

Lighting Design Collaboration – A Case Study

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Good collaboration produces good outcomes.

This may sound like an obvious statement but it is surprising how rare a truly collaborative project is. One such project was the Lonsdale Street Boulevard, part of the Revitalising Central Dandenong (RCD) project. This paper discusses the project, the design process and the resulting outcomes.

Dandenong is the heart of Melbourne's growing south east corridor. The RCD project is a \$290m Victorian State Government initiative to rejuvenate the city centre and create a fresh new future for central Dandenong. The RCD initiative is being delivered by the Victorian Government, through VicUrban, in partnership with the City of Greater Dandenong (an interesting collaboration on the client side). The project is part of a 15-20 year master plan that seeks to attract more people, jobs and businesses to the city centre. It is estimated that the revitalisation will help to create up to 5,000 new jobs, 4,000 new homes and to leverage \$1 billion in private sector development in the city centre over the next 15 to 20 years.

Lonsdale Street was one of the first of the RCD projects and the brief was to create one of Melbourne's great boulevards, and once again, establish Lonsdale Street as the heart of central Dandenong. It features slower moving traffic, safer pedestrian crossings, wider footpaths and a more pleasant street environment, new cycle paths, more trees, improved lighting and integrated public art.

As this was one of the first projects (and one of the most substantial) of the revitalisation, it was crucial to achieve success. Lonsdale Street role in the revitalisation was as an anchor which provides a spine for other developments in the precinct. The success of the project serves as an attractor for future development associated with the land parcels that are created by the revitalisation. It was very important that the project succeeded collaboratively and from the outset collaboration was the project's mantra.

The master plan that was developed by Taylor Cullity Lethlean and BKK Architects produced a very ordered rhythm throughout the street where everything is a derivative of 3m. The rhythm applied to paving patterns, tree spacing, the layout of street furniture and of course to the lighting. The lighting scheme we arrived at featured 12m high street lighting poles at 18m centres, 3m high pedestrian poles at 9m centres and 6m high feature lighting poles at 6m centres. It's just not possible to achieve such precision in layout without a very coordinated approach.



So how did the collaboration actually play out?

We attended weekly face to face meetings and workshops both at the architect's office and out at site. The workshops were big – everyone who could potentially influence the outcome was there: the client's own landscape architect, TCL and BKK, Arup (who were the civil engineer), the artist David Sequeira and us from Electrolight. The workshops were effective because we were all encouraged to provide ideas and input to all aspects of the project: the lighting designer having input to the tree selection, the artist providing input to the paving design, and so on. This highly collaborative approach was very interesting and enjoyable and produced some great outcomes for the project. The idea to create a linear lighting sculpture along the central median came from the group, not any single individual.

All project control group meetings were held on site (1 hour travel time from central Melbourne). This also assisted with the collaborative nature of the project – when you are forced to go to site on a regular basis, you soon build up a good understanding of the project, the sense of place and the wider project team.

In conforming to the 3m rhythm described above the lighting arrangement had to work hard. We also wanted to reduce, as far as possible, the amount of street clutter so we combined as many items as possible – we have street lights on the same poles as the shared use zone lights. These same poles accommodate the pedestrian crossing buttons and the traffic lights. The poles themselves were designed especially for the project: beautiful tapered cylindrical structures that are designed to be frangible on impact and in a custom colour. Of course this new pole design had to be approved by the state roads authority VicRoads – no mean feat at the best of times. But the team got behind the design, we consulted extensively with VicRoads and found that they were more than reasonable. It would have been so easy to go with a standard galvanised octagonal pole but instead we have the most elegant forms, entirely befitting of a great boulevard.



It was a similar story with the lamp we specified for the shared use zones. The cosmopolis lamp is used fairly extensively in Europe but in Australia it was very new. The lamp has good colour rendering, white light, excellent lamp life and is more efficient than those commonly used. We were initially met with resistance from the supply authority (who maintain the lights) because of a reluctance to carry another lamp type but again the team won the day and the better lamp prevailed. The project now has the largest collection of this lamp type in the southern hemisphere. Council's support when dealing with the supply authority made all the difference.

At its heart this project was about people and the collaboration of those involved was what made the project the success it is.

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