



Heritage Victoria
Via email

21 April 2023

Dear Sir or Madam

The attached Draft Heritage Interpretation Plan outlines the direction of heritage interpretation at 495 Collins Street, Melbourne. This document was developed in conjunction with the project team and in consultation with the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation. It is grounded in extensive historical research and an understanding of the significance of the sites.

The Draft Heritage Interpretation Plan presents several opportunities for heritage interpretation that celebrate the site's First Nations, built and social history. We believe this document provides a holistic and layered approach to heritage interpretation that will greatly benefit the site and its future audiences.

The site's multitude of histories is represented through key narratives that emphasise the significance and value of 495 Collins Street and provide audiences with a sense of belonging, continuity and connection to the site. Heritage interpretation is seamlessly integrated with the architecture, landscape architecture and interior design of the building. A range of large and small-scale interpretive devices will engage audiences, spark their curiosity and ensure they can understand the site and its meanings.



Please note that the opportunities and draft concepts presented in the Draft Heritage Interpretation Plan are preliminary and demonstrate our proposed approach rather than a commitment to specific project deliverables. The project team will continue to work closely with stakeholders to progress the most suitable opportunities during the subsequent design stages.

Please do not hesitate to let me know if you have any questions.

Yours Faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Sue Hodges', written over a thin horizontal line.

Sue Hodges
Managing Director

495 Collins Street

495 Collins Street Heritage Interpretation Plan

1 May 2023



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1 Executive Summary

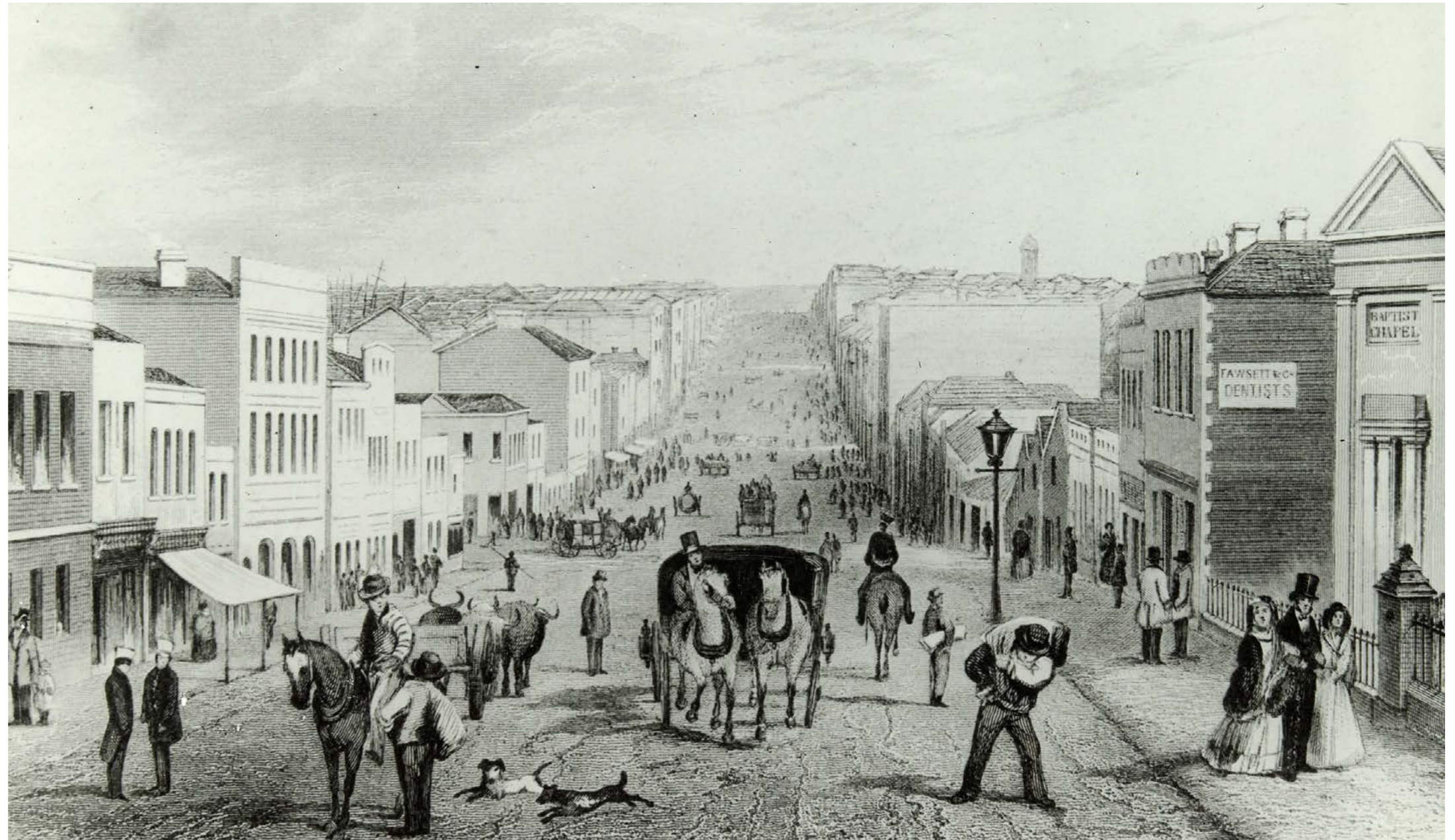


1 Executive Summary

1.1 Background

In late 2022, Salter Brothers engaged SHP (Sue Hodges Productions Pty Ltd) to develop a Heritage Interpretation Plan for the Former Intercontinental Hotel at 495 Collins Street. The site comprises the Winfield Building at 487-495 Collins St, Winfield Square at 497-503 Collins St and the Rialto Building at 497-503 Collins St. The Winfield and Rialto buildings are listed on the Victorian Heritage Register (Place IDs 742 and 743, respectively), while Winfield Square is listed on the Victorian Heritage Inventory.

The site is proposed for redevelopment and is being reimagined as a cultural project accessible to everyone. The Rialto Building will provide hotel accommodation, function space and retail space, while the Winfield Building will provide a club for hotel patrons and the public. This includes a pool area, library and sitting room, restaurant and dining area. The existing, unsympathetic 1980s additions to the buildings will be removed. A new tower will provide additional hotel rooms as well as office space. New laneways offer additional public thoroughfares between Collins St and Flinders Lane.



Collins Street, c. 1920-50
Victorian Railways, State Library Victoria

1 Executive Summary

1.2 Response to the Project Brief

This Heritage Interpretation Plan provides an holistic approach to interpretation for 495 Collins St. It outlines key themes and stories for interpretation, which are grounded in historical research, the heritage values of the site and consultation with the site's Traditional Owners, the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation. The Interpretation Plan provides recommendations for interpreting the history of the Rialto and Winfield Buildings and the broader history of the area, including the history and culture of the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people. It also includes proposed locations for interpretive installations and concept designs.

SHP has worked closely with the client and Cox Architecture from the outset of the project. The intent is for heritage interpretation to be seamlessly integrated with the architecture, landscape architecture and interior design of the site. The overall approach to interpretation is to spark curiosity and engagement to connect people to place and culture. The heritage values of the buildings and aspects of post-colonial history are interpreted inside the heritage buildings themselves, while Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung history and culture is primarily interpreted in the new built fabric. The new fabric also looks to the future, envisaging one that promotes connectivity, reconciliation and welcome and is future-oriented.



"Rialto" Collins Street Melbourne, 1907
State Library Victoria

1 Executive Summary

1.3 Historical context

The site at 495 Collins Street is located on the Country of the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people. Their ancestors have lived and maintained a connection to this place for over 30,000 years. Collins Street has important associations for Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people as a traditional pathway connecting their ceremonial grounds and camping grounds.¹

Europeans first arrived in Melbourne in 1835 and in 1837 surveyor Robert Hoddle designed the grid layout for the new settlement. Collins Street was marked out in this plan. The first buildings in Collins Street were constructed before 1837, but blocks were not sold until 1 June 1837.²

Melbourne's first bank opened on the corner of Collins and Queen Street in 1838. Over the next 50 years, several impressive bank and insurance buildings were designed by architects and built at the western end of Collins Street, giving this part of the street a mercantile and industrial character.³ Meanwhile, the eastern end of Collins Street, with its assortment of prime residential accommodation, medical chambers, elite private clubs, churches, artist studios and theatres, gained a reputation as the 'best' part of Melbourne.⁴

After Melbourne experienced a major land boom in the 1880s, much of Collins Street was redeveloped. Businessman Patrick McCaughan bought several frontages along Collins St during that time, including the land at 497-503 Collins Street. He commissioned respected local architect William Pitt to design the Rialto Building as a state-of-the-art commercial office building. Comely and Guillam constructed the building in 1890-91 and the first tenants moved in during 1892.⁵ Early tenants included the Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works, the Farmers' Co-operative Association, Fink, Best & Phillips Solicitors, Rates Office and Treasurer, Importers and Accountants, and Strachan & Bostock woolbrokers.⁶

The Winfield Building at 487-495 Collins St was built in 1891 to designs by Charles D'Ebro and Richard Speight Jnr. It was financed by Richard Speight Jnr and his father, Richard Speight Snr, a Victorian Railways Commissioner, to provide 'office and store accommodation'.⁷ Like the Rialto next door, Speights' buildings were designed to offer the very latest approach to commercial buildings with shops on the ground floor and offices for a range of businesses on the upper levels. The Wool Exchange had moved in by 1892 and the first wool sale was held on 5 October of that year. The building was known as the Wool Exchange Building until the 1920s, when it became known as the Winfield Building.⁸ The Victorian Producers Co-op Co Ltd bought the building in 1949.⁹

The Grollo Group gained financial control over the Rialto and Winfield Buildings in 1980. From 1981-86, the Grollo Group and St Martin's Properties redeveloped the site, creating a hotel and the then-tallest office building in the Southern Hemisphere. The rear of the Winfield Building was demolished as part of this work. The InterContinental Hotels Group took over the management of the hotel in 2006 and undertook a \$50 million redevelopment of the site. The InterContinental Melbourne The Rialto opened in 2008.¹⁰ The site is now poised for renewal, but will continue to be used as office and hotel accommodation.

1.4 Significance

The Winfield Building (487-495 Collins St) and Rialto Building (497-503 Collins St) are listed under the Victorian Heritage Act (2017) under item numbers VHR H0040 and VHR H0041. Winfield Square (497-503 Collins St) is also listed under the Victorian Heritage Act (2017) under Victorian Heritage Inventory item number H7822-2197. The following Statements of Significance guide the development of the themes, stories and locations for interpretation of 495 Collins St.



Collins Street - Town of Melbourne, Port Phillip, i.e. Phillip, New South Wales [original caption], 1840
J Cross, London, State Library Victoria

1 Executive Summary

1.4.1 Winfield Building, 487-495 Collins Street

What is significant?

The Winfield Building, formerly the Wool Exchange building, 487-495 Collins Street, was erected in 1891. It became known as the Winfield Building from the mid 1920s. The architects were Charles D'Ebro and Richard Speight jnr. It is believed to have been built for J R Murphy, owner of Murphy's brewery. Part of the financing for the building came from the architect and his father, Richard Speight Snr, a commissioner of the Victorian Railways. From 1892 to 1894 the building was Melbourne's first amalgamated wool exchange and incorporated an auction hall which brought together all the Melbourne wool sales. Other tenants in the rear stores included the Melbourne Chilled Butter Company and Melbourne Cool Storage Co. The front section to Collins Street is all that remains of the original, much larger complex. The rear of the Winfield Building was replaced by a fourteen storey extension in 1984, part of the redevelopment of the site as a hotel. The four storey building with a facade to Collins Street was built as two ground level shops with offices overhead. It is constructed of brick on a bluestone plinth and cement render mouldings. It is in the English Queen Anne style, reflecting the architectural influence of Richard Norman Shaw in England. The corner treatment echoes the adjacent Rialto building, being splayed and crowned by a conical turret. Characteristic of the Queen Anne style is the steep pediment at roof level, reminiscent of Flemish gables and penetrated by windows. Also contributing to the style is the banded cement contrasting to the face red brickwork and the wide variety of window treatments. The dormer windows and decorative iron ridgework add further interest to the variegated and picturesque roofline.

