



Alive limbos under the Bolte Bridge

Docklands News photographer Hanna Komissarova captured the incredible moment on March 13 when the mini-maxi yacht *Alive* was forced to engineer its way onto its side to squeeze under the Bolte Bridge, safely arriving in Docklands as it awaited its scheduled start in the Melbourne to Osaka yacht race. More on page 13

Future of Docklands’ heritage fleet still under threat despite six-month extension

“Development Victoria (DV) has backflipped from its original decision to terminate the leases of Docklands’ heritage fleet operators in June by granting them a six-month extension to remain at North Wharf until the end of the year.”

WORDS BY  
SEAN CAR



DV’s decision to extend the leases of the fleet, which includes the *Alma Doepel*, *Enterprise* and steam tug *Wattle*, was announced on March 13 – around 10 days after they were given four months’ notice to vacate the wharf to make way for Lendlease’s ongoing Collins Wharf development.

DV’s original actions infuriated the operators of the *Alma Doepel*, who have been restoring the ship in Docklands for the past 16 years, providing much-needed activation and celebrating the area’s rich maritime heritage.

The not-for-profit restoration project is in its critical final stages, and its leaders plan for a return to water as a sail training and educational vessel for youth development in 2026. The *Alma Doepel*’s current Shed 2 site provides essential workshop and storage facilities.

DV had informed representatives from *Alma Doepel* during a meeting on March 3 that it had been unable to find a solution to keep the ship in Docklands but had explored a potential move to Seaworks in Williamstown on its behalf.

Docklands News understands that Seaworks doesn’t have any berths available for two years.

The only other solution understood to have been discussed was a move to the Bolte West site at Yarra’s Edge, however the area isn’t viable due to the height of the Bolte Bridge in this location being lower than the *Alma*’s masts.

Following the meeting, Matt McDonald, chair of Waypoint Foundation, which owns the *Alma Doepel*, told *Docklands News*: “DV is yet to provide a suitable alternative facility. They have been aware of our operations

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Government puts Mission to Seafarers building out to tender

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Major overhaul for the Docklands Chamber of Commerce



BUSINESS, PAGE 5

Alpaka: a sleek and functional brand finds its home in

Eight years ago, Alpaka was born from a business thesis at RMIT. It has now come full circle, setting up its flagship store in Docklands – a location that holds deep significance for the brand’s origins.

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# Development Victoria: how has it come to this?

It's a fair question many people have been asking since this government agency, born out of Docklands, effectively gave our heritage fleet the boot from its home in Victoria Harbour, initially with as little as four months' notice.

WORDS BY  
SEAN CAR



While its interest in activating the precinct has whittled away to next to nothing over the years, no-one could ever have imagined Development Victoria (DV) could treat these treasured maritime assets in this way. As it approaches its inevitable exit from Docklands (understood to be around 2030), DV's agenda for the area seems to have become solely centred around "building homes" and leaving placemaking headaches for others to worry about later. While there are still people in the government agency who maintain a genuine interest in doing the Docklands project justice, they seem to have become overrun by real estate agents masquerading as public servants. How can anyone in DV seriously justify evicting the heritage fleet in March, ordering them out of Docklands by June, and claiming no extensions were possible, only to cave to pressure and extend their leases by six months? To answer the aforementioned question, it should never have come to this. But that doesn't go far enough in explaining how DV created this situation in the first place – one that has left these heritage vessels now in a desperate race against the clock.

The support DV has shown the heritage operators over the years can't be overlooked. The sheds they have occupied along North Wharf for many years are a testament to that. But that generosity will all count for nothing if they can't find a new home. Yes, they have all known for years that Lendlease would one day be continuing its development along the wharf. All they asked for was due notice and some support in maintaining their presence in Docklands – a commitment DV has previously given. In its own Community and Place Plan from 2012, it lists under "community priorities": "Facilitate the development of berths for heritage vessels, including the Alma ...". So, where are they supposed to go? For anyone who attended the crisis meeting convened by the Melbourne Maritime Heritage Network (MMHN) on March 25, they would have perhaps left the discussion feeling a sense of helplessness. Neither the Alma Doepel nor steam tug Wattle are operational. Their supporters still require time beyond the end of this year to restore their vessels, and now faced with eviction, they have no workshop space to carry out this mission. The costs associated with their relocation will also eat away at precious funds these not-for-profit organisations have set aside for returning their boats to water. All operators, including the Enterprize, also come with a lot of "stuff". It's one thing to move the vessels to other locations, but they need onshore facilities accessible to where they're moored. The consensus that seemed to emerge among stakeholders at the March 25 meeting was that, for the Alma and Wattle in particular, the focus must now be centred on becoming operational again. While this makes finding another berthing location in Victoria Harbour a reality with the support of the City of Melbourne,

it still doesn't solve the issue of a permanent berth. Talks of a new operational precinct at Yarra's Edge only suit Wattle and Enterprize – the Alma is unable to access it due to the low clearance at that point of the Bolte Bridge. Then there's the long shot of relocating the floating barge ATET and using it as a temporary berth. But this would require significant investment to restore and fit out with the appropriate facilities, not to mention the question of ownership and the current legalities surrounding it. The obvious solution for keeping the fleet together seems to be over at NewQuay abutting Ron Barassi Snr Park, but DV's acting group head precincts Imogen Lewis told Docklands News it was "currently not suitable". "Development Victoria has previously investigated short-term uses for the site; however, it is currently not suitable as there are no services such as water, electricity or access to the water," Ms Lewis said. DV goes on to claim that there is no wharf or mooring opportunity "given the deterioration of the seawall in this location," but this, as well as the issues around power and water, are hardly impossible challenges. Fitzgeralds – the company tasked with demolishing Central Pier – has constructed a gangway to get over the seawall to the pontoon at the neighbouring NewQuay West site, where it is currently transporting the pier's remains to. The only thing getting in the way of progress seems to be a government agency that has completely lost its way. If DV has any interest in leaving behind a positive legacy in Docklands and doing what's right by our heritage fleet, the least it could do is honour its commitments and spend the time and money necessary in making the space at Ron Barassi Snr Park a reality. ●

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# Future of Docklands' heritage fleet still under threat despite six-month extension

Continued from page 1.

and requirements for many years and have made numerous commitments to a long-term home for *Alma Doepel* in Docklands."

"It is disappointing to now be told to leave Docklands with no viable alternative," Mr McDonald said, adding that it had received a previous commitment from DV "for a future home for the *Alma Doepel* in Docklands for more than a decade."

"After all of the work, meetings, plans and advocacy to now end up with ship getting kicked out of Docklands is extremely disappointing."

After receiving the news, the *Alma Doepel* team launched a community campaign titled "Restoration, Not Relocation", which had raised more than \$9000 and attracted more than 1300 signatures to a petition at the time of publication.

DV told *Docklands News* in February that any extension of licence agreements at North Wharf wasn't possible. However, on March 13 it informed operators that its tenures had been extended by six months up to the end of 2025.

DV's acting group head precincts Imogen Lewis told *Docklands News* that it had provided "substantial financial support to the heritage fleet, maintaining workshop and berthing facilities for the vessels at no charge over the last 16 years at North Wharf."

"We will continue to work with heritage fleet until their licence expires and help them consider alternative locations as we make way for 900 more homes to be built in Docklands," Ms Lewis said.

"Development Victoria and Lendlease have worked to provide additional time for the heritage fleet to remain at North Wharf. As a result, Development Victoria can offer an extension of six months at Shed 2 and the associated berthing, until the end of 2025."

"We recognise the importance of providing time to determine a suitable alternative location for the fleet's workshop and vessels, and we will continue to work with them to explore viable relocation options."

Mr McDonald welcomed the news as a "small reprieve" and said it would be continuing its campaign to establish a long-term home.

The *Alma's* restoration director Dr Peter Harris said after all the "blood, sweat and tears" given by volunteers, supporters and shipwrights over the years, the risk of losing its home in Docklands was "heartbreaking".

"The history of the *Alma Doepel* and Docklands are inextricably linked. She is the last of the ships that operated commercially from the port prior to redevelopment, she is cherished by the Docklands community and belongs in Docklands," Dr Harris said.

