

**Report to the Future Melbourne Committee****Agenda item 6.1****Neighbourhood key issues and City of Melbourne Projects for Southbank****22 November 2022****Presenter:** Rushda Halith, Director Community Development**Purpose and background**

1. The purpose of this report is to provide an overview of the Southbank 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.
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. Southbank is an important cultural hub that stretches out across the southern side of the Yarra River – Birrarung. To the east, this neighbourhood flanks St Kilda Road, laying claim to a world-class arts precinct. Head west to follow the Birrarung through Southgate and past the Melbourne Exhibition Centre to Montague Street. Southbank is hemmed by the West Gate Freeway and Dorcas Street in the south.
6. The area is rich with Aboriginal heritage and continuing cultural significance. Many sites – such as an ancient waterfall – are described in the [Mapping Aboriginal Melbourne](#) project.
7. Southbank has experienced rapid growth since the 1990s, evolving from an industrial area into a dense, high-rise neighbourhood. Almost all dwellings are flats or apartments.
8. About 23,000 people live in Southbank, accounting for 15 per cent of the total population of the City of Melbourne. Its residents are younger than the rest of the City of Melbourne: almost 42 per cent are aged 25 to 34, compared with an average of 35 per cent across the City of Melbourne.
9. Almost half the residents speak a language other than English at home, with the top five community languages being Mandarin, Spanish, Hindi, Cantonese and Indonesian (ABS 2021).
10. Southbank Promenade is one of Melbourne's major entertainment precincts, boasting many restaurants and hotels. Spectacular river and city views make it a popular place for locals and visitors alike.
11. Many live and work locally. Almost 44,000 jobs are found across 940 businesses in Southbank. Through the Business Precinct Program, up to \$90,000 of annual funding is provided to the Yarra River Business Association for business support and activation initiatives. A range of community groups in Southbank are supported with [grants and funding](#) to deliver local projects and activities.
12. Southbank is home to the Melbourne Arts Precinct, which boasts one of the highest concentrations of arts and cultural organisations in the world. Here, you'll find the iconic Arts Centre, NGV and Hamer Hall as well as many galleries, theatres, studios and arts education institutions. The Victorian Government has invested \$1.7 billion to transform the precinct.
13. It's part of Council's planning strategy to continue to grow Southbank as Melbourne's premier arts precinct and an extension of the central city, focused on the Birrarung. It will develop into a truly walkable neighbourhood that provides a great environment for people.

14. Ten years ago, Council transformed the heritage-listed site of the former JH Boyd Girls' High School into the Boyd Hub. It is an important meeting place, hosting the Southbank Library and integrated family services, a community centre, and creative spaces as well as Boyd Park.
15. The community hub is one of seven centres across the municipality to offer integrated family services. Boyd hosts maternal and child health, immunisations, family support and counselling, drop-in sessions for families, parenting education and playgroups. About 2000 new families have connected with these services over the past decade. More than 2800 families with children under 5 have used the playroom, and we've run more than 28,000 children's programs.
16. Southbank Library is the smallest of six permanent libraries in the municipality, with about 300 sqm floor space and a collection size of some 18,000 items. Over the past 10 years, more than half a million books have been borrowed, and more than 7500 library members have been welcomed.
17. A community animator works closely with community on programming, partnerships, activation and connection. Two community spaces have enjoyed more than 6000 room bookings from more than 500 different user groups. More than 60 artists have accessed the seven studios.
18. Studios at the Boyd Hub are affordably rented to emerging and mid-career artists, including a new annual Aboriginal artist residency and two additional artist-in-residence spaces. Australian Book Review is a long-standing resident through the Creative Spaces program.
19. City of Melbourne manages several creative venues in Southbank, including Assembly Point outdoor gallery space, and The Guild on Sturt Street, which houses six cultural organisations including the National Institute of Dramatic Art, The Print Council and Australian Performing Arts Market.
20. Popular playgrounds are found at Boyd Park and Grant Street Reserve. Two new neighbourhood parks and a community play space have just been welcomed to the neighbourhood as part of the \$44 million transformation of Southbank Boulevard. Residents and workers will now benefit from more than 22,000 sqm of new public open space along the boulevard, in the city's most densely populated suburb.
21. It's a priority in the Council Plan to investigate options to increase open space in Southbank, in addition to the Southbank Boulevard transformation. There's also a new enclosed off leash dog exercise park under the freeway undercroft.
22. As part of Council's push for a clean city, over the past six months the organisation has responded to more than 400 instances of dumped rubbish, and removed 2860 square metres of graffiti from Southbank, including from riverbank walls and bridges. Pressure washes of footpaths also take place throughout Southbank.
23. Council is also investing in neighbourhood infrastructure this year. This includes \$2 million for public art, \$5 million for Dodds Street Linear Park, \$2 million to progress delivery of the City Road Master Plan, \$190,000 to reduce speed limits, \$600,000 for cycle infrastructure and \$760,000 for other green space, infrastructure and cultural projects.
24. About \$5.1 million will be invested in renewal works in Southbank including for roadways, kerb and channel, median and tree plot renewals, Safe City cameras, library materials and property. About \$1.3 million will also contribute to maintenance work in Southbank, including at community facilities, creative spaces and other property, on pedestrian infrastructure, wayfinding signage and for urban forest health.
25. To create a local composting hub for Southbank residents to recycle their food waste, Council is investing in the Southbank Sustainability Group through a \$5000 grant. It should roll out by mid-2023.
26. Boyd Library is one of many potential sites for a battery in our [Power Melbourne](#) network of neighbourhood batteries. The project will engage with the Southbank community to understand how Power Melbourne can support locals to access cheaper power and benefit from the clean energy transition.
27. Management has consulted with the community to identify priorities for Southbank. Pedestrian safety, traffic management, more parks with amenities, and more spaces and activities for community were front-of-mind in more than 800 pieces of feedback. Find out more in the [Southbank Neighbourhood Portal](#).

