

Urban Heritage:

the rise and postwar development of
Australia's capital city centres

Susan Marsden

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Foreword

This publication describes the use of a thematic approach to heritage identification and conservation in Australia. I am particularly happy to write the foreword, as the Australian Heritage Commission originally initiated such an approach as a framework for assessing places nominated to the Register of the National Estate.

The historic development of the majority of Australia's State and Territory capitals after World War Two is detailed in this work. It outlines a thematic framework to assist in the identification of heritage places from 1945 on. This framework should increase our understanding of what functions are important in city centres and what features we value and wish to conserve.

I believe that this publication will be of great interest to many Australians, as it provides a much-needed overview of the architectural and historical development of heritage places in the postwar city centres of Australia.

It provides a fascinating insight into the similarities and differences that exist between our cities as they respond individually to external and internal influences.

I hope that this work will increase community and government awareness of the importance of our post 1945 heritage places and ensure that they are conserved for all Australians to enjoy.

The Australian Heritage Commission is committed to research on heritage issues and to making that research freely available. To help achieve this objective, this publication will be placed on the internet linked to the Commission's home page at www.ahc.gov.au.

I commend this work to all of those interested in taking as much of our heritage as possible into the next millennium.



Peter King
Chairman
Australian Heritage Commission

Introduction

Aims, definitions and methods

Background

Since World War Two the pressures of redevelopment and modernisation on city centres have accelerated and expanded. These pressures are focused most intensely in Australia on the State capitals. As a result, much of the built and cultural heritage of the capital city centre has been obliterated, not only uses dating from before the war but also the very postwar structures that replaced them. Since the 1950s architects, planners and historians have identified significant buildings and structures dating from colonial times and many places have been subsequently heritage-listed by Commonwealth, State or local government. But few of these places date from later than the 1920s and fewer still from after 1945. This very lack of recognition adds to the threat presented by intensive redevelopment, especially as many of the significant postwar buildings are privately-owned and located on small but expensive central sites. Their primary purpose is to continue to earn profit from the sale or lease of floor space.

For the same reason, heritage attempts to prevent the replacement or drastic remodelling of these buildings has often been vehemently opposed by owners and developers. They have also questioned the supposed historical significance of the buildings as each is treated as an isolated case. Some comparisons have been possible due to heritage professionals' knowledge of similar buildings in the same city but no architectural or historical context for the buildings of the postwar city centre in Australia overall was available.

In response to this problem, the Australian Heritage Commission (AHC) engaged Associate Professor Jennifer Taylor to prepare a report on postwar multi-storied office buildings.¹ In 1995 the Commission published in its priorities for the national component of the National Estates Grants Program, 'Historical analysis, identification and assessment of the main themes associated with post WWII CBD development in Australia'. My application was selected for the study. My work spans both heritage consultancy and Australian urban history, and I am a Visiting Fellow at the Urban Research Program (URP), Australian National University, where the grant was awarded.

¹ Jennifer Taylor (with Susan Stewart), 'Post World War Two multistoried office buildings in Australia (1945-1967)', report prepared for the Australian Heritage Commission, Sydney 1994.

Aims

The purpose of this project was to prepare a contextual history of post-World War Two central business district development, and to establish a thematic framework to assist the AHC, other heritage agencies, historians and researchers in general in identifying, assessing and conserving places of heritage significance. The report was intended to provide a base study and context for future heritage studies of Australian capital cities in general and city centres in particular. The project would provide a definition of CBDs in Australia, and a national basis for comparison of the historical development of CBDs in different Australian capital cities. All of these objectives have been met in the following study.

The introduction answers the first objective by defining the term 'city centre' (used in preference to CBD, or central business district) and determines the study's parameters. The main part of this report is in the form of contextual histories and a thematic framework which are intended for use as a base for future urban heritage studies and to help the Heritage Commission and others to identify places of heritage significance.

The histories are also intended to provide a national basis for comparison of the different capital city centres. *Part One: The historical development of Australia's capital cities and their centres: an overview* covers the period from origins to the twentieth century. This section considers the whole city and the development of their centres, especially those features that have shaped and are still evident in the centres. The purpose of this study is to provide a means to assess the heritage of the present city centres. This turns on delineating themes common to the cities, which have resulted in comparable heritage, as well as themes that have contributed to the differences between them.

The Part One history is presented as an essay in which themes are implicit but not separated out. I describe themes common to the cities and some of the differences. Part One treats the cities as a whole, rather than their centres only, but it is important to emphasise that the cities and their centres were one and the same to begin with and that the centre retained most of the urban population and services for many years, in Darwin's case until well after the Second World War. Interwoven in this account are individual city histories with particular reference given to the shaping of their city centres before 1946. I have deliberately taken different approaches in the arrangement of the prewar and the postwar histories. Part One treats most of the themes delineated in Part Two but in narrative form. This is partly for reasons of brevity (as the main focus of the report is the postwar city centre) but also as an attempt to indicate the interplay of themes.

The more detailed account of the postwar city centre is provided in *Part Two: The city centres since World War Two*. This forms the longest section of the report. The postwar history is written as a series of themes.² These have been arranged so that

² I am grateful to Frank Stilwell for this suggestion

the first themes in each section are the most general and set the context for the others in that section. I have also arranged them to provide some sense of narrative.

A discussion of the thematic framework used in Part Two is provided in *Results and conclusions*. I have also made recommendations in this section. As the study involved an extensive literature review and consultation with other researchers there is also a substantial bibliography that includes, with my grateful thanks, the names of my informants. I would in particular like to thank Professor Patrick Troy, Head of URP.

Definitions

The first question that should be answered is *which* capital cities are considered? They are the State capitals: Adelaide, Brisbane, Darwin, Hobart, Melbourne, Perth and Sydney. Darwin is included because it has been capital of the Northern Territory since self-government in 1978, and in practice capital since 1869 although formally administered from Adelaide, Melbourne, then Canberra. In the Australian Capital Territory, also administered by the Commonwealth until recently, Canberra is both the seat of federal government and the Territory's 'capital', so there has been less opportunity than in distant Darwin for the growth of independent administrative and cultural functions housed in close proximity in a city centre. In fact, Canberra was designed as a city *without* a city centre or even a CBD although one has been attempted in the past 20 years. For these reasons my study will refer to but otherwise exclude the national capital.

There are further questions. Is 'CBD' (central business district) an appropriate term to use for the central city in Australia? What constitutes the central area in each city? What are its boundaries? How many years does the phrase 'postwar' cover?

Defining the city centre

Suburban Australians use the phrase 'going to town' for visits to the city centre. 'Town' is a concentration of non-residential activities in one small area that displays a distinct contrast to suburbia. Town offers variety, complexity and opportunity. It is, in Lefebvre's words 'the place of the unexpected', and, as Harvey suggests, 'out of that all manner of possibilities can flow'.³

'Central Business District' is too limiting a term for a place so crowded with possibilities. CBD was a term coined by North American researchers and reflected the greater functional specialisation of big American cities around 1930 than their counterparts in either Australia or other countries. Since World War Two business and commerce have become the dominating concerns of most large city centres, including those of the Australian capitals. Yet the 'core' of the Australian city is still not given over to business and commerce alone. In 1964 Borrie's plan for central Melbourne defined its function as 'to provide a central place for the exchange of goods, services

³ D Harvey, *The urbanization of capital: studies in the history and theory of capitalist urbanization*, John Hopkins University Press, Baltimore, Maryland 1985, p 225.

and ideas, and for public and business administration'.⁴ Even this concise definition expands the functions of the city centre beyond business as it includes public administration and implies livelier and more profound cultural exchanges than those involved in simply buying and selling.

So, my first decision about parameters is to replace the term CBD with 'city centre'. In so doing, I am opening up the study of the centre's postwar history to include themes, trends and influences more subtle but equally as significant as the economic and technological changes exemplified in high-rise office buildings.

Sydney historians such as Shirley Fitzgerald have recently proposed that the City Council no longer use CBD for central Sydney because the term (and hence planning practice) excludes other significant city functions. For similar reasons, many planners and geographers prefer to use 'central area', 'central activities district' or 'core'. However, they tend to divide the central area into two districts, 'core' (CBD by another name) and 'frame'. This is a transition zone of mixed-use between the vertical scale and intensive uses of the core and the horizontal and homogeneous residential or industrial inner suburbs. (That homogeneity, it should be pointed out, is also a postwar phenomenon and reflects the fixing of landuses by council zoning.)

Examining activities in core-and-frame is Alexander's approach in the only Australian book that deals squarely with city centres.⁵ The advantage of this approach is that it takes into account the shifting nature of centre boundaries as land-and-capital-intensive uses such as office towers invade low-rent and land-extensive uses such as terrace cottages and warehouses. I take a similar approach to Alexander in this study in adopting the term city centre, which encompasses the high-rise core and at least part of the low-scale frame. There are strong linkages between them; both are characterised by mixed-use, and use land more intensively than elsewhere in the metropolitan area (although the frame is distinctly more horizontal than the core), and, perhaps most importantly, activities in both districts serve the city and the State as a whole.

The city's 'frame' plays significant central roles of its own. Low-cost accommodation for people who need or serve the centre is one important function, albeit one threatened by other central functions, such as freeways, transport terminals and warehousing for suburban retailers. Another important function is the prevalence of certain industries, despite a general postwar trend of decentralisation of manufacturing. The somewhat perjorative term 'frame' denies its unique identity, an identity that, from the closing days of World War Two, was fiercely contested with planners and developers. These 'outer' central areas are also important because in their modest heights, in the age and variety of their buildings and the intermingling of houses and workplaces, they retain a character that was, until the early 1960s, typical of most Australian city centres as a whole. This unregarded heritage is as important as the city's great public buildings or modernist towers.

⁴ EF Borrie, *Report on a planning scheme for the Central Business Area of the City of Melbourne* [City of Melbourne] 1964, p 15.

⁵ I Alexander, *The city centre*, UW A Press, Nedlands 1974.

City centre activities

Determining which activities and events belong to the city centre helps determine its historical themes. But different groups have ascribed different activities to the city centre according to their own interests. Alexander nicely summarises the debate by geographers over definitions and activities. He includes commercial, retail, 'remnant' residential and other central functions in his definition of city centres. He examines the location of activities in central Perth and then government service as 'frame' rather than 'core' activities. He notes that in Perth and Sydney 'certain public facilities, government services and open spaces ... concentrate in areas adjoining the core boundary.'⁶ In Perth there are concentrations of public buildings such as hospitals, libraries and court houses to the immediate north and south of the core. I suggest, however, that historically the 'core' in the Australian capitals was government service and administration and that businesses located nearby, and continue to do so.

Alexander makes a further important point about public buildings and spaces: they form effective barriers to the expansion of the core because public land is not subject to the pressures of the land market. This holds true in every Australian capital with the proviso that 'privatisation', the sale by governments of public-owned assets, such as Melbourne's former central hospital site, has demonstrated that such public places may not be the permanent features they once seemed.

Beyond those barriers of public buildings and parks is a mix of factories, sheds and housing in the outer central district. That urban mixture was once characteristic of many inner suburbs, and still is in places that were traditionally working-class. Alexander acknowledges that the boundary between the central 'frame' and the inner suburbs is not sharp. So, where does the city centre end and the inner suburbs begin?

Delimiting the boundaries

Substituting 'city centre' for the term CBD doesn't solve the problem of defining the city centre. If anything, it makes the task harder because the concept of a 'city centre' encompasses not only a wider range of functions but a larger geographical area than CBD or core. However, I have excluded from detailed consideration most of the inner suburbs mainly on pragmatic grounds because of the size of the task. At the same time, the connections between centre and inner city, not least the persistent threat the centre poses for the inner suburbs, make it imperative that I include some discussion of these areas.

The simplest way to define the boundaries would seem to be to adopt city council boundaries. I take them into account but there are problems with doing so. For a study that spans 50 years, there is the problem of local government boundaries shifting over time. For example, the City of Adelaide has kept to the city's original boundaries of 1837 but Melbourne's and Sydney's boundaries have been altered several times since the war. The City of Sydney has waxed and waned four times since 1948, to

⁶ Alexander, *The city centre*, p 33.

include then exclude inner suburbs on the east, south and west.⁷ The other cities illustrate a separate problem as their city councils include substantial urban areas beyond the centre. Brisbane and Darwin Councils are responsible for the whole metropolitan area except for the most recent fringe development. Nevertheless, one of the main types of urban council in Australia is the central council whose boundaries contain most city centre functions. City councils also have in common mixed-use, high-rise and low-scale streetscapes and large public spaces.

The other method of delimiting the boundaries is through geography and morphology, that is natural and created physical boundaries. The planner George Stephenson illustrated how cities are structured by lines of communication and physical barriers with maps of five State capital centres in 1955.⁸ Adelaide was planned from the outset to grow within the framework of the Park Lands; Brisbane is in a loop of the Brisbane River with Central Station and rising ground marking the northern edge; Perth is contained by the Swan River, former swamps and Mount Eliza, with business and commerce concentrated south of the railway; Sydney is closely contained by the harbour, the Domain and Hyde Park and Central Station, Darwin is built on a peninsula and Melbourne is partly bounded by public gardens, parliament and government buildings and large railway stations.

I have adopted the same boundaries but have interpreted them loosely, in keeping with the constant blurring and extension of central city activities, for instance, including the 'south bank' arts and entertainment complexes built in Brisbane and Melbourne, despite disagreement between informants in those cities whether or not they should be included.

Time-span

There are temporal as well as geographical parameters. How many years does the term 'postwar' cover? I include the whole period from 1945 until the 1990s. Australians keep making dramatic changes to their cities, not all of them resulting in new towers or the destruction of old urban fabric. If I halted at 1970 I might limit the study to the impact of Australia's economic expansion, modernist architecture, intensive redevelopment, traffic congestion, and the flight of retailers, residents and manufacturers. All are major themes for that postwar period. However, since the 1970s the cities have been strongly affected by quite different processes, including the revival of pedestrian precincts, new emphases on public social and cultural activities and on the value of retailers and residents, mass tourism, and heritage preservation. Business, hence work practices and office architecture, has also assumed new forms in response to such influences as Asian investment, economic restructuring, new telecommunications and computer technology.

⁷ P Ashton, *The Accidental city: planning Sydney since 1788*, Hale & Ironsinger, Sydney 1993, p 11; S Fitzgerald, *Sydney 1842-1992*, Hale & Ironsinger, Sydney 1992, p 231.

⁸ G Stephenson, *The design of central Perth: some problems and possible solutions*, UWA 1975.

Methodology

The methods of research involved a literature review (searching Internet, on-line library catalogues and CD-Rom databases, and visiting university, State and national libraries), preparation of a bibliography, and field visits to city centres, which included consulting with other historians, architects, council and State heritage staff. Further consultation was carried out with scholars and visitors at the URP and elsewhere. Personal consultation with other researchers was invaluable, as might be expected for the study of so recent a period. Much is known but very little has yet been written down, or available only in unpublished heritage reports and theses. All of these sources were drawn on.

In the literature review and bibliography I included searches on the Internet, for example through the archive logs of the H-Net email discussion list H-Urban. There are at present limits to the value of Internet in such a study because: such sources have not been established long enough for there to be much of relevance in their on-line archives; what there is difficult to get and analyse; and because most relevant international references cited were not available in Australia or not applicable to Australia. (Much is unavailable in Australian libraries; and works earlier than c1970 or of limited distribution—for example, Australian planning reports—are rarely cited except in some library catalogues). The Internet was most useful for getting access to Australian library catalogues, hence interlibrary loans, and for direct email contact with informants. The best database in Australia relevant to this work is HERA, the AHC database but again, not all of the works listed will be available locally, even in the Commission's own, excellent library.

Following this work I made a preliminary analysis and presented a paper at the Australia ICOMOS conference (Melbourne, 1996). This was the basis for the introduction, above. Then, while drafting a contextual history I adapted the draft Principal Australian Historic Themes provided by the AHC (see *Testing the framework in Results and conclusions*).

I created a 'regional' thematic framework relating specifically to the postwar city centres.⁹ There are four major thematic headings (they are, broadly, political economy, built form and social life and culture, or 'city building' and 'city life'). I incorporated within these four major thematic headings the themes and sub-themes identified in the introduction and elaborated in the contextual history. Some are in chronological order, to assist with a postwar narrative, where possible. I then completed the histories, tested the new framework using places selected from the Register of the National Estate (see *Results and conclusions*), presented progress reports and prepared the final report.

A note on sources. I have extensively footnoted the text but not information based on my own understanding of each city. References to 'Information provided by ...', or, for example, M Evans to S Marsden, refer to informants I contacted during this study,

⁹ This approach was suggested by the Australian Heritage Commission project supervisor, Joy McCarrn

visiting them in person or communicating by phone or email. They are also listed in the *Bibliography*.

Susan Marsden
Urban Research Program
Australian National University
Canberra 1997

Afterword & acknowledgments

This report was completed at the Urban and Environmental Program (formerly, URP) at the Australian National University and presented to the Australian Heritage Commission in February 1997. I am grateful to Professor Patrick Troy and colleagues at the Urban and Environmental Program, Joy McCann at the Australian Heritage Commission, and my informants in each city (listed in the Bibliography) who provided valuable information and advice.

A version of the contextual history was published as *A history of Australian capital city centres since 1945* URP Working Paper No 61, October 1997 (with thanks again to Patrick Troy and to Series Editor Rita Cole and the reviewers, especially Tony Dingle).

I have since made minor additions and corrections to the original report, reproduced here, and improved the presentation. My most enthusiastic thanks to Christine Debono (ACNT) and also to Philip Giovanelli (AHC), as well as to the Australian Heritage Commission for funding publication of this report and to the Australian Council of National Trusts for overseeing its production.

I would also like to thank Andrew Tatnell (Big Island Photographics) for the vivid cover photograph of Perth, Hagemyer Lifestyle Brands (Australia) for providing the city centre maps free of charge and UBD for waiving copyright fees for their reproduction.

Finally, I must record with great regret a further loss for Australia's cities, and that was the closure of the Urban and Environmental Program by the ANU in December 1999.¹⁰

Susan Marsden

Australian Council of National Trusts
Canberra 2000

¹⁰ For a history of the URP see P Troy, *The Urban Research Program 1966–1996*, URP, ANU, Canberra 1997. In February and March 2000 I recorded two interviews with Urban Research Unit co-founder, Professor Max Neutze, for the National Library of Australia.

Contextual history: Part one

The historical development of Australia's capital cities and their centres: an overview

Unlike those other transcontinental examples of European expansion, the United States and the Russian Empire, Australia does not present the picture of a rolling frontier moving ever outwards towards the distant Pacific. The Australian interior was too arid. Instead, Australia began with an archipelago of isolated settlements along a sprawling coast. Sydney in 1788, Hobart and Launceston in 1803–04, Brisbane, Perth, Melbourne and Adelaide between 1824 and 1836 ... can be seen each as the nucleus of a separate impulse of settlement from which colonization would spread out.

These foundation city-states, each with its own hinterland, depended for their communications to a large extent by sea until late in the 19th Century. Each developed its own strong sense of local identity, so that it was thought almost inevitable that, when self-government came in the 1850s, the foundation ports each became the mini-metropolis for a separate colony.¹¹

Both historical and geographical influences are implicit in Australia's urban system. In summary, the main geographical influences on the development of the Australian capital cities overall have been distance and the resources of each city's hinterland. The shape and character of the city centres have also been influenced by the physical features of their original sites. The main historical influences relate to the international context in which the cities were founded and also in succeeding years; both persisting and changing city centre functions; the relationships between the Australian capitals, and, finally, local influences. The built heritage of these city centres illustrates people's responses to the physical attributes of the sites and both persisting and changing activities through time during which urban places were retained, remade or replaced.

Geographical influences

Simple regard of a map will reveal some defining characteristics of Australia's capital cities. The most important of these is distance. Australia is located on the far side of the world, 16 000 kilometres, from Britain, the original coloniser and investor and principal source of settlers. Australia is also remote from most other lands with large populations, except those in the South Pacific and South Asia. Within Australia the capital cities are distant from each other, located at widely separated sites along the continental coastline. Few cities appear on the map of Australia, and fewer still of any size. Despite 200 years of immigration the population of this big country is small yet

¹¹ G Bolton 'The civil war we never had', Proceedings of The Samuel Griffith Society, 1994, v 3, chapter 5 (<http://www.exhibit.com.au/~griffith/v3cort.htm#ChapterFive>).

most of the capital cities are of a size comparable with large cities in more densely populated countries. This reflects a long process of uneven urban growth and the differing economic opportunities for development in each colony/State.

As the map also indicates, each State capital is a maritime city. The size of the country and its remoteness made overseas and regional shipping links crucial. Canberra, the federal capital and the only inland capital, was the exception that proves the rule as it was established for political rather than mercantile purposes and at a much later date than the other cities when shipping was no longer of such importance in communications. The port has been a major function of the capital cities and has strongly influenced their growth and physical character. The port also had profound effects on the economic development of the city centres but from the perspective of tangible heritage there were significant differences between cities stemming from the precise location of the port. The cities may be neatly divided into three groups: where the city centre is also a port; where the city centre was formerly port that has been moved downstream but has left a legacy of structures and landuses; and where the centre was never a port that was built at some distance away and developed its own distinctive heritage.

There were numerous reasons for these differences, including the constraints and opportunities of the chosen sites. For example, Sydney Cove and Hobart's Sullivan Cove in the Derwent River are magnificent, deep-water harbours, alongside ground suitable for town-building, while in SA the best place for Port Adelaide was at a shallow river outlet surrounded by a swamp that was of no use as the site for a city. This difference also reflected the founders' ambitions for Adelaide, which were grander than for the older penal settlements. Sydney and Hobart were established by seafaring men who placed 'their straggle of streets close alongside deep water', so that city and port were one entity. There are still wharves for ocean-going ships at the end of George Street in Sydney and Elizabeth Street in Hobart although the operations of Sydney and Hobart as ports have changed dramatically in the past 20 years.

By contrast to the other capitals, 'Perth and Adelaide were settled by systematic colonists, who surveyed a gracious grid of city streets well away from the ruffraff of the port.'¹² Perth is 16 kilometres from Fremantle, its port at the mouth of the Swan River. The separation of city and port in Adelaide and Perth has also meant that both city centres, placed a little inland, remain close to the geographical centre of their expanding metropolitan areas. Darwin combines characteristics of the first and second groups. It was founded by SA colonists but on a more modest and realistic scale than Adelaide, with the surveyor-general, George Goyder, placing a small grid adjacent to the best harbour along the NT coast. Central Darwin, like Sydney and Hobart, still operates as a port.

¹² This and the following paragraph, including quotations, are mainly based on I Manning, *The open street: public transport, motor cars and politics in Australian cities*, Transit Australia Publishing, Sydney, 1991, p 11.

Manning writes, 'Melbourne and Brisbane were intermediate cases: each lay beside a [navigable] river, and as the size of ships increased so the port moved downstream'. As the Yarra is smaller than the Brisbane River, this change occurred first in Melbourne, beginning as early as the 1850s, although shipping began to move downstream in earnest from the original centre in Melbourne after Victoria Dock was opened in 1892.¹³ Despite a bar at the river mouth, which hindered colonial shipping, the down-river movement of the port in Brisbane did not assume importance until the twentieth century and was not completed until after the Second World War. Manning groups the nineteenth century colonial capitals into Sydney, Hobart and Brisbane, where the port lay alongside the city centre, and Perth, Adelaide and Melbourne with ports more distant from the centre. 'This difference has had lasting effects on their history ...'. However, it should be noted that Melbourne centre's early role as a port had effects that are still evident.¹⁴ For example, the intersection of Collins Street and Queen Street, which once overlooked Queen's Wharf from the 'town', has always been the centre of financial Melbourne.¹⁵

As the map of Australia also reveals, the nation occupies a whole continent. Australia's size means that the distances between the capital cities translate into wide differences in climate, landscape and local resources. Darwin, the northern-most capital is situated only 12° south of the equator, close to Indonesia, while the most southerly city, Hobart, lies at 42° with Antarctica as the nearest landmass to the south. Cities are not differentiated to the degree one might expect with such wide divergences in latitude, due to their common British origins and the homogenising influences of the twentieth century.

However, the distances separating Darwin, Hobart and Perth from the most-populous south-eastern cities for many years retarded their growth and the development of their city centres. In 1901 Perth and Hobart were towns of around 35 000 people (although Perth and Fremantle combined had 60 000), compared to 119 000 in Brisbane, 162 000 in Adelaide, and 478 000 in Melbourne, which had just been eclipsed as the largest city by Sydney, with 482 000.¹⁶ Darwin's population (by 1911) was merely 1 127, mostly male, and atypically mixed, with Europeans, Japanese and Chinese (Aborigines were probably also numerous but not counted).¹⁷ This ranking of capital cities by size remained the same until Brisbane overtook Adelaide as the third largest city in the early 1940s.

By contrast with Hobart, Perth's growth was a recent phenomenon. It was strongly boosted by the big gold discoveries of the 1890s, just as the goldrush had boosted Melbourne's growth in the mid-century, and also that of Sydney, Hobart and Adelaide through the sudden increase in settlers generally and expanded trade opportunities. Major differences between the cities have developed as a result of this relationship

¹³ G Davison, ed, *Melbourne on foot*, Rigby, Adelaide 1980, chapter by Davison p 22.

¹⁴ This point was given emphasis by several of the informants I consulted in Melbourne.

¹⁵ Davison, *Melbourne on foot*, p 32.

¹⁶ JCR Cramm and J McQuilton, eds, *Australians: a historical atlas*, Fairfax, Syme & Weldon NSW 1987, p 90.

¹⁷ D Camert, *Looking at Darwin's past*, Northern Australia Research Unit, ANU Darwin 1996, pp 7-8.

between the cities and their geographical hinterlands. Adelaide's strong urban growth during the nineteenth century 'reflected the fortunes of a hinterland economy centred on wheat ... wool, hides, fruit and wine ... [with] local manufacturing activities [such as] brewing, flour milling, footwear and clothing'.¹⁸ This relationship was strengthened by the distances between all cities, as well as between the capitals. The isolation imposed by these distances may have prevented the emergence of rivals to Sydney and Melbourne but for a long time it also protected local businesses from competition, fostering the development of more complex city centres in the smaller capitals than might otherwise have been the case.

The Australian topography, which is mostly flat on the mainland, also made it relatively easy for each capital city to establish and extend its dominance to the far boundaries of each colony. As McCarty has argued in his influential analysis, the size and rate of growth of each capital was a function of the wealth of its hinterland and of its ability to dominate the colony's transport, business and government against rival cities within and outside the region.¹⁹ Sydney and Melbourne became (and remain) Australia's biggest cities because they 'had large, productive hinterlands in which there were no important urban rivals, but each city competed against the other in urban industries such as manufacturing and shipping'.²⁰

Adelaide and Perth also had no regional rivals and vast but arid hinterlands—both cities benefiting greatly from the later exploitation of minerals in those regions, copper in SA and gold in WA. By contrast to those colonies the rugged topography of Tasmania isolated one district from the next and fostered the rise of towns approaching the size of Hobart. Launceston, in the north, also benefited from its closeness to Melbourne, across Bass Strait. The only other State with a similar regional, and hence urban pattern, is Queensland. Brisbane is located at the southern end of an immensely long coastline.

Geography has contributed to and continues to shape differences between Australia's capital cities and their city centres. Common geographical criteria were used in determining each city site—a coastal location near deep anchorage, fresh water, moderate elevation, good soils and building materials.²¹ Yet these same criteria were satisfied by very different physical features. One defining characteristic of each city centre is the difference in types of local stone used in the surviving colonial buildings, for example, Sydney's triassic sandstone and Adelaide's limestone and sedimentary 'bluestone'.

To this day, environmental differences contribute strongly to the different public images of each city, as well as their possibilities, especially as the city centres are contained to some extent within natural boundaries. More than any other capital city,

¹⁸ *Australia: a historical atlas*, p 94.

¹⁹ JW McCarty, 'Australian capital cities in the nineteenth century', in JW McCarty and CB Schedvin eds, *Australian capital cities*, Sydney University Press, Sydney 1978, p 20.

²⁰ McCarty, pp 20–21.

²¹ P Statham, 'Patterns and perspectives', in P Statham, ed, *The origins of Australia's capital cities*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 1989, pp 12–13.

physical geography has determined Sydney's urban form and provides much of its beauty. Both the city centre and metropolitan development generally have been strongly shaped by the harbour, sea, creeks, cliffs, gullies, dense bushland and parks. The city centre on the southern side of the harbour is near the eastern margin of the metropolis and is physically constrained on three sides by Sydney Cove and Darling Harbour (north and west) and the Domain, Hyde Park and the Botanic Gardens on the east. The remaining 'boundary' to central Sydney was added later with the construction of Central Station.

The other State capitals are defined mainly in relation to the river, which was the rationale for first settlement, and by lands held in public ownership since colonial times. Hobart, like Sydney, draws great appeal from its dramatic physical setting, which has also confined the city centre.

Hobart was placed 20 kilometres up the Derwent River on its western side where Mount Wellington restricted development to a strip of land running from south to north. Lack of a river crossing for a long time limited settlement on the eastern side of the river. In Brisbane the wide and meandering Brisbane River provided a channel for communication but also acted as a barrier. Habitation was concentrated on the north bank, confined on three sides by a meander of the river, by Central Station and slopes marking the fourth side to the northwest (Petrie Terrace and Spring Hill), and to former farming land on the south side of the river. North Brisbane (now the city centre) and South Brisbane were for many years two separate settlements.²²

Perth was sited on a low ridge running east from Mt Eliza, which formed a tongue of land extending into a great bend in the Swan River. Central Perth was contained by the river on the south and east, swamps to the north and Mt Eliza to the west. When the railway was inserted, the core of the city was concentrated to the south, between rails and river, although this is an area twice the size of central Sydney.²³ Melbourne was originally defined by its relationship to the Yarra River, Eastern Hill and Batman's Swamp. The site of the township—now the city centre—was determined by the reef in the Yarra, which separated the tidal river from the fresh water above and marked the upper limit of shipping.²⁴ Melbourne is today defined by rails and river, as well as other public land. The edges of central Melbourne are formed by the Yarra River, Spencer Street, Flinders Street and Princes Bridge Stations, Parliament and government buildings, and Fitzroy, Carlton and Flagstaff Gardens.

South Australia's River Torrens is a more modest stream than any of the other rivers but is given greater prominence than the Brisbane, Yarra or Swan Rivers by Light's plan for Adelaide. This divided the city into two distinct sectors that straddled the river valley, which was reserved as parkland, and the whole city was also surrounded by parkland. South Adelaide, the larger grid, became the city centre and North Adelaide

²² A Smith, 'Woolloongabba transported: its charging face', R Fisher and B Shaw, eds, *Brisbane: people, places and progress*, Brisbane History Group, Brisbane 1995, pp 83–84.

²³ G Stephenson, *The design of central Perth: some problems and possible solutions*, University of W A Press, Nedlands, 1975, p 13.

²⁴ M Lewis, *Melbourne: the city's history and development*, 2nd ed, City of Melbourne, 1995, p 12.

residential. Light's parkland and the river still confine the city centre while the design as a whole has defined Adelaide City Council since it was first formed in 1840.²⁵

Central Darwin, is even more isolated by water than Sydney as it is located on a peninsula. In Goyder's original plan, the sea played the same containing role as Light's parklands around Adelaide. However, unlike Adelaide, this has meant that the location of Darwin's 'central area has become more eccentric in recent years as the city has grown'.²⁶

Local geographical differences are significant but there are also physical characteristics common to the whole country, despite its size, and these have also shaped the cities. The very size of the country and the distances between cities has encouraged an expansive use of space within every city. They were characteristically low-scale and widespread, open to the sky. This character prevailed even in the city centres and postwar high-rise development has by no means effaced it, especially in 'frame' districts surrounding the business sectors.

Historical influences

History has had more complex effects than geography. Some powerful common historical influences have shaped the capital cities and their centres. But they have equally been shaped by different historical experiences and by different responses to similar influences. For example, the capital cities were spaced at wide distances not only because of the size of the country but also for defence reasons. British settlement at Sydney Cove was probably motivated by defence concerns about France, as well as for penal and trade considerations.²⁷ Robson has claimed that Tasmania was settled and Hobart established as an out-station of NSW as a direct reaction to the presence of French expeditioners in the area.²⁸

Similar imperial defence concerns played a part in short-lived military outposts established in WA and Northern Australia and in the official support given to James Stirling's private Swan River Colony, which created Perth as its capital. The siting of these settlements may have reflected a more general intent to place strategic outposts around the continent as a 'ring fence to deter all foreign interests'.²⁹ But by the 1820s there were more concrete defence concerns: protection of existing and new colonies from the convicts who had been their most numerous settlers. Moreton Bay was established as a place of secondary punishment for convicts, therefore, distant from Sydney, and Perth and Adelaide were placed far from the 'contaminating' effects of the convict settlements.

²⁵ S Mansden, P Stark and P Sumnerling, *Heritage of the city of Adelaide*, Adelaide City Council 1990, pp 17, 22.

²⁶ R Barker, 'Laying it on the line— the layout of Adelaide and Darwin', unpublished paper, Urban History conference, June 1995, ANU, Canberra, p 11.

²⁷ P Statham, in Statham, p 5.

²⁸ L Robson 'Settling VanDiemen's Land', in Statham, p 79.

²⁹ Statham, p 6.

The influence of the first settlement (Sydney, 1788) and the designation of the whole of eastern Australia as the first colony of NSW, is reflected in the concentration of other capitals in eastern Australia. Hobart (1804), in Van Diemen's Land (the island of Tasmania); Brisbane (1825), at Moreton Bay in northern NSW, and Melbourne (1835), at Port Phillip Bay on the mainland's southern coast were once 'out-stations' of Sydney, and developed as settlers—convict and free—moved on from the central coast of NSW. (Proximity to Sydney—but no closer than 100 miles—was actually a requirement in specifications for the federal capital of Canberra.) More subtly, distance *from* 'convict' Sydney partly explains the choice of sites in western and central-southern Australia respectively by the free colonists who founded Perth (1829) and Adelaide (1836).

As the first settlement, Sydney coped with the harshest effects of remoteness, as even food supplies were mainly dependent on ships' visits. The first 20 years, from Capt Phillips' choice of the site in 1788, are usually described as a struggle for survival.³⁰ There was also struggle involved in transforming Sydney from its founding purpose as a convict camp, deliberately distanced and half-forgotten by the British Government, to a mature town with a more complex range of social groups and functions. The building of wharves and business-houses, the growth of shipping, a local merchantry and free settlement were in part outcomes of efforts taken to overcome the site's remoteness by seeking out and exploiting regional resources: whaling, farming, wool-growing and sea-borne trade. There was a similarly slow transition in Hobart and Brisbane, from places of convict exile, to towns with significant roles as administrative and commercial centres and as ports. Sydney, as the first and largest settlement, always retained its advantage over the other capitals, except Melbourne in the latter half of the nineteenth century.

There are also many common features in the cities that reflect common underlying histories. The most important common influences derive from the period in which all of the cities were established, and their origin as British settler societies under the control of colonial administrators. From 1788 the vast majority of settlers in Australia—convicts included—were British. Their numbers and influence were reinforced by successive waves of immigrants and by political, cultural and commercial relations that have remained significant. Hence, every city expresses a fundamental cultural homogeneity deriving from British occupation and influences. This inheritance has its most visible expression in the architecture, institutions and economies of the city centres.

The similarities between cities also reflect the period in which they were founded. All of the State capitals were established in a short span of time of less than 50 years. (Darwin was established later, in 1869.)³¹ All of the cities were founded within the 'modern' age, as part of the expanding British Empire, industrial revolution, mass-emigration from Europe, and the global spread of western capitalism. Partly as a result of these global changes, most of the Australian cities rapidly grew through

³⁰ For example, see G. Aplin, S. G. Foster and M. McKernan, eds, *Australians: events and places*, p. 272.

³¹ The name Darwin was used in the nineteenth century but was not officially adopted until 1911.

immigration, overseas trade and investment, developing close links with overseas capital and technology. The influence of overseas investment and emigration, in combination with local factors, also created a pattern of urban development typified by cycles of boom and bust. Upswings in the economies of countries like the USA, Argentina and Australia were counterpoised to downswings in the older European economies, and vice versa. 'The vital significance of cities in the Australian space economy means that each upswing would be reflected by buoyant conditions in them.'³²

By importing or adapting them, the Australian capitals soon developed administrative, cultural and economic functions of some complexity. All of the State capitals were created as colonial outposts of the British empire and developed as the capitals of increasingly autonomous colonies. In effect, until federation in 1901, each Australian colony was an independent city-state. In the modern world generally, colonial systems facilitated the growth of primate cities (much larger than other regional cities) by centralising administration in them and focusing transport and communications links upon them to make regions easier to administer. Growth in ex-colonial capitals was then hastened by the rise of nationalism, increased centralisation of political functions and rapid population growth. Colonial economies promoted export-oriented primary production that also fostered urban primacy rather than the development of a range of large cities within a colony.³³ Such was the case in Australia.

Sydney was the capital of NSW and the other Australian colonies (with dates of separate establishment) and their capitals were Western Australia (1829: capital, Perth), Tasmania (1825: Hobart), South Australia (1836: Adelaide), Victoria (1851: Melbourne), and Queensland (1859: Brisbane).³⁴ Self-government (in the form of elected colonial parliaments) was proclaimed in all colonies during the 1850s, except for WA (1890). This capital city function is one of the most important themes and contrasts with the urban history of even quite similar countries such as New Zealand. Hamer has argued that, in contrast to NZ, each of the main Australian colonies was founded from a port town that was intended from the start to be the capital, 'and to which governments committed resources accordingly. This strategy gave those towns a flying start that made it almost impossible thereafter for other towns [within each colony] to have any serious prospect of mounting a challenge to their dominance.'³⁵

In every city colonial/State government was highly centralised, with Government House, Parliament, government offices and other State agencies situated in the city centres, close to cultural, commercial and business premises. The federal capital of

³² MT Daly, 'Finance, the capital market and Sydney's development', in RV Cardew, JV Lardale and DC Rich, eds, *Why cities charge: urban development and economic change in Sydney*, George Allen & Unwin Sydney, 1982, p 53.

³³ AS Linsky, 'Some generalizations concerning primate cities', in G Breese, ed, *The city in newly developing countries: readings on urbanism and urbanization* Prentice-Hall, London 1972, pp 285, 287-288, 291-292.

³⁴ Formal declaration of the earlier colonies predated actual settlement, for example, the British government agreed to establish NSW in 1786 and South Australia in 1834. Van Diemen's Land (Tasmania), Victoria and Queensland were originally part of NSW.

³⁵ D Hamer, 'The making of urban New Zealand', *Journal of urban history*, 22, 1, November 1995, p 6.

