

Dear City of Melbourne Meeting Group Team

This is a written submission in regards to the City of Melbourne Council meeting of Tuesday 30th August, 2022, and in particular Agenda Item 6.4 Proposal discontinuance and sale of Gough Alley Melbourne.

A recommendation has been given in regards to this matter. The Lord Mayor, and Councillors should give this matter serious consideration. In the recent history of the City of Melbourne, there is a previous instance, if memory serves me correct, of a laneway (or section of) being sold to a developer.

The reaction of citizens when they discovered this was one of surprise. This contemporary precedent enabled the architects to max out the development, shall we say.

Melbourne has a reputation of preserving and rehabilitating laneways and alleys. Case studies have been made in regards to the laneway culture of Melbourne. This culture contributes in a most positive way to the liveability of the City. Hosier Lane is an example of a landmark, famous laneway that enhances the experience citizens have in Melbourne.

Before discussing this matter of the recommendation that has been given, Councillors should be cognisant of the profile of Gough Alley Melbourne. In the Arts community, it is held in high regard.

See, more than a decade ago, a photographer/ graphic designer from France, inspired by the architectonic features of Melbourne's laneways undertook a project to document the amazing, sci-fi dream-like atmospheres that can be experienced in Melbourne's laneways and alleyways. The cognoscenti are familiar with this project.

As a visual artist, [REDACTED] has the imagination and creativity to faithfully chronicle the extraordinary details and vistas surrounding Melbourne's laneways.

Her photo project was called 'Sky Is The Limit', and Gough Alley Melbourne was one of the locations where [REDACTED] took her evocative photos. Her work was of such brilliance that it attracted, in the Arts circles much attention. So much so, that on the 8th August, 2012, the editorial board of The Daily Mail, a United Kingdom newspaper, made the decision to publish the best of [REDACTED] photographs of Melbourne laneways and alleys. A staff writer contributed an accompanying story, with the headline - "No head for heights? Look up instead: Stunning photographs of skyscrapers given dream-like twist" (Daily Mail, UK, 8 August, 2012). A photograph of Gough Alley Melbourne, and its startling overhead vista was one of the selected photos. Gough Alley Melbourne was considered to be worthy of making the cut. This photograph of Gough Alley Melbourne, and the accompanying article enhances Melbourne's reputation of being an exciting, incredible city to visit and experience. It really vibes up Melbourne.

Gough Alley Melbourne has cultural significance on an international scale. For art connoisseurs, after the essential visits to Hosier Lane, ACDC Lane and Amphlett Lane a visit to Gough Alley Melbourne is on the bucket list. It's important for people from overseas who are switched on and tuned into the goings-on in the art world. To really get to the true heart of the matter of Melbourne's laneways, for those in-the-know, a visit to Gough Alley Melbourne is an absolute must. Some might say, that's between you and me. The inner sanctum of the arts world may consider Gough Alley more Melbourne than Melbourne! But they won't tell

you that. It's a laneway that is treasured and has a unique, appreciative audience. Truth is, there are big fans of Gough Alley. It has a cult following.

The Daily Mail is a major UK newspaper with a daily print run of one million copies, and a readership of over 2,000,000. The editorial board of the Daily Mail, and perhaps other newspaper journalists in the UK would be surprised at the recommendation that has been given in regards to Gough Alley Melbourne.

This recommendation is inconsistent with the ambition for Melbourne to climb back up the rankings of the world's most liveable cities. It is a definite killing of a unique and important component of Melbourne's laneway culture. We have established that Gough Alley Melbourne has international recognition, and that in the Arts community, this laneway is a landmark destination for the cognoscenti. Councillors should take stock of this.

To agree with the recommendation that has been given, to agree to "sell part of the farm", will be damaging to Melbourne's reputation as a vibrant, electrifying city that embraces the arts, music, film and literature worlds.

There is much respect and admiration for the City of Melbourne and its phenomenal, world class support of the arts and music communities. This support in the years since the advent of many difficulties has been exemplary, and is much appreciated. However, to agree to the recommendation that has been given would tarnish Melbourne's reputation, both in Australia and overseas. Melbourne will be diminished with what is being proposed. I couldn't make that any clearer.

You've got to embrace Gough Alley. Its potential in the arts world, its capacity to be utilised in Marketing the city as an Arts destination, to be fully integrated on an official level in the laneway culture, could be worth a lot more than 4.2 million.

