

NWMPA

Activation Plan.

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INTRODUCTION

Five Year Activation Plan

This document has been prepared by The Place Agency for the North West Melbourne Precinct Association (NWMPA) to guide their planning and decision making over the next five years.

This strategy takes a placemaking approach to improving the social, economic and environmental sustainability and resilience of the North and West Melbourne Precinct.

In this document, we have recommended initiatives for supporting members and promoting the precinct. These have been categorised into four areas of focus, including: concierge and networking, capacity building, place marketing, and placemaking.

Recommendations in this document, as well as the place vision and goals have been developed through a co-design process involving the NWMPA's volunteer committee as well as the broader membership.

This strategy is considered a 'live document' and should be reviewed and updated with the membership and in line with changing needs and conditions.





INTRODUCTION

About the NWMMPA

WHO WE ARE

The North West Melbourne Precinct Association is a volunteer run organisation dedicated to supporting, connecting and showcasing local businesses. We are run by local businesses, for local businesses and are united by a shared passion for the precinct.

WHAT WE DO

Our mission is to champion local businesses and enable a thriving local economy in North and West Melbourne. We do this by:

- Connecting businesses to find local suppliers, partners, and clients.
- Supporting businesses with knowledge, advice, and commercial opportunities.
- Advocating for the precinct, and helping NWMMPA members to navigate Council.
- Promoting the precinct to attract customers and increase customer loyalty from local residents.

WHAT WE PROVIDE

To support our members, we provide:

- A regularly updated business directory of local services, suppliers and organisations.
- A business concierge service that connects members with the support they need from Council, local services or other local businesses.
- Ongoing advice and problem solving.
- Professional development and networking opportunities for our members.
- Social experiences for our members.
- Local marketing campaigns and promotional initiatives.

HOW WE DO IT

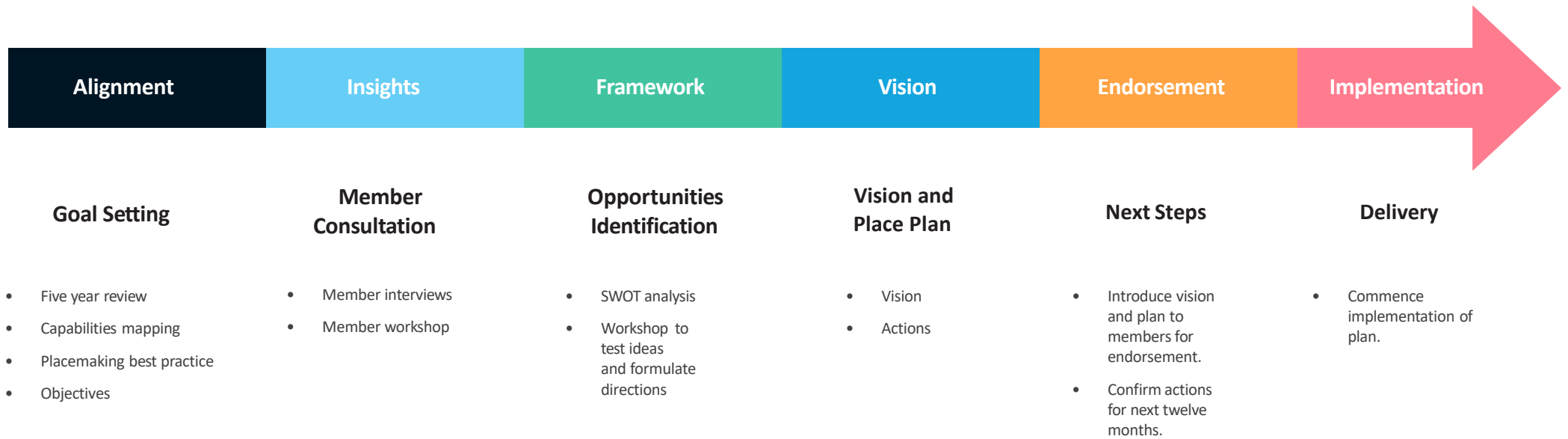
We are funded by our members and through the City of Melbourne. We also generate income through events and initiatives. This money is used to advance our mission and to benefit all members.

Our funding enables us to provide one part-time staff member (approx. 12 hours per week) to assist members and deliver projects. Outside of this, all of our activities are developed and delivered by our executive committee, who volunteer their time for the Association in addition to running their own businesses.



Approach

The following approach was taken to develop this strategy from May-August 2021.