Canberra is, again, the exception that proves the rule, as Commonwealth Parliament, the High Court and major federal government offices are sited in a sector planned from the start to be distant from the city's 'civic' and commercial sector.

The exceptions to Hamer's argument: Hobart, Brisbane and Darwin, which did not become capitals until some years after founding, had a slower start than the other cities. This was probably also a factor in the rise of more competitive urban systems in Tasmania and Queensland than in the other States. In their early years, Melbourne, Hobart and Brisbane were subordinated to Sydney as the administrative centre of NSW. The Sydney administration forbade merchant ships to enter the fine harbour of Derwent River partly because of fears that the 'Mother colony' would be eclipsed by Hobart. The restraint on trade was lifted in 1812–13 and Hobart effectively became a capital as it was also made the administrative centre for all of Van Diemen's Land.³⁶ Intercolonial and overseas trade increased rapidly in the next three decades with wharves, warehouses and public buildings clustering near Sullivan's Cove. Hobart's present Parliament House was converted in 1856 from the first customs house and bond store.

In a later NSW administration, Governor Gipps, 'saw no greater future for Brisbane Town than as simply an ordinary provincial settlement that would not need grand avenues'.³⁷ Gipps' attitude had a permanent effect as he decreed in 1842 that Brisbane's streets should be reduced from a planned 28 metres to 20 metres. When Moreton Bay's use as a place of exile for convicts was ended in 1842 fewer than 100 people remained in the region and 'settlement was painfully slow for the first few years'.³⁸ Sydney's population doubled from around 30 000 to 60 000 between 1842 and 1856.³⁹ Brisbane's population by 1856 was only an estimated 3 840. There were regional towns of similar size such as Ipswich and Gayndah that competed with Brisbane to become the capital of Queensland when it became a separate colony from NSW in 1859.⁴⁰ The main impetus to the growth of Brisbane and the development of a distinctive city centre came through the introduction of self-government, hand-in-hand with immigration and general economic expansion. By 1868 Brisbane was the largest town in Queensland with a population of 15 240.

Hobart's development also faltered after convict transportation ceased in 1853. Both self-government and the end of transportation were mixed blessings. Both were counted as triumphs but the 'triumphs helped to bring crashing the old levels of living

³⁶ RJ Solomon 'Hobart and the southeast', in G Aplin, SG Foster and M McKerran eds, *Australia: events and places*, pp 356, 360; W A Towrley, *Tasmania: from colony to statehood 1803–1945*, St David's Park Publishing, Hobart 1991, pp 68–70.

³⁷ Quoted in J Blake, *Brisbane's urban development and heritage*, an assessment, Background discussion paper no 13, The Brisbane Plan a city strategy, Brisbane City Council, 1990, p 7.

³⁸ Smith, 'Woolloongabba transported', p 83.

³⁹ S Fitzgerald, *Sydney 1842–1992*, Hale & Iremonger, Sydney, 1992, p 28. Sydney's population at the 1851 census was 53 924.

⁴⁰ Smith, 'Woolloongabba transported', p 84.

standards and by increasing isolation so reduced stimulation that the confidence of the people of Tasmania and Hobart was never quite the same again'.⁴¹

Convictism was an important historical distinction between the capital cities. In the founding years, the main difference was a cultural one, reflecting the differences between convict and free societies, that persisted after transportation had ended. In Sydney in 1841 (after free settlements had been established at Perth, Adelaide and Melbourne) more than a quarter of the population was convict or ex-convict while the remainder was colonial-born and free immigrant in about equal proportions. In 1847 nearly half of Hobart's population was still convict or ex-convict and only a quarter were free immigrants.⁴² [T]he first population of Sydney was of the wrong sort, whilst that which flooded Melbourne from 1851 to 1861 was eminently adventurous and enterprising ...⁴³

Another major difference between the convict towns and the free settler towns is still evident as it was expressed in their morphologies. This was the town plan. Scant concern with future urban expansion was shown in the selection of sites for the convict camps at Sydney, Hobart and Brisbane, and limited town plans were adopted only after those towns began to develop. When the small penal establishment at Moreton Bay was moved in 1825 from its seaside location 27 kilometres up the Brisbane River the new site made only half a square mile (0.3 hectare) available for settlement within a bend of the river.⁴⁴ The suitability of the Brisbane Town site (now the city centre) has since been much-debated. Similarly, since colonial times observers have compared Sydney's narrow and crooked streets with their 'unsuitableness for the practical wants of a large city' with the 'practical handsomeness' of Melbourne and Adelaide but observers have also admitted to enjoying 'a certain picturesqueness and old-fashionedness about Sydney, which brings back pleasant memories of Old England, after the monotonous perfection of Melbourne and Adelaide'.⁴⁵

Adelaide, Melbourne and Perth were placed squarely in the tradition of free settler frontier towns in NZ and North America with new world plans that were vast grids. These were far larger than necessary but based on expectations that the town would grow into a city and all the delineated spaces would eventually be filled. 'Plats were essentially maps of the future.'⁴⁶

In this respect, the plans of those Australian capitals anticipated the burgeoning of the city centres in the second half of the twentieth century. During the nineteenth century, the over-large plans were often condemned for creating straggling, squat towns with

⁴¹ P Bolger, *Hobart Town* Australian National University Press, Canberra 1973, p 133.

⁴² JCR Cramm and J McQuilton, *Australians: a historical atlas*, Fairfax, Syme & Weldon Associates, Broadway NSW 1987, pp 203, 204 (pie diagrams).

⁴³ RENTwoperry, *Townlife in Australia*, 1883, Penguin facsimile, Ringwood, Victoria 1973, p 3

⁴⁴ Smith, 'Woolloongabba transported', p 83.

⁴⁵ Twoperry (writing in 1883) pp 20–21.

⁴⁶ D Hamer, *New towns in the new world. Images and perceptions of the nineteenth-century urban frontier*, Columbia University Press, New York, 1990, p 178.

wide and windy streets and a paucity of public improvements. 'The sheer excess space provided by the Adelaide plan proved a serious obstacle to closer development for a small population with limited resources.'⁴⁷ During the twentieth century few changes were needed to these plans as there were still vacant inner-city blocks available for development and the spacious urban layouts could accommodate demands for bigger buildings and wider roads.

There are other common historical influences deriving from the founding years. Despite some false starts and second thoughts each city centre stands on the original city site and is defined by the morphology established by the first surveyors, the location of the port and the pattern of streets, plots and public spaces set out during the early colonial era. During the 'Age of Macquarie' (1810–1821) the NSW governor Lachlan Macquarie had a pronounced impact on Sydney and Hobart. Macquarie recognised that Sydney needed taking in hand and instituted a program of improving the town. The most lasting effect of his plans was in the siting of and grouping of impressive new public buildings, decisions that have 'exerted a partial but lasting influence on the land use zoning of central Sydney'.⁴⁸ When Macquarie visited Hobart in 1811 he was dismayed by its primitive appearance and irregular layout that could create problems similar to those that beset Sydney. He ordered a town survey, a public building program and building regulations, including a specification for wide streets. The surveyor, James Meehan, adapted a grid plan to existing landuses with the present Macquarie Street used as his baseline. This plan and an 1813 survey remain the basis of the present city centre layout.⁴⁹

Melbourne's present city centre was laid down in 1837 as a rectangular street pattern along the River Yarra. The plan nicely combined current official thinking on suitable town plans with the profit motivations of the free settlers. The surveyors Robert Hoddle and Robert Russell plotted 30-metre main streets and alternating 10-metre little streets as suitable for the speculators who established the city, with several sites reserved for public purposes. By the 1850s the city centre had assumed the form familiar today.⁵⁰ Adelaide, Perth and Darwin were also planned from the start as grids, usually with minor streets alternating with major streets. Adelaide was provided with the most generous and symmetrical provision of public squares.

Each city centre was also defined in relation to its region by a network of roads, and later, rails and telegraph lines. From 1837 Brisbane's military commandant, Major Sydney Cotton, linked the town to its outliers by establishing a network of roads that, to save time and labour, radiated from the centre like spokes of a wheel. This network laid the lines of communication for future transportation.⁵¹ In the same year, Adelaide's military-trained surveyor-general, Colonel William Light, designed similar

⁴⁷ SPikusa, *The Adelaide house 1836 to 1901*, Wakefield Press, South Australia 1986, p 96.

⁴⁸ G Aplin 'Collaborative planning? Macquarie and Greenway', in R Freestone, ed, *The Australian planner*, Proceedings of Planning History conference, University of NSW, Sydney 1993, p 38.

⁴⁹ L Scripps, *Central Hobart: a thematic history*, printed report, Hobart Central Area Strategy Plan topic paper, appendix 1, Hobart City Council, 1991, pp 1–3.

⁵⁰ G Davison, ed, *Melbourne on foot*, Rigby, Adelaide 1980, chapter by Davison, pp 13, 18.

⁵¹ Smith, 'Woolloongabba transported', p 83.

radiating main routes from the centre, the most important of which were Port Road and the Bay Road (now Anzac highway, to the original anchorage at Glenelg). These main roads determined subsequent rail, tram and bus links that followed the original radial pattern from the centre. This radial design helped to concentrate business, cultural institutions and public administration in each city centre, despite the early growth of suburban settlements.

The radial networks of roads, rails and telegraphs were extended during the colonial period to the furthest borders of each colony. Finally, they linked capital to capital but colonial parliaments ensured that each network was centred on their own capitals, whilst also competing to siphon trade from borderlands such along the River Murray, cumulatively reinforcing the dominance of each capital within its own colony and adjoining regions. By the late nineteenth century the Australian population was not only one of the most highly urbanised in the world but it was also concentrated into few cities: the six capitals. This metropolitan primacy, where each capital is many times larger than the next rank of towns in the State, grew during the twentieth century as one of the most distinctive features of Australia's settlement pattern, especially in Victoria, SA and WA.

Each capital was developed in advance of or in step with the occupation and exploitation of the surrounding countryside, and well ahead of exploration, let alone formal occupation of the interior. Unlike most European cities, none of Australia's capital cities was created as an outcome of rising local population, agrarian surpluses or regional trade, although these were all important factors in their growth and in the consolidation of their city centres. The Australian capitals shared these characteristics with other new world cities, especially those founded during 'a surge in nineteenth century urbanisation that ringed the Pacific with a network of bustling commercial cities: Melbourne, Sydney, Brisbane, Auckland, San Francisco, Seattle and Vancouver'. All of these cities grew as gateways to extensive hinterlands, 'facilitating European settlement and the harnessing of their developing regional economies to world money and produce markets'. Some historians have described them as 'instant cities'.⁵²

More distinctively, in each Australian city, the public sector often initiated, and has remained crucial to private sector investment. No capital city was purely a 'private' city developed by settlers independently of government funds. The urban roles of present Australian governments are clearly descended from the roles of colonial governments, which provided public investment in infrastructure such as transport, which was essential to private development.⁵³ In Sydney and Hobart, as in Brisbane, 'the facilities provided by the [British Government's] convict regime provided the basis for Brisbane's role as the commercial and administrative centre for Queensland and as Queensland's capital'.⁵⁴ Social welfare and cultural activities were also supported by colonial governments, which assumed increasing responsibility for public buildings—

⁵² (Including preceding quotations) Lewis, *Melbourne*, p 8.

⁵³ A Parkin, *Governing the cities: the Australian experience in perspective*, Macmillan, Melbourne, 1984, p 64.

⁵⁴ W Ross Johnston, 'Brisbane and the southeast', in *Australia: events and places*, p 288.

hospitals, asylums, schools, libraries, museums—and the employment of staff. Public works such as wharves, roads and telegraphs favoured business in the capital city centres and major cultural, welfare and administrative functions were even more highly centralised. Thus the capital cities were built by a partnership of public and private enterprise with government providing essential services, and also, through convict assignment and assisted immigration, both labour and consumers.

Melbourne came closest to the traditional models of urban development as it was initiated not by distant government but by colonists at Launceston who were eager to take up new pastoral lands on the mainland. However only part of the Port Phillip region had been explored, let alone occupied, and the new town was within a year brought under the control of the NSW administration. Melbourne's accessibility to older settlements in NSW and Van Dieman's Land and the wealth of its regional resources—pasturelands and gold—did make it the city least dependent on government expenditure and the most rapidly developed. Its population jumped from around 600 to nearly 5 000 between 1838 and 1841, rocketing to 53 235 by 1854, following the goldrush.⁵⁵ Sydney had reached a similar size by then—but after more than 60 years of settlement. Yet the most enduring legacy of those founding years and Melbourne's most distinctive feature is the government-planned 'grid', a term still used to describe the city centre, which was laid out by government surveyors in 1837.

Perth and Adelaide were also established by free settlers intent on profit, who, unlike the first Port Phillip settlers, succeeded in creating new colonies separate from NSW. But both towns languished until rescued by British government expenditure. In Perth's case the main form of government help was convict labour, provided by transportation, which lasted from 1850–1868.

Colonial governments soon recognised the advantage of moving some of the costs of building the cities to local government, once there seemed to be sufficient ratepayers to provide the revenue. The form of municipal government was strongly influenced by the British Municipal Corporations Act of 1835. Between 1842–1859 councils were established in every capital city although those in Adelaide, Sydney, Perth and Hobart struggled with insolvency and were temporarily abolished or replaced. Even in the early years councils had a discernible impact on the centres, for example, in setting up markets and building the town halls, which remain civic and social focal points. But the role of councils in building the city centres was more pervasive than that. Morton's summary of Adelaide council's role may suffice for most. A primary phase of installing infrastructure—roads, bridges, squares, markets, council premises—was followed by a secondary phase of city improvement and regulation—health inspections, building controls, tree planting and gardens and subsidising of cultural activities—then a tertiary phase of 'social engineering', with comprehensive city planning and the subsidy of welfare schemes.⁵⁶

⁵⁵ *Australians: events and places*, p 401.

⁵⁶ P Morton 'A history of Adelaide and its council 1878–1928', Typescript, City of Adelaide, 1991, pp 6–7. (Published in 1996.)

The area of city councils varied, both between cities and within cities over time, except in Adelaide, where the boundaries have always been those of Light's survey of 1837. When the boundaries of Sydney's council were drawn in 1842 they followed the harbour's southern shoreline and other natural landmarks and encompassed 'the extent of the settlement, with generous margins for expansion'.⁵⁷ Since then boundaries have waxed and waned, but in common with most capital city councils, they were confined to the centre and its immediate surrounds as other suburbs—with new councils—spread beyond them.

City councils in Perth and Hobart retained the largest percentages of the total metropolitan area but only in Brisbane was the multiplicity of local councils merged into one. In 1925 the Greater Brisbane Council was created, which covered the whole metropolitan area. This important event also differentiated Brisbane from the other cities because the council was responsible for city-wide functions—including water, sewerage, public transport, major roads and metropolitan planning—which were assumed by State government elsewhere.⁵⁸ In fact, no sooner had city councils been established in Australia than government began to create separate departments and semi-independent statutory boards with important city functions. Early examples were port authorities such as the Marine Board of Hobart (1857) and the Sydney Harbour Trust (1901), which was established specifically to transfer responsibility for the upkeep of the harbour from municipal authorities.⁵⁹

There was no contest between local and State authorities in Darwin. Darwin council, set up in 1874, wrestled with a diminishing rate base and was abolished at its own request in 1937.⁶⁰ Despite recurring efforts by colonial and Commonwealth authorities to stimulate private development Darwin was (and has remained) the city most dependent on the public sector. The NT was part of SA from 1863 and administered from Darwin from 1869. The South Australians had planned to make Darwin their northern capital and expected it to profit from trade with Asia through a rail link to Adelaide, and as the service centre for flourishing plantation agriculture, pastoral runs and mines. 'More than a century later the destiny has not been achieved, and generally the Northern Territory has spurned the attempts of those who would civilize and develop her.'⁶¹ The main reason for the town's survival (when earlier settlements were abandoned) was due to the government's construction of an overland telegraph line in 1872 which linked with an overseas cable at Darwin and made rapid communication possible between Australia and Europe. But SA lost rather than made money in the NT and relinquished it to the Commonwealth in 1911. Darwin's growth

⁵⁷ Fitzgerald, *Sydney 1842-1992*, p 28.

⁵⁸ M Bowman, *Local government in the Australian states*, AGPS, Canberra 1976, pp 55-56. Detailed histories of Brisbane Council are provided in Greerwood and Lavery, and Cole.

⁵⁹ NO'Flanagan *The Sydney Harbour Trust: the early years*, URU working paper no 18, ANU 1989, p 1.

⁶⁰ H Wilson 'Historical overview', in AWelke and H Wilson 'Darwin central area heritage study', Report to Northern Territory Conservation Commission through National Trust of Australia (Northern Territory), Darwin 1993, p xi.

⁶¹ P Forrest, in P Jarver and P Forrest, *Darwin Australia's northern capital*, Thunderhead Publishing Darwin 1992, p 3.

remained fitful until it again assumed strategic importance in the military lead-up to the Second World War.

The Australian colonies retained their capitals when they became States upon federation and the creation of the Commonwealth in 1901. For much of the twentieth century Melbourne was also the federal capital as the site for Canberra had not even been chosen in 1901. Commonwealth parliament (and therefore, most federal court and departmental functions) was located in Melbourne until a temporary parliament house was opened in Canberra in 1927, but the slow construction of other government facilities and housing meant that the transfer of big departments such as Defence was not completed until the 1960s. Undoubtedly, the Commonwealth presence reinforced Melbourne's continuing pre-eminence as Australia's financial centre, at least until the 1960s, although some Commonwealth headquarters were also established in Sydney (for example, the Commonwealth Bank and the Australian Broadcasting Commission).

In both centuries the cities were marked by economic growth cycles, booms and busts. Local causes were often evident: Sydney's expansion during the 1830s as it exported wool and whale oil; the gold boom which created 'Marvellous Melbourne'; the 'wheat rush' of the 1870s which funded the rebuilding of central Adelaide; and the slump of the 1890s. Hobart also reflected rise and falls in local fortunes but this did not disguise the effects of its fall in status after the 1850s from being a major colonial trader to the capital of a small and isolated colony and distribution centre for the southern region—the north was better reached by traders from Melbourne.⁶² From the second half of the nineteenth century and through much of the twentieth century Hobart did not bloat like the other capitals due to increasing competition from the other cities, and because of an often-stagnant hinterland and 'the limitations of insularity, both internal and external'.⁶³

These events also reflected close connections between colonial economies and western capitalism. Local factors worsened international depressions in the 1890s and 1930s. The 1880s–1890s was a decade of great expansion in Sydney, Melbourne, Adelaide and Brisbane as investment funds rushed in from Britain, imposing buildings were constructed and speculation reached fever pitch in land, houses, offices and shops. Most extravagantly, commercial Melbourne asserted 'her wealth in stucco and stone'.⁶⁴ City skylines were still dominated by public buildings, typically, clock towers on town halls and post offices—in Sydney, the GPO in Martin Place, the Lands Department building between Bridge and Spring Streets, and the Town Hall in George Street—but the development of engineered buildings during that decade started a

⁶² Bolger, pp 128–129.

⁶³ RJ Solomon, *Urbanisation: the evolution of an Australian capital*, Argus and Robertson, Sydney 1976, p 397.

⁶⁴ Davison, in G Davison, ed, *Melbourne on foot*, p 20.

process of high-rise construction of commercial office blocks that would eventually efface the old skylines.⁶⁵

The change was long drawn out. The building boom ended when the bubble burst in the late 1880s in Brisbane and Adelaide, before the other cities. Then general depression in the early 1890s worsened the local economies. In Brisbane its impact was magnified by three great floods that hit the city in 1893. As in Adelaide, the city's economic recovery was slowed by prolonged rural drought. In Brisbane, large-scale immigration had more than doubled the metropolitan population from only 37127 in 1881 to 125 123 by 1891.⁶⁶ But its population and those of Adelaide and Melbourne dropped during the 1890s, only recovering with the revival of immigration in the 1910s. By 1925 Brisbane's population was around 260 000.⁶⁷ Partly because more British settlers were attracted to Sydney than Melbourne in the 1920s, Sydney increased its lead as the largest city.⁶⁸ Sydney reached one million in the early 1920s and Melbourne by the end of the 1920s. Then another severe depression slowed metropolitan growth.

From the late nineteenth century the most evident impact of population growth was in the suburbs, not the city centres. 'European Australia was born urban and quickly became suburban', with Woolloomooloo created east of Sydney in the late 1820s, and suburban allotments sold within two or three years of the founding of Perth, Melbourne and Adelaide.⁶⁹

The numbers of suburban residents remained small until the influx of immigrants in the 1850s and 1860s placed 'a messy jigsaw of villas, truncated terraces, cottages, corner shops, pubs, workshops, stables, and vacant lots' in inner suburbs such as Richmond and Carlton in Melbourne and Redfern in Sydney.⁷⁰ However, these new suburbs still clustered 'to the skirts of a recognisable central business district',⁷¹ and themselves formed part of 'central' Sydney and Melbourne. As most jobs were located in the city and most residents walked to work they lived as close to the centre as possible.

When significant manufacturing industry developed in the late nineteenth century most factories and warehouses were located not only in the capital cities but in these inner city areas. Even as the city spread, central suburbs became more tightly packed, despite the demolition of houses for factories, warehouses and shops. In the 1890s, Sydney's 'walking zone' housed 60 per cent of its metropolitan population.⁷²

⁶⁵ HJ Cowan 'City buildings', in D Fraser, ed, *Sydney: from settlement to city. An engineering history of Sydney*, Engineers Australia, Sydney 1989, pp 221, 229.

⁶⁶ K Cormee, 'Subdivision boom, building bust: the slow settlement of Norman Park', in Fisher and Shaw, eds, *Brisbane: people, places and progress*, p 93.

⁶⁷ J Lavery, 'Cooparoo: the development of a shire', in Fisher and Shaw, p 31.

⁶⁸ I Burnley, 'Immigration the post-war transformation of Sydney and Melbourne', in J Davidson ed, *The Sydney-Melbourne book*, Allen & Unwin Sydney 1986 p 119.

⁶⁹ G Davison pp 42, 45, 50-51.

⁷⁰ Davison p 58.

⁷¹ M Kelly, 'Nineteenth century Sydney', in Davidson p 44.

⁷² Kelly, p 46.

However, from this time, beginning with Sydney and Melbourne, a more clearly defined central business district became evident. In central Melbourne during the 1910s the last city residents departed and most of the mercantile firms closed their warehouses. 'Importing and manufacturing were less important than the growing financial and service centres'.⁷³

The shift in population from the city's 'walking zone' to more distant suburbs was made possible when trains and trams were introduced and when new stations were opened. 'Transport routes early provided a skeleton for the urban body.' Transport to the growing metropolis was so vital that colonial politics in the 1870s and 1880s was mainly concerned with building railways, pushing out 'from the egocentric city to the rampant suburbs and the far countryside'.⁷⁴ Most suburban systems were complete by the mid-1890s and suburbs were constructed along radial rail and tram lines. At its peak, Melbourne's cable tram system extended to 17 radiating routes.⁷⁵ In Brisbane suburbs grew along four main railways radiating from the centre. Between the 1890s and the 1930s the electrification of trams and the introduction of motor buses reinforced suburbanisation. When electric trams were introduced to Brisbane in 1897, as they were cheaper, faster and carried more passengers than horse-drawn vehicles, they 'effectively doubled the radius for convenient suburban commuting and stimulated further real estate development beyond the bounds of the traditional walking city'.⁷⁶ Because Brisbane developed later in the nineteenth century than the southern capitals its suburban development was more greatly influenced by new transport technology—trams and trains—than they had been.⁷⁷

But in every capital transport routes converged on the city and the small business nodes that developed along them were subordinate to the centre. Most residents continued to catch buses or trams to work in the city. Metropolitan areas were defined for the first Commonwealth census in 1911 and were delimited by a circle at a certain radius from the central General Post Office. Despite several phases of rapid suburb building between 1911 and the census of 1947 most took place within that radius and close to public transport routes. Metropolitan areas remained closely tied to and focused on the city, even if it was no longer strictly central: metropolitan Melbourne was described in 1941 as 'a non-concentric, semi-circular form draped about the head of Port Phillip Bay'.⁷⁸

By the 1950s, a century of suburban development had shifted residents and factories from the centres, although the population of inner areas had levelled rather than steeply declined, as immigrants had replaced those who moved. Between the 1850s–1890s Chinese residents had formed an expanding Chinatown in Melbourne's Little

⁷³ Davison in G Davison ed, *Melbourne on foot*, p 21.

⁷⁴ RJ Pryor, 'The recent growth of Melbourne', *Australian Geographical Studies* v 6, 1968, pp 128, 129 (first quotation by Pryor; in the second he quotes Carr).

⁷⁵ D Durstan *Governing the metropolis: Melbourne 1850–1891*, MUP, Carlton, Victoria 1984, p 207.

⁷⁶ Smith, 'Woolloongabba transported', p 89.

⁷⁷ Smith, p 89, quoting G Davison 'New, raw, unrefined half-finished: Brisbane among the Australian capital cities', in Brisbane History Group, *Brisbane in 1888: the historical perspective*, ed R Fisher, 1988.

⁷⁸ Quoted in Pryor, p 129.

Bourke Street and its lanes between Swanston and Russell Streets. Repressive labour, trade and immigration laws had led to Chinatown's decline close to vanishing point by the 1930s but 30 years later new Chinese immigrants helped to revive it: the Sze-Yap Society, which had occupied land in South Melbourne from the 1850s, and erected its present building in Little Bourke Street in 1911, remodelled it in the early 1960s with shops and accommodation for Chinese classes, dances and clan meetings.⁷⁹

In central Adelaide, small, cheap housing in the West End had attracted Chinese and 'Assyrians' in the 1880s, and from the late 1920s, Greeks and Italians. '[T]he history of Greeks in Adelaide is an important theme in the twentieth century history of the city.' Greek numbers were highest after the war, in 1954, then they followed earlier immigrants to the suburbs.⁸⁰ Adelaide City's population, which peaked at 43 000 in 1915, was around 35 000 in 1951, and only then dropped abruptly, to 19 000 by 1967.⁸¹ Demographic change in the inner areas of the other capitals followed a similar pattern.

Far from reducing central business activity the growth in suburbs had also helped to increase central commercial, cultural and administrative activities. What further changes would mass use of cars and accelerated metropolitan growth bring to the city centres?

The urban centre is a city's memory cast in brick and stone. This is where the city starts its long journey into the future, and its gradual expansion into the countryside. The steps along the way are recorded in the design of buildings, the layout of streets and public places, all permanently imprinted in people's minds.⁸²

⁷⁹ A Blake, in Davison ed, *Melbourne on foot*, pp 50–61.

⁸⁰ (Including quotation) P Sumner, 'Adelaide's West End', in B Dickey, ed, *William Shakespeare's Adelaide 1860–1930*, Association of Professional Historians, Adelaide 1992, p 32.

⁸¹ Marsden, Stark and Sumner, pp 40, 43, 44.

⁸² H Girardet, *The Gaia atlas of cities. New directions for sustainable urban living*, Gaia Books Ltd, London 1992, p 120.

Contextual History: Part two

The city centres since World War Two

1. Constructing capital city economies

1.1 Economic cycles

Principally for economic reasons, the years since World War Two may be divided into two broad periods. The first, Australia's long economic boom from the 1950s until the early 1970s, is labelled in a history of entrepreneurship as 'years of plenty, profit and industrialists', and the following period as a 'roller coaster ride' and a time of 'new directions and expanding horizons'.⁸³ Within these broad phases short cycles of boom and bust also left their marks on city centre architecture in a manner typical of the history of Australian cities overall.

Between 1940 and 1970 the Commonwealth Government was one of many that subscribed to Keynesian economic theory and the protection of 'infant industries'. Import quotas and restrictions and tariffs were used to protect manufacturing industries and foreign and domestic investment was concentrated in industries such as clothing, consumer goods and cars that catered mainly for the Australian market and were competitive as long as levels of government support remained high. During the late 1950s and 1960s the Australian economy experienced rapid growth, despite the credit squeeze of 1960. The expansion of manufacturing, coupled with immigration schemes that supplied both workers and consumers, was a major factor in the boom, mainly benefiting Melbourne, Sydney and Adelaide. Adelaide's basic role, like that of Hobart, was as a port city for agricultural exports but Adelaide's early postwar boom derived from the manufacturing that expanded between the 1930s and the 1970s within the context of federal government protectionism and with State government encouragement.⁸⁴ The biggest gains in each city were made in car and appliance manufacturing and their feeder industries, which expanded with the boom in consumer spending after the war, that also boosted city centre business.

Manufacturing was less important in the other capital cities and most of it served their own regions. Economic boom in Perth, Brisbane and Darwin followed later. Advances

⁸³ M Hartwell and J Lane, *Champions of enterprise: Australian entrepreneurship 1788-1990*, Focus Books, NSW 1991, Table of contents.

⁸⁴ Many writers have discussed Adelaide's industrialisation under the Liberal-Courty League governments of the period, most recently, DC Rich, in 'Tom's vision? Playford and industrialisation', chapter 5 in B O'Neil, J Raftery and K Rould, eds, *Playford's South Australia: essays on the history of South Australia 1933-1968*, Association of Professional Historians, Adelaide 1996.

in transport and communications technology had made the exploitation of mineral resources in remote regions feasible. Overseas funds were drawn in to mine extensive mineral deposits in the NT, Queensland and WA, setting off huge mining booms in the 1960s. In the 1980s resource-based development—mainly in WA, central Queensland and NSW—tripped off another round of intensive office building in the city centres. This was offset by the loss of factory jobs in Adelaide, Melbourne and Sydney and in capitals other than Sydney by an increasing concentration of international and national business in that city.⁸⁵

South Australian factories produced consumer goods for sale in the main markets of eastern Australia and from the 1970s Adelaide's economy faltered with downturns in Australian consumer spending and the removal of manufacturers to the eastern cities of Melbourne and Sydney. Concurrently, the international restructuring of industry had widespread and enduring effects on all major Australian cities. From 1972–73 capital city economies were also disturbed by the first oil crisis and the onset of national and international stagflation and recession: 1974–5 was a bad year for the property market in many countries, with high interest rates, scarce mortgage money, a fuel crisis, and an over-supply of offices.⁸⁶

The realignment of the Australian economy in a global context since the 1970s and especially since the mid-1980s has had particular impact on the capital cities. Tariff cuts in 1973 were the first steps taken by the Commonwealth in dismantling protectionism which forced manufacturers to reduce workforces and restructure operations. This process was hastened by the emergence of the 'take-over merchants', some of whom focused on developing more efficient industries that could compete in overseas markets.⁸⁷ In 1983 the Commonwealth abolished foreign exchange controls and then deregulated the banking system, forcing Australian business into the international economy by opening it to foreign competition and investment.

The full urban consequences of the 'internationalisation' of manufacturing and finance sectors previously protected by government policy are still being played out. The locational outcomes are already becoming apparent. Few Australian cities are well-placed to provide the context for newly international economic activities, whether formerly protected activities or sectors such as tourism, producer services and new manufacturing that have entered global markets for the first time. While employment in Sydney was diversified during the 1980s in new areas such as tourism and other producer services, metropolitan Melbourne and Adelaide continued to rely on previously tariff-protected manufacturing industry. The sharp downturn in their economies resulted in drastic reductions in State government expenditure on services such as cultural facilities that, especially in South Australia, had also contributed

⁸⁵ The impact of these changing economic influences on Australian cities is usefully summarised in Australian Institute of Urban Studies, *Urban strategies for Australia: managing the 80's*, AIUS, Canberra 1980, pp 9–12.

⁸⁶ M Murphy *Challenges of change: the Lerd Lease story*, Lerd Lease Group of Companies, Sydney 1984, p 148.

⁸⁷ Hartwell and Lane, p 379.

significantly to Adelaide city's economy and its national image. Brisbane became Australia's third largest city in the early postwar years and in the 1970s, as Queensland attracted increasing numbers of internal migrants and a large proportion of international tourists, moved closer to challenging Melbourne's status as second city.⁸⁸

In the period up to 1973, Sydney's growth as a corporate headquarters was associated with indigenous capital, whereas Melbourne attracted multinational (local) head offices. However, in the last ten years this differential has tended to diminish with more multinationals establishing in Sydney ... Daly ... demonstrates the significance of global reorganisation of finance and development capitals, the process of switching from manufacturing to real estate and the attractions of Sydney in these processes. The Sydney CBD thus experienced a 'boom and bust' cycle very reminiscent of that experienced by London during the same period ...⁸⁹

Both London and Sydney are global 'gateway cities'. The global economy uses a restricted set of world cities as it requires infrastructure such as international airports and commodity markets, and also because multi-national executives 'follow-the-leader' by selecting sites in large, well-known centres. These constraints reinforce the dominance of single 'gateway' cities in most countries. As businesses closed in the other capitals new and transferred businesses clustered in Sydney, forming an agglomeration of services and skills that is attracting further investment.⁹⁰ The development of international computer networks and high-speed telecommunications further reinforced that trend as firms dispersed production but concentrated management, which relies on face-to face contact with service providers and clients, in the very centre of a few global cities.

In sum, the date, around 1972–73, divides not only the economic history of the city centre but many related themes. In the first period the main themes include the impact of Australia's economic expansion, modernist architecture, intensive redevelopment, traffic congestion, and the flight of retailers, residents and manufacturers. Since the 1970s the cities have been strongly affected by different processes, including the revival of pedestrian precincts, new emphases on public social and cultural activities and on the value of retailers and residents, mass tourism, and heritage preservation. Economic changes have continued to play a dominant role but business, hence corporate practices and office architecture have assumed new forms in response to such influences as globalisation, Asian investment, economic restructuring, new telecommunications and computer technology.

⁸⁸ B Lepari, G Freed, P Murphy and A McGillivray, *The economic role of cities: Australia in the global economy*, Commonwealth Department of Housing and Regional Development, Urban Futures Research Program, AGPS, Canberra 1995, p 30.

⁸⁹ M H Flett and JB McLoughlin 'Urban studies and planning in Australia: a preliminary review of the literature', printed paper, School of Environmental Planning, University of Melbourne, Victoria [1985], p 81.

⁹⁰ K O'Connor and RJ Stimson, *The economic role of cities: economic change and city development Australia 1971–1991*, AGPS Canberra 1995, pp 1–3.

1.2 National and international economic links

Commonwealth and State Governments gave encouragement to foreign investment, especially in manufacturing and mining. In the early postwar years most capital entered Australia via government channels and by foreign companies establishing subsidiaries. Foreign investment leaped in the 1960s and the economy became more closely tied to those of Australia's major trading partners in the mining industry. 'By the late 1960s, mining in the [Northern] Territory, as elsewhere in Australia, had become a capital intensive industry, dominated by large companies rather than the small [local] companies or partnerships that had been common prior to the war.'⁹¹ While new offices were constructed in the capitals of those regions by local firms that profited from the boom, national companies such as BHP and the partners or subsidiaries of overseas companies tended to build new headquarters in Sydney and Melbourne.

'In the 1970s about a quarter of the central business districts in Sydney and Melbourne were said to be owned by foreign (mainly British) capital.'⁹² Foreign investors were 'main players' in the office redevelopment that changed the city centres. In the 1950s–1960s these were mostly British insurance companies and American corporations. From the late 1960s the presence of Australian private developers and institutions strengthened—the largest, the AMP Society and the MLC Company—with loans from overseas as well as local financiers. In the 1980s ethnic Chinese and Japanese investors emerged as a major force, bolstered by the relaxation of Foreign Investment Review Board guidelines in 1986.⁹³ Changes in foreign investment in city centres have reflected changing investment patterns overall, from Britain and the US to Japan and more recently, other Asian sources.

Foreign investment has been concentrated in Sydney and to a lesser degree, Melbourne. This tendency has been strongly reinforced by globalisation.

Another difference in the pattern of international links reflects the siting of the capital cities. South African investors have recently emerged as 'a major new force in the Perth property market', buying up inner-city apartments and hotels and widening to include large CBD office buildings. Interest was generated by the migration of white South Africans, Perth's attractions including its political stability, its similarity to Johannesburg, and its relative proximity.⁹⁴

Since self-government in 1978 Darwin has assumed uniquely regional economic links with neighbouring countries largely as a result of the Northern Territory Government's 'enthusiastic' pursuit of closer trade and cultural relations, particularly with eastern

⁹¹ PF Donovan, *At the other end of Australia. The Commonwealth and the Northern Territory 1911–1978*, University of Queensland Press, St Lucia, 1984, p 216.

⁹² A David and T Wheelwright, *The third wave: Australia and Asian capitalism*, Left Book Club, NSW 1989, p 105.

⁹³ R Ostrow, *The new boy network: taking over corporate Australia*, William Heinemann Australia, Victoria 1987, pp 17–20.

⁹⁴ *Australian* 10–11 August 1996 (Property).

Indonesia.⁹⁵ In 1993 yet another Commonwealth committee examined ways of promoting NT development, as an outcome of the federal government's wider concern to strengthen 'Australia's engagement with the rapidly growing economies of East Asia'.⁹⁶ The Committee on Darwin examined how Commonwealth and NT governments could build on links established with Indonesia and take advantage of Darwin's closeness to East Asia. 'Darwin cannot presume that its proximity to East Asia is sufficient in itself. In order for Darwin to succeed, it must compete internationally.'⁹⁷ Its best opportunities were in service industries in which Darwin excelled and were responses to the needs of its Asian neighbours: education and training, research and health. The committee tacitly acknowledged Darwin's place in the Australian urban economy by asserting that strengthening links with other Australian capitals was equally important if Darwin was to become Australia's gateway to South East Asia. 'Darwin-based companies must be able to network effectively with the larger national companies based in Melbourne and Sydney.'⁹⁸ Any substantial increase in business conducted through Darwin with South East Asia is likely to make an equal if not greater contribution to the further growth of the Melbourne and Sydney city centres.

In Darwin the main urban impact of links with eastern Indonesia has so far been apparent in festivals such as the Arafura Sports Festival, and some expansion in city-based tertiary employment. Plans to expand trade have also found form in major extensions to Darwin's port. Interstate firms are establishing project offices in Darwin that will lead to further office block construction and will intensify political and redevelopment pressures on the older uses of the city and their heritage.

1.3 Dealing with remoteness, hardship and disasters

In the first postwar period when manufacturing was so important in urban economies, the physical isolation of the smaller capitals from the main Australian markets in the country's south-east limited the redevelopment of their city centres. In the 1950s Brisbane still 'carried the mantle of being a branch-office and warehouse town', and even 30 years later it was headquarters for only one national corporation—Mt Isa Mines—with little change in its branch office image.⁹⁹ In central Brisbane and Perth high-rise development was sparked by mining and property booms involving the exploitation of resources within their own States.

