

Queen Victoria

MARKET

Since 1878



HERITAGE TRAIL







QUEEN VICTORIA MARKET HERITAGE TRAIL

The Queen Victoria Market, established in 1878 is the largest market in Australia and one of the largest in the world. Many of the buildings are still used in trade today. Covering 7 hectares of land within the City of Melbourne, the Market remains essentially intact to its date of construction.

Walk the 'Heritage Trail' to explore the Market's historical significance through its unique sculptures, rooftops and façade. Discover the buildings, events and people who helped shape it.

A map of the Queen Victoria Market is located in the centre of this brochure for your reference.



SITE 1 – ENGAGING THE SENSES

At the time of European settlement, the area now occupied by Queen Victoria Market was part of the estate of the Aboriginal Wurundjeri-willam clan of the woi wurrung language group, or tribe. This language group was part of the Kulin Nation.

Melbourne Town Council was formed in December 1842 to run the city's many markets including the Eastern and Western Markets and then later, the Lower and Upper Queen Victoria Market.

Initially, only the Upper Market was called Queen Victoria Market; with the lower allotment known simply as the Meat Market. Although not officially opened until 20 March 1878, parts of Queen Victoria Market had been used for market purposes for 13 years prior to the Market's official opening.

The Lower Market, the irregular allotment bounded by Queen, Victoria, Elizabeth and Therry Streets was granted to the Town Council for use as a market in March 1859 and fenced off and used as a livestock and hay market from 1865. The current Meat Hall is the only structure remaining on the site from this earlier period with H & I Sheds dating from 1878.

Today Queen Victoria Market remains a world renowned tourist attraction and continues to play a central part in Melbourne's cultural, business and social life.





SITE 2 – A PLACE TO MEAT

The Meat Hall or Meat Fish and Rabbit Section as it is officially known is the oldest building on the Queen Victoria Market site and was originally used as a wholesale meat market. Built in 1869, it preceded the official opening of Queen Victoria Market by nine years.

The Meat Hall not only housed butchers, but also fishmongers and rabbit sellers (or rabbitos as they were known). The Chitty family started their rabbit business in the early 1900s in the days when rabbit was cheap and readily available; and they regularly sold 6,000 rabbits a week. The release of the calici virus to control the wild rabbit population in the 1990s meant that rabbit was no longer plentiful and the rabbit business failed. The Chitty family went on to sell seafood and continue as fishmongers in the Meat Hall today.



SITE 3 – MORE THAN A FAÇADE

At the same time the two storey Elizabeth Streets shops were built, the Meat Hall façade was replaced with the current cement rendered façade and the farm animal frieze on the building's pediment was completed by sculptor John Simpson McKennal.

The façade is of architectural significance as are the iron gates under the Produce Arch and between the shops and the Meat Hall on Elizabeth Street. These gates, along with veranda lace work display the City of Melbourne coat of arms, which branded the Market as municipal buildings.

Central to the coat of arms is the silver shield with the cross of Saint George representing Melbourne's links to England and the four escutcheons of a fleece, a bull, a ship and a whale; represent the four major activities on which Melbourne's economy was founded – livestock (rustling), wool (fellingmongering), shipping and whaling.





SITE 4 – DELI DELIGHTS

The Dairy & Produce Hall is a wonderful intact example of an art deco building. In a time before modern refrigeration, marble was used for the counter tops because of its natural thermal properties and the building's unique design incorporated a special underground ventilation system designed to help keep the hall and its highly perishable dairy products cool. The decorative brass plate in the centre of each shop front is one of the few visible elements of that now redundant system.

The unusual roof line with louvers assists ventilation and skylights allow plenty of natural light for improved product display. The marble comes from the Buchan area in Victoria and the wooden window frames are actually covered with a layer of white metal that contains nickel giving the frame its special “white” colour.



SITE 5 – PRODUCE AND PIONEERS

The real history of the Market starts here with H & I Sheds along with A & B Sheds used as an outlet for Melbourne's Market gardens.

From the 1850s Melbourne experienced a mass influx of people from around the globe, including many from southern China, chasing the dream of striking it rich on the gold field. By the 1870s the heady days of the gold rush had passed and many unsuccessful "diggers" returning from the gold fields turned their hand to market gardening. The Chinese were particularly adept at market gardening, many of which had sprung up along Merri creek, with about 30 percent of the Chinese migrant population working in Victoria's market gardens by 1900. Gradually these were taken over by the Greek and Italian communities, particularly after World War II.

Today I Shed has an array of products and is also the site for the popular organics section first offered in 1991, the earliest organic retail centre in Melbourne.

SITE 6 – MELBOURNE'S MARVELLOUS MEAT HALL

In 1884 a new front to the Meat Market was added. The Meat Hall is both of architectural and social significance for its rarity as one of a few purpose built market buildings in existence in Australia. At the time, its single span roof was only the second of its type in the colony.





