University of Southern Queensland

Faculty of Health, Engineering & Sciences

THE VALUE OF PUBLIC SPACE -

A TOWN SQUARE IN A SMALL URBAN COMMUNITY

A dissertation submitted by

David Kraljik

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Abstract

In Western society, planned public space in the form of town squares has been evident since around 500 B.C. Historically, public town squares have not been included in planning schemes of Australian urban planners and policy makers. This is particularly evident in Melbourne, until the recent development and success of Federation Square. This success has prompted a surge in the development of town squares particularly in small urban communities throughout Victoria. The historical omission of public town squares within Australia has resulted in a lack of local literature available concerning town squares and a particular lack concerning the values that communities attach to the public town square. This raises the question of, what social values can be placed on the presence of a public town square in a small urban community?

The aim of the research was to determine the significance of the values from an Australian perspective, with consideration of the historic function, meaning and purpose of the square and the significance of town squares to modern communities. To help bridge the gap in the local literature, the research included existing literature from Western Europe and North America; current Australian planning theories; and analysis and observations at an existing town square as the basis for a framework for the development of public town squares. The application of the resultant framework provided direction and guidance to accomplish the secondary goal, the development of a public town square in the small urban community of Bacchus Marsh in Victoria, including the drafting of a concept design.

It was concluded that the social, cultural and economic values that communities attach to public town squares and the historical function, meaning and purpose of the square have remained to this day important to the community. Amongst other benefits, a successful town square can improve the physical health and wellbeing of community members which is critical in today's social environment. The framework although limited by the absence of community consultation was functional and able to be used to create the desired sustainable concept design in Bacchus Marsh, a town square that would provide long lasting value to the community.

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Certification of Dissertation

I certify that the ideas, designs and experimental work, results, analyses and conclusions set out in this dissertation are entirely my own effort, except where otherwise indicated and acknowledged.

I further certify that the work is original and has not been previously submitted for assessment in any other course or institution, except where specifically stated.

David Kraljik

Student Number - Q9820854

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Signed

Date – 28th October 2014

Acknowledgements

David Kraljik Q9820854

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Chapter 1

1.0 Introduction

> 'A successful city is like a fabulous party, people stay because they are having a great time.' (Burden 2014 n.p.).

In a 2014 TED talk on public space, Amanda Burden (Commissioner for the New York City Department of City Planning: 2002-2013) contends that where people go and where people meet is at the core of what makes a city work. These public spaces and the quality of the public space available can be a factor in the success of any community, large or small, in terms of sociability, functionality, accessibility or indeed, the want to live within that community (Burden 2014; Gehl 1987, 2000b; Whyte 1988). This, by virtue, imparts a value on public space to the community for which it serves.

Creating public space that *is* successful in terms of use, function, meaning and significance within a community is a complex and challenging task. This is evident from the available literature produced by urban planners, architects, social scientists, political theorists and philosophers. As expected, this wide a range of disciplines provides a confusing array of theories and opinions that are difficult to collate and merge into a cohesive unit of thought. This dissertation acknowledges these theories as important frameworks that need consideration in the modern urban planner's development of successful public space. Some of these theories are discussed to emphasise this necessity of consideration and highlight the complex nature of urban planning in today's society.

This dissertation will primarily focus on public space from an urban planning viewpoint, with particular focus on the history, and the role and function of the town square in Western society. Much of the literature focuses on public space and squares in cities, particularly throughout Western Europe, England, North America and South America. Upon investigation, there is an apparent lack of literature concerning the

public town square and its significance in smaller urban communities, particularly within Australia. The gap in the Australian based literature can be attributed primarily to the historical absence of public town squares in town planning. This is particularly evident in Melbourne, Victoria. This, in turn may be attributed to Australia's relative recent Western settlement; planning to cater for the needs of the community as it evolved; modernist planning theories; suburbanisation; and car culture amongst other factors discussed in this dissertation. Also absent is literature on the social values the community attaches to town squares in particular. For this reason, the social values people attach to public space, for which there is ample literature, will be the point of departure, with the knowledge then applied to town squares as a form of public space. Based on this information, the primary research question raised in this dissertation is:

- What social value can be placed on the presence of a public town square in a small urban community?

To aid in answer this question the following secondary questions were also raised:

- What values do communities attach to public space and how are they relevant to today's society?
- Can the original function, meaning and purpose of the public town square be relevant in today's society making the square a significant inclusion in town planning as it has been throughout history?

Following the investigation into the research questions, this dissertation will then draw together the theories and ideas presented in the available literature and apply them to focus on the drafting of a framework for the development of public town squares, with the view that such a framework is a valuable inclusion in urban planning and design. The final aspect is to apply the framework to the development of a public town square in the small urban community of Bacchus Marsh, Victoria; a public square that will add lasting value to the community.

The contents of this chapter includes in order of presentation:

- Background – a brief discussion on information centred around the research topic.
- Project Aims – the goals to be achieved from the research.
- Project Justification – the need for the research question to be investigated and a solution reached.
- Project Method – the steps involved to achieve the project aims.
- Limitations – a brief discussion on the foreseen limitations and the impact of these on achieving the project aims.

1.1 Background

Public space within communities has played an important role in society since ancient times. There is evidence of society's inclusion, need and use of public space in ancient civilisations in the form of markets (economic and social value), places of worship (religious value), for military purposes (safety value), and to voice opinions (democratic and political value), to name but a few (Childs 2004; French 1983; Mumford 1961; Zucker 1959). Perhaps the most relevant value for today's society is the social value, since public space is primarily used for leisure activities rather than the more historic activities mentioned above (Gehl 2013). The significance of public space in terms of the social value to the community include the opportunity for face to face contact and human interaction along with the basic democratic right to use the space, features that have been historically, and remain to this day, critical to our wellbeing (Kelly 2012) and to the rights the public deserve, living in a democratic society.

The public square in Western society has been a feature of urban planning from around 500 B.C. with the Greek *agora* (Carr et al. 1992; French 1983; Mumford 1961; Zucker 1959). History has seen squares remain an integral part of the village, town or city since that time (Gehl 1996, 1987, 2010; Zucker 1959). Squares past and present ideally are, and have been, the place to meet, chat, shop, wait, watch, listen and play for all people without fear of discrimination or exclusion (Carr et al. 1992; Childs 2004; Whyte 1988).

Planners of public squares have faced many challenges throughout history. Current day challenges are no exception. These challenges have evolved over time, initially with the motor vehicle from the turn of the 20th century (Carr et al. 1992; Gehl 1996, 2010), suburban sprawl post-World War II (Carr et al. 1992; Gleeson & Low 2010), the shopping centre in the 1980s (Banjeree 2001; Carr et al. 1992); competing interests from private developers (Burden 2014; Whyte 1980) and, finally, the rapid increase in available communications technology and social media into the public realm (Banjeree 2001; Castells 2000; Foth et al. 2011; Offenhuber and Schechtner 2012; Sorkin 1992, Townsend 2013). It is the hope that these challenges, amongst others, can be overcome and measures be included in the future development and use of public squares to combat these social changes and keep the square as a relevant and significant inclusion in the public realm as is has been in Western Society since 500 B.C.

The chosen case study for the development of a public town square is Bacchus Marsh in Victoria. Bacchus Marsh is a small urban community located sixty kilometres west of Melbourne and is home to 18068 residents as of 2011 (ABS 2011).
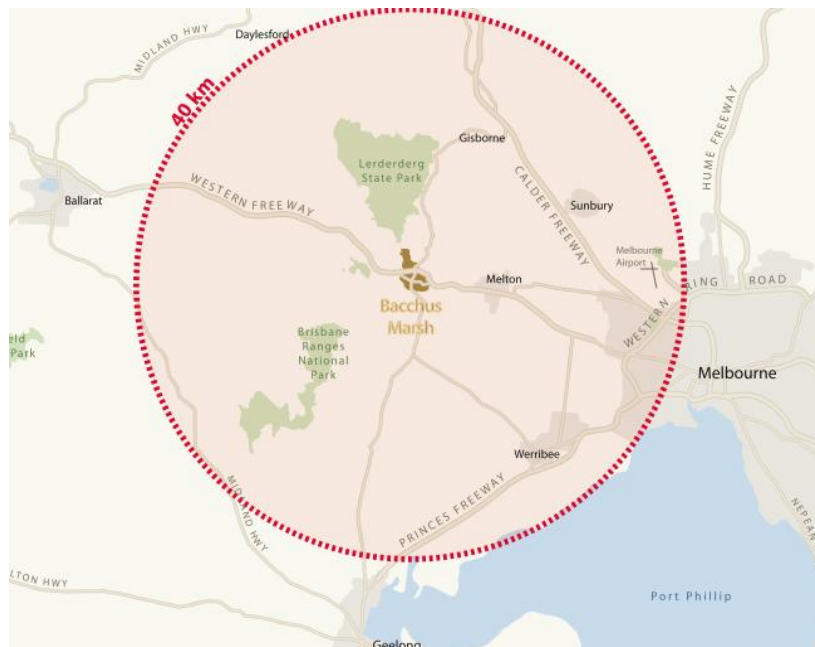
Figure 1.1 – Bacchus Marsh location plan (BMASP 2011, p.9)

The town itself is situated in a valley at the base of the Great Dividing Range. Two rivers, the Lerderderg River and Werribee River traverse the valley and provide spectacular gorges along with the fertile river soils that provide the opportunity for agriculture. Agriculture is the major contributor to the local economy and certain agricultural lands have been protected by policy from residential development (MPS 2014). The main entrance to the town is through the Avenue of Honour, a three kilometre stretch of road lined with elm trees planted at the conclusion of World War I for the fallen soldiers from the community. The Avenue is flanked by market gardens and orchards that give the community a distinctive country feel in an urban environment.

Bacchus Marsh is the largest centre in the Moorabool Shire and is the municipality's main centre for retail, service, and employment activities (MPS 2014). With regards to community infrastructure or indeed the lack of, the Moorabool Planning Scheme 2014 states, '*Bacchus Marsh has the most comprehensive community infrastructure in the Shire but there are shortfalls in infrastructure and service provision...*' (MPS 2014, sec. 21.01, p. 1). Further to this the current Moorabool Shire Council Activity Centre Structure Plan (MSCACSP), the Moorabool Shire Health and Wellbeing Plan 2013-2017 (MSCHWP) and personal observation indicate, that the town is currently lacking high quality, developed public space in particular. As a result of community consultation the MSCHWP states a number of recommendations made and concerns raised by community members. Those relevant to this research include:

- Improvements to arts and culture facilities.
- New and improved outdoor facilities.
- Importance of a connected community.
- Increased availability of a broad range of health and wellbeing programs across a range of demographic groups.
- Programming including exercise programs and activities for different demographic cohorts.
- Concerns for safety relating to bike tracks and general concern for ensuring a safe community for children and families.

(MSHWP 2013)

Alongside these community views, as a resident of 35 years, a personal desire exists to create a public town square in a currently available and suitable location. A square where community members and visitors alike can gather at any time and for any reason; a square that celebrates the history and culture of the town, providing the members of the community with a sense of pride and belonging. To achieve this, a location was identified at 197 Main Street, Bacchus Marsh. The location is council owned and currently contains the newly constructed library, shire hall and RSL building, with a vacant lot abutting the RSL (see F*igure* 1.2). The location is in fact the site of the original town library that was demolished in 2012.

Figure 1.2 The proposed location for the public town square development.
The RSL building can be seen in the background.

The personal conviction that the residents have to some extent lost their connection with the town and with each other, together with the well documented social and physical benefits associated with quality public space (Kelly et al. 2012; Wooley et al. 2004), have, in essence driven this research. The local council has similar interests and/or

concerns, as evidenced in the MSCHWP and by the presentation in August 2014 of a community study that includes a public Community Strengthening Survey (see Appendix B), inviting residents to assess current community services, facilities, access, social, cultural and economic values and level of public consultation. The survey is based on a framework presented by Community Indicators Victoria (CIV) whose five indicator themes are as follows:

1. Healthy, safe and inclusive communities.
2. Culturally rich and vibrant communities.
3. Dynamically resilient local communities.
4. Sustainable built and natural environments.
5. Democratic and engaged communities. (CIV 2014).

The aim of CIV is to support equitable, healthy, engaged and well planned communities by including members' thoughts, feelings and opinions to achieve positive results in the planning process. The CIV themes resonate throughout this dissertation and go hand in hand with the values described as necessary in the creation of quality public space. Relevant to planning and this dissertation, the Moorabool Planning Scheme (MPS) clearly encourages the strengthening and fostering of these values and recommends the inclusion of a meaningful civic space in the location chosen for the concept design in this dissertation.

Amidst the challenges there is evidence of a resurgence in the creation of quality public space in the form of town squares both internationally (Gehl 2010; Ilum 2014; PPS 2014g), locally and particularly within Victoria (discussed further in Chapter 3). This resurgence has added weight to the research argument that the small urban community of Bacchus Marsh can benefit socially, culturally, and economically from the development of a high quality public town square.

1.2 Project aims

The aims with this research project are threefold; one, to answer the question regarding the value of public space, in the form of public squares, to communities for which they serve; two, to use the information gathered to develop a framework for the design of public squares and, finally, to use the framework to draft an informed concept design for a town square in Bacchus Marsh. The contention of this dissertation, based on a review of the available literature, is that a well-designed public space, in the form of a town square in a small urban community, is an invaluable asset to the community that it serves. The aim is to prove this by applying relevant historical values combined with society's current needs and desires or preferences provided by the literature to create a framework for the development of a functional, meaningful town square for the community. In the absence of community consultation (discussed further as a limitation) it is the hope that the community's current needs and desires with regards to public squares can be best determined by identifying from the literature relevant historical values combined with current social ideas and practices both in Australia and other western societies.

It is the hope that this research or part of, may be presented initially to local Council for review, comment and discussion. Subsequent review by the wider community is the ultimate desired outcome, which would at least promote discussion and awareness, not only on the topic of public space and town squares but also on connectivity, accessibility and walkability in any community, all integral aspects of a quality public realm.

1.3 Project justification

As previously discussed, the justification for researching this topic stems from a personal vision to have a well-designed and meaningful public town square in Bacchus Marsh. It is the hope that the research conducted may contribute to the creation of a platform for discussion of the revitalisation of the town centre by presenting a public

space that invites community members to participate in social, cultural and political activities that can benefit the community as a whole. As is Amanda Burden's goal for New York City, the goal here is to draw people in and entice them to stay a while, to create interesting talking points and provide a comfortable, inviting, safe environment for all users. A successful, high quality town square can also improve the way community members feel both physically and mentally (Wooley 2004), improve their health (Gehl 2010; Handy et al. 2002) and improve general wellbeing (Kelly 2012). These are all important aspects of life acknowledged by Code of Conduct of the Planning Institute of Australia (PIA) who state a development should be planned to provide 'a pleasant, healthy, safe and socially connected working and living environment' (PIA 2014, p. 3). These responsibilities placed on planners by the PIA align with the design qualities of public town squares, adding legitimacy and validity to the research presented.

1.4 Project method

The study conducted used a mixed methods approach to satisfy the project aims. Qualitative information on public space, and in particular town squares, with emphasis on the values that the community attach to it was researched initially from secondary data, then primary quantitative data in the form of researcher observations was collected, collated and analysed. The observation methodology is discussed in detail in Chapter 3. The primary data was supplemented by secondary data in the form of demographic comparisons of the case study and similar locations. The primary objective of the demographic comparisons was to provide evidence of similarities to further legitimise the development of a public square in Bacchus Marsh. This is discussed further in Chapter 3.

Three main phases were identified to successfully complete the research and answer the research questions. During the first phase, a literature review of public space including writings and commentary from urban planners, architects, philosophers and political and social scientists was conducted. Consideration and acknowledgement of the views

and opinions from each field was given and then focus was directed primarily on that of the urban planner. The result of the study of the values and current state of public space led to the primary focus topic of the study – town squares. An analysis of the historical function, design and social meaning of public squares drew comment and evaluation. The review of literature included the current issues facing planners in terms of accessibility, particularly pedestrian access and vehicle imposition, technology in communications and social and cultural changes.

The penultimate section of the literature review focused on public squares from an Australian perspective with emphasis on Melbourne and the success of Federation Square. The success of Federation Square helped to legitimise the inclusion of public squares in communities large or small, particularly in Victoria.

The final section then presented three existing frameworks with related criteria and qualities from highly respected sources from Australia, North America and Western Europe that was used as a basis for the creation of a framework for the development public town squares.

On completion of the literature review, the second phase involving the analysis and evaluation of local functioning town squares and/or proposed town square developments was undertaken to aid in providing design elements for the case study proposal. This evaluation included the collection of primary data through unobtrusive observation of users at an existing town square. The observational data was recorded on multiple occasions over four days. Each day comprised four observation period and data was recorded for ten minutes in each period. Data was collected using methods primarily sourced from Burden (2014), Gehl and Svarre (2013) and Whyte (1980). Methods included; counting numbers of users; noting where people move, stop, and sit; noting weather conditions; noting physical attributes of the site and surrounds including types of social and business activities within and surrounding the chosen town square. The observations of users' activities were detailed including times and their positions within predefined zones in the square. The results of the primary data was then collated and analysed. Chapter 3 includes the presentation of the primary data on site plans

showing users position at different times during each observation period. A graphical representation of the data including users' position in the square, gender and activity was presented to quantify the various factors. A detailed description of the methodology employed for the observations is presented in Chapter 3.

The third phase involved information from the literature review and primary and secondary data gathered to adapt developed, published principles in public space design by Thomson & Maginn, Project for Public Spaces (PPS) and Jan Gehl. These principles along with those gathered from the literature, together with the analysis of demographic data, existing local town squares and town square proposals, and observation of users and use of an existing town square was developed to inform a framework specifically designed for town squares. The framework was applied to the design of a public square in the small urban community of Bacchus Marsh. The public town square was in a suitable and accessible location to promote walking or cycling, available to all members of the public, to meet, chat, shop, wait, watch, listen and play in a comfortable, safe, inviting environment. All important factors in public town square development.

1.5 Limitations

This dissertation relied on the available literature that document the values that communities attach to public space, and design guidelines for the creation of quality public space. It was ascertained from the literature that community consultation is critical in the process of creating successful public space, including public squares. Unfortunately, the University of Southern Queensland (USQ) Human Ethics regulations prohibited the involvement of humans as part of the research. This meant that the major assumption was made that the community is in fact in favour of the creation of a public square in Bacchus Marsh. The assumption is in part validated by current planning theories presented in the Moorabool Planning Scheme 2014 (MPS) which as mentioned implicitly states that there are shortfalls in infrastructure and service provision in Bacchus Marsh. The absence of community consultation will further be overcome by the selection of a public square in a location with similar demographics to Bacchus

Marsh, undertaking unobtrusive observations of the public in that space and collating that data to build patterns of use.

It should be stressed that the aim of this dissertation is to produce the best possible concept design of a town square in a small urban community based on the available literature and direct unobtrusive observation, with a framework developed from those sources to inform the concept design. It is critical to stress that before implementation of the design community consultation and review is a necessary requirement. Although this is a major limitation placed on the research, it is the hope that outcomes presented will raise discussion and review within the Moorabool Shire Council who may then decide to present the proposal to the community for further review and comment.

1.6 Conclusion

Public space in Ancient times was a necessary part of planned communities providing members with an area to socialise, buy, sell, protest and partake in leisure activities. Throughout history, public squares, particularly throughout Western Europe, have developed and continued to this day to be important features in cities and towns facilitating and promoting social life and serving civic functions as necessary. This dissertation will focus on the available literature regarding public space and public squares from both an historic and modern viewpoint and the values that communities attach to that space. It is these values that have endured and remain important to this day.

In North America and Australia there have been some challenges presented to public space particularly post-World War II. These challenges were fuelled in part by post-World War II planning trends and principles that encouraged suburbanisation, increased vehicle use and the shopping centre. More recently, challenges posed by advancements in technology and the increasing use of social media as a mode of communication, are those faced by planners and policy makers. The realisation that post-World War II planning principles do in fact diminish the quality of public life and has been an important step in shaping modern planning strategies. Modern planning principles

acknowledge the need for quality public space within communities and support the notion that traditional face to face contact is essential to the well being of members in a community. A public square is the ideal location to provide the social and civic functions required within the community and provide the opportunity for personal meetings and exchange.

The well documented, recent resurgence of public squares in other parts of the Western world has added relevance and currency to this dissertation while indicating the community's desire for public squares. This resurgence aids in the subjugation of an important limitation of this dissertation – community consultation - at least in terms of questioning people's desire for public squares. The question of design criteria still remains limited in the absence of community consultation. The literature comprising historic and modern concepts and designs of public squares and the values communities attach to them will be used to create a framework that will aid in presenting an informed concept design of a public square from an Australian perspective.

Considering the current planning strategies adopted by municipalities throughout Victoria, the development of a framework for the design of town squares is seen as an important factor in providing the quality public space that policy makers, planners and the community at large are striving for in the redesign of old centres and the development of new. It is the hope is that both the framework and concept design presented, based on literature and theory can be used as a starting point and are useful tools in the development of quality public space in the form of town squares in any community.

Chapter 2 - Literature review

2.1 Definitions

2.1.1 The square

Public squares in different regions, and throughout the literature, are described in many ways. The commons, plaza, piazza, piazzetta, agora, and *forum*, for the purpose of this dissertation, all describe the square. The square in essence is a public open space located centrally within a town or city accessible to all (Zucker 1959; Gehl 2000b). The history, significance, meaning, design and uses or the square presented forthwith has primarily been limited to Western countries due to the case study location. No attention has been given to private space or corporate squares which may be the subject of further research.

2.1.2 What is "public space"?

'Public space is the stage upon which the drama of communal life unfolds' (Carr et al. 1992, p .3).

Public space can be seen as many things: an arena for political action, a place to communicate, to be seen and heard, for leisure, to socialise, rest, watch and play. Whatever the activity, the design and creation of public space is intended for the public to use freely (within the set laws) and without discrimination (Whyte 1980; Carr et al. 1992; Wooley et al. 2004). This is critical aspect pertaining to the democratic rights of citizens living within a community.

Good public space is an essential part of community life and in Western society it has been the case since 500 B.C. with the Greek *agora* (Carr et al. 1992; Zucker 1959; Mumford 1961; French 1983; Gehl 2010). It fosters a sense of belonging for those within the community (Childs 2004) and can have cultural meaning and historical significance (Carr et al. 1992; Goodsall 2003; Huijbens 2010; Wooley et al. 2004).

In terms of urban planning, Gehl (2000b) describes public space as having three traditional functions: a meeting place; a market place; and a traffic space with some variation of these uses through history. These functions are born from the needs of the community which the public space serves (Carr et al. 1992).

The functions described by Gehl (1996, 2000b) should also be meaningful to people within the community it serves. Carr et al. (1992, p.19) contend that good public space should be 'responsive, democratic and meaningful'. These qualities are echoed in some shape or form throughout the literature (Thompson & Maginn 2012; Wooley et al. 2004; Worpole 1992) and were adopted in this research, particularly with the attachment of these qualities to public town squares. It also touches on the concept of a sense of community or sense of belonging that will be discussed in the following section.

2.2 How is public space valued?

Three topics will be discussed as important values that communities attach to public space. The social, economic and cultural values attached to public space can be difficult to quantify empirically. For this reason, the values are described qualitatively, with some examples presented to provide an illustrative overview of the concept. Social values like personal wellbeing, happiness and health may be partly quantified by the Personal Wellbeing Index (Kelly 2012). A sense of community can be quantified by McMillan and Chavis' Sense of Community Index (SCI) (McMillan & Chavis 1986). Although both of these indexes are beyond the scope of this dissertation, they deserve mention. Economic values can be quantified by monetary transactions and tourist numbers and people visiting retail areas (Wooley 2004). Cultural values are assessed through people's connection to a place through history or happenings (Carr et al. 1992). All of these values can be essential to making a public space a successful one. It is accepted that while these values do not encompass all with regards to public space, they are seen as integral to the focus in this research particularly in light of their relevance to the development of the built environment the Moorabool Planning Scheme (MPS)

which states 'Creating quality built environments supports the social, cultural, economic and environmental wellbeing of our communities, cities and towns' (MPS 2014, sec. 15, p. 1). The three values amongst others will be discussed in the following sections.

