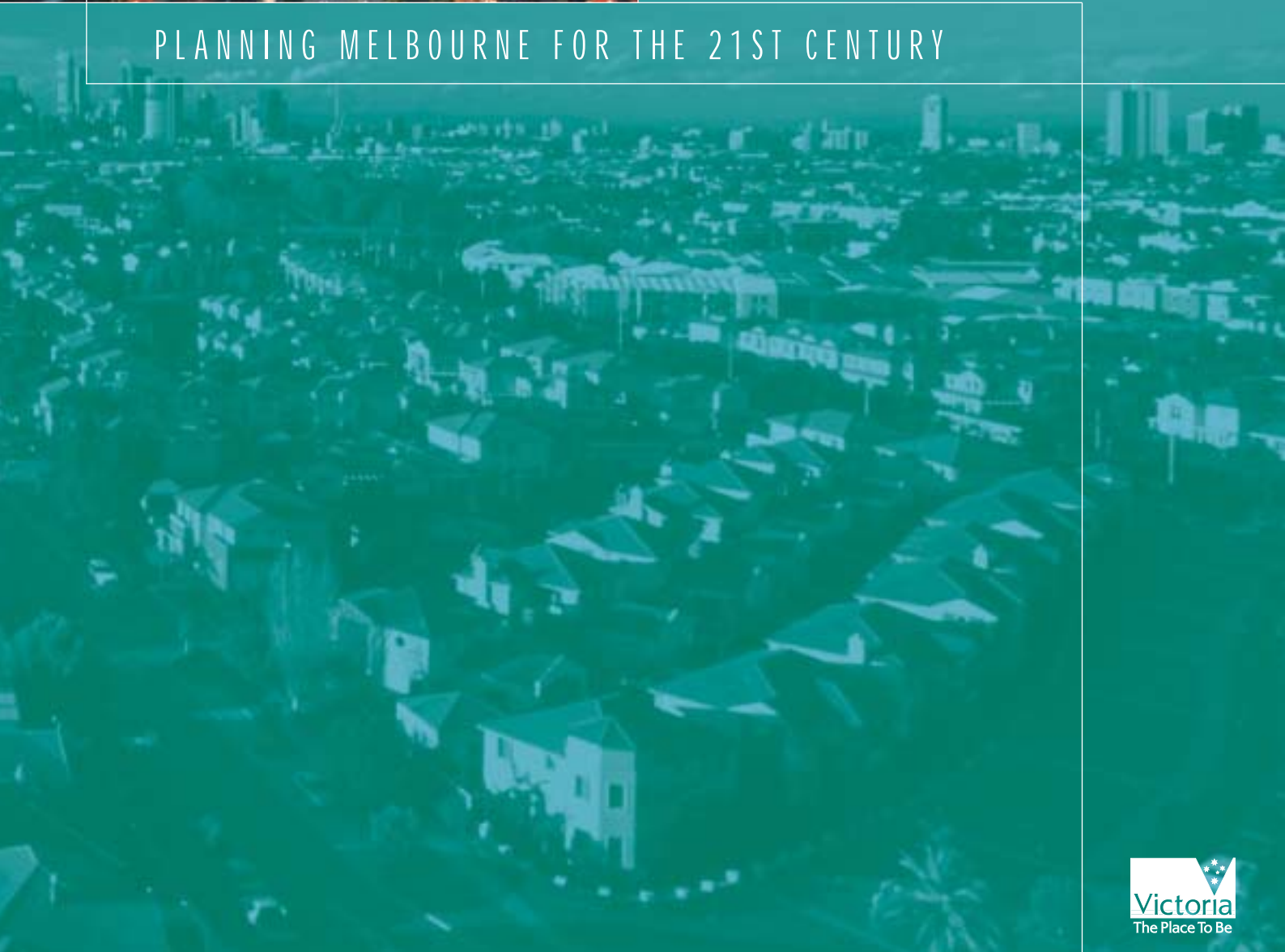# Sense of Place:
urban design principles
for the metropolitan strategy

Technical Report 12

PLANNING MELBOURNE FOR THE 21ST CENTURY

Victoria
The Place To Be

Message from the Ministers

By world standards Melbourne is a great city. The Bracks Government is committed to maintaining Melbourne's reputation as a liveable city and an attractive investment destination. The Government has developed a Metropolitan Strategy to set a clear vision for Melbourne's future liveability and prosperity and, importantly, its long-term sustainability.

The preparation of the Metropolitan Strategy has drawn on inputs from a wide range of sources. It is vital that the strategy has a sound research and information basis. It is also especially vital that community aspirations for the city's future be well understood. The key inputs to the strategy, therefore, include both a wide ranging public consultation program as well as a series of research or technical papers on issues that may have an impact on Melbourne's future.

The Bracks Government has given an undertaking to make as much of this background information as possible widely available to stimulate discussion about the future of Melbourne.

This report is one of the technical reports commissioned by the Department of Infrastructure (DOI), which we hope will stimulate feedback. Its content and recommendations are the views of its authors and not necessarily the views of the Government.

We encourage you to read this and the other technical reports and, should you wish, to make your views known about the future of Melbourne by:

Telephone: 1800 191 012
Email: metroplan@doi.vic.gov.au

Or write to:
Metropolitan Strategy Project
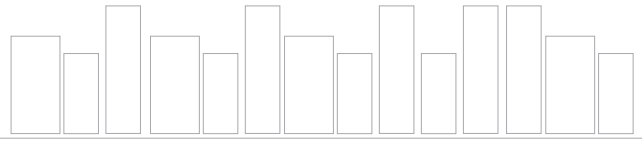GPO Box 2797Y
Melbourne 3001

Mary Delahunty MP   Peter Batchelor MP
Minister for Planning   Minister for Transport

Sense of Place:
urban design principles for the metropolitan strategy

CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

01

Urban Design and Sense of Place

WHY ARE URBAN DESIGN AND SENSE OF PLACE IMPORTANT?

Urban design is one of the principal means available to ensure that future urban environments maintain a sense of place. (Technical Report 9, Culture and the Metropolis, expresses well the significance to people in the community of Sense of Place.) This report suggests how sense of place can be better reflected in planning policies in the Metropolitan Strategy. It also suggests how the application of sound principles of urban design can provide better quality, more functional and more sustainable urban development in the study area.

WHAT SHOULD THE METROPOLITAN STRATEGY SAY?

The Metropolitan Strategy should include principles for strengthening the characteristics that differentiate a particular local environment or place, as follows:

> Respond to and reveal, express or highlight the following aspects of the area:
  Underlying (natural) landscape character
  Cultural heritage
  Valued existing built form context

> Respond to or express the values, needs and aspirations of groups in the community for whom the place is being designed, and make it welcoming to them

> Assist in making the area more 'legible' (easy to find your way around in)

> Provide opportunities for individual and community expression and identity

WHAT SHOULD HAPPEN NEXT?

1. Urban design should be treated as an integral and fundamental component of future stages in the development of the Metropolitan Strategy

2. The 'sense of place' principles contained in the following chapters of the report, relating to landscape character, urban and neighbourhood character, activity centres, transport corridors and development of new communities, should be refined and elaborated into firm implementation programs

02

Landscape Character

WHY IS LANDSCAPE CHARACTER IMPORTANT?

The Central Victoria region comprises a large number of distinct landscape character types. Many of these landscape types intersect in the Melbourne metropolitan area, and most parts of the region are located close to the border of at least two types of landscape. Residents of the region therefore have access to a wide range of scenic environments for living, working and recreation. At the same time, the underlying landscape character of an area is fundamental to its sense of place, even where substantial urban development has occurred. Future development should therefore assist with expressing the character of these different landscape types. The ways this can occur are outlined in this chapter.

WHAT SHOULD THE METROPOLITAN STRATEGY SAY?

The Metropolitan Strategy should make reference to the importance of landscape character and use the map and principles to underpin its development related policies. Reproducing the map of character types and suitable photos would help to give the document a greater 'sense of place'. The climate design principles should be used as inputs to sustainable building siting and design policies.

WHAT SHOULD HAPPEN NEXT?

1. The principles should be developed into State policy, for inclusion in the State section of the VPPs.

2. An Advisory Note should be prepared providing guidance on relating development to landscape types, to assist Councils

3. Threats and opportunities posed by both urban development and rural land management practices (eg roadside management, location of powerlines and wind farms) should be addressed

Note that Chapter 8 contains principles for managing the urban/rural edge of Melbourne, in each of the landscape character types that adjoin the metropolis

03

Towns and Cities in the Central Region

WHY ARE THE TOWNS AND CITIES IN THE CENTRAL REGION IMPORTANT?

The urban form of each town and city in the Central Victoria region represents an accumulated community 'memory' of the origins and development of the state. Future development should respect and add to this 'layering' of community memory and history. This will enhance the image and sense of place of these towns and cities, and result in better quality, more respectful design of new development.
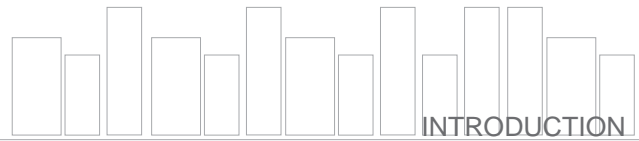
WHAT SHOULD THE METROPOLITAN STRATEGY SAY?

The Metropolitan Strategy should endorse the importance of urban character to the image and sense of place of Victorians, refer to the categories of urban character that exist in the study area, and summarise the principles that are contained in this chapter.

WHAT SHOULD HAPPEN NEXT?

1. The principles should be developed into State policy, for inclusion in the State section of the VPPs.

2. An Advisory Note should be prepared providing guidance on relating development to urban area types, to assist Councils

04

The Melbourne Metropolis

WHY IS THE MELBOURNE METROPOLIS IMPORTANT?

In trying to establish a sound approach to urban design in metropolitan Melbourne, it is first useful to establish the real factors that distinguish Melbourne from other world cities, and from other state capitals within Australia.

The Melbourne metropolis has developed in a largely consistent pattern for most of its existence, a pattern that is described in the sections that follow. This pattern has considerable merits form a town planning and urban design perspective. Some of its essential attributes and benefits have been diluted and undermined in recent decades. It is important to understand how and why the metropolitan area developed as it did, and the implications of these lessons for its future structure.

WHAT SHOULD THE METROPOLITAN STRATEGY SAY?

The Metropolitan Strategy should place Melbourne accurately in its world and Australian context, and build on the structuring attributes that have shaped the metropolis over the past 150 years, in the ways suggested in this and subsequent chapters.

WHAT SHOULD HAPPEN NEXT?

1. An urban structure plan should be prepared for metropolitan Melbourne, based on the analysis in this chapter

2. The principles should be developed into State policy (using a map and words), for inclusion in the State section of the VPPs.

05

Activity Centres

WHY ARE ACTIVITY CENTRES IMPORTANT?

Activity centres are (or should be) the focal points of the local community, and they are essential to local identity. They should be the places in which local services are concentrated. Their design and appearance should express public and civic values. Their proper planning is the key to reducing car-dependence in Melbourne and other urban centres.

WHAT SHOULD THE METROPOLITAN STRATEGY SAY?

The Metropolitan Strategy should include the following succinct principles that should apply to the design of every Activity Centre:

> Safe (perceived safety, actual safety)
> Compact/walkable
> Integrate activities into a single, connected place entity
> Multi-function
> Open, accessible and welcoming to all
> Integrate with surrounding area
> Layout centred on public transport

WHAT SHOULD HAPPEN NEXT?

1. Introduce a major program of activity centre planning and development

2. An Advisory Note should be prepared on the future of activity centres, including design and development principles developed from those in this chapter, to assist Councils

3. The importance of activity centres in implementing the policy thrusts of the Metropolitan Strategy, and the importance of achieving a sound design approach, should be highlighted in the SPPF

06

Residential Areas and Neighbourhood Character

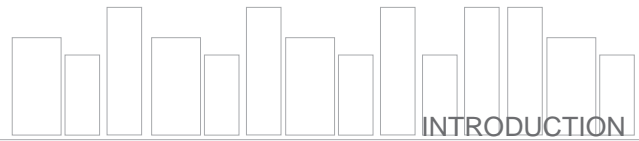### WHY ARE RESIDENTIAL AREAS AND NEIGHBOURHOOD CHARACTER IMPORTANT?

Residential areas need to continue to make a contribution to urban consolidation and sustainability policies, but in a more planned and measured way than hitherto. Despite the importance attached to livability and neighbourhood character of the region's residential areas, they warrant greater attention in useful, policy specific ways in the Metropolitan Strategy or VPPs, within the framework established by ResCode.

WHAT SHOULD THE METROPOLITAN STRATEGY SAY?

The Metropolitan Strategy should make more specific reference to the role of existing residential areas in contributing to sustainability and consolidation objectives, adopting the approach suggested. The importance of residential areas as quality living environments, and the vital importance of ResCode and the neighbourhood character issue, should be reflected in the Strategy by outlining the principles of development in the four neighbourhood character types described in this chapter.

WHAT SHOULD HAPPEN NEXT?

1. Councils should be encouraged to develop strategic frameworks and action programs for housing in local areas, to ensure that broader planning issues are considered alongside neighbourhood character, eg identifying 'brownfield' site development opportunities, improving sense of community and safety, and ameliorating shortcomings in sustainability and 'walkability' in many residential suburbs

2. The neighbourhood character principles should be developed into State policy, for inclusion in the State section of the VPPs.

3. An Advisory Note should be prepared to provide design guidance in relation to neighbourhood character types, based on the material in this chapter, to assist Councils

3

07

Transport Corridors

WHY ARE TRANSPORT CORRIDORS IMPORTANT?

Transport corridors are the public face of our cities, towns, suburbs and countryside: investors drive along them, visitors get their impression of areas from them, tourists pay to see the view from them, and travellers need to know where they are. They are often fronted by important building and activities. In addition, they represent the biggest single public space resource in most urban areas, many have potential as wildlife corridors and 'green lungs' of a city, or for development to avoid waste or under-use of land. Adverse safety, noise, visual intrusion and land use impacts need to be addressed in many transport corridors.

WHAT SHOULD THE METROPOLITAN STRATEGY SAY?

The Metropolitan Strategy should explicitly acknowledge the importance of transport corridors in the terms outlined above, and should preferably summarise the principles contained in this chapter.

WHAT SHOULD HAPPEN NEXT?

1. The Department of Infrastructure should integrate land use planning, urban design and road and rail corridor design to take account of this broader perspective

2. Policy on the form of development fronting transport corridors could be included in the SPPF

08

Development of New Communities

WHY IS DEVELOPMENT OF NEW COMMUNITIES IMPORTANT?

Melbourne has in the past created liveable and sustainable suburbs, based around a network of green wedges and linear open spaces. Applying these as models in innovative ways that respond to the underlying landscape character we can create new contemporary suburbs/new communities for the 21st Century.

WHAT SHOULD THE METROPOLITAN STRATEGY SAY?

The Metropolitan Strategy should incorporate this chapter's suggestions regarding:

> Melbourne's Urban/Rural Edge
> Principles for Design of New Communities

WHAT SHOULD HAPPEN NEXT?

1. Prepare a Central Victoria region urban structure plan

2. Review the subdivision planning and approval process to achieve the outcomes referred to in this chapter

3. Develop a sectoral structure planning process for Growth Areas based on sustainability principles

4. Require individual estates to conform to the structure plans and development guidelines

5. The principles should be developed into State policy (using a map and words), for inclusion in the State section of the VPPs

ABOUT THE STUDY

In March 2001 Mike Scott & Associates were commissioned to prepare a short scoping document, like an elaborated brief, on the subject of an Metropolitan Strategy Urban Design Strategy. The input to this was a small workshop attended by Department of Infrastructure officers, Bill Chandler and Rob Adams. This project recommended a stage 2 of work to fulfil some aspects of the brief, but this was not proceeded with.

Background to the Study

The present project started with the intention of implementing the tasks agreed by the Department of Infrastructure when stage 1 of the Metropolitan Strategy Urban Design Strategy was completed in March 2001. In the meantime, Mike Scott & Associates became incorporated into Planisphere.

The Metropolitan Strategy is intended to provide a comprehensive, long term strategy for the Melbourne metropolis and its surrounding region. Concern was expressed at the November 2000 workshop that the strategy needed to be located firmly in the Melbourne region as a place.

The 'stage 1' project commissioned from Mike Scott & Associates in March 2001 suggested the scope of issues that could be considered in a Metropolitan Strategy Urban Design Strategy. This project proposed that factors such as natural features, landscape quality, transport corridor design and residential character could be categorised and mapped at a regional or sub-regional level, and used as a platform for 'place-based' policy development in the Metropolitan Strategy.

The Brief

The objective of the current report therefore became:
To provide an urban design underpinning to the Metropolitan Strategy that emphasises 'place-making'.

The particular tasks asked of the consultants were:

1 Review of and input to relevant emerging policies in the Strategy, to ensure they adequately embody a place-based approach to design

2 Some mapping of the basic landscape and built form characteristics of the region, and associated policy response (at a level higher than envisaged in the Urban Design Strategy scoping paper)

3 Recommendations about the next round of major metropolitan development projects that will follow on from Transit Cities, Northbank, Docklands etc (This task was subsequently changed to be: preparation of case studies to illustrate some of the main themes of the urban design principles in the report.)

Study Area

The study area is the central region of Victoria, including the regional centres of Geelong, Ballarat, Bendigo and Warragul. Within that broader area, there is a particular focus on metropolitan Melbourne itself. The scale of the policies, typologies and maps needed to reflect this very large study area. Analysis and proposals needed to embrace the broad regional area, not just metropolitan Melbourne.

Study Timeline

The study was commissioned in December 2001. Preliminary draft material needed to be submitted on 4 January, and a first full draft by 21 January. The report was completed on 12 February, after comments from Department of Infrastructure officers had been incorporated.

Method

The methodology adopted was largely determined by the limited time available, and comprised:

1 Meetings with Department of Infrastructure to determine the direction of the project and the time-scale in which it would be completed.

2 Team workshops (Mike Scott, John Curtis and Dora Kouremenos, plus one also attended by Rob Adams) to discuss the themes and concepts of the report and produce draft principles.

3 Review of relevant literature and research of relevant themes including past strategy and policy.

4 Analysis of information available, including literature, maps and other graphics.

5 Report writing based upon the above analysis, which discussed the themes and concepts raised in step 1 and 2 of this method.

6 Review of draft reports, and appropriate alterations made.

7 Presentation.

Team and Roles

Mike Scott, Planisphere, (Project Manager)
Planisphere conducted the project, with Mike as project manager and main author. Mike played the major role in undertaking tasks 1 and 2, and contributed to task 3.

Rob Adams, City Projects, City of Melbourne, (Urban Design Adviser, Project Identification)
Rob contributed input to all three tasks, and took the leading role in preparing task 3, assisted by Chris Peck.

John Curtis, John Curtis Pty Ltd, (Urban Designer)
John assisted with most aspects of the project, and played a major role in developing the typologies and principles in task 2.

Dora Kouremenos (Executive Officer)
Dora contributed to all the team workshops and undertook specific tasks.

Lisa Riddle, Planisphere, (Policy Developer)
Lisa assisted with ensuring that policy outputs from the project are soundly expressed in relation to future planning scheme requirements.

Conceptual Approach to 'Sense of Place'

The following diagram, based on an idea from Steve Thorne, summarises a view of 'sense of place' as the product of the inter-relationship between people, natural systems and urban form/built form:

SENSE OF PLACE
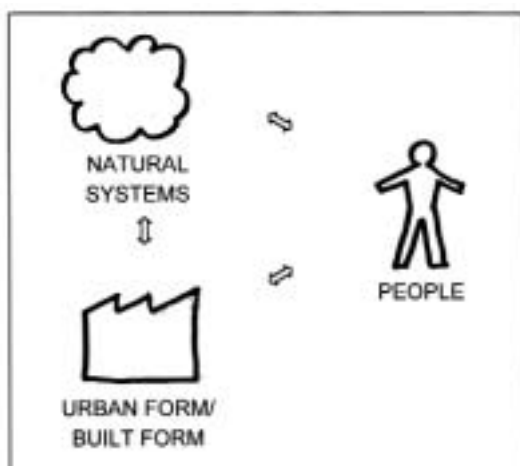
IMPLEMENTATION

Introduction

The Metropolitan Strategy is the most important strategic planning document to be published by the government in many years. It must underpin the future strategic planning of all local Councils, public authorities, privatised utility providers, and the private development industry. The mechanisms by which this can be achieved are varied, but vital to the success of the Strategy. Without a clear focus on effective implementation the Strategy will be of little more than academic interest. The recommendations in this section of the report deal with the methods to implement this report, but some of the recommendations may also be applicable to the whole strategy.

The various mechanisms available to the government in implementation of the recommendations of this report include:

1. Amendment of the State Planning Policy Framework that sits in all planning schemes in Victoria

2. Development of strategies and practice policies with other government authorities and departments such as VicRoads, Department of Community Services, Parks Victoria and Department of Education in relation to physical planning of services and facilities

3. Agreements with utility providers regarding priorities and design practices

4. Promotion and education through workshops and production of pamphlets for distribution through Councils and other authorities to private developers

Of these, the changes to the State Planning Policy Framework have the greatest direct impact on local planning authorities and private development. It is the primary method of embodying strategic planning documents in the legal framework of planning in Victoria. This therefore requires particular attention.

State Planning Policy Framework

The State Planning Policy Framework is contained in the Victoria Planning Provisions, and consequently is contained within every planning scheme in Victoria. It is the premier strategic planning document in the legal sense; all planning schemes are required to meet the objectives and conform with State policy. Where a conflict is perceived between local and state policy, the State policy takes precedence. The SPPF is therefore used by Planning Panels to assess planning scheme amendments proposed by Councils and private applicants, and it can be used by planning authorities and the VCAT to assess planning applications.

It is vital that all contents of the SPPF are clear, concise and as unambiguous as possible to ensure their effective use and implementation through all levels of the planning process. Contents of the SPPF must be readily understood by applicants, planning officers, legal professions and councillors. Language must be carefully chosen, and the use of visual representations greatly assists in expressing objectives and directions of the strategy.

At present the SPPF includes state policy for the whole state of Victoria. It is structured by land use or activity. It includes one Clause (19.03) that contains general principles of urban design.

The planning scheme is primarily concerned with land use location and type, 'amenity' in relation to adjoining and nearby properties, and increasingly with urban form and design. The growth in the importance of urban design is evidenced by the increasing emphasis placed upon such design aspects as neighbourhood character. Combined with the other elements of the SPPF that will reflect the land use related strategies, the urban design elements will create a well-rounded strategic base for the metropolitan and surrounding region.

The Urban Design Framework

In the same way as a Municipal Strategic Statement and Local Policies in Clause 22 can include an Urban Design Framework for a municipality, the SPPF could include a Framework for the central region of the State (and indeed for the whole state, were one to be developed). The Framework is best expressed utilising visual as well as verbal tools, in a diagrammatic map or maps and words. The Urban Design Framework for the central region of Victoria can be taken from the chapters of this report that outline the broad underlying physical structure of the landscape and built form. The principles contained in these chapters that relate to private and public development should be refined and accompany the maps.

Principles of Urban Design

This report has been structured and written in such a way as to enable translation into the planning scheme. Some elements will transfer more easily and some do not have a role in the planning scheme at all. The chapters of the report relating to activity centres, transport corridors and residential areas, new and established, should be integrated with sections of the SPPF that relate to these land use areas.

Guidelines

Where the report makes mention of guidelines it is suggested that these would be best developed as Advisory Notes to sit outside the planning scheme, their primary role to be in assisting planning authorities to understand and interpret the principles in the SPPF for their own municipality. It is likely that the Advisory Notes could be used to form the basis of further work within individual municipalities or localities to further the urban design objectives contained in the SPPF.

URBAN DESIGN AND SENSE OF PLACE

WHY ARE URBAN DESIGN AND SENSE OF PLACE IMPORTANT?

Urban design is one of the principal means available to ensure that future urban environments maintain a sense of place. (Technical Report 9, Culture and the Metropolis, expresses well the significance to people in the community of Sense of Place.) This report suggests how sense of place can be better reflected in planning policies in the Metropolitan Strategy. It also suggests how the application of sound principles of urban design can provide better quality, more functional and more sustainable urban development in the study area.

WHAT SHOULD THE METROPOLITAN STRATEGY SAY?

The Metropolitan Strategy should include principles for strengthening the characteristics that differentiate a particular local environment or place, as follows:

> Respond to and reveal, express or highlight the following aspects of the area:

> Underlying (natural) landscape character
> Cultural heritage
> Valued existing built form context

> Respond to or express the values, needs and aspirations of groups in the community for whom the place is being designed, and make it welcoming to them

> Assist in making the area more 'legible' (easy to find your way around in)

> Provide opportunities for individual and community expression and identity

WHAT SHOULD HAPPEN NEXT?

1 Urban design should be treated as an integral and fundamental component of future stages in the development of the Metropolitan Strategy

2 The 'sense of place' principles contained in the following chapters of the report, relating to landscape character, urban and neighbourhood character, activity centres, transport corridors and development of new communities, should be refined and elaborated into firm implementation programs

OVERVIEW

'Sense of Place' should be a major underpinning of the policies in the Metropolitan Strategy. Technical Report 9: Culture and the Metropolis (Clark et al :2001:32) rightly relates that Sense of Place is about more than the physical environment of an area. It is about the people who inhabit and work there, the culture of their social and economic groupings, and the way they interact with their environment. Similarly, Technical Report 9 correctly places Urban Design in the context of people, their needs and their activities.

The broad definition of sense of place is typified by the following:

"' Sense of place' means a 'complex of intangible characteristics of place that make it attractive to actual and potential residents and influences their behaviour in observable ways'" (Bolton:1992:193 cited in Worthington:2000:349)

URBAN DESIGN

Urban design is a term used to cover a spectrum of meanings. At one extreme, it is used to embrace most of the processes involved in the planning of an area, but with a particular emphasis on the physical expression of urban form. In this sense it is seen by many as a version of town planning which engages more effectively with the '3D' form of the city, particularly its public spaces. Town planning has tended to restrict itself to land use zonings and other two dimensional approaches to urban planning. Often this approach to urban design is applied at an 'action area' or local plan scale (eg across a city block, or for a shopping centre), but it is equally applicable across whole suburbs or municipalities or even regions.

At the other extreme, urban design is seen in a restricted meaning, as little more than the 'contextual' approach to the design of an individual building. This approach to urban design emphasises the streetscape context into which a new building is to be placed. The notions of 'respectful' design embedded into the neighbourhood character provisions of ResCode are one example of this. This definition of urban design is important and still needs better understanding among building designers. But it is important for this approach to be seen in the context of the broader meaning discussed above. Views of urban design restricted to this limited meaning tend to see urban design as an 'add on', once other basic planning issues such as population, employment and transport have been resolved. Urban design issues relevant across a broader geographic area, or inherent to the final form of public spaces such as streets and buildings, have to be addressed along with the other planning fundamentals if we are to improve the quality of our cities and towns.

URBAN DESIGN AND SENSE OF PLACE

Urban design and sense of place are inextricably linked, as is discussed further below. Urban design is one of the principal means available to ensure that future urban environments maintain a sense of place. Both need to be seen in the broad cultural context established in Technical Report 9. For example, the way landscape and built form character (including neighbourhood character) should be expressed in new development requires an understanding of the broader cultural context to be successful, although it is largely about the physical manifestation of sense of place. Therefore one purpose of the present report is therefore to suggest how sense of place can be better reflected in physical planning policies in the Metropolitan Strategy, taking into account the social and cultural context. Many of the mechanisms that will be used to implement the Strategy involve application of physical planning controls and undertaking of physical works. The Strategy will guide development throughout the Central Region of Victoria for many years, and the nature of new development has a major impact on people's Sense of Place.

Good urban design should help to strengthen people's Sense of Place. An important way in which that can occur is to use urban design to express the underlying, or valued, landscape and cultural character of an area. The remainder of this report suggests a basis for this.

COMPONENTS OF SENSE OF PLACE

According to Technical Report 9, in planning for a 'sense of place', elements that need to be recognised are:

> "Climate, natural vegetation and subtle qualities of light,
> "Physical factors such as character of streets, building types, signage and construction materials, and
> "The people, their activities, their modes of movement and transport".

The guidelines and processes for creating a 'sense of place' are therefore:
> "A set of milieus for events and activities so that as behaviour settings they afford the sensory, formal and symbolic experiences that make places culturally relevant and pleasant to inhabit,
> "Sequences of agreeable experiences, or patterns of places, and
> "Places having a clear conceptual framework that is the basis for the spatial geometry of places and the links between them".

Similarly, The City of Melbourne's Places for People Report on Melbourne City 1994, lists improving the pedestrian network, making and improving gathering spaces to excellent quality, strengthening street activities by physical changes and encouraging more people to use the city, as significant features in creating a 'sense of place'. In the second chapter, "Defining a liveable city", there are more detailed explanations regarding the 'ingredients' for 'sense of place' such as: places to promenade and places to rest, interesting ground level facades and adjoining spaces where people congregate, good visual qualities from small details to streetscapes and vistas, valuable historic environments retained, respected and interpreted, and beautiful and effective lighting (pp.14-15).

Much of what is embraced by these definitions relates to functional aspects of the urban environment, and how to improve the quality of the urban experience. These issues are addressed in this report, along with discussion about the inherent qualities of a place - the things that make one place distinct from another. Questions we have set out to answer include:

- What are the underlying landscape characteristics of the Central Region of Victoria?

- How is Melbourne distinct from other world cities, in its origins as a place?

- What makes one suburb different from another?

PRINCIPLES FOR STRENGTHENING SENSE OF PLACE

Taking this last, more specific approach to 'Sense of Place', we have developed the following general principles. Applying these principles will generally result in a strengthening of the characteristics that differentiate a particular local environment or place.

> Respond to and reveal, express or highlight the following aspects of the area:
>   Underlying (natural) landscape character
>   Cultural heritage
>   Valued existing built form context
> Respond to or express the values, needs and aspirations of groups in the community for whom the place is being designed, and make it welcoming to them
> Assist in making the area more 'legible' (easy to find your way around in)
> Provide opportunities for individual and community self-actualisation and expression

CULTURAL PERSPECTIVES AND SENSE OF PLACE

Different people see landscapes and cities through different eyes, and many people regard urban design, neighbourhood character and other similar concepts as purely subjective. While the application of urban design skills certainly involves the use of judgement, it is an over-simplification to categorise it as purely subjective. Sense of place is something that most people are aware of. It is something about which opinions may differ, particularly between different cultural groups. An important example of this is the Aboriginal perspective.

