

THE WATERFRONT STORY



BACKGROUND

Until 1996, the north facing shore of Corio Bay in Geelong, 40 minutes drive from Melbourne, was almost exclusively devoted to maritime and general industry.

In 1995, the Victorian State Government and the City of Greater Geelong formed a partnership to redevelop and beautify the area, stimulate the local economy and attract tourism. The Steampacket Place Development Board was formed to guide the project. The Board was made up of two State Government representatives, three local Councilors, three community representatives and the Chief Executive of the City of Greater Geelong. The Project Management team, the Steampacket Place Project Directorate was formed in 1996 to manage delivery of the project on behalf of the Board.



The Directorate's goal was to transform the waterfront into a local and tourist destination which was capable of drawing traffic from the Princes Highway en-route to the Bellarine Peninsula and the Great Ocean Road, Victoria's most frequented tourist route.

In 1998 the Directorate moved under the jurisdiction of the City Planning and Special Projects Department of the City of Greater Geelong where it stayed until the projects grand opening in February 2001.

At the beginning of the project, planner's Keys Young were engaged to write the Waterfront Geelong Design and Development Code which established the principles for the future evolution of the area. The Code was

recognised with an award in the Urban Planning Achievement category of the 1996 Awards for Planning Excellence held by the Royal Australian Planning Institute. In 1999 the Code was awarded the Waterfront Centre Honor Award for excellence in waterfront design, presented in Charleston, USA.

The Code has recently been incorporated into the revised Greater Geelong Planning Scheme as a referral document. Adherence to the code ensures that development within the Special Use Zone 1 (Waterfront Geelong) is integrated with the surrounding areas to form a cohesive unit. The Code also seeks to ensure that the waterfront contributes to the city in terms of its life, vitality and urban form.

All aspects of design are considered in the Code, from lighting and urban furniture, to advertising and directional signage. As a result of the Code, Keys Young designed a flexible "Masterplan" to guide the development of the waterfront (above).



Landscape Architects Taylor Cullity Lethlean were selected to interpret the landscape requirements of the Code and Masterplan and design the hard and soft landscape for the project. The following principles, prepared by Taylor and Cullity have guided the masterplanning and documentation process. These principles convey the Board's expectations of the project and are essential in delivery of the built works.

- Ideals of research and innovation in industry and education to be expressed in both the design and site activities. The waterfront is to be a representation of the future aspirations of Geelong.
- Reinforce the primary links to the waterfront connecting the Central Activities Area along Bellerine, Yarra, Moorabool and Gheringhap Streets.
- Heighten the sense of Waterfront Geelong by activating pedestrian relationships with the water.
- Protect the view-lines to the bay along the principle streets.

- Create a high quality promenade link along the waterfront connecting Eastern Beach parklands through to Rippleside parklands.
- Provide a range of eating, dining and recreational spaces whilst retaining a primarily urban parkland image.
- Identify opportunities for a range of art components that enliven the waterfront, integrate into the landscape and speak of Geelong as a centre for technology, innovation and research.



- Identify development sites and activities that integrate and compliment waterfront spaces and create opportunities for eating, exhibition, kiosks and tourism.
- Integrate the waterfront with the city by addressing key linkages, such as Rippleside, North and West Geelong and Eastern Beach Parklands.
- Establish quality urban development that respects the existing city fabric and integrates with the proposed waterfront redevelopment.

A number of specialist consultants, in addition to the principal consultants have been engaged. They include engineering, lighting, architects, coastal and marine engineers and project superintendents.

The total project is estimated to be worth approximately \$180 million of public and private expenditure.

1994 - 1996

Deakin University and The Great Hall

The first stage of the project was the redevelopment of the former Dennys, Lascelles Woolstores on Western Beach Road. They became a new Deakin University campus housing the schools of Architecture and Building as well as the administrative head office. Deakin hopes this campus will sustain more than 2,000 on-campus and over 30,000 external students.

The \$30 million redevelopment of the Woolstores includes the Great Hall - a facility to rival some of the best concert halls in Australia. The Great

Hall provides a stunning venue for many cultural events.



Busport Transport Interchange

The \$6 million Busport transport interchange opened in 1996. This facility links the network of public buses servicing the Geelong area as well as the Surf Coast. Busport is located adjacent to Deakin University reinforcing the growing emphasis towards the waterfront. Busport also provides 200 public car parking spaces with the capacity to expand the parking levels in the future and houses a number of shops and offices.

In conjunction with the construction of Busport and Deakin, extensive street works have been carried out around the precinct, including new paving and kerb treatments, urban furniture and general landscaping.

Eastern Beach

The full restoration of Eastern Beach was completed in 1994 at a total cost of \$3 million. The swimming enclosure and children's pool, exotic palms and the renovated Beach House restaurant/cafe draw people to the waterfront. The restoration combined with the weekend children's activities has boosted local and tourist visitations to the foreshore.



