

Report to the Future Melbourne (Planning) Committee

Agenda item 6.2

Seafarers Rest Park Design Stage 2 Community Engagement

Presenter: Jocelyn Chiew, Director City Design Studio

2 June 2020

Purpose and background

1. The purpose of this report is to update Council on Seafarers Rest Park design and seek endorsement for Council officers to commence Stage 2 community engagement in June 2020 for a 6 week period. The project responds to the City of Melbourne's Open Space Strategy and is identified in the Docklands Public Realm Plan.
2. Management (CoM) is working in partnership with the Department of Treasury and Finance (DTF) and adjacent landowners Asset 1 Pty. Ltd., through an established Project Steering Committee, on the design of a new park at Seafarers Rest.
3. The existing Seafarers Rest Park is located on the north bank of the Yarra River, between The Mission to Seafarers historic building (1916 designed by Walter Butler) and the Seafarers Bridge (2009 designed by Grimshaw).
4. As part of the contract of sale and planning permit for a new mixed use development on the neighbouring Goods Shed site, the land owner is required to design and construct a new park in line with CoM's design brief.
5. CoM's open space design brief was issued to Asset 1's property developer, Riverlee, on 28 June 2019. The brief established a vision for this new park as a vibrant green space for the local community that creates a meaningful connection between existing and new development, and the river.
6. Oculus landscape architects, engaged by Riverlee, have developed a design for the park which responds to the design brief and site constraints. The latter includes a large concrete slab - a remnant of a former wharf shed foundation - which requires structural remediation and has dictated the placement of lawns.
7. CoM have facilitated multiple workshops and design review meetings with members of Oculus landscape architects and key internal and external stakeholders, and provided them with an opportunity to review and provide comment on the design.
8. The design considers its location within the Dockland historic maritime precinct and where appropriate, proposes the inclusion of local maritime artefacts. The design also contributes to broader strategies for increased pedestrian and bicycle access, city greening and biodiversity.
9. The new park will be handed over to Council as committee of management once completed at the end of 2023.

Key issues

10. The Project Steering Committee met on 17 April 2020 and approved the approximately 50 percent developed design by Oculus and the project's next steps.
11. The next steps include commencing Stage 2 engagement for the Park and updating the community on the progression of the design in line with the projects Communications and Engagement Plan.
12. Stage 1 engagement sought input from the public on their needs and aspirations for the park to inform the design brief. This input has been documented in the Seafarers Rest Park Stage 1 Engagement Summary Report & Analysis (Attachment 2).
13. Stage 2 engagement will provide the opportunity to update the community on the design and to close the loop with the community on information captured in Stage 1 and how this has informed the design.

Recommendation from management

14. That the Future Melbourne Committee authorises Council officers to commence Seafarers Rest Park Design Stage 2 community engagement and present the approved park design for information, for a six week period commencing 3 June 2020.

Attachments:

1. Supporting Attachment (Page 2 of 36)
2. Seafarers Rest Park Stage 1 Engagement Summary Report & Analysis (Page 3 of 36)
3. Oculus presentation (Page 23 of 36)

Supporting Attachment

Legal

1. No direct legal issues arise from the recommendation from management.

Finance

2. Asset 1 is contributing approximately \$3.4M to the park's development, comprising \$400k for site remediation and approximately \$3 million for park construction. Council has allocated \$1 million in the 2019-20 Budget, comprising \$250k towards project management and consultant fees and \$750k towards site remediation. (DTF are contributing the land and \$350k for structural remediation works.
3. The cost for Stage 2 community engagement is provided for in the current 2019-20 budget. The current developed design has been tested and is within budget.
4. The Planning Permit states "The full practical completion by the permit holder of the Seafarers Rest Park open space, at the agreed cost with the State Government (Department of Treasury and Finance), in accordance with the park design brief to the satisfaction of the council."

Conflict of interest

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

Health and Safety

6. In developing this specific proposal, no Occupational Health and Safety issues or opportunities have been identified. Occupational Health and Safety issues or opportunities relating to other aspects of the project have been dealt with by the procurement process and consultants directly as part of deliverables.

Stakeholder consultation

7. A Communications and Engagement Plan has been endorsed by the Project Steering Committee.
8. The Communications and Engagement Plan is based on a three-stage process;
 - Stage 1: Engage the community and stakeholders to ensure their feedback is incorporated into the Design Brief.
Stage 1 community engagement took place between 19 November and 14 December 2018 and included a survey via the Participate Melbourne online engagement tool. The survey was promoted via postcards to surrounding residents and businesses, on-site signage, City of Melbourne web pages and social media and a pop-up desk at the Docklands Community Forum (5 December 2018). Stage 1 has been documented in the Engagement Summary Report & Analysis 14 March 2019, see Attachment 2.
 - Stage 2: Display draft design to the community and stakeholders for information and to close the loop on stage 1 consultation. Forecast to occur in June 2020.
 - Stage 3: Keep the community and stakeholders informed with regular updates at key stages of the project including further design development and construction in 2023.

Relation to Council policy

9. The project is in line with the City of Melbourne Open Space Strategy and Docklands Public Realm Plan. It also aligns with Council Goal 2: A city for people.

Environmental sustainability

10. In developing this proposal, environmental sustainability issues or opportunities have been considered throughout the entire design process.
11. The proposal will decrease the amount of stormwater run-off from the site via water sensitive urban design (garden beds and permeable surfaces). This will prevent potentially contaminated water running directly into the Yarra River and in turn, improves water quality and catchment for irrigation.
12. The proposal will introduce a variety of new plants and tree species increasing biodiversity in the city and reducing urban heat island effect through the reduction of hard surfaces.



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Seafarers Rest Park Stage 1 Engagement Summary & Analysis

NOVEMBER - DECEMBER 2018

14 March 2019

Report prepared by Global Research Ltd
For City Of Melbourne



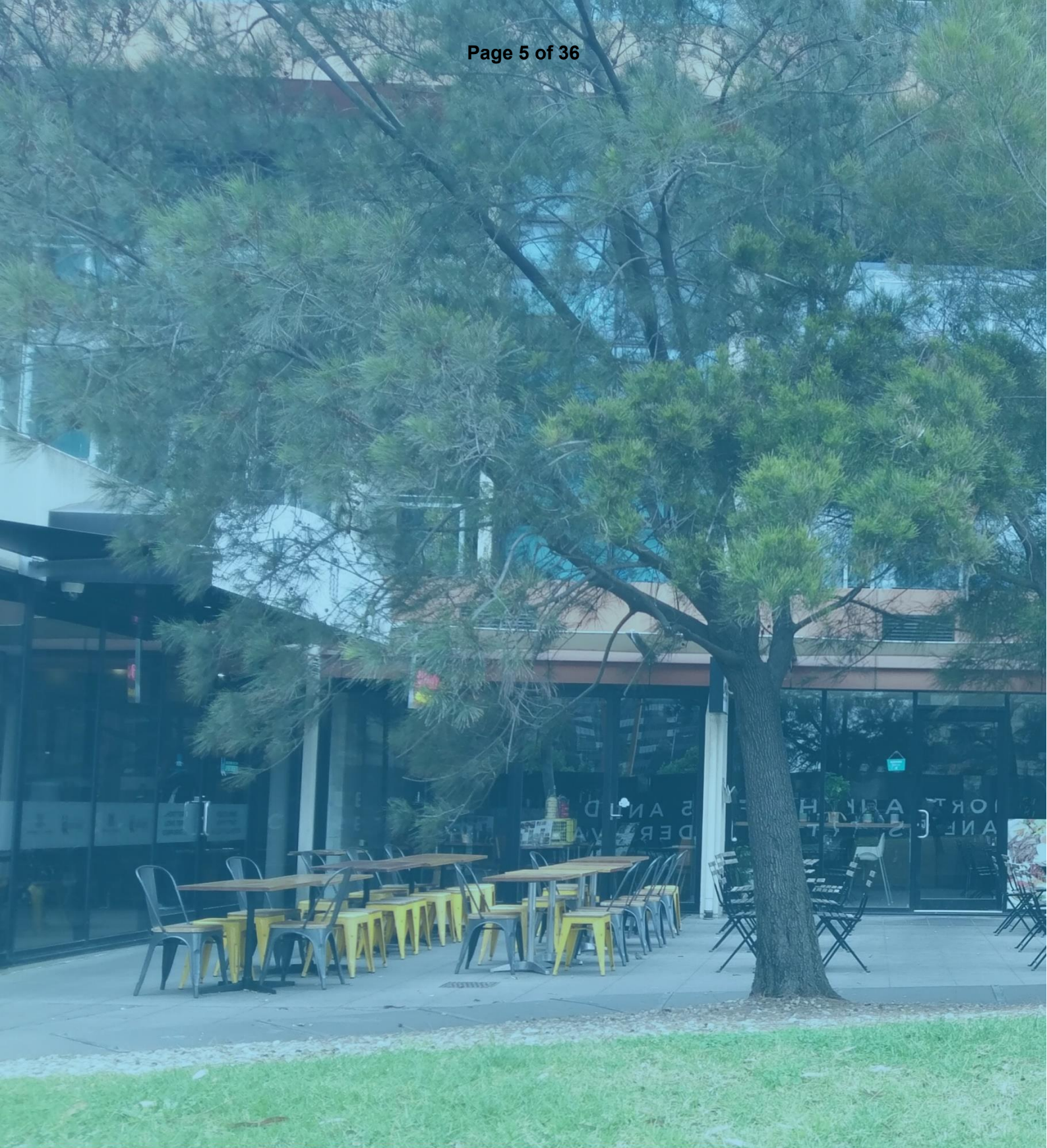
CITY OF MELBOURNE

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Executive
Summary

About the process

The City of Melbourne is working in partnership with the Victorian Government, developer Riverlee, and landscape architects Oculus to create a new park at Seafarers Rest in Docklands, to:

- Increase pedestrian and bicycle access
- Retain existing trees where possible
- Protect neighbouring heritage sites

To complete stage one, the City of Melbourne undertook a community engagement and consultative process between 19 November and 14 December 2018. They wanted to gain an understanding of the local community's interest and ideas for a new park at Seafarers Rest (SR) in Docklands.