28. Through the [Neighbourhood Model](#) and a dedicated Neighbourhood Partner, the hope is to understand the strengths, needs and priorities of residents, students, businesses, workers and visitors across the municipality, and to use this knowledge to guide our work.

**Recommendation from management**

29. That the Future Melbourne Committee notes the overview of the Southbank neighbourhood community and upcoming key initiatives.

**Attachments:**

1. Supporting Attachment (Page 4 of 11)
2. Southbank: Neighbourhood Highlights and Initiatives (Page 5 of 11)

## 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 Southbank Neighbourhood community and upcoming key initiatives in Attachment 2 are in 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 Southbank 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 Southbank focus on enhancing both environmental and social sustainability.

## SOUTHBANK

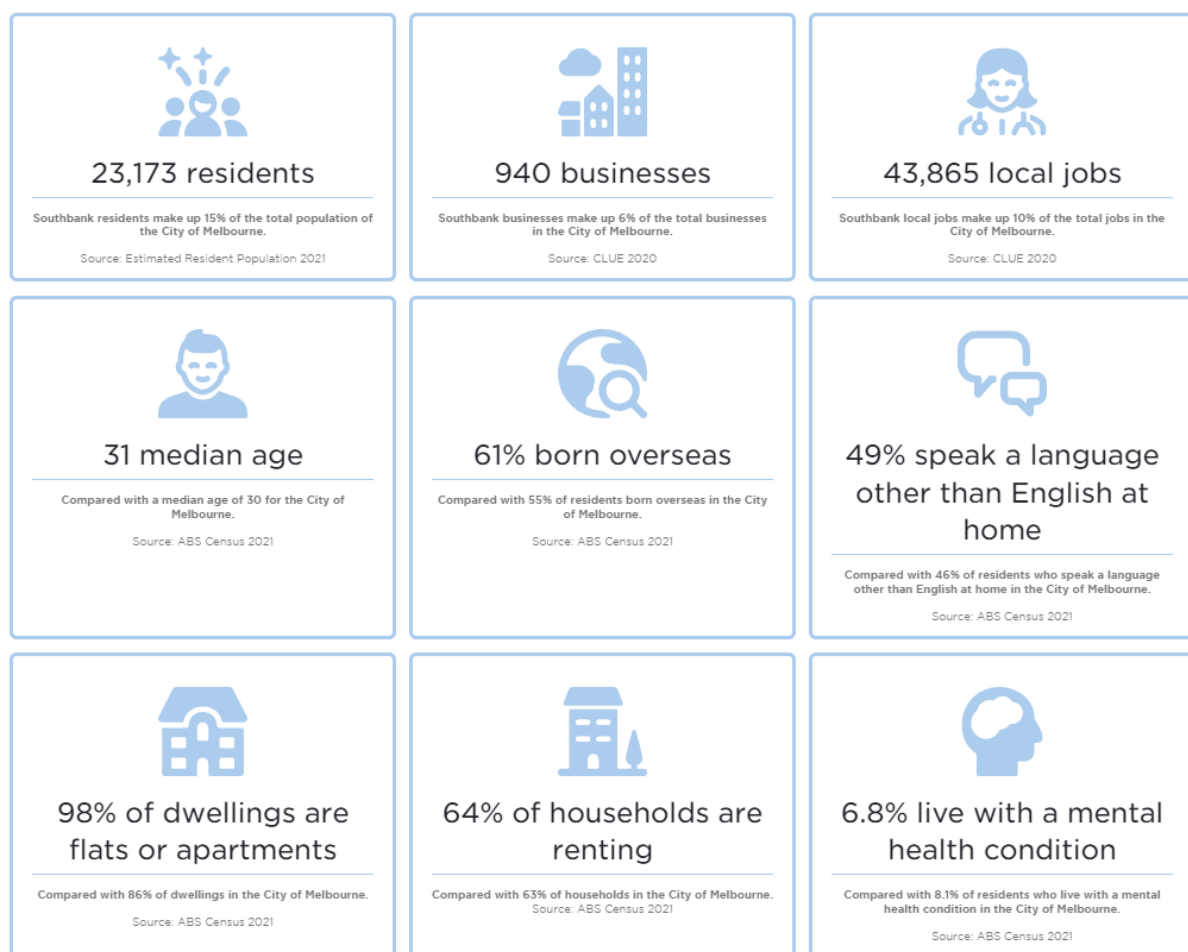
### Neighbourhood Highlights and Initiatives



