Docklands Urban Forest

Consultation Outcomes 2014

Background

The City of Melbourne is developing an urban forest precinct plan for Docklands, which will guide tree planting for the precinct over the next ten years. A workshop was held by the City of Melbourne Urban Forest Team for local community members to participate in the development of the precinct plan. On 15 February, 2014, more than 120 community members attended a 3-hour Saturday morning session at the Harbour Kitchen in Docklands. For more information on Melbourne's urban forest and the urban forest workshops, visit melbourneurbanforestvisual.com.au.

What We Were Told: Community Workshop, 15 February

Place We Value

Participants were asked to introduce themselves to the other people at their table and to identify their favourite landscapes in Docklands. The Participatory Mapping methodology for this exercise was developed by Dr. Dave Kendal from the Australian Research Centre for Urban Ecology and the results are being used to guide the development of the precinct plans, and for Dr. Kendal's research into what people think about street trees in urban streetscapes.

Participants were provided with a sheet of stickers and a key that defined what each colour represented. Each colour sticker represented one of the following values or an area in need of more trees:

1. Civic: These areas are important because they contribute to the identity of the city, make the city more welcoming or help market the city to national and international visitors.
2. Natural: These areas are important because they represent natural places where trees and other plants can grow, where birds, animals or insects could live, or natural processes can occur.
3. Culture and heritage: these areas are important because they represent human history and allow me or others to continue and pass down the wisdom and knowledge, traditions, and way of life of our ancestors.
4. Social: these areas are important because they provide opportunities for meeting or being with other people for social or sporting activities.
5. Life sustaining: these areas are important because they help produce, preserve, clean, and renew air, soil and water and they provide shade and protection from wind or rain.
6. More trees needed: These areas would be improved by more or new tree planting.

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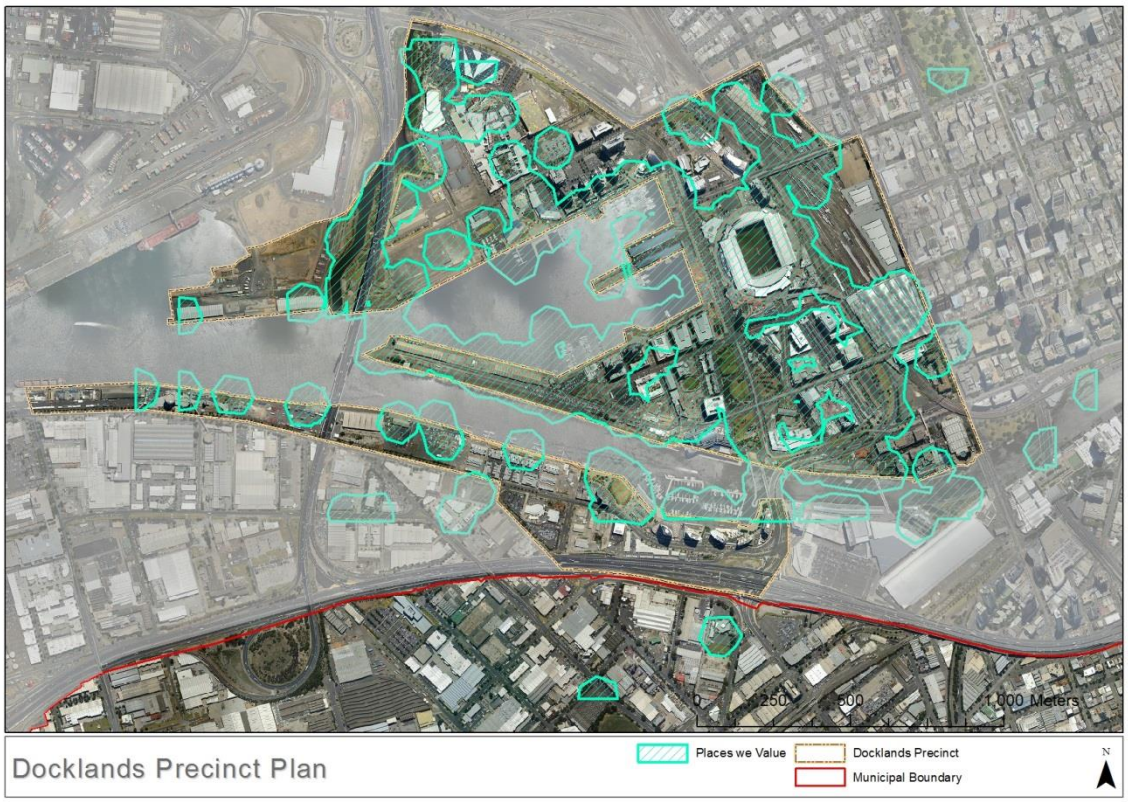
Participants were asked to place stickers representing one of five values (Civic, Natural, Culture and Heritage, Social, Life Sustaining) on maps of the Docklands precinct. Map 1 indicates all the places/streets which were identified by the participants as valued places. The polygons were created in ArcGIS software by running a kernel density analysis of the sticker points and then converting those to polygons to show outlines of where values were located. For maps of each value, please see Appendix1.