Aboriginal Perspective

The difference between the Aboriginal view of 'place' and the European view of 'place' appears, however, to operate at a very fundamental level. "The house, the home, the permanent address - this was the white man's idea; the [Aborigines] had no use for it" (Boyd:1977:137). The Aboriginal cultural landscape is the base upon which other cultural and historical layers have been laid, and continues to the present day, woven in amongst subsequent layers (Logan et al :2001:4). The indigenous populations were nomadic agriculturalists who lived 'in harmony' with the land; using resources only as they needed them. This meant that they had no sense of materialistic ownership. European populations, influenced by religious themes of domination over nature however, valued the land as a commodity, to be improved upon and altered by man as he pleased. Only now have issues of native land title, such as Mabo, arisen and finally been debated.

While indigenous populations now usually reside in western-style housing, this housing will often cater for an extended family of parents, siblings, grand-parents and cousins - all members of traditional Aboriginal kinship networks. These residences are also often located near culturally important landmarks, such as coasts, rivers and wetlands used by the Wurundjeri, Bunurong and Wauthurung people, "valued... because of their ability to evoke and appreciation for the antiquity of their culture" (Logan et al :2001:11). In this instance, 'place' becomes spiritually significant and disturbance of such landscape could offend native people. However, with the variety of employment opportunities in towns and cities, many indigenous people have now sought residence in urban areas.

Experience with Neighbourhood Character Studies

Experience with neighbourhood character studies has yielded a surprising degree of consensus about sense of place within a particular area. Group discussion about the things people value about their locality tends to reveal a shortlist of specifics about which there is broad agreement, for example 'the treed character' or 'the seaside atmosphere'. The 'menu' of components of neighbourhood character dealt with in ResCode (eg built form, vegetation) is extremely important to sense of place in many areas. But there are some localities where people place a higher value on things like closeness to shops and transport, or on more fundamental issues such as public safety and protection from pollution. The important point is that there is often a surprising degree of consensus about the fundamentals of sense of place within a local community.

URBAN DESIGN AND...

Urban design, being concerned with the '3D ' expression of urban form, interfaces with numerous other disciplines and perspectives. In the paragraphs below we examine some of these relationships.

Urban Design and Community

Many factors influence human behaviour. Philosophers will continue to argue about the degree of determinism governing individual freedom, and psychologists will continue to argue about the extent to which behaviour is conditioned by environment. There have been tendencies in the history of architecture and town planning to assume a high degree of 'physical determinism'. People who have advocated physical determinism' believe that the shape and structure of the physical environment determines the way people will use it.

This belief may have had its roots in the nineteenth century approach to public health. The 'miasma' theory of disease held that disease was spread by bad smells. The way to make towns and cities more healthy was to create wide streets through which fresh air would disperse the inevitable odours of pre-sewerage system era cities. The provision of better, more sanitary housing has helped to improve public health. But, as we now know, the provision of better, more sanitary housing does not necessarily cause every household to live a more sanitary lifestyle. Washing your hands requires a convenient supply of clean water. The presence of a tap does not necessarily result in everyone washing their hands.

So it is with urban design and the behaviour of city dwellers. Forms of city or suburb can be designed that facilitate more interaction between people, or more walking. Forms of city or suburb have in the recent past been designed that make it harder to do both. Urban design does not determine behaviour, but it certainly influences it. The Metropolitan Strategy includes aims to make the urban environments in the Central Region more conducive to community interaction and development, and better for walking. Much of the present report sets out principles aimed at establishing an urban form that is congruent with these aims. The authors do not pretend that this urban form will determine the requisite change in behaviour.

Urban Design and Heritage (and Neighbourhood Character)

Urban design and cultural heritage are different concepts, with different professions involved in their practice. However, good urban design embraces the idea that cities and neighbourhoods evolve, and that the 'layering' of different eras of development (see, for example, **chapter 3**) is something positive, something to build into urban design plans. People often appreciate living and working in environments that express the evolution of that place. Furthermore, that is often much to be learned from previous urban and built forms, as the following example illustrates.

The widespread introduction of heritage controls across much of the inner suburbs in the 1980s was cursed by many architects at the time. It was seen as stifling innovation in design. The reality is that planners and designers eventually came to understand and engage with what really matters about Victorian inner city design. What really matters is not the use of reproduction styles and cast iron lacework - quite the opposite. What really matters is the way the buildings directly engage with the street. The Victorians created a truly urban environment, a 'walking' city that worked. Once this was understood, designers stopped using what we now see as 'outer suburban' siting principles for buildings (eg large setbacks, car parks in front, excessive use of driveways, internally-focussed developments). From this experience we have learned a good deal about how to design more sustainable suburbs for the future (see below).

A similar process seems now to be underway now in relation to neighbourhood character. Designers are complaining about 'style fascism' on the part of planners. Planners and designers need to move on to understand the true value of our middle and outer suburbs, which is fundamentally about the relationship of buildings to landscape, as explained in **chapter 6**. Neighbourhood character is not about reproducing Californian Bungalows or banning neo-Georgian style. It is about fundamentals like siting, tree planting and the way the public/private interface is designed.

Urban Design and Accessibility

Good urban design needs to encompass the legitimate needs of all sections of the population to access and enjoy our city streets and places. In the recent past, possibly too much attention has been given to facilitating car access and storage. While this remains an important issue, more needs to be done to understand and plan for the environment of walkers, public transport users, cyclists, all age groups and mobility capabilities. The special needs of people with pushers and trolleys, people in wheel chairs and motorised buggies, and people with other mobility needs or limitations, also need to be considered.

Taking walking as one example, some street patterns make walking an unattractive option (see **chapter 8**), and many actions taken to improve road traffic flow disadvantage walkers, such as limited crossing times at pedestrian signals. We need to re-examine most of our urban environments from the walker's perspective, and ensure that we gradually transform our towns and suburbs into more walker-friendly environments.

Urban Design and Advertising

Advertising signs are an inevitable part of the market economy. In some locations they add colour and interest to otherwise dull surrounds. In places like Times Square (New York) and Piccadilly Circus, they more than the buildings are the urban environment. Generally speaking, advertising should be treated as one of the many components of our street scenes that need to be 'got right'. People tend to like streetscapes in which there is variety and interest, but not chaos. Some ordering principles are needed to avoid visual chaos, such as common front setbacks, or use of similar coloured materials, or similar forms and heights of buildings, or strong tree planting. Advertising needs to take its place among all the items that compete for attention in a typical street. Sometimes it is appropriate for advertisements or signs to be a dominating feature. More often, they need to be placed carefully within the urban context. For example, there are ways of locating signs on a building that complement the architecture, rather than obscuring or detracting from it.

Urban Design and Safety

There is a continuing debate about design for safety. Some individuals seek improved safety by erecting high front fences, and some developers build inwardly focussed developments with controlled access. The most common forms of this type of development are shopping malls and 'gated' residential communities. Many urban designers have argued, to the contrary, that streets need to made more attractive to walkers, and more apparently safe, by facing activity onto the streets. From the urban designers' perspective, there is more to the debate than just safety. Active streets and street frontages produce more interesting and attractive cities. Connected street systems provide more opportunities for routeing buses and walking direct routes, and therefore more sustainable cities. Street-fronted cities tend also to be more legible in their view.

In a pioneering piece of research, the City of Gosnells in Western Australia undertook an evidence-based investigation into the relationship between crime rates and locality type. The outcome of this research supported the urban designers' perspective. This report, entitled 'SafeCity Urban Design Strategy' (2001) concluded that designers need to:

> Achieve connection and integration
> Improve surveillance
> Analyse the important social, economic and environmental consequences of design

The report contains detailed recommendations about:

Urban structure
Streets and parking
Subdivision and housing
Parks and landscape
Fences and walls
Windows and doors
Lighting and signage

There are also often tensions between designing for road safety and the designing for more attractive, safer streets for walking. The theory of separating different classes and types of traffic spatially was one of the under-pinnings of the disconnected court style street patterns used extensively in greenfield development in recent decades. As chapter 8 explains, this type of street pattern is considered undesirable from an urban design perspective. Recent work for VicRoads by Ratio consultants, on planning for road safety, has attempted to strike a balance between the two perspectives.

Urban Design and Sustainability

The quest for more sustainable urban forms has been a challenge eagerly taken up by many urban designers. This report is, in part, an attempt to take some of the best practice from urban designers, and to apply it to the urban areas in the central region.

Many books and articles have been written on the subject of designing sustainable cities. One particularly worthwhile reference is 'Liveable Neighbourhoods', published by the Western Australian Planning Commission in June 2000. This takes the general principles and applies them in detailed development guidelines.

TOWARDS BETTER DESIGN QUALITY

The discussion so far has suggested a number of conclusions. Urban design should be:

> A fundamental of planning processes such as the Metropolitan Strategy
> An important means of delivering Sense of Place
> A way of engaging with the planning of cities and regions 'in 3D', not just an add-on concerned with local streetscape design
> A primary driver of the quest to deliver sustainable urban form

Other points from the previous discussion are:

> The importance of the context of differing cultural perspectives and the values of ordinary people is sometimes overlooked by urban designers. But experience with neighbourhood character studies suggests that community views and expectations about urban design issues can be surprisingly coherent within a particular area.
> While urban design does not determine behaviour, it certainly influences it.
> The lessons we can learn from our cultural heritage of urban form, and the importance of accommodating the 'layering' of development eras in new developments in a way that expresses the evolution of our urban places.
> The need to ensure that the access needs of all people are met.
> The vital importance of reconciling the sometimes conflicting needs for safety in the way cites and suburbs are designed.

Many people say that they view urban design as purely subjective. While most aspects of urban design can be argued to be subjective, this view applies equally to the work of most 'professions' in today's post-modern world. We have moved a long way from the era of unquestioning acceptance of technical advice from expert planners. But this is a long way from dismissing an entire field of endeavour as subjective.

It can be argued that the opinions of everyone are equally valid on a subject like aesthetics. Planners do well to keep away from questions of architectural style.
In Australia, we value freedom of choice about the detailing of our dream home. (**Chapter 6** explains that neighbourhood character is mainly about the relationship of buildings to landscape, rather than what style to design in.)

It will be evident from reading this report that most urban design issues are more concerned with a skilled and logical 'reading' of local characteristics, and about functional matters like producing, for example, more attractive, safe and convenient walking environments. Urban designers acquire skills and knowledge that enable them to understand how to produce these environments. While these matters are ultimately subjective, they are not simply matters of taste. To arrive at an informed view about the design of future towns and cities, talk first to urban designers and others with expertise in environmental planning.

So what is 'good design'? In part, it is a matter of taste. But it is also about getting the basics 'right'. By this we mean relating to the landscape and townscape character of the area, adding to a more sustainable city, making streets more pleasant, and so on. These are the types of issue addressed in this report. Following the basic principles outlined in this report would be the best way of improving the quality of design across the central region of Victoria.

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LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

WHY IS LANDSCAPE CHARACTER IMPORTANT?

The Central Victoria region comprises a large number of distinct landscape character types. Many of these landscape types intersect in the Melbourne metropolitan area, and most parts of the region are located close to the border of at least two types of landscape. Residents of the region therefore have access to a wide range of scenic environments for living, working and recreation. At the same time, the underlying landscape character of an area is fundamental to its sense of place, even where substantial urban development has occurred. Future development should therefore assist with expressing the character of these different landscape types. The ways this can occur are outlined in this chapter.

WHAT SHOULD THE METROPOLITAN STRATEGY SAY?

The Metropolitan Strategy should make reference to the importance of landscape character and use the map and principles to underpin its development related policies. Reproducing the map of character types and suitable photos would help to give the document a greater 'sense of place'. The climate design principles should be used as inputs to sustainable building siting and design policies.

WHAT SHOULD HAPPEN NEXT?

1 The principles should be developed into State policy, for inclusion in the State section of the VPPs.

2 An Advisory Note should be prepared providing guidance on relating development to landscape types, to assist Councils

3 Threats and opportunities posed by both urban development and rural land management practices (eg roadside management, location of powerlines and wind farms) should be addressed

Note that Chapter 8 contains principles for managing the urban/rural edge of Melbourne, in each of the landscape character types that adjoin the metropolis

OVERVIEW

For the purposes of this study, the following landscape character types have been identified in the Central Region of Victoria:

Great Dividing Range and Foothills: Eastern
Great Dividing Range and Foothills: Western
Western Basalt Plain
Northern Plains
Melbourne's Eastern Hills and Vales
West Gippsland Hills and Vales
Port Phillip Sandbelt
Peninsulas and Islands
Bay Coast: Beach or Cliff
Bay Coast: Wetland or Environmental Area
Bass Strait Coast (Beach or Cliff)

The above Landscape Character types can be found on Figure 2.1. They were delineated using a number of resources: The Atlas of Victoria, contour maps and satellite images. Using the physiography, climate and vegetation maps in the atlas aided in the determination of the types of landscape found in certain areas.

The main criterion used in determining the landscape character types is: Does this landscape character type require a different design response for new development?
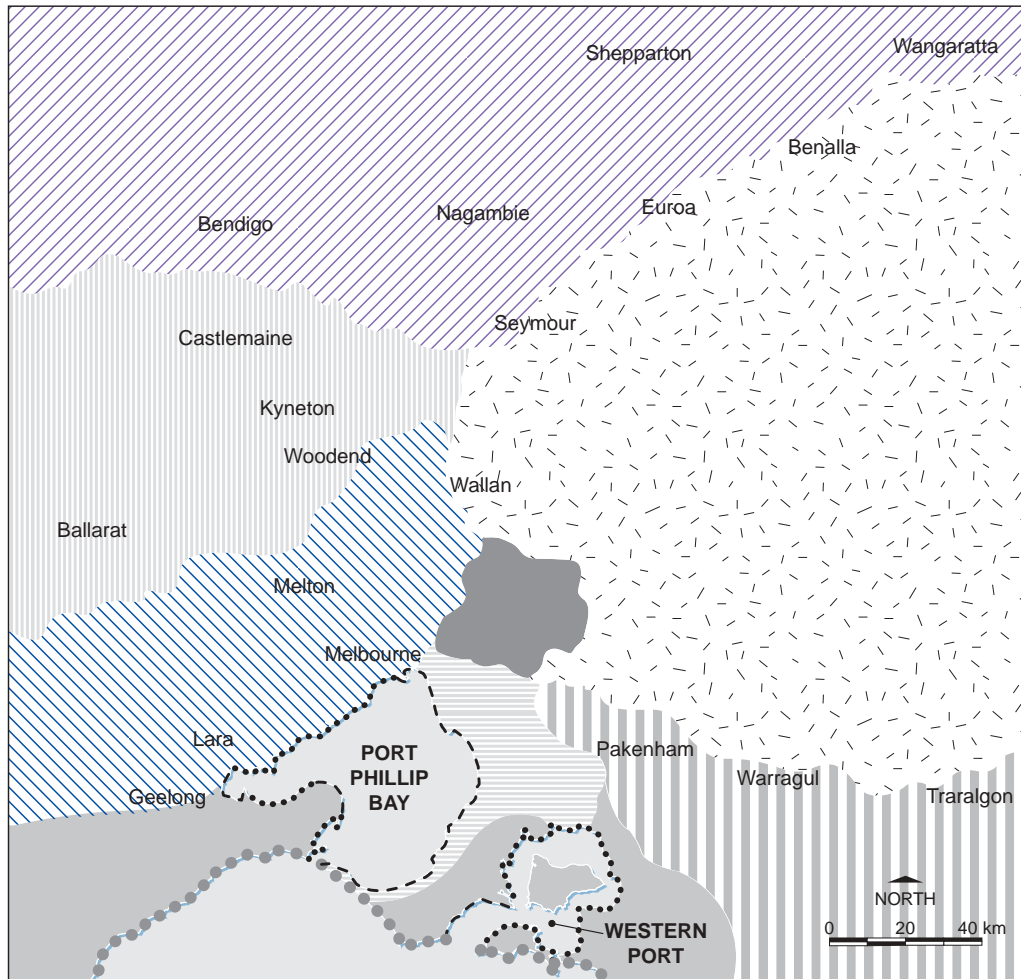
We have tried to highlight the underlying landscape quality. The principles mostly suggest how new development should relate to each landscape character type. Degradation of landscape quality by urban development is a pressing problem in the central region, one that warrants more attention in State policy.

Protection and enhancement of rural landscapes NOT under threat from urban development is a related but separate issue. These landscapes may be under threat from factors other than urban development, such as practices connected with agriculture, forestry, roadside management, rail reserve management, and siting of powerlines and wind generator farms. The landscape character types proposed in this chapter may well offer a useful first step in considering these issues. It should be obvious, for example, that the Western Basalt Plains are equally sensitive to having their character changed by powerlines or wind farms (because they cannot be hidden behind trees or hills) as they are to urban development. Along with the typologies developed in subsequent chapters, they could help to frame priority programs for undergrounding powerlines. These issues warrant further work in State policy development.

A general principle that should inform the enhancement of all landscape character types is to plant vegetation indigenous to the area wherever practical and possible. Exceptions to this approach should carefully consider the effect on landscape character and environmental sustainability.

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER PRINCIPLES

The characteristics of each of these landscape types is described below, together with an assessment of the importance of each type, and the principles that should guide further development in them.

Shepparton
Wangaratta
Benalla
Bendigo
Nagambie
Euroa
Castlemaine
Seymour
Kyneton
Woodend
Wallan
Ballarat
Melton
Melbourne
Lara
PORT PHILLIP BAY
Pakenham
Warragul
Geelong
Traralgon
WESTERN PORT
NORTH
0 20 40 km

2.1 Landscape character

- Great Dividing Range and foothills: eastern
- Great Dividing Range and Foothills: western
- Western basalt plains
- Northern plains
- Melbourne's eastern hills and vales
- West Gippsland hills and vales
- Port Phillip sandbelt
- Peninsulas and islands
- Bay coast: beach or cliffs
- Bay coast: wetland or environmental area
- Bass Strait coast (beach or cliff)

The boundaries between each landscape character area are extremely approximate: landscapes tend to 'blur' into each other in reality.

GREAT DIVIDING RANGE AND FOOTHILLS: EASTERN

2.1

The Great Dividing Range and Foothills are located to the north-east, east and south-east of Melbourne and include regions such as: the Dandenong Ranges National Park, Sugarloaf Reservoir, Yan Yean Reservoir, the Yarra Ranges National Park and Toolangi State Forest. They are bordered to the north by rural towns such as Seymour, Euroa and Benalla, to the south by the south-eastern suburbs of Pakenham, Warragul and Traralgon, and to the west by Dandenong, Ringwood and Greensborough.

Large parts of this area are above 800m above sea level. Most of the forests in this category consist of large stands of eucalyptus species, tall mountain ash, scattered grey gum and messmate species. Foothills are made up of wooded and pastoral slopes, and provide a backdrop to the Melbourne metropolitan area. This region has high rainfall, cool summers and cold winters.

DESCRIPTION	LANDSCAPE CHARACTER IMPORTANCE	PRINCIPLES
Forested mountain ranges and foothills	Defining landscape backdrop to the metro region	The ranges should provide the appearance of a forested backdrop to Melbourne when viewed from all parts of the metropolitan area.
Wooded and pastoral lower slopes	Valued landscape and recreational resource	Maintain a low degree of site coverage in all developed areas to maintain the well-vegetated appearance.
	Forms a natural edge to urban development	The eastern Great Dividing Range and foothills should remain free of further urban development
		Existing urban development should gradually merge into the vegetative character of the eastern ranges and their foothills

GREAT DIVIDING RANGE AND FOOTHILLS: WESTERN

2.2

This region lies to the west of the Kilmore gap which bisects the eastern and western sections of the Great Dividing range. It is the divider between the western and northern plains. To the north it runs between Castlemaine and Bendigo, and to the south it is bordered by Sunbury, Melton and Bacchus Marsh. The area includes the Wombat State Forest to the south and the tourist and historic gold towns such as Ballarat, Daylesford, Clunes, and the mineral spas at Hepburn Springs.

The western area of the Great Dividing Range does not have as high elevations as the eastern section with fewer patches of land over 800m above sea level - most is between 200-800m above sea level. Consisting of partly forested, rolling hills, it begins to merge with the urban environment towards the south-east. The climate is relatively dry and vegetation is similar to the eastern section of the range.

DESCRIPTION	LANDSCAPE CHARACTER IMPORTANCE	PRINCIPLES
Rolling hills, partly forested (mostly dry)	The divider between the Western Plains and the Northern Plains	Retain the appearance of forested or rural wooded landscapes when viewed from a distance (particularly from the western plains, the Metropolitan area and the key transportation corridors).
	Attractive living environment encourages urban sprawl	
	Scenic qualities easily diminished by poorly sited urban development	Maintain low site coverage to retain the rural landscape setting
	Some locations able to absorb well-sited development	Special consideration should be given to the siting of all structures

WESTERN BASALT PLAIN

2.3
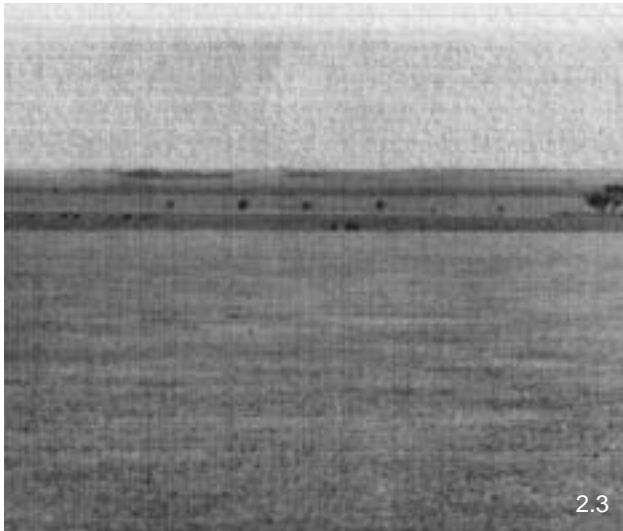
The Western Basalt Plains are located to the west of Melbourne, bordered to the north-west by the western Great Dividing Range, to the east by the Hume Freeway, and to the south to south-east by Port Phillip Bay until Geelong. Located in this region are the Brisbane Ranges National Park (central), the You Yangs National Park (south-east), and the Avalon Airport (south-east). They are divided from Melbourne's Eastern Hills and Vales by the River Yarra, Darebin Creek and Plenty River.

This area consists of flat open grasslands with incised creeks. The volcanic basalt plains provide good environments for pasture and crops, with long rows of cypresses and gum trees as wind breaks or divisions between fields and properties. Rainfall is relatively low in comparison to the ranges, with hot summers and cold winters.

DESCRIPTION	LANDSCAPE CHARACTER IMPORTANCE	PRINCIPLES
Flat, dry grasslands with incised creeks and streams	Long distance views beneath big skies, a character that is conducive to continued urban sprawl	New fringe development should have defined edges
	Development changes the landscape character and cannot be hidden	New fringe development should be interspersed with connected networks of undeveloped land reserved for open space, to provide a landscape resource accessible to all residents
	The urban edge is typically formed by visually prominent back fences and sprawling roadside development	
	Intimate creek environments provide a valued (potential) scenic and recreation resource	Creek valleys should become part of the open space network and be open to public access in the form of linked trail networks
		Retain the character of open grasslands and incised creek valleys in key open areas in association with urban development

NORTHERN PLAINS

2.4

This area is located from the northern boundaries of the eastern and western sections of the Great Dividing Range, to the border of New South Wales. It includes the Redcastle, Rushworth and Wellsford State Forests and Whipstick State Park and many prominent rural cities such as Bendigo and Shepparton.

The flat agricultural landscape and open woodlands, consisting of alluvial plains deposited by former streams in Pleistocene times, has hot dry summers and cold wet winters. Irrigated cropland is also found in this region alongside narrow sections of forest, such as that along the Goulburn River.

DESCRIPTION	LANDSCAPE CHARACTER IMPORTANCE	PRINCIPLES
Flat, agricultural landscape with open woodlands	Victoria's agricultural landscape	Maintain views from transport corridors
	Largely cleared of indigenous vegetation	Avoid roadside urban sprawl
		Retain country town character of settlements within this landscape
		Ensure a high level of design for all development within close proximity to major transport corridors

MELBOURNE'S EASTERN HILLS AND VALES

2.5

Melbourne's Eastern Hills and Vales are located to the north-east of the Central Business District. They stretch to the foothills of the Dandenong Ranges in the east, and adjoin the sandbelt in the south. They are divided from the Western Basalt Plains by the River Yarra, Darebin Creek and Plenty River. This region includes approximately 25-30km of the Yarra River, a section of the Plenty River, La Trobe University Bundoora Campus and the Merri Creek.

This landscape comprises rolling, treed hills, and many ridges and creek valleys. It has a temperate climate with a mean annual rainfall of approximately 600-1000mm. Much of the region is found in metropolitan Melbourne and therefore has scattered gardens, grassland and woodland. Further towards the eastern Great Dividing Range there is open woodland.

DESCRIPTION	LANDSCAPE CHARACTER IMPORTANCE	PRINCIPLES
Undulating, treed landscape with frequent ridges and creek valleys	The landscape underlying the valued 'green and leafy' eastern suburbs of Melbourne	Maintain sufficient space for tree planting in new developments
		Retain and enhance the 'green and leafy' character of these areas.
		Expose and enhance the underlying character, especially in open spaces and in views from major transport corridors

WEST GIPPSLAND HILLS AND VALES

2.6

The West Gippsland Hills and Vales are located to the east and south-east of Melbourne. They are bordered to the north by the Eastern Great Dividing Range, to the south by Narre Warren South and Cardinia, and to the west by Dandenong. Found in this region is the Princes Highway and the Dandenong District Centre.

This area has rolling pastoral landscape and a temperate climate. It comprises rugged to gentle undulating terrain to the north, coastal plains to the west and flood plains to the east. The mean annual rainfall is approximately 700-1000mm, with an average of over 150 days per year with rain.

DESCRIPTION	LANDSCAPE CHARACTER IMPORTANCE	PRINCIPLES
Undulating, treed pastoral landscape with frequent ridges and creek valleys	Attractive living environment encourages urban sprawl Scenic qualities easily diminished by poorly sited urban development Some locations able to absorb well-sited development	Avoid the extension of a suburban character into the background hills of the southern areas of the Dandenong Ranges. Expose and enhance the underlying landscape character especially when experienced from the major transport corridors and the broadscale open space system Design development to foster the longer term development of leafy and green future suburbs of Melbourne

PORT PHILLIP SANDBELT

2.7

This area extends from Port Melbourne to the Eastern Hills and Vales to the north, the coast of Western Port Bay between Warneet and Tooradin and to east of Cranbourne, Frankston, Mornington, Rosebud and Portsea in the south, West Gippsland to the east and Port Phillip Bay to the west (through to Point Nepean). Located in this region are Moorabbin Airport, Patterson Lakes, Arthurs Seat State Park, Mornington Peninsula National Park and numerous coastal towns often visited during holiday periods.

The landscape here is flat - no higher than 200m above sea level, except for Arthurs Seat (305m) - and includes a variety of physiography from coastal sand barrier from Mornington to Portsea, to coastal plains in the southern areas. Vegetation is predominantly scattered gardens, grassland and woodland, with patches of vegetation-dominated residential landscapes (Moonah and Ti Tree) in some coastal suburbs, and cropland/natural and sown grassland.

DESCRIPTION	LANDSCAPE CHARACTER IMPORTANCE	PRINCIPLES
Coastal dunes, headlands and flats	The landscape underlying the valued coastal character of Melbourne's bayside communities	Retain and enhance the underlying landscapes of coastal or sandhill bushland and heathland within the major open space, green wedges and waterway corridors.
		Retain the dominance of canopy native vegetation on prominent headlands, hill faces and ridge lines
		Maintain sufficient space for vegetation in new developments where this landscape quality remains

PENINSULAS AND ISLANDS

2.8

The Peninsulas and Islands are found on both sides of the Port Phillip Bay, including the Bellarine Peninsula, the Mornington Peninsula, French Island, Phillip Island and land to the south of West Gippsland (Korumburra, Leongatha, Wonthaggi, Inverloch etc.). These areas contain the French Island National Park, the penguin colony, and many other tourist locations along the western surf coast and to the east of Phillip Island.

The landscape is mainly flat with extensive coastal plains, lava plains on the south of the Mornington Peninsula and on Phillip Island and some flood plains near Wonthaggi, west of Geelong and along the Barwon River. With a temperate climate, there is much cropland and natural sown grassland, as well as forest to the west and open woodland in the east. There are patches of tall shrubland, particularly on French Island.

DESCRIPTION	LANDSCAPE CHARACTER IMPORTANCE	PRINCIPLES
An undulating pastoral landscape, more intimate and treed on the Mornington Peninsula	Attractive living environment encourages urban sprawl Scenic qualities easily diminished by poorly sited urban development Some locations able to absorb well-sited development	Retain the appearance of forested or rural wooded or pastoral landscapes when viewed from a distance, the key transportation corridors and coastal viewing areas. Maintain low site coverage to retain the rural landscape setting. Special consideration should be given to the siting and design of all structures to retain the rural character

BAY COAST: BEACH OR CLIFF

2.9

These regions are: the eastern coastline of Port Phillip Bay to Point Nepean, the northern coastline of Port Phillip Bay between Williamstown and Altona, the western coastline of Port Phillip Bay, the coastline of the Bellarine Peninsula between Portarlington and St. Leonards, and the western coastline of the Western Port bay between Sandy Point and Shoreham Beach.

The Western Port and Port Phillip Bay coastlines mainly consist of gravelly or shelly sand with some underlying rocks. The Western Port coast also contains intertidal shore platforms, cut in consolidated rocks (except granite). On the Bellarine and central Mornington Peninsulas, cliffs eroded to various degrees can be found. See 'Port Phillip Sandbelt' and 'Peninsulas and Islands' for climate.