How is it significant?

The Winfield Building is of architectural and historical significance to the State of Victoria.

Why is it significant?

The Winfield Building is architecturally significant as one of the best examples of the Queen Anne style in Victoria. In contrast to the Gothic and classical modes, the Queen Anne style was employed only sparingly for Victoria's commercial buildings in the 1890s. However, the style was well suited to the flamboyant and confident designs favoured by commercial developers during the so-called 'boom period'. It is one of architect Charles D'Ebro's finest buildings.

The Winfield Building is architecturally significant for its unique spatial relationship to the adjacent Rialto building, with which it formed a narrow laneway. Together they form an integral part of the exceptional block of late Victorian 'boom' period buildings in Collins Street.

The Winfield Building is historically significant as the location of the amalgamated Wool Exchange. The wool industry and its stores was a dominant force in the west part of the city and the Winfield Building became a focal point for the industry from the early 1890s.

The Winfield Building is historically significant as a demonstration of the building boom in Melbourne during the early 1890s, shortly before the economic depression halted building for most of the decade. The design demonstrates the new approach to office accommodation, being specifically planned for a range of commercial tenants and with shops to the ground floor of the street facade.¹¹



Winfield Building 487-495 Collins Street
Melbourne, 1954
Lyle Fowler, State Library Victoria

1 Executive Summary

1.4.2 Rialto Building, 497-503 Collins St

What is significant?

The Rialto Building, 497-503 Collins Street, was designed by the prominent Victorian architect William Pitt for businessman Patrick McCaughan. It was built by contractors Comely and Guillam between 1890 and 1891. The large complex, principally built in face red tuck-pointed brick, has facades to Collins Street, the Rialto Plaza, Flinders Lane and to the redeveloped rear section of the Winfield building to the east. The five storey Collins Street facade forms a screen to the major section of the building at the rear, a six storey arcade of small warehouses. The Collins Street facade is a distinctive version of the Venetian Gothic palazzo style. This polychromatic facade, with a diverse range of decorative materials including cement, ceramic tiles and pressed zinc, forms an integral part of the Rialto precinct, a highly significant group of five late Victorian buildings. Pitt's version of the Gothic was inspired by the style of the Gothic palazzo mercantile exchanges of Venice.

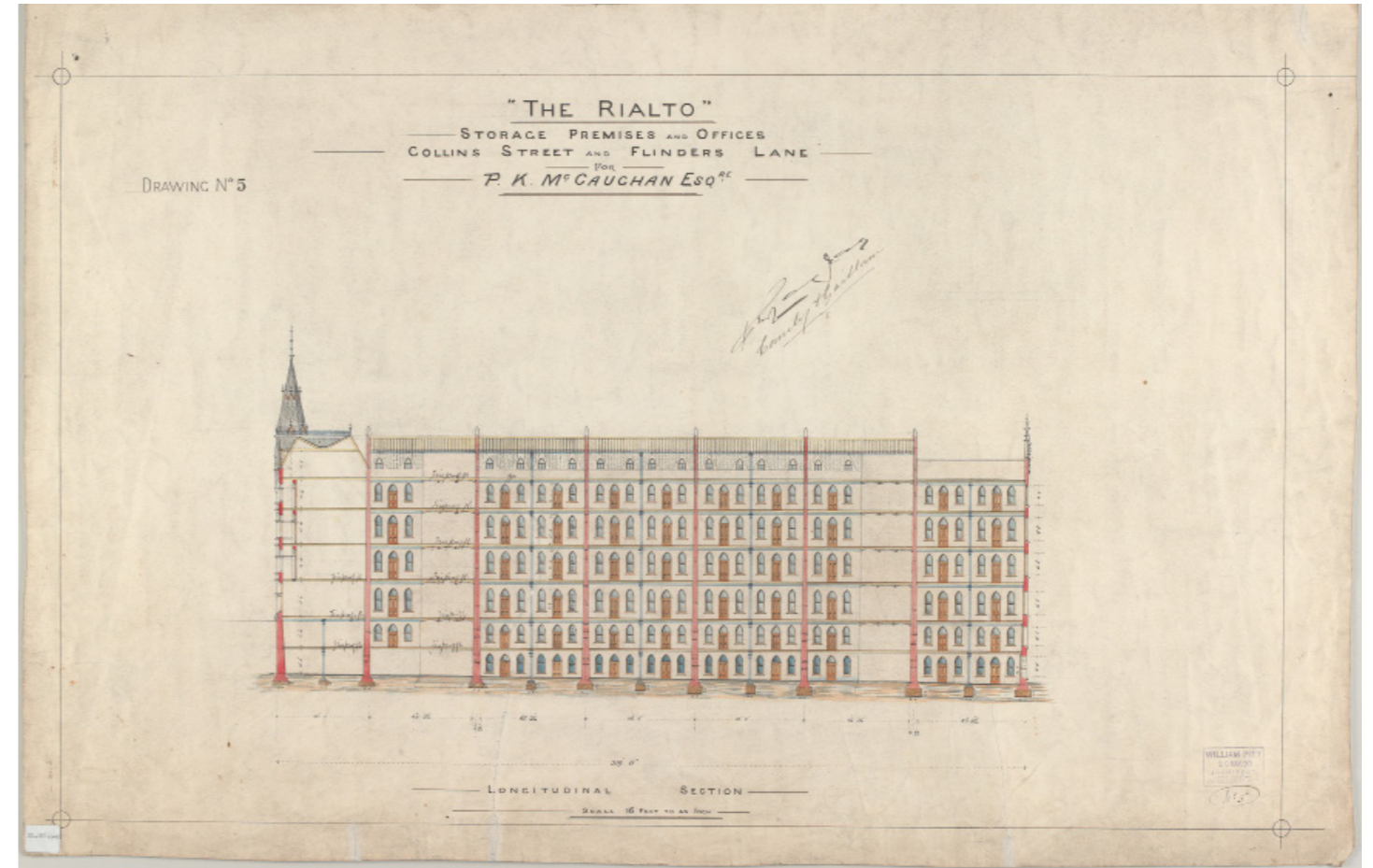
The long east facade is now incorporated into an atrium, and faces the new Winfield Building finished in a sympathetic style on the opposite side. The pointed arch motif of the Collins Street facade is consistently repeated in the openings of the warehouse section of the building. The whole complex is now occupied by a hotel, housed beneath a glazed atrium formed in 1984.

The original bluestone cobbled laneway, which served the carts and waggons delivering wool and other products to the Rialto building warehouses, survives intact on the ground floor of the atrium. This laneway forms a U-shape by looping around under the building at the Collins Street end, and returning along the whole length of the west facade back to Flinders Lane.

The building was specifically designed with the latest contemporary fire prevention measures. The plaster of internal walls and ceilings of the office section was placed on expanded metal lathing, a significant advance to traditional timber laths. In the stores area each room was compartmentalised with full height masonry walls. The stone stairs and hydraulic lifts were located in two isolated bays. Traegerwellblech fireproof flooring was employed, a system of curved corrugated iron resting on the flanges of steel joists and covered with concrete.

The Flinders Lane facade incorporates a five storey corrugated iron urinal enclosure. The floors of the block are formed by the galleries, and the walls are simply formed from galvanised corrugated iron. The exact date of these toilets is not known. Pitt's original plans show earth closet toilets on the roof of the building, but a later, apparently undated plan shows urinals in their current position. The architect took the trouble to incorporate Gothic pointed arch windows into the ironwork, giving a sense of unity with the brick structure.

Tenants of the building in the early 1890s included the newly formed Melbourne Metropolitan Board of Works, responsible for providing Melbourne with a water and sewerage system. Other tenants included the law firm of Theodore Fink, who was a noted lawyer at many 'land boomer' trials in the 1890s. Later tenants included the Melbourne Woolbrokers Association and in 1904 the Wool Exchange Sale Room was located on the fourth floor of the warehouse block.



"The Rialto" Storage premises and offices
Collins Street and Flinders Lane for P. K.
McCaughan Esqre, 20 May 1890
William Pitt, State Library Victoria

1 Executive Summary

How is it significant?

The Rialto Building is of architectural and historical significance to the State of Victoria.

Why is it significant?

The Rialto Building is architecturally significant as one of the finest 'boom style' buildings in Melbourne, and is an integral part of an exceptional group of late Victorian commercial buildings in Collins Street. The richly articulated surface mouldings, the array of Gothic windows and polychromatic brickwork to the Collins Street facade is a quintessential expression of 'boom period' architecture. It is one of the finest examples of the commercial Gothic style successfully developed by prominent architect William Pitt.

The rear section of stores stylistically echo the front office section, notably in the use of the pointed Gothic window. The stores are significant as a unique arrangement of warehouse space in Melbourne. The space created by the long internal facade and the narrow laneway is also unique, and despite no longer being open to the elements, the current layout retains the form, substance and atmosphere of the original layout.

The Rialto Building is architecturally significant for its fire-prevention measures. Innovative technology in its construction included fire resistant expanded metal lathing for plaster and Traegerwellblech floors.

The Rialto Building is historically significant as a demonstration of the building boom in Melbourne during the early 1890s, shortly before the economic depression halted building for most of the decade. The design demonstrates the new approach to office accommodation, being specifically planned for a range of commercial tenants and with shops to the ground floor of the street facade. The unusual urinal enclosures demonstrate a novel solution to the provision of sanitation in a multi-storey building.

The Rialto Building is historically significant for its associations with the newly formed Melbourne Metropolitan Board of Works. It is also associated with many prominent businesses, including the law firm of Theodore Fink. Additionally, the warehouses link the building historically to the wool industry because the building was an important focal point to the wool markets and auctions as well as for storage.¹²



*Rialto Building SOHE, 2008
Victorian Heritage Database*

1 Executive Summary

1.4.3 Winfield Square, 497-503 Collins St

This place is included on the Victorian Heritage Inventory, for its potential to contain historical archaeological remains associated with the settlement and growth of early Melbourne. Under the terms of the Heritage Act 2017 there is protection for all historical archaeology sites and objects in the state.¹³



Winfield Building 487-495 Collins Street
Melbourne, 1954
Lyle Fowler, State Library Victoria

1 Executive Summary

1.5 Impact of Significance on the Project

The tables below (a) detail each of the heritage values for the Winfield Building, Rialto Building and Winfield Square and (b) show how these values have influenced recommendations for heritage interpretation. The tables are aligned with the themes and stories in Section 2 of the Heritage Interpretation Plan.