Map1. Places valued by participants



Locations for More Greening

Participants also used stickers to identify locations where more trees were needed and the locations are shown in Map 2.

Map2. Opportunities for tree planting identified by the participants

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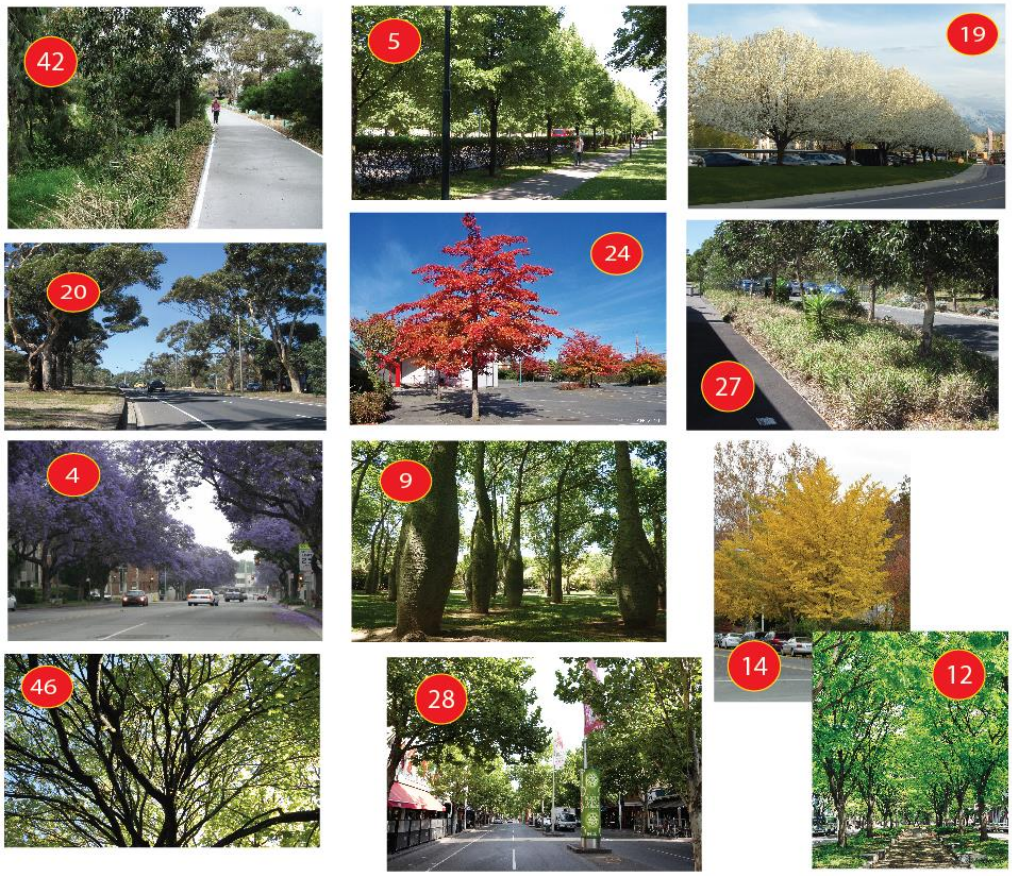
Preferences for the Future

Each table was given a set of the same 21 photos. Participants were asked to divide the photos into three groups based upon the future urban forest character they envisaged for Docklands. Photos were to be grouped into the following:

