



PLACE MANAGEMENT INFORMATION BOOKLET

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**This brochure is prepared by the
Department of Planning and Community Development
to assist local government, business associations,
property owners and other government agencies
to understand and appreciate place management and how
it can facilitate the development of vibrant
activity and town centres.**



CONTENTS

1. SCOPE & POTENTIAL	1
What is place management?	1
The role of place management in activity centres	1
What makes a successful activity centre?	2
What does place management offer?	2
Benefits of place management	3
Requirements for successful place management	4
2. SKILLS, EXPERIENCE AND RELATIONSHIPS	5
Appointing a Place Manager	5
Professional background of Place Managers	5
Key roles of a Place Manager	6
Key interpersonal skills of a Place Manager	7
Creating an effective environment for a Place Manager	8
3. THE FIRST 100 DAYS	11
Key actions a place manager should initiate simultaneously in the first 100 days	11
A. Establish the scope of the place management program	12
B. Demonstrate ability to make a difference	13
C. Assemble information and data	13
D. Develop a communications strategy	14
E. Establish a work program, goals and objectives	14
PLACE MANAGEMENT BEST PRACTICE EXAMPLES	17
Bendigo City Centre	17
Central Geelong	18
Fairfield, NSW	19
Footscray	20
Port Phillip	21
Wodonga	22
LINKS, REFERENCES AND INFORMATION	23



1. SCOPE & POTENTIAL

WHAT IS PLACE MANAGEMENT?

Place management is a mechanism for managing the wide range of issues, challenges and opportunities that face an activity centre every day. It is a management approach that enables issues to be pursued in an integrated, coordinated way to achieve the economic, social and environmental potential of an activity centre. It involves:

- › actively leading, facilitating and coordinating the delivery of actions and strategies
- › effectively communicating and championing the vision for the centre
- › generating a positive approach to the development of the centre, engendering interest, enthusiasm and excitement in the pursuit of the vision
- › making efficient use of available resources
- › integrating and prioritising all social, community, economic, marketing, physical and environmental initiatives
- › engaging all parties in the process and creating partnerships
- › recognising and resolving the diverse and often competing views of stakeholders.

As all activity centres are different, place management programs need to be tailored to reflect the specific scale, status, role and resources of the centre.

THE ROLE OF PLACE MANAGEMENT IN ACTIVITY CENTRES

Vibrant, multifunctional activity centres are vital for sustainable urban living. The Victoria Planning Provisions and the *Melbourne 2030* strategy place great significance on the social, economic, environmental and physical value of a network of sustainable, accessible and multifunctional activity centres.

Vibrant, safe and attractive activity and town centres are places that:

- foster a sense of community and develop a unique, individual character, image and style
- evolve and grow with their community and reflect its character, heritage, and future aspirations
- nurture small business and local employment
- provide housing choice and opportunities for people to age in place
- facilitate and encourage walking, cycling and public transport usage.

Ongoing place management enables activity and town centres to fulfil these roles.





WHAT MAKES A SUCCESSFUL ACTIVITY CENTRE?

Activity centres are vital components of sustainable and liveable communities. They are the focus for a broad range of activities, day and night, every day of the year and have a variety of public and private property owners and tenants.

Activity centres are constantly evolving in line with demographic trends, emerging technology, changing business and consumer demands, residential aspirations, environmental sustainability and competing centres. Their successful evolution requires ongoing attention to economic, social, environmental and physical initiatives.

The key components of a successful centre are:

- › a viable and sustainable vision and strategic plan
- › an integrated approach to planning and implementing business, community, physical and environmental initiatives
- › local leadership, resources and an inclusive and an enduring management structure
- › effective partnerships between local residents, local government, businesses, property owners and State Government.

Physical, planning, design, marketing,
social transport, safety, economic,
environmental issues and initiatives



PLACE MANAGEMENT



Integrated, effective,
inclusive implementation

WHAT DOES PLACE MANAGEMENT OFFER?

Place management programs integrate and coordinate a range of economic, social, environmental and physical initiatives to help achieve the vision of an activity centre. These programs:

- › establish a single management and implementation mechanism for an activity centre, ensuring the overall vision for the centre is pursued in a logical and timely way, making the most efficient use of all available human and financial resources
- › integrate the critical economic, social, environmental and physical aspects of the centre's development and ensure all stakeholders and the wider community are engaged
- › benefit all parties including local government, businesses, property owners, residents, investors and developers by:
 - integrating approaches
 - streamlining processes
 - providing a one-stop shop for information
 - attracting additional funds and resources
 - building partnerships
 - reducing duplication
 - using resources effectively
 - providing consistent communications
 - facilitating development
 - resolving issues.

Every day State Government, local government and the private sector are involved in a broad range of initiatives within any activity centre. These initiatives are driven by a wide variety of agencies, with different and often competing objectives, priorities and budgets, which can cause confusion, duplication and inefficiencies.

