

1.6 A REVITALISED NETWORK OF LANES AND ARCADES



Eating out is a conspicuous feature of Melbourne life, and the laneways and 'little streets' contain some of the city's liveliest areas.

Redevelopment of Melbourne's laneways has contributed immeasurably to the character of the city centre as a dense and lively area for multiple activities. Physical improvement of the city's lanes provides for the comfort, engagement and entertainment of pedestrians, inviting a range of popular uses. They also create opportunities for innovation, surprise and unique approaches to both permanent and transient design (refer further 1.8 below).

Totalling some 230 lanes, places, streets, arcades and alleys, these routes serve as important north-south connections, expanding the city's pedestrian network while supporting the formal structure of the grid. The network of animated spaces also provides settings for activities that can not be accommodated in the 'little streets', since they also carry vehicular traffic.

With the increase in inner city living, many laneways have the additional function of providing user-friendly and safe entries to many residences. Increasing residential occupation of, and specialised retail activity within, the little streets, lanes and arcades introduces activities that are mutually enriching inside and out. The laneways therefore support sustainable inner city development by allowing retention of heritage streetscapes to coincide with increased residential density and better use of space.

Streets, lanes, arcades and rights-of-way are a set of spaces that offer intense, intimate experiences.

