

# The Heart of Preston

Updated April 2021<sup>1</sup>

Ensuring a thriving Preston Market into the future. And creating a vibrant, diverse and connected community.



<sup>1</sup> This document was originally created from Council's decision on 19 August 2019. It was subsequently updated from Council's decision on 18 May 2020. The current version (April 2021) comes from Council decision on 22 March 2021.





## Message from the Mayor

**For half a century,** Preston Market has been the beating heart of the local community. Welcoming, humble, affordable, diverse; our market is a place where people from all walks of life come to do their weekly shop, meet with friends, or pick up an unexpected knick knack.

**We all love Preston Market and want it to keep thriving for the next 50 years ... and beyond. We also know that the surrounding site has the makings of a diverse and connected neighbourhood, close to public transport, services, educational facilities, jobs and open spaces. The landowners have been clear in their intention to develop the site, and Council, while not the decision maker, is advocating strongly to ensure the best possible outcome for the community.**

To work out what matters most to protect through any redevelopment, we've turned to the people who know this cherished place best: the market traders, shoppers and other community members who love its vibrant atmosphere and affordable, delicious food.

Extensive community consultation has shown that people want any future development to value the unique character of the market, ensure it is able to continue as a diverse place of welcome to gather and connect, create new green open spaces, feature strong sustainability principles, focus on pedestrian and cycling access, and improve community safety.

Now, we have gathered up the community views and used them to create a document which seeks to express local residents' and traders' shared expectations around the future of the Preston Market Precinct, and set out the things that need to happen for change to result in good outcomes for our community.

We want the market to stay where it is, economic and viable, providing a secure future for the existing traders, so that the community can continue to get fresh, affordable and diverse food in a heritage protected building. We will do whatever we can to get the developers to commit to this.

I encourage you to find out more about the future of Preston Market at <https://www.yoursaydarebin.com.au/prestonmarket>



**Cr Lina Messina**  
**Darebin City Council Mayor.**



# The Preston Market is unique.

It's privately owned and operated, yet is considered by locals to be one of the area's most cherished public spaces. It's less than 50 years old, but feels like a cornerstone of Preston's post-settlement history.

**Importantly, the precinct bordering Preston Station, Murray Road, Mary Street and Cramer Street is both the site of the market and an unparalleled opportunity to address the area's housing crisis by creating an inclusive community close to transport, shops, and education and health services.**

The private landowners have been clear in their intention to develop the site, and Council is working to ensure the voices of the community are heard and that any development results in significant community benefit.

In four rounds of extensive community engagement working with the Victorian Planning Authority (VPA), Darebin City Council asked a diverse group of local stakeholders what was important to them about the market, and what kind of development they might want to see in and around the market. Separately, Darebin also engaged an independent expert to study the market's unique character and identity as part of a first-of-its-kind report.

Technical studies on heritage and urban design have also been undertaken by Council so that we can be in the best possible position to advocate for appropriate development outcomes during the State Government's planning process. Council is now in a good position to advocate for the strongest possible set of protections to safeguard what is special about the market, including a Local Heritage Overlay.

Local views have directly informed this document, which seeks to set out the key things that need to happen for a future Preston Market Precinct to be a place for everyone, where the market's status as a special place for locals is maintained and enhanced. Decision makers need to:

**Value** heritage and its unique characteristics of covered streets and walkways that act as public spaces, its sheds, stalls and small shops as part of any redevelopment.

**Support** traders before, during and after any redevelopment.

**Create** new usable green open space to feature strong sustainability principles, showcase excellence in design and improve the look, feel and safety of the area.

**Deliver** social equity to the precinct via new community spaces, affordable housing, social programs, facilities and employment opportunities.

Underpinning all of these objectives is a baseline requirement that, before any development proceeds, the owners give a contractual commitment to retain the market use at the current site.

