

# FUTURE MELBOURNE

## Future Melbourne

### Forum 1: Melbourne's Cultural Identity: What do we value?

Date: Wednesday 13th Jun 2007

Time: 6:00pm - 7:30pm

Venue: Bio 21 Theatre, 30 Flemington Rd Parkville

#### **WELCOME ADDRESS – Professor Vijoleta Braach-Maksvytis, Deputy Vice Chancellor, Innovation and Development, University of Melbourne**

[Vijoleta]

Good evening everybody and a very warm welcome this evening to this first of five fora that starts the wonderful project of having your say about the future of Melbourne and what it can look like. And what a better way to start the very first forum than to have a typical Melbourne evening in June but isn't it wonderful; it's raining, it's cold, it's gorgeous. So it's fantastic that you're able to come here and this is the first of a series of five that will kick start this whole process which will last over the next 15 months or so. And we'd like to hear the views of all that, all the people who are part of the city, who visit the city, who care about the city and have some interaction.

The University of Melbourne and the City of Melbourne have joined forces to actually create this process that involves as wide a possible of stakeholders in this planning of the future of the city. And we're particularly pleased as a university to be part of that, to engage in the city that we, you know, we share the same street as the Council and the roots of this university go back to the foundations of the city itself. So it's a tremendous privilege that we have as a university to be part of this. So I won't take up any more time and I'll just introduce Councillor Carl Jennings, sorry Jetter and, for the traditional welcome and then we'll kick off.

Councillor Carl Jetter, City of Melbourne

Carl Jetter

Thank you very much and as we're talking about our future, good evening ladies and gentlemen, as we're talking about our future, looking into the future I think it's important that we connect with our history and where our city all started from. And therefore as we always do within the City of Melbourne, I'd like to start with a traditional welcome, which is we respectfully acknowledge that we're meeting on the traditional lands of the Kulin nation. This special place is now known by its European name as Melbourne. Today Melbourne is one of the very great multicultural cities of the world, a significant meeting place. For the great Kulin nation, Melbourne has always been an important meeting place and location for events of social, educational, sporting and cultural significance.

Thank you very much.

## **MODERATOR'S PREFACE - Dr Gael Jennings**

Gael Jennings

Well we've got quite a few welcomes, really, haven't we. I'll try and keep mine very brief then, thank you Councillor Jetter. So my name is Gael Jennings and I'm moderating this series of public fora, all but the last one when I'll be in Thailand, so I'm sorry, on holiday. Now as [Vijoleta] just said, it's a very typical cold, lovely Melbourne evening, and so welcome to come and have a chat about the city's future, what kind of future we want. Every 10 years the City of Melbourne actually has a plan for the city;, the one that's current is *City Plan 2010* and it's about to be replaced by the new one which is *Future Melbourne*, and that will take us up to 2020. And it's a plan that will look at all the activities and the life of Melbourne in the coming years, a forward plan. It's due to go before the Melbourne City Council at the end of next year and as [Vijoleta] said, it's got joint partners; the two major ones are the City of Melbourne and the University of Melbourne. And they are inviting you and all sectors of the community, to be as deeply involved as you wish to be in what is a truly consultative and open-ended process which will begin with tonight's public forum and it will end when there is a negotiated and agreed plan that goes before Council.

And the way in which this will work is that there are five chief forums,, tonight is about Melbourne's identity, what we value about Melbourne. They run each week for five weeks. Next week's forum is about Melbourne's prosperity, the week after, meeting environmental shocks, the week after that, change and social inclusion, and then the last one is building our city for the future. And in each of these there will be invited experts who are passionate about Melbourne and live in Melbourne who will speak very briefly and then will be here to just inform and guide your discussion.

But that's just the plank and around that there is an interactive conversation that will be ongoing. There's a website which you'll see a million times, it's [www.futuremelbourne.com.au](http://www.futuremelbourne.com.au), and it's interactive; inside that webpage there is an e-Village where these forums will be—they're recorded and they'll be put on there. All the interactions will be guided in there and you can make your comments, your input, your visions, whatever it is you want to do. On there, you can build on other people's comments and so on, so it will be truly interactive. Also on there is a questionnaire that you can fill in, there's the mailing address—you can actually send in things by real mail—and any other new public conversations that are event-based will also be listed there.

And as time goes on, the team, the Future Melbourne team will be drawing together the things that are said and argued, negotiated, debated upon and getting towards agreement, and will post major points which then you can build on further. And towards the very end of the process it will be brought down to some sort of more 'nitty gritty' points and then for future, more targeted consultation. Opportunities to do that will be put on the website so that you'll know and they'll be advertised elsewhere.

Now what this process will actually be talking about, it will be to raise—it will be talking

about key urban issues basically, things like, well anything you want to raise of course, things like climate change, rising energy cost, water shortage, security, the vitality of the city, its identity, access to housing, all sorts of things that you might want to talk about. But the process will go through some kind of consensus or definitely canvassing what we value as Melbourne, what Melbourne's values are, what our identity is and that's of course the core function of tonight.

And after you've got the value of your city that you're operating from, then you can start to look at different scenarios, different issues, negative and positive, that you want to bring up. And talk about perhaps different visions for Melbourne and what the possibilities there are and different scenarios. And then through this very consultative process both in actuality and through the interactive web space, be able to get to some kind of negotiated visions and scenarios and on from there, a plan that's been negotiated and agreed on and considered by Council.

As I said earlier, you can be as involved as you like. So if you want to be really involved and you've already got a vision, like you think Melbourne should be the new business capital of Australia, then you can actually enrol other people through this process. You can say *Okay, come onboard, come and support my vision*—get online and talk about it bring in all your other partners, you put up your visions, you talk about your scenarios, you have all those debates, you have them online. If the Future Melbourne team sees that there's a bit of consensus and momentum going there, then it might get picked as one of the major target points. And then of course it has to be negotiated against the other visions that have been picked up and talked about. And so in that way, what the major partners of Future Melbourne are hoping to get, is something that's truly consensual and democratic to come before the Council. And by the way, a new Council by the time it gets there, by the end of next year.

But you might not want to be that involved; you might want to just share your views tonight or at any other of the events. You might want to just do it in writing through the questionnaire which should be on your seat—if it's not on your seat it will be available as you walk out the door, through the webpage and through the so called *e-Village* which is on the webpage. Again, that's [futuremelbourne.com.au](http://futuremelbourne.com.au). Or you can just wait and see what other people raise and then log in much later and get involved with some of those issues once it's further down the track. So all of those are ways that are available for you to participate. .

So let's start with tonight's—and I'll try to be brief because I've been very severe with the speakers saying they can only speak for five minutes so that you'll all have a chance to have your conversation—tonight we're going to be talking about Melbourne's cultural identity, what do we value? And these are the kind of things you might want to be thinking about and what we'd like to discuss, so what is it that you love about Melbourne? What's Melbourne's identity? What are our values? What features of the city are we really proud of? What are the unique elements and identities of Melbourne? What's

wrong with Melbourne? What don't we like? Are we seen as innovative or conservative? Are we really better than Sydney? Can we plan a better city? What are the strengths that Melbourne has that we could build on? What are our emergent strengths like the fact that we're a knowledge centre and we're doing a lot of cross-fertilisation with our knowledge hence the University of Melbourne being a partner in this. What resources can we draw on to go forward? What are the big issues facing us that we have to take into account as we do go forward in terms of building on the cultural identity that we want?

So tonight as you can see we're joined by some pretty exemplary Melburnians who have contributed a great deal to Melbourne. They all have a passion for Melbourne, they have a huge expertise in it and they're here to give you a short nugget of what they think, drawing from their expertise, and then to help you with the discussion that we're going to have afterwards. So they'll speak for five minutes each and then we'll have about three quarters of an hour at the end for our conversation altogether.

Now please be aware that this forum is going to be recorded and put on the website so be very careful and clean and you can check it out later.

Our first panellist is a man who is shaping Melbourne's physical, intellectual and ethical landscape. Morry Schwartz is a property developer and a publisher. He was born in Hungary, he's the son of Hungarian refugees, matriculated from Melbourne High School, went onto study architecture at Melbourne uni but wisely left early to travel the world. And he set up a film distribution company at a young age, 22 I believe, and then the pioneering publishing company *Outback Press*. And then after that he very smartly set up Aardvark Concreting Company, which was a fledgling development company to finance the press and that's more or less what he's still doing because you'll all be aware of course, as you can see in your programs, about his property development company.

