FEDERATION SQUARE REVIEW
Background Information
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FEDERATION SQUARE REVIEW
FORWARD

Since its opening in 2002, Federation Square has become one of Melbourne’s most iconic landmarks. A meeting place for all Melburnians in the centre of our city and home to some of Victoria’s leading cultural institutions, it welcomes approximately 10 million visitors every year.

The Square is going through a period of change and challenge, and we want to make sure this key piece of infrastructure continues to be an exciting, appealing and attractive place to visit.

Key projects already underway to enhance the area in and around Federation Square, include the redevelopment of the Australian Centre for the Moving Image, the construction of the Metro Tunnel (Town Hall Station) and the transformation of the Melbourne Arts Precinct.

The Federation Square Review will tap into the aspirations of Victorians and the ideas from the very best urban design minds to ensure it continues to grow as an innovative and focal place for the community, while also examining Federation Square’s financial and governance arrangements. The review will consider ways to deliver a vibrant and attractive precinct with more public and commercial space, encouraging gatherings and providing better access to the Yarra River and adjacent landscapes.

There will be a focus on how Federation Square functions as a public space so that it continues to stand out as an iconic Melbourne attraction that is enjoyed by not only Victorians but people from across Australia and all over the world.

We invite key stakeholders, members of the public and tour operators from across Victoria to tell us firsthand about why they come to visit Federation Square and how it can be improved.

We look forward to your feedback and insights to help identify and explore the actions the state government can take to benefit Federation Square now and into the future.

The Hon
Martin Pakula MP
1 HOW IS THE REVIEW BEING CONDUCTED?

The Review is being conducted in two parts:

Public purpose and built form review is focusing on:

- How Federation Square has been used by the public to date, public attitudes and sentiments towards the public space and whether community expectations for Federation Square have been met.
- Views of the community on how the public space might be used in the future, to build a shared vision for how it could evolve to benefit Victorians and visitors.
- Design principles to inform contemporary enhancement of Federation Square, to be informed by consideration and awareness of the new Town Hall station entry, the ACMI redevelopment and other relevant precinct visions.
- Options for the future to increase public interest, engagement and connectivity to the Yarra River from Federation Square.
- Considering opportunities beyond the Federation Square site.
- Careful consideration of heritage controls, other relevant requirements and relevant implications.

Financial and governance review is focusing on:

- Current and expected future financial position and capabilities.
- Sustainable operating model to deliver on the vision for Federation Square.
- Existing ownership and fit for purpose governance structures and arrangements, to better deliver on a shared vision for Federation Square.
- Consideration of best practice global benchmarking of successful Public Squares and identifying best practice in financial management and governance.

Note: the financial and governance review is already well advanced.
1.1 CONSULTATION PROCESS

Community consultation is an important step in the public purpose and built-form review. During this phase, the review will tap into the vision of Victorians and the very best urban design minds in relation to Melbourne’s public square – considering ways to deliver more public space, encourage public gatherings and provide better access to the Yarra River.

The community and stakeholders are invited to have their say from early August 2019 on:

- What values and aspirations community and stakeholders hold for Federation Square.
- Deeper conversations will be held with key stakeholders to help develop a community vision and inform recommendations for government to consider. The consultation will also ask key stakeholders to consider how Federation Square could better connect with the surrounding transport links, sporting and cultural precincts.

The consultation activities will occur onsite at Federation Square and online via engage.vic.gov.au. The consultation will seek to attract a diverse representation of Victorians and domestic and international visitors, Traditional Owners, young people, culturally and linguistic diverse as well as Federation Square tenants.

The consultation findings will be considered alongside all technical inputs and expertise informing the review. A snapshot of broad community engagement findings will be made available to the public.

If you would like to know more about the consultation process and to sign-up to receive project updates visit engage.vic.gov.au.
Did you know?