SITE 7 – MARKET DAY IN EARLY MELBOURNE TOWN

Before the days of shopping centres, markets were the destination for all fresh produce. By the 1890s, Melbourne's CBD housed several large markets specialising in fish, flowers, fruit and vegetables or wholesale produce.

Melbourne's first, the Western Market opened in 1841 on the corner of Williams and Collins streets. It was Melbourne's principle wholesale market until 1930.

Paddy's Market (later called the Eastern Market) was opened in 1847 and commanded the corner of Bourke, Exhibition and Little Collins Streets. Fruit and vegetables were traded under open-sided sheds. The market was rebuilt as a two storey, glass-topped indoor market hosting over 220 stalls. It lasted for 113 years.

SITE 7 – FULTON STREET

Melbourne's early markets were the predecessors to the only city-based market to survive today, the Queen Victoria Market. For over 135 years the 'Queen Vic' has grown, expanding over the old cemetery and absorbing streets and lanes. C Shed was once Fulton Street, named after an influential magistrate and Melbourne City Councillor, Thomas Fulton.



SITE 8 – WHOLESALE TO RETAIL

By the 1960s, the Queen Victoria Market was over crowded and a new solution needed to be found. The massive demand for retail goods, could only be fulfilled once the pre-dawn wholesale trade had been satisfied.

Despite the many objections from merchants, wholesalers and growers, the decision was made to relocate the market's wholesale activities to Footscray. Once the wholesaling market activities moved to Footscray in 1969, A and B Sheds were purely for the retail trade of fruit and vegetables.

