



## December 2012:

Seasons Greetings everybody!

Firstly, our DCA Christmas party was held on Wednesday, December 5 – the same day that the Docklands News was published. If you get this reminder in time, please don't forget to attend.

All are welcome! It starts at 7.30pm and is only \$10 each for non-members, which includes both savouries and drinks. The venue is Harbour Kitchen under the NAB building on Victoria Harbour Promenade.

Now to business ... the DCA's annual general meeting was held at the Hub on October 29. Besides the moderate attendance, a total of 12 proxy votes were received from people unable to attend. Guest speakers from the council included officers from its urban design department who provided an insight into planning processes. There was not much joy for residents I'm afraid in terms of community input.

It is worthwhile to remind people what the DCA does. It was instituted by the Docklands Authority to promote growth of a strong community in Docklands.

It is registered under the Act. Essentially, we promote activities for the community and take up issues with the council, Places Victoria and the State Government on behalf of the community, to improve facilities and amenities and the local environment.

The association is regarded as the conduit for distribution of material on issues and events to residents from the council, Etihad Stadium, the Hub, the Port of Melbourne Authority and outside organisations and to provide responses, including to individuals such as researchers.

We also provide opinions, convey matters requesting attention, submit recommendations and follow up outcomes on behalf of the community.

Our representatives attend briefings, forums and meetings on issues and we liaise with other community groups.

I have written to Lord Mayor Robert Doyle and councillors requesting they review their decision behind closed doors to cancel the 9.30pm fireworks on New Year's Eve and asking for the courtesy of a response.

We have received responses from two councillors only, suggesting we refer to others. I'm not sure of our chances but you have to try.

Our protest in 2009 when the council tried a similar cancellation resulted in it being reinstated.

We doubt the crowd management excuse again put forward and suspect the reason is cost-saving. There is no evidence of crowd-management problems in previous years.

We had suggested that the Chamber of Commerce also write to the council requesting review, on behalf of the restaurants/retailers, but are not aware of such action being taken as yet.

On November 15, I chaired the quarterly meeting of the OC chairs of high-rise residential buildings in the inner city. Chairs include members of the DCA.

Main items discussed included the amended Metropolitan Planning Scheme and the sub-committee review of the OC legislation and maintenance planning and funding.



A meeting of the Docklands Community Forum was held on Thursday, November 29.

We were given presentations over two hours on planning and council projects. We were told by a council director that there is no way the NYE 9.30pm fireworks will be reinstated.

Nonetheless, I challenged that vigorously saying there is no evidence of crowd problems and the Lord Mayor admitted at a function that he was not prepared to spend the extra money.

The same decision was reversed in 2009 and it should be reversed again. The 9.30pm cancellation deprives families with children of the event and also families from the Western suburbs, many of whom come in by car, to say nothing of the loss of business for struggling restaurants.

Some of us asked that there be less lectures in future and more opportunity for discussion of issues amongst ourselves, being the community and business representative members. Following that, we could come up with views and recommendations ourselves.

Regarding the major esplanade redevelopment we were told that options will be presented to the community to review prior to decisions being made. That will be a welcome improvement in the process.

I'd like on behalf of our committee to wish to wish you all a Merry Christmas and a happy and safe new year! I look forward to preparing a column for you in the New Year.

Regards to all

Roger Gardner, President, DCA

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## November 2012:

The DCA has been awarded a \$3000 community service grant from the council as part of its grants program. It is for conducting community activities and consolidation. We wish to thank the council for the grant.

Having said that, there has been a general outcry from Docklands against council's decision behind closed doors to cancel the 9.30pm family fireworks display on New Year's Eve. They have said it is due to police advice regarding crowd management issues. There have been no previous reports to that effect and we are sceptical of the reason.

This event is important for families and for restaurants and other businesses in Docklands. Council tried a similar tactic in 2009 but reinstated the event following our protests. We will protest again.

The DCA annual general meeting is being held on Monday, October 29. The guest speaker will be Rob Moore, council's manager of urban design. I will report on the outcome next month.

On October 4, I met with some leading people involved with groups in Melbourne who are highly critical of the State Government's planning of both high-rise and suburban low-rise development, including relaxing of the laws and the Minister's autocratic approach.

Strategies for objection are being developed. This is relevant to Docklands in terms of future development and protection of amenity.



An objection by owners corporation (OC) chairs will be lodged with the Minister, Places Victoria (PV) and council to MAB Corporation's quiet approach to PV in an attempt to change the NewQuay Master Plan to construct more residential towers instead of commercial buildings behind existing residential towers.

This proposed change is objectionable on a number of grounds.

Myself representing the DCA along with Albert Morcos on October 11 attended the meeting of the Docklands Steering Group comprising senior executives of council and Places Victoria at which we reported on the first forum meeting and were given the opportunity to hear reports on the status of projects.

The status reports contained nothing we didn't already know. These have so far been tell-sessions where we're told what's going to happen; whereas we request the opportunity to have input before decisions are made. I did say that we oppose the placing of old cargo sheds on the revamped Esplanade and was promptly told that was locked in.