A place management approach can work alongside local council and other stakeholder initiatives to integrate actions, priorities and budgets and facilitate the efficient and holistic development of an activity centre.



BENEFITS OF PLACE MANAGEMENT

Place management of an activity centre can achieve a range of benefits including:

- › a clear understanding of the individual character of a place, and a collective vision
- › a one-stop information and contact point to advocate for the centre
- › an integrated implementation plan and one set of priorities
- › simultaneous delivery of multi-disciplinary programs, policies and initiatives
- › capacity to build partnerships between key stakeholders
- › the ability to measure performance and monitor success across all initiatives
- › the ability to establish clear roles, responsibilities and relationships for all parties
- › effective development attraction and facilitation
- › hands-on awareness of day-to-day issues and the capacity for immediate response
- › savings and economies of scale for business training, purchasing and marketing
- › coordination of works, events and marketing.



“Place making and place management should be considered an essential governance function of urban communities. Town centres and activity centres all create a focal point for communities, but on their own do not necessarily create the heart and experiences communities are looking for. Place making is about creating the buzz and the experience that not only attracts people, but also resonates with their inner need for connection with others and their sense of community and wellbeing. Place making does not necessarily require large infrastructure changes, but can often be achieved through a range of social programs and events, and the creation of interest and vibrancy through the excitement of ever changing experiences.”

*Peter Marshall, Chief Executive Officer
Wyndham City Council*

“Council’s place management approach applied to the Knox Central Principal Activity Centre has helped to activate the policy intent of the Knox Central Urban Design Framework. It has brought together a range of decision-makers who are influencing positive change in the Centre. More detailed planning for particular precincts, based on the Framework, is happening in partnership with business, community and government. The end result is more informed decision-making. Place management is helping Council to deliver a range of services in a more holistic and integrated manner. It has also helped us to leverage additional resources (funds, ideas, investment, advocacy) from Government and industry to make our Activity Centres more vibrant and mixed-use places. I would commend the place management approach to the revitalisation of activity centres as it offers a triple-bottom line perspective to revitalisation.”

*Graeme Emonson, Chief Executive Officer
Knox City Council*

REQUIREMENTS FOR SUCCESSFUL PLACE MANAGEMENT

A successful place management program requires a nurturing and supporting corporate environment that:

- › understands and appreciates the principles and requirements of a place management approach
- › allocates sufficient resources to effectively pursue required outcomes
- › provides a long-term commitment from the host organisation.

Place management must be seen as an ongoing component of the successful evolution of an activity centre, not as a short term initiative with an end date. Although the specific management tasks and scope may change over time, place management should be a core, ongoing activity of the Council.

Specifically a place management program requires:

- › **Established supported plan and vision**
For a place management program to be effective it must have a plan and a vision that enjoys the support and commitment of all stakeholders.
- › **Clearly defined roles and scope**
The role and scope of the place management program and the place manager must be clearly established prior to the engagement of the place manager. It is essential for the organisation, as a whole, to appreciate and support the program. The role needs to be a ‘visible’ one that is well understood by all stakeholders and the wider community.
- › **Position, credibility, respect and authority**
An effective place manager must have the capacity and authority to work across and influence all areas of the host organisation (typically a local government organisation), and direct access to senior management. The manager should also have capacity to deal directly with all external stakeholders in order to gain their support and respect.

2. SKILLS, EXPERIENCE AND RELATIONSHIPS

APPOINTING A PLACE MANAGER

Having made the decision to pursue a place management program for an activity centre, the next step is to appoint a person or team of people to manage the program.

Successful place management programs prove that having a dedicated person or team, is much more effective than diluting the responsibility or pursuing the initiative as part of another role.

“Place managers are there to ‘sell’ the vision of the centre and mediate the consequences for a place... A place manager needs to be ‘visible’ and their position and responsibilities clearly understood by the community.”

John Mant, 2008

The role of a place manager varies over time as the centre evolves. Priorities will change as no two centres are alike. There is no one ‘size fits all’ approach for the place management of an activity centre, and no one professional background or skill-set appropriate to all centres.

PROFESSIONAL BACKGROUND OF PLACE MANAGERS

A review of successful place management programs throughout Australia and overseas indicates place managers come from a broad range of backgrounds and professions including:

Advertising	Architecture
Business Management	Creative Arts
Economics/Commerce	Engineering
Facility Management	Heritage
Law	Marketing
Psychology	Real Estate
Retailing	Teaching
Urban Design	Urban Planning

Discussions with existing place managers, leaders and decision-makers indicate that although a professional background of some relevance to the centre is essential, the key roles and skills for a place manager are listed here.