- Federation Square is the most significant permanent contribution to commemorate Australia’s Centenary of Federation (1901-2001) and one of the most important civic designed places in Australia this century.
- Key reasons for visiting Federation Square are:
  1. Major events
  2. Atmosphere
  3. Connection
  4. Bucket List
- According to survey data from Tourism Research Australia, Federation Square was the third most visited Melbourne Attraction / Precinct by international visitors in FY2019, after CBD Shopping and Queen Victoria Market.
- People aged between 35 to 44 are estimated to make up the highest proportion of people visiting Federation Square followed by 45 to 54.
- 74% of visitors are highly likely to visit Federation Square again.
- Over 1000 people did a tour of Federation Square in 2018-19.
- 75% of all visitors to Federation Square are female.
- Federation Square has over 81k Facebook followers.
- 2019 Visitor Insights Survey showed that 86% of respondents expressed positive sentiment about Federation Square.

1.2 KEY FACTS ABOUT FEDERATION SQUARE TODAY AND HOW IT IS RUN

- Federation Square is managed by Fed Square Pty Ltd (FSPL) which was established by the Victorian Government in 1999.
- FSPL is responsible for the coordination and management of all the tenants on the Square, programming and marketing of all public spaces and all aspects of managing the assets (i.e. buildings and infrastructure) and operations.
- FSPL is wholly owned by State Trustees (State Government) and has an independent Board of Directors.
- FSPL covers all operating and capital costs through the revenue it generates from tenancies, carparking, third-party venue hire as well as borrowings. Tenancy rental comprises 64% of total revenue, venue hire/event revenue (15%), car park (14%) and Other (7%).
- FSPL operates under a Constitution and a Civic and Cultural Charter that was jointly developed and agreed by the State and the City of Melbourne.
- The Civic and Cultural Charter recognise Melbourne’s pre-eminence as a centre of creativity and innovation and its diverse arts and cultural festivals. The tenants on the site benefit from the yearly programming and activation of the square. (Click here for the Charter)
- On the 11 October 2018 Heritage Victoria recommended that Federation Square be included as a Registered Place in the Victorian Heritage Register for its historical, architectural, aesthetic, cultural and technical significance to the State of Victoria. An Interim Protection Order over Federation Square is in place until 31 August 2019 allowing for permit applications to be lodged with Heritage Victoria prior to a determination by the Heritage Council of Victoria. During the course of the Review, it is anticipated that the Heritage Council will announce its decision on whether to include or not include Federation Square on the Victorian Heritage Register.
- The review will address implications flowing from the pending decision on the site’s inclusion on the Victorian Heritage Register.
- Major developments at Federation Square including the Metro Tunnel Town Hall station and the $36.6 million ACMI redevelopment will continue to progress in the context of the heritage recommendations.

For more detail refer to the Federation Square Annual Report 2017-18 (click here)
2 BACKGROUND AND HISTORY

2.1 ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS AT FEDERATION SQUARE

Since inception Federation Square has played host to a large number of cultural festivals, national flag raising events, vigils, celebratory events (such as the Queen’s visit, Oprah Winfrey, Welcome Home to Cadel Evans), sporting events (such as the launch of the Grand Prix, Presidents Cup Golf, Cricket teams and football teams), the digital screen being used as an art gallery and its use for sporting events (e.g. AFL Grand Final, Melbourne Cup, Australian Open Tennis Championships, Super Bowl and World Cups).

It is also home to some of Victoria’s leading cultural institutions including the Ian Potter Centre: NGV Australia, Australian Centre for the Moving Image (ACMI) and the Koorie Heritage Trust.

Recent events and activities include:

- River Rink, winter wonderland
- Partnership with Channel 7 for Australian Open
- Participation in White Night
- African Food and Cultural Festival
- Christmas Square with City of Melbourne
- International Day against Homophobia, Biphobia, Intersexism, and Transphobia
- Pause Fest
- Victoria Multicultural Festival
- Melbourne Knowledge Week
- Polish Festival
- National Reconciliation Week
- Starting point for the Long Walk
- Victoria Multicultural Festival
- Mabo Day
- Japanese Summer Festival
- Diwali, the Festival of Lights
- Shep Square with City of Shepparton showcasing regional food and produce
2.2 VISITATION AT FEDERATION SQUARE

Federation Square is the iconic heart of Melbourne, receiving approximately 10 million visitors each year. Since opening in 2002 Federation Square has welcomed more than 100 million visitors.

