



22 November 2013

Places Victoria
710 Collins Street
Docklands Victoria 3008

Email: fishermansbend@places.vic.gov.au

Dear Sir/Madam,

Re: Submission on the Draft Vision & Interim Design Guidelines for the Fishermans Bend Urban Renewal Area

unChain is an incorporated community organisation dedicated to harnessing community involvement to make Port Phillip a better place in which to live, work and play. We are a non-political community group intent on delivering good outcomes for Port Phillip. Originally we were brought together by concerns about the proposed development on the St Kilda Triangle. Now we are interested in an array of matters arising in Port Phillip, especially the appropriate development of our inner city.

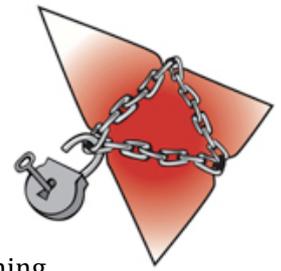
We have members from all political parties but we do not have any political allegiance. We have an e-mail membership of over 2000 people. In the 2012 Port Phillip Council elections, three unChain Councilors were elected and we gained approximately 36% of the first preference votes across the municipality. We can therefore claim to speak on behalf of a significant number of residents and traders in Port Phillip.

Unchain has made previous submissions to the Victorian Government and to the City of Port Phillip on a number of planning matters including:

- PTV design options for the Route 96 Tram Project
- The Melbourne Metropolitan Strategy 2013
- The St Kilda Triangle - Amendment C106 2013
- The St Kilda Triangle - Council's Budget 2013
- Port Melbourne Foreshore UDF 2012
- 1-7 Waterfront Place 2013
- St Kilda Festival 2010
- Marina Reserve 2010

We have reviewed the *Draft Vision for Fishermans Bend Urban Renewal Area* (Draft Vision) and the *Interim Fishermans Bend Design Guidelines* (Design Guidelines). We commend the work done by Places Victoria in preparing both documents and advise our broad support for the objectives set out in each.

While supporting the Government's initiative we remain concerned as to how the objectives will be realised. There are many ways that even the best visions can go awry including a failure to learn from the past, a failure of implementation strategies and a



failure to ensure adequate funding is available. Dependable and resilient planning controls are required; as is a clear identification of a timeframe and funding approaches. Our submission speaks to both the strength of the vision and the potential threats that militate against it being achieved.

We note by way of background that there are many engaged in Melbourne's planning debate who do not accept the premise that significant population growth is inevitable or desirable. They assert that the majority do not want a bigger Melbourne. They argue that Melbourne's famed livability is threatened by growth, and that a pro-growth position reflects the position of developers and the growth lobby. Unchain does not accept the proposition that we simply declare Melbourne full. It is our submission that the Victorian Government must manage Melbourne's growth in a bipartisan manner for the benefits of both its people and the environment. Clearly, large urban renewal programs contribute to the necessary release of land for residential and commercial development and mitigate the need to extend the urban boundary on the city fringe. There are many cities in the US, Europe and Asia that have large populations, resilient economies, better public transport, better healthcare, more affordable housing and more beautiful public spaces facilitated through intensive use of central city precincts.

Before providing our detailed submission we would like to take a moment to comment further on the notion of Melbourne's "Livability" quotient. We are concerned that the Draft Vision repeats in its presentation the misleading ranking by the Economist Intelligence Unit in 2012 that Melbourne is the world's most livable city. The EIU Global Livability Report is based on a survey of expatriates. It is used by companies to determine hardship allowances for their expatriate staff. It is not intended to measure the quality of urban life from the perspective of a citizen who lives in each of the 140 cities surveyed. The 30 factors measured do not include many factors that are important to residents such as housing affordability, schools and universities, green spaces, natural assets, cultural assets, connectivity and (lack of) isolation. The EIU ranking is misleading and dangerous on two grounds. One is that it is 'anti-growth': biased towards mid-sized cities with low population density rather than global cities such as Berlin or New York. Secondly, it may understate the size and nature of the problems that Melbourne residents are experiencing, both now and in the immediate future.

It will be the issues that are not measured in the EIU ranking that will be fundamental to assessing the success or failure of the Fishermans Bend Urban Renewal Area (FBURA). Not least being the delivery of affordable housing.

