

BIG CHANGES
COMING SOON!

JULY 2026 EDITION #231

FOREVER FREE



Volunteers sought to keep community garden growing

The Docklands Community Garden has long provided a peaceful green refuge in one of Melbourne's busiest high-rise neighbourhoods, but more volunteers are needed to help keep the Geographe St site, which was established in 2009, at its thriving best. More on page 5.

Photo: Huda Shehzad.

Tram bridge to E-Gate still possible despite West Gate Tunnel fears

“ A long-mooted tram connection linking West Melbourne to E-Gate and Docklands remains technically feasible despite the construction of the West Gate Tunnel Project's Wurundjeri Way extension, *Docklands News* can reveal.

WORDS BY
SEAN CAR



the Wurundjeri Way extension has permanently compromised E-Gate's potential as a major urban renewal site, particularly by cutting off the direct east-west connections envisaged in earlier planning for the West Melbourne Structure Plan.

The final West Melbourne Structure Plan, adopted in 2022 after years of work, ultimately included a pedestrian and cycling connection via Hawke St, but did not retain an earlier, more linear tram bridge proposal from Abbotsford St due to the challenges presented by the West Gate Tunnel Project.

However, *Docklands News* understands subsequent work undertaken by the State Government and the City of Melbourne demonstrated that a tram-capable bridge was still possible if part of the Wurundjeri Way extension along E-Gate's northern edge was lowered, allowing a bridge structure to clear both the road and rail corridor without excessive difficulty.

A source associated with the investigation said the work showed that while the road had reduced the development footprint on the northern edge of E-Gate, it had not destroyed the precinct's urban renewal potential.

The investigation also tested whether a tram could be carried across the infrastructure at an acceptable gradient. While trams can climb hills, they require a suitable grade, meaning a direct crossing was more difficult.

Continued on page 9.

EVENTS, PAGE 3

Firelight Festival returns to heat up Docklands

COUNCIL AFFAIRS, PAGE 7

Docklands gaps exposed in council infrastructure plan



BUSINESS, PAGE 8

TAP831: Docklands' local

Tucked away on the corner of Merchant St and Bourke St, TAP831 is something of a rare find in Docklands – a welcoming pub and restaurant that has built a loyal local following.



HYPERLOCAL

NEWS

CONTACT

Suite 208, 198 Harbour Esplanade
Docklands 3008
docklandsnews.com.au
Tel: 8689 7980

EDITOR

Sean Car

PUBLISHER

Hyperlocal News Pty Ltd
ABN: 57 623 558 725

ADVERTISING

Hyperlocal print works for advertisers in our digital world because local people are interested in local news.

To sell to the Docklands community, contact Sean Car on 0460 896 115 or sean@hyperlocalnews.com.au

Reader contributions are welcome. Send letters, articles and images to: admin@hyperlocalnews.com.au

The deadline for the August edition is July 31

Opinions expressed by contributors are not necessarily shared by the publisher.

hyperlocalnews.com.au
admin@hyperlocalnews.com.au

Follow us on social media by searching @docklandsnews



Docklands' low canopy in focus as council considers urban forest plan

Docklands' low tree canopy and exposed waterfront streets will come under renewed focus as the City of Melbourne considers a new 10-year Urban Forest Precinct Plan for the neighbourhood.

WORDS BY
SEAN CAR



The Docklands Urban Forest Precinct Plan 2025–35 is due to be considered at the July 7 Future Melbourne Committee meeting, alongside final plans for Kensington and North and West Melbourne.

The precinct plans form part of the council's broader Urban Forest Strategy, which aims to increase canopy cover across the municipality to 40 per cent by 2040, reduce the urban heat island effect, improve biodiversity and guide street tree planting over the next decade.

For Docklands, the challenge is particularly acute.

The report identifies Docklands as having one of the lowest canopy covers in the municipality, at 8.2 per cent, well below established inner-city areas such as South Yarra, East Melbourne, Parkville, Carlton and Kensington.

The plan notes that Docklands is still a relatively young urban forest. The precinct was developed from the 1990s as an urban renewal area of docks and wharves, with the first strategic tree planting taking place around 2001 when the first residents moved in.



Located at the meeting point of Victoria Harbour, the Yarra River and Moonee Ponds Creek, Docklands has seven kilometres of waterfront edge, with Harbour Esplanade forming its central spine.

While the report says the deciduous tree canopy of the Hoddle Grid continues along streets such as Collins, Bourke, La Trobe and Dudley streets, the rest of Docklands has a more native and evergreen character.

The plan says Docklands already has the highest proportion of native species in the municipality and the second-lowest proportion of exotic species, giving it a distinct character from many of Melbourne's older neighbourhoods.

Community feedback has reinforced that direction, with residents wanting Docklands to remain "self-contained and distinct" from the CBD, while better connecting water, tall trees, understorey planting, wildlife and people.

The report says the community wants more native species, more understorey planting, stronger biodiversity corridors and a clearer connection to Docklands' pre-development landscape of rivers, wetlands

and working docks.

It also notes that future planting should reduce reliance on London plane trees, partly because their suitability in future climates is less certain, and because further plane tree planting would be less consistent with the community's desire to distinguish Docklands from the central city area.

Under the plan, low-canopy streets without recent tree planting will be prioritised for new planting over the next decade, with works staged according to complexity.

The council will also monitor recently planted streets to support healthy growth, and review older or underperforming streetscapes later in the 10-year period.

Biodiversity is another major focus. The plan identifies Docklands as a prime location for biodiversity corridors because of its proximity to waterways, with several streets mapped as important for bird habitat.

Future planting will seek to connect open spaces, maximise canopy cover, use understorey planting to support biodiversity, and extend the character of parks into adjoining streets.

The plan also seeks to build resilience against pests and disease. It identifies sycamore lace bug as a high risk for Docklands and says mixed tree species will help reduce the risk of large-scale tree loss.

If endorsed, the Docklands plan will guide street-by-street planting decisions through to 2035, with all streetscapes in the precinct expected to be assessed for tree planting potential by 2032.

For a suburb often criticised for its hard surfaces, wind exposure and limited shade, the plan represents a long-term attempt to make Docklands cooler, greener and more ecologically connected while strengthening its waterfront identity. ●

INNER REAL ESTATE

FOR SALE



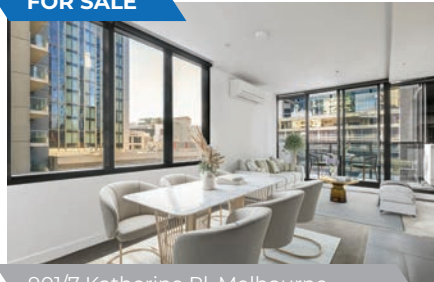
1101/33 Batman St West, Melbourne

2 1 1
\$470,000 – \$490,000

Gio Campagnaro
0447 894 467



FOR SALE



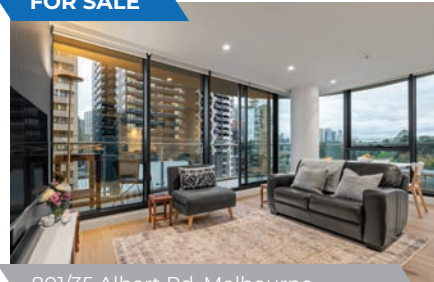
901/7 Katherine Pl, Melbourne

1 1
\$349,000

Matt Kunz
0477 006 125



FOR SALE



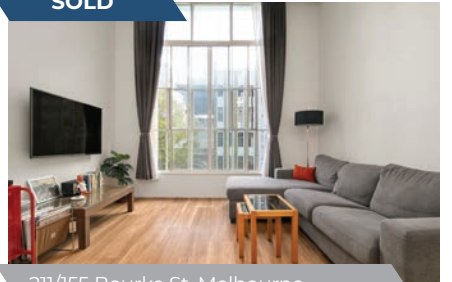
801/35 Albert Rd, Melbourne

2 1 1
\$590,000 – \$645,000

Anthony Cimino
0400 500 903



SOLD



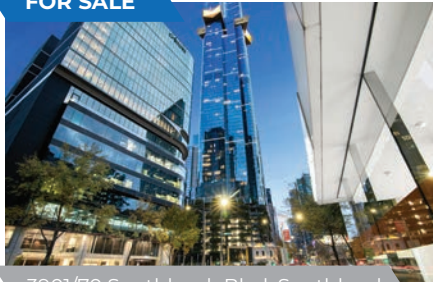
211/155 Bourke St, Melbourne

1 1

\$350,000

Anthony Cimino
0400 500 903

FOR SALE



3901/70 Southbank Blvd, Southbank

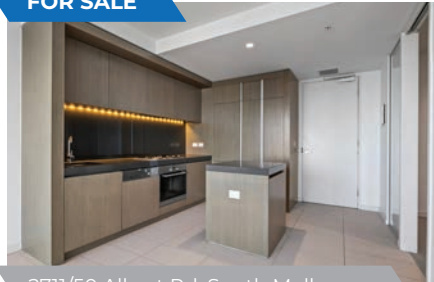
1 1

\$419,000

Anthony Cimino
0400 500 903



FOR SALE



2711/50 Albert Rd, South Melbourne

2 1 1

\$579,000

Anthony Cimino
0400 500 903



FOR SALE



1016/408 Lonsdale St, Melbourne

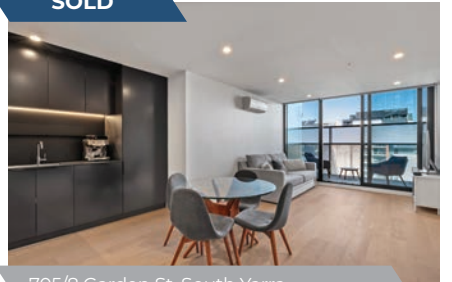
1 1

\$280,000 – \$300,000

Gio Campagnaro
0447 894 467



SOLD



705/8 Garden St, South Yarra

2 2 1

Contact Agent

Anthony Cimino
0400 500 903

Head Office – Inner Real Estate \ 138 Thistlethwaite Street, South Melbourne, Victoria 3205 \ 03 9804 5551 \ mail@ire.com.au \ ire.com.au

