

AUGUST 2025 EDITION #221

FOREVER FREE

Inflatable giants steal the show at Firelight



The City of Melbourne proved again that it can attract a crowd to Docklands, with a record-breaking 115,000 visitors gathering for this year's Firelight Festival from July 4 to 6. But it was Tasmanian artist Amanda Parer's giant inflatables that stole the show, including this guy peering over Library at the Dock! Photo: Hanna Komissarova.

Uncertain future remains for Docklands' heritage fleet as Seaworks move looms

“ Docklands' much-loved heritage fleet faces renewed uncertainty, with Development Victoria (DV) pushing ahead with plans to relocate the vessels to Williamstown's Seaworks precinct – despite serious logistical, financial, and timing concerns.

WORDS BY
SEAN CAR

”



DV had sought to relocate the fleet from North Wharf by the end of 2025, offering no further lease extensions for the *Alma Doepel*, *Enterprise* or steam tug *Wattle* beyond this point.

However, DV confirmed with *Docklands News* in

July that the fleet would be able to continue berthing at Collins Wharf through to mid-2026, providing some relief to operators as a relocation solution is finalised.

While DV has proposed Seaworks as a new home, stakeholders have raised alarm that the precinct won't have berthing capacity for larger vessels like the *Alma* until at least mid-2026, but it's likely this period will be longer.

DV's position has prompted frustration and concern among the heritage operators, with the *Alma Doepel* team stressing that any move without a confirmed and viable new home is untenable.

Docklands News understands that the *Alma Doepel* team has made it clear it will resist any relocation unless a secured location is in place and would be seeking financial support to make any such move feasible.

While the *Alma Doepel* team, which has been restoring the century-old sailing vessel in Docklands for 16 years, is now increasingly open to relocating to Seaworks, commercial lease rates at the Williamstown facility present a significant challenge.

The not-for-profit operators currently enjoy security of tenure at North Wharf – provided rent-free with utility support by DV for more than a decade.

Ironically, the *Enterprise* once called Seaworks home, but was relocated to Docklands in 2009 after rising commercial rents became unviable.

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sparks fresh
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floats swimmable
Yarra future



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PUSH! Fitness
expands into ANZ
Wellness Centre

Longstanding Docklands fitness operators Andrew and Jean Ward have marked a new chapter in their commitment to the precinct, taking over the ANZ Wellness Centre at 833 Collins St.

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Victorian Government’s in-house buyer sparks
fresh concern for apartment communities

In late July it was reported that Homes Victoria, the Victorian Government’s housing agency, is hiring an “internal homebuyer.”

The aim of the role? To secure properties – via lease or purchase, including bulk and off-the-plan deals – for residents displaced by the planned demolition of Melbourne’s public housing towers.

This announcement has triggered fresh alarm across Melbourne’s vertical communities, particularly in nearby high-rise strata buildings. While Homes Victoria has previously purchased and leased properties to grow the state’s social housing stock, the job ad’s reference to a “high priority Tower Relocations program” suggests a ramp-up in acquisitions as 44 towers are progressively retired.

Unsurprisingly, this initiative is reigniting serious concerns among apartment owners, residents and strata managers – many of whom remain wary after the government’s previous forays into headleasing.

Critical questions remain unanswered about this government strategy including what criteria will define a “suitable” apartment? Already evident is geographic proximity, to help public housing residents remain near their communities – but what else might be considered desirable?

What about onsite building management? Will this be viewed as desirable in that they could “unofficially” take on front line support functions? It has happened previously in Docklands.



As highlighted in my earlier Docklands News article (“Headleasing in residential strata”, August 28, 2024), we have seen what happens when social housing is introduced into private residential buildings without adequate support.

Remember Queens Place and the Botanic complex in Southbank? Vulnerable individuals were placed in apartments without

wraparound services – resulting in antisocial behaviour, resident distress and building managers pushed into roles far beyond their remit.

The concern is that this new in-house buyer role could signal a renewed push to embed social housing in our vertical communities – again, with little clarity or preparation.

Additionally, there is growing unease about transparency. With off-the-plan purchases on the table, residents fear decisions will be made long before they are informed, undermining trust and long-term cohesion.

And most importantly, what responsibilities will the government assume as a head lessee or owner – what role will they play in addressing building defects, participating in owners’ corporation decision making and strengthening community cohesion?

The goal of rehousing displaced residents is both valid and urgent. But unless supported by clear accountability, adequate services, and early consultation with owners’ corporations, this policy risks repeating the failures of the past.

If Victoria wants its housing strategy to succeed, it must learn from the lived experience of those already residing in our apartment communities. ●

Janette Corcoran

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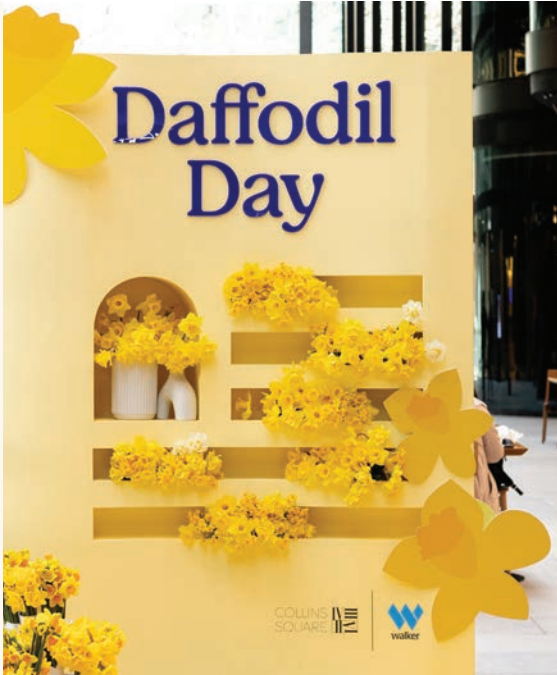
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Greening the city: Major planning change paves way for a sustainable Melbourne skyline

“

A bold new chapter in sustainable city planning is now under way in Melbourne, with the City of Melbourne officially adopting Planning Scheme Amendment C376 to drive greener, more climate-resilient building design across the municipality.

”

WORDS BY
SEAN CAR



in common ownership and designed for potential future adaptation to non-car uses – acknowledging the long-term transition away from private vehicle dependency.

While these provisions will remain discretionary, the intent is to signal a clear shift toward more sustainable urban transport infrastructure in the precinct.

At the heart of the amendment is the Green Factor Tool – an Australian-first assessment framework that helps planners and developers measure the quantity and quality of green infrastructure, such as green roofs, facades, and podium-level planting.

“We talk about Melbourne being a Garden City ... and we’re going to see an unprecedented expansion of our green streets, green laneways and, as of tonight, green buildings,” Cr Reece said. “The Green Factor Tool is the policy framework which helps unlock that green infrastructure.”

The policy marks a critical step in the city’s broader climate response. In Melbourne, buildings account for more than two-thirds of total emissions – far higher than the national average – and transitioning to net-zero buildings is central to the council’s 2040 climate targets.

“This is integral to our approach as a city to be net zero,” the council’s environment portfolio lead Cr Davydd Griffiths said. “The building stock that we have is fundamental to that.”

The council’s director of city strategy Jo Cannington said the change had been years in the making, with work commencing in 2017 as part of the “Green Our City Action Plan”.

The planning process included a lengthy public consultation period, public exhibition of the amendment, and consideration of 73 submissions before an independent planning panel was convened last year.

A key outcome of the panel’s review was a recommendation to shift from mandatory to discretionary controls – a change ultimately supported by the council.

“This allows us to meet the market where

it’s at, and also protects development feasibility, which is important,” the council’s planning portfolio lead and Deputy Lord Mayor Roshena Campbell said.

“This amendment is one way in which we are signalling that we want to see efficient buildings, design excellence and sustainable buildings and green buildings.”

While councillors acknowledged the compromise, several submissions voiced concern that making the controls discretionary may water down their impact.

Brenton Beggs, from the Australian Institute of Landscape Architects, said while the institute strongly supported the amendment, “without strong guidance or incentives, there’s a risk that some developments will do the minimum or bypass green infrastructure implementation altogether”.

Council officers noted this concern but said adopting discretionary provisions provided a practical first step toward the long-term goal of mandatory controls, allowing the City of Melbourne to monitor implementation and work collaboratively with industry.

Importantly, many developers are already ahead of the curve. According to council data, around 92 per cent of recent development applications already meet the new standards.

For ASPECT Studios senior associate Warwick Savvas, the policy change simply formalises what many in the industry are already doing.

“I can vouch that the industry is ready to go,” he said. “Engineering and horticultural design and innovation are already supporting these greening elements.”

