

DOCKLANDS NEWS

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Puzzles & Trivia P18



Docklands Primary at capacity, set to use shopping centre for classrooms

Docklands Primary School is at capacity just over two years since opening and will be forced to move classes into empty retail space at The District Docklands shopping centre from July.

WORDS BY *David Schout*
EDUCATION

The state government admitted it had underestimated student numbers in the local area and the school, which opened in 2021, already had more enrolments than its 525-student capacity.

In a significant development, the government was set to convert nearby vacant shopfront space into a temporary campus for hundreds of students from Term 3.

It is understood the new campus may simply feature classrooms and toilets, with no specialist learning or play spaces, and students would move between the school and

shopping centre during the day.

One parent and former school council member privy to discussions with the Victorian School Building Authority (VSBA) and Department of Education said she and others held concerns about the suitability of the space.

Mary Masters detailed the issues with *Docklands News* and said that the proposed temporary campus — set to feature nine classrooms, which could house 225 students — was not large enough, nor would it have a private entrance at this stage, and that it was actually unfit for education purposes.

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“Get the balance right”: council urges government changes before it ends 1am licence “freeze”

The City of Melbourne has urged the state government to make key policy changes before it ends a 13-year freeze on new late-night venues in Docklands.

WORDS BY *David Schout*
COUNCIL AFFAIRS

Councillors urged the government to discard the policy that allowed most new Docklands bars to operate “as of right” without a permit, and to clarify its definition of “noise sensitive areas” before it follows through with a pre-election promise that would likely pave the way for more local venues remaining open until 3am.

From July 1, a policy that prevents new liquor licences in Docklands and the CBD from serving alcohol beyond 1am will be lifted.

Since 2010, bars and other late-night venues wishing to trade beyond this time have required a special ministerial exemption.

The move was implemented by the former Brumby government as a way to tackle alcohol-related harm and crime in inner-Melbourne.

However, from July 1 no such exemption will be required after Premier Daniel Andrews vowed to “supercharge the creation of new venues” prior to re-election in November, part of which included a removal of the current freeze in a move it is understood surprised the council.

At the March 21 Future Melbourne Committee meeting, councillors urged the government to implement two key changes to the planning policy before the looming deadline.

The first was to ensure all new late-night venues in Docklands required a planning permit — as they do in the

CBD — and weren’t granted one “as of right”.

“There is no strong rationale as to why bars and nightclubs require a planning permit in the Capital City Zone but not in most precincts in the Docklands Zone,” an earlier motion by Cr Rohan Leppert had read.

This motion also stated that, “The ‘as of right’ uses in most precincts in the Docklands Zone limit the ability of council to apply the local planning policy.”

The second move was to provide a concrete definition of “noise sensitive areas”, something that the current policy does not feature, which had “given rise to frequent dispute”.

The council recommended that the definition reflected EPA regulations which defined noise sensitive areas as “within 10 metres of a wall of an accommodation use”.

Deputy Lord Mayor and planning chair Nicholas Reece said he was wary of the government’s impending move.

“I do want to assert, in the clearest possible terms, that there are risks associated with lifting liquor licences to 3am in the city,” he said.

“The difference between 1am and 3am may only be two hours on the clock, but it can be a lifetime of difference when you’re having a night out on the town.”

In the 10 years to 2021, the residential population of Docklands and the CBD more than doubled from 28,011 to an estimated 59,765.

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PAGE 6 TO ENTER

MARKET LANE

The District Docklands

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NEWS

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Docklands Act, it's time ...

If there was ever a month to highlight the desperate need to reform governance of Docklands, March 2023 might have just taken the cake.

WORDS BY *Sean Car*
EDITORIAL

In the 32 years since the *Docklands Act 1991* was conceived, a lot has changed in our precinct. With the exception of a handful of undeveloped sites, it's largely been built out, and now, more than 16,000 residents call this place their home.

There's also a school here now, which is currently overflowing. More on that shortly ...

Despite all of this, the governance structures in place still treat this central city suburb as the subject of urban renewal, where the rights of residents, who have invested heavily in our community, continue to be outweighed in favour of opaque development planning.

Meanwhile, as you'll read on the front page of this edition, the Victorian Government is now proceeding with changes to make it easier for venues in Docklands to serve liquor until 3am, "as of right".

We all know Docklands is zoned as "mixed use" and, being home to Marvel Stadium and a bustling events calendar, we ought not expect this to ever change completely. But this decision by the state government, without consultation, does nothing in the pursuit of balancing the area's interests.

The ongoing campaign from scores of residents to find a solution to noise and amenity impacts relating to floating nightclub ATET reached a tipping point last month as the City of Melbourne convened a crisis meeting in an attempt to address the issues.

But despite the best efforts from those at Town Hall, and even relevant state regulators to ease the pain for locals, one resident perhaps best summed up the situation that Docklanders find themselves in ...

"I don't give a damn what the rules and regulations are, they're obviously completely inappropriate. They have to be changed, there is no other answer."

And yet, the main government agency responsible for Docklands, Development Victoria, was absent from this meeting. Despite approving ATET to operate at its current position on the wharf, it continues to pass the buck onto the City of Melbourne as a "permit issue".

That may be the case, but as the resident succinctly put it, perhaps the rules under which the council is working are inappropriate? It's fair to say given the numbers of locals affected, and the inability to find a meaningful resolution, the only hope lies in "reform".

While some locals feel they are being forced out of their homes, some students at Docklands Primary School (DPS) will be forced from Term Three to attend classes held in a shopping centre – another historic failure of planning that our community is now having to deal with.

And, in one way or another, it all comes back to the *Docklands Act*. Built on the last conceivable site left for a school in Docklands, DPS has already been dealing with a myriad of competing safety issues along Footscray Rd and its students have no easy access to badly needed open space.

All because of an irrelevant set of laws, and a passive government agency administering them, which continues to see the needs of developers and businesses prioritised under the guise of "urban renewal".

Come on, Premier Andrews. There might not be enough votes here to sway you, but it's time to do the right thing – repeal the *Docklands Act*, ship out Development Victoria, and give this community some certainty and a sense of ownership over its neighbourhood. ●



New-look *Docklands Directory* is now online

BUSINESS

Many locals will have already noticed the refreshed printed version of the 2023 *Docklands Directory*, and now there's a new website to go with it!

Produced annually by *Docklands News* publisher Hyperlocal News, the directory has undergone a complete overhaul, with the new print and digital guides aimed at providing maximum benefit for those living, working or visiting Docklands.

For places to eat or stay, services or things to do, the new online directory, developed by local creative agency MoWorks, provides a one-stop-shop for all businesses in Docklands.

To list your business, sign up for regular updates or simply peruse the new website, head online. ●

For more information:
docklandsdirectory.com.au



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Plans for live music venue in Docklands appears to change course

WORDS BY *Brendan Rees*
PLANNING

A major music promoter's push to build a new pop-up live music venue in Docklands appears to have been abandoned after announcing it would invest its future at the iconic Festival Hall.

Live Nation Australia confirmed it had secured a multi-year lease at the heritage-listed Festival Hall in West Melbourne, after reaching an agreement with Hillsong Church, the venue's current owners.

Hillsong had bought the Dudley St venue in October 2020 for \$23 million after the music industry was decimated by COVID-19 induced lockdowns.

As reported by *Docklands News* in November last year, there were reported plans for a live music venue to be created in Docklands, with a vacant space next to the Costco supermarket on Footscray Rd being a key site of interest.

It was part of a state government announcement that it would spend \$5 million in creating a "pop-up live performance venue which will attract new audiences and activate underused parts of the CBD".

According to *The Age*, which had obtained cabinet documents, the proposed venue was being pushed by Live Nation, a US-based live music company, with a space being sought in Docklands to "fill a known gap in the Melbourne event and performance landscape" and host more than 100 shows a year with the capacity to hold crowds of up to 3500 people.

But Live Nation confirmed the multi-year lease of Festival Hall in March, and its wish to revive the live music destination, which hosted The Beatles in 1964.

"We are extremely excited to be delivering the next chapter of Festival Hall's life, not only because it will help support the growing



demand of shows that are coming down the pipeline across the industry, but also to put the iconic venue firmly back on the global live entertainment map," Live Nation president Roger Field said.

"It's a privilege to be part of an organisation that values the protection of existing heritage music assets and sees the importance that these venues play in the ongoing growth of the live entertainment sector and the communities they're a part of."

Chief executive officer at Music Victoria Simone Schinkel said, "we are so excited to have such an iconic venue back as a full-time live music venue".

"It really was a missing piece; without it, Melbourne was missing that mid-sized arena, something between The Forum and Kia Arena, and for a thriving music scene you need venues of all different sizes," she said.

The state government was contacted for

comment about whether it still had plans to create a pop-up live performance venue in the CBD or Docklands.

Hillsong will continue to use Festival Hall for weekend services and other events.

It bought the venue with the intention to create a community hub to support live music, entertainment, and other events. At the time Hillsong stated, "it's a way to give back to Melbourne and continue the venue's legacy."

Live Nation has revitalised other heritage entertainment venues including the Palais Theatre in St Kilda and Anita's Theatre in New South Wales.

The original Festival Hall burnt down in 1955 before being rebuilt for the 1956 Melbourne Olympic Games where it hosted boxing and gymnastics. The venue then went on to become the live music and boxing institution of Melbourne and was known for staging a range of world-renowned artists. ●

Contractor appointed to demolish Central Pier

WORDS BY *Sean Car*
HERITAGE

Development Victoria (DV) has announced that it has appointed the same contractor who removed Central Pier's western tip in 2022 to oversee the demolition of the remainder of the heritage structure.

DV's acting group head of precincts Niall Cunningham said DV had "started the first step in the process of removing Central Pier with the appointment of Fitzgerald Construction Australia as lead contractor after a competitive public process".

"Removal work is anticipated to begin by the second half of 2023," Mr Cunningham told *Docklands News*, with the highly specialised removal works estimated to take around two years to complete.

Central Pier was permanently closed in early 2020 due to safety concerns and has continued to deteriorate in Victoria Harbour amid the pandemic, an ongoing legal dispute with the pier's former tenants, and applying for approvals from Heritage Victoria.

Heritage Victoria approved a permit for DV to remove the remaining unsafe pier structure last year under the requirements of the *Heritage Act 2017* due to its registration as a place of historical significance to Docklands, and the City of Melbourne.

DV said that removal of the pier was the first step towards supporting the revitalisation of the waterfront along Harbour Esplanade, having recently completed a community engagement process at the end of 2022.

The feedback collected has been captured in an Engagement Summary Report, which is expected to be made publicly available in the coming months.

The revitalisation of Harbour Esplanade has been included as part of the scope of consultation for Central Pier, with DV seeking to create one of Australia's "premier waterfronts". ●

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“The current situation is unacceptable”: council and regulators

Deputy Lord Mayor Nicholas Reece has described current impacts on many Docklands residents from floating nightclub ATET as “unacceptable”, as the City of Melbourne continues to advocate to state government in search of solutions.

WORDS BY *Sean Car*
PHOTOGRAPHY BY *Ajay Viswanath*
COUNCIL AFFAIRS



▲ Lord Mayor Sally Capp addresses the audience on March 14.

The council’s chair of planning made the statement as part of his concluding remarks at a community meeting held at Marvel Stadium on March 14, which was prompted by the council following ongoing complaints from locals since ATET opened in October last year.