SALES | RENTALS | OWNERS CORPORATION



Firelight Festival returns to heat up Docklands

“ Docklands is set to glow again this winter, with the City of Melbourne’s Firelight Festival returning to Harbour Esplanade for three nights of fire, music, food and after-dark entertainment. ”

The free annual festival will take over the waterfront from Friday, July 3 to Sunday, July 5, bringing more than 130 performers to Docklands, including fire artists, musicians and roving entertainers.

This year’s program will feature fire pits, flame jets, food trucks, silent discos,

glow-in-the-dark pickleball and a new large-scale laser and light show designed to transform the harbour into an immersive winter spectacle.

The new installation will combine water fountains, high-impact lasers and synchronised music, spanning almost 90 metres across the harbour. It will bring together 20 choreographed water fountains and 30 laser projectors across the precinct, with two nightly shows featuring fire performers at 6.30pm and 8.30pm.

The spectacle will also unfold against Development Victoria’s new Echo installation, which features 147 illuminated marine buoys tracing the footprint of the former Central Pier across Victoria Harbour.

For Docklands, Firelight’s return is another major winter boost for local traders, hospitality venues and attractions, with more than 100,000 people expected across the weekend.

Lord Mayor Nick Reece said the festival

was a chance for Melburnians to experience Docklands at its best.

“Firelight Festival is a great excuse to rug up, get out of the house and see Docklands at its best,” Cr Reece said.

“Firelight is Melbourne’s brightest winter event and this year’s program will bring back the fiery favourites, with new after-dark experiences adding even more glow to the program.”

Cr Reece said Docklands was set for “a huge start to the school holidays” with crowds expected across the three nights.

Tourism and Events portfolio head Cr Mark Scott said the festival would help bring people into the precinct during winter.

“Melbourne doesn’t hibernate in winter – with family-friendly events like the Firelight Festival bringing people out, supporting local traders, hospitality and businesses while delivering an unforgettable free experience,” Cr Scott said.

“Firelight Festival always brings an energy

to the Docklands, and with AFL games, restaurants, bars and local attractions nearby, it’s the perfect excuse to make a day and night of it.”

Festivalgoers will also be able to take part in glow-in-the-dark pickleball at Docklands Community Hub Reserve, with tournaments and free play on offer, while silent discos at MPavilion Docklands will cater to all ages.

Thirty food trucks will serve winter favourites across the weekend, including hot chocolate, s’mores and street food.

Local businesses will also take part through special offers and activities, including Firelight boat and kayak cruises, themed cocktails, live DJs, dining deals, happy hours and accommodation packages.

The festival will run from 5pm to 10.30pm on July 3 and 4, and from 5pm to 10pm on Sunday, July 5. It will be held along Harbour Esplanade between La Trobe and Collins streets, including Docklands Park and Community Hub Reserve. ●

Pop-Up Markets In the heart of Docklands

Discover something special at Collins Square’s exclusive artisan markets. You’ll find something for everyone - from handcrafted ceramics and bespoke jewellery to irresistible baked treats and beautifully made candles.

Support local makers and enjoy a relaxed wander through the stalls.

Save the dates and join us



Collins Square, Lower Plaza
727 Collins Street, Melbourne



COLLINS SQUARE



ADVERTISEMENT
Your City of Melbourne community update

Images by
@chalkakfilm

Our City Our Stories



*Scan to subscribe for the stories
that matter to Melbourne*

news.melbourne.vic.gov.au



CITY OF MELBOURNE

Volunteers sought to keep Docklands garden growing

The Docklands Community Garden has long provided a peaceful green refuge in one of Melbourne's busiest high-rise neighbourhoods, but more volunteers are needed to help keep it thriving.

WORDS BY
DANIEL GAWNE



Located on Geographe St, adjacent to Victoria Green, the garden has been part of Docklands since 2009. Open to the public and easily accessible from Harbour Esplanade and Collins St trams and Southern Cross Station, it offers residents, workers and visitors a tranquil space to slow down, connect with nature and enjoy locally-grown produce.

Volunteer Olaf Hartnett, who visits the garden every week, said he often saw the "same regulars" enjoying the space.

Olaf, who lives with PTSD, said he sometimes struggled to go outside, but described the community garden as a "little paradise" in the heart of Docklands.

While the garden has a strong support base, with 256 people on its mailing list, only around 10 to 12 people regularly volunteer. Lead volunteers Greg Wise and Dee Kallenberger are hoping more locals will get involved.

Greg said the garden was seeking two types of volunteers.

The first are "Garden Ambassadors", who would help with growing the garden's volunteer base, onboarding and operating a calendar for volunteers, marketing and



social media and overseeing the garden's operations and events. The role may suit local residents who can spare a couple of hours a week, including retirees or anyone interested in spending more time outdoors.

The second are general garden volunteers, who would help with regular tasks such as planting seedlings in the garden beds and greenhouse, watering, weeding, applying fertiliser and pest control and general maintenance.

Greg said some gardening experience would be welcome, but was not essential, as senior volunteers and ambassadors could provide guidance.

He said regular attendance was important, but even one hour a week could make a difference. Volunteers may also be asked to help for around four hours quarterly

when major activities, such as replanting the garden, are undertaken.

All tools, supplies and guidance are provided, and people do not need to live in Docklands to volunteer.

The garden has recently added a new greenhouse, providing a protected space to grow seeds. It replaces an earlier greenhouse that was destroyed by vandals, with the new structure designed to be more robust.

Vandalism has been an ongoing challenge, with plants damaged or destroyed in recent months. Volunteers have also raised concerns about some visitors taking too much produce, leaving little behind for others.

Dee said the community was welcome to pick a small quantity of ripe, mature

produce, but encouraged visitors to leave enough so everyone can have a share.

Despite these challenges, the garden remains a much-loved local haven, with further improvements planned. Greg and Dee said there were extension plans for a native garden made up entirely of Australian flora.

It would add to existing features including the sensory garden, where children can learn about how produce grows, and the vertical garden with its own reticulated water system.

People interested in volunteering at the Docklands Community Garden can contact Greg on **0408 818 980** or via email at **wiseguy873@gmail.com** ●



 **INNER OWNERS CORPORATION**



Proudly named Victoria's Best Strata Team, we're honoured to receive the 2025 Strata Community Management – Medium Business Award.

Recognised for our transparency, trust and open-door approach, we remain committed to putting people first. Thank you to our clients, partners and community for your support.

Call 9804 5551 for a confidential, obligation-free discussion about how we can add value to your building and community.

Head Office – Inner Owners Corporation \ 138 Thistlethwaite Street, South Melbourne, Victoria 3205 \ 03 9804 5551 \ mail@iocm.com.au \ iocm.com.au

SALES | RENTALS | OWNERS CORPORATION

A helping hand out of homelessness



The City of Melbourne's investing \$2.3 million in homelessness initiatives as part of Budget 2026-27.

For people experiencing homelessness, a pathway to stable housing often begins with something simple: a conversation.

"A huge part of our work is consistency. We keep showing up."

After 8 years working with people sleeping rough in Melbourne, Jessica has seen firsthand how trust is built slowly, one conversation at a time.

"Everyone is different and there's no one-size-fits-all approach. Sometimes a win is someone accepting a cup of coffee and being open to a chat after years of trying to build rapport," says Jessica.

Rain, hail or shine, Jessica's teams are in the city every day. As the coordinator of Launch Housing's Rough Sleepers Initiative and Daily Support Team, they're often the first point of contact for people experiencing homelessness.

In a typical month, the Daily Support Team speaks to more than 130 people across the City of Melbourne. They connect people with health services and crisis accommodation and pathways into longer-term housing.

