



Melbourne - A Great Maritime City

Melbourne Maritime Heritage Network (MMHN)

6 June 2021

Submission to the City of Melbourne Draft Economic Development Strategy 2031

Any City of Melbourne (CoM) Economic Development Strategy should recognize, build upon and optimize the value of all existing assets, both physical and cultural. MMHN finds that although Key Priorities identify some elements in the economic equation, there are deficiencies.

MMHN argues that Key Priorities, as outlined in the Draft Economic Development Strategy 2031 (DEDS), fail to adequately recognize the economic value of particular 'assets' within Melbourne - multifaceted maritime heritage, maritime industry and waterways. Such assets are, if properly understood and addressed, capable of contributing much to the economy and more generally to 'brand' Melbourne.

MMHN has outlined under five headings below those 'assets' which are relevant to the CoM economic outlook and which require specific attention in the DEDS in order to optimise their value. Relevant DEDS citations appear in boxes below text.

1. Waterways infrastructure and services
2. Docklands Activation
3. Maritime Skills and Training
4. Maritime Industry / The Port of Melbourne
5. Maritime Innovation / Knowledge Economy

1. Waterways infrastructure and Services

MMHN is pleased to note a substantial commitment in the Draft CoM Budget to waterways infrastructure. However, waterways infrastructure should be more explicitly featured in the DEDS. Elements to be considered include:

- **Ferries**

The CoM needs to ensure that its capital works effectively facilitate water-based transportation. The CoM should ensure its *Greenline* infrastructure incorporates ferry terminals at places along the trail, e.g., Federation Square, Enterprize Park, Seafarers Rest Park, Australian Wharf, Collins Wharf and Harbor Esplanade at New Quay and Ron Barrassi Snr Oval. Given road congestion, the CoM should also advocate strongly to the state government for an expanded ferry service (tourism and public transport).

Noting that the state government subsidizes trams, trains, buses etc., the CoM could rightly argue that ferry services should be included as a viable public transport option within the MYKI system. MMHN is aware of strong interest from Victorian Ports (Station Pier) to re-establish a ferry service from West Finger Pier (possibly trialing weekends or when cruise ships are in port) to Victoria Harbour, Station Pier and St. Kilda Pier. The CoM could commence collaboration with the City of Port Phillip to pursue this opportunity.

Key Priority 4 Beyond the Office

* Advocate for the Victorian Government to commit to delivering integrated public and active transport in urban renewal areas, including Melbourne Metro 2 and trams to Fishermen's Bend and the Arden precinct.

- **Marine Services Depot**

The CoM needs to strongly advocate Development Victoria and other relevant state government authorities to urgently fast-track the long-planned and already funded Marine Services Depot at Bolte West Precinct. The CoM needs to enable marine services to be readily available to both commercial and recreational boating in Melbourne. Recreational boating is a multi-million dollar industry – and the CoM should prioritise opportunities to capture more of it into Melbourne (provisioning, equipment sales, servicing etc.)

Key Priority 4 Beyond the Office

* Curate and coordinate the growth and development of existing, emerging and new globally competitive innovation districts in City North, Arden and Fishermen's Bend.

2. Docklands Activation

MMHN finds that there are many elements to consider in the economic development of Docklands so that it becomes a viable precinct - a tortuous journey that is still being travelled. Difficulties in forging Docklands' precinct identity can be attributed to persistent failure by Development Victoria (DV) to acknowledge and recognize that Docklands is ALL about the waterways. This is its point of differentiation, which DV has failed to grasp from the outset. Fixated on land-based real estate development, DV ignored the unique value of this location - maritime heritage and maritime industry embedded in wharves, piers, piles, cranes etc.; all implied in the name itself, 'Docklands'. Had DV understood this, then 'activation' may have occurred naturally. But it didn't, hence the need for the CoM to retrofit a waterway focus to 'activate' the languishing precinct.

Note that pre-pandemic, MMHN submitted a Docklands project - a container installation designed to activate Docklands, containers being emblematic of Docklands, and there are several vacant sites to locate such an installation. MMHN argued that a stacked container installation was a new, cost effective Docklands 'attraction' capable of internal temporary exhibitions and external projections – both focusing public attention on the maritime industry. We await a CoM response on this proposal.