Hobart's isolation at the southern end of the island of Tasmania has constrained the city's development since it was eclipsed by Melbourne in the 1860s. At the other end of top of Australia the even more isolated city of Darwin has been described,

⁹⁵ *Report of the Committee on Darwin* Commonwealth of Australia, Canberra 1995, p 29.

⁹⁶ *Report of the Committee on Darwin* p 1.

⁹⁷ *Report of the Committee on Darwin* p xvii.

⁹⁸ *Report of the Committee on Darwin* p 39.

⁹⁹ V Harris, 'From town to metropolis: contemporary visions of Brisbane', in R Fisher and B Shaw, eds, *Brisbane: people, places and progress*, Brisbane History Group, Queensland, 1995, pp 133 (quotation), 134.

somewhat hopefully, as 'a small capital city serving a vast hinterland in Australia with developing commercial and social networks reaching into South-East Asia.'¹⁰⁰

Isolation limited social and cultural as well as economic opportunities. One of the aims of the Festival of Arts, first held in Adelaide in March 1960, was to make the arts accessible to 'people of a parochially-minded and geographically-disadvantaged area'.¹⁰¹ Psychological isolation also has physical outcomes: Stephenson believes that Perth's isolation kept city planning conventional, with tardy adoption of such civic improvements as pedestrian malls, and that much livelier debates go on in Sydney than anywhere else in Australia about the future of the city centre.¹⁰²

Remoteness, hardship and disasters continue to shape the built form of the smaller city centres. An earthquake rocked Adelaide in 1954 and many buildings were damaged but not destroyed. Brisbane River swamped the city of Brisbane in a devastating flood in 1974. A series of disasters—and responses to them—have strongly shaped central Darwin. Five cyclones between 1878 and 1937 all but destroyed the town. Then during the war half of the city's buildings were destroyed by Japanese bombing and subsequent army occupation. This meant that by 1945 there was very little surviving of the prewar city.

Darwin suffered the single greatest disaster in the history of any Australian city when Cyclone Tracy struck on Christmas Day in 1974. Local authorities had ignored Bureau of Meteorology warnings despite Darwin's long history of cyclone damage. Ninety four per cent of houses were destroyed or seriously damaged and 66 people died. There were

47 000 people in Darwin at the time. General Alan Stretton, head of the Commonwealth's new National Disasters Organisation, was placed in command of Darwin Relief Operation and promptly reduced the population to 10 500 by evacuation to the south. Yet he refused to allow the armed forces to take over restoring the city, deciding instead that it was important for morale to allow 'the people of Darwin to drag themselves out of the rubble'.¹⁰³ And they did so.

These decisions, which Stretton rated as two of the most important he made, had important long-term urban consequences. Within two years the population had returned to its pre-cyclone size but only about half of the former residents had returned. 'A great percentage of the people in Darwin today are part of the huge workforce that is reconstructing the city, together with a new group of citizens who intend to make the northern capital their new home'.¹⁰⁴ Stretton's support for civilian rather than military restoration of the city may have also helped reinforce residents' commitment to rebuilding their old city rather than planning a new model city.

¹⁰⁰ Lady Jessie Kearney, in *Report of the Committee on Darwin*, p 296.

¹⁰¹ Quoted in A Parter, 'Entertainment: the charging scene', in O'Neil et al, p 313.

¹⁰² Gordon Stephenson interview transcript, 1991–1992, tape 18, pp 205–207. JS Battye Library of West Australian History, Oral History Unit, OH 2532.

¹⁰³ A Stretton *The furious days: the relief of Darwin* Collins, Sydney 1976, pp 9, 14–16, 61, 204–206 (quotation p 205).

¹⁰⁴ Stretton p 196.

Buildings in the city centre were less extensively damaged by the cyclone. Most were quickly repaired but two ruins have been kept in central Darwin as a 'grim and poignant reminder of that horrific night in December 1974'. The Town Hall of 1884 and the Anglican church, built in 1902, were valued as rare historical and stone buildings in the architectural style of colonial SA. The cyclone left standing only some broken walls of the hall and the church's wartime memorial porch. These have been stabilised and preserved.¹⁰⁵ Such heritage sites commemorate both their builders and the events that nearly destroyed them. In response to the cyclone, builders and architects in Darwin developed a 'concrete bunker' mentality with public and commercial as well as domestic buildings abandoning lightweight materials for stolid, ground-hugging forms: the massive concrete construction of the Anglican Cathedral (built around 1977) was typical.¹⁰⁶ In turn, contemporary architects are now returning to lighter building styles with greater airflow, better suited to the city's climate and history.¹⁰⁷

1.4 Transport and communications

It is a truism that efficient transport and communications are essential for urban economic development. The provision of infrastructure remained primarily a responsibility of State and local governments.¹⁰⁸ Just as colonial governments built roads, rails and telegraph lines to funnel trade into the capital cities, Australian governments continued to spend heavily on promoting access by road, rail, ship and telecommunications. These links promoted international and interstate as well as regional use. Sea-borne trade with overseas countries remained important. The ports still function in central Sydney, Darwin and Hobart. However, industrial cargo loading was shifted away from central Sydney and Brisbane removing to Botany Bay and the mouth of the Brisbane River respectively.

The Maritime Services Board (MSB) assumed responsibility for Sydney Harbour and port management in 1935 but as a 'holding operation' until 1945 when rapid changes in cargo handling and types of ships required extensive modernisation of harbour works. Containerisation was a profound change enabling the use of much larger ships and fewer seamen and waterside workers. Trade in petrochemicals and bulk materials also increased enormously, requiring massive new facilities. Concrete and steel replaced timber-piled wharf structures; longshore (parallel) wharves replaced finger wharves; ferry wharves were modernised; container terminals were built; and the Port Operations and Communications Centre was housed in a concrete tower at Millers Point. From 1971, to relieve the pressure on Port Jackson, the MSB developed Port Botany as the main container and industrial port. Circular Quay kept its ferries, but the last major port development in central Sydney was a modern passenger terminal built on the western side of the Quay for the tourist-liner trade, which flourished between

¹⁰⁵ A Welke and H Wilson, 'Darwin central area heritage study', Report to Northern Territory Conservation Commission through National Trust of Australia (Northern Territory), Darwin 1993, pp 222-224, 257-259 (quotation).

¹⁰⁶ M Evans to S Marsden

¹⁰⁷ R Hooper to S Marsden

¹⁰⁸ In 1990 about 85% of public sector infrastructure was in the State and local sector. D Borthwick, 'Funding the future infrastructure: a view from the Commonwealth Treasury', National Infrastructure Committee, *The third national infrastructure conference*, AGPS, Canberra 1990, p 231.

the 1940s and 1960s.¹⁰⁹ Since then air travel has replaced ship passenger transport and the terminal is only occasionally used for pleasure cruisers.

In comparison to the southern cities, Darwin's port function was never major but it has had a strong influence on the city centre. The Royal Australian Navy also played its part: a whole precinct from Bennett Street east to the wharf was acquired by the Navy by the 1950s and used as its base with shore functions housed in the town's former public and commercial buildings. That area had been the main focus of the city before the war but civilians were kept out of the area for many years by the Navy and so both European-Australian and Chinese-Australian business relocated in Smith Street west of Bennett Street. Mirroring that western shift a new post office was built in the same locality in the late 1950s.¹¹⁰ There is still a strong Navy presence in Darwin and as well, since the 1970s, mineral exports, mainly uranium, have gone out by sea from its port.

Hobart, like Sydney, was its State's principal port. In the mid-1960s more than a third of imports and of exports were shipped through Hobart. The main exports were apples and zinc.¹¹¹ Besides these activities the port continued to exert a strong influence on landuse in the city centre. 'The port has been so closely connected with the town's central structure and functions and more generally with its fluctuating fortunes that its attractive force can hardly be over-rated.'¹¹² Hobart in 1954 demonstrated 'a close integration between port and town'. The pattern of Hobart's central functions also demonstrated a certain concentricity. There was the cove and its port adjacent facilities, with government buildings grouped nearby; alongside them was a well-defined commercial core surrounded by offices then warehouses on the south and east with mixed commercial-industrial-residential uses on the west and north. Commercialism was also pushing outwards in sectoral fashion along the lines of access in the low land between the Domain and the western piedmont.¹¹³

Sydney demonstrated a similar semi-concentric pattern. The change in both cities since then reflects both the glamourisation of the ports and their continuing influence as factories, warehouses and waterside worker dwellings have been recycled or replaced with office towers, hotels and public buildings oriented to the harbour. In the 1950s the entire western boundary of central Sydney housed port-related functions: port workers' housing in the Rocks, and warehousing and light industry in the streets running parallel to Darling Harbour. Some residential use survives in the Rocks, mainly at Millers Point, and some shipping ties up at the northern end of Darling Harbour but the rest has been almost entirely replaced by entertainment and an expanded office zone.

¹⁰⁹ N Rich, 'Harbour works', in Fraser, pp 160–161.

¹¹⁰ P Forrest to S Marsden

¹¹¹ City of Hobart, pp 26, 27.

¹¹² Solomon, *Urbanisation* p 345.

¹¹³ Solomon, *Urbanisation* pp 223, 344.

One manifestation of this change was the remaking of southern Darling Harbour as a tourist and entertainment site in the late 1980s. Here, working ships were replaced by the National Maritime Museum and the Ultimo Power Station, which generated its last electricity in 1963, was reopened as the Powerhouse technological museum in 1988. Most recently in the late 1990s, National Trust efforts to preserve early twentieth century timber wharves and store sheds at Walsh Bay on Sydney Harbour, just to the west of the bridge, were thwarted by a State Government intent on expediting their partial destruction and redevelopment for commercial and residential use.

Passenger ferries remain a significant feature of Sydney Harbour and Circular Quay although their importance as a form of public transport declined with the rise of private car use. Ferries also operated in Hobart and Brisbane. Traffic engineer Wilbur Smith noted in 1964 there were 15 ferrying passengers across the Brisbane River, including at Edward Street and Customs House, and other services travelling up and down the river.¹¹⁴

Since World War Two Australia's international trade in bulky goods has continued by sea. By contrast, almost all of the interstate trade and all passenger transport was transferred from coastal ships to rail and roads. Another profound difference between prewar and postwar transport policies was the change in emphasis from providing for public and mass-transport: trams, trains, shipping, to private transport in cars and trucks, on roads and freeways. In the cities during the early postwar years high rates of public transport use persisted, due to the relatively high cost of cars and wartime petrol rationing, which was prolonged until 1950. 'But could this continue in an era of rising incomes, expectations and car ownership?'¹¹⁵ The answer was no.

With suburbanisation more and more residents came to live beyond tram and train networks and made increasing numbers of journeys to destinations other than the city centre. As both cause and consequence car ownership rose rapidly. In the decade 1947–1957 alone, the number of vehicles on Melbourne's roads doubled.¹¹⁶ People abandoned both public transport and their bicycles. In Brisbane public transport use declined from 45% of all travel to 29% in the few short years between 1960–1964.¹¹⁷ In Melbourne workers' use of bicycles plummeted from nearly ten per cent to two per cent between 1951 and 1964.¹¹⁸ Governments may have responded to these changes by adopting an approach recommended in 1953 by the MMBW, that is, by coordinating all tram, train and bus services. Instead, public transport remained uncoordinated and operators competed with each other's services rather than with cars, while overall patronage continued to fall.¹¹⁹

¹¹⁴ Wilbur Smith and Associates, 'Brisbane transportation study', vol 1, Brisbane 1965, p 3. (URP library).

¹¹⁵ P Mees, *Do public choice and public transport mix? An Australian-Canadian comparison* URP working paper no 51, ANU 1996, p 14.

¹¹⁶ Lewis, p 116.

¹¹⁷ Wilbur Smith and Associates, p 78.

¹¹⁸ Mees, p 15.

¹¹⁹ Mees, p 15.

In a new age of public spending all attention was on building for cars. Some of the most powerful and pervasive agencies were the State's road construction departments (helped by earmarked Commonwealth funds) such as South Australia's Highways Department and the Department of Main Roads (DMR) in NSW. Their work had both direct and indirect impact on city centres, as they razed central sites, both eased and accelerated traffic congestion, built freeways to by-pass the old radial road system and attached outlying rural districts and towns to the city's urban catchment with upgraded roads and new freeways. In the 1970s the DMR pushed 'freeway construction ... north to the Newcastle metropolitan area and south toward the Wollongong area, thereby hastening the day when there will be but one giant megalopolis on the New South Wales coast'.¹²⁰

The grand postwar transport edifices are the sweeping forms of high bridges and wide freeways; the most ubiquitous are carparks and privately-built petrol stations. Bridge and freeway construction and the widening of central intersections reshaped city centres as radically as high-rise and large-scale office buildings. The Cahill Expressway in Sydney is the best-known symbol. This was designed as a distributor for traffic between North and East Sydney to by-pass the city centre, with an overhead roadway above Circular Quay, a tunnel under a corner of the Botanic Gardens and a concrete bridge to carry Art Gallery Road. It was opened in 1962.¹²¹ With subsequent construction of the elevated Western Distributor, Warringah Freeway and other roadworks whole precincts of colonial buildings were swept away elsewhere in Sydney.¹²² The same events were repeated in the other cities. In his survey of 1840s townscapes in central Hobart carried out in 1962, Solomon identified an 'area of outstanding preservation centred on Burnett Street ... in 1965 it was razed to provide for increased traffic flow'.¹²³

The transformation was most marked in central Brisbane, where an American consultant Wilbur Smith prepared a transportation study recommending construction of 80 miles of 'controlled access freeways' (three traversing the city centre), expressways (including a riverside expressway that now parallels the river through the city centre), five new bridges, city centre carparks, a transportation centre built above Central Station and the replacement of trams and trolley buses with diesel buses. All of Smith's recommendations assumed that 'the central business district will remain the focal point of the City's expanded activities and generate [increasing] travel ...'.¹²⁴ These traffic proposals were incorporated in the first town plan of 1965 and implemented by Brisbane City Council.¹²⁵

¹²⁰ RH Leach, *The governance of metropolitan areas in Australia with lessons from Canadian and American experience*, Centre for Research on Federal Financial Relations, ANU Canberra 1977, p 38.

¹²¹ D Fraser, 'Roads and streets', in Fraser, p 61.

¹²² For a history of these events, see D Ball, *The road to nowhere? Urban freeway planning in Sydney to 1977 and in the present day*, URP working paper no 51, ANU 1996.

¹²³ Solomon, *Urbanisation* p 187.

¹²⁴ Wilbur Smith and Associates, pp IV (quotation), V, VI.

¹²⁵ V Harris, p 136; and see Wilbur Smith & Assoc, 'Brisbane Transportation Study'.

The impact of American methodology in transport planning on the postwar city centres cannot be over-emphasised. This was reinforced by the actual part played by American traffic engineers, above all Wilbur Smith & Associates and De Leuw Cather. The two firms between them prepared plans that were implemented at least in part in nearly every capital city in the 1960s and 1970s, Wilbur Smith in Brisbane, Melbourne and Hobart, and De Leuw and Cather in Sydney¹²⁶ and Perth.¹²⁷ In the circumstances, it seems appropriate that the only postwar structures in central Brisbane to be presently placed on the Register of the National Estate should be the postwar Victoria Bridge and the city council's multi-storey carpark.

In Perth the Stephenson-Hepburn Plan of 1955 established the basis for planning in the period of expansion. On the plan's recommendations the Narrows Bridge was constructed in 1959 and freeways swept around the city centre.¹²⁸ The bridge linked Kwinana Freeway through an interchange to Mitchell Freeway and heralded the restructuring of the road system of the whole Perth region for postwar growth in motor traffic. The road system also brought major landscape changes to central Perth. With 'The Causeway' it enclosed Perth Water (on the Swan) as a lake within a basin whose rim is fringed with parkland, freeway and high-rise buildings.¹²⁹ Perhaps not surprisingly, the effect is like that of central Chicago along its lakefront.

In the city centres at street level, traffic signals, road signs and parking meters proliferated. Parking meters were first installed in Melbourne in 1955 and in Adelaide in 1958. Over a thousand meters were installed in Adelaide, where the manager of the department store Miller Anderson looked to American experience in observing, 'that a city would die if it could not provide adequate parking'.¹³⁰ There was a simple correlation between the rebuilding of city centres, the increase in traffic and the demand for bigger roads: 'the size of the central area and the width of the streets remain the same but the buildings get bigger and higher holding more people and attracting more traffic'.¹³¹

Planning that permitted car parking within the new office towers and did little to restrict car traffic abetted the congestion of the city centres and their transformation from public transport-oriented and pedestrian-friendly places. Retailing declined because the car had taken over the streets and a city centre such as Perth was considered 'no

¹²⁶ Ball, p 14.

¹²⁷ Information provided by PMees and PTroy, URP, 13 February 1997. The URP library holds several of the relevant consultants' reports, including W Smith & Assoc, 'Brisbane Transportation Study'.

¹²⁸ G Seddon and D Ravine, *A city and its setting. Images of Perth Western Australia*, Fremantle Arts Centre Press, Fremantle 1986, pp 187, 285.

¹²⁹ I Molyreux, comp, *Looking around Perth. A guide to the architecture of Perth and surrounding towns*, Wescolour Press, East Fremantle 1981, p 72.

¹³⁰ *Advertiser* 8 August 1960, quoted in P Summerling, 'Playford and "progress" in the City of Adelaide', manuscript loaned to S Masden by the author [p 19].

¹³¹ D Winstan *Sydney's great experiment: the progress of the Cumberland County Plan*, Argus and Robertson Sydney 1957, caption opposite p 82.

longer a pleasant environment where people can do their shopping and meet friends'.¹³²

State government policies were often contradictory. At one and the same time bridges were built to bring more traffic into the city and to help avoid it. The opening of the Tasman Bridge across the Derwent in 1964 for the first time enabled residents on the opposite shore to Hobart able to reach the city centre quickly. The impact on both suburbanisation and city centre business was immediate but the dependence on a rapid link with the centre was made manifest when the bridge was rammed and badly damaged by an ore ship in 1975 and was not reopened until 1977.

Despite the importance of road transport, for most of the postwar period suburban rail, tram and bus routes followed the radial pattern established in colonial times, which continued to channel traffic and passengers into the city centres. Local shopping precincts were aligned to main roads or stations and remained subordinate to central business and commerce. The relationships between centre and suburb changed dramatically after motor car use became nearly universal in the 1950s but even today, in such a large and complex city as Melbourne, the majority of suburban residents journey to work in the city and inner suburbs along radial road, tram and rail routes.¹³³

Provision for public transport varied widely between the cities. It was not all simply a matter of downgrading and replacement. Construction of Sydney's city loop electric railway system had a long history. The Railways Department started construction in 1917, completing two underground stations in the city in the 1920s and another two by 1932 (after Sydney Harbour Bridge was opened for rail and road traffic). The loop was completed in 1956 when Circular Quay Station was opened.¹³⁴ A similar underground rail loop was proposed for Melbourne in 1929; State cabinet approved plans for the concept thirty years later; the Melbourne Underground Rail Loop Authority was established in the 1970s, and completed the work in stages from 1982.¹³⁵ In a later period, State Governments in Perth and Brisbane electrified their suburban railways, with marked increase in patronage. By contrast, suburban railway services ceased in Hobart in 1975.

In all capitals except Melbourne tram services were run down. Street tramways were phased out in Adelaide and Perth in 1958 and the last Sydney tram line was closed in 1961.¹³⁶ Extension of Melbourne's tramway system stopped in 1956 and new suburbs depended on *ad hoc* private bus services.¹³⁷ But Melbourne kept its 'green monsters'.

¹³² L Nilson 'Planning a city in a region: the central city area', in *The city and region of Perth, a case study of the capital city of Western Australia*, Papers and proceedings of the 10th Congress of the Australian Planning Institute, Perth 1968, p 76.

¹³³ N Low, 'The Kerrett government of Victoria: catastrophe or continuity?', paper presented at URP seminar, ANU, 14 October 1996, p 19.

¹³⁴ L Colthart and S Maddrell, 'A research guide to the history of public works in New South Wales', draft edition, Public Works Department, Sydney, c1986, p 35.

¹³⁵ Lewis, p 134.

¹³⁶ K McCarthy, 'The tramways of Sydney', in Fraser, p 268.

¹³⁷ Mees, p 16.

When competing road users pushed for their removal, 'Chairman Risson of the Tramways Board had the tramlines set in cement, making it far more difficult to remove them'.¹³⁸

By contrast with sea and land transport, the Commonwealth Government was the major provider of airports. The obsession with near-city centre locations is revealed in the siting of most of the postwar airports in the face of rapid suburbanisation. As was clearly inevitable, housing soon surrounded the airports, making further extension physically impossible, hugely expensive or highly disruptive to residents. The siting of Australia's international airports has played an important part in hastening central business growth in particular cities, and in accentuating differences in rates and types of development between them. 'With Australia's first international airport and agglomerations of activities dependent on access to international air traffic, such as the regional headquarter functions of transnational corporations, financial services and, more recently, tourism, the service industries have therefore concentrated in Sydney.'¹³⁹ The 'globalisation' of the Australian economy in the 1980s and 1990s has further advanced clustering in Sydney.¹⁴⁰

'Telecommunications represents the new urban infrastructure.'¹⁴¹ As the information sector (communications, finance, property, business, public administration, community services and education) is concentrated in the city centres it is hardly surprising that the increase in telephone traffic, use of mobile phones, high-speed data lines, fibre optic networks, facsimile machines and personal computers is most evident and has had a major impact in the city. The rate of change is so fast, however, that physical relics of each development are likely to be few and short-lived, although it is evident in the globalisation of the urban economy and in changes in the city workforce and its working conditions.

While the 'hollowing out' of large corporations may have reduced the numbers of city centre workers, it has not led to the decentralising of the businesses themselves, nor their managers, to whom face-to-face relationships and close physical proximity remain crucial. But how big will future skyscrapers need to be?

1.5 Business, finance and speculation

Hartwell and Lane divide the history of Australian entrepreneurship into four periods: 1788–1850, the commercial-agricultural period; 1851–1890, pastoral-mining; 1891–1948, national-industrial; and 1949–present, international-corporative.¹⁴² The most important areas of enterprise in the last period have been mining, financial, commercial and industrial. Large business firms began to appear in the third period but only since 1949 has the size of firms greatly increased, with a period of significant

¹³⁸ L Frost and T Dingle, 'Infrastructure, technology and change', in PTroy, ed, *Technological change and the city*, Federation Press, Sydney 1995, p 27.

¹³⁹ Lepari et al, p 7.

¹⁴⁰ O'Connor p 3.

¹⁴¹ PNewton quoted in D Lambertson 'Communications', in Troy *Technological change and the city*, p 85.

¹⁴² Hartwell and Lane, p 15.

restructuring not occurring until the late 1970s. 'The profile of enterprise today is much different from what it was in 1939', and now conforms more closely to the world pattern of business, that is, dependent on professional bureaucracies rather than the individual entrepreneur-manager.¹⁴³ Melbourne's role as a national and Sydney's as an international financial centre were cemented in this period.

Each of these aspects of postwar business, and the underlying economic cycles, has had a profound impact on city centres in Australia. For business, or more broadly, the production and exchange of goods and services, lies at the heart of the modern city. As Solomon noted in his study of central Hobart, the most striking functional development revealed in the 1954 census, as compared to 1847, was 'the real advent of business offices ... Their twenty-fold increase in number indicates the arrival of personal, professional and business administrative services at a scale quite foreign to mid-nineteenth populations at large'.¹⁴⁴ The great majority of new buildings in the city centres in the postwar years related to finance or business generally.

The modern city centre is Australia's marketplace, its investment centre, its office block and department store. The rise and spread of office blocks is expressive not only of modern architecture but also of wide economic and political changes, for example the great increase in employment in service industries since the war relative to primary and secondary industries outside Australian city centres; and the restructuring of corporate Australia in the 1980s following the abolition of foreign exchange controls in 1983 and the deregulation of banking in 1986.

The Commonwealth Government lifted restrictions on share dealings and stock exchanges in 1947, opening the way for speculative investment in industries that were starved of funds during the five-year suspension of trading. Inevitably after the restraints placed on business both by the depression and wartime controls, and as the population boomed after the war, there was an avalanche of new companies. In the ten years following 1945 the number of companies listed on the Sydney Stock Exchange nearly doubled from 522 to 909, growing only slightly after that to 1043 by 1970.¹⁴⁵

A pronounced feature of the 1950s and 1960s was the development of the holding company, mergers and take-overs. Many firms in the smaller capitals were taken over by companies with headquarters in Sydney and Melbourne: a history of the Brisbane Stock Exchange pinpoints 1954 as the year 'the Southern take-over of Queensland companies began'.¹⁴⁶ From the late 1960s decline in manufacturing investment was overtaken by investment in city offices, triggering further, and more extensive office construction in the city centres.

¹⁴³ Hartwell and Lare, p 24.

¹⁴⁴ Solomon *Urbanisation* p 219.

¹⁴⁵ Hartwell and Lare, p 222.

¹⁴⁶ AL Loughheed, *The Brisbane Stock Exchange 1884-1984*, Boolarong Publications, Brisbane 1984, p 134.

Another round of takeovers took place in the 1980s but this time as international investors and firms moved in on Australian business. In the 1980s as the Commonwealth deregulated the financial system 'takeover specialists, greenmailers, white knights, share traders, investors and speculators pushed aside old conventions and practices and led the restructuring of business and enterprise', and a sustained rise in the stockmarket—'a five year bull run ... also saw the inevitable meteoric rises and falls in individual and company fortunes'. For reasons that are implicit in this description (but not pursued by the commentator) in the late 1980s there followed an 'unprecedented attack on corporate Australia and ... the so-called entrepreneurs who were the golden boys prior to October 1987'.¹⁴⁷

It is too soon to tell the full consequences of these successive periods of takeover for the Australian city centres, but one feature common to both periods is the increasing tendency to downgrade (or close) operations in the smaller capitals in favour of expanding or building corporate offices in Melbourne and particularly (in the latter period) Sydney. Corporations, banks and insurance companies are withdrawing from the smaller cities, leaving their postwar towers such as Shell Building in Hobart leased to many tenants.

Who constructed the new office blocks after World War Two? 'Between 1957 and 1966 British insurance companies were responsible for building more offices in Sydney than either the Australian development companies or life assurance or insurance companies.'¹⁴⁸ In this early phase from mid-fifties to the mid-sixties, apart from British and American companies there were three other main groups: government bodies and large Australian corporations such as the AMP and BHP; and property developers that derived from construction companies such as Lend Lease and its main rival LJ Hooker Ltd.¹⁴⁹

Lend Lease (originally Civil & Civic) was set up in response to an Australian mission which visited Amsterdam in 1949 to invite the interest of companies in the Snowy River Scheme. Two Dutch companies, the biggest builder, Bredero's and the Royal Dutch Harbour Company, sent an engineer, GJ Dusseldorp, to appraise the situation. He was so impressed by the country's possibilities that the companies formed a joint venture, Civil & Civic Contractors (the Harbour Company sold its interest to Bredero's in 1953) with Dusseldorp placed in charge. They intended to start in a small way and then look for bigger projects, and established themselves in government contracts in the Snowy Mountains and nearby Canberra before expanding to Sydney and the other capitals. In order to take control of design and hence, construction costs, Civil & Civic established a finance and investment company, Lend Lease, in 1958.¹⁵⁰

By the mid-sixties a new group of developers had emerged. 'The financial institutions, which had provided the principal market for Lend Lease development projects ... had

¹⁴⁷ (Including the several quotations) L. Cox (chairman, Australian Stock Exchange) Foreword to Hartwell and Lane, p 10.

¹⁴⁸ Ostrow, p 17.

¹⁴⁹ Murphy, p 56.

¹⁵⁰ Murphy, pp 29–31.

learned a lot from the developers, and could see benefits in developing their own investment properties'.¹⁵¹ However, Dusseldorp could 'see where the storm clouds are gathering' and in 1971 announced that his company was moving out of city office development.¹⁵² Lend Lease from the start had also been involved in suburban development, both commercial and residential, and operated a home unit display centre on the ground floor of Caltex House in the 1960s.¹⁵³ They had been the first developer to enter the city centre market in 1958 (Caltex House) and were the first to leave it. Property values were rising to a peak and it would be a buyer's market for some time to come. By the time of the credit squeeze in 1973, which brought down successful development companies and left offices empty, Lend Lease was building shopping centres in outer suburbs.

However, several city centre projects were completed during the next decade, especially in capitals other than Sydney. Well-known central towers built by Civil & Civic included, in Sydney: Caltex House (1958), Lend Lease House (1961), Australia Square (1968), MLC building (1978) and the Regent Hotel (1980), as well as stage 1 of the Opera House but *not* a proposal for the high-rise redevelopment of the Rocks.¹⁵⁴ In Melbourne, its first contract was in 1959 with the Consolidated Zinc building, then Prince's Gate (1966), the Reserve Bank (1960s), and Nauru House (1977), built under a design and construct contract for the Nauru Government. In Brisbane the company built the Bank of NSW and the Ansett Terminal in the 1960s, and in the 1980s redeveloped Central Railway incorporating office buildings and the Sheraton Hotel. In Perth, the company built the new State government offices. Its first project in Hobart was a multi-storey office for the City Mutual Life Assurance Society, which was followed by construction of all subsequent CML buildings in Perth, Darwin, Melbourne and Brisbane.¹⁵⁵

Business districts expanded further in the late 1960s as the finance and merchant banking sector with strong overseas shareholdings challenged the conservative Australian banking sector. From the late 1960s private developers—including groups headed by postwar immigrants such as Lustig and Moar, Grollo and Dusseldorp—and local institutions—the largest, the AMP Society and the MLC Company—dominated the market. Multi-storey headquarters were also built on the proceeds of the resources boom, by Lang Hancock in Perth and Mt Isa mines in Brisbane. Lang Hancock discovered the remote Hamersley iron field in WA in 1952 and could not get finance to develop it until the early 1960s but from then Australia began to export iron ore for the first time, much of it from this field and Hancock's other discoveries in the Pilbara region.

Property boom in the city centres was followed by crash, in the early 1970s and again in 1989–1990. In the bust of the 1970s many British institutions, the founders of the

¹⁵¹ Murphy, p 113.

¹⁵² Murphy, p 138.

¹⁵³ Murphy, p 51.

¹⁵⁴ Murphy, p 92.

¹⁵⁵ Murphy, p 112, 123 and *passim*.

commercial property industry, pulled out. Government bodies continued to build in the city centre, not only State and national departments but also interstate and overseas governments and banks that built office blocks in Melbourne and Sydney as a form of investment. One of the most notable of them, Nauru House, was built in Melbourne in 1977 by the government of the Pacific island of Nauru as an investment for the future when its phosphate reserves have been fully exploited.

Foreign banks joined local financiers in lending large sums for property development in a further frenzy of office building in the 1980s. Investment in capital city property markets by ethnic Chinese (South East Asian) and Japanese also emerged as a major force during the 1980s. Asian investment, which accounted for less than 15% of total foreign investment in Australia in the mid-1970s increased to 40% by the mid-1980s, much of it directed to the capital city centres. The Malaysian syndicate Ipoh Garden Berhad completed the restoration of Sydney's Queen Victoria Building and the Japanese company Kumagai Gum redeveloped the Adelaide Railway station with the South Australian Superannuation Investment Trust.¹⁵⁶

During the 1980s State governments and their financial institutions were also caught up in the property development frenzy. Public tolerance of the shady deals and spectacular collapses characteristic of many private developers in boom and bust did not extend to massive losses incurred by State banks, and governments in Victoria, SA and WA were resoundingly defeated as a result. Long-established State Banks were dismantled, leaving luxury high-rise offices as memorials to their demise. The property collapse which followed its State Bank disaster of the late 1980s and early 1990s was particularly pronounced in Adelaide.

1.6 Manufacturing

Perth, Brisbane, Hobart and Darwin were not affected in the same degree by the restructuring of manufacturing that had such an effect on Melbourne and Adelaide. In Darwin and Hobart this was simply because they lacked, and were unlikely to develop, large-scale manufacturing sectors.¹⁵⁷ Hobart's economy remained dependent on agriculture and government spending, especially the Commonwealth's income transfers.¹⁵⁸ By contrast with other States, manufacturing actually grew during the 1980s in Brisbane and Perth, drawing on strong mining industries and high levels of internal migration. In both cities this manufacturing was mostly of a medium-level assistance type and so less affected than heavy industry by the reduction of tariffs in the 'internationalising' of the Australian economy.¹⁵⁹

Despite an educated workforce and the decision during the 1980s to locate the Multifunction Polis (MFP) in Adelaide, the city's economy faltered after the 1970s with the decline of its industrial base of car manufacture and white goods. The city had drawn strength from the Victorian economy—also based on manufacturing—and

¹⁵⁶ Ostrow, pp 18–21 (quotation p 19).

¹⁵⁷ *Report of the Committee on Darwin* p 38.

¹⁵⁸ Lepari et al, p 33.

¹⁵⁹ Lepari et al, p 32.

enjoyed no locational advantages in relation to overseas markets in the west or the Asia-Pacific region, none of the vitally important agglomerations of business in Sydney, and neither an international airport nor an information technology infrastructure.¹⁶⁰ Despite the efforts of successive State governments to promote events- and tourism-based development, in many respects Adelaide's economy has reverted to its traditional dependence on public administration and primary industry, in particular, wine and natural gas exports. How this has affected building in the city centre is yet to become obvious, except in a negative sense of relatively few new office blocks and a decline in State spending on restoration, maintenance and construction.

1.7 Marketing, retailing and wholesaling

'We've rolled out the red carpet from the smarter end of Queen Street to the Cherm side Drive in Shopping Centre ...'.¹⁶¹ Cherm side, Australia's first drive-in shopping centre, was opened in suburban Brisbane in 1957 and 'led the move of Australian retailing from the city to the post war suburbs'.¹⁶² Shopping emporia had emerged at the end of the nineteenth century with big department stores catering for particular markets a phenomenon of the interwar years. In Sydney, David Jones' prestige shops were in Elizabeth Street and the middle-range Grace Brothers in George Street. Lower George Street near Railway Square became an important retail precinct in the inter-war period, tapping both rail passengers to Central Station and drivers along this main thoroughfare.¹⁶³

Central Sydney and Melbourne accounted for about a third of retail sales in the 1950s, a share drastically pruned during the next decade as suburban shopping complexes were built. In every capital, central retailers recorded a declining share of total metropolitan sales (although retailers such as Myer's from Melbourne and John Martin's in Adelaide created their own competition by opening suburban complexes). Efforts to retain shoppers, for example by building their own carparks, did little to stem the decline. By the 1990s central Sydney accounted for less than 10% and central Melbourne less than 5% of metropolitan retail sales.¹⁶⁴ Several of their large department stores were closed and demolished or converted to other uses, especially in the main retail area at the southern end of central Sydney.

At the same time, Sydney- and Melbourne- based companies took over firms in the other cities, matching business takeovers generally from the mid-1950s. In Brisbane by the end of the decade most large retail stores had succumbed, including Finney

¹⁶⁰ Lepari et al, p 32.

¹⁶¹ *Courier Mail* advertisement, illustration in P Spearitt, 'Suburban cathedrals: the rise of the drive-in shopping centre', in G Davison, T Dirgler and S O'Hanlon eds, *The cream brick frontier: histories of Australiansuburbia*, Department of History, Monash University, Victoria, 1995, p 95.

¹⁶² Spearitt, in Davison et al, p 97.

¹⁶³ McDonald, Thorp, *Review of heritage inventory for central Sydney* pp 7, 8.

¹⁶⁴ Spearitt, in Davison et al, pp 101, 103.

Isles (David Jones, Sydney) and McWhirters, and Allan and Stark (both by Myer Emporium, Melbourne).¹⁶⁵

In Hobart during the 1950s and 1960s the Liverpool Street store of Brownell's was amalgamated with Johnston and Miller's Murray Street store, and the whole became part of Myer's, the country's largest retailer. Fitzgerald's of Collins Street, the leading Tasmanian retailer, absorbed the Goodwill store in Elizabeth Street. The Coles' store was extended and the Cat and Fiddle Alley was completely enclosed and redeveloped as an arcade by the hardware firm Charles Davis. An important outcome of these mergers was the provision of internal access with intercommunication between adjoining shops extended to give, what was at the time, and certainly in Australia, 'probably unique walk-through circulation from any street frontage to any other'.¹⁶⁶ The Cat and Fiddle Arcade is now something of a rarity in capital city centres, a 'classic' 60s shopping arcade.¹⁶⁷ Retailers in the other capital cities followed suit in the following decades.

The history of inner city marketing and retailing until around 1970 provides an instructive example of how urban historiography is coloured by the dominant historical trends in Sydney and Melbourne. In both of these cities retailing drained away to suburban shopping centres but this trend was less marked in the other capitals (except Darwin, for geographical reasons explained elsewhere). In 1962 central shops and department stores made more than 90% of clothing and drapery sales in metropolitan Hobart, where the development of shopping centres was slower than in the other cities.¹⁶⁸ As Scott noted in 1959, suburban competition in Sydney was also favoured by the location of the CBD, as none of the others was so far off centre.¹⁶⁹

However, as the take-over of stores continued, by the 1970s retailing in Australia was essentially a matter of franchising operations dominated by large retail chains. By the late 1980s the top ten retail outlets were owned by three or four companies.¹⁷⁰ Using information technology they proceeded to centralise operations in their home cities (Sydney and Melbourne) and cut costs in other city centres by closing older, surplus stores and retrenching staff. In Hobart all the old family businesses were taken over by national companies, the last of them Fitzgerald's (by Harris Scarfe) and Soundy.¹⁷¹

In Adelaide the latest casualty of this process is the John Martin's store in Adelaide's Rundle Mall. David Jones bought the 131-year-old South Australian business in 1985.¹⁷² David Jones built its own elegant department store in the same street in

¹⁶⁵ Loughheed, p 134.

¹⁶⁶ Solomon, *Urbanisation* p 217. See also Scripps, pp 59–60.

¹⁶⁷ B Lerrard to S Marsden

¹⁶⁸ 'Report on land use survey of central business district 1967–1968', City Engineer's Department, City of Hobart, 1968, p 27.

¹⁶⁹ Scott, p 292.

¹⁷⁰ Hartwell and Lane, p 390.

¹⁷¹ B McNeil to S Marsden

¹⁷² *Australian* 21 February 1997.

