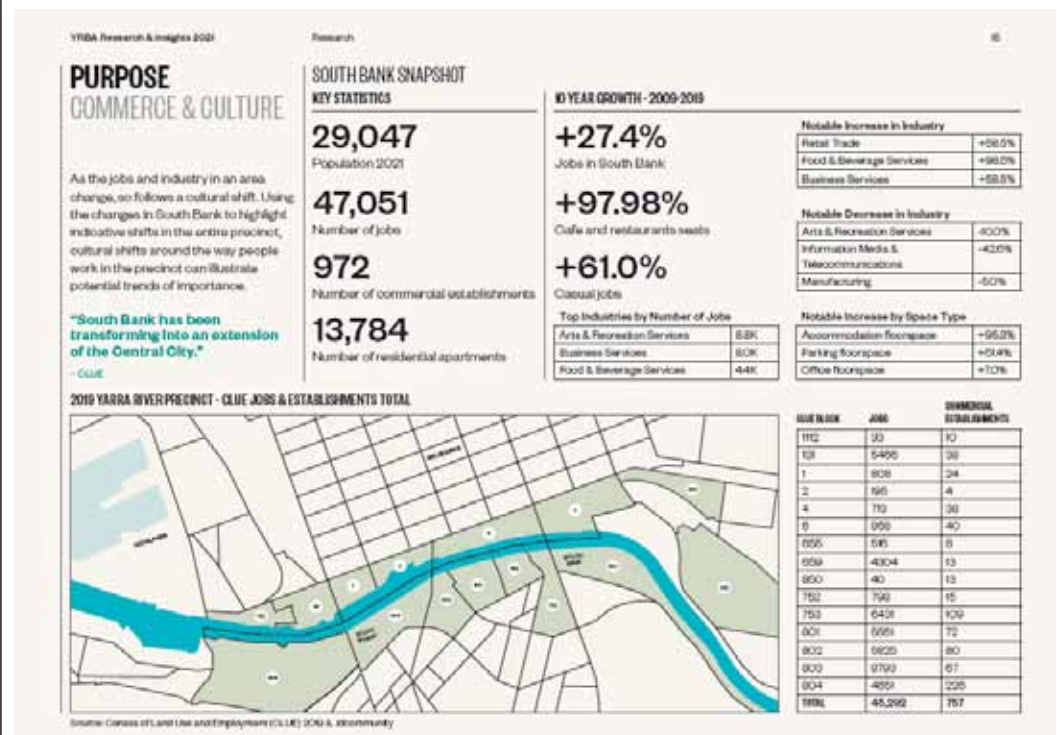
A longitudinal study of these two counters and an aggregation of the data shows that pedestrian movement in the precinct jumped by 10-15% from 2016 into 2017 and 2018, but fell from 2019.

This aligns with a sharp fall in national GDP from 2018, a drop in consumer confidence and the flatlining in wage growth. The precinct's frontline businesses largely depend upon on the amount of discretionary income

available in the community, hence the local economic scenario was falling even before the impact of COVID-19.

The economic analysis presented below will be updated to reflect 2021 conditions upon release of the latest City of Melbourne Census and Land Use Data, expected during the first quarter 2021/22.

The centrality of the Yarra River Precinct to the Melbourne 'experience' and the high quality of its 'offer' will mean that, eventually, trading conditions will return to pre-pandemic levels. Therefore the economic analysis undertaken for this strategic plan features trading conditions in 2019. A return to these figures is being used as a benchmark for achievement within the 5 year timeframe of this strategy.



The 2021 survey of Association members and stakeholders by Right Angle Studio revealed a significant level of satisfaction with the current roles and performance of the Association. It highlighted the wide variation in size, experience and business maturity of the YRBA membership, which continues to make it challenging for the Association to meet all needs and expectations. However, some key issues arising from the survey include:

- the perception of a lack of inclusion in YRBA decision-making and the

subsequent communication of those decisions,

- the perception of a lack of diversity within the YRBA governance structure,
- a lack of understanding about the precinct geography and member businesses' alignment with the precinct brand,
- a diversity of opinion on the merits of whether to adopt a greater marketing or advocacy emphasis within YRBA's objectives.

YRBA's board membership aims to balance geographic and sector representation of the precinct business community, but also to

capture key skills and experience. The long standing board membership has served the Association well, though the need for a younger and gender-balanced board should be the aim during the 2021-26 cycle.

YRBA has operated on an annual income varying between \$100-\$150k. The higher end has only become available during 2020/21 because of the COVID Recovery programs put in place by the State and local governments. More typically, YRBA's annual income sits at about \$100-\$110K.



Due to careful budgeting the Association has generated an operating surplus most years, which has resulted in an ongoing contingency fund. The fund not only meets out-of-budget items that might arise, but would enable the Association to operate for at least 12 months should its major funding disappear, providing for a timely wind-down of activity and dispersal of assets.

YRBA recognises that, as a coal-face organisation, its resourcing will remain modest for the period 2021-2026. It will continue to be heavily reliant upon the generous funding provided by Council under the Melbourne City Precinct Program. The increase in funding from \$75,000 p.a. to \$90,000 p.a. is welcomed, and the introduction of incentives from Year 3 of the new program to stimulate membership development is a positive move.

During the 2017-2021 period, YRBA actively sought corporate sponsorship to supplement its income and to increase discretionary monies available for marketing. Despite professional assistance, the Association failed to secure a corporate sponsor, largely because of its small size, relatively modest sphere of influence and a downturn in the sponsorship market generally.

It also became apparent that the high costs of servicing a corporate sponsor may exceed the resourcing of the organisation. While always open to corporate sponsorship and ready to embrace it, YRBA will not continue the search for a corporate sponsor, but rather it will maximise the monies available to it under normal funding arrangements, and investigate additional sources through project-specific grants.

YRBA's financial management remains strong and stable, largely thanks to the long standing services of its honorary treasurer, and the systems in place to ensure compliance and transparency. However, the potential loss of key corporate service supports during the 2021-2026 period must be recognised and succession planning will be an important need for the Association moving forward.

Economic recovery following COVID-19 pandemic

The complete removal of international tourism, the significant removal of interstate tourism in 2020 & 2021, the profound effect on corporate workplaces and the severe downturn in business events in the precinct has at least halved economic activity within the tourism and hospitality sectors of the precinct. This is not expected to return to pre-pandemic levels until 2024/25, which could question the viability of many precinct businesses.



Major disruption to Southbank Promenade resulting from promenade upgrade works and redevelopment of the Southgate complex

Much of the precinct's public and private infrastructure is now 25-30 years old and in need of major refit and refurbishment. The redevelopment of the Southbank Promenade and the announced major redevelopment of the Southgate complex, will, effectively, shut-down the eastern end of Southbank for possibly 2-3 years. This is expected to have a significant economic effect on many businesses in that area and may also disrupt the traditional pedestrian flow. An upside is that it may present an opportunity to wean commuter cyclists from the promenade and onto alternative cycle routes.



Continuing business and resident concern about cyclist/pedestrian separation on the promenades

This has been an issue of angst among business people and residents of Southbank for much of the Association's existence and has been aggravated by a reluctance of relevant authorities to take it seriously. The temporary closure of the western end of Southbank—forcing use of the Southbank Boulevard alternative—and the gradual roll-out of Greenline projects on northbank offers some hope of a partial resolution during this five year cycle.



Contested use of water and land-assets within the precinct, aggravated by fragmented ownership/control (see image below)

The fragmentation of the precinct into jurisdictions and services managed by a range of authorities is expected to continue to thwart efforts during this five year cycle to better coordinate planning, communication and service provision. There appears to be little appetite among government for an overarching coordinating authority. The implementation of the Yarra River Birrarung Council during this cycle is not expected to have much impact on the issues facing the commercial sector.

Continuing development of Montague Precinct and its potential integration with the Yarra River Precinct

During the five year period 2021-26 the development of the adjoining suburb of Montague will occur. It is not yet known whether the new suburb's services and experiences will synergise with those offered in the Yarra River Precinct, thus providing for an easy integration with YRBA's current and proposed activities.

Lack of momentum with the City Road redevelopment

The continuing divide between the dynamic river promenades and the paucity of experience available in Southbank's hinterland, despite the large scale development of accommodation along City Road, is limiting the geographic expansion of the Association's coverage and scope.



GREENLINE DEVELOPMENT

The initial scoping for the Greenline project provides some hope that civic attention will now focus on the northbank of the river and particularly its integration and synergy with the CBD. Greenline's potential to develop the northbank as green-centric public spaces, with some complementary business activity in key zones, is the biggest opportunity presented to the precinct. However, its success rests with the ability of State Government agencies to embrace the Council's vision and to put aside territorial and jurisdictional differences to help steer it to fruition. Resolution of the future of the heliport and helicopter services in the precinct through the Greenline project will also be welcomed.

ARTS CENTRE RE-IMAGINING AND ARTS PLAZA DEVELOPMENT

Momentum also appears to be developing for the major refurbishment of the now 35-50 year old arts precinct. The State Government's purchase of the CUB Southbank site for redevelopment as a major gallery of contemporary art may also spur the development of Sturt Street as a world-leading cultural tourism plaza. It is hoped that better connection of the arts precinct with the river will be a co-benefit of the project.

SOUTHGATE REDEVELOPMENT

Southgate kick-started the precinct in the early 1990s and its proposed major redevelopment by ARA Australia during this cycle is expected to spearhead the refurbishment of the area. Its proposed emphasis on more open public space should complement the redevelopment of the Southbank Promenade and augment the proposed re-imagining of the arts precinct.

SEAFARERS DEVELOPMENT

Riverlee's brown-site development of the northbank west of the Spencer Bridge during this cycle is expected to fill the last major gap in the precinct's urban fabric. Its integration with the Mission to Seafarers, creation of new parkland, plus new, quality residential and commercial facilities should not only expand the appeal and functionality of the western end of the precinct, but also strengthen the maritime heritage of that section of the precinct, thus providing a new positioning strength.



THE PRECINCT IN 2026

Below: Priority areas of YRBA interest and involvement 2021-2026

1. Sturt St Arts Plaza
2. City Road refurbishment
3. Greenline
4. Maritime heritage zone

Notwithstanding the longtail effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, the next five year cycle in the precinct should see refurbishment of key existing areas, plus the development of exciting new areas, specifically along the northbank. This is already most evident along City Road and in Montague. Better physical integration with Docklands should also result in a more contiguous waterway experience for Melburnians and visitors. Central to this aspiration is a commuter ferry service, integrated into the Myki system, which could also service the tourism industry, particularly outside peak commuter periods.

The start of Greenline related projects is expected to herald better integration of the river precinct with the CBD, thus presenting Southbank as a contiguous experience with the city centre for workers and visitors alike.

While inbound tourism is expected to have fully recovered by 2026, it is hoped that the pandemic may have provided the impetus and incentive for many precinct businesses, particularly in the food and beverage sectors, to identify the Southbank residential population as a major market for them and to continue their efforts to service that important sub-market. YRBA will continue to build a sense of comraderie between business and residents.

It is hoped that by 2026 the western end of the Yarra River Precinct will have a strongly established maritime heritage theme, to complement its existing role as a business events node. This will enable the Association and other marketing organisations to better target promotion of the businesses of South and North Wharves.

Similarly, 2021-2026 should see City Road become a more experiential sector of the precinct, thus creating reasons for visitors to venture south of the river. This will improve residential amenity through an inflow of visitors and strengthen the viability of many Southbank and Montague businesses. The urban renewal of City Road through the Council's masterplan should create a tourism precinct of greater substance and depth than currently exists, complemented by the State Government's progress on its arts plaza vision for Sturt Street.

Fundamental to achieving the above is the better integration of local and state government planning and service provision for the Yarra River Precinct. By 2026 it is hoped that the Council's Greenline vision for northbank will have provided an example for government departments and agencies of what can be achieved when they work together with the same vision. This may also translate into a more collegiate approach to the management of the precinct as a whole.



YRBA'S STRATEGIC DIRECTIONAL ASPIRATIONS 2021-2026

ASPIRATION	MODE	EXPLANATION
<i>A clearly defined precinct to members and consumers</i>	<i><u>Re-examine the brand and geography of the precinct</u></i>	As the precinct and its businesses have matured, the question of the scope and brand of the precinct association has come into focus. Is the notion of a Yarra River Precinct relevant within the marketing of Melbourne as a whole and, if it is, what does it mean to the consumer? Is there a better marketing approach to promoting Melbourne City's river assets?
<i>A sustainable membership base of around 200 businesses</i>	<i><u>Review the member development strategy</u></i>	YRBA's membership numbers have dropped since 2015 and hover around the 150-160 mark. Is there a better way to communicate with prospective members? Does YRBA need to more actively engage new members? What does a business of the 2020s want from a local business association? Does City Road present a new membership opportunity?
<i>Clearly defined benefits of YRBA membership</i>	<i><u>Improve presentation and communication of membership offer and benefits</u></i>	The 2021 survey revealed that the membership is unclear about what the Association offers and, indeed, what is its role among other organisations and associations available to them. Better definition of the Association's B-2-B and B-2-C role and aspirations needs to be clarified, given the reality that its limited resourcing means that YRBA needs to put much of its effort and resources into one rather than both.
<i>Highly targeted information to member businesses</i>	<i><u>Examine appropriate communication channels for the new era of business membership</u></i>	The methods and channels of communicating with businesses and business people is changing rapidly. Is a weekly EDM still the best way to communicate important news and opportunities? Does attendance at member events to obtain and share information resonate with a younger cohort of business people? How should YRBA's social media activity fill the gaps and/or enhance the effectiveness of members' individual social media efforts?
<i>Resident 3006 is an underpinning market for relevant precinct businesses</i>	<i><u>Strengthen precinct business understanding and appreciation of the Resident 3006 community</u></i>	The pandemic has provided the opportunity to underline the importance of the Resident 3006 community to the hospitality sectors' business model. The Association needs to continue and expand the connections it has forged between businesses and residents, especially when the allure of the returning tourism market again captures business's attention.

YRBA'S STRATEGIC DIRECTIONAL ASPIRATIONS 2021-2026

ASPIRATION	MODE	EXPLANATION
<i>Tailored and nuanced support services to members</i>	<i>Provide more bespoke business mentoring and assistance support</i>	Despite the ever growing maturity of the precinct businesses, there will always be a subset of family operated and start-up businesses that require some degree of hand-holding. What specific assistance can YRBA provide cost effectively to assist these businesses? Is it more important to provide targeted business help rather than bigger picture marketing? Which agencies can YRBA align with to provide such services to its members?
<i>A transparent governance structure that allows for greater participation by members</i>	<i>Increase communication and transparency re governance, including greater diversity on the YRBA Board and ad-hoc committees</i>	An issue evolving from a very stable 23 year old organisation, with little turnover in its board composition, may be that it starts to lack diversity of opinion. How does the Association attract and retain the services of younger business people, especially in an era when the appeal and perceived benefit of association membership is declining? What are the best ways to communicate the outcomes and effectiveness of YRBA's advocacy work?
<i>YRBA is a significant player in the shaping of Northbank</i>	<i>Support and amplify Council's progress on fulfilling the Greenline project for Northbank</i>	The Council's 2021 announcement of its Greenline vision for Northbank provides the Association with the opportunity to provide informed and meaningful input to the planning process. This needs to emphasise the call for connectivity, safety, low-level activation and the desire to soften hard-edges—ideas that emerged from the 2019 Yarra River Big Ideas Forum. The Association needs to be a major player in fulfilling the project's vision, rather than being an ad-hoc reference point for Council officers. YRBA will urge the City of Melbourne to use the Association to help fulfil the Council's overall vision for Northbank, as well as for its specific projects.
<i>A strongly themed and positioned western end of the precinct</i>	<i>Strengthen the maritime theming of the western end of the precinct</i>	The Yarra River Precinct is redolent with stories of its pre-European and post settlement history, yet there is little to indicate this to Melburnians and visitors. The development of the Seafarers project provides the Association with the opportunity to work with relevant authorities to create trail/s to interpret the experience, in an effort to develop a new 'product' for the precinct and to reduce some member perception of YRBA as a Southbank-centric organisation. YRBA will identify and work collegiately with relevant organisations to develop and market the precinct's new maritime heritage 'product'.

YRBA'S STRATEGIC DIRECTIONAL ASPIRATIONS 2021-2026

ASPIRATION	MODE	EXPLANATION
<i>An activated on-water experience and an operating environment that is fair and equitable for river operators</i>	<i>Encourage and facilitate activation of the waterway, including an equitable arrangement for commercial river operators, moving towards a more collegiate and cooperative approach to governance of the Lower Yarra</i>	While much has been achieved in this sphere during the past five years, much is yet to happen. A power imbalance between river operators and the large government authorities that manage the space is still creating an inequitable operating environment for them. The Association's role during the next five years also needs to include helping those operators understand and adapt to a new era on the waterway, including new market segments that want a more interactive experience. YRBA will continue to promote to relevant authorities the outcomes of the 2014 State Government Review of the Lower Yarra River, and the recommendations of the special advisory committee that evolved from it.
<i>A widely respected and understood governance structure</i>	<i>Continuity of good governance and addressing succession planning of key personnel</i>	The Association has enjoyed 23 + years of stability at a board and executive level. The passage of time means that the next five year cycle will most likely see significant change in key personnel. Succession planning needs to be an important part of governance activity before 2026 to ensure smooth transition and continuity in member servicing.



YRBA'S STRATEGIC DIRECTIONAL ASPIRATIONS 2021-2026

ASPIRATION	How	WHEN	WHO
<i>Advocacy</i>			
YRBA is a key player in the shaping of northbank	Support and amplify Council's progress on fulfilling the Greenline project	2021-2026	YRBA/CoM
A strongly themed and positioned western end of the precinct	Strengthen the maritime heritage product and theming of the precinct	2022-2024	YRBA/CoM/Riverlee/ MMHN/ South Wharf/ North Wharf/ WTC
An activated on-water experience plus a fair and equitable operating environment	Encourage and facilitate activation, including equity and transparency for leases, and the streamlining of event application processes	2021-2026	YRBA/DWELP/ Parks Victoria/ River operators
<i>Marketing</i>			
A clearly defined precinct for members and consumers	Clarify the precinct boundaries, positioning and branding	2022	YRBA Board
The precinct enjoys 'front of mind' awareness among tourism marketers and consumers	Continue building general awareness of the Yarra River Precinct as a key component of Melbourne's tourism, hospitality and cultural tourism experience.	2021-2026	YRBA/CoM/VTIC/ Visit Victoria
Synergy between members' and YRBA's digital marketing activity	Build member awareness and use of YRBA's digital marketing services	2021-2024	YRBA/Consultants
Resident 3006 is an underpinning market for relevant members	Present tactical opportunities and campaigns to connect business with residents of 3006	2021-2026	YRBA/SRA/CoM
<i>Member Servicing</i>			
Tailored and nuanced business support services for members	Clearly identify members' business support needs	2022	YRBA/Consultants
	Facilitate more business support mentoring and assistance at preferential rates from quality suppliers	2022-2026	YRBA/Consultants
<i>Governance</i>			
A widely respected and understood governance structure	Increase communication and transparency re governance	2021-2024	YRBA Board
	Increase diversity on YRBA board and sub-committees		
	Address succession planning for key personnel		

SPHERE OF INFLUENCE

While the past two decades has seen YRBA build a high degree of respect and credibility, the Association also recognises that its resource base and outreach limits its sphere of influence. This was reinforced in the findings of the 2021 member/stakeholder survey.

