

FORWARD SURGE



2017.jpg



2017 Forward Surge .jpg



aerial.jpg



2017a.jpg



2017d.jpg



2017b.jpg



2017 from St Kilda Road.jpg



2017c.jpg



2017 view towards to Arts Centre.jpg



2017 view towards St Kilda Road.jpg



2017 mortar used for landscape elements (detail).jpg



2017, base.jpg



2017 stairs from Arts Centre
Lawn to Hamer Hall.jpg



2017 in front of the Arts
Centre.jpg



2017 garden beds next to
Hamer Hall.jpg



2016.jpg



2016, Inge King with Rings of
Saturn.jpg



2014.jpg



1992.jpg



1981 During installation.gif



1975-6 Forward Surge under
construction .gif

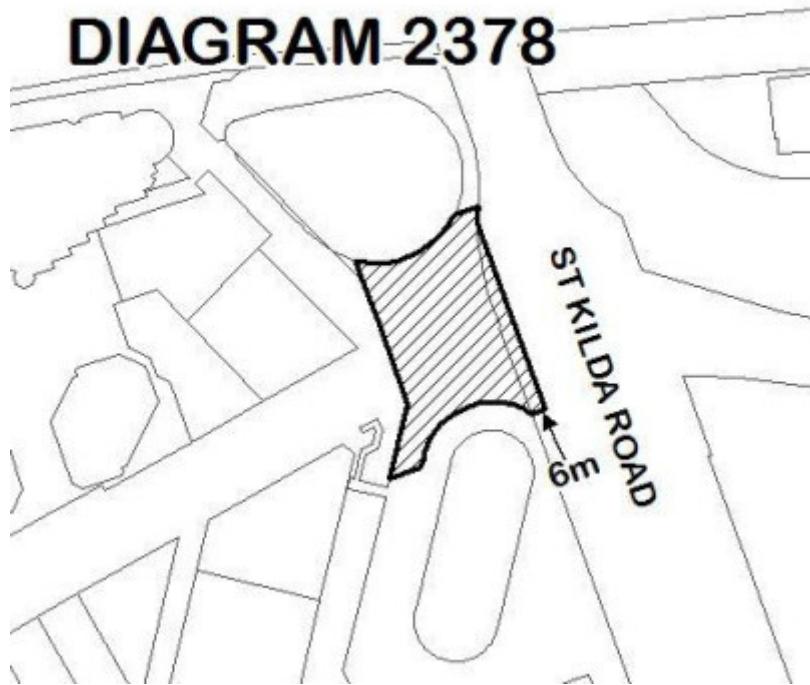


Diagram 2378.JPG

Location

100 ST KILDA ROAD SOUTHBANK, MELBOURNE CITY

Municipality

MELBOURNE CITY

Level of significance

Registered

Victorian Heritage Register (VHR) Number

H2378

VHR Registration

June 14, 2018

Heritage Listing

Victorian Heritage Register

Statement of Significance

Last updated on - September 22, 2025

Forward Surge is located on Wurundjeri Country.

What is significant?

Forward Surge, a monumental public sculpture made by renowned Australian sculptor Inge King (1915-2016) and its setting on the Arts Centre Lawn. The sculpture is made from fabricated steel, painted black, set into concrete foundations and surrounded by bluestone pavers and a large green lawn with concrete edged garden beds. The sculpture comprises four upright curved steel 'blades' that appear to roll northwards and it visually links the two main performance spaces in the Victorian ArtsCentre precinct. The Arts Centre Lawn is the setting both for the sculpture and extensive public use.

How is it significant?

Forward Surge is of cultural, aesthetic and historical significance to the State of Victoria. It satisfies the following criteria for inclusion in the Victorian Heritage Register:

Criterion D

Importance in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a class of cultural places and objects.

Criterion E

Importance in exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics.

Criterion F

Importance in demonstrating a high degree of creative or technical achievement at a particular period.

Criterion H

Special association with the life or works of a person, or group of persons, of importance in Victoria's history.

Why is it significant?

