

Extending Melbourne's arts and cultural facilities

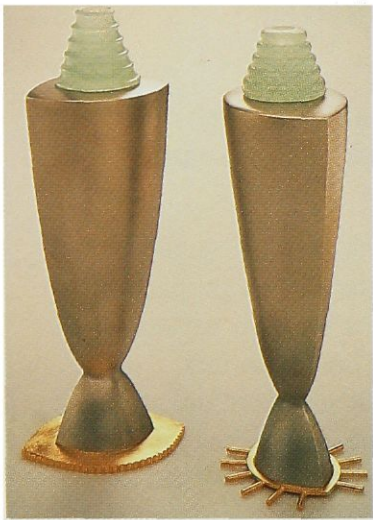
Metropolitan Melbourne is a city of culture. It supports a rich diversity of artistic activities. It is home to many nationally and internationally recognised cultural assets.

These include the collections of the National Gallery of Victoria, the Museum of Victoria, State Library of Victoria, Scienceworks and countless other institutions scattered throughout the suburbs, including the Museum of Modern Art at Heide, the McLelland Gallery and the Monash University Gallery. In fact, Melbourne probably has the highest concentration of public and commercial galleries in Australia. They exhibit the widest possible range of creative work, including contemporary and traditional Aboriginal art, European art, world art and Australian art from the 18th century to the present day. There is increasing interest in art forms based on new technologies.

The Melbourne Symphony, the Victoria State Opera, the Australian Ballet, Circus Oz, the Melbourne Theatre Company and numerous other dance and theatre companies add to the city's cultural life – as do its art, music and drama schools. Melbourne hosts successful international festivals of the arts, comedy, film and chamber music as well as many community and alternative arts events, including the Next Wave Festival, the Moomba Carnival and the Antipodes Festival.



The Frankston Cultural Centre, opened in 1995, augments the already rich array of arts facilities in suburban Melbourne and the central city.



***Oil and Vinegar* by Beatrice Schlabowsky.** Melbourne's reputation as craft centre rests not only on the skills of gifted individuals, but also on the enormous breadth of grassroots creative activity the city supports.

The city is a major centre of film culture and production – the foundation provided by the State Film Centre, Film Victoria and the Melbourne International Film Festival is being extended by new initiatives in multimedia and hybrid art forms. Melbourne also has a strong craft tradition – evidence of which can be seen in Craft Victoria, the Meat Market Craft Centre and shops and markets throughout the metropolitan area.

The most heavily used of the city's cultural assets are its 117 public libraries. They have 2.3 million members who make over 21 million visits and borrow more than 38 million items each year.

Melbourne's streets, parks and gardens provide impromptu venues for performers and buskers. They are also home to many artworks, ranging from historical monuments to contemporary sculpture.

Arts 21 is the Victorian Government's strategy for developing the arts industry into the next century. The strategy recognises the key role the arts industry has played in establishing Melbourne's reputation as the cultural capital of Australia. It aims to develop the city's existing reservoir of arts skills and talent through six specific plans. Among other things, these will improve facilities for the presentation of the arts, encourage leadership and best practice in the arts, and stimulate arts activities responsive to the interests of Victorians and visitors to Melbourne.

The Government also recognises that the arts industry contributes enormously to Melbourne's creative ambience – accentuating the qualities of intellectual vitality and innovation which the city must project if it is to compete effectively for opportunities in the international arena.

The Government is integrating arts industry development and urban development in two ways. First, it has initiated the Agenda 21 program of civic projects which will provide metropolitan Melbourne with important new cultural and recreational facilities. Second, it will define cultural precincts throughout Melbourne to provide a focus for future planning.

Among the most important of these is the arts and entertainment precinct along the Yarra in the central city, which caters for the whole metropolitan population. Already well established, the Government will improve it further by:

- ☐ completing the Melbourne Exhibition Centre, and refurbishing the Old Customs House so that it can be opened to the public
- ☐ using developments at the Victorian College of the Arts, the CUB Malthouse and the YMCA site to consolidate Southbank's standing as an arts precinct of international quality
- ☐ drawing up redevelopment plans for the National Gallery of Victoria, the Victorian Arts Centre and the State Film Centre.

Circus Oz is a unique physical theatre company which has established an international reputation – much like Melbourne itself.



The emerging innovation precinct centred on RMIT and the University of Melbourne will be complemented by two more *Agenda 21* projects – the new Museum of Victoria in Carlton and the restoration and redevelopment of the State Library.

In addition, the Government will provide funding for a study into the feasibility of establishing a public lending library in the central business district for city residents, visitors and workers.

The Community Support Fund has made a significant contribution to the cost of building the Frankston Cultural Centre, the new Jewish Museum in East St Kilda, and the Performing Arts Centre and National Wool Museum in Geelong. The Government recently announced that the fund will be used to help purchase and refurbish a new base for Circus Oz in Port Melbourne.

Developing sport, recreation and racing facilities

Melbourne has long been regarded as the sports capital of Australia, and this is borne out by the city's superior sporting facilities, an impressive schedule of major events (including the Australian Tennis Open, the Spring Racing Carnival, the Australian Football League Grand Final and the forthcoming Australian Formula One Grand Prix), the large crowds drawn to sporting events, and the high number of Victorians in elite competition both in Australia and overseas.

Sport and recreation bring significant economic and social benefits to Victoria as a whole as well as putting Melbourne in the international spotlight. We can use the city's sporting reputation, its enviable array of world-class sporting venues and its proximity to surf beaches, snowfields and bushland to advantage by promoting the city as a sports tourism destination.

The Albert Park redevelopment isn't just restoring the historic lakeside motor racing track. It also involves the construction of new sporting facilities catering for everything from soccer to water polo.



The Government will reinforce Melbourne's competitive strengths in sport and recreation by:

- ☐ completing the Melbourne Sports and Aquatic Centre at Albert Park
- ☐ preparing a plan for managing and upgrading major sporting facilities, including Olympic Park
- ☐ continuing to develop quality horse racing and equestrian facilities such as the Equestrian Centre at Werribee Park.

Fostering cultural diversity

Melbourne has a long tradition of welcoming people from all countries and walks of life, making it one of the most multicultural cities in the world. Metropolitan Melbourne's population is drawn from over 130 different countries. One out of every four residents was born overseas or has overseas-born parents. The diverse cultural origins of Melbourne's population have contributed to its urbanity and tolerance, while the city's links to many homelands have generated significant business and development opportunities.

The Government will support cultural diversity by:

- ☐ promoting cultural activities that acknowledge and enhance Melbourne's ethnic diversity and richness
- ☐ promoting multiculturalism through school education programs and other initiatives
- ☐ providing a favourable business climate and quality educational services to attract diverse immigrant groups