ROLES	SKILLS
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• champion the vision of the centre and develop an integrated and inclusive program to pursue it• lead, coordinate and integrate multi-disciplinary programs (social, physical, economic and environmental)• communicate and network• advocate and influence• benchmark and measure• facilitate and negotiate	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• listen, absorb, relate and understand• deliver, respond and act decisively• be assertive and persistent• enthuse, negotiate and persuade• conceptualise and integrate social, cultural, economic and physical aspects of a centre• understand government processes and structures• understand private sector development processes



KEY ROLES OF A PLACE MANAGER

TO CHAMPION THE VISION AND DEVELOP AN INTEGRATED AND INCLUSIVE PROGRAM

A commonly agreed vision for an activity centre is recognised as a prerequisite for an effective place management program. It is the role of the place manager to champion and sell the vision as well as gain 'buy-in' from various groups, agencies and individuals who have a role in implementing the program. In order to do this, the place manager must fully understand and appreciate the vision and the processes that led to its development.

As the vision dictates the direction of the activity centre, it is the place manager's role to integrate all initiatives which are part of this vision, across Council and with external agencies to create a coordinated work program. This is essential for simultaneous, coordinated delivery of the initiatives.

TO COORDINATE AND ADOPT AN ENTREPRENEURIAL APPROACH

Given the ongoing nature of activity centre planning, it is likely the place manager will inherit a range of programs, policies and initiatives from across Council. It is important for the place manager to quickly gain an appreciation of the full breadth of the programs as well as who is funding and managing them.

Although the place manager's role is not to take control of all projects, it is essential that they understand all relevant programs to establish an efficient, integrated and consistent implementation process, with all projects contributing to the overall vision, goals and objectives of the centre. This requires trust, strong relationships and mutual respect between the place manager and all Council departments and external agencies.

- The place manager must also adopt an entrepreneurial approach to the pursuit of the activity centre's vision as the person charged with making it happen, rather than relying on existing systems, traditional approaches and policies. This may require:

- thinking 'outside of the square'
- establishing links that do not currently exist between people and organisations
- considering options not routinely associated with the public sector.

- The place manager must have an appreciation of local government processes, planning and development, social and community development, business and economic development, marketing and urban design.
- The place manager must be able to identify gaps, duplications and omissions from existing programs, and propose new initiatives.

TO BUILD RELATIONSHIPS AND EMPOWER OTHERS

It is not possible or practical for the place manager to solve all issues or deliver projects on their own. Design development, funding, management and delivery will be the responsibility of many different Council departments, government agencies and the private sector. However, place managers need to forge strong relationships with a broad range of individuals and organisations involved with these initiatives, and empower people to pursue their initiatives as part of the place management program. They must:

- be able to visualise projects from the perspective of others and ask why are they doing it and what they want out of it
- demonstrate how they can help others achieve their objectives, whilst achieving their own
- be capable of building relationships with all groups, agencies and individuals
- effectively communicate the activity centre's vision in a consistent way to all internal and external participants, stakeholders and the wider community
- be a confident and effective networker, able to promote the centre and the program at every opportunity and facilitate engagement where there are diverse and competing viewpoints. This may involve shared decision-making, negotiated choices and trade offs.



TO FACILITATE DEVELOPMENT AND BUILD PARTNERSHIPS

The place manager must be able to facilitate economic, social and environmental investment within the centre in order to turn plans into reality. This will require ongoing facilitation and enduring partnerships between all key players. Place managers will need to use the following strategies to achieve their goals:

- To facilitate physical development, a place manager requires knowledge of the planning and development approvals systems, an appreciation of how the private sector approaches development and the appropriate authority to negotiate on behalf of the Council.
- To facilitate community and social development, the place manager requires knowledge of social and community policies, programs and principles.
- To build enduring partnerships, the place manager must appreciate the objectives of all relevant organisations and identify opportunities for mutual benefit.
- To be an effective advocate and negotiator, the place manager must be able to credibly represent the activity centre at a high level with both public and private sector organisations.

KEY INTERPERSONAL SKILLS OF A PLACE MANAGER

A successful activity centre requires the input of many groups, individuals and agencies over time but it is only the place manager who will be exposed to many issues and stakeholders on a daily basis. To other stakeholders the centre is just one item on their agenda; to the place manager it should be the only item. For this reason, a place manager requires well-developed interpersonal skills, including the ability to:

- **Listen, absorb, relate and understand**
A place manager must be a good listener and demonstrate empathy for other parties and an appreciation of their perspective and point of view.
- **Deliver, respond and act decisively**
A place manager must be able to quickly sum up a situation and act decisively to resolve a problem. It is common for the private sector to have a dismissive view of the public sector and its capacity to act. Stakeholders will be looking to the place manager to achieve results and real change.
- **Be assertive and persistent**
Place management is a long-term task. The multitude of stakeholders and the variety of issues means most ideas and initiatives will take time, patience and perseverance to achieve results. The place manager must be patient and prepared for long, arduous battles. It is their responsibility to keep issues 'on the table'.
- **Enthuse, negotiate and persuade**
The place manager is the 'sales person' for the activity centre, maintaining a positive outlook on the centre at all times. They must be capable of negotiating good outcomes to benefit all parties.
- **Engage in continuous learning**
Place management is an emerging field and an evolutionary process. Place managers must be prepared to continually learn and grow on the job. It is important for place managers to network with each other, share experiences, approaches and techniques.



