

Train Stations as



Places for Community Wellbeing

By Village Well - July 2006





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Flinders Street Station Mural Detail. Artist Mirka Mora, 1985



Magic Words

After Naluniat

...That was the time when words were like magic.
The human mind had mysterious powers.
A word spoken by chance
might have strange consequences.
It would suddenly come alive
and what people wanted to happen could happen –
all you had to do was say it.
Nobody could explain this:
that's the way it was.

A poem from the New York Subway's 'Poetry in Motion' program, part of their Art in Transit division.

Translated from the Inuit by Edward Field



Platform for Art Exhibition Space, Degraaves Subway, Flinders Street Station

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Executive Summary

Background

In 2002 VicHealth developed focus on enhancement of the built environment in order to promote health and wellbeing. Some of this work involved utilization of the arts medium to create public spaces which enhanced social connection and inclusion, a fundamental determinant of mental health. A range of local governments were resourced to undertake “place making” activity with some of this work being connected to public transport facilities. The learnings resulting from this activity were documented in “Health in public spaces: Promoting mental Health and Wellbeing through the Art and Environment Scheme”. (VicHealth 2004) and have stimulated on-going VicHealth interest in this area.

Consequently, in 2006 VicHealth commissioned development of a scoping paper focusing on existing arts practice designed to develop railway stations as community hubs. This document is a result of the scoping exercise undertaken.

Context

Train stations are a key public space and piece of infrastructure in a community. They are vital to many people to enable them to engage in work and social commitments. For young people and those without cars they can be essential in reducing their social isolation and ability to maintain community links. Unfortunately for many people they are also places mixed with feelings of fear and frustration. This document investigates the possibility of railway stations becoming places that are inclusive, safe, facilitate social inclusion and cohesion and contribute to the development of strong communities.

In particular this document 1) investigates the relationship between community cultural development, railways stations and community wellbeing, 2) showcases current cultural activity designed to enhance railway stations in order to increase public transport utilisation and 3) considers the many social, economic and environmental issues that contribute to successful ‘place making’ railway stations.

Perception and Practice

The key issues affecting public perception of railway stations as positive places that were identified by this project include:

- Public perceptions of safety
- Crime, violence and anti-social behaviour at train stations and their surrounds
- Poor built environment and urban design.
- The lack of a comprehensive cross-government policy on station environments
- The lack of funding for development of these facilities
- Communication difficulties between stakeholders
- Privatisation of the rail system

In order to combat these negative aspects a number of approaches to the development of railway stations have been designed to:

- reduce vandalism
- increase feelings of security for passengers
- reduce car dependence
- increase civic pride and engagement
- take pressure off city parking
- increase incidental exercise
- provide viable options for people without access to vehicles;
- create community environments which are safe and responsive to community needs.

Policy Context

Planning and policy makers in Victoria have acknowledged negative aspects of our railway facilities and there are increasing examples of a response to these issues. These include:

- Policy for city growth, planning and built form is covered by Melbourne 2030, Planning for Sustainable Growth through the Department of Sustainability and Environment. This document concentrates on the integration of land-use and transport planning and has direct relevance to the projects and directions represented in this paper. One of its primary goals is to improve the quality and accessibility of the Victorian public transport system in order to increase the use of public transport. The Transit Cities Program, part of Melbourne 2030; the ‘program aims to create safe, vibrant, communities centred around public transport’ (DSE, 2006). The transport node is the focus for the development and ‘ideally becomes the community ‘heart’... where people shop, work, meet, relax and live’ (DSE, 2006).

- There are a number of social strategies such as A Fairer Victoria (State Government, 2005), where the role of public transport is seen as a key factor in creating a more equitable society through providing mobility and opportunity.
- The Equal Opportunity Commission Victoria, recognizing the importance of public transport as a site for reducing racial discrimination. In 2005 they joined with Connex, Yarra Trams and Metlink for a campaign to promote cultural diversity on Melbourne public transport. The campaign promoted racial and religious tolerance through advertisements that portray people from different cultural backgrounds in familiar situations - using public transport.
- The mission of Arts Victoria, the State Government's arts implementation and advisory body, is to 'increase the availability and accessibility of the arts to the public' (Arts Victoria website). Railway stations have been the site of some community arts activity with ample opportunity existing to extend this work over time.
- The Victorian Government Transport and Liveability Statement released in May 2006 also sets a context in which to progress development of public transport facilities as vibrant and healthy community hubs.

While these discrete government policies and strategies provide direction to enhance positive civic qualities such as social equity, public transport nodes and their importance within the built fabric, and arts practices in the public realm, there is no activity addressing the experience people have of railway stations themselves.

This could be partly due to the fact that these strategies have coincided with a period of economic change that has led to the Melbourne public transport network being privatised with reduced staffing levels leaving many of our stations unmanned. This reduction in on-site custodianship of stations has meant that there is no authority charged with looking after stations as a site for anything other than waiting, embarking or disembarking from a train. The managing of stations as 'places' – places of meaning, social interaction, engagement, learning, or other positive experiences, is an opportunity currently not exploited.

Whilst there is emerging policy and activity in this area, there is clear potential to combine resources to explore the positive impacts that fully developed railway stations can have on the lives of individuals, families and our community in general.

Place Making and Railway Stations

Place making focuses on developing public spaces into places that have meaning for people, give them pleasure to be in, and that resonate with feeling and memory (Yencken, 1995). Specifically, place making:

- aims to achieve enhanced civic engagement, social and economic development, cultural understanding, and deepen people's relationship to the environment via participatory processes and creative outcomes.
- strives to enable people to experience the public environment as a place where they belong, where they participate in the public and cultural life of the community.
- is based on a community development framework that attempts to achieve multiple outcomes through a range of strategic initiatives. Community development is a process by which people work toward achieving a local collaboratively based vision or project.

Railway stations as sites for place making and community development have natural synergies that many of the researched projects identified in this paper have capitalised on.

While art and artistic practices have been incorporated into the design, retrofits and even exhibition programs of railways stations across the world the integration of community engagement in these processes has a relatively short and humble history. Both processes are valued, however, this paper suggests that while the former does give pleasure it is the latter that helps give meaning to those spaces that act as gateways to many of our communities. Public transport is a crucial aspect of any city or town that strives to be socially equitable and environmentally responsible as it is acknowledged that:

- Access to public transport reduces dependence on private vehicles, which are problematic due to their high resource consumption, air pollution including greenhouse gas emissions, their need for large amounts of space for parking and roads, and their tendency to decrease social interaction
- Public transport nodes are natural gathering points which many people in social need access, and so it is a natural point for provision of information and services

- Public transport is a place of incidental human interaction, including cross-cultural and cross-generational interaction, which, if positive, can help to create a sense of inclusion and belonging, benefiting mental health
- Public transport encourages incidental exercise as people often access stations by walking or cycling, benefiting physical health
- In places where public transport is not privatised, railway stations are publicly-owned civic places that government authorities and the community may feel a sense of obligation to and ownership of, and may use these spaces to achieve civic pride and community expression. This is also the case in some areas where the private company is willing to share ownership with the community, for example The Stationeers see Chapter 4.

The Role of Community Arts

Implementation of community arts processes, alongside other strategies, can assist development of railway stations as places of inclusion rather than isolation and fear.

‘Through design and art, a public space can be filled with meaning. It can be endowed with a sense of occasion so that it is a place of significance for the people who use it. Thus, a well-designed public space can make a positive contribution to the mental health and wellbeing of a community’. (VicHealth 2004)

By engaging the community in creative processes and outcomes where they can express and ‘co-create’ meaning in a station environment, it has been shown that the level of care for the station and environs generally improves. Community engagement through arts processes has been found to create more personal, humanised spaces where people feel a sense of belonging that often fosters an ethic of care towards others in that environment, positively impacting on mental health and increasing perceptions of safety.

The Focus Of Current Practice

The activity presented in this report indicates that a ‘community development through the arts’ approach can be utilised to respond to and resolve issues of community wellbeing. This report details projects from a range of cities and towns across Europe, the United States and Australia, where, in many cases the wider social and community goals of these programs aim:

- To humanise unattractive or soulless station environments
- To replace or discourage graffiti and vandalism with validated creative expression
- To support social programs such as freedom from discrimination, cultural exchange and support for vulnerable groups within society
- To foster community custodianship in stations both staffed and unstaffed
- To enhance the journey of the rail users
- To reduce violence and other forms of crime.

For the purposes of this report, a worldwide scan of railway station revitalisation projects that utilised community arts practices was undertaken. The natural synergies between public transport, community development and environmental responsibilities have been widely identified, and almost all of the projects selected as case studies have aims that span this range. Through community involvement in arts projects, most of the projects aim to specifically:

- Increase safety and deter crime
- Increase patronage thereby enhancing the viability of public transport and reducing the environmental impact of car use
- Increase positive social interaction
- Increase an ethic of care and custodianship
- Enhance the physical environment
- Reflect the ‘sense of place’ – the history, context and stories of the station and surrounds
- Reflect the local community and the various users of the station
- A sense of pride (individual and civic)
- Create positive relationships between the station, public transport users and the local community.
- Enhance community health and wellbeing through creation of safe, supportive and inclusive environments.

The 21 projects, including 5 international, 5 interstate and 11 Melbourne projects, have been selected for their demonstration of diverse, inspiring and innovative ways of engaging communities in railway stations and their environs.

Conclusion

All the international and interstate case studies of community arts and involvement programs discussed in this paper are managed by a government owned and managed rail authority. Here in Melbourne, with our privatised system, the research suggests that it may be more difficult to deliver a program with a rich suite of aims around community engagement. However, what challenges the research is the sheer number and diversity of community engagement projects already existing within the Melbourne rail network, including significant projects from both Metlink and the Stationeers programs, both of which are ultimately government funded via the providers. While none of these projects have the scope or image of some of the non-Melbourne programs, they represent in combination, an enormous amount of goodwill and hard work, and the flourishing of diverse senses of custodianship.

It is evident that there are a range of overseas and interstate models that have delivered exciting and inspiring projects. The dissemination of this research could be used as a tool to help expand the vision amongst all key stakeholders and lead the way to action of benefit to all.

Summary of Art and Community Engagement Projects

PROJECT & LOCATION	INITIATOR & PARTNERS	FUNDING	AIMS SUMMARY
International			
* Platform for Art, London, England	London Underground	Corporate sponsorship	Public art program aims to showcase and celebrate the rich and vibrant London art scene, to create an environment for positive impact and to enhance and enrich the journeys of the passengers. Platform for Art includes both permanent installations as well as changing exhibitions. Both installations and exhibitions include community engagement, ranging from schools, elderly and youth ethnic groups, and employ community artists in theatre, photography, visual arts and music. www.tfl.gov.uk/tube/arts/platform-for-art
* Adopt-a-Station, Lancashire, England	Lancashire County Council, Northern Rail	Lancashire County Council, Northern Rail, local business	This model is tailored to the village setting, with a focus on encouraging local people to use train services more by encouraging community members to beautify their station, creating a more welcoming environment. www.lancscc.net/environment/train/crp/adopt.asp
* Adopt-a-Station, Chicago, U.S.A.	Chicago Transit Authority	Corporate sponsorship	The Chicago Transit Authority's model, adapted to the high use urban environment, has a corporate engagement strategy to achieve wins for the community and the rail users. Adopting organisations are offered an opportunity to enhance and revitalise the appearance of stations by commissioning local artists to create pieces that reflect the local community. www.transitchicago.com
Art in Transit, New York, U.S.A.	Metropolitan Transport Authority	Metropolitan Transport Authority	Encourages the use of public transit by presenting visual and performing arts projects in subway and commuter rail stations.
* TriMet Public Art Program, Portland, U.S.A.	TriMet, a municipal corporation of the State of Oregon	TriMet	The program is based around a recently installed light rail system. The TriMet program promotes transit use and community pride by integrating permanent and temporary art works into the transit stops, celebrating the contributions of public transportation and recognising the cultural and environmental richness of the region. Content of the artwork is arrived at through processes of community consultation. www.trimet.org/publicart/index.htm
* Fruitvale, U.S.A.	The Unity Council, a not for profit community group	Developers, The Unity Council	Fruitvale is an example of a transit-oriented development (TOD) project lobbied for and achieved by the community, the aims were to strengthen existing community institutions and catalyse neighbourhood revitalisation, improve perception and reality of safety and to beautify a blighted area around an existing station, and it has been measurably successful. Whilst not a discrete 'art' project, the level of community engagement and ownership is evidently high, and the new pedestrian plaza adjacent to the station is a hub where many creative endeavours take place. www.unitycouncil.org

Montreal, Canada	City of Montreal	Cityof Montreal	To become the most beautiful subway and the longest art gallery in the world, with Montreal cultural themes.
“El Subte Vive” Cultural Program, Buenos Aires, Argentina	Metrovias, the company who manage the subway	Metrovias	To humanise the system and create, for the benefit of the passengers, a spirit- and heart-touching environment. The stations are almost free of advertising, but instead contain a large number of murals. Includes a “Film in the Subway” series.
Australian			
* Building Better Train Stations, Perth, W.A.	Transperth	Public Transport Authority	This program represents a significant investment in a new rail system, and contemporary understandings of community engagement and expression are integral to the role-out of their system. As the crucial nodes within their transit oriented developments, they are keen to ensure their stations are welcoming, inclusive environments that include community-input public art and other community facilities such as the Fremantle Bicycle Workshop. www.newmetrorail.wa.gov.au/NMR/Documents/Resources/Publications/On%20Track/OnTrack%202005-07.pdf
* Adopt-a-Station, Adelaide	Transadelaide with Work for the Dole, Lions, Rotary, Apex, Freemasons, high schools, Neighbourhood Watch, church groups	Transadelaide, in-kind sponsorship from partners	In 1994 the State Government transportation authority Transadelaide, with in-kind sponsorship from multiple community partners, worked to actively combat graffiti and vandalism by giving individuals and community groups the opportunity to ‘adopt’ their local tram stop or railway station. Noticable improvements to the station environments, including murals and retrofitting heritage stations for community use, have encouraged increased patronage over the twelve years of the project. www.transadelaide.com.au/community/adopt_station.htm
* Adopt-a-Station, Brisbane	Queensland Rail, Griffith University	Queensland Rail, Griffith University	In conjunction with Griffith University, Queensland Rail initiated artistic installations to improve the South Bank site to generate a stronger sense of connection and ownership with the community. The artwork was created through a process of community engagement in the history of the site. Queensland Rail also have a successful mural program, which works predominantly with schools. www3.griffith.edu.au/01/ocp/abstract.php?id=401&mode=PROJ&title=Adopt%20a%20Station
Action Stations, Sydney	Keep Australia Beautiful, City Rail, Blacktown Council	Blacktown Council	Piloted in Doonside as part of Blacktown Council’s Community Pride Program. Involves volunteers constructing planter boxes on railway station platforms and landscaping leading to a noticeable improvement of the station and surrounds.

* These projects are discussed in detail in Chapter 4

Current Practice in Melbourne

In 1999, Melbourne's public transport network was privatised, which included reductions in staffing levels, leaving many of our 209 metropolitan stations unmanned. This lack of on-site custodianship of stations means that there is no authority charged with looking after stations as 'places'.

In the course of this research, ten of Melbourne's municipal councils were contacted to find out whether they had engaged with railway stations as sites for Community Arts projects. While the findings across the councils ranged from a number of creative projects at stations to none at all, there was a consensus amongst those interviewed that stations are important public spaces that hold a variety of meanings for people both positive and negative, and that, in general, art projects have a positive role in strengthening the positive and diminishing the negative perceptions of public places.

A common sentiment expressed by council officers was that working with railway stations in any capacity is complicated by the fact that there are so many authorities who have jurisdiction over different aspects of the station and its environs. Depending on the project, Connex, Victrack, Metlink, DOI, Vicroads, Heritage Victoria, private landowners and various departments within local government may all have responsibility for an area of land or function of the station and may need to be consulted. There were reports of confusion over which authority could give permission for a project, and who would be responsible for maintenance.