What makes a great place?

They are accessible.
Am I able to get there?

People can engage in activities there.
Am I able to play and participate?

The space is comfortable and has a good image. Am I able to stay?

It is a sociable place.
Am I able to connect?

This framework was introduced as part of Member workshop to support ideation. It comes from the NSW Public Great Spaces Draft Toolkit (2020). This framework should continue to be used to identify gaps and opportunities in future engagement with members.





INTRODUCTION

Typologies

The following five typologies have been used to segment the different kinds of actions needed to create a great place:

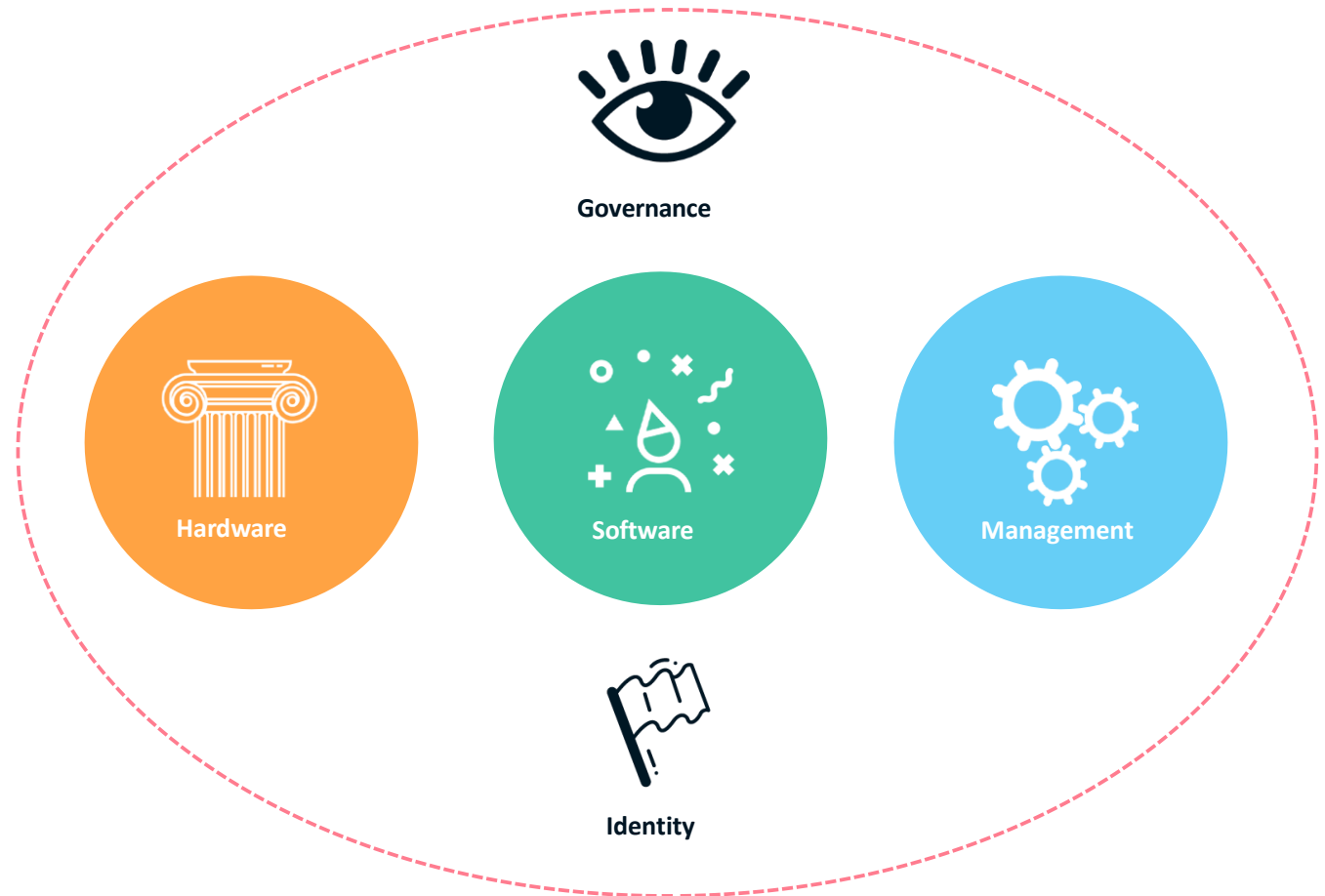
Hardware - physical infrastructure and design, which influence how a place looks and feels. This could include signage, sustainability features, and street furniture.

