

Bold visions on traffic, city life

LIFE CHALLENGES FACING MELBOURNE



The CBD embracing the Yarra:

John So: Melbourne must be extended to the Yarra in every way possible.

Mary Delahunty: The river development will be addressed in our Yarra Plan — a work in progress — to link the south and north banks of the Yarra and establish Melbourne as one of the world's premier waterfront cities.

Rob Pradolin: The most significant change to Melbourne over the next two decades should be development on the Yarra, including Docklands, the landmark Freshwater Place and Eureka tower in Southbank, and the decking over the rail lines from the CBD to Richmond.

Developing over the rail lines from Federation Square to Richmond:

John So: The State Government needs to ensure we drive on and leave a legacy for the future. A conceptual plan needs to be developed as soon as possible.

Mary Delahunty: We are open to offers from the private sector.

Rob Pradolin: There needs to be a bipartisan commitment to deck over the rail lines and a strategic plan developed for how that will be achieved.

Boosting the CBD's west:

John So: The northwest of the CBD is fast developing into a very trendy area. With the development of Docklands, people are starting to realise the area around Spencer St is the link between the CBD and waterfront.



Into the future: Grocon's plan, with an addition by Lord Mayor John So, for covering the railway.

Mary Delahunty: The Spencer St Station overhaul will lift that whole area and the Government will look at proposals from the private sector to develop run-down buildings to the north.

Rob Pradolin: The western precinct has been calling out for something to be done. The planned Spencer St

Station development and dismantling of Flinders St overpass will dramatically change people's perception of the area, add to the value of property and help drive investment to make it an attractive place to live.

Inner-city traffic congestion:

John So: We need to keep working

with the State Government. We need an inner freeway loop.

Mary Delahunty: It is a matter for Melbourne City Council and the transport authorities.

Rob Pradolin: We have to change the culture of car dependency. We need to look at mechanisms to encourage our community to act in a sustainable way.

At Sunday Herald Sun 3/8/2003

Inner ring route wanted

CHRIS TINKLER and IAN HABERFIELD

AN inner-ring road to avoid traffic gridlock and decking on Jolimont railyards are the major challenges facing Melbourne.

This is the view of a panel of experts and key stakeholders assembled by the *Sunday Herald Sun*.

Traffic congestion is identified by Melbourne Lord Mayor John So as one of the most pressing issues facing Melbourne.

Cr So and Rob Pradolin, general manager of major developer Australand, say a second key challenge is for the State Government and Opposition to commit to putting a deck over the rail lines between Federation Square and Richmond.

And they want the development of a bipartisan blueprint for the area to begin within months.

Cr So says that to avoid a congestion crisis, road links from St Kilda to Clifton Hill (and the Eastern Freeway) and across the north from Clifton Hill to Flemington (and CityLink) need complete overhauls.

A major new road — probably a freeway — needs to be built above or underneath Punt Rd and Hoddle St from St Kilda to Clifton Hill, and the Eastern Freeway needs to be extended over or underground from Clifton Hill to Flemington.

With the extension of the Eastern Freeway to Ringwood, more traffic will feed into the north-eastern inner-city corridor



High life: An artist's impression of Queensbridge Square.

and through the city to the west," says Cr So. "There has to be something to link Collingwood, Fitzroy and Carlton to CityLink."

"Of course it is expensive, but the Government has to either tunnel or build over existing roads."

"With Punt Rd and Hoddle St, the Government has to look at very drastic ways to link the north and south. Again, it would require a tunnel or building over roads."

"A ring road needs to be created. We should be asking the Federal Government to fund it."

Hoddle St, Punt Rd and the Eastern Freeway were identified as three of Melbourne's most congested roads in a *Sunday Herald Sun* study last year.

And a Federal Government study has revealed traffic congestion will cost Melbourne \$8 billion a year by 2015.

A 5km tunnel extension of the Eastern Freeway — from Clifton Hill through Fitzroy, Carlton and Parkville to the CityLink in Flemington — is being considered in the State Government's overdue northern central city corridor study, launched in November 2000.

Two years ago, Melbourne City Council set out the decking vision for eight city blocks — about 1.5km — from Federation Square to Richmond station in a blueprint for the city's future.

Inspired by the idea,

Grocon and Becton bid to build the Commonwealth Games village Jolimontg over a section of the Jolimont tracks.

The Government dismissed the bid in favour of Australand's Parkville village plan.

Even though the Parkville village is going ahead, Mr Pradolin says, "There needs to be a bipartisan commitment to deck over Jolimont railyards and a strategic plan

developed through consultation with key stakeholders.

"After consultation, the Government needs to show strong leadership in achieving the vision."

"If, as expected, development slows between 2005 and 2008, it will give the Government an opportunity to inject funds to deck the rail lines and kick-start the strategy."

The Government can then ensure it shares the

SANDRIDGE BRIDGE COMI LIFE

WORK has begun on reviving the disused Sandridge Rail Bridge. Scaffolding has gone up on the northern section of the 17m wide city eyesore and heavy machinery is rolling in.

This comes as the *Sunday Herald Sun* exclusively unveils the bold vision for the new-look bridge, north bank redevelopment and new Southbank hub called Queensbridge Square.

The bridge will be developed with a walkway along its eastern side, but with a "deconstructed void" along its western side.

The 1888 relic will be repainted a traditional railway grey.

Only the superstructure will remain on the western side, with the base being removed.

The bridge walkway will slope into a major tree-lined open space on the north bank, stretching from Banana Alley to Princes Bridge and taking over a major section of Flinders St Station.

The bridge also will slope into the heart of the new Queensbridge Square, which will front Australand's \$750 million three-tower Freshwater Place apartment, shop and office precinct under construction on the southern bank of the river.

It is understood discussions are taking place about the possibility of including water features in the square, which will slope to the water's edge and is expected to become Southbank's outdoor hub.

The north bank, bridge and Queensbridge Square development is being completed by a partnership of the State Government, Melbourne Council and Australand.

Planning Minister Mary Delahunty has identified the development — part of the \$4 billion Yarra Plan to link the northern and southern sides of the river from Richmond to the Docklands — as a key project for the city.

benefits of development and take advantage of the consequent upturn in the property cycle, as well as leaving an important legacy for Melbourne.

"The biggest challenge with Jolimont is to ensure not only do we achieve a successful commercial, retail and residential development, but an excellent public outcome."

Cr So would like to see a landmark public building on the block between

Federation Square and Batman Ave, with minimal commercial and residential development and expansive parkland elsewhere on the decking. He says the building could be a celebration of the city or a showcase for environmental technology.

Grocon has released a stunning image of its vision for the area.

The image shows how the low-rise Games village would have been

built over lines north of the tennis centre, with commercial and residential development west of Spring St and parkland southeast of the MCG.

Grocon state development manager Stephen Rothel says a similar vision, without the village, could eventuate with little government expense.

"Decking the railyards would create land and eradicate a significant blight," he says.