DESCRIPTION	LANDSCAPE CHARACTER IMPORTANCE	PRINCIPLES
The developed coastline of Port Phillip and Westernport Bay	Attractive living environment, subject to intense development pressure Scenic qualities easily diminished by poorly sited or scaled development Some locations are accepted as concentrations of more intense development (eg Port Melbourne)	Maintain vegetation dominant skyline when viewed from the bay and key viewing points along the Bay. Retain and enhance the underlying landscapes of coastal or sandhill bushland and heathland within the major open space, green wedges and waterway corridors. Ensure that all prominent headlands, hill faces ridge lines remain dominated by a canopy of native vegetation. Express the built form of the key nodal points of Frankston, St Kilda, Port Melbourne and the CBD of Melbourne.

BAY COAST: WETLAND OR ENVIRONMENTAL AREA

2.10

Wetland and environmental areas on the bay coasts are located on the north-west coast of Port Phillip Bay between Altona and Corio, the western coast of Port Phillip Bay between St Leonards and Queenscliff (including Swan Island), and the coastline of Western Port Bay between Sandy Point and northern Phillip Island to Cat Bay.

The north-west and western sections of Port Phillip Bay contain gravelly and shelly sand, with the western section also consisting of some partially eroded cliffs. The Western Port Bay area includes marsh coasts to the west and north, shelly and gravelly beaches to the east with cliffs at various points along the eastern to south-eastern coastline. See 'Port Phillip Sandbelt' and 'Peninsulas and Islands' for climate.

DESCRIPTION	LANDSCAPE CHARACTER IMPORTANCE	PRINCIPLES
The undeveloped coastline of Port Phillip and Westernport Bay	Land valued because it has been withheld from development for various reasons	Presumption against development where landscape or ecological values are important
		Where development must be accommodated:
		Site structures if required behind sand dunes and away from wetlands.
		Design development to be subservient to the macro landscape

BASS STRAIT COAST (BEACH OR CLIFF)

2.11

The Bass Strait Coast extends across the southern-most sections of the Victorian coastline, through districts such as Apollo Bay, Torquay, Point Lonsdale, Queenscliff, Point Nepean, Cape Schank, southern Phillip Island, Wonthaggi, and Wilsons Promontory.

From Cape Otway across to Phillip Island, there are some shelly, gravelly beaches and eroded cliffs, with intermittent intertidal shore platforms. From San Remo east to Wilsons Promontory there are more beaches, and fewer intertidal platforms and cliffs, which mainly appear on landmass that protrudes into Bass Strait, such as Cape Paterson. See 'Port Phillip Sandbelt' and 'Peninsulas and Islands' for climate.

DESCRIPTION	LANDSCAPE CHARACTER IMPORTANCE	PRINCIPLES
A rugged, natural coastal environment	Valued landscape and recreational resource	Presumption against development where landscape or ecological values are important outside defined townships
		Where development must be accommodated:
		Site structures if required behind sand dunes and away from promontories and headlands
		Design development to be subservient to the macro landscape

CLIMATIC ISSUES

The climates found in these landscape types vary widely. These different climates warrant an appropriate built form response if development is to become more environmentally sustainable. Much historical development of the region has responded to the local climatic and other conditions, but use of standard house designs mitigates against this. An example of the origin of a local style, partly based on climate, is given by Boyd:

"Within the southern villa style there were minor variations caused at least in part by regional geographic and climatic conditions". Areas such as Warrandyte attracted artists and week-end trippers who, with little income, "looked to the earth for [building] materials". "Early in the twentieth century they revived wattle-and-dab, pisé and wood slab structural techniques". After 1945, the practice of using earth to create home-made bricks became increasingly popular, and people moved to district such as Warrandyte to follow the lines of the artists. A 'Warrandyte' style had developed: "a neo-Californian bungalow style; rubble stone and adobe blocks, vertical boarded walls, shed roofs, sudden studio-like windows - a somewhat nostalgic bushlands atmosphere". (Paraphrase of Boyd pp17-19)

CLIMATE TYPE	LANDSCAPES IN WHICH THEY OCCUR	PRINCIPLES
High rainfall, cool summers, cold winters	Great Dividing Range and Foothills: Eastern	Avoid development on cold southern slopes
		Avoid development on western and northern fireprone slopes.
		Maximise northern exposure and sun access all year
		Sheltered outdoor space for rain protection
Hot summers, cold winters	Great Dividing Range and Foothills: Western	Provide shelter through landscape design from hot northerly winds
		Avoid development on western and northern fireprone slopes.
		Maximise northern exposure and sun access in winter
Dry, hot summers, cold winters	Western Basalt Plain	Provide shelter from hot dry summer winds and cold wet winter winds
		Provide firebreak edges to western plains grassland to northern and western aspects
		Maximise northern aspect sun access in winter
Hot, dry summers, cold, wet winters	Northern Plains	Provide shelter from hot dry summer winds and cold wet winter winds
		Provide firebreak edges to farmland and remnant woodland to northern and western aspects
		Maximise northern aspect sun access in winter
Temperate	Melbourne's Eastern Hills and Vales	Maximise northern aspect sun access in winter
	West Gippsland Hills and Vales	Continue to use trees especially deciduous to modify sun access
Maritime	Port Phillip Sandbelt	Continue to use trees especially deciduous to modify sun access
	Peninsulas and Islands	Design to capture cooling summer breezes
	Bay Coast: Beach or Cliff	Maximise northern sun access in winter
	Bay Coast: Wetland or Environmental Area	Provide shelter from cold winter winds
Exposed maritime climate	Bass Strait Coast (Beach or Cliff)	Design to avoid cold Bass Straight gales through landscape and built form
		Maximise northern aspect sun access in winter

Today, with increasing concerns about sustainable development, climate responsive design is more important than ever. As Boyd illustrates, local climatic variation can be a rich source of future variations of built form character, adding to the 'sense of place' of the central region.

The following chapters describe:

> The character of the towns and cities that have developed on this landscape setting (**chapter 3**)
> How the urban structure of the Melbourne metropolitan emerged, and how it should continue to develop (**chapter 4**)
> Principles for the future design of activity centres (**chapter 5**)
> Planning of residential areas, and the types of residential character that exist (**chapter 6**)
> Transport corridors (**chapter 7**)
> Development of new communities (**chapter 8**)

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TOWNS AND CITIES IN THE CENTRAL REGION

WHY ARE THE TOWNS AND CITIES IN THE CENTRAL REGION IMPORTANT?

The urban form of each town and city in the Central Victoria region represents an accumulated community 'memory' of the origins and development of the state. Future development should respect and add to this 'layering' of community memory and history. This will enhance the image and sense of place of these towns and cities, and result in better quality, more respectful deign of new development.

WHAT SHOULD THE METROPOLITAN STRATEGY SAY?

The Metropolitan Strategy should endorse the importance of urban character to the image and sense of place of Victorians, refer to the categories of urban character that exist in the study area, and summarise the principles that are contained in this chapter.

WHAT SHOULD HAPPEN NEXT?

1 The principles should be developed into State policy, for inclusion in the State section of the VPPs.

2 An Advisory Note should be prepared providing guidance on relating development to urban area types, to assist Councils

OVERVIEW

For the purposes of this study, the following urban character types have been identified in the Central Region of Victoria:

>   Melbourne, Dominant Urban Centre of Victoria
>   Regional Centres
>   Country Towns/Townships/Coastal Towns

The chapter begins by outlining the factors influencing the layout and siting of the towns in the region, many of which share a common provenance. It then describes the 'spurts of growth' that have been expressed as eras of development in most settlements in the region. The shape and structure of the Melbourne metropolis itself is covered in more detail in **Chapter 4**.

LAYOUT AND SITING OF CENTRAL REGION TOWNS

Principles for the siting and layout of towns throughout the Australian colonies gradually evolved into a set of regulations based on the findings of a Board of Inquiry set up by Governor Darling. Known as the Darling Regulations, these were adopted in 1829, before the towns of the Central Region were established. The regulations distinguished between development within the 'town reserve', an area typically 3 miles by 1 mile, and the 'rural' land beyond the town reserve.

The principles by which the centres of most older towns and cities in the region were laid out are based on these regulations. Variations in orientation and alignment were made to accommodate topography, established routes or difficult ground. In the case of Melbourne, the grid was modified in ways well documented by Miles Lewis (p27), into a unique form now referred to as the 'Hoddle' grid. Most of suburban Melbourne was laid out on the 'beyond the reserve' principles.

The 'Darling Regulations'

"The planning principles which have evolved over fifty years, and which were to be applied to Melbourne:

>   Town reserves are situated on rivers (something which I have not discussed here, but which goes back to the original instructions issued to Arthur Phillip).
>   Town reserves are typically 3 miles by one mile, and within them only small allotments are released for houses, shops, etc., while the rest of the space is reserved for future expansion.

>   Within the town reserve reservations were made for public buildings and other purposes (which is self-evident, but was first done systematically under Macquarie).
>   The town layout is on a rectangular grid, but adjusted to suit the topography.
>   The dimensions of allotments and streets are as provided by the Darling Regulations.
>   There are incentives or requirements to encourage substantial building on town lots and to discourage speculation in land (easy when it was a condition of a lease, but difficult when the land has been sold freehold).
>   Outside the town reserve, river frontages are shared in long strip allotments.
>   The surveying of rural land is generally into sections of 1 square mile, on a north-south, east-west orientation." (Lewis, p.27.)

In summary, these regulations meant that the Town Reserve was generally situated on rivers, with only limited release of lots (rest left for future expansion), with reservations made for public buildings. The street pattern was a rectangular grid, with allowances for topography, comprising thirty metre/1.5 chain main road reserves (the pattern used all over Victoria c1850-c1860); twenty metre/1 chain reserves for lesser roads (mostly abandoned c1850-c1860).

The results of the application of these 'Darling' principles are that:

>   Most Central Victorian townships are based around a core that shares a similar pattern of 1.5 chain (30m) streets on a grid pattern
>   The middle and some outer suburbs of Melbourne are laid out on the 'outside the Town Reserve' basis, within a one square mile north-south, east-west grid of one chain (20m) main roads
>   Much of rural Central Victoria was surveyed and laid out (property boundaries and roadways) on the same system

'SPURTS' OF GROWTH

Development of the towns established across central Victoria on the grid principle proceeded in 'spurts' (Eastwood). These spurts, or eras, of development can be clearly traced today in the built form of each settlement. The urban form of each town and city represents, in a sense, an accumulated community 'memory' of the origins and development of the state. Future development should respect and add to this 'layering' of community memory and history. Broadly speaking, the eras of development to date comprise:

'SPURTS' OF GROWTH

ERA	FEATURES		URBAN AND BUILT FORM CONSEQUENCES
1830s on	Pastoral frontier towns Tree stumps in the street Walking (or horse) based development	> > > >	Cottage or homestead style of building Large gardens/grounds Absence of any 'urban' feel Use of locally available materials
1850s on	Gold rush cities and settlements Initial civic buildings and public spaces Walking (or horse) based development	> > > >	Emergence of an urban character Low scale of development (one or two storey), often modest in style Many 'gap' sites Widespread availability of brick, and corrugated iron for roofing
1880s on	Second gold rush Public transport-based development Melbourne as a metropolis, overwhelming leadership in its region Start of sewerage	> > > > >	Emergence of city character in regional centres, and metropolitan character in Melbourne, with a large network of distinct suburban centres Grander civic buildings and public spaces Increasingly elaborate decoration Commercial buildings grow in height and scale (invention of the elevator) Still many 'gap' sites and unfinished buildings
1890s on	Depression and war Slower pace of development City Beautiful movement (slum clearance and height limits) Public transport-based development, start of car use	> > > > >	Gradual consolidation of development Growth in use of elevators; 40m height limit in Melbourne Early steps in emergence of a local style Emergence of the 'red roofed' suburbs (terra cotta tile) Beginning of non-load bearing walls in commercial development
1920s on	Depression and war Slow pace of development New image: 1929 plan, zoning, slum clearance, MMBW plan Public transport-based development but growing car use	> > >	Widespread use of concrete and steel in commercial building construction Most residential development is now 'garden suburban' in character Very little single fronted residential development
1950s on	The urban spurt Olympics Fringe development still public transport based Slum clearance	> > > >	Residential development continues the 'garden suburban' theme; lot and house sizes gradually increase Melbourne's 40m height limit breached Commercial and civic buildings, and public housing flats, no longer form 'the walls of the street' The first internalised mall shopping centres
1970s on	Continued metropolitan expansion 'Gentrification' of the inner suburbs Fringe development structured mainly around car use	> > > >	Residential development continues the 'garden suburban' theme, but with a curvilinear+court street pattern; lot sizes start to reduce, but house sizes continue to grow (more two storey) Major commercial developments obliterate fine grain street and subdivision patterns Infilling of most development 'gaps' remaining from the initial gold rush 'spurts' Rediscovery of the merits of truly urban environments

A flavour of these growth spurts is revealed in the following quotes and summaries:

"To inhabitants and visitors alike the most remarkable thing about Melbourne in the nineteenth century was the speed of its growth. It was commented on in every decade, especially in the 1880s, when everyone seemed to speak of the transformation from primeval wilderness to magnificent metropolis."

"The growth occurred in spurts and was associated with a pattern of financial booms and busts, and perhaps the most surprising feature is that the first spurt of remarkable growth occurred so soon after the first settlers arrived in 1835. From about 1838 Melbourne began acquiring the feel and institutions of a town, although the amazing hotch-potch of buildings and the tree-stumps in the street made it look, still, like a settlement."

"Melbourne's second growth spurt, during the 1850s, facilitated the emergence of a fluid society in which men become leaders of their local community, and who during the third growth spurt in the 1880s, aided in the transformation of Melbourne from a "walking city of small suburban communities into a public transport city with large bureaucratic institutions". (Eastwood)

By 1883, Melbourne's physical appearance began to change again, and it started to lose its "rustic" charm. Subdivision of vacant lots into very small house lots, such as those in Carlton, condensed the inner city population. The increase in tanneries and breweries and wool-washing works created air and water pollution, made the suburbs unpleasant to live in. In districts such as Collingwood, low-cost tenanted flats bought by speculators were classed as unfit for habitation and it became a community of low-income earners. The fringes of Melbourne expanded as those who could afford to, moved further out. Footscray's expanding working-class made it a new suburb of the 1980s. "Noxious trades" had been removed to the fringes of the city where populations were minimal, leaving Footscray with employment in metals and machinery shops and foundries attracted by the railway link from here to the city. (paraphrase of Eastwood)

"The evolving geography of Melbourne showed a broad continuation of earlier tends during the 1980s". Development at the fringes of the city caused decentralisation of industry, services, institutions such as schools, shopping etc., and created 'urban sprawl'. Suburbanisation was much faster in the north-east, the east and the south-east, than the north, north-west and west. During the 1960s, the phenomenon of gentrification began to gather speed, as the inner suburbs were "invaded" by "the better-off, better-educated, younger and more articulate middle-class professionals". Victorian and Edwardian housing stock in Parkville, Carlton, East Melbourne and Fitzroy were the first to become popular. Other inner areas to follow were: South Melbourne, Port Melbourne, Middle Park, Collingwood and Richmond.

However, this invasion forced lower-class residents to move to the outer suburbs where land prices were cheaper. These areas "were characterised by a serious lack of shops, schools, public transport, child care and even basic sewer and water services", unlike in the 1960s when decentralising industry and employment opportunities attracted outwards movement. (paraphrase of McLoughlin)

URBAN AREA TYPES
MELBOURNE, DOMINANT URBAN CENTRE OF VICTORIA

"The men from the south needed a safe place to disembark their herds and goods. The squatters needed a port from which to ship their wool to the mills of Britain. Melbourne was chosen as a place for these functions because the river was navigable up to a point beyond the swamps; the water was fresh, if brackish, beyond the line of rocks above the turning circle for ships; the soil seemed fertile for crops; the pasture looked rich; there were wooded hills for building timber. Above all, Melbourne was in a central position with regard to the pastoral hinterland, more so than Portland where the Henty's had settled."(Eastwood pp.13-14.)

"Between 1869-78 the Victorian Government laid down approximately 670 miles of radial country rail tracks". The radial design gave Melbourne dominance over other port industries such as Portland and Geelong and over competing country industries. This also facilitated the movement of raw material from the whole colony, which in turn, expanded Melbourne's market. Country industries relied upon local production and on the freight service from Melbourne to transport goods throughout the colony, which increased their costs. Therefore, most local industries that had developed to serve local needs either "stayed small or collapsed or moved to Melbourne. Due to the subsequent steady growth of Melbourne industry, railways were built in Spencer Street to transport wheat etc. to the wharves for export. To increase export opportunities, the Yarra river was widened and deepened in 1878 to accommodate "deeper-draught overseas ships", with a canal through Fishermen's Bend in 1886 and the completion of Victoria Dock in 1891. The ease of movement created by the railways and the "capital costs of technological innovation" enabled Melbourne flour-millers to dominate the Victorian industry in 1881. (Eastwood)

"Port Phillip Bay was the safest and most capacious harbour on the shores of Bass Strait. However, the commander of the new outpost, Lieutenant Colonel David Collins, grumbled continually. The puzzle is why he did not move from the dry sandy entrance of the bay to that more attractive site thirty miles up the bay, where Melbourne now stands and where a small town could have easily fed itself with grain and meat. The likely answer to this riddle is suggested by the map. The northern or Australian shore of Bass Strait was shaped like an arc, and Port Phillip Bay was the point of that arc most distant from the routes through the strait. Collins therefore may have argued that if he placed his convict camp thirty miles to the north of the mouth of the bay, he would be taking up a position that was too far from the sealane to be strategic. He also implied that the entrance to Port Phillip was too temperamental to justify a colony anywhere inside; he saw fast tides rippling through the narrow entrance and he knew that, when the wind blew from the wrong quarter, ships might wait days before they could safely sail through the jaws of the bay."(Blainey, pp.77-79)

The system of railways that radiated from Melbourne enabled the capital to "draw in commerce like the arms of an octopus". Freight transported by rail was moved more quickly and more cheaply than that moved through the use of bullock teams, and as the main station was located in central Melbourne and near the port, it was easiest to export from this location. This gave Melbourne industries a competitive edge over country businesses. As other Australian capital cities had major railway stations located along side "the nearest safe ports" and not necessarily next to the capital, they did not gain quite the same advantage as Melbourne. However, there was one disadvantage in creating and expanding railways; "the governments that built them incurred big debts in London." They borrowed money in long term loans, and then had to pay interest each year to the lenders. (Paraphrased from Blainey, pp264-65)

Melbourne's location on the Port Phillip Bay facilitated its growth as a world city, but also drew business from other Victorian towns. After the railways were built between 1869-78, this enabled Melbourne to "draw in commerce like the arms of an octopus" (Blainey:1977:264), giving it a competitive edge over other port and country businesses, and expanding Melbourne's market (Eastwood:1983:59). Its port was used by rural regions of Victoria to transport goods and produce, and the Central Business District provided services, commerce and government (Lewis: 1995:12). Similar processes occurred in the other 'colonies' that subsequently formed the federation of Australian states, resulting in Australia becoming the most urbanised country in the world.

The discovery of gold strengthened and expanded the economic functions of the city (Eastwood:1983:31). During the second growth spurt of the city in the 1850s, Melbourne was transformed from "a walking city of small suburban communities into a public transport city with large bureaucratic institutions" and a "metropolitan ethos" (Eastwood:1983:55-7). This attracted settlers from country or gold-town Victoria, who found employment in the growing industrial and manufacturing sectors. The low-price suburbs provided adequate land and accommodation until the 1960s, and tracts of rural land separated urban areas allowing the ownership of pigs, cows and goats, giving the outer suburban land a rural feel.

Throughout this period, Melbourne continued to develop as the dominant urban centre of Victoria. Only in the very first years of settlement was there any question that other centres, such as Geelong or especially Williamstown, might become equal or larger in size.

DESCRIPTION	MAIN CHARACTERISTICS	PRINCIPLES
Melbourne is the principal port, business and population centre of Victoria	For almost its entire history, Melbourne has been overwhelmingly the largest urban centre in the state	Plan future expansion of Melbourne in a way that maintains the distinct and separate characters of the regional centres and country towns in its hinterland Utilise the substantial infrastructure radiating from Melbourne as a basis for accommodating pressure for urban growth

The urban structure of the Melbourne metropolis is discussed in **Chapter 4**.

REGIONAL CENTRES

Geelong, Ballarat, Bendigo (and to a lesser extent smaller or more recently grown centres such as Shepparton or Traralgon)

Ballarat is set on a relatively flat site in the middle of the western extension of the Great Dividing Range. Most of its roads follow a simple east-west and north-south grid pattern.   It is a good example of a regional centre: "it is in a key strategic position at the centre of some of Victoria's most important freight, tourist and commuter transport routes" (City of Ballarat Municipal Strategic Statement). Ballarat boasts a university and its main industries are manufacturing, retail, health and community and then education. It is also a major tourist destination, a regional hub of Victorian road systems and close to western farming areas. It has rail links to most regional areas of Victoria, excellent infrastructure and sophisticated communications networks.

Bendigo, originally called 'Sandhurst', grew from a collection of discrete gold mining settlements, whose separate entities are still much in evidence today. The main axis follows the north-south alignment of the city's creek valley setting. The street pattern is grid-based, but with so many distortions to accommodate hills and valleys, old mines and settlements and original trade routes that it is irregular except in local areas.

Geelong is laid-out in a grid which, like Melbourne's CBD, has its centre angled to face the waterfront. Most of the suburbs are laid out on a grid oriented east-west and north- south, also like Melbourne. As this town is situated on Corio Bay, it has good water access, and the nearby highways give access to Melbourne, and other areas of regional Victoria, as does the rail network.

From these descriptions, it can be observed that most regional centres have the following characteristics:

> Similar ground plan principles (Darling regulations)
> Grid-based centre with Victorian heritage character and a prominent railway station
> Sense of being the regional capital: the types of shops and services, the presence of significant public buildings and spaces, including gardens
> The inner suburban 'ring' is mainly Victorian /Edwardian, but has a garden suburb character (lower density than Melbourne)
> Beyond this, there are suburbs of interwar and post war bungalows (mostly the latter, due to the effects of the inter war depression), still within a grid-based street pattern
> Some fringe residential has a landscape dominated character (mainly Bendigo and Ballarat)
> More recent development has often 'back-filled' the areas between the main development corridors, sometimes in a pattern and form indistinguishable from Melbourne's suburbs of a similar era

There are sound reasons for encompassing these centres within a strategic plan for metropolitan Melbourne. Geelong in particular is coming more and more closely within the ambit of Melbourne's influence, in terms of commuting for example. In many senses they are becoming part of a single urban system. The fundamental principle that should guide future urban development of the regional centres is to maintain their separate identities. The Metropolitan Strategy provides an ideal vehicle for setting in place policies that will ensure this happens.

DESCRIPTION	MAIN CHARACTERISTICS	PRINCIPLES
Large provincial centres which boomed in the 19th century, and have since continued to grow	Grid central plan with many imposing Victorian buildings	Build on and reinforce the distinctive character of each regional centre rather than reproducing Melbourne's outer suburban forms of development
A rich legacy of large public buildings	Usually have important central area gardens	
Regional centre gives them an importance second to only Melbourne	Serve the region with large stores and other services	Contain the sprawl and maintain the easy access to the surrounding countryside.
	Industrial base often eroded in recent years	Avoid stand alone fringe outer suburban shopping centres, loss of offices to inner residential areas and internal malls diminishing the urban quality and sustainability of the centre.
	Becoming more attractive for lifestyle reasons	
	Provide city convenience with easy access to the countryside	Opportunity to use empty/under-utilised sites and upper floors
	Distinctive regional character sometimes lost in newer suburbs	Improve gateway routes/transport corridor image
	Usually have a prominent railway station	

COUNTRY TOWNS / TOWNSHIPS / COASTAL TOWNS

Examples: Castlemaine, Queenscliff, Seymour, Heathcote

Many of these towns grew along rail lines or other major transport routes such as roads and ports, for example Kilmore on Sydney Road (this section is now named the Hume Highway). Most began as small settlements, and due to the discovery of gold, the distinctiveness of the landscape or resources, or a special role bestowed upon the town by government, they grew to form a particular identity. Most were subdivided by surveyors into quarter acre lots, with land on the fringes as large as five acres. Larger lots adjoining the town were to be used as farmland.

Queenscliff is an example of a coastal town. It can be accessed via ferry from the Mornington Peninsula. It is a retail centre, with a military history and historic landmarks, and a number of local community events, such as the Queenscliff Music Festival. It has a central grid-like street layout, and the Bellarine Railway, now a tourist rail line. Towards the outer boundaries of the town, density decreases and tends to follow the form of the landscape, particularly along the coastline (Queenscliff Municipal Strategic Statement).

Seymour, a rural town, is based upon the Hume Highway and its rail line (to Albury-Wodonga). The surrounding landscape is predominantly agricultural, and can often be viewed from the outskirts of town. The roads are not always edged and gravel roads still exist in some patches. Towards the outskirts, density declines and land parcels become bigger.

From these descriptions, it can be seen that most country towns, townships and coastal towns have the following qualities:

> Grid-based centre (Darling) with railway station (often closed), a river, based around a main street (often the highway), with some public buildings and Victorian buildings
> Roadways (30m) may have ragged edges or wide gravel or 'nature strips', sometimes with a formal (often exotic) tree avenue
> Sometimes there are gaps between buildings, and between developed sites
> Once away from the main street, there is often lower density housing of all eras that finally flows into the surrounding landscape
> The surrounding landscape can usually be seen from within the town

DESCRIPTION	MAIN CHARACTERISTICS	PRINCIPLES
Usually coastal, agricultural, railway based, former gold, industrial or hills tourist based towns. They serve the immediate hinterland but many have taken on a role in tourism in recent times.	Grid based centres Usually have a railway station (often closed.) Often rich legacy of less grand Victorian buildings. Roads are often 30 metres wide with unformed gravel edges and formal exotic avenues of trees lining them. Often there are gaps between the buildings Low density housing of all eras is usually located immediately behind the main street Modern supermarket developments often disrupt this urban form The surrounding landscape is often visible from within the town	Stop them becoming like suburbs of Melbourne Keep the feeling of spaciousness and incompleteness Keep the visual links to the surrounding landscape (the grid street pattern often assists with maintaining vistas, due to the straight streets) Retain the pattern of wide streets with gravel verges. Retain and enhance the distinctive character of each generic type of town: Coastal town with holiday house seaside architecture and retained coastal vegetation Hills town with retained remnant forest and rustic architecture Former gold with remnant gold era buildings and mining relics Industrial with often the feeling of a 'Company town' often with a 'Garden City' character Agricultural service town with distinctive expression of its service role

The following chapters describe:

> How the urban structure of the Melbourne metropolitan emerged, and how it should continue to develop (**chapter 4**)
> Principles for the future design of activity centres (**chapter 5**)
> Planning of residential areas, and the types of residential character that exist (**chapter 6**)
> Transport corridors (**chapter 7**)
> Development of new communities (**chapter 8**)

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THE MELBOURNE METROPOLIS

WHY IS THE MELBOURNE METROPOLIS IMPORTANT?

In trying to establish a sound approach to urban design in metropolitan Melbourne, it is first useful to establish the real factors that distinguish Melbourne from other world cities, and from other state capitals within Australia.

The Melbourne metropolis has developed in a largely consistent pattern for most of its existence, a pattern that is described in the sections that follow. This pattern has considerable merits form a town planning and urban design perspective. Some of its essential attributes and benefits have been diluted and undermined in recent decades. It is important to understand how and why the metropolitan area developed as it did, and the implications of these lessons for its future structure.

WHAT SHOULD THE METROPOLITAN STRATEGY SAY?

The Metropolitan Strategy should place Melbourne accurately in its world and Australian context, and build on the structuring attributes that have shaped the metropolis over the past 150 years, in the ways suggested in this and subsequent chapters.

WHAT SHOULD HAPPEN NEXT?

1 An urban structure plan should be prepared for metropolitan Melbourne, based on the analysis in this chapter

2 The principles should be developed into State policy (using a map and words), for inclusion in the State section of the VPPs.

OVERVIEW

This chapter explains how the urban structure of the Melbourne metropolitan emerged, and the lessons we can learn from this. It sets the scene for the more detailed coverage of urban place types that appears in the following chapters. It begins by placing Melbourne in its world and Australian context:

Melbourne, World City
Melbourne, Second City of Australia

Then it examines the urban structure of Melbourne under the following headings:

The Melbourne CBD
Central Melbourne
Inner Suburbs
Corridors of Growth
Centres of Activity
Middle and Outer Suburbs
'Green Wedges'
Open Space Corridors

Urban design principles are suggested as a consequence of each of these analyses, except for those discussed at more length in subsequent chapters. These are: The Inner Suburbs (see **chapter 6**), Corridors of Growth (some related topic of Transport Corridors, **chapter 7**), Centres of Activity (see **chapter 5**) and The Middle and Outer Suburbs (see **chapter 6**).

MELBOURNE IN CONTEXT

In this era of global competition between cities, Melbourne is often compared with other world cities. Melbourne is ranked relatively low in various hierarchies of international importance, but has been ranked highly as a 'liveable' city. Planners and others often compare Melbourne with Paris, Seattle, Toronto and other world cities. Within Australia, the verbal rivalry between Melbourne and Sydney continues, while Melburnians are sometimes smuggly disparaging about the 'city of churches' (Adelaide) and other smaller state capitals.

In trying to establish a sound approach to urban design in metropolitan Melbourne, it is first useful to establish the real factors that distinguish Melbourne from other world cities, and from other state capitals within Australia.

MELBOURNE, WORLD CITY

"The city's origins lie in the surge in nineteenth century urbanisation which ringed the Pacific with a network of bustling commercial cities" (Lewis:1995:8). Melbourne became a 'gateway' facilitating European settlement and interaction with world economies. The surprisingly rapid growth of Melbourne was attributed not only to a population explosion, but also to the technologies of the industrial revolution such as railway, and its participation in world trade. The location of Port Phillip Bay in close proximity to the Central Business District also enabled import and export, with "a commercial centre servicing trade and investment" (Eastwood:1983:5). Britain used Melbourne's produce to feed its growing population and Australian gold financed British trade expansion. By the early 1880s, Melbourne housed 31% of the Australian population and had developed a complex internal economy, producing the title 'The Metropolis of the Southern Hemisphere' (Eastwood:1983:57, see Appendix 4.1).