1959–1962, constructing a sheer white and black marble upper facade unbroken by windows, leaving much larger and more flexible floor areas than provided in Adelaide's other stores.¹⁷³ Without doubt this difference was one factor in the decision to close John Martin's, with declining sales given as the reason—and the profit anticipated in redeveloping the prime site as a hotel and entertainment complex. The government supports the redevelopment but 550 jobs will be lost at the store. The event, rational as it may seem in broad economic terms, highlights the damage such a closure inflicts on the economic life of the city concerned, and the threat to its heritage. 'If ever there was to be a symbol of the decline of South Australia, it is the closing of the icon, John Martin's ...'.¹⁷⁴

John Martin's closure marks a further stage in the decline of retailing in all of the city centres. Yet the very fact of decline prompted alliances between government ministers, councillors and traders who sought ways to arrest the trend and encourage suburban shoppers to return. These strategies took several forms, albeit common to every capital city (governments and traders closely observed measures taken in the other cities). Broadly, these measures were of two kinds: those that expedited car access, and those that encouraged pedestrians. While inner suburban communities opposed the destruction threatened by radial freeways and ring routes, strongly entrenched interest groups supported them. In the 1960s, the non-resident businessmen who dominated most city councils feared the decline in the proportion of suburban people who came into the centre to shop and work. 'They blamed it entirely on poor access and the lack of parking space'.¹⁷⁵

Car-favouring measures were more prevalent until the 1970s, and pedestrian-favouring measures have been more prevalent since then, although construction of roads and car parks has continued, as most pedestrians first drive to the city. In every city streets were closed to create pedestrian malls and interior malls were created or refurbished such as, in Sydney, Centrepoint and the Strand Arcade in the 1970s and the Mid City Centre and the Queen Victoria Building in the 1980s. 'These developments all recreate in various forms the total/cultural shopping experience available in the suburbs since the 1950s...'.¹⁷⁶ By contrast to that suburban experience, the other retailing change—much encouraged recently by local and State government—has been the rise of 'theme shopping'. This is dominated by arts, crafts and cafes, and located in distinctively urban settings: in old produce markets like the East End Market site and Central Market in Adelaide, and Victoria Market in Melbourne, and in historical precincts such as old waterfront districts, the Rocks in Sydney and Salamanca Place in Hobart. Thousands of people also crowd Darwin's dry season Sunset Markets.

¹⁷³ Royal Australian Institute of Architects, 'RAIA register of significant architecture— South Australia', report, RAI A, Adelaide 1986. The building, designed by South Australian architects Hassell and McCornell, was designated by the RAI A in this report as 'meritorious'.

¹⁷⁴ Michael Lerron quoted in the *Australia* 21 February 1997.

¹⁷⁵ Dingle and Rasmussen, p 242.

¹⁷⁶ Meagher, p 378.

Cumulatively these changes have made a big impact. They have only slowed rather than reversed the trend to suburban shopping but they have helped alter public perceptions of the city centre. The changes were principally economic in motivation, 'the result of crisis and reconsolidation of retailing as a major city centre activity'.¹⁷⁷ But the refocus on shoppers' needs as pedestrians has also partly restored the city to its people, despite the distances that opened up between the centre and its metropolitan population after the war. The new developments, further promoted by longer shopping hours, Sunday trading and new markets, have fostered the most important form of tourism: visits by local people, and contribute markedly to changing perceptions by other visitors. This phenomenon was remarked upon most frequently by Perth and Brisbane informants perhaps because it has happened there most recently.

Another interesting change was in markets. Traditionally both wholesale and retail produce markets were located in and adjacent to the city centres, but since the war most of the colourful and messy wholesale produce markets have been moved to fringe suburban sites. Councils and governments also sought to do the same with the retail markets but ran into resistance from residents and shoppers. At the same time, city councils have increasingly favoured the establishment of 'special' markets selling food, clothing and crafts in carparks and other open places and in old buildings.

1.8 Entertainment for profit and tourism

The extravagantly beautiful natural settings of Sydney and Hobart have long attracted tourists. Tourists became a new phenomenon in Australian life in the late nineteenth century as the urban middle classes prospered. Hobart was suddenly discovered by tourists from the mainland and declared a gem. It was small, cool and picturesque, and best of all, it recalled the mythic green hills and old stone walls of 'Home'.¹⁷⁸ Hobart's appeal, especially to middle class and nostalgia travellers has remained, and tourism forms a highly significant sector of Hobart's economy. Wrest Point, the first legal casino in Australia, was opened there in 1973 but the city is better known for its colonial character and has been cleverly promoted in terms of 'heritage tourism'.

After World War Two higher disposable incomes and greater leisure time for Australians generally, and larger metropolitan populations, translated into bigger profits for the entertainment and tourism industries in every capital city. Except for office and finance, no other sector has shown such physical expansion and alteration of existing places as this, especially in central Sydney and Melbourne.

The Committee on Darwin recommended in its 1995 report that 'Darwin and the Northern Territory must continue to build on their successes in mining, tourism and agriculture'.¹⁷⁹ Despite Darwin's proximity to Asia, and by contrast to other Australian cities, most international tourists came from Europe and the USA.¹⁸⁰ Every State

¹⁷⁷ Meagher, p 378.

¹⁷⁸ Bolger, pp 188–189.

¹⁷⁹ *Report of the Committee on Darwin* p xvii.

¹⁸⁰ *Report of the Committee on Darwin* p xix

Government and city council has tried to promote their capital city as a destination for overseas and Australian tourists. They have funded arts festivals (the core reason for Adelaide Festival), sports events and other mass entertainment, constructed large arts and entertainment centres (always in city-centre or near city-centre localities) and casinos. The revitalisation of the Yarra as the centrepiece of a 'new look' Melbourne is placed firmly within that context: this began with the opening of Southgate in 1992 followed by further developments on the river including a huge casino, an exhibition centre, and a new maritime park.

1.9 Housing and lodging

Housing and lodging as a business or speculative undertaking has always been a major industry in Australian city centres, including hotels, hostels, boarding-houses and serviced apartments as well as terraces, flats and medium-density housing. However, the market sought by inner-city developers has shifted from people of moderate and low incomes who were typical tenants up to the 1950s—working-class families in terraces, single men in boarding-houses, commercial travellers in city hotels—to an almost exclusively middle- and high-income group. This change was most marked in central Sydney and Melbourne.

Completed in 1967, the Park Regis was the [Sydney] CBD's first high rise apartment building built since World War II. Although inner city living has been encouraged by the City Council as a means of bringing life and activity to the centre, office buildings command higher returns and consequently few apartment buildings have been built in the CBD. Those that are built, usually on the fringe of the CBD, cater to the luxury market and visitors seeking [sic] serviced apartments.¹⁸¹

Most of Sydney's old hotels were demolished for site redevelopment. At the same time, Sydney's new role as an international financial and tourist city attracted investment in the form of luxury hotels and serviced apartments and their numbers doubled in the second half of the 1980s.¹⁸² In a similar fashion, low-rental accommodation for permanent residents was replaced by high-cost owner-occupied housing as working-class places were converted or demolished for new apartments. Even in the 'frame' districts much old and low-income housing has been replaced with high-income and high-rise housing, especially in Sydney and Melbourne.¹⁸³ The speculative construction of 'walk-up' flats tended to dominate in the first postwar period, into the 1970s, and then more up-market conversions, townhouses and apartment blocks. By 1981 townhouses/flats represented 90% of total dwellings in the City of Sydney.¹⁸⁴ Most of its boarding houses were demolished or converted to strata title flats. The same thing happened in central Melbourne, where the numbers of boarding houses and other 'non-private dwellings' dropped from 4 800 in 1947 to 1 221 by 1971.¹⁸⁵ There was nowhere near the same intensity of redevelopment in the other capitals but there were similar trends.

¹⁸¹ P Spearritt and C De Marco, *Planning Sydney's future*, Allen & Unwin, Sydney, 1988, p 101.

¹⁸² Meagher, p 380.

¹⁸³ Spearritt and De Marco, pp 43–48.

¹⁸⁴ Spearritt and De Marco, p 44, table 4.11.

¹⁸⁵ 'Melbourne's inner area – a position statement', MMBW Planning Branch report, Melbourne 1977, p 27.

Just as office towers effaced the mixed shapes, low heights and social variety of central city buildings these new forms of accommodation substituted high-cost, high-rise buildings with a restricted range of users for the widely varying sizes and social uses of the older buildings. Even when existing buildings—such as boarding houses—were converted rather than replaced, the new residences housed fewer tenants and none with low incomes. Since the late 1960s, gentrification, with young, middle-class couples buying and restoring old terraces and cottages, has had the same effect. This phenomenon has also been as much an economic exercise as a demographic change as many of these young buyers profited from the subsequent sharp rise in inner city house prices.

More recently inner city housing projects on obsolete sites been heavily subsidised by State and Commonwealth Governments, during the 1990s with 'Better Cities' money. Even here, more low-income housing may be destroyed than provided, as in the East Perth Development Project.¹⁸⁶ Nor will efforts to retain the built heritage of lodging in the city centre preserve its cultural heritage, that is, as low-cost rental accommodation and inexpensive hotel rooms.

1.10 Professional services, institutions and associations

Martyn Webb coined the term 'Establishment precinct' to embrace the area in central Perth including the State government offices, Town Hall, Law Chambers, Anglican cathedral, former Presbyterian Church, Government House, Supreme Court and the Weld Club.¹⁸⁷ To this old 'establishment' was later added Commonwealth institutions. Some of the most impressive postwar buildings have been law courts constructed by the Commonwealth in the capital city centres. The Commonwealth-State Law Courts built in Sydney in association with McConnel Smith and Johnson earned the RAI NSW Chapter Merit Award in 1977.¹⁸⁸

The clustering of 'establishment' places includes the rooms of related professions. Law firms retain city offices near the courts in every city. In Brisbane Ann Street and Queen Street were 'top dollar' for law firms but they have been moving to riverside locations in Eagle Street, as part of the general rediscovery of the Brisbane River.¹⁸⁹ The central location of medical practitioners reflects the original siting of public hospitals, invariably built in or near the city centres. Where these have been retained, the medical profession has kept its central rooms. In Hobart doctors' surgeries have concentrated in Macquarie Street. In Adelaide they concentrate in North Terrace along the same street as the Royal Adelaide Hospital and the University of Adelaide. But even the Adelaide medical establishment has been moving out. From the 1960s as cars increasingly congested the city centres, doctors and other professionals requiring easy vehicular access for themselves and their clients, began to move into adjacent fringe districts, such as West Perth and North Adelaide. The phenomenon of practices occupying old residences and eventually demolishing them is a strong

¹⁸⁶ I Alexander and A May, 'Land use change in the Perth CBD', slide commentary, 1994

¹⁸⁷ I Hocking, 'Growth and change in central Perth', in M P Morison and J White, eds, *Western towers and buildings*, University of W A Press, Nedlands 1979, pp 287–288.

¹⁸⁸ Pegrum, p 98.

¹⁸⁹ H Gregory to S Marsden Brisbane August 1996.

component in the outwards expansion of CBD functions to old residential districts such as North Adelaide.

The dispersal of stockbrokers from tightly focused 'central business districts' has been made possible but not inevitable as computer-based trading has replaced trading floors in stock exchanges and has moved trading from local exchanges to interstate and overseas. Stock Exchanges were formed to create markets by bringing brokers face-to-face and so played an important part in helping to concentrate financial services and company headquarters in city centres. Mining was the catalyst for stock exchanges established in the Australian capital cities in the late nineteenth century and the Sydney Stock Exchange was typical in not diversifying from 'an over-reliance on mining' until well after World War Two.¹⁹⁰ Melbourne's sharebroking was the most diverse and dominated trading in Australia until the 1970s with big firms, led by Sir Ian Potter, assuming many of the functions of merchant banks. The space demands of stock exchanges grew with the 1960s mining boom, the diversification of business, the rise of popular interest in share trading and large government developments. Adelaide Stock Exchange managed with its original federation building (refitting the interior after it was gutted by fire); Brisbane Stock Exchange moved into Network House in Queen Street in 1967 and Sydney Stock Exchange moved into a new tower, Exchange Centre in Bond Street, in 1979. In response to new requirements as well as to greater demand, Sydney's new exchange increased floor space by 60%, enhanced the areas open to the public and housed computers in a basement.¹⁹¹

When a violent storm struck Sydney in November 1984 water spilled into the ancient Tank Stream under the building, smashed through the exchange's door, engulfed the visitors' gallery and trading floor and filtered down to the computers. The damage was nearly \$2 million and the computers had to be replaced but a recently-developed joint exchange arrangement, made possible by those computers, meant that Sydney brokers could keep on trading in Melbourne. This was a sign of things to come. Within stock exchanges the open trading floors, where 'chalkies' kept track of transactions, have been replaced by computer displays and traders no longer need to be present. Computer networks have also facilitated share-trading independent of local stock exchanges and, since deregulation of Australia's financial system, have exposed all of the exchanges to strong competition from overseas. Jim Bain, chairman of the Sydney exchange argued strongly for a computerised national exchange to win back trading in major listed companies that was increasingly moving to London and New York.¹⁹² In 1984 the Brisbane Stock Exchange historian predicted that improvements in computer systems could ultimately lead to centralisation of share transfers and information on companies in one location in Australia but did not think this likely for another decade.¹⁹³ Four years later his Sydney counterparts concluded their history with the end of local exchanges. Sydney Stock Exchange was formally merged with

¹⁹⁰ S Salisbury and K Swerrey, *The bull, the bear and the kangaroo: the history of the Sydney Stock Exchange*, Allen & Unwin North Sydney 1988, p 2.

¹⁹¹ Salisbury and Swerrey, pp 387–388, 428; Loughheed, p 182.

¹⁹² Salisbury and Swerrey, pp 427–428, 448–452.

¹⁹³ Loughheed, p 174.

the other five Australian Associated Stock Exchanges into the Australian Stock Exchange in 1987.¹⁹⁴

2. Building and remaking city centres

2.1 Development and redevelopment phases

The great difference between country and city landscapes in Australia today is the constant redevelopment that presses on and reshapes the capital city centres. More than any other sector, offices have changed the shape and size of the city centre since World War Two. Offices have come to dominate most city centres and to extend their business district by colonising 'frame' districts and adjoining suburbs.

One of the dynamics shaping the Australian economy as a whole and the capital cities in particular has been the 'rapid regeneration of CBDs forming an important part of the asset underpinning of the banking and insurance sector'.¹⁹⁵ The larger the city grows the higher its land values, the bigger the profits to be made and the faster its redevelopment. In 1945 the Commonwealth's Building Materials Act gave priority in the use of scarce building materials to the construction of suburban homes. When controls on non-residential building were lifted in 1953, in Adelaide as in other capitals 'a belated building boom began occurring within the CBD, sparking a sharp increase in the number and complexity of Building Applications lodged with the Council'.¹⁹⁶

Darwin was the only exception as Commonwealth government controls of a different kind continued to prevent private redevelopment. The Departments of Post-war Reconstruction and the Interior planned to remake the bomb-shattered town into 'a city of striking tropical architecture', and in 1946 the Commonwealth compulsorily acquired all freehold land in and near central Darwin. The expensive plan was not implemented and soon abandoned but private building was restricted until as late as 1971 when conversion of urban leases to freehold, first permitted only in 1962, was simplified.¹⁹⁷ In every other capital, the transformation of the city centre started in the mid-1950s when controls were lifted and 'fifteen years of virtual stagnation in civil investment through the depression and war had rendered it ripe for change'.¹⁹⁸

The first phase in the centre's postwar history, then, involved neither development nor redevelopment but an artificially-prolonged period of stasis due to prolonged wartime controls. This was reflected in the mixture of landuses, low-scale and 'pre-modernist' architecture, and the low-key city life. In central Hobart in 1954 the majority of buildings were houses and shops, just as they had been for the past century. The numbers of offices, factories and public buildings had greatly increased in that time

¹⁹⁴ Salsbury and Sweerey, p 452.

¹⁹⁵ Lepari et al, p 33.

¹⁹⁶ R Thornton, Adelaide City Council archives, letter to S Marsden 12 October 1995, p 4.

¹⁹⁷ SA Kirg, 'More than meets the eye: plans for land use change in Darwin after Cyclone Tracy', in HH Aschmann and SA Kirg, *Two Northern Territory urban studies*, North Australia Research Bulletin no 5, North Australia Research Unit, ANU, Darwin 1979, pp 60-62.

¹⁹⁸ H Wardlaw, 'RDL Fraser: his contribution to the planning of Sydney', in Freestone, p 159.

but represented less than 14% of central 'functional units', compared to the 78% share of houses and shops.¹⁹⁹ In the 1940s and 1950s the cities were still highly centralised, even Sydney, with offices, port facilities and higher order retailing in the centre and workers' homes and industry, even electric power generation, concentrated in the inner suburbs to the south and west. Moored ships could be seen from Sussex and Kent Streets, their superstructures 'all of a piece with the outlines of narrow Victorian office buildings', and a small and self-styled bohemia met in the 'heartland of pubs and coffee bars ... Though Sydney had a definite presence, a mapped social and cultural geography, we nevertheless saw Europe as the centre of the life we aspired to'.²⁰⁰

What this means in heritage terms is that much of the prewar city centre, even the colonial city centre, survived intact until the 1960s. In his 1968 survey the City Engineer noted that Hobart's central business district had not developed a 'comprehensive high density core'. Blocks with the greatest coverage of buildings were isolated from each other and had the many divergent uses—jam factory, government office, shops—typical of old city centres.²⁰¹ Some prewar precincts still remain in the city centres, most famously in Hobart, and elsewhere most commonly in government ownership or in 'frame' districts such as in Adelaide. 'There are many pockets of undiluted old Adelaide, as around Margaret Street, along Carrington Street, and west of Colonel [sic] Light Square.'²⁰² Prominent central buildings which fell into neglect but survived into the 1970s were saved from demolition by heritage activists and then by formal heritage controls, and many of them have been restored. However, most prewar city precincts have been obliterated.

From the late 1950s 'Sydney was radically rebuilt upwards in a sudden spring of affluence', and 'the confident domain of women and girls in hats and gloves began to break up ...'.²⁰³ By 1965 Souter could write, 'Just as the inner city once seemed unlikely ever to change, now it seems unlikely ever to stand still again.' Change became central Sydney's main characteristic. Venerable places disappeared overnight, and the city 'opened new petals of aluminium and glass like one of those time-lapse flowers that take only a few seconds to bloom'.²⁰⁴

Melbourne's skyline, its ground level spatial configuration and the 'colourful mix of forms and functions in the nineteenth-century town'²⁰⁵ were also radically transformed between 1956 and 1975. These changes were ascribed to postwar prosperity, to architects' discovery of the International Style, and to property and mining booms as

¹⁹⁹ Solomon *Urbanisation* p 321.

²⁰⁰ R Creswell, 'The sea, the sea', in D Modjeska, ed, *Inner cities: Australian women's memory of place*, PenguinBooks, Victoria 1989, pp 162, 163, 167.

²⁰¹ City of Hobart, p 9.

²⁰² D Whitelock, *Adelaide 1836-1976: a history of difference*, University of Queensland Press, St Lucia, 1977, p 303.

²⁰³ S Demody, 'Private transports', in Modjeska, p 44.

²⁰⁴ (Both quotations) G Souter and G Molnar, *Sydney observed*, Argus and Robertson, Sydney, 1965, 1968, p 57.

²⁰⁵ Davison, in *Melbourne on foot*, pp 21-22.

well as rising land values. The change was most pronounced at the heart of the financial district near Collins Street where land values soared. As land taxes were tied to the unimproved capital value redevelopment was inevitable. The old urban mix 'gave way to the high-rise uniformity of the corporate bureaucracies in the 1960s'. Most of Australia's largest companies—including BHP, Shell, ICI, GMH, Ansett—and its leading financiers moved to the city centre. The Reserve Bank replaced the Occidental Hotel in 1958, and Conzinc Riotinto (CRA) replaced Melbourne Mansions in 1963.²⁰⁶ Even in the early 1960s, when the 'glasshouse revolution' had just started, offices comprised more than 40% of Melbourne city addresses. In the 1970s the trend accelerated as the office zone expanded upwards, beyond the existing city council height limit, and outwards to invade the old wholesaling, light industrial and professional districts.²⁰⁷

Change came more slowly in capitals other than Sydney and Melbourne but the mining boom of the 1960s affected nearly every city. Daly emphasises how important mining was for the Australian economy and its CBDs. Although Melbourne was the headquarters of national mining companies the boom had the most pronounced effect on Darwin, Brisbane and Perth as they were smaller cities and closest to the new mines. Heightened economic activity soon redefined those city centres that were further changed by increased government activity. 'Darwin sloughed off its makeshift air when the Government pledged to build a new powerhouse, a high school and new government offices.'²⁰⁸ However, even today, although there are no height or other built form controls on city buildings, the incidence of tall buildings is not large in central Darwin and the predominant impression is of a low-rise, low-density city fringed by foreshore and botanic gardens.²⁰⁹

There was massive industrial and commercial development of WA from the mid-1960s to the mid-1970s and Perth was altered physically 'as the old and familiar landmarks were torn down and replaced by skyscraper blocks'. Some people made fortunes in iron or nickel or in the 'surge of real estate development in the city and new suburbs. By the mid-1970s, the number of Perth suburbs had doubled in just over a decade ...',²¹⁰

Australia's boom in city office construction halted temporarily in the late 1970s, leading to an over-supply in office space, especially in Sydney and Melbourne. But in the bigger cities shops, theatres, restaurants and other 'sociable activities' continued seeping away to the suburbs. In 1973, Melbourne City Council commissioned a Strategy Plan that stated 'a need to balance the economic advantages of compactness and the old social values of variety and accessibility'. The planners concluded that the future City of Melbourne should enable people to experience

²⁰⁶ D Durstan, in *Melbourne on foot*, p 43.

²⁰⁷ Davison, in *Melbourne on foot*, pp 21–22

²⁰⁸ Dorovan, *At the other end of Australia*, p 219.

²⁰⁹ Darwin Design group, 'Future directions for Darwin, Summary report', Darwin 1990, pp 8–9. (NARU Library, Darwin)

²¹⁰ CT Stannage, *The people of Perth. A social history of Western Australia's capital city*, Perth City Council 1979, p 344.

variety and contrast. 'But profits, rather than people, have always had most influence on the city's townscape. Business created the social contrasts of the nineteenth century town and bigger business is steadily obliterating them in the twentieth century.'²¹¹

There was an even more frenzied spate of office building in the late 1980s, but this time more highly concentrated in Sydney, as a global gateway city. In one decade alone (1970–1979) more office space was built in central Sydney than was built between 1850 and 1969. That total doubled again between 1980 and 1992.²¹² In most years between 1987 and 1992 around 40% of all office construction in Australia was located in Sydney. Office construction was also high in Melbourne, ranging from around 25% to 35%. Less than 1% of national office construction in each year was located in Hobart.²¹³ Hobart is insulated from the mainland's extremes of boom-bust cycle. By contrast to Hobart, the history of Perth is 'a history of discontinuity' as WA has 'started' afresh with each new wave of settlers and mining discoveries. This discontinuity is reflected in its architecture. 'The city has been rebuilt again and again.' St George's Terrace is 'the physical expression of the same theme'.²¹⁴

As a group, the office towers that replaced so many of the older central buildings are themselves 'evocative of an age'. As McDonald and Thorp have written for the inter-war buildings in Sydney, this group 'evokes the confidence and energy of a particular period.' These postwar buildings demonstrate anew the latest design principles and construction techniques, with their builders taking advantage of new technologies and changing height regulations. They also represent some of the leading local, national and international firms of the postwar period.²¹⁵

The physical impact of business on the postwar city centre was not a matter of simply 'building upwards and outwards'. Even within the so-called CBD there is a spatial arrangement of business with corporate offices as precisely placed as red gums along a creek bed. This analogy is most apt in Perth's core business district which has kept its location between the railway and Swan River, with office developers still strongly favouring a St George's Terrace address.²¹⁶ The dramatic big city image in postcards of central Perth, photographed from across the Swan River, is in reality a view of tower development ranged in a line along the high ground of the terrace, much of it only one building deep.

All informants in this study readily identified business precincts (as well as commercial and government precincts) in their cities, and pinpointed when and where these precincts were shifting: nowhere is this a matter of corporate business 'invading' the

²¹¹ Davison in *Melbourne on foot*, pp 21–22.

²¹² G Meagher, 'Hearts and minds: theorising change in the city centre', *Postmodern Cities Conference Proceedings*, Department of Urban and Regional Planning, University of Sydney, Sydney, 1993, p 381.

²¹³ O'Connor and Stimson pp 33, 35 (fig 3.3).

²¹⁴ George Seddon quoted in C Polizzoto, 'Reading the city', *Fremantle Arts Review* vol 2, no 1, January 1987.

²¹⁵ See B McDonald and W Thorp *Review of heritage inventory for central Sydney* stage 1, Sydney 1995, p 8.

²¹⁶ Information from Ian Alexander, Perth, October 1995.

whole surrounding central city. In Adelaide the AMP tower, completed in 1968, marks the gateway to a cross-shaped high-rise business district oriented to King William Street and Grenfell-Currie Streets. The continuation of high-rise development southwards around Victoria Square is mainly comprised of government offices that have traditionally located there. The Commonwealth's Reserve Bank next to the State Administration Building are two postwar high-rise examples. From a distance on the suburban plain, and most vividly from Mt Lofty, the visual impression of central Adelaide is one of a neat pyramid set in a jumble of smaller building blocks, delineated in turn by spacious parkland.

In heritage terms, we need to retain some evidence of the dominant character of each precinct in the postwar period, especially as this is already changing in some cities. Strictly speaking, there is no longer a single, tightly-focused central business district in either Melbourne and Sydney. Unlike the other capitals, high-rise office construction has since the war extended well beyond the old CBDs. In Melbourne the main extension was along St Kilda Road, encouraged by Melbourne City Council zoning. In Sydney office developers crossed the harbour to Milsons Point and North Sydney. New skyscrapers jostle for space on each side of the harbour, creating the strong visual impression of twin cities linked by the arch of the Harbour bridge.

The first phase in postwar office-building was marked by height and the extension of business precincts. While these trends continued, in the second phase, from the late 1960s, skyscrapers also became land-eaters. Building taller was one option for increasing saleable office space: the other was building wide. This was a more complicated matter than finding finance and the right building techniques as it involved purchasing and amalgamating adjacent city properties into one large redevelopment site. The amalgamation of blocks also meant that demolitions increased and this even included earlier postwar buildings such as the ANZ and Commonwealth Banks in Perth.²¹⁷

Just as Civil & Civic had signalled the dramatic change to Sydney's vertical scale with Caltex House, in 1961 it developed a proposal for a complex that would, in its final form, occupy half a hectare between Pitt and George Streets.²¹⁸ Lend Lease described its proposal as 'urban renewal' but since the opening of Australia Square in 1968 the radical design of the two buildings and plaza by Harry Seidler, particularly the 50-storey round tower, has focused attention on the architecture alone, as 'a Work of Outstanding Environmental Design'.²¹⁹

However, Lend Lease's original emphasis on the urban implications of its scheme is equally as significant as Seidler's design. For Australia Square represented a complete departure from the past in the way that an entire city precinct was acquired, demolished and replaced by structures of far greater mass and height. The change was not simply that of scale, although that trend would cause increasing disquiet

²¹⁷ Information from Ian Kelly, Perth, October 1995.

²¹⁸ Murphy, pp 80–82.

²¹⁹ Working of Civic Award presented by NSW Chapter of the Royal Australian Institute of Architects in 1967, in Murphy, p 117.

around Australia. By combining long-established plots and closing streets the procedure threatened to obliterate street and block patterns dating from the foundation years of the capital cities. Their existing medium-to-large rectangular blocks actually invited 'the creation of large scale, superblock fabrics that are incompatible with traditional urban fabrics'.²²⁰ Provision of new plazas such as within Australia Square did not compensate for the varied pedestrian roles of the old streets. These large complexes combined offices with other city centre functions, but internalised them. Taylor discusses this process in some detail, for example for Allendale Square, Perth, and Collins Place.²²¹

It took some time for these losses to the city's heritage to be recognised generally.

[During the nineteenth century Melbourne developed] a double pattern of streets in the city centre: the open, regular main streets of the grid which are dominant over the city as a whole; and the variable pattern of little streets, lanes and arcades.

With later, larger-scale building this century the trend of subdivision reversed. Single structures fully occupy areas once subdivided for many. This building pattern can erase much of the character and interest of Melbourne, turn important activity areas into service areas, and destroy a circulation system which evolved in part to accommodate pedestrian needs which have not changed.²²²

The development of the metropolitan areas as a whole—suburbanisation—also represents a theme of major significance to city centres. Despite a long history of suburbanisation it was not until the 1950s that the traditional close links between centre and suburbs began to dissolve as new suburbs were built well beyond the centre and its web of radial public transport routes. For example, the Melbourne metropolitan area lay within 10 miles radius from the GPO in 1911 and contained around 260 square miles and it steadily but not dramatically increased to 310 square miles by 1947. By contrast with the gradual expansion of the prewar period this metropolitan area more than doubled by 1954 and increased again to 812 square miles by 1961.²²³ Sydney's built-up area expanded from around 400 square kilometres in 1945 to nearly 1 200 square kilometres in 1981.²²⁴

A map of Brisbane at the census in 1971, published by the Cities Commission (1975) and similar maps for the other capitals show how today's city centre once comprised nearly the whole city with early suburbs closely surrounding it. In succeeding phases suburban development proceeded around these inner suburbs and also reflected the trend towards coastal living. A map of the phases of metropolitan development of Sydney show the suburbs surging far to the north, west and south of the city centre since 1941.²²⁵ Yet the maps also show how oriented most metropolitan areas remain to their city centres. For example, in Brisbane the suburban centres of the early

²²⁰ Siksa, p 13.

²²¹ Taylor *Australia architecture since 1960*, pp 58, 60, 61.

²²² *Grids and greenerly*, Urban Design & Architecture Division, City of Melbourne, 1987, p 56.

²²³ Pryor, p 121.

²²⁴ D Rich et al, in RV Cardew et al, p 20.

²²⁵ See DN Jears and Peter Spearmitt, *The opera air museum: the cultural landscape of New South Wales*, George Allen & Unwin North Sydney, 1980, p 105 (map).

twentieth century and the succeeding postwar centres form two concentric rings around central Brisbane.

City centre functions: shops, manufacturing jobs and professional services were moved to new suburban locations. At the same time, financial services and public administration intensified and extended central business districts, partly as a consequence of rapid metropolitan growth.²²⁶ Thus postwar suburbanisation had both positive and negative effects on the city centre, increasing demand for government and professional services and entertainment and promoting the growth of office blocks but also hastening the decline of retailing and residential use and destroying, along with old buildings, an identity constructed over the previous century.

2.2 City planning and regulation

Urban historians have noted that the same global technological changes have been responded to differently in individual cities, resulting in different images and cultures in different cities. One suggestion is that this difference is due to political differences. The timing, form and extent of city planning—urban design and development control—is one important example. Partly due to differences between the States in planning and regulation, the impact of the most-obvious change since the war, the high-rise office block, has taken very different forms and heights in each city and has occupied different territories. Many of the specific design features of high-rise offices are also due not so much to architecture as to the height limits and plot ratios set by city councils.

In Melbourne in 1889 when the 12-storey Australian Provincial Life Insurance Building was opened, the official party in the hydraulic lift shot straight to the top and was jerked back three metres by the recoil springs. This small drama helped to persuade the City Council to impose a 40-metre height limit on buildings, which remained in force until ICI House was constructed in East Melbourne (deliberately, just beyond the city centre limits) in 1956–1958. The tower soared to twice the height of the old limit (it was 70 metres, with an 84-metre service tower) and its architect, Osborn McCutcheon, also made innovative use of concrete and sheer glazed curtain walls, ‘setting off the city’s second office boom and the redefinition of its skyline’.²²⁷

As other developers found ways to exceed existing height controls, councils responded by substituting new, but less restrictive forms of control. Plot ratio provisions established a permissible ratio of floor space to land area for various parts of the city.²²⁸ They continued to limit the total floor space in proportion to the area of

²²⁶ See K O’Connor and E Blakely, ‘Suburbia makes the central city: a new interpretation of city suburb relationships’, *Urban policy and research* 7, 3 September 1989.

²²⁷ *Historic Buildings Council Register*, Department of Planning and Development, Melbourne 1993, p 29. For similar developments in Sydney see Fraser, pp 226–227, 235, 236, 238.

²²⁸ In Britain Lord Holford’s original concept was labelled ‘floor space index’. That was the amount of floor space in the building compared with the plot on which it stood, and half the adjoining street, so that if the street was narrow the floor space index was lower and so the building was lower than allowed on a wide street. But when Holford prepared the City of London Plan councillors, lobbied by developers, left out consideration of the width of the adjoining street and changed the index to a comparison between the site

the site but allowed more flexibility in design and height. For example, in Melbourne, both the Century Building, 13 floors, built to the old 40 metre limit, and Nauru House, 52 floors, and covering only a quarter of the site, have plot ratios of about 12:1.²²⁹

Plot ratio and other regulatory constraints ‘crunched together’ with clients’ desire for sheer height and for specific addresses, such as St George’s Terrace in Perth, have increasingly set the parameters for architectural design. Perth’s towers can be clearly dated by their heights, which seemed to increase in one hundred per cent leaps decade by decade, from the 10–12 storeys of the MLC building and Council House in the 1950s and 1960s to the 50 storey Bond Tower in the 1980s. Many developers started projects on the assumption that they could get raised height limits or new plot ratios before their project was completed: Bond was one who succeeded in doing so, in Perth. The QV1 building of the 1990s was 40 storeys but an ‘odd shape’ because it was not allowed to interfere with the sight lines from the parliamentary precinct.²³⁰

Mt Newman House (1971) introduced the method in Perth of amalgamating lots to enable permissible plot ratio to be concentrated into a free-standing tower block. This method was also used for the three tallest buildings of the mining boom, Allendale Square, the AMP and St Martins, each exceeding 140 metres.²³¹ The reduced coverage of the site reflected planners’ concern to provide light, air and public space at street level and was enshrined by councils in a further requirement for set-back from the boundaries.

The new provisions had the opposite effect to height controls as, instead of building right to the street frontage to gain as much floor space as possible for modest towers, builders moved them back from the street and squeezed in extra floor space by stacking them as high as the plot ratio would allow. This practice soon had a discernible impact on the physical and social heritage of the city as it broke down the formal definition of the streets, removed shopfronts and detailed building facades from the footpaths and created cold and windy microclimates which discouraged traditional pedestrian use.²³² Melbourne City Council, flushed with civic pride, gave site ratio bonuses to get BHP House aloft in 1972. But office-workers found its spaces intimidating, and architects hotly debated the decision to award it a 1975 architectural prize.²³³ ‘Plot ratios enabled the development of wind-blasted plazas and holes in the street.’²³⁴

Development phases that had such pronounced effect on the city centres reflected not only the rise and fall of company fortunes in response to investment and speculative opportunities and the impact of federal fiscal policies, but also the

area and the whole floor area, and it was called plot ratio. This method of measuring density in big buildings was soon adopted worldwide. Stepherson interview, tape 7, p 84.

²²⁹ *Grids and greenerery*, p 58.

²³⁰ Information from Ian Kelly.

²³¹ I Hocking, ‘Perth— the building challenge’, Perth, c 1987, p 24. Batty Library.

²³² *Grids and greenerery*, p 58.

²³³ Davison in *Melbourne on foot*, p 31.

²³⁴ B Raworth to S Marsden, Melbourne 1996.

interplay between private development and government regulation. Indeed, David Harvey has emphasised in his work on western cities the ways in which government and planners have tried to resolve capitalism's periodic crises by 'spatial fixes', using geographical policies and controls.²³⁵

Initially, State and local government policy treated the whole city centre as a central business zone with little restriction placed on the construction of new office blocks or the displacement of housing and open space by warehouses and small factories. Height and other building characteristics were controlled by building regulations but, as in Melbourne, 'virtually any activity that was likely to choose to locate in the Central Area was permitted to do so.' As a result, the stock of buildings and the pattern of landuses that existed by the early 1960s represented 'almost a purely market controlled allocation of space and intensity of site use'. Such controls as existed simply rationalised the logic of the market, 'tidying up' rather than influencing the pattern of city centre activities. This remained true even after the introduction of new development controls (for example, in Melbourne and Brisbane in the mid-1960s).²³⁶

By 1975 more powerful and 'long-awaited planning strategies' had been produced for central Sydney (Sydney City Council, 1971 on), Melbourne (Interplan, 1974) and Adelaide (City of Adelaide Plan, 1974). 'The plans set out objectives for future city development ... and while they may have been stronger on rhetoric than on means of implementation, they offered some hope of more decisive planning in city centres where the forces of capital had otherwise had a relatively free rein'.²³⁷ The consensus seems to be, however, that the power of property and finance capital remained paramount, at least in Melbourne and Sydney, and that planners failed to control either the content or the form of their city centres.²³⁸ McLoughlin argues that landuse planning in Melbourne since the war has been highly reactive to wider capitalist developments rather than directive of them, for example, in the 1980s when the Labor Government responded to deepening recession by using planning policies to maintain the primacy and property values of the central business district.²³⁹

Central Perth took until 1986 to get a statutory planning scheme and a strategic plan, more than 30 years after Stephenson and Hepburn proposed development control in Perth's first metropolitan plan. In the interim, planning in central Perth was a matter of conflict and procrastination while finance capital, in partnership with State and local government, proved its power by unrestrained office construction. The diversity of uses and places in central Perth declined as small merchants closed shop in the face of reduced sales and rising rents and the city's architectural heritage was systematically destroyed. As the inevitable outcome of this planning and development system Alexander predicted the central core of Perth would be 'left as a sterile area

²³⁵ J Brian McLoughlin, *Shaping Melbourne's future? Townplanning, the state and civil society*, Cambridge University Press, Melbourne 1992, chapter 21

²³⁶ John Paterson Urban Systems Pty Ltd, 'The Melbourne central business district in the 1960s', Australian Institute of Urban Studies Research Project 33, Canberra [c 1972] p 52.

²³⁷ I Alexander, 'Does central Perth have a future?' *Urban policy and research* vol 3 no 2, 1986, p 17.

²³⁸ For example, see McLoughlin chapter 21.

²³⁹ McLoughlin p 232.

composed of office towers, international hotels and an increasing array of empty shops'.²⁴⁰

Differences in local government regulation have also contributed to differences in the shape and extent of other city centre functions. Local government zoning by the city councils has had a strong influence. Alexander presents a series of maps comparing the functional zoning in the central areas of Perth, Adelaide and Hobart around 1970.²⁴¹ These demonstrate considerable differences in the extent of the city centre zoned for different purposes, for instance the greater proportion councils have allowed for residential use in central Adelaide and Hobart than in Perth.

Planning rates highly as a theme in central Darwin's postwar history but not in its heritage. The one place where a completely new capital, or at least a new city centre, might have been created by postwar planners was in the NT. The near-destruction of Darwin not once but twice—in 1942 and again in 1974—was recognised by Commonwealth planners as an unprecedented opportunity to build a new city. Darwin also seemed to offer fewer obstacles to such planning than elsewhere: its population was small, transient and politically powerless; its surviving structures were modest; and the Commonwealth already determined most land tenure and economic activity. On both occasions the Commonwealth adopted measures to freeze private development and prepare elaborate plans. Yet the old town centre survived and few planning proposals were implemented.

