



Residents to the Rescue!

In last month's CBD News, readers were reminded of the Postcode 3000 campaign. Did you know that in the same year, 1992, our community group, Residents 3000 Inc. was born?

Postcode 3000 was a bold initiative for city planners. Melbourne city, in those days, was just a workplace that died after 6pm. Along with the rest of Australia, Victoria needed to revive its economy following the late 80's recession. If you were not there at the time, imagine how bold the concept was, to encourage people to move into the city to live. In Australia, people lived in sprawling suburbs, in large houses on the quarter acre block.

You couldn't live in the city! Where would you do your shopping? "It is just a concrete jungle in there", people would say. Despite these perceptions, other people with a bold vision, saw Melbourne's city centre becoming not only a business centre, but both a cosmopolitan residential and a business centre. Aspirations for Melbourne to rival other famous cities like Vienna, Paris, London and New York were there in those planners' minds. These cities had many residents. A 10-year plan was developed to turn unused commercial buildings into stylish apartments plus add some modern new high-rise buildings to the mix.

Think about it. How bold was the plan to build large supermarkets in the city centre to cater for the planned new population – the residents to come. "If you build it, they will come!" (you hope). But the people did come and they loved it.

Who were these people? The ones who preferred to live in apartments. Who rejoiced in the fact that they had a small environmental footprint. These residents were bankers, insurers, students, IT experts, retirees, artists, musicians and so on. They generate income and they consume. Thus the local economy began to grow, making a big contribution to economic recovery.

Ten years later the city became the envisaged vibrant place. As time progressed, it won awards as the world's most liveable city, many times. Residents, contributed over a third of the local domestic product. The City of Melbourne and commercial interests continued to develop the beauty of the city, the shops both grand and large as well as those that were small, boutique and much loved. CBD Melbourne grew up.

But now, we have another economic downturn and possibly the restrictions and difficulties are not over yet. But the city is so much better off than in 1992. Excellent infra-structure is in place. There are more trees, great parks, wonderful shops, art precincts, beautified laneways, museums, excellent public transport and a new metro under construction – in fact, all the trappings of a sophisticated city centre.

How we live has changed a lot during this last year. People are realising that they can work at home. But they also realise that buzz of ideas that spark innovation and invention, needs personal interaction. It makes sense then to live close to your work. In fact, what if some of the un-used office space was changed into apartments but some remains as office accommodation? So you live in the building that employs you? Take the lift from your apartment to the office, for an in-person meeting but do your contemplative work from home several floors below?

Residents are the key to recovery. Those that have been hibernating in the quiet, dead city are starting to emerge with a pent up need to consume and invent. But the city can grow further. City planners



maybe should be considering re-promoting the advantages of residing in the city, to build the residential population beyond the natural growth trend. People make a city.

Certainly Residents 3000 has been and still is a vibrant organisation providing the essential social context to the fabric of city work/life balance. Your committee is planning many exciting in-person events when it is safe to do so. In the meantime, the Zoom events are continuing and 2021 should see the revival of our “3000 Steps” walks, discovering more about your city, plus some community activities like plastic waste clean up campaigns. Both being outdoor activities with small groups that are healthy and safe.

This is the last article for 2020. The committee of Residents 3000 wish you all a safe and healthy festive season and encourage you to aspire to be a part of the city’s revival. With your enthusiasm, vision and belief, Melbourne can grow to be the most liveable city in the world again.