The *Alma Doepel* was first seen in



Victoria Harbour as a trading cargo ship in 1916 and visited the harbour regularly throughout her commercial life. The ship returned to Docklands in 1978 and has called the area home for the majority of the past 50 years.

The height of the Bolte Bridge was built to enable the *Alma's* masts to pass underneath.

Despite having publicly supported the heritage fleet's long-term presence in Docklands and even previously committed to helping establish a permanent home, DV says Lendlease was now "advancing the staged development of Collins Wharf".

DV said the heritage fleet's current home at Shed 2 had always been presented as an interim solution and noted that it would need to relocate when development was ready to occur.

It added that it had provided significant support to the fleet, including around \$800,000 in costs over a 16-year period to maintain workshop and berthing facilities as well as payment of utilities and all outgoing.

While the extension provides all stakeholders with a last-ditch opportunity to establish a permanent home in Docklands for the fleet, which is considered critical for the area's long-term activation, a viable solution remains unclear.

*Docklands News* reported last year that DV was planning to relinquish its authority

over Docklands by 2030, and long-term activation of the precinct will largely fall under the auspices of the City of Melbourne.

The council, which currently manages much of the waterway operations in Victoria Harbour and Yarra's Edge, said it currently had no suitable alternative locations in Docklands that offered both an onshore workshop and berthing facilities for the fleet's restoration needs.

"Docklands has a rich maritime history – and we continue to support the fleet in identifying potential sites for relocating and restoring heritage vessels," a City of Melbourne spokesperson said.

Melbourne Maritime Heritage Network (MMHN) chair and former City of Melbourne councillor Dr Jackie Watts said MMHN was "seriously dismayed at recent actions by DV to, in effect, oust the heritage fleet from Victoria Harbour."

"DV continues to ignore strong Docklands precinct community support for the presence of the heritage fleet in Victoria Harbour. Instead, DV continues to pander to the accelerating demands of commercial property developer, Lendlease, on North Wharf," Dr Watts said.

MMHN convened a forum on the "dire situation" of the heritage fleet to be held at the Library at the Dock on March 25, which was attended by around 70 stakeholders, however no-one from DV attended the event. ●

## Renewed calls for public transport to be accelerated to Fishermans Bend

Infrastructure Victoria has called for the state government to start building tram routes to Fishermans Bend by 2030, while urging it to "start preparing now" for the Melbourne Metro 2 train project.

WORDS BY  
SEAN CAR



The state's independent infrastructure advisory body released "Victoria's draft 30-year infrastructure strategy 2025-2055" last month for community consultation, which remains open until April 28 via Engage Victoria.

Melbourne Metro 2, which proposes a new underground train tunnel from Clifton Hill to Newport via Docklands and Fishermans Bend, is one of several projects Infrastructure Victoria has called on the government to start planning for now.

In June last year, the state government announced its preferred route for the train tunnel, which included a new station in the heart of Docklands on Bourke St, as well as two new stations in Fishermans Bend. However, Yarra's Edge residents are also urging the government to include a new station in its neighbourhood for the growing Lorimer precinct.

While acknowledging that Metro 2 is a longer-term project, the strategy implores the government to get on with delivering two critical tram connections to Fishermans Bend; one from Anzac Station to Fishermans Bend North, and the other from Southern Cross Station to Fishermans Bend South.

Infrastructure Victoria says its research forecasts tram services to the precinct will reach capacity by the mid-2030s, and that planning for Metro 2 now was essential.

"To achieve the 80,000 jobs and 80,000 residents anticipated for the precinct, Fishermans Bend will need a new train line. The Melbourne Metro 2 project provides this," its strategy states.

It estimated the costs to deliver both tram routes over five years between \$1 billion and \$1.4 billion and noted that the state government could also seek additional funding from the federal government.

While the state government has previously mooted building a controversial tram bridge through Yarra's Edge between Collins and Hartley streets, Infrastructure Victoria has instead proposed an extension to route 11 that would see the Fishermans Bend South route divert from Collins St along Spencer St to eventually connect with Plummer St in Port Melbourne. ●



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## Government puts Mission to Seafarers building out to tender

The Victorian Government's Department of Transport and Planning (DTP) has invited expressions of interest from commercial operators to activate the heritage-listed Mission to Seafarers building in Docklands.

WORDS BY  
SEAN CAR



The property has been the subject of much speculation since 2021 when the state government partnered with the City of Melbourne to conduct a feasibility study on its future use.

The not-for-profit Mission to Seafarers Victoria, which has operated from the building at 717 Flinders St in Docklands since 1917, currently leases the building from the state government for a peppercorn sum.

But with the increased costs of maintaining the heritage building, the state government, with the council's support, has sought to find ways of activating what it considers to be an underutilised asset.

DTP said it was now inviting expressions of interest from "commercial managers with industry knowledge to spearhead the development" of the site, to be lodged between March 6 and April 5.

"The site is located in the South Wharf precinct within walking distance from the Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre, DFO South Wharf and the promenade eateries," the EOI description reads.

"The historically significant Mission to Seafarers heritage-listed building is located on site and occupied by the Mission to Seafarers Victoria, and in future the Melbourne Seafarers Centre Inc."

"The selected commercial manager will be tasked with implementing a comprehensive commercial strategy aimed at ensuring the site's sustained viability and efficient management under a long-term commercial tenancy arrangement."

"There is substantial potential to optimise the site's utilisation through the implementation of a refined operational framework.

To support this endeavour, DTP will provide partial funding to the appointed commercial manager."

It's understood that the Mission to Seafarers Victoria would still maintain a presence in the building as part of any future activation under a commercial arrangement between the government and its chosen operator.

Developer of the Seafarers project, Riverlee, which is currently transforming the neighbouring former Goods Shed No.5 site into a mixed-use development, is understood to be one party interested in activating the Mission building.

Riverlee is also delivering the new 3500sqm Seafarers Rest Park adjoining the two sites, which is one of the first major components of the City of Melbourne's signature Greenline project that was expected to open last year.

In response to questions from *Docklands News* regarding its interest in the Mission to Seafarers building, a Riverlee spokesperson said it wasn't able to comment at this stage as the government's tender process was still ongoing.

It's also not clear when Seafarers Rest Park will open to the public, with hoardings remaining up around the site.

However, development of its Seafarers project is progressing well in preparation for its expected opening this year, with Riverlee recently announcing the completion of the building's façade in late January.

Led by Riverlee in collaboration with renowned firms, including Fender Katsalidis, Oculus, CARR design and ODO, the \$600 million Seafarers project has reimaged the heritage-protected Goods Shed No. 5.

It will feature a limited collection of 114 luxury hotel-branded residences and 277 guest rooms as part of Australia's first 1 Hotel & Homes. ●



## Alpaka: a sleek and functional brand finds its home in Docklands

Eight years ago, Alpaka was born from a business thesis at RMIT. What started as a Kickstarter campaign for a single messenger bag has now grown into a globally-recognised brand specialising in sleek, weatherproof everyday carry (EDC) bags.

WORDS BY  
GEORGIE ATKINS



Alpaka has come full circle, setting up its flagship store in Docklands – a location that holds deep significance for the brand's origins.

"The first Kickstarter campaign was shot in and around Docklands, so Docklands is a very meaningful part of the brand history for Alpaka," brand experience and content manager, Gelo Acosta, said.

Alpaka's focus has always been on designing products that balance functionality and aesthetics.

"The goal was to create sleek, travel and urban-tested, weatherproof bags that can be great everyday bags," Mr Acosta said.

"They don't look like hiking bags, but they're still highly functional."

The brand caters to a niche yet growing subculture of consumers known as EDC enthusiasts.

"EDC is a subculture of the carry consumer market, that's our primary audience. But since opening the retail business, we've also started catering to CBD workers, students, young professionals, and the public,"

Mr Acosta said.

The decision to open Alpaka's first flagship store in Docklands was an easy one, with Mr Acosta sharing that the location was one of the main reasons for opening an in-store retail experience.

"The idea was for it to be just an event and local community space," he told *Docklands News*.

"We run a lot of events with our brand partners, as well as educational partners like RMIT. But when we opened the showroom, local residents just started treating it like a normal store. They walked in, asked about the bags, and bought them."

