# Southbank and Fishermans Bend

# Heritage Review

Prepared for the City of Melbourne

16 June 2017

## Biosis offices

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# Executive summary

The City of Melbourne commissioned the Southbank and Fishermans Bend Heritage Review as part of its heritage strategy. The aims of the study are to identify places of heritage significance, prepare a thematic history and make recommendations for heritage protection of suitable places by way of new heritage overlays in the Melbourne Planning Scheme. The study also confirms the significance of existing identified heritage places and incorporates research to further support their heritage significance.

Southbank and Fishermans Bend are priority areas in the City of Melbourne Heritage Strategy. Understanding the city's heritage is key to protecting heritage places and values. The Southbank and Fishermans Bend area covers a geographically small part of the city, but this area has played an important role historically in the development of the city, and contributed to its social, cultural and economic development. The distinctive historical urban character of Southbank and Fishermans Bend is undergoing rapid change. The heritage fabric is an important resource that can add community value and maintains a link to the area's history during this process of change.

The study area comprises the areas south of the Yarra River, east of St Kilda Road and north of Kings Way and the West Gate Freeway within Southbank, South Wharf and the northern part of Fishermans Bend. The study area is shown in Figure 1.

Several places were identified at the beginning of the project as needing urgent assessment. This was completed in January 2017. Planning scheme amendment documentation has been prepared to implement the recommendations of this report, however these documents do not form part of the current report.

Aboriginal tribes occupied the area for thousands of years, finding a rich source of food among teeming wildlife along the tidal estuary, swamps and sand ridges. These lowlands both delayed development and preserved natural habitats as recently as the 1960s. Initially valued for transport and industry, the area attracted a wide range of activities. Government and entertainment facilities are concentrated in the area along St Kilda Road. The riverbank was the centre of maritime industry, and commercial activity spread along City Road. Warehouses, timber yards, aircraft and car factories dominated the City Road area in the 20th century, while in recent decades the character is changing to host new residential apartment developments and creative industries.

The legacy of this history is a wealth of high quality early government architecture (such as the Victoria Barracks and Police Depot), the cohesive industrial styles of factories and warehouses dating from the late Victorian, Edwardian and Interwar periods alongside the modern cultural icons of the Arts Precinct.

The methodology used to undertake the review is explained in Section 2 of this report. A Statement of Significance for the whole Southbank Fishermans Bend area is provided in Section 3. A thematic historical narrative is provided in Section 4 of the report and the study recommendations are outlined in Section 5.

Appendices to the report provide citations for the proposed heritage precincts (Appendix 1), the existing heritage places to be retained (Appendix 2) and the newly-identified heritage places (Appendix 3). Appendix 5 lists potential heritage places for further investigation in the future.

In some cases, the study has revealed anomalies in existing heritage overlays, for example, when heritage overlays have been demolished, have been mapped incorrectly, or changes to the street addresses have been made to existing heritage overlays.

Where existing heritage overlays include multiple distinct buildings (such as the Arts Centre or Hamer Hall, both in HO760), separate citations are provided for each component. In these cases, the citation numbers may not match the numbers coding heritage overlays.

## Recommendations

The Report recommends:

1. Retention of 17 existing heritage overlays, with corrections made to descriptions, addresses and/or boundaries. Citations and statements of significance for these places are included in Appendix 2 and shown on Figure 87.

2. Deletion of 14 existing individual heritage overlays that have either been demolished or incorrectly included. These are listed in Section 5.3.4 and Table 10 and are mapped in Figure 88.

3. Deletion of the HO5 South Melbourne Precinct Heritage Overlay.

4. Introduction of two new precinct heritage overlays:

   - City Road industrial and warehouse precinct (inside Capital City Zone), Figure 91, and

   - South Wharf shipping sheds and berths precinct (outside Capital City Zone), Figure 92.

5. Introduction of 35 new heritage overlays, including two thematic group listings. Citations and statements of significance for these places are included in Appendix 1 and Appendix 3, and their locations are shown in Figure 89. These include the four priority places assessed at the beginning of the study and subject to a separate interim HO amendment, two serial or group listings and one landscape/streetscape place. The remaining heritage places include two group listings:

   - Electricity substation thematic group, Figure 93, and

   - Bluestone-pitched laneways group, Figure 94.

   The new heritage places also include one landscape/streetscape place:

   - St Kilda Road Boulevard.

   Two further places should be nominated to the Victorian Heritage Inventory, as listed in Appendix 4, Table 12 and Figure 89.

The study has identified a further 28 places for potential future heritage overlays. Although these places have architectural or historic importance, they have not been recommended at this time for heritage protection for reasons explained in Section 5.3.7 of the report. These places are briefly described in Appendix 5, and their locations are shown in Figure 90.

# Contents

# 4  Thematic history

## 4.1  Introduction

This section provides a historical narrative of the study area based on the relevant historic themes as set out in City of Melbourne's Thematic Environmental History.

The study area comprises diverse neighbourhoods which are parts of formerly larger areas that have been truncated by both the freeway and shifting municipal boundaries resulting from various council amalgamations and expansions (

Figure 1 & Figure 2).

### 4.1.1 Former boundaries

The current City of Melbourne boundary was established in 1994 when local government amalgamations occurred throughout Victoria. Previously the area south of the river had been part of the municipalities of South Melbourne and Port Melbourne, with the lands along the riverbank and at Fishermans Bend under the planning and administrative control of the Melbourne Harbour Trust and later the Port of Melbourne Authority.

Emerald Hill Borough was proclaimed on 26 May 1855, became a town on 1 March 1872, and was renamed and proclaimed the City of South Melbourne on 21 September 1883. Sandridge Borough was proclaimed on 13 July 1860, renamed Port Melbourne on 25 January 1884, became a town on 20 January 1893, and was proclaimed the City of Port Melbourne on 14 May 1919.[7]

On 18 November 1993, a small portion around Southbank and the Victorian Arts Centre was transferred from the City of South Melbourne to the City of Melbourne.

The cities of Port Melbourne, South Melbourne and St Kilda were amalgamated on 22 June 1994 to form the City of Port Phillip.

### 4.1.2 Thematic framework

The historical themes that form the background to the current heritage study derive from the City of Melbourne Thematic Environmental History.[8] The following table shows how City of Melbourne themes relate to both the Australian Historic Themes and the Victorian Framework of Historic Themes (VFHT).[9]

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[7] *Victorian Municipal Directory*. Brunswick: Arnall & Jackson. 1992.
[8] Thematic History: a History of the City of Melbourne's Urban Environment (Context Pty Ltd, for City of Melbourne, 2012);
[9] Victoria's Framework of Historical Themes (Heritage Council and Heritage Victoria).

**Table 4     Thematic framework – Melbourne and Victorian themes**

| City of Melbourne theme | Subtheme | Victorian Framework of Historic Themes | Theme content within study area |
|---|---|---|---|
| **1. Aboriginal Ccountry** | 1.0 Aboriginal Country | 1.4 Creation stories and defining Country<br>2.1 Living as Victoria's first inhabitants | Riverbank camping and fishing at The Falls, Sandridge track |
| **2. Promoting settlement** | 2.1 Founding stories | 2.2 Exploring and mapping | Surveyors camp, laying out the Sandridge and Short roads |
| | 2.2 Defending traditional country | 2.8 Fighting for identity<br>4.3 Grazing and raising livestock | Fawkner and Derrimut settling on the south bank |
| | 2.3 Promoting immigration | 2.4 Arriving in a new land<br>2.5 Migrating and making a home | Aboriginal contact on south bank, Fawkner's homestead, immigration depot |
| **3. Shaping the urban landscape** | 3.1 From town to city | 6.2 Creating Melbourne<br>6.3 Shaping the suburbs | Architecture, planning, parks and gardens, the 'Garden City', street trees, public spaces |
| | 3.2 Expressing an architectural style | 6.2 Creating Melbourne<br>6.3 Shaping the suburbs<br>9.3 Achieving distinction in the arts | Industrial-utilitarian design, Richardson Romanesque in City Road, arts precinct |
| | 3.3 Naming places | 6.2 Creating Melbourne | City South to South Melbourne to Southbank, migrating Fishermans Bend, Lost Montague |
| | 3.4 Defining public space | 4.7 Transforming the land and waterways | Wastelands and wetlands, St Kilda Road boulevard, Queens Bridge Square, Southgate |
| **4. Governing, administering and policing the city** | 4.1 Governing the Colony and State of Victoria | 7.1 Developing institutions of self-government and democracy | South Melbourne, Port Melbourne, Harbour Trust MMBW, Commonwealth lands and institutions, Victoria Barracks, GPO, Department of Defence |
| | 4.2 Administering the City of Melbourne | 6.1 Establishing Melbourne Town<br>6.2 Creating Melbourne<br>6.3 Shaping the suburbs | Annexations south of the river, council amalgamations |
| | 4.3 Melbourne's role as federal capital | 7.1 Developing institutions of self-government and democracy | Police and army headquarters |
| | 4.5 Administering Aboriginal affairs | 7.1 Developing institutions of self-government and democracy | Emerald Hill gathering place, The Falls, fringe camps and removal to Coranderrk |

| City of Melbourne theme | Subtheme | Victorian Framework of Historic Themes | Theme content within study area |
|---|---|---|---|
| | 4.6 Administering justice | 7.3 Maintaining law and order<br>7.1 Developing institutions of self-government and democracy | Police Depot and stables |
| | 4.7 Policing the city | 7.3 Maintaining law and order | Police Depot |
| | 4.8 Defending the city | 7.4 Defending Victoria and Australia | Victoria Barracks, defence industries in Fishermans Bend |
| 5. Building a commercial city | 5.1 Establishing a pastoral industry | 4.3 Grazing and raising livestock | Pastoral industry, trading port livestock shipment, merchants, banking, manufacturing, exhibitions, retail development |
| | 5.2 Melbourne as a trading port | 5.3 Marketing and retailing<br>3.2 Travelling by water | South Wharf, graving docks, bond stores, ferries |
| | 5.3 Developing a large, city-based economy | 5.3 Marketing and retailing<br>5.2 Developing a manufacturing capacity<br>5.4 Exhibiting Victoria's innovation and products | Manufacture and warehousing, noxious trades of Port Melbourne, wartime and post-war industries of Fishermans Bend merchants, banking, manufacturing, exhibitions, retail development |
| | 5.4 Developing a retail centre | 5.3 Marketing and retailing | Southbank motor showrooms |
| | 5.5 Building a manufacturing industry | 5.2 Developing a manufacturing capacity<br>5.4 Exhibiting Victoria's innovation and products | Soap, candles, chemicals, furs, cars, planes, tanks |
| | 5.6 Publishing newspapers and periodicals | 3.7 Establishing and maintaining communications<br>5.4 Exhibiting Victoria's innovation and products | GPO workshops, Herald Sun television studio, WWII communications research and development, radio factory |
| 6. Creating a functioning city | 6.1 Water supply | 6.2 Creating Melbourne | Fresh water at The Falls |
| | 6.2 Sewerage | 6.2 Creating Melbourne<br>8.3 Providing health and welfare services | Manure pits, North Yarra main |
| | 6.3 Providing essential services | 8.3 Providing health and welfare services | Prince Henry's Hospital, electricity substations |
| | 6.4 Disposing of the dead | 8.6 Marking the phases of life | No specific places identified |

| City of Melbourne theme | Subtheme | Victorian Framework of Historic Themes | Theme content within study area |
|---|---|---|---|
| | 6.5 Public toilets | 6.2 Creating Melbourne<br>8.3 Providing health and welfare services | No specific places identified |
| | 6.6 Street making, drainage and river works | 3.1 Establishing pathways<br>3.2 Travelling by water<br>4.6 Exploiting other mineral, forest and water resources<br>4.7 Transforming the land and waterways | Water supply, sewerage, port, transport, public services, public utilities, laying out St Kilda and Sandridge roads, river widening |
| | 6.7 Transport | 3.1 Establishing pathways<br>3.2 Travelling by water<br>3.3 Linking Victorians by rail<br>3.4 Linking Victorians by road in the 20th century<br>3.5 Travelling by tram | Track to the beach, river wharves and graving docks, Hobson's Bay Railway, cable trams, building road electrification, bluestone lanes, bridges |
| 7. Appreciating and adapting the natural environment | 7.1 Appreciating the natural landscape | 1.6 Appreciating and protecting Victoria's natural wonders | Garden City movement, field naturalists and bird observers, West Gate Park |
| | 7.2 Cultivating the 'Garden City' aesthetic | 6.2 Creating Melbourne<br>4.7 Transforming the land and waterways | Draining/filling swamps, blasting rocks, dredging river, Coode Canal, Garden City housing schemes |
| 8. Living in the city | 8.1 Settling as immigrants | 6.7 Making homes for Victorians<br>6.8 Living on the fringes | Canvas Town tent city, immigrants, migrant hostels |
| | 8.2 Housing the population | 6.7 Making homes for Victorians<br>6.8 Living on the fringes | Montague slums, council houses, Garden City |
| | 8.3 Educating the people | 8.2 Educating people | City Road Primary School, Lucy Serco dressmaking school, National Gallery Art School, Victorian College of the Arts |
| 9. Working in the city | 9.1 A working class | 5.8 Working | Working life, GMH Social Centre |
| | 9.2 Women's work | 5.8 Working | Commonwealth Clothing Factory, war industries, Lucy Serco dressmaking |
| | 9.3 Working in the post-war city | 5.8 Working | Car and plane factories, wharfies |

| City of Melbourne theme | Subtheme | Victorian Framework of Historic Themes | Theme content within study area |
|---|---|---|---|
| 10. Shaping cultural life | 10.1 Arts and creative life in the city | 9.3 Achieving distinction in the arts<br>9.4 Creating popular culture<br>2.6 Maintaining distinctive cultures<br>8.6 Marking the phases of life | Arts precinct, National Gallery, ballet, concert hall, theatres |
| | 10.2 Belonging to a religious denomination | 8.1 Maintaining spiritual life<br>8.4 Forming community organisations | Old/new St John's Lutheran Church, Father Bob |
| | 10.3 Belonging to an ethnic or cultural group | 8.5 Preserving traditions and commemorating | Arts and culture, ethnicity, community groups, religion, cemeteries, migrant communities |
| 11. Caring for the sick and destitute | 11.1 Improving public health | 8.3 Providing health and welfare services | Public health, slum clearance, filling swamps, Prince Henry's Hospital |
| | 11.2 Providing welfare services | 8.3 Providing health and welfare services | New Gordon House, Hannover House |
| | 11.3 Caring for the sick | 8.3 Providing health and welfare services | Hospitals and welfare, Prince Henry's Hospital, Army Repatriation Clinic |
| | 11.4 Caring for mothers and babies | 8.3 Providing health and welfare services | No specific places identified |
| 12, Expressing social and political opinion | 12.1 Introducing social and political reforms | 7.1 Developing institutions of self-government and democracy<br>7.2 Struggling for political rights | Parliament, Eight Hour Day monument, federation, union strikes and agitation, slum clearance |
| | 12.2 Staging protests | 7.2 Struggling for political rights | Wharf strikes, communist agitation |
| | 12.3 Upholding conservative values | 7.1 Developing institutions of self-government and democracy<br>7.2 Struggling for political rights | No specific places identified |
| | 12.4 Celebrating the larrikin spirit | 7.2 Struggling for political rights | No specific places identified |
| 13. Enjoying the city | 13.1 Public recreation | 5.6 Entertaining and socialising<br>9.1 Participating in sports and recreation | Theatres, hotels, cafes, bohemian Melbourne, recreation, entertainment, festivals, tourism, Wirth's Circus, Glaciarium |
| | 13.2 Promoting tourism | 5.7 Catering for tourists | Queens Bridge Hotel, Melbourne Arts Centre |

| City of Melbourne theme | Subtheme | Victorian Framework of Historic Themes | Theme content within study area |
|---|---|---|---|
| | 13.3 Staging exhibitions | 5.6 Entertaining and socialising<br>5.7 Catering for tourists<br>9.1 Participating in sports and recreation | National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne Exhibition and Conference Centre |
| | 13.4 Procession sand street events | 5.6 Entertaining and socialising<br>5.7 Catering for tourists<br>9.1 Participating in sports and recreation | St Kilda Road arch |
| | 13.5 Building a city of fashion and style | 5.6 Entertaining and socialising<br>5.7 Catering for tourists | Kosky Bros., furriers, Maurice Artaud & Sons |
| | 13.6 Eating and drinking | 5.6 Entertaining and socialising<br>5.7 Catering for tourists | Hotels, Southgate development, Crown promenade |
| 14. Advancing scientific knowledge | 14.1 Keeping weather records | 9.5 Advancing knowledge | No specific places identified |
| | 14.2 Observing the heavens | 9.5 Advancing knowledge | No specific places identified |
| | 14.3 Pioneering botanical research | 9.5 Advancing knowledge | No specific places identified |
| | 14.4 Developing zoological gardens | 9.5 Advancing knowledge | No specific places identified |
| | 14.5 Establishing scientific institutions | 9.5 Advancing knowledge | CSIRO and Materials Research Laboratories, Government Aircraft Factory, research and development at GMH Experimental Tank Factory |
| 15. Preserving and celebrating the city's history | 15.1 Remembering the past | 7.5 Protecting Victoria's heritage<br>8.5 Preserving traditions and commemorating | Local historical societies and publishing histories, Arts Centre collection, Victoria Barracks Museum, GMH heritage collection |
| | 15.2 Raising monuments | 7.5 Protecting Victoria's heritage<br>8.5 Preserving traditions and commemorating | Factory honour boards |
| | 15.3 Remembering the Aboriginal past | 7.5 Protecting Victoria's heritage | Commemorating Birrurung, shared histories |
| | 15.4 Preserving the fabric of the past | 7.5 Protecting Victoria's heritage<br>8.5 Preserving traditions and commemorating | Civic monuments, centenary 1934-1935, heritage movement, commemorations |

### 4.1.3 Main themes relevant to the study area

Some themes are more prominent or important in the study area due to their particular historical development. Impacts of various phases of redevelopment have resulted in different levels of preservation of buildings and fabric that demonstrate these themes. The following table identifies each theme and its relative importance, as well as surviving evidence that remains in the study area to express the themes. The darker the shading, the greater the importance.

**Table 5    Relevance of themes in the study area**

| City of Melbourne theme | Fabric representing the theme | Relevance in Southbank and Fishermans Bend |
|---|---|---|
| **1. Aboriginal country** | Underwater remnants of rock bar at The Falls, potential for buried land surfaces and archaeological deposits | The south bank of the Yarra River, swamps and Fishermans Bend were important resources and gathering places. |
| **2. Promoting settlement** | No physical evidence | An aspect of the area's early history including Fawkner's huts and survey camp, and the immigrant depot, but these were subsumed by later events. |
| **3. Shaping the urban landscape** | Victorian, Edwardian and Inter-War factories and warehouses in Southbank, WWII Fishermans Bend factories | Distinctive architectural and land use developed in the area, many examples of which survive, making this a particularly important theme. |
| **4. Governing, administering and policing the city** | Victoria Barracks, Police Depot | This is an important theme in respect to specific heritage places on St Kilda Road, demonstrating both the proximity of governmental control to the city and the character of that control in the built fabric. |
| **5. Building a commercial city** | Numerous factories and warehouses throughout study area | Southbank and Fishermans Bend were predominantly areas of trade, commerce and manufacturing, making  this theme of high importance. |
| **6. Creating a functioning city** | Streets and lanes, electricity substations | Public utilities were critical elements for the area but were much like any other part of the city, so this theme is of only moderate importance. |
| **7. Appreciating and adapting the natural environment** | West Gate Park | Much of the area's history has been about eliminating the natural environment, so while the natural environment was adapted to some extent, this theme is of low importance. |
| **8. Living in the city** | No residential places remain | While a few pockets of residential places were extant in the 19th century, these were replaced by commercial activity by the early 20th century making this theme not well-represented in the study area. |

| City of Melbourne theme | Fabric representing the theme | Relevance in Southbank and Fishermans Bend |
|---|---|---|
| **9. Working in the city** | Numerous factories and industrial sites | Southbank and Fishermans Bend have been primarily places of work and commerce, making this theme of very high importance. |
| **10. Shaping cultural life** | Arts precinct | The Southbank arts precinct has long been an important part of Melbourne's cultural activity. |
| **11. Caring for the sick and destitute** | No physical evidence | The immigrant depot, police surgeon and Prince Henry's Hospital were important parts of the area and represent this theme, but of which little evidence remains. |
| **12. Expressing social and political opinion** | South Wharf 21, timber yards, GMH | The timber workers' strike, Docklands Wars and Holden walk off were only some examples of the significant industrial action in the area, demonstrating that this is an important theme in the area's history. |
| **13. Enjoying the city** | Arts [recent, Southgate, Crown Casino | The Southbank arts precinct has long been an important part of Melbourne's cultural activity. |
| **14. Advancing scientific knowledge** | Materials Research Laboratories | The scientific research during and after WW2 connected to the experimental tank project and Aeronautical Research Laboratories make this an important theme. |
| **15. Preserving and celebrating the city's history** | National Gallery of Victoria, Performing Arts Collection, Southbank Library | While there is recent activity in this area, the theme has not been prominent in the history of the study area. |

## 4.2    Summary timeline

The following timeline identifies representative events in the history of Southbank and Fishermans Bend.