Feedback was received via an eight-question online survey, which 89 participants completed. Additionally, 2 emails and 1 written letter were received from the public.

The aims of this consultation were to:

- Determine the value of Seafarers Rest to communities.
- Determine what connections respondents have with the area.
- Determine how community members use and would like to use the space.
- Determine which design features the community would like to see at the redeveloped SRP.
- The consultation also aimed to understand the diversity and representativeness of respondents in relation to gender, living situation and age.

Key findings

Overall, people wanted Seafarers Rest Park (SRP) to have a high amenity value, welcome users with space for rest, relaxation, recreation and reflection, while at the same time accommodating foot and cycle commuters and minimise inter-activity conflict.

There was general consensus that the area would benefit from redevelopment

- Respondents thought SR currently has little utility value.
- SR is considered to currently have minimal aesthetic value.

Natural spaces and aspects are important to people

- Respondents want trees, plants and greenery in addition to open spaces for amenity value and for practical use such as shade and shelter.
- Natural surfaces, such as grass, are desired.

Local history must be represented in the redeveloped SRP

- The connection with the Mission is important to people, as well as highlighting its maritime history.

People anticipate SRP facilitating multiple activities and functions

- Most respondents recommended features that facilitate active or passive recreation.

- It was anticipated the area will remain a thoroughfare for many.
- Designing features to minimise conflict between park-users, cycle and foot commuters were suggested.
- Built features such as play equipment, exercise equipment, seating and art were supported. As were practical aspects such as water fountains, rubbish bins and lighting.

Some conflicting uses and outcomes for the area were identified

- The provision of public toilets is contentious, with equal numbers of respondents supporting or opposing public toilets in the development.
- Park users want to minimise modal conflict within the park.
- Respondents want the park to feel safe and welcoming for everyone and were concerned about potential negative social behaviour

Respondents' connection and use of Seafarers Rest

- Most respondents either lived or worked in the area. Others used the wharf or were visitors.
- Respondents mainly used the area as a thoroughfare.
- Around one third of respondents used the area for leisure and as a place to exercise.
- Current Seafarers Rest area use was evenly spread over the week and weekend with morning, afternoon and evening use reported.

Respondents' characteristics

- Older age-groups were over-represented in responses when compared to Docklands' usual population.
 - over half of respondents were 35-54 years of age. Whilst Docklands residents in this age group make up only one quarter of the population.
- The 14-24 age bracket was under-represented
 - only 2% of respondents were 14-24 years of age. But this age-group makes up 18% of the Docklands population.
- Nearly three quarters of respondents were couples and families with children.
- Couples without children (36%) were the most common household type to respond; although, this was still significantly fewer than the Docklands population (63%).

Seafarers Rest Park

Stage 1 Engagement



Global Research
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Stakeholder engagement to ensure future park users' feedback is incorporated in the project brief.

Aims for Seafarers Rest

- + Increase pedestrian and bicycle access
- + Retain existing trees where possible
- + Protect neighbouring heritage sites

Key findings of stage 1 engagement

Informed by:

89

Surveys

2

Emails

1

Written Letter

Overall, people wanted Seafarers Rest Park to have high amenity value; welcome users with space for rest, relaxation, recreation and reflection; while at the same time accommodating foot and cycle commuters, minimising conflicts.

WHAT PEOPLE CURRENTLY THINK OF SEAFARERS REST

Seafarers Rest will benefit from redevelopment

- Little utility value.
- Minimal aesthetic value.

Connection and use of Seafarers Rest

- Mostly used as a thoroughfare.
- One third use for leisure or exercise.
- Use is evenly spread over the week, weekend and throughout each day.

REDEVELOPMENT DESIGN FEATURES SOUGHT



Natural spaces and aspects are important

- Trees, plants and greenery; open spaces for amenity value, and practical uses such as shade and shelter.
- Natural surfaces, such as grass, are desired.



Represent local history

- The connection with the Mission is important.
- Highlight the nautical theme.



Multiple activities and functions

- Features that facilitate active or passive recreation.
- The thoroughfare will remain.
- Include features: play equipment, exercise equipment, seating and art.
- Include practical aspects such as water fountains, rubbish bins and lighting.
- Conflict reduction between park-users, cycle and foot commuters needed.



Conflicts identified

- Public toilets equal numbers support or oppose.
- Promote as safe space for park users and commuting cyclists.
- Promote as welcoming space for community minimizing potential for negative social behaviour.



Project
Overview

Introduction

The City of Melbourne is working in partnership with the Victorian Government, developer Riverlee, and landscape architects Oculus to create a new park at Seafarers Rest in Docklands. This is one of eight new parks the City of Melbourne will create by 2020.

Seafarers Rest is an existing public open space earmarked for renewal in the City of Melbourne's Open Space Strategy. It has also been identified as a key area in the Docklands Public Realm Plan.

The park is located on the north bank of the Yarra River between The Mission to Seafarers heritage building and the Seafarers Bridge. It aims to:

- Increase pedestrian and bicycle access.
- Retain existing trees where possible.
- Protect neighboring heritage sites.

A larger project to build a new 17-level mixed use development and restore the neighboring wharf shed and crane, is also underway near the park.

Background

A communications and engagement plan was developed for the project. It outlines a three staged approach to consult and inform the community including residents, businesses, workers and visitors to the area. The three staged strategic approach includes:

Stage 1 – Engage stakeholders and future park users and ensure feedback is incorporated into the project brief where possible.

Stage 2 - Inform stakeholders and future park users to the proposed design and request feedback.

Stage 3 - Keep stakeholders and future park users informed with regular updates at key stages of the project, including design development and construction.

As part of Stage 1, the City of Melbourne undertook a community engagement and consultative process between 19 November and 14 December 2018, to gain an understanding of the local community's interest and ideas for a new park at Seafarers Rest in Docklands.

Feedback was received and collected via a public online survey. Eight questions were asked and demographic and contact details were collected. Eighty-nine people completed the survey. Additionally, 2 emails and 1 written letter were received via a public project inbox.