Most larger developments within the precinct are 'big-ticket' projects, requiring long lead times and significant funding by Council and State Government. Beyond advocacy and limited input into

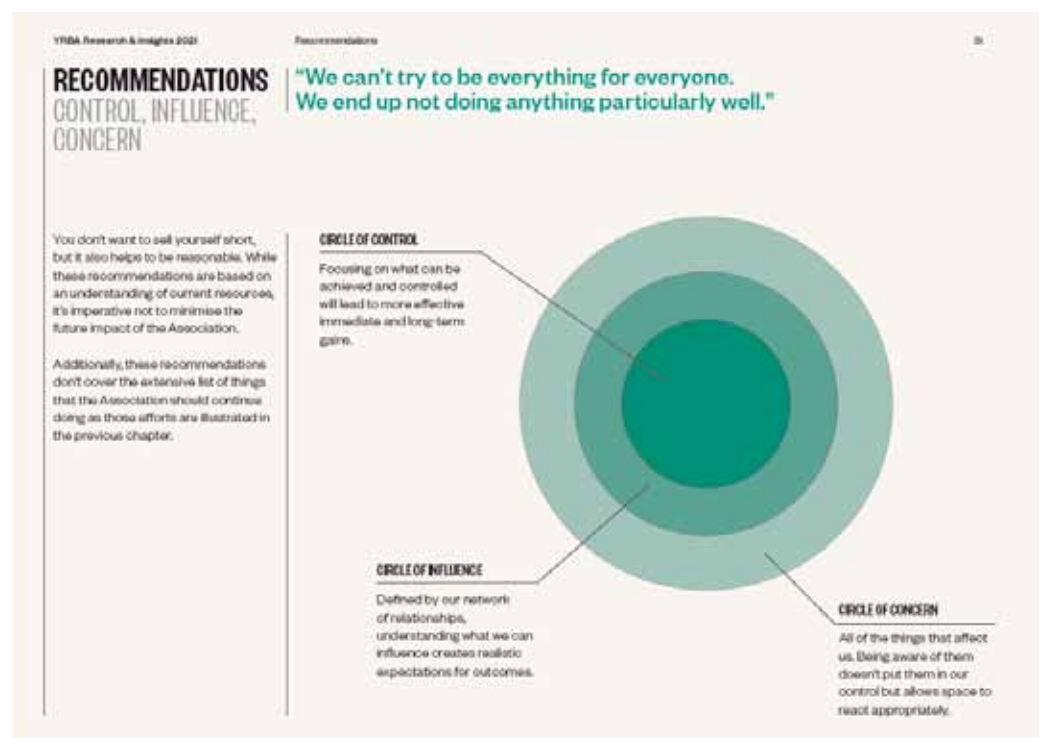
the planning and design process, the Association's ability to secure major infrastructure and to affect major change will be, necessarily, limited. For example, its most recent infrastructure success, the installation of floating berthing infrastructure at Southgate, took 15 years of advocacy to achieve.

The diagram below from the 2021 member/stakeholders survey summarises the influence of the YRBA. The report recommends that YRBA blends a big-picture vision with a realistic

appreciation of what the Association can achieve in its own right.

Continuing alliances with similar groups such as the Southbank Residents Association and the Yarra Riverkeepers Association can boost the efficacy of the Association's work.

Member partnerships with higher level organisations, such as the Victorian Tourism Industry Council (VTIC) and the Committee for Melbourne, will become even more important during the 2021-26 cycle.



SPHERE OF INFLUENCE

Major forums, such as the Big Ideas Forum of 2019 (pictured below), are an important means of bringing together key players to share in the visioning and planning for the Yarra River Precinct. It is hoped that a similar milestone event can be held towards the end of this five year cycle.

Most significantly, the already healthy and respectful relationship between YRBA and the City of Melbourne will remain the Association's greatest strength and will be of most benefit to its YRBA's members.


Most direct assistance required by members involves liaison with the City Council. YRBA will remain as a key voice for SMEs in both accessing council services and feeding-back council information to member businesses.

It's also important that the Council continues to recognise the ability of the precinct associations to provide meaningful input to the development of its key projects and services.



APPENDICES

- | | | |
|---|--|--|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Yarra River Big Ideas Forum Report2. YRBA 2021 member/ stakeholder survey: summary of findings3. Vision 21 | | |
|---|--|--|



Yarra River Melbourne,
Yarra River Business Association,
Arup
August 2019

Yarra River Big Ideas Forum

ARUP



Proudly presented by
**Yarra River Business
Association Inc**

Contents

Foreword	pg. 3
The Process	pg. 5
'What we heard'	pg. 7
Locations liked most...	pg. 8
Locations liked least...	pg. 10
Big Ideas	pg. 12
Thank you	pg. 23
Appendices	pg. 25
Group findings	pg. 26
Moments from the day	pg. 32

Arup wish to acknowledge the custodians of the land in which this forum was held, the Wurundjeri people of the Kulin nation and their Elders past and present and emerging. We acknowledge and respect their continuing culture and the contribution they make to the life of this city and this region. We recognise and respect their cultural heritage, beliefs and relationship with the land, which continue to be important to the Kulin nation people living today and shape our city.

yarrariver.
melbourne

 Proudly presented by
Yarra River Business
Association Inc

ARUP

Foreword



Mark Rowland

Associate, City Planning

Australasian Transport Market Leader,

Arup

Mark.Rowland@arup.com

(03) 9663 1546



John Forman

President

Yarra River Business Association Inc.

john.forman@eurekaskydeck.com.au

0405 144 934

The Yarra River is a globally iconic waterway and arguably Melbourne's most significant natural asset. It is at the core of Melbourne's identity and the lifeblood of the city's inner reaches. The river meanders through Melbourne's renowned civic parks and places, bringing together people from all walks of life to relax within the heart of the city. Together, the civic parks and places along the Yarra attract millions of visitors each year, contributing significantly to Melbourne's liveability and economic prosperity.

As Melbourne's population grows over the next 35 years, the role of the Yarra River in the city is becoming even more important. Better human interaction with the river and its edges is needed to improve the attractiveness and liveability of the city.

To capitalise on potential opportunities and ensure Melbourne's continued economic prosperity and liveability; a 'Big Ideas' forum was held with nearly 100 stakeholders from across local and state Government, along with business owners and community representatives. This document records the outputs and ideas from the forum for consideration by key decision makers in transforming the banks of the Yarra River. We look forward to continuing the conversation with all key stakeholders, and hope to re-convene next year to reflect on the progress that has been made.

"Great cities embrace their green and blue infrastructure. Sydney has its harbour and ocean beaches, New York has its Central Park and the Hudson River, and Singapore has its island status and concept of a 'city in a garden'" (Yarra River Protection Ministerial Advisory Committee).



The Process

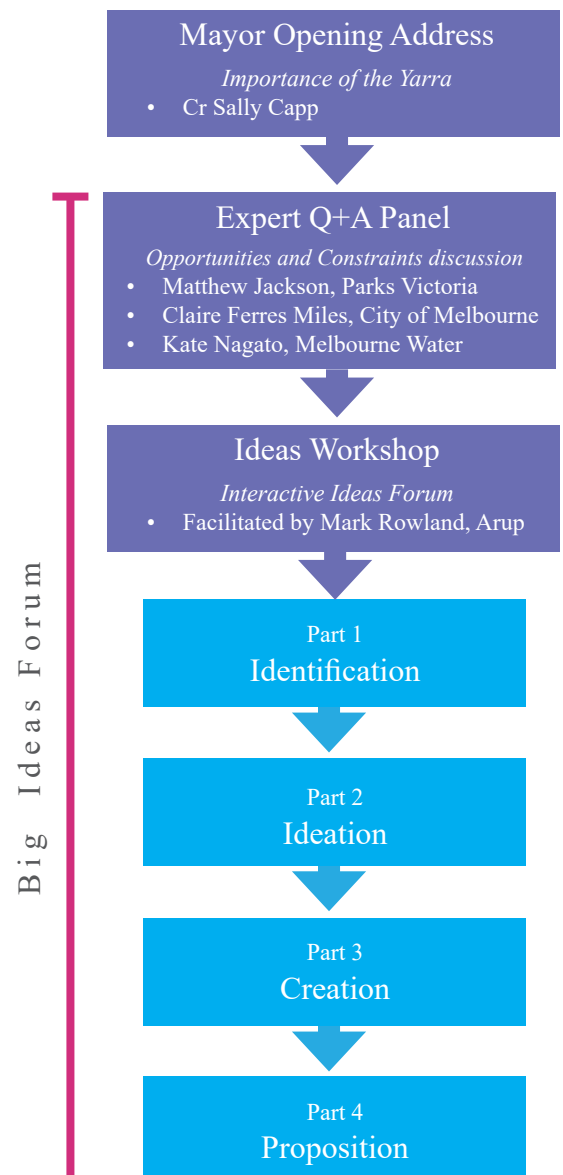
The ‘Big Ideas’ forum aimed to encourage participants to think about the Yarra at both a city and local scale, and articulate what is and isn’t liked. Insights from peer group discussions generated transformational ideas for the lower Yarra, with a focus on overcoming challenges facing the river and its edges.

The Lord Mayor, Cr. Sally Capp opened the forum, outlining the importance of Melbourne’s most prominent natural asset and its value. Not only to our environment, but to Melbourne’s livability as a city, its wider community and its visitors.

Mark Rowland hosted a Q&A panel with three senior key government representatives involved in the management of the Yarra River. Matthew Jackson from Parks Victoria, Claire Ferres Miles from the City of Melbourne and Kate Nagato from Melbourne Water held in-depth conversations highlighting opportunities, challenges and stakeholder ambitions for the river and its banks.

An ideas workshop was the largest component of the day. Starting with ‘Identification’, participants nominated their most liked and least liked locations. They were then asked to create ideas that were ‘transformational’. Discussions on most liked and least liked locations have been captured in the Appendix. Drawing on key insights, teams brainstormed ideas to mitigate challenges and build upon opportunities.

Teams homed in on one “big idea” to create a two-minute pitch that explained the core requirements and impact of their concept, answering other team’s questions at the end. The fast paced and dynamic session generated some bold ideas for the Yarra River, outlined in this document





‘What we heard’

The Yarra River is celebrated as one of Melbourne’s most iconic features, forming a natural spine through the city. Dynamic conversations from the ideas forum highlighted the need for targeted project prioritisation and consideration for the future. However, discussions around the river’s future suggested that many physical, environmental and operational challenges already faced the Yarra.

Key stakeholders in the Yarra River’s future, contributed valuable observations and ideas to the forum. Initial conversations around most liked and least liked locations along the Yarra River suggested a clear trend of favouritism towards open and green space. Downtown commercial areas like Docklands and Enterprise Park were less favourable, due to less public amenity and safety concerns along the hard surfaces of the river’s edge.

Ideas around community wellness, connectivity and river edge activation recurred in group discussions. A desire to soften hard segments of landscapes along the Yarra into more permeable and accessible places for residents to dwell would allow more spaces to reflect on the river edges. This activation would attract more potential uses for the river’s edge, like pop-up and fixed retail space, festivities and seasonal events. Connectivity ideas, such as bridging green spaces and a waterway public transport system were also raised.

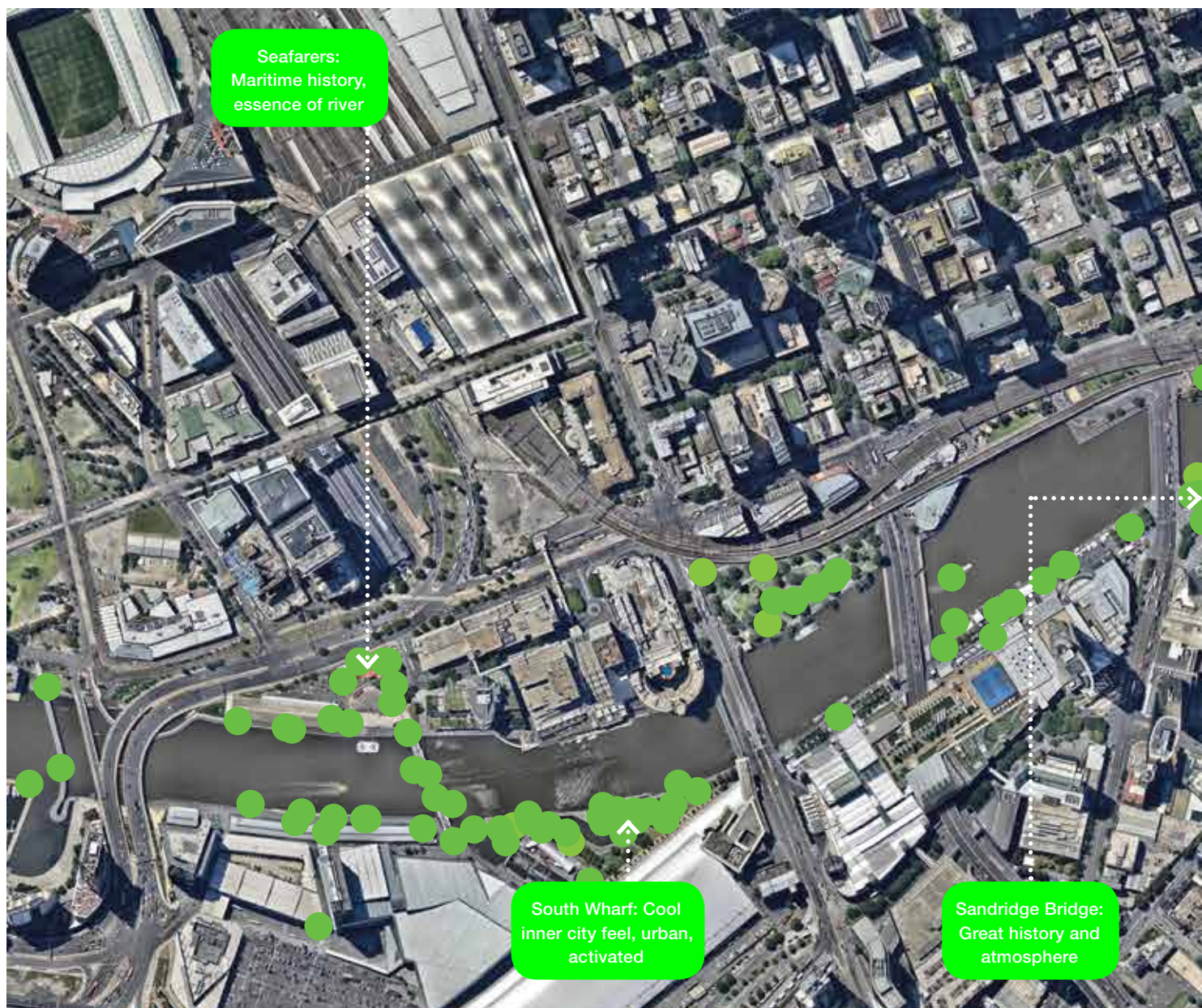
A recurring discussion point was to reidentify the Yarra River with its traditional name, Birrarung, acknowledging the custodians and traditional owners of the land and respecting its rich history, pre-colonial settlement. Kate Nagato from Melbourne Water said, ‘We did this with Uluru, so why not the Yarra?’

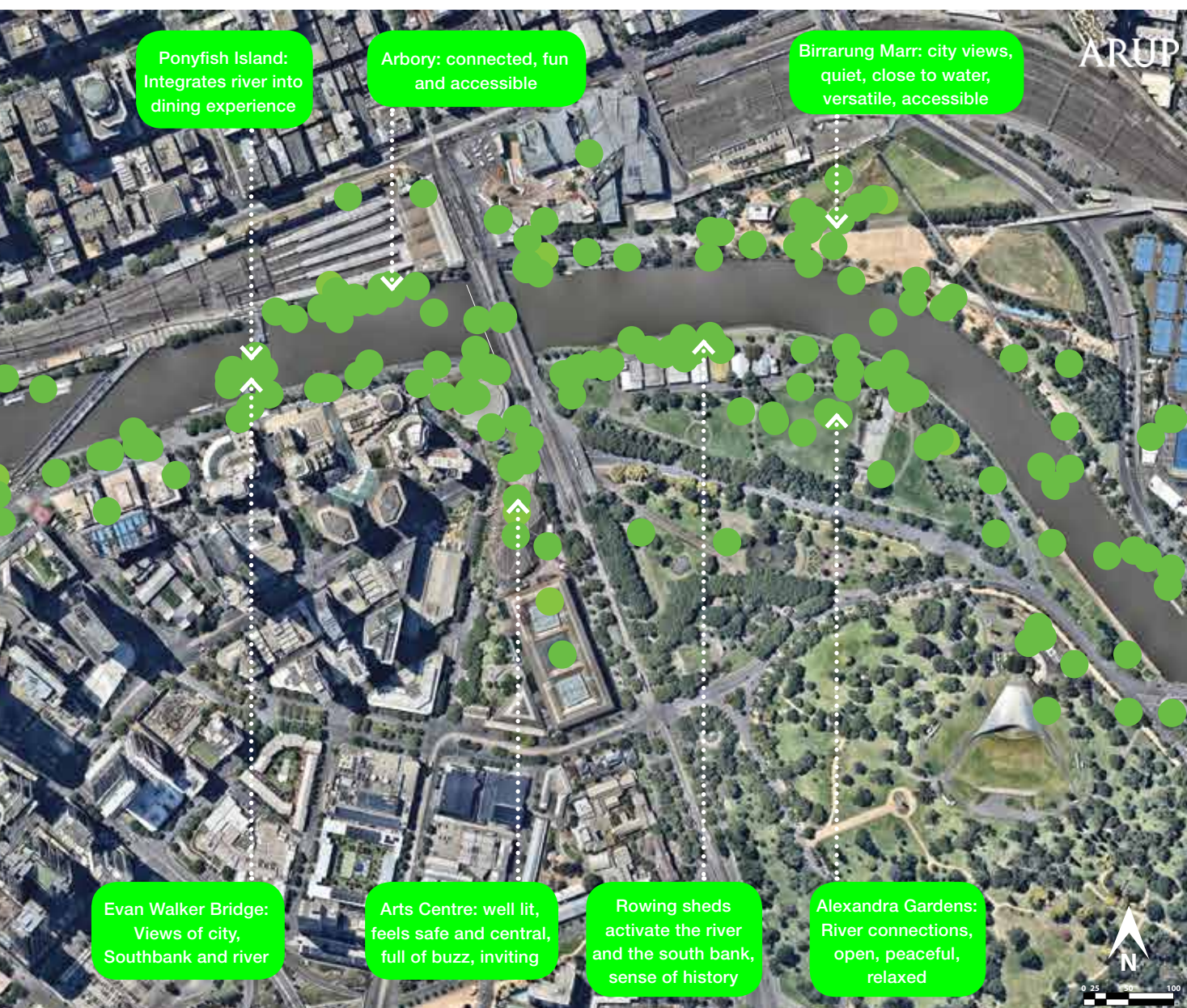


Please note. Detailed notes of individual group discussion and ideation in appendix of this document.

Locations liked most...