We note commentary in the *9th Annual Demographia International Housing Affordability Survey* which assessed for each year 2004 to 2012 that Australia, along with New Zealand, had the most unaffordable major housing markets of the 337 metropolitan markets surveyed in Australia, Canada, Hong Kong, Ireland, New Zealand, the United Kingdom and the United States. The survey concluded that every major market in Australia, including the Melbourne market, was severely unaffordable in every year surveyed¹. This assessment indicates a chronic failure of government housing, planning and regulatory policies at all levels – local, state and federal. A performance indicator in assessing success for Fishermans Bend will be its capacity to deliver affordable housing.

¹ <http://www.demographia.com/dhi.pdf> Page 21.



Our specific comments on the Draft Vision and Design Guidelines are as follows.

1. Building Zoning and Density

Unchain commends the Draft Vision's aim of extending central Melbourne's land use mix into Lorimer, Sandridge and part of Montague and also the extension into these precincts of the city's high quality public realm. We also support less intensive development in Wirraway and the remainder of Montague.

We question however the extent of high-rise proposed in the Draft Vision. While accepting high-rise has its part in FBURA we question why in excess of 50% of Fishermans Bend calculated across all precincts is earmarked for developments above 8 storeys. We note Melbourne University Architecture Design Studio findings which indicate that the proposed residential density targets for Fishermans' Bend can be achieved with mainly 8 storey urban developments.

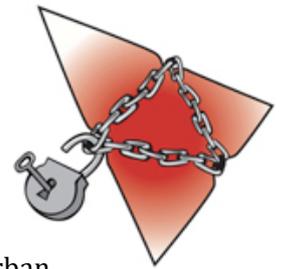
We note further that the City of Port Phillip's previous Structure Plan for the Montague Precinct (which was shelved when the area was brought under the planning authority of Minister Guy late in 2012) also allowed for high density commercial and residential use of the precinct without the same degree of high-rise as proposed in the Draft Vision.

We are specifically concerned with the town planning outcomes anticipated by allowing high-rise in close proximity to the Yarra River along Lorimer's northern boundary. This creates "shadowing" as is the case with South Bank where a "wall" of high rise hugging the Yarra River has meant a quite bleak urban environment behind the "wall". For Government to allow developers to build a "wall" high rise close to a key community asset such as the Yarra River is a derogation of Government's vital role to protect such assets. Besides, it allows developers to be "lazy" as it is clear that they can more easily sell apartments close to the river. However, high rise apartments will still gain a view of the river without needing to be a "wall" along it. Accordingly, unChain strongly recommends that high rise buildings should be widely dispersed within and between the various precincts to allow for neighbourhoods that are diverse in terms of building form (recognizing and agreeing that certain of the precincts not contain high rise developments).

Accordingly, with reference to the built environment that has emerged along City Road and Whiteman Street in Southbank we are concerned that high-rise building controls as exemplified in previous urban renewal programs will not deliver distinctive designs of quality required to achieve the standard of livability anticipated by the Draft Vision.

We submit that the extent of high-rise proposed in FBURA be reviewed and reduced and that where permitted strict controls are place on the design of high-rise buildings to design quality, privacy, solar access, overshadowing and adverse wind effects.

2. Open Space



We commend the Draft Vision's commitment to open space within the urban renewal area including the extension of existing open space and the development of tree-lined boulevards and green-links.

To assure deliver of open space the extent and detail of their inclusion will need to be clearly stated in FBURA's Strategic Framework Plan.

The developer contribution scheme advanced in the Draft Vision for public open space is supported. We recognized however that the developer contributions for open space and for other environmental, social and cultural initiatives will need to be clearly announced by the State Government prior to developers purchasing their sites and as such the development of the developer contribution scheme applicable to Fishermans Bend should be a Government Priority.

3. Public and Private Transport

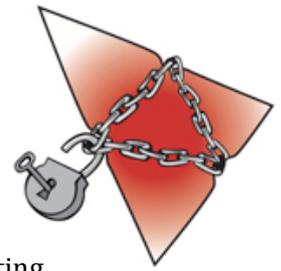
We commend the Draft Vision's commitment to public transport. We also commend the primacy of pedestrian access and cycle use within the scheme.

We trust the Government will be able to deliver on this vision as the capital investment required for the proposed rail and tram network will be considerable. We assume the public transport solutions proposed in the Draft Vision have been demonstrated through a comprehensive economic cost benefit analysis.