Others highlighted the competitive edge sustainability gives Melbourne as it works to recover from pandemic-induced commercial vacancies.

Alexander Sear, from ADP Consulting, said green credentials were increasingly critical to attracting high-quality tenants.

“JLL and CBRE have both published data that says lower-rated buildings don’t get tenants. We’ve got a big vacancy problem in the city – and we don’t want more shells lying there hoping for some love,” he said.

“These buildings last 60 to 100 years. If we don’t get this right now, we’re designing things that will miss our net zero targets.”

Despite some concern from the Property Council of Australia over car parking provisions, it too expressed strong support for the amendment as a necessary step toward meeting emissions targets and maintaining the city’s global standing.

The City of Melbourne said the cost of implementing the new standards was now modest – between 0.86 and 1.95 per cent of total build costs – largely due to updated regulations and shifting industry standards. ●

Uncertain future remains for Docklands’ heritage fleet as Seaworks move looms

Continued from page 1.

Despite the heritage fleet’s role in activating Victoria Harbour and preserving the area’s maritime identity, DV appears determined to sever ties with the vessels ahead of its planned withdrawal from Docklands by 2030.

One viable solution remains at NewQuay beside Ron Barassi Snr Park – a location that could keep the fleet together and in Docklands. But DV has dismissed the site as “not suitable” saying that it lacks essential services such as water, electricity and direct access to the water.

Critics argue these problems are solvable with moderate investment and the will to support a meaningful outcome.

However, in addition, DV says part of the site is under contract for future development and includes an exclusion zone due to deterioration of the seawall.

The Alma’s team has long sought to remain in Docklands – the ship’s historic home for most of the past 50 years. In March, Alma Doepel chair Matt McDonald said it was “extremely disappointing” that DV had failed to provide a viable alternative, despite making commitments for a Docklands home for more than a decade.

DV’s own 2012 Community and Place Plan acknowledged the need to “facilitate the development of berths for heritage vessels, including the Alma.” But with less than six months remaining, the pathway forward remains unclear.

As stakeholders scramble to secure a future for the fleet, one thing is certain: unless DV reengages in good faith and provides real support, the Docklands community stands to lose a defining part of its identity.

DV’s acting group head precincts, Ronan Mellan, told Docklands News that it was “continuing discussions with the heritage fleet and Seaworks and will support their relocation.”

DV reiterated that it has provided substantial support to the Heritage Fleet, valued at around \$800,000 over 16 years. This support has included access to berthing and workshop space, along with coverage of utilities and other operational costs.

DV added that together with Lendlease, it had done everything it could to support the fleet, extending its occupation at Collins Wharf for as long as possible.

However, DV has left the door open for exploring “longer-term opportunities for the fleet at Docklands” by working alongside the fleet and the City of Melbourne. ●

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What began as a humble 32-square-metre office on St Kilda Rd with one desk and no client list has evolved into one of inner Melbourne's most adaptive boutique real estate agencies: Inner Real Estate.

”

WORDS BY
SEAN CAR



Now managing more than 850 properties across the CBD, Southbank, Docklands, St Kilda Rd and surrounds, Inner Real Estate (IRE) is built on family values, innovation, and a deep respect for the evolving community it serves.

Founded in 2008 by Joe Cimino, Inner Real Estate was born from a simple passion for property. Joe's sons Anthony and Michael later joined the business, shaping it into the full-service agency it is today – offering sales, rentals, property management and owners' corporation (OC) services tailored specifically for inner-city living.

Speaking to *Docklands News*, director Anthony Cimino reflects on IRE's early years and how the business grew in step with the city around it.

“Back then, most of our buyers were investors, often based overseas and buying off-the-plan,” Anthony said. “Now, it's a totally different market. We're seeing first-home buyers, downsizers, and long-term owner-occupiers moving in – it's become a place where people really want to live.”

Having weathered more than a decade of market cycles, IRE has learned how to evolve with its client base. Anthony said that shift – from an investor-dominated market to one increasingly defined by people buying homes to live in – had fundamentally changed the way the agency worked.

“When the business first started, we would be selling 18 out of 20 properties to investors ... whereas now we're getting 15 or 16 sales out of 20 to owner-occupiers and a big portion of that is first home buyers,” he said.

“And we're talking places like Southbank – a stone's throw to the CBD, and inside the CBD as well. I see this as a really great thing because the time the owner-occupier

is holding onto those properties becomes a lot longer – they're not changing hands every three to five years like an investment property – they're now changing every 10 years.”

With a strong local presence and an agile team of around 20 staff, IRE's size is part of its strength. Its boutique model allows the team to form genuine relationships with clients while delivering tailored support throughout the life of a property – whether managing a rental, selling a unit, or overseeing an entire residential building.

“There's no job too big or too small,” Anthony said. “When you've got a boutique agency, we all help each other out.”

That inclusive culture – and low staff turnover – has helped IRE maintain continuity and trust across its expanding client base. Many of the team have been with the business for years, growing alongside the company and the city it serves.

In 2019, IRE expanded into OC management under the name Inner Owners Corporation, a natural evolution for a business so embedded in its local vertical communities.

“As a boutique, full-service business, we're able to lean into the community – buying, selling, managing residential properties, as well as whole complexes by understanding what people want in those buildings and communities they're living in,” Anthony said.

“Buildings are becoming communities, not just places to live ... and that's a common theme – we've got renters who've become owners, their families are moving in, and you're really starting to see a sense of community grow.”

The business's approach to supporting OCs is one underpinned by exceptional service, full transparency, efficient communication and rigorous financial management, offering a nimble, responsive and reliable experience.

At its core, Anthony said, it was all about people.

“When people ask what is one of the most important things about being in real estate, it's the relationships that you're able to build,” he said. “If you're not acting with the right integrity you're not going to last very long in this industry.”

Anthony said the business's three values

– “Integrity, Respect, Energy” – were at the heart of everything it did.

“What we really pride ourselves on is doing the right thing for our clients regardless of whether they use their services or not,” he said. “We're not a transactional business – it's about relationships.”

And when asked what he and his team love most about working in central Melbourne?

“There's just something beautiful about a Saturday morning walking through Melbourne's CBD and being able to put an open for inspection board out on Collins St and open up a property on one of the most famous streets in Australia – if not the world – and sell a piece of Australian history,” he said.

“It's a pretty surreal thing when you sit back and think about the opportunity to be able to sell, rent and look after owners' corporations in this sort of area ... it's the people of the inner city of Melbourne that really contribute to that feeling and I'm fortunate enough to be in this area for so long doing what I love.”

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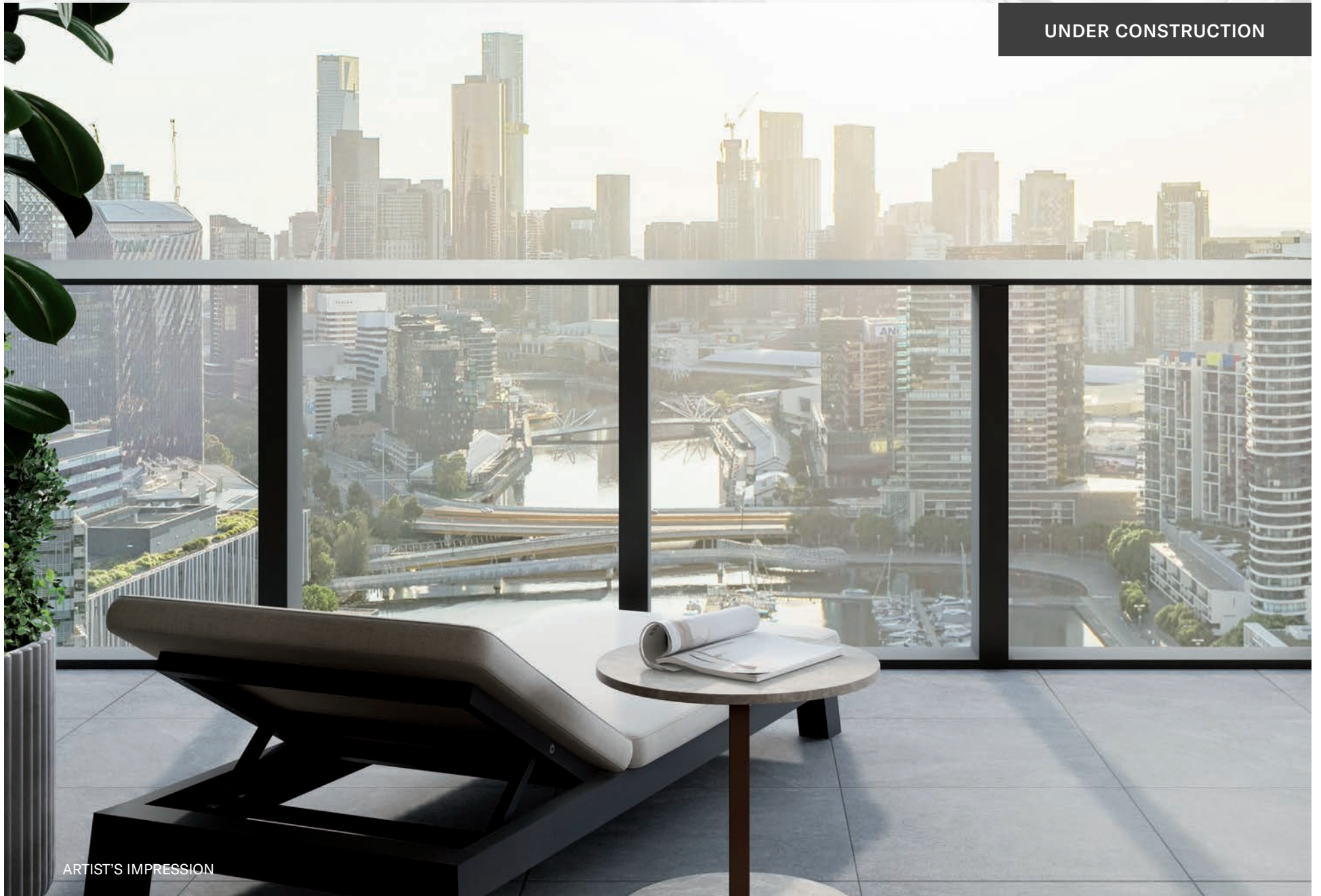
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BOOK
APPOINTMENT



