



Launceston City Heart Project Community Engagement

Final Project Report

October 2014



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Executive Summary

The Launceston City Heart Project sets out to energise Launceston's CBD by identifying the improvements needed to breath new life into the city centre and drawing on input and ideas from key stakeholders and the broader community is central to the project.

Through the Launceston City Heart Project engagement process, the City of Launceston, the community and businesses as well as local authorities and community groups came together to shape the future heart of their city - the CBD. Council and CoDesign Studio worked together to create complementary engagement activities to draw out ideas from across all groups within the community. Council focused on engaging specific local stakeholder groups, while CoDesign Studio engaged the broader general public. In particular, CoDesign Studio was enlisted to enable people from across many groups in the community to have a say, by delivering creative and participatory public engagement activities, from pop ups to prototyping. Working together in this way, the project has created an understanding of the future role and function of the CBD to support a strong Launceston and identified the key precincts and the improvements needed, to bring life into the CBD now and in the future.

Engagement Process

The project delivered a creative community engagement process. Engagement activities were novel, easy to do and fun, which offered a fresh approach and enabled new thinking to surface. A multitude of ways to have a say were offered, with something being offered to suit almost everyone. The prototyping phase of the project took the community's ideas one step further, translating them into reality for a few days to test them out. The most commonly suggested ideas were for Civic Square and Brisbane Street Mall, and so these were trialed as 'prototypes': seating, shelter, greenery and other creative additions to make the CBD a place to explore and a place for children. A design brief set by CoDesign Studio and Council was developed and the creative skills of UTAS School of Architecture and Design students were enlisted to make the changes happen. As a result more detailed design recommendations are provided for these sites.

Recommendations

Emerging from this process, the recommendations provided in this report - for the role and function of the CBD, place principles for the CBD and the priority improvements - are solidly grounded in the views of a cross-section of the community, including many people who do not usually have a say. The findings highlight a desire for a CBD role and function that needs to play to Launceston's strengths, and present the CBD as a unique destination, differentiated from other centres. It should be a place to explore offering new, creative and eclectic experiences, which draw locals and visitors to the CBD again and again. Its future is as a living space, a social space and an experience destination, underpinned by unique and diverse retail offerings.

The seven Place Principles, provided as a toolkit for revitalising the CBD, build on Launceston's strengths and recognise the CBD's opportunities, some of which actually stem from its challenges.

Priority Improvements & Actions

Finally, the identification of key sites, improvements and actions for immediate change are set out, providing clear priorities for the council and the city community to deliver a strong CBD together. Leading these priorities is the redevelopment of Civic Square and Brisbane Street Mall, considered as cornerstones of a successful city, followed by development of the CBD laneways. Beyond this streetscaping improvements, including lighting and greenery were identified for a number of precincts and a specific project on adaptive reuse of underutilised buildings recommended.

Civic Square is set to become a social and civic hub; a versatile place for a range of events and activities, a place for families and a vibrant social spot drawing local visitors in. Brisbane Street Mall is to become a destination to linger in rather than pass through. In future the site needs a considered facelift, will provide spaces for many different people using it and generate more streetlife, including at night, to create a welcoming and vibrant space.

Read together, the report's recommendations provide a clear and well supported pathway for the CBD to be a place of life, interaction and innovation to support a strong economy and community. Above all, they provide the foundations for the City of Launceston to continue to work with its community and stakeholders to create a stronger and livelier CBD.



Prototyping social spaces to support liveability, in phase 2 of the community engagement

Introduction

In mid-2014, CoDesign Studio was engaged by City of Launceston to assist the delivery of a unique collaborative, community engagement process to underpin delivery of the Launceston City Heart Project. The project aimed to creatively develop a vision for the city now and into the future with the community, setting a bold framework for improving liveability, tourism, recreation and employment opportunities, within a strong heritage and environmental framing. This project provided a rare opportunity to bring together the wider Launceston community, and build the local support that is necessary to create an active, vibrant city centre. Ultimately it is not governments, strategies or infrastructure projects that create great places, but inclusive, connected communities.

The project aims were to identify:

- **Direction** - the function and future role of the CBD
- **Place Principles** – Overarching principles for the ongoing development of the Launceston CBD to ensure that the direction is realised
- **Place Improvements** – Identify projects, changes and developments for specific locations to improve the CBD.

The project used a creative and participatory approach to ensure that local stakeholders and communities are actively involved in the planning and delivery of projects. It progressed through the four-stage participatory approach summarised in Figure 1 below. In collaboration, City of Launceston and CoDesign Studio worked to:

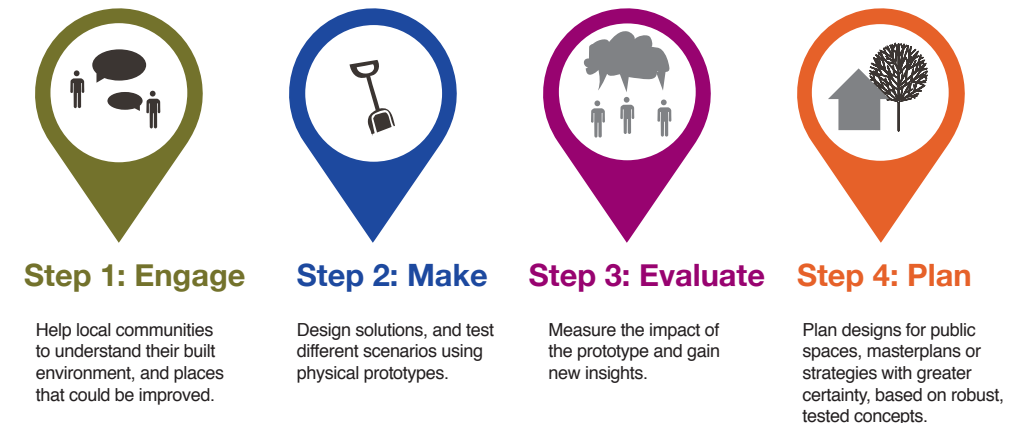
1. Understand and identify views on the future direction of the CBD, which locations are important to the community and ideas for improvements throughout the city
2. Engage broadly to gain views from a wide cross-section of the community and through multiple stakeholder groups

3. Validate and test out ideas in a practical way, demonstrating and engaging people with on the ground prototypes, which physically test out ideas for their future city

4. Build community ownership and support for the project through encouraging active participation and hands on involvement with the project now and in the future, which is sustained beyond the Launceston City Heart Project.

This report sets out the recommendations based on this extensive community and stakeholder engagement process and place-based design recommendations for future CBD development.

Figure 1: CoDesign Studio's participatory design approach



Context

The Launceston City Heart Project engages and connects community and key stakeholders to revitalise the CBD. This exciting project follows on as a development and sub-component of the umbrella *Greater Launceston Plan (2014)* and the *Launceston Central Area Development Study (2013)* by testing ideas further. It forms a vital stepping-stone from this broad plan to various on the ground redevelopment projects that are to occur in the Launceston CBD in the near future.

The Launceston City Heart project comes at a time of change in the City of Launceston. It is a considered and strategic approach to developing a series of projects that conserve what is great about the city, while developing and nourishing what is new and innovative, to support diverse community and business in reaching future potential.

The project deals with key issues that the city is facing, such as the challenges facing retail and the roll on effect of vacancies within the city; the low population growth, aging population and the migration of young people to other cities.

A lack of inner city residential development and accessibility are also key issues. Moving forward from these issues, the project explores the opportunities to support tourism within the area and the sprouting of local and community initiatives that seek to draw on and show what is great about Launceston and its people. These are key to developing the city from the ground up, providing exciting opportunities for the future.

This is an exciting time for Launceston as the council, key stakeholders and the community come together to identify and develop the city centre well into the future with energy, vision and collective ownership.

