

**CITY DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATION  
LTD.**

NATIONAL BANK BUILDING, 160 RUSSELL STREET, MELBOURNE CI . FB 3621, FB 3622

September 8th 1960.

Mr. George Clarke,  
Clarke Gazzard and Yeomans,  
90 New South Head Road,  
Edgecliffe,  
Sydney N.S.W.

Dear Mr. Clarke,

I hope you do not think that lack of interest in your letter and accompanying paper has been the reason for my failure to reply to you earlier. The reverse, of course, is the case, and I must say immediately that I have read your paper with the very greatest interest and congratulate you on the clear analysis you have made of the central city problem, and its cure.

I most thoroughly agree both with the analysis and with the suggested action. When I was in America two years ago I had the opportunity of discussing the Charles Centre with Drayton Bryant, who was one of its sponsors, and I also had the opportunity of seeing what other cities have done in the direction of urban renewal - activities which far outpace anything we have tried to do in any Australian city.

The great difficulty in Australia - and the reason why similar projects do not receive the support here that they receive in America is that the Australian central city businessman and property owner has not yet been hurt enough by the problems of congestion, lack of planning and the flight to the suburbs.

My enquiries satisfied me that the American businessman did not become enthusiastic about the kind of renewal you describe until he, too, had been thoroughly punished through his pocket book and cash register. As one

downtown expert said to me: 'They didn't wake up until the bricks fell upon them, then they came rushing with their cheque books'.

My conclusion of all I saw in the fifteen United cities I visited was that the city businessman was engaged in a desperate battle to encourage business back to the old downtown centres - and not too successfully. Over and over again people said to me: 'If only we had realised earlier what was happening!'

The nice question, therefore, is: 'Can you possibly lead people in a way which will short circuit these bitter experiences, and to benefit by the bitter experiences of the American city businessmen'. For seven years in Melbourne, through the City Development Association, I have tried to do just this, and while we have had many interesting and sometimes spectacular achievements, we have never been able to raise either the enthusiasm or the money for the kind of research projects and action studies which you mention in your paper. We would not have an earthly chance of finding £75,000 ~~to~~ do, for instance, what the New Haven people did - simply because there is no sense of crisis here, as they experienced.

C.D.A. in Melbourne has battled, yelled, agitated, abused and pressurised people and authorities to get action in various ways, and with a lot of success, but without ever reaching the point now readily accepted by the thinking businessman in America.

I do not want this letter to appear as a counsel of despair, but I do think it is important to face undeniable facts, and from my knowledge of Sydney I would say that you would immediately be faced with the same sort of problem as we have faced - mild interest, limited financial support, and less than enough real understanding.

Unfortunately the businessmen who have the money lack the understanding of the problems, aren't aware of the solutions - and sometimes don't even understand that there are problems, while the technical people - like yourself - who recognise the problems and can see answers haven't the money.

I think that the answer could rest with a most carefully selected combination of technical brains (with no money), and an out-of-the-ordinary group of businessmen with the money who would get together as a group of back-room people to finance studies, and come up with answers which they would

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then try and sell to the authorities, without prior publicity so that they could take the credit.

You may find this thought interesting.

Best wishes,

Yours sincerely,

  
R.A. Gardner.