

The Case for a Melbourne Maritime Trade Heritage Museum

Melbourne is unique amongst the large cities of the nation and comparable cities in the developed world in NOT having a Maritime Heritage Museum. Quoting 'Polly Woodside' Volunteers Association noted in their newsletter, 21/8/2018 "*Melbourne is the only maritime city in the developed world without a maritime museum.*"

Significantly the City of Melbourne draft Annual Plan Initiative 2019-2020 includes "*Adopt a leadership and advocacy role with key stakeholders with the objective of securing collaborative co-funding partnership agreement to deliver maritime legacy outcomes in the municipality including interpretative heritage signage and a maritime museum.*"

In August 2012 the State Govt. development authority VicUrban (predecessor of Development Victoria) invited The Sorrento Steam and Bay Steamers Group to submit a proposal for a Maritime Museum (Circa?) A Committee was formed and in collaboration with Maritime Museums of Victoria a proposal was duly submitted as both a Report and Concept. It noted the 'place' based approach of the State Govt. investing in dispersed locations for specific maritime 'stories' yet an absence of such recognition in Melbourne. There is much maritime heritage in the [Melbourne] Port story to be exploited for the benefit of the community at large, for tourists and visitors for the younger generation that they come to understand the history of the City and its Port.

In 2011 The Maritime Museums of Victoria (17 groups) and Maritime Heritage Association of Victoria (also made a similar submission to the State Govt. for a Docklands Maritime Centre. Its expressed objective was to "complement" existing maritime attractions. A detailed design was submitted

The opportunity now presents itself:

- No new Museum has been established in Melbourne for many years. There is wide acknowledgement amongst stakeholders that an opportunity now exists to establish a maritime museum focused on trade as a permanent tourist attraction in Docklands.
- It will serve as a repository for maritime assets and archives, which are currently not accessible in the public realm. The absence of such a maritime museum in Melbourne should be understood as an undeveloped cultural asset.

Focus on Trade/Commerce

The Maritime Trade Museum would have a specific focus on commerce or trade, specialist shipping, oil and gas rigs, docks, stevedoring, ports management etc. This focus would be a clear point of differentiation from existing maritime museums and would align with Melbourne's current status as the nation's largest port. The museum would trigger wider public recognition and education about the crucial role played by maritime trade in underpinning Melbourne's and Victoria's prosperity – currently and in the past. Such a museum at Docklands has the potential to provide access to both information and on-water experiences (e.g. Heritage Fleet, harbour tours, docks tours.)

Note: In the 19th century, the provision of such public 'education' was known as '*instructive amusement*' (referenced in City of Melbourne 2018-19 Annual Plan.)

In sharp contrast to the Melbourne's poor recognition of its waterways as public assets thus far, it is significant to note that two major international maritime museums (London and New York) make specific reference to an aspiration to create greater 'access' to their respective Docklands areas and value of the creation of informational trails. The City of Melbourne Annual Plan 2019 - 2020 indicates a shift in this thinking is now proposing a *Greenline/Blueline* trail along the North Bank of the Yarra.

International Models for Maritime Museums

There are numerous international examples e.g. Belfast (Titanic), Glasgow, Greenwich Maritime Precinct (*The Cutty Sark*), Quebec City, Lisbon, Auckland, Oslo, Copenhagen, Noumea, Kawasaki (Kobe) – but significantly none specialising in Maritime Trade in Australia.

Note: The Victorian Government Architect offered to investigate various models in a meeting with Jackie Watts (2018).