**Table 6    Timeline of events in Southbank and Fishermans Bend**

| Time | Event | Theme |
|---|---|---|
| **40,000-60,000 years ago** | Aborigines arrive in Australia, rapidly spreading around the coast and across the continent. Oldest evidence of occupation near Melbourne at Dry Creek near Keilor. | 1.1 |
| **10,000-5,000 years ago** | Rising sea levels flood Port Phillip Bay, Yarra Delta formed, Aboriginal economic patterns stabilised around lower Yarra and Sandridge Flats. | 1.1 |
| **1700s** | Yalukit willam, one of the five clans of the Boon wurrung (known as the coastal tribe), and members of the Kulin Nation occupy the area around the bay, camping on freshwater swamps near Emerald Hill. | 1.1 |
| **1802 (November)** | Charles Grimes and John Fleming survey the Port Phillip coastline and row up the 'Freshwater River' (Yarra) and 'Saltwater River' (Maribyrnong). | 2.1 |
| **1803** | William Buckley escapes from Sullivan's Bay (Sorrento) penal settlement, passes by the Yarra and lives with Wathaurung people near Geelong for 30 years. | 2.1 |
| **1824 (15 and 20 December)** | Hamilton Hume and William Hovell pass about 20km west of the Yarra mouth on their voyage to Westernport, miscalculating their direction and reaching Corio Bay. | 2.1 |
| **1835 (30 August)** | George Evans lands on the Yarra bank near the Custom's House site on behalf of John Pascoe Fawkner and plants crops. | 2.1 |
| **1835 (8 June)** | John Batman of the Port Phillip Association crosses Yarra and later records, "This will be the place for a village". | 2.1 |
| **1835** | John Batman travels around the western shore of Port Phillip Bay to explore the area. | 2.1 |
| **1836 (February)** | John Batman returns and Fawkner moves to the south side of Yarra, the first white resident of South Melbourne. | 2.1 |
| **1836** | Surveyor William Darke prepares maps of the shoreline of Port Phillip Bay, names the Port Melbourne area "Sandridge". | 2.1 |
| **1837** | Governor Bourke arrives, proclaims the town and the first land sales | 3.1 |
| **1839** | Wilbraham Liardet settles on Sandridge Beach and establishes a jetty, a hotel and a mail service. The location becomes referred to as "Liardet's Beach". | 2.1 |
| **1840s** | The beach is now referred to as Sandridge and becomes a main arrival point for ships, with its jetty and track along what will become Sandridge Road, then later City Road and Bay Street. | 3.3 |
| **1850-1854** | Crown land surveys and sales at Sandridge and Emerald Hill. | 3.1 |
| **1850s** | Sandridge flourishes through the Victorian gold rush and becomes a thriving transport hub. Bay fishermen erect huts along the coastline. | 8.2 |

| Time | Event | Theme |
|------|-------|-------|
| **1853** | Canvas Town, Immigrants' Aid Society and an immigration depot open in St Kilda Road. | 2.3 |
| **1854** | The Hobsons Bay railway line opens, connecting Sandridge to Flinders Street in Melbourne via the first Sandridge rail bridge. | 6.7 |
| **1855 (26 May)** | Emerald Hill is declared a municipality. | 4.2 |
| **1856** | Victoria Barracks open in St Kilda Road. | 4.8 |
| **1860** | The first of several proposals for a direct shipping channel between the bay and Melbourne. | 6.7 |
| **1860** | Sandridge in severed and made an independent borough. | 4.2 |
| **1861** | Work at the South Melbourne abattoir commences. | 5.3 |
| **1863** | Emerald Hill is proclaimed to be a borough. | 4.2 |
| **1870** | Felton Grimwade commences manufacturing at their chemical works. | 5.3 |
| **1870s** | The Montague housing area is established and quickly fills with workers' cottages. | 8.2 |
| **1872 (28 March)** | The Williamstown Steam Ferry commences operation and the 'Short Road' is in use. | 6.7 |
| **1872** | Emerald Hill is proclaimed to be a town. | 4.2 |
| **1872 (28 March)** | The Williamstown 'Short Road' proclaimed a main road. | 6.7 |
| **1877** | The Melbourne Harbour Trust is formed. | 6.7 |
| **1880** | Serious flooding in Montague, Fishermans Bend and South Melbourne. | 6.6 |
| **1883** | Emerald Hill is proclaimed to be a city, and its name is changed to South Melbourne. | 4.2 |
| **1884** | Sandridge changes its name to Port Melbourne. | 4.2 |
| **1886** | The Coode Canal is constructed, causing Coode Island to shift the location of Fishermans Bend. | 6.7 |
| **1892** | The Victoria Dock (now Victoria Harbour) was completed. | 6.7 |
| **1893** | Port Melbourne is proclaimed to be a town. | 4.2 |
| **1899** | The South Melbourne abattoir rebuilt and enlarged. | 5.3 |
| **1900s** | Sandridge, Fishermans Bend and Coode Island are popular field naturalist destinations and wildlife refuges. | 7.1 |
| **1905-1911** | Enamelled steel street signs are installed. | 3.3 |
| **1909** | Johns & Waygood establishes its head office and works on City Road and Cecil Street. | 5.3 |
| **1910s** | Extensive street tree-planting is undertaken by municipal councils. Trees include oriental plane, poplar, elm, oak, pine, sugar gum, currajong and pittosporum. | 7.1 |

| Time | Event | Theme |
|------|-------|-------|
| **1913** | Station Pier replaces the former Railway Pier. | 6.7 |
| **1919** | Port Melbourne is proclaimed to be a city. | 4.2 |
| **1920s** | The Yarra River is widened and the south wharves are reconstructed. | 6.6 |
| **1922** | The new Princess Pier is completed. | 6.7 |
| **1925** | The SEC's electricity supply is provided. | 6.3 |
| **1930s** | Early industries, including soap production, chemical works, a rubber factory and blanket mills, prosper in the area. | 5.5 |
| **1930s-1950s** | The Montague slums are cleared and residents rehoused, many in Garden City. | 8.2 |
| **1936** | Major companies, including GM Holden, BHP and Broken Hill Associated Smelters commence operations in Fishermans Bend. | 5.5 |
| **1937** | The Commonwealth Aircraft Corporation open a factory at Fishermans Bend with test facilities and the first runway in Melbourne. CAC also builds the Wirraway warplane. | 4.8 |
| **1939** | Garden City public housing provides low-cost housing for the working class. | 8.2 |
| **1949** | The Fishermans Bend Migrant Hostel is established in the former army barracks. | 2.3 |
| **1954** | Australian Motor Industries erect large auto assembly works. | 5.5 |
| **1960s** | Webb Dock is constructed as a containerized terminal and for the ferry to Tasmania. | 6.7 |
| **1967** | The National Gallery of Victoria is constructed. | 10.1 |
| **1968** | Construction on the West Gate Bridge commences. | 6.7 |
| **1974** | The West Gate Bridge collapses. | 15.1 |
| **1974-1978** | West Gate Park is created. | 7.1 |
| **1975** | Closure of the South Melbourne abattoir. | 5.5 |
| **1977-1978** | The Port Melbourne and St Kilda lines are converted into light rail lines. | 6.7 |
| **1978** | The West Gate Bridge opens. | |
| **1982** | The Melbourne Arts Centre and Concert Hall are constructed. | 10.1 |
| **1990** | St John's Lutheran Church Southgate is rebuilt. | 10.2 |
| **1990s** | Fishermans Bend evolves into a light-manufacturing and industrial precinct. | 5.5 |
| **1990s** | Southgate's development has become mixed-use, both commercial and residential. | 13.6 |
| **1994** | Port Melbourne and South Melbourne become part of City of Port Phillip. | 4.2 |
| **2012** | The Victorian Government rezones 248 hectares into the Capital City Zone to kick-start the renewal of Fishermans Bend, declaring it a project of State Significance. | 3.1 |

## 4.3 Environmental factors affecting land use

Themes: 3.x Shaping the urban landscape, 7.1 Appreciating the natural landscape

The nature of the landscape south of the Yarra River has had an important effect on the area's development and history. The Southbank and Fishermans Bend area comprises a number of landforms. The tidal estuary was formed 5,000-10,000 years ago following rising sea levels and the flooding of Port Phillip Bay, along with the formation of wetlands and sand ridges. The natural landscape of the region was then modified by Aboriginal fire management. European settlement transformed the area yet again, first into a wasteland of sandpits and noxious trades, and later into an industrial heartland. Recent decades have seen the area form a new chapter in Melbourne's growth and evolution.

Much of the Southbank and Fishermans Bend area lies on the soft, grey Coode Island Silt deposited by the Yarra and Maribyrnong Rivers, overlaid with sand ridges from old beach dunes and separated by intervening swamps. The wooded Emerald Hill, formed out of the Older Volcanics, was the first upstream high ground. This was a rich environment for a diverse plant life and animals, which in turn supported Aboriginal people living in the area for thousands of years. The base of the hill reaches down near City Road and Montague Street, where there was once a large swamp. Another swamp separated Emerald Hill from St Kilda Road.

The basement rocks of the area were made of folded and faulted Ordovician and Silurian marine sediments, overlaid by Tertiary sands and gravels from Older Volcanics. Between one and five million years ago volcanic eruptions buried most older sediments west of modern-day Melbourne under basalt lava flows. However, the erosive force of the Maribyrnong River gradually cut through the basalt to expose the older sediments. The older volcanic lava flows stopped by the Pliocene Red Bluff sands outcrop north of the Yarra estuary at Kensington and North Melbourne. Batman's Hill, near Spencer Street, appears to be the southern edge of this exposure. [10]

The slumping of the Port Phillip Basin resulted in the formation of the bay and the drowning of the river mouth, which was subsequently filled by estuarine and fluvial sedimentation, including Coode Island Silt. These recent and Pleistocene sediments now form the estuaries and flood plains of the Maribyrnong and Yarra Rivers, as well as the lower reaches of Moonee Ponds Creek. The flats extend between Melbourne and Footscray, and south from the basalt ridge of Kensington to the bay, including the areas of Fishermans Bend and most of Sandridge/Port Melbourne. Soils on these floodplains included silt deposited by floodwaters, and swamp deposits of fine sand and silty clay. Raised beach ridges, from wind-blown and wave-deposited sand, formed south of the Yarra River over much of Port Melbourne, forming the geological unit known as the Fishermans Bend Sand. [11]

The shallow sand deposits were exploited extensively for building, road-making and more from the mid-19th century into the 1960s. The deep Coode Island Silt deposits challenged foundation engineers, leading to several innovative structures such as the Tea House, built on a massive raft of red gum timber, or the deeply-bored piles of the Kings Way Bridge. [12] The Coode Island Silt continues to influence the form of development in the area. The cost of foundation piling means that medium-rise buildings are rarely financially viable.

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[10] Geological Survey of Victoria, Melbourne, Sheet SJ, 55-1.

[11] N.J. Rosengren, Sites of Geological and Geomorphological Significance in the Western Region of Melbourne,
   Conservation Forests and Lands, Victoria, 1986.

[12] Kings Way Bridge classification report, National Trust Bridges Database, Reg. No. 4042.

**Figure 3    Geological survey plans from 1959 showing sedimentary units and sand quarries**

City Road began as the Sandridge Road, following the higher ground at the foot of Emerald Hill and the dry ridge between the Port Melbourne Lagoon and the swamps and sand ridges to the west. Williamstown Road also followed the higher ridges where possible, but required considerable more filling. In Southbank, a large swamp extended south of City Road and east of Kings Way, down to Albert Road. It wrapped around the hill to the east where Victoria Barracks stands today. The swamp delayed development of the area until well into the 20th century.

Downstream was a large tidal marsh on the south side of the Yarra, commencing opposite the site where the West Melbourne Gasworks would be built. Further west were a series of sand ridges and intervening swamps, formed by the progressive shift of the Yarra as it meandered across the estuary. The accumulation of sand formed beach ridges, which were left behind as the shoreline receded. Williamstown Road marks the approximate southern limit of these swamps and ridges. Another large marsh commenced north of where Todd Road now runs.



**Figure 4    Cox Plan 1864, showing the section of South Melbourne, Fishermans Bend and Sandridge**

Fishermans Bend originally described the sharp bend in the natural course of the Yarra River near its junction with the Maribyrnong. The Coode Canal altered the course of the river, and as a result, Aboriginal riverbank campsites that may have existed on banks of the original river course are now under the West Melbourne freight terminals, or would have been dredged away for river widening.

The lower reaches of the Yarra, from the junction of the Maribyrnong River to the mouth, was known in the past as Hobson's River. This section of the river was the location of some of Melbourne's largest early industries, but it was also one of the best habitats for wetland flora and fauna and therefore an important food resource for Aborigines. Red gum and river bottlebrush lined the banks of the Yarra, along with tea-tree and swamp paperbark in the low-lying areas. Manna gum and drooping she-oaks dotted the hills and sand ridges.

When alterations to the natural course of the Yarra River began in the mid-19th century, with the construction of training walls, the removal snags and trees from the riverbank and dredging the riverbed, these changes had only a minor impact on the surrounding mud flats, salt marshes, swamps and other estuarine landforms. It was not until the large-scale land reclamation and filling during the Second World War that the Fishermans Bend area lost its predominantly natural character.

## 4.4   Aboriginal history

Theme: 1.x Aboriginal country

The first inhabitants of the Yarra riverbanks, the Fishermans Bend flats and the Yarra River estuary would have moved into the area around 5,000-10,000 years ago, when the water level in Port Phillip Bay would have become stable and regular floods had deposited sufficient sediment to form dry land. The area would have been an important resource-rich environment for Aboriginal people. Earlier periods of lower sea levels, when much of Port Phillip Bay was a dry plain, caused erosion of the Yarra and Maribyrnong river valleys and making land surfaces lower. With the rising sea levels and flooding of the bay the accumulation of sediment covered any earlier landscape, and therefore any older Aboriginal campsites.

Aboriginal occupation of the Yarra delta is presumed to have been relatively intensive and an important part of their overall natural and cultural resources. This is based on speculation and extrapolation rather than solid archaeological, ethnographic or historical evidence, however William Thomas, Assistant Aboriginal Protector, noted in 1840 that:

> By what I can learn, long ere the settlement was formed the spot where Melbourne now stands and the flats on which we are now camped [on the south bank of the Yarra] was the regular rendezvous for the tribes known as Warorangs, Boonurongs, Barrabools, Nilunguons, Gouldburns twice a year or as often as circumstances and emergences required to settle their grievances, revenge deaths . . . .[13]

Similarly, when Fawkner came across a group of Aborigines near Batman's Swamp he noted:

> ...the Blacks at first alarmed, the women in particular. When I drove towards them they threw themselves into strange but pleasing positions and bellowed loudly.[14]

At the time of European settlement, Aboriginal people in the central Victoria had a social, political, economic and cultural structure and organisation based on familial links and totemic associations, or

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[13] Thomas in Presland, G. 1985. *Aboriginal Melbourne: the Lost Land of the Kulin People*. McPhee Gribble, Ringwood, p.35.

[14] Billot, C.P., 1985, *The life and times of John Pascoe Fawkner*, Melbourne: Hyland House, p.14.

*moieties*. A number of language groups (*Taung wurrung, Wadda wurrung, Dja wurrung, Woi wurrung* and *Bun wurrung)* formed a loose coalition known as the Kulin Nation.

Aboriginal people from the *Woi wurrung* and *Bun wurrung* language groups shared territory around Port Phillip Bay and across the site of the future Melbourne. Particular clans claimed the land between the mouth of the Yarra River and Melbourne.

Billibillary (1799-1846) was Ngurungaeta (or leader) of a group known as 'Billibillary's mob' who belonged to the Wurundjeri willam clan (meaning 'white gum dwellers') of the *Woi wurrung*. He was one of the signatories to Batman's treaty, and custodian of the Mount William stone axe quarry.

Derrimut (or Derremart) (1808/14-1864) was the Arweet (also leader) of the Yalukit willam clan (meaning 'river dwellers') of the *Bun wurrung* who, despite having his wife kidnapped by sealers, stayed at the Port Phillip settlement and protected Fawkner's hut from rumoured attack in 1835. Benbow (or Euernowel) (1800[?]-1852), who was referred to by the white men as 'King Benbow', lived in a hut on Batman's land with his wife 'Kitty'. He recovered Batman's drowned son's body from the river and, with Derrimut, helped in the search for the murderers of the overseer, Franks, and his shepherd. He is also recorded hunting at Williamstown in Fawkner's diary in 1836. Derrimut died in 1864 and his memorial stone is located in the Melbourne General Cemetery.[15]

Both Aboriginal groups comprised several extended families who took advantage of the seasonal abundance of the beach, swamps and river at Fishermans Bend and the wooded Emerald Hill. They managed the landscape with fire and travelled to other parts to rest the land and allow it to regenerate. The Chief Protector the Aborigines, George Augustus Robinson, first listed them in his 1840 journal. In 1900, the early ethnographers Howitt and Fison referred to a difference between the Aboriginal groups at St Kilda and Sandridge.[16] Their suggestion was that the group at Sandridge had *bunjil* (eagle) as their moiety, while the St Kilda group had *waa* (crow) as their moiety.[17]

The preferred camping places of the *Woi wurrung* and *Bun wurrung* clans were along the south bank of the Yarra River, opposite the settlement of Melbourne. The salt and fresh water met here at The Falls, and a rock bar on the Yarra near the foot of Queen Street held back the tidal inflow, and so maintained fresh water above The Falls. The location provided the most reliable drinking water in the area and a convenient and safe place to cross the river.[18] It was probably the place that John Helder Wedge was shown by two natives who called it *Yarrow* (swiftly flowing), but they were probably referring to The Falls rather than the river itself.[19] The Government reserve for Aborigines was run by George Langhorne and was established in 1837 on an 895-acre site south of the Yarra River to the east of Anderson Street near the present-day Royal Botanic Gardens. The Government paddocks were established here, between Princes Bridge and Punt Road.

Aborigines took advantage of the rock bar to trap fish and cross the river. When Charles Grimes explored Port Phillip in 1803, and Batman and Fawkner took up residence in the area in 1835, this was the obvious place for a settlement as it avoided the flood-prone flats and sand ridges.

The river, however, was winding, shallow and full of snags, so larger ships anchored in the bay and passengers walked across the flats to Melbourne, following well-worn Aboriginal paths. These paths

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[15] Presland, *Land of the Kulin,* 1985.
[16] Clark 1990, p.368.
[17] Nicolson and du Cros, 1999, p.7.
[18] Ian D. Clark, Toby Heydon, 1998, 25-7 A Bend In The Yarra: A History of the Merri Creek Protectorate Station.
[19] Eidelson, Meyer 1997, *The Melbourne Dreaming*. A Guide to the Aboriginal Places of Melbourne (Reprint 2000 ed.). Canberra: Aboriginal Studies Press. p.14–17.

became the basis for later roads, such as City Road and Williamstown Road, transporting goods from the Port Melbourne piers to the city. Australia's first train, the Hobson's Bay Railway, ran parallel to these paths from 1854.

South Melbourne was first known as Emerald Hill, after the hill on which the town hall stands, described as a green island surrounded by swamps. This was a traditional social and ceremonial meeting place for a number of Aboriginal tribes. A great gathering had been witnessed in this place in 1840 by a number of the early European settlers. Corroborees were also recorded and painted by Wilbraham Liardet at Emerald Hill. In 1840 Richard Howitt described fifty men dancing there, assisted by the musical accompaniment of women, in a performance which would 'haunt the soul for years afterwards'. [20]

*Woi wurrung* and *Bun wurrung* people camped in the area stretching from The Falls to approximately two kilometres southeast along the river. To the west, the swamps and saltwater may have been less attractive for camping, but plentiful game and plants here meant it that was a rich source for food. A particularly favoured location for camping was on the hill overlooking 'Tromgin', a swamp south of the Yarra River. Robinson and Thomas, an assistant protector, reportedly spent much time from the late-1830s to mid-1840s attempting to 'break up' Aboriginal camps along the Yarra River close to the settlement.[21]



**Figure 5      Melbourne from The Falls, 1837, showing an Aboriginal camp on the south bank of the Yarra River (National Library Australia)**

[20] Howitt, 1904, The Native Tribes of South East Australia.
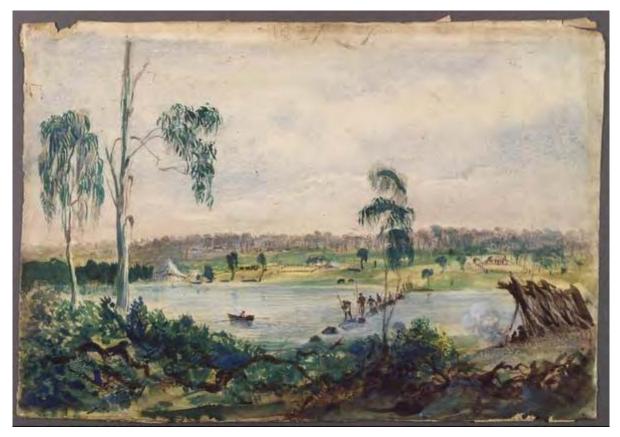[21] Clark & Heydon, 1998, p.34-5, 40, 49.

**Figure 6     Melbourne from The Falls by Robert Russell, 1837 (National Library Australia)**

## 4.5   Discovery and survey

Theme: 2.1 Founding stories

Knowledge of the existence of Port Phillip Bay came to navigators and settlers in New South Wales only 14 years after settlement had begun in Australia. On 5 January 1802, Lieutenant John Murray, aboard the *Lady Nelson*, observed what was 'apparently a fine harbour of large extent' through the heads, which guarded the entrance to Port Phillip Bay. Two months later, on a second visit, he entered the bay and took possession of the area in the name of King George III. Seven weeks after this Captain Mathew Flinders, aboard the *Investigator*, sailed into the bay and reported an 'extensive harbour' surrounded by country which had 'a pleasing, and in many places a fertile appearance'.[22]

Based on the reports from Murray and Flinders, Governor King despatched his surveyor-general, Charles Grimes, with instructions to explore the shores of the bay. On 2 February 1803, Grimes and his party rowed a small boat up the course of the Yarra River to its tidal limit. James Fleming, a member of his party, later described this place as 'the most eligible place for a settlement that I have seen'.[23] Grimes also mapped the river and coastline at Fishermans Bend and Sandridge, describing his visit thus:

> *At the usual time, the same party as yesterday, with the addition of the doctor, went on shore; for about a mile the land was dry, a light sandy soil; afterwards a large swamp with three lagoons in it all dry. The land appears to be covered with water in wet*

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[22] R.D. Boys, First Years at Port Phillip, 1834-1842, Melbourne, 1959.
[23]  Flemming Journal.