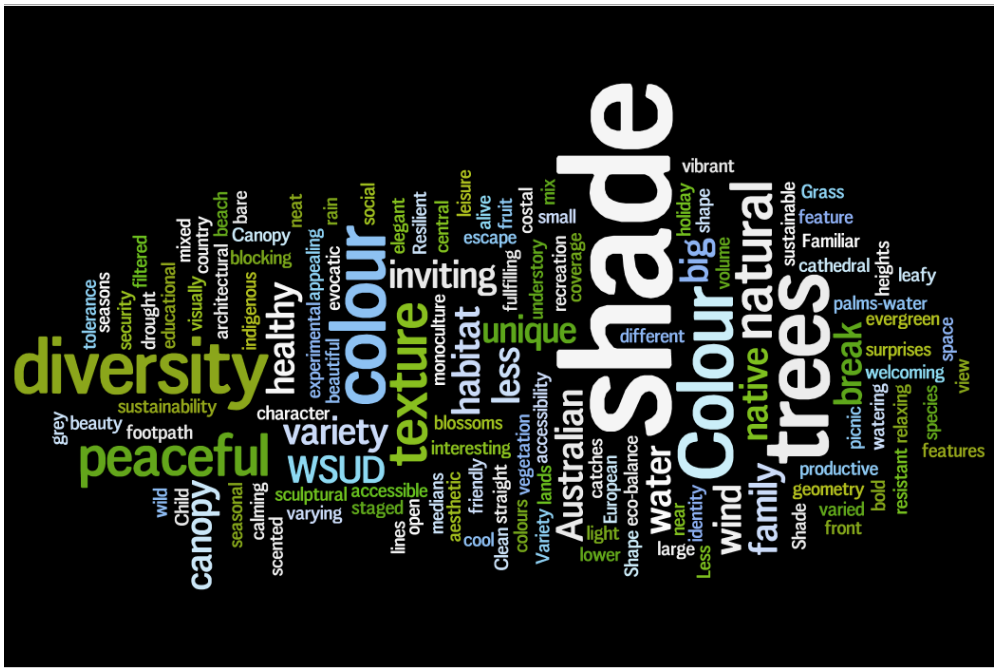
1. Photos that best represent the future of Docklands.
2. Photos that represent the future you don't want.
3. Photos you are unsure about or cannot agree upon.

Depicted below are the combined photos chosen as the best & the least representation of the future of Docklands.

The photos that were generally agreed (by 7 out of 11 groups) to represent a most wanted future:



Participants were then invited to add a word or phrase on post it notes to describe their favourite photos. A summary of these key words from all the tables has been combined into the following Wordle.



Photos that Represent an Unwanted Future

Less than 5 out of 11 groups liked the images for various reasons:

‘Out of place’, ‘boring’, ‘monoculture’, ‘limited shade’, ‘too structured’, ‘no lower vegetation’, ‘not water sensitive’

Character Statement - Docklands

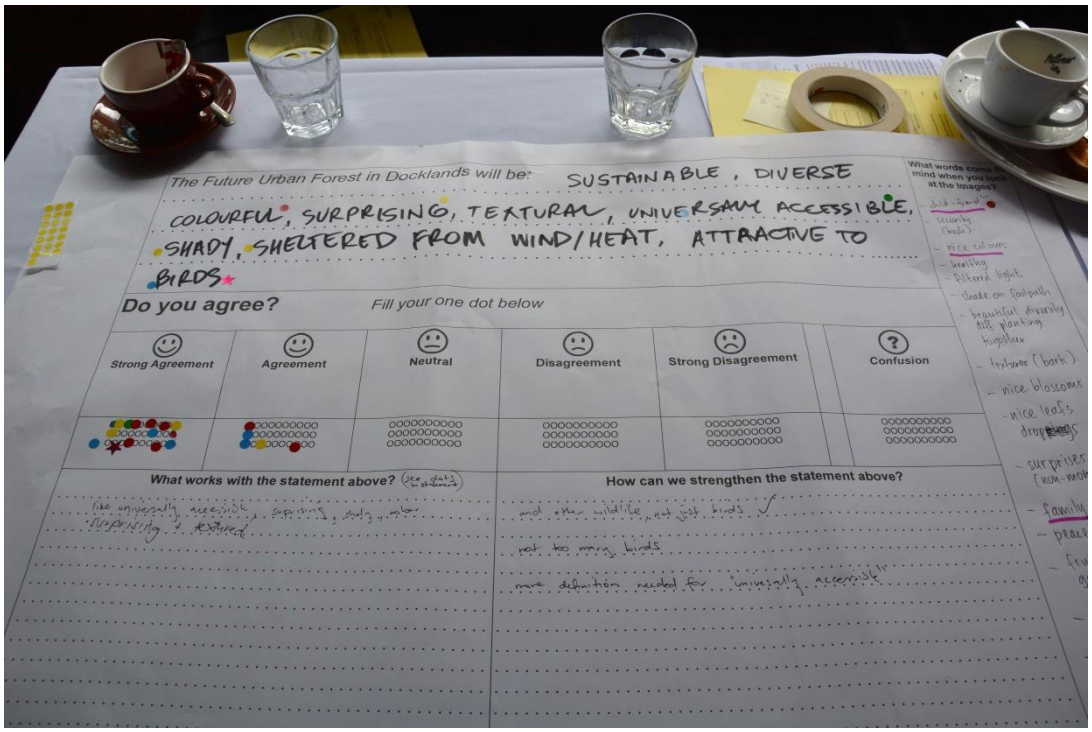
Using the photos they had selected, each group was asked to draft a character statement and the results were as follows:

Table A	The future urban forest in Docklands will be: A staged greening of docklands that makes it green leafy like the rest of Melbourne; that preserves its street patterns and connection with the water. Create a botanic precinct with feature and mixed species. Early greenery with evolution long term
Table B	The future urban forest in Docklands will be: Resilient, welcoming, scented trees, shape, not too neat, natural, wild, varied texture, costal, colour, shade
Table C	The future urban forest in Docklands will be: Diverse, global, seasonal colour, shady, layered, Australian, architectural/sculptural/cathedral, varied character
Table D	The future urban forest in Docklands will be: Visually balanced between modern architecture and the muddy brown of the water creating a foyer Melbourne is proud of.
Table E	The future urban forest in Docklands will be: Sustainable, diverse, colourful, surprising, textural, universally accessible, shady, sheltered from wind/heat, attractive to birds.
Table F	The future urban forest in Docklands will be: A mix of native trees and grasses that introduce colour and WSUD feature to the area; provides a space for social integration, recreation and evolves with the surrounding urban environment.
Table G	The future urban forest in Docklands will be: A natural, dense vegetation system that increases biodiversity and respects the natural and cultural heritage of the area. It will be resilient to climate change with multiple level planting (under storey planting)
Table H	The future urban forest in Docklands will be: A canopy that provides shade to reduce the heat island effect, resists strong winds, catches rainfall, provides scenic beauty through colour and maintains ecological balance.

Table I	The future urban forest in Docklands will be: A destination which include parks, shade for walker and cyclists, an interactively diverse, unique, educational landscape for families, tourists and the local community. Use the trees to draw people together to provide an aesthetic, functional and relaxing space.
Table J	The future urban forest in Docklands will be: Diverse in terms of color, shape, shade, seasonality, aesthetics; sustainable in terms of providing cooling and shade, native habitat; also a great inviting social place for the community to experience
Table K	The future urban forest in Docklands will be: Defining the individual character through diverse trees that are uniquely colourful, shady, providing an inviting environment.

Participants were then given the opportunity to review each group's statement, using a ranking system of 4 categories: 'Strong Agreement', 'Agreement', 'Neutral', or 'Disagreement'. The most popular statement was from Table E:

'*The future urban forest in Docklands would be sustainable, diverse, colourful, surprising, textural, universally accessible, shady, sheltered from wind/heat, attractive to birds*'.



What We Were Told: Online Conversation

The online conversation is continuing at http://participate.melbourne.vic.gov.au/participate-melbourne

Comments to date have supported:

- Greening the Latrobe St, Harbour Esplanade and New Quay Promenade, as well as the south side with native trees/ wind free smaller species and grass. And Combine these with seating to provide an enjoyable outdoor space for lunch, or just to rest and get some fresh air.

- Do something daring and wonderful. Convert the entire concrete plaza opposite Harbour town Shopping Centre between Pearl River Road and Doepel Way into a densely planted forest.

- More pocket parks with more seating.

- More large shading native trees to make the Docklands less industrial and more inviting for visitors and workers alike.