Facilitated by community engagement practice Mosaic Lab, the live-streamed event saw more than 100 Docklanders meet with representatives from the City of Melbourne, Environment Protection Authority (EPA), Victoria Police and Liquor Control Victoria.

However, representatives from Development Victoria, the main decision-making authority still overseeing governance of Docklands alongside the council, were noticeably absent from the meeting.

“Where is Development Victoria? Clearly, they’re not on the list tonight,” one resident said on the night.

ATET’s owner Jake Hughes also attended the meeting along with his parents.

With question times at the council’s regular meetings having become dominated by complaints regarding ATET since the venue first

opened, the “town hall” style meeting was aimed at providing locals clear space to raise concerns and hear directly from authorities.

In opening the event, Lord Mayor Sally Capp said, “we want you to know that we are elected to represent you and your views, that we have heard them loud and clear.”

“I know there’s a lot of frustration among our residents here in Docklands over the noise issues coming from ATET,” Cr Capp said.

“Tonight is an opportunity for us together with the other regulatory bodies responsible for managing noise and amenity issues. We’re here tonight to listen collectively – the first time we’ve had a chance as the responsible bodies to do that.”

The first 90 minutes of the meeting largely saw residents line up both in person and

through online questions to have their say, with many providing their own agonising accounts of how ATET’s operations had personally affected them and their families.

“It’s probably one of the most beautiful places in Australia, and we understand things have changed, post COVID, but this place [ATET] has made us prisoners in our own home,” one resident said.

“It has made us leave Melbourne eight to 10 times at our own expense just to get away from the problems.”

“I’m just flabbergasted. This beautiful place is being held hostage by one venue,” with the resident also citing concerns about being consistently “terrorised” by “drunken, high people” who he said frequented Buluk Park on weekends.

“I have zero confidence in anything coming from tonight,” he said.

“How about something coming the residents’ way. I can’t actually see one aspect of anything that has gone the residents’ way since October 22 [ATET’s opening] ... not one.”

Another resident, who is part of the Residents of Docklands Inc. group launched in response to the issue, told the meeting that his wife had become “hysterical” from the stress caused by the venue’s constant bass during weekends.

“My wife will try and find a corner in the hallway where it’s protected. It’s not good,” he said.

Many residents expressed concerns with the constant bass during ATET’s operations, and not being able to entertain or sit on their balconies, while one father said he’d been unable to get their three-year-old daughter to sleep.

“Recently trying to put her to bed has become an issue. If she can’t sleep, how is she expected to develop?” he said, urging authorities to “put the kids at the forefront of a solution, please.”

“We can’t go out on the balcony,” another resident said. “We have to shut the door to the living room, and we still have this ‘doof, doof, doof’. It’s not music, it’s a horrible sound and it gets to you. We can’t have this go on forever.”

Another resident said she didn’t know what anxiety felt like before ATET. “I now know what anxiety is from that ‘doof, doof, doof’. I don’t entertain anymore,” she said.

Many others aired their frustrations with the regulatory environment governing Docklands, with many calling for urgent reform to current planning laws and the *Docklands Act 1991*.

“I don’t give a damn what the rules and regulations are, they’re obviously completely inappropriate. They have to be changed, there is no other answer,” a resident said, while another asked the council whether it was “working with the state government to change the *Docklands Act*, so that residents have some input as to what happens in their suburb in the same way that residents in other locations have.”

And, in perhaps one of the more challenging



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meet with residents over ATET nightclub noise

“I don’t give a damn what the rules and regulations are, they’re obviously completely inappropriate. They have to be changed, there is no other answer.”



accounts given on the night, a NewQuay resident living with medical conditions said she had become unable to work due to the impact of the bass from ATET.

“My personal situation is that I work full time in the CBD. I also have medical conditions that I need to manage, and I wanted a work-life balance that could allow me to manage those conditions,” she said.

“As a consequence of ATET and the impact it’s had on me, I now have a situation that would have been classed as a medical condition that is now disabling me to undertake my work and look after my health. I’m having to potentially reduce the amount of work that I do and my effectiveness at work.”

The final 30 minutes of the session heard mainly from the council’s general manager of strategy, planning and climate change Evan Counsel, as well as the EPA’s Steve Lansdell, who each attempted to address many concerns raised on the night.

Of particular note, many residents have

queried why ATET had been classified as an indoor venue given the nature of its “roll-up” open-air structure based outdoors in Victoria Harbour.

“There are particular definitions under the state guidelines as to what is an indoor or an outdoor venue,” Mr Edwards said, reaffirming that it was deemed “an indoor venue” – a response one resident labelled as “gobbledygook”.

But another member of the council’s planning team Julian Edwards added, “the definition sits within the EPA protocols and the reason that indoor was used is because it sets a higher benchmark than what the outdoor one allows, in terms of the volume, the decibels, the amount of noise.”

Mr Lansdell said while it had fallen under an indoor classification, it was looking into possible measures with ATET’s management to better enclose the venue.

“An outdoor venue is really there to apply to big outdoor spaces, big outdoor venues that can’t feasibly be enclosed. That’s why indoor is

where this one is classified,” he said.

“As the team has said these are actually some stricter controls. Why isn’t it enclosed? It is a very good question...”

The meeting also heard from the council’s acting CEO Alison Leighton, who attempted to assure residents that councillors had been “prioritising” the issue with the council’s administration and officers.

“I sense the frustration. We are committed to providing timelines and we are committed to providing responses to all of the questions that you’re asking of us,” she said.

The Lord Mayor said the issues residents were facing “was a very complex area the council, unfortunately, has very little direct control over,” adding that noise, liquor licensing and safety were all matters overseen by the state government.

“The EPA levels are set by the EPA through the state government, so we’d be looking for reform there,” Cr Capp said.

“Unfortunately, the way the system is set up

with the *Docklands Act*, residents don’t have the opportunity to object to these types of permits.”

“But this is an area that was set up to have a mixture of 72,000 employees, 20,000 residents ultimately, and a whole mix of retail, dining, entertainment, including what happens here at Marvel Stadium, whether it’s football or concerts; this area was set up specifically to be a home to all of those.”

“What we’re experiencing at the moment is a real tension between what is an allowable use and activity here in Docklands.”

At the meeting, a commitment was made to:

- Respond in writing to all questions raised no later than April 18, 2023 – a coordinated response from the City of Melbourne, EPA, Department of Justice and Community Safety and Victoria Police; and
- Communicate the outcomes of the investigations currently under way by the council and the EPA eight weeks from the information session (May 9, 2023), which includes sound monitoring from within apartments.

While much frustration and tension lingered in the air at the end of the meeting with many left feeling a sense of helplessness over the situation, Cr Reece said the council was continuing to take the issue “very seriously”.

“I hope you get a sense from this evening that this is something that we’re taking very seriously,” he said. “You absolutely have the right to peaceful enjoyment of your homes.”

“The current situation is unacceptable. The current situation cannot continue, and we are going to work with you to fix it.”

“As you have heard, the fact that we are here tonight having this meeting means fixing it is not as easy as it might seem, so there are a multitude of things that we are working on to try and get a resolution.”

“It’s very much our intention and our plan to be able to have a venue like ATET, which operates successfully in an environment where there are residents nearby. We have seen that it can be done multiple times in this city, and we think it can be done here as well.” ●



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Docklands Primary at capacity, set to use shopping centre for classrooms

Continued from page 1.

“This year, every single available space at our school is being used for learning. Our library, art room and ‘wet rooms’ have all been turned into permanent class spaces to handle enrolment,” she said.

“The VSBA have said, ‘right, here’s how you fit nine classrooms into this floorplan’ [at The District], and haven’t really considered that there are huge concrete poles in the middle of the classrooms obscuring students’ view ... if it’s going to be in a shopping centre, the least they could do is make it an appropriate learning space.”

Ms Masters said she and others “don’t disagree that there has to be a temporary solution”, and while far from ideal, they would not oppose the option of moving classes to the nearby shopping centre.

However, she said the floorspace needed to be larger than proposed, have an entrance separate from the public concourse, and contain some specialist learning areas.

“The space that’s being proposed is really quite upsetting that it’s quite a small space when The District has so much vacancy. The District have said that they are willing to give more space, they want better outcomes for this temporary campus, but of course they’re not willing to compromise on their commercial rents ... it is short-changing our kids and their education and wellbeing, when there is so much space at The District that [the government] could rent, and they’re just saying ‘we don’t have the money’. It just doesn’t pass the pub test, that there is space available and they’re choosing not to spend the money for the kids’ needs.”

A Department of Education spokesperson admitted to *Docklands News* that it had underestimated enrolment numbers at the school but said the new space would not compromise education outcomes.

“Strong demand has exceeded forecasted



needs for Docklands PS, with a second temporary campus to ensure the school continues to support local families planned for the beginning of Term 3, 2023,” the spokesperson said.

“The campus is being designed and delivered in close consultation with the school leadership team, to ensure it delivers the same strong learning outcomes experienced on the main campus.”

A Department assessment of the site for operational, security and infrastructure needs had found that the location of the additional campus was suitable for education.

It said the new campus was required on a temporary basis until additional capacity was generated within the local network of new nearby schools; firstly, a new North Melbourne Primary School campus (set to open within months) and the future development of

additional primary schools within Fishermans Bend.

Ms Masters said it was evident from the outset that the school, located on Little Docklands Drive, was not going to be big enough going forward.

“It was apparent to the school community on our first day,” she said.

“One hundred and ten preps enrolled, and we all thought ‘what, what do you mean? Is there going to be 110 preps every year?’ And yes, there has been.”

She said that despite increasing demand on space within Docklands Primary, those involved had created a “fantastic school”, and she knows of students remaining at the school even when parents moved out of Docklands.

Ms Masters said their requests for the temporary campus were straightforward: “If some of our school children must learn off-site

“

“It just doesn’t pass the pub test, that there is space available and they’re choosing not to spend the money for the kids’ needs.”

”

away from their school community, then we have a duty of care to ensure they feel safe and do not receive a compromised education.”

A statement from The District Docklands read: “The District Docklands is an integral part of the Docklands community and has responded to relevant stakeholders and decision makers with regard to this matter. We are available to support our community where required.” ●



David Schout

JOURNALIST

DAVID@HYPERLOCALNEWS.COM.AU

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DOCKLANDS NEWS

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Docklands' free Repair Cafe is returning and asking for interested locals to reach out

WORDS BY *Kaylah-Joelle Baker*
PHOTOGRAPHY BY *Murray Enders*
COMMUNITY

Docklands' Repair Cafe is set to return this May, and organisers Docklands Neighbourhood House (DNH) and Docklands Representative Group (DRG) are looking for locals to help it flourish.

Living in a vertical village can have many upsides, but both groups are also aware that it can mean there is minimal room to undertake repairs of personal possessions.

This is why this year both DNH and DRG are coming together with the City of Melbourne's Library at The Dock Makerspace to try and grow their Repair Cafe.

"We are really excited about linking with the City of Melbourne's Makerspace and the possibilities this can bring," DRG member Janette Corcoran said.

"We see a natural synergy with the aims of the Makerspace, and they have some seriously skilled people and great tools that can only benefit our fledgling Repair Cafe."

After trialling the cafe last year, both DRG and DNH agree that a local Repair Cafe is integral to the future fabric of Docklands, but for a local initiative like this to work, it does require community backing.

The cafe is as much about the locals coming in to receive assistance as it is about having repairers available to help.

