

Project 1

A major activity strip the length of Sturt Street linking all of the major arts and cultural institutions (existing and proposed) in the Southbank Arts cluster and connecting directly to St Kilda Road and the CAD via a plaza at the Arts Centre.



OBJECTIVES:

1. Foster the development of the Sturt Street strip into a vibrant mixed use activity strip with a strong arts activities character.
2. Integrate the arts cluster around the spine of Sturt Street and connect this spine directly into the CAD and Federation Square.
3. Develop the collective identity of the Southbank arts cluster.
4. Provide a high quality, accessible public environment around the new Recital Hall and Melbourne Theatre Company building.



Above: Existing view along Sturt Street from the Arts Centre podium

Right: View down the proposed ramp from the Arts Centre Plaza to Sturt Street.

The Sturt Street cultural spine

ISSUES

Arts facilities along Sturt Street:

Sturt Street runs past every major arts institution in Southbank including the Arts Centre, the Australian Ballet, National Gallery of Victoria (NGV), Malthouse, Australian Centre for Contemporary Art (ACCA), Victorian College of the Arts (VCA), Iwaki Auditorium, and the Recital Hall and Melbourne Theatre Company (MTC). Other facilities under consideration (a new music conservatory and VCA secondary college) further add to this Arts Cluster. But the Arts Cluster has little coherent identity and is largely disconnected from the CAD.

Poor access and orientation:

There is no direct pedestrian link between the Arts Centre's front-of-house at St Kilda Road and the facilities to the south in Sturt Street. They are distant, hidden and inaccessible from the CAD and river. There is no visual indication for visitors to Southbank of the Sturt Street Arts Cluster from the surrounding streets.

Streetscape amenity and facilities:

Most buildings along Sturt Street have inactive street frontages. The footpaths are wide and trees have been planted recently, but overhead power lines are still in place and will limit their growth. There is no provision for disabled access to trams or for bicycle lanes.

The Arts Centre:

The Arts Centre has a proposal to create a new pedestrian plaza on the lawn between the State Theatre and Hamer Hall. This plaza is designed to be a major activity hub comparable to Federation Square. But the Arts Centre podium is 8 metres above Sturt Street and has dead frontages and service spaces on its western side. Sturt Street north of Kavanagh Street is effectively an 'off-ramp' from Alexandra Avenue, however it carries very low traffic volumes.

Crossing Kings Way:

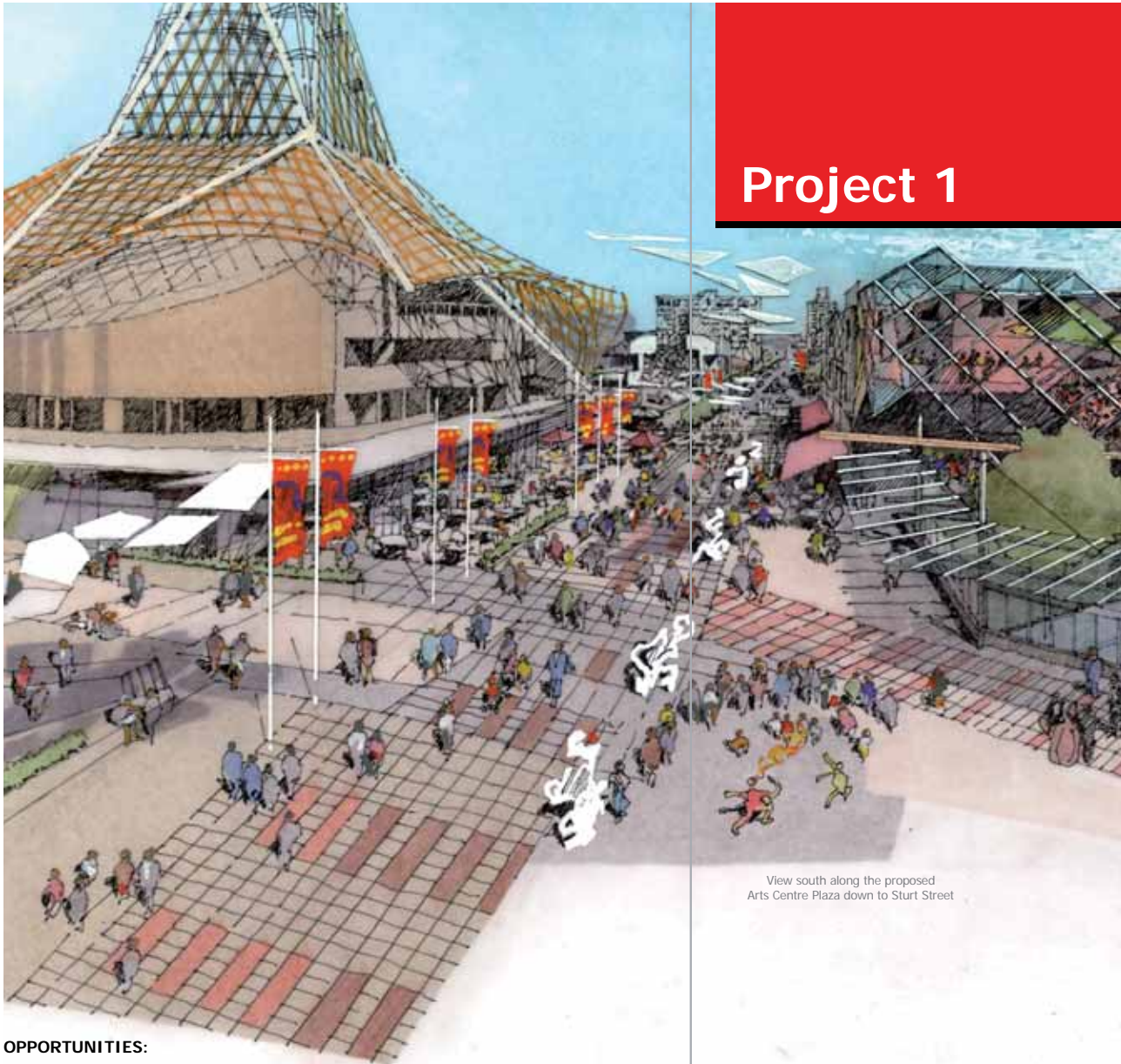
The route 55 tram is an important service to the central city north of the river. But access to and from the stops in the middle of Kingsway is hazardous and unpleasant. The Sturt Street crossing of Kings Way leads directly to South Melbourne's shops. The crossing at all sides needs significant improvement.