Forward Surge is significant at the State level for the following reasons:

Forward Surge is culturally significant as one of the most outstanding examples in Victoria of late modernist public sculpture. Forward Surge has become an iconic Melbourne landmark. It is culturally significant for the way it demonstrates how some modern sculpture was designed to encourage human interaction. Forward Surge was also designed to be viewed from a moving car. Its setting on the Arts Centre Lawn greatly contributes to the human interaction. It is culturally significant as one of Melbourne's few public art works from the 1970s that remains in situ in its original site with mostly original surrounds

(Criterion D)

Forward Surge is aesthetically significant for the way it integrates harmoniously with the built environment while its monumental, black appearance ensures that it remains an independent artwork. *Forward Surge* was selected by Arts Centre architect Roy Grounds to aesthetically link Hamer Hall and the Theatres Building.

Forward Surge is culturally significant for the way that it is widely appreciated by both the general and academic communities. It occupies a central place in Victorian cultural history.

(Criterion E)

Forward Surge is technically significant because the fabrication and installation of this large and heavy public art work was a technical achievement by sculpture fabricators and installers J.K. Fasham, engineer Joe Borg and Thermal Engineering. It is also the largest (in terms of length and breadth) work made by Inge King. *Forward Surge* is creatively significant as an abstract sculpture made from multiple different elements which succeed in creating changing sensations of form, space and light as people walk through and around them.

(Criterion F)

Forward Surge is historically significant because it was created by one of Victoria's most celebrated and critically respected sculptors - Inge King. Forward Surge is the most important creative achievement of her career and was her first significant public commission in Victoria, her home state. Forward Surge is historically significant because it is associated with Roy Grounds and his design of the Victorian Arts Centre. It continues the tradition of other modernist buildings where the architect commissioned artwork as an important part of the site. Forward Surge is historically significant because of its associations with the emigre artists who came to Australia after WWII and who collectively revitalised Victorian cultural life. It is also associated with the *Centre Five* group of modernist sculptors, one of whom was Inge King, who advocated for sculpture to be incorporated into architectural projects

(Criterion H)

Permit Exemptions

General Exemptions:

General exemptions apply to all places and objects included in the Victorian Heritage Register (VHR). General exemptions have been designed to allow everyday activities, maintenance and changes to your property, which don't harm its cultural heritage significance, to proceed without the need to obtain approvals under the Heritage Act 2017.

Places of worship: In some circumstances, you can alter a place of worship to accommodate religious practices without a permit, but you must notify the Executive Director of Heritage Victoria before you start the works or activities at least 20 business days before the works or activities are to commence.

Subdivision/consolidation: Permit exemptions exist for some subdivisions and consolidations. If the subdivision or consolidation is in accordance with a planning permit granted under Part 4 of the *Planning and Environment Act 1987* and the application for the planning permit was referred to the Executive Director of Heritage Victoria as a determining referral authority, a permit is not required.

Specific exemptions may also apply to your registered place or object. If applicable, these are listed below. Specific exemptions are tailored to the conservation and management needs of an individual registered place or object and set out works and activities that are exempt from the requirements of a permit. Specific exemptions prevail if they conflict with general exemptions.

Find out more about heritage permit exemptions [here](#).

Specific Exemptions:

It should be noted that Permit Exemptions can be granted at the time of registration (s.49(3) of the *Heritage Act 2017*). Permit Exemptions can also be applied for and granted after registration (under s.92 of the *Heritage Act 2017*).

General Condition 1

All exempted alterations are to be planned and carried out in a manner which prevents damage to the fabric of the registered place or **object**.

General Condition 2

Should it become apparent during further inspection or the carrying out of works that original or previously hidden or inaccessible details of the place or object are revealed which relate to the significance of the place or object, then the exemption covering such works shall cease and Heritage Victoria shall be notified as soon as **possible**.

General Condition 3

All works should ideally be informed by Conservation Management Plans prepared for the place. The Executive Director is not bound by any Conservation Management Plan, and permits still must be obtained for works suggested in any Conservation Management Plan.