# Community engagement: a snapshot...



1,138  
conversations



34

traders  
were  
consulted

93

people took part  
in 8 migrant and  
culturally diverse  
kitchen table  
discussions

485

people visited  
on-site pop-ups

75,046

online  
social media  
impressions

526

surveys completed

Between January 2018 and May 2019, alongside the Victorian Planning Authority (VPA) Darebin Council participated in an unprecedented program of community engagement around the future of the Preston Market Precinct. What we learned has directly informed this community-led vision for the future of the market and the surrounding site.



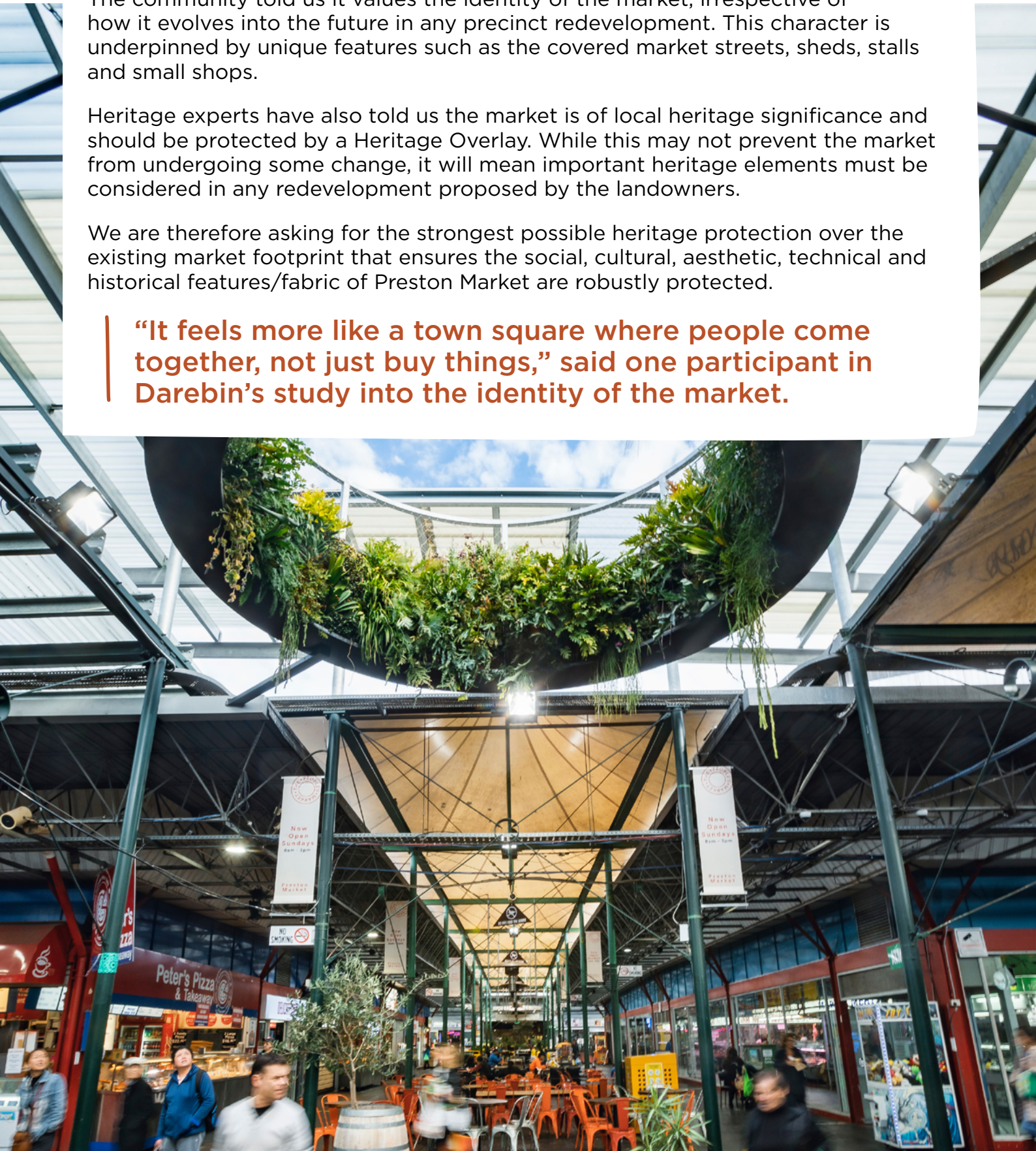
# Value and protect the market's unique identity and heritage

The community told us it values the identity of the market, irrespective of how it evolves into the future in any precinct redevelopment. This character is underpinned by unique features such as the covered market streets, sheds, stalls and small shops.