*seasons. Come to a salt lagoon about a mile long and a quarter of a mile wide; had not entrance to the sea. Soon afterwards came to a large river; went up it about a mile, when we turned back and waited for the boat to take us aboard. The ground is a swamp on one side...Saw many swans, pelicans and ducks.[24]*

The accounts of the area either did not inspire confidence among the Sydney adventurers or else the time was not ripe for further expansion of settlement, as nothing more was heard about Port Phillip for two decades. In 1824, Hume and Hovell passed west of Port Phillip Bay, initially believing they had reached Westernport. Another decade was to pass before an attempt at permanent settlement was made. John Batman traversed the basalt plains north and west of the bay in 1835, before settling on his chosen site on what was to become known as Batman's Hill.

The name 'Sandridge' was given by Surveyor William Darke when he prepared maps of the shoreline of Port Phillip Bay in 1836. The early settler Edward Curr recorded the area along the beach where surveyors had laid out allotments with string lines, simply as 'The Beach'.[25]

Government survey of Melbourne was carried out under Robert Hoddle's supervision in 1837. He laid out the streets around the existing huts to the east of Batman's farm on the north side of the Yarra River to take advantage of the high ground and avoid the swamps altogether. This geographic influence would continue to determine future land use in the Southbank area. As land around Melbourne was surveyed and sold, the higher and more fertile areas were given preference and the swamps and riverbanks were reserved for future public purposes.

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[24] Logbook of Charles Grimes, 2.2.1803. Quoted in N. U'ren and N. Turnbull: A History of Port Melbourne, O.U.P. 1983, p.6, in Allom Lovell and Associates, 'Port Melbourne Conservation Study Review', Vol.1, pp.13-14, and Ward A. Port Phillip, Heritage Review, Vol.1, 2011, Version 15, p.26.
[25] Curr, E.M., Recollections of Squatting in Victoria Then called the Port Phillip District (from 1841-1851), Melbourne University Press, p.9-10.

**Figure 7    Map showing the site of Melbourne, Russell, 1837 (8168-P1-312-SYDNEY-M20)**

The prominent rise of Emerald Hill attracted initial settlement because of the views it offered, as well as and the land being permanently dry when much of the surrounding area was swamp or flood-prone.[26] Edmund Finn, who wrote under the name 'Garryowen', is credited with naming Emerald Hill when he described the area in an October 1845 advertisement for a temperance society picnic as an '...eminence . . . green as the freshest shamrock . . . encircled by shining lagoons, the sparkling sea, and growths of scrub and ti-tree'.[27]

The first surveys in Sandridge were conducted in 1850, and in Emerald Hill from 1852 to 1854, during the time that Robert Hoddle and later Andrew Clarke headed the survey office. The layout of the Emerald Hill survey was based on a grid bounded by Eastern Road, Park Street, Montague Street and the diagonal Sandridge Road (City Road). The South Melbourne grid was aligned with the original orientation of the CBD grid, with the line of Spencer Street continuing down as Clarendon Street. In 1854, the grid was extended to include Three Chain Road (Albert Road) and Nelson Road.[28]

The diagonal track to the beach along what would become Sandridge Road (and later City Road and Bay Street) pre-existed the grid survey, and so was retained. Like Williamstown Road, which came a bit later, Sandridge Road was also the shortest distance between two important points. The

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[26] Ward, 2011, p.12.

[27] Susan Priestly, 'Emerald Hill', eMelbourne Encyclopedia. Accessed online, from http://www.emelbourne.net.au/biogs/EM00519b.htm.

[28] Streets of South Melbourne. Accessed online, from http://streetsofsouthmelbourne.wordpress.com/introduction.

Sandridge Survey also used a grid, but aligned itself parallel with the beachfront to avoid awkward triangular lots.

However, development west of Sandridge Road was constrained by swamps and, from 1854, the railway. An 1855 Department of Crown Lands confirmed the reservation of the land west of the railway, and so prohibited development of this area. Behind the Victoria Barracks, another large Crown land reserve was retained from sale for many decades, evidently to provide for future government facilities but also because of its flood-prone nature.

St Kilda Road began its life as a bush track to the fishing villages and later became the 'fashionable villages for the wealthy' at St Kilda and Brighton beaches. St Kilda Road, however, overcame the disadvantages of its early neglect and, from the 1860s, was laid out and planted with avenues of trees to form a grand boulevard.

At the same time, wide landscaped reserves were provided along the Port Melbourne and St Kilda railway lines. A much later plan included a 'permanent reserve for stormwater channel and other public purposes'[29] on the alignment of an earlier proposal for a ship canal. However, neither scheme was ever acted upon.

## 4.6 Early settlement

Themes: 2.7 Promoting settlement, 8.1 Settling as immigrants

The Port Phillip Association, which was formed in Tasmania with John Batman as their agent, undertook a reconnaissance expedition across Bass Strait to the Port Phillip District in May/June 1835, followed by a permanent camp from late-June on the Yarra. Batman laid claim to Aboriginal lands north and west of the Yarra on behalf of the Association and erected his own house on Batman's Hill, near the later site of the Spencer Street rail yards. The area south of the Yarra was not part of the Port Phillip Association's claim.

John Pascoe Faulkner arrived soon after Batman's men in August 1835, but made a more substantial landfall on the north bank of the Yarra River. Batman arrived and set up his own premises to this same site in November 1835. However, in November, Fawkner was persuaded to move to the opposite bank in deference to Batman's prior claim, and so become the first permanent non-aboriginal settler of South Melbourne. This pattern of settlement, focussing on the higher ground north of the river and upstream along the river, was to continue for many years.

Melbourne's first white settlement, in the vicinity of Batman's Hill, can be located today only from documents. No physical evidence of the first period of settlement is likely to be found because of the extensive excavations and reclamation that has occurred with river improvements, railway construction and the erection of city buildings. However, the topographic features of the site, such as the high ground adjacent to the river and swamp, can be identified by the informed observer. Russell's 1837 map of Melbourne shows three long narrow buildings at the top of a ridge that led down to the river with a paddock or garden and cultivated ground. [30]

A view from Emerald Hill in 1855 shows that there was very little settlement on the south bank of the Yarra, with only a couple of dwellings on the higher ground and some boats tied up on the

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[29] Port Melbourne, Parish of South Melbourne, County of Bourke, Department of Lands & Survey, Melbourne, T. S. Butson, 13 February 1914.
[30] Robert Russel, Map Showing the Site of Melbourne, 1837.

undeveloped river bank. The Hobsons Bay Railway and Sandridge Road show that activity was focussed on travelling through the areas swamps to get to the bay port (see Figure 8).



**Figure 8     View from Emerald Hill, 1855, Whittock (National Library)**

## 4.7   Formation of towns and local government

Themes: 4.1 Governing the Colony and State of Victoria, 4.2 Administering the city of Melbourne

Melbourne's initial settlement occurred at a slow pace – a few dozen huts and some more substantial buildings on the hill opposite the falls, some more huts along the beach at Sandridge – but the bulk of the settlers fanned out to the pastoral hinterlands to raise sheep and cattle. However, this dramatically changed with the discovery of gold in 1851 at Ballarat and Bendigo. Thousands came to Port Phillip, disembarking on the beach at Sandridge and walking across the flats to Melbourne. In 1852, 94,664 people arrived in the colony by sea and within months of the announcement of the discovery of gold, a tent city had sprung up on the south side of the Yarra between Emerald Hill and St Kilda Road. The area was known as 'Canvas Town' and was laid out in streets with shops, residences and hotels, all under canvas (see Figure 9).

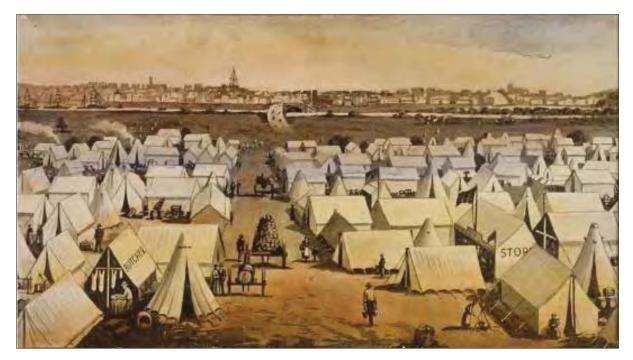**Figure 9      Canvas Town and Princes Bridge, De Gruchy & Leigh, lithographers, c.1855 (State Library of Victoria H25127)**

Creation of the Melbourne Corporation in 1842 initially provided local representation and services throughout the colony. However, as suburbs grew and Victoria became a separate colony from New South Wales, suspicion of the power of Melbourne councillors among the colonial government saw the subsequent fragmentation of local democracy into many small councils.

The first land sales were held in 1850 at Sandridge, and in 1852 at Emerald Hill. In 1854, Canvas Town was dispersed and many of the inhabitants moved up to Emerald Hill. On 14 December 1854, a residents' meeting was called to lobby for independence from Melbourne. On 26 May 1855, Emerald Hill became the first suburb outside of Geelong to be declared a municipal district, taking the motto *'Ordine Primum'*, meaning 'first in the field'. When the council met for the first time on 4 July 1855, James Service, later to become Premier of Victoria, was elected chairman. Despite rapid development, the area was still separated from the main settlement by swamps and flood-prone flats (see Figure 10).



**Figure 10    Melbourne and its suburbs, compiled by James Kearney, draughtsman, engraved by David Tulloch and James D. Brown. Melbourne, Andrew Clarke, Surveyor General, 1855**

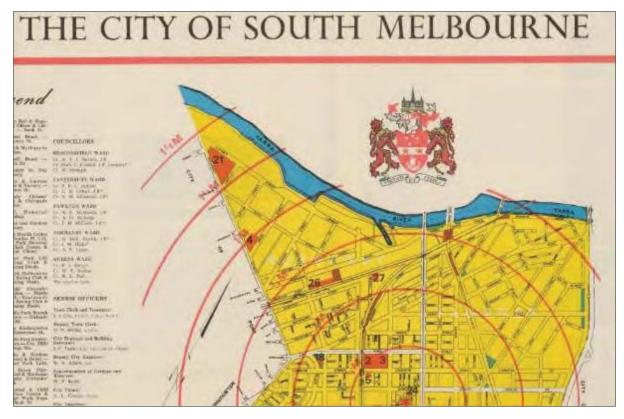**Figure 11   The City of South Melbourne council map, 1970 (State Library Victoria)**
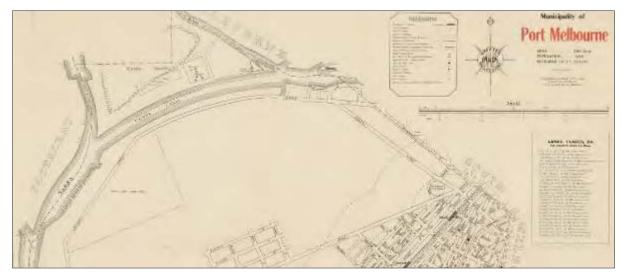


**Figure 12   Municipality of Port Melbourne, Melbourne, Anderson, Gowan Pty Ltd., 1921
(State Library of Victoria, http://handle.slv.vic.gov.au/10381/118445)**

Emerald Hill was proclaimed a borough in 1863, a town in 1872, and city in 1883 when its name was also changed to South Melbourne. Sandridge was severed from Emerald Hill and made an independent borough in 1860. It was renamed Port Melbourne in 1884, becoming a town in 1893 and a city in 1919. [31]

In 1994, under the Kennett State Government, a review of municipal government led to the amalgamation of most councils, with the former cities of South Melbourne, Port Melbourne and St Kilda combining to form the City of Port Phillip (apart from the strip of land north of the West Gate Freeway, which became part of the City of Melbourne).

## 4.8 Wasteland, wetland and wildlife

Theme: 7.1 Appreciating the natural landscape

Much of Fishermans Bend and a large part of Southbank were originally low-lying swamps and sand ridges – hence the original name for Port Melbourne, 'Sandridge' – and its proximity to Melbourne and wasteland status saw these outlying areas used as convenient dumping grounds. For example, in 1885, contracts were let for the very substantial amount of £5,000 to M Gardiner & Co. for 'removing earth from Fishermans Bend and spreading same'.[32] The cumulative effect of this was that today there is now a metre or two of fill and rubbish across most of the area, which only occasionally reveals the buried natural ground as a black, humic layer over the original sands. It is in this layer that any potential Aboriginal archaeology would be located, presenting a unique challenge for its appropriate and adequate identification and evaluation. Coode Island was created through the excavation of the Coode Canal in 1886 between Victoria Dock and the Stony Creek Backwash. The canal also cut off a bend of the Yarra previously known as Humbug Reach (Fishermans Bend), reducing the trip from the bay to the Melbourne docks by about 3 kilometres. The old course of the Yarra remained as a shallow channel for many decades, creating an area of about 100 hectares surrounded by water. Coode Island was effectively isolated from major human impact from its creation the 1880s until the 1950s, and as such, it became a sanctuary for wildlife.

The original vegetation south of the river was described in early survey plans as being dominated by tea-tree scrub, salt marsh, swamp and sandy waste with a small stand of trees, possibly swamp paperbark, which was destroyed when the canal cut was excavated. The swamps harboured a variety of species of plant, animal and insect life. A new species of mosquito, *Culex labeculosus*, and a scale insect, *Pulvinaria salicornae*, were described in the early-19th century, along with some more common scale insects. Of native plants, black wattle, *Acacia mearnsii*, and coast wattle, *Acacia longifolia,* climbing lignum, *Muelenbeckia adpressa,* New Holland Daisy, *Vittadinia australis*, sea blight, *Myoporum viscosum*, smooth sea-heath, *Frankenia pauciflora*, and angular, rounded and small pigface, *Mesembryanthemum australe, M. aequilaterale* and *M. tegens*, were found by Tovey in 1908 and 1909, along with a vast array of exotic plants probably introduced from ship ballast which had been dumped on the river banks.[33] The ballast dumps also introduced many exotic species of rock into the area, and it was noted as a good site for obtaining geological specimens which, '. . . would constitute handsome educational cabinet specimens of types of rock difficult to procure otherwise except at

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[31] Barrett, Bernard, *The Civic Frontier: The Origin of Local Communities and Local Government in Victoria*, Melbourne University Press, Melbourne, 1979.

[32] Victorian Government Gazette, No.44, 24 April 1885, p.1127 & No.98, 16 October 1885, p.2875.

[33] J.R. Tovey, 'Some notes on Coode Island and its Flora' *Victorian Naturalist, No.XXVIII,* July 1911, p.57-61.

some expense. . .'.[34] These included some examples of gneiss banded with crystalized red garnets, granite porphyries, schist, limestone crowded with fossils, varied sandstones and quartzite.

One of the few residents of Coode Island, Bill Lemarquand, who was born on the island in 1901 and lived there until the 1940s, recalls that:

> The sky was ablaze with skylarks . . . every few yards there were nests on the ground. Springtime was full of their music. Sometimes there were dolphins in the river. The most beautiful thing I have ever seen was the pigface growing on the island in spring. It was a swamp in the middle before they drained it. I will never forget that pigface.[35]

As a boy, Bill caught bream, mullet and eels in the rivers as well as rabbits, and he recalls that wild ducks were abundant.

Fishermans Bend was once a significant breeding and feeding ground for thousands of wader and other birds. Local ornithologists such as Gerygone (Jack Jones), Margaret McKenzie, Lawrence O'Conner and Ralph Kenyon recognised the area's importance, as did the many field naturalists and bird watchers who made regular club excursions to both Coode Island and Fishermans Bend. The area was of sufficient note for Peter Scott, the head of Severn Wildlife Trust, to visit it during a trip to Australia.

In 1898, the mouth of the Yarra was noted for its diverse and rare flora. Thirty species were recorded by one observer, many of which were noted as appearing only in the one spot, or not found to the east of Melbourne.[36] These particular species included *Frankenia laevis, Alternanthera triandra, Sagina apetala, Atriplex Muelleri, Enchylaena tomentosa, Salicornia arbuscula, Muehlenbeckia Cunninghamii, Eutaxia empetrifolia, Tillaea purpurata, Hydrocolyte hirta, H. tripartita, H. callicarpa, Pimelea clauca, Calotis scapigera, Angianthus Preissianus, Cotula filifolia, Lobelia platycalyx, Sebaea albidiflora, Samolus remens, Convolvulus sepium, Wilsonia humilis, W. rotundifolia, Myoporum deserti, M. humile* and *Azolla ficuloides.*

Field naturalist excursions to Fishermans Bend continued well into the 1940s. In 1949, the Bird Observers Club recorded double-banded dotterels, little stints, red-capped dotterels, and a lone hooded dotterel on the beachfront. Meanwhile, on the sand bar were a few crested terns and one fairy tern. On the flats, there was evidence of nesting birds, including white-fronted chats, red-capped dotterels, banded plovers, little grassbirds and black-fronted dotterels. Also noted were hardhead ducks, black ducks, little grebes, eastern swamp hens, dusky moorhens, black swans and marsh crakes. Altogether, this particular outing recorded 35 native and seven introduced species. It is interesting to note that the various swamps, ponds and other landscape features, formed largely by intermittent filling and sand quarrying, were all known by different names, such as Bittern Pond, the Pit, Butte Pond, Crake Pond and the Old Butts.[37]

Up until at least the 1960s, there were up to 40 species of Australian birds breeding at the Fishermans Bend wastelands, while many more species found food, shelter or rest there either as

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[34] "Excursion to Coode Island", *Victorian Naturalist*, No.XXIX, May 1912, p.5-6.

[35] John Lahey, 'When Coode Island was a paradise for birds', *The Age,* 15 March 1994, p.7.

[36] Alex Morrison, "Some Plants found growing at Mouth of River Yarra and at Werribee', *The Victorian Naturalist,* Vol. 15, 1999, p.87.

[37] "Fishermen's Bend Outing", Bird Observers Club Monthly Notes, September 1949; Jack Jones, 'The Birds of Fishermans Bend', Bird Observers Club Monthly Notes, February 1938; 'Fishermen's Bend Outing', Bird Observers Club Monthly Notes, May 1946; 'Trip to Fishermen's Bend' Bird Observers Club Monthly Notes, October 1948.

part of a wider range or during stopovers on continental migrations. *Footscray's First Hundred Years* provides lists of breeding species as well as frequent and rare visitors, making particular mention of the nearly extinct Australian bustard and several other rare birds. The brightly-coloured blue-winged shoveler was also often seen in spring on the swamps and, occasionally, on the Maribyrnong River.[38]

The variety and abundance of wildlife at Fishermans Bend came to the notice of the Government when, in 1909, the Governor in Council authorised the proclamation of the ground of the Victorian Golf Club at Fishermans Bend as a sanctuary for animals and birds. The area comprised about 50 hectares near the south bank of the Yarra, and was leased by the club from the Crown. The golf club occupied the area east of Salmon Street and was in use from at least 1908 to after 1928.[39] The club originally intended to plant the area with trees as ornament as well as shelter for native birds, however this scheme faded when the land reverted to Government for other uses, eventually becoming part of the aircraft factory and runways.[40]

Large parts of the western portion of Fishermans Bend continued to be subject to sand mining into the mid-20th century, initially to raise the runways at the Commonwealth Aircraft Corporation airfield (Figure 13). Quarrying was also later undertaken to obtain fill for other area works, as well as to extract materials such as concrete or mortar for use elsewhere, by the Melbourne Washed Sands Co. in the 1940s and 1950s.[41]

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[38] '15,000 water fowl were shot for the table', *Footscray's First Hundred Years.* p.93.

[39] 'GOLF'. *Weekly Times*, Melbourne, Victoria, 23 May 1908, p.20. Accessed online 13 September 2016, from http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article224464162.

[40] "A Suburban Sanctuary", *EMU*, Vol. IX, July 1909, p.21.

[41] Daily Commercial News And Shipping List, Sydney, NSW, 26 June 1931.

**Figure 13   Aerial view of Fishermans Bend, Victoria, c.1940 (State Library of Victoria Pictures Collection, H96 163/11)**

## 4.9   Industrial development

Theme: 5.5 Building a manufacturing industry

The proximity to the Yarra and swampy wastelands of Fishermans Bend and Sandridge initially attracted activities and industries that were shunned from the commercial and residential parts of Melbourne. Low-lying areas on the south bank of the Yarra saw the development of brickworks, ships chandlers, dry docks and repairers, stevedores and Melbourne's first iron foundries and engineering works. Related industries gradually spread westward. Further downstream, boiling down works, fellmongeries, abattoirs and other noxious trades crowded along the riverbank and discharged their wastes into the river.