To ensure delivery of desired outcomes Public Transport Victoria will need to lock-in budgetary commitments to the Draft Vision's public transport initiatives and provide the necessary capital works in a specified timeframe so as to allow Fisherman Bend to realise its vision. Mistiming in this regard will drive car dependency within Fishermans Bend and it is unlikely the area will recover from reliance on private vehicle use once established.

The management of private vehicle access within Fishermans Bend will need to be clearly documented in the Strategic Framework Plan.

On the matter of why people choose public over private transport options we note the Draft Vision's observation that a go anywhere, anytime public transport solution is required, linking Fishermans Bend to the CBD and surrounding suburbs, otherwise private transport will be chosen over public. As the master plan for FBURA is based on linking the city to the Bay it is natural that the primary public transport links run east west with Plummer Street and Collins Streets providing the primary transport trunks. On the assumption that employment opportunities within the FBURA will not be met fully by local residents it appears that workers coming into the area by public transport will need to rely on Melbourne's existing radial train system in order to access their place of work, changing trains at either Parliament or Southern Cross Stations to access the proposed train and tram networks to service Fishermans Bend. It is unlikely workers accessing their workplace from the South, including bayside suburbs, will favour public transport over private given this arrangement. Consideration should be given to extending public transport linkages to the south.



Such linkages could be achieved by utilising modal interchanges on existing transport networks. As an example the Route 96 tram service accesses the eastern end of the FBURA. A change from private car to tram use could be facilitated by providing enhanced car parking at the St Kilda Triangle site. Such arrangements would limit private car entry into FBURA in support of the public transport aims underpinning the Draft Vision. At the same time enhanced parking arrangement at St Kilda Triangle could assist in realising the vision for the Triangle site as a significant cultural precinct². We commend this proposal to the State Government.

4. Affordable Housing and Residential Mix

We commend the Draft Vision's commitment to create distinctive and diverse neighbourhoods.

As stated above, central to the question of diverse neighbourhoods is the question of housing affordability. We accept that land release is central to managing affordability and we support urban renewal as strategy for releasing land close to city centre. The challenge for the State Government is that the majority of land within FBURA is held in private ownership and that land is under strong price pressure as a result of rezoning. Providing a strategy that allows maximum benefit to flow to all Victorians from the rezoning requires creative thinking and leadership from the Government. The ability for the citizens of Victoria to gain value from the rezoning may already have past.

Over and above the question of general affordability, there is the question of housing low income residents and the unemployed. UnChain supports the work of the Port Phillip Housing Association (PPHA) in their delivery of affordable housing to these groups and we acknowledge the contribution PPHA has made to date on Fishermans Bend through their consultation with Places Victoria and the City of Port Phillip.

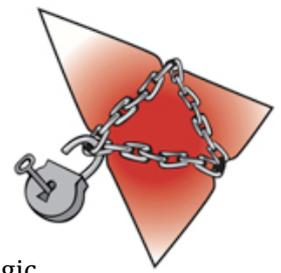
We believe that the Fishermans Bend Strategic Framework Plan needs to provide both quantified performance goals for the supply of affordable housing and the methodology for how those goals are to be achieved.

We note the Draft Vision's proposal to "assess the potential for development contributions to be directed towards affordable housing managed by Registered Housing Associations"³ and we concur with PPHA that such development contribution schemes need to be implemented in the FBURA Strategic Framework Plan.

In addition, the strategic framework for Fishermans Bend needs to set clear criteria for housing diversity including the setting of quantifiable goals for the residential mix addressing housing for families, singles, couples and for shared housing as well. Housing for the aged, and accessible housing, inclusive of

² <http://stkildatriangle.com/documents.htm>

³ *Fishermans Bend Urban Renewal Area – Draft Vision*, September 2013, Page 52



required support services, also requires clear quantification in the strategic framework.

Early planning and implementation of infrastructure is addressed elsewhere in this submission but it is acknowledged here that integrated planning of public transport, medical services, school facilities and retail centers which are freely accessible to the community underpin the successful delivery of diverse neighbourhoods and affordable housing.

Further consultation will be needed with groups such as PPHA to ensure that the appropriate emphasis is placed on affordable housing when preparing the Strategic Framework Plan for Fishermans Bend.

