

DOCKLANDS NEWS

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▲ L-R: Mo Hamdouna, Clemence Vandame, Caitlyn Clinch and Ian Yun of MoWorks will deliver the “Docklands Dollars” website.

Fighting for Docklands with Dollars!

WORDS BY *Sean Car*
PHOTOGRAPHY BY *John Tadigiri*
BUSINESS

A new “Docklands Dollars” initiative, aimed exclusively at helping bring visitors and foot traffic back to Docklands, will be launched by the Docklands Chamber of Commerce (DCC) on March 29.

With the support of the City of Melbourne and Development Victoria, the scheme will model similar economic injection programs seen around the world during COVID-19 by encouraging people to stay and spend in Docklands through a range of incentives.

But unlike the state government’s regional travel vouchers which allow participants months to use, the DCC has set a 30-day period for Docklands Dollars to be activated from the time of registering to help support struggling businesses faster.

By registering through a dedicated website –

docklandsdollars.com.au – participants will be required to book a minimum two-night stay at a Docklands accommodation provider and spend at local restaurants, bars and attractions to claim a rebate from the DCC.

While only businesses which are members of the DCC will be eligible to participate in the program, customers will be able to claim \$50 off their accommodation, as well as 25 per cent off the total spend of their meal or purchase.

With the entire program to be delivered by DCC and its members, local creative agency MoWorks (pictured) has been charged with creating the Docklands Dollars website, while other members will be given various marketing and promotional responsibilities.

In light of a recent economic report by the City of Melbourne revealing a near 50 per cent occupancy of street-facing businesses in Docklands (read full story on page 5), DCC president Johanna Maxwell said the scheme would help businesses recover slowly.

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Council pushes Development Victoria to reveal community funds

A developer’s funding pool for Docklands community projects will be revealed within the next six months should the City of Melbourne get its way.

WORDS BY *David Schout*
PLANNING

Facilities such as The Hub and projects identified through the soon-to-be released Docklands Activation Strategy are set for a cash injection that is said to be a “positive outcome for residents”.

As part of the Two Melbourne Quarter development near Southern Cross Station, developer Lendlease was required to provide almost 1000sqm of community space via an agreement with Development Victoria (DV).

However, opting against this, Lendlease instead provided a cash-equivalent contribution that is due to be spent on other local community projects.

DV, a state government agency, has confirmed it will consult with the council before allocating funds to community projects, but is yet to reveal the figure.

When contacted by *Docklands News*, DV did not say when it would reveal the figure to council, nor why it had yet to do so.

“This is an opportunity to look at what community facilities or projects are needed elsewhere in Docklands and we look forward to continuing work with council to deliver a great outcome,” group head Geoff Ward said.

At a February 16 Future Melbourne Committee (FMC) meeting, councillors urged DV to reveal the figure within the next six months so it could better grasp the funding pipeline for the local area.

Council planning chair Cr Nicholas Reece said being kept in the dark on the value was far from ideal.

“I’ve got to say, as a councillor and someone who sees themselves as a custodian of the city, there are a number of aspects to this arrangement that I do find challenging,” he said.

“Sitting here tonight, we don’t actually know the value of the community infrastructure commitment which is being made by Lendlease.”

While the council does not know the value of the commitment, it does have a seat at the table to determine which community facilities or areas are in most need of a cash injection.

“That is still a far from perfect arrangement, but nonetheless it means that as councillors we can take comfort that Lendlease aren’t walking away from the commitment they’ve made to make a contribution to community infrastructure here in Docklands, but ... the arrangement doesn’t have the level of transparency we would ordinarily look for,” Cr Reece said.

Cr Reece stressed that the frustration was not with the developer, but rather the governance around available funds.

According to council documents, an email from DV on January 29 indicated where the funds could be allocated.

“DV and CoM have agreed to work together to spend these funds on appropriate community projects in Docklands – with the Hub@Docklands and projects identified through the Docklands Activation Strategy agreed as good starting points,” it read.

“To this end, it is DV’s intention to establish a DV/CoM project working group to map out a suitable process and coordinate activities.”

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A Almost half Docklands shopfronts vacant

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D Fourth time lucky for bike share?

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The deadline for the April edition is March 25.

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▲ L-R: Adam Bandt MP, William Comley and Ellen Sandell MP surrounded by staff, cut the ribbon on Melbourne Bay.

Melbourne Bay breathes new life into Docklands

While many businesses have been forced to shut their doors or significantly reduce trading due to the pandemic, a moment worth celebrating took place on Monday, March 1 with the opening of the new Melbourne Bay Restaurant on Harbour Esplanade.

BUSINESS

The business's owner William Comley and his staff were joined by Federal Greens MP for Melbourne Adam Bandt and State Greens MP for Melbourne Ellen Sandell who cut the ribbon on the new restaurant. Mr Comley, who also operates the adjoining

Harbour Coffee House at the ground floor of Life Lab at 198 Harbour Esplanade kept his business open to locals throughout of Victoria's COVID-19 lockdowns. He has now expanded into the corner shop-front next door with the licensed Melbourne Bay Restaurant, which offers a Chinese-Australian fusion lunch menu and an extensive beverage list ●

Feeling soxy at the Sunday Markets

COMMUNITY

Despite being forced to cancel its Valentine's Day market due to Victoria's snap lockdown last month, Docklands Sunday Markets returned on Sunday, February 21. Sock trader Susie Raz (pictured) was one of just many food and craft stallholders who featured on the day which went ahead with great success. The Sunday Markets are located at NewQuay Promenade on the second and fourth Sunday of each month. The March markets will take place this month on March 14 and 28. For more information head to page 16 of this edition ●



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Fighting for Docklands with Dollars!

Continued from page 1.

“If you do the quick sums of workers, Marvel Stadium, Central Pier, etc. it works out to around 40 million visitors that aren’t coming to Docklands this year,” she said. “Even if you put the most minimal spend on that at \$20 to \$25 you’re talking about a billion dollars that’s not coming into Docklands over the course of a year.”

“We have developed, at the suggestion of one of our members, a plan to recover Docklands in a slow burn process. That is, to get a voucher system up and running where people have to come and stay in Docklands for a minimum of two days and once they’ve made their booking there’s the opportunity to recoup money.”

“This would then generate people coming to stay in Docklands as our accommodation providers have really been hurt hard during this time. When people are here they will go locally so they can pick any of our member businesses to participate and our member businesses will be part of the Docklands Dollars.”

“They can go kayaking, they can go on the Melbourne Star, Artvo, the Icehouse, Cargo or Renzos for lunch, they can shop in any of the shops at The District and get rebates for it. But it only becomes active when they’ve actually booked and paid for their accommodation then activated their profile on the Docklands Dollars website.”

Mrs Maxwell said participants would be required to collect receipts and lodge them with the DCC, which would directly issue rebates within 24 to 36 hours sparing local businesses the administrative and financial burden.

In addition to the state government’s \$200 voucher scheme for the CBD expected to roll-out by the end of March, she said the support of Docklands Dollars would help contribute to regular cash flowing through local businesses while workers gradually return to the precinct.

“We need the continuity, we don’t need a sugar fix. We need people on a regular basis coming through,” Mrs Maxwell said.



▲ DCC member Vanessa Muggianu (Berth), vice-president Daniel Hibberd (Quest Docklands), Clemence Vandame, Caitlyn Clinch, Ian Yun, Mo Hamdouna (MoWorks) and DCC executive officer Shane Wylie.



▲ Stuart McCorkelle plays The Last Post at Victoria Harbour as part of the 2020 Dawn Service.

“We’re not asking our member businesses to provide discounts or anything like that. The members don’t have the margins in their figures to offer freebies so they need the cashflow.”

“We’re trying to generate a very quick turnaround on this spend and the entire project could have a lifespan of 18 months and we’re wanting money to be spent pretty quickly.”

Pending the continued easing of COVID restrictions, Mrs Maxwell said the DCC was also working with City of Melbourne and Development Victoria on a number of pop-up events as part of the Docklands Activation Strategy to complement Docklands Dollars.

ANZAC Day in Docklands

The DCC will expand on its ANZAC Day Dawn Service program from 2020 with eight buglers to be spread around Docklands for this year’s service.

Partnering with Skunkwork Productions’ “The Last Post Project” in support of Womens’ Veterans Network Australasia, the initiative is aimed at encouraging young musicians around the country to earn sponsorship by learning *The Last Post* and playing it on ANZAC Day.

Mrs Maxwell said Docklands would act as the showcase for the program on April 25, with two buglers to play from Yarra’s Edge and six surrounding Victoria Harbour.

“We want Docklands residents to come out and support, whether it’s on your balcony with candles or actually at each of the individual sites,” she said.

“We would like to actually have people participate and donate if they’re able to. All funds

raised will go towards veteran support for suicide prevention.”

Further updates on ANZAC Day services will be provided in the April edition of *Docklands News* ●

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Sean Car
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Council pushes Development Victoria to reveal community funds

Continued from page 1.

Deputy planning chair Rohan Leppert said the fact that the council had no oversight of upcoming funding was “absolutely no way to plan for future populations.”

“I think pushing DV a little further to disclose what they can to the City of Melbourne as a planning authority and as a service provider is so important,” he said.

“We’ve just got to have some way of looking into the future and understanding how and where these contributions will cater for a growing and important population in Docklands.”

Cr Jamal Hakim, a Docklands resident, said the importance of the funds was heightened in a post-COVID community.

“Docklands has so much that needs to be done to activate community spaces,” he said.

“I urge DV to also consider that Docklands is one of the worst affected areas from COVID, and I hope that the delivery of these spaces to support the community will grow and make a more welcoming space for visitors and the community.” ●



David Schout
JOURNALIST
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A message to Docklands from the Lord Mayor ...

Pre-COVID, Docklands was really starting to come into its own with more than 70,000 jobs in the area recorded in a 2019 census conducted by the City of Melbourne.

The number of jobs in Docklands had more than doubled in a decade. Major developments were being planned, approved and proceeding at a rapid rate. Job creation and commercial activity were on the up.

However, COVID has hit Docklands particularly hard with almost half of shopfronts empty or closed due to the pandemic. A huge amount of work and effort is going to be required to bring Docklands back better than before. As a proud Docklands resident, I am totally committed to working with local businesses and residents to drive the economic recovery of Docklands.

In the post-COVID environment, we need to fight for every dollar coming into our city.

One of the biggest challenges is that we now need to create economic growth instead of simply managing it.

This mindset change will need to be reflected at all levels of the City of Melbourne. I’ve said it before, we need to become a city of yes!

One example of this mindset change in action is the rapid rollout of the COVID support grants and extended outdoor dining program.

Now that the workplace caps have risen to 75 per cent, we look forward to welcoming more workers back to their Docklands offices. However, we also need to expand our horizons and aim to attract new jobs and industries into our city.

This means supporting start-ups



“

A huge amount of work and effort is going to be required to bring Docklands back better than before.

”

and innovation, and pitching our city to become the base of new headquarters for national and international companies.

My priorities for this council term are driving our economic recovery, delivering infrastructure projects on time and on budget, getting the basics right, sustainability and making our city more equitable.

All councillors at the City of Melbourne are committed to delivering on our commitments to the community and we know the immense challenges ahead of us.

Despite the difficulties ahead, we do feel optimistic about the future of our city because we all know how Melburnians rally together during tough times ●

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Almost half of Docklands' shopfronts vacant: report

WORDS BY *David Schout*
BUSINESS

Docklands is one of Australia's worst-hit COVID areas after a report confirmed 47 per cent of street-facing businesses were currently vacant due to the pandemic.

A City of Melbourne survey of businesses shopfronts found that in December 2020, just 53 per cent remained occupied.

The numbers were far worse in Docklands than the rest of the municipality as the CBD, Southbank and Carlton each recorded more than 70 per cent occupied shopfronts.

Given the City of Melbourne is already one of the worst hit local government areas in Australia due to COVID-19, the report confirmed Docklands as one of the nation's most-impacted local economies.

"It is a very sad time for our precinct," Docklands Chamber of Commerce (DCC) president Johanna Maxwell said in response to the report.

"The mood is very grey and dark. A few businesses are optimistic about trading well and have been rewarded through their efforts during COVID lockdowns but the great majority are very pessimistic."

Of the 47 per cent unoccupied street-facing businesses in Docklands, 25 per cent were "temporarily closed" and 22 per cent were listed as "vacant".

Mrs Maxwell said that local businesses in Docklands felt "neglected".

"That this has been absolutely devastating but also that because it has backed on to the closure of Central Pier many are feeling neglected by the state government and the City of Melbourne," she said.

"Most of our trading members have had revenue falls of 70 per cent. That's not just restaurants and retailers, that's all the service businesses — printers, hairdressers, allied health etc. They've been forgotten about in these lockdowns."



▲ The council's director of economic development Andrew Wear.

The council's Streetfronting Business Vacancy Report was part of a wider economic recovery update that portrayed a troubling outlook.

The report concluded that while the local economy had shown signs of improvement after stage four restrictions were eased in late 2020, the recovery levels were not sustainable.

Pedestrian numbers, for example, had only bounced back briefly.

"In the period leading up to Christmas we had a few days that were even better than last year. But that was brief, and following Christmas, pedestrian numbers declined again," the council's director of economic development Andrew Wear said.

Lord Mayor Sally Capp said the data was "compelling", while Deputy Lord Mayor Nicholas Reece called it "extremely worrying".

In response, Cr Capp pledged to meet with



▲ "Closed" signs and empty tables throughout NewQuay.

federal treasurer Josh Frydenberg and state treasurer Tim Pallas to urge targeted city support beyond March 28.

Two key business support packages were due to expire at the end of the month; the federal government's JobKeeper payments, and the state government's commercial tenancy relief scheme.

Mrs Maxwell confirmed with *Docklands News* that some traders had predicted conditions to worsen at the end of March.

"Without a dramatic change, further hurt is coming when JobKeeper payments end," she said.

Cr Capp said this issue would be top of the list in the meeting where she would urge "targeted" assistance to reach "the hardest hit".

"Melbourne's businesses need certainty and confidence. We're going to keep saying it over and over again," she said.

"We would like the state and federal government to be considering, particularly as we head into budget time, extra direct financial assistance for businesses here in the City of Melbourne that have borne the brunt of the economic fallout of this pandemic."

Cr Davydd Griffiths said that beyond the numbers, each of the municipality's 20,632 businesses currently receiving JobKeeper had their own story to tell.

"We can look at data about businesses, but of course each of those businesses represent real human beings; owners, workers and the communities that interact with those businesses daily," he said.

The state government announced on February 26 that three-quarters of workers across both the public and private sector could return to the office.

Docklands small businesses in particular have suffered from the rapid downturn in office workers as a result of the pandemic.

Mrs Maxwell said she was unsure when, if ever, the local economy could return to pre-pandemic levels.

"To be honest, without some dramatic investment and long-term plan, it might never return. With corporates accounting for almost 100,000 employees daily in Docklands the current model is dependent on their daily investments. If that doesn't return, then Docklands needs to reinvent itself."

She said the Chamber of Commerce was doing all it could to continue its advocacy and practical support for the area, including Docklands Dollars scheme (details page 1).

From Monday March 1, 75 per cent of the workforce was permitted to return to offices in what will come as a boost to Docklands.

The AFL also announced in February that 50 per cent of its Melbourne stadium capacity would also be permitted to return, meaning nearly 29,000 fans will be able to attend games at Marvel Stadium ●

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Among the more than 1100 businesses awarded funding, Urban Alley Brewery

in Docklands received a grant to implement a range of COVID-safe improvements, including remodelling its entryway.

Sassone Cucina also received funding to introduce a new outdoor dining area.