General Condition 4

Nothing in this determination prevents the Heritage Council from amending or rescinding all or any of the permit exemptions.

General Condition 5

Nothing in this determination exempts owners or their agents from the responsibility to seek relevant planning or building permits from the relevant responsible authority, where applicable.

Specific Permit Exemptions

-Touch-up painting of un-corroded areas of the sculpture only, using semi-gloss black paint, provided that preparation or painting does not remove large amounts of original paint.

General Exemptions:

-Maintenance and replacement of plumbing and electrical services near the sculpture providing that the original formation of the sculpture and its bluestone base remains unaltered, and does not have a detrimental impact on its cultural heritage significance.

Public Safety and Security:

-The erection of temporary security fencing, scaffolding, hoardings or surveillance systems to prevent unauthorised access or secure public safety which will not adversely affect significant fabric of the place provided that temporary structures are removed within 30 **days of erection**.

-Emergency building stabilisation (including propping) necessary to secure safety where a site feature has been irreparably damaged or destabilised and represents a safety risk.

Note: Urgent or emergency site works are to be undertaken by an appropriately qualified specialist such as a structural engineer, or **other heritage professional**.

Signage and Site Interpretation:

-No signage or interpretation may be fixed to *Forward Surge*.

-Signage and site interpretation activities provided the signs located and be of a suitable size so as not to obscure any views of or cause any damage to significant fabric of the place.

-The erection of non-illuminated signage to ensure public safety or to assist in the interpretation of the heritage significance of the place or object and which will not adversely affect significant fabric including landscape features of the place or obstruct significant **views of the sculpture**.

Landscape Exemptions

-Works to pathways that are not part of the original design, and do not affect the cultural heritage significance of the sculpture and the **Arts Centre Lawn**.

-Minor repairs and maintenance to hard landscape elements, structures, steps, paths, steps and gutters, drainage and irrigation systems, edging, fences and gates but not the bluestone paving surrounding *Forward Surge*.

-The process of gardening, including mowing, hedge clipping, bedding displays, removal of dead shrubs and replanting the same species or cultivar, disease and weed control, and maintenance to care for **existing plants**.

-The removal or pruning of dead or dangerous trees to maintain **safety**.

-Subsurface works involving the installation, removal or replacement of watering and drainage systems in accordance with AS4970 and on the condition that works do not impact on the bluestone paving, concrete garden beds or underground concrete plinth.

-Vegetation protection and management of possums and vermin.

Theme

9. Shaping cultural and creative life

Construction dates 1973,

Heritage Act Categories Registered place,

Hermes Number 5097

Property Number

History

Arts Centre Lawn

Forward Surge is located on the Arts Centre Lawn. The lawn was included in the design of the Arts Centre partially to fulfil a condition imposed by the City of Melbourne. The design had placed Hamer Hall on the site of Snowden Park. The City of Melbourne permitted the loss of this park providing an equivalent "verdant space" was created to replace it. The Arts Centre Lawn does this. The lawn was also necessary to cover both part of the roof of the Arts Centre and the bridge over City Road, Sturt Street and Southgate Avenue.

Commissioning of *Forward Surge*

Forward Surge sits at the heart of the Victorian Arts Centre (VHR H1500). The complex was designed by the architect Roy Grounds from 1962 and the final building was completed in 1984 after his death. *Forward Surge* was installed on 22 March 1981. Roy Grounds chose *Forward Surge* from a 1:12 scale maquette included in King's second Australian solo exhibition, *Inge King: Maquettes for Monumental Sculpture*, held at the Chapman Powell Street Gallery, South Yarra on 2-14 April 1973. Powell Street Gallery director, David Chapman had arranged for the members of the Victorian Arts Centre Building Committee, including Roy Grounds, to visit the exhibition. As King later recalled, when Grounds saw the maquette for *Forward Surge* he said, 'I want this one.'