Software - programmed services and experiences such as events, networking, and marketing activities.

Place Management - people, systems and processes needed to deliver on our vision. This includes staff, contractors, and policies.

Governance - how we work with and involve community and stakeholders in the work we do, and how we are kept accountable.

Place Identity - our brand and it's elements - such as logo, social media, and website.





INTRODUCTION

Location Context

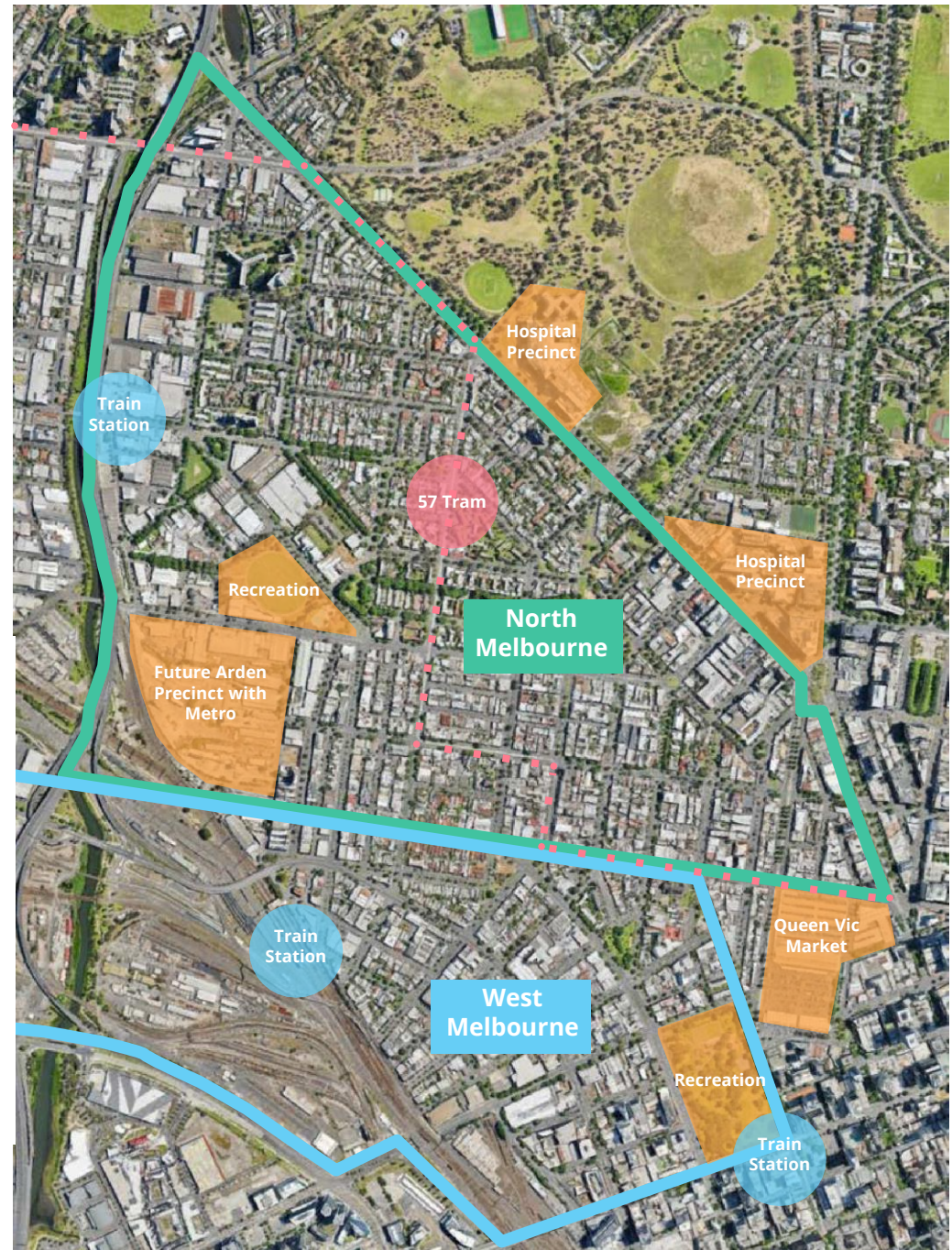
Located on the edge of the CBD, North and West Melbourne is bound by the Moonee Ponds Creek to the west and Royal Park to the north. The area is a mix of heritage terraces and warehouses, with light commercial buildings and new apartment towers emerging primarily in the areas south of Victoria Street.