1.5.1 Rialto Building, 497-503 Collins Street

RIALTO BUILDING, 497-503 COLLINS STREET			
Item/Value	Impact on the project	Alignment to themes and stories	Recommendations
497-503 Collins St is a demonstration of the building boom in Melbourne during the early 1890s, shortly before the economic depression halted building for most of the decade	Enables audiences to understand Melbourne's building boom of the 1880s and early 1890s and the economic depression of the 1890s	4.06, 5.13, 5.14, 5.15	Text as graphic, bronze inlays
	Places the building within the context of Melbourne - both in terms of its physical location and the timeline		Timeline (in ground or digital)
			Relief map or digital map. The digital map could be animated, changing as buildings in Melbourne rise and fall over time. 495 Collins St is located at the centre of the map.
497-503 Collins St demonstrates the new approach to office accommodation, being specifically planned for a range of commercial tenants and with shops to the ground floor of the street façade	Highlights how 497-503 and 487-495 Collins St demonstrate the new approach to office accommodation, because they were specifically planned for a range of commercial tenants and with shops to the ground floor of the street façade	4.07	Diorama highlighting the building's key innovative features, including expressions of the commercial Gothic and Queen Anne styles, fire-prevention measures in the Rialto Building, long internal façade and narrow laneway and arrangement of warehouse spaces. Augmented reality explains more about each of the key features through audio/video.
The unusual urinal enclosures demonstrate a novel solution to the provision of sanitation in a multi-storey building.	Highlights the issue of sanitation in 19th century multi-storey buildings. Enable audiences to understand that the urinal enclosures at 497-503 Collins St are unique	4.08, 4.09, 4.10, 4.11	Diorama highlighting the building's key innovative features, including expressions of the commercial Gothic and Queen Anne styles, fire-prevention measures in the Rialto Building, long internal façade and narrow laneway and arrangement of warehouse spaces. Augmented reality explains more about each of the key features through audio/video.
			Animation of waste disposal (could be linked to MMBW sewerage system)
			Audio of toilets in use, shouts from the street below
The building has associations with the newly formed Melbourne Metropolitan Board of Works	Highlights the building's association with the MMBW	4.18, 4.19, 4.20, 4.21, 4.22, 4.23, 4.24, 4.25, 4.26, 4.27, 4.28, 4.29, 4.30, 4.31, 4.32, 4.33, 4.34, 4.35, 4.36	Rooms named after staff at MMBW complemented by suitable artwork in room, interpretive text/story about the staff member/department, their role and achievements
			Map of Melbourne's sewerage system as designed and implemented by MMBW
			Sculpture of pipework

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Item/Value	Impact on the project	Alignment to themes and stories	Recommendations
The building is also associated with many prominent businesses, including the law firm of Theodore Fink.	Highlights the building's association with prominent businesses	4.57, 4.58, 4.59, 4.60	Rooms named after staff from the relevant businesses, complemented by suitable artwork in room, interpretive text/story about the staff member/company, their role and achievements
The warehouses link the building historically to the wool industry because the building was an important focal point to the wool markets and auctions as well as for storage.	Highlights the building's association with the wool industry	4.15, 4.16, 4.37, 4.38, 4.39, 4.40, 4.41, 4.42, 4.43, 4.44, 4.45, 4.46, 4.47, 4.48, 4.49, 4.51, 4.52, 4.53, 4.54, 4.55, 4.56	Rooms named after staff in the wool department complemented by suitable artwork in room, interpretive text/story about the staff member/department, their role and achievements
			Sculpture/artwork associated with wool

1 Executive Summary

1.5.2 Winifield Building, 487-495 Collins Street

WINFIELD BUILDING, 487-495 COLLINS STREET			
Item/Value	Impact on the project	Alignment to themes and stories	Recommendations
487-495 Collins St is location of the amalgamated Wool Exchange. It was a focal point for the wool industry, which dominated the city's west, from the early 1890s.	Highlights the building's association with the wool industry	4.15, 4.16, 4.37, 4.38, 4.39, 4.40, 4.41, 4.42, 4.43, 4.44, 4.45, 4.46, 4.47, 4.48, 4.49, 4.51, 4.52, 4.53, 4.54, 4.55, 4.56	Rooms named after staff in the wool department complemented by suitable artwork in room, interpretive text/story about the staff member/department, their role and achievements
			Sculpture/artwork associated with wool
	Emphasises the importance of the wool industry in Melbourne and explore the links to other relevant site's in the city's west		Map of Melbourne highlighting the buildings and sites associated with the wool industry
487-495 Collins St is a demonstration of the building boom in Melbourne during the early 1890s, shortly before the economic depression halted building for most of the decade	Enables audiences to understand Melbourne's building boom of the 1880s and early 1890s and the economic depression of the 1890s	4.06, 5.13, 5.14, 5.15	Text as graphic, bronze inlays
	Places the building within the context of Melbourne - both in terms of its physical location and the timeline		Timeline (in ground or digital)
			Relief map or digital map. The digital map could be animated, changing as buildings in Melbourne rise and fall over time. 495 Collins St is located at the centre of the map.
487-495 Collins St demonstrates the new approach to office accommodation, being specifically planned for a range of commercial tenants and with shops to the ground floor of the street facade.	Highlights how 487-495 and 497-503 Collins St demonstrate the new approach to office accommodation, being specifically planned for a range of commercial tenants and with shops to the ground floor of the street facade.	4.07	Diorama highlighting the building's key innovative features, including expressions of the commercial Gothic and Queen Anne styles, fire-prevention measures in the Rialto Building, long internal façade and narrow laneway and arrangement of warehouse spaces. Augmented reality explains more about each of the key features through audio/video.

2 Themes & Stories

2 Themes & Stories - Theme 1: Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Stories

2.1 Theme 1 : Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Stories

The Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people are the Traditional Owners of the land that is now home to the 495 Collins Street site. Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung ancestors have lived here on Country for over 30,000 years, sustained by the plentiful resources of Naarm—the Woi-wurrung name for the area that includes today's Melbourne and Port Phillip Bay.¹⁴ This place always was, and always will be, Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Country.

This theme explores the vibrant stories of the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people. These are the cultural stories of people with a connection to Country that stretches across many thousands of years and who bring this connection to the 495 Collins Street project. The two Creator Beings of the Kulin Nation, Bunjil and Waa, open the storytelling. Bunjil soars high in the sky as the ever-watching Wedge-tailed eagle and Waa the Crow resolutely protects the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people.¹⁵ Their stories, and other stories of Creation, are told through art, dance and songlines and help us understand the importance of Country and the ongoing connection of the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people to this place.

Much later on, there are stories of tragedy and immeasurable grief and pain. These are told to us by the survivors of the Frontier Wars, massacres, dispossession and Stolen Generations: First Peoples who have survived and thrived after European colonisers forced them from their traditional lands, stole their children and prevented them from practising their culture.¹⁶ These stories are mentioned in the research spreadsheets but we have not elaborated on them in this document because this is a subject for consultation with the Wurundjeri Elders in future sessions.

Key stories include:

Story 1.1	Wurun: the Manna Gum
Story 1.2	Bunjil and Waa: Ancestral Beings of the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people
Story 1.3	Ceremonies
Story 1.4	Camping
Story 1.5	Wurundjeri seasons
Story 1.6	The coolamon
Story 1.7	Tanderrum
Story 1.8	The pre-colonial landscape
Story 1.9	Possum skins

2.1.1 Story 1: Wurun - the Manna Gum

*These leaves are offered to you, take a leaf and you are welcome to everything from the tops of the trees to the roots of the earth.*¹⁷

Aunty Joy Wandin Murphy, n.d.

The Manna Gum tree is sacred to Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people. Tall, robust and versatile, this species is found throughout south-eastern Australia across all Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Country, from the low-lying river flats of *Naarm* to the misty mountain gullies of the Dandenong Ranges. In Woi-wurrung language, *wurun* is the Manna Gum tree (*Eucalyptus viminalis*) and *djeri* the succulent, pale insect larvae, or 'grub', that lives between its thick layers of bark. This is how the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people got their name as the 'Witchetty Grub People'.¹⁸

Before Melbourne was founded in 1835, much of *Naarm*, including the river flats that stretched between the *Birrarung*, Merri Creek and the Maribyrnong River, was covered in clusters of majestic silver and green Manna Gum trees.¹⁹ This is the tree that has sustained the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people for thousands of years. Nutritious and tasty Witchetty Grub larvae are easily plucked from the tree's layers of bark, while its long limbs and thick canopy provide shade and shelter during *Naarm's* erratic weather.²⁰

Before colonisation, the hollowed-out burls of Manna Gum trunks were used to carve shallow wooden dishes known as *tarnuk*, which Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung women used to carry seeds, tubers and babies. When coated in a protective layer of clay, *tarnuk* could be used to contain and carry water.

Today, Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people continue to use *tarnuk* in Welcome to Country ceremonies.²¹



The Manna Gum, n.d.
Don Burcher, Home of the Yarra Education

2.1.2 Story 2: Bunjil and Waa

Our ancestors left their mark on the land for us to follow in their footsteps. We have a presence on this earth through the spirits of our ancestors.²²

Aunty Joy Murphy, 2019

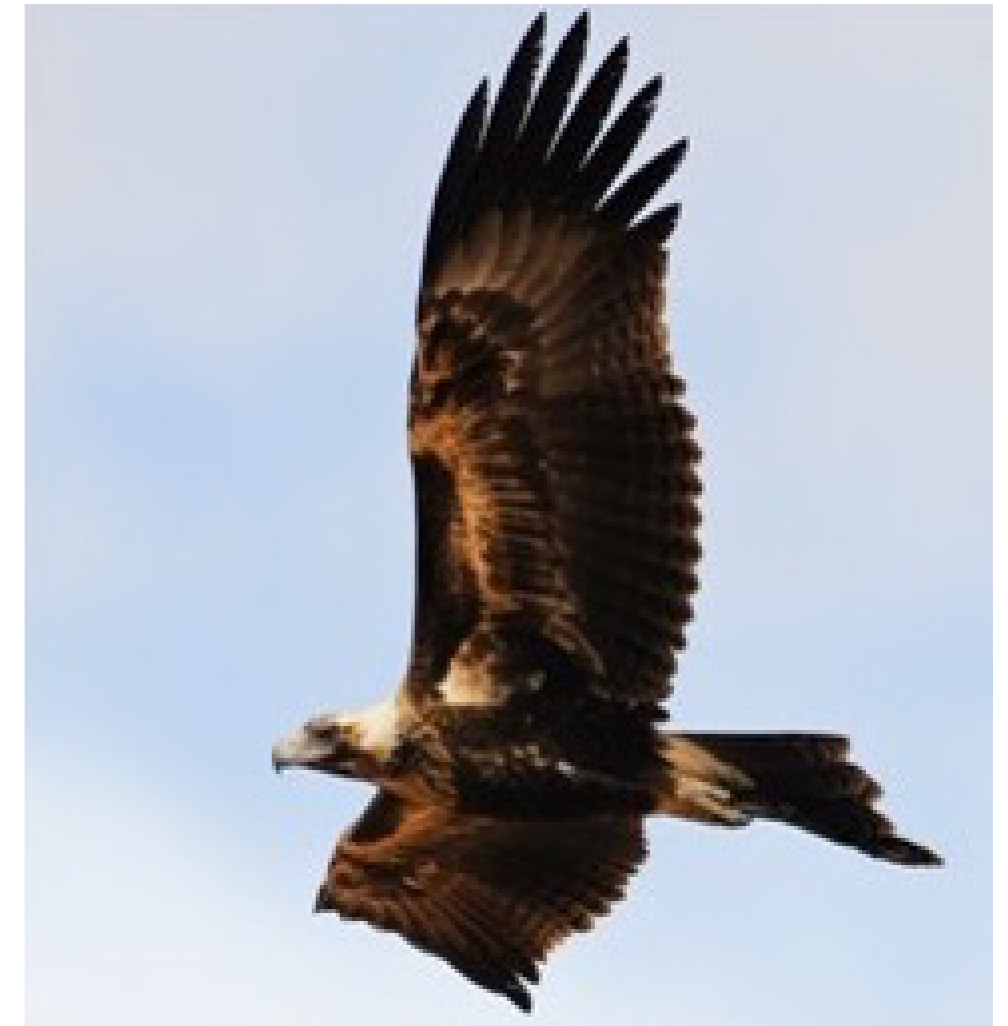
For Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people, the Dreaming is mapped onto Country. Bunjil the Wedge-tailed Eagle and Waa the Crow are the two Ancestral Beings for the five groups of the Kulin Nation: the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people, the Wadawurrung of the Western Kulin Language Group and the Dja Dja Wurrung (Ngurai-illam-wurrung), Taungurung and Bunurong of the Eastern Kulin Language Group.