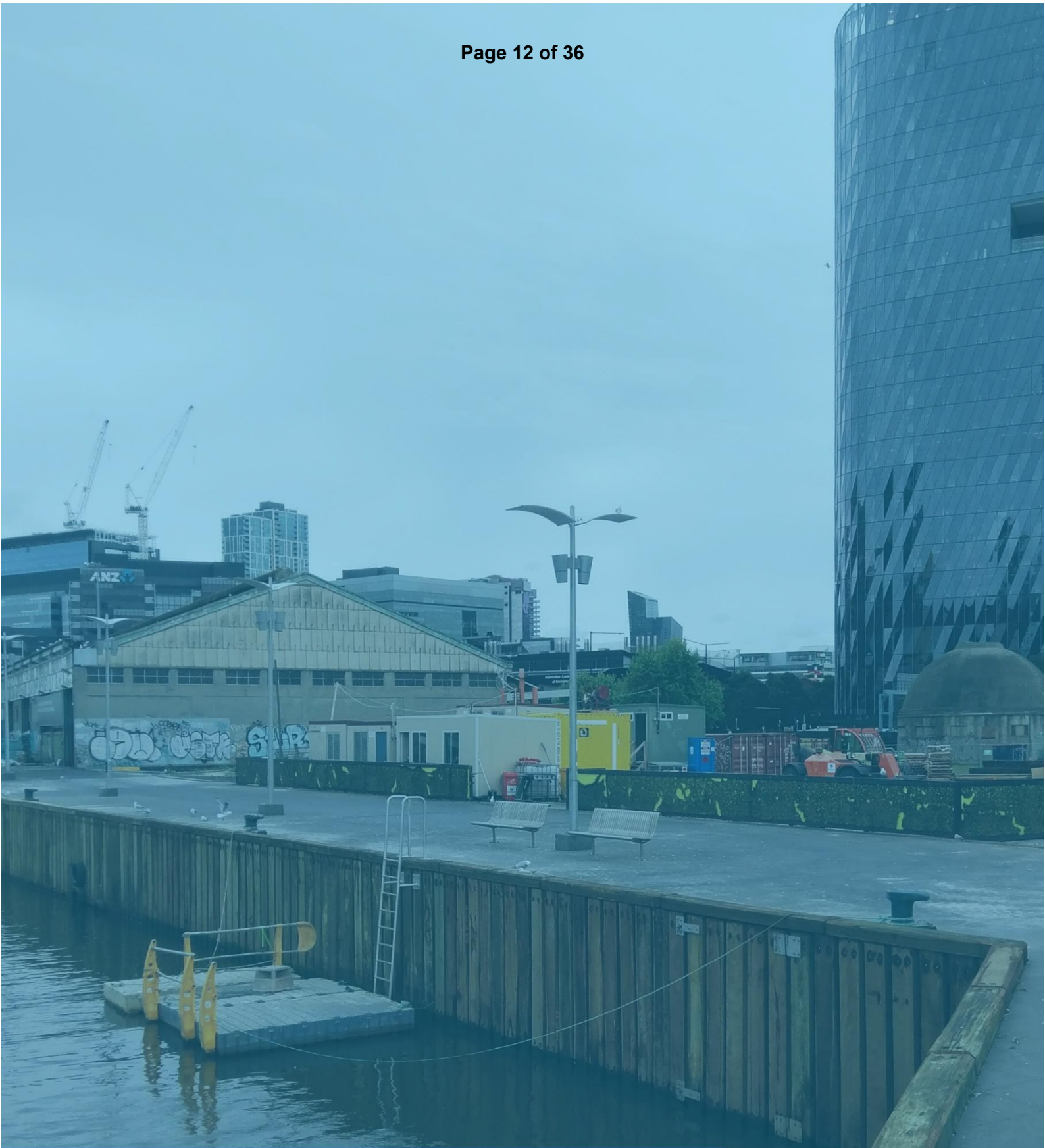
This report presents a synthesis of all the information that was received.

Objectives

The aims of this consultation were to:

- Determine the value of Seafarers Rest to communities.
- Determine what connections respondents have with the area.
- Determine how community members use and would like to use the space.
- Determine which design features the community would like to see at the redeveloped SRP.

The consultation also aimed to understand the diversity and representativeness of respondents in relation to gender, living situation and age. This report presents a synthesis of the information received and is structured to answer these four objectives.



Stage 1 Engagement:
Full Results

Quantitative analysis overview

Frequency analysis was completed on the demographic and connection to SR questions and is presented as charts below.

The results for respondents' age groups and household, were compared with Docklands population data, sourced from Australian 2016 Census data (retrieved from:

http://quickstats.censusdata.abs.gov.au/census_services/getproduct/census/2016/quickstat/SSC20760).

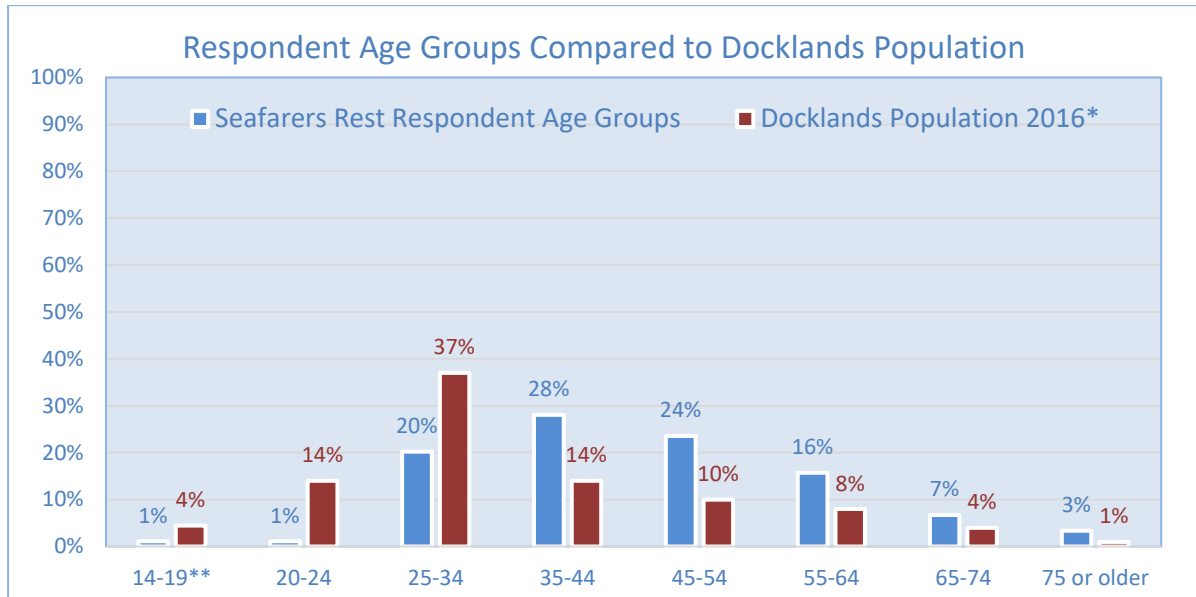
Note the sample size was relatively small. It consisted of 89 survey respondents and was not randomly selected. These two factors mean the results are not representative of the whole Dockland's population, but are reflective of the opinions of those who participated in the engagement process. When results are compared with Australian Census data, percentages have been used. Given the small sample size, however, total numbers are used to present results for the remaining questions.

Respondent characteristics

Summary of respondents to the Seafarers Rest engagement:

- Older age-groups were over-represented in responses – over half of the respondents were 35-54 years of age. While Docklands residents in this age group make up only one quarter of the population.
- The 14-24 age bracket was under-represented, with 2% of respondents being from this group, but this age-group forms almost a fifth of the Docklands population.
- Couples and families with children made up nearly three quarters of respondents.
- Couples with no children (36%) were the most common household type to respond, this was significantly fewer than the Docklands population (63%).

Respondent age groups



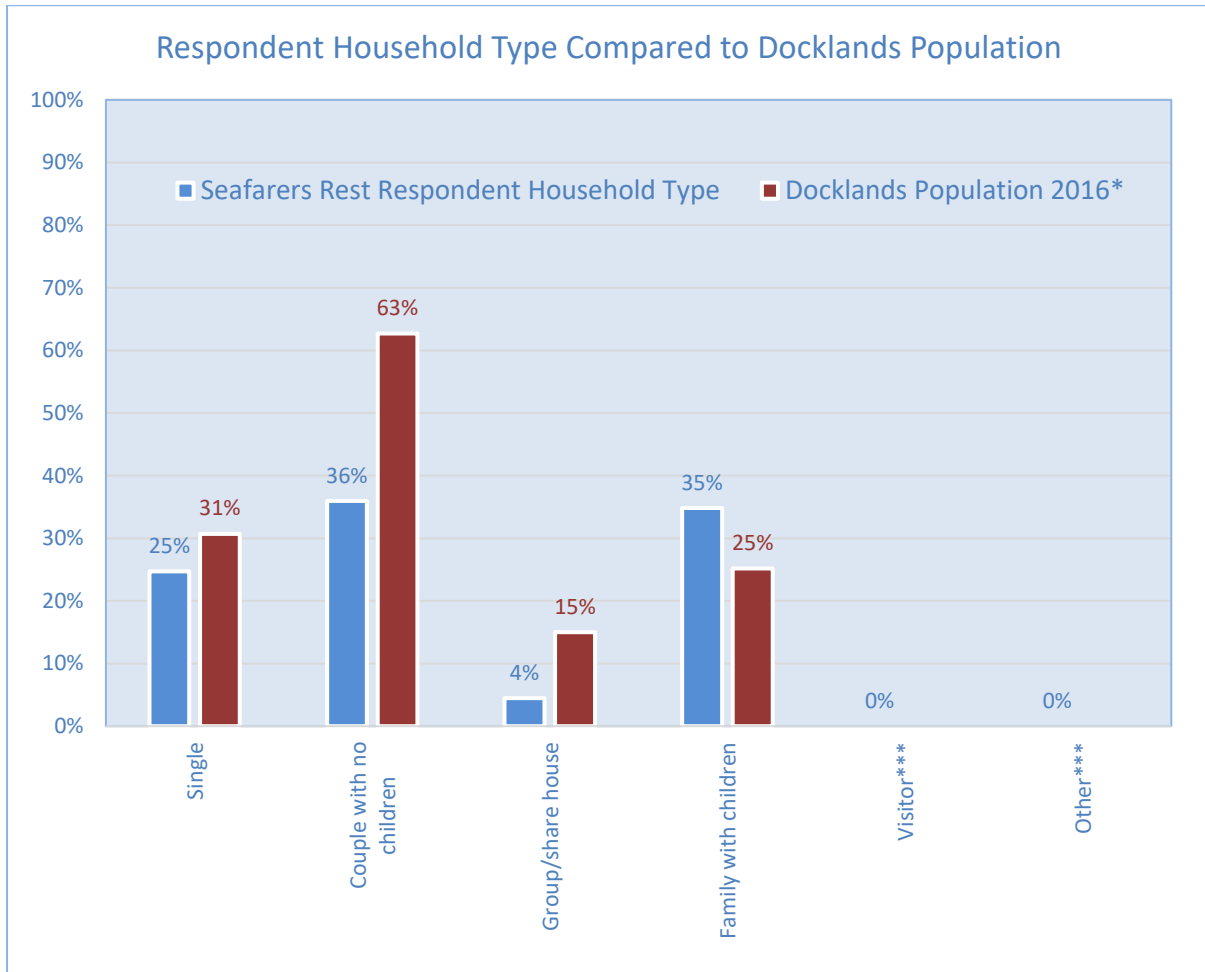
* Docklands Population Data has been sourced from Australian Bureau of Statistics, Australia Census 2016.