The Department of Infrastructure has attempted to clarify this situation with the appointment of a Local Government Relationships Manager within the Public Transport Division in 2005. This position is responsible for addressing a very wide range of issues including graffiti management, traffic engineering requirements, and negotiations between Connex, Victrack, communities and councils. As this position is required to deal with multiple stakeholders working towards diverse outcomes, it cannot work solely within a community development framework. Neither does this position have the power to address the issue which the research has revealed as a key barrier to community engagement in railway stations at this time, that of limited possibilities of custodianship due to the privatised management of stations.

Except for a handful of inspiring examples, stations as sites of meaning, positive social interaction, community engagement, learning, or other beneficial experiences, are opportunities currently

rarely exploited. As this report will show, this is in contrast to many places around the world where the enhancement of public transport has included a vision for and a roll-out of innovative community engagement strategies that incorporate artistic and cultural practices.

Emerging Trends in the Melbourne Context

Melbourne's stationmasters once had a custodial role, and in the course of this research it was revealed how much they are missed, as many that were interviewed expressed their disappointment at the mechanised, impersonal stations we predominantly have today. However, it is perhaps this sense of loss, combined with Melbourne's creative sensibility, that has spurred some of the emerging activities around stations. In various ways, it appears that community groups, artists and individuals, traders, councils and service providers are filling the void in custodianship with new ways of belonging to and caring for stations and station visitors, which this report documents.

Melbourne Projects

The following projects are by no means a complete list of arts and community projects on the Melbourne rail network. These are the projects uncovered in the course of the research and find adequate information on, through contacting individual councils, the service providers and through site visits. There is currently no central registry of community engagement or community arts projects in Melbourne.

PROJECT & LOCATION	INITIATOR & PARTNERS	FUNDERS	AIMS SUMMARY
* The Stationeers, 60 station groups throughout Victoria	Keep Australia Beautiful Victoria, DOI, Connex	Department of Infrastructure	Initiated by Keep Australia Beautiful Victoria (KABV), has been running since 1994, with funding from the Department of Infrastructure, and promotes the railway station as the gateway to the community. It aims to foster mental and physical health, community satisfaction, safer and cleaner stations, less vandalism, and the environmental benefits of encouraging people out of their cars and onto public transport. They achieve these aims through assisting communities to get actively involved in their local station, including art projects, and working bees for litter collection, painting and planting. Currently there are over twenty metropolitan stations with Stationeers groups, including partnerships with community groups such as disabled support programs and historical societies. www.kabv.org.au
* Friends of Mentone Station and Gardens, Mentone Station	Community members, later partnered with Stationeers	Kingston City Council	Operating since 2002 and the most active of the Stationeers groups, their mission is 'to protect, enhance and develop the Mentone Station, its associated gardens and local environment as a source of community pride in consultation with stakeholders'. The Friends have achieved great success in improving the experience of the station and environs, becoming true 'custodians' of the site. They initiated schools students painting murals at the station, and historical posters in the station waiting room. www.kingston.vic.gov.au/Page/Page.asp?Page_Id=1568&h
* Noble Park Pride of Place Project, Noble Park Station	Community Building Demonstration Projects (CBDP) of the Office of Community Building in the Department of Premier and Cabinet, and numerous community partners	Pride of Place program (DSE)	This 2004 project aimed to create a vibrant precinct via public art and design projects that directly engage the community, enhance safety and security, enhance the image of Noble Park, improve access to the precinct, and explore ways of linking the north & south retail precinct. It was largely successful in achieving these aims via an intensive community engagement process, covered in detail in this report. North & south retail precinct.
* Mural, Richmond Station	City of Yarra with Connex, Vic Track, local trader	Crime Prevention Victoria	A 2004 initiative the project aimed to reduce the amount of 'tagging' in the area creating a better environment for traders and public; and provide aerosol artists with the opportunity to create quality public artwork. It has reduced the amount of unwanted graffiti, and has had community-building outcomes including linking up neighbouring traders with local artists.
* Graffiti Mural, St Kilda Junction underpass	City of Port Phillip and Metlink, Whitelion	City of Port Phillip and Metlink	A 2005 initiative of the City of Port Phillip and Metlink, with Whitelion, local artists and the Indigenous community. By engaging with often marginalised aerosol artists, some of whom were street kids or drug users, it aimed to legitimate the skills of these artists and engage them in an inclusive and supported experience, as well as reduce the amount of tagging.

(continued)

* Moving Galleries, student art and community-sourced poetry on 40 Melbourne trains	Committee for Melbourne, with Connex, rookuTroupe, Arts Education Victoria	Arthur Robinson, Brite Solutions, Hothouse Design, Tattersalls, CPR Communications	A 2006 student art and community-sourced poetry on 40 Melbourne trains, was an initiative of the Committee for Melbourne, working with Connex, rookuTroupe, and Arts Education Victoria. It aimed to enhance the experience of public transport, with an emphasis on accessibility and inclusion. www.melbourne.org.au/moving_galleries .
Mural, Burnley Station	Metlink and Whitelion	Metlink and Whitelion	To create for young people a sense of pride in their community, 'ownership' of public transport network and reduction in anti-social graffiti.
Sculpture, Clayton Railway Reserve	Kingston Council	Kingston Council	To create art based on the history of the area viewable for passengers in the trains and those passing in cars.
Public Art project, railway bridge near Footscray Station	Maribyrnong Council	Maribyrnong Council	Entitled 'The West Welcomes Refugees', based on piece of graffiti written on rail bridge, aims to engage artist, and via this the broader community, with this theme. To be installed in 2005 in location where graffiti was first written.
'Where Have we Come From, Where are we Going?'; Mural, Oakleigh Station	Monash Council	Dulux Paints	To tell the stories of the people and place of Oakleigh through community participation in public art.
Nuts and Bolts, underpass art installation, Newport Station	Hobsons Bay City Council	Hobsons Bay City Council	To tell the stories of the industrial past of Newport and the work of Newport people.
Mural by Mirka Mora, Flinders Street Station, 1985	Ministry of Transport, with Ministry of Arts assistance	Ministry of Transport	Features images of local characters and stories, plus mythological imagery.
* Platform 2, Flinders Street Station Degraeves Underpass	Platform Artists Group	Arts Victoria, Australia Council, City of Melbourne	Located at Flinders Street Station Degraeves Underpass since 1994. It provides an exhibition outlet for a diversity of artists, focusing on those who address context, location and the audience. www.platform.org.au
* enterTRAINment, Epping Line	City of Darebin with the cities of Banyule and Whittlesea, Crime Prevention Victoria, Victorian Police, Neighbourhood Watch Preston, Hillside Trains.	Crime Prevention Victoria	A program of live music by local musicians on the Epping Line between 1992 and 1999, was funded by Crime Prevention Victoria and was run in conjunction with Darebin Council. It aimed to provide entertainment, information and a positive environment for passengers using the train and rail stations in Darebin on targeted nights of the year. www.crimeprevention.vic.gov.au/CA256C7B00823407/page/Community+Safety-EnterTRAINment?OpenDocument&1=0-Community+Safety~&2=0-EnterTRAINment~&3=~
* Garden of Eden, Albert Park Railway Station	Tenant	Self-funded, from the enterprises, plus local, state and federal government	A not-for-profit foundation that includes businesses who together inspire and promote visions for sustainable urban communities. They are funded via local, state and federal government programs that they run on site, and also self-funded from the enterprises which include a café, yoga classes, a nursery and art gallery.

* Mart 130, café at Middle Park Railway Station	Tenant	Self-funded, from the enterprises, plus local, state and federal government	Aimed to fill a gap in the community while enhancing an unused heritage building. It does both very successfully, providing a comfortable environment for locals and transit users, with an historical ambience. It re-ignites custodianship of a railway station using a business model of pride and service building.
* Railway Café, Windsor Station	Tenant	Self-funded, from the enterprise	Aimed to provide a service for commuters and a valued local resource through retrofitting a heritage station. The building has a soulful interior and strong sense of place including poetry on the walls, a community noticeboard, books, games and historical rail memorabilia.
Bar at Middle Brighton Railway Station	Tenant	Self-funded, from the enterprise	To provide an entertainment venue while retrofitting and enhancing a heritage station.

** These projects are discussed in detail in Chapter 4*

1.1 Scope

In 2002 VicHealth developed focus on enhancement of the built environment in order to promote health and wellbeing. Some of this work involved utilization of the arts medium to create public spaces which enhanced social connection and inclusion, a fundamental determinant of mental health. A range of local governments were resourced to undertake “place making” activity with some of this work being connected to public transport facilities. The learnings resulting from this activity were documented in “Health in public spaces: Promoting mental Health and Wellbeing through the Art and Environment Scheme”. (VicHealth 2004) and have stimulated on-going VicHealth interest in this area.

Consequently, in 2006 VicHealth commissioned development of a scoping paper focusing on existing arts practice designed to develop railway stations as community hubs. This document is a result of the scoping exercise undertaken.

1.2 Background

Community is defined as a ‘social construct incorporating four elements: people, meanings, practice and spatial configuration’ (Black, 2005). Community, for the purpose of this paper, refers to both communities within a geographical locality to train stations and the commuter community as we explore how train stations can contribute to the wellbeing of both these communities.

Throughout the world, railway stations are important places within cities and neighbourhoods. They are places where people gather, wait, meet, and begin and end journeys. Stations are part of many people’s experience of the public realm, and so the quality of that experience can have impacts on people’s daily lives. Those without access to cars are dependant on public transport, and may need to use it regardless of the impact it has on their sense of wellbeing, including young people, the elderly, and migrant populations. All of these groups are vulnerable segments of the community. A public transport system that engages and communicates with its users through inclusion, inspiration, beauty and creativity has the potential to positively impact on people’s mental health and wellbeing.

As train stations are a central feature in many communities, they hold the potential to impact personal and collective wellbeing by providing equitable access to public transport services and a

space for social interaction, community information exchange, activity and expression. Further, by revitalising train stations as community hubs a new form of community asset is created. The Purple Sage Project, which undertook an extensive community engagement regarding the impact of privatisation on communities, identifies community assets as local schools, libraries, town halls and parklands. They ‘contribute to feelings of security, shared wellbeing, orientation and belonging’ and ‘hold enormous historical, cultural, emotionally and spiritual value (Victorian Women’s Trust et.al. 1990)

Currently, many train stations are not being utilised for the benefit of the communities that interact in and around them, and instead negatively affect community wellbeing. Empty and isolated train stations have been rated as one of the three most feared places for Melbourne travellers (PTUA, 2002). According to the *Victorian Police Corporate Statistics* (Houlihan, 2006), nine people were raped, 168 were sexually assaulted and 870 were physically assaulted on or near Melbourne’s public transport in the 2004-05 financial year. A ‘large proportion of property crime occurs when premises are unoccupied or unsupervised’ (CPT, 2006). Automobile damage and theft are two examples of property crime that occurs at Melbourne’s train stations, with 1200 cars being stolen and 1500 being broken into in train station car parks in the last year (Houlihan, 2006).

According to the *Transport and Liveability, The Path to a Sustainable Victoria* report, issued by the Coalition for People’s Transport (2006), the development of activity areas in and around train stations will reduced isolation and property crime during off peak periods. Passive surveillance is created through increased social interaction and pedestrian activity. Like the Purple Sage Project, this report also highlights the value of social capital for ‘fostering prosperous and resilient communities’ and that a ‘great deal of social interaction can be incidental and occur in public spaces’ (CPT, 2006, p.15). Considering Melbourne has one of the world’s largest rail networks with 15 lines, the potential for train stations to deliver community wellbeing across Melbourne is an exciting challenge.

1.3 The Role of Rail

Railway technology quickly developed to become the primary people-moving system of the nineteenth century industrial city, and the stations reflected this civic significance in the attention given to their architecture. For many travellers of the time, stations were the impressive gateways into the city or the neighbourhood, the first and last point of call, and the comfort of passengers and the experience of the station was given substantial consideration. Some of the most beautiful buildings of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were railway stations and in many of these art was utilised to decorate, inspire and communicate. Art expressed pride and prestige, reflecting the importance of this mode of travel for the city and its people. From the art nouveau whimsy of the Paris Metro, the elaborate 'Palaces for the People' of the Soviet's Moscow subway, to New York's Grand Central Station and intricate subway mosaics, station art and architecture have become icons of design and have graced the lives of millions.

Melbourne, a city founded at the height of the industrial era, had an extensive rail system built into its earliest fabric, including many fine station buildings. Flinders Street Station is one of Melbourne's signature buildings and throughout the suburbs there are beautiful stations from a range of architectural eras. While there may be very few – if any – examples of discrete 'artworks' within the city's early stations, the architecture itself was often highly decorative, with much detail to capture the imagination. The vast stained glass piece at the entry to Flinders Street Station is perhaps our most memorable example.

Over the course of the twentieth century Melbourne, like many cities of the world particularly those in the United States, was dramatically changed by the widespread introduction of the car. Rail use dropped off, and stations were no longer the 'gateways' they had once been. Government infrastructure funding was redirected to prioritise the car, and railway stations were neglected. This is in contrast with other countries, in Europe for example, where the car made less inroads into the historical urban fabric, and rail use did not significantly decline. These cities can now be seen to have distinct advantages with regard to a number of important contemporary issues, including environmental, social and health (Engwicht, 1992).

1.4 Rail in Melbourne Today

Planning and policy makers in Melbourne have taken note of these issues, and a range of Government strategies are currently being developed. In planning for city growth and built form we have *Melbourne 2030, Planning for Sustainable Growth*. Public transport has had a number of upgrades since the 1970's, and recently received significant attention in the form of the 2006 *Transport Liveability Statement*. In addition, there are a number of social strategies including A Fairer Victoria (State Government, 2005), as well as Arts Victoria, the State Government's arts implementation and advisory body, whose mission includes to 'Increase the availability and accessibility of the arts to the public' (Arts Victoria website).

While these discrete government policies and strategies attempt to enhance positive civic qualities including social equity, public transport nodes and their importance within the built fabric; and arts practices in the public realm, there appear to be few strategies that draw together these interconnected issues by addressing the experience people have of railway stations themselves. This could be partly due to the fact that these strategies have coincided with policies of economic rationalisation that led to the Melbourne public transport network being privatised, and included a reduction in staffing levels that has left many of our stations unmanned. This lack of on-site custodianship of stations means that there is no authority charged with looking after the station as a site for anything other than waiting, embarking or disembarking from a train. The managing of stations as 'places' – places of meaning, social interaction, engagement, learning, or other positive experiences, is an opportunity currently not exploited. As this report will show, this is in contrast to many places around the world, including places in Australia, where the enhancement of public transport has included innovative community engagement strategies that incorporate artistic and cultural practices. These strategies aim to enrich peoples experience of the public realm and with the people with whom they share their city, and make for safer, cared-for environments, and a healthier population.

Melbourne in the twenty first century is a city experiencing something of an artistic and cultural renaissance; it feels to be a 'city of passion and creativity' (City of Melbourne's Arts Strategy 2004-2007). It also has a populace with an engaged and proprietary sense of their public transport system. It is not without significance that the 2006 Commonwealth Games Opening Ceremony began with a winged W-Class tram flying into the MCG, and spilling out with tram conductors. This poetic

and quirky beginning was not without poignancy, as many Melbournians still mourn the loss of our tram conductors, who were always more than just ticket sellers, instead they could be seen to have held custodianship of part of the public realm. Stationmasters had a similar role, and in the course of this research it was revealed how much they are missed, as many that were interviewed expressed their disappointment at the mechanised, impersonal stations we predominantly have today. However, it is perhaps this sense of loss combined with Melbourne's creative sensibility that has spurred some of the emerging activities around stations. In various ways it appears that community groups, artists and individuals, traders and councils are filling the void of custodianship with new ways of belonging to and caring for stations and stations visitors, which this report documents in Chapter 4. It must also be said that there are logistical and institutional barriers to this type of naturally occurring custodianship, outlined in Chapter 3.