5. Employment, Creative Industry Clusters, High & Low Tech Industry

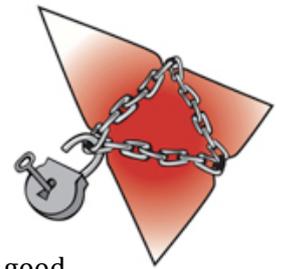
Victoria has a massive opportunity to take advantage of the growth in the New Economy. Businesses such as Digital and IT services, Design and Biotech form the basis of the New Economy. IBM has estimated that industries that embrace digital and IT services will grow the Australian economy by more than \$1 trillion by 2050. Unchain believes it is essential we encourage the development of New Economy businesses at Fishermans Bend.

How can we encourage businesses such as architects' offices, film production companies, advertising firms, IT and bio-tech start-ups etc to locate at Fishermans Bend? To grow, businesses need an efficient and low cost environment. A strategic framework designed to limit excessive growth in land values and provide reliable and cheap infrastructure is required. New Economy businesses are generally started by the young. To keep attracting young entrepreneurs into an area the cost of living in the area needs to remain low.

We support "clustering" within Fishermans Bend. Research shows that strong benefits come from encouraging businesses within a particular sector to "cluster together" allowing for quick cross fertilisation of ideas and innovation. The availability of employment in a particular sector and a number of businesses co-located within one area encourages entrepreneurship. An entrepreneur is more willing to take a risk with a start-up if he or she knows that they are likely to be able to find alternative employment in the area if their commercial initiative fails.

Another important driver for clusters is to encourage tertiary educational and research in Fishermans Bend. There is currently only limited post-secondary education opportunities within the City of Port Phillip. Fishermans Bend presents the opportunity to build a university campus in the city with a focus on IT and design. Tertiary facilities enlivens places. It brings talented young people together. Combined with a clustering policy it is likely to incubate New Economy businesses in Fishermans Bend.

Low tech industries that service local community also need low cost commercial space. Key existing businesses within FBURA such as car mechanics, wholesale outlets, garden supplies, car rentals and self storage facilities service local residents and are currently readily accessible. These businesses are at risk with



the redevelopment of Fishermans Bend and a focus should be to retain a good percentage of these businesses in the area to provide depth and diversity in employment.

Accordingly, the FBURA Strategic Framework Plan needs to ensure that lower cost housing and commercial space will be available for both high and low tech industries at Fishermans Bend and that provision is also made for tertiary education and research facilities.

Unchain submit that the incentives to create clusters should be implemented prior to development with the FBURA occurs so that new economy businesses and supporting tertiary institutions can consolidate their presence within the urban renewal area as soon as possible and contribute to the future development of the FBURA as an established presence in the precinct.

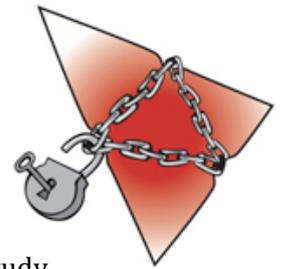
Use of existing industrial buildings and a campus consolidation program through progressive land acquisition by tertiary institutions should be encouraged by the State Government and by the City of Port Phillip.

6. Procurement, Timeframe and Funding

The Draft Vision acknowledges the importance of adequate funding for infrastructure and the early procurement of infrastructure requirements, however, there is an open ended question as to how such funding is to be delivered.

We believe there is a requirement for the State Government (and City of Port Phillip as appropriate) to provide the early funding required for infrastructure procurement. These costs need to be provided ahead of time in order to secure targeted community deliverables such as schools, parks, streets and boulevards, and key head-works for water, sewage and power supplies. It should also be recognised that such public funding may not be able to achieve any “return” on its investments in for some public assets in a strict financial sense e.g. schools, parks, roads. Where a “return” is targetable e.g. on water, sewage and power supplies then to ensure the Vision is delivered the Government needs to accept that the “return” will be delivered over a long period e.g. 30 years and should assess infrastructure delivery and “returns” on that basis.

It is a widely accepted practice for projects of the scale of Fishermans Bend that an economic cost benefit analysis be undertaken. UnChain strongly believes that such an analysis should be carried out as soon as possible. The benefits that are likely to accrue at the local, state and national levels from a well-executed redevelopment of Fishermans Bend are likely to be substantial. For instance, the increased business & other taxes accruing to the State and rates to the City of Port Phillip should be significant over the long term. If FBURA facilitates the flourishing of New Economy businesses in Fishermans Bend as unChain strongly recommends then the multiplier effect will be enormous. Further, there are likely to be substantial benefits accruing from the fact that there will be a concentration of people within Fishermans Bend in a highly livable environment as an alternative to allowing the costly urban sprawl of Melbourne to continue.