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As 2021 takes shape, there are a number of projects on-the-go and we are seeking feedback from people of all ages and backgrounds during March:

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What can we do to help Melburnians lead happy and healthy lives? Share your feedback to help identify priorities for our Municipal Health and Wellbeing Plan and guide our work for the next four years. Some of the key areas are food security, climate change and mental health.

3 Towards a smoke-free Melbourne

Did you know that the City of Melbourne already has 12 smoke-free areas, and a vision to make Melbourne a smoke-free city by 2025? Share your feedback by registering for our community panel or via our quick online survey.

For more information, visit participate.melbourne.vic.gov.au and sign up to receive updates.



IN-BRIEF

NIGHT-TIME ECONOMY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The City of Melbourne is creating a new advisory committee that will advise Council on the growth and sustainability of social, cultural and economic activities that happen between 6pm and 6am. The group will include retail, hospitality and creative industry leaders.

MARITIME HERITAGE

Melbourne has a rich seafaring history and the City of Melbourne is exploring ways to celebrate this, together with the Victorian Government. This includes exploring possible uses for the Mission to Seafarers building in Docklands. Have your say by 15 March at participate.melbourne.vic.gov.au

RAINBOW CARERS

Do you provide unpaid care to an older person, or someone living with a physical or mental health condition or disability? The City of Melbourne offers supportive programs for carers, including a dedicated group for LGBTIQ+ carers, in partnership with Queerspace. Find out more at melbourne.vic.gov.au/carers

ELIZABETH STREET

Works are underway to create more space for people and a more appealing streetscape on Elizabeth Street. Due for completion in May, the transformation between Flinders Street and Flinders Lane will add 400 square metres of pedestrianised space. Learn more at melbourne.vic.gov.au/cityprojects

MOOMBA

Melbourne's favourite community festival returns in 2021 with a revised program and format to ensure the event will delight families and meet COVID-19 safety requirements. Join the fun from 5 to 8 March. moomba.melbourne.vic.gov.au

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Renewed focus on maritime heritage

WORDS BY *Jess Carrascalao Heard*
MARITIME

The City of Melbourne has called on the community to have its say over possible refurbishment of the Mission to Seafarers building at North Wharf.

The community has until mid-March to share ideas for the heritage-listed building, with their feedback forming a “key component” of a maritime heritage feasibility study.

Melbourne Maritime Heritage Network (MMHN) chair Dr Jackie Watts said the feasibility study was a “marvellous step forward”.

“It’s an opportunity to re-focus on Melbourne’s rich maritime heritage ... Melbourne is a maritime city, and always has been,” she said.

The Mission to Seafarers building was built more than a century ago as a hub to provide services to seafarers.

Its features include the consecrated St Peter the Mariner Chapel, and the Norla Dome, originally designed as a gymnasium to help seafarers keep fit while on shore.

The building is still the home of Mission to Seafarers Victoria (MtSV), which continues to provide services to those on the sea, including counselling, pastoral care and medical assistance.

MtSV CEO Sue Dight said that though some refurbishments to the first floor of the building were already in advanced planning, there were some upgrades to the building she would like to see.

“When funding is available for an upgrade to the rest of the building, new bathroom facilities would be nice and some exterior lighting to help keep the graffiti to a minimum,” she said.

According to the Participate Melbourne website, any new use of the building would be additional to existing seafaring services.

Suggestions on the website’s survey include a maritime heritage space or museum, a visitor centre, a community space and service, an art



and cultural space, and even a start-up space.

On Dr Watts’s wish list for the building is a mini-iMax-style experience in the Norla Dome with seafaring image projections, but insists that the services and chaplaincy must continue.

General Manager of the historic tallship *Enterprize* Michael Womack thinks a museum would help enhance Melbourne’s maritime heritage and its history as Australia’s major container port.

He believes Australia has lost a lot of its seafaring traditions, making the preservation of maritime heritage even more important.

“We are a maritime nation. We are surrounded by sea. We can’t cross a land border to anywhere,” he said.

The council’s focus on maritime heritage comes as a part of last September’s COVID-19 Reactivation and Recovery Plan.

As a part of an effort to reboot the city’s economy post-lockdown, the council has begun looking for new ways to attract people, and cash, back into the city.

Included in the plan is a “strategic feasibility

study of a maritime heritage museum experience” as a part of its list of priority infrastructure projects.

The plan states that these projects would require “immediate stimulus funding from the Victorian and Australian Governments” to address the impact the virus has had on the city’s economy.

Dr Watts said the City of Melbourne should be congratulated for collaborating on the feasibility study.

“It’s actually a unique opportunity where existing heritage coalesces with a modern view to ensure our heritage is given due recognition,” she said.

As well as seeking community input on the Mission to Seafarers building, the Participate Melbourne website states that the council is “exploring the development of a maritime heritage area in and around Docklands”.

The Mission to Seafarers building is described on the website as a “key asset” to the area.

Ms Dight said, “The Mission building is just

one piece of a much larger Maritime Heritage Precinct that is being explored.”

She said a Melbourne maritime heritage precinct currently exists, but as a “set of loosely interlinked heritage collections”.

Examples of maritime history in the area include heritage infrastructure at Victoria Dock and Central Pier, tall ships, including the *Enterprize*, as well as elements of the \$500 million Riverlee Seafarers development project.

The development includes plans for a renewal of Seafarers Rest Park in conjunction with the City of Melbourne, the restoration of a heritage-listed crane, and a development design that is sympathetic to Shed 5 at North Wharf.

Ms Dight said the city’s maritime heritage needed to be recognised and celebrated in a variety of ways, both educational and via tourism.

Mr Womack said now was the right time for the focus to be on maritime heritage in Melbourne.

“Another 20 years and some of that history will go, or the buildings that are part of that history will be gone,” he said.

Members of the community can share their ideas and provide feedback on Melbourne’s heritage at the Participate Melbourne website.

Community engagement is open until 15 March ●

For more information:
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Jess Carrascalao Heard
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Owners' corporation changes shut down

A bid to make it easier for owners' corporations (OCs) to take legal action against corrupt developers has been shut down in the Victorian Upper House.

WORDS BY *David Schout*
STRATA

Amendments put forward by the Victorian Greens, which also sought to impose a three-year cap on all contracts entered into by a building developer, received no support from both major parties.

Introduced by MLC for Northern Metropolitan and the leader of the Victorian Greens Dr Samantha Ratnam, The Greens argued that the 1.5 million Victorians who live in or own property within an OC setting were not adequately supported by current legislation.

They sought to reduce the threshold to trigger legal proceedings against a developer within an OC from 75 to 50 per cent.

"I've spoken to many residents in the big apartment towers and they don't feel supported by the current OC laws. This bill was the perfect opportunity to fix that," Greens Member for Melbourne Ellen Sandell said.

"The Greens' amendments would have tightened the rules on what potentially corrupt developers could do while supporting residents to take legal action against them. We will continue to advocate for those residents until the government provides them with adequate protection and support."

The amendments looked to lower the barrier for OCs seeking legal action particularly around building defects and cladding rectification, which has become a significant issue

in recent years.

They also sought to protect building occupants against long-term contracts entered into by the developer at the completion of a building's construction, in which subsequent owners are then forced to foot the bill.

Reports suggested some of these were uncompetitive "multi-decade contracts".

Strata Title Lawyers CEO Tom Bacon said he was disappointed by the response of the major parties.

"I'd say that owners' corporations all throughout Victoria will be dismayed by how out of touch both the Labor and Liberal parties are with their constituents," Mr Bacon said.

"Both major parties defeated the Greens' sensible amendments to limit all management and facilities contracts to three years, and to permit owners' corporations to sue developers and builders for defects and flammable cladding by ordinary resolution. We see now where the favouritism lies. It's not with owners and investors and everyday folk. It's with the developers and construction companies, and with election donors."

Mr Bacon said the result did not bode well for OCs going forward.

"We can no longer expect any consumer protection from the government for the apartment sector. Frankly, apartments do not represent a good investment in Melbourne anymore."

The Labor government defended the bill — titled *Owners' Corporations and Other Acts Amendment Bill 2019*

We see now where the favouritism lies. It's not with owners and investors and everyday folk. It's with the developers and construction companies, and with election donors.



— after rejecting the amendments.

"This bill delivers a package of 36 substantive reforms that streamline and modernise the regulation of the Victorian owners' corporations while enhancing protections for lot owners," Minister for Local Government and Suburban

Development Shaun Leane said in the Legislative Council on February 16.

"This is done by improving the quality of owners' corporation managers, expanding and improving developers' duties to the owners' corporations they create, improving governance and financial administration and internal relations of owners' corporations, and improving the regulations of owners' corporations in retirement villages."

Minister Leane argued that the potential impacts of limiting service contracts to a maximum of three years could be "severe".

"The consequence could be severe, particularly for utility providers, who require certainty beyond three years for the viability of their businesses. It could result in owners' corporations struggling to find businesses willing to provide the most basic services — that is, water and electricity — given that the contracts would be for a maximum of three years," Mr Leane said.

Barbara Francis of resident lobby group We Live Here criticised both the government and opposition in failing to properly address issues raised by The Greens.

"They're [The Greens] the only ones that have any real handle on what's going on," she said.

The Greens also sought to lower the barrier for owners to install solar panels on a building's roof from a "special resolution" (75 per cent OC vote) to an "ordinary resolution" (50 per cent), but this too received little support.

While all three amendments were all rejected by the government, Samantha Ratnam used the opportunity to press the government on the delayed review of the *Short-stay (Accommodation) Act 2018*, which was earmarked for 2020.

"The short-stay industry has largely been left to set its own rules, with the government only intervening to implement a complaints process and avoiding implementing any real regulation of the industry," Dr Ratnam said.

"Now we are facing the need to reinvent our cities in light of the havoc wreaked by COVID, this is a perfect time to be looking at how we make our cities more liveable."

Minister Leane said the review would "start this year."

The passing of the Amendment Bill was celebrated by the short-stay accommodation industry, with The Hotel Conversation reporting that accommodation industry agency ResortBrokers had led a campaign to amend the proposal which would have limited service contracts to three years.

"The company [ResortBrokers] engaged with the key ministers including the Victorian Treasurer, Minister for Tourism and the Minister for Consumer Affairs and successfully achieved an amendment to the Bill which effectively protected contracts that facilitated hotel and serviced apartment operations from the restrictions of Section 67B," the report stated ●



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COLLINS PLACE

Runners gear up for Gift

Organisers and athletes alike are putting their final preparations in for the inaugural Docklands Gift on Saturday, March 20 at Ron Barassi Snr Park.

WORDS BY *David Schout*
SPORT

The first-time event at Ron Barassi Snr Park — delivered in partnership with the Victorian Athletics League (VAL), Docklands Primary School and the Docklands Sports Club — is set to feature a range of fun and competitive events for the local community.

One of the event’s organisers, Robbie Spencer, said he hoped the atmosphere on the day would replicate those at famous regional events.

“We don’t have an inner-city Gift. It’s hard to try and get kids, especially in high-density areas, to know what the Stawell Gift and these sort of races are about,” he said.

“They’re so unique in their own right. I remember the first time I went to Stawell, I was just a kid and thought ‘I don’t know what’s going on, but I love it. People are winning money, people are racing off different handicaps, boys are competing against men, men are competing against women, what’s going on here?’”

Mr Spencer, a national junior sprint champion and now coach, said when he was keen to get involved when he first heard the Docklands Gift may go ahead.

“I couldn’t see it not happening — it’s too good an opportunity, it’s too good a ground, it’s too good of a venue and having the city as a backdrop is just amazing.”

“We don’t have an inner-city Gift. It’s hard to try and get kids, especially in high-density areas, to know what the Stawell Gift and these sort of races are about.”



Aside from the picturesque backdrop, Spencer said the venue itself was ideal for a grass-surface athletics event.

“The surface is great. I walked on it recently after a big downpour and you wouldn’t have even known it had rained. So even if it does rain the night before or even on the day, we know it won’t be an issue.”

The newly-opened Docklands Primary School is set to play a role on the day, and students have been encouraged to enter the events.

From 9am on the day, individual year-level races will be held (prep to grade six), and the winners will progress to the Docklands Primary School Gift.

In this final race, year-level winners will run off different handicaps (for example: grade six students from the back markers, preps at the front) to win the inaugural sash.

Spencer said that Australia’s 1500m record holder Stewart McSweyn is also due to speak with students at the school in the lead-up to the event.

Gifts, prize money and handicaps

The term “gift” is a historical one. In the late 1800s, prominent gold mining towns would host race carnivals and grant winners a gold nugget “gift”, usually supplied by a mine owner or local publican.

While the winners of the Women’s and Open race on March 20 won’t be lugging home their own gold nugget, they each will however walk away with \$1500 in prize money.

In fact, most of the main races throughout the day will grant prize money between \$300 and \$1500 to the winners.

The Docklands Gift will employ handicapping for the different races throughout the day, whereby competitors are “handicapped” according to their recent form.

Stronger runners are usually assigned a shorter handicap (that is, closer to the starting marker), while less strong runners are given a more generous handicap (or “head start”).

This process, in theory, “levels out” the competition and would see winners perform the best against previous form.

The handicap process is administered by the VA ●

For more information:
facebook.com/docklandsgift





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Docklands Gift, March 20: Key times

- 11:58am: Docklands Primary School Gift (Final)
- 1:28pm: 70m Open (Final)
- 2:36pm: 800m Open (Final)
- 2:46pm: 800m Women's (Final)
- 2:56pm: 100m Under 18 Boys (Final)
- 3:06pm: 100m Under 18 Girls (Final)
- 3:16pm: 100m Masters (Final)
- 4:49pm: Frontmarkers Mile (Final)
- 4:59pm: Backmarkers Mile (Final)
- 5:09pm: 300m Masters (Final)
- 5:17pm: 400m Womens (Final)
- 5:25pm: 400m Open (Final)
- 5:33pm: 100m Women's Gift (Final)
- 5:43pm: 100m Docklands (Open) Gift (Final)

Favourites/athletes to watch

- Open Gift: Jason Bailey, Kevin Brittain, Nicholas Antonino, Harrison Kerr, Jack Boulton.
- Women's Gift: Tayley Perry, Hannah Lindstrom, Karlee Bailey, Zoe Neale.
- Open 400: Dominic Hoskins, Daniel Quattrone, Darcy Ireland.
- Women's 400: Meg Deane, Alex Tzilantonis, Kim McDonough, Jess Payne.
- 800m Open: Tom Hecimovic, Neil Brennan, Lonain Burnett, Ryan Antidormi, Marcus Overman.
- 1600 Open: Joel Donnar, Julian Harris, Marcus Overman, Nathan Crowley, Justin Murphy, Michael Preece.

Glenn Harvey answers your legal questions

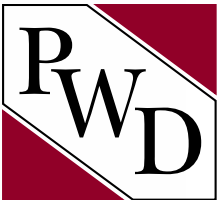
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“Lessons have been learned”: Fourth time lucky for bike share?

WORDS BY *David Schout*
TRANSPORT

In the past three years, three share bike operators have packed up and left Melbourne. Will the newest company to take the plunge prove more successful?

Melbourne and share bikes haven’t had the most compatible relationship in recent years. In fact, most operators have upped and left.

Many will remember oBikes, whose fleet of yellow bikes were more likely to be found in trees and rivers than paths and roads during a calamitous period in 2018.

The Singaporean-based company quickly abandoned their Melbourne program amid the threat of huge fines from the Environment Protection Authority (EPA).

From there, the only casual cycling options Melburnians and tourists could utilise were the state government’s “blue bikes”.

But they too were on their way soon after, departing in November 2019.

While these sturdier “docked” blue bikes had not experienced the same dumping issues as oBikes, uptake was low.

