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MARTIN PLACE PLAZA TO BE PERMANENT

The Martin Place pedestrians-only plaza between Pitt and George Streets will be retained permanently.

The Premier (Mr. Askin) and the Lord Mayor (Ald. McDermott) announced this yesterday.

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Ald. McDermott said tenders for work on paving the area and beautifying it would be called immediately.

The work would be completed within nine months.

The work would include:

- Paving the whole area to sidewalk level with pinkish sandstone.
- Planting quick-growing shade trees.
- Redesigning existing news-stands and flower stalls.
- Provision of a "Parisienne-style" coffee bar probably to be run by Legacy.
- Redesigned seats and street furniture.
- More seats and street furniture.

Ald. McDermott said he had never known a project to receive so much support from the public.

"Unsolicited letters from citizens have poured into the Town Hall in hundreds — 80 percent of them in

support of the project," he said.

Ald. McDermott predicted the Martin Place plaza would be the forerunner of similar projects.

He wanted to emphasise that the plaza would not become "a commercial or carnival area."

The Legacy coffee bar, if it eventuated, would be the only addition to existing facilities — and proceeds from it would go to a worthwhile charity.

"All the predictions of traffic difficulties have proved wrong."

"Traffic now flows more quickly and evenly through George Street, and other diversions have caused less disruption than the creation of one-way streets."

Ald. McDermott said the City Council had spent about \$10,000 on the present temporary arrangements in the plaza.

"The total cost will be in excess of \$100,000, and this will provide an invaluable asset," he said.