As the totems of the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people, Bunjil and Waa feature in many Dreaming stories and are often accompanied by other ancestral beings such as Bellin Bellin the Musk Crow, Myndie the snake and Thara the small hawk.²³ As the Wurundjeri's *mamingata*, or father, Bunjil created Country by moulding mountains and carving creeks and rivers through them and creating the plains of *Naarm*. He used wet clay from the riverbed to sculpt Country's animals and people, granting them life with his breath.²⁴ Waa (or Waarg) the Crow was tasked by Bunjil to protect the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people. His piercing cry of 'waa!, waa!, waa!' is the shrill alert that lets all know danger is nearby.²⁵ While Bunjil is stately and proud, Waa is more playful and has a starring role in many Creation stories around Victoria.²⁶

Individuals and groups of the Eastern Kulin Nation are either one of two moieties, Waa or Bunjil. The moiety is passed down along the father's line of the family. Belonging to a moiety guides individuals on marriage, ceremonial rituals, food taboos and disputes. Membership comes with the solemn responsibility of caring for Country.²⁷



Australian raven, n.d.
Terence Alexander, eBird



Wedge-tailed eagle, n.d.
Birdlife Australia

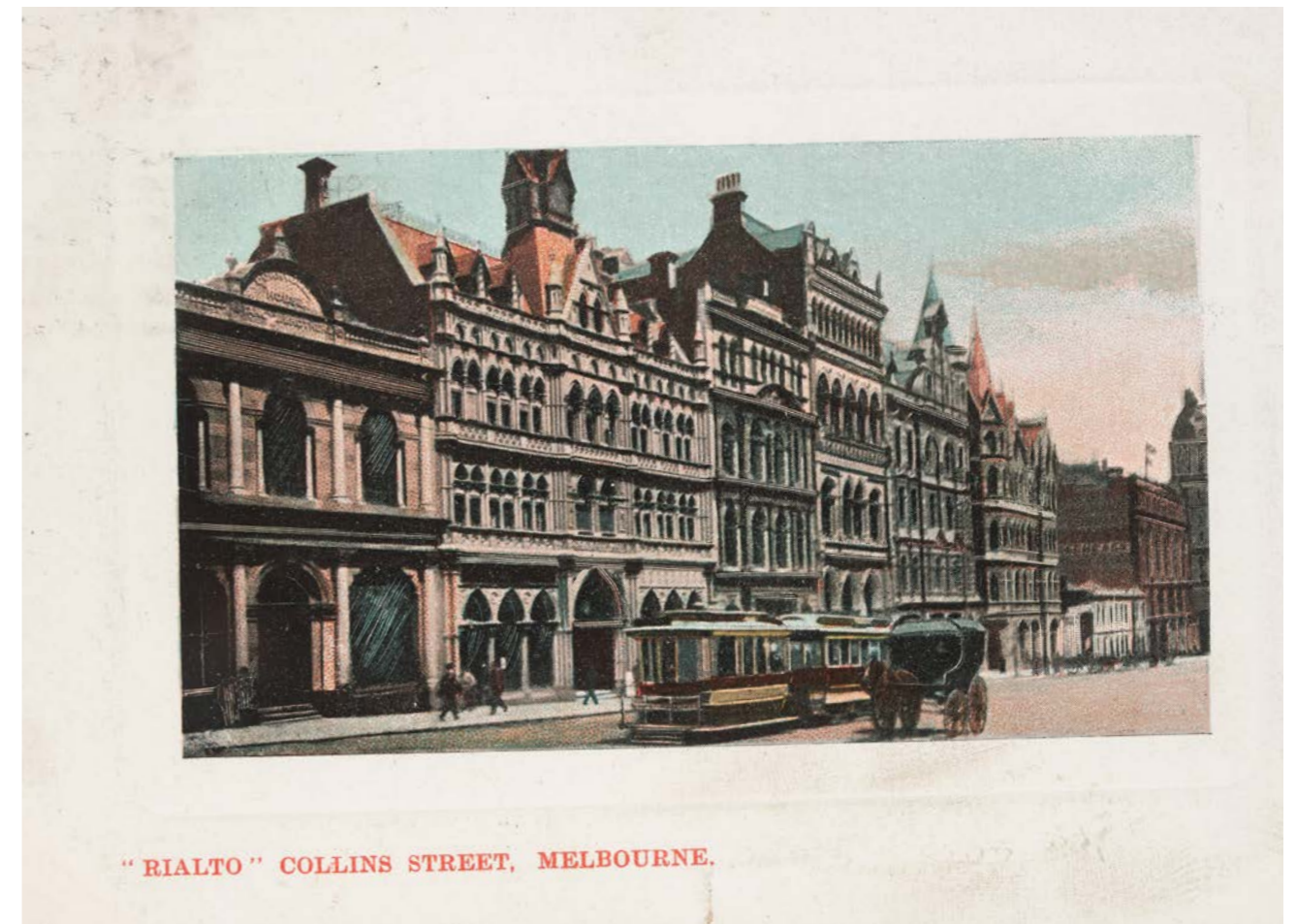
2.1.3 Story 3: Ceremonies

A smoking ceremony can take up to two to three days and its dancing and all going through the ceremony. So, it's to clean your spirit, it's to take away all the bad spirits so that you came onto Country clean of spirit.²⁸

Aunty Di Kerr, 21 November 2018

Participating in ceremonies is an important part of traditional Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung life. Ceremonies were banned after colonisation but passed down through oral culture and recorded by one remarkable man, Uncle William Barak. A Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Elder, *ngurungaeta* (leader) and advocate for his community,²⁹ Uncle William was passionate about safeguarding Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung culture for future generations. He recorded his childhood memories of corroborees, dances and gatherings in paint.³⁰

Created during a time of systematic cultural destruction, Uncle William Barak's paintings are tangible evidence of the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people's ceremonial culture, recorded with a vivid and colourful realism that evokes time, place, emotion, movement and music.³¹ Although his paintings have been celebrated as artworks, for the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people 'Uncle William's works are more than art, they are precious cultural documents that '(capture) our cultural expression.'³²



Aboriginal ceremony, with wallaby and emu [original caption], c. 1880-90
William Barak, State Library Victoria

2.1.4 Story 4: Camping

In their migratory moves [during the warmer months] all are employed; children in getting gum, knocking down birds, &c.; women in digging up roots, killing bandicoots [sic], getting grubs, &c.; the men in hunting kangaroos, &c. scaling trees for opossums, &c, &c. They mostly are at the encampment about an hour before sundown the women first, who get fire and water, &c., by the time their spouses arrive.

Camps used by Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people before colonisation are a palimpsest upon which the City of Melbourne is overlaid. During summer, Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people camped seasonally along both sides of the river near Yarra Park, the Royal Botanic Gardens, and the Domain.³³ One of their camps is located behind Hamer Hall.³⁴ Another is at Coranderrk Aboriginal Station, located on a traditional camping site near the junction of Badgers Creek and the Birrarung.³⁵ In and around these locations, Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung men hunted a range of animals, including kangaroos, possums, emus, bandicoots, brush turkeys, and used spears to catch fish from the *Birrarung*.³⁶

When the weather was cold and the banks of the rivers and streams likely to burst or flood, Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people travelled into the northern ranges. There they built semi-permanent *miam*s, or huts, out of bark to protect themselves from the cool air, rain and wind. William Thomas observed that local First Peoples moved to new camps every one to three days during the warmer months, but usually walked no more than six miles each day.³⁷

When the warmer months arrived and food supplies were more plentiful, Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people returned to *Naarm*'s hinterland. They often visited the Bunurong people in summer to access the fishing areas in their territory and speared fish at night by wading through shallow water, using fire sticks to light their way.



Aboriginal Australians camped in the bush near the Yarra River [original caption], c. 1859-63
Richard Daintree, State Library Victoria

2.1.5 Story 5: Wurundjeri seasons

Wurundjeri seasons are based on complex, cyclical patterns based mainly around flora and fauna.

Biderap: Dry season happens in January and into February. In this season, the weather is hot and dry. Grasses are drying while the Cherry Ballart, Kangaroo Apple and Pricky Currant ripen. Snakes and lizards are active, wombats are active at night and female brown butterflies fly.

Luk: Eel season happens in February and March. In late summer there are thunder storms and the danger of fire is high. The hot winds stop and the weather becomes cooler in this season. Manna Gums and Banksias flower. Eels are fat and it is time to harvest them. Brush tail possums breed.

Waring: Wombat season starts in April and lasts until mid-July. The weather is cool and rainy, with misty mornings. Soft tree ferns sprout, fungi fruit and tuberous plants grow. Wombats come out in the sunshine while kangaroos and wallabies feed on new plant growth. Male Lyrebirds display their courtship rituals and moths emerge.

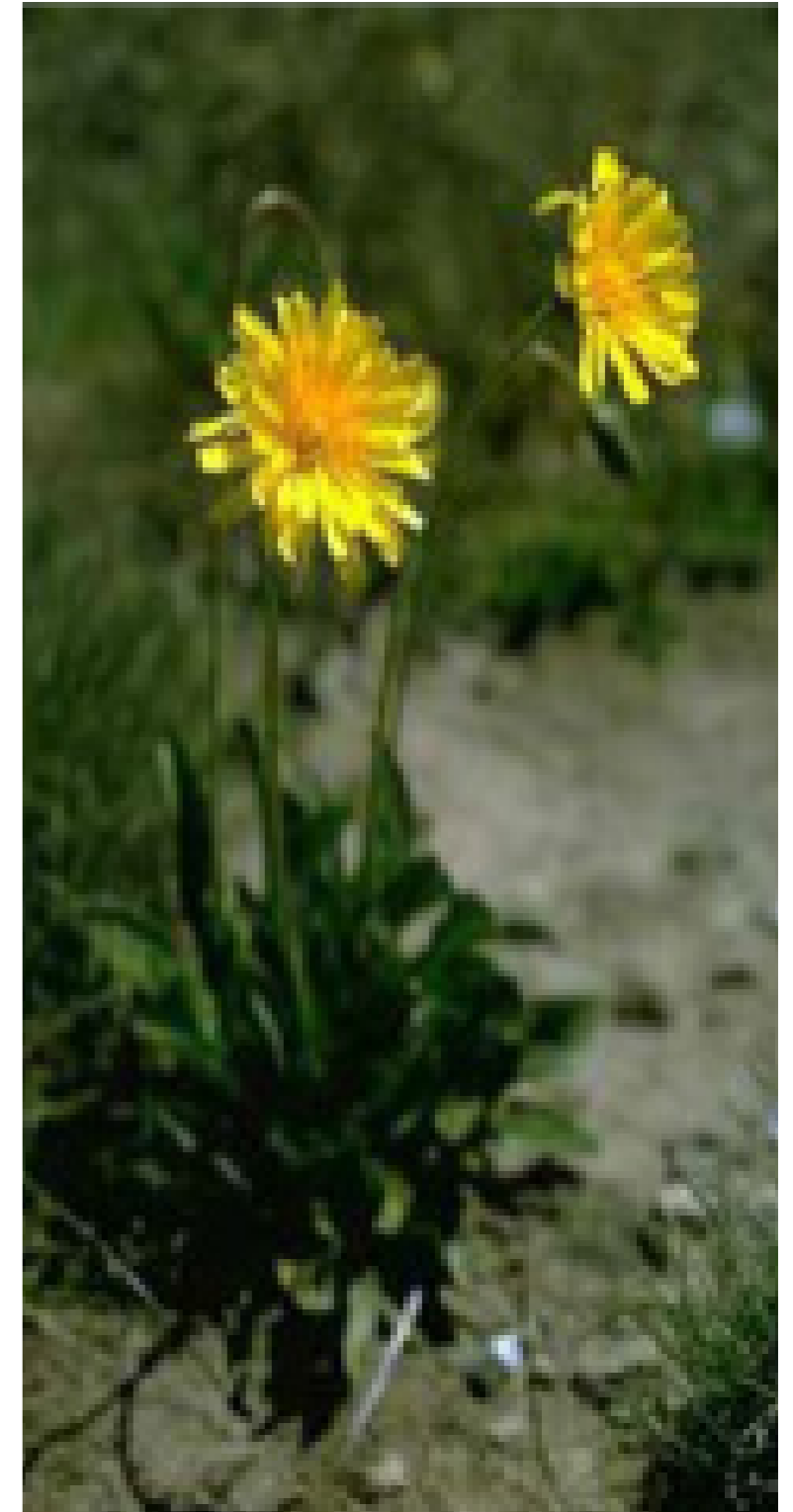
Guling: Orchid season happens from mid-July until August. In this season the cold weather is coming to an end. Orchids, Early Nancy, Silver Wattle and Yellow Box flower. Birds start to nest and koalas begin mating. They can be heard bellowing at night.