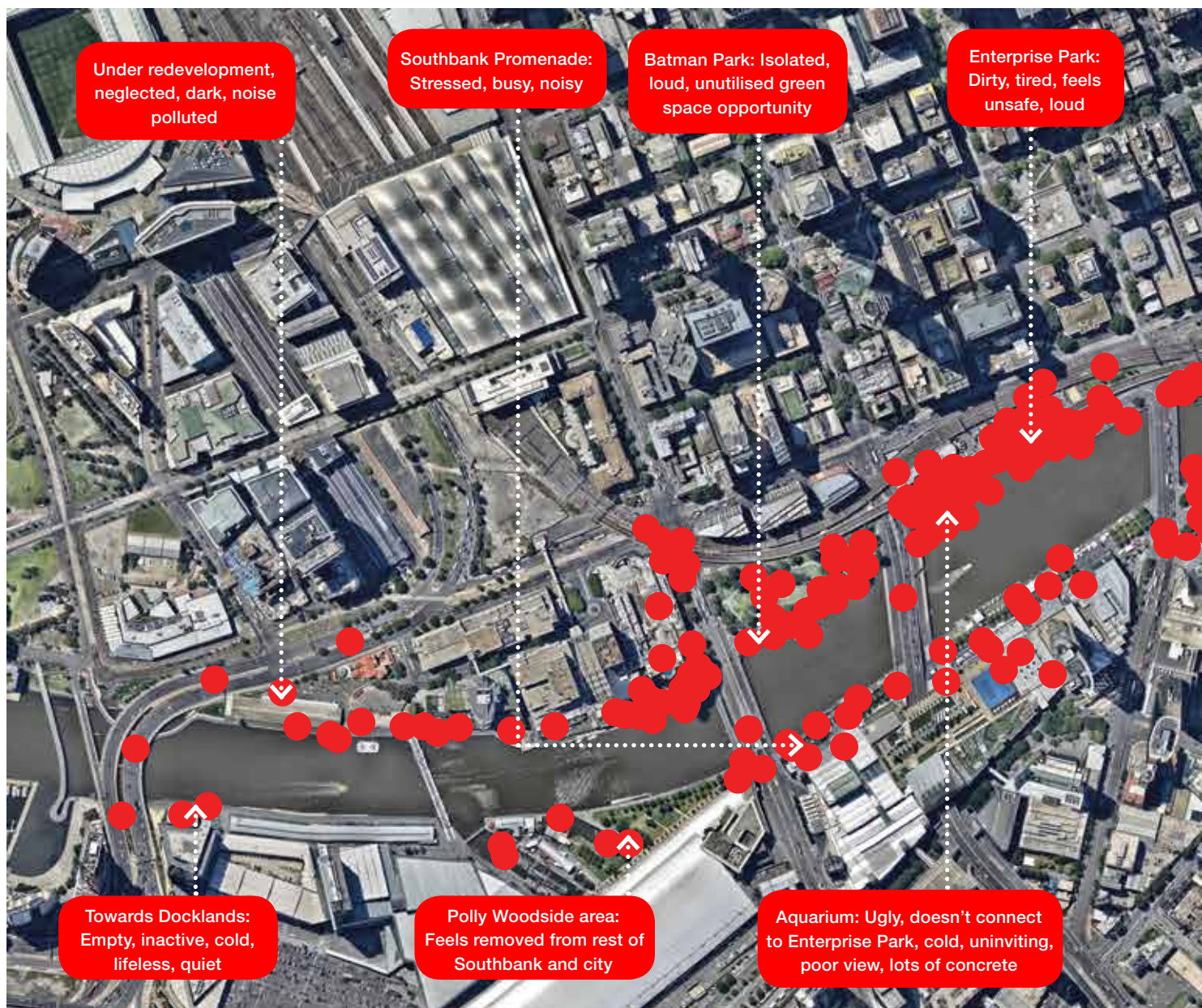
The image below highlights the focus area for the Ideas Forum; the lower city section of the Yarra River. During the 'Identification' stage of the workshop, participants were given five green dots and asked to identify the locations they 'liked most' along the River. Each participant was then asked to describe the location they liked most from the perspective of how it 'looks, feels and sounds' when they experience it. Consolidating each groups' information provides a detailed database of both qualitative and quantitative experiences along the Yarra River's edge and surrounds. The image below is a consolidation from across ten groups, amounting to nearly 450 dots.



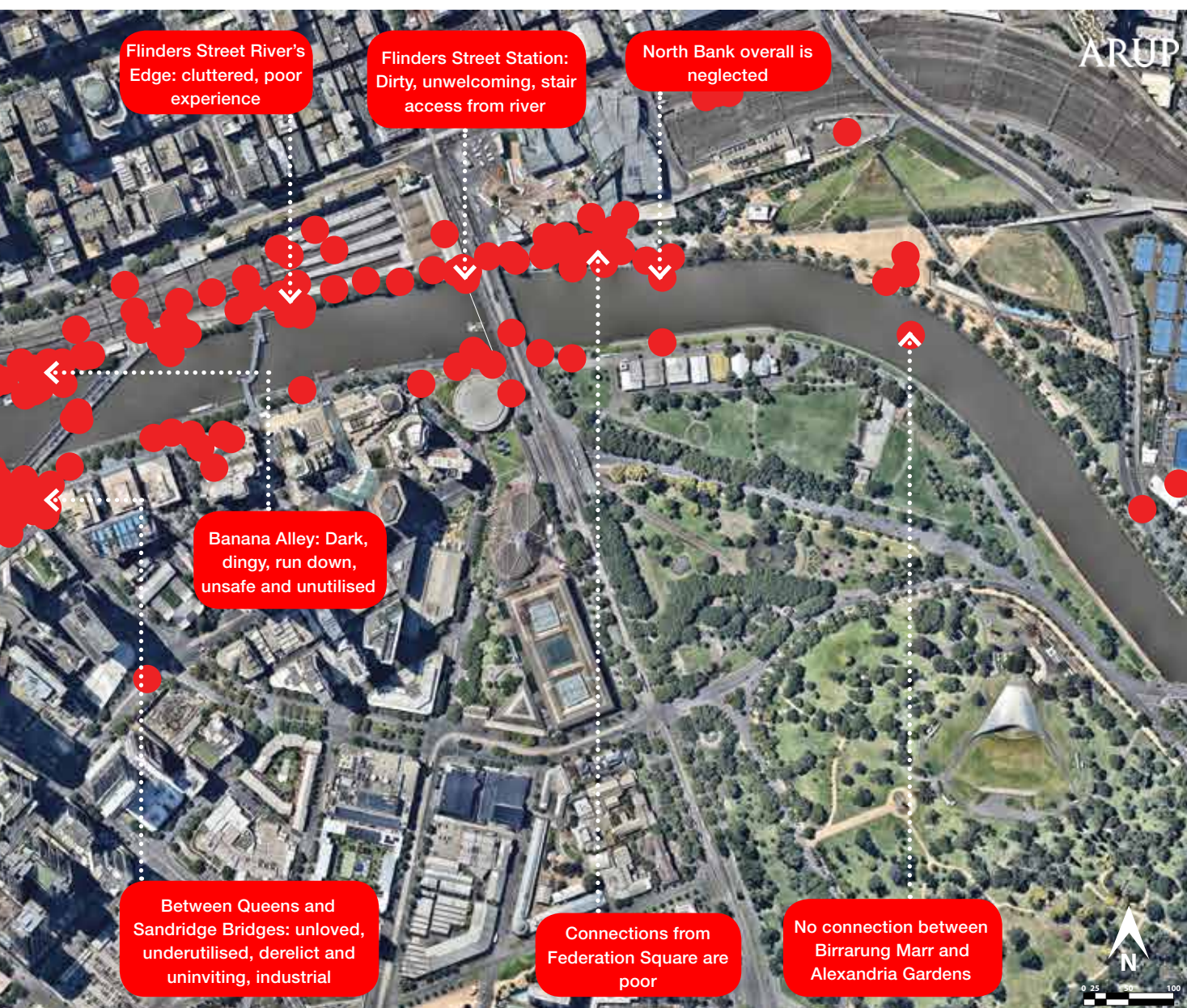


Locations liked least...

The image below highlights the focus area for the Ideas Forum; the lower city section of the Yarra River. During the 'Identification' stage of the workshop, participants were given red dots and asked to identify the locations they 'least liked' along the River. Each participant was then asked to describe the location they liked least from the perspective of how it 'looks, feels and sounds' when they experience it. By consolidating each groups information provides a rich evidence base of both qualitative and quantitative experiences along the Yarra river's edge and surrounds. The image below is a consolidation from across 10 groups, amounting to nearly 450 dots.



Please note. Detailed notes of individual group discussion and ideation in appendix of this document.



Flinders Street River's
Edge: cluttered, poor
experience

Flinders Street Station:
Dirty, unwelcoming, stair
access from river

North Bank overall is
neglected

Banana Alley: Dark,
dingy, run down,
unsafe and unutilised

Between Queens and
Sandridge Bridges: unloved,
underutilised, derelict and
uninviting, industrial

Connections from
Federation Square are
poor

No connection between
Birrarung Marr and
Alexandria Gardens

ARUP



0 25 50 100
m

Big Ideas

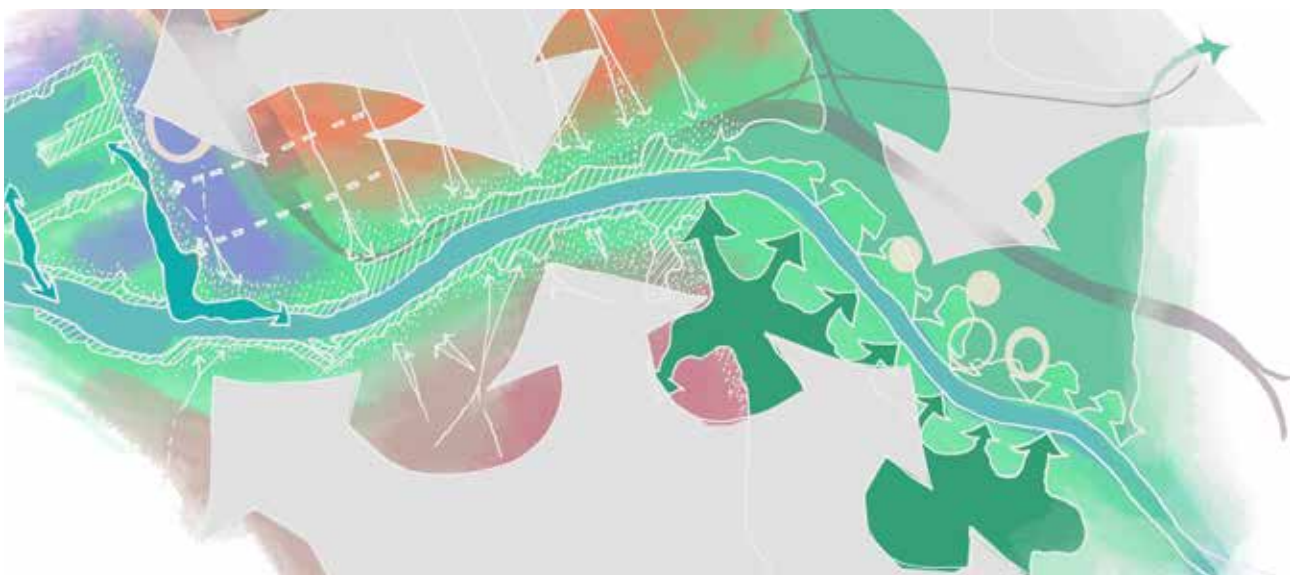
Group 1

Birrarung Walk

A Las Ramblas-like approach to the Yarra River, the aim is to connect a 'string of pearls'; ten great things to do between Swan Street Bridge and Seafarer's Bridge. This journey will create a sticky place through a regenerative approach to the river, building resilience. Bringing a sense of pride to the space, it would attract residents, visitors and retailers. A shared vision and investment from both public and private stakeholders is essential to get this project off the ground. Initially, this would start with smaller projects and progress into the greater vision over the next 18 months. A focus on sustainability needs to be at the core of this process, with strict ground rules for both sectors involved. It is important that these guidelines take into account international approaches to these kinds of regenerative projects, lifting Melbourne's profile as a global city. It would become Melbourne's next big attraction, encouraging visitors to connect with the unique destinations along the Yarra. Existing examples of this conceptual idea include the successful Brisbane South-bank and Sydney's Circular Quay.



Example of project to re-engage people with riverside walk



Arup artist impression of river walk concept

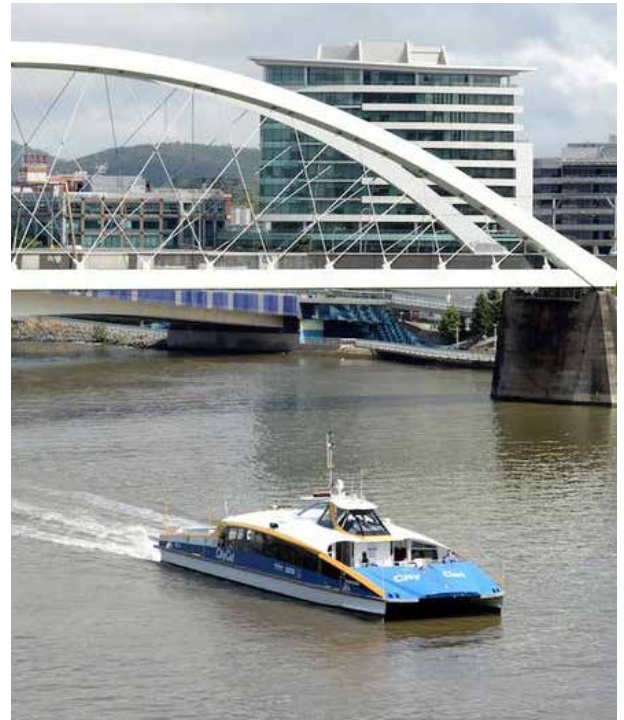
Big Ideas

Group 2

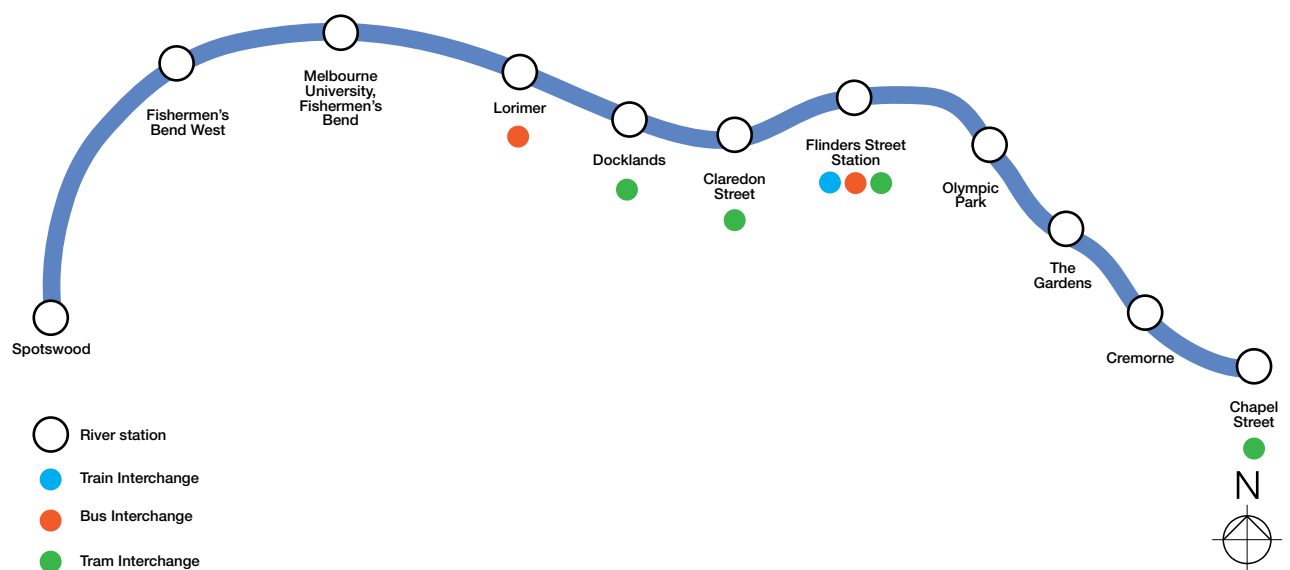
Ride the River

A river ferry transport solution to help mitigate our overcrowded trains, trams and roadways, will enable greater accessibility to the river. Like other great river cities, we have an opportunity to offer a modern alternate transport option along Birrarung, linking key precincts and job centres. Pontoons will sit along the river, providing viewing points and access to river transport during major events. This transport option would be achievable in 3-5 years, possibly sooner given the need to connect priority precincts like Fishermens Bend. Key partners would include Public Transport Victoria, state government and waterway authorities. A key constraint that needs to be considered moving forward is the speed restriction.

The river has a strong history of transportation that has greatly diminished in recent times. This project would bring people back to the river, to engage with and appreciate the city.



Brisbane's existing ferry system offers a strong precedent
Source: The Conversation, 2015



Conceptualised river map put forward for discussion purposes

Big Ideas

Group 3

Green Family & Entertainment Spaces

This project aims to renew and increase the number of places to meet and experience the Yarra together, particularly gathering places for family and friends. The aim is to encourage visitors and residents to linger and dwell along the Yarra's edges, offering natural respite for city workers. This initiative will be achieved by filling more green spaces with picnic tables, bbq's and trees between Princes Bridge and Charles Grimes Bridge. The timeline for this would work in installments over a ten year period as pockets of green spaces are introduced. Partners would include City of Melbourne, waterways authorities and Parks Victoria.



Birrarung Marr's successful Artplay Outdoor play area
Source: ASPECT Studios, City of Melbourne, 2004



BBQ and outdoor areas on the Yarra River's edge

Source: Traveller.com.au, 2014

Big Ideas

Group 4

The Special Sandridge

Sandridge Bridge has been identified as a great space offering huge opportunity, but currently under utilised, its full potential unrealised. It offers a strong city story, historically and architecturally, but requires huge upheaval to reach functionality that would offer a new place along the river. This will include greening the bridge, continuing a green line currently running down Southbank Boulevard into Queens Bridge Square. This project would extend the green line down Sandridge Bridge, over the top of the railway line and into the city, creating an accessible public space. With the infrastructure already there, this could be driven by City of Melbourne and achieved through stakeholder collaboration.



Arup artist impression of river bridge concept



Arup artist impression of river bridge concept

Big Ideas

Group 5

Heart of Birrarung

Between Sandridge Bridge and Queens Bridge Square lies a great opportunity to better connect Southbank with the city. This area is currently lifeless and neglected, with barriers impeding access to the river's edge. Banana Alley is another contributor to this disconnected, unwelcoming environment that discourages engagement with the river. However, this convergence point offers potential for a river-embracing location that could extend the green line from the Botanic Gardens, allowing the nature that has been stripped away to return and intermingle with urban development. This type of place-making exercise would require state government involvement in conjunction with the private sector.



Eat Streets Northshore Markets, Hamilton, Queensland
Source: eatstreetmarkets.com, 2019



Arup artist impression of Banana Alley revitalization

Big Ideas

Group 6

Birrarung Square

A greater connection between the river and Federation Square would see a celebration of 60,000 years of Indigenous Australian history. This would include a green link between Birrarung Marr and Birrarung Square, decking over the train tracks east of Flinders Street Station beside Federation Square. The aim is to foster a greater relationship between the city and the river by drawing linkages across from the buildings, over the green space, to the river. Over time, this will present river-facing development opportunities. With construction on the metro tunnel underway, now is the perfect time to begin implementing this space. A collaborative approach would benefit this project, with state government leadership and partners including Vic Track, Metro, City of Melbourne and Federation Square.



Umbrella Sky project, Portugal

Source: Getty Images, 2016



Federation Square, Melbourne

Source: Tourism Australia, 2019

Big Ideas

Group 7

Return to Birrarung

This proposal stems from a need to better connect the city and the Yarra River. Reframing perceptions of the river provides an opportunity to draw on its history as the food bowl and cultural centre it was before settlement. Return to Birrarung would take a place-based approach to the whole Yarra River precinct. A series of nodes, both floating and fixed, would form a continuous network of experiences. As a unique place along the river, it would become a major visitor attraction; the thing to do when in Melbourne. These nodes will include a return to wetlands in some areas, high activation zones and food harvesting that could be utilised by local vendors. The Federation Square and Birrarung Marr precinct would be a key focus for transformation, with education and interpretation interwoven into these places, and steeped in a respectful engagement with the traditional owners of this land.



Melbourne's Night Noodle Market

Source: City of Melbourne, 2018



Arbory Afloat

Source: TimeOut, 2017

Big Ideas

Group 8

Birraconnect

Birraconnect is a return to Birrarung, and aims to turn our city to “face the front” again. With a strong focus on the North Bank of the river from Spring Street to Spencer Street, there is a vision to widen footpaths and introduce more green spaces. Under the viaduct and near the aquarium, there are opportunities to implement strategies that face the front, such as the Yarra Pool. A big shift could be achieved by 2030 with this approach, by forming a Birraconnect Authority dedicated to this reformation, and building on the existing Birrarung Council



Floating gardens Chicago Riverwalk

Source: Christian Phillips for Landzine, 2012



Bruges riverfront, Flussbad Triennale

Source: Atelier Bow-wow architecture, 2019



Big Ideas

Group 9

North Bank Activation

North Bank Activation focuses on the North Bank of the river, particularly between Sandridge Bridge and Spencer Street. It would see a continuous connection all the way along the North Bank, removing uses that currently sub-optimize this space. It would also bring focus to an increase in safety along the corridor. Improved and additional egress points to the city will be implemented to increase accessibility towards the north. River activation, such as a floating swimming pool, will link across to Southbank. Serious consideration will be required in rethinking roads that currently intersect the North Bank, and how an uninterrupted connection can be made. This calls for a masterplanning approach to the entirety of the precinct.