The Launceston Heart Project stems from, and builds upon, existing studies and strategic plans for the Launceston area. These include:

- **Launceston Public Spaces and Public Life - 2011:** Gehl Architects applied expertise in observation and analysis to understand public life in Launceston. The result is five key recommendations for Launceston: focus on its wonderful amenities; provide a people friendly city traffic system to also encourage more pedestrians; continue with existing initiatives to invite people into the CBD; ensure a diverse and unique experience encouraging people to stay longer.
- **Launceston Central Area Development Study - 2013:** Prepared by David Locke Associates, this plan provides in depth evaluation of the city centre and clearly identifies precincts and urban design key principles for the city's development
- **Greater Launceston Plan (GLP) - 2014:** The GLP provides a strategic overview of the challenges facing Greater Launceston; the key identified changes needed within the city and a clear framework for the various projects and categorisation of these for the next twenty years. The Launceston City Heart Project is one of five projects set out in the plan, aiming to engage and facilitate community feedback to develop the CBD.

A number of current City of Launceston projects are being delivered which also draw on this previous work and which the Launceston City Heart (LCH) Project is being coordinated with:

- **Launceston CBD Bus Location Study – 2014** This project is undertaking a detailed examination of options for bus service/stop locations and designs in the CBD.
- **Launceston’s Transport Futures: Getting from A to B - 2014** This project is creating a long term planning document that sets out the Council’s proposals and strategies to deliver a quality, sustainable and integrated transport system

Elements of these recent studies and projects were tested and validated through engagement activities carried out as part of the Launceston City Heart Project. Community input regarding the Council identified precincts were a focus, as well as elements of the other report recommendations where relevant. As such, this existing work will be drawn on in the report findings.



Prototyping in CBD spaces, in phase 2 of the community engagement

1 Community engagement

The core objective of the engagement methodology was to document and understand community views of the city, explore the city's role now and function in the future, and to collaboratively identify specific areas that need to be improved to make the CBD stronger and more vibrant.

The engagement process was designed to ensure that people across different demographics are accessed, and created a variety of ways people could be involved. This means for instance time-poor office workers were involved in a quick, mobile manner as well as offering people who had more time the opportunity for longer conversations. As such, the project enlisted a range of online and place-based activities with something to suit everyone.

Throughout this process the community was also encouraged to get hands on by shaping their CBD through collaborative solution creation. The participatory tools for engagement utilised, provided a deeper and more innovative method of developing long lasting partnerships with community members – the community is playing an active role in shaping their city and feel that their voice is heard.

1.1 Engagement activities

The Launceston City Heart Project engagement process was undertaken in two phases:

- **Phase 1 idea collection:** Collection of data and feedback about the role of the CBD, and key areas, issues, ideas and actions to improve the CBD
- **Phase 2 idea testing:** Following the analysis of the data gathered in Phase 1, ideas for CBD improvements in key precincts identified in community feedback were tested throughout prototyping.



Brisbane St Mall Community Engagement Pop up



The Quadrant Community Engagement Pop up

In delivering the engagement process, CoDesign Studio focused on engaging the general public and various groups within the Launceston community. Complementary to this, City of Launceston engaged in interactive workshop based discussions with formal stakeholder groups such as business groups, community organisations, state government authorities and internal council staff.

A summary of the engagement activities is provided below. The detailed findings of the engagement process are provided in Appendix 1 Engagement Findings Report.

Phase 1: ideas collection key activities

Online engagement:

- Online Survey and Polls on the *Your Voice, Your Launceston* website
- Social Media/Hashtag utilising #launcestonheart through facebook, twitter and instagram

Place-based activities:

- Pop Up workshops in public space at: Civic Square, Brisbane Street Mall, the Quadrant and the Farmers Market
- Scavenger Hunt with local school students
- Community group meetings
- Retailer engagement
- Key retail stakeholder group presentation and meeting
- Posters, stickers and interactive project signage
- My big idea's for Launceston's CBD post cards
- Key stakeholder interactive workshops



#LauncestonHeart footpath chalk stencilling

Phase 2: Prototyping key activities

At the conclusion of Phase 1, all of the data generated was compiled and analysed to clarify key themes, patterns and areas that the community had identified.

These strongest ideas, in the most commonly identified locations were further tested and refined through prototyping through:

- Developing and delivering prototypes for improvements to key public spaces within the CBD, in partnership with relevant community groups and stakeholders
- Gathering feedback about the improvements being tested through surveys, site observation and discussions with key stakeholders and site users about whether the improvements being prototyped worked.

Build community ownership and drawing on local skills to deliver a new CBD heart

The CBD prototypes provided an important step between receiving community feedback and making changes on the ground they provided a trial run of some of the suggested changes and provided an opportunity to refine them. To deliver these prototypes, the Launceston City Heart Project enlisted the help of talented locals. It collaborated with the UTAS School of Architecture and Design, drawing on the creative skills of a fourth year architecture studio class. The focus of their subject was to develop prototypes for Civic Square and Brisbane Street Mall, which responded to community feedback about the two sites. A design brief was set by the project team, based on this feedback, and the students delivered outcomes enjoyed by the whole community.

This collaboration was made possible by the enthusiastic support of UTAS staff and students, creating a great project outcome of providing students with hands on experience on a live project. The students continue to be involved with the project and are seeing how their input is translating to changes being made on the ground. Another positive outcome was that, where possible, the prototyping materials were reused or gifted back to the UTAS and community, e.g. greenery was used in local gardens.



Phase 2 - Civic Square Prototyping: Mayor and council staff, CoDesign Studio, UTAS students

2.2 Community engagement: evaluation

The engagement process for the Launceston City Heart Project successfully reached a broad cross-section of the community, developed a clear picture of the city and identified areas and ideas for change.

In summary, the engagement process involved the following:

- **1, 595** people responded to the survey (172 online, 1,423 paper-based). This high number of responses gives a strong foundation for strategic decisions to enhance the Launceston CBD and serves to validate feedback provided through other engagement activities. A summary of the findings is included as Appendix 2.
- **405** people engaged at the pop up engagement workshops at Civic Square, Brisbane Street Mall, the Quadrant and the Farmers Market (See Figure 2)
- **135** people were involved in in-depth discussions at **nine** key stakeholder interactive workshops
- **383** people sent in project postcards with their 'big idea' for the CBD
- Local high schools and UTAS students were involved providing and testing ideas for improvements to their CBD
- **Many hundreds** of people provided ideas by filling in comment stickers on shop windows around the city or posted photos, commented or liked ideas on social media.
- **Many hundreds** of people tried out or provided feedback on the prototypes, which tested improvements to Civic Square and Brisbane Street Mall.

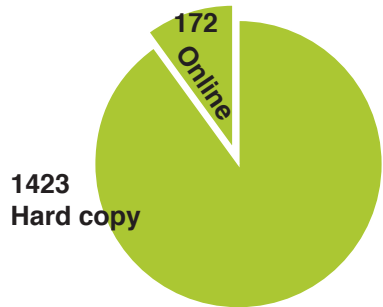
The people engaged represented a spread across income, age, location, occupation, family type and education. Particular demographics were low-income and middle-income families, single parents, young persons, older persons, children, persons with a disability, retailers, farmers, business owners, tourists and office workers in the CBD. The process reached a number of groups that are usually hard to reach including younger people, people with a disability, single parent families and time-poor small business owners. This depth and breadth of people engaged is reflected in Figure 2 below, in particular this highlights the specific groups who engaged through on street pop up workshops. An equally diverse range of people was observed using the CBD prototypes.