Jessica says while the work can be challenging, it's deeply rewarding.

"The real beauty of the work we do is seeing people who have been entrenched in sleeping rough find a home after years of persistent engagement with the team."

"We got to know someone who had been sleeping rough for 10 years. He's now moved into safe, secure, long-term supported accommodation where he can stay for the rest of his life if he chooses. This amazing outcome came from years of engagement, relationship building and support from multiple people across the team."

For Jessica, stories like this are a reminder that the right care can change lives.

To help more people find a path out of homelessness, City of Melbourne is investing \$2.3 million in homelessness initiatives as part of Budget 2026-27.

The funding will help back 2 new programs: the Melbourne Outreach Team, delivered by Launch Housing and Ngwala Willumbong, and a new Safe Space Program led by VincentCare.

Led by Jessica, the new Melbourne Outreach Team will help people sleeping rough with referrals to crisis accommodation, supported housing and other essential services.

The service will also double the number of specialist frontline workers on Melbourne's streets and introduce a dedicated complex case manager to provide trauma-informed, long-term care.

"We want to ensure people experiencing homelessness get the care they need most, working alongside trusted partners with expertise in mental health, social services and trauma. Together, we believe we can make a real, positive difference in people's lives," Lord Mayor Nick Reece said.

Jessica says the complexity of homelessness means no single organisation can tackle it alone.



"It takes strong partnerships between outreach services, health providers, housing services and local government to create lasting change."

As part of this broader network, City of Melbourne Community Safety Officers (CSOs) also help connect vulnerable people with services across the city. Their numbers are set to double from 11 to 22 as part of Budget 2026-27.

CSOs are trained in trauma-informed engagement, mental health awareness, cultural safety, substance use and family violence awareness.

The path out of homelessness rarely begins with housing. More often, it starts with trust.

"Treating people with dignity and respect won't solve homelessness but it can make it more likely that people will feel comfortable reaching out for support," Jessica said.



The team connects people with crisis accommodation and longer-term housing. Photo: Launch Housing



KEEP UP TO DATE

Scan to read more stories that matter to Melbourne.



Docklands gaps exposed in council infrastructure plan

Docklands and its surrounding urban renewal areas face significant gaps in community infrastructure as population growth continues to place pressure on schools, open space, sportsgrounds, early years services and flexible community facilities.

WORDS BY
SEAN CAR



The City of Melbourne's new Community Infrastructure Plan 2026–36, endorsed unanimously at the June 16 Future Melbourne Committee meeting, identifies the south-west district – covering Docklands, West Melbourne, Fishermans Bend, Lorimer and E-Gate – as a major growth area with historic under-supply.

While Docklands already has several important community assets, including Library at The Dock, Community Hub at The Dock, Ron Barassi Senior Park and Pavilion and Yarra's Edge Community Space, the report says community space across the broader district remains limited.

It identifies "significant gaps" in open space, sport, arts, early years and health spaces, driven by growth and long-term under-provision.

Docklands is singled out as a major residential, employment and visitor destination where growth is expected to continue. According to the plan, Docklands' residential population is forecast to rise from 18,199 in 2023 to 29,586 by 2043, an increase of 63 per cent.

Its worker population is also expected to grow from 76,700 to 96,600 over the same period.

The report says young adults will remain the largest age group in Docklands, while children aged zero to 11 are the fastest-growing cohort – creating increased demand for local community spaces and services.

In the short term, Docklands needs arts and culture spaces, community gardens, flexible bookable spaces, including for older people, and early years services such as long day care, kindergarten and playgroups.

The report also notes that Docklands Primary School, which opened in 2021, is already at capacity, with demand for an additional primary school.

For a suburb that has long advocated for better community infrastructure to match its residential growth, the plan provides an important acknowledgement of gaps that many locals have raised for years.

The council's four-year pipeline for the south-west includes planning to optimise the use of Hub@Docklands and surrounding land for community purposes, managing

and activating Yarra's Edge Community Space, and partnering on new community spaces and transfer of assets in Docklands.

It will also advocate for a new or expanded primary school in West Melbourne and Docklands and for the expansion of Ron Barassi Senior Park.

Other priorities for the district include planning for new and improved open space, preparing a master plan for Westgate Park, connecting cultural and creative organisations to meet local needs, and coordinating delivery of community space planned for Fishermans Bend.

The plan also identifies E-Gate as a future opportunity. While the site remains an industrial area, the report says it has long-term potential to accommodate large-scale community spaces, including open space, recreation and aquatic facilities, subject to strategic planning and further investigation.

That will be closely watched in Docklands, where E-Gate has long been seen as a potential missing link between the waterfront, West Melbourne and North Melbourne, and

a rare opportunity to deliver infrastructure at a scale not easily achieved in the built-out parts of the inner city.

Fishermans Bend is also central to the council's long-term thinking. The report describes it as Australia's largest urban renewal precinct, with Lorimer planned as a dense urban neighbourhood and the Employment and Innovation Area focused on advanced manufacturing and business.

While growth in Fishermans Bend is expected to be gradual over the next two decades, the area is forecast to accommodate more than 12,000 residents and 80,000 workers, with development dependent on investment in transport and community space.

The council says Fishermans Bend should support municipal facilities, including arts, open space, sport and recreation.

City strategy director Jo Cannington told councillors the plan was a "first of its kind" for the City of Melbourne, bringing together the council's understanding of its community infrastructure assets and future demand.

Acting Lord Mayor Roshena Campbell said the plan provided a "much needed reset" and a more transparent framework for identifying existing supply, future demand and the gaps to be addressed.

The final motion also requires future project ideas to be monitored, considered and, where necessary, reprioritised through the council's annual plan and budget process.

For Docklands, the challenge will be turning the plan's acknowledgement of long-standing gaps into funded projects.

With Docklands continuing to grow, Fishermans Bend emerging and E-Gate still waiting for a clear future, the south-west district is likely to remain one of the city's most important tests of whether community infrastructure can keep pace with urban renewal. ●

CIRCA
NEWQUAY

STAMP DUTY CONCESSIONS APPLY



ARTIST'S IMPRESSION

3000SQM OF PARKLAND ON YOUR DOORSTEP

1, 2 and 3 Bedroom Apartments, Townhouses, Terrace Homes and SOHOs now selling from \$595,000–\$2.6M.

Enjoy fresh sea air, lush parklands and a beautiful waterfront promenade. Residents will have access to a wide range of amenities, close proximity to schooling, public transport connections, and shopping.

Developed by

MAB

FOR MORE INFORMATION CALL 8899 9202

DISPLAY SUITE, BANKSIA APARTMENTS,
GROUND LEVEL, 2 GLENTI PLACE, NEWQUAY



SERVICES AVAILABLE:

- ▶ Physiotherapy
- ▶ Chiropractic
- ▶ Massage
- ▶ Psychology
- ▶ Nutrition
- ▶ Bowen Therapy
- ▶ Pilates
- ▶ Kinesiology
- ▶ Exercise Rehabilitation



Shop 4/860 Collins St, Docklands, 3008
(03) 9088 3228 www.docklandshealth.com.au

BOOK ONLINE
DOCKLANDSHEALTH.COM.AU

TAP831: Docklands' local

Tucked away on the corner of Merchant St and 831 Bourke St, TAP831 is something of a rare find in Docklands – a welcoming pub and restaurant that has built a loyal following among the local business community while also becoming a favourite stop before a game or concert at Marvel Stadium.

WORDS BY
CHRIS JACKSON



"We've got our own little pocket of Docklands," venue manager Brion told *Docklands News*.

That sense of community is no accident. A hospitality veteran with 26 years' experience, Brion has been at TAP831 for the past three-and-a-half years and believes it is the small details that keep people coming back.

"There's nothing better than walking into a venue and your drink's ready before you've even said hello," he said.

It is a philosophy shared by the team, with several staff members having been with the venue for many years. TAP831 itself has been part of the precinct for more than a decade, surviving COVID and evolving into a local institution.

Brion is proud of the culture the team has created.

"It's not just a pay cheque, it's an institution," he said. "You'd be hard-pressed to find another venue around here with the same service, food and customer connection."

Walking into the downstairs bar, the



atmosphere immediately feels relaxed and familiar. Regulars chat over lunch, office workers gather after meetings and staff greet many customers by name. The relationships feel genuine rather than rehearsed.

Upstairs offers a different experience. Filled with natural light from floor-to-ceiling windows overlooking Merchant St and the mature trees lining Bourke St, it is an inviting dining space that feels removed from the bustle below.

"People love coming up here, especially at lunch," Brion said.

The venue has also recently launched a new menu designed to encourage diners to try something different. Rather than offering the same specials each day, a different signature dish now takes centre stage throughout the week.

Daily lunch specials, priced at \$25 and including a house wine, beer or soft drink, have quickly become popular. Favourites include the house-made beef and Guinness pie, braised lamb shank and pan-fried chicken breast with potato gnocchi, mushroom, spinach cream and truffle oil.