Key Priority 4 Creative Resurgence

* Work with the Victorian Government to facilitate investment in Docklands, including the redevelopment of Central Pier and Docklands Media Precinct, to establish it as a destination, extension of the central city, and emerging film and digital media hub.

Elements for consideration in the DEDS:

- **Central Pier/Victoria Harbour**

MMHN is pleased to note specific reference in the DEDS to the redevelopment of the heritage listed **Central Pier**. However, regrettably, there is no reference to its equally significant location, that is **Victoria Harbour** itself - an under-developed public waterways 'asset'. This harbour is a world-renowned 19th century civil engineering project, but this implicit heritage touristic 'value' is not made known to the public. It should be.

The harbour is also a large expanse of water enclosed on three sides which should be understood as an aquatic amphitheatre on which to stage pontoon/barge-based events or continuous creative technology-based entertainment, e.g., Dancing Waters, music concerts, light show projects. Viewing such entertainment from all around the harbor would be safe, free and accessible. MMHN notes creative lightshows are a regular nightly feature in Singapore Harbour, Dubai - even Las Vegas. Why not Docklands?

Key Priority 4 Creative Resurgence

* Work with the Victorian Government to facilitate investment in Docklands, including the redevelopment of Central Pier and Docklands Media Precinct, to establish it as a destination, extension of the central city, and emerging film and digital media hub.

- **Maritime Experiential/Education Centre on Central Pier**

MMHN takes the view that a Maritime Experiential/Education Centre located on Central Pier is the best way to optimize this iconic location. Such a centre aligns closely with many DEDS Key Priority areas. Featuring creative technologies, the proposed Maritime Experiential/Education Centre would satisfy multiple objectives for the CoM including education, entertainment, exhibition space etc., capable of drawing people to Docklands regardless of the weather. Comparable cities around the world, including the Australian-designed Maritime Centre in Melbourne's sister city Tianjin, celebrate their maritime heritage and maritime industry. Given the richness of Melbourne's maritime heritage, the absence of such facility is deeply regretted.

Currently there is no avenue in Victoria to showcase Melbourne with maritime greatness – a wasted historical 'asset'. A Maritime Experiential/Education Centre would enable Heritage Victoria to showcase its vast marine archeological collection currently warehoused in Abbotsford, out of the public realm. A comparative analysis of activities occurring in maritime centres around the world reveals that the CoM would potentially access a range of international collaborative opportunities.

There is much to be gained by the CoM strongly backing such a project. MMHN is aware of potential industry support – and assured of Victoria-wide community support. The state government may well be supportive, but CoM engagement is obviously crucial. However, independent of state government support, in the short term, the CoM could initiate a global (or local) architectural competition to design an iconic building on, above and even below, Central Pier. Such an architectural competition would draw attention to Melbourne – its rich maritime heritage, its prosperity based on maritime industry, and its capacity to foster maritime innovation (there are many examples).

Key Priority 2 Creative Resurgence

* Through a new tourism entity called Visit Melbourne, we will position Melbourne as the premier international and domestic visitor destination in Australia. We will promote the breadth of our original, inspiring and unique experiences, and attract and deliver an exciting major events program throughout the calendar year.

* Work with the Victorian Government to facilitate investment in Docklands, including the redevelopment of Central Pier and Docklands Media Precinct, to establish it as a destination, extension of the central city, and emerging film and digital media hub.

Key Priority 7 Digitally Connected City

* Enhance our libraries, open data platform, open innovation agenda, skills development and educational programs, and expand knowledge sharing such as Melbourne Knowledge Week festival and Melbourne Conversations events. (Deliver and partner in medium timeframe.)

