

7 February 2025

Carlo Celis
Senior Subdivision Officer
City of Melbourne
GPO Box 1603
MELBOURNE VIC 3000

Road Naming Proposal – Benz Lane Council Lane 1163

Dear Carlo,

Please be advised that Ratio Consultants act on behalf of *Leisure Accommodation Collective Pty Ltd (LACo)* in relation to the above-mentioned matter.

The following proposal is for the naming of a currently unnamed pedestrian throughfare, formally known as Council Lane 1163. The throughfare connects Franklin Street and A'Beckett Street, in the block located between Anthony Street and Elizabeth Street.

This report outlines the proposed name, location of the road being named, background information on why the proposed name is appropriate and a detailed response to the *City of Melbourne's Place and Road Naming Policy 2024*.

The proposal also demonstrates compliance with the relevant principles for road naming set out in *Naming rules for places in Victoria 2022 - Statutory requirements for naming roads, features and localities*.

Proposed Name

The proposed name is Benz Lane, which commemorates the area's rich local history and complies with relevant naming rules. Subsequent sections of this proposal provide further explanation of the proposed name and its relevance to the local area.

Location

The road being considered for this proposal runs in a northwest to southeast direction between Franklin Street and A'Beckett Street, immediately east of No. 167-175 Franklin Street. Please refer to **Appendix A** for the proposed location of Benz Lane.

Background and Reason for Proposal

As part of a renewal to the adjoining property at No. 167-175 Franklin Street, naming this walkway will ensure patrons to the venue and other commercial properties are properly directed to the correct address.

The proposed name, Benz Lane, reflects strong links to the local area's history and the roads purpose as a connecting thoroughfare for pedestrians.

Benz derives from Hedwig Benz, who was the first full time interpreter employed at the Queen Victoria Hospital in 1956, providing crucial communication services for post-war migrant patients. The Queen Victoria Hospital was decommissioned in 1987 and is now the Queen Victoria Women's Centre located at 210 Lonsdale Street, Melbourne (approximately

600m east of the unnamed walkway). Hedwig Benz worked at the Queen Victoria Hospital from 1956 to 1971, and died in 2006. A detailed biography of Hedwig Benz is provided at **Appendix B**.

As such, naming the laneway in her honour supports the rich multicultural city that Melbourne is, whilst aligning with the City of Melbourne's approach to naming which encourages recognising women of historical importance.

City of Melbourne's Approach to Naming

The City of Melbourne supports names that recognise women in history. Specifically, the City of Melbourne teamed up with the Victorian Women's Trust to feature more Victorian women when naming places and lanes, providing an opportunity to celebrate women who have influenced and inspired our community.

Accordingly, the proposed laneway name originating from Hedwig Benz; a woman of historical significance to the City of Melbourne will provide an opportunity to celebrate influential women.

Compliance with Naming Rules

Compliance with the relevant principles for road naming set out in Naming rules for places in Victoria 2022 – Statutory requirements for naming roads, features and localities are set out below.

Relevant Principal	Compliance of Proposed Name
Principle A – Ensuring public safety	This principle deals with ensuring that emergency services and other public services (such as mail) are not put at risk. This proposed name will support public and operational safety, specifically naming the road will allow easier wayfinding for emergency services and other public services.
Principle B – Recognising the public interest	This principle deals with ensuring that long-term public benefits outweigh short-term effects on the wider community. The proposed road name offers a long-term public benefit of educating the broader community of the history of the locality. It will also provide clear directions to patrons of the adjacent commercial properties. Additionally, the introduction of a name to the road will not create any short-term inconveniences and on balance recognises and supports public interest.
Principle C – Linking the name to place	This principle deals with ensuring that the road name has strong links with its locality to ensure the preservation of cultural heritage. The proposed road name has strong links to the local areas, given Hedwig Benz's crucial role at the Queen Victoria Hospital, which is located a short 600m east of the unnamed road.