### Contents

1. About Southbank
2. Council Services in Southbank
3. Our Investments in Southbank
4. Southbank Neighbourhood Priorities and Activities
5. Our Strategic Work in Southbank

## 1. About Southbank



Southbank is situated on the southern side of the Yarra River Birrarung and bounded by St Kilda Road and the West Gate Freeway.

About 23,000 people live in Southbank, making up 15 per cent of the total population of the City of Melbourne. People aged between 25-34 years (predominantly a young workforce) make up the largest age demographic at 41.6 per cent, significantly higher than City of Melbourne average of 35.4 per cent. Almost half the population speak a language other than English at home with Mandarin, Spanish, Hindi, Cantonese, and Indonesian the top five community languages (ABS 2021).

Southbank has experienced rapid growth since the 1990s, transforming from an industrial area into a dense, high-rise neighbourhood. Ninety eight per cent of dwellings are flats or apartments. The Boyd Community Hub, including the Southbank Library and Boyd Park, is Southbank's key community asset.

Southbank Promenade is one of Melbourne's major entertainment precincts with many restaurants and hotels. The spectacular city views make it a popular place for locals and visitors.

Southbank is also home to Melbourne Arts Precinct. It has one of the highest concentrations of arts and cultural organisations in the world, including the National Gallery of Victoria and Hamer Hall as well as many galleries, theatres, studios, and arts education institutions including the University of Melbourne. The Victorian Government has invested \$1.7 billion to transform the Melbourne Arts Precinct.

Recent findings from our Participate Southbank neighbourhood consultation identified fourteen neighbourhood priorities including pedestrian safety, traffic management, more parks with amenities, and more spaces and activities for community.

## **2. Council Services in Southbank**

### **Boyd Community Hub**

At Boyd Community Hub, the City of Melbourne provides the Southbank Library, integrated family services, a community centre, and creative spaces. The Hub is situated next to Boyd Park.

Boyd celebrated its 10th birthday this year and over the ten years:

- Maternal health and childcare have supported approximately 2,000 new families
- Over 60 artists have accessed the 7 studios
- Over 2,800 families with children under 5 have used the playroom
- Over 6,000 room bookings in two community spaces with over 500 different user groups
- Over 7,500 new library membership with over 500,000 books borrowed
- Over 28,000 children's programs run

Southbank Library is the smallest of six permanent library locations in the municipality with approximately 300 sqm floor space and a collection size of around 18,000 items.

The community hub is one of seven centres across the municipality to offer integrated family services. These include Maternal and Child Health (MCH) Key Age and Stage appointments for infants, immunisation community sessions, family support and counselling appointments and drop-in sessions for families, parenting support education programs and playgroups.

There are two bookable spaces at the community centre and a Community Animator at Boyd works closely with community members on programming, partnerships, activation and connection.

### **Creative Spaces**

City of Melbourne manages several venues in Southbank.

- Assembly Point is an outdoor gallery set in vitrines (large glass cases) that will host 11 visual arts exhibitions in 2022-23. Spaces are provided to artists at no cost. A range of emerging artists, curated group shows, RMIT students and celebrated mid-career artists are exhibiting this year.
- The Guild, on Sturt Street, houses six cultural organisations including NIDA, The Print Council and APAM (Australian Performing Arts Market). Creative Spaces leases the site commercially and on leases, at subsidised rates, to not-for-profit cultural organisations.
- At Boyd Hub, City of Melbourne manages six studios that are affordably rented to emerging and mid-career artists (including a new annual Creative Spaces Aboriginal Artist Residency). Australian Book Review is also a long standing resident at Boyd Hub as part of Creative Space's program. Also at Boyd Hub are two additional artist-in-residence spaces awarded by the Arts Investment team to best-in-school creative practitioners.