DESCRIPTION	MAIN CHARACTERISTICS	PRINCIPLES
Metropolitan Melbourne in its international context	One of a Pacific ring of nineteenth century 'instant cities' (including Sydney, Brisbane, Auckland, San Francisco, Seattle, Vancouver):	Measure Melbourne's success as a living environment and distinctiveness as a place by comparison with its 'peer' world cities
'Marvellous Melbourne'		
'The Paris of the Antipodes'	Built from scratch in the 1800s	Learn from the experience of planning in cities with a similar history of development
'The Chicago of the South'	Spatial form shaped by the latest technological innovations	
'Queen City of the South'	Gateways to expansive hinterlands	
'The Metropolis of the Southern Hemisphere'	Social and economic structures mirroring the logic of the modern capitalist market place	
	Melbourne exemplifies these characteristics, and was in the 1880s the largest in both population and extent	

MELBOURNE, SECOND CITY OF AUSTRALIA

"A comparison with the other Australian colonies will suggest that the distinctive aspect in the first sixty years was the quality of entrepreneurship". The Hinterland was licensed, leased and purchased by speculators and investors, and with the discovery of gold, Melbourne attracted young and enterprising settlers, who "generally tend[ed] to liberalism and enlightenment in their beliefs". During the 1890s, Melbourne acted as the country's first capital whilst a permanent site was being chosen, and its port grew busier with imports and exports for the world market (Lewis:1995:9). At least until recent years, Melbourne was Australia's unchallenged financial capital, and it remains Australia's busiest port.

Physically, Melbourne lacks the topographically stunning settings of Sydney's harbour, Hobart's mountain backdrop or Perth's waterfront. Although it was planned to a degree, the plan lacked the sophistication of Adelaide's, not to mention Canberra's. Climatically it is argued by many to be less desirable than Brisbane, Perth and Sydney. In the absence of a stunning natural location and a sophisticated ground plan, Melbourne has had to rely on the work of humans to embellish its character.

Many informed commentators now accept that Melbourne has achieved a high quality of urban form and public spaces that compensate for its topographically more subtle setting. This is particularly true of the central city and the inner suburbs. There is a consistency and quality of public space design, avenue planting and building form, based on the classical tradition, that is well suited to the formal, grid-based street pattern. The Victorian legacy has been well-conserved, and new development has largely respected the essence of this legacy. The streets are walkable, the trams are distinctive.

The distinctiveness of Melbourne's suburbs, compared to the suburbs of the other capitals, is mostly evident in the subtle variations in house style between the states. Sense of place is not strong in many suburbs developed over the past fifty years. But Melburnians do seem to have discovered ways of making suburbs liveable and attractive. The middle 'garden' suburbs of the east and south exemplify the attractive comfort of the typical Melbourne suburb.

DESCRIPTION	MAIN CHARACTERISTICS	PRINCIPLES
Second largest city, and original capital, of Australia	Physical setting lacks a strong topographical character	Maintain the simple grid street pattern in urban extensions
Distinctive cultural attribute compared with the other Australian colonies: entrepreneurship	Simple, unsophisticated grid street pattern	Observe formal/classical urban and landscape design approach
	Physical setting includes natural features that can be emphasised to enhance sense of place (eg rivers and creeks, the bay, the backdrop of the hills)	Carefully retain and expose natural features
		Encourage high quality, contextual design that develops a consistent urban character

THE STRUCTURE OF MELBOURNE

The Melbourne metropolis has developed in a largely consistent pattern for most of its existence, a pattern that is described in the sections that follow. This pattern has considerable merits form a town planning and urban design perspective. Some of its essential attributes and benefits have been diluted and undermined in recent decades. It is important to understand how and why the metropolitan area developed as it did, and the implications of these lessons for its future structure.

THE MELBOURNE CBD

The Melbourne CBD is the original settlement site of Melbourne, a grid street pattern angled to face the Yarra River frontage, located where shipping wharves could be located and fresh water obtained.

Miles Lewis describes in detail (see Appendix 4.2), in Melbourne: The City's History and Development (1995), the cultural and physical significance of the Central Business District of Melbourne. As mentioned previously, it was a variety of elements that made the CBD distinctive. Physically, the grid layout designed by Robert Hoddle was a design unique among Australian cities. Streets were one and a half chains wide (30m), with ten chain blocks (200m) bisected by half chain lanes (10m). Later buildings reflected 132 foot (40m) height limits through the range of architectural styles from Edwardian to Baroque, creating coherence in scale and articulation (1995:12).

The centre of Melbourne "reflects... the rapid evolution of a wealthy society from the mid-century gold-rushes, through the era of protection of native industry, to the financial boom of the late 1880s, when the buildings of an eclectic High Victorian character and principally British provenance dominated" (Lewis:1995:12). The grand scale of some buildings displayed the wealth of city, with new technology in iron girders and hydraulic lifts aiding in construction of taller structures (Eastwood:1983:66). Melbourne's first skyscraper was ICI House (1956) "superseding the spires of St. Patrick's Cathedral". Groups and activities located in the CBD also aided in the distinct character of Melbourne: "The Chinese in and around Little Bourke Street, the mercantile zone near the Customs House in Flinders Street, the clothing trade in Flinders Lane, the legal community centred upon the Law Courts in Williams Street and the medical profession at the east end of Collins Street" (Lewis:1995:13).

It is the sum of a number of qualities that gave the Melbourne CBD its distinctiveness. The Victorian architecture, the regularity of layout, its relationship to the bay, the Yarra, Eastern Hill and the former Batman's Swamp, and its positioning of various groups and activities throughout the CBD, have all given Melbourne a unique identity in a local context as well as globally.

DESCRIPTION	MAIN CHARACTERISTICS	PRINCIPLES
One of the great colonial city centres of the nineteenth century	Centre of the largest tram network outside Europe	Express the distinctive orientation of the Hoddle grid in the CBD's built form, by orienting buildings, including tall buildings, parallel with, and at right angles to, the grid
Quintessential expression of nineteenth century planning	Broad, rectilinear streets (30 metre/1.5 chain streets with 0.5 chain 'little streets')	
Unique Hoddle grid	Earlier twentieth century buildings reflect the 132 foot (40m) height limit	Maintain the distinctive grouping of tall buildings that emphasises the subtle topography of the CBD (the eastern and western hills)
Completely unlike an old world city, and not so grand as grid cities of Europe and North America	Most buildings up to the 1950s were sensitive to the street context in siting and architectural treatment, producing a much admired coherence of scale and articulation throughout much of the CBD	Maintain the pedestrian friendly scale of the lower rise inner core of the CBD
A distinctive, though intermittent, Victorian character		
Buildings represent the rapid evolution of a wealthy society, culminating in the tallest buildings in the state	After the 1950s, much development, although of individual quality, eroded the specific character of Melbourne	Develop and apply a consistent approach to urban design throughout the central region (learning from the experience of the City of Melbourne, which has applied a consistent approach for fifteen years or more)
The Yarra River, locational anchor of the city	The landmark buildings (eg Queen Victoria Market, public buildings, Flinders Street Station, Royal and Block Arcades) and the localities within the city (eg Chinatown, mercantile, legal, medical areas) provide much of its cultural character and interest	
	Little provision for gardens and public space	
	A coherent and predictable streetscape	

CENTRAL MELBOURNE

There are, in a sense, two 'inner areas' of Melbourne. One is the Victorian inner residential suburbs (see below). The other, discussed now, is what most visitors would perceive to be central Melbourne in its broadest sense: not just the CBD, but also the ring of parkland, the major sporting venues, Lygon Street, the boulevards, and the major institutions such as the museum and the University. The 'cheese stick and tooth picks' sculpture at the junction of CityLink and Flemington Road was located to highlight this sense of arrival in central Melbourne.

Central Melbourne is smaller in extent than the inner suburbs, but it includes most of what are commonly seen as its 'capital city' functions (see, for example, appendix 4.3, figure 6 Central City Functions, in Municipal Boundary review submission by City of Melbourne, 1985). It is no coincidence that this area is similar in extent to the municipal boundary of Melbourne, soon after it was created (appendix 4.4). It is also similar in extent to the area defined topographically in 'Grids & Greenery' (City of Melbourne 1987) as 'inner Melbourne' 9, 25, 45, (appendix 4.5, 4.6 & 4.7 respectively) and the area covered by 'Central Melbourne: Framework for the Future', the land use and development strategy produced by the State Government in 1984.

DESCRIPTION	MAIN CHARACTERISTICS	PRINCIPLES
You have really arrived in Central Melbourne when you enter the boulevards and the ring of parklands, and see the island of tall buildings close by	Sixty metre (3 chain) boulevards with elm and plane avenues, each with its characteristic cross-section and built form types	Enhance the sense of arrival at key points around the edge of central Melbourne
	The ring of parks and gardens, each with its distinct character	Visually link the landscape 'ring' of parklands and boulevards
	The rail yards and port	Maintain the dominance in height of the CBD tall buildings
	The major public buildings and institutions	Reinforce the capital city character through the continued location of key facilities and the development of a more urban form to the built areas
	The views from the CityLink western bypass, the Bolte Bridge and the West Gate Bridge	

INNER SUBURBS

The second 'inner area' of Melbourne is the densely developed Victorian inner suburbs, most of which lie within a seven kilometre radius of the Melbourne GPO. There are two distinct forms of these inner residential suburbs.

The areas laid out by the Survey Department (eg Carlton) were planned with the following characteristics: 30m and 20m road reserves; some squares and circuses added to the Darling/Hoddle grid; land sold as (generally) quarter acre allotments, but quickly subdivided by speculators into small house sites with narrow frontages, and narrow lane ways. For example, one section of North Carlton sold by the government in 1870 as 10 house blocks, was subdivided into 72 small house blocks by 1890 (Eastwood:1983:46).

By contrast, in the areas without effective control of subdivision (eg Fitzroy), Crown land was sold in big blocks (25-60 acres) within a grid of 20m north-south/east-west main roads. The layout of streets and subdivision into house allotments was undertaken by private speculators, resulting in streets of varying width on north-south/east-west orientation, including many very narrow streets, often without connectivity, and no provision for parks and squares (see summary of Eastwood in Appendix 4.8).

Principles to Guide Development in the Inner Suburbs

The Principles for guiding future development of the inner residential suburbs are contained in 'Inner Suburban' Neighbourhood Character Type in chapter 6.

CORRIDORS OF GROWTH

The growth of Melbourne beyond the 'walking city' inner suburbs was enabled by the development of railways and cable trams. In many other world cities, suburbs grew outwards along trunk rail routes, so that suburban traffic followed the main line function. In Melbourne, this only occurred to a limited extent. Many of the rail routes in the metropolitan area grew expressly to serve suburban traffic, with meandering alignments and closely spaced stations. Land speculation for suburban development was closely related to projected rail line and railway station openings, particularly in the 1880s. Rural service centres (eg Dandenong, Box Hill) first established on main road routes. They were later served by rail, eventually becoming centres for suburban development.

The cable trams (most subsequently converted to electric operation) filled in many of the network gaps between the rail lines, helping to consolidate the inner and some middle areas into a dense network of activity centres, residential suburbs and industrial areas. Beyond this inner area, activity centres and suburbs grew like beads on a string along the radial rail lines. Further suburban development followed, joining the beads into continuous corridors of development.

This radial pattern of corridor development has formed the basis for Melbourne's continued outward growth until the present day. Since the 1960s, there has been an increasing tendency to locate new development away from the radial public transport routes. This has resulted in some unusual situations, such as the eras of development becoming more recent as you start to drive back towards central Melbourne from the Ferntree Gully rail line. However, the principle of corridor development has been enshrined as planning policy in successive Melbourne Metropolitan Planning Schemes since the second world war. It has also has become associated with the 'green wedge' concept (see below).

Principles relating to Corridors of Growth

Growth corridors are still an appropriate way of accommodating urban development on Melbourne's outer fringe, provided they are based around effective public transport infrastructure and well-planned nodes of activity, and continue to be separated from each other by 'wedges' of open space and non-urban land.

CENTRES OF ACTIVITY

The typical 'strip' activity centres (eg Sydney Road, Camberwell Junction) originate from the era of rail corridor and tram network development described above. These centres embody many characteristics now deemed to be desirable in the design of future activity centres (see **chapter 5**). Virtually every household in the inner and some middle (then outer) suburban areas lived within easy walking distance of the shops and the tram or train. Most services were concentrated in centres or along strips, making access in a single walking trip easy. The centres were conjoined with the residential areas they served. Many of the most sought-after residential locations were along the main roads extending out from the strip centres (eg Glenferrie Road, Hawthorn; St Kilda Road), occupying larger allotments since transformed, in many cases, into flats or offices.

Beyond the inner area, where activity centres grew along the radial rail lines, the layout of centre was the same - linear, compact and focused on the railway station. The adjoining residential suburbs, since the era of the motor car, became lower in density and dependent on local bus routes for public transport access between home and shops or station (eg Glenroy, Ringwood). Eventually, pressure grew to locate new centres of activity away from fixed rail routes, at locations such as Chadstone, Southland and Highpoint. These developed as stand-alone, mall-based centres, specialising in shopping initially, but increasingly diverse in activity since. Problematically, they were designed primarily to service car drivers. The shortcomings and attributes of these centres are discussed in chapter 5.

Principles for Activity Centres

Activity centres should be reinforced as the local urban focus and identity, linked to the neighbourhood and providing a public transport hub. Chapter 5 contains more detailed Principles.

SUBURBS AS 'VILLAGES'

Melbourne is famously supposed to have been founded as 'the site for a village'. Many people regard the metropolis today as a collection of villages, or at least a collection of communities with a strong sense of local identity and belonging. Advocates of planning for self-contained communities would encourage these tendencies. Some of the attraction of the planning concept of 'urban villages' includes associations of this type. Eastwood reinforces this view and places it in a historical context (p49):

Most suburbs were separated from each other by large tracts of rural or undeveloped land and there was a great deal of open land within the suburbs too during the 1860s and 1870s. They had a rural feel to them, since people were able to keep cows and pigs and goats on the vacant sections. They were face-to-face communities in which people knew each other personally or by reputation, and they were walking communities with wide footpaths and narrow carriage-ways and a pub on every other corner so that no-one had too far to walk. These features are still quite apparent in these suburbs today.

Is Melbourne a collection of villages? Many people like to think of their suburb as a village. Sense of place and neighbourhood character are concepts that encourage us to emphasise the distinctiveness of particular localities. Our addresses only include the suburb name, not Melbourne. We like to see our local activity centre as a focus of the neighbourhood. We want our suburb to be different and distinctive, to have its own special character. We want the streets to be walkable. We want attractive local open space.

If more services could be concentrated in local activity centres, the need to travel outside our local community might be reduced, with the benefit of reduced car use. The growing trend to work from home supports this in some ways.

Beyond these statements there is difficult and controversial territory. Our society is very mobile, and our aspirations for mobility seem to continue to grow. For example, our friendship networks are determined by a multitude of factors, only one of which is proximity within the street or neighbourhood. Another example is pubs. There are still corner pubs, although they are fewer in number. But pubs have specialised. A decision to visit a particular pub is determined by a multitude of factors, including which pub 'theme' you want to experience (Irish, gambling, eating etc). Even in the post-random breath test era, people often drive across miles of suburb to get the right experience. We no longer automatically walk to 'the local'.

Perhaps this is a perceptual issue. We like to think of our suburbs as villages, we want our suburb to have a distinct character, and we want to have local services accessible on foot. We may support policies that improve these things. But in reality we will often behave in ways far removed from the reality of traditional village life.

Implications

Policies like enhancing neighbourhood character and consolidating services into activity centres may help to reinforce perceptions that the Melbourne metropolis is a collection of villages, and may help to reduce the need to travel. They may assist in creating more favourable conditions for positive community interaction. They may ultimately assist with encouraging community interaction and development. But they will not determine that these changes will occur.

MIDDLE AND OUTER SUBURBS

Melbourne's middle and outer suburbs have produced a living environment valued highly by their residents:

One of the greatest legacies of the Federation period which was enthusiastically embraced in the Post WW2 years was not to do with grand public buildings or planning but with the consolidation of a domestic, residential ideal: the development of suburbs of detached houses in generous gardens. While a form of suburbanisation had begun in Melbourne within fifteen few years of the settlement's establishment and had been boosted by the post-gold rush boom, the tracts of bungalows built in the 1920s and 1930s in what are now thought of as the middle suburbs area became a distinctive element of Melbourne's character and heritage. It is arguable - and certainly many of the public responses to Metropolitan Strategy consultation make this point - that Melbourne's relatively low density suburbs of houses in garden settings are its most distinctive and valuable asset. The garden city ideal perhaps reached its zenith with the spread of the city in the 1970s into areas on the environmentally -sensitive fringe. Suburbs such as Eltham and Warrandyte are symptomatic of attempts to integrate suburban residential development with natural environments, perhaps representing the pinnacle of the garden suburb ideal that has been so characteristic of the attitudes of Melbourne suburbanites. (Heritage and the Metropolitan Strategy: Technical Report 10, p13)

The garden suburbs of Melbourne (and also of the other towns and cities in the region) are clearly an essential component of our city's 'livability'. **Chapter 6** describes the character attributes of these areas and suggests principles to guide future development.

However, many suburban areas have shortcomings from the perspective of sustainable urban form. There is debate about the sustainability of typical low density suburbs built up to about the late 1960s. Some argue that they are too low in density to allow viable public transport at a standard that might encourage a worthwhile shift away from car use. Others argue the contrary. There is more acceptance that the more recently developed suburbs, based on disconnected, curvilinear street patterns with courts or cul-de-sacs, discourage walking and make efficient bus routeing impossible. In seeking to create more sustainable urban environments, government policy will need to address how these deficiencies over the long term.

Principles

Principles for guiding development within established middle and outer suburbs are contained in **chapter 6** ('Garden Suburban', 'Garden Court' and 'Bush Suburban'). Principles for the development of new suburbs are proposed in **chapter 8**.

'GREEN WEDGES'

'Green wedges' means the wedge shaped fingers of non-urban land that penetrate the metropolitan area between some of the urban corridors. The system of green wedges has been an integral part of the strategic plan for Metropolitan Melbourne for some years. Functionally, they serve a useful purpose, providing space for low intensity or land hungry uses like agriculture, golf courses, extractive industries and airfields.

They are also important because of their landscape quality. Many Melburnians value them because of their landscape and the relief they provide from the urban environment. These wedges are often privately owned making their retention as a landscape asset more difficult. They are mostly open or rural in appearance, at least when viewed from above. However often the landscape quality of the wedges has been diminished when viewed from the roads passing through, in contrast to the aerial view which may still appear green. Development along the roads, with its fences and signs and yards, tends to obscure the 'green' qualities of many wedges.

Principles to Guide Development in Green Wedges

Enhance the rural landscape character of the green wedges, especially when experienced from transport corridors, as well as their recreational value, by adopting the following principles:

> Site structures in a landscape setting which complements the landscape character of the green wedge. This means that frontage and rear setbacks should be adequate to achieve this landscape setting.
> Use transparent low transparent fences and avoid high security fencing on the frontage boundary.
> Ensure that site have a low site coverage by buildings to maintain the open landscape feel
> Protect key view lines to landscape features and other long vistas
> Provide generous landscape space within the road reserve with planting appropriate to the landscape character of the wedge.
> Use planting to screen buildings and other structures.
> Restrict the use of signage particularly advertising signage.
> Design buildings in a low key way with minimal building bulk or massing
> Use topography to hide buildings and other forms of development.
> Provide landscape buffers to major uses such as quarries or airports

OPEN SPACE CORRIDORS

Metropolitan Melbourne is laced with a system of green open space corridors mainly based on the creek and river waterway system and publicly owned. Many of these creeks radiate out through the suburbs from the Yarra River valley. This attribute makes them ideal as walking and cycling corridors. In some cases these corridors run (or could potentially run) from the heart of the metropolis to the surrounding non-urban landscape. For example, it is possible to cycle most of the way from the CBD to the Dandenongs (east), to Brimbank Park (north west) and to Greenvale (north) on paths that follow creeks. Another creek-based path system connects the bay at Carrum with the Dandenongs.

This potential of the open space corridors was recognised briefly in a government program called 'Bay to the Ranges' in the early 1990s. This program began to delineate a complete network of open space corridors that linked many completely urban parts of Melbourne with the wide open spaces at the edge of the metropolis. In a large, sprawling city like Melbourne, this is an attractive structuring principle. Many people see the need to place limits on the continued expansion of the metropolitan area, partly because they fear being further cut off from the countryside. Continuous green corridors provide a way of ameliorating this deficiency. Furthermore, this approach to open space provision compliments both the 'growth corridor' and 'green wedge' policies that have shaped Melbourne for many years.

The landscape qualities of these open space corridors need to be protected and enhanced. Because many of them are narrow and most are in creek valleys, there is an opportunity to create a wholly naturalistic landscape environment. It is possible to walk or cycle along many creek paths ignorant of the presence of urban development just over the skyline. Equally, there are many locations where development sited on the skyline has diminished or destroyed this quality.

The landscape quality of these corridors is also valued particularly where the road network crosses these corridors. In some cases the landscape character has become dominated by signage and inappropriately sited structures.

Principles for Landscape Enhancement in Open Space Corridors

Open space links are more than functional trails and recreational links. They provide a key landscape framework for metropolitan Melbourne. These principles show ways to expose and reinforce this landscape structure:

> Preserve natural skylines form development when viewed from within the open space corridor.
> Design the landscape where roads cross the creek or open space corridor as a natural landscape rather than structured sporting and other facilities
> Locate building and other structures away from these road crossings
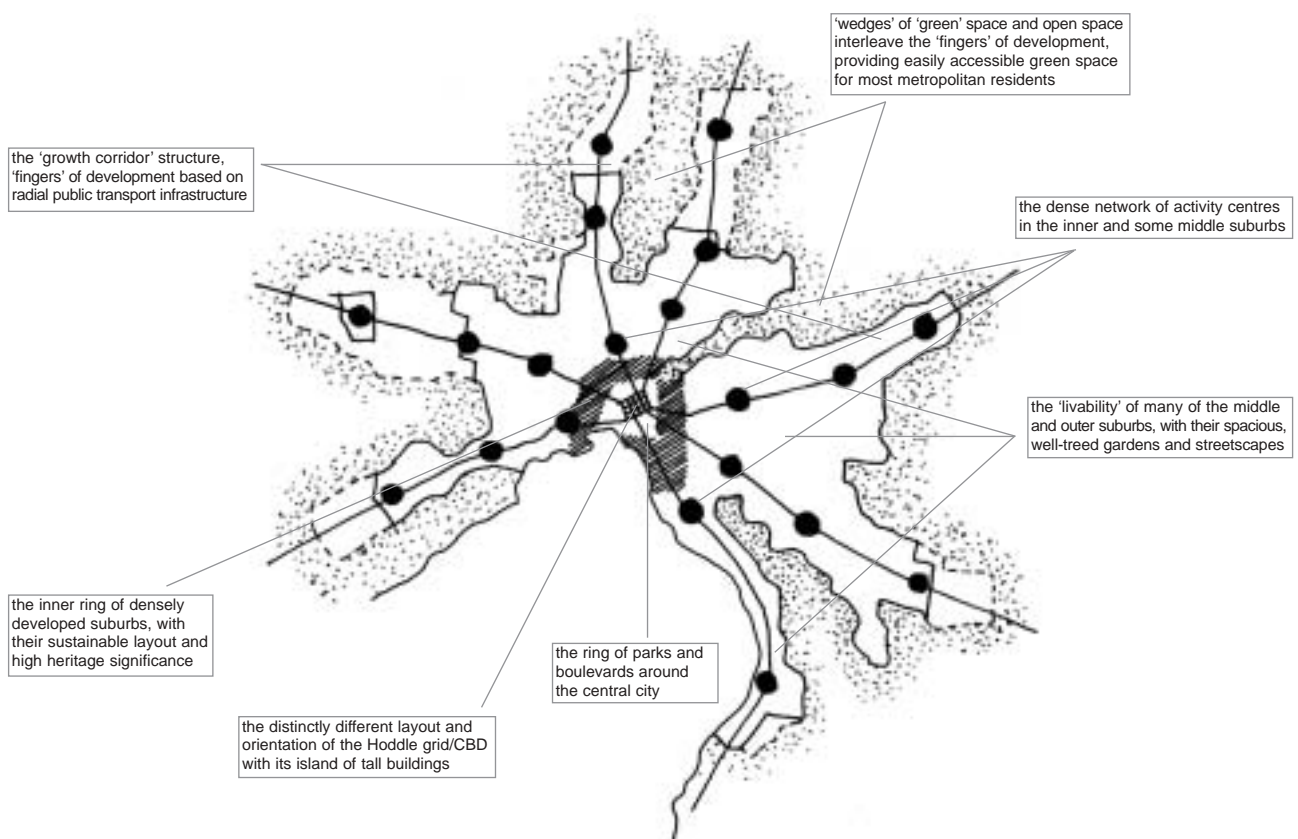> Use large scale trees to delineate the open space corridor from a distance.

CONCLUSIONS

Future consolidation and enlargement of the metropolitan urban structure should build on the strengths of the present structure, and attempt to deal with any weaknesses. Some of the strengths are:

> The distinctly different layout and orientation of the Hoddle grid/CBD and its expression in the consistent public space treatments and, vertically, with the island of tall buildings, visible from many parts of the region
> The ring of parks and boulevards around the central city, and the views of the CBD towers from particular vantage points in this ring (eg from Bolte Bridge)
> The inner ring of densely developed suburbs, notable for their strong urban characteristics, high quality living environment, sustainable layout and heritage significance
> The 'growth corridor' structure, sending 'fingers' of development out from the inner and middle suburban 'hand', based on radial public transport infrastructure and therefore offering continuing potential for sustainable development
> The 'wedges' of 'green' space and open space that interleave the 'fingers' of urban development, providing easily accessible green space for most metropolitan residents
> The network of activity centres, dense and easily accessible by non-car travellers in the inner and many middle suburbs
> The 'livability' of many of the middle and outer suburbs, with their spacious, well treed gardens and streetscapes, and the unusual 'bush' character of some foothills and bayside suburbs

Some of these conclusions are summarised in Figure 4.1.

4.1 Strengths of the Current Metropolitan Urban Structure

'wedges' of 'green' space and open space interleave the 'fingers' of development, providing easily accessible green space for most metropolitan residents

the 'growth corridor' structure, 'fingers' of development based on radial public transport infrastructure

the dense network of activity centres in the inner and some middle suburbs

the 'livability' of many of the middle and outer suburbs, with their spacious, well-treed gardens and streetscapes

the inner ring of densely developed suburbs, with their sustainable layout and high heritage significance

the ring of parks and boulevards around the central city

the distinctly different layout and orientation of the Hoddle grid/CBD with its island of tall buildings

In relation to potential weaknesses, more can be done to:

> Exploit the diverse waterfront opportunities, which include the shores of Port Phillip Bay, docklands and the numerous creek corridors that interlace the metropolitan area
> Protect, enhance and differentiate the character of individual suburbs
> Improve the walkability of many outer suburbs based on the court/cul-de-sac street pattern
> Improve the sense of place, walkability, safety and non-car access to, activity centres based on stand alone, internalised developments
> Consolidate residential development in and around activity centres and on 'brownfield' sites
> Make the green wedges 'look' green
> Provide a more exclusively 'natural' environment in the open space corridors, free of urban intrusions
> Extend the open space corridor system to all parts of the metropolis, including alongside newly developing growth corridors, and complete remaining gaps in the system

The following chapters describe:

> Principles for the future design of activity centres (**chapter 5**)
> Planning of residential areas, and the types of residential character that exist (**chapter 6**)
> Transport corridors (**chapter 7**)
> Development of new communities (**chapter 8**)

References

Eastwood, J., 1983, Melbourne: *The Growth of a Metropolis*, Thomas Nelson Australia, Melbourne, pp.5,13-14,31,55-57,59,66.

Lewis, M., 1995, *Melbourne: The City's History and Development*, The City of Melbourne, Melbourne, pp.8-9,12-13,27.

05

ACTIVITY CENTRES

WHY ARE ACTIVITY CENTRES IMPORTANT?

Activity centres are (or should be) the focal points of the local community, and they are essential to local identity. They should be the places in which local services are concentrated. Their design and appearance should express public and civic values. Their proper planning is the key to reducing car-dependence in Melbourne and other urban centres.
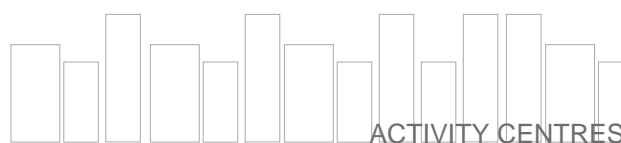
WHAT SHOULD THE METROPOLITAN STRATEGY SAY?

The Metropolitan Strategy should include the following succinct principles that should apply to the design of every Activity Centre:

> Safe (perceived safety, actual safety)
> Compact/walkable
> Integrate activities into a single, connected place entity
> Multi-function
> Open, accessible and welcoming to all
> Integrate with surrounding area
> Layout centred on public transport

WHAT SHOULD HAPPEN NEXT?

1 Introduce a major program of activity centre planning and development

2 An Advisory Note should be prepared on the future of activity centres, including design and development principles developed from those in this chapter, to assist Councils

3 The importance of activity centres in implementing the policy thrusts of the Metropolitan Strategy, and the importance of achieving a sound design approach, should be highlighted in the SPPF

OVERVIEW

One aim of the Metropolitan Strategy should be to consolidate development within existing urban areas that are well served by public transport, and thereby to encourage a shift from car-based to public transport-based travel. The central city of Melbourne, located at the 'hub' of the radial suburban rail network should continue to develop and grow as the state's major concentration of urban activity. Further development of major activity centres that are located at the intersection of numerous public transport routes should be encouraged, as a means of reducing reliance on car travel. Other activity should be concentrated as far as possible in neighbourhood centres accessible by train, tram or bus, and by walking and cycling.

The Strategy should also emphasise that most activity centres have the capability to accommodate medium or high density residential development. A policy of encouraging more residential development in activity centres will have the twin advantages of reducing pressure for redevelopment of existing residential areas, and locating more people nearer to shops, services and public transport.

