

Report to the Future Melbourne (Knowledge City) Committee

Agenda item 6.4

Melbourne Maritime Heritage Precinct and Mission to Seafarers - Feasibility and Business Case – Final Report**21 September 2021****Presenter:** Graham Porteous, Director Strategic Projects**Purpose and background**

1. The purpose of this report is to update Councillors on the key recommendations from the Melbourne Maritime Heritage Precinct and Mission to Seafarers - Feasibility and Business Case report (the project).
2. In early 2020, the Victorian Government approached City of Melbourne to ascertain its interest in assuming management and operational responsibility of the Mission to Seafarers (M2S). Management expressed interest on the understanding that Council would not be in a position to contribute capital funding to the project.
3. The City of Melbourne in partnership with the Victorian Government engaged a consultant to undertake the project which included a specific review of M2S capability to contribute to the precinct as well as an assessment of possible locations in the event that the feasibility study brings together previous reports, strategies and intentions to deliver a Melbourne maritime heritage precinct.
4. A Project Steering Group (PSG) was established to provide guidance and strategic advice. Membership included key stakeholders across the maritime sector, Victorian Government and the City of Melbourne.

Key issues

5. The project was completed in two parts. Part 1: Feasibility Study – Maritime Heritage Precinct indicated significant support for the development of the 'precinct as a trail' concept which would connect maritime assets while also recognising Aboriginal maritime heritage. It was noted that the 'trail' concept could be incorporated into the Draft Greenline Implementation Plan. The concept also proposes an important role for the Mission to Seafarers building with staging opportunities and a possible new connection point to the Yarra River, Birrarung through Seafarers Rest Park.
6. Part 2 of the project (Business Case) assessed the opportunities, constraints, risks and indicative costs to the City of Melbourne assuming management responsibility of the Mission to Seafarers building. The report recognised that the building requires significant capital investment by the Victorian Government to ensure its longer term functionality, operational excellence, compliance and amenity. A redeveloped building would continue to support the continued delivery of seafarer welfare services, and could also operate as a heritage precinct or other community uses. It was not of significant size to accommodate a maritime heritage museum.
7. A list of 72 stakeholders that were identified to have connection with the maritime heritage sector were provided with a briefing paper to respond against. A total of 28 responses were received and helped to inform later individual and group discussions. The overall feedback supported the development of a 'precinct as a trail' concept and retention and improvements to the Mission to Seafarers building.
8. The PSG prioritised Aboriginal connection and involvement in the project. Three Traditional Owner groups were approached to take part in the consultation process. Not all groups were able to be involved. Consultation with the Bunurong Land Council Aboriginal Corporation was convened on 24 March 2021.
9. City of Melbourne also used the 'Participate Melbourne' web page to enable broad community engagement. The community consultation ran from 15 February to 15 March 2021. Throughout the period, the website had 4,613 visitors and was viewed a total of 5,500 times. The total number of completed online survey forms was 244.

Recommendation from management

10. That the Future Melbourne Committee:
 - 10.1. Note and endorse the findings of the feasibility and business case report.
 - 10.2. Note significant support from the community for a 'precinct as a trail' concept which would connect existing maritime assets while also recognising Aboriginal maritime heritage.
 - 10.3. Requests management to consider where opportune and appropriate the integration of heritage precinct features into existing Council capital works programs, including the Draft Greenline Implementation Plan.
 - 10.4. Requests management to continue working with the Victorian Government to determine the use, quality and type of function of the Mission to Seafarers building including the continued delivery of seafarer welfare services and options for further community use.
 - 10.5. Requests management write to Department of Treasury and Finance to ascertain their intention to fund the necessary capital improvements on the Mission to Seafarers building.

Attachments:

1. Supporting Attachment (Page 3 of 107)
2. Melbourne Maritime Heritage Precinct and Mission to Seafarers Feasibility and Business Case -Final Draft (Page 5 of 107)

Supporting Attachment

Legal

1. Legal advice will be provided as necessary in respect to the capital investment agreement and other matters the subject of the report.

Finance

2. The feasibility study and business case was jointly funded by Council and Victorian Government (\$30,000 each). These funds were available within the existing Council budget for 2020-21.

Conflict of interest

3. No member of Council staff, or other person engaged under a contract, was 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. In developing this report, management and the consultant prepared a COVID-Safe community engagement program to ensure strict adherence to all DFFH health and safety requirements stakeholder consultation.

Stakeholder Consultation

5. A list of 72 stakeholders that were identified to have connection with the maritime heritage sector were provided with a briefing paper to respond against. A total of 28 responses were received and helped to inform later individual and group discussions. The overall feedback supported the development of a 'precinct as a trail' concept and retention and improvements to the Mission to Seafarers building.
6. The PSG prioritised Aboriginal connection and involvement in this project. Three Traditional Owner groups were approached to take part in the consultation process. Not all groups were able to be involved. Consultation with the Bunurong Land Council Aboriginal Corporation was convened on 24 March 2021.
7. The 'Participate Melbourne' page was used to enable broad community engagement which ran from 15 February to 15 March 2021. There were 4,613 visitors and 244 online survey forms completed.
8. Detailed information in relation to stakeholder consultation can be found in Attachment 2.

Relation to Council policy

9. 2020/21 API 19 – Activate Docklands with a focus on Victoria Harbour

“Explore opportunities for water transport and tourism and a feasibility study on a maritime heritage museum (in partnership with Development Victoria and Heritage Victoria)”.

10. Council Plan Goal – Prosperous City

This initiative aligns with the primary goal of Melbourne as a destination of choice to visit, live and study. It also aligns with the goal to enable a growth in visitor numbers.

11. Draft Greenline Implementation Plan

The Draft Greenline Implementation Plan (the Plan) proposes transforming the Northbank of the Yarra River, Birrarung into an inspiring public waterfront on Melbourne's city edge; a series of vibrant river front destinations along a 4km pedestrian and cycle connection that celebrates the rich Aboriginal culture and city heritage, while enhancing environmental outcomes. The Maritime Precinct section of the Plan identifies Seafarers Rest Park. This park will provide a new public space that reveals Melbourne's significant

maritime heritage. The enhanced pedestrian and cycling connections allow for easier and more enjoyable travel into the CBD, Docklands and Southbank. Community engagement on the Plan has commenced. It identifies five key precincts including one with a maritime focus.

12. Docklands Community and Place Plan

This initiative aligns with goals outlined in the Docklands Community and Place Plan to continue to protect heritage listed buildings and facilitate appropriate adaptation to new uses, including community use and access where possible. The plan also identifies opportunities to facilitate the development of berths for heritage vessels, including the Alma Doepel, which offer community and educational programs and encourage potential links to Polly Woodside and Mission to Seafarers.

13. This concept is further consistent with the vision of the Yarra River, Birrarung Strategy 2019 which will direct policy decisions and inform all future capital works project planning. This alignment will ensure linkages of maritime sites of significance and provide a cohesive experience to better appreciate history of the Yarra River, Birrarung.

Environmental sustainability

14. Environmental sustainability issues or opportunities are considered not relevant to this proposal. Any subsequent project development would involve an environmental and sustainability assessment.



City of Melbourne

Part 1: Feasibility and Possible Locations of a Maritime Heritage Precinct

Part 2: Business Case for Mission to Seafarers Building

Version 4

14 June 2021

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Version Control

Version	Date	Purpose
Version 1	26 Mar 2021	First draft to client
Version 2	14 Apr 2021	Incorporation of community consultation report as provided by MCC. Section 5.4 added and additions to the ES
Version 3	10 May 2021	Incorporation of CoM comments, combining both reports into a single volume
Version 4	14 June 2021	Copywriter review
Version 4	16 August 2021	Final Draft

Clarification of accuracy

This analysis uses inputs provided by third parties, including information from the client, Victorian and Australian Government agencies, from consultation with the community and industry, and drawn from publications in the public domain. These inputs have not been independently checked and the findings presented in this report are subject to the accuracy of these inputs.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The City of Melbourne appointed Biruu to prepare this feasibility study and business case for the development of a maritime heritage precinct and the linking of key assets along the Yarra River and Docklands. The proposed precinct would celebrate Melbourne's significant maritime commercial history and heritage while also contributing to the activation of the Docklands precinct generating benefits for tourism and the wider community.

This report includes a specific review of the Mission to Seafarers heritage-listed building complex at North Wharf Docklands.

A Project Steering Group was established to provide guidance and strategic advice and ensure all stakeholders are supported and well briefed on the need for their input. Membership of this group included key stakeholders across the maritime sector, Victorian Government and the City of Melbourne. The project also engaged extensively with the local community including Traditional Owners.

This report is presented in two parts: (1) an evidence-based feasibility study for the potential location of a maritime heritage precinct/experience; and (2) a high-level business case for the Mission to Seafarers building as one of the likely locations for a maritime heritage precinct.

Part 1: Feasibility study – maritime heritage precinct

The purpose of the feasibility study was to understand the potential and possible locations of a maritime heritage precinct.

The feasibility study included:

- A desktop review of nine previous reports, papers and plans which are relevant to the establishment of a possible maritime heritage precinct.
- Exploration of three possible locations for a proposed maritime heritage precinct including: (1) around the Mission to Seafarers building / Polly Woodside /Seafarers Bridge; (2) Victoria Harbour/Central Pier; and (3) Williamstown.
- A review of similar maritime heritage assets around Melbourne, Victoria and internationally to identify opportunities and learnings from existing precincts and attractions.
- An extensive stakeholder engagement approach with targeted stakeholders, community, Traditional Owners and other relevant bodies to ensure a better understanding of their perspectives, priorities and opportunities.

An analysis of this research informed the development of the 'precinct as a trail' concept which would connect existing and new maritime assets while also recognising Aboriginal maritime heritage. Importantly, this concept had wide support from stakeholders and is consistent with the Yarra River, Birrarung Strategy which will direct policy decisions and informs all future capital works project planning. While cost has not yet been determined, it aims to generate a positive economic impact for the City. The concept also proposes an important role for the Mission to Seafarers building with staging opportunities and a new access point to the Yarra River, Birrarung.

There are five key recommendations:

1. A maritime heritage precinct along the Yarra River (Birrarung) and Docklands Harbour can best be created through the linking of existing maritime assets in a 'trail', rather than using any individual location.
2. Aboriginal maritime heritage should be recognised and integrated into the project in line with the input of Traditional Owner groups.
3. Adequate investment, combined with strong governance, management and marketing are essential to the success of this 'precinct as a trail' concept.
4. The 'precinct as a trail' would benefit greatly from, and compliment, the City of Melbourne's Greenline project.

5. The Mission to Seafarers building could play a pivotal role as the 'headquarters' of a trail type precinct.

Part 2: Business case

The Victorian Government has approached the City of Melbourne to ascertain its interest in assuming ownership, management and operational responsibility of the Mission to Seafarers building possibly as part of a maritime heritage precinct. This report assesses the opportunities, constraints, risks and likely costs to the City of Melbourne taking over this asset.

About the building

The Mission to Seafarers building is located at 717 Flinders Street, Docklands and was built in two stages between 1916 and 1919. It has approximately 1,800 square metres of floor space across three levels plus garden and carpark areas. The complex consists of the St Peter the Mariner Chapel, an extensive clubroom and administration area, the Chaplain's house, a small cottage, garden and the Norla Dome.

The building is on Crown land and is owned by the Victorian Government via Department of Treasury and Finance when they acquired it following financial difficulties of the previous owner decades ago. It is leased to the Mission to Seafarers Victoria Inc. to provide welfare services for seafarers.

The role the Mission to Seafarers building and the adjacent Seafarers Rest Park would play in a maritime heritage trail precinct is pivotal to its creation. The building would need to be linked with the river and bridge and care will need to be taken in the design of Seafarers Rest Park to ensure a high level of exposure, linkage and connection. The extent to which this is possible will largely be determined by Heritage Victoria and in-principle support should be obtained prior to assuming management responsibility.

As a risk mitigator, once acquired and properly refurbished, the building could service a host of multi-purpose community uses.

The City of Melbourne would be prudent to assume that significant work and cost would be needed as part of any major refurbishment to make the building compliant with current requirements. Department of Treasury and Finance has recently funded some significant works including façade and waterproofing that may reduce some of the scope of redevelopment.

The building is listed on the Victorian Heritage Register H1496 pursuant to the Heritage Act. It is of architectural, aesthetic and historical significance to the State of Victoria. This imposes significant restrictions on what can be done with the building with respect to changes.

Building Use

The consultation for the Part 1 Feasibility Study found that there is widespread support for the use of the building to continue to deliver seafarer welfare services. This is likely to be a formal and/or informal condition to any management transition.

The core areas required for seafarers welfare services could be accommodated in the two upper levels of the building, freeing up the ground floor. This was generally supported in the Feasibility Study. This would require formal agreement with the Mission to Seafarers Victoria Inc.

By relocating the seafarer welfare services functions upstairs, the entire ground floor of the building could be repurposed for tourist, community, function, education and/or exhibition spaces to support and enhance the trail precinct and to showcase the heritage protected building. It could also include some major 'wow' factor that would showcase the dome, perhaps the most unique part of the building.

Financial

A high level 'first pass' cost plan provides some initial budget guidance of likely building capital expenditure (capex) costs based on rough sketch design concepts delineating the building into minor and major work areas. This recommends \$15-20 million as a rough order of cost only until more detailed work can be undertaken.

Rooms-for-hire operating model

Under this scenario, the upper floors could be leased to the Mission to Seafarers Victoria Inc. and/or Melbourne Seafarers Centre Inc. at a commercial rate. These organisations will in turn likely seek support from, the Victorian Government for these costs.

The lower floors are used by a variety of community hire, weddings, event spaces etc. Three full time equivalent (FTE) staff are assumed and an after-hours security guard for three nights per week.

The initial analysis shows an operating deficit of around \$150,000. The commercial rent from the upstairs tenants is the key operational support.

Tourist destination model

Under this scenario the upper floors are leased to the Mission to Seafarers Victoria Inc. and/or Melbourne Seafarers Centre Inc. at a commercial rate. The lower floors are used for maritime tourism and maritime exhibition space. A modest allowance has been made for entry and building hire. Three full time equivalent (FTE) staff are assumed and an after-hours security guard for three nights per week.

The analysis shows an operating deficit of around \$50,000 per annum. The commercial rent from the upstairs tenants is the key operational support. If no entry fee was feasible, this deficit would increase to \$300,000.

Risk

This project has a high level of risk. The 'by exception' key risk items for the project include: agreement to the project by Mission to Seafarers Vic Inc.; Heritage Victoria's agreement to redevelopment including improved access points; any delays to the Riverlee project and access permissions; design connecting the park, river and bridge; Building Code of Australia compliance issues; permit approvals; capital and running cost estimates; and funding from the Victorian Government.

Recommendations

Outcomes from the business case recommendation include:

1. Acknowledgement that the Mission to Seafarers building is held in high regard, valued and should be retained.
2. Recognition that the building requires significant capital investment to ensure its longer term functionality, operational excellence, compliance and amenity.
3. Acknowledgement that Council would not invest in any capital redevelopment costs.
4. The Victorian Government remains responsible to fund the capital cost of any building upgrade. On this basis, Council would be interested in supporting the continued development of the project noting that:
 - a. The capital refurbishment and project costs could be significant and will be dependent upon the determined use, quality and type of function of the building.
 - b. A full operational review of the building would be required to assess Council's potential interest.
5. Recurrent funding support may be required depending on the operating model and that:
 - a. Continued liaison with the relevant Victorian Government departments to determine the future arrangements with Mission to Seafarers Victoria Inc. and/or Melbourne Seafarers Centre for the delivery of seafarer's welfare services and associated costs is required.

PART 1:

FEASIBILITY STUDY

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

The concept of a maritime heritage precinct has been explored in numerous reports produced by Government, the City of Melbourne and the maritime sector. These reports have indicated strong interest in the development of a maritime heritage precinct located in Docklands and the Yarra River, Birrarung.

The proposed precinct would celebrate Melbourne's significant waterways history and cultivate a focus for Melbourne's maritime heritage. The Mission to Seafarers building in particular represents both a key asset and opportunity that could add value to the longer term vision of a maritime heritage precinct.

This feasibility study provides preliminary advice to the City of Melbourne and the Victorian Government regarding a maritime heritage precinct in the Docklands area. The study aims to identify the likely feasibility and possible locations of a maritime heritage precinct. The research included:

- Desktop review of previous reports and reviews
- Desktop review of similar facilities both from Australia and internationally
- Consideration of strategies and plans underway in the Docklands precinct
- Comprehensive stakeholder engagement process with all interested parties
- Identification of options for possible locations for a maritime heritage precinct

The City of Melbourne's Strategic Projects team has worked collaboratively to establish a Project Steering Group which provided guidance and strategic advice to this project. The Steering Group's aim was to ensure all stakeholders were supported and well briefed on the need for their input.

Membership of the Project Steering Group included:

- Melbourne Maritime Heritage Network: Ross Brewer, Jeff Malley and Greg Yorke
- Mission to Seafarers: Neil Edwards, Chairman
- Melbourne Seafarers Centre: Warwick Norman
- Parks Victoria representative: Paul Roser, Manager Heritage Programs
- Department of Treasury and Finance: Sam Burke, Director Land and Property
- Department of Transport: Andrew Newman, Director Ports, Freight and Intermodal.
- City of Melbourne: Graham Porteous, Director Strategic Projects City of Melbourne (Chair)

1.2 Project objectives

The Project Steering Committee developed and endorsed a set project objectives to guide the feasibility study and business case. These objectives included:

- Has wide stakeholder support for a particular concept and scale
- Has wide stakeholder support for a site
- Is consistent with existing State and City of Melbourne strategies and policies
- Has positive economic impact on the City
- The upfront/capital cost is borne by State and / or others
- The ongoing operational cost to City of Melbourne is low
- Is part of a precinct and has potential staging opportunities
- Contextualises Aboriginal connection and involvement
- Is realistically implementable within 3-5 years

Consultation feedback, ideas and options have been analysed against these objectives in developing the recommendations made in this report.

PREVIOUS REPORTS

Previous reports commissioned or produced by the Victorian Government, City of Melbourne and the maritime sector have indicated strong interest in the development of a maritime heritage precinct. A desktop review of these previous reports, papers and plans was conducted to inform this feasibility study and the identification of possible locations for a maritime heritage precinct.

These documents include:

- Dockland Activation Strategy 2020 (prepared by Alto Cibus for the City of Melbourne)
- Tourism Demand for Commercial Maritime Heritage 2019 (prepared by the City of Melbourne)
- City of Melbourne Seafarer's Rest Park Stage 2: Report 2020 (prepared by Global Research Ltd for the City of Melbourne)
- Melbourne Heritage Fleet Feasibility Study 2015 (prepared by Urban Enterprises for City of Melbourne)
- The Case for Melbourne's Heritage Fleet 2018 (prepared on behalf of the three heritage vessels ST Wattle, SV Enterprize, and SV Alma Doepel and the Victorian Wooden Boats Centre P/L)
- Maritime Heritage Docklands Network Project 2018 (prepared by Dr Jackie Watts on behalf of the Melbourne Maritime Heritage Network)
- Melbourne Maritime Heritage Network Research Paper 2019 (prepared by Dr Jackie Watts on behalf of the Melbourne Maritime Heritage Network)
- Williamstown Maritime Precinct Framework 2020 (prepared by GHD for the Department of Transport)
- Yarra River – Birrarung Strategy 2019 (City of Melbourne)

1.3 Dockland Activation Strategy 2020

Summary

The 'Dockland Activation Strategy 2020' was prepared by Alto Cibus for the City of Melbourne. The key objective of this project was to recommend a two-year activation strategy for Docklands to help ameliorate the consequences of the closure of Central Pier and shutdowns due to COVID-19.

The report highlights that there were a number of serious underlying problems in Docklands even before the closure of Central Pier and these magnified the consequences of the pier closure and COVID-19 shutdowns. Some of these underlying issues include: no clear identity for Docklands, a lack of connectivity with the area, limited public amenities and problems with the visual aesthetics of the Central Pier area.

Key outcomes relevant to this project

Some of the key findings and outcomes relevant to this project include:

- The location of a maritime heritage precinct at the Mission to Seafarers site conflicts with the Dockland Activation Strategy recommendations which are seeking to attract visitation and drive investment into the 'core' Docklands harbour area (see Figure 1).
- The strategy recommends that a single 'focus area' will have a sustainable impact on the precinct, celebrating maritime heritage while also providing an opportunity for jobs and economic growth.
- It states that it is easier to change consumer habits if repeat visitation is confined to one area. Activities and attractions should be concentrated to one area to have a complimentary impact and deliver critical mass, providing the best chance to have a sustainable impact on the Precinct.
- The strategy focus area does not encompass the Mission to Seafarers building complex and as such is seeking to promote investment around the Central Pier.

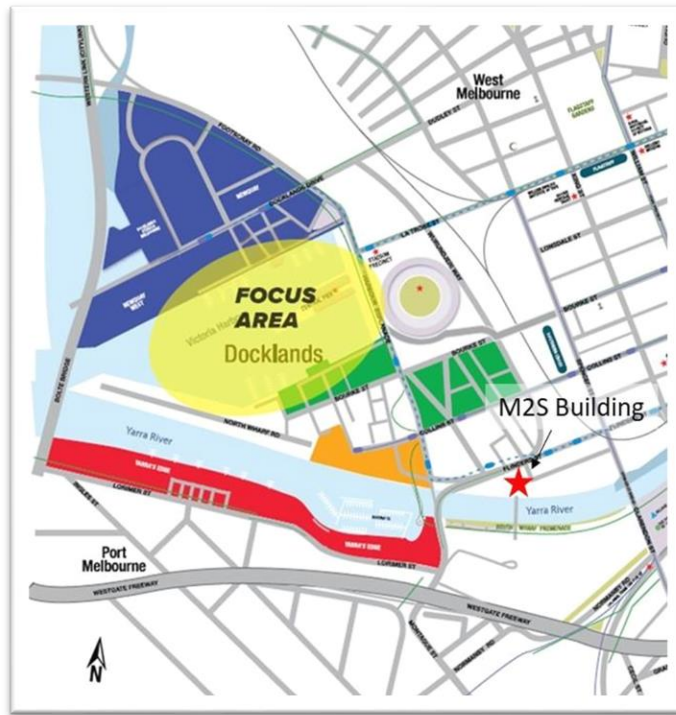


Figure 1: The Docklands Activation Strategy 2020 recommends a focus area at Central Pier

1.4 Tourism Demand for Commercial Maritime Heritage

Summary

The City of Melbourne prepared a paper on 'Tourism Demand for Commercial Maritime Heritage' in 2019. This paper provides an initial assessment of the potential for the establishment of a museum that is dedicated to the preservation and promotion of Melbourne's Commercial Maritime Heritage to activate the Docklands precinct for tourism.

The paper reviews existing maritime heritage experiences in Melbourne along with leading maritime centres around the world. It highlights the potential for Docklands to activate the waterfront to stimulate visitation to the area. This would include berthing heritage vessels in Victoria Harbour and a permanent activation on the water (akin to the water foundations in Dubai Mall). It also recognises that while the demand for cultural and heritage tourism is growing, competition in Melbourne is strong and therefore it must be a compelling proposition for visitors.

Key outcomes relevant to this project

Some of the key findings and outcomes relevant to this project include:

- The most well-developed maritime heritage location is in Williamstown, however a ferry service between Williamstown and Southbank could enable a dedicated heritage themed tour service, to connect the precinct.
- The Mission to Seafarers site could potentially serve as a viable option to house a permanent commercial maritime heritage focussed gallery, rather than pursuing investment for the development of a new site within the City of Melbourne.
- The Mission to Seafarers location could also potentially leverage private property developer, Riverlee's, significant redevelopment on the Northbank of the Yarra River, Birrarung which includes restoration of the historic wharf and heritage-listed crane.
- There is a risk that a museum dedicated solely to the preservation and promotion of what is arguably a niche aspect of Melbourne's history may not enough broad visitor appeal to ensure its commercial viability without ongoing funding support from state and/or local government.

1.5 City of Melbourne Seafarer's Rest Park Stage 2: Report 2020

Summary

The City of Melbourne is working in partnership with the Victorian Government, Riverlee, and landscape architects, Oculus, to create a new park called Seafarers Rest in Docklands. The park is located on the north bank of the Yarra River, Birrarung between the Mission to Seafarers building and the Seafarers Bridge.

Global Research Ltd was engaged to undertake community engagement in relation to the Park. The City of Melbourne also undertook a community engagement and consultative process in late 2018 to understand the local community's needs, interest and ideas. Designs were presented to community stakeholders during June-July 2020 and engagement continued with Traditional Owners and other key stakeholders, including Mission to Seafarers, to ensure their input into the development of the park design.

Overall, stakeholders were happy with several elements of the design. In particular, the community appreciated the focus on trees and greenery and felt that Seafarers Rest Park would become a space for all to enjoy.

Key outcomes relevant to this project

The current park design does not emphasise requirements of a maritime heritage precinct as this was not part of the design brief that was developed following the community consultation. However, there are opportunities to enhance the design to accommodate critical aspects of the proposed maritime heritage precinct. Some of these key aspects include:

- Feedback from stakeholders was that Seafarers Rest Park would become a community space for everyone to enjoy. There is further potential to make greater use of the park as a community space through showcasing maritime heritage and Indigenous maritime stories.
- There is an opportunity to build on greenspaces and biodiversity in the design through creating an access point from the river which would also be integral to the successful integration of the proposed maritime heritage precinct/trail.
- The aesthetics of the park would benefit from a greater visual linkage of the Mission to Seafarers building to the Yarra River, Birrarung including a new southern entrance to the Mission to Seafarers entrance which would open directly onto the park (across the Riverlee service road) and a focus on connecting the bridge with the Mission to Seafarers building.