Principle D – Ensuring names are not duplicated	This principle deals with ensuring that the proposed name is not duplicated within a 5-kilometre radius at a metropolitan Melbourne location. There are no duplicate road names within 5km radius.
Principle E – Recognition and use of Traditional Owner language	The proposed name is not within the Traditional Owner language. Accordingly, this principle is not applicable to this application.
Principle F – Names must not discriminate or be offensive	This principle deals with ensuring that the proposed name must not discriminate or cause offense. Although the proposed name derives from a name in history, the work of the women at the Queen Victoria Hospital is seen to pioneer the future of women in the medical field and supports an empowering message for women in history. Supported by City of Melbourne’s naming process, the proposed name encourages a message of equality rather than discrimination.
Principle G – Gender equality	This principle deals with encouraging gender equality. Similarly, to Principle F, the proposed name highlights the spirit and work ethic of women in history, specifically those associated with the historical Queen Victoria Hospital. Therefore, the proposed name supports and celebrates gender equality.
Principle H – Dual names	This principle deals with transitional names toward the adoption of the Traditional Owner name. This principle is not applicable to the proposed road name, which is not proposing the use of dual names.
Principle I – Using commemorative names	This principle deals with considerations when the road name commemorates an event, person or place. The proposed road name uses the last name of Hedwig Benz who died in 2006. Benz was the first full time interpreter employed at the Queen Victoria Hospital in 1956, providing crucial communication services for post-war migrant patients. Consent from a family member of Hedwig Benz has been attained and is provided at Appendix C.
Principle J – Using commercial and business names	This principle deals with ensuring that commercial and business names are not used. The proposed road name is not proposing to use a commercial or business name.
Principle K – Language	This principle deals with the language of the proposed name.

The proposed name is a simple 4 letter word, which does not include any punctuation, hyphens or numerical values as required.

Principle L – Directional names to be avoided

This principle deals with ensuring that cardinal directions are not used in road names.

The proposed road name is not proposing to use cardinal directions.

Principle M – Assigning extent to a road, feature or locality

This principle deals with clearly defining the area and/or extent to which the name will apply

This principle has been addressed by shading and defining the location of the proposed laneway at **Appendix A**.

We look forward to Council's consideration of the application. Should you have any queries relating to the road naming submission please contact me on (03) 9429 3111 or by email at lily.lockley@ratio.com.au.