Beyond selling high-quality bags, Alpaka is committed to fostering a vibrant community, such as through participation in the upcoming District Docklands Easter egg hunt, as well as recently hosting a watch launch for a local micro-brand.

For Mr Acosta, who started as a fan of the brand, working at Alpaka is a full-circle moment.

"I didn't even know they were Melbourne-based until four years ago. I supported their first Kickstarter while living in London," he said.

"The brand's tagline is 'Keep Moving Forward', and that's how I've been living my life – moving from the Philippines to London, LA, and now Melbourne."

With an office, a design workshop, and plans for a dedicated photo and video studio, Alpaka hopes to embed themselves as part of the Docklands community for the long haul.

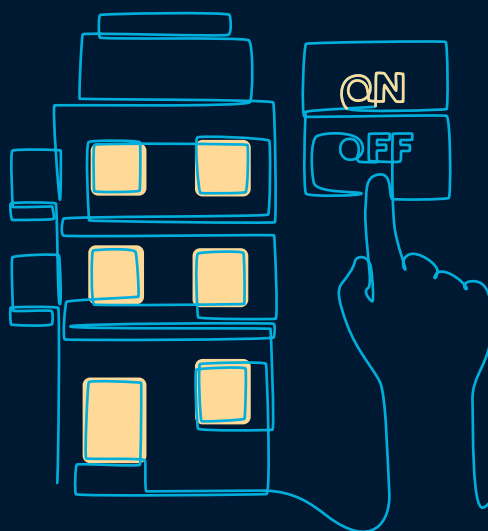
"We're pretty much a Docklands local now, I even moved here five months ago," Mr Acosta said.

More than just a retail store, Alpaka is a hub for community engagement, innovation, and stylish, functional carry solutions. ●

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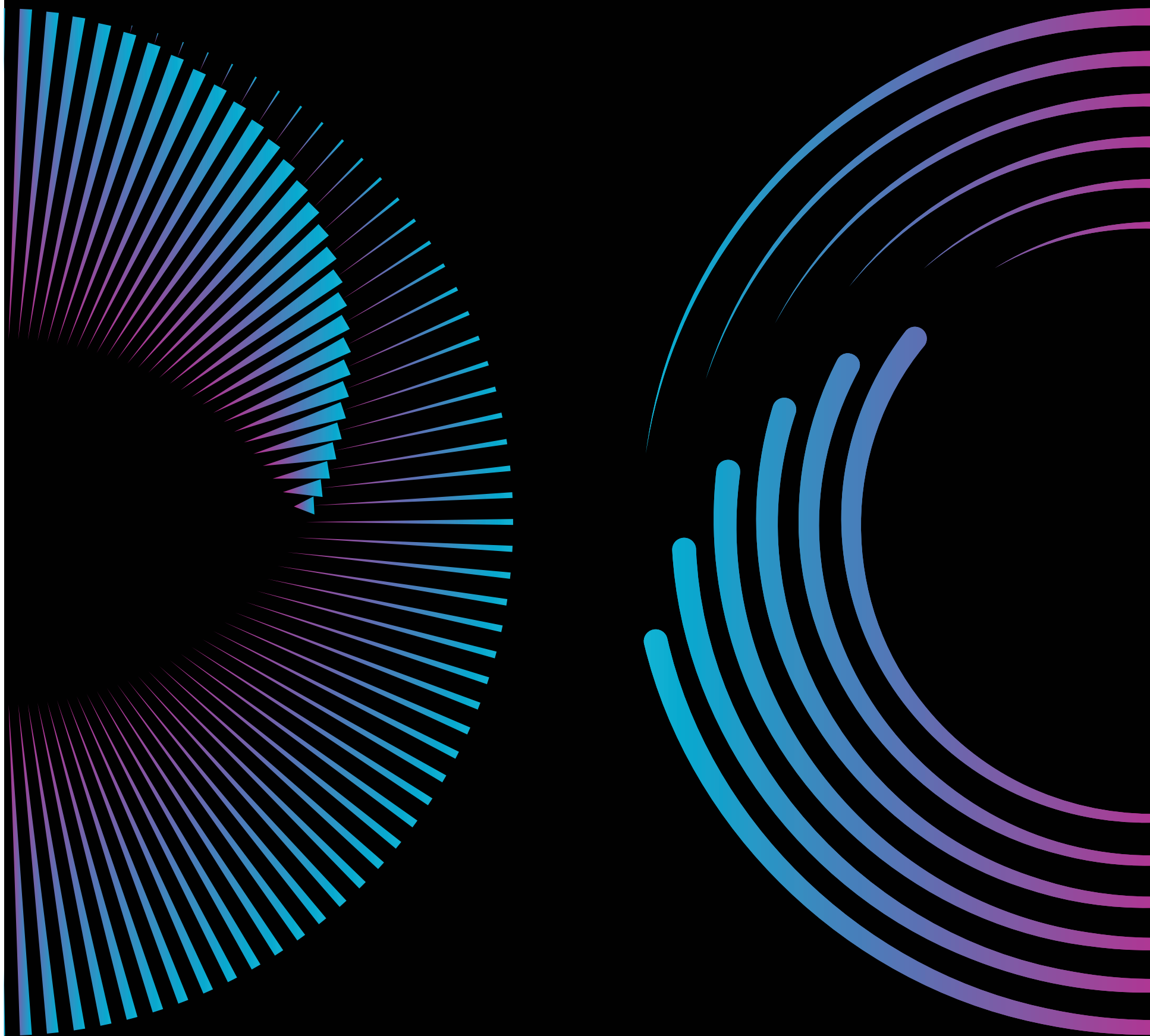
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# “Helping people is in my DNA”: Gladys Liu’s community-driven vision for Melbourne

“

The City of Melbourne has welcomed another new face to Town Hall, with Gladys Liu stepping into her role as a newly-elected councillor.

”

WORDS BY  
GEORGIE ATKINS



A former federal MP, as well as a businesswoman and speech pathologist, Cr Liu brings a diverse background and a passion for community service to the position.

Reflecting on her campaign success having won election via Lord Mayoral candidate Anthony Koutafides’ councillor ticket, Cr Liu shared her enthusiasm for engaging with residents and businesses.

“During the campaign, I got the chance to meet with so many wonderful people and hear about what matters to them,” she said.

“I feel that has prepared me very well for the job that I am now so lucky to do.”

Cr Liu’s journey to the council has been shaped both personally and professionally by her experiences as a young migrant having fostered a deep understanding of the challenges faced by international

students and newcomers to Melbourne.

“I came here as an international student. I still remember I had no family, no friends, no money, and I spoke very little English at the time,” she said.

“I can understand what young people are going through, and I’m very glad that the City of Melbourne warmly welcomes international students, and we are fully behind them.”

Cr Liu’s career has spanned speech pathology, business ownership and politics, including her tenure as the federal member for Chisholm from 2019 to 2022.

“After being elected as a federal member of parliament in 2019, that gave me the chance to understand even more about the running of government, and that prepared me for the role that I have today,” Cr Liu told *Docklands News*.

Despite her experience in federal politics, Cr Liu finds local government to be uniquely fulfilling.

“A lot of people see a federal member of parliament as higher up or more powerful, but at the end of the day, I find that people care more about the environment around them and whether they have enough things like parks and transport,” she said.

“These are the things that people are concerned about, more than the big topics that you and I may hear [about] in the news.”

Cr Liu is also a passionate advocate for accessibility and inclusion, having lived with hearing loss for most of her life.

“I’m totally deaf in my left ear. That made me humble and able to relate to people living with a disability.”

As deputy head of the Disability Advisory Committee and head of the Community Health and City Services portfolio, she hopes to improve services for people with disabilities and those experiencing social



COUNCILLOR PROFILE

isolation.

“Loneliness is quite a big issue, especially in the City of Melbourne, where we have the highest number of people living on their own,” she said.

Cr Liu’s commitment to health and well-being extends beyond politics, becoming a certified fitness instructor last year.

“A lot of people my age say, ‘I’m too old, I can’t move,’ but I wanted to set an example

and help those who don’t believe they can do it.”

As she settles into her new role, Cr Liu is optimistic about the future of the City of Melbourne and her contributions to the community.