1.6 Melbourne Heritage Fleet Feasibility Study 2015

Summary

This discussion paper prepared by Urban Enterprises in 2015 for the City of Melbourne examined the feasibility of establishing a Melbourne Heritage Fleet Precinct in Docklands. The proposal was to create a tourism product that incorporates and articulates Victoria's maritime heritage aimed at the berthing area along Central Pier, on the north side of Harbour Esplanade.

The study found that there is strong strategic and policy support for recognising and promoting the maritime heritage of Melbourne and Docklands, including making provision for heritage vessels. However, limited on shore and water area is seen as a major barrier for the proposed maritime heritage fleet tourism precinct.

Key outcomes relevant to this project

Some of the key findings and outcomes relevant to this project include:

- There are multiple key success factors that are critical to the development of the proposed maritime heritage fleet precinct such as: modern, architecturally significant on-shore building/presence; relationship with waterfront; unique presentation of information (digital, experiential and immersive); heritage boat rides; heritage vessel display; education programs; food and beverage offerings and event spaces.
- Stakeholders were adamant that a static display of vessels would be insufficient. There needs to be a unique offer that incorporates heritage vessels with the history of Docklands including Indigenous Australians and Early European settlement, as well as digital multimedia and immersive, interactive visitor experiences.

- There was strong support from all stakeholders who were consulted during the course of the project for the establishment of a maritime heritage fleet precinct. This includes the City of Melbourne and Places Victoria who have a role to play in delivering the base infrastructure required to take the project forward. There are a number of boat operators who expressed their support and interest to be located in the precinct, provided that some of their on-ground needs are met.
- The study identified that the market potential for a maritime heritage tourism precinct in the Docklands would be 3.5 million people. Based on a market share of 12% (which is the market share of the Australian National Maritime Museum in Sydney¹), the paper estimates an annual visitation of 412,263 people. However, Council should be wary of visitor comparisons to the National Maritime Museum in Sydney unless the scale and central location can be matched.

1.7 The Case for Melbourne's Heritage Fleet 2018

Summary

This report was prepared in 2018 on behalf of the three heritage vessels ST Wattle, SV Enterprize, and SV Alma Doepel and the Victorian Wooden Boats Centre P/L. The concept is that the three vessels would be berthed in Victoria Harbour adjacent to Central Pier in a single Heritage Fleet facility, combining berthing and land based facilities within the one centre.

The concept includes the reconstruction of heritage-listed sheds adjacent to the berths which would provide an ideal location for the land based facilities necessary for the ongoing maintenance and repair of the vessels. These sheds would also provide a location for the Victorian Wooden Boats Centre to continue operations in Docklands.

The sight of three vessels forming the Heritage Fleet, along with modern-day artisans at work employing past skills, and interpretive displays of artefacts and exhibits from the maritime past would be a compelling and enlivening addition to Docklands, increasing visitation and boosting the local economy.

Key outcomes relevant to this project

Some of the key findings and outcomes relevant to this project include:

- Successful maritime heritage and museum centres throughout the world are invariably concentrated centres, rather than scattered exhibits and activities. The "one-stop-shop" approach is most obvious in such famous centres as Greenwich, Chatham, San Francisco, San Diego and Southampton.
- A single-focus centre concentrates tourist activity in one precinct and provides choices for selection of activities and a desire to explore, to move from one activity to another. This prolongs visit time and enables the increase of visitor satisfaction and the likelihood of return visits.
- One centre also creates benefits for the provision of infrastructure and the co-ordination of services. It is easier, more economical, and more effective to market one centralised activity than to try to sell the attractions of many smaller activities which must compete with each other.
- Further consultation with Enterprize revealed the water depth in the Yarra River, Birrarung may be an issue in places as the boat draws 3.2m. Some parts of Australia Wharf are apparently only 2.1m deep and may need to be dredged. Other considerations raised included: that the heritage fleet boats require office, workshop and teaching spaces within easy walking distance; fire hydrants, power and bollards need to be provided at the water's edge; and security needs to be in place. The limited space within the building would not provide for these types of spaces.

While 'The Case for Melbourne's Heritage Fleet' recommends one Heritage Fleet centre, the proposed maritime heritage precinct connecting through the Mission to Seafarers building would

¹ The paper estimated the Australian National Maritime Museum's market potential based on domestic daytrip activities, domestic overnight activities, international day trip activities, local catchment visitations and student visitations. The paper estimated a market potential of 5,583,456 visitations per year. With an annual actual visitation of 685,959 visits per year, the paper concluded that the Museum's market share was 12%.

invariably be a collection of connected attractions, rather than a concentrated centre. This paper argues that the latter is preferable and generates more economic benefit to the area.

1.8 Maritime Heritage Docklands Network Project 2018

Summary

The 'Maritime Heritage Docklands Network Project' is a briefing paper prepared in 2018 by former City of Melbourne Councillor, Dr Jackie Watts. The objective was to 'sustain and celebrate Melbourne's Maritime Docklands Heritage Network – a comprehensive approach to exploiting the as yet undeveloped cultural assets and creating new maritime assets'.

The paper argues there is an urgent need for state and local government to properly acknowledge that trade by sea was, and is still, crucial in underpinning economic prosperity. Unless responsible authorities progress a comprehensive plan to both recognise and exploit the cultural assets held within the Melbourne Maritime Docklands Network, the return on investment to date will not occur.

Extensive and nationally significant maritime archives already exist in Melbourne but are dispersed and are not understood 'collectively' as public assets. The responsibility for these valuable heritage assets currently lies with non-profit organisations staffed by volunteers and within Victorian Government departments.

Key outcomes relevant to this project

Some of the key findings and outcomes relevant to this project include:

- This paper advocates strongly for a maritime precinct. It notes that key maritime stakeholders express enthusiasm for an official plan to formalise a collaborative approach to link a geographically dispersed Maritime Heritage Docklands Network.
- The report recommends a maritime museum to showcase the wealth of existing maritime heritage assets. It presents a number of locations for the museum, including Collins Wharf, Riverlee, Ethihad Stadium and various locations along Harbour Esplanade. The paper briefly mentions a museum at the Mission to Seafarers building if it was substantially refurbished.
- It also identifies the need for commercial investment in ferry services, along with attracting yachting and ocean racing events to the city.

1.9 Melbourne Maritime Heritage Network Research Paper 2019

Summary

The 2019 report by former City of Melbourne Councillor, Dr Jackie Watts, builds on the argument that Melbourne's maritime heritage assets and precincts remain under-developed, fragmented, in dispersed locations, often with limited public exposure and consequently limited financial viability.

The formation of the Melbourne Maritime Heritage Network will work collectively to focus attention of maritime heritage within the government and in the public realm. It will aim to ensure that the cultural and economic value of Melbourne's maritime heritage can be preserved and sustained through collaborative and coherent management.

The paper notes Melbourne is unique in being the only large port city in the nation, and amongst comparable cities in the developed world, in not having a maritime heritage museum. Return on investment on maritime heritage by government or corporate sector to date has not been optimised and is unlikely to occur if current bureaucratic silos persist.

Key outcomes relevant to this project

Some of the key findings and outcomes relevant to this project include:

- No new museum has been established in Melbourne for many years. There is wide acknowledgement amongst stakeholders that an opportunity exists to establish a maritime museum focused on trade, specialist shipping, oil and gas rigs, docks, stevedoring and ports management as a permanent tourist attraction in Docklands.
- Riverlee have expressed a strong interest in assisting with a museum or interpretation centre, although they are not proposing a museum as part of their development. Riverlee has commissioned historical research on this area with specific reference to the social and commercial importance of the Goods Shed and the heritage crane on the site.

- The paper recommends that the museum's focus on trade would be a clear point of differentiation from existing maritime museums in Victoria or nationally and would align with Melbourne's current status as the nation's largest port. The museum would trigger wider public recognition, acknowledgement and education about the crucial role played by maritime trade while also offering on-water experiences (e.g. Heritage Fleet, harbour tours, docks tours).
- Importantly, the paper also notes that the City of Melbourne envisages a Greenline trail connecting green public spaces, many of which exist already or are planned, along the waterways. From the maritime heritage perspective, the Greenline project represents a significant investment in the waterfront and would have the added benefit of connecting the 'dispersed' maritime heritage assets in Melbourne.

1.10 Williamstown Maritime Precinct Framework 2020

Summary

The Department of Transport – Freight Victoria (DoT) engaged GHD to prepare a framework for the Williamstown Maritime Precinct, providing a mechanism to support future land use and infrastructure changes, and unlock potential benefits for current operations and community alike. The analysis was to help inform prospective investment and development decisions and shape the future of the precinct, so that it can be restored and enjoyed for generations to come.

The Williamstown Maritime Precinct (see Figure 2 below) is a premier maritime destination and an iconic Melbourne tourist destination providing an important space for the local community. The Williamstown foreshore provides a place for recreational, educational, tourism, cultural and commercial activities, attracting more than 100,000 visitors from around Victoria, interstate and overseas each year.

The draft Framework sets out a vision for the precinct underpinned by a series of strategic directions and precinct options. The Framework is undergoing community feedback.

Key outcomes relevant to this project

Some of the key findings and outcomes relevant to this project include:

- The Framework lays out a vision for the Williamstown Maritime Precinct as a premier and interactive cultural, maritime and boating destination, centred on the working port as an integral component of the Victorian Ports system. The precinct will enhance the economic and social values of Williamstown for visitors and community to engage and learn about the area's living maritime and cultural heritage, in a safe, connected and flexible environment.
- The Framework details Williamstown foreshore's suitability as a maritime precinct, noting that as a working port with remnants of old maritime related infrastructure and activities, the area has a strong, revered maritime function and character. A significant draw card to the area is the Seaworks Maritime Precinct which hosts community events and is home to a discovery centre showcasing an impressive collection of artefacts. In addition, the HMAS Castlemaine is currently docked at Gem Pier which hosts a maritime museum and is one of the few accessible public piers making it a popular destination for visitors.
- The Strategy notes that the Williamstown foreshore has many advantages as a maritime precinct, well situated with restaurants, shops and other services. It is also one of very few maritime spaces that provide access to piers and jetties in Melbourne to support visiting Tall Ships. It also highlights opportunities for tourists to view Port Phillip Bay and the local area from the air with Melbourne Seaplanes operating out of Williamstown, via a purpose-built pontoon.

Given the wealth of already established maritime attractions, Williamstown appears to be well suited to a maritime precinct. This does not preclude the creation of a maritime precinct in Docklands. Connecting the two will be important if this project proceeds. However, it should be noted that development and investment in Williamstown's precinct will have impacts on any progression of a Melbourne CBD precinct, such as attracting investment from Victorian Government.



Figure 2: The Williamston Maritime Precinct is defined as the area from Anchorage Marina, to the north, and extending to the Port of Melbourne Gellibrand Precinct area, to the south.

1.11 Yarra River – Birrarung Strategy 2019

Summary

This strategy defines the City of Melbourne's vision and direction for the inner-city reaches of the Yarra River, Birrarung. It will direct policy decisions and inform all future capital works project planning within the City of Melbourne's river corridor. The 'Yarra River - Birrarung Strategy' provides an advocacy tool to guide the City of Melbourne, adjoining landowners and investors in preserving and evolving the river's character and liveability while offering a planned response to avoid ad hoc decisions and holistically shape future proposals.

The Strategy identifies a vision: 'The Yarra River, Birrarung, will be an inspiring public waterfront that celebrates the rich Aboriginal culture and offers a green sanctuary, loved by Melbournians. It is organised around four key themes: Ecology, Culture, Place and Movement.'

There is a need to rehabilitate and improve the natural spaces along the river corridor, not only to benefit the growing population but as a commitment to restoring the ecology of the river. An

opportunity to improve reconciliation with the Traditional Owners is a key ambition of this strategy and, also, a key challenge for a rapidly growing city.

Key outcomes relevant to this project

Some of the key findings and outcomes relevant to this project include:

- The strategy presents a number of policies and actions, including Action 10: Develop an interpretation strategy including storytelling and signage for the Yarra River, Birrarung, on the basis of the Aboriginal cultural narrative, maritime trading heritage and shared post contact history. It highlights the unique experiences of the Yarra River including locations of maritime heritage (Figure 3).

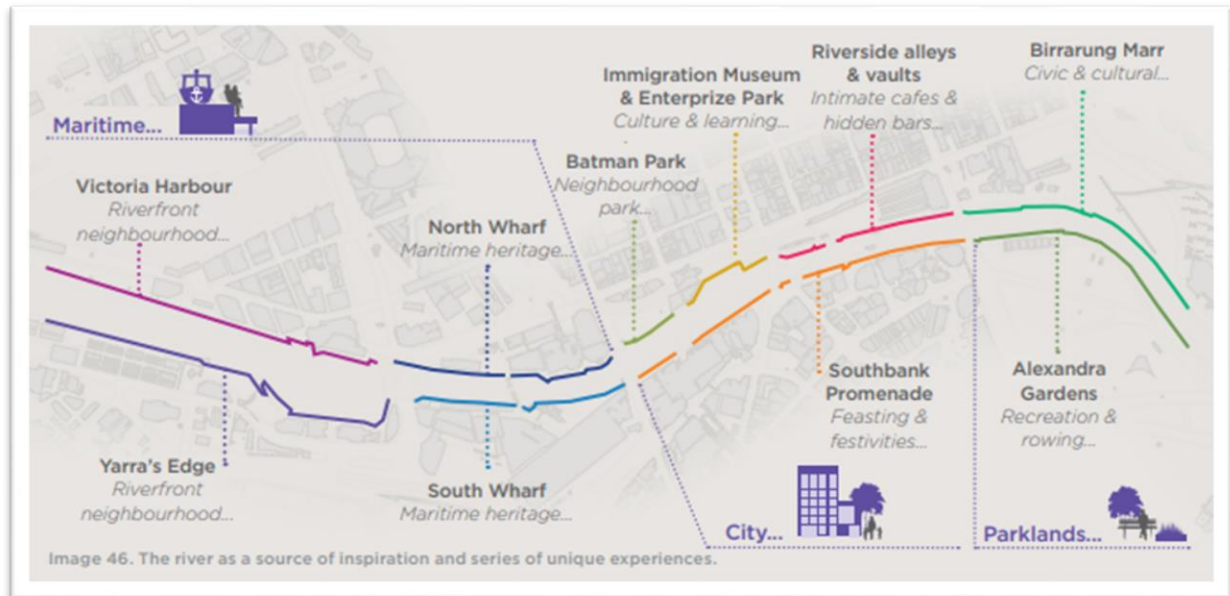


Figure 3: The North Wharf has been identified as a place for maritime heritage in the Yarra River – Birrarung Strategy 2019

- The strategy identifies the Northbank as a broad area of poor definition and inconsistent quality that weakens a strong, attractive identity for the city. The central riverfront is also impacted by limited day-to-day activations. It notes the importance of balancing public access to the riverfront with private commercial activations, and suggests that the diversity of landowners impacts the management and conditioning of riverfront areas.
- Further recommendations in the strategy include making Northbank a priority for major investment, realising its potential as a future 'greenline'.

LOCATION OPTIONS

Based on the findings of the desktop review, the next step in the feasibility study was to identify and assess potential locations for a heritage maritime precinct. The study identified three main location options and considered key aspects that would impact suitability for a maritime precinct including cost, public transport, timing, facilities, capacity to berth ships and stakeholder support.

The three locations are:

- Around the Mission to Seafarers building / Polly Woodside / Seafarers Bridge
- Victoria Harbour (Central Pier)
- Williamstown

1.12 Mission to Seafarers Building Area

The Mission to Seafarers building is located on North Wharf, Flinders St extension (Figure 4). It is well located in relation to the Seafarers Bridge which links it to the Polly Woodside ship and museum. The location provides many public transport options including bus, train and tram and it is also within walking distance of the CBD.

The site includes the Missions to Seamen building, St. Peter's memorial chapel, the former gymnasium (domed roof structure), the Chaplain and caretaker former residences, and a small car park along the eastern boundary of the parcel.

The building was established and continues to be used by Mission to Seafarers Victoria Inc. to provide welfare services for seafarers. It is also used for church services, as a community meeting place, venue hire and as an exhibition space.

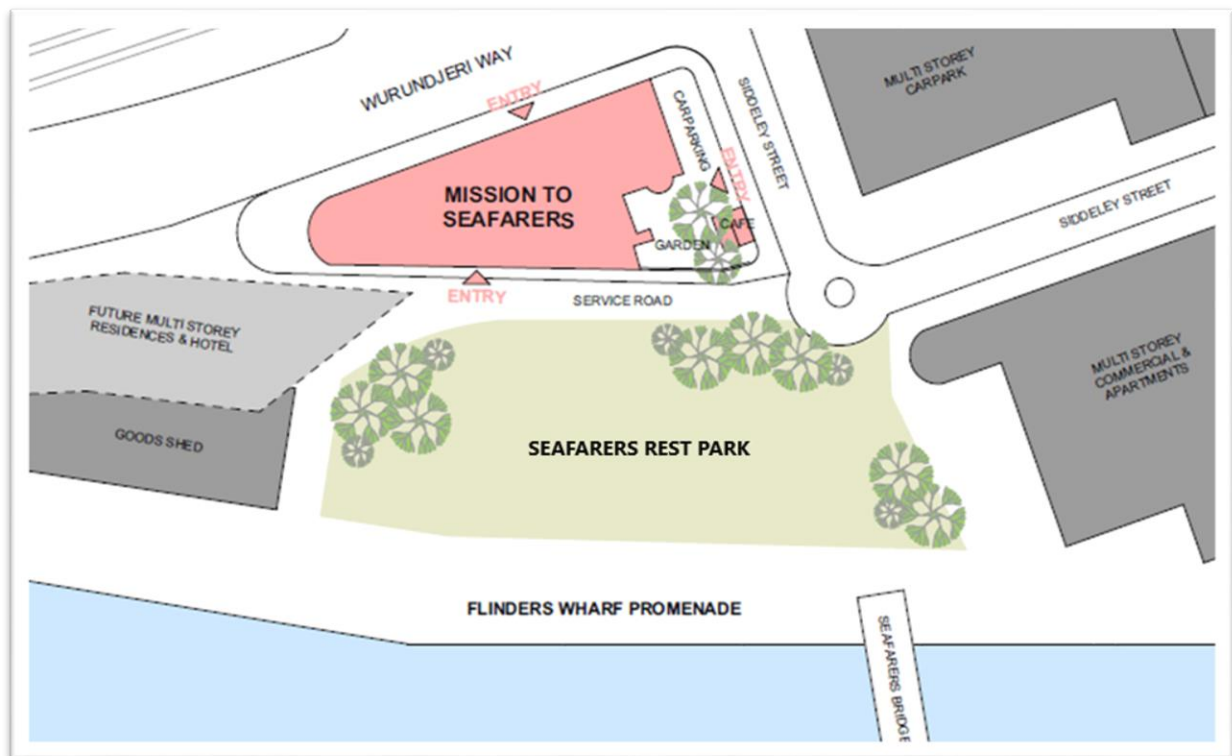


Figure 4: Map of the location of the Mission to Seafarers building

The building has significant heritage constraints, so redevelopment options are limited and likely costly. However, preliminary discussions between the City of Melbourne and the Victorian Government indicate capital investment by the state should council have an interest in assuming management responsibility of the building.

The Victorian Government has indicated a significant base build of \$10 to \$20 million is required to undertake refurbishment and fit out the building. The aim of the investment is to retain the functional operations of the heritage building and core services to seafarers, as well as defining a repurposed future for the building which could include a focus on Melbourne's maritime heritage activities.

There is strong stakeholder support for investment and repurposing of the Mission to Seafarers building which is further discussed later in this report. Stakeholders noted that the location of the Mission to Seafarers building is central to maritime heritage in Melbourne, with many maritime attractions located nearby and is thus well-suited to the development of a maritime heritage trail.

1.13 Victoria Harbour (Central Pier)

Central Pier in the Docklands was built in 1916 and then rebuilt between 1946 and 1950. The southern end of the pier was truncated in 2005 because it was so decayed. Engineers have assessed the structure as no longer safe for public use. The site is managed by Development Victoria and it is currently vacated and boarded up as unsafe.

During its operation, Central Pier was used for cargo shipping, handling 20 million tons annually in the mid-1980s. In recent times and until its closure it was the site of an entertainment precinct.



Figure 5: Photograph of Central Pier at Docklands

Central Pier is the heart of the Docklands, with good water frontage (Figure 5). It has excellent public transport connections and is easily accessible from the CBD. It is close to shops, Marvel Stadium, the Library @ the Dock and other services. The heritage vessels, Enterprize and Alma Doepel, are located in North Wharf, close to Central Pier.

The Docklands Activation Strategy recommends investment in this area of the Docklands. The consultation conducted as part of this project also identified some support for Central Pier as a location for the maritime heritage precinct, although there were mixed views. Consultation also revealed that Docklands has suffered considerably from the COVID lockdown and that the Mission to Seafarers building provided an opportunity to emphasise the authentic heritage of the area.

Central Pier is currently being assessed for rectification and redevelopment by Development Victoria. It could potentially house a significant maritime heritage museum and precinct, but we understand that current planning ideas are not considering this. Rectification and redevelopment of the pier will cost many hundreds of millions of dollars and timing is uncertain.

1.14 Williamstown

The Department of Transport has drafted a framework for the Williamstown Maritime Precinct.

Williamstown is a port and harbour on the western side of Port Phillip Bay. It is an area that holds significant value for its Traditional Owners, local community, operators and users. The foreshore and broader local area have long and rich histories, located on the lands of the Bun Wurrung clans, and then established as a seaport supporting farming and trade activities from the late 1830s.

Williamstown is a working Port, supporting a diverse range of waterfront uses. This includes critical infrastructure for liquid bulk fuel distribution and fuel security in Victoria through to maritime related activities, numerous marinas, yacht and sporting clubs, 'on-water' tourist attractions and public foreshore.

The image (Figure 6) below shows the precinct boundaries. It arguably already is a maritime precinct. In addition, the consultation revealed some stakeholder support for Williamstown as the primary location for the maritime heritage precinct, although, again, there were mixed views.



Figure 6: Aerial view of the Williamstown Maritime Precinct

OTHER MARITIME FACILITIES

1.15 Introduction

It is important to understand similar maritime heritage assets in Victoria, more broadly in Australia and internationally. Other maritime facilities and attractions were researched to understand gaps and opportunities for the proposed Melbourne maritime heritage precinct. This provides an opportunity to learn from existing projects building on their strengths and avoiding their weaknesses.

1.16 Maritime locations around Melbourne

There are various museum style attractions around Victoria and, in Melbourne specifically, which celebrate maritime heritage. Findings from the research are discussed below.

Polly Woodside

The Polly Woodside, managed by the National Trust of Australia (Victoria), is located in a dock situated in Southbank on the Yarra River in the city of Melbourne.

Polly Woodside, a barque, now restored, was launched in 1885. The vessel resides in an original wooden-walled dry dock which was used for the repair and maintenance of ships for over 100 years. It gives visitors an insight into the development of the Port of Melbourne.

Polly Woodside generates additional revenue through venue hire, but we understand the asset is struggling financially.



Alma Doepel - Docklands

The Historic Tall Ship 'Alma Doepel' is owned by Sail and Adventure Ltd, a Not for Profit organisation dedicated to the advancement of youth through Sail Training.

The 117-year-old Alma Doepel is currently being restored with the aim of recommencing youth sail training on the Victorian Coast. The cost of the project is \$4 million; \$2.8 million has been raised so far through sponsorships and donations. The remaining \$1.2 million required to finish the project is actively being sought through fundraising and new sponsorships.

It is berthed at Victoria Harbour.



Steam Tug Wattle - Docklands

The Steam Tug Wattle is operated by Bay Steamers Maritime Museum Ltd, a Public Company limited by guarantee. The objects of the Museum are the preservation, restoration and operation of historic ships, and the promotion and encouragement of interest in Australian maritime history.

Following a restoration, the Steam Tug Wattle is operational and provides cruises in the Port of Melbourne. Cruises on offer include excursions, special event cruises and high tea cruises. The Tug departs from the Docklands and Williamstown.



Maritime Museum @ Seaworks

The Maritime Museum at the Seaworks Maritime Precinct has an impressive collection of artefacts, models and bells to showcase the stories of maritime history of the Port of Melbourne. Exhibitions include the First Fleet, prison hulks, Melbourne Harbour Trust and the Colonial Navy, as well as an extensive library and photograph collection.



In addition to a museum, Seaworks has a working deep-water port and Melbourne's key mooring site for visiting local and international tall ships and other historic vessels.

Seaworks is a not-for-profit organisation which promotes Victoria's maritime history on a prime waterfront location in Williamstown.

Seaworks supplements its income through venue hire, offering space for large events and festivals, conferences and seminars, and private functions.

HMAS Castlemaine Williamstown

The HMAS Castlemaine in Williamstown is a WWII ship and the last Bathurst Class corvette still afloat.

HMAS Castlemaine is owned, preserved and operated by the Maritime Trust of Australia, a volunteer run organisation, and has been restored and maintained by those volunteers since 1974.

The ship is afloat at Gem Pier, Williamstown, close to cafes, playgrounds, galleries and Seaworks Maritime Precinct.



Summary of opportunities relevant to this project

Melbourne already has strong existing maritime heritage assets, although they are geographically disparate, fragmented and lack a consistent consumer experience. The review of the maritime assets revealed that there is an opportunity for these attractions to complement each other and to create a compelling maritime heritage experience for locals and tourists alike.

As discussed later in this report, these attractions form the basis for a skeleton of a maritime heritage trail precinct connected by the Mission to Seafarers building.

1.17 Maritime heritage precincts and trails

There are a range of successful maritime heritage precincts and trails in Australia and around the world. A selection of different types of maritime trails is presented below.

Maribyrnong River trail

The Maribyrnong River trail is shared by pedestrians and cyclists and runs for 25km from Brimbank Park to Footscray Road. The trail passes through Pipemakers Park and Melbourne's Living Museum of the West, which contains historical presentations on the river valley and the people who have lived there since its initial occupation up to 40,000 years ago by the Wurundjeri people.