2.2.1 Social value

The social values a community attach to public space are important assets as they can offer physical health benefits (Gehl 2010; Handy et al. 2002; Kellet & Rofe 2009; Kelly et al. 2012; Wooley et al. 2004) and bring communities together by providing a meeting place to build and strengthen social ties that have been disappearing in many urban areas (Wooley et al. 2004). These social ties can instil a sense of community or sense of belonging to members of that community (Childs 2004; Kelly et al. 2012; McMillan 1996).

2.2.1.1 Sense of Community

'Sense of Community is a feeling that members have of belonging, a feeling that members matter to one another and to the group, and a shared faith that members' needs will be met through their commitment to be together' (McMillan & Chavis 1986, p. 9).

A sense of community, a sense of belonging or a sense of conviviality as put forward by Childs (2004) is an important social value constantly appearing in the literature (Childs 2004; Kelly et al. 2012; PPS 2014b; Wooley et al. 2004) amongst others. Public space provides a physical environment to aid in its creation, growth and maintenance (Wooley et al. 2004). McMillan (1996) goes into detail on the necessary components comprising a sense of community, whereas a general discussion will suffice for the purpose of this dissertation. People's social connection, interaction and the benefits of community involvement will be touched on forthwith.

In part, a sense of community is created by people's social connection. Kelly et al. (2012) write on the social connection, our relationships with others, as being critical to our wellbeing. Social connection is meaningful, positive interaction between people. This social connection is best achieved through face to face contact between individuals (Kelly et al. 2012). Social connections provide a platform for communities to share

information, resources and skills, making them dynamic and more resilient, while making individuals feel a part of society (Kelly et al. 2012). Kelly et al. continues explaining that social connections establish mutual expectations and trust that are the 'foundation for economic exchange and a healthy democracy' (Kelly et al. 2012, p. 6). This trust is also an essential factor in creating a sense of community (McMillan 1996). Public space and the activities that it allows and the community involvement it encourages can help create, foster and build this sense of community people feel.

In the discussion on community involvement, Wandersman (1981, cited in Childs 2004) explains the creation of public space with the direct inclusion of the community in design, building and managing of the space has been found to increase user satisfaction. Greed et al. (1996) further add that it is important that the public should have the opportunity to contribute ideas in public space design in term of fountains, sculptures and public art, enabling them to take greater ownership of the space. This strengthens the social and cultural value of the public space, in turn building and strengthening the sense of community and sense of belonging for those involved. Another factor that should be mentioned is that community involvement needs to be made available to all members of the community. Childs (2004) touches on the importance of including teenagers in decisions made on the community stating that teenagers' sense of community strongly centres on 'hanging out' with friends and how they need a place to do so. Childs (2004) says that the benefits of instilling this sense of community in teenagers can include lowering crime and vandalism and have positive long-term effects on their social health. Malone (2002) goes further suggesting that teenagers interacting in public space construct their social identity in relation to their peers and other members of society. With reference to these views, it is important to have public space accessible to all, so it follows, why not provide the opportunity for all to participate? Greed et al. (1996) contend that festivals and events in public space have an important impact on developing civic pride and community spirit. These public events include performances and markets.

Project for Public Spaces (PPS) is an organisation dedicated to the improvement of public space since 1975. In PPS (2014b), "Healthy Hubs: How Markets Create a New

Sense of Community", comment on the Halifax Seaport Farmers Market and the role it plays in the local economy which in turn contributes greatly to the sense of community. The resurgence of farmers market and the effects on the community will be discussed in a latter section.

Many of the activities taking place in public spaces, in particular squares, involve spectating and observation, predominantly of strangers (Altman & Zube 1989; Whyte 1980). A small urban community would certainly contain an aspect of this, however, one would expect that community members are less likely to be strangers and more likely to engage in verbal and personal interaction with a more significant number of others (Jacobs 1961). These face to face interactions, essentially human contact, are likely to provide and build a sense of community as described by McMillan (1996) instilling a sense of pride in its members.

2.2.1.2 Personal health and wellbeing

Social values such as those described in the previous section relate the physical and psychological health of the community, where the following relates to the personal health of the people in the community. These social values as health benefits should not be underestimated as important benefits that quality public space can provide to all within a community (Gehl 1987; Handy 2002; Kelly 2012; Wooley 2004; Worpole 2007). Kelly 2012 puts particular emphasis on public space providing the opportunity for social connections that are critical to our wellbeing.

Wooley et al. (2004) detail the increasing incidence of obesity in Britain and emphasis the health benefits of living in a walkable environment, explaining that ideally public space should be within walking distance of people's homes. Gehl (2010) agrees with the suggestion to help fight rising obesity by the implementation an integrated city policy to account for safety, health and sustainability. Gehl contends that increased pedestrian safety promotes walking and cycling which in turn promotes healthy lifestyle and longer life. Good neighbourhood connectivity and the creation high quality public space can aid in promoting walking and cycling which can lead to a healthier lifestyle for members of the community (Handy et al. 2002; Gehl 2010; Marcus & Francis 1998;

Wooley et al. 2004). Promoting health and wellbeing within the community is high on the agenda and rightly so, given the well known statistical data and trends. To relate this issue to the case study, Moorabool Shire released the MSCHWP in 2013 that addresses the community's personal health and wellbeing concerns now and into the future.

2.2.2 Cultural value

> 'Specific places acquire meanings through their functions, further deepening their roles in people's lives' (Carr et al. 1992, p.23).

The cultural value of public space is an important aspect of the overall value and should not be underestimated or undervalued. The culture of a community is apparent in many forms, including its history, indigenous roots, art, legends (true or otherwise), heroes, villains or music. McMillan (1996, p.323) explains that these and other symbolic expressions represent the community's values and traditions that are 'transcendent and eternal'. Childs (2004) comments on history and meaning and suggests that every place, whether it is old or new, has some history attached. Such history creates culture that attaches meaning to a place, increasing significance and importance of that place within a community. It is a place where local artists can express themselves; local heroes can be honoured and local stories past and present be told. Such a place can enrich and enliven people through history, and by instilling pride and a feeling of belonging (Childs 2004). Carr et al. (1992) reiterate this, stating historical places connect people to past events that stimulate feelings of national pride and of a sense of belonging. Carr et al. (1992, p. 47) further explain that public life in public space serves as a 'social binder' based on the community's history and culture. Such value is difficult to quantify yet attaining this value should be strived for. On squares, Low (2000) expresses the importance of linking the experience of being in the plaza to the history associated with the plaza.

When discussing the recently developed Perth Cultural Centre, PPS president Fred Kent talks about the success of the project in a cultural sense stating the project is 'all about engagement, people, social interaction, a hundred different things to do...that diversification of uses is a really big deal for the people who use that place, and for their

local culture' (PPS 2014e). Zukin (1995, p. 259) expands, defining public space as the primary site of public culture, 'a window into the city's soul' that provide locals and visitors alike an understanding of the culture and social life of the community.

It can be seen from the literature that the culture of a community, and in turn a public space within it, exists and evolves over time and stays with that place in the memory of the people who use it, adding value and meaning. This in turn creates a valuable community asset that can be used for a diverse range of uses by a diverse range of users. The next section will concentrate on the physical benefits that public space can provide for all users of public space within the community.

2.2.3 Economic value

> As towns increasingly compete with one another to attract investment, the presence of good parks, squares, gardens and other public spaces becomes a vital business and marketing tool (Wooley et al. 2004, p. 4).

The economic value of a public space can be quantified by an analysis of monetary transactions as a direct result of the space or events held within it (Wooley et al. 2004). These may be shop or vendor takings from within the space or from surrounding businesses or from organised events such as farmer's markets (Altman & Zube 1989). An example could be that people may attend a farmers' market in a town square, then have a coffee at a local café or lunch at a local pub then fuel up at the local petrol station. These people may be locals out and about on a day to day basis, tourists visiting for the day or people passing through. The key is that locals and visitors alike have a reason to stop and spend time in a place. Worpole and Knox (2007) contend that thriving town centres are essential to tourism strategies, and emphasises the importance of attracting tourist dollars to the community. It is not hard to see how an organised event in the public space can have great economic benefits to the community; even for small communities. Suffice to say, if the public space is well designed and meaningful then it will attract people regardless of the presence or absence of events. Attracting people is the key to creating great public space (Burden 2014; Whyte 1980).

The social considerations, health issues and economic factors are further evidence of the urban planners' challenge to create functional, meaningful and thereby successful public space within a community. The following section adds to the dilemmas faced by planners with the views of experts from other fields briefly noted.

2.3 The death and re-birth of public space

This section touches on the social science, political theorists or philosophers' view with some cross-reference to the urban planner. Jürgen Habermas, Hannah Arendt and Robert D. Putman have opinions and theories on the death and re-birth of public space. This brief section is included to highlight the complexity of public space and the differing and varied factors that planners face and must consider in designing successful public space.

2.3.1 Death – an alternate perspective

Jürgen Habermas, a philosopher noted for theories on the public sphere, believes that the transformation of our streets and squares from public space to arterials and parking lots is a result of downsizing governments and the services they historically provide, and increased powers of private corporations (cited in Childs 2004). Banjeree (2001, p.9), an urban planner, agrees and follows with two additional trends associated with the steady 'withering of the public realm'. One such trend related to this dissertation being the well-known advancements in communications technology, which are discussed in a later section.

Hannah Arendt a political theorist, was primarily concerned with the counteraction of the individuals' separation from the common world (Goodsall 2003). This theory is relevant to today's society with technology, smart devices and associated means of communication. It raises the question: "What is the nature of the common world today?"

Robert D. Putnam is the Professor of Public Policy at Harvard University. In Putnam's *Bowling Alone* (2000) the rise, fall, and potential reawakening of the public realm is

examined (Childs 2004). The current disconnect in social life is emphasised and provides suggestions on how society may reconnect. These thoughts are integral to the creation and use of public space.

From a planner's perspective, Worpole (1992) and Gehl (1996, 1987) contend that the impact of the car on modern towns has, for the most part, been disastrous and that planners have often ignored and undervalued walking and pedestrian access in towns or cities. The issue of the car culture raise further issues in urban planning while providing evidence of the connection and need for all aspects of public life to be considered when planning for a successful public space.

The reasoning behind the death or demise of public space extends beyond the scope of this dissertation. It should though be noted that the demise is noted and much literature is available (Chidister 1989; Banerjee 2001) amongst others. More concern is had here with the re-birth and increasing significance in the creation of good public space, in particular town squares that benefit the community socially, economically and culturally.

2.3.2 Re-birth

Carr et al., Gehl, Worpole (1992) and Marcus and Francis (1998) all contend that there is evidence of resurgence in the creation of public space. Gehl (2000) discusses resurgence in public space over the past 30 years reporting a tripling in area of public space in Copenhagen and a tripling in the use of that space. Whyte (1980), cited in Marcus and Francis (1998), also reported a significant rise in the use of public space in New York's Manhattan during 1973 and 1974. According to Gehl, Jane Jacob's 1961 book, "The Death and Life of Great American Cities" had a major impact in this resurgence and of using public space for social and recreational purposes. With regard to more current trends, Gehl (2000b) describes the public space strategies of nine cities and thirty-nine streets and squares throughout the world. The strategies include the improvement of public space, pedestrian movement and public life. Continuing on movement Gehl (2010b, p. 89) continues listing a number of recent projects where street design is based on 'the linear pattern of human movement' and square design is

'based on the eye's ability to survey an area'. Gehl believes both concepts are essential design elements of cities built around streets and squares. Gehl's view is that these new projects demonstrate a renaissance in proven planning principles built around streets and squares. This view that traditional ideas in planning are still relevant today is the view pursued in this dissertation. These traditional ideas need to be applied and adapted to meet and reflect current community needs (Carr et al. 1992). The need to reflect current needs is echoed by Zucker (1959), Altman and Zube (1989), Banjeree (2001) and Childs (2004). The method of reflecting current needs should be widely adopted to create relevant public space for today's communities. More generally on modern urban life and the public realm in Australia, Gleeson (2006) agrees that society must address the ecological and social imperatives that present now rather than return to an idyllic urban past. Why though, is it so inconceivable that that past or an adaptation cannot be strived for and attained by today's society?

PPS are positive of at least the need for resurgence stating 'In cities and towns around the world, people are crying out for lively gathering places where civic life flourishes and different cultures mix' (PPS 2014f, para. 1). Although difficult to validate, this comment does appear to support the resurgence described by Gehl (1987, 2010), Carr et al. (1992), Whyte (1980). The city of New York is evidence of the resurgence with over fifty new plazas being created by the Department of Transportation over the past seven years (Ilum 2014).

From an Australian perspective, Melbourne underwent radical change by devising an urban renewal project in 1985 aimed at improving the city's public realm. A key decision was the closure of Swanston Street (a major north south route through the CBD) to vehicular traffic in 1992. This allowed for major improvements to pedestrian and bicycle access and related features that resulted in a vibrant and active environment (City of Melbourne 2009). Further to this, a 1994 study by Gehl Architects commissioned by the City of Melbourne identified and recommended many areas of improvement required to further revitalise the city. The City of Melbourne committed to make those changes over the following 10 years. In 2004 the city and city life was reassessed and presented in "*Places for People – Melbourne 2004*". The success of the

urban renewal project is evident by comparing studies from 1994 and 2004. They showed a 39 percent increase in daytime pedestrians while night time pedestrian numbers have doubled while there has been an increase of 71 percent relating to the area available for public use including public squares shown in *Figure* 2.1 (Gehl Architects 2004, p. 22).

Figure 2.1 Squares, parks and promenades (shown as dots) introduced into Melbourne after 1994 (Gehl Architects 2004, p. 22)

New York City's new plazas, Gehl's evidence from Copenhagen and the pedestrianisation of Melbourne since 1985 provide strong evidence of a resurgence of and the public's desire for quality public space. Where better to focus that resurgence and what better gathering place than a public town square?

2.4 Public town squares

2.4.1 Town squares – a brief history

From the literature perused, it is clear that squares in some form, appeared long before ancient Western society embraced the concept. French (1983) discusses ancient cultures such as the Incas and their city, Machu Picchu, as having a central open space as a square, however, admits there is no evidence of its function. Zucker (1959) contends that the Aztecs had a planned open space central to the city of Tenochtitlan, now Mexico City, surmising it to be a place for communal gatherings and market place. That central plaza from ancient times is now the location of the current Plaza Mayor or Zócalo in Mexico City. Again, there is no apparent evidence left by the Aztec civilisation as to the ancient plaza's purpose or use, although Childs (2004, p. 29) labels it the 'central ceremonial complex'. Gehl also touches on primitive society when discussing towns surrounding squares, saying

> This organisational principle can be traced throughout history, from traditional tribal camps to contemporary campsites. The buildings, entrances, tents, and so on are assembled around a public space and turn toward one another like friends around a table (2010, pp. 85-87).

The key words, 'organisational principle', here, suggest the need for societies throughout history to have some form of social order to function effectively. The words 'like friends around a table' also emphasises the social aspect of the square throughout history.

The authors mentioned above, and others including Carr et al. (1992), Mumford (1961) and Low (2000) agree that the Greeks, in around 500 B.C., were the first to create planned public open space in their cities in the form of public squares or agora. The need for and creation of public space at this time may have been born from the community's development of some form of democratic society and citizenship, requiring the need for a public gathering place (Zucker, 1959). Whatever the case, the agora served as a civic centre for political and social gatherings, a market place, and a

place for sport and leisure. Kreisis (1965) writes on the agora in Lato detailing the shady trees and fountains and the fact that it served all purposes of community life. The location of the square throughout history was typically as close to the city centre as possible, accessible to all citizens (Zucker 1959; Kreisis 1965).

The next phase in the square's development occurred in Italy, particularly in Rome, as the *forum*. The cities of the Roman Empire were centred around the *forum*. On the *Forum* Romanum, Mumford (1961) explains it as being not only the centre of public life for Rome but the entire Roman Empire. Grimal (1983) agrees, detailing that the city of Rome was built around its *forum*. Grimal emphasises the importance of the square to the Romans, explaining that other provincial cities had in their centre a public square around which all the activities of business and public life were concentrated. Grimal then turns focus to the pedestrian nature of Roman *forums* telling of a large stone that kept vehicles out of the *forum* at Arles. This emphasises an important design feature of public squares: that they should be devoid of regular vehicular traffic, a feature supported by Gehl (2010) and PPS. Although activities conducted were similar to those held in the Greek agora, the Romans displayed grandeur in and around their *forum*s (Carr et al. 1992). Roman Emperors clearly made statements of wealth and power with the construction of their cities, including the *forums*, while at the peak of international domination (Mumford 1961).

The Medieval period followed the fall of the Roman Empire, with little development in planning. Mumford (1961) describes how, after the fall of the Roman Empire, with no army to defend them, people sought refuge and safety in the countryside. Between the fifth and tenth centuries, for a period cities were no longer the centre of production and trade. After the tenth century, and with the construction of walled towns providing security, market squares were incorporated back into town and city design (Mumford 1961). An example of this in France is the central marketplace of Monpazier (Morris 2013). In this case, as with many others, the use of the square as a market has endured to current times.

After a lull in the development of public squares, the Renaissance provided some of the greatest squares to this day. Although the Piazza San Marco in Venice began as a small medieval square it was developed into a grand Renaissance square, 'the ballroom of Europe' (Zucker 1959, p. 113). The Renaissance was an era when urban design became relevant, as during this period many great squares in Western Europe were redeveloped or created (Zucker, 1959).

Amidst all the transformations and developments of squares throughout history, this dissertation, inter alia, seeks to recapture the original use and meaning of the square in society and apply modern thinking or trends in the design of a contemporary public place. A place for the public that satisfies the social, cultural and economic needs of the community that it serves, no matter its size or scale.

2.4.2 The meaning, function and significance of the square – *past, present and future*

The *historic* meaning, function and significance of the square have been touched on in the previous section. The question remains as to whether the square holds significance and can be relevant in *current modern day society and into the future.* Zucker (1959, p. 2) writes '[the] psychological function of the square is true for the present and future as it has been for the past.' Marcus and Francis (1998) agree with the understanding that the square is not that of days gone by, but it does have some functional parallels in modern society.

Gehl comments on the importance of street and square in history and of their relevance to the present as a result of that history:

> In the entire history of human settlement, streets and squares have been the basic elements around which all cities were organised. History has proved the virtues of these elements to such a degree that, for most people, streets and squares constitute the very essence of the phenomenon "city" (1987, p. 89).

Whyte (1980), like Gehl, pays particular attention to the relationship between the street and the square, contending that it is imperative for both to be well designed, at similar

elevations, and in a suitable location amongst other factors for a square to be a success in terms of function and use.

Zucker (1959) contends that present planners face similar dilemmas to those of the past, explaining that the square is ever evolving as it needs to adapt to current social and economic changes, and advancements in technology. This idea of ensuring the location, design and function of a current day square meets the needs of the community is echoed throughout the literature (Zucker 1959; Carr et al. 1992; Banjeree 2001).

Altman and Zube (1989) expand on this notion, suggesting that we cannot create or recreate public squares and expect to relive the nostalgic public life of the past. Zucker (1959) agrees, suggesting we should learn from history but not copy ideas. The main point again here is that squares need to be relevant and designed to fit the needs of the current day community that uses them (Zucker 1959; Carr et al. 1992; Banjeree 2001; Altman & Zube 1989).

Chidister (1989) holds a pessimistic view believing that the function and purpose of the square is no longer valid since the roles once associated with the city centre have been dispersed. Chidister writes the fragmentation of cities has caused activities historically conducted in the square out of necessity, to spread to other venues. In support of this view, Worpole (1992) conducted a 15 month study in response to the perceived notion that town centres had lost many of their traditional functions as the centres of social, political and cultural life. Again, this criticism of the square and its modern day purpose only exemplifies the views of Zucker (1959), Carr et al. (1992), Gleeson (2006) and others that public space needs to evolve with the evolution of the community and its needs.

With an optimistic view, French (1983, p. 12) states the square 'thrives on the rich civic chaos... The square is its (the city's) heart and the beat should be felt.' Mark Shepard in Offenhuber and Schechtner (2012 n.p.) reiterates with: 'Walk toward the heart of the city. If the city has no heart, give it one.' These comments imply that along with location, the square should ideally have an intricate connection to the city which in turn gives the square meaning and purpose to the community which in turn connects back to

the social and cultural value associated with the square. This is even more valid and relevant to a small urban community where the square has the ability to remain the heart and can still have meaning for the whole community.

Re-iterating French's sentiment from a local perspective, social and cultural events held at Melbourne's Federation Square have become commonplace. The square is host to over 2000 events each year and has become the 'city's focal point, its heartbeat' (Culture Victoria 2010). There is no apparent reason why the success, to some degree, of Federation Square cannot be achieved in a small urban community. Zucker (1959), Gehl (2000, 2010), Whyte (1980, 1988), Carr et al. (1992) and Childs (2004) all mention the important design aspect of scale with Gehl (2010) in particular, emphasising that public space needs to be presented at a human scale. This can be achieved by recognising and acknowledging the existing environment and surrounds and working within those limits and boundaries. Therefore, there is no reason why large scale principles cannot be applied to small scale projects. Regardless of this the abovementioned authors all agree that the square is a relevant if not essential inclusion in public space within a community.

2.4.3 Economic function – *places of commerce – markets*

"If you want to seed a place with activity, put out food." Whyte (1980) emphasises that an essential ingredient in the success of a square is the presence of food. Although Whyte's main focus is on cafés and vendors, these enterprises can be linked to the historical use of the square as a market. Through history the square has more often than not had some economic function, typically being the home of the market (Worpole 1992).

This continues to this day with the squares resurgence as Farmer's Markets. In 2011 the Victorian Government pledged $2 million to support the growth of farmers markets. Markets numbers have more than doubled between 2004 and 2011 nationally (AFMA 2012). These farmers markets that are not already located in town squares would greatly benefit from being located in a public square centrally located within a community. In a 2006 study of markets in the UK Watson & Studdert discuss the economic success of a

market being directly linked to its success as a social space. The economic benefits from successful markets to a community are widely known (Watson & Studdert 2006) and for the purpose of this dissertation the associated public space that holds a market is of interest. The public space, usually centrally located, provides the location to hold markets that promote the use of the space and contribute social, cultural and economic benefits to the community that have been previously discussed. This central location also provides the location for other activities – one being to voice an opinion, political or other.

2.4.4 Political function - *to be seen and heard*

Western culture and democracy has allowed for the square to be a place where people can be seen or heard. Minority groups, disgruntled workers, and the oppressed can take centre stage and demand attention by gathering in squares to voice all manners of views and opinions. The political environment need not be democratic, as seen with the Nazi spectacles of grandeur before and during World War II.

Figure 2.2 A rally at the 1936 Summer Olympic Games at the Lustgarten, Berlin (German Federal Archive 2014).

Proving the ability of the square to have political importance across many societies and cultures is the 1989 student protests in Beijing's Tiananmen Square. It provides one of the most vivid memories of political action in a square for those who witnessed –

particularly 'tank man'. The image of a lone unarmed man stopping a line of tanks during the protest can raise goose bumps.

Figure 2.3 'Tank man' the lone protester stopping a line of tanks during the 1989 student protests in Tiananmen Square (Franklin 2014).