This was blamed on a number of things, but a small network of bikes and docking stations — especially when compared with other successful programs around the world — was perhaps the most obvious.

The government tried to spin the failed program as a positive when roads minister Jaala Pulford argued it would “create more space on our footpaths for pedestrians and bike parking”.

But that conflicted with the City of Melbourne, who at the same time held a press conference urging operators to give Melbourne a try.

Electric share bikes, in particular, were “part of the future” according to the council’s then transport chair Nic Frances Gilley.

The council got its wish when Uber subsidiary Jump announced it would deploy 400 red bikes onto Melbourne’s streets in March 2020 to fill the void.

Within weeks, however, COVID-19 lockdowns ensured share bikes quickly became redundant.

And soon after, Jump became the third company in short time to abandon its share bike plans in the city.

But, it’s not all bad news.

The red bikes have returned to the streets of Melbourne after Jump was acquired by Lime.

For some time now, the San Francisco-based company has attempted to crack the Melbourne market with their primary product — electric scooters — but restrictive local laws have ensured that (as it stands) cannot happen.

By acquiring the Jump brand, however, they finally have a presence here in Melbourne with the re-badged bikes.

So, will they work?

Lime believes previous failures gives it strong intel on what *not* to do.

“I think we’ve come a long way from those times,” public affairs manager for Lime Australia and New Zealand Lauren Mentjox recently told 3AW.



▲ Melbourne’s latest share bike experiment - Jump operated by Lime.

“Lime has been operating bikes for about three years now, and we’ve certainly learned a lot about shared bikes, and we think they are the way of the future. We think that some of those bikes potentially didn’t have the oversight that Lime has. We have strong teams on the ground ... and we’re certainly making sure that we don’t make any of the mistakes that were done before.”

Eight hundred e-bikes are being rolled out and, according to Lord Mayor Sally Capp, there had been very few complaints to date.

“Lessons have been learned from previous share bike schemes,” Cr Capp said.

“These e-bikes incorporate GPS tracking and geo-fencing capabilities, for example, which allow the bikes to be managed more easily and efficiently.”

The bikes cost \$1 to unlock, and 45 cents per minute to ride.

The rate is already a 50 per cent increase on the cost compared with Jump (which was 30 cents per minute), despite being the identical bike.

The Lord Mayor did not respond to whether she believed the cost hike might impact uptake.

A day pass can be purchased for \$16.99.

Lime e-bikes: How do they work?

The bikes combine good old-fashioned pedal power and electric power, for help getting up

those tricky inclines.

They are designed to travel up to 25 kilometres per hour.

Users can borrow them by using either the Uber or Lime app, where a map reveals the nearest bike to your location.

Each bike has a QR code to scan before use, which takes users through the booking and instruction process.

Helmets are provided.

After a ride is completed, users can park them on public bike racks or, if unavailable, on the kerbside provided it is more than 1.5 metres from any building.

Lime has entered a one-year trial period with the Melbourne, Yarra and Port Phillip councils, and the bikes can only be ridden and parked within these areas, which are defined within the app.

Users that stray outside the three local government areas will not be able to lock the bike after a ride, and will continue to be charged.

Further, there are designated no-park zones (usually busy pedestrian areas) where users will similarly be charged penalties for non-compliance.

As for ending up in waterways or toilet blocks, Lime is confident the weight of the bikes (over 30kgs) makes it difficult to move and vandalise them, and that users are traceable through their app bookings ●

“Lessons have been learned from previous share bike schemes. These e-bikes incorporate GPS tracking and geo-fencing capabilities, for example, which allow the bikes to be managed more easily and efficiently.”



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Sites roll through opaque Fishermans Bend planning process

WORDS BY *Meg Hill*
PLANNING

Twenty-six major Fishermans Bend planning applications that were frozen by the Minister for Planning in 2018 are making their way back through approval processes, with two now endorsed by the City of Melbourne.

As reported in a previous edition of *Docklands News*, the first was endorsed in December. The second – for three towers in the Lorimer Precinct – was endorsed by councillors at a Future Melbourne Committee (FMC) meeting on February 16.

The proposed development, which sits directly opposite Forge and the under-construction Voyager towers at Yarra’s Edge, includes one 11-storey office tower and two residential towers of up to 24 storeys on a block of land at 850-868 Lorimer St. The land is currently occupied by a two-storey building.

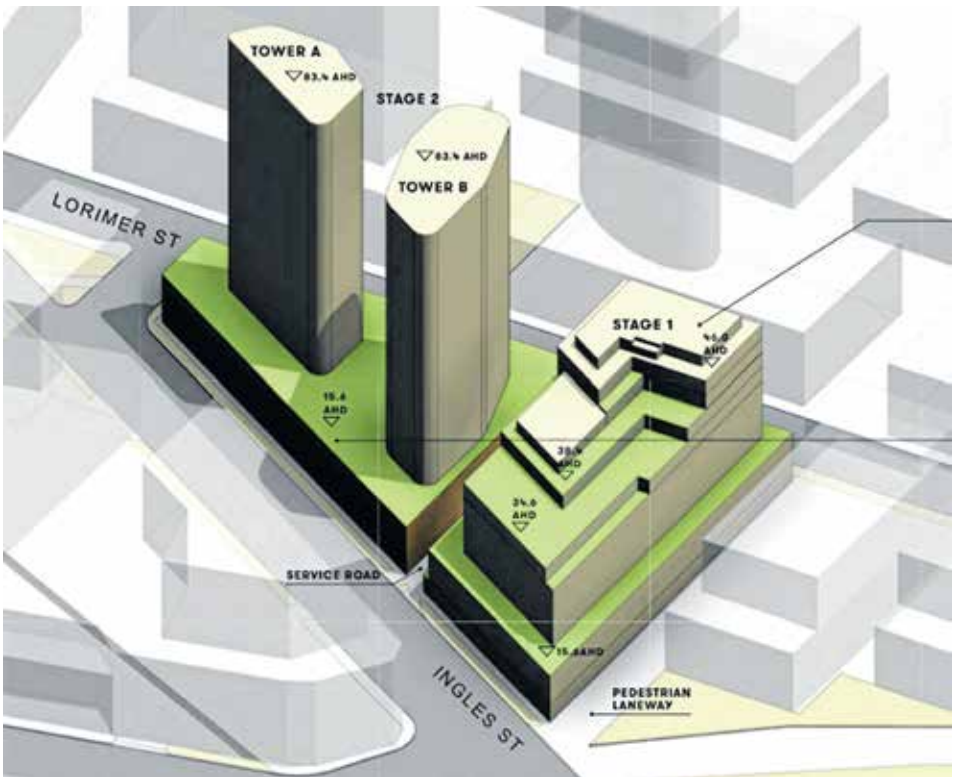
The development is costed at \$252 million. The residential component will include a minimum of six per cent affordable housing.

The endorsement raised the issue of transparency within the planning process set out for the 26 frozen applications, which are now receiving approval not through planning applications but incorporated documents to the Melbourne Planning Scheme.

The developments are exempt from public notice requirements and third-party objections through this process, which Cr Rohan Leppert said lacked transparency but was “the best we can do”.

“This is one of the largest and most multi-faceted sets of permits, if you like, even though there’s no permit being applied for, we’re advising the Minister they should be embedded straight into the Melbourne Planning Scheme, all without notice and all without review and given everything else that’s going on in the world all with very, very little fanfare,” he said.

Cr Leppert said the council had received correspondence from Lorimer precinct residents about the process and how they could be



▲ A graphic of the proposed plans for 850-868 Lorimer St.

involved.

“It’s incredibly difficult to know how to begin to explain to the non-planner and the local resident how we got to this position and why they have absolutely zero rights even to be told what’s going on let alone to have their say on the application,” he said.

“This is not a transparent and accountable planning process but it’s the best we can do given the way those applications were called in and the way that incorporated documents are now the fairest ways to embed these planning permissions straight into the planning scheme

in a way that works for the applicant and allows the city and department to influence in the direction of the policy that we set for Fishermans Bend.” ●



Meg Hill
JOURNALIST
MEG@HYPERLOCALNEWS.COM.AU



New mural brightens up Central Pier

ARTS & CULTURE

February saw a team of artists paint a 90-metre mural along the hoarding of Central Pier.

Blender Studios in West Melbourne was commissioned by TAC to paint a mural titled *The Road Belongs to All of Us* to help celebrate and inform the community about new cycling infrastructure in Melbourne coinciding with the release of a new Melbourne bike map.

Blender Studio’s lead artist Adrian Doyle told *Docklands News* that his team of eight artists came together with the intention of creating a “dynamic and large-scale mural”.

“The mural reflects on the icons of inner-city suburbs,” he said.

“[Artist] Adnate created a portrait of the lady whom was the original model of the skipping girl to represent Richmond, Kaffine has created a very awesome LGBTQI-friendly artwork of Collingwood and its famous characters and icons and I created the link from the suburbs to the inner-city.”

The mural was completed at the end of February and will be up for a few months ●



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Air brakes causing headaches for Yarra’s Edge residents

WORDS BY *Jack Alfonso*
TRANSPORT

The Department of Transport (DoT) has said it holds no current plans to install signs deterring truck drivers from using air brakes along Lorimer St, despite a petition being initiated by Yarra’s Edge residents in December.

The DoT cited the integral role of engine brakes in a truck’s braking system, deeming that it would be inappropriate to restrict truck drivers from using them in potentially necessary circumstances as the main reason not to place “Trucks Avoid Using Engine Brakes” signs in the area.

“We understand the effect road noise can have on residential areas, particularly for those living near busy freeways,” a DoT spokesperson said.

“We’re working with the community and industry to reduce overall traffic noise levels and to limit noise impacts in our inner-city suburbs in a carefully planned way while keeping freight moving.”

The news comes after Yarra’s Edge residents started a petition to install signs to counter the “completely unacceptable” and “deafening” use of air brakes.

“This is a dense residential area and the air brakes negatively affect quality of life for all who reside here,” one local resident wrote online.

“There is a definite noise issue with trucks using air brakes, not only in Lorimer St, but on the freeway behind it. The empty trucks using Lorimer St also make a lot of noise going over the manhole covers. Sleeping is definitely an issue,” another said.

The petition itself highlights residents’ beliefs that authorities have neglected to consider the noise pollution surrounding Yarra’s Edge as the residential area has been developed.

“This area of Melbourne should never have been developed into a residential area if authorities were not willing to stop trucks using air brakes in the area,” the petition stated.

In a letter to the editor addressed to *Docklands News* last month, Yarra’s Edge resident Matt Lyon cited the installation of similar signs in nearby areas such as Ingles and Pickles streets in Port Melbourne as a potential solution.

“This problem could be alleviated quite simply by the installation of signs along Lorimer St near the Yarra’s Edge development for truck drivers not to use engine brakes in this area,” he said.

The issue was raised as part of a Lorimer St planning application which went before councillors at the Future Melbourne Committee (FMC) meeting on February 16. In the report from management, the City of Melbourne (CoM) cited the need for glazing and concrete in new buildings to reduce the effect of noise pollution from traffic, highlighting their awareness on the issue.

The CoM did not respond to questions raised into the matter by *Docklands News*, but did refer to the acoustic report included as part of the motion presented at FMC on February 16. The issues were raised with the council and local police in June last year after then Deputy Lord Mayor Arron Wood and local police met with local residents regarding a series of hoorn related incidents in the precinct ●

For more information:
ipetitions.com/petition/lorimer-airbrakes



▲ Back to the office at Collins Square.

Back to more flexible work

WORDS BY *Rhonda Dredge*
BUSINESS

The transition back to working in the office has begun but some managers are questioning the need to return to full-time desks, now that meeting technology is so well-established.

Employers have drawn up rosters for the return and others have let teams organise their own schedules.

Yet either way, corporate presence is likely to have a different shape in the future.

Dao and Nicole have returned to their desks in the Collins Square complex. Both are working two days a week and they’re dressed in casual gear.

They can’t believe how flexible arrangements are. They’ve figured out with their teams which days they’ll be coming in.

“I think that working through COVID I’ve been able to see times in the past where they’ve been reluctant to have people working from home,” Nicole said. “We’re still productive.”

“We still meet deadlines,” Dao agreed, but she said it was good to come to the office for some “adult time”.

There’s a perception that working mothers are snowed under with child-minding duties that affect productivity at home but according to research published in *Frontiers in Psychology*, the boundaries between home and work have already dissolved among workers who transfer knowledge as opposed to products.

“Knowledge workers take advantage of flexible working to craft unique, personal arrangements to suit their work, family, personal and community pursuits,” Dr Xi Wen Chen of RMIT wrote.

The improved efficiency of meeting technology, such as the use of Zoom, during the pandemic has been a major factor in accelerating this change.

Alice, a manager in intellectual property for a Collins Square tenant, said that the company’s customer relations team had returned to the office but everyone else was still working from home.

“We’re a global company so we’re not going back broadly until July,” she said.

Her team is based in Asia and Australia. “I’ve developed better relations with the team. There was a disparity between face-to-face and virtual. Everyone is on video now



▲ Working at the park.

so we’re on an even footing.”

Kirsty works as a banking lawyer and her hours have always been flexible. The company wants her to go back 50 per cent of the time and there’s a roster.

The big difference after COVID, she said, is that if she was working from home before, she never told clients. “I told the kids to be quiet. Now if kids make a noise no-one cares. You can still be professional.”

She can even take her laptop to the park and check her email while her son plays with a friend.

Alice said there was a fine balance between having flexible work and being on the computer at 10pm at night.

“I feel like I’m rushing around less because I’m never racing home from work. If you try and work in a focused way it’s good from home. I’m still doing my work. What’s changed is my life around work,” she said.

According to the Walker Corporation, landlords at Collins Square, the more flexible work arrangements are not changing the profile of the complex.

“As the economy continues to bounce back post-COVID we have actually seen an increase in the level of interest from companies and businesses to lease more office space,” Emily Carroll, Head of Property Investments, said in a statement from the company.

“Collins Square is a thriving business hub that will continue to be the place where successful businesses depend on connection, collaboration and teamwork.”

“While our leasing partnerships are always kept confidential, we are proud to have over 30 long term lease arrangements in place equating to 100 per cent occupancy at Collins Square.” ●

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Full steam ahead for *Alma*'s restoration

WORDS BY *Micaela Togher*
MARITIME

Restoration of the historic ship *Alma Doepel* is going full steam ahead despite setbacks caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

With new engines just delivered and gearboxes now en route from Germany, work is ploughing ahead to ensure the ship's hull can be floated in April/May of this year.

Boasting a total of 350 planks, the ship's planking stage of the repair has now been finished.

Caulking – the process of sealing the ship to ensure it is watertight – is also nearing completion, thanks in large part to the assistance of volunteers.

Alma Doepel Supporters Club vice president Bill Reid said the loss of volunteers due to COVID-19 restrictions last year was one of the biggest setbacks.

"COVID really did slow things down because volunteers couldn't be on site," Mr Reid said.

"Volunteers contribute a lot to the project in terms of labour that frees up the paid labour to focus on the more complicated tasks."

Built in 1903 by Fredrick Doepel and named for his youngest daughter Alma, the ship was originally used to carry goods like timber, wheat and jam.

During WWII, the *Alma Doepel* was renamed AK82 and used as an army supply vessel running from Townsville and Darwin to Papua New Guinea.

First restored between 1976 and 1987, the ship returned to full sail in the Parade of Sail in Sydney Harbour in January of 1988.

She was used as a sail-training vessel until the need for repairs forced her into retirement in 1999.

Currently berthed at No 2 Victoria Dock, the *Alma Doepel* will again be used for sail-training purposes with a focus on helping young Australians at risk.