Sailor's Rest Restaurant

The opening of Sailor's Rest Restaurant in 1996 represented a \$1.5 million investment by owners Ahmed and Debbie Elzahbi. The restaurant upstairs offers superior food and wines and there is also a more casual al-fresco area downstairs. Balconies on both levels offer exceptional views of Corio Bay.



1996 - 1998

Baywalk

A feature considered critical to the success of the waterfront was the waterfront promenade. This continuous high quality path enables people to move safely and without interruption along the waterfront from Rippleside Park to Limeburners Point.



Children's Playground



A children's playground has been constructed to the west of the Cunningham Pier forecourt along the baywalk. The playground follows the theme of the Voyage of the Poppykettle by Geelong Author and Artist Robert Ingpen.

Reconstruction of the waterfront road



The waterfront road has been rebuilt to incorporate new paving and kerb treatments, underground power, a bicycle path, new landscaping and urban furniture and fully landscaped car parking bays. Traffic lights have been installed at a number of key intersections to assist traffic management and give greater control to pedestrians. Taylor and Cullity Pty. Ltd designed the landscape for the reconstruction. The road redevelopment received a Project Award of Merit in the Design of Public Spaces category from the Australian Institute of Landscape Architects.

The project also received the Best Overall Project Award and the Best Project – Pedestrian Precincts Award from the Cement and Concrete Association of Australia.

Baywalk Bollards



Created by local artist Jan Mitchell, the timber painted sculptures known as the "Baywalk Bollards" comically reflect local history and number over 100. They are installed right around the waterfront along the Baywalk.



Brougham Apartments

The construction of 23 luxury apartments in the former Commonwealth offices on Brougham Street is complete. This development is by Renaissance Projects.



Urban Furniture

The Steampacket Directorate commissioned designs for a series of unique urban furniture elements for the waterfront precinct. These items are distinctive in their design and incorporate physical and cultural features reflecting the local area. The City owns the patent on all items and has sold certain items to other municipalities.



Waterfront events calendar



With the increased awareness of the Waterfront precinct and the facilities it offers, the Geelong waterfront is fast gaining a reputation as a premier events centre. Major events include the Geelong Waterfront Festival, the Festival of Sail – Australia's largest yachting regatta, the 18 foot skiff racing, the Geelong Speed Trials and the Celtic Festival plus numerous smaller events, festivals and markets.



Cunningham Pier

Since opening in August 1996, Cunningham Pier has proved a spectacular venue. This \$10 million development, undertaken by Island Trader Pty. Ltd includes Smorgy's family restaurant, Buccaneers Cafe and a function room. The Pier offers berthing facilities for large vessels.



Royal Geelong Yacht Club

A stunning effect was achieved simply by demolishing a 3 metre grey concrete brick wall around the perimeter and replacing it with a traditional wrought iron fence. This allows vistas from the City area through the Club grounds, the yard and marina.



Precinct Signage

The introduction of precinct and highway signage has been well received by local traders and visitors. The philosophy was simply to gain exposure for Steampacket Place as a waterfront precinct.



1998-1999

Steampacket Quay



Local firm, Geelong Civil Constructions built the waterfront quay at the base of Moorabool Street. This \$3 million Quay creates a memorable focus for the City and transforms this area into an exciting activity node at the water's edge. The Quay is designed to provide opportunities for greater interaction between pedestrians and the water and is located along the visual termination of Moorabool Street. The capacity exists for ferries to operate from this location to and from Melbourne.



The building of the quay involved the excavation of approx. 15,000m³ of land, the construction of new boardwalks and significant paving details. It also provides the location for the major public artwork "North" by artist Mark Stoner. This major installation creates a striking and pivotal urban design feature which acts to bring the Bay and City together in a unique design that uses the vista down Moorabool Street to reinforce the proximity of the water to the City.



Hotel development



At the completion of an extensive evaluation process, the Abi Group were selected as the preferred developer of the hotel/apartment complex on the corner of Yarra Street and Eastern Beach Road.

The Sheraton Four Points will be the hotel operator and they have confirmed their

development will be opening in March 2001. The hotel has 110 rooms and is rated 4 ½ star. Services include an international restaurant, bar, café, lounge bar, business centre, heated undercover pool, fitness centre, sauna and 24-hour reception.

The rest of the development on the corner of Eastern Beach Road and Yarra Streets comprises residential apartments.

Major art pieces



"North" by Mark Stoner (above) sits on the edge of the Quay at the termination of Moorabool Street. When viewed from higher up Moorabool Street, the placement of this impressive sculpture gives the impression that it is floating on the water. The sculpture itself comprises of seven randomly placed case cement objects representing the sails of yachts on the bay. No two objects are placed on the same axis and each object is coloured with ochre and grey oxide paints. The objects are very tactile, and visitors can walk amongst them to gain different perspectives.