Access to the river for both freshwater (above The Falls) and navigation for shipping (below The Falls) was critical to the early industries, particularly those relying on the shipping trade, such as Millers Rope Works and ship builders, and the large water users, such as Ramsden's Paper Mill, which commenced manufacture in a substantial masonry industrial complex in 1868.[42]

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[42] 'Mr. Ramsden's Paper-Mill'. *The Argus*, Melbourne, Victoria, 29 April 1868, p.5. Accessed online 20 February 2017, from http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article5814826.
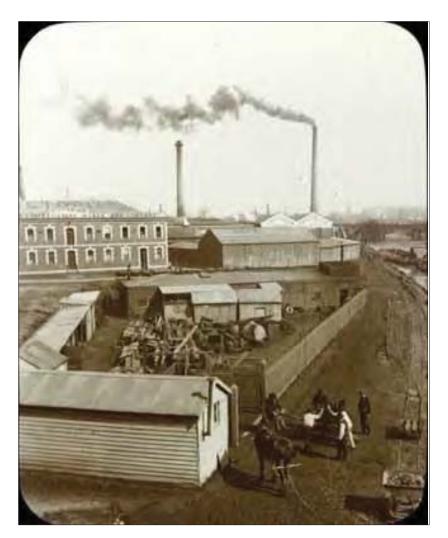
**Figure 14    View west along Yarra bank, showing Ramsden's Paper Mill, c.1885-1920 (State Library of Victoria)**

A royal commission was held in 1872 to consider the best use of low-lying lands near Melbourne on both banks of the Yarra for public and commercial purposes.[43] In the later 1870s this resulted in moves to clean up the river and move most of the worst noxious industries away from the city, generally to Footscray and Yarraville. As a result, most of this area was cleared of industry.[44]

A pipe factory, asphalt plant and timber yard with drying sheds were located in Brady Street, in the 1890s. Meanwhile, the Port Melbourne Abattoir was built in Lorimer Street, and a boiling down works was established in Boundary Street.

The abattoir was a subject of concern from its establishment in about 1861. Odours spread to the Melbourne and Emerald Hill areas and its discharges polluted the river which, being tidal, washed the discharge up onto the door of the city with each tide. The abattoir was completely rebuilt in 1899, following the same plans as the Melbourne City Council abattoirs in Flemington.[45] It continued to

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[43] Low Lands Commission Melbourne, Parliamentary paper, Victorian Parliament, No. 62. John Ferres, Government Printer, *The Argus*, 22 Feb 1873, p. 6. Accessed online 20 February 2017, from http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article5848716.
[44] Cannon, M. Old Melbourne Town before the Gold Rush, 1991.
[45] Record, Emerald Hill, Victoria, 17 June 1899.

operate into the 1960s, but was closed around 1975 and leased out for less disagreeable uses before being demolished to make way for warehouses and showrooms around 1990.

Boiling down works provided tallow and glycerine to the soap and candle works, the largest of which was Kitchen & Sons, established in 1856 just outside the Melbourne City Council area in Ingles Street. It manufactured candles, washing blue, soap, soda crystals, glycerine and baking powder.[46]



**Figure 15    View east from near Port Melbourne Football Ground showing Kitchen & Sons soapworks and the warehousing and timber yards beyond**
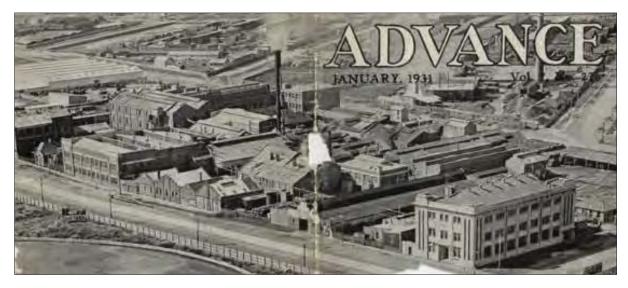


**Figure 16    Kitchen & Sons factory, from company brochure**

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[46] Candles, Soap, Apples, Milk, Cream, Butter, Butterine, Marjarine and Margarine from The House of Kitchen. Reg A. Smith, April 1978. Accessed online, from http://member.melbpc.org.au/~tonkit/kitchen/docs/Candles.pdf.

Felton Grimwade & Co. was established in Melbourne in about 1867, soon after moving from Russell Street to Flinders Lane where its importing business flourished. The firm operated as wholesale druggists but developed into a large manufacturing enterprise with products including acids, salt, glass bottles, fertilisers and eucalyptus oil. In 1870 they were operating a chemical works at Port Melbourne. The Port Melbourne Council, however, opposed the manufacture of sulphuric acid at the plant as early as 1872. Nevertheless, the company manufactured sulphuric acid and other mineral acids such as bisulphide of iron from the outset. By 1894 the Port Melbourne building was the principal manufactory of Felton Grimwade and Co.'s diverse chemical business.



**Figure 17    Felton Grimwade chemical and bisulphide works, Port Melbourne, Australasian Sketcher, 12 March 1884 (State Library of Victoria, A/S12/03/84/43)**

Alfred Felton is remembered for his generous bequest to the National Gallery of Victoria, which continues to fund the purchase of artworks for the State Collection.

Ballarat Brewing Company, run by Coghlan & Tulloch's, had three premises in Ballarat. In order to better establish themselves in the Melbourne market, they erected a modest building in Cecil Street, South Melbourne (now partly beneath the West Gate Freeway) in about 1910 for storage or distribution of bottled beer. Like many of the regional breweries, the company was subject to merger and takeover. In 1953, it acquired the Volum Brewery in Geelong and, five years later, was itself taken over by Carlton & United Breweries, although public pressure at the time ensured that the 'Ballarat Bertie' logo was retained on the new beer bottles produced by CUB. After the takeover, the company's former building in Cecil Street was used by CUB for storage until at least the mid-1970s.[47]
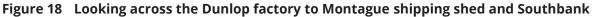
The 1930s saw dramatic expansion of industry in the Fishermans Bend area, partly as a result of government stimulus programs as well as due to the war effort. Port Melbourne prospered as an industrial location long into the mid-20th century.

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[47] City of Port Phillip Heritage Review, citation No.2315.

**Figure 18   Looking across the Dunlop factory to Montague shipping shed and Southbank**

Two Southbank engineering firms, Austral Otis and Johns & Waygood, pioneered the development of the passenger and goods lift in Melbourne, initially using hydraulic power from the Yan Yean water supply. In doing this, they contributed to the engineering which permitted the construction of multi-storey office buildings. Austral Otis established their head offices and engineering works at the corner of Kavanagh and Hanna streets in 1887, while Johns & Waygood were located at Cecil Street in 1909, where they erected extensive workshops and a new plant for the manufacture of structural steel.[48] Austral Otis were also responsible for the first escalator installed in the Manchester Unity building in 1932. Johns & Waygood erected further works on the corner of Gladstone and Kerr streets for the manufacture of mortar bomb cases in 1938 and 1939 as a part of the war effort.[49]

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[48] Pratt, A., The National Handbook of Australia's Industries, The Specialty Press Pty Ltd., 1934, p.257-58.
[49] National Trust citation, Johns & Waygood, October 1989.

**Figure 19   Austral Otis factory in 1980s (National Trust)**



**Figure 20   Beginnings of Johns & Waygood works (State Library of Victoria)**

Queens Bridge Street was originally called Moray Street North and, along with City Road, provided the main access into South and Port Melbourne from the city when the only bridges available for foot and wheel traffic were the Princes and Falls bridges. As a result, the roads became important commercial thoroughfares with numerous warehouses and factories. Robur Tea had two separate warehouse buildings, one on Clarendon Street and the other on Queens Bridge Street.

Another beverage was next door at the Castlemaine Brewery, where its two two-storey bottling stores and central five-storey brew tower were constructed in 1888 at 115-133 Queens Bridge Street.

In the 1890s, a slump in industrial activity delayed development in the area, but it had revived by the turn of the century. City Road gained a number of warehouses including Crown Chemical and Anderson's printing works and wholesale furriers Kosky Brothers. Next to Kosky, Maurice Artaud built a three-storey brick warehouse and factory in 1911 for his import and hat manufacturing trade. Unfortunately, there were multiple instances of fires breaking out, causing damage to many of these buildings in two separate instances which then required extensive rebuilding. The presence of a firetrap in the proximity of a varnish factory was also cited as the reason for rebuilding the Queens Bridge Hotel.

Much of City Road was devoted to supplying the building industry during Melbourne's boom periods. J Wright & Son's Carron Timber Yards were located on the corner of Sturt Street and City Road near Princes Bridge, with timber yards covering several blocks. James Wright was also responsible for erecting many buildings around Melbourne as well as in the Southbank area, and so had a very substantial physical impact on the character and streetscapes of Melbourne.

Wright's rival was John Sharp & Sons, who was based a little further down City Road in 1912, but had operated on the site from at least the 1890s.
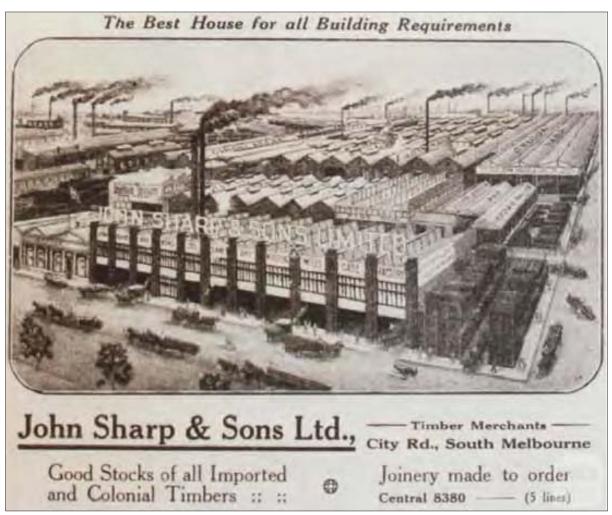


**Figure 21   John Sharp & Sons timber merchants, City Road (Victorian Places website)**

John Danks & Son also operated from City Road supplying plumbing fixtures from their brass foundry for improved bathrooms, kitchens and laundries being installed in Melbourne houses. They expanded rapidly and in 1900 moved from their City Road site to the corner of Hanna Street and Bank Street in South Melbourne.[50]

The development of refrigeration at the end of the 19th century facilitated a number of new industrial enterprises. Among them was Sennitt's Ice Cream, started by John Paul Sennitt who had previously been an engineer for the Victorian Cold Accumulator Co. Pty Ltd in La Trobe Street. In 1894, the business was transferred to 'a centrally-situated, prominent and commodious premises' on the south bank, between Princes and Queens bridges.[51]

## 4.10 Port development

Themes: 5.2 Melbourne as a trading port, 6.6  Street-making, drainage and river works

As Melbourne was founded by sea and, for much of its history, has depended on shipping for its prosperity and livelihood, port and harbour facilities have been paramount. The first options for loading and discharging larger ships were either to haul them upriver by rope to the 'pool' at the bottom of Market Street, or to anchor them off Sandridge and alight, then walking the 2¼ miles into town. The Yarra River was narrow, shallow, winding and littered with snags, meaning that it could take days to get ships up to the settlement. While the beach landing at Sandridge was only about two miles (3.2 kilometres) away, by water it was more than six kilometres of 'warping' to the open water of the bay – using the capstan to haul the ship by ropes tied to trees along the bank.

Fishermans Bend originally referred to that part of the former course of the Yarra River where it made an almost 180-degree turn, located north of where Swanston Dock is now, close to Footscray Road. The spelling has varied between 'Fisherman's' and 'Fishermen's' Bend, either with or without an apostrophe. Some maps, such as Coode's from the 1870s, have 'Fishermans', though according to Allan Meiers, the term 'Fishermens' Bend with an 'e' was in popular usage in the 1920s for all the area west of Graham Street including Garden City, while 'The Bend' referred to the beach west of the Sandridge pier to the river mouth.[52] The name was officially gazetted as Fishermans Bend in 1998.

Numerous plans for improvements to the river situation were proposed, including several for a new ship canal going directly from Hobsons Bay across the Sandridge flats to Melbourne. Hoddle himself proposed a pier, railway, water supply pipeline, road and settlement at Sandridge in 1839, pre-empting the eventual solution by 15 years.[53]

The option for a ship canal directly between the settlement on the Yarra River and the bay was first proposed in the 1850s and revived several times. A number of reviews, royal commissions and investigations were held into the issue. In January 1851, even before the announcement of gold discoveries changed the whole basis of trade and shipping in Port Phillip, *The Argus* reported that a '...public meeting, according to the requisition, of such of the inhabitants as are favourable to the

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[50] Priestley, S., *South Melbourne A History*, Melbourne University Press, 1995, p.258.

[51] Andrew J. Ray, 'Sennitt, John Paul (1851–1922)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, National Centre of Biography, Australian National University. Accessed online 20 February 2017, from http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/sennitt-john-paul-13190/text23879.

[52] Allan Meiers Fisher Folk of Fishermans Bend, Port Melbourne Historical and Preservation Society, October 2006.

[53] Robert Hoddle, *Pioneer Surveyor 1794-1881*, Bernes Hoddle Colville Research Publications, Melbourne, 2004, p.177.

formation of a Company for the purpose of constructing a SHIP CANAL."[54] This appears to have been well-attended and was answered shortly afterwards with the publication of a scheme employing a canal straight to the Southbank area along with a large wet dock, neither of which were connected to the river.



**Figure 22    Plan of the City of Melbourne and Port Phillip Bay showing the proposed ship canal and docks, Melbourne, 1853[55]**

[54] Proposed Ship Canal. 7 January 1851. *The Argus*, p.2. Accessed online 10 May 2013, from http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article4775479.
[55] Collins & Co., 1853, State Library of Victoria map collection. Accessed online, from http://handle.slv.vic.gov.au/10381/117444.

Another complex and sophisticated design for a ship canal or 'tidal harbour' and docks was proposed along with an extension of the city westward. This was presented to the Royal Commission by John Millar in December, 1860.[56]



**Figure 23   Plan for proposed ship canal, 1860, John Millar**

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[56] Design for ship canal or 'tidal harbour' and docks for the Port of Melbourne: with proposed extension of the city west-ward / laid before the Royal Commission by the author, John Millar, lithographed at the Office of Lands and Survey, Melbourne, 21 December 1860, State Library of Victoria.

The Melbourne Ship Canal and Dock Company was formed in 1864 by a group of prominent Melbourne businessmen with a commercial scheme to construct a dock while cutting a canal directly into Hobsons Bay. The idea was that it would have the additional benefit of relieving flooding problems in the low-lying areas of West and South Melbourne.[57]

Since Melbourne's beginning, The Melbourne Ship-Canal & Dock Company was formed in 1864, by a group of prominent Melbourne businessmen, with a commercial scheme to construct a dock with a canal to be cut directly to Hobsons Bay. It was intended that it would have the added benefit of relieving the problem of flooding in the low lying areas of West and South Melbourne.[58]

Improvements to wharves and jetties have been continuous. At the start, major development took place at the natural 'pool', a wide, deep section of the river situated at the bottom of Market Street near the customs house on Flinders Street. This became known as 'Queens Wharf', while new wharves built across the river became known as 'South Wharf'. Both were gradually extended downstream. By the 1860s there was continuous wharfage along both sides of the Yarra, from Queens Bridge (then called Falls Bridge) to near Spencer Street and, by the 1880s and 1890s, continuing further to the gasworks on the north bank with the construction of the 'Australia Wharf'.[59]

Melbourne City Council initially controlled the waterfront, but the ongoing need for improvements resulted in the formation of the Melbourne Harbour Trust in 1877. One of its first acts was to commission John Coode, an eminent British harbour engineer, to prepare a plan for improvements to Melbourne's port and navigable rivers in 1878. His plan included widening and straightening the river entrance, excavating the Victoria Dock on the swamps immediately west of the city and cutting a new canal to remove the long, difficult passage around Fishermans Bend, from Humbug Reach to near Yarraville. This new canal would commence just west of where the Bolte Bridge crosses the river today.

As part of the Coode Scheme a turning basin (or 'swinging basin', to turn ships around) was proposed on the south bank of the river just above the gasworks, to enable river ships to be swung around while also providing additional wharf space. An upper swinging basin had previously been created at The Pool by dredging and widening the river, and another swinging basin had been formed at the mouth of Victoria Dock, again, by widening the river.

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[57] 'The Melbourne Ship Canal and Dock Company and the Floods of the Yarra'. 15 August, 1864. *The Argus*, p.6. Accessed 10 May 2013, from http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article5751552.

[59] Buckrich, Judith Raphael, *The Long and Perilous Journey: A History of the Port of Melbourne*, Melbourne Books, Melbourne, 2002; Hoare, Benjamin, Jubilee, *A History of the Melbourne Harbour Trust: Compiled from the Original Records of the Trust and From the Victorian Hansard*, Peacock Brothers, Melbourne, 1927.

**Figure 24**   **Plan of ship canal and site for docks, Robert Adams, Melbourne. Photo-lithographed by J.W. Osborne at the Department of Lands and Survey, 1860**



**Figure 25**   **Proposed ship canal and docks, Port of Melbourne, Victoria. Department of Lands and Survey, Melbourne. Photo-lithographed at the Department of Lands and Survey by J. Noone, 1875**

The canal was opened in 1887[60], cutting off the former Fishermans Bend and in doing so, shortening the route to the bay. By forming a regular curve and widening and deepening the channel, shipping of the largest tonnage at the time could reach the main port immediately west of the city and railway terminal. Other development continued along the bay piers, which still dealt with over 30,000 tonnes in 1899 alone. Deeper draft ships were accommodated at a rebuilt station pier (which replaced the railway pier) in 1913, augmented a few years later by the new Princess Pier in 1922. [61]

The south bank of the Yarra was always bustling with maritime activity and seamen's lore. The pubs and Seamen's Mission provided for the needs of the men, while several slipways and graving docks along the riverbank served the needs of the ships. The docks were used primarily for repairs and maintenance, although some small vessels were also constructed along here. When Hughes & Sinnott's Dock excavated a dock in 1868 they began a long-running dispute between the users of the river and the Harbour Trust, which had resumed various leases for river-widening from the 1870s. This culminated in a battle between the dock owners and the Harbour Trust.[62]

Wright & Orr Co. built a new dry dock in 1878 which was further extended in 1907. It measured 420 feet in length (128 metres). It was abandoned after World War II as it had become inadequate for the larger modern ships of the time. Duke Dock was next to it downstream, built first in 1875, extended in 1880 and then rebuilt from 1901 to 1904, becoming the largest dry dock in Victoria after an extension in 1935 added 527 feet (160 metres) to its length. The tight site produced a remarkable image of bowsprits of large ships hanging over Normanby Road. The dock had a brief period of intense activity during World War II, but declined after the war ended, ultimately closing in 1975 and handed over to the National Trust. In 1978, the Trust opened its partly-restored museum ship, Polly Woodside, to the public, fittingly at rest in the Duke and Orr Dock.

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[60] 'The Fisherman's Bend Canal'. *The Age*, 28 July 1887, p.5. Accessed online 13 September 2016, from http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article190641542.
[61] Ruhen, Olaf, p.180.
[62] Ruhen, Olaf, *Port of Melbourne, 1835-1976*, Cassell Australia, Sydney, 1976.

**Figure 26    Wright's dock with Duke & Orr dock behind, 1948 (State Library of Victoria, H2008.39)**



**Figure 27    Opening of the Polly Woodside Melbourne Maritime Museum by the Right Honourable Dick Hamer, Premier of Victoria**

**Figure 28    Coode plan for Melbourne's docks, State Library of Victoria. Note 'Fishermans Bend' in top left**

In the early 1900s, further improvements were carried out to the wharves along the upper parts of the navigable section of the Yarra River, including widening the swinging basin downstream of Johnston Street which had, by this time, become known as the Interstate Swinging Basin due to shipping using the river wharves. Improvements were necessary because the former Turning Basin at The Pool below Queens Bridge and the river wharves would both be cut off from shipping by the construction of the proposed Spencer Street Bridge.

The new Swinging Basin involved excavation of the low swampland on the south side of the river, and creation of a large timber-piled extension to the existing south wharf. In the 1920s and 1930s, further widening of the river was carried out downstream of the swinging basin while even more new wharves constructed. As a result, the existing industries, storage yards and other port-related activities were pushed further south as timber storage, ballast yards and other maritime warehousing grew more and more concentrated in the triangle between Lorimer Street, the Port Melbourne railway and Ingles Street.

**Figure 29  View across the Australia Wharf showing scattered huts on the south bank, Lewis, 1994:21, cited in Duncan**



**Figure 30  The Yarra River and Port of Melbourne show their widening operations downstream of the swinging basin between 1930 and 1948[63]**
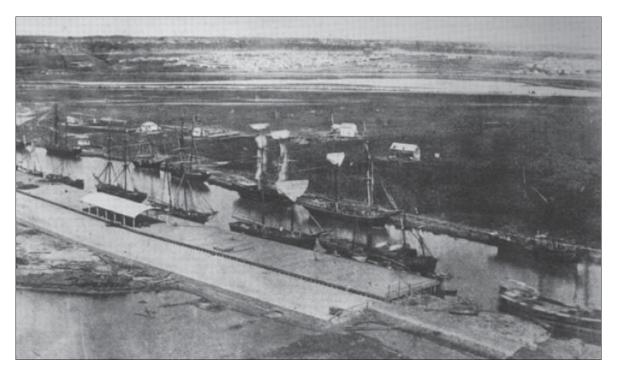
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[63] State Library of Victoria, H91.160/524. Accessed online, from http://www.slv.vic.gov.au/airspyglass/0/0/0/im/ai000525.jpg

**Figure 31** **Spencer Street Bridge c.1928 shortly after its completion, showing the densely-developed industrial area, State Library of Victoria H2001.308/3064**

South Wharf was gradually extended along the river, both as dredging widened the channel and as construction of Lorimer Street improved river access. By 1899, South Wharf was constructed down to the commencement of the Coode Canal, at a point opposite the Victoria Dock entrance. A small wet dock had been excavated all the way back to Lorimer Street, roughly where the Bolte Bridge now crosses the riverbank. By 1942, the wharves had reached Salmon Street, with the Coode Canal doubled in width up to this point.[64]

Wharfage opposite GMH was considered to be an integral part of the factory operation, as considerable quantities of components and raw materials would be transported to the plant from overseas, or from the BHP steel mills in New South Wales and South Australia. Wharf sheds numbers 31 and 32 were constructed by 1955, providing general cargo storage for the building materials industries.
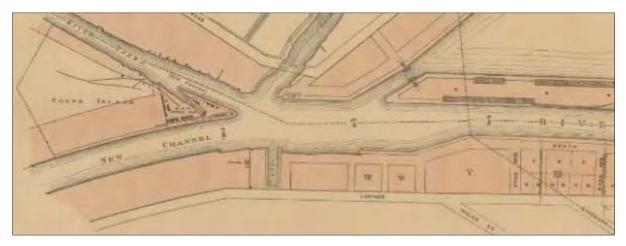


**Figure 32** **South Wharf and its surrounds in 1899[65]**

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[64] Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works & McGowan, G. R. 'Map of Melbourne & Suburbs'. Melbourne Board of Works, Melbourne, 1942.
[65] Melbourne Harbour Trust Plan of River Yarra and Victoria Dock: showing wharves, berths and sheds from Queen's Bridge to 2 Miles. Melbourne Harbour Trust, Melbourne, 1899.

