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Regent  
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# Black ban on square demolition

By VINCENT BASILE,  
our Civic Affairs Reporter

**Melbourne's beleaguered City Square project faces a major setback with an indefinite union black ban on demolition work on the site.**

The militant Builders' Laborers' Federation last night announced the ban would remain until the Regent Theatre was reopened to the public.

The decision was announced by the federation's Federal secretary (Mr. Norm Gallagher) at a meeting of the Save the Regent committee.

The Melbourne City Council announced last week results of an expert survey on the theatre, which said the building was not worth preserving, and should be demolished to make way for the City Square.

"No work will be done on the square project until the Regent is reopened to the public," Mr. Gallagher said.

"We fully endorse the views of the Save the Regent committee that the theatre is of significant historical value, and is the most beautiful in Melbourne.

"We have a responsibility towards future generations to save it. Never again will

a theatre like the Regent ever be built in Melbourne or in Australia."

Because of the black ban the new strategy for the City Square project, which envisaged a \$19,000 feasibility study by Clarke Gazard Planners Pty. Ltd. and later an architectural competition, will be further delayed.

Last week the Lord Mayor (Cr. Whalley) said a report by experts, commissioned by the council, indicated that:

- Public support for the preservation of the building was based on emotion and misinformation.

- The National Trust had not classified the building.

- The acoustics were bad and the auditorium was unsuitable for use as a concert hall.

- The cost of restoration would be higher than the building of an entirely new concert hall and ornaments and decorations in the theatre were cheap plaster casts of which moulds still existed in the country.