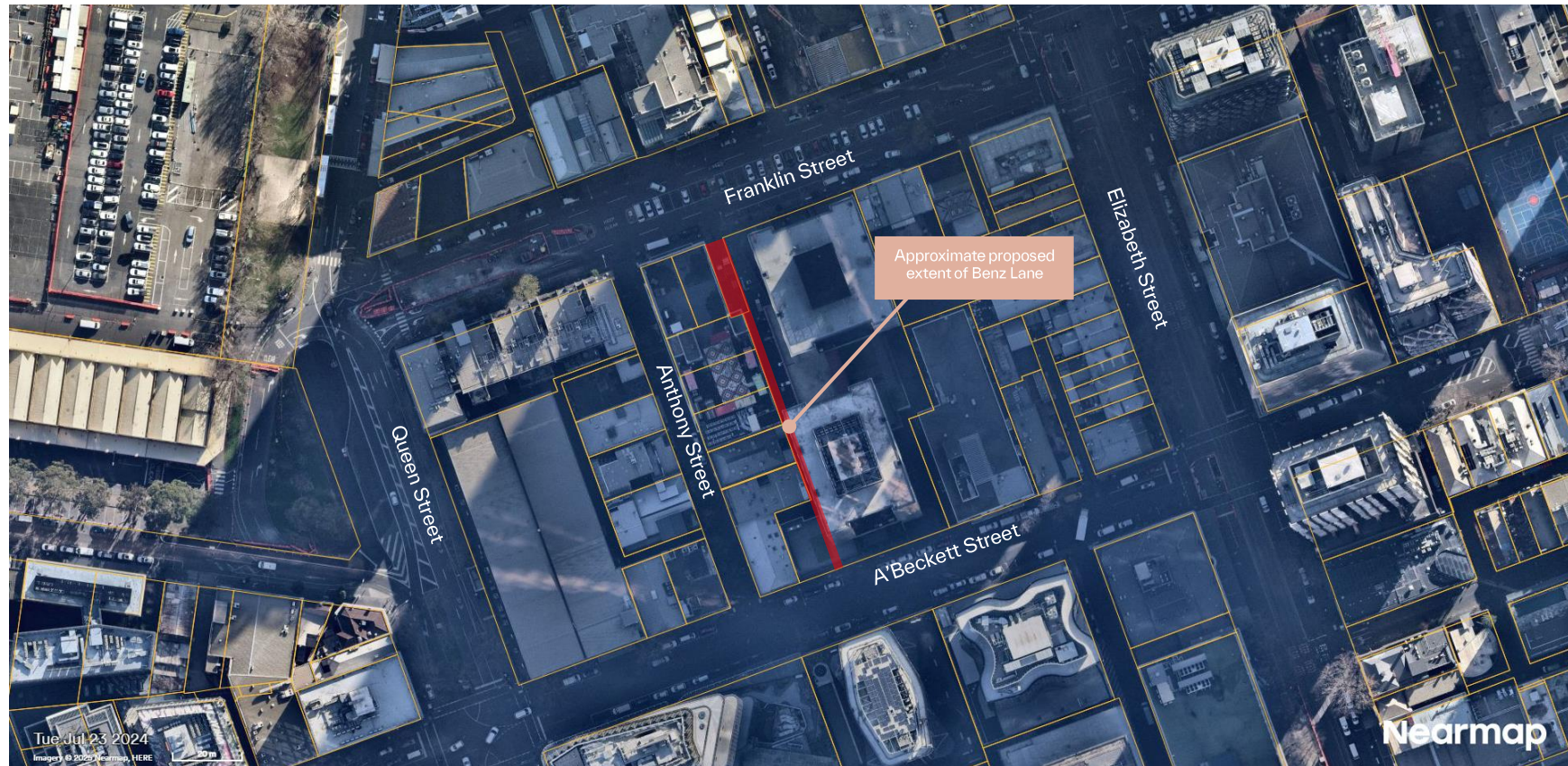
Yours sincerely,



Lily Lockley
Planner

Appendix A – Location of proposed extent of Benz Lane

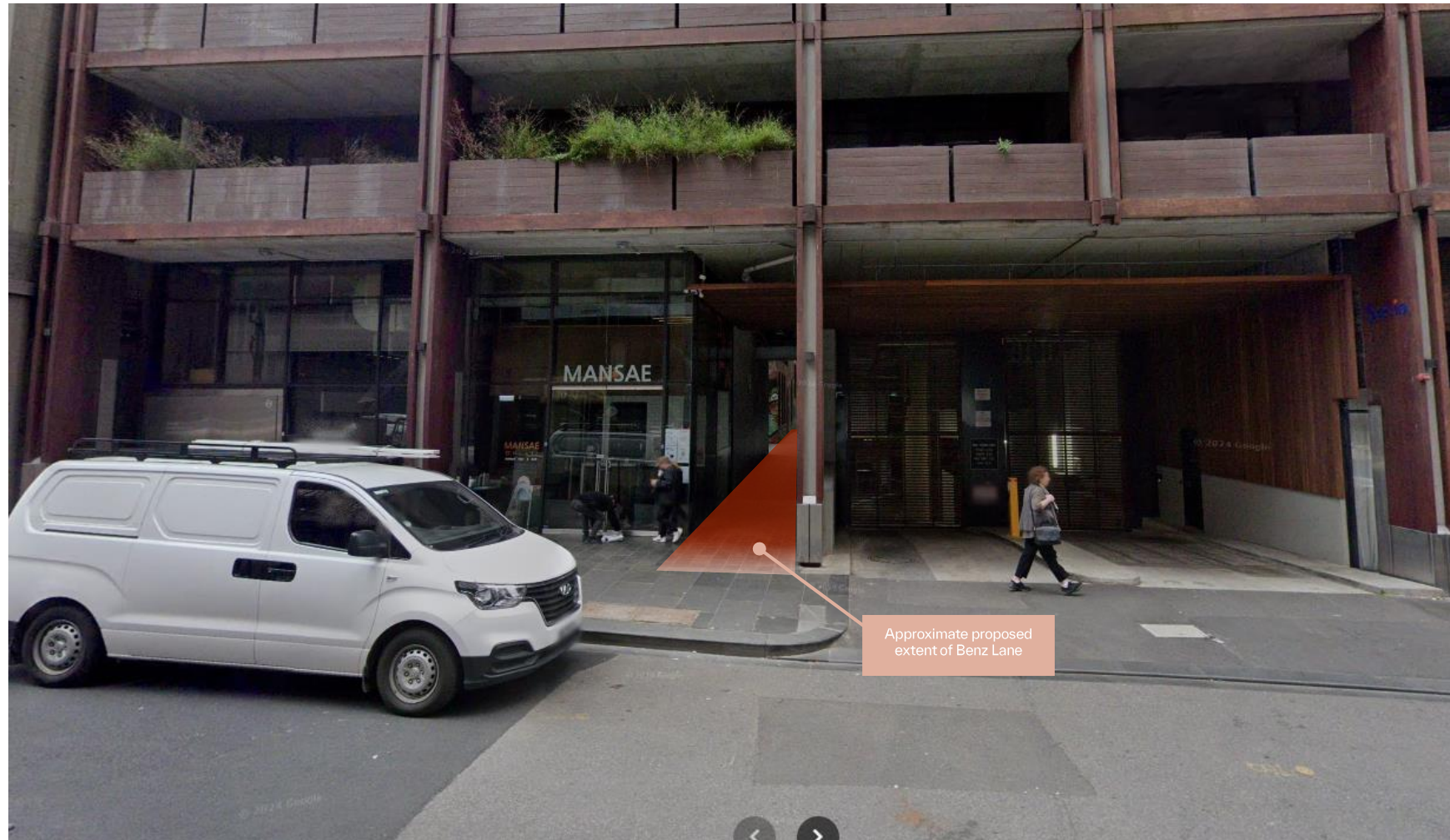
Figure 1: Approximate proposed extent of Benz Lane, viewed from Franklin Street