2.

Stakeholders

2.1 Jurisdiction

There are a number of authorities charged with maintaining and managing stations and their surrounds. With the introduction of franchisees to operate the tram and train networks in 1999, the number of stakeholders increased, with new players including Connex, Yarra Trams and the marketing and promotions company Metlink.

Department of Infrastructure (DOI)
DOI is the government department in charge of all policy development, infrastructure including rail, and decisions regarding service delivery. They set the terms of and manage the contracts of the service providers, and are also involved in across-government projects relating to planning and development.

Relevant divisions within DOI include:

- Public Transport Division (key branch: Market Development, including the Local Government Relationships Manager.)
- Planning and Policy Division (key branch: Integrated Planning)

VicTrack

VicTrack is the government agency that holds ownership of all stations, tracks, and the areas of land within the railway easement. Currently they lease the railway track and stations to the Director of Public Transport, who in turn sub-leases the assets to Connex. In addition to maintaining these assets for the benefit of the public transport system, VicTrack is responsible for raising revenue by lease or sale of land that is excess to the needs of the rail network. Permission from VicTrack must be sought by the local council or the community if they wish to install artwork or use stations in any way, or if they wish to lease or manage areas within the railway easements.

Connex

A private international company, Connex is the rail service provider in Melbourne. The company manages the railway stations, providing staff, cleaning and maintenance as required by their service agreements with the Director of Public Transport. It has a marketing division, that is responsible for the arrangements with non-profit organisations that approach the, looking for sponsorship such as placing information posters at stations. Permission must be sought for art or community projects at stations or on trains, or for being on the station for purposes other than waiting for or disembarking from a train. Connex does not seek art or community projects, it is

reported that there are not the resources to do this. They do not currently have a policy on art or community projects at stations.

Metlink

Metlink was created by the Victorian Government to bring together network-wide functions under direct contract to the State. Metlink is a non-profit company, wholly-owned by the metropolitan train and tram franchisees, but providing services to all operators (including V/Line and the Bus Association of Victoria) and to the State under the Metlink Services Agreement.

Metlink's overarching objective is to increase public transport patronage and fare revenue through improvements in network-wide products and marketing.

As part of this, Metlink is responsible for the following functions:

- passenger information (including a website, call centre and the Met Shop)
- marketing and communications
- signage and branding
- revenue collection and distribution
- ticketing and revenue protection
- public transport policy and advocacy
- data collection and analysis

DOI Market Development Branch ensures Metlink are meeting their obligations under the Metlink Services Agreement.

2.2 Stakeholders with an Interest in Station Environments

2.2.1 Government Stakeholders

Department of Sustainability and Environment

The State Government department responsible for policy and planning in the built and natural environment. (See section on Relevant Government Policy, page 17).

Local Government

As key public spaces, often located at the heart of the towns and villages of a municipality, local governments recognise the importance of appealing, cared-for and well-managed stations. A number of councils have already undertaking

community art project at stations or on VicTrack property, and many have an interest in further engaging in such activity.

Department for Victorian Communities (DVC)

The Department for Victorian Communities works with local people throughout Victoria with the mutual goal of strengthening communities. They advocate that successful community strengthening happens when government investments are linked to local knowledge and community decision-making. (See section on *Relevant Government Policy*, page 17).

Heritage Victoria

Referral authority on heritage station redevelopment.

Arts Victoria

Arts Victoria is the Government body charged with advising on and implementing arts policy, developing the arts and cultural industries across the State, and ensuring access for all Victorians. Their mission includes building audiences and encouraging participation, both of which have the potential to be achieved through community arts engagement within the station environment.

Regional Management Forums

A cross-sector government initiative to promote integrated planning, headed by DVC. As public transportation service and nodes impact across a range of government departments, the Regional Management Forums have an interest in this area.

Police

As railway stations are places with issues of perception and reality of anti-social behaviour, crime and violence, police have an ongoing interest in eliminating such behaviours, and run a number of public transport-centred campaigns to this effect.

Crime Prevention Victoria

The agency responsible for implementation of the Victorian Government's crime and violence prevention strategies.

2.2.2 Other Stakeholders

The following table includes academic, community, professional and industry stakeholders.

Organisation	Role	Area of interest and/or activity
Academic:		
GAMUT/ University of Melbourne	Research	Four year international research project in the area of Governance and Management of Urban Transit (GAMUT)
Monash University	Research	Professor of Public Transport Grahame Currie has a research interest
RMIT University	Research	Department of Planning and Environment students and staff assisted with this research and have expressed an ongoing interest
Community:		
Keep Australia Beautiful Victoria	Advisory	Stationeers – Right on Track community engagement project
Public Transport Users Association	Inform	Advocacy
Environment Victoria	Inform	Advocacy
Friends of the Earth	Inform	Advocacy
Victorian Council of Social Services	Advisory	Advocacy
Bicycle Vic	Advisory	Advocacy
CERES Community Environment Park	Advisory	Advocacy
Committee for Melbourne	Inform	Advocacy
Professional:		
Planning Institute of Australia	Advisory	Planning, Health and Wellbeing Project
Australian Institute of Urban Studies	Advisory	Transport Indicators Project
Cultural Development Network	Advisory	Development of Arts and Culture
Industry:		
Bus Association	Advisory	Bus interface with Station

2.3 Relevant Government Policy

There are a number of existing government policies that support the potential for railway stations to become innovative community hubs. These policies have been developed at the State Government level and do not necessarily represent all rail related policy, as mentioned later in this paper, some local governments are involved in station revitalisation through their cultural policies.

Melbourne 2030

Melbourne 2030 is a “strategic plan prepared to manage growth and change across metropolitan Melbourne and its surrounding region” (DSE, 2005a).

One of the primary goals of this policy is to improve the quality and accessibility of the Victorian public transport system in order to increase the use of public transport within the state, particularly in urban and suburban areas (DSE, 2003). The aim of the policy is to have public transport’s share of motorised trips within Melbourne increase from the current level of 9% to 20% by 2020 (DSE, 2003).

A key part of achieving this goal is maximising the use of Activity Centres (DSE, 2005). Activity Centres are hubs of activity in urban settings that are used by people every day to shop, work and perform other daily tasks (DSE, 2003). They vary greatly in size and usage, however one characteristic that they all share is that they are based around public transport services, including train stations (DSE, 2003).

There are about 1000 Activity Centres nominated across Melbourne that are subject to a set of Performance Criteria listed within the Melbourne 2030 Policy (DSE, 2003). This is a list of 18 criteria that cover social, economic and environmental considerations to be taken into account when designing and developing these Activity Centres. They include such things as ensuring that these centres:

- Improve the liveability (that is, the safety, convenience, comfort and aesthetics) of the area;
- Increase opportunities for social interaction and provide a focus for the community;
- Meet the needs of all segments of the population;
- Contribute to the area’s natural, cultural and historical heritage; and
- Contribute to economic competitiveness of the network centres that provide wide community benefit. (DSE, 2003)

Over 100 of these Activity Centres as classed as being Principle, Major or Specialised Activity Centres (DSE, 2003). Most of these are located near established train stations, so it is important that the design of these train stations be carefully considered. As part of the Melbourne 2030 policy, the Department of Sustainability and Environment provides a set of design guidelines for Activity Centres which are integrated into the planning schemes in each municipality (DSE, 2005).

Transit Cities

The Transit Cities Program has been developed by the Department of Sustainability and Environment, in partnership with local councils, government authorities, developers and the community, to implement the Melbourne 2030 Strategy. Using Transit Oriented Design principles, which creates mixed-use developments around public transport services, the ‘program aims to create safe, vibrant, communities centred around public transport’ (DSE, 2006). Nine metropolitan and four regional centres were selected. The transport mode, either train, light rail or bus terminus is the focus for the development and ‘ideally becomes the community ‘heart’ ... where people shop, work, meet, relax and live’ (DSE, 2006).

A Fairer Victoria

A Fairer Victoria is the Victorian Government’s social policy action plan. The plan sets out 85 actions the Government will take within fourteen major strategies to address disadvantage in Victoria. (A Fairer Victoria 2006)

These actions aim to improve access to services, reduce barriers to opportunity, strengthen assistance for disadvantaged groups and places, and ensure that people get the help they need at critical times in their lives. The actions comprise new initiatives and reforms to the delivery of services.

‘A Fairer Victoria’ includes specific strategies for increasing support for mental health services with a stronger focus on prevention and early intervention. Strategies for building stronger communities include expanding the *Neighbourhood Renewal* program and improving community transport services. There are also strategies for involving communities in decisions affecting their lives and making it easier to work with Government. The report promises to implement new ways of working directly with communities, giving groups and communities a greater say in determining their futures. Specific strategies include investing \$9.4 million to streamline support for community groups, promote greater business involvement in the community and establishing a new think tank to

encourage the business sector, community sector and local government to work together. All of the above strategies have the potential to be realised in part through a program to revitalise railway stations as community hubs. In fact, the role of public transport is a key factor in creating a more equitable society through providing mobility and access, so there is enormous potential for multiple strategies to be realised through the unique conjunctions found at railway stations.

3.

Current Issues for Communities around Train Stations

3.1 Introduction

Train stations are generally poorly considered by the community in terms of their role as gateways to public transport use, and conversely as gateways and welcoming points into the local area. Research has shown that issues, such as community levels of fear, are affected by the quality of the physical environment, and that the physical environment is more likely to be abused when there is no sense of care or custodianship. The relationship between the public's perception of safety, the use of railway space by youth to express themselves through graffiti, and the policing of station environments is currently an awkward balance.

3.2 Safety

The perception of safety could be considered one of the main barriers to public transport usage. Trains and train stations in particular are locations that authorities often focus many community safety and crime prevention strategies. For the most part these strategies are of the punitive variety; security cameras, transit police and anti graffiti policies and practices. It is increasingly recognised, however that the physical environment of stations can affect the level of fear felt by pedestrians and travellers. It is this fear, rather than crime itself, that is affecting public transport usage.

State and local government recognise the value of creating urban environments that are active, support positive interactions and encourage greater use of public transport. It is also increasingly accepted that 'lower levels of street activity increase fear' (Bell 1998). However some railway stations appear either deserted and unkept, or have been updated to corporate and sterile environments. Even train stations that are attached to shopping centres, such as Melbourne Central and Box Hill, where the level of activity above ground is high, lack humanity and activity on the platforms themselves. These environments are not welcoming to human beings. To feel safe both the physical environment and the level of activity have to reflect safety through natural surveillance, scale, and design.

Privatisation and the introduction of ticketing machines has seen the reduction of station attendants on many lines and ultimately civic places have become private concerns. In a recent report Multicultural Perspectives of Crime and Safety respondents clearly stated that public transport particularly trains were seen as unsafe "I feel less secure now because of ticket machines, some stations do not have anyone to sell tickets and therefore vandalism and hooligans are very real threats" (Crime Prevention Victoria).

As mentioned, the reaction by authorities to train travel safety is increasingly policed with measures such as security cameras, closed circuit television, blue lighting in toilets, razor ribbon, closed and barred waiting rooms and transit police becoming the focus. Connex has trialled yellow safety zones whereby passengers stand in the intercom system area. Passengers are told this will enable them to push emergency button easily and be in full view of the camera. These measures may support the reduction of crime but they also increase the feelings of insecurity and the perception of train stations being a place where crime happens.

There are other programs that involve the community in crime prevention such as *The See Something Say Something* campaign, based on the Neighbourhood Watch concept. In 1981 in New York The Guardian Angels program commenced with volunteers that patrolled the subway. A study from this time found that 61% of people surveyed said they felt the presence of the Angels made them feel safer and 66% felt that their presence could reduce crime itself. While this can be seen as a positive result there was also criticism, as there has been about programs like Neighbourhood Watch and See Something Say Something, that this is a vigilante approach to safety. However these programs do reveal that one of the most important elements in providing feelings of safety is that we need to feel that others are present to witness what happens to us and that we need the presence of other human beings to feel safe. The recent Commonwealth Games experience in Melbourne with the increased presence of volunteers and day & night activity also saw increased public transport usage.

In general environments that are populated with human beings engaged in positive activities,

enjoying and expressing themselves people feel safer. A place is considered to be safe because other people are already there and because they are calm and relaxed.

Agency coordination

In the course of this research, ten of Melbourne's municipal councils were contacted to find out whether they had engaged with railway stations as sites for Community Arts projects. In most cases the primary contact was the manager of the arts and culture department in each municipality. While the findings across the councils ranged from a number of creative projects at stations to none at all, there was a consensus amongst those interviewed that stations are important public spaces that hold a variety of meanings for people both positive and negative, and that art projects have a positive role in strengthening the positive and diminishing the negative perceptions of public places.

A common sentiment expressed by council officers was that working with railway stations in any capacity is complicated by the fact that there are so many authorities who have jurisdiction over different aspects of the station and its environs. Depending on the project Connex, Victrack, Metlink, DOI, Vicroads, Heritage Victoria, private landowners and various departments within local government may all have responsibility for an area of land or function of the station and may need to be consulted. There were reports of confusion over which authority could give permission for a project, and who would be responsible for maintenance.

‘We shy away from rail projects as it is just too hard to get dialogue between the authorities – they all keep passing the buck. It’s not a funding issue as much as the communication problems that make simple projects really hard. Sometimes community members come to us wanting to do art projects at stations but the process we have to go through with the authorities ends up alienating the community.’
(City of Kingston, 2006)

This very issue - that of there being no-one in charge of local government relationships, has recently been addressed the Department of Infrastructure. A position of Local Government Relationships Manager (in the Market Development Branch of the Public Transport Division) was created in 2005. The position is responsible for addressing a very wide range of issues including graffiti management, traffic engineering requirements, negotiations between Connex and councils, and all issues and relationships (which

have a different set of needs and expectations depending upon the performance indicators of their positions). This does not leave a great amount of time or energy for focussing on a community development framework. As such it is not clear that this position will have the power to address what the research has revealed as a fundamental problem with community engagement in railway stations at this time, the issue of confused, split, or limited custodianship.

3.3 Station Environments

For this report a perceptual analysis of the potential for physical improvement of station environments was undertaken. This took the form of site visits, included 35 qualitative surveys of the experience of a diverse range of Melbourne stations, and interviewing 26 station users.

This was in order to obtain data regarding a central question of this report – what are the possibilities for redevelopment of train stations as centres for community engagement?

The common themes identified by this research as important to fostering or inhibiting community development at Melbourne's train stations were aesthetics, amenities, the condition and design of station buildings and the pervading atmosphere at each station. The details of this analysis is located in Appendix 2.

Whilst the analysis of the 35 stations visited varied according to the above-mentioned indicators, there was one theme that was evident at all stations surveyed. Each station demonstrated potential to be developed further into a place that could foster community wellbeing. Potential took the form of possible renovations to existing buildings, undertaking some form of landscaping, incorporating some type of artwork into the station area or improving accessibility. This scope for improvement offers hope that train stations could be revitalised to form active community hubs.

4.

Case Studies

There are many inspiring projects around the world that use community arts process to engage communities in connecting to their railway stations. We have identified a range of international, interstate and local projects that could inform policy development in Melbourne.

4.1 International Projects

The following international projects have been chosen as case studies as they demonstrate diverse, inspiring and innovative ways of engaging communities in railway stations.

4.1.1 Platform for Art, London Underground

'London Underground is integral to London's historic and contemporary identity. It provides an interface for residents, workers and visitors; facilitating their movement around a City that is a key world heritage site, is world-renowned as a diverse and vibrant cultural centre, and is home to some of the most innovative and exciting contemporary art in the world. Platform for Art delivers a programme that feeds directly on that reputation and reflects the quality and range of work to be seen all over the city' (www.tfl.gov.uk/tube/arts/platform-for-art).

