

The voice of Docklands | 道克蘭之音

DOCKLANDS NEWS

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Docklands does a Bradbury

It was wall-to-wall Olympians in Docklands on March 30 as the Icehouse's second rink was bestowed with Steven Bradbury's name.

Bradbury's name entered our common language after he won Australia's first ever winter Olympic gold medal in Salt Lake City in 2002 when the speed skaters in front of him crashed just before the finish line.

He was joined by Australia's most recent winter Olympics gold medallist Lydia Lassila during a star-studded evening to launch the nation's Olympic Winter Institute in Docklands.

Council scuttles its marina bid

After nine months, the City of Melbourne has abandoned its attempt to find commercial tenants for Waterfront City Marina.

Last June, the council upset Docklands' charter boat operators by calling for expressions of interest for two berths at Waterfront City and flagged that it intended to open up the rest of Docklands to commercial competition.

The council won't discuss the matter, claiming it is confidential. But it is understood that only two operators responded and it has taken until now for the council to decide it doesn't want either.

The council refuses to reveal how much manpower has been wasted in the process or how much it paid in legal fees to run the expression of interest, but one of the unsuccessful bidders estimates the cost in the hundreds of thousands of dollars.

"I doubt whether they would get any change out of a couple of hundred grand," Rivers Group charter operator Lou Jovanovski said.

Mr Jovanovski has removed the second of his four boats from Docklands. Early this year Sapphire left for the Gold Coast and last week Explorer followed.

"How can you invest in a business without security of tenure?" he said. He criticised the council for offering only a two-year lease with a further one-year option.

He branded the EoI "stupid" and said it was "just not worth staying in Docklands". Mr Jovanovski said Rivers Voyager would "probably" also soon leave.

He had offered the council a deal on a 10-year lease at Waterfront City but this was

considered non-conforming. The other unsuccessful bidder offered less money than the council wanted.

Tramboat operator Anthony Purcell said he offered slightly less than the going Docklands rate because the berthing did not come with car parking, refuelling access and other amenities enjoyed by other Victoria Harbour operators.

The vice-president of the Charter Vessel Owners Association of Victoria, Keith Rankin, said he was pleased that the council had abandoned the Waterfront City Marina expression of interest.

"We didn't believe it was going to work as the same approach has failed upstream with disastrous result for operators, tourists and other river users," Mr Rankin said.

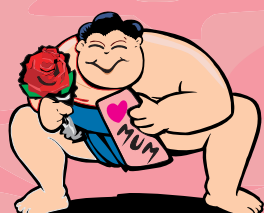
He said since the EoI was issued, the charter boat operators and the council had a much better relationship and the parties were now working toward a more commercially realistic approach.

"We are glad that this approach is not going to be forced on us here," he said. "A lot more work needs to be done in striking an appropriate berthing fee in Docklands."

Mr Rankin said it was a shame that Rivers Group was relocated its fleet from Docklands, but it indicated how hard it was to survive in the Melbourne market.

ING Real Estate is believed to be working with the council to secure commercial tenants for the marina.

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Sunday
9 May



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