Childs (2004, p. 5) reminds us of the horrific terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001 where the people of New York took to the squares. Childs makes the pertinent remark: 'It's an ancient concept. You go to a square, to the marketplace. Not to anyone's house – to *everyone's* house' (*New York Times Magazine* 2001, cited in Childs 2004) re-iterating the concept of the square as a public domain, a place to be seen, heard, celebrate or grieve. Offenhuber and Schechtner (2012) present a recent example of the square being used as a public place of political protest. Student protests in Spain in 2011 attracted more than 10000 people to the main square of Madrid.

A recent Australian example was prompted by a series of attacks on Indian students and taxi drivers throughout Melbourne in 2010. In protest of the attacks, 40 Australian-Indian portraits were erected at Federation Square to display the importance of Australian Indian contribution to society (Kelly et al. 2012).

Figure 2.4 "Indian Aussies" posters displayed at Federation Square in protest of attacks on Indian students and taxi drivers (Australia India Institute 2013).

This topic emphasises the presence and tolerance of the multitude of cultures within Australia discussed in a latter section.

These are but a few examples of many instances where the people have used the square as a common meeting place to voice opinions, joy, fear, support, celebration or oppression. It shows the square does not discriminate or have political preference. No matter the cultural or political climate, the square can be seen as the preferred location for the public to be seen or heard whether it be on mass or as individuals or small groups in a more private, friendly and subdued environment.

2.4.5 Social function – *sit, chat, watch*

Leisure, social meetings, observing, entertainment and play are all important functions of the square now, as they have been throughout history. Social activities are all activities that depend on the presence of others in public spaces (Gehl 2010). In Northern America, Marcus and Francis (1998) explain that 90 percent of modern plaza

use is social based contending like Gehl that the simple activities of walking, standing sitting are those that should be considered essential elements in the design of quality public space.

Whyte (1980) enters great detail of the social activities that take place in squares. The main activity being people watching other people. Gehl (1987) describes activities as both active, including talking, playing or performing and passive; watching or listening. Gehl (2013) continues with a description two types of activities that are undertaken in public space – necessary activities that include going to the bank, paying a bill, catching a bus or optional activities including chatting, sitting, enjoying the sunshine and watching. Gehl (2013) agree with Marcus and Francis (1998) contending that society is increasingly using public space for optional activities that increase opportunities for social interaction.

The historic functions, meaning and significance of squares to a community are still relevant now, as they were then, emphasising and re-iterating the significance of the square to current day society. This is particularly relevant to a square in a small urban community where those communities remain somewhat similar to ancient cities in terms of local government, social events, culture, history and people within the community being familiar to one another. Overall it has been found that as society and its needs constantly evolve and change with time so must planners' ideas and thoughts on the provision and presentation of public space. The following section discusses some of the current and future challenges planners face in the design and creation of public space.

2.5 Current and future challenges

The literature suggests that a number of challenges have been identified which contributed to the demise of public space, and the subsequent demise of public life, particularly throughout the last century. Banjeree (2001) identifies a shortage and inequity in the provision of public space and identifies three major trends that will shape the future of public space. These are 'privatisation, globalisation and the communications revolution.' (Banjeree 2001, p. 9). Banjeree (2001) stresses the need

for planners to anticipate the effects of these trends and understand the evolution of public life in order to address the decline. The idea of planner's understanding public needs is supported by others such as Gehl (2010), Altman and Zube (1989), Zucker (1959), and Carr et al. (1992).

It should be noted that neither people in Australia, nor those in North America, share the same culture that makes public space, and in particular squares, as successful as in Western Europe or Latin America. Many Europeans live in a high density urban environment, with public life lived primarily in the street and square (Altman & Zube, 1989). This is a café culture and one only need to watch movies, read books on travel or visit places in Italy or France to see this in action. In Latin American cities the square has long been the symbol of civic power and cultural centre (Low 2000).

On the topic of density, Australia, although highly urbanised as a nation, the population density in cities and large towns is no match for cities in Europe. The Melbourne metropolitan area itself has a density of around 425 people per square kilometre (City of Melbourne 2013), around six times fewer than that of Rome, eight times fewer than Paris and 13 times fewer than Athens. In terms of history and culture, Australia, settled by the British only 225 years ago has a comparatively short western history. It is well known as a highly multi-cultural country with almost 1 in 4 people born overseas and with arrivals between July 2008 and June 2009 coming from a range of more than 200 countries (Thompson & Maginn 2012). As a democratic society, a number of social justice principles are listed by Thompson and Maginn (2012, pp. 237-238) that acknowledge the diversity. The diversity of culture, both foreign and indigenous should be embraced by all. At least this is an ideal that should be strived for. Phillip Adams cited in Malone (2002) talks of the development of a civil society depending on the tolerance of multicultural communities with Australia being the focus. In spite of that apparent lack of Western history and homogenous culture it is not to say that successful, functional and suitable public squares cannot be created. Federation Square in Melbourne is a prime example of a recent successful public space ranked number fourteen in the PPS 'The World's Best Squares' (PPS 3 2014c). This is a much larger and complex example than that proposed in this dissertation, yet the modern day

principles of function, meaning, concept and design remain the same, only the scale changes. The recent success of Federation Square and others throughout the world (PPS 2014f, 2014g) gives credibility to the need for quality public space as a valuable inclusion in the community. Quality public space can in fact draw people out of the comfortable and safe private space of their homes (Fischer cited in Carr et al. 1992; Gehl 2010; Wooley 2004) and back into society.

2.5.1 Private space

In North America, the use of private outdoor space has increased with the move of the middle and working class people into the suburbs (Carr et al. 1992; Goodsall 2003). The social effects of suburbanisation have some social scientists suggesting the decline in public life can be attributed to a shift in societal balance toward the 'security and pleasures of private life' (Fischer cited in Carr et al. 1992, p.5). The suggestion is that people in suburbs are more likely to be living in detached housing that accommodates a more private and less public life. Gehl (2000) agrees, writing that less and less of daily life is undertaken in public space. Worpole and Knox (2007) take a different viewpoint, contending that almost any space, regardless of ownership or appearance is potential public space; citing the school gate, shopping mall or café as gathering places. This may be the case to some degree, and applies to some day to day activities, yet the question remains whether any public activity is accepted in these locations as it ideally should be in a true public space. These types of spaces are not the subject of this dissertation however they raise the issue of public versus private space and its uses.

Many similarities from the North American situation described by Carr et al. (1992) can be drawn to that of Australia. The trend to move to the suburbs and resultant low density living has led to similar use of private and public space. In the 1940s, around 90 percent of Melbourne's residents lived within 16 kilometres of the central business district. This proportion fell to less than 50 percent by the 1980s as the outer suburban areas grew correspondingly (Prescott 2013). Industry and thereby jobs also moved out to the suburbs due primarily to the introduction of truck transport (Gleeson & Low

2000). These factors created the urban sprawl and associated low density living within Australia. They have also contributed greatly to the Australian car culture.

2.5.2 Private transport – *car culture*

In North America, the use of private transport, in the form of the motor vehicle, and an 'obsession with traffic flow have diminished the life on the street' (Carr et al. 1992, p. 5). Gehl contends that the creation of more roads only invites more traffic to occupy and use them (Gehl, 2010). In 2012, 71 percent of people in Australia travelled to work or place of study by passenger vehicle. The inability to access or inconvenient times of public transport caused 53 percent to use private vehicles while 28 percent preferred the convenience, comfort or privacy a private vehicle provides (ABS 2013a). This brings to light a planning issue on another level – improving public transport.

With regards to accessing public space, in 2010, 20 percent of adults without access to passenger vehicles stated that a lack of transport was the reason for not attending cultural venues or events, including botanic gardens, zoos, museums or public libraries. Only 2 percent of people surveyed rode bicycles, with over half who did not ride stating that the distance was too great (ABS 2013a). The large proportion of people driving to work emphasises the issue of suburbanisation and associated accessibility issues as presented by Carr et al. (1992), Gehl (2000) and Kellet & Rofe (2009).

Gehl (2010) provides a visual representation depicted below of the results of closing traffic at New York City's Times Square.

Figure 2.5 New York's Times Square before and after closure to traffic

(Gehl 2010, p.22)

Developing new roads only invites people to drive increasing the amount cars in cities and towns (Gehl 2010). By providing opportunities and invitations for people to walk and cycle more people then walk and cycle (Gehl 2010). This is evident in Copenhagen where from 1962 the closure of streets to vehicular traffic, the transformation of many parking lots into public squares and the provision of improved pedestrian and bicycle access has led to a significant increase in city area devoted to pedestrians. This has also allowed for the provision of improved bicycle access where in 2008, 37 percent of people cycled to work or educational institutions (Gehl 2010). The aforementioned closure to vehicles in Swanston Street in Melbourne has also had a profound effect on increasing pedestrian activity and improving public life. A similar scenario is evident in San Francisco where the Embarcadero freeway was destroyed during the 1989 earthquake. The decision was made to not re-build the freeway, with interesting results – the traffic stabilised at a lower level and instead a wide boulevard for pedestrians, facilities for cyclists and trams were constructed in its place.

Figure 2.6 1920 - trams and pedestrian activity, 1959 – construction of the freeway, Present Day – the boulevard and a return of the pedestrian and cyclist. (Gehl Studio 2010)

When provided with the invitation to enter and use public space, people tend to stay and participate in social interaction that includes watching, staying or joining in (Gehl 2010). It can be argued that the same activities take place in the modern day shopping centre. Although typically privately owned space, enclosed shopping centres in some cases have replaced the square both physically and in various functions. There is much debate over the social benefits to the community and the public's freedom to use this space which is discussed in the following section.

2.5.3 The shopping centre

Carr et al. (1992, p. 5) explains that the 'impersonal shopping centre and commercial strip' have taken over traditional public spaces as the new setting for communal life in North America. Echoing that sentiment are both Sorkin (1992) and Mattson (1999 cited in Goodsall 2003, p. 364) who describes the public plaza being replaced by the enclosed shopping mall, 'placing consumption rather than community at the centre of attention.'

Low (2010) agrees contending that the square has lost its civic function and democratic meaning. Banjeree (2001, p. 11) writes that 'privately owned shopping malls continue to capture much of the public life in America while its Main Street languishes'. Whyte

(1988) adds to the discussion commenting on the positive feel of a successful public space and that same feel not being felt in a suburban shopping centre.

In England, Buchanan (cited in Worpole 1992) has a similar view to Mattson, believing that planning models were consumerist rather than civic. In effect saying, town centres had lost their multifunctional purpose as civic, service, religious or leisure places for a community and become centres for commerce and shopping.

In Australia, the Geelong town square, Market Square was replaced by a multilevel shopping centre in 1985, removing an historic and important public space from the community (further details are described in section 2.7). An ironic decision considering Melbourne's urban renewal project aimed at promoting public space and social life was launched in the same year. This provides just one local example of decision makers putting consumerism before community.

By observation over many years, the trend in Bacchus Marsh suggests the same has occurred, as explained by Carr et al. (1992) and Banjeree (2001). The shopping centre is the main and most frequented location for people to meet, eat, chat, where young children play watched by their parents while others observe life passing by, a sort of quasi-public space. No truly public space exists for all of these activities to take place, hence this dissertations proposed need for one in the form of a square. Thankfully, the current planning theories as expressed by the PIA and reflected in the Moorabool Planning Scheme have moved away from the car culture and inclusion of the enclosed shopping centre, putting emphasis back on the people living within the community.

An example of current planning theory in Victoria has been implemented the community of Ocean Grove (near Geelong) in the Ocean Grove Town Centre Urban Design Framework. The framework emphasises the traditional strip shopping as preferred over the enclosed shopping centre (City of Greater Geelong 2013). The statement 'Ocean Grove needs a heart and soul – A meeting place' (City of Greater Geelong 2013, p. 5) also emphasises the desire for a public square in the town. Improving these aspects of the public realm will in turn help to improve the community's sense of belonging. For the future of true public space, it is the hope that

this is one example of the planning trend of the enclosed shopping centre reversing. Speaking of trends, social media and its impact on public life and space is next on the agenda.

2.5.4 Technology and social media

An important and current issue in modern society is the use of technology in the form of smart devices and current social media to gather and disperse information, complete daily tasks and entertain those who use them. One only need observe for a short time the sheer number of people, heads down, engaged with an electronic device. Are they shopping, communicating, banking or playing? Is this the future of communication? Is face to face contact becoming obsolete, surpassed by communication and activities on electronic devices? Is the new public space in cyberspace? Banjeree (2001) poses similar questions, while Castells (2000) cited in Goodsall (2003, p. 369) explains the transformation of the 'territorial city' into an 'information city' and that urban physical space may indeed be replaced by cyberspace. This may seem farfetched, yet not improbable, given the uptake of, and incredible leaps in, the technology and capabilities of electronic devices and use of social media.

Foth et al. (2011) describe how advancements and uptake of such technologies over the past decade have become integral to our social and working lives as well as shaping the way we make sense of our cultures and engage as citizens. Foth et al. (2011) contend that the current technologies combined with associated applications offer the public a more open, collaborative and personalised internet experience that in turn fosters participation. The ease at which information can be disseminated and the seemingly limitless boundaries that technology and applications provide make available the opportunity for people to participate in social or political activities.

Offenhuber and Schechtner (2012) present an interesting situation which arose in 2011 in Spain, an organised political demonstration. The demonstration was solely organised though social media and online communications. More than ten thousand people assembled in the main square of Madrid, the Puerta del Sol, while more people occupied Catalonia Square in Barcelona and Seville's Metrosol Parasol. Perhaps this

merger of old, an historic place to stage, and new, the use of technology to disseminate information, provides proof that squares remain a relevant public domain as through history while adding the dimension of sharing information through technology and current cultural dimensions.

Childs sums up the situation well by presenting a positive view of the need for physical space stating:

> In an age of internet newsgroups and live journals, of FedEx and faxes, of telecommuting and mass migrations, the idea of physical civic commons may seem to some as quaint or quixotic. The opposite is true. The need and desire for vital civic places is both perennial and current, and the means are at hand.
> (2004, p. 9)

Townsend (2013, p.15) present a combination of views explaining that information technology needs to be integrated with 'infrastructure, architecture and even our bodies' to create 'smart cities' for now and the future. This view is perhaps the most consistent with those presented in this dissertation.

The issue of technology and the increasing use of electronic devices keeping children indoors and the use of private space for entertainment and other daily tasks have been raised by Carr et al. (1992) and Gehl (2000). It is widely known that there is an increasing occurrence of childhood obesity and Type II diabetes. In Australia in 2007-08, one quarter of Australian children (or around 600,000 children aged 5-17 years) were overweight or obese, up four percentage points from 1995 (2013b). This may be attributed to amongst other factors a more sedentary culture which may be attributed to the increased use of devices for private entertainment. We need to promote an active, healthy lifestyle to help reverse these trends. Gehl (2010) contends that providing high quality physical environments present the community with opportunities to participate in activities that promote a healthy physical and social lifestyle.

The future of public space lies in the merger and integration of fast evolving technology with traditional face to face human interaction. Due to its rapid advancements, technology may be seen as one of the most difficult aspect for planners to control or

react to in designing current day, relevant public space. This is yet another challenge for urban planners to conquer.

2.6 Town squares – creating a great town square

If we delve deep enough there can be good and bad found in just about anything. Town squares are not immune to critical evaluation and nor should they be. They are a public asset and as is the case with all such assets they and their use should be scrutinised. Public space is also limited and highly contested between public and private interests (Burden 2014). These reasons alone mean it is imperative that urban planners and designers get town square location and design right. Considering every detail is critical in the success or failure of a town square or any other public space for that matter (Burden 2014; PPS 2014d).

2.6.1 What makes a good town square?

Typically, a square's success is based on the number of users that it attracts. As Whyte (1980) so simply puts it: 'What attracts people most, it would appear, is other people'. This simple notion of people attracting other people resonates through the literature with Jacobs (1961), Gehl (2000, 2010). The number of users is dependent on two separate yet related factors. The first being the overall design and/or quality of the square as detailed by many authors (Whyte 1980; Gehl 2010; PPS 2014a, 2014b; Childs 2004; French 1983; Marcus & Francis 1998). The second sum of factors is the purpose, function and meaning of the square. These factors give the square a feel (Carr et al. 1992; Jacobs 1961; Gehl 2000), importance and relevance for community members and visitors alike.

The overriding theme in design and planning for a new public square is that it needs to meet the needs of the community for which it serves. This is true; however, there are general thoughts on concept and design that apply across the board. The design considerations presented below have been influenced by Whyte (1980, 1988), Gehl (1987, 2000b), Childs (2004), French (1983), Marcus and Francis (1998) and PPS

(2014a, 2014d). These essential design features to be considered include seating, light, relation to the street, scale, water, trees and vegetation, availability of food and triangulation - characteristics of public space bringing people together (Whyte 1980) and technology. These features are discussed in a latter section of this dissertation.

2.6.2 Purpose, function and meaning

Good public space should be 'responsive, democratic and meaningful' (Carr et al. 1992, pp. 19-20). These ideas stem back to the Greek agora and Roman *forum* and still apply today particularly to town squares in small urban communities rather than cities, where neighbours, rather than strangers are most likely to meet (Jacobs 1961). This key element of smaller communities can evoke a strong sense of community within its members. This idea further supports the importance of the social and cultural benefits that the square can provide to the community to which it serves.

The public spaces created by societies serve as a mirror of their public and private values. Countries or regions should not try to create public spaces based on foreign designs or ideas. If done so the space will not be meaningful to the community and may not adequately reflect user needs (Carr et al. 1992, Marcus & Francis 1998, Childs, 2004). This may render the space unsuccessful and unused by the public it was intended. This sentiment is echoed by Altman and Zube (1989) when making comment on Northern America not having the café culture of Western Europe suggesting that the design of the square should hold local interest paramount.

In physical planning terms, Gehl (2010) has described in recent times that some squares have become large, meaningless areas devoid of people believing that that the decision to have many dispersed roads and paths has led to the problem. Gehl contends that the concentrated street network based on the linear pattern of human movement found in old cities was more conducive to more intimate public spaces.

Childs (2004, p. 8) puts a homely spin on the variety of functions public space serves stating:

> Like living rooms, public places often have edges full of places to sit, and open centres. People sit and hang out around the edges, and dance, ice-skate, or hold protest rallies in the centre.

The purpose, function and meaning of the square in a small urban community can provide great value in many forms as has been discussed in previous sections. These values and benefits have not differed greatly from ancient times. They include the feeling of inclusion, comfort and safety in public for community members along with quantifiable values such as economic benefit to the community as a whole.

2.6.3 Feeling safe

It is important for the users to feel safe within a square or any other public space. The feeling of safety can be created by the presence of people (Whyte 1988; Jacobs 1961, Gehl 2010). In writing on slums and their improvement, Jacobs (1961) emphasises that such places need to be lively, well watched and have a continual presence in order to improve and be 'unslummed' and for community members to feel safe. These thoughts can be applied to squares. Whyte (1988) gives an example of a fenced square in New York, Bryant Park, being a location for dangerous people making it unsafe for the general public and requiring the need for a police presence. To help resolve the issue of safety it should be 'unfenced' as Whyte puts it. Whyte (1988) re-iterates Jacobs' theory of the need for a continuous human presence or 'eyes on the street'. Whyte suggests that well used places can achieve this by employing a person who is in the space for much of the time such as a food or newspaper vendor or building guard. This presence helps people feel safe and comfortable.

Ideally, from a planning perspective, an attempt should be made to maintain the central location while incorporating the original civic and economic function, historical significance and cultural meaning of the square to a community. The design of a modern day town square needs to take those traditional factors into account along with the current needs of the community particularly in terms of technology. A square by doing so can help build strong, cohesive, resilient communities where people feel as though they belong.

2.6.4 Does size really matter?

On the topic of function and size Zucker explains:

> This physical and psychological function of the square does not depend on size or scale. The village green in a small New England town, the central square of a residential quarter within a larger city, the monumental plaza of a metropolis – all serve the same purpose (1959, p.1).

In terms of design Whyte (1988) and Gehl (2010) describe scale as an important design consideration explaining that a concentrated space has more chance of success than a sparse, spread out area. Gehl proposes a size of 70 to 100 metres as the maximum distance to be able to see events within an area (Gehl cited in Marcus and Francis 1998).

Whyte's study found that people gather around the edges of space rather than in the middle of a void and Gehl (2010) discusses the 'edge effect' in some detail. In essence, the size and scale of a square needs to be relative to its surrounds and its human uses (Thompson & Maginn 2012, Gehl 2010, Whyte 1988).

In summary, the square needs to be meaningful to the community, have multiple purpose and functions and be of human scale. These traits along with a central location, good accessibility and connectivity options and sound design all contribute to the success of a square within any community. Much information has been presented has related to public space and squares in various Western countries, Australia and in particular, Victoria will now be the primary focus of this dissertation.

2.7 Squares – an Australian perspective

From an Australian perspective, planning strategies have historically lacked the provision of town squares in CBD's. This is due in part to Australia's relatively recent colonisation that has limited the need, history, or time to create the equivalent of the Greek agora, Roman *forum*, medieval market squares or grand Renaissance squares. Squares in Australia have typically not served the traditional functions as they have

throughout Western Europe in particular. The European cities and towns typically have long histories and as previously discussed, squares have served an important role in the social, cultural and economic lives of people. Australia is country with a brief Western history, is highly suburbanised with typically lower densities than European counterparts (Gleeson 2006), and historically does not possess the features of the pedestrianised European cities that contain squares that have been successful for hundreds or indeed thousands of years. Where public squares have been incorporated in planning and urban design in the past, we have at times, squandered the opportunity to keep and maintain the space for the community to use. An example is Geelong, which had a public square for over 100 years, and then lost it to the construction of a privately owned enclosed shopping centre. A pictorial history of Market Square in Geelong is shown in the series of images below (*Figures 2.7 – 2.12*).

Figure 2.7 Geelong Heritage 2014. *Market Square, North Side, Geelong, c.1857*, City of Greater Geelong.

Figure 2.8 Geelong Heritage 2014. *Trail's Fountain, Market Square, c.1905* - Postcard, City of Greater Geelong.

Figure 2.9 Geelong Heritage 2014. *Queen Victoria Statue, c.1905*, City of Greater Geelong.

Figure 2.10 Geelong Heritage 2014. A crowd in Market Square watches the Cricket Test Match electric score board, McCann Street, c.1938, City of Greater Geelong.
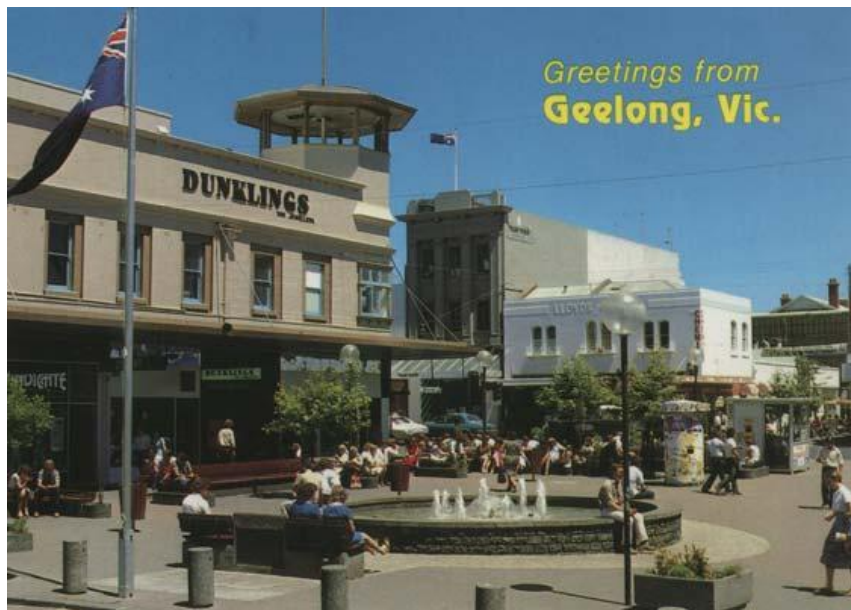
Figure 2.11 Geelong Heritage 2014. *Market Square, c.1980 -* Postcard,
City of Greater Geelong.

