



MELBOURNE CBD LEGAL PRECINCT

A VISION FOR THE FUTURE



COURT SERVICES
VICTORIA



Court Services Victoria acknowledges the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as the Traditional Custodians of the land. Court Services Victoria also acknowledges and pays respect to their Elders, past and present.

This report is protected by copyright. Apart from any use permitted under the *Copyright Act 1968* (Cth), all rights are reserved.

© Court Services Victoria

Published by Court Services Victoria
Design: Andrew Hogg Design
November 2016

This report may also be downloaded from the Court Services Victoria website www.courts.vic.gov.au

Enquires
Court Services Victoria
223 William Street
Melbourne Victoria 3000
Email: feedback@courts.vic.gov.au

Cover image: Supreme Court of Victoria
Image above: Coroners Court of Victoria



MELBOURNE CBD LEGAL PRECINCT

A VISION FOR THE FUTURE

MELBOURNE'S LEGAL PRECINCT

Melbourne is the home of great precincts including the burgeoning Parkville health and biomedical precinct and the rapidly evolving Monash Science Technology Research and Innovation Precinct (STRIP), along with the renowned Sports, Arts and Entertainment precincts and cultural precincts such as Chinatown, Little Saigon and the Greek Precinct. These are iconic and economically vibrant hubs of state, national and international significance.

The Melbourne CBD Legal Precinct is another unique part of our city.

The Melbourne CBD Legal Precinct (the Precinct) is another unique part of our city (see map page 05).

The focal point is the intersection of William Street and Lonsdale Street, whose four corners are occupied by the Supreme Court of Victoria, the County Court of Victoria, the Magistrate's Court of Victoria and the William Cooper Justice Centre¹, with VCAT a more distant one kilometre away. The surrounding streets are home to the Children's Court, the Commonwealth Law Courts, universities and the offices of numerous legal practices. At its margins are two historic public amenities: Flagstaff Gardens – Melbourne's oldest park – and the Former Royal Mint site.

The Precinct is a critical hub of the Victorian court system representing more than half of Court Services Victoria's (CSV) overall asset base and a significant portion of our real estate value.

Every day, the streets fill with those appearing in court – whether as a witness, a defendant or a party in a civil case. Often they come with their families. Barristers walk the pavements in wigs and gowns. Solicitors and legal clerks wheel trolleys

of documents. Police officers come to give evidence. TV reporters stand in front of bright lights. Protestors come to be heard. Throughout the day, emotions are visible on the pavements of the Precinct: anxiety, anger, hope, celebration, remorse, defiance, sadness, love. It is a theatre of human emotion.

The Precinct is a driver of the Melbourne economy. It houses over 13,000 direct legal services jobs and an estimated 14,700 indirect jobs². The overall economic value that the legal services sector brings to the state is acknowledged as making a significant and important contribution to the Victorian economy.

Above all, the Precinct is the visible embodiment of the rule of law.

¹ William Cooper (c.1860-1941) was an Australian Aboriginal community leader and indigenous rights campaigner. The William Cooper Justice Centre is the location of the Judicial College of Victoria, hearing rooms for the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal, headquarters of the Magistrates' Court of Victoria and Court Services Victoria.

² City of Melbourne Census of Land Use and Employment 2012



Supreme Court of Victoria

THE CONTEXT

The City of Melbourne is growing rapidly. There are currently 850,000 people on average each day in the city, with that forecast to rise to 1,000,000 within a decade. The number of city centre residents is expected to rise from 115,000 to 180,000 in the same period. Where the city footprint has previously moved south into Southbank and south-west into Docklands, it is now moving north and west, putting the Precinct in its geographical centre.

The Precinct is also transforming. New cafes and restaurants are opening. Flagstaff station is set to open on weekends. And between the institutional buildings and legal offices, numerous high rise residential apartment blocks are springing up.