Porneet: Tadpole season occurs in September and October. The temperatures rise in this season, but the rain continues. Murnong is ready to eat and Flax Lillies, Goodenias and Kangaroo Apples flower. Frogs call to one another and tadpoles hatch. Pied Currawongs call too.

Buath Gurru: Grass flowering season happens in November. In this season, the weather is warm and it rains often. Kangaroo Apples bear fruit and Kangaroo Grass and Coranderrk flower. Bats are active, catching insects and male Common Brown Butterflies fly.

Garrawang: Kangaroo Apple season happens in December. The weather is changeable at this time. Fruits grow on the Kangaroo Apple, Cherry Ballarts, Elderberries and Pricky Current. Bats continue to catch insects, while goannas and snakes are active and Wedge-tailed Eagles breed.

The Kulin Nation also observed larger patterns in the climate. According to their traditional knowledge, fire season happens around every seven years. Flooding happens about every 25 years.



Murnong, n.d.
Australian National Botanic Gardens

2.1.6 Story 6: The *Coolamon*

[Further information to be sourced from the Aunties via consultation.]

Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people cut the bark from the elbow of a tree root or branch with a stone axe to create a coolamon. They used sharp stones or shells and smoothed the bark into the shape of a dish to carry water or food. Wurundjeri women also used the coolamon to carry seeds and berries.³⁸



Baby resting in a coolamon, n.d.
State Library Victoria

2.1.7 Story 7: *Tanderrum*

[Further information to be sourced from the Aunties via consultation.]

Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people performed the *tanderrum* ceremony to welcome other First Peoples groups to their traditional lands. Visitors carried fire on bark when they entered the place for *tanderrum*, with men entering from one side and women and children entering from another. Clan members introduced Elders.

Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people took boughs from many different trees to give their visitors temporary access to land and resources. They built two fires for men and women and children and took care of their visitors' needs, built willams, brought their visitors food and drink and conducted Welcome to Country ceremonies [check with the Aunties in future consultation sessions].

Federation Square was traditionally a small ceremonial area for Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people. It continues to play this important role today as the site for the annual *tanderrum* ceremony, which also marks the start of the Melbourne International Arts Festival. The ceremony brings together all the groups of the Eastern Kulin Nation: the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung, Bunurong, Taungurung, Wadawurrung and Dja Dja Wurrung peoples. First Peoples could not practise the ceremony after European invasion and it has been revived only recently.³⁹



Wurundjeri smoking ceremony, 2011
Wurundjeri Council

2.1.8 Story 8: The pre-colonial landscape

'[Melbourne is] ... prettily situated upon gently undulating hills ... picturesque and park-like country, which the most fastidious observer of nature's beauties cannot be insensible to. The soil in the immediate neighbourhood of the town is most excellent, which, with the park-like appearance of the surrounding country, forms a grand contrast to the barren scrub and sandy rocks of Sydney.
Robert Hoddle, c1847

The land around Melbourne was described by early settlers as 'park-like'. In 1839, Jane Franklin recorded her trip from Melbourne to Mount Macedon and described beautiful fine open grassy grounds with a few trees scattered throughout. She commented on how green the grass was and connected this to recent burns by the Traditional Owners that had been intentionally undertaken before heavy rains. It is possible she was describing sheet burning that would have exposed the *murnong* (yam daisies).⁴⁰

Three years earlier, John Henry Nocock, Captain of HMS Rattlesnake, had written in his private journal:

*'The country here is enchantingly beautiful. Extensive, rich plains all around, with gently sloping hills in the distance, thinly wooded and having the appearance of an immense park. The grasses, flowers and herbs that cover the plains are of every variety that can be imagined.'*⁴¹



Melbourne from the falls, [original caption], 1837
Eliezer Levi Montefiore, State Library Victoria

2.1.9 Story 9: Possum skins

[Further information to be sourced from the Aunties via consultation.]

Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people wore long possum or kangaroo skin cloaks to protect themselves against the cold weather when they rested on Country. Wurundjeri women used sinews from a kangaroo's tail to sew the cloaks together. Possum skins were also used as blankets and to make drums.

Today, Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Elders and leaders wear possum skin cloaks when they conduct cultural business and ceremonies. Each cloak is made of almost 40 possum skins.⁴²



A Possum Skin Cloak, n.d.
AIATSIS

2.2 Theme 2: The Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people & *Birrarung*

[Stories will developed in consultation with the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation].

[Birrarung] was a ceremonial place, ceremonies seemed to have always taken place by the river.

Aunty Joy Wandin Murphy, n.d.⁴³

Birrarung is fundamental to the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people's cultural and spiritual connection to Country.⁴⁴ Its perennial, clay-brown waters have sustained them for many thousands of years. With its headwaters high in the Yarra Ranges, the river's clear and bubbling waters emerge in damp ferny gullies shaded by canopies of towering Mountain Ash.⁴⁵ As it continues its journey to the lowlands of *Naarm*, the *Birrarung* passes by the site of 495 Collins Street before it empties into the glassy blue waters of Port Phillip Bay, the traditional Country of the Bunurong/Boon wurrung people.

This theme explores *Birrarung's* role in Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung culture, as both a physical source of nourishment and a place of ritual, celebration and Dreaming.⁴⁶

Key stories include:

- | | |
|-----------|---------------------------|
| Story 2.1 | The 'river of mists' |
| Story 2.2 | The river that sustains |
| Story 2.3 | Creating the river course |
| Story 2.4 | Waterfalls |
| Story 2.5 | Fishing for eels |
| Story 2.6 | Fishing with nets |

2.2.1 Story 1: The 'River of mists'

Sharp-eyed Bunjil soars overhead watching everything spread out beneath him. Fresh water, which began its journey as parnmin falling on djerang mixes into palem warreen.⁴⁷

Aunty Joy Murphy, 2019

The word *Birrarung* means 'River of mists' in Woi-wurrung, the traditional language of the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people.⁴⁸ The name refers to the river as it was before Europeans came to *Naarm* and irrevocably altered the natural flow of its waters. Before this, the section of *Birrarung* that is now home to Queens Bridge (originally known as 'The Falls Bridge') was dominated by an impressive outcrop of volcanic basalt that formed between 820,000 and 1.2 million years ago. This was a time when volcanoes north of *Naarm* erupted and released tonnes of molten lava to flow downstream towards the bay.⁴⁹

First Peoples used the rocks as stepping stones to cross *Birrarung*. The often-submerged basalt rock extended about 44 metres from the northern bank and about 32 metres from the southern bank and was not particularly high, but created a hauntingly misty waterfall in the place that would eventually become the heart of Melbourne.⁵⁰



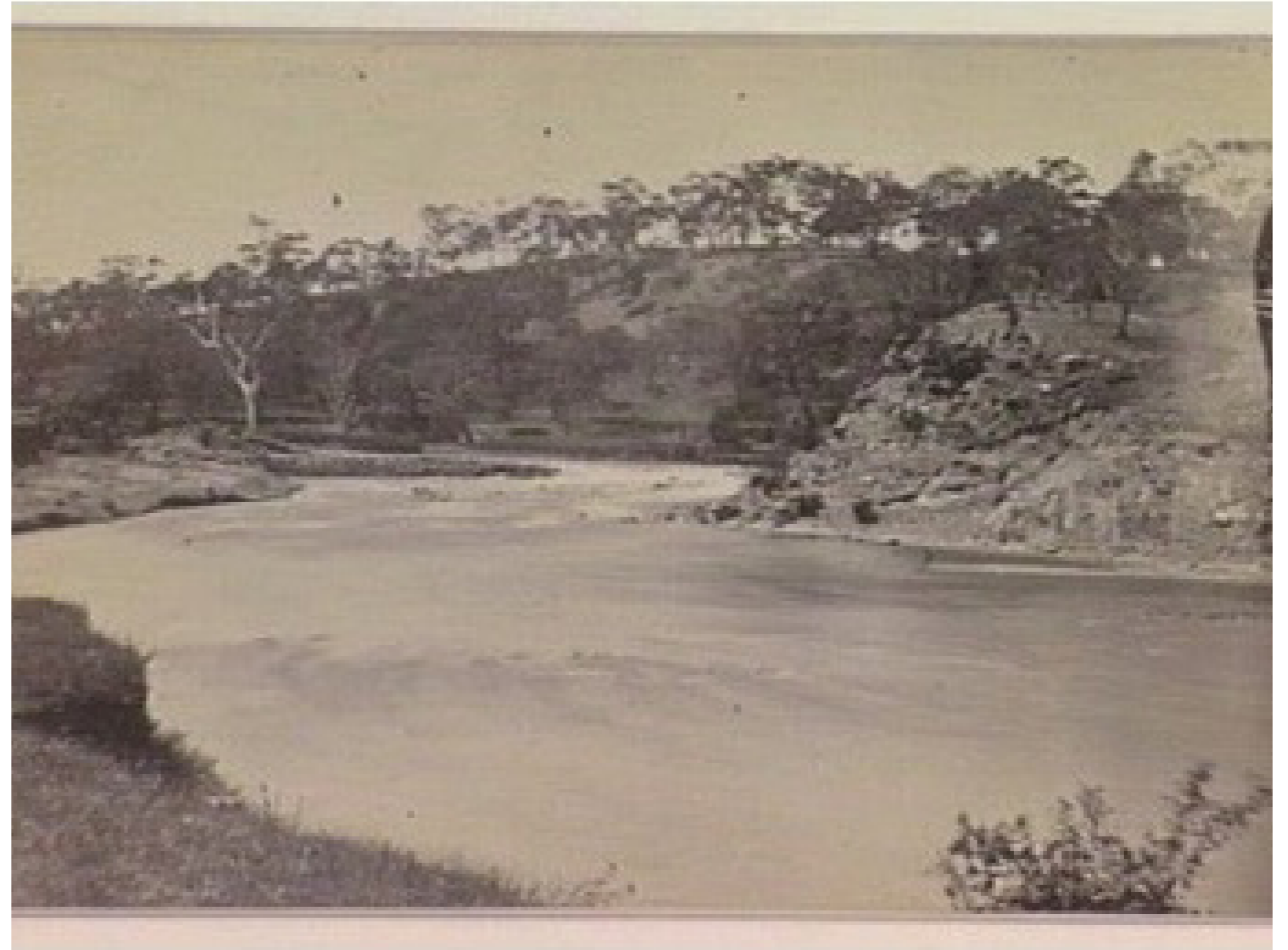
Yarra River, n.d.
State Library Victoria

2.2.2 Story 2: The River that sustains

*In evening light, boggon scurries along the edge of Birrarung looking for dinner, maybe a tasty fish or two.*⁵¹
Aunty Joy Murphy, 2019

For thousands of years, Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people lived sustainably on Country thanks to a sophisticated understanding of seasonal abundance and the need to cultivate and manage their natural resources.⁵² They camped near freshwater rivers like *Birrarung*, Merri Creek, Gardiners Creek, Mullum Mullum Creek, Koonung Koonung Creek and the Maribyrnong River. They were sustained by the rivers' flowing waters and the eels, fish, waterbirds and mussels that lived there, plants such as the *murnong* (Yam Daisy) that grew nearby and animals such as *wallert* (possum), *marram* (kangaroo) and wallaby that came to the waters to quench their thirsts.⁵³

Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people also collected bark from the tall, sturdy Eucalypt trees that grew along the riverbanks. They used it to carve shallow wooden dishes known as *coolamon* and *tarnuk* that were used to carry seeds, tubers and berries.⁵⁴ The sturdier strips of bark were also used to build semi-permanent miams, or huts, which helped keep the cool winter winds at bay.⁵⁵



[Dight's Falls on the Yarra River] [picture] [original caption], 1869
State Library Victoria

2.2.3 Story 3: *Birrarung's* Creation story

[Further information to be sourced from the Aunties via consultation.]