During the 1940s Australian interest in town planning was acute. 'National planning for a new postwar world order was expected to produce modern, efficient, scientifically planned cities.'²⁴² Harold Smith, an architect employed by the Commonwealth in its Sydney planning office, recalled a group of architects meeting every week to discuss 'everything to do with architecture, philosophy, sociology'. Smith published a small book, *Planning the community* in 1944 where he argued that the six capital cities and Newcastle presented 'the most difficult problems of physical reconstruction' that could take 'generations' to change. As a result of his interest Smith was asked to form 'a small coterie of architects, engineers and sociologists to do a lot of work advising on the reconstruction physically of Darwin ... and at the same time ... planning for Canberra'.²⁴³

Despite such advice, the first plan for Darwin failed because of the huge projected expense—30 million pounds—and the electoral defeat in 1949 of the Chifley Labor Government that had fostered the making of grand schemes for postwar reconstruction.²⁴⁴ A generation later the Commonwealth Government established a

²⁴⁰ Alexander, 'Does central Perth have a future?' p 23.

²⁴¹ Alexander, *The city centre*.

²⁴² Renate Howe, 'Visionary reality in planning post-war Melbourne, 1945–55', paper presented at the Urban History Conference, ANU, June 1995 p 6 (including quotation from Smith, below).

²⁴³ Harold Smith, transcript of interview by Mandy Jean Sydney, 1992, tape A, pp 7–8 (original transcripts, bound collection). RAIANSW Chapter; Sydney, oral history collection (loaned by Sharon Veale, RAIAN, to SMarsden 1996).

²⁴⁴ King, p 61.

Darwin Reconstruction Commission within a fortnight of Cyclone Tracy, in 1975, but from the start it was criticised for its emphasis on the replanning rather than the reconstruction of Darwin. The DRC planning schemes drew on the opportunity presented by the devastation to 'improve' Darwin with proposals for large-scale landuse changes. Darwin's landuse patterns were focused on the peninsula where the town had been founded and where the port and commercial and administrative functions were located. Some industry had developed adjacent to the centre to the south of the railway line while the old residential area between the CBD and the airport had been completely filled by 1974. Most of the pre-Cyclone Tracy population lived in suburbs close to the centre, including Larrakeyah and Stuart Park, but the airport prevented further close development and from the 1960s most new residents made homes in the more-distant northern suburbs beyond the airport.²⁴⁵

Thus by the 1970s, unlike other capitals, Darwin city centre was distant from most of the suburban population and was also physically isolated by the peninsula-airport-residential suburbs split. Most residential growth was in the north while most jobs were in the old town on the peninsula. At peak hour, all traffic was funnelled down a single road (Bagot Road).²⁴⁶ The DRC did not propose relocating the CBD to a more central area but suggested the development of a new northern centre to take over predominant commercial and employment roles while the old town would function as a tourist, cultural and administrative centre.²⁴⁷ A freeway was also proposed but neither this nor other DRC proposals were accepted. The replanning of Darwin failed to halt existing trends: the change from residential and light industry to commercial use in city blocks and the increasing distances between city employment and suburban living.²⁴⁸ However, Darwin's continued development along pre-cyclone patterns has resulted, as predicted by the planners themselves, in a concentration of retailing in the northern centre (Casuarina), convenient to most residents, while 'old' Darwin's main functions have become tourism, culture and administration, apart from functions associated with its port.

The 'Canberra' planners' proposals for the Darwin region met with broad community opposition as people waited in mounting frustration for permission to rebuild their homes. The second chairman of the DRC, Clem Jones, with experience in consensual rather than doctrinaire planning as Brisbane's former Lord Mayor, abandoned the controversial proposals and focused on rebuilding rather than replanning.²⁴⁹ By the end of the DRC (1978) few replanning proposals were implemented. Darwin's residents may have supported recommendations to move the airport or to shift government buildings closer to the population's centre of gravity but, as one commented shrewdly, 'you don't stand a chance. It will cost too much'.²⁵⁰ The airport stayed where it was and the federal Department of Construction repaired and rebuilt

²⁴⁵ PV Greerhalgh, 'The Darwin Reconstruction Commission: public policy and sociological considerations', Thesis, School of Australian Environmental Studies, Griffith University, 1978, pp 33, 31, 36.

²⁴⁶ Greerhalgh, pp 64–65.

²⁴⁷ Greerhalgh, pp 65, 67.

²⁴⁸ Kirg, p 147, 152.

²⁴⁹ Greerhalgh, pp 110, 112, 192.

²⁵⁰ Quoted in Greerhalgh, p 84.

city centre government offices, that had, in any case, suffered much less from cyclone damage than suburban homes.²⁵¹ In the 1950s and again in the 1970s planners had failed to accommodate prior historical development and residents' preferences, and failed to properly take into account other influences, not least those of government activity itself.

Such failures also limited the effect of ambitious plans in the more populous and complex Australian cities. Where they succeeded was when public as well as political support was cultivated and, ironically, when they 'rationalised' existing trends. The Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works was given power to produce a master plan for metropolitan Melbourne in 1949. Thousands of households, businesses, public authorities and professionals were consulted: an accurate interpretation of people's wants was seen as 'fundamental to any successful planning scheme in a democratic community'.²⁵² EF Borrie, the chief planner, also aimed for a flexible plan that followed trends rather than led them, because economic and social factors determined the size, character and needs of any city and a plan 'can merely provide for such needs in the best possible manner'.²⁵³

The plan, completed in 1953, provided a zoning system to promote orderly future development but did not disrupt existing use. Its basic themes were efficiency and practicality. However, even such common-sense matters as efficiency and practicality may be approached in different ways by planners and with differing impact on particular urban communities. 'Borrie's admiration for American cities led him to accept rather earlier than many that the car would have to be accommodated and that this would radically alter the design and shape of the city.' He disliked the ageing inner city housing and as central city employment would soon expand he argued for its replacement with high-rise flats. West of Parliament House he proposed 'razing virtually everything in the area bounded by Spring, Collins, Elizabeth and Swanston Streets' for a new 'civic centre', portrayed in illustrations as a square surrounded by monumental office blocks for municipal, State and Commonwealth use. Finally, a ring road was to 'sweep up under Spring Street and link up with a network of radiating freeways'.²⁵⁴

Rasmussen and Dingle describe these elements as radical for the time.²⁵⁵ Yet nearly every contemporary metropolitan plan in Australia proposed similar destruction of inner suburbs and surviving open areas to bring freeway traffic into the centre, and destruction of the centre to build offices, carparks and civic complexes to serve the city at large. In South Australia in 1949 the whole of the central city south of the River Torrens was proposed by planners as a commercial and industrial area, leaving only North Adelaide residential, but a new north-south highway was planned to cut right

²⁵¹ For a detailed description and analysis of the DRC era see Geerhaigh, pp 64–134.

²⁵² C Rasmussen and T Dingle, 'EF Borrie and Melbourne's 1954 master plan', in Freestone, ed, *The Australian Planner*; p 131. See also T Dingle and C Rasmussen, *Vital corrections: Melbourne and its Board of Works 1891–1991*, McPhee Gribble, Victoria 1991, pp 231–257.

²⁵³ Rasmussen and Dingle, pp 131–132.

²⁵⁴ Rasmussen and Dingle, p 132 (also illustration for Civic Centre, figure 1, p 134).

²⁵⁵ Rasmussen and Dingle, p 132.

through the district. There was strong opposition from local residents to similar freeway proposals made later under the Metropolitan Adelaide Transportation (MATs) Plan, including from North Adelaide resident Hugh Stretton whose book *Ideas for Australian cities* had such an influence on planners in the 1970s.²⁵⁶ Adelaide's metropolitan plan of 1962, its transport system plan of 1968 and related government strategies also treated the central region as 'a redevelopment site for commercial and industrial construction and for new commuter roads'.²⁵⁷ Many such planning proposals were implemented, particularly freeways and bridges in Perth and Brisbane (see 1.4).

'Few other urban areas of the State have been the centre of so many proposed redevelopments as has the humble district of Wapping.' During the war, the City of Hobart appointed a prominent Victorian planner, FW Cook, to prepare a town planning scheme. One of his recommendations was for a wide Northern Highway extending Park Street into the heart of the city with a traffic circus surrounded by grandiose buildings, in the process destroying houses in Wapping and the Theatre Royal.²⁵⁸ Similarly, the City of Hobart Plan (1945) as a whole proposed but did not implement a complete transformation of the city with old working-class Wapping, typically, presented as an 'opportunity for replanning'. Less dramatically, but just as inexorably, Hobart's old wharf district has indeed been obliterated.²⁵⁹

The freeway proposals in Hobart and Adelaide and several metropolitan planning proposals elsewhere lapsed or were abolished after adverse public reaction. Some proposals were merely delayed (construction of Melbourne's ring road has been recently resumed).²⁶⁰ Even such popular and pragmatic plans as the MMBW plan depended on finance for the required public works.²⁶¹ On this difficulty hinged the salvation of some inner suburbs blighted for years by freeway proposals and central precincts earmarked for redevelopment. But the threats to the centre mooted in the big plans were almost as marked in effect on the city's heritage as the plans that were actually implemented. In central Perth, blighted houses in Northbridge and East Perth for many years attested to the effect of their acquisition for a proposed City Northern Bypass.

More positively, public reaction to road building, flat development and other 'urban renewal' proposals revealed much about what people valued in their city centres and contributed to a wider appreciation for Australia's urban heritage.²⁶² In Northbridge, for example, the bypass was deferred as community protest mounted over the social and environmental dislocation caused by the proposals. Northbridge has become highly

²⁵⁶ Sumner [pp 16, 18].

²⁵⁷ SMarsden 'Playford's metropolis', in O'Neil et al, p 129.

²⁵⁸ SPetrow, 'A city in search of a plan: Hobart 1945-1962', paper presented at the Urban History Conference, ANU, Canberra 1995, pp 5-6 and illustrations.

²⁵⁹ Wapping History group, *'Down Wapping'.* Hobart's vanished Wapping and Old Wharf districts, Blubber Head Press, Sandy Bay, Tasmania, 1998, 1994, pp 214 (first quotation), 217.

²⁶⁰ Low, p 21.

²⁶¹ See Dirgler and Rasmussen pp 243, 255.

²⁶² This observation is based on Dirgler and Rasmussen p 257.

popular with city workers and suburbanites alike for its old-city mix of low-scale, low-rent buildings, cafes and bars.²⁶³

Big metropolitan plans posed one kind of threat to existing urban fabric but the abandonment of statutory planning has posed others. Since the 1980s State Governments have tended to adopt an approach similar to the Victorian Government's 'emphasis on a "market-driven" planning and development process'. As the authors of this statement ask, 'what does this mean for ... the city as a whole? What sort of development will result?'

Until about ten years ago, major development proposals were either assessed through the planning permit route (eg Rialto complex) or as part of 'spot' rezonings (eg Melbourne Central). We are now seeing the rise of the "floppy scheme"... the planning scheme that can accommodate almost any private sector initiative and changes in market conditions. How does the state protect and serve the public interests when urban designs are undertaken privately in precincts of up to 30 hectares? ... In a real sense, planning and design have shifted from the public to the private sector. What are the distributional consequences of this shift in responsibility?²⁶⁴

The authors are discussing proposals to redevelop the docklands west of central Melbourne but their comments also concern the city centre and other city centres that have always been most vulnerable to the manipulation of planning controls in favour of redevelopment.

2.3 Architecture, engineering and construction ²⁶⁵

Melbourne has been described as the virtual capital of modern architecture between 1935 and 1960, when modernist architects Roy Grounds, Frederick Romberg and Robin Boyd were the 'undoubted focus'.²⁶⁶ The three, in partnership between 1953 and 1961, were amongst the country's most influential architects, particularly in helping to establish and promote European 'functional' architecture and the 'International' style. All three architects shared an interest in geometric design, as expressed in Grounds' design of Victoria's new National Gallery and Canberra's Australian Academy of Science. Romberg's large projects also referred to the Brutalist movement developing overseas, which was expressed in hard shapes, modular frames, exposed utilities and raw concrete, and which later gained wide currency in Australia.

Relatively few of the Grounds, Romberg or Boyd buildings were large city centre structures, a fact that Boyd came to regret, and his later career in the partnership tapered off 'in a generally fruitless attempt to get skyscraper commissions'.²⁶⁷ By the

²⁶³ Alexander and May.

²⁶⁴ CD Lorg, University of Melbourne, posting re forum, 'Private planning, private cities. The Docklands', to be held in Melbourne, 29 November 1996. H-NET Urban History Discussion List <H-URBAN@h-net.msu.edu> 19 November 1996.

²⁶⁵ Taylor's books and report, cited elsewhere, are a major source for this theme, and I have not reproduced them here. See also Lewis' sections on building and architecture and streetscape in *Melbourne*, pp 135–139.

²⁶⁶ C Hamann in H Tarrar, ed, *Architects of Australia*, Macmillan, Sth Melbourne 1981, p 129.

²⁶⁷ Hamann pp 129, 134, 138 (quotation).

1960s they were no longer regarded as leaders in Australian architecture. 'Smartness, the pursuit of structural virtuosity, the aim of building a taller skyscraper than the latest one in Sydney, became the aim of many clients and architects.' The initiative moved to Sydney where new modern architects such as Wooley and Seidler had emerged. Boyd himself became one of Seidler's most influential and widely-read publicists.²⁶⁸

The 'American' theme, highly visible in the office towers of the postwar city centre, became ever more apparent in this shift of leadership to Sydney. From the 1950s the USA was by far the strongest overseas influence on the architecture of the Australian capitals. Central Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane and Perth are showcases for work by architects such as Harry Seidler, who studied or worked in North America with Walter Gropius, Josef Albers, Marcel Breuer and Oscar Niemeyer (in Brazil) and introduced their concepts directly into Australia after his arrival in 1948.²⁶⁹ Seidler's work and his influence on other Australian architects was that of an 'Internationalist'. What this term actually means is that Seidler's 'architecture is East Coast modern, the American version of the Bauhaus idea restated by Breuer, which is identified more with the USA than it is with Australia'.²⁷⁰

These early influences on Seidler's architecture were augmented by his long collaboration with the engineer Pier Luigi Nervi in Rome, lasting from 1963 with the design of Australia Tower to Nervi's death in 1979. Seidler's public work became characterised by curvilinear mass forms which, with Nervi's contribution, also pioneered new engineering methods in Australia. Permanent precast concrete formwork was first used in Australia Tower, while the MLC Centre in Sydney was the highest concrete structure in the world at the time of its completion in 1978.²⁷¹

Unlike town planners, who continued to favour England, postwar Australian architects studied in or visited the USA. Increasing levels of investment in Australian property and finance by American firms also meant that they often preferred to engage American architects rather than Australian firms, or else American architects were brought out to work with them. American technology and technological 'know-how' was also influential. From the late 1950s, as managing directors argued at the time, 'advances in elevator technology, the development of new building materials and sophisticated building techniques, combined with the pressing demand for office accommodation in an affluent and expansive era, meant that city buildings would inevitably go higher'.²⁷² In 1958 ICI building set off Melbourne's second office boom and the height limit was removed by council. This was Melbourne's first International Style high-rise.²⁷³

²⁶⁸ Hamarr, pp 134, 139 (quotation).

²⁶⁹ J Taylor, *Australian architecture since 1960*, Law Book Company, NSW 1986, p 15.

²⁷⁰ P Drew, in K Frampton and P Drew, *Harry Seidler: four decades of architecture*, Thames and Hudson, London 1992, p 15.

²⁷¹ K Frampton, in Frampton and Drew, pp 86-87, 88.

²⁷² Murphy, p 80.

²⁷³ Davison, in *Melbourne on foot*, p 34.

In many places, an American CBD effaced an idiomatically Australian cityscape. In Melbourne in 1969, the Menzies, once 'the first hotel in Australia' was demolished to make way for the 'black ice of BHP House (1972)'. Like the nearby Shell House (1960) and AMP Square (1969) this 41 storey building was 'created in the glass and steel image of corporate America by Australian architects working in consultation with the leading American architects Skidmore, Owings and Merrill'.²⁷⁴ Similar sentiments were expressed in assessing Adelaide's postwar modernist buildings. 'Rarely ... did functional efficiency and expediency produce designs of superior merit. Two notable exceptions are the Reserve Bank building in Victoria Square and the Australian Eagle Insurance Building in Grenfell Street.'²⁷⁵

The other important point to make about this modernist architecture is that most of it is postwar, unlike the American and European originals to which Australian architecture deferred. The first skyscraper in the world was built in Chicago in 1885 and New York's first skyscraper was constructed in 1902, where just 11 years later the Woolworth Building reached 60 storeys.²⁷⁶ Dumas House (government offices) one of Perth's earliest postwar blocks, planned in 1962 and opened in 1966, borrowed its concept from the Reichsbank project of 1933. Sydney Opera House was begun soon after Dumas House, 'further contributing to the obsolescence of the universal gargantuan box'.²⁷⁷ 'The *certainty* of these heroic Perth slabs becomes the uncertainty of both the copy and of the new.' This fundamental uncertainty in the architecture of the postwar city was most evident in the smaller State capitals, where high-rise was adopted more slowly than in Sydney and Melbourne and attempted with less flair (and often with less money).

The copy suffers from being too late. In the case of these late modern buildings, acutely so, for in the great Western Australian fear of being *behind*, they are ... the last of a kind. As architectural modernism seemed to emerge at full strength and purity here, elsewhere the orthodoxy was losing ground.²⁷⁸

As for the glass towers of the 1980s and 1990s, even Seidler's innovatory sunbreaker facades were based on Le Corbusier's *panne de verre* designs of the early 1930s for Algiers, which he soon afterwards abandoned.²⁷⁹ Advances in manufacturing technology in steel and concrete, mainly in the USA, were also adopted some time later in Australia. While steel was the main material in North American skyscrapers, concrete was more evident in Australia, especially when combined with high-strength steel strand. 'The multiple arch structure of the Sydney Opera House, concrete domes

²⁷⁴ Davison in *Melbourne on foot*, p 31.

²⁷⁵ Marsden, Stark and Sumner, pp 43–44.

²⁷⁶ *The city as an economic system*, OpenUniversity Press, Bucks, UK, 1973, p 95.

²⁷⁷ G. Crist, 'ReSetting a city: three modern buildings and the uncertainty of place', M Arch thesis, University of W A, Nedlands, 1993 (UW A Library, Scholars Centre, p 63.

²⁷⁸ Crist, p 62 (both quotations).

²⁷⁹ Stephenson interview, tape 19, p 216.

of various configurations and elegant large span, arch bridges and tall buildings such as the MLC Centre in Sydney illustrate the flexibility of this material.²⁸⁰

Underlying more recent technological advances has been the development of computer technology that has enabled engineers to carry out complex analyses very rapidly: for example it took an engineer a year to complete an approximate structural analysis of the Australia Square Building; ten years later, after engineers spent a few days preparing the data set, a computer took 43 seconds to develop a precise analysis for the MLC Centre. What this means is that the size, architectural form and structural solutions of new city buildings, especially special-purpose buildings, are already more varied than in the past.²⁸¹

The skills demanded by multi-storied and large-scale building construction since the war have promoted the development in Australia of national engineering firms and architectural firms specialising in high-rise, interior decoration and landscape design. Large Sydney- and Melbourne-based firms built up national practices, while two or three local architectural firms predominated in each of the smaller capitals. In the early postwar period all the important buildings in Perth were done by Sydney and Melbourne architects or by the principal architect of Public Works.²⁸² Bates, Smart & McCutcheon of Melbourne designed the MLC buildings in Adelaide, Perth, Brisbane, Hobart and North Sydney and the ICI buildings erected in Melbourne and Sydney between 1955 and 1958 that introduced such major features as curtain walls and articulated cores. The firm worked in association on the MLC buildings with local architects in each city who also carried out other significant local projects. For example, Cheesman, Doley, Brabham and Neighbour in Adelaide also designed the innovative IMFC Building (1964) in King William Street.

In Brisbane, the MLC Assurance Building was designed by the Melbourne firm in association with Queensland's Conrad & Gargett.²⁸³ Bren Gargett joined Arnold Conrad's firm in 1939 and they developed one of Queensland's largest architectural practices after the war. A dramatic aerial photo of central Brisbane in 1988 shows more than half of the city's big buildings marked as Conrad & Gargett projects. There are 24 of them, including towers built for the ANZ, National and Commonwealth Banks, Santos House, Sheraton Hotel, National Mutual, the State Executive Building, Central Station Development and Brisbane Administration Centre.²⁸⁴

Half of these C&G city buildings were government commissions—university, hospitals, Commonwealth, State and city council agencies. Expanding government demand after the war strongly influenced building and design professions by providing large contracts and training whole cohorts of builders, architects and engineers. The Snowy

²⁸⁰ M Marosszeky, 'Construction technology and urban development', in Troy, *Technological change and the city*, p 117.

²⁸¹ Marosszeky, pp 119–120.

²⁸² Stephenson interview, tape 10, pp 126, 127.

²⁸³ Marsden, Stark and Sumelirg, pp 44, 174; Taylor and Stewart, pp 1–5, 10, 13; 2–2, 5; RAlA South Australia, 'Significant 20th century architecture'.

²⁸⁴ *Architects of Australia*, Bicentennial edition, Images of Australia, Camberwell Victoria [1988], p 43.

Mountains Scheme alone provided a training ground for a generation of engineers. RG Robinson, an SMA engineer who had led the Commonwealth mission to Europe and later became a Director of Lend Lease, recalled that the Australian building industry did not employ engineers in the early 1950s and the Snowy Scheme gave them unique experience. 'By the time they began to leave the mountains, the country had a booming construction industry, with buildings of a size and complexity that called for engineering skills.' Some engineers followed Robinson into Civil & Civic which had by then become an industry leader.²⁸⁵

Australia has also enjoyed a 'long and unbroken history of government architects and government architecture'.²⁸⁶ Each State capital retains a large stock of colonial and twentieth century public buildings, some of them kept in original use, some expensively restored as heritage buildings and others 'recycled'. The General Post Offices were highly visible examples. Most were constructed as elaborate edifices by the colonial governments, but were transferred to the new Commonwealth after federation in 1901. Adelaide's GPO, which was completed in 1872, was conserved and the postal hall restored in association with Danvers Architects and re-opened in 1986. The new Commonwealth's design and construction authority became a separate Department of Works and Railways in 1916 and continued in various guises until it amalgamated with other federal services in the 1990s, a fate it shared with equivalent State departments such as SACON in SA. Until then, many buildings in the city centres were designed and constructed by those large Commonwealth and State departments.

With few exceptions government buildings built in the middle years of the century, from the 1930s to the 1960s, were considered by private architects to be undistinguished, at best. These were not the finest years for architecture generally but government architects were further limited by tight costs, high demand for serial construction throughout the State or country and by other bureaucratic restraints. However, even in the 1960s certain Commonwealth buildings were designed to showcase the best of Australian materials and craftsmanship: for example, in the Reserve Bank building in Adelaide.²⁸⁷ More commonly, 'departmental architecture of the sixties could be recognised by its safe and conventional design, precise brickwork, curtain walls (often enough), and the ubiquitous use of deep metal tray fascias.' After that time more innovative and rigorous work became evident, and a change in attitudes also brought a rise in restoration projects.²⁸⁸

The stylishness of government architecture in more recent years may also be an expression of a diversifying clientele that included independent institutions, some with international roles. For example, Ceres House was built by the Commonwealth for the Australian Wheat Board on its old site in Lonsdale Street Melbourne in 1987. The new

²⁸⁵ Murphy, p 6.

²⁸⁶ R Pegrum, ed, *Australian architects: Australian government architects*, Commonwealth of Australia and RAIAC Canberra 1988, p 7. For details of government building in Sydney see also Coltheart and Maddrell, pp 13–14.

²⁸⁷ P Stark to S Marsden 1996.

²⁸⁸ R Johnson in Pegrum, p 95 (including quotation).

office tower displayed high quality fittings and detailing of 'crisp functionalism' in keeping with its use in international negotiations.²⁸⁹ City premises for the Commonwealth Bank reflected a similar change. The bank was required to process architectural requirements through the Commonwealth bureaucracy until the 1960s.²⁹⁰ The bank building in Martin Place Sydney, built as the NSW Government Savings Bank in 1928, was adopted as the Commonwealth Bank's international headquarters, a decision that made it in 1989 Australia's largest conservation and refitting project undertaken by government architects and engineers.²⁹¹

This project also illustrated a general trend, evident since the 1970s. An increasing civic concern—often expressed as conflict—was reflected in the design of new buildings which respected rather than challenged their surroundings, and in major restoration projects.²⁹² The Telephone Exchange constructed by the Commonwealth in Charlotte Street Brisbane in 1989 was given brick cladding at the lower levels and incorporated a brick warehouse dating from 1912.²⁹³ The exchange was one of a number of towers built in the Australian capitals that retained old building facades and adopted complementary design features although critics on both sides of the heritage divide increasingly condemned such projects as 'facadism'.

After World War Two both government and private architects had to adapt designs to an increasingly diverse range of requirements, including such aspects as air-conditioning and telecommunications. 'The growth of city business districts now requires larger and more sophisticated buildings each with an inbuilt flexibility to adjust to customer demand and technological innovation.'²⁹⁴ The design of telephone exchanges precisely addresses contemporary telecommunications requirements. The Commonwealth built several new city centre exchanges. For example, the Kent Street Sydney (1988) and Charlotte Street Brisbane (1989) exchanges satisfied functional criteria by reducing dust and light with minimal fenestration, restricting public access, using reinforced concrete structures and low-maintenance external materials, and providing 'sophisticated reticulation of cabling and mechanical, electrical and fire services'.²⁹⁵

Another factor in changes in the design of postwar buildings was due to changes in their ownership or tenancy. Since the war, State and Commonwealth government policy on office accommodation has swung between owning and leasing buildings. Both policies have had great impact as governments own and lease extensive areas of office space in every capital city centre. In the 1980s, in response to Commonwealth government policy to increase the amount of owned accommodation, Australian Construction Services designed massive new offices for central Melbourne

²⁸⁹ Pegnum, p 64.

²⁹⁰ NQuarry, in Pegnum, p 14.

²⁹¹ Pegnum, p 20.

²⁹² See J Taylor; *Australia architecture since 1960*, pp 62–66.

²⁹³ Pegnum, p 48.

²⁹⁴ Pegnum, p 48.

²⁹⁵ Pegnum, pp 48, 50 (quotation).

and Sydney.²⁹⁶ As the pendulum swung, as lessees, Commonwealth and State Governments strongly influenced private building design by establishing specific office standards. These requirements influenced all new office design in cities such as Hobart where government is by far the major renter. They also had the effect of downgrading historical buildings (including early postwar buildings) available for lease in the city centre because they did not comply with the stringent new standards.

Several informants in this study have also drawn attention to the design impact of changes in private ownership from the early postwar period when many towers were built as premises for particular companies, to the period since the 1980s when developers have built most offices for lease. The building's design is its own best advertisement but it must be flexible enough to accommodate any tenant. In these circumstances the advice of leasing agents on the most popular and lucrative design features has assumed much greater importance than in the past when buildings were designed for occupation by single companies.

2.4 Urban services

NSW was unique in that groups of councils could form county councils that could be delegated to supply services individual councils found difficult to provide. The largest of these in the postwar period was Sydney County Council which supplied electricity to the City of Sydney and more than 20 other councils.²⁹⁷ The 'giant' of the regional bodies established by State Government in Sydney was the Metropolitan Water Sewerage and Drainage Board. The MWSDB was established in 1888 and served the whole of metropolitan Sydney and outlying municipalities extending west to the Blue Mountains and south to Wollongong, and a population of more than three million by the mid-1970s.²⁹⁸

The counterpart to Sydney's MWSDB in Melbourne was the Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works (MMBW). This was not only a utilities provider but also a planner with some equivalent functions as Brisbane City Council.²⁹⁹ The MMBW had the strongest impact of any government agency on central Melbourne after the war, although its landuse planners had much less influence than its infrastructure professionals such as the transport engineers.³⁰⁰ Brisbane City Council had responsibility for water supply and sewerage throughout the metropolitan area from 1923 although in 1979 the Brisbane and Area Water Board was established to build storage dams.³⁰¹

Unlike the nineteenth century with its primitive pipelines, open sewers and local dams, and its bulky overhead power lines, most of the structures associated with these

²⁹⁶ Pegrum, p 82.

²⁹⁷ Leach, p 34.

²⁹⁸ Leach, p 35.

²⁹⁹ For a detailed historical account of the MMBW see Dirgale and Rasmussen

³⁰⁰ McLoughlin pp 236, 248.

³⁰¹ G Cossin, 'Water: tracing the Brisbane water supply', *Brisbane: public, practical, personal*, Brisbane History Group, Brisbane 1981, p 31.

services are now located far from the city centre or else underground. The MMBW's skill in tunnelling trunk sewers won it a contract to tunnel a section of the new rail system for the Melbourne Underground Rail Loop Authority in 1977. MMBW engineers designed two giant tunnelling shields which were too expensive to remove on completion of the project and so were left to become part of the tunnel structure at Museum Station.³⁰² Such great underground engineering structures form as substantial and significant a part of each city's postwar heritage as its office towers and public buildings.

2.5 Image-making

Both Sydney and Hobart impress visitors by their outstanding physical settings. In both cities the dominant image is of deep harbours bounded by steep hills and the juxtaposition of port and town. In Hobart as well the visitor is awed by the imposing bulk of Mt Wellington. For residents, 'the dominant images are associations of water and hilly topography and the uses to which they may be put'.³⁰³

The annual Sydney-Hobart yacht race has made both harbours famous but Sydney's image as a magnificent 'harbour city', and more recently as a 'world city' is also an outcome of the most sustained image-making in Australian urban history. The new cultural understanding of the 'harbour city' interests Sascha Jenkins, that is, not 'the economics of the port, but rather the development of the Harbour as a cultural icon; a tourist site, a pleasure ground, a sports arena, a public amphitheater'. This change brought with it a different economics—tourist dollars, and wealthy waterside real estate. Sydney originally grew around the harbour because of its reliance on a functional port but by the beginning of the twentieth century, town planners were already 'placing the harbour at the cultural and symbolic centre of the city, rather than the geographical or economic centre'. Through the twentieth century (in a process which accelerated from the 1950s) industry was relocated from the city centre further down the harbour and to Botany Bay and Newcastle.

The Sydney Harbour Bridge, built in 1932, illustrates well the shift in the way the Harbour was used and presented. The Bridge was written about, photographed, painted, placed on postcards and miniaturized in souvenirs to present Sydney to the world as a harbour city. It physically marked out the new pleasure space.

Sydney Harbour from Bridge to Heads was the domain of wealthy suburbs, picnic grounds, tourism and public spectacle. The water was used by private pleasure crafts, commuter ferries, Harbour cruises, Passenger ships and impressive naval vessels.³⁰⁴

Image-making often hinged on the creation of icons. Architectural design played a crucial role. The Sydney Opera House, like the Harbour Bridge, soon became an essential Sydney landmark, as intended, 'each representing a substantial commitment of public funds for erecting a city monument as well as building for a specific purpose'.³⁰⁵ More recently, State and local governments have boosted city centres by

³⁰² *Living city* (MMBW, Melbourne). Spring/Summer 1977, pp 19–21.

³⁰³ Solomon *Urbanisation* p 201.

³⁰⁴ Sascha Jenkins, Sydney University <sascha.jenkins@pgrad.arts.su.edu.au> Re: History of Harbour Cities, H-NET UrbanHistory DiscussionList <H-URBAN@h-net.msu.edu> 16 Feb 1997.

³⁰⁵ Coltheart and Maddrell, p 74.

restoring and publicising heritage precincts as icons, the most famous of them Hobart's Battery Point and the Rocks in Sydney. Both localities draw their appeal also from a romanticised harbour image. (These developments also raise an important issue in the role of heritage, and could also be addressed under tourism and government.) In the creation of icons, the transformation of other old urban precincts, such as Melbourne's riverside development, were far more radical and unsympathetic to historical buildings, and in the case of the Sydney's East Circular Quay development, more controversial.

Major events were also recognised as playing a crucial role in promoting a city's image and were used both consciously and indirectly to physically improve the city centres and hasten new building projects. Key events that were used to boost civic improvements and attract new investment were: the 1956 Olympic Games in Melbourne; Queen Elizabeth's visit to all cities in 1954; the Empire Games in 1962 hosted by Perth; the Commonwealth games and the 1988 Expo in Brisbane³⁰⁶; the 1988 Bicentenary, mainly Sydney, and Sydney's preparation for the 2000 Olympic Games. In Melbourne, for example, two of its most significant postwar buildings were constructed for the Olympic Games: the Olympic Pool, and the Southern Cross Hotel, built as the first international-standard hotel with all the accoutrements.³⁰⁷ Perth's Council House was opened at the time of the Empire Games.

With these events-driven developments as models, all of the capital cities vied for major events like the international Commonwealth Games and the Olympic Games. The other type of event (also with essentially economic aims) were internally originated. The Adelaide Festival of Arts was the most important of them both because of its positive impact on Adelaide's image and economy and also because, as with other successful city-making enterprises, the other cities followed suit.

Historical commemorations were also useful in this way, especially the 'sesquicentenaries' of British settlement celebrated in Perth in 1979) and Adelaide (modelled on Perth experience) in 1986. The Australian bicentenary was more extravagant in both national impact and local effect because large sums of federal money were supplied for the so-called 'celebration of nationhood'. A third group of image-making events were recurring national or international events, such as the Grand Prix, held during the 1980s in Adelaide and since then in Melbourne. In all cases, as in other forms of new enterprise (new manufacturing in the 1960s, information technology-based business in the 1990s) there was strenuous competition between capital cities, best exemplified by the 'stealing' of the Grand Prix from Adelaide by Melbourne. The physical effects of these events were also very important. These were essentially of two kinds. There was statuary and signage, for example, Expo statues were re-erected in Brisbane's streets and historical markers, statues and restored historical buildings in Adelaide marked the celebration of the State's sesquicentenary. New buildings, parks and precincts were also created largely

³⁰⁶ See Cole, pp 260–1, 371.

³⁰⁷ M. Sheehanto S Marsden Melbourne 1996.

as an outcome of these events, for example, the Festival Theatre in Adelaide, South Bank cultural complex in Brisbane, and the transformed Darling Harbour in Sydney.

New high-rise buildings were also erected as city monuments. Two of the earliest postwar towers in central Perth were Council House and Dumas House, which was opened in 1966 as the first section of the new State government offices adjacent to Parliament House.

Each of these ... buildings was commissioned by a government intent on producing civic monuments. The Premier ... described ... Dumas House as a symbol of the state's progress. There is a sense of entering a new era, of resetting the city at a greater scale. More importantly, in these projects there is a discourse aimed at constituting civic space, in the ownership of the present, rather than *historical* space. These were perhaps the last such attempts on such a scale. From the shift in the framework for constructing monuments, civic value defers to age value ... civic space from here on becomes a museum.³⁰⁸

Other structures had powerful negative as well as positive images from the beginning. Nauru House in Melbourne is a prime example. The 52-storey building represented a further destruction of 'gracious' Collins Street (this is not mentioned in the Lend Lease history). It was built by Lend Lease in a similar style and scale to Australia Square (Sydney) with a large plaza and shopping arcade. But Melbourne's people have responded to such developments far less happily than in Sydney, demonstrating how different the image (and social uses) may be of very similar buildings in the different cities. At the same time, these buildings often have great symbolic significance for the owners. Nauru House was built for the newly-independent island of Nauru. 'The building was planned to accommodate 4 000 to 5 000 people, more than the entire population of the island. It was not only intended as a commercial investment, but as a symbol of Nauru nationhood.' One feature was a 73-metre frieze by S Ostoja-Kotkowski that displayed the emblems of the 12 tribes of Nauru. The building was opened by Australia's Prime Minister, Malcolm Fraser,³⁰⁹ attended by the President of Nauru and representatives of many Pacific nations.³⁰⁹

Skyscrapers by their very nature are highly-symbolic structures, deliberate expressions of corporate image or ambition, as well as of pragmatic concerns with profit and company administration. '[B]efore the proliferation of electronic media provided alternative marketing mechanisms, a building was an important means of communicating the financial security and public benevolence of its owners.' Hence, all aspects of their design were image-conscious: their massive size, landscaping, public art, foyers and interior finishes; prestige areas for important company business, and facilities for staff relaxation.³¹⁰

Sydney's first concrete skyscraper, Caltex House, was built as a massive advertisement for Civil & Civic. Dusseldorp, had searched for opportunities to enlarge operations from the Snowy Mountains and Canberra, especially to Sydney, as

³⁰⁸ Crist, p 32.

³⁰⁹ Murphy, p 153.

³¹⁰ Taylor report, 'Interior', p 1.

Australia's largest city. In 1954 he seized the chance 'to demonstrate, very publicly, both the existence and efficiency of this new, unknown construction company'³¹¹ by taking over an option to build a 16-storey building designed for a site in Kent Street near the abutment of the Harbour Bridge. The site was outside the city's main commercial district but was in a commanding position as a tall building would dominate a large surrounding area and be visible to motorists crossing the bridge from the northern suburbs.³¹² In a similar fashion, BHP House in Melbourne was designed to be a demonstration of Australian steel, and this was carefully explained in the company's brochure on the building.

By comparison, in recent years large mining companies such as SANTOS in SA have moved from one office building to another. At present SANTOS occupies Adelaide's tallest tower, the former State Bank building. Such companies have been divesting themselves of city property and taking up leases. Tenancy of office towers has become far more mobile and so their design has become more flexible. 'Gone are the days of having a signature design for one company', such as the MLC and the AMP.³¹³

Image-making was by no means the sole province of civic boosters and developers seeking economic benefit. There was a great increase from the 1930s in Australian novels with an urban setting but, as art imitates life, most of them were set in the biggest cities of Sydney and Melbourne.³¹⁴ The same is true for Australian films and television series with urban settings. Films and TV series often emphasised differences in urban image between Sydney and Melbourne. The cities evoked in these TV series, films and novels, the actual locations depicted, and the sites of significance to the creators in their own lives form another significant urban heritage.

Many postwar writers and film-makers have portrayed not a particular city—invariably excepting Sydney's harbour—but an abstraction of the modern Australian city. Many creators also switched popular attention from city centre to suburban sprawl, most famously Barry Humphries with 'Moonee Ponds' and Patrick White with 'Sarsaparilla'.³¹⁵ The poet Chris Wallace-Crabbe echoed his contemporaries in describing postwar Melbourne and Sydney as so large and suburban-extensive as to be centreless. Perhaps he was commenting only on the city's universal

³¹¹ Murphy, p 17.