Platform for Art, the public art program of the London Underground, includes both permanent installations as well as changing exhibitions. Both art types include community engagement, ranging from schools, elderly and youth ethnic groups, and community artists in theatre, visual arts and music. The program appears to have a focus on intercultural expression and providing a forum for expression of marginalized groups, and works closely with the range of users of the station within the local community. One extremely popular exhibition was entitled *Baby Fathers*, at Piccadilly Circus Station, and showed portraits of teenage fathers and their children in humane, surprising and poignant ways (Damon & Dillon, 2003).

Recent programs have included *Red Threads* at North Harrow station. This was created with members of local community, predominantly older women from India and Pakistan, in partnership with three local arts venues. 72 posters are on display in the station.

For *Mine*, at Aldgate East Tube Station during November 2005, Wessex Girls Youth Group worked with artist Marysa Dowling for a period of six weeks. The group produced a series of digital photographic compositions that have been enlarged to fit the alcoves in Aldgate East Station. These images express their feelings about identity and highlight issues concerning race and representation.

According to the London Underground's website *Platform Portraits*, the last collaboration between Platform for Art and the Whitechapel Gallery, was seen by an international media audience of approximately 150 million people.



Red Threads at North Harrow photo by Declan O'Neill



Aldgate East photo by Daisy Hutchison

4.1.2 Chicago Adopt-a-Station

The Chicago Transit Authority (CTA) launched the Adopt-A-Station program in 1997 to develop partnerships between community organisations, local businesses and individuals. The program helps create rail stations that reflect the history and diversity of the communities served by the CTA, with the aim of creating unique gateways to each neighbourhood, via the station.

Adopting organizations are offered an opportunity to enhance and revitalize the appearance of the Chicago railway stations by commissioning local artists to create murals, sculptures, mosaics, paintings or photographs. Stations are adopted for two years.

In 2005, 20 CTA stations were under adoption. These included the Chinatown station that highlighted masks and statues that capture the area's Chinese roots; the Conservatory - Central Park Drive station adorned with mosaic murals created by neighbourhood youth; and the Merchandise Mart station which displays photography by Columbia College students. A press release put out by the CTA in March last year quotes Chicago Cubs Vice President of Community Affairs Mike Lufrano as saying: "We are proud to partner with the CTA in a community effort that has beautified a station also identified with the Chicago Cubs and our loyal fans. We hope our efforts will inspire others to add artistry and vitality to their neighbourhood stations to reflect the surrounding community."

This particular model of station adoption produces a high quality outcome for the neighbourhood community and the rail user, as the station is only subtly branded by the businesses, and produces high quality artwork. By taking a 'corporate social responsibility' approach, those who provide the income are valued by the community for their contribution, rather than being annoyed by in-your-face advertising.



4.1.3 Lancashire Adopt-a-Station

Northern Rail in Lancashire, England has instituted another model of Adopt-a-Station. Theirs is similar to the Adelaide program, with a focus on landscaping, cleanliness and beautification. The following extract from their website gives a good insight into how the model has been adapted to the 'village' context of Northern England:

Why do it?

There are lots of different reasons for adopting your local station, perhaps:

- You want to encourage local people to use train services more by having a more welcoming station,
- You want to achieve success in the Best Kept Village or Best Kept Station competition,
- You have an interest in gardening and horticulture,
- You don't want an eyesore in the middle of your village!

What can be done?

Station adoption groups do all sorts of things, it just depends on how much time they have. Some:

- Plant flowers and have hanging baskets or pots of plants,
- Paint fences, shelters etc,
- Get the local schools and groups involved with community art projects,
- Develop local information boards at the station,
- Develop walking guides and posters displayed at the station.

Who does it?

Lots of people may want to get involved in adopting their local station; it could be:

- Rail users,
- School and youth clubs,
- Community groups,
- Environmental or horticultural groups,
- Local businesses and tourist attractions.

4.1.4 Portland

The TriMet Public Art Program promotes transit use and community pride by integrating permanent and temporary art works into the public transit system, celebrating the contributions of public transportation and recognizing the cultural richness in the region.



At Overlook Park Station Fernanda D'Agostino was inspired by research on the healing power of light and nature.

- Light towers modelled after roadside shrines in Poland feature portraits of community members overlaid with images of nature.
- Art glass in the windscreen suggests the transforming power of nature.
- Community map artist Margaret Eccles created a symbol for the relationship between good health and community.

At Prescott St Station, artists Brian Borrello and Valerie Otani recognize the shipbuilding industry while providing an alternative approach to rainwater filtration.

- A stainless steel "ship's prow" gathers rainwater and funnels it to a green space.
- Blue glass bricks in the platform hint at imaginary waterways beneath the station.
- An etched granite map features Portland's "disappearing streams."

At Portland Boulevard Station, Native American artists Lillian Pitt, Ken MacKintosh, Rick Bartow and Gail Tremblay use traditional motifs to symbolize the life-sustaining relationships of nature.

- Steel column wraps were inspired by Columbia River Gorge petroglyphs.
- Platform pavers outline a traditional Klikitat basket weave pattern.
- Guardrail panels feature symbols of salmon and Thunderbird.
- Bronze sculptures are mounted at the ends of shelter canopies.

- The community map by Dawn Waldal visually interprets poetry by Native American Elizabeth Woody.

An article on the TriMet website describes how a creative response to vandalism is turning into a win for the community;

'Sandblasting vandalized glass beautifies bus stops and deters further vandalism.'

TriMet now reuses graffiti-laden glass bus shelter panels by sandblasting them into artwork that enhances communities, saves money and reduces waste.

Each year, about 750 panels are severely scratched by vandals. Replacement panels would cost TriMet about \$200 each.

Instead, the vandalized glass is removed, sandblasted with an artist-designed motif and then reinstalled where needed. Etching the glass by sandblasting removes the scratches and costs under \$20. This saves TriMet at least \$100,000 a year.

"This is an innovative solution to an expensive problem that underscores our commitment to keeping our amenities attractive," says TriMet General Manager Fred Hansen. "TriMet saves money and reduces waste by recycling the glass, and at the same time the community gains a piece of artwork."

4.2 National Projects

4.2.1 Building Better Train Stations Program

The "Building Better Train Stations Program" is a Western Australian Government initiative that is "about promoting the use of public transport nodes to help revitalise established communities". (MacTiernan, 2004). An important dimension of this program is the public arts initiative that is being incorporated into various train station redevelopments. On a bigger scale this program forms just one part of the Western Australian governments planning guidelines for the future. Other policies that support the government's vision

for metropolitan Perth seek to expand the state's rail network and show a shift towards supporting transit-oriented developments.

The Building Better Train Stations Program has so far developed plans to build fifteen new train stations whilst expanding seven existing stations. (PTA, 1997) The overarching ideal in the design of these new or renovated stations is the intention to make each train station a focal point for their own individual suburb. This aim seeks to reverse previous trends apparent in the design of public transport facilities. These trends largely focused on providing only the bare essentials; namely a platform and some form of shelter. Previously public transport infrastructure has been categorised by limited accessibility. It appears to have been built almost as an afterthought, as the infrastructure itself was often isolated from the most heavily used areas of a town or suburb.

Development opportunities that seek to combine a mixture of commercial, residential and transport based development are being identified and fostered under the direction of the Department of Planning and Infrastructure (DPI). The Western Australian planning document Reconnecting Perth seeks to "promote maximising access to mass transit by fostering mixed use development that is compact, pedestrian friendly, socially diverse, and interconnected with other places via public transport." (DPI, 2005) Following the Reconnecting Perth guidelines, train stations such as Gosnells, Armadale and Bassendean have been completely overhauled. Common features of redeveloped train stations include sheltered access for cyclists, pedestrians and disabled patrons. Expanding on the mixed use development emphasis in the Reconnecting Perth strategy, redeveloped stations will seek to play a much more active role in a town's psyche (DPI, 2005). This will be achieved through prominent design features including public artworks, attractive landscaping and eye-catching entrances. At a practical level, stations will be designed with access points to and from main streets in order to further integrate a station into people's daily lives.

Examples of public artwork displays have already been completed and incorporated into newly developed train station buildings, including the Thornlie station and the Esplanade station. In both cases the artwork undertaken has placed a special emphasis on reflecting important local pastimes in an attempt to maintain a particularly local theme at each station. At the opening of Thornlie Station in August 2005, the Arts Minister, Sheila McHale, is quoted as saying; "The public art focuses on the special recollections of Thornlie people, gleaned by artists Arif Satar and Audrey Fernandes-Satar through research and workshops"

4.2.2 Fremantle Station Bike Workshop

The proposal for a bike workshop at the Fremantle train station is an innovative program that offers a range of social and environmental benefits. Central to this program is the theme of promoting cycling as an alternative transport mode, however the bike workshop will also incorporate a work for the dole scheme. This project would be supported by cycling based strategies such as Cycle Instead as well as public transport oriented policies such as the Building Better Trains Station program.

Integral to this proposal are plans to utilise neglected heritage buildings within the station precinct, and to develop these buildings into bike workshops. The bike workshop concept as stated will be much broader than simply providing bicycle parking facilities. It is intended that the workshop would encourage people to use their bikes as often as possible in their everyday lives. The campaign would be conducted by offering bike maintenance seminars, bike hire on a short or long term basis, the retail of bike accessories and a bicycle service business. (City of Fremantle, 2004)

At a social level this project has numerous positives. A work for the dole scheme has been canvassed, in which people who have been unemployed on a long-term basis would receive basic training in bike maintenance (City of Fremantle, 2004). It is hoped that an increasing number of people will take up this transport mode, which will have flow on health benefits as people conduct more regular exercise. Furthermore, the increase in bike use should reduce the number of cars on the road. This may contribute to a reduction in greenhouse gas emissions, providing both social and environmental benefits.

The bike workshop scheme at Fremantle train station represents a creative solution to solving the issue of bike theft that had previously plagued the station (City of Fremantle, 2004). The awareness that bikes can be stolen or damaged if left at train stations can act as a powerful deterrent against accessing a station using a bike. This kind of issue is similar to poor pedestrian access at train stations, which is now a priority to be resolved under the Western Australian governments Building Better Train Stations program. Improved pedestrian access is a cornerstone of new train station design outlined in the Building Better Train Stations brochures. The brochure for the newly developed Gosnells train station states, "a new path will provide safe pedestrian, wheelchair and cyclist access through the station precinct and town centre." (Building Better Train Stations 2005)

4.2.3 Adopt-a-Station

A number of nations around the world have station engagement programs named Adopt-a-Station, including the United States, the United Kingdom and Australia. These vary in scope and results, but in common they have in place a structure to facilitate community engagement in railway stations, in order to improve amenity, aesthetics, identity and local pride. Following are two Australian case studies; Adelaide and Brisbane.

Adelaide Adopt-a-Station

In 1991, TransAdelaide created a national first when it began its Adopt-a-Station program. The Adopt-a-Station program is a partnership between TransAdelaide and groups or individuals in the community to look after their local train station or tram stop. The program actively combats graffiti and vandalism by giving individuals and community groups the opportunity to 'adopt' their local tram stop or railway station.

TransAdelaide has 84 metropolitan train stations, of which 70 stations have some degree of community involvement, ranging from a local resident who loves the chance to do some extra gardening, or has a bent to keep the station tidy, to the involvement of clubs with dozens of members. Work for the Dole programs have been instituted to revitalize station surrounds, with ongoing maintenance often taken up by the local Lions group. Other groups that have 'adopted' Adelaide stations include Rotary, Apex, the Freemasons, high schools, Neighbourhood Watch, and church groups.

The difference the program has made is remarkable, according to program co-ordinator Garry Gailey. They have recorded marked increase in patronage of stations when run-down areas are transformed with attractive, cared-for landscaping. This is especially notable where the landscaping abuts car parking, as commuters feel it is safe to leave their car.

TransAdelaide have roughly quantified the cost savings of the adopt-station-program at \$0.5 million per annum. They include in their calculation the reduction of graffiti, and volunteer labour in garden planting and maintenance. However, as Gailey notes, it is harder to estimate the revenue from increased patronage, and to calculate the benefits of getting people off the roads (less road construction and maintenance, plus greenhouse gas savings).

Gailey reports that he started off in rail as a ticket inspector, where he began to lose faith in people. But now, his current position enables

him to access the goodwill of individuals and the community, and to help others to make a positive contribution to their place. He is a passionate advocate for the Adopt-a-Station program.

Arts Projects in Adopt-a-Station

The laneway approach to Largs North station was continually being graffitied, until a partnership between the local council and adopt-a-station created an artistic solution. A local graffiti artist was employed to create a large mural on the wall of the laneway that reflected the users of the building adjacent, the local RSL. The mural has reportedly not been vandalized. This same artist has since been employed to decorate the wall of the showgrounds, which runs along the rail corridor, with a mural depicting the history of the agricultural show.



Salisbury Adopt-a-Station



Public transport themed mural at Salisbury Station.



Garry Gailey driving the tractor in the Salisbury Christmas pageant, the trailer decorated with Adopt a Station posters. Salisbury High School students escorted the float through the streets.

Gawler Adopt-a-Station

Gawler Station and the historical stationmaster's residence, recently renovated by a Work for the Dole crew, have an art gallery in the complex dedicated to local art.

Brisbane Adopt-a-Station

Queensland Rail has an Adopt-a-Station program, where they have so far incorporated children's artwork into three metropolitan stations. Then in 2005 Queensland Rail approached Sam di Mauro, Lecturer in Design, Queensland College of Art at Griffith University, to see if he or his students would like to create artwork for South Bank station, located just beside the university in inner Brisbane. South Bank station is for key for a number of local schools, workers, families and leisure users. Di Mauro was inspired to involve this wider community, so he applied for and obtained a

research grant through the university to undertake such a project.

He and his students researched the history of that part of Brisbane, and set up an exhibition of images they had collected. They then organised a function at the university and invited station users and the local community to come along and talk about their experiences of the station and surrounding neighbourhood, prompted by the images. Sixty people turned up and the students listened to the stories, and then created artwork inspired by those stories.

Six professional artists were also commissioned to respond to the exhibition of images, with work that reflected the space and the culture of the area. Queensland Rail selected the artwork that was to be installed at the station, and it was installed June 2006, fourteen months after the inception of the project. It is too soon to evaluate the success of the artwork in the space, but di Mauro felt the process to be very successful in terms of engagement of community and stakeholders, and the quality of the artwork produced from these interactions.

Following is a quote from the university's website about the project:

'The project utilises qualitative research methods to comprehend the relationship between community, place and time. The suburban railway stations of South Bank and South Brisbane will be used as major source of reference to enrich the functional and aesthetic points of arrival and departure for communities using the South Bank station. Findings of this research will inform changes that need to be made to improve the South Bank site to generate a stronger sense of connection and ownership with the community.' (www3.griffith.edu.au/01/ocp/abstract.php?id=401&mode=PROJ&title=Adopt%20a%20Station)

4.3 Melbourne

Whilst Melbourne has no specific policies relating to art and community engagement at stations, there are a range of arts and community projects already located at Melbourne stations. The level of community engagement naturally differs in the arts projects. For instance, perhaps the highest exposure art piece at a station is Mirka Mora's 1985 mosaic and paint mural at Flinders Street Station. Whilst this was not a community project, Mirka Mora is a well-known Melbourne artist who over decades has worked with many thousands of children in her artist in schools workshops, and so her art may have a stronger resonance than the art of a less community-engaged artist.

Whilst we have focused on researching visual arts project, because of the physical and long-lasting effect they have on a space, there are also notable 'ephemeral' works that have been located at stations, such as theatre. For instance, at Flinders Street Station, as part of the 2005 Melbourne International Arts Festival, Back to Back Theatre ran a show called Small Metal Objects, performed on the 'Station Concourse with a supporting cast of a thousand commuters' (foot). The audience wore headphones so that they could hear the musical score and the voices of the actors, who roamed amongst the curious commuters who were coming and going. By bringing performance out of the theatre and into a normally utilitarian public space, it can change the nature of how we experience that space, creating an experience of wonder, surprise and delight – for the theatre patrons as well as the train users.