** Note the survey age category was 14-19 years of age, and the Census data is for 15-19 years of age. The difference between this age-group would be greater if the same age categories were used.

Age group summary analysis

- Over half of respondents (n.46) were aged between 35 and 54 years of age
- Two percent of respondents (n.2) were aged 24 years or younger.
- A higher percentage of respondents (41% more) were older than 34 years of age compared with the Docklands population.
- Fewer respondents (18% fewer) were younger than 35 years of age compared with the Docklands population.

Respondent household types



* Docklands Population Data has been sourced from Australian Bureau of Statistics, Australia Census 216

*** Note, Census data is not available for the Visitor or Other categories.

Household type summary analysis

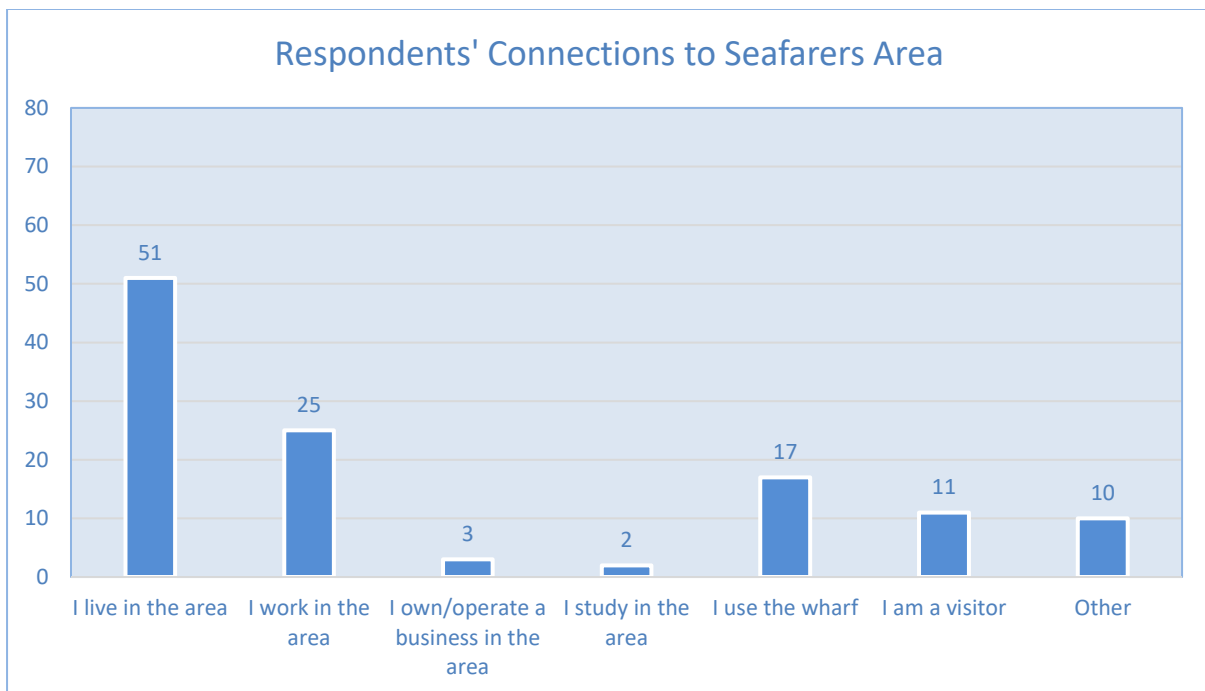
- 36% of respondents (n.32) lived as a couple with no children, which was a significantly smaller percentage than the 63% who make up the Docklands population.
- 35% of respondents (n.31) stated they were part of a family with children, which was slightly more than the 25% who make up the Docklands population.
- 25% of respondents (n.22) were single, which was slightly fewer than the 31% who make up the Docklands population.
- 4% of respondents (n.4) lived in a group/share household which was fewer than the 15% who make up the Docklands population.

Summary of connection, use, frequency of use

Summary of respondents' connection and use of Seafarers Rest:

- The majority of respondents either lived or worked in the area. Others used the wharf or were visitors.
- Respondents' use of the area was mainly as a thoroughfare.
- Around one third of respondents used the area for leisure and as a place to exercise.
- Use of the area was relatively evenly spread over the week and weekend with morning, afternoon and evening use reported.

Respondents main connection with Seafarers Rest

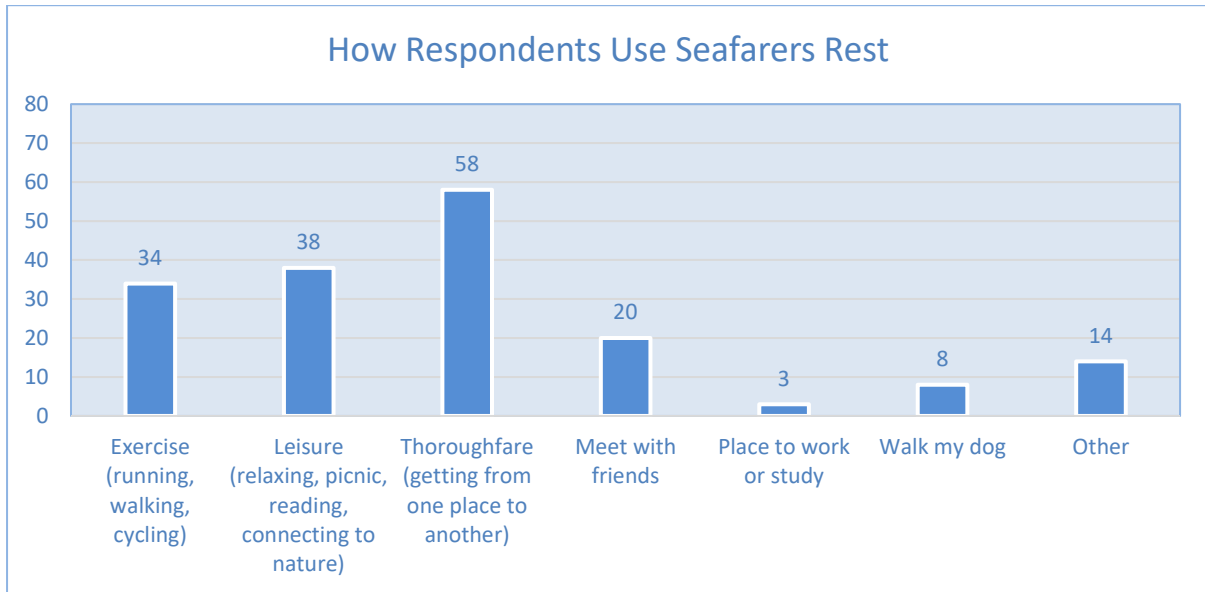


Note because the response rate was relatively low (n.89), the remaining charts are presented as total numbers, not percentages.