But from my point of view Morry's greatest contribution is to the public discourse that he started up in Melbourne, again, in Australia, he put his own money on the line and under the Black Ink emblem he has been publishing the Quarterly Essay for some time now and since 2005—the Monthly Magazine which is the magazine of intellectual discourse in this country. It covers Australian politics, society and culture.

Morry's interests lie in Melbourne's big picture. He likes to see ideas become a reality. He's interested in culture, destiny and opportunities so let's hear from Morry Schwarz now.

**PANELLIST PRESENTATION – Speaker 1: Morry Schwartz - Property Developer and Publisher**

Morry Schwartz Gael, thank you very much. Ladies and gentlemen. What's not to love about Melbourne? What a city: it's young, big and growing, it's blessed with natural assets, a pleasant climate, well-planned, multicultural, highly educated and wealthy, conservative, civil and famed for its sport and culture.

It's often said that geography is destiny and in the case of Melbourne you could say that geology is also destiny; gold made us. The wealth allowed the creation of a powerful yet gentle city, a city of such good bones that more than a century later it's still been voted as the most liveable city in the world. But we have our liabilities, the tyranny of distance was always there. And as the city grows, pressures and challenges are mounting, not least the challenge of the mega shift from industrial to the post-industrial age.

But assets are often hidden liabilities. The fact that we've not been good at value-adding in Australia illustrates this well. It was just so easy to simply mine and export: so much wealth under our feet why bother to do more? It's human nature. Japan in the 70's and 80's had the opposite experience: no natural resources, they had to import it all, and they became the world's manufacturing powerhouse. And just as our assets can be liabilities, it is clear that our liabilities are our hidden assets; we seem to need adversity in order to succeed.

Now can we have a change of slide? To the liabilities. As we enter the post-industrial era, having been the industrial capital of Australia, we are the ones forced to reinvent ourselves most dramatically and that will stand us in very good stead. But we were never completely dependant on this industrial manufacturing, we always were a complex city with a balanced economy, agriculture, tourism, finance etcetera. So we're not like Detroit or the other American rustbelt cities. In a tale of three cities, say Melbourne, Detroit and Sydney, it is Melbourne that is best positioned for the future. Sydney doesn't need to change much, having depended less on manufacturing, it can go to the beach and rest on its laurels. Detroit, which was completely dependent on manufacturing, is structurally damaged. But Melbourne knows it has challenges but not insurmountable ones and it tries harder.

Applying my opening theory that our liabilities are our hidden assets, let's quickly go through our red list. Our first five liabilities relate in part to tourism and visitation. We are remote, on the way to nowhere else, almost nowhere else, have nothing extraordinary to show really. We do know that cities which are over-dependent on tourism are stressed by it so is this a blessing in disguise? To a degree I think yes, but not entirely. For a balanced economy a city does need tourism and Melbourne could do with more. A city must make for itself a unique character, a character that is real.. The Melbourne Cup is a great example as was Aussie Rules. I do wonder if the VFL did the right thing in nationalising the sport.

Let me tell you an amazing story. At the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, tourists came to Melbourne all the way from Europe by ship to visit Baron Von Mueller's Botanical Gardens which were regarded as a wonder of the world and therein I think lies the secret. We must do some things better than they are done anywhere else in the world. But how do we do that? I think we can learn from the Von Mueller phenomenon. I'm sure that it was a huge investment for the city at the time, crucially, he was trusted to realise his vision. This is the secret I believe: choose great practitioners and don't be

parochial, fund them and give them the freedom to realise their vision.

Public galleries and public art are key elements in the fame of a city. Our galleries are very fine but our public art I think is woeful. Here is an idea. Why not let the expertise and the curators of the NGV choose and place public art? The outcome could be extraordinary. Cities like Barcelona and Turin are tourism magnets because of their public art.

Summing up the first five liabilities, we can't change geography but we can develop our culture and built form. So I'll go on with the liabilities. Sydney now is the commercial capital of Australia. Like [Hertz], this makes us try harder. The manufacturing base is dwindling, this forces us to forge our post-industrial economy. Pressure on affordable housing, I don't have an answer, maybe allow more density, plus maybe more sprawl. More on that just in a moment. Shortage of water, let's conserve but also let's find alternatives, let's charge for it. And let's desalinate; Dubai depends completely on desalination.

Education, standards are slipping. We are great exporters of education today, it does have its negatives in the pursuit of excellence for us but no time here to discuss this very serious problem. Traffic is worsening. I'm very against the privatisation of public transport and the privatisation of city cleaning. The State and City could do a far better job at these functions. Urban sprawl, stretching resources, the cost of stressed infrastructure is high and we've opted for the 2030, the American smart growth model, a limit on sprawl. Should we look at this again? Maybe it's too rigid, maybe we charge appropriately for the infrastructure and let the market decide where growth stops.

I haven't talked about the greening of the city. Both the State and the City Council are doing an exceptional job at this; the State is joining the [Clinton Group] and the City of Melbourne's new super-green headquarters is a triumph. This is an example of excellence, trying for the best in the world. I congratulate the Council and Rob Adams for this very visionary project. It is initiatives like this forum in which we communally brainstorm about the future which will get us there in good shape. I congratulate the City of Melbourne and Melbourne University for holding it. Thank you.

Gael Jennings

Thank you Morry, that's great. Right, well we're going to press on through all the panellists so that we can have a conversation at the end. Our next panellist is—you probably know her from The Brains Trust on The Einstein Factor and in many other ways. Dr Clare Wright is a post-doctoral fellow at the History Department of La Trobe University. She graduated from the University of Melbourne in 2002 with a PhD in Australian studies and her doctoral thesis actually won an inaugural award, the [Geoffrey Surle] award for the best post-graduate contribution to Australian history. And you'll be interested to know it was about women publicans in Victorian pubs, which I thought was terrific.

Clare also holds a Master of Arts in Public History from Monash University where she honed her skills and commitment to popularising history and she's been employed as a

lecturer at the University of Melbourne and as an executive officer of the History Council of Victoria. She was a judge in The Age Book of the Year Awards and the Victorian Premiere's Literary Awards and you will know her from her newspaper articles, her voice on ABC radio as recently as last night, and of course ABC TV. Dr Clare Wright.

**PANELLIST PRESENTATION: Speaker 2: Dr Clare Wright – Historian and Author**

Clare Wright

Thanks Gael. A visitor to Melbourne once commented on the scene that greeted him on his arrival: "Here the swart Briton ... walks shoulder to shoulder with the flat-faced Chinaman, the tall and stately Armenian, the lithe New Zealander, or South Sea Islander, the merry African from the United States, the grave Spaniard, the yellow-haired German, the tall sharp-visaged Yankee, and the lively Frenchman. In fact", the visitor noted, "every State in the world has its representative in the diggings of Victoria and the streets of Melbourne". This is the Melbourne that a delighted Robert Caldwell discovered in 1853. Apart from the reference to the goldfields and the somewhat [unpolitically] correct racial portraits, we might easily recognise our own city of today.

In 1861 a pioneer historian mused that the gold rush had transformed Melbourne "as if by the wand of a magician into one of the most bustling emporiums of the world". Later historians, like Graeme Davison in his classic *Marvellous Melbourne* have demonstrated the metropolis' cyclical capacity for spectacular material progress and the equally remarkable human costs of such phases of affluence and decline.

I think one of the great strengths of Melbourne as a city is its willingness to reveal its underbelly. This is not a sin city expose, a flesh wielding carnival of the transgressive and elicited; Melbourne has never been a showy place, even its Commonwealth Games spectacle used a duck rather than sequence and feathers to focus the world's attention. Melbourne is a serious place. Much as Manhattan has made anxiety and neurosis a centrepiece of its cultural attraction, Melbourne has proudly worn its head on its sleeve.

And part of this intellectual approach to life has been, and needs to remain, an analytical, critical tone in public conversations, in political debates and in planning decisions. By an intellectual approach, I'm not talking about an effete disconnected, critical practice of cultural elites that's all about pushing artistic boundaries or cutting edge design practices or conceptual craft or other high cultural extractions. I mean taking a more Oxford Dictionary definition of critical, that is containing or involving comments and opinions that analyse or judge something in a detailed way by engaging in critical practices in thinking about Melbourne's identity or values or future aspirations, I mean showing a continued willingness to ask hard, significant and sometimes provocative questions and being prepared to listen to uncomfortable, unsettling answers.