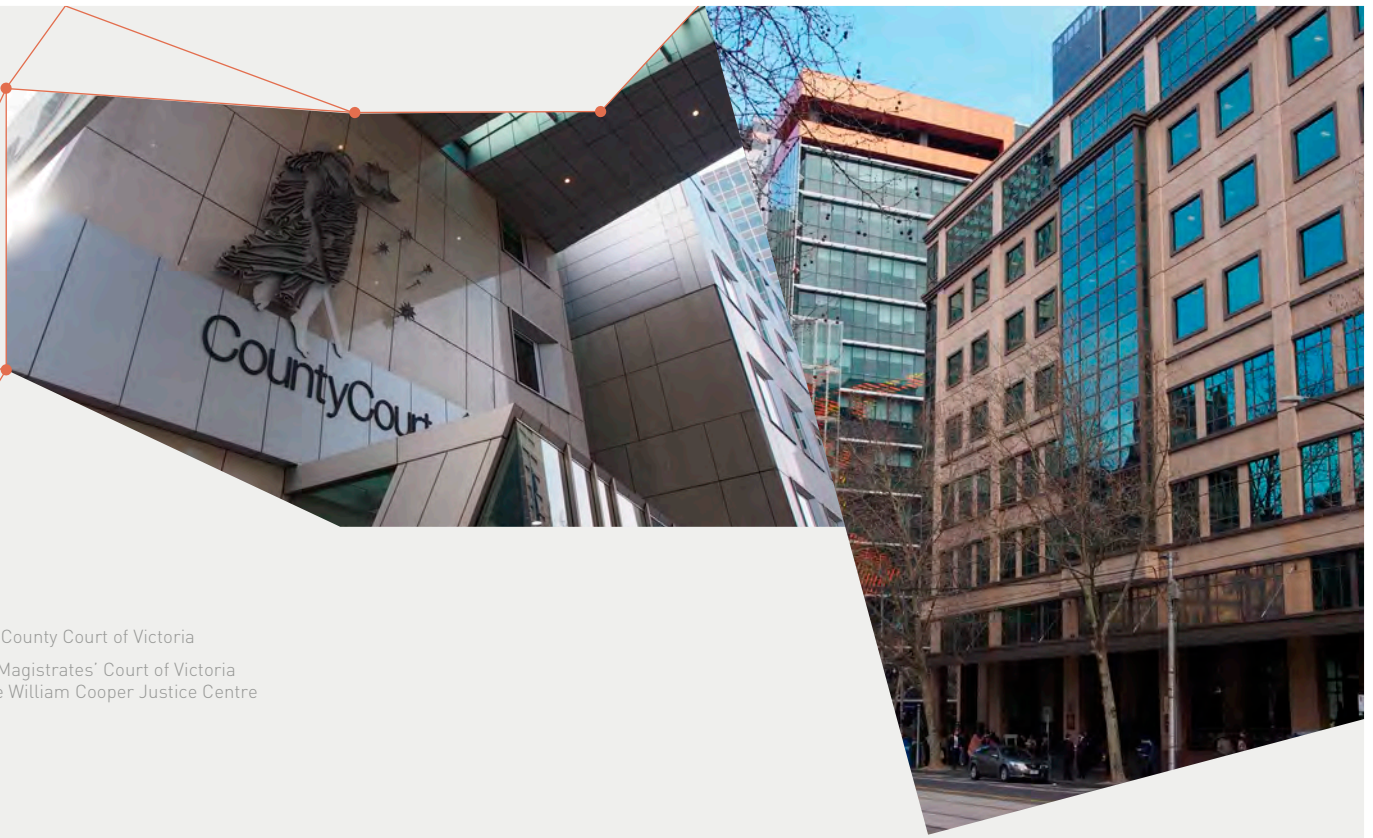
This mirrors the development of CSV. Established in July 2014 to be independent of government, it has a clear, expert and focused concern on strategy, innovation, renewal and in meeting the needs of our community. The model has generated interest from across Australia and overseas: the eyes of the legal profession are on Victoria.

THE CHALLENGE

As the population of Victoria increases, so too will the demand for court capacity. However, the Precinct is a physically limited space that is increasingly attractive for private sector development as the CBD consolidates westward. If CSV does not plan now to cope with current and future needs and demands, the opportunity will be lost.

At the same time, Victorian courts have not kept pace with today's design, technology and security requirements. Buildings and systems are inflexible and outmoded and court jurisdictions are hampered in their ability to lead the level of transformation considered necessary to support ongoing improvements in service delivery.

As part of our broader statewide plan, a comprehensive and visionary strategy for CSV's CBD assets is now needed.