Respondents' main connection to area summary:

- Over half of the respondents (n.51) live in the area
- Just over one quarter work in the area (n.25)
- Around one fifth use the wharf (n.17)

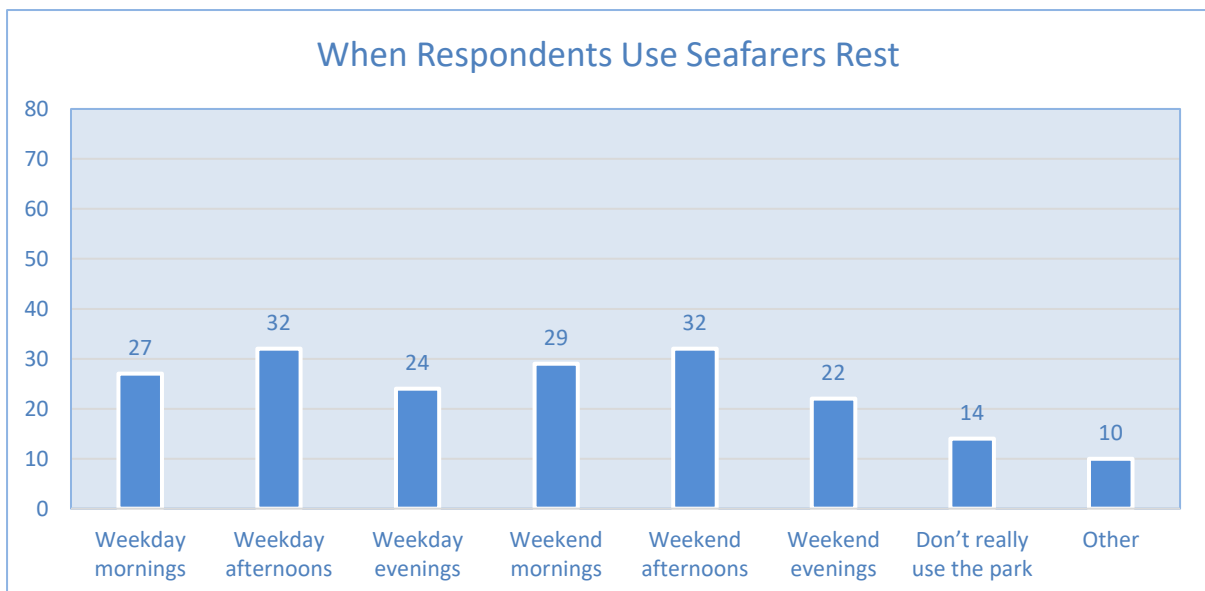
How did/do people currently use Seafarers Rest



How people currently use Seafarers Rest summary:

- The most common use of the area is as a thoroughfare (n.58)
- Leisure or relaxing was the second most common use (n.38)
- Nearly half of the respondents (exercise or dog walking) identified physical activity as a use (n.42)
- Around one fifth of respondents use Seafarers Rest to meet with friends (n.20).

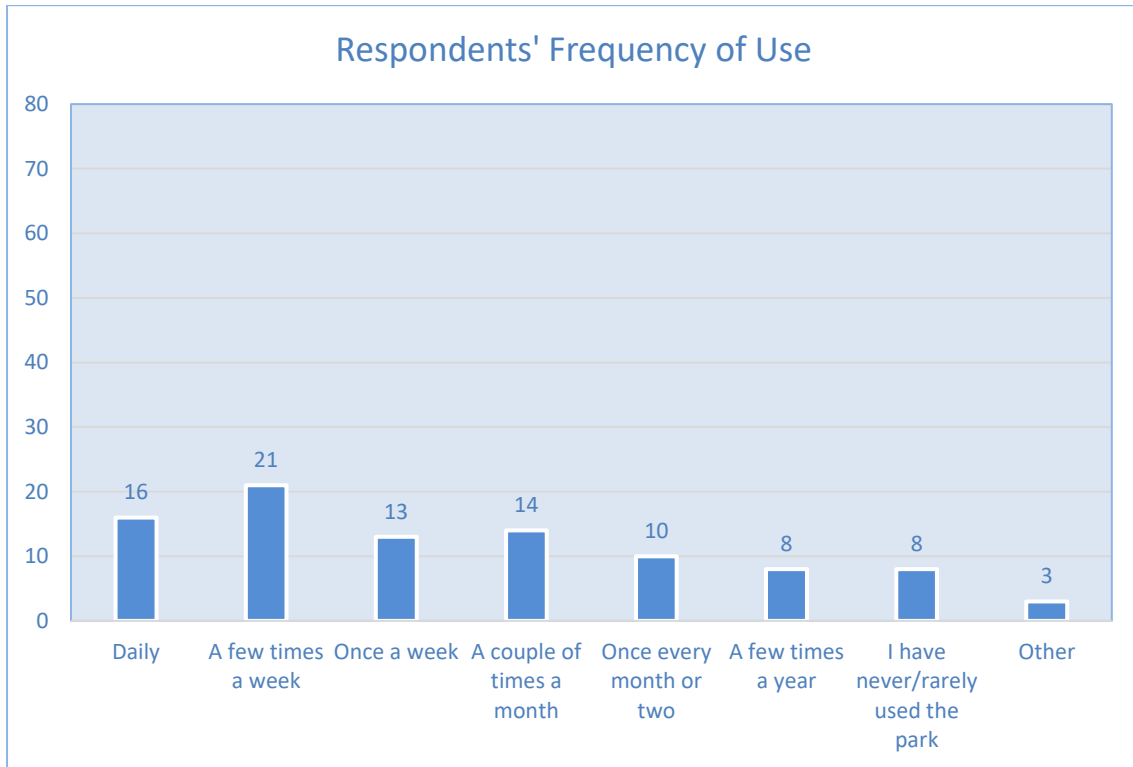
When the park is usually used



When the park is usually used summary:

- Use of the area by respondents is spread consistently throughout the week and time of day.

Frequency of park use



Frequency of park use summary:

- Over half of respondents (n.50) use the area at least once a week.
- Almost one fifth rarely or hardly ever use the area (n.16).

Summary of written comments

Overall synthesis of all written comments:

- Overall, people wanted SRP to be a place with high amenity value, be welcoming for users, and provide space for rest, relaxation, recreation and reflection.
- At present, the space is described as providing little to attract people.
- People wanted the park design to include trees, plants and natural surfaces, for amenity value and for more practical uses such as shade and shelter.
- Respondents suggested, directly and implicitly based on how they want to use the park, that design features should cater to a diverse range of activities.
 - While most respondents recommended design features that can be used for active or passive recreation purposes, it was anticipated that the area will remain a thoroughfare for many.
 - Design features to minimise conflict between park-users, cycle and foot commuters were suggested.
- Built features such as play equipment, exercise equipment, seating and art were supported, as were practical aspects such as water fountains, rubbish bins and lighting.

Written comments analysis and reporting overview

Analysis approach

The following discussion presents results from a qualitative analysis of the following four free-text questions, which captured ideas and opinions from participants in the engagement process.

- Does Seafarers Rest have a special feature, aspect or character that is important to you?
- What would you like to see at the new park?
- Is there anything else you would like to see at the park?
- Is there anything else you would like to tell us about Seafarers Rest?

Responses were combined during analysis to present findings summarised under three themes:

- 1 Suggestions/recommendations for design of Seafarers Rest.
- 2 Awareness and interest in the use of Seafarers Rest
- 3 How respondents would like to use Seafarers Rest

The summaries that follow present the key points made relevant to each of the three main engagement themes.

Appendix 1 to this document provides further in-depth analysis of the written comments received.

How analysis was completed

To complete the analysis, Global Research analysts read each comment received from the community and organised them into themes and topics based on the points made. Most comments contained multiple points, relevant to multiple topics, resulting in many comments being coded multiple times. The analysis was assisted by NVivo qualitative analysis software.

Analysts developed a coding schedule based on the desired objectives for the project, as listed by CoM and the content of comments. The objectives were:

- Awareness and interest in the use of SRP;
- How respondents would like to use SRP;
 - As indicated in the proposal, anticipated use was inferred from the types of features respondents stated they would like the park to contain. These were found in responses to questions six and seven, and were about what respondents would like to see in the park.
- Suggestions and/or recommendations for design of SRP; and,
- Any feedback received that corresponds to issues noted above and/or potentially new issues.

New topics were created and comments coded to these as they arose, ensuring all comments and the points made were included in the analysis.

Theme 1: Suggestions/recommendations for design of Seafarers Rest

Summary of design suggestions/recommendations:

- Design feature suggestions made up a large proportion of respondents' comments. Specific design features were requested across multiple categories. In order of most requested, these include:
 - Shaded areas
 - Art features
 - Access to drinking water
 - Lighting
 - BBQ areas
 - Dog-friendly areas
- Public toilets were a contentious topic, with arguments both for and against their provision in SRP.
- When asked about the design of a new SRP, greenery (in the form of trees, plants and grass) was the most frequently suggested feature.
 - People wanted trees and planting to provide areas with amenity value.
 - There was strong support for green and open spaces to be included in the design.
- Respondents were clear in their desire for any SRP designs to reflect the history of the area. Most often, this was in relation to the maritime connection.
 - The Mission was noted several times. Respondents wanted to see the building better connected to the park, and maritime aspects reflected in design.
- Play and exercise equipment were commonly suggested, the provision of which would encourage a range of age groups to use the area.
- Respondents wanted seating included in the park design, to provide places to stop, rest and relax.

Theme 2: Awareness and interest in the use of Seafarers Rest

Summary of awareness/interest in Seafarers Rest use:

- Respondents' awareness of the area was centred around its connection with water. Both the river, and the maritime connection, such as the Mission, were key points of interest for respondents.
- People valued the proximity to the river, and the historic maritime significance. For many respondents though, the area is of little significance and is mainly used as a thoroughfare.
- SR as an open space was an attraction for respondents, however, awareness and use of the area is currently limited by its poor amenity value.