"For our very first Repair Cafe, there was a little girl around five and she had overwound her music box, so the ballerina didn't dance anymore," DNH community development officer Jason Butcher said.

"The repairer sat there for about 45 minutes fixing the music box, and she was ecstatic when it worked, her face lit up and it was beautiful to see. And the repairer was beaming almost as much as the little girl. You need positive moments like this."

Last year, DNH and DRG found that toy and clothing repairs were in huge demand, and both organisations are hoping that through talking with the community, locals can let the team know what else may be beneficial as well as what skills they themselves could offer.

"Repair Cafes work really well when there are local networks and communities built up around it," Mr Butcher said.



"And when there are people interested in helping their neighbours out and meeting people, it becomes just as much social as it is financially beneficial."

While there are hopes for the Repair Cafe to become embedded in the community, Mr Butcher said they were going to start small, continue to seek constant feedback, and try to aim at running a couple of repair sessions each season.

If you have any skills or feedback to share, or are interested in volunteering in some capacity, DNH and DRG are asking for people to reach out to them. ●

For more information: facebook.com/docklandsneighbourhoodhouse

"Get the balance right": Council urges government changes before it ends 1am licence "freeze"

Continued from page 1.

"There's been huge change in the complexion of the central city over the last decade, so we need to respond to that. The state government cannot be blind to that in setting the regulatory terms," Cr Reece said.

Since Docklands' floating nightclub ATET opened in October 2022, the council had been inundated with complaints from some residents about the impact of noise emanating from the venue.

Likely keen to not subject the council to more criticism about late-night venues, Cr Reece emphasised that the impending move was a decision made in Spring St, not Town Hall.

"There's been a lot of discussion today in the media and elsewhere about the City of Melbourne's role in all of this, but in the end it's a state government decision that is being made here to change from 1am to 3am, and it's Liquor Control Victoria — a state agency — who will be principally responsible for regulation in this area. So, for the City's part, we do have a role to play but we'll be very much a partner of the state government."

Cr Leppert said the changes would make things "clearer for all parties", including residents.

"This isn't an exercise to greatly loosen or greatly tighten the rigour around late-night licence permits," he said.

"It's about making sure the policy is as clear and as understandable as it can be so that we can balance those two really important competing

interests; one, the right to a good night's sleep for a residential population that has grown by an extraordinary amount over the life of this policy."

"And two, the need to continue to retain that special mix of uses; of entertainment and economic uses that we expect in a central city, and those licensed venues can continue to operate with reasonable conditions being applied to them."

Cr Reece said the proposed changes were about protecting the needs of residents, but emphasised that Melbourne's post-pandemic economic recovery was strongly reliant on a bustling nightlife.

"It's all about getting the balance right; recognising the needs of residents and our community, while also maintaining a healthy and busy night-time economy," he said.

"We do know that the night-time economy is going to be even more important for Melbourne going forward as people's work patterns, transport patterns have changed as a result of COVID, so that hospitality, events and night-time economy is going to be a bigger share of the overall economy of Melbourne going forward."

"Having said that, residents and our community are absolutely entitled to the peaceful enjoyment of their homes."

It is expected that the number of applications for late-night venues — those operating beyond 1am — would increase when the freeze lifts. ●

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DEVELOPED BY **MAB**

Some of the unsung heroes of aviation doing it all from Docklands

When most people imagine a jet plane and the many parts that go into completing one, the wings or the engines are likely to be among the first notable pieces of the puzzle they consider. But what about the crucial components that join everything together?

WORDS BY *Sean Car*
BUSINESS

In what will come as a surprise to many, Docklands is home to one of the world's leading suppliers to the aviation industry of the critical custom fasteners, widgets and hardware that allow the likes of today's aircraft to be assembled and repaired.

Whether it be a bolt capable of withstanding supersonic speeds, or specialised drilling equipment fit for high accuracy applications, AFT Applied Fasteners and Tooling contributes many of the pieces to these incredibly technical puzzles.

Originally founded by Sue Campbell in her Docklands apartment in 2014, the business now supports design, assembly, and repair of some of the world's most sophisticated aircraft, spacecraft and defence programs from their Harbour Esplanade office.

Just last month, as part of the Avalon Airshow, the company hosted several North American-based manufacturers it represents in the aerospace and defence industries, which was the source of great pride for this fast-growing local business.

"The show was epic. One of our suppliers from Canada said it was one of the best run



▲ Colin and Sue Campbell at the Avalon Airshow last month.

events that he's ever attended worldwide, so it was credit to Sue who organised it all beautifully," Colin Campbell told *Docklands News*.

"Sue can run a small country by lunchtime – that's my tagline for her! Everything just ran so smoothly," adding that Avalon was the fourth air show the business had taken part in.

Combining Sue's background in

business administration with Colin's expertise in mechanical engineering, as well as Sue's sister, Lorraine's background in logistics, this family business was set up for success from day one.

While the aerospace and defence industries are the source of most of its clients, AFT has now grown to support a wide variety of sectors,

including solar, electric vehicles, marine and land vehicle programs.

"Sue set up AFT to basically be a specialist for design, manufacturing and assembly of aircraft and space components. By default, we do some defence projects, so we support this industry as part of the supply chain," Colin said.

"We support all of the airlines, and they lean on us pretty hard, because it's often all last-minute support so we have a great relationship with all of them and that's been going since day one."

"But there are lots of different areas where they need specialised products. It's been a good story and we've had a lot of support from our customers."

"A lot of places don't really put much emphasis on the widgets, but it's an important part of the assembly process as without those widgets, everything stops."

With innovation at its core, Colin said the business was also passionate about supporting the next generation of engineers, sponsoring Monash University's Rocket, Mars Rover and the Motor Sport clubs.

And while the group are Docklands residents themselves, he said the business was also committed to the area long term, given its location to industry and the new University of Melbourne engineering campus soon to open in neighbouring Fishermans Bend. ●

For more information:
aft.systems



Sean Car
EDITOR

SEAN@HYPERLOCALNEWS.COM.AU

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City of Melbourne endorses “precinct-transforming” \$750 million plans for historic Goods Shed

Despite opposition from Heritage Victoria, revitalisation plans for the 1889-built Goods Shed have been strongly endorsed by the City of Melbourne.

WORDS BY *David Schout*
PLANNING

Plans for twin 41-storey towers above a re-vamped Goods Shed have been approved by City of Melbourne councillors and hailed as one of the most significant investments ever in Docklands.

The \$750 million proposal by developer Walker Corporation would see the 134-year-old shed revitalised to feature a large market hall and event spaces, flanked by two new office buildings.

Councillors’ support comes just two months after Heritage Victoria opposed the plans, a decision now subject to an appeal, on the basis that it would “permanently, irreversibly and further diminish” what was “Victoria’s longest and most substantial goods shed”.

However, councillors said the plans would “open up” views to the historic sheds and enliven a currently underwhelming Village St and Aurora Lane either side of the historic shed.

“This application is one of the most significant development applications I think the City of Melbourne has seen in Docklands for approaching two decades,” Planning chair and Deputy Lord Mayor Nicholas Reece said.

“This development has the potential to be a real game-changer for Docklands ... a precinct-transforming development.”

Lord Mayor Sally Capp said the proposal was a tick of approval for both Docklands and the city.

“As we come out of a pretty tough three years, every sign of confidence in our city is welcome and this is a sign in fluorescent lights big and bold to have the Walker Group investing at this scale,” she said.

At present, the building is occupied by privatised workplaces with separate tenancies, the council assessed that this “limited the experience” of the historic shed, and that “the public was not able to experience its unique heritage character”.

Constructed in 1889, the Goods Shed once



spanned 380 metres and was the longest building in the Southern Hemisphere.

A connected shed until 2003, construction of the Collins St extension saw it separated into two, however the proposal included plans to reconnect the sheds to feature three new “zones”.

The southern-most section would remain as an education centre featuring pod offices, while the currently disconnected central section would feature new cultural and event spaces, and the northern section would host a market hall and retail spaces.

“The proposal is to really open up views to the Goods Shed so that it can be connected to Collins St so people are aware it’s there, and they’ll be invited to actually experience what currently has a low amount of foot traffic and public view,” City of Melbourne Head of Statutory Planning Marjorie Kennedy said at the March 7 Future Melbourne Committee meeting.

Walker Corporation purchased the southern shed (or “No.2” shed) in 2010, before acquiring its northern counterpart a decade later in 2020.

The group’s Head of Commercial Development Jessica Jordan told councillors they had always seen potential in the sheds.

“[They] represent a missed opportunity,” she said.

“You can’t see the sheds from Collins St, the internals of the sheds are filled with modern infrastructure leaving very little ability for us to really appreciate the heritage value that exists. And along Village St the streets are inactive with no public accessibility — and we feel that they’re quite unfriendly.”

Ms Jordan said a broader aim was clear in regard to the local area: “We want people to enjoy Docklands, we want people to visit Docklands and we want people to stay in Docklands.”

Original plans for the project included one larger commercial building, however this was reduced by nine storeys to ensure both towers sat at the same level at 188 metres high.

There was also pushback from council officers to avoid the revamped shed “looking like a museum” in which it appeared “glassed in”.

“

The fabric is there, it just now needs the imagination and the investment to unlock it ...

”

This was a suggestion that architects Bates Smart were reportedly receptive to, and director Cian Davis was encouraged by what the project could mean for the precinct.

“The potential of the balanced towers really talk to a gateway to Collins St, and a celebration of that connection between the CBD and Docklands is a major opportunity,” he said.

Cr Reece said the development could “unlock the full potential of Village St” which would “rival some of the great heritage laneway precincts of Melbourne”.

“The fabric is there, it just now needs the imagination and the investment to unlock it,” he said, adding that the importance of the proposal to Docklands was not lost on anyone.

“It’s been really tragic to see the loss of some key hospitality and entertainment infrastructure in Docklands in recent years, most notably Central Pier. But with this particular development we have the potential to bring that sort of activation back into Docklands in a really exciting way.”

Cr Reece was, however, disappointed that plans included the demolition of the Lantern Building on Collins St, built just 15 years ago, given the council’s aims of preventing large-scale demolitions.

Ms Kennedy said although far from ideal, it was a necessary step to ensure the development could proceed.

According to consultant Urbis, the site would have the potential to host almost 13,000 permanent employees in a “premium-grade, fully electric building”.

The council’s support is a key step before the Planning Minister Sonya Kilkenny makes a final judgement on the development plans.

Urbis director Sarah Horsfield confirmed that their client (Walker) had appealed the Heritage Victoria refusal, but had not requested that the Planning Minister “call in” the matter to make an overriding decision. ●

Glenn Harvey answers your legal questions

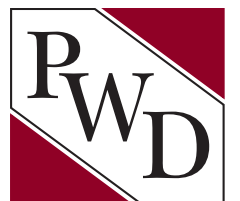
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The renowned skateboarding artist creating waves in Docklands

Watching an artist create a piece of work in their own unique way is always interesting, but not often are artists riding a skateboard at the same time.

WORDS BY *Kaylah-Joelle Baker*
ARTS & CULTURE

Brett Ashby is a Melbourne-born international contemporary, public and performance artist and, as part of Renew Australia, he has set up a studio in Docklands where he can be seen creating work from his skateboard.