Heritage experts have also told us the market is of local heritage significance and should be protected by a Heritage Overlay. While this may not prevent the market from undergoing some change, it will mean important heritage elements must be considered in any redevelopment proposed by the landowners.

We are therefore asking for the strongest possible heritage protection over the existing market footprint that ensures the social, cultural, aesthetic, technical and historical features/fabric of Preston Market are robustly protected.

**“It feels more like a town square where people come together, not just buy things,” said one participant in Darebin’s study into the identity of the market.**





**To achieve this, Council has resolved to advocate for:**

**a) Objective one:** Following redevelopment, the market retains its heritage significance and unique feel of covered streets, intersections, sheds, stalls and small shops that create a place of welcome, exchange and diversity; which would require the following key elements:

### **Identity**

- i)** At least the same number, types and sizes of stalls.
- ii)** The same sunlit, open and airy feel and characteristics of the original heritage market and not a shopping centre or mall.
- iii)** Retains its cruciform intersections, which act as a key focal point, and connect to the broader precinct.
- iv)** Support the continuation of Preston Market's existing expanse and extent to ensure its current footprint location, fabric and use are retained.

### **Urban Design & Feasibility**

- v)** Retains a network of neighbourhood blocks and covered market streets with main public walkways at least 12 metres wide.
- vi)** Has active market streets in the evening and out of hours.
- vii)** Provides a wide and inviting street frontage and sense of presence along Cramer Street, in a high amenity position opposite upgraded green space next to the oval.
- viii)** Integrates with existing public open space, including the Preston Oval opposite and new and upgraded open spaces as part of the level crossing removals and Council open space works.
- ix)** Incorporates a safe and active connection from the station through to High street that has a high level of market activity.
- x)** Has strong public space functionality with generous public seating, and market streets that remain open to the public 24/7 and are protected via easements.
- xi)** The market is not completely surrounded by taller buildings, hidden from view.

### **Architectural heritage significance**

- xii)** The market undergoes minimal change to protect as many significant heritage elements as possible.
- xiii)** The market retains the same spaceframe roof as a significant heritage element.
- xiv)** The market retains the same outer concrete walls.
- xv)** The market retains the same layout and wide, light and airy walkways.
- xvi)** The market's existing footprint is protected with strong heritage controls to ensure the social, cultural, aesthetic, technical and historical features and fabric are robustly protected.



**Valuing Preston Market's identity** as a friendly, welcoming place, featuring a diverse range of traders selling affordable goods, requires a commitment to:

**Safe and active connection from High Street to the Station.**

**Celebrate the humble, informal & industrial feel.**

**Vibrant mix of fresh food, delis, variety stores and cafés.**

**Sunlit, open and airy.**

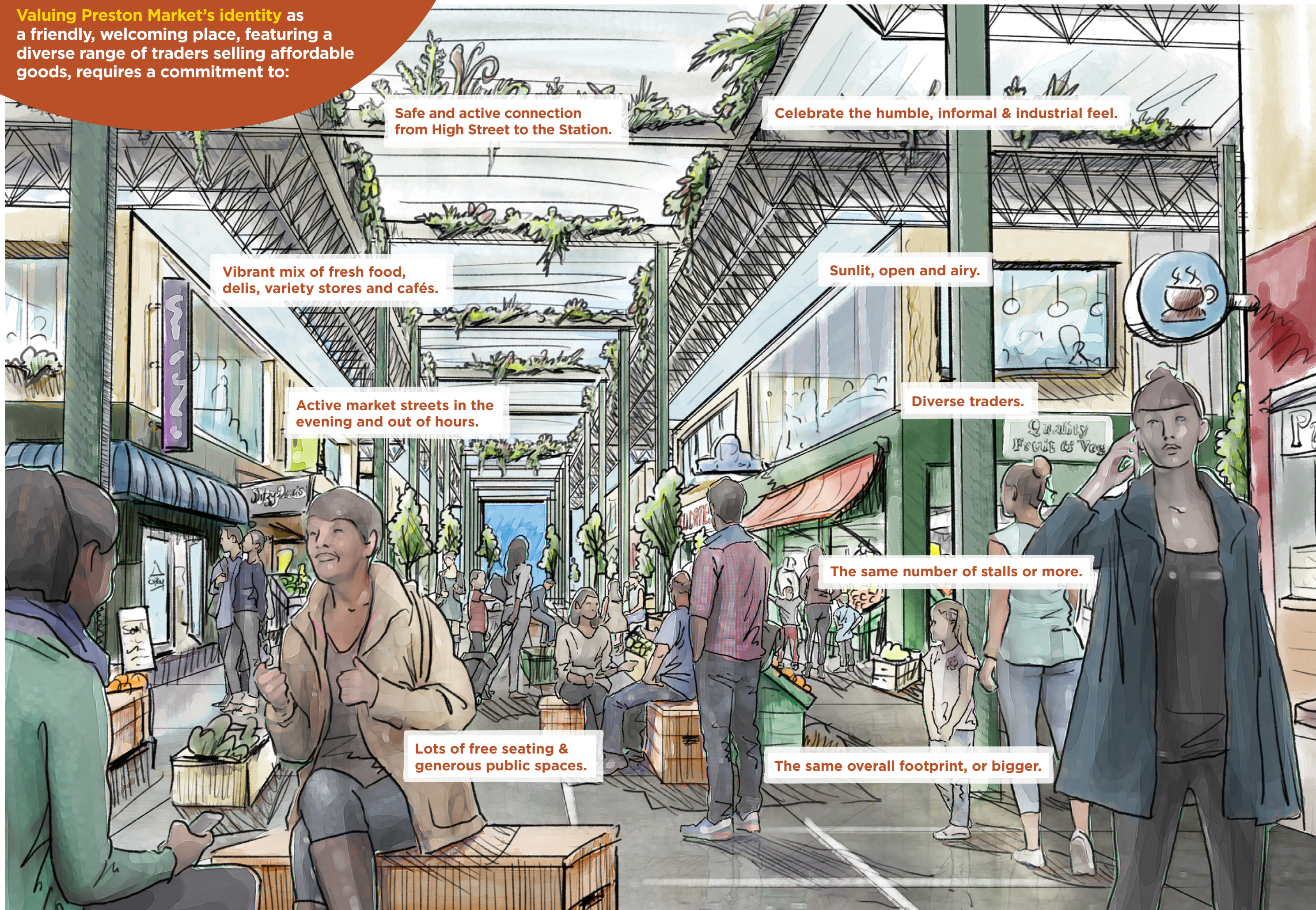
**Active market streets in the evening and out of hours.**

**Diverse traders.**

**The same number of stalls or more.**

**Lots of free seating & generous public spaces.**

**The same overall footprint, or bigger.**







## Support Traders

Traders are at the heart of the market. Supporting them through the transition, to ensure a diverse mix of traders is vital if the market's identity is to be protected through any redevelopment of the site.

**“People come to the market to support family businesses and contribute to something that is different from mainstream shopping centres,” one stallholder told the identity study authors.**

Through any redevelopment of the site, it is essential that the conditions that support such a multicultural, diverse and colourful group of traders are not lost.

The market is a place for business owners who might not be able to afford to operate a larger or more formal operation, gives low income households access to cheap fresh food and other goods, and acts as an affordable, convenient supplier to small local businesses across the community.

Looking after traders means supporting them before, during and after any redevelopment of the market precinct.

