

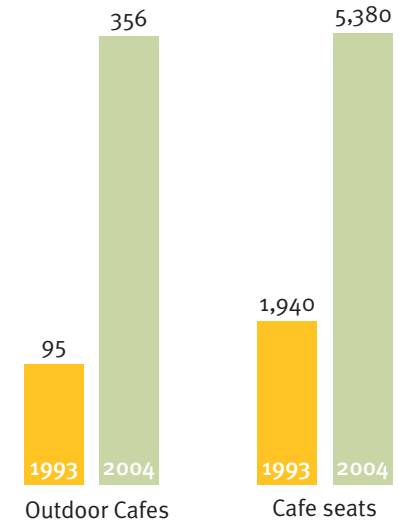
## 1.7 MORE PLACES TO SIT AND PAUSE

Resting is an integral part of pedestrian activity patterns. The provision of frequent seating opportunities gives people the opportunity to rest in order to be able to enjoy public life and the hustle and bustle of the city. Apart from the number of public benches, other factors such as views, shade and comfort, location on important pedestrian links, and orientation to street activities are important in order to provide a good seating ambience.

The amount of public bench seating in Melbourne has been almost constant since 1993, reflecting the substantial street furniture installation program undertaken during the mid 1980s to mid 90s. While new squares and parks have been added (eg. Federation Square and Birrarung Marr) public seats have been surrendered in several other locations (eg. Town Hall Plaza and City Square). Instead, widespread secondary seating options such as steps, planter box edges, low bollards and ledges offer opportunities for informal seating, perching and leaning.

What has substantially increased in Melbourne is the number of seats offered via kerbside cafes, yielding 5,376 seats by November 2004 – or an increase of 177 per cent since 1993. Again, the laneways have contributed greatly to this increase via smaller café ‘hubs’ with many new establishments. This reflects the sweeping emphasis on outdoor lifestyle and appreciation of a rich diversity of cultures in Melbourne. It is a sign of a city catering more and more to the local community and people visiting, inviting them to stay longer and participate in the public life of the streets.

*Respite in the city is offered in many forms, ranging from public benches (top Swanston Street), movable chairs (middle, City Square) to informal features such as lawns, retaining walls and stairs (below, State Library forecourt).*



*Melbourne has seen a remarkable increase in the number of outdoor cafes and cafe seats over the past decade.*