CREATING AN EFFECTIVE ENVIRONMENT FOR A PLACE MANAGER

Place management is an 'action-results-driven' activity that does not always fit neatly into an existing local government organisational structure. A high level of mutual respect is required between the place manager and their superiors. Place management is not a role that can be effectively pursued by a committee process, or where specific approval is required before an action can be taken, or an idea pursued.

Place managers must have an appropriate status within an organisation to effectively lead the place management program. This may require, from time to time, the place manager having direct access to the Chief Executive Officer and Council and being able to speak with authority to external stakeholders.

There is no one organisational department that is most suited to house a place management position. Each has advantages and disadvantages. However, a high level of autonomy and legitimacy through appropriate governance structures is usually required to leverage urban change faster.

Current place managers are found within:

- Asset Management
- Community Development
- Corporate Planning
- Economic Development
- Infrastructure
- Major Projects
- Planning
- Urban Design

Irrespective of where the place manager position is located, they must have:

- › the ongoing confidence of Council staff and the ability to act and pursue issues and initiatives without the need for constant reporting or authorisation

- › the ability to easily and informally work across the organisation to seek support, information and input (into and from) many departments
- › effective access to, and visibility within, all stakeholder groups, both internal and external to Council
- › a presence in the activity centre on a daily basis.

Current place managers are located either in Council offices or in a dedicated space within the activity centre they are managing. Each location has benefits.

ADVANTAGES OF LOCATION WITHIN COUNCIL OFFICES:

- immediate access to all Council departments delivering programs and initiatives to the centre
- seen as an integral part of the Council team
- access to systems, technology and information.

DISADVANTAGES OF LOCATION WITHIN COUNCIL OFFICES:

- may be remote from the activity centre
- can be perceived by external stakeholders as part of Council bureaucracy
- can be difficult for external stakeholders to access.

ADVANTAGES OF A LOCATION WITHIN THE ACTIVITY CENTRE:

- visible presence within the activity centre
- easy access for businesses, community, property owners, investors and developers
- not seen by external stakeholders as 'part of the Council bureaucracy'
- direct access to the activity centre where projects are being delivered.

DISADVANTAGES OF A LOCATION WITHIN ACTIVITY CENTRE:

- remote from Council and decision makers
- not perceived by other Council officers as part of the Council team
- limited access to Council administrative support, information, databases and technology.





3. THE FIRST 100 DAYS

The first 100 days are critical to the long-term success of a place management program and the credibility of the place manager. Within this initial period the status of the project is established, roles and responsibilities are confirmed, networks are identified, credibility is determined and any scepticism is either confirmed or overcome.

“A place manager is there to make a difference by doing whatever needs to be done.”

John Mant, 2002

The scope and variety of tasks a place manager needs to pursue are extremely broad. Experience shows that every day potentially unearths a new set of opportunities, challenges and connections, in addition to the established work program. Place managers need to be able to prioritise their work – both strategic planning and immediate problem solving – in a highly organised and inclusive way.

KEY ACTIONS A PLACE MANAGER SHOULD INITIATE SIMULTANEOUSLY IN THE FIRST 100 DAYS ARE:

- A Establish scope of the place management program**
- B Demonstrate ability to make a difference**
- C Assemble information and data**
- D Commence communications program**
- E Establish work program, goals and objectives**

Place managers have many stakeholders to work with, and a broad variety of issues to tackle. Major stakeholders include other Council departments, property owners, businesses, local residents, community groups, social development agencies, government departments, infrastructure providers, potential investors and developers, local media, emergency services and local politicians. All of these stakeholders expect to be informed about what the place management program will mean for them.

Many stakeholders have varying, and sometimes conflicting expectations of the place management program. They may take great interest in any early actions and initiatives the place manager decides to pursue.





A. ESTABLISH THE SCOPE OF THE PLACE MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

Clarifying the scope of the place management program – its expectations, status, roles and relationships – needs to occur in the first few weeks of the project. The place manager must adopt a proactive attitude to these issues, rather than waiting for things to happen or other people or agencies to initiate discussions.

The place manager must have a full appreciation of the vision of the activity centre and the scope of the program. It is the place manager's role to champion this vision. Once the vision and scope is firmly understood, the place manager should take every opportunity to present this vision (either casually or formally).