"The goal has always been that she will become a sail-training vessel to help young kids learn what they are capable of. We work with organisations who help kids at risk who have the potential to be saved by showing them what they can do," Mr Reid said.

It is estimated a further \$1.3 million will need to be raised in order the complete the restoration.

Mr Reid emphasised the need for donations to ensure continued progress on the remainder of repairs.

The next phases involve completing the deck, rig, engineering and accommodation.

It is anticipated this process will take a further two years following the refloating of the *Alma*'s hull.

"We are hopeful if the money comes in, that's how long it's going to take," Mr Reid said ●

For more information:
almadoepel.com.au

Infrastructure strategy nears

WORDS BY *Meg Hill*
COUNCIL AFFAIRS

The City of Melbourne will soon have its say on a major state government infrastructure strategy outlining a 30-year approach to everything from climate change, affordable housing and the municipality's urban renewal areas – Arden, Macaulay and Fishermans Bend.

Infrastructure Victoria's draft 30-year infrastructure strategy was released for public consultation at the end of 2020 and will be tabled in Parliament later this year.

The council was due to consider its submission to the strategy on February 16, but councillors unanimously voted to defer consideration of the submission due to the context of the ongoing pandemic and February's snap lockdown, and include distinctions between short- and long-term goals.

"I believe that in light of the current situation, the environment that particularly our small businesses are experiencing and the hardship being felt right across our economy and community, it is important that for every report, every investment, every program being considered by council that we put that overlaying context into our thinking and our planning," the Lord Mayor Sally Capp said.

"That's why I'm moving this amended motion this evening."

Key opportunities that were proposed to be prioritised by council officers in the existing submission included:

- Recognising the role of the central city in the Victorian and national economy, and its need for sustained investment

to recover from the impacts of COVID-19.

- Encouraging the Victorian Government to enable local government to deliver small scale but cumulatively significant capital infrastructure to generate a short-term economic boost when funded and delivered as a larger package. This should include public realm improvements, recreation facilities and social infrastructure.
- The development of innovation districts;
- Immediate investment in foundational and catalytic infrastructure in the urban renewal areas of Arden, Macaulay and Fishermans Bend, including the tram extension to Fishermans Bend.
- Encouraging a bolder approach to address the clear demand for affordable housing; and
- Embedding expert Aboriginal knowledge on sustainable land management practices into the contemporary management.

"The draft strategy is a significant step towards planning for Victoria's future in uncertain times. We acknowledge that the draft strategy aims to balance the complexity of longer-term planning with the need for the Victorian Government to act now," the report said.

"We agree with the draft strategy's position, that there will be significant increases in population and the demand for infrastructure in the period to 2050 and support the proposed investment in transport, rapidly growing suburbs and social infrastructure to address predicted future demand." ●

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Your City of Melbourne community update



San Telmo is serving up Argentinian feasts in Meyers Place

OUTDOOR DINING EXTENDED

Dine with friends in an iconic Melbourne laneway or pop-up parklet to support local businesses as they continue to adapt to COVID-19 restrictions.

The City of Melbourne has extended its outdoor dining program until mid-2021 to provide further support to hospitality businesses. The extension will allow outdoor dining spaces to remain until Wednesday 30 June.

Nearly 1500 permits for outdoor dining have been issued across the municipality, and more than 200 outdoor dining ‘parklets’ have been installed, to help venues reopen and continue operating.

The City of Melbourne will invest \$2.2 million to extend the program as part of the joint \$100 million Melbourne City Recovery Fund in partnership with the Victorian Government.

This brings the total investment in outdoor dining infrastructure, maintenance and repurposing of laneways to \$7.7 million.

What businesses are saying

The City of Melbourne surveyed 150 of the more than 180 businesses with outdoor dining ‘parklets’ in January to gather feedback and inform decision making on the future of extended outdoor dining.

The survey indicated that outdoor dining ‘parklets’ had helped 81 per cent of businesses to reopen, 76 per cent to maintain seating capacity and 72 per cent were either satisfied or very satisfied with their ‘parklets’.

A comprehensive evaluation of the program will be considered by councillors later this year, including an assessment of the economic benefits and recommendations for the program beyond June 2021.

WHAT IS A PARKLET?

The outdoor dining program has seen cafes and restaurants expand onto footpaths, laneways and on-street parking spaces. When parking spaces are used in this way, the new dining areas created are known as parklets. Keep an eye out for them in your neighbourhood and stop by for a meal to support local business.

A word from the Lord Mayor

Lord Mayor Sally Capp said that lockdowns have had a major impact on our business community – particularly the hospitality industry – so Council is doing everything it can to provide certainty for businesses.

‘The outdoor dining program has helped bring back the buzz by attracting patrons from across Melbourne and the regions,’ the Lord Mayor said.

‘The extended outdoor dining program has helped to provide hospitality businesses with extra capacity to seat more customers and get more revenue.

‘Businesses can have confidence that outdoor dining will continue in the City of Melbourne until winter. We’re looking into additional features to support outdoor dining during the cooler months such as weather protection.

‘We want to reduce the administrative burden on businesses so will be directly contacting each business and have a simplified process to extend permits for those who wish to continue their outdoor dining space.

‘All City of Melbourne councillors are committed to ensuring our organisation is focused on assisting local businesses that have been battling some of the toughest trading conditions in living memory.’

For more information, visit melbourne.vic.gov.au/outdoordining



SUPPORT FOR BUSINESSES

Local businesses, services and organisations are the lifeblood of Melbourne, and our support for them is multi-layered and ongoing.

Visit melbourne.vic.gov.au/business to subscribe to the Business in Melbourne newsletter and explore the help on offer, including grants, rate relief, marketing support and free outdoor dining permits.

For one-on-one advice, call our dedicated Business Concierge Service on 9658 9658 (press 1 for business), or enquire online at the above website.

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Your City of Melbourne community update

SEEKING CREATIVES FOR ARTPLAY NEW IDEAS LAB

Do you have an idea for a brand new creative project that could be co-designed with children or families? Submit your proposal to the ArtPlay New Ideas Lab by Friday 26 March.

If you need inspiration, look no further than the current New Ideas Lab project Imagination Gamespaces, which has seen local kids creating interactive 'escape rooms' with fantastical storylines and riddles.

ABOUT ARTPLAY

ArtPlay brings together children, families and artists to explore and create innovative arts experiences at its premises at Birrarung Marr and online.

Led by Brendan Ternus, Alia Syed Rose and Shaun Wykes from Radical Attic, Imagination Gamespaces included immersive game design, creative writing, visual art and performance-based activities.

'One of the things I've learned from this project is how powerful kids and their ideas can be,' Brendan said.

'We gave kids the agency and space to create whole new worlds, and it was clear what is on their minds: the environment, wealth, equality, conflict, peace, and heroes trying to make an impact in their communities.'

'Reflecting these values and concerns is so important, particularly in this topsy-turvy world we are living in. Art can help communities reinvent themselves. It is also a real antidote to disconnection.'

Brendan moved to Melbourne three and a half years ago after working on education projects in China, France, Japan and the United States. Melbourne's thriving youth arts scene has enriched his creative career.

'ArtPlay is one of the most supportive environments I've encountered all over the world,' Brendan said.

'The New Ideas Lab supports your process from the inception of an idea all the way through to execution and, if you aren't an established artist, the team can connect you with a mentor to help grow your ideas.'

'All the New Ideas Lab projects are very different but everyone is on the same page about the value of collaboration with kids and bringing their voices to the fore.'

'ArtPlay also helps New Ideas Lab projects find new audiences after the program is over through a showcase that connects you with industry leaders. So it's the gift that keeps on giving.'

The final showings of Imagination Gamespaces will take place in the April school holidays.

How to apply

The 2021 ArtPlay New Ideas Lab will support four proposals for brand new work to be co-created with children or families, with each project valued from \$10,000 to \$20,000.

People working in the creative sector and artists from all disciplines and cultural backgrounds are encouraged to apply. Applicants do not necessarily need experience in working with children, but a passion and enthusiasm for involving children in the creative process is essential.

Expressions of interest are now open and close at 5pm on Friday 26 March.

For more information, visit melbourne.vic.gov.au/artplay

Information and events in this publication are current at the time of printing. Subsequent changes may occur.

'YEARS OF OUR LIVES' PROJECT

Radical Attic also worked with older Melburnians during 2020's reimagined Seniors Festival to create a community timeline celebrating their unique life experiences and diversity. Explore the participants' reflections, treasured memories and adventures at melbourne.vic.gov.au/olderpeople



Local kids designed their own 'escape rooms' through Imagination Gamespaces

KEEP IN TOUCH

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You can also join conversations to influence plans for your neighbourhood through Participate Melbourne at participate.melbourne.vic.gov.au

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Council starts graffiti blitz

WORDS BY *Katie Johnson*
COUNCIL AFFAIRS

Unsightly graffiti and tagging in Docklands will be removed from shopfronts, bridges and building facades under a new City of Melbourne initiative.

Using some of the \$100 million Melbourne City Recovery fund, the council will focus on removing graffiti in high places that would normally be out of reach.

Lord Mayor Sally Capp said the cleaning blitz would ensure Melbourne was sparkling clean for workers returning to the city.

“Unwanted graffiti and tagging is a blight on the city. We can now literally go above and beyond to remove graffiti from hard to reach places,” the Lord Mayor said.

“The significant cost of hiring elevated working platforms means that the removal of graffiti from heights above three to four metres is cost-prohibitive.”

“This joint funding means we are able to contract two additional staff and hire the necessary equipment to remove graffiti from heights, including above shop awnings, bridges and on the sides and facades of buildings.”

So far the council has identified the CBD and a number of Docklands streets as priority areas for cleaning and will be adding more destina-

tions over the next six months.

Last month, the council’s new public toilet at Harbour Esplanade near NewQuay was defaced by taggers and the resulting graffiti was only removed some weeks later by high-pressure hose (pictured).

Graffiti removal services for tagging at street level will be boosted between now and the end of June 2021 as part of the program.

The council has hired two additional graffiti management vehicles and two more contract staff to proactively control and clean the areas on a daily rather than weekly basis.

The recovery fund will also be put towards additional waste services, including more hard waste collections for businesses and residents, deep street cleaning, additional cleaning of outdoor dining parklets and increased dumped rubbish removal.

Currently the CoM invests almost \$1 million on graffiti removal annually and removes around 50,000 sqm, or more than two MCGs worth of graffiti from private and public spaces, every year.

Lord Mayor Sally Capp said the new initiative would ensure Melbourne was cleaner than ever.

“Our community has been clear that graffiti removal is important to them and they want more action taken to address tagging across the municipality,” she said ●

Two Docklands projects approved

PLANNING

A 55-storey skyscraper for 700 Collins St and a 22-storey office tower in the City Harbour precinct have been approved by Minister for Planning Richard Wynne.

Developer Cromwell Property has been given approval to build a \$350 million mixed-use build-to-rent apartment, office and hotel tower in Docklands (pictured right), which will be the tallest tower in postcode 3008 once complete.

Meanwhile, in a big win for the development of the Digital Harbour precinct (now City Harbour) at the corner of Latrobe St and Harbour Esplanade, developer Digital Harbour Holdings has also been issued an approval for its new office tower (pictured below).

Located at Digital Drive next to the Melbourne Water office building fronting Latrobe St, the \$195 million 22-storey development will create more than 36,000 sqm of new office space across from Poly Australia’s new commercial project at 1000 Latrobe St, which is currently under construction ●



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DOCKLANDER



Life’s a marathon!

WORDS BY *Ellen Blake*

Docklands resident Julie Boyd’s first time running a marathon was when she travelled 42 kilometres along the Great Wall of China.

After starting triathlons in her late 40s, Julie decided to run the marathon after being invited by a friend.

“I just thought, ‘wow that’s mad’. But I love travelling. So, I thought even if the run isn’t a success, it could be an adventure,” Julie said.

“It was the one that really got me started into running.”

Since then, Julie has become enamoured with the sport and has completed 11 overseas marathons in nine years.

Julie has recently released her new book *The Rise and Fall(s) of a Would Be Runner*, which details her experiences competing in long-distance running events across Australia and around the world.

“I’ve been writing a diary for 40 years now. I really enjoy writing and I really enjoy reading about other people’s adventures. I had it in the back of my mind to write a book for a long time,” Julie said.

Julies lists marathons in Rio de Janeiro, Boston, and through Southern France’s vineyards as her most memorable running moments.

Alongside the highs, Julie also lists a notable experience participating in the Two Bays Trail

run along the Mornington Peninsula.

“It was my first trail run and my first ultra-marathon and I tripped on a tree root only 12 kilometres in and broke my shoulder,” Julie said.

“The idea of the book was to write about the ups and downs of running.”

Julie recommends long-distance running to everyone, including more mature runners.

“Running is just a great way of meeting people. I still have great friends from my trips,” Julie said.

And her advice to those tackling the 42 kilometres for the first time?

“To do a marathon you’ve got to believe in yourself and stick to a training plan,” Julie said.

“It’s important to be organised and stick to a regime. I have a training plan and I stick to it, even if it’s raining or too hot.”

Following COVID and the end of border restrictions, Julie aims to compete in the 89-kilometre Comrades Marathon in South Africa.

Despite her extensive travels overseas, Julie has called the Docklands area home for the past four years.

“I love being so close to all the things I like to do,” Julie said.

“Just round Docklands itself is amazing. I love to run and see the water. I love the locality for the scenery and for the closeness to everything. It’s great.” ●

“

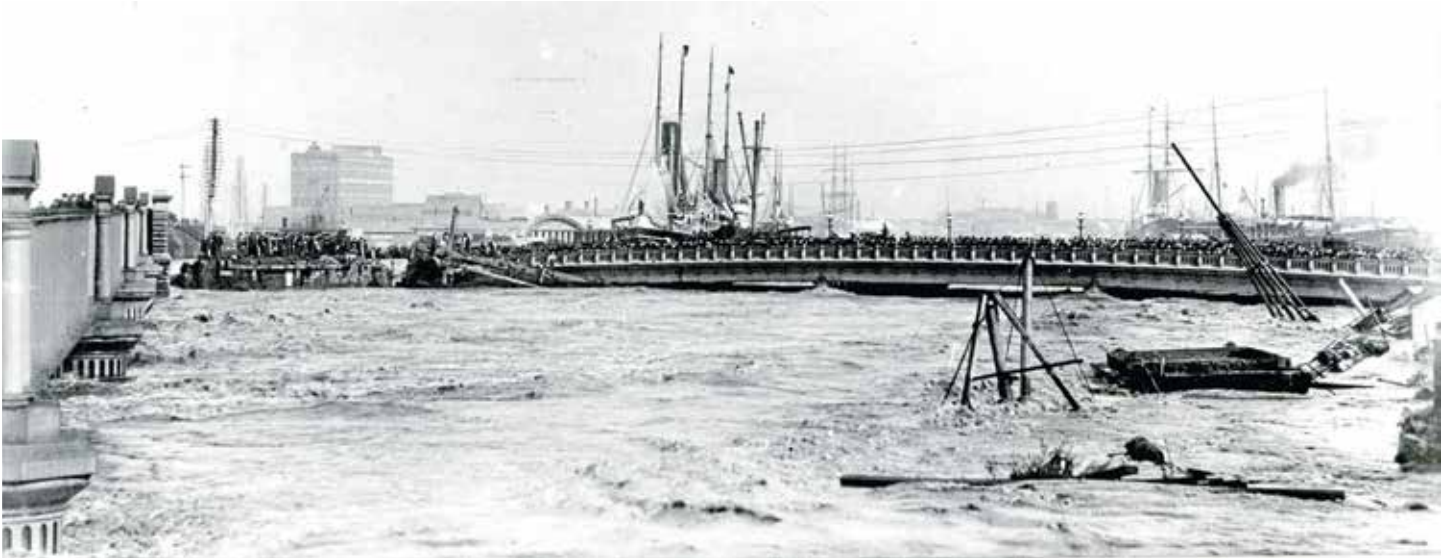
Julie has recently released her new book The Rise and Fall(s) of a Would Be Runner, which details her experiences competing in long distance running events across Australia and around the world.

