

# **PUBLIC CONSULTATION ON THE DRAFT PRESTON MARKTE PRECINCT C182dare**

Dear Sir/Madam,

On behalf on my immediate family who have lived in Preston for 36 years and have had a very long experience with the Preston Market.

My extended family have 15 residences in Preston and we have lived in the suburb for decades.

I write only on behalf of the following reference numbers

Our concerns about the development, are as follows:

## **On the issue of the proposed changes to the Market and how we should preserve it:**

- It is reasonable to expect that our community have access to affordable produce that is direct from farms, especially as it has served (to date) a largely newly arrived migrant community who are under intense economic pressures as they settle in Australia. This has been the story of my family and we continue to rely on Preston Market as the **go-to affordable food destination**.
- **The area has a largely migrant elderly community and with the increased pressure of rising expenses the Market has buffered the cost of living for many of our communities elderly.** It is not a fair exchange (with the private consortium), for those that have sustained the market economically through decades of patronage to suddenly loose access to this affordability. This would be a grave hardship for our community.
- The stallholders should be guaranteed protection from rental hikes which is reasonably foreseeable from such a large scale redevelopment and this would have a devastating economic flow on effect on our community (increased pricing) now and in the future that would deprive us of affordable produce and services within proximity to our residences, that has the potential to cause harm to our overall physical and mental wellbeing.
- Further it is well documented that having access to fresh produce is a good indicator of population health with reduced medical bills to the public purse. We do not want 'food deserts' in our inner communities where access to fresh produce can only be acquired through the monopolies of large multinationals who's only mission is to serve their shareholders with little regard for community, long term sustainability

and forcing producers into exploitative supply contracts, not to mention the enormous waste due to produce not meeting their 'standardised standards'. The Market provides for access diversity, for this reason any reduction to the Market should be non-negotiable now or in the future, it must be **perpetually preserved and guaranteed**.

- The Market should be protected from franchise operations - we already have Northland and High Street for that, it is NOT reasonable to replicate Northland - all franchises should be excluded from the future of the Market. What is overlooked often is that the Market unique value proposition is diversity, sustainability and wholesome food and services - the antithesis of Northland and other *Westfield-esque* locations. When Northland opened the Market and High Street business were greatly affected but they weathered the economic hit and found their irreplaceable essence.
- For a successful Market our stallholders should be part of the **co-design of the make up and configuration of the re-vamped Market**, their input should be from first-principles as good human design principals dictate, as they are more intimately aware of how to best deliver the service to the community to make for a win-win solution, and given their service to our community, their right to their livelihood should be preserved and enhanced. To protect their future the stallholders should not have to bear the economic loss during the construction, shutdown or re-location, the private owners are likely to benefit enormously from this redevelopment that would easily eclipse the gross incomes of all the stalls combined.

### **On the issue of overhead development of the Market**

- The great marketplaces of the world - Kapala Carshi (Turkey), Hamadiya Market (Syria), Venice, Rome, China, Vietnam, that my family has visited do not have any buildings above their Markets. This is an ancient wisdom that is lost in the hyper over developed Western world with a myopic obsession at extracting 'value' from any conceivable thing. Food and community are sacred, Duke University in their breakthrough longitudinal study, documented how having a 'ritual' is essential to having an overall better quality of life. The Market is a ritual for many many people, consciously and unconsciously and food is sacred too many - consciously and unconsciously. The ancients must know something about life that we in our Modernity should learn from - our food nourishes us both physically and spiritually, blocking and imposing concrete slabs above our 'food bowls' impacts morphic resonance that is likely to lead to a general *un-wellness* over the long term. The great markets of the world have open vistas to the heavens - our Preston **Market has this at the moment and it should be preserved as such**. If this metaphysical argument is non palatable to a materialists view point, perhaps one can take a lesson from the current

pandemic and be impressed at how important it is to have well open ventilated spaces that no amount of artificial, energy guzzling air controllers, could ever replicate, as we enter the era of more frequent pandemics. The rational argument I present from overhead development is that it is in keeping with the good international practice (ancient and new) and with so much of our natural spaces made *un-natural* from over-development it is reasonable that we have a space that is still free from imposed over development especially where our nurturing is concerned.

### **On moving the market:**

Markets globally are at the centre of any development with other services around them (as per our experience with international ones), it is quite illogical to relegate them to edge possibly for some expedient reason. My biggest concern is that moving the market to the edge of Cramer Street it would force traffic congestion all the way up to Plenty Rd and up to Gilbert Road - traffic congestion it is currently significant (pre- Preston Station upgrade). The move also does not account for future development of Melbourne Polytechnic's Cramer Street buildings (Q, R, S) that are end of life and projected to be redeveloped in the next 10 years. So within 10 years Cramer Street, West of High Street, would the brunt of traffic and reduce quality of access for residence in this area. As an example Victoria Market Peel Street, is highly congested from Thursdays: before the market opens stall holders constantly move produce in their forklifts, loading vans/trucks double park, and they usually blocked the Street, this was my experience as I stalled in traffic to drive through Peel Street to South Melbourne. Unlike Peel Street Cramer is much much more narrow and not a thoroughfare, it is reasonable to expect that traffic will be excessively high with bottlenecks and much congestion that would make access to us residents very difficult. **Maintaining the Market in the centre would absorb traffic ACTIVITY within the Precinct through parking, bike paths, walking tracks as it currently stands - as long term residents of Preston this is a reasonable expectation.**

### **On the markets cultural and heritage significance:**

As mentioned above the Market is a ritual for our residents near and far and it is very important to our cultural migrant community - of which my family is one and we are 15 households in Preston. Culturally it serves to support our communities' physical and mental wellbeing through connection and reduced stress to access produce and services. It is reasonable to expect that the new redevelopment continue to nurture our *current* and *future* communities' all rounded wellness needs.

