

**Report to the Future Melbourne Committee****Agenda item 6.1****Neighbourhood key issues and City of Melbourne Projects for Docklands****17 May 2022****Presenter:** Rushda Halith, Director Community Development**Purpose and background**

1. The purpose of this report is to provide an overview of the Docklands neighbourhood community and upcoming key initiatives. (Refer Attachment 2).
2. On 14 December 2021, Council endorsed Future Melbourne Committee meetings to occur in neighbourhood locations to encourage and support more local residents, businesses, workers and students to participate, experience and engage in Future Melbourne Committee meetings through attending, observing, making a submission and/or asking a public question in a neighbourhood setting.
3. This initiative is part of a neighbourhood approach commenced last year to strengthen how the Council understands and works with different communities across the municipality as we continue to navigate the impacts of COVID-19.
4. The municipality is made up of a broad set of neighbourhoods, each with its own unique characteristics and needs – from densely populated urban environments, such as the central business district, to more residential areas, such as Kensington, Carlton and South Yarra. Using community development practice and a place-based approach, Council seeks to better understand the strengths, needs and priorities of communities to guide its work. Ensuring opportunity of access and participation of diverse voices and views will be a key priority as this approach is embedded this year through neighbourhood plans and projects, developed in partnership with communities.

**Key issues**

5. Docklands sits on the lands of the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung people of the Eastern Kulin. Originally part of the Port of Melbourne, the neighbourhood joined the City of Melbourne municipality in July 2007.
6. This area, at the lower delta of the Yarra River Birrarung, was once a wetland rich with natural resources. After European settlement, industry increased and by 1908, Victoria Dock was handling around 90 per cent of Victoria's imports. By the 1970s the dock and wharves were in decline, then lay derelict until urban renewal began in the 1990s.
7. When Docklands was absorbed back into the City of Melbourne in 2007, it doubled the size of Melbourne's central city and returned a significant area of waterfront to the city. The suburb now stretches out over 200 hectares of land and water just west of the CBD, hugging Victoria Harbour.
8. From the first development at New Quay – featuring apartments, restaurants and a private marina, Docklands has evolved into a sophisticated waterfront precinct. It is increasingly in dialogue with the central city through the use of Melbourne icons, such as laneways and bluestone pavers.
9. Docklands offers a mix of inner city living, shopping at The District Docklands, commerce, connection to nature, entertainment, dining, sporting and community events, arts and culture.
10. It is well-connected to Melbourne's main transport networks, including trams and Southern Cross Station, and adds a new type of commute into the mix with the Port Phillip Ferry station.
11. A highlight is the award-winning Library at the Dock, the country's first six-star Green Star rated public building. This welcoming community space boasts stunning views of the waterfront and marina, an expansive children's collection, gallery and high-tech makerspace.
12. More than 16,000 residents now call Docklands home, although the pandemic led to a population dip as international students and others relocated. It's a multicultural community: 68 per cent were born overseas and 65 per cent speak a language other than English at home. Vertical living is ubiquitous: 97 per cent of residents live in a flat or apartment.

13. Nearly 1200 local businesses are located in Docklands, from small businesses and waterfront eateries to national headquarters for major businesses including NAB, ANZ, Myer, AXA, Bendigo Bank, Medibank Private and the Bureau of Meteorology.
14. COVID-19 has however had a dramatic impact on local businesses, with almost a third of all shops either vacant or closed at some stage during the pandemic, and many corporate office buildings rested during lockdowns.

**Recommendation from management**

15. That the Future Melbourne Committee notes the overview of the Docklands neighbourhood community and upcoming key initiatives.

**Attachments:**

1. Supporting Attachment (Page 3 of 8)
2. Docklands: Neighbourhood Highlights and Initiatives (Page 4 of 8)

## Supporting Attachment

### Legal

1. Council adopted the schedule of Future Melbourne Committee and Council meetings on 14 December 2021, in accordance with its Governance Rules. This included the locations for the community Future Melbourne Committee meetings, which commence from February until November 2022.

### Finance

2. The financial impact associated with the key initiatives outlined in the overview of the Docklands Neighbourhood community and upcoming key initiatives in Attachment 2 are in the draft 2022-23 budget.

### Conflict of interest

3. No member of Council staff, or other person engaged under a contract, involved in advising on or preparing this report has declared a material or general conflict of interest in relation to the matter of the report.

### Health and Safety

4. Council projects and activities in Docklands seek to improve the health, safety and wellbeing of the community.

### Stakeholder consultation

5. The holding of meetings in community locations, will increase the community's capacity to experience and participate in the democratic process, in addition to engaging with Councillors informally on a range of matters.

