



# SOUTHBANK PLAN

## 6 principles + 6 projects

APRIL 2006



# Contents

***Introduction***

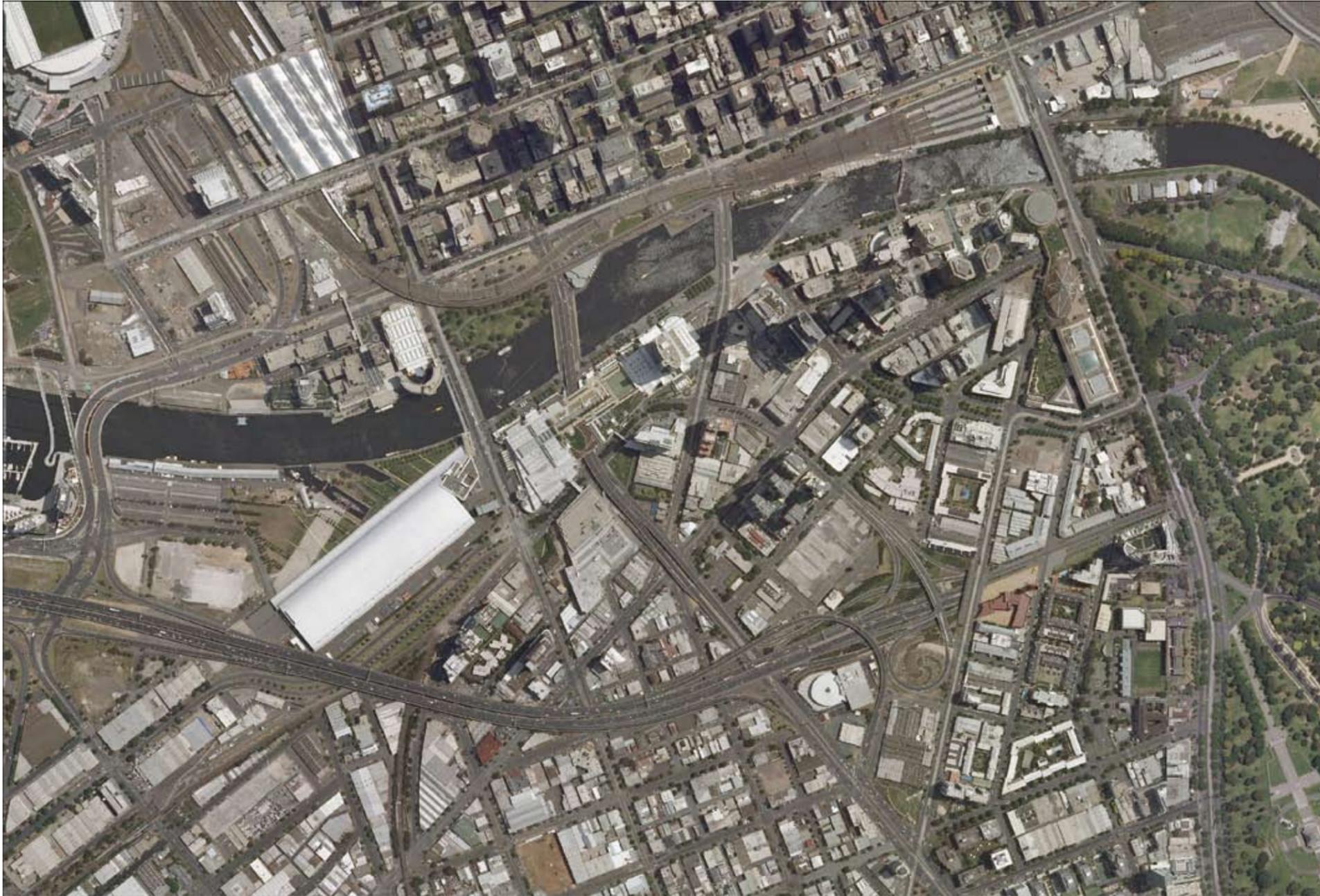
***Issues***

***6 principles***

***Activating street life***

***6 projects***

Southbank Plan: 6 principles + 6 projects summarises the issues and opportunities analysis developed in the Southbank Study and proposes an integrated suite of project, policy and program initiatives to address the issues raised in the study.



Aerial view of Southbank (2006)

# Introduction

## Southbank: The vision and the plan

**The central Melbourne district known as Southbank contains a powerful mix of national, metropolitan, and locally-significant destinations and occupations. Southbank also houses significant commuter and freight roads infrastructure.**

**Identified by postcode 3006, it is bounded by the Yarra River, Westgate Freeway, Kings Way, Dorcas Street and St Kilda Road. While a physically cohesive part of central Melbourne, it has four distinct precincts:**

- The Yarra south bank, or the river edge
- The Arts precinct
- Southbank Central, with its high-density residential focus
- Southbank Village.

**Together, these make up a new inner city neighbourhood that complements the Hoddle Grid and Docklands to define the Central Activities District (CAD) of Melbourne with the Yarra at its heart.**

**Southbank's significance as Victoria's focus of the arts and entertainment and as a high-density residential neighbourhood are balanced and mutually supportive.**

The Southbank Study led by the Department of Sustainability & Environment assessed the issues for the future of Southbank and identifies the need to:

- Define the individual and joint roles of the Victorian Government and the City of Melbourne in relation to Southbank's development
- Guide ongoing development through coordinated private and public sector projects
- Coordinate efforts to create an integrated high-quality district.

Southbank Plan: 6 principles + 6 projects summarises the issues and opportunities analysis developed in the Southbank 3006 Study and proposes an integrated suite of project, policy and program initiatives to address the issues raised in the study.



## Development context

Southbank today is largely the result of urban renewal programs by successive Victorian Governments from the 1980's onwards. Public works and land sales stimulated private redevelopment. Construction of the Westgate Freeway, CityLink, Southgate, Crown Casino, the Melbourne Exhibition Centre and significant residential development occurred in a short period. There is considerable scope for further redevelopment.

## Amenity issues

Along with the renewal along the Yarra River, development needs to be pursued with equal care for Southbank as a whole. Public amenity issues that need to be addressed include shadows and wind turbulence, road and construction noise, traffic and parking problems, discontinuous pedestrian routes and a shortage of public open space. Commensurate with this is continued acknowledgement and allowance for the area's strategic role in the city's metropolitan transport network.

## Governance

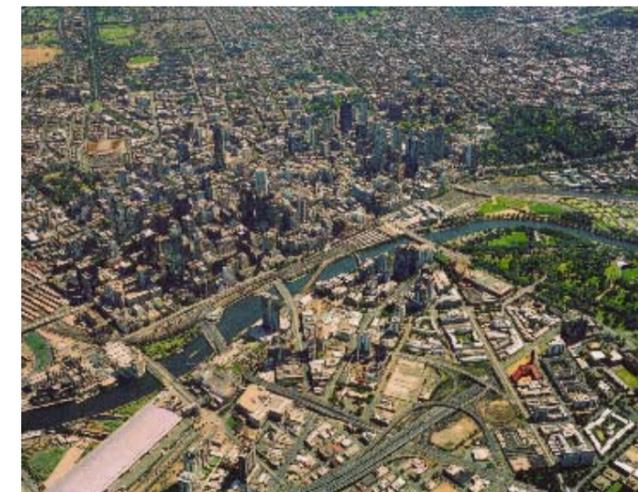
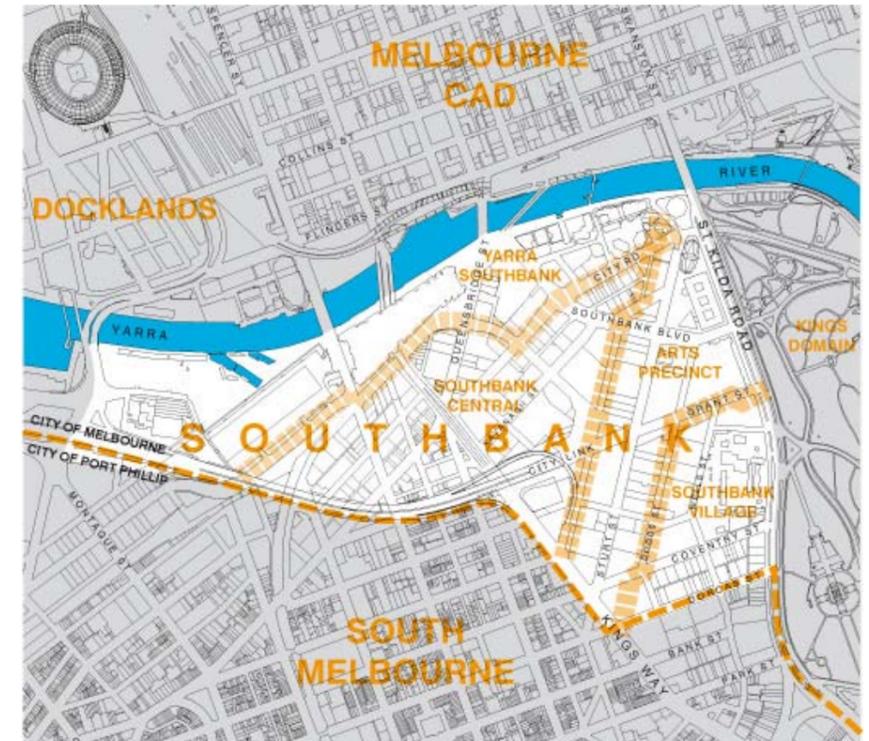
Statutory planning responsibility for Southbank lies with the Victorian Government and the City of Melbourne. For large development proposals, the Victorian Government is the Responsible Authority while the City of Melbourne acts a Referral Authority. For smaller projects, the City of Melbourne is the Responsible Authority. Maintenance, management and development of the public environment is generally the responsibility of City of Melbourne with some public places managed by the institutions they abut. Transurban is responsible for the CityLink infrastructure.