“I want people to know that I am accessible. If anyone feels that they have an issue, a question, or something to share, please get in touch.” ●

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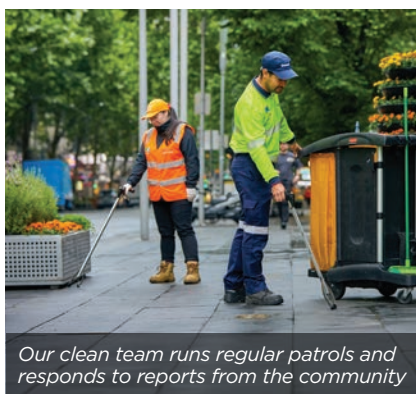
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Photo: Sapphic Flicks

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# Major overhaul mooted for Docklands Chamber of Commerce funding structure

Docklands could house the City of Melbourne's first "Business Innovation District" (BID) following an independent review of its business precinct program (BPP), which funds the Docklands Chamber of Commerce (DCC).

WORDS BY  
SEAN CAR



The DCC is one of 10 "precinct" or trader associations supported under the council program, which has been the subject of a recent SGS Economics and Planning review that went before councillors for consideration at its March 25 meeting.

More than 1200 businesses across the municipality are currently members of precinct associations. These include the Yarra River Business Association (representing Southbank and South Wharf), Carlton Inc., Collins Street Precinct, City Precinct, Melbourne Chinatown Business Association, Kensington Business Association, Lonsdale St Greek Precinct, Melbourne City North Association and the North & West Melbourne Business Association.

While the SGS review put forward a series of recommendations to strengthen and build on the current precinct program, its most significant proposal looks set to be rolled out in Docklands in the form of the city's first BID pilot.

According to Main Street Australia, a BID is a defined area within which businesses are required to pay an additional tax (or levy) to fund projects within the district's boundaries.

Globally, they're considered to be a useful economic development model, having been seen in other countries including Canada, the US, UK and Germany, as well as locally in municipalities such as Stonnington and Boroondara.

In its report, SGS stated that the council could focus on "testing the appetite for and feasibility of a pilot BID program" in Docklands by engaging stakeholders to assess willingness to participate in a "special rate scheme".

Under the current precinct program, businesses are required to pay on average \$50 each year to become a member of a trader association, which some groups reported as presenting a barrier.

Some associations said there was often a "reluctance" for some businesses to join based on a range of factors, including additional cost, a "what's in it for them" mentality or "confused perceptions" about a precinct association's role and authority.

A special rate scheme underpinning the proposed BID model for Docklands would instead see membership funded as a levy



Lord Mayor Nick Reece and Docklands Chamber of Commerce president Dan Hibberd.  
Photo: Hanna Komissarova

through a business's rates, which is considered an effective way of getting more businesses to buy in to the work of their association and generate more revenue.

The legislative infrastructure is in place to enable the formation of BIDs in the City of Melbourne as it relates to the introduction of special rates schemes under the Local Government Act 2020.

For such a scheme to be established, clear alignment is required between the incidence of the special rate and the flow of benefits from the funded works and services, and "a majority of affected ratepayers agree to the introduction of the special rate".

The City of Stonnington has previously levied a \$1.8 million per annum special rate to fund marketing and programming to promote visitation and sales in the Chapel St activity centre.

However, the scheme was terminated following adverse audit reports, which pointed to lapses in financial accountability and opened the Stonnington council up to legal challenges from local businesses.

In its report, council management said Stonnington's experience presented "an important lesson that governance structures for BID type schemes need to be robust and open to council and public scrutiny".

Under a public-private partnership with the council, the SGS review said such a scheme could "support significantly scaled efforts in marketing, infrastructure improvement and capacity building".

"This would require the development of a costed BID program and conceptualisation of a suitable governance structure which shares oversight between council and

traders," the report stated.

"A targeted rate in Docklands could be expected to generate between \$500,000 and \$1 million per year. Pending the resolution of these matters, the work of the BPP program, including council's financial commitment, could be folded into a pilot Docklands BID as a supplement to resources raised via the targeted rate."

With the council's current four-year BPP (2021-25) to end on June 30, councillors unanimously endorsed a series of recommendations on March 25 for the program over the next two financial years.

Under the current program, associations were eligible for up to \$120,000 in years three and four should they register more than 300 members.

In response to the review, council management proposed continuing the current program "with improvements", including enhanced governance and accountability measures, increasing available funding to a maximum of \$130,000 per annum and providing clearer program objectives.

The council said it would also consult with property and business owners on the appetite for a BID in Docklands, as well as the Collins Street Precinct Group, adding that it would also investigate additional BIDs in precincts across the city.

The council's city economy and business portfolio lead Cr Kevin Louey, who has been involved with the BPP for nearly 20 years, thanked the many volunteers who worked across all the associations.

"I've seen it [the BPP] grow, I've seen the many volunteer hours that have gone into running all of these 10 geographic precincts that we have spread across our city – both

in the city, as well as the fringes," Cr Louey said.

"So, they all do a different type of activation but all of them put their heart and soul into activating their little part of town ... I've got to thank them for all they do and the committees that strive to achieve the goals for their members as well."

Lord Mayor Nick Reece said he was "a big fan" of the program.

"I think the teams of people behind precincts do incredible work for our city and make a real difference," Cr Reece said.

"I think some of the outcomes we get from our precinct associations is truly remarkable and I feel like they make the council dollar go a long, long way in those business precincts so, thank you, to our business precinct presidents and teams."

In its report tabled to councillors on March 25, City of Melbourne management cited several successful initiatives of its current program across the city that "drive visitation, enhance vibrancy, and boost our local economy".

In Docklands, it referenced the DCC's Docklands Dollars program from 2022-23, which saw the chamber partner with Lendlease, MAB, Mirvac and The District Docklands to launch a \$100,000 rebate for residents to shop and support local traders.

"This highly successful initiative drove extra visitation and spend to Docklands at a time when the precinct most needed it. This included a \$9.30 return for every \$1 spent and an average redemption of \$134," the report stated.

However, in its "outlook" for the DCC, the council described its current state as "improving, but requires council's attention", stating that Docklands remained a "priority area for council intervention".

It comes off the back of the DCC's recent *Soul of Docklands* initiative – a storytelling campaign co-funded together with Docklands' four major developers – which struggled to achieve its desired outcomes.

However, it has more recently worked as part of the Docklands Stakeholder Group to deliver Docklands' first farmers market series, which has been well received by the community despite multiple cancellations due to heat and clashing with the Run for the Kids event in April.

"At the DCC we are encouraged more than ever about the positive collaboration with the City of Melbourne teams. The review of the precinct program was thorough, providing comprehensive feedback that was well rounded from all parties," DCC president Daniel Hibberd told *Docklands News*.

"We are eagerly awaiting the City of Melbourne to initiate conversations that enable us to understand more about the exciting opportunity of moving towards a BID system."

"We are now keen to engage with all Docklands businesses to understand their point of view on how the DCC can support them with an expanded program such as this." ●

# ADAM BANDT

## FEDERAL MP FOR MELBOURNE

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# Southern Cross Station working group yet to release new air-quality results

It has been 12 months since the Southern Cross Working Group was formed to examine and identify potential improvements to poor air quality at the station. However, while ongoing air-quality monitoring is taking place, no results have yet been made public.

WORDS BY  
JON FLEETWOOD



The working group includes members from the Department of Transport and Planning (DTP), the station owner Civic Nexus, V/Line, Kinetic (SkyBus), Metro Trains, and the Environment Protection Authority (EPA).

It is understood that as part of this, Civic Nexus regularly collects air-quality data and provides the results to the DTP on a monthly basis.

A DTP spokesperson told *Docklands News* that work was under way to further improve data collection to inform potential improvements within the Southern Cross Station precinct. However, this data has not been released for the public to see.

Previous air-quality results, which led to the formation of the working group, revealed that under the current standards, nitrous dioxide levels are more than 90 times the World Health Organisation's guidelines, largely due to diesel trains and buses.

Additionally, based on evolving knowledge of the carcinogenic nature of diesel particulate matter (DPM), new Safe Work Australia Workplace Exposure Limits (WEL) are set to take effect from December 1, 2026.

Last year, neighbouring resident Paul Smitz, who lives at Liberty Tower on Collins St, launched a petition calling on the Victorian Government to address the air pollution issues within the station.