London Maritime Museums

1. Docklands Museum London.

The London Docklands Museum clearly provides a very useful 'model' for Melbourne, which has the opportunity to create a similar museum as a permanent 'activation' at Docklands to showcase Melbourne's rich and vibrant commercial maritime heritage. A reminder that Melbourne remains the largest port city in Australia and is also recognised as a home base for specialised shipping. Located in Limehouse, and is close to Canary Wharf in East London. This is a site-specific museum telling the history of London's River Thames and the growth of Docklands. The museum is part of the Museum of London jointly funded by the City of London Corporation and the Greater London Authority. It also enjoys strong corporate sponsorship from Sainsbury's. Jackie Watts visited the London Docklands Museum June 2018 and reported: "*The reclamation and re-imagining of London's extensive Docklands is impressive – as is the way in which the 'commercial/ trade' aspect of London's maritime heritage is recognised and promoted in the Docklands Museum. Of course trade between Australia and England features in many of the exhibits!*"

2. Royal Museums Precinct at Greenwich, London

This is essentially a 'dispersed' collection model and is an extraordinarily popular tourist destination. Located near the Royal Observatory Greenwich, is the iconic historic vessel '*Cutty Shark*', the National Maritime Museum and the Queen's House art gallery. Publicly funded but receives significant philanthropic funds.

Planning major new wing gifted by shipping magnate and philanthropist Sammy Ofer.

Managed through a Trust, Director Dr. Kevin Fewster

<https://www.rmg.co.uk/?gclid=EAIaIQobChMI6NiTitDQ3gIV1I6PCh0QIQipEAAAYAiAAEgIpR>

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Note: Should the 'Polly Woodside' be more appropriated and curated re-located, the vessel has the potential to become Melbourne's 'Cutty Sark'.

Aberdeen Maritime Museum

This Museum reflects recent commercial history in that it is constructed on various levels revolving around a full-scale model of a gas or oil rig. Both government and the corporate sector support the Museum. See: <http://www.aagm.co.uk/Visit/AberdeenMaritimeMuseum/amm-overview.aspx>

Singapore

Reflecting the extent of acknowledgement of the importance of maritime heritage, there are two maritime museums in the city.

1. Maritime Experiential Museum: The Maritime Experiential Museum, formerly the Maritime Xperiential Museum and the Maritime Experiential Museum and, is a museum in Resorts World Sentosa, Singapore. See: <https://www.rwsentosa.com/en/attractions/the-maritime-experiential-museum>

2. Singapore Maritime Gallery: An education centre showcasing all aspects of maritime engagement using interactive technologies.

See: https://www.maritimegallery.sg/web/portal/home?utm_source=google_maps

Lisbon Maritime Museum

Established in 1863 and housed in a monastery and with the National Ministry of Archeology. This museum is dedicated to the memory of the great naval achievements of Portugal starting from the age of the great geographical discoveries until now.

See: <http://www.lisbon-tourism.com/en/lisbon-attractions/museums-and-galleries-in-lisbon/maritime-museum.html>

Amsterdam Maritime Museum

Reflecting Holland's strong maritime tradition. Digital as well as conventional collection including heritage fleet virtual reality experiences. See: <https://www.hetscheepvaartmuseum.nl>

New York, USA

Reflecting the extent of acknowledgement of the importance of maritime heritage, there are two maritime museums in the city.

1. South Street Seaport Museum .The Museum houses paintings, ship models, scrimshaw & more with vintage ships docked outside. <http://southstreetseaportmuseum.org/>

2. WaterFront Museum. The Museum aims to educate about maritime history & expand waterfront access in the metro area. And <http://www.waterfrontmuseum.org/>

Australian Models for Maritime Museums

Queensland Maritime Museum, Brisbane

Managed by an incorporated association. The CEO Matt Rowe has offered support to a Melbourne Maritime Trade Museum via OSSA. Attracts 34,000 visitors annually (2016 report).

Average daily revenue \$750 rising to \$1500 during school vacations. Broadly self-funded through membership and sponsors. The Queensland Government invested a further \$600,000 added to three years recurrent funding from Queensland Arts.

Australian National Maritime Museum, Sydney

This is a Federal Government agency. The Museum is managed through a Council appointed in accordance with the Australian National Maritime Museum Act 1990. Visitation for 2016-17 exceeded 1,512,000. The Federal Government provided \$13.9 million over three years but 39% of revenue came from non-government sources.