So if you ask, *who wins*, you also ask, *who loses*? If you ask, *what can we build*, you also ask, *what will we be tearing down*? If you ask, *how high can you go*, you will also

ask, *how low will we stoop, and is it worth it, and by what means do we measure success or failure?* If I sound like a wowser, I spoilsport, a wet blanket, a naysayer, well Melbourne has a proud tradition of them too.

When we talk about identity, the hard and provocative question is this, if this is who we are, who aren't we? Who don't we want to be? Is Melbourne just Carlton and Fitzroy? All sleek, black clothes and exceptionally good coffee, or is Melbourne Broadmeadows and Box Hill and Boronia too? Identity is a tricky issue. Defining a nation or a city's fundamental characteristics and values is always going to be a process of exclusion. Yet the concept of identity is often employed as a unifier, something that will bring us altogether hence the easily digestible, reassuring notions of national identity we hear, top-down, parrot-like, such as *mateship* or *relaxed* and *comfortable*. Or quick marketing fixes like *World's most liveable city*—sorry Morry. There might be an initial flurry of pride in hearing ourselves so described but then a stoush with a neighbour or a glance at our mortgage balance or an hour spent in a traffic jam listening to talkback radio and we know we're being weasel-worded again.

History I think can be an antidote to the sort of social disintegration, real or perceived, the boosterist labelling and apple pie values aimed to counteract. Our shared history is what genuinely unites us, across age, class, ethnicity, race and gender. Well told, honestly reported, sensitively sign-posted, the past belongs to all of us and it remains perversely hostile to public relations consultants. The beauty of history is that it is inherently complex, multi-layered and diverse.

One of my favourite books is a children's picture book—the other part of my CV that Gael failed to mention is that I have three children. It's a picture book by Nadia Wheatley called *My Place*. It looks at the same city block over 200 years, revealing the changing inhabitants and usages of the natural and built environment. As the layers of paint are peeled back on the façade of a simple terrace house in the inner city we see waves of migration, three wars, five [...] industrial landscapes reduced to concrete car parks, streams become canals and then drains and an indigenous population exiled only to return transformed but still there. *My Place* turns out to be everyone's place.

In planning for Melbourne's future we must have serious regard for its past. We need to determine what places are important to us and why, what sites contain meaning and for whom. These might not just be textbook National Trust edifices that reflect past glories and prosperities but also more seedy sites of protest, tragedy and pain. Conservation and restoration always involves choices: what to salvage, what to discard, what stories to tell, what stories to bury under the rubble of progress. And there are limitations to the resources of course: money, space, competing visions, contested terrain. But my hope is that for every scientist, architect, engineer and interior designer that is empowered to determine what our future Melbourne looks like, there will be an historian consulted too.

It would be too pompous, too arrogant and up ourselves to call Melbourne *the thinking person's city*, and as I've suggested, I don't like tags, but we should steer clear of magic

wands, avoid cheap shots, be suspicious of quick fixes, and always have the courage to ask the hard questions. Honouring and respecting what lies beneath rather than always searching for the pot of gold will ensure Melbourne approaches its future with integrity. Thank you.

Gael Jennings

Thank you Clare. Our next panellist is Professor Rob Adams, whom you would have seen on the Queen's Birthday Lists; he was awarded an AM in the Queen's Birthday Honour List. Rob is the Director of City Design at the City of Melbourne and he is absolutely passionate about good design of cities. He's got a very strong interest in the roles at all levels that government plays with this design. Some call him the driving force behind Melbourne's urban renaissance and I think that that's probably true in my experience of him on various committees and boards and so on and seeing what he does, and of course just being recognised officially. He's a champion of both the arts and environmental sustainability and he's worked to ensure that good urban design is established as a platform for city development. So let's hear from Rob Adams. Thank you Rob.

**PANELLIST PRESENTATION: Speaker 3 - Professor Rob Adams, Director of City Design, City of Melbourne**

Rob Adams

Thank you Gael, and good evening ladies and gentlemen. In coming to the subject you've already heard you can start anywhere and end anywhere and Melbourne has this incredible wealth of culture; it has both culture of continuity and we're going into culture of change. I felt daunted by this subject, I've got to say, and where would I start and where would I place emphasis?

In searching for some sort of guidance I went down to ACCA the other day to see an exhibition called *A Constructed World*. And on the wall were three skateboards—and I can relate to that, that's part of a culture that I understand, I have a son—and the artist there, Jacqueline Riva and Geoffrey Lowe, had actually inscribed on the back of a skateboard this text about culture and then they got the kids to skate on it so it wasn't all there. But some of the words resonated: *culture is a collective talking cure that can be undertaken*, and I think that's why we're all here tonight. We don't know yet what we want to say, what will happen and history can only be made later, after shared events have transpired.

*It can't be given as a pill by those who know what is good for you*, and I thought that actually resonated as well and we [should be possibly humble], and I think Clare has actually covered that off in her discussion.

The next point was reassuring because I still hadn't worked out where I had to go, they basically said *Failure is an important shared space, it's something we all have in common*, and I could relate to that. So I still went searching for what part of culture I would talk about and over the weekend I was reading a book by Peter Droege, *The Renewable City*, which has just come into publication. And it was interesting because in reading the start of that book, and it was right in the first chapter about this book, he said,

and I'll quote, "As an historical phenomenon, the use of oil, gas and coal is extremely short-lived; a mere blink of an eye, at little over one per cent of the total history of urban living of under 10,000 years. Yet today's global urban civilisation is almost entirely based on that. As a result, the fossil fuel economy is fragile; not only does our dependency on it pose a massive security risk and endanger our survival, it also lies at the root of the vast majority of urban sustainability problems."

He went on to talk about conflict and climate change and the rest of it. He referred to it as the fossil disease, as a complex global pandemic—it might be overstating it but interesting to consider: "To many, conquering this pandemic seems like an extraordinary challenge for technology. First and foremost, the disease is culturally, psychologically and physically anchored." It was those lines that actually started to resonate with me that culturally we've locked ourselves into this particular outcome as well as politically and psychologically. The global economy is entirely identified with its underlying fossil fuel supply framework; it is fossil in nature.

The celebration of petroleum combustion as a source of an abundance achievable by all is determining virtually every aspect of our contemporary culture, and I suppose that's where I wanted to start because we can talk about what we've had and what we actually bring with us in terms of continuity but it's interesting to think about where in 10 years we will be culturally. And what will be the forces that actually mould that culture? And I'm an enthusiast and an optimist and I actually think what we're about to go into is one of the most exciting periods that we've ever been through. It will actually bring us together as a community and we'll have to start working out how we recreate the communities that we used to have many hundreds of years ago and how those communities can actually work together. And the space in which they will actually undertake this dialogue, which will not be the space with the [house], it will be the space outside the front door in the public realm.

And we sit in a city that's been modelled on a false utopia, the utopia of the garden city where the main public space is no longer a meeting space; it's a space you drive a car in. And we need to think about how we reshape that space and how we actually make that the meeting space that you find in our cities.

So if we think about all the aspects of culture from the fabrics we wear to the chairs we sit in to the buildings we construct, they're all dependent on this one very short period of time where we had fossil fuel. I'm not going to give you an answer tonight, I thought that would be enough to sort of pose as a question but I leave you with that as a thought. Thank you.

Gael Jennings

Thank you very much Rob. Thank you. Our next panellist is Dr Kate Shaw who is a Research Fellow in Architecture, Building and Planning at the University of Melbourne. Kate's interest is in, I, actually hadn't heard of this term before, it's *creative youth communities* in Melbourne. It's a recent emergence of these creative youth communities and it's led to her interest in how these groups might influence the future cultural life of

the city. She's got a long history of activism in the St Kilda area in the Kennett years and her interests revolve around creative cities, cultural diversity and social equity, urban regeneration, gentrification, and student housing and place making. So let's hear what Kate Shaw has got to say. Welcome Kate.

**PANELLIST PRESENTATION: Dr Kate Shaw – Research Fellow in Architecture, Building and Planning, University of Melbourne**

Kate Shaw

Thank you. Okay. Well there's a lot of talk these days about creative cities and how to be one; most cities in the world want to be creative. Melbourne is an interesting case, it actually is one. So Melbourne has one of the most highly regarded live music scenes in the world, it's street and stencil art have international reputations. We have the basic demographics of the ideal right here and now; 36 per cent of the City of Melbourne's residential population of 65,000 are students. In South Carlton between RMIT and the University of Melbourne students make up almost half the population. This is perfect; young people studying and thinking are among the most creative minds of all.