Of the case studies selected, there are a number of categories:

- Ongoing, currently existing art and station engagement projects, including Stationeers, Friends of Mentone Station and Gardens Group, Platform 2, Moving Galleries
- Previously completed community arts projects including Noble Park Pride of Place, Richmond Station, St Kilda Junction Underpass, EnterTRAINment
- And private enterprises at stations – Garden of Eden at Albert Park Station, Mart130 at Middle Park Station and Railway Café, Windsor Station.

4.3.1 The Stationeers

Keep Australia Beautiful Victoria formed the Stationeers 'Right on Track' program in 1994. It was formed as a result of increasing concerns by members of the community and the state government regarding the untidy surrounds of railways stations in Victoria (KABV, 2004). The program however has grown to encompass a

sophisticated understanding of how the 'custodial' nature of the program produces a wide range of benefits. They outline these benefits in language that encourages a proprietorial attitude towards stations, and they advertise the program on their website;

'The Stationeers - 'Right on Track'[®] is an opportunity for you to make a difference to the environment by caring for the land in and around your local railway station. Like a ripple effect, the simple deed of improving the appearance of a train station can have a much larger impact on our environment.

By adopting a train station and working to eradicate litter Stationeers volunteers make the station environment pleasant and safer for commuters and the community, In contrast to those that stand back with arms crossed, declaring that "somebody should do something," Stationeers have demonstrated the satisfaction and benefits of acting instead of complaining. What are these benefits?

- **Feeling Good** - Exercise, fresh air, friendships
- **Community Satisfaction** - Inspiring a sense of pride and making a positive contribution to the local environment.
- **Safer Stations** - Promoting the station as a community asset and meeting place.
- **Cleaner Stations** - Eradication of litter is often the first step taken by Stationeers groups, an essential component of any beautification process.
- **Less Vandalism** - greater activity at the stations tends to results in less graffiti and vandalism.
- **Environmental Benefits** - attractive and safe train stations encourage commuters and travellers to drive less and travel by train more.

The program aims to turn transit stops into gateways of your community.'

The *Stationeers* program aims to clean and beautify train stations around the state. It accomplishes this by removing litter, establishing and improving landscaping, discouraging vandalism by installing murals and other beautification strategies, and increasing public awareness. They identify the health benefits of a more appealing station environment, 'When people take trains, they walk more and interact with each other, increasing physical and mental health and community spirit.' (KABV,2004).

The Stationeers Program Manager Natalie Staton has documented inspiring examples of the degree to which a custodial sensibility has been ignited. At one V-line station the Stationeers group have a roster to ensure that one of their members is at the station to greet and assist any alighting

passengers. At Nunawading station, Alkira, a support service for people with intellectual disabilities located right beside the station, have capitalized on this synergy and 'adopted' the station, and as a group the clients enthusiastically visit most days with plants, brooms and bags to collect rubbish. 'They aim to install artwork, however, they need to raise funds from donors to enable such a project', says Staton. A quote from Meaghan Adams, Alkira's Community Relations Manager, states that 'Alkira has been involved in many projects to benefit the community but this one stands out as a truly unique opportunity for us to give to our neighbourhood.' (letter to KABV, May 2006)

Stationers are all volunteer members of the community, come from various backgrounds and are involved in the program for a variety of reasons. They include school and youth groups, clubs, local traders, members of CORE (the Public Correctional Enterprise), environmentalists and train enthusiasts (KABV, 2004). The Stationers program manager assists communities in planning the activities for each station. KABV negotiates with applicable rail authorities, property owners and councils in order to gain access and permission for the proposed projects. The program also provides Stationers groups with safety gear and information, helps with the purchase or donation of equipment, supplies and plants, and works with the groups to recruit further volunteers.

Keep Australia Beautiful Victoria and these volunteer groups collaborate with local and state governments, the Department of Infrastructure, Connex and V/Line. Currently, over 60 stations have been 'adopted' through this program (with 21 currently active metropolitan groups), providing over 40,000 hours of volunteer work per year. This is estimated at more than \$1 million worth of value provided, not including the significant community and beautification benefits (KABV, 2004).

4.3.2 Friends of Mentone Station and Gardens

The threat of a bus interchange and car park on the site of the well loved Mentone Station gardens was the catalyst for the formation of the Friends of Mentone Stations and Garden group. Three hundred people turned up to a rally in 2002 to save the trees from removal, and in a creative gesture tied bows to the bases of the eighty year old Norfolk Island Pines. Consequently the gardens were saved, and the *Friends* group, with a membership of approximately sixty, has continued to improve the area around the station. The Stationers program manager heard about their activities and approached them to join the

program, which provides insurance cover and some promotions.

Dorothy Booth, the instigator of the action that saved the gardens, continues to be a driving force within the Friends. She reports that the monthly working bees are a great social activity. Often they collect rubbish during the working bee, and she notes that while when the group began they would often collect over 11 bags of garbage, but that now it is usually less than two bags. Part of the reason for this dramatic litter reduction Booth attributes to the Friends' engagement of the local school students. The Friends group noted that the wall adjacent to the station underpass was continually vandalized. The Friends group initiated the involvement of four local schools; Kilbreda, St Bede's, Mentone Girls' Secondary colleges and Mentone Grammar, whose art students each created a panel with a theme of historical local architecture. Booth reports a dramatic change in community perception, with virtually no vandalism in the nearly two years since the project was installed. Over 7000 students use the station every day, so the Friends group was keen to instigate a custodial attitude in the students through their involvement. The Kingston Mayor Arthur Athanasopoulos is quoted in the Council newsletter 'Kingston Your City' in December 2004 as saying; "My Council colleagues commend the dedication and commitment of the community steering committee that has adopted and looked after this historic and treasured site."

The local Mentone Historical Society is also very supportive, with some mutual members. A collaboration between the Society and the Friends has resulted in securing from Connex four poster frames for stories about Mentone to go into the station waiting room.

As the station is only staffed weekday mornings, Booth reports that 'we are now the station masters'. The Friends have engaged with police transit police, and ring them if they notice any problems. Booth expressed that it can be extremely difficult dealing with all the authorities, it being hard to find out who is responsible for what, and then who is the appropriate person to speak to within the organisation.

'There is a need to build up so many relationships, and then the authorities don't necessarily understand how involved and knowledgeable we are. We have to be very persistent.'

The Mentone Friends won the KABV Sustainable Cities Community Pride Award in 2005, and Dorothy Booth was named citizen of the year for the Kingston municipality.



Kilbrida College artists at the launch of the murals - photo Michael Petit

4.3.3 Noble Park Pride of Place Project

The Noble Park Pride of Place Project was an art and design project located in the Noble Park railway and retail precinct. (All the following photos by Ratartat)

How it Came About?

The Community Building Demonstration Projects (CBDP) was an initiative by the Office of Community Building in the Department of Premier and Cabinet. The aim of CBDP was to strengthen disadvantaged communities across Victoria. Noble Park, a suburb of the City of Greater Dandenong (CGD), was selected as one of ten areas designated for funding through the initiative. The Proud to Participate (PTP) Project established a Community Reference Group to guide its development. The reference group consisted of state and local government representatives, local community and service organisations, local business leaders and community members. The PTP Community Reference Group undertook consultation with the broader community regarding potential community building projects. The findings indicated that there was a strong desire to improve the visual appearance of Noble Park's retail and railway precinct in order to:

- Create a vibrant precinct;
- Enhance safety and security;
- Enhance the image of Noble Park;
- Improve access to the precinct; and
- Explore ways of linking the north & south retail precinct.

Funding for the art and design project was approved in 2003, through the State Government Department of Sustainability and Environment's (DSE) Pride of Place program. A Pride of Place Community Committee was established and included representatives of the Noble Park Chamber of Commerce, Council's Community Support Group, Church Groups, Ethnic Communities Council of the South East; SCAAB, Youth Links, Noble Park RSL, local and state government representatives, local residents, local artists and a representative from the local transit provider Connex. The Pride of Place Community Committee reported directly to the PTP Community Reference Group.

A consultant group was selected, through a tender process to work on the Pride of Place Project. The consultant group consisted of community engagement specialists Village Well (Jacque Robinson), artists Ratartat (Peter Widmer and Geoff Bonney) and urban design company Aspect (Tim O'Loan).

Aim and Objectives

The aim was to work with the Pride of Place Community Committee and the wider community to develop a plan to improve the appearance of the Noble Park retail and railway precinct and improve the image and level of pride of the community, while reflecting its cultural diversity.

The objectives for the Pride of Place Project were to:

- Develop a design theme that builds on existing character and culture;
- Develop public art and design projects that will directly engage the community;
- Provide an opportunity for the community to work in partnership with business and government to revitalise the Noble Park retail and railway precinct;
- Improve the visual quality of the Noble Park environment and optimise opportunities for economic revitalisation; and
- Improve the level of community safety within the Noble Park retail and railway precinct.



Process

The consultation team in collaboration with the Pride of Place Community Committee undertook a place making approach to the project. The process involved

- Undertaking a review of historical, social, cultural documentation (including the Community Resource Audit conducted previously by the Proud to Participate Initiative)
- Conducting site visits
- Developing an urban design and landscape diagram explaining public art opportunities and issues relating to safety.
- Conducting consultations with government, the communities of Noble Park (GP – general public) and the traders and retailers of the precinct
- Analyzing data and recommending key themes for the project
- Developing visuals and text to present back to the community the key themes and concepts
- Identifying groups to be involved in the making of the art works
- Making and installing the art work
- Creating a stewardship framework for ongoing community involvement



The Three Projects

Three concepts were developed and implemented. Two of the projects continue to engage local community members in ongoing development and maintenance.

4.3.4. The Railway Underpass Art Gallery

The railway underpass was selected by the community as a location for the first public art piece. The concept for the art work came out of a community art day consultation where a wooden model of the underpass was created in which community members could contribute to the design through various activities. Stories about 'place' were collected from older people in the community about the history of the underpass. One story for instance came from an older resident who spoke about how the railway underpass was prone to flooding in the past and that as a child he would go swimming in it. The community art day design work and the stories provided a theme for the underpass that of 'turning a negative into a positive'. The community put forward the idea of changing the image of the underpass from one of being unsafe and unattractive to creating images and messages of warmth, fun and playfulness to make it a place where people like to visit and enjoy.

The final design features vertical stripes, which create a sense of height and connection between one side of the underpass and the other. The artwork appears only on the 'scary corners' so the pedestrians' eyes focuses not on the underpass itself but the beauty of the artwork as they enter and exit. The verticals made from corten steel feature individually painted and mounted paintings.

The individual art works were created by local adult artists as well as artists (students) from Noble Park English Language School, Noble Park Primary School, Noble Park Secondary School, Urimbirra Adult Day Care Centre and St Anthony's Primary School. The art works were as diverse as the artists who painted them, with paintings of favourite Noble Park places (swimming pool, parks, shops), natural landscape features, messages of love to encourage underpass pedestrians to feel safe such as 'I love you. I love you. I love you', paintings depicting faraway places bringing a piece of the artists homeland to their new home in Noble Park and quite a few self portraits.

The Verticals were designed in such a way so that they could be replaced individually if they were damaged and the whole installation could be relocated if funding became available to update the underpass

Feedback from participants and the broader community were very positive with many of the young people reportedly visiting the underpass regularly to look at their artwork, take photos of it, bringing friends to see it and clean it. The underpass has become a place to visit rather than to rush hurriedly through – a destination in

itself. The installation also brought together young people from linguistically and culturally diverse backgrounds and differing abilities to individually express themselves through creating their painting. The paintings work together as they sit side by side in the outdoor gallery. Older people and young people were also brought together through story telling. At the art making days older people told their stories and young people interpreted the stories through images. In these ways the installation has created a place where the diversity of the population has been expressed.



4.3.5 The Art Boxes

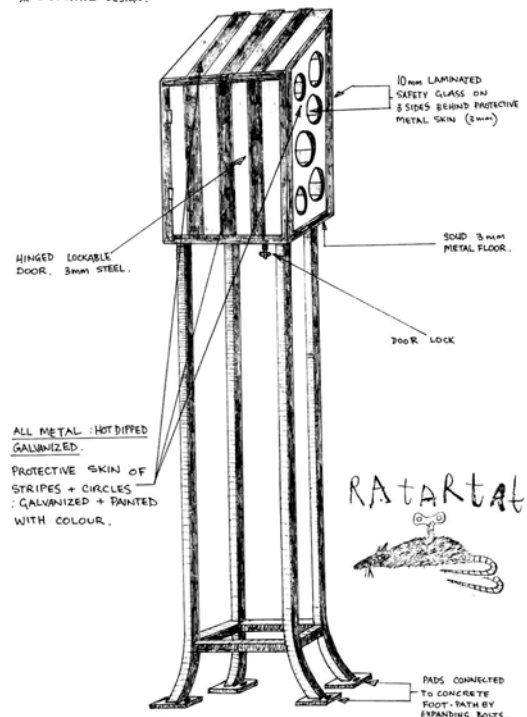
The concept for the Community Art Boxes was to create mini art galleries or display boxes that could provide opportunities for artists and community members to exhibit/display artworks, objects of interest, information, stories or photos etc. Artists from Noble Park Secondary College, Urimbirra and the Noble Park English Language School were invited to design and adopt stewardship of the art boxes.

Three art boxes have been installed in the surrounds of the Noble Park Railway Station. The Noble Park Community Centre (NPCC) has received funding through the City of Greater Dandenong (CGD) and the Department of Sustainability and Environment to engage a community development worker to facilitate a pilot stewardship program.

The stewardship framework allowed for ongoing involvement in creating a sense of place in the railway precinct. The framework articulated the possibility of exchanging ownership of the boxes should the current stewardship group wish to discontinue their involvement. The keys to the box would be handed over to NPCC, who would then offer the box to other community groups in the area. Village Well and Ratartat developed a set of guidelines for stewardship in collaboration with the NPCC and the City of Greater Dandenong (CGD).

The pilot project is currently being conducted at the time of publishing and evaluation has not yet been conducted.

NOBLE PARK THEATER BOX
PROUD TO PARTICIPATE PRIDE OF PLACE PROJECT.
* INDICATIVE DESIGN.



4.3.6 Community Gardens

A community native garden was designed by ASPECT. The garden concept received funding support from the Stationers Project (DSE) and the CGD and community members have formed a Friends of Noble Park Railway Station. The friends group includes membership from NP Secondary College, NP Christian Church, Connex, and local residents, including a prominent member of the original P2P Reference Group. Activities such as clean up and planting days have taken place.

Key Issues for the project

Cultural and Linguistic Diversity

Over half (52%) of Noble Park residents speak languages other than English at home; the most common languages being Vietnamese, Greek, Khmer, Italian, Cantonese and Spanish. In 2003, as the Pride of Place Project commenced, Sudanese refugees had also been taking up residency in the suburb.

Generations Divided

As with many places Noble Park's older residents had concerns about the young people in the area. Some people felt intimidated by the presence of groups of young people at the railway station. There was a strong desire to find a way of involving young people in the project and bringing people from different age groups together.

Do Ability by Volunteers

Community participation was required not only in creating the themes for the art works but also the making, installation and maintenance. The works needed to be able to be reproduced beyond the contractual agreement with the consultancy team and the life of the Proud to participate Project. Sustainability of the projects was a key consideration.

Costs

The project has a relatively small budget. The arts projects needed to come within a tight budget and yet meet the stated objectives of the project and the strong desire of the community to do something that they could be proud of. There was also an issue of funding for ongoing maintenance that was not initially budgeted for.

Evaluation

An evaluation report by CGD at the conclusion of the project was very positive about the outcomes of the project for community members.

