

URBAN & BUILT ENVIRONMENT NEWS

The housing market in Melbourne today foresees multiple challenges including meeting future housing needs, particularly with respect to the delivery of higher density, environmentally sustainable and affordable housing. This issue will highlight two strategies – C21 – Creating a greater City of Casey and the Arden vision – both aligning with Melbourne’s status as one of the most ‘livable cities’ aiming to cater to their growing and diverse demography.



Australia over the years has cultivated community engagement intensive planning process with which has permeated across sectors. As Melbourne continues to intensify and expand due to rapid population growth councils are simultaneously dreaming up visions to keep the cities growing citizenry happy and empowered.

One of the fastest growing municipalities in Victoria with approximately 288,800 residents, the City of Casey in the outer south-eastern suburbs of Melbourne is an interesting example of a suburban municipality successfully planning for democratised spaces over years of convergent planning.

CASEY – PLANNING FOR GREATNESS

The City of Casey first developed a long-term blueprint for shaping the future in 2002, C21 – A Vision for the future. This high level strategic document has been updated twice; in 2011 Casey C21 – Building a Great City, and in 2017 Casey C21 – Creating a Great City (the Vision). Over the years the city has aimed to design inclusive, hybrid form of public spaces, reflecting and embracing the diversity of its community.

In 2017 the City of Casey laid out a long term vision of being a city (City of Casey, 2017):

1. Where everyone can work locally, travel conveniently, and access all the services they need.
2. With state-of-the-art facilities for the arts, education, sports and leisure
3. where everyone belongs to a vibrant, safe and connected community, based on mutual respect and understanding
4. where the built and natural environments are complimentary, clean and enjoyable

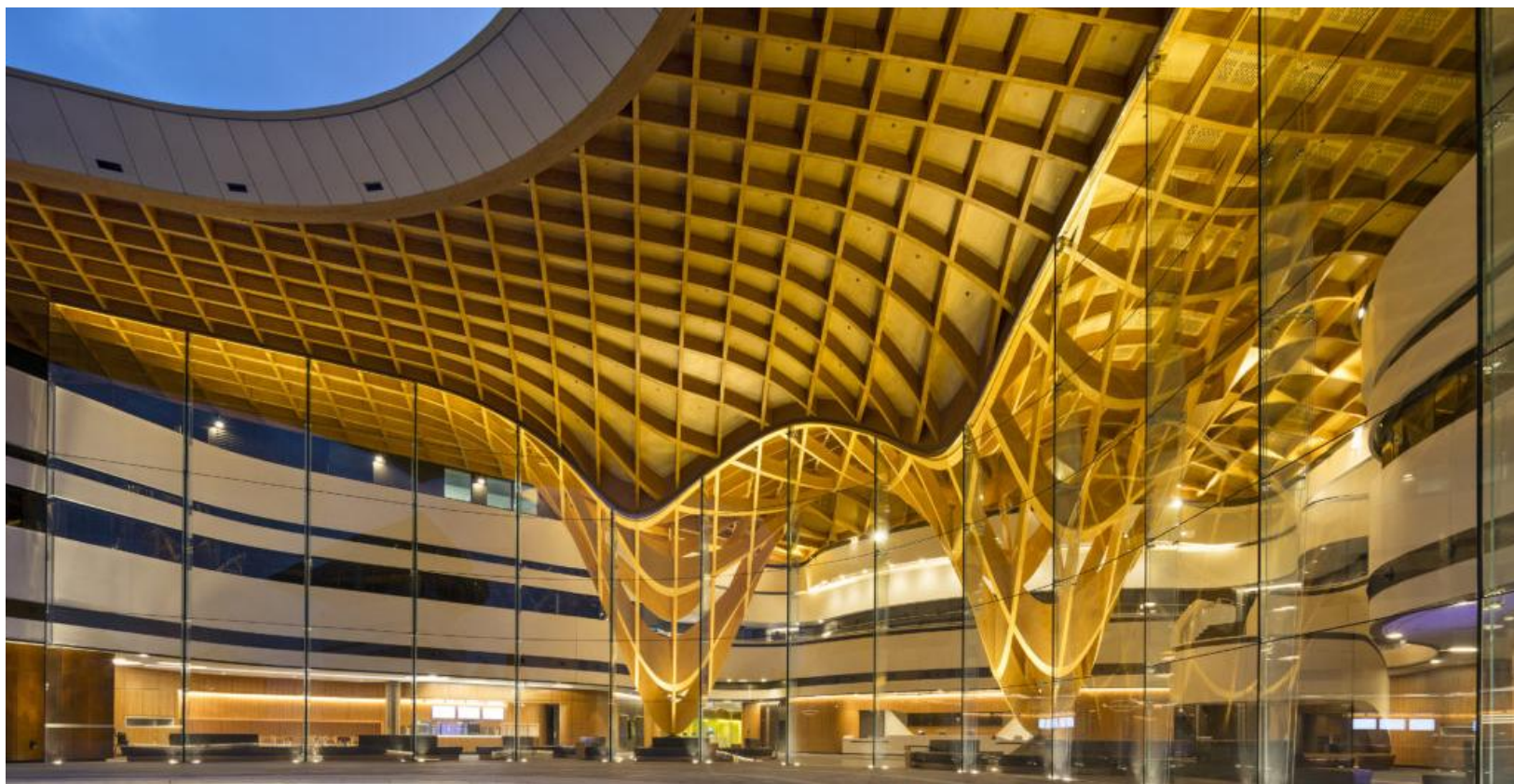
Over the past 15 years, the city has changed dramatically resulting in a diverse community with a range of ages, backgrounds, interests, expectations and aspirations.