Along the path there is wayfaring signage with historical information about the maritime heritage of the area. This could be replicated in a maritime trail along the Yarra River, Birrarung.

Australian National Maritime Museum waterfront

The Australian National Maritime Museum in Sydney is a premier tourist location which attracts hundreds of thousands of visitors each year. The museum is located on the waterfront and is surrounded by complementary maritime attractions, essentially forming a maritime precinct. The museum's waterfront contains the following maritime attractions:

- Sydney's first Seabin
- Sea Science Pontoon
- Seafarers' Memorial Anchors
- 'Johnnie and Mehmet', AE2 Commemorative Sculpture
- Harding Safety Boat
- Cape Bowling Green Lighthouse
- Windjammers Sculpture
- Signal Mast
- AE1 Memorial '*...the ocean bed their tomb*'
- Welcome Wall

The museum has food and beverage and retail located nearby, encouraging people to remain in the area. This would be difficult to replicate in the Mission to Seafarers location, as it does not have many shops in the vicinity – the south bank of the river has better activation in this regard.

South Australian trails

Nine maritime heritage trails can be found along the South Australian coast and River Murray. Some of these trails explore the ships' graveyards and their abandoned vessels, while others explore a diverse mix of both above-water and underwater shipwreck sites.

- Underwater Heritage Trail
- Garden Island
- Investigator Strait
- Jervis Basin
- Kangaroo Island
- Port Elliot
- River Boat Trail
- Southern Ocean
- Wardang Island

Depending on the location, the trails can be discovered by land, boat or underwater, and provide an insight into the history of the state's maritime industry.

Interpretive signs along the trails next to each wreck site - either on shore or underwater - highlight the history and archaeological significance of the vessels and tell the story of the region where the vessels now lie.

These trails are immersed in nature. The Greenline proposal seeks to introduce more natural habitat to the Yarra River, Birrarung, but obviously any trail in central Melbourne would be unable to replicate these trails in South Australia. However, a maritime trail through the Docklands could leverage the way in which maritime attractions are integrated into a long trail through signage and story-telling.

Canadian Maritime Heritage District

The development of a Canadian Maritime Heritage District² is underway, as of June 2020. The initiative is a partnership between the Canadian Maritime Museum, HMCS Sackville and Foundation and Develop Nova Scotia and intends to be “a hive of maritime activities, fascinating exhibits, wonderful story-telling, hands-on exploration, boat building, public access to the water, sea music, and visiting ships”.

The district will emphasise indigenous culture, showcasing the “contributions of Mi'kmaw seafarers, and those who arrived later and worked as mariners, fishermen, sailors, and others who made their livings on or from the sea. It will also recognise the sacrifices and triumphs of the many service men and women, and Merchant Mariners who contributed to victory in WWII in the critical Battle of the Atlantic”.

As this district is not yet operational at the time of writing, it cannot provide information regarding visitation and viability; however the development should be observed to learn how to successfully develop a maritime precinct.

Chicago Riverwalk

The Chicago Riverwalk³ is a 2km walk along the Chicago River through central Chicago. Originally unsightly and unpopular, the riverfront was redeveloped to provide a broad range of attractions: outdoor bars and restaurants, children’s play areas, museums, pier fishing, boating, kayaking, public art and bird-life. There is public art available along the Riverwalk, including the largest video-projection art installation in the world. The Riverwalk puts a focus on water access, with recreational experiences available such as kayaking and cruises.

Like the Birrarung Strategy, the river has been divided into sections with different focuses. The Chicago Riverwalk is composed of six coves: the Marina; the Cove; the River Theatre; the Water Plaza; the Jetty; and the Boardwalk.

The Riverwalk is the product of 15 years of transformation and a successful example of what the riverbank of Yarra River, Birrarung could be, transforming the riverbank from unsightly and unpopular to bustling. The Riverwalk is so busy that additional safety measures have been introduced to manage the flow of people.

The Riverwalk generates funds based on concessionary fees, which rise based on a vendors’ profits. These funds are used to pay back a federal loan due in 2048; it’s expected Chicago will be able to pay back the loan faster due to its success.

Summary of lessons relevant to this project

The examples of maritime heritage trails and precincts in Australia and overseas offer some key learnings which are relevant to this project:

- The provision of wayfaring signage along pathways is an effective way to guide visitors along the maritime heritage trail.
- Food and beverage and retail experiences encourage visitors to stay longer and to explore the area further.
- Interpretive signage featuring designs, stories and artwork provide an opportunity to communicate information to visitors about the cultural, historical and natural significance of the assets.
- Trails immersed in nature are popular and the City of Melbourne’s Greenline proposal would add significant benefits to a maritime heritage trail in the area.
- A significant trail type destination can take years to transform, however future planning needs to consider how to effectively and safely manage bustling crowds.

² <https://canadianmaritimeheritage.ca/>

³ <https://www.sasaki.com/projects/chicago-riverwalk/>

CONSULTATION

1.18 Stakeholder engagement approach

The Project Steering Group identified stakeholder support as an integral component to the success of any maritime precinct. The Steering Group ensured that the project objectives included a focus on wide stakeholder support for a particular concept, scale and site.

The consultation process helped to ensure a better understanding of different community and stakeholder perspectives, as well as needs and interests as part of the feasibility study and business case process. A broad engagement process with targeted stakeholders, community, Traditional Owners and other relevant bodies encouraged a wide range of voices to take part, including local community and diverse communities.

Full consultation notes can be found in the Consultation Report – Appendix 1.

1.19 Targeted consultation

The Project Steering Group identified a comprehensive list of 72 stakeholders to be engaged in the stakeholder engagement activities.

These stakeholders were provided with a briefing paper and were asked to provide written responses to a series of questions. A total of 28 responses were received. This feedback informed later individual and group discussions.

The feedback from the targeted consultation included:

- The Mission to Seafarers building location is central to maritime heritage in Melbourne, and with many maritime attractions located nearby; a maritime trail would showcase this heritage.
- There was differing views on the best location for a maritime museum and/or precinct with opinions touching on all three locations identified.
- There was a high level of diverse views across the consultation topics. However, there was strong endorsement for a continued focus on existing welfare services within the building.
- Most respondents acknowledged that the Mission to Seafarers building was too small to provide an iconic facility but could see the role as a location for displays.

1.20 Docklands-specific consultation

The City of Melbourne held further consultation with the Docklands Reference Group and Docklands Chamber of Commerce over Zoom. These groups were asked for their feedback on the top three priorities and future opportunities for the Mission to Seafarers building in addition to their support for a Melbourne maritime heritage precinct.

The top priorities identified by members across the two groups were consistent with feedback from the written responses. The priorities included: (1) maritime heritage space or museum; (2) art and cultural space; and (3) community space and environmental sustainability.

Both groups noted that Docklands has suffered considerably from the COVID lockdown and were enthusiastic about new opportunities in Docklands. The Docklands Reference Group noted that Docklands has a perception of lacking authenticity, so heritage buildings such as the Mission to Seafarers building need to be celebrated and utilised to their full potential.

The Group highlighted the need for the building to have a legitimate purpose beyond a visitor centre and suggested that emphasis be placed on continuing its key focus – welfare services for seafarers. The Group also warned against another building with a room for hire model, as it would not bring much additional value to the local community.

Both organisations were very supportive of maritime heritage being recognised. The Docklands Chamber of Commerce notes that Docklands has 7km of waterways, Victoria Harbour and the Yarra River, Birrarung which is underutilised and under celebrated. Initiatives that celebrate maritime heritage are mechanisms to support the significant heritage.

1.21 Consultation with Bunurong Land Council Aboriginal Corporation

The Project Steering Group prioritised Aboriginal connection and involvement in this project. Three Traditional Owners were approached to engage with the consultation process but not all groups were able to be involved.

A consultation with the Bunurong Land Council Aboriginal Corporation was held over Zoom. The consultation sought to determine:

- The importance of maritime history and links to Aboriginal cultural heritage in Melbourne
- The value of the creation of a maritime heritage area in Docklands for the Bunurong Land Council Aboriginal Corporation community
- The top three future priorities for the Mission to Seafarers building for the Bunurong Land Council Aboriginal Corporation community
- Any ideas for future opportunities for the Mission to Seafarers building that contribute to the goals of the Bunurong Land Council Aboriginal Corporation community
- Their level of support for Melbourne maritime heritage being celebrated and recognised

Bunurong advised that the Mission to Seafarers building location on the Birrarung Yarra River is noted for its saltwater/freshwater significance as it heads out to the bay. It was a place for women to gather grasses for baskets and fish traps. The area was also a haven for frogs and birdlife.

The location is important as a shared space for pre- and post-colonial stories around maritime heritage to be told. The building could be an opportunity to tell the story of Bunjil, and there is potential for a replica canoe display in or around the building.

Bunurong also identified that a maritime trail can provide an opportunity to tell timeline stories that integrate pre-colonial and post-colonial connection to the water. In such a trail, the use of local language and naming of place is important.

Bunurong was very supportive of the project and identified the potential to embed a junior Bunurong member into the project. In their experience, having early involvement is key to ensuring that information is shared and in line with the wishes of the Bunurong people. It is important that maritime heritage isn't just presented through a post-colonial lens (e.g. anchors) but also incorporates community knowledge.

1.22 Community consultation

The City of Melbourne used the 'Participate Melbourne' web page to garner community consultation from a wide range of stakeholders. The community consultation ran from 15 February to 15 March 2021. An engagement report titled 'Melbourne Maritime Heritage Precinct and Mission to Seafarers – Feasibility and Business case – Engagement Analysis' was prepared by Global Research Ltd that contains the detail of the consultation feedback. A summary of the report findings is presented below.

The purpose of the project was to find out whether the community sees value in the creation of a maritime heritage area for Melbourne, identify ways that the Mission to Seafarers building can be part of this, and, keeping the core seafarer services, find other uses for the iconic building.

Overall, throughout the engagement period, the website had 4,613 visitors and was viewed a total of 5,500 times. The total number of completed Online Survey Forms was 244, plus 15 responses were received via the Participate Melbourne's Gather Tool — primarily short descriptions of ideas for enhancing the area or to inform the feasibility case.

With regard to the respondents:

- Nearly half of the online form respondents stated that they were residents — 114 (47%)
- 60% of respondents found out about this project via social media
- Nearly half of the respondents were aged between 40 and 59 years of age — 109 (46%)
- A large majority of respondents were not part of maritime organisation, community group or local organisation — 206 (84%)
- A high proportion of respondents want to be kept informed about this project — 206 (84%).

Key findings

The community consultation generally reinforced the findings of the targeted consultation. Support was high (90%) for Melbourne maritime heritage being celebrated and recognised (Figure 7). A considerable number of respondents were in favour of a maritime precinct, with around one third of these comments supporting a focal point being at Mission to Seafarers ensuring that heritage is celebrated in a vibrant living way and that a stagnant museum should be avoided.



Figure 7: Global Research infographic summarising the Participate Melbourne consultation

Preferred options for future use of the building ranged from heritage space, community space, and art and cultural space, which supports a flexible multi-use of the building (Figure 8). Music, arts and community events were the most commonly suggested uses with support for education, Aboriginal history, and maintenance of the current welfare services all getting support.



Figure 8: Global Research infographic summarising the Participate Melbourne consultation

A sizeable number of respondents emphasised the need to continue current functions, specifically welfare and hospitality for seafarers and others within the community.

1.23 Internal consultation with City of Melbourne staff

In addition to the external consultation, a zoom consultation was held with key City of Melbourne staff. The key messages from the consultation were:

- The access to the building via the Seafarer's Rest Park is very important. The design of the park has taken the heritage building into consideration.
- There are mechanisms in place which can assist in providing an entry point to the building from the river through the Riverlee development.
- There is a need to connect the Yarra River, Birrarung and Docklands, and the building could play a role in this as it sits between the two zones.
- There is a need to be cautious about the tourism appeal of maritime heritage, as it is often overstated.
- The Missions to Seafarers' limited access to the river and lack of tall ships could hamper its attractiveness as a maritime location. Furthermore, spreading the precinct too 'thin', i.e. having disparate facilities which are not closely linked could hamper the precinct's attractiveness.
- The Victorian Government has put its focus on Williamstown as a maritime precinct.

1.24 Consultation findings summary

The following themes emerged from the consultation process and will be prioritised in this paper:

- **Melbourne's maritime heritage has been neglected.** Most respondents were enthusiastic about Melbourne's maritime history and were disappointed that it had not received significant attention and investment from government.
- **The Mission to Seafarers Vic Inc. organisation welfare services should remain a priority in the building.** Many stakeholders were clear that the building should continue to provide welfare services to seafarers, continuing the building's original purpose. However, some stakeholders indicated that the organisation no longer needed the entire building and could be relocated to the second floor.
- **The Mission to Seafarers building location is noted for its Aboriginal significance.** The location is important as a shared space for pre- and post-colonial stories around maritime heritage and provides an opportunity to give greater public visibility to Aboriginal history and culture. It is integral for the Traditional Owner groups to be involved moving forward.
- **The importance of Seafarers Rest Park should not be underestimated.** In follow up consultations, respondents stressed the importance of Seafarers Rest Park. The design of the park needs to reflect the maritime heritage of the area and it needs to accommodate public access to the Mission to Seafarers building from the Yarra River, Birrarung.
- **The Mission to Seafarers building is too small to provide a premier maritime museum.** However, there was support for flexible multi-use of the building such as digital exhibitions and maritime-based experiential experiences. It was also noted that 'stagnant museums' should be avoided.
- **The Mission to Seafarers building is well suited to a 'visitor hub'.** The building could be used to provide visitor information about the maritime attractions in Melbourne and house some small exhibitions. Some stakeholders pointed to the inclusion of a café and public spaces for hire to make the model sustainable.
- **There is great potential for the Mission to Seafarers building to have an important role in a heritage maritime precinct.** A Docklands maritime precinct would by its very nature extend from Enterprise Park, Polly Woodside, to Bolte Bridge and into Victoria Harbour. It would be part of a precinct including the rowing sheds, the tourist boats, the Polly Woodside, the fishnet bridge, Victoria Harbour and the coal canal.

The table below shows the overall findings in relation to the consultation objectives.

Consultation objective	Finding
The ideal concept, scale, content, curation and governance of a maritime precinct	There is wide stakeholder support for the concept of a maritime trail along the Yarra River, Birrarung would showcase Melbourne's maritime heritage. Stakeholders noted that the location of the Mission to Seafarers building is central to maritime heritage in Melbourne, with many maritime attractions located nearby.
The level of support for the siting options of Mission to Seafarers vs Docklands (location undefined) and what role this building could play within a precinct	While this project aims to confirm wide stakeholder support for a site, there were differing views on the best location for a maritime museum and/or precinct. Some respondents advocated for Victoria Harbour/Central Pier, some respondents preferred Williamstown and others identified the Mission to Seafarers building as the best available opportunity.
The level of divergence of views on concept, scale and siting within the stakeholder community	There was a high level of divergence among the stakeholder community. All respondents agreed that maritime heritage is important and supported action in this space. All respondents highlighted the need for the Mission to Seafarers building to continue to provide welfare services within the building. However, the role of the Mission to Seafarers building in supporting maritime heritage differed among stakeholders.
The level of support to the Mission to Seafarers site (limited size but a defined opportunity) that could potentially limit the idealised project scope and size	Most respondents acknowledged that the Mission to Seafarers building was too small to provide an iconic facility. However, it was thought that the building could act as a central location for displays or attractions around Docklands.
The level of financial and other support stakeholders could provide to the project.	Many consultees were willing to provide support to the project in the form of their experience, expertise and membership base.

FEASIBILITY RECOMMENDATIONS

1.25 Project objectives

This feasibility study was established to identify the likely feasibility and possible locations of a maritime heritage precinct. The table below summarises the key outcomes of the feasibility study against of the project objectives.

Original Objective	Discussion
Has wide stakeholder support for a particular concept and scale	<p>The 'precinct as a trail' concept has wide acceptance as it can connect existing and add new maritime elements.</p> <p>There are differing views on the best location for a major museum and whether it would draw sufficient visitors.</p>
Has wide stakeholder support for a site	<p>The 'precinct as a trail' concept centered around the location of the Mission to Seafarers, Seafarers Rest Park, Seafarers Bridge and Polly Woodside has wide acceptance as it can connect elements on the Yarra River, Birrarung and, also, Docklands if and as they are established.</p>
Is consistent with existing State and CoM strategies and policies	<p>The 'precinct as a trail' concept centred around the location of the Mission to Seafarers, Seafarers Rest Park, Seafarers Bridge and Polly Woodside is consistent with the Birrarung Strategy.</p> <p>Note that the Dockland Activation Strategy recommends the development around Victoria Harbour. However, there are concerns regarding the cost, timing and likelihood of this recommendation.</p>
Has positive economic impact on the City	<p>The 'precinct as a trail' concept will have positive economic impact to the City in terms of tourism and business development.</p> <p>The economic impact is clearly positive, but it can't be quantified until a specific project brief is developed.</p>
The upfront/capital cost is borne by State and / or others	<p>This is still to be determined. It is subject to the Victorian Government views on the project that is proposed. However, there are indications that State Government will invest in the refurbishment of the Mission to Seafarers building.</p>
The ongoing operational cost to City of Melbourne is low	<p>This is still to be determined. It is subject to the Victorian Government views on the project that is proposed.</p>
Is part of a precinct and has potential staging opportunities	<p>The 'precinct as a trail' concept has easy staging opportunities.</p> <p>The larger redevelopment/museum options are much harder to stage due to their scale.</p>
Contextualises Aboriginal connection and involvement	<p>This is an opportunity and a critical part of the 'precinct as a trail' concept. It is important when defining maritime heritage to include Aboriginal maritime heritage in the story of the place. Much of the maritime activity and story of the people, river and bay predates colonisation.</p>
Is realistically implementable within 3-5 years	<p>This objective favours the 'precinct as a trail' concept centred around the Mission to Seafarers, Seafarers Rest Park, Seafarers Bridge and Polly Woodside (although the park is dependent upon the successful development by Riverlee). The larger concepts could not realistically meet this timeframe objective.</p>

1.26 Recommendations discussion

Recommendation 1: A maritime heritage precinct can best be created through the linking of existing maritime assets in a 'trail', rather than using any individual location.

A world class maritime heritage 'precinct as a trail' can be created through the linking together of existing maritime assets along the Yarra River, Birrarung and Docklands rather than using any individual location. It is envisaged that will be more successful and a point of differentiation as a linked assemblage of nodes of existing and new maritime heritage resources.

The vision of connecting existing assets, adding new ones, improving wayfinding and interpretation, and managing and marketing it as a whole has wide support with the stakeholder group.

A successful linkage and marketing of heritage maritime assets along the water would enhance Melbourne's attractiveness as a place to visit, play and work. Successfully implemented, it will bolster Melbourne's tourist appeal particularly around the Docklands area.

There is already in place the skeleton of such a trail precinct (Figure 9). A natural collection of adjacent nodes includes Sandridge Bridge, Enterprise Park (currently being completely upgraded), Seaworks, Batman Park, Poly Woodside Park, Polly Woodside ship and museum, across Seafarers Bridge into Seafarers Rest Park, Mission to Seafarers building, refurbished crane and goods shed as part of the Seafarers development. The trail could then continue to Docklands via the Australian Wharf which is well linked via the Jim Stynes footbridge and then to North Wharf and Victoria Harbour where the current Heritage Fleet (Alma Doepel, Enterprize and Steam tug Wattle) are berthed.

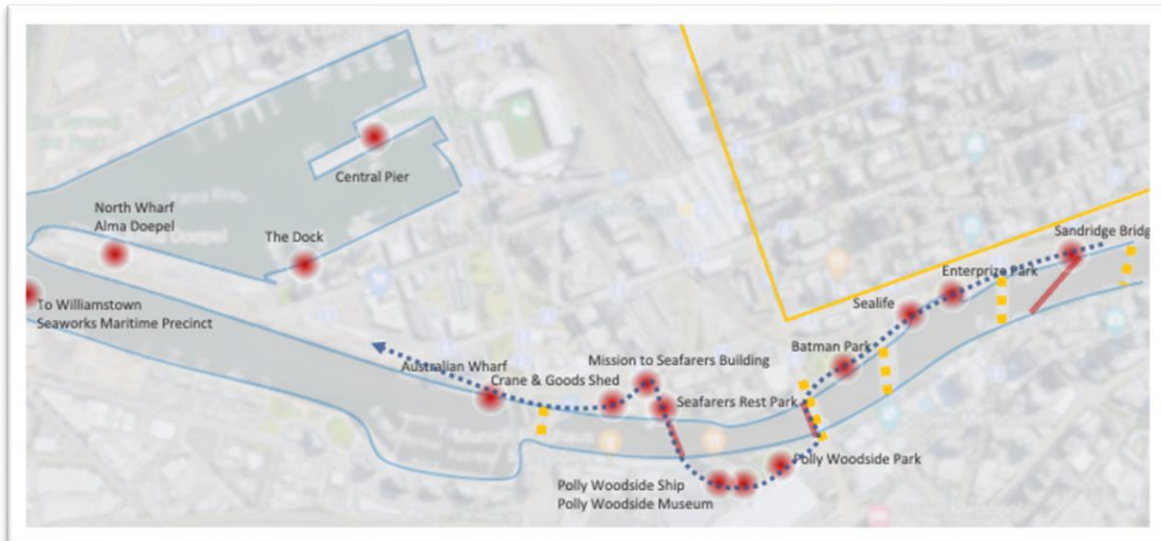


Figure 9: The skeleton of the proposed maritime heritage trail precinct

The central area of the Polly Woodside Park, ship and museum, Seafarers Bridge, park, and Mission to Seafarers building and the Seafarers development would form a natural heart to such a trail precinct as the activity levels and attraction density is high. This area of the river is currently a bit of a dead end and could be branded and promoted as heritage maritime which would greatly assist in bringing life to the area.

A trail concept would allow new maritime heritage assets to be easily added as and when they are completed including North wharf and Central Pier in Docklands (by foot) and linking by ferry to the Williamstown maritime attractions such as Seaworks and HMAS Castlemaine.

Recommendation 2: Aboriginal maritime heritage should be recognised and integrated into the project in line with the input of Traditional Owner groups.

It is important when defining maritime heritage to include Aboriginal maritime heritage in the story of the place. The Mission to Seafarers building location on the Yarra River, Birrarung is noted for its saltwater/freshwater significance as it heads out to the bay. It was a place for women to gather grasses for baskets and fish traps. The area was also a haven for frogs and birdlife.

Recommendation 3: Adequate investment, combined with strong governance, management and marketing are essential to the success of this ‘precinct as a trail’ concept.

Without adequate investment, governance, management and marketing the concept is unlikely to be successful. The Mission to Seafarers building needs refurbishment. Wayfinding and interpretation need bolstering all along the river. The Seafarers Rest Park redevelopment also needs to be completed and accompanied by a strong marketing and communications strategy.

A small, focused maritime heritage trail management team with meaningful budgets and some industry and stakeholder advisory oversight would also be recommended to ensure ongoing focus and governance.

The Birrarung Strategy defines City of Melbourne’s vision and direction for the inner-city reaches of the Yarra River, Birrarung. Its purpose is to direct policy decisions and inform all future capital works project planning within the City of Melbourne’s river corridor and offer a planned response to avoid ad hoc decisions and holistically shape future proposals. The Strategy includes a graphic for sections of the Yarra River, Birrarung, which supports the location of maritime heritage along the Yarra in the locations outlined above (Figure 10).

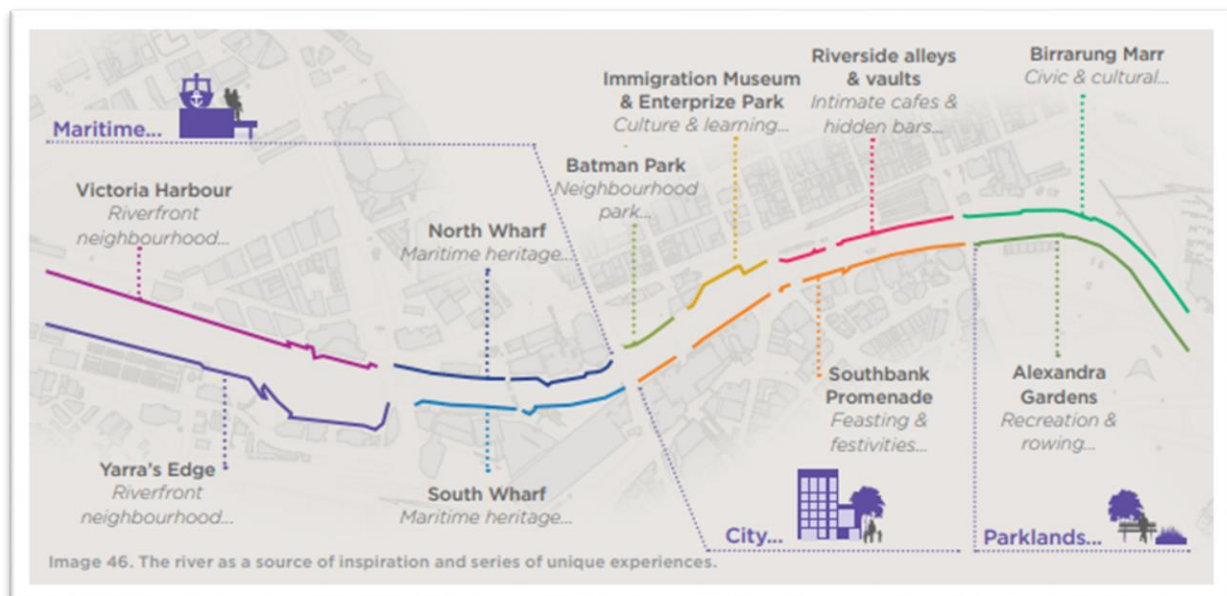


Figure 10: The location of maritime heritage along the Yarra River, Birrarung

A maritime trail would support Action 10 of the Birrarung Strategy: *Develop an interpretation strategy including storytelling and signage for the Yarra River, Birrarung, on the basis of the Aboriginal cultural narrative, maritime trading heritage and shared post contact history.*

Recommendation 4: The ‘precinct as a trail’ would benefit greatly from, and compliment, the City of Melbourne’s Greenline project.