### Relation to Council policy

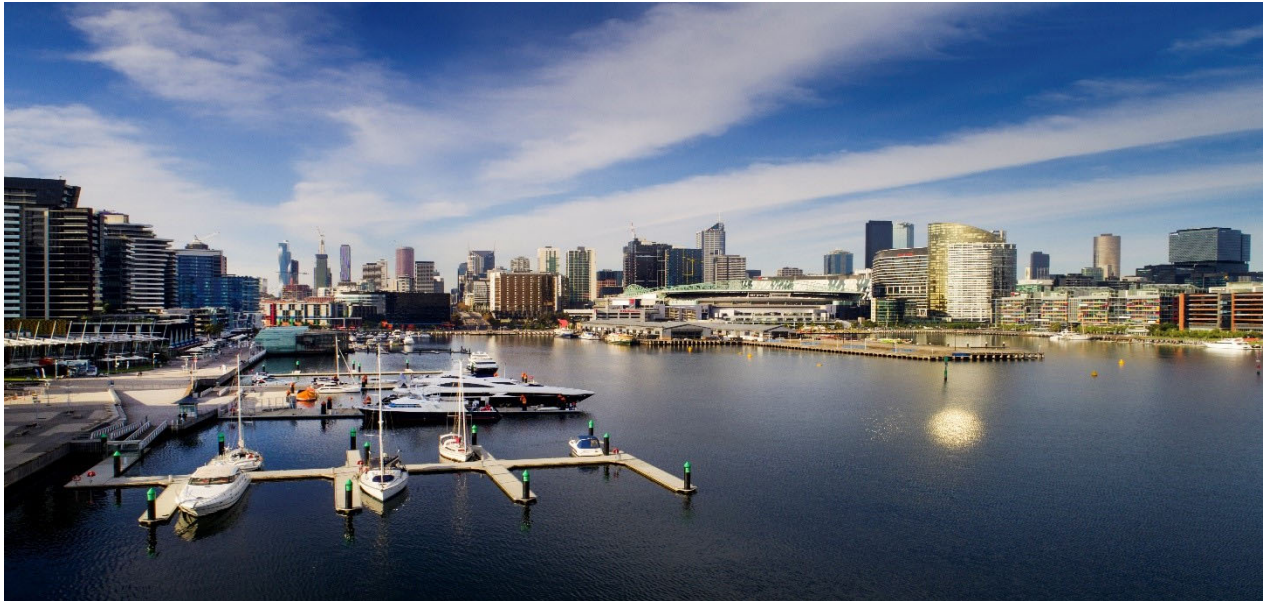
6. This report aligns with the community aspirations identified in the Council Plan 2021-2025 and the Governance Rules.

### Environmental sustainability

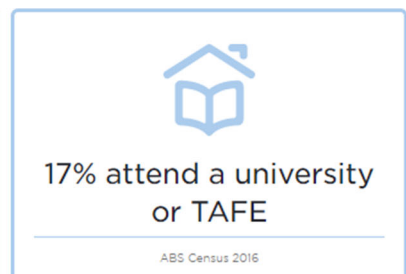
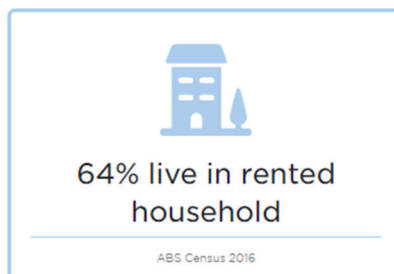
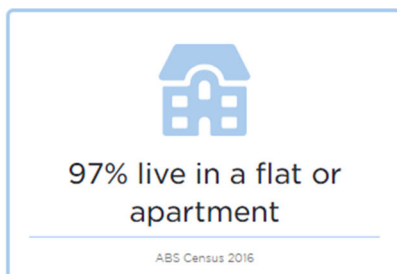
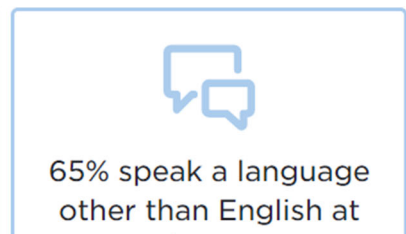
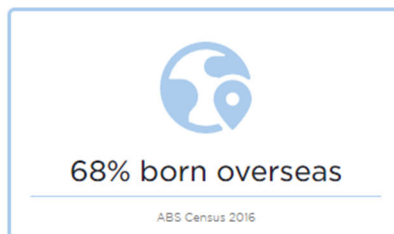
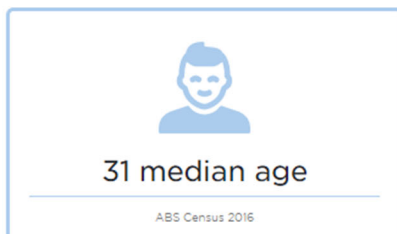
7. Council projects and activities in Docklands focus on enhancing both environmental and social sustainability.