- **Outdoor Swimming Pool /Aquatic Playground**

Pool: To effectively draw the public further into Docklands, permanent attractions are required. MMHN is aware that proposals arise from time to time from the private sector for installation of a floating outdoor swimming pool. MMHN is dismayed to note that the CoM seems to approve of a Yarra River CBD location – especially on the north bank, which is often in shadow. Given the need to ‘activate’ Docklands, surely the CoM should (or pressure Parks Victoria to) impose a permit condition that such a pool be located in Victoria Harbour, wharf side at New Quay. There are potential changing facilities at the Ron Barassi Oval - in the vicinity, of course, of other ‘struggling’ attractions in Docklands e.g., the ‘Star’ Wheel, ice rink and shopping mall. It would also be close to Docklands Primary School. See <http://yarrapools.com>

Obstacle Playground: Again, in a locality close to Ron Barassi Oval there is scope for installing an aquatic ‘obstacle course’ targeting teenagers/young adults. See <https://www.waterfront.nt.gov.au/aqua-park> Obviously the weather in Melbourne is not always conducive to swimming – but the beaches are cold and are wetsuits in common use – why not at Docklands?

- **Events Calendar Considerations**

Scheduling events on Victoria Harbour seems to be ad hoc, conveying the impression that the CoM does not capitalize on the potential of its Docklands waterways asset. A more proactive approach to more effectively managing this asset is essential. Acknowledging that there are competing responsible authorities controlling the waterways, it is nevertheless unacceptable that a plethora of bureaucracies continue to impede management of events - permits, publicity, scheduling, and safety, OHS, etc. the CoM could take a strong proactive advocacy role in negotiating with the state government for streamlining or reform of such unhelpful processes.

The CoM could also embed all of its scheduled events in Docklands. Whatever the scheduled CoM annual events (e.g., Moomba, Fashion Week, Knowledge Week, Comedy, Music etc.) the CoM should ensure that each event features a water-based/Docklands element in its program.

For example, the CoM should build on popular Moomba events by expanding on the successful Birdman Competition to a similar competition at Victoria Harbour featuring ‘innovations’ in boat propulsion. We note that the successful Melbourne Regatta is again

under discussion with commercial boat operators at Victoria Harbour, but more assistance is warranted from the CoM.

We note that an Inflatables Festival lends itself to Victoria Harbour – yet the last such event was held in the Maribyrnong River. We also note the Dragon Boat championships were last held elsewhere. The CoM should liaise closely with Dragon Boats Victoria to encourage the return of the event to Docklands. The CoM should be proactively pursuing such opportunities (see <https://www.dragonboatvictoria.com.au/events/101182/>).

Key Priority 4 Creative Resurgence

*Collaborate with peak arts organisations on industry insights into how to sustain the city's visual art, craft, performance, dance, literature and music industries

- **Melbourne - Osaka Cup Race 2025**

This iconic two-hander Yacht Race event was devised in the CoM by a former CoM Lord Mayor - yet the CoM appears to be reluctant to engage in preparation for the next race with organisers who are located elsewhere on Port Phillip Bay. Osaka is a Sister City of Melbourne. While recognizing there may be physical limitations in Victoria Harbour for competitors, in order to maximize its value for 'brand' Melbourne, the CoM should now adopt a proactive approach with organisers Sandringham Yacht Club, Hokko Yacht Club and with the Ocean Racing Club of Victoria.

See: <http://melbourneosaka.com/en/about-the-race/>

Also see: <http://melbourneosaka.com/en/home/>

Such an iconic race should rightly trigger a Festival of Yachting in Victoria Harbour in collaboration with BIA and Better Boating Victoria. A persistent disregard for its maritime heritage in the CoM may account for the apparent reluctance in the CoM to take a more entrepreneurial stance in attracting yachting and recreational boating to Victoria Harbour and the Yarra River. Whatever the cause, the CoM has a role to play to, as it were 'get on board'. The CoM promotes Melbourne as a city for retail, but inexplicably maritime heritage and watersports such as yachting do not feature as strongly as is warranted. Opportunities are being lost to strengthen the 'brand' Melbourne to capture the tourism value of this 'asset'.

Key Priority 2 Creative Resurgence

* Through a new tourism entity called Visit Melbourne, we will position Melbourne as the premier international and domestic visitor destination in Australia. We will promote the breadth of our original, inspiring and unique experiences, and attract and deliver an exciting major events program throughout the calendar year.