From teacher to publican: Cr Griffiths's journey to Town Hall

“

Amid the pandemic, Labor Councillor Davydd Griffiths said goodbye to his pub, the Royal Mail on Spencer St.

”

WORDS BY
JON FLEETWOOD



However, as one door closed, another opened. His experience as a publican inspired him to run for a spot at Town Hall, as he felt the City of Melbourne was missing someone who truly represented the small business community.

During his first term, Cr Griffiths was proud to be part of a council that made it easier for small businesses to operate.

The Business Concierge Program is chief among them. The program helps traders who are starting or expanding to navigate the complexities of permits, regulations, and other council-related matters – something Cr Griffiths had struggled with himself as a publican.

“If you owned 10 pubs, you probably had a government relations manager. But if you were running the till and scrubbing the floor yourself, there was no time to figure out council permits or apply for grants,” he said.

Now in his second term and serving as the environment portfolio lead, Cr Griffiths

is focused on big-ticket items like delivering the North Melbourne Community Centre and progressing the expanded Boyd Community Hub in Southbank.

On climate action, he praised the council's Power Melbourne initiative and reiterated the importance of sticking to long-term goals, including reaching net zero for council operations by 2030.

But Cr Griffiths also expressed concern that recent budget cuts could impact many of the programs the council runs, and said the City of Melbourne should be vigilant about the consequences of selling off assets such as Citywide.

“The listing of assets can only go on for so long,” he said. “It's important that we keep control of the kinds of assets that enable us to do the work council is supposed to do.”

His approach to policy and advocacy is shaped by a varied and decorated career in education and public policy.

He grew up in Bendigo before moving to Melbourne to study teaching, but his time in the classroom was short-lived.

Following a stint in teaching, he went on to write education and health policy and worked as a ministerial advisor before becoming a publican. He says that his diverse background informs how he approaches governance.

“I always try to balance policy with people,” he told *Docklands News*. “Budgets aren't just numbers – they affect real lives. And that's how I approach every decision.”

Cr Griffiths also brings a progressive voice to some of council's more complex issues, including city safety and homelessness. He says it's vital for the city to balance enforcement with compassion.

“You can throw money at policing, or you can invest in addressing root causes like mental health and drug use. We need a



COUNCILLOR PROFILE

balanced approach – and I'll always advocate for the people most impacted,” Cr Griffiths said.

That advocacy extends to international students and gig workers – two groups he says are too often exploited.

“We bring these young people here, and we have a duty of care. That includes educating them about their rights and protecting them from wage theft or dodgy housing conditions,” he said.

The council is already supporting groups like The Couch at the Salvation Army, where students can learn about their rights in a safe environment. However, he believes it is an issue that still requires strong advocacy and continued support.

“When we talk about crime in the City of Melbourne, we're probably thinking about a certain kind of crime and how that presents on the streets – but there are a number of ways that people feel unsafe,” he said.

Exploited workers and people experiencing food insecurity may feel unsafe too, and Cr Griffiths believes the council has a responsibility to care for those affected.

He said that when creating a policy or an initiative, it is easy to only see one side of the equation.

However, drawing on his experience from the many industries he has worked in, he said that he tried to always look at the other side of the coin, to reduce the risk of people being forgotten. ●

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The city skyline at dusk

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PUSH! Fitness expands in Docklands with new ANZ Wellness Centre

Longstanding Docklands fitness operators Andrew and Jean Ward have marked a new chapter in their commitment to the precinct, taking over the ANZ Wellness Centre at 833 Collins St.

WORDS BY
SEAN CAR



It's the third major milestone for the husband-and-wife duo since launching PUSH! Fitness in 2016. After opening a dedicated Pilates studio in 2021, their latest venture called Wellness 833 brings together allied health and fitness services under one umbrella – cementing their status as Docklands' go-to for health and wellbeing.

The new facility features physiotherapy, clinical Pilates, myotherapy, remedial massage, infrared saunas, yoga, meditation, health screening and body scanning, with more services to come, including beauty and spa treatments. But Andrew said the offering was about more than just services – it was about relationships.

"This opportunity to take over the Wellness Centre is an initiative from both sides to bring all facets of health together in one place," he said. "Instead of a fragmented experience where a physio hands over to a gym or vice versa, we now have one integrated model. That's great for ANZ staff, but also for the broader Docklands community."

Andrew first arrived in Docklands in 2011 and has spent 15 years shaping its health and fitness landscape. He credits much of PUSH! Fitness's sustained growth to their deep roots in the area.

"When we opened the gym, we focused on creating great relationships with our members and team. That goodwill has carried us through each expansion," he said.

"From gym, to Pilates, to Wellness, we're seeing clients come back to us again and again because they trust what we do. We've always put people first – and that trust has made this latest step both possible and viable."

The ANZ Wellness Centre has only been operating under The Push Group for a few weeks, but early signs are promising.

"There was a lot of planning to make sure everything was ready from day one, and the feedback has been fantastic," Andrew said. "It's a beautiful facility and we thank ANZ for the trust they have in us as professional operators. We've retained excellent staff, and our focus – as always – is on high-quality care."

The Wards invested \$450,000 into refurbishing their gym in 2024 and have now doubled down on their long-term commitment to Docklands through the new wellness space.

Andrew said their strong partnership with ANZ and local knowledge had helped tailor services to what people in the area really need.

"Our priority here is to care for ANZ employees and also support the community more broadly," he said. "Whether it's someone walking in with neck pain or starting a long-term rehab plan, we want people to get the help they need right away – and to feel like they're being looked after."

As PUSH! Fitness approaches its 10-year anniversary, the couple shows no signs of slowing down.

"We're open for new clients," Andrew said. "It's not just about price – it's about quality. What we offer is a five-star experience, from the facility to the practitioners. For people walking in, it feels like a resort. And that's exactly the feeling we want to create." ●

City of Melbourne floats swimmable Yarra future

Could the idea of diving into Victoria Harbour on a hot day soon become more than a dream?

WORDS BY
SEAN CAR



Momentum behind the "swimmable city" movement in Melbourne has taken a major step forward, with City of Melbourne councillors due to consider a motion on July 29 to investigate what actions the council can take to support the vision of a swimmable Yarra River (Birrarung) before 2050.

The motion, brought by Cr Davydd Griffiths, the council's environment portfolio lead, follows growing public and political interest in restoring safe access to the river. It calls for a comprehensive investigation into what the council can do, how it can work with other levels of government, and where along the river trial swim spots might be established.

Cr Griffiths's motion also noted recent comments from Lord Mayor Nick Reece, who told the *Herald Sun* in July that he believed the Birrarung could be swimmable "well before the year 2050".

The move aligns with a wider global trend of cities transforming formerly industrial waterways into safe and inviting spaces to swim, with the Seine in Paris, Rotterdam's harbour, and New York's Hudson and East Rivers among leading examples.