Within this overall policy context, the practical question posed in this chapter is: How should activity centres be designed, in future, so that they accommodate more intense development, particularly higher density residential development, in a way that creates more attractive environments, and minimises any adverse impacts?

There are numerous other issues to consider, as the remainder of the chapter will make clear. The answers to these questions will vary from centre to centre, depending on their physical characteristics and other matters. This chapter begins the process of considering these important differences by describing a number of types of activity centre, from a physical layout perspective.

Local Councils, developers and citizens will need a clear picture of the way the government wants activity centres to develop, and most importantly, how they might look 'on the ground' once they embody these features. An attempt is made to open discussion on this in the illustration of a 'before and after' activity centre, and in the Case Studies at the end of this chapter.

Perceived Safety

Perceived safety (of people walking the streets) is an important aspect of activity centre sustainability. The principles suggested in this chapter aim to produce attractive, convenient and safe walking environments through means such as creating active frontages,

passive surveillance etc.

Activity Centres and Cultural Identity

Activity centres are important expressions of local cultural identity. The name of a local centre is often the name used by residents to identify their locality. The image of an activity centre is often linked in people's minds with the image of a suburb as a whole. The Sense of Place principles suggested in **Chapter 1** are particularly relevant to the design of activity centres.

ACTIVITY CENTRES AND SUSTAINABLE URBAN FORM

Many planners and designers argue that internalised, stand-alone, mall-based developments are inconsistent with a sustainable urban form, and that henceforth, activity centres should be developed to be 'street-based'. This argument is worth examining with some rigour, as there are important points to be made on both sides. Two useful questions we could ask are: What precisely is wrong with stand-alone, mall-based centres? What are the characteristics of a street based centre that are worth incorporating into future activity centre developments?

What is Wrong With Stand-Alone, Mall-Based Centres?

In answer to the first question, the simple fact of enclosure in a mall is not necessarily a negative. The Block Arcade in central Melbourne is just one example of an enclosed (albeit small) 'mall development' that is sited in a way that conforms with sustainability criteria. Mall developments tend to be extremely carefully designed to be compact and walkable once you are inside them. However, unlike Block Arcade, they are often not dovetailed into an existing street-based urban form in a way that supports the development of an integrated centre. More commonly they stand in a large car park, and present blank walls to the outside.

'Connection' - the Essence of the Challenge

It is the disconnection of many stand-alone, mall-based from their surroundings that is seen as the main problem with them. A development sited in the middle of a large car park, with poor public transport services and inconveniently located bus stops, is designed primarily to serve car users. Activity centres should be located and laid out to make public transport, walking or cycling the easiest, most convenient modes of access.

Many mall-based centres are located within existing street-based centres (eg Camberwell Junction, and Barkly Square, Brunswick). The extent to which they integrate with and support the other activities in the centre varies. The Case Studies later in this chapter include some suggestions on this.

Design of Multiple Use Activity Centres

To reduce the need to travel, it helps to concentrate most services into consolidated centres of activity, so that only one trip is needed to fulfil multiple trip purposes. Community services, municipal service centres, parks and other 'public' facilities are increasingly being incorporated into private mall developments.

Some very large, exclusively car-based centres seem to have all the ingredients of a successful centre, in terms of activity mix. The complex of activities at Stud Road on the Burwood Highway in Knox is a good example. It includes shops, a bus station, car parking, weather protection, a good range of shops, civic centre next door, restaurants, some offices, an education institute, factories and offices.

A major shortcoming of such centres is the poor quality of public and pedestrian environment between each parcel of development. Each parcel is inwardly focussed, which means the building presents blank walls to the outside, and sits in a sea of parking (and possibly some landscaping). There is an absence of safe, direct and convenient foot access between each parcel, or even to adjoining residential areas. Even the street systems fail to connect, so that it is necessary to drive from one activity to another via the main highway. Centres such as these may be successful as a collection of individual trading entities, but they fail to contribute to a sustainable urban form. We must in future avoid the 'gated community' approach to activity centre design. Development of activity centres as separate, internally focussed 'islands' of activity is bad planning.

What is Right about Street-Based Centres?

What are the characteristics of a street based centre that are worth incorporating into future activity centre developments? Integration of activity into a single place entity, in a way that connects physically with the local community, should be the main attribute. Street-based centres, being collections of (mainly) private land alongside a public thoroughfare, tend by their nature to be multi-functional. As originally developed, many included residential accommodation 'above the shop', plus most local services, and often a civic presence and public space. Until recent decades it was normal for all but the smallest centres to be located at a railway station, on a tram route, or at least on a significant bus route.

An important difference between mall centres and street-based centres is ownership. Single ownership mall centres are carefully designed and managed to provide the most efficient (walking) shopping environment. The contra is that they are private spaces with controlled access - the retail equivalent of a 'gated community'. Street-based centres are part of the public domain and physical fabric of a community. Does this matter?

The Case for Street-Based Centres

How should different activities be integrated into a coherent, compact, walkable centre? Most urban designers would argue that the street should be the structuring principle that fulfils this function. Streets are multi-functional public spaces that connect most activity within our towns and cities. In adding to the existing urban fabric, which is street based, the obvious starting point should be an extension of the street system. People gain access to the centre along streets, and walk around it along streets and lanes. Activity centre design that is based on the street system may make it easier to integrate with the local community's sense of place. Local street pattern is often a significant component of people's sense of place. Activity fronting streets, and the traffic along the roadway, tends to make sidewalk footpaths feel safer than segregated pedestrian malls, particularly out of hours.

Problems arise in managing these multi-functional environments (eg traffic safety and noise, disabled access), but usually these problems are considered by designers to be outweighed by the benefits of the traditional street environment, and capable of amelioration. There is debate over this last point. It will be more helpful for this report to elucidate the principles that activity centres should aim to achieve, rather than taking a dogmatic stance on this issue. Having said that, it would seem that street-based activity centre designs (with or without enclosed mall components) are most likely to be able to fulfil the principles set out below.

Case Studies

Six Case Studies have been prepared to illustrate the application of some of these principles. These appear at the end of this chapter, and cover the following topics:

1. Car Parks and Residential Interface
2. Development Over Car Parks
3. Integration of Higher Density Residential
4. Large Store Integration
5. Development over Railways
6. Development of Railway Corridors
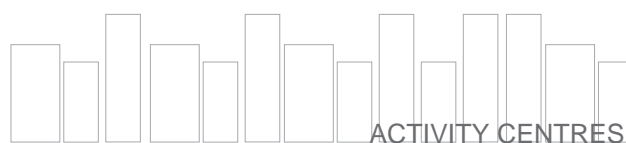
ACTIVITY CENTRE PRINCIPLES

In summary, therefore, we should aim to design activity centres according to the following principles:

> Safe (perceived safety, actual safety)
> Compact/walkable
> Integrate activities into a single, connected place entity
> Multi-function
> Open, accessible and welcoming to all
> Integrate with surrounding area
> Layout centred on public transport

These principles have been written deliberately to be equally applicable to the design of any type of activity centre, whether street- or mall-based. However, there are differences in the way they might be applied in a street-based activity centre (existing or proposed) as compared to 'retro-fitting' an internalised, car-based mall development, as discussed below.

Applying the Principles to Street-Based Activity Centres

In designing a new street-based activity centre, or upgrading an existing street-based centre to embody the consolidation principles described above, the following aims should be considered:

> Maintain the continuity of built form to the street
> Ensure any future internalised mall form developments observe the principles and contribute to the sustainability of the centre as a whole (see **Case Study 4**)
> Retain and enhance the continuity of the shopping and other uses directly linked to the surrounding residential areas (see **Case Study 1**)
> Avoid extensive ground level car parks separating the centre from surrounding uses (see **Case Study 2**)
> Retain/enhance the focus on public transport (see **Case Study 5**)
> Encourage a vertical mix of uses, shop top housing (see Case **Study 3**) or offices over shops, bearing in mind accessibility requirements of mobility impaired people
> Respect the character and heritage of the centre

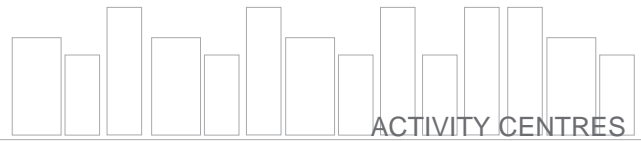## Applying the Principles to Existing Stand Alone, Car-Based Mall Centres

In upgrading or 'retro-fitting' an internalised, car-based mall development, to embody the consolidation principles described above, the following aims should be considered:

> Redesign centres to focus on transit stops or interchange
> Redesign these centres to address the surrounding streets by bringing development out to the streets as far as is practical (one type of solution for integrating large stores is shown in **Case Study 4**)
> Reconnect surrounding residential areas by compacting car parking areas and introducing new uses such as higher density housing or other central activities uses (see **Case Studies 1, 2 and 3**)
> Refocus development to address the public domain of new connective streets with traditional footpaths
> Introduce a full range of central area uses and activities which are both intermixed and well connected
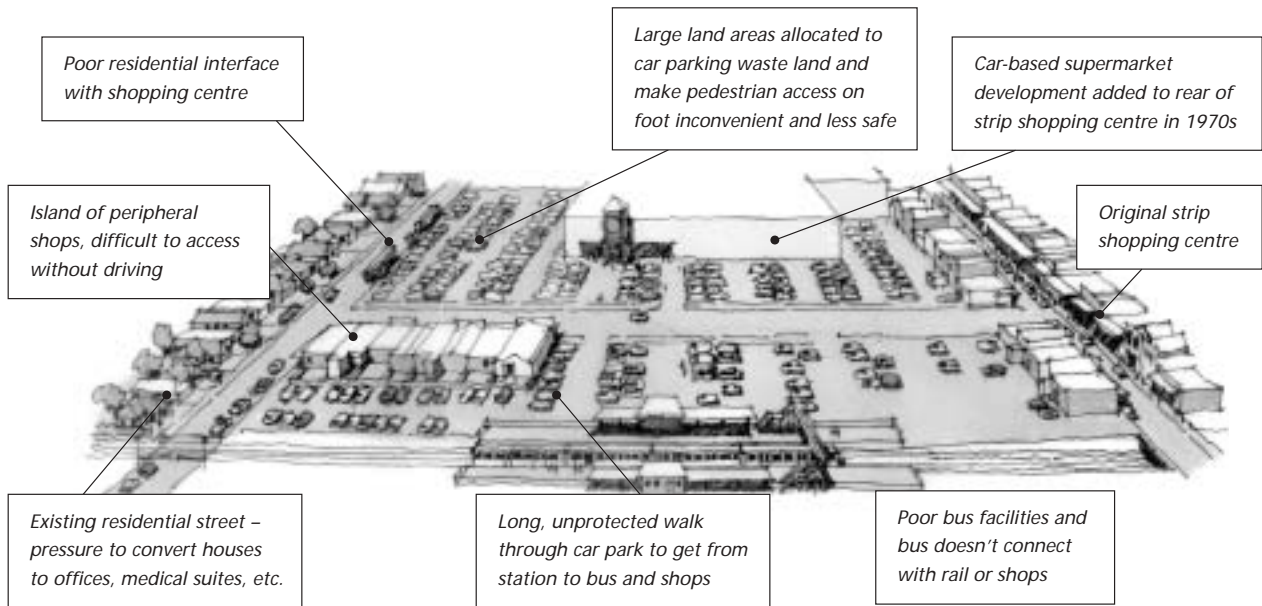
What Will This Look Like 'On the Ground'?

The actual form of activity centres in the future will of course vary according to local circumstances. Every activity centre has its own characteristics, and part of the aim of an urban design approach is to reveal and highlight these attributes. In the pages that follow, the types of activity centre are elaborated into four basic configurations. The types of new built form that are appropriate will vary between different types and configurations of centre.
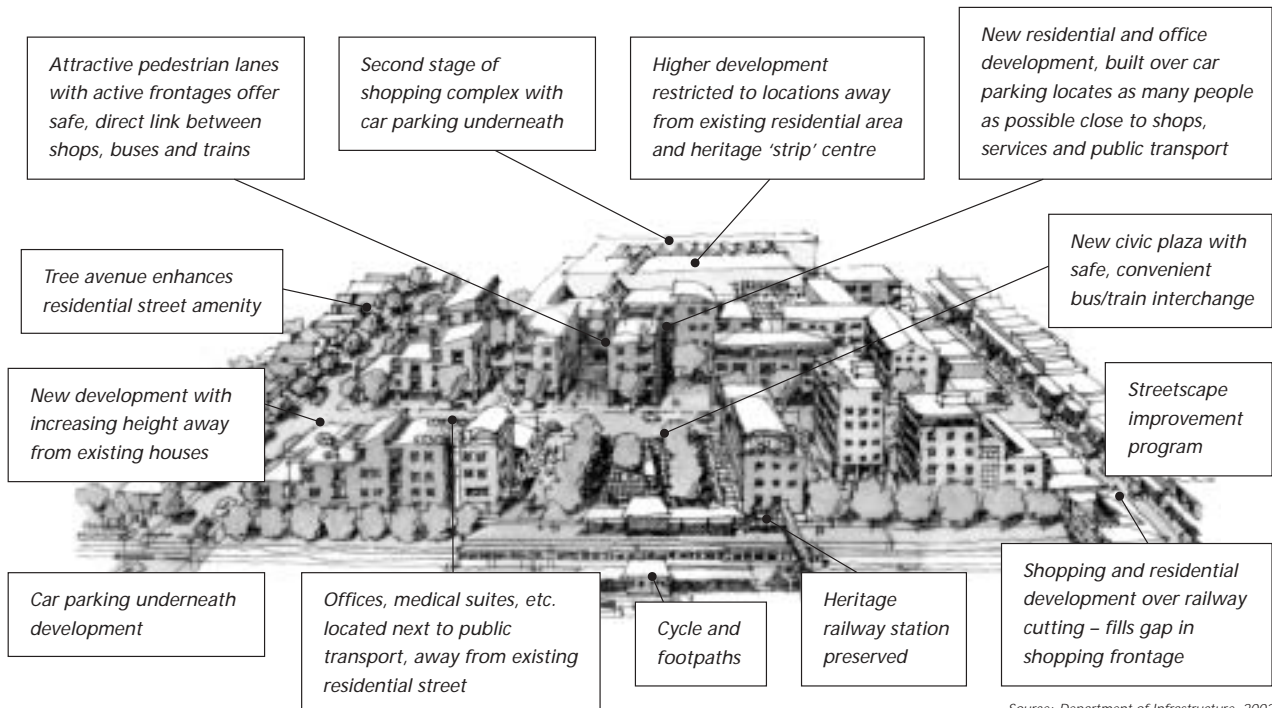
On the next page is an illustration of the kind of 'before' and 'after' scenario that could occur in a typical centre.

Typical Activity Centre Today

Poor residential interface with shopping centre

Large land areas allocated to car parking waste land and make pedestrian access on foot inconvenient and less safe

Car-based supermarket development added to rear of strip shopping centre in 1970s

Island of peripheral shops, difficult to access without driving

Original strip shopping centre

Existing residential street – pressure to convert houses to offices, medical suites, etc.

Long, unprotected walk through car park to get from station to bus and shops

Poor bus facilities and bus doesn't connect with rail or shops

The Same Activity Centre as it Could Be

Attractive pedestrian lanes with active frontages offer safe, direct link between shops, buses and trains

Second stage of shopping complex with car parking underneath

Higher development restricted to locations away from existing residential area and heritage 'strip' centre

New residential and office development, built over car parking locates as many people as possible close to shops, services and public transport

Tree avenue enhances residential street amenity

New civic plaza with safe, convenient bus/train interchange

New development with increasing height away from existing houses

Streetscape improvement program

Car parking underneath development

Offices, medical suites, etc. located next to public transport, away from existing residential street

Cycle and footpaths

Heritage railway station preserved

Shopping and residential development over railway cutting – fills gap in shopping frontage

Source: Department of Infrastructure, 2002

ACTIVITY CENTRE TYPES

As discussed, there are differences in the way the principles might be applied in a street-based activity centre (existing or proposed) as compared to 'retro-fitting' an internalised, car-based mall development. In fact there are numerous variations on each of these typological themes, and every activity centre has unique attributes, arising from its location and layout, that need to be responded to with specific proposals.

The way these are applied varies between the types of centre we have defined. For the purposes of this study, the following Activity Centre types have been identified in the Central Region of Victoria:

> Strip Centres
> Internalised, Car-Based Mall Developments
> Strip+Mall Hybrid Centres
> Multiple Strip Centres
> Local Centres

Street-Based Activity Centres

Examples: Camberwell Junction, Sydney Road, Pakington Street West Geelong, Glenhuntly Road (Elsternwick), Springvale Road (Springvale)

5.1

Single shopping street lined by shops built to the street frontage

> Often follow the tram routes
> Parking on street frontage
> Rear car parks often introduced from the 1950s on cause a duality as to the shop frontage
> Introduction of larger stores and supermarkets can be disruptive to urban form
> Many inner suburban examples now survive as part of 'café society'

Strip centres, such as Sydney Road, are usually medium-sized retail, commercial, civic and entertainment centres. They are generally places that foster a sense of community, and the mix of businesses ensures social and economic sustainability.

Internalised, Car-Based Mall Developments

Examples: Knox City, Highpoint, Southland

5.2

Shops located along internal mall with large anchor stores terminating each mall

> Mall surrounded by ground level car parks decked car parking introduced in more recent developments
> Detached from the surrounding roads, residential areas and other uses.
> Public domain has been privatised.
> Does not accommodate a mix of uses as found in traditional town centres.

Improvements in access through increases in car use and development in the outer fringes of Melbourne, have encouraged the development of large stand mall centres. Highpoint is a good example of a stand alone mall centre. It is a large, enclosed shopping and entertainment centre with numerous opportunities for social interaction. Physically, stand-alone malls generally do not fit in with the structural character of their surrounding areas and do not encourage access on foot or by public transport. However, the ability to find many products and services in one place, may still reduce the need for extensive car travel to multiple dispersed shops. A low level of vacancies and high trading levels ensure strong economic performance.

Strip + Mall Hybrid Centres

Examples: Barkly Square (Brunswick), Moonee Ponds, Glen Waverley, Box Hill, Geelong city centre

Traditional shopping centres which have had modern mall form development added to the original urban form

> Traditional strip centres usually located along more than one street
> Mall form developments have taken over one or more traditional blocks, often reducing the viability of the remaining centre.
> Loss of active public streets

An example of this activity centre is Box Hill. Box Hill includes stand alone centres such as Whitehorse Plaza, as well as linear shopping strips along main roads, such as Whitehorse Road. These areas contain a reasonable mix of activities and good economic performance. Usually well-serviced by public transport, these areas are accessible for most members of the community. Some areas may decline over time as other areas become more popular or if large stand-alone malls provide competition.

Multiple Strip Centres

Examples: Footscray, Ballarat. Traralgon, Shepparton

Traditional shopping strips which extend over one or more street blocks

> Main large stores relate to the street rather than an internal mall
> Car parks located within the block. Sometimes creates a duality of frontage.
> Some parking still located on streets

Footscray has multiple shopping strips such as those along Nicholson and Barkly Streets, making it a multiple strip centre. Like the singular strip centre, it contains a good mix of different activities.
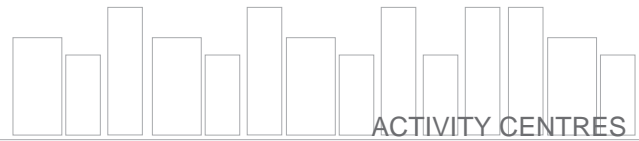
Local Centres

Examples: Centre Road East Bentleigh, Gammon Street, Seddon. The function of many of these centres is being taken over by Seven-11s and petrol/food Marts.

Local centres are smaller centres with a more confined catchment. Apart from their size and the more limited range of facilities, they should be located and have similar layout and design principles applied as the larger centres. For example, the public transport orientation may simply take the form of a bus stop.

5.3

CASE STUDIES

Six Case Studies have been prepared to illustrate the application of some of these principles. These appear in the following pages, and cover the following topics:

1. Car Parks and Residential Interface
2. Development Over Car Parks
3. Integration of Higher Density Residential
4. Large Store Integration
5. Development over Railways
6. Development of Railway Corridors

The following chapters describe:

> Planning of residential areas, and the types of residential character that exist (**chapter 6**)
> Transport corridors (**chapter 7**)
> Development of new communities (**chapter 8**)

CASE STUDY 1 - **Car Parks and Residential Interface**

ISSUE

The interface between residential areas and their activity centres is in most cases not planned. It is usually an incremental process of demolition and blight, conversion of residential blocks to ground lot carparks and eventual redevelopment. The result of this process is a 'ragged edge' condition that is both unsightly and in many cases unsafe, resulting in the reduction of residential amenity and property prices.

EXAMPLE SITE

BEFORE

AFTER

OPPORTUNITY

1

The opportunity exists through better planning controls and increased development potential to encourage these sites to progress in a more ordered fashion. Depending on the nature and prosperity of the activity centre this will occur at a number of levels. The options are as follows :

1. If interface sites are to be used for ground level carparking in an interim capacity they need to be landscaped in a way that provides an area of strong visual amenity. Tree plantings need to present a strong visual connection between the residential area and its activity centre.

2. In preference the street edge should remain as a built edge with carparking taking place within the site and therefore causing less visual disruption. This provides not only the opportunity for a more active frontage improving safety and the feeling of continuity between residential areas and the activity centre but also provides a development opportunity within the centre.

OPTIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT

1. LANDSCAPED CAR PARK

2. BUILDINGS FRONT STREET/CAR PARKING BEHIND

IMPLEMENTATION

Local Government needs to take a stronger role in controlling the interface between activity centres and their residential surrounds. There should be commitment to the creation of an area of high amenity between the residents and the activity centre, and ad hoc demolition of properties should be avoided where possible. Increased amenity and safety will encourage greater walkability from the adjacent residential areas. Built solutions may be challenging to facilitate, but they may well provide a better long term rate base for the local municipality. A reduction in fees and charges may in many cases provide the economic viability to avoid bomb site interfaces.

CASE STUDY 2 - **Development Over Car Parks**

ISSUE

Ground level carparks within and adjacent to activity centres are a major contributor to a feeling of poor amenity and safety within activity centres. In many cases Councils have not realised the opportunity for redevelopment of these areas so as to better integrate the carparking within an overall redevelopment of the site.

residential   commercial

BEFORE

EXAMPLE
SITE

AFTER

OPPORTUNITY

2

The opportunity exists for Councils in closer partnership with private enterprise to look at the redevelopment of carparking areas within activity centres. Depending upon the location of the activity centre and the financial basis for the centre, the potential exists for carparks to be incorporated within mixed use developments. Development of residential adds to the safety and viability of Activity Centres. The options are as follows:

1. The carpark can be put underground creating a development site for additional retail and residential activities in a formula whereby a Council may remain the owner of the carpark, while the private developer is responsible for the commercial development above.

2. If the economics of the particular location do not allow this due to the high costs of underground parking, the potential exists for the redevelopment with carparking on a level above a ground floor retail level with residential over. In many cases this would prove to be more commercially viable but needs sensitive treatment in terms of shielding the carpark, particularly if it is to be naturally ventilated.

OPTIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT

1. BASEMENT CAR PARK
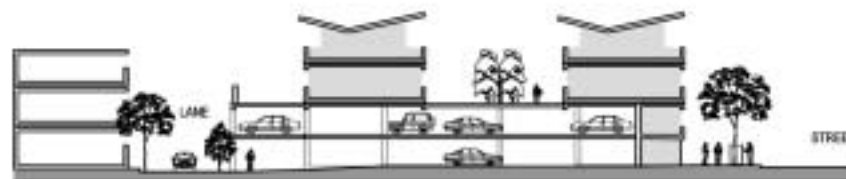
2. ABOVE GROUND CAR PARK - Residential above and around car park edge to activate and protect street facades.

IMPLEMENTATION

Local Government needs to take a more active role in determining the incorporation of carparking within the overall fabric of the activity centres. Constraints need to be put on the random spread of development to ensure the economic viability of Council owned land in and adjacent to activity centres. The integrated design of carparking into the activity centres is likely to create an atmosphere conducive to better long term development of the overall area.

CASE STUDY 3 - **Integration of High Density Residential**

ISSUE

With changing cultural patterns there is an increasing desire for people to live close to or within activity centres. These new residential developments tend to demand an increased density and height to provide quality aspects from the new residential apartments. This presents an issue of both scale within existing activity centre and increased traffic generation due to the increased population.


BEFORE

EXAMPLE SITE

OPPORTUNITY

The opportunities exist in activity centres to allow for increased heights, particularly when these can be used to assist in the integration of large retail stores and or car parking structures. This increased development predominantly should be used for residential which, given its usage patterns, can in many instances use shared parking facilities because of the time differences in demand. Increased population will create greater opportunities for a diverse retail base within the centre including such things as cafes and convenience stores. Densities improve safety and walkability. The residential layer can be used to assist interface issues between the existing residential uses.

OPTIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT

- EXISTING COMMERCIAL
- NEW HOUSING
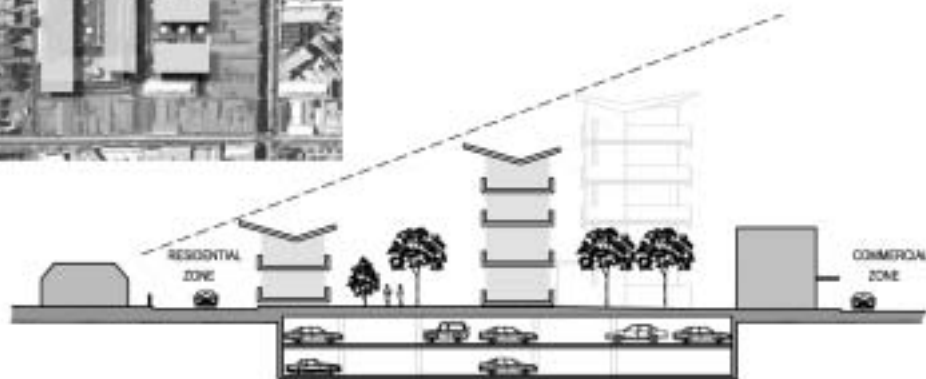
Two storey building on residential street hides higher development behind.

IMPLEMENTATION

Councils need to investigate the potential for increased heights within activity centres of up to 6-8 storeys to allow for residential. Shared parking can be promoted to take advantage of different usage patterns between residential and commercial retail. Incentives can be provided through a reduction or removal of fees and charges for mixed use residential development in turn for long term revenue increases that will arise from a stronger rate base. Councils should support the introduction of high density residential development by complementing these developments with improved streetscape and open space developments, to meet the need for quality public spaces within activity centres.

CASE STUDY 4 - **Large Store Integration**

ISSUE

The introduction of large stores within activity centres has in too many cases been handled in a way that produces a disruptive component within the built form of activity centres. Their large footplates, blank backs, sides and sheeted roofs create visual blight within the centre and the surrounding area. Their mere size in many centres is an issue and the need for large service vehicles leads to undesirable service docks. Poor integration can adversely affect the health of an activity centre.

BEFORE

EXAMPLE
SITE

AFTER

OPPORTUNITY

4

The construction of large stores can and should be undertaken in a way that better integrates them with the surrounding activity centres. The opportunities exist to surround large supermarket areas with speciality shops or smaller scale uses. There is also an opportunity to see their roofs as development sites with residential development over. In many cases the size of these supermarkets is in its own way disruptive. Given the shift in retailing to a more personal level, the question of size is open to debate and Councils need to play a greater role in determining best fit. The location and integration of these stores should also take into consideration the best location to reinforce the strengths of existing retail strips.

OPTIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT

EXISTING COMMERCIAL

NEW COMMERCIAL

NEW HOUSING

Integrated supermarket and residential development

IMPLEMENTATION

Councils need to establish the appropriate size of future large box retail to ensure the potential for better integrated activity centres. 'Stand alone' boxes should be discouraged. Councils need to encourage these boxes to be located away from the edges of activity centres so as to allow a better containment. The potential for greater height over to accommodate residential and other uses should be introduced. Active edges to all large retail stores should be a prerequisite. Wherever possible loading areas need to be contained within the building fabric so as not to severely disrupt street frontages.

CASE STUDY 5 - **Development over Railway Stations**

ISSUE

Railway Stations within activity centres have long been an issue in terms of dividing neighbourhoods. References to being on the "wrong side of the track" are indicative of this. They have also through their nature and associated activities such as carparking, tended to blight the adjacent residential and retail areas that adjoin them. The important role as a gateway is often degraded. The issues of modal interchange also need strengthening.

BEFORE

EXAMPLE SITE

AFTER

OPPORTUNITY

5

The opportunity exists to decrease the barrier like effect of railway stations and improve the linkages to the surrounding residential and retail areas. This will result in the creation of safer street and footpath areas and provide passive surveillance at stations. New development filling the gaps in and around and over railway stations will assist in producing continuous streetscapes within the local neighbourhood. In many cases, particularly where the station is in a cutting, new development will reduce the effects of noise and visual blight. The major opportunity however exists in the potential to increase densities in and around these important public transport gateways to metropolitan residential areas and to enhance the linkages between other modes of transport.

OPTIONS FOR
IMPROVEMENT

IMPEMENTATION

Rationalisation of railway stations to reduce track areas to a minimum will lead to greater availability of potential development land. Partnerships between State Government, Local Government and developers, to encourage the redevelopment of the station, should be put in place for all activity centres. Local Government needs to investigate increased heights and development potential, adjacent to and over railway stations, so as to make these areas more attractive for development. Heritage issues, particularly heritage stations, need to be protected. The fundamental premise of redevelopment of railway stations should be the creation of a continuous street with the adjacent neighbourhood, ie. roads and footpaths carried through and over railway stations wherever possible. Dead ends should be avoided. The development of these areas should be used to relieve pressure on existing residential areas.

CASE STUDY 6 - **Development of Railway Corridors**

ISSUE

Rail corridors generally present a difficulty within the metro fabric, in as much as they can be seen as dividing points and barriers between communities and in doing so they reduce the connectivity and linkages between different areas of the city. They also tend to lower land values along their routes.