The response has been so strong that some dishes regularly sell out, while local tradies now phone through lunch orders before arriving.

"We're trying to break the norm and do things a little differently," Brion said.

The team is also preparing to introduce a weekly roast night, featuring rotating roast options.

"There'll definitely be proper Yorkshire puddings," he laughed.

While weekdays are driven by the surrounding corporate workforce, evenings



and Saturdays often revolve around Marvel Stadium.

Brion describes the year as having two distinct seasons: footy season and concert season.

"It's literally a five-minute walk to the stadium," he said. "For some concerts we can have up to 200 people booked before the show."

Whether it is office workers catching up over lunch, regulars dropping in for happy hour or concertgoers looking for a meal before heading to Marvel, TAP831 has quietly built something that is becoming increasingly rare in Melbourne: a venue where customers are not only recognised, but remembered.

Sometimes, as Brion puts it, it is the "little one percenters" that make all the difference. ●

Harbour Esplanade to feature in 220km Birrarung walk

A long-term plan for a 220km "whole-of-river" walking trail along the Yarra, or Birrarung, will take walkers through Docklands and along Harbour Esplanade as part of a major new route connecting the river's lower reaches to the Upper Yarra Reservoir.

WORDS BY
JENNY DENTON



The Birrarung Valley Walk, expected to open in 2029, will run from Williamstown to the forested Yarra Ranges, linking existing riverside paths, cultural sites, parks, wetlands and major city landmarks.

In the city, the route will include areas west of Docklands, taking walkers along Harbour Esplanade, before heading towards Federation Square and Birrarung Marr to form an important part of the walk's urban waterfront experience.

But rather than simply tracing the river as it appears today, the western city section will also take walkers through the original Yarra corridor west of Docklands, reflecting the fact that the river's course was dramatically altered after colonisation.

Birrarung Walk Inc. executive director Nichola Lefroy said the section that appears to stray from the current river corridor from the current Yarra alignment was intentional.

The route heads north-west along the Maribyrnong River because the confluence of the Yarra and Maribyrnong once sat



much higher than it does today, before the Birrarung was straightened as part of colonial-era engineering works.

The area between the present river and the walk's alignment was once swampland, rich with bird and animal life.

By taking walkers through that landscape, the walk will be able to tell a deeper story about how the river was changed, how wetlands were filled, and how the city's western

waterfront was reshaped over time.

It also avoids reliance on the punt beneath the West Gate Bridge between Spotswood and Westgate Park, which operates only during peak periods.

The proposed walk will feature major destinations, including Herring Island, Abbotsford Convent, Heide Museum of Modern Art, Warrandyte and Mount Lofty, before finishing near the river's source in the Yarra Ranges.

As with Victoria's Great South West Walk and Grampians Peaks Trail, walkers could choose to complete the route over several weeks or tackle individual stages.

Unlike more remote walks, however, the Birrarung Valley Walk is expected to offer accommodation options at the end of each stage.

According to Birrarung Walk Inc., the project is being developed in collaboration with Traditional Owners, state entities and local governments along the river, and in deep partnership with the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation.

A key part of the project will be a companion app providing separate streams of environmental, First Nations and post-colonial stories. It will also allow walkers to report dumped rubbish or environmental issues.

While about 80 per cent of the 220km trail already exists as publicly accessible pathways, new or upgraded sections will be needed beyond Warrandyte.

In the CBD and Docklands sections, Ms Lefroy said the major work now was not so much building new paths, but working with land managers and Traditional Owners to gather and curate the stories that will be told along the route.

City of Melbourne Deputy Lord Mayor

Roshena Campbell said the project would change the way people experienced Melbourne.

"It's a privilege for the City of Melbourne to work alongside Traditional Owners, our council peers and land managers to shape a world-class experience for Melburnians and visitors," Cr Campbell said.

"It's an historic project and a bold vision that will change the way we experience our city."

Environment portfolio lead Cr Davydd Griffiths said the walk offered "an extraordinary opportunity" to connect people to the living river corridor.

"Whether it's a short walk through the city or the full 220km journey, this walk will offer a chance to better understand the environmental, cultural and historical significance of the Birrarung," he said.

Ms Lefroy said the late Dr Maudie Palmer AO, founding director of what is now Heide Museum of Modern Art, had been the driving force behind the idea.

The vision gathered momentum during the COVID years and gained support from Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung and Bunurong Traditional Owners in 2023. Formal planning with local governments and public land managers began in 2024.

For Docklands, the route offers a chance to place Harbour Esplanade within a much broader story: not only as a modern waterfront spine, but as part of a changed river landscape shaped by wetlands, industry, engineering and renewal.

Melbourne Water manager Matthew Daley said the authority was working with steering committee members on the next stages of planning to help define access routes, clear pathways and appropriate signage, while ensuring the proposal protected the river and drinking water supply. ●

Tram bridge to E-Gate still possible, despite West Gate Tunnel fears

Continued from page 1.

The solution explored was a broader looping alignment: heading south from Abbotsford St, crossing the road and rail infrastructure, then bending west before curving back into the site and connecting to the northern end of Footscray Rd.

By adding length to the bridge alignment, the study found the gradient could be eased enough to make a tram connection possible.

That would also allow the bridge to support walking, cycling, emergency access and potentially buses or other limited vehicle movements, while avoiding the need to encourage general private car traffic through E-Gate.

A lighter bridge for pedestrians, cyclists and emergency vehicles was also considered as a lower-cost alternative if a tram was ruled out. But the work found that any bridge over active rail infrastructure would be expensive, meaning the cost difference between a lighter structure and a tram-capable bridge may not be as dramatic as assumed.

The study was preliminary and would need to be updated, particularly given rising construction costs. But *Docklands News* understands both the City of Melbourne and the state government could say "hand on heart" that a tram connection was doable.

That finding is likely to sharpen pressure on the state government to make a clear election commitment to E-Gate, one of Melbourne's largest remaining government-owned urban renewal sites.

The 20-hectare precinct, located between Docklands, West Melbourne, North Melbourne and Moonee Ponds Creek, has long been seen as a missing link in Melbourne's urban structure.

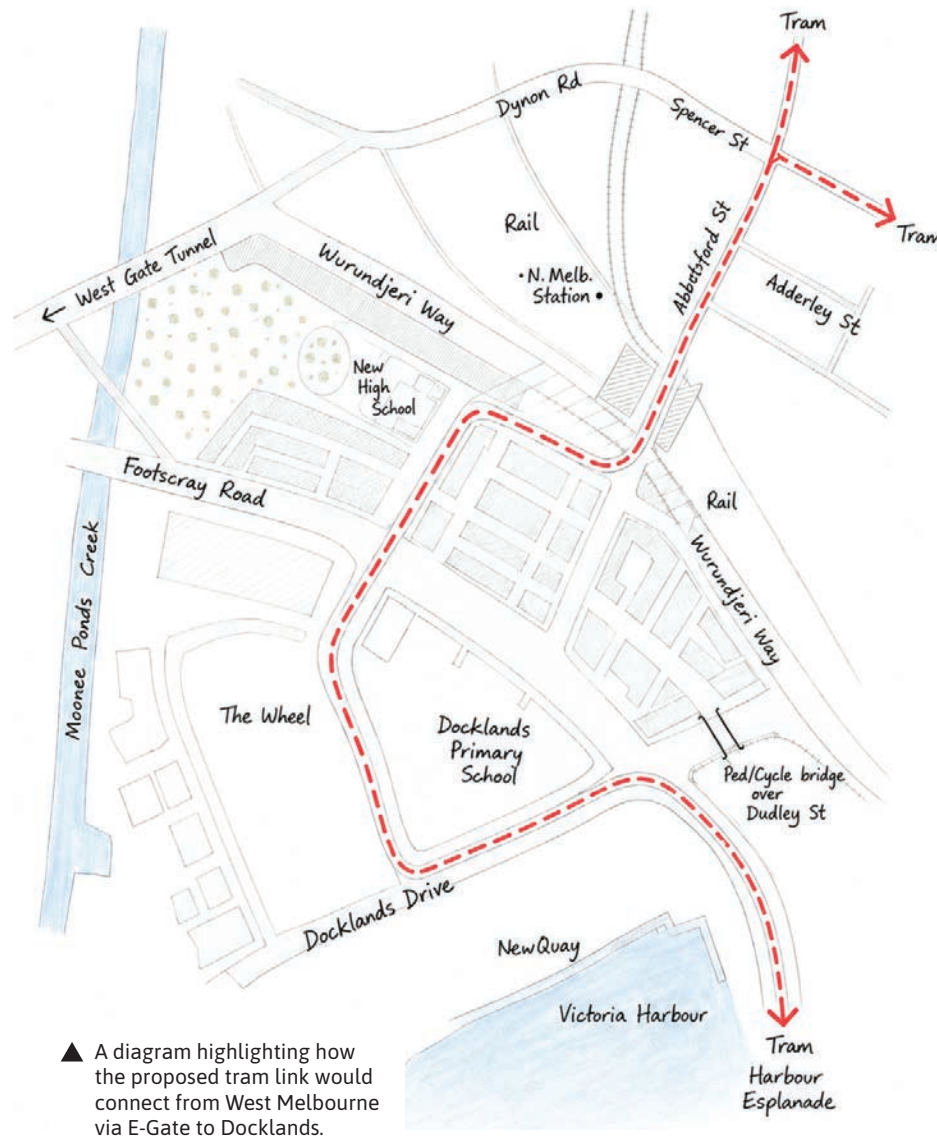
It has been earmarked in the past as a future mixed-use neighbourhood capable of housing thousands of residents, but planning has stalled while major road infrastructure has cut through the site.