## 4.11 Bridges, roads and rail

Themes: 6.6 Street-making, drainage and river works, 6.7 Transport

Liardet's Hotel and the jetty at Sandridge were the starting points of the first track across the sandy flats from the beach to the city of Melbourne. It remained a sandy track for the first decade or so, with little impetus for funding available to undertake improvements. However, in 1853, construction of the road to Sandridge was undertaken by the Central Roads Board, which used extensive sections of 'timber viaduct' (probably a corduroy road where logs are laid side by side and chained together) to cross swampland.[66] The Sandridge Road was formally proclaimed as a main road in 1854,[67] while a toll bar was in place for much of the 1850s to raise revenue for route improvement and maintenance. At the time, the road was considered to be one of the best in the colony.[68]

Patrick Hanna operated a ferry service between King Street, Melbourne, and the south bank around 1862, and Hanna Street, later to become part of Kings Way, was named after him.

Travellers relied on punts or wading across The Falls prior to the privately-financed Balbirnie's Bridge was built by the Melbourne Bridge Company over the Yarra River in 1845. A new, more permanent bridge with a dramatic single masonry arch was designed by Lennox, built in 1850, and opened in time for the separation of the colony of Victoria from New South Wales.[69]

St Kilda Road gradually developed into Melbourne's grand boulevard, with works to form and drain the carriageways undertaken in the 1850s and avenues of decorative trees planted in the 1860s. The Victoria Barracks and the Church of England Grammar School commenced construction in 1856, and subsequent development and government land releases were controlled by requiring buildings of public and civic importance.

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[66] VGG, 26, 4 May 1853, p.622.
[67] VGG 82, Tuesday, September 05th 1854 p.1988
[68] THE SANDRIDGE ROAD. (1859, June 25). The Argus (Melbourne, Vic.: 1848 - 1957), p. 5. Retrieved May 14, 2013, from http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article5683372
[69] Gary Vines, *Historic Metal Road Bridges in Victoria*, VicRoads and National Trust.

**Figure 33   'Sandridge Road as it will be', 1860, R. Shepherd[70]**

In 1839, only a few years after the first European settlement of Melbourne, consideration was already being given to the construction of a railway to link the main centre of habitation with the bay, where shipping arrived. Difficulties navigating the shallow and tortuous lower Yarra saw many ships anchor in Port Phillip Bay and then transfer their cargo – supplies and immigrants – by lighters, small, shallow draft boats, up the river or across the swamps of Sandridge. In the 1839 Government Survey, Robert Hoddle made provision for a railway linking Melbourne and Hobsons Bay. Nothing came of this due to a lack of both capital and motivation, but on 7 September 1851 a public meeting called for a railway linking Melbourne to Sandridge (Port Melbourne). The Government approved the establishment of the Melbourne and Hobsons Bay Railway Company on 20 January 1853, soon followed by the Geelong and Melbourne Railway Company and the Melbourne, Mount Alexander and Murray River Railway Company.[71]

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[70] Lithographed Thomas Ham, Ladd & Carr printers, State Library Victoria collection H92.194/2 http://handle.slv.vic.gov.au/10381/153976

[71] National Trust of Australia (Victoria)  Classification Report FN B4794 St Kilda Railway Road Over Rail Bridges

**Figure 34   Plan of Melbourne c.1852 showing St Kilda, Sandridge and Short Road (State Library of Victoria).**

Construction of the first rail line, from near Flinders Street to a wharf on Hobsons Bay, was rapid. On 12 September 1854 the Melbourne and Hobsons Bay Railway was opened using a locally-constructed locomotive. This was possibly the first locomotive-hauled train in the Southern Hemisphere. The line ran for about 2¼ miles (3.6 kilometres) between the Sandridge Pier and Flinders Street. The only major structure on the line was a sharply-skewed timber trestle bridge crossing the Yarra River. When railway was sufficiently successful over the next twelve months, the company, having returned an 8% dividend to its shareholders, decided to construct a new branch to St Kilda.

The Victorian Government Railway Department was established on 1 April 1856 as part of the Board of Land and Works. George Christian Darbyshire was appointed as Engineer in Chief. Soon after his appointment, the Government took over the struggling Murray River Railway Company. However, the Hobson's Bay railway line was still privately operated. Over the next few years, the Melbourne & Hobsons Bay Railway Company upgraded both its lines, which included the duplication of tracks and the opening of new stations. On the St Kilda branch, stations were opened at Emerald Hill (now South Melbourne) in September 1858, and at Butts (now Albert Park) in November 1860.[72] The line was further extended to Brighton by the St Kilda and Brighton Railway Co. in 1859, joining the St Kilda line by a loop from St Kilda to Windsor, and extended even further to Brighton Beach by 1861. However, a more direct route from Windsor to the city was built 11 months later and the loop line was dismantled in 1867. In 1878 the private railway company operating the line was taken over by the Victorian Railways. William Elsdon, a civil engineer, was appointed Chief Engineer of the Melbourne &

[72] City of Port Phillip Heritage Review, Railway cutting and road bridges, Heritage Alliance.

Hobsons Bay Railway during the construction phase from 1854-1878, and then made Chief Engineer of the Victorian Railways until 1882.[73]

Much later on, a further railway line through Fishermans Bend was constructed in 1986 to connect the Spencer Street rail yards to Webb Dock. However, the tight curves, especially at the Yarra River bridge, made the line difficult to use and it was closed in the late 1990s.

In 1854, a telegraph line from Melbourne to Sandridge was constructed along Sandridge Road and the railway line. This was the first telegraph line in Australia and provided shipping intelligence and synchronised signalling to set ships' chronometers via a time ball at Williamstown, with the observatory near the Royal Botanic Gardens.[74]

Williamstown Road and Ingles Street were practically the only other roads of any substance in the area north of the Sandridge railway line and west of Emerald Hill until quite late into the 19th century. Both roads were still considered impassable in the 1880s, in part due to carts cutting up the surface of the sandy ground. [75]

Williamstown Road was known as the Short Road as its use considerably shortened the journey from the city to Williamstown in combination with a ferry at Greenwich, near the end of North Road Williamstown. The alternative route ran around the north of Batman's Swamp, crossing the Maribyrnong at Footscray via Dynon Road to Whitehall Street and Douglas Parade. Short Road ran from Queens Bridge (previously the Falls Bridge) along Queens Bridge Road (formerly Moray Street North), City Road and Williamstown Road to the ferry, crossing the river near the old Newport Power Station and onto Williamstown via Douglas Parade.

Substantial work was undertaken on Short Road in the 1870s, with £400 contributed by Williamstown, Sandridge and Emerald Hill councils, and £600 contributed by the Victorian Government. The road was proclaimed a main road on 28 March 1872.[76]

A ferry was briefly operated in 1857-1859 from the temporary northern terminus of the Geelong railway line at Greenwich,[77] providing a service along the Yarra River to Melbourne. A ferry to Williamstown called the 'Gem' also began operating before 1870, but this is likely to have only operated between North Wharf and one of the Williamstown piers.[78]

Williamstown Council launched a new steam ferry service called 'The Link' in 1873, later known as 'Clough's Short Road Ferry'.[79] This ferry operated until 1907, when a new steam ferry was commissioned. In 1931 a third ferry, built by Thompson's engineering and also steam driven, was brought into service. This was a combined vehicle and passenger ferry, and was operated by winching itself along a chain laid across the bed of the river. The cable was occasionally snagged by

[73] Minutes of the Melbourne & Hobsons Bay Railway Co., Public Records Office cited in National Trust of Australia (Victoria)  Classification Report FN B4794 St Kilda Railway Road Over Rail Bridges

[74] VGG 99, Tuesday, October 31st 1854 p. 2419

[75]  'DEPUTATIONS.', The Argus (Melbourne, Vic. : 1848 - 1957), 28 May1885, p. 10, viewed 26 April, 2013, http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article6080703

[76] VGG No 19, Thursday, March 28th 1872

[77] Museum Victoria, Victorian Railways, Geelong & Melbourne Railway Co http://museumvictoria.com.au/railways/theme.aspx?lvl=3&IRN=449&gall=454

[78] TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 6, 1870. *The Argus*, 6 September 1870,, p.4. Accessed online 14 May 2013, from http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article5830963.

[79] Williamstown Borough Council, 24 July 1869, *Williamstown Chronicle*, p.5. Accessed online 14 May 2013, from http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article68579312.

ships using the river channel and whenever a ship passed the ferry would have to stop to slacken the cable, allowing it to drop to the bottom of the river.

When the first Greenwich ferry began operating in 1873, fees were one pence for a foot passenger, six pence for a vehicle with one horse or animal, nine pence with two horses or animals, one shilling with three animals, and vehicles with four wheels paid two shillings.

The Short Road appears to have regularly been subject to neglect and, as a result, there was extensive lobbying by business and councils for improvements. However, in 1888, a conference of relevant authorities seems to have brought about few results.[80] A proposal for a tramway along the route was approved by the government, but the Austral-Anglo Tramway Company did not manage to either raise the capital or undertake any works towards realising the project. Willimstown Council offered to contribute to the project, and the penal department even offered convict labour to undertake works.[81] In 1896 a committee with representatives from the Harbour Trust and Williamstown and Port Melbourne Councils met on several occasions to address the condition and repair of the road.[82] Substantial repairs were carried out by the Country Roads Board in 1926.[83] When the West Gate Bridge opened on 15 November 1978, the ferry ceased operating.[84]



**Figure 35   Wiliamstown ferry, Frank and Wendy Rouse[85]**

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[80] 'The proposed Short Road to Williamstown – Conference of Municipal Representatives', *The Age*, 22 November 1888, p.4.

[81] 'A Short Road to Williamstown', *The Age*, 22 November 1888, p.5.

[82] The Williamstown Short Road, 11 September 1896, *The Argus*, p.6. Accessed online 6 May 2013, from http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article9168164.

[83] Williamstown Short Road, 30 January 1926, *The Argus*, p.33. Accessed online 6 May 2013, from http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article3731864.

[84] Heritage Inventory H7822-0385: Williamstown Steam Ferry Landing. Accessed online, from http://vhd.heritage.vic.gov.au/places/result_detail/13688.

[85] Williamstown Ferry, Frank & Wendy Rouse. Accessed online, from http://historictrucks.blogspot.com.au/2009/12/short-road-ferry-to-williamstown.html.

As the 20th century began, industrial development spread down City Road from the Southbank area and later into Fishermans Bend, resulting in substantial road works with stone pitching the main service roads in 1907, particularly in the Montague area, home to most of South Melbourne's pitched roads in 1924.[86]

The configuration of streets in the Southbank area was heavily influenced by the needs of industry, with roads backing far enough down to wharves to allow loading from dockside sheds, or set further back from the river to accommodate slipways and graving docks. Land allotment also catered to industry needs, with large blocks for the vast timber yards and factories. One particularly unusual shape, however, is the long, narrow allotment created parallel with Queens Bridge Street to accommodate Millers Ropewalk. This is still discernable as part of Freshwater Place and various property boundaries behind modern buildings today.



**Figure 36    Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works plan of Southbank area showing the Millers Ropewalk set behind blocks off Queens Bridge Street**

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[86] Priestly, p.250.

From 1905 to 1911, enamelled steel street signs were installed in much of the suburban areas and some main routes, while tree planting was carried out extensively along the main roadways with oriental planes, poplars, elms, oaks, pines, sugar gums, kurrajongs and pittosporum sourced from the Mount Macedon Government nursery.[87]

Tar macadam, wood-lined channels, asphalt, some timber block paving on tramways and fully-pitched laneways were all used to improve drainage, reduce rutting and limit dust nuisance. The Southbank lanes were created as part of subdivisions during the Victorian era as service access routes to the rear of properties. Crown parcels sold at auction from the 1850s were generally larger blocks that ran from street to street. The laneways were created by private owners subdividing Crown allotments as a means of maximising lot yield. Although the Central Business District laneways were intended as service lanes due to a prohibition of crossovers into main streets, in some cases the inner suburban laneways, including in the Southbank area, also became the main access route to some residential properties. Often these access points became associated with the city's gold rush and 1890s Depression-era slums.[88]

Councils were responsible for constructing and maintaining roads and streets. Bluestone pitchers were cut into standard sizes, usually within the quarries in the northern and western suburbs of Melbourne, and either delivered to site or, in the case of excess supplies, stored in council depots around the municipality. Construction of stone paving, kerbs and channels for streets and lanes began in the 1850s and appears to have been a continuing practice up until the 1930s. The use of concrete for kerb and channel construction began around 1912 in some areas, however it appears that bluestone was used for kerbs and channels many years later than it was in other parts of the municipality. The Annual Report from the South Melbourne City Surveyor to the Public Works Committee for 1912 to 1913 noted that 1,325 lineal feet of bluestone kerbing and 1,770 lineal feet of concrete kerbing had been used in road construction and maintenance during that year. In comparison, the Annual Report for South Melbourne for 1927 to 1928 noted that 318 lineal feet of bluestone and 1,609 lineal feet of concrete kerbing had been used in road construction.[89] Few, if any, laneways were constructed in the Fishermans Bend area or in the northern part of Port Melbourne, as these larger industrial blocks did not require rear service entries. The sites here covered entire blocks or were developed later, once narrow stone paved lanes were seen as an anachronism.

Lorimer Street was the only other substantial road through Fishermans Bend in the 19th century. It owed its origin to the use of excavated spoil from the Coode Canal to build up land along the banks of the new cut. This area then became available for occupation by various port related business, and formed the initial area for new factories in the early 20th century. Salmon Street was constructed as a result of the immediate pre and post war development at both ends for both GMH and Rootes car factories, with a concrete road surface of the type built for military roads at the time.[90]

Spencer Street Bridge was constructed in 1929 in part to improve access to the south wharves and the Fishermans Bend industrial area. The bridge was an innovative design, employing cantilevered and suspended spans and strong enough to carry the tramlines that were then extended down Clarendon Street. Construction was funded jointly by the cities of South Melbourne, Port Melbourne

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[87] Priestly, p.251.

[88] Bate, Weston and Melbourne and State Library of Victoria, 1994. Ess*ential but unplanned: the story of Melbourne's lanes*. City of Melbourne: State Library of Victoria, Melbourne.

[89] City of Port Phillip, 'Heritage kerbs, channels & laneways history, significance & guidelines', no date. Accessed online, from http://www.portphillip.vic.gov.au/Heritage_Kerbs_Channels_and_Laneways.pdf.

[90] Parliament of Victoria, 'Land Bill'. 19 November 1941, Hansard, p.1873.

and Melbourne along with Victorian Railways, the Harbour Trust and Tramway Board, and built by the Victorian Railways Construction Branch.[91]

By the 1950s private car traffic had expanded greatly, and congestion had become a significant problem in Melbourne. Following the 1929 Melbourne Strategy Plan and the Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works (MMBW) Melbourne Metropolitan Planning Scheme in 1954, a major traffic route to the city was considered necessary along Hannah and Roy Street in South Melbourne, along with three new river crossings in the city area. Following preliminary enquiries, King Street was given first priority among these crossings. The project was seen as part of the road strategy for Melbourne, developed by the MMBW as the metropolitan planning authority at the time. Once completed, the bridge would become the responsibility of the MMBW. However, expertise in bridge construction lay more with the Country Roads Board, and was made the responsible authority for supervising construction under the 1957 King Street Bridge Act. The bridge employed new materials and construction techniques involving welded, deck-girder, suspended-span construction with spans up to 160 feet (49 m) long. However, a partial collapse in July 1962 led to a royal commission that identified the builder's unfamiliarity with welding low-alloy steel as the reason for cracked welds.[92]

Other river crossings had to wait until the erection of the Johnston Street (now Charles Grimes) Bridge in 1990, and the Bolte Bridge in 2000. In recent years, substantial public use of Southbank has led to the construction of five separate footbridges across the river: the Southbank Bridge (Evan Walker Bridge), the conversion of the Sandridge rail bridge for foot traffic, the Seafarers Bridge, the Spencer Street Bridge footbridge and the conversion of the Web Dock railway bridge to the pedestrian Webb Bridge.

## West Gate Bridge

By the 1960s the character of Fishermans Bend was emerging. While the Harbour Trust kept the western end locked up and the West Gate Bridge cut a swathe through both South Melbourne and Fishermans Bend, industrial development progressed and took on an air of maturity.

In 1964, plans were announced for a lower Yarra crossing, and work began on the West Gate Bridge in 1968. The surrounding land was used as a construction site with large areas reclaimed from remnants of the former swamps and sand pits. On 15 October 1970 a box girder span at the western side of the bridge collapsed, killing 35 men and injuring 18. The reconstructed bridge was eventually opened on 15 November 1978. The bridge is Victoria's tallest, at 2.58 kilometres long and 102 metres high. By 1979 it was carrying 22,000 vehicles per day, and in recent decades it has been widened and strengthened using innovative carbon fibre post tensioning. *The Age* described the land seen from the bridge in the early days of its opening as:

> *It is scrofulous scenery indeed... dead water, swamp, sick factories, dead wood, haze, gasping barges, wretched refineries, wheezing chimneys, dead grass, institutional putrefaction.*

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[91] National Trust Classification Report, B6799 Spencer Street Bridge.
[92] Darwin, D., George H., Matheison, J., and Wilson C., 1960, 'King Street Bridge Project', *Journal of the Institution of Engineers Australia*, 32:167-182, September.

**Figure 37  West Gate Bridge toll plaza looking east just prior to opening (Museum Victoria)**

A toll was initially charged to cross the bridge, with the toll plaza located near Todd Road. It was later demolished, with service centres built in its place. The last remnant of the tolling and administration facilities was the West Gate Bridge Authority office building which was demolished in 2010.

The West Gate was part of a freeway scheme from at least the 1950s that was intended to provide a bypass of the city. This was ultimately realised when the Southern Link elevated road, which was shown in the 1969 Melbourne Transportation Plan and constructed 1987, was connected by tunnels under Grant Street, the Kings Domain and Yarra River to the South Eastern Freeway between 1996 and 2000.

## 4.12  Utility services

Theme: 6.3 Providing essential services

Electricity supply from the SEC came to the Fishermans Bend area in 1925, both providing some respite from the dangers of dark streets in slum areas and facilitating further industrial development. Previously, the A. U. Alcock Electric Light and Motive Power Company had supplied power into South Melbourne from its Melbourne power station in Coors Lane.[93] As part of the power network, a number of specially designed electricity substations were erected, with the larger examples located

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[93] Gary Vines, July 2007, 'Cross Street Electrical Substation Footscray: Report for City of Maribyrnong', Biosis Research Pty Ltd, p.12. Retrieved 12 September 2012.

close to established industry. South Melbourne and Port Melbourne were connected to the Yallourn power supply in 1926 when the new Substation G was erected in South Melbourne and an interconnector line constructed across the Yarra to the Yarraville Terminal. The transmission towers had to provide clearance for shipping on the river, much of which still included masted sailing ships and so required two steel towers 250 feet (76 metres) high.[94]

Additional electricity substations were constructed, beginning in the 1930s, to provide greater capacity for the burgeoning industries. A large installation on the corner of Salmon and Turner streets was erected specifically to provide power to the new Holden factory. Smaller installations were erected in South Melbourne on Fawkner, Hancock, Sturt and Moray streets to serve the diverse industries in Southbank and South Melbourne. In the 1970s a much larger substation was built in Dodds Street as part of network modernisation.[95]

Further demand, in particular from the vast car factories, saw the establishment of the Fishermans Bend Terminal Station in the late 1960s, near Turner and Graham streets at the SEC depot. Tall transmission towers were erected either side of the Yarra River to carry to 220 kilovolt cables high enough to avoid shipping.

The South Melbourne cable tramway was opened by the Melbourne Tramway and Omnibus Company on 17 June 1890, followed three days later by the Port Melbourne line which ran along City Road and Bay Street. The tramway engine house for both lines was located on City Road. With the formation of the Melbourne & Metropolitan Tramways Board in 1919, a new electric tram route was established via Albert Park and, in 1937, the South Melbourne cable line was converted to electric traction while the Port Melbourne line was closed down and the engine house sold off.[96]

## 4.13 Humpies and Montague slums

Theme: 8.2 – Housing the population

The wastelands of Fishermans Bend became a refuge for the dispossessed and homeless, as much as for wildlife, somewhat like the better-known Dudley Flats north of the river. Rambling fishermen's camps existed along the beach and on the remaining undeveloped stretches of river banks, and humpies and shacks were thrown up at different times by those making a living out of scrounging from the rubbish dumps, or who were simply taking advantage of the quite undisturbed locality. For example, a Portuguese man who lived in Fishermans Bend in 1877 was considered a subject worthy of the *Police News* despite his diminished circumstances, which featured an illustration of him, '. . . sitting at a table with his trained rat standing on the table on hind legs and dancing.'[97]

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[94] Electric Supply, 2 June 1926, *The Argus*, p.26. Accessed on 17 February 2017, from http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article3785833

[95] M. Pierce, 'Early Electricity Supply in Melbourne', *Australian Journal Of Multi-Disciplinary Engineering* Vol.8, Iss.1, 2010.

[96] Ward, 2011, p.20.