The return over the next 50 years in terms of prestige, cultural enhancement, marketing, brand enhancement would be worth a lot more than 4.2 million. Have a real, serious think about that.

Because that's the real live option, and it's one that's being discussed today. You might not know it, but in some spheres, it is. There is an argument that at 4.2, you're getting ripped off. Compared to what Gough Alley could give to the City of Melbourne.

What would Melbourne be like, if the City of Melbourne endeavoured to further elevate and promote Gough Alley? To go for the Flash Forward Option. Melbourne would be a much, much better city.

Before reading this, how many Councillors had heard of [REDACTED]? How many tourists make a pilgrimage to Hosier Lane?

We have to build this city, now, I am all for that. However, we should also recognise when someone, just before dinner, is asking for a cookie, from the cookie jar. City of Melbourne should say to this recommendation that has been given, -"No, they already are about to have the Porterhouse steak, medium-rare, with vegetables from a Victorian country garden, and a jug of Carlton beer at the table to wash down the dinner. No, now is not the time to have a Cookie. That's an unreasonable request".

There's nothing wrong with asking to buy an important alley from the City of Melbourne. Nothing at all. You've got every right to ask for that. And the City of Melbourne has got every right to reply- "No, all things being considered, and looking at the options that we have on the table, and we do have options, it is inappropriate, wrong and a short-sighted behaviour to want to sell this precious alley. "

City of Melbourne could ask the developers to build within the existing boundaries, and explain that the better option for Melbourne is to hold on to Gough Alley. City of Melbourne could ask the architects to build a red brick wall, like the one on Hosier Lane for the visual artists to work on. City of Melbourne could

ask the developers to support a Flash Forward type of venture in Gough Alley. Now that's more exciting than the recommendation that has been given. It might take a lot of work, however it's more exciting.

City of Melbourne should give serious consideration to keeping Gough Alley, promoting it, and enhancing it with a Flash Forward kind of endeavour. This would be a better outcome for the community. Hold on to the dream-like twist.

Best regards
Chris Thrum

Hi Shawn,

As discussed, see below.

Regards

Tony Penna

Subject: Council Meeting 30 Aug

Hello Council Business,

I tried to call earlier and left a message for some to call me back. I haven't heard from anyone as yet.

Please find attached a submission for this afternoons council meeting. It was separately forwarded to the Lord Mayor, DLM and Cr Leppert on Saturday.

Owing to being in the middle of the Daintree rainforest this morning without any phone reception I wasn't able to upload it via the website.

Can you please include this with the documents for this afternoon council meeting.

Regards

Tony Penna
President
Southbank Residents Association



Submission to Council Meeting No. 22

Council Chambers, Melbourne
30 August 2022, 5.30pm – Meeting No.22
Agenda Item FMC 6.5: Quarterly performance reporting – Council Plan major initiatives, Finances and Capital Program

The Southbank Residents Association is puzzled by an entry in the Quarterly Performance report. The entry concerns the Dodds St Linear Park.

Management has recommended to Council that it approve a number of program adjustments, including:

- 8.3.4. Budget reduced for –
 - 8.3.4.2. Dodds Street linear park, Southbank (Project 14G8129N) - from \$5,214,000 to \$250,000

Further in the document there is the entry under:
Capital Works Portfolio Financial Tear 2021 - 2022

Project Title	Description	Quarterly Update
Dodds Street linear park	Delivery of the Dodds street linear park, in conjunction with the Southbank Major Public Art Commission. ... <i>Funding is being transferred from 14G8111N - Transforming Southbank Boulevard and Dodds Street.</i> <i>Total funds transferred \$2,227,000 with balance expected to be spent in 2021-22 Our emphasis</i>	Budget: \$250,000 YTD Actuals: \$305,327

Such a significant budgetary change should have been accompanied by an explanation as it would seem to imply a major modification to the original brief of the project.

The SRA is not suggesting anything untoward, there may be quite a reasonable explanation, however none seems to have been provided.

Without an explanation, SRA objects strongly to this budget adjustment. We are bewildered such a significant budget amendment hasn't been communicated with the wider Southbank Community.



The Dodds Street Linear Park development with its public art component is a significant and critical aspect of this development and we would be devastated to see this project watered down, especially without consultation.

Unless there is a sound explanation and purely an administrative function with no change to the original project brief, then SRA strongly objects and request this adjustment is deferred until appropriate community consultation has been completed.



Tony Penna
President
Southbank Residents Association