AUSTRALIA'S HIGH-STREETS ARE CHANGING AS OUR CITIES URBANISE AND EVOLVE. THE WAY WE SHOP IS CHANGING, AS IS THE WAY THAT AUSTRALIANS RELATE TO THEIR URBAN SPACES. OUR "RETHINKING THE STRIP" FORUM FOCUSED ON THE CHALLENGES FACING TRADITIONAL STRIP SHOPPING PRECINCTS.

TRACT CONSULTANTS, AS ONE OF AUSTRALIA'S PRE-EMINENT DESIGN AND PLANNING FIRMS, HAS BEEN CREATING AND SHAPING OUR NATION'S CITIES AND URBAN SPACES FOR OVER FOUR DECADES AND IN VICTORIA, TRACT IS A LONG TERM RESIDENT AND PARTICIPANT OF THE BRIDGE ROAD, RICHMOND PRECINCT. ONE OF MELBOURNE’S HISTORIC HIGH-STREET ‘STRIPS’, BRIDGE ROAD IS EXPERIENCING RAPID URBAN CHANGE. AFTER MANY YEARS AS A HUB FOR CHEAP RETAIL, VACANCY RATES ARE RISING AND IT'S CLEAR THAT THINGS CAN'T STAY THE SAME FOREVER.

EVERY TWO YEARS, TRACT BRINGS OUR STAFF, STAKEHOLDERS AND KEY INDUSTRY COLLABORATORS TOGETHER IN A NATIONAL FORUM, TO FOCUS ON AN IMPORTANT ISSUE FACING OUR INDUSTRY. THIS TIME AROUND, A COLLABORATION WITH THE MELBOURNE UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF DESIGN (URBAN DESIGN STUDIO) CREATED “RETHINKING THE STRIP”, FOCUSED ON BRIDGE ROAD AS A CASE STUDY OF THE MYRIAD OF URBAN HIGH-STREETS AND STRIP SHOPPING PRECINCTS WITHIN AUSTRALIAN CITIES. A POP-UP STUDIO WAS ESTABLISHED HAND-IN-HAND WITH THE SCHOOL OF DESIGN IN A VACANT SHOP ON BRIDGE ROAD IN ORDER TO ‘INHABIT THE STRIP’ AND ENGAGE WITH THE LOCAL COMMUNITY.

AFTER WEEKS OF PREPARATION, THE FORUM KICKED OFF ON A COOL OCTOBER MORNING IN RICHMOND, AND THE CONVERSATION AROUND “RETHINKING THE STRIP” COMMENCED.
"HOW DO WE ADAPT THE HIGH STREET TO NEW SOCIAL AND RETAIL DEMANDS?"

CASE STUDY BRIDGE ROAD, MELBOURNE
“WE ALL KNOW WHAT WE DON’T WANT, FINDING A SOLUTION IS A BIT TRICKIER”

THE STREET AND SURROUNDING AREA HAS EVOLVED INTO A GENTRIFIED, HIGH ENERGY, URBAN POCKET

“CAFES, SHOPS AND GENERAL BUZZ ATTRACTS PEOPLE FROM ALL OVER THE CITY”

CASE STUDY OXFORD STREET, SYDNEY

CASE STUDY JAMES STREET, BRISBANE

CASE STUDY PAKINGTON STREET, GEELONG
"WE NEED TO CREATE PLACES FOR PEOPLE WHERE THEY DON'T ACTUALLY HAVE TO SPEND"

"...I THINK MAIN STREETS CAN BE SO MUCH MORE THAN JUST SHOPPING AREAS"

"WE'VE IDENTIFIED, THIS THEME OF TEN THOUSAND SMALL THINGS"

"RETHINKING SOMETHING REQUIRES THINGS THAT ARE JUST BREAKING OUT OF THE NORM"