## Planning and policy context

A number of policy documents produced by the Victorian Government, the City of Melbourne and the City of Port Phillip are relevant to Southbank. These include: Melbourne 2030; the Melbourne Planning Scheme and Municipal Strategic Statement; City Plan 2010; the South Melbourne Central Structure Plan; the City of Melbourne Transport Strategy and the Metropolitan Transport Plan (2004). The Southbank Community Plan was adopted by Council in 2004.

A draft Structure Plan for Southbank was prepared by the Department of Infrastructure and the City of Melbourne in 1999. It was included in the Melbourne Planning Scheme as a reference document but not adopted by the Victorian Government.

Left: 'Airsy' view of Princes Bridge and Southbank c1930 (Royal Historical Society of Victoria Collection, from G. Whitehead, *Civilising the City*).



Above: Maps the four distinct precincts of Southbank.

Left: Aerial view of Southbank and Melbourne's CAD from the south-west, about 2004.

Below: The extent of likely new development in Southbank. Sites coloured red are known to be in various stages of planning for new development approvals, or are obvious candidates for redevelopment.



# Issues

Major issues that future development in Southbank needs to address are:

- **Improving the public environment:** Southbank's public environment is to be repaired and improved to address the needs of workers, residents and visitors.
- **Supporting walking:** Walking is to be supported as the preferred means of access and a valued means of informal recreation throughout Southbank.
- **Developing community infrastructure:** Additional meeting places, community support facilities and other means of fostering local attachment and identity are to be provided.
- **Integrating intensive development:** All development in Southbank is to be integrated and complementary to the district as a whole.

## Wasted used land

Opportunities to provide public spaces in Southbank in the form of traditional parks are limited but there are large areas in existing road reserves and associated with other infrastructure that are opportunities to transform unsightly and unattractive spaces into active and attractive public open space.



## Architectural quality

There are some significant, but relatively few, fine contemporary buildings in Southbank and a scattering of heritage-listed buildings.



## Activation of public spaces

Most existing buildings away from the riverside contribute little to the quality of adjoining streets as lively and attractive public spaces. Inactive frontages, car parks, and overshadowing make the streets seem unpleasant and relatively unsafe.



## Pedestrian and cycle access

A very high standard of pedestrian amenity has been created along the riverside promenade, but pedestrian access into Southbank away from the river and between Southbank and South Melbourne is limited by a lack of convenient routes and poor amenity.

Bicycle access through Southbank is similarly limited. Congestion along the riverside promenade has resulted in bans on cycling along the Capital City Trail although there are no satisfactory alternative routes available.



## Open spaces for local needs

The best public open spaces in Southbank, which are among the best in Melbourne, are located along the Yarra River. However, away from the river the open spaces are highly utilised by locals but more spaces, better located and of better quality are needed.



## Impacts of infrastructure

Infrastructure supporting vehicular traffic through Southbank has typically been designed with very poor provision for pedestrians. This limits access to and discourages use of public transport facilities in the area.



## Streetscape amenity

Streetscape amenity can be improved in many locations to support walking as a form of local transport and for recreation. Improving the street environment is also important to encourage new developments to address the streets with active frontages and high-quality architecture. At present, some streets in Southbank adjoining important development sites are hostile environments due to traffic impacts, or they appear as neglected service roads, and developers are naturally inclined to isolate building uses from the street.

# 6 principles

The Plan is based on six principles for improving the public environment in Southbank. These principles are derived from the issues and opportunities analysis and have been used to develop the initiatives for activating street life and the six projects for making improvements to the public environment. These six principles are:

## 1 Create an integrated walking network

Southbank needs a network of convenient, attractive and safe walking routes. Improvement opportunities include:

- **Improving existing walking routes:** Introduce streetscape enhancements used elsewhere in the City of Melbourne.
- **Making new walking routes:** Allow access through areas that are currently blocked off, or where existing access is poor and not used.
- **Supporting way-finding:** Design streets, buildings and open spaces in ways that are logical and legible, and help people find their way.
- **Link into the wider network:** Link Southbank's walking routes to those in Port Phillip and north of the river.

## 2 Provide better public spaces

Southbank needs an accessible, open space system with diverse opportunities for recreation and social and civic engagement. Improvement opportunities include:

- **Creating new public spaces:** Expand the existing range of recreational public open spaces in Southbank to meet the projected needs of the district and in locations where they are needed.
- **Improving existing public spaces:** Provide diverse recreational opportunities for a variety of groups; protect users from extremes of weather and exposure to traffic noise; improve amenity and personal security.
- **Enhancing streets as public spaces:** Undertake a comprehensive streetscape improvement program supported by detailed audits of street safety, accessibility, amenity and lighting.
- **Managing the place:** Develop a cycle of local events to promote Southbank's public spaces.

## 3 Encourage complementary land use mixes

Southbank needs to include activities that support each other and contribute to the quality and vitality of the public environment:

- **Encouraging mixed use development:** Encourage buildings with retail outlets, offices and community facilities at street level and housing above.
- **Integrating existing public institutions:** Favour development that maximises public access to facilities and open spaces associated with public institutions in Southbank.
- **Filling gaps in activity:** Identify appropriate community facilities that can be accommodated in new developments; investigate local hubs near Clarendon Street and Sturt Street.

## 4 Encourage high quality built form

All development in Southbank should contribute to the quality of the public environment and be respectful of neighbouring developments:

- **Orienting development towards streets:** Ensure all developments have active frontages, overlooking windows above ground floor and high-quality architecture.
- **Protecting amenity in high-density development:** Design to reduce noise problems in buildings and open spaces and review guidelines for minimum setbacks and spacing between towers.
- **Ensuring exemplary development of public sites:** Ensure the development of publicly-owned sites (such as the former YMCA) meet the objectives of the Structure Plan.

## 5 Improve the cycling and traffic network

Southbank needs to achieve a better balance between vehicle access and sustainable transport including public transport, walking and cycling whilst recognising that the Southbank arterial roads and public transport network are important both locally and to the Melbourne and Victorian economies. Opportunities include:

- **Managing vehicular traffic:** Review traffic and public transport management with a view to developing strategies to improve efficiency and local amenity and to develop integrated transport and traffic management plans specific to Southbank.
- **Supporting public transport:** Improve pedestrian amenity and security near stops; make buses and trams a priority on important routes; improve evening and weekend services and encourage a better interface between private development and public transport facilities.
- **Supporting cycling:** Investigate an underpass of Kings Way between Moray and Kavanagh Streets, options for safe cycling along Southbank Promenade, provision of more on-street bike lanes and bike parking and cycle routes under the freeway viaducts.