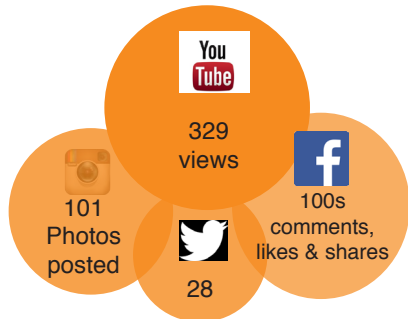
Community engagement feedback via comment stickers

Figure 2: Volume and Diversity of People Engaged

1595 SURVEYS



ONLINE & SOCIAL MEDIA



QUICK COMMENTS



IN DEPTH DISCUSSIONS

- 'The CBD needs to be more of an experience'
- 'Inner city living is hugely important'
- 'The city needs to offer more points of difference'
- 'Maintain a retail focus but the CBD needs to understand its role'

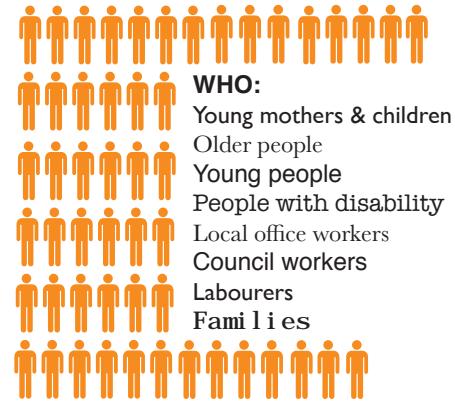


HANDS ON TESTING

Hundreds of people tried out the prototype improvements in Brisbane St Mall & Civic Square

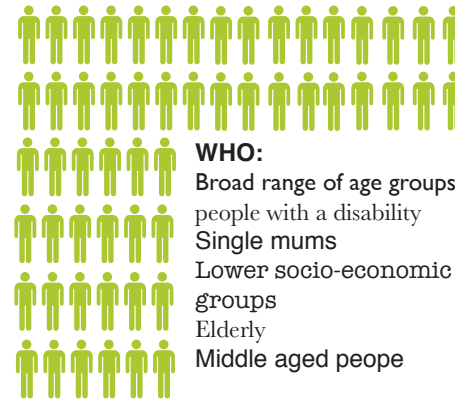


POP UP WORKSHOPS



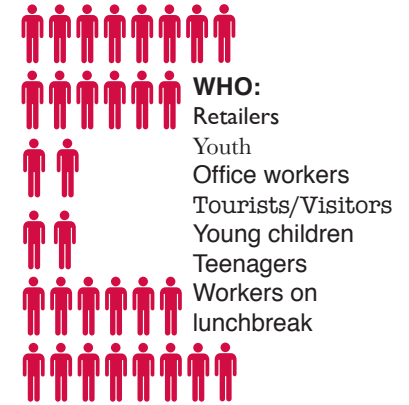
Engaged **90**

CIVIC SQUARE



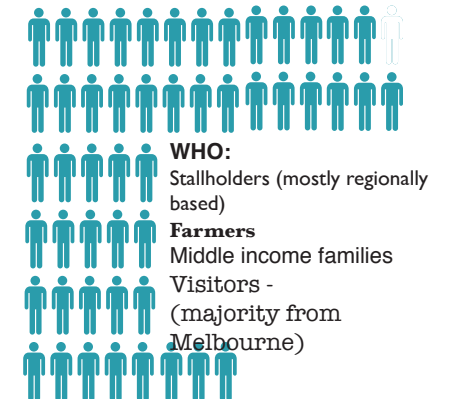
Engaged **138**

BRISBANE ST MALL



Engaged **96**

THE QUADRANT



Engaged **81**

HARVEST MARKET

405 Engaged on street

Feedback from the community engagement process was overwhelmingly positive. Anecdotal feedback from participants indicated that they found it useful to have a range of ways to have a say, as there was always another option. For example, if people were too busy to stop, they could take a postcard and fill in a survey online. In addition, people found the engagement methods refreshing, novel and fun, and indicated that council was thinking outside the square with a fresh approach and it signalled that council wanted to hear from all parts of the community. People thought that providing prototypes to test out changes to city space, created a ‘great feeling’, was ‘creative and beautifying’ and ‘hope there is more to come’.

The success of the engagement methods reflects the careful planning undertaken to map out key stakeholder groups in the community and develop tailored engagement activities to ensure groups with a high stake in the outcomes of the Launceston City Heart Project, but who may not normally have a say, could contribute.

City of Launceston engaged with formal stakeholder groups and organisation from across the community in workshops discussions. This included:

- Businesses & business groups (inviting all Chamber of Commerce and City Prom members)
- Regulatory bodies (including State Growth, NBN, Aurora, Telstra, Heritage Tas., Tas. Water, Tas. Fire, Police, Ambulance, Emergency services etc.)
- Alderman, Executive Management & Council Staff
- council committees (including Tree Advisory, Bike & Pedestrian Advisory, Launceston Heritage Society, Access Advisory and T-BUG)
- Community organisations (including youth, arts and seniors groups, disability groups, LINC)
- Tourism groups
- UTAS staff and students.

Beyond the city-wide engagement activities, CoDesign Studio also engaged with many groups through presentations and group discussions and other individual discussions including:

- Chamber of Commerce, Traders Association, retailers and CityProm
- UTAS staff and students
- Community groups, including community group members coming together from various organisations as part of Reactivate Launceston
- LINC Launceston
- Aldermen, council staff and representatives

A solid basis for moving forward

Overall the volume and diversity of people engaged, including many hard to reach groups, ensures that a broad cross-section of the community is represented in the feedback and the project findings. This provides Council with a solid foundation with which to progress with recommendations for development in this report



Interactive key stakeholder workshop

Engagement findings and CBD recommendations

The results of the engagement process have been analysed to provide City of Launceston and the broader community with a clear way forward to create a stronger CBD and heart for the city.

This way forward is comprised of three key recommendation elements presented in the following sections: Firstly a shared understanding where the CBD is going – **its role and function**; secondly, **the place principles** which will support delivery of the type of CBD the community is seeking; and finally, identifying the specific **precincts** which need to be the focus of development efforts and the **improvements** needed in these locations.

The recommendations presented below stem from analysis of a wide range of feedback, prototyping and site observation and analysis. The detailed findings are presented in the Engagement Findings Report provided in Appendix 2.

2.1 Future role & function of the CBD

Having a shared understanding of the future role and function of the CBD is critical. Decisions about the types of improvements and investments made in a city will flow from and be guided by consideration of whether they support the future city the community wants to achieve.

The role and function of the city presented here clearly illustrated as building upon existing strengths of creativity, abundance, local produce, history and surrounding natural attractions. Overall, the CBD needs to offer a point of difference to distinguish itself from other centres locally and offer unique experiences to draw both locals and visitors.

Four key themes for the direction of the future CBD emerged from the engagement:

1. The CBD needs to be a living space. Inner city living was a strong theme in community feedback. More needs to be done to create, promote and support inner city residential opportunities, to create a livelier city and a bigger CBD population to support the businesses here, and take the CBD beyond being just 9-5. Ultimately a sustainable CBD needs people living and working in it. Inner city living needs to be supported by (and will in turn support) lifestyle elements of the city: outdoor dining, walking to work, coffee culture, social events and ‘a third place’ (community places separate from home and work). Many options for further residential development have been suggested, with strong community support for realising opportunities to make more of underutilised spaces in the CBD, including upper storey of retail as an easy way to achieve mix used use living.

2. A unique and diverse retail centre. The CBD needs to maintain a retail focus but needs to be smart about how it does this and understand its role in the face of new business models. The CBD is a great place to shop, however there are factors reducing the necessity to shop here, including the increase in online – an ease for farmers and regionally based people - and the development of periphery shopping centres within a broader radius the CBD. The CBD needs to differentiate itself.

A strong focus is needed on boutique retail showcasing uniquely local offerings, experience creation and support to attract new business innovators through start-up programs, incentive and innovation partnerships. This offers locals and visitors a unique experience. The CBD needs to support a foundational retail mix to support inner city living, providing everyday needs, such as grocers, bakeries, newsagents, small supermarkets and chemists. Beyond this, the retail mix needs to be complemented by roles supporting lifestyle and experience to create a sustainable direction.