ESTABLISH THE PLACE MANAGER'S INTERNAL STATUS, RELATIONSHIPS AND VALUE

To be effective, the place manager must be able to work across all Council departments involved in the activity centre, which typically means almost every department. Part of the place manager's role is to demonstrate the value of their position to each of these departments and address any concerns about how the place management program will impact on existing roles and responsibilities.

The place management program could be perceived as a threat to current roles and responsibilities or as another layer of bureaucracy. It is essential for these perceptions to be addressed so that a collaborative environment can be created where place management is seen as beneficial to the work of other departments.

This is best achieved by:

- › face-to-face meetings and discussions
- › providing information that demystifies the concept of place management
- › seeking opportunities to assist other departments to deliver their programs, access funds or work through bottlenecks
- › establishing protocols to enable all parties to gain from the place management program
- › organising a cross-functional team with representation from relevant departments for regular information exchange.

ESTABLISH THE PLACE MANAGER'S EXTERNAL STATUS, RELATIONSHIPS AND VALUE

To be effective, a place manager must be known and respected by all external stakeholders. This is achieved by:

- › walking the streets of the activity centre at least on a weekly basis, and dropping in to see businesses
- › contacting and arranging meetings with business or community groups or individuals
- › arranging meetings with relevant State and Federal government agencies. Regardless of current issues, it is important to make contact with all relevant agencies within the first 100 days
- › seeking local media coverage of the place management program.



B. DEMONSTRATE THE ABILITY TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Nothing builds support and commitment like demonstrable success. Tangible outcomes need to happen in the activity centre within the first 100 days in each of the major action areas (physical, economic, social and environmental) that can be credited to the place management program and/or the place manager.

IDENTIFY SHORT-TERM OPPORTUNITIES

All stakeholders will be looking for some tangible, positive outcome from the place management program in the short-term. For this reason it is important to identify and pursue short-term initiatives. Simple, achievable projects should be identified that can be 'badged' as part of the place management program and celebrated in the media.

EXAMPLE OF EARLY OPPORTUNITIES IN THE FIRST 100 DAYS

Economic: Commence facilitation of business networking, and a promotional activity

Environmental: Commence waste removal or recycling program, facilitate a clean-up day.

Physical: Footpath repairs, lights fixed, bent signs fixed, weeds removed, seats installed. Erect 'coming soon' signs on sites of physical initiatives. Commence work on one public space improvement initiative.

Social: Commence facilitation of a community event in the centre, install notice board, community event staged, safety issue addressed.

C. ASSEMBLE INFORMATION AND DATA

The place manager should capture as much information about the activity centre as possible in the first 100 days. Baseline data will be invaluable for the place manager to gain an overall impression of the activity centre and to establish benchmarks from which to measure future initiatives.

Data sources may include:

- base plans
- business activity mix
- car parking numbers
- database/property ownership
- economic data
- employment level
- feature surveys
- frequency of public transport
- number of residents
- number of dwellings
- planning controls
- potential development sites
- safety data

IDENTIFY STAKEHOLDER ISSUES AND PERCEPTIONS

Surveys of businesses and customers should be undertaken early on in the place management program to identify issues and perceptions. This will help focus the program and establish benchmarks that can be used to measure its impact and effectiveness.

UNDERTAKE PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT

Ongoing support for the place management program will be judged on how successfully it addresses, or is perceived to address, underlying issues. It is important to measure the impact of any initiatives. Likewise, these measures need to be identified early on to ensure appropriate information is gathered.



D. DEVELOP A COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY

Early development of a communications strategy – in consultation with Council’s communications team – is essential to ensure external stakeholders are kept up to date in an appropriate and timely way. Common, consistent messages should be established to avoid confusion.

The place management program should be branded in a way that conveys its purpose but does not stamp it as just another Council strategy. It may not always be appropriate to use the term ‘place management’ in the actual program title because it may not be widely understood and can have multitude interpretations.

Support for the program from the Mayor, Chief Executive Officer and senior business and community leaders should be highlighted in early communications materials to build status and credibility.

E. ESTABLISH A WORK PROGRAM, GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

IDENTIFY BUDGETS, RESOURCES AND FUNDS

To prevent over-promising and under-delivering, it is important to identify all existing and potential revenue sources for the place management program (both internal and external). This needs to include all programs and initiatives being delivered to the activity centre by all Council departments or external agencies.

COMMENCE AN INTEGRATED IMPLEMENTATION PLAN FOR THE ACTIVITY CENTRE

To ensure all initiatives are delivered in a logical, appropriately prioritised manner, it is necessary for the place manager to integrate the implementation plans of all existing projects into one document and determine overall priorities.

PREPARE AN ANNUAL WORK PROGRAM FOR THE PLACE MANAGER

Given the broad scope of the place manager’s role, it is essential to establish clear priorities and determine what projects will be pursued in the short-term. If this is not done the place manager may spread their effort too thinly and limit their effectiveness.