## 6 Coordinate parking provision and access

Car parking throughout Southbank needs to balance accessibility by car with the long-term objectives of a sustainable, inner urban district. Improvement opportunities include:

- **Limiting local parking supply:** Develop a parking limitation strategy for future development and investigate options for varying development mixes to increase daytime activity rather than adding to evening parking demands.
- **Improving access to existing parking spaces:** Encourage more efficient, flexible management of existing car parks to accommodate weekend demands and investigate the potential use of private car parks for the general public.
- **Managing on-street parking:** Undertake a detailed review of the current use of kerbside space to determine best use.

# Activating street life

An active street life is made up of people walking, sitting and bike riding in the public environment. Southbank has a concentrated and growing residential population and is home to a number of vital and dynamic institutions which generate activity which could be drawn out more into their neighbouring public spaces. There is a range of policy and program initiatives that could facilitate this activity. While they form a general approach to street activation across Southbank, particular focus will be given to Sturt Street as a pilot for place-making initiatives of relevance to the district as a whole.

## 1 Events in public places

Develop the potential of a number of existing public places in Southbank – streets, plazas and parks to host informal and formal events and activities.

- Introduce an 'events in public places' process as part of the Place Management of Southbank to seed activity in public spaces.
- Initiate a cycle of local events to promote Southbank's public spaces.
- Work with public institutions to develop a local public events calendar in Southbank and promote the use of local public spaces as part of the events.
- Work with the City of Melbourne to develop Southbank's public open spaces to support a range of local recreation needs.
- Encourage the VCA, the Victorian Arts Centre and the Victoria Barracks to provide public access to spaces within their institutional grounds.

## 2 Promoting Southbank the place

Southbank already has much to draw visitors but this can be more pro-actively marketed with an emphasis on visiting and exploring Southbank on foot, by bike and with public transport .

- Work with Tourism Victoria and the City of Melbourne to develop tourism promotion initiatives for Southbank. Build on the success of the Yarra Promenade and the various cultural facilities and link Southbank into the broader tourism strategies for Melbourne's Central Activities District.
- Promote a precinct based coordination of events and performances under one Southbank brand.
- Develop a visual thematic for Southbank identity to apply to promotions of events and activities.
- Make a tourist map of Southbank.

## 3 Way-finding

Walking into and around Southbank can be made easier and more attractive by providing clear and well designed way-finding.

- Prepare or update design guidelines for streetscape works that will contribute to way-finding (City of Melbourne Technical Notes).
- Extend the City of Melbourne way-finding elements into Southbank beyond the promenade to include poster pillars, etc.
- Extend the City of Melbourne's directional and building number signage through Southbank, including multi-lingual signs in major tourist areas.
- Prepare guidelines for private development to support way-finding (to supplement or amend the existing Urban Design within/outside the Capital City Zone policies).

## 4 Travel behaviour change

Encourage people to take public transport and walk and cycle in public space, whether for commuting, visiting, shopping or recreation.

- Work with DOI and City of Melbourne to review traffic and mobility management, which would include: a detailed review of clearways, turn lanes, signal phases, etc. throughout Southbank; provision of more bicycle parking and end-of-trip rider facilities (change rooms etc.) in new developments; a program for on-street bicycle route improvement throughout Southbank; lower speed limits in local streets.
- Initiate a 'Travel Smart' travel behaviour change program for Southbank for residents, workplaces and tertiary institutions.
- Review traffic management measures on City Road and improve the street for pedestrians, cyclists and buses.

## 5 Retailing strategy

Promote active retailing along key street frontages as a major stimulant for the area's street life.

- Develop retail promotion initiatives for Southbank that address the needs and opportunities for local convenience shopping, the opportunities for specialist retail clusters (e.g. Arts and Culture) and tourism related retailing.

## 6 Development facilitation

Facilitate an active street interface in new and existing buildings, particularly along identified key streets.

- Encourage development that optimises public access to facilities.
- Advocate and encourage street-oriented development through negotiations in pre-application discussions and through the Planning Permit process; and by improving streetscape amenity where active frontages are desired.
- Expand the Urban Design outside the Capital City Zone Policy to provide similar levels of guidance for high-rise development anywhere in Southbank.
- Review the existing Mixed Use Zone to strengthen the ability for commercial and residential use to co-exist, particularly to ensure commercial or retail uses at street level.
- Extend the City of Melbourne's policy on Sunlight to Public Spaces to include protection for public spaces in Southbank.
- Work with Victorian College for the Arts to capitalise on the unique opportunities that tertiary institutions can offer to activate the street life in their neighbourhood.

The programs and policies aimed at facilitating life in Southbank's streets, plazas and parks need to be coordinated with the proposed six projects for making a better public environment.

## Sturt Street place-making initiative

As a start-up initiative for implementing the Southbank Plan, the Government (in partnership with the City of Melbourne) will focus their particular attention on Sturt Street and its environs. This will instigate a range of coordinated, place-making actions and approaches to significantly increase local street life and activity. This will include:

- The development of Grant Street as a new local community heart. This will involve the design and development of new public open space and investigation of on-site local service retail; neighbourhood meeting spaces; childcare facilities; and the associated provision of adult learning programs.
- The mandating of any development on Government - owned land (adjacent or fronting Sturt Street) to make provision for street level retail with an emphasis on food and cafe uses.
- The required provision of street-related retail tenancies to any new development along Sturt Street.
- The extension of footpaths, tree planting, seating and lighting to support 'spill out' space from existing, or proposed, active ground floor building spaces along Sturt Street.
- Working with the VCA to encourage the College's frontages to Sturt and Grant Streets to actively engage these streets.
- The development of clear way-finding initiatives linking Sturt Street to South Melbourne and other neighbouring public facilities.
- The investigation of significantly improved pedestrian linkages between Sturt Street and South Melbourne, across Kingsway.
- The design and development of a new street space (delineated by a screen and canopy structure) to the west side of Sturt Street, above the King's Domain Tunnel entry. Development of an associated activity program for this space.
- Support the City of Melbourne's Southbank Place Manager to help drive and implement the Sturt Street initiatives.



Sturt Street cultural spine

# 6 projects

The Southbank Plan initiatives need to be undertaken by the Victorian Government and City of Melbourne, acting individually, jointly or in partnership.

These project initiatives also need to be coordinated with private and institutional projects. This will lead to development outcomes with direct and indirect benefits for the wider public.

### Coordination & facilitation

The Victorian Government and City of Melbourne must coordinate their actions. A joint working party is proposed to review and make recommendations on the responsibilities of both parties. A joint working party would consider priorities and integration of programs over defined time periods, guide the implementation of the Plan and monitor its effectiveness in improving the public environment.

Implementation of some of the longer and more complex projects will require a coordinated whole of government approach, particularly to achieve the necessary site acquisition, sales and land exchanges, and to gain support from institutions, agencies and authorities for works that affect their assets or operations.

Implementing the major improvements will also require:

- A more detailed feasibility assessment of technical issues and constraints.
- Agreement upon project management responsibilities between the City of Melbourne and the Victorian Government and other agencies or institutions as appropriate.
- Consultation with key stakeholders.
- Identification of land consolidation strategies in places.
- The strategic use of Government land holdings.
- Identification of funding strategies and sources.
- Establishment of processes for design and for construction.