Theme 3: How respondents would like to use Seafarers Rest

Summary of how respondents would use Seafarers Rest:

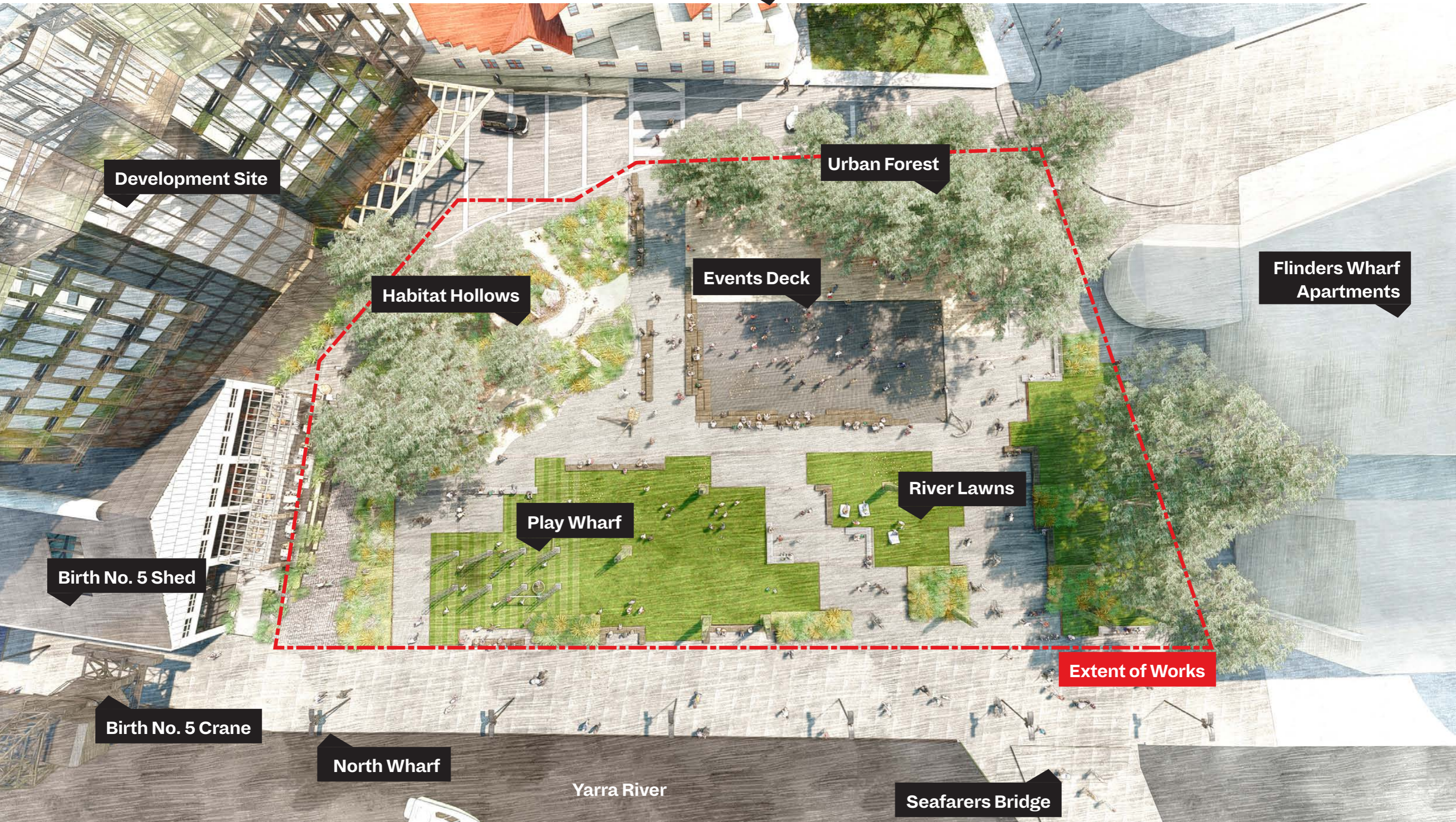
- Respondents anticipated using the park in ways which necessitate it having greened areas, open areas and sheltered areas.
- Although the area is anticipated to remain in use as a thoroughfare (as evidenced by the cycling comments), respondents stressed that the park ought to provide for multiple uses, i.e., places for socialising and passive recreation, have ample seating, and useable spaces (such as for exercise).