³¹² Murphy, pp 6, 16–17 (quotation).

³¹³ P Stark to S Marsden

³¹⁴ For example, post-war Melbourne appears in novels by George Johnston *Clean straw for rothing*, Hal Porter, *Watcher from the cast iron balcony*, and *Paper chase*, Frank Hardy, *Power without glory*, Judah Waten, *So far no further*, and Glen Tomasetti, *Thoroughly decent people*. For a discussion of the post-war Australian city and its imaginative literature, see S Marsden, 'Images of the city in Australian literature', BA thesis, University of Adelaide, 1974, chapter 5, pp 69–89.

³¹⁵ Marsden, 'Images of the city', pp 73, 74, 85, 87.

characteristics, describing Melbourne as 'a fat mid-century metropolis, sharing its problems, its fashions and its hit parades with a host of other industrial cities ...'.³¹⁶

2.6 Reviving and preserving the centre

Heritage preservation is most evident in central Hobart but this was mainly due to historical circumstances as no freeways were built nor was there large-scale high-rise redevelopment. Hobart's relative stagnation became a virtue once heritage tourism became popular. The 'historical' city centre is in this context as much a creation of postwar social and economic circumstances as are the towering central business districts of Sydney and Melbourne.

Modernist architects and planners, whose designs wreaked such radical change in the city centres, were often the first to formally list and attempt to conserve places threatened by those very changes. Architects were prominent in establishing National Trusts and in publishing books such as *Early Melbourne architecture* and *Early Adelaide architecture*, all of which drew public attention to the loss of historical buildings.³¹⁷ Closely modelled on the world's first, the English National Trust of 1894, National Trusts were established in every State and Territory after 1945. The trusts were membership-based community organisations established to help conserve Australia's natural and cultural heritage. Their dates of formation were: NSW 1945, SA 1955, Victoria 1956, WA 1959, Tasmania 1960, Queensland 1963, and ACT and NT 1976. They formed a national coordinating body, the Australian Council of National Trusts, in 1965. These dates are of interest as they indicate when there was sufficiently great local concern about heritage losses for communities to form their own National Trusts, and in most cases, to gain their own Acts of Parliament.

As voluntary bodies the National Trusts had relatively little clout in the early years except through the work of amenable planners and architects. RDL Fraser, chief planner to the Cumberland County Council which prepared Sydney's metropolitan plan, broke new ground in public administration by providing for a register of places of scientific and historic interest. He developed close ties with the National Trust and the Royal Australian Historical Society and the CCC itself bought and restored some listed buildings and helped other organisations to do the same. 'Fraser's initiatives must be given ... credit for today's much more enlightened public and governmental attitudes towards urban conservation, even if perfection still evades us.'³¹⁸ Similar heritage lists appeared in other plans, such as George Clarke's *City of Adelaide Plan*, well before they were prepared under State heritage legislation.³¹⁹

³¹⁶ C Wallace-Crabbe, 'Melbourne', *Current Affairs Bulletin* vol 32, 1963, pp 163–164. Donald Horne made similar observations in his influential book, *The lucky country* (1964).

³¹⁷ M Casey et al, *Early Melbourne architecture 1840 to 1888*, OUP Melbourne 1953; EJR Morgan and SH Gilbert, *Early Adelaide architecture 1836 to 1886*, OUP Melbourne 1969.

³¹⁸ RDL Fraser was Deputy Chief, 1946–1952, and then Chief County Planner to the CCC 1952–1964, when it was replaced by the State Planning Authority. Wardlaw, pp 155, 156 (quotation), 161.

³¹⁹ Urban Systems Corporation, *The City of Adelaide Plan* USC, Sydney 1974, prepared for the City of Adelaide. Work on compiling a heritage register for SA was started in 1979 under the Heritage Act of 1978.

In Perth the architect and planner Margaret Feilman, who introduced British postwar town planning concepts to WA, and designed its first New Town (Kwinana), was also a pioneer in heritage conservation techniques. Between 1959 and 1990 she identified some of WA's major heritage areas; helped to establish the WA National Trust; was an inaugural Commissioner of the Australian Heritage Commission and played an important role in setting up the Register of the National Estate; and as Chairman of the WA Town Planning Board guided the introduction of heritage policy in local government planning schemes.³²⁰ Many other architects and other professionals gave their time voluntarily to committees responsible for compiling the National Trust registers, a process of classification that continues today in all trusts except for SA. Far more postwar city buildings are on those lists and in twentieth-century listings prepared by the Royal Australian Institute of Architects than in the government heritage registers.

By the late 1960s these efforts were subsumed in broad new alliances between residents, National Trusts and unions. The skyscraper boom and fast-breeding flats had brought adverse public reaction as the inner city's familiar scale was shattered. State and local government response was to try and impose new requirements on developments, such as the provision of on-site public space and car parking, rather than making any attempt to prevent the destruction of existing buildings and precincts. Some private developers succeeded in defusing heritage objections by means other than either preservation or obliteration. In the course of amalgamating properties between King Street and Martin Place, Sydney, to create one large site for the MLC's new tower, Lend Lease bought the last remaining city centre theatre, the Theatre Royal. Two public meetings were called to save the theatre in 1972, speakers including Jack Mundey, Labor MP Neville Wran and Liberal MP Peter Coleman but, according to the Lend Lease history, the audience became 'amazingly quiet' when Dusseldorp offered to incorporate a new Theatre Royal in the development. All opposition dissolved and the union's bans on demolition were lifted.³²¹ In the same period, Builders Labourers' Federation 'green bans', in support of the NSW National Trust, proved crucial in the campaign to prevent complete demolition and redevelopment of the Rocks and much of the original scale of the area was preserved.

Planners and architects had contradictory effects on the heritage of the city centres: sometimes these contradictions resided in the same person. An extravagant 1880s bank building (Edmund Wright House) became 'an icon of Adelaide's architectural heritage' with the campaign to stop its demolition, the first popular heritage protest in the city. Dean Berry, president of the National Trust of SA, did not support the campaign as he favoured modernisation: but he was also one of the architects who were engaged to design the replacement office tower. The old building was saved when the State Government was moved to buy it in 1971.³²² In 1973 the National

³²⁰ B Melotte, 'Margaret Anne Feilman an Australian planning pioneer', in Freestone, pp 162–164.

³²¹ Murphy, pp 130–131.

³²² Marsden, Stark and Sumelting, pp 32 (quotation), 45, 98; see also D Best, *Preserving our heritage*, Adelaide 1971.

Trust of Victoria fought a successful campaign to save the 1890s chamber of the Commercial Bank in Melbourne from demolition.³²³

Given the significance of the movement to preserve the inner city (and the passion it has aroused for and against continuing development) the movement's own heritage is worth preserving. There are some highly symbolic sites, such as the Rialto and Edmund Wright House. The Rialto expresses success and failure on both sides—that is, preservation and new development—and compromise. Some heritage battles were lost, for example when the Bellevue Hotel in central Brisbane was demolished at night-time in 1979, but such sites still hold powerful associations and the very loss prompted wider concern to save the city's heritage. During the 1980s Aurora Heritage Action, formed in response to members' failed attempt to prevent demolition of the Aurora Hotel, became a vocal and effective proponent of heritage protection in central Adelaide for the ensuing decade.

In 1973 the National Trust was largely responsible for getting the Commonwealth to set up a National Estate Committee of Inquiry chaired by Justice Robert Hope. This led to the Commonwealth enacting its first heritage legislation, the *Australian Heritage Commission Act 1975*. Under this Act the Australian Heritage Commission was formed which compiled a Register of the National Estate. This now includes many city places although it has a direct protective role only over actions proposed by the Commonwealth and its agencies.³²⁴ However State heritage legislation, enacted in every State and Territory between 1974 (Victoria) and 1995 (Tasmania), has attached legal sanctions and some acts are linked to planning legislation.

3. Governing the city

3.1 Extending the city-state

Public administration was based in capital city centres from the start and the centralisation of government departments increased steadily from the late nineteenth century. This theme continued to be of major significance after World War Two. The provision of services and activities to the whole metropolitan area and State-wide is perhaps the most important characteristic of the city centre, as it includes political, cultural and administrative as well as economic (transport, business and commercial) roles. After the war, this role of the city centre was challenged for the first time by the suburbanisation of retailing, manufacturing and professional services and by government housing and transport policies. Despite their contradictory effects, both the development of competing suburban centres and the intensification of central business and administration were actively encouraged by government. State agencies such as the centrally-located South Australian Housing Trust (SAHT) focused its developmental activities on the outer metropolitan areas, building suburban shopping centres at new housing estates and satellite settlements such as Elizabeth.³²⁵ At the

³²³ Davison in *Melbourne on foot*, p 33. Also, M Lewis to S Marsden

³²⁴ M Pearson and S Sullivan, *Looking after heritage places*, Melbourne University Press, Victoria 1995, p 48. See this whole chapter for a discussion of all the relevant legislation, State by State, and its implications.

³²⁵ S Marsden, *Business, charity and sentiment: the South Australian Housing Trust 1936–1986*, Wakefield Press, Adelaide 1986.

same time, other State departments and local councils promoted easier access to the city for car-dependent suburbanites by building freeways and carparks and widening central streets and intersections.

Some State government services themselves were 'decentralised' to new suburban centres. This mainly occurred in Sydney where many State administrative activities, previously concentrated along the eastern boundary of the city, have been either dispersed throughout the city centre or 'decentralised' to suburban locations such as Parramatta.³²⁶ New suburban premises were also built by the Australian Taxation Office. Less-often reported in urban history studies has been the reinforcement of capital city central functions by local, State and federal government. A recent government study of the role of Australian cities in the global economy noted the historical constraints of an urban hierarchy in which 'as a federal political administrative system, Australia has eight metropolitan cities which serve as centres of government administration, with attendant service agglomerations'.³²⁷ Government service and administration has remained at the 'core' in the Australian capitals and businesses have continued to locate nearby.

In the postwar period—despite some decentralisation of government offices to suburban centres or country towns—the concentration and numbers of government offices and facilities in the city centres was markedly increased by two phenomena: the huge expansion in Commonwealth revenue and powers, and the proliferation of State government responsibilities. The revival of central Darwin and Hobart was due almost entirely to this expansion. Broadening government responsibilities encompassed welfare, housing, education, culture, public transport and services, many of them metropolitan services. The forms of government also diversified, although this process slowed after the mid-1970s. 'Once government took the form of a few ministerial departments, a small number of statutory boards and local government authorities. Now the departments and boards have increased in number and to them have been added commissions, corporations and a variety of regulatory bodies.'³²⁸

Government and its symbols were highly important in colonial Hobart but due to these changes there was a doubling of public buildings (including churches and halls) in the city centre between 1847 and 1954. Such buildings as the convict barracks, St David's Church, Government House, and Parliament House, shown on the map of 1859, had been joined, amongst others, by the Court of Requests, Technical College, Hydro-Electric Commission and Van Dieman's Land Folk Museum by 1954.³²⁹

[A]s examination of the modern city image has indicated, some public buildings of long standing and a few of recent advent are important social foci for part or all of the

³²⁶ Meagher, p 374.

³²⁷ Lepari et al, p 28.

³²⁸ W A Towerley (1976), quoted in Scripps, p 21.

³²⁹ Solomon, *Urbanisation*, pp 221–222, 324–325 (maps).

community. It is noteworthy that locational stability has been a feature of most public functions; some have been duplicated, but few have moved from their initial sites.³³⁰

Efforts by State Governments to maintain or increase local economic activity, largely by promoting investment in the capital cities, has been a countervailing influence to that of federal policy and international investment. Both of these have more narrowly promoted the growth of Sydney and Canberra. For example, State government policy required or encouraged interstate developers and engineering firms to set up subsidiary operations in their own States during the 1960s, which had important implications for city building.³³¹ For a long time Queensland was the main exception to the urbanising policies of the other governments as both Labor and National Party premiers maintained prewar economic policies oriented towards rural industries and decentralisation and neglected manufacturing and urban development.³³² Most governments have increasingly used city centres directly as instruments of impetus to State economies, in the 1990s including Melbourne's Capital City Program and casino, and Adelaide 21.

Commonwealth government activity has formed a higher proportion of total 'business' in the smaller capitals than in Sydney or Melbourne, further reinforcing their city-state character. As a WA Chamber of Commerce submission noted in 1990, 'Between them the Federal and State Governments and City of Perth own 49.6% of the land and employ approximately one in eight of the CBD workforce'.³³³ McNeil estimates that up to two thirds of real estate in central Hobart is government occupied.³³⁴

Although government involvement in the city centres remains high, State and federal government are now withdrawing from direct provision of infrastructure and services such as telecommunications. Questions are being asked about whether the private sector can deliver what people need in their cities, and about the social costs of these changes falling most heavily on those who can least afford them. The effects of privatisation will be manifest not only in new urban places but also in historical places and in the heritage of city centres as sites of social and cultural exchange.

3.2 Federalism

Apart from short-lived attempts by Labor Governments in the 1940s and the 1970s to create a direct role for the Commonwealth in the Australian cities, State and local governments have retained major responsibility for them.³³⁵ Yet the Commonwealth has had an enormous impact on the postwar city centre, directly in the siting and

³³⁰ Solomon, *Urbanisation*, pp 323, 329.

³³¹ D Stewart, 'The heavy engineering industry and engineering products', in Fraser, p 212.

³³² D Murphy, R Joyce and M Cribb, *The premiers of Queensland*, University of Queensland Press, St Lucia, 1990, p 444.

³³³ 'A capital city for Western Australia', WA Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Perth, 1990, p 11. Battye Library.

³³⁴ B McNeil to S Marsden

³³⁵ There is an extensive literature on this subject. For example, see especially chapters 1 and 2 in CJ Lloyd and PN Troy, *Innovation and reaction: the life and death of the Federal Department of Urban and Regional Development*, George Allen & Unwin North Sydney 1981.

design of its own offices and institutions, and indirectly through its national programs and policies, for example, in immigration, finance and trade. Especially in the period to 1970, the rise of city businesses reflected the pivotal role of the federal government in directing the flow of investment, changing the financial system to open up new areas for finance, tempering wage increases with high levels of protection for domestic industry, and expanding demand through immigration and its own works programs.³³⁶ Changes in immigration policy also had a direct effect. For example, in the 1980s a shift in selection towards family reunion and business people favoured the larger capitals of Sydney and Melbourne where the bulk of migrants was already located and which offered the best business opportunities.³³⁷

The origins of Lend Lease reflect the significant role played by the Commonwealth Government's postwar development works and immigration programs. The history of Civil & Civic (which became Lend Lease) demonstrates this at several points. In 1949 an Australian Government mission travelled worldwide to invite the interest of companies in the Snowy River Scheme and other development works. Apart from capital, the Government sought engineers, tradesmen and labourers because the labour, materials, capital and expertise required was far beyond the resources and skills of a nation with eight million people. As a result of the mission, the two Dutch companies set up Civil & Civic Contractors in Australia under the management of GJ Dusseldorp, who recruited tradesmen in Holland for the first contract to supply and erect prefabricated houses at Cooma, the administrative headquarters of the Snowy Mountains Hydro-Electric Authority.³³⁸ Civil & Civic won other government contracts in the Snowy Mountains Scheme and in nearby Canberra, where the company's first branch was described for years as 'the training ground of the organisation'.³³⁹

The effects of Australian federation itself are still being played out, with differing effects on each capital city. In every city the federal system has required the Commonwealth to construct or rent office space and erect major public buildings such as courts and post offices. Commonwealth grants and loans have helped to fund other building expansion, notably by the State universities, although Adelaide was unique in having two of these located within the old city centre. As Commonwealth powers and responsibilities expanded after the war, Commonwealth buildings in the city centres became more prominent. As this power derived in large measure from the transfer of income tax revenue from the States to the Commonwealth in 1942, the buildings constructed for the Taxation Office have particular significance.

The Commonwealth presence reinforced Melbourne's continuing pre-eminence as Australia's financial centre, at least until the 1960s. The Commonwealth public service expanded greatly during World War Two but new departments continued to be located in Sydney or Melbourne because of the lack of accommodation in Canberra. Despite a renewed commitment to transfer public servants to Canberra after the war

³³⁶ Hartwell and Lare, p 223.

³³⁷ Lepari et al, p 43.

³³⁸ Murphy, pp 1-3.

³³⁹ Murphy, pp 4-7, 16, 122 (quotation).

even the new Department of Housing and Construction was set up in Melbourne.³⁴⁰ If not for Prime Minister Robert Menzies, Melbourne may have remained the *de facto* national capital, but his determination to develop Canberra led to the formation of the National Capital Development Commission (NCDC) in 1958 which had wide powers to plan, develop and build. During the 1950s and 1960s, Melbourne was emptied of federal departments and thousands of public servants and their families were transferred to new NCDC homes in Canberra. A significant number of places in central Melbourne reflect its 60 years as unofficial federal capital.

Sydney was the other State capital that gained the most from federation. This was, broadly, because the removal of trade barriers between the States opened their economies to competition from Sydney firms, and specifically because several Commonwealth functions were located in Sydney, beginning with construction of the Commonwealth Bank headquarters in 1912. To gain NSW support for federation in the 1890s, the founders had agreed to place the federal capital no further than 100 miles from Sydney. With the advent of cars and better roads, this represented only three hours' travel. Hence, from the 1960s, once Canberra was firmly established and the Commonwealth's role was vastly extended, the trend quickened for Commonwealth functions to be placed in central Sydney headquarters. In the 1970s, Sydney-based arts administration—including the ABC, the Australian Film and Television School and the Australia Council—accelerated the concentration of arts activity in Sydney rather than Melbourne.³⁴¹ Even the day-to-day work of politicians and public servants was often carried out in Sydney premises. An entire modern office block is provided as the Sydney offices of federal ministers, and there are also official residences for the prime minister and the governor-general. The present prime minister, John Howard, has even chosen to live in Sydney rather than Canberra.

Despite the tendency for direct Commonwealth construction and administration to favour Sydney or Melbourne, this was less important in terms of overall activity in those cities than in the smaller capitals.³⁴² As the national capital Canberra is often described as a government town with its office blocks occupied mainly by public agencies and government departments. However, as a proportion of total office space and employment in the city centre, public administration is nearly as predominant in the smaller State capitals, above all, Hobart and Darwin. Hobart Council's land use survey in 1967–68 found the city's main office zone was concentrated around Franklin Square, surrounded by the town hall and council offices, the Hydro-Electric Commission offices, State government offices, including the Supreme Court, and on the northern side of Macquarie Street, banks, insurance and lawyers' offices. 'The amount of Commonwealth, State, Local and Semi-Government office buildings shows the importance to Hobart of its function as State Capital, for without these buildings the structure of the Central Business District would resemble little more than a large

³⁴⁰ Murphy, p 39.

³⁴¹ This shift in arts administration and arts activity from Melbourne to Sydney is discussed at greater length in Davidson's introduction to Davidson, ed, *The Sydney-Melbourne book*, pp 6–8.

³⁴² O'Connor and Stimson make the point about the over-representation of public administration and community services in capitals other than Sydney and Melbourne (pp 29, 30) but leave Hobart and Darwin out of the tables comparing employment share by industry sector (p 30).

rural town.³⁴³ Government continues to predominate in Hobart's 'central business district'.

Commonwealth expenditure generally was also of greater proportional significance in the postwar development of the smaller capitals, Darwin being the pre-eminent example. Darwin's population started to grow rapidly for the first time in the 1960s in response to the expansion of mining, improved beef markets and burgeoning public service employment in Darwin itself. The main Commonwealth departments concerned with the NT in the 1960s and 1970s (apart from Defence) were Works and Housing, Northern Australian and Housing and Construction. Departmental ambition was the most important factor contributing to rapid population growth in Darwin.

Departmental staff build-up followed a course remarkably similar to an international arms race, and as numbers increased additional services were inevitably required, which fed the spiral. In addition other agencies, not yet represented in Darwin, saw a necessity ... to expand their influence ... [N]ever have so few been governed by so many.³⁴⁴

Between 1966–74 the close correlation between public sector and population growth was evident in average annual growth rates of 9% and 10% respectively. Darwin's population doubled from 23 350 in 1967 to 46 656 in 1974. After the cyclone, it had nearly regained that size by 1976.³⁴⁵ Departmental rivalry was intensified during the Darwin Reconstruction Commission era (1975–78) and population numbers were swelled by heavy government expenditure on rebuilding. The public service was further expanded in the mid-1970s by moves towards self-government as the new NT public service was created. Despite alternatives proposed by the DRC both Commonwealth and Territory administration kept to its old city centre location and so expansion was reflected in the rebuilding and increase in office accommodation as well as in new public buildings.

After 1978, Darwin benefited more rather than less from Commonwealth expenditure due to a decisive shift in national defence policy. In the 1970s the forward defence policy of stationing Australian forces overseas was abandoned in favour of self-reliance and fostering a favourable security environment in SE Asia and the South Pacific. Northern Australia became 'the nation's potential front-line and the Darwin region acquired a new and enduring priority status in defence planning'.³⁴⁶ The practical consequences for Darwin of this change became apparent in the 1980s. A purpose-designed naval facility for patrol boats was opened in 1982; No 75 RAAF Squadron was transferred from Malaysia in 1988; and in the same year Northern Command was established as a new joint-force regional command with headquarters in Darwin. By 1994 around 6 400 defence personnel and dependants were based in the Darwin area and their numbers are projected to double by 2001.³⁴⁷ Foreign

³⁴³ City of Hobart, 1968, pp 14–15.

³⁴⁴ Bauer, quoted in Greerhalgh, p 41.

³⁴⁵ Greerhalgh, pp 76, 77.

³⁴⁶ Quoted in *Report of the Committee on Darwin* p 174

³⁴⁷ *Report of the Committee on Darwin*, pp 174–175.

defence force activity also increased in the 1990s, with demonstrable increases in economic activity and employment in central Darwin.

3.3 State government and the central city

State and local government's role in providing infrastructure for urban and economic development, including ports, railway stations, freeways and streets and underground services has been mentioned, as also the fact of government 'business' headquarters being further concentrated in the city centres. In the smaller States, semi-government authorities such as the SAHT and Tasmania's Hydro-Electric Commission accounted for large percentages of government employment and expenditure and occupied big city premises.³⁴⁸ As developmental authorities they also fostered industrial, residential and metropolitan development, with further important consequences for the city centre.³⁴⁹

Apart from the effects of new responsibilities, the increased presence of State government in the city centres was an outcome of faster transport and communications. These favoured a tendency to close rural and suburban premises and further centralise operations at central headquarters. Scripps notes the effects of all of these tendencies in Tasmania's Police Department, which grew to keep pace with population increases and changes in areas of responsibility—such as the policing of drugs and gaming—as well as new technology. At the same time the department centralised services by closing branch police stations around the city and expanded its original Liverpool Street premises.³⁵⁰

In the first postwar period developmental agencies, such as transport and electricity departments erected prominent central buildings in every capital, while in the second phase cultural edifices were prominent, such as the arts complexes built at the edges of city centres in Melbourne, Brisbane and Perth. The most significant postwar building of all is Utzon's Opera House in Sydney, although its construction was hindered as well as helped by NSW State ministers and public servants.³⁵¹ The novelist Patrick White wrote to a friend in 1963

Today Utzon showed us over the Opera House ... It has made me feel glad I am alive in Australia today. At last we are going to have something worth having ... I was particularly glad to have been shown over by Utzon, a kind of Danish Gary Cooper, although his English is a bit woolly at times, and difficult to follow. How shocking to think of those miserable little aldermannish devils attacking such a magnificent conception from their suburban underworld. Funnily enough as we were walking up and down all those steps in such a very contemporary setting I kept thinking of Phaestos, Mycenae and Tyrins ... I

³⁴⁸ Scripps, p 21; Marsden *Business, charity and sentiment*, pp 259, 260

³⁴⁹ Marsden *Business, charity and sentiment*, pp 146–149, 225, 239–240, 380 and passim; S Marsden 'Constructing Playford's city: the South Australian Housing Trust and the transformation of Adelaide, 1936–1966', PhD thesis, Flinders University of South Australia, Adelaide 1994, pp 214–219, 305–307, 517–524.

³⁵⁰ Scripps, p 25.

³⁵¹ Coltheart and Maddrell, p 71.

suppose the contemporary and the ancient do have a lot in common; it is the in between periods which went astray under the mass of detail.³⁵²

A history of the NSW Public Works Department draws attention to the prominence achieved by restoration and heritage planning as a function of the Government Architect's Branch from the 1960s. The formation of an 'Historic Buildings Group' in the branch provided a more systematic approach to this work, involving research and preservation of major buildings such as Parliament House, and often including conversion to new usage, such as the Hyde Park Barracks and the Mint Museum.³⁵³ Counterparts to the NSW department, especially in SA and Victoria, have done similar work, in the process also helping to revive traditional building skills such as slate laying and stone carving.

State government influence was not restricted to the buildings within the city centre but also its form and size. State governments were usually the first to build high-rise offices beyond the centre and some governments decisively extended the city centre. Evan Walker, Labor's Minister for Planning in Victoria, oversaw a strong central city planning initiative and the introduction of conservation controls in the early 1980s. He welcomed the proposals of planning officers to redevelop old industrial land across the Yarra River from Flinders Street Station and give the public better access to the river. He initiated the Southbank development through a private developer, Costains and Jennings, the government using its profits from the sale of land to build a walkway along the river.³⁵⁴

This development followed the earlier construction of the art gallery on the south side of the Yarra and used city controls to expand the city centre across the river. Under the succeeding Liberal Government council boundaries were redrawn again and the Melbourne Council gave up some of its residential areas and gained some of the business areas on the Southbank.³⁵⁵ Despite fundamental differences in philosophy there were strong continuities between Cain's Labor Government and the recent Kennett Liberal Government in their attitudes to reinforcing and extending central Melbourne through major redevelopment projects and other policies.³⁵⁶

By contrast with the other capitals, for much of the postwar era State government was little concerned with Brisbane's development. This reflected Brisbane's historical role in Queensland, which was never dominant like the other mainland capitals. (See also Part I). The city was never the focal point of State development, sharing this role with many other towns, and its political power was accordingly less. Perhaps partly because this would not threaten the Government or its main interests, the Queensland Government was willing to create one Brisbane metropolitan council and

³⁵² Patrick White to Desmond Digby, 15 March 1963, in D Marr, ed, *Patrick White Letters*, Random House, Sydney, 1994, p 223.

³⁵³ Coltheart and Maddrell, pp 54–55.

³⁵⁴ Low, p 17.

³⁵⁵ B Raworth to S Marsden

³⁵⁶ Low, p 17.

to assign it functions elsewhere carried out by the State.³⁵⁷ This changed in the 1980s, best exemplified by a similar extension of the city centre to the south side of the river as in Melbourne, following government construction of the cultural complex and redevelopment of a 'waste' site for the 1988 Expo.

Darwin fully assumed the role of capital when the NT gained self-government in 1978. The effects on the city were immediate as an ensuing building boom 'gave an impetus to development barely seen at any time in the Territory's history.'³⁵⁸ Besides new suburbs and a satellite town (Palmerston), the postwar Darwin Town Area leases were abolished and the city centre was returned to freehold tenure, giving encouragement to private development which included three new hotels and a casino (1983). New government buildings were also needed, the most prominent of them the Supreme Court and the Legislative Assembly building, both constructed in the early 1990s.³⁵⁹ As in the older capital cities these buildings are located in a distinct government precinct, thus individually and collectively symbolising the State's administrative and legal authority.³⁶⁰ As in the other States, the new Government soon adopted measures to revive the city centre, its main strategy being to increase the inner city residential population and provide a 'catchment area' for central businesses. 'The CBD is an area that's got a lot of political leverage, with supporters and members of the Country Liberal Party which governs the territory. It has some very old Darwin money.'³⁶¹

The granting of self-government had wider implications for the city centre. The *Report of the Committee on Darwin* suggested that opinions on the economic effect of self-government varied. Some claimed that progress that depended on direct Commonwealth control was no longer possible, while others argued that there was now a Government 'which strenuously advocates northern development in national and international forums'.³⁶² The committee itself noted several instances of benefit to Darwin of self-government, including the fostering of links with SE Asia. In common with the experiences of an older capital such as Brisbane, the granting of self-government some time after the city's creation seems to hasten regional economic development, to the particular benefit of city centre businesses and government agencies.

3.4 City councils

The roles of city councils also expanded after the war, as demonstrated by the increase of council staff and the construction and extension of council buildings. Notable new buildings included Council House in Perth and the Colonel Light Centre in Pirie Street, Adelaide. Councils were responsible for many other new developments, most visibly, carparks, cultural facilities (such as city archives and

³⁵⁷ Leach, pp 68–70.

³⁵⁸ Wilson in Welke and Wilson p xix.

³⁵⁹ Wilson p xix.

³⁶⁰ Camert, p 35.

³⁶¹ P Forest to S Marsden

³⁶² *Report of the Committee on Darwin*, p 20.

libraries) community centres, parks and gardens, and street furniture. Darwin's Council (which includes both city and suburbs) made a deliberate effort to make its presence felt in the city centre with the construction of an expensive cultural centre and city pool.

However, Darwin Council, in common with all local government in Australia had limited planning powers. Nor did any city council (except Brisbane) perform a broad range of functions. Their powers were limited both by State legislation and by the tendency for State Governments to assume responsibility for important urban functions such as water supply, public transport and planning. This tendency, already evident in the colonial period, accelerated in the postwar period as social and urban requirements became more pressing and States responded by creating a plethora of new departments and special-purpose authorities. Typical was the finding of planners in 1975 who identified 20 State departments and agencies providing services to the Hobart area, including health, welfare, police, education, environment, works and housing, lands, rivers and water supply and the Hydro-Electric Commission.³⁶³

Lennon has argued that central city government has 'never sat comfortably in the structure of local government'.³⁶⁴ Since World War Two this fact has provided endless opportunities for conflict, especially over city centre development. In Perth, for example, the council resented the intrusion of planners such as Gordon Stephenson, appointed by the State, and he found that there was always 'bad blood' between council and government over central Perth.³⁶⁵ During the 1980s as State Governments, central city councils and surrounding inner city councils struggled for political control of the city centre, powers were removed from most of the city councils. The councils in Melbourne and Perth were temporarily replaced by administrators and in Sydney by a Central Sydney Planning Committee.

As another consequence of this conflict physical boundaries have also been changed. The City of Adelaide has kept to the 1837 boundaries but Melbourne's boundaries have been moved and those of Sydney have been shifted four times since 1948, in order to include or exclude adjoining inner suburbs.³⁶⁶ Ashton's series of maps neatly illustrate the waxing and waning of the council since it was formed in 1842. The original boundaries were more or less maintained for the first century, 1842–1948, were then much expanded between 1949–1968; over the following 20 years were reduced and re-inflated; then Sydney was reduced to its 'core' from 1989, the closest the council district has come to being completely identified with a CBD.³⁶⁷

³⁶³ Leach, pp 17–18, 89.

³⁶⁴ M Lennon quoted in R Howe, 'Local government and the urban growth debate', in P Troy, ed, *Australian cities*, Cambridge University Press, Melbourne 1995, p 186.

³⁶⁵ Stephenson interview, tape 23, p 267.

³⁶⁶ P Ashton, *The Accidental city: planning Sydney since 1788*, Hale & Irons, Sydney 1993, p 11; S Fitzgerald, *Sydney 1842–1992*, Hale & Irons, Sydney 1992, p 231.

³⁶⁷ Ashton *The accidental city*.

Sydney has varied in size as state governments have attached or detached residential areas to ensure that the majority group in the city council reflects the politics of the party in power.³⁶⁸

The reasons for these changes are intimately bound up with perceptions of the role of the city centres, whose interests in the city are paramount and which level of government is responsible for them.

The 1993 Conference of Capital City Mayors was told that, during the 1980s, central-city governments in Perth, Adelaide, Melbourne and Sydney were ineffective in preventing the demolition of historic precincts and buildings, the over-supply of commercial buildings, the flight of retailing and jobs from the city and inner suburbs and a steady population drain from central and inner-city areas ... This failure occurred despite the resources of central-city governments which have the largest planning departments in local government and in Brisbane and Hobart are larger than State government planning departments.³⁶⁹

That is the large view. Yet it has been city councils rather than State Governments that have in recent years succeeded in making their cities more urbane, with heritage preservation, published guides and markers, new street furniture, tree planting and other improvements, with malls, markets and public entertainment and by rehabilitating old residential streets.

3.5 Officials, politicians and interest groups

Urban development is not simply the outcome of unfettered economic and social activity, nor does it automatically respond to grand shifts in public policy. Individual men, women and groups also make or seize opportunities to effect change. This constitutes an important theme, although it overlaps with broader themes such as government. The contributions of politicians and public servants is the easiest to describe as they are well-documented in newspapers, histories and public records. Some historians focus on the leadership patterns of public officials and their implications for urban public policy, especially economic development.

In an American urban studies course the question is asked, which cities and leaders have followed different sets of economic strategies and with what consequences? 'Cities differ in systematic ways that we can capture with attention to leaders and their rules of the game.' In some cities, 'a handful of radical or "progressive" mayors differ from the rest'. US social movements in the 1970s left distinct impacts on city leadership and policies. Competition for scarce development funds also limited policy options. 'While incrementalism and good government by city managers served well in some cities through the early 60s, they fell in the wake of taxpayer's revolts, grant cuts, inflation, and a new set of rules of the game.'³⁷⁰

³⁶⁸ I McPhail, 'Local government', P Troy, ed, *Federal power in Australia's cities*, Hale & Ironmonger, Sydney 1978, p 106.

³⁶⁹ Howe, in Troy, *Australia's cities*, p 187.

³⁷⁰ *Urban Policy Analysis syllabus*, Fall 1995, contributed by Terry Clark, University of Chicago, H-Net Urban History discussion list <H-URBAN@UICVM.CC.UIC.EDU> 30 September 1996.

In Australia, Lord Mayors Clem Jones and Sally Anne Atkinson exerted a powerful influence on central Brisbane and its image.³⁷¹ Jones also played an important role in post-cyclone Darwin. Council officers also made their mark. William Charles Veale, Adelaide's town clerk from 1947 to 1965, 'has been described as the chief architect of Adelaide's postwar municipal development: "no other man since Col Light has left his imprint so ineffaceably on the City of Adelaide, or so transformed its character" was how the *Advertiser* summed up his ... service'.³⁷² In 1957 Veale was sent by the Council on a five month tour to gather ideas for Adelaide, visiting 40 cities in Europe and North America. His detailed reports aimed to develop Adelaide's infrastructure, especially in traffic management and car parking. His main memorial was in the Park Lands where he gained large council expenditures on plants, lakes, a golf course and Veale Gardens, implemented 'in the interest of the community as a whole and as a tourist attraction which benefited the business interests.'³⁷³

Both as individuals and collectively the new, professionally-trained 'experts' in urban-related disciplines—architecture, town planning, engineering—had a considerable impact on the city centres. Their impact was greatest when incorporated into business or political activity, where they could provide a focal point that united politicians, reformers and businessmen into coalitions that introduced urban reform. The advantage of such experts was that they combined practicality with economic efficiency and social reform, and so appealed to a range of groups, including residents, businesspeople, politicians and suburban commuters.

Individual planners, especially in the early postwar period, had a distinct impact on the city centres, although not always a positive one. Borrie's destructive 'vision' for inner Melbourne has been described. Later, George Clarke exerted some influence on planning in both Sydney and Adelaide. His *City of Adelaide Plan* (1974), as the Lord Mayor wrote in its foreword, proposed a change of emphasis for the council, which implemented some of the proposals. This change was evident in the consultants' stated philosophy: 'To redefine in contemporary terms the urban design potential of Light's original plan, so as to conserve the best of the historic physical environment and further develop the physical city for new as well as old uses.'³⁷⁴

3.6 Conflict and protest

City centres were often battlegrounds: in marches against war, against rape, for Aboriginal land rights, for student benefits, and against unpopular government policies. The most sustained and violent history of protest and reaction was played out in Brisbane's public spaces in conflicts engendered and exacerbated by conservative State Governments, both Labor and National Party. In 1948 when railwaymen, waterside workers, miners and seamen went on strike the police violently broke up a peaceful demonstration against an Act designed to prevent strikes; the

³⁷¹ See Cole (on Jones) p 275.

³⁷² Thornton Marsden p 5.

³⁷³ D Jones, 'The emeralds of Adelaide: impacts and dilemmas of growth and change upon Adelaide's Parklands', in ICOMOS papers, 1996 [paper, p 5].

³⁷⁴ George Clarke, *The City of Adelaide plan*, Urban Systems Corporation, Adelaide 1974, p 16.

next day, 10 000 people demonstrated in King George Square.³⁷⁵ In 1971 a state of emergency was declared during protests against the visit of the South African Springbok Rugby Team; a 'Right to March' movement maintained the right to public demonstrations between 1977–79; and in 1985 there were again clashes in the streets during the confrontation between Queensland's Government and power unions.

There was also conflict behind closed doors between competing city interests that sometimes spilled into the streets. 'More than at any other time in the city's history planning was now a controversial and public matter'.³⁷⁶ Stannage's comment about planning in Perth in the boom decade from the mid-1960s applies equally to the other capitals. Metropolitan plans of the 1950s and 1960s, which considered inner-city areas as ripe for redevelopment, engendered growing resistance from inner suburban residents, who objected to flats and the destruction of community, local businesses who feared the freeways, and conservationists who opposed the loss of colonial buildings and river valleys which were often used as cheap sites for freeway routes.³⁷⁷

In the 1970s, protest spread to the business heartland.

[In Melbourne] Collins Street became a battleground. Financiers, mining magnates and real estate sharks from the west end suddenly declared territorial war and ... leapfrogged east in great destructive bursts ... Then the boom faded and a counter-offensive began. Inflation, the Builder's Labourers' Union, the National Trust and the vicissitudes of capitalism itself conspired to wreck the futuristic dreams of the developers. In 1977 the chairman of the National Trust, Rodney Davidson, called on the government to hold a referendum on the future of Collins Street.³⁷⁸

The Collins Street Defence Movement was formed in 1976, 'too late to be effective'.³⁷⁹ But by 1980 an 'uneasy truce' prevailed, with the 'Chicago' end of Collins Street half-finished and the 'Paris' end half-wrecked. 'This is no small matter for Melbournians. For if Melbourne has either a soul or a destiny it is somehow bound up with Collins Street.'³⁸⁰ In most Australian cities councils and governments reacted to public pressure by adopting stronger roles in keeping urban heritage and by improving the city's public spaces. In its 1988 Strategy Sydney City Council proclaimed, 'Central Sydney—a central place, a special place and a place for people'.³⁸¹

Residence has remained an important theme of the postwar period, particularly as a form of conflict which has strongly influenced the character of the city centres. The residential presence has been both denied and affirmed by city councils, governments and 'core' commercial interests. During the first postwar property boom in Sydney 'the

³⁷⁵ Murphy, Joyce and Cribb, pp 454–455.