More than half of these students come from over 100 different countries. We have not only a strong young population but a highly cosmopolitan one. But where are the places in the CBD for these people to hang out and interact? I've been involved in a large [...] research project for the last two years at the University of Melbourne involving the Faculty of Architecture and also Geography and Public Space Design and the project recognises the presence of this student population and wonders what provision is actually being made for it. The students are telling us in in-depth interviews that the main places that they hang out are Melbourne Central and QV and that their main activity is eating and shopping. This is not necessarily what they prefer.

In my doctoral research I've explored many cities renowned for their creativity and I can say categorically that really creative cities have odd, hidden, undeveloped sorts of spaces. Melbourne has its laneways indeed, which have long played a very important role in this city but they are becoming well trodden and commodified; they are beautiful but not quite the spaces anymore that I mean. Creative cities need amorphous spaces, they need large and undefined spaces where unanticipated, unanticipated activities can occur, literally things we haven't thought of yet; they have to be able to shift.

Creative cities have rough edges, especially places for cultural production as well as consumption. Space in Melbourne, particularly since the success of Postcode 3000 and our urban renaissance, as is often the case, is being smoothed out. The Docklands are no longer a place for spontaneous activity. The one really large site in the CBD which has been sealed off and sitting empty for more than a decade is the CUB site on the corner of Swanston Street and Victoria Street, between the University of Melbourne and RMIT; it's a wonderful spot. Picture it, it's right in the heart of student territory and it is finally entering a phase where it is likely to be redeveloped. What are we going to get there? At the moment the most probably outcome is another QV-type shopping centre. I also want to challenge the mindset that maintains this extraordinary site's inaccessibility

for the 15 year period of its abandonment. Creative cities entertain temporary uses. Increasingly they encourage interim uses that make innovative use of a site's interim status; they don't lock them up.

Earlier this year Professor William Mitchell, Bill Mitchell from MIT, originally a Melbourne boy, he is also formerly Head of Architecture at UCLA and of Design at Harvard, returned to Melbourne to talk about the interdisciplinary co-operation involved in MIT's redesign. And he said one of the most important aspects of this redesign was the establishment of a ring of low-rental, commercial space around the university. These created opportunities, he said, for direct relationships between the university, small start-up companies and students, connecting the university to the surrounding urban area and providing opportunities for studios, research, employment, interaction.

In our own interviews in our research project with university clubs and social organisations, we also have found that creative activities generate the strongest levels of engagement with other people. And these can be obvious artistic activity such as theatre and dance, or they can be more laterally creative such as media, research and design or simply innovative and collaborative thinking. These activities need cheap space.

We do have examples of this in Melbourne: the Nicholas Building on the corner of Collins and Swanston Streets is a rambling rundown multi-level building with a great range of rooms let out to a great bunch of small initiatives from start-up fashion designers to galleries to a thriving button business. I would encourage you to go and have a look, you can walk in and walk up around and you can go to any of the levels and actually see what's going on, it's fantastic.

Now the rents stay relatively low because most of the spaces are small; it's divided up into very, very small areas, all are rented. The place works on a similar principle to rooming houses, not highest and best use but profitable nevertheless—although there are questions there and we can talk about those later.

Many European cities take this kind of thinking a step further; through a wide range of planning interventions they maintain a stock of places for start-ups. I've looked at, particularly at Berlin and Amsterdam and Rotterdam and perhaps we can talk about these later as well, but what they say is that to maintain creativity they have to be involved and they are. To maintain creativity you've got to have cheap living space. There's no point in having good, cheap inner city commercial space if students have to live miles away or maintain close to full-time waiting jobs to pay their own inner city rent.

Planning regulations can help here. Notwithstanding that we have somehow allowed the situation to arise where inner city student housing are some of the most expensive available, but there are many possibilities enacted elsewhere, from inclusionary zoning to housing cooperatives to other forms of non-profit or subsidised housing, to ensure that student housing is actually the cheapest in the area.

Both universities and governments have a role here; we need strong partnerships where

ideas about creative uses of space are matched with regulation. New ideas from the universities have to be supported by clear planning frameworks. The Future Melbourne initiative where the two are being connected in a more real way than I've ever seen before is the way to get there.

So three key ideas for Melbourne, Gael asked. We need cheap working space. We need cheap living space. And we need powerful partnerships between the universities and the governments at both levels to make these happen. And we're not delivering too well on the first two yet but we have here in this very room, I think, the beginnings of the third. So I congratulate the Council and the University on this really important initiative. Thanks.

Gael Jennings Kate that was terrific, really interesting, thank you. Our final speaker tonight is Sid Myer. He's Co-Vice Chair of the Myer Foundation and the Chair of Asialink. He's a Melburnian who's dedicated to strengthening business and government and the links between Australia and Asia. He's very committed to promoting and developing Melbourne's strong multicultural capacity, so let's hear from Sid Myer.

**PANELLIST PRESENTATION: Speaker 4 – Sid Myer, Co-vice chairman Myer Foundation**

Sid Myer Well thank you—firstly, can everyone hear me? Good. Thank you for asking me to make a few comments of introduction tonight. After listening to my colleagues here I'm inclined to the view that the best thing I can do is actually say nothing and rest on the excellent comments before me. However I have chosen to talk about something tonight dear to me and that is multiculturalism and put the notion to you that multiculturalism is central to Melbourne's cultural identity. And if you'll bear with me for a minute, I hope this works, if you speak more than one language would you put up your hand? If you were not born in Melbourne would you put up your hand? And if you were not born in Australia would you put up your hand? In a sense, I rest my case. I'd like to put the notion that multiculturalism is good for Melbourne and Melbourne's good at it.

Second, a strong and vibrant multicultural society will be more important to Melbourne in the emerging decade than in the last decade. And then perhaps in closing, and if time permits—gong me off if you have to—some comments about the drivers of cultural identity in the next decade.

As we can see in this room, and it's symptomatic of everywhere in Melbourne, multiculturalism is deeply rooted and thoroughly entrenched in Melbourne. In a sense we've arrived as a multicultural city; going back is not an option. The only option is to take it forward. In going forward I sense there's a change emerging between what might have been a more Eurocentric-based heritage and culture to a more Eastern, an Eastern-influenced culture. And that's not surprising is it? Over 60 per cent of the world's population lives to our north and to our north-west; it includes two of the world's fastest growing and largest economies in China and India. And in almost every metric, in trade, in investment, in tourism and in education, Australia's, Victoria's and Melbourne's

engagement in and with Asia is growing.

Can I suggest that Melbourne is good at multiculturalism although we don't always get credit for how good we are. Multiculturalism, as we've seen in this room, is everywhere. It's on the sports field. You have a look at the AFL teams lists, even the team that carries this city's name. Have a look at the Commonwealth Games' team with the emphasis on the Australian team and see the names that are representative. Go to kid's sport on Saturday as I do with mine and have a look at who's playing. Dining out tonight for many of you may be more of an issue of where to go—of not where to go but what to eat and how lucky are we for that? Art galleries, theatre, public transport, buying clothes, getting a parking ticket or a speeding fine, servicing your computer or your car, managing your superannuation fund, everywhere you go multiculturalism and the multicultural credits of this city are on display.

Further, at an organisation which was mentioned earlier that I Chair, Asialink, we see evidence of multicultural success daily. Over 100 public lectures during the course of the year are held either at the university or in a CBD location. Somewhere around 30,000 people visit us. These events attract students, business and community leaders, writers, academics, artists and people from government. The size and the diversity of the audiences is the envy of our interstate colleagues, our interstate partners and our interstate competitors. There's something going on with multiculturalism in Melbourne.

Whilst some of our community in Melbourne have arrived as a result of circumstances that were not within their control, most of those who have arrived have arrived and chosen Melbourne as the place to live. Melbourne has been paid a great compliment in this context. Aside from recommendations of friends and families, I'd suggest that one of the reasons for selecting Melbourne is that the city harbours values that people from all cultures seek out.

And now looking forward, determining what values we seek and cherish for the year 2020—if I can use that as an horizon—determining what values we have and hold now in '07 and then making the understanding of the differences in those values and plotting a course to the values that we think will be important is going to be an important part of success for Melbourne in the next decade. Values like human security, tolerance, engaging diversity, sustainability, creativity, commercial strengths, ideas and innovation, many of which have been much more articulately described by my colleagues than I.

Being good at multiculturalism is going to be even more important in the future as I mentioned earlier. The norms here I think are well known to most of us: the world's getting smaller, time's moving faster, people are travelling more, the internet's making everything more accessible and you'll have many others. But there are other factors at play that also make multiculturalism important. Australia's in pretty good economic shape as is Victoria hence it's an attractive place to invest. Being a vibrant, multicultural community I think will make Melbourne an even more attractive place to invest in the future.