The petition received close to 600 signatures and was tabled in the Legislative Assembly in November. However, while Mr Smitz acknowledges that progress has been made to improve air quality, the lack of transparency around the data provided to the DTP is "frustrating".

In February this year, the Australian Rail, Tram and Bus Union (RTBU) threatened to shut down the station unless more was done to improve air quality by reducing the "toxic fumes" caused by diesel engines from trains and buses.

Employees rallied at Southern Cross

Station in hazmat suits and masks to raise public awareness and demand action from their employers and other stakeholders.

State Secretary of the RTBU, Vik Sharma, said the union had attempted to engage with the company and the government about implementing new standards as soon as possible, rather than waiting until the new Safe Work Australia Workplace Exposure Limits (WEL) came into effect in 2026.

"Failure to implement changes that drastically improve air quality at the station will leave us no option but to escalate the campaign," he said. "This may include the need to shut down the station until a safe environment can be achieved."

However, despite the data not yet being released, several operational initiatives have been implemented to mitigate emissions within Southern Cross Station.

V/Line endeavours to keep train idling times to a minimum and has been working to further reduce them where operationally possible. Over the past three years, there has been a regular phase-out of locomotive-operated services.

The new fleets will comprise diesel-electric VLocity trains, with the Albury, Bairnsdale, and Shepparton lines already using these trains. Services on the Warrnambool line are expected to be operated by VLocitys from April 2025.

The EPA, which is involved in the working group, has also been conducting air-quality monitoring outside office premises on the southern side of the station and above the roof structure.

The monitoring aims to inform and assist with potential improvements, and to date, the ambient air quality has remained "generally" within the "good" hourly air-quality category range, an EPA spokesperson confirmed. ●

COMMUNITY 3008 INC.

## Join us on April 3

Our next Community3008 Inc. meeting will be held on Wednesday, April 3. Doors open at 6pm for a 6.30pm start at Library at the Dock.



This month, we're welcoming members of the *Alma Doepel* restoration team, who will share updates on the remarkable work under way to restore one of Melbourne's last remaining tall ships.

More than just a history lesson, this is a conversation about the future – about how we can ensure heritage vessels remain part of our Docklands identity.

Many of you will be aware that the *Alma* faces potential eviction from North Wharf this year due to the next phase of development in Docklands. It would be a huge loss to see this proud piece of maritime heritage displaced, especially when there may be an opportunity to create a permanent home for vessels like the *Alma* in the area currently being cleared by the Central Pier demolition. This is a chance to rally around an important part of our local story.

We'll also be joined by the acting Neighbourhood Partner from the City of

Melbourne, who'll introduce himself and provide a local government update. If you have questions, concerns or ideas to share, this is your space to speak up, connect, and help shape the future of our neighbourhood.

We're always looking to welcome more locals into the fold, especially families, young residents and anyone new to the Docklands. If you know someone who might like to get involved, bring them along! Community3008 is built on connection and shared voices.

And if you're interested in joining the committee, suggesting speakers, or just getting more involved, don't hesitate to reach out – we'd love to hear from you.

Contact us via email at [contact@community3008.org.au](mailto:contact@community3008.org.au) or Facebook [facebook.com/community3008inc](https://facebook.com/community3008inc) ●

## Gas works light up Harbour Esplanade

Gas and electricity giant APA Group is carrying out works in Docklands to prepare for repairs and maintenance.

WORDS BY  
JON FLEETWOOD



As part of this project, controlled flaring at the corner of Harbour Esplanade and Collins St began in Docklands in late February and is expected to continue until mid-April.

APA Group is an Australian company that owns and operates natural gas and electricity assets, and an APA spokesperson confirmed that the flaring was part of "routine" integrity works on the T16 Pipeline, which runs from Dandenong to West Melbourne.

"The pipeline plays an important role in the Victorian Transmission System, which supports Victoria's gas and energy needs for households, businesses, and industry," the APA spokesperson said.

"Flaring is a globally recognised engineering best practice for safely reducing gas pressure in pipelines. It is the safest and

most effective way to prepare the pipeline for repairs or maintenance while protecting the community and the environment."

This process has been carefully planned, and APA has implemented comprehensive safety measures to protect the environment and the public.

APA has been in close contact with residents, local businesses, the City of Melbourne, and the state and federal governments to ensure the community is aware of the work. ●

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## Your forever home awaits in the heart of Melbourne

640 Bourke Street is the quintessential Melbourne address, where heritage and modernity converge in a landmark development designed for contemporary living.

Anchored by the historic Eliza Tinsley building, an elegantly sculpted 68-storey tower rises, offering a refined collection of one-, two- and three-bedroom residences that speak to Melbourne's timeless character.

Designed by Rothelowman, each residence is purposefully crafted with generous floor plans, curated finishes, and an intelligent approach to spatial design. Inspired by the best in global apartment living, these homes offer a rare level of sophistication, balancing functionality with an eclectic design aesthetic. From the reimaged kitchen island and dining table to intricate art deco-inspired tiling, every detail has been considered.

Across 3000 square metres of amenities,

residents can curate their own daily rhythm. The Social House fosters connection with a whisky lounge, billiard room, and discreet speakeasy, while The Wellness House offers a fully equipped gym and restorative bathhouse. For select residents, Eliza Tinsley House provides an intimate retreat, complete with a cinema, art therapy room, and mindfulness lounge.

At street level, a new public plaza and boutique retail precinct create a vibrant city hub. Moreover, 640 Bourke Street offers breathtaking views of the city, with higher floors providing unobstructed panoramas of Melbourne's skyline, Port Phillip Bay, and beyond.

Positioned in the heart of Melbourne's most storied boulevard, residents are steps from Flagstaff Gardens, Queen Victoria Market, luxury shopping, and iconic laneways. With tram and train connectivity at the doorstep and arterial routes nearby, the entire city is within easy reach.

With residences from \$640,000 to \$3,950,000 and off-the-plan stamp duty savings available until October 2025, 640 Bourke Street presents a rare opportunity to secure a forever home in the heart of Melbourne. The Display Gallery opens late February, offering an exclusive preview before construction begins.

[640bourkest.com.au](http://640bourkest.com.au) ●

## FEDERAL MP

# Public housing tower demolition hits at the heart of our community

In Melbourne there's not enough affordable housing.

But with news that the State Government is demolishing our inner-city public housing towers, and with Labor confirming there will be no public housing rebuilt on the land at Flemington and North Melbourne after the towers are demolished, the problem is only going to get worse.

We can see the housing crisis everywhere we look. More and more people are sleeping rough.

Renters are making more and more sacrifices, while they worry about the arrival of an email from the real estate agency announcing the latest increase in the rent.

For people who are trying to buy their own home, the realisation that they don't stand a chance continues to rise.

House prices have soared and RealEstate.com is suggesting that rents could rise 20 per cent next year. Over the past three years in Melbourne, the rents on apartments in the CBD have already increased by 14 per cent.

Wages aren't keeping up. The housing market is cooked, which is why it's so hard to understand why the Victorian Labor government recently sent residents of the public housing towers in Flemington and North Melbourne a letter telling them that time is up, they'll have to go.

While the writing was on the wall, we had been hoping that there would be a reprieve, and that people would get to stay in their homes and not be forced to pack up and try and find somewhere to live.

This is not going to be easy, with public housing disappearing and rents increasing.

Ripping down people's homes, handing



off the land to private developers and pushing people out into the cold, is heartless.

People have lived in these places for years, building friendships, families and communities.

They've played sport together, shared meals, dealt with COVID lockdowns, fallen in love and found friends to rely on, but now their communities are being torn apart.

We need more public housing, not less. But Labor is washing its hands of the people who live in public housing.

Labor and the Liberals are funded by big banks and the property industry profiting from the housing crisis.

They both support unlimited rent increases and they're giving \$176 billion in tax handouts to wealthy property investors that deny renters the chance to buy their first home.

The Greens will keep fighting to stop the demolitions and build more public housing. In a wealthy country like ours, everyone deserves an affordable place to live. ●

## HEALTH & WELLBEING

# How to stay health-conscious this Easter

Easter is a time of celebration, but it often comes with an overload of chocolate and high-calorie treats. While occasional indulgences are part of a balanced lifestyle, mindful eating can help you enjoy the festivities without negatively impacting your health.