BEFORE

EXAMPLE SITE

AFTER

OPPORTUNITY

6

Opportunities exist to rationalise the planning controls around rail corridors to allow for their better integration into the urban fabric. For example many of the rail corridors pass through cuttings that would allow for simple development over the railway line, so as to provide a continuous urban fabric between two areas and allow connections over the railway. Alternatively in developments adjacent to rail lines, buffer zones have been left either as a landscape element, or in many cases industrial uses have located along the corridors. Simple changes to the planning regulations would allow for more intensive development along these corridors, which would both provide better amenity to the adjacent areas but also increase densities in and around rail and road corridors.

OPTIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT
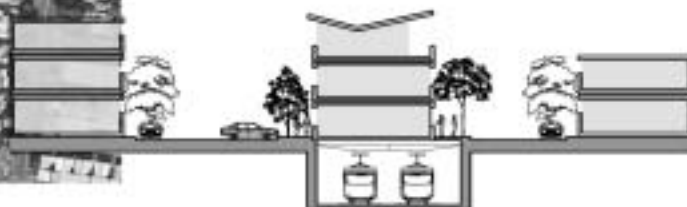
IMPLEMENTATION

Councils need to work with the State Government to investigate the potential for development around and over rail corridors passing through their municipalities. They may be able to provide incentives in terms of increased densities and development rights. Opportunities need to be taken to link the road and pedestrian network either side of a rail corridor so as to better integrate communities. Existing landscape buffers need to be developed as a positive landscape contribution to the area and not simply a no or low maintenance exclusion zone.

06

RESIDENTIAL AREAS AND NEIGHBOURHOOD CHARACTER

WHY ARE RESIDENTIAL AREAS AND NEIGHBOURHOOD CHARACTER IMPORTANT?

Residential areas need to continue to make a contribution to urban consolidation and sustainability policies, but in a more planned and measured way than hitherto. Despite the importance attached to liveability and neighbourhood character of the region's residential areas, they warrant greater attention in useful, policy specific ways in the Metropolitan Strategy or VPPs, within the framework established by ResCode.

WHAT SHOULD THE METROPOLITAN STRATEGY SAY?

The Metropolitan Strategy should make more specific reference to the role of existing residential areas in contributing to sustainability and consolidation objectives, adopting the approach suggested in on the next page. The importance of residential areas as quality living environments, and the vital importance of ResCode and the neighbourhood character issue, should be reflected in the Strategy by outlining the principles of development in the four neighbourhood character types described in this chapter.

WHAT SHOULD HAPPEN NEXT?

1   Councils should be encouraged to develop strategic frameworks and action programs for housing in local areas, to ensure that broader planning issues are considered alongside neighbourhood character, eg identifying 'brownfield' site development opportunities, improving sense of community and safety, and ameliorating shortcomings in sustainability and 'walkability' in many residential suburbs

2   The neighbourhood character principles should be developed into State policy, for inclusion in the State section of the VPPs.

3   An Advisory Note should be prepared to provide design guidance in relation to neighbourhood character types, based on the material in this chapter, to assist Councils

OVERVIEW

The 'liveability' of many of the central region's residential areas is supposedly a major economic strength. The introduction of ResCode in 2001 fulfilled a major State Government's election promise to make neighbourhood character the starting point for consideration of residential development applications. ResCode has provided the policy and control framework to enable Councils to protect and enhance neighbourhood character. The new General Practice Note 'Understanding Neighbourhood Character' explains the meaning of neighbourhood character and its components.

The aim of this chapter is to offer an answer to two questions: What other initiatives need to be taken to make our residential areas more liveable and sustainable? What are the types of neighbourhood character that can be found in the central region?

The Metropolitan Strategy can open the door to a more spatially based approach to urban consolidation. This chapter aims to establish neighbourhood character principles for the central region, after first placing neighbourhood character in the context of other planning and design initiatives needed in residential areas.

PLANNING OF EXISTING RESIDENTIAL AREAS

Urban consolidation, particularly of residential areas, has been official State Government policy for many years. The main thrust of this policy has been 'placeless', in the sense that policy has been statewide, with little provision made to accommodate different situations in different localities. This indiscriminate approach may have been a major factor behind the opposition to the Good Design Guide. The Local Variation provisions in the Good Design Guide were made little use of by Councils. ResCode, introduced in August 2001, is still a statewide policy, but it increases the range of mechanisms available for Councils to vary the statewide provisions.

It is commonly accepted that activity centres need local policies, and in some cases detailed planning strategies, tailored to specific local conditions. We suggest that the planning of residential areas also needs to be examined from a spatially specific perspective.

Many municipalities have already introduced planning policies specific to each residential neighbourhood as a result of undertaking neighbourhood character studies. These have become a successful way of injecting 'sense of place' into day-to-day statutory planning decisions. Their main limitation, so far, has been the absence of parallel and equally specific policy on housing, to ensure that broader planning issues are considered alongside neighbourhood character. Many residential suburbs include 'brownfield' site development opportunities that Councils should encourage for residential redevelopment. Furthermore, the Government has concerns about the sense of community and safety in residential communities, and their lack of sustainability and 'walkability' in many cases. Addressing these issues effectively will require specific local policies in many residential areas.

NEIGHBOURHOOD CHARACTER TYPES

Neighbourhood character is a fundamental of sense of place in residential communities. While many Councils have undertaken neighbourhood character studies, little or no attempt has been made to generalise the findings of these studies into a typology of neighbourhood character types. This section attempts to do this. For the purposes of this study, the following neighbourhood character types have been identified in the Central Region of Victoria:

6.1 Neighbourhood Character Types

☐	'Inner Urban'
▨	'Garden Suburban'
▨	'Garden Court'
■	'Bush Suburban'
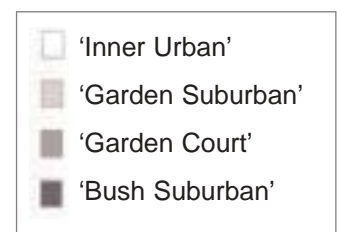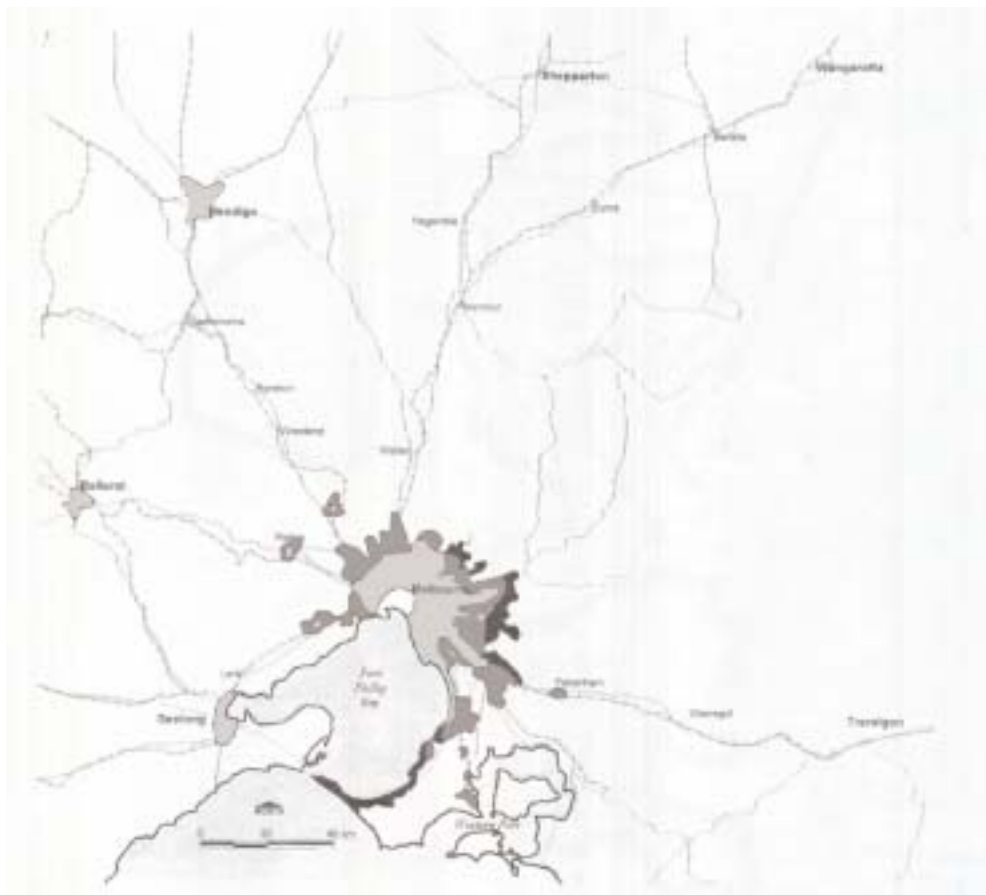
BUILT FORM / LANDSCAPE RELATIONSHIP	CHARACTER TYPE
Built form dominated residential areas	'Inner Urban'
Spacious residential areas in a garden setting (formal street pattern, generally modified grid)	'Garden Suburban'
Spacious residential areas in a garden setting (informal, generally curving street pattern with courts/cul-de-sacs)	'Garden Court'
Landscape dominated residential areas	'Bush Suburban'

These four categories have been defined because they illustrate the four main types of residential area that exist in the central region of Victoria, from an urban design perspective. The differentiation between these types is NOT based on architectural style or era of development. It IS founded on the layout and form of the areas, and the way that the built form interacts with and relates to the landscape. These factors should be the basis for the application of neighbourhood character policies. Neighbourhood character is NOT about the imposition of design styles. Rather it should be about recognising the distinctive characteristics of different urban forms, and their relationship to topography and vegetation. Getting this right is the best way of maintaining and enhancing the sense of place of the central region's residential areas.

An approximate delineation of these character types is shown in Figure 6.1. Robin Boyd's tongue-in-cheek but insightful sketches and descriptions of the main types of house design that have evolved since European settlement are included in Appendix 6.1. Private gardens play an important role in influencing the perception of neighbourhood character and Boyd's comments relating to Australian garden styles throughout the eras are included in Appendix 6.2. Local study may be required to form an accurate view about the neighbourhood character of each part of a municipality particularly if the aim is to prepare statements of preferred future character. However, even the most sophisticated neighbourhood character study will be less than useful if those applying it fail to appreciate the fundamentals of the four main character types described in this chapter.

Areas with New and Changing Character

Most neighbourhood character studies concentrate on describing and evaluating existing residential areas. Generally the tendency is to focus on strengthening those characteristics that are valued by local people, and to ameliorate those that are not.

Some areas are subject to redevelopment, or have aspects of their character that are a cause of strong concern by local people, warranting change to the physical fabric.

In both these instances, the appropriate planning strategy may well be to try to improve the character of the area by changing it. Achieving a measured and consistent change in the development character of an area requires a sound approach to planning. Definition of the new character will often require urban design skills, and the process of managing change may require a sophisticated program of community involvement.

Areas yet to be developed (generally 'greenfield' areas) should be allowed to create a new character, within broad parameters such as relating to the built character of adjoining areas and expressing the underlying landscape character. These parameters are discussed in Chapter 8.

NEIGHBOURHOOD CHARACTER PRINCIPLES

Principles for each of the four types of neighbourhood character are outlined on the following pages.

'INNER URBAN' NEIGHBOURHOOD CHARACTER TYPE

4.1

4.1a

BUILT FORM DOMINATED RESIDENTIAL AREAS
Examples: Melbourne's inner suburbs (eg Carlton, Fitzroy, Port Melbourne, Williamstown); the centres of Maldon and Clunes.

This intensive form of subdivision, much of it into small, narrow blocks, resulted in a built form dominated character. This type of character is widespread in Melbourne's inner suburbs, but unusual outside Melbourne, except in the centre of some older regional centres and country towns. As mentioned in Chapter 4, some of these areas were subject to a planned approach, with formal street layouts

and a more effective control of land release subdivision. Others grew more haphazardly, with streets of varying width, including many very narrow streets, often without connectivity, and no provision for parks and squares.

Our view of Melbourne's inner suburbs as living environments has been transformed in the last forty years. Originally the focus of slum clearance policies, they have since become desirable residential locations, valued for the urban lifestyle and heritage qualities. Urban designers see them as exemplars of a more sustainable urban form.

DESCRIPTION	MAIN CHARACTERISTICS	PRINCIPLES
Dense, low rise residential and mixed use areas serviced by strip centres	Highly urban character: buildings dominate the street scene	Continue to conserve the heritage areas
Largely intact Victorian colonial suburbs of high heritage value (probably world significance) associated with the rise of Marvellous Melbourne	Low rise scale, narrow fronted rhythm	Maintain and enhance the hard urban character, with its solid, fine-grain street scape 'walls', dense, connected street and laneway networks, minimal setbacks, and pedestrian-friendly environment
A walking, then tram-based city	Small front setbacks, small or zero side setbacks, create unbroken 'walls' to the street	Accommodate more intense development where these characteristics can be maintained, provided any shortfalls in the quality and quantity of public realm space are made good
Distinction between areas laid out by the Survey Department (eg Carlton), and areas without effective control of subdivision (eg Fitzroy)	Front property boundary always expressed by a fence	
In outer areas, land sometimes remained undeveloped for decades, leading to mixed eras of development (eg Northcote)	Possibility of siting new, more intense development so that it is 'hidden' from view	
	Fine-grain, connected street and lane way pattern, highly conducive to walking and cycling	
	Served by a relatively dense network of strip activity centres and public transport services	
	Many areas of mixed use	

'GARDEN SUBURBAN' NEIGHBOURHOOD CHARACTER TYPE

4.2

4.3

4.4

SPACIOUS RESIDENTIAL AREAS IN A GARDEN SETTING (FORMAL STREET PATTERN, GENERALLY MODIFIED GRID)
Examples: the Melbourne middle suburbs (eg Camberwell, Essendon, Sunshine); most residential areas in Regional Centres and Country Towns / Townships / Coastal Town

The middle suburbs of Melbourne are possibly what most people have in mind when they talk about Melbourne's comfortable 'liveability', and compare its suburbs favourably as living environments with the affordable equivalents in Sydney. The middle suburbs became the crucible of the protests relating to urban consolidation, the Good Design Guide and neighbourhood character in the 1990s. Outside Melbourne, most urban residential areas have the spacious 'garden suburban' character, because densities and site coverage tend to be lower than equivalent metropolitan areas.

Most garden suburban residential areas are laid out within a north-south, east-west grid of one chain (20m) main roads (more likely to be 30m in regional Victoria). Mostly the street pattern is grid-based or grid-adapted. The roads are tree-lined avenues, often with concrete kerbs and footpaths, and grassed nature strips. Some housing has low walls fronting formal, trimmed gardens that are open to the street, and houses are located within the lot, rather than extending to its boundaries. The atmosphere of a garden suburb is one of space and trees, though the separation of private and public land is clearly defined.

DESCRIPTION	MAIN CHARACTERISTICS	PRINCIPLES
Train and tram-based	Spacious feel - space around and between buildings, open rather than enclosed street space, large setbacks	Use a formal approach to street space design (eg regular avenues of trees, regular geometry of kerbing and traffic management devices)
Late-Victorian to 1960s/70s		
Grid-based street pattern	Green and leafy appearance in many areas	
Spacious streets and gardens	Low scale, dominant roof forms, strong horizontal emphasis	Retain the spacious, green and leafy character, including views of backdrop vegetation between and over buildings, generous front garden setbacks open to view from the street, and grassed nature strip with minimal interruption
Detached houses, double or triple fronted		
Footpaths and nature strips and tree avenues (often exotic)	Gaps between buildings	
Car storage usually off-street and behind the building line	Front property boundary usually defined by low, solid fence or moderate height 'transparent' fence (eg wire mesh)	
Tram and/or railway station-based retail strips		Maintain the horizontal emphasis of massing and form resulting from the dominance of the roof form

87

'GARDEN COURT' NEIGHBOURHOOD CHARACTER TYPE

4.5b

4.5a

4.5

SPACIOUS RESIDENTIAL AREAS IN A GARDEN SETTING (INFORMAL, GENERALLY CURVING STREET PATTERN WITH COURTS/CUL-DE-SACS)
Examples: Melbourne outer suburbs such as Chirnside Park, Wantirna, Carrum Downs; areas of Regional Centres and Country Towns/Townships/Coastal Towns developed since approximately the late 1970s.

From the 1960s to present time, garden court residential areas have emerged. They grew faster in the north-east, east and south-east than in the north, north-west and west Melbourne (McLoughlin:1992:4). These suburbs have grown on the fringes of Melbourne and other centres, where initially, infrastructure and services were inadequate.

The term Garden Court refers to the combination of a Garden Suburban type of development superimposed on a pattern of curvilinear streets with cul-de-sacs or courts. This layout was designed to accommodate full car-based access as safely as possible, by eliminating 'rat runs' and providing low speed, low volume traffic environments within the courts. A negative consequence of this type of layout has been the poor connectivity of the street system for bus routes and walking. These areas tend to be associated with car-based, stand alone retail centres. In seeking to create more sustainable urban environments, government policy will need to address these deficiencies over the long term.

The curvilinear street pattern results in the creation of informal street spaces which are often complimented by informal (often native) garden plantings. There is often only one footpath, sometimes none at all.

More recent trends in Garden Court areas have seen reduced setback and road width standards, coupled with substantially increasing site coverage. Many estates of the 1990s include large numbers of two storey houses with much reduced setbacks. These changes have reduced the 'garden' aspect of the character, increasing the sense that the street is lined by a solid 'wall' of buildings. Although street and garden trees will eventually mature and 'soften' these streetscapes, they will continue to have a more built-form dominated character.

DESCRIPTION	MAIN CHARACTERISTICS	PRINCIPLES
Car-based	Pre-1990s: spacious feel - space around and between buildings, open rather than enclosed street space, large setbacks	Use an informal approach to street space design (eg informal groupings of trees, irregular geometry of kerbing and traffic management devices)
1960s/70s onwards		
Curvilinear plus court-based street pattern	From the 1990s: a more enclosed feel due to smaller setbacks, higher site coverage and two storey development	Retain the spacious, green and leafy character, including views of backdrop vegetation between and over buildings, generous front garden setbacks open to view from the street, and grassed nature strip with minimal interruption
Spacious streets and gardens		
Detached houses, double or triple fronted	Green and leafy appearance in many areas	
Two storey houses and higher site coverage common from 1990s	Low scale and horizontal emphasis of dominant roofs (pre-1990s)	
Nature strips, often without footpaths	Gaps between buildings (less from 1990s)	In pre-1990s areas, maintain the horizontal emphasis of massing and form resulting from the dominance of the roof form
Informal street tree planting, often native	Less emphasis on separate definition of public and private domain: front gardens often not fenced	
Car storage usually off-street and behind the building line (in front of the building line in some more recent estates)		
Car-based, stand alone retail centres		

'BUSH SUBURBAN' NEIGHBOURHOOD CHARACTER TYPE

4.6

4.6a

LANDSCAPE DOMINATED RESIDENTIAL AREAS
Examples: Eltham, Dandenong Ranges foothills, Warrandyte, Barwon Heads; parts of Daylesford, Marysville and Greater Bendigo.

These suburbs are dominated by vegetation, often to the extent that houses are hidden from the street by trees and understorey. Typical types of environment in which this form of character has emerged include the foothills of the ranges and some seaside suburbs and towns, in which houses are sited among ti tree or moonah vegetation.

The most important characteristic of 'bush suburban' areas is the way buildings and structures are absorbed into the landscape. In areas with the strongest manifestation of this character, narrow dirt roads wind around the contours and through the trees, and there is little evidence of suburban development other than an occasional driveway leading off through the trees. Houses are sited among the trees, garden planting is simply a continuation of the surrounding landscape character, and there is little definition of property boundaries apart from agricultural wire fences.

DESCRIPTION	MAIN CHARACTERISTICS	PRINCIPLES
Narrow, often unmade roads curve through the bush and around the contours	Landscape dominated environment	Withstand pressure to subdivide and increase site coverage
Bush vegetation character dominant in private grounds, roadway edges and public spaces	Design of individual buildings often less important than siting and concealing them	Site development away from front boundaries and within the flow of the topography
Footpaths often only 'tracks through the trees'	Building heights need to relate to tree canopy height	Retain vegetation character of surrounding landscape in private grounds and gardens, and along roadway edges
Buildings at least partly hidden from view	Minimal definition of property boundaries	Avoid construction of streets to normal suburban standard
		Avoid excessive change to the landform

The following chapters describe:

> Transport corridors (**chapter 7**)
> Development of new communities (**chapter 8**)

References

Boyd, R., 1977, *Australia's Home: Why Australians Built the Way They Did*, Penguin Books, Ringwood

McLoughlin, B., 1992, *Shaping Melbourne's Future? Town Planning, the State and Civil Society*, Cambridge University Press, Melbourne

07

TRANSPORT CORRIDORS

WHY ARE TRANSPORT CORRIDORS IMPORTANT?

Transport corridors are the public face of our cities, towns, suburbs and countryside: investors drive along them, visitors get their impression of areas from them, tourists pay to see the view from them, and travellers need to know where they are. They are often fronted by important building and activities. In addition, they represent the biggest single public space resource in most urban areas, many have potential as wildlife corridors and 'green lungs' of a city, or for development to avoid waste or under-use of land. Adverse safety, noise, visual intrusion and land use impacts need to be addressed in many transport corridors.

WHAT SHOULD THE METROPOLITAN STRATEGY SAY?

The Metropolitan Strategy should explicitly acknowledge the importance of transport corridors in the terms outlined above, and should preferably summarise the principles contained in this chapter.

WHAT SHOULD HAPPEN NEXT?

1　The Department of Infrastructure should integrate land use planning, urban design and road and rail corridor design to take account of this broader perspective

2　Policy on the form of development fronting transport corridors could be included in the SPPF

OVERVIEW

For the purposes of this study, the following Transport Corridor types have been identified in the Central Region of Victoria:

Urban Freeway
Rural Freeway
Urban Arterial - Divided
Urban Arterial - Single Carriageway
Country Road
Railway Corridors
Transport Corridors as Gateways
The Regional Transport Corridors

GENERAL PRINCIPLES FOR TRANSPORT CORRIDORS

> Design for the speed at which the surroundings will be passed
> Prepare complete corridor masterplans for design treatment of important transport routes
> Where possible, avoid the 'boxed in' quality of sound protection walls by designing appropriate landscape or development 'buffers'
> Ensure that backs and sides of buildings visible from transport corridors are treated with the same care in design as 'front' elevations
> Relate the landscape design to the underlying landscape character
> When planting tree avenues, underground or relocate powerlines and other services

PRINCIPLES FOR TRANSPORT CORRIDOR TYPES

These appear in the following pages.

URBAN FREEWAY

Examples: City Link, Monash Freeway, Western Ring Road, Scoresby Freeway

6.1

RURAL FREEWAY

Examples: Hume, Calder and Mornington Peninsula Freeways.

6.2

Limited access divided high speed roadway sometimes including express bus lane

May expose new views of the metropolitan area and its broad landscape setting
Noise protection walls may restrict these views
Limited access may divide communities
Development rarely fronts these routes that often adjoin significant landscapes (eg. waterway corridors)
Landscape 'read' at speed from moving vehicles.

PRINCIPLES

> Maximise opportunities to expose the underlying landscape character and urban form through which the freeway is passing, without prejudicing noise protection requirements
> Avoid the 'boxed in' quality of sound protection walls
> Relate the landscape design to the underlying landscape character
> Relate development to freeways where they pass through activity centres.
> Locate landmarks and distinctive landscape features at key points to assist in orientation and legibility of the city.
> Design landscape treatments to be 'read' at speed (ie broad-scale and bold)
> Minimise undesirable signage within the view corridor
> Ensure that backs and sides of buildings visible from freeways are treated with the same care in design as 'front' elevations

Limited access divided high speed roadways linking regional centres.

Expose sweeping views of Country Victoria.
Limited access may divide communities
Often intrude into broad scale landscapes.
Restrict appreciation of rural Victoria when towns are by passed

PRINCIPLES

> Design the alignment to maximise views and the tourist experience.
> Design alignments to complement and expose the landscape through which the road passes - this usually means curvilinear alignments through rolling to hilly country and straight alignments across plains.
> Design exits to towns to be sufficient and attractive to make visits inviting.
> Relate roadside landscape to the broader landscape setting and character
> Avoid inappropriate development adjacent to the freeway which reduces the rural landscape experience from when viewed from the freeway

URBAN ARTERIAL - DIVIDED

Examples: Nepean Highway Cheltenham, St Kilda Road, Burwood Highway, Stud Road, Geelong Road Footscray.

6.3

Main metropolitan road with divided carriageway and wide median

Median usually planted but road design requirements may require sporadic plantings.
Often road and landscape treatment is sporadic and inconsistent
Overhead power lines often dominate the verge streetscape
Inner Melbourne examples are more formal boulevards
Uses lining the route may front onto or back onto the arterial road.

PRINCIPLES

> Design road corridor and landscaping to reflect the landscape and urban character through which the road passes
> Prepare and implement a comprehensive landscape design for the full length of the road
> Underground or relocate powerlines to ensure continuous avenue planting.
> Generally use formal avenue plantings for the Capital City/inner Melbourne area and the inner garden suburban character areas of Metropolitan Melbourne
> Use less formal bush boulevard treatments for the outer areas of Melbourne
> Ensure that main roads provide well-designed footpath and cycle routes.
> Design all roads to have uses and activities which front onto the road to provide visual interest and to contribute to a safe feeling for pedestrians.

URBAN ARTERIAL - SINGLE CARRIAGEWAY

Examples: Orrong Road, Brunswick Road, Rosanna Road.

6.4

6.5

Undivided main roads:

Secondary to the main urban arterials.
Sometimes part of a key metropolitan link which connects to divided urban arterial
Usually have grassed verges or nature strips with formed kerbs.
Often road and landscape treatment is sporadic and inconsistent
Overhead power lines often dominate the verge streetscape

PRINCIPLES

> Design road corridor and landscaping to reflect the landscape and urban character through which the road passes
> Prepare and implement a comprehensive landscape design for the full length of the road
> Underground or relocate powerlines to ensure continuous avenue planting.
> Generally use formal avenue plantings for the central Melbourne/inner Melbourne area and the inner 'Garden Suburb' Neighbourhood Character Type areas of metropolitan Melbourne (see **chapter 6**)
> Less formal layouts reflecting a bushland character may be appropriate in outer suburbs.
> Ensure that main roads provide well designed footpath
> Design all roads to have uses and activities which front onto the road to provide visual interest and to contribute to a safe feeling for pedestrians.

COUNTRY ROADS

Examples: Melba Highway, South Gippsland Highway

6.6

Usually undivided main rural roads

Usually the regional country links with key routes replaced by freeway upgrades.
Often lined by remnant bush
Link country towns, regional cities and key tourist destinations
Provide gateways to regional cities and country towns.
Often have unformed edges

PRINCIPLES

> Design the alignment to maximise views and the tourist experience.
> Design alignments both to compliment and expose the landscape through which it passes: this usually means curvilinear alignments through rolling to hilly country and straight alignments across plains.
> Design approaches to towns to be attractive to make visits inviting.
> Relate roadside landscape to the broader landscape setting and character
> Avoid inappropriate development adjacent to the road which reduces the rural landscape experience when viewed from the road
> Retain and enhance remnant roadside vegetation.
> Expose sweeping views of Country Victoria.
> Locate limited access roads so that they avoid dividing communities
> Design the alignment to maximise views and the tourist experience.

RAILWAY CORRIDORS

Examples: Sandringham line, Hurstbridge Line

6.7

Radial metropolitan rail corridors

Long established corridors
Adjacent uses usually back onto the corridor often unattractive in appearance
Often remnant indigenous vegetation remains within the reservation
Stations are gateways to suburban activity centres
Often under-utilised land associated with the corridor.

PRINCIPLES

> Encourage uses to front onto the corridor or provide attractive presentation
> Protect and enhance remnant vegetation
> Use corridor for pedestrian and cycle routes
> Use additional/surplus land particularly around railway stations for consolidated redevelopment and to contribute to more compact activity centres.
> Design landscape of corridor as comprehensive design for the corridor.

INTERSECTIONS AND GATEWAYS

Major intersections often combine the following characteristics:

Important locations for assisting with 'legibility' of a city
Premium sites for signs and advertising
Attractive to uses that lack a sense of place or a pedestrian-friendly street frontage (eg service stations, fast food operations)
Widened or splayed roadways that have caused demolition of street-fronting buildings
Profusion of poles and wires
Gaps in avenue tree planting to allow for sight lines or narrower medians and footpaths

Councils, designers and others are also tempted to denote major intersections as 'gateways'. This is a vague concept, but often embraces one or more of the following:

Taller buildings
A gateway 'feature' (eg a piece of 'urban art' or special landscaping)
Special signs (eg the start of a shopping centre, the boundary of a municipality)

PRINCIPLES

> Design the intersection as part of a comprehensive urban and landscape design for the full corridor.

> Mark only gateway points that have an important cultural meaning to wide sections of the community (eg the entry to central Melbourne); rely on the minimum necessary signage to mark administrative boundaries etc

> Express important changes in urban form or landscape that might otherwise be missed

> Design must include the road corridor as well as the private domain fronting the route.

> Minimise land take for road widening at intersections, and redevelop demolished buildings with buildings that contribute to the local streetscape character

> Take steps to minimise the visual clutter caused by signs, poles etc

THE REGIONAL TRANSPORT CORRIDORS

Examples: Geelong, Bendigo, Ballarat, LaTrobe Valley or Seymour Line. This means the fast rail corridors (Geelong, Bendigo, Ballarat, LaTrobe valley).

Key regional routes linking Melbourne to the regional centres to be upgraded as fast rail corridors. They pass through country/Victoria rural landscapes with suburban development lining routes as they approach each centre.

PRINCIPLES

> Refer to rail corridor design for detailed principles

> Highest priority should be given to implementation of these principles along these routes.

> In rural areas avoid inappropriate development adjacent to the rail corridor and within view lines form the rail line.

> Corridor design should focus particularly on the rail station final approaches.
> Realise the potential for urban consolidation around these terminals in Regional Centres

CASE STUDY PROJECTS

One Case Study has been prepared to illustrate the application of some of these principles, covering the following topic: 7. Road Corridors

The following chapter describes development of new communities (**chapter 8**).

CASE STUDY 7 - **Road Corridors**

ISSUE

Road corridors, particularly major freeways are treated as single purpose zones moving large volumes of traffic. The reaction is one of exclusion of other activities and limitations to obstructions within the corridors. This leads to a 'scorched earth' approach to these areas.