However, such studies also seek to “count the costs” as well and so the study should assess those costs. unChain believes that the development of an economic cost benefit analysis will represent a particularly powerful analytical tool if professionally undertaken as it will direct and guide the selection of the commercial elements of the Fishermans Bend that provide the best economic benefits to the whole community. Undoubtedly, such an analysis will show that a “crowding out” of the area with residential high rise will not be to the economic benefit of the people of Melbourne and Victoria.

A clear timeframe for this vital urban renewal project needs to be established and adhered to. In developing this timeframe, the State Government needs to carefully consider project staging. Project staging within a well thought out framework will make delivery of this complex program an efficient undertaking. As already outlined, the State Government should particularly plan for early delivery of infrastructure head-works projects. The draft Vision outlines the various precincts that are planned and so there should be timelines included in the FBURA for the delivery of these precincts.

Establishing a clear timeframe provides the private sector the confidence needed for its planning. Also, Government at all levels must be cognizant of the desire for certainty from the private sector in the many dealings needed with Government to achieve delivery of projects and programs e.g. approval processes that are non-arbitrary and efficient, the fact that core infrastructure head-works will be delivered on time, that schools and road works will in fact be delivered.

The economic benefit analysis needs to consider sale and relocation of the Councils transfer station and depot.

Both the State Government and the City of Port Phillip should commence the early and timely earmarking of sites for essential infrastructure so that they do not have to pay huge uplift in values at a later date. It is noted that there is considerable existing publicly owned land within the FBURA. As well as assessing publicly owned land within the context of siting new community infrastructure such as roads & schools, strong consideration should be given to utilising such sites to enhance the scope for developing New Economy industry in Fishermans Bend. For example publically owned sites could be offered for inclusion in collaboration with a leading University for the siting of an IT faculty in Fishermans Bend. See earlier section outlining this proposal in more detail.

We note that the procurement strategy pursued in Docklands saw the land release controlled by a limited number of corporate developers who were responsible for ensuring basic infrastructure and who derived their profit through the sale of land subdivisions. We submit that a more nuanced strategy for land consolidation be deployed that allows for a more granular approach to the development of the area. A more open market for development will contribute to the diversity of outcome that underpins the Draft Vision.

<<What mechanisms will the Government deploy to capture some of the uplift in land prices afforded by rezoning and required to fund environmental, social and cultural infrastructure.>



7. Environmental Sustainability.

We welcome the key strategies within the Draft Vision that support world best practice in delivering environmentally sustainable design at Fishermans Bend.

Part of the strategy for sustainability will be achieved by documenting appropriate performance standards to be assessed through the approval process for individual buildings and incorporated into the costs of those building as paid by private developers. However much of the infrastructure for sustainability will be in the public realm and will need to be installed prior to the construction of private buildings.

The infrastructure such as storm water management, water recycling, district based cogeneration, bike and walking routes will need to be fully addressed in the Strategic Framework Plan.

Much of the infrastructure will be required prior to major building developments being approved. Early funding of the infrastructure will hence need to be secured by the Government.

8. Climate Change, Sea Rise & Flooding

The medium to long term affects of climate change has not been adequately addressed in the Draft Vision. Reference is made to the vertical location of ground floors in the Design Guidelines as a defense against flooding but there is no commentary provided to demonstrate the adequacy of the guideline.

Mapping information provided by Geosciences Australia⁴ show the impact of sea level rises at 0.8m and 1.1m within Fishermans Bend⁵. The maps use nominal highest astronomical tides (HAT) to determine sea level at both adjusted heights. The maps do not consider flooding effect resulting from large storms or tidal surges within the Yarra River that may occur in conjunction with a HAT event. While approximate, the maps indicate significant susceptibility to regular flooding within the Lorimer, Sandridge and Montague precincts predicated on a sea level rise of 1.1m. It is our understanding that a projected 1.1m rise by 2100 is not considered out of the question by scientific organisations worldwide, including the CSIRO in Australia. A higher rise in sea level may be possible.