Data shows that most Australians don't eat enough whole foods, while nearly one-third of daily energy comes from ultra-processed foods. This imbalance increases the risk of chronic diseases, including heart disease and diabetes. "Instead of resorting to restrictive diets, adopting sustainable habits – such as prioritising whole foods and practicing portion control – leads to better long-term health outcomes," accredited practising dietitian at Docklands Health Amanda Huynh said.

### Strategies for a balanced Easter

1. Make nutrient-dense foods a priority  
Start meals with vegetables, whole grains, and lean proteins. This approach helps control hunger and ensures essential nutrients are consumed before indulging in treats.

2. Opt for dark chocolate over milk chocolate

Dark chocolate (70 per cent cacao or higher) is richer in antioxidants and has a more intense flavour, which naturally limits overconsumption. In moderation, it can even support heart health and reduce inflammation.

3. Balance treats with whole foods  
Pairing chocolate with nutrient-dense options like nuts or fruit enhances satiety and provides added vitamins, fibre, and healthy fats. This reduces the likelihood of overindulging in sugar-laden treats.

4. Incorporate movement into the festivities

Physical activity helps balance energy intake and promotes overall well-being. Simple activities such as a post-meal walk, an Easter egg hunt with kids, or



outdoor sports can help offset excess calorie consumption.

5. Hydrate before and after meals

Drinking plenty of water aids digestion and helps regulate appetite. If you're craving something sweet, a glass of water might curb unnecessary snacking.

6. Practice portion control

Mindful eating, using smaller plates, and savouring every bite can help prevent overeating. Instead of consuming an entire chocolate bunny at once, enjoy a small portion and save the rest for later.

7. Cook with cacao instead of processed chocolate

Instead of consuming chocolate with added sugars and fats, try healthier alternatives such as adding cacao to oats for a nutritious breakfast or use cacao powder in baking to create healthier Easter treats.

**A sustainable approach to enjoying Easter**  
"Rather than focusing on restriction, a balanced diet allows you to enjoy celebrations without guilt. By making small, mindful adjustments, you can indulge while still maintaining a health-conscious lifestyle – one that extends far beyond Easter," Ms Huynh said. ●

**Dr Mike Edgley**

CHIROPRACTOR

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# Calls for parking overhaul at Yarra’s Edge to deter hooning activity

A Yarra’s Edge resident is calling on the City of Melbourne to consider making substantial changes to car parking arrangements surrounding Point Park in response to past hooning activity seen in the area.

WORDS BY  
SEAN CAR



Resident Sean O’Brien told *Docklands News* last month that since developer Mirvac closed off large sections of the area to begin construction on its Trielle project in December last year, hooning activity had become “practically non-existent”. “I believe the reason that the issue has improved so substantially is simply because the car parking area along South Wharf Drive (between Mills Place and Point Park Crescent) was closed off in late 2024,” Mr O’Brien said.

However, he said residents were concerned that once Mirvac finished construction that hoons would return to the area, and have called on the council to use the opportunity to consider reforms in preparation for Trielle’s opening.

“Perhaps it could be closed off permanently and replaced with public gardens,” Mr O’Brien said. “Alternatively, various other strategies could be put in place.”

“For example, the City of Melbourne could install visual barriers to deter hoons from sitting around in the eatery areas near the

corner of South Wharf Drive and Point Park Crescent and just ‘looking’ at their parked hoon cars, which they always seemed to love doing when the parking was available on a Friday and Saturday night.”

“The high construction site walls that Mirvac has installed in the area has certainly stopped that.”

A City of Melbourne spokesperson said the council regularly monitored changes to street and parking conditions to help inform future planning, and that it would commence formal community engagement on parking in Docklands by early 2026.

“All on-street parking managed by the council across Docklands and Fishermans Bend will be reviewed – and we will be guided on areas for improvement identified by residents and businesses,” the spokesperson said.

The council also stated that feedback on parking conditions could be made by the community at any time online through Participate Melbourne.

But Mr O’Brien said the council’s response didn’t specifically refer to the hoon issue. “We don’t even know whether or not solving the hoon issue would be an objective of the City of Melbourne’s car parking review,” he said.

As previously reported by *Docklands News*, hooning activity has plagued the Yarra’s Edge community along Lorimer St and the area surrounding Point Park for several years over Friday and Saturday nights.

In 2019, residents formed a new action group in response to issues including dangerous driving, revving engines, “illegal parking” and antisocial behaviour, caused by regular weekend car and motorcycle meet-ups. ●



# Help shape the future of energy from your lounge room

What if your apartment could be more energy efficient, more comfortable and help save you money on power bills?

CSIRO, Australia’s national science agency, is inviting inner-city Melbourne households to take part in a national study exploring how apartment dwellers use energy. Whether you rent or own, you’ll receive \$1500 in smart home sensors and a personalised energy report, just for taking part.

In apartment buildings where 10 households sign up, CSIRO will fund a NABERS Apartment Building rating (valued at \$5000). This rating has helped other high-rise apartments cut common area energy and water costs by around 30 per cent thanks to improved performance insights.

It’s all part of the *Apartment Energy Behaviour Study*: Australia’s largest-ever investigation into household energy use.

Led by CSIRO senior research scientist Dr Pippa Soccio, the project aims to bring modern apartment living into Australia’s energy conversation.

With apartments now the fastest-growing housing type in many parts of Australia, this research is more relevant than ever. Most energy efficiency models were developed for 1950s detached houses and are based on outdated assumptions about how people live today.

“One such assumption is that households

start cooking dinner at 4pm using heat-intensive methods like roasting, grilling or frying,” Pippa said.

“But that doesn’t reflect how people live today, especially in apartments, which may not have large ovens, or any oven at all.”

To collect the real-world insights, CSIRO is installing small, renter-friendly devices in 430 apartments across Melbourne, Sydney, Darwin and Southeast Queensland – including 140 in central Melbourne. The devices discretely collect data on cooking habits, appliance usage and window-opening patterns, which influence energy use, indoor temperature, humidity and air quality.

Insights from the study will directly inform the Nationwide Housing Energy Rating Scheme (NatHERS), which sets minimum energy efficiency standards for Australian homes.

“This project is about giving people insights they wouldn’t otherwise have access to,” Pippa said.

“It’s not just about research, it’s about making a real impact on how Australian apartments are designed and lived in.”

CSIRO is currently shortlisting households in selected apartment buildings across inner Melbourne. If you’ve ever wondered whether your apartment could perform better on the energy front, now’s your chance to find out – and help shape the future of energy from the comfort of your couch.

To learn more and sign up, visit: [ahd.csiro.au/aebs](http://ahd.csiro.au/aebs) ●



# Football historian commended for his work looking at the AFL’s little-known history

Docklander Graham Pilkington has received a commendation at the Victorian Community History Awards for his journal article looking at the history behind one of Australia’s most popular and unique sports: Australian Rules Football.

WORDS BY  
ALEXANDRA RANDALL



*The Unusual Australian Football Scoring System: Six Behinds to a Goal* asks questions most footy followers likely take for granted, exploring the first four pioneering decades of the AFL, and, specifically, why a scoring system that awards missing came to be.

The idea for the project began at the AFL House in Docklands,



the national headquarters of the sport. Mr Pilkington told *Docklands News* that, following a visit there, he discovered there seemed to be limited knowledge about the iconic sport.

“I was talking to three historians, all distinguished guys, and I asked them why a goal is worth six points”, he said, adding that, “to my surprise, they didn’t have an answer for me.”

When Mr Pilkington initially began researching, he confirmed that there was little research on the topic, made more surprising

through the uniqueness of the scoring system.

“No other professional sport has a system like it, where it rewards a near miss, but no one had looked at it more than superficially,” he said.

He decided to be the one to fill this gap, initially writing what he described as a “jokey piece”, before deciding that was a “waste” of the research and converting it into an academic journal article.

Since its publication in the *Victorian Historical Journal*, it was shortlisted for the Victorian Community History Awards held in Southbank last month, which were hosted by Public Record Office Victoria and the Royal Historical Society of Victoria.