BEFORE

AFTER

OPPORTUNITY

7

Opportunities exist to transform road corridors into greenbelts with active frontages. These areas lend themselves to water conservation techniques to grow linear landscapes within these reserves. Future development adjacent to these reserves should treat the roads as their frontage rather than their backs, while recognising the limitations for direct access onto the roads. Simple safety barriers and road connections back into the adjacent areas will enable these to be developed as frontages rather than backs. The use of landscape combined with safety mechanisms to protect drivers and exclude casual pedestrian access would lead to improved visual amenity of these corridors.

OPTIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT

CURRENT - Isolated transport routes.

PROPOSED - Devleopment of green belts and active frontages.

IMPLEMENTATION

The future development of road frontages and particularly freeways should have a policy of no blank walls. Development along these corridors needs to look at frontages combining techniques of double glazing and screening with the appropriate safety elements to enable this new approach to operate. Allowance should be made in future roads budgets to build in crash protection so as to allow for the full landscaping or building of these areas. Relaxed planning controls allowing for 3-4 storey development along these corridors should be introduced to take advantage of views and encourage development of the edges rather than treat them as left over spaces.

08

DEVELOPMENT OF NEW COMMUNITIES

WHY IS DEVELOPMENT OF NEW COMMUNITIES IMPORTANT?

Melbourne has in the past created liveable and sustainable suburbs, based around a network of green wedges and linear open spaces. Applying these as models in innovative ways that respond to the underlying landscape character we can create new contemporary suburbs/new communities for the 21st Century.

WHAT SHOULD THE METROPOLITAN STRATEGY SAY?

The Metropolitan Strategy should incorporate:

> Melbourne's Urban/Rural Edge
> Principles for Design of New Communities

WHAT SHOULD HAPPEN NEXT?

1   Prepare a Central Victoria region urban structure plan

2   Review the subdivision planning and approval process to achieve the outcomes referred to in this chapter

3   Develop a sectoral structure planning process for Growth Areas based on sustainability principles

4   Require individual estates to conform to the structure plans and development guidelines

5   The principles should be developed into State policy (using a map and words), for inclusion in the State section of the VPPs.

OVERVIEW

The Metropolitan Strategy should acknowledge that greenfield development will continue to occur, but only within the context of:

> Two other equally important strategies: denser residential development of activity centres, and continued development in residential areas within the framework of ResCode
> A more pro-active stance on the nature of greenfield development, including land release, public transport and other service provision, creation of self-contained communities, and improved control of subdivision and design

The chapter addresses the following topics:

Melbourne's Urban/Rural Edge
Principles for Design of New Communities
Structure Planning of Growth Areas
Greenfield Development Principles
The Process of Greenfield Development

'Melbourne's Urban/Rural Edge' links back to the Landscape Character material in chapter 2, relating each landscape type on Melbourne's fringe to Principles about defining and designing the edge. 'Principles for Design of New Communities' first examines what is needed to improve the sustainable design of new suburbs. It then outlines the important role of structure planning in delivering coherent patterns of settlement on the urban fringe, sets out suggested Greenfield Development Principles, and then discusses the processes needed to bring about better greenfield development planning. Some comments are included on the approach to country town and Regional Centre expansion, related to the fast rail project.

MELBOURNE'S URBAN/ RURAL EDGE

This section develops urban design principles for the way the edges of Melbourne should be designed. Where should Melbourne 'end' from a landscape character perspective and how should the urban/rural edge be expressed? For each landscape character type urban design principles are defined for Growth Areas. The landscape character types are defined and delineated in **chapter 2**.

Photo 8.1 shows the attractive way in which Melbourne's outer Eastern suburbs merge into the foothills of the Dandenong Ranges.

Photo 8.2 illustrates the kinds of problems that can occur in the absence of firm policies about the urban/rural interface

Great Dividing Range and Foothills: Eastern

Most of these edges have already developed and principles are directed towards reinforcing and maintaining the treed hill backdrop to the metropolitan area.

PRINCIPLES

> Maintain continuous canopy of trees
> Ensure that development does not occur above tree line
> Avoid development on ridge or hill tops
> Use materials and colours that blend with the vegetated background.
> Ensure that site coverage of building is sufficiently low to maintain a well-vegetated environment.

Great Dividing Range and Foothills: Western

This landscape character type may define the edge of development on the western plains. It is also applicable to locations like Sunbury or Bacchus Marsh.

PRINCIPLES

> Locate development within well treed areas or ensure that planting is undertaken around new development
> Ensure that development does not occur above the tree canopy line
> Avoid development on ridges or hill tops
> Use materials and colours that blend with the vegetated background.
> Ensure that site coverage of building is sufficiently low to maintain a well-vegetated environment.

Western Basalt Plain

By the open nature of this landscape the urban design of edges requires greater care and attention.

PRINCIPLES

> New development should have defined urban edges
> Use creeks and floodways to articulate new communities into defined urban areas and to recreate the western plains grassland landscape.
> Avoid low density edges to new development.
> Provide a street or road edge to the development.
> Support viable forms of agriculture to the town edge.

Melbourne's Eastern Hills and Vales

These edges are completely developed, and generally merge into the wooded slopes of the foothills.

West Gippsland Hills and Vales

These edges include the Growth Areas of the Berwick corridor merging into the southern foothills of the Dandenong Ranges.

PRINCIPLES

> For foothills edge see above
> Soften edges with planting and by ending development at a physical feature such as a creek corridor or below a ridge line
> Use creeks and floodways to articulate new communities into defined urban areas and to reinforce the underlying landscape character
> Support viable forms of agriculture to the town edge
> Limit development on skylines and ridges

Port Phillip Sandbelt

Development mostly committed: see Bay Coast and Cliffs for edge conditions.

Peninsula and Islands

This landscape character should, where possible, remain as a rural character beyond metropolitan Melbourne.

Bay Coast: Beach and Cliff

Includes the Bay interface with the southern suburbs of Melbourne

PRINCIPLES

> Maintain vegetation dominant skyline when viewed from the bay and key viewing points along the Bay.
> Express the built form of the key nodal points of Frankston, St Kilda, Port Melbourne and the CBD of Melbourne.
> Develop selected waterfronts as urban promenades at such key nodes as Frankston, Mordialloc, St Kilda/South Melbourne, Port Melbourne, Williamstown Beach and Geelong.
> In the vegetation dominant areas maintain sufficient space for vegetation in new developments. Ensure that development is below the dominant canopy tree height.

Bay Coast Wetland or Environmental Area

> Avoid significant development in these areas
> Where development is necessary, use low key landscape sensitive design.

PRINCIPLES FOR DESIGN OF NEW COMMUNITIES

Melbourne prides itself on its legacy of liveable neighbourhoods. Of these the inner suburbs meet most of the criteria of walkability, access to public transport, ability to accommodate higher densities and adaptability to accommodate changes over time.

More recent development on the fringe is limited in its response to the need for sustainable development responding principally to the needs of the automobile. The result is that public transport is distant from individual residents, subdivision layouts do not invite walking, and activity centres are physically detached from each neighbourhood. While it is inappropriate for urban designers to reproduce these liveable suburbs of Melbourne, there are lessons to be learned in developing urban design principles for new greenfield development. New development, while adopting these universal principles, can also respond to the underlying landscape character to create new and innovative suburbs for the 21st Century.

In Growth Areas some estates have been well-designed and some individual estates have been built with these principles in mind. However, certain fundamental sound planning principles have been missed, and these mostly relate to the fact that development of greenfield housing mostly occurs in individual estates, rather than as part of the creation of well-structured new suburbs or communities.

What is needed are:

> Effective structure planning of Growth Areas to produce sustainable communities, instead of collections of estates
> Design principles that express clear physical design outcomes
> An improved design and approval process for new suburbs, including a revised subdivision process

Some comments are now made on each of these in turn.

STRUCTURE PLANNING OF GROWTH AREAS

Urban Structure: New Suburbs and Neighbourhoods

New suburbs should be designed as a coherent pattern of neighbourhoods, with each neighbourhood focused on a centre containing associated public transit stops. This pattern of neighbourhoods in turn should support an activity centre with the main road and street pattern providing direct access to the town centre from each neighbourhood (figure 8.1).

Principles to Guide Structure Planning of a New Suburb

In developing a structure plan for a new suburb:

> Use creeks and other landform feature to articulate each new neighbourhood and to form the basis for a connected open space network.
> Design main roads as town roads with buildings and activities fronting on to them, to provide safer environments for pedestrians using the main roads and a more lively character to the suburb.
> Disperse traffic throughout the network, rather than planning a strict road hierarchy, to provide a greater sense of safety for pedestrians and fewer heavily trafficked streets.
> Design the main town centre to be central to all of the neighbourhoods it serves.
> Focus each neighbourhood on the public transit stops.

STRUCTURE PLANNING
OF GROWTH AREAS 8.1

open space system structured along creeks

main roads

freeway

railway

neighbourhood
centres focussed on
public transport stops

400 metre walking distance
from neighbourhood centre

concentration of industrial activity,
accessible to freeway and railway

town centre with railway station
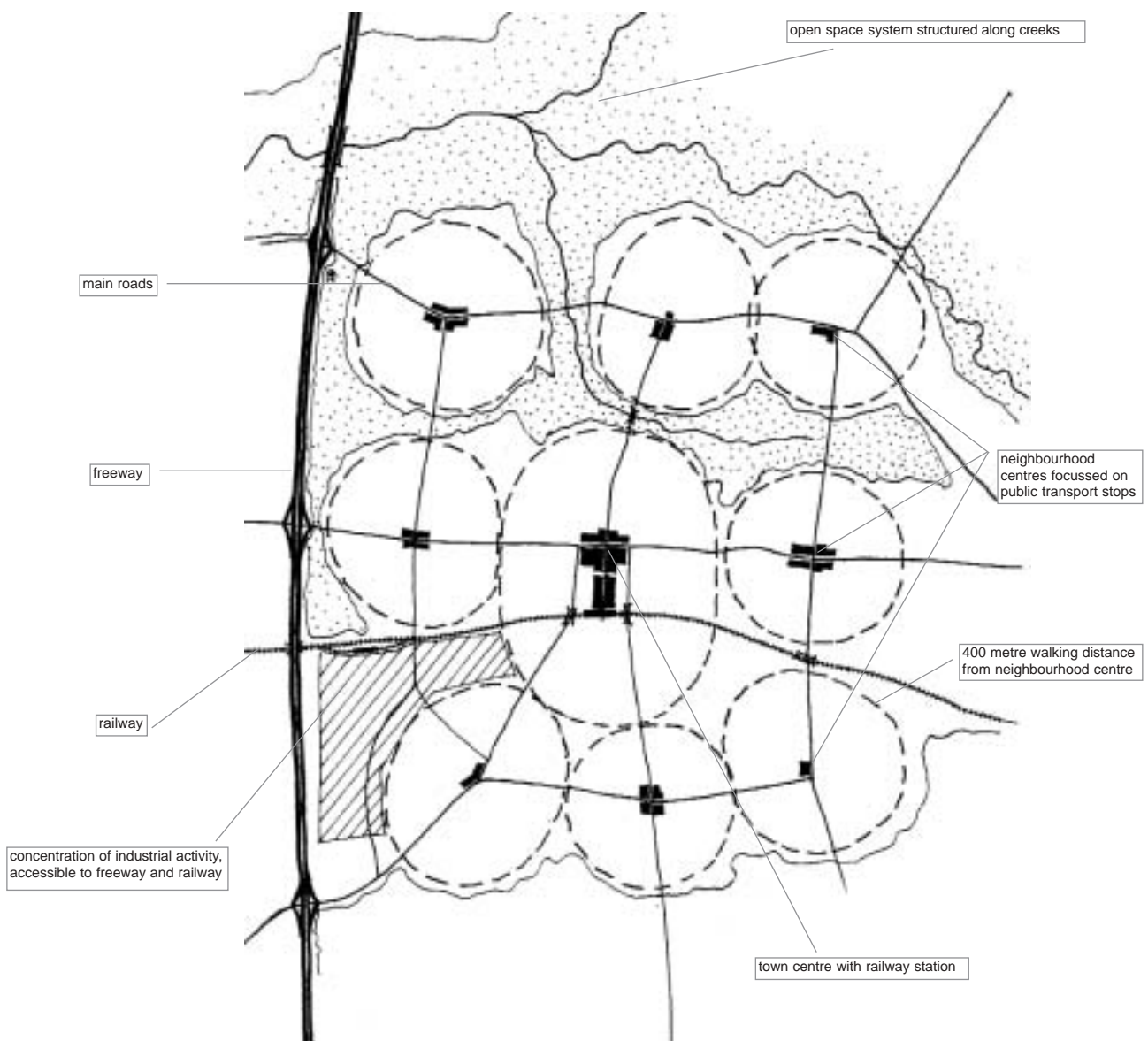
GREENFIELD DEVELOPMENT PRINCIPLES

The following table attempts to interpret commonly understood livable neighbourhood guidelines into a succinct set of planning principles with clear physical outcomes.

PRINCIPLE	URBAN DESIGN IMPLICATIONS	AVOID
1 Design the new neighbourhood as part of a wider Urban Design Framework Plan	Prepare a physical design based structure plan for the wider area Key structuring elements include activity centres, main roads, public transport, open space system. Design of new communities to be undertaken by qualified urban designers.	*Small independent or isolated subdivisions*
2 Respond to the broad landscape character of the area as described in chapter 2	Express and enhance the landscape character of the area.	*Imposed design solutions and design solutions which obscure the underlying landscape character*
3 Design compact walkable neighbourhoods with walkable distances to services and facilities	Locate facilities central to the residential neighbourhood, within 400m walking distance	*'Loose fit' designs that leave space for future development in a way that reduces urban compactness*
4 Integrate uses including housing, workplaces, convenience shopping and recreation, and incorporate community services and facilities	Design a fine-grained mix of housing types and other land uses. Consider vertical mix of uses such as shop top dwellings, home offices etc	*Large open lot car parks separating residential areas from other activity centres and other uses*
5 Focus on public transport linking the neighbourhood to the metropolitan network	Design the street layout to link directly to public transport stops Ensure that most residences are within 400m of a public transport stop	*Public transport stops at the edge of development*
6 Provide an interconnected street network that makes walking and cycling easy by offering direct routes between points.	Design a 'permeable' neighbourhood with connected streets and footpaths	*Designs based on cul de sac layouts with disconnected streets and footpaths; 'gated' communities*
7 Provide safe new communities through the design of public spaces, activity mix and peopled streets.	Front parks and main roads with development. Design all focal areas to have active frontages to all streets	*Residential and other uses backing onto parks and open space systems.* *Streets with car parks and other non active uses fronting them*
8 Recognise and build on existing cultural heritage values and attractive local character to develop a strong sense of place.	Design to incorporate local built form, landscape or heritage traditions in a contemporary way.	*Heritage or landscape traditions drawn from other regions.* *Mock heritage or reproduction styles which have no relevance to the area.*
9 Meet a diversity of needs and aspirations by encouraging a mix of lot sizes and a mix of housing types to meet different needs	Design housing layouts with a 'fine-grained' mix of lot sizes and housing types to accommodate a broad spectrum of household and residents	*Large monolithic residential areas with one type of housing or lot size.*
10 Provide a variety of open space types to meet different needs including active and passive recreation, linked into the metropolitan open space system where possible and appropriate.	Design neighbourhoods so that all residents and workers have ready access to all forms of open space and recreational facilities. Locate open space to provide a focus for residential neighbourhoods Design surrounding built form to front parks and all other forms of open space	*Introverted open space areas with development backing on to the open space* *Large centralised multi-use open space areas that are remote from a majority of the residents.* *Significant open space areas which cannot be linked by bicycle or walking paths.* *Dedicating left over space as recreational open space.*
11 Develop neighbourhoods which are environmentally friendly, including energy efficiency of buildings, water re-use where possible and local waste management and treatment systems	Design new communities with layouts that optimise solar access Facilitate built form which is sustainable and solar responsive Facilitate landscape systems of parks and open space that enable the re-use of waste water	*'Rubber stamp' subdivisions that disregard solar access and other environmental issues.*
12 Ensure that neighbourhood layouts enable a high level of connectivity to adjacent subdivisions	Design neighbourhoods as part of a wider framework plan Realise all opportunities to connect roads, footpaths and open space systems to the adjacent subdivision	*Stand alone subdivisions with single access only to the adjacent main road.*

Principles for New Communities and Regional Centres

In general the principles outlined above should be applied to new, stand alone settlements and greenfield development within the regional centres. Specific qualities applicable to regional centres are:

> Respect and expose the broad underlying landscape character of the area.
> Reflect and complement key regional urban character and heritage aspects of the region.
> Retain views to the surrounding rural countryside or alternatives bring elements of this into the development.
> Avoid reproducing the urban character of the outer suburbs of Melbourne

Principles for Greenfield Development in Country Towns

Many of the principles described above are applicable to new development on the fringe of existing country towns. Specific qualities applicable to country towns are:

> Ensure that views to the surrounding rural countryside and landscape features are retained.
> Maintain the open character of the existing built form of country towns.
> Medium density with a built form dominated character is less appropriate for country towns.
> Respect local traditions and character in development of the street layout and built form for the town.
> Avoid reproducing the urban character of the outer suburbs of Melbourne

THE PROCESS OF GREENFIELD DEVELOPMENT

Changes will be needed to the processes by which greenfield developments are designed and approved if the principles expressed in this chapter are to be realised on the ground. It is beyond the scope of this report to examine this aspect of the issue in detail, and it is understood that the Department of Infrastructure is proposing a review of subdivision processes. The following comments may prove helpful:

> The process needs to deliver 'whole suburb plans' rather than 'individual estate plans'
> The current system of outline development plans and the like often fails to coordinate development in the way envisaged in this report
> Therefore the State may need to play a stronger role in coordinating development
> It is difficult or impossible to achieve more sustainable building design and orientation when the process of subdivision is separated from the process of building design and siting
> Urban design skills are needed at the outset of a subdivision design process
> The sequence of land re-zoning and release is very important
> Coordination is needed of all facets of land use planning and development: not just 'residential development' but also jobs, shops, recreation (as well as infrastructure such as transport)
> It might help to designate population targets and housing diversity targets for new suburbs
> Demonstration projects are an effective way of showing what can be done

APPENDICES

CONTENTS

APPENDICES TO CHAPTER 4

APPENDIX 4.1 QUOTE / SUMMARY

A: The growth of Melbourne in a global context

"The new towns of the nineteenth century and the expanding old towns grew in Britain, in other European countries and in Australia as a result of the same complex of forces. Melbourne was a much a product of the population explosion, the industrial revolution and increasing world trade as was Glasgow or Liverpool, Buenos Aires or San Francisco. The speed of its growth was just as remarkable, its size and prosperity just as astonishing and they occurred for the same reasons. Observers were surprised that a colonial town should grow so fast; colonial towns founded in an earlier age in North America had not done so. But Melbourne was a nineteenth century colonial town, subject to nineteenth century economic forces, and that was why it grew so fast."

"Melbourne frequently was likened to Liverpool and with reason. Both cities were ports and distribution centres for imports and exports, and were commercial centres servicing trade and investment. So too were the other growing Australian capital cities. Melbourne's pattern of growth was rather different but it was not unique. The colonial cities were founded in the industrial age by the foremost industrial country, Britain, at a moment in time. They did not grow slowly out of a local environment, beside a ford or because of rich farmland. They were established where there was plenty of fresh water, preferably a rich countryside, and above all a good harbour to maintain the vital sea-link with Britain. The settlers came from Britain, the goods which fed, clothed and entertained them came from Britain. The capital which built up flocks, bought the mining machinery, built the railways and suburbs came from Britain, and the exports whose sale paid for all of these things, went through the ports of Britain. Thus, for a long time, the decisions of the British industrialists and financiers affected, even determined, Australian economic development." (pp.5-6)

"If one half of the explanation for the rapid growth of the colonial port cities lies in nineteenth century Britain, the other half lies firmly embedded in Australian soil. From the hinterlands of the cities came the exports which Britain needed to serve her industries and, by the 1870s, to feed her people."

"Australian export products served Britain's manufacturing industries. Australian gold provided capital for a great trade expansion in the second half of the century and gold migrants stimulated Britain's shipping industry and brought her consumer goods. From the 1870s Australian farm products fed Britain's swollen population. All these goods were produced in the Australian hinterlands and went out through the ports. The services necessary for export and import; warehousing, shipping arrangements, handling and loading, financial and legal and insurance contracts, enabled the port cities to grow prosperous on the charges and commissions involved."

"The growth of the port cities is therefore directly related to the growth and prosperity of their hinterlands. Melbourne's foundation and its rapid early growth are due to the great expansion of the pastoral industry in the 1830s and 1840s and its special characteristics. Another burst of growth in the 1850s is due to the immigration and wealth caused by the gold discoveries in the hinterland." (pp.8-9)

Eastwood, J., 1983,"The Urban Revolution", *Melbourne: The Growth of a Metropolis*, Thomas Nelson Australia, Melbourne, pp.5-6 & 8-9.

B: "The Metropolis" (summary)

"Melbourne by the early 1880s was recognised clearly as a metropolis: Queen city of the South, visitors said, and the metropolis of the Southern Hemisphere!" Melbourne obtained this label not only through its size and scale, having 31 percent of the population of the whole colony, but also through its leadership of its region in the 1870s. The complex internal economy expanded, as did the social structure and the outer suburbs, creating a "metropolitan ethos".

Eastwood, J., 1983,"The Urban Revolution", Melbourne: *The Growth of a Metropolis*, Thomas Nelson Australia, Melbourne, pp.57-59.

C: "Melbourne, a Victorian Community Overseas

"Twenty years ago the site of the metropolis of Victoria was a forest, ten years ago it was covered with a straggling village, today it has assumed the aspect of a city of magnitude and importance; and who shall define the limits of its future dignity and splendour? The prophetic eye beholds its wide and spacious thoroughfares fringed with edifices worthy of the wealth of its citizens and corresponding in architectural pretensions with the greatness of the commercial transactions of their occupants." p. 277

"The rateable value of Melbourne in 1891 was surpassed in the Empire only by London and, only just ahead, by Glasgow. During the great urban boom of the 1880s, Melbourne was described by a distinguished visitor, G.A. Sala, as 'marvellous Melbourne'. Other people called it 'the Paris of the Antipodes', or the 'Chicago of the South'." p.278

Briggs, A., 1982, "Melbourne, a Victorian Community Overseas", *Victorian Cities*, Pelican/Penguin Books, Ringwood, Australia

APPENDIX 4.2 QUOTE: MILES LEWIS 1995

A: Melbourne's growth as a colony

"Melbourne's history is best understood in comparative perspective. The city's origins lie in the surge in nineteenth century urbanisation which ringed the Pacific with a network of bustling commercial cities: Melbourne, Sydney, Brisbane, Auckland, San Francisco, Seattle and Vancouver. They grew as gateways to their expansive hinterlands, facilitating European settlement and the harnessing of their developing regional economies to world money and produce markets. Some historians have styled these cities "instant cities". They were cities of the nineteenth century, built from scratch, their spatial form shaped by the latest technological innovations, and their social economic structures mirroring the logic of the modern capitalist market place. Melbourne - fittingly dubbed 'Marvellous Melbourne' by George Sala in 1888 - encapsulates this remarkable city-building process. It was for most of the nineteenth century the most remarkable of these Pacific Rim cities, and the largest in both population and in physical context."

"The growth of the city is often taken for granted, but it was not inevitable or predetermined."

"A comparison with the other Australian colonies will suggest that the distinctive aspect in the first sixty years was the quality of entrepreneurship. Unlike the other colonies, the first settlement was established neither by the British Government, nor by the New South Wales Government, nor by private investors in treaty with the British Government. It was established by speculators, technically in breach of the law. The hinterland was not given out in grants to capitalists and retired military officers but licensed, leased and purchased by investors and speculators. Even prior to the gold discoveries the colony had developed so dramatically in fifteen years that separation from New South Wales was inevitable. By the same token, one easily forgets that the seven year old Melbourne settlement was incorporated as a municipality in the same year as the fifty-four year old Sydney."

"This entrepreneurial quality was reinforced by the gold discoveries. They attracted a body of settlers overwhelmingly young, enterprising and independent, and generally tending to liberalism and enlightenment in their beliefs. These were the people who opposed state aid to religion, fought for the eight hour day, pressed for land to be opened up to the small settler, and most dramatically - inverting the orthodoxies of the parent country - espoused the protection of the native industry. Protection was to be the third leg of the Victorian economy. Whereas the pastoral industry and the gold mines were based upon natural resources, and were basically fortuitous, 'Protection' was a political creation, and the industry which it fostered was overwhelmingly metropolitan."

B: Melbourne CBD: Statement of Cultural Significance

"From early settlement Melbourne's development has featured diverse experiences and activity, both cultural and architectural. This statement of cultural significance clearly and concisely distinguishes those aspects of Melbourne's Central Business District which set it apart as a distinctive and important cultural site. The statement therefore draws on the extensive detail of this history, and has been prepared pursuant to the Burra Charter."

"Melbourne's 'Golden Mile', the central one by one half mile grid which is the core of the Central Business District, or CBD, is one of the great colonial city centres of the nineteenth century, distinguished by its Victorian architecture, characterised by its regularity of layout and defined by its relationship to the Yarra River, Eastern Hill, and the former Batman's Swamp."

"Founded by free settlers from Tasmania in 1835, several decades after the establishment of Sydney and Hobart, six years after Perth, one year before Adelaide and seven before Brisbane, Melbourne's centre quickly became the quintessential expression of early nineteenth century planning, with an emphasis upon broad, rectilinear streets with little provision for gardens and public space. Colonial surveyor Robert Hoddle's of one and a half chain (30m) streets and ten chain (200m) blocks bisected by half chain (10m) lanes in unique among Australian capitals. The layout establishes a character quite unlike that associated with the more picturesque cities of the old world, though not so grand as some of the newly founded or redeveloped quarters of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in Europe and North America. The uniform street and footpath widths and the deciduous trees contribute to a coherent and predictable streetscape, and the grid must be seen as the most important and obvious relic of Melbourne's earliest years."

"The surviving architecture dates essentially from 1855 onwards. While the number and prominence of public buildings proclaim the independence brought by Victoria's separation from the colony of New South Wales in 1851, the architectural wealth of the city stems largely from the influence of other forces. It reflects first of all the rapid evolution of a wealthy society from the mid-century gold rushes, through the era of protection of native industry, to the financial boom of the late 1880s, when buildings of an eclectic High Victorian character and principally British provenance dominated. This architecture continues to show the diversity of scale and activity contained within the central grid in the nineteenth century, and establishes the city's distinctive, though intermittent, Victorian character. Other elements of the city fabric reflect the hiatus of the 1890s depression, followed by tentative developments from 1905 to 1910 when an austere version of the American Romanesque prevailed as the major commercial architectural expression, most noticeable in the warehouses and emporia of Flinders Street and Flinders Lane."

"This period saw Melbourne act as Australia's first capital while a permanent site was being determined and prepared, but the presence of the Federal Government had little impact upon the fabric of the city other than to encourage progress on various large nineteenth century public buildings, such as the Parliament House and State Library."

"Later buildings began to reflect the 132 foot (40m) height limit and the architectural sensitivity to street context which applied from the Great War until the 1950s, with buildings ranging in expression from Edwardian Baroque to Moderne. The result was a much admired coherence of scale and articulation throughout much of the CBD."

"While these stages created the city's distinctive visual characteristics, the post-1950s, development had significant impact. It included much of individual quality, but did much to erode the specific character of Melbourne."

"The Yarra River had always been critical to Melbourne. In the period of first settlement it provided the major avenue of access to the small township and the site of the city was largely determined by the reef, since removed, which separated the tidal salt Yarra from the fresh water above. It was from the south bank that the characteristic views of the town were taken until the 1890s, by which time the consolidation of the belt of railway stations and viaduct largely destroyed that visual link. It remained from the south that continual waves of immigrants first approached the town until, in the late 1950s, the air superseded the sea as the main means of arrival. While the late nineteenth and then twentieth century

developments gradually built up a visual barrier between the Yarra and the city, the river has remained the southern boundary of the CBD in the collective consciousness of Melburnians."

"The early removal of Batman's Hill and the draining of the West Melbourne Swamp largely eliminated the topographical limit to the town to the west, but the Spencer Street Railway Station has since maintained an arbitrary boundary at this point. Eastern Hill, however, has remained a pivotal feature and has had its role as a religious acropolis reinforced by establishment of a series of faiths and denominations. Government steadily consolidated the Spring Street boundary, and Melbourne's first glass skyscraper, ICI House of 1956, broke the 132 foot height limit, superseding the spires of St. Patrick's Cathedral as the eastern punctuation mark."

"Sited at the north west boundary to the CBD, relatively distant from the centres of commerce and government, Flagstaff Hill does not retain the same topographical and visual significance. It nonetheless, has strong historical associations and is one of a series of landmarks which cumulatively define Melbourne's identity, including the Queen Victoria Market, the major nineteenth century public buildings, Flinders Street Station and the Royal and Block Arcades. The trams, though not a fixed element, are rendered even more significant by their rattling omnipresence throughout the CBD."

"Melbourne's character has also been positively affected by the manner in which various groups and activities have positioned themselves within its matrix, as happens in many cities. The Chinese in and around Little Bourke Street, the mercantile zone near the Customs House in Flinders Street, the clothing trade in Flinders Lane, the legal community centred upon the Law Courts in Williams Street and the medical profession at the east end of Collins Street - the tendency for these and other groups and activities to perpetuate themselves has contributed noticeably to the social and architectural identity of their respective areas. The wave of European immigration in the post-war period had a less noticeable impact upon the specifically physical and architectural character of the city, while nonetheless clearly transforming its cultural identity, most especially in terms of restaurants, shops and cafes."