Comments sent to Melbourne Urban Forest email:

- Areas to be include in Docklands' Urban Forestation: (1) areas between the elevated CityLink and the Film Studios, north of Docklands Drive and (2) continuing north over the canal, past the Ice House towards Footscray Road. (3) Moonee Ponds Creek.

- Replace the concrete space along the water in front of Etihad Stadium with grass and trees and maybe a collection of small cafes, a nice wooden boulevard. It's now an ugly embarrassment.

- Flowering gums should be planted along the Harbour Esplanade which are safe and unique, evergreen Australian, cope well with hot and windy weather and don't throw the limbs. They attracted native birds such as Rosellas and Cockatoos. Please demolish The Dead Cow on the Dead Tree Sculpture.

Summary of Key Messages from Docklands Consultation

Docklands is a unique part of Melbourne and the urban forest planting should respond to its Australian identity and waterfront connection.

Desired future states defined by the community:

- Green, leafy, native
- Shady, sheltered from wind
- Varied in colour, texture, scent, understory, seasons, height, shape
- Social, evocative, peaceful, natural, vibrant, elegant
- Connected to the water
- Water sensitive

Urban forest benefits highlighted through community consultation:

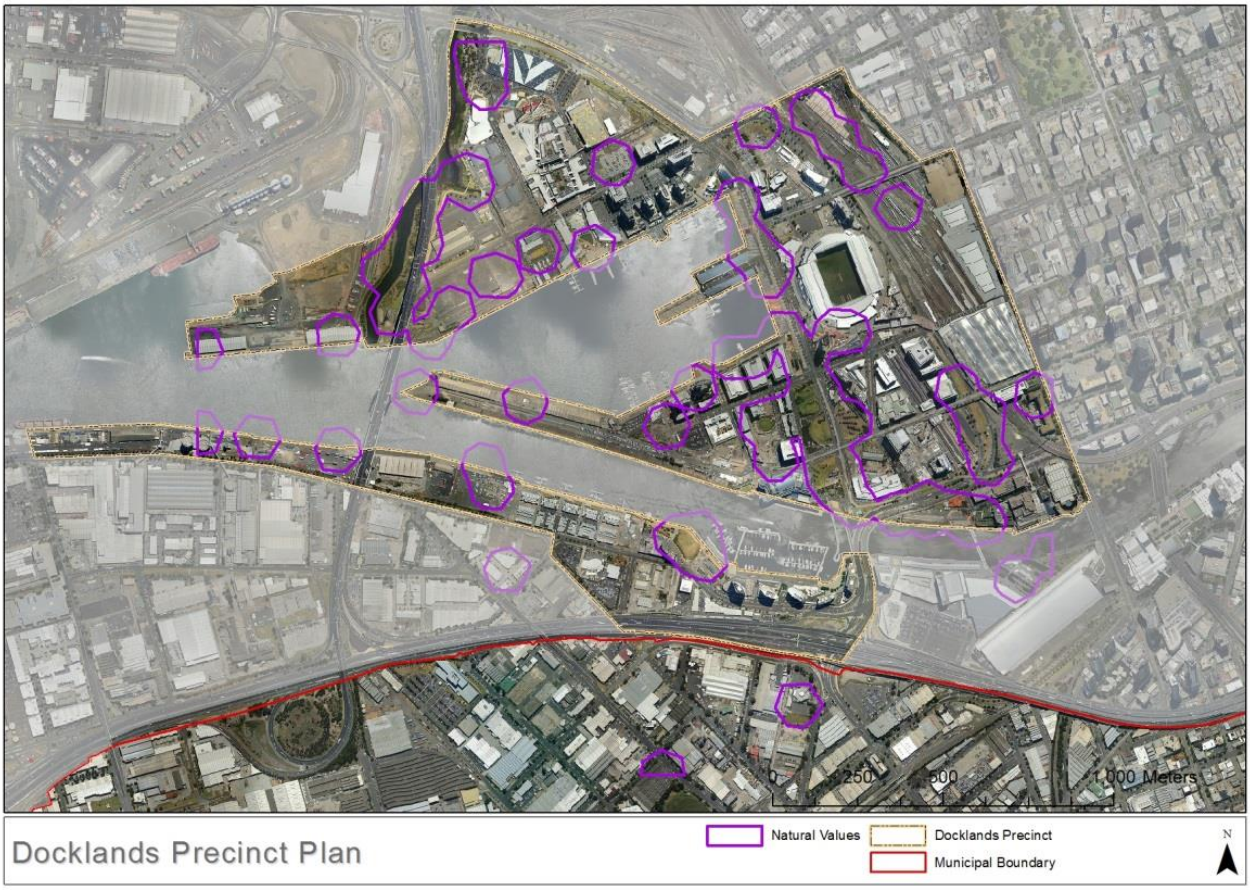
- Shade
- Biodiversity
- Aesthetic beauty
- Psychological benefits (e.g., sense of calm, soothing etc.)
- Social cohesion
- Cultural (e.g., indigenous trees, nativeness, connection to water)\
- Wind mitigation
- Water capture and storage