Note: An arrangement has been recently formed to allow AMC to deliver training at the Museum.

Maritime Museum, Hobart

Privately operated maritime museum dedicated to the history of Tasmania's association with the sea, ships and shipbuilding.

Note: Although Hobart Museum holds archives and archives from the Australian Antarctic Division expeditions, Melbourne played a key role in Australian Antarctic operations until the 1970s. All Antarctic vessels including the iconic 'Nella Dan' left from Melbourne including the initial expeditions in 1953. Representatives from the Australian National Antarctic Research Expeditions organisation (ANARE) have approached the Melbourne Maritime Network for assistance in ensuring that this significant maritime heritage of Melbourne specifically the north bank of the Yarra is rightly and accurately acknowledged.

Note: The ANARE will feature in design of the Seafarers Rest Park on North Wharf.

Fremantle, Western Australia

Reflecting the extent of acknowledgement of the importance of maritime heritage, there are two maritime museums in the city.

1. WA Maritime Museum Under the control of the Western Australian Government, Museums of Western Australia. The Museum aims to explore WA's maritime relationship from leisure boats and handcrafted sailing boats to commercial pearl-luggers. See

<http://museum.wa.gov.au/museums/maritime>

2. WA Shipwrecks Museum. Specialising in maritime archaeology

<http://museum.wa.gov.au/museums/shipwrecks>

Cairns Museum

This is operated by City of Cairns. It notably contains a small stevedoring exhibition.

Possible sites for the Melbourne Maritime Trade Heritage Museum

There are several sites options. The best option will be determined through negotiated partnerships and collaboration.

- ***Collins Wharf (Docklands, Victoria Harbour)***

Lendlease Collins Wharf development site

Located along Collins Wharf the development has ministerial approval and will commence work in 2019. Lendlease have suggested a space on the southern side of Victoria Harbour suitable for a new maritime museum as an appropriate element on their Collins Wharf development plans. It is on the water's edge and Lendlease view a 'maritime heritage presence' as good for the promotion of this residential development. The site is accessible by public transport. There will be a public walkway along the wharf and heritage tram rails on the path are to remain. Development Victoria advises that there are existing plans for a pedestrian walkway from the wharf to the north side of Victoria Harbour. This would allow access to the museum from across Victoria Harbour (*September 2017 LL Tim Campbell, Project Victoria Harbour 0404 140 120*). The proposed Melbourne Greenline Trail from Birrarung Marr through the CBD to Harbour Esplanade and on to the Bolte Bridge at Ron Barassi Senior Park could easily incorporate a 'spur' trail along Collins Wharf to the proposed park at the tip of the wharf. Lendlease also intend to include the former Harbour Control Tower into their design.

Note: Adjacent to the Maritime Museum in Sydney, the Navy has constructed an elongated small two level Museum on a floating wharf.

- **Yarra Bank North**

Riverlee Yarra North Bank development site

Located adjacent to the Mission to Seafarers, the development has ministerial approval. It sits on the north bank of the Yarra alongside Seafarers Park; the development incorporates retention and restoration of the large heritage Goods Shed that will be a conference centre and the base of a hotel. The site faces the Seafarers Rest Park currently being designed, which will incorporate a heritage crane and other maritime artifacts. It sits adjacent to the proposed City of Melbourne maritime waters-edge trail running from Birrarung Marr through the CBD to Harbour Esplanade and on to the Bolte Bridge.

Note: Riverlee have expressed a strong interest in assisting with a museum or interpretation centre and have already commissioned historical research on this area of Yarra Docklands with specific reference to the social and commercial importance of this particular Goods Shed and the heritage crane on this stretch of river bank, Melbourne's first Docklands.