Unlike other inner-city precincts, North and West Melbourne does not have a major high street such as Lygon, Brunswick or Smith Street (each of these is over 1.6km long). As such, the character of North West Melbourne is very different to the other precincts that border the city centre.

While there is a concentration of businesses along Errol Street, retail and commercial premises are salt-and-peppered across the precinct. The business mix is extremely diverse with creative studios next door to mechanics, cafes and chiropractors, as well as numerous home-based businesses.

Significantly, the precinct borders major hospitals and is in close proximity to the University of Melbourne. These institutions have often attracted people to live in and/or visit the precinct. In the coming years, the Arden Precinct will emerge, bringing with it a significant workforce as well as a new metro station connected to Parkville.

In the years to come, significant development will bring more population and businesses into the precinct and around its periphery. Notable plans include the Arden precinct masterplan, Queen Vic Market redevelopment and Macaulay Structure Plan. These plans should be monitored over the next five years.





ANALYSIS

Member Insights

The Place Agency have interviewed ten members of the North West Melbourne precinct Association to better understand their experience, expectations, and how the Association can create meaningful value for them.

Overall, participants were generally new members who had little knowledge of what the Association is or does. Many had not interacted with the association (e.g. attended events, used the Directory), and flagged that communication could be improved through a regular newsletter as well as a calendar of events that they can look forward to and plan around.

Members were optimistic and wanted to work with the Association to promote the precinct. In particular, they would like to the Association to highlight the precinct's connection with creative arts, sense of community, and strong diversity of businesses.

There were two distinct categories of participants: members whose business was primarily Business to Business (B2B) and those whose businesses were Business to Consumer (B2C).

Unfortunately, consultation with members was hampered because of rolling COVID-19 restrictions. Ongoing future consultation with members has been recommended as a key deliverable of this strategy.

In general, members whose businesses were B2B were more interested in:

- Networking opportunities to meet other members,
- Opportunities to showcase their goods and services (to other members),
- Opportunities to promote their goods and services to the local area,
- Professional development opportunities to better market their businesses, and to learn new skills.

In general, members whose business were B2C were more interested in:

- Advocacy to City of Melbourne to bring more events to the area, and to improve placemaking,
- Support in navigating Council so they know who to connect with if they want to host an event or access a program (such as green laneways)
- Connecting with aligned businesses so they can collaborate,
- Opportunities to promote their goods and services to the local area.

Other insights include:

- Members wanted more transparency around how and why decisions are made, and how money is spent.
- Members would be interested in joining 'sub-committees' to plan an annual event or major marketing campaign.
- Members would value social experiences such as an End of Financial Year drinks.
- Members felt that events that supported the local community were a good thing. However, these should not be priorities but good to do if there is capacity and if there have been notable successes.



Precinct Analysis

Strengths

- Strong and diverse communities in the area
- Strong local economy,
- Great variety of businesses,
- A notable community of highly skilled makers, creatives and trades- people
- Strong creative scene with a number of visual and performing arts venues and creative practitioners based in the area,
- Distinctive character enhanced by industrial and heritage architecture,
- Very good connectivity with train, tram and good quality bike paths.

Opportunities

- Accessing local institutions such as the University and Hospitals to showcase businesses and encourage visitation,
- Promoting health and wellbeing as a resource in the precinct,
- Improving placemaking, including creating more places to sit, meet and to enjoy the surroundings,
- Drawing upon the wealth of artists and design practitioners in the area,
- Creating more reasons to visit, to bring people in from outside of the precinct, to attract new businesses and visitors,
- Better communication of who we are, our point of difference / what makes us special.

Weaknesses

- Lack of identity,
- Some businesses are isolated from the action,
- Lack of marketing channels with a wide audience,
- Lacks a 'heart' or centre of gravity,
- Lacks vibrancy - a sense of ongoing activity. It is quieter than neighbouring areas (which is also a strength),
- There is much less employment in the area compared with other inner-city areas, reducing the opportunity for day-time trade,
- Night-time economy is not as strong as other inner-city precincts.

Threats

- Ongoing construction in West Melbourne and in the future Arden Precinct will reduce the appeal of these areas,
- The Queen Vic Market is an existing food destination that is going from strength-to-strength, capturing visitors who would be on their way to/from North-West Melbourne.