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HISTORY

Queens Bridge over troubled water

From the very beginning, Melburnians and dock-workers living and working close to the Yarra River have dealt with the constant peril of flood.



This image shows how dangerous the Yarra could be. While catalogued at the Royal Historical Society (RHSV) as from 1912, another publication suggests this is from the floods that swept Melbourne in July 1891. We do know that the presence of the Sandridge Railway Bridge (left), Queen’s Bridge (right), and the Robur Tea Building (between the bridges) date this photograph sometime after 1889. It would have taken a daring photographer to get up so close and personal with the torrential waters, with wharf infrastructure such as cranes buried in its inky depths. At the Southbank end, it appears a boat has capsized and become wedged against Queen’s Bridge. This is likely to be the spoon dredge which was mentioned in *Illustrated Australian News* (August 1, 1891), as it fell into the Yarra River on the Sunday night of the floods while engaged in removing a coffer dam. All the while, curious Melburnians are watching the carnage with some seen peering over the iron wall of the railway bridge. They didn’t need to worry about any oncoming trains, as the floodwaters had spilled onto the roads and railway line beyond the south bank.

The floods of 1891 were not the first in Melbourne, as colonial records of the river’s flooding went as far back as the 1830s. One of the first major floods after settlement happened in 1839, with the low-lying lands so submerged that a Mr McHaffie (published in *The Argus*, February 28, 1881) with several other men in a

dinghy “crossed the Yarra and rowed over the flat” to the Port Melbourne beach. One of the town’s most infamous floods (and its biggest) was in 1863, which is a story worth its own article, when more than five inches (more than 130mm) of rain turned the city streets and Emerald Hill into an extension of the river. In the 1880s improvements were made to the Yarra through the destruction of the Falls and construction of Coode Canal so it was thought that no one had to suffer the heartbreak of floods again.

However, on Friday night and Saturday morning July 11, 1891, it started to rain with little respite for the next two days. Assisted by a strong south-west gale, a reported 5.3 inches (more than 134mm) of rain fell over Melbourne and its suburbs in a 56-hour period, engorging the river to the point where it burst its banks. By July 13 suburban streets resembled the canals of Venice with the water varying between 1.5m and 4.5m in depth. The two-storey terraces near Dight’s Falls were inundated to the top storey. Flemington Racecourse was converted into a lake over a metre deep. At Punt Rd the water rose up to just two metres under the railway bridge. The *Bendigo Advertiser* (July 14, 1891) recounts a group that surveyed the street by boat, reporting how the water had submerged verandahs and that only the roofs could be visible below Kelso St. The street’s lamp posts reportedly resembled “... a light-

house out there, only there was no light in it.”

Meanwhile, at the west end of Melbourne, the floods were a threat to the construction of the Victoria Dock. Along the mouth of the docks, workers frantically worked throughout Sunday and Monday to plug up a coffer dam (formed by the riverbank) with clay, sandbags and planks, led by Harbour Trust acting engineer A. W. Alexander. While there were leaks that saw nearly a metre of water pool into the dock (and 500 men temporarily out of a job), if it hadn’t been for their hard work and determination, it would’ve been a lot uglier.

During the ordeal, around 3000 people across Prahran, Richmond, Collingwood and surrounding suburbs became homeless, and sheltered at schools, town halls and neighbouring homes. As the flood waters rose rapidly, locals at Richmond’s Wellington St were forced to flee half-naked to dry land in the dark, in gushing rain and cold winds while abandoned dogs barked for salvation that never came. Workplaces became inaccessible or suffered damage to equipment and goods, such as the Gillespie’s Flour Mill in Collingwood when water spilled into its storage chamber (consisting of 2000 bags of flour) and rose to seven bags high. For Richard Gardner, the son of a ferry keeper, his attempts to rescue cattle at Richmond became a fight for survival as the torrent forced him onto a rooftop, where he waited four hours for rescue. However, not ev-

eryone was lucky as three souls were lost: a man drowned in a house in South Yarra as he waited for the owners to come back, while another was found drowned at Moonee Creek. A third was a worker for the Harbour Trust, who fell under Prince’s Bridge after his dredge capsized.

In the aftermath, the floods caused more than £200, 000 in damages. In response Melburnians collected everything they could for the victims, with various relief funds exceeding £19, 000 within a month of the floods. In the years afterward, the authorities made sure they would not be blindsided by the hubris of the Coode Canal work. In 1896 the *Yarra Improvement Act* was passed, allowing work on the Yarra between Punt Rd and Prince’s Bridge. This saw the river straightened and the removal of two billabongs near the Botanical Gardens to improve the flow of the Yarra.

Despite the attempts to tame nature, there is still regular flash flooding that can turn city streets into wild rapids and there was a major flood in 1934. Although anything on the magnitude of 1891 has not been repeated since ●



Ashley Smith

RESEARCHER
ROYAL HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF
VICTORIA

How do we solve a problem like rough sleeping?

“Welcome to the seventh of our 12-part series which will attempt to explore the role that housing can and should play within Australian society and why it is important to our economy that we house all Australians, rich or poor.”

This series intends to draw on a range of perspectives centred around housing and homelessness. We will hear a range of views from business, the not-for-profit sector and hopefully government, as to why they believe housing is an important social and economic building block for Australia's future prosperity. This month we have asked Jenny Begent, Head of Social Mission for The Salvation Army, to share her thoughts on why the objective around housing all Australians, and in particular investing in social housing in the era of working from home, should be considered an economic imperative...

I am fortunate enough to live in what is considered by the Economic Intelligence Unit (EIU), as the most liveable city in the world. Due, in no small part I suspect, to its great coffee and café culture, but also to its healthcare, education, stability, culture, environment and infrastructure. On the Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU), it scored an incredible 97.5 out of 100. As a resident myself, I can attest to it being a fine place to live.

Yet, from my vantage point at The Salvation Army in the centre of the city, I am all too aware that Melbourne isn't a great place for all its residents. One of our significant challenges is the increase in the number of people sleeping rough. According to the City of Melbourne, rough sleeping has increased by 74 per cent compared to two years ago. This represents 247 individuals, most aged between 26 and 60. Most are there due to housing affordability, mental health or an addiction.

Melbourne is not unique in Victoria for its rough sleepers; rough sleepers are present in all our suburbs and in our major towns. It is unique, however, in the level of infrastructure that exists as a draw for people seeking housing and support. So, like Dick Whittington, searching for streets paved with gold, the homeless, the ill, the abused come looking for support, propelled by a spectrum of problems which includes having nowhere else to go.

This Increased presence has meant increased government and media attention, which has, in some instances quite frankly, not been at all helpful when agencies such as ours have been trying to support and assist this most vulnerable group. Along with increased attention, has been a call for solutions, some excellent, others not helpful. The call for the criminalisation of rough sleepers is extremely counter-productive, leading to vulnerable people being driven un-

derground rather than remaining visible where support can be offered. A great majority of rough sleepers are victims of crime themselves and the calls to criminalise, further stigmatise homeless street people, and penalise them for simply being poor.

The plethora of support agencies, and council and government responses have both helped and hindered this cohort. Differing agendas, targets and attitudes have meant that many rough sleepers have failed to obtain the housing and medical support they need to help them make a sustainable return to mainstream society. Until recently there has been a lack of political appetite and bureaucratic capacity for a co-ordinated approach to tackling rough sleeping. However, the creation of the Rough Sleeping Taskforce has finally been translated into a practical approach that will work towards a state-wide solution, rather than a Melbourne city-specific approach.

Rough sleepers are one of the most disadvantaged groups in society. They deserve better than to be treated as a nuisance – they may have suffered a relationship breakdown, a bereavement or domestic abuse. Instead, people need long-term, dedicated support to move away from the streets for good. Those who sleep on the streets are extremely vulnerable and often do not know where to turn for help. These individuals need additional support to leave homelessness behind, and any move to criminalise sleeping rough could simply create additional problems to be overcome. If we are to tackle the current housing and health inequalities then we need to assess and meet their needs in new and imaginative ways. It requires a broad overarching response that considers their health needs as well as housing needs. The response needs to be undertaken with main stream providers ensuring effective partnerships across a many

and varied service response.

It also requires a response from individuals, a reminder that each one of us is just one step away from homelessness. In the literal sense, as we walk around our own towns and cities and pass rough sleepers, and in the theoretical sense, we could suffer a job loss, an illness, a financial setback or a combination of the three. We could end up sleeping rough; anyone who is on the street is certainly a lot worse off than me. I look them in the eye, I say hello. When I acknowledge them, they are no longer invisible.

I hope you found the above perspective by Jenny interesting and insightful. While what was said may not align with our view of the world, we all need to listen and digest what is said by others in order to find common ground. This is why we are focusing on the fact that the provision of shelter is a fundamental human need (not human right) and without that need being met, we have unintended social and economic consequences that will span generations. As I said in my first article, doing nothing is NOT AN OPTION! We need to act and we need to act now. All of us need to be part of the solution so please feel free to write to me with your thoughts: info@housingallaustralians.com.au ●



Rob Pradolín
FORMER GENERAL MANAGER AT FRASERS PROPERTY AUSTRALIA AND FOUNDER OF HOUSING ALL AUSTRALIANS (HAA)
INFO@HOUSINGALLAUSTRALIANS.COM.AU

COUNCILLOR PROFILE

New councillor is a “unionist at heart”

WORDS BY Sean Car

Having snuck into the final councillor position at last year's local government elections, CFMEU member and new councillor Elizabeth Doidge said she was looking forward to helping shape and reactivate the city that she loves.

A proud “unionist at heart”, the 31-year-old was elected to the City of Melbourne council on Lord Mayoral candidate Jennifer Yang's union-backed ticket, with the CFMEU alone providing more than \$195,000 for the campaign.

Working in policy and stakeholder engagement with the CFMEU, Ms Doidge told *Docklands News* that the union's desire was just to have a place on council so it “could influence policy” and “play a part in the city that we built”.

And in what will come as music to the ears of many local residents, she said part of her ambition as a councillor and chair of the council's sustainable building portfolio was to help improve dialogue between the council, the building industry and residents.

It was a relationship tested in the CBD during the height of the pandemic when out of hours construction permits were granted by the council last year and Ms Doidge said there was a lot her union could do to help residents.

“There's never been a dialogue between the building industry and local residents, I suppose we're at loggerheads and that's something the CFMEU can do,” she said.

“It's not just because we have a lot of resident members but there can be a lot of issues resolved through collaboration – you just need those channels and I would love to be a part of that.”

In addition to her roles with the CFMEU and now as a councillor, Ms Doidge is, remarkably, also currently completing a master's degree in communications at RMIT University, where



she has been previously studying politics, international relations and media during the past 14 years.

She said the city was a “huge part” of both her own and her family's lives. Her grandfather once served as the manager of Flinders Street Station, while her grandmother was a regular shopper at Queen Victoria Market and visitor to St Patrick's Cathedral.

Having lived and worked in Melbourne her entire life, she said it was that affinity with her city that led her to the union movement, and she was looking forward to using her role as a councillor to change perceptions about the CFMEU.

She said all CFMEU members, including its controversial secretary John Setka, were far more progressive than many gave them credit

for, and had many overlapping ambitions with the council such as greening the city, sustainable development and community outreach.

“When John Setka and I were sitting down and talking about the relationships we have with council and things like that he said, ‘we need more trees, we need more green in the city ... it's getting ugly,’” she said.

“There's a lot of perceptions that the unions and the employers in our industry are always fighting with each other which is not true at all. We have fantastic relationships with builders and bosses of constructions companies, and we all work together to make sure the construction industry is healthy and safe.”

“There are jobs for our members so it's not in our interest to make building difficult it's quite the opposite – we want it to continue as much as

possible and we want jobs for our members. But we want to make sure they're good jobs, they're safe jobs and we want to see the products we're building are quality.”

With the impacts of COVID-19 sure to play out across the city for many years to come, the current council term marks as one of the most critical periods in City of Melbourne's history as it recovers from the pandemic.

In addition to the Environment and Creative Melbourne portfolios, Ms Doidge has taken on the role as deputy lead of the all-important City Activation portfolio, which is being led by fellow first-time Cr Roshena Campbell.

While she is still wrapping her head around local government processes, she said her councillor colleagues and others at the City of Melbourne had provided great support in helping her settle into the role.

It's been wonderful,” she said. “Especially now that I've been there for a while and I'm really starting to understand the role that councils play in actually shaping the city and having a really positive impact on the future of our city.”

“I pay very close attention to everything everyone says! I'm never going to walk into that room and think I'm the smartest person there or think I'm the best politician or the best councillor but that's why I love it. There's a great group of people who have very diverse political views and political backgrounds and I think we can all come together and make a big difference.” ●



Sean Car
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SEAN@HYPERLOCALNEWS.COM.AU

Revitalising Docklands after the pandemic

“Melbourne is such a unique and special place, and I love raising my family here. But as we emerge from the worst of the pandemic it’s so important to remember what makes Melbourne so special and to support the local small businesses that make Melbourne great.”



▲ Ellen Sandell MP cutting the ribbon at Melbourne Bay Restaurant’s reopening event with Federal MP for Melbourne Adam Bandt, restaurant staff and local business owner William Comley.

For me, what makes Melbourne great is our vibrant arts, cultural and hospitality scene. From the bustling city streets with laneway cafes to the established institutions like local independent bookshops or family restaurants that have been a cornerstone of the community for decades.

While Docklands has been the beating heart of Melbourne’s industry for hundreds of years, the next page of its history is relatively new and has been defined by waterside hospitality, arts festivals and a growing community of locals who live, work and learn at the edge of our cen-

tral city. But with the exodus of office workers from the city, Docklands has been one of the places hardest hit by lockdown restrictions.

That’s why this week I ventured out to cut the ribbon to re-open the Melbourne Bay Restaurant, an amazing local place on Harbour Esplanade.

This place serves up authentic Chinese dumplings and noodles, handmade on site from a generations-old family recipe. Next door the cafe serves coffee, hot chocolate and chai all sourced from local Melbourne producers.

It’s small businesses like these that collective-

ly weave the fabric of our community together and tell the stories of our shared history.

It was devastating to see that booked-out restaurants and busy retailers during Valentine’s Day and Lunar New Year in Melbourne were so affected by the most recent snap lockdown. I was proud to call for more support for casual workers and small businesses affected by this lockdown. But as things go back to COVID-normal, we need to look out for our local small businesses that make Melbourne great.

So, if you can, get out and support your local businesses, especially in the CBD and

Docklands.

And if you’re a local business who needs support or a shout-out, please don’t hesitate to get in touch by email or calling us on 9328 4637 ●



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WE LIVE HERE

Government hypocrisy on the record

Hansard can be decidedly inconvenient for pivoting politicians.

The state government managed to tie itself in syllogistic knots defending the indefensible this month, at the second reading of the *Owners’ Corporations and Other Acts Amendment Bill 2019*. Its stunning self-contradictions are now recorded in *Hansard* for posterity.

They had a chance to get it right and they stubbornly refused to listen to the needs of apartment-dwellers.

From the time the Bill was drafted, We Live Here made submissions and lobbied for amendments, including one to protect apartment owners from the inequity of long-term service contracts gifted to developers’ mates. As described in previous columns, some of the contracts are 25 years and we have had an example of 99 years reported to us.

