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### **Submission to Future Melbourne Committee**

City of Melbourne, Melbourne Town Hall,  
07 May 2024, 5.30pm – Meeting No.76  
Agenda Item FMC 6.3: Opportunities to deliver new public open space for Southbank

Firstly, we are extremely pleased that once again open space deficiencies in Southbank are being addressed.

It is noted the current and future open space has been extensively detailed by the officers, however they have failed to mention the additional space for stage 6 of Transforming Southbank Boulevard. In fact, they talk of this project as having been completed and the open space delivered. When council announced the completion of this project, SRA vehemently protested to this announcement knowing stage 6 was still yet to be delivered. Is this more evidence that council has no intention to deliver stage 6, also bearing in mind we have been asking for a timeline and scope for this stage, but nothing has been forthcoming.

Likewise, we note the officers have stated the completion of stage 1 of Southbank Promenade is also complete. As you are aware, SRA have in this forum questioned this so-called completion on numerous occasions with the Lord Mayor in November 2023 declaring a misstatement in the announcement, and, we highlighted to this forum, via photographs, demonstrating this stage has not been completed based on the masterplan proposal. Our question for when this will indeed be completed was taken on notice in December 2023. Two months ago I separately met with the Deputy Lord Mayor and the CEO and advised we had still yet to receive a response to our question in those meetings, at which time I was advised by both they would look into it. However, to date nothing is still forthcoming. Is Southbank once again being misled by council to try to get us to believe projects have been completed when in fact they haven't?

The Southbank Structure Plan *Recommendation L3 CityLink tunnel entrance deck* is a project that SRA has been long engaged with, asking for updates in this forum almost yearly since its announcement in 2010. At our 2022 AGM Roger Teale, then General Manger of Infrastructure and Design announced this project would not be going ahead because of cost, however he was quickly rebutted by council that was not council's position. We subsequently received an email response from Roger on behalf of the CEO, Alison Leighton, that the project 'would be funded and delivered by the Victorian government' but at that stage he was not aware of any plans to deliver the deck by the state. SRA has not been officially informed of this change in position, but more concerning, nor of the feasibility study undertaken in 2021. After all our questions to this forum on this very topic, why were we not informed this study had taken place? Once again Southbank can't help but feel we were kept in the dark. Has the state government officially informed



council they will not fund the project or has council just decided there is likely nothing to gain from lobbying the state?

3 MINUTES

More concerning for Southbank is councils attempt to further undermine our open space by conveniently adding an attachment to the agenda item to discontinue Southbank Structure Plan *Recommendation L3 CityLink tunnel entrance deck*. This is a significant aspect of the 2010 Southbank Structure Plan with which the community has been anticipating and residents making investment decisions in our neighborhood. A high degree of confidence in the officers' planning should be expected by residents. Through the Southbank structure plan, Southbank residents were being led to believe council had the open space needs covered. To now remove it from the Southbank conversation with a single sentence in a motion is a travesty to the Southbank community. How can it have taken 14 years for the officers to conclude it was not feasible leaving the residents living with optimistic hope during that time. To propose such a significant change to such an important document should be, in our opinion, canvassed widely throughout the Southbank community and open for discussion, particularly to be provided a detailed strategy for its replacement. Not merely 4 days' notice prior to an FMC meeting.

How much confidence can the Southbank community have in the remaining items, still yet to be delivered, in the 2010 Southbank structure plan? We ask council for another serious review of these outstanding items and to be open with the Southbank community with what else is unlikely to be delivered and a timeline for the delivery of the remaining items.

While the process has been poorly handled, the SRA accepts that the proposal is not feasible for the City of Melbourne to deliver on cost grounds.

The proposal to expand the Normanby Rd Reserve is an imaginative project that will be of some value to residents who live south of the Yarra.

To establish one single site of 1.2 hectares opens up so many possibilities for diverse recreational purposes. This site has so many more options than the current 1.02 hectares which is spread across seven pocket spaces throughout Southbank.

The report acknowledges in section 13, that 'it is not centrally located to the neighbourhood'. Indeed, it is located on the boundary of the City of Melbourne and some distance from Southbanks' most densely populated block in Australia.

Given that the properties East of Clarendon St, North of City Rd and West of Queensbridge St are predominately commercial, for the large majority of Southbank residents the Normanby Rd Reserve will be too far away, notwithstanding council's own open space



strategy outlines spaces to be within 300 metres walk of them. Based on this, we estimate this space will serve a very small proportion of the Southbank community. However, these are the very people who are outside the 300 metre walking radius of Southbank's current central open space area of Boyd park. For this reason, the Reserve will be a great asset to residents in the block bound by Whiteman and Clarendon Streets and potential future residents of Fishermans Bend Montague precinct.

Indeed, given, as it says in section 15, that the City of Port Phillip has a Making Montague Precinct Implementation Plan which aims to reclaim the West Gate Freeway undercroft for public use enabling a future park in the interface area, the Normanby Rd Reserve will be very accessible to many new residents in the Montague area as development of that area proceeds. While the park would be a potential asset for Melbourne and given its shared patronage from two councils, it would therefore be fitting the City of Melbourne seek a significant financial contribution from the City of Port Philip for this development.

Regards

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Tony Penna", written over a horizontal line.

Tony Penna  
President  
Southbank Residents Association