ANALYSIS

Place Marketing

GOAL	Keep members engaged and drive visitation to businesses in North and West Melbourne.			
KEY STRATEGIES	ENGAGE MEMBERS Develop compelling content that is of value to current members and attracts new businesses to join.	PROMOTE MEMBERS Showcase the membership through campaigns that are targeted and curated to ensure these create impact for our members.	INCREASE VISITATION Drive visitation to the precinct, this includes increasing local visitation and attracting people from further afield.	ENHANCE THE PLACE IDENTITY Develop campaigns that create a call to action to visit the precinct, focusing on what makes us distinctive.
OBJECTIVES AND GOALS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve newsletter content and messaging to members. • Improve member satisfaction. • Attract new members. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver smaller, more frequent ads that showcase groups of members such as artisans, handy-people, food businesses, creative agencies. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase the frequency that locals shop in the precinct. • Attract people from outside the precinct. • Increase basket spend, and encourage customers to visit more than one business. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver events, experiences and placemaking that showcases our creativity, community and point of difference.
EXAMPLE CONTENT	Create a competition for a high- value prize such as \$500 worth of printing or a holiday voucher.	A rock-poster campaign with Artisan businesses, focusing on what is hand made in the precinct.	Develop a map of local businesses that visitors can use to identify other places to shop along their usual routes.	A large scale mural by a local artist that says 'welcome to North Melbourne' on Queensberry Street.



Audience Segments

MEMBERS

Our goal is to support, engage and connect members, while also creating compelling reasons for non-members to join.

B2B MEMBERS

Members who primarily enterprise is business to business.

B2C MEMBERS

Members who primarily enterprise is business to customer.

NON-MEMBERS

Businesses based in the precinct that are not currently members.

RESIDENTS

Our goal is to establish positive behaviours that see local residents prioritising local businesses, visiting more and increasing their basket spend.

PRECINCT RESIDENTS

People who live within the precinct boundaries.

NEIGHBOURING AREA RESIDENTS

People who live in proximity to the precinct and journey in for work, school, shopping and more.

VISITORS

Our goal is to encourage people visiting the precinct to spend more time in the area, visit more businesses, and to come back again.

WORKERS

People who come into the precinct to work.

HEALTH CARE VISITORS

People who come to the precinct to visit the hospitals or health businesses.

EVENT VISITORS

People visiting the precinct to attend events.

CUSTOMERS

A broad range of people coming to the precinct to shop and do business.



ANALYSIS

Place Fabric

Made by Hand

Celebrated for the quality of its artisans and makers, relied upon for its tradespeople.

Made by History

An eclectic ecosystem of buildings, businesses and people, each with a rich and layered history.

Made by Heart

Driven by and for a diverse, strong and connected community, with a deep pride in place.

Made for Health

A place where people come for health and wellbeing, not limited to the hospitals but our businesses, spaces and places.

Our Haven

A pocket of great that lies on the edge of the towering CBD, but with the charm and character of a country town.



VISION

Welcome to North and West Melbourne, our haven on the doorstep of the towering CBD.

We are celebrated for our relaxed and social setting, friendly service, our artisans and makers, reliable tradespeople, and our community of businesses.

People and businesses are attracted to our characterful streets and laneways, our active green spaces, and our new village heart.



Priority Actions

Increase and retain membership		Retain 100 members annually and increase membership by 10% each year. Measure and increase satisfaction.
Establish member event program		Host seven events per year for members, including a mix of networking, professional development, and social.
Establish member sub-committees		Establish two sub-committees, empowering members to develop and deliver initiatives.
Update and deploy place brand		Launch new precinct brand, update comms channels and deliver consistent branded content.
Create a 'village heart'		Explore opportunities with the City of Melbourne to identify and create a central place for people and businesses.
Improve place governance		Host one member workshops, one member information session, and one AGM per year.
Improve place management		Establish defined roles and responsibilities for committee members, and address knowledge gaps.
Deliver meaningful place marketing		Develop a marketing program that shares the place vision and employs tactical third-party media.



FRAMEWORK

Areas of Focus

CONCIERGE & NETWORKING

Connecting businesses to find local suppliers, partners, and clients, and to build a collaborative culture among our membership.

CAPACITY BUILDING

Supporting businesses with knowledge and up-skilling opportunities in the form of advice, materials, and events.

PLACE MARKETING

Promoting the precinct and our membership in order to attract visitors, in the form of marketing, events, partnerships and activations.

