

unChain Inc:

Submission on the Marina Reserve Masterplan

26 July 2010

On behalf of unChain Inc I would like to make the following brief points about the Marina Reserve Masterplan:

That as Melbourne grows to perhaps 7 million people it is important to protect public land and to provide recreational facilities for the public, especially young people.

That there is a demonstrated need for a skateboarding facility for the kids of Port Phillip.

That skateboarding is intimately linked to surfing and the sea and therefore is an appropriate use of foreshore public land. It is in keeping with the current windsurfing and kitesurfing activities at St Kilda beach and the foreshore location of other skate facilities at Geelong, Lorne, Bondi, and many Queensland beaches.

That we support the submission by Rob Francis, President MOSS Foundation, which proposes 'to maximize participation and longevity of the facility a dual depth bowl with a "waterfall" should be included in the "skateable infrastructure" area to complement the street terrain in the "incidental skate space" areas.

That we support the submission by Don Gazzard that:

- The existing path though the Reserve should be retained,
- The bike path should be relocated along the edge of Marine Parade,
- The multi use skating facility should be re-located as shown on his revised Master Plan.
- The car park should be reduced in size to 17 car spaces at the marina end retaining the existing arrangement of cars on either side of a central aisle
- Consideration be given to using the unused area of carpark as netball court
- Toilets are not considered necessary

That toilets are not considered necessary because there are existing public toilets at Donovan's restaurant, only some 300 meters away to the north. Furthermore there is an opportunity to require the toilets at the St Kilda Marina to be made available to the public when this lease is renewed in the near future. These toilets are only 100 meters away to the south.

That if there is path along the northern edge of the Marina Reserve, this should be made from a material such as Brunswick stone to give access to pedestrians, wheelchairs, prams, joggers but not to skaters.

That consideration be given to relocating the long boats from the northern edge of the Reserve into the Marina.

That consideration be given to constructing a lookout tower at the north-western point of the Reserve.

Peter Holland  
President unChain Inc  
[hollandp@me.com](mailto:hollandp@me.com)  
0411 470 651

Hon Ryan Smith, Minister for Environment and Climate Change, Minister for Youth Affairs

### Re Marina Reserve St Kilda

I am writing about the decision of the Department of Sustainability and Environment (DSE) decision to approve the Marina Reserve Masterplan but only on the condition that Council removes the semi-enclosed skate pocket and reduces the size of the active recreation and skateable space by 33%.

I understand that the Council has requested you to review that decision and I strongly support the Council's request. I urge you to approve the original Masterplan submitted by Council.

I am the President of the residents' group unChain Inc and the former President of an earlier residents' group, the St Kilda Foreshore Conservation Group. Together the two groups have been keenly interested in foreshore issues for the past two decades.

Since 1998 the Council has been seeking an appropriate site for a skatepark for the young people of Port Phillip.

The previous Council had resolved to build a skate park in Albert Park, near the primary school on Fitzroy Street. There were 368 objectors to this proposed site including the St Kilda Park Primary School, St Kilda Sports Club, Parks Community Association, Save Albert Park, Port Phillip EcoCentre, St Kilda EarthCare, St Kilda Cricket Club, St Kilda Historical Society, Fitzroy Street Traders Association, Australian Institute of Management, residents, businesses and members of UCSK. Objectors argued that the Albert Park site was too close to the St Kilda Park Primary School. The school had collected considerable evidence that introducing a skate park so close to the school would be contrary to the safe and nurturing environment it sought for its students.

In December 2008, immediately after the Council elections, the new Council decided to begin a new process to select a site for a local skate park. The council resolved to undertake an independent assessment of eight sites previously assessed, and any new sites that may be identified, including the Albert Park site. They appointed an independent assessor, Richard Simon of Simon Leisure Consulting, and establish a community reference group of two councilors and eight key stakeholders, including young people and skaters.

The Independent Assessor and the Community Reference Panel assessed 23 possible sites. The recommendation was that the Marina Reserve was the preferred site.

In June 2009 the Council accepted the recommendation for the skate park at Marina Reserve. Mayor Frank O'Connor said:

*'No site in St Kilda could ever please everyone but the Marina Reserve site overlooking Port Phillip Bay is by far the best site of the nine of the shortlist and the twenty three sites that were considered by the community reference panel. It's the right size, scale and topography (i.e. flat) and the design will be able to capitalise on its stunning backdrop of Port Phillip Bay, the lighthouse and St Kilda beach stretching north. This site is relatively central within St Kilda, handy to trams, buses and parking and open to casual viewing, a key safety principle which makes it suitable for skaters of all ages. This site is not particularly well-used as a community space and there will still be plenty of parkland for all to enjoy after the skate park is built'.*

The next step was to provide for community consultation on the renewal of the Marina Reserve. Council promised there would be a range of recreational activities and facilities for different age groups. The Marina Reserve would not be a stand-alone skate park. Council's vision was for 'an integrated multi-purpose space to cater for all members of our community - including walkers, joggers, cyclists and skaters'. Community consultation addressed issues such as safety, residential amenity, loss of green space, potential impacts on views and the future management plan.

The consultation included an extensive survey of local schoolchildren that showed they want a skatepark. The consultation also included widely advertised Community workshops. Members of unChain Inc actively participated in these workshops. The workshops were successful in getting people to understand other people's views and to identify many promising ideas for the Reserve.

The result was a Masterplan for the Marina Reserve that the Council adopted in October 2010. It features an active recreation and skateable space, BBQ and picnic area, new bike lanes, public toilets and viewing areas, all set within an expanse of green open space. It is important to note that this was a carefully considered plan that had widespread community support.

The Marina Reserve is a Coastal Crown Reserve so the Council's Masterplan requires coastal management consent and approval from the Department of Sustainability and Environment (DSE).

However in March 2011 the DSE gave only a conditional approval of the Masterplan. On behalf of Port Phillip residents I urge you to give an unconditional approval of the plan. These are some of the considerations I think are important:

- That as Melbourne grows to perhaps 7 million people it is important to protect public land and to provide recreational facilities for the public, especially young people.
- That the St Kilda Foreshore Urban Design Framework, a long-term plan for the renewal of St Kilda's foreshore, proposed a coastal skatepark. The Masterplan for the Marina Reserve completes this work on the St Kilda foreshore.
- That there is a demonstrated need for a skateboarding facility for the kids of Port Phillip.

- That skateboarding is intimately linked to surfing and the sea and therefore is an appropriate use of foreshore public land. It is in keeping with the current windsurfing and kitesurfing activities at St Kilda beach and the foreshore location of other skate facilities at Geelong, Lorne, Bondi, and many Queensland beaches. The spiritual home of skating, Venice Beach in California, has a foreshore skatepark.
- This skatepark would be on reclaimed land and intended to be used by all age levels and skill levels. It has been designed to minimize any adverse impacts, especially on the neighboring residents.
- The Marina Reserve will not just be a skatepark. The new Reserve will be shared by many people and provide benefits for the whole community.

Mr Minister, you have the opportunity to ensure that after 12 or more years of waiting, the young residents of our community will finally get a well-designed and well-managed skatepark and the Marina Reserve will complete the rejuvenation of the St Kilda Foreshore.

I am happy to provide any further information you may think relevant

Yours Sincerely

Peter Holland  
President, unChain Inc  
April 2011.  
[hollandp@me.com](mailto:hollandp@me.com)  
0411 470 651