Flooding and pollution from run-off will require areas of open space to be set aside in response. We submit that insufficient study has been done with respect to the effects of climate change on the city of Melbourne to determine the location and size of such open space. It is imperative that an assessment is undertaken of Port Phillip Bay to consolidate a detailed understanding of the effects of climate change so that those affects can be known not only in Fishermans Bend but in all areas adjoining Port Phillip.

⁴ http://www.ozcoasts.gov.au/climate/Map_images/Melbourne/mapLevel2_East.jsp

⁵ http://www.ozcoasts.gov.au/climate/Map_images/Melbourne/eastB-mapLevel3.php



9. Port of Melbourne, Webb Dock & Heavy Freight Transport

Port of Melbourne is Australia's busiest port. As stated in the Draft Vision the State Government has announced the \$1.6 billion Port Capacity Project, due for completion in 2016, which seeks to expand existing docks at the Port and to create a new container terminal and associated facilities at Webb Dock.

The effects of the Port Capacity Project on local residents will be amplified by increases in residential population generated by the urban renewal of Fishermans Bend. These issues relate directly to the ports 24/7 operations, increased noise and traffic on the roads and water, impacts on water quality and water runoff and increase in industrial views afforded by the port expansion.

We note the Port of Melbourne Corporation commitment, as part of the Port Capacity Project, to:

- Retain open spaces and improve buffering around the working port including an extensive noise⁶ and vision⁷ buffer zone along Todd Road.
- New road construction to link Webb Dock to the West Gate M1 Freeway. Closure of Williamstown Road (west of Todd Road), upgrade bus facilities along Todd Road and the creation of attractive, safe pedestrian and cycle access for commuters and port workers.⁸

We also note the Corporation's advice that there are 2,300 truck and light commercial vehicle movements per day in and out of Webb Dock and that the Corporation does not undertake to remove heavy vehicles and trucks from using residential street, their undertaking being only to reduce the number doing so and to work closely with local Councils and VicRoads to create an efficient road linkage that considers the needs of transport efficiency and local amenity⁹.

It is imperative given the close collocation of the FBURA and the Port of Melbourne that the State Government coordinates a multi-authority response to freight movements from the port including directing VicRoads to ensure that freight is not transported through local residential areas and that appropriate measures are undertaken to eliminate 'rat running' by Port trucks.

We submit that a further assessment of the impact of the Port Capacity project on the FBURA be undertaken so that any shortfall in Port Capacity Project environmental assessment which has adverse impact on Fishermans Bend can be identified and addressed in the infrastructure works of the FBURA.

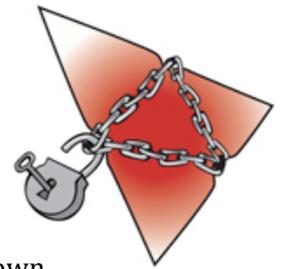
In conclusion we observe that while the Draft Vision and Design Guidelines imply that the planning of Fisherman's Bend has learnt from the shortcomings in past urban renewal programs it does not specifically acknowledge that there have been significant mistakes in the development of the Docklands and Southbank precincts that must not be repeated. Such shortcomings need to be fully addressed in the implementation

⁶ <http://portcapacity.portofmelbourne.com/pages/forum-noise.asp>

⁷ <http://portcapacity.portofmelbourne.com/pages/project-details.asp>

⁸ <http://portcapacity.portofmelbourne.com/downloads/130906-Webb-Dock-roads-snapshot.pdf>

⁹ <http://portcapacity.portofmelbourne.com/downloads/130906-Webb-Dock-roads-snapshot.pdf>



mechanisms still to be developed. It will be the leadership shown in setting down robust planning controls, open and transparent governance and clear funding pathways that will establish the credibility of the urban renewal program proposed for Fishermans Bend and allow for rebuttal of the claim that it is yet another platform for developers' interests.

Finally, unChain commends the current Community Consultation and Engagement process for Fishermans' Bend. However, at the same time, unChain strongly recommends that a continuous process of Community consultation and engagement be undertaken as Fishermans Bend develops e.g. a draft of the Strategic Framework Plan should be released for Community input before its adoption. Without this continuous community engagement, the two core elements of the Minister for Planning's vision for the area – a "vibrant community" and a "livable community" will not be met. unChain looks forward to participating in future community consultation and engagement around the development of appropriate mechanisms to ensure that Fishermans Bend develops into a global showpiece of how urban renewal can be undertaken.

Yours faithfully

Richard Roberts
Secretary
unChain Incorporated