Our position in the region is becoming more, not less, important and as a result of this, trained, skilled and competent multicultural Melbourne will be an important part of our engagement in the region and provide us in a strong position to play an important role in the region. Hence I suggest if Melbourne is a successful multicultural city, its opportunity and the opportunities of its citizens internationally and in the region will be substantially increased. Indeed this could become our point of differentiation, one of our competitive advantages over cities elsewhere and in Australia.

So lastly, and in closing, multicultural Melbourne, cultural identity, what does it mean? I share Clare's view; it's a word that's a bit spooky. Cultural identity in some parts is wrapped up historically in things like place, history, future, race, ethnicity, religion, nationality, language as we've seen here. Even things like climate innovation and [law] have an impact. I find it a very difficult term to define. On one hand I understand the notion of a city's cultural identity being part of a city's soul, something that's uniquely Melbourne. On the other hand, it's a most limiting notion that tends to perhaps pigeonhole us in a space and doesn't provide room to move. So I urge caution in being too fixed with the definition of our cultural identity. In the future I think the city's cultural identity will be defined less by historical norms, although I know they're important, but more by the values of the city. Getting the values right in 2020 will determine what sort of city we'll become.

Lastly, we all have high hopes for the Future Melbourne initiative, we all have vested interests in good outcomes, let's be sure we listen to the multicultural voices that have made Melbourne great and will continue to enrich and to endow the city. Thank you very much.

Gael Jennings Thank you very much Sid.

## **OPEN DISCUSSION**

Gael Jennings So who would like to make a comment about our identity, Melbourne's cultural identity or any other comment?

Female Yes, I had more of a question than a comment and it's a question to Sid Myer and in a way it picks up a lot on what the other speakers have put forward for us very generously this evening. To start with, with Morry Schwarz, to go back to your number one liability which is our location at the end of the world, I think it's very interesting to think about how we could potentially turn that into an asset.

Rob Adams, in terms of the wonderful infrastructure that the city has built such as ACCA and the buildings in the city, there seems to be a terrific level of expertise in the city that would be of great interest and is of great interest to other partners internationally, and it's about the international profile, I think that it's an interesting issue. Particularly in area like culture and say the visual arts, Melbourne has this wonderful infrastructure but I think

there's been a slight struggle in terms of finding that event that can define its place in the world internationally. And there are a number of circuit events and we've had a number of those in terms of where we want to attract international attention but to a degree, say in the case with the model, it's very hard often to distinguish ourselves by just having one other—there's a law of diminishing returns when you just have one other Grand Prix or one other of these events.

And if you look at a city like Brisbane for instance, which has developed its own event, such as the Asia-Pacific Triennial, it found a particular region of the world—and this obviously connects with what you're saying Sid Myer—that is, in terms of Australia, was really in demand of a dialogue in terms of understanding our relationship to that part of the world, which raises the question of what the southern capital of a southern continent might connect with in terms of other countries in the world.

And going on, what Clare was saying about history, and it was very interesting to see how the name of Spenser Street Station was recently changed to the Southern Cross Station and that it was changed very much in the light of multiculturalism. It was presented by the Premier as being a beacon of multiculturalism, the Southern Cross that guided people to this part of the world.

And certainly in terms of Kate Shaw, thinking about the changing student population, I think if you look at that, part of the city around RMIT, say, where students tend to congregate, there's a lot of south-Asian, some new restaurants, it's very dynamic and I think that is the largest source of migration to Victoria at the moment, from the Indian population.

So putting all of that together, Sid, I just wondered if you'd respond—and certainly other speakers may be able to—to the idea that in terms of continuing Australia's journey for finding its place in the world. No longer an outpost to the British Empire but a city in its own place of the world, continuing on its journey and connecting to its neighbours in the eastern hemisphere, in Asia, is there potential, do you think, particularly for Melbourne, to be a centre in connecting us to the burgeoning democracies of countries like Latin America, Africa, the Pacific, which for the first time in history are able to interact freely beyond political oppression with other countries of the world where the values of multiculturalism, design, ecology and tolerance could be of great use?

Sid Myer Well thank you for the question. I mean my first ...

Female The question was a journalist's nightmare; the question was longer than the answer.

Sid Myer My first comment is in a sense the future's in our hands and if we choose to be an important hub or a point of connection or some form of linkage with the economies of the north, you know, through Asia, then we are eminently able to do that. I wouldn't necessarily be letting distance stand in the way of that, I think there's enough technology and enough communication in the world to be able to deal with that. So you know, I think it's much more about Melbourne making a definitive statement that this is what we'd like

to do and then setting about doing it and achieving that notion that you've put. So I mean I'm inclined to be positively oriented to Melbourne becoming very much the hub that you're referring to given that that's, you know, what Melbourne chooses to do.

Morry Schwartz And I think that you asked how can we make a remote city into an asset, well I think that what I'm saying is that, when I say that liabilities are our hidden assets, our liabilities remain liabilities, we don't turn them. What makes them an asset is that we've got to build a better, stronger Melbourne, attractors that are so strong that people will be willing to come all the way from Europe by ship.

Gael Jennings Do any of the others of you see part of Melbourne's cultural identity being linked up with being I guess a bit of a mentor and a leader, a creative sort of, sort of a hub?

Rob Adams I think [Kevin] poses an interesting question because I think some of the biggest challenges that we face are in the southern hemisphere. If you actually think across that south and think about Africa, South America and India, south-east Asia, that whole area really is, I think, going to be where a lot of the solutions and answers are found. And I think the fact that we do sit in the south gives us this unique opportunity to form our own identity in the southern hemisphere rather than going back to our roots, if you come from the north, where many of the people who settled here early on in Australia's settlement did come from that northern European culture. So I think there is an opportunity there and [Kevin] is very clever in asking the question because he's started to actually pioneer that through the arts with a program called *South*. And I think that's been a very useful program where artists from, you know, South Africa, New Zealand, Peru have actually come in and worked with the younger generations in Melbourne. And I think that's where we can look and ...

Gael Jennings So it draws in, as you were saying, a whole lot of the different threads that everyone was picking up and pulls, gives it a stronger identity and a purpose forward. We've got another comment over here.

David Yenkin This is a comment and perhaps query to Sid Myer, and I also want to ask Morry a question. Michael [Kline] from this university made I think a very telling remark when he happened to mention to me that he thought Australia was a multicultural and multilingual society with a monolingual mindset. And I'd like, since you're the Chair of Asialink, perhaps a comment on the teaching of languages and also the various abandonment of the program of Asian language teaching some years back, which I think was a great mistake. So perhaps a comment from you and comment, and a reply from you.

And to Morry, just out of interest, I'd be extremely intrigued to know what the proportion of sales of the Monthly and of Quarterly Essay are in the major cities in Australia, that is if that's not a commercial in confidence piece of information.

Gael Jennings Well let's start with Morry's figures.

Morry Schwartz Pro rata, pro rata to population. It always was, I mean all the way back to Outback Press days, which is sort of 33/34 years ago, the books we published back at that time were

also pro rata, except for one exception and that, when Queensland was ruled by Bjelke Petersen we sold many more books in Queensland pro rata. And that was a, yeah, for obvious reasons.

Gael Jennings Okay, thank you. Sid?

Sid Myer Well thank you for that question, you've given me a massive platform to talk about something about which I am very passionate. I won't go on though, suffice to say that as a city and indeed as a country I think we've lost ground in the area of the teaching of Asian languages, or indeed languages generally but particularly Asian languages. If we go back some 15 or so years, the then government had a very substantial program of teaching through primary, secondary and tertiary schooling of languages. That program, and the teaching generally began to fall off, I guess it was about four or five years ago and nowadays the numbers are very reduced from what they were 15 or, yeah, 15 years ago.

As an example, I'm trying to bring to mind numbers of students learning Chinese in tertiary education in Australia and I think the numbers are of the order of 1,600 and of that 800 are Chinese anyway. So that to me is an example of a great failing where indeed I think many would argue the teaching of Chinese was going to be very important for the future of this country and this city as such. So it's disappointing that teaching has fallen off in this area and it represents a great opportunity to develop teaching within, as I say, primary, secondary and tertiary.

David Yenkin As I understand it, the real reason for this fall off is that the program of funding support to schools for the teaching of Asian language was abandoned about seven or eight years ago, that was the reason, not the fact that the students or the schools weren't interested. Would you agree with that?