Figure 2.12 Geelong Heritage 2014. *Market Square car park, 1985*, City
of Greater Geelong.

The photographs up to and including that from 1980, display qualities of public space
described throughout this literature review. These qualities promote sociability and the
celebration of local culture that can strengthen community spirit and improve personal
wellbeing. The 1985 photograph unfortunately displays the power of consumerism and
the unfortunate, uninviting modernist architectural style. Fortunately in Victoria, there

appears to be a reversion back to the social city and town with the City of Melbourne leading the way in adopting Jan Gehl's mantra promoting, social, accessible, connected and healthy communities.

2.7.1 Melbourne – planning then and now – squares

The city of Melbourne has been chosen as a good example of a place where public squares have been introduced successfully in recent years. Originally Melbourne was devoid of squares. The street network, designed as a traditional block pattern common throughout British colonies and known as the 'Hoddle Grid' (City of Melbourne 2008, p. 143) named after Robert Hoddle, Melbourne's surveyor in 1837. This design allowed for some urban parks but no squares. Melbourne until recent times, was commonly referred to as the 'doughnut' since it was empty (in term of activity) in the centre and particularly devoid of activity after business hours (Gehl 2010, p. 15).

Figure 2.13 Extract from Kearney's Melbourne and its suburbs, showing a distinct English block pattern in 1855. The map of Melbourne was produced by the Surveyor-General's office in Victoria.

From 1985 an urban renewal project run by the City of Melbourne committed to strengthening public life and pedestrian traffic in the city (Gehl 2000b). Following a 1994 study conducted by the City of Melbourne and Gehl Architects that identified

many deficiencies in the availability and quality of public space in the city, the City of Melbourne committed to make radical changes to parts of the city in order to improve the public realm over a 10 year period. A part of the commitment was the redevelopment of City Square in 2000 and the construction of Federation Square completed in 2002. The success of the squares is presented in a 2011 report – *The Metropolitan Melbourne Investigation* – states that almost one quarter of weekend visitors to Melbourne visited Federation Square (VEAC 2011) with over nine million visiting annually (Fed Square 2011) making it the most popular area visited in the CBD. These figures emphasise the significance and overall success of Federation Square as public space in Melbourne and add weight to the legitimacy of planning for the inclusion of public squares in Australia. Interestingly the Melbourne Planning Scheme 2008 provides no policy and limited guidance on the provision and design of public squares in Melbourne. Much of the document speaks of the public realm and the need for vital, accessible, meaningful public space with no policy specifically regarding public squares. This may account for the absence of assessment tools and frameworks for design of squares in isolation.

2.8 Creating a framework for the development of public town squares

As previously mentioned, the case study for this dissertation is a small urban community located in Australia. For this reason, predominantly Australian design principles with some influence from existing literature and adaptation of design from successful squares were investigated and ultimately adopted. A framework for the development of public squares in isolation is a key aspect of the research and to achieve this, the following principles relating to the creation of high quality public space is presented as a basis for that framework.

From an Australian perspective, Thompson and Maginn (2012, pp. 310-317) in *Planning Australia – An overview of urban and regional planning* propose six principles of urban design that should be used in creating good urban spaces:

1. *Legibility and memorability*: The objective is to recognise physical qualities of a place that will have a high probability of evoking a strong mental image in any observer.

2. *Character and 'sense of place'*: The careful composition of building styles, materials and colours, coupled with the harmonious treatment and use of the public domain, give a place a distinctive identity, commonly referred to as character. The sense of place refers to the human perception and recognition of atmosphere inherent within a place. The quality of a public space is enhanced when it exhibits a distinctive character and sense of place.

3. *Permeability, connectivity and accessibility*: Refers to the range and number of alternate pathways available through and to a place. The greater the choice, the better is the access. Access also encompasses rights to being in and moving between spaces, and to ownership and use. To be genuinely accessible, a place must allow a wide range of uses and activities within it, over differing periods of time, and be available to many people.

4. *Human scale*: The relationship between human scale and that of a place has a significant influence on spatial quality. Places can be too large or too small depending on their function. Where a balance is achieved between the human scale and that of the place, a comfortable sense of 'enclosure' is said to be achieved – in other words the place exhibits a 'human scale'.

5. *Safety and security*: It is recognised that poor design can provide the conditions that unwittingly promote criminal behaviour. Where the design has anticipated and mitigated opportunities for crime, the quality of the place will be enhanced. Accordingly, places that feel safe and secure to use are inviting and comfortable. One of the most effective tools to achieve this is the creation of spaces that encourage casual surveillance or 'eyes on the street'. The greater the visibility and opportunities for human activity and interaction within a place, the greater

the deterrent for criminal behaviour to occur, thereby increasing the sense of safety and security.

6. *Variety, interest and vitality*: Variety is associated with the mix of uses and experiences. It is the availability of choice and activity in a place that appeals. Opportunities to live, shop, work, laze, watch people and play, and even to find solitude within a single place, provide a dynamic 'vibe' and popularity. Some design solutions to achieve this include the inclusion of public art, landscaping, and venues for activities such as performances, play and sitting. Building design that allows the activities to spill out of the building into the public arena can also aid in promoting these qualities. (Thompson & Maginn 2012)

The principles described by Thomson and Maginn provide guidelines for the design of high quality urban space in general. Many of the six principles fall in line with the theories of PPS, Whyte, Gehl, Marcus & Francis, Carr et al. and Childs all discussed throughout this literature review. PPS, a North American based organisation, present a framework to aid in the evaluation of public space shown in figure 2.14 below.

Figure 2.14 Criteria framework to evaluate a public space according to PPS (PPS 2014g).

The framework, centred around the public space, has four key qualities:

1. ***Access and linkages*** – related to connections to its surroundings, both visual and physical.
2. ***Comfort and image*** – that include perceptions about safety, cleanliness and seating availability.
3. ***Uses and activities*** – includes activities that are made available in the space, the balance and variety of use and users and the times that the space is used.
4. ***Sociability*** – is the ability of a space to encourage meetings and make people feel comfortable interacting with strangers. It has a strong connection to sense of community or sense of belonging. (PPS 2014g)

The qualitative characteristics (intangibles) of these qualities are assessed using the relevant quantitative data (measurements) that can be gathered by observation or through demographic or statistical means. The framework provides another good tool to assess public space in a general sense.

From a Western European viewpoint, in *Cities for People*, Gehl presents 'The city at eye level – 12 key criteria' divided between the three headings of Protection; Comfort; and Delight (see *Figure 2.15*).
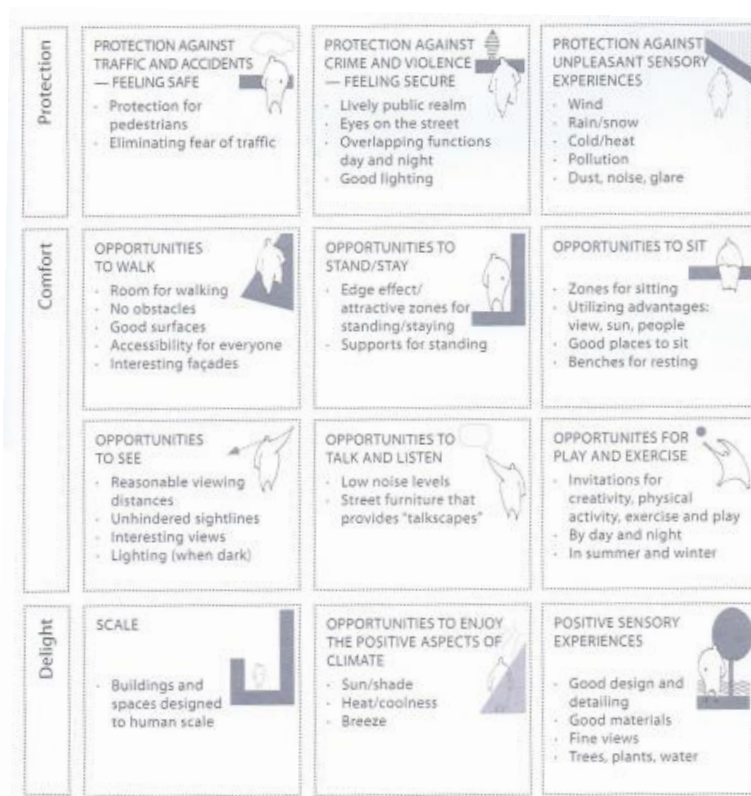
Figure 2.15 'The city at eye level – 12 key criteria', presented by Gehl in
Cities for people (Gehl 2010, p. 239).

The criteria provide an excellent range of qualities to consider in the creation of or assessment of public space.

Some of Gehl's projects have been discussed throughout this dissertation and the applied theories presented have had great success. The success is particularly evident in the transformation of Copenhagen and more recently Melbourne into pedestrian orientated cities, encouraging an active public realm that includes the provision of high quality public squares.

The three frameworks, although presented differently share many similar qualities and characteristics. The qualities also overlap with the CIV themes to assess community satisfaction discussed earlier. This suggests that the quality of the public realm is related to the physical quality of the community and the satisfaction of its members. It is

apparent from the information in the Moorabool Planning Scheme that an approach based on the theories presented in the above frameworks is to be adopted.

2.9 Conclusions

From the literature it has been concluded that modern day town square design in a small urban community should be based on the original purpose, meanings and functions of the square from ancient Western civilisation. The idea of a public space that is open to and shared by all members of the community is an important component in building a strong sense of community and sense of belonging. This ideal is not outdated, nor is the square obsolete as an effective, current and relevant form public space. This idea should then be built on by adapting the design to local cultural attitudes and conditions. The design should be able to further adapt with changes in these attitudes and conditions, particularly with reference to advancements in information technology. These rapid advancements may be the most challenging issue for planners to face today and into the future when considering public space.

The recent success of Federation Square in Melbourne and other squares in cities throughout the world such as Pioneer Courthouse Square in Portland along with the over fifty new plazas in New York City prove the communities desires for quality public space. Such quality public space need not nor should it be limited to cities. Smaller urban communities have parallel social requirements to those of larger cities only on a smaller scale and so similar principles in design of town squares are relevant and able to be used or modified to suit local conditions. The hope of this dissertation is that we as society do not lose touch of traditional means of social interaction that are critical to wellbeing, physical and mental health and general happiness within a community. Community wellbeing and satisfaction is affected by the quality of the public realm and so it is justified that time, effort and resources be applied to create high quality public space. This is especially important in areas lacking quality public space such as Bacchus Marsh. From the literature, local planning schemes, local activity centre structure plans and other planning documents it is clear that the modern approach

to planning and design revolving around people, their safety, comfort, health and wellbeing is the preferred approach and has superseded the Modernist's emphasis on roads and individual buildings. This is the approach pursued by this research in the creation of a framework and a high quality public square in Bacchus Marsh.

Chapter 3

3.0 Existing town squares and data analysis

The previous chapter reviewed the available literature on public space and town squares located in Western Europe and Northern America and which primarily focussed on cities. Following that, the topic of town squares from an Australian perspective was presented, with a brief discussion on planning in Melbourne and the recent successful development of Federation Square. The basis of the framework for town square development using published principles and criteria was then discussed and the necessity of community consultation emphasised.

This chapter will briefly discuss other existing and planned town square developments in three small Victorian urban communities similar to Bacchus Marsh. The aim of this is to raise the current planning theories in Victoria. Two areas with similar demographics to Bacchus Marsh, Eltham and Caroline Springs will then be compared to further legitimise the suitability of a new town square in Bacchus Marsh. Analysis and observations made of an existing public space in Caroline Springs will then be presented to aid in determining patterns of use, types of users and design features to be used in and for the proposed town square in Bacchus Marsh. Finally the information will be reviewed and the data from observations will be used to inform a framework for the development of public town squares in Chapter 4 and the application of the framework to a new town square proposal in Bacchus Marsh in Chapter 5.

3.1 Methodology

In order to legitimise the inclusion of a public town square in Bacchus Marsh, and to aid in the development of a framework for the design of town squares in general, three aspects were deemed as important factors for inclusion into the research.

The first was the search for the existence of either existing or proposed town squares in other small urban communities within Victoria. The scope of the search was limited to Victoria to provide an understanding of the current planning theories in the region applicable to the case study. Three towns with recently developed or proposed town squares have been identified in Section 3.2 with a brief outline of each proposal and presentation of key words and phrases in the related planning documents. The purpose here is to present evidence of a resurgence of public town squares in Victorian planning, as is proposed in North America by PPS (2014f, 2014g).

The second aspect was the demographic comparison of two small urban communities similar to Bacchus Marsh. The chosen communities were Caroline Springs and Eltham. They were chosen based on their demographic similarities, along with the recent inclusions of public squares within the communities. Caroline Springs has a recently developed public square (2009), while Eltham has a planned town square that was approved for development in May of 2014. The purpose of bringing the developments to attention is to legitimise the inclusion of a public town square in Bacchus Marsh.

The final aspect of the process was to conduct an analysis of elements and features within an existing public town square. Followed by observations within, the same existing public town square. Observation of elements within and use of existing public space is an important aspect of creating successful new spaces (Gehl 2013; PPS 2014a; Whyte 1980). The Caroline Springs Civic Centre was chosen for analysis due primarily to the aforementioned demographic similarities to Bacchus Marsh, along with; the features within the space including seating, lighting, art, hard and soft surfaces (more are described in detail in section 3.4); the proximity of residential, retail and commercial use buildings that display the desired mixed use development as described in the Moorabool Planning Scheme (MSC 2014); and the recent construction of the square - 2009. Upon visual inspection, the design features of the square were also in line with those proposed as desirable from the literature, including Carr et al. (1992), Childs (2004), Gehl (2004, 2000b, 2010), PPS (2014d, 2014h) and Thompson & Maginn (2012).

The observation techniques used throughout were guided primarily by *How to Study Public Life* by Jan Gehl and Birgitte Svarre (2013) and *The social life of small urban spaces*, by William Whyte (1980). Both sources provided valuable direction throughout this aspect of the research including methods to record data, what to record, where to position oneself whilst observing, and how to present the results of the observations.

Permission to make the observations was initially sought from the Civic Centre management with the aid of an explanatory letter from the University of Southern Queensland (USQ) (Appendix C). Permission was granted on the proviso that no people were photographed in the process. USQ ethics policy also prohibited approaching and questioning members of the public. In light of these limitations, in this study, the users were not actively questioned but were observed unobtrusively. Observations were for 10 minutes every hour over four time periods, 12:15, 13:15, 14:15, and 15:15 on four separate occasions; the first on Monday August 11th; the second on Thursday August 14th; the third on Friday August 22nd; and finally, the fourth on Monday September 1st. The complete set of observations as digitised diary entries can be found in Appendix D. The data was collected in the same format on each occasion to enable comparison between days of observation.

The area was divided into three zones as follows (*see Figure 3.1)*:

1. **Grass** – essentially the grassed northern section of the square. It includes some manmade mounds, garden beds and trees up to around 5m high.
2. **Seats** – is the area between the Civic Centre building and the grass area excluding the stairs to the east. The area has dedicated seating areas along its north edge and a line of bicycle racks along its south edge.
3. **Stairs** – is the wide stair front entrance to the square. It provides the connection of the street to the space and the Civic Centre buildings.

The three zones differ in composition and provide a variety of standing and seating options. The separation of the square into zones was a deliberate attempt to see which zones were most frequented throughout any observation period. Additional detail in terms of design and features in these zones can be found in Section 3.4. Although grassed surfaces are generally associated with public open space or parks (Healthy Places & Spaces 2009), the inclusion of the grassed area in the observations was to

determine whether such a surface would be of benefit to users in the proposed development in Bacchus Marsh.

Figure 3.1 shows an example of the observation diary showing the number, sex and description as adult or child of users from the 1st of September 2014.The day and date are shown, with weather conditions and any additional notes regarding the day noted on the sheet. The table at the bottom provides the observation time; zone; number of users in the zone at that time; whether an adult user was male or female; or if the user was a dependent child. A dependent child refers to a child with an adult carer. Anyone else was classes an adult as they were independently using the square of their own accord.

Time	Stairs	Male	Female	Child	Seats	Male	Female	Child	Grass	Male	Female	Child
12:15	2	2	0	0	6	0	2	4	8	2	2	4
13:15	0	0	0	0	6	0	4	2	12	0	3	9
14:15	1	1	0	0	4	0	2	2	6	0	2	4
15:15	14	9	5	0	25	8	17	0	38	11	24	3
Totals	17	12	5	0	41	8	25	8	64	13	31	20
Overall	122											
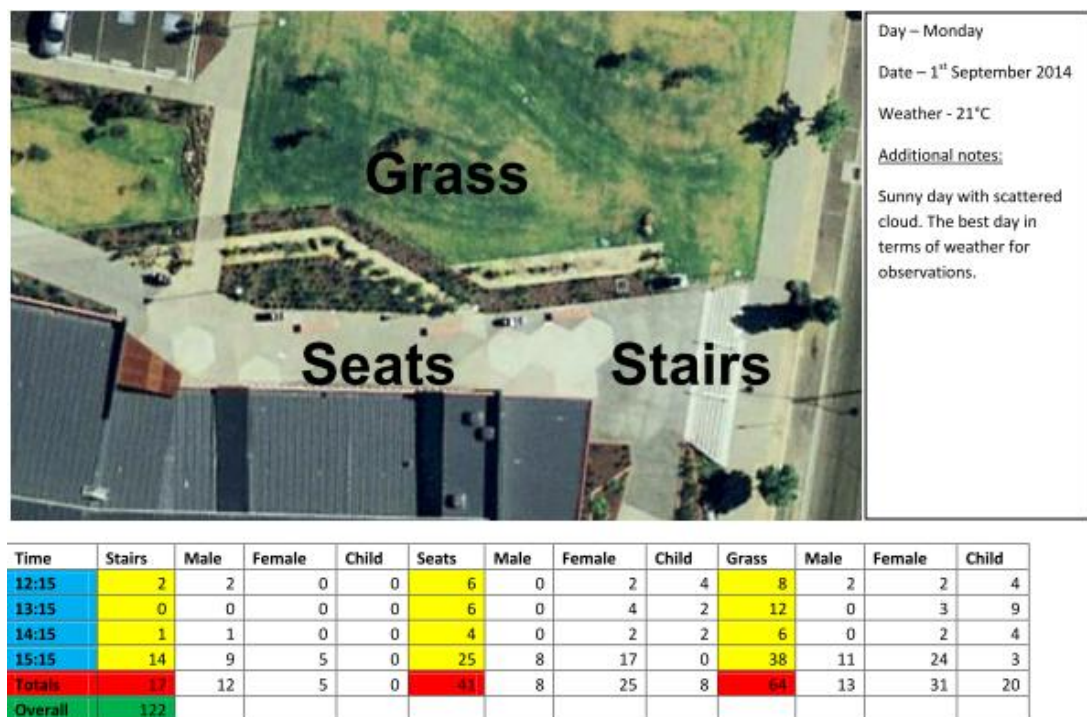
Figure 3.1 Observation diary showing the number of users at the four observation times during one observation period.

Further information was collected simultaneously on an additional observation sheet that displayed the users' location at each observation time together with additional information on the following four user activities:

1. ***Standing*** – either alone or in groups and completing an activity including talking, using a mobile device or eating.
2. ***Sitting*** – either alone or in groups and completing an activity including talking, using a mobile device or eating.
3. ***Playing*** – either alone or in groups.
4. ***Waiting*** – either alone or in groups.

After manual input on an observation sheet in the field the data was transposed to a digitised format as shown in *Figure 3.2*. The remaining observation sheets can be found in Appendix D.

	12:15 ◇	13:15 ●	14:15 ■	15:15 ▲
Stairs	W-2	N/A	SI-1	SI-8 W-6
Seats	SI-5 ST-1	SI-4 ST-2	SI-4	SI-16 ST-9
Grass	SI-5 ST-3	SI-5 P-7	SI-3 P-3	SI-22 ST-16
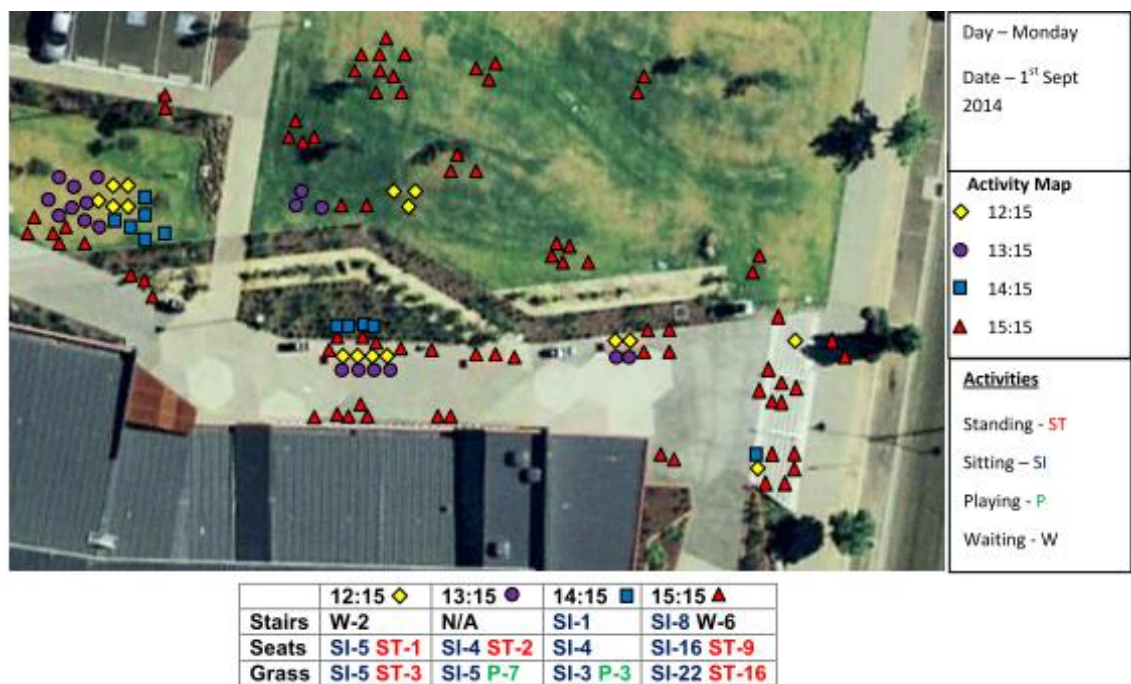
Figure 3.2 Observation diary showing the users location and tabulated activities at the four observation times during one observation period.

The observation data was then collated and presented in a series of pie charts that displayed the users and use throughout the three zones limited to the four activities mentioned above, over the four observation periods. Pie charts were chosen, as they are easy to read and comprehend and they provide a good visual representation of the data. A discussion of the data can be found in Section 3.5.

The results of the analysis was ultimately applied to the development of the framework for the design of town squares discussed in Chapter 4 and the application of the framework to the development of a town square in Bacchus Marsh in Chapter 5. The following section gives a brief description of some limitations of the observation methods adopted.

3.1.1 Limitations

The purpose of the observations was to identify the use and users of the existing public space at Caroline Springs. Upon commencement of the research, realistic expectations of the quantity of data collected and the time period over which observations were made were realised. Some limitations due were identified as:

- **The time of year** – the end of winter provided limited good weather days. Commonsense, supported by Gehl (2013) provides the realisation that uncovered, public open space will be utilised more frequently and for longer periods if the weather provides comfortable conditions for users. For this reason, the best available days were chosen throughout the chosen period for observations given the time constraints.

- **Time constraints for observations** – although every effort was made to allow for the best available times in terms of weather for observations to take place it was accepted that more observation times over different periods of the year would give a more rounded dataset. Nonetheless, the data gathered gives a good indication of the public's use of the space in the period of August 2014.

- **Community consultation** – The University of Southern Queensland ethics policy prevented community consultation, or contact with members of the public. To know what brought users to the square; what they liked or disliked about the square; and the user's age would have been beneficial to the research.