As Casey's community transitions across different life stages, a range of public spaces are required to respond to the demographic change

Bearing this in mind the 2017 Housing Strategy for the city of Casey refers to a multitude of local, metropolitan, policies committed to ongoing dialogue with the community. This was preceded by the city's most ambitious community engagement program 2016, Casey Next which informed the city's vision refresh Casey C21 – Creating a Great City.



Buildings like the Bunjil place in Casey are good examples of the kind of democratization of buildings' usages emerging from this system of robust community consultation processes (Muir, 2018). Designed by critically acclaimed architects fjmt, is the perfect example of a new form of community and civic building fulfilling these needs. It incorporates a library, theatre, function centre and a multipurpose studio, an art gallery and the City of Casey customer service centre, all in the one building.



Above all perhaps, it is a place where all of this overlaps and interconnects and at the centre is the interconnecting fluid form of the foyer gathering space, a non-hierarchical space that unifies the complex — FJMT



Similarly the Arden vision, an initiative of the Victorian Planning Authority (VPA) is poised to be an inclusive, creative and sustainable neighbourhood able to provide for the future generations in Melbourne City.

INTENSIFYING ARDEN

The area has been earmarked for future development – the vision is for knowledge industries and residential towers to rise in the region between the old swamp and the bay of Melbourne City. **The key catalyst for renewal is the Arden Metro Railway Station** which will be constructed on Laurens Street, between Queensberry and Arden streets. The new station will provide a link to Parkville, Melbourne University and the biomedical precinct (Bertram, 2018).

“It’s a part of Melbourne that will transform,” Professor Bertram says. “Because of the Moonee Ponds Creek interface, the need to address flooding issues, the area’s proximity to the city centre – although historically it wasn’t a very desirable part of town. There’s a lot of industry that’s turning over, which in one sense is an opportunity.”

The Metro Tunnel Project will open up spaces in Arden by:

- Linking the precinct to Parkville and the city, as well as the inner suburbs such as Kensington, North Melbourne, West Melbourne, and the booming western suburbs of Footscray, Sunshine and beyond
- Transitioning an industrial pockets near Melbourne's CBD into a new job destination
- Creating a platform for the sustainability, liveability investment and innovation

Richard Wynne, Minister of planning envisages Arden as Melbourne's equivalent of San Francisco's Multimedia Gulch, the industrial and residential zone south of Market Street that, during the 1990s contributed to the city's vibrancy.

Targeted urban renewal projects like Arden, the first link in a chain, are vital to keep Melbourne among the most liveable cities in the world given the rate at which the city's population is growing.

Key direction for Renewal

Eight key directions, shaped through community, stakeholder and government partners encapsulate the environmental, social and economic vision for the Arden precinct (Victorian Planning Authority, 2018).

1. **Transforming Arden:** The precinct will advance Melbourne's strengths as a progressive, innovative and connected local and global city. The new North Melbourne Station will catalyse Arden's transformation into a new employment hub. There will be significant opportunities for better and diverse ways of working, living and learning, as it evolves from an industrial area into an innovation precinct
2. **Designing a Distinctive Place:** Arden will be shaped by the exemplary urban design and built form, anchored by the valued characteristics that make the suburbs of North and west Melbourne special to its residents and workers. Public areas will respond to the existing environment and strengthen the evolving identity of the precinct.
3. **Embedding Sustainable Change:** Best practice standards for the environmental, social and economic sustainability will underpin planning for the communities and buildings, making Arden and exemplar of sustainable urban renewal.
4. **Accommodating Diverse Communities:** Arden will cater to a diversity of households across a range of ages and incomes. New homes will be well-designed, accessible and sustainable.
5. **Prioritising Active Transport:** Arden will provide direct and efficient connections in and around the precinct through safe and attractive public areas. This will include active and public transport networks that will complement the new North Melbourne Station.
6. **Investing in community Infrastructure:** Arden will support the existing and new community by providing infrastructure that is integrated with the existing area. The design of community facilities, such as schools will reflect best practice and community input.



7. **Celebrating Water:** Arden will incorporate water as a feature of the landscape through the innovative and creative flood mitigation solutions. The Moonee Ponds Creek corridor will be valued as an environmental, recreational and active transport asset and an integrated water and management approach will ensure that water is shared and reused across the precinct.
8. **Creating Diverse Open Spaces:** Arden will be a cooler and greener version of the central city with a generous and well connected open space network, providing multi-functional spaces for recreation, socialising, active transport and biodiversity.

Each of these visions is then further broken down in objectives and planned outcomes in the Arden Structure Plan.

The rigour of the vision planning exercise in the City of Casey and Arden precinct goes to show, how community engagement, positive feedback loops, and iterations may lead to similar visions of a sustainable, environmental, resilient spaces which caters to the individual as well as the masses.

It is essential that the community, planners and policy makers continue to observe urban experiments such as these in order to learn from them and ensure that Melbourne can continue to grow without compromising on its liveability.

REFERENCES

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