Bunjil the eagle is our creator spirit. Bunjil created man, woman and child from the land.

Bunjil created the birds, the animals, the mountains, the rivers.

Bunjil created all things natural from the land.

Bunjil watches over the indelible footprints of our ancestors on this land.

Aunty Joy Murphy Wandin, 2016

The Wurundjeri-willam's *ngurungaeta* (leader) Billibellary recalled that two Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung headman created the *Birrarung's* course. The Creation Story is as follows:

Once, Port Phillip Bay was a lush, fertile plain. The Boon Wurrung and Wadawurrung peoples regularly hunted on this plain, enjoying its spoils. The Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people, however, were stuck in the mountains, held back by a pool of Yarra water. To free the water, Bar-wool, a Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung headman, used his axe to carve a path for the water to follow. Continuing west past Baw Baw, Bar-wool met Yan Yan, a headman from Morang, who was cutting a path for the Plenty River. Joining forces, the headmen continued south, stopping to rest at Bolin Bolin. When they reached the Port Phillip plains, the water flooded out, filling the paths created by the axes and Port Phillip Bay.⁵⁶



Melbourne from the falls, [original caption], 1837
Eliezer Levi Montefiore, State Library Victoria

2.2.4 Story 4: Waterfalls

[Further information to be sourced from the Aunties via consultation.]

Before Europeans colonised *Naarm*, waterfalls existed near the present-day *Birrarung Marr*. Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people walked across a series of basalt rocks that created the waterfall to travel from the south side of the *Birrarung* to its northern banks. These basalt rocks formed a ledge, which was once a larger sheet of rock broken but which had been broken by the flow of water over time. The upper surface of the basalt rock formed stepping stones that stood a few centimetres above the surface of the river.

In May 1835, John Batman sailed into Port Phillip Bay in the Schooner *Rebecca*. He was the first European to see the waters of the *Birrarung* and the lowlands of *Naarm*. Batman had chartered the ship from Robert Scott in Launceston on behalf of the Port Phillip Association to explore the coast and surrounding area. In June he sailed up the *Birrarung*, but was brought to a standstill by a low, impassable waterfall. The *Rebecca* anchored at its base. Here Batman made his declaration that 'this will be a place for a village...well supplied with a running stream of fresh water'.⁵⁷

Somewhere along the shores of *Birrarung* is also the site of the infamous Treaty Batman signed with the people of the Kulin Nation. To communicate with the First Peoples, Batman brought First Peoples from Sydney and a treaty to 'legally buy ... 600,000 acres of land from the local native people in return for 'blankets, knives, looking-glasses, tomahawks, beads, scissors, flour, etc'.⁵⁸ On 6 June 1835, John Batman met the First Peoples of Port Phillip. One of the three 'principal chiefs' mentioned by Batman was Billibellary, although Batman named him (and the two other chiefs) 'Jagajaga'. The exact location of the signing of the Treaty is unknown, but historians believe the event took place within the boundaries of the present-day City of Whittlesea, on the banks of Edgars Creek at Thomastown or Darebin Creek at Bundoora or Epping. Wherever the signing of the Treaty took place, it clearly covered Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Country as well as land belonging to other First Peoples.

Although land purchase was a foreign concept to the people of the Kulin Nation, they had a ceremony, *tanderrum*, that welcomed strangers and gave them permission to use their land and resources. It is possible that this is how they understood the treaty. This is how Batman recorded the interaction in his *Journal*:

... we walked about 8 miles when we fell in the tracks of the Natives, and shortly after came up with a family—one Chief, his wife, & three children ... we walked about 8 miles, when to our great surprise, we heard several voices calling after us. On looking back we saw 8 men all armed with spears, etc ... When we stopped they threw aside their weapons and came very friendly up to us ... After some time, and full explanation, I found eight chiefs amongst them, who possessed the whole of the Country near Port Phillip. Three brothers, all of the same name, are the Principal Chiefs ... After a full explanation of what my object was, I purchased two large tracks of land from them ... the parchment the Eight Chiefs signed this afternoon, delivering to me some of the soil of each of them, as giving me full possession of the tracks of land ...⁵⁹

At the end of his visit, Batman left six men behind. They included the three First Peoples men from New South Wales who had assisted him with treaty negotiations.⁶⁰

The Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people quickly realised that the Treaty would have profound ramifications for them. Billibellary played a key role in attempting to have the Treaty revoked. He was an influential *ngurungaeta* ('head man' or 'tribal leader') of the Wurundjeri-willam clan. As such, he was a prominent figure in Kulin/European diplomatic relations and one of the eight *ngurungaeta* to sign Batman's 'Treaty' on 8 June 1835.

Living with his family on the northern bank of the Yarra River around Yarra Bend park, near Merri Creek, Billibellary fought against the injustices inflicted on the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people by the colonisers. In 1843, he appealed to the Assistant Protector of Aborigines, William Thomas, to return stolen land so that his people could farm it. The request failed but Billibellary forged a lifelong friendship with William Thomas that would shape the future of the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people.



Melbourne from the Falls from sketch June 30. 1837, 1882
Robert Russell, State Library Victoria

2.2.5 Story 5: Fishing for eels

[Further information to be sourced from the Aunties via consultation.]

Before Europeans arrived in the 1830s, the land we call Melbourne today was known to the area's Traditional Owners, the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people, as *Naarm*. First Peoples had been living in the area around Birrarung (Yarra River) and Merri Creek for at least 30,000 years. At this time, the landscape between *Birrarung*, Merri Creek and the Maribyrnong River was dominated by vast river flats.

Eel season is in February and March. In late summer there are thunderstorms and the danger of fire is high. Eels are fat and it is time to harvest them. Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people caught eels by burning the reeds that grow in the shallows in the still waters of billabongs. Drawn to the warmth, the eels were then speared, to remove them from the water, then again to kill them. In running waters, the Wurundjeri people used stone traps to catch eels.



Aboriginal Australians camped in the bush near the Yarra River [original caption], c. 1859-63
Richard Daintree, State Library Victoria

2.2.6 Story 6: Fishing with Nets

[Further information to be sourced from the Aunties via consultation.]

Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people made fishing nets from stringybark fibre that was spun into cords. The nets were stored in hollowed logs and kept close to water sources. In *The Birth of Melbourne*, Tim Flannery has written that:

*'In four hours angling at the Yarra Falls it was commonplace to catch over 150 bream, each weighing over a kilogram. Great knob-headed snapper weighing over 15 kilograms were plentiful, while crayfish and large flathead were to be had for the spearing in the shallows.'*⁶¹



Merry Creek (Plenty Ranges, 1864) [original caption], 1864
State Library Victoria

2.3 Theme 3: How *Birrarung* has changed Since colonisation

Natural landscapes are in a constant state of flux, from the deep time geological processes that span millions of years to the seasonal changes we experience many times during our lives. Riverine landscapes such as the *Birrarung* are ephemeral because their water flow can be forever altered by an event as short as a protracted rainstorm or as devastating as a volcanic eruption. Rivers such as *Birrarung* are also essential resources for survival, which placed them in the sights of the colonisers.

This theme explores how the *Birrarung* has changed since Europeans colonised *Naarm*. This is a theme of Before and After. Before evokes a time when First Peoples carved slabs of bark from the River Red Gum trees that lined *Birrarung*, leaving behind scarred trees that can still be seen throughout *Naarm*.⁶² After is a time when Europeans arrived in an unknown land convinced of the wisdom and practicality of shaping the landscape to satisfy their cultural and mercantile aspirations. They chose to mould the landscape on a much larger scale, from failed attempts to control the *Birrarung* through to dams and using dynamite to destroy the cascading misty waterfall that was once located where Queens Bridge now spans the river.⁶³

Key stories include:

- | | |
|-----------|-----------------------------|
| Story 3.1 | Naming the Birrarung |
| Story 3.2 | Industry on the Birrarung |
| Story 3.3 | Destroying the Falls |
| Story 3.4 | Changing the river's course |

2.3.1 Story 1: Naming the *Birrarung*

[Further information to be sourced from the Aunties via consultation.]

John Helder Wedge, surveyor for the Port Phillip Association, gave *Birrarung* its colonial name in 1835. He visited the area with two Kulin Nation people, who pointed at the flowing water and said 'yarra yarra'. Wedge recorded this phrase as 'yarrow yarrow' in his notebook and took it as fact that this was what the local First Peoples called the river. Afterwards, Wedge learnt that 'yarra' translates to 'flowing' and was being used to point out waterfalls.⁶⁴ Another mistake by the colonisers!



Willows on the Yarra Yarra, 1860
State Library Victoria

2 Themes & Stories - Theme 3: How *Birrarung* has changed since colonisation

2.3.2 Story 2: Industry on the *Birrarung*

[Further information to be sourced from the Aunties via consultation.]

Nothing can be more ... repulsive than the approach to Melbourne by the river Yarra ... polluted by the drainage and sewage of the city and of half a dozen suburbs, [it] is as offensive to the eyes as to the sense of smell; while the malodorousness of the atmosphere is aggravated by the fumes from various noxious industries that have been established on its banks.

Andrew Garran, *Picturesque Atlas of Australasia*, 1886

Melbourne was founded on primary industries that included quarrying, mining, pastoralism and forestry. Pastoralism was the earliest of these. After John Batman arrived in *Naarm* in 1835, settlers quickly took up land for the purpose of grazing livestock, especially sheep, because demand for wool from the Old World was high. These primary industries provided Melbourne with a strong economic base from which other industries grew.

Birrarung was essential to the rise of 'Marvellous Melbourne', which was underpinned by the rapid growth of manufactories and trades and an accompanying boom in migration. But some of these developments were far from 'marvellous'. All kinds of noxious industries flourished on the lower banks of the *Birrarung* and near the river in Fitzroy and Collingwood. These included tallow, glue and soap works, slaughterhouses, tanneries and fellmongers. The city earned the moniker 'Marvellous Smellbourne' as residents in the eastern suburbs suffered the terrible smells being carried to them on the wind from the west.

The *Birrarung* quickly became polluted. Raw sewage flowed into it (as it still does occasionally today). By 1857, fresh water was being pumped to Melbourne from the Plenty River due to the Yarra's poor quality. In particular, the area where the Moonee Ponds Creek and *Birrarung* meet was heavily affected by fellmongery and woolwashing activities. This area is of great importance to the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people⁶⁵ and the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation is engaging in a series of programs to heal the river's health. [more information to be sourced during consultation].

New arrivals to Melbourne established a variety of less offensive trades that gave the settlement the air of respectability. Politician and businessman John Pascoe Fawkner founded Melbourne's first hotel and its first newspaper, the *Melbourne Advertiser*, in 1838. A post office, hospital, police court and lock-up were other early additions to the town. Stores such as draperies, butchers, bakers and chemists sprang up as Melbourne grew.