### Funding

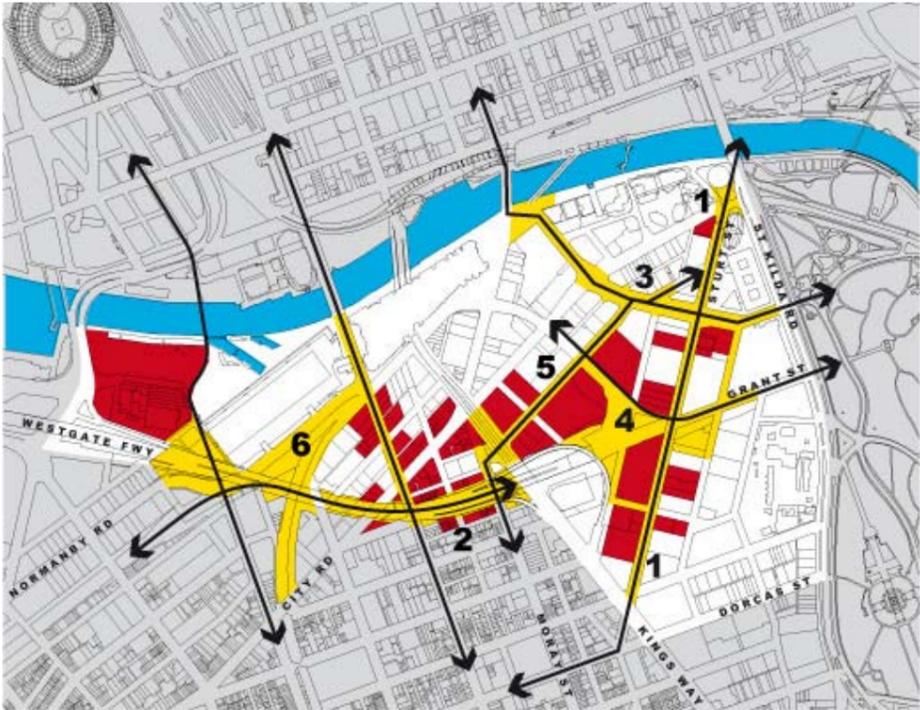
Funding options for the proposed projects will be the subject of further discussions between the State Government, City of Melbourne and other key stakeholders. Such options may include the allocation of open space contributions (under the Subdivision Act) administered by Council in addition to budget allocations. In finalising the Southbank Plan and its associated Implementation Plan, these and other funding mechanisms, including the contributions that could be made by private development and through use of strategic government land holdings, will be further explored.



### PUBLIC LAND HOLDINGS

The extent of Southbank land in public ownership of some form including various permanent and temporary Crown Land reserves, Crown Leases, road reserves, etc. is shown on the plan above.

- VICTORIAN GOVERNMENT OR CITY OF MELBOURNE LAND
- COMMONWEALTH LAND



### STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT & IMPROVEMENT OPPORTUNITIES

- MAJOR SITES WHERE REDEVELOPMENT IS CONFIRMED OR LIKELY
- ↔ KEY OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVED WALKING AND CYCLE LINKS
- AREAS OF STRATEGIC PUBLIC REALM IMPROVEMENTS

# 6 projects

## 1 The Sturt Street cultural spine

A pedestrian promenade along Sturt Street linking all of the major facilities and institutions (existing and new) of the Southbank Arts Precinct and connecting directly to St Kilda Road through a plaza at the Victorian Arts Centre.



## 2 Southbank Boulevard open space link

An improved walking link and sequence of high-quality public spaces along Southbank Boulevard, connecting to the Yarra River and Queensbridge Square to the north, and to the Domain and the Sturt Street cultural spine to the east.



## 3 Southbank central interchange precinct

The dislocation and leftover spaces in central Southbank from the construction of the CityLink Interchange repaired through consolidation and development of fragmented land, new local movement links joining separated areas, and a new local centre around Grant Street/Sturt Street.



## 4 Kavanagh / Moray Street local link

A local link between Southbank and South Melbourne, providing a generous and attractive space for walking and cycling that is animated by new high-density development along its length.



## 5 Westgate Freeway undercroft

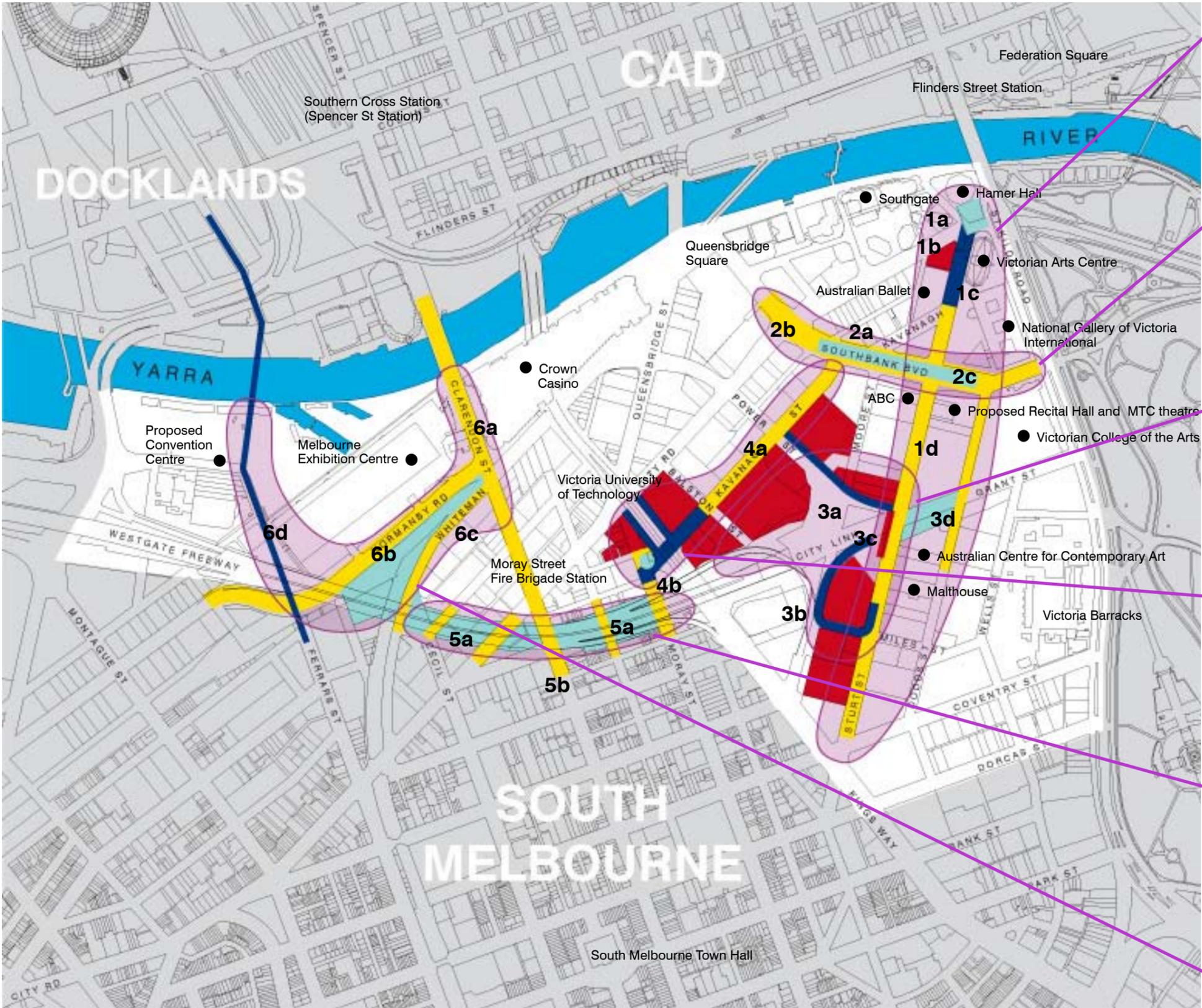
An open space corridor below the Westgate Freeway with an off-street cycling and walking route linking a series of active recreational facilities such as a skate park and netball courts, and enhanced streetscapes linking Southbank and South Melbourne.



## 6 Docklands-South Melbourne links and Whiteman Street local centre

Improved public transport and cycle links in Clarendon and Ferrars Streets respectively, framing a local centre with community services and open spaces at Whiteman Street and the light rail reserve.