This passion for performance art has seen Brett entertain crowds at Bondi Beach's Sculpture by the Sea Festival in 2014 and Melbourne's Fringe Festival in 2019. He was also the inaugural resident artist at the former historic prison Pentridge, which was transformed into a community development space.

Following on from this success, his recent *Inner Essence* series has been met with a wave of intrigue.

"With *Inner Essence* I am bringing in a range of people from different industries and they come on the day and sit behind the easel, so they don't get to see what is being painted until the end of the hour," Brett said of his latest live series.

"There is no talking between the artist and subject, and the spoken word is being represented through the painting and the sounds ... the interview is almost happening on the canvas."

"It's a moment of being alive together through the experience, and in a way, people are being able to sit, feel alive, and celebrate what it is to be living and the freedom of what that is."

Among the large list of guests Brett has had as his subject, are a lawyer, architect, and an actress, and all have responded to the experience



▲ Photo credit (top L-R) Angelo P. Rivera Photography and Joel Melbourne Photography.

with much excitement.

Chef, writer and actor Sophia Dunn reflected on the sitting as something that "has changed [her] life".

"It is as though layers of conditioning have been absolved. Essentially, I think the concept is all about love. The complicated nature of the human form/mind and breaking free of conditioning, so as to create a better world," she added.

Australian singer Lisa Edwards also considered



“

There is no talking between the artist and subject, and the spoken word is being represented through the painting and the sounds.

”

using a paint palette of chakra colours.

On Thursday, March 30 from 4pm, Brett will host Dr Cristina Cooper who is highly skilled and successful in holistic health and wellness.

Dr Cooper's practice in her chosen field holds special meaning for Brett who, as a cancer survivor, told *Docklands News* about the importance of being able to use his work to communicate about different ways of healing and health.

Shortly after this event, Brett's next confirmed subject will be lawyer and *My Kitchen Rules* contestant, Zana Pali, on April 4 at midday.

Brett's live art and fine art gallery can be found at 381 Docklands Drive. ●

For more information:

Instagram: [@brettashbyartist](https://www.instagram.com/brettashbyartist)



Kaylah-Joelle Baker

JOURNALIST

KAYLAH@HYPERLOCALNEWS.COM.AU



Footscray Road closed westbound

! From late-March to late-May 2023



Footscray Road westbound between Dock Link Road and Appleton Dock Road will be closed from **late-March to late-May 2023** so the launching gantry can continue moving safely above the road.

Detours via Dynon Road will be in place. Drivers should plan ahead and allow for extra travel time.

Thanks for your patience

We understand that these closures may be disruptive to you. Thank you for your ongoing patience as we work as quickly and safely as possible to get the job done.

Visit bigbuild.vic.gov.au for more information, including detour routes and exact closure times.

In partnership with:



Keep in mind there are other disruptions during this time.

Find a detailed list at bigbuild.vic.gov.au



Authorised by the Victorian Government, 1 Treasury Place, Melbourne

OUR BIG GREEN CITY HOW WE'RE TURNING GREY TO GREEN

Melbourne is a city of green possibilities - green roofs, green laneways, more trees, more plants and more green space.

At the City of Melbourne we're passionate about turning grey to green and making Melbourne one of the greenest cities in the world in which to live, visit and do business.

We've been working hard for 10 years to create a big, green city.

We were one of the first cities in the world to launch our Urban Forest Strategy in 2012, now we're half-way through.

Did you know that over the past decade we've planted more than 47,000 trees?

And that our urban forest is made up of more than 78,000 public trees across the municipality?

Not only is a healthy urban forest vital for the wellbeing of our community, trees help cool the city and help mitigate against the impacts of climate change.

So we're planting a diverse range of species, such as the Chinese Parasol Tree (*Firmiana simplex*) and Pau Ferro (*Libidibia ferrea*), to improve the resilience of our urban forest.

With all the extra trees, we have a canopy cover of more than 25 per cent,

so we're well on our way to achieving our goal of 40 per cent canopy cover by 2040 and a greener, cooler city.

Our Urban Forest Strategy guides our work and we continue to seek community feedback on important issues like our Urban Forest Precinct Plans, tree maintenance and water management.

We want Melburnians to be a driving part of our city's greening efforts.

We already have more than 700 Citizen Foresters who help collect data about the urban forest.

Join us on our campaign to continue to grow Our Big Green City.

Plant a plant. Take a photo to share on social media using [#OurBigGreenCity](#)

Join us at our upcoming community workshops, read more about our Urban Forest Precinct Plans or let us know your thoughts via our online survey at participate.melbourne.vic.gov.au/urban-forest

Learn more about what we're doing to see Our Big Green City thrive in this special feature.

#OurBigGreenCity

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Your City of Melbourne community update

GREENING THE CITY FROM THE GROUND UP

We're on a mission to turn more grey spaces to green.

While Melburnians have embraced green infrastructure, with green roofs, walls and facades sprouting across the city, there's still so much more we can do to improve new buildings or retrofit.

The possibilities for city greening are the focus of our Canopy Green Roof Forum, a City of Melbourne initiative that showcases the best urban green infrastructure and city greening projects, strategies and initiatives.

There are lots of great urban greening projects to learn from and knowledge that can be shared.

Our Canopy Green Roof Forum aims to showcase to building owners, tenants and community members how they can easily green their rooftops, balconies, walls and facades with lush green plants.

Green infrastructure is vital for cities, just as important as roads and public transport to the health and wellbeing of the community, providing more vegetation and green spaces in a dense urban environment.

The visual appeal and the myriad ways of greening and cooling the city all contribute to making our urban environment much more desirable.

Plants and trees provide clean air, clean water and increase our resilience to the impacts of climate change.

To keep up-to-date with future canopy forum events or subscribe to our newsletter visit melbourne.vic.gov.au/canopyforum



Councillor Rohan Leppert plants the first of 3000 trees for 2023 with David Callow and Matthew Forster



Fall in love with our leafy laneways

We've transformed some of Melbourne's iconic laneways into lush green spaces for everyone to enjoy.

Greening projects are an important part of the work we do to adapt to climate change and cool the city.



Visit Guildford Lane to experience urban tranquility

Here are four leafy laneways to explore.

Guildford Lane

Wander down this quirky laneway between Queen and Sutherland streets to spot greenery flourishing in pots and window boxes, and climbing up the buildings' drain pipes.

Meyers Place

A striking green wall with 80 species of plants is the jewel of this laneway between Bourke and Little Collins streets. Pause to enjoy the contrast between vibrant greenery and the towering metallic skyline beyond.

Coromandel Place

Stunning Boston ivy against historic red brick makes this laneway off Little Collins Street extra charming.

Katherine Place

This foodie precinct near Melbourne Aquarium has turned over a new leaf, now boasting street trees, gardens and lush greenery in planter boxes and pots.

Our Green Your Laneway program was the first of its kind in Australia when it launched in 2017.

Each laneway trialed different greening approaches.

After five years of growth, we've evaluated the success of the laneways and identified the best ways to encourage more community-led greening.

We have established incentives and opportunities for the community to green their laneways effectively, including the Greening Melbourne permit system and through the Green Your Laneway stream of the Urban Forest Fund.

Learn how you can green your laneway at melbourne.vic.gov.au/greenlaneways



HELP US GO GREEN

Help us plan the future of tree planting in your neighbourhood.

Join us at our community workshops to learn more about our Urban Forest Precinct Plans:

1 April - South Yarra, St Martins Youth Arts Centre, 10am - 2pm

29 April - CBD, Zinc, Federation Square, 10am - 2pm

13 May - Carlton, Melbourne Museum, 10am - 2pm

For more information and to register your interest visit participate.melbourne.vic.gov.au/urban-forest

KEEP IN TOUCH

To stay connected with all the latest news from the City of Melbourne, follow us on social media and subscribe to *Melbourne News* at news.melbourne.vic.gov.au

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ADVERTISEMENT
Your City of Melbourne community update

HONOUR A HUGGABLE TREE

Learn about our Exceptional Tree Register and how you can protect our urban forest for future generations.

We've just added 108 special trees to the Exceptional Tree Register, which means a total of 268 trees are now protected from being removed or significantly pruned.

These trees are on privately owned or managed land and include those of outstanding size, old age, outstanding habitat value, Aboriginal association, curious growth form, significant environmental services, among other exceptional criteria.

Trees are nominated by the community and then evaluated by an expert panel.

You can nominate any tree on private land within the City of Melbourne. This could be trees in private backyards, residential communal gardens, schools and universities - we even have exceptional trees at some of our favourite places to visit like Melbourne Zoo, Melbourne Showgrounds, Melbourne Museum and Yarra Park.

Listed trees are protected under the Melbourne Planning Scheme and a permit is needed to remove them or to undertake works that might affect their health or condition.

Next time you're out and about, check out these exceptional trees:

Tree 176 River Red Gum (*Eucalyptus camaldulensis*)

This tree in Yarra Park is a living Scarred tree with Aboriginal significance and is likely to be about 300 years old. The scar on this River Red Gum was created when the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung peoples removed bark to make canoes, shields, food and water containers, string, baby carriers and other items.

Tree 170 Port Jackson Fig (*Ficus rubiginosa*)

Attractive for its curious growth form, this Port Jackson Fig is perched atop a stone wall at RMIT University with long aerial roots draped down metres to the ground.

To see which trees made the list or more information about our Exceptional Tree Register and nomination process visit participate.melbourne.vic.gov.au/amendment-c379



Our Exceptional Tree Register is designed to protect important green assets

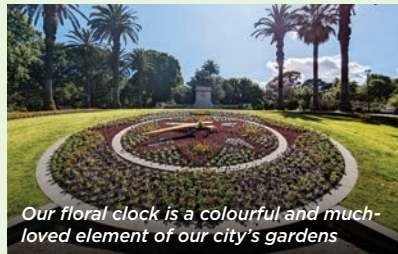
KEEPING OUR PARKS CLEAN AND GREEN

Melbourne's open spaces range from the major parks and gardens that define our city with classic 19th century heritage features and majestic tree-lined avenues; to the 170-hectare Royal Park with its unique bushland landscape and wetlands habitat, as well as smaller neighbourhood and local reserves.

With a network of some 480 hectares of internationally acclaimed parks and gardens, there is the perfect patch of green space to suit everyone.

To keep our park assets clean and green, we invest \$6.5 million in our Annual Park Renewals Program.

This includes everything from renewing garden beds in iconic parks like Fitzroy and Carlton gardens to irrigation to keep our lawns green in summer. As well as updating and refreshing public toilets to improve user experience.



Our floral clock is a colourful and much-loved element of our city's gardens

BIOBLITZ CITY NATURE CHALLENGE

Love getting up close to nature? Then we want you.

Help us discover and document the unique animals, plants and fungi that call Melbourne home.

We're documenting our city's plants and wildlife as part of the City



Help us survey our city's biodiversity at our BioBlitz events. Photo credit: Stuart Riley.

Nature Challenge, an annual global citizen science bioblitz event.

Join expert researchers, local community groups, families and students to unearth our creature secrets from Friday 28 April to Monday 1 May.

The bioblitz will provide us with a snapshot of the biodiversity in our neighbourhoods, and provide the community opportunities to help survey city biodiversity and increase connection to nature.

Sign up at participate.melbourne.vic.gov.au/bioblitz

Nuturing our nature

Cities are important places for biodiversity. They are home to a large number of species and considered 'hotspots' for threatened species.