Basemap source: Nearmap (dated 23 July 2024)

**Not to scale*

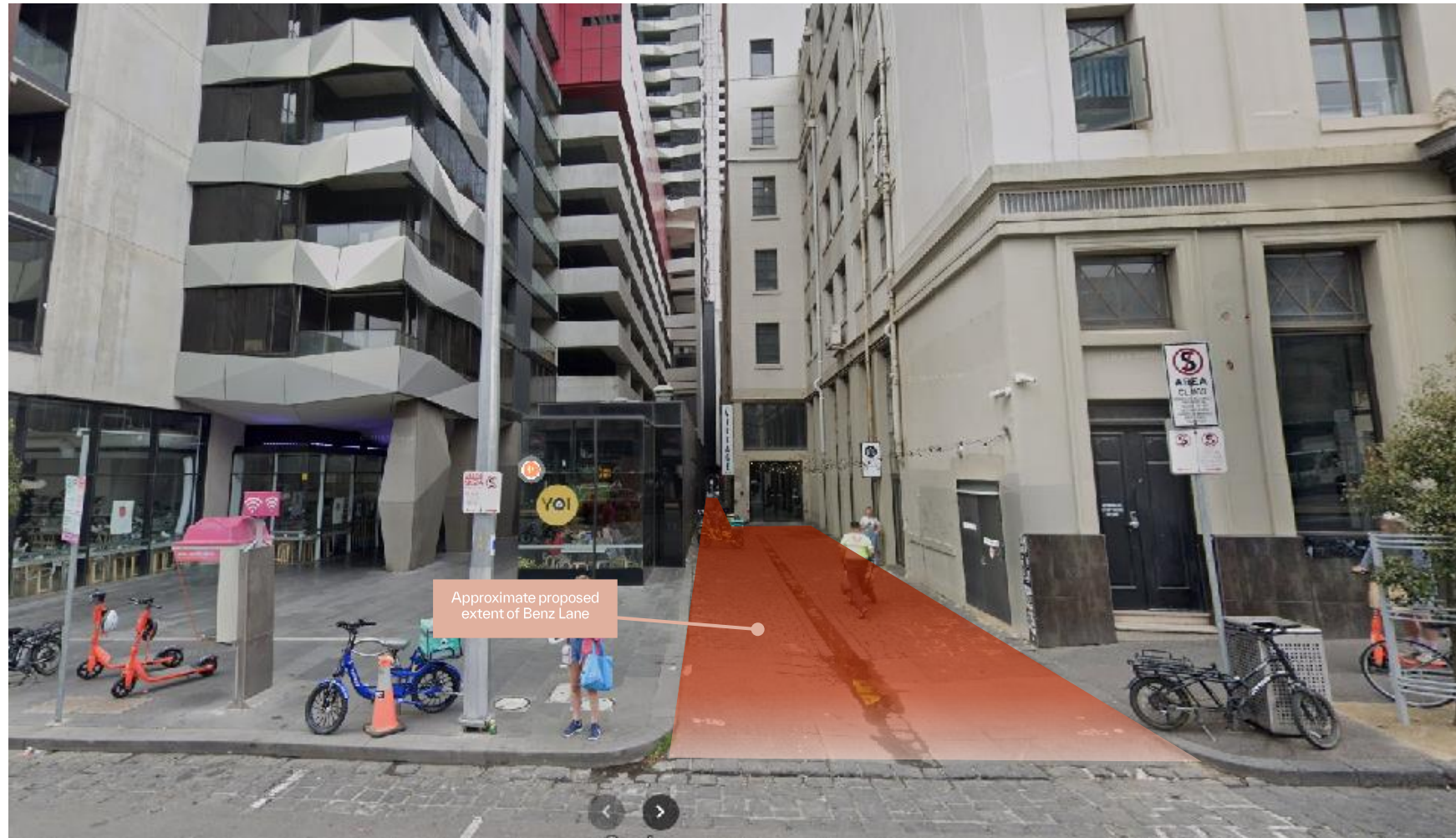
Figure 2: Approximate proposed extent of Benz Lane, viewed from Franklin Street



