

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

**“WELL THERE’S THIS PASSAGE I GOT
MEMORIZED. EZEKIEL 25:17.”**

Jules Winnfield, Pulp Fiction (1994, dir. Quentin Tarantino)



Image_ Total House by Bogle and Banfield Architects



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VICTORIAN CHAPTER PRESIDENT

PULP FICTION, Tarantino's genre busting epic of 1994 gave us so much more than a movie. It was a form of recycling, combining crime fiction, film noir, splatter movies, blaxploitation and the Bible, using two brilliant washed up leads in Travolta and Jackson to rattle Hollywood back to life. Tarantino was a magpie, collecting material from the past and remaking it into a multi layered, authentic and original work.

Adaptive reuse is the kind of architectural parlance perfectly suited to mid level government reports. It makes a strangely cold and grey idea of remaking the beautiful artefacts we love to keep. The structures which hold our cultural consciousness and tie us to histories of society, industry, materials and place. Should we reconsider reuse as a kind of Slow Food movement for architecture? Consideration of terroir, the knowledge of elders, the ways of making, taste and sustainability should preside over commercial or regulatory considerations. Slow Architecture.

Victoria is full of brilliant, brave examples such as ARM's Storey Hall, Lovell Chen's 1888 building at the University of Melbourne, Greg Burgess' sensitive reworking of Yunken Freeman Griffith Simpson's Myer Music Bowl and Nonda Katsalidis' Richmond Silos. Melbourne's renaissance as a food and wine capital, since Neuenhausen liquor reforms, is largely based on the recycling of disused fine grain building stock and run down pubs, an economic lever which drove the rediscovery of Melbourne's lanes and remade our reputation as an authentic and cool city. The same lever has provided opportunities to a new breed of

young architects, keen to design public projects. Jimmy Watson's Wine Bar by Robin Boyd and Pellegrini's showed us how it was done, with human scale, clean lines, authentic materials, respect for the old fabric and by bringing in light.

All news, however, has not been good. Docklands is slowly growing into its oversized pants, but will always suffer from the loss of industrial heritage. What could have been kept was not, and its sense of place as a former port has been lost. We should be mindful of this as the planning of Fisherman's Bend and other major areas proceeds. A key issue is the inadequate protection of post war and industrial buildings. We must do more to protect the unloved buildings which hold so much of our collective knowledge and embody the aspirations and needs of other eras. Loss of industrial heritage is indefensible, particularly as long span structures are so simple to adapt to new uses. The recent listing by Heritage Victoria of Total House by Bogal and Banfield is a wonderful step in this direction.

Reuse is environmentally sustainable. The embodied energy of old structures has already been expended. To demolish and rebuild takes thousands of tons of carbon based energy, so reuse has obvious environmental benefits. Some aspirational green rating systems privilege this correctly. Others, with property industry backing, do not. More importantly, reuse embodies social and cultural sustainability. The act of preservation ameliorates the alienating effects of excessive development and nourishes our sense of history and place. The Italians, as in many things, provide us with the way! Carlo

Scarpa in Venice, conceptually rich, impeccably composed and softly crafted remodelling, which astonishes with its invention and the joys of touch and smell. Wet stone, salt, timber, wax, books; they are the scents of time and centuries of preservation. In the same city, Tadao Ando's Punta della Dogana demonstrates a firmer hand, but still a calm respect for the medieval Customs warehouses.

One of our challenges as a profession is the gradual loss of the knowledge of skilled practitioners, and the lack of transfer of their experience to young architects. Our senior counsellors are a great help to many troubled architects. Dedicated academics such as Phillip Goad, Julie Willis, Des Smith, Rohan Storey, Tony Hall and Gina Levenspiel have researched and recorded the work of living architects such as McIntyre, McGlashan Everist, May, Couch and Clerehan to an appreciative audience. But there is room for more. The connection of younger to elder architects is never easy, but it is one which can provide confidence and opportunity to the emerging practices and a chance for old dogs to show their tricks. As I found with my mentors Peter McIntyre, Maggie Edmond and Ted Billson, the opportunity to learn from strong, skilled professionals is essential to improving as an architect.

When David Lynch cast Hopper and Rossellini in Blue Velvet, he mined the past, he gave us the psychotic and the beautiful and recreated two stars into a compelling new present. As a society and culture, we must do the same.

Thanks to Kristin Green