



ROYAL HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF VICTORIA INC.

239 A'Beckett Street, Melbourne 3000

Update on Queen Victoria Market 'People's Panel', 27 October

Wednesday, 31 October 2018

In last week's statement on the Queen Victoria Market 'People's Panel', we noted that the first two sessions had, as a fellow participant remarked to me, 'tried to railroad us' into accepting the discredited Doyle plan for the market, the plan rejected by Heritage Victoria. We protested in letters to the organisers and then to the Lord Mayor (see Appendix, below). Others too had written to the Lord Mayor expressing concern. The Friends of the Queen Victoria Market obtained the release of Heritage Victoria's internal report on the Doyle plan, which is a searing indictment of the whole plan (it is also on our web site). And our statement was picked up by the *Herald-Sun* on Saturday ('Historian slams market panel', 27 October 2018, p. 16). All this may have contributed to a new attitude on the part of facilitators and City of Melbourne and QVM Pty Ltd staff when the third panel session opened on Saturday morning.

At Saturday's session, Dr Judith Smart represented the RHSV. Several delegates demanded a chance to reset the panel's mode of operation and to consider the basic issues without the presence of the numerous Council and QVM Pty Ltd staff. This demand was widely supported and the facilitators acceded to it.

After a broad discussion among the delegates (the first open discussion in 12 hours of panel time!), three Heritage Victoria representatives made a presentation to explain their decision to refuse the City's application for a permit to dismantle the heritage sheds and to excavate three levels for underground services.

Panel members agreed to devote the next workshop to alternative presentations, including from architect John Mc Nabb on his alternative concept for the QVM; Rohan Storey from Melbourne Heritage Action, Harry Webber, Aboriginal Affairs and Rob Adams, Director of City Design (who has already spoken at length to the panel). In addition, a representative of the City of Melbourne will respond on the hitherto secret plans for stages 2 and 3 of the QVM renewal.

The next workshop will be on Wednesday 7 November. Another two sessions are now being planned to allow time for discussion after these presentations. It will be hard for a group of volunteers to effect change, but now a basis has been set that makes this possible.

Dr Judith Smart, Heritage Committee, with Professor Charles Sowerwine, Chair, Heritage Committee, Royal Historical Society of Victoria.

Appendix:
Correspondence with Sally Capp The Right Honourable The Lord Mayor of Melbourne

email to the Lord Mayor, 16 October 2018

Dear Lord Mayor,

In the lead-up to the People's Panel, you (and various Council officers) insisted that the Panel would involve open discussion, that everything would be on the table. We agreed to participate on the basis of that undertaking.

Imagine then my surprise when, in the mid-morning session on Saturday, we were seated at tables and told to plan the placement of the package previously pushed by QVM Pty Ltd and by the Council. This was, for all intents and purposes, the package rejected by Heritage Victoria, the package discredited in public discussion. I was told by the officer who was the "host" at our table that this package was non-negotiable.

I protested in a blue post-it, on which we were told to note important things, and a facilitator took it, but I never heard further. I had expected that we would discuss this issue openly.

I would add that this followed hours of presentation by Council and QVM Pty Ltd officers, with no alternative views presented nor opening for discussion. In fact, there has been virtually no open, general discussion in our two sessions to date.

I protested in a letter to Council officers on Friday, but have had no response either via email or at the Saturday panel (see copy of email below).

We need to be able to discuss broad issues, among which are the following:

- whether a massive change in the market's traditional mode of operation would improve the market or cause it to go the way of the Prahran Market.
- whether the renovation and restoration of the market and the provision of such services as electricity, internet, water and sewage (which everyone supports) require excavation of three underground levels or whether this can be done more simply and incrementally.
- how to market the QVM effectively to the new demographic, both as shoppers and as potential stall-holders; a particular point of importance is addressing the large number of migrants coming into the area.

I and my fellow delegate Dr Judith Smart remain committed to collegial participation, but there has to be open discussion.

Yours

Charles Sowerwine, Chair, and Judith Smart,
Heritage Committee,
Royal Historical Society of Victoria

email from the Lord Mayor, 17 October 2018

Dear Charles and Judith

Thank you for your email regarding the People's Panel process. I really appreciate your participation and frank feedback.

I am disappointed that you feel so frustrated about the process. Please be assured that we do want an open discussion on the ways in which the market can be renewed. This is within the context balancing competing uses as we strive to retain authenticity and heritage, provide trader viability and enhance the customer experience.

My understanding is that Heritage Victoria did not discredit renewal, but rather, raised concerns about the way we proposed to achieve that renewal. This formed the basis for the creation of the People's Panel and underlies the discussions currently underway.

I have raised your concerns with QVM project leaders and have been assured that your concerns will be addressed.

Yours sincerely

Sally Capp | The Right Honourable The Lord Mayor of Melbourne

email to the Lord Mayor, 23 October 2018

Dear Lord Mayor,

Thank you for your reply and for that from Amy Lees.

At our cordial meeting with you, you repeated that "everything was on the table." At the end of the meeting, Jo, I think it was, symbolically crushed the images I'd brought of the original Council project. We understood that the panel would have open discussion.

Now we discover that discussion is entirely controlled by facilitators and that our "remit" is, in the words of the Council web site, to "help shape the delivery and location of trader and customer facilities at Queen Victoria Market" and that the nature of these facilities is non-negotiable.

You will understand that this leads us to question the basis of the People's Panel process and that we reserve all our rights in this regard.

Heritage Victoria certainly did not and would not discredit "renewal," but the sticking points should cause Council to rethink from the base. We were and remain ready to participate positively in that rethink.

Yours

Charles Sowerwine, Chair, and Judith Smart, Heritage Committee, Royal Historical Society of Victoria