PLACEMAKING

Identifying spaces and places that can be enhanced in partnership with Council. Intended to make the precincts more attractive and enable activation.



CONCIERGE & NETWORKING

Initiative	Description	Typology
Business Concierge	Support members in identifying and contacting local businesses (suppliers and customers).	Software
Business Attraction	Work with the City of Melbourne's Business Concierge and local real estate agents to attract new operators and businesses to the precinct.	Software
Member Connections	Introduce like-minded members and encourage them to connect and collaborate.	Software
Member Newsletter	Update members on a regular basis with opportunities including events, grants, and resources.	Software
Member Directory	Update business classification on the directory to make it more accessible and practical.	Software
B2B Events	Host an annual networking event for B2B members where they can make connections, learn from each other and promote their services.	Software
B2C Events	Host an annual networking event for B2C members where they can make connections, learn from each other and collaborate	Software
Health Events	Bring together businesses involved in the health sector to create a greater sense of community and to encourage collaboration.	Software



CAPACITY BUILDING

Initiative	Description	Typology
Member Workshops	Host a workshop each year to involve members in the development of an annual program, and the refinement of ongoing programs and services.	Governance
Member Committees	Establish a member sub-committee to assist in the planning and delivery of large initiatives, such as the peak event.	Governance
AGM	Host an annual AGM of all members to review the performance of the Committee and to review the strategy for the next period.	Governance
One-On-One Mentoring	Establish a local mentor program connecting new businesses with established businesses in the area, helping them to access the local market and connect with customers.	Software
Tax Planning	Approach Xero and MYOB to deliver a workshop for members on how to improve bookkeeping and tax planning for the end of the financial year.	Software
Social Impact	Engage a pro-bono consultant to deliver a workshop on how members can increase their social impact. This may include working with community organisations to better understand the needs of culturally and linguistically diverse people living in the area, or to explore how businesses can support local residents from disadvantaged backgrounds.	Software



PLACE MARKETING

Initiative	Description	Typology
Re-Brand Launch	Host an event to introduce the new Association brand to members and the wider community.	Identity
Peak Event	Host a large format event that drives visitation to the precinct. This may be 'Spring Fling' or a new event.	Software
Precinct PR	Engage third-party media agencies to develop compelling PR pieces that showcase our precinct and attract customers.	Identity
Artisan Profiles	Showcase our creative community in a PR campaign with a recognised publication. This may involve a series of profiles on notable artists, makers, and creatives who work in the precinct.	Identity
Health Promotion	Showcase our health and wellbeing practitioners in a marketing campaign designed to attract customers and promote the precinct as a destination for health and wellbeing businesses.	Identity
Google Reviews	Drive a campaign inviting members and the wider community to submit positive Google Reviews for local businesses. This will assist members in both their SEO and appearance on Google Maps.	Identity
Photography	Provide a list of local photographers for different kinds of photography (portrait, food, product), offer members a \$50 discount on one of the approved suppliers.	Software
Member Promotions	Promote members through curated media ads on a high impact channel, such as a paid promotion in the local paper, industry magazine.	Identity
Place Ambassador	Consider engaging a high profile member of the community as a 'place ambassador.' This person could be a sports person or a prominent resident. They would be asked to promote local businesses through owned media channels and create content that could be shared.	Identity



PLACEMAKING

Initiative	Description	Typology
Greening Connections	Work with the City of Melbourne to enhance the main connections throughout North and West Melbourne from a pedestrian perspective, making these routes more attractive and desirable. Consider using large planters with distinctive vegetation that is consistent across the precincts to reinforce their shared identity.	Hardware
Precinct Banners and Decorations	Work with the City of Melbourne to create distinctive banners and decorations for the precinct, that showcase our identity, creativity and point of difference.	Hardware
Precinct Hub	Activate a vacant tenancy in a high-visibility area. Invite members to use this space to promote their businesses and engage with new customers. This would be of particular value for home-based businesses, artisans and creatives. This action would require grant funding.	Software
Laneway Treatment	Work with the City of Melbourne to explore creative laneway treatments that bring colour and life into these spaces, supporting neighbouring businesses and attracting visitors.	Hardware
Precinct Wayfinding	Develop a create a wayfinding campaign to highlight local businesses. This may include a creative map of the precinct, delivered as a print-out. This initiative must be delivered in connection with a PR or paid media campaign.	Hardware
Prototype Green Spaces	Work with the City of Melbourne to deliver a pop-up park at a location that will not impact accessibility. The pop-up may involve a road-closure where we can test the idea and appeal of a new green space / village heart.	Hardware
Hawke Reserve Masterplan	Work with the City of Melbourne to develop a masterplan for Hawke Reserve, including a public art commission.	Hardware