Commendably, Greens MLC Dr Samantha Ratnam introduced an amendment to the Bill, precisely along these lines, limiting to three years any service contracts signed by a developer. While the Bill laudably limits owners’ corporation (OC) management contracts, it’s silent on sweetheart deals for other huge commitments like building management and cleaning.

The argument mounted by the government was exasperatingly risible. Labor MLC Shaun Leane, craftily narrowed his focus to utilities ...

“The consequence could be severe, particularly for utility providers, who require certainty beyond three years for the viability of their businesses. It could result in owners’ corporations struggling to find businesses willing to provide the most basic services – that is, water and electricity – given that the contracts would be for a maximum of three years,” Mr Leane said.

So here we have the Victorian Government

zealously espousing the right of developers to lock apartment owners into onerous long-term contracts.

How did this government work itself into such a distastefully invidious argument that abrogates both social responsibility principles and free market policies – risking affront to the entire political spectrum?

Our proposal for a three-year limit would still be an excellent outcome for providers in a market dominated by shorter deals. And if a provider does a good job, they will likely retain the contract after the three years is up. That’s the appeal of competition isn’t it?

The Honorable Member’s specious utilities example conspicuously contradicts government policies that actively promote competition in the electricity market.

Do you recall the Victorian Government offering everyone \$50 each just to have a look at its energy comparison website? That was part of a suite of competitive reforms associated with its *Energy Legislation Amendment Bill 2019*, passed on October 17, 2019.

This is where *Hansard* becomes inconvenient, recording unanimous government support for that pro-competition energy Bill.

Fast forward scarcely more than a year and Hansard now records the same government capriciously condemning apartment dwellers – 25 per cent of Victorians – to suffer anticompetitive gouging at the hands of building services providers.

Why the about-turn, indulging the cupidity of developers and their cronies?

What’s going on here, is it a case of incompetence, ignorance or undue influence?

Greens and independent support

After almost two years of lobbying, We Live Here had the support of the Greens and several crossbenchers for a range of amendments to the OC Bill:

- Andy Meddick, Animal Justice Party

- Clifford Hayes, Sustainable Australia Party
- Rod Barton, Transport Matters Party
- Catherine Cumming, Independent Government hypocrisy on the record
- Fiona Patten, Reason Party – although perplexingly, Ms Patten voted against our amendment about reasonable limits on contracts that developers dish out.

Dr Ratnam proposed three amendments, which were all rejected by the government. Nevertheless, she used the opportunity to press for other urgent reforms:

“The short-stay industry has largely been left to set its own rules, with the government only intervening to implement a complaints process and avoiding implementing any real regulation of the industry,” Dr Ratnam said.

“Now we are facing the need to reinvent our cities in light of the havoc wreaked by COVID, this is a perfect time to be looking at how we make our cities more liveable.”

Hear, hear!

“Oops, thanks for the reminder”

Dr Ratnam also raised the issue of the review of the *Short-stay (Accommodation) Act 2018*, promised for 2020 and seemingly forgotten.

Labor MLC Mr Leane sought some whispered advice before confirming that, err, yes, there will be a review “which will start this year”.

Asked for more specificity about timing and terms of reference, Mr Leane dodged with, “I cannot be more descriptive.”

Maybe *Hansard* needs the “shrug” emoji.

Pressed on the issue Mr Leane then went on to repeat the party line, “there is a provision in this [short-stay] Bill that gives owners’ corps the ability to penalise certain owners if they are breaching the short-stay rules.”

This is shamefully deceptive. In its two years of operation, the number of cases where owners have successfully taken action in the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal (VCAT) un-

der this provision is ZERO.

The short-stay Act is a toothless, useless law and Mr Leane knows it.

We need dedicated regulations for apartments

The reading of the *OC Amendments Bill* highlighted the convolutions required to draft a single piece of legislation covering everything from caravan parks to skyscraper apartment towers. Navigating the new law will be a huge challenge, perhaps one relished by our learned friends in the legal profession.

A review of the short-stay Act is quasi-scheduled, with the task of establishing terms of reference apparently not in anyone’s in-tray quite yet.

Now the government has a chance to set terms to review several issues in concert: specific provisions for short-stays, general improvements to regulatory framework, and the role of planning regulations.

Perhaps the new Minister for Consumer Affairs Melissa Horne can jump out of the ministerial revolving door to take charge.

Campaign donations

As a not-for-profit organisation, donations from individuals and buildings keep our campaigns going. To register as a supporter of We Live Here or to donate, please visit **welivehere.net**. **We Live Here** does not accept donations from commercial tourism interests ●



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ABORIGINAL MELBOURNE



Cultural competency on the rise

Where the COVID-19 pandemic and the shift online upended many organisations last year, Koorie Heritage Trust (KHT) manager of education and visitor experience Rob Hyatt said the trust’s Building Aboriginal Cultural Competency workshops had soared in popularity.

WORDS BY Ellen Blake

“There’s been a massive return from moving online. We now do about 25 to 30 sessions a month,” Mr Hyatt told Docklands News.

Through the workshops, the KHT works with various companies, including state governments and corporate and community organisations, to provide education on working with Aboriginal communities.

“The main thing we hear from organisations is a desire to learn more and provide workplace support,” Mr Hyatt said.

“Many of the organisations we work with have implemented reconciliation strategies but need more education on certain issues.”

The Building Aboriginal Cultural Competency workshop focuses on four key education blocks: concentration of Aboriginality and identity, history, understanding Aboriginal communities today, and hints and tips for effectively engaging with Aboriginal people.

“The workshop supports people to work with Aboriginal people but also stresses the social benefit of broader education about Aboriginality,” Mr Hyatt said

The workshop includes discussions on both traditional and contemporary elements of Aboriginality, an understanding of the history of what has happened to Aboriginal people and its impacts on areas such as education, justice and employment.

Mr Hyatt said the workshop also impressed the resilience of Aboriginal culture and Aboriginal people.

“One of the main points of the workshop is to underscore the continued survival of Aboriginal culture and its strengths,” Mr Hyatt said.

Mr Hyatt said the workshops were based on experiential and participatory learning and encouraged discussion.

He added that workshop participants were increasingly interested in discussing “Change the Date” and “Black Lives Matter” after highly publicised social movements over the past few years.

“This is just not a lecture, we encourage participants to self-explore their own experiences, values, beliefs and behaviour,” he said.

The KHT is holding the Building Aboriginal Cultural Competency workshops for organisations, and individuals and small groups throughout the year online ●



For more on the workshops: korieheritagetrust.com.au/visit-us/education/#cultural-competency

MELBOURNE MARITIME HERITAGE NETWORK

A return to the sea shanty

Just when we thought “it safe to go back into the water” so to speak, and that the pandemic tide had ebbed enabling a return to near normality, this month we saw yet another lockdown! Lockdown itself seems to have triggered another unfathomable phenomenon - the extraordinary popularity of the sea shanty. This historical maritime musical genre has been around for 600 years and became popularised in the 18th century with the advent of very long sea voyages such as those to Australia. These rousing rhythmic songs helped with tasks where seafarers needed to work in rhythm, e.g., when lifting sails or hauling cargo via ropes. No doubt in times gone by sea shanties would often have been heard around docks. Perhaps the chant or chorus created a sense of common purpose among those working. In a sense, lockdown has a quality akin to a long “voyage” (in this case, through the pandemic) and it seems that isolation heightens an appreciation of collective endeavour, which might in part account for the current popularity of shanties during COVID.

Alert: between 12pm and 3pm on Sunday, April 18, Melbourne Maritime Heritage Network (MMHN), in collaboration with the Navy Band, will host a performance at the stage at Federation Square with the promise that a sea shanty or two will feature! See theguardian.com/music/2021/jan/13/not-just-for-drunk-en-sailors-how-sea-shanties-took-over-tik-tok and

theage.com.au/culture/music/why-are-sea-shanties-suddenly-all-over-social-media-20210119-p56v7h.html

Docklands residents need no reminder that waterways have been and are significant to Melbourne’s evolution as a city and much maritime heritage is irrevocably tied to its river system. A new exhibition entitled *Yarra: Stories of Melbourne’s River*, is now on at Melbourne’s Old Treasury Building, Spring St. The Yarra, once known as Birrarung: River of Mists, meanders through urban reaches past Docklands. The placid river belies a turbulent, teeming and often tragic past. The river and swamps sustained the Woi Wurrung, Wurundjeri and



Boon Wurrung peoples but also of course, the river’s fresh water both attracted and sustained European presence. Early cultural contact took place along the banks of the river. As the colonial European population grew, the river’s sweet water became degraded and its abundant swamplands were drastically re-configured to tame the periodic flooding when the river became a swollen roaring torrent, breaking its banks, demolishing wharves, threatening factories and homes in low-lying areas. After the last “great flood” disaster in 1891, the river was changed forever. Its course was straightened, shortened and deepened into a “channel” running through the city. The Coode Canal and Victoria Port (now known as Victoria Harbour) were excavated. In 2017 ground breaking legislation determined the right of the Wurundjeri peoples to help manage the waterways – ensuring that an earlier pre-European sense of Birrarung is sustained into the future.

For Docklands residents (young or not-so-young) looking for an inexpensive, informative and compelling maritime hobby to be enjoyed from dry land – and one that is especially rewarding for Dockland residents – MMHN encourages you to consider ship-spotting. It is a form of “collecting”, identifying, perhaps photographing and recording, the many types of ships that power into our Docklands. Shipping is, after all, critical to our economy. And why are container ships so especially fascinating? Because production is globalised, the vast bulk of all products are conveyed to us in containers by sea through Docklands. Global trading means products often make multiple journeys – in containers. Shipping logistics and complex



supply chains underpin the world economies and impact on the environment. There are instruction guides to assist identification. For more information email info@mmhn.org.au. The World Shipping Society (WSS) meets monthly at the Port Education Centre, Lorimer St, Fishermans Bend.

Continuing the “spotting” theme, Docklands residents are likely to “spot” flags flying on vessels around the waterways. Flags are the means of information exchange (i.e. signalling) between ships and from ship to shore. Pre-dating modern information technologies, flags remain in use and retain considerable fascination among maritime heritage enthusiasts. There are many conventions relating to the “language” of flags and like many conventions, they change over time. For example, in the first half of the 20th century, the Red Ensign had widespread use in Australia. It is the same as the Blue Ensign, which became the Australian National Flag after 1901 following Federation. At the same time, the Red Ensign became the flag of Merchant Naval Shipping and has remained so ever since. Flags signalling disease aboard vessels or contagion also changed over time from yellow to chequered yellow and black. How many, and what colour flags can you see flying in Docklands? ●



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PRECINCT PERSPECTIVE

Addressing issues in Yarra’s Edge

A big shout-out to City of Melbourne Cr Kevin Louey and three senior managers who met a delegation of residents at Point Park last month.

We had a list of many concerns that we believed were not being addressed by the council and some we considered were dangerous and needed urgent attention.

Some of the issues we had were the gravel paths around Point Park which created a dangerous situation with the sand whipping up in people’s faces and across footpaths making them slippery in the high winds that blow through the area.

Also the ponds created after rain along the walkways creating a hazard for pedestrians and cyclists and more particularly mothers with prams. Unfortunately, this has been an ongoing situation for many years.

South Wharf Drive paving has been breaking up and the area around the trees has been caving in and the council has now started some repairs but a lot more needs to be done as this is a very popular walking area.

It has been pleasing to see the increased numbers using Point Park and the barbecue facilities but after a busy weekend the rubbish bins have been overflowing and we have requested more in that location and close to the pizza shop.

We also asked that the council consider beautifying the piazza in front of Towers 1 &

2 with permanent tables, chairs and umbrellas and make the area more inviting for residents and tourists that frequent the area.

The council officers listened to our concerns and said they would put our requests into the system but it all comes down to priorities and what’s in the budget going forward.

My concerns in the during the three-and-a-half years we have been living at Yarra’s Edge it seems we are the poor relations when it comes to council spending in this area.

I see the Marina and amenities as a fantastic tourist attraction as is evidenced by the numbers of people that are attracted to this location.

Some time ago I met with Lord Mayor Sally Capp and some of her officers and suggested that the council fund some kind of music event at Point Park which has much to offer.

Unfortunately, with COVID restrictions the arts and entertainment industry has been decimated and this is something the council could do to support the music industry.

The open space on the park would be ideal for residents and families to enjoy some great music.

Now that things are starting to get back to normal after the third snap lockdown it really is incumbent on us all to support those busi-

nesses that stayed open at great expense to them in many cases so they deserve our ongoing loyalty to help them through what’s been a difficult year.

Finally, it’s great to see Melbourne people starting to get back to normal and we hope that over the next few months we see more employees coming back to the city and the Docklands precinct which can only help support those struggling local businesses.

We all need to be vigilant going forward as COVID is still with us for many months to come and we need to be wearing masks when required and still must observe social distancing where possible and be mindful that we don’t want to go into lockdown again ●



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Talking maritime heritage

“
The talk all around the Mission at the moment is about the maritime heritage and what the building is best used for.
”

The Mission to Seafarers Victoria (MtSV) building is, and will continue to be, a place of rest and recreation for seafarers. I have mentioned over the past 12 months how busy we have been as port workers caring for the crews who come to Melbourne delivering all the goods we require for our daily lives. Cars, concrete and coffee. We continue to serve the seafarers who will most likely not get shore leave in Melbourne for a least the rest of the year.

One thing that those who come on our guided heritage tours of the building or just drop in to check us out ask most often is, “how are you funded?” and my answer is always the same: The Australian Government signed the International Maritime Labour Convention 2006 (MLC); The state owns the ports and who funds the Mission?

The MLC states as per guideline B4.4.4 ...

Financing of welfare facilities¹. In accordance with national conditions and practice, financial support for port welfare facilities should be made available through one or more of the following:

- (a) grants from public funds;
- (b) levies or other special dues from shipping sources;
- (c) voluntary contributions from shipowners, seafarers, or their organisations; and
- (d) voluntary contributions from other sources.

The MLC also calls for ...

Guideline B4.4.2.3 Necessary welfare and recreational facilities should be established or developed in ports.

These should include:

- (a) meeting and recreation rooms as required;
- (b) facilities for sports and outdoor facilities, including competitions;
- (c) educational facilities; and
- (d) where appropriate, facilities for religious observances and for personal counselling.

The Mission was built for all these things – the tennis courts were taken for Siddeley St, and the gym in the Norla Dome is now used for public exhibitions and events. For outdoor recreation we have taken crews to the local basketball courts, and when Seafarers Rest Park is built they will have this outdoor area as well as our wonderful garden.

The North Wharf area around the Mission is currently under development with the Seafarers Rest Park, the Seafarers apartments and hotel (by developer Riverlee), and it will be a desirable area when completed; so why shouldn't the Mission to Seafarers stay where we need to be to deliver our core services and continue to be a place for the community?

MtSV also believes our heritage collection and related narrative should be maintained, and that the presentation of the collection must continue to be associated with the Mission buildings. If there were to be no change to MtSV's position within the building, MtSV would continue to invest resources in preserving and presenting its collection and related heritage narrative for the benefit of the people of Victoria. Your support for the Mission and seafarers comes in the form of attending one of our wonderful events, dropping in for a coffee; or drink after work and appreciating that Melbourne has many maritime stories and the Mission to Seafarers is one part of the great big picture ●



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HEALTH AND WELLBEING

Are you as mobile as you think?

During March, we at Docklands Health will be asking our patients to get more mobile this Mobility Month!