Basemap source: Google Street View

**Not to scale*

Figure 3: Approximate proposed extent of Benz Lane, viewed from Franklin Street



Basemap source: Google Street View

**Not to scale*

Figure 4: Existing conditions of proposed Benz Lane, looking north



Dated: 8 July 2024

Appendix B Biography of Hedwig Benz

Hedwig Benz (née Schläpfer) was born in Brig, Switzerland, in 1920. Growing up in the picturesque Alps, she developed a strong sense of community and compassion, values that would later define her professional life. Hedwig spent her formative years in Switzerland and briefly in Italy, where she immersed herself in the local culture, developing fluency in multiple languages. This multilingual skill would become a cornerstone of her career in later years.

In July 1949, seeking new opportunities, Hedwig immigrated to Melbourne, Australia, aboard the S.S. Almkerk. Like many post-war migrants, she came with the hope of contributing to Australia's growing society. Initially working as a housekeeper and nurse, Hedwig adapted quickly to her new environment, embracing the vibrant multiculturalism of Melbourne.

Melbourne in the mid-20th century was a city undergoing significant change, with an influx of migrants reshaping its cultural and social fabric. Hedwig became deeply involved in this dynamic, working tirelessly to support newly arrived non-English-speaking migrants. Her ability to speak German, Italian, and French made her an invaluable resource in bridging communication gaps within Melbourne's migrant communities.

In 1954, Hedwig married William Benz, a fellow Swiss migrant. Together, they built a life in Melbourne, becoming Australian citizens in 1958. By this time, Hedwig had already begun making her mark on the city. In 1956, she was appointed as the first full-time interpreter at the Queen Victoria Memorial Hospital, a groundbreaking position created in response to the needs of Melbourne's growing migrant population.

The Queen Victoria Memorial Hospital, established in 1896, was a pioneering institution dedicated to women's healthcare. By the mid-20th century, Melbourne's diverse migrant population necessitated new approaches to patient care. Hedwig's work as an interpreter was instrumental in ensuring that language barriers did not impede the delivery of high-quality medical services. She bridged the gap between medical staff and non-English-speaking patients, allowing them to communicate effectively and access the care they needed. Her role was particularly significant in alleviating the burden on children who often had to interpret complex medical information for their parents.

Hedwig's contributions set a precedent for cultural competence in healthcare. Her efforts led to the hospital's later expansion of interpreter services, with twelve interpreters fluent in fourteen languages employed by 1985. Her pioneering work not only improved healthcare outcomes but also underscored the importance of inclusivity in medical settings, helping to make Melbourne a more welcoming city for migrants.

In recognition of her dedicated service to the migrant communities of Victoria, Hedwig Benz was awarded the British Empire Medal (BEM) in 1972. The BEM honors individuals for meritorious service to their communities, and Hedwig's award highlighted her hands-on contributions and their profound impact on people's lives.

After her retirement in 1971, Hedwig and her husband relocated to Queensland, where she continued to support her local community in quieter ways. Despite leaving Melbourne, her legacy endured through the countless lives she touched and the systems she helped transform.

Hedwig Benz passed away in 2006, leaving behind a legacy of compassion, dedication, and service. Her pioneering work in Melbourne remains an inspiring example of how one individual can make a profound difference in the lives of others, particularly in a diverse and evolving society.

