

Federation Square

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Project Evaluation (1.011)

**Existing
Conditions:**

CBD

Yarra River

Prince's Bridge

Flinders Station

Flinders St Rail
Yard

St Paul's Cathedral

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Project Evaluation (1.011)

Site History & Impetus for Project

Prince's Gate Office Towers (1967)

-Unpopular Development along edge of railyard. Divided the City from its River

-Demolished in 1996

Desire to create a civic space linking the Central Business District to the Yarra Waterfront.

-Various previous attempts to roof the adjacent rail yard (1925, 1958, 1961, 1973....)

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Basic Project Components

Support Deck

- Constructed over fully operational Flinders Street rail yard.
- Required both sufficient structural support and vibration absorbing materials

Square

- Plaza of carved Kimberley sandstone
- Designed for up to 15,000 people

Atrium

- Portion of plaza enclosed to form large covered public space
- Contains medium-sized amphitheater
- Climate controlled by Labyrinth System

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Basic Project Components

Buildings

Characterized by triangular façade panels in a variety of materials

Tenants include:

- Ian Potter Centre: NGV Australia
- ACMI (Australian Centre for the Moving Image)
- SBS Radio, Television & Online
- Transport* Hotel
- Melbourne Visitor Centre
- Restaurant/Retail Establishments

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Project Evaluation (1.011)

Will This Project Be Sustainable?

Not just an environmental perspective. Important to look at all aspects of sustainability.

Key Overarching Questions:

Can this project have a longer lifespan than the Prince's Gate development?

Is it the right choice for this time and place?

Will Federation Square become properly integrated into Melbourne's existing environment (economic, natural, cultural, social, etc.) ?

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Engagement

Public Undertaking – Not Enough Public Participation?

Design Selection:

Competition (1996) resulted in 177 entries, five of which were short listed

Final Selection panel comprised of 7 “expert” judges

Stakeholder Concerns:

Aesthetics of plan - Appealing to the majority?

Opposition centered on the “shards controversy”

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People

Positives from the Perspective of the Average Melburnian:

Significant connection between city and river

Contribute to national/international prestige of the city and overall civic pride

Provide space for cultural and civic activities (museum, amphitheater, multicultural broadcasting station, indoor/outdoor plaza, etc.)

Potential for new jobs

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People

Negatives from the Perspective of the Average Melburnian:

City with Relatively Low Densities- Is there too much open space?

Is there a specific target audience or will it be enjoyed by a mix of people?

Increases in traffic congestion

Lack of aesthetic appeal (“ugly,” “confronting,” etc.)

Large amount of money spent on one prestige project. Best use of government funds?

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Environment

Construction over rail yard: potential similarities to brownfields projects.

- + Attempt to incorporate elements of green design (labyrinth, limited use of certain materials, etc.)

- Little mention of potential impact on Yarra River (increased runoff, debris from lengthy construction process, etc.).

Creation of unpleasant microclimate?
(wind tunnel effect)

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Institutional Arrangements & Governance

Institutional Challenges:

Change of government midway through the construction process.

Political battles over building sizes, placement, and location of various functions.

Impact on Overall Project:

- Significant change of design
- Reassignment of management duties
- Expanded construction timeline

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Economy

Financed by City of Melbourne, State of Victoria, the Commonwealth, and private investors

Original Cost Projections: ~ \$150 million Australian

(Timeline: July 1997 - June 2001)

Actual cost: ~ \$450 million Australian

(Timeline: July 1997 - October 2002)

Profitability was *not* main goal →

Was public undertaking designed to enhance the Yarra waterfront and revitalize the City

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Economy: Financial Sustainability

Annual Figures					
Receipts	2002/2003	2003/2004	2004/2005	2005/2006	2006/2007
Commercial (Net Revenue)					
Parking	849,168	1,474,651	1,518,891	1,564,458	1,611,391
Public Space Hire	77,333	119,480	123,064	126,756	130,559
Merchandise & Events Revenue	800,000	824,000	848,720	874,182	900,407
Tenancies	3,783,221	8,214,391	8,658,231	8,917,978	9,185,517
Less Leasing Expenses	-100,000	-103,000	-106,090	-109,273	-112,551
Net Commercial Revenue	5,409,722	10,529,522	11,042,816	11,374,101	11,715,323
MCC Contribution	342,922	515,000	530,450	546,364	562,754
Other Revenue	155,348	31,955	39,260	42,142	62,804
Net Commercial Revenue	5,907,992	11,076,477	11,612,526	11,962,607	12,340,881
Payments					
Corporate Services	-1,652,161	-1,695,566	-1,747,705	-1,801,840	-1,875,293
Development and Operations	-3,753,050	-5,362,547	-5,523,303	-5,689,002	-5,859,672
Marketing and Communications	-2,077,374	-2,147,725	-2,212,037	-2,278,398	-2,346,750
Loan Repayment	-1,080,917	-1,853,000	-1,853,000	-1,853,000	-1,853,000
Total Operating Costs	-8,563,502	-11,058,838	-11,336,045	-11,622,240	-11,934,715
Net Surplus/(Deficit)	-2,655,510	17,639	276,481	340,367	406,166

Source: Federation Square Management, 2002/2003 Corporate and Business Plan

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Economy: Broader Impacts

Tourist attraction on par with Sydney Opera House? Ways to measure this?

Intended to attract over 6,000,000 visitors per year

- Feb. 2003 total: ~ 2,000,000

Expected to employ over 600 people

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Traditional & Non-Market Considerations

It speaks for the future, not of the past and I think its going to be one of the most exciting offerings about the way we celebrate 100 years. I suppose we could have done a sewage scheme instead. There's got to be room for the spirit, and if there's not room for the spirit in Australia we're a very poor community.

- Robert McClelland, Victorian
Minister for Planning 1992-99

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Traditional & Non-Market Considerations

Does the project inspire?

Will it be the cultural heart of Melbourne?

Will Melburnians become reacquainted with their waterfront?

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Project Evaluation (1.011)

Overall Integrated Assessment & Continuous Learning

Project has only recently been completed - still unclear whether the major objectives have been met.

Received a great deal of attention, both positive and negative.

Will be several years before we can know if the significant costs of Federation Square were truly justified.

Continuation of Shard Debate? Possible redesign of the site in near future?

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