Existing Site Conditions



Seafarers Rest Concept Plan

The Mission to Seafarers Victoria



Development Site

Urban Forest

Habitat Hollows

Events Deck

Flinders Wharf Apartments

Birth No. 5 Shed

River Lawns

Play Wharf

Extent of Works

Birth No. 5 Crane

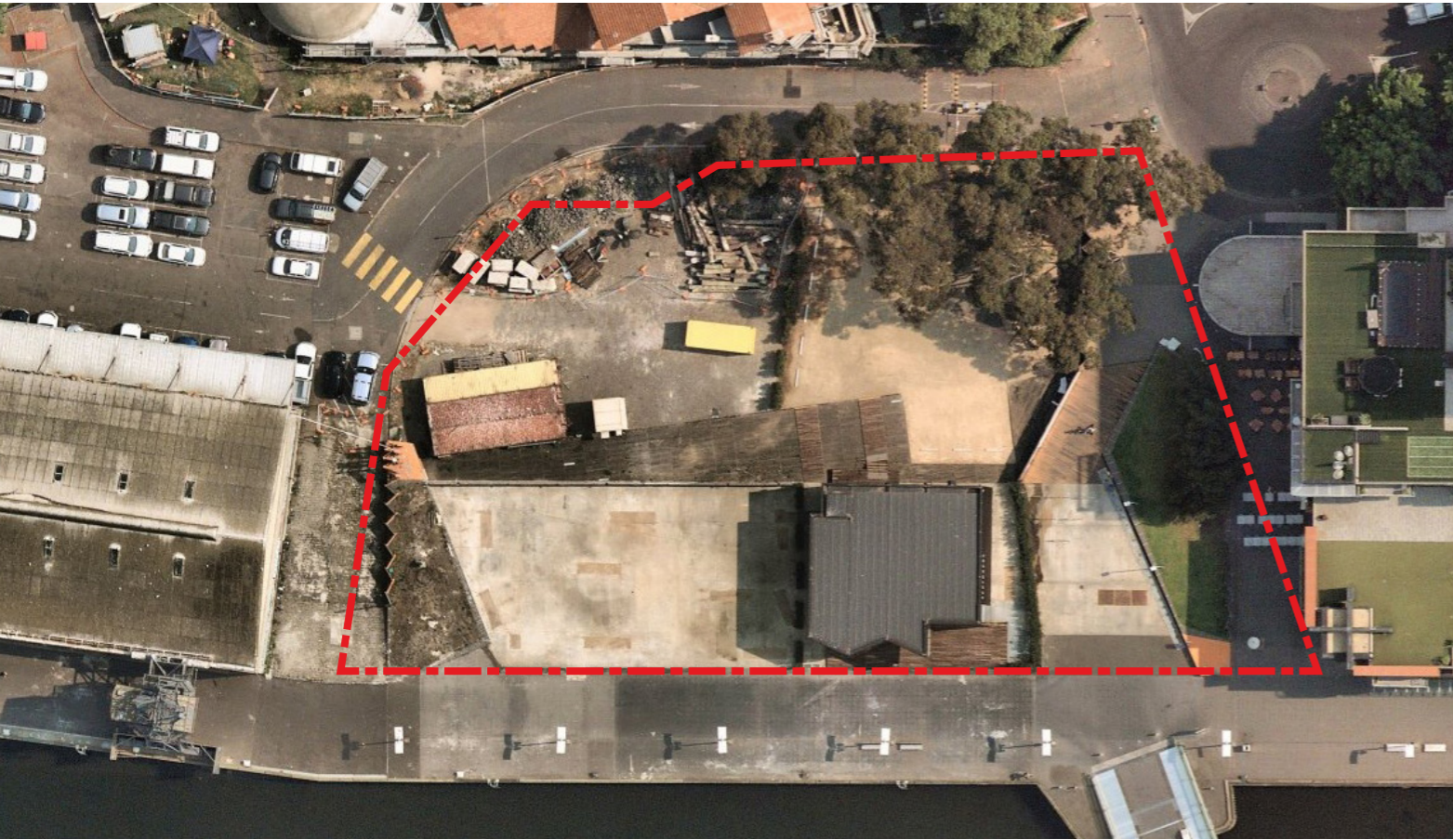
North Wharf

Yarra River

Seafarers Bridge



Public Open Space



Existing Park

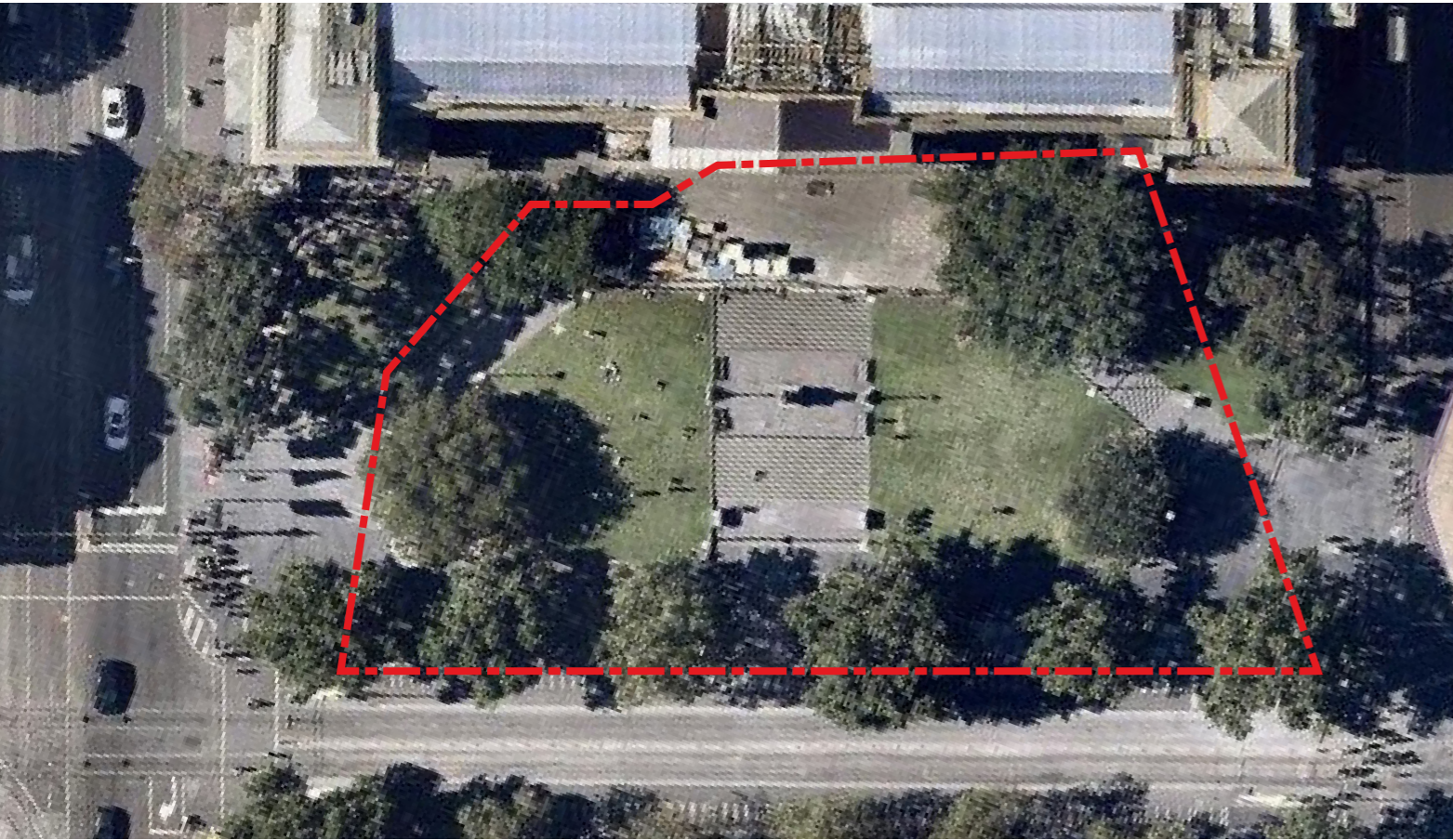
- Site Area 3,565m²



Proposed Public Open Space

- Site Area 3,565m²

Public Open Space



State Library Forecourt

- Site Area 3,565m²



Proposed Public Open Space

- Site Area 3,565m²

Key Themes and Function

The River Lawns

The Play Wharf

The Habitat Hollows



The Events Deck

The Crates

The Urban Forest

The River Lawns A riverside walk with clear connections to Docklands and Northbank

Protecting and celebrating
Melbourne's maritime heritage

Columns evoke the
old heritage shed

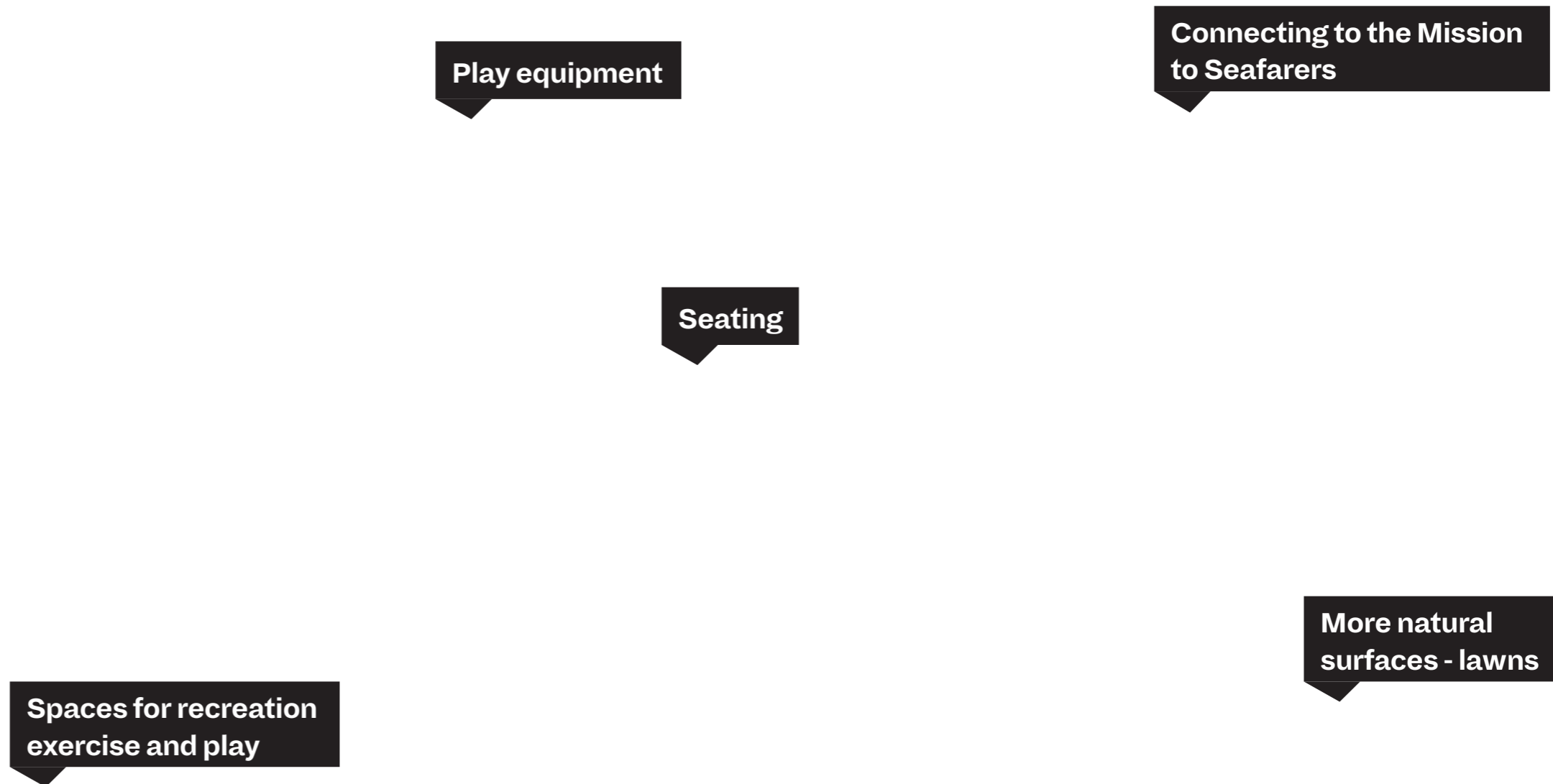
Play equipment

Increasing pedestrian
and bicycle access

Spaces for rest, relaxation,
recreation

More natural
surfaces - lawns

The Play Wharf A playful space for children and adults overlooking the Yarra River



The Habitat Hollows Outdoor rooms for nature play + habitat for Melbourne's urban ecology