Much of his research involved trawling through old newspapers, and reading old copies of rules, the first being written in 1859. He traced the development of the behind, starting with the advent of it being recorded, but not counted

within the score to “show which team was more dominant and to give journalists of the time something to write about”.

Mr Pilkington knows his stuff about football and has lots of interesting facts to share. For example, he said footy originally developed to give the “lazy cricketers something to do in the winter”, and used to be played on a square field, with only the two goal posts and no points posts. A behind was a point scored when the ball landed outside the posts “behind goal”.

From the “high marking and high kicking game familiar today” to the now distant variation of AFL that would continue until one team kicked two goals, sometimes lasting all afternoon, Mr Pilkington believes understanding where you came from is key to truly knowing why the game endures to this day.

“If you know where you’ve come from, it helps understanding where you are at the moment”, he

said, before adding that this was not his only project on the little researched origins of AFL.

Other research includes the reasoning behind goal posts being a certain number of yards apart, and an examination of the Geelong Football Club post-World War One, in which two teams were entered alongside each other.

For the duration of his research, he was based in Docklands, reflecting that it was “a very nice place to live”, before adding that it “felt like a bit of a holiday when you come outside and see all the water with the boats on it”.

As for footy, Docklands is also an ideal location, with Marvel Stadium being in “a great position for all the teams and public transport next to Southern Cross [Station]. It’s great,” Mr Pilkington said.

“They’ve got a roof on a 50,000-seater ground. I mean, a lot of places don’t even have 50,000 seats - we have one with a roof.” ●



## Heritage fleet eviction – tell us what you think

A reminder that the core concern of Melbourne Maritime Heritage Network (MMHN) is advocacy and the proactive support of maritime heritage in many forms.

MMHN is therefore alarmed that Development Victoria (DV) has announced that it will evict heritage vessels from berths on North Wharf (Collins Wharf) in Victoria Harbour.

This has caused great distress. DV responded by delaying the eviction by six months.

This “reprieve” is simply inadequate for the vessels to become or remain operational.

The vessels require both on-water berths and nearby shed space for around two years. DV, the responsible authority, has provided no viable options for relocation of the heritage vessels.

On March 25, MMHN hosted a community forum at Docklands Library so that representatives from the heritage vessels *Alma Doepel*, *Wattle* and *Enterprise*, as well as the community, could meet to discuss the future of the heritage fleet in Victoria Harbour.

In an engaging discussion around the

challenges posed by DV's actions, we heard of the skilled work done by heritage vessel volunteers over so many years. We discussed relocation options and the next steps toward developing a combined, coordinated response to the looming eviction. Around 70 people attended the forum, yet DV, the responsible authority, refused to appear.

MMHN is coordinating a report summarising the comments that arose at the forum, to be sent to DV and the Minister for Precincts Harriet Shing. Share your thoughts via email at [info@mmhn.org.au](mailto:info@mmhn.org.au).

### Drama sailing under the Bolte Bridge

What a marvellous thing to be in the right place at the right time? You may have noticed the mini-maxi yacht *Alive* at the Melbourne City Marina on New Quay, awaiting its scheduled start on the gruelling Melbourne to Osaka yacht race (M2O).

Given that its mast is taller than the Bolte Bridge, entry into Victoria Harbour was not easy!

Some Docklanders may have watched the drama unfold under the careful scrutiny of the City of Melbourne Waterways Branch, who were nearby and ready to assist if necessary.

As the yacht slowly approached the Bolte Bridge, a crew member sat atop the mast, effectively forcing the mast to bend sideways. No good – the mast was still too tall!



The *Alive* circled back downstream, working on the next strategy to pass under the bridge. Plan B involved filling an enormous orange rubber bladder with water and hoisting it up the mast, tilting it further sideways before another attempt at passing under the bridge was made.

The Waterways Branch boat tied a rope to the prow of the yacht and delicately (and successfully) towed *Alive* under the Bolte. Just.

### HMAS Cerberus Base Open Day

An invitation: MMHN encourages the Docklands community to consider a day trip (one hour and 15 minutes away) to visit the Royal Australian Navy (RAN).

The HMAS Cerberus Base Open Day will

take place on Sunday, April 6 from 10am to 3.30pm at Sheean Avenue, Somers.

This is a special day for all maritime enthusiasts – a full day program of brief talks on a fascinating range of maritime topics.

In addition, you can attend the eagerly anticipated “soft opening” of the recently refurbished Cerberus Learning and Heritage Centre. Curator, Lawson Rennie, will share his insights into the Cerberus collection.

Program:

- 11am – Presentation: Australian Naval and Military Expeditionary Force 1914
- 12:30pm – Official Reopening
- 1pm – Presentation: Royal Australian Navy in the Korean War
- 2pm – Presentation: Women in the Royal Australian Navy
- 3pm – Presentation: N-Class Destroyers

For more information, see the RAN website: [navy.gov.au/community-engagement/events](http://navy.gov.au/community-engagement/events) ●

**Jackie Watts**

CHAIR

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## OWNERS' CORPORATION LAW

### New legislation to protect owners' corporations and homeowners slammed by builders' association

In a move that would surprise no-one at all, both the Master Builders Victoria (MBV) and Housing Industry Association (HIA) have issued a united rejection of the Victorian Government's proposed new building dispute resolution legislation, describing it as “unfair and unworkable”.

The Victorian Government is implementing a new government department to oversee all builders and plumbers in Victoria, and at the same time is introducing tough new legislation to protect owners' corporations (OC) and homeowners, and is designed to catch up to legislation in New South Wales and in Queensland.

The *Building Legislation Amendment (Buyer Protections 2025) Bill*, which was introduced into Parliament in late March, is intended to better protect consumers, but MBV and HIA say while the intent is laudable, the impact of the proposed changes goes way beyond protecting consumers and will unfairly punish reputable builders with hasty and misconceived definitions and powers.

This despite the fact that builders and plumbers have had the benefit of weak home building regulations and poor oversight and supervision from the now-defunct Victorian Building Authority for the past 30 years.

MBV CEO Michaela Lihou said, “We all understand the need to protect consumers and have a fair, reasonable and respectful dispute resolution process, but this legislation takes a potential sledgehammer to the rights of builders.”

HIA executive director Keith Ryan called the legislation misguided and potentially damaging to an industry already grappling with a complicated regulatory system.

“Where is the logic when under these new rules, a builder could potentially be at risk

of being subjected to a rectification order a decade or more after they've finished the job?” he said.

This whining from the HIA is seriously off the mark and on the nose. In New South Wales, all builders, developers, engineers and architects are subject to a 10-year legislative provision where an OC can bring a cause of action for defective construction work or design work. This has been the legislative position since 2021.

All that Victoria is doing is following in the footsteps of the building industry in New South Wales.

However, the HIA has droned on further:

“And as this legislation reads, the new Building and Plumbing Commission will be able to make ‘rectification orders’ against home builders in response to any type of complaint from a consumer, with apparently no need for the consumer to show that there are serious problems with their build that justify such a powerful intervention by a regulator.”

“And to add insult to injury, builders have no effective right to challenge the making of an order. This is legislative madness and totally unfair.”

In my view, the above comments are all I need to hear. I would implore the Victorian Parliament to immediately act to pass this legislation and fast track its commencement date. This is music to my ears, when I hear that builders are finally sounding a little frustrated, even scared of legislative change in the air.

Finally, OCs might be getting a powerful enforcement tool to help them in their challenge to get builders to fix defective buildings. Long overdue and well deserved, I say. ●

**Tom Bacon**

STRATA TITLE LAWYERS

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## DOCKLANDS REPRESENTATIVE GROUP

### Strata committee training: necessity or burden?

**Owners' corporation (OC) committees play a vital role in managing our residential buildings. Yet these annually elected volunteers often face wide-spread criticism ranging from accusations of misunderstanding complex strata regulations to internal dysfunction, to explicit conflicts of interest.**

One proposed solution is committee training, a measure recently introduced in New South Wales (NSW). NSW now requires OC committee members to undertake formal training, aligning their duties more closely with those of company directors. The goal is to ensure members understand their roles and responsibilities, improving governance, reducing disputes, and fostering a more cooperative strata environment.

