

19 March 2020

Melbourne Maritime Heritage Network (MMHN) Comments on Draft Yarra Strategic Plan

MMHN is pleased to offer its comments on the *Draft Yarra Strategic Plan (DYSP)*. MMHN is a widely representative network of individuals and organisations with an interest in Melbourne's Maritime Heritage. We see that maritime history and present extensive maritime activities are vital to an understanding of our city and we are determined to promote these aspects to Melbourne and its visitors.

MMHN considers that the preservation and development of the Aboriginal heritage of the entire Birrarung (Yarra River) is singularly important and we are pleased that this is reflected in the DYSP. The involvement of the Wurendjeri Woi wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation is well covered in the Plan and its drafters are to be congratulated.

However, MMHN wishes to put forward other important comments principally focussed on the Inner City Reach of the Birrarung. Many of the points we make apply to adjacent segments of the river.

Melbourne's maritime heritage had two major parts. We have summarised our attitude to the Plan's treatment of the first part, its Aboriginal heritage. Our major concern is the treatment – or better expressed the lack of consideration - of Birrarung's post-Aboriginal heritage.

The Plan ignores (or perhaps deliberately omits) post-Aboriginal maritime heritage. Our city of Melbourne developed because of this heritage. Melbourne is Australia's largest port and the Birrarung remains its key element. Constituent elements of this maritime heritage include not only the port and the trade that generated and sustained the city but also the river-dependent industries, fishing, recreational boating, ferries, tugs, docks, wharves and the range of personal histories associated with each of these elements.

It is a fact that many river-related features in the Inner City Reach are listed by Heritage Victoria (HV). They include:

- Princes Bridge
- Prince's Walk Vaults
- Queen's Bridge
- Sandridge Railway Line Bridge

Melbourne Maritime Heritage Network Ltd ACN 631 878 772

Web: mmhn.org.au; Email: info@mmhn.org.au

PO Box 1085 Carlton Vic 3053

- Lower South Wharf
- Berth No 5 North Wharf (includes the electric crane)
- Flinders Wharf
- Cargo Sheds South Wharf 1, 2 & 4-9
- Australian Wharf
- Stony Creek Ballast Loading Wharf
- Railway Coal Canal and Wharf Yarra River
- Duke and Orrs Dry Dock
- Polly Woodside
- Former Customs House
- Gasworks Superintendent's residence (Harbour Esplanade)
- Enterprise Landing/Yarra Turning Basin
- Victoria Dock (but not explicitly Central Pier)
- McCallum's Punt (Under Charles Grimes Bridge)
- Former Shipping Control Tower
- Mission to Seafarers

Each of these constructions form an integral part of the river environment. There are, we believe, several similar places that deserve inclusion in the. In due course, MMHN will make representations to ensure the comprehensiveness of its listings in order to cement protection of these additional sites.

MMHN submits that the exclusion of maritime heritage in the Draft Plan is a major defect that require urgent remediation. We consider that the drafters of the plan should have been well aware of the importance of maritime heritage. We would be happy to assist in the detailed inclusion of this topic of vital importance as the Plan moves towards finality.

(signed)

Michael O'Brien
For the MMHN Board