Liverpool City Centre Masterplan, NSW

Source: Liverpool City Council, 2017



Arup artist impression of North Bank revitalization



Thank you

Thank-you to the following organizations
for their attendance in the Yarra River Ideas
Forum

- Arts Centre Melbourne
- Arup
- Asado
- Bendigo Bank
- Better Boating Victoria
- Beulah International
- City of Melbourne
- Coleby Consulting
- Committee for Melbourne
- Creative Victoria
- Environment Protection Authority
- Eureka Skydeck
- Eureka Tower
- Federation Square
- Freshwater Place/ JLL
- GoBoat Melbourne
- Herald Sun
- Hospitality One
- HQ Group
- JCBA
- Leftbank Melbourne
- Melbourne Boat Hire
- Melbourne River Cruises
- Melbourne Showboat
- Melbourne Water
- Mirvac
- Mission to Seafarers
- Novotel South Wharf
- Parks Victoria
- Pure South
- Quest Southbank
- Rebecca Walk P/L
- Riverland Group
- Riverlee
- Sandi Sieger Social Media
- Southbank Local News
- Southbank Residents Association
- Southgate
- Venice on the Yarra
- Village Well
- Visit Victoria
- Williamstown Bay & River Cruises
- Yarra Pools
- Yarra River Cruises
- Yarra Riverkeepers Association



Appendices



Group findings

	GROUP 1	GROUP 2
Positives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Alexandra avenue has picnic areas, bike paths, botanic gardens, green spaces, community spaces (skate parks, rowing sheds) Looks healthy, alive, utilised. Feels safe, friendly, fun, relaxing, meditative. Sounds natural, lively, calm and cool, green and serene, isolated from urban zone, less congested by cars, more native animals Arbory looks; lights, colour. Feels safe, active, vibrant. Sounds busy and social Riverlee development; protects heritage crane/shed, new innovative use and connection, feels good 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parkland on river edge provides natural respite Rowing club looks open and green, sounds quiet and feels relaxing Arts Centre feels quiet and at the centre of it all Southbank has historically significant sites but looks dirty and unloved
Negatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Flinders wharf is uninviting, run down, no green space Water locks at Jeffs Shed is under utilised and bridges lock off water Enterprise Park looks cold, empty, unactivated and not looked after, feels cold and unsafe 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Southbank near Crown looks industrial, sounds empty and feels dull Batman Park looks unloved, feels unsafe, sounds noisy from helipad Railway underpass looks creepy and dirty, feels unsafe and sounds busy
Big Ideas	<p>Rename the river to Birrarung</p> <p>Move the Melbourne Star</p> <p>One governance model</p>	<p>Swimming in the river</p> <p>Night market and farmers market along water way and more cultural events</p> <p>Northbank improved park network</p>
Chosen Idea	Nodal spaces such as pontoons supporting local vendors, biotope to support river ecology and places of respite that step down to the water for Melbournians	Season events: winter festival, summer fun, Christmas markets

Group findings

	GROUP 3	GROUP 4
Positives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Love the rowing as part of history of the river, needs to connect visually with river Birrarung Marr park area looks stunning, uninterrupted and has city views, it feels green and natural offering respite, sounds quiet The Arts Centre looks; spectacular lights, watching over the river. Feels; full of buzz, relaxed walk from river full of anticipation. Sounds full of conversation before a show, quiet reflection in downtime 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Arbory: looks attractive, commercial, accessible operation, feels calm and fun, sound loud and vibrant Further down river near Birrarung Marr: looks view of city and river bend, uninterrupted, beautiful. Feels international city, natural, park both sides, open, spacious. Sounds like rowers, birds, runners, play, non city sounds, relaxed healthy Between Queens and Sandridge Bridge looks like the entrance to Melbourne, can see up and down the river to Arts Centre, feels like people on the move, happy and vibrant, sounds like Melbourne, Trams / sports festivities
Negatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Helipad is noisy, invasive and interrupting Docklands end looks empty and inactive, feels lifeless and cold, sounds quiet The rowing shed need to blend in with the park Flinders Street Station looks industrial and disconnected and feels disconnected 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Flinders Street station: Looks dirty, unwelcoming, stairwell access, Feels unsafe and dirty, sounds silent and scary Underpass: camping ground for vagrants, unprotected, noisy. Hard landscapes, dirty, unsafe, cold, empty, cars and trains Enterprise park near aquarium: looks dirty, tired, feels unsafe, sounds urban, car noises, train noises Batman Park: looks like lots of potential, large open but under used. Feels not relaxing, disconnected, unloved. Sounds like noisy, traffic, train, helicopter
Big Ideas	<p>Develop blue and green connection</p> <p>Sink the railway line</p> <p>Fly the Spine: recreational drone flights, helicopter flights, flying foxes to celebrate Bunjil story along the river</p>	<p>Convert Aquarium into a maritime museum which is opened out to face the river, aquarium relocated, integrate into museum trail</p> <p>Relay train tracks to reduce noise</p> <p>Construct an 'arch' over King Street to move pedestrian and cycling traffic seamlessly, could be Southgate or a reconciliation arch (run design competition)</p>
Chosen Idea	Prosecute all litter droppers in Melbourne and ban bikes on pedestrian promenades or walkways	Create a base for indigenous groups operating pre-1835 River History Tourism businesses - maybe in Banana Alley vaults - and properly fund these groups to build solid tourism ventures

Group findings

	GROUP 5	GROUP 6
Positives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bridges: warm and lights up the river all night, creates an atmosphere Corner of river and Flinders Street station looks like activity, boats, tourism, feels like movement and vibrancy, sounds like laughter, tourists and boat engines 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ponyfish Island: a lovely place for all to enjoy, local and guests Birrarung Marr: Good parkland, quiet, easily accessible, close to water, versatile use Fed square river edge: key front of house passenger boating destination, near public transportation, easy access, historically long term, passenger boating activity
Negatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Banana Alley: very dirty, people sleeping rough, uncomfortable feel, sounds like trains Near aquarium looks like barren wasteland, feels cold and uninviting, no sounds Bridge and Flinders Street Station corner looks dirty and smelly, sounds noisy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Queensbridge Square: hard, open space, lack of shared and sheltered green seating, work through without sound Banana Alley: looks rundown, rubbish, carparking, shabby, unsafe and underutilising opportunity, outdated and backwards facing. Inappropriate passenger boating destination, unattractive, lack of parking, no retail or activity overall Southbank near Pollywoodside feels removed
Big Ideas	<p>Uber Air Skyport at Batman Park</p> <p>Deck railway lines and make it a big park</p> <p>Improve all abilities access to the river</p>	<p>Increase passengers, boating and destination, icons, key attractions</p> <p>Masterplan for Yarra, MCG, Fed Square, Flinders Street Station, Fed Square East</p> <p>Re-development and activation of North Bank</p>
Chosen Idea	<p>Change the name of the river to Birrarung - encourage Aboriginal cultural significance</p> <p>Turn all the buildings to face the river and have open view lines and space from Fed Square to the river, make the river part of the square</p>	<p>Queens Bridge: Indigenous word for our meeting place for resting, activation. Create a true multi use biophilic and diverse place - a true rest, work, play place making destination</p>

Group findings

	GROUP 7	GROUP 8
Positives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Alexandra Gardens: Beautiful along the river, open, peaceful Activation of vaults with market events and hospitality, vertical activation Evan Walker Bridge: Elevated view of city, south bank and river, people Arbory Float and Pony Island: excellent integration of the river and food and wine 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Southbank: inviting, sunny Southbank and Arts Centre: sunlight, good food and drink, good connection to river, wide promenade, good visualisation and use Alexandra Gardens: good connection between gardens and river Best view of Melbourne under Swan Street bridge
Negatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commuter cyclist and peds conflicts north bank North Bank is narrow and can impact safety for pedestrians for major events No clear destination, wayfinding is poor Under the bridge, no direct access, Flinders Station east entry, doesn't feel good, no direct and visible access to river in south side 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Near Sydney Myer Music Bowl, not used falling in Tall building right on the river Call outs rubbish at low tide Aquarium: too concrete, train line along river, uninviting, poor view from water Flinders street to Elizabeth Street crossing: ugly, not great use of public space, needs to stay low so don't block sun on other side
Big Ideas	<p>Water display with laser lights telling an indigenous story - become a destination</p> <p>Greening Queens Bridge square</p> <p>Continuity of green spine connection from botanical garden to river in Southbank Boulevard (south bank structural plan stage 6)</p>	<p>Close Alexandra Parade and make it a park to connect both gardens and domain with river</p> <p>Well being spots, meditation, yoga, exercise stations</p> <p>Recognise history of primary production: bakers, brewery, distilling, roastery</p>
Chosen Idea	Flinders Street "big idea", governance critical, formal river management committee	

Group findings

	GROUP 9	GROUP 10
Positives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Arts Centre: Cultural life - enjoyment, inspired Birrarung Marr: Happy, peaceful, engaging with event Peaceful, relaxing (Yarra's edge) Fresh, open, accessible, nature History (maritime), essence of river, mission to seafarers, green 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Activated spaces: Bars and F+B Important world arts destination Arbory: connected, fun, accessible Activation rowing Parks and open spaces in Birrarung Marr and Alexandria Park
Negatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Along Flinders Street Station river edge cluttered and inaccessible Southbank Promenade: stressed, busy, noisy Enterprise Park: unkept, untidy, uninviting, dull Seafarers: under redevelopment, was/is underdeveloped and unsafe, neglected, dark, overshadowed, traffic, pollution, noise 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Southbank: too commercial, harsh No bridge between Birrarung Marr and Alexandria Gardens Fed square to Birrarung Marr access is poor Flinders Street Station river edge: poor experience, circulation access, egress, train line barrier access North bank neglect
Big Ideas	<p>Open space outside Crown Casino managed by council</p> <p>Bridge between Birrarung Marr and Alexandra Gardens</p> <p>Highline between river and Docklands</p> <p>Identification of river landmarks and make them link</p>	<p>Cultural destinations including educational along river</p> <p>Cover and sound proof train tracks</p> <p>Make Rebecca Walk a destination</p>
Chosen Idea	River public transport	Clean up river, social responsibility: homeless, youth, indigenous, shared governance and shared vision, reinstate Elizabeth creek into Yarra

Moments from the day









Prepared for

Yarra River Business Association, VIC

Prepared by

Arup

Sky Park, One Melbourne Quarter
699 Collins Street, Docklands VIC 3008

Tel: (03) 9668 5500

For further information, please contact

Mark Rowland

Associate, City Planning

Australasian Transport Market Leader, **Arup**

Mark.Rowland@arup.com

(03) 9663 1546

John Forman

President

Yarra River Business Association Inc.

john.forman@eurekaskydeck.com.au

0405 144 934

ARUP



YARRA RIVER BUSINESS ASSOCIATION

**RESEARCH & INSIGHTS
2021**



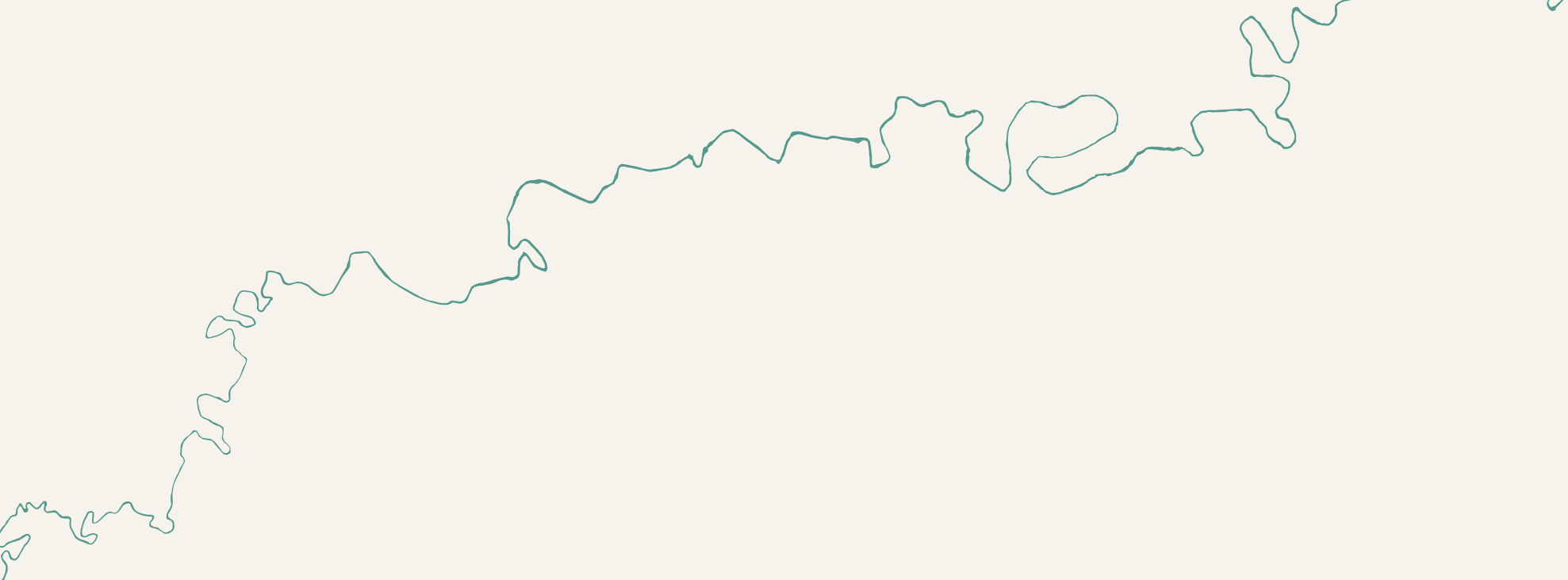
Yarra River Business
Association Inc

**Right Angle
Studio**

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

The Yarra River Business Association respectfully acknowledges the traditional owners of the land, the Boon Wurrung and Woiwurrung (Wurundjeri) people of the Kulin Nation and pays respect to their elders, past, present and emerging.





WURUNDJERI FOREWORD FOR
THE YARRA RIVER COMMUNITY VISION

The Wurundjeri believe that we need to change how all Victorians think about and actively respect the Birrarung.

We believe we need to see it not as a resource to be exploited but rather to recognise the complex, living system that is sensitive to its surrounds and a uniquely Victorian treasure.

The YRBA caters to the current and future needs of a diverse community – providing distinct value by connecting people, facilitating growth and developing potential throughout one of Melbourne’s most iconic precincts.



CONTENTS

06 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

08 RESEARCH

- 09 Overview
- 10 Methodology
- 11 Place
- 13 People
- 15 Purpose

16 RESULTS

- 17 Overview
- 18 Comprehension & Engagement
- 26 Benefits
- 27 Aspirations

30 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 31 Control, Influence, Concern
- 32 Where to from Here
- 33 Offer
- 34 Identity
- 36 Value

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

BUILDING THE FUTURE OF THE YARRA TOGETHER

The Yarra River Precinct is a key piece of the puzzle that makes Melbourne such an engaging city. Understanding the needs and hopes of the businesses, organisations and people that bring the location to life is paramount.

The 2021 Stakeholder Survey began as an opportunity for Yarra River Business Association (YRBA) members to reflect on what they thought the Association had done well in the past while illuminating ways it might deliver value in the future.

Th work quickly became a chance to better understand member needs and wants for the future of the Yarra River Precinct (YRP).

Summarised here and combined with desktop research, their insights form the basis for better understanding how the YRBA might deliver services that meet and exceed their expectations now and in years to come.

DEFINE DATA

Gained through contextual research and qualitative interviews, member's understanding of how people see the Association and the precinct provide the foundation for what they think is preferable and possible.

DEVELOP INSIGHTS

With a diverse member base, homing in on how people view the YRBA being most effective in the past and what they want from the Association in the future creates a rich tapestry to critically analyse value.

DELIVER CLARITY

Data and insights are only useful when they're used, and the analysis of quantitative and qualitative data points to key moves and opportunities for the YRBA to meet member and precinct needs.



RESEARCH

RESEARCH OVERVIEW

Developing a comprehensive picture of both the YRBA and the Yarra River Precinct requires a foundation based in place, people and purpose – an understanding of the precinct, those who activate it and the commercial and cultural trends that shed light on the future.

PLACE



THE YARRA RIVER PRECINCT

With a wide range of forces, interests and responsibilities actively shaping the future of the precinct, grasping the essential trends is necessary to accurately understand how the area will evolve.

What we achieved...

A clear understanding of the trends that will shape the future of the Yarra River Precinct.

PEOPLE



STAKEHOLDERS & MEMBERS

Waterways have long been melting pots that attract a dynamic mix of people coming together to make a place that transcends each individual's intent and capability – this waterway is no different.

What we achieved...

A snapshot of the people who bring the Association and the Yarra River Precinct to life.

PURPOSE



COMMERCE & CULTURE

Defining an economic and cultural snapshot for the precinct highlights the opportunities that the Association can capitalise on and deliver to, fostering an environment for sustainable growth and change.

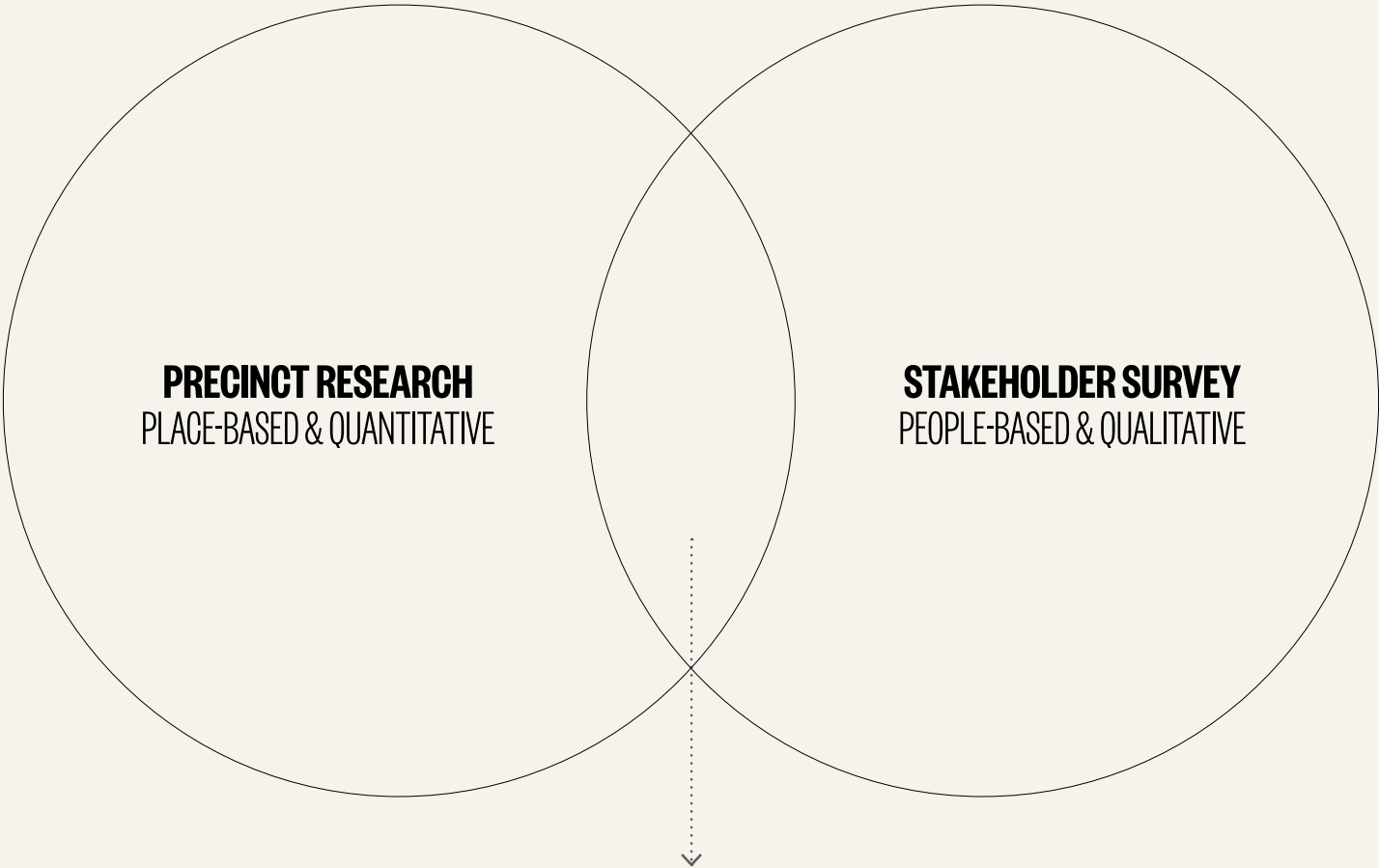
What we achieved...