### **Parks and public open spaces**

There are popular playgrounds at Boyd Park and Grant St Reserve. Two new neighbourhood parks and a community play space have just been opened as part of the transformation of Southbank Boulevard.

It's a priority in the Council Plan to investigate options to increase open space in Southbank, in addition to the Southbank Boulevard transformation. There's also a new enclosed off leash dog exercise under the freeway undercroft.

## **Clean City Focus**

Over the last six months, City of Melbourne has responded to over 400 instances of dumped rubbish and removed 2,860 square metres of graffiti throughout Southbank. Initiatives also include the use of charter boats to remove graffiti from riverbank walls and bridges linking Southbank Promenade to the CBD. Pressure washes of pavements also occur throughout Southbank.

### **3. Our investments in Southbank**

#### **Capital works**

New infrastructure investments in Southbank this year include around:

- \$2 million for public art
- \$5 million for Dodds Street Linear Park
- \$2 million to progress delivery of the City Road Master Plan
- \$190,000 to reduce speed limits
- \$600,000 for cycle infrastructure
- \$760,000 for other green space, infrastructure and cultural projects.

Around \$5.1 million will be invested on renewal works in Southbank including for roadways, kerb and channel, median and tree plot renewals, Safe City cameras, library materials and property. Approximately \$1.3 million will also contribute to maintenance work in Southbank, including at community facilities, creative spaces and other property, on pedestrian infrastructure, wayfinding signage and for urban forest health.

In Council Plan 2021– 2025, Council committed to acquiring more open space in areas of greatest need including Southbank. Financial provision has been earmarked in the Public Open Space Reserve for this purpose.

#### **Investing in the community**

Through the Business Precinct Program, up to \$90,000 of annual funding is provided to the Yarra River Business Association for business support and activation initiatives and a range of community groups in Southbank are supported to deliver local project and activities through our grant programs.

#### **Investing in sustainability**

City of Melbourne is supporting Southbank Sustainability Group, through a \$5000 grant, to create a local composting hub that deploys multiple technologies for Southbank residents to recycle their food waste. It is expected that this will be rolled out by mid-2023.

Boyd Library is one of many potential sites for a battery in the [Power Melbourne](#) demonstration network of neighbourhood batteries. The project will continue to engage with the Southbank community to better understand how Power Melbourne can support locals to participate in and benefit from the clean energy transition.

### **4. Our strategic work in Southbank**

#### **Neighbourhood Planning**

As part of the [Neighbourhood Model](#), we are seeking to better understand the strengths, needs and priorities of residents, students, businesses, workers and visitors across the municipality, and to use this knowledge to



guide our work. Southbank has a dedicated Neighbourhood Partner and the Southbank Neighbourhood Portal launched in October 2022.

We've undertaken consultation with community to identify 14 local priorities for Southbank receiving over 800 pieces of feedback. These priorities are publicly available on the [Southbank Neighbourhood Portal](#). The portal is a 'one-stop-shop' for local residents, businesses and visitors to stay up to date about what's happening locally, opportunities to connect and engage and keep informed on progress of neighbourhood priorities.

Below is a summary of Southbank neighbourhood priorities.

<b>Aboriginal Melbourne</b>
<p><b>Wurundjeri Heritage and Culture</b> Recognition of Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung people's ongoing cultural connection to Country to be more visible through culturally appropriate signage, more cultural awareness education, native flora, placemaking and creative art initiatives.</p>
<b>Access and Affordability</b>
<p><b>More Community and Recreational Spaces</b> Increased access to new and existing spaces, including more casual and bookable, outdoor and indoor community and recreational spaces for people of all ages and all abilities.</p>
<b>Climate and Biodiversity</b>
<p><b>Neighbourhood greening</b> More greening and plants across the neighbourhood in public spaces and communal areas of residential buildings including rooftops to also help reduce noise pollution and provide a cooling green canopy effect.</p>
<p><b>Sustainable living</b> Further promotion of composting, recycling, and renewable energy.</p>
<b>Economy of the Future</b>
<p><b>Affordable and Safe Transport</b> Make Southbank more accessible and safe with an improved mixture of transport options.</p>
<p><b>More diverse hospitality and retail options</b> Need more diversity of hospitality options and shopfront activation that attract locals and visitors, especially on City Road.</p>
<b>Melbourne's unique Identity and place</b>
<p><b>Parks and open spaces with amenities</b> Increase and enhance parks and open space facilities and improve amenities such as seating, shading, bins, clean public toilets, and family friendly playgrounds.</p>
<p><b>Dog Friendly Neighbourhood</b> More dog off-leash areas, pet services and responsible pet ownership education to support recent increase in pet ownership (especially dogs) while maintaining safety and comfort for other park users.</p>
<p><b>Planning and Development Impacts</b> Address planning, development and construction impacts on liveability with current rapid urbanisation.</p>