A survey at Federation Square in 2018 found that:

- Most visitors were from surrounding Melbourne suburbs (44%), 16 per cent were from interstate and the same proportions were from overseas.

- The highest proportion of visitors to Federation Square are aged between 35 – 54 years.

- Visitors perceived the square as an art and cultural precinct (42%), one third saw it as a community venue (31%) and fewer saw the square as a meeting place (16%), entertainment (7%), food (3%) or sport (0%) destination.

- It is noteworthy that visitor perception of Federation Square (based on people who visit and those who have not) is distinct from the main reasons why people visit Federation Square.

The developments at Federation Square including the Metro Tunnel Town Hall Station entrance and the $36.6 million ACMI redevelopment will continue to progress throughout the Review period and will contribute to both the Square’s accessibility and visitation numbers upon their completion.

1 Federation Square – Report of intercept interview findings, Cooper and Badcock, February 2018.
2 Federation Square – Report of intercept interview findings, Cooper and Badcock, February 2018.
2.3 HISTORY OF FEDERATION SQUARE

First Nations history

For tens of thousands of years, the land beneath Federation Square was a sacred Aboriginal meeting place and was the home and gathering space for the Wathaurung, the Bunurong and the Woiworung.

European settlement

Since European settlement the Federation Square site has had variety of different land uses that each have had an important contribution to the city including an office and morgue (1854), Fish Market (until 1892) and train station (1861).

Princes Bridge

In 1888 Princes Bridge’s construction was completed which joined Swanston Street to St Kilda Road. Previously punts across the Yarra River connected these busy areas. The design of Princes Bridge came through an architectural design competition and was needed as an important connection and crossing point for the city.

Office towers

The 1967 development of the Princes Gate towers was the next notable development on the site connecting Flinders Street to the Yarra. The development was made up of two office towers using brutalist architecture design that was unpopular and overshadowed St Pauls Cathedral. The east tower housed the Victorian Employees Federation and the west tower housed the Gas and Fuel Corporation. The Princes Gate development arcade included a supermarket, clothes shops and a bank. The towers were fully demolished by 1997.

Design competition

In 1996 the Victorian Government held an international design competition to redefine Federation Square as the city’s civic space. The brief included requirements to create a natural amphitheatre and include cultural and commercial spaces. The major requirement and design challenge were that the new space had to be built over the existing railyards which were visually unattractive and severed access between the city and the Yarra River on the south-east side. London firm Lab Architecture studio partnered with renowned Melbourne firm Bates Smart to deliver the winning design after a shortlisting process.

Construction

Works began in 1998 to construct Federation Square with $450 million investment supported by the Victorian State Government, City of Melbourne, the Commonwealth Government and the private sector through various tenancies and major sponsorships.

Opening day

Federation Square opened in October 2002 and has attracted high volumes of visitors. Its unique design has made it the most awarded project in the history of the Royal Australian Institute of Architects Victoria (RAIA), receiving five major awards for architectural and design excellence a year after opening.
2.4 WHAT WE NEED TO KNOW FROM YOU

We want to know your aspirations and ideas for the future of Federation Square. We’re open to hearing all ideas and views and this information will be invaluable in shaping a community vision for Federation Square. The consultation findings will inform the review alongside the technical work being undertaken.

2.5 HOW TO GET INVOLVED

Please visit the engage.vic.gov.au site to:
Complete an online survey.
Learn more about the consultation process and sign-up for project updates.

We also encourage you to visit the Engagement Hub at Federation Square to talk to one of our friendly team members and participate in one of our on-site engagement activities – check engage.vic.gov.au for more details and opening hours.