³⁷⁶ Stannage, p 3.

³⁷⁷ For example, see Dingle and Rasmussen's discussion of the reaction to the Melbourne master plan and its implementation in *Vital corrections*, pp 246–257.

³⁷⁸ Durstan in *Melbourne on foot*, pp 38–39.

³⁷⁹ Lewis, p 139.

³⁸⁰ D Durstan in *Melbourne on foot*, pp 38–39.

³⁸¹ *Central Sydney Strategy* City of Sydney, 1988, p1.

Liberal-Country Party Government of Sir Robert Askin decided that they too should have a piece of the action'. The Government set up Sydney Cove Redevelopment Authority to redevelop the East Rocks area, most schemes (including that of Lend Lease) proposing extensive demolition for high-rise offices. This was defeated by a coalition of the National Trust, the Rocks Resident Action Group and the Builders Labourers Federation.

Fitzgerald writes that conflict within the council between residential and commercial interests has been a constant theme in Sydney's twentieth century history. The conflict in Woolloomooloo has also meant that, after the 1970s, rather than shifting east into Woolloomooloo, commercial tower-builders turned from the city centre towards the west.³⁸² Similar conflict has erupted in the other cities with important consequences for city centre heritage.

4. City life

4.1 City people

Demography is the rise and fall and transformation of populations: 'city people' in the aggregate. Cities are shaped by the interaction between economic, political and demographic processes. Which demographic processes have most affected city centres? They are: Australia's total population increase since the war; its pace and its concentration in the capital cities; and the scale of immigration, its diversification, and where most of that growth was concentrated. Between the late 1940s and the early 1970s Australian mothers and federal immigration schemes boosted growth at unprecedented rates, with the 'baby boom' and immigrants contributing similar shares to the growth in capital city populations.³⁸³ The biggest increase through immigration occurred between 1949 and 1959 with 2 115 000 arrivals.³⁸⁴

The five largest cities took over a century to reach a total population of four million by 1947; 24 years later that total had almost doubled. By the census of 1971 'Sydney and Melbourne were massive, sprawling metropolises, each with over 2.5 million inhabitants, and the populations of Brisbane, Perth and Adelaide all exceeded 700 000'. Metropolitan primacy had also grown. As a long-term trend, which accelerated between the 1940s and the 1960s, population growth was concentrated in the capital cities, where 63% of Australians lived by 1995, compared with 54% in 1947.³⁸⁵ That average conceals marked differences between the cities. By 1961 Melbourne, Perth, and Adelaide housed between 65% and 79% of their State populations while Hobart, Brisbane and Sydney held between 40% and 58%. After that date as overseas

³⁸² Paul Ashton to S Marsden

³⁸³ Forster, p 17. Immigration contributed 48% to 56% of the population increase in all the capitals except Brisbane and Hobart (33%). Natural increase accounted for 33% (Adelaide) to 46% (Sydney).

³⁸⁴ Hartwell and Lane, p 216.

³⁸⁵ The largest percentage change was in SA where Adelaide's share of the State population grew from 59% to 72%; Melbourne's share was the same. Forster, p 15.

immigration slowed the proportions in every capital rose only slightly, held level or slightly declined.³⁸⁶

Immigration was of an unprecedented scale and an equally unprecedented diversity as the Commonwealth Government, seeking high numbers, extended assisted passage for the first time to non-British peoples. This produced three remarkable demographic changes: rapid rises in total population, in ethnic diversity and in the proportion of immigrants in the population overall. All three effects were most marked in the capital cities as most immigrants were attracted to them by manufacturing and service jobs and new suburban housing. However, immigration had differing degrees and types of influence on each city (see below). There were higher proportional rates of growth in the smaller capitals, except for Darwin where rapid population growth did not occur until the 1960s, when many Australians were drawn to the city due largely to Commonwealth activity.

Since the early 1970s, apart from international influences shaping Australian cities, the most important national reshaping process has been the 'population turnaround'. The growth rate of the largest cities—Sydney, Melbourne and Brisbane—declined relative to smaller cities in their own States, and there was also movement from Adelaide, Melbourne and Sydney to the western and northern capitals. Retirement migration, tourism and the search for alternative lifestyles generated rapid growth in coastal districts, especially in Queensland and NSW. The scale of interstate migration to the Brisbane region and to a lesser extent, Perth, has made them 'serious alternatives to Sydney and Melbourne as locations for households and firms'.³⁸⁷ It has also more recently underpinned economic and cultural diversification, especially in the Brisbane and Perth city centres.

4.2 Immigrants

One of the most important themes in the postwar history of the Australian capital cities is the impact of overseas immigrants.³⁸⁸ Postwar immigration—and particular groups and individual immigrants—have also had a profound impact on the character and development of Australia's city centres. This impact may be discerned in three broad areas.

Australia's capital cities were created by immigrants but by 1947 most of the population was Australian-born and almost entirely British in origin. This was evident in the sedate and homogeneous character of the city centres—except for Darwin where long-established Chinese and Greek families were a strong presence in city businesses and activities. The enlivening and enrichment of all of the city centres by European and Asian immigrants is generally acknowledged as a major theme in their postwar history.

³⁸⁶ JCR Camm and J McQuilton, eds, *Australians: a historical atlas*, Fairfax, Syme & Weldon NSW 1987, p 90.

³⁸⁷ Lepari et al, pp 46, 47.

³⁸⁸ For both specific and general observations on post-war immigration its implications for Australian cities see also IH Burnley, ed, *Urbanization in Australia: the post-war experience*, Cambridge University Press, London 1974, eg pp 56–57 and 99.

Less readily identified but of more fundamental importance were other consequences of the postwar immigration schemes. At the broadest level, the scale of immigration hugely increased the size of the capital cities, contributing demographically and economically to their metropolitanisation. There were more specific effects, reflecting migrants' preferences for particular cities. The greatest number of overseas immigrants went to Melbourne and Sydney, which also attracted most of the European refugees, then, from the 1950s, southern Europeans, and from the 1970s, Asians. Melbourne's share of Asian migration was high but most was concentrated in Sydney, accounting for nearly 45% of Australia's Asian intake between 1976 and 1990. English and Irish immigrants were more widely distributed with Sydney, Melbourne, Adelaide and Perth absorbing similar shares before 1986 and Perth and Sydney receiving the highest shares after that.³⁸⁹ Proportionately, Adelaide and Perth received a predominance of British immigrants. Overseas immigration had least impact in Brisbane, Hobart and Darwin.

There were also distinct geographical patterns of ethnic difference within each city. British and other northern and eastern Europeans chose new housing in outer suburbs, and southern Europeans went to old houses in the inner city, where they developed enclaves with their own shops, churches and clubs. Burnley has explored the impact of residents on inner Sydney and Melbourne.³⁹⁰ In 1966 there were nearly equal numbers of migrants (mainly Italians) as Australian-born residents in the northern section of central Perth, compared to a ratio of 1:3 for the metropolitan area. 'This concentration of migrants, mostly southern Europeans, in the inner city is a striking feature of all the Australian capital cities, and has generally kept the central areas alive as cities.'³⁹¹

The southern Europeans were succeeded by the next wave of non-British immigrants. In sum, 'the normal settlement patterns for non-British migrants follow three stages: firstly, settlement in inner-city areas or near migrant hostels; secondly, movement outwards along public transport routes; and thirdly, dispersal into more middle-class areas particularly for the younger generation'.³⁹² Fourthly, some members of the next generation have returned, with other young Australians, to inner-city living. In Perth, as in other cities, immigrants speaking languages other than English are still concentrated near the city centre. In Highgate, Northbridge, Perth City and North Perth in 1995 over 10% of residents were recorded as not fluent in English.³⁹³

Just as some working-class Australians held onto their homes despite Housing Commission high-rise, freeway building, and the oddities of middle-class and immigrant neighbours, each succeeding group of immigrants left some residents in the city, together with many of the places that they built. Their clubs and churches

³⁸⁹ O'Connor and Stimson, pp 22–23.

³⁹⁰ For example, see Burnley's chapter, 'Immigration: the post-war transformation of Sydney and Melbourne', in Davidson

³⁹¹ Seddon, *Sense of place*, p 325.

³⁹² Australian Bureau of Statistics, *Year Book Australia 1995*, no 77, ABS, Canberra 1994, p 136.

³⁹³ *Western Australia Year Book '95*, Australian Bureau of Statistics, WA Office, Perth 1995 (Profile of Perth) p 316.

often remain as social focal points although most of their members have moved to new suburban homes. There is a built heritage of the inner city which expresses its enduring role as a place of first residence for new immigrants, and a place of lasting association for many of them.

A third consequence of postwar migration lay in the roles played by particular groups and individuals. 'The Italians brought concrete, the Jews commerce, the Yugoslavians brought carpentry, the Poles bricklaying. Everybody brought in something.'³⁹⁴ Some individuals had far-reaching impact on the architecture, economies, politics and cultural activities of their adopted cities. The influence of architects and engineers is highly visible. Australia's most-renowned architect, Harry Seidler, came from Vienna via North America in 1948. His city centre monuments are well-known and extensively documented.³⁹⁵ The work of other architects and engineers is less-recognised. Alexander Wargon, who was born in Poland and educated in Israel and at Harvard University, practiced as a design engineer with consulting firms in Australia from 1951–1961. In the 1960s he formed the firm Wargon Chapman Partners, the structural engineers for 4000 projects since then, including in central Sydney the American Express building, Centrepont tower and several hotels, Queen Victoria car park and the Sydney Harbour tunnel.³⁹⁶

Postwar immigrants played an important part in developing businesses which catered for the high demand for property development, building from scratch companies like Westfield, Stockland Trust, Transfield, Lend Lease and Stokes Developments. Stockland Trust (originally Stocks and Holdings) was started by Ervin Graf, who arrived in 1950, worked as an industrial architect, then in business constructing mass housing and in 1957 diversified into commercial developments such as the Imperial Arcade in central Sydney. Adapting activities to changes in the market, in the 1970s Graf's company constructed central Sydney's first new residential building, the Park Regis, and inner-city townhouses and luxury apartments, then diversified further into multi-storey office blocks and shopping centres and extended operations to Queensland.³⁹⁷

The role of Dutch engineer Gerardus (Dick) Dusseldorp in Lend Lease has been described. The 'wooing and warring' of Bruno and Rino Grollo (sons of an Italian immigrant), Viennese immigrant Ted Lustig and his Israeli son-in-law Max Moar, 'had an enormous impact on property development in Australia, leading to the remoulding of Melbourne's financial centre'.³⁹⁸ In the 1970s and 1980s the Lustig and Moar Corporation and the Grollo Group developed joint holdings, such as the Hyatt Hotel in Collins Street. As rivals they 'set about developing what they believed to be their own end of town'.³⁹⁹ One of the most contested, and most renowned of postwar

³⁹⁴ P Joss, in Ostrow, p 288.

³⁹⁵ For example, see Frampton and Drew. Their selected bibliography is four pages long.

³⁹⁶ Alexander Wargon, Curriculum vitae, Institution of Engineers Oral history project, NSW, 1996 (copy provided by R Block, Oral History Program, State Library of NSW).

³⁹⁷ Hartwell and Lane, pp 239–240.

³⁹⁸ Ostrow, p 40.

³⁹⁹ Ostrow, p 41.

Melbourne's developments was Bruno Grollo's \$350 million Rialto complex in the west end of the city.

While developers in Sydney and Melbourne were often European migrants, developers in the later boom city of Perth were mostly Australian-born or English migrants. Alan Bond, who arrived from England in 1950, 'made and lost his first money in the property industry'. After profiting from subdivision he moved into construction, including the thirteen-storey Stock Exchange building on the old ANZ Bank site in 1968.⁴⁰⁰ From the 1980s, when Asian investment in Australian capital city property expanded dramatically, many investors became permanent residents to bypass investment regulations. Others, like the Tan family of the Malaysian company Ipoh Garden Berhad, sent their children to run their business interests. Changes in investment regulations meant that residency was no longer essential for foreign investors, but, as Ostrow observed, 'it is common for Asian family members, particularly transglobal Chinese, to diversify throughout many Western outposts, thus spreading their risks in a political and financial sense'.

As in other immigrant cities such as New York, ethnic Chinese immigrants and investors from South-East Asia renewed historical Chinatowns in Melbourne and Sydney. Melbourne's Chinatown had almost disappeared by the 1930s and was revived and changed by the new, permanent Chinese immigrants whose use of 'blazing paint and neon dominates the casual view'. Its shops and cafes were patronised by all Melburnians and in the late 1970s Melbourne City Council began to publicise the area and erected colourful arches spanning Little Bourke Street.⁴⁰¹ In a city centre dominated by high-rise offices Chinatown provides welcome variety, while its enduring institutions—such as the Sze-Yap building—tell of a unique aspect of the city's history.⁴⁰² In Sydney, partly in response to the redevelopment of nearby Darling Harbour, Chinatown grew in extent and popularity from the 1980s. Tiger Balm heiress and multi-national businesswoman, Sally Aw Sian, who built up Australian investments in the 1980s, was described as one of the largest holders of property in Chinatown, including the Dixon House commercial complex and the Sing Tao building.⁴⁰³

4.3 Working life and unemployment

Much attention has been paid in Australian histories to industrialisation, with emphasis on the structural change evident from the 1930s as manufacturing industry accounted for rising proportions of the workforce relative to primary production and mining. Attention has also been drawn to a further marked change in the distribution of employment since the 1940s, with the proportion in manufacturing remaining constant at 26% while the proportion in tertiary, or service industries, rose from 46% in 1949 to 64% in 1970. Twenty years later the proportion in manufacturing as a percentage of the workforce had declined to 16% and the percentage in the tertiary sector had risen

⁴⁰⁰ Hartwell and Lare, pp 244, 245.

⁴⁰¹ A Blake in *Melbourne on foot*, p 61.

⁴⁰² Blake, pp 53 (quotation), 59.

⁴⁰³ Ostrow, p 266, 268.

to 77%.⁴⁰⁴ The rise was mirrored in the vertical and horizontal expansion of the postwar city centres

It should be pointed out that Australian city centres have traditionally employed a high proportion of the workforce. At the beginning of the twentieth century tertiary activities accounted for more than 50%, and as Australia was already highly urbanised much of that employment was located in the capital city centres. Profound changes in the architecture, technologies and social relations of the workplace should not blind the urban historian to this equally significant continuity.

In terms of sheer size the city workforce was largest in Sydney, which accounted for a third of all of the nation's finance, property and business service jobs by the 1980s. Melbourne and Sydney retained shares of secondary and tertiary employment far in excess of their share of the nation's population, although their shares fell slightly after 1986.⁴⁰⁵ However, the rise in workers, from a smaller base, seemed more dramatic in the other capitals. The number of workers in central Perth rose from 72 400 in 1961 to 111 300 in 1991, although this represented a decline in the percentage of the whole metropolitan workforce (from 44% to 20%).⁴⁰⁶ Wilbur Smith predicted with some accuracy a very similar rise in Brisbane, and a similar decline in the centre's percentage of metropolitan employment overall, from 39% in 1960 to 27% by 1981.⁴⁰⁷ The rise in employment in the city centres encompassed an increasing specialisation in office and service jobs and a decline in sales and blue collar jobs as manufacturing, wholesaling and retailing dispersed to the suburbs. 'Thus despite the rapid rate of office development evident during the 1970s, and despite the considerable increase in office jobs, the overall increase in the central workforce [in Perth] was not as large as might have been expected ... The slowdown in central growth is in line with trends observed in Melbourne ... and Sydney'.⁴⁰⁸

Not all manufacturing firms moved to the suburbs: food processors and manufacturers of clothing and printing with clients in the city held on until at least the late 1970s when technological and economic changes forced many out of business. New firms and very small and old-established firms continued to be attracted to the city centre by the ease or cheapness of rental space, the range of building types offered, and proximity to other firms and the market. Even in 1976 the inner city was still the most important area for Brisbane's industrial labour force and number of manufacturing establishments as a whole.⁴⁰⁹ This was similar even in the more industrialised cities of Adelaide and Melbourne. A continuing form of 'blue-collar' work was also offered by city councils, although much of the heavy manual work was replaced as machinery became more sophisticated. A further change was the composition of the workforce itself. Until the 1960s council workers were male and usually local residents: in

⁴⁰⁴ Hartwell and Lare, pp 219, 294.

⁴⁰⁵ O'Connor and Stimson p 46.

⁴⁰⁶ Alexander and May, table 1.

⁴⁰⁷ Wilbur Smith and Associates, p 128 (table 6-5).

⁴⁰⁸ Alexander, 'Does central Perth have a future?', p 22.

⁴⁰⁹ 'City of Brisbane Town Plan 1976, Statement of intent part B, supporting data', Brisbane City Council, 106-107. (URP library).

Sydney this preference was formally institutionalised by Labor councils but changing community attitudes brought this system into disrepute and at the same time the car enabled even council workers to live in the further suburbs.⁴¹⁰

In comparison to other sectors of the workforce, the proportion of female workers has traditionally been highest in the tertiary sector: the big city's 'office girl' has featured in songs and stories for most of the century. However, one of the most important changes in the Australian workforce generally since World War Two has been the shift in its gender composition. Until the 1960s most married women did not (and, in the case of the public service, could not) take up paid employment. While women joined the labour force at a steadily increasing rate through the 1970s and 1980s, the labour market remained segmented by gender and most women took up routine, part-time and casual jobs in the expanding tertiary sector.⁴¹¹ Hence, central business districts became dominated numerically by female workers, at least until the late 1980s when those same routine jobs were abolished in their thousands with the widespread use of computer networks and financial restructuring. The female character of much of the working population of the postwar city is an aspect of the city's heritage which warrants investigation.

Since the 1970s some women have instead been employed or contracted by corporations to work outside the city centre on personal computers, linked up to central offices by data networks, as tele-workers (working from a remote location outside the city) or tele-commuters (from suburban or fringe central sites). Electronic networks of self-employed professional contractors and researchers have also emerged, which have been described (somewhat prematurely) as 'virtual cities'. By 1992 more than two million people, one quarter of the total workforce, carried out some hours of work at home. As yet, however, tele-commuting and tele-working have not brought large population shifts from the cities nor markedly changed the organisation of work.⁴¹² In the late 1980s, two new Commonwealth buildings alone were designed to house a total of 10 500 staff: 7 500 in the Melbourne office on a large site bounded by Lonsdale, Spring, Exhibition and Little Lonsdale Streets, and another 3 000 in the Sydney office on Pitt and Hay Streets.⁴¹³

What is clear is that 'employment opportunities in the centre are narrower than they have ever been and are likely to become even narrower as the centre becomes more specialised'.⁴¹⁴ The adoption of information technology with the reduced reliance on central place also increases specialisation by reducing the need for many retailers, householders and firms to locate or even visit the centre. Innovations in information technology have also been used to develop changes in the organisation of offices remaining in the city. One result has been the reduction of office space per person, even for senior staff who now do their own typing (word processing) and record-

⁴¹⁰ S Fitzgerald, 'Community, politics and work in the inner city 1900-1970', in S Fitzgerald and G W otherspoon eds, *Mirrorities: cultural diversity in Sydney*, pp 74, 78, 79.

⁴¹¹ Lepari et al, p 95.

⁴¹² Lepari et al, pp 103-104.

⁴¹³ Pegrum, pp 82, 83.

⁴¹⁴ PTroy, 'Social aspects of urban consolidation', in *ICOMOS Conference papers*, Melbourne 1996, p 3.

keeping. This has reversed a trend towards more generous space per worker evident in the design of earlier postwar office buildings.⁴¹⁵

Since the 1970s as unskilled jobs have disappeared with restructuring and economic recession the unemployment rate amongst teenagers and recently arrived migrants has been high. The Vietnamese in particular have experienced severe unemployment. Most unemployment has been in suburban and regional settings but with bad consequences for many city workers: job losses in shops and offices, constant drudgery in family restaurants, extra stress for welfare workers and longer hours and less funding for public servants. The urban unemployed are also at their most visible here, gathering in the city to collect pensions, to protest and to seek pleasure.

4.4 Responding to urban and natural environments

Modernist architects usually aimed to create rather than preserve urban environments, while orienting new structures to the best metropolitan views. Some architects, notably Seidler, interpreted their commissions as an opportunity to create both an individual landmark and a semi-public realm within the city's commercial centre. His MLC Centre included a public plaza, a shopping concourse and a theatre (described earlier), demonstrating 'a preoccupation with "cities in miniature" that has characterised almost all of Seidler's subsequent city-centre developments'.⁴¹⁶ Certainly, this aspect was one of the several favourable observations made by informants about Seidler's Riverside Centre in Brisbane (1986). The 40-storey Riverside Centre, a synthesis of 'everything that Seidler has realised over the past two decades ... [also] attempts to reorganise a large extent of the existing waterfront' at a bend of the Brisbane River.⁴¹⁷ The architect's 46-storey Grosvenor Place, completed in Sydney in 1987, further demonstrated that

Seidler is constantly engaged in three interrelated operations: first, in an effort to render the tall office building as an integrated urban landmark; second, in a parallel endeavour to treat the landscape at grade in such a way as to create a civic arena ... without those public institutions that are essential to the public realm; and finally, Seidler continually tries to create enclaves within the chaos of the modern city and to augment those enclaves where possible with subsequent developments as in the addition of the Phoenix Tower to Australia Square ... or in the recent extension of the Riverside development in Brisbane.⁴¹⁸

But there is another, less overwhelming trend evident in dealing with the environment of Australian city centres. Starting from the late 1960s (but adopted at different rates in different cities) urban dwellers and public agencies realised a new conception of the inner city as an environment to be valued in its own right, its natural and built features deserving preservation, revival or enhancement. In every city centre—despite continuing conflicts over forms of public intervention and private development—this recognition has brought about preservation and renewal projects with remarkably broad appeal. Masses of people enjoy the 'rediscovered river' in Melbourne and Brisbane, North Terrace's 'cultural boulevard' in Adelaide, and Queen Victoria Building, Circular Quay and Darling Harbour in Sydney. Renewal projects involving

⁴¹⁵ PTroy to S Mairden and PTroy, 'Introduction', in Troy, *Technological change and the city*, p 7.

⁴¹⁶ Frampton pp 89 (quotation), 90.

⁴¹⁷ Frampton p 102.

⁴¹⁸ Frampton p 97.

rehabilitation, selective rebuilding and public housing rather than clearance and private redevelopment have also created attractive precincts and helped to maintain in some areas a traditionally diverse residential environment.

In the early 1970s, urban renewal was redefined as a technique of improving urban areas 'for human use and enjoyment, by deliberate public intervention in the processes of the built environment'.⁴¹⁹ Renewal proposals (as specified under Victoria's *Urban Renewal Act 1970*) would be multi-lateral—taking into account natural, aesthetic, economic, social and technical issues, and building in public participation and feedback—by contrast with previous non-participatory and 'singular measures of urban intervention' such as slum reclamation, expressways and zoning. Earlier 'renewal' programs had aimed to remove historical impediments to urban change. By the 1970s, the need for renewal was created *by* those changes: 'the increasing rate of complex changes of a personal, social, and technological order in the cities, which themselves form the most complicated environmental artefacts the world has ever seen'.⁴²⁰ Conflicts over renewal proposals had produced 'a litany of errors' and there was 'a public of opinion which is armed, ready, and waiting eagerly to attack the proposals of those agencies and authorities which would intervene in ... the built environment of the inner suburb'.⁴²¹ Yet even before the 90s ended State Governments were ignoring these public preferences and overturning heritage controls to expedite, once again, private economic redevelopment, even utilising such icons as the Adelaide Park Lands.

4.5 Cultural sites, arts, crafts and sciences

City centres as a whole are cultural sites of enormous significance and embody many of the places, values and activities of modern urban culture. As a colonial and peripheral society Australia's urban culture has always been dominated to a greater or lesser degree by the 'metropolitan' cultures of London, New York and Los Angeles. In Australia the metropolitan cultures of both Sydney and Melbourne have also predominated but with Sydney gradually exerting greater influence in line with its growing size and financial dominance.

Cultural sites within the city centre include: libraries, museums, arts centres and institutes; other sites with less tangible but equally powerful cultural and historical associations; and the lecture halls, workshops and rooms that accommodate cultural and scientific activities carried out privately or collectively. Although public cultural institutions have been constructed at great expense, many private or non-government activities depended upon free or cheap accommodation in the old church halls and run-down commercial premises that have characterised much of the city centre and its margins. The city centres have also become performance spaces in their own right, as buskers, bands and performers entertain city crowds and arts festivals use city gardens and squares in open-air plays, concerts and exhibitions. Collective cultural activities have always been a significant city centre function in Australia, but these

⁴¹⁹ H PARSORS, 'On intervention in the inner suburbs: a general view', in D Whitelock, ed, *The inner Adelaide suburbs—their future*, Department of Adult Education, University of Adelaide, Adelaide 1972, p 7.

⁴²⁰ PARSORS, p 7.

⁴²¹ PARSORS, p 12.

exploded in number and variety from late 1960s, with the growth of a 'parallel education system' in voluntary associations, adult education, museums, galleries and public funding for the arts, sciences and heritage.⁴²² From 1960 the Adelaide Festival of Arts attracted increasing levels of local, State and Commonwealth government funding as did ensuing arts festivals in the other capitals.

The biggest public expenditures were, as always, on capital works rather than recurring expenses. Sydney Opera House, the Adelaide Festival Theatre and the Perth Concert Hall were all opened in 1973. New libraries, archives, museums and cultural centres or major extensions were constructed in Adelaide, Perth, Hobart and Sydney while entire cultural complexes were developed just outside the traditional city centre in Melbourne, Brisbane and Perth. Universities and colleges also built or refurbished concert halls, libraries and lecture rooms.

Apart from the architectural interest of the buildings themselves, many of the postwar office towers were also giant art galleries as their developers commissioned sculptures, paintings and tapestries for foyers, meeting rooms and forecourts. In Sydney, the Australia Square architect, Harry Seidler, was sent around the world to buy artworks, consulting with art historians in Zurich and interviewing Henry Moore and Herbert Bayer before deciding on a stabile by Alexander Calder. Inside the building were Aubusson tapestries and works by Le Corbusier and Victor Vasarely.⁴²³ The MLC project in Sydney included works by Charles Perry and Albers and Calder tapestries.⁴²⁴ Typically, the *Victoria Year Book* for c1970 discusses contemporary Australian sculpture almost entirely in terms of the works commissioned for public and corporate buildings in city centres or other metropolitan sites.

4.6 Social services

Government, voluntary and private health and welfare services are highly centralised. Most public and private hospitals were originally established in the city centres. The Royal Adelaide Hospital has occupied the same site off North Terrace since the 1840s.⁴²⁵ The Royal Hobart Hospital was built in 1938 on a central site used for public hospital buildings since 1819. Apart from the purpose-built St Mary's Hospital, most of the other private hospitals in Hobart were established in large former city residences. Some of those buildings have subsequently been put to commercial use, illustrating in one swoop the evolution of landuse in the city centre.⁴²⁶

In each State, expanding suburban and rural settlements were serviced initially by extending established hospitals and other medical services near the city centres, and then by providing branch and mobile services whilst also building up central premises. In the 1960s South Australia's semi-voluntary Mothers and Babies Health Association

⁴²² See D Horre, S Marsden and A Pairter, comps, *A hidden Australian cultural resource– the parallel education system*, National Centre for Australian Studies, Monash University, Victoria, 1993.

⁴²³ Murphy, p 101.

⁴²⁴ Murphy, p 136.

⁴²⁵ Marsden, Stark and Sumner, p 273.

⁴²⁶ Scripps, pp 35–36.

operated 265 metropolitan and rural health centres, ran three baby health trains and taught mothercraft education in secondary schools from its headquarters on Adelaide's South Terrace. Torrens House, its training school for nurses and hospital for mothers was located in the same city centre street.⁴²⁷

New public hospitals in Australia were opened in suburban locations after the war but the central hospitals were often retained and extended, usually in unattractive utilitarian high-rise styles. Indeed, construction 'of the high-rise section of Royal Perth Hospital in 1947, overshadowing St Mary's Cathedral, provided a foretaste of the jump in scale which was to mark the next phase of the city's development'.⁴²⁸ Also typical is the rebuilt Royal Adelaide Hospital, which encroached on Adelaide's Botanic Gardens. But the role of the RAH in Adelaide is far more significant than its appearance, as thousands of patients are treated there and because it is one of the largest single employers in the city centre. In Hobart, in a process typical of health services elsewhere, annexes were set up around the city and then again centralised at the main hospital when it was extensively rebuilt.⁴²⁹

A similar historical process was evident in the growth of educational facilities: as shown in Brisbane, the history of education in Australia is an urban study.⁴³⁰ Schools, universities, institutes of technology, conservatoriums, teachers and students populated the towns and cities, clustering ever more thickly towards the centre. Many State-level educational institutions and bureaucracies are still highly centralised but schools, dependent on a student population who walked or rode bicycles from home, have followed families out into the suburbs. Even in Hobart by the 1930s there were few schools in the city centre and the last remaining school is St Michael's Collegiate.⁴³¹ Both primary and secondary schools survive in Adelaide and North Adelaide but the closure of the nineteenth-century Sturt Street School in central Adelaide in 1996 was but the latest in a long saga.

Several of the universities started in central premises. The original campuses of the University of Adelaide (founded in 1874) and the University of South Australia (founded as the School of Mines in 1888) still occupy adjoining sites on North Terrace.⁴³² Their buildings, old and new, house both students and the central administrations of multi-campus universities created by amalgamation with more widely-scattered teacher training colleges. The University of Queensland was started in central Brisbane in 1909 in the former Government House. JD Story, Vice-Chancellor from 1936–1960, worked with Premier Forgan Smith to transfer the university from its cramped George Street quarters to suburban St Lucia. The original

⁴²⁷ J Raftery, 'Saving South Australia's babies: the Mothers' and Babies' Health Association', in O'Neil et al, pp 275, 282.

⁴²⁸ Hocking, 'Growth and change in central Perth', p 281.

⁴²⁹ Scripps, p 36.

⁴³⁰ T Watson 'Education schooling in urban context', in *Brisbane: public, practical, personal*, p 15.

⁴³¹ Scripps, p 68.

⁴³² Marsden, Stark and Sumner, pp 266, 272.

site is now occupied by the massive buildings of Queensland University of Technology, established as an institute in 1965.⁴³³

4.7 Activism, associations and organisations

City centres are seeding grounds for new social and political movements. A myriad of political, community, charitable and cultural associations flourish, die down and revive in old city offices, church halls, libraries and homes. Protest marches crowd city streets and squares. The biggest demonstrations in all State capitals were held in May and September 1970 to protest Australia's involvement in the Vietnam War. Around the same time, the brilliant red, black and yellow Aboriginal flag was designed for use in the National Aboriginal Day rally at Victoria Square in Adelaide.

Even before they were released from government control in the 1960s the predominantly non-urban Aboriginal people formed city organisations. After the 1960s many repeated the pattern of earlier generations of Australians by migrating from country to town. Numbers moved into inner city suburbs such as Redfern in Sydney or city centre hostels and rooms. By 1986 an average of 24% of Aboriginal people lived in the major cities; 48% of Victoria's Aboriginals lived in 'major urban areas' (mainly Melbourne) and 40% of the population in SA lived mainly in Adelaide. One-third of all urban Aboriginals in Australia lived in NSW, although many in towns other than Sydney.⁴³⁴ An important part of their cultural revival was the establishment of Aboriginal-controlled services, frequently located in or near the capital city centres.

The first Aboriginal Legal Service (1970) and the first Aboriginal Medical Service (1971) were set up in Redfern. At the same time the black theatre of Nindethana 'arose out of the streets of Melbourne', and helped set up the National Black Theatre in Sydney. 'We performed as black theatre groups, as street groups, in the marches. Black theatre would get involved with all the political demonstrations.'⁴³⁵ Overall in Australia between 1973–86 more than 1 000 Aboriginal-managed, government-funded enterprises and services were established in social welfare, education and business, while State and Commonwealth Governments, churches and universities established others.⁴³⁶ Aboriginal activism was animated and supported by those who lived and worked in the capital cities.

From the 1960s there was also an efflorescence of activism focused on the inner city itself, with major social and physical consequences. Traditionally, local 'progress associations' had agitated for improved roads and services in developing suburbs but from the 1960s a revival of local activism was directed at the ill consequences of progress in old, inner suburbs and city centres.

⁴³³ Watson p 17.

⁴³⁴ H Tesfaghiorghis, *Geographic variations in the economic status of Aboriginal people: a preliminary investigation*, Discussion paper, no 2, 1991, Centre for Aboriginal Policy Research, ANU Canberra, pp 4 (table 2), 17 (table 9), 18.

⁴³⁵ G Bostock, 'Black theatre', in J Davis and B Hodge, eds, *Aboriginal writing today*, Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies, Canberra 1985, pp 67 (first quotation), 69, 70 (second quotation).

⁴³⁶ N Parbury, *Survival: a history of Aboriginal life in New South Wales*, NSW Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs, Sydney 1986, 1988, p 142.

[G]reater public awareness of and concern for the environment has led to a rapid increase in both the numbers of such groups and in the level of their activities in recent years. Individually and collectively, these groups have been extremely effective in certain policy areas, eg opposition to the Housing Commission's high rise flat policy, [and] to the inner city freeway proposals ... One of the largest and most influential of these groups is the National Trust of Victoria, which ... has been a consistent advocate of the need for legislation to protect buildings of historic or architectural interest and has recently extended its support to include the designation of conservation areas ... Virtually all the 15 inner municipalities have their own residents' associations, tenants' associations, environmental groups or transport action groups ... They are becoming more influential and are being acknowledged increasingly at both local and state political level ... Many community groups ... help sponsor the umbrella group, the Committee for Urban Action. This Committee, with many professional planners in its membership, carries out its own research, takes up wider issues, and is active in political lobbying ... To sum up, there are a considerable number of special interest and community groups whose interests lie within the Inner Area ... Future planning policies are likely to have to take into consideration the views of such groups.⁴³⁷

Despite having some significant effects on 'the path of urban change', these groups were middle-class and male-dominated, oppositional in nature and mostly short-lived. As McLoughlin concluded in Melbourne's case, 'with no disrespect to such movements ... they have been no match for industrial, property and finance capital and the growing power of the corporate state and its professional bureaucracies in deciding the patterns of metropolitan change'. And they have been least influential in the business districts of the city centres.⁴³⁸

4.8 City pleasures

The social use of city streets and parks is as important as the activities carried out in its buildings. Each city was provided during its high-Victorian period with a range of places, including hotels, parks and libraries, which catered for popular, physical and cultural pleasures. These pleasures have persisted since colonial times: urban Australians still promenade in the Botanic Gardens or stand listening to demagogues at the current equivalent of Speaker's Corner in Sydney's Domain or Adelaide's Botanic Park. The city centre is a place for social exchange, for eating and drinking, sport, celebrations, festivals, pageants, fetes and street parties; it is a social place and a stage for events large and small. Even in sedate Adelaide, the Australian tour by the Beatles in 1964 'drew crowds to the streets in numbers not experienced since the Royal Tour of 1954'.⁴³⁹ Lewis introduces the postwar history of central Melbourne by evoking its most dramatic events: mass protests when American president LB Johnson visited in 1966; the funeral of Prime Minister Harold Holt at St Paul's Cathedral in 1967, and the Vietnam moratoria organised by Jim Cairns in 1970 when more than 70 000 people marched through the city.⁴⁴⁰

Meetings, protests and the opportunities for entertainment, adventure and vice have proliferated exceedingly. An *Australian Quarterly* description of central Adelaide in 1960: 'the dead Sundays, six o'clock closing time on weekdays ... and the noticeable

⁴³⁷ Planning Barch, 'Melbourne's inner area - a position statement', MMBW, Melbourne 1977.

⁴³⁸ McLoughlin pp 234, 235 (quotation), 240.

⁴³⁹ Parter, in O'Neil et al, p 312.

⁴⁴⁰ Lewis, p 127.

shortage of good hotels, restaurants and night clubs'⁴⁴¹ applied to all of the city centres of the time. Australia's Protestant ascendancy, particularly in the smaller capitals, succeeded in banning Sunday entertainments and off-course betting until the broad trend towards a secular society and a liberalising of public opinion brought legislative changes in the late 1960s and early 1970s.⁴⁴² NSW extended hotel trading to 10 o'clock in 1955 and SA was the last State to allow bars to open after six in 1967. Liquor licences were also changed to allow restaurants to serve alcohol and 'bring-your-own'. Subsequently, gambling in hotels, clubs and casinos was made legitimate and State-funded casinos were built in every capital after the first, built in Hobart.

There was also a phase of what Cole calls (in reference to Brisbane) 'Remembering pedestrians'.⁴⁴³ As car traffic deterred shoppers, city councils began to improve pedestrian access in ways long advocated by planners such as Stephenson and Ritter in WA. In Perth the council created Hay Street Mall in 1970, Forrest Place was closed to vehicles in 1979 and Central Railway Station forecourt was paved and bridged. Today, troops of people pass along the walkways and cross the station to the cultural centre and Northbridge on the far side of the railway. The other cities followed suit in the same decade. Shopping streets were closed to cars in Adelaide (Rundle Mall), Sydney (Martin Place), Melbourne (Bourke Street Mall) and Darwin (Smith Street Mall). The new malls and civic squares have become city stages, with buskers, open-air concerts and encounters, great and small.

Rundle Mall, opened in 1976, was designed by Hannaford and Partners as a result of a Labor election promise and following traders' repeated urgings. Champagne gushed from the relocated nineteenth-century fountain, surrounded by '10 000 people jamming the mall at a delightfully happy ceremony'. The elated premier Don Dunstan claimed the mall as 'the greatest thing that has happened to the City of Adelaide since Colonel Light'.⁴⁴⁴

The impact of those social and legislative changes on the city centre was, indeed, immense. The built change was less obvious than office towers but the social impact was more highly visible as people thronged the streets and life returned to the cities at weekends and at night. New cafes and hotels were built but more commonly existing buildings were altered, such as Adelaide Railway Station, partly converted to a casino. Central hotels resumed the wider entertainment role they had played in the nineteenth century, although there were fewer of them.

6 o'clock ... closing, and there were pubs on every corner of Sydney ... When they extended it to 9 o'clock closing it did away with the drunkards who used to swill their beer at six o'clock and get in as much as they possibly could at the time. But when they came to 9 o'clock and then they altered the liquor laws to allow for beer gardens ... it became more sociable...