3. A social space supporting liveability. Many comments were made about creating spaces and activities to make the city more social and liveable. Providing places to meet and create connections was seen as vital role, including creating the CBD as a ‘third place’. People sought diversity of social spaces in the CBD, beyond the Mall, include a civic heart in Civic Square, similar to Fed Square in Melbourne, supporting social activities. Shutting off streets to enliven the CBD with day and/or after hours markets and local projects are very popular, as is a walkable and cycleable city for active living. Reinvigorating after-hour activities was a significant un-met role for the CBD.

Spaces for kids with things to play on, spaces for young people and considering needs of an ageing population are all important elements in a well-rounded social city.

4. The CBD as an experience. A key theme, which goes to the heart of the CBD of the future, is that it needs to be an experience. When people visit they want to find something ‘popping’ all of the time and new things to explore so they want to keep coming back. The city needs to offer a range of dining experiences and entertainment. It should be welcoming, offer new and different attractions to draw people, and provide information about what’s on. The city has many spaces with potential, which just need programming and creativity. There is strong focus of new and different food options including restaurants in later hours, on weekends, outdoor dining and food vans to pop up unexpectedly and spice up underutilised parts of the CBD.

Harnessing the future capacity of the city centre in terms of a range of lifestyle choices is key to the sustainability of the city in the future. This needs to be demonstrated through increased liveability – a foundational retail mix, night time economy, connectivity and walkability, a range of housing options within the city heart and a clear strategic, innovative approach to retail densification. The city needs to be courageous in its approach to mixed use planning; residential and commercial flexibility in planning, temporary appropriation of space and flexibility within permit structures. This is key to attracting more people and increasing tourism in the area whilst also retaining local families and young people.

The unique historical aspects of the CBD area also part of the experience and something to be enhanced and capitalised on. For example through introducing a historical trail or revitalising and lighting up beautiful building facades.



2.2 Place principles



1. Local and unique

Launceston is unique, from its local retail and family histories and heritage, to its range of community groups developing projects from the ground up. Prioritise these and develop innovative capacity to support the producers, retailers and entrepreneurs – in all the forms that it comes. Create opportunities and CBD spaces that support local retail, producers, stories and ideas, and shine a light on its beautiful heritage features.



2. Design for flexible use

Design spaces for versatility and multiple use. Develop solutions for seating, entertainment, programming and retail vacancies that are flexible, changeable and moveable and perhaps only temporary. Think about how solutions can be responsive to seasons and playful change. This engages the community and provides access for community groups and social entrepreneurs to use new spaces.



3. Meeting and socialising: rain hail or shine

Key to greater utilisation of public space is the development of infrastructure, particularly small-scale infrastructure, that creates weather protected areas that can be utilised in winter or summer, in the rain or in the sunshine. Places to meet, interact and encounter, where enjoyment and activities are free so they're for everyone.

The seven Launceston City Heart Place Principles have been distilled from across all the feedback, conversations and observations feeding into the Launceston City Heart Project.

They underpin delivery of the type of CBD the community is seeking, providing a toolkit of principles to guide the type of improvements needed.



4. Greenery in all shapes and forms

Look for large or small greenery opportunities that will beautify the city and soften spaces – flower pots, planters, hanging gardens, vertical gardens, vegie patches and trees – a range of options that distinguish different precincts within the city.



5. Healthy and connected

Make the most of human scale streets and laneways Launceston offers to explore, make the CBD a wonderful setting for walking. Connect the city to its surrounding suburbs through greater pedestrian and bike access.



6. Creative and innovative

Do it differently, utilise design thinking, community innovation and new enterprise to create solutions - take a different approach and make it a bold experiment. Try new ideas out, encourage community innovation by establishing local enterprise incubators and opportunity for artists. Make every laneway a place to explore and solve CBD problems with novel solutions.



7. Mixed use planning

Consolidate and support a range of living, working and retailing options into the centre. Provide flexible and mixed use planning to encourage a diversity of use and densification, inviting people into the city and support new ways of living and working in it.

2.3 Improvements and activities: city wide

A number of improvements were identified as relevant to the whole CBD.

The following recommendations are critical to address city-wide issues:

- Required **small-scale infrastructure** was identified as seating and shelter (including comfortable and safe meeting places) wayfinding, toilets, toilet signs and CBD lighting (for safety and also to highlight areas of interest) and for those unfamiliar with the CBD, as well as a better range of information services for visitors. From the communities perspective it was these low-cost, high-impact elements rather than major redevelopments that were seen as important for their everyday use of the CBD.
- Refreshing the **overall urban design** look of the CBD through for example landscaping, street furniture, art and lighting.
- More and different type of **greenery** through the CBD.
- **Activation of commercial vacancies and residential and other use of upper storeys** Short term activation through community groups and innovators was popular - utilising empty shopfronts and vacant upper levels to provide for Launceston's creative community as exhibition, studio and office space. Strong support was demonstrated for creating more residential uses of upper stores as well. Creating flexibility within the planning scheme plus building and heritage legislation, or other incentives to make renovating buildings viable.
- Develop a body of design research that explores the current states of the buildings, ownership opportunity and precedent projects for the development of a residential heritage precinct, for example in parts of George, Brisbane and York Streets as well as Charles and Cameron
- **Better connectivity and mobility.** More pedestrianisation in the CBD and beautification of streets to make walking and exploring the CBD attractive. Safe and comfortable bus stops, more bike links into the CBD and overall restructuring vehicle, public transport, bicycle and pedestrian access and flow to get the balance right.

- **Information and wayfinding** for locals and visitors helping people to get around and explore. Providing points of interest between attractors and destinations are key.
- Think about **night-time use**, making the CBD more welcoming and brighten it up light and warmth. Allow temporary use of spaces after hours to make night-time spaces including for young people, especially with food vans in under utilised parts of the CBD.
- **Interesting and interactive** elements including light and sound installations, interactive attractions, public art and installations that rotate to keep the city alive with experiences.
- Bring out and highlight **heritage features**, including lighting on key buildings.
- Creative urban design or generating a **mix of use** in areas of perceived negative use.

Parking is a problematic topic in Launceston, as it is in many places. Given the volume and mix of views, it warrants further attention. People expressed frustration that parking was inadequate and expensive in the CBD, while others suggested that expectations that people can park directly outside where they are going in the CBD need to shift. Feedback also indicated that people compare parking in the CBD with the ease of parking at local shopping centres, reinforcing that there might be unrealistically high expectations for the CBD. Creating more parking is also in conflict with another strong desire people had for the CBD. It is felt strongly that a great feature of Launceston in its walkability and people suggested greater pedestrianisation and making the CBD more pleasant rather than traffic dominated was vital. Creating more and cheaper parking would conflict with this goal.

Additionally, previously completed Council strategic documents indicate the need to carefully consider car parking in the CBD, for example the Launceston Public Spaces and Public Life document prepared by Gehl Architects.

As a way forward, action can be taken to make the most of existing parking, for example through working with partners to develop an innovative smartphone application for vacant parking or more convenient payment options and potentially more incentive public and private parking validation schemes. Parking accessibility for elderly and disable people is critical and needs to be adequately supplied. Another creative idea suggested was providing car parks on the CBD periphery, providing good pedestrian links into the CBD and limiting parking in the centre. Beyond this, the other negative impacts of increasing the supply of cheap parking on Launceston need to be further explored and understood.

The current parking supply and cost in Launceston could be audited and benchmarked against other leading cities to set the appropriate bar. In addition, creative, leading practice should be explored which helps cities make the most from parking and create new benefits parking space, such as pocket parks or making clear what parking revenue is used for like the 'Change for Charity Meter Program' in the USA. Additional community dialogue on this issue is required.

Creative solutions for bus stop design and parking meters



Photo credit: Scott Beale laughingsquid.com



Photo credit: www.bilinguallibrarian.com

2.4 Improvements and activities: precinct specific

Analysis of the community feedback collected in Phase 1 of the LCH project, revealed that two sites in the CBD that were the focus of most community feedback: Civic Square and Brisbane St Mall. Both sites were felt to have untapped potential and could play a greater role in making the CBD stronger and more vibrant. CoDesign Studio and the City of Launceston LCH Project Team worked in conjunction with UTAS architecture students to deliver a series of prototypes to address and test out the community ideas put forward for these sites. This provided further insight into the two and prompted more detailed recommended changes.