Sid Myer Yes that's correct, the funding, a substantial amount of the funding did cease.

Gael Jennings This—sorry.

Sid Myer But if I may, I'd also just like to point out that in a sense this is a case where I think it takes two to tango; the funding creates a, if I might put, a supply push approach where the teaching is created and students will be taught. And it's equally as important in my mind that in fact there's demand pull where the community and employers and others are pulling through the system the demand for teaching of languages. So I think the two of them sort of do have to work a little bit together. From the supply side there was certainly a substantial reduction.

Gael Jennings I just was moving us back sort of onto the topic in a sense in that that's a good example I suppose of if we're trying to decide as a community what it is that we're valuing and what Melbourne's values are then we can create both pull and the push really. All of our panellists have said actually we can envisage what it is we want and then we can go for it and this is where this process is starting tonight really. Here in the, yes, Councillor?

Cr Carl Jetter Thank you. Carl Jetter here. In my view, and I'd just like to add to the debate, but first of all I'd like to say that I believe that cultural identity primarily relates to the character of the people rather than the physical benefits and burdens we may have as a city. So coming back to the identity and the character of our people, I'd like to start by sharing briefly my own personal experiences.

I arrived in Melbourne 40 years ago, a mere 40 years ago, from Germany and at that time what I found was a very European city, primarily British with a strong southern European influence. But at that time, and I remember very clearly, one of my first experiences was a Moomba parade and it was so different to what it is now; it was a very British and European Moomba parade. At the time we knew there was a white man policy, at the time, only 40 years ago, I mean nobody would talk about our settlement, who we were as a city or even beyond or before the European settlement; that was not a discussion point. We didn't acknowledge, or knew, we barely knew our, really, our way-back Kulin nation, I mean there [was a] Kulin nation, I mean nobody knew That was 40 years ago.

Forty years ago we wore very British clothing; it was a very European settlement. And the reason I'm pointing it out is because where we're now, we're looking at 40 years later, we are very proud acknowledging, as Sid said, we're very proud of our 140 ethnic communities. What is important is that those ethnic communities are bringing their own identities and their own culture with them and so they should. We're proudly celebrating their national days as a city. We are proud of having a very peaceful multicultural city but I believe also we need to be prepared for the cultural identity of our future to learn to understand those 140 ethnic communities' characters, their needs, and learn to be tolerant towards their needs because they will very strongly influence the culture of our city. And that's yet to happen. We didn't have the Indian communities which we have now, the Indonesian communities, the South African communities. We are proud that the whole world lives in our city very peacefully together but they will very strongly influence the future of our cultural identity. And I believe that we need to be prepared to work together a lot stronger and be prepared to understand each other a lot more so because that will be the future of our cultural identity.

Gael Jennings Thank you. So really catching, going with the thread of multiculturalism into the future and how we prepare to it, I mean we're really saying clearly that part of our identity, our cultural identity is going to always be multicultural. And when we get to a more planning stage that we're talking about, the other aspects in the other forums, I'll guess we'll be looking at the impact of further migration because of greenhouse and all sorts of other issues which will take it further. Would anyone on the panel like to comment? Yes Morry?

Morry Schwartz Yes Carl, 39 for me, not 40 and yes things have changed but I don't think that they've changed as much—it's not a sea change. I still feel that I'm in the same city and I do think that geography does in a way affect what we are and who we are. But I agree with

you that current migrations are going to change our future much more than they're changing the present and that we've got to be prepared for it. If you look at the Honours Lists in yesterday's, or the day before, paper, look at the names all the way through and they are Anglo, 95 or 97 per cent, it's only very, very few which are not. So we are sitting here preparing for a wave that has not yet come, [and I agree].

Gael Jennings And if we want to identify as part of our culture the things that you've all been saying, we have to not be, what did you say, monocultural in our mindset. That might be one of the cultural values that we want to embrace and put down as a core value, I don't know, I just put it up for discussion. What do the other members of the panel think?

Clare Wright Well that just puts in mind for me the primary school that my children go to in the northern suburbs. Out of a class of 20 or 21 kids my children would be vastly in the minority to be identified as being Anglo. Now my background is much more complicated than my look might suggest so I think even Anglo is a complicated term, *white* might be a better one. But in their class there would be five or six kids who represent that grouping and then the rest of the kids would come from every country in the world, particularly new waves of African, Indian, south-eastern migration, Sudanese, Somali.

And the thing that impresses me in that school is that they don't need to teach the values of inclusiveness and tolerance and compassion because those kids live it every day. And the stories that you hear told of, you know, the kid who used to bring the salami sandwich and be ostracised for it ...

[Morry Schwartz] That was me.

Clare Wright ... well it doesn't, I can tell you it doesn't happen anymore because, because ...

Gael Jennings Well not at that school.

Clare Wright Certainly not at that school but I think that this is happening in many schools around our suburbs. I think the interesting question is how you then transpose that say onto the city of Melbourne and I'm really impressed with Kate's point, is that most people come into the city to consume it in some way. And so consumerism becomes the link between people, the common value in a way rather than necessarily what they're producing or creating out of that culture. And I think that is the challenge, that how you bring that diversity that is out there clearly, not necessarily in terms of how you define the values of it but how you utilise those human resources in those communities in much more creative ways rather than the common link between all of us being the \$2 shops that we can—and how many of them can we support really?

Gael Jennings I think that that's a really clever idea, building on the common sort of links that we've been, common cultural identity links that we've been talking about is to, yes, is to move on the other, build one on the other. What does everyone else think? Yes? Yes Geoff?

Geoff I was at an event recently where the Aboriginal activist, Garry Foley who teaches indigenous history in the Education Faculty at the University of Melbourne, mentioned that 98 per cent of his students were Americans and that he has a couple Australian

students in his, as his, students in his class. He lamented that fact and said that there were going to be an awful lot of American graduates going back to America with a fine history of the indigenous history; he was surprised, he didn't dwell on the point. I'd like to put the question to the panel, given that contemporary indigenous culture hasn't really been touched upon all that much tonight, would the panel like to comment about the relevance of contemporary indigenous culture and how that may be integrated into the desires of future Melbourne.

Gael Jennings Okay, thank you. Who'd like to talk?

Geoff Um, maybe Clare?

Gael Jennings Clare?

Geoff Kate?

Clare Wright Well I've taught a number of those American students too at the University of Melbourne; they come in great swarms and do the Australian Studies courses on their study abroad tour. And what those students used to say that I thought was really interesting was they were really impressed at how prominent indigenous history and indigenous culture was here because they felt that they knew nothing about their Native American people, that all they knew was that they lived on reservations and had casinos and that was about it. Or had seen *Dancing with Wolves*, the Kevin Costner movie, and that really was the extent of their knowledge about Native American culture. So they were very impressed that it was as public as it is, that there are these welcome ceremonies, that there are public places called Birrarung Mar that show that the history is there.

I suppose I agree with you and in a way it underlines my point about bringing historians to the fore because a lot of the fact that that is on our agenda at all has been the work of pioneering historians who have been working for decades now to have that history told. Those are some of the secret histories of our city and there are many other secret histories of our city if you, you know, to go off the topic a little bit but, you know those books by the Sparrows, Jeff and Jill Sparrow, the *Radical Melbourne* series about the many sites of protest and dissent and radicalism that are our alternative histories in this city, I think all of those can be brought more to the fore.

I don't have a particular vision as to how they get brought forward into our daily discourses in a way that isn't just another kind of consumable in a sense, how they can bring a kind of, a meaning and significance that touches people's lives. I think that's probably the challenge rather than there just being, you know, a mural or some kind of public art—although I agree public art's a very important asset I think that bridging that gap, as Gary is saying, between people's interest and their knowledge and what they see around them is a really important challenge.

Gael Jennings Kate, what would you say?

Kate Shaw I don't have much to add to that, I think Clare [...].

[Rob Adams] I think there are some interesting values that we could actually take from our indigenous community. We seem to be obsessed with [owning], you know, delineating, drawing lines around and that's not their culture. And I think there's a richness that their culture's got that ours hasn't and I think, as we actually look towards maybe the aspect of culture that I talked about, some of the solutions are already in the indigenous cultures. So we'd do well to actually stop and actually have those conversations and discussions with the indigenous community about treatment of land and respect for land. How important is ownership? And that cuts the root of our culture, it's something that, you know, if you talk about you're labelled as a socialist or a communist or something like that. But I, you know, it's actually something that I think we need to contemplate.