'The impact of community building projects can not be easily measured, given that their essence

is the development of relationships, trust and a contribution to one's sense of well being. A member of the P2P Reference Group describes 'the ripple effect' whereby the success of a project such as the Art Panels at the Underpass cannot be determined merely by the number of people at a launch, but by how people feel about the panels on a daily basis: 'So in their daily life they walk to the station, they walk past there, does it make them feel better?' The enthusiasm and support for this project suggest the answer is yes.' (*Otis. N. 2006. Proud to Participate Evaluation. CGD*)

The report concluded that 'Building pride in place helps build a sense of community. Tangible and visible improvements in the built and natural environment are a reminder of the positive. Promote respect and celebrate diversity, not assimilation.' (*Otis. N. 2006. Proud to Participate Evaluation. CGD*)

'There is also 'evidence that local traders had developed an enhanced sense of community' (*Otis. N. 2006. Proud to Participate Evaluation. CGD*)

An interview with a former PTP Community Reference Group and Pride of Place Community Committee, Alan Leithhead has continued to volunteer to lead the Friends of Noble Park Railway Station. 'It's important because it (the station) is the gateway to Noble Park. People used to say it was a dingy place but now they can see it is a beautiful joint. The underpass art has had nothing but good news' (feedback).

The consultancy team were clear that the project needed to provide a way for culturally and linguistically diverse people to participate and take ownership of the project. The arts projects enabled people to communicate through images rather than words and provided a means for people to make a mark on their new home while honouring their culture from which they came. One Sudanese young man had apparently never seen paint before, when he was asked to contribute to the art box project. He thoughtfully painted a self-portrait in which rain came out of the sky onto his cheeks and then on to the ground. His artwork now takes its place in the centre of town. It is difficult to say what affect this has had on him, but his teacher from the NP English Language School said he was thrilled.

4.3.7 Richmond Station - Stewart Street Mural

In 2001 a mural in Stewart Street, Richmond, which was privately commissioned by the Parasol Clothing Pty Ltd, a business directly opposite

the site, was painted over. The original mural was installed on panels on a *VicTrack* owned wall (approximately 20 metres in length). Prior to the placement of the panels and after their removal, the wall was a site for regular tagging.

In recognition of the previous mural's contribution to local amenity, Yarra Council undertook to engage in a process to create a new mural on the site.

A new artwork was commissioned to replace the removed artworks and to link with other Council anti-graffiti initiatives in the area and:

- Reduce the amount of 'tagging' in the area creating a better environment for traders and public; and
- Provide aerosol artists with the opportunity to create quality public artwork.

Due to the collapse of one of the original contractual parties, M-Train, the schedule of this project was greatly disrupted. Council subsequently entered into separate agreements with both the new land managers Connex and the artist.

Funding and Support

This mural was commissioned and project managed by the City of Yarra. Crime Prevention Victoria also contributed funds toward the mural as part of a Graffiti Solutions Local Partnership Program Grant received by Council. *VicTrack*, the property owners of the wall, agreed to the use of the site for the mural and Connex, the property managers, were the direct point of contact for any dealings after this permission was given.

Artwork Description

The mural, completed in October 2005 by artists Kim and Dale Nichol, combines images of sporting and urban themes to reflect the surrounding environment of the site.

Materials: Painting directly onto site wall using aerosol painting techniques

Approximate dimensions: 32 metres (length) x 2.5 metres height.

Ownership

The completed work is part of the City of Yarra Art and Heritage Collection and will be managed under these guidelines.

Since Completion of the Mural

- The mural has remained 'tag' free since its completion. Buildings within the street though still are targets for tagging. The buildings that remove tagging regularly (*Parasol Clothing*) have

a reduced level of tagging.

- Local trader *Sammy Parasol*, from *Parasol Clothing*, was involved through out the project process and on completion of the work was very pleased with the final product. He was pleased on two levels- firstly a great mural which creates a landmark at the location and secondly, the reduction of tagging on this site.
- *Connex*, giving him the opportunity to further his skills in a legal and supported environment, engaged artist *Kim Nicol* on the additional mural project. *Kim* is now looking at working with a number of young graffiti artists on a further project, which if successful will give all of the artists involved an opportunity to show their work in a public environment.
- The artists also noted that during the project while they were on site painting, they received far more favourable feedback about the project then negative feedback. They worked on days of regular weekend pedestrian traffic flow as well as days when sporting crowds accessed the station, so they had the opportunity to communicate with regular users of the site as well as people accessing it for a specific event. They found this a very positive experience and were happy to engage with the public to talk about the mural and their working processes.
- The mural is now registered as part of the city of Yarra Art and Heritage Collection and is a strong example of Council's interest and support of diverse contemporary art.

Project Process

The project took a long time to undertake and complete due to a number of factors including:

- The collapse of one of the original contractual parties, M-Train
- Internal/external processes around contract/ agreement development
- Planning permit process
- Flexibility around artist schedule (the artists worked full time in their regular jobs whilst undertaking the mural)

Yarra Council reports that *Connex* were very responsive to the project, but were keen to have Council manage the project and looked to Council for direction on the process. Council felt that this was appropriate in this case.

Yarra Council expects to be involved in further arts projects of a similar nature that rely on a partnership on some level with *Connex* to proceed and succeed. Council report that as *Connex* continues to have involvement in these projects, the organisation develops a better understanding of issues and processes involved.

Yarra Council occasionally have people approach them to access *VicTrack/Connex* walls. The

Council officers direct these queries to a contact person at Connex, but feel that it would be useful for VicTrack/Connex to develop guidelines and processes around this area and they suggest that Connex publish such information on their website for individuals and organisations to access.

4.3.8 Mural at St Kilda Junction Underpass – Metlink, Whitelion and City of Port Phillip

Due to Metlink's role as the public face of all system-wide marketing and communications activities for the transport operators, they are a key stakeholder in any broadening of the community development agenda within the public transport system. Metlink state that they are 'committed to making corporate social responsibility an essential part of its business strategy', (Metlink 2005) and they embody this through their partnership with the charity Whitelion.

'Whitelion opens doors to opportunities, relationships and community for young people involved in the juvenile justice system or at risk of involvement. This is achieved through role modelling, mentoring, employment and indigenous programs, outreach services, and through preventative programs run in rural and metropolitan communities. Whitelion aims to break the cycle of substance abuse, criminal activity, marginalisation and incarceration by providing opportunities to make links and build relationships with the community.' (Metlink 2005)

Through this partnership Metlink has involved young people in creative projects that have helped to engender a sense of pride in their community, a sense of 'ownership' of Melbourne's public transport network and has created opportunities for young people that they otherwise may not have been exposed to. Through constructive projects such as the mural painting at Burnley Station and St Kilda Junction in conjunction with local council, Metlink hopes to decrease the level of illegal graffiti on and around public transport. The St Kilda Junction project concept emerged from the City of Port Phillip's Graffiti Strategy and as partners in the project they feel it has been a very successful outcome, resulting in a great deal of positive feedback from the community.

'While the mural/art program provides a lasting solution to managing notorious graffiti hotspots, the artwork has the added benefit of rejuvenating and invigorating community space and pedestrian thoroughfares. This helps to present Melbourne as a modern, vibrant, and sophisticated metropolis'. (Metlink 2005)



4.3.9 Moving Galleries

Moving Galleries was a project initiated by the Committee for Melbourne's young leadership development program – the Future Focus Group (FFG). The inspiration for Melbourne's 'Moving Galleries' came from public transport art and poetry initiatives from other countries. When in London, Stuart Weir (FFG participant) enjoyed the 'Poems on the Underground' and the Platforms for Art programs, which are long-running programs on the London Underground rail system. The Moving Galleries projects notes that 'The success of the London project has inspired similar poetry-inspired initiatives, involving established and emerging poets, throughout Britain, Europe and the USA. Projects using a combination of poetry and art have appeared on trains, buses, platforms and tickets for travel on public transport in cities such as Bristol, Dublin, New York, Stockholm and Paris.'

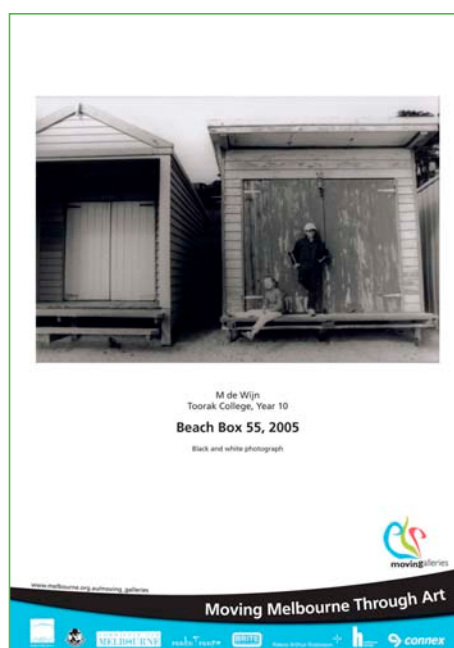
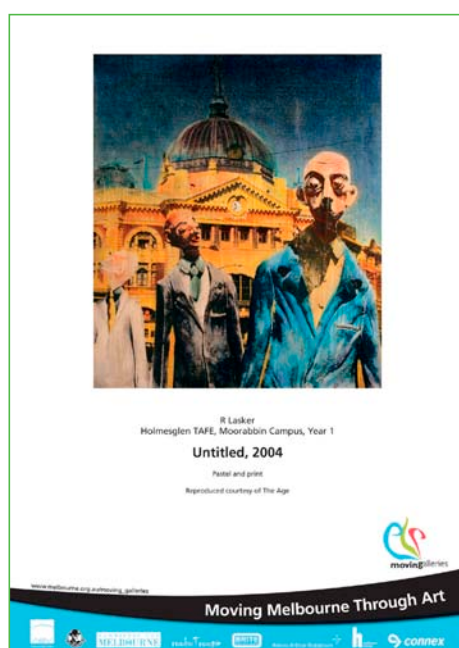
The Committee for Melbourne's mission is 'to act as a non-political, courageous, innovative and far-thinking catalyst to enhance Melbourne as a dynamic, commercial, technological, intellectual and cultural capital of the world - while extending its position as the world's most liveable city' (Committee for Melbourne 2006). The Future Focus Group (FFG) is a two year voluntary leadership development program designed to enable future leaders to contribute to improving Melbourne in a way they are passionate about. Stuart Weir, a FFG participant and lawyer with Committee for Melbourne member organisation Allens Arthur Robinson, was inspired to do something for the public transport system. He created Moving Galleries as his FFG project and a team of past FFC graduates joined him to get the concept up and running.

The FFC Moving Galleries team created multiple partnerships with an emphasis on community involvement. The poetry group *Rooku Troupe*, who had separately begun exploring the possibilities for poetry on trains, were linked up with the FFG project. An open invitation went out, soliciting poetry submission in the 'Rooku' form; 'haiku with an Australian bent and without all the rules.' Rooku Troupe, on the Committee for Melbourne website, state that; 'The Moving Galleries project seeks to bring poetry back into the public arena – to encourage those using Melbourne trains not only to read and appreciate short form poetry, but to write it too. Our long-term vision is for the Moving Gallery project to become an integral part of the life of Melbourne, and increasingly interactive. The emphasis of the project is on accessibility, and participation through experiencing the work on all levels – as observer and creator.'

The other significant community partnership was with Art Education Victoria, who selected the best student high school student artwork for the art posters. The selected work tended to reflect something of the spirit of Melbourne.

Moving Galleries, with the support of their sponsors Allens Arthur Robinson, Brite Solutions, Hothouse Design, Tattersalls, CPR Communications and Connex, printed 480 posters with 36 different images, which were installed by Connex as part of their in-kind support, into 40 trains.

Ms Delahunty, present at the launch of Moving Galleries on April 6, 2006, said: Moving Galleries places the arts right at the heart of our daily lives. It's a quirky, thought provoking and accessible project that brings the arts to the people.' (foot)



Artwork by Lasker and de Wijn

4.3.11 Platform 2

The Platform Artists Group are a not for profit organization who curate *Platform 2*, a series of exhibition spaces located in Campbell Arcade subway at Flinders Street Station. It was established in November 1994 following the success of the initial Platform project at Spencer St Station. The subway has heritage listing and creates an unusual environment for the often experimental exhibitions. A large number of rail users pass by this artwork daily, many of whom would not necessarily visit more conventional exhibition spaces.

Works are offered by a range of people, from secondary and tertiary students, to emerging and professional artists. Poetry, 2D and 3D works are arranged in a series of window boxes, creating a passage of thoughtful material as you enter or leave the station. Platform 2 encourages works that respond to the unique context of the exhibition site.



4.3.12 EnterTRAINment

EnterTRAINment was a crime prevention project. Local artists performed on trains at night up along the Epping Line. An initiative of the City of Darebin the project had several partners including Banyule City Council, Whittlesea City Council, the City of Preston the Victorian Police, Neighbourhood Watch Preston and Hillside Trains. Established in 1992, the program concluded in 1999.

A program coordinator worked with a community recording studio 'Decibels' to program bands, promote the events and arrange for police to be present. The bands were made up of local young people. The police presence was positive and community engagement focused. Transit police were also involved.

An evaluation of the program was undertaken (2000). Passengers were invited to respond to surveys handed out on the train during events.

The majority of people who responded were young people between the ages of 15 and 20, most of whom rated the program as *excellent* or good. Responding to questions regarding the programs effect on perceptions of safety, most people felt that the presence of the police along with the informal surveillance by performers made them feel safer. The positive atmosphere created by the music and the enthusiasm of the young performers was greatly appreciated by respondents young and old.

The program concluded, not because it lacked popularity or funds (there were several supporters including local businesses) but due to liability concerns. However, Crime Prevention Victoria's website recommends further projects be undertaken. Recommendations for future initiatives include extending EnterTRAINment to train stations. In the past, EnterTRAINment Programs have included volunteers walking commuters from stations to their cars.

4.3.12 The Garden of Eden – Albert Park Railway Station

The Garden of Eden Project, located at the Albert Park Railway Station and including the railway reserve's adjacent open space, is an inspiring project demonstrating a range of community arts and engagement processes. The project includes a community centre, nursery, café, art gallery, and a sustainable living education site incorporating organic food production, compost toilets, and art pieces. This scale of community activity has been made possible by the conversion of the St Kilda rail line into a light rail service, which means the stations were disused entirely, and replaced by simple shelters at the edge of the old stations. As a consequence, patrons of public transport do not pass through the centre of Garden of Eden, and so it cannot be considered a core experience of embarking or disembarking. However, there is much to be enticed by while waiting or passing through on the tram, including edible landscaping and visible artworks.

The site encompasses the Garden of Eden Nursery, and the Garden of Eden Incorporated, which supports the community garden. This is the basis for a sustainable living education site, where freshly harvested organic produce, alternative health, a café, and other associated businesses and services co-exist to demonstrate ethical business practice, right livelihood and a balance between nature and the city.

The Garden of Eden has run a number of community art projects within their wider program of creating sustainable urban communities

including

- silk painting workshops
 - mosaic workshops as part of a Work for the Dole program
 - developing new partnerships in local community settings, including church groups and schools.
- They also run yoga classes and alternative health workshops, and workshops and forums on sustainability.

Funding comes from fee for service, and project grants including Department of Education and Workplace Relations and Department of Human Services, and the Community and Cultural Grants Scheme through City of Port Phillip.



photo – Amadis Lacheta

4.3.13 Middle Park Station Café - Mart 130

Proprietors Joanna Wilson, Dan Doherty and Stuart McKenzie

Mart 130 is a café in the former Middle Park railway station, now stop 130 on the number 96 light rail to St Kilda. It has only been open since December 2005, but The Age newspaper has already rated it as one of the top ten cafes in Melbourne (The Age, Epicure section, January 23 2006). The café owners negotiated with Yarra trams for the lease; they report that Yarra trams were neither open nor closed to the idea, but that it took significant negotiation to work out the terms of the agreement. The café had the lease for eighteen months before opening, during which time they made significant improvements to the building, without changing the architectural integrity of the structure. They invested in this project as they felt the site had enormous potential, and could fill a gap they perceived in the market.

