

## Too late? 49

For instance, recently a contract was let, I am informed, for a giant building to be constructed behind the Town Hall and Cathedral, and it will dwarf these two great old buildings.

Why should the community not have a chance to comment before rather than after these decisions are made?

What other city in the world would allow its Cathedral and its Town Hall to be dwarfed and belittled? The effect will not be happy, yet the result is likely to appear before anyone realises the meaning of it.

I was discussing the city with architect Neville Gruzman who intends to devote much of his time to checking the City's needs and the council's actions.

While praising the idea of Martin Plaza, he asks — why should the Plaza, as realised, be full of such ugliness against its grand background? Why red lampposts and why gipsy caravans for the flower sellers? What has that to do with the City centre?

I agree. We need to bring grace, not musical comedy, to our beautification programs.

None of the decorations there, anyway, are fitting with the Cenotaph. Taste failures tend to be permanent.

The Cenotaph would be better set off by a fountain designed to separate it from the paved surface of the plaza.

Martin Plaza is still incomplete, so to my mind the debate is still open and changes could be made.

These are just instances, to focus your thoughts on your City.

our town

Leslie Walford  
Nov 19 72.

IT WAS one of those Monday mornings.

First, the alarm clock hadn't rung — or maybe I'd slept through it. I was half an hour late before I started!

Then I burnt the toast, burnt my fingers on the iron pressing a dress, found there was no milk for my coffee, and I'd run out of mascara and lipstick.

I hoped I wouldn't run into anyone I knew, feeling undressed like that.

To top it all, it was a gloomy winter morning, and as I walked up Pitt Street to the office, I felt sure it was going to continue to be a bad day.

Then, almost magically, right in the middle of the drab buildings, there was a mass of bright color, and in the middle of the choking smog of cars there was a fresh, fragrant scent.

I had reached Martin Plaza and right in front of me was one of the flower-barrows.

Painted bright orange.

### Smile that has charmed many

with carved-out designs in red, it housed dozens of red, pink, and white carnations, yellow daisies, daffodils, violets, and pansies in equally bright plastic buckets.

The man attending the barrow, rugged up in a worn corduroy jacket over a bright blue jumper over a thick white shirt, almost ran up as I stopped.

The Australian Women's Weekly — July 26, 1972

"Hello, lovely lady," he said in a slightly accented, deep rich voice.

Kominos Lackerdiss is an outrageous flatterer. Even if you do look like the morning — after — the — night — before, he'll say you're lovely. He is one of those men who keep alive the tales of European charm.

He comes from Greece

and, though his dark hair is turning grey under the peaked cap he always wears, he is good-looking with a smile I'm sure has charmed many women.

He has been in Australia since 1948 and ran his own flower-farm before becoming a barrow flower-seller.

He's had this new barrow since Christmas, leasing it

from the Council of the City of Sydney, and thinks "it's beautiful, eh?"

The barrows were designed by the architects who designed Martin Plaza, Clarke Gazzard Architects, and built by a cartwright, Tom McCotter.

"Every morning," said Mr. Lackerdiss, "I get here early to arrange the flowers so they look pretty."

"I get here maybe seven, half past six. I start selling from 7.30. I leave home (at Chatswood) at four, and go to the markets to buy the flowers."

"I buy every flower I can get. Sometimes I do not get enough. Flowers are very scarce. That is why they are so expensive."

"Years ago you couldn't get rid of flowers at three-

pence a big bunch, there were so many."

Mr. Lackerdiss has his own theory about why there are not enough flowers.

"A flower-farm is very hard work. Before, the children used to help the father and work hard and then take over the farm. But now the children go into other work, not so hard. The farms are sold and houses go up."

Selling flowers is equally hard work if Mr. Lackerdiss' hands are anything to go by: cuts, stains, calluses, and dirt, making them feel like coarse sandpaper.

"Chrysanthemums are the worst — the green stain from their stems doesn't come off easy."

It seems Mrs. Lackerdiss has the same problem — she runs a florist's shop in Chatswood.

"Flowers," said Mr. Lackerdiss, "is like the two-up game, sometimes you make it, sometimes you don't. Sometimes you sell all the

### Suddenly it was a good day

flowers, sometimes you don't. You never know.

"Winter is the worst. No, summer is the worst. Both is worst. Who will come out in the rain in winter to buy flowers? In summer, flowers die quickly. It is all a game."

But he likes it. He not only loves flowers but the people, too. He is street directory, building directory, company directory, and "Dear Dorothy Dix" all in one.

His work has given him a great knowledge of the city, and many friends.

"One businessman who stops here to buy flowers came to me one day saying, 'I have this beautiful new girl in the office, how do I tell her I like her?'"

"Send her red roses, I tell him. 'Doesn't that mean love?' he says. 'Of course,' I say. 'No, no,' he says, 'I don't want to send red roses.'"

"He did give her some flowers, many flowers."

"Then the girl comes to me, and says what do I do, he keeps sending me flowers and wanting me to go out with him."

"I got a surprise. She was only 18 and he was about 60."

Not many Australian men buy flowers. Most of Mr. Lackerdiss' customers are women, and they don't usually buy the flowers for themselves.

"My busiest time is on Monday from 8.30 to 10. The girls buy them for the offices."

"If men do buy flowers, they want them all wrapped up so people can't see they carry flowers."

He has favorite flowers: red roses followed by red carnations, the flowers Australians like best.

"And here you are, lovely lady, just for you, a present." He pinned a red carnation on my dress and gave me one of those charming smiles.

Suddenly it was a good day.