Here in Melbourne, attention has increasingly turned to Docklands – particularly Victoria Harbour – as an ideal location to trial public swimming.

Closed off from the lower Yarra's main channel, the harbour's calmer waters offer a unique setting for pilot interventions. Feasibility studies dating back to 2022 have previously identified sites near Bolte West

and Ron Barassi Snr Park as promising candidates.

For local advocates like Matt Sykes from Regen Melbourne, who recently represented the city at the Swimmable Cities Summit in Rotterdam, Docklands could play a pivotal role in reimagining the river-city relationship.

In an interview with *Docklands News* in June, Mr Sykes said that "there's no reason Melbourne can't follow the lead of cities like Paris and Rotterdam. Victoria Harbour has everything you need – it's protected, accessible and symbolic of where the city meets the water."

Vice-Chancellor's Senior Research Fellow in the School of Global, Urban & Social Studies at RMIT University Dr Rebecca Olive said the backdrop of the Paris Olympics should motivate Melbourne to follow suit.

"Swimmability' should be part of a healthy city and hopefully international examples, like the success in Paris, will encourage the Victorian Government, councils and community to work towards creating cleaner and safer access to the Yarra for public swimming," Dr Olive said.

"Swimmability in urban environments provides many benefits. It creates more nature positive and regenerative cities that are more climate resilient, and generates the economy by supporting recreation businesses, hospitality and tourism."

"But before that happens, we would need to overcome the current barriers to swimming in the Yarra, including water quality, access points, boat traffic, storm-water and safety."

"Local community groups have already been working towards making the Yarra swimmable, but we also need the support of governments and local councils to make it happen."

The motion to be considered on July 29 calls for council officers to report back before the end of 2025 with findings on costs, responsibilities, timeframes and potential locations for public swimming infrastructure. ●



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Neighbourhood Grants will help activate public spaces

Council releases new draft Urban Forest Precinct Plans for Kensington, North and West Melbourne and Docklands

“

The City of Melbourne has taken another important step toward its goal of increasing tree canopy cover to 40 per cent across the municipality, unanimously voting on July 1 to release draft Urban Forest Precinct Plans for Kensington, North and West Melbourne, and Docklands for community consultation.

”

WORDS BY
SEAN CAR



The draft plans mark the latest stage in the city's 20-year Urban Forest Strategy, first adopted in 2012, which seeks to cool the city, enhance biodiversity, and improve health and wellbeing by strategically increasing tree cover in every neighbourhood. With final plans already endorsed for East Melbourne, South Yarra, the CBD and Carlton, the western fringe of the municipality is now in focus.

“Urban forests are living, breathing assets that help us deal with the impacts of climate change, reduce heat in our suburbs, and make Melbourne a better place to live,” the council's environment portfolio lead Cr Davydd Griffiths said.

Speaking during the July 1 Future

Melbourne Committee (FMC) meeting, Cr Griffiths highlighted the depth of community engagement that has already gone into shaping the drafts, recalling consultation sessions such as the one at Kensington Town Hall where three generations of one family mapped out the trees most meaningful to them.

“These are rich documents that will guide tree planting and care over the next decade, and it's critical that our community has the chance to help shape them even further,” he said.

Each precinct plan is tailored to local conditions and community values. In Kensington, the vision centres on preserving the area's unique character, heritage peppercorns, and fruit trees along the Stock Route while greening newer developments and creek corridors with more native species. Understorey planting and habitat corridors for wildlife are also key priorities, with targeted biodiversity plantings identified along several streets.

North and West Melbourne's combined plan aims to strengthen the established tree avenues that define its streetscapes, while also improving biodiversity along waterways and rail corridors. Recognising the risk posed by pests like the sycamore lace bug, the plan proposes mixing species to avoid monocultures and create resilience, while maintaining the distinctive local character.

Docklands, a much newer precinct, presents both challenges and opportunities. While its canopy cover has increased significantly since 2001, much of its public realm remains exposed. The draft plan proposes connecting open spaces and waterways through biodiversity corridors, diversifying streetscapes with mixed evergreen and deciduous species, and protecting significant populations of trees against pests and pathogens.

The Docklands plan is especially focused on reducing monocultures and creating



“breaks” in high-risk species to prevent large-scale losses to disease, with strategies informed by global best practice and local research trials.

Cr Andrew Rowse questioned why North and West Melbourne were combined into one precinct plan given their different land uses and canopy profiles. The council's arborist explained that the decision was due to the small residential footprint of West Melbourne and its alignment with North Melbourne's residential areas – but acknowledged that future iterations could consider splitting them if the community supported that.

Lord Mayor Nick Reece also endorsed the plans enthusiastically, noting the city's “tree-thousand” target of planting 3000 trees annually to meet its canopy goal.

“When you ask Melburnians what they love most about our city, our parks and gardens are top of the list,” he said. “We're not going to let the future down. We're putting in place an urban forest strategy that will deliver for Melburnians today and for future

generations.”

Cr Dr Olivia Ball urged residents to engage with the plans and help shape their streetscapes for the next decade.

“These are important, detailed documents that will help us get to 40 per cent canopy cover for the benefit of everyone,” she said. “We want the community to share their strong opinions and expertise to get this right.”

Community consultation on the draft Urban Forest Precinct Plans for Kensington, North and West Melbourne, and Docklands will be conducted via the Participate Melbourne website. Feedback gathered will inform the final versions of the plans, scheduled to return to the Future Melbourne Committee for endorsement in early 2026, with implementation to follow.

Meanwhile, community engagement is already under way for other neighbourhoods including Southbank, Parkville, and Fishermans Bend, as the city works precinct by precinct toward its long-term urban greening vision. ●

Docklands to serve up Australia's biggest pickleball party

Docklands is set to transform into the nation's pickleball capital for the inaugural Picklepalooza this August.

The three-day celebration will be held at the iconic Game4Padel venue between August 8 and 10.

It will feature pickleball clinics, exhibition matches with local and international stars and family-friendly games, wellness activities, and giveaways.

City of Melbourne Lord Mayor Nick Reece said the event was a great way to get active and engaged with the local community.

“Picklepalooza offers a unique opportunity to get active with the family. It's a lively new event

for our community, encouraging everyone to try something new and perhaps even find their next sporting passion,” Cr Reece said.

Backed by the Victorian Government and City of Melbourne, Picklepalooza aims to bring the community together through Australia's fastest-growing sport in one of Melbourne's most picturesque settings.

Alongside the festival, the organisers are launching the Picklepalooza Playzone, a mobile gaming hub. ●



WORDS BY
JON FLEETWOOD



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Reclaiming Docklands: a six-part series

Part 4: Disconnected by design: the fight for a cohesive neighbourhood.

WORDS BY
JAMAL HAKIM



For a suburb with thousands of residents, Docklands still struggles to feel like a neighbourhood.

It's not for lack of people. Or potential. It's not even for lack of events. From fireworks on New Year's Eve to the recent Firelight Festival, there's no shortage of moments when the precinct comes alive: brief flashes of activity, colour, and community.

But moments aren't movements. And in Docklands, we continue to mistake activation for cohesion.

It's because we lack connection, and the structures and spirit that help build it.

The recent Firelight Festival once again lit up our waterfront and reminded us of the beauty and possibility of Docklands at its best. Crowds gathered, lights shimmered across the Yarra, and the precinct buzzed with life. But the day after the festivities, the

question remained: what happens when the lights go out?

A neighbourhood isn't built in bursts. It's built in the everyday. The local. The lived-in. And that's where Docklands is being let down, from both above and within.

On one side of the coin is the slow disappearance of civic infrastructure. Since the 2022 Docklands Summit, the momentum has stalled. Promises of community-led engagement and neighbourhood partnerships have since stalled. The Docklands Stakeholder Group was dissolved. No community centre has been established. No funded governance structure has taken its place. Community3008 Inc. continues to hold the space, but with no resourcing, its capacity is stretched thin (hint-hint: go join and take part!).

But the other side of the coin is equally challenging – and more uncomfortable to name.

Too many people pass through Docklands without planting roots. Some landlords treat apartments like safety deposit boxes. Some residents treat the neighbourhood like a short-term address, not a long-term investment. Even some businesses operate as if Docklands is just a footnote to the CBD, rather than a place with its own identity, needs, and future.

“
We cannot outsource belonging. A neighbourhood is built by the people who show up for it – every day.
”

If we want Docklands to feel like a neighbourhood, we must start treating it like one.

That means turning up for more than events. It means knowing your neighbours. It means backing local traders, joining your building's body corporate, attending a community meeting, or even just picking up rubbish when you see it. These acts may seem small, but connection grows through habits, not headlines.