The sections below provide design and place-making recommendations from the in depth feedback from the prototype at Civic Square and Brisbane Street Mall.

Following this are key recommendations for other areas of the CBD that were identified in feedback as priorities. These are:

1. Quadrant and Laneways
2. The Avenue
3. St John Street
4. Kingsway
5. Brisbane Street West
6. Charles Street
7. George Street
8. Cameron Street
9. Dechaineux carpark

2.4.1 Prototyped precincts

Prototype 1: Civic Square

Civic Square was one of two highest identified areas by the community as being in need of revitalisation. Feedback centred on place activation, flexible use of the space, increased public amenity and small-scale infrastructure.

Feedback

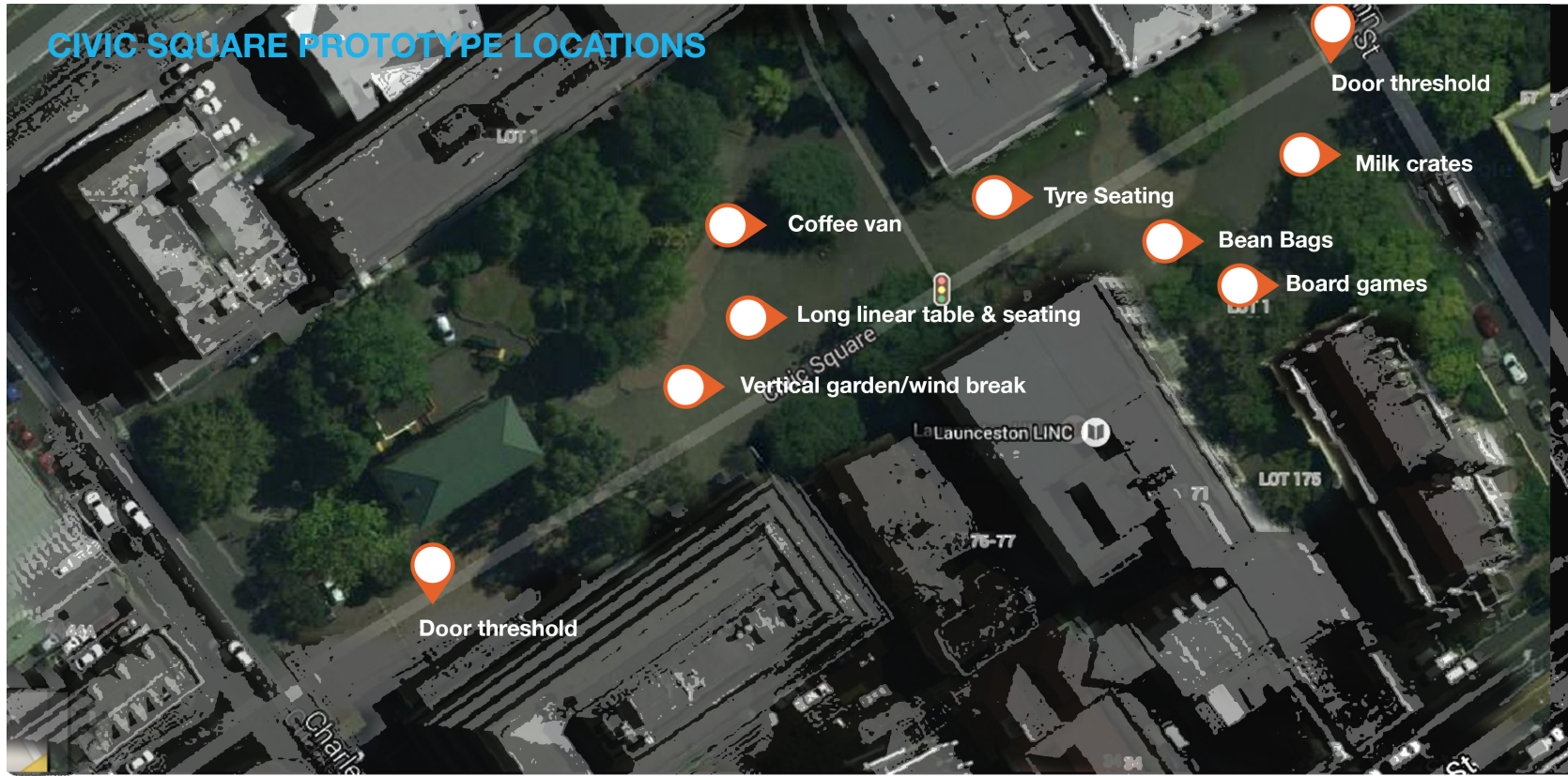
The issues and aspects identified by the community clearly focused on:

- Civic Square is under utilised, a thoroughfare, it is open and people feel on show
- This is an open space with little to encourage people to linger and interact
- However, many groups within the community visit the precinct to visit LINC, pay bills and visit the council building and a range of office workers use and pass through the space
- There is a lack of community programming and entertainment, events and activation within the precinct
- There needs to be more interaction with destinations such as LINC Launceston
- There is a lack of seating and weather-protected areas within the Square.

Prototyping

To test out solutions identified by the community, the prototypes (documented in the figure below) were installed and feedback on their effectiveness gathered.

Figure 3: Civic Square prototype locations



Place Recommendations

Based on this feedback and findings from the prototyping phase, Civic Square should be developed as a social and civic hub; a versatile place - which many saw functioning like Fed Square in Melbourne. It should be a flexible space use to support a range of community, civic, and entertainment uses and a social hub. It should be redesigned interact with the key destinations here and provide for families and office workers who use this as their outdoor space in the city particularly as a lunch spot. The space should provide interest to make people linger and create nooks for people to take a break.

Recommendations to activate this area:

- Supporting community and creative use. Events, cultural programming, civic ceremonies, community open-air music and outdoor cinema. Provide support services such as PA system, space to advertise events and activities. Also explore the addition of a screen and small stage
- Allow food vans to access and activate this area at certain times to provide fresh and new food options (and free marketing to attract crowds)
- Create a 'pop up back yard' drawing on various community groups skills, gardening and workshops as a temporary activation of the space (this was also suggested for Dechineaux carpark)

Design recommendations for Civic Square are:

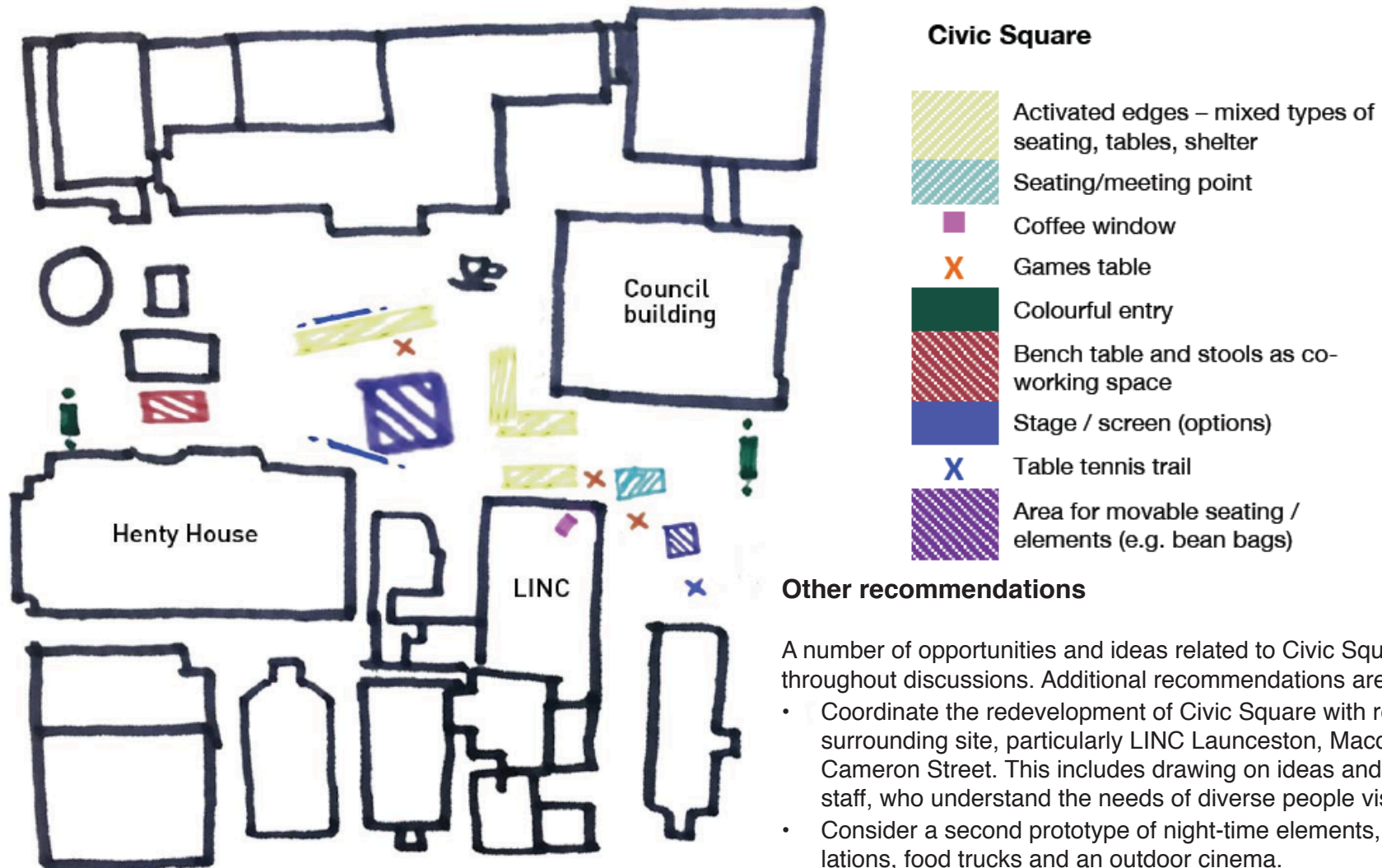
- Design places for children (especially pre-school) to play and climb, incorporating more elements like stacking blocks, tactile elements (e.g. astroturf & water fountain) and colour
- New elements should be removable/movable to one hand enable the open space area to get more use and feel less open, but on the other also allow public events to utilise the full extent of the square. Also modular elements can be moved to follow the sun and add to the flexibility of the space
- Further activate edge brickwork around the site as seating by adding tables, chairs, games tables, barriers (e.g. planter boxes) to make people

feel less exposed /on display and create protected nooks for parents and kids, office worker lunch spots and for people to take a break

- Provide a seating area with back support and comfort
- Make the space interactive and regularly change it – add in playful elements like sand in summer and a lock up container on site with bean bags or deck chairs for nice weather
- Increase interaction and amenity related to LINC:
 - Provide 'reading bean bags' from LINC reception on nice days as well as potentially games for young children e.g. giant jigsaw, particularly on Rock n Rhyme days, and little book swap library
 - Explore addition of a coffee/tea lounge at the LINC
 - Use the sunny corner of LINC for tables, chairs and child-friendly elements
- Temporary/moveable shelter and wind breaks that are flexible and can be used and adapted seasonally
- Explore the introduction of a screen. This could be trailed through using a blow up screen to host an open-air cinema or sports event. The screen should support high quality entertainment and its use should draw on place principles set out in this report. For example it could display local art or being used as a light installation at night to make the space brighter or a night cinema which also lights up the space as a security measure
- Incorporate more colour and greenery into the design
- Provide outdoor educational activities for parents and kids to do together that would encourage using their imagination, including games
- Consider installing an outdoor table tennis table or other small form of recreational activity for office workers as well as young people and kids, this could be temporarily trialled over summer and decorated by local artists
- Consider addition of fairy lights in focal trees e.g. outside LINC
- Seek out opportunities to integrate the design with proposed changes to Macquarie House
- Involve UTAS in the design and installation process and seek input from community groups in process to understand requirements.

The key design recommendations are captured in the figure 4 below:

Figure 4: Design recommendations for Civic Square



Prototype 2: Brisbane St Mall

Brisbane Street Mall was the other highest identified area by the community. This was due to the site being the most used precinct within the city and a pedestrian thoroughfare with close proximity to the bus interchange and a key central destination with popular retail offering and connectivity to other areas of the CBD.

Feedback

Issues identified in the Brisbane St Mall were:

- Out-dated seating and treatments of the public amenity (including poles, streetlights, shelter) and cluttered
- There were negative perceptions of certain groups and behaviour considered antisocial in the mall
- The lack of weather-protected areas within the Mall - for wind cold and rain - however wind being the most often identified
- The lack of food and coffee options (particularly cheaper options) within the Mall, to create a buzz and street life
- Nothing to welcome or attract people here at night

Prototyping

To test out solutions identified by the community, the prototypes documented in the figure below were installed and feedback on their effectiveness gathered.



Phase 2 - Prototyping in Brisbane St Mall

Figure 5: Brisbane St Mall Prototype locations



Place recommendations

Based on careful analysis of community feedback and prototyping, the recommendations for this Brisbane Street Mall are:

- Refresh the look of the mall, updating elements and materials and reducing physical and visual clutter. Include greenery to soften the space and lighting to make it more welcoming.
- A visitor information area or kiosk, for example, at the St John Street end of the mall is critical, along with other wayfinding and community/what's on information. For example small screens to advertise events and activities situated at each end of the mall. Also better directional signage to public toilets and baby change facilities.
- Provide a diversity of seating that is comfortable and offers places to relax. Design in different arrangements for different experiences – for individuals and small clusters for groups - with differing heights and tables and seating types:
 - Provide alcove seating in the sunny prototyped location at the southeastern corner at the St John Street end as a place to wait, read, check messages or enjoy the sun.
 - 'People watching' seats that are comfortable and easy to get up and down from.
 - Consider stools and high tables with newspapers and coffee or for using the free wifi
 - Games boards and lower seating.
- Refresh the playground equipment for kids to play, replacing the current sculpture. Design the playground to offer something for small children and larger kids through a range of hands on fun. Position seating that allows parents clear eye sight lines to children playing on the playground.
- Windbreaks at each end (and possibly in the middle) of the Mall to deal with prevailing winds, make sure the wind tunnels are properly identified and design developed accordingly.
- Encourage people to meander and traverse the Mall, for example through diagonal cross over points and sight lines to commonly accessed destinations across the mall.

- Create a lively atmosphere that attracts different groups of people.
 - Install games tables / a lockup-able games module. This could be moved between the Mall on weekends and Civic Square on weekdays.
 - Create a pleasant atmosphere at night-time, with music, lighting, outdoor dining/coffee and food vans.
 - Install community pianos that could be used by a wide range of age groups
 - Encourage a great local acts to busk, for example through allowing them to sell CDs or other programming
- Consider the most appropriate location for various activities, rather than necessarily duplicating across all areas
- Eateries mean people and street life. During the day and at night encourage more outdoor food and drink providers. Trialling food vans in evenings was very popular. Explore providing a coffee cart on weekends at the eastern end of the Mall.
- Increase passive surveillance and attract a broader range of uses to reduce any antisocial behaviour and shift perceptions of the mall, including provide activities and places for young people to enjoy.
- Increase connectivity to The Mall through the laneways and arcades as well as pedestrian links at each end of the Mall. Create new access points where possible.
- Redesign the current shelter to provide a level of intimacy under it.

The key design recommendations are captured in the Figure 6 below.