Maggie Fookes and Bill Perrin have been commissioned to design the paving inlay and

the cargo boxes in the Customs House forecourt. The paving inlay called "Splats" (above and detail) represents a more commical installation. The stainless steel splats have been inlaid into the concrete near the carousel pavilion and represent sea organisms. The inlay details contain various objects, some familiar, some more abstract.

The cargo boxes in the Customs House Park consist of large bronze and glass boxes (below) which contain items representing cargo shipped through the Port of Geelong during the last 2 centuries. Each box is inscribed with the name of the vessel that carried the goods, the dates the vessel operated and the types of cargo it carried. The boxes have a secondary use as seats, and they are internally lit at night creating a striking view.



Steam-driven carousel and pavilion



In 1996 the City of Greater Geelong purchased a c. 1892 Armitage-Herschell steam-driven carousel for restoration. Less than 200 of these hand-carved wooden carousels still exist in the world, most in North America and Europe. The restoration of the Geelong Carousel has taken place over the last three years in Central Victoria. The Carousel, together with a restored c. 1888 steam engine and a part-original, part-replica 1898 Gavioli Band Organ are housed in a magnificent glass pavilion, designed by local architects McGlashen Everist, next to the quay. The Carousel provides an entertaining, exciting and unusual focus for the Waterfront that not only provides enjoyment, but also provides an asset that will appreciate due to its uniqueness and value as an antiquity.



The carousel commenced operation in October and has been more popular than anticipated.



Customs House

The Steampacket Place Development Board purchased the Geelong Customs House from the Commonwealth Government in 1997. This historic property was completed in 1856.



The building is of classical Georgian design very similar to provincial English customs houses. The rear of the building takes on a Renaissance

Revival appearance generally characterised by cement finished walls with ornamental detailing. The building's north and south elevations are constructed in Barrabool Hills ashlar sandstone with the east and west elevations constructed in coursed bluestone. Decorative elements such as the stringcourses, quoins and entablature are made from Barrabool Hills sandstone. The building underwent a full restoration in 1981-1982 and is contained on the Register of the National Estate and retains a high degree of historical integrity. The large scale of the building demonstrates the early importance of Geelong as a commercial port, second only to Melbourne. Until recently it was still used in a shipping related capacity.

The Directorate has confirmed that the Customs House will be used for a Tourist Information facility on the top two floors and a highly specialized wine and cheese larder on the ground floor facing into the forecourt.

The Board provided over \$800,000 to develop the forecourt of the Customs House looking out towards the bay (below). The water feature running north-south contains a bar-code on the bottom as a light-hearted element. The bar code is from a "Noddy's" soft drink label which is a uniquely Geelong product and was used with their permission.



Wharf Shed

Opened late in 1998, a formerly derelict wharf storage shed has been transformed into a café and restaurant. Upstairs you can dine in the very popular Le Parisien Restaurant and enjoy the classical french fare and hospitality of Jean-Paul and Lorraine Temple. Downstairs the more casual Wharf Shed Cafe has proved very popular with locals and visitors.

1999 – 2000

Steampacket Gardens

The Steampacket Gardens were reconstructed allowing for a new multi-purpose events and activities space and new landscaping to complement the sophistication of the surrounding area.



Eastern Beach Mineral Springs

The Steampacket Place Project Directorate secured a grant of \$10,000 from the Victorian Mineral Water Committee (V.M.W.C.) for undertaking an investigation of the (then) defunct Eastern Beach Mineral Springs. The Board allocated \$10,000 of its own funds to the project.

In March 1999, an initial drilling investigation was undertaken. The objective of the groundwater investigation was to intersect the aquifer which supplied mineral spring water to the former wells located on the beach below the sea wall; test the suitability of the resource and construct a permanent bore to allow public access to the resource.

The investigation bore was located adjacent to the square turret structure on the seashore marking the historical mineral water collection point. The mineral spring water was intersected at around 55 metres. A permanent bore casing was installed to prevent seepage into the bore. The mineral water has been tested to be of a very pure quality and highly carbonated. The spring also has its own effervescent head. The Victorian Mineral Water Committee has stated that ".....the current result is outstanding. The bore has its own "head" so a hand pump is not required. What is also amazing is the very high free carbon dioxide content. The mineral water virtually fizzes out of the top of the bore casing. That we should rediscover a pure resource within the heart of the State's second largest city and arguably at one of its most valued open space locations is a dream come true".

We are currently constructing a permanent collection point for the mineral water with further funding at a second bore site nearer to Eastern Beach. Members of the public are welcome to collect this wonderful resource. Expected completion date is June 2001.



Yarra, Moorabool, Cunningham and Brougham Street beautification



The project would not be complete without the beautification of the surrounding streets. Works included new furniture, lighting, road re-building and powerline relocation.

All of the works outlined have been the subject of public consultation through the development of the Coastal Action Plan, which has been approved by the Central Coastal Board, Victorian Coastal Council and Minister for conservation and Land Management.