Map – Places identified for civic value

These areas are important because they contribute to the identity of the city, make the city more welcoming or help market the city to national and international visitors.

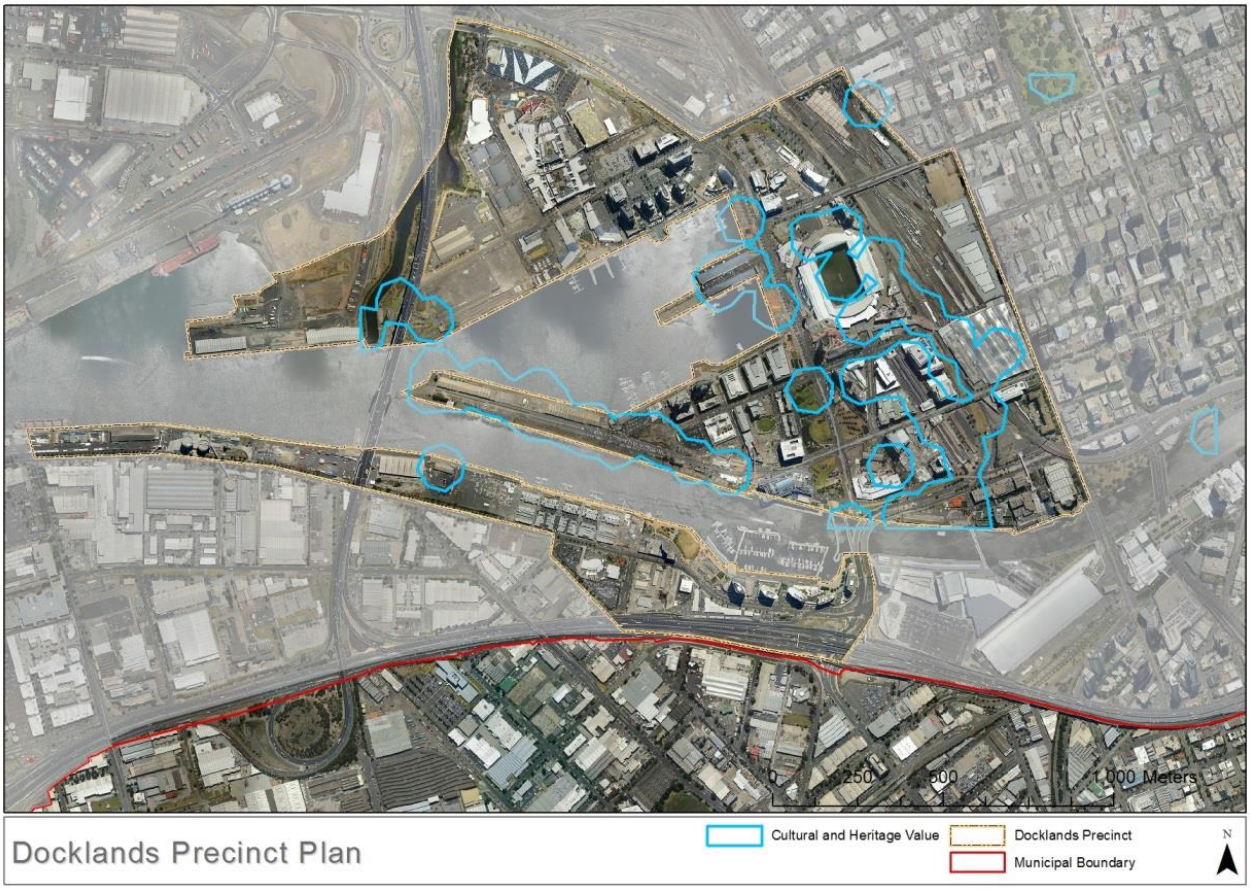
Map – Places identified for natural value

These areas are important because they represent natural places where trees and other plants can grow, where birds, animals or insects could live, or natural processes can occur.