In terms of heritage - not all old things are bad that they must be totally torn down and replaced with something new. As custodians of the present

we have a duty to future generations to preserve the historical significance of the Market and the migrant community that nurtured into being. Tearing it down will tear down all the historical context and erase our stories with it. It will no longer be the place where my dad bought 25 kg flour at the Greek store to make pasta or bought *pastaderma* bread at the Italian store or where he got fresh fish at his favourite Vietnamese fishmonger or ricotta from the Croatian deli. Whilst we are for continuous improvements I am concerned at this wholesale *let's tear down, replace and remove approach that is reflected in the design*. With so much sophisticated technology and sensitive architectural development it is reasonable to expect that we have a duty to do our best. **Why is it that our true migrant stories are being erased and replaced by a gentrified narrative that is foreign to the origin of the place?**

### **On the height of the buildings:**

The proposed 20 level building is a massive over-development for Preston. Taking as an example Box Hill that has 20 storey building but which is in the lush Eastern suburbs - that suburb is 14 km away from CBD, Preston is 7km, you would have to go out towards Thomastown/Lalor to get to an equivalent distance from the CBD. The primary issue is that Preston is an inner city suburb that cannot cope with such **highly concentrated density development** without adverse effects on the quality of surrounding areas, it is the concentration of development that is an issue and not the development per se. Box Hill can absorb the high concentration because it is on the outer suburbs not inner and there are substantial thoroughfares for traffic movement. There is significantly more green space in Box Hill and surrounding suburbs compared to Preston and the streets and housing in Box Hill are substantially larger compared to Preston. Preston has historically been a working man's suburb and this is reflected in the type of housing in the area - small blocks, narrow streets - a reasonable reason why such highly concentrated development is inappropriate.

From a macro view of the suburb: the development of a 20 storey building is excessive. It is not in keeping with the rest of High Street which has modest buildings of up to 6-8 stories. High Street's development is much more dispersed and offers better quality of life and access to amenities. We should encourage more diversity not concentrated megaliths.

It is also reasonable to expect that some time in the future, the High Street portion (between Murray Road and Cramer Street) will be re-developed and if approval for 20 storey building at Market goes ahead this would set a precedent that would be hard argue against. From this perspective 20 storey buildings between Murray Road, St Georges Road, Cramer Street and High Street would make the area **un-transversable** and pushes the problem to future generations.

An argument could be presented that there would be more shop/working spaces that would open up because of the Precinct - but this is already catered for along the length of High Street and more multi-purpose developments with businesses at the ground floors and dwellings above vs a highly concentrated centre with reasonably expect poor access and highly congested with traffic to and from a commerce centre: such a precinct exists and it is called Northland.

Further in light of Covid and the projected likelihoods of more frequent pandemics - there is no reasonable soundness as to why we should increase the concentration of living spaces in one small block that potentially transmit contagions rapidly.

Given the location of the site - it is reasonable that buildings do not exceed 10 storeys.



### **On making apartments affordable to those with low incomes**

For a highly concentrated and highly over developed site - at least 20% should be earmarked for low income earners. This is to ensure that our community is not priced out of Preston and that we have enough economic diversity for a sustained economy (eg we need nurses, police, teachers, drivers and childcare workers). It is not unreasonable to expect that if the Precinct could easily price out low income earners which would force out of suburb workers travelling to the Precinct for work that would defeat sustainability goals: economic or environmental, and make equity in the suburb worse. An often overlooked factor is that women over the age of 50 are the most likely sub category demographic to be most impacted by economic in-equity and a growing population of need. A 20% cap would

allow for a greater diversity of low income people to have access to this community heart. We should look at the 20% cap as an investment in our community and not as a cost - the benefits over the long term, as documented, would outweigh the initial loss. We build resilient communities through this.

### **On Design of the precinct**

As a community the Market is the heart of Preston, box like concrete slabs (corner of St Georges and Murray Road) are not respectful of the significant of the place. This is an opportunity for Preston to have a world class design that pushes the boundaries of sustainability, open space and community wellness. It is too important to be left to mediocre architects that optimise for immediate revenue and push the problem to future generations. I am concerned about the 10% open space - it is inadequate for the level of concentrated residential and office development proposed. There would be too much competition for such a small quotient between residents and office workers - so instead of it being serene there would be an element of stress from not being able to find a quiet place to rest. Increasingly as people work from home - the resident and office worker vying for the same open space would be significant - not to mention the thoroughfare of customers visiting the Market. I would expect at least 21% as a reasonable standard for open space otherwise Preston Oval and Zwar park would bear the brunt of people looking for spaces to relax and exercise. I think it would be unfair that us residents outside of the Market absorb this additional need that is very reasonably likely to eventuate. The private developers will be gaining significant financial advantage in the immediate and long term - as a community we should not wear the cost of this.

By exceeding sustainability, environmental, open space and wellness goals as set internationally - this would be in keeping with the Market's central role as a space that nurtures our community through its food and services. It becomes a show case of harmony and attracts a mindful community. This is an opportunity should not be missed. I would love to see a design that is more considered in the use of materials and final aesthetics and not just glass boxes that are detrimental to our environment on so many levels: unbearable in summer, higher need for heating and cooling, wind tunnels and flow on effect to surrounding areas - our suburb does not cool down as fast in summer because of the heat trapped in concrete buildings. Building designs should be cutting edge world class.

Regards