The council absolutely has a role to play. So does Development Victoria. But so do we.

Disconnection is not just a failure of policy; it's a failure of care. And that care must come from both directions:

from institutions, yes, but also from the people who live, work, and move through Docklands every day.

There are signs of hope. Local groups like Docklands Representative Group and Community300 Inc. are working hard to keep the community connected. New businesses are trying to create welcoming spaces. Parents are building friendships at local parks. Artists, walkers, and residents are reimagining public space in subtle, joyful ways.

This is what real placemaking looks like: not fireworks, but follow-up. Not just activation, but accountability. Not just city-led, but community-made.

If we want a better Docklands, we can't wait for someone else to create it. We all have a part to play – no matter how large or small. My challenge to you is start today and be an active member of our community.

Next time, we'll look at how Docklands was sidelined in Melbourne's post-pandemic recovery, and why rebalancing investment and focus isn't just fair, it's urgent. ●

Jamal Hakim is a Docklands resident and former City of Melbourne councillor. You can reach him on Instagram @thejamal-hakim or LinkedIn, or at the local cafe.

Record-breaking Firelight Festival lights up Docklands

Docklands was ablaze with energy earlier this month as the Firelight Festival returned for its most spectacular showing yet – drawing a record 115,000 visitors across three nights from July 4 to 6.

Now a staple of the city's winter calendar, our waterfront precinct was transformed into a glowing playground of fire, light and live performance, with this year's festival marking a 44 per cent jump in attendance from 2024.

"Firelight Festival burned brighter than ever this year," City of Melbourne Lord Mayor Nick Reece said. "It was the biggest weekend of the year for Docklands businesses, delivering a huge mid-winter trading boost."

The festival featured around 50 fire artists, dancers, musicians and roving performers, alongside 40 food trucks serving everything from sizzling skewers to hot chocolate and s'mores.

For the first time, the glow extended onto Victoria Harbour with the debut of the *Light the Night Boat Display*, where five illuminated vessels competed for crowd votes. A Melbourne-first appearance by Tasmanian artist Amanda Parer's giant inflatables also stole the show, with four monumental sculptures lighting up the waterfront.

"Crowds came out in force to soak up the fiery spectacle and support local hospitality," Cr Mark Scott said. "Once again, Melbourne proved it's the events capital of Australia, year-round." ●





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Australia's coolest sport brings fire to Docklands

I tagged along to a game expecting to be bored. I don't watch footy, I don't follow sport, but somehow, I walked out a full-blown ice hockey fan. I've been a regular ever since.

WORDS BY
NERIEDA KEENAN



If you think you've seen every sport Australia has to offer, think again. Ice hockey is carving out a fast-growing fanbase right here in Melbourne, and it's not something you want to miss.

Each weekend at O'Brien Icehouse in Docklands, the Australian Ice Hockey League (AIHL) delivers an unforgettable mix of speed, skill and energy. It's loud. It's intense. It's a full-contact sport played on ice, and it's happening right in your backyard.

The AIHL is Australia's top-tier ice hockey competition, featuring teams from all over the country. Melbourne is home to two of them: the Melbourne Mustangs and Melbourne Ice. When they go head-to-head, O'Brien Icehouse erupts with energy. Even regular season games feel like finals, and the crowd gets right into it from the moment the puck drops.

You don't need to be a sports enthusiast to enjoy ice hockey. Whether you're new to the game or just looking for something exciting to do, ice hockey is one of the most entertaining live sports experiences around.

The action is non-stop. Players fly across the rink at high speed, guiding the puck with precision, slamming into the boards just centimetres from the crowd, and scoring goals that bring the fans to their feet.

The atmosphere at O'Brien Icehouse is half the fun. Music pumps through the arena between plays, and there's a sense of closeness you don't get to experience at other sports.

With the option to sit in the grandstand, or stand right up against the glass, you can be as close to the action as you like. In the stands, you'll have an undiluted view of the Olympic-sized arena.

At the rink? You'll be as close to the action as it gets.

This season is building toward a massive finish, with the AIHL Finals returning to O'Brien Icehouse with five intense games running across Friday, August 29, through to Sunday, August 31. Series tickets are available now. Single game tickets are set to go on sale on August 1.

If you've never been to a game before, now is the time. Fast, fierce and packed with adrenaline, ice hockey is a sport that grabs your attention and refuses to let go.

Now, all that's left to do is choose your allegiance. Will it be the Melbourne Mustangs, or Melbourne Ice?

To find out more, visit theaihl.com, or follow [@melbournemustangs](https://twitter.com/melbournemustangs) or [@melbourneice](https://twitter.com/melbourneice) on Instagram. ●





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Planning and Environment Act Regulations 2015 (Form 2, section 52(1)) NOTICE OF AN APPLICATION FOR A PLANNING PERMIT	
The land affected by the application is located at:	695-699 LA TROBE STREET AND 160 HARBOUR ESPLANADE, DOCKLANDS VIC 3008
The application is for a permit to:	Create, vary and remove restrictions on title (Variation to Restrictive Covenant AD304197L, Variation to Agreement AD30407C, Removal or variation to Easement E-1, E-3, E-4, E-5, E-10, E-11, E-12 on PS432271H and creation of E-22 & E-33) associated with the proposed use and development of a multi-storey residential building. <i>Note: The proposal to create, vary and remove an easement or restriction is <u>not</u> exempt from notice requirements under the Planning and Environment Act 1987..</i> <i>This is a summary. Full details of the proposal are contained within the application documentation</i>
The applicant for the permit is:	Salta Properties (Docklands) Pty Ltd c/- Urbis
The application reference number is:	PA2503517
You may look at the application and any documents that support the application at the office of the Responsible Authority.	Minister for Planning c/- Department of Transport and Planning <ul style="list-style-type: none">1 Spring Street, Melbourne VIC 3001Online at https://www.planning.vic.gov.au/permits-and-applications/ministerial-permits/browse-ministerial-permits

A permit is required under the following clauses of the planning scheme:

Planning scheme clause	Matter for which a permit is required
37.05-2	Use of land north of the Major Sports and Recreation Facility for a dwelling
37.05-4	Construct a building or construct or carry out works on land in the Docklands Zone
43.02-2	Construct a building or construct or carry out works on land affected by Schedules 12 and 52 of the Design and Development Overlay
44.04-2	Construct a building or construct or carry out works on land affected by the Land Subject to Inundation Overlay, Schedule 3.
52.02	To create, vary or remove an easement or restriction registered to the title.

To view applications and supporting documents in person, please email julia.smith@transport.vic.gov.au to make an appointment to view the plans. This can be done during office hours and is free of charge. The plans may also be viewed online at <https://www.planning.vic.gov.au/permits-and-applications/ministerial-permits/browse-ministerial-permits>.

Any person who may be affected by the granting of the permit may object or make other submissions to the responsible authority by email to development.assessment@transport.vic.gov.au or by post to Minister for Planning, C/-Department of Transport and Planning, GPO Box 2392, Melbourne VIC 3001.

- An objection must:**
- be made to the Responsible Authority in writing,
 - include the reasons for the objection, and
 - state how the objector would be affected.

The responsible authority must make a copy of every objection available at its office for any person to inspect during office hours free of charge until the end of the period during which an application may be made for review of a decision on the application.

The responsible authority will not decide on the application before:	14 AUGUST 2025
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If you object, the responsible authority will tell you its decision.

The District Docklands welcomes thrills, creativity and slime with new attractions

Three exciting new additions have landed at The District Docklands, further cementing the precinct’s reputation as Melbourne’s home of entertainment.

WORDS BY
SEAN CAR



From immersive high-tech adventures and hands-on construction play to colourful science fun, these new venues offer something for every age, every interest and every season – helping transform The District Docklands into a must-visit destination for families and fun-seekers alike.

DreamRace: A new era of action-packed virtual reality

Now open and more than double its original size, DreamRace (formerly DreamScape) is offering a thrilling new chapter of high-tech family adventure. Spanning more than 1500 square metres, the venue now houses three signature experiences: DreamRide (a 9D virtual-reality motion cinema), DreamRonin (a fast-paced, obstacle course-inspired digital game) and DreamSpartan (a Ninja-Warrior-style challenge zone tracking real-time speed and agility).

“This expansion is a dream come true,” founder Joanna Chen told Docklands News.



“We’ve tried many locations, but none felt as perfect as The District Docklands.”

As the only experience of its kind in Australia, DreamRace offers competitive, active fun for kids, teens and even grown-ups looking to test their strength and reflexes.