The maquette itself remained in the artist's possession until 2006, when she gifted it to the Arts Centre Melbourne (accession no. VAC2006-006.001). Before the full-sized sculpture could be fabricated, a second maquette had to be made to account for the wider bases that were needed to allow each element (a partial arch) to stand unsupported. The second maquette was later acquired by Dr and Mrs Bruce Munro and given by them to the Geelong Art Gallery in 1983 (accession no. 1983.76.a-e).

The final site for *Forward Surge* came to be seen by the artist as integral to the work. In the exhibition catalogue, the *Forward Surge* maquette was designated as a 'sculpture for open air environment.' While this was a very broad remit, in retrospect the location came to be seen by King as ideal. In large part, this is owing to the surrounding architecture: the curves of the steel sculpture echo the curves of Hamer Hall and the Theatres Building, while also contrasting with them in terms of material: black-painted steel versus concrete. The horizontal layout of the four sculptural elements / arches also acts as a counterpoint to the severe vertical thrust of the Arts Centre spire and the neighbouring high-rise apartment complexes. It took eight years for the work to be enlarged, fabricated and put into storage. During this time King paid repeated visits to the site. Shortly after the work was finally installed, on 23 March 1981, she wrote: 'I had clearly visualised *Forward Surge* in relation to its surroundings, but one cannot be absolutely sure until the work is installed. Seeing the sculpture finally in place on a beautiful sunny autumn day, the arches soaring into the sky, and linking the two buildings, spire and concert hall, was a wonderful experience.'

Manufacturing *Forward Surge*

The process of manufacturing *Forward Surge* was long and complex, entailing extensive meetings and correspondence with King, Grounds, the Arts Centre building committee, fabricators J.K. Fasham Pty Ltd and engineers Thermal Engineering. J.K. Fasham consigned the fabrication work to Thermal Engineering owing to the size of factory required to house the sculpture during fabrication. King chose her own structural engineer, Joe Borg, who was also a sub-contractor of J.K. Fasham. Borg made most of the computations for the enlargement of the curves. The artist's archive holds the original records of the protracted negotiations with all these people and companies. She said: '... with *Forward Surge*, I chose my own structural engineer. I had an engineering firm [Thermal Engineering] who would enlarge it but we needed a structural engineer... Grounds, Romberg and Boyd suggested that they would take over and I said no thankyou. Because I wanted to work with somebody who understood what I wanted; ... an insensitive engineer can suggest things that can ruin your work, and I knew I could talk to this man.'

The first sail was completed by June 1975 and removed by Mayne Nickless to the Public Works Department store in Port Melbourne. Fabrication was completed in 1976, and the four sails were stored with the Public Works Department with only an undercoat. In her book on King, Judith Trimble described the internal armature and construction of *Forward Surge*: '... Like the hull of a ship, the sculpture has an internal structure. Steel arcs 5cm thick and braced by T and angle sections were aligned with paired steel trusses built to the same profile and positioned at intervals between them, the whole construction mounted upon a steel base. Horizontal steel beams linked these members and stabilised lateral movement. The inner curve was then clad with (precisely curved) 6 mm. mild steel plate cut down to long strips measuring 610 x 244 cm., as it was not possible to manage continuous lengths. The sheets were attached to the framework with fillet welds at intervals and welded edge to

edge to create a smooth surface. Once the inner cladding was in place the forms became self-supporting, and props and braces were removed. ... The most difficult aspect of the job concerned welding the outer skin to the frame, especially in the narrowly tapered top of the curve. With welds ground and polished, the curves (now resembling great waves or sails) were stored; this was no small operation in itself.'

To install the work in 1981 police escorted four low-loaders from the Public Works Department store in Port Melbourne to St Kilda Road, which had to be partially closed off, on the morning of 22 March 1981. The four sails were attached to an underground concrete plinth installed on top of the immense concrete roof of the underground Arts Centre and bridge over the streets below. A team of men worked from 6 am to mid-afternoon to position the four steel elements on their concrete foundations. The steel blades were painted black, *in situ*, using Dimet brand inorganic zinc silicate coating applied as a corrosion inhibitor followed by 'Dimet 25%' black semi-gloss paint.