For Docklands, E-Gate is particularly significant. The precinct's western end, including NewQuay and Waterfront City, has long struggled with poor connections, underperforming retail and a sense of isolation from surrounding neighbourhoods.

The source described E-Gate as Docklands' "missing tooth" – the gap that, if properly planned, could connect the western end of Docklands to North and West Melbourne and help unlock a more complete inner-city community.

Rather than treating E-Gate as a lost opportunity, the source said the state should now revisit the site with a more ambitious plan centred on housing, public transport, open space and community infrastructure.

Its government ownership makes the challenge even more pointed. As a former Fishermans Bend Development Board member once observed, "if you can't get urban renewal right on government-owned land, you're just not trying hard enough."



▲ A diagram highlighting how the proposed tram link would connect from West Melbourne via E-Gate to Docklands.

The opportunity is also about more than housing yield.

Docklands, North Melbourne and West Melbourne continue to face major shortages in open space, sporting facilities and secondary school provision. Docklands Primary School, which opened in 2021, is already under pressure, while hopes for a secondary school at the former Costco site in Docklands were dashed earlier this year after the building was acquired for another use.

E-Gate could provide the kind of land that is almost impossible to find elsewhere in the inner city.

The source said the western end of E-Gate, near Moonee Ponds Creek, could be particularly suitable for a secondary school, sports fields and open space, especially if combined with flood mitigation infrastructure such as retarding basins.

Sports fields that occasionally flood could still serve a major community function, while delivering much-needed active open space for both Docklands and North and West Melbourne.

The eastern end of the site, closer to Docklands and the CBD, could then support denser mixed-use development, including social and affordable housing.

While housing near the new road would need careful acoustic treatment, the earlier work suggested development could still occur close to the northern edge if apartments were designed to face south into the site, with appropriate buffering from the road.

The City of Melbourne has previously said E-Gate retains potential to become a "world-leading sustainable and affordable mixed-use neighbourhood", with connections to Docklands, Arden, West Melbourne and Dynon.

But the question now is whether the state government is prepared to turn that potential into a funded plan.

The West Gate Tunnel Project has already transformed the physical conditions around E-Gate. The next state election presents an opportunity for the government and opposition to commit to repairing the connectivity damage, protecting a tram corridor and

finally unlocking the land for public benefit.

Lord Mayor Nick Reece said, "with more than 40 hectares to work with, E-Gate is a once-in-a-generation opportunity to deliver the open space and community infrastructure for the 300,000 residents who live nearby."

Cr Reece added that the council would be advocating for the investments "that matter most to Melburnians" - including green space and transport infrastructure - ahead of the State Election in November.

"We also know that reliable, accessible public transport is essential to a liveable city. There's no point investing in new precincts if people can't easily get to and from them," the Lord Mayor said.

"A tram extension into West Melbourne would support rapid population growth and help ensure these emerging neighbourhoods are connected, accessible and easy to move around."

The City of Melbourne's Advocacy and Partnerships Plan 2025-29, sets out six key priority areas, including "Melbourne thrives as we grow". As part of this priority area, the council said it was advocating to the Victorian Government to:

- Unlock open space at E-Gate, "creating the Fawkner Park of the west"
- Extend the free tram zone and tram lines into urban renewal areas, including an additional route to West Melbourne (via Spencer St).

Community3008 co-president Peter Lardner said Docklands' continuing population growth made the need for family infrastructure increasingly urgent, with several residential towers under construction and more expected to begin soon.

He said the number of families living in Docklands would continue to rise, placing further pressure on local childcare, primary school and secondary school places, where demand was already exceeding availability.

Mr Lardner said inner-city living and raising families were "not mutually exclusive", but required governments to plan differently for vertical communities.

"To the contrary, they are necessarily interwoven concepts in contemporary society," he said. "So we need to take every opportunity to design and build infrastructure and precincts that support families in the vertical living environment."

He said the vacant E-Gate site provided a rare opportunity for "true strategic planning" by government and other relevant authorities.

Mr Lardner said the precinct could be designed to have a positive long-term impact on children and families by delivering education, connection, safety and active community spaces.

"The vacant E-Gate parcel of land provides a unique opportunity ... to create a precinct that positively impacts on the future for our children," he said. "A precinct that educates and connects. A precinct that is safe and active. A precinct built for long-term community enhancement." ●

CHRISTMAS IN JULY
AT THE

winter night market

PART OF THE *Winter* SERIES

SEE
WHAT'S
HAPPENING

JUN 03 —
— AUG 26

WEDNESDAYS
5PM — 10PM

thenightmarket.com.au

QUEEN
VICTORIA
MARKET

Greening Docklands

We welcome the City of Melbourne's recent call for Melburnians to join in the mission to create a garden city.

WORDS BY
MEGAN HEALY



The release of the Garden City Community Guidelines encourage residents and businesses (outside the CBD) to create gardens along City of Melbourne-managed streets and laneways, without the need for a permit.

With Docklands being around 200 hectares in size and majority privately owned, community-led greening is essential for supporting biodiversity, creating healthier ecosystems and strengthening community connections.

The guidelines outline where you can create in-ground and temporary gardens (pots and planters), as well as tips on maintenance, safety, accessibility and recommended plant species. Edible plants cannot be planted in-ground and require raised planters on median or nature strips (which do require a street garden permit).

Planting local native plants and wildflowers is encouraged, as they are naturally suited to local conditions. Not only will your garden look beautiful, but it will provide food and shelter for wildlife and important pollinators – such as bees, butterflies and birds!

Some personal favourite natives include Daisies, Purple Coral Pea, Straw Flowers, Yellow Buttons, Slender Speedwell, Correa and Grevillea. Whether you simply have one or two pot plants on your balcony, or a row of planter boxes, every single plant can make a meaningful impact.



To further help your gardening journey, the City of Melbourne Gardens for Wildlife team of passionate volunteers is available for consultation (virtual or in-person). You will receive a report on how to accomplish your goals and create your very own Garden for Wildlife. You will also receive a voucher for free native plants from Bili Nursery.

For further information: melbourne.vic.gov.au/gardens-wildlife-melbourne-program

Community 3008 Inc. together with the Gardens for Wildlife Team and Bili Nursery, is pleased to announce the inaugural "Greening Docklands" Community Workshop. This free two-hour workshop, focusing on "Balcony Gardening", will be held on September 12 at The Library at the Dock. Places are limited, so Docklands residents are encouraged to register their interest via email to megan.community3008@gmail.com

Are you familiar with the Moonee Ponds Creek Trail?

Stretching 25km from Docklands to Woodlands Historic Park, the trail follows a

natural waterway rich in history and environmental significance. Founded in 1989 by the Hon. Kelvin Thomson, the Friends of Moonee Ponds Creek (FoMPC) has worked tirelessly to protect, preserve and enhance the environmental and ecological attributes of the creek and its tributaries.

Partnerships with relevant councils, government agencies and organisations have helped deliver major improvements, including the shared walking and cycling trail that now connects communities, parks and reserves, and links into Melbourne's wider trail network including the Capital City Trail.

Revegetation programs have been a significant and continuing part of FoMPC's activities, enhancing biodiversity and wildlife habitat by planting indigenous species based on guidelines developed by Greening Australia's David Chynoweth.

Ongoing projects along the creek corridor from its source above Greenvale to its junction with the Yarra River in Docklands continue through the multi-stakeholder Chain of Ponds Collaboration – working to

transform the creek into an iconic waterway for Melbourne that provides high social, cultural and environmental benefits.

Recognising litter and rubbish dumping as a major ongoing challenge, the collaboration launched the successful Adopt-a-Creek Program in 2025 with support from Melbourne Water. Currently, 50 sections of the creek and three tributaries have already been adopted by local communities for clean-up, greening and rejuvenation projects.

Docklands' section of the creek, running from Footscray Road to Ron Barassi Snr Park, is yet to be adopted. Residents, businesses and community groups are encouraged to get involved and help create a cleaner, greener, healthier corridor for native wildlife and for everyone who enjoys walking, cycling, birdwatching or simply spending time in nature.

