

VANTAGE POINT

The following presents two views of the main shopping centre on Brighton Road, taken from the same Vantage Point. They are starkly different, and highlight aspects of life in the Sandgate community on two days separated by approximately 63 years of considerable social and economic change.

c.1960



2023



The black and white photo was taken around 1960, from adjacent to the Police Station looking back towards the Town Hall. The photographer was out and about on a winter mid-morning, judging by the shadows, and maybe a Sunday, if the volume of traffic, both pedestrian and vehicular is any indication.

The population of Brisbane was approximately 600,000 - less people and, by extension, less cars leaving more room for us to ride our pushbikes, walk or catch Sandgate's own Black and White bus to school.

Einbunpin lagoon, First Lagoon as it was called then, occupied quite a lot more real-estate, stretching from Keogh St, adjacent to the Police Station, to beside what is now the Post Office Hotel. While the problematic water hyacinth grew freely, the water looked clean and supported a variety of wildlife.

The large building in the distance to the right is the Sandgate Post Office, now the Post Office Hotel. The shop to the left, on the corner of Fourth Avenue, is Lyons Men's and Boy's wear, formerly Barden and Lyons, now the Professionals Real Estate office.

Yes, there were clothing stores, including Bayard's drapery at the far end of Brighton Road adjacent to the Town Hall, shoe retailer, Chandlers electrical and white goods store and two major grocery and household items stores, many butchers and not forgetting "Been there forever and having another sale" Russel's haberdashery, which sadly, has recently closed its doors, forever.

In those times it was also, generally, just a short walk to your friendly corner store, where you could buy an ice cream, the vegetables for the evening meal and the morning or evening paper but that's another story.

The colour photo taken in November 2023 from the same vantage point, tells a very different story. The photographer, this time, was out and about late Sunday afternoon. The most obvious differences between the two periods are, more cars, many more trees and less lagoon. One change that has not come about is the development of high rise buildings.

Sadly, the lagoon has been reduced in size to accommodate a carpark. Now, as a result of kerb-to-kerb sealed roads draining rain run off away from the lagoon the water requires constant oxygenation and regular treatment for blue-green algal blooms. While the lagoon hosts turtles, eels and some water birds, it attracts nowhere near the diversity of wildlife as the nearby Dowse Lagoon.

As mentioned above, the nature of the shopping centre has also changed, with fewer specialty shops. For Brisbane's current population of approximately 2.5 million, it is more convenient to shop in major chain supermarkets than family-owned, corner stores and local specialty shops.