Those welcoming the move as a step toward stronger governance point to the fact that while most volunteers may be well-meaning, many have struggled with the legal, financial, and operational responsibilities of their role, often learning on-the-job from others (who may similarly lack a firm understanding). Advocates argue that well-trained committees lead to better decision-making, greater transparency, and fewer conflicts.

However, others are raising concerns about the practicality and unintended consequences of compulsory training. A major concern with compulsory training is that additional requirements may deter volunteers. These unpaid roles already carry significant responsibilities, and further obligations could shrink the already limited pool of willing participants.

There are also questions about the content, delivery, and oversight of the training. If too general, it risks being a box-ticking

exercise with minimal impact. If too specialised, it may overwhelm volunteers who simply want to contribute without becoming strata law experts.

Another key issue is who should provide the training. Should it be led by not-for-profits with experience in strata governance (and how many of these are there?), or will commercial providers dominate the space?

If training becomes mandatory, it could create a lucrative market, potentially attracting providers more focused on profit than quality education. Accessibility is also a concern. OC committees consist of individuals with varying availability, and our residential buildings are spread across the state. While online courses offer convenience, they lack the interactive benefits of in-person sessions. Striking the right balance between accessibility and effectiveness will be crucial.

To explore these issues, the Owners Corporation Network (OCN) is hosting a free webinar on April 17, 2025, at 12pm AEST, titled “Committee Rights, Responsibilities, and New Training Requirements.”

While focused on NSW, the discussion is also relevant to Victoria, where we are awaiting news on our own OC legislative review. To register and join the conversation, go to [ocn.org.au](http://ocn.org.au)

Ultimately, while mandatory committee training presents challenges, it may also offer a much-needed pathway to enhance strata governance and create more effective committees. The key is ensuring training is informative and accessible without becoming an unnecessary burden on volunteers. ●

**Janette Corcoran**

MEMBER

[JCORCORAN@DOCKLANDS.ORG.AU](mailto:JCORCORAN@DOCKLANDS.ORG.AU)





- ## QUIZ SOLUTIONS

1 Prize-Ras 2. Home Docklands 3. Booker  
lemur 4. 15 per cent 5. Pygmy mouse  
lemur 6. 27 Dresses 7. Centurion 8. Yarra  
Birrarung: Artists, Writers and the River  
9. Star fruit 10. *One Night* 11. Anne Jolic  
12. Five

## No. 311

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## SOLUTIONS

FRAME, LEMON, ABBOT, PULSE, STEER

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Apr. 2025

## No. 046

EASY

			6		8			
9	4	6		1			2	
7		8			9		6	
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	8			3		4	9	2
			1		7			

HARD

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		1		5	3			
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7				6		5		2

## SOLUTIONS

EASY

[illegible]

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## Theme: Blacksmith

The leftover letters will spell out a secret message.

L	W	L	S	W	O	L	L	E	B	T
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Y	K	O	O	O	A	E	N	I	A	M
T	H	C	R	R	M	T	I	A	D	P
A	A	T	D	G	M	S	P	N	E	E
X	N	E	I	E	E	O	A	V	G	R
E	H	O	H	M	R	O	H	I	T	M
S	P	A	R	K	S	T	S	L	E	T
W	R	O	U	G	H	T	N	O	R	I
N	O	R	P	A	Q	U	E	N	C	H
S	M	O	K	E	F	I	N	K	A	L

OIL  
QUENCH  
SHAPING  
SMITHY  
SMOKE  
SOOT  
SPARKS  
STEEL  
SWORD  
TEMPER  
WROUGHT

Secret message: Working not metal

## No. 046

1 Variety of nut (9)  
6 Boss (4)  
10 Tavern (3)  
11 Confusing (10)  
12 A rectangle  
halved from  
diagonal  
corners (8)  
13 Special  
abilities (6)  
14 Objurgation (4)  
15 Group of  
organisms (7)  
20 Obliterated (7)  
21 Circle of light (4)  
25 Spectacles (6)  
26 Rocky (8)  
28 Impregnating (11)  
29 Biological  
blueprint (1,1,1)  
30 Calm (4)  
31 Worsen (9)

1		2		3		4		5		6	7		8
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12								13					
14				15			16						
				17							18		19
			20							21			
22		23								24			
25							26						
					27								
28											29		
30						31							

- 1 Office machines (8)
- 2 Conscious (8)
- 3 Western Australian port city (6)
- 4 Crow (coll) (6,3)

- |    |                               |    |                                  |
|----|-------------------------------|----|----------------------------------|
| 5  | Musical instrument (4)        | 19 | Temper (8)                       |
| 7  | Treble (6)                    | 22 | Employable (6)                   |
| 8  | Abstract (6)                  | 23 | Car fuel (6)                     |
| 9  | Book of the Old Testament (7) | 24 | Brand (6)                        |
| 16 | Purifying (9)                 | 27 | Middle <i>Simpsons</i> child (4) |
| 17 | Non-specific (7)              |    |                                  |
| 18 | Asian country (8)             |    |                                  |

**SOLUTION**

[illegible]

## No. 046

9	24	12		10	4	6	12	17	8	18	8	10
8		24		12		4		12		8		2
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12	23	14	2	4	21		14	9	12	2	2	9
		9		W		20		8				8
5	9	6	12	2	18	8		11	3	8	18	15
9		2		12		12				4		1
13	2	4	4	16		12	23	7	9	17	10	4
13		6		10		22		4		11		6
9	23	9	22	12	23	12	8	11		1	9	21

## SOLUTIONS

H	T	U	O	J	V	B	N	A	G	T	E	F
2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	
P	C	D	R	I	K	S	Y	Z	M	X	Q	W
14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26

## No. 046

**Reference:**  
Collins Concise  
English Dictionary

## SOLUTIONS

## Today's Focus:

**7 words: Good**

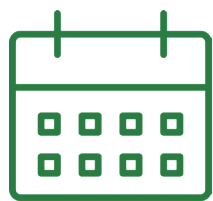
8 words: Very good

**13+ words: Excellent**

floor, folly, fool, forlorn, FORLORNLY, loon, loony, lorn, lorry, lory, only, orlon, orly, roll, roof



## WHAT'S ON April



From workshops to markets and festivals, you'll find something to float your boat this April in Docklands.



### MAKERS MARKET AT THE DISTRICT

Enjoy creative, colourful market stalls showcasing art, craft, jewellery, fashion, homewares, gifts, and delicious homemade and homegrown produce.

Outside H&M – The District, Docklands

UNTIL 29 JUNE, 11AM – 4PM



### ACCA FAMILY ART DAY

A free art-making program for children aged 3–10 and families. Create artwork to take home and contribute to a large-scale artwork inspired by ACCA's new exhibition Tina Stefanou: You Can't See Speed!

Australian Centre for Contemporary Art

TUESDAY 15 APRIL, 10AM – 1PM



### MELBOURNE INTERNATIONAL COMEDY FESTIVAL

Comedy is taking over the streets of Melbourne, with laughs around every corner! There's something for everyone.

Melbourne Town Hall, 90/130 Swanston St

UNTIL 20 APRIL



### DOCKLANDS FARMERS' MARKET

The Docklands Farmers market runs on the first Sunday of every month, bringing fresh fruit, vegetables, meat, poultry and dairy from all over Victoria for the local community to buy.

Newquay Promenade, Docklands

UNTIL 4 MAY



### MOSAIC MAKING WORKSHOP FOR BEGINNERS

In this workshop, you will learn the art of creating beautiful mosaics. Choose from a variety of colourful glass and learn how to design and grout your own unique piece.

Be-ras Creatives Art Cafe, Docklands

UNTIL 17 AUGUST



### SWIFTIE SINGALONG CRUISE

Shake it off with Port Phillip Ferries on a Swiftie Singalong Cruise during the Easter school holidays. Dress up in your favourite Taylor Swift-inspired outfit and cruise along the Yarra River in style.

Port Phillip Ferries Docklands Terminal

TUESDAY 15 APRIL, 2.30PM – 3.30PM



### RUN FOR THE KIDS

The Herald Sun/Transurban Run for the Kids is a much loved, family-friendly event. With two picturesque and unique course routes, the event is enormous fun for avid runners and casual walkers alike.

Harbour Esplanade, Docklands

SUNDAY 6 APRIL, 7AM – 1PM

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