Melbourne is a biodiverse region with 239 species of birds, 12 species

of reptiles, 18 species of mammals, seven species of frogs, more than 1500 species of insects, and 31 species of fish recorded in the past 20 years.

Cities around the world are developing greening initiatives to improve and protect nature in the urban environment.

Here in Melbourne, we recognise our responsibility to play an active role in protecting and enhancing nature in our city.

We're half way through our Nature in the City Strategy, a program to create healthy ecosystems and thriving biodiversity in our neighbourhoods.

From the soil with its underground fungi to the plants and animals, including insects, birds, mammals and frogs, our Nature in the City Strategy connects all parts of the ecosystem and clearly sets out the actions we need to ensure the environment our children inherit is richer than it is today.

Over the past five years, we've been busy.

We've achieved and passed our target to increase understorey habitat by 20 per cent - now at 26 per cent and rising.

We established a Gardens for Wildlife program so that residents can turn

their balcony, backyard, community garden, school veggie patch or green rooftop into a haven for birds and bees.

Our expert garden guides are on hand to help create wildlife-friendly habitats, even if there is only space for pot plants.

We've worked with the University of Melbourne to reintroduce a locally extinct species, the tiny, flightless Matchstick Grasshopper. Insects like grasshoppers play an important role in maintaining a healthy ecosystem and are an abundant food source for larger animals such as praying mantis, lizards and birds.

The Matchstick Grasshopper's population has dwindled in recent years due to a scarcity of suitable environments and an inability to relocate from one habitat to another.

To learn how you can get up close to nature visit melbourne.vic.gov.au/urbannature



Garden Guide volunteers visiting a Melbourne garden, inspiring private landholders to create space for nature in the city

Parks and gardens directory

Melbourne is world renowned for its parks and gardens.

To make it easier for you to explore our green spaces, we've created a free park and gardens directory to help guide your tour around the city.

Our interactive City of Melbourne maps provide easy-to-access information on park facilities including playgrounds, barbecues, dog off-leash areas and more.

Visit maps.melbourne.vic.gov.au



Explore one of city's parks and gardens today

“Sounding board for the city”: residents’ forum providing valuable counsel to council

Established during COVID-19 to collate feedback from well-connected locals, the “Presidents of Residents” forum is now a permanent part of decision-making at Town Hall.

WORDS BY *David Schout*
COUNCIL AFFAIRS

At the height of COVID-19, decision-makers at the City of Melbourne needed advice on how to best help a local population that, like the rest of the state, was struggling.

Many locals were stuck inside for large parts of the week, shopfront vacancy signs were increasing by the day, and international students were seeking assistance in huge numbers.

The council needed on-the-ground feedback from residents, and established a working group on the run to help with that.

To this day, the group remains a cog in the decision-making machine at Town Hall and having moved on from providing pandemic-related ideas for assistance, it now advises on things like safety, planning and transport.

Named the “Presidents of Residents” group — a title that has since stuck — the forum assembles leaders from residents’ groups across the municipality, to garner both suburb-specific and city-wide ideas.

Representatives from the Docklands Residents Group (DRG), including president Ben Ball and secretary Dr Janette Corcoran, have attended the forum since its inception.

“It found its real benefit quite early because it was operating during COVID in a slightly different form, and that’s where we could directly share issues of criticality because, basically, we were locked down,” a DRG spokesperson said.

“The biggest thing about it is the opportunity to directly engage with elected officials and decision-makers in the one space.”

The DRG say they’ve found it particularly useful interacting with residents’ groups in other areas, particularly the CBD and Southbank, which are similar mixed-use areas with a high percentage of high-rise locals.

President of the Drill Hall Residents’ Association Martin Mulvihill, says the forum is an exercise that simply makes sense.

“The City [of Melbourne] should be proud of it,” Mr Mulvihill said.

“I think it works ... it acts as a kind of sounding board or feedback system for the city.”

President of CBD residents’ group EastEnders Dr Stan Capp said the endeavour had become a “very valuable forum”.

Dr Capp and other community leaders had pushed for last year’s “Safety Summit”, which brought together the City of Melbourne, Victoria Police, residents’ groups, and stakeholders to address key issues facing the city;

something that he cites as an example of forum suggestions put into action.

“It’s been an opportunity to raise issues and have them considered, and I think they’re always offered and considered in a respectful environment,” he said.

“I think we can have a free and open discussion about anything we like, quite frankly. It’s been a good forum for that.”

Lord Mayor Sally Capp was central to the group’s establishment in 2020 and, along with Deputy Lord Mayor Nicholas Reece, regularly convenes with the group.

Cr Capp’s office puts together an agenda for each meeting (they also open the floor for discussion points) and invite presenters to speak with the community leaders.

Recently, this included representatives from both e-scooter companies currently heading a 12-month trial within the city; Lime and Neuron.

The companies were informed by the Presidents of Residents group of particular hotspots and pedestrian-heavy areas where scooters were being incorrectly parked on a regular basis.

The group is one of two ways the council has sought to improve communication between itself and residents, the second being via online neighbourhood portals.

“All of the feedback provided by the residents and via the portals is considered, and action is taken where feasible,” the Lord Mayor told *Docklands News*.

“City of Melbourne greatly values the insights gathered from the Presidents of Residents group and looks forward to achieving more positive and collaborative outcomes in future.”

While the group is seen as an example of how local government can utilise residents’ expertise to achieve positive outcome, there was still room for improvement according to participants.

“I think there’s a hunger to play a more hands-on role in direction-setting rather than necessarily just providing feedback, despite that being really important,” the DRG spokesperson said.

Mr Mulvihill added that the forum’s configuration probably did not span enough cohorts.

“It’s sort of unrepresentative, necessarily so because it’s dealing with established organisations like resident organisations,” Mr Mulvihill said.

“As such it probably cuts out the big young student and young people population generally in the city.” ●



Alma Doepel bunk sponsorship program off to a good start

WORDS BY *Bill Reid*
COMMUNITY

Down in Docklands under the Bolte Bridge, there is an exciting project under way – the restoration of the “last of her kind” Australian-built, three-masted tall ship.

The *Alma Doepel* was built in Bellingen NSW in 1903 by Frederik Doepel and named after his youngest daughter Alma.

The *Alma Doepel* restoration is asking for sponsors to help with the restoration of bunks that provide accommodation to young trainees participating in future youth development voyage programs.

Melbourne Rotary Clubs are stepping forward to sponsor bunks along with community banks.

On Saturday, March 11, *Alma Doepel* volunteers held an open day with a barbecue to host the International Yachting Fellowship of Rotarians, during which Bill Chapman presented a cheque to restoration director Dr Peter Harris OAM.

This is the third bunk sponsorship by Rotary Clubs. Rotary Clubs of Moorabbin and Hawthorn have each sponsored a bunk along with community banks – Valley Community Financial Services (two bunks) and Community Bank Murrumbena (one bunk). A huge thank

you to those organisations for their support.

The bunk sponsorship program invites organisations and individuals with an interest in youth to sponsor the restoration and installation of 36 bunks and eight bathrooms below deck to accommodate young people from a diverse range of backgrounds to participate in development voyages onboard the *Alma Doepel*.

These voyages provide a unique opportunity for young people to emerge from their comfort zones to challenge themselves in a way that enables them to grow as a person raising their self-esteem as they realise their full potential.

If you want to know more about the bunk sponsorship program, please contact adsc@almadoepel.com.au

If you are interested in a tour of the *Alma Doepel* restoration, bookings can be made any day of the week (except Sunday). Please contact adsc@almadoepel.com.au.

On Sunday, May 7 *Alma Doepel* restoration opens her doors to the public as part of the Australian Heritage Festival. Everyone is welcome. Bookings via TryBooking: trybooking.com/CGAEQ ●

For more information:
almadoepel.com.au

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A tense urban vibe

WORDS BY Rhonda Dredge
ARTS & CULTURE

The visuals of Yarra's Edge are just as stunning to its locals as to visitors but some take a while to discover the charms.

When Peta Brehaut moved in after the lockdown, she took out her camera and couldn't stop clicking.

The communications coordinator had been letting her artistic side slumber.

One of her first pictures was of the Webb Bridge. She took it from her balcony on a long exposure.

The picture with its tense urban vibe shows a love of place and design.

It is one of the photographs in the International Women's Day show at Magnet Gallery and the most relevant in terms of location.

The exhibition with its theme of circles has brought out the more abstract side of the photographer's work.

Peta became starry-eyed about Yarra's Edge as a place during lockdown.

"We were in Southbank," she said. "We lived there seven years. During lockdown I said let's move. We didn't know Yarra's Edge existed. We found a place. Committing is fantastic."

She shot a lot of local pictures, started posting on Instagram and met a group of photographers who walk around the city.

"I was going to the office at lunchtime. Now I get out and take photos."

One of the Instagram group swirled around a light on a string in front of the Arts Centre.

This added the effect Peta wanted for the show.

She is now going uber local and putting on a solo show in the café at the bottom of her tower.

The show will open on April 19 and is aimed at locals. She loves the light that reflects off the ANZ building, for example.

She said a lot of people cross the Webb Bridge and go straight to South Wharf. Their balcony



looks straight across the river where the magic happens.

"The buildings filter away from the sun, and you get silhouettes," she said.

Photographs, Peta Brehaut, 18 Pence Lane, Tower 4, from April 19. ●

A school holiday bonanza at The District

WORDS BY Jack Hayes
EVENTS

If you have vacation plans, scrap them, because The District is embarking on its biggest-ever program of school holiday activations.

Kicking off the fun is Saboteurs, an Australian exclusive right here in Docklands, based on the hugely popular online game, AmongUs.

Perfect for birthday parties, corporate events or holiday fun, this immersive, interactive space-themed game requires players to complete tasks including Decontamination, Shields, O2, Medbay, Fix Wiring, Upload and Download Data, Sleep Pods, Communications, Electrical, Habitats, Mining and more.

The aim of the game is to vote, eject and survive.

Saboteurs is the perfect rainy-day activity, with the venue comprising of 530sqm across 11 converted shipping containers inside a Moon Base-themed play space.

The game is designed for one to 15 players, a great opportunity for groups big and small.

To find out more or to book, head to saboteurs.com.au.

Next, we see the return of the ever-popular all-ages immersive play experience, Imaginator (formerly Imaginaria).

Back for another season, Imaginator sees a collision of imagination and technology to create a stunning audio-visual play experience from the future.

Enjoy the different installations at your own pace, take an hour to deeply engage with the experience or go on a simple 15-minute stroll – either way, it is an immersive experience unlike any other.

Part game, part gallery, part journey, Imaginator encourages the inquisitive, with shimmering light and sound sculptures that see you consumed in vivid pulsing colour and rich sounds.

Dive off a four-metre ledge into the unknown or relax on a giant rotating bean bag as you take in the ethereal sights and sounds.



Imaginator is back at its usual location under the Melbourne Star. For more information, visit imaginators.com.au.

The last of The District's major school holiday activations is Chaos Lab, a hugely successful attraction making its way from Sydney to Docklands.

Expect a graffiti wall, slime station, mirror maze, a ball pit, and many more surprises as the team at Chaos Lab captivates the whole family.

Meet the manic mad scientist and their lab assistants, who will show you through different rooms to create, discover, play, and, above all, have fun.

Docklanders will be sure to enjoy themselves and create great family memories in this creative laboratory.

Chaos Lab is located at 18 Wharf St, Docklands. For more information, visit chaos-lab.co/Melbourne.