- 1 The Sturt Street cultural spine**
  - 1a New Arts Centre Plaza
  - 1b YMCA site redevelopment
  - 1c Sturt Street ramp to new Arts Centre Plaza
  - 1d Streetscape improvements including all-access compliant tram stop
- 2 Southbank Boulevard open space link**
  - 2a Enlargement of median to create linear public open space
  - 2b Improved pedestrian crossing of City Road to link to Queensbridge square
  - 2c Tram stop improvement at new Recital Hall
- 3 Southbank central interchange precinct**
  - 3a Grant Street linked to Kavanagh Street via generous walking and cycling 'street' parallel to Power Street
  - 3b Explore with Transurban the potential of parts of the large area of land of the CityLink Sturt Street off ramp.
  - 3c Make an active edge to west of Sturt Street at the Domain Tunnel portal.
  - 3d New local centre and large open space centrally located.
- 4 Kavanagh / Moray Street local link**
  - 4a Streetscape enhancements along Kavanagh Street
  - 4b New underpass of Kings Way linking Kavanagh Street to Moray Street
- 5 Westgate Freeway undercroft**
  - 5a Public spaces developed in undercroft with cycling and walking paths and active recreation facilities
  - 5b Streetscape enhancements below freeway
- 6 Docklands-South Melbourne links and Whiteman Street local centre**
  - 6a Enhancement in Clarendon Street to encourage walking and use of public transport
  - 6b Rationalisation of roadway to enlarge open spaces
  - 6c Development of local centre at Whiteman Street
  - 6d Cycle link from Ferrars Street to Docklands

NEW LINKS  
 IMPROVED STREETS  
 NEW PUBLIC OPEN SPACE (PARKS, RECREATION FACILITIES AND PLAZA'S)  
 DEVELOPMENT SITES INTEGRATED WITH PUBLIC REALM IMPROVEMENTS  
 ARTS, CULTURAL AND ENTERTAINMENT FACILITIES

## Project 1

### THE STURT STREET CULTURAL SPINE

**A pedestrian promenade along Sturt Street linking all of the major arts and cultural institutions (existing and proposed) in the Southbank Arts Precinct and connecting directly to St Kilda Road through a plaza at the Victorian Arts Centre.**

#### ISSUES

**Arts facilities along Sturt Street:** Sturt Street runs past every major arts institution in Southbank including the Arts Centre, Ballet Centre, National Gallery of Victoria (NGV), Malthouse, Australian Centre for Contemporary Art (ACCA), Victorian College of the Arts (VCA), Iwaki Auditorium, and the proposed Recital Hall and Melbourne Theatre Company (MTC). Other facilities under consideration (a new music conservatory and VCA secondary college) further add to this Arts Precinct.

**Poor access and orientation:** There is no direct link between the Arts Centre's front-of-house at St Kilda Road and the facilities to the south in Sturt Street. They are distant, hidden and inaccessible from the CAD and river. There is no visual indication of Sturt Street Arts Precinct from the surrounding streets.

**Streetscape amenity and facilities:** Most buildings along Sturt Street are poorly related to the public realm, with little activation of street spaces. The footpaths are wide and trees have been planted recently, but overhead power lines will limit their growth. There is no provision for disabled access to trams or for bicycle lanes.

**The Arts Centre:** The Arts Centre has a proposal to make a new pedestrian plaza on the lawn between the State theatre and Hamer Hall. This plaza is designed to be a major activity hub. But the Arts Centre podium is 8 metres above Sturt Street and creates dead frontages and service spaces on its western side. Sturt Street north of Kavanagh Street is effectively an 'off-ramp' from Alexandra Avenue, however it carries very low traffic volumes.

**Public open spaces:** Most public space near Sturt Street is poorly located in terms of amenity for active use, abutting blank building walls or noisy roads. For example a park such as the Sturt Street Reserve would ideally be better located more centrally.

#### OBJECTIVES

- Improve access and orientation for pedestrian movement between the Central Activity District (CAD) and Southbank arts facilities, and between performance venues and existing car parks at the Ballet and Arts Centres.
- Develop the collective identity of arts and performance facilities in Southbank.
- Provide a high quality, accessible public environment around the new Recital Hall and Melbourne Theatre Company building.
- Improve accessibility and interaction between the arts and cultural facilities and venues.

#### DEVELOPMENT FACILITATION

- Support redevelopment of the YMCA site by creating an address onto the Arts Centre plaza, and loading bay access from the north end of Sturt Street.



#### OPPORTUNITIES

*Opportunities for further investigation include:*

**A generous pedestrian and bicycle ramp extending Sturt Street, from Kavanagh Street up to the Arts Centre plaza and St Kilda Road.**

**Narrowing or closure of the Sturt Street exit from Alexandra Avenue to improve the Arts Centre loading bays.**

**A Sturt Street address for the Arts Centre, National Gallery, and the National Gallery's sculpture garden.**

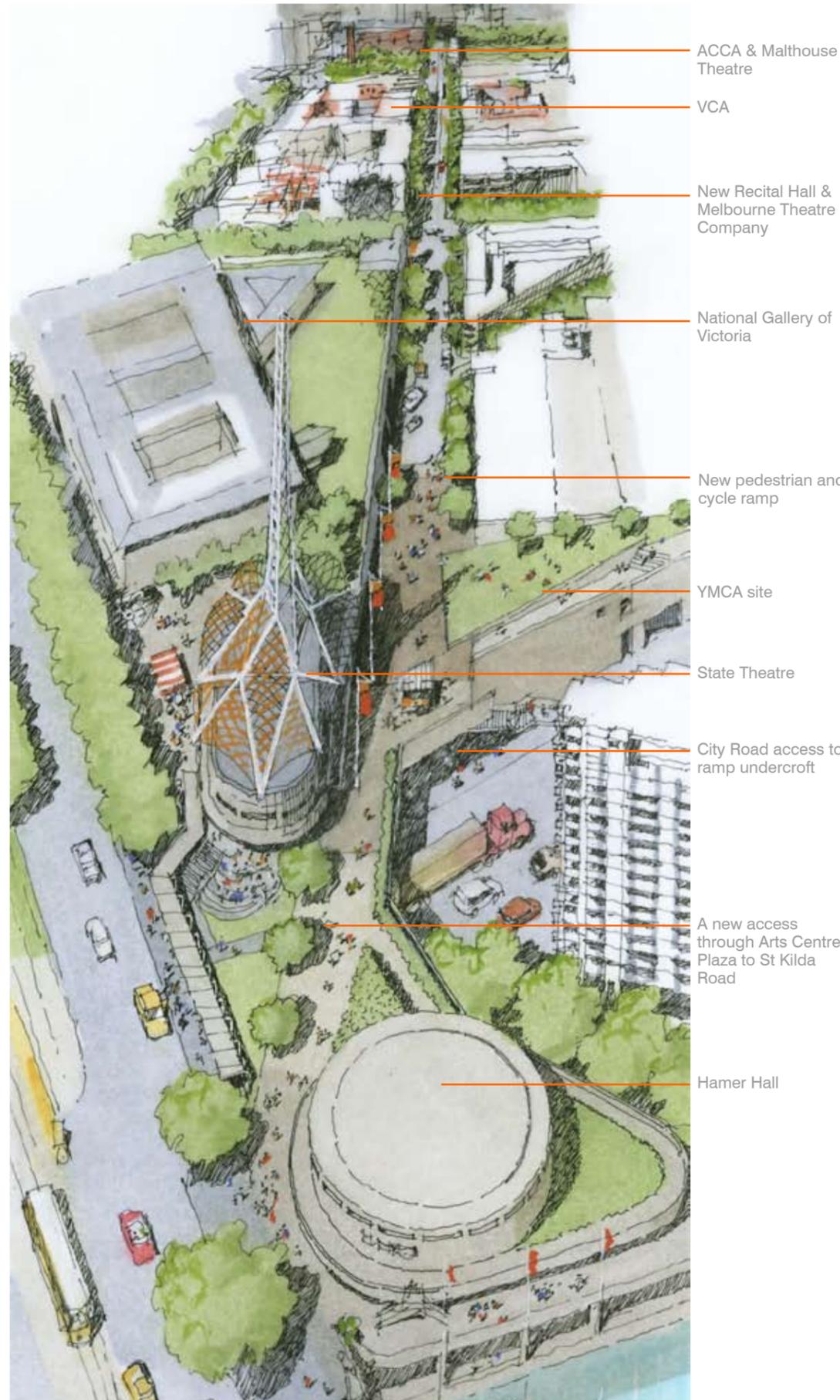
**Sturt Street improvements: power-lines underground, bike lanes and generous DDA-compliant tram stops at key nodes including:**

- Iwaki Auditorium/Recital Hall/MTC
- ACCA/Malthouse

**New educational and cultural facilities (VCA secondary college, music conservatorium) located so that they interact with Sturt Street.**

**Exemplary architecture and a visible public profile of artistic activity in the precinct including temporary exhibitions and performances in public spaces.**

**A public place along Sturt Street's western footpath at the Domain tunnel entry (see project 4).**



ACCA & Malthouse Theatre

VCA

New Recital Hall & Melbourne Theatre Company

National Gallery of Victoria

New pedestrian and cycle ramp

YMCA site

State Theatre

City Road access to ramp undercroft

A new access through Arts Centre Plaza to St Kilda Road

Hamer Hall

### **A new pedestrian ramp connecting a new Arts Centre plaza at St Kilda Road to Sturt Street**

Directly connecting Sturt Street to St Kilda Road would make Sturt Street, Melbourne's 'Arts Street'. The design of this pedestrian and bicycle link needs to be integrated with a re-working of the Victorian Arts Centre plaza and with redevelopment of the YMCA site at the corner of Sturt Street and City Road.