Little Builders: Dig, design and discover

Also newly opened is Little Builders, a one-of-a-kind indoor sand-play wonderland where children are encouraged to build, explore and experiment. The centrepiece: a massive 50sqm sandbox filled with 25 tonnes of soft, clean sand and stocked with more than 100 tools, toys and ride-on diggers.

“Seeing Little Builders come to life has been an absolute joy,” Harriet Page, project

manager, Little Builders at The District Docklands, said.

“We’ve loved watching young imaginations run wild in our indoor sandbox, and the community’s response has been overwhelmingly positive.”

“Every time a child’s face lights up as they dig, build or uncover a new creative possibility, we know we’ve hit the mark. We’re thrilled by the feedback so far and can’t wait to continue growing with The District Docklands for many years to come.”

Whether it’s carving out winding roads, constructing forts, or collaborating on miniature cities, children can unleash their creativity in themed zones designed to spark imagination and encourage teamwork. From school excursions to weekend family outings, Little Builders promises a playful,

educational experience that’s as fun as it is developmental.

Slime Lab: Sensory science comes to life
Opening in late July, Slime Lab brings the wonder of science to life in a delightfully gooey way.

Offering vibrant DIY slime workshops, craft parties and interactive science activities, this studio is set to become a favourite for curious kids and creative families.

With its mix of STEM-based learning and tactile play, Slime Lab is perfect for birthday celebrations, after-school fun or a weekend dose of squishy science.

Together, these three new venues highlight The District Docklands’ evolution into a year-round entertainment hub – driving foot traffic, while giving families more reasons to spend time in the precinct. ●



Docklands frozen in time: photo exhibition captures final days of Victoria Dock

A haunting visual tribute to Docklands before its transformation into a modern city precinct will go on public display for the first time when *Last Light on Victoria Dock 1999* opens at MAGNET Galleries this September.

WORDS BY
SEAN CAR



on the edge of erasure, where rusting cranes, crumbling piers, and decommissioned tugboats sat quietly under glowing skies.

“I just did it because I enjoyed doing it,” Mr McAuley told Docklands News. “I had no previous connection to Docklands, but I fell in love with that sense of peace and serenity – the vibration of something forgotten.”

Taken over 18 months during twilight hours, the images reflect Mr McAuley’s obsessive focus on composition and light. Shot on



high-resolution transparency film, the photos carry a distinct warmth and stillness, capturing what he calls “a beauty in old objects.”

The exhibition opens on September 4 at 6.30pm and is the result of a chance Facebook post that led MAGNET Galleries to uncover the long-held collection.

Mr McAuley, who has nine portraits held in the National Portrait Gallery, said the images had waited 25 years for the right moment to be seen.

“Photographs grow in power with time,” he said. “They become more meaningful as the past fades.”

Built between 1887 and 1892, Victoria Dock was once the largest dock in the world, handling 20 million tonnes of cargo annually at its peak. But by the late 1990s, containerisation and the rise of air freight had rendered it obsolete.

Mr McAuley’s photos show a landscape in limbo – sheds abandoned, rails rusted, the life drained from what had once been Melbourne’s industrial front porch.

“It was a labour of love,” he said. “I knew every boat, every plank. I’d jump in my car from Richmond if I saw a storm rolling in, just to catch the light over the dock.”

Curated with care, the exhibition speaks not only to the history of Docklands but also to the role photography plays in preserving memory.

“I don’t see personally any great beauty in the Docklands now,” Mr McAuley reflected. “But the old Docklands – the Victoria Dock – had a graciousness, a reserved beauty that deserved to be remembered.” ●

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City of Melbourne to advance Safe City Camera Program reforms amid safety concerns and rising crime

The City of Melbourne's extensive CCTV network is set for a major overhaul, as councillors received a key update on the Safe City Camera Program (SCCP) at the July 29 council meeting.

WORDS BY
SEAN CAR



The report outlined a phased plan to maintain and expand the program while also introducing new policy reforms, including the controversial use of surveillance footage by council officers for local law enforcement.

Established in 1997, the SCCP has grown from 23 cameras to 328 across 126 city locations and is credited with helping Victoria Police identify thousands of criminal offences. According to the council report, between 2018 and 2024, the system observed or responded to nearly 37,000 incidents – with more than 10,000 referred

to police.

However, with perceptions of safety in the city declining, the City of Melbourne has committed to bolstering its public safety infrastructure. According to the council's 2024 Social Indicator Survey, just 48 per cent of people now feel safe in the city at night, down from 82 per cent in 2022/23.

The council's 2025–26 budget has allocated \$1.56 million to upgrade the existing CCTV network, with the Victorian Government contributing \$3.6 million over two years to expand coverage. More than 100 new cameras are planned, following public calls for greater surveillance in high-traffic and high-risk areas.

Lord Mayor Nick Reece has previously described the SCCP as "one of the most effective in the country" and said expanding the network was necessary to keep pace with the city's growing safety needs.

Phase one of the program – already under way – involves essential hardware upgrades and the development of a new SCCP Policy to guide how the system is used. The new policy is expected to broaden the program's scope, allowing council-authorised officers to access footage for investigations into illegal dumping, graffiti, vandalism and other breaches of local laws.

The report notes that these changes would make investigations more efficient and reduce costs to ratepayers.

Future phases will focus on expanding camera coverage to more locations and assessing the use of artificial intelligence and video analytics to enhance monitoring.

Docklands is currently home to around 10 Safe City cameras, which are predominantly located along Harbour Esplanade and areas surrounding Southern Cross Station.

Council officers are currently working with legal experts to ensure all proposed changes meet human rights and privacy obligations under state law.

A draft policy will be tabled at the September 16 Future Melbourne Committee meeting, with public consultation to follow. The final policy is due for endorsement in November.

While most councillors have backed the reforms, some – including Cr Dr Olivia Ball – have previously raised concerns about cost-shifting from the state government and the potential for overreach.

The July 29 meeting will be the first step in a months-long process to finalise the city's approach to public surveillance, with councillors to consider the report and initiate the next stage of policy development. ●

City of Melbourne review finds Developer Contact Policy is "working well"

“

A review of the City of Melbourne's Developer Contact Policy has found that the policy ensures public accountability in decision-making processes.

”

WORDS BY
JON FLEETWOOD



The policy, adopted by the council in 2024, requires councillors to publicly record when they meet with developers.

According to a council report, the review found that the existing processes, procedures, and guidelines within the policy are transparent, consistent, and uphold public accountability in decision-making.

However, the review did find that the same reporting requirements should also apply to the chief executive officer of the City of Melbourne.

As of March this year, the current CEO of the City of Melbourne, Alison Leighton, has been required to record her meetings with developers.

At the Future Melbourne Committee meeting on July 29, an updated version of the policy was voted on by councillors after the August edition of *Docklands News* published.

There was no feedback from the community, councillors, or council officers regarding the operation of the policy, and the review has concluded that minimal change is required.

As it stands, it is compulsory for councillors to record contact with developers. The declaration of prescribed contact is the direct responsibility of the individual councillor.

Additionally, as the sole responsibility for recording prescribed contact lies with councillors, council staff are not responsible for updating or checking the Developer Contact Register, aside from publishing the register on the website.

A range of legislation, codes, and council documents inform and support this policy, including but not limited to the *Freedom of Information Act 1982*, the *Local Government Act*, and the *Planning and Environment Act*. ●

Four councillors to set off on \$80k junket

Four City of Melbourne councillors will set off to several Asian sister cities to promote trade and investment opportunities in Melbourne, at a cost of more than \$80,000 to ratepayers.

WORDS BY
JON FLEETWOOD



Lord Mayor Nick Reece, alongside Cr Kevin Louey, Cr Gladys Liu and Cr Philip Lie Liu, will embark on what is described as an "Asia Business Mission" to Chengdu, Nanjing and Tianjin in China, and Osaka in Japan.

The trip will run from September 16 to 29, with the councillors scheduled to meet with influential city leaders from academia, industry, and innovation sectors to strengthen trade, investment, and global positioning outcomes.

The councillors will fly business class, with a council report estimating the cost at \$20,470 per councillor.

During the trip, the councillors will be joined by several Town Hall staff and business delegates from the green economy and health sectors who will be a part of the

mission on a fee-for-service basis.

While all councillors – apart from Cr Davydd Griffiths, who abstained from voting – supported the trip, concerns were raised about the size of the delegation at the July 15 Future Melbourne Committee (FMC) meeting.

Cr Owen Guest said he was not "convinced" a delegation of this size was necessary, expressing concern that it may be "overkill".

He said that while he supported the delegation this time, he wanted the value of the trip to be clearly demonstrated so he could determine whether it was worthwhile.

