



Melbourne - A Great Maritime City

4 December 2022

To: Lord Mayor and Councillors

Submission relating to Greenline, FMC (6/12) Agenda Item 6.6

The City of Melbourne (CoM) is aware, we trust, of long standing MMHN support for the Greenline Project. MMHN has made submissions; MMHN Board members have participated in meetings with senior officers and the former CEO discussing the opportunity presented by Greenline to showcase Melbourne's rich, but seldom recognised maritime heritage.

We write now because of several serious concerns arising from FMC Agenda Item 6.6(6/12)

We understand, of course, that CoM cannot undertake implementation works along the entire length of Greenline at the same time. But surely a degree of consistency about the 'story' about the Birrarung as presented by Greenline should accurately reflect the cultural and social heritage of the river – whatever the Site works being implemented.

We note reference to detailed treatments and approaches in response to Key Themes shaping "*Site 1 Concept Design (the Site 1 Project)*" appears to indicate a segmented fragmented approach to the overall Greenline project design. Greenline implementation is to occur in a series of 'Sites' which suggests that continuity is absent from the overall concept design. **The questions arise - is there to be one cohesive Greenline Birrarung 'story' - or many Greenline Site 'stories' - or is the approach entirely selective or ad hoc? What 'story' will actually identify the entire cultural and social heritage of the entire Greenline Birrarung?**

However, if indeed the CoM intends that there be continuity within the Greenline design concept, then MMHN is seriously concerned about historic accuracy and rigour as is indicated at the outset with Site 1.

We note Agenda Item 6.6 Key Issue 5 identifies "*Key themes from the engagement process include managing active transport, increasing safety and security, park furniture, improved litter maintenance, increased visibility of Aboriginal culture, improvements to the environment and ecology, potential impacts on major events and opportunities for more community and local events. The engagement findings were generally favourable, although concerns were expressed about the impact of the billabong on event operations*".

While it is critically important to reference "*increased visibility of Aboriginal culture*", why is there is no reference at all to the equally important maritime heritage as a 'Key Theme' emerging from "*outcomes of public consultation and stakeholder engagement*". The CoM has

failed to acknowledge MMHN Submissions and failed to acknowledge meetings. It has failed to refer to *‘increased visibility’* for the rich maritime heritage associated with the entire length of the Greenline trail - including the *Greenline Birrarung Marr Precinct Site 1*. **The questions arise - is this omission an oversight or simply a lack of historic information or is maritime heritage to remain *‘invisible’* in the Greenline Birrarung ‘story’?**

The CoM is aware that MMHN commissioned an accurate historical narrative encompassing ALL maritime heritage along the length of the Birrarung including indigenous presence and activities. MMHN has offered this accurate historical narrative as a resource to the CoM in the hope that would offer historical rigour to inform the Greenline Project in its entirety. MMHN stands ready to assist with content for any form of informational or interpretative signage on Greenline.

Investment in Greenline should be understood as an investment in an extended recreational and environmental civic asset. It should also be understood as an investment in an undervalued and poorly understood CoM cultural asset. No matter which particular Greenline ‘site’ works are being undertaken, the CoM has an obligation to optimize the cultural ‘value’ of the Birrarung by accurately presenting the public with access to the complete Birrarung ‘story’. This means recognising and celebrating the ALL cultural and social heritage of the Birrarung. If indeed Greenline is a *“city shaping initiative to transform the North Bank of the Yarra River”* then surely reference to maritime activity along the Birrarung is warranted. After maritime and riverine activity on Birrarung/Yarra actually drove Melbourne’s prosperity. This must be part of the Birrarung ‘story’.

To state the obvious, cultural heritage is multilayered. Recognising one cultural strength or attribute does not require that the CoM to disregard or cancel another cultural strength or attribute. Of course CoM should *“increased visibility of Aboriginal culture”*, MMHN emphatically advocates that maritime industry and trade heritage should also be made *‘visible’* along the entire Greenline - including *‘Greenline Birrarung Marr Precinct Site 1’* .

Site 1 should be used as a ‘template’ to set in place from the outset the comprehensive cultural and social heritage too be acknowledged throughout Greenline as an entire Birrarung ‘story’. **The question arises - will the CoM commit to adopting an historically rigorous and inclusive approach to Birrarung cultural heritage along Greenline - including maritime trade heritage?**

Kind regards

The Hon Martin Dixon
Member of the Melbourne Maritime Heritage Network Board,
Lead - MMHN Tourism Advisory Group

Re Greenline See <https://www.melbourne.vic.gov.au/about-council/committees-meetings/meeting-archive/MeetingAgendaItemAttachments/1005/17841/DEC22%20FMC1%20AGENDA%20IEM%206.6.pdf>