Use of *Forward Surge*

Since its installation, *Forward Surge* has been the site of numerous community activities. These include markets, performances, meetings, weddings and other informal interactions such as family picnics. In 2006, with King's consent, *Forward Surge* was temporarily painted a teal blue colour as part of a Commonwealth Games project, 'The Beach', in which the lawn next to Hamer Hall was transformed into a beach-like environment. King approved the project 'because it means the sculpture has a life.' The sculpture was then painted black again. The blue paint layer is still visible under subsequent black layers.

Modernism

While European modernism came to Australia in 1910 and was visible in popular culture from the 1930s (for example in fashion and retail), it took until the late 1950s or 60s for it to become accepted in the arts including sculpture. Modernism aimed to reject the styles of the past and focus instead on innovation and experimentation in forms, materials and techniques in order to create artworks that better reflected modern society. *Forward Surge* is one of the most outstanding examples in Victoria of late modernist public sculpture. Its abstract style is typical of the way that modernist sculpture rejected traditional representations of the world.

History of Inge King and her work

Inge King (nee Neufeld) was born in 1915 in Berlin, where she initially trained as a wood carver in the studio of Hermann Nonnenmacher and later studied at the *Vereinigte Staatschulen für freie und angewandte Künste* (Unified State Schools for Fine and Applied Art). This was one of the Weimar Republic's two great schools of art - the other being the Bauhaus. In 1939, she left for Britain where she studied on a scholarship at the Royal Academy, London, and at the Glasgow School of Art, gaining a diploma in sculpture in 1943. In the ensuing years, she gradually abandoned the academic figurative tradition in which she was trained in favour of an abstracted cubist form of carving, influenced by Jacob Epstein and Henry Moore. She showed work of this kind at her first solo exhibition, held at the London Gallery, 1949. She also travelled to France and the USA saying: 'My time in the United States was wonderful: it gave me new freedom; it was as though ballast had fallen off me - a European ballast.'

In 1950, she married the Australian painter and printmaker Grahame King in London and with him came to Australia in 1951, settling in Warrandyte. In Australia, she ceased carving and began constructing sculpture from sheet steel and copper wire, exhibiting these constructions and mobiles with her husband at the Peter Bray Gallery, Melbourne, 1952, and at the 1953 and 1957 Herald Outdoor Art Exhibitions in the Treasury Gardens. In 1959, she learnt to use an arc welder and thenceforth welded her work in steel, becoming one of the first sculptors in Australia - along with Clement Meadmore and Lenton Parr - to work primarily in that medium. She was also included that year in the significant *Six Sculptors* exhibition at the National Gallery of Victoria - the first ever showing of contemporary sculpture at the gallery. Along with her co-exhibitors from that show she would go on, in 1961, to co-found *Centre 5*, a group that agitated for the acceptance of abstract sculpture and for closer consultation with sculptors on the part of architects involved in the design of public works.

Her work of the 1960s featured heavily encrusted edges and joins, emphasising the artistic process of their construction. Relatively few works from this period were commissioned for public spaces in Victoria with *Wodonga Fountain*, 1972 (Wodonga Civic Centre), *Shell Sculpture*, 1965 (University of Ballarat) and *Eurydice*, 1965 (BHP) being among the few exceptions. In 1968, she began grinding steel to a smooth, polished finish, one example being *Wall Sculpture I*, 1968, (McClelland Gallery and Sculpture Park, Langwarrin). She was awarded her first two major commissions in Canberra and Brisbane between 1969 and 1973. These two commissions

were of a scale that required King to work with engineers and fabricators - a process she considered enabled her to 'complete her training.'

From 1961 to 1988, Inge King's smaller works, which she assembled, welded and painted by hand in the studio, were nearly all in black-painted steel. Her first monumental black painted sculpture was *Black Sun* (1975) for which she won the Mildura purchase prize at the *Mildura Sculpturescape*. *Forward Surge* was the second of King's fabricated public works to make use of simple black-painted steel. Other major black painted steels commissions in Victoria include *Sun Ribbon*, 1980-82 (Melbourne University), and *Grand Arch*, 2001 (Art Gallery of Ballarat). King also produced sculptures made of steel painted in black and other colours such as *Joie de Vivre*, 1989 (ICI House); *Shearwater*, 1994 (ESSO Australia); *Sentinel*, 2000 (City of Manningham); *Grand Arch*, 2001 (Art Gallery of Ballarat); *Rings of Saturn*, 2005-06 (Heide Museum of Modern Art) and *Red Rings*, 2008, Eastlink trail.

