

unChain Newsletter

June Quarter 2015

To comment on this Newsletter, email unChain at unchaininc@gmail.com. You can also go to our website for more information, www.unchain.org.au

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1. Renewal of Membership of unChain

Fees for the 2015/2016 year are now due. Financial members will be able to vote at the AGM towards the end of the year. The annual fee is \$20. There is also a life membership for \$100.

The easiest way to pay is by direct deposit into the unChain account at the ANZ
BSB - 013 427
A/C - 278146477

Make sure you put your name in the information box so we know which members are renewing is paying. If there are any problems please email the unChain Secretary Richard Roberts at Richard@superinvestment.com.au

If you want to join unChain, please email our President Catherine Sharples at unchaininc@gmail.com

2. The St Kilda Triangle

Council has said that they expect to have a Masterplan for the St Kilda Triangle by October. Council's aim is to deliver a fully funded project.

Council is organising a Masterplan Co-Design Workshop in August. You can register your interest to attend at the Council's website (<http://stkildatriangle.com/index.htm>).

For any other enquiries about the Workshop, you can contact the project team via ASSIST on 03 9209 6777 or email stkildatriangle@portphillip.vic.gov.au.

In April unChain held a Community Forum on the St Kilda Triangle. There were three impressive speakers.

- Claire Ferres-Miles is the City of Port Phillip General Manager responsible for Place Strategy and Development. She is in charge of the Triangle project. She explained the Council's concept of 'community co-design' for the Triangle.
- Jill Garner is the Acting Victorian State Architect. She gave examples of successful precedents for the Triangle. These included Amsterdam, Millennium Park in Chicago, the Guggenheim and Olympic Park in Seattle. She emphasized that sometimes these renewal projects take a long time because it is necessary to get many ducks lined up in a row.
- Kate Brennan is the former CEO of Federation Square. Fed Square is a precedent for how public spaces can be used for the public benefit.

3. The Palais

In June the Council announced that it had developed a Strategic Works Plan for the immediate building repairs and the works needed to bring the Palais up to compliance with current standards. This will cost an estimated \$25.5 million. Council will fund \$7.5 million, the State government \$13.4 million and there will be other sources. We can be confident that the work will be done well because it will be done by Major Projects Victoria. MPV has extensive experience in this sort of project, especially the \$138 million restoration of Hamer Hall.

Later in the year the winner of the long-term lease of the Palais will be announced. This is a contest between the current operator, an international firm Live Nation and a Sydney company. The successful tenderer will be responsible for the additional functional upgrades to the Palais.

Congratulations to the Council and the State government for saving the Palais.

4. Gasworks Arts Park

There has been much public concern about the soil remediation of the Gasworks Park. This has been successful. The draconic initial proposals have been withdrawn and a Memorandum of Understanding between the Council and the State Government has been drafted.

5. The Stokehouse, the St Kilda Lifesaving Club and the South Melbourne Lifesaving Club

The St Kilda Lifesaving Club will be rebuilt in 2015/16. The Stokehouse was destroyed by fire in January 2014 and will be replaced by a high quality architectural design. This will cost \$12 million. The same architect is involved in the two projects.

In June Council requested the Minister to approve a new 30 year lease of the Stokehouse.

The State government committed \$2 million for the redevelopment of the South Melbourne Lifesaving Club and the Council is working with the Club on the design.

6. JL Murphy reserve and the Peanut Farm

The State government has committed to upgrading the sports pavilions at these two reserves at a cost of \$700,000 and \$1 million respectively. This will involve consultation with community groups and clubs.

7. Fishermans Bend

Fishermans Bend poses major issues for the Council. The appropriate development of Fishermans Bend will be one of the most important issues for the Council and the state government over the next four years. It is important that there be the comprehensive review of the FB Strategic Framework Plan that the Labor party has promised.

On 17 April 2015 the Victorian Minister for Planning announced important changes to the Fishermans Bend Urban Renewal Area (FBURA), summarised as follows:

- introduced mandatory height controls
- set new height limits for areas which previously had no height limit (40 storeys in Montague and 18 storeys in Sandridge and Wirraway)
- replaced the Metropolitan Planning Authority (MPA) as Responsible Authority with himself, for all developments outside of the four and eight storey mapped height areas, and above 25,000m²
- amended the Strategic Framework Plan (SFP) released in July 2014 by removing the preferred height map and also 'Key Element 2: Sustainable Transport'
- highlighted a new 18 month strategic planning phase for the project, including the development of detailed neighbourhood precinct plans, and creation of an Infrastructure Plan

- expanded the Fishermans Bend Urban Renewal Area to include a newly titled Fishermans Bend Employment Precinct, north of the freeway in the City of Melbourne, increasing the renewal

The Minister has released the amended **Strategic Framework Plan** and included it in the Planning Scheme. The Minister for Planning has also established a Ministerial Advisory Committee for the area.