The maritime trail concept presented herein would complement the Greenline project, a revitalisation of the Northbank of the Yarra River, Birrarung covering four kilometres between Birrarung Marr and the Bolte Bridge.

Recommendation 5: The Mission to Seafarers building could play a pivotal role as the ‘headquarters’ of a trail type precinct.

A new access point to the Mission to Seafarers orientated towards the Seafarers Rest Park and Yarra River, Birrarung is pivotal for any successful maritime precinct. The building currently has no direct access or linkage south towards the river and park. This would need to be rectified within the constraints of the planning scheme and heritage controls.

By relocating the seafarer welfare services functions upstairs, the entire ground floor of the building could be repurposed for tourist, community, function, education and/or exhibition spaces to support and enhance the trail precinct and to showcase the heritage protected building. It also probably needs some major ‘wow’ factor that could showcase the dome, perhaps the most unique part of the building.

PART 2:

BUSINESS CASE FOR MISSION TO SEAFARERS BUILDING

BUSINESS CASE INTRODUCTION

1.27 Background

Owned by the State and featuring St Peter the Mariner Chapel, Flying Angel Club and the Norla Dome, the Mission to Seafarers building located at 717 Flinders Street also houses an archival collection of maritime and social history.

Mission to Seafarers Victoria Inc. is a not-for-profit organisation that leases the building from Department of Treasury and Finance. They provide seafarers welfare services and undertake fundraising activities to support those services as well as help maintain the building.

The Victorian Government has approached the City of Melbourne to ascertain its interest in assuming management and operational responsibility of the building possibly as part of a maritime heritage precinct that the City is investigating (See Part 1 – Feasibility Study).

1.28 Purpose and scope of this report

In anticipation of the existing Mission to Seafarers site being a likely asset following a refurbishment and redevelopment of the building, Part 2 of this report provides a high level business case on the site.

The business case includes:

- An assessment of the current status of the building and operation
- A desktop review and summary of the current usage of the site
- Identifications of options for use as a maritime heritage asset
- Consideration of future plans and works at adjacent development sites
- High level analysis of operational and financial issues

This report has been conducted as a high-level analysis only, using desktop reviews and available information. The site analysis, design, long-term financial forecasts have not been considered as part of this business case and but would need to be explored if there are subsequent stages of building development.

Previous reports produced by the Victorian Government, Council and the maritime sector have indicated strong interest in the development of a maritime heritage precinct located in Docklands and the Yarra River, Birrarung. The proposed precinct would celebrate Melbourne's significant waterways history and cultivate a focus for Melbourne's maritime heritage. The Mission to Seafarers building and its location in particular represents both a key asset and opportunity that could add value to the longer term vision of a maritime heritage precinct (Figure 11).



Figure 11: Map shows a location plan of the building in relation to its surrounds.

BUILDING STATUS

1.29 Mission to Seafarers building

Once known as the Mission to Seamen, the Mission to Seafarers building has approximately 1,800 square metres of floor space across three levels and is located on North Wharf, Flinders Street extension. It contains the Missions to Seamen building, St. Peter’s memorial chapel, the former gymnasium (domed roof structure), the Chaplain and caretaker former residences, and a small car park along the eastern boundary of the parcel. Currently, it is used to facilitate welfare services for seafarers, church services, community meeting place, venue hire and as an exhibition space.

The image (Figure 12) below shows the front elevation abutting the busy six lane Wurundjeri Way.



Figure 12: Photograph of the Mission to Seafarers building.

The building continues to be used by Mission to Seafarers Victoria Inc. to provide welfare services for seafarers. Mission to Seafarers Victoria Inc. raises revenue to support these welfare services through commercial uses of the building complex for venue hire, exhibitions and fund-raising activities (including attracting grants and donations). Restricting welfare services to the upstairs areas of the building may impact the tenant’s ability to raise funds and should be negotiated. It also houses Mission to Seafarers Victoria Inc. heritage collection and a range of other maritime heritage artefacts.

The image below (Figure 13) shows the location of the building and its surrounds. The lines indicate the title boundaries. Note the private property extending between the building and the Seafarers Rest Park to the south of the building.

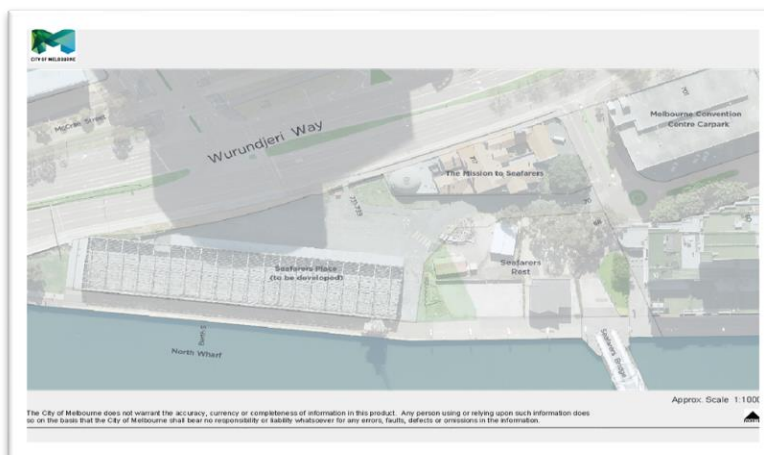


Figure 13: Location of the building and its surrounds.

1.30 Building layout

An indicative isometric view of the building is shown below (Figure 14) and provides a good high-level insight into its layout and major components. This was prepared to show that the seafarer welfare services core areas could all be potentially accommodated on the upper levels.

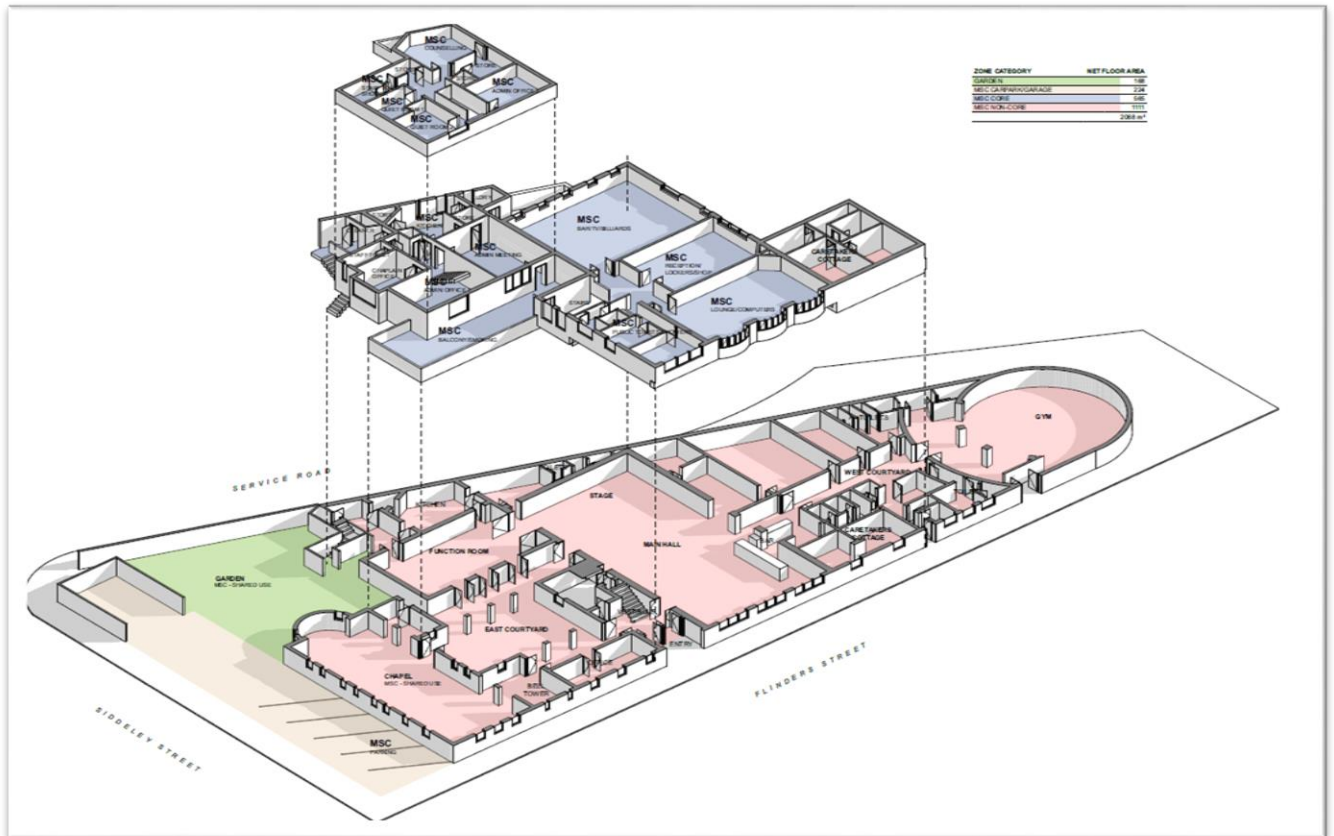


Figure 14: Layout of the building.

In addition, photographs from the Heritage Victoria database show internal areas of the complex.

Description

Image

This image is of the east courtyard, between the chapel and the main hall. The doors in the photo lead to the function room.



This image shows the entrance to the Norla dome.



This image is of an art exhibition inside the Norla dome.



1.31 Building ownership

The building is owned by the Victorian Government through the Department of Treasury and Finance.

We understand that it was leased to the Mission to Seafarers Victoria Inc. but this lease has expired. Mission to Seafarers Victoria Inc. is still the sitting tenant and the Victorian Government has indicated that any new ownership or redevelopment proposal must cater for them, perhaps with them moving their welfare services to the upper levels.

1.32 Planning context

All of this property is an 'area of cultural heritage sensitivity'.

The building is identified as:

- Address: 717 Flinders Street Docklands 3008 (Figure 15)
- Crown Description: Allot. 10 Sec. 98 City of Melbourne, Parish of Melbourne North
- Standard Parcel Identifier (SPI): 10~98\PP5514C
- Local Government Area (Council): Melbourne
- Council Property Number: 513867
- Planning Scheme: Melbourne

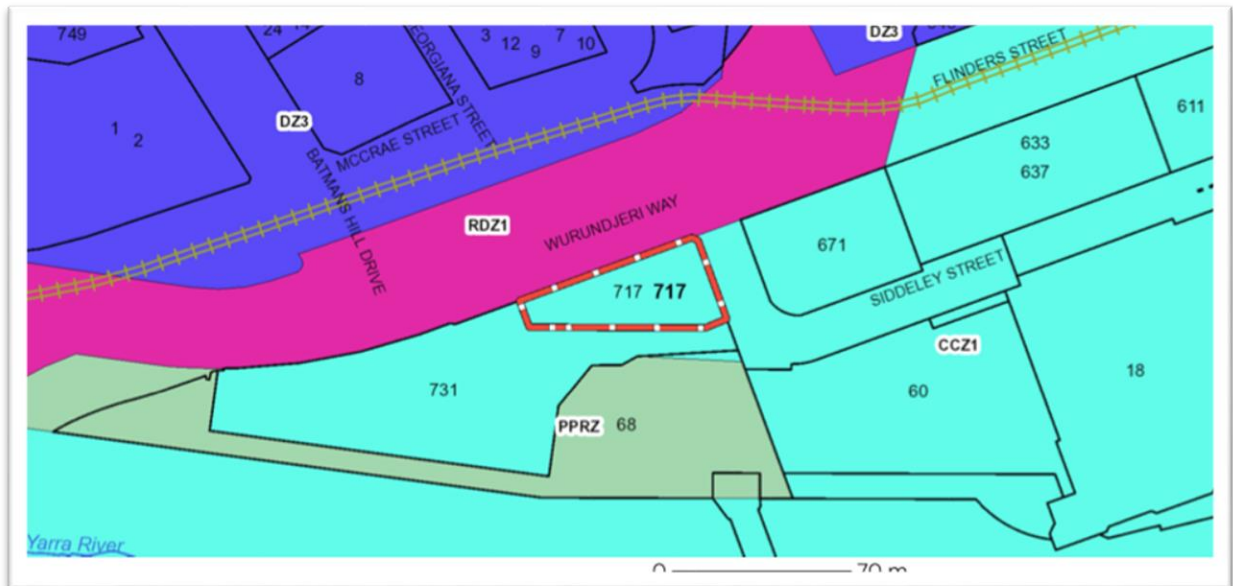


Figure 15: Location on Wurundjeri Way.

Zoning

- Capital city zone (CCZ)
- Capital city zone - schedule 1 (CCZ1)

Overlays:

- Design and development overlay (DDO)
- Design and development overlay - Schedule 10 (DDO10)
- Parking overlay (PO)
- Parking overlay - precinct 1 (PO1)
- Heritage overlay (HO)
- Heritage overlay (HO650)

1.33 Heritage Victoria registration

The building is listed on the Victorian Heritage Register H1496 pursuant to the Heritage Act. It is of architectural, aesthetic and historical significance to the State of Victoria. This imposes significant restrictions on what can be done with the building with respect to changes.

The registration notes the buildings are architecturally significant as a milestone in the introduction of the Spanish Mission style to Melbourne. The style was to later find widespread popularity in the suburbs of Melbourne. The choice of Spanish Mission directly refers to the Christian purpose of the complex.

The buildings are unusual for combining two distinct architectural styles, for they also reflect the imitation of English domestic architecture, the Arts and Crafts movement. Butler was one of the most prominent and progressive architects of the period and the complex is one of his most unusual and distinctive works. Notable interior features include the chapel, the internal courtyard and loggia, the main hall and lobby and the domed gymnasium with oculus. The chapel is of architectural and aesthetic significance for its timber truss roof and its fine collection of crafted joinery, including the altar and sanctuary chairs with their carved Australian flora motifs.

Maritime imagery abounds throughout the complex: some stained glass windows in the chapel depicting stories and scenes associated with the sea; the pulpit in the form of a ship's stern; the large mariner's compass inlaid in the terrazzo floor of the lobby; and the copper ship finial on the roof. Built-in timber cupboards, wardrobes, panelling and studded doors throughout the buildings evoke a ship's cabin.

The buildings have historical and social significance as tangible evidence of prevailing concerns for the religious, moral, and social welfare of seafarers throughout most of the 19th and 20th centuries. The complex has a long association with the Missions to Seamen, an organisation formed to look after the welfare of seafarers, both officers and sailors, men "of all nationalities". It had its origins in Bristol, England when a Seamen's Mission was formed in 1837.

The building reflects the diverse role played by the Mission with its chapel, hall and stage, billiards room, reading room, dining room, officers' and men's quarters, chaplain's residence, and gymnasium. The chapel contains many items which have been donated to commemorate seafarers, including stained glass windows, altar rails, baptismal font, pews, choir stall and sanctuary chairs.

The location, size and arrangement of the buildings provide evidence of the volume of shipping and the scale of activity on the docks and wharves of Melbourne throughout much of the 20th century and the support structure created to assist those working in the shipping trade.

The extent of registration includes:

- All the building.
- All the following specified objects:
 - Chapel bell
 - Chapel: Pews, Choir stalls, Altar and reredos, Pulpit, Lectern, Baptismal font and cover, Carved timber sanctuary chairs (two)
 - Chaplain's residence: Oak sideboard in dining room, Dining room table and 6 chairs
 - Billiards Room: Timber bench seat
 - Office: Timber cupboard

A Conservation Management Plan (CMP) for the building was carried out in 2003 (Vols. 1 & 2 by RBA Architects). It identifies the significance of the building and appropriate conservation policy. CMPs are normally reviewed and updated within a 5-10 year period. It is not clear whether a new CMP has been produced and this should be considered.

There is now probably a need to revise and update the CMP in relation to current constraints (physical and management and the changing setting of the place) and to assist consideration of the development uses discussed in this report.

In 2018, Lovell Chen produced a 'Conversation Works Specification' to direct the conservation works. Approval from Heritage Victoria is required for redevelopment and this will place significant constraints on what can be done to modify the building. Additional time and budget should be allowed compared to a non-listed building development.

1.34 Key constraints

The use of the building by Mission to Seafarers Victoria Inc. has a long history and has wide support for continuance, although they do not require the whole building for their core needs. In addition to seafarer welfare services, they also see their role as the building custodian. Although, it is understood that they no longer have a formal lease of the building with Department of Treasury and Finance, they do have influence over development plans via their community and supporters. Assumptions have been made that they are willing to relocate upstairs, but this has neither been formalised nor the costs quantified.

The building is listed on the Victorian Heritage Register H1496 pursuant to the Heritage Act. It is of architectural, aesthetic and historical significance to the State of Victoria. This imposes significant restrictions on what can be done with the building with respect to changes.

The building currently has no direct access or linkage south towards the river and park and this would need to be rectified, or it won't integrate with the trail. It is recommended that the following concepts would need to be implemented for this to happen:

- New major access through on the southern elevation to access the park and provide strong linkages of the building to the bridge. The existing front entrance is not suitable. Appropriate design and planning is required to determine if there is an appropriate access point on the southern elevation suited to becoming a new front entrance to the building that also connects well to the future park and river trails.
- Possible opening of the wall into the garden area
- Tidying the southern elevation which is back of house and visually unattractive.

The extent to which this is possible will largely be determined by Heritage Victoria. Support should be obtained in principle from them to a design concept prior to purchase. There is also potential for 'non typical' Building Code of Australia compliance issues (entry into private property etc.) and these would need to be satisfactorily resolved.

The southern elevation (Figure 16) abuts the private property of the adjacent Riverlee development (their service road). This needs to be crossed to gain access to the park. Legal certainty should be obtained from Riverlee that this access is acceptable and can be permanent. This land arrangement may also have building code compliance issues (egress into private property etc.), and these issues should be discussed with a Building Surveyor.



Figure 16: The southern elevation abuts the private property of the adjacent Riverlee development.

1.35 Building condition

A building condition and compliance report has not been completed as part of this stage of the project but would need to be explored if there are subsequent stages of building development.

On inspection, the building condition appeared quite poor, although Department of Treasury and Finance had recently funded maintenance and rectification works to the façade, some windows and roof areas, as well as some internal works. We understand the budget was in the order of \$2.5 million.

It would be reasonable to assume that a major renovation would be required for a redevelopment and that current Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) standards would require a lift be installed. New services are likely to be required throughout.

1.36 Seafarers Rest Park

The Seafarers Rest Park is a proposed park to the south of the building. It is currently in detailed design phase.

It is being majority funded by the Riverlee developer as part of their development contribution. They propose to construct the park at the completion of the construction of their tower building. The image below (Figure 17) shows render of the proposed park and the Riverlee development. The dome of the Mission to Seafarers building can just be seen.



Figure 17: The render of the proposed park and the Riverlee development.

As identified in this report a southern connection and new entrance would be required to link the building with the river, park and bridge. To link the building with the river and bridge, care will need to be taken in the design of Seafarers Rest Park to ensure a high level of exposure, linkage and connection.

The figure below shows a montage of the Riverlee tower, park concept drawing and Mission to Seafarers building and sketch arrows on possible key connections that would need to be considered.

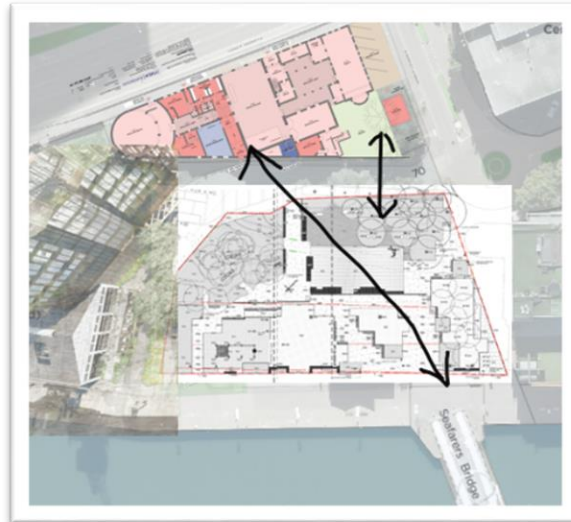


Figure 18: Arrows show possible key connections that would need to be considered.

As previously discussed there are possible permit, design, legal and compliance constraints that need to be investigated to determine whether this is possible.

1.37 Riverlee Seafarers development

Directly to the west of the building, Riverlee is developing a hotel and hotel branded residences project which includes reuse of the goods shed and retention of the old crane. They have branded the development 'Seafarers'.

The image (Figure 19) below shows the large scale of the development. The Mission to Seafarers building can be seen in the bottom right of the artist impression below.



Figure 19: The large scale Riverlee development.

Aside from the scale, there are two key issues of particular relevance to this project:

- If the Riverlee project is delayed or unable to make its presales hurdles, it and the Seafarers Rest Park may not proceed. The park, especially, is critical to the wider project
- Legal access permissions from Riverlee to cross their private property roadway between the building and Seafarers Rest park is required

With respect to the second issue the drawing extract below (Figure 20) shows this private property road and just how close the title boundary is to the rear wall of the building. As noted earlier, this may impose constraints on the ability to create a visually strong and connected southern entrance.



Figure 20: The private property road at the rear wall of the building.

OPTIONS FOR USE

Based on the research conducted in the feasibility study and this business case, there are some varied options for use of the Mission to Seafarers building premises.

Continued focus on welfare services for seafarers

There was strong support to prioritise welfare services to seafarers, continuing the building's original purpose. This is likely to be a formal and/or informal condition to any sale, lease or management agreement.

Previous analysis showed that the core areas required for seafarers' welfare services could be accommodated in the two upper levels of the building, freeing up the ground floor. Further consultation is recommended to understand whether Mission to Seafarers Vic Inc. no longer needs the entire building and could be relocated to the second floor, and any commercial lease arrangements.

Church services continue

The Chapel is currently used by the Anglican Church. Exact arrangements for its use are unclear. It is assumed that its use would be continued as it is quite a specialist room and the pews, choir stalls, altar and reredos, pulpit, lectern, baptismal font and cover, carved timber sanctuary chairs are registered in the Heritage Register.

Blend of public spaces

During the consultation phase, many potential uses of the building were put forward. Few respondents advocated for a full maritime centre in the building (it being too small), instead preferring a blend of heritage premises and purpose with new public spaces, services and amenities.

The concept of a 'visitor hub' was put forward many times, in which the building is used to provide visitor information about the maritime attractions in Melbourne and perhaps houses some small exhibitions. Some respondents pointed to the inclusion of a café and public spaces for hire to make the model sustainable. '

These lower floors could generate an income through community hire and events.

Digital displays and experiences

If the second floor is used by the Mission to Seafarers Vic Inc., then the remaining spaces on the ground floor could be used for a variety of purposes within the limitations of heritage constraints.

The ground floor spaces, around 1,100m², comprising the major spaces of the Main Hall, Chapel, Function Room, East Courtyard, Dome, Caretakers Cottage and Garden, assuming that heritage constraints would mean they would likely have to remain as-is in form.

These spaces could be repurposed and/or marketed for tourist, community, function, education and exhibition spaces to support and enhance the trail precinct and to showcase the heritage protected building. It could also include some major 'wow' factor that would showcase the dome, perhaps the most unique part of the building. Entry fees could generate some income.

There was stakeholder support for some designed interactive installations for visitors in the building. The building, particularly the dome, would provide an ideal steppingstone for trialling digital exhibitions and other maritime-based experiential museum experiences.

Place to share stories of Aboriginal maritime history

Stakeholder engagement with Traditional Owners also identified the cultural significance of the location and the opportunity to give greater public visibility and understanding of Aboriginal maritime history and culture.

Greater connection to the park and river

The design of the park needs to reflect the maritime heritage of the area and it needs to accommodate public access to the Mission to Seafarers building from the Yarra River, Birrarung.

Caretaker's cottage redevelopment

The Caretakers cottage and west courtyard back of house areas may get approval for more intensive development into modern toilets, kitchen, offices etc. subject to heritage consent. A concept plan needs to be prepared cognisant of all the building constraints and aspirations.

FINANCIAL ANALYSIS

1.38 Capital requirements -

One scenario identified through this process included a maritime heritage museum and range of commercial spaces.

A high level 'first pass' cost plan was prepared to provide some initial budget guidance of likely building capital expenditure (capex) costs based on rough sketch design concepts delineating the building into minor and major work areas. No building testing, due diligence, inspection, engineering or other consultant input has been included.

The summary of the cost plan is as follows:

Total Quantity Surveyor cost estimate from earlier work	\$11.5m
Add 20% for unforeseen heritage costs	\$2.3m
Add additional escalation base on a 2023 start (say 10%)	<u>\$1.4m</u>
Indicative capex budget (building)	\$15.2m

ADD

Allowance for internal fit out, 'wow' type attraction, external integration with a maritime precinct, IT, AV etc. approximately \$5m

Adopt \$15-20m whole project capital requirement.

1.39 Operational funding

Indicative operating budget estimates have been developed to consider the potential different operating model options.

Rooms-for-hire operating model

Under this scenario the upper floors are leased to the Mission to Seafarers Victoria Inc. and/or Melbourne Seafarers Centre Inc. at a commercial rate.

The lower floors are used by a variety of community hire, weddings, event spaces etc. Three FTE staff are assumed and an after-hours security guard three nights per week.

The analysis shows an operating deficit of around \$150,000 per annum. The assumptions are shown below. The commercial rent from the upstairs tenants is the key operational support.

This excludes any capital maintenance sinking fund type allowance.