King has held numerous solo exhibitions including those at Powell Street Gallery, 1969, 1973; Realities Gallery, 1977, 1980, 1985; Victor Mace Gallery (Brisbane), 1978; Coventry Gallery (Sydney), 1978; Bonython-Meadmore Gallery (Adelaide and Sydney), 1985, 1987, 1989; and the Australian Galleries, sixteen exhibitions since 1988. Major survey exhibitions have been held at Melbourne University, 1982; Deakin University, 1990; National Gallery of Victoria (NGV), 1992; Bendigo Art Gallery, 1995; ANU Drill Hall Gallery, 2002, and NGV, 2014.

King lectured in sculpture to trainee kindergarten teachers at the School of Early Childhood Studies at the University of Melbourne, 1961 to 1975, and taught sculpture at the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology, 1976 to 1987. In recognition of her outstanding services to the arts in Australia she was created an Officer of the Order of Australia in 1984. More recently she was awarded the inaugural Dame Elisabeth Lifetime Achievement Award for Australian Sculpture, in October 2015. She is represented in all major public collections in Australia as well as in private collections throughout the country and in the UK, Europe and the USA.

References:

The nomination of *Forward Surge* was extensively copied for this assessment. It contained 69 references.

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Robin Grow, 2017, History of Snowden Park, Southbank Local News,
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Rachel Roberts Communications, et al, 2009, Modernism <http://www.australia.gov.au/about-australia/australian-story/modernism>

The Charles O. Perry Studio, Charles O. Perry, <http://www.charlesperry.com/sculpture/style/planar/>

When Art Meets Architecture, 2014, Penelope Seidler AM talks about her extraordinary 50- year collaboration with her husband, Harry Seidler AC, Sydney Living Museums <https://sydneylivingmuseums.com.au/stories/when-art-meets-architecture>

East Link Sculpture Park booklet <https://www.eastlink.com.au/images/documents/EastLink-sculpture-park-booklet-July-2017.pdf>

Bauhaus, The Art Story <http://www.theartstory.org/movement-bauhaus.htm>

Assessment Against Criteria

Criterion

Forward Surge is of cultural, aesthetic and historical significance to the State of Victoria. It satisfies the following criteria for inclusion in the Victorian Heritage Register:

Criterion D

Importance in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a class of cultural places and objects.

Criterion E

Importance in exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics.

Criterion F

Importance in demonstrating a high degree of creative or technical achievement at a particular period.

Criterion H

Special association with the life or works of a person, or group of persons, of importance in Victoria's history.

Extent of Registration

NOTICE OF REGISTRATION

As Executive Director for the purpose of the **Heritage Act 2017**, I give notice under section 53 that the Victorian Heritage Register is amended by including the following place in the Heritage Register:

Number: H2378

Category: Heritage Place

Place: *Forward Surge*

Location: 100 St Kilda Road, Melbourne

Municipality: Melbourne City

All of the place shown hatched on Diagram 2378 encompassing parts of Crown Allotments 3C, 13F, 2341 and 2342, City of South Melbourne, Parish of Melbourne South and part of the road reserve for St Kilda Road.

Dated: 14 June 2018

STEVEN AVERY

Executive Director

[*Victoria Government Gazette* G 24 14 June 2018 1286]

This place/object may be included in the Victorian Heritage Register pursuant to the Heritage Act 2017. Check the Victorian Heritage Database, selecting 'Heritage Victoria' as the place source.

For further details about Heritage Overlay places, contact the relevant local council or go to Planning Schemes Online <http://planningschemes.dpcd.vic.gov.au/>