## DOCKLANDS

### Neighbourhood Highlights and Initiatives



#### Who lives in Docklands?



## About Docklands

Docklands sits on the lands of the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung people of the Eastern Kulin. Originally part of the Port of Melbourne, the neighbourhood joined the City of Melbourne municipality in July 2007.

This area, at the lower delta of the Yarra River Birrarung, was once a wetland rich with natural resources. After European settlement, industry increased and by 1908, Victoria Dock was handling around 90 per cent of Victoria's imports. By the 1970s the dock and wharves were in decline, then lay derelict until urban renewal began in the 1990s.

When Docklands was absorbed into the City of Melbourne, it doubled the size of Melbourne's central city and returned a significant area of waterfront to the city. The suburb now stretches out over 200 hectares of land and water just west of the CBD, hugging Victoria Harbour.

From the first development at New Quay – featuring apartments, restaurants and a private marina, Docklands has evolved into a sophisticated waterfront precinct. It is increasingly in dialogue with the central city through the use of Melburnian icons, such as laneways and bluestone pavers.

Docklands offers a mix of inner city living, shopping at The District Docklands, commerce, connection to nature, entertainment, dining, sporting and community events, arts and culture.

It is well-connected to Melbourne's main transport networks, including trams and Southern Cross Station, and adds a new type of commute into the mix with the Port Phillip Ferry station.

A highlight is the award-winning Library at the Dock, the country's first six-star Green Star rated public building. This welcoming community space boasts stunning views of the waterfront and marina, an expansive children's collection, gallery and high-tech makerspace.

More than 16,000 residents now call Docklands home, although the pandemic led to a population dip as international students and others relocated. It's a multicultural community: 68 per cent were born overseas and 65 per cent speak a language other than English at home. Vertical living is ubiquitous: 97 per cent of residents live in a flat or apartment.

The population's health and wellbeing profile fares better than the wider city at 75.3 compared to the city average of 71.9 (2020). The overall wellbeing score is based on respondents' reported satisfaction with their standard of living, health, achievements, personal relationships, feeling safe, part of the community and future security. It is also an indicator of resilience evidence of the strength of the Docklands community. A midpoint review of the health and wellbeing profile is currently underway.

Nearly 1200 local businesses are located in Docklands, from small businesses and waterfront eateries to national headquarters for major businesses including NAB, ANZ, Myer, AXA, Bendigo Bank, Medibank Private and the Bureau of Meteorology.

COVID-19 has however had a dramatic impact on local businesses, with almost a third of all shops either vacant or closed at some stage during the pandemic, and many corporate office buildings rested during lockdowns.

As the city recovers from COVID-19, Docklands will continue to invite both commercial and residential development that will add to the suburb's growth for years to come.

## **Council Services**

### *Childcare and Family Services*

Childcare in Docklands is provided by Gowrie @ The Harbour. This is a City of Melbourne facility, leased to Gowrie Victoria, which provides 150-place education and care centre integrated kindergarten. Family services are provided at Community Hub @ The Dock including family, maternal and child health, immunisation, family support, counselling and parenting support.

### *Libraries and Community Spaces*

The Library at the Dock provides loans of books and other materials to approximately 3,200 members. In the 2021-2022 financial year, City of Melbourne is expected to buy approximately 5,600 new books to add to the collection. At the library a makerspace is also provided that offers equipment such as 3D printers, sewing machines, tools, media computers and creative programming.

The library also offers seven bookable community spaces, 120 seat performance space, recording studio and equipment.

The Community Hub @ The Dock provides bookable community spaces and the Boating Hub.

### *Parks & Open Spaces*

City of Melbourne manages and maintains many public spaces in Docklands including Adela Lane Reserve, Buluk Park, Collins Landing, Hub @ Docklands, Docklands Park, Forge Apartments/The Wharf Club, Harbour Esplanade (131-141), New Quay Promenade, New Quay Central Park, Point Park, Quay Park, River Esplanade, Ron Barassi Senior Park, Seafarers Rest, Spencer Street Plaza, Victoria Green, Victoria Harbour Promenade, Webb Bridge Reserve, Wharfs Landing and Yarra's Edge.

### *Sporting & Recreation Venues*

City of Melbourne manages the Melbourne City Marina, Melbourne's largest visitor berthing facility. The Council also directly manage the Yarra's Edge Marina and is responsible for day-to-day operations of the waterways, allocation and licensing of berths and marina leases management. The Community Boating Hub is also managed by City of Melbourne and provides licenses for boating organisations to use the Hub as a base for dragon boating, sailing and outrigger canoes.