WORDS BY Dr Carla Cerra

So, what is mobility? Mobility is being able to move with freedom and comfort. Mobility plays a large role in our everyday life and allows us to move in every way. From getting out of bed in the morning to brushing our teeth and performing every other small or large physical task in our day! A restriction in mobility can affect many elements of our lives not only physically but also socially and emotionally.

A recent survey by the Australian Chiropractors Association (ACA) found that one in 10 Australians claim their pain hindered their ability to play with their children; one in ten indicated impacts on intimate relationships; and one in 20 realised their persistent pain resulted in increased friction with their partner.

With statistics like these, it is important you are staying on top of your mobility and monitor any changes in your strength, balance and flexibility. This Mobility Month, try out these four simple exercises to discover how “mobile” you are:

- Head rotation: testing how far and evenly you can turn your neck on each side.**
- Sitting down, keep your shoulders still and against a chair.
 - Turn your head all the way to the left as if you were looking over your shoulder. How far around did you get?
 - Repeat on the right. Was it even? Was it comfortable?

- Trunk side bend: testing how far you can run your hand down each side of your body.**
- Stand with your feet comfortably apart.
 - Run a hand down the side of your leg so you side bend without leaning backwards or forwards.
 - Repeat on the other side. Was it even and was it comfortable to do?
- Sit to stand: testing the ease at which you can rise from your chair with crossed arms.**
- Sit in the middle of your chair. Cross your arms over your chest.
 - Keeping your back straight and arms across your chest...
 - Stand straight up and then sit back down. Did you do this easily or was it hard?
- Single leg stance: testing how well you balance on each leg.**
- In a safe environment free of trip hazards, stand upright with feet together and place hands on hips.
 - Lift one foot off the ground. Do not allow your legs to touch. Time how long you can stand without moving.
 - Repeat on opposite side. Are you able to stand on each leg for at least 40 seconds? (If under 60 years)

How was your flexibility, strength, and balance? If you find that you are struggling with one of the exercises, not to worry. Our chiropractors and physiotherapist at Docklands Health are here to help. Ask us about getting more mobile this March by contacting us by phone at 9088 3228. Online at docklandshealth.com.au or you can come in and speak to us at Shop 4/860 Collins St Docklands●

For more information on Mobility Month, and to watch the test in action, visit docklandshealth.com.au/mobility-month



SHAUN & REBECCA
We'd like to see international travel return, but we'd really like to see a green economy created. What we're hoping is that the government will listen to the climate scientists as much as they've listened to the health scientists.



MICHAEL
I'd like to see the city economy return to what it once was. It's a little bit dead at the moment and feels different.



TIN-TIN & MARCELA
The return of festivals, live music, outdoor events and those sort of things – as well as international travel.



SANDEEP
Normalcy.

Faces of Docklands

Question: What are you hoping will return in the post-vaccine world?

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CHAMBER UPDATE

Docklands Dollars

By the third week of Victoria's very first lockdown the Docklands Chamber of Commerce (DCC) had a plan in front of the City of Melbourne to recover businesses.



We knew it was not going to be a simple process to exit lockdown. At the time we had no idea we'd still be dealing with them now, but that plan has remained and will be launched this coming month as Docklands Dollars.

For us, the key to initiating people to spend in Docklands is having them come to stay, so that's where our priority is. We are going to encourage and subsidise people to stay in Docklands and then rebate their spends across any member of the DCC.

Our spend is enormous and couldn't be achieved without the gracious help of the City of Melbourne and Development Victoria, but that investment will be paid back hundreds of times in our local traders.

Any business in Docklands can get involved so long as they are or become a member of the DCC. The annual membership has also been heavily reduced to just \$50 and includes the business listing on our home website – docklandsc.com.au – and our soon-to-be Docklands Dollars website, representations across our socials (an annual reach exceeding 10 million) and advertising in our newsletters.

State fuphries

Every time I hear Dan Andrews on the news at present I cringe. Firstly, thinking he's going to announce one new case and we're going back into some sort of lockdown. Then just hearing his lies, specifically about businesses returning their employees.

Currently we sit at a legislated maximum of 50 per cent. I walk Docklands every single day and while I'm not privy to the internal numbers of the ANZ or Myer for example, I couldn't imagine we are anywhere near five per cent of employees back at work and we're not going to get there any time soon. I understand why the fuphries are there – tell the public and business community a positive spin that the economy is returning. But it's simply not and we have the cliff edge just a few weeks away.

I'm very aware of quite a few businesses who simply can't operate past JobKeeper. That last payment is going to be their last hurrah •



Shane Wylie
MEDIA DIRECTOR
DOCKLANDSCC.COM.AU



DOCKLANDS
Chamber of Commerce

The Wild West of OC elections

Owners’ corporations (OCs) are often referred to as a fourth tier of government – and our elections are just as political!

Upon purchasing your apartment, as a lot owner, you automatically become part of your OC. But to join the committee, the key decision-making group for your building, you must be elected by your fellow owners (or their proxies) at your Annual General Meeting (AGM).

Sounds democratic – and seems like a great instance of hyperlocal democracy in action. That is, our vertical villages are managed by an annually elected group, drawn from fellow owners, and it is they who make decisions about how our building is managed, including how our levies are spent and what actions are taken to address problems.

Regrettably, this committee, most especially how it is elected, also typically involves hyper-local politics. And in many buildings, the intensity of competition rivals that of other levels of government.

It is all too common to hear of buildings run as fiefdoms, where long-standing committee chairs have developed a sense of entitlement to the role. Woe betide any whippersnappers who dare challenge this status quo!

In other tiers of government, such as local council, procedures have been developed to ensure that our electoral systems are fair, transparent and promote effective participation. While you might initially think that the last thing our vertical villages need is more procedures, the calibre of our OC committee daily affects the quality and fabric of our home life – this committee is the maker of by-laws, the

procurer of contracts and the setter of fees and levies.

And this is why the way each OC exercises its choice over who will represent them has never been more important.

So, what are these issues impacting the transparency of our elections – here are three: dummy nominees; proxy farming; and robust electoral processes.

Dummy nominees

In local government, this refers to a candidate who stands for election with no intention or realistic chance of winning. Their purpose may be to direct preferences to other candidates or split the vote or simply to block other candidates. In the case of OCs, someone can be asked to nominate (perhaps by the entrenched chair!) for the purpose of blocking others from securing a position on the committee. The way this works is that each owner can vote for up to 12 people. Proxies are collected (proxy farming) by the serious candidate, who then directs these votes towards their preferred 12. So, if someone collects 60 or 70 proxies, these can be used for their preferred 12 nominees, thereby blocking others from being elected. This can result in nominees being elected who have little interest in serving on the committee. One recent instance I have heard about involves a nominee who is currently selling their apartment and who has twice been previously elected and then resigned soon after.

Proxy farming

Proxies are part of an important mechanism which allows owners to appoint someone (a proxy) to represent them if they are unavailable. The proxy can use this assigned power to vote in committee elections and on resolutions, and/or otherwise represent the lot owner. It is often the case, however, that owners do not direct the proxy as regards their wishes, with the result that the proxy has free rein and can direct these votes to whoever and however they choose. Proxy farming occurs when large numbers of proxies are actively sought for the purpose of concentrating voting power so as to determine outcomes (e.g. who is elected, which resolutions pass). If there is no direction given, this means that a small number of owners (maybe even one owner) can determine the outcome of meetings, elections and resolutions. At its heart, proxy farming is all about the balance of power – who has it, who wants it and what they want to do with it. It is deeply undemocratic and other Australian states (such as NSW) have strict limitations on proxy farming. Not so Victoria – yet.

Electoral process

While the current system has been in operation for many years, there remains a great deal of confusion regarding nomination and voting procedures, starting with the submission of documents. For example, proxy forms require all owners to be listed and to sign. However, this seemingly straight forward issue repeat-

edly proves problematic, especially for people from non-English speaking backgrounds. There is an array of other procedural issues, such as the practice of nominating “from the floor” which gives little time for strata managers to confirm nominee eligibility and little scope for owners to consider such nominations. Many of these issues could be resolved through a combination of clearer instructions from Consumer Affairs Victoria, regulatory improvements, and the introduction of tailored online strata registration systems, which could assist in checking submissions while they are being completed.

The way our community, the OC, is able exercise choice over who will represent us is fundamental to our wellbeing. These three issues – dummy nominees, proxy farming and electoral process – are just the tip of the OC electoral iceberg. Failure to improve robustness and transparency promotes undesirable and undemocratic practices, leading to the concentration of power in the hands of those most adapt at working this inadequate system. Now is the time to begin a genuine dialogue about how hyperlocal democracy can best work in our vertical villages ●



Dr Janette Corcoran

APARTMENT LIVING EXPERT

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ABBY’S ANGLE

The smell of coffee

It’s not like me to feel down. It’s really not. Well actually, it’s not like me to let feeling down win. I can usually keep it at bay pretty well.

I listen to meditation and white noise apps at night to help me sleep. I take a positive approach to life to basically believe that as quickly as things change for the worse they can change for the better. I try to practice mindfulness and appreciate the small things around me – the tickle of my cat’s whiskers against my cheek as I squeeze him against me, the dog’s tail wagging every time I walk into the room – every time! The smell of coffee at the start of the day, the chill of the wine at the end. Rain on my garden.

These things have kept me buoyed, through times that are often lonely, dark and relentless.

I have a wonderful life, I have fabulous clients and I work hard – and I’m grateful to have the work that I do. There are people who would trade their troubles for mine in a heartbeat. Work isn’t the problem. I’ve tried to age with what I assumed would be “dignity” through COVID. I let the greys grow, visualising these gorgeous silvery streaks. I traded my routine of exercise for a more “organic” gardening style of spending time outdoors. It wasn’t long before one look in the mirror shocked some sense back into me. I now have regular hair appointments, and personal trainer twice a week. It feels so much better, and I really am happy about my approaching “big birthday”. Aging isn’t the problem.

I think, sometimes, you just have a run where you lose faith that things are going to get better. And it’s really complex, because there’s nothing wrong with right now. The problem is though, that everything I’m doing right now, is focused by goals. I work hard for my clients and work extra hard on business projects because I want to actually get time back. I want more me time, time with my son, some “freedom”. I work hard

so that I have a nest egg so that I can maybe take a big holiday someday – which I haven’t done forever. But because of all the commitments I make, sometimes I wonder if I’ll ever get off this mouse wheel.

I realise I’m feeling down, because I’m tired. Physically tired (probably because of the frenzy of fitness due to the “non-problematic” aging), mentally tired (probably due to the additional business projects I’ve thrown myself into) and emotionally tired (let’s face it, I have a teenager in the house). But here’s something that has happened that is new and feels like I stepped off that spinning wheel. I simply said, out loud, “I’m feeling down, and I don’t know why. And I’m tired”. And do you know the response? My son sent me to bed, brought me a cup of tea and sat and played guitar. The cat was snuggled in, the dog snored in her bed at my feet. And they made me smile. And the time with them that I craved, was there.

It’s okay to feel down – but don’t be afraid to say so. You don’t need to understand why you feel sad, or explain it. Just let people help a little. It’s okay to go through rough patches, and sometimes no matter how hard you try to stay positive, life keeps throwing you unexpected and terrible curveballs! It’s okay to call it, and say it’s a rough day, week or month. But let people help. I’m nurturing myself back to positivity, and soon the wine will be flowing, the meditations will be running, and the world will shine again. But until it does, I’m done with false positivity. I’m just going to run with honesty. And I think you should too. It’s the only way to let people in. You deserve that.

With love and strength, Abby x ●



Abby Crawford

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OWNERS’ CORPORATION MANAGEMENT

Developers favoured, owners’ an afterthought

WORDS BY
THE KNIGHT –
OWNERS’ CORPORATION MANAGERS

Last month the *Owners’ Corporations and Other Acts Amendment Bill 2019* passed the third reading in the upper house of parliament and has since received royal assent.

While there are some welcome amendments, which will come into effect by December 1, 2021, the Bill unfortunately does not do enough to protect consumers or keep pace with a rapidly growing industry.

In good news for those living in an owners’ corporation (OC), the changes will prevent an OC manager (OCM) from being appointed for a period that exceeds three years, the developer may not receive any payment from the appointed manager and any relationship between managers and developers must be disclosed.

These changes will all help ensure that qualified, experienced OCMs are appointed based on merit, and not simply appointed as the highest bidder, or due to other financial benefit to the developer.

The bill will also make it mandatory that large OCs prepare a maintenance plan and strike a levy to meet its obligations, reducing the occurrence of urgent, and expensive, repairs which owners must find the money to pay for, in addition to their regular levies.

While much focus was given to increasing the fiduciary duties of OCMs to protect owners, not enough was given to addressing the same duties of other parties, such as developers and building managers, where unscrupulous contracts are still rife.

Indeed, some last-minute amendments – which seem to have slipped through without proper consultation with the broader industry – favour developers and commercial operators, allowing them to retain the right to lock future owners into lengthy contracts.

Raised in the name of protecting the hotel and resort management sector, who argued that the three-year cap on contracts would break their business, these amendments enable developers to enter contracts with letting managers, caretakers, building maintenance, facilities management, and other providers, with no maximum term or parameters on fees and charges.

“These changes open the door to the sale and purchase of management rights to Victoria which has plagued the Queensland sector for several decades,” Strata Community Association Victoria (SCAV) president Gregor Evans said in a media release on behalf of the SCAV. “We know what follows – OCs blindsided by expensive contracts, locked in for long periods of time and stripped of their right to choose or the ability to properly performance manage.”

Those who spoke to the Bill in parliament commented on the extraordinary amount of time its passage has taken, highlighting where the OC industry sits on the government’s priority list.

This has been blamed upon “further consultation”; however, the original consultation was completed in 2019, and there were no further advertised public consultations, nor seeking feedback from groups who provided written submissions. Why was the industry not included in this additional consultation?

Ultimately, there were only six people present on the day of the reading to have the backs of the one-and-a-half million Victorians that this bill affects. Once again, the government has failed to properly recognise multi-dwelling properties as residential homes rather than commercial interests.

Disappointingly, although perhaps not surprisingly, precedence has been given to the rights of developers and commercial operators who stand make considerable profit of these amendments, over the residents who stand to pay the price ●

Pet's Corner

My Malisha

“

Malisha, an eight-year-old mix with what her owner assumes to be Chihuahua, came into Natalia's life almost a decade ago in Russia, and since then the pair haven't looked back.

”



WORDS BY *Jack Alfonso*

“I brought her here to Australia from Thailand after picking her up in Russia, so she's a bit of a traveller,” Natalia said.

After Malisha was picked up as a stray at around one-and-a-half years old, the pair have become almost inseparable, with Natalia, a housewife, labelling her like a “close, close friend.”

“She helps me always, because when I moved from Russia to Thailand I was alone – and she helped me,” she said. “Of course, it's the same here, every day, and especially during lockdown.”

Oozing a particularly calm and placid persona, Malisha is very gentle and approachable for a scratch, and when asked what her four-legged friend meant to her, Natalia summed it up in one word; “everything” ●

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10 YEARS ON

Looking back at Docklands News - 10 Years On

MARCH 2011 | ISSUE 62 |

DOCKLANDS NEWS

Urban renewal is in the spotlight

The Planning Minister Matthew Guy received a lot of media attention last month for his vision to redevelop 200ha of light industrial land in Port Melbourne.

Despite packaging this idea as part of the policy he took to last year's state election, the media got very excited about the plan.

There is a good deal of confusion around the plan and specific details won't be known until the formation of a new Urban Renewal Authority which is expected before July.

The Urban Renewal Authority is expected to subsume VicUrban's role as master planner of Docklands. It will also be responsible for redeveloping the 20ha E-Gate area to Docklands' north.