<p><b>Vibrant public spaces</b> Southbank to be recognised as an inviting, pleasant and community-friendly space and not a thoroughfare or a sterile concrete jungle with more public amenities, creative installations, and beautification of spaces.</p>
<p><b>Safety and Wellbeing</b></p>
<p><b>Pedestrian safety</b> Initiatives needed to make area safer for pedestrians including more pedestrian crossings, longer crossing times, lower speed limits on the main road for cars, and bikes and e-scooters to be removed from the footpaths.</p>
<p><b>Traffic and noise management</b> More traffic management to enable less congestion, less noise pollution and less trucks and heavy vehicles to increase sense of safety and wellbeing.</p>
<p><b>Safer neighbourhood</b> Further safety measures to increase sense of safety including an increased police and security presence, better lighting in the streets, and more CCTV, to especially help with issues relating to anti-social behaviour.</p>
<p><b>Community Activities and Events</b> More programs and events to enable people to connect including support for volunteering, community, recreational and art activities, and a centralised place to share community information.</p>

### **Southbank Structure Plan**

The Southbank Structure Plan 2010 provides a vision and strategy for the future development of Southbank as an integral part of the central city, with the Yarra River – Birrarung at its centre. The plan was endorsed by the Future Melbourne Committee 2010.

### **Southbank Urban Forest Precinct Plan**

The Southbank Urban Forest Precinct Plan 2015–2025 has been developed in collaboration with the community. Consultation highlighted that Southbank is a highly urbanised setting that presents opportunities for a greatly expanded and innovative urban forest that enhances the function of the water cycle. The precinct plans will help to guide implementation of the urban forest strategy in Melbourne's streets.

### **Southbank Boulevard and Dodds Street Concept Plan**

This is an ambitious project that sets out to create five new public spaces and neighbourhood parks along Southbank Boulevard for the people of Southbank. The project includes new trees and 1.1 km of new bike lanes. This is a multi-year project that was completed in October 2022.

### **City Road Master Plan**

The City Road Master Plan was endorsed by the Future Melbourne Committee in June 2016. The master plan aims to transform City Road into a safe and welcoming place for everyone through a series of capital works projects. It will achieve urban forest and water sensitive urban design objectives, while helping to respond to the urban heat island affect and flooding issues in Southbank. It also aims to improve the safety and amenity of the street in order to encourage more people to walk, cycle and use public transport.

## **Disaster preparedness and resilience planning**

Through a new initiative on Community Disaster Resilience City of Melbourne will look to run programs to help our community be more prepared. This project seeks to understand further what types of events, programs and support would be valuable in Southbank for building neighbourhood resilience to tackle climate change and disasters. Throughout November a Community Resilient Assessment of Southbank is being developed, informed by two community workshops on 8 and 29 November, and a survey on Participate Melbourne. This will increase our collective understanding of the physical and social vulnerabilities to disasters faced by communities in Southbank and generate ideas for building community resilience.

## **Municipal Planning Strategy**

The Municipal Planning Strategy (draft 2022) establishes the overarching strategic planning policy for the municipality. It considers the area's context, history, assets, strengths, attributes and influences and establishes the vision and strategic direction for future land use and development. The Municipal Planning Strategy will update the Melbourne Planning Scheme to incorporate the vision and objectives of Council's strategies, plans and policies and responses to emerging issues for managing land use and development for the next 10 to 20 years.

The Municipal Planning Strategy vision is for Southbank "to continue to grow as Melbourne's premier arts precinct and an extension of the central city, focused on the Birrarung (Yarra River). It will develop into a truly walkable neighbourhood that provides a great environment for people."

Exhibition of the Municipal Planning Strategy, planning scheme amendment, will occur early in 2023 and will include a program of consultation.

## **Open Space Strategy**

Council Plan 2021–25 sets the objective of increasing the amount of public open space in the municipality with a focus on areas of greatest need, such as Southbank. Investigations of options, including land acquisition to increase the amount of public open space have commenced and are ongoing. Priority areas for new open space will be determined through the review of the current Open Space Strategy (2012), which is underway and will be completed in early 2023.