[97] *Police News*, 14 April 1877, Melbourne: Richard Egan Lee, State Library Victoria Accession no(s) PN14/04/77/00, http://www.slv.vic.gov.au/miscpics/gid/slv-pic-aab26620

**Figure 38** **'Portuguese man living at Fishermans Bend, Sandridge'**, *Police News*, **14 April 1877**

The famous Australian artist Albert Tucker also looked to Fishermans Bend for inspiration, as evidenced in the social deprivation and depression which came to feature strongly in his paintings. He took several photos of what is assumed he regarded as 'picturesque shacks' in preparation for paintings in the 1930s.



**Figure 39** **Fishermans Bend, Albert Tucker**[98]

The 1880s were a period of rapid growth in Emerald Hill, with a population of 25,000 in 1880 rising to 43,000 by the end of the decade. Port Melbourne saw similar growth, but from a smaller starting

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[98] Fishermans Bend, Albert Tucker, State Library of Victoria, H2008.98/205. Accessed online, from http://handle.slv.vic.gov.au/10381/140187.

point. Many of the municipal councillors were prominent real estate developers and financiers, including Matthias Larkin, James Page, J. R. Buxton and W. Thistlethwaite, or were land speculators such as William Buckhurst. As a result, subdivision and street construction, although rudimentary, went ahead rapidly.[99]

The closest residential area to Southbank was Montague, a former swamp, which was subdivided and promoted for 'persons of the artisan class'. This was reflected in the advertisements for houses for sale, for example, describing a 'neat two-roomed cottage and land, plastered, £110, Stoke Street, off Gladstone Place'. By 1875 there were 560 households and, by 1900, there were 1,000 in the district with 200 in the lanes and little streets. Many of the people attracted to the low-cost housing were labourers, fisherman, boilermakers, mariners and shipwrights, probably drawn to the area because of its proximity to the docks and metal works along the river and to the noxious trades on the Sandridge flats. Owner occupation was at approximately 33% and most of the houses in the smaller streets were made of timber and had two or three bedrooms. Almost no houses had a bathroom or washroom. By the 1920s, much of the housing stock was falling into disrepair due to regular flooding and inundation coupled with minimal maintenance, particularly among the rental properties. However, Montague was renowned for its close-knit community. The self-contained suburb had its own school, church, police station, kindergarten, football team, hotels, post office, bank and shops.

A 1881 contributor to *The Argus* described the Montague area, known colloquially as 'Salt Lake City', as a poorly-drained sector with a terrible stench in which typhoid was rife. '[It is] wonderful how people can live there; yet new houses are going up there daily in thick clusters, evidently intended for persons of the artisan class. Children are being reared . . . in great numbers. Their chief amusement here is to play in the horrible liquid surrounding their homes.' [100]

Floods exacerbated the problems, with one description of the 1880 flood noting:

> *Pedestrians could proceed along the footpath in Flinders Street to a point a short distance beyond William Street where the flood barred all further progress. The houses from this point to the corner of Spencer Street were flooded on the ground floors and cellars. The water could be seen stretching from a short distance below the Falls Bridge to Sandridge Bend on the one hand, and from Emerald Hill to Footscray on the other.*[101]

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[99] Ward, 2011, p.35.
[100] *The Argus*, 16 August 1884, in Priestley, p.121.
[101] 'The Floods in Victoria', 18 September 1880, *South Australian Register*, p.6. Accessed online 4 June 2013, from http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article43149401.

**Figure 40    Floods along the Port Melbourne line**[102]



**Figure 41    The Argus, 6 March 1919, p.8**

The first inquiry into housing conditions in Victoria was conducted in 1913 by a select committee of the legislative assembly. This first slum commission paid special note to the Montague district, noting that the area between Ferrars and Boundary streets, and from City Road to the Port Melbourne railway, ". . . was very flat and the drainage bad, . . . with very few exceptions the houses are all built of wood and iron . . .' where most did not have baths, and were small and in poor repair.[103]

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[102] 'The Sandridge Train – Keeping the line clear'. A scene in North Sandridge. *Illustrated Australian News*. 25, 9, 188. Accessed online, from http://handle.slv.vic.gov.au/10381/208269.
[103] 'Suburban slums, Evidence of Police, Hovels and Shelter Sheds', *The Age*, 20 November 1913, p.6.

By 1931, the second major economic depression occurred, bringing with it its associated poverty and deterioration in living standards. Some efforts were made by Council to address the slum conditions. In 1930, the mayor of South Melbourne, Councillor H. A. Layfield, officially declared open a new children's playground in Thistlethwaite Street and personally introduced many children to the new swings and slides.[104] The consequences for Southbank appeared to be that the remaining residential properties were eventually demolished or replaced with commercial activities.[105]

The Town Planning Commission, which presented a far-reaching report in 1929, identified the Fishermans Bend area as having opportunities not only for social housing, but also for integrated transport and employment. In a prescient comment it identified that:

> . . . provision for an arterial road two chains wide westerly across this area to join with Bay View Avenue, Spotswood, which would make an extremely valuable direct route to the city from the Geelong Road and the whole of the area west of the River Yarra. The road will be of much value to the Fisherman's Bend area, but its great usefulness will lie in providing a main 'through' road, connecting the western suburbs with the city and the eastern suburbs by a much shorter route than at present exists.

This was the proposed Howe Parade which although it was only constructed within the Garden City area, can still be identified in property boundaries and parkland across Fishermans Bend. What the commission predicted, of course, was the West Gate Bridge.[106]

The Port Melbourne Council had previously petitioned the government to unlock land at Fishermans Bend and sponsor workers' housing from 1906. It identified Fishermans Bend as a possible future housing site from as early as 1912. While the State Bank and Housing Commission Victoria housing at Garden City is outside the City of Melbourne part of Fishermans Bend, this played an important role in enabling the various industries to become established north of the bend, including the aeronautical industries, Holden and other factories. It also facilitated the removal of housing in the Southbank area.[107]

The efforts of charitable organisations can also be recognised in the construction of the New Gordon House in Lorimer Street in 1976. New Gordon House was built by the Hanover Centre, which had established some of the first specialist homeless services in Melbourne. It was a partial replacement for the Gordon Rooming House in the city. It was in an out-of-the-way place, considered to be blighted, and *The Age* referred to it as 'an icon of ugliness'.[108] However, Kevin Borland's award-winning design was seen at the time as a progressive innovation, providing separate rooms for all residents. The building was demolished in 1992 to make way for the new Exhibition Centre.[109]

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[104] Mayor As Play Leader. *The Argus*, 13 May 1930, p.5.
[105] Port Phillip Heritage Review, Gladstone Street Public Houses.
[106] U'Ren, N., Turnbull, N., A History of Port Melbourne OUP, 1983, p.227.
[107] Andrew Ward, Port Phillip Heritage Review, Version 14, 2009, 'Port Melbourne – The Garden City Housing Estates', HO2, City of Port Phillip.
[108] *The Age*, 27 June 1992, p.138.
[109] Kevin Borland: Architecture from the Heart, Huan Chen Borland, Conrad Hamann, RMIT Publishing, 2006.

**Figure 42   New Gordon House**

## 4.14 Working conditions and the rise of the labour movement

Themes: 9. Working in the city, 9.1 A working class

The rapid expansion of industry in Southbank in the 19th century led to a substantial local workforce, and with it, occasional industrial conflict. This context gave rise to both social reformers and political intrigue. Among the prominent South Melbourne workers' advocates and unionists were the future Prime Minister John Curtin, trade union leader James Francis Roulston, solicitor and politician William (Bill) Slater, and trade unionist, labour journalist and politician Donald James Cameron. All were closely connected to South Melbourne, either having been educated in the local schools, such as

Cameron was, or becoming prominent in union activity in the industrial sector.[110] For example, Curtin worked as an estimates clerk at the Titan Manufacturing Company in South Melbourne from 1903 to 1911, during which time he made his first connections to the union movement.[111]

Some of this union activity stemmed from factory working conditions in the 19th century. For example, despite the 1873 Victorian legislation limiting working hours to eight for women and children, enforcement was slack. In 1883, inspectors at James Miller's South Melbourne ropeworks found 10-year-olds working 60 hours a week.[112] The Southbank area was one of the most industrialised parts of Melbourne by the late-19th century, but despite being on the doorstep of the city, apart from the entertainment strip along St Kilda Road, it remained a mysterious place of smoke and noise, rarely visited by the Melbourne establishment and city administrators. It was also mostly under the jurisdiction of the South Melbourne council, which was more concerned with its residents further south at Emerald Hill, so they, too, tended to forget the area. As a result, Southbank was both a seedbed of manufacturing and a hotbed of industrial dispute.[113]

Rolling strikes by members of the Storemen and Packers' Union, with the support of the Carters and Drivers' Union in 1916, crippled the warehousing and supply of goods, particularly in the West and South Melbourne Bond stores. At the same time, Austral Otis was shut down by a strike organised by the Amalgamated Society of Engineers.[114]

The auto industry in particular experienced a period of strong union activity in the 1960s and 70s, particularly at the GMH Fishermans Bend plant, much of which was generated through independent shop floor action within the union. That is, the factory workers themselves initiated strikes rather than following orders coming from union management. This was a consequence of the close-knit community that the car factories engendered, and became a factor that brought people even closer together under common cause. The community and social links created by the close working relationships are the continuing legacy of this history.

The most militant of unions however, were those on the wharves and shipyards. The maritime strike of 1890 was part of a general strike across Australia that lasted two months, eventually broken when police and military forces were brought in to smash the resistance.[115]

During the 'dockland war' of the early 1970s the port was subject to several incidents, including the burning of the Federated Ship Painters and Dockers Union office, and the murder of Arthur 'The Ferret' Nelson, a union official whose car was pulled from the river at South Wharf.[116] Again, in the

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[110] Graham Dunkley, 'Cameron, Donald James (Don) (1878–1962)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, National Centre of Biography, Australian National University. Accessed online 20 February 2017, from http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/cameron-donald-james-don-5474/text9303.

[111] From Poor Boy to Prime Minister. Accessed online, from http://john.curtin.edu.au/manofpeace/boytopm.html.

[112] 'Winning the Eight Hour Day – Teacher Resources', *An education program for Middle Years*. Accessed online, from http://museumvictoria.com.au/pages/2330/winning-8-hour-day-teacher-notes.pdf.

[113] Lewis, Miles, *An industrial seed-bed*, Department of Planning, Melbourne, 1983.

[114] 'Industrial Unrest', *The Argus,* 11 February 1916, Accessed online 20 Feb 2017, from http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article2107230.

[115] Maritime Union of Australia, 1890 Maritime Strike. Accessed online, from http://www.mua.org.au/1890_maritime_strike#sthash.QV6jpbEG.dpuf.

[116] ''Arson' in dockland war', *The Canberra Times*, 25 January 1972. Accessed online 17 September 2016, from http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article101754069.

1990s, conflict flared up in opposition to plans to replace union wharfies with overseas trained imports.[117]

## 4.15 Education, community services and health

Theme: 8.3 – Educating the people, 11.1 – Improving public health

Because Fishermans Bend was primarily an area for working rather than residing, it had few facilities for the local population, which were generally concentrated in the better-established areas at Emerald Hill, Sandridge or in the new Garden City estate. However, St Kilda Road hosted a number of health and community facilities over the generations. The Homeopathic Hospital was established on St Kilda Road in 1876 in an effort to provide more affordable medical services. By 1934 it had expanded to become Prince Henry's Hospital, when substantial modern buildings were erected.

The City Road Primary School was erected in 1884 at a time when a number of new state-run schools were replacing church schools. In 1930, it was converted into the J. H. Boyd Domestic College, possibly reflecting the diminishing number of families living in the Southbank area at that time. It later became a campus of the Western Melbourne Institute of TAFE (now Victoria University), before turning into the Southbank Library and community centre today.

As the area hosted many new arrivals from the days of the Canvas Town in the early 1850s, services were periodically provided to assist immigrants. The Immigrants' Home was opened on St Kilda Road in 1853, 'for the amelioration of the fearful distress amongst the newly arrived population'. The Immigrants Aid Society was the charitable organisation responsible, and during the boom of the 1880s they extended the facility with new buildings, completed in 1887. Later, it served as a night shelter for the homeless and vulnerable.[118]

The Immigrants Aid Society also opened a reformatory school for boys and girls in the military reserve on St Kilda Road in 1860. This institution mainly housed orphans, but the location was criticised as being unhealthy due its proximity to the Military Swamp. Boys were put to work at the Royal Botanic Gardens while many of the girls entered domestic service at an early age.

An Immigrants Depot was erected in 1841 near Kings Domain to provide shelter for new arrivals, and during the gold rush a vast Canvas Town or tent camp grew around this area.[119] The sometimes dire circumstances that new arrivals could find themselves in, particularly the women and children, prompted the formation of an Immigrants Aid Society by concerned residents and the church. The society based its immigrants home in the buildings used by the Victorian Government to accommodate newly-arrived immigrants near Princes Bridge on St Kilda Road.[120]

The Yarra Bank also became a refuge for the homeless in the 20th century, although this was probably unconnected to these early phases of emergency accommodation. The area between the river and Yarra Bank Road in front of the factories provided refuge for homeless people taking advantage of the relatively large areas of vacant land close to the city.

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[117] Wendy Lowenstein and Tom Hills, *Under the Hook: Melbourne Waterside Workers Remember: 1900-1998*.
[118] Shurlee Swain, 'Immigrants Home', in Andrew Brown-May and Shurlee Swain (eds), *Encyclopedia of Melbourne*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2005.
[119] Buckrich, & Birkenbeil, 1996, *Melbourne's Grand Boulevard: The Story of St Kilda Road,* State Library of Victoria, Melbourne.
[120] Shurlee Swain, 'Immigrants Home', in Andrew Brown-May and Shurlee Swain (eds), *Encyclopedia of Melbourne*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2005.

A number of other benevolent institutions were established in the area, including the Protestant Orphanage, the St Vincent de Paul Boys' Home and Girls' Home, a Magdalen Asylum for 'Fallen' Women and a branch of the Salvation Army Corps in Coventry Street.

In 1925 the YMCA Hostel was relocated from a warehouse in Flinders Street to new, purpose-built premises on City Road close to St Kilda Road, and continued the provision of overnight accommodation to those in need. It was demolished in the 1980s, evidently due to subsidence of the foundations brought on during construction of the Concert Hall.



**Figure 43   YMCA, City Road, 1974 (Lindsay Bridge, Flickr)**

## 4.16  Military, industry and aviation

Themes: 4.8 Defending the city, 4.7 Policing the city, 5.5 Building a manufacturing industry

### Barracks

Following their involvement in putting down the 1854 Eureka Stockade rebellion, the British Imperial Garrison troops, including the 12th and 40th Regiment of Foot, were provided with impressive new accommodation on Melbourne's doorstep. Named after the British queen, the Victoria Barracks housed the Colony of Victoria's colonial forces from the creation of the Commonwealth of Australia in 1901, until 1958, when the Department of Defence moved to the new Russell Offices in Canberra.

The military reserve occupied the high ground on the edge of St Kilda Road. It was surrounded by swampy lowlands extending to the west, originally extending as far west as Moray Street. The reserve was reduced to the area east of Hanna Street (now Kings Way) in 1862. A pathway was constructed through the swamp west of the Barracks to alleviate congestion caused by local travel through the reservation. By 1876 some of the military reserve land on St Kilda Road was transferred to other purposes, and in 1881 the land west of Wells Street was subdivided and gradually sold off.

The earliest building of G-Block was built between 1856 and 1858 by soldiers of the 40th Regiment, supervised by a royal engineer officer. Other buildings were built by civil contractors between 1856

and 1872. A large extension (A-Block New Wing) was added in 1917 for the Department of Defence headquarters. This was built in a similar style to the others, but the construction method and interior were completely modern for their time. The Art Deco M-Block was added in 1939 with a floor that was the first continuous concrete pour in Australia. The Repatriation clinic on the corner of Coventry Street was also built in 1936/1937 to the design of noted Melbourne-based architect George Hallandal of the Commonwealth Department of Works, to assist with medical evaluations of returned soldiers.

The former Repatriation Commission Outpatients Clinic, which opened in 1937 in St Kilda Road, is one of a large number of military buildings developed by the Commonwealth Works Department in Victoria as part of strategic preparation for World War II. It was designed for the Commonwealth Repatriation Commission by Hallandal, acting under H. J. Mackennal, Director of the Commonwealth Public Works Department of the Interior, and built by Blease McPherson and the Company of Queen Street.

The clinic was part of a million-pound repatriation program undertaken by the Commonwealth Government across Australia and widely reported on during its planning stages and upon completion. It was one of large number of military buildings developed by the Commonwealth Works Department in Victoria as part of strategic preparation for World War Two. The clinic replaced an earlier galvanised structure at the south-eastern corner of the site. Lieutenant Colonel White, Acting Minister for Repatriation, announced the proposal to build an outpatients' clinic for returned soldiers in 1936 for a cost of £10,000. The building was purpose-built for outpatients to reduce congestion in the facilities available at the time at the Caulfield Repatriation Hospital (*The Argus*, 1936). The design met some controversy, with well-known artist Sir Arthur Streeton condemning the contrast of the brown brickwork with the existing bluestone structures of Victoria Barracks. Streeton wanted the clinic built in bluestone to match the Barracks and Melbourne Grammar so that it would be a fitting addition to the great boulevard that was St Kilda Road. Mackennal replied that the brick was chosen to make the building 'unpretentious', and that the cost of building in bluestone would have been four times the final contract price of £16,000.[121]

Servicemen may have had a close affinity with the trip down St Kilda Road, either to the Barracks or at least once a year to the War Memorial, but for some it was a difficult trip. Those who had lost an arm or a leg in duty were provided with artificial limbs by a specially-built factory and fitting centre behind the Victoria Barracks on Sturt Street.

The first proposal for a Government-run factory producing artificial limbs for returned soldiers came from a Mr. J. Smith of Ringwood in 1915. In the later years of   I the needs of returning servicemen were met by the Caulfield Military Hospital, which employed 24 men, all but four having lost a limb themselves, in the manufacture of artificial limbs. An American expert, Mr. C. A. Aunger, was brought to Australia by the Commonwealth to assist in establishing a factory. The manufacture of limbs began at Caulfield in November 1917 and was transferred to a new factory in Sturt Street behind the Victoria Barracks in March 1918, initially under the control of the Defence Department. In December 1920, control was transferred to the Repatriation Department. In total, five Commonwealth artificial limb factories were established in Australia by 1919, employing 40 men, most of whom were also amputees.

Major Charles Morley was appointed assistant manager of the factory in 1918, and by August 1919 the South Melbourne factory was turning out 80 limbs per month. There were, however, complaints about the distance that men had to walk on crutches from the tram for fittings and repairs.

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[121] *The Argus*, 1937.

Meanwhile, the Melbourne factory also had to serve Tasmanians who had to make the long journey to Melbourne to be fitted. The tramline was eventually extended down Sturt Street and a shelter constructed near the factory at the request of the Returned Servicemen's Amputees Association.

## Police

The Victoria Police Department was established in 1853, bringing several mounted units together under the banner of the Mounted Branch. Horse and rider numbers reached a peak in the early 1900s with 211 Mounted Stations throughout the state. However, the introduction of the motorcar gradually replaced the horses. The central Melbourne police stables were originally located on the banks of the Yarra near Olympic Park, as well as in St Kilda Road. Construction of the Police Depot commenced just prior to World War I to improve and centralise headquarters for police training and mounted police operations in Victoria. The full facilities included stables, riding school and drill hall (1912-1913), police hospital and dispensers residence (1914), police stores and workshop (1916-1920), police barracks (1925) and rough riders residence (1929). The new buildings were necessary because the Federal Government had decided that the Victoria Barracks would be the headquarters of the newly-formed Commonwealth Department of Defence in 1906. The Victoria Police had occupied a significant proportion of the Barracks since 1881, but they now had to find new accommodation. The buildings were designed by Public Works Chief Architect E. Evan Smith and constructed by Shillabeer & Sons. The Police Depot was later repurposed for the Victorian College of the Arts.[122]

## Airfields

Fishermans Bend played an important role in the development of both civil and military aviation in Australia. In 1919 the first flight of a Maurice Farman S11 Shorthorn aircraft departed from what was known as the Carey Airfield, an informal grass runway established on the flats, by aviation pioneer R. Graham Carey with financial backing from the Mayor of Essendon, Councillor Arthur Fenton. Carey purchased four aircraft from the Department of Defence after World War I and established an airstrip on waste ground at the western end of Graham Street in April 1919, taking joy-flights on his own time. In 1920, the Melbourne Air Service was established 'to give instruction in the art of flying in the neighbourhood of Melbourne'.

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[122] Victorian Building Services Agency and Victorian Department of Infrastructure, Former Police Barracks, St Kilda Road, 'Melbourne conservation plan for the Victorian College of the Arts', 1997.

**Figure 44   S11 returning to Port Melbourne after 18 years (PMH & PS Collection)**

Aerodrome Licence No.1 was issued for the Fishermans Bend Aerodrome, 'behind the dunes' in Ferry Road (now Williamstown Road) on 30 May 1921. Possibly the first aircraft accident investigation in Australia took place the following year when Pilot Hubert Ross, on a joy-flight with Cyril Harris and Jessie Dorman, crashed into the yard of a cottage, resulting in the deaths of all three men.

Later, when private enterprise as well as Government options for aircraft manufacture in Australia were being considered, and after long, drawn-out negotiations between the Victorian and Federal governments, a new aerodrome was constructed at Fishermans Bend. On 11 November 1936, the Victorian Premier Dunstan announced that 60 hectares had been set aside as an aerodrome for the newly-established Commonwealth Aircraft Corporation (CAC).[123]

### Aircraft manufacture and testing

In the 1930s, concern about international militarisation in Germany, Italy and Japan led Essington Lewis of BHP and several other prominent Australian industrialists, including General Motors Holden, to consider the creation of an Australian aircraft manufacturing company capable of supplying the Royal Australian Air Force with locally-built military aeroplanes. This was seen as an essential contingency against the eventuality that aircraft might not be available from overseas in time of war.