We have tentatively set the date of the DCA Christmas Party for Wednesday, December 12. Invitations advising venue and other details will be sent out in the near future.

I have been asked by the community garden co-ordinator to include the following report in this column for the benefit of readers:

"All of that area around the park and Myer, leading into the garden area was on a contaminated site. It was the site of the old gas works.

The ground has been decontaminated to world's best practice standards. But, in addition, all the garden beds are raised beds and filled with new soil from off site.

They have a moisture barrier membrane beneath plus a 50 cm scoria layer to prevent water rising from beneath.

They are completely safe for food production, but users are advised not to plant edible foods in the ground around the garden (although that's probably safe too)".

This report was provided in response to an enquiry from a university researcher.

Regards to all,  
Roger Gardner, President DCA

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## October 2012:

It's great to see the weather warming up a bit.

I attended the induction meeting of the Community Forum on September 19. The group includes representatives from the Docklands Community Association, the Chamber of Commerce, Destination Docklands, waterways businesses and five individuals – comprising two business people, one worker, one young parent and one older resident. Meetings will be held every two months attended by council and Places Victoria officers.



An objective is to put forward views to the Docklands Steering Group which is a committee of officers who decide on strategies and action plans. I also attended the first programmed meeting on September 26.

I also attended on September 25 the launch by the Lord Mayor of the construction of the new community centre and library. Occupancy is scheduled for the end of 2013.

Regrettably, council has informed us there will be no fireworks in Docklands at 9.30 pm this New Year's Eve. There will be a midnight one.

They say it is due to crowd management issues, not in Docklands itself, but in the merge afterwards with the crowds from the city.

I responded to the council director that we had not heard of problems in previous years and that families enjoy the earlier event with their children and it draws a large crowd to the area.

Interestingly, council proposed withdrawal of the earlier 9.30 event in 2009 but was forced to reinstate it following protests. The reason given on that occasion was cost, on the basis that it was too expensive when added to the cost of the other city displays. I think that we should lodge a protest in conjunction with the Chamber of Commerce whose businesses are also affected.

The DCA has been contacted by the new commander of the City West Police Station, Snr Sgt Michael Wilmot, who wanted to introduce himself and wishes to work closely with the Docklands community. He would like us to become actively involved in the Precinct Policing Program, which we will do. We will arrange a date to meet with him later in the year after he returns from overseas.

Two other OC chairs, who are also DCA members, and myself met with Places Victoria officers including Simon Wilson who confirmed that MAB want to put more residential towers at the rear of the existing buildings on New Quay East instead of lower commercial buildings as originally planned. The privacy, traffic, lack of adequate access and other problems were raised. We got no conciliatory response and will have to take the matter further.

Places Victoria has called for expressions of interest to provide a place of worship in Docklands. They refer to a possible site on Footscray Rd, south of Costco but will consider other suggestions from interested developers. As to how a religious denomination will be selected is unclear.

I would like to take the opportunity to point out that the DCA makes supporting comments on proposals that benefit Docklands not only for residents but also for workers and businesses.

Examples are provision of recreation facilities, ferry service and redevelopment of Harbour Esplanade which we are pushing. We believe the esplanade is a focal point for entry from the city to Docklands and should be developed as a linear park not only for locals but for all visitors. Peter Clarke agreed with this in recent discussions.



On the other hand, if there are any issues such as traffic congestion, lack of car parking or any developer plans which are disadvantageous to residents and others, we will continue to say so and raise this with the authorities in an attempt to obtain corrective action.

If any reader would like to become a member of the DCA or has any suggestions they wish to put forward regarding activities or issues, they are welcome to contact us on [docklandscommunityassociation@gmail.com](mailto:docklandscommunityassociation@gmail.com). If you would like to talk to me about any aspect you are welcome to call me on 0412 097 706.

Roger Gardner, President, DCA

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## June 2012:

### Greetings everybody

Whilst there is still no decision from Minister Guy regarding the MAB plan for the redevelopment of Waterfront City and the piazza, the DCA has received a response from Premier Baillieu to our representations saying that, whilst he couldn't make specific comment on the plan while it is still under review, he said: "I would like to commend the commitment of time and resources that the members of the Docklands Community Association have dedicated to raising their concerns about the proposal with the Minister for Planning."

"The Victorian Coalition Government is committed to improving community assets in the Docklands precinct ... As part of the 2011-12 State Budget, our Government provided \$9.7 million over four years to develop a new planning strategy for Melbourne, of which Docklands is a vital component."

I think we can take some heart from that and also from the protracted delay in a decision on the WFC plans, which may indicate some modifications are under consideration.

The City of Melbourne has released what it calls Public Realm Plans for Docklands. It can be commented on online or at public forums being held at the Hub on Wednesday, June 13, 5.30 - 6.30pm or Saturday, June 16, 11am to 12 noon.