Map – Places identified for culture and heritage value

These areas are important because they represent human history and allow me or others to continue and pass down the wisdom and knowledge, traditions, and way of life of ancestors.



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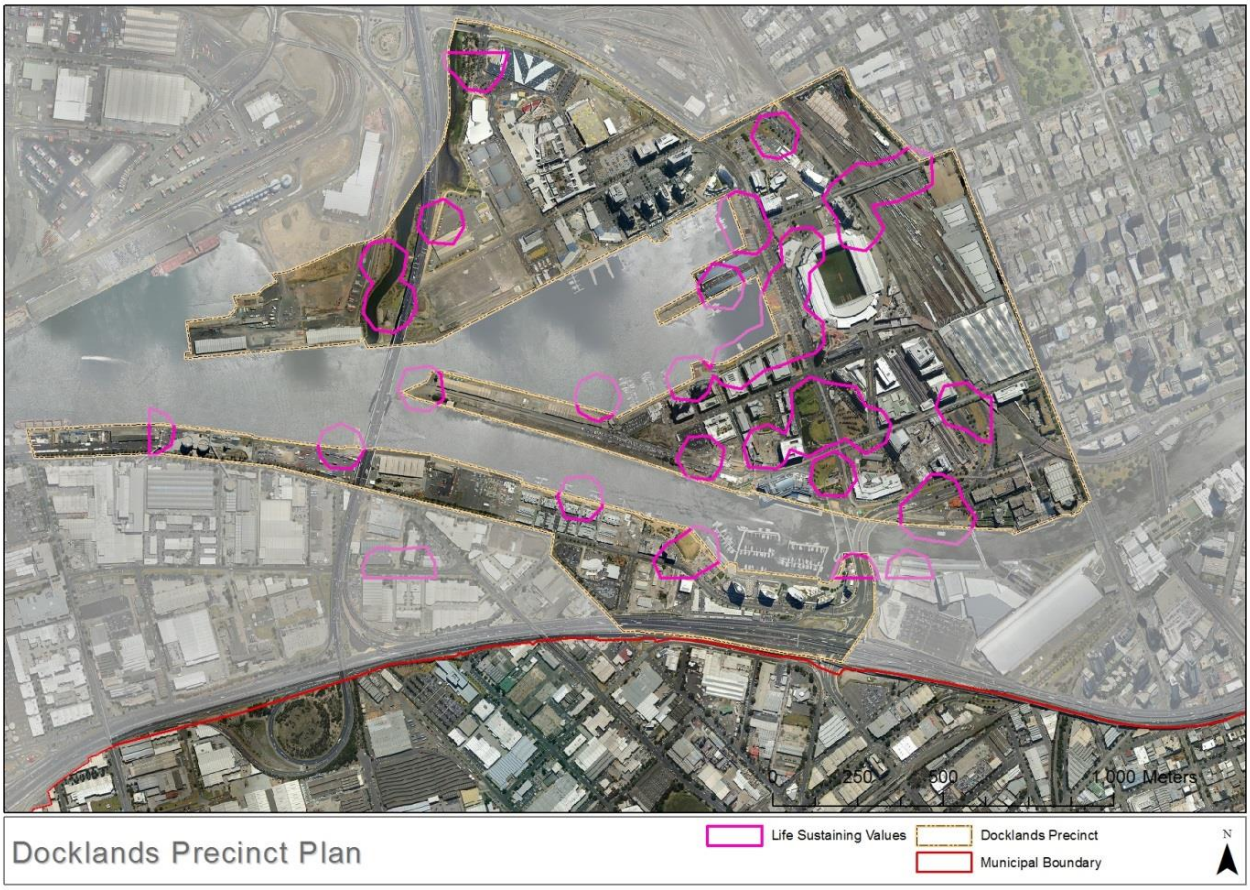
Map – Places identified for social value

These areas are important because they provide opportunities for meeting or being with other people for social or sporting activities.

Map – Places identified for life sustaining

These areas are important because they help produce, preserve, clean, and renew air, soil and water. And they provide shade and protection from the wind or rain.



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