### **This is why we want decision makers to:**

- Develop a formal agreement between the site's owners, Council and the State Government that ensures continuous operation of the market before, during and after any redevelopment.
- Ensure good access and trading conditions.
- Prioritise existing tenants by offering a range of lease options.
- Set the same price in rent adjusted for inflation.
- Ensure the same number of market carparks.
- Ensure there is a diverse mix of independent businesses, with no franchises or chains.
- Manage the market effectively to provide a clean, safe and pleasant environment for traders and shoppers.



**To achieve this, Council has resolved to advocate for:**

**b) Objective two:** The vibrant mix of traders, particularly those from diverse backgrounds, are supported before, during and after redevelopment to keep the market accessible, affordable and multicultural; which would require the following key elements:

- i) Ensure continuous operation of the market before, during and after development by:
  - (1) entering into a formal agreement(s), which will include a Market Continuity Plan and Transition Plan.
  - (2) maintaining appropriate access and trade conditions
  - (3) maintaining appropriate trader car parking and large vehicle loading / unloading conditions
  - (4) providing leases with the provision for rental adjustments where trading is adversely impacted by construction requirements.
- ii) Ensure security and affordability for traders by:
  - (1) prioritising existing tenants
  - (2) setting the same price in rent, adjusted for inflation
  - (3) offering a variety of flexible lease options.
- iii) Provide the same amount of Market car parking before, during and after redevelopment.
- iv) Retain the diversity of independent businesses, with no franchises or chains.
- v) Manage the market effectively during and after redevelopment to provide a clean, safe and pleasant environment for traders and shoppers.



# Create a Sustainable and Vibrant Neighbourhood

The precinct surrounding the market sits right at the heart of Preston. The way this site is reimaged will set the tone for the future of the area, and define what kind of place Preston will be for decades to come.

It has the potential to become an exemplar of environmental and sustainable design in its development and operation: featuring new green open spaces, inviting streetscapes with the highest sustainability standards and principles, to showcase excellence in design and improve the look, feel and safety of the area.

“You’re lucky if you get to live near Preston Market,”  
Emma Gustafsson, a long term Preston resident,  
told the authors of the Identity Study.





New green open spaces.

Canopy trees on all streets and laneways.

World class architecture and urban design with the highest sustainability rating.

Pedestrian and cycling friendly streets.

No overshadowing of public open spaces, on and off site.

Opportunities to grow, prepare, share and compost food on site.

No car parking at ground level, and undergrounding car parking.



**To achieve this, Council has resolved to advocate for:**

**c) Objective three:** the surrounding precinct is developed as a model of a sustainable, liveable neighbourhood with world class architecture, open spaces, streetscapes, public areas and urban design that tell the stories of the migrant communities that have made this place what it is; which would require the following key elements:

- i) Meaningfully involve migrant communities in precinct design and creation of new open spaces.
- ii) Create a fine-grain and liveable neighbourhood that is inviting and interesting from the ground floor up.
- iii) Provide a variety of building heights and generous setbacks, with world class architecture and urban design.
- iv) Strict, mandatory height limits of 12 storeys (including podium) for any new development across the precinct with an understanding that every new building on site will be within that height limit.
- v) Provide a permeable street network that connects to the broader neighbourhood and prioritises pedestrians and cyclists.
- vi) Wind impact is minimised through precinct and building design for pedestrian amenity and comfort, particularly at key open spaces
- vii) Provide opportunities to grow, prepare, share and compost food in the precinct.
- viii) Provide at least 10% public open space on site, at multiple key intersections including along the main east-west market street.
- ix) Provide an additional financial contribution of up to 8.2% to enhance existing open space within the central Preston area.
- x) Provide canopy trees on all streets and laneways.
- xi) There is minimal overshadowing of open spaces on the site and to Preston Oval and its surrounds, as the premier open space destination within Central Preston.
- xii) No car parking on the ground level and underground car parking wherever possible.
- xiii) Minimise vehicle movement within the precinct..
- xiv) A minimum of 6 - star green star communities (or current best-practice Green Star).
- xv) Minimise waste and maximise reuse of materials in the redevelopment of, and future operation of the precinct.
- xvi) Provide a safe, active connection to 421 High Street.
- xvii) A minimum 6 Green Star accreditation for all buildings as built (or current best-practice).
- xviii) A minimum 7 Star Nationwide House Energy Rating Scheme (NatHERS) rating (or current best-practice).