Outside of these exciting new attractions, these holidays you'll still find all the usual District favourites like Hoyts, Archie Brothers, ArtVo, Glow Golf, Chipmunks and more. ●

For more information:
thedistrictdocklands.com.au

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Lord Mayor Sally Capp with Beverly Caprioli, University Café

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BUSINESS

How would I describe the inner-city apartment market right now? In a word; RESILIENT, and here's why ...

According to PropTrack, the median sale price in the Docklands has increased by 5.9 per cent to \$635,000, and the feedback we're receiving from buyers right now is that affordability is driving demand.

WORDS BY *Baden Lucas*
DIRECTOR - LUCAS REAL ESTATE

During the past three months, Lucas Real Estate has received 3599 enquiries from prospective buyers and tenants, and the vast majority of them are attracted to apartment living for these three key reasons.

- Location, location – one of the biggest strengths of Docklands, Southbank and Melbourne CBD is the location. Buyers and tenants are looking for apartments in convenient, central locations with amenities such as shops, restaurants and public transport.

- Affordability – the rental market has been driven by migration and price volatility, with prices recovering and exceeding pre-pandemic levels. Lucas leases more than 10 properties per week, and currently it's taking just 12 days for us to find our newest residents. This demand in the rental market has driven a lot more demand from first-home buyers looking to escape the rental market and who are recognising the incredible value for money our inner-city market commands.

- Low-maintenance living – another factor that makes inner-city apartments attractive to buyers is the low-maintenance lifestyle they offer. Living in the heart of the city means having access to an array of cultural and entertainment options, as well as a vibrant and diverse community. This is highlighted by the incredible contribution Docklands Primary School has made to our community!

The first three months of 2023 have started with a real sense of positivity in our marketplace, with urgency from buyers looking to settle quickly. Our quarter to date has seen Lucas' average time to sell drop to 40 days, from 55 inner-city apartment sales with an average settlement period of 44 days.

The most significant impact to our market is

interest rates, but how does this impact buyers in the real world?

Well, aside from repayments being higher, the additional challenge that buyers are experiencing is that their loan approval amounts are shifting monthly.

Where a prospective buyer may have been approved in January to spend \$700,000 – experiencing two rate rises in a month will reduce their borrowing power to \$650,000.

According to the Australia Bureau of Statistics, home loan financing has dropped by 35.1 per cent since a high in February 2022. Still, the overall appeal and affordability in the inner-city apartment market have meant strong demand, and volume remains high.

Finally, Lucas was honoured to be recognised for the sixth year running as Agency of the Year in both rentals and sales in Docklands, as well as finishing Top 10 in Rentals in Victoria. Thank you to all our rental providers, tenants, vendors, and buyers – I look forward to updating you at the halfway point for 2023. ●

For more information:
lucasre.com.au

MAKING MOVES

Rise to the top: How Docklands businesses can improve their SEO strategy

WORDS BY *Mo Hamdouna*
MO WORKS

There is one type of website traffic that is almost 80 per cent certain to close you a sale every time – local SEO.

Unlike usual/national Search Engine Optimisation (SEO) which targets a broader audience, local SEO is directly targeted to the niche or surrounding areas that your business exists in, making it more effective in converting customers to sales.

This means your website needs to be optimised to appeal to the needs and wants of people browsing the web in a specific area like Docklands to generate more traffic from searches performed locally.

So, how can you improve your local SEO strategy in Docklands?

Start with your Google Business Profile (GBP). Include accurate business information, such as your address and website URL, and use relevant keywords in your listing description. Ensure you post regular updates to your profile to reach more potential customers in Docklands.

Optimise your website's content by including relevant keywords related to your business location in your website's title tag, meta description, and content. For instance, if you own a restaurant in Docklands, target keywords such as "Docklands restaurants" or "where to eat in Docklands".

You should also optimise your website for mobile. The majority of Google searches are made on mobile devices, and 82 per cent of consumers have used their mobile to search for "near me" businesses. These are the people you want to reach and put your business in front of when they want to buy your product or service.

Reviews. Reviews. Reviews. Collect, respond, and share them. To improve your search visibility, aim to get as many authentic reviews as possible. Reviews enhance your GBP listing and are collected by Google from other websites and social media to boost your local SEO.

Obtaining local backlinks is also effective in enhancing local SEO. Contact other Docklands-based businesses and offer to collaborate on content, link to each other's sites, and try to get listed in local directories like *Docklands Directory*.

Another out-of-the-box idea to help your business stand out is to host or sponsor local Docklands events. Use these opportunities to network and boost your reputation locally.

By implementing these strategies and staying up to date with the latest trends, your Docklands business is set to rise to the top of local SEO rankings and drive more search traffic to your website.

As always, keep making moves and taking bold steps towards your business growth.

work@moworks.com.au ●

Australia's best and most enjoyable ice-skating rink is on your doorstep in Docklands

Located in District Docklands, O'Brien Icehouse is the home of Australia's premier ice skating and ice sports venue, providing the most enjoyable and entertaining ice-skating experience for all ages.

Open seven days a week, 364 days a year, O'Brien Icehouse features two Olympic-sized rinks and boasts a range of activities the whole family can enjoy. Easily accessible, with plenty of parking and located in Melbourne's Free Tram Zone, it is the ideal place for a healthy, active, and enjoyable day out.

A fun environment ensures people of all ages can enjoy ice-skating safely. Whether you're a beginner or an ice-skating pro, you will be sure to have a day jam-packed with fun. And you can plan your day with ease knowing it is always 16 degrees inside the venue.

There is a wide range of skates for hire in all sizes, and skate aids and plastic seals are available for those looking for a little help while skating. The plastic seals are always popular

with young children and provide that extra confidence. We also have special ambassadors out on the rink to help skaters, particularly those starting out.

If you're looking for a fun way to spend the day with family, friends, or a loved one, come on down to O'Brien Icehouse. Visit obrienicehouse.com.au for more information, including the special "Tight Tuesday" discounts.

O'Brien Icehouse – more than ice skating

Ice Hockey

Enjoy all the action of ice hockey, the fastest sport in the world, in the Australian Ice Hockey League (AIHL) at O'Brien Icehouse. The AIHL season runs from April to August with games played most weekends at O'Brien Icehouse, the home of Victoria's two AIHL teams, Melbourne Ice and Melbourne Mustangs.

Birthday Parties

The coolest kids' birthday parties are held at O'Brien Icehouse. The ideal venue for a birthday celebration, a dedicated party host will take care of everything to provide you with a memorable party experience.



Docklands is the home of Australia's premier ice-skating and ice sports venue with activities and events that will provide a memorable experience for all the family.

O'Brien Icehouse is a cashless venue (EFTPOS only) and is open 364 days a year. ●

For more information:
obrienicehouse.com.au

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Victoria gets new building laws to clean up the industry

Last month, the Victorian Parliament introduced the Building Legislation Amendment Bill into the lower house, seeking to substantially amend the Building Act and the Architects Act by improving consumer protections for domestic and residential owners.

WORDS BY *Tom Bacon*
STRATA TITLE LAWYERS

The Bill seeks to adopt a number of reforms already implemented in NSW, by establishing a State Building Surveyor as an overarching gatekeeper for new buildings in Victoria. To support this new position is the creation of a Building Monitor.

These professionals will play a role in looking into systemic issues plaguing the industry and will provide input and direction to the VBA to play an enforcement role, while the State Building Surveyor will be able to issue binding determinations relating to the technical interpretation of the Building Code and Plumbing Standards.

Another key component of these reforms is to adopt legislative change to amend the distribution of the cladding rectification levy, to provide financial or other support to owners who are not eligible to receive funding under the current program, which is administered by Cladding Safety Victoria (CSV).

The current legislation cannot authorise the cladding levy to be used to fund activities where full rectification solutions are not funded by the state.

The amendments will provide greater flexibility in how the cladding levy is used, including enabling the use of the levy to provide financial or other support to address buildings that CSV have determined will not be eligible to receive funding under the current program.

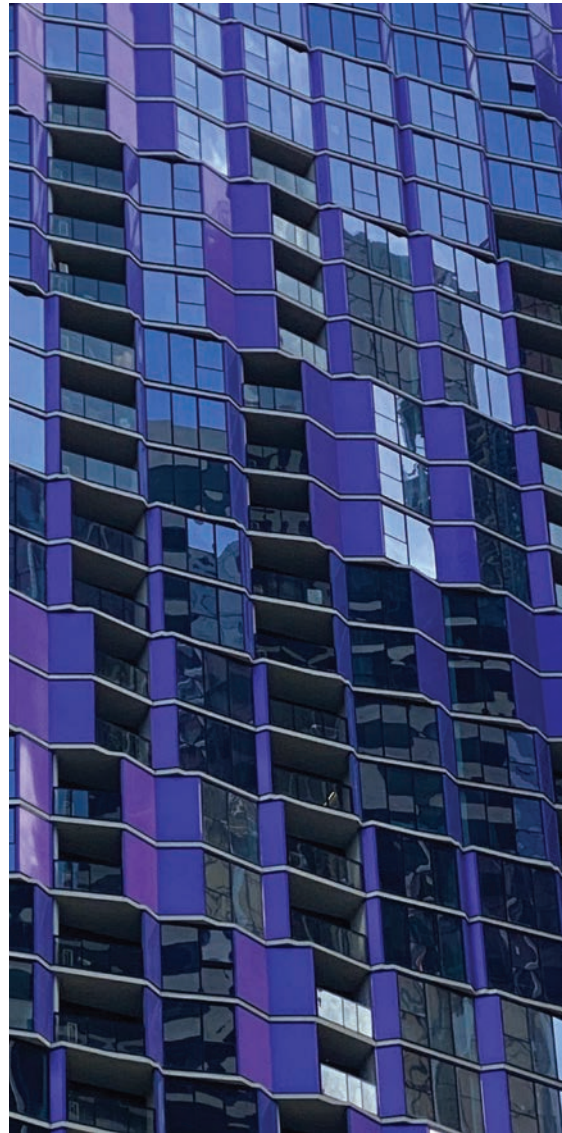
This is about giving greater discretion, obviously within the purposes of funding cladding rectification works or trying to fix the cladding issues, in allowing to do out-of-scope things that might not be eligible for full funding, as the funding at the moment only looks at high-risk buildings.

Relevantly for owners' corporations (OC), there will also be a new requirement that a draft building manual be provided to the OC upon completion of the building. The manuals are intended to be a single repository of all relevant information relating to the design, construction, and ongoing maintenance of a building.

The building manual will address a significant hurdle for owners and OCs in accessing information about their building.

By making information about the design, construction, and maintenance of a building more readily accessible, the building manual will aid not only owners and OCs but also other parties such as building practitioners and regulators in future.

In NSW, the Building Commissioner has developed a reputation as a tough, no-nonsense individual that will



fearlessly champion the interests of apartment owners, and will use his legislative powers to issue court orders against recalcitrant builders and developers, and will cancel occupancy permits and de-register building licences when timeframes for rectification are not met.

In Victoria, this role for the State Building Surveyor has not been adopted, but I do hope that Victoria one day decides to give more power here. It is exactly what needs to occur in my view.