Making the ramp the entire width of Sturt Street between Kavanagh Street and City Road, would create the neat appearance of a street running uphill to St Kilda Road. It would also allow for improved service and delivery access to the Arts Centre and the YMCA site using existing access from City Road to the undercroft of the new ramp. This would close Sturt Street as a through traffic route at existing ground level. Access to the Arts Centre car park would be via Southbank Boulevard and Kavanagh Street, or from Sturt Street to the south.

Investigation into the potential development of a new Music Conservatorium and a new VCA-affiliated secondary college in the arts precinct should include provision of local retail and services facilities to create a music, education and neighbourhood hub focused on Grant and Sturt Streets. It could also provide a centrally located neighbourhood park. The park could include a children's playground, a facility currently being investigated for the neighbourhood by the City of Melbourne.



Existing view along Sturt St from The Arts Centre podium

## Project 2

### SOUTHBANK BOULEVARD OPEN SPACE LINK

**An improved pedestrian link and linear, high-quality public place along Southbank Boulevard, connecting to the Yarra River via Queensbridge Square, and to the Domain and the Sturt Street cultural spine.**

#### ISSUES

**Excess traffic capacity of Southbank Boulevard:** Southbank Boulevard was designed as a through route between St Kilda Road and the CBD via Queensbridge, but because of its closure at Queensbridge Square, traffic volumes are low in proportion to the road space provided. This encourages excessive driving speeds and creates a poor pedestrian environment. Southbank Boulevard north of City Road is now a strictly local route. The footpaths were widened and traffic lanes reduced in conjunction with the development of Freshwater Place, however the road space provision is still very generous. East of Sturt Street, tram tracks and a narrower road reserve limit a boulevard treatment.

**Pedestrian amenity and facilities:** Despite its name, Southbank Boulevard lacks the formal, pedestrian-friendly urban qualities of a genuine boulevard. Its variable width and alignment and irregular medians make a disorienting space that fails to provide a civic focus for Southbank. Pedestrian crossings are degraded by splayed intersections and slip lanes, and pedestrians are frustrated by wait times at signals. There are no bike lanes although it is the only convenient alternative to Southbank Promenade, where cycling has been banned due to congestion and conflicts with pedestrians.

**Recital Hall and MTC project:** The vacant 'Telecom' site between Sturt and Dodds Street on the south side of Southbank Boulevard is the proposed site for the new Recital Hall and MTC building. The current standard of pedestrian amenity and the general presentation around the site is very poor as a context for two major performance venues.

**City Road crossings:** The Southbank Boulevard intersection with City Road is difficult, off-putting and slow for pedestrians to cross (especially the vision-impaired or otherwise disabled). This is worsened by slip lanes at all corners and long waiting times for signals. Vehicular traffic at the intersection remains heavily congested, despite excess capacity in other sections of Southbank Boulevard.

#### OBJECTIVES

- Create public spaces that are attractive to local pedestrian use.
- Improve amenity and service for pedestrians and bicyclists.
- Improve pedestrian links from the riverside promenade to arts and performance facilities along Southbank Boulevard and Sturt Street
- Improve pedestrian crossings of City Road at Southbank Boulevard.
- Contribute to the formal character and legibility of Southbank.

#### DEVELOPMENT FACILITATION

- Provide a better and more accessible public environment for the National Gallery and new Recital Hall and Melbourne Theatre Company building.
- Provide local linear park for existing and future local residents.



#### OPPORTUNITIES

*Opportunities for further investigation include:*

**A broadened and significantly enhanced pedestrian space in Southbank Boulevard by reducing traffic and turning lanes between Sturt and Fawkner Streets.**

**Generous tram stops near the new Recital Hall and Melbourne Theatre Company building, to meet requirements for DDA-compliance and to provide improved public transport facilities for the new performance venues.**

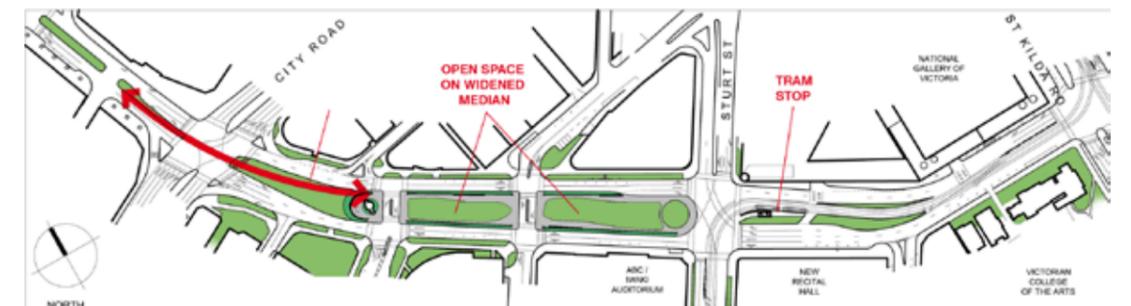
**Improve pedestrian crossing at the City Road intersection.**

**Significant artworks located at key sites along Southbank Boulevard in connection with the National Gallery collections, and/or temporary exhibits linked to the College of the Arts.**



#### Southbank Boulevard transformed into a local park

A schematic design for Southbank Boulevard south of City Road (illustrated above) has been prepared by the City of Melbourne. This has been subjected to traffic analysis indicating its feasibility, and public consultation indicating support for the proposal. The next stage is to allocate a capital works budget, obtain formal VicRoads and planning approvals and then to prepare and implement a detailed design.



#### Easier pedestrian crossings of City Road at Southbank Boulevard

Better pedestrian crossing facilities of City Road at Southbank Boulevard (existing view at left) are important to complete the link to the new Queensbridge Square and Yarra Promenade.



## Project 3

### SOUTHBANK CENTRAL INTERCHANGE PRECINCT

**The dislocation and leftover spaces in central Southbank from the construction of the CityLink Interchange repaired through consolidation and development of fragmented land, new local movement links joining separated areas, and a new local centre around Grant Street/Sturt Street.**

#### ISSUES

**Property fragmentation and inefficient land use:** The construction of the Westgate Freeway and CityLink has left large areas of land throughout Southbank as fragmented, inaccessible spaces abutting high traffic roads and are cut off from any form of pedestrian use.

**Sturt Street frontages:** About 300 metres of Sturt Street's west side adjoins the CityLink Southbank interchange where it enters the tunnel. This gap in the streetscape has no active uses fronting the street and even the views to the ornamental planting in the Interchange are negated by the noise of the City Link traffic.

**Severance of Southbank from South Melbourne:** The combined effect of the freeway and Kings Way is to cut Southbank from South Melbourne where established local community and retail services are located.

**Neighbourhood meeting places:** There is a general lack of a local shopping centre and suitable local public open spaces for people living and working nearby.

**Grant Street:** Grant Street and a strip of open space to its south suffer from a lack of active frontages and are little used.

**Development pressures:** A series of current planning approvals are in place between Kavanagh Street and the motorway. Some of these are yet to be constructed, creating opportunities for mutually beneficial design review. There are also institutional pressures for development in Southbank:

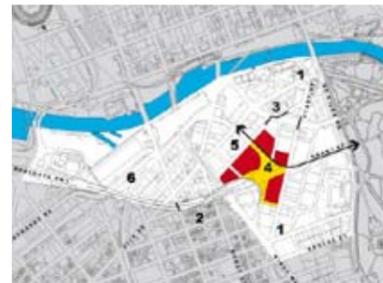
- The MSO now shares facilities with the ABC as a tenant, but the ABC is unable to offer them long-term security of tenure and alternative accommodation is desired.
- There are three music conservatories in central Melbourne and an investigation recently commenced into the potential to consolidate these into a single new Conservatorium, housed in a new facility in Southbank.
- The State Government (through VicUrban) has recently funded a feasibility study for a VCA-affiliated secondary college in Southbank.