ANALYSIS

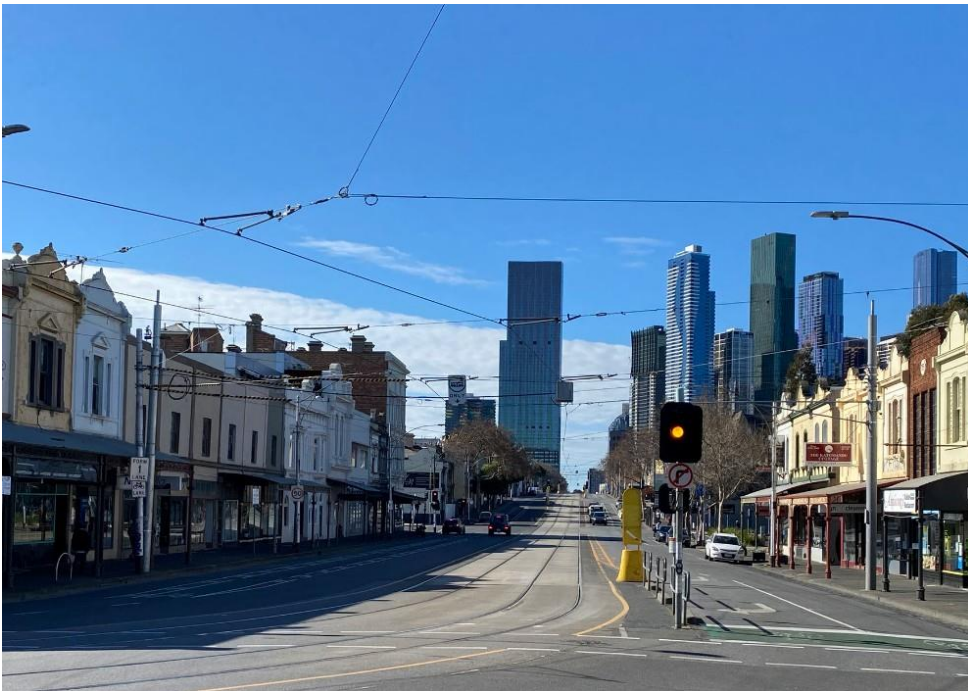
Priority Activation Areas

To support the evolution of the precinct, the following priority activation areas have been identified. The recommendations for these areas would need to be implemented in partnership with the City of Melbourne (both in terms of funding and capabilities).

1. Victoria Street - The gateway to North and West Melbourne.
2. The Errol Street Hub - a characterful centre of gravity with distinctive laneways.
3. Queensberry Street - the critical link between Errol Street and the Arden Precinct.
4. Errol Street North - a new 'village heart.'
5. Hawke Reserve - an active green space that creates a sense of arrival into North and West Melbourne.
6. Hawke Street - an important North/South connection linking the two precincts and connecting with cycle routes.

N.B these priority areas do not preclude the activation of other areas in North and West Melbourne in consultation with members and the City of Melbourne.