Tourist destination model

Under this scenario the upper floors are leased to the Mission to Seafarers Victoria Inc. and/or Melbourne Seafarers Centre Inc. at a commercial rate equating to around \$200,000 per annum. These organisations will in turn likely require the Victorian Government to reimburse this, and more, to agree to pay this.

The lower floors are used for maritime tourism and maritime exhibition space. A modest allowance has been made for entry and building hire. Three FTE staff and an after-hours security guard three nights per week are assumed.

The analysis shows an operating deficit of around \$50,000 per annum. The details and assumptions are shown below. The commercial rent from the upstairs tenants is the key operational support. If no entry fee was feasible, this deficit would increase to \$300,000.

This excludes any capital maintenance sinking fund type allowance.

1.40 Risk

This project has a high level of risk. The 'by exception' key risk items for the project include:

- Agreement to the project by Mission to Seafarers Vic Inc. is a practical requirement and therefore a key risk. The use of the building by Mission to Seafarers Victoria Inc. has a long history and has wide support of continuance. Assumptions have been made that they are willing to relocate upstairs and pay a commercial lease, but this has not been formalised.
- It is critical the project has Heritage Victoria's agreement for a new southern entry / major access point, in addition to opening up the garden and cleaning up the southern elevation.
- If the Riverlee project is delayed or unable to make its presales hurdles, it and the Seafarers Rest Park will not proceed. The park especially is critical to the wider project.
- The project requires legal access permissions from Riverlee to cross their private property roadway between the building and Seafarers Rest Park.
- Further work needs to be done to develop a satisfactory design connecting the park, river and bridge.
- There may be non-typical Building Code of Australia compliance issues (entry into private property etc.) which would need to be satisfactorily resolved.
- The development of an acceptable design which capable of permit approvals needs to be undertaken.
- Further estimates will be required on the capital and running cost especially with the context of old heritage buildings.
- The project will require funding support from the State Government which is not yet agreed.

We have formulated our recommendations with a view to mitigating these risks prior to a final decision being made.

1.41 Compliance

It is beyond the scope of this report to assess compliance of the Mission to Seafarers building.

The building is old and in need of refurbishment. It appears on a visual inspection to have inadequate DDA facilities such as a lift, and it doesn't have centralised services such as ventilation, heating and cooling. It would be wise to assume that significant work and cost would be needed as part of any major refurbishment to make the building compliant with current requirements.

Department of Treasury and Finance has recently funded \$2.5m worth of works including façade and waterproofing that may offset some of the scope of redevelopment.

A detailed technical due diligence of the building prior to considering the assumption of any committee of management responsibilities should include:

- Condition assessment to determine accurate refurbishment and operational costs in order to implement any concept plan.
- Building Code Australia (BCA) advice on the key implications of these issues.
- Heritage advice and subsequent Heritage Victoria agreement that a new southern entry / major access point is possible.
- Appointment of design consultants to develop a concept plan consistent with the heritage, building, and tenant constraints.
- Commencement of discussions with Riverlee to regarding access to the private property roadway between the building and Seafarers Rest Park.

BUSINESS CASE RECOMMENDATIONS

The business case recommendations include:

1. Acknowledgement that the Mission to Seafarers building is held in high regard, valued and should be retained.
2. Recognition that the building requires significant capital investment to ensure its longer term functionality, operational excellence, compliance and amenity.
3. Acknowledgement that Council would not invest in any capital redevelopment costs.
4. The Victorian Government remains responsible to fund the capital cost of any building upgrade. On this basis, Council would be interested in supporting the continued development of the project noting that:
 - a. The capital refurbishment and project costs could be significant and will be dependent upon the determined use, quality and type of function of the building.
 - b. A full operational review of the building would be required to assess Council's potential interest.
5. Recurrent funding support may be required depending on the operating model and that:
 - b. Continued liaison with the relevant Victorian Government departments to determine the future arrangements with Mission to Seafarers Victoria Inc. and/or Melbourne Seafarers Centre for the delivery of seafarer's welfare services and associated costs is required.

APPENDIX 1 – DETAILED CONSULTATION REPORT

Melbourne Maritime Heritage Precinct and Mission to Seafarers Project Feasibility Study

Consultation Report

1.42 Methodology

Stakeholder support was identified during project initiation as an integral component to the success of any maritime precinct. The project sought to undertake a consultation process to ensure better understanding of different community and stakeholder perspectives, needs and interests as part of the feasibility study and business case process. A broad engagement process would encourage a wide range of voices to take part including local community and diverse communities.

The consultation process sought to determine:

- The ideal concept, scale, content, curation and governance of a maritime precinct
- The level of support for the siting options of Mission to Seafarers vs Docklands (location undefined) and what role this building could play within a precinct
- The level of divergence of views on concept, scale and siting within the stakeholder community
- The level of support to the Mission to Seafarers site (limited size but a defined opportunity) that could potentially limit the idealised project scope and size?
- The level of financial and other support stakeholders could provide to the project

Project Steering Group members were asked to provide a list of stakeholders they thought should be contacted (see below for full list). These stakeholders were sent an email with an attached briefing paper (also below). Stakeholders were asked to provide a written response to a series of questions, which informed later group discussions.

1.43 Consultees

The following consultees were contacted for their input into the Mission to Seafarers Building / Melbourne Maritime Heritage Precinct.

Organisation	Contact Name	Role
Melbourne Maritime Heritage Network (MMHN)	Michael O'Brien	Director
Mission to Seafarers, Victoria	Neil Edwards AM	Chairman
Melbourne Maritime Heritage Network (MMHN)	Liz Rushen	Director
Melbourne Passenger Boating Assoc.	Jeff Gordon	President
Queenscliffe Maritime Museum	Colin White	Secretary
	Lindsay Rex	
Amazon 1863 Project Inc.	Karyn Bugeja	Secretary
Maritime Law Association of Australia and New Zealand (MLAANZ)	David Goodwin	President
	Gareth Johnson	
	Gregory Harper	
Boating Industry Association of Victoria (BIAV)	Steve Walker	

Offshore & Specialist Ships Australia Ltd	Ross Brewer	Chairman
History At Work	Emma Russell	Director and Principal Historian
Maritime Union of Australia	Shane Stevens	Victoria Branch Secretary
	Jeff Malley	
Yarra River Business Association	Tim Bracher	Executive Officer
	Michael Julian	
Melbourne Maritime Heritage Network (MMHN)	Michael Taman	Member
Bay Steamers Maritime Museum Ltd	Tony Lewis	Chairman
Maritime Museums of Victoria Inc.	Neil Thomas	Secretary
Melbourne Maritime Heritage Network (MMHN)	Mark Sims	Member
Melbourne Seafarers Centre	Warwick Norman	
	Graham Pilkington	
Riverlee	Brett Howlett	
Institute of Marine Engineering Science and Technology (IMarEST)	Howard Mumford	
Kangan Institute	Gideon Perrott	
The Company of Master Mariners of Australia Limited (Melbourne Branch)	Ian French	Melbourne Branch Master
Royal Historical Society of Victoria (RHSV)	Charles Sowerwine	Chair, Heritage Committee
	John Widmer	
Offshore & Specialist Ships Australia Ltd (OSSA)	Brian Mallon	Member
National Trust of Australia (Victoria)	Simon Ambrose	Chief Executive Officer
Melbourne Bushwalkers Inc. (MBW)	Susanne Etti	President
Melbourne Bushwalkers Inc. (MBW)	Robert Mair	Past-President
Offshore & Specialist Ships Australia Ltd (OSSA)	Andrew Coccoli	member
Stella Maris Seafarer's Centre	James McCully	Manager
Mission to Seafarers Vic Inc.	Sue Dight	Chief Manager
Melbourne Seafarers Centre	Mick Doleman	Chairman
Melbourne Naval Committee	David Garnock CAPT, CSC, RAN	President
Melbourne Bushwalkers Inc. (MBW)	Susanne Etti	President
Melbourne Facilities Management	Cheryl Andrews	General Manager
Port of Melbourne - Sustainability Manager	Emily Spiller	
Port of Melbourne - Head of Business Development	Vlad Jotic	
Bay Steamers Maritime Museum (ST Wattle – Heritage Fleet)	Tony Lewis	Chair
Polly Woodside Volunteers	Neil Thomas	
Seaworks Maritime Precinct		
Enterprize Melbourne's Tall Ship	Michael Womack	
Maritime Trust of Australia (HMS Castlemaine)	Denis Gale	President
Alma Doepel	Peter Harris	Restoration Director
Naval Association of Australia - Melbourne Sub Branch	CMDR Terry Making AM RAN Rtd	President

Naval Commemorative Committee of Victoria	CMDR Terry Making AM RAN Rtd	President
Melbourne Naval Committee	CAPT David Garnock CSC RAN Rtd	Chair Person
State Government Architect	Jill Garner	Victorian Government Architect
Development Victoria	Jamie Gillingham	Senior Development Manager
Monash Indigenous Studies Centre	Lynette Russell	Professor
Committee for Melbourne Residents 3000	Rafael Camillo	President
East Enders Inc.	Stan Capp	President
Southbank Residents Association	Tony Penna	President
Ross House Association	Michael Griffiths	General Manager
Housing Choices Australia	Naomi Board	Community Development Officer
Rotary Club of Southbank	Sally Page	President
Melbourne City Southbank Lions	Alan Cui	President
Melbourne Sunrise Probus Club		Personal email on website
Victoria Police	Glenn McFarlane	Crime Prevention Officer
Hotham History Group		
North and West Melbourne Association		Kevin Chamberlin
Yarra River Keeper Association		
Department of Transport	Andrew Newman	Director - Ports, Freight & Intermodal
Parks Victoria	Paul Roser	Manager Heritage Programs
Department of Treasury and Finance	Sam Burke	Director Land and Property

1.44 Email text

Consultees were sent an email with the following text:

I am writing to you regarding the consultation process for the Mission to Seafarers Building / Melbourne Maritime Heritage Precinct. Previous reports produced by the State Government, City of Melbourne and the Maritime sector have indicated interest in the development of a maritime heritage precinct located around Docklands and the Yarra River. The Mission to Seafarers building currently represents a possible opportunity that could act as an enabling project to a maritime precinct. It is currently owned by the State.

The City of Melbourne have appointed Biruu to prepare advice on whether it could acquire the building for such a use, and the extent to which such a project could meet some clearly defined objectives with a focus on the Mission to Seafarers building. The first part of this work is for Biruu to undertake comprehensive consultation with stakeholders to ascertain their views and determine the level of consensus and support.

Attached is a short briefing paper that outlines the project objectives, consultation goals and specific questions we are seeking feedback on.

We are requesting identified stakeholders prepare and return a short written response to these questions by the end of January which can then be used as the agenda for a discussion in a meeting format, probably via Teams or Zoom.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions.

1.45 Consultation briefing paper

The Project and background

Previous reports produced by Government, Council and the maritime sector have indicated interest in the development of a maritime heritage precinct located in Docklands and the Yarra River.

The Mission to Seafarers (M2S) building in particular represents both a key asset and opportunity that could add value to the vision of a maritime heritage precinct.

The City of Melbourne has appointed Biruu to undertake a stakeholder consultation and prepare a report on the likely feasibility, support and costs of the project with a focus on the M2S building.

Project Objectives

City of Melbourne is seeking a project that:

- Has wide stakeholder support for a particular concept and scale
- Has wide stakeholder support for a site
- Is consistent with existing State and CoM strategies and policies
- Has positive economic impact on the City
- The upfront/capital cost is borne by State and / or others
- The ongoing operational cost to CoM is low
- Is part of a precinct and has potential staging opportunities
- Contextualises Aboriginal involvement with the area
- Is realistically implementable within 3-5 years

Options developed in the study will be measured back against these project objectives to inform project feasibility.

Consultation Goals

We wish to determine through consultation with you and other stakeholders:

- The ideal concept, scale, content, curation and governance of a maritime precinct
- The level of support for the siting options of Mission to Seafarers vs Docklands (location undefined) and what role this building could play within a precinct
- The level of divergence of views on concept, scale and siting within the stakeholder community
- The level of support to the Mission to Seafarers site (limited size but a defined opportunity) that could potentially limit the idealised project scope and size?
- The level of financial and other support stakeholders could provide to the project

Questions

Specifically, we are seeking feedback on the following questions:

- What is your definition of concept, scale, vision, content, curation, governance and funding of a Maritime Precinct / Museum?
- Where do you think it should be located?
- What role could the M2S building play?
- What is your level of support to the M2S building and site?
- What compromises are likely to be required at this site compared to your idealised vision?
- What staging opportunities do you think are available?
- What level of financial support could you make?
- What level of other support could you make?
- Who are the other key stakeholders?

Process

In the first instance we are seeking short written feedback to the questions noted above, ideally by the end of January. These should be addressed to m.bowles@biruu.com

Following receipt of written feedback, meetings with representative bodies will be arranged with Michael Bowles, Principal, Biruu Pty Ltd to discuss and expand on the initial feedback.

Community consultation may also take place via the City of Melbourne 'Participate Melbourne' website.

Map & Images

Location Plan



Location Plan



Old concept showing existing walls and layout of M2S



APPENDIX 2 – PARTICIPATE MELBOURNE SUMMARY REPORT

Engagement Analysis Report by Global Research

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Executive summary

About the engagement

The City of Melbourne is exploring the development of a maritime heritage area in and around Docklands and the Birrarung Yarra River, together with the Victorian Government. One of the key assets of the area is the Mission to Seafarers building at 717 Flinders Street.

Built in 1917 by the Mission to Seafarers, this heritage-listed building at North Wharf, Docklands, is an important part of Melbourne's maritime history. The building spans 2030 square metres and currently includes a consecrated chapel, courtyard, domed room, hall and other multifunctional smaller spaces.

In this community consultation process, views were sought regarding:

- > How this historic building could help Melbourne to celebrate and preserve its rich maritime and seafaring history,
- > What other visions the community has for the building, and
- > What the community's ideas are for recognising maritime heritage in Docklands.

The community consultation ran from 15 February to 15 March 2021.

Overall, throughout the engagement period, the website had 4,613 visitors and was viewed a total of 5,500 times. The total number of completed Online Survey Forms was 244, plus 15 responses were received via the Participate Melbourne's Gather Tool — primarily short descriptions of ideas for enhancing the area or to inform the feasibility case.

The purpose of the project was to:

- > Find out whether the community sees value in the creation of a maritime heritage area for Melbourne.
- > Find out how residents, workers and visitors imagine that the Mission to Seafarers building can be part of this.
- > Find other uses for the iconic building while keeping the core seafarer services.

The aim of this report is to capture and represent the different feedback, ensuring that the community's contributions and sentiment are reflected in the report. This report details the background and engagement process of the project, provides an overview of the reach of the engagement, and presents what the community said.

Key findings

Demographic information of those who completed the online form

- > Nearly half of the online form respondents stated that they were residents – 114 (47%).
- > 60% of respondents found out about this project via social media.
- > Nearly half of the respondents were aged between 40 and 59 years of age – 109 (46%).
- > A large majority of respondents were not part of a maritime organisation, community group or local organisation — 206 (84%).
- > A high proportion of respondents want to be kept informed about this project — 206 (84%).

Online form respondents' opinions

Top three future priorities for the Mission to Seafarers Building (respondents selected their top three from seven options, which included 'other'):

- The most commonly selected option was 'Maritime heritage space or museum' which was selected by 183 (75%) respondents as one of their top three options.

- The second most commonly selected option was 'Community space and service' which was selected by 155 (64%) respondents.
- The third most commonly selected option was 'Art and cultural space' which was selected by 148 (61%) respondents.

Support for Melbourne maritime heritage being celebrated and recognised:

- Over 90% of respondents were either very (187, 78%) or somewhat (31, 13%) supportive of Melbourne maritime heritage being celebrated or recognised.

WHAT THE COMMUNITY SAID: Use and development of Mission to Seafarers

Future uses for Mission to Seafarers (MTS):

- Music, arts, and community events were the most commonly suggested use for the Mission to Seafarers.
 - While a considerable number of respondents supported a maritime museum for the purpose of educating the community about the maritime industry's contribution to Melbourne's development over hundreds of years, there was also opposition to a museum from another significant group who felt it would dominate the space, be too static and lack 'life', and constrain alternative activities.
 - There was support for a maritime heritage educational component being developed within MTS, predominantly via passive exhibits or hands-on activities.
 - Several respondents made the point that Aboriginal history and culture needs to be included in any development.
 - A sizeable number of respondents emphasised the need to continue current functions, specifically welfare and hospitality for seafarers and others within the community, and a considerable number of respondents supported provision of bars and cafes. Similar numbers were in favour of use for community activities such as community gatherings and events, or arts and cultural activities, particularly musical performances.
- > Preservation and management:
- A considerable number of respondents were in favour of a maritime precinct, with around one third of these comments supporting MTS being a focal point.
 - There was a desire from a moderate number of respondents for maritime heritage to be celebrated, which aligned with an active interpretation of history at MTS rather than static museum exhibits.
- > Site design and Mission to Seafarers' relationship with Melbourne:
- A considerable number of respondents felt that changes to the MTS building should be minimal, stating that structural or design change will be detrimental to the beauty of the building.

WHAT THE COMMUNITY SAID: Celebration and recognition of Melbourne Maritime heritage

- > Heritage support and protection:
- A considerable number of respondents commented that Melbourne's maritime heritage has been neglected and that action must be taken to preserve and celebrate what remains before it is lost forever. Other Australian cities were felt to do better than Melbourne in preserving maritime heritage.
 - MTS was seen as intrinsically valuable and as an anchor for broader Melbourne maritime heritage. Some called for historical and contemporary maritime activities to be both celebrated and possibly blended to tell a continuous story.
 - There was a desire for MTS artefacts to be well curated and authentically displayed, while remaining engaging and alive rather than stale or boring.
 - A moderate number of respondents stated that MTS's current activities should be retained, in particular services to seafarers and authentically displaying maritime artefacts.
 - The acknowledgement, remembrance and expression of Aboriginal maritime heritage was supported by several respondents. A small number of respondents

similarly commented on the potential for MTS to play a role in education about maritime history through time.

Uses for Mission to Seafarers:

- The most commonly expressed sentiment in these comments was ensuring that heritage is celebrated in a vibrant, living way and that a stagnant museum should be avoided.

Management and miscellaneous topics:

- Just over half the several comments made regarding management of MTS focused on the need for better promotion to make more people aware of the building and its services.

REIMAGINING MELBOURNE'S MARITIME HERITAGE

In February and March 2021, CoM sought feedback on:

- Whether the community sees value in the creation of a maritime heritage area for Melbourne.
- How residents, workers and visitors imagine that the Mission to Seafarers building can be part of this.
- Keeping the core seafarer services, find other uses for the iconic building.

ENGAGEMENT REACH

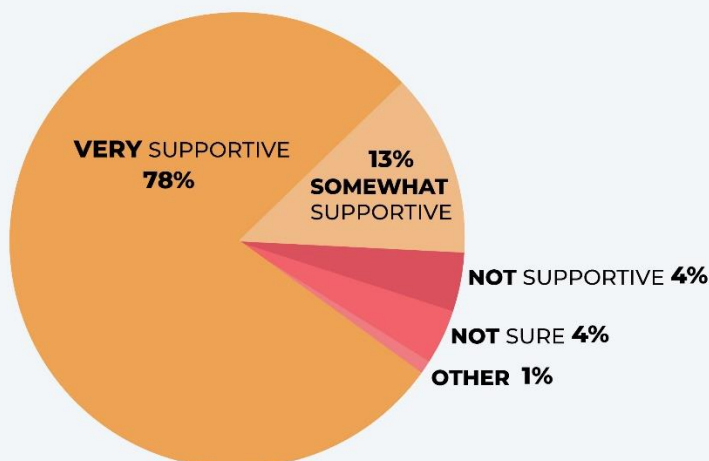


TOP FUTURE PRIORITIES FOR MTS BUILDING

(Percentage of times that each option featured in respondents' top 3 choices)



SUPPORT FOR CELEBRATING MELBOURNE MARITIME HISTORY



There was **91%** support for Melbourne's maritime heritage being celebrated and recognised

POTENTIAL USES FOR THE MTS BUILDING



Continuation of current services was a bottom line for many.

Keep the connection to the community in offering it as a community space while respecting the heritage of the space and support the seafaring population in the way it has for over 100 years.



Music, arts and community events were the most commonly suggested uses for MTS.

There is a lack of unique concert spaces within the city of Melbourne... The acoustics in the Mission to Seafarers are unique and fascinating. It's an essential part of our artistic development as artists in this city.



Support for a maritime museum was split. While a considerable number were in support, many did not want the space dominated by a static, lifeless heritage interpretation.

I would like to see it developed as a museum outlining its significance in Melbourne history.

It's always got a warm community vibe, I think changing it to a museum will make it cold and corporate. It will also take a space away from Melburnians for functions and events.



Hands-on interactive maritime education opportunities were hailed, along with quality curation of maritime artefacts.

A maritime history display, however simple, but a hands on approach would be especially valuable, would be welcomed by local Children's Services and local families in making the building a destination for learning about maritime history and connection to community from an early age.



Café and bars were a welcome addition for many.

A place to tell Aussie stories and support local writers, a drop in centre for Australian theatre writers with an atmospheric cafe built in where writers can gather in a relaxed friendly environment.



Community gatherings and events were popular amongst the local community.

It should be a community space for live events and gatherings like it has been for years

PRESERVATION AND MANAGEMENT



Historic and contemporary maritime activities should be celebrated and tell a continuous story from Aboriginal times to the present day.

Would like to see Indigenous and social histories included as well.



Support for a maritime precinct in Docklands with MTS as a focal point was expressed.

Essential to see M2S building as focal point for promoting and extending the concept of maritime heritage.



Preserving the fabric of the existing MTS building and its functions was supported.

Keep everything in its original design and structure while providing a heritage visitor/tourist icon. Do not build any other structures. Use the existing space.



Comments on how to better manage MTS focused on the need for better promotion to make more Melburnians aware of MTS and its services.

Some community or some people do not know much about how important this building and its services are so I hope that in the future the mission reaches out to other communities.

Project overview

Introduction and background

The Victorian Government has approached City of Melbourne to ascertain its interest in assuming management and operational responsibility of the Mission to Seafarers building. Preliminary discussions indicate capital investment by the state should council have an interest in assuming management responsibility of the building.

The Victorian Government has indicated a significant base build of \$10 to \$20 million is required to undertake refurbishment and fit out the building. The aim of the investment is to retain the functional operations of the heritage building for core services as well as defining a repurposed future for the building which could include a focus on Melbourne's maritime heritage activities.

The Mission to Seafarers (M2S) building in particular represents both a key asset and opportunity that could add value to the vision of a maritime heritage precinct.

To ensure all options for the heritage asset are considered, a feasibility study and business case is being undertaken. This includes the assessment of potential revenue streams, possible locations and options for operations as a mixed commercial and/or community use space. Community engagement with key stakeholders has been a core requirement of the study.

CoM appointed Biruu to undertake key stakeholder consultation and prepare a report on the likely feasibility, support and costs of the project.

Consultation to date has also included inviting the community via Participate Melbourne (15 February – 15 March 2021) for their feedback about possible uses for the Mission to Seafarers building in the Docklands. This report contains the collation, synthesis, and presentation of the community feedback from this component of the engagement.

Engagement method

The community consultation goal was to better understand different community and stakeholder perspectives, needs, and interests in a maritime heritage precinct and how the Mission to Seafarers building could contribute to such a precinct.

The engagement process sought to encourage a wide range of diverse voices from the community to take part.

Feedback was sought on:

- The ideal concept, scale, content, and functionality.
- The level of support for the siting options of Mission to Seafarers vs another Docklands location (undefined) and what role this building could play within a precinct.
- Understanding broader community interests, needs, and aspirations for the site.

Responses were sought from 72 targeted individuals with 28 responses received.

Engagement was sought from three Traditional Owner groups which resulted in one targeted workshop being held.

A further activity of the engagement process included taking the proposal out to community to seek their feedback.

The following process was undertaken:

- > Participate Melbourne website was set up with the project background material and extensive list of Frequently Asked Questions.
- > Feedback survey (via Participate Melbourne webpage) was open for four weeks between February and March 2021.
- > Emails were sent to key stakeholders with a link to the Participate Melbourne survey and a request to circulate to their networks.
- > Three individual stakeholder sessions were held with key resident groups.

Engagement

FULL RESULTS

As explained above, two methods were used to collect information from the Melbourne community for this component of the engagement. An online survey form was completed by 244 respondents and the Gather tool collected 15 written responses.

The survey form asked for each respondent's connection to Melbourne — age, membership of a maritime or community group, interest in being informed about the project, how they heard about the project, top three priorities for the MTS building, and support for heritage being celebrated and recognised.

Note that the charts that are presented in the section are based solely on the responses received via the online survey form, and do not include the respondents who provided a response via the Gather tool. However, the thematic analysis of written responses comes from both the survey form and Gather tool responses.

Quantitative analysis overview

Frequency analysis was completed on the questions listed below. The results are presented as charts, along with key findings.