Cr Griffiths abstained from voting, stating that the proposed trip was not at the "level"

he would have liked to see, given what was being asked of councillors.

He highlighted recent budget discussions focused on reducing spending and said he was committed to running a "fine-tooth comb" through the council's expenditure.

"This strikes me as a good example of something that needed a couple more weeks of work and consideration about what could be done on the mission ... to see what value for money we're getting," he said.

Despite the concerns, the delegation received broad support from councillors.

Lord Mayor Nick Reece said that "this is a significant opportunity for council to strengthen our partnerships in China and Japan and secure tangible trade outcomes."

"Melbourne is the most successful multicultural city in the world, and our multiculturalism is our superpower when it comes to foreign affairs and international trade."

The council's portfolio head for safety and cleaning Cr Rafael Camilo was also a strong supporter of the trip and defended its purpose.

"This is not a holiday," he said. "This is not about councillors going there and getting a freebie from the council – this is work," he said.

"I will make sure that those councillors are doing their job. This is a mission to make trade and bring business back to Melbourne." ●



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Crystal Challenge brings international skating spotlight to Docklands

Docklands will take centre stage in August as the O’Brien Icehouse hosts the 2025 Crystal Challenge – Melbourne’s premier international figure skating competition.

WORDS BY
SEAN CAR



Held over four days from August 7 to 10, the event will feature more than 200 skaters from across Australia and the Asia-Pacific, from junior levels through to adult elite competitors. The competition is presented by the Melbourne Figure Skating Club in partnership with The District Docklands.

The Crystal Challenge is part of the prestigious International Judging System (IJS) Championship Series and offers a rare opportunity for locals to witness elite figure skating in action – without leaving the city.

“Hosting more than 200 skaters from Australia and New Zealand, the 2025 Crystal Challenge is our country’s biggest figure skating event outside of Nationals,” competition convenor Bronwyn Argentino said.

“Registrations sold out within days, a clear testament to the event’s outstanding reputation. We not only have some of the best facilities at O’Brien Icehouse, but also a friendly, welcoming team of volunteers.”

The event is expected to bring a wave of visitors to Docklands, including athletes, families, coaches and supporters. Organisers say it’s a valuable boost for the precinct, shining a spotlight on the area as a vibrant, all-season events destination.

While many competitors are chasing medals and rankings, the human stories behind the skaters are just as compelling. Many juggle full-time work or school with demanding training schedules, travelling interstate or overseas to compete at this level.

“The Crystal Challenge athletes train all year and at very unsociable hours, demonstrating their love and dedication to this beautiful sport. They look forward to coming to Crystal Challenge, one of the first Champ Series events of the year,” Ms Argentino said.



In addition to the main competition, each afternoon will feature free “Learn to Skate” demonstrations open to the public, giving families and first-timers the chance to try their hand on the ice. Spectators can also meet skaters and coaches during scheduled meet-and-greet sessions throughout the event.

The live event draw will take place virtually on Friday, August 1 at 6.30pm and will be open to media. General admission to the competition is just \$3, making it one of the most accessible international sporting events in the city.

“This sport is often seen as a niche sport in Australia but is growing and offers many pathways for athletes of all ages and abilities,” Ms Argentino said.

Whether you’re a longtime fan of figure skating or new to the sport, the Crystal Challenge promises four days of artistry, athleticism and family-friendly fun.

For full event details and competition schedule, visit melbournefigureskatingclub.com.au or follow @obrienicehouse on social media.

The event will take place at O’Brien Icehouse, The District Docklands from August 7 to 10. Admission is \$3 admission and afternoon “Learn to Skate” sessions are free. A virtual live draw will be held on August 1 at 6.30pm. ●

Calling all changemakers: it’s time to step up for Docklands

At Community3008 Inc., we believe in the power of community to shape our suburb for the better, because Docklands doesn’t just need more planning. It needs more people involved.

This month, we’re putting out a call to residents, workers, and local businesses who care about the future of our neighbourhood. If you’ve ever thought “someone should do something about that” ... this is your moment to act.

Where’s the Docklands dog park?

More and more locals are raising furry friends in high-rise living, but we still don’t have a dedicated dog park that fits the bill. Our pups deserve a place to stretch, socialise, and play safely all day long. If you’ve got ideas, passion, or just want to be part of the team pushing for better spaces for pet owners, we want to hear from you.

Connecting Lorimer: no more forgotten precincts

The Lorimer St precinct is growing fast, but many residents still feel disconnected from the rest of Docklands and the city centre. With new parks and developments on the way, now is the time to work together on better pedestrian links, signage, community-building and representation. If you’re a Lorimer local or simply care about connectivity and equity across Docklands, let’s collaborate.

Greening our neighbourhood, together

We don’t just need more greenery, we need the *right* kind, in the *right* places. We’re looking for community members passionate about climate resilience, beautification, and tactical urbanism to help us push for pocket parks, planter boxes, vertical gardens, and more. Whether you’re a gardening lover or just want more shade on your daily walk, come join us.

A cleaner Docklands starts with us

We all want a cleaner, safer Docklands. But beyond council street-cleaning, what role can we play? Whether it’s a monthly community clean-up, tackling graffiti hot-spots, or identifying problem areas, we need your help. Let’s turn concern into action, and pride into presence.



Join: Community3008 Inc. needs you

These aren’t just issues, they’re opportunities for us to shape Docklands with care, purpose, and people at the centre. And it starts by getting involved.

We’re inviting you to:

- Become a **member** of Community3008 Inc.
- Tell us what you care about
- Join a working group or help form a new one
- Volunteer your time, talents, or even just your ideas
- Attend our next meeting, event or clean-up day

Come say hi to us at the next Farmers market on Sunday, August 3. Docklands is full of passionate, creative people. Let’s bring that energy together and show what community can do.

It’s your neighbourhood. Be part of shaping it – Community3008 Inc.

Get in touch

- Email: contact@community3008.org.au
- Website: community3008.org.au ●

OWNERS’ CORPORATION LAW

Why it pays to grant access to private apartments to the owners’ corporation

Lot owners and tenants need to be aware that an owners’ corporation has a lawful right to serve a notice to gain entry to private apartments, in order to carry out repairs, maintenance and other remedial works.

The notice in writing must provide at least seven days’ notice to the owner, and if the lot is tenanted, then the notice must go to both landlord and tenant.

Once properly served, the lot owner or tenant must grant entry to the owners’ corporation (OC) and its agents, contractors and servants.

In addition to these very wide powers, an OC may also gain access without providing seven days’ notice, in an emergency, in circumstances where there is a water leak, or an interruption to a service such as electricity, gas, electricity, telephone, water, drainage and the like.

If a lot owner or tenant refuses entry or permission to enter, then the OC may apply to VCAT for a formal order of access.

If an access order is granted, VCAT may also award damages to the OC if the resident’s failure to provide access caused them to incur costs or exacerbated damage to other lots and the common property.

It does not seem to matter if the OC is requiring access to the apartment for one hour, one day or one month.

In a recent case determined in VCAT, an OC in Docklands was granted access by order to enter a unit to erect swing stages to allow

for façade repairs.

The lot owner had earlier refused access by seeking to impose unreasonable conditions of entry to their apartment, such as requiring the OC to pay compensation of \$100 per day, and to only enter the apartment during certain hours, and to only have a right of access for a finite duration of time (30 days max).

VCAT awarded the OC \$13,000 in damages, finding that the OC incurred more costs in the remedial repairs project by virtue of the delays in not getting access to the apartment, and because it had to complete the remedial repairs in two different stages by coming

back to the site at a later time.

VCAT also has a general discretion to award legal costs in special circumstances too.

Therefore, lot owners and tenants need to be very cognisant of their rights and responsibilities when they receive these types of notices from their OC manager or building manager. ●

Tom Bacon

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Showcasing Victoria Dock to the world

Unsurprisingly, given that we are an island continent, media coverage of global naval activity by the RAN, USA, UK, China and others seems to have intensified recently.

While Melbourne Maritime Heritage Network (MMHN) finds such global naval "cruising" fascinating, it is, as the saying goes, not "new news".

Melbourne has long-standing, global significance as a strategic port in the far south and in this context 2025 marks an important anniversary year.

The 1925 visit of the United States Fleet to Victoria Harbour (July 23 to August 6) was the largest peacetime visit by a naval force in Australian history. The fleet included 57 US Navy warships, painted grey. This extraordinary event remains unmatched in scale and spectacle.

MMHN board member Michael O'Brien invites you to imagine the excitement 100 years ago when this naval spectacle unfolded in Victoria Dock. All 26 destroyers docked dramatically in Victoria Harbour, while four battleships berthed in the deeper water off Princes Pier (now demolished).