For more information on joining the program, please contact Kelvin Thomson at kelvint@hume.vic.gov.au

Have you visited the Docklands Community Garden?

Situated on Geographe St, adjacent to Victoria Green, the garden features a wonderful array of herbs, seasonal fruits and vegetables all lovingly planted and cared for by dedicated volunteers.

To help the garden grow and flourish, we are seeking additional volunteers, including five "Garden Ambassadors".

Expressions of interest are now open, so if you're a local resident with a seasoned green thumb or a nature novice with a few hours to spare each week, we'd love to hear from you!

For further information or to express your interest, please contact head gardener Greg Wise at wiseguy873@gmail.com by July 30, 2026.

For community updates, events and activities, please follow our Instagram account [@docklandscommunity3008](https://www.instagram.com/docklandscommunity3008) ●

HEALTH & WELLBEING

The inseparable link between money and mental health

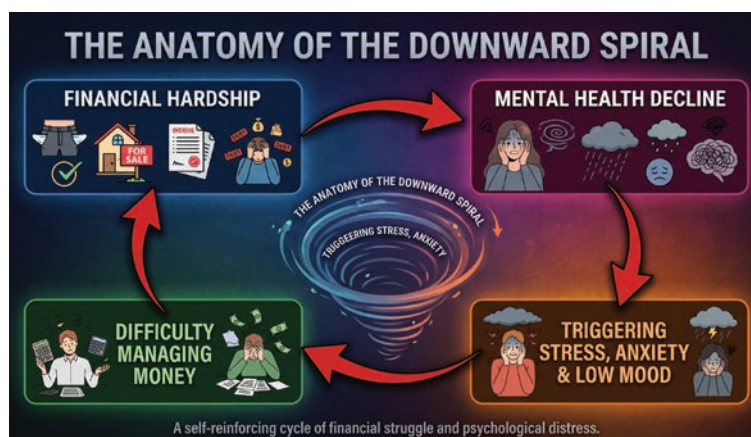
Money and mental health are often treated as separate issues: one about spreadsheets and bank accounts, the other about psychology and emotional wellbeing.

But Australian research commissioned by the Australian Securities and Investments Commission (ASIC) and Beyond Blue shows the two are deeply linked.

According to the research, 14 per cent of Australian adults experienced both financial hardship and mental health symptoms over a five-year period. People experiencing financial challenges were twice as likely to also experience mental health issues, while those facing mental health challenges were twice as likely to experience financial strain.

Money troubles do not just exist on paper. They can affect people physically and emotionally, creating a cycle that can be difficult to break.

Financial stressors such as



unpaid bills, lack of emergency savings or sudden income loss can trigger poor mental health. This may show up as insomnia, chest pain, intense worry, social isolation, shame or low self-worth.

When mental health declines, it can also affect financial capability. Ongoing stress, low motivation or the cognitive load of a mental health condition can make everyday money management, decision-making and maintaining steady employment much harder.

This interaction can quickly become a downward spiral. A person may defer one bill, fall behind on another, then struggle to recover as financial and psychological pressure compounds.

One of the biggest barriers to reversing this cycle is stigma. Financial success is often wrongly tied to personal worth, while debt or money struggles are framed as personal failure. This can lead to embarrassment and shame, causing people to hide their difficulties

and delay seeking help.

The start of a new financial year can be a useful moment to reset. Small, practical steps can help create an "upward spiral", where improvements in financial management support better mental health, and vice versa.

1. Shift from avoidance to awareness

When money causes anxiety, avoidance is common. People may ignore bank statements, skip bills or avoid looking at their accounts. But facing the numbers clearly can reduce the fear of the unknown and make it easier to form a realistic plan.

2. Build a micro-buffer

A lack of emergency savings is a major source of stress. While a large safety net may feel impossible, small automated savings can still help. Even \$10 or \$20 a week in a separate account can build a sense of security and choice.

3. Stay connected

Financial stress often causes people to withdraw socially, especially when they feel ashamed or worried about spending money. But isolation can worsen mental

health. Free or low-cost connection, such as walks, community events or casual meals at home, can help maintain support networks.

4. Seek help early

Do not wait for a crisis. If you are struggling with bills, contact your utility provider, bank or telco early and ask about hardship options. Free services such as the National Debt Helpline on 1800 007 007 can also provide confidential financial counselling.

5. Practise self-compassion

Financial hardship is often caused by unexpected life events, health issues or broader economic pressures, not personal failure. Separating your self-worth from your bank balance is one of the most important ways to protect your mental wellbeing while working towards financial recovery. ●

Dr Mike Edgley

CHIROPRACTOR

DOCKLANDS HEALTH





Crowds flock to waterfront market

The Docklands Waterfront Farmers' Market has continued its strong start, with almost 5000 people flocking to Harbour Esplanade for its second instalment on June 21.

The market, led by the Docklands Chamber of Commerce, attracted more than 4950 visitors, building on the momentum of its launch and further strengthening the precinct's push to bring more regular activity to the waterfront.

The June market again brought together farmers, producers, local traders, community groups and visitors for a day of food, music, harbour views and family-friendly activity.

The chamber said the success of the event had been made possible through the support of partners including Development Victoria, the City of Melbourne, the Victorian Farmers' Market Association and a range of local businesses and organisations.

Mirvac partnered with Yarra River Cruises to provide a complimentary passenger ferry from Yarra's Edge, while Australian Boat Parties operated the popular Boat Bar.

The Alma Doepel Heritage Boat Community Group used the day to raise funds and awareness for its restoration project, while ANZ engaged visitors with giveaways, and Boost Juice at The District Docklands contributed smoothie vouchers.

Community3008 volunteers also hosted a Relax Station with seating and tables, while Ship4Good held its first community day, inviting locals on board MV Steve Irwin for music, food and ocean conservation education.

Port Phillip Ferries and Docklands News also continues to promote the event.

The strong turnout is a promising sign for the market's future, with organisers describing it as a long-term community asset for Docklands and encouraging local businesses to get involved.

The market will skip July due to Run Melbourne, which will bring thousands of participants through Docklands on Sunday, July 19.

The next Docklands Waterfront Farmers' Market will be held on Sunday, August 16 from 10am to 3pm, with future markets scheduled for September 20, November 15 and December 20. ●

Century 21 City Dock opens in NewQuay

A new real estate agency has opened its doors in Docklands, with Century 21 City Dock establishing a street-front office on Caravel Lane in NewQuay.

WORDS BY
SEAN CAR



understanding of apartment living, owners' corporations, investors, landlords and the day-to-day needs of inner-city communities," Ms Bhansali said.

"Our goal is to provide a highly personalised service where clients deal with experienced professionals who genuinely understand the local market."

For Ms Bhansali, Docklands was the natural place to establish the agency.

She said the precinct had been the team's "business home" for many years, with the agency already having strong relationships with residents, owners' corporations and local businesses.

"We've watched the precinct evolve into one of Melbourne's most vibrant waterfront communities," she said.

"We saw an opportunity to create an agency that is genuinely embedded within Docklands rather than simply servicing it from another suburb."

Before opening the Caravel Lane office, Century 21 City Dock operated from Aqua Vista Tower. Ms Bhansali said even from that location, the business regularly received walk-in enquiries from people seeking out the Century 21 brand.

Moving to a ground-floor office in NewQuay was therefore a natural progression, giving the agency greater visibility and allowing residents to drop in for property advice, appraisals or conversations about the local market.

"We wanted a highly visible office that reflects our commitment to the community," she said.

"Rather than operating behind closed doors, we want to be approachable, available and actively involved in the precinct."

Ms Bhansali said the Docklands market was continuing to mature, with renewed

confidence from both owner-occupiers and investors.

Rental demand remained strong, supported by professionals, students and people returning to city-based work, while buyers were becoming more selective about building quality, amenities, location and long-term value.

"Overall, Docklands is transitioning from being viewed primarily as an investor market to becoming an increasingly desirable place to live, work and build a long-term lifestyle," she said.

She said Docklands offered a rare combination of waterfront living, access to the Free Tram Zone, public open space, restaurants, entertainment, Marvel Stadium and proximity to the CBD.

Over recent years, she said more owner-occupiers had chosen Docklands as a long-term home, helping strengthen the local community.

"We believe Docklands is entering an exciting new phase of maturity," Ms Bhansali said.

Beyond buying, selling and leasing, Century 21 City Dock hopes to support local businesses, participate in community events and become part of the everyday fabric of Docklands.

"Success for us isn't measured only by transactions," Ms Bhansali said.

"It's about becoming a trusted local business that people know, recognise and feel comfortable recommending to family and friends."

Looking ahead, the agency's ambition is to become one of Melbourne's leading inner-city real estate businesses while remaining firmly connected to the communities it serves.

docklands.century21.com.au ●

are you looking for a new space
for your creative business?

bright and affordable offices available
at collins street studios

 creative spaces

creativespaces.net.au



Docklands: Firelight returns, and the harbour takes centre stage

Melbourne is into the coldest stretch of the year, which is precisely when Docklands does its best work – turning Victoria Harbour into a stage.