Other recommendations

- Further engage the businesses in Brisbane Street Mall as the concepts for the space are refined. There are some perceptions the design is already set. Consider providing another stage of consultation through providing designs and maps as an exhibition within the Mall.

Figure 6: Design recommendations for Brisbane St Mall



2.4.2 Other precincts

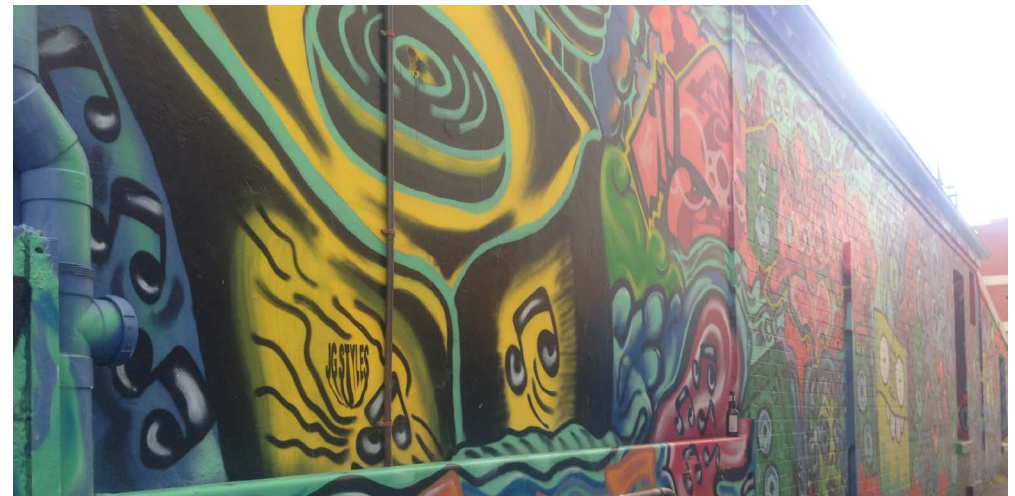
1. Quadrant & Laneways

People like many elements of the Quadrant, which could be built upon. The main focus however is realising the significant potential of the laneways, which could be exploited further. The main themes for this precinct were connectivity and creativity.

Recommendations for this area are:

- Encourage businesses and property owners to open up to the laneways and new business opportunities where possible - without their support it will not happen!
- Develop the laneways as connections through to the Quadrant and the Avenue, and make them places to explore through wayfinding, beautification and greenery, in particular reactivate Dicky Whites Lane. Utilise hanging pots, pot plants and adding greenery to the upper storey and throughout the laneways. Hanging light sculptures throughout the laneways to increase safety and open these up to those using the city. Develop a laneways project as a competition for local artists, design students and community groups to respond to be collaboratively worked on with Council. Designate one lane for street art.
- Consider using elements of the streetscape treatment from the Quadrant throughout the laneways
- Light up beautiful heritage architecture, as a part of a lighting strategy throughout the CBD.
- Continue with the live music in the area, consider a small stage
- A family friendly twilight market in the Quadrant mid week to encourage people to visit the city at night – partner with the Farmers Market
- Utilise the vacant newsagency (as it has been vacant for a long time) as a community engagement hub for ongoing projects as part of the Launceston City Heart, exhibition space for design projects and competition entrants
- Examine and draw on existing work and ideas by UTAS students in relation to the laneways

- Assess the pavement for any issues for elderly / disability access
- Support CityProm to develop the idea of installing a hanging installation of umbrellas in a laneway and future programming of other laneway installations.



Launceston street art



Retailer street beautification

2. The Avenue

The Avenue is a well-liked part of the CBD and thought to be functioning well. The strip is considered 'cosy and busy' and attractive with a good diversity of shops. The area was well utilised and illustrates a successful design of a shared use zone. As a lovely area of the city, along with the nearby Quadrant, it should be developed by maximising its existing strengths.

Recommendations include:

- Increasing the night-time offerings within this area by supporting restaurants, particularly outdoor dining, which could help to address the limit options in the CBD after hours
- Consider addition of a pocket park in place of one parking spot to create a pause and meeting point along this strip
- Explore opportunities for inner city living here in close proximity to such good amenities
- Monitor and address any unsafe pedestrian crossing points.
- Ensure footpaths are not overly cluttered to keep the foot traffic flowing.

3. St John Street

This street is defined by difficulties with the bus interchange, the width of pavements and the divisive issue of whether cars should be allowed down the street. Detailed investigation of options for the bus stops in the area are currently being undertaken.

Recommendations for this area are:

- Ensure bus stops are in suitable locations which do not result in decreased accessibility to the CBD or less safe environments to wait for buses.
- Creative urban design solutions to reduce conflict between uses, including, for example, widened footpaths.
- Creative design of bus stops, drawing in the place principle provided. For example consider incorporating additional functionality into stop design such as a public book share or laptop table

4. Kingsway

Based on the number and range of creative ideas for Kingsway suggested in the engagement process, the potential of this strip could be further explored. The overall vision for this street emerging is as arts and new enterprise/ boutique area, used for flexible pop up and creative uses.

Initial recommendations to explore are:

- improve lighting on Kingsway, to address safety concerns.
- trial street closure from 4/5pm one night per week, linking to cinema events
- motivate existing building owners and businesses to have an outdoor theme, paint buildings and open up buildings to the street. Create laneways to Charles Street where possible and use the back of Charles St businesses
- investigate the current tenure and retail mix here and determine feasibility of options suggested.

5. Brisbane Street West

Brisbane Street West provides a key connector into the CBD, a link to nearby educational institutions and home to a number of key destinations.

Recommendations for this location are:

- improvements to make the street more attractive, in particular wider footpaths and add seating / meeting points near key destinations such as the cinema
- additional bike parking at the western edge
- access pedestrian safety issues at crossing to cinema and lolly shop
- explore creative new uses for Cuisine Lane to address safety issues and improved access

6. Charles Street

Small streetscape changes are recommended here, including:

- more street furniture along Charles Street - this could be developed as an extension of the Brisbane Street Mall street furniture project
- consider using easy to install hanging wall gardens within the street on vacant shopfronts to beautify the street whilst waiting for new tenants.
- Improved mobility and accessibility options should also be considered here including pedestrian access along Charles Street and to the Mall, and bike connections the length of Charles Street.

7. George Street

Issues identified in George Street were vacant shopfronts and opportunities to utilise upper storey spaces for residential uses as well as inadequate parking towards this end of the city. There was a call to develop this as a precinct for ‘hipper’ residents as a niche lifestyle precinct.

Recommendations for this area are to:

- extending free wifi
- encourage the conversion of upstairs spaces for residential uses and invite creative industry to utilise this area
- support this area as a dining and lifestyle precinct, and consider residential opportunities.

8. Dechaineux carpark (also known as the ‘Myer carpark’)

This space was considered as having potential for alternative uses. It is recommended that feasibility of new uses be explored with the property owners including temporary uses (markets, community pop up spaces), creating an axis between Civic Square and the Mall and broader development feasibility.

9. Cameron Street

Cameron Street is considered a key connector – to City Park, the Gorge and QVMAG, with opportunities for city living with residential development.

It is recommended that:

- bike lanes continue along Cameron St connecting to the heart of the CBD be developed
- Cameron Street East be made more inviting with the link to City Park enhanced and beautified.
- Cameron Street West links to the Gorge and QVMAG be enhanced and explore the potential of an outdoor gallery, as an extension of QVMAG to Civic Square as a wayfinding trail.