A useful overview of the ways that the precinct is evolving into a 21st century cultural destination.

RESEARCH
METHODOLOGY

UNDERSTANDING PLACE & PEOPLE

Though primarily a qualitative exercise grounded in interview methods meant to uncover how people see the YRBA and the Yarra River Precinct, the supplemental quantitative information provides a better foundation for how trends within the precinct might affect member experiences and issues.



ACTIONABLE INSIGHT

Incorporating useful data with the nuanced way that people think of and describe issues develops a more robust understanding of the situation – most importantly, it can lead to actionable insight.

PLACE

A BENCHMARK FOR AN URBAN WATERWAY PRECINCT

Far from the industrial past that eschewed a holistic connection to the waterway, the strategy for the Yarra now looks to the long history from traditional owners and the future visions of healthy cities to develop an active destination and global benchmark.

“Many cities around the world embrace their rivers and in Melbourne we have an exciting opportunity to transform our waterfront. The Yarra River is one of our most important assets and we are at a pivotal point for its future.”

– Sally Capp, Lord Mayor Melbourne

YARRA RIVER PRECINCT DRIVERS

01

Return to the River

From physical, cultural, social and economic perspectives, an inclusive and active waterway provides the foundation for a unique and iconic destination.

03

A Meaningful Place

With substantial destination anchors established, returning focus to the Aboriginal and maritime history of the area will further deepen how people see the Yarra.

02

High-density Living

Continually evolving urban living around the river will continue to grow, creating an attractive and active environment for residential city living.

04

A Big Body Clock

Through a rich mix of different activities and programming, the precinct invites people to engage from morning to night and throughout the year.

PLACE

PRECINCT POTENTIAL & PRECEDENTS

Exceptional precedents for restored urban waterways, parks and precincts abound, and many offer useful insights. But what about the future of the Yarra River Precinct can be unique to Melbourne? Birrarung is ready to become a true benchmark for iconic city rivers.

“We want to know what the YRBA thinks the future of the Yarra River Precinct is – how they see it evolving.”

– City of Melbourne

BRYANT PARK NYC



With Bryant Park on the brink of falling into complete disarray, the Bryant Park Corporation formed in the 1980s to restore the historic public space. The primary redevelopment spearheaded by the management and board is the largest effort in the US to apply private management backed by private funding to a public park.



NEWACTON CANBERRA



Balancing curated and uncurated spaces, NewActon is an innovative cultural precinct where people feel comfortable and which champions the everyday over the extraordinary. The blending of both destination and daily life brings NewActon to life, activating the spaces with diverse audiences.



RIVERWALK CHICAGO



The rebirth of the similarly disinvested, over-industrialised and stigmatised Chicago River resulted in an active destination with many of the same traits and trials of the Yarra River Precinct. They've solved many of them and delivered an iconic destination.



HIGH LINE NYC



Almost everyone wants a High Line. But the interesting development of the green spine of NYC might be more around the business growth that sprouted around the park. As a true park for profit, the High Line catalysed growth in the area and reshaped the neighbourhood.

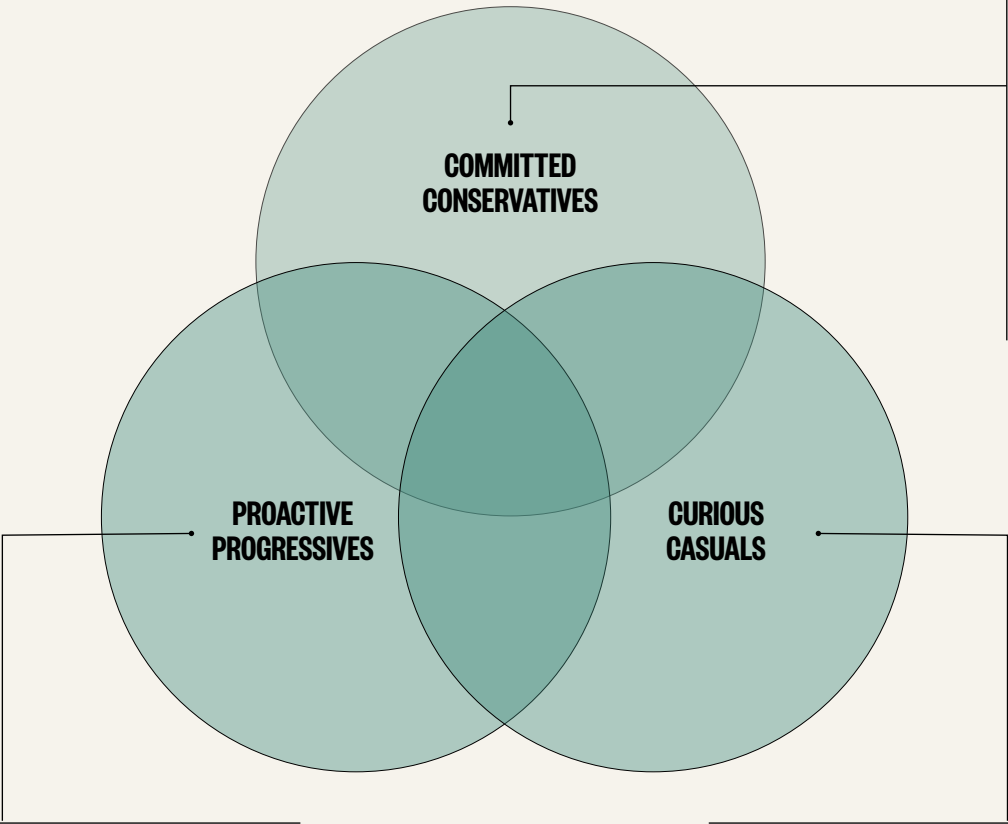


PEOPLE

A DIVERSE COMMUNITY

Though the stakeholders and members come from diverse industries with distinct needs, finding commonalities between them illustrates where current and future needs and wants may align.

Drawing on their level of engagement and literacy around the Yarra River Precinct and the YRBA, these audience typologies are defined by their attitudes towards the true nature and role of the YRBA – providing the foundation for assessing how best to communicate with and provide services to them.



Who We Are

We see the YRBA as an organisation with a strong track record and altering the course may do more harm than good.

What We Want

A sound and feasible approach to how the YRBA evolves.

What We Need

Strong metrics and clear outcomes.

Who We Are

We are motivated and ready to build our businesses and the precinct as a whole towards a bright future.

What We Want

A fresh vision for the precinct and a diverse group of committed people to realise it.

What We Need

Clear ways to achieve big goals.

Who We Are

We have cursory understanding of the YRBA's services and value – we aren't sure how it can benefit us.

What We Want

Short-term benefits that help our businesses with immediate needs.

What We Need

Guidance on how to use services to the fullest.

PEOPLE

PARTICIPANT SNAPSHOT

Geographically aligned and categorically diverse, the participants provide a broad representation of stakeholders committed to the future of the Yarra River Precinct.

- ARTS & EDUCATION

01

Photography Studies College

02

University of Melbourne, Southbank Campus

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT, HOSPITALITY & EVENTS

03

Arts Centre Melbourne

04

Fed Square

06

Sandi Sieger

COMMUNITY

06

The Mission to Seafarers Victoria

07

Southbank Residents Association

08

South Wharf Association

09

St John's Lutheran Church

FOOD & BEVERAGE

10

Arbory Afloat

11

Asado

12

BearBrass

13

Belgian Beer Cafe

14

The Boatbuilders Yard

15

The General Assembly

16

Grazeland Melbourne

17

Hophaus Euro Bar Bistro

18

La Camera Southgate

19

Left Bank Melbourne Restaurant & Cocktail Bar

20

Ludlow Bar & Dining Room

21

Pilgrim Bar

22

PJ O'Brien's Irish Pub

23

Ponyfish Island

24

Red Rock Venues

25

Riverland Bar

GOVERNMENT

26

City of Melbourne

27

Parks Victoria

28

Victoria Tourism Industry Council

HOSPITALITY, HOTEL & ENTERTAINMENT

29

Clarion Suites Gateway

30

Quest Southbank

MEDIA & ADVERTISING

31

Hyperlocal News

PROPERTY DEVELOPMENT & ASSET MANAGEMENT

32

Riverlee

33

ARA Asset Management Ltd – Southgate

RETAIL

34

DFO South Wharf

35

WTC Wharf Melbourne

RIVER OPERATORS – CRUISE/EXPERIENCES, TRANSPORT, ETC

36

Bay & River Cruises

37

Classic Steamboat Cruises

38

GoBoat Melbourne

39

The Lady Cutler Melbourne Showboat

40

Melbourne River Cruises

41

Melbourne Water Taxis

42

Microflite - Melbourne Heliport

43

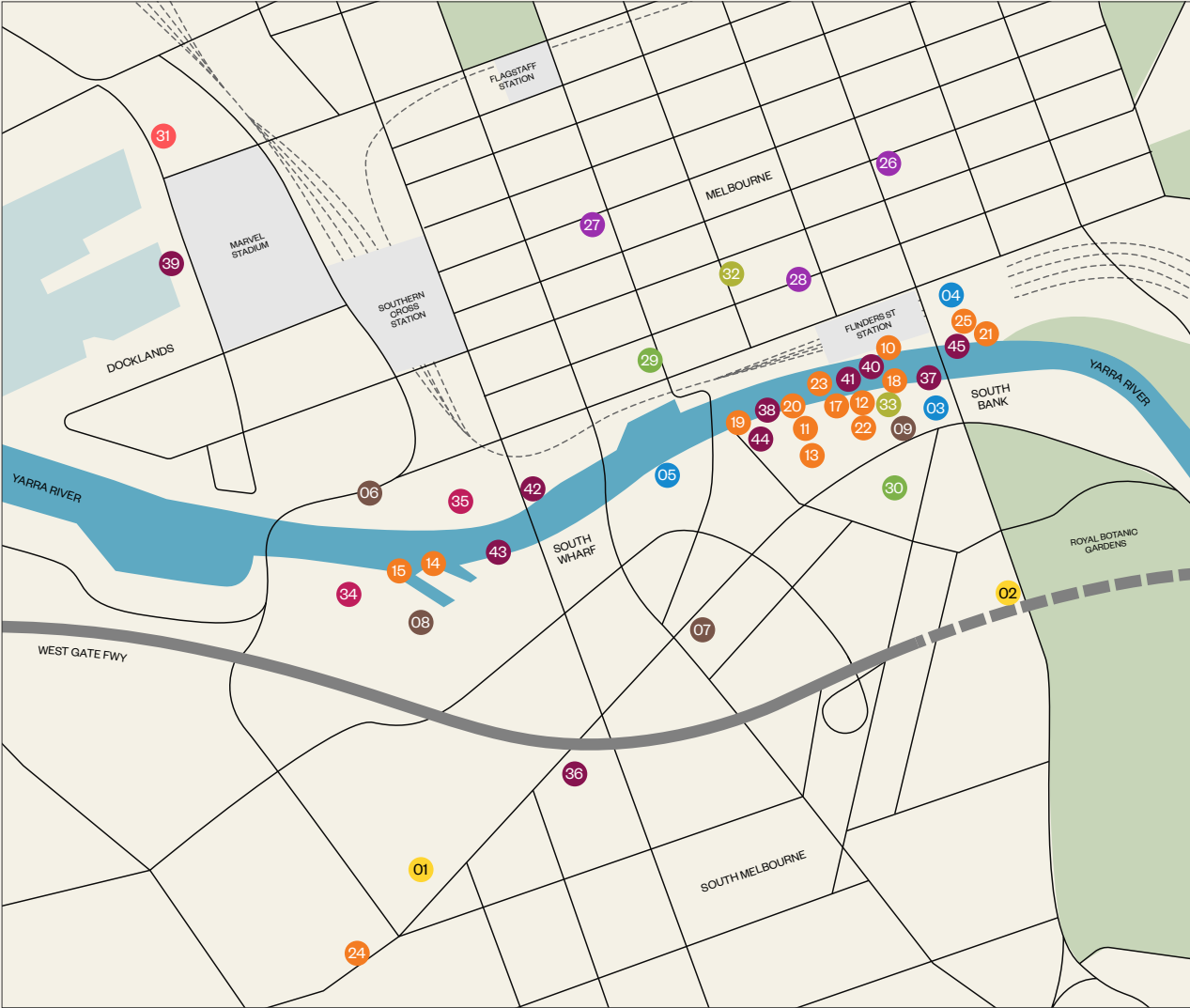
Venice on the Yarra

44

Williamstown Ferries

45

Yarra River Cruises



PURPOSE

COMMERCE & CULTURE

As the jobs and industry in an area change, so follows a cultural shift. Using the changes in South Bank to highlight indicative shifts in the entire precinct, cultural shifts around the way people work in the precinct can illustrate potential trends of importance.

“South Bank has been transforming into an extension of the Central City.”

– CLUE

SOUTH BANK SNAPSHOT

KEY STATISTICS

29,047

Population 2021

47,051

Number of jobs

972

Number of commercial establishments

13,784

Number of residential apartments

10 YEAR GROWTH - 2009-2019

+27.4%

Jobs in South Bank

+97.98%

Cafe and restaurants seats

+61.0%

Casual jobs

Top Industries by Number of Jobs

Arts & Recreation Services	8.8K
Business Services	8.0K
Food & Beverage Services	4.4K

Notable Increase in Industry

Retail Trade	+58.5%
Food & Beverage Services	+98.5%
Business Services	+58.5%

Notable Decrease in Industry

Arts & Recreation Services	-10.0%
Information Media & Telecommunications	-42.6%
Manufacturing	-5.0%

Notable Increase by Space Type

Accommodation floorspace	+95.3%
Parking floorspace	+51.4%
Office floorspace	+7.0%

2019 YARRA RIVER PRECINCT - CLUE JOBS & ESTABLISHMENTS TOTAL



CLUE BLOCK	JOB	COMMERCIAL ESTABLISHMENTS
1112	33	10
131	5466	38
1	808	24
2	195	4
4	713	38
6	868	40
655	516	8
659	4304	13
850	40	13
752	798	15
753	6431	109
801	5851	72
802	5825	80
803	8793	67
804	4651	226
TOTAL	45,292	757

Source: Census of Land Use and Employment (CLUE) 2019 & .idcommunity

RESULTS

RESULTS

OVERVIEW

The Stakeholder Survey generated a range of observations about both the YRBA and the Yarra River Precinct. The former portion of the investigation directed focus on how people comprehend and engage with the YRBA, while the latter centred on their hopes and aspirations for both the Association and the precinct.

COMPREHENSION & ENGAGEMENT

Gauging the primary ways that people understand the definition, function and services of the YRBA shows how members comprehend and engage with the Association.

What this means for the YRBA...
How people think of and interact with services points to what the YRBA might keep or improve while highlighting potential opportunities.

BENEFITS

Within that spectrum of understanding, focusing on how people apply value to the YRBA helps illustrate how members place importance on and navigate needs with the Association.

What this means for the YRBA...
Direct and indirect benefits from the Association aren't understood in the same way – this may help guide decisions about future resources.

ASPIRATIONS

Hopes and concerns for the future of the Yarra River Precinct need to be framed within how people define the location – that will help bring a better picture of their aspirations to light.

What this means for the YRBA...
Defining the Yarra River Precinct is more of an evolution than a set task, but that facilitation and spearheading is where the YRBA can really shine.

COMPREHENSION & ENGAGEMENT

WHO WE ARE & WHAT WE DO

WHO THE YRBA IS

Beyond the words 'business' and 'association', virtually no two participants had the same definition of the YRBA. There was an understanding that the Association helps businesses, but clarity on the who, what and why was vague. Occasionally some respondents thought the Association was only for restaurants or a tourism body for City of Melbourne.

WHAT THE YRBA DOES

Similarly, most participants were aware of either the advocacy or marketing arms of the Association, but rarely were they able to articulate the full range of services.

Increased clarity and transparency about the role, organisation and mission of the YRBA will help build a more cohesive and committed member base.

Challenges

- Ensuring members understand what the Association is and how it operates.

Opportunities

- Clarifying the history, evolution, intention and vision for the YRBA.

Challenges

- Communicating the diverse offer to a wide range of audiences.

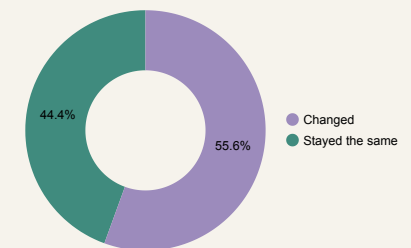
Opportunities

- Providing accessible ways to understand function and value.
- Being clear about how the Association provides value to members and the public.

"It's an industry body that gives an opportunity to communicate with members and great connection to council, wish I knew more and participated more – I've taken more than I've given."

"I think it's a group of people with a vested interest in a part of Melbourne, looking for key areas in cooperation – marketing, insight sharing, etc – to feed each other."

CHANGING PERCEPTIONS



Slightly more people believe the Association has changed over time. The majority of those that noted a shift in perception were positive.

Positive Changes

- Become more professional, matured
- A better digital presence, relevant
- Trying to get more people involved
- More focused on big ideas

Negative Changes

- A bit in the shadows

"My perception completely changed. I reckon they were really awesome. Had a great interview with them the other day – one of the best articles generated that we've ever had."

COMPREHENSION & ENGAGEMENT

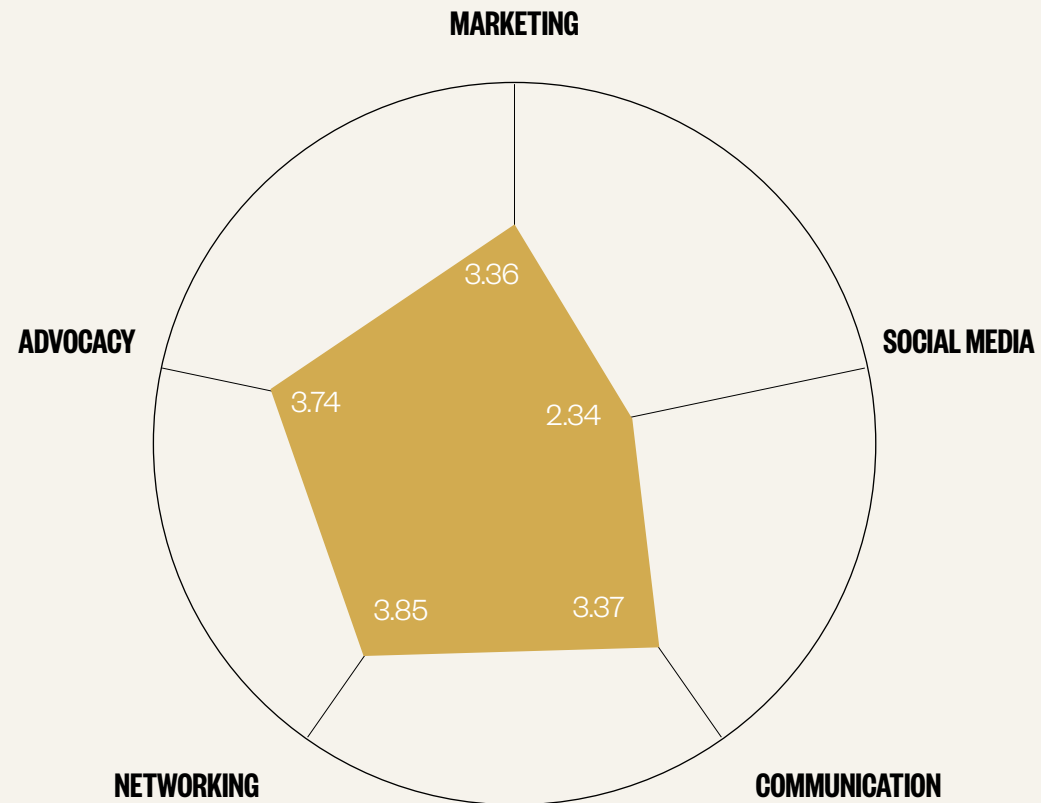
SERVICES SNAPSHOT

The average scores for each of the primary services point to perceived strengths and areas for improvement. Though members may have had a higher score for overall marketing efforts, they were often unsure about specific campaigns or social media efforts.