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[123] PMH & PS, 'Wings over Fishermens Bend', 24 October 2014.

The Commonwealth Aircraft Corporation was established in Fishermans Bend in 1936 to manufacture aero engines and complete aircraft. [124]

Lawrence Wackett, a captain with the Australian Flying Corps known for his engineering ingenuity, began designing and manufacturing civil aircraft after World War I. He was in command of the RAAF Experimental Section established at Randwick, Sydney, in 1924. The chief of the air staff, Sir Richard Williams, nominated Wackett to set up and manage the CAC operation at Fishermans Bend, Melbourne. Wackett selected an American aircraft with which to begin production, which was named the Wirraway I. The first prototype was flying by June 1938, and the first deliveries to the RAAF took place in July 1939.[125] It was a general purpose military aeroplane chosen primarily because it would be useful to the RAAF and was relatively simple to build.



**Figure 45    New CAC works at Fishermans Bend, late-1937[126]**



**Figure 46    CAC from the south showing camouflage-painted buildings[127]**

In 1939 the Commonwealth Government set up facilities to manufacture the British-designed Bristol Beaufort twin-engine bomber in Australia, and a new factory was erected for the Beaufort Division of

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[124] 'The Story Of The Commonwealth Aircraft Corporation', accessed online, http://www.beaufortrestoration.com.au/Pages/ProductionChild/Manufacturers/CAC.html.

[125] Alex Post, 'Wackett, Sir Lawrence James (1896–1982)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, National Centre of Biography, Australian National University. Published first in hardcopy 2012, accessed online 16 September 2016, from http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/wackett-sir-lawrence-james-15887/text27088.

[126] Geoff Goodall Collection, 114112c6800-121R. Accessed online, from http://www.goodall.com.au/australian-aviation/tugan-gannet/tugan-gannet.htm.

[127] State Library of South Australia Commonwealth Aircraft Corporation factory, PRG 247/143/1. Accessed online, from http://collections.slsa.sa.gov.au/resource/PRG+247/143/1.

the Department of Aircraft Production, later known as the Government Aircraft Factory (GAF). During World War II, CAC manufactured Wirraway general-purpose aircraft, Wackett trainers, Boomerang fighters and Mustang fighters at its Fishermans Bend plant.[128]

In 1942, when the threat of invasion of northern Australia seemed highly possible, manufacturing facilities were concentrated in southern Australia for safety. Two American Butler hangars were erected at the CAC facility at Fishermans Bend, wherein aeroplanes arriving from the United States were assembled, with an additional de-mountable Bellman hangar added by August 1943. The Butler hangar was also the wartime base of 'Associated Airlines', the private corporate airline of BHP and its associated 'Collins House' group of companies. Its aircraft were also used by Essington Lewis in his role as Director of Munitions, and were also often used by the Prime Minister in preference to airline services at Essendon Airport. The U.S. Army and U.S. Naval Attaches also based their executive transport aircraft at the Butler hangar during the war due to its high level of security, as well as its easier access to Melbourne.[129]



**Figure 47   Butler hangar at Fishermans Bend prior to relocation (National Trust)**

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[128] D. P. Mellor, 'The Role of Science and Industry', *Australia in the War of 1939-45 series*, Canberra, 1958, p.381-422.

[129] 'National Trust classification report: Butler and Bellman Hangars at Commonwealth Aircraft Corporation Fishermans Bend'. Accessed online, from http://vhd.heritagecouncil.vic.gov.au/places/12650/download-report.

**Figure 48    Lancaster bomber demonstrated at Fishermans Bend airfield**



**Figure 49    Aircraft factories Fishermans Bend with runways beyond**

The Aeronautical and Engine Research Test Laboratory was created in 1939 as part of the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) Division of Aeronautics, to conduct research in the area of aeronautics, particularly aircraft and, later, missile design. H. E. Wimperis, former Director of Scientific Research in the British Air Ministry, recommended that an engineering research establishment be established by CSIR emphasising that it should be located close to centres of aeronautical industry and performance testing, identifying the site at Fishermans Bend as excellent for this purpose.

Construction at the Fishermans Bend site commenced in August 1939, one month before the start of the Second World War. The first staff to work at 'the Bend' arrived in April 1940, and in May the

laboratory formally became the Division of Aeronautics, part of CSIR, with L. P. Coombes, formerly of the Royal Aircraft Establishment Farnborough, as Chief.[130]

The organisation changed its name to Aeronautical Research Laboratories in 1949. In March 1994 it was merged with the Materials Research Laboratory to form the Aeronautical and Maritime Research Laboratory of the Defence Science and Technology Organisation (DSTO).[131]



**Figure 50   Aeronautical Research Laboratory, Lorimer Street**

Later, after the demise of both commercial and Government aircraft manufacturing ventures, the factories reverted to other owners and uses. DeHaviland took over parts of the plant and buildings and continued the manufacturing, repair and aircraft servicing programs, and in recent years this has been taken over and continued by Boeing. However, large parts of the building complexes, including almost all of the Government aircraft factory, have been demolished and replaced with modern buildings.

## Tank manufacture and testing

As military industries and scientific research facilities were already established in Fishermans Bend at the outbreak of World War II, the location was the obvious choice for the establishment of an experimental military tank works. British artillery officer, Colonel W. D. Watson, advised the Department of Defence from December 1940 on the technical requirements for the program, and by February 1941, the Australian Cruiser Mark 1 military tank had reached its mock-up stage. An experimental tank depot was constructed around July 1941 on a four-hectare site at Fishermans Bend.[132] However, production was very slow and only a few tanks were built before the programme was discontinued in July 1943, favouring the use of imported tanks from the United States instead.

The Department of Aircraft Production (DAP) then took over the factory to expand its existing aircraft production at the CAC works on Lorimer Street. Production commenced in 1937, and the Beaufort bomber factory was built on Lorimer Street in 1940. The Salmon Street factory became the DAP

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[130] DSTO, 'Our History', 2016. Accessed online, from http://www.dst.defence.gov.au/discover-dsto/our-history.

[131] Kepert, J. Ll, 'Fishermens Bend – A Centre Of Australian Aviation', Department of Defence, Defence Science and Technology Organisation, Aeronautical Research Laboratory, Melbourne, Victoria.

[132] Reeves, 2015.

Maintenance Division, and then the Maintenance & Disposals Division in August 1945. At the end of the war the division was re-named the DAP Supply & Disposals Branch (and, later still, the Disposals Branch), from where surplus materials were sold off.[133]



**Figure 51   Beaufort aircraft factory at Fishermans Bend,15 June 1943 (Australian War Memorial**

## 4.17  Auto Industry and GMH

Themes: 5.2 Developing a manufacturing capacity, 5.8 Working

Melbourne's automobile industry had its origins in the area around the hay and horse markets at the top of Elizabeth Street, where the carriage builders and blacksmiths were the obvious businesses for adopting the new form of travel. A secondary centre however, was focussed around City Road and Sturt Street, where convenience to the city and the docks – for the inevitable importation of early vehicles – could benefit business. Early motoring firms began as either importers of complete vehicles or assemblers of locally-made bodies on imported chassis and mechanical components. Among the more prominent firms were Melford's, Lanes Motors and Kellow Falkiner. Morley Ford occupied the prime riverbank position near Queens Bridge Square for decades, while GP Motors were a relatively early establishment in City Road, and prospered, erecting a new workshop in 1938.

Melford's had their main service centre on Sturt Street, while Lane's were a little further south on Dorcas Street. Meanwhile, a more substantial business was growing in the former Sharps & Sons timber business in City Road: General Motors (Australia). A number of parts suppliers were also located in Southbank, such as the Harry Norris-designed Brooklands Accessories. Many of these premises followed the most up-to-date architectural styles with Art Deco, Streamline Moderne, and International Style elements reflecting the forward-looking ideals of the motoring fraternity.

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[133] Simon Reeves, Former Tank Factory Fishermans Bend, National Trust of Victoria.
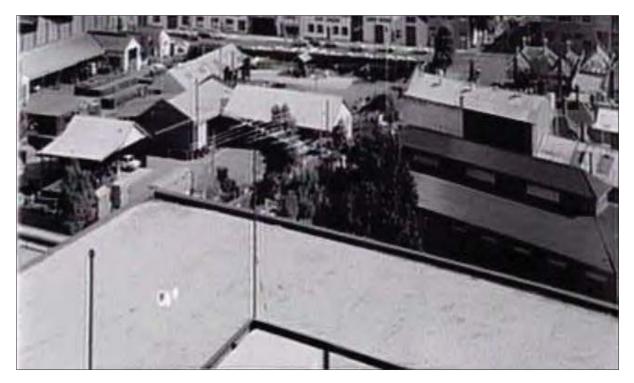
**Figure 52   Looking over Dorcas Street and Lanes Motors to the small factories and warehouses of South Melbourne (State Library of Victoria)**



**Figure 53   Lanes Motors, Dorcas Street**

**Figure 54   Brooklands Auto Accessories, Sturt Street, 1982 (Graeme Butler)**

The streamlined motor garage featuring tall vertical elements was once something of a signature building for Southbank, with Cheney, Morley, Coffey, Melford's and Lane's Motors all featuring prominent towers. Only Lane's survives today, however.
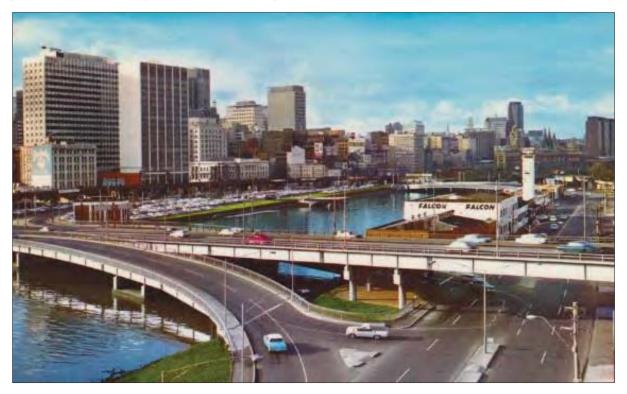


**Figure 55   Yarra Bank Road and Kings Way with Coffey Motors, c.1970**

## GMH

The Adelaide coach-building firm of James Alexander Holden started as a saddlery business as early as 1854, expanded into coach-building. His sons developed motor-body building, eventually erecting a large factory at Woodville. The firm evolved over the years, first moving into the automotive field in 1908 repairing car upholstery and later expanding to full-scale production of vehicle body shells. Throughout the 1920s Holden supplied tramcars for Melbourne, but the company was more prominent as a motor-body builder and an assembler of various automobile models, particularly using imported General Motors chassis. In 1931, Holden merged with GM to become General Motors-Holden's Limited (GMH) and in 1936 the firm opened a new headquarters and assembly plant in Salmon Street, Fishermans Bend in Port Melbourne.[134]

During World War II the factory produced more than 30,000 vehicle bodies for the Australian and United States armed forces and manufactured a wide range of equipment, including field guns, aircraft, aero and marine engines. After the war, Holden returned to producing vehicle bodies, including Buick, Chevrolet, Pontiac and Vauxhall.

Before the war ended, the Australian Government had already taken steps to encourage an Australian automotive industry. Both GM and Ford provided studies to the Australian Government for an Australian-designed car. Although Ford's proposal was the first choice, financial costs saw the government choose the GM proposal, also due to the low level of necessary government intervention.

Holden's managing director, Laurence Hartnett, favoured development of a local design, while GM preferred to see an American design as the basis for 'Australia's Own Car'. Holden commenced manufacture of a fully-Australian product in 1948, the 48-215 – nicknamed the FX – and the second version was the more-famous FJ.[135]

Expansion of production saw Holden establish a second Victorian assembly plant in Dandenong in the late-1950s. Because of this, construction of complete cars ceased at Fishermans Bend, and instead the plant there concentrated on manufacturing components. A substantial new engine manufacturing plant was erected to the west of the original works. The size and scale of the factory and its relative isolation meant that facilities for staff were important. As well as company canteens, staff could enjoy recreation facilities such as tennis courts and a social centre for functions and entertainment.

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[134] Davis, Tony, Kennedy, Ewan, Kennedy, Alistair (1998). *The Holden Heritage: Eighth Edition*. Blakehurst, New South Wales: Marque Publishing. ISBN 0-947079-57-2.
[135] Darwin, N. (1983) *The History of Holden Since 1917.* Melbourne: Gordon & Gotch; 'Holden History In Brief'. Accessed online, from http://history.gmheritagecenter.com/wiki/index.php/History_of_Holden.

**Figure 56** **GMH looking over the empty expanse of Fishermans Bend, c.1936 (State Library of Victoria, H91.160/259)**

**Figure 57   General Motors-Holden's Ltd., Fishermans Bend, 1939 (Greater Port Melbourne, Port Melbourne Centenary Celebrations Committee)**

**Figure 58    Industry at Fishermans Bend with new engine plant in background with white roof, 1964[136]**



**Figure 59    GMH Social Centre**

[136] 'A Regional Geography of Victoria', Whitcombe & Toombs, Victoria Places.

**Figure 60    Interior of the GMH Social Centre**[137]



**Figure 61    Views of the History of Transport mural in the GMH Social Centre**

[137] David Thompson, GMH Social Centre, Port Melbourne. Accessed online, from http://artdecobuildings.blogspot.com.au/2011/12/gmh-social-centre-port-melbourne.html; City of Port Melbourne Building Permits, 31/1/1945, Canteen built for General Motors-Holden's by Richmond builder E. A. Watts.

The earliest part of the GMH plant was located on the corner of Salmon and Lorimer streets with reinforced concrete Art Deco-style office buildings fronting large areas of steel-framed and saw-toothed-roofed factory space. The factory was designed by a team of four: L. H. Hartnett, Managing Director; E. J. L. Gibson, Construction Engineer; J. S. Storey, Director of Engineering; and N. A. Pointer, Equipment Engineer.[138]

In the 1950s, major expansion to the south and west of the existing works occurred, including the engine plant. In the 1990s, the new V6 engine plant was constructed towards Todd Road, filling the last remaining vacant land. Holden began selling off sections of its 38-hectare manufacturing plant. The original office blocks were sold off in 2005 and are now occupied by Boral and JG King Building Group. The earliest assembly buildings have been demolished to make way for an industrial park, and the 1950s boiler house which had featured an early glass curtain wall design was demolished in 2011. The engine plant itself is now mostly empty and partly stripped of cladding.[139]

Fishermans Bend provided the catalyst for three major car manufacturers, as well as several others, in the mid-20th century. Holden, Chrysler and Toyota all had their origins in the area, benefitting from Government tariff protection, direct investment and the advantage of connectivity and infrastructure that Fishermans Bend provided.[140]

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[138] National Trust classification, General Motors Holden Administration Offices and Social Centre.
[139] 'Former GMH powerhouse in Port Melbourne', Marcus Wong, 27 March 2012. Accessed online, from https://wongm.com/2012/03/former-gmh-powerhouse-in-port-melbourne/.
[140] Stubbs, Peter C. (1972). The Australian motor industry: a study in protection and growth. Cheshire for the Institute of Applied Economic and Social Research, University of Melbourne.

**Figure 62   Demolished Holden boiler house  (Marcus Wong)**

### Neale's Motors/Autocraft

Holden was only the first of a number of the automotive companies to establish themselves in the Fishermans Bend area, which attracted several firms due to the availability of large vacant sites suitable for erecting manufacturing facilities for mass production lines, and for its proximity to rail and sea transport.

Neal's Motors was also drawn to Fishermans Bend, and granted land opposite to GMH in Salmon Street in 1938. The company erected a large factory of 22 square yards to the design of architect Harry A. Norris and assembled Austin Cars under managing director J. H. Lane.[141] Neal's Motors expanded in 1940 with the purchase of Overseas Motors from P. Armitage, who was also a partner in the Spicer & Armitage Central Spring Works in Sturt Street, South Melbourne. This purchase gave Neal's the rights to assemble and distribute Rootes cars such as the Hillman, Humber and Comer.

Autocraft Pty Ltd commenced operations nearby in 1937 assembling Austin cars. It continued operating on a site in Lorimer Street until 1957 when it was bought out by the British Motor Corporation.[142]



**Figure 63   Autocraft factory, Port Melbourne, 1957**[143]

### Standard Motor Co/AMI

Australian Motor Industries (AMI) had its genesis in the form of Eclipse Motors, which secured the Victorian agency for Standard Motor Company's cars in 1929. In 1952 one of its main investors, the Crosby family, in conjunction with Standard Motors in England, financed a new plant in Port Melbourne to assemble Standard Motor Cars. It took over the former Felton Grimwade building in Ingles Street, Port Melbourne, in 1954, changed its name to AMI, and assembled Fiat, Triumph, AMC Rambler and Mercedes Benz cars.[144] In 1963 it secured the Australian franchise for Toyota cars and began to assemble the Tiara Model. This was the first Toyota car to be built outside of Japan. Toyota acquired a controlling stake in AMI in the 1960s. By 1994, production was shifted from Port

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[141] 'Neal's Motors New Plant', *The Age*, 26 January 1939, p.7. Accessed online 17 September 2016, from http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article205956761.

[142] 'Autocraft Ptd Ltd', *Examiner*, 16 April 1937, p.6. Accessed online 17 September 2016, from http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article52133970.

[143] Fowler, Lyle & Commercial Photographic Co., State Library of Victoria.

[144] Sands & McDougall Directory.

Melbourne to Altona.[145] The factory extended along Cook, Graham and Bertie streets, but the northern part was demolished for the West Gate Freeway, and much of the remainder has been replaced with modern buildings in the last two decades.
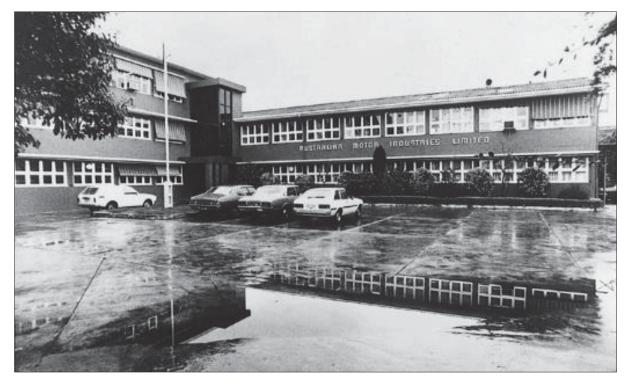


**Figure 64   AMI offices in Cook Street, since demolished, 1970s[146]**

[145] Fawbert and Turvey, 'Protecting the future of our automotive past'. Unpublished paper, 2015.
[146] *Toyota History, 75 years,* 'Chapter 2, Entering the automotive business'. Accessed online, from http://www.toyota-global.com/company/history_of_toyota/75years/text/entering_the_automotive_business/chapter2/section5/images/l02_02_05_06_img04.jpg.
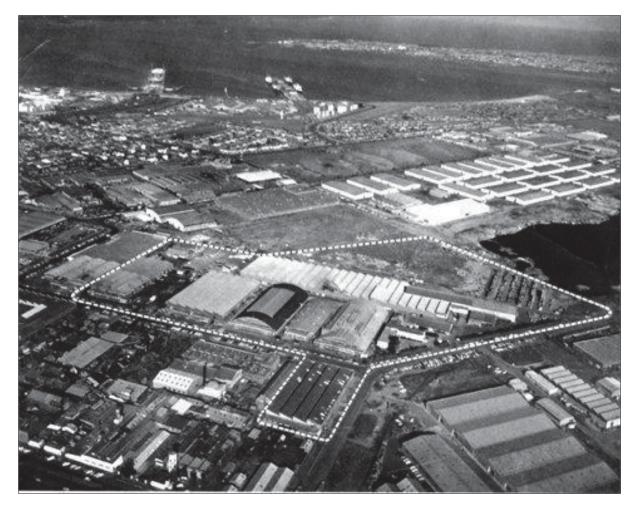
**Figure 65   AMI Factory, Port Melbourne, 1960s**[147]

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[147] Phil Goschnick, 'Mercedes-Benz in Australia During the Ponton Era (1953-1962)'. Accessed online, from http://www.mbzponton.org/valueadded/production/australia/australia.htm; Belinda Stening, 'Australia led Toyota expansion', *Curve,* 13 August 2006. Accessed online, from http://www.curvelive.com/Magazine/Archives/sixteen/Australia-led-Toyota-expansion.

**Figure 66   External view of the Standard Motor Products factory, 1962[148]**

## 4.18  Post-war industry

Themes: 5.5 Building a manufacturing industry, 4.8 Defending the city

While development in Fishermans Bend in the immediate pre-war and wartime periods was characterised by the establishment of new, large manufacturing complexes serving the war effort, the post-war period was characterised by the diversification of industry. Many new manufacturers were established in the Fishermans Bend area, such as Mytton Grosvenor (later Mytton Rodd), which produced stainless steel tanks, beer kegs and cutlery,[149] Fowler's Engineering/International Harvester and G. N. Raymond timber yards.[150] In the 1950s, all were located on Lorimer Street, but more recent development on these sites has replaced all the original buildings.

Australian Gypsum Limited and Australian Plaster Industries were established by the 1960s in Lorimer Street as well, to take advantage of the area's proximity to the bulk goods terminal on South Wharf. This complex went on to become a major plasterboard manufacturer under Boral, and still is. However, again, the company operates today in more-recently-constructed buildings.