And while the details surrounding the Port Melbourne project are sketchy, Mr Guy has said the area in question is:

- Three times the size of Docklands;
- Primarily south of the Westgate Freeway;
- Includes only a small part of land north of the freeway near the Bolte Bridge;
- Will not encroach of the Port of Melbourne's operation; and
- Will be developed in specific precincts.

He is talking about a 20-30 year project and, unlike the Docklands development, the area is mostly occupied.

Mr Guy has said he was not talking about relocating the heavy industry which is on the



north side of the freeway. But, rather, it is the light industrial area of Port Melbourne south of the freeway which he intends to convert to high-density residential.

This would be primarily achieved by rezoning the land.

He was quick to point out that any residential redevelopment would have “corresponding services to match” in a reference to what lessons had been learned from the Docklands experience.

“It will be a residential suburb, without corporate headquarters or a stadium,” Mr Guy said. ●

OWNERS' CORPORATION LAW

New OC legislation substantially amends the legal position in water ingress cases

A lot has been written and said about the new amendments to the owners' corporation (OC) legislation, set to begin at the end of 2021.

I'd like to focus this article on an area which hasn't got much traction and attention as yet, but which represents a big change to how an OC must respond to complaints about water ingress from lot owners and occupiers.

Firstly, the law. The new Act sets to introduce a new Section 17A into the Act, to clarify that any rainwater or other water that falls, occurs or flows on the common property (otherwise than in a waterway or a bore) is taken to be part of the common property.

Subsection (2) further provides that, for the purposes of section 8(4)(c) of the *Water Act 1989*, an OC is the occupier of land to the extent that the land is common property, meaning that it will have the right to take and/or use water referenced in subsection (1).

The above wording might seem innocuous, and certainly the passage of water is not a very sexy subject, and it didn't really attract many comments and objections at the public consultation stage, but consider the following ...

Under this new legislation, if there is a burst pipe that causes water to escape onto the common property, then that water is considered to be common property water, and if that water causes damage to anyone else's property, then the OC will be responsible.

Hypothetically speaking, if a pipe were to burst from within an individual unit (say from a dishwasher, shower drains, bathroom sinks etc.) and if that were to cause damage to multiple units below, then the OC is prima facie, the responsible party to account for all of the loss and damage.

True enough, the OC might well be able to claim back from the lot owner or occupier a portion of the costs if it could be proven that the cause of the burst pipe was from lack of maintenance or some other form of mischief as a contributory act. However, the responsibility and the costs of chasing the lot owner or occupier for that contribution might well be economically impractical or unfeasible to do so.

I am not sure that the insurers of OCs will be thrilled by this legislative change. I would say that the insurers are changing the terms of their policies as we speak. Therefore, all OCs should be aware upon the renewal date of their policies to check the policy wording to see whether they are still covered for these types of claims.

In addition, if an OC has the ability to pass special resolutions without too much expense, then my advice would be to pass updated additional rules to pass responsibility to lot owners for any acts where water is permitted to escape their own internal services and cause damage to other lots and the common property, and to provide a mechanism for the debts to be paid upon demand. It may also be of benefit to consider passing a rule to ensure that owners and occupiers are responsible for any insurance excess in the event that an insurance claim needs to be made.

OCs need to be careful to protect themselves, because left unchecked, this updated legislation put the OC squarely "in the gun" for future water ingress claims ●



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BUSINESS

Not your average bank, not your average banker

WORDS BY Jack Hayes

"After 15 years I've still got customers coming back to me saying, 'if it weren't for you, I wouldn't have bought this house' or 'if it weren't for you, I would have never been able to do this', that just makes my day."

With more than a decade-and-a-half working at Bank of Queensland (BOQ) and more than 30 years working in the banking sector, it is no surprise BOQ Docklands owner manager Josephine Tan has built a loyal and long-lasting following of clients.

Starting her BOQ career on Exhibition St, Ms Tan said it was an easy decision to bring her business to Docklands. The majority of her client base and staff made the move with her and although the decision was not one without risks, given the chance again, she would do it in a heartbeat.

"When we first started 15 years ago, we were the new kids on the block. A lot of people associated BOQ with Queensland and understandably so," Mr Tan said.

"Now with more than 200 branches nationwide, we remain the only bank with the model of owner managers. We've got a phone number that is direct; you don't have to wait on a phone and speak to an automatic voice."

"We are here to provide solutions and fix things – I think people are really drawn to that. It's about developing a relationship and at the end of the day, that's the biggest thing for us. People choose to bank with people."

Ms Tan specialises in all aspects in banking, including home loans, finance, mortgages and commercial and business lending.

With COVID-19 changing the way we carry out our daily lives in almost every aspect, banking is no different, and although Ms Tan laments the times her clients weren't able to visit her in person, there have been many positive changes to come from COVID-19.

"During the pandemic, the banking sector had to change quite a bit. People were under lockdown, they couldn't come in. That is why BOQ has developed a few things to make re-



mote banking easier," Ms Tan said.

"Pocket Banker by BOQ is a fast and secure way for you to complete a BOQ lending application. It allows customers to carry out your usual lending application without need to come in branch and fill out paperwork."

Pocket Banker by BOQ gives customers a direct line to a lender via audio or video calls and the ability to set reminders and to-do lists so you don't forget important dates or tasks.

While making lending more accessible for customers regardless of their capacity for in-person visits, BOQ is also providing \$3000 cash back for refinance of loans of at least \$250,000 and \$1000 cash back for new home buyers.

"If you're renting a house today and you have the ability, you should be buying it instead. Rent is becoming more expensive than a mortgage repayment," Ms Tan said.

"Our role in this is to help and educate people. We have helped businesses or homeowners differ their loans for six months when they lost tenants, then capitalise the differed amount into their loans, so they didn't have to pay extra."



"With a smaller bank, it is a lot easier. We don't have the back log that you expect with larger banks. We are here, we are in the business and we own the business. That is the difference."

As for Ms Tan's vision for a future Docklands? "We need a big-ticket item. I think we need a contemporary gallery on the NewQuay waterfront. Wouldn't that be amazing?" ●

For more information:
facebook.com/boqdocklandsmelb

New seafood concept store at The District

WORDS BY Jack Hayes

There are often three non-negotiables customers refer to when visiting their local fish shop: quality, affordability and freshness.

It isn't often, however, that all three are met by the one store. That is, until now.

In October last year, Fish Pier managing director Albert Lau, opened the company's first ever concept store at The District Docklands' Market Lane, offering locals a level of shopping convenience only matched by the quality of produce.

"We have almost 20 shops in Melbourne, but this is the first of its kind. You're not met with the usual fishy smell of a fish shop as all of our products are cleaned, filleted, packaged and priced in store," Mr Lau said.

"The store has been designed especially for the busy lifestyle of the locals and makes shopping for seafood easy with the choice to buy fresh from the market, seafood off the ice or pre-packaged for your convenience, so you can just take it straight home, cook it and eat it."

"Our staff are happy to help you with selection and cooking tips; and we can do seafood platters for special occasions."

Veering from the traditional over-the-counter transaction with your fishmonger, the design of Fish Pier, Market Lane allows customers to roam throughout the store, carefully choosing between a range of whole and filleted fish, sourced daily from Melbourne's wholesale fish markets.



▲ Fish Pier managing director Albert Lau (left) with staff Lilly and Stan (right).

Complementing the array of locally sourced fresh fish, which includes premium quality salmon, tuna, kingfish and scallops, is a range of carcasses, fish heads and fish stock to salmon caviar, crayfish and abalone to please even the most discerning palate.

"As well as our exclusive lines, we are also becoming known for our oysters. Delivered in store every day, we choose the best from our suppliers in Coffin Bay, the Sydney Rocks and Tasmania," Mr Lau said.

"Customers are able to watch our team member Stan shucking them fresh in store every morning. Take them to go or eat them right away – grab a lemon wedge, use our complimentary sauces and take a seat at a convenient table."

Mr Lau, who has started his day the same

way for the past two decades by journeying to Melbourne's wholesale fish markets at 2am, admitted it had been a slow start since opening late last year, but was encouraged by the gradual return of workers and visitors to the area.

"We chose Docklands because of the apartment lifestyle with high-density living and residents that are after easy and convenient quality seafood," he said.

Fish Pier, Market Lane is open seven days a week from 10am until 7pm with free 90-minute parking at Market Lane ●

For more information, visit:
fishpier.com.au

港区店面空置近半

Docklands港区是澳大利亚COVID受灾最严重的地区之一，此前一份报告证实，由于这次疫情，有47%的临街店面目前空置。

David Schout

墨尔本市政对商店店面的一项调查发现，2020年12月，只有53%的店面在租用。港区的店面空置数字比城市其它地方要糟糕得多，因为中央商务区、Southbank和Carlton区各有超过70%的店面在租用。由于COVID疫情影响，墨尔本市已经是

澳大利亚受灾最严重的地方市政地区之一，该调查报告还证实Docklands港区是澳大利亚受影响最严重的地方经济之一。港区商会主席Johanna Maxwell在回应这份报告时说：“对我们这个区域来说，这是一个非常悲伤的时刻。”“对此我们心情很沮丧。少数商家对其良好的营业持乐观态度，并在COVID封锁期间通过努力获得了回报，但大多数商家非常悲观。”港区47%的临街空置店面中，25%是“暂时关闭”，22%列为“无人租用”。Maxwell夫人说，港区当地的商家感到他们“被忽视了”。她说：“这绝对是毁灭性的，而且港区的中央码头也已经关闭，我们被州政府和墨



尔本市政忽视了。”“我们大多数商家的收入都下降了70%。这不仅仅是餐馆和零售商，还有所有的服

务行业，如打印服务、理发师、综合医疗行业等等，在封闭期间中，他们被遗忘了。”



墨尔本市政呼吁社区对北码头(North Wharf)的海员大厦(Mission to Seafarers)翻新计划发表意见。

重新关注航海遗产

Jess Carrascalao Heard

对于这一列入遗产名录的建筑，社区必须在3月中旬之前提出想法意见，反馈意见将成为海洋遗产可行性研究的“关键组成部分”。墨尔本海洋遗产网络(MMHN)主席Jackie Watts博士说，可行性研究是“向前迈出了不起的一步”。她说：“这是一个重新关注墨尔本丰富

的海洋遗产的机会，墨尔本一直都是一个海洋城市。”这个建筑的特色包括神圣的圣彼得(St Peter)水手教堂和诺拉(Norla)穹顶，最初是作为一个体育馆设计的，以帮助海员在岸上保持健康。该建筑仍然是维多利亚航海使命组织(MtSV)的所在地，该组织继续向航海人员提供服务，包括咨询、牧师关怀和医疗援助。MtSV首席执行官Sue Dight表示，尽管大楼第一层的一些翻新已经在提前规划

中，但她希望看到大楼的一些升级。她说：“当有资金用于升级这个建筑其它部分的时候，最好能更新浴室设施，还有一些外部的照明，有助于将涂鸦保持在最低程度。”根据参与墨尔本(Participate Melbourne)网站，该建筑的任何新用途都将是对现有航海服务的补充。该网站调查的建议包括海洋遗产空间或博物馆、游客中心、社区空间和服务、艺术和文化空间，甚至还有创业空间。

港区运动会准备就绪

David Schout

3月20日星期六将举行首届Docklands港区运动会，组织者和参赛者都在为运动会做最后的准备。这是第一次在Ron Barassi Snr 公园举行的港区运动会，与维多利亚田径联盟(VAL)、Docklands小学和Docklands体育俱乐部合作举办，旨在为当地社区提供一系列有趣和具有竞争性的活动。活动的组织者之一Robbie Spencer说，他希望运动会当天的气氛就像那些闻名的地区性活动一样。

Spencer曾是全国青少年短跑冠军，现在是教练。他说，当他第一次听说Docklands港区运动会可能如期进行时，他就渴望参与其中。我一定会看到运动会进行的，这是一个太好的机会了，场地极好，地点也佳，以城市为背景真是太棒了。”他表示，除了风景如画的背景外，场地本身是举办草皮田径比赛的理想场所。“地面很棒，最近一场大雨之后，我走在上面，甚至都不知道下过雨。因此，即使前一天晚上还是当天下雨，我们都知道这不会成为问题。”

新开学的Docklands小学当天将发挥作用，并鼓励学生参与这个活动。当天上午9点开始，将举行年级个人竞赛（从学前班至六年级），获胜者将进入Docklands运动会决赛。在本次决赛中，年级优胜者将进行不同距离的比赛（例如：六年级的学生将从后面的标记起跑，学前班的学生将在最前面起跑）以赢得首界运动会的腰带。Spencer说，澳大利亚1500米纪录保持者Stewart McSweyn也将在运动会开始之前来学校与学生交谈。



市政促筹社区项目资金

如果按墨尔本市政的意愿，一家开发商为Docklands社区项目筹集的资金将在未来六个月内公布。

David Schout

一些设施如社区中心等项目通过即将发布的“港区激活策略”确定将获得的现金注入，这被称为是“对港区居民的积极成果”。作为南十字(Southern Cross)车站附近的两个墨尔本区块开发项目的一部分，开发商Lendlease公司通过与维多利亚开发部(DV)达成的协议，将提供近1000平方米的社区空间。

但是，Lendlease公司也可以选择出资一笔等值的钱款，用于其他当地社区的项目。州政府机构DV已确认将在向社区项目分配资金之前与市政协商，但尚未透露具体数字。在与本报联系时，DV并没有说何时将向市政披露该数字，也没有说为什么还不披露。DV负责人Geoff Ward说：“这是一个探讨港区其他地方需要什么样的社区设施或项目的机会，我们期待与市政继续合作，以取得更大成果。”

在2月16日的未来墨尔本委员会(FMC)会议上，议员们敦促DV在未来六个月内公布这一数字，以便更好地为地方区域管理这笔资金的流向。市政规划主管Nicholas Reece议员说，不愿意看到这笔款项的数值至今还不明确。他说：“我得说，作为一名市政议员，一名将自己视为这座城市的守护人，这种安排在很多方面确实具有挑战性。”“今晚坐在这里开会，但我们实际上却不知道Lendlease公司承诺的社区基础设施资金具体是多少。”

港区消费折扣计划

Sean Car

由Docklands港区商会发起的一项“港区消费折扣”(Docklands Dollars)新计划将于3月29日启动，旨在吸引游客，重振港区经济。在墨尔本市政和维多利亚州发展局的支持下，该计划将通过一系列奖励措施鼓励人们在港区逗留和消费，类似在COVID

疫情期间，世界各地所看到的经济注入计划模式。但是不同于州政府颁发可使用数月的远郊旅行券，DCC为“港区消费折扣”(Docklands Dollars)设定了一个30天的期限，从注册时开始激活，以帮助当地企业更快地摆脱困境。参与者可通过专设网站（docklands-

dollars.com.au）进行注册，要求在Docklands港区预订至少两晚的住宿，并在当地的餐厅、酒吧和景点消费，才能从DCC那儿要求返回折扣。该计划仅限于港区商会成员的商家才有资格参与，其客户能够从他们住宿中获得50澳元的回扣，以及在港区的餐饮或购物消费中获得25%的折扣。



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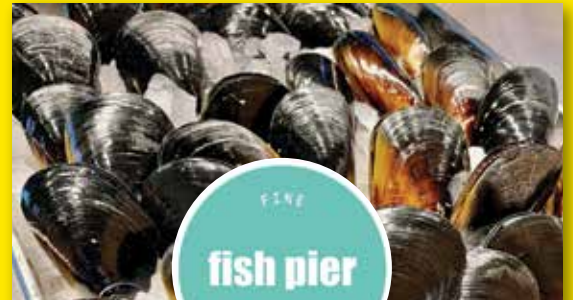
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