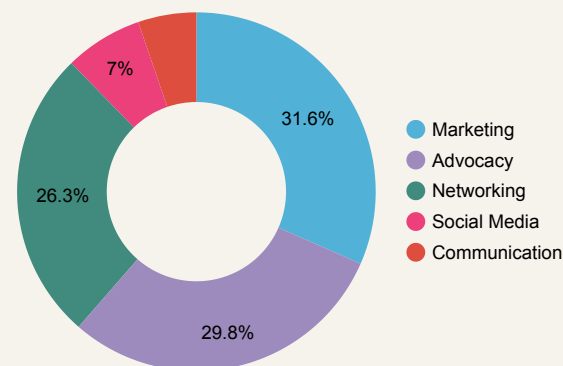
When asked which services were most important to their businesses, participants placed marketing and advocacy slightly above networking. The most common answer when asked about least valuable services was that they were all important – highlighting the varied needs of the diverse member base.

51.4%

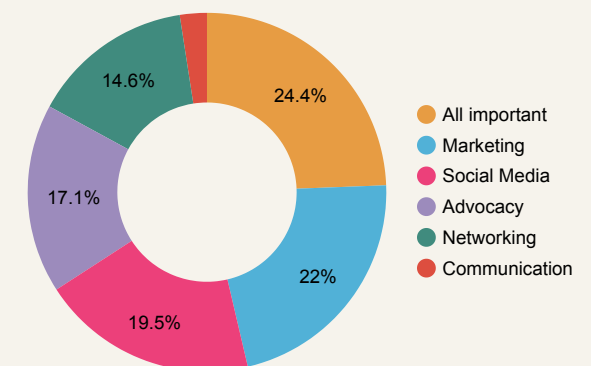
of participants feel they do not fully understand or utilise all of the services on offer.



MOST VALUABLE SERVICES TO MEMBER BUSINESSES



LEAST VALUABLE SERVICES TO MEMBER BUSINESSES



COMPREHENSION & ENGAGEMENT

ADVOCACY

Advocacy regularly surfaced as one of the best things that the YRBA has done in the past. Though this core service is an important part of the overall offer from the YRBA and many members view the development, management and execution within the entire advocacy ecosystem as good, there are some places where improvement was noted.

IMPORTANCE OF SERVICE

29.8%
of participants rated advocacy as the most important service offered by the YRBA.

“The benefit is from connection – advocacy. One big ticket item makes it all worthwhile. When Tim connected me to council it was a six figure win for me.”

TO KEEP

The contacts and relationships fostered with key players in business and government are seen as a major strength. When members are aware and across the service, there is a perception that the YRBA “punches above their weight” and facilitates diverse stakeholders well.

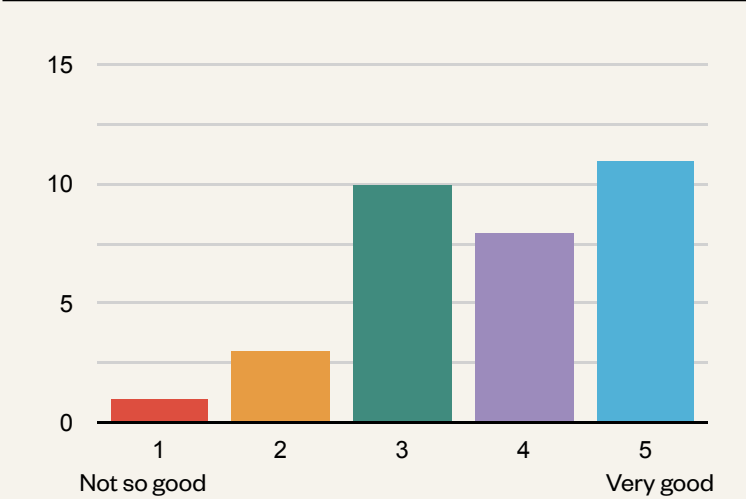
TO IMPROVE

The primary areas noted for improvement revolve around efficacy and transparency. Some members are wary that attention and support is weighted unfairly, particularly if more prominent members are the landlords of smaller businesses. Everyone wants to see more “behind closed doors”.

WHAT WE HEARD

- “The Big Ideas Forum was one of their most successful efforts.”
- “As a small advocacy organisation, they can wave the poster, but I’m not sure if the voice is actually effective.”
- “YRBA may need a dedicated person for advocacy.”
- “I don’t think most people understand advocacy.”

SERVICE RATING



OPPORTUNITIES

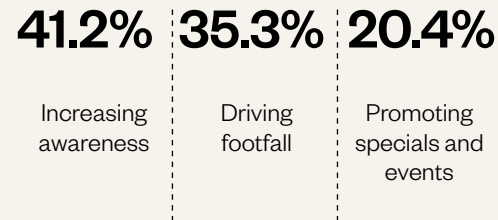
- Providing a more accessible and deeper explanation of the entire advocacy process may help educate members on what to expect from the service.
- Distributing regular communications about the outcomes and efficacy of a variety of advocacy efforts may show members active transparency.

COMPREHENSION & ENGAGEMENT MARKETING

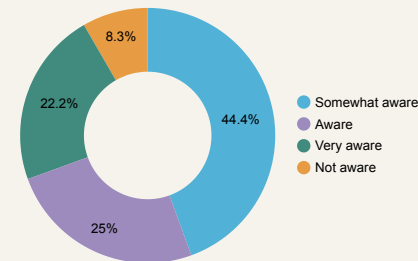
Members have differing views on both the quality and the fundamental role of the marketing service offered by YRBA. Depending on the maturity of some of the organisations, the role of the marketing service may be seen as a way to promote individual businesses. But, the majority of members see the role as promoting the entire precinct.

Note: This is a contentious area where members may view the service as something they directly pay for and therefore should receive a variety of expected benefits from.

MOST IMPORTANT MARKETING OUTCOMES



AWARENESS OF YRBA MARKETING ACTIVITIES



IMPORTANCE OF SERVICE

31.6%
of participants rated marketing as the most important service offered by the YRBA.

TO KEEP

The YRBA is regarded as a strong facilitator for stakeholders, and the marketing strategy is occasionally regarded as equitable.

TO IMPROVE

The main member issues related to value, capability, efficacy and the types of marketing wanted. Some members may want marketing assistance while more mature businesses may not. Clarity around the marketing strategy is needed.

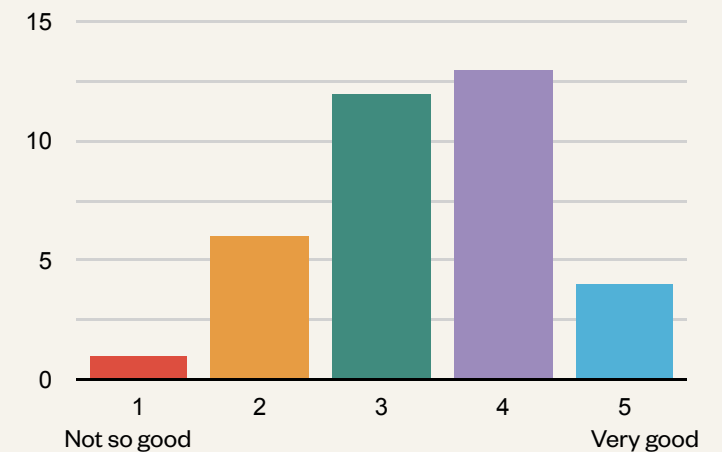
WHAT WE HEARD

“Are there robust resources to do this effectively? Is it possible to work with people that have expertise in this?”

“The role should be more about the precinct as a whole, it’s not reasonable for a business to expect them to do their marketing for them.”

“They do try to hit as many members as they can, but that’s a big flaw. Ensuring that everything is equitable means that the campaigns are too general to have impact.”

SERVICE RATING



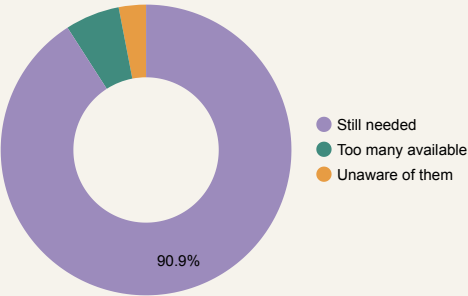
OPPORTUNITIES

- Deciding how this service is most effective for the precinct and members – a fundamentally important decision.
- Focusing more on the precinct than individual businesses may provide a more manageable marketing plan.
- Utilising the City of Melbourne's offer to provide more content and marketing assistance.
- Continuing to explore experiential and events-based marketing solutions that work for the precinct.

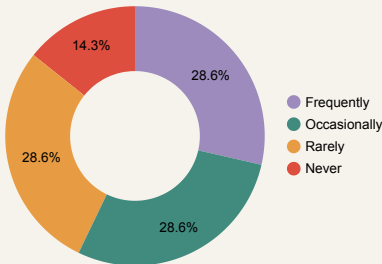
COMPREHENSION & ENGAGEMENT NETWORKING

As one of the most easily understood services, networking ranks high as a valuable asset to the YRBA ecosystem of benefits. Members regularly noted the effective and personal nature of face-to-face interaction. However, some members preferred networking events with topics and speakers that aligned more to their industry and upskilling opportunities.

ARE BUSINESS NETWORKING EVENTS STILL NEEDED?



YRBA MEMBER FUNCTION ATTENDANCE



TO KEEP

This is a core offer for the YRBA and though members lament their inability to be involved more, they regularly noted the value of the service. Aligning the diverse member group is a key value for the Association.

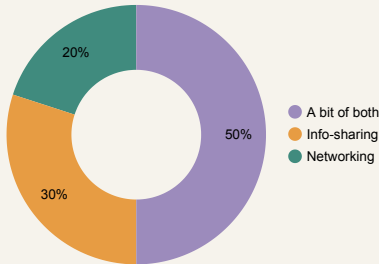
TO IMPROVE

Members noted that opportunities to diversify the networking events would be welcome. A range of speakers from government and industry, upskilling in marketing and social media and reporting on updates from previous advocacy efforts were all wanted by members.

WHAT WE HEARD

- “Networking is only as good as the people that want to network. Some members don’t use the association as much as they could.”
- “Good but needs to be far more adaptable. Focus has always been face to face – could bring new elements in.”
- “One of YRBA’s primary strengths, must continue.”

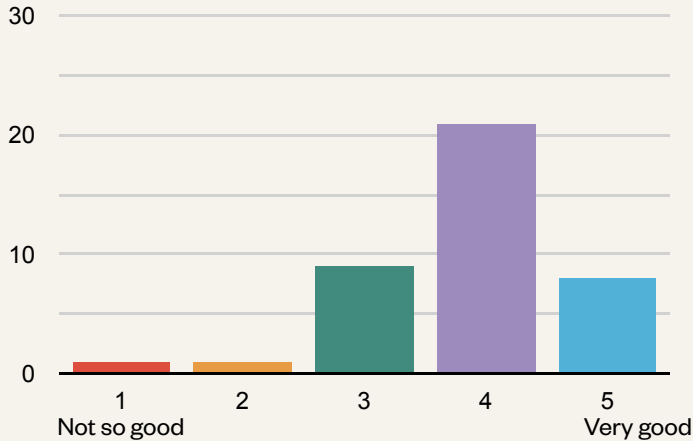
TYPE OF EVENTS WANTED



POSSIBLE FUTURE EVENTS

Industry-specific was the most popular type of event that members wanted to see more of in the future.

SERVICE RATING



OPPORTUNITIES

- Developing a new range of member events that focus on industry-specific or upskilling options may increase member engagement.
- Focusing on big picture strategy could be supplemented with more basic business coaching, recognising that not all members need the same type of assistance and events.

COMPREHENSION & ENGAGEMENT COMMUNICATION

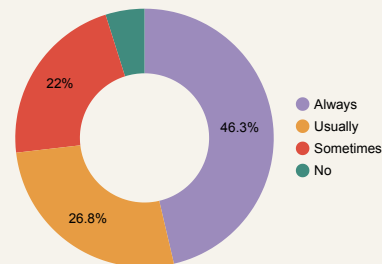
To better understand communications versus marketing, participants were asked to think about the YRBA in terms of both internal and external comms. Internal communications were centred around specific elements like EDMs as well as the ease and efficacy of communicating with the Association.

HOW MEMBERS CONTACT THE YRBA

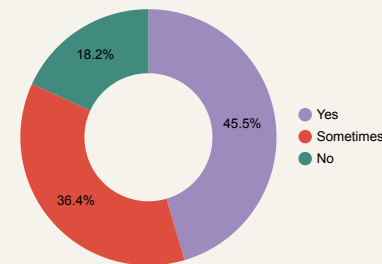
93.1%

of participants “just contact Tim” to get in contact with the YRBA – all find the process very easy.

HOW OFTEN MEMBERS READ THE EDM



HOW OFTEN THEY FIND THE CONTENT USEFUL



MOST POPULAR TYPE OF CONTENT

82.1%

of participants are looking for information about upcoming events and general news.

TO KEEP

Internal communications are highly regarded. Engagement with e-bulletins and the personal nature of contact give members a thorough, consistent and accessible way to communicate with the YRBA.

TO IMPROVE

Some members mentioned a desire to be more involved in decision-making processes across the Association and that includes internal communications.

WHAT WE HEARD

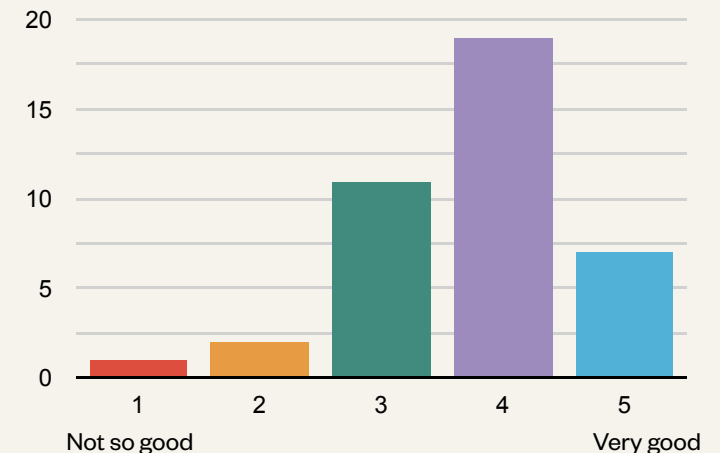
“The newsletter is really good. It’s informative with a good mix of info and tips. The website is fantastic and details all the roles different agencies play – nobody maps that governance stuff.”

“Internal comms are a bit stronger than the external. I don’t know if the YRBA knows what it’s supposed to do.”

“I think it’s very regular, but it’s about the traction. There’s a question about uptake.”

“Keep doing what they’re doing.”

SERVICE RATING



OPPORTUNITIES

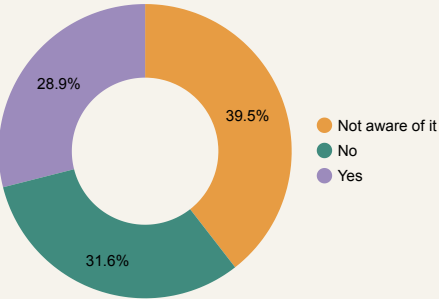
- Determining the primary function of internal versus external comms may help to determine the most important features of the EDM.
- Balancing news and events with content that reports on advocacy may help increase transparency.

COMPREHENSION & ENGAGEMENT

SOCIAL MEDIA

Focusing on a specific element of marketing like social media allowed participants to think in greater depth about how they view the overall digital identity and strategy for the YRBA. However, many were unaware of the service and what might be required of them to engage properly.

USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA SERVICE



TO KEEP

When participants were aware of the service, they were primarily positive about recent growth and changes. The updated approach resonated with members and they were pleased to see more attention on dynamic digital outputs over print.

TO IMPROVE

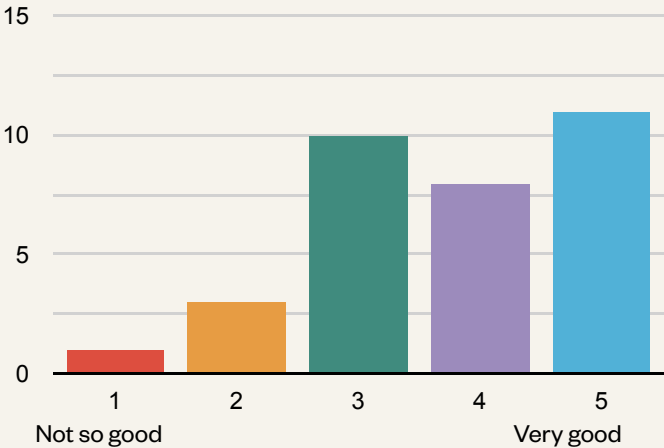
Many members have a comprehensive marketing engine in place while others have limited capabilities. Most participants seemed unclear on an overall social media or marketing strategy. This may lead to them gauging how often their individual business is represented rather than seeing a holistic approach to promoting the precinct.

WHAT WE HEARD

- “Greatly improved, would have scored 1 a year ago.”
- “The YRBA is too Southbank-Centric.”
- “It’s dependent on you producing content. What would be useful is to pick up content already produced on social media and reamplify that.”
- “Very biased to specific operators and businesses, committee members get more attention.”

“Social media and marketing are important for our tenants. They see it and they see the benefit.”

SERVICE RATING



OPPORTUNITIES

- Determining if the social media strategy is intended to promote the precinct and/or individual businesses may help alleviate member concerns and promote internal alignment.
- Communicating with members how the social media strategy is developed, managed and delivered may increase engagement.

COMPREHENSION & ENGAGEMENT

YARRARIVER. MELBOURNE

Like many aspects of the YRBA and the precinct, the brand and the website proves to be a divisive point of contention. Participants are roughly equally split between keep it, update it and no opinion. That said, those who wanted to keep it had less formed and resolved reasons for doing so than those who wanted to update the brand and website.

TO KEEP

The precinct approach to the website is something that resonated with most members – it was one of the less confusing elements of the site.

TO IMPROVE

Many members didn't know yarrariver.melbourne is run by the YRBA. Further, there are a number of choices that need to be worked through so the site aligns to the overall future strategy.

WHAT WE HEARD

“This feels like walking into a house party. I’m not sure if it’s starting or ending.”

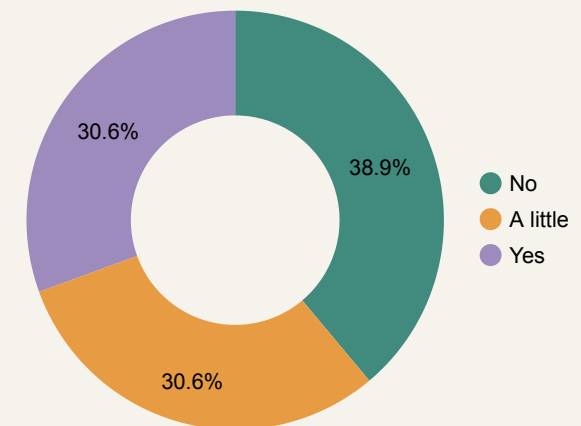
“I’m not confident that a visitor or local would go to that site? Why would they go there? Is it for members only? If they’re coming to the area for tourism there are plenty of other sites to look at.”

“The destination itself is undersold. This needs to be a destination for all of Melbourne and a major tourist attraction.”

“It’s fun and bright, less corporate, could lean more to doing that brand only – don’t need the YRBA corporate branding.”

Unclear brand strategy and digital objectives may be leading to a lack of alignment among members.

DOES THE YARRARIVER.MELBOURNE BRAND ALIGN WITH YOUR BUSINESS OR THE PUBLIC?



OPPORTUNITIES

- Determining if this brand truly represents the future Yarra River Precinct.
- Focusing on low-maintenance, easy wins.
- Determining who the site is for and what it's supposed to do will help define the optimal features and design elements.
- Ensuring elements that mimic city listing approaches (calendars, directories, etc) are actually worth the work.