Note: Melbourne played a key role in Australian Antarctic operations from this site until the 1970s. All Antarctic vessels including the iconic '*Nella Dan*' left from Melbourne including the initial expeditions in 1953. Representatives from the Australian National Antarctic Research Expeditions organisation (ANARE) approached the Melbourne Maritime Network for assistance in ensuring that this Antarctic connection with Melbourne specifically the North Bank of the Yarra, be rightly and accurately acknowledged. Riverlee are very keen to acknowledge this aspect of the site's history in their development.

Beneath the Flinders St Viaducts behind Batman Park

Located between Flinders St and North Bank there are series of spaces under the viaducts managed by the City of Melbourne since 1958 are currently vacant or leased. These viaducts could be re-purposed and re-designed as linked linear spaces glazed to facing the green space and the Birrarung. The darkened spaces towards Flinders St would be suitable for the latest virtual reality and augmented reality technologies whereas spaces with natural would be suitable for display of the more conventional maritime artifacts. This would effectively form a precinct between Spencer Street and King Street. There is considerable space beneath the Flinders Street Viaduct which links Flinders Street station to Southern Cross station and forms the main link between the eastern and western parts of the Victorian Rail Network. From Spencer Street, the viaduct swings southward around the back of the former Fish Market (now Northbank Place and Rebecca Walk) behind Batman Park then north-east to avoid the re-created Turning Basin on the

Birrarung then crossing over the Banana Alley Vaults before entering Flinders Street. The land under the Viaduct has been used for various uses: when the King St Bridge was built in 1958 the land was turned over to the City of Melbourne. In 1997 the Northbank area was to an extent redeveloped, and the area under the viaduct bordering Batman Park was converted into commercial space named ‘Rebecca Walk’ in reference to the schooner “*Rebecca*”.

AFL/Marvel Stadium redevelopment sites (Docklands, Victoria Harbour)

The AFL is redeveloping Marvel Stadium and their concept plans indicate it may extend to or beyond Harbour Esplanade, even over the water in Victoria Harbour. The AFL is open to considering community benefit options, which presumably might include a museum (*Meeting September 2017 Simon Gorr.*) The State Government has agreed to provide significant funding support for the redevelopment (circa \$300 million.) The State Opposition, however, has expressed opposition to this project.

Note A:

City of Melbourne 2018-2019 Annual Plan item: “*Partner with Development Victoria and the AFL to develop a Stadium Precinct Master Plan to deliver exemplar connected public spaces in Harbour Esplanade, Bourke and La Trobe Streets, integrated with the future direction of Etihad Stadium, Southern Cross Station and Central Pier.*”

City of Melbourne Annual Plan 2019- 2020 –*Advocate to Development Victoria to ensure that Melbourne’s Maritime heritage is considered as part of the development of Harbour Esplanade and Victoria Harbour*

Note B: The Marvel redevelopment plans could incorporate a stretch of the Melbourne Greenline/Blueline Maritime Trail from Birrarung Marr through the CBD to Harbour Esplanade and beyond to the Bolte Bridge to possibly Moonee Ponds Creek

Development Victoria sites for consideration

Development Victoria controls various potential sites suitable for a new Maritime Heritage Museum. With the objective of addressing the persistent challenge of activating of Docklands and properly recognizing the potential of the site, Development Victoria could allocate any of the following sites for consideration as a museum:

* **Harbour Esplanade area** – Several options are feasible.

* **Central Pier** With the necessary reconstruction underway to address structural faults in the 100-year-old Central Wharf, there is an opportunity to create a potentially iconic highly visible museum on a site surrounded by the waters of Victoria Harbour.

* **Installation of a floating wharf** or pontoons moored to reconstructed pylon area.

Note: Development Victoria already has funds to reconstruct the Esplanade and has positioned two interim pontoons with a café there already.

* **A reconstructed Heritage Goods Shed or large pontoon** along Harbour Esplanade. There is potential for an iconic building to be created.

* **New Quay area (1)** – there is a large square vacant MAB site on the water’s edge adjacent to Ron Barassi Senior Park.

* **New Quay area (2)** – There is a long narrow vacant site along the water’s edge adjacent to Ron Barassi Senior Park.