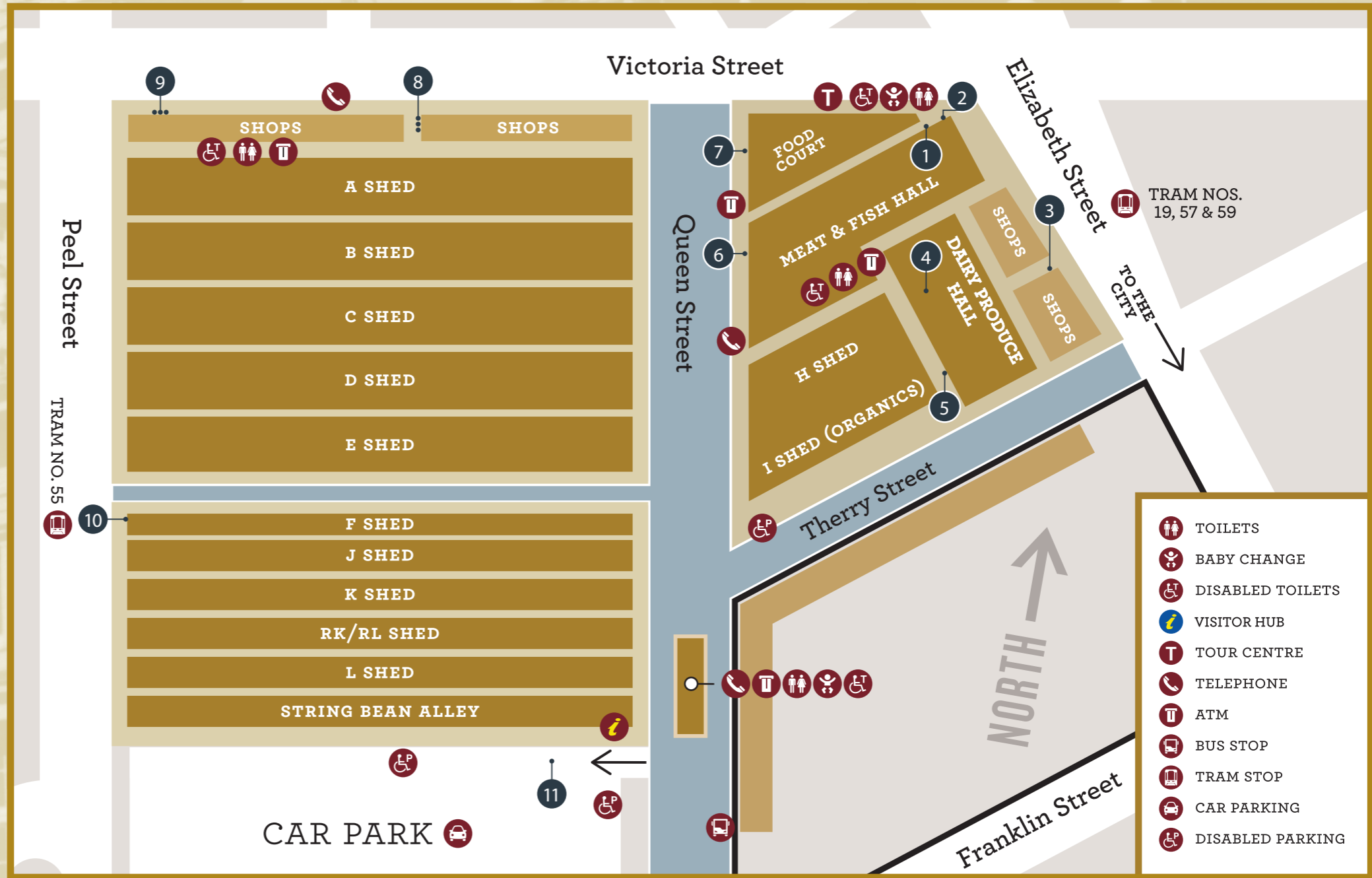
SITE 8 – MARKET FOOTBALL

By the 1920s, a strong sporting and social culture had developed among the stallholders and merchants at Queen Victoria Market. Football, cricket, bowls and golf clubs were formed with matches held throughout the 1920s and 1930s between city trading and business associations.

The “Market” football team, as the Queen Victoria Market team was known, joined the Wednesday Football League with games being held every Wednesday afternoon during the football season. Market competed against teams drawn from local and civic organisations including the Fire Brigade, Police, Post and Telegraph, Press, Telephone Exchange, Yellow Cabs and Waterside Workers.



- 1 CORNER OF VICTORIA AND ELIZABETH STREETS
ENGAGING THE SENSES
- 2 CORNER OF VICTORIA AND ELIZABETH STREETS
A PLACE TO MEAT
- 3 ELIZABETH STREET
MORE THAN A FAÇADE
- 4 INSIDE DAIRY PRODUCE HALL
DELI DELIGHTS
- 5 I SHED, ORGANICS AISLE
PRODUCE AND PIONEERS
- 6 QUEEN STREET, MEAT HALL
MELBOURNE'S MARVELLOUS MEAT HALL
- 7 QUEEN STREET, FOOD COURT
MARKET DAY IN EARLY MELBOURNE TOWN
FULTON STREET
- 8 VICTORIA STREET
WHOLESALE TO RETAIL
MARKET FOOTBALL
- 9 VICTORIA STREET (NEAR PEEL STREET)
VICTORIA STREET SHOPS
INSTANT AND DELICIOUS
QUEEN VICTORIA MARKET TIMELINE
TOMBSTONE TERRITORY
THE PEOPLE PREVAIL
- 10 PEEL STREET
THE OLD CEMETERY
GRAVES AND GHOULS
- 11 CARPARK
TO MARKET, TO MARKET
WORKING UP AN APPETITE





SITE 9 – VICTORIA STREET SHOPS

Like Elizabeth Street, the Victoria Street shops were constructed as shops at ground level with living quarters to the rear and above for the retailers and their families.

69 Victoria Street was the childhood home of Mary Healy, who was born at home on 30 December 1893. The Healy family was a family of tailors and operated a shop on the ground floor of the building. By 1904 they had relocated their business to just around the corner at 511 Elizabeth Street.

SITE 9 – INSTANT AND DELICIOUS

By the 1950s, food vans became a popular fixture at the Market. To satisfy the tastes of American servicemen stationed in Melbourne during World War II, café menus were expanded to include the likes of cola, hamburgers and coffee and street stalls selling hotdogs and doughnuts soon followed.

The American Doughnut Kitchen first appeared on Queen Street in the 1950s and is still operated today by the family of the original owner.



SITE 9 – QUEEN VICTORIA MARKET TIMELINE

1842

The Melbourne City Council established to manage the City's many markets, one of which would become the Queen Victoria Market.

MARCH 1859

Melbourne Town Hall granted the Meat Market allotment for use as a market.

20 MARCH 1878

The Queen Victoria Market officially opened.

1917

Melbourne General Market Lands Act passed enabling the Market to be expanded on Old Cemetery land.

1 DECEMBER 1969

Wholesale Fruit and Vegetable Market opened in Footscray and wholesale relocated from Queen Victoria Market.

25 MARCH 1979

Sunday Market trading began.