Nesting boxes

Retaining existing trees

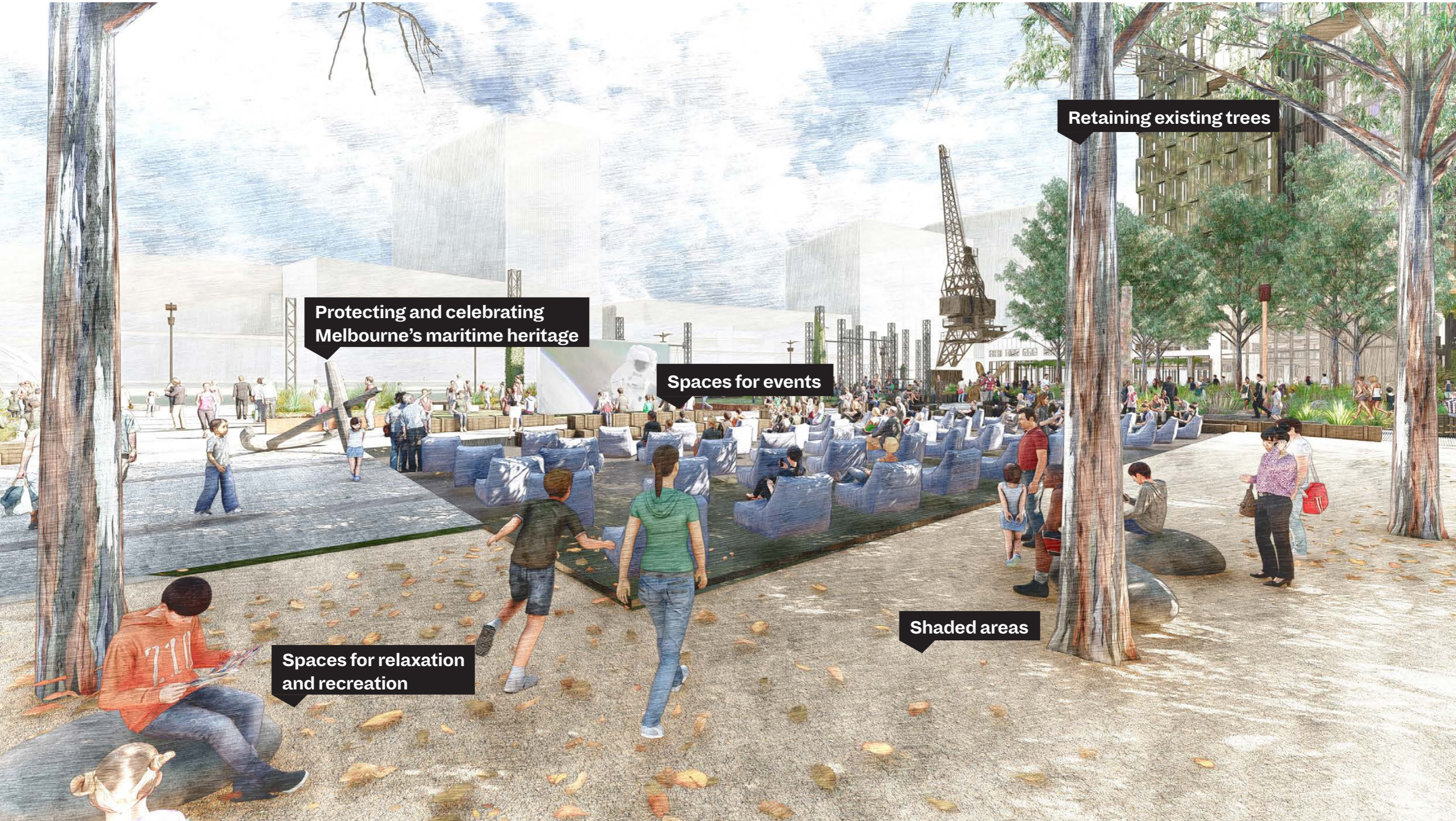
Salvaged Tree Trunks

Increasing pedestrian and bicycle access

Trees, plants and greenery for amenity, shade and shelter

Water Sensitive Urban Design

The Events Deck An open space for gathering, and events



Protecting and celebrating
Melbourne's maritime heritage

Spaces for events

Retaining existing trees

Shaded areas

Spaces for relaxation
and recreation

The Crates Referencing the site's maritime history and providing a distinctive place to meet



Retaining existing trees

Spaces for neighbourhood activities and events

Seating

More natural surfaces - timber

The Urban Forest Seafarers Rest will become a green haven



Retaining existing trees

Trees, plants and greenery for amenity, shade and shelter

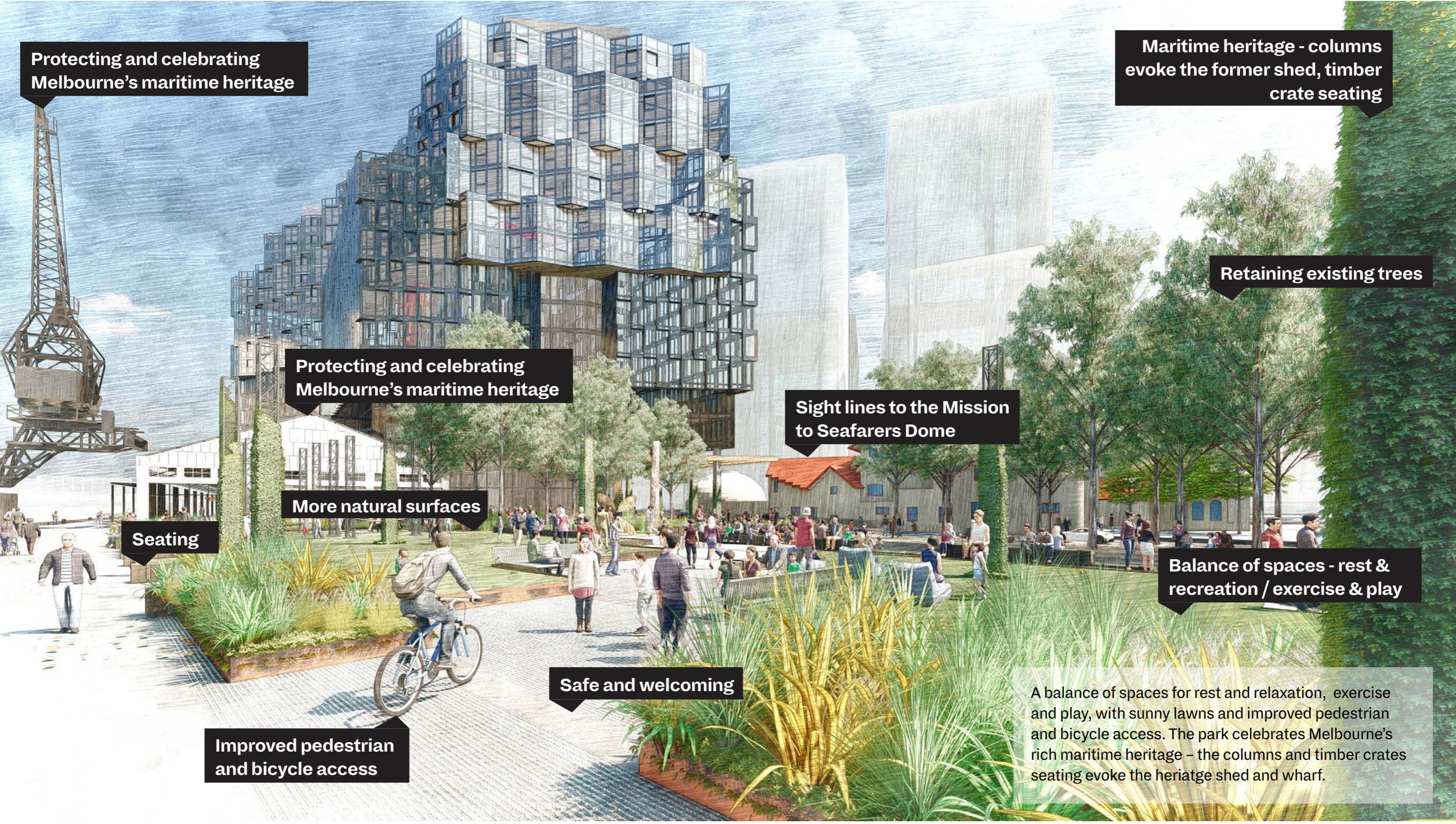
Play equipment

Dog friendly areas

Shaded Areas

Increasing pedestrian and bicycle access

Key Objectives Achieved 1 of 2



Protecting and celebrating Melbourne's maritime heritage

Maritime heritage - columns evoke the former shed, timber crate seating

Protecting and celebrating Melbourne's maritime heritage

Retaining existing trees

Sight lines to the Mission to Seafarers Dome

More natural surfaces

Seating

Balance of spaces - rest & recreation / exercise & play

Improved pedestrian and bicycle access

Safe and welcoming

A balance of spaces for rest and relaxation, exercise and play, with sunny lawns and improved pedestrian and bicycle access. The park celebrates Melbourne's rich maritime heritage – the columns and timber crates seating evoke the heriatge shed and wharf.

Key Objectives Achieved 2 of 2

Retained trees and new tree planting combines to create 40% tree canopy cover. Extensive planting combines with water sensitive urban design to increase biodiversity and the site's hydrological and ecological performance connecting people to nature.



Retaining existing trees & provision of 40% canopy cover

Trees, plants and greenery for amenity, shade and shelter

Play equipment

Increased biodiversity and WSUD

Dog friendly areas

Increasing pedestrian and bicycle access

Shaded Areas

Maritime Artefact's & Heritage

Artefacts & Heritage

- The brief and the park design celebrate this location as a key part of Melbourne's maritime heritage
- Views and connections to the Mission to Seafarers building, the heritage shed and crane have informed the park layout.
- Elements, materials and details within the park reference the site's heritage and a number of maritime artefacts will be located in the park as part of its unique character and identity.

Site Constraints Response

- Existing and proposed development interfaces
- Existing structures – wharf shed slab
- Environmental conditions – soil contamination