1. What is your connection to the City of Melbourne? [select one]
 - Resident / Worker / Student / Property owner / Business / Visitor / Other (please specify)
2. What do you consider the top three future priorities for the Mission to Seafarers building? (addition to ensuring existing seafaring services continue) [select up to three]
 - Maritime heritage space or museum / Visitor centre / Community space and service / Art and cultural space / Environmental sustainability/ Business/start up space / Other (please specify)
4. How supportive are you of Melbourne maritime heritage being celebrated and recognised? (select one)
 - Very supportive / Somewhat supportive / Not supportive / Not sure / Other
7. Are you part of a maritime organisation, community group or other local organisation?
 - Yes (please specify) / No
8. What age group are you in?
 - Under 9 / 10-14 / 15-19 / 20-24 / 25-29/ 30-34 / 35-39 / 40-44 / 45-49 / 50-54 / 55-59 / 60-64 / 65-69 / 70-74 / 75-79 / 80-84 / 85 and over
9. Are you interested in being kept informed of this project?
 - Yes / No
10. How did you hear about this project?
 - A letter or email from City of Melbourne / City of Melbourne e-newsletter / City of Melbourne social media / Melbourne magazine / A poster / Media coverage / In person / Other

Summary of survey demographics and response options

OVERALL FINDINGS

DEMOGRAPHIC AND CONSULTATION PROCESS INFORMATION

- > Nearly half (47%) of the respondents stated that they were residents — 114
- > Sixty percent of respondents found out about this project via social media
- > Nearly half (46%) of the respondents were aged between 40 and 59 years of age – 109
- > A large majority (84%) of respondents were not part of a maritime organisation, community group or local organisation – 206
- > A high proportion (84%) of respondents want to be kept informed about this project – 206

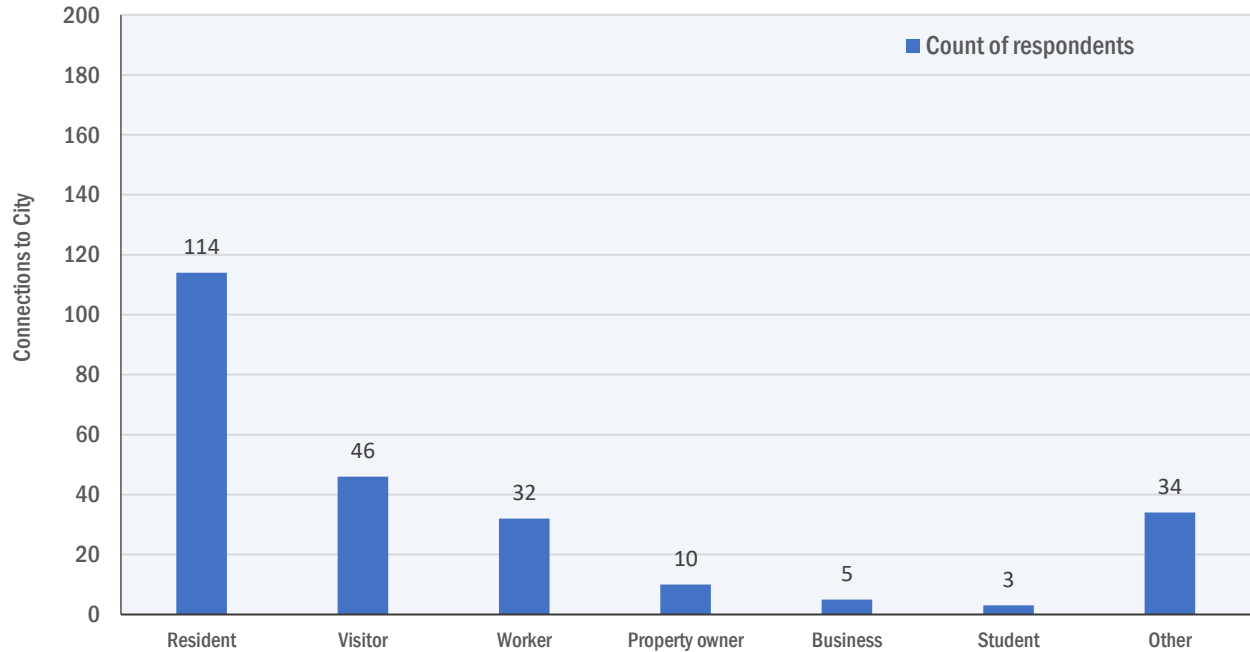
RESPONDENTS' OPINIONS

- > Top three future priorities for the Mission to Seafarers Building:
 - The most commonly selected option was 'Maritime heritage space or museum', which was selected by 183 (75%) respondents as one of their top three options.
 - The second most commonly selected option was 'Community space and service', which was selected by 155 (64%) respondents.
 - The third most commonly selected option was 'Art and cultural space', which was selected by 148 (61%) respondents.
- > Support for Melbourne maritime heritage being celebrated and recognised
 - Over 90% of respondents were either very (187, 78%) or somewhat supportive (31, 13%) of Melbourne maritime heritage being celebrated or recognised.

RESPONDENTS' CONNECTIONS TO MELBOURNE

RESPONSE TO: *What is your connection to City of Melbourne?*

Respondent connections to City of Melbourne



Note: respondents could select only one option.

KEY FINDINGS:

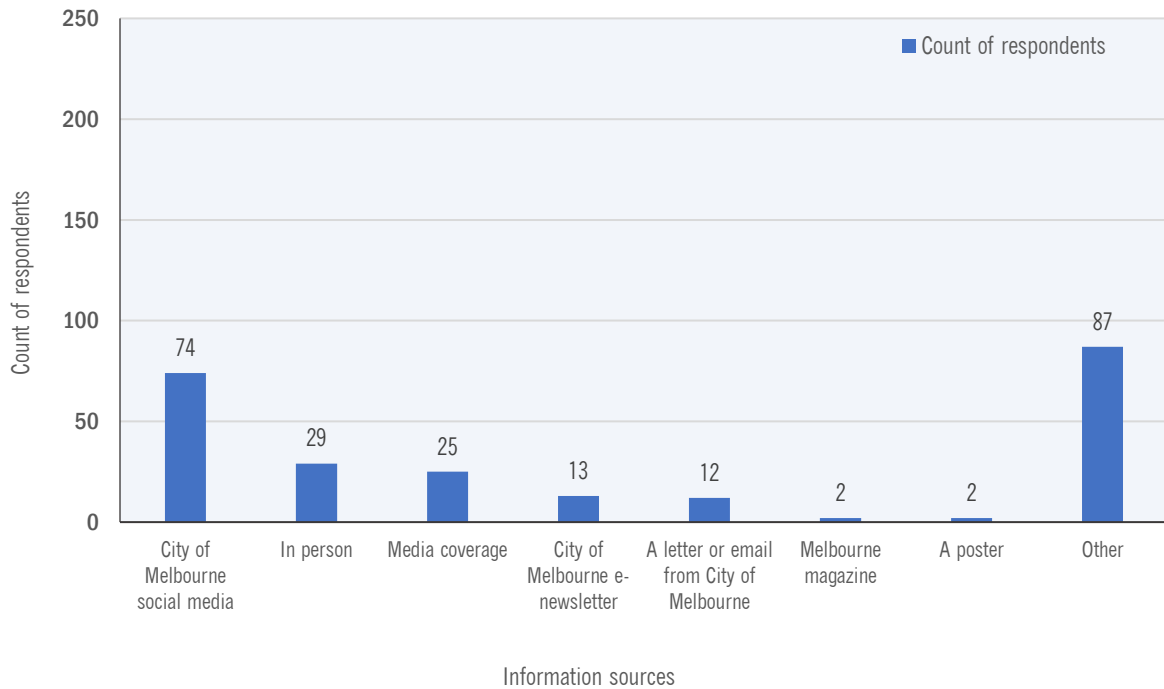
The largest group of respondents were residents:

- Nearly half of the respondents stated that they were residents – 114 (47%)
- Close to one fifth of respondents were visitors – 46 (19%)
- Workers were the next largest group – 32 (13%)
- Groups that made up less than five percent of respondents were: property owners – 10 (4%); business – 5 (2%); student – 3 (1%);
- Thirty-four respondents selected 'other' (14%). These respondents fell into three broad categories: connection to MTS – 15; Maritime and/or heritage – 11; and local community member or frequent visitor – 8.

HOW RESPONDENTS HEARD ABOUT THE PROJECT

RESPONSE TO: *How did you hear about this project?*

How respondents heard about the project



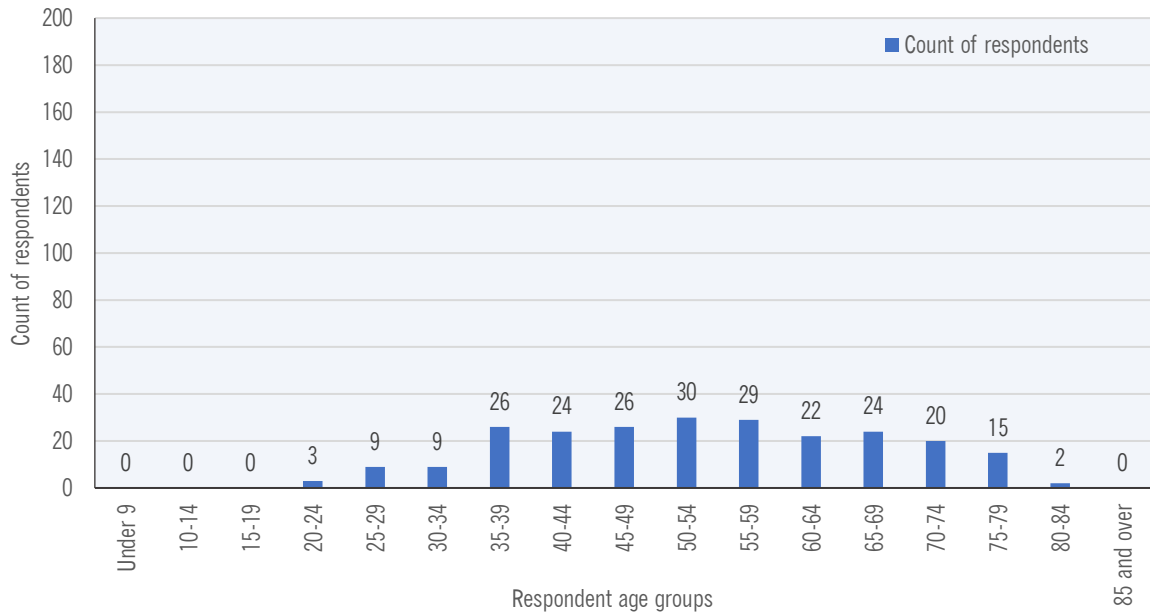
KEY FINDINGS:

- A high proportion of respondents selected 'other' — 87 (30%). Over half of these respondents stated that they found out via Facebook or social media, with other common ways being through friends or family, or visiting the Mission.
- City of Melbourne social media was the second most commonly selected option – 74 (36%). When this option is added to the respondents who selected 'other' but stated social media, the number who heard about the engagement via social media was around 60%.
- In person was the next most selected option – 29 (12%)
- Ten percent or fewer respondents (25) selected the remaining options: City of Melbourne newsletter – 13 (5%); a letter or email from City of Melbourne – 13 (5%); Melbourne Magazine or a poster, both – 2 (1%).

AGE OF RESPONDENTS

RESPONSE TO: *What age group are you in?*

Respondents' age groups



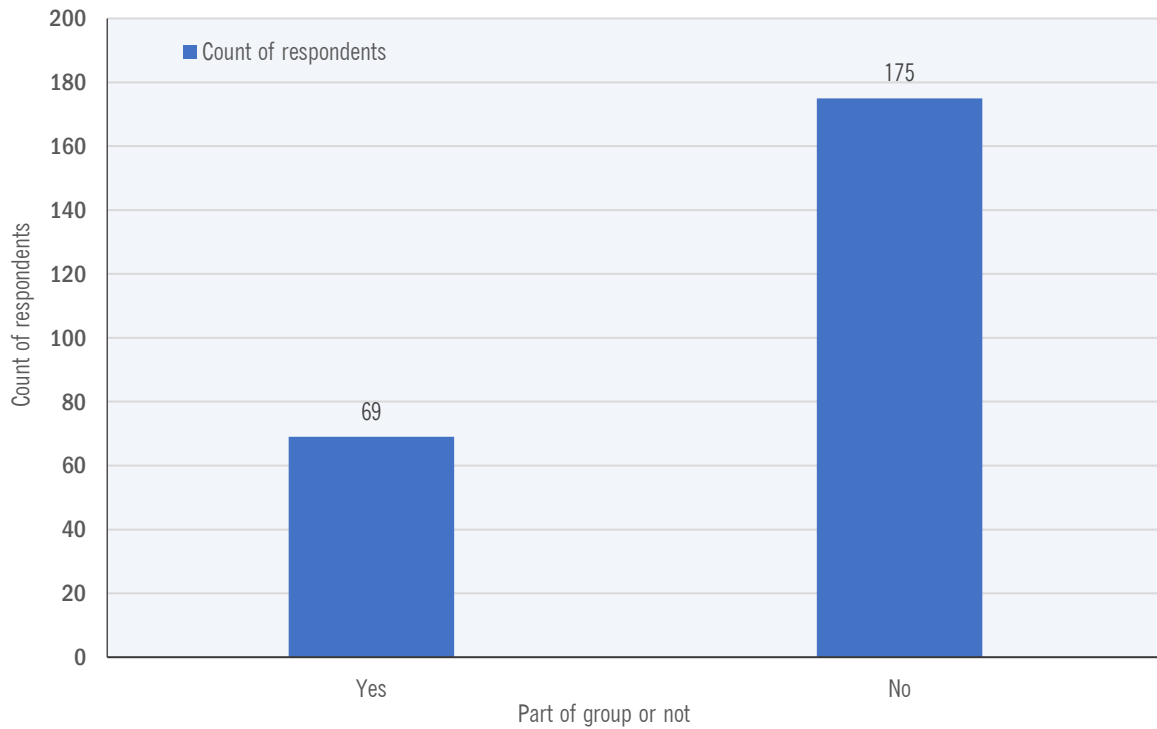
KEY FINDINGS:

- > There was a broad distribution of age groups that completed the engagement form:
 - Nearly half of the respondents were aged between 40 and 59 years of age, which was a total of 109 (46%).
 - Just over one-third of respondents were aged between 60 and 84 years of age, 83 (35%)
 - One fifth were aged between 20 and 39 years of age, 47 (20%)
 - No respondents were under 20 years of age or over 84 years of age.

RESPONDENTS' MARITIME ORGANISATION OR COMMUNITY GROUP PARTICIPATION

RESPONSE TO: *Are you part of a maritime organisation, community group or other local organisation?*

Part of a maritime organisation, community group or other local organisation



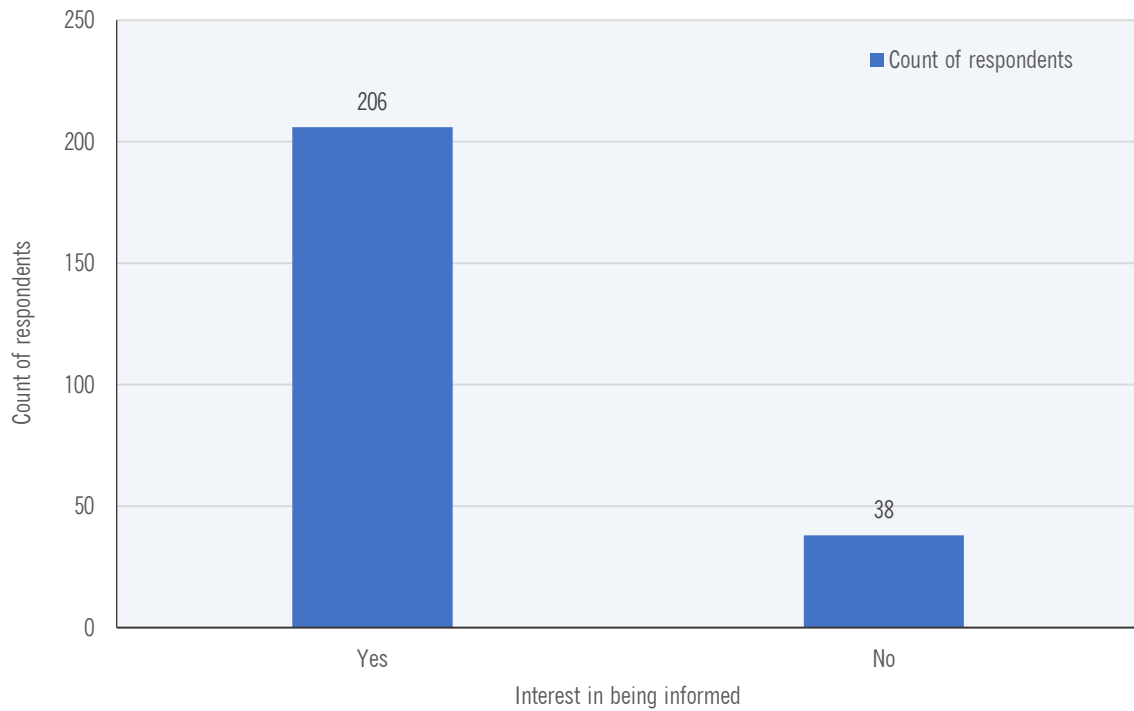
KEY FINDINGS:

- > A large majority of respondents were not part of a maritime organisation, community group or other local organisation, 206 (84%).
- > The proportion who were part of a maritime organisation, community group, or other local organisation consisted of 38 (16%) respondents.

INTEREST IN BEING KEPT INFORMED

RESPONSE TO: *Are you interested in being kept informed of this project?*

Interest in being kept informed about the project



KEY FINDINGS:

- > A high proportion of respondents want to be kept informed about this project, 206 (84%).
- > A small proportion of respondents do not want to be kept informed, 38 (16%).

Written comments analysis overview

Analysis and reporting overview

ANALYSIS APPROACH

The following discussion presents results from qualitative analysis of the three free-text questions included in the survey.

3. Do you have any ideas for future opportunities for the Mission to Seafarers building in the Docklands?
5. Please share any thoughts or ideas you have on this?
6. Do you have any other thoughts you would like to share to inform our feasibility study?

The summaries that follow present the key points made under each theme and topic. The nature of responses to Question 3 and Question 6 were similar, focusing on heritage values and uses for the Mission to Seafarers building in the future. For this reason, the comments received under each question have been combined and organised into the themes and topics discussed in the first section below, titled *Use and development of Mission to Seafarers*.

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. Some comments contained multiple points, relevant to multiple topics, resulting in a number of comments being coded to multiple places. 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 purpose of the project was to:

- > Find out whether the community sees value in the creation of a maritime heritage area for Melbourne.
- > Find out how residents, workers and visitors imagine that the Mission to Seafarers building can be part of this.
- > Find other uses for the iconic building while keeping the core seafarer services.

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

To give a clear and consistent indication of the number of comments received on each topic, the following key was used to describe the relative number of comments on each topic:

Key for comment numbers:

- > 3 comments: a few
- > 4—7 comments: a small number
- > 8—14 comments: several
- > 15—24 comments: a moderate number
- > 25—49 comments: a considerable number
- > 50—74 comments: a substantial number
- > 75—99 comments: a sizeable number
- > 100—149 comments: a large number
- > 150+ comments: a very large number

Comments from respondents have been included in this report verbatim. However, obvious spelling or grammatical errors have been amended for clarity.

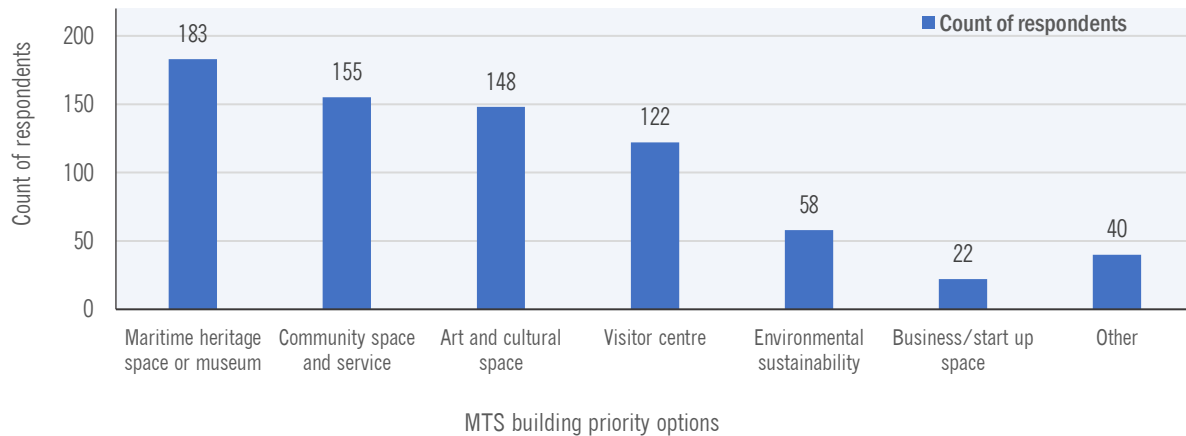
Use and development of Mission to Seafarers

RESPONDENTS' TOP THREE MISSION TO SEAFARER BUILDING PRIORITIES

Respondents were asked the following closed question.

RESPONSE TO: *What do you consider the top three future priorities for the Mission to Seafarers building? (in addition to ensuring existing seafaring services continue) (select three options)*

Top three Mission to Seafarers building priorities (addition to existing services)



KEY FINDINGS:

- > The most commonly selected option was, 'Maritime heritage space or museum', which was selected by 183 (75%) respondents as one of their top three options.
- > The second most commonly selected option was 'Community space and service', which was selected by 155 (64%) respondents.
- > The third most commonly selected option was 'Art and cultural space', which was selected by 148 (61%) respondents.
- > The fourth most commonly selected option was 'visitor centre', which was selected by 122 (50%) respondents.
- > Three options were selected in the top three by less than 50% of respondents:
 - Environmental sustainability, 58 (24%)
 - Business/start up, 22 (9%)
 - Other, 40 (16%)

The 40 respondents who selected 'other' were able to write a suggestion. The responses contained themes similar to the responses in the following question, which have been extensively analysed and reported. The categories these responses fell into, with numbers of comments in brackets, were: Services to seafarers or other visitors (17), Hospitality and event space (9); Education or heritage (7); Art space (4); Tours (3); One-off suggestions (7).

Use and development of Mission to Seafarers comments

Two of the three open-ended questions respondents answered are analysed below. These questions were:

Do you have any ideas for future opportunities for the Mission to Seafarers building in the Docklands? (associated with the question asked immediately above) and

Do you have any other thoughts you would like to share to inform our feasibility study?

Discussions are generally ordered by the frequency of comments made on each topic (most to least).

Section summary

Future uses for Mission to Seafarers

- > Events were the most commonly suggested use for the Mission to Seafarers, with music, arts, and community events being the most popular.
- > While a considerable number of respondents supported a maritime museum to educate the community about the maritime industry's contribution to Melbourne's development over hundreds of years, another significant group opposed this, fearing it would dominate the space and constrain alternative activities.
- > There was support for a maritime heritage educational component developed within MTS, predominantly via passive exhibits or hands on activities.
- > Several respondents made the point that Aboriginal history and culture needs to be included in any development.
- > A sizeable number of respondents emphasised the need to continue current functions, specifically welfare and hospitality to seafarers and others within the community.
- > A considerable number of respondents supported provision of bars and cafes, and similar numbers were in favour of use for community activities such as community gatherings and events, or arts and cultural activities.
- > Maritime-themed events (both walking and water-based) were suggested by several respondents.

PRESERVATION AND MANAGEMENT

- > A considerable number of respondents were in favour of a maritime precinct, with around one third (10) of these comments supporting MTS being a focal point.
- > A considerable number of respondents expressed the need to preserve the heritage and history of MTS, no matter what changes or enhancement occur.
- > There was a desire from a moderate number of respondents for maritime heritage to be celebrated, which aligned with support for an active interpretation of history at MTS rather than static museum exhibits.
- > The most commonly expressed management suggestion was for more promotion of MTS to the wider Melbourne community.

SITE DESIGN AND MISSION TO SEAFARERS RELATIONSHIP WITH MELBOURNE

- > A considerable number of respondents expressed that change to the MTS building should be as minimal as possible, stating that structural or design change will be detrimental to the beauty of the building.
- > A moderate number of site design suggestions were made, most commonly focused on how the site interacts with neighbouring land areas.
- > Being cognisant of how people can physically access MTS, particularly due to its location on a busy road, was important to a moderate number of respondents. A similar number of respondents focused on how the site relates to Melbourne

more broadly and the city's interpretation of maritime heritage.

STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT

- > A moderate number of respondents made various specific points about how the strategy's development could be enhanced.

Future uses for Mission to Seafarers

The sections that follow are a full discussion of comments, organised by most-to-least frequently mentioned.

EVENTS OR PERFORMANCE SPACE

100 COMMENTS

Events were the most frequently suggested use for the Mission to Seafarers' space. Music, arts, and community events were the most commonly discussed types of events, along with a considerable number of respondents who suggested events generally.

MUSIC EVENTS

30 COMMENTS

Music events were the most commonly suggested individual event, discussed by a considerable number of respondents. Most of these comments were relatively short, with respondents describing the types of events they would like to experience in the space, including: "music gigs or dance parties", "Concerts" and "intimate live music".

One respondent elaborated:

There is a lack of unique concert spaces within the city of Melbourne. The focus is on very clean concert halls. The acoustics in the mission to seafarers are unique and fascinating. It's an essential part of our artistic development as artists in this city.

Also, suggestions for maritime themed events were made:

Annual Seafarers Festival Sea Shanties Hornpipe. Costumes from the early days.

Another comment was collected via the Participate Melbourne Platform from Paulie Stewart from the Melbourne band Painters and Dockers, who expressed interest in developing a Valentine's Day event where celebrities read historical letters from sailors. He also suggested a stage for visiting acts to perform sea shanties.

The quality of the building acoustically and the variety of spaces for musical performances were commonly highlighted as elements making it ideal as a musical venue.

ARTS EVENTS

28 COMMENTS

Arts events were also suggested by a considerable number of respondents. Again, these comments were relatively short with a broad range of artistic performances listed. These included readings, comedy, arts and cultural events, performance spaces, shows, niche cinema, fringe theatre, live theatre, regular maritime themed musical & literary nights, and TED talks.

The size and quality of the space was again mentioned, for example in this comment:

The space currently hosts cultural events year-round, and it should be properly funded and supported to do this. Unique spaces that support the arts are the lifeblood of a city, and spaces of comparable size and character in other cities around the world have become globally

recognized on the back of proper investment from government, and leadership from suitably qualified artists.