Tom Bacon
TOM BACON IS THE PRINCIPAL LAWYER OF STRATA TITLE LAWYERS.
TOM@STRATATITLILAWYERS.COM.AU

Smoke on the Yarra

“*The hazardous working conditions of labourers at the docks and wharves in Melbourne made their lives perilous. One of the dangers they faced was the risk of fires, which could easily ignite if flammable materials came into contact with stray sparks or flames.*”

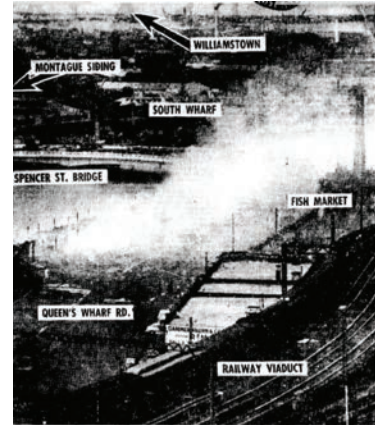
”
WORDS BY *Ashley Smith*
ROYAL HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF VICTORIA

This grainy image depicts the fire that took place on Queen's Bridge and was published in *The Herald* newspaper in 1951.

Various fires have been recorded either at the docks or wharves on either side of the Yarra for more than a century. On February 6, 1951, smoke filled the area of Queens Wharf between Spencer Bridge and Queens Bridge, with the Yarra River serving as a backdrop. While the cause of the inferno appears to be unknown, it was first reported around 5am.

One of the first to spot the fire was train driver L. G. Forbes, who was taking the Broadmeadows train across Queen Bridge when he reported, “there was a terrific burst of dense black smoke. The train was moving slowly. In less than 30 seconds you couldn't see a thing.” (*The Herald*, February 6).

The fire brigade arrived at 5.30 am but faced an unexpected challenge when the fire reached a petrol tank, causing a destructive explosion. Henry Pierce, an employee of the Fish Market located near Spencer Street Bridge, witnessed the powerful blast that shattered nearby windows and sent debris flying. He reported it in *The Age* on February 7. At daybreak, numerous civilians



in Melbourne witnessed the bravery of the firemen who fought the flames despite several oxy-acetylene cylinders exploding and causing the riverside of the sheds to plummet into the Yarra. The smoke was visible from as far away as Ferntree Gully, and even later that evening, firefighters were still extinguishing smaller fires. Despite the intensity of the blaze, there were no reported fatalities.

The fire caused damage worth more than £200,000, destroying around 200 yards of shipping buildings belonging to 13 carriers and shipping-related businesses. The damages included more than 60 trucks and vehicles, cranes, and thousands of pounds worth of cargo.

The fire also resulted in several boats catching fire, including *The Royal*, a £2000 launch, which was later hauled away by the Harbour Trust and sunk in the harbour.

Following the fire, the Melbourne City Council received various proposals and suggestions for the future of the area, including gardens, a car park, and a bus terminal. Eventually, the council chose to build a car park, which was completed by July 1953, and could accommodate 200 cars.

It wouldn't be for another 30 years until Batman Park was finally opened near the fire site in 1982, and until 2002 it housed Ron Robertson-Swann's infamous *Vault* sculpture. ●



Ashley Smith
RESEARCHER
ROYAL HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF VICTORIA

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MELBOURNE MARITIME HERITAGE NETWORK

Looking at Docklands through a “maritime heritage lens”

Melbourne Maritime Heritage Network (MMHN) notes that despite the publicity “hype” currently surrounding the state government’s “BIG BUILD” it is worth remembering one thing about Docklands ...

WORDS BY *Dr Jackie Watts*
CHAIR



When development of the Docklands precinct began, the project was, and arguably still is, the most significant example of urban infrastructure investment ever created, and not just in Victoria, but Australia, and the Southern Hemisphere – it’s up there on the global stage.

Looking at the current deliverables, it is sometimes easy to forget that the state government remains firmly in the mix of an ongoing collaboration between Development Victoria, the State’s development delivery authority, and a select group of private sector developers.

However, the fact remains that after almost two decades, the Docklands precinct remains, in development terms, still very much “unfinished business” and anecdotally only two thirds complete.

From a strictly maritime perspective, extensive crumbling wharves remain a feature along NewQuay, North Wharf, Harbour Esplanade and the Bolte West Precinct. The iconic Shipping Control Tower remains a boarded-off neglected eyesore when it could so easily be a fascinating destination for locals and tourists alike.

Why the interminable delay to repair these public assets? Who knows? The heritage-listed iconic Central Pier is to be demolished without firm plans for replacing this community asset.

There is a ferry terminal on Harbour Esplanade, but there are no plans for more commuter or tourist ferries services. The Marine Services Depot to support local boating has failed to materialise. The Heritage Fleet (*Alma Doepel*, *Steam Tug Wattle* and the *Enterprise*) despite the valiant efforts of an army of volunteers, is without a permanent home in Docklands.

All in all – what a painful litany of squandered maritime heritage assets in Docklands!

Multiple responsible authorities continue to stymie the economic development of Docklands waterways, and despite 25 years of “planning” work there is still no genuine connectivity between the CBD and Victoria Harbour.

MMHN draws your attention to Development Victoria’s own website which actually states – “Docklands is one of Australia’s

largest urban renewal projects, reconnecting central Melbourne with its historic waterfront” – slippage certainly between Development Victoria rhetoric and the reality!

The crucial role Docklands plays in enabling Victoria’s prosperity is persistently ignored. Why?

And why is MMHN listing these worrisome matters now? This is actually a catalogue of unfulfilled opportunities in relation to maritime heritage in Docklands that will, we hope, draw your attention to an opportunity which now exists for all concerned stakeholders in Docklands about the sorry state of its maritime infrastructure.

Infrastructure Victoria is asking the questions – MMHN encourages the Docklands community to respond.

MMHN argues that Infrastructure Victoria must seriously consider maritime infrastructure assets as well as roads, overpasses and bridges. Building on this, MMHN encourages Docklands residents to make sure Infrastructure Victoria and the state government acknowledge their obligations towards the Docklands community and maritime stakeholders in relation to the as yet unfinished “BIG BUILD” that exists still in Docklands. A “BIG BUILD” that needs to be completed before **Infrastructure Victoria** determines a new “30-year Infrastructure Strategy”.

MMHN urges you to take this new opportunity now, to tell Infrastructure Victoria what Docklands still needs. Complete the Infrastructure Victoria survey! Who knows what influence you may have? None unless you try.

MMHN has completed the survey and submitted 500 words on what is needed from the maritime perspective. It is critical to remember that the waterways, that is, maritime matters, are actually what makes Docklands unique.

engage.vic.gov.au/victorias30yearinfrastructurestrategy ●

DOCKLANDS REPRESENTATIVE GROUP

Planning issues are more widespread than ATET

ATET is merely the 2022 incarnation of the planning problems in Docklands.

The Docklands Representative Group (DRG) has been petitioning for years about the issues with the *Docklands Act 1991*, which allows Development Victoria to grant/deny applications without public notification of its actions, and for many exemptions to the planning process, including not requiring notification of planning applications to neighbours or public advertisement, and the ability to object to a planning application meaningfully.

Changing the *Docklands Act* is the responsibility of the state government, so the DRG has been speaking with members of parliament to gain support for changes to the *Docklands Act* and the Docklands Zones in the Melbourne Planning Scheme.

We have had successful discussions with members of parliament and are working on the exact wording of the changes before returning to the MPs and the City of Melbourne for support.

Similarly, the current planning scheme for Docklands Zone includes:

“Encouraging bars, hotels and nightclubs in the Capital City Zone and Docklands Zone that:

- Accommodate less than 100 patrons.
- Have appropriate noise attenuation.

Limiting the use of outdoor areas (including smoking areas, rooftops and open courtyards): to 1am; and in noise-sensitive areas, limiting alcohol consumption in outdoor areas to 11pm (13.07-1L-04).”



Despite these planning scheme policies, the *Docklands Act* permitted the creation of a nightclub for significantly more than 500 patrons with no noise attenuation.

Furthermore, it is clear from the recent Community Meeting on March 14 that the City of Melbourne will only take further action once it has the support of the EPA and other external reports, so it will not stand alone in court when challenged.

The process for a council to change a Planning Scheme is long, structured, and set out in the *Planning and Environment Act 1987*. Changes are prepared by the local council and approved by the Minister for Planning.

The City of Melbourne, having acknowledged that things are “unacceptable”, should initiate the process to review the Docklands Zone so that once these external reports exist, they are incorporated into the feedback from the community and recommended to the Minister for Planning without undue delay. ●

HEALTH & WELLBEING

What daily stretching does for your body

All practitioners recommend it. We know we should be doing it. But it’s just one of those things that we shove to the bottom of the priority list unless we make it a daily ritual.

them to do something that involves a good range of motion, they become strained and can cause ongoing pain. Daily stretching can not only help with pain relief by gently extending the muscle to loosen it, but also to help prevent future episodes.

Increased motion and mobility

When was the last time you tried to bend down and touch your toes? Or reach your fingertips to your shoulder blades? Did you struggle? Daily stretching could help with that by keeping your muscles in a good state of flexibility to give your joints and muscles groups their full range of motion (so you can tie your shoes or scratch your back comfortably).

Better posture

How are you sitting while you’re reading this? Are you at a desk and slumped forward? On your phone with your head dropped and neck bent? Chances are, you’re naturally falling into these poor posture positions because your body has become used to them (not a good thing). Daily stretching can help break those bad posture habits by freeing up muscle groups to allow more flexibility and prevent them from contracting/shortening to a poor position.

Great for the mind

When our body is working at its best without pain, discomfort, or injuries, our minds are less stressed and freer to focus on other things. Daily stretching in the morning or evening can be a great form of meditation to prepare the mind and body for the day. ●

Daily stretching might seem like a lot of work, but the towering list of benefits should give you the nudge you need to make it part of your regular routine.

What exactly does stretching do?

When we stretch, we’re increasing our muscle length to prevent it from tightening and shortening which limits our range of motion, causes injuries, and triggers pain and tightness. By stretching, we extend the muscle for better mobility and strength when we’re asking it to do activities such as exercise or sports, and the muscle is prepped and ready to go.

What are the main types of stretches?

Static stretches typically involve stretching a muscle in a single hold for 30 to 60 seconds with comfortable pressure (usually after exercise).

Dynamic stretches are otherwise known as “warm up stretches” and involve a series of movements and gentle exercises to stretch the muscles in an active way.

What are the benefits?

We know you’re busy, so here’s the abridged version!

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Dr Mike Edgley

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Activity increasing in Docklands

It's hard to believe we're already heading into Easter holidays, and as a business owner, the end of the financial year seems like it's just around the corner.

WORDS BY *Daniel Hibberd*
PRESIDENT



So, how has Docklands been performing for those of us so invested in seeing it thrive once again?

Firstly, I am pleased to report that our local economy continues to show signs of resilience in the face of ongoing challenges. While we are not yet out of the woods when it comes to the impact of COVID-19, we have seen a steady increase in foot traffic and economic activity in recent months, with city worker foot traffic at 77.4 per cent in February, up from 60 per cent at the end of January. With footy off to a flying start at Marvel Stadium and corporates reporting to us that they're consistently coming in at least three days a week for larger-style collaboration and team building events, our local businesses have risen to the occasion by providing high-quality experiences for our visitors.

There are also a number of exciting events coming up that set to drive visitation. Of course, the Grand Prix and Melbourne Comedy Festival are massive highlights, as will be the seven AFL games in April at Marvel.