The proprietors report that they have less connection to the light rail users than they predicted, but a stronger connection to the local community. Many customers are walkers, cyclists or dog walkers who use the track alongside the

café to access Albert Park Lake. The proprietors have considered the isolated nature of the station building and have built attractive timber shutters to pull across the windows at night; as part of the leasing terms the tenants are responsible for maintenance and graffiti removal. A VicTrack workman who happened to be on-site at the time of my visit reports that there used to be a lot of graffiti on the station building that VicTrack were responsible for removing. This is in contrast to the current situation reported to me by the proprietor, who says that since the café opened there has been very little tagging and no vandalism. He feels that this is because people see that the place is being used and cared for; it no longer has the 'abandoned' feel that tends to attract anti-social behaviour.

The historical weatherboard station is decorated with historical rail memorabilia including old photos of the station from the 1930's. The station master then was the grandfather of the current café proprietor's husband – the staff tell me this story with pride. There is a photo of him in his uniform, enlarged to life-size and decorating the café. The staff greet people who come in by name, children pull toys out of the toy box, there are blankets for those sitting out on the platform or verandah. In one way, these café staff could be considered the new generation of station masters, providing activity, safety, and a sense of community.

While not a community project, Mart 130 has an appealing atmosphere of community engagement and ownership, fostered largely by the attention and care given to the station building and surrounds by the café owners. It has a delightful ambience combining a strong historical sense of place with broad contemporary appeal, as evidenced by the diverse customers including groups of high school students, well heeled locals, VicTrack workmen, and parents with babies or young children.



4.3.14 Railway Café Windsor

Railway Café is located on platform one at Windsor Station. It is housed in what was originally the railway ticket office that was built 120 years ago and is heritage listed. According to Damien, the manager and sole employee at Railway Café, 'the building was left to rot after the Kennett government removed staff from train stations'. As the building had been left untouched for many years it had suffered from extensive water damage and required a complete refurbishment but the end result is quite amazing. The owner of the café had the concept of creating a café at Windsor station in the derelict ticket office and approached VicTrack, a government body that 'owns all land and infrastructure in Victoria used for the purposes of public train and tram based transport' (VicTrack, 2006). A lifetime lease was established at a 15 year fixed rate.

The café opened on the 2nd of February 2000 and it operates from 7am till 3pm Monday to Friday and on Saturdays during the football seasons. It is exquisitely decorated and features relics from its previous life including items discovered during the refurbishment, such as hand drawn plans of the station from the 1890's, and a customer service charter for ticket office staff from the 1950's. The music and atmosphere is relaxing and people from local businesses as well as commuters frequent the café. There is a notice board in the café where local information can be posted including events and productions, rental advertisements and items for sale.

According to Damien who has worked in the café since the first year it opened, there are a number of regulars and it is definitely a place where people interact and meet. He commented that people seem less concerned when trains are cancelled or running late, or are in less of a rush, they are happy to sit in the café and get the next train. Damien believed the café contributed to safety at the station and definitely assisted many people get where they wanted to be, so much so, he has written letters of complaint and petitioned Connex to put information staff at the station or pay him. He remarked that the café is a tricky business to manage as it is hard market to define. The Windsor Railway café closed in late June for a full refurbishment by the owner.



5.1 Opportunities Relating to Existing Programs

There are already a number of key projects running in Melbourne that involve the community in creative outcomes around stations. There are opportunities for engaging the managers of these programs in expansion and promotion of their work.

5.1.1 Metlink and Whitelion with Council and Community Partners

Due to Metlink's role as the public face of all transport operators through their marketing and communications activities, they can be seen as a key stakeholder in any broadening of the community development agenda within the public transport system. Metlink state that they are 'committed to making corporate social responsibility an essential part of its business strategy', (Metlink 2005) and they embody this through their partnership with the charity Whitelion.

5.1.2 Stationeers – Right on Track, with Department of Infrastructure and Connex

The success of the program is due to collaboration between the community, local government and state government, Stationeers projects are undertaken in consultation with program partners the Department of Infrastructure, Connex and V/Line. This collaboration provides community members with lines of communication into pertinent areas of local and state government. It is worth exploring the potential for the expansion and re-imagining such a project with a wider team of stakeholders.

Another rich opportunity is the engagement of local councils in the vision as train stations as community hubs. Community development staff within council already appreciate the importance of developing participatory art projects within the public realm, and, in interviews undertaken during the course of this research¹, expressed interest in engaging further with station revitalization. The Cultural Development Network would be a potential linkage point in bringing together these staff and co-developing a vision.

5.1.3 Funding

Funding projects that respond to the issues raised in this report is both an opportunity and a challenge. The issues of custodianship and ownership of the 'problems' have prevented a holistic approach to station revitalisation in Melbourne. While a partnership approach between all stakeholders would be preferred it is unlikely that such a funding model would work at this time. The following listing identifies current funding opportunities and reflects the diversity of interest in public transport and community arts programs.

Department of Infrastructure - Meeting our Transport Challenges

This is one of the State Government's major funded policy statements. The focus is on rehabilitating public transport infrastructure so that it will meet the needs of Melbourne into the future. There are significant opportunities in here for this project. Funding is targeted towards local government partnerships, interchanges, transit cities and station upgrades which hold synergies with VicHealth strategies.

<http://www.doi.vic.gov.au/DOI/Internet/planningprojects.nsf/AllDocs/C620CDC85F4F2624CA25716F007E5930?OpenDocument>

Possible funding streams identified within the Statement:

- New local area demonstration program
- Making Transport more accessible
- Improving Metro Interchanges
- Transit Cities
- TravelSmart

Funding and implementation details are still being developed.

Arts Victoria

"Arts Victoria is the Government body charged with advising on and implementing arts policy, developing the arts and cultural industries across the State and ensuring access for all Victorians. It is a division of the Department of Premier and Cabinet". Arts Victoria has a broad arts funding program with the potential to attract and support artists to contribute to VicHealth strategies. There are a number of programs that could support arts related projects.

<http://www.arts.vic.gov.au/arts/funding/funding.htm>

¹ Telephone or in-person interviews were conducted with council staff of the cities of Maribyrnong, Brimbank, Hobsons Bay, Kingston, Moreland, Melbourne, Darebin, Port Phillip, Greater Dandenong, and Yarra.

Department for Victorian Communities

Community Support Fund: "Community strengthening grants support planning (encouraging planned responses to community needs), improving skills in the community, strengthening community organisations and building community infrastructure." This is a strong stream of funding which could support the building of community facilities, planning and organisational development.

<http://www.grants.dvc.vic.gov.au/CategoryPage1.asp>

Sustainability Victoria

"The Sustainability Fund (the Fund) has been established to provide a resource to support projects and initiatives that will foster the environmentally sustainable use of our resources and best practices in waste management." There are certainly some compatibilities here, however other sources are of more direct relevance.

<http://www.sustainability.vic.gov.au/www/html/1270-sustainability-fund.asp>

Local Governments

Would likely need a budget bid for the coming year, although may be able to be linked into scheduled works and arts programs.

Australia Council

National Arts funding body with many opportunities for supporting artistically oriented projects.

<http://www.ozco.gov.au/>

Crime Prevention Victoria

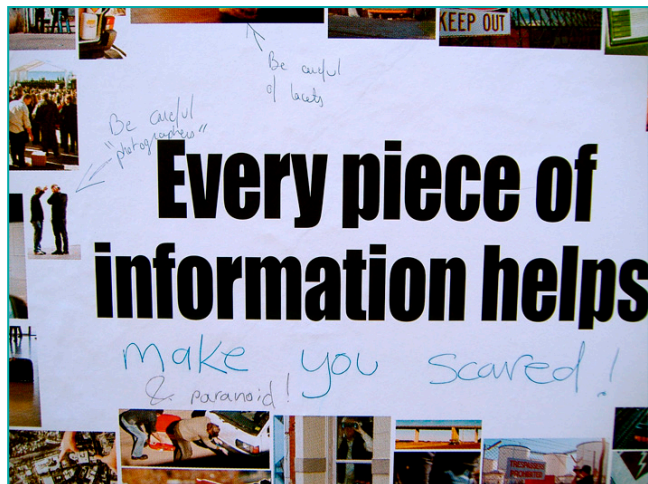
The agency responsible for implementation of the Victorian Government's crime and violence prevention strategies. They have funded station artworks as part of graffiti prevention programs.

<http://www.crimeprevention.vic.gov.au>

5.2 Risks

5.2.1 Short Term Risk Management Versus Community Engagement

As outlined in Chapter 3, there are currently attempts to make public transport safer with a range of policing and security measures. These measures may support the reduction of crime but they can also increase the feelings of insecurity and the perception of train stations being a place where crime happens. The community engagement approach also attempts to promote safety through changing the perception of stations as dangerous places, by emphasizing the positive rather than highlighting the negative. Community engagement and beautification is a longer term and more complex approach, and in the current society obsessed by risk management, this approach may be less valued. This is especially pertinent when the government wishes to communicate their understanding of the threat of terrorism, and the potential for railway stations to be terrorist targets.



5.2.2 Advertising

In the period of the first half of 2006, railway stations have been affected by a new regime of advertising, including brightly lit moving image 'adshells'. These have significantly affected the station environment. Results from the collection of qualitative data and interviews from Melbourne stations (see Appendix 2) reveal that some passengers find these advertisements offensive, invasive and off-putting. In terms of the impact they have on the station environment, they would certainly compete strongly for attention alongside any community projects, and perhaps dwarf them. The overwhelming impression may still be of a 'corporate' space, where those with money and little connection to place and community have the loudest voice. Village Well, as consultants in the field of Place Making, feel that advertising of this nature may seriously compromise the potential of railway stations to become authentic 'community' hubs.



Clifton Hill Station is now Continental Soup Station...



or underwear station

5.3 Evaluation and Conclusion

All eight international and interstate case studies of community arts and involvement programs discussed in this paper are managed by a government owned and managed rail authority. The research was unable to uncover a single private rail operator who had a program of similar scale. This suggests that those programs run by government-owned authorities have a broader, better-marketed and more consistent vision with bigger budgets. It is surmised that this is due to the fact that the range of positive outcomes from community art projects fit within the objectives of a government better than they do the objectives of a private contractor who is primarily concerned with numbers of patrons.

Here in Melbourne, with our privatised system, the research suggests that it may be more difficult to deliver a program with a rich suite of aims around community engagement. However, what challenges the research is the sheer number and diversity of community engagement projects already existing within the Melbourne rail network, including significant projects from both Metlink and the Stationeers programs, both of which are ultimately government funded via the providers. While none of these projects have the scope or image of some of the non-Melbourne programs, they represent, in combination, an enormous amount of goodwill and hard work, and the flourishing of diverse senses of custodianship.

The crucial factor appears to be an authority with a mandate and a budget to promote and deliver custodianship via community engagement in creative practices. It is evident that there are a range of overseas and interstate models that have delivered exciting and inspiring projects. The dissemination of this research could be used as a tool to help expand the vision of the current key stakeholder, or sharing and growing the vision amongst all key stakeholders. Yet it is the story of Melbourne, an artistic city with rich cultural traditions, known for innovation, a rich sense of place and community and an engaged relationship to the public transport system, that should be at centre stage in any discussion on future models. A creative and inclusive way forward that respects past projects at stations and builds upon this diversity will be an embodiment of the true spirit of community development, enhancing the wellbeing of all Melburnians.

Research Partners

Village Well is a Melbourne Place Making consultancy that works with developers, municipalities, government agencies and community groups to help create places that offer a vibrant community life, flourishing local economy and a healthy natural environment. Village Well specialises in community consultation and visioning, place marketing, graphic communication and design, and inclusive governance structures. Village Well, in collaboration with the VLGA, have developed the Destination Station project:

Destination Station is a revitalisation strategy for railway stations in Melbourne devised by Village Well in collaboration with VLGA and CERES. It provides a new framework for considering the future of railway stations as places to strengthen the wellbeing of the whole community. The railway station will realise its full potential as a place for cultural experiences, community engagement, environmental education and local economic development - a civic heart of the neighbourhood.

Using the framework of the four pillars of sustainability - social, cultural, environmental and economic - Destination Station aims to catalyse a renaissance in public transport use with a positive change of perception in the minds of all Melbournians. Railway stations can be more than just places to wait or disembark - they will become inspiring destinations in themselves, well connected both physically and emotionally to the surrounding community.

Victorian Local Government Association (VLGA) is the peak body for local government and community in Victoria, empowering local governments by strengthening their capacity to engage with their communities and advocate on their behalf. VLGA have been partners in the project since its inception, inspired by the *Destination Station's* potential to catalyse social change.

CERES Community Environment Park, local leaders in environmental sustainability, social equity, cultural richness and community participation, are keen to spread their message through creating other destinations that embody these values, and see projects and activities at railway stations as an exciting method of doing this.

Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology (RMIT), Four students from the RMIT Department of Social Science and Planning were engaged on the 'Destination Station' project through an internship with Village Well, researching the relationship between wellbeing and train stations, including global and national examples of community, cultural and environmental initiatives in such places.

Research Methodology

Research for this report included interviews in person, by telephone and by email, and web searches and literature scans. The RMIT students interviewed 26 people at railway stations on their qualitative perceptions of the station environment, as well as doing their own qualitative perception studies of 36 different stations. Another methodology employed was action research – research that aims to initiate action through the process of the research. In other words, we have been cognisant of the fact that asking questions about arts and community cultural practices at railway stations will inevitably draw some attention and awareness to this relatively under-developed area. In our research process, we have seen the excitement and interest generated in the interviewees by the concepts of station revitalisation and community wellbeing through arts practices. A number of the relevant authorities are keen to explore these ideas further, both through the 'Destination Station' framework, and through such initiatives that VicHealth may carry out on receiving this report's recommendations.

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Appendix 1

Website Resource: Thinking Transport

The Thinking Transport website was developed by the Victorian Local Governance Association (VLGA) through the Local Government Integrated Transport and Mobility Project, which was funded by the Department of Infrastructure.

The project responded to a growing awareness amongst the community, professionals and government of significant economic, environmental and social gains to be made from the improved choices an integrated approach to transport outcomes offers. With the important role local governments play in land-use planning, infrastructure development and community building, the need to develop traditional mode specific approaches into integrated transport strategies was becoming increasingly urgent.

As a part of achieving these outcomes, an online toolkit was developed, the Thinking Transport website: www.thinkingtransport.org.au.

The website brings together the lessons and learnings from the project, and provides:

- A thorough background on transport and mobility issues
- The latest transport news events
- An overview of the legislative and policy framework
- A guide to developing an integrated transport plan
- Illustrated examples of good practice

Thinking Transport will also be hosting the outcomes of the Transport and Mobility Indicators (TAMI) Project, a joint partnership between the AIUS (Australian Institute of Urban Studies), VLGA, Melbourne City and DOI, which is currently in its pilot phase.

Appendix 2

Primary Train Station Research

The four members of the research team performed the collection of quantitative data collection from a total of 35 train stations and qualitative data collection from 26 train stations.

Train Station Selection

In order to ensure that a representative sample was collected, a number of selection criteria were used to select train stations to be surveyed. The train stations which were selected were evenly distributed along the 16 "lines". The client and research team ensured that an even number of train stations which they perceived to be 'good' (improved regarding either community, aesthetic and/or economic factors) and 'bad' (unimproved regarding either community, aesthetic and/or economic factors) were selected. In addition to these two factors, the client requested a focus on 'outer' areas of Melbourne, particularly those train stations located in 'Zone 2' and 'Zone 3' of the train station network. The train stations selected are indicated in the diagram below.



Diagram 1- Train stations surveyed. Adapted from Metlink Victoria (2006)

Finally, to ensure that a range of times were covered, eight checklists were completed during each of morning peak, afternoon peak, evening, weekday off peak and weekend times.

