



Our Yarra: Healthy, Protected and Loved

## **Submission to Federation Square Review**

**Date of Submission: 5 September 2019**

### **The Yarra Riverkeeper Association**

The Yarra Riverkeeper Association speaks for the Yarra, Melbourne's own beautiful, resilient, iconic river. The Association is the voice for the River. It is an independent community of citizen advocates that works solely in the interest of the river.

The spokesperson of the Association is the Yarra Riverkeeper who monitors the river in the Association's boat and on foot, by bike and by canoe building a detailed understanding of the River. This understanding is shared with the community through the Association's educational programs, website, and social media.

The Yarra Riverkeeper Association was a key advocate for better legislative protection for the river, which resulted in the Yarra River Protection (Willip-gin Birrarung murrn) Act.

### **The Yarra River**

Melbourne is a river city, and the Yarra is at the heart of the city's imagination along with its connected parklands and public spaces.

### **The Yarra Riverkeeper Association addresses these points in the Terms of Reference**

*The review will present recommendations to government to identify:*

- *a vision for Federation Square that is supported by the community*

Yarra Riverkeeper Association submits that the essence of a vision for Federation Square lies in the connection between Federation Square and the Yarra River. A re-vision would celebrate and strengthen the connections of Federation Square to Birrarung Mar and the Yarra River. Melbourne no longer turns its back on the River that runs through it, except in this, the most public of our gathering places. Respect for and acknowledgement of the history and ongoing culture of the traditional owners must be the foundation for the future of this space.

*This vision would flow through to the design principles which would include*

Connections to the Yarra River: visually as well as physically. There are many opportunities to explore skilful and inventive ways to soften the approaches to and from the River

The hardscape of Federation Square be mediated with a transition to the River environment

Ensure the central role of the Tanderrum - the gathering of the Kulin nations - in the calendar of events at Federation Square

### **Commentary**

The Tanderrum Bridge which connects Birrarung Marr to the Tennis Precinct shows how well sensitive design can perform the desired function while incorporating meaning.

Yarra Riverkeeper Association submits that improved connectivity with the Yarra River would increase the activation of the site and benefit the future vitality of Federation Square. The success of Arbory Bar and other ventures have demonstrated Melburnians appetite for enjoying the River environs.

Yarra Riverkeeper Association requests to participate in Stage 2 key Stakeholder Consultation to be held in October 2019.

**These annotated photographs make further observations from a river perspective**

*Figure 1: The buildings present as a wall to the river bank.*



*Figure 2:* This terrace, with premium views over the River is vacant. What kind of business model cannot make this succeed?



*Figure 3a:* The sequences of stairs that connect Federation Square with the River are handsome and impressive, but inaccessible. Opportunities surely exist to ease the transition for people with accessibility issues from the upper level to the River below.

