

LEX LOCI'S TRAVELS

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An irregular one-pager from The Public Land Consultancy

Lex Doesn't Park At the Queen Victoria Market

In lockdown, the Lexmobile doesn't get around the State the way it used to. Lex finds himself driving around Melbourne, facing his age-old parking dilemma.

As a motorist, he wants a parking space, preferably right outside his destination, and preferably free. As a commentator on land use, he deplores the distorted economics and waste of space represented by bleak at-surface parking lots.



Take for example the Queen Victoria Market. Here is a bleak bitumen wasteland within walking distance of the CBD. Lex abhors it. And there's another reason he doesn't want to park here.

He just doesn't want to park on top of people's dead bodies. Yes, the QV Market is built on top of a graveyard.



This was Melbourne's first colonial burial ground. Some 10,000 people were buried here. One (unconsecrated) corner was set aside for Aboriginal people and executed criminals. Many of the bodies were later relocated to the Melbourne General Cemetery, but many remain, undisturbed.

Other sites so close to the CBD would never be devoted to surface carparking. The laws of economics would sooner or later force their owners to put them to some more intensive, viable, productive, use.



But there's good news at the QV. The bitumen is to be transformed, bit by bit, into public park. The first stage involves relocation of an arts exhibition space called 'the Testing Grounds' from under the shadow of the Arts Centre spire.

Good for the QV, and good for the artists, whose potential audience will now be the 10 million people who, in normal times, use the market each year.



And Lex is confident that those artists will find ways of commemorating the people buried below their new open-air gallery. Elsewhere, cemetery trusts are floating the idea of the [multi-use cemetery](#). Here, Lex expects to find an innovative variation on that theme.

But our Lex still hasn't found a place to park. Two blocks down William Street he passes the Old Mint building, standing on Crown land. Behind it is a bleak surface carpark. Curious.

See you there! Lex Loci.

Queen Victoria Market is on Wurundjeri Land