ESTABLISH REFERENCE AND ADVISORY GROUPS

To build partnerships and engage stakeholders, it is necessary for a place manager to establish appropriate working groups to assist them in their work and perform a governance role.

The number of these groups, the schedule of meetings and the range of people involved, should be kept to a minimum. Place management should always focus on ‘doing and implementing’ rather than ‘talking and planning’, and every opportunity should be made to reinforce this impression.

Membership of any reference group should represent diverse stakeholder viewpoints. The reference group should be capable of rigorous debate to ensure all points of view are considered. It is essential for members to have:

- › appropriate status and decision-making ability
- › a high level of interest in the place management project and the ability to influence decision-making
- › the ability to effectively represent their organisation, its issues and perceptions.



PLACE MANAGEMENT BEST PRACTICE CASE STUDIES

The following case studies have been selected as best practice examples currently being practised across Victoria and New South Wales. The cases show key principles and learnings from each example.

PLACE MANAGEMENT BEST PRACTICE EXAMPLE: BENDIGO CITY CENTRE



Rod Duncan, Manager City Centre Program
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www.bendigo.vic.gov.au/citycentreprogram

Bendigo has applied a 'place-based' perspective that unifies the inter-dependent components of the city centre – including its appearance, economic prosperity, vitality and contribution to community identity. This holistic approach was reflected in articulating a widely agreed shared vision for the future with the Bendigo Central Business District Plan in 2005.

This unified approach has been continued through implementation of the vision, with creation of the Bendigo City Centre Program to connect the various organisational, functional and professional inputs and influences upon change in the city centre, spanning both public sector initiatives and private investment and business activity.

KEY PRINCIPLES OF THE PROGRAM

Interdependency. The program is premised on a 'place-based' approach, which acknowledges quality outcomes require an integrated and holistic overview.

Sustainability. The imperative of more sustainable urban living can be most effectively advanced through strengthening of multi-functional activity centres that are readily accessed by a variety of transport options.

Liveability. A strong, well-designed city heart forms the centre of the whole community, providing a strong focus for identity and communal activities and a range of experiences spanning all age and diversity groups.

Prosperity. A healthy mixture of multiple uses provides a rich and flexible cluster supporting a wide range of employment, business, services, facilities and administration.

LESSONS LEARNED

- Place management needs to be guided by a plan – a robust plan based on sound, sincere engagement of stakeholders. This provides the essential legitimacy to unite contributors and interests.
- Establish positive, direct links with key decision-makers early – before you need their help. Identify influential players from inside and outside your organisation.
- To be effective, the place manager role needs direct access to senior levels within Council, and to have legitimacy to step across traditional boundaries to bring different elements together.
- Short-term achievements that are mediocre can do more harm than good. Resist the temptation of a 'quick goal' that compromises strategic principles, as it can dilute the ability to achieve more important targets.
- Understand the rationale of other interests – without necessarily thinking like them.
- Personal relationships and mutual trust are essential tools.





PLACE MANAGEMENT BEST PRACTICE EXAMPLE: **CENTRAL GEELONG**

Steve Bentley, Place Manager, City of Greater Geelong
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www.centralgeelong.com.au

A place management program for Central Geelong and the Waterfront was established in 2001.

The program covers around 1,250 businesses and is funded as a core component of Council, based in its Major Projects Unit. A full-time place manager oversees 12 Council staff.

Since 2001, the Central Geelong place management program has overseen significant revitalisation of Central Geelong, with \$61 million in public investment and \$800 million private investment. The program is also integrated with the Central Geelong Marketing initiative, which has an annual budget of \$550,000 raised through a special rate scheme.

Employing two full-time marketing coordinators, the program is estimated to provide local businesses with \$3 million in annual benefits. The special rate scheme was renewed in 2006 for a second term with a 99.8 per cent acceptance rate. The program is run through a Section 86 Committee (established under Local Government Act, 1989 (Vic)) of Council, rather than an external arrangement with a business association.

Major achievements of the program include:

- significant streetscape works
- development attraction and facilitation
- 'clean and safe' initiatives
- establishment of a Farmers Market
- establishment of a 'park and ride' bus shuttle
- a business development and networking program
- a year-round marketing and promotional program
- effective development and management of Council assets in the centre

LESSONS LEARNED

- Having a place manager and the special rate scheme working alongside each other has meant greater coverage and coordination of issues and better understanding by various Council departments.
- The program could have been more effective if the place manager was appointed prior to, or earlier on, during the implementation phase of physical revitalisation works.
- The more senior the place manager in the organisation, the more successful the program will be in changing culture and obtaining resources.
- A Section 86 Committee is beneficial in comparison to being a separate incorporated body. It has meant a closer working relationship with, and better 'buy-in' by Council.
- Measurement of performance in both tangible economic benefit and customer satisfaction is critical. It has given the program the capacity to demonstrate its value.
- Cleanliness and safety are the best elements to get right early on. The product must be right before moving on to promotion.