However, after the last State Election and before the above announcements, the new Labor Government gave planning approval to three additional high rise projects in the precinct. These projects and all of the projects announced by the previous Liberal Government will be able to proceed irrespective of any new Government measures introduced to improve planning and basic community infrastructure in the precinct. All of these projects involve residential high rise. No approvals have been provided for projects that would allow for long term employment industries in the precinct.

At this point, this precinct is in danger of becoming an example of the worst possible outcome for a liveable, community-orientated urban area. The precinct has been subjected to enormous instability in planning terms due to such factors as: the dominant role of State Governments and the limited community ability to input into the decisions of such Governments; constant changes of the Government authorities accountable for planning in the precinct; extremely short terms decisions of Governments to grant planning approvals; an attendant lack of planning for basic community infrastructure in the precinct etc

In February the Council formed a Fishermans Bend Community Forum comprising Councillors and representatives of various organisations including unChain.. This Forum is only mandated as an information forum and has no decision making powers. The Forum will allow Council to regularly inform members about projects and initiatives being undertaken in the FBURA precinct either by Council or State agencies. Richard Roberts from unChain is a member of the Forum.

8. Apartment Standards

In the 2014 election blurb where unChain asked questions of the candidates, unChain said:

‘Melbourne's apartment building boom is delivering poor outcomes for the city, with a third of new units badly designed and almost half too small. Some of Melbourne's newest developments are up to 10 times as dense as permitted in overseas cities. The existing policies to encourage affordable, well-designed and environmentally friendly apartment buildings are not working in Melbourne.

The Australian Institute of Architects' Victorian president, Peter Malatt, has said tough new design standards were crucial if Melbourne was to

avoid "future slums" lining the city's streets.

In 2014 the Office of the Victorian Government architect developed draft guidelines governing the size and design of new apartments. The draft *Better Apartment Design* rules was leaked to newspapers in 2014. The draft included minimum ceiling heights and minimum apartment sizes. These were based on standards that apply in Sydney.

The proposed design standards included:

- Minimum sizes (37 sq m for studio apartment, 50 sq m for 1 bedroom flat, 65 sq m for 2 bedroom, 90 sq m for 3 bedroom)
- Minimum ceiling heights (2.7m)
- Eight dwellings per lift
- Minimum storage requirements
- Minimum depth balcony for flats above ground level (2m)
- Noise limits
- Operable external windows for all 1 to 9 level rooms
- All habitable rooms must be naturally ventilated
- Controls on air conditioning units

In May 2015 the Minister for Planning released a paper called 'Better Apartments – A Discussion Paper'. This raised the issues but does not have the specific standards. Submissions on the discussion paper are due before 31 July. unChain will make a submission (see www.delwp.vic.gov.au/better-apartments).

In the City of Port Phillip in the period 2011-2014 4066 apartments were approved in buildings that were 4 storeys or more. Only the City of Melbourne (18,420) and Stonnington (5088) had more apartments approved. Therefore it would be very useful for the City of Port Phillip to analyse the data that is in its possession so that it and others can take an evidence-based approach to the question of apartment standards. unChain suggested that the City of Port Phillip should analyse all (or some) of the Fishermans Bend high-rise apartments that have been approved or submitted for approval. The study could be based on the OVGA draft guidelines:

9. The Review of Port Phillip ward boundaries

In June the VEC released its review of the Port Phillip ward boundaries. The Victorian Electoral Commission (VEC) recommends Port Phillip City Council change to consist of nine councillors elected from three three-councillor wards, adopting the ward boundaries of Option B of the preliminary report.

There will be three wards:

- Gateway Ward (mostly existing Sandridge and Emerald Hill wards)
- Lake Ward (mostly existing Albert Park and St Kilda wards and part of Junction ward)
- Canal Ward (mostly existing Point Ormond and Carlisle wards and part of Junction ward)