WORDS BY
JAMIE GILLINGHAM

Firelight Festival returns to Harbour Esplanade from Friday, July 3 to Sunday, July 5: three nights of fire, light, music and food, timed for exactly the moment the precinct needs a lift.

Even with the reduced wharveside it's billed as the biggest edition yet, as every edition dutifully is. More than 130 performers and fire artists will take over the Esplanade, and a new laser-and-water spectacle will be choreographed against 20 fountains, lighting the water itself. The City of Melbourne expects well over 100,000 visitors across the weekend – a figure it arrives at with its customary optimism, and one we'd be delighted to see proved conservative.

For us at MMHN, the most interesting part was never the promenade – it was the water. Last year, Firelight's "Light the Night" boat display invited local owners to dress their vessels and cruise the harbour after dark, with the crowd voting a People's



Choice. The debut drew just five illuminated boats, but by every account they were a hit with the crowds lining the Esplanade. Which makes its quiet disappearance from this year's programme a real missed opportunity.

Because a harbour full of lit vessels isn't a novelty, it's a memory. Victoria Harbour spent the better part of a century as a working waterfront, and few things honour that past better than boats alive on the water after dark. So, consider this an early plea to the organisers: bring Light the Night back next year, bigger and brighter, and use it to coax the much-missed heritage fleet back

onto the harbour for a proper lap of honour. What finer farewell to the working harbour that made them?

Meanwhile, one storied vessel has settled in to take up the slack. The MV Steve Irwin, the former Sea Shepherd flagship of Whale Wars fame, is now berthed at Melbourne City Marina in Docklands. Saved from the scrapyard by the not-for-profit Ship4Good, the "Steve" carries genuine credentials: she's a registered historic vessel, and after a decade of Antarctic campaigning has found a quieter second life in education and ocean conservation.

Ship4Good is running "General Waste's

Kids Shipboard Tour & Treasure Hunt" aboard the Steve Irwin across the school holidays, a ship-wide hunt led by the vessel's performers and educators (cast as the villainous General Waste), with clues, eco-challenges and a serious point about marine debris wrapped inside the fun. It's aimed at children aged 7 to 13 and their families, runs 11am to 12.30pm, and has sessions on June 28 and July 3, 4, 7 and 11. Bookings at ship4good.com.au/event-list.

It's just the sort of thing MMHN likes to see – a historic ship earning her keep by drawing a new generation onto the water.

A few other dates for the diary. Melbourne Rare Book Week runs July 23 to August 1, with a full programme including a session from our own Liz Rushen; see rarebooks-melbourne.com for details.

And if Firelight tempts you back out into the cold, make a day of it: MMHN's own Maritime Heritage Trails walk you through Melbourne's waterfront past in three illustrated chapters – Victoria Harbour, Northbank and Southbank, all available on your phone at mmhn.org.au/heritage-trails, and providing a new perspective on some very old water.

On a sadder note, MMHN marks the passing of Geoff Dougall, respected Williamstown historian, founder of the Williamstown Maritime Association, and one of the early site managers whose vision helped shape Seaworks – the precinct now preparing to welcome Victoria's heritage fleet. Geoff passed away on June 12, aged 80. Vale. ●

Stopping rubbish entering Victoria Harbour

While battling environment ministers and government departments, it can be easy to lose sight of the issue at hand.

WORDS BY
HARVEY CLEGGETT



The photo featured shows rubbish that recently accumulated along the entire 450-metre Harbour Esplanade rockface after a single high-tide rain event. It demonstrates that the litter entering Victoria Harbour is coming from the Yarra River.

This is not rubbish dropped by boat owners, the passing public, or material simply blown in from nearby streets, as Parks Victoria's Stuart Lerner has suggested to me. The Yarra River is the source.

A floating boom, as depicted in the June edition, could have prevented this – and for just \$30,000.

It is also important to note that in 2008, Parks Victoria was contracted by VicUrban, now Development Victoria, to provide litter capture in the Docklands precinct. At that time, Parks Victoria was required to collect and dispose of all floating litter and debris from Docklands waterways with minimal inconvenience to Victoria Harbour and river users. It was also required to collect litter seven days a week, providing 28 hours of on-water litter collection.



The "litter barge" purchased by Parks Victoria was once a regular visitor to the harbour. However, for the past four to five years, the barge has not been seen in the area. Discussions with a Parks Victoria employee revealed the barge is now taken out only once or twice a week, and only along the Yarra River upstream.

The result is no regular on-water litter collection in Victoria Harbour, other than irregular on-foot removal of rubbish along the Esplanade rocks. This is unsatisfactory and must be addressed by Environment Minister Steve Dimopoulos.

As mentioned in the April edition, 145 "Echo" lights have been installed in Victoria Harbour, approved by Development Victoria, Heritage Victoria, Melbourne City Council and Parks Victoria. The lights are intended to signify the location of the former sheds, at a cost of \$150,000 for a six-month installation.

That money could have provided 30 years of floating boom

protection.

My challenge to readers is to pick out the lights among the illumination from high-rise buildings, bridge lighting and reflections across the water. In my view, \$150,000 for lights that can barely be seen at night is not value for money.

For Development Victoria's executive general manager Niall Cunningham to claim "Echo represents the beginning of a new phase for the waterfront" suggests he has not stood at Harbour Esplanade at night to inspect the effectiveness of this temporary installation.

This brings me to my ongoing efforts to convince the Environment Minister that action is needed.

Firstly, I recontacted Robert Clarke, the chief development officer of The Gurner Group, who has committed to contacting the minister directly. He said that, like me, he has not yet been able to reach the minister, but will continue trying.

Secondly, my efforts to secure an interview with ABC Radio Melbourne morning host Raf Epstein have resulted in an on-air interview in which I outlined the facts and explained why a proof-of-concept floating boom should be adopted. Mr Epstein has committed to seeking an interview with Parks Victoria.

Thirdly, questions raised in Parliament by Shadow Environment Minister Nick McGowan, requesting a response by June 11, have revealed that

the minister has chosen not to respond. Mr McGowan will now invoke the parliamentary "no response" clause. See here:



Mr Dimopoulos's online description of his role as Environment Minister reads: "As a guardian of our state's natural assets, I take that responsibility seriously."

The actions required to validate those words are still missing.

Ratepayers and visitors to the area must be wondering whether the Environment Minister will ever accede to reason and agree to a trial of the boom.

Rest assured, I will continue to press for this. After all, collectively our taxes pay the minister's wages, and a state election is now only months away.

Please sign the petition here. ●



Expressions of interest: FREE electrification assessments for eligible apartment buildings

Interest in apartment building electrification is growing, but understanding what electrification means for a particular building – the benefits, challenges and practical pathways – requires careful consideration.



Many apartment communities are already considering how to improve building energy performance, manage ageing infrastructure and prepare for future needs, such as EV charging facilities. Whether electrification forms part of that journey, and to what extent, is often less clear.

For many owners' corporations (OCs), the challenge is not deciding whether electrification is good or bad, but determining whether, where and when it may be in the best interests of their building and owners.

The reality is that there is no one-size-fits-all answer.

Every apartment building is different. They vary in age, design, services infrastructure and ownership arrangements. Buildings were also constructed under different building codes and standards, which continue to influence the opportunities

available today. Some operate embedded energy networks, while others have individual utility connections. What may be practical and cost-effective in one building may be unsuitable in another.

For OCs, this presents a critical governance challenge. OCs have a responsibility to act in the best interests of owners, but doing so requires reliable information and a clear understanding of the options available.

That is why building-specific advice is so valuable.

The Electrifying Apartment Buildings Program, a joint initiative of the Victorian Government and the City of Melbourne, is offering eligible apartment buildings the opportunity to better understand their energy performance and future options.

Selected buildings will receive professional assessments and reports valued at approximately \$20,000, including:

- An electrification feasibility study
- A NABERS for Apartments energy rating
- An energy opportunity assessment

Together, these assessments provide a detailed picture of how your building currently performs and what future pathways may be available.

The electrification feasibility study examines a building's infrastructure and identifies opportunities and constraints. The energy opportunity assessment highlights practical improvements that could enhance efficiency and reduce operating costs. The NABERS for Apartments rating provides an independent benchmark of energy performance, helping owners understand how their building compares and where improvements may deliver the greatest value.

Importantly, participation in the program does not commit a building to undertake

any upgrades. Instead, it provides something many OCs currently lack: independent, expert advice tailored to their building.

Understanding a building's unique circumstances is the essential first step towards making informed decisions about its future.

For OCs considering what is in the best interests of their owners, this program offers a valuable opportunity to access expert guidance and develop a clearer picture of what a transition pathway for their building could look like.