# Deliver New Community Benefits

For this new neighbourhood to be vibrant and cohesive, it needs places and services that bring people together from different ethnicities and age groups, foster a sense of community and helps to address the housing affordability crisis.

There's a chance to build further social equity around a place that's already seen as a focal point for community connections.

**“It is the centre of the community,” said one Identity Study participant. “One of the few places everyone gets mixed.”**

The market precinct is an important community asset and additional benefits will be built into any redevelopment. There has also been significant investment from State Government and Council to the surrounding area. It reasonable that community benefits will be contributed by the developer in the form of affordable housing and new community facilities.

## **These could include:**

- Affordable housing,
- New green open spaces,
- An early years centre,
- Library,
- Lifelong learning centre, or
- Neighbourhood house.

To help address the housing affordability crisis, 20 per cent of apartments built in the precinct should be designated as affordable housing to prevent people from being forced out of the area by rising rents.

It could also mean attracting commercial cultural facilities like a cinema and art galleries.





**To achieve this, Council has resolved to advocate for:**

**d) Objective four:** value that is created through the redevelopment is shared with the wider community through a range of state-of-the-art new community spaces, affordable housing, social programs and facilities and employment opportunities; which would require the following key elements:

- i) Provide a range of commercial cultural facilities like a cinema or galleries, and also office spaces for local jobs.
- ii) Contribute towards new community facilities such as lifelong learning facilities, and/or a bigger, better neighbourhood house.
- iii) Provide new maternal and child health, and kindergarten facilities.
- iv) Ensure new green open spaces that are usable to a broad range of people.
- v) Provide affordable (20%) and diverse housing, with a proportion of tenancies weighted towards newly arrived migrants.
- vi) New intercultural programs around food, language and art.



## Keeping your market on-site

**To keep your market on-site, Council has resolved to advocate for:**

**e) Objective five:** That any development is contingent on a contractual commitment to retain the market use at the Preston Market site.

- i) The majority Landowner/developer to enter into a contractual commitment with the State Government and Council that would survive the sale of land, before a planning scheme amendment is gazetted, to retain a fresh food and variety market within the Preston Market Precinct and to protect the ongoing operation of the market, the existing traders and its diversity and affordability.
- ii) The market is an ongoing use within the precinct.

**PROTECT  
PRESTON  
MARKET**



# How you can show your love for Preston Market

**Council is calling on the State Government to ensure the market thrives into the future by incorporating measures to protect Council's Heart of Preston through the planning controls.**

There are several steps to go before any new planning controls will be decided by the Minister for Planning, and Council will advocate for the best outcome at every stage of this process.

Council will also consider the State Government's draft plans when these are released later in the year. Later in 2021, Council expects to advocate for what's important to the community in any formal planning processes including exhibition and review by an independent planning panel or standing advisory committee.

**To find out more or register for updates...**

Head to  
**[yoursaydarebin.com.au/PrestonMarket](https://yoursaydarebin.com.au/PrestonMarket)**

Call us  
**8470 8888**

Drop in to  
**274 Gower St, Preston**  
at Darebin Customer Service Centre next to Town Hall

## CITY OF DAREBIN

274 Gower Street, Preston  
PO Box 91, Preston, Vic 3072  
T 8470 8888 F 8470 8877  
E [mailbox@darebin.vic.gov.au](mailto:mailbox@darebin.vic.gov.au)  
[darebin.vic.gov.au](https://darebin.vic.gov.au)



**National Relay Service**  
[relayservice.gov.au](https://relayservice.gov.au)

If you are deaf, or have a hearing or speech impairment, contact us through the National Relay Service.



**Speak Your Language**  
T 8470 8470

العربية	Italiano	Soomalii
繁體中文	Македонски	Español
Ελληνικά	नेपाली	اردو
हिंदी	ਪੰਜਾਬੀ	Tiếng Việt