#### OBJECTIVES

- Bring together land fragments around the CityLink interchange to create sites that could be developed for open space and private buildings with active street fronts.
- Re-establish local circulation links that were disrupted by construction of the motorway.
- Develop a local shopping centre
- Investigate the provision of public open spaces that better meet the needs in the locality
- Provide pedestrian shelter and active frontages to the footpaths along Sturt Street.

#### DEVELOPMENT FACILITATION

- Consolidate sites for development and support development of public facilities such as a new music conservatorium, VCA secondary college, or other VCA facilities.
- Improve street access and development frontages for the site between Kavanagh, Power, McGowan and Balston Streets.
- Improve pedestrian access for the above site to important facilities east of the CityLink interchange.



#### OPPORTUNITIES

*Opportunities for further investigation include:*

**A new, generous walking and cycling 'street' linking Grant, Moore and Kavanagh Streets along the edge of the CityLink interchange and Power Street with future development fronting onto this walking street.**

**To provide better quality and well located public open space in this central area of Southbank that meets resident's need better such as expanding ACCA's north forecourt into Grant Street to create a larger, centrally-located local park.**

**Consolidation of the SES site, sites to the north and peripheral land in the CityLink interchange to create a more substantial development site fronting Sturt Street.**

**The large area of land taken up with the Domain Tunnel exit ramp to Power Street appears to carry very low traffic volumes. Investigate, with Transurban the potential to achieve the objectives for improvements along Sturt Street by re-thinking the design of the exit ramp to enable re-development for buildings and/or open space of part of this 1.5ha site.**

**A better, more active and engaging use of the land along the Sturt street edge of the Domain Tunnel that contributes to the activation of Sturt Street.**

**Investigate with Transurban the potential for increased planting in the northern area of the CityLink interchange to improve the visual outlook for pedestrians in McGowan Street and adjoining development.**



New development south of Kavanagh Street

New local centre

Canopy to western footpath of Sturt Street at City Link tunnel entry

Malthouse

Consolidated development site at City Link intersection



**New development generating activity around the CityLink interchange**

There are current but un-actioned planning permits for several sites around the CityLink interchange. Better development outcomes here rely on a good land consolidation strategy offering benefits for owners of these sites as well as to the public. This should address areas managed by Transurban as part of CityLink, remnants of sites acquired to build CityLink but not needed for the motorway, other Government-owned land and key sites in private ownership. It should aim to optimise land parcels for private development and new public facilities, and to create or improve local circulation links, resolving their alignments, levels and intersections with existing streets as a context for development plans on individual sites.

**Activate Sturt Street along the CityLink tunnel edge**

Detailed investigation is required for design options to improve the edges of the CityLink interchange, especially along Sturt Street (below left). This could involve replacing the unsuccessful planter along the tunnel portal. This could include a combination of light, built and open space elements such as a widened footpath, tram stop facilities and passenger shelters, and a large canopy with integrated tram wire supports and lighting.



## Project 4

### KAVANAGH / MORAY STREET LOCAL LINK

**A local link between Southbank and South Melbourne providing a generous and attractive space for walking and cycling that is animated by new high-density development along it.**

#### ISSUES

**Lack of pedestrian and cyclist amenity in Kavanagh Street:** Although Kavanagh Street has a generous (30m) road reserve width that far exceeds basic requirements for vehicular traffic, it makes poor provision for pedestrians. Most of the existing street space is used for car parking, and the extensive angle parking is hazardous for cyclists. Overhead power lines remain on the southern side, detracting from the appearance and limiting opportunities for effective street tree planting.

**Likely impacts on the quality of street frontages to future developments:** Kavanagh Street has a 'back-of-house' appearance, largely resulting from its predominant use for car parking, but is the primary address for substantial development sites to the south as well as an important frontage for the former VUT site near Kings Way. Collectively, these represent a large proportion of potential development in this part of Southbank. The existing condition of the street jeopardises good development outcomes on these sites, especially active engagement between building uses and adjoining streets.

**A pedestrian and cycle route to South Melbourne:** Kavanagh Street can provide a useful link to Moray Street, South Melbourne (which provides an important north-south cycle route). Currently, the ramps up to the Kings Way overpass block this connection.

**Queensbridge Street / City Road intersection:** The intersection of Queensbridge Street and City Road is very large and complex due to the angled crossing of four streets as well as a tramway. It is further complicated by the overhead structure of Kings Way; traffic connections weaving between the piers of Kings Way are disorienting and create multiple conflict points between vehicles and pedestrians, some with poor visibility. Levels of service and amenity for pedestrians are extremely poor.

#### OBJECTIVES

- Improve pedestrian and bicycle links between South Melbourne and Southbank.
- Encourage attractive and active interfaces between the ground floor of new developments and Kavanagh Street.
- Simplify the intersection of Queensbridge Street/City Road/Moray Street to improve amenity and legibility for all modes of traffic.
- Optimise opportunities for usable public space associated with new development.
- Encourage the development of built form that reduces the visual impact of the Kings Way overpass by screening views of it where possible and by creating a street-related architectural scale.

#### DEVELOPMENT FACILITATION

- Encourage good street-oriented development on sites south of Kavanagh Street and on the former VUT site.
- Improve the profile and accessibility of existing major development sites.
- Create a new or enlarged development site at the south-west corner of Moray Street and City Road.



#### OPPORTUNITIES

*Opportunities for further investigation include:*

**A new underpass below Kings Way to link Kavanagh Street and Moray Street.**

**Moray Street realigned and redesigned in the area of the Kings Way undercroft between Kavanagh Street and City Road, to link with the new underpass and simplify the Queensbridge Street / City Road intersection.**

**Kavanagh Street redesigned to provide generous spaces and a high level of amenity for pedestrians and cyclists, as well as local traffic access to adjoining properties.**

**New development creating a highly active ground level frontage onto Kavanagh Street with a mix of local retail and hospitality uses, creating a lively and attractive public environment.**

**A sheltered mid-block pedestrian link and pocket park connecting Kavanagh to McGowan Street, between Power and Balston Streets.**



**Kavanagh Street transformed into an attractive walking and cycling street linked to Moray Street**

An underpass linking Kavanagh and Moray Streets would provide convenient access from Southbank into the heart of South Melbourne. Design constraints on the underpass need to be investigated, including the structure of Kings Way, ramping of the tramway to clear the underpass, underground services, etc. to determine the depth and alignment of the underpass and its capacity to carry (local) vehicular traffic or only pedestrians and cyclists. This, in turn, will affect the designs of nearby intersections as well as the need for any land acquisition and the potential sales of new development sites.

Improving Kavanagh Street (existing below, proposed left) as a pedestrian environment relies on improving the street itself and negotiating with owners of adjoining properties to ensure that new development provides active and attractive building frontages onto it.

## Project 5

### WESTGATE FREEWAY UNDERCROFT

**An off-street cycling and walking route linking a series of open spaces including recreational facilities such as a skate park and netball or tennis courts, and enhanced streetscapes linking Southbank and Southbank below the Westgate Freeway.**

#### ISSUES

**Available space:** The undercroft includes large land parcels, potentially suiting activities that demand large ground-floor spaces. The clearance to the overhead structures varies from 12 to 15 metres, and with the wide spacing of the piers, the spaces have reasonable natural light and shelter. They are generally unencumbered by structures other than the elevated motorway, with only wire mesh fences and car parking attendants' facilities in portable buildings. Landscape devices to protect structure supports could be incorporated into the recreational landscape design.

**Poor environmental amenity:** The undercroft is unattractive with shabby pavements, fences, temporary structures, and use of the area for car parking causing unnecessary environmental blight.

**Ownership and uses:** The undercroft spaces between Kings Way and Montague Street are Crown Land. Most have been leased until around 2015 to a variety of car park operators, except where a McDonalds has been built west of Clarendon Street at City Road.

**Street frontages:** All of the spaces are exposed to local streets, because of this exposure, the condition of the undercroft also blights a wider area beyond it affecting perceptions of environmental quality, safety and vitality, degrading land values and development potential, and deterring pedestrian circulation between Southbank and South Melbourne.