"It is the sum of all these qualities, rather than any individual aspect, which gives Melbourne its unique identity. While the rigour of the grid and the quality and prominence of the architectural fabric of the nineteenth century are the most distinctive and frequently hailed aspects of its physical presence, it is the marriage of these with a strong and diverse cultural persona which sets Melbourne apart as a distinctive post-colonial city within its immediate Australasian context and the res of the world."
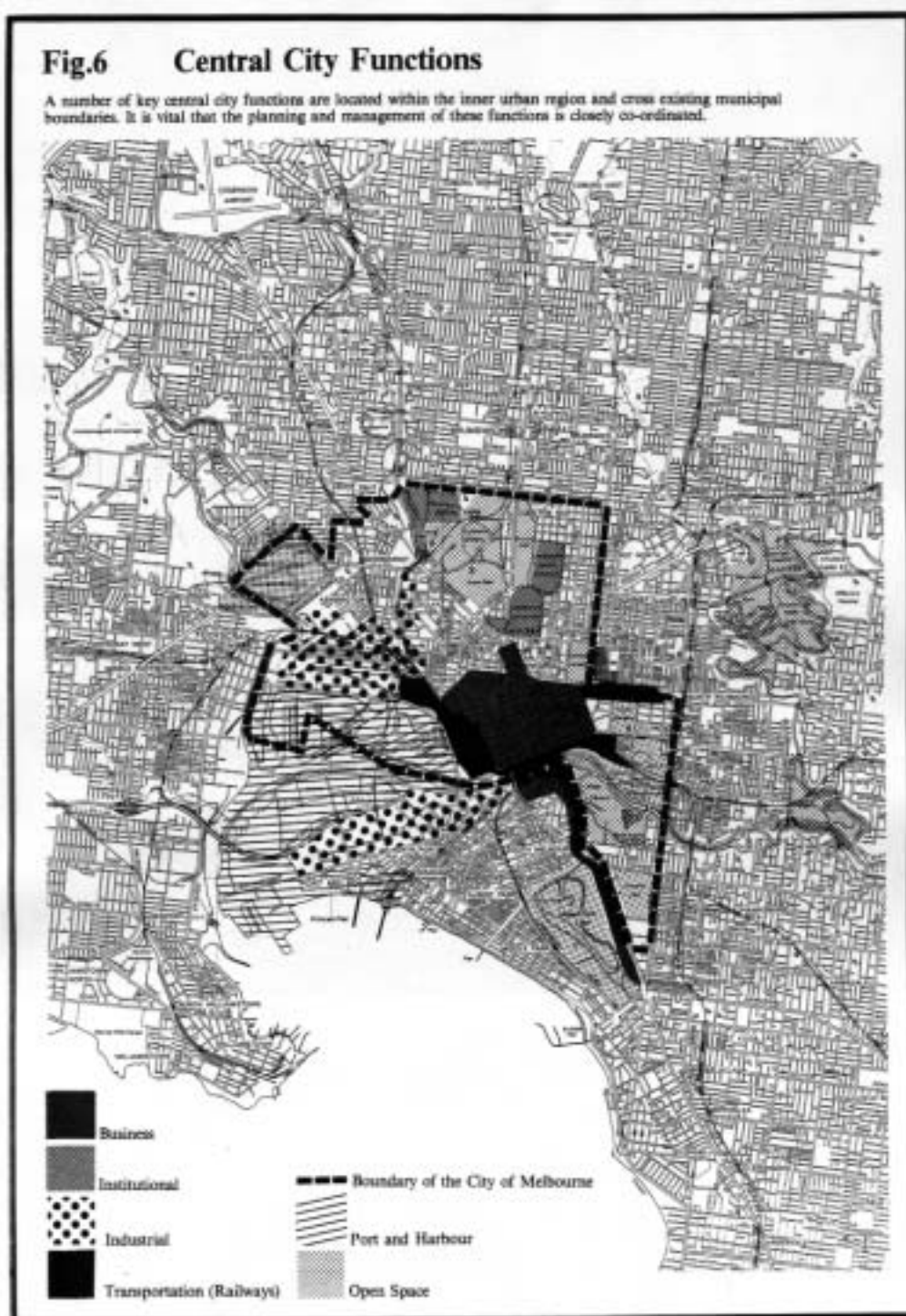
C: The Darling Regulations

"The planning principles which have evolved over fifty years, and which were to be applied to Melbourne:

1. Town reserves are situated on rivers (something which I have not discussed here, but which goes back to the original instructions issued to Arthur Phillip).

2. Town reserves are typically 3 miles by one mile, and within them only small allotments are released for houses, shops, etc., while the rest of the space is reserved for future expansion.

3. Within the town reserve reservations were made for public buildings and other purposes (which is self-evident, but was first done systematically under Macquarie).

4. The town layout is on a rectangular grid, but adjusted to suit the topography.

5. The dimensions of allotments and streets are as provided by the Darling Regulations.

6. There are incentives or requirements to encourage substantial building on town lots and to discourage speculation in land (easy when it was a condition of a lease, but difficult when the land has been sold freehold).

7. Outside the town reserve, river frontages are shared in long strip allotments.

8. The surveying of rural land is generally into sections of 1 square mile, on a north-south, east-west orientation."

Lewis, M., 1995, "Frontier Town to 1852", Melbourne: The City's History and Development, The City of Melbourne, Melbourne, p.27.

APPENDIX 4.3 MAP: CENTRAL
CITY FUNCTIONS

Fig.6   Central City Functions

A number of key central city functions are located within the inner urban region and cross existing municipal boundaries. It is vital that the planning and management of these functions is closely co-ordinated.

Legend:
- Business
- Institutional
- Industrial
- Transportation (Railways)
- ■■■ Boundary of the City of Melbourne
- Port and Harbour
- Open Space

APPENDIX 4.4 MAP: HISTORY OF CITY OF MELBOURNE BOUNDARY CHANGES

Fig. 3 History of City of Melbourne Boundary Changes
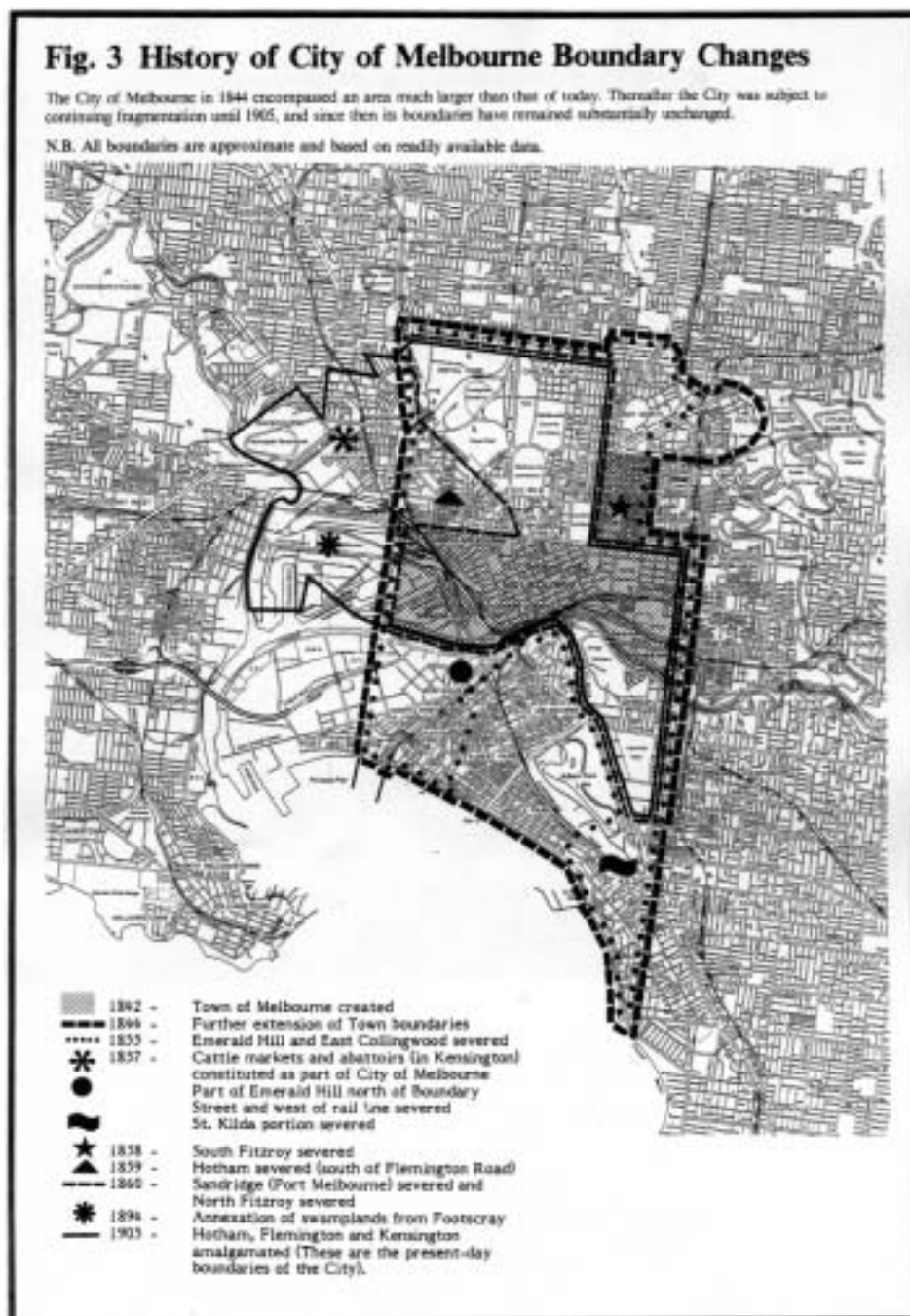
APPENDIX 4.5 MAP: 1987 MAP
OF MELBOURNE
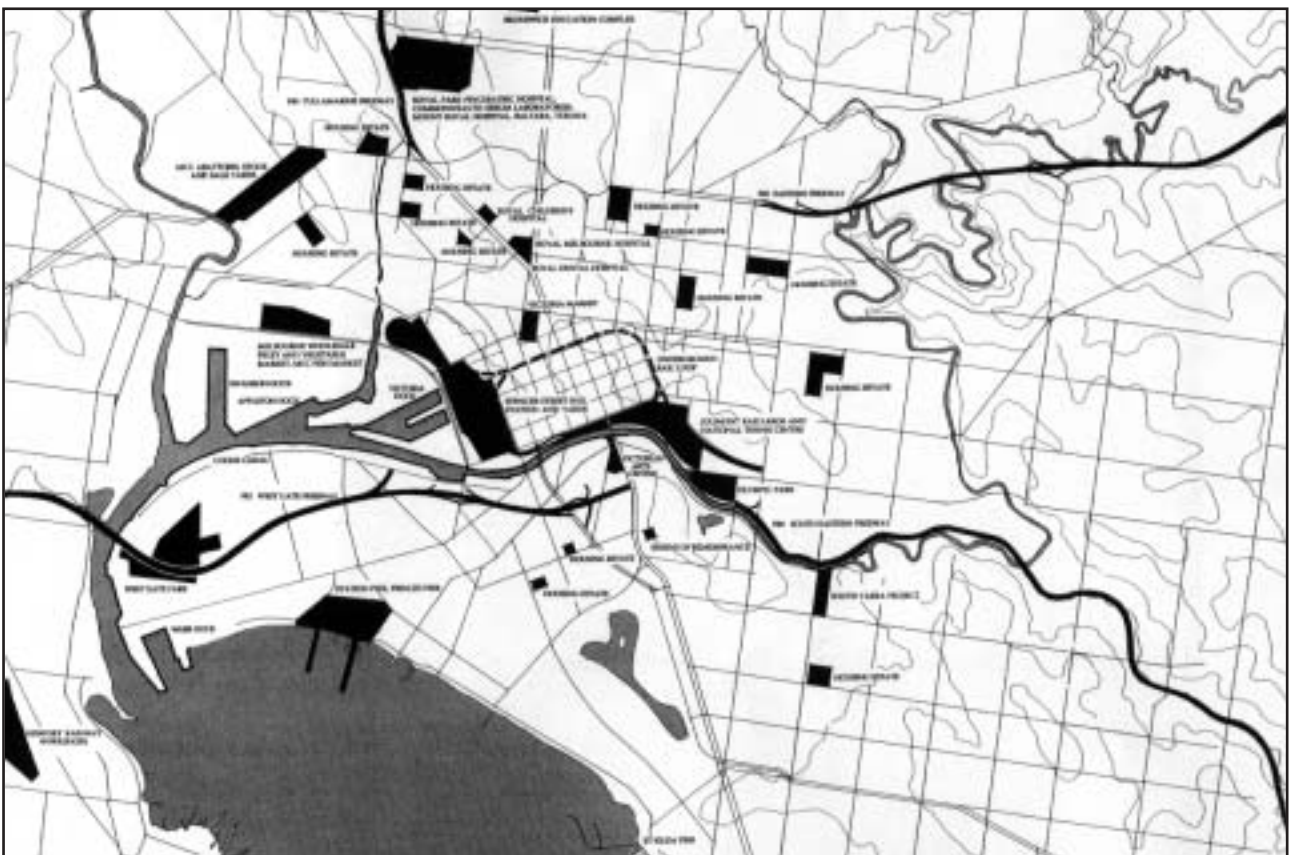
APPENDIX 4.6 MAP: THE PARKS AND GARDENS OF INNER MELBOURNE (1987)

THE PARKS AND GARDENS OF INNER MELBOURNE
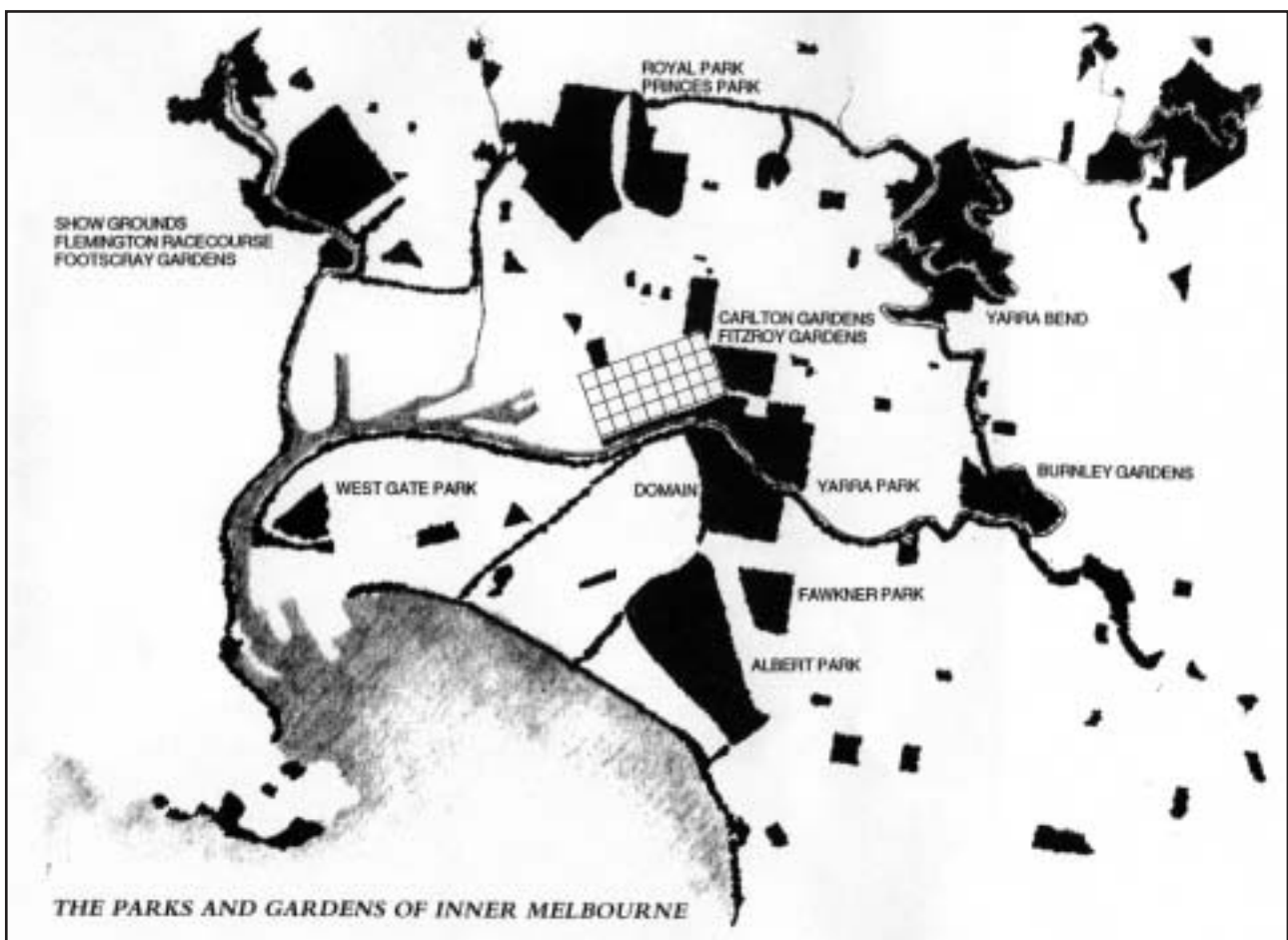
APPENDIX 4.7 MAP: THE STREETS
OF INNER MELBOURNE (1987)

THE STREETS OF INNER MELBOURNE

APPENDIX 4.8 SUMMARY OF EASTWOOD

"For most people life was centred on the growing suburbs, just as important to Melbourne in these years as the more spectacular growth of the outer suburbs in the 1880s. North Melbourne and Carlton were part of the Town Reserve set aside for town growth and extension when necessary and the house allotments were put up for auction between 1852-1867. "

"The lay-out of these suburbs represents the last valiant effort by the Survey Department to impose planning principles on the organisation of space in Melbourne but here too, as in every other suburb, the profit motive triumphed. The Survey Department laid out the street network and provided generally for quarter-acre house blocks. However in Central Carlton there was more variation with some blocks as small as one sixth of an acre and some quite large. The street lay-out there was so designed that no allotment was more than 2 blocks from a park, and land was granted to community institutions such as the Rifle Club. The suburban ideal, as planned by the Survey Department, was subverted by speculators and would-be landlords, who bought up groups of allotments, inserted narrow streets and even narrower lanes between the streets, and sub-divided the allotments into small house sites, some with frontages as narrow as 16 or 18 feet or less."

"A similar process occurred in the North Carlton are which was put up for auction in the 1870s. Of more than 2000 allotments sold by the Government, 79 percent were bought by purchasers in parcels of from 2 to 43. One section which the Government sold in 1870 as ten house sites had been sub-divided by private speculators into 72 small house blocks by 1890."

"Only in those suburbs which had been part of the Town Reserve was there any attempt at planning at all or any provision for parks and squares. In every other suburb the Crown sold in big blocks, from 25 acres to 60m acres, and the lay-out of streets and the sub-division into house allotments was done by private speculators on the grid-iron system for maximum profit. Block size depended on the market they were aiming for. The organisation of suburban space in Melbourne is a monument to the economic motivations of the immigrants and to the profit-oriented market economy of the nineteenth century in which they operated. Our suburbs have been shaped by speculators."

"With the West Melbourne swamp preventing settlement on the western edge of the city and the land beyond it too far for a walking community to travel to work, settlement had to go north and south, and above all, along the river to the east. So Collingwood, Richmond, Fitzroy and Prahran became the most populous suburbs."

(Eastwood)

St. Kilda's location on the Bay and close proximity to the CBD resulted in its growth as a sea-side resort, comprising large villas for city businessmen. The size of the estates enabled them to become self-supporting in produce, fruit and dairy products.

Due to the flat and poorly-drained land located in Richmond and Collingwood, men were able to build as cheaply as they wished, with any kind of materials. Tanneries, tallow-works, breweries and fell-mongering were located along the river where City building regulations did not apply. This industry created employment for those who lived within a small radius of the factories and breweries. Here, most blocks were bought by speculators and sub-divided for later sale, mostly to landlords who put up row-houses on very small blocks, with narrow frontages which averaged 25 feet to 30 feet.

Suburbs separated by large tracts of rural land, enabled people to keep cow, pigs and goats, giving the region a rural feel. A strong sense of separated and local identity was created through face-to-face (personal) and walking communities with wide carriageways and footpaths and multiple pubs to promote interaction. Networks and community relationships were based upon institutions such as churches and primary schools, and facilitated movement and interaction beyond local districts.

(paraphrased from Eastwood pp48-50)

The value of these areas came to be appreciated after the process of 'gentrification' began in the 1960s. The decentralisation of industry in particular, and then services, institutions and shopping to the outer suburbs, and the subsequent movement of blue-collar workers to live in these areas, left the inner suburbs free for "the better-off, better-educated, younger and more articulate middle-class professionals" (McLoughlin:1992:4). The popularity of Victorian and Edwardian housing stock had caused an invasion of inner Melbourne, and houses once deemed only fit for lower class, were renovated, extended and re-sold for large profits. By the 1980s, attention had switched from slum clearance and comprehensive redevelopment to conservation and planning scheme protection.
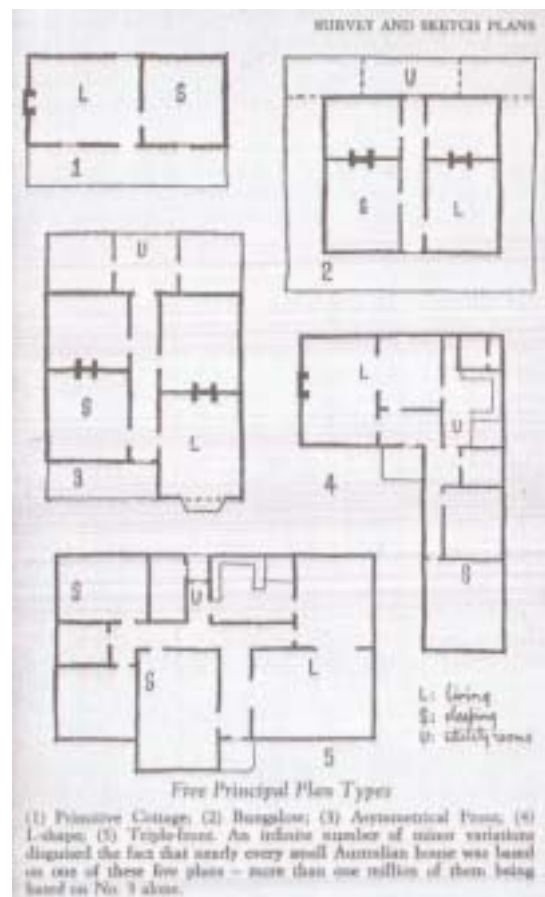
APPENDICES TO CHAPTER 6

APPENDIX 6.1 HOUSE TYPE SKETCHES, ROBIN BOYD

The illustrations reproduced here are from Boyd, R., 1977, *Australia's Home: Why Australians Built the Way They Did*, Penguin Books, Ringwood.

Boyd's 'Five Principal Plan Types'

He states in the caption that nearly every small Australian house was based on one of these.

Five Principal Plan Types

(1) Primitive Cottage; (2) Bungalow; (3) Asymmetrical Front; (4) L-shape; (5) Triple-front. An infinite number of minor variations disguised the fact that nearly every small Australian house was based on one of these five plans – more than one million of them being based on No. 3 alone.

Boyd's Eleven 'Major Steps of Stylism'

Victoria was settled too late to enjoy much genuine Georgian-style building, but the miner's cottages and early farm houses of Victorian times share many characteristics with styles 1 and 2.

Major Steps of Stylism (1)

Major Steps of Stylism (2)

Major Steps of Stylism (9)

Major Steps of Stylism (3)

Major Steps of Stylism (6)

Major Steps of Stylism (10)

Major Steps of Stylism (3)

Major Steps of Stylism (7)

Major Steps of Stylism (11)

Major Steps of Stylism (4)

Major Steps of Stylism (8)

Boyd's comment on 1955-1970 styles

"About 1955 brick manufacturers began making with American machines the smoothly extruded wire-cut bricks. These came in many colours, but none was more popular for houses than a light pinky-tan usually known as Salmon. This was generally contrasted with dark brown roofing tiles. Apart from these conventions the ordinary vernacular house grew quite sober and sensible in the 1960s. It dropped affections such as corner windows and sometimes even the wrought iron. It often had little or no applied decoration. It was in fact often simpler than the Sydney school architect's houses just described. It was also adopting a better range of equipment indoors, largely made in Australia and now at last white instead of cream. Some form of modified central heating became fairly standard equipment in the southern states. A streak of Diggerism nevertheless remained to resist, as something unnecessary and unAustralian, air-conditioning and dish-washers. However, the vernacular house was an undoubtedly better, in 1968, than ever before. It was guilty only of a lack of imagination and a certain primness that was reflected in the tightly clipped garden and motor-mowered expanse of unused lawn."

(Boyd p301)

APPENDIX 6.2 STYLE OF PRIVATE GARDENS, ROBIN BOYD

Front gardens make an important contribution to neighbourhood character. Although private garden planting is not a topic relevant to town planning policy and controls, it is worth noting these comments from Boyd:

Australian garden styles through the eras

The 1830s brought visions of garden cities and suburbs, with greenbelts incorporated into town planning principles: "A park should surround every town like a belt one mile in width, an informal playground and promenade space, this park should not be disfigured by wearisome uniformity of trees... every street should open out into the park and every... house should be... obliged to be built with verandahs" (Colonel Light's plan for Adelaide 1837:pp.33-34).

A typical Australian 1940s suburb had several forms. One is described as "a winding avenue of heavy oaks lined by tall fences and impenetrable hedges... with a monumental gateway, a sweep of gravel drive, bay windows, lawns, flowering shrubs. The second comprises "narrow grass strips dividing sidewalks from the roadway, cropped trees... low continuous fences made of... pickets or bricks or woven wire, squares of lawn with beds of annuals and low shrubs and a sprinkling of decorative trees. The last is a "treeless traffic way... with continuous rows of buildings on each hand pressing greedily forward over the garden" (pp.12-13.).

Throughout the 1850s, the Gold Era, garden lawns extended from verandahs and contained beds of roses and geraniums. During the 1860s, houses and their gardens were still neat and trimmed. Picket fences were popular to "divide the public mud from the private garden", which with the help of a water supply and the rubber hose, had developed into a "precise architectonic composition of low shrubs and flower beds, broad nurtured buffalo grass lawns and gravel drives". Shade around verandahs was provided by banksias, honeysuckles and fruit trees (p.47).

With the expansion of the city in the 1880s, houses appeared everywhere, with little room for the greenbelts suggested in the 1930s. "On each bare hill-top a great mansion appeared, threw a high iron fence around itself and withdrew behind a rising curtain of nurtured deciduous trees". These extravagant estates boasted big trees and "fairytale" landscapes. With the increase in the use of lawn-mowers, the garden beds of the 60s shrank, and squares of lawn of buffalo grass expanded to the edges of properties (pp.54-57)

Though the gardens of the 1890s Queen Anne era were as "picturesque" as the architecture, they were much more "formal". "They were [still] based on buffalo lawns, broken only by a gravel path, twisting in a slow 's' to the front door, narrow flower beds lined the side fences and a tall, opaque cyprus or pittosporum hedge, trimmed to a velvety smoothness, hid the street. Rather than native species, ornamental English trees were used to "improve" the landscape, which was framed by four foot high wooden picket fences (pp.66-71)

L'Art Nouveau emerged in the early twentieth century, "a season for flower-lovers", with flower baskets as common decorative elements. This era gave way to 'modern architecture during the 1910s, in which Functionalists discarded ornate design and decoration and focused upon structure and practicality. By 1915, sheds began appearing in back gardens, to house the increasingly popular automobile. Side paths and entrances were introduced, and tall cyprus hedges were reduced to low leafy saltbush barriers behind woven wire fences, resulting in a loss of privacy in the front garden. The Bungalow style finally embraced native flora, with "hydrangeas and rhododendrons crowd[ing] the building base, rockeries and flagged paths twist[ing] around the edge of the lawn and the formal bed of annuals disappeared... now spare young white gums, handsome red flowering-gums and mauve-flowering, lacy jacarandas grew thickly in front gardens and on wide lawn side-walks" (pp.71-90).

In the 1920s, as Jazz Style merged into Spanish Mission, small wire or red-brick fences were replaced by thick stuccoed garden walls. During the 1930s, Modern replaced the shabby Bungalow style gardens with paths and garden beds straightened out and trimmed with border plants. Hedges that once stood behind fences disappeared as did "the pretence that the front garden was a living space". "The bed of annuals that replaced the hedge was called the 'display border'". Nature strips became a 'mark' of white collar areas, and "carried trees which were regularly lopped into stunted knots of foliage. In some areas, such as Perth, front fences were removed completely, "the neighbouring private gardens and public side-walk often merged in one sweep of lawns and shrubs". The backyard became the only private outdoor space and therefore was given significantly more attention than before. "Wide lawns extended from the house, lined by flower beds and broken by fruit trees, usually... at least one lemon tree. Vegetable beds in parallel rows were tucked into a rear corner." Towards the late 1940s - early 1950s - austerity reached great heights with straight lawns and narrow flower beds, with clipped shrubs, and electric mowers aided the maintenance of large square lawns (pp.92-119).

Boyd, R., 1978, *Australia's Home: Why Australians built the way they did*, Pelican/Penguin Books, Middlesex, England,

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PHOTOGRAPH SOURCES

There was insufficient time and budget to take photographs specially for this report. Therefore photographs from Planisphere's photo library were used where possible. Where suitable photos could not be obtained from this source, selective use was made of government publications, as follows:

NO	TITLE	SOURCE
2.1	Great Dividing Range: Eastern	FC
2.2	Great Dividing Range: Western	FC
2.3	Western Basalt Plains	FC
2.4	Northern Plains	FC
2.6	West Gippsland Hills	FC
2.8	Peninsulas and Islands	AV
2.9	Bay Coast: Beach or Cliff	BCC
2.10	Bay Coast: Wetland or Environmental Area	LPS
2.11	Bass Strait Coast	FC
4.1(a)	'Inner Urban' Neighbourhood Character Type	MCC
6.2	Rural Freeway	AV

AV Atlas of Victoria, Victorian Government Printing, Melbourne, 1982
BCC Bayside City Council Coastal Strategy
FC Leonard, M., Hammond, R., 1984, Landscape Character Types of Victoria, Forest Commission Victoria
LPS Linking People and Spaces, Draft Open Space Strategy for Melbourne, Parks Victoria, 2001
MCC Urban Conservation in the City of Melbourne, City of Melbourne, 1985

QUOTATIONS

Extensive use has been made of quotations from suitable sources in some chapters. These are acknowledged and sourced. Permission to publish has not been sought.