Appendix C – Family Consent

From: [REDACTED]
To: [Lily Lockley](#)
Subject: Re: Proposed Benz Lane - Melbourne CBD
Date: Tuesday, 4 February 2025 3:54:17 PM

Hi Lily,

It was indeed a big surprise to get your phone call.

Any blood relative are living in Switzerland, like her Brother s wife and children and grandchildren. I could get in touch with them.

However I am the only relative leaving in Australia.

Aunty had help so many children and family that she did considered the as her own.

I am happy for you to use the name of Benz or Schlaepfer (her Maiden name).

I am so happy that she is getting some recognition for her help the to the community.

Please don't hesitate to contact me for more information.

Warm regards

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

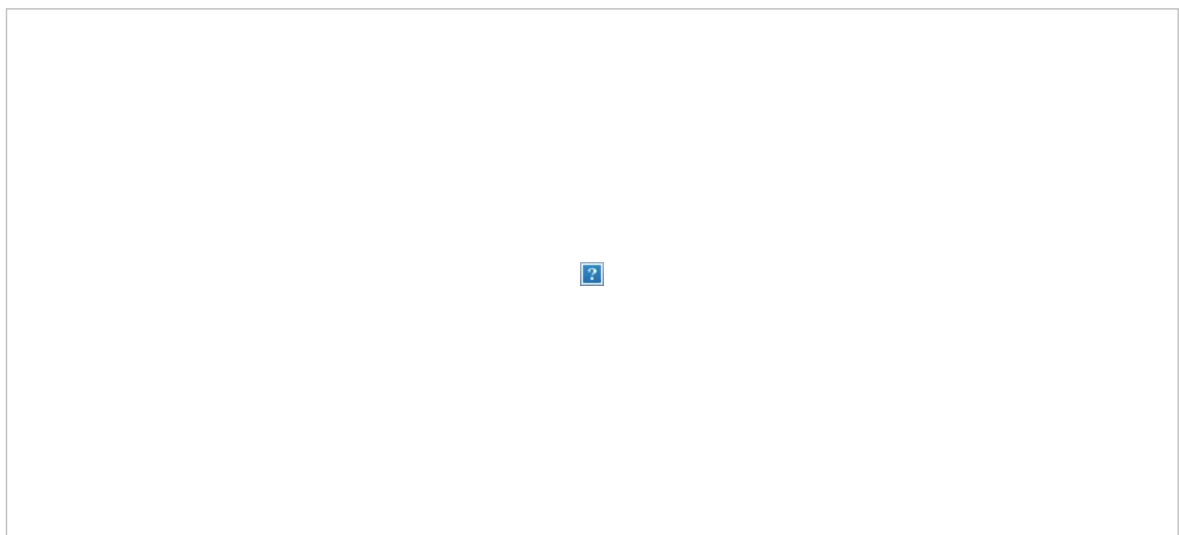
On 4 Feb 2025 9:01 am, Lily Lockley <lily.lockley@ratio.com.au> wrote:

Good morning [REDACTED]

It was nice chatting to you just now!

As discussed, we are looking to rename an existing unnamed laneway in the Melbourne CBD to commemorate your Great Aunt, Hedwig Benz. It is proposed to name the laneway 'Benz Lane'.

Below, is a map of the proposed location of Benz Lane, which provides a linking pedestrian throughfare from Franklin Street to A'Beckett Street.



The proposed Benz Lane seeks to commemorate Hedwig Benz, who was the first full time interpreter employed at the nearby previous Queen Victoria Hospital in 1956, providing crucial communication services for post-war migrant patients.

As part of our laneway renaming application to the City of Melbourne, we are seeking consent from the family members of the person being commemorated.

As I understand, Hedwig Benz was your Great Aunt. Did you have any other living relatives who have a closer genetic relation to Mrs Benz? If yourself, and / or any other relative (who may have a closer genetic relation), are in support of our application, it would be greatly appreciated if you could provide us with your written consent.

Please do not hesitate to contact me on 0490 768 340, if you have any questions or concerns.

Kind regards,

Lily Lockley
(She/Her)
Planner

Phone 03 9429 3111

Email lily.lockley@ratio.com.au

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Gadigal Country
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Brisbane

Jagera Country
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Hobart

nipaluna Country
(03) 6108 9261



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We acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the land we work, live and travel on, and appreciate the rich cultures of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and their enduring connection to Country.