The Docklands Sports Courts is a synthetic multi-use sport facility which can be booked for use or is otherwise accessible open space for public use.

Ron Barassi Senior Park is home to the Docklands Sports Club comprising of approximately 100 junior sport participants. Docklands Sports Club runs junior programs in soccer, cricket and AFL. Ron Barassi Senior Park is also available for casual bookings and events. The Hub @ Docklands is a community recreation facility supporting a range of recreation programs.

## **Council Investment in Docklands**

### Capital Works

Infrastructure investments in Docklands include:

- \$864,000 – Australia Wharf Fitout
- \$300,000 – Waterways Operations precinct in the Bolte Precinct West to support effective growth of marine activity
- \$165,000 – Waterways provision of kayak storage and fishing infrastructure
- \$40,000 – Seafarers Rest Park

We will invest around \$3,174,900 on renewal works in Docklands on the Melbourne City Marina

Renewal, the Waterways Renewal Program as well as renewal of roadways, drains, parks, landscape, library collection and property.

We will invest \$285,692 on maintenance works in Docklands including wharf and marina maintenance on community facilities and other property, safe city cameras and urban forest health.

In addition, through the Business Precinct Program, we will invest \$90,000 annual funding to Docklands Chamber of Commerce for business support and activation initiatives.

### **Key Initiatives**

Current Council work underway will:

- Develop and deliver the Docklands Neighbourhood Planning Portal as part of our neighbourhood model of working with communities to respond to existing and projected needs, insights and trends. The first round of consultation occurred through March and April, further consultation will resume in late 2022.
- Fund the Docklands Representative Group to establish the new Docklands Owners Corporation Network. The new group was launched in March.
- Deliver and manage the Business Precinct Program 2021-25 including:
  - The Shopfront Activation Program where landlords are supported to provide short to medium term spaces for creatives, start-ups and independent retailers and bring activity and consumers back into Docklands. Current activations include two new local retailers - WØRKS, a sustainable personal care boutique and laGuapa, an ethical fashion retailer. Well-known local artist Yandell Walton also has installation on display at The District Docklands as part of the program.
  - Support for local businesses via the Business Concierge Service.
- Support local events and activations via the City of Melbourne's Premier Events and Event Partnership Program, including:
  - The Playground At Docklands – a school holiday program that provides a no cost option for parents to bring their children to a pop-up playground at the water in Docklands. Last years' event attracted over 20,000 visitors to Docklands, this years was equally successful.

- Firelight Festival – occurs in Docklands each year to coincide with the Winter Solstice, celebrating winter with a focus on family, community, food, music, fire and light. The event attracts approximately 75,000 people over three nights, and generates an economic uplift of approximately \$4m for the municipality.
- Docklands Summer Nights Drone Show – a one-time only evening drone swarm show running from 15 January until 5 February, which attracted 107,000 people and generated an economic uplift of \$5.4m for Melbourne.
- Host a Docklands summit to elevate the urgent need for action and generate enthusiasm and outcomes for the regeneration of Docklands.

### **City of Melbourne will progress delivery and strategic work for:**

#### *Moonee Ponds Creek Strategic Opportunities Plan 2019*

The Moonee Ponds Creek Strategic Opportunities Plan outlines opportunities to revitalise Moonee Ponds Creek with a chain of parklands, new open spaces and wetlands.

Moonee Ponds Creek runs for 25 kilometres through several established suburbs, including Docklands, Kensington, North Melbourne and West Melbourne, and alongside urban renewal areas of Arden, Macaulay, Dynon and E-Gate.

While Moonee Ponds Creek has substantial economic, ecological and recreational value, its health has been negatively impacted over many decades by industry and infrastructure. Moonee Ponds Creek is central to all urban renewal areas within the City of Melbourne. The future of the creek therefore is critical to the future liveability of Melbourne.

The Strategic Opportunities Plan sets out opportunities across three sections of the creek within the City of Melbourne:

- North: from Brunswick Road to Racecourse Road
- Central: from Racecourse Road to Dynon Road
- South: from Dynon Road to the Yarra River.

#### *Docklands Urban Forest Precinct Plan 2014*

Docklands Urban Forest Precinct Plan has been developed in collaboration with the community, which is reflected in the character, vision, planting plan and priorities defined for Docklands' urban forest. Consultation highlighted that Docklands is a unique part of Melbourne and the urban forest planting should respond to its uniqueness, Australian identity and waterfront connection. Our work with the Docklands community indicated a preference for trees that would add to the social, cultural and aesthetic value within Docklands as well as providing canopies that would mitigate wind, capture water and foster biodiversity.