Outside of the CBD

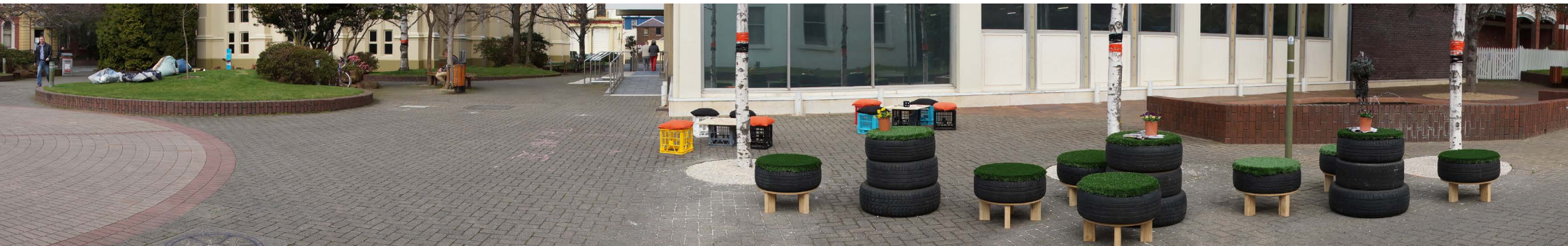
While outside the scope of the Launceston City Heart Project boundaries, a number of ideas outside the CBD were provided in feedback. These are:

- City Park & Royal Park: more programming such as extending the season for music in the park, exploring a satellite MOFO program and providing family-friendly cafes and restaurants with outdoor seating within the park.
- River precinct: Development along the river precinct was encouraged, including residential development and Boag’s Brewery precinct was also seen as having potential.

2.5 Improvement priorities

The feedback gathered through the LCH Project serves to refine the LCC priority areas for redevelopment. Based on analysis of all feedback the clear precinct priorities are Civic Square, Brisbane Street Mall and the CBD laneways, particularly connecting to the Quadrant and the Avenue. Next up, building on the existing strengths of the Quadrant, the Avenue and George Street should be considered.

Beyond this, improvements often of a similar type are suggested across a number of locations – for example streetscape improvements at a number of locations. Sites with greatest potential to deliver on the Place Principles should be prioritised. Adaptive reuse of underutilised buildings is the main priority investigation project emerging from the project.



Stakeholder perspectives of precinct improvements

2.6 Additional recommendations

The delivery of the Launceston City Heart Project, involved discussions with many groups, individuals and stakeholders about ideas and opportunities for further collaboration and coordination as the LCH Project moves forward. These are captured below.

- Work with UTAS students to consider their design recommendations in the redevelopment of both Brisbane Street Mall and Civic Square masterplanning process.
- Draw on other UTAS projects, which relate to recommendations provided. For example detail work on the laneways.
- Sustainability within the city was not a key priority identified but an important part of modern city planning and design, a focus on what sustainability means within the Launceston CBD is an important follow on project.
- Prototype ideas for other key precincts throughout the city, including night-time uses of key precincts.
- Place-making evaluation and engagement at other key shopping destinations within Greater Launceston.
- Carefully considered further work and engagement on 'polarised' issues is advised such as parking.
- Develop a partnership program with the tourism strategy. There is a strong alignment with the branding identified in the tourism strategy (Eclectic, Boutique, Playful and Quietly Proud) and the Place Principles.
- Utilise the Launceston City Heart branding throughout further projects – this was popular and well recognised.
- Generate further media coverage linking the engagement with on the ground works so that people see their comments converted into actions. This will build good will towards council and increase willingness to engage and contribute to the future projects.
- Further coordination with CityProm to ensure consistent direction, messaging and programming for the CBD is achieved.

2.7 Next steps

In delivering the priority recommendations identified in this report, the following is recommended:

- Undertake a masterplanning exercise to deliver the priority improvements and actions identified by the community
- Create a community consultation over concepts developed to discuss the opportunities generated through the project
- Identify projects that can go ahead quickly and perform cost/social benefit analysis
- For complex sites, carefully assess options and ensure that residents are well educated about any potential changes.



Civic Square Prototype

Conclusion

The engagement process has directly reached well over 2,000 people through pop-ups, prototyping, workshops, surveys and various other community engagement activities successfully brought many ideas to the surface and located them within the CBD.

Analysis of feedback and key sites has revealed a consistent vision for the future CBD and the changes needed to achieve it. Three key elements have emerged and are recommended to underpin the way forward.

1. A strong future direction for the CBD: consistent across the feedback, emerged to distinguish the CBD and offer unique experiences, to draw both locals and visitors and support the ongoing sustainability of Launceston's centre. In summary, the future CBD is:

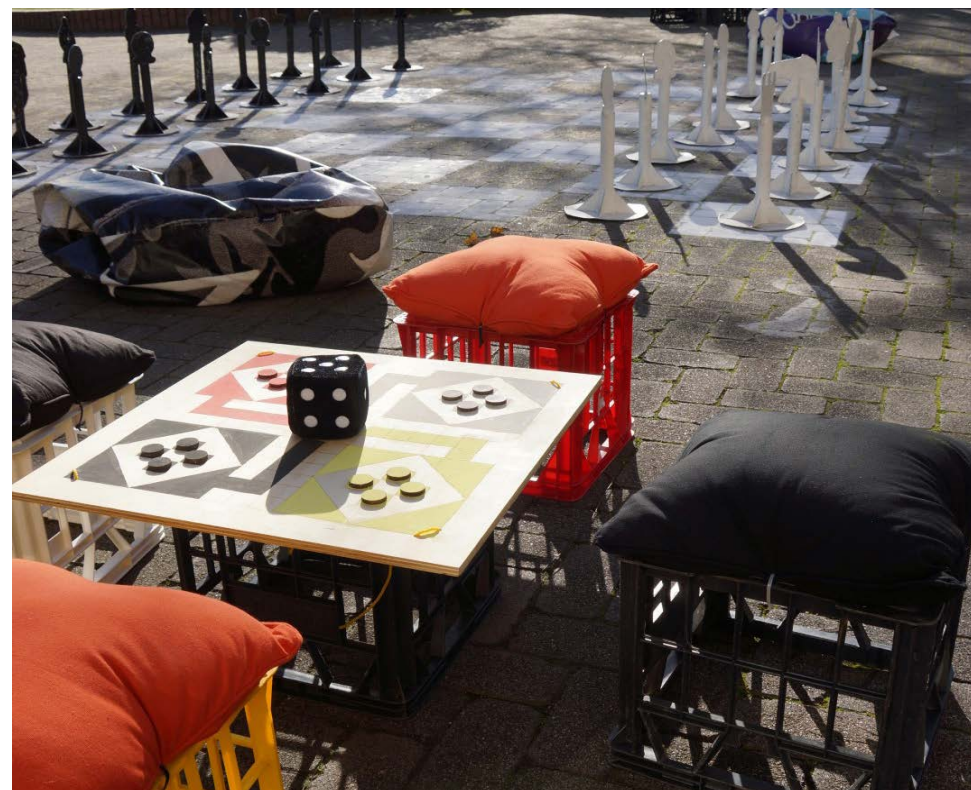
- A living space
- A unique and diverse retail centre
- A social space supporting liveability
- An experience destination.

2. Seven carefully crafted Place Principles: are set out to deliver on this vision and the improvement for the CBD identified: Local and unique; Design for flexible use, Meeting and socialising: rain hail or shine; Greenery in all shapes and forms; Healthy and connected; Creative and innovative; and Mixed use planning.

3. Priorities for immediate redevelopment and action: Civic Square including Cameron Street axis (between Royal Park and City Park), Brisbane Street Mall and the CBD laneways are set out as the key priorities for major work, followed by city-wide improvements across a number of precincts. A specific project on adaptive reuse of underutilised buildings is recommended as a priority.

The Launceston City Heart Project illustrated the level of energy and passion residents and businesses have for their city centre, there are many opportunities (both short and long term) to develop the city centre to be a thriving heart for greater Launceston, that celebrates the old, engages with the innovative and is a great place to live and work.

The project has also uncovered many passionate groups with the community and opportunities for further constructive partnerships, collaboration and coordination. These should be nurtured to create a uniquely Launceston CBD.



Appendices

The following documents are attached:

Appendix 1: Engagement Findings Report

Appendix 2: ERMS Community Survey Summary Report