- **Boat Show**

Given the size and scale of the recreational boating industry, there is demonstrable economic benefit in the CoM ensuring that this annual event is present in Melbourne. Activation of Docklands is enough to justify serious CoM efforts to retain and support this highly popular event. Boats on the water, in Docklands, is an integral attraction of this event.

Key Priority 1 Business Friendly City

* Deliver an enhanced Business Concierge service that will assist city businesses to navigate council processes and regulations and be the first port of call for business enquiries

* Digitise City of Melbourne permits and streamline processes – for example, by digitising construction and business permits and statutory planning processes.

Key Priority 2 Creative Resurgence

* Through a new tourism entity called Visit Melbourne, we will position Melbourne as the premier international and domestic visitor destination in Australia. We will promote the breadth of our original, inspiring and unique experiences, and attract and deliver an exciting major events program throughout the calendar year.

Work with the Victorian Government to facilitate investment in Docklands, including the redevelopment of Central Pier and Docklands Media Precinct, to establish it as a destination, extension of the central city, and emerging film and digital media hub.

Collaborate with peak arts organisations on industry insights into how to sustain the city's visual art, craft, performance, dance, literature and music industries.

3. Maritime Skills and Training

Given the size and growth of the maritime industry, including commercial, naval and recreational activity, the paucity of maritime education and training offered in Melbourne, Victoria and Australia as a whole is inexplicable. Melbourne is missing out on this economic driver. The CoM has an opportunity to proactively grow the maritime training sector. Despite its proximity to Port Phillip Bay, its estuary and two major rivers systems, very little maritime or watercraft-based skills and training is delivered in Melbourne.

• Key Stakeholders

It is important to note that the **Australian Maritime College** (AMC) in Launceston has collaborative arrangements in place with NSW, SA and with WA but regrettably, not yet with Victoria and, importantly, not with its closest major city, Melbourne. MMHN and Offshore & Specialist Ships Australia (OSSA) are working to changing this and the proactive engagement and support from the CoM would obviously be persuasive.

It is also important note recent developments through **Australian Industry Standards** (AIS) in Maritime Training Packages and industry assessment research by **Maritime Industry Australia Ltd.** (MIAL) and **Offshore & Specialist Ships Australia** (OSSA). All data indicates an urgent need for growth in the provision of maritime training and skills. The CoM could proactively investigate opportunities to ensure that this new industry direction is captured in Melbourne.

• Maritime Skills Institute / Kangan TAFE, Docklands

An opportunity exists for the CoM to proactively advocate to the state government that a **Maritime Skills Institute** be established in Melbourne, adopting a ground-breaking collaborative delivery model at **Kangan TAFE, Docklands**. Fox Group is committed to expanding the site adjacent to Kangan – and given Fox is a freight company; the potential for logistics training at this site is obvious. The CoM can proactively facilitate discussions. Kangan TAFE delivers one maritime credential. The planned CoM Maritime Services Depot could support a range of marine apprenticeships. In addition, the Docklands heritage fleet could support a range of heritage specialist skills training opportunities.

Key Priority 5 Diverse Community

- * Support the recovery and resurgence of our international education sector, by rebuilding Melbourne's reputation among students and their peers, communities and visiting parents through: Establishing a 'One-Stop Digital Community to foster digital connection.
- * Review Melbourne's International Engagement Strategy to ensure that future partnerships enable mutual growth and opportunity. (Partner in medium timeframe.)

- **Cruise Industry / CoM Opportunity**

Post-COVID, the return of cruise ships will bring other related maritime industry opportunities for Melbourne to expand relevant training. Pre-pandemic MMHN was advised that Cunard would be based in Melbourne. MMHN research reveals that Station Pier, our second 'front door', offers a notoriously poor visitor experience for cruise passengers. MMHN notes that the responsible authority, **Victoria Ports Corporation**, in effect outsources port services to individual cruise companies who then cut-corners on services in port.