The docks to the west of Swanston Street were particularly important to the fledgling city and home to ship building and ship repairs. This area attracted substantial warehouses from the 1850s, a few of which still stand.⁶⁶



The Yarra, c. 1870-90
State Library Victoria

2.3.3 Story 3: Destroying the Falls

[Further information to be sourced from the Aunties via consultation.]

Europeans used the ledge of rock formed around the waterfall to travel across *Birrarung* to metropolitan Melbourne on the river's northern banks. By the 1840s, they had attempted to dam the river at the waterfalls and construct a permanent bridge not only to travel across *Birrarung* more easily but also to ensure Melbourne could be supplied with fresh water. This resulted from William Lonsdale's earlier unsuccessful attempt to establish a bridge across the river in 1839. Over the next few decades, pollution and runoff from Batman's Hill filled the wetland. In the late 1850s, Batman's Hill was levelled to make way for Spencer Street Railway Station, a dead-end terminus, which opened in 1859.⁶⁷

'The Falls' was a small rocky barrier, located west of Queen Street, and the source of John Wedge's 'yarra yarra' confusion. They were a problem for the burgeoning city. In the 1880s, Sir John Coode produced plans designed to increase the shipping efficiency of the Yarra River by blowing up 'The Falls' with dynamite. By 1889, Queens Bridge opened to replace the earlier bridge. This was also known as the Falls Bridge. During the construction of Queens Bridge's in 1884-88, workers removed the remnants of the basalt ledge and irrevocably changed a key feature of the river's cultural landscape. The waterfalls no longer exist today at Queens Bridge but at dusk before nightfall the air becomes misty, a poignant reminder of a river geography that has forever been lost.⁶⁸



View on the Yarra Yarra, 1862
Frederick Grosse, State Library Victoria

2.3.4 Story 4: Changing the river's course

The work of constructing the ship canal across Fisherman's Bend is rapidly approaching completion, and it is anticipated that in the course of another month the whole of the maritime trade of the Yarra will pass along the new waterway.⁶⁹

Illustrated Australian News, 26 May 1886

Before the 1880s, the junction of the Maribyrnong River and *Birrarung* was narrow and prone to flooding. Many major changes were made to the river to accommodate the needs of the rapidly-growing city.

The first major alteration of the river's course took place in the 1860s, when the river's mouth was relocated 300 metres east of its original position and widened to allow ships with a draught greater than four metres to enter Melbourne.⁷⁰ In 1879, further attempts were made to alter the waterways of the lower part of *Birrarung* to alleviate the impacts of regular flooding when Sir John Coode enacted a plan to straighten the course of the *Birrarung* by cutting a canal through the bend. Two thousand workers constructed the canal using steam driven machinery under his leadership.

Over seven long years, Coode's team battled with flooding-prone ground to remove the need for ships to navigate around Fisherman's Bend, a large natural curve on the *Birrarung's* course.⁷¹ During works, 1,350,000 cubic yards of earth were excavated, causing irreversible changes to the surrounding landscape and environment.⁷² Gone were the river's grand bends and full lagoons, so important to the Wurundjeri Woiwurrung people. In their place lay a 2-kilometre long channel, offering ships a shorter, more direct route from Hobson's Bay to the city wharves.⁷³



Melbourne Harbour Trust : dock and river improvements proposed by Sir John Coode, c. 1879
State Library Victoria

2.4 Theme 4: Business & industry at 495 Collins Street

495 Collins Street has long been a site of business and industry. The doors of the Rialto and Winfield buildings have rarely stopped swinging, while the bluestone cobbled laneway has seldom been free of either pedestrians or delivery cart drivers. The sheer diversity of business and industry at 495 Collins Street is exemplified by the first list of tenants associated with the Rialto Building. This list includes legal firms, the Farmers Co-operative Association, woolbrokers, the Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works and others.⁷⁴

This theme explores some of the key businesses and industries associated with 495 Collins Street before it was transformed into a luxury, award-winning hotel.⁷⁵ Many of these organisations were led by pioneering businessmen, intent on harnessing Melbourne's rapid and successful development. As such, this theme is one of hard work, good fortune and influence.

Key stories include:

Story 4.1: The latest in fire protection

Story 4.2: The Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works

Story 4.3: William Thwaites

Story 4.4: The Melbourne Woolbrokers Association

Story 4.5: First sales in the Wool Exchange Building

2.4.1 Story 1: The latest in fire protection

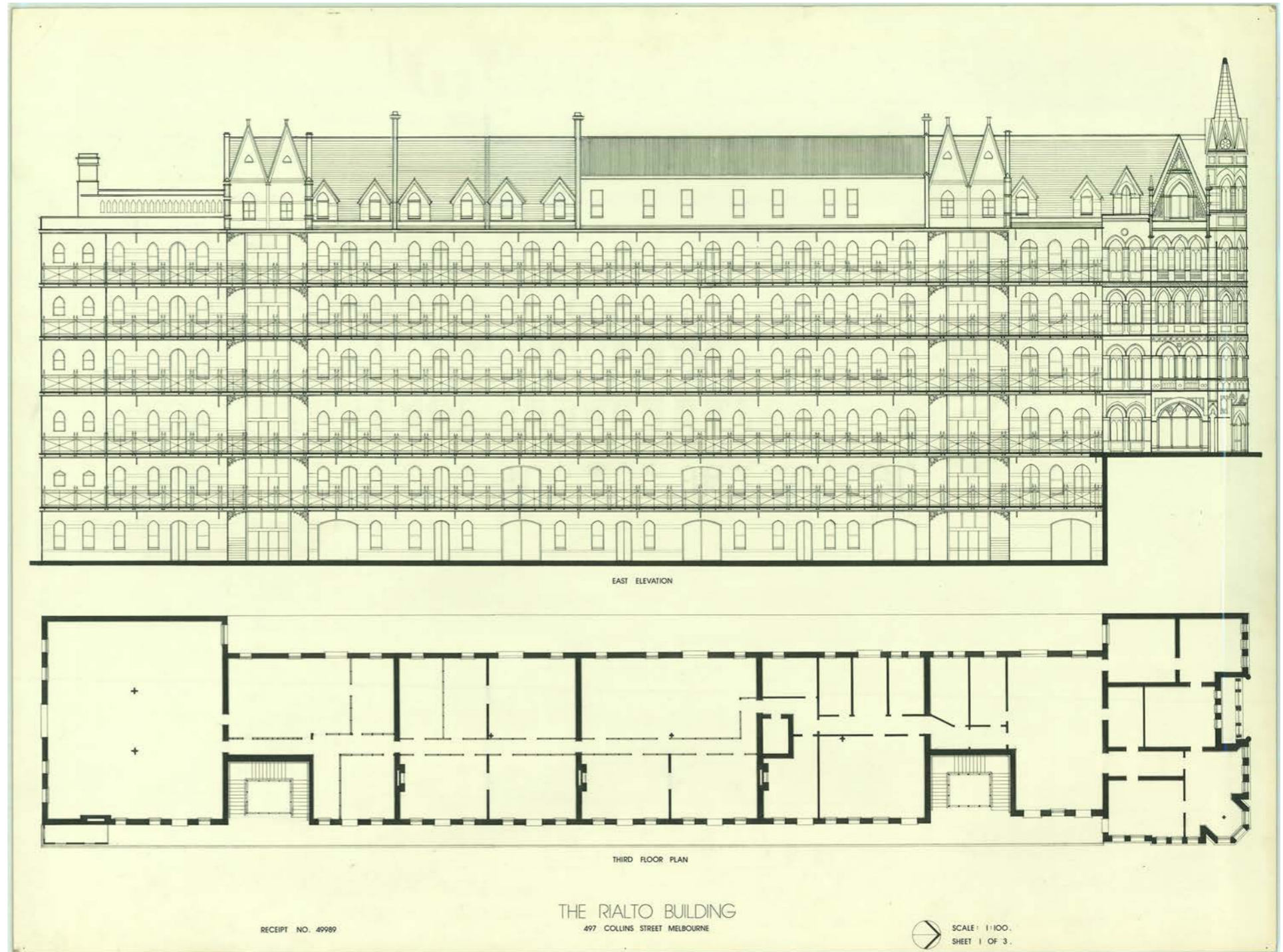
In addition to having the advantage and protection of a resident caretaker, both [the Olderfleet Building and the Rialto Building] are especially constructed on the latest fire-proof principles and with the latest appliances of first aid in the event of a fire.⁷⁶

The Argus, 16 July 1894

Boasting ornate, Venetian Gothic facades, the Rialto Building is an outstanding example of Melbourne's boom-era architecture. Unexpectedly, it is also a fascinating example of innovative fire safety practices.

As an avid supporter of the arts, architect William Pitt was well aware of the dangers that theatre fires posed. When Pitt designed the Princess Theatre in 1886, he chose to incorporate Traegerwellblech flooring techniques throughout. Using corrugated iron, steel joists, and a layer of concrete, Traegerwellblech flooring improved the Princess Theatre's capacity to survive a blaze.⁷⁷

Pitt also incorporated Traegerwellblech flooring into his design for the Rialto building.⁷⁸ But this was not the only preventative measure: Patrick McCaughan's investment into the Rialto building was safeguarded by Pitt's insistence on all the latest fire prevention techniques. Fearful of the damage flames and smoke could cause, Pitt not only incorporated metal lathing into the Rialto's walls and ceilings but also ensured the building's stone stairs and hydraulic lifts were located away from one another in isolated bays. Even the storerooms were protected by full-height masonry walls.⁷⁹



The Rialto Building. 497 Collins Street, Melbourne, 1977

T Fisher, State Library Victoria

2.4.2 Story 2: The Melbourne & Metropolitan Board of Works

That the pollution, as it pleases the fastidious to term it, is deleterious to health is denied by eminent medical testimony; and even had it been so, the commingling of the "salt sea waves" consequent upon the removal of the falls, would do away with the evil. Rivers are Nature's outlets, and it is questionable whether the finest scheme that man can devise for the disposal of sewerage, could equal, on the score of health, the one here provided by nature.⁸⁰

The Mercury and Weekly Courier, 2 September 1887

The only other measure of any magnitude which occupied the attention of hon. Members was the bill to provide for the establishment of a metropolitan Board of Works, which was introduced into the Assembly in June, and was not finally passed till Wednesday last.⁸¹

The Argus, 20 December 1890

The growth of Melbourne brought sickness to the river as the once-fresh water of *Birrarung* was infested with animal byproducts, noxious pollutants and human waste. As filthy water swirled through the city, bringing with it the flotsam and jetsam of human life, Melbourne gained a new nickname: Marvellous Smellbourne.⁸²

In September 1877, the Victorian government proposed the formation of a Metropolitan Board of Works.⁸³ The Board's main task was to fix the public health hazard posed by the river by redirecting surface water and open street channels into a complex series of underground sewers.⁸⁴ Edmond Gerald FitzGibbon, Town Clerk at the City of Melbourne, played an important role in the development of the Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works. After the 1888 Royal Commission into Melbourne's public health crisis, FitzGibbon campaigned tirelessly for control of the city's new sewerage system. He argued that this should rest with municipal councils.⁸⁵ Recognising that the system would cross multiple council boundaries, FitzGibbon also petitioned for the work to be led by a board of works.