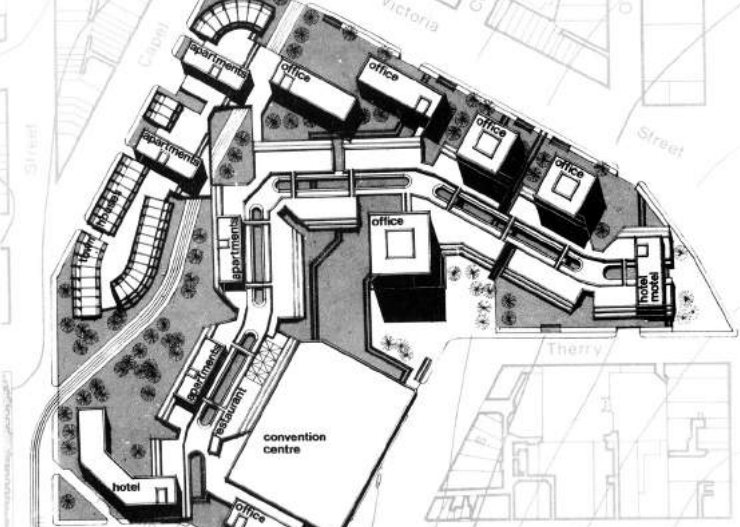
25 NOVEMBER 1998

The Night Market began.

2000

The entire Market and Old Melbourne Cemetery were classified by the National Trust.





SITE 9 – TOMBSTONE TERRITORY

In the late 1950s, claims about corrupt merchants and unfair practices at the wholesale fruit and vegetable market led to a 1960 Royal Commission to examine the existence of cartels. The claims were unproven, yet the ill feelings continued and culminated in the April 1963 shooting of an O Shed market gardener. By January 1964, another man, also an O Shed trader, had been killed and two more seriously wounded. Soon O Shed was dubbed 'Tombstone Territory'. A subsequent dawn police raid at the Market the following January led to the seizure of many deadly weapons. Eventually the Wholesale Market was relocated to Footscray and Council decided to redevelop Queen Victoria Market.

SITE 9 – THE PEOPLE PREVAIL

The State Government favoured developing the site, which was viewed as prime development land at a time when Melbourne's skyline was rapidly changing. The proposed redevelopment was not popular and by February 1972, 18,000 signatures opposing the development had been gathered from a wide range of people. In 1975 the Council shelved its plans and committed instead to a substantial renovation program. By 1978, when the Market celebrated its centenary, renovations were well under way.



SITE 10 – THE OLD CEMETERY

Much of the Upper Market is situated on cemetery land. The Old Melbourne Cemetery, opened in 1837, was located in land bounded by Franklin, Peel and Fulton Streets (where C Shed now stands). Although closed in 1854, some families with vaults and reserved allotments were allowed burials up to 1917. Meanwhile the Melbourne General Markets Act 1877 allowed for the acquisition of some Old Cemetery land. Sheds A to F were then speedily constructed. F Shed was built in 1878 as a barrier between the Market and the remains of the Old Cemetery. Sheds G, H & I were erected at the same time and they formed the newly opened Queen Victoria Market in 1878. From 1890 F Shed was also the site of the original trade in dairy products prior to the Dairy Produce Hall's construction.

SITE 10 – GRAVES AND GHOULS

As the Market grew, its administrators sought to obtain more of the Old Melbourne Cemetery site. The cemetery was unique in that it was divided into sections to allow burials of people from different denominations and religions. Isaac Selby, in his *Old Pioneers Memorial History of Melbourne*, written in 1920, describes the layout of the Cemetery, as follows:

Two acres to the Episcopalians [Church of England], two acres to the Presbyterians, two acres to the Roman Catholics, one acre to the Independents, one acre to the Wesleyans, one acre to the Jews, half an acre to the Quakers, and half an acre to the Aborigines. The convicts were buried just outside the northern end of the Cemetery in No Man's Land.





SITE 11 - TO MARKET, TO MARKET

Loaded with vegetables and fruits, market gardeners began their day in early morning darkness. The quiet streets echoed with the clip-clop of horses and the crunching roll of wagon wheels. Horses were trained to head to the correct shed where the produce was sorted by type - you can probably guess what was sold in String Bean Alley!

“When I first went to market, I was barely fifteen years old, and my father said not to worry about finding the way. He said, “Just put the reins on the brake handle and Prince (the horse) will take you there”, which Prince duly did. When we arrived at the market, he passed A and B Sheds, pulled into C Shed and stopped at stand number 120, the right one.”

In 1930 a new era was formally ushered in when the City Council banned horses from the Market.

Quote: Alan Marriott, from Melbourne Markets, 1841-1979: The story of the fruit and vegetable markets in the City of Melbourne by Colin E. Cole

SITE 11 - WORKING UP AN APPETITE

In the wholesale section, selling began with first light and continued until eight or nine in the morning. Then it was time for breakfast.

Murray's Dining Room, at 19 Victoria Street, was a popular destination. Two sisters ran the café and for them work began at one o'clock in the morning. Towels and soap were laid out for the men. Six tables seating six each were set - the charge was six pence for porridge, stewed steak, vegetables and mashed potatoes.

Queen Victoria
MARKET
Since 1878

HERITAGE TRAIL

FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT

(03) 9320 5822

QVM.COM.AU

INFO@QVM.COM.AU

