

The Case for Adopting a Melbourne Maritime Heritage Network Approach

The State Government has the overarching authority to establish this Network and deliver benefits aimed specifically at economic up-lift and efficiencies, which so many stakeholders have identified as lacking.

Key maritime stakeholders express enthusiasm for an official plan to implement a collaborative approach to link the geographically 'dispersed' Maritime Heritage Assets and Precincts via a Network.

After extensive consultations with key stakeholders and research over several months during 2017, 2018 and 2019 several urgent actions have emerged, which deliver direct benefit the City of Melbourne, to the State of Victoria and to the public.

Note: The State Govt 2019-2020 Annual Budget in effect recognises the poor management of Yarra waterways, allocating \$5.1 million to protecting waterways and making specific reference to the need to continue to improve the management of the Yarra River.

A Maritime Heritage Network Approach would effectively:

- Counter the frustrating bureaucratic tangle, which has led to the 'deficit' existing today in relation to Melbourne's rich maritime legacy.
- Acknowledge existence of Melbourne and Victoria's maritime legacy throughout Greater Melbourne.
- Embed Melbourne's Maritime Trade Legacy within 'Brand' Melbourne and Victoria.
- Deliver the mutual benefit of a fostering collaboration between the multiple and enthusiastic stakeholder groups in Melbourne and around Greater Melbourne.
- Capture the cultural and economic value of the remnant Maritime Trade Legacy.
- Optimise the public and private return on investment in maritime assets or sites.
- Capture the benefits of shared ticketing, cross promotion etc. in relation to ferry links, tourist maps and public transport options.

Note: The Association of Bayside Municipalities estimates that the recreational activity of tourists and locals results in approximately \$320 million in annual revenue for the Bay region. See <https://abm.org.au>

Multiple elements within the Melbourne Maritime Network

Maritime legacy archives, images, artifacts and ships are dispersed in various locations and in various premises around Melbourne, e.g. Williamstown, Spotswood, CBD, Southbank, Docklands (2), Port Melbourne and Geelong. Much of this archival material is known to be of national significance yet not readily accessible to the wider public.

- *Home Port Melbourne*

Few are aware that Melbourne has enjoyed unique status as the 'home port' for specialised shipping of many types (e.g. oil and gas rigs, Antarctic vessels, sea pilots etc.) The Off-Shore & Specialised Shipping Australia (OSSA) has amassed archives and has access to much more material from the commercial shipping sector.

Note: February 2019. The shipping line '**Cunard**' nominated Melbourne as 'Home Port' Station Pier for the vessel the Queen Elizabeth for the next three cruising seasons.

- *Stevedoring prominence*

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The technological evolution of stevedoring is not as well understood as it should be as a 'disruptive technology' in today's terms. There have been significant social repercussions to this technological 'disruption' and the Port of Melbourne has been, and remains at the forefront. Archives exist in all of the various commercial entities as well as Ports Victoria and Public Records Office.

- *Victoria Harbour*

This area is a unique and unusual element of City of Melbourne maritime trade history. Victoria Harbour is an artificially constructed 'basin' excavated 'by hand' and steam shovels during the Depression.

- *Yarra River and Port Phillip Bay re-alignments and dredging*

As the City of Melbourne evolved, so too did the propensity for, and the technical capacity to, alter the riverbed to suit trade purposes.

- *Slipways, docks, piers and other infrastructure assets*

Remaining examples of maritime legacy infrastructure which should be identified within the Maritime Heritage Network will include warehouses, good sheds, cranes, wharves, piers, bollards, dry-dock machinery, etc. on the Yarra River, estuary, Victoria harbor and Port Phillip Bay.

Note: The State Government has committed (Minister for Ports 2018) to adequately maintain the slipway at Dudley Street so that it remains accessible to larger yachts and other ships.

- *Commercial ferry/taxi/punt services*

Given the demographic growth and road congestion in Melbourne, ferry services and water transport of all types needs to be strongly encouraged by all levels of government.

Promotion of new ferry or water taxi destinations beyond the CBD around Greater Melbourne with a focus on maritime heritage may appeal to tourists arriving at Station Pier (ticketing linked to Public Transport Victoria light rail and trams).

More ferries and shared ticketing would connect dispersed maritime heritage precincts and assets and would also encourage patronage at various premises. Many cities use this connected or shared ticketing model and public transport.

- Ferry service initiatives around Victoria Harbour, the Yarra and beyond (Belarline – Sorrento) are increasing and patronage will continue to increase as the urban population density of Melbourne and road congestion increases.
- Ferry services operate from Port Arlington to Docklands.
- *Westgate Punt* – operates a service that crosses the Yarra River between Spotswood Jetty and Westgate Landing in Port Melbourne under the West Gate Bridge.
See: <https://www.theage.com.au/national/victoria/punt-ferry-saved-from-sinking-by-rise-in-patronage-20130911-2tktb.html>

* Two existing ferry services, *Port Phillip Ferries* and *SeaLink*, are expanding services with the support of the State Government trialing a new ferry service to Geelong commencing 2019.
See: www.portphillipferries.com.au/geelong-ferry-trials/

- Melbourne Water Taxis are currently licensed to service landings or jetties on the Yarra River between Abbotsford and Williamstown, and on the Maribyrnong River to Canning Street, Essendon. With developments on Yarra North bank this service will expand.
See: <http://www.melbournewateraxis.com.au/destinations/>
- *GoBoats* and *OnABoat* are recently commenced operations on Melbourne waterways offering private electric picnic boats for hire. No licence is required. See: <https://goboatmelbourne.com.au> <https://www.onaboat.com.au/>

- ***Developer Engagement***

Yarra North Bank – Riverlee tower development on the north bank of the Yarra adjacent to the Mission to Seafarers will retain and restore the Heritage Goods Shed No 5, the heritage crane, improve the Seafarers Park and maintain the waterside public pathway through to Jim Stynes Bridge. Riverlee have commissioned serious professional historical research about the Yarra North Docks.

Note: In April 2019 Riverlee prepared a Draft proposal for an innovative Pontoon Concept document aiming to (a) *Connect Mission to Seafarers, Seafarers Rest, Seafarers Bridge and Seafarers Wharf to form a cohesive precinct that honours the city's heritage and ensures a culturally diverse, inclusive and sustainable future.* (b) *Be an innovative and fresh addition to the city's vibrant culture, reconnecting the city and its people to the river, building on the rich history to create a new future.* (c) *Reactivate this forgotten piece of Melbourne's waterfront and continue to embrace and show respect for the Yarra.*

Docklands, Collins Wharf – Lendlease Towers has plans to restore the heritage Harbour Port Control Tower on Collins Wharf, and continue support for the Heritage Fleet on the wharf. Lendlease has also committed to retain the redundant dock rail lines extending along Collins Wharf. It has already restored the Australian Wharf and installed informational signage on its heritage significance. Lendlease has also prepared ‘exploratory’ concept designs for a Maritime Museum on Collins Wharf.