Above: County Court of Victoria
 Right: Magistrates' Court of Victoria
 and the William Cooper Justice Centre

THE OPPORTUNITY

Strategic investment and creative innovation could transform the Precinct into a single, cohesive international centre of legal excellence.

We want to harness the momentum of ongoing change and build a strong identity for the Precinct. In doing so, we are maintaining a clear and unambiguous focus on State Government priorities, the needs of the Victorian community and the needs and priorities of courts and court users.

Infrastructure that meets Victoria's needs

The volume of cases coming to courts has increased in line with the Victorian population. It is vital that the capacity of the Precinct, which has clear physical constraints, is used optimally. This means getting the best use from existing buildings; developing buildings where possible, and ensuring adequate physical and technological capability.

The Supreme Court has been the centrepiece of the Victorian legal system for 130 years. It is the architectural jewel in the Precinct, but the historic complex needs a radical rethink if it is to be able to meet today's service delivery requirements, changing public expectations and security needs.

And whilst the court buildings are already physically close to one another, connecting them both physically, operationally and metaphorically would allow a greater feeling of collaboration between the courts while promoting a stronger and more cohesive judicial system. This would further enhance the public perception of justice.

Working with local government

Working together with Precinct partners and Melbourne City Council, CSV is leading and promoting plans that are focused on imaginative and eye-catching developments including lighting, streetscape and creative ideas in order to improve overall amenity and public navigation of the Precinct and contribute to the activation of the city.

Maintaining Victoria as the major events capital of Australia

Melbourne would become a strong draw card for legal conventions and conferences and CSV is already in discussion with the Law Institute of Victoria exploring creative possibilities.

Getting on with it: creating jobs, driving growth

If developed as we hope, aspiring lawyers from across Australia will want to work and live in the Precinct. Our Universities will attract the best students and retain the best lawyers. This will benefit Victoria and realise our aspiration to develop Melbourne as an international centre for arbitration and mediation.



Pedestrian scramble at Hachikō Square in Shibuya, Tokyo (image courtesy Wikipedia)

THE PLAN

The particular needs of the Precinct are at the heart of CSV's CBD Major Assets Strategy. This strategy is being prepared for consideration by the Attorney General and the State Government.

- Develop a dynamic and rejuvenated Precinct as a critical hub in our state-wide plan that fosters and grows the collegiality, cooperation and collaboration between court jurisdictions and across the justice system.
- Develop a state of the art solution for the next generation Supreme Court of Victoria and ensure clear, cohesive and sustainable strategies for each of our court jurisdictions for safe and secure, future proofed and flexible environments.
- Demonstrate international leadership with technologically advanced systems that transform communications, access to justice, efficiency, effectiveness and performance capabilities.
- Ensure innovative service models that support civil, criminal, specialist need and commercial opportunities, including promoting Melbourne as an international centre for commercial arbitration and mediation.
- Contribute to a thriving economic community.

CONCLUSION

We have a unique opportunity right now to build on a gathering momentum to transform the Precinct into a working and living community that will play its part in the expansion of the CBD to the north and west.

CSV will work in partnership with the State Government to ensure that the Precinct is a sustainable, iconic and economically prosperous hub, at the heart of judicial excellence in Victoria.

MELBOURNE CBD LEGAL PRECINCT

A VISION FOR THE FUTURE



LEGEND KEY TO MAP

- | | | |
|---|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Supreme Court Victoria (SCV) Law Courts 2 SCV Court of Appeal 3 SCV Old High Court 4 SCV 436 Lonsdale Street 5 County Court Victoria 6 Magistrates' Court Victoria 7 Children's Court Victoria 8 William Cooper Justice Centre | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 9 Commonwealth Law Courts 10 Civic Compliance Victoria 11 Office of Public Prosecutions 12 Australian Federal Police 13 Law Institute of Victoria | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 14 Victoria University, College of Law & Justice 15 Monash University, Law Chambers 16 The Former Royal Mint site 17 Telstra Exchange 18 Flagstaff Station 19 Flagstaff Gardens |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Barristers Chambers Legal Firms | | |

Outside Precinct:

VCAT 55 King St, Melbourne
Coroners Court Victoria and Victorian Institute of Forensic Medicine, Southbank
Law Foundation Victoria 5/43 Hardware Ln, Melbourne



COURT SERVICES
VICTORIA

For further information visit
www.courts.vic.gov.au