It was interesting at Birrarung Marr that when the [Birrarung] was going in, they didn't want any writing. In fact the stories had to be told by the voices. So if you go up to those panels and push them on the side of ArtPlay you get their story about it and I think that storytelling and that discussion is something that's important.

Gael Jennings [...] so we'll go into the middle there. Thank you.

Phil Truscott Hi, Phil Truscott from Eltham College of Education. We're unfortunately not as multicultural as Clare's children's school is but we try to compensate that by having the Year 9 campus in the city where our students spend a year. So my question is not really educational, it's actually probably a little more political and social. Kate mentioned before the need for amorphous spaces with rough edges and I think you made some contrasts with Docklands and so on. I'm thinking about things such as the Docklands Film Studio where one of the things that they're really touting at the moment is, you know, that they're going to be the home for the next Steven Spielberg production. And I suppose thinking back to, you know, the glorious renaissance of the Australian film industry of the 70s when a lot of that really did take place in Melbourne, my question is how do we rationalise, how do we marry the need for I guess global economic development of Melbourne with the maintenance or the fostering of a truly Melbourne, Australian and multicultural identity?

Gael Jennings So that's for who to start with?

Phil Truscott Well perhaps Kate because you prompted the question.

Kate Shaw Well what a question. It's a good one. Um, look you have to provide space for both, don't you? I mean the point about the Docklands, the studio I think is that it was always going to be commercial. I think the process for the development was too quick, the funding process was flawed. I don't know that there was a great deal of consultation with the kind of filmmaking community in terms of what they wanted or needed. And, oh look, there are also questions of management and I think that that's, I mean without going into detail there of course, but I mean there are very interesting case studies of self managed and kind of, you know, semi-autonomous spaces, particularly in the European cities that I was talking about where the kind of cultural production is actually generated from within and that is important. Whereas of course the studios was always an idea to kick start

and subsidise the general development of the Docklands area I think.

Morry Schwartz I think that the studio is an export product. I don't think it was meant to be that way but I think that's what it is—I don't think that we've had one Australian production as yet in those studios. I'm not saying that's a bad thing or a good thing; we do need our exports but we also need our film industry and I hope that the current government, the new government initiative is going to help the industry, which is the rebate process.

Rob Adams Interesting. There's quite a good study done out of New Zealand that looks at the value of good urban design and they go through a whole lot of things like density, mixed use, accessibility. But the one they always put in is local character, you know, building on your own character rather than actually trying to be someone else's character. And I think that's an important thing we should actually keep in this debate.

Female Hi, this is a question for Morry. I'm a bit curious about your description of, mainly when you mention what we should let the market decide, given that there was no attempt to question or to talk about sustainability. One characteristic of our cities in Australia is that we are one, this country has one of the highest environmental emissions of greenhouse gas emissions per capita and that's quite an embarrassing and really worrying statistic. Now we have let the market decide for a long time. What do you think is the relationship between that and our high emissions, rate of emissions?

Morry Schwartz There certainly is a problem with emissions and with sprawl. I was very specifically talking about the market deciding their limits of growth for the city rather than—and it was only a question, I said that it would be interesting to revisit the 2030 idea, which is this idea of the American idea of 2030 where you draw a very rigid line around a city. And I think that when you've got problems with affordability of housing you've got to think very hard about rigid lines and I think that the market has a place. It's a matter of introduction of the right taxes, the right carbon taxes etcetera which will again, if placed into the economy, will automatically control emissions so that the market forces are able to, if you've got the right mechanisms in place that can control these problems I think.

Gael Jennings Would anyone else like to comment?

Sid Myer I might just note that this is a topic that's going to form, you know, part of the dialogue over the next series of meetings, sustainability emissions, the environment and so on. In the case of cultural identity I'm inclined to think that the way to engage with it is to begin to think of it in terms of the values that as a community we aspire to in that 10-year timeframe and being led by those values which might be, you know, linked to the environment or linked to sustainability and using the values as a guide or as a draw to helping us shape the issue of sustainability and the environment in all that we do.

Gael Jennings That's the third forum, by the way, the one that's *Meeting the Environmental Shocks*, two weeks from now. In the back row there.

Geoff Leech Geoff Leech. I'm just interested a little bit in what people might think, the panel in particular, about sport as being considered as part of our cultural identity? No one's

really said much about some of our sporting events and I'm sure that many people would put Melbourne on the map for its sporting prowess, sporting support etcetera, etcetera, etcetera. I know in some circles the link between sport and culture is seen as debateable at least but I'm interested in what the panel thinks about sport as a part of our cultural identity, and not the North Melbourne football ground?

Gael Jennings Very good. Isn't it amazing that it's taken until now for someone to dare to talk about sport?

Morry Schwarz Well not really, I'm interested in sport and not only that, but I thought that controversially I said that the VFL should never have exported ...

Gael Jennings You did—a very important point.

Morry Schwarz That's right, and I'm just wondering if people agree with that? I mean here we are, we had this, you know, this huge cultural magnet, or tourism magnet, identity magnet and what did we do? Sent it interstate, you know, now it's everywhere, and they're beating us at the same time too.

Rob Adams Well I've always been amazed by Melbourne's culture of sport. I know of no other place where people turn out as they do, I mean a few years back they played the Bledisloe Cup at the MCG and 80,000 people turned up. I suspect only 10 had ever understood the rules of the game but the Melbourne audience is the most receptive audience to sport and maybe that's why we take it as granted and we should actually mention it, yeah.

Gael Jennings But what does it tell us about the Melbourne, you know, the character of Melbourne people or—I mean, are we all just saps that we're being marketed by, you know, the people who own both the networks and etcetera. Or is it actually something intrinsic in us? What do you think? Is it actually an important part of our character and identity that can be moved to other things that we also embrace? Kate?

Kate Shaw I can certainly say that it forms the basis for some of our best music and comedy.

Rob Adams I think it says a lot about people wanting to be in the company of other people and I think what I draw from that is that the Melbourne community actually like to go out and be with their fellow citizens and sporting is a very easy medium to do that in. But you can see it in other spheres. You can see the way café streets develop, you can see it in the number of restaurants I mean, I was told when I first arrived here that Melbourne had more restaurants per capita than any other city. I don't know whether it's true but I think we generally do go out and actually mix in groups and that's a good story because that actually means we don't sit in isolation in our homes; we actually, we're out there in public space be it the MCG or Lygon Street or wherever.

Sid Myer I'd endorse that. I think it's firstly very good to have it on the agenda. Secondly, it is an important part of community. It's perhaps less obvious in a big city like Melbourne but in some of the smaller rural centres around the State, you know, the sporting club within that small rural centre is in fact I think often the lifeblood of the particular community. And if for whatever reasons that sporting club folds or is unable to sustain itself the

impact on the community is often disastrous. So there is the linking of sport to the sense of community and participation and people wanting to be together so I think it's good to have raised it.

Gael Jennings I think, yeah, it would be fair to say it's true in Melbourne too, not just in regional centres but at every level we're all connected one way or another through sport whether we like it or not.

Clare Wright And especially in a time when other things are bringing people out onto the streets and I think that is an important part of sport, is that it brings people together and it brings them onto the streets. And that other forms of bringing people onto the streets is in decline and I'm thinking particularly of political rallies. I mean a lot of our images of Melburnians inhabiting their city and coming into it are walking down the streets. Certainly my memories of student life are about those demonstrations where you paraded down Swanston Street and you go to the Parliament House. I mean a lot of the time when people visit these sites in Melbourne it's not because they're there as tourists, they're there as dissenters or protestors but that is a form that is dropping off.

And I think that that's also shown in the success of Federation Square, you know, there was a lot of controversy about that space, architecturally as in design, in terms of all sorts of things but the thing that seems to have worked about it is as being a meeting point for people often watching sport on the big screen. But I think that Melburnians do want spaces and opportunities to come together which again brings me back to Kate's excellent point about that big, open space that's sitting there and I think that it's really important to think about how you design those spaces.

And also I'd put in a plea for designing spaces that are family friendly spaces as well, that can bring kids onto the street and into the city to do other things than go to the movies or see the Myer Christmas windows or go to Target, which is really what they can do these days because the other sort of aspects of cosmopolitan, urban renewal that are about café society and other more, other sort of markers of civilisation very much exclude families and children. And so you get that huge divide between the suburbs where people are living their daily lives and the city that doesn't have much meaning or relevance to them, except as a site of consumption.

Morry Schwartz And I think that just to add one little thing, that we should take great pride in the peacefulness I think that our sports are carried out in as against what we see in the UK and Europe when they go to a soccer match. I think that we should take pride in the fact that these are big, peaceful events.