**Lack of local open space:** There is a lack of open space in the immediate area.

#### OBJECTIVES

- Make the undercroft spaces attractive, exciting and active spaces that contribute positively the amenity of the area.
- Remove the blight effect of the undercroft spaces.
- Provide space and facilities for local recreational needs.
- Improve north-south pedestrian and bicycle links along streets between South Melbourne and Southbank.
- Create an attractive, safe and convenient east-west route for cycling and walking.

#### DEVELOPMENT FACILITATION

- Significantly reduce a major blight that now limits the desirability of properties in the area for higher-order land uses.
- Provide local facilities and amenities supporting and encouraging desired residential development in the precinct.



#### OPPORTUNITIES

*Opportunities for further investigation include:*

**A new, safe and generous east-west pedestrian and cycle route linking Southbank and South Melbourne.**

**More attractive frontages onto the streets between Southbank and South Melbourne that encourage more walking in the area.**

**Accommodation of local residents' and workers' recreational needs, especially active uses that are less sensitive to traffic noise than passive recreation.**

**Accommodation of selected city-wide recreational needs that are difficult to meet in existing parks.**

**Distinctive examples of how to transform the image and use of spaces that are usually considered to have little potential as public space, including acoustic dampening techniques and artistic interventions.**



Images: Natasha Morgan

### The freeway undercroft used as space for active recreation, walking and cycle paths

Parks using freeway undercroft spaces have been developed in Seattle (the I-51 Colonnade Park) and in San Francisco's Mission District, providing skate parks, mountain bike trails, dog walking areas and other facilities. The spaces under the Westgate Freeway offer an important and strategically located resource for the Southbank and South Melbourne communities.

The Yarra Turning Basin (right) illustrates how negative impacts of the motorway can be counteracted; spaces below the Westgate Freeway have even greater potential to become exciting and engaging public spaces.

Making the undercroft spaces available for other uses need to be investigated, including short term terminations of existing leases, converting sites on an ad hoc basis as current leases expire, or a combination of these with selective early lease terminations on sites that offer the greatest potential. Once the available areas are determined, they should be designed to provide for recreation needs as identified through existing neighbourhood audits, new surveys as appropriate and consultation with the City of Port Phillip.



Existing view of the freeway undercroft

## Project 6

### DOCKLANDS-SOUTH MELBOURNE LINKS & WHITEMAN STREET LOCAL CENTRE

**Improved public transport and cycle links in Clarendon and Ferrars Streets, framing a local centre with local services and public open spaces at Whiteman Street and the light rail reserve.**

#### ISSUES

**Lack of local open space:** There is a lack of open space for local residents. The Melbourne Exhibition Centre's forecourt is the nearest 'park', but this is isolated by Normanby Road and the Exhibition Centre itself, and is not designed to cater for local recreational needs.

**Wasted land along Normanby Road and the light rail:**

There is a wide swathe of land – about 5 hectares – between the Exhibition Centre and recent high-rise development south of Whiteman Street. Normanby Road balloons from its 30m reserve near Montague Street to about 45m through this area. Anecdotal evidence suggests that even at peak times when traffic is leaving the Exhibition Centre car park, the road's capacity exceeds traffic demand. The light rail further fragments the space between Normanby Road and Whiteman Street. The area is thinly scattered with relatively ineffective tree planting, and is useless as a public space.

**Poor image and amenity of Clarendon Street:** The area includes a mixture of residential and casino-related activity with remnant low-rise industrial buildings. There are many properties, especially fronting Clarendon Street, which would be appropriate for redevelopment with significantly larger buildings. The current amenity of Clarendon Street is very poor – resulting from factors such as the overhead Westgate Freeway and the degraded condition of its undercroft, wide splayed intersections, overhead power lines and poor footpath conditions as well as heavy traffic. This is a deterrent to desirable types of redevelopment.

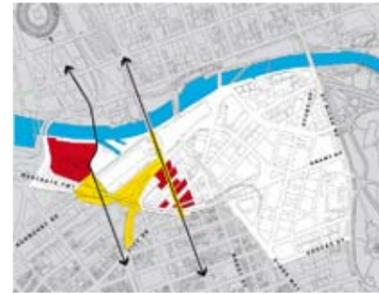
**Isolation of the new Convention Centre:** Isolation of the proposed Convention Centre between major transport infrastructure, the river and the Exhibition Centre risks encouraging its operation as an enclave without the benefits of connecting to Southbank and the surrounding city. Provision of a new footbridge over the river is an agreed requirement for the new Convention Centre, to link with Docklands. Convenient and attractive walking routes are also needed to Southbank and South Melbourne from the Convention Centre.

#### OBJECTIVES

- Support improved public transport services along Clarendon and Spencer Streets.
- Enhance pedestrian amenity to encourage walking and use of existing public transport services.
- Support improved cycle links between South Melbourne, Southbank and Docklands along Clarendon Street, and along Ferrars Street and through the Exhibition Centre/Convention Centre precinct.
- Encourage development along Clarendon Street that activates the street edges.
- Develop a new local centre for the residents of the western part of Southbank, including public open spaces.

#### DEVELOPMENT FACILITATION

- Encourage high-quality, high-density redevelopment fronting onto Clarendon Street that contributes to the amenity and liveliness of the street environment.
- Support integration of the Convention Centre and its use into Southbank as a whole.
- Support residential development in the area.



#### OPPORTUNITIES

*Opportunities for further investigation include:*

**A cycle and pedestrian link from Ferrars Street across Normanby Road and through the Exhibition / Convention Centre precinct to the river and proposed footbridge.**

**Upgrading of Clarendon Street with footpath repaving, rationalisation of cross-overs, DDA compliant tram stops, power lines placed underground, street tree planting, new public lighting and furniture.**

**Redevelopment of properties along Clarendon Street with active ground level frontages and canopies over footpaths for weather protection.**

**Minimisation of on-street parking and increasing pedestrian space, using the extensive Casino and Exhibition Centre car parks to meet local parking demands.**

**Consolidation of waste for public open space by rationalising:**

- Normanby Road's width
- Whiteman Street's width (e.g. by introducing a one-way system)
- The intersections of Cecil and Whiteman Streets
- Crown Land under the freeway

**Support for residents' recreation needs (e.g. a children's playground).**

**Development of a neighbourhood hub between Whiteman St and Normanby Road, in a series of pavilion buildings separated by small open spaces. This should accommodate a mixture of services, tenancies, meeting rooms and retail supporting local residents, with open spaces.**



New development along Clarendon Street

Pedestrian, cycle and public transport improvements in Clarendon Street

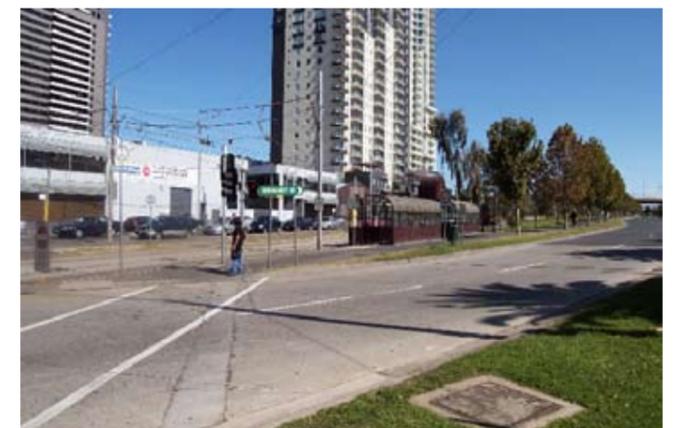
New local centre at Whiteman Street

Improved open space, bike and walking links

### **A local centre combining community facilities and open spaces at Whiteman Street, with enhanced public transport, pedestrian and cycle links to the CAD and South Melbourne**

Clarendon Street's design should be reviewed to improve public transport services and patronage from Southern Cross Station into Southbank and South Melbourne. Visual and amenity improvements of the streetscape should be undertaken to encourage desired redevelopment of nearby properties.

Road and transport layouts in the area of Whiteman Street and Normanby Road (existing, right) should be reviewed to enable consolidation of fragmented land parcels and the creation of local circulation links through the area while supporting wider transport imperatives. Planning and design for the neighbourhood hub can commence after the extent of usable areas are defined.



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Queensbridge Square with the new pedestrian link to the CAD via the former Sandridge rail bridge.