⁴⁴¹ Quoted in A Ritter, 'Entertainment: the changing scene', in O'Neil et al, p 314.

⁴⁴² D Hilliard, 'Religion in Playford's South Australia', in O'Neil et al, pp 269, 271-272.

⁴⁴³ Cole, p 298.

⁴⁴⁴ Hannaford & Partners, *Rundle Mall design implementation report*, Rundle Mall Management Committee, North Adelaide 1977, pp 3, 9.

Coffee houses began ... in line with the immigrants ... particularly the Greeks ... who were used to having their coffee and they couldn't find a place in the city and so they set up business themselves. And then as more came in it spread ... [instead of drinking in hotels, people would] go into these places and have a coffee, which was a different sort of behaviour for the masses. Sidney Warden [whose practice concentrated on hotel design] ... was responsible for very nice coffee houses in Pitt Street.⁴⁴⁵

After Australia's first regular television service was launched in 1956 the numbers of cinemas dwindled rapidly. Thirty years later, with the social discovery of the city, they made a come-back. Architecturally, today's cinemas are less glamorous but more numerous than the first generation of 'picture theatres' (some of them have been recycled). In Sydney the block bounded by Liverpool, Kent, George and Bathurst Streets contains more than 20 cinemas. 'Within this tiny space perhaps the most hyperbolic compression of space, time and possible meanings occurs ...'.⁴⁴⁶

There are also pleasures of more recent fabrication: amusement arcades, night clubs, entertainment complexes and sites like Hobart's Salamanca Place and Adelaide's Rundle Street East where historical sites accommodate shops, markets and cafes. Some commentators distinguish between the class of pleasures on offer, most evident in central Sydney and Melbourne which are increasingly devoted to tourism and mass entertainment, while theatre, serious bookshops and art galleries have 'fled, to everywhere but the central city'.⁴⁴⁷

'Walking the Block', fashionable in the 1880s, has returned to Melbourne but in other respects, city pleasures are less public than in the nineteenth century. Public space is becoming more privatised, with the construction of interior arcades, overhead walkways and the installation of security cameras. New spaces such as Southbank in Melbourne draw great crowds but are only semi-public as they are expensive and patrolled by security guards.⁴⁴⁸

As well, the space-demands of the new towers ensured that they obliterated a much wider variety of structures and spaces with a greater range of uses, and overshadowed and confined outdoor places. Close attention to the uses of the new blocks such as the MLC building in Sydney reveals that most were designed to accommodate some functions provided by prior buildings on the site but with major differences: semi-public places such as hotels became semi-private spaces hidden within the tower. Initially, few blocks were designed solely as offices. Several new catered for a range of uses with ground-floor shops, bars and public plazas. But newly-created public spaces in the forecourts and plazas of the new buildings were often *too* large or windy and shadowed. Melburnians, by contrast with Sydney-siders, abhor these spaces.⁴⁴⁹

⁴⁴⁵ Lorenzo Malarot, interview by Marily Jean Sydney 1992, tape 2, p 7 (uncorrected transcript, boud collection). RAI, NSW.

⁴⁴⁶ Meagher, p 380.

⁴⁴⁷ Lewis, p 129. A similar observation was made by G Davison to S Marsden

⁴⁴⁸ A Brown May to S Marsden

⁴⁴⁹ P Miller to S Marsden

4.9 Worship and commemoration

The churches, like the State, erected their proudest edifices in the city centres. They have kept many of these grand buildings—despite much-diminished congregations—as their headquarters with attached administrative offices. In particular, a large number of churches remain in central Adelaide and Hobart.

City churches and cathedrals best exemplify the organic nature of large central buildings. Some are still under construction after many years—Adelaide's nineteenth century St Francis Xavier's Cathedral lacks a tower and the funds to build one—and all of them have undergone continual alteration and embellishment inside their old stone walls. Within them and in church precincts, social change since the war is reflected in the changing users and physical alterations to function rooms, halls and offices.

4.10 Living in the city

Traditionally the city centre has provided for people who can find no home elsewhere, if only an overnight bed or a park bench. City living encompasses a vast and shifting population of sad old drunks and homeless teenagers, prostitutes, patients and students, tourists in hotel towers and visiting tribespeople in city parks. Victoria Square in Adelaide and Raintree Park in Darwin are used by Aboriginal people as important meeting places, although there are conflicting reactions to their presence by other city people.

Large numbers of single people are drawn to life in the city: in central Melbourne in the early 1970s the percentage of single person households was 29% compared to 10% in the 'outer area'.⁴⁵⁰ These city people form a transient, heterogeneous, tolerant but sometimes troubled population. People even choose to take their lives in large numbers at city sites. An architects' report in Adelaide noted tersely that 'in 1984 it was deemed necessary to add protective screens to all multi-storey car parks'.⁴⁵¹

There are also permanent city residents, larger than average proportions of whom are single elderly women and recent migrants. As explained in the introduction, the postwar city centre comprises both a high-rise business 'core' and a low-scale, mixed-use 'frame'. Some writers refer to the latter as the 'fringe' of the CBD. When maps are prepared of the city centres, as in Perth, 'the population density map is the employment density map turned inside out'. Employment density follows the highest land values in the main retail and office areas in the 'core' of the city while the highest residential density is in the 'frame', to the north, east and west in central Perth.⁴⁵²

This is a community based on varied residence—old terraces and new apartment blocks, hostels, hospitals, bungalows and flats, mansions hived into single-room lets, and cheap hotels—served by delicatessens, corner pubs and the elaborate churches and schools built for once-large city centre populations. Some frame districts—mainly

⁴⁵⁰ 'Melbourne's inner area', MMBW report, p 74.

⁴⁵¹ RAI A report, 1986, in reference to the Rundle Mall/Pulterry Street multi-storey car park.

⁴⁵² G Seddon, *Sense of place*, UW A Press, Nedlands, 1972, p 235.

in the smaller capitals—are also important relics of the pre-modernist centre, which was until the 1960s low-scale and heterogeneous, with a variety of building types and ages and intermingled houses, services and workplaces.

Solomon recorded that houses and shops together accounted for 90% of the functional units in central Hobart in 1847, and 78% in 1954, that is, there was over that near-century only a modest reduction. Housing alone represented 68% of all functional units. In other words, residential property was still the main occupier of inner Hobart land in 1954 despite the growth of commerce and administration and the substitution of commercial for residential property in some city blocks. The number of dwellings had actually doubled since colonial times and nearly the whole western half of inner Hobart was dominantly residential.⁴⁵³ The population of the City of Hobart (in 1944) was 54 215.

This mixture of central housing and workshops was dismissed by early postwar planners as ‘slums’, or as obsolete landuse, ripe for ‘redevelopment’. Much was replaced but the following generation of planners and public officials included many who proposed revival of these communities and implemented planning and heritage controls. As a result, residence as a form of conflict between city dwellers, planners and developers has been an important postwar theme in old residential districts like the Rocks and Woolloomooloo, Wapping and the South East and South West corners in Adelaide and North Adelaide.

Low-cost accommodation for people who need or serve the centre remains an important function of the frame district, although threatened by other central functions: freeways, transport terminals and warehousing, office blocks, entertainment venues and luxury apartments (see 1.9). In *The city centre*, Alexander illustrates landuse change in central Perth in 1953 and 1968 by maps which show, even in this short period, ‘core’ functions such as retailing and offices greatly expanded in extent, although offices, then as now, are concentrated on and near St George’s Terrace. By contrast, residential use was much reduced during that time, and the ‘frame’ had been invaded by other uses. In Hobart the central concentration of office and public buildings had also intensified by the 1950s but the expansion of the business core into adjacent areas provided ‘a mixed pattern of functions which is usually identified as transitional land use’.⁴⁵⁴

What were the implications of this process of ‘transition’? In the 1960s Souter described the existing population of Sydney’s inner terraces joined by three groups of newcomers, all ‘fugitives’: from Southern Europe, Aborigines from country towns, and other Australians fleeing suburbia.⁴⁵⁵ ‘While the foreigners and the fugitives from suburbia are restoring the terraces, the City Council and the State Government take the easier course of demolition and reconstruction’. In keeping with his times, Souter did not regret the loss of squalid housing but he did remark on the destruction of the

⁴⁵³ Solomon, *Urbanisation*, pp 222–223, 321.

⁴⁵⁴ Solomon, *Urbanisation*, p 223.

⁴⁵⁵ Souter and Molnar, pp 73–78.

'little worlds' of the residents in the central city, who had been 'swept out to Villawood and Lalor Park'.⁴⁵⁶

From the 1970s, after encountering widening opposition to their demolition and high-rise policies, State housing authorities in Sydney, Melbourne and Adelaide revisited the inner city in a more tactful manner by constructing 'in-fill' housing of a similar scale to older houses and restoring earlier houses. These tended to be inner-city rather than city centre sites, such as the Emerald Hill (Melbourne) and Glebe (Sydney) projects inspired by the Commonwealth Department of Urban and Regional Development. But in Adelaide the SAHT acted on the Dunstan Government's policy of 'getting population back into the city square mile', and, in the face of gentrification, retained housing for people on low incomes. The Trust built new terraces and flats and 'turned decayed city housing into good quality modern housing' by restoring and letting cottages and single men's rooming-houses.⁴⁵⁷

Since the 1970s city councils have also made efforts to promote the return of residents, notably in Adelaide, Melbourne and Sydney. Typically, Sydney Council's strategic plan of 1971 aimed to 'arrest and reverse the decline in the city's residential population', noting that up to 900 people were moving out every year and that residential space continued to decline as other uses encroached. However, the writers also predicted that high land costs and scarcity of space would result in high density residential development and, as has been demonstrated, high-income residents.⁴⁵⁸ Financial inducements such as bonus floor space for residential buildings has fostered a boom in inner-city apartments.

The return of city residents to new and 'recycled' buildings is often-noted in the media, but not their fewer numbers compared to earlier populations, nor the contrast between the street life of those times and today's highly-privatised lives. Meanwhile, the majority of each capital's population lives at greater and greater distances from the centre.

In the modernist projection of suburbia in Australia there was a refusal to acknowledge the street culture of the inner city communities. The local cultural forms which were indigenous to the inner city working class, involving centrally the use of the street as a semi public and living space, in the context of domestic overcrowding and gregarious association, were denied in this projected broadacre utopia. The slum kids, who feature so prominently in interwar social documentary photography, would be tucked away in the wholly private realm of the quarter acre block..

[P]ublic spaces and public places have become more impersonal under the effects of modernism ... [I]t was precisely the dishevelled [sic] and variegated nature of the traditional neighbourhoods which encouraged the intermingling of social groups essential for a rich civic culture ... [whereas] modernity entails: the separation of home and work, the breakdown in localised kinship networks and the creation of busy and impersonal transit routes and central city areas.

⁴⁵⁶ Souter and Molnar, pp 78 (quotation), 79.

⁴⁵⁷ Marsden, *Business, charity and sentiment*, pp 347, 368, 371, 372 (photo), 378, 392 (quotation).

⁴⁵⁸ GPW ebbert, ed, *The design of Sydney*, Law Book Co, Sydney, 1988, p 10.

A dichotomy has been set up between the very private realm of the suburban house and the very public realm of the ... inner city.⁴⁵⁹

Conclusion

Despite intense pressures from State and capital to redefine city centres in terms of a single use—office space—they retain, and should retain, a complex of uses and an overlapping set of economic, political and cultural spaces. The concept of overlapping spatial arrangements ties together many of the themes listed separately above and links the centre's history to its heritage. Not listed because they are all-encompassing are those other major themes of the city centre: spatial and historical change in central city function, within a context of local, national and global political-economic restructuring.⁴⁶⁰

The diversity of use in city centres overall does not obscure their internal division into distinct precincts: every suburban shopper knows to head for Rundle Mall in Adelaide or Queen Street Mall in Brisbane. One important aspect of central areas is the physical structures, landuses and cultural activities carried over from earlier times. Residential occupation of 'CBDs' is a good example. This aspect of modern city centres is important not simply to historians but has been demonstrated by popular choice and government and business response to be of real significance. Such historical aspects of urban morphology are termed path dependency by economic historians.⁴⁶¹

Finally, cities are not simply agglomerations of concrete and bitumen. They are human communities. Wyllie has defined community as the space in which the relationship between the public and the private is negotiated. Public spaces are the physical domain where these relations are negotiated. Defining community as space brings the concept into direct relationship with contemporary research into urban spatial arrangements.⁴⁶² Community as public space has been stridently contested as well as celebrated in the city centres. Let another writer speak the final words for the inner city, of Sydney:

We form our communities, fight our battles, earn our living, live intensely. But there's something wrong ... the actual city we live in being one that creates a constant friction between how we want to live and what is there. The dark rooms looking out on traffic, piled on top of one another, the survival of the fittest, the houses of the rich along the waterfront, the houses of the poor along the freeway. Cities are shaped by economic pressures more than by communities, or our desires. We always have to carve out our bit of territory, usually the bits that the developers, private and public, have so far overlooked. We spread out, moving ahead of the real estate boom, changing the communities we move into, and then get overrun ourselves ...

Maybe the inner city has always been under pressure, always breaking down, crystallising out and reforming ... The positive side of this is the way people move in and rebuild—

⁴⁵⁹ G Morgan 'Defensible space, moral panics and crime: the unintended consequences of post-war expansion', in Freestone, pp 149 (first paragraph), 152.

⁴⁶⁰ F Stilwell to S Marsden

⁴⁶¹ Dingle, in Troy, *Australian cities*, p 20.

⁴⁶² Freeman Wyllie, URP seminar, ANU 13 May 1996.

rooms, communities, ideas. The street life, the graffiti, the coffee shops, tropical landscapes in the backyards of DMR squats.⁴⁶³

⁴⁶³ B Brooks, 'Maps', in *M odjeska*, p 33.

Results and Conclusions

Results

What are themes and thematic frameworks? They are useful tools, no more and no less. 'An historical theme is a way of describing a major force or process which has contributed to our history ... The relative significance of items can be assessed by using the framework set up by the historical themes.'⁴⁶⁴ The use of themes in heritage conservation in Australia was initiated by the Australian Heritage Commission to provide a framework for assessing places nominated for the Register of the National Estate. The AHC widely promoted the use of themes in State conservation plans through the National Estate Grants Program. As a result the first thematic listing in Australia was published in South Australia in 1980 and this has since guided South Australia's program of heritage survey and assessment.⁴⁶⁵ The AHC's own thematic listing was not developed until 1995 after wide consultation.⁴⁶⁶ The Principal Historic Themes (PAHT) identified in that report 'point to enduring structural categories of experience', which is also my intention in the following framework, with the proviso that some categories will change over time.

The present study builds on previous work not only in heritage studies and urban histories but also in delineating historical themes. The result is intended to provide a workable thematic framework relevant, as such frameworks should be, to a particular time and place: the postwar city centre in the Australian capitals. This work is presented below. The proposed changes to the PAHT are discussed in the section below *Testing the framework*.

The city centre framework also incorporates themes outlined in other thematic frameworks relating to urban and/or city centre development. I have incorporated (or adapted) themes outlined in several studies. The Sydney study Brian McDonald + Associates—Wendy Thorp *Review of heritage inventory for central Sydney* stage 1 comes the closest to the place and period of my own. Their themes are close to those I have developed, except that they have excluded the wider social and cultural uses of the city centre and the postwar period. Their themes also reflect the focus on

⁴⁶⁴ 'Historical context reports and historical themes', NSW Heritage Manual, NSW Department of Urban Affairs & Planning, Heritage Council of NSW (draft, 1996, provided to S Marsden by T Prescott), pp 1, 3.

⁴⁶⁵ S Marsden, *State Historic Preservation Plan: Historical guidelines*, Heritage Unit, SA Department of Environment, Adelaide 1980.

⁴⁶⁶ Centre for Western Australian History with Jane Lennon and Associates, 'Principal Australian historic themes project: vol 1, presentation and discussion of a thematic framework', AHC May 1995 (including following quotation p 43).

buildings of the inter-war period, and mainly those representing commercial or financial activity.

I have used the previous heritage framework for central Sydney by Spearritt, Thorp et al that covers the whole of its history (I include only those sub-themes relevant to my period). The list as a whole is a mixture of chronological, geographical and type themes. I have also used lists prepared for SA and the ACT.⁴⁶⁷ I have drawn on the most recent NSW heritage themes⁴⁶⁸ and Scripps' thematic history of central Hobart (for Hobart City Council). Her sub-themes are also a mixture of chronology, type and place.

I have used the adapted PAHT thematic list as a checklist, so that all the delineated themes are included or subsumed in the following (some have been moved to different thematic headings such as 'architecture', others have been combined, renamed or rearranged in order). Here is the final thematic framework devised for the city centres with further comments and themes suggested by informants and in other thematic studies placed in the column alongside. I do not go into detail here about what each theme includes as this is discussed as part of the history of the city centres since World War Two.

- | | | |
|------------|--|--|
| 1. | Constructing capital city economies | |
| 1.1 | Economic cycles | economic buoyancy ⁴⁶⁹ |
| 1.2 | National and international economic links | globalisation (financing only) |
| 1.3 | Dealing with remoteness, hardship and disasters | natural disasters and threats |
| 1.4 | Transport and communications | port function, relocation of port and reuse of site
transport, communications (especially telecommunications, IT; harbour and hinterland, moving goods and people, impact of the car ⁴⁷⁰) |
| 1.5 | Business, finance and speculation | mining (in the hinterland of several cities)
speculation, corporate changes

the CBD as a financial centre; Australian business confidence ⁴⁷¹ |
| 1.6 | Manufacturing | the rise and decline of manufacturing |
| 1.7 | Marketing and retailing | wholesaling, retailing; department stores, Cat & |

⁴⁶⁷ Most of these thematic lists are provided in Lerron 'Principal Australian historic themes project', stage one: identification and assessment of previous work about themes at state level, Jane Lerron and Associates, Hamilton Queensland 1993 (provided by the AHC).

⁴⁶⁸ 'Historical context reports and historical themes', NSW Heritage Manual 1996.

⁴⁶⁹ McDonald and Thorp. I have footnoted themes suggested in other studies only when they are additions to those suggested generally and by my informants, eg communications.

⁴⁷⁰ Scripps.

⁴⁷¹ McDonald and Thorp 'perspectives'.

		Fiddle Arcade (Hobart) ⁴⁷²
1.8	Entertaining and tourism	tourism
1.9	Housing and lodging	hotels, boarding-houses
1.10	Professional services, institutions and associations	law, professions, economic institutions
2.	Building and remaking city centres	city building; the shape of the city: slum clearance and urban renewal; new building technologies; the CBD ⁴⁷³ precinct development ⁴⁷⁴ changing uses, evocative of an age ⁴⁷⁵
2.1	Development and redevelopment phases	eras: redevelopment, destruction, high-rise and large-scale servicing the metropolis; city improvement; the skyscraper
2.2	City planning	planning, plot ratios, height controls (setting/changing the parameters)
2.3	Architecture, engineering and construction	architecture, adaptive reuse, construction, technology, materials; office blocks and emporia
2.4	Urban services	the provision of services (water, power, sewerage, lighting) ⁴⁷⁶
2.5	Image-making	city images, symbols
2.6	Reviving and preserving the centre	revitalisation, heritage and development 1958–1988: destruction of Victorian Sydney; retaining heritage
3.	Governing the city	
3.1	Extending the city-state ⁴⁷⁷	government centralisation ⁴⁷⁸
3.2	Federalism	
3.3	State government and the central city	role of government
3.4	City councils	
3.5	Officials, politicians and interest groups	impact of individuals

⁴⁷² Scripps.

⁴⁷³ Scripps.

⁴⁷⁴ M cDonald and Thorp.

⁴⁷⁵ M cDonald and Thorp.

⁴⁷⁶ Scripps.

⁴⁷⁷ 'Government centralisation' is a theme from Historical themes ('perspectives') delineated in the *Review of heritage inventory for central Sydney* stage 1 (Brian M cDonald + Associates – Wendy Thorp), Sydney 1995, p 7.

⁴⁷⁸ M cDonald and Thorp.

3.6	Making & changing laws and regulations	
3.7	Conflict and protest	city as a battleground between different interests
4.	City life	city life: living in the city; working in the city; religion, education and culture; leisure
4.1	City people	(including outcasts) activities and impact of different social and ethnic groups (and below)
4.2	Immigrants	(ie including those who live outside centre but have strongly influenced it) migration/migrants
4.3	Working life and unemployment	offices, shops, trades, government, work eg changing office working conditions
4.4	Responding to urban and natural environments	natural features, climate, changes in attitude and use of urban features
4.5	Cultural sites,⁴⁷⁹ arts, crafts and sciences	libraries, museums, arts centres; sites with less tangible cultural associations; cultural and scientific activities carried out privately in other places
4.6	Health, welfare and education	
4.7	Activism, organisations and associations	impact of individuals, the myriad of political, community, charitable, cultural etc associations
4.8	City pleasures	entertainment, recreation, eating and drinking, celebrations; city as a social place and stage
4.9	Worship and commemoration	religion and philanthropy ⁴⁸⁰
4.10	Living in the city	slums and homelessness, residence, residential decline and revival, gentrification, community ⁴⁸¹

Testing the thematic framework

This section of the report tests the city centre thematic framework in two ways. In Part One the framework is tested using selected places drawn from the AHC's *Register of the National Estate Database*. In Part Two the framework is used to test and extend the draft Principal Australian Historic Themes (PAHT) framework prepared by the AHC.

⁴⁷⁹ This theme is borrowed from NSW State Heritage themes (1996). I have used it as a usefully inclusive term for libraries, institutes, galleries, museums, theatres and complexes, or 'cultural centres' which are such important new features in or near the city centres in the post-war period. Also sites with less tangible but equally powerful cultural and historical associations.

⁴⁸⁰ Scripps.

⁴⁸¹ Scripps.

Part One

Originally it was proposed that the framework be tested using places drawn from the *Register of the National Estate Database* for a particular city centre (Melbourne) but I found only one relevant RNE item (Olympic Stadium) and, apparently, no other postwar places registered, nominated or interim-listed, not even ICI House (1958), Melbourne's first international-style skyscraper (which is on the *Victorian Heritage Register*). Instead, I made an exhaustive search of the database for every capital city centre (including registered and indicative items) to assemble a sample of 22 places.⁴⁸² Some of these places have actually been rejected but remain on the database, for example, Perth's May Holman Centre and Darwin's former Legislative Assembly Building.

Nearly half (ten) of the 22 places are in Darwin, perhaps because most of its prewar buildings have been destroyed, thereby elevating the heritage 'value' of its early postwar buildings. It also reflects the fact that a number of assessments were completed as part of the AHC's recent Darwin backlog project. This is planned but is yet to happen elsewhere despite the national significance of many postwar places in the other cities. As my discussions with heritage staff in each city revealed, many of these postwar buildings are already being demolished or radically altered: Anzac House, one of only three postwar places in central Sydney listed on the AHC database, was demolished in 1988. State and council registers include more postwar buildings than are on the RNE. For example, Adelaide City Council has recently listed the Reserve Bank (c1965) in Victoria Square, not only for its architectural significance but in recognition of the register's under-representation of the important theme of federalism in the city centre.⁴⁸³

It should be noted, however, that the many prewar places on the RNE constitute an important part of contemporary city centres, especially in Hobart, and that the construction or alteration of many of these places continued after World War Two. Also, I have not included that late twentieth century architectural phenomenon, the facade. Several of these form entrances or podiums for new skyscrapers. Nor have I included registered natural areas near city centres, such as Albion Heights in Hobart.

While there is a total of 22 places (below), most of them appear under two or more thematic headings, for example, Perth's Council House. The reasons for this are made clear in the foregoing history. The scarcity of listed postwar places leaves many of the thematic headings unfilled, so this is more a test of the Commission's database and the RNE than of the framework. The framework could also be used to test a larger sample of postwar places in some future study which assembles them from

⁴⁸² There may be more— the method for searching the database by date of construction has not yet been perfected and is cumbersome and time-consuming— but I also made several other item-by-item searches without finding any other post-war places.

⁴⁸³ Paul Stark (Adelaide City Council) to S Marsden, November 1996.

other registers (for example, State, Council, National Trust, and RAI A surveys of twentieth century buildings).⁴⁸⁴

⁴⁸⁴ A similar thematic and chronological analysis of South Australian State Heritage Items in 1979 provided a basis for the subsequent State-wide program of regional and thematic surveys which have made the Register more inclusive. S Marsden, *South Australian State Historic Preservation Plan: Historical guidelines*, South Australian Department of Environment and Planning, Adelaide, 1980, Appendix 2.

1.	Constructing capital city economies	
1.1	Economic cycles	
1.2	National and international economic links	<i>American Express Tower, Sydney</i>
1.3	Dealing with remoteness, hardship and disasters	
1.4	Transport and communications	<i>Victoria Bridge, Brisbane Brisbane City Council multi-storey car park</i>
1.5	Business, finance and speculation	<i>MLC Buildings, Adelaide and Perth Trust Bank, Hobart American Express Tower, Sydney Tem House, Darwin IMFC Building, Adelaide Australian Eagle Insurance Co Ltd Building, Adelaide Territory Insurance Office, Darwin</i>
1.6	Manufacturing	
1.7	Marketing and retailing	
1.8	Entertainment for profit & tourism	<i>Olympic Stadium, Melbourne</i>
1.9	Housing and lodging	
1.10	Professional services, institutions and associations	
2.	Building and remaking city centres	
2.1	Development and redevelopment phases	<i>American Express Tower, Sydney Tem House, Darwin Territory Insurance Office, Darwin Australian Eagle Insurance Co Ltd Building, Adelaide MLC Buildings, Adelaide and Perth. Brisbane City Council multi-storey car park</i>
2.2	City planning and regulation	
2.3	Architecture, engineering and construction	<i>MLC Buildings, Adelaide and Perth Olympic Stadium, Melbourne Trust Bank, Hobart American Express Tower, Sydney Paspaley House, Darwin Australian Eagle Insurance Co Ltd Building, Adelaide</i>
2.4	Urban services	
2.5	Image-making	<i>Olympic Stadium, Melbourne Council House, Perth Sydney Opera House and Surrounds</i>

3.	Governing the city	
3.1	Extending the city-state	<i>Legislative Assembly Building, Darwin</i>
3.2	Federalism	<i>Old Supreme Court, Darwin</i>
3.3	State government and the central city	<i>May Holman Centre (former Superannuation Building), Perth</i> <i>Sydney Opera House and Surrounds</i>
3.4	City councils	<i>Council House, Perth</i> <i>Brisbane City Council multi-storey car park</i>
3.5	Officials, politicians and interest groups	
3.6	Making & changing laws and regulations	
3.7	Conflict and protest	
4.	City life	
4.1	City people	<i>House Type A, Darwin</i> <i>House Type A1, Darwin</i>
4.2	Immigrants	<i>Paspaley House, Darwin</i>
4.3	Working life and unemployment	<i>Former Nurses' Quarters, Darwin</i>
4.4	Responding to urban and natural environments	
4.5	Cultural sites, arts, crafts and sciences	<i>Sydney Opera House and Surrounds</i>
4.6	Social services (including health, welfare and education)	<i>Darwin Primary School and Grounds</i> <i>Former Nurses' Quarters, Darwin</i>
4.7	Activism, organisations and associations	
4.8	City pleasures	<i>Olympic Stadium, Melbourne</i>
4.9	Worship and commemoration	<i>Chung Wah Temple, Darwin</i>
4.10	Living in the city	<i>House Type A, Darwin</i> <i>House Type A1, Darwin</i> <i>Former Nurses' Quarters, Darwin</i> <i>Paspaley House, Darwin</i>

Part Two

One of the purposes of this project was to test and extend the draft Principal Australian Historic Themes framework. That is done in this section.⁴⁸⁵ Having adapted PAHT to provide a framework specific to postwar capital city centres (as above), I suggest changes to the original PAHT framework which may, with further modifications, be used for Australian cities generally, and certainly for the heritage of the capital cities.

⁴⁸⁵ This section is based on S Marsden, 'Post-war CBD study: some thoughts on the thematic framework', which was an attachment to the second progress report presented to Australian Heritage Commission, September 1996.

The omission (in the draft framework) of any specific reference to *Creating capital cities* and *Building and remaking city centres* (in particular, under 4. *Building settlements, towns and cities*) was one reason for my original interest in this project given the central role of the capital cities in the occupation, exploitation and cultural development of Australia since 1788. These two themes should be added to 4, as 4.2 and 4.3.

The city centre focus of many of the activities listed under other themes in the framework is also important and should be referred to explicitly. For example, an urban locus is implicit in many of the themes identified under 3. *Developing local, regional and national economies*, but the themes listed are not confined to the capital city centres or cities generally. Yet, as this study makes clear, one of the most distinctive attributes of Australian history since settlement has been the creation of cities in advance of the economic development or even the occupation of the continent as a whole. The capital cities have continued to promote as well as dominate regional economies. Hence, *Constructing capital city economies* should be placed in its chronological order immediately after 3.1 *Exploring the coastline* (3.2 *Surveying*, was focused initially on the capital city sites and the surrounding countryside). Similarly, 7. *Governing*, should include *Making city-states*, or reference to this theme should be included by rewriting 7.2, 7.3 or 7.5. As the fundamental contrast in Australian life has for most of the post-settlement period been between rural and urban life (also expressed in the literature) I have included 8.13 *Living in cities and suburbs* and its opposite, 8.14 *Living in the country and rural towns*.

Another, more general observation is that use of the terms ‘developing’, ‘establishing’ in the PAHT tend to exclude later processes such as decline. ‘Developing’, like many of the other sub-themes, focuses only on the ‘up’ side or the formative process rather than the downside, disappearance or ‘restructuring’ of manufacturing, and other changes. More simply-expressed themes are often more inclusive, such as ‘marketing’ and ‘manufacturing’ and should be preferred.

Adaptation of Principal Australian Historic Themes

My additions or changes (*in italics*) are given in full as follows. The original PAHT numbering of sub-themes has been retained except when I have inserted new sub-themes.

- 2. Peopling the continent** **2. *Peopling the cities***
- 2.4 Migrating
- 2.7 *Urbanising Australians* *Urbanising*
- 2.8 Responding to Australia's natural environments *Responding to urban and natural environments*
- 3. Developing local, regional and national economies**
- 3.2 *Constructing capital city economies*
- 3.6 Establishing lines and networks of communication
- 3.7 Moving goods and people
- 3.12 *Manufacturing*
- 3.13 Developing an Australian engineering and construction industry
- 3.14 Developing economic links outside Australia

- 3.15 Struggling with remoteness, hardship and failure
- 3.17 Financing Australia
- 3.18 Marketing and retailing
- 3.20 Entertaining for profit
- 3.21 *Housing and lodging people* (more inclusive than 'lodging people')
- 3.25 *Providing professional services*
- 3.26 *Forming economic institutions and associations*
- 3.27 *Economic cycles*
- 4. Building settlements, towns and cities**
- 4.1 Planning urban settlement
- 4.2 *Creating capital cities*
- 4.3 *Building and remaking city centres*
- 4.4 Supplying urban services
- 4.5 Developing urban institutions
- 4.6 Living with slums, outcasts and homelessness
- 4.8 Remembering significant phases in the development of towns and suburbs
- 5. Working**
- 5.2 Organising workers and work places
- 5.4 *Working in offices and shops*
- 5.8 *Working in trades and factories*
- 5.8 *Working for government*
- 5.9 *Dealing with unemployment*
- 6. Educating**
- 6.1 Forming associations, libraries and institutes for self-education
- 6.4 Building a system of higher education
- 7. Governing**
- 7.2 *Making city-states*
- 7.3 Developing institutions of self-government and democracy
- 7.4 Federating Australia
- 7.6 Developing administrative structures and authorities
- 7.7 *Making and keeping laws and regulations*
- 7.8 *Protesting*
- 8. Developing cultural institutions and ways of life**
- 8.1 Organising recreation
- 8.4 Eating and drinking
- 8.5 Forming associations
- 8.6 Worshipping
- 8.7 Honoring achievement
- 8.8 Remembering the fallen
- 8.9 Commemorating significant events and people *and preserving their heritage*
- 8.10 *Engaging in the arts and sciences*

8.13 *Living in cities and suburbs*

8.14 *Living in the country and rural towns*

Conclusions and recommendations

I recommend that the framework developed for capital city centres be used or adapted in related heritage studies, and that the suggested changes in the PAHT framework also be adopted.

I also recommend that such studies take heed of the limitations of thematic frameworks. The arrangement of the main contextual history (Part Two) along thematic lines rather than chronologically or by individual city gives prominence to themes significant in the postwar history of every city centre but it does not highlight important differences between the cities in timing, degree of impact and specific effects (that is, tangible heritage). These differences are equally important and would be given emphasis in heritage studies of individual centres, within the framework established in the present study. These differences make the heritage of each city centre distinctive and worth preserving in its own right.

The other problem with dividing this account into thematic divisions lies in downplaying the *many* factors at play and their interaction in shaping the centre and its structures. I found some difficulty in deciding where to assign certain aspects of the centre's history and some repetition was inevitable. For example, high-rise office buildings appear under several thematic headings, as Taylor's architectural study suggests they should be.

A major chapter in the history of Australia, as written in the city, is there to be read from the presence of the early 'modern' office block. No other building type so clearly represents the excitement, the prosperity, and vision of Australia as it embarked on the second half of the twentieth century. No other building type is more indicative of the economic rationalism and more demonstrative of the widespread destruction of the historic urban fabric that characterized the 'renewal' of the city in the rush to 'progress'.⁴⁸⁶

The organiser of an American Studies Association session makes a similar point about the range of economic and cultural meanings of the skyscraper. McMurdy writes that the skyscraper has been acknowledged as a distinct American building type, driven by economic forces and cultural impulses specific to that culture. (This assertion itself raises interesting questions about what skyscrapers tell about Australia's postwar culture.) Tall buildings were celebrated in popular culture as demonstrations of economic and technological accomplishment, while architects 'heralded this singular opportunity to develop an American style'. Skyscrapers also transformed urban landscapes, 'and created interior landscapes defined by new technologies, a gendered workforce and an emerging corporate culture.' Yet skyscraper studies are 'fragmented along disciplinary lines, precluding a truly cultural consideration of this architectural phenomenon that so profoundly transformed the American city'. The planned session will adopt interdisciplinary approaches linking

⁴⁸⁶ J Taylor, *Post World War II multistoried office buildings in Australia (1945-1967)* Essay prepared for the Australian Heritage Commission Sydney 1994, pp 1-2.

such aspects as architecture, urbanism, economics, corporate culture, social structure such as gender and class, and technology; for example, by considering 'the iconography of the skyscraper in contemporary literature or music; the construction of social life within the skyscraper and its relationship to urban culture; economic forces promoting or controlling construction; or the uses of technology to manage a gendered workforce'.⁴⁸⁷

A more general point to make about the identification of historical themes is that it should be an ongoing process. This is because there will be new hypotheses, new evidence and new histories, not to speak of ongoing historical change itself. Review and adaptation of the themes and especially the histories provided in this study should be an important part of any related heritage study, above all because it covers a period and a topic still under-researched and poorly understood.

I strongly recommend further research projects which carry this study back in time and also focus on particular city centres. I also recommend similar comparative studies to this project which provide thematic histories of other key urban areas. A study of major importance in the heritage of the Australian city would be an assessment of port districts, or docklands, including in port cities such as Newcastle and Wollongong. Particular themes within cities or city centres should be pursued, including social and cultural themes which are more difficult to relate to built heritage but just as significant in the city's history as retailing or office development. Political influences should also be explored further, in particular the consequences of federation which are still being played out as we approach the centenary of federation.

What are we trying to identify and preserve in the city centres? Writing the contextual history threw up several dilemmas. For example, history—above all, recent, urban, Australian history—is a matter of constant change. How do we respect *that* heritage without acceding to the destruction of places reflecting earlier periods of change? Should we simply accept all change in the city centres; or strive to keep examples of all the main forms change has taken; or become actors ourselves by reserving some places from change or permitting only small changes. The answer will involve the usual mix of all three approaches, despite the potential for endless conflict.

I recommend that the information in this report, which should be of use and interest to many Australian be made available in published form or on-line on computer networks. I believe that people have the right to access to such information, to be able to develop an understanding of the present circumstances and to have means to participate in and to influence events. I would therefore also recommend an approach to actual heritage assessment which aims to keep traces of all development, making them explicable and accessible: whether good, bad or ugly, intimate or overpowering. Further, as suburbs are rendered ever more private and their public sites are reduced, sold, and subdivided, the public functions of the city centre and its ownership by all of those who live and work in the city and State become more important.

⁴⁸⁷ Roberta Moudry (sessionorganiser) Cornell University, 'CFP: Skyscrapers Culturally Reconsidered', notice of American Studies Association Meeting, 1997 Parel, Washington DC, forwarded by Public History DiscussionList <PUBHIST@LISTSERV.IUPUI.EDU>21 September 1996.

In defining the Australian city centre and providing contextual histories of its development I have also offered some analysis of important issues and certain conclusions. One further issue is the purpose of the study itself. I perceive it as helping to establish which functions are important in the city centre, those features we value and want to keep. It is vital that we identify the historical themes and heritage which have gained most prominence since World War Two but we should also identify the structures, landuses and cultural activities carried over from earlier times. This is important not simply to historians but has been affirmed by popular choice and government and business response. Economic historians have called this carryover of past activities in the urban landscape 'path dependency'.⁴⁸⁸ I name it part of the heritage of the postwar Australian city.

⁴⁸⁸ L Frost and T Dirgle, 'Sustaining suburbia; a historical perspective on Australia's urban growth', P Troy, ed, *Australian cities*, University of Cambridge Press, Melbourne 1995, p 20.

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Abbreviations

ACC	Corporation of the City of Adelaide
AGPS	Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra
AHC	Australian Heritage Commission, Canberra
AIUS	Australian Institute of Urban Studies
ANU	Australian National University, Canberra
BCC	Brisbane City Council
BLWA	JS Battye Library of WA History, State Library, Perth
CUP	Cambridge University Press
DAS	Department of Administrative Services, Canberra
DFAT	Dept of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Canberra
MMBW	Melbourne & Metropolitan Board of Works
MUP	Melbourne University Press
NARU	North Australia Research Unit, Australian National University, Darwin
NT	National Trust
NTU	Northern Territory University, Darwin
QUT	Queensland University of Technology
RAIA	Royal Australian Institute of Architects
RAPI	Royal Australian Planning Institute
SAGP	South Australian Government Printer (also, Printing Division)
SAHT	South Australian Housing Trust
SLNSW	State Library of NSW, Sydney
URP	Urban Research Program [now, Urban and Environmental Program], Research School of Social Sciences ANU
UQP	University of Queensland Press, St Lucia, Brisbane
UTS	University of Technology, Sydney
UWA	University of Western Australia, Nedlands, Perth

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