FitzGibbon's efforts were rewarded in June 1891 when he was appointed the first chairman of the Melbourne and

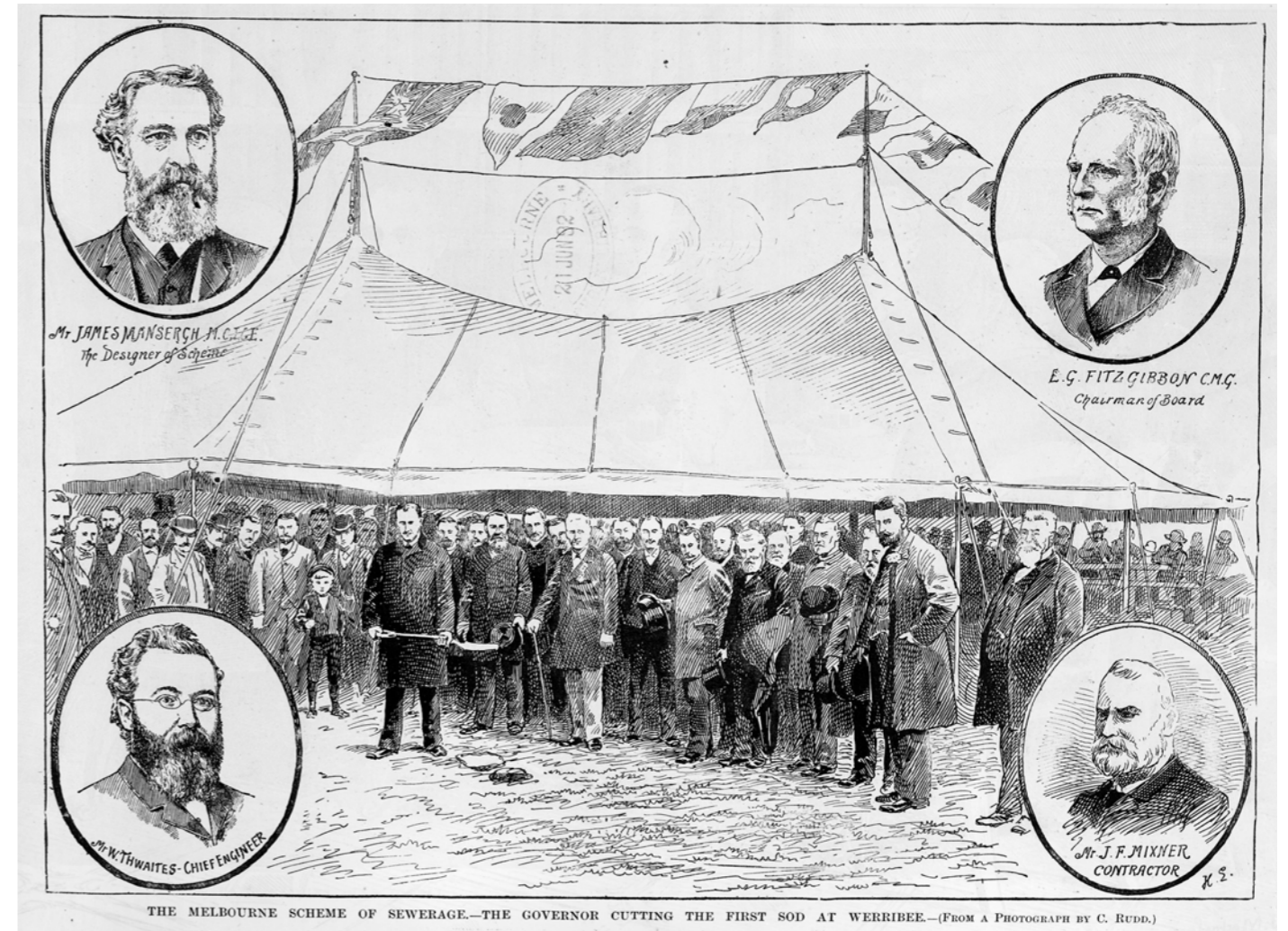
Metropolitan Board of Works.⁸⁶ The new Board leased the third floor and a portion of the Rialto's basement.⁸⁷ From his office on the first floor of the Rialto Building, FitzGibbon oversaw the Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works' efforts to improve sanitary conditions in inner-city Melbourne. The Board's first tasks were to combat the spread of typhoid and to rid the city of the smells that plagued its waters.

Considering the state of Melbourne's existing sewerage system, both tasks were easier said than done. Melbourne's rapid population growth had not coincided with the development of appropriate waste disposal techniques. Rather than sleek, underground pipes, Melbourne was marked by open drains that ran the length of the city streets. If you'd been in Melbourne at this stage, you would often have seen homeowners slinging their waste from windows—this even happened at 495 Collins Street—and have had to dodge streams of human and animal excrement running along open drains.⁸⁸ These drains poured into the Yarra River, where human waste, food products and industry pollutants swirled together to produce an 'horrific concoction'.⁸⁹

This watery brew was not only foul smelling and unpleasant to the eye, but also an easy means of transport for deadly typhoid germs.⁹⁰ In summer, the situation worsened. One Hoddle Street resident wrote to *The Age* to complain, describing 'the stench arising from the gutter' as 'simply abominable' in hot weather.⁹¹ Others were more vivid in their descriptions:

*'One cannot go down a single street of the city but what the most deplorable stench fills the mouth and nostrils, sufficient to knock a bull through a hedge, is to state the case mildly.'*⁹²

For many, the development of the Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works was a welcome decision but, as with all new developments, there were objections. *The Mercury and Weekly Courier* opposed the idea of constructing a new sewerage system, claiming that cries for a Board of Works came only from the 'autocrats' who lived alongside the river and objected to its dark hue.⁹³ Dismissing concerns about pollution, *The Mercury and Weekly Courier* contended that the Yarra River was a perfectly acceptable, natural solution to sewage disposal.⁹⁴ But the MMBW's system has stood the test of time and is being upgraded at the time of writing.



The Melbourne Scheme of Sewerage, 1 June 1892
Heinrich Egersdörfer and Charles Rudd, State Library Victoria

2.4.3 Story 3: William Thwaites

*Mr Thwaites will be positively immortal in his engineering way. His name can never die, as that of the skilful practitioner who carried out the Melbourne sewerage.*⁹⁵
Punch, 21 November 1907

William Thwaites was born and bred in Melbourne.⁹⁶ Described as a 'man of the people', he excelled at school, winning several engineering prizes during his time at the University of Melbourne. He then began work with the Victorian railways department.⁹⁷ Thwaites's interest in Melbourne's sewerage was piqued after he returned from a brief stint in South Australia as a surveyor and he applied for the Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works' top job: Engineer-in-Chief.

But Thwaites's career with the Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works began shakily. Although 22 of the 39 members of the Board voted to appoint him as the Board's first Engineer-in-Chief, other members fiercely opposed the idea of an Australian-trained engineer taking the role.⁹⁸ When speaking to the Caulfield Shire Council, board member Walter John Carre Riddell (later chairman) expressed his disappointment with the board's choice:

*'The salary of £2,000 per annum was not a large one for the important position of engineer-in-chief, but it was certainly too much for the gentleman the board had seen fit to appoint. Personally he [Carre Riddell] would have liked to have seen the salary made about £3,500 and the services of a skilled English engineer—one well versed in sewerage matters—secured.'*⁹⁹

Despite all this, Thwaites went on to enjoy a highly-successful career, with his crowning achievement the development of Melbourne's new sewerage system. Originally, the system was to be based on one of eight designs produced by English engineer James Mansergh.¹⁰⁰ However, Thwaites took issue with Mansergh's suggestion that the city's sewerage should be divided between Mordialloc and the Werribee Plains. He directed all sewage to Spotswood pumping station to reduce the overall length of the water mains and limit expenditure.¹⁰¹ His changes worked and the All England Eleven Hotel was the first building to be connected to the new system in 1897.¹⁰²



Principal Officials Metropolitan Board of Works, 1 September 1891
State Library Victoria

2.4.4 Story 4: The Melbourne Woolbrokers Association

Not long since, the buyers and sellers were at variance over rules then existing in the auction room, but the hatchet was soon buried, and now the two branches of the industry are on the most amicable terms.¹⁰³
The Herald, 27 February 1892

The Melbourne Woolbrokers Association was established in 1890, following calls for a central sale room and standardised conditions for selling wool.¹⁰⁴ The Association had 5 founding members: Goldsbrough Mort, the New Zealand Loan and Mercantile Agency, Australasian Mortgage and Agency, Union Mortgage and Agency, and Dalgety.¹⁰⁵

Members of the Melbourne Woolbrokers Association received benefits such as standardised auction practices and collective action against price cuts and increased expenditure.¹⁰⁶ There were unexpected benefits of joining the Association, such as an invitation to an annual buyers versus sellers cricket game. The brainchild of both the Melbourne Woolbrokers Association and the Victorian Woolbuyers Association, the purpose of this annual game was to improve relations between the two parties.¹⁰⁷ It was a successful endeavour, with wool seller William Oliver noting that 'It gives me much pleasure to attend ... Such meetings do good; they afford an opportunity for friendly intercommunication, which promotes good feeling.'¹⁰⁸

In February 1892, 70 men travelled by train from Melbourne to attend the match at Mordialloc Cricket Grounds. With a mix of 'ordinary players and non-players' participating in the match, the play was more enthusiastic than polished.¹⁰⁹ However, the lack of talent on the pitch did not dampen spirits, as 'infinite amusement was provided for the spectators by the unconscious mistakes of the amateurs'.¹¹⁰ Over lunch, George Maiden of Goldsbrough, Mort & Co. addressed the gathering, speaking fondly of the wool sector and praising the men stood in front of him for their dedication to cultivating 'intimate and friendly' relations.¹¹¹



Richard Goldsbrough, n.d.
Australian National University

2.4.5 Story: First Sales in the Wool Exchange building

*It is expected that the sale will attract an unusually large concourse of buyers, growers, and others interested, a considerable number of buyers having just arrived by the incoming Orient and Messageries boats.*¹¹²

The Argus, 5 October 1892

On Wednesday 5 October 1892, the first wool sale of the season was met with considerably more excitement than usual. Held by pastoral house Goldsbrough, Mort and Co. Limited, the sale included 2,946 bales of wool.¹¹³ But the excitement did not just stem just from Goldsbrough's promise of good clips. The wool had been on display within their warehouse all morning, and was evidently good quality. Tensions were high as the sale was to be the first held in the Wool Exchange Building (Winfield Building) on Collins Street. As the opening gavel fell in the central auction room at 3:00pm, a new era of wool selling began in Victoria.¹¹⁴

Mr GB Appleton, the sales auctioneer, entered the central auction room at 3:00pm, to be faced with an unexpectedly large crowd. By all accounts:

*'... it was never anticipated that the sale room would be so crowded as it was to the doors, even to the exclusion of many interested, who were unable to gain admission.'*¹¹⁵

But Appleton was not one to cave under pressure. He took to the rostrum proudly, gavel in hand, and welcomed in a new era of wool selling with a spirited address to 'one of the largest gatherings of wool buyers that ever assembled in the colonies.'¹¹⁶

Members of the Melbourne Woolbrokers Association continued to hold sales in the Winfield Building until 1914, when a purpose-built Wool Exchange Building opened on the corner of King Street and Little Collins Street.¹¹⁷



The Wool Exchange (Winfield Building), Collins Street, Melbourne, Victoria, c. 1900-20
Algernon Darge, State Library Victoria

2.5 Theme 5: Life on Collins Street

Collins Street in the 19th century was a celebration of all the best that Melbourne had to offer. Away from discussions of sewerage and the noise of wool brokering, Collins Street was home to the greatest architectural achievements, the most sought-after creative minds, and the splendid sight of young ladies and gentlemen taking a turn around town.

This theme explores some of the significant events that occurred along Collins Street during the late 19th century, including the experiences of Melbourne's elite, with stories of afternoon promenades and artistic accomplishments, while also revealing some of Collins Street's darker moments.

Key stories include:

Story 1: Promenading along Collins Street

Story 2: Boom and bust

Story 3: The heart of Melbourne

Story 4: A terrible fire

Story 5: Collins Street illuminated