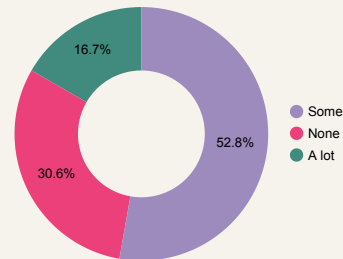
BENEFITS

UNDERSTANDING DIRECT & INDIRECT BENEFIT

Determining value can be tricky. Participants responded to questions ranging from the monetary worth of their membership to their emotional reaction to the Association. Through a varied set of lenses including potential engagement on the board, it's clear that the YRBA is a fundamentally valued organisation.

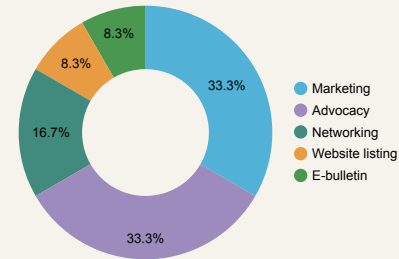
Direct and indirect benefit weren't always understood in the same way among participants. Some of it may depend on the maturity of the business and operator. Are they interested in or able to work towards long-term goals? Can they see the uplift of the precinct as a benefit to their business? If they are a young business or in a precarious situation, then direct benefit also mean immediate benefit, i.e. increased sales.

YRBA'S DIRECT BENEFIT TO BUSINESSES



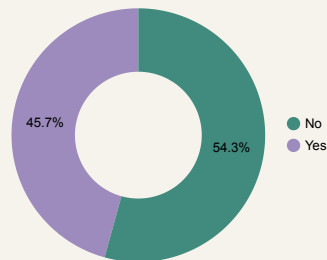
"We get direct benefit through connection with other businesses in the area when Tim makes introductions."

MOST BENEFICIAL ASPECTS



"I don't think we get a direct benefit, but the indirect is enough. There's no way they can give direct benefit – don't have scope or resources."

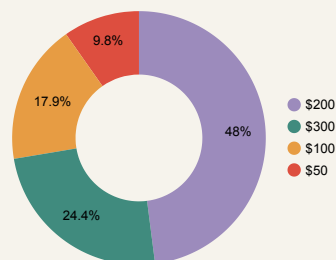
INTEREST IN PARTICIPATING ON THE BOARD



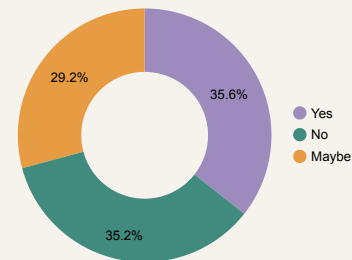
This is fairly high uptake and hopefully the numbers will convert to a substantial increase in interest.

"I'm not sure if the board is very diverse. I think this exercise is a step in the right direction, but what are they going to do with this information? What's the outcome?"

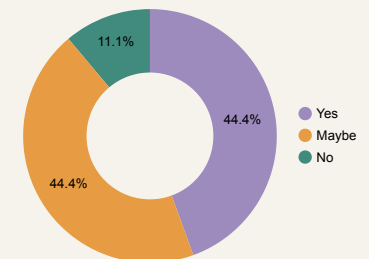
MEMBERSHIP FEE = GOOD VALUE



WOULD YOU PAY MORE FOR NEW SERVICES?



WOULD THE AREA SUFFER WITHOUT YRBA?



EMOTIONAL REACTION TO LOSS OF YRBA

58.1% 38.7% 03.2%

Disappointment
& devastation

No reaction

Wouldn't be
surprised

Though a number of people showed ambivalence towards the YRBA, a greater number were significantly emotionally invested.

WHAT TYPES OF SERVICES?

"More events."

"Business coaching."

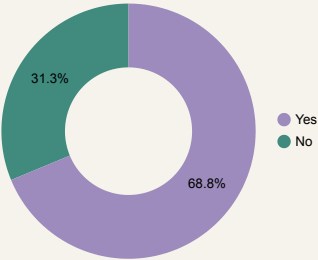
"Expanded networking to include direct introduction and facilitation to build festivals."

ASPIRATIONS

YARRA RIVER BUSINESS ASSOCIATION

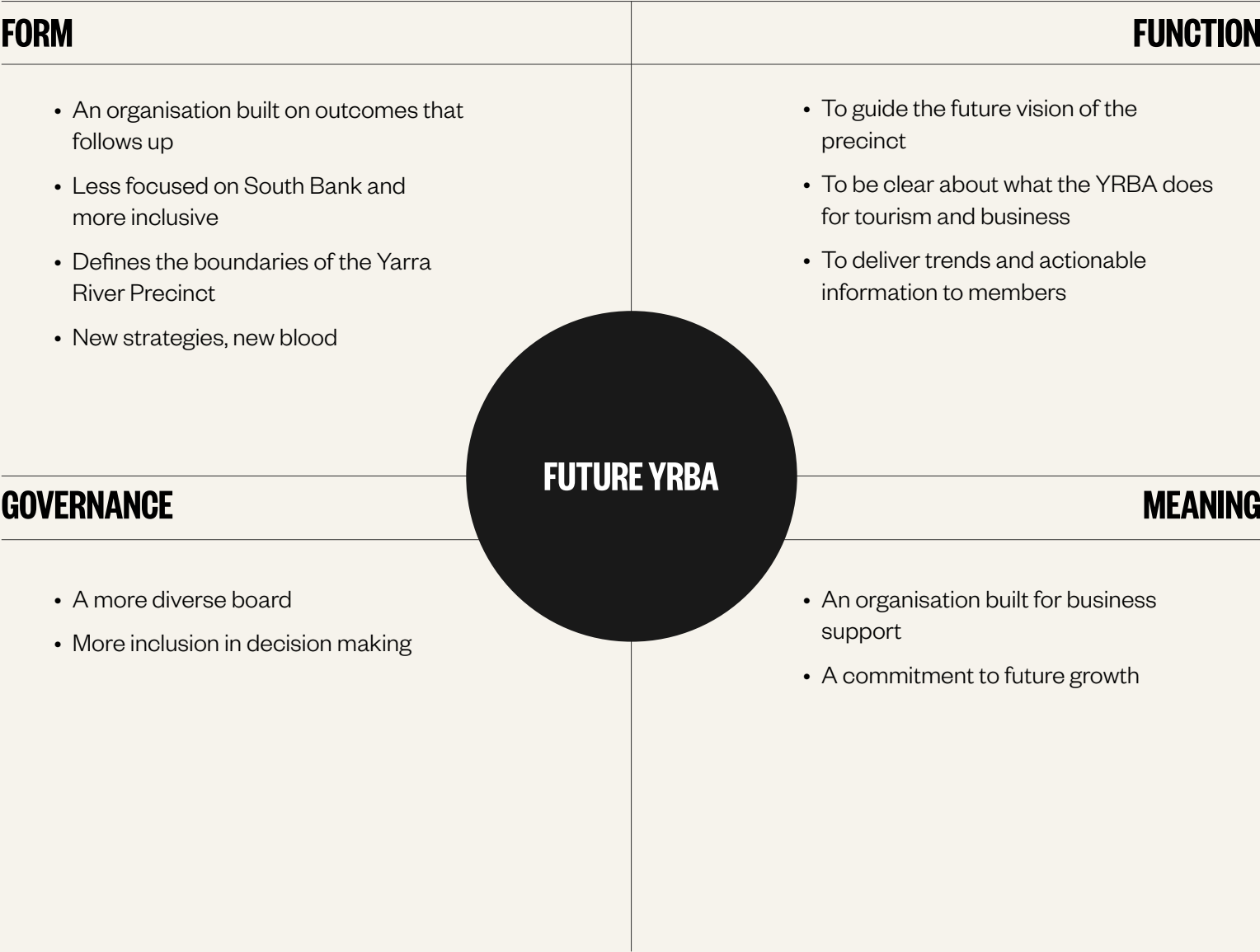
Participants view the future of the YRBA as an opportunity to deliver on some key elements they find important. What the Association is and does, how it's structured and what it values are lenses through which to better see what members think and want.

AWARE OF BIG IDEAS FORUM & VISION WORK



“I would expect that from the YRBA. It’s their job to work on the future of the precinct.”

“It provides members an opportunity to engage with decision makers. They’re on point, they’re always discussing things that impact their members. What transpires from that? Is their role to facilitate the discussion rather than affect the outcome? The Big Ideas Forum has a report, but then nothing happened. This is an opportunity.”



“Here is the deep dilemma of planning for place identity – how to create or protect urban place identity in a manner that does not kill the very dynamism that produces it in the first place.”

– Kim Dovey, Architecture and Urban Critic



ASPIRATIONS

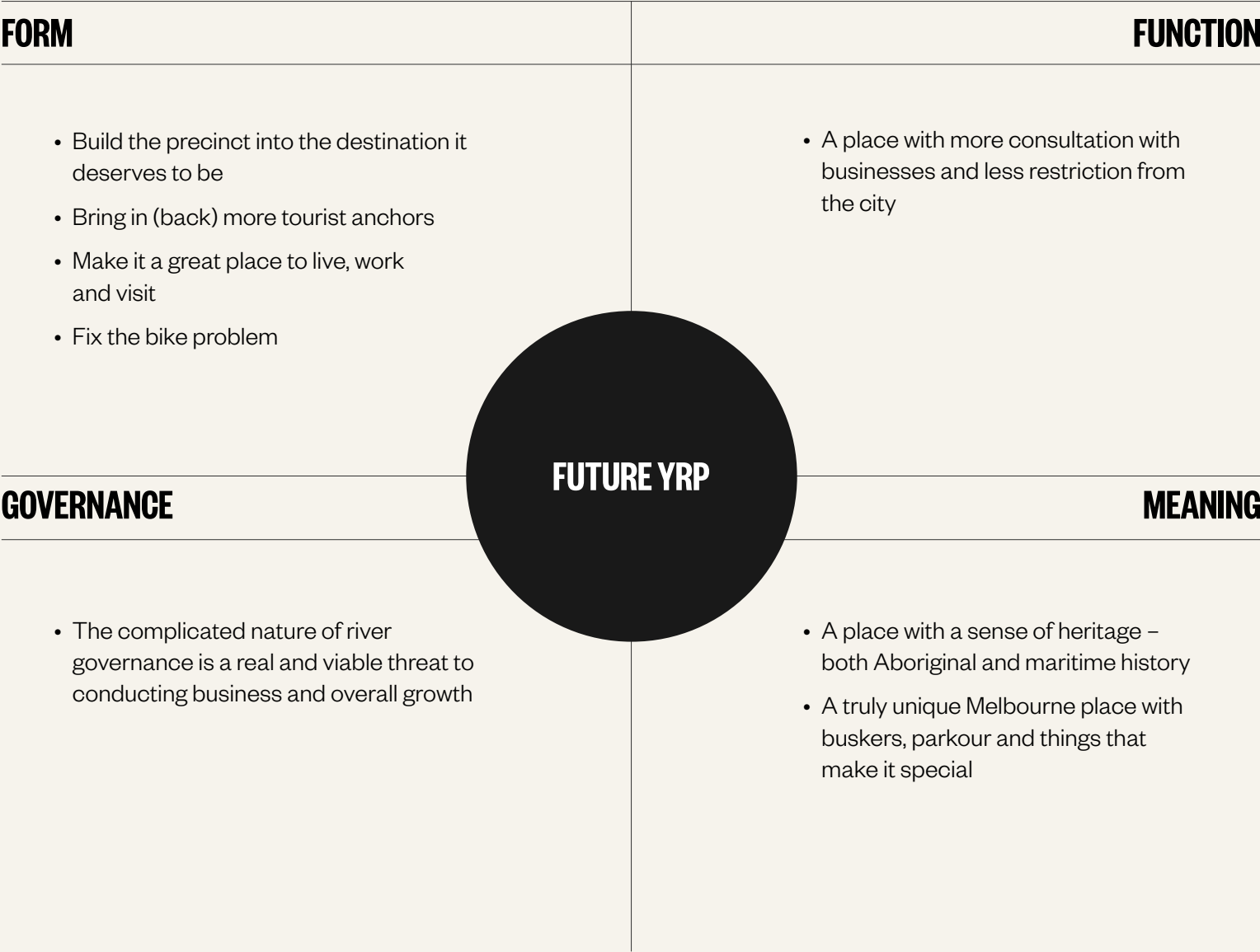
YARRA RIVER PRECINCT

The future of the Yarra River Precinct is obviously tied to each member. When members look forward to what they want the precinct to be, it's possible to extrapolate their values and help solve issues in ways that align with what's most important for the future..

WHAT WE HEARD

“It’s a great opportunity to develop a neglected area like Darling Harbour. We need promotion, investment and innovation. It’s underfunded. It’s a unique location. (It’s not Sydney Harbour, but it’s what we have.) It has a historical value that hasn’t been recognised and capitalised on, this place has been here for such a long time. It was dead across the street when I arrived, there was nothing here. This is still a fantastic opportunity.”

“I think it has to capture the beauty and essence of what Melbourne is, from an experience point and from a product point. There’s been these Peroni pop up bars with cheesy shit music making noise pollution, it could turn into a shit party zone. Have to maintain sophistication and style, Not becoming the new Chapel Street.”



RECOMMENDATIONS

RECOMMENDATIONS

CONTROL, INFLUENCE,
CONCERN

You don't want to sell yourself short, but it also helps to be reasonable. While these recommendations are based on an understanding of current resources, it's imperative not to minimise the future impact of the Association.

Additionally, these recommendations don't cover the extensive list of things that the Association should continue doing as those efforts are illustrated in the previous chapter.

“We can’t try to be everything for everyone.
We end up not doing anything particularly well.”

CIRCLE OF CONTROL

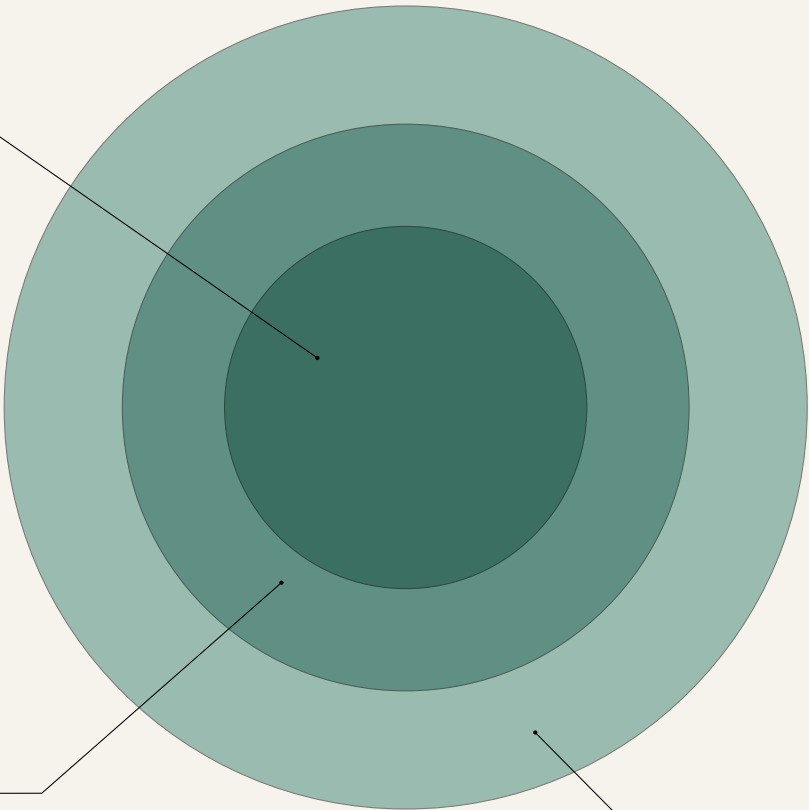
Focusing on what can be achieved and controlled will lead to more effective immediate and long-term gains.

CIRCLE OF INFLUENCE

Defined by our network of relationships, understanding what we can influence creates realistic expectations for outcomes.

CIRCLE OF CONCERN

All of the things that affect us. Being aware of them doesn't put them in our control but allows space to react appropriately.



RECOMMENDATIONS

WHERE TO FROM HERE

“I think the YRBA needs to have a really high profile in the future direction of Melbourne. When you think about the greenline, it should happen. The YRBA needs to be front and centre in all that strategic planning going on.”

Future changes and iterations to the YRBA can be more easily assessed and implemented when grouped into key aspects that function as an action plan.

OFFER

A clear and aligned internal understanding of the primary objectives, outcomes and services will translate to a stronger public-facing identity and value proposition.

What this means for the YRBA...

- Know your audiences
- Define your offer
- Communicate your services

IDENTITY

‘Achievable’ and ‘low-maintenance’ aren’t the most aspirational words but they’ll serve the Association in the exhaustive task of stewarding the place brand and identity for the precinct.

What this means for the YRBA...

- Define the precinct
- Build a place brand
- Design the right website

VALUE

People like what they can understand. If the value provided by YRBA is easy to talk about, people will do just that. Give them things they need and the words to express their worth.

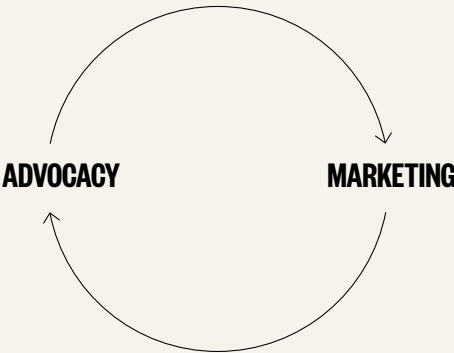
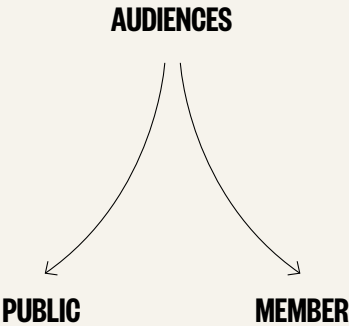
What this means for the YRBA...

- Educate your audiences
- Provide useful guidance
- Foster sustainable growth

OFFER

DEFINING WHO YOU ARE
& WHAT YOU DO

Underpinning future strategies with a clear picture of audiences, strong definitions of what the Association is and isn't, and generous communications about services will go a long way to engaging members.



Clarity and brand
will tell people what
to expect.

RECOMMENDATIONS

KNOW YOUR AUDIENCES

With public- and member-facing audiences, drilling down to develop a clear picture of who messaging and efforts are for always pays dividends.

Opportunity
Further developing any audience work can be seen as an added value for members.

DEFINE YOUR OFFER

Many members defined the YRBA as a marketing/tourism body or an advocacy. We like both, and see each feeding the other.

Opportunity
Finding the solution to this will make each stronger and potentially easier to execute.

COMMUNICATE YOUR SERVICES

Very few members could completely explain each service offered. Nearly everyone had difficulty aligning on how to describe what the YRBA does.

Opportunity
Clearly communicating a service is like giving people a script they can make their own.

IDENTITY

BRANDING A PRECINCT

Approach brand and website as low maintenance. As something you can control, what can you best achieve? Directories, listings and a what's-on city guide approach are labour-intensive endeavours that are already done well by others. What branding and marketing does the Yarra River Precinct need and how can the YRBA deliver that?