COMMUNITY EVENTS

13 COMMENTS

Several respondents suggested community events or alluded to this use in comments like “residents to book an area” or “function hire”. The building’s accessibility and its ability to accommodate many different large and small event types were emphasised as making it highly suitable for these uses.

It should be a community space for live events and gatherings like it has been for years

EVENTS IN GENERAL

29 COMMENTS

Events more generally were referred to in another considerable number of comments. These comments echoed previous points, highlighting how different spaces like the chapel could be utilised for events — weddings were specifically mentioned. Respondents in favour of this use appreciated how events have a live human element to them, as opposed to a museum which is static. One respondent stated:

Definitely using it for 'an alive human community focus'. IE: Performances, celebrations, school excursions. Museums tend to be static, so important to draw new audiences to the Seafarer's.

This comment summed up what the space adds to events:

The building is a wonderful space for creative arts, opportunities and events. We have just confirmed venue hire for every available Saturday night until at least the end of the year which will bring over 3000+ people to the venue and encourage foot traffic through the South Wharf precinct. We are excited to make use of a space full of so much history and bring customers to a space they've never seen before.

The point was also made that the MTS building is already a great place for events in many different forms and this can be enhanced with improvements. One comment said:

It's such a wonderful set of buildings, as an events business, we welcome and value such unique, historic special spaces. Support for the existing team to upgrade things like kitchens / bathrooms would be fantastic.

MARITIME MUSEUM, EDUCATION, ACTIVITIES AND ABORIGINAL STORIES

93 COMMENTS

SUPPORT FOR A MARITIME MUSEUM

36 COMMENTS

A maritime museum in a variety of different formats was suggested by a considerable number of respondents. The overall sentiment was that a museum could be one component of the building, with this point being made in around one third of these comments. Respondents felt that a museum was important to educate people on maritime history from the past through to the present day and ensure that past events are not forgotten. The following comment is typical of these views:

We need to preserve and promote the history of the Mission to Seafarers, so whatever is done with the building should incorporate some museum component that tells its story.

OPPOSE OR RESTRICTED MARITIME MUSEUM

26 COMMENTS

A variety of points were made in opposition to an MTS maritime museum, with respondents particularly objecting to the building in its entirety being repurposed as a museum and offering a range of justifications for their views.

Respondents argued that the Mission should be kept the way it is and continue its current functions. It was felt that this would not be possible if it is converted to a museum, as this would make it “sterile” and “suck the life” from MTS, limit or exclude other activities, and limit visitors to those who are interested in maritime history. One respondent explained:

Maritime history is well documented and on display at the Mission and sure you could add an inclusion as a stop along the way of a city-wide heritage trail; but I really think turning the entire building into a museum is an enormous and unnecessary undertaking. Celebrate it as it is, because it means a lot to a lot of people.

Other comments pointed out that there are already maritime museum displays in other Melbourne buildings; suggested that a museum would be better in a striking new building without the constraints of a historic building; or argued that other places (such as Central Pier or the end of Victoria harbour) would be more suitable locations for a dedicated maritime museum.

This quote is representative of these arguments:

I don't think there's a need for a dedicated maritime heritage museum in Melbourne. It would overlap with existing displays at the Melbourne Museum, Immigration Museum and Scienceworks, and the pre-existing heritage display spaces at Melbourne Town Hall and the Old Treasury building. And it would prevent arts and community groups from accessing a space that is already in dynamic use.

This comment describes what would be lost if the building was converted to a museum.

It's always got a warm community vibe, I think changing it to a museum will make it cold and corporate. It will also take a space away from Melbournians for functions and events.

A couple of longer comments were made via the Gather tool. One suggested an international design competition be run for a brand new maritime museum which is a landmark to rival Sydney. Another suggested an immersion museum at North Wharf Rd Dockland.

ENHANCING EDUCATIONAL FUNCTIONS OF MTS

20 COMMENTS

These comments focused on the educational function they felt the MTS could fulfill. The delivery approach recommended was generally broader in style and more innovative than that described in the suggestions for developing a museum. They included suggestions for how to educate the public in engaging ways or supporting research into maritime history. One respondent elaborated:

A permanent maritime heritage display with a hands on approach would draw families and children to the space both tourists and local. I can say as an educator that we would very likely make the building a regular excursion destination if this was an option. Inviting young children to discover and build connections to their local community in this way would be invaluable and would hold positive implications for the whole area.

This comment made a similar point but with an academic angle:

A learning space for studies related to both marine development and maritime history, perhaps in co-operation or partnership with other leading universities, study centres or industry.

Another respondent expanded further on the educational opportunities:

*Provide historic education to the youth of Melbourne and encourage visitors to feel more connected with Australian history and tradition.
Provide activities and events.*

A couple of Gather comments echoed suggestions regarding the MTS being used for educational purposes. One was as an educational destination for both younger people and the community more broadly, while the other suggested making it a place where people can learn and share new ideas.

ABORIGINAL CULTURE AND HISTORY

14 COMMENTS

Respondents underscored the need to incorporate Aboriginal history, stories, and culture into the fabric of whatever is developed at MTS. The point was made that Aboriginal stories have not been included within maritime history to date and they should be, with comments stating that the history must begin with Aboriginal stories and continue through to modern times rather than merely beginning at colonisation. There was real benefit for all identified in more people knowing Aboriginal stories. One respondent expanded on this:

The voices of the local Aboriginal people must also be a part of this in terms of their connection to waterways. Do seafarers at the mission currently have an opportunity to learn about indigenous heritage of the area? This may assist further in pulling feet into the building and would be powerful to share with visitors and seafarers helping them build an understanding of the custodians of the land they are on....consultation would obviously be needed with the local indigenous community.

This respondent supported a full continuum of history being told:

Very much portraying the history from when the indigenous people used the bay through the arrival of English, the arrival of historical people such as the convicts, Irish orphan girls to the World War 1 & 2, Korean, and Vietnam all their arrivals and departures by boat.

CONTINUE CURRENT FUNCTIONS

83 COMMENTS

CONTINUE CURRENT WELFARE AND HOSPITALITY

43 COMMENTS

There was a strong consensus in these comments that MTS should continue to deliver its current functions, especially noted as supporting seafarers, a venue for arts, a performance space, hospitality, and a venue for the local community.

*I think it's operating perfectly as a support for seafarers whilst being a totally unique and wonderful arts and performance space. The sense of maritime history is already well documented and presented in the space.
MTS MUST continue as one of Melbourne's premier arts spaces.*

The regular use by community groups, local residents and transients should be maintained as the core purpose of MtS

The current feel of the space was expressed in this comment:

I think it's important to remember that people use the existing space already on unique and lovely ways. The seafarers is such a wonderful

anachronism in the increasingly over built and commercial space around it, it's welcoming and homely and great

Respondents did not want changes to compromise the delivery of current services and functions.

A couple of Gather comments were supportive of MTS being retained in its current form. One respondent was distressed that a new purpose to that of the last 100 years was being proposed. The other comment was in favour of maritime history preservation more broadly across Melbourne.

SERVICE TO SEAFARERS TO CONTINUE 40 COMMENTS

These comments focused on the core mission of MTS to serve seafarers from around the world and it was stressed that this service needs to be retained and remain as a priority. They did not want changes to MTS impinging on or reducing these services.

This was a representative comment:

Update the Mission to Seafarers building without impacting the much needed service provided to seafarers away from their home country.

Another comment highlighted the value and need of this service:

It should be a place where seafarers can unwind and enjoy themselves. They do such difficult work and often for little money. We should aim to create a unique place for these wonderful people so they can have the respite they deserve. They should be fed and entertained and have a marvelous time - they deserve it!

A couple of Gather comments were supportive of retaining support services for seafarers. One specifically listed support for them and the other stated that a museum should be built somewhere else, concluding:

The Mission should remain a seafarer's welfare centre.

EATERIES, BARS AND HOSPITALITY 39 COMMENTS

SUPPORT FOR A BAR 12 COMMENTS

Several respondents felt that either retaining the current bar or further developing the bar was a good use of the MTS space. There was also specific support for the beer garden, while a themed maritime bar was another suggestion. This was one supportive comment:

Having stopped by a few times, the beer garden, hall and small museum are fantastic. It would be great to continue these spaces (especially the beer garden) and maybe have evening dances, events in the hall area. That'd be fun.

OPPOSE A BAR 5 COMMENTS

A small number of short comments opposed a bar being provided. One respondent stated:

Would be nice if this was an art gallery or similar. I dislike that it is some bar where people drink - we have enough bars around here.

SUPPORT FOR A CAFÉ 10 COMMENTS

Several short comments supported a café as one of the uses for MTS. This was a typical comment:

A community art market space and Cafe or restaurant would be great

SUPPORT FOR A RESTAURANT

5 COMMENTS

A small number of short comments suggested a restaurant at MTS. This was one of the more detailed comments:

How about part of it being an early 1900's restaurant with period dressed staff. Maybe even a history reenactment as part of the evening meal.

OTHER HOSPITALITY

7 COMMENTS

Other hospitality suggestions were made, including making it a place to attract younger people; afternoon teas in the garden; a food and beverage hub; location for night life; and calls to keep it for local uses. Two comments noted that it was a unique hospitality space and mustn't be lost.

COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES (ADDITIONAL TO EVENTS)

38 COMMENTS

A considerable number of respondents described uses other than events which the local community engages in and benefits from.

Over half of these comments were from respondents who supported the space being open to the community to use and enjoy, as is the case currently. These are a couple of representative comments:

Keep the connection to the community in offering it as a community space while respecting the heritage of the space and support the seafaring population in the way it has for over 100 years

It's an essential community hub. Both of these things could be aimed towards doing with more emphasis and publicity.

The term 'community gathering' or similar was used multiple times to describe use, as it has been in this comment:

The maritime heritage should not be at the expense of a community gathering place which this intimate building lends itself to.

A broad range of other specific community uses were suggested. These included opportunities to meet the local community and engage with mariners; a government-sponsored yacht club for underprivileged people; rowing club; protected green space for local people who don't have their own gardens; volunteer opportunities; a training centre; Melbourne or Victorian Historical Society meeting place; University of the Third Age meetings, and specialist clubs.

ARTS AND CULTURAL SPACE

37 COMMENTS

There is a detailed discussion above of MTS as an ideal venue for music and arts events. These comments are similar, but refer specifically to use as a creative space.

The most common suggestion made in over half of these comments was for the space to be used as an art gallery or arts space. These were a few supportive comments:

I want to see it expand its status as an arts and performance space.

MTS MUST continue as one of Melbourne's premier arts spaces.

Arts, Artefacts, Exhibition Space, Melbourne Maritime Tapestry

Other suggestions included a maritime themed space; a cultural venue for Docklands; actively create the Norla Dome; space for grassroots artists; and a place for 'Aussie stories'.

This was another suggestion about how art can be incorporated into the space:

Some old pictures of maritime heritage inside would be lovely and a connection to maritime history through art in the proposed park adjacent.

MARITIME-THEMED TOURS

11 COMMENTS

Several respondents supported MTS being a hub for maritime tours. These were suggested in a number of different formats, including part of a maritime heritage trail; tours of the site explaining the history; tours around Docklands; and charter boat services.

This was one of the comments:

Some historical walking tours from the mission would be nice, with information on the maritime heritage of the area.

OTHER SUGGESTED USES

13 COMMENTS

A few comments suggested business uses such as a business or start up centre; business hot desks; and corporate meeting rooms. A couple of respondents suggested using it for accommodation.

Other suggestions were an active chapel; entertainment business; tourism venue; information centre, Sea Cadets.

One comment specifically opposed use for commercial business activity.

PRESERVATION AND MANAGEMENT

The topic that received the second most comments covered the topics of preservation and management of the MTS site.

MARITIME PRECINCT OR HUB

30 COMMENTS

The majority of these respondents were keen for MTS to be the centre or hub of a Melbourne maritime precinct. However, a couple of respondents stated that Melbourne's maritime focus should be at Williamstown.

Around one third of these comments stated that MTS should be either part of or at the centre of a larger maritime precinct. This was one of these comments:

Essential to see M2S building as focal point for promoting and extending the concept of maritime heritage. So other work needs to be undertaken by MCC and Vic Gov to develop the heritage theme along the Yarra, Vic Docks, Port of Melb, Station Pier and Williamstown. Fractured governance of the river and its precincts has led to an uncoordinated hodgepodge of developments. Not necessarily maritime or community themed.

Various other points were made. A small number of respondents felt that activities should be coordinated between MTS and Williamstown; a few respondents stated that Docklands should be enhanced with a maritime art theme; a few respondents stated that MTS should be part of a maritime tour; and another few respondents suggested a link between MTS and Tall Ships Victoria. A suggestion was also made to combine with the Stella Marris Seafarers centre.

Below are quotes from respondents who made specific points. This first comment was a typical description of how the MTS should be part of a heritage precinct:

Make sure the MtSV is part of a larger Maritime Heritage Precinct on both sides of the Yarra

This comment provides detail on some of the maritime features that could be linked:

Focus centre for maritime heritage providing information on and linking to Polly Woodside, Seaworks, HMS Castlemaine and other heritage sights

One comment offered a comprehensive description of MTS as part of a suite of maritime features:

As a heritage building representing the maritime history of Melb it could be part of a suite of maritime tangible and intangible cultural heritage programs along with Princes Pier - so, it can allow all to engage and reflect on our connection to the sea from Indigenous Australians, to later colonial sailors, even later to the impact of 19thC industrial and commercial entrepôt that Melb was for Australia and later even maritime mass migration from South East Europe - as part of a larger program linking Princes Pier, Mission and of course Port Melb

This respondent argued MTS is isolated from Melbourne's other maritime activities and a more integrated approach is required:

Melbourne has a fleet of heritage vessels badly in need of a suitable OPERATIONS base (the fleet is functional) there is NO acknowledgement or practical input of Melbourne's indigenous maritime heritage and very little support given to the education and skills needed to maintain the current maritime industry. The Mission to Seafarers still serves a practical purpose to visiting seafarers but operates as an island in Melbourne's Maritime heritage infrastructure. Much more is needed.

Three Gather comments were received on this topic. These suggested including Williamstown; that the mission should remain as welfare centre and a new museum should be built at the end of Victoria Harbour; and finally, that the burgeoning heritage fleet should be docked adjacent to the Seafarer's precinct:

While vision is needed to furnish a workshop, the creation of the Seafarers precinct is a long-awaited opportunity to establish a permanent home to showcase and support the fleet. Its realisation will complement the core qualities of the Precinct; enhance its attraction as a destination and provide the foundation necessary for continued preservation and operation of these diverse examples of Melbourne's maritime heritage

SUPPORT FOR HERITAGE PRESERVATION

29 COMMENTS

A considerable number of respondents expressed the need to preserve the heritage and history of MTS. The most common point, made in around half of these comments, was that the heritage of the site needs to be preserved no matter what changes or enhancement occur. Respondents argued that preserving heritage is important for future generations and noted that there has already been significant loss of heritage and what remains should be preserved. It was felt that the space could be reinvented but heritage must be retained and. This was one of the comments:

We need to maintain our heritage of the area it is an important part of how Melbourne developed and grew

Another respondent offered a personal statement:

My families arrived in Australia by ship. My mother's families by sailing ship in the gold rush times and my father's families by steamship in the 1890s. It would be good for future generations to appreciate this heritage.

Other suggestions were to restore historical photos and rehang them; and retain the heritage theme.

Another point was made that resources are needed to sustainably restore the space.

CELEBRATION OF MARITIME HERITAGE

22 COMMENTS

A moderate number of comments supported celebrating maritime heritage. This often included combining it with contemporary activities, particularly lived experiences. There was a desire for exhibits to be put on display in a livelier way than generally experienced in a museum, such as a maritime festival or displays. This was one of the comments:

Host maritime history exhibitions, displays and seminars. Some maritime artefacts might be put on permanent display.

Another respondent expanded on the ways this could be done:

Celebrating maritime history, past present and future of Melbourne and VIC is critical. Both from the public and private sectors. While the past is important, I'm sure that there is so much happening now and with future activities, having a central space to bring this altogether is key as well. A week of annual events showcasing life on, in and around the sea would be great. The Aquarium is so close - there could be a collaboration event linking up man, sea life, sustainability, ecology and species extinction past present and future. All issues of immense concern today and going forward!! As well, maritime in the urban scape - not just sea but river life as well. So many of us love or want to live close to water. How we harness life, leisure, technology and innovation to explore local and state opportunities around our waterways. Showcase and expo these ideas at the MTS and other local venues such as the Aquarium, Library, Hub etc.

PROMOTION OF MTS

16 COMMENTS

A moderate number of respondents felt that MTS should be better promoted. Some specific comments were made about the need for the outside of the building to be more inviting to attract people in. One respondent noted:

Having a drink in the garden to support seafarers is lovely, but not many people know it's there. Better publicity, and maybe once businesses come back after Covid a once a month night with a band and sausages/drinks that's advertised locally Fri or Sat. Maybe a sign to tell people to come on in, turn right and grab a drink so people know they can drop in if they're not a seafarer.

Other comments discussed promotion more broadly and felt that it could receive greater focus from MTS management. This was one of those comments:

Better marketing of this site as a function centre and for community/cultural groups is needed.

MANAGEMENT OF MTS

14 COMMENTS

A couple of the several comments that discussed the management of MTS were complimentary towards the current management, with one specific comment stating they are welcoming.

A few points were made regarding budgeting and financial viability. These included that the mission won't bring huge profits but it will be sustainable; that current budget management should be prioritised over promotion; a question about how the Mission will raise funds for Seafarers; the need to better understand the value of MTS to tourism and the state; that the feasibility of the building has already been established by its successful running for so long; and that the MTS should be managed for the community, not corporates.

Other varied points included that the function of MTS should be broader than a museum so a broad range of people are attracted to visit; an offer of support from a music university lecturer; an objection to religious management; and a suggestion that management should have a personal interest.

One respondent queried:

Will the community still have access to an affordable and accessible function venue, without a contracted caterer as per other City of Melbourne venues?

A Gather comment recommended:

...use what is left for maritime activities such as cheap births and services for visiting sailor's ships Chandler, sailing clubs, boating groups. Subsidise rents and exclude commercial activities which have so far excluded real booties. Use the shamans mission for its original purpose as accommodation, refreshment and social services primarily for ships crews. Subsidise it so this will work.

COMMUNITY/MARINER INTERACTIONS

5 COMMENTS

A small number of comments discussed and supported direct interaction between community individuals and visiting mariners, such as the following comment:

Community space with opportunity for engagement with and learning from the mariners and their cultures. Celebrating the diversity of the mariners and welcoming them to our city.

Site design and MTS relationship with Melbourne

RETAIN THE PHYSICAL MTS STRUCTURE

30 COMMENTS

A considerable number of respondents expressed the need to retain and not alter the MTS building. These comments generally raised similar points, consistently stating either do not alter the building or alter as little as possible. The sentiment of these comments was that the building is appealing and change will be detrimental. The following quotes are representative:

It is a beautiful building. Please don't make too many changes.

...Maintaining the physical integrity of the original building is a priority.

SITE DESIGN SUGGESTIONS

21 COMMENTS

A moderate number of site design observations and suggestions were made, many of them highly detailed.

How MTS interacts with its immediate surroundings was discussed in various ways. A couple of challenges were identified, including the busy road at the back and the site being dwarfed by impending neighbouring towers. Solutions to these were a more welcoming

façade and potential buffering of the road with trees. An opportunity was identified by a few respondents to connect with the neighbouring park, with one suggestion to connect the park and MTS through maritime art works. A suggestion was made to connect with passersby at the back of the building, with MTS staff providing food.

This detailed suggestion was made regarding connection to neighbouring areas:

A significant problem for the Mission to Seafarers is that its main entrance is hard against Wurundjeri Way. The building needs to have its orientation returned to the river, and that southern aspect already has sections of open ground that will remain once the apartment building emerges next door. These areas should become the new entry point with pop up catering booths, bar, a small stage and seating area. On a pragmatic side, Council needs to ensure the Mission is protected by 'prior usage' regarding volume levels and the tenants of the new apartments.

Another respondent suggested this approach to linking with the neighbouring area:

As well as residential buildings, this area of Docklands is surrounded by many office buildings. Mission to Seafarers could be repurposed to compliment the new park behind it and attract office workers and residents to the northern bank of the Yarra River. This area is under-utilised and lacks the atmosphere and character that the southern bank does.

This integration with the neighbouring park was also suggested.

Strongly integrate the building with the Seafarers Rest Park so it is easy for people to flow in and out. Claim a lane of traffic off Flinders St to make it a more pedestrian friendly location.

A few other one-off points were made. These included making best use of the building by making it a sanctuary from the city; that the building should be refitted to make sure maximum use is made of the site; and that more people are encouraged to visit.

Support for open space was offered, and it was suggested that a teen playground nearby would be appreciated, as there are not many other options in Melbourne.

One respondent noted there is a need to be cognisant of climate change and sea level rise, while another identified the need for better lighting.

ACCESS TO THE SITE

16 COMMENTS

A moderate number of comments were similar to those above, however, this group focused on physical access to the site. This key point was made by one respondent:

The maritime precinct should be accessible to as many people as possible.

The core access challenge identified by a small number of respondents is Wurundjeri Way, which was noted as a busy road to navigate. Some respondents stated that better road access is necessary. Another small number of comments made the point that improvements to accessibility should be part of the changes planned for MTS. A few respondents focused on the need to provide good pedestrian access, along with a few that suggested better public transport and tram access is needed.

Other one-off comments were that access to the rest of Docklands is a key issue to consider; that there is a need to make MTS more visible; and that there could be a way to approach by sea.

A few issues were raised in this comment:

Parking needs to be reassessed by City of Melbourne, and easier access from nearby tram stops should also be improved. A ferry service running weekends from Southbank to the Mission couldn't hurt.

This Gather comment suggested utilising ferries as a transport option:

Let's face it. Melbourne's waterways are criminally under-utilised. Public ferries are an asset to commuters and a tourist draw in cities like Sydney and Perth. Melbourne would benefit massively from such services. A ferry starting near Flinders St station, making stops at the Mission to Seafarers, DFO South Wharf, Fisherman's Bend, and The District Docklands would most definitely be commercially viable as some of these spots are difficult to access via train/tram.

MELBOURNE LINKING AND INTERACTING

14 COMMENTS

A moderate number of points were made discussing how MTS links to greater Melbourne. These comments generally focused on highlighting the areas maritime character and how it connects with the rest of Melbourne. One respondent stated that MTS is disconnected from Docklands, while others stated that there need be better links connecting the rest of the city to MTS. Some made the point that connections could be enhanced by a comprehensive approach to maritime heritage. One comment identified places that could be linked, suggesting Princes Pier, Mission and Port Melbourne.

One respondent suggested:

The mission could be the connection point between the city the river and the harbour, referencing the ongoing relationship of Melbourne with Port Phillip Bay and the world.

A few respondents stated that links could be made by enhancing the connection between MTS and nearby waterways by MTS having its own mooring and docking heritage vessels in close proximity. One respondent offered the following suggestion:

There should be a direct connection to the riverfront behind the Mission complex, to better link the site and venue to its purpose - if obtaining the land is impossible, then cutting a canal connection with wharf would be sensible. Heritage vessels or other craft could then be better associated with the maritime history precinct.

Another comment suggested that indigenous wayfinding should be incorporated and that there should be a comprehensive link across the city:

Including indigenous wayfinding and cultural history. Linking this part of Docklands to the rest of Docklands and the city/Southbank with parks, paths and bridges.

A detailed comment expanded on how engagement with MTS will be enhanced with improved thoroughfares:

A vibrant public space and thoroughfare between the city, Docklands and Southbank is very much needed. For example, what attracts people to the State Library of Victoria? The majority of people visit this space to view some of Melbourne and Victoria's heritage, have their lunch on the grass alongside Swanston Street, and enjoy the atmosphere around them. The same analogy could be applied here in Docklands. In addition to this, Mission to Seafarers will eventually become a central point between the city and the new Fisherman's Bend precinct so an attractive public space will be vital to preserving Melbourne's history and culture.

This respondent sought greater city-wide awareness and protection of water birds:

I would like to see garden design and education displays for adults and kids about the water birds of the area to be considered and included.

Another comment focused on how more needs to be done across the city to enhance maritime protection:

Central pier needs a new purpose, we cannot simply remove our piers as they crumble and not replace them!

SPECIFIC MTS ENHANCEMENTS

13 COMMENTS

A broad range of one-off enhancements for MTS were suggested. These included physical additions such as another tall shop at the rear of the building to tie in with the museum; more sports facilities for those in smaller homes to use; some cycling or end of trip facilities provided; a phone charging station for passersby; a community garden; more toilets, kitchens; and a rare trades expo hall.

One respondent made this future-thinking suggestion.

Making it eco friendly so in years to come it can still be in great condition and won't need many upgrades for future generations

Other comments suggested ways to deepen people's understanding of maritime and MTS history. These included displaying the ships that visited in Victorian times and the people who were on them, telling stories about shipping in 1800s; and recording stories from people who have previously been involved with MTS so they are not lost, which could then be recorded and played as audio-visuals at MTS.

This was one specific enhancement that was suggested.

Virtual reality space where people can experience what past and present seafarers deal with. Going out to sea for months at a time, conditions at sea etc. are all unknowns to most of us.

Strategy development and miscellaneous

STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT

14 COMMENTS

Several respondents made comments about the strategy development process or public engagement process associated with the strategy development.

A couple of respondents focused on the questions used in the engagement process, in particular the number of options available to be selected from. It was suggested that more options could have been provided in the top three mission priorities, or respondents should have been able to select more options in the connection to Melbourne question. Another respondent warned against engaging "too many consultants", while another was concerned minds had already been made up.

A small number of respondents suggested groups or individuals that should be contacted to be involved in the process, including visiting mariners, curatorial experts, maritime unions, and ship owners.

A couple of comments alluded to a tourism strategy also being critical in the development of the precinct:

A thorough [...] tourism strategy will be critical to whether the heritage precinct will work commercially for all destinations within it.