Questionnaire Participant Selection

Participants for questionnaires were randomly selected by the researcher. The only prerequisite for participation is that they are present at the train station being surveyed at the time it is being surveyed.

Data Collection

Researchers attended the selected train stations with their checklist and questionnaire, and both parts were filled out at the station being surveyed, at the time they were being surveyed.

The first part of data collection, the checklist, was completed by the researcher. It asked details about the location, zone and 'line' of the train station being observed, as well as the date, time and weather conditions at the time of observation.

It also asked for a yes/no response to questions about whether the station was attended, was there a community noticeboard, artwork, a local area map, retail and community facilities and any green or recreational areas nearby. In addition to asking these questions, it also asked for photographic documentation of any of the above mentioned features of the train station.

The checklist also asked what the type and condition of the train station building were, as well as whether the activity and legibility at the station was high, medium or low.

Finally, a 'Sense Summary' was completed. This involved summarising what was detected by the researchers' senses at the train station, including what could be seen, smelled, heard and felt. See Appendix 2 for further details on the design and layout of the checklist.

The second part of the data collection was the questionnaire. In this questionnaire, respondents were first asked for their demographic information, including their first name, age, occupation, suburb of residence how frequently they use the station and reason for travel on that day.

They were then asked a series of questions regarding their opinion about the train station at which they were questioned. These include what they like and dislike about the station, how the

station makes them feel, notable experiences they have had at that station, and any barriers to them using the station. They were also asked whether they could envisage the station as a community hub, and how they feel about the contribution that community art could make to that station. See Appendix 3 for further details on the design and layout of the questionnaire.

Data Analysis

Analysis was performed on both the quantitative and qualitative data collected. For the purposes of this report, all 35 checklists and 26 questionnaires were analysed. Questionnaires and checklists were first checked for any missing demographic information and those with incomplete data of this sort were discarded. It was found that all of the questionnaires and checklists were valid.

As the collected data was hand-written, it was then transferred to a digital format (Word document) for ease of analysis. The results of the checklists (except for the sense summary) were then entered into an Excel spreadsheet. The number of train stations that had community noticeboards, artwork, local area maps, retail and community facilities and any green or recreational areas nearby were recorded in this spreadsheet. Additionally, the number of train stations surveyed in each zone was recorded. A map detailing the specific train stations surveyed was also drawn.

An analysis of the qualitative data was performed in order to try and discover the good and bad features of the train stations surveyed, in the opinions of both the researchers and the interviewees.

The valid sense summaries were then analysed by the researcher that wrote them. Themes were identified and a short summary was written by each researcher, outlining the common features between the train stations that they observed. These features were divided into 'good' and 'bad'. Results of these analyses were combined to form a summary of what the researchers thought was good and bad about train stations, and what they believed could be done to improve train stations as a community hub.

Then, the questionnaires were coded according to the demographic information provided. Then, the other data was analysed and codes were developed from themes identified from this data. These themes were divided into three areas; What the interviewee thought was good about their train station, what the interviewee thought was bad about their train station, and what could be done to improve their train station as a community hub.

Quantitative Findings

Table 1 – Checklist Results

The above table shows the results of the quantitative analysis. The majority of train stations visited were located in zones two or three. Most stations were attended. Only two of the 35 stations had community notice boards, and six had a map of the local area. Four stations out of the 35 surveyed had some form of artwork present, while retail could be found at 30 stations. Community facilities, such as childcare centres and public phones were present near half of the train stations that were visited, and 22 of the train stations were located close to green or recreation areas.

Qualitative Findings

Eight different themes that were evident in the 26 interviews that were conducted. These themes included; Aesthetics, Amenities, Accessibility, Atmosphere, Community Arts, Security and Social Interaction. Around half of the interviewees mentioned the Aesthetics of train stations. Aesthetics included features such as art, building architecture, graffiti art and greenery. Five interviewees found the station to be aesthetically pleasing, while six interviewees did not find train stations attractive. For example, Zoë from Clifton Hill states that "This station has good graffiti [art]!", while Grant from Pakenham suggested that the look of the station could be improved "... if the council allowed some more local kids to put their art on the station".

Toilets, seating, the comfort of the station, ticket machines, shelter and parking were all included under the theme of Amenities. Almost half of the participants (11) stated that the amenities at the train station where they were interviewed were not very good. "The toilets are never open!" exclaims Elizabeth from St Albans, and Marilyn from Keilor Downs, a student, states that "I carry expensive design materials, I don't want them getting dirty – there is nowhere to put them". Only two interviewees mentioned amenities in a positive light, with Sam from Springvale commenting that "[the station] is central to town, I can always get a park". Photograph 6 shows an example of toilets that are not open for the use of the community.



Photograph 6 – Closed Toilets

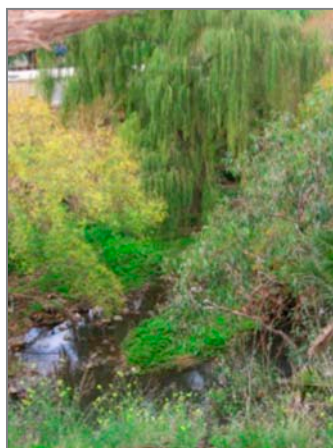
Twelve participants mentioned Accessibility in their interviews. Comments were spread fairly evenly between the positive and negative, with seven interviewees making favourable comments about accessibility at train stations and five interviewees commenting that accessibility was not adequate. This theme included accessibility to local shops and accessibility between train stations. Underpasses were a big issue, with Daniel from Yarraville commenting that “Yarraville station needs an overpass or an underpass” and Rowanna from Diamond Creek saying that “I don’t like the underground passage, its very unpleasant”.

Photograph 7 demonstrates one of the negative aspects of accessibility, a ‘dangerous’ underpass.



Music and vista were aspects of the theme Atmosphere. Only nine interviewees mentioned atmosphere, three commenting positively and six making negative comments. Positive comments include “One day I accidentally caught the wrong tram, I ended up at Beacon Cove... I sat there anyway doing my knitting, admiring the view” from Mary, St Kilda. Ned from Lilydale illustrates a personal perception of a negative aspect of the atmosphere at his train station, stating that “The music is terrible, couldn’t they play some rock or country music instead? They play classical to keep away the kids but it doesn’t work – its just noise pollution.”

Photograph 8 gives an example of a pleasant vista Rushell Station.



One of the most prominent themes that we identified was Community Arts. This theme was particularly important because one question focused specifically on community arts in train stations. Community arts included graffiti, sculptures, colour, puppets or performers, young or local artists and local schools and murals. Most participants believed that community arts should have a place at train stations. Carlie from North Fitzroy commented that “I’d like to see more puppeteering” Community arts should be used for entertainment and diversion”, and Elise from Malvern stated that “Anything is better than these ads!”. Photograph 9 gives an example of the type of advertising that exists at train stations. Photograph 10 shows some community art already present at Melbourne’s train stations.

Photograph 9 – Advertising, Toorak Station



Photograph 10 – Community art, Noble Park Station

Security, including lighting and staff attendance, was an important issue for many interviewees. Fifteen people mentioned security, five commenting that they felt safe and ten stating that they did not feel safe at train stations at certain times. Kate from Brighton notes that the position of the train station impacts on whether or not she feels safe, commenting that “I probably wouldn’t come here at night alone. It’s pretty far from the street so if anything happened and no one was in the station, no one could see.” Photograph 11 is one of the Safety Zones at train stations, where commuters can stand if they feel that they are in danger.



*Photograph 11
– Safety Zone,
Frankston Station*

The final theme we identified was Social Interaction, which encompassed meeting people and how people interact at the train station. This was not a dominant theme among our participants, however it was largely considered a positive aspect of train stations. Six participants mentioned incidence of positive social interaction and three mentioned negative. “I met someone at the station and we got into a conversation about photography because I had been taking photos near by” states Zoë from Clifton Hill, and Sam from Dingley commented that “I come at the same time every day so I see people I know and we talk, that is good. It gives me something to look forward to.” Photograph 12 shows a public bar and hall for hire, the type of social interaction that may occur at train stations.



*Photograph 12
– Public Bar and
Hall for Hire,
Lilydale Station*

Finally, in order to answer the research question it was important that interviewees answered a specific question on the potential for stations to become social hubs. The participants were asked, “Could you envisage a train station as a community hub?”. The majority of respondents answered in the affirmative, with only three respondents stating that they could not envisage a train station as a community hub. The interviewees suggested a number of ways in which train stations might be improved in order to foster social connections. These included retail and commercial developments on or nearby train stations, such as shopping centres, cafes and bookshops, community arts such as live music and graffiti art, and other endeavours such as notice boards and community owned facilities such as halls and public spaces to rent.

Sense Summary Findings

For this report a perceptual analysis of the potential for physical improvement of station environments in order to obtain data regarding a central question of this report – what are the possibilities for redevelopment of train stations as centres for community engagement? Research methods included 35 qualitative surveys of the experience of a diverse range of Melbourne stations, and interviewing 26 station users.

The common themes identified by this research as important in fostering or inhibiting community development at Melbourne’s train stations were aesthetics, amenities, the condition and design of station buildings and the pervading atmosphere at each station. Signage was not evaluated as it was evident that at the time of surveying, the new Metlink signage was in the process of being installed.

Aesthetics as defined in this report includes the appearance of station buildings, the amount of litter present and the colour schemes at each station. Stations that rated highly in this regard included buildings that were intact and free of graffiti tags. Stations that were able to avoid the common “concrete jungle” effect, through the inclusion of some form of artwork or nearby vegetation, and those that were relatively free of litter were also highly rated. Stations that did not rate well had visible litter, were less well-maintained and there was no sign of different colours or artwork in the design of the station. Effectively these stations comprised of only the bare essentials, which was often just a basic structure such as a shelter and a platform.

Amenities were deemed to be the structural components and facilities in each station. Features

included toilets, fencing, station buildings and signage. Each station was assessed according to whether these features were present and in what condition. Stations that performed well had toilet facilities that were open and in a good, clean condition. This important amenity was often either inaccessible or in an unsatisfactory condition. Whilst it was accepted that some form of fencing is necessary for safety at train stations, fences were assessed according to their visual impact with a particular focus on access points and the sense that was projected by this structure. Six foot high cyclone fencing at an entrance point to a station was considered to be quite overbearing and unattractive. Examples of fences that were less intrusive were generally softened by nearby vegetation, station buildings or painted in a colour that made them blend in with their surrounding environment.

Station buildings were analysed according to many different factors. The first factor was whether buildings were open and being utilised. Buildings that were constructed from weatherboards or were of heritage design through elaborate eave designs or the use of brickwork or bluestone tended to project a sense of history and grandeur. This was identified as a priority to be preserved. Stations that were newly built were assessed according to whether they appeared inviting. An important consideration for both types of building was whether they were clean and attractive places to be in. Too often however, station buildings have very little character, with rows of plastic chairs, vending machines and bare walls dominating the station building.

A particularly dynamic and subjective aspect of stations included the prevailing atmosphere at each station. Atmosphere was defined as the mood of each station which was assessed through consideration of the number of people present at each station, the level of interaction between people and whether the surrounding environment enhanced the overall 'vibe' of a station. Stations that performed well in this regard generally had people constantly moving around and within the station, and busy platforms. This gave a station an energetic feeling, a sense that it was alive. Other influences on atmosphere included the surrounding views, which at some stations created a peaceful ambience as commuters were able to enjoy looking out upon nearby parkland, a township or a café busy with people chatting whilst eating and drinking.

Whilst the analysis of the 35 stations visited varied according to the above-mentioned indicators, there was one theme that was evident at all stations surveyed. Each station demonstrated potential to be developed further into a place that could foster community wellbeing. Potential

took the form of possible renovations to existing buildings, undertaking some form of landscaping, incorporating some type of artwork into the station area or improving accessibility. This scope for improvement offers hope that train stations could be revitalised to form active community hubs.

Appendix 3

CERES Community Environment Park

CERES is an inspiring exemplar for civic engagement and well being at a local level. In fact, CERES is a pioneer of these processes, especially where ecology, environmental health and community participation have been major issues. Although a local manifestation, CERES is part of an expanding international phenomenon of localisation which encompasses many of the concerns of VicHealth for inclusion, freedom from discrimination, access to economic resources, collective environmental health, community development and the role of the arts in such revitalisation.

Internationally, a new civil society is emerging with a focus not primarily on the market nor the state but on networks of families, communities, voluntary associations. This new type of civil society encouragingly contains a population of global-minded but community-based citizens. The new formation, a stable basis for the future, was prophetically well described in the 'People's Earth Declaration' promulgated at the Earth Summit at Rio de Janeiro in 1992 by grassroots organisations:

- The fundamental purpose of economic organisation is to meet the community's basic needs, such as food, shelter, clothing, education, health, and the enjoyment of culture. This purpose must take priority over all other forms of consumption...
- Beyond meeting basic physical needs, the quality of human life depends more on the development of social relationships, creativity, cultural and artistic expression, spirituality, and opportunity to be a productive member of the community than on the ever-increasing consumption of material goods...
- Organising economic life around decentralised, relatively self-reliant local economies that control and manage their own productive resources, (that) provide all people an equitable share in the control and benefits of productive resources, and...the right to safeguard their own environmental and social standards, is essential to sustainability...
- All elements, irrespective of gender, class, or ethnic identity, have a right and obligation to participate in the life and decisions of the community...

CERES epitomises the principles inherent in this localisation process. The CERES saga includes: African, Aboriginal and Indonesian cultures in the city; the conversion of an abiotic 4 hectare tip site into a community environment park; the annual pilgrimages of 200 000 people through the site; the potential establishment of CERES type projects around Australia; community governance structures; a turnover of \$3.5 million amidst frugality; alternative economics and community business; community arts initiatives; organic food growing and marketing in the city; employment programs and the creation of 50 FTE jobs in the 'green economy'; the generation of green power for Melbourne; and a diversity of environmental education programs.

Whether applied to landfill sites, train stations, power line easements, community spaces, parklands, or school campuses; the experiences of CERES provide powerful insights and blueprints for action.

The specific experiences over the 23 year life of CERES which are most relevant to this proposed project are listed here:

- The on-site organization of dozens of sculpture and mural projects. These have included training and community participation programs and even resulted in one semi-literate participant twice winning the Peoples Award for sculpture.
- Dozens of community festivals such as Harvest and Kingfisher Festivals which have engaged thousands in healthy and artistic activities.
- The widespread use of murals and community art works to promote environmental messages on site.
- The creation and conduct of major community run businesses such as café, market, and plant nursery
- The successful combining of social, environmental and economic imperatives in the implementation of all income generating activities.
- The export of CERES experiences (via consultancies) to other community spaces with the establishment of CERES type projects in Sydney, Perth, Brisbane, Broadmeadows.
- The application of CERES principles and designs in Australia's schools, particularly through 230 Sustainable schools in Victoria (10% of Victoria's schools registered with CERES). CERES jointly won the Eureka Award in 2005 for establishing the Sustainable Schools Initiative.

- Experimentation and success in developing community participation in the governance and stewardship of public spaces.
- The promotion and employment of healthy mobility practices. CERES encourages walking and cycling and has one of the highest participation rates in these modes of any visitor centre.
- The development of community run action spaces such as community gardens and chicken areas.
- The establishment of a bicycle cooperative which uses unemployed people and donated bikes to create courses in bike maintenance and sales of second hand bikes. Such workshops would be a perfect complement to train stations as a way of encouraging healthy bike-train combinations and local micro-industry.
- The successful rehabilitation of a 4 hectare landfill site by community planning and labour.
- The redefinition and use of blighted and neglected spaces such as power line easements, quagmires, weed paddocks, landfills, old buildings.
- The attraction of people into once-blighted spaces and the creation of paid and volunteer jobs

These are a few of the many achievements of CERES. Through clever, symbiotic partnerships with local governments and other agencies; and through project planning and implementation conducted by experienced community-based professionals, CERES is well-placed to contribute to this proposed project.