- **Night, weekend and event observations** – only one night visit was achieved for the purpose of assessing the lighting of the space. No other observations were made at that time. No organised events were scheduled for the space over the observation period and so none were observed. Although observations of an

event may have provided some useful information, the intention was to observe the space on a normal day to day basis, hence the absence of weekend observations.

These limitations were understood and the best quality data was collected in light of them. To supplement the observations and emphasise the growing interest in public town squares, current planned town square proposals were identified and are discussed in the following section.

3.2 Existing town squares and current proposals

Three town square proposals are identified in the following section. Eltham – to the east of Melbourne; Ocean Grove – to the south; and Toolern to the west were identified as communities with proposed public town squares in the existing or proposed town centres. The presentation of this information is intended to emphasise the current planning approach in Victoria with particular reference to town squares. A brief description of the three communities and some keywords and phrases taken from the related planning documents is presented in the following sections.

3.2.1 Eltham

Eltham is a community of around 20 000 people, situated 30 kilometres east of Melbourne. The development of a town square simply named 'Eltham town square' was approved by the Nillumbik Shire Council in April 2014. Some of the design objectives are listed below:

- Recognise the site as a destination for both locals and visitors alike.
- Provide a safe, all ages, all abilities, all hours, meaningful and rich public space.
- Represent the character of Eltham and wider Nillumbik in the grain of the design.
- Acknowledge the built heritage of the area in legible, contemporary, adaptable and efficient buildings (Nillumbik Shire Council 2013, sec. 4.0).

3.2.2 Ocean Grove

Ocean Grove is a coastal community located 95 kilometres south of Melbourne. The 'Ocean Grove town centre urban design framework' has identified a number of improvements to the public realm within the town. Some design objectives taken from the document are:

- Ocean Grove should have a 'heart and soul' with spaces for the community to gather. It should be attractive and vibrant with retail, business, social and cultural activities. Its big beach, ocean and surf character should be evident.
- Ocean Grove should provide a network of roads that don't always give priority to traffic. There should be strong pedestrian and cycle connections between the Park, Town Centre and Beach.
- The design and planning guidelines need to support developments that advance the special character of Ocean Grove (City of Greater Geelong 2013, p. 1)

3.2.3 Toolern

Toolern is a planned community of up to 60 000 residents to be located 40 kilometres west of Melbourne. Four dedicated squares are proposed in the '*Toolern town centre – urban design framework*', each differing in function. Two squares will serve as transit hubs; one will serve civic functions; and the other a village hub (City of Melton & GAA 2014). Twelve principles to be followed in the design of the town centre are presented in the document. Those relevant to this section are:

- **Placemaking –** an authentic town centre which responds to the local environment and caters for the future residential community and visitors to Toolern.
- **Urban structure –** the 'heart' of the Toolern Town Centre, which is structured around a network of crafted public spaces and streets, closely integrates with the transit precinct.
- **Street design –** attractive streets designed to provide a comfortable pedestrian environment through the creation of shelter and protection as well as direct view

lines and connections to the public squares, plazas and gathering points of Toolern.

- **Public spaces –** a network of interesting, safe and enlivened public spaces and pedestrian environments that are designed to accommodate multiple uses and activities at all hours of the day.

- **Sustainability –** place to live, work, shop, and play that are adaptable, and flexible to enable Toolern to develop a 'sense of place' over time. The masterplan is flexible to allow Toolern to develop as a robust, resilient and sustainable town centre into the future.

- **Built form –** a network of interesting, safe and enlivened public spaces and pedestrian environments that are inclusive to all; multiple uses and activities can occur at all hours of the day. Built form which is delivered in a manner which strengthens a sense of enclosure and safety, a series of spaces providing variety in ambiance, scale and function.

- **Community facilities –** major civic, cultural and community facilities which take pride of place in Toolern, creating great civic places and establishing a sense of identity for Toolern and its community.

(City of Melton & GAA 2014, p. 7)

As discussed previously in Chapter 2, there is abundant literature from North America (PPS 2014) and Europe (Gehl 2010) referring to the resurgence of town squares in those parts of the world. The information presented above, albeit brief, provides evidence of similar sentiments Victoria, in terms of the current planning approach including the development of town squares. The three examples presented above all include the provision of a town square or squares in the design of the town centre. Further to this the planning and design objectives in creating town centres noted include pedestrianisation; planning with a human focus; creating meaningful places; and sustainable developments, which were all discussed at length in Chapter 2. Based on the examples provided, these objectives appear now to be the norm in planning in Victoria. The next phase involved a simple demographic comparison of a community with an existing public square and a community with a proposed square with the intention of

building the evidence proving Bacchus Marsh to be a suitable location for a new town square.

3.3 Demographic data

Demographic comparisons between Bacchus Marsh, Caroline Springs and Eltham can be seen in *Table 3.1*. The table provides a brief summary of the demographics as detailed in ABS (2011).

	Bacchus Marsh	Caroline Springs	Eltham
From Melbourne	60 km west	30 km west	25 km east
Population	18 068	20 366	18 162
Avg. Age (years)	37	32	39
Avg. Income ($ per household per week)	1 233	1 653	1 850
Employment status	63% Full time	66% Full time	58% Full time
	35% Part time	23% Part time	37.5% Part time
	4.3% Unemployed	5.4% Unemployed	2.7% Unemployed
Families	4 961	5 608	5 083
Avg. Family size	3.1	3.3	3.3

Table 3.1 A brief comparison of demographic data between Bacchus Marsh, Caroline Springs and Eltham

Although brief, the intention is to simply highlight the similarities of demographic data between Bacchus Marsh (with no town square) and Caroline Springs (with a town square) and Eltham (with an approved proposed town square). Population, employment status, the number of families and the average number of people in a family are similar across the three communities. The only real disparity shown is the average income per household per week with Bacchus Marsh residents earning around $400 and $600 less per week than Caroline Springs and Eltham residents respectively. Given that Caroline Springs has a recently developed town square and Eltham has an approved proposed

town square, there would appear, based purely on the demographic data presented that Bacchus Marsh could sustain its own successful public town square.

3.4 Analysis of an existing public space - Caroline Springs Civic Centre

The public square is located in the heart of Caroline Springs off the main thoroughfare, Caroline Springs Boulevard. The immediate area shown in *Figure 3.3* is mixed use with commercial, retail, residential, educational and civic buildings present.
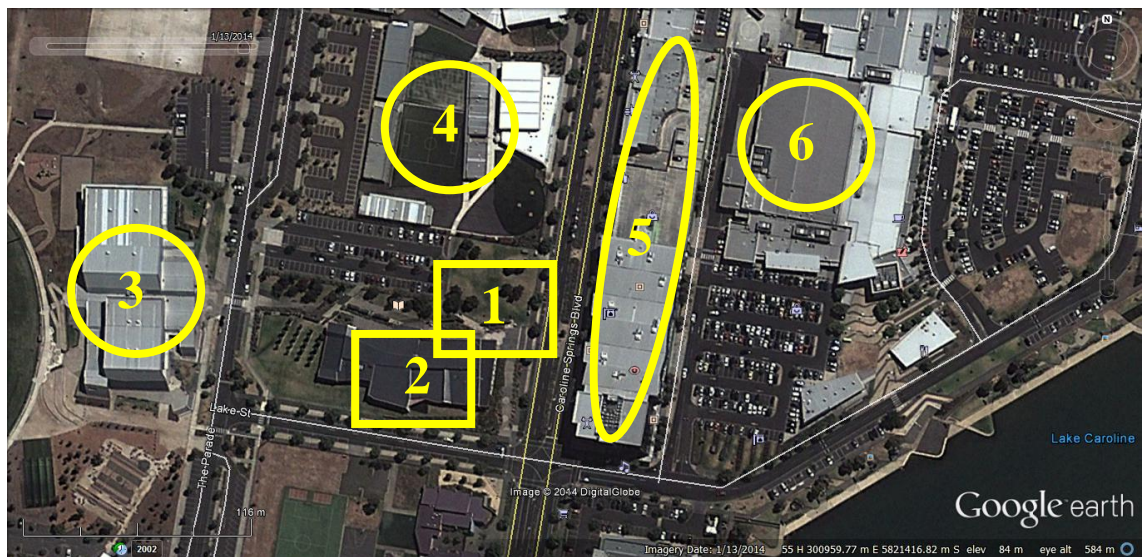
Figure 3.3 Image of the Caroline Springs Civic Centre and surrounding area (*Google Earth 2014)*

The current uses are indicated by the corresponding numbers in *Figure 3.3* as follows:

1. The public square to be analysed and observed.
2. The Civic Centre buildings including the library.
3. An indoor recreational facility.
4. An educational facility.

5. Retail (strip shopping including restaurants), commercial and residential buildings.

6. An indoor retail shopping complex.

The observed space was around 60 x 30m in size and is shown in the following series of images with a description of the area following each.

3.4.1 The 'stairs' zone

Figure 3.4 The 'stairs' zone connecting the space to the street

Figure 3.4 shows the 'stairs zone' from the street into the square. The 20m wide stairway provides plenty of places to stand or sit. Hand rails are good places to lean, along with the primary purpose of safe navigation up or down the stairs. Although around one metre above the street, which is not desirable (Whyte 1980), it still manages to invites users into the space though the tapered design and generous width. An access ramp is located to the left of the stairs that caters for elderly and disabled access, also providing an alternative access point from the abutting street to the south. There is pole style overhead lighting, one of which can be seen on the right hand side of the stairs. The same lighting continues through the space at regular intervals. Upon a night

inspection, the square was illuminated by the light poles and by additional lights in and on the building. The light produced was suitable for safe navigation, however additional lighting would be required for any event or night activities. There are no lights over the northern section of the 'grass' zone.

3.4.2 The 'seats' zone

Figure 3.5 The 'seats' zone from the top of the stairs

Figure 3.5 shows the 'seats' zone from the top of the stairs. The glass doors on the left provide the entrance to the civic centre. The ground surface is coloured exposed aggregate concrete and so is easy to maintain. There are three concrete bench seats in this section of the zone that are also low maintenance and provide seating for four or eight back to back, which is how the school age users were occasionally found to sit. No other users sat back to back. The bench in the foreground is situated too close to the garden bed for users to sit back to back and so would suggest the seats are designed for four users. The garden bed abutting the concrete comprises hardy native plants and shrubs – again low maintenance. Although providing a soft edge, the taller shrubs restrict the view through the square, particularly from the 'seats' zone through to the 'grass' zone. Gehl (2010) recommends that views not be obstructed through a space. In

this case is would be desirable for users in this area to be able to see others in the 'grass' zone. This is supported by the view that what people most like to do in public space is to watch other people (Whyte 1980).

An important aspect of any space for tidiness is a number of rubbish bins throughout (Whyte 1980). There are two sets of bins (each with general rubbish and recycling) which upon inspection of the square for rubbish on the four days of observation appear adequate to service the area.

The four flags acknowledge the culture and identity of the area, with the Australian, Indigenous, Victorian and Shire of Melton flags on display. Adding to the local meaning and identity, the building design and patterned concrete was inspired by the rock formations in the nearby Organ Pipe National Park (Cheney 2013).

Figure 3.6 The 'seats' and 'grass' zone continued through to the sculpture

Figure 3.6 shows a continuation of the 'seats' and 'grass' zone through to the sculpture by artist, Charles Anderson and named 'Words for water'. The sculpture is reminder of scarcity of our natural resources together with conveying an optimistic vision of how new communities and cultures can grow, overlap and evolve together (City of Melton,

2014). Art and sculpture add cultural value to the square by providing identity and a connection of the square to the people who use the space (Carr et al. 1992).

Further seating in the form of two timber bench seats is present in this area. They unfortunately provide little comfort for users due to the angle of the seat and backrest. Users would more often than not sit atop the backrest with their feet on the seat. This would allow them to be at eye level to those standing in the same group. Although unconventional, that configuration seemed to work, particularly when there were groups present at the 15:15 timeslot. A portion of the abutting car park can be seen, with separation provided by a garden bed comprising low native plants. This provides a low maintenance green barrier or soft edge between the space and the car park.

3.4.3 The 'grass' zone

Figure 3.7 The 'grass' looking towards Caroline Springs Boulevard

Figure 3.7 provides a view 180 degrees opposite to that of *Figure 3.6*. Here, one can clearly see the 'grass' zone with the manmade mounds ideal for sitting, or for users to gain a height advantage. The trees provide good shade and relief from the sun when needed. The obvious disadvantages of grass as a surface are its limitations of use due to

inclement weather and the ongoing maintenance required. The advantages are that it provides a comfortable, cool place to sit or stand and it encourages play and activities such as picnics or simply lazing comfortably under a tree. The grass in the foreground provided a good play area and was particularly popular with mothers with small children. The contained nature and feel of that area contributed to that use.

The bicycle racks along the building encourage cycling to the space and also provide great places to lean against and talk. They also provide small children with a kind of 'monkey bar' that they can swing on and hold each in turn.

Figure 3.7 also shows the commercial (above) and retail (below) use buildings along Caroline Springs Boulevard (at the rear of the image). Residential accommodation is also on the above ground levels, to the left and right in the image.

From the analysis of the public space it was found that it exhibits many desirable features as presented by Carr et al. (1992), Childs (2004), Gehl (2000b, 2010), PPS (2014d) and Whyte (1980). Such features include a variety of standing and seating options, hard and soft surfaces, trees and vegetation, rubbish bins and adequate lighting. With the suitability of the square established, the next phase involved discovering how people used the space by unobtrusively observing their movements at different times and on different occasions.

3.5 Observational data analysis and discussion

The following section will discuss observations of users within the three predefined zones in the square. As previously mentioned, the observation times were 12:15, 13:15, 14:15 and 15:15. After the initial round of observations on the 11th of August, it was found that the users in the 15:15 timeslot were dominated by secondary school students who had just finished school. The initial reaction was to remove the observations made at 15:15 since the results would be skewed and not give a true representation of use. Upon closer inspection, it was found that although skewing overall numbers of users, it gave a great indication of how the space was likely to have been intended for use. The

square was at its most active, with students using all of the zones and features within the zones to socialise, the timeslot was kept for this reason. In fact, the most useful information was collected during this observation period as it gave an insight of how a busy square could be used in a small urban community by enthusiastic users.

3.5.1 Zones by observation day

A comparison of the number and type of users in the three zones was made over the four observation periods in order to show the consistency of use or otherwise. The main factor expected to affect the number and types of users were the weather conditions at the time of observations (Gehl 2013). Consequently the weather improved over the course of the four observation periods as follows:

- 11th August - 12°C, cold and cloudy, gusty southerly winds.
- 14th August - 15°C, cool with cloud cover, light south westerly winds.
- 22nd August - 18°C, warm with scattered cloud, slight westerly breeze.
- 1st September - 21°C, warm and clear skies, slight northerly breeze.

The impact of improving weather is clearly evident in the presentation of data that follows.

3.5.1.1 The 'stairs' zone by observation day

The number of users in 'stairs' zone by observation day did not vary greatly over the four observation periods, as shown in *Figure 3*.8. Typically, users were waiting for a bus or pick up from the parking spaces along Caroline Springs Boulevard. Occasionally users were sitting on the stairs looking out towards the footpath and road. An interesting observation was made on the 11th of August when the weather was cold. More users were observed on the stairs than any other day. This can be attributed to the users not wanting to linger in other zones within the square because of the cold weather, hence more were awaiting pick up. In this case, the weather conditions had the opposite effect than that expected. In terms of positioning within the zone, users would either sit on steps or stand leaning on the handrail. Strangers would often keep a distance of at least

half the width of the stairway with most keeping to the edges, while obvious friends or acquaintances would sit or stand in small groups of three or four.

Stairs zone by day

Users - 17
21%
Male - 12
Female - 5
Child - 0

Users - 26
32%
Male -14
Female -12
Child - 0

■ 11-Aug
■ 14-Aug
■ 22-Aug
■ 1-Sep

Users - 18
23%
Male - 10
Female - 7
Child - 1

Users - 19
24%
Male - 11
Female - 7
Child - 1
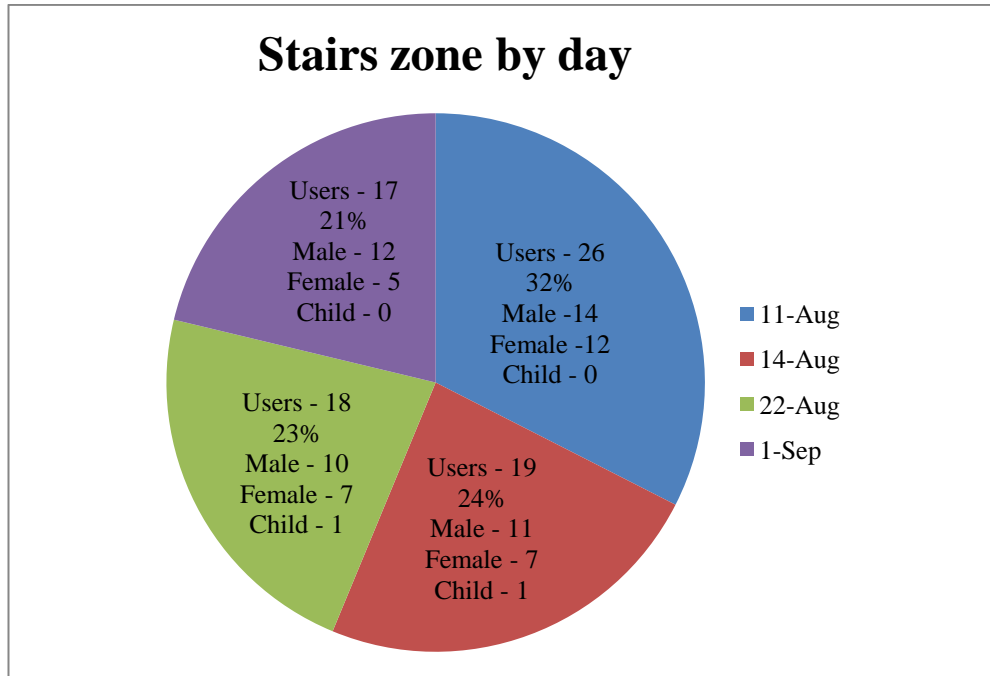
Figure 3.8 Pie chart displaying the number of users of the 'stairs' zone by observation day

3.5.1.2 The 'seats' zone by observation day

The number of users in the 'seats' zone by observation day, show a reversal of use to *Figure 3.8*. Although not showing great disparity, the 11th of August, with the poorest weather, also had the lowest number of users in the zone. The remaining three observation days show a similar number of users, with the 1st of September having the greatest number. Consequently, this was the best day in terms of weather. Even on the coldest day users tended to stay in the square and socialise. The users staying can be attributed comfort provided by the hard surface in the cold weather. The comfort, in this case, is provided by a range of seating and leaning options. Seating options as discussed were bench style seats, while leaning options included the building wall and bicycle racks along the building. Users tended to stay on the edges of the 'seats' zone, whether

sitting or standing, and watch others moving through the centre of the zone. On the coolest day, the 'seats' zone was clearly preferred over the 'grass' zone.
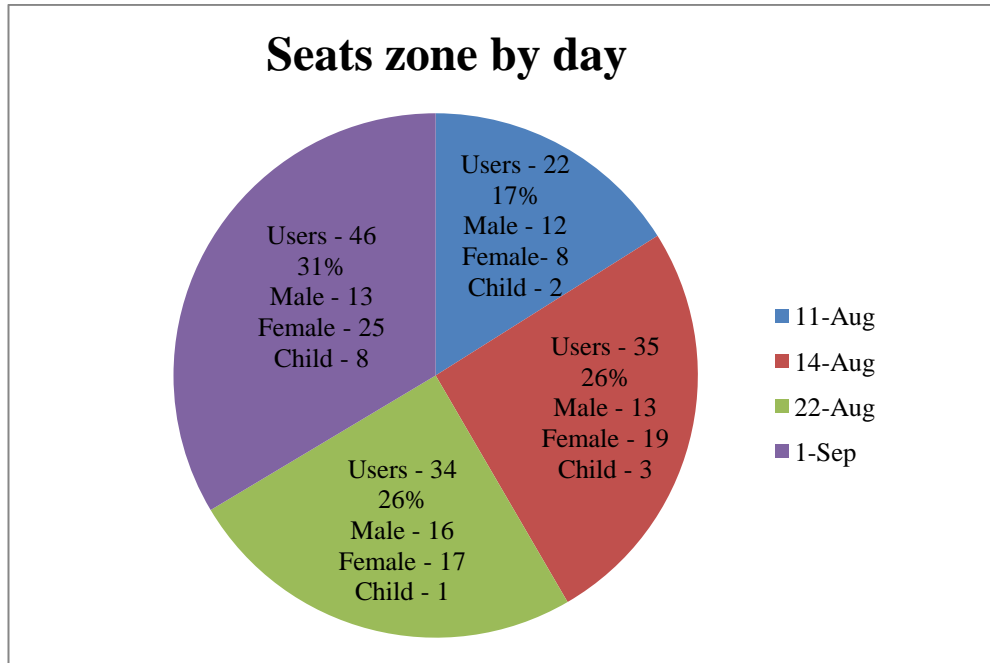
Figure 3.9 Pie chart displaying the number of users of the 'seats' zone by observation day

3.5.1.3 The 'grass' zone by observation day

The steady improvement in weather conditions over the observation period was reflected in the increase in the number of users of the 'grass' zone. This is clearly shown in *Figure 3.10*. Another interesting fact is the number of females consistently outnumbering males. This is discussed further in Section 3.5.2.1. Females tended to sit on the grass in groups or with children on the western grassed area. Children were observed to play on the grass either alone or in groups. The occasional male with child or children was observed. Groups of users typically sat on the mounds through the grassed area, particularly in the 15:15 observation period. This number increased steadily with the improvement in weather. The number of children using the zone also increased accordingly. Children typically played on the grass with a female carer nearby.
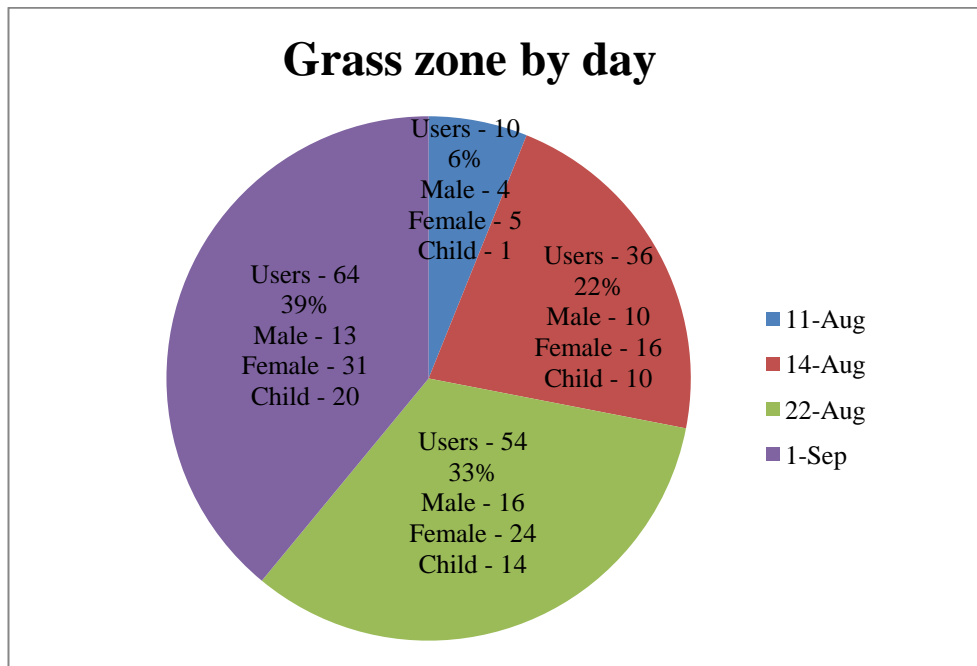
Figure 3.10 Pie chart displaying the number of users of the 'grass' zone by observation day

3.5.2 The overall use of zones

The total number of users over the four observation periods by zone is displayed in *Figure 3.11*. The chart gives an overall count showing the order of popularity based on user discretion of the zones. Although providing the least amount of seating options, the 'grass' zone accommodated the most users. The use of the grass was however, dependent on the weather conditions. The overall use of the three zones suggests that all are valuable inclusions in the design of a town square. Although grass is typically not an inclusion in town square design, the popularity of use observed, suggests it to be the most valuable inclusion.