PLACE MANAGEMENT BEST PRACTICE EXAMPLE: FAIRFIELD, NSW



Tony Walker, Place Manager, Fairfield Town Centre
twalker@fairfieldcity.nsw.gov.au
www.fairfieldcity.nsw.gov.au

Place management was first introduced in the NSW Council area of Fairfield City in 1993–94 as a result of a joint project with the State Government to revitalise the Cabramatta Town Centre. A Council restructure in 1998 saw place management become a central part of the organisation's strategic corporate focus and activity. The place management approach created a significant change in the organisation, moving from separate guilds or silos to four main divisions based on governance, effectiveness, efficiency and transparency.

The current place management program includes:

- four Place Managers – the Council area is divided into four 'places' with a place manager responsible for the strategic direction, specific projects and activities for each 'place' with a focus on commercial centres
- two Town Centre Coordinators – based on the concept main street coordinators
- one Marketing Officer – focused on the Wetherill Park Industrial Estate
- one Place Project Coordinator to support projects led by the place managers across the Centres

The Place Management program is run from Council's Outcomes Department and funded as a core component of Council. Other branches in the Outcomes Department include Special Projects, the Strategic Planning and Policy branches and Community Development. This structure ensures an integrated approach to strategic planning across the municipality addressing the community's needs through policy development, the management of place and special projects. The aim is for each Centre to have a current strategic framework that aligns with Council's policy development (such as local economic development, culture and arts), and services programs (such as waste and asset management). Individual place management initiatives include: capital

improvement works; marketing and place branding; tourism, asset maintenance and management of stakeholder networks

LESSONS LEARNED

- Place managers are best located in the same workspace as Council's strategic planning team to ensure the community needs of 'places' are considered in policy development and service program priorities.
- Place management programs consume large amounts of work time so realistic targets are necessary to avoid 'burn out' of place managers.
- For a place manager to be effective a number of key elements are required:
 - the role style (i.e. facilitator, manager or team member) and scope of work (ie. geographic slice, system or centre) that a place manager undertakes needs to be clearly defined and linked to the overarching Council wide strategic planning objectives (i.e City Plan)
 - who the place manager reports to, and what authority they have, must be clear and agreed by all stakeholders
 - a place manager's skill-set needs to match to the predetermined project/program outcomes
 - a place manager must be self-motivated and people-orientated.





PLACE MANAGEMENT BEST PRACTICE EXAMPLE: **FOOTSCRAY**

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Maribyrnong City Council created the City Design and Place Making Unit in mid 2004 to lead the regeneration of Footscray. Officers from a variety of disciplines, including urban design, architecture, landscape architecture, planning and event management, are brought together within this Unit to oversee a series of strategic projects, capital works initiatives, marketing and advocacy programs to help Footscray realise its full potential. The Unit began by establishing a clear vision for Footscray's renewal, and with this in place, set out to ensure a collaborative understanding of what initiatives needed to be resourced and delivered. Once the scale of renewal was established, the need for support from all tiers of government became apparent.

As a result, the Unit has worked with the Victorian Government and other private and public sector organisations, to deliver projects that include:

- creating a heavy vehicle curfew in parts of the city centre
- establishing a Footscray Traders Association
- erecting 'wayfinding' signage to help pedestrians travel to key places in the city
- redesigning and reconstructing Australia's first pedestrian mall – Nicholson Street Mall
- developing a Greening Footscray strategy for street-tree plantings in the city
- screening Footscray Flicks – outdoor cinemas in the heart of Footscray
- organising the Footscray Progressive Dinner – restaurant hopping and food sampling at various locations
- facilitating the Footscray Skyline Study – a strategy for mapping where taller buildings and higher densities should be located across the city.

Because of the unit's clear vision and stakeholder commitment to its projects, the Victorian Government announced a \$52.1 million Footscray Renewal Initiative.

During the next four years, the following regionally significant projects are proposed, including:

- a modern footbridge at Footscray Railway Station
- upgrade of the main streets in the town centre and central mall
- development of strategic sites in the Footscray Railway Station precinct
- retail and marketing strategies to help reposition Footscray

To facilitate these projects, the Victorian Government and the Council opened a 'One-Stop Planning Shop' in central Footscray in November 2007. This shop reflects the fact that the Footscray Renewal Initiative is not a one-off project, but requires constant commitment and responsibility to achieve a goal that extends 20–30 years into the future.

LESSONS LEARNED

Ensure the place manager sits within the appropriate unit of the Council's organisational structure. For example, the place manager for Footscray rests within a combined unit – City Design and Place Making – led by officers from a mixture of disciplines.