RECOMMENDATIONS

DEFINE THE PRECINCT

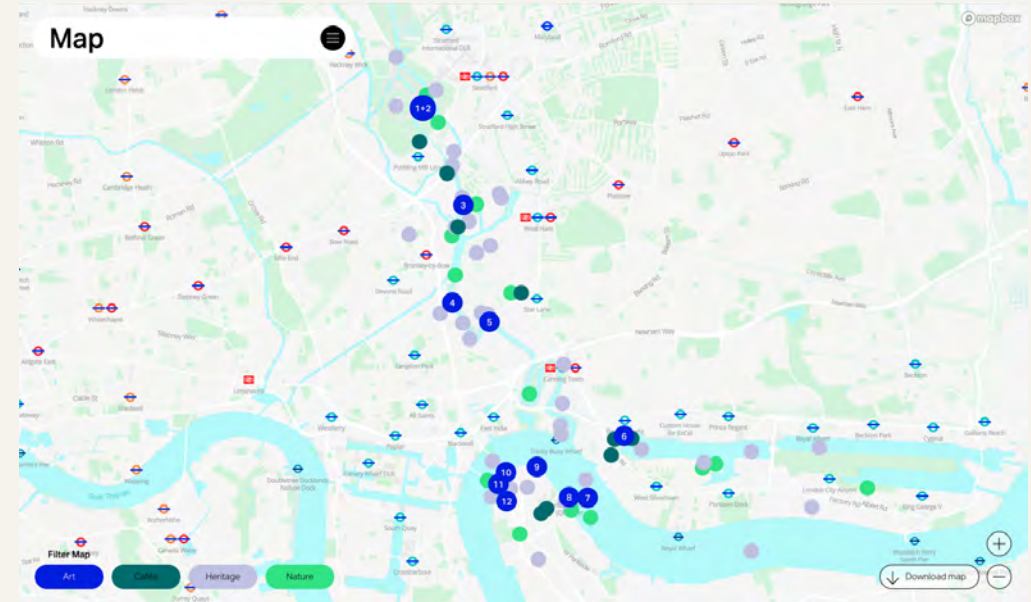
There is little consensus on where the precinct begins, ends and what's in between.

Opportunity

Utilising the public-facing website for the precinct, the YRBA can begin to define how people think of the YRP.

"If your place needs a slogan, it has a problem."

– Peter Saville, Creative Director Manchester City



Effective and Easy to Maintain Place Branding
The Line Artwalk, London

BUILD A PLACE BRAND

Current misconceptions about the precinct need to be addressed before current business can grow and new life can be attracted.

Opportunity

Branding the precinct first and the Association second will put the right foot forward and control the narrative.

DESIGN THE RIGHT WEBSITE

Engaging and easy to maintain don't have to be mutually exclusive – the right design solution will align to and elevate the overall strategy.

Opportunity

Developing a public- and member-facing anchor will define the identity of the precinct.



Melbourne
Aquarium

Batman Park

WTC Wharf

Melbourne Convention
and Exhibition Centre

South Wharf



Crown Entertainment
Complex



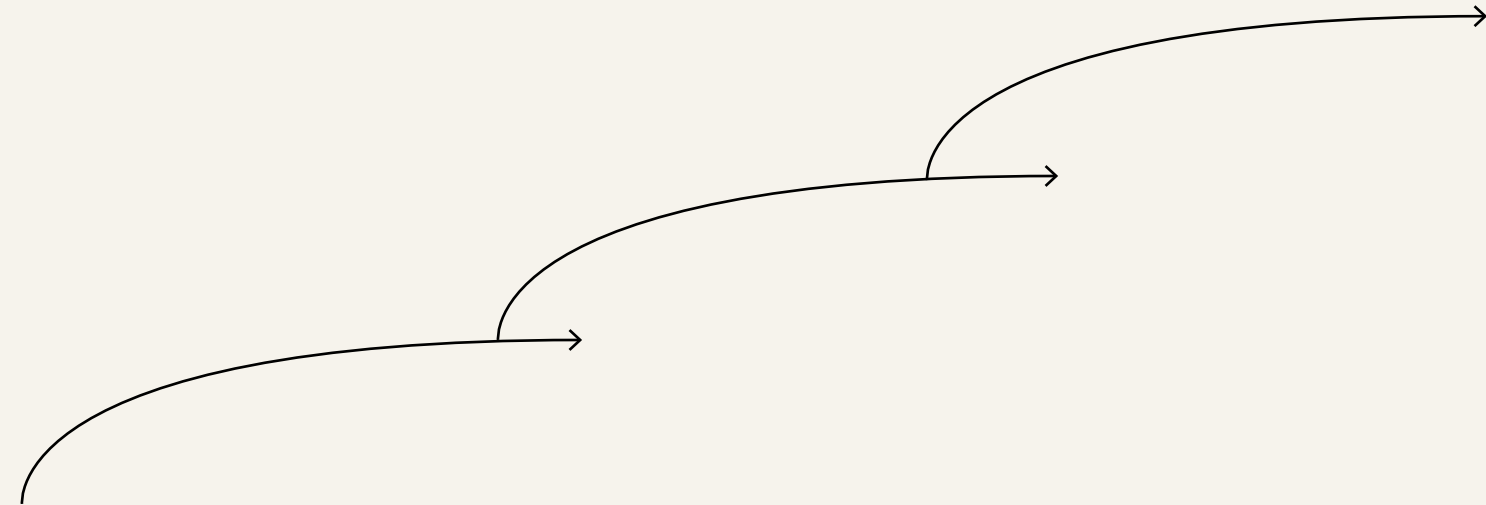
Immigration
Museum

Taxi

VALUE
DEVELOPING &
ATTRACTING POTENTIAL

People like what they
can understand.

Creating more value for members may require educational moments where people can better see how things work in the YRBA. Likewise, the public and future members will be more attracted by better engagement. Creating value is also about developing and attracting potential.



RECOMMENDATIONS

EDUCATE YOUR AUDIENCES

The public doesn't understand the precinct and the members don't fully understand the Association. What don't they understand?

Opportunity

Providing members with ways to better understand how services work will increase engagement and efficacy.

PROVIDE USEFUL GUIDANCE

Nearly every member responded positively to wanting to know more about their future customers. How can the YRBA help with that?

Opportunity


Shifting quickly from tourists to residents, a people report might help businesses capitalise quickly.

FOSTER SUSTAINABLE GROWTH

Current members want to know they're supported and new prospects want to know what's attractive about doing business in the precinct.

Opportunity

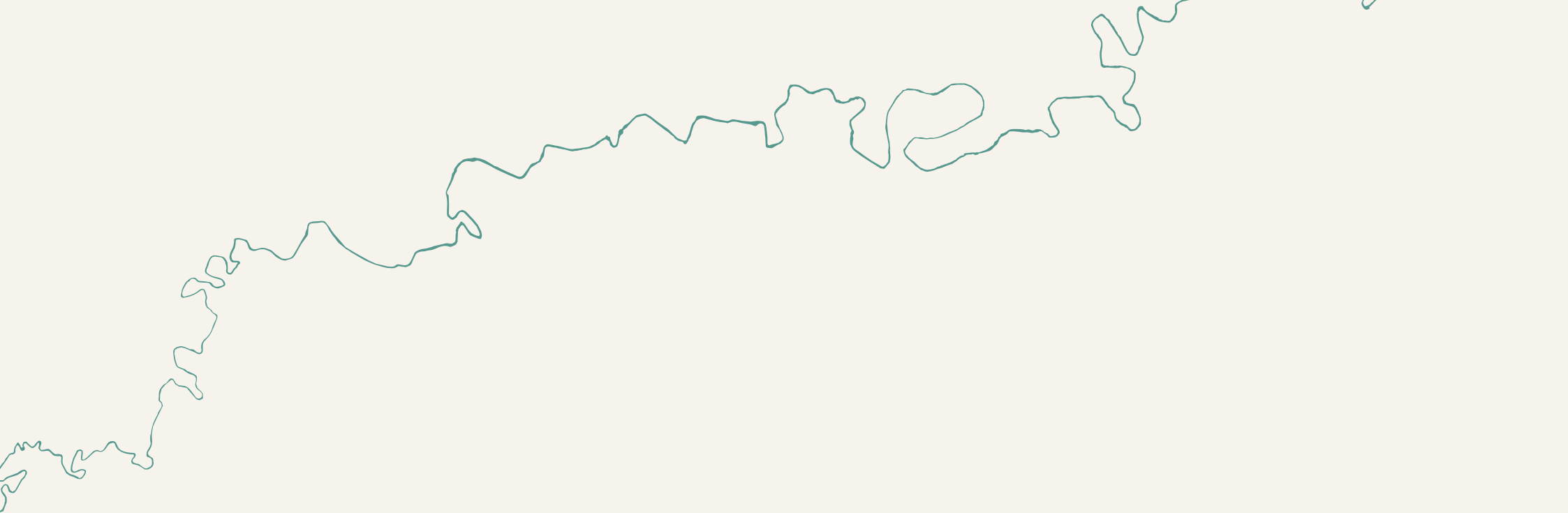
Defining the YRBA's role as a long-term custodian of the precinct will help focus the future on growth and potential.

An aerial view of two rowers in a white scull on a body of water during sunset. The water is dark with golden reflections from the low sun. The rowers are wearing black tank tops with red accents. Their oars are visible, dipping into the water. The scull is long and narrow, with a pointed bow.

**“Start where you are.
Use what you have.
Do what you can.”**

– Arthur Ashe







Yarra River Business
Association Inc

**Right Angle
Studio**

VISION 21

yarrariver.melbourne



Proudly presented by
**Yarra River Business
Association Inc**



Introduction

The Yarra River is recognised as Melbourne's most important tourism and recreational asset, yet it still lacks a cohesive vision for its management and future direction.

This may be because of its highly fragmented management structure and/or a lack of coordinated action by various agencies over many years.

However, the State Government and various organisations are now showing interest in the waterway, although the focus is primarily on planning and ecology.

The city section of the Yarra River – Punt Road to Bolte Bridge – has particular needs, which require special consideration.

This is not only because it is Melbourne's 'shopwindow' for millions of visitors, but also because it is an economic powerhouse, supporting thousands of small to large businesses and employing tens of thousands of people.

It is also 'home' to over 12,000 residents, whose lifestyles benefit from the infrastructure and services that the tourism industry has brought to the area.

This document aims to complement the overarching State Government's Yarra River Strategy, and the City of Melbourne's Yarra River Plan, by drilling-down to some key issues and projects that will make a major difference to our section of the waterway.

In doing so, we recognise the depth of Indigenous culture embodied in the area and the need to protect the asset through environmental remediation and informed urban planning.

Waterway activation and business growth must not be at the expense of river health. It also needs to be recognised that respect for the river best comes through interaction with it.

The greatest contact people have with the Yarra River is via the passive recreation that is offered in its city section.

The Vision

Remediation of waterfronts from industrial land and former wharves into fascinating, colourful promenades is happening throughout the world.

Most of the great city waterfronts have managed to sympathetically blend natural assets with commerce, tourism and recreation.

Good waterfront activation is usually intuitive and seamless. They are lively and yet also provide respite from the world of commerce for residents, workers and visitors.

Despite its proximity to the central business district, Melbourne's river frontage is yet to achieve a physical and psychological connection to the city's heart. Significant buildings still turn their back on the water and major obstacles remain between the City's Hoddle grid and the river. The river front still needs to be 'found' by visitors, rather than it being an automatic part of their visitor experience.

In particular, the Lower Yarra River's northbank remains a neglected zone, with some sections even regarded as 'no-go' areas. Yet, the northbank is the heart of Indigenous culture and post-settlement history. It is the birthplace of European Melbourne. It is where Melburnians should be interacting with their waterway on a daily basis. It should provide a high quality, contiguous experience with Docklands. It should form a band of green that envelopes the CBD and links to the gardens on the city's north and east.

The Lower Yarra River and Docklands should be the epicentre of passive recreation in Melbourne, where cycling and walking the banks can be undertaken in safety and comfort, and where the history and significance of the area is apparent.

High quality visitor precincts are, by nature, also places that enhance the lifestyle of residents and city workers. Visitors want to be where the locals gather, so high quality investment in the public realm of the Lower Yarra River has economic, well-being and lifestyle benefits.

We invite you to share this vision.



City waterfront, Vancouver. B.C.

Things to be Done

Master Planning

Much has been achieved along the Lower Yarra River during the past 20 years and credit is paid to the private and public sector organisations for their efforts.

However, development of the public realm has been ad-hoc and fragmented, with little coordinated planning to synergise the various developments and to create a real sense of place and identity.

The city section of the lower Yarra is too important to Melbourne's image, and to its citizens well-being to remain without a consolidated vision and coordinated planning.

Master planning for the Yarra River needs to genuinely embrace the business community and reflect the commercial needs of the city section.

The Northbank

Banana Alley

The 1880s vaults of Banana Alley are a gem of early Melbourne commerce. However, because of poor and fragmented management, they remain an eyesore and are an obstacle to be negotiated on a journey along the river's northbank.

Unsympathetic activities have been allowed to occupy the vaults on medium to longer term leases, precluding strategic improvements to the area. Management of the vaults is also complicated because of the vaults' importance as a structure to support the railway above.



Banana Alley's potential to be one of inner Melbourne's best-sited tourism and hospitality locations needs to be realised through a concerted effort by government and land management agencies.

Enterprise Park

Similar to Banana Alley, the long-neglected riverside land under the railway viaduct adjoining SEALife aquarium is regarded as a 'no-go' zone. It is dark, dank and often characterised by anti-social activity. Procrastination by relevant authorities over many years has seen it slide into the 'too-hard' basket.

Its prime location alongside Flinders Street, opposite Crown, and adjoining one of the city's major attractions, should make it an easy candidate for conversion to a quality public space. Its importance to Indigenous culture and to the early maritime commerce of Melbourne gives it even greater significance.

Batman Park



This park was converted from car parking to lawn during the late 1980s, but its potential has never been realised for either passive or active recreation. An early 2000s development under the railway viaduct, 'Rebecca Walk', has failed repeatedly and is quickly becoming another derelict section of the northbank.

Control of the undercroft buildings of Batman Park should be ceded to the City of Melbourne and managed as active, low-cost accommodation for creative industry, in the same spirit as Vancouver's highly successful Granville Island (*see image above*).

Things to be Done

Docklands linkage

Northbank needs to be a high quality contiguous walking experience between Princes Bridge and New Quay in Docklands. The low lying bridges of the Lower Yarra and the river's arterial road crossings make this objective difficult and potentially expensive..

Suggestions have included a cycling veloway attached to the railway viaduct, and a more current proposal has been for a New York style 'Greenline' elevated pathway.

In the meantime, attention paid to the physical linkage between North Wharf and Docklands, across Wurrundjerri Way, would create a more intuitive and comfortable crossing point between the City's two water precincts.

Reimagining Arts Centre Melbourne

Early planning work is underway by the State Government to enhance the cultural assets of Southbank, including the building of a new gallery of contemporary art. The 10 year plan includes significant public realm landscaping work, which will not only provide pedestrian friendly linkages between the various buildings of the complex, but will enhance the concept of a world-class Sturt Street arts plaza.

The State Government and its appointed architects are encouraged to embrace the interface with the Yarra River as much as possible in the redevelopment.



City Road, Southbank

The density of residential development in Southbank is among the highest in the world. The major east-west arterial of City Road further renders the suburb a soul-less thoroughfare. Completion of the Southbank Boulevard urban park in 2021 will provide a much needed green spine, connecting the river to Kings Domain, including an alternative commuter cycling route to reduce congestion on Southbank Promenade.

The Council's City Road master planning is an essential tool in helping to retro-fit Southbank to a more liveable environment, and, in doing so, it is hoped that it will create 'ant-tracks' and activity nodes to encourage visitor exploration, as an adjunct to the riverfront experience.



Southbank and Crown Promenades

These two promenades are among Melbourne's most pedestrianised urban areas. The quality of the promenades is essential to the visitor experience of the Lower Yarra River and, therefore, need to be maintained and regularly upgraded to reflect such status.

Recreational cycling is welcomed and encouraged. However, commuter cycling is not compatible with a highly pedestrianised area, for both safety and aesthetic reasons. Getting the balance between encouragement of recreational cycling and the discouragement of commuter cycling is a major challenge.

Ultimately, prohibition of commuter cycling on Southbank and Crown Promenades should be the ambition, after provision of a feasible, alternative commuter cycling route.

Things to be Done

On-water litter reduction

Water quality has improved dramatically in the Lower Yarra River during the past 40 years. Heavy metal pollutants have been largely eliminated and e-coli contamination has been significantly reduced.



However, interception of rubbish before it enters the waterway is still inadequate. Storm water management is not keeping pace with urban development.

The City section of the Yarra River is the repository of contamination resulting from inadequate upstream interception by Councils and State Government. This affects visitor perception of the river and is a poor reflection on what is otherwise a clean city.

Entrapment of the hard rubbish as it enters the waterway is essential. This also requires real-time management of litter loads caught in entrapment baskets etc, rather than the current passive on-water collection of gross pollutants once they have entered the waterway..

Water Transportation

The quality of on-water visitor transportation is steadily improving. However, the city section of the Lower Yarra River still lacks a commuter water service, which could help to ease CBD congestion and would link future major developments such as Fishermens Bend to upstream destinations and public transport connections. The success of the Brisbane Rivercat commuter service is often cited as evidence of what could be achieved for Melbourne.



Work has already been undertaken by the City of Melbourne's Waterways Unit on the design of a commuter vessel to meet the special needs of the Lower Yarra.

The introduction and viability of commuter water transportation will, ultimately, be market-led, but financial incentives should be seriously considered to test and kick-start such a service.



Partnership Organisations

The Lower Yarra River is managed through a combination of complex, multi-faceted State legislation. It can involve up to 18 organisations, depending on the scope and size of a particular project. The public realm of the precinct is, ultimately, under Crown control, although the management of certain areas is delegated to Council and various State Government authorities. This situation has given rise, in recent times, to a call for a single management authority for the Lower Yarra.

In the meantime, the ability to achieve progress in the precinct requires a shared vision and the cooperation of multiple agencies. Most projects require additional grants or capital works allocations, usually over a number of consecutive budgets.

On-water management of the Lower Yarra is shared between **Parks Victoria** and the **City of Melbourne**. Parks Victoria has jurisdiction over berthing and on-water activation, while Council's involvement is confined to the Docklands waterways, including Marina Yarra's Edge and Melbourne City Marina. The City of Melbourne also has responsibility for the lower and upper promenade of Southbank and rowing shed leases.

On-water activation often requires the permission and oversight by the City of Melbourne's planning department, while on-water or edge-water events often involve Parks Victoria and City of Melbourne.

Other organisations with direct involvement on the waterway are:

The **Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning** (DELWP) provides policy advice on marine conservation, coastal issues and local ports. DELWP has an arrangement with Parks Victoria to enable PV to act as the responsible authority for managing the Yarra River and associated waterways.

Transport Safety Victoria is the main agency responsible for safety on Victorian waters, including the Yarra River. It administers the Marine Act 1988, including registration of vessels, regulation of the operation of vessels, pollution prevention, international conventions and enforcement of laws relating to the operations of vessels.

Melbourne Water is responsible for the environmental management of all waterways (including the bed and banks of the Lower Yarra River) and major drainage systems in relation to water quality, flood protection and floodplain management affecting the river.

The **Environment Protection Authority (EPA)** enforces the Environmental Protection Act 1970 and licenses discharges of pollutants to the environment, including the Yarra River. The Authority's responsibilities broadly encompass any matter affecting the environmental condition of the river.



About the YRBA

The Yarra River Business Association Incorporated (YRBA) is a membership organisation established by the City of Melbourne and the then Tourism Victoria (now Visit Victoria) in 1998 to provide a voice for the business community of the Precinct.

For more than 20 years the YRBA has actively represented the interests of small to medium businesses located on and along the river, through an ongoing program of advocacy and marketing activity.

As a result, the Lower Yarra business community has real input to the planning and operational decisions made for the area by the many and various organizations involved with river governance.

A 10 person private and public sector Board sets YRBA's strategic direction, while day to day activity is handled by an Executive Officer and a team of consultants. Funding for the organisation is generated through City of Melbourne administrative and marketing grants, as well as private business membership fees.

For more information about the structure and operation of YRBA Inc, please visit

www.yarrariver.melbourne

<http://yarrariver.melbourne/about-us>

<http://yarrariver.melbourne/membership>

<http://yarrariver.melbourne/members>



Supported by



Big Ideas

YRBA strives to reflect the needs and collective vision of its membership.

On 15 August 2019, in conjunction with Arup Australia, YRBA held the Yarra River 'Big Ideas' Forum in the Melbourne Town Hall, hosted by Lord Mayor, Cr. Sally Capp.

The event involved representatives from 45 business and stakeholder organisations, who were led through an iterative workshop process to develop a refined list of projects for possible consideration in the Yarra River Precinct.

The process was designed as a way of informing the various agencies involved in the river management about the need for a shared vision for the waterway, in the hope that future planning may reflect the environmental, recreational, urban planning and economic values that are inextricably interwoven within the context of the Lower Yarra River.

The following document has been prepared by Arup Australia as a summary of that event.