Expressions of Interest close on July 26, 2026. Participate Melbourne (scan QR code for more information): ●



Janette Corcoran

MEMBER

JCORCORAN@DOCKLANDS.ORG.AU



OWNERS' CORPORATION LAW

The new Owners' Corporation Bill in Parliament – the good, the bad and the ugly

True to form, and six months after the Expert Panel delivered its confidential bill to the Labor Government without so much of a peep from Consumer Affairs in relation to any feedback or further consultation ...

The government then went into overdrive, by releasing a self-congratulatory press release, a formal "response" to the Expert Panel report, and introduced a draft Bill to the Lower House, which was then read a first and second time, all in the space of two days.

Now we know that the Expert Panel recommended 51 amendments to the current legislation.

The Labor Government decided to accept 17 recommendations in full, three recommendations in part, and 26

recommendations supported in principle.

The current Bill however, which is due to be introduced to the Upper House when Parliament next sits in late July, is primarily focused only on one aspect of the proposed reforms, which is about ensuring that lot owners enduring financial hardship are given some relief in terms of making payments on their fees and levies.

What we know from the draft Bill is that there will be a standard form which any lot owner can fill out and send to the owners' corporation (OC) to request a payment plan for their quarterly fees and levies. Information about the standard form and about the process for implementing a payment plan must be published and provided to owners together with the fee notices each quarter.

The Bill seeks to set out certain prescribed and mandatory instances where an OC will not be permitted to refuse a lot owner's proposed payment plan, where the lot owner is

an owner-occupier.

What that means is that it is about to get very hard (almost impossible) for OCs to refuse a payment plan from an owner-occupier. Furthermore, no penalty interest or debt recovery proceedings can be imposed as long as the payment plan is on foot.

And lot owners will still be eligible to sit on committees and vote at General Meetings if the Bill goes through. All of which will further disincentivise lot owners (and some committee members) to pay their fees on time.

What perhaps the current Labor Government might not appreciate is that it is all well and good to grant cost of living relief to some lot owners, but someone has to pay the piper!

Money doesn't grow on trees, and there has been inadequate analysis by the government as to who exactly is going to be paying the ongoing bills of an OC. For some buildings, the annual fees are over \$1million per

year. If perhaps one out 10 owners decide to defer paying their quarterly levies on time, then very quickly the OC is going to find itself with insufficient funds to pay its bills.

Almost every OC in a medium-large building will now have to impose annual fees 10 per cent in excess of the current budget, in order to ensure that sufficient cashflow protection is in place.

The upshot of this is that in a current cost of living crisis, the cost of living in an OC just went up by 10 per cent, thanks to a policy decision by the government that was supposed to deliver cost of living relief. Go figure! ●

Tom Bacon

STRATA TITLE LAWYERS

TOM@STRATATITLAWYERS.COM.AU



DENTIST

Services:
Check-ups (exam, scale and clean, X-Ray); children's dentistry; teeth whitening; dental implants; root canal treatment; crown, bridge, veneer; dentures.

Mon-Fri 8:30-5pm (Thurs until 6pm) Sat: 9am-1pm
57 Merchant St, Docklands (opposite Victoria Harbour Medical Centre)
www.docklandsdentalstudio.com.au – ph 9021 9487 mob 0488 799 487

BOOK NOW ONLINE
docklandsdentalstudio.com.au

Dental Practice ACCREDITED

Now Accepting zip Money
Zoom! Teeth Whitening Now Available

invisalign Start from just \$12 a day
The Clear Alternative to Braces

Our Dentists:

Dr Pia Oparkcharoen Dr Jie Chen
Dr Amanda Wong Dr Cindy Liang

DOCKLANDS NEWS

Subscribe to our email for the latest news

Delivered monthly to your inbox

Scan the QR code to sign up

WHAT'S ON July



From workshops to markets and festivals, you'll find something to float your boat this July 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
EVERY WEDNESDAY, 5PM – 7PM



FIRELIGHT FESTIVAL
 Firelight Festival returns to Docklands, featuring fire performances, laser shows, live entertainment, food stalls, illuminated installations and family-friendly winter fun.
Harbour Esplanade, Docklands
3 – 5 JULY, 5PM – 10.30PM



FLOATING SOUND AND BREATH
 Floating Sound and Breath at 1 Hotel Melbourne offers a candlelit pool experience combining breathwork, meditation and sound healing for deep relaxation and restoration.
1 Hotel Melbourne, Docklands
TUESDAY 7 JULY, 6.30PM – 7.30PM



ACRYLIC PAINTING ON CANVAS SCHOOL HOLIDAY WORKSHOP
 Rainbow Art Class school holiday workshop offers inclusive acrylic painting for children and teens with guided creative activities.
The Hub at Docklands
UNTIL 9 JULY, 4.30PM – 5.30PM



ELIZABETH WEST: BEYOND THE FRAME
Beyond the Frame explores humanity's relationship with nature, challenging traditional ways of viewing landscapes and inviting audiences to engage with the living world beyond the image.
Window, Library at The Dock
UNTIL SUNDAY 2 AUGUST, 10AM – 4PM



DOCKLANDS WATERFRONT FARMERS' MARKET
 Docklands Farmers' Market will run monthly at Harbour Esplanade, featuring Victorian produce, artisan goods, seafood, entertainment, and direct farmer sales.
Harbour Esplanade, Docklands
SUNDAY 16 AUGUST, 10AM – 3PM



SONGBIRDS
 Interactive songs, rhymes, and stories engage newborns to 18-month-olds, introducing language, rhythm, and early literacy. Programs run during school terms only.
Library at The Dock
UNTIL 9 DECEMBER, 10.30AM – 11AM

Business Directory

ACCOUNTING

rubix
 business accountants
 Maximising your profits by minimising your tax
 PH 9603 0066
 www.rubixbusinessaccountants.com.au

HEALTH & BEAUTY

DOCKLANDS HEALTH
SERVICES:
 ▶ Physiotherapy ▶ Massage ▶ Psychology
 ▶ Chiropractic ▶ Pilates ▶ Podiatry
HOURS
 Mon-Fri 8am-7pm | Sat 8am-12pm
 4/860 Collins St, Docklands, 3008
 (03) 9088 3228 www.docklandshealth.com.au

PHARMACY

victoria harbour pharmacy+news
 Hours: Mon to Fri 8am-8pm & Sat 9am-1pm
 ☒ Pharmacy ☒ Giftware
 ☒ Magazines & Papers ☒ Tatstolotto
 ☒ Same day dry cleaning
66 Merchant St, Docklands (opposite Safeway)
 Ph: 03 9629 9922 Fax: 03 9629 9933
 Email: vicharbourpharmacy@nunet.com.au

ESCORTS

THE MOST EXCLUSIVE ESCORT AGENCY
Paramour
 OF COLLINS STREET
 CITY CENTRE
 Melbourne's exclusive entertainment service. Highly recommended for our interstate and overseas visitors
 • Dinner Companions
 • Social Escorts
 • Sensual Ladies
 Scan QR code for pictures of ladies
TEXT: 0477 291 058
(03) 9654 6011
 CBD - 5 MINUTES TO YOUR DOOR
 たくさんの美しい女性 日本語を話します
 We have survived COVID-19 AND ARE STILL HERE TO HAVE BEAUTIFUL LADIES PRIVATELY TO YOUR DOOR 24/7

DENTAL

docklands DENTAL STUDIO
 a different dental experience
NOW OPEN SATURDAYS
 Mon-Fri 8:30-5pm
 (Tue, Thu until 6pm)
 Sat: 8:30-1pm
 57 Merchant St, Docklands
 T (03) 9021 9487 | mob 0488 799 487
 (opposite Victoria Harbour Medical Centre)
 www.docklandsdentalstudio.com.au

www.victoriaharbourmedicalcentre.com.au
VICTORIA HARBOUR MEDICAL CENTRE
Victoria Harbour Medical Centre Telephone 9629 1414
 2-3/850 Collins Street Docklands 3008 After Hours 13 74 25
 Entry via Merchant St Fax 9629 4265
Hours: Mon-Fri 8am-6pm, Sat 9am-12 noon

REAL ESTATE

LUCAS
 WE KNOW VERTICAL LIVING BETTER THAN ANYONE.
 THAT'S YOUR ADVANTAGE.
 9091 1400 | lucasre.com.au

Thinking about advertising your business?
 Contact us to tailor your next campaign
 DOCKLANDS NEWS | 8689 7980 | admin@hyperlocalnews.com.au

THINKING OF SELLING OR LEASING YOUR PROPERTY?

WALK IN OR
BOOK A FREE
PROPERTY
APPRAISAL
TODAY!

Find out what your property is worth today

Get a clear understanding of your property's current market value with a free appraisal from a team that knows Docklands and surrounding suburbs.

Sales | Leasing | Property Management

41 Caravel Lane, Docklands | 03 9124 7306

docklands.century21.com.au

CENTURY 21 City Dock