In relation to Station Pier, from the Victorian Ports perspective, the 'customer' in the equation is the cruise company - not the passenger. This reflects badly on the City Melbourne. The comparison between Tullamarine as a port of entry and Station Pier as a point is an entry to the CoM, is stark. Station Pier is terminally unimpressive. For example, there is often no access to MYKI tickets, any luggage trolleys, and taxis are parked at distance, no WIFI, no kiosks, no quality souvenir outlet (Melbourne made or Aboriginal art). Cruise companies collaborate with tour operators on board vessels, selling tours to take passengers to distant locations. Passengers are not offered information on any opportunities to access local sites of interest (e.g. Bay St or Flinders St). A significant percentage of passengers stay on board. The cruise terminal area is at a considerable distance from the public trams, which is a handicap for elderly passengers.

Given the primary 'business' of Victorian Ports is safety, port efficiency, pier maintenance etc.) the CoM should, in collaboration with the City of Phillip, start advocating with Tourism Victoria and other relevant state government authorities for improvements in approach and systems at Station Pier, e.g., a permanent outlet for the Koori Heritage Trust, onboard promotion encouraging passengers to visit the city. Melbourne is at a disadvantage under the current system of management and negotiations with relevant authorities should commence in advance of the resumption of cruise ships. Note training in Cruise Hospitality Services is delivered at William Angliss TAFE and tourism is taught at VU and RMIT.

Key Priority 2 Creative Resurgence

- * Support Melbourne's creative industries through adaptive reuse and activation of precincts and vacant spaces throughout the city.
- * Through a new tourism entity called Visit Melbourne, we will position Melbourne as the premier international and domestic visitor destination in Australia. We will promote the breadth of our original, inspiring and unique experiences, and attract and deliver an exciting major events program throughout the calendar year.
- * Continue to collaborate with the music industry to support and protect all aspects of the city's music ecosystem through industry development and regulation.

* Work with the Victorian Government to facilitate investment in Docklands, including the redevelopment of Central Pier and Docklands Media Precinct, to establish it as a destination, extension of the central city, and emerging film and digital media hub.

* Collaborate with peak arts organisations on industry insights into how to sustain the city's visual art, craft, performance, dance, literature and music industries.

Key Priority 5. Diverse City

* Deliver initiatives to support Aboriginal enterprises, increasing the profile of Aboriginal culture in the municipality.

4. Maritime Industry / The Port of Melbourne

MMHN finds insufficient reference in the Draft Strategy to proactive engagement with this major economic driver in the CoM to indicate that the maritime industry, Victorian Ports and the Port of Melbourne has been adequately considered. Given that Australia is an island nation and Melbourne is Australia's largest port, maritime trade has been the basis of the city's economic viability and prosperity – past, present and will be well into the future. COVID has clearly confirmed our reliance on seaborne trade.

“The Maritime industry is an intrinsic part in the Australian economy in the provision of importation and export of goods, as well as tourism and other value added activities. The Australian Maritime industry has estimated annual revenue of \$5.76 billion. Over 95 per cent of Australian exports are carried by sea and 10 per cent of the world's cargo passes through Australian ports. The Maritime industry will continue to face increased workforce pressures, including competition from skilled international workers competing for local jobs and access to training. The ageing workforce is also a continued area of concern. Succession planning will be vital to maintain a robust and sustainable industry into the future.” April 2018 Executive Summary extract. See:

https://www.australianindustrystandards.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/DRAFT-Maritime-Skills-Forecast-2018-Final_v2.pdf

Key Priority 1 Business Friendly City

* Facilitate major new investment proposals – especially global headquarters and research and development centres – through the establishment of Invest Melbourne, which will offer assistance to identify suitable locations and streamlined planning and permitting.

* Provide coordinated support for Melbourne's innovation, entrepreneurship and start-up ecosystem, including international enterprises, to encourage business development and capacity building.

Key Priority 6 Diverse City

* Review Melbourne's International Engagement Strategy to ensure that future partnerships enable mutual growth and opportunity. (Partner in medium timeframe.)

* Leverage diaspora and alumni communities to strengthen international relationships and facilitate foreign investment.

5. Maritime Innovation / Knowledge Economy

Pre-pandemic Melbourne's knowledge economy was thriving – driven largely by international education and the innovation sector. Given the likely continued absence or