The plan is a lengthy document covering roads, streets, buildings and open space on land.

Interestingly, it does not address water-use development. The impression is that they want to broaden the focus away from parks open space, which of course is lacking.

Whilst streets can be used for walking and there are bike tracks, it acknowledges the need for land-based recreation and more parks and trees. Of course the "No man's land" Esplanade is open space and its redevelopment will add significantly to the Docklands' image and use.

Interestingly, it says the Waterfront City Piazza is earmarked as a civic space providing a green space for locals as well as for events attracting up to 5000 people.

The development of the waterways usage is an integral part of the public realm development and perhaps is being made a separate study. Ferries are seen as crucial in bringing visitors to and from NewQuay. In relation to the recent airing of the idea of commuter ferries between the lower western suburbs and the city it raises the question of would they also service NewQuay.

Council is running a survey on what people think of the public events held in the city. The notice has been sent out to members. It can be accessed online. It has been pointed out to council that they have failed to include reference to events held in Docklands.



Lists of Docklands events and activities from the Hub, council and Etihad Stadium are being emailed to members as they come to hand.

Following the forum in March hosted by Places Victoria and council informing us of improved governance and consultation, we have heard nothing further or have not received any response to our suggestion that the DCA and the Chamber of Commerce should be represented on their strategic planning committee. We will follow up.

If any reader would like to become a member of the DCA or has any suggestions they wish to put forward regarding activities or issues, they are welcome to contact us on [docklandscommunityassociation@gmail.com](mailto:docklandscommunityassociation@gmail.com). If you would like to talk to me about any aspect you are welcome to call me on 0412 097 706. You can also keep up with things on our website <http://www.docklandscommunityassociation.com>

Great to be in touch again.

Sincerely

Roger Gardner  
President DCA

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## February 2012:

Greetings everybody and welcome to 2012.

The DCA Christmas Party held on December 7 at the Harbour Kitchen on Victoria Harbour was a great success, with a crowd full of cheer on a balmy summer's evening.

Members are being kept informed of coming events in the area. The new year's eve fireworks were spectacular as usual. The crowd was well behaved. The number of police and security arrangements were well sourced.

Myself and two representatives from other areas met with Planning Minister Matthew Guy in his offices on December 14. I reiterated our community's strong objection to MAB Corporation's plan to erect a hotel in the Waterfront City Piazza, together with its plans for extra tall buildings and with no extra traffic management. Mr Guy referred to MAB's plan to put a park at the rear of the proposed hotel. Hopefully he was just being rhetorical, but it would be annoying if he had been "taken in" by MAB's proposed "park" which we had already advised was a sham, as it would be a small overshadowed strip with traffic lanes on both sides to the hotel, with water views blocked. I repeated this.

The City of Melbourne is siding with us and has sent written objections to the department, which I referred to in the meeting. Councils get overridden, but the fact that it is the City of Melbourne may carry more weight. Developers have done what they like in Docklands. The community's profile has been raised and we have to continue to fight for what's left. The Minister gave no indication of a decision at the meeting, which was to be expected.

Council has released plans for future open space in the municipality including Docklands. This has been forwarded to DCA members. Feedback is encouraged. A link is available for readers on <http://www.melbourne.vic.gov.au/openspace>. The plans as per the maps do not provide any significant land-based open space in Docklands which is not surprising, since there is not much left. The same applies to other areas of the city with no new major parks/gardens planned. It says a lot but delivers little.



Apart from token strips, the largest space shown is the known patch off the end of Docklands Drive at the Bolte Bridge which may be allocated to the Melbourne Football Club. The sizes of the blue and orange circles (on their maps) are exaggerated.

Some salvation could lie in the redevelopment of Harbour Esplanade between the newly located tram tracks and the water. This is a fairly large area. We will be following up for concept plans which so far have not been forthcoming from the council or Places Victoria. This area should become a walking esplanade with lawn, paths and trees. We will oppose any plan to put buildings on it.

Their maps do show another blue circle for open space provision in the proposed redevelopment of the railyards known as E-Gate on the other side of Footscray Rd and at its northern end. This is not close for Docklands and the size again is dubious. The nearest major gardens for us will continue to be Flagstaff.

It is disappointing to say the least that whilst extolling the virtues of open space "within easy walking distance", the plans provide very little.

The chair of Places Victoria (formerly VicUrban), former city councillor Peter Clarke, has stated a desire to liaise more closely with the DCA which is welcome. We hope that this will result in us gaining more facilities and redress for the community, including open space, recreation and other facilities, improved traffic management and more control over developers.

If any reader would like to become a member of the DCA or has any suggestions they wish to put forward regarding activities or issues, they are welcome to contact us on [docklandscommunityassociation@gmail.com](mailto:docklandscommunityassociation@gmail.com). If you would like to talk to me about any aspect you are welcome to call me on 0412 097 706. You can also keep up with things on our website <http://www.docklandscommunityassociation.com>

Great to be in touch again.

Sincerely

Roger Gardner  
President DCA