Overall use of zones
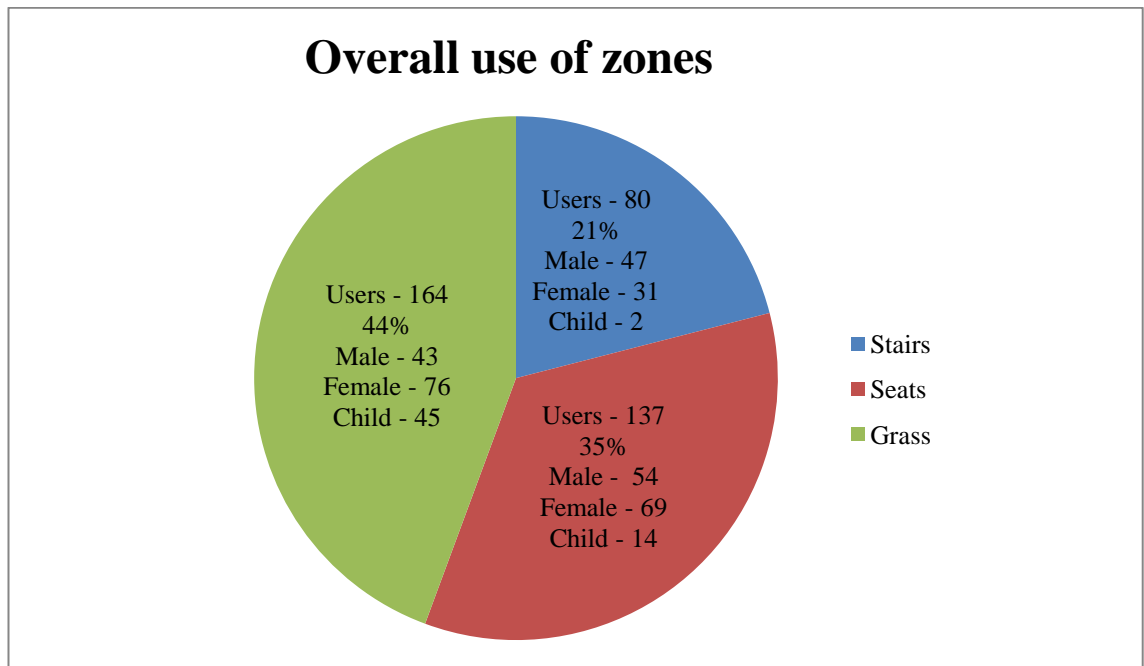
Figure 3.11 Pie chart displaying the overall number of users by zone

3.5.2.1 Male, female or child

Figure 3.11 also displays the overall number of users for each of the zones with a count of females, males and children. Of the 381 observed users, 176 were female, 144 were male and 61 were children. An important aspect of the quality, successful and safe public space is whether females use the space (PPS 2014; Gehl 2010; Whyte 1980). The number of children is also a reflection on the quality and safe feel of the space. If mothers or fathers and their children feel safe and comfortable using the space then the space has a much greater chance of being successful (PPS 2014; Gehl 2010; Whyte 1980). The observed square exhibited this diversity of user and so is a good example to base features to include in a new public square.

3.6 Conclusions

Town squares feature high on the agenda in current planning approaches of municipalities throughout Victoria. The importance of inclusive communities and the

relationship to a sense of belonging for community members resonates throughout the planning documents presented from Eltham, Ocean Grove and Toolern.

The importance of the town square has not only been emphasised through those documents but through the observations made at the Caroline Springs Civic Centre. The observations have served the purpose of determining:

- how many users may frequent an existing public square with similar attributes to the area of the proposed town square in Bacchus Marsh;
- which areas are most frequented;
- how the areas within the space are used;
- how many females, males and children use the space;
- the relationship between the weather conditions and the use of the various zones within the space.

The results of the observations showed a reasonably constant use of the 'stairs' and 'seats' zones over the observation period, regardless of weather conditions. The use in the 'grass' zone increased markedly with improved weather conditions.

The results were able to be used in determining design features such as the inclusion of a grassed area, seating and lighting options and art in the proposed town square in Bacchus Marsh. The results also confirm that Bacchus Marsh is a suitable location for the development of a potentially successful public town square

Information and data presented in Chapter 2 and Chapter 3 will be used in the preparation and development of the framework for the design of public town squares, presented in the following chapter.

Chapter 4

4.0 The framework and discussion

The previous chapter discussed the significance and relevance of observational data collected, concluding that a public town square in Bacchus Marsh has the potential to be a successful public space. From the data in Chapter 3, together with details on the values that communities attach to public space and the three public space principles and criteria examples from Thomson & Maginn, PPS and Gehl discussed in Chapter 2, a framework for the development of public town squares was able to be developed. The following chapter will discuss and explain the visual aspects of the framework design and the elements that make up the framework.

4.1 A framework for the development of public town squares

The framework comprises eight 'principle squares' with the successful public town square at the centre as the ultimate goal. These principles are surrounded by the 'accountability square' showing those responsible for the principles. The principles and those responsible are in turn encased by the 'values square'. The overall layout provides visual impact and emphasises the square in every way. The framework shows all aspects as interrelated and all together produce the result in the centre, a successful public town square.
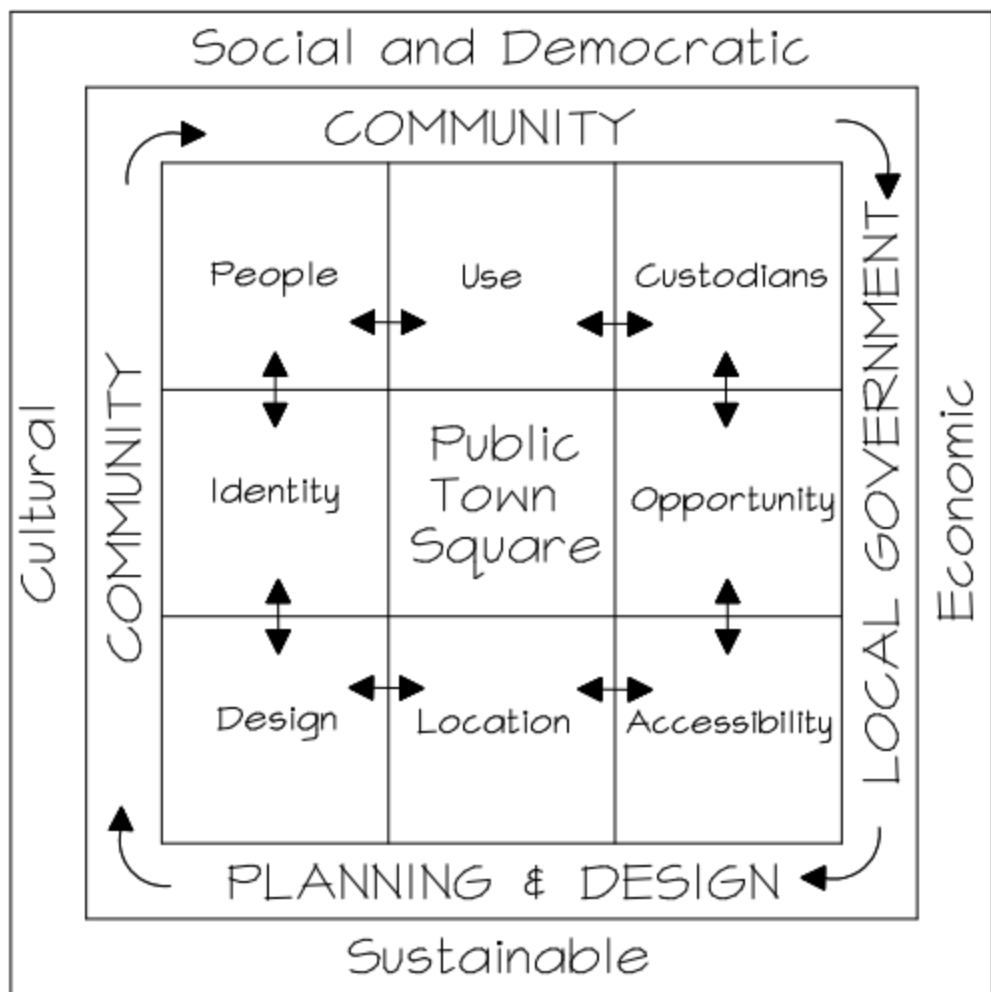
Figure 4.1 The resultant framework for development of public town squares

The framework is designed to be used in the development of a public town square. All principles and related criteria need to be investigated and reported on, and by doing so, all values will have been addressed.

Chapter 2 describes how town squares can and should evolve over time, and how they should be developed depending on local conditions. To cater for this, the principles within the framework are designed with the ability to be moved similar to a simple sliding number puzzle, symbolised by two way arrows between the principles. By sliding the principles, the parties responsible for the principles can be customised to suit local conditions and/or the specific nature and purpose of the development. This versatility in the framework is a deliberate attempt to convey the complex nature of

developing a successful public town square and the need to adapt a design to local conditions.

In addition to this sliding of the principles, the 'accountability square' can be rotated, symbolised by curved arrows, to change the position those responsible for the 'principle squares'. This feature again emphasises the need for versatility and the respect of local context. The sliding of the 'principle squares' and the rotation of the 'accountability square' provides an infinite number of combinations, in effect stating that all are responsible for the principles in some way. This overall responsibility promotes consultation between all parties with the result being a successful public town square. The movement also represents that the framework is dynamic and can be built on over time with any changes to planning theory and policy that may occur.

The outermost 'values square' remains constant with the three values that communities attach to public space – social; cultural; and economic; and the benefits to community members from these values being the overall goal of the development. In the framework, the public town square is underlined by 'sustainable' to highlight the importance of any development in today's society being a sustainable one in term of planning, design and enduring nature.

Further explanation of the framework and the elements within, are addressed in the following sections.

4.1.1 The 'principle squares'

The 'principle' squares cover eight core principles that go into the development of a public town square based on the literature presented in Chapter 2 and observations made in Chapter 3. The principles are not exhaustive, and interpretation and adaptation is invited to suit local conditions. The core principles contain a subset of criteria or qualities that define that principle. The criteria may overlap with some principles and may also be altered or adapted to suit local conditions or to promote unique characteristics within a community. The following sections describe the principles and related criteria.

4.1.1.1 People

'People' relates to the aspects of the square that encourage sociability and nurture and foster community involvement and interaction. This principle and related criteria can result in physical health benefits along with improving general wellbeing within the community. The importance of physical health in today's society and the relationship to planning was discussed in detail in Chapter 2. The related criteria for 'people' include:

- *Inclusive*: No users should not be excluded from the square which includes exclusion by other users. This is a critical element of a democratic society and refers to the user's rights to be in and use the square. It also refers to users being permitted to express an opinion or view in the space. The unimpeded use of the square by the disabled and elderly is also an important aspect of inclusiveness.
- *Vibrant*: A dynamic vibe should be produced by the elements within and activities that occur within the square. This criterion is also related to the 'use' principle. People and activities within the square are what make it a vibrant place. This is evidenced by Federation Square discussed in Chapter 2.
- *Health and wellbeing*: The square, features around, or elements within should promote exercise, walking and cycling. The opportunity to exercise within the square should be provided by organised events promoting physical health within the community.

4.1.1.2 Use

Use incorporates the activities that take place or are proposed to do so in the square. The related criteria are:

- *Inviting*: The square itself should be invite use by potential users. This criterion is related to the overall design of the square and the connection between the street and surrounding buildings to the square.
- *Variety*: A range of options and activities should be provided in the square to engage a diverse range of users. Female, male, disabled, young and elderly users

should be catered and allowed for. The square should be designed in such a way as to provide adequate areas to hold a range of activities at any one time.

- *Day and night:* Surrounding businesses should promote both day and night activities in and around the square and organised night time activities should be encouraged within the square (Gehl 2010). User activity, day or night within the square, can help make the space feel safe for all users, promoting use by a wide and diverse range of users (Gehl 2010; Healthy places and spaces 2009; Whyte 1980).

4.1.1.3 Identity

Relates to the cultural aspects of the square and its' connection to the town and the community. Creating a square with local meaning and significance can help to foster a sense of belonging and pride within a community, which in turn can encourage community engagement and involvement (Carr et al. 1992; Kelly 2012). Although the history of a place cannot be altered, the 'identity' needs to be adaptable to cultural and societal changes that may occur over time (Healthy places and spaces 2009). The related criteria include:

- *History*: The local history and heritage of the town should be respected and reflected in the overall design of the square (MPS 2014). This may be present in special features within the square that are relevant to the location's history. Events and activities held within the square can make community members aware of the location's history and build a sense of belonging not only to the location but to the square itself.

- *Culture*: Elements that incorporate local culture (including indigenous culture) should be included in the square to give the square a distinctive identity or character (Carr et al. 1992; MPS 2014; PPS 2014d). The recognition of indigenous history and culture is an important aspect in planning in today's society. A policy objective in Section 15.03 of the MPS is to 'ensure the protection and conservation of places of Aboriginal cultural heritage significance' (MPS 2014, sec. 15.03-2, p. 6). Further statutory policy guidance

can be found in the *Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006.* The inclusion of flags; public art; indigenous influence; or provision for performances should be included that help to build connections between users and the square. These elements may also attract visitors, having positive economic outcomes.

4.1.1.4 Design

The design of the square is complex and must take into account many aspects. The design should provide a comfortable, safe and welcoming environment for any users (Gehl 2010; MPS 2014) while taking into account any significant features of the locality. The following criteria will help to create that environment:

- *Local:* The square design should incorporate features significant and meaningful taken from the immediate or wider location.

- *Human scale:* The design of the square should be scaled to its surrounds and to the community to which it serves (Gehl 2010; Thompson & Maginn 2012). This includes any surrounding buildings and features within the space. Gehl (1987) suggests the space be no more than 35 metres which is the distance that people can recognise other people.

- *Enduring*: The design should be such that it will not date and thus require remodelling with changes in societal or design trends. This criterion also refers to sustainability. Materials used in construction must be able to withstand environmental and human impacts over time. Current and future activities should be considered to allow for an evolution of the square over time.

- *Pedestrian:* the square should be a dedicated space for pedestrians with limited or no vehicles permitted. Cycling should be encouraged as a mode of transport to the square but should also be limited within the square, primarily for safety reasons.

- *Legible:* The square and features within should be well defined and easy for users to follow. There should be limited obstructions of the view through the square and the square should not be poorly organised or cluttered (City of

Melbourne 2006). Legibility also helps with users feeling comfortable within a space (Gehl 2010; Thompson & Maginn 2012).

- *Active edges:* A variety or seating and standing options should be present throughout the square, but particularly around its edges. In '*Cities for people'*, Gehl describes this as 'edge effect' (Gehl 2010, p. 239). Users particularly like to situate themselves on the edges of the space. This phenomenon was confirmed by the observations made and discussed in Chapter 3.

- *Collaborative:* The planning, design and maintenance of the square should be in conjunction with the people who use the space – the community. Community collaboration is an aspect that resonates throughout the literature as an essential ingredient to any successful public space.

- *Surfaces:* Hard and soft surfaces should be considered in the square's design to provide a range of seating options. If appropriate, and based on the observations in Chapter 3, grassed areas should be incorporated into the design. Grassed areas provide a place for children to play and a comfortable place to sit, particularly during times of good weather.

- *Seating:* A range of seating options should be provided. Formal fixed seats or benches; moveable seats; low retaining walls or garden surrounds; stairs; and even bike racks provide good seating options. This allows the user choice and can promote sociability or allow privacy as desired.

- *Interactive*: Exploration and the opportunity for users to interact with the elements within the square should be promoted. Such elements can promote interaction with strangers and thereby improve social ties and foster a sense of belonging within the community (Kelly 2012). This may be in the form of a fountain or water feature where users are allowed to get their feet wet (Whyte 1980), an exercise station or children's play area.

4.1.1.5 Location

The square should be centrally located and fit within the local planning context. These are described below:

- *Central:* The square should be centrally located in the heart of the town. This allows for all users to access the square and enables a great range of activities to be organised and take place in the square. It also ensures that the square is a focal point for the community as it has been throughout history in Western society, maintaining the historical significance of the square.

- *Within the planning context:* The development of the square needs to fit within the current planning scheme of the town. This also includes community expectations. The location (including the immediate surrounds) should be zoned mixed use to promote a variety of functions to occur in and around the square. This can also promote day and night use and have a significant bearing on the overall success of the square (Healthy places and spaces 2009; Gehl 2010).

- *Informal use:* The space may already be used informally. People may gravitate to the space before development which may help in populating the space when developed (Childs 2004).

4.1.1.6 Accessibility

Accessibility relates to the available access options to the square in terms of roads and pedestrian and cycling routes. It also relates to the users ease of navigations through the square. The criteria are as follows:

- *Walk and cycle:* The square should be able to be accessed safely on foot or by bicycle from most areas within the community. The central location plays an important role in improving walkability to the square. Pedestrian and cycling access should be prioritised over vehicles. Walking or cycling to the square, aside from providing physical activity can also promote social interaction along the way with the increased possibility of social meetings on route to the square.

- *Connected:* There should be a good relationship between the square and the accessing street or streets. This includes only slight elevation differences and an inviting and interesting entrance and vista through the square (Gehl 2010; Whyte 1980). It also related to the general road network connecting to and through the activity centre. This criterion may also refer to the use of technology throughout

the square that may promote social connection such as the use of permanent or temporary screens for viewing events. Information technology and social media can also be beneficial to promote activities within the square to a wider audience. It should be remembered that the square provides the opportunity for face to face contact and social connection that is critical to our wellbeing (Kelly 2012).

- *Accommodating:* Access to and though the square should accommodate anybody with special consideration of the elderly and disabled. Ramps and slight grades throughout should be incorporated into the design. This allows anybody to access and navigate the square making the square more inclusive.

4.1.1.7 Opportunity

Opportunity refers to the related economic aspects of the square and surrounding buildings. They include:

- *Business:* As a mixed-use development, the buildings surrounding the square should provide a variety of business opportunities. Typically the businesses directly abutting the square should have active frontages opening up to the square. This promotes a vibrant atmosphere and invites and encourages use (Gehl 2010; Healthy Spaces and Places 2009; MPS 2014).

- *Markets:* Regular markets should be encouraged not only for economic gain, but for the many social benefits they provide for members of the community and visitors as discussed in Chapter 2 (Watson & Studdert 2006).

- *Tourism:* The elements of the square, along with the surrounding businesses should entice visitors to spend time and money in the square.

- *Food:* Food and beverage businesses are encouraged to trade in and around the square. Having food and drinks available for as long as is practical each day and night will bring users to the square (Healthy Spaces & Places 2009; Whyte 1980).

David Kraljik – Q9820854

4.1.1.8 Custodians

The custodians of the square are important to the success of the square in many ways. Community involvement in the custodianship of a square can instil a sense of pride that can promote community involvement and engagement and foster a sense of belonging within the community. The related criteria are discussed below:

- *Safety:* Safety can come through good design that promotes use and an active environment. A square that is not fenced (Whyte 1980), has no concealed areas either by structures or vegetation, has adequate lighting and promotes use day and night (Healthy Places and Spaces 2009; Gehl 1987, 2010; MPS 2014) can feel safe and promote use by females, males and children. Safe neighbourhood, including public space also help to 'encourage physical activity, foster community connectedness and add the overall health and well being of residents within a community (MSCHWP 2013, p. 24).

- *Surveillance:* Can come through eyes on the street (Gehl 2010; Jacobs 1960; MPS 2014; Thompson & Maginn 2012; Whyte 1980). The 'eyes' can be through the general public, business owners or the occasional presence of local law enforcement.

- *Maintenance:* Efforts need be made to maintain the square in terms of physical attributes and also general cleanliness. A well maintained, tidy public town square promotes use and encourages users to return.

- *Volunteers:* Volunteers should be encouraged to help with maintenance and surveillance. This also helps to foster a sense of belonging and ownership of the space within the community.

The principles cover a broad range of elements that make up a successful public town square. The following section will discuss the parties responsible for the principles, not only in inception, but the ongoing maintenance and improvement over time to keep the square relevant and meaningful to the community.

4.1.2 The 'accountability square'

The 'principle squares' are surrounded by the 'accountability square'. This square contains the parties involved with or responsible for and fostering the principles and related criteria. The rotation of the 'accountability square' is denoted by the curved arrows. The movement of the 'principle squares' and rotation of the 'accountability square' ensures that the square will be developed based on local conditions, which is all important to the success of the square. The responsible parties are positioned connected at each corner of the framework by curved arrows which also symbolise essential requirement of consultation between all parties. In essence, it shows that all parties need to communicate and responsibilities are shared amongst the parties. If this occurs, then the best possible outcome for the community can be achieved, that is, a successful public town square.

Community is given the most responsibility for the square, covering two sides of the 'accessibility square'. PPS, Gehl and Thompson & Maginn (and others) all emphasise community consultation and involvement as essential throughout the planning, design and maintenance of public space. This emphasises the need for members of the community to take an active role in the creation, ongoing development and maintenance of a public town square to make it meaningful and successful. They are indeed, the ones who will use the square on a day to day basis and so should bear the greatest responsibility and input into the square. The responsibilities placed on the community have a proven impact on the overall success of the square (Childs 2004; PPS 2014). In addition to the general community, local business owners are important stakeholders in a square and should be included in this section of the 'accountability square'.

Local government is another responsible party shown in the framework. Local government needs to consult the community, planners and designers to provide the best outcome when it comes to the development of a successful town square. Local government typically have planning departments so therefore, they, and the 'planning' element of the framework may overlap.

Planning & Design is the final responsible party shown in the framework. Those involved with Planning & Design, either from private industry or within local government, need to consult both the community and local government to provide the users with the best possible outcome. Planners need to work within the local planning context in terms of policy and community needs and desires. In relation to urban designers the design of the square, if carefully considered can have positive social (including health and well being), cultural and economic outcomes for a community (ASBEC 2014). These also happen to be the constant values that encase the framework.

4.1.3 The 'values square'

The 'principle squares' and 'accountability square' are encased by the 'values square'. The 'values square' takes the three values communities attach to public space that resonate throughout the literature; social; cultural; and economic, as discussed in detail in Chapter 2, with the important addition of sustainability. The values communities attach to public squares have endured since ancient times and continue to be relevant and significant to today's society (Carr et al. 1992; Healthy spaces and places 2009; Kelly 2012; Wooley 2004). This proves the values to be the constant and enduring elements of the framework while emphasising the importance of them to the community and its members.

The inclusion in the framework of sustainability, in terms of developments, is a critical aspect in current planning theories. Creating sustainable developments in today's society is an essential element of any development. The PIA code of conduct states that developments should be 'Sustainable and ethical' with 'Responsible management of natural and built resources' (PIA 2014). These sentiments are further reflected in local planning related literature (ASBEC 2014; City of Melbourne 2006; Healthy spaces and places 2009, MPS 2014).

4.2 Conclusions

From the literature presented in Chapter 2; analysis of an existing square and observations made in an existing square presented in Chapter 3; a framework for the design of public town squares was developed. The overall visual design of the framework and its moveable elements symbolise; the importance of the base values that the communities attach to public squares; the interchangeable nature of principles and those responsible; the requirement to adapt the development of a square to local conditions; and the essential need for consultation between responsible parties. All of the elements when addressed lead to the central goal of a successful public town square.