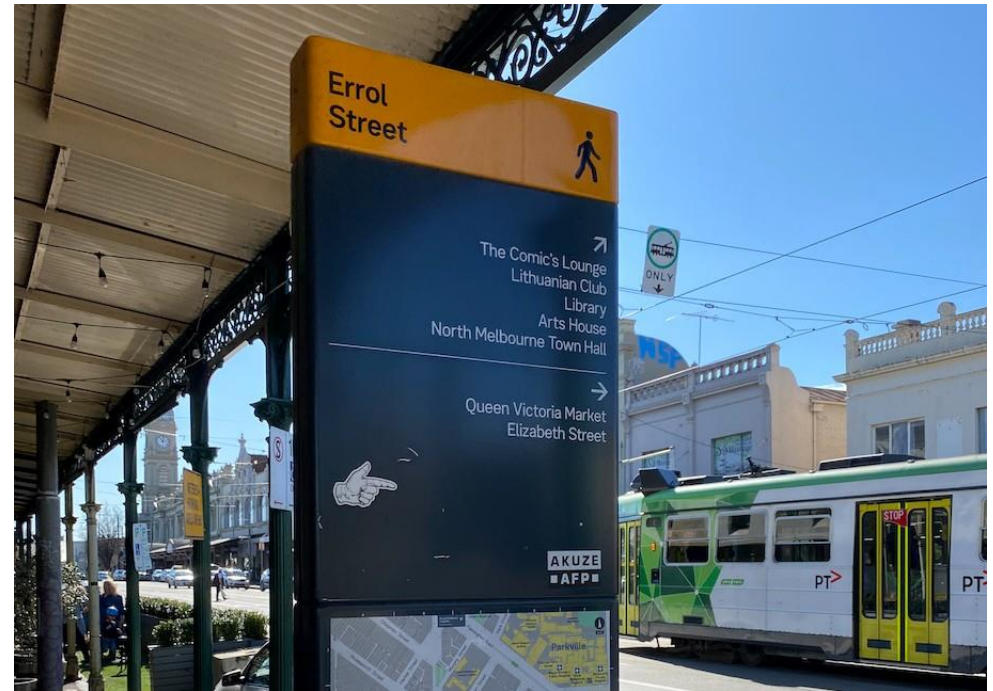




1. Victoria Street

Victoria Street is the ‘gateway’ into North and West Melbourne. Improving the presentation of the street will encourage more people to journey into the precinct. Streetscape improvements might include:

- Working with the City of Melbourne to improve the aesthetic of the street by adding greenery / planters.
- Working with businesses and landlords to improve shopfront presentation.
- Improve wayfinding from QVM to attract visitors. Develop a creative ‘trail’ with artistic murals and touch-points.



2. Errol Hub

Anchored by Errol Street, this block between Curzon and Chetwynd, and Victoria and Queensberry streets can become a centre of gravity, attracting people with its characterful architecture, eclectic businesses and distinctive laneways. Placemaking improvements might include:

- Working with City of Melbourne to enhance laneways with art (murals, light boxes, hanging installations), as well as creative lighting.
- Working with the City of Melbourne to deliver distinctive decorations along Errol Street during peak times, as well as planter boxes to add greenery to the street and laneways.



3. Queensberry Street

Queensberry Street is an emerging hub for the local economy. In the future, it will become the critical link between Errol Street and the Arden Precinct. We can enhance this link by:

- Consulting with Development Vic and Melbourne Metro Tunnel Project to explore opportunities for involving businesses in the activation of Arden.
- Creating distinctive Queensberry Street events with local businesses that enhance the identity of the street.



4. Errol Street North

Errol Street North has the potential to become a new 'village heart' where people can relax on an enhanced nature strip. This northern location will work to draw people in from the hospital precinct. We can improve this space by:

- Working with the City of Melbourne to create more places to sit and relax, improve the landscaping, and creating a sense of arrival.
- Working with the City of Melbourne to trial a short-term road closure to create a new green space over summer, and to host activations that bring people to the area.



5. Hawke Reserve

Hawke Reserve is currently underutilised as a green space. It should create a sense of arrival at the intersection of Victoria and Errol, and be a destination marker for North and West Melbourne. This space could be enhanced by:

- Working with the City of Melbourne to create a new masterplan for this park. We can support with community and business consultation.
- Working with the City of Melbourne to develop a public art plan for the park, to integrate fantastic local artists from the beginning of the project.



6. Hawke Street

Hawke Street is an important connection from West to North Melbourne. This street could be more distinctive with improved greenery, placemaking, and pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure. This street could be enhanced by:

- Creating a more distinctive experience as Hawke Street turns into Errol / Victoria Streets. This should be explored as part of the Hawke Reserve masterplan.
- Work with the City of Melbourne to evaluate streetscape upgrades including cycling infrastructure and lighting that would enhance the street between Hawke Reserve and Hawke and Adley Street Park.



Greening Connections - Example of distinctive planters used at Queen Victoria Market.



Precinct Wayfinding - Example of gallery trail from the City of Yarra.



Laneway Treatments - Example of treatments by City of Melbourne.




Prototype Green Spaces - Example of green space in Yarraville.



Hawke Reserve Masterplan - Example Otter Street Park, City of Yarra.



Precinct Hub - Example of 'Made of Ballarat' pop-up shop in Melbourne.

A dark blue background with a large, stylized pink geometric pattern on the right side. The pattern consists of several thick, parallel lines that form a series of nested, downward-pointing chevrons or a large, abstract letter 'X' shape. The lines are bright pink and set against the dark blue background.

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