A place management approach makes it easier for all stakeholders to achieve shared project outcomes. Instead of individual Council units competing for budgets, time and resources for project initiatives, greater advantages result from more units being involved in an overall place management approach as all stakeholders are collectively able to achieve their goals.



PLACE MANAGEMENT BEST PRACTICE EXAMPLE: PORT PHILLIP



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The City of Port Phillip's place management program is facilitated through the Community Development & Planning Division of Council. The program employs four place managers, covering the following places:

- City of Port Phillip foreshore
- St Kilda
- Major and neighbourhood activity centres
- Port Melbourne

These roles are structured to work across all areas of Council and with external stakeholders, as required.

PORT MELBOURNE PLACE MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

The purpose of the Port Melbourne Place Management program is to implement the Community and Council vision, including the Waterfront Revitalisation, Port of Melbourne development focussing on Webb Dock and the Bay Street Activity Centre to improve visitor and local experiences. The position provides central coordination and leadership for all Port Phillip Council initiatives and aims to build partnerships across Council and with other stakeholders including State Government, the Port of Melbourne Corporation, cruise shipping industry and local stakeholder groups

Key tasks have included:

- managing the Port Phillip City Council Capital works program for the area
- undertaking strategic planning and urban design initiatives
- ensuring the desires of local residents are recognised
- facilitating community forums
- engaging with local, business communities and visitors
- removing impediments to a comfortable or enjoyable experience
- improving systems, processes and mechanisms to facilitate improvements to the visitor experience and the local environment

- providing clarity by ensuring clear directions are established for a local area or place
- ensuring Council's strategic functions, the delivery of capital improvements, and its operations align with the vision and directions for local places.

LESSONS LEARNED

- It is important to create friendships and build teams to assist in achieving identified goals.
- Bring people into the discussion about their place – there is a wealth of knowledge in the community.
- Be prepared to work on and contribute to difficult discussions.
- Deliver promises and communicate progress.
- Recognise that place management is an ongoing process with no end. It is a very exciting and dynamic role.
- Undertake and attempt early completion on any small initiatives that have been identified as recurrent or emerging issues such as rubbish collection and streetcleaning, directional signage, street furniture, landscape maintenance.
- Clearly articulate key project areas and focus on these, rather than try to tackle all areas at once.





PLACE MANAGEMENT BEST PRACTICE EXAMPLE: **WODONGA**

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The aim of this project is to revitalise High Street, Wodonga as a vibrant place providing a rich mix of social, cultural, civic and economic experiences.

The project evolved from a Council traffic engineering initiative aimed at reducing through-traffic in High Street as well as the need to create a 'city heart'.

However, the City of Wodonga realised physical changes to the street were not enough, and a 'place making' approach was also needed. In 2007 Council employed a full-time place manager to develop and implement the program. A range of community and business engagement strategies were pursued including:

- **Lounging On High** – encouraging the community to use High Street as their lounge room every Friday night (bringing their own furniture)
- **High Street Hosts** – volunteers on the street who welcome people and provide information.
- **Merchants With Heart** – a program that encourages businesses to provide services for the public without requiring them to purchase goods.
- **Kids Adventure Tales** – a discovery trail with adventure nodes that encourage kids and parents to explore High Street.

These initiatives have dramatically changed the way residents relate to High Street and increased a sense of ownership and pride. Some new businesses have also been attracted to the street.

The place management project is funded by Council, with an annual budget of between \$1 and 2 million. It operates out of Council's Community Development division. Strong partnerships exist with local businesses and the Wodonga Chamber of Commerce.

Future initiatives illustrate the program's integrated approach to physical, community, economic and environmental development. These initiatives include

urban design treatments to turn High Street into a series of 'meandering rooms', widened footpaths, activation of blank walls, movable furniture, innovative child-friendly urban sculptures, branding, merchant carts and market spaces. The project will also pursue business development and employment programs, improve the business mix along High Street and provide a creative industries incubator.

LESSONS LEARNED

The goal of place making is to construct a memorable experience. A place maker must weave together knowledge from a wide range of disciplines such as human psychology, environmental psychology, sociology, community development, economic development, marketing, architecture, landscape architecture anthropology, cultural development, engineering, traffic and safety.

Place making is 100% psychology, 100% great social/cultural programs and 100% great design. You must start by understanding the stories a community is telling itself about itself. Social/cultural programs are essential in assisting the community to drop those stories that limit its potential and start telling new stories.

The art of place making, like the art of homemaking, creates an environment that nurtures both inhabitants and visitors. It is not primarily about the design of the space but about the spirit of those who create the space and the characters who inhabit the space.





LINKS

www.dpcd.vic.gov.au/placemanagement

www.mainstreetaustralia.org.au

www.atcm.org

www.ida-downtown.org

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