The values that communities attach to public space, along with the essential ingredient of sustainability made up the binding fabric surrounding the internal elements of the framework. Those values will provide intrinsic and eternal social, cultural and economic benefits to the communities where the public town square is to be developed. Overall, the values provide a reminder of the importance of public squares in general to communities. The values have endured time and remain critical in providing communities with a sense of belonging that is critical to the personal wellbeing along with physical health. This is especially important since the decline of physical health is one of the most pertinent and current issues in today's society, an issue that the planning profession can have a positive impact on now and into the future.

As discussed in Chapter 1 the case study town of Bacchus Marsh has no current public town square. From the information gathered in Chapters 2, 3 and 4, the social, cultural and economic benefits of such a development to the community are unquestionable. The following chapter will apply the framework to a suitable area in Bacchus Marsh in an attempt to foster the values and provide long lasting benefits to the community.

Chapter 5

5.0 Bacchus Marsh and the framework

The previous chapter described development of the framework whilst explaining the elements that make up the framework.

This chapter will address the application of the developed framework to the available location in Bacchus Marsh. Each principle and criteria will be applied to the location in order to present a draft concept design of a new town square for Bacchus Marsh.

5.1   Bacchus Marsh planning

The Moorabool Planning Scheme (MPS) comprises the Victorian State Planning Policy and the Moorabool Municipal Strategic Statement (MMSS). The Victorian State Planning Policy provides the framework for planning state wide and the MMSS provides the vision for the land use planning in Moorabool. The policy and statement identifies major issues, directions and strategies within zones, overlays and policies providing the means for achieving Council's long term land use and development objectives (MPS 2014). As previously mentioned in Chapter 1, the MPS has identified inadequacies in infrastructure and service provision within Bacchus Marsh that are addressed in part in the following sections discussing of criteria within the framework.

5.2 The location

Site for the proposed town square
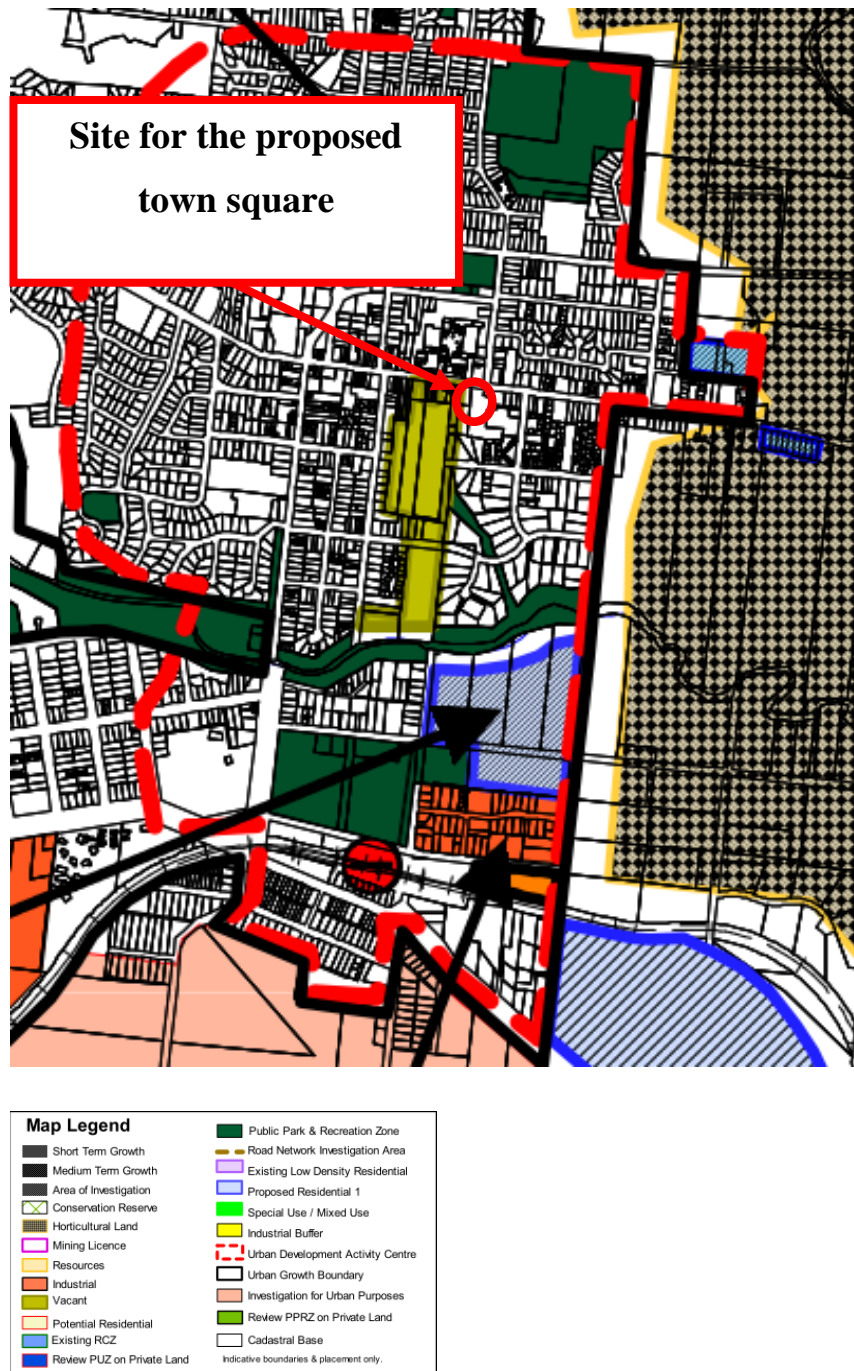
Figure 5.1 Bacchus Marsh framework plan (MPS 2014, sec. 21.07, p. 5).

Figure 5.1 shows the Bacchus Marsh framework plan as presented in the Moorabool Planning Scheme. The proposed site is slightly east of centre to the urban development

activity centre zone (thick dashed line) and is situated on the main road that provides access to Melbourne to the east and to Ballarat to the west. Further details of location, zoning and the site can be found in the sections that follow.

*Figure 5.2 T*he location of the proposed public town square (Source - Google Earth 2014)

Figure 5.2 displays the location of the proposed town square with the numbers representing current surrounding businesses as shown in the following list:

1. The site for the proposed town square – 197 Main Street Bacchus Marsh
2. The RSL building
3. The Moorabool Shire Hall
4. The Moorabool Library - Lerderderg Branch
5. The Bacchus Marsh Bowling Club
6. Stock feed store
7. Auto mechanic
8. Vacant, privately owned land (for sale at the time of writing)
9. Café
10. Service station
11. Hotel

12. Tattooist

13. Bank

14. Chinese restaurant

15. Indian restaurant

16. Thai restaurant

17. Pizza restaurant

18. Vacant shop

19. Restaurant / café

20. Enclosed shopping centre including Coles; Aldi; Target; Post Office; Home wares; Shoes; Variety stores.

21. Subway restaurant

22. Fish and chip shop

23. Pizza restaurant

24. Real estate agent

25. Hairdresser

26. Real estate agent

27. Lawyer

28. Nursery / florist

29. Café

30. Financial services

31. Women's clothing and giftware

32. Real estate agent

33. Private agricultural land

34. Residential flats and housing (not shown)

The list displays a wide variety of use, with as many 11 of the 30 businesses being food related. As previously discussed, this can be an important factor in the success of a square.

Businesses 14 to 19 have a newly constructed alfresco outdoor eating area with equal space provided for each establishment (see *Figure 5.3)*. This will encourage night time use of the area that should, based on the research, flow on to an increased number of

users in the square. As noted, an increase in users in the square will improve safety and encourage further use.

Figure 5.3 – the alfresco outdoor dining constructed in 2014. The proposed site and RSL building can be seen in the background.

Figure 5.4 shows the site zoned mixed use, as desired by the findings of the research. A proposed 'greenway' is also shown in the image that will improve pedestrian and cycling access from the train station to the south (not shown) and the new town square. On completion, the 'greenway' will provide opportunity for more users to access the square, while promoting physical exercise within the community. A sketch of a section through the proposed 'greenway' is shown in *Figure 5.5*.
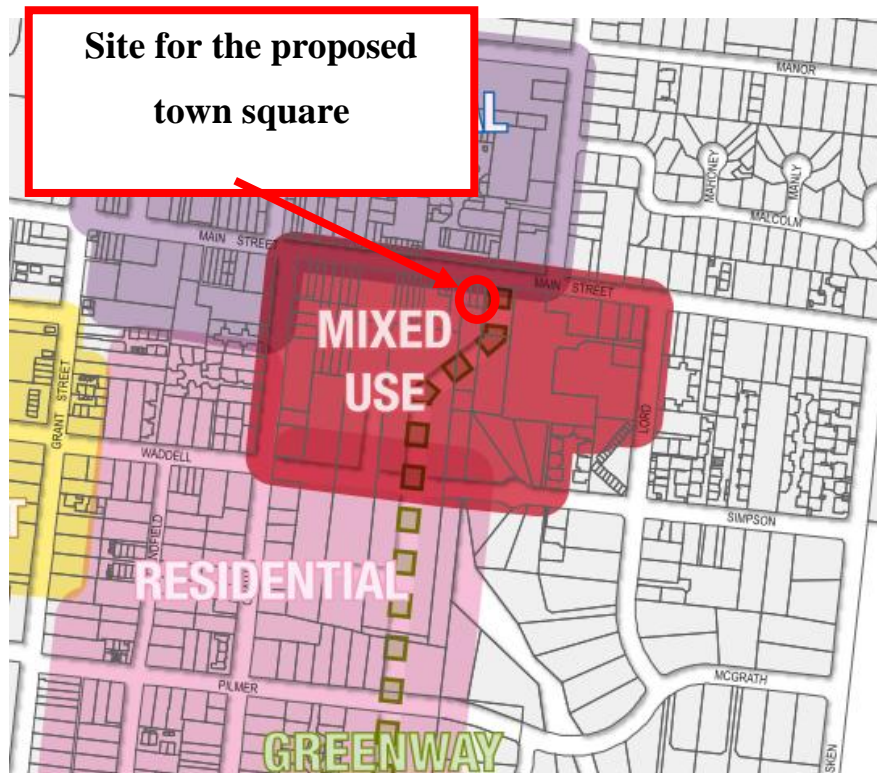
Figure 5.4 The Bacchus Marsh Strategic Vision Plan (BMASP 2011, p.15)
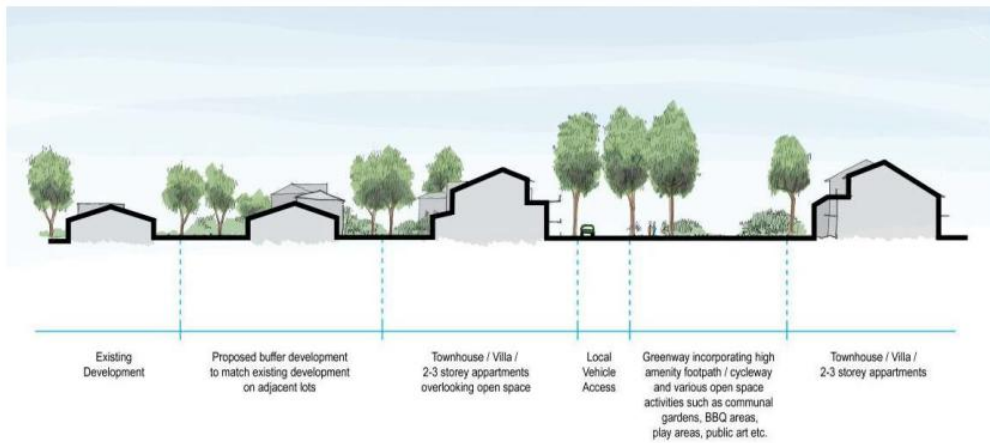
Figure 5.5 A sectional view through the proposed 'greenway' (BMASP 2011, p.38)

5.3 The site

The site for the proposed square is around 55 metres by 55 metres and is shown in *Figure 5.6*.

*Figure 5.6 V*iew of the proposed site from the north west

It would be preferable that the existing trees remain and be integrated into the proposal. The two concrete paths that can be seen are in good condition and should also remain if possible. The site is level with good access for construction vehicles to complete the necessary works.

5.4 The application of the framework
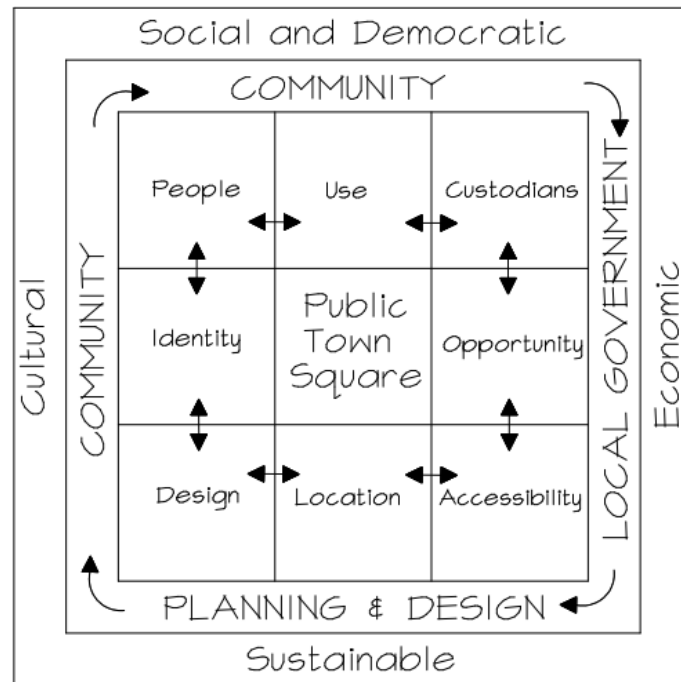
Figure 5.7 The framework re-visited

Figure 5.7 shows the framework to be referenced to throughout the following sections. Each principle will be addressed and considered in turn with an assessment of the principle and related criteria and its relationship to the resultant concept design. Some of the principles and related criteria are satisfied by local planning policy reflected in the following sections. The application of the framework and the resultant concept design, in reality, require community consultation, and professional services, which is beyond the scope of the research. A theoretical application of the framework to the location resulted in a draft concept design, provided as a sketch in *Figure 5*.9. Further investigation, including community consultation is necessary for the framework to be tested in reality. A ☑ is placed beside the criteria when satisfied, a ☒ is placed beside the criteria if not satisfied.

5.4.1 Location

Central ☑

The site for the proposed square is centrally located within the denoted activity centre zone as seen in *Figure 5.1*. The library, shire hall and RSL building emphasise the civic and public nature of the location. The site is bound by the Main Street to the north and access road that runs along the western side of the site. The roads provide a definite line of delineation between the private and public realm, which enables the space to be seen as truly public.

Within the planning context ☑

The square must be designed within the guidelines of the Moorabool Planning Scheme. Other related planning documents such as the Bacchus Marsh Activity Centre Structure Plan (BMACSP) and the Moorabool Shire Council Health and Wellbeing Plan 2013-2017 (MSCHWP), may also provide guidance. The site is zoned mixed use, which based on the research is desirable for the development of a public square. The MPS and Moorabool's economic strategy, Growing Moorabool have identified the need for a mixed-use activity centre, 'adding vibrancy, increasing patronage for local business while realising a stronger community and cultural hub' (MPS 2014, sec 21.04, p. 1).

Informal use ☑

The site was observed to have been used as a location for community gatherings over the course of 2014. One such event was the commemoration of the 100th anniversary of World War I and the other a 'Literacy Trail' event (*Figure 5.8*) that attracted school children to the space.

Figure 5.8 The proposed site used by school children on a 'Literacy Trail'
in September 2014

5.4.2 Accessibility

Walk and cycle ☒

The central location promotes walking and cycling to the square. Conversely community sentiment is that walking and cycling paths in Bacchus Marsh require improvement and upgrade (MSCHWP 2013). The introduction of the 'greenway' will further encourage walking and cycling by providing users the opportunity to use a safe and direct route. An objective of the MPS is to create neighbourhoods orientated around easy walking distances to activity centres, community facilities and public space (MPS 2014, sec. 56.03-1, p. 2). With the planned improvements this criterion will be satisfied.

Connected ☒

Connectedness is addressed by planning documents as a current inadequacy with current road infrastructure and traffic congestion raised as issues by the community

(MSCHWP 2013). The introduction of the 'greenway' will help to address this providing a direct route from the railway station to the square taking pressure of existing access roads. With the planned improvements this criterion will be satisfied.

Accommodating ☑

This is addressed in the MSCHWP, which specifies 'access and inclusion accross all ages, gender, cultural diversity and ability' (MSCHWP 2013, p. 38). The site allows a smooth transition from the street to the square, no steep grades or steps that may be difficult to manage for the elderly or disabled.

5.4.3 Design

Section 15 (Built environment and heritage) of the MPS states that 'Creating quality built environments supports the social, cultural, economic and environmental wellbeing of our communities, cities and towns' (MPS 2014, sec. 15, p. 1). These are again consistent with the values associated with the elements of the framework.

Local ☑

Ensuring the square retains and nurtures the local identity and image of Bacchus Marsh is important to the squares success. The coloured hard surface will reflect the natural colours present in the surrounding gorges and the winding path separating the concrete and grass represent the Lerderderg and Werribee River that traverse the valley. The mounds through the grassed area represent the Great Dividing Range and the design of overhead pole lighting resembles apples hanging from a tree acknowledging the importance of agriculture and horticulture to Bacchus Marsh. The community garden is also linked to agriculture, representing the market gardens, prevalent on the approach to the square through the Avenue of Honour. The existing elm trees in the square will remain, reminding users of the Avenue of Honour and soldiers that lost their lives in World War I. These features ensure the identity of Bacchus Marsh is retained through its history and natural attributes.

Human scale ☑

The concept design shows the square to be scaled appropriately. The mixed-use building to the rear is two storey with the first floor set back from the ground floor, creating a balcony and provision for users to observe the happenings in the square. The overall hard surface is around 40 metres long by 35 metres wide (to the community garden) which put the square within the 35 metre guideline (Gehl 1987). The grassed area around 50 metres long by 10 metres wide, providing a good alternative place for users to be in the square.

Enduring ☑

The materials used in construction shall be durable and sourced where possible from renewable resources. The MPS along with the PIA, emphasise the requirement for sustainable developments in national, state and local planning.

The orientation is such to take advantage of passive solar energy during winter months that will increase use during cooler weather. As mentioned in Chapter 3, weather is a factor that determined use of the square.

Pedestrian ☑

The square is dedicated to pedestrians. No ordinary vehicle access would be permitted. Emergency vehicles would be an exception to this rule. Cycling would not be permitted in the square, with bicycle racks located on the periphery of the square. The design of the racks will allow for the ability of users to lean on, providing additional options for users to gather, promoting sociability, as was found in the observations at Caroline Springs.

Legible ☑

Unlike the Caroline Springs example where vegetation blocked the view across the square, the concept design has clear views through and across the square. The square is

well defined with the trees and existing path on the Main Street section of the square separating the square from the street. The winding existing path and community garden divide the hard and soft surfaced areas of the square. Overall the concept design is clear, uncluttered and therefore, legible to users.

Active edges ☑

The concept design allows for active shop fronts opening up to the square on the south and east sides. The community garden provides an occasional active edge depending on the activity. For example, community members may be tending to the garden or harvesting, providing activity in that area of the square and encouraging sociability with other users.

Collaborative ☒

Although not achieved in this case study, the research and current local planning literature express the necessity of a collaborative approach to planning and design. Community consultation is an essential ingredient in the success of a public town square and any further application of this framework will need to address this aspect. Presentation to the council may stimulate community consultation and provide the opportunity for discussion.

Surfaces ☑

As discussed in Chapter 3, the inclusion of a grassed area is beneficial and promotes use of the square. The concept design allows for the inclusion of hard (concrete) and soft (mounded grass) in the proposal. The hard surfaces account for formal and informal activities all year and in most weather conditions. The grass provides an alternative, primarily supporting informal leisure activities.

Seating ☑

The concept design seating is varied and provides many options for users. The moveable seating provided in front of the retail areas provides users with choice of position, sun, shade, direction and proximity to others depending on personal preference.

Seating around the community garden is around 1.5 metres off the edge of the structure to allow for movement between the seating and garden itself. This also allows for community members to tend to the garden. It also provides users with a choice of which direction they would like to face either to the east and the hard surface of the square, to the west and the soft surface of the grass or to the garden itself.

Other seating options include around the fountain or sculpture, existing bench seats around trees, or new benches throughout the square.

Interactive ☑

The inclusion of a fountain, sculpture, community garden and mounded grass area provide places for users to interact with the elements within the square, making it an interesting and engaging place to be.

5.4.4 Opportunity

Business ☑

As previously mentioned, the Council have identified the need for a mixed-use activity centre, adding vibrancy and increasing patronage for local businesses. Twenty-five businesses were identified in Section 5.1 (with the enclosed shopping centre counted as one). The square presents the opportunity for restaurants; café's; and other food related stores; stores to browse; and small vendors to trade within the square. This provides opportunities for local employment and adds to the diversity of retail options, reducing the need for people to travel out of town to shop.

Markets ☑

The square by its existence provides the opportunity to hold farmers markets. The MPS states that 'Agriculture is the major sector in Moorabool's economy…with intensive horticulture on irrigated land around Bacchus Marsh' (MPS 2014, sec. 21.01, p. 1). The horticulture is primarily orchards (apple, cherry and other stone fruits), vegetable production and strawberry production and picking which also happens to be a tourist attraction. Farmers markets organised in the square will be an ideal event to support local growers and promote their produce.

Tourism ☑

As mentioned above, the horticultural resources in Bacchus Marsh support 'tourism and the lifestyle and appeal of the area' (MPS 2014, sec. 21.04, p. 1). Section 21.04 of the MPS states that these horticultural areas are to be protected from residential encroachment to ensure they continue to support the economy and tourism. The square itself, or events such as farmers markets held within the square can encourage visitors to the town improving the local economy.

Food ☑

The square presents the opportunity for restaurants; café's; ice cream shops; other food related stores; or small food vendors to trade within the square. Users are likely to bring food from the nearby existing food stores and eat in the square, increasing overall use. Farmers markets held in the square will also provide the opportunity for local people and visitors alike to sample and enjoy local produce. The community garden will produce some food, but more importantly provide a talking point for users promoting sociability and ownership of the square.

5.4.5 Identity

History ☑

The current local planning documents mention existing built form, historic buildings and landscapes, 'contribute to the Shire's numerous places of natural and cultural heritage significance' (MPS 2014, sec. 21.01, p. 1) and that these should be protected, maintained and reflected in future development.

The RSL cannon is shown in the concept design as a historical element within the square. The fountain or sculpture may also be linked to the history of the town in some way. This nature of the connection would best be determined through community consultation.

Indigenous history would also be recognised, also determined though community consultation and communication with the local Aboriginal community.

Culture ☑

Section 15.01 (Urban environment) of the MPS states that urban design is to create urban environments that are 'safe, functional and provide good quality environments with a *sense of place* and *cultural identity*' (MPS 2014, sec. 15.01, p. 1). Recognition of Aboriginal culture is covered in Section 15.03 of the MPS and the MSCHWP. Matters relating to Aboriginal culture and history would be best addressed through consultation with the local Aboriginal community.

Flags, as shown in the concept design in are included in a similar configuration to the Caroline Springs example. An Australian, Aboriginal, Victorian and Moorabool flag could be permanently on display recognising the location and displaying a sense of pride for the country and location.

The fountain or sculpture shown in the concept design has local significance and creates a unique identity for the square that users can relate to as discussed in the previous section.

Events and activities in the square will celebrate other cultures, acknowledging the multi-cultural society that is Australia.