Historically many small to medium businesses have been supported by transient foot traffic

moving in and out of the Docklands precinct for work purposes within national corporate offices, as well as the residential community. With the current absence of full occupancy in offices, what really excites me is the potential of reimagining our local economy by thinking creatively, laterally, or perhaps just ... big.

A brilliant local example of this is the Docklands Studio which has become home to the world's biggest virtual production film-making facility, with the unveiling this month of a 40-foot-high (12.19-metre), 6000-screen facility.

Called a "virtual production stage", it's a type of facility that has been dubbed the next big thing in film and TV. The studio is expected to attract major film and TV productions, which will bring additional spending to the area, including on accommodation, transport, and local businesses.

The project has received support from local government officials, who see it as a major opportunity to boost economic growth and development in the Docklands area.

Other creative ways we have seen office space filled here is by the opening of shared working spaces in the area, all which also bring talent from tech start-ups and emerging businesses into our precinct. All of these changes in our local workforce are encouraging and connect into our new vision of Docklands.

Of course, there are still challenges ahead, and we must continue to work together as a community to address them.

One area of concern top of mind for me is how our small businesses are adapting. There are a number of options we have to support businesses including the upcoming Small Business Bus scheduled to visit on April 5 at 850 Collins St, Docklands. The Small Business Bus is a mobile office on wheels, travelling throughout Victoria offering free one-on-one business advice and financial counselling services to current and prospective small business owners and operators.

A session can be made via the link below or walk-up on the day, subject to availability.



As we move forward into the month of April, I encourage all members of the Docklands Chamber of Commerce to remain engaged and involved in our community.

By working together, we can continue to build a strong and vibrant business precinct and community overall. ●



Easter at Queen Victoria Market

As Easter quickly approaches, Queen Victoria Market stalls are stocking up on everything you may need for a weekend full of fresh produce and yummy treats.

WORDS BY *Kaylah-Joelle Baker*

Gifts and decorations are also covered, with a unique selection of hand-painted chocolate eggs, Easter bun tea, bunny-shaped soaps, and handmade crafts available around the market.

Ambiance will be pivoting slightly from their usual Christmas-focused store to include a range of Easter decor, from garlands to centrepieces, jewelled eggs and Easter wreaths, while The Hellenic Deli and The Eggporium will have kits for do-it-yourself egg dyeing. ●

For more information:

qvm.com.au/easter

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QUIRKY CORNER

Eggs may be arriving early in Docklands this Easter

Docklanders were provided with an im-peck-able view early last month when a man was seen walking down NewQuay Promenade with a chicken on his shoulder.

Of the egg-cellent spotting, one resident described it as a "classic Docklands moment", saying that despite having lived in many places, it is definitely the first time he has seen a man in the city with a "shoulder chicken". ●

Got something quirky or unusual to share? Email it to admin@hyperlocalnews.com.au to be featured in next months the Quirky Corner!

STATE MP (UPPER HOUSE)

It's time for reform of Victoria's criminal justice system

The March release of the Justice Reform Initiative's Victorian State of Incarceration Report paints a harrowing picture of the problems facing our state's criminal justice system.

WORDS BY *Evan Mulholland*
MP FOR NORTHERN METROPOLITAN

The Victorian adult prison population now has grown by more than 32 per cent in the past decade, and we are now spending a billion dollars a year keeping Victorians locked up, an increase of 96 per cent over the same period. This is despite relatively stable levels of crime.

It shows that something is deeply wrong with

the way the Victorian Labor Government is overseeing our prison and rehabilitation systems.

In my inaugural speech I spoke about the need for us as Victorians to appeal to our better selves in dealing with the crisis of incarceration in our state, and the power of the value of redemption.

I believe Victorians are ready to appeal the human good in people and begin exploring better ways to combat the root causes of crime. The criminal justice system in our state does not differentiate between those that we are afraid of and those that we are just mad at, and our lack of nuance does both those we lock up, and our community a great disservice.

That is why under the leadership of John Pesutto, the Victorian Liberals have appointed this state's first ever Shadow Minister for Criminal Justice Reform in Brad Battin. It is time for new solutions. We cannot in good conscience spend yet another \$798 million to increase state prison capacity, which appears to be the only solution on offer from Labor.

We must prioritise community safety, but that does not mean we cannot find alternative punishments for people who should not be in prison. For non-violent offenders, such as low-level drug possession.

I believe Victorians would rather spend a small amount at the start of someone's interaction with the justice system on programs of rehabilitation than spend \$149,113 a year, every year, to keep them in prison. This is not only makes economic sense but is clearly a better outcome for society.

Current policy continues to lead to circumstances where many who are incarcerated cannot find a job once they leave prison and end up back there. The report found that 53.1 per cent of people in Victorian prisons have been there before. This means the government spends \$1.5 million per day on prisoners who have been incarcerated before. This recidivism disproportionately affects already vulnerable communities like First Nations people. ●

I firmly believe there are good human qualities to every Victorian, even those that have followed the wrong path at times. We should seek out the good in our fellow Victorians and always find a pathway to redemption. We can and must do better.



WE LIVE HERE

Aurora-gate exposes inadequate laws



The battle for the owners' corporation at Aurora Melbourne Central has underlined the woeful inadequacies of Victoria's strata laws and VCAT tribunal system.

The Aurora building, with a staggering 1000 apartments over 85 storeys, has been the centre of allegations of abusive, threatening behaviour, harsh rules and unlawful fines. The internet has been deluged with video evidence of ugly physical arguments in the corridors and lobby.

At the core of the dispute is the issue of proxies. In an extraordinary turnout, 200 owners logged onto a special general meeting to challenge the incumbent chair – only to be stymied by an astounding volume of proxies.

Residents have complained to Consumer Affairs Victoria and state politicians, only to be fobbed off and told it is a civil matter.

We have grave concerns that the Aurora-gate debacle may become the paradigm for apartments across Melbourne. Our contacts in the industry tell us that many unscrupulous committees are exploiting the legal vacuum to breach strata laws and regulations with impunity.

If the Aurora mess had been in NSW or Queensland, those states' VCAT equivalents would have stepped in and appointed a manager. Why can't this happen in Victoria? Perhaps

because the Victorian Government seems to be committed to inertial indolence when it comes to legislative reform.

Last year the government introduced oddly timid laws that limit proxy holdings to five per cent. A chairperson would only need three supporters to subvert that intention if 20 per cent of the owners turn up to a meeting.

We Live Here can help apartment residents and owners build awareness about the problems exacerbated or caused by government inaction. If your building has a stacked committee or you are concerned about mismanagement or malfeasance, please contact We Live Here privately – details are below.

A public review of the *Owners Corporation Act*, first promised by the state government for 2021, was never conducted. The review is now vaguely slated for "sometime between 2023 and 2027". Victorians deserve better.

Green pressure Labor on short stays

"Short stay accommodation is almost entirely unregulated in Victoria, and it's making the rental crisis worse."

With this opening salvo, Greens spokesperson for renters' rights Gabrielle de Vietri MP announced a new campaign pressuring the Victorian Labor Government to introduce short-stay regulations.

Ms de Vietri went on to say, "We need to introduce strong short-stay regulations to ensure affordable housing is available to families and workers experiencing housing stress. Cities around the world like New York, London, and Berlin regulate their short-stay market, it's time

for us to do the same."

The Greens propose:

- A 90-day cap on how many nights a year you can rent out an entire property as a short-stay.
- Allowing owners' corporations to regulate short-stays for properties of absentee owners.
- A new mandatory public register of short-stay operators.

We Live Here applauds the wider socioeconomic view being taken by the Greens.

Campaign donations

As a non-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 welfarehere.net or email campaign@welfarehere.net ●

For more information:
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What's on: April 2023



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 Library at the Dock

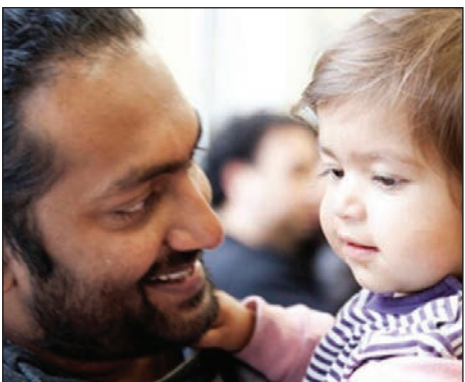


WEDNESDAY, APRIL 5. 10AM - 4PM.
SMALL BUSINESS BUS: BUSINESS ADVICE
 Business advisors from Monarch Institute can help you with 1:1 tailored advice to help you start, build, or transform your small business. Confidential sessions are 45mins, free-of-charge. Book at Business Victoria website.
 850 Collins Street, Docklands

UNTIL NOVEMBER 27
LIBRARY CINEMA (FREE)
 Last Monday of every month, 3pm to 5pm.
 Come along for contemporary, classic and documentary films on the big screen. Feel free to stay for snacks and a chat afterwards.
 Library at The Dock

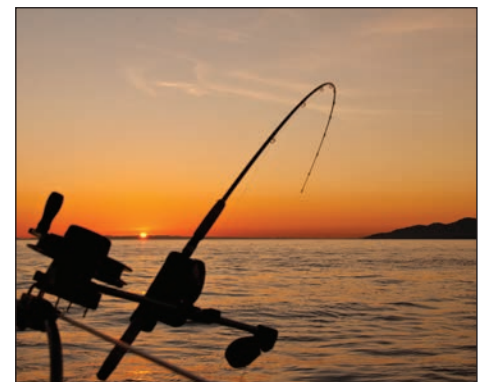


UNTIL DECEMBER 31
MAKERS MARKET AT THE DISTRICT
 Last Sunday of every month, 11am to 4pm.
 Enjoy live entertainment and creative, colourful market stalls showcasing art, craft, jewellery, fashion, homewares, gifts, and delicious homemade and homegrown produce.



UNTIL DECEMBER 7
PRESCHOOL STORYTIME
 Every Thursday, 10:30am to 11:15am.
 Share the wonder of books with your preschooler at this storytime session with stories, songs, rhymes and activities. Ages 3 to 5 years; no bookings necessary.
 Library at The Dock

WEDNESDAYS AND WEEKENDS
SOCIAL FISHING CLUB
 Sessions will run every Wednesday afternoon and on weekends. Details for specific times can be found on Docklands Neighbourhood House's Facebook, or call The Centre on 9328 1126.
 Rods and bait are supplied, so just come along for a good time. All ages welcome.



10 YEARS ON

Looking back at Docklands News - 10 Years On

APRIL 2013 | ISSUE 85 |

DOCKLANDS NEWS

Cracked windows becoming customary

A window at the Customs House in Docklands cracked last month causing a lane of traffic on LaTrobe St to close for more than five hours.

The incident happened on March 6, with the road closed from around 3.30pm until after 9pm.

Police blocked off the patch of LaTrobe St in front of the building as a precaution while the fire brigade worked to secure the window.

The windows in the building are double sided with a layer of glass internally and a layer externally. The internal window had cracked but there was minimal risk of the window falling onto the road.

The window was removed and boarded up and Digital Harbour precinct manager Mark Newbegin said the cause of the break was now being investigated.

It's the second time a window in the building has broken and required the assistance of emergency services.

Mr Newbegin did not disclose the cause of the first break but said he no longer believed this explanation to be correct and that further investigation was required to determine the cause of both breaks.



Mr Newbegin declined to comment on whether last month's heatwave was a factor in the window breaking as further investigation was required. ●

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