As the fleet approached the Heads, the people of Melbourne welcomed them with great enthusiasm. Thousands of spectators lined the shore, while others boarded excursion paddle steamers *Weerona* and *Hygeia* to greet the fleet as it entered Port Phillip Bay, enroute to Hobsons Bay and the city's docks.

An estimated half a million people visited the ships during their stay. The YMCA encouraged Melbourne families to host US



sailors for dinner and overnight stays. The entertainment in town and beyond brought delight to all. There were baseball matches at the MCG and Albert Park, receptions at Queen's Hall and Government House for the officers, a Lord Mayor's Ball for 3000 guests at the Exhibition Building, race meetings, theatre and cinema shows, day trips, a city parade and, of course, fireworks! Wow!

While this was clearly a "goodwill cruise" and a wildly popular public event, it also served a strategic purpose. Some interpreted the visit as a subtle signal to Japan and the UK regarding the growing capability of the US Navy after World War I. The US was preparing for potential conflict in the Pacific, and this voyage was a useful logistical test for operations across vast ocean distances. Choosing Australia as a destination, rather than the Philippines or East Asia, helped to avoid escalating tensions with Japan – though conflict eventually did occur.

Shipping Control Tower, Victoria Harbour – nearly excellent news

Heritage Victoria has recommended that the Shipping Control Tower be added to the Victorian Heritage Register as a "Registered Place". While this is a major – and rare – win for maritime heritage in the Docklands precinct, the final decision to protect the tower rests with the Heritage Council.

MMHN welcomes this development but warns that the fight isn't over. A close reading of the Heritage Victoria recommendations reveals "wriggle room" that could be exploited by those opposing heritage protection in Docklands.



What you can do:

Supporters of maritime heritage now have an opportunity to make a formal submission. Please consider submitting an online response addressing any concerns you may have and emphasising the long-term significance of preserving this unique port infrastructure asset.

You can read the full HV report, make a submission and see the historic images via the Victorian Heritage Council's website.



And finally – a fun invitation

MMHN is delighted to invite you to a significant photographic exhibition.

Last Light on Victoria Dock

This unique collection of images from the 1990s captures the historic, economic, and social significance of Victoria Dock before its demolition and transformation into the urban renewal precinct that is the present-day Docklands. Award-winning photographer, Bill McAuley, will present his work, and MMHN will speak about the heritage and history of Victoria Dock.

When: September 4 at 6.30pm

Where: MAGNET Gallery, the District Shopping Centre, G19 Wharf St, Docklands. Take the Bourke St tram to Waterfront City (last stop). •

Jackie Watts

CHAIR

INFO@MMHN.ORG.AU



HEALTH & WELLBEING

Bridging the gap: How "micro-moments" and "major moments" combat loneliness

As Loneliness Awareness Week commences (August 4 to 10), a new initiative, "10 Moments That Matter," is highlighting the profound impact of both brief, everyday interactions and significant life changes on our sense of connection and belonging.



The campaign emphasises that combating loneliness isn't always about grand gestures, but often about recognising and nurturing what are being called "micro-moments" and navigating "major moments" with an awareness of their potential for both isolation and connection.

The power of "micro-moments": stitching the fabric of connection

"Micro-moments are brief interactions that help us feel seen, valued, or emotionally attuned, even if it's just for a few seconds," says Dr Malcolm Winstanley Cross. "They're not grand gestures – they're social glimmers that stitch together the fabric of connection."

These small, often overlooked interactions play a crucial role in building comfort and a sense of shared humanity.

One of the most accessible micro-moments is **small talk**. Often dismissed as mere filler, small talk is, in fact, "how connection begins". It helps build comfort, signals openness, and allows individuals to find common ground.

The repetitive nature of small talk, such

as daily exchanges with colleagues, can gradually turn strangers into acquaintances and even friends.

Unexpected help also falls under the umbrella of micro-moments. Whether it's a stranger offering directions, a neighbour assisting with groceries, or a friend texting "I've got you," these acts remind us that "we're not invisible, we're part of something shared". Such instances can transform a purely transactional interaction into a relational one.

Rituals, even without deep conversation, contribute significantly to micro-trust. Repetitive actions like saying hello to classmates or colleagues, joining a weekly group, or walking a familiar route where familiar faces appear can build a sense of connection.

The initiative also highlights the impact of **compliments and comments**. A light joke about the weather or a compliment on someone's attire can spark a connection and invite shared humanity, particularly in otherwise mundane settings.

Finally, **unspoken stuff** – a smile, a nod, or a shared glance – can be incredibly

powerful. These non-verbal cues can convey "I see you" or "I agree" without words, subtly communicating "we're in this together," even if only for a brief moment.

Navigating "major moments"

While micro-moments are the daily threads of connection, "major moments" are significant life transitions that can profoundly impact an individual's susceptibility to loneliness and their opportunities for forging new bonds. The period between 16 and 25 years old is particularly significant, as it often involves a multitude of changes.

Starting new endeavours, such as a new school, university/TAFE, or job, can bring heightened vulnerability due to unfamiliar dynamics and cultures. In these situations, small gestures like remembering someone's name or asking about their weekend can build trust. Accepting invitations for coffee or lunch can also facilitate getting to know people better and cultivate new relationships.

Loss of a loved one is an incredibly difficult major moment. People checking in weeks later or offering practical help can be invaluable. Shared experiences during

times of loss can also strengthen existing bonds.

Moving to a new city or country, while potentially exciting, can also be isolating as a fresh start still requires anchoring. Casual conversations with neighbours and establishing new rituals, such as daily walks, can help build a sense of belonging.

Becoming a parent is another major moment that can present social challenges. Friends may be on different life paths, and the sudden shift in identity and responsibility can lead to feelings of loneliness. Joining local parent groups allows for the sharing of stories and experiences, fostering a sense of belonging.

Finally, **new relationships**, while often romantic, encompass any deepened connection were shared rituals like cooking together, inside jokes, or even conflict resolution can deepen the bond.

As Loneliness Awareness Week unfolds, the "10 Moments That Matter" initiative serves as a vital reminder that combating loneliness is a continuous process. By embracing these principles, individuals can actively foster a more connected and supportive community, one interaction at a time. •

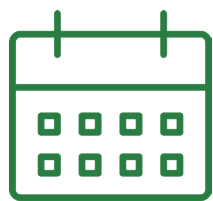
Dr Mike Edgley

CHIROPRACTOR

DOCKLANDS HEALTH



WHAT'S ON August



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



COMMUNITY SOCIAL CRAFTING

Have you been looking for an inclusive, supportive, creative community crafting group? The Cauldron is a fabulous creative community space in Docklands hosting weekly social crafting sessions.

The Cauldron, The District Docklands

WEDS UNTIL 31 AUGUST, 5PM – 7PM



DOCKLANDS FARMERS' MARKET

Enjoy a walk by the harbour, grab some fresh summer veggies, baked goods and more award-winning produce. First Sunday of every month.

Newquay Promenade, Docklands

SUNDAY 3 AUGUST, 8AM – 12.30PM



PICKLEPALOOZA

The ultimate pickleball festival is coming to Melbourne, in various pop-up courts and activation zones. Learn the basics or level up your skills with expert instructors at free pickleball clinics.

Shed 21 – 194 Lorimer St, Docklands

8 – 10 AUGUST, 2PM – 4.30PM



PLANT FRAME WORKSHOP FOR BEGINNERS

Join this fun workshop where you'll create your own mini vertical indoor garden. In this workshop you'll mix your potting mix and build a landscape frame from scratch.

Be-Ras Creatives Art Cafe, Docklands

UNTIL 31 DECEMBER



JESWRI: BEYOND HECTIC

Jeswri is a Gadigal artist, street artist, and storyteller living on Wurundjeri Country. *Beyond Hectic* is a raw and reflective snapshot of an artist navigating survival & self-expression in the face of pressure.

Gallery – Library at The Dock, Docklands

UNTIL 3 AUGUST, 10AM – 7PM



BOOK WEEK STOMPERS AND COSTUME PARADE

Stories, songs and craft for all small friends. Lots of fun! Age: 18 months to 3 years. No bookings required.

Library at The Dock

THURS 21 AUGUST, 10.30AM – 11.15AM



RAINBOW ART CLASS

These art classes are all about having fun with self-expression, creativity and imagination. Experienced art teacher Shyamasree Bose guides children in a colourful exploration of acrylic painting.

The Hub at Docklands

UNTIL 25 SEPTEMBER, 4.30PM – 6.30PM

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