Sid Myer Morry, your children have obviously grown up and you haven't attended too many children's football matches [...]?

Gael Jennings That's like if you're, you know, in the Mafia and you get shot.

Clare Wright But I would add too, I mean ...

Sid Myer Come with me for a weekend.

Morry Schwartz Really? As long as they grow out of it.

Clare Wright It's almost like Melbourne's hardwired. I mean I think we do use it as a springboard, it's just it's been so deeply a part of, it's almost like our buildings, it's almost part of our infrastructure now. But I'm thinking about [the cause], that it's played a reconciliation and the Long Walk Home, one of the most extraordinary and moving incidents that, you know, Melbourne has seen for a long time I think, carried out through footy so it's just kind of there.

Male Hi, my name is [...]. I'm part of the Indian ethnic community of Melbourne and my comment is basically in support of Kate's talk and basically it stems from having been an international student in Melbourne and I've been in Melbourne for about three years now. And it was really hard as an international student in Melbourne, not just in terms of the level of expenditure that one had to incur, but also in terms of we really don't have any space where one could express oneself. It was, I was studying in RMIT city campus, which probably is the most cosmopolitan place as they can be and yeah, and I don't know if this statistic is correct but Melbourne probably draws international students only second to Boston, I'm not sure if it's correct but yeah ...

Gael Jennings Melbourne, actually Australia pulls the highest number of international students of any country in the OECD by a long shot.

Male Yeah. I have met not only people from other countries over here but I have made friends with people from my own country whom I had never, probably hadn't the opportunity of meeting. So I mean, what I'm saying is that cheap space for living and cheap space to express oneself and the whole partnership between the government and universities and where universities are actually urban regenerators by themselves, and how what universities are doing can be more a part of the public arena, which is I think is surprisingly currently absent, is definitely I think one of the sort of points that need to be considered while deciding what the future of Melbourne should be.

Gael Jennings Mhmm, mhmm, that's right. Anyone like to add to that? That's pretty much what you think.

Kate Shaw Look, I think it's on the agenda now and, um, part of my presence here at the Future Melbourne forum is actually in recognition of that research project that we're doing so it's attention will continue to be paid to that issue.

Female We've spent a lot of time talking about sort of cultural values of Melbourne but its identity is very much tied up with its design, how it's been planned, how it sits in its space, its buildings. And I'd like the comments from whoever feels best to answer it, is what do we value about our built structures, about what makes our cities? And what do we see for the future? It's very much part of our culture, our built structures.

Gael Jennings So Rob, would you like to, in terms of our identity of things that we ...?

Rob Adams

It's an interesting one. I suppose one of the streets I enjoy the most is the bottom end of Victoria Street or maybe Little Bourke Street and why, because it's a combination of where we start and where we are today, where overlaid on this Victorian streetscape you get a Vietnamese culture or a Chinese culture. And I think the memory of the built form and where it started is important, whether we snap freeze it in time is another issue. I think we've got to develop and take on part of the reflections of what we are today rather than just actually sitting in the past. That's a very difficult debate because obviously there are structures that need to be preserved as they were originally constructed. But many of them can't stay as museums, they've got to be reoccupied and reused and I think the GPO, while we might—um, and Morry is sitting here and it's not a plug for you Morry, but I think that's a perfect example of taking a building that had gone past its original purpose and reconvertng it into something that has actually given it a new lease of life. And doing it in a very honest way of preserving the old and complementing it with the new, so not actually having a cringe about actually living in this modern age.

So from the building fabric point of view, I think that would be my response. If I then go back onto my 'hobbyhorse' and say well what will our built form be in the future? If someone was today to offer me one city and say *you have one city to make a zero emission city ahead of all other cities*, I'd go and pick Barcelona. And I'd pick Barcelona because it's got a very high density at 200 people per hectare, it's got 40 per cent open space, it's built to about seven storeys consistently so it can actually make complete use of solar energy, wind energy, all of those other things. Great streets, good public transport and [walkable]. We need to think carefully about the sorts of structures we're building into the future because they are not sustainable at some of the heights that we're going up to.

And the spaces in between are not as good when they are actually overshadowed or get the wind resistance you get around a tall building. The centre part of Melbourne, it's not an accident that it's one of the most interesting parts of Melbourne because it actually preserved its 40-metre height limit, and we got the lanes and alcoves and the activity and the pubs and all those things. So the built form for the future, it won't be high-rise; we're building redundancy when we build high-rise.

Gael Jennings

Clare, do you want to add to that?

Clare Wright

I'm just thinking about that, transforming the usages of buildings, but I'm thinking particularly of pubs which are, you know, there used to be hundreds, thousands of them in the city and then, and aren't now both because of licensing reduction which happened between 1906 and the 1920s—don't get me started. But the ones that do remain I think have the opportunity to both remain as built forms and possibly retain their usage as places of hospitality on their ground floor. But most of those pubs have accommodation spaces upstairs and that's because of the original licensing laws that required there to be residences in any place that sold alcohol and for the publican to live onsite up until the

1960s. So most pubs have unoccupied space in them and I see them as being able to be used in the way that the Nicholas Building is as well.

And some pubs—there's a couple in Fitzroy that are doing this now—are renting out those former accommodation spaces that nobody wants to, and hasn't slept in for 40 or 50 years, as writer studios, as artist studios, and again they possibly can be those kinds of cheap spaces and bring those people into the city. You can retain the built form but change the use of it and yeah, I think pubs are a perfect example of how that can happen.

Gael Jennings We have to wrap this up now but I'll take one more comment and then I'll direct you to the website and to the next forum and so on, because these are ongoing conversations, we don't have to finish this whole topic right now. But there, yes, [...] right here.

Female Actually as the last comment from the floor for the evening I shall like to return to celebrating the reasons why we're meeting here, that is the partnership between the University and the City and to congratulate the City for actually forming a partnership with the University because to pick up on what the man, the student from India said and to pick up on what Kate said, we really could become a great city for students. We have eight universities already and if the city actually takes on itself to project as a city of education, education and fun, I think we could actually with time make ourselves known around the world as the city that students, that prospective students want to come here. And if we treat them well, some of them might even choose to stay and perhaps make it an even better city. So congratulations to both parties.

Gael Jennings That's an interesting point to finish on because it touches on something that wasn't picked up, in my opinion, quite enough and I would be interested to see if it is picked up in the wider conversations, which was Clare's point about Melbourne actually being, not to use, you know, it really is a place of great, deep thought, analytical and critical faculties. And it's something we should be intensely proud of because I think that gives us a really deep base. And to just throw it into the mix, you know we are the leading place almost in the world of biomedical research, we really punch above our weight in all sorts of very strong intellectual pursuits and I would have to throw into the mix that I think it's an incredibly important part of our cultural identity. And that's where a lot of the multiculturalism is coming from too, particularly the density of students here.

So, but in brief summary—before I direct you to [www.futuremelbourne.com.au](http://www.futuremelbourne.com.au), which is the interactive website and the e-Village where you'll find this recorded and all sorts of topics up there for discussion and all the other parts of the discussion signposted for you to then attend or contribute to in that way—what's been raised tonight by the panel and sort of drawn out from you is that we're not constrained by our physical location or structures but we're informed by them and they can be something that we can turn into assets or liabilities depending on what it is that we want to do with them when we've defined the things that we value and where we want to go. That we need to look below the level to see where we've come from, to see that in every decision we make we need

to let something else go and we need to have a strong feeling of that, of our history and that balance of decisions and values that we're making every time. How we're informed by our built environment but also we're going to have to harness this precipice that we're on, where our old ways will have to finish because of global warming. And as Rob has pointed out, this is a marvellous opportunity to look to a whole new way of being, of building our city and responding and working together.

And Kate's made a point which actually so interestingly has linked to what everyone else thinks, which is we need a space to be able to be ourselves and be creative in all these ways. And we need to put that into our planning and we need to say that's part of our psyche and part of what's really special about Melbourne. And Sid of course, the basis of all of this is something that is embedded in all of us, we are multicultural, from the first Australians through to the current Australians and in all of it, that's something that we cherish and is going to be something that's going to drive us forward.

So they're just some things I think that we've pulled together tonight from all of us and hopefully we can go forward, both on the website and the next forum, which is same time, same place next week and we'll be talking about our prosperity then, building on these values that we've looked at. So thank you all so much for coming out on a cold night, it's been fabulous you're all here and I'll see you next week. Thank you panel.