5.4.6 People

Inclusive ☑

A goal in the MSCHWP is to 'create inclusive and engaged communities that provide opportunities for people across their life stages to participate in activities that improve wellbeing' within the community (MSCHWP 2013, p.3). The square is truly public in nature and no users will be excluded.

Vibrant ☑

The extensive use of the square and activities organised for within the square will ensure vibrancy and create a dynamic vibe. The incorporation of a screen for viewing movies and events will help create the desired vibe.

Health and wellbeing ☑

A priority of the MSCHWP is the support and promotion of healthy lifestyles and being active. The square will provide opportunity through its existence and through activities within the square focussed on physical exercise.

The square also provides the social forum required for face to face interaction, discussed throughout as being critical to personal wellbeing.

5.4.7 Use

Inviting ☑

The square is open and inviting to all users. No barriers exist to pedestrian access or movement throughout the square.

Variety ☑

The square is available for a variety of uses by a diverse range of users. Activities including Farmers Markets, screenings of movies and events, performances, charity awareness, and day to day activities will be encouraged. This will create interest within and cater for a wide range of the community that will help foster a sense of belonging within the community.

Day and night ☑

It will be the aim that businesses within the square are open for extended hours where practicable to provide the opportunity for users to linger in the square after dark. Surrounding businesses should aim to do the same, creating foot traffic and more users to the area.

Lighting from that described in the design section along with lighting provided by the businesses will allow the square to be used safely and comfortable at night.

The screen will also provide night time activities making the square a more vibrant place for more hours of every day.

5.4.8 Custodians

Safety ☑

The Main Street location may help to provide a safe environment before even considering the design elements that help with this criterion. It is generally busy with vehicle and pedestrian traffic, is well lit and well maintained by the Council. Local police frequently drive past the space as the police station is also located on Main Street. Provided good, commonsense design prevails, the square will feel and be a safe place for all.

Surveillance ☑

Surveillance will come from users within and around the square, police and other authorities and business owners whether permanent or temporary. The aim is to have the square populated for as many hours in a day as is practical. If this is achieved then greater passive surveillance and safety will follow.

Maintenance ☑

The Moorabool Shire Council would be in charge of maintenance and repairs of the square. Mowing of the grassed area and general rubbish removal would be included in the Council's responsibility. General cleanliness is the responsibility of the users as would be the maintenance of the community garden. A volunteer group may be beneficial to ensure maintenance does occur.

Volunteers ☑

Bacchus Marsh has a number of volunteer run organisations including the Bacchus Marsh Historical Society, who along with housing, sorting and maintaining historical town records, operate the Blacksmiths Cottage (an historic building) and the Forge Book Barn. From the 2011 Census, 20.3 per cent of the local population reported performing volunteer work compared with 17.7 per cent for Victoria (MSCHWP 2013,

p.14). This suggests that a significant number of people within the town are willing to volunteer and lend a hand with aspects of the community that help of benefit its members. The inclusion of a community garden in the concept design can help create a feeling of ownership of the square and instil a sense of pride within community members.

5.5 The draft concept design

Existing car park

Bike racks — Existing concrete path

New 2 storey building with 1st floor setback
Ground - restaurant / cafe, tourist info
First - commercial with balcony
Provision for screen

Bench style seating

Moveable seating

Community garden

Feature
(sculpture or fountain)

Moveable seating

Bench seating

Bench style seating

RSL cannon

Bike racks

Flags

Light pole

Coloured concrete

Existing concrete path

36 m

Bike racks

Main Street

Existing RSL building

New small retail / food and beverage

Mounded grass area

Access Road

The Draft Concept Design

5.6 Conclusions

The location and surrounds were described to prove the suitability of the site to the development proposal. Following this, the framework for the development of town squares was applied to the location.

It is understood that the absence of community consultation places a severe limitation of the overall process, however, for the purpose of the research, the methods adopted were deemed appropriate to produce an initial draft concept design for review and comment by Council and the community.

It was found that for clarity and to further refine the framework, some of the criteria within the principles may need to be broken down into smaller components. For example 'connected' may be divided into 'infrastructure connection' and 'social connection' and 'street square connection'. With the limitations imposed on the research, the necessity of refinement of the framework was an expected outcome to in future ensure the best possible result.

Despite the limitations and the shortfalls in the framework, the result was a concept design that, based on the research, provides a good example of a quality public town square.

Chapter 6

6.0 Conclusion

From the research conducted it was found that public space is an essential and complex element within a community. Many hands delve into the pie that is public space before its final development and competing interests are often in conflict as to its inclusion and extent in the public realm. After World War II, public space was almost forgotten by planners and policy makers with Modernist planning theories dominating the landscape. Fortunately, Modernist theory that was based on individual buildings and vehicle transport, have been superseded by planning theories concerning people and their general health and wellbeing. This has lead to a resurgence in the creation of quality public space in the form of public town squares.

To re-cap, the primary research question raised in this dissertation is:

- What social value can be placed on the presence of a public town square in a small urban community?

To aid in answering this, the following secondary research questions were also raised:

- What values do communities attach to public space and how are they relevant to today's society?
- Can the original function, meaning and purpose of the public town square be relevant in today's society making the square a significant inclusion in town planning as it has been throughout history?

In order to answer the primary research question of - *What social value can be placed on the presence of a public town square in a small urban community?* - the values that communities attach to public space were first investigated and assessed as to their relevance to modern day society. Social, cultural and economic values are those that resonated through the literature and have endured throughout history. It was determined

that these values still apply today and remain the underlying elements in terms of benefits to a community, of any public space. All public space in some way provides these values, to what degree depends on the quality of the space. Quality refers to the location, design, features and meaning, all of which are reflected ultimately by the overall use of the space.

The historic role and function of the public town square in Western society was then investigated to gain an understanding of the significance of the square to communities throughout history and in turn relate that to modern day society. As the focus of the dissertation was on Western society, the literature investigated was primarily from Western Europe.

It was concluded that, although a matter of contention and debate, raised in the following paragraph, the historical functions of the square to the community remained today as they have through history. Since 500 B.C. the square has been the public forum, providing a social, cultural and economic arena to communities. Although at all times, all functions are present in some way, over time the functions have changed in terms of priority depending on societal situation and trends. For example, a medieval square's primary function was a market (economic); a Renaissance square represented art and culture of the time (cultural); finally, the primary function of modern day squares is for leisure (social). Regardless of priority, these functions have endured the test of time. Religious, political, consumerist and leisure activities have been some of the activities that have taken place in squares since that time and still remain today. The presence of the functions and activities mentioned confirm the current day significance of the square, making it a relevant inclusion into the public realm.

Some academics contend that the square as public forum had been superseded by communication over the internet and social media. These theories were acknowledged and investigated and the conclusion reached that the square was in fact still a relevant public forum and could co-exist with the recent advancements in communications technology. Proving this theory, an example was provided where a recent political demonstration in a public square was organised using social media as the advertising

medium. In addition to this example it was found that the psychological need for human face to face contact is an essential element that is critical to a person's wellbeing. The square also provides the opportunity to partake in physical exercise which can help to combat the health problems of obesity and type II diabetes that have become prevalent in Western society. These health issues and rapid advancements in communications technology pose complex challenges to planners now and into the future.

Adding to these challenges, the complex nature of urban planning in today's society was emphasised by the presentation of views and opinions on public space from social and political scientists; academics; and philosophers; as well as the more expected theories from architects, urban designers and planners. The complexity is accentuated by the current planning theories involving the provision of sustainable developments in terms of; the environmental impact of development; and the enduring nature and features of the development. These aspects, together with the established fact that community consultation is essential to the success of any public space, prove the complex nature of planning today. Sustainability and community consultation were essential inclusions in the resultant framework for the development of town squares discussed later in this chapter.

To combat the lack of local literature concerning town squares in Australia, analysis of an existing town square and unobtrusive observations of users within the square were conducted. The Caroline Springs Civic Centre provided a suitable location based on demographic similarities and further similarities of the existing public square to the location of the proposed town square in Bacchus Marsh. The analysis of the square gave insight on those features and design elements that were based on local conditions such as sculpture; inclusion of flags acknowledging culture; and the incorporation of local features in building design. These features give the square meaning and significance to the local community. The literature presented, emphasised developing a square based on local conditions as a critical element to the ultimate success of the square. As discussed, this was found to be reflected in the design at Caroline Springs and in turn was reflected in framework and further applied in the proposed town square in Bacchus Marsh.

The observations provided patterns of use and also served to confirm the inclusion of elements within the framework and design of town squares that are suited to local conditions. An example of this is that the likelihood of success of public space is dependent on the presence of female use of the space. It was observed that a grassed area in the square clearly encouraged use by females and children, hence is a valuable inclusion into public square development. Other factors confirmed by observations were, 'edge effect' and the value of including features that had multiple functions such as bike racks and large rocks that could be used to sit or lean on. These features encouraged social interaction and were factors in the use of, and thereby, overall success of the square.

A significant limitation imposed on the research of not being permitted to approach the public during the observations is acknowledged to have had an effect on the overall results. User's personal feelings on the square would have made a valuable contribution to the framework and development of a new town square that are discussed in the following sections. In light of this limitation, the data was collected solely through unobtrusive observation. The results provided suitable data to satisfy the aims of the research to a point where the observations informed the framework and provided guidance in overall design and use of a public square in a local environment.

From the research including existing literature; existing frameworks for the development of public space in general; analysis of an existing town square; and observations within the existing town square, a framework for the design of public town squares was developed. The framework provides a visual and functional tool that symbolises the square in every way. In terms of the application of the framework to the proposed location in Bacchus Marsh, it served the purpose of resulting in a draft concept design. It was found however, that for clarity some of the criteria within the principles may need to be broken down into smaller components to further refine the framework. This along with community consultation would in turn improve the process, and the result.

Community consultation is arguably the most important factor in the creation of successful public space and the framework reflects this finding. Consultation between all parties responsible for the development of a public square also ensures local relevance and meaning is incorporated into the development. The values that communities attach to public space are also prominent in the framework along with sustainability, which was found to be the overriding theme in current local planning literature. In the absence of community consultation, the application of the framework to the case study – Bacchus Marsh, was theoretical and based on the information gathered and collated and discussed previously. Although this is a major limitation placed on the research, it is the hope that outcomes presented will raise discussion and review within the Moorabool Shire Council who may then decide to present the proposal to the community for further review and comment. In an attempt to combat the absence of community consultation, generally, a commonsense approach was adopted throughout all aspects of the research. This approach is one supported by the literature and relevant planning documents perused.

To return to the primary research question of what social value can be placed on the presence of a town square in a small urban community – Bacchus Marsh. The overriding theme resulting from the research indicates that community members can not only benefit from social values but also cultural and economic. Together, the values provide community members with benefits that are meaningful and significant to their lives. The most important social value to society today is the opportunity that a high quality public square can provide to improve physical health and personal wellbeing.

Obesity and type II diabetes have been discussed as major health concerns in Australian society. The opportunity and promotion of physical exercise provide the community with health benefits aimed to reduce the prevalence of the diseases. The opportunity for face to face social interaction can create and foster a sense of community or sense of belonging that are critical to personal wellbeing as previously mentioned. The health and psychological benefits to community members are intrinsic and eternal. These benefits are aspects of life that planners can have a direct positive impact on now and into the future.

Overall, despite the limitations imposed on the research, the aim of determining the modern significance of the public town square and the social, cultural and economic values that current day communities attach to a public town square was achieved. The framework for development of town squares was created and applied to the proposed location in Bacchus Marsh and a draft concept design of a sustainable public town square was presented - a public square that will add lasting value to the community.

6.1 Further research

Public space encompasses a large area of study and a wide variety of disciplines. Therefore, further research could take one of many paths. Although increasing density in cities and smaller communities is high on the agenda, how much damage has suburbanisation, car and shopping culture affected the psyche of society in Australia. Is the quarter acre dream still a reality and if so how does one change the mindset of Australians to adopt the sustainable future approach.

Further research that may be undertaken with immediate reference to that presented was identified as:

- Improve deficiencies in the framework developed in Chapter 4. Refinement would improve the desired outcome and overall clarity throughout the process.
- Investigate youth activity and perception of public space.
- Investigate issues with women and children in public space.
- Investigate issues with Indigenous people in public space.
- Define and further investigate the relationship between planning theory and physical and mental health within the community. Is planning theory a reaction to public health issues? If so to what extent.

Conversely, another question that may be raised is can we as a society support and sustain the latest planning theories, socially, economically and culturally? Does business and economics, political agenda, personal safety and security inhibit or prevent us from achieving these ideal goals?

Chapter 7

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Appendix A

University of Southern Queensland

FACULTY OF ENGINEERING AND BUILT ENVIRONMENT

ENG 4111/ENG 4112 Research Project
PROJECT SPECIFICATION

FOR: David KRALJIK

TOPIC: THE VALUE OF PUBLIC SPACE – A TOWN SQUARE IN A SMALL
                   URBAN COMMUNITY

SUPERVISORS: Marita Basson and Paula Grant

ENROLMENT: ENG 4111 – Semester 1, 2014 / ENG 4112 – Semester 2, 2014.

PROJECT AIM: To evaluate the social value of public space to the small urban
                   community with particular emphasis on the town square. To use
                   the results of the research to compile a framework for the
                   development of a town square in a small urban community.

PROGRAMME: Issue A – 19th March 2014

1. Research literature on the social value of town squares, both internationally and
   locally.
2. Research and comment on the historical significance town squares held for
   communities in the past and compare that with the modern day significance of
   public space.
3. Comment on the social values communities attach to public space, with
   particular reference to, and emphasis on, town squares as evidenced in the
   literature.
4. Analyse an existing small urban community's geographical characteristics and
   statistical demographic data for use as secondary data in the preparation of a
   proposal for the development of a town square as part of open space
   requirements by local authorities.
5. Observe and evaluate characteristics of users, types of social activities, types of
   business activity within and surrounding an existing town square in the

Appendix A

Continued from previous page:

> abovementioned locality. On multiple occasions and during multiple times of the day to collect primary data to inform the framework for the development of a town square in a small urban community.

6. Apply the framework to a case study involving the proposal for the development of a town square in a small urban community (Bacchus Marsh, VIC).
7. Submit an academic dissertation on the research.

As time permits:

8. Draft a concept design of the town square proposal.

 AGREED: _____(Student) _____ , _____
(Supervisors)

          Date: /   / 2014   Date: /   / 2014   Date: /   / 2014

Appendix B

Have your say..... Moorabool

Community Strengthening Survey

1. On scale of 1-5, (1=very low and 5=very high) how would you rate the adequacy in your local community in terms of your needs of:
   - A) public transport — 2
   - B) health services — 5
   - C) education — 2

2. On a scale of 1-5, (1=very low and 5=very high) how adequate are the opportunities in your local community for you to effectively engage in:
   - A) sport and recreation — 4
   - B) art and cultural activities — 2

3. How would you rate the opportunity for social interaction within your local community's public spaces, facilities and local groups (1=very low and 5=very high)

   1   (2)   3   4   5

4. How would you rate the parks, reserves and open spaces in your local community for upkeep, accessibility and facilities (1=very low and 5=very high)

   1   (2)   3   4   5

5. How would you rate the level of support available to you from friends, family and neighbours (1=very low and 5=very high)

   1   2   (3)   4   5

6. How would you rate access to buildings and services in your local community for people with a physical disability? (1=very low and 5=very high)

   1   2   (3)   4   5

7. How welcoming is your local community of people from different cultures? (1=not welcoming and 5=very welcoming)

   1   2   (3)   4   5

PTO→

Appendix C

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

6 August 2014

UNIVERSITY
of SOUTHERN
QUEENSLAND
AUSTRALIA

Re: Observations for ENG4111/4112 Research Project by David Kraljik (student number 0019 820854)

David is currently enrolled as a student at USQ and is busy with his fourth year research project. As part of the project he has to collect data using unobtrusive observations and taking photographs in public open space settings in Caroline Springs.

It would be appreciated if David could be allowed to conduct his data collection unhindered. David is in possession of his student card and you may ask to view that.

If you require any further information, please contact me on the contact details below. I am David's supervisor for his research project, titled *The value of public space – a town square in a small urban community*.

Email address: marita.basson@usq.edu.au

Work no: (07) 4631 2335

Yours sincerely

Marita Basson
Lecturer Urban Design and Planning

University of Southern Queensland
Toowoomba | Springfield | Fraser Coast

usq.edu.au
CRICOS QLD 00244B NSW 02225M
PRV 12081

Appendix D

Time	Stairs	Male	Female	Child	Seats	Male	Female	Child	Grass	Male	Female	Child
12:15	4	2	2	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
13:15	3	2	1	0	3	0	1	2	2	1	0	1
14:15	3	1	2	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
15:15	16	9	7	0	17	12	5	0	8	3	5	0
Totals	26	14	12	0	22	12	8	2	10	4	5	1
Overall	58											

Seats

Grass

Stairs

Day – Monday

Date – 11th August 2014

Weather – 12°C

Additional notes:

Cold and cloudy day.

Rain – Nil

Wind – Gusty and cold from the south.

Appendix D

David Kraljik – Q9820854

Appendix D

Day – Thursday

Date – 14th August 2014

Weather - 15°C

Additional notes:

Cool day with cloud cover.

Rain – Nil

Wind – Light from the south.

Grass

Seats

Stairs

Time	Stairs	Male	Female	Child	Seats	Male	Female	Child	Grass	Male	Female	Child
12:15	4	3	1	0	1	0	1	0	4	1	0	3
13:15	1	1	0	0	4	0	1	3	6	0	2	4
14:15	3	1	1	1	2	0	2	0	5	1	1	3
15:15	11	6	5	0	28	13	15	0	21	8	13	0
Totals	19	11	7	1	35	13	19	3	36	10	16	10
Overall	90											
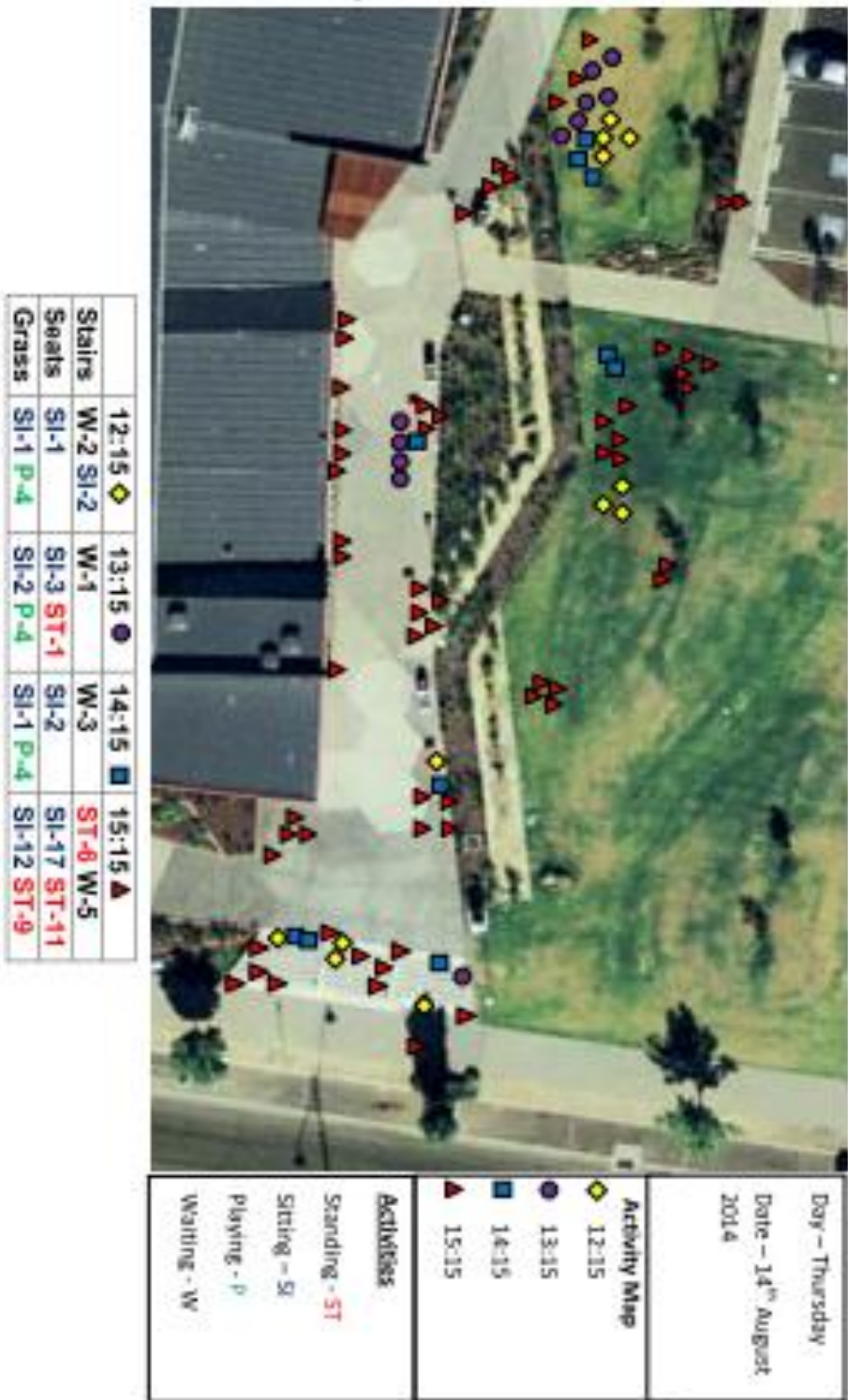
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Appendix D

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Appendix D

Day – Friday
Date – 22nd August 2014
Weather - 18°C
Additional notes:
Sunny day
Wind – Nil

Time	Stairs	Male	Female	Child	Seats	Male	Female	Child	Grass	Male	Female	Child
12:15	4	2	1	1	1	0	1	0	9	1	2	6
13:15	1	1	0	0	4	0	3	1	7	0	2	5
14:15	2	1	1	0	1	0	1	0	4	0	1	3
15:15	11	6	5	0	28	16	12	0	34	15	19	0
Totals	18	10	7	1	34	16	17	1	54	16	24	14
Overall	106											

Appendix D

	12:15 ◆	13:15 ●	14:15 ■	15:15 ▲
Stairs	W-4	W-1	Sl-1 W-1	Sl-5 W-8
Seats	Sl-1	Sl-4	Sl-1	Sl-13 ST-15
Grass	Sl-2 P-7	Sl-2 P-5	P-4	Sl-24 ST-10

Activity Map

Date – 22nd August 2014

Day – Friday

◆ 12:15
● 13:15
■ 14:15
▲ 15:15

Activities

Standing - ST

Sitting = Sl

Playing - P

Waiting - W

Appendix D

Time	Stairs	Male	Female	Child	Seats	Male	Female	Child	Grass	Male	Female	Child
12:15	2	2	0	0	6	0	2	4	8	2	2	4
13:15	0	0	0	0	6	0	4	2	12	0	3	9
14:15	1	1	0	0	4	0	2	2	6	0	2	4
15:15	14	9	5	0	25	13	17	0	38	11	24	3
Totals	17	12	5	0	41	13	25	8	64	13	31	20
Overall	122											

Seats

Grass

Stairs

Day – Monday

Date – 1st September 2014

Weather – 21°C

Additional notes:

Sunny day with scattered cloud. The best day in terms of weather for observations.

David Kraljik – Q9820854

Appendix D

	12:15 ◆	13:15 ●	14:15 ■	15:15 ▲
Stairs	W-2	N/A	Sl-1	Sl-8 W-6
Seats	Sl-5 ST-1	Sl-4 ST-2	Sl-4	Sl-16 ST-9
Grass	Sl-5 ST-3	Sl-5 P-7	Sl-3 P-3	Sl-22 ST-16

Activity Map

◆	12:15
●	13:15
■	14:15
▲	15:15

Day – Monday

Date – 1ˢᵗ Sept 2014

Activities

Standing - ST

Sitting – Sl

Playing - P

Waiting - W

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