A few other one-off comments were made including a suggestion to publicise the feasibility study more and get more Melburnians involved; an offer of support to research indigenous mariner activity, a note that the process needs to be more rigorous than the piers on Harbour Esplanade process; and one respondent was looking forward to the next stage.

MISCELLANEOUS COMMENTS

9 COMMENTS

Several one-off comments did not fall under any previous topic. One respondent suggested a joint Melbourne Seafarers Centre and associated fundraising; while another queried whether there was a Mission to Seafarers operating in Melbourne Port, stating:

If not there should be to support international crew especially those from less fortunate countries than Australia.

One respondent noted the site should be privatised, while another felt that it seemed:

Ridiculous to be talking about celebrating Melbourne's maritime heritage and connection to the sea whilst banning fishing on the public pontoons at Yarra's Edge Marina.

One respondent requested CoM “stop being city-centric and look further afield”, while another pointed out that “many cities have Maritime Museums, Singapore for example, we could learn from others”.

Other specific points were raised, including:

Read pages 5 & 6 in my Mother's book "Nessie's Story" which gives detail of Rev. Kerr Johnson.

Car dealership for electric vehicles only and e bikes.

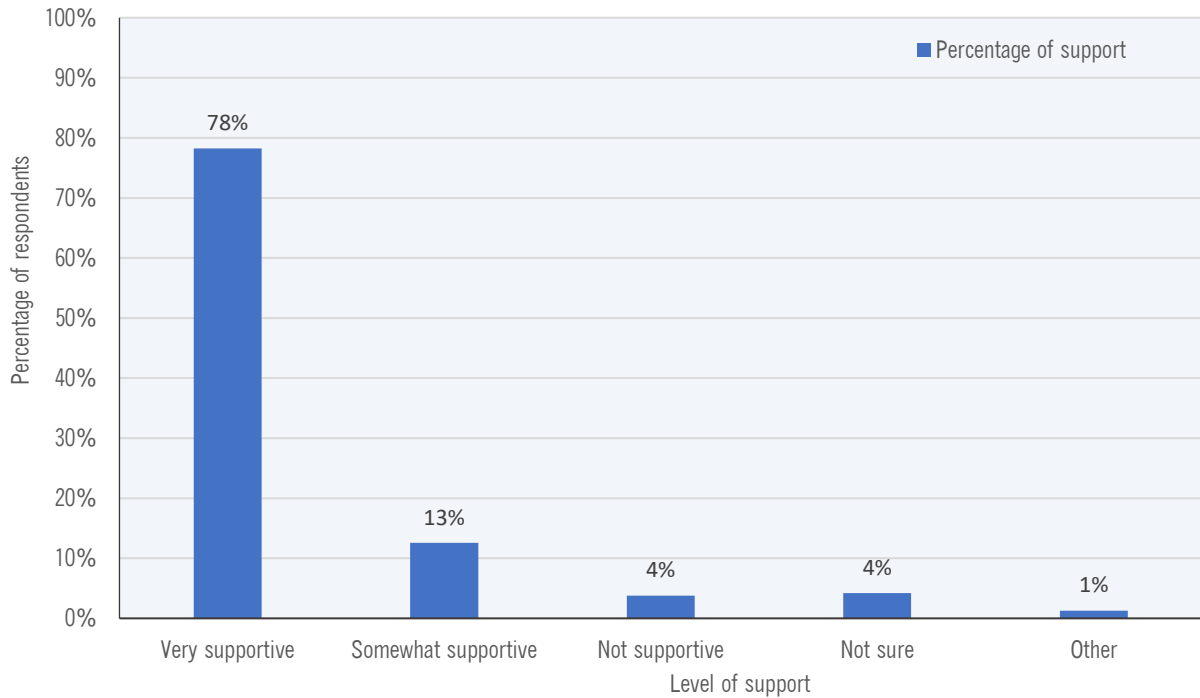
Additionally, there were 83 comments which stated they didn't have a comment to make.

Celebration and recognition of Melbourne Maritime heritage

Level of support for celebration and recognition of Melbourne Maritime heritage

RESPONSE TO: *How supportive are you of Melbourne's maritime heritage being celebrated and recognised?*

Support for Melbourne's maritime heritage being celebrated and recognised



KEY FINDINGS:

- > Over 90% of respondents were either very (187, 78%) or somewhat supportive (31, 13%) of Melbourne's maritime heritage being celebrated or recognised.
- > Nine respondents were not supportive (4%).
- > Ten respondents were not sure (4%).
- > Three respondents selected 'other' (1%).

Maritime celebration and recognition comments

Following the questions above, respondents were asked: *Please share any thoughts or ideas you have on this?* Their responses are analysed below. Discussions are generally ordered by the frequency of comments made on each topic (most to least).

SECTION SUMMARY

HERITAGE SUPPORT AND PROTECTION

- > A considerable number of respondents made the point that Melbourne's maritime heritage has been neglected and that there is a need to take action to preserve and celebrate what remains before it is lost forever. Other Australian cities were considered to better preserve and celebrate maritime heritage.
- > MTS was seen as intrinsically valuable as well as an anchor for broader Melbourne maritime heritage.
- > There was a desire for MTS artefacts to be well curated and authentically displayed, while remaining engaging rather than stale or boring.
- > A moderate number of respondents stated that MTS's current activities should be retained, particularly services to seafarers and authentically displaying maritime artefacts.
- > A moderate number of respondents made the point that historical and contemporary maritime activities should both be celebrated and possibly blended.
- > The acknowledgement, remembrance and expression of Aboriginal maritime heritage was supported by several respondents as part of MTS playing a broader role in education around maritime history.

USES FOR MISSION TO SEAFARERS

- > The main themes discussed in this section have already been discussed in the section above, see page 20. The most commonly expressed sentiment in these comments was ensuring that heritage is celebrated in a vibrant, living way and creating a stagnant museum should be avoided.

MANAGEMENT AND MISCELLANEOUS TOPICS

- > Just over half the several comments made regarding management of MTS focused on better promotion of the MTS building and its services.

UNSUPPORTIVE COMMENTS

- > A small number of respondents disagreed that maritime heritage needs to be significantly celebrated, appraising it as a niche interest that won't attract people to experience it on an ongoing basis.

Heritage support and protection

The sections that follow are a full discussion of comments, discussed from most-to-least frequently mentioned topics.

PRESERVE AND CELEBRATE HERITAGE

38 COMMENTS

The considerable number of comments on the need to preserve and celebrate Melbourne's maritime heritage contained strong, consistent themes.

Respondents commonly started with the point that Melbourne's heritage, particularly its maritime heritage, has been neglected. It was considered overlooked, especially in comparison with other Australian cities which were felt to do a better job celebrating maritime

history. They went on to state that there is a need to take action to preserve and celebrate heritage before it is lost forever. This was a typical comment:

Most of Melbourne's shipping has totally relocated from the area around the MTS. The maritime history has been marginalised and forgotten. It is time to rejuvenate the maritime history and culture.

Respondents identified the opportunity to preserve MTS for its own sake but to also be an anchor for maritime heritage. Some made the point that once heritage is lost it is lost forever, while others made the point that 'tinkering' with heritage buildings or items can be as damaging as removing them. Some respondents called for artefacts at MTS to be well-curated and authentically displayed. However, it was also stipulated that what is displayed must be interesting and engaging rather than "stale" and "boring". The point was also made that MTS is an interesting building which deserves to be preserved:

Preserve the building as a snap shot in time. Be sympathetic to the past and our shared heritage, one it is gone it may never return. The installation of "art" or some business space will irreversibly damage the building.

This point was made about authentic preservation of heritage items:

The restoration of the old crane is an example of how this can be done. No 'bling' but simply honouring the original purpose of the building's form.

Some felt that Melburnians are not aware of the place that maritime industry has played in the development of the city, and in particular that most groups, barring Aboriginal people, have settled in Melbourne after arriving by a maritime vessel. A point frequently made was that maritime history could be preserved across a larger precinct, not just MTS.

This comment provided a detailed explanation of what they considered to be reasons behind heritage loss:

The maritime heritage of the Yarra and Victoria Harbour are hidden, ignored and discounted by most people using the city and by previous planning decisions. The lack of obvious synergies from the Immigration Museum, through the Polly Woodside, the Mission and on to the Wooden Boat Centre, the Heritage Fleet and the Port of Melbourne show we are missing opportunities. Development seems to happen around and in spite of these structures rather than enhancing and empowering them. The presence of a living harbour with multiple use profiles should be benefit to the City. Instead we seem to be determined to lose that which remains: the ongoing debate on the future of central pier, and the lack of clarity of the future of the heritage fleet typifies this.

This comment described what is lost when older buildings are replaced with modern buildings:

We have a rich maritime history, and so many architecturally lovely buildings have been knocked down for glass & metal tubes. Heritage gives a city personality and feeling. Also I don't think we pay enough attention to our maritime past

This was considered one of the benefits of heritage protection and celebration:

Sharing our historical buildings with present generations creating awareness and appreciation of not only history but architecture and the people and places that made Melbourne so Marvelous

RETAIN CURRENT USE AND FUNCTIONS

19 COMMENTS

Again, there were strongly consistent themes raised in these comments. Respondents stated that MTS currently delivers a very important function in serving visiting seafarers. Some also felt that MTS presents maritime artefacts in an authentic way. Respondents expressed that changes should not impact what is currently delivered by MTS, and that the current daily living activities should not be halted or hindered by changes. This was one of the comments:

While I think that the history of the mission to seafarers should be celebrated I want the space to continue to be a place that sailors and land dwellers can come together, not something sterile and regulated

Respondents also felt that the current structure and shape of the building should not be altered. This comment included a number of the points that were commonly made:

This is a heritage space and one that is so unique to this part of Melbourne. It is interesting architecturally and an amazing community space. The possibilities are many! I hope this stays open and available to greater Melbourne and its visitors.

This comment made the point that MTS should not be sacrificed for the preservation of maritime heritage:

Our maritime history is an important part of Melbourne's story. But don't build a museum and ruin the authenticity of what's already there and happening at the Mission to Seafarers. They engage wonderfully with Melbourne's communities, including artists already. Leave it alone.

This comment also emphasised the importance and value of MTS's current functions:

The Mission to Seafarers serves a great purpose for visiting seafarers as well as maintaining historical awareness of the importance of the precinct. I think that this should be maintained for newcomers

CONTINUING MTS SUPPORT

6 COMMENTS

A small number of respondents specifically expressed the need to ensure that the work of the mission in supporting seafarers continues.

This was one representative comment:

The mission dedicates its space and time to working with seafarers from all over the world and do a fantastic job especially through Covid. Without the fund raising they do and the draw of this space they couldn't achieve this. Leave them there.

CONNECT OLD AND NEW IN THE CELEBRATION OF MARITIME HERITAGE

18 COMMENTS

Respondents highlighted their support for celebrating heritage but also the importance of weaving the past and the present together for a living expression of maritime heritage.

This comment summed up the sentiment of many others on this topic:

Heritage is great however it needs to be met with the modern side of the industry. There must be a more balanced approach for the public to take an interest in this facility.

This comment described how modern activities can be enhanced by including historical elements:

The maritime industry has played a crucial role in the formation and development of this continent and will forever do so. As with so many places in the world, the major ports and maritime history are being subsumed in the natural growth of cities and populations. This is a natural progression, but in the 21st century we must be able to retain the memory, culture and physical aspects of what has gone before, in conjunction with that development.

Another comment suggested how a living expression of the maritime industry can be retained:

A FUNCTIONING maritime precinct, where heritage is not only maintained and displayed, but where modern and historic maritime and indigenous maritime skills are actively learnt and practiced

A FOCAL POINT FOR MARITIME HERITAGE

16 COMMENTS

A variety of different initiative were proposed to create a hub of maritime heritage and activity. While a moderate number of respondents felt MTS should play a part in this network, the part it should play differed. Some felt it should be a centre, while others thought it should be one feature amongst a maritime network.

Suggestions regarding a network included linking the Tall Ships to preserve them all; linking with South Wharf and Victoria Harbour; reinventing Victoria Harbour Basin as a focal point of the Marine industry, such as vessel building; and that Williamstown should be focal point with Docklands in a supporting role.

Other suggestions were to develop a maritime museum, not necessarily at MTS; a destination 'maritime heritage' site; or curate the library at Docklands with exhibitions.

Another suggested a wharf for passengers to disembark at MTS.

This comment sums up the sentiment of what many were seeking:

The Mission building and seafarers welfare are only part of Melbourne's maritime heritage; at best, a living precinct would include the building as one destination among a range of experiences for visitors

This was one opinion regarding the part that MTS should play:

The Network and connectivity of the organisations involved are the main showcase of Maritime History in Melbourne. The building is not required as the main feature of Maritime Heritage in Victoria or Melbourne.

FAMILY MARITIME HERITAGE CONNECTION

12 COMMENTS

A variety of different personal connections were described by several respondents. These connections underpinned respondents' commitment and emotional investment in the initiative.

Connections included: former maritime dance troop manager that performed at MTS; family seafarers have described the importance of the MTS building; member of the Port Adelaide Maritime Museum; raised money at school for MTS; longstanding member of Royal Melbourne Yacht Squadron & a retired boat builder; father was a Port Philip Sea Pilot; the last minister of the mission to Seafarers was a family friend who married my parents; My husband's grandfather was the official artist for the Port of Melbourne; and family were mariners and regularly visitors to Sandridge (South Melbourne).

ABORIGINAL CULTURAL HERITAGE

9 COMMENTS

Several respondents made a short but clear point that Aboriginal maritime history should be included in the initiative. This was a representative quote.

Would like to see indigenous & social histories included as well as focus on Melbourne's waterways & river systems.

EDUCATIONAL ROLE

7 COMMENTS

A small number of respondents made the point that education on maritime heritage should be a part of future developments. About half of the comments referred specifically to educating children.

This comment summed up the points made:

A way to connect kids with maritime heritage would be nice, perhaps an interactive display to teach them about the nearby heritage listed crane and how the docks used to look. Plus the importance from an economic perspective in Melbourne's early development and also a connection to immigration and the importance of the diversity that this brought to the city (in a similar way to the Queen St bridge celebrates this.)

SYDNEY BENCHMARK

5 COMMENTS

A small number of respondents referenced other places as aspirational examples of how maritime heritage can be celebrated, with Sydney lauded in particular. This was a representative comment:

Sydney actively celebrates its maritime. It's everywhere you look. For some reason, Melbourne has never embraced our heritage to the same level; for a newcomer you'd think we were settled overland.

ATTRACT MORE PEOPLE TO VISIT

2 COMMENTS

A couple of respondents noted that more people would be attracted to visit if the MTS was more open to the community, specifically if the outside of the building was more inviting.

COLLABORATION PROMOTED

2 COMMENTS

A couple of respondents suggested a collaborative approach should be followed.

MISCELLANEOUS HERITAGE TOPICS

18 COMMENTS

A variety of one-off or unique comments were made by respondents regarding heritage protection or development. The points made included: history should be told how it was and a politically correct approach should not be taken; although a lot of people won't care about the building the city should take over to avoid its loss to developers; similar preservation policies should be taken to Port Adelaide Maritime Museum; Williamstown should also be a focus for maritime preservation; a museum-style didactic approach should be avoided as a more subtle approach will allow visitors to drink and absorb the history; MTS could be a land-based version of Polly Woodside, preserving and presenting history; 'disneyfying' the site should be avoided; City planning decisions need to protect heritage; diverse (female, Chinese, Aboriginal) history needs to be preserved rather than just white male; the building needs space between it and its tall neighbours; 1800-period themed like Sydney was supported; should include recognition of maritime unions and workers' struggle on the docks and at sea; heritage preservation must avoid being captured by vested interests; and the shed was an opportunity lost and this one should not be.

Uses for Mission to Seafarers

Note that the section above, *MTS Future Uses*, contains a detailed discussion of how respondents felt MTS can be used in the future. This question also attracted comments focused on use even though the question asked about the level of support for Melbourne's maritime heritage being celebrated and recognised. Hence, these comments repeat some of the topics in the previous section.

OPPOSE OR RESTRICTED MARITIME MUSEUM

16 COMMENTS

A moderate number of respondents made comments opposing a traditional-style museum dominating the MTS. The most common reason for this was that a museum would create a stagnant or lifeless space opposed to the living vibrant one which MTS currently is. This was a representative comment:

A museum commemorates a dead culture. The building itself is alive, I have been to live events in the space and it should be kept to encourage events such as live music, sea shanty choir and community gatherings.

This comment made a similar point:

...there is nothing to be gained by demanding this building become solely a museum. Display areas could definitely be improved in the existing building but the Mission already functions as a living museum, a place of engagement and discovery via the gentler, less didactic approach of the public being welcome to socialise within the building. They learn as they drink and they chat.

SUPPORT FOR A MUSEUM

7 COMMENTS

A small number of comments in answers to this question supported a museum. These comments were in favour of the site being converted to a museum, such as:

A museum dedicated to merchant and wharf history

SPECIFIC DEVELOPMENT SUGGESTIONS

14 COMMENTS

Several respondents made specific suggestions for how they thought MTS should be developed. These comments included community-focused usage, such as 'something for single mums and teens as they struggle to go together and do activities'; incorporating maritime art in the adjacent park to make a connection; an interactive display for kids, for example of earlier Australians, and some of the historical shed and warehouses kept and repurposed into community spaces.

Other points raised included building business usage; a proper Yarra water taxi service and more boats on Yarra; and one respondent noted access across the busy road is a challenge to connecting with Parklands.

Another comments included that Polly Woodside needs to be out of the water for improved preservation, as is done in the UK; and the possibility of a heritage ship being located somewhere close to the building

These other suggestions were made.

How about a financial incentive for Film and Television students (e.g. Swinburne University) to develop a short film or documentary around this building to be aired publicly and/or on Youtube for raising public awareness of the building?

I would love to see a historical festival where sailor skills can be taught, sailor/officer/captain journals can be read, lectures about the era can be attended, sea shanties can be sung/taught, dancing lessons, costuming talks or workshops given, etc. etc...

Consider an oral history program. Consider holographic projections out on the Yarra now showing busy river traffic and life in the past.

Design more landings / pontoons at water level along the Yarra to permit interaction with the water, including areas dedicated for fishing, boat landings and kayak launching areas.

PROPOSED ACTIVITIES TO RUN OR HOST

8 COMMENTS

Several respondents made specific suggestions for activities to run, including weekly church services and the annual art exhibition; school excursions; chamber music; and working displays like Garden Island in Sydney with steam cranes for loading and unloading goods.

These other suggestions were also made:

Many years ago my Scottish dancers used to come every year and perform on Polly Woodside. We performed dances depicting sailors working on the ships, we danced to sea shanties etc. it was a time that was loved by performers and families. Perhaps we can be involved in some performances along/near the Maritime Museum.

Something like Sarah Island, Tasmania, where you have people dressed in period costume telling the stories of the past so that the children can really visualize the history.

TOURS

4 COMMENTS

A small number of respondents suggested MTS could be a base for tours. This was one of the comments:

Some historical maritime heritage walking tours of the area starting from there would be really nice.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

4 COMMENTS

A small number of respondents focused on the benefits that can occur from bringing people together to enjoy wholesome community activities, with one respondent stating:

We hold such an opportunity in our hands with a unique area that holds far more potential to be a true community than simply a party/ alcohol based destination- we need to consider the people of Docklands generations later in our choices.

HOSPITALITY

3 COMMENTS

A few respondents suggested a café or a bar as a use for MTS.

Management and miscellaneous topics

FUTURE MANAGEMENT OF MTS

13 COMMENTS

Several comments focused on future management and promotion of MTS.

Just over half of these comments suggested that there must be greater promotion of MTS. These respondents commonly stated that they hear little about maritime history in Melbourne and it should be promoted via physical signs or social media.

A variety of other management comments were made, including keep prices fair to encourage custom; develop a volunteer base; plan well for maintenance; and preserve it so it is worthy of visiting and people will come.

This was one more detailed comment.

It provides exhibition space for the annual art award, that could be used year round for maritime related exhibits, with suitable funding for a curator, mounting of exhibitions, storage of artefacts and conservation. It should be linked to the Polly Woodside museum in some way. Maybe the National Trust should have a role in preserving this historic building.

MISCELLANEOUS TOPICS

14 COMMENTS

Several other one-off comments were made. A few of these expressed doubt as to the value of the project, with one comment questioning why this is being revisited, one suggesting the new development would be more suitable for this than Seafarers, and another stating:

I'm very supportive but don't think most people would be. My dad was a victim of the 1973 Blythe Star shipping accident so I have a nostalgic view of maritime history but without that connection I really don't think most people would be that interested in maritime history.

Other various points included confusion caused by a new hotel being called the Seafarers; calls to improve the existing Polly Woodside Museum; and a suggestion to look at what Port Hedland do out of their Mission to Seafarers. One respondent described their personal connection with maritime history, while another discussed heritage groups and they need for them to support one another.

Another respondent raised a query:

Given that Wurundjeri Way is busy and will become more busy with West Gate Tunnel traffic, I wonder how access and amenity will be kept to a good standard. This area is isolated, noisy, and hard to imagine as a "meeting place".

Finally, two comments made general statements about Melbourne, with one stating that "Melbourne was and is a port city", and the other noting that "preservation and innovation is Melbourne".

Unsupportive comments

MARITIME HERITAGE NOT A PRIORITY

5 COMMENTS

A small number of respondents disagreed that maritime heritage needs to be significantly celebrated. The points made were that maritime heritage is a niche interest and will not attract people to experience it on an ongoing basis; there are other things to celebrate; and that Docklands is not the best place to celebrate maritime heritage, with a couple of respondents suggesting Williamstown as a better location.

One respondent summed up:

There is lots of talk of supporting the maritime heritage at Victoria Harbour, it's a draw, but it's not the only draw. Some heritage is good, but it's not something I'd return back to again and again.

The Gather tool comments

The comments below are those submitted on the CoM Participate Melbourne Ideas wall via the Gather tool.

Display of a hand drawn Marine Engineers work book.

Posted by Reid LOWE | 22 days ago

Mr. Gerry Van Loon is a 95 year old Marine Engineer who emigrated from Holland to Australia. During World War 2 as a young man in war torn Holland he studied his craft under extreme conditions, during those times he produced a most detailed and exquisite hand drawn exercise book of ships machinery and equipment. This book is still in his possession. Mr. Van Loon was the Marine Engineering head of department at Footscray Technical College from 1970 to 1981. It was during this time that...

0 Likes 1 Comments

Celebration Melbourne Dock Worlets

Posted by Dockers/Mission | 25 days ago

Hi there. As a member of the recently formed Melbourne Maritime Heritage Network I'm really interested in the reimagining of the. Seafarers Mission. The network's recent talk on the indigenous perspective of Port Phillip Bay was great stuff. It's Paulie Stewart here musician and journalist and founder of veteran local rock act The Painters And Dockers. The band has been inducted into The Age Rock And Roll Hall Of Fame, released seven albums and performed more than 2000 shows around the...

0 Likes 1 Comments

Children's Aspect/ Community Strength

Posted by F. C. | a month ago

A maritime history display, however simple, but a hands on approach would be especially valuable, would be welcomed by local Children's Services and local families in making the building a destination for learning about maritime history and connection to community from an early age. As an educator at a local service, we would certainly make this an excursion destination as part of our educational program for young children. A way to let the local community know the nationalities of seafarers...

0 Likes 1 Comments

home away from home

Posted by ben | a month ago

for starters... the dome should be used for meditation events and listening parties... but secondly... keep the ethos of this place alive... support people that need support... backpackers, sailors, homeless, etc... Thirdly, make it a place that supports a new political economy... teach the lessons of Henry George... and the changes we need

2 Likes 0 Comments

Exploring Melbourne's maritime history

Posted by Sue Jones | a month ago

This interesting article might interest everyone who is interested in the tragic story of one Melbourne's first Aboriginal naval officers, Thomas Bungalene. <https://magazine.melbourne.vic.gov.au/exploring-melbournes-maritime-history/>

1 Likes 0 Comments

Melbourne needs public ferries!

Posted by Jonathan | a month ago

Let's face it. Melbourne's waterways are criminally under-utilised. Public ferries are an asset to commuters and a tourist draw in cities like Sydney and Perth. Melbourne would benefit massively from such services. A ferry starting near Flinders St station, making stops at the Mission to Seafarers, DFO South Wharf, Fisherman's Bend, and The District Docklands would most definitely be commercially viable as some of these spots are difficult to access via train/tram.

via train/tram.

0 Likes 0 Comments

Museum

Posted by History | a month ago

Turn it into a museum of all thing ships and sea.

0 Likes 0 Comments

Williamstown

Posted by dawnbutler | a month ago

Include history from Williamstown early days shipping

0 Likes 0 Comments

Maritime Museum

Posted by Docklans resident | a month ago

A brand new Maritime Museum should be built at the end of Victoria Harbour. An international competition should be organised to receive entries from great architects like Santiago Calatrava who was recently contacted by a Docklands resident. Melbourne deserves a landmark like the Sydney Opera House. The heritage fleet, wooden boat centre should remain on the Victoria Harbour precinct to add to the maritime experience for tourists. This way Melbourne would be able to celebrate its maritime...

4 Likes 0 Comments

Mission to Seafarers building

Posted by Why repurpose? | a month ago

The mission to seafarers is an active organization that has provided over 100 years of unconditional welfare support to seafarers. It distresses me to see this proposal asking for the public to imagine a new purpose to the site of a current and critical Organisation.

5 Likes 0 Comments

The dome

Posted by Jean claude | a month ago

Let's start with the truth. That dome building was ment to be a Mosque.

0 Likes 2 Comments



Saving the S.S. Glaucus

Posted by J. A. Scott | a month ago

It would be good if you could include in your exhibitions the heroism of some seafarers. I have been researching into my Great Uncle Fred Holdridge who came to Australia from England. Through Trove I discovered an heroic rescue of the Glaucus by...

0 Likes 0 Comments