Public open spaces:

Most public space near Sturt Street is poorly located in terms of amenity for active use, abutting blank building walls or noisy roads. A park such as the Sturt Street Reserve would ideally be better located more centrally.



Project 1



View south along the proposed Arts Centre Plaza down to Sturt Street

OPPORTUNITIES:

1a. A new urban plaza between Hamer Hall and the Arts Centre theatres:

A major new public place in Melbourne with a direct link along the west of Hamer Hall to the Southgate podium (Arts Centre Theatres). Extending over the entire width of Sturt Street connecting directly to the Ballet building and a new arts building (possibly for the MSO) at the corner of Sturt St and City Road.

1b. A pedestrian and bicycle connection extending Sturt Street via a generous ramp up to the Arts Centre podium:

Extending Sturt Street via a generous ramp up to the Arts Centre podium through the new plaza to St Kilda Road and on to Federation Square. This connection will open up Sturt Street as Melbourne's arts street – an entirely new and exciting prospect for the central city. It will further elevate the proposed Arts Centre plaza as a major new hub of public life and open up further the Sturt Street address of the NGV.

1c. Develop the vacant site at the corner of City Road and Sturt Street as a major new arts facility:

Develop the vacant site at the corner of City Road and Sturt Street as an exciting new arts facility, possibly a music centre and base for the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra (MSO).



Existing view along Sturt Street from the top Hamer Hall balcony

Project 1

A new pedestrian ramp connecting a new Arts Centre plaza at St Kilda Road to Sturt Street



- Sturt Street Arts Cluster
1. Proposed Southgate Link
 2. Proposed Plaza
 3. Proposed road upgrade
 4. Proposed arts building
 5. Proposed podium extension
 6. Proposed ramp connection
 7. NGV Sculpture Plaza
 8. Proposed road upgrade
 9. New Recital Hall & MTC Theatre



Existing view along Sturt Street to the Arts Centre podium and City

Right: Night view up Sturt Street to proposed pedestrian ramp connection to the Arts Centre Plaza

1d. St Kilda Road tram and pedestrian upgrade:

Upgrade of St Kilda Road from Princess bridge to Southbank boulevard to provide improved pedestrian and tram service to the Arts precinct and manage tram shunting.

1e. New activity district and Arts Street:

A comprehensive reshaping of Sturt Street's identity and character from north to south including:

- Closing or reducing the Sturt Street exit off Alexandra Avenue to improve traffic movements for parking and loading at the Arts Centre.
- A pedestrian priority crossing at the Southbank Boulevard intersection.
- Powerlines underground, bike lanes, generous high quality sidewalks and lighting, and universal access tram stops at the key nodes including the Iwaki Auditorium/ Recital Hall/MTC and ACCA/Malthouse.
- Exciting new architecture and artistic treatments (such as a continuous sculpture walk from the Malthouse to St Kilda Road) and activities in the street and adjoining public spaces.
- A public place along Sturt Street's western footpath at the Domain tunnel entry and, as far as possible, closure of the gap in the west side of Sturt Street created by the CityLink interchange. (See project 3.)
- Intensification and activation of all street frontages including the VCA with up to eight storey buildings, cafés, bars, restaurants and other retailing and commercial activity, to make this an active and diverse strip day and night interspersed along its length with theatres, galleries and performance venues. (See Project 7f)

1f: Improved pedestrian crossing at Kings Way and Sturt Street:

Make significant improvements to pavement treatments and signal timing and lighting to facilitate the safe, convenient and attractive crossing of Kings Way at Sturt Street both to reach the tram stop and to make the walk to and from South Melbourne shops. Investigate the options for removing slip lanes. Upgrade the tram stops.



Project 1



Sturt Street Cultural Spine

ACCA & Malthouse Theatre

VCA

New Recital Hall & MTC

New NGV sculpture plaza

New pedestrian and cycle ramp connection to Sturt Street

New arts building on vacant site at City Road - possible MSO base

Ramp connection up from City Road

Arts Centre

New Arts Centre plaza and gateway to Sturt Street cultural precinct

Hamer Hall