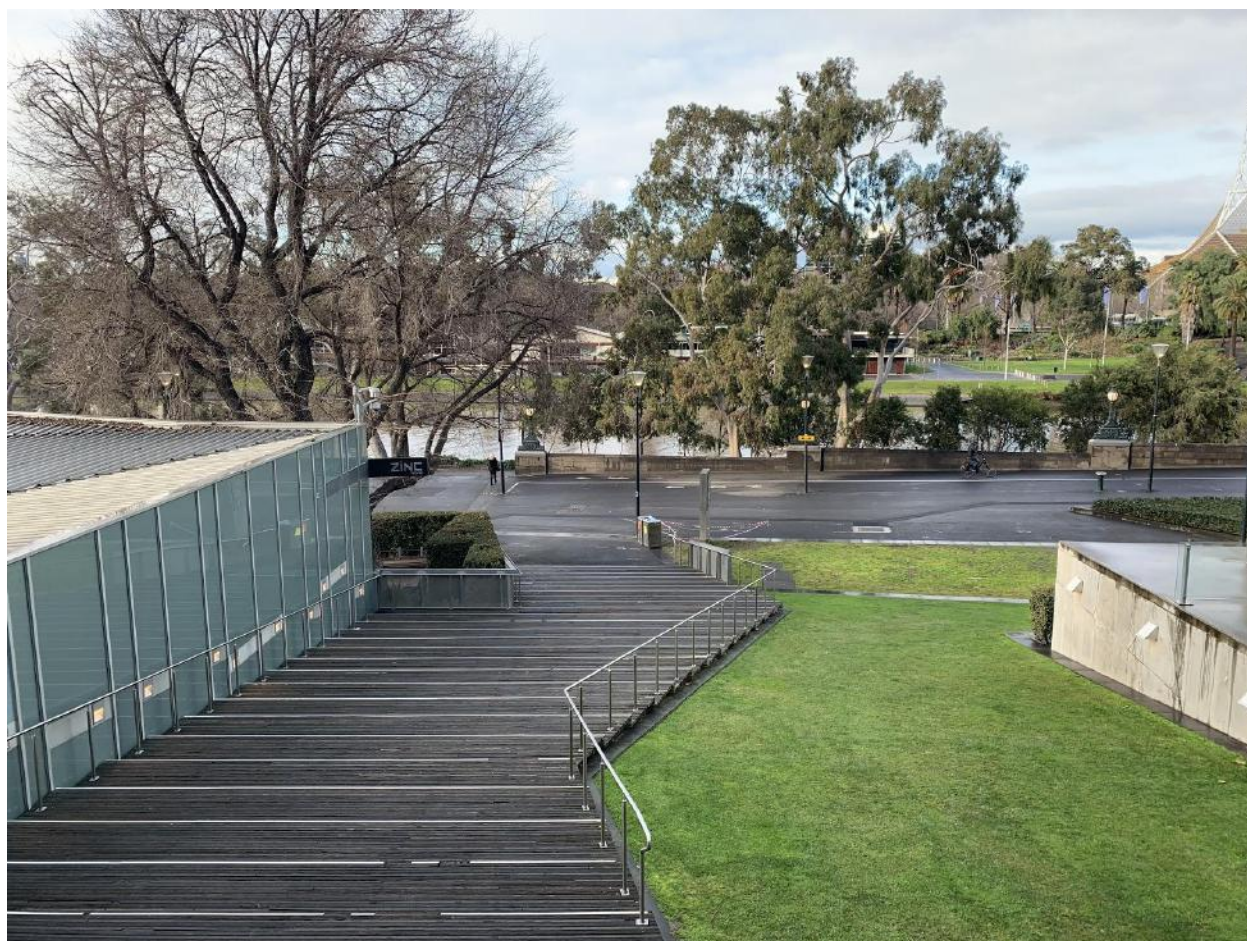
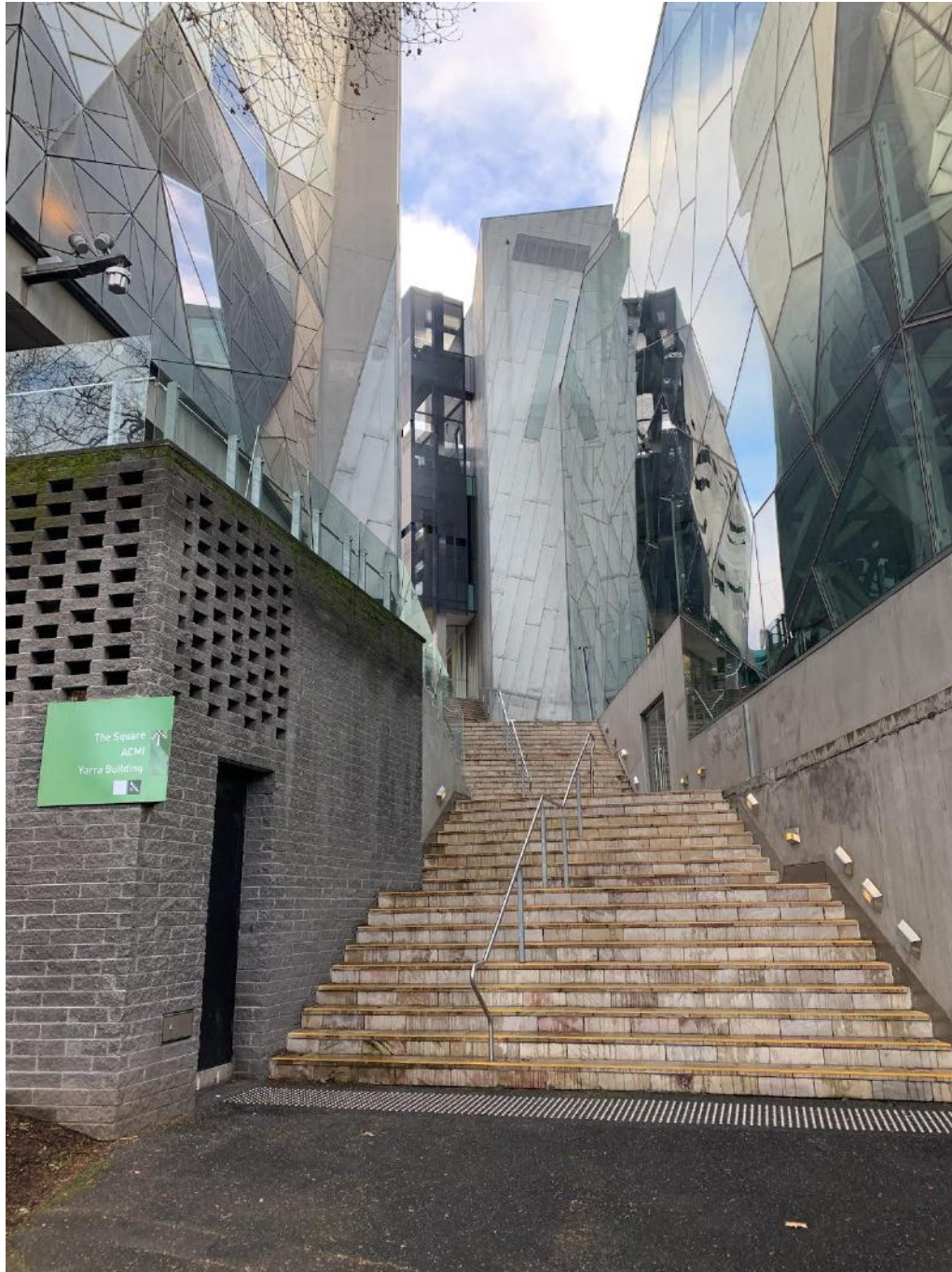


Figure 3 b: The entries to the stairways are also not easy to find.



*Figure 4:* This piece of public art that talks to the diversity of Melbourne is in an obscure location leading to the carpark. How else could the diversity of Melbourne and its people be represented?



*Figure 5: The sweeping terrace overlooking the Yarra River is bleak, yet offers great opportunities for activation.*



*Figure 7: View lines to the River should be considered to increase the sense of connection.*



*Figure 8: opportunities for visual delight should be taken*



### **Other points**

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Reference should be made to the draft City of Melbourne River strategy and its objectives

**Request**

The Yarra Riverkeeper Association asks to participate in the next round of key stakeholder consultation in October.

September 2019