Stewarts and Lloyds erected a factory on Lorimer Street next to Neal's Motors in about 1945. The firm was established in Newcastle in the late 1920s by its English parent company of the same name. It was a member of the Tubemakers of Australia Limited group of companies, and manufactured steel pipes, boiler and stay tubes and water bore casing. The company also manufactured cylinder

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[148] Photo by Wolfgang Sievers, National Library of Australia, PIC WS 3140A LOC, Cold store PIC Siev B&WN-F.
[149] Memories of Mytton Rodd. Accessed online, from http://www.myttonrodd.9k.com/rich_text.html.
[150] Golder Associates, 2016, Preliminary and Contamination Study, Fishermans Bend Employment Precinct.

blank forgings, which were central to the automotive industry.[151] Two of the original Stewarts & Lloyd's c.1945 buildings, each with three-gable roofs, survives today with a new section joining them.



**Figure 67   Stewarts & Lloyds factory, Lorimer Street**

The Melbourne office of Stewarts & Lloyds was on the corner of City Road and Power Street. The prominent corner building featured a circular glazed tower which was only demolished in about 2002.



**Figure 68   Stewarts & Lloyds head office, City Road (Museum Victoria)**

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[151] Accessed online, from
http://www.beaufortrestoration.com.au/Pages/RestorationChild/Stories/Story_PubDAP002.html.

The linesman depot training centre, as well as the PMG workshops (the precursor to Telecom, and later Telstra) were located in Plummer Street from the 1940s to the 1960s, possibly even later. Plummer Street was named after a late-19th century councillor, possibly James K. B. Plummer, a Port Melbourne solicitor during the 1880s and a councillor during the 1890s.[152]



**Figure 69   Linesman Depot Training Centre, Fishermans Bend, 1945**

## Kraft

Fred Walker got his start in the food business in 1899, and by 1908 he was well-established as an importer and exporter. Around 1910 he began canning food for export and in 1918 commenced the manufacture of the beef extract product Bonox. His company's major innovation, however, was Vegemite, developed in 1923. In 1926 he formed the separate company of Kraft Walker Cheese Company Pty Ltd after being granted an exclusive license by the Kraft Cheese Co. (Inc.) of Chicago, United States, to use their patented method for the manufacture of processed cheese.[153]

Fred Walker died in 1935, but the Kraft Walker Cheese Company Pty Ltd was subsequently amalgamated with Fred Walker & Co. and the American Kraft Company acquired a controlling interest. In 1950 the company changed its name to Kraft Foods Limited, while continuing to produce a range of well-known  food products, including Vegemite, Bonox and Kraft Cheddar Cheese. Today, Kraft is owned by Mondelēz International.[154]

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[152] 'Port Melbourne'. 6 August 1887. *Record*, p.8. Accessed online 8 May 2013, from http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article108485676.

[153] Farrer, Keith Thomas Henry, 'C. P. Callister – A Pioneer of Australian Food Technology', *Food Technology in Australia*, vol.25, 1973, p.52-65.

[154] K. T. H. Farrer, 'Walker, Fred (1884–1935)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, National Centre of Biography, Australian National University. Published first in hardcopy 1990. Accessed online 22 August 2016, from http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/walker-fred-8953/text15747.

**Figure 70   Kraft Factory (Wolfgang Sievers, State Library of Victoria)**

The change in the Kraft company structure also came with a recapitalisation and expansion of the production facilities. A new factory was built in Port Melbourne, replacing the Southbank premises. The new factory opened on 19 March 1957. By this time the company enjoyed an extensive home market for processed cheese, yeast extract, beef extract, meat and fish pastes and similar lines, as well as a considerable export business to Asian countries.[155]

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[155] Kraft Walker Cheese Co., 'The Kraft Story: Commemorating the Opening of the Kraft Port Melbourne Factory', 19 March 1957. Kraft Walker Cheese Co., Melbourne.

**Figure 71   View of the Kraft factory from the Salmon Street overpass**

As general office development spread from the Melbourne CBD down St Kilda Road in the 1950s, the area immediately opposite Princes Bridge became a desirable location, convenient for modern headquarters. The Alfred Nicholas Company, maker of Aspro, had a substantial building here in the late-1950s. Australian Paper Mills also erected a new steel and glass office building near their paper mills while, next door, Vacuum Oil erected its up-to-date glass and concrete tower by architects Bates, Smart and McCutcheon in 1959/1960. Vacuum Oil's building featured a four-metre-high aluminium statue of the company logo, 'Pegasus' by Raymond Boultwood Ewers.



**Figure 72   Ewers' Pegasus station and Vacuum Oil building (State Library of Victoria, H91.244/403)**

## 4.19 Post-war migration

Theme: 6.7 Making homes for Victorians

From the 1940s, government policy saw a new phase of mass migration occur, partly due to the problem of 'displaced persons' post- war, but also as immigration policies were made to encourage economic growth. Over 30,000 new Australians came every year between 1947 and 1961, with a large proportion of them from Britain, but also significant numbers from Greece and Italy.

As well as the more famous Bonegilla Migrant Camp, another large facility for housing new Australians was opened at Fishermans Bend in 1952, accepting new arrivals up to 1975. Located at the corner of Hall and Turner streets in Port Melbourne, the Fishermans Bend Migrant Hostel contained former army huts and large warehouses erected during the war.[156] In 1952, residents at the hostel were among the 1,000 people who marched through the city protesting evictions from migrant hostels, with men, women and children singing patriotic songs and carrying banners stating, 'We fight for British justice,' and, 'For six years we have fought the Gestapo. We fight again.'[157]

None of these buildings survived on the site, although one structure appears to have been relocated to Oakleigh and remains there as the former Australian Air League headquarters.[158] Another hut was relocated in 1973 to Essendon where it was used by the Sea Scouts at Fairbairn Park.[159]

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[156] Fishermans Bend Migrant Hostel Facebook page. Accessed online, from http://goo.gl/ROM6b.

[157] "700 Migrants Demonstrate in Melbourne.' *Barrier Miner*, 22 November 1952:1. Accessed online 29 May 2013, from http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article61225578.

[158] Heritage Alliance, 2008, 'Survey of Post-War Built Heritage in Victoria', p. 248, 'Fishermen's Bend Migrant Hostel (former) [remnant hut]', 030-005 50-56 Atkinson Street, Oakleigh. Accessed online, from http://www.dpcd.vic.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0015/47202/Post_war_study_Stage1_Vol2_Trans.pdf.

[159] 15th Essendon Sea Scouts, Accessed online, from http://www.vicscouts.com.au/essendon-15th/history/1956.
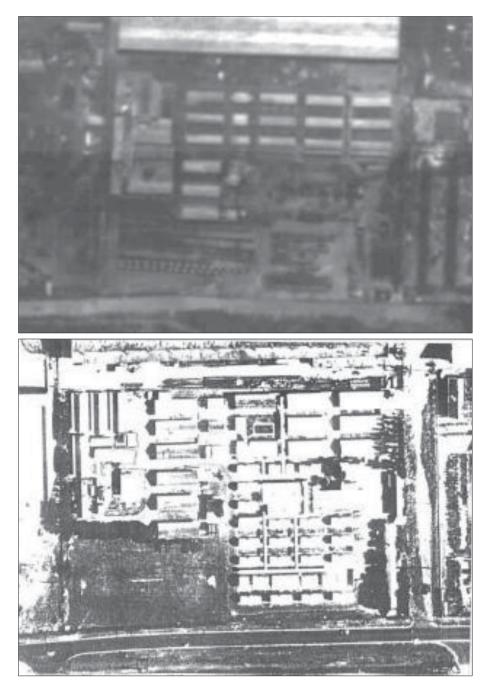
**Figure 73   Plans of Fishermans Bend Migrant Hostel, 1945 and 1969**[160]

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[160] Photos of Fishermans Bend Migrant Hostel, Linda Walton. Accessed online, from http://goo.gl/sgDZx.

**Figure 74   Aerial photo showing Migrant Hostel with GMH in background**

A growing working class and radical political climate was developing, creating a number of unions and other associations. The Amalgamated Society of Engineers was prominent at the Port Melbourne railway workshops from the 1890s, while the Port Phillip Stevedores Labour Association, Hobsons Bay Fishermen's Union and Melbourne Wharf Labourers Union all formed in the 1880s. They were all active participants in the 1886-1887 maritime strike, a formative event in the Australian union movement.[161]

Some more conservative factions in the community formed the Temperance Hall, while the Licencing Reduction Board was responsible for closing 18 hotels in the district in the early 20th century.

## 4.20  Arts and culture

Theme: 10.1 Arts and creative life in the city

South of the river was a wilder place with less oversight or regulation, where bohemian and risqué pursuits could be conducted out of the glare of the establishment across the river.

From the 1870s, travelling circuses pitched their big tops on the roadside near the site now occupied by the Arts Centre. Cooper and Bailey's Great American International Circus was possibly the first one, in 1877. In 1893 Fuller's Great Circus and Menagerie erected its first building on the site and, in 1901, the Fitzgerald Brothers' Circus built a more substantial timber building to house their entertainers. Wirth's Circus took over the entire site in 1907 and built the 'Olympia' building, which was the only permanent circus venue in Australia until the 1950s. An amusement park known as 'Princes Court' was developed on the land adjacent to the circus in 1904/1905. Popular attractions included a toboggan ride, a waterslide, restaurants, bars and a Japanese teahouse.

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[161] Lowenstein & Hills, *Under the Hook*, 1982, p.7.

**Figure 75   Princes Court, c.1908, printed postcard (State Library of Victoria H40394/6)**



**Figure 76   Looking towards Southbank in the 1890s, showing St Kilda Road, the Green Mill, Wirth's Park and industry (http://icelegendsaustralia.com/FAI.html)**

Popular attractions included a water chute, open-air skating, helter-skelter and other amusements. Other entertainment facilities included the Green Mill dance hall and club and the Glaciarium ice-skating rink, which opened on City Road in the early 1900s.

Other attractions included the ice skating rink, known as the 'Glaciarium', which opened in 1906, and the Green Mill Dance Hall with its reproduction of a Dutch windmill, built in 1926. Wirths' Circus

survived the Depression as well as both World Wars. The building was converted into a cinema during the First World War and some of the buildings were used to nurse veterans, while the dance hall was popular with returned servicemen. But in 1953 Wirths' Olympia was destroyed by fire. The Green Mill also suffered from numerous fires and would later become the Forty Club, and then the Trocadero Ballroom. The buildings were replaced, first by a car park and then later with the Arts Centre. The annual Moomba Parade, which commenced in 1954, followed a route along St Kilda Road.



**Figure 77    The Glaciarium in the 1950s (State Library of Victoria
http://handle.slv.vic.gov.au/10381/50184)**

The State Government of Victoria had been looking for a site for a large cultural complex to house a gallery, theatres and a concert hall from the 1940s. The National Gallery was in cramped space, sharing with the museum and library in Swanston Street, and there were few adequate concert venues apart from the Melbourne Town Hall. The Wirth Brothers' circus site was ideal, and a popular choice for the new cultural institutions.

In 1955, Victorian Premier Henry Bolte announced that a new Victorian Arts Centre would be built on the site, and appointed noted local architect Roy Grounds, who split from his firm of Grounds, Romberg and Boyd to take the commission on alone. The National Gallery was under construction from 1959-1968; the concert hall opened in 1982 and the theatres building followed soon after, in 1984.

The design of all three buildings had to be modified to cope with the uneven ground and the presence of deep Coode Island Silt, which required more substantial 25-metre-deep foundations, dewatering and cathodic protection to prevent the metal from corrosion in the waterlogged ground. The spire on the theatres building was replace in 1996 due to corrosion. The concert hall was renamed Hamer Hall in 2004 to honour former premier and leading arts supporter Sir Rupert Hamer.[162]



**Figure 78   Former courtyard in the National Gallery of Victoria (State Library of Victoria)**

The Victorian Ballet were temporarily housed in the YMCA building on City Road, which was linked by a concrete footbridge to the Arts Centre. When the YMCA was demolished, a purpose-built Victorian Ballet Centre was erected. Other facilities were also eventually added to what was planned to be an arts and entertainment precinct, such as the Melbourne Recital Centre, Melbourne Theatre Company (2009) and the ABC centre in 1994, in which the Iwaki Auditorium can be found.

The Playbox Theatre Company moved to Southbank following a fire and subsequent demolition of their Exhibition Street building. The former Castlemaine Brewing Company malthouse was converted to provide two theatre spaces in 1990, taking on the name the Malthouse Theatre. The Australian Centre for Contemporary Art gallery, designed by Wood Marsh Architects, was erected next door in 2002 on land that had been cleared previously for the construction of the Domain and Burnley City Link Tunnels.

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[162] 'Between Beauty And Power: Henry Moore's Draped Seated Woman As An Emblem of the National Gallery Of Victoria's Modernity', p.1959-1968, Christopher Marshall, *Art Journal*, 46, NGV, 2006.

## 4.21 Civic improvement and social history

*Themes:* 13.1 – Public recreation, 3.4 – Defining public space

Although sometimes considered a forgotten wasteland, Port Melbourne Council and residents recognised the need for civil improvements in the Sandridge flats area and, in particular, along the boundary of the residential areas. The early surveys provided for a recreational reserve along Williamstown Road by about 1880. This became the North Port Oval, which was developed substantially in the 1900s. As a point of focus for the working class industrial community, the Oval was renowned for its games full of rough play and fights – among both players and fans – when it hosted a semi-final in 1903. The 'roughing up' of an umpire in a 1907 game caused the Victorian Football Association (VFA) games to be moved away from the Oval for the rest of the season. Unruly behaviour and on-ground incidents occurred regularly over the next 40 years, and were subject to several VFA investigations.

Regardless of its notoriety, the Port Melbourne club enjoyed considerable success in the 1920s, with a winning streak of 33 games between July 1920 and June 1924. The £80,000 grandstand was opened with much fanfare by Mayor Cr. A. Tucker in 1928, and later renamed the Norman Leslie Goss stand after the long-time club secretary and player. The ground was taken over by the army in 1942 and was used to grow vegetables. It subsequently lost its high-quality playing surface when the Harbour Trust banned the removal of sand (which had been used for many years) as top-dressing.[163]

Local Port Melbourne resident and football player Tommy Lahiff put it bluntly: 'You were either a wharfie or you worked in one of the factories. Swallow and Ariell's, Kitchens, Dunlops, Laycocks.'[164] One of Unilever's foremen in the 1950s recalled that Port Melbourne was a close knit-community, rough but honest. 'Once you were in, you were right.'[165] The people of Port Melbourne suffered enormously through the 1930s depression, when 75-90%of young people are thought to have been unemployed.

The Princes Bridge entrance to Melbourne was marked by another prominent but relatively small public space for over 90 years – the Snowden Gardens, which were vested in the City of Melbourne in 1913. In the 1890s the area near Princes Bridge was a quarry hole and military purposes reserve, but it was subsequently landscaped as parkland and turned into the Snowdon Gardens. This was later the site of the three lily-pad-like dishes of the Southgate Fountain designed by Robin Boyd, but these were moved to storage when the Arts Centre Concert Hall was constructed.

[163] Sando Caruso Football Grounds of Melbourne Pennon, 2002, p.118-119.
[164] Tommy Lahiff, quoted in 'They can carry me out', *Memories of Port Melbourne*, (1991), p.57, cited in Ward, 2011, *Port Phillip Heritage Review*, Vol.1, p.52.
[165] Ward, 2011, *Port Phillip Heritage Review*, Vol.1, p.53.

**Figure 79    Melbourne from St Kilda Road, showing Snowden Gardens, Princes Bridge and St Kilda Road, 1903 (State Library of Victoria)**



**Figure 80    Aerial view of the Southbank area, Melbourne, near Princes Bridge before the construction of Hamer Hall (Strizic, M., 1960)**

The loss of the Snowdon Gardens was, to some extent, compensated for by the new open space around the new gallery and Arts Centre, including the National Gallery of Victoria's sculpture garden and the Richard Pratt Garden at the Arts Centre, which today still features its own fountain, 'Nautilus', in honour of Roy Grounds. Similarly, the moat around the National Gallery of Victoria contributes open space of a sort to the streetscape.

## Golf

Fishermans Bend also lays claim to being the origin of the Victorian Golf Club (VGC), established on 6 March 1903 by a group of influential Melbourne businessmen led by Billy Meader. They wished to create a 'good' golf club to play over leased links land at Fishermans Bend in Port Melbourne. Meader is widely regarded as the 'father of Victorian golf'. He was one of a small group of devotees who set up the VGA in 1907, and was the VGA's first treasurer and later appointed secretary from 1907 until 1932.

The original course at Fishermans Bend was located on the south-east corner of Lorimer and Salmon streets opposite the site of the future Holden factory. In 1926 the VGC relocated to a new site in Cheltenham, a short walk from the railway station, as a convenience for the many members, as few owned cars in those early days.[166] While the club was located at Fishermans Bend, the VGC had the distinction of being the only 'members club' in Australia. The old course continued to host open and amateur events of the VGC until at least 1928.[167]



**Figure 81    Fishermans Bend Golf Course from Todd Road**

## Racing

After World War II ended, the runways near the aircraft factories were adapted for use as a race track. Car and motorcycle races were held on the runways between 1953 and 1959. Other areas of

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[166] 'A unique overview of the Victoria Golf Club History'. Accessed online, from http://www.victoriagolf.com.au/cms/about-us/history/.
[167] 'Golf Notes' *Table Talk*, 23 February 1928:42. Accessed online 13 September 2016, from http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article146843511; 'Victoria s Golf Clubs and Personalities', *Table Talk*, 21 December 1933:41. Accessed online 13 September 2016, from http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article147259999.

wasteland were also devoted to motorcycle scrambles and dirt-track racing. The Fishermans Bend Track was laid out along the runways and taxiways of the airfield with hay bales marking corners, but otherwise there were no barriers along the track. Many Australian racing drivers had their start at Fishermans Bend, including Bob Jane and Bib Stillwell.[168]
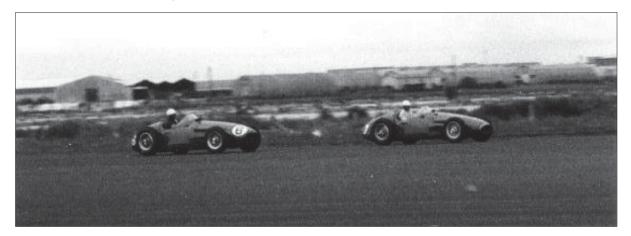


**Figure 82  Motor racing in the 1950s (Geoffrey Green)**



**Figure 83  Pit straight on the main east-west runway, c.1954**

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[168] *Motor Magazine*, September 1965. Accessed online, from http://www.motorsportmagazine.com/archive/article/september-1965/58/those-maseratis-australia.
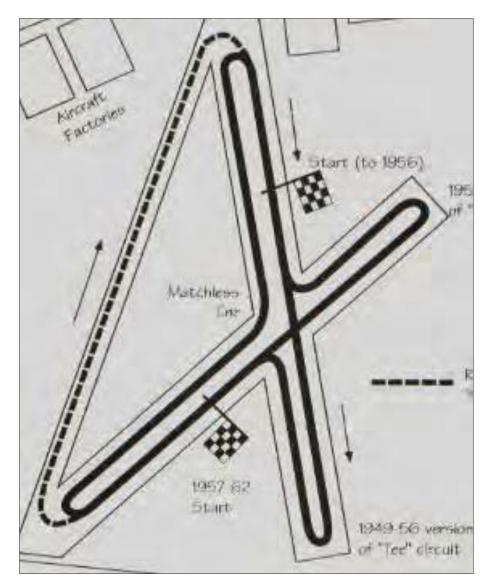
**Figure 84   Plan of race tracks at Fishermans Bend runways**

## West Gate Park

Theme: 1.6 – Appreciating and protecting Victoria's natural wonders

Fishermans Bend was considered to be a wasteland and dumping ground for most of its life. The filling of the natural sand ridges and swales was finally complete when the most recent Webb Dock development was undertaken 2015-2016. However, the area saw a transformation as a consequence of the construction of the West Gate Bridge. Oscar Meyer, chair of the West Gate Bridge Authority, wanted to create a beautiful park beside the Yarra River to complement the sculptural form of the bridge. Planning Minister Evan Walker and David Yencken from the Planning Department were instrumental in getting this plan off the ground. The idea was presented to the Federal Government as part of Victoria's sesquicentenary celebration and the park became the largest funded project among the anniversary celebrations. Initial works began during the 1984-1985 financial year.[169]

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[169] Friends of West Gate Park, The 30th Anniversary book: The West Gate Park creation story, November 2015, http://www.westgatepark.org/friends-of-westgate-park/

A 1985 master plan by Loder & Bayly emphasised the grand scale and unique qualities of the site, which would be seen from above by motorists crossing the bridge each day. Lakes were intended to be focal points, with the bridge acting as the central sculptural feature. An island visitor centre, an amphitheatre and a narrow-gauge tourist train were proposed, but none of these eventuated. Fill was brought in and filled into the undulating landscape to create artificial hills providing views of the lakes and lagoons. The water areas also incorporated a salt lake, a result of a deep hole left after sand mining in the 1930s.

West Gate Park opened on 7 November 1985, dedicated to the people of Victoria. Lyn Moore was commissioned to produce an appropriate artwork, the *Earth Series*, eight separate sandstone, granite and ironbark sculptures, which were erected in the park in 1990. The prototype of the concrete box girder section of bridge forms an entry feature and viewing platform over the water between the dam and the freshwater lake.



**Figure 85   One of Lynn Moore's *Earth Series* sculptures in West Gate Park**

The most dramatic changes in the Fishermans Bend and Port Melbourne area have come within the last two decades. Bay-side piers and sidings, where former rail yards and industry were located, became the upmarket Beacon Cove development as industrial sites were converted into apartments. Such development has accelerated rapidly, with the most recent apartment boom occurring at Bay Street in Port Melbourne and along City Road in Southbank.

## 4.22  Redevelopment

Theme: 5.3 – Developing a large, city-based economy, 6.7 – Making homes for Victorians

The current transformation of the Southbank area goes back to development of the first post-war office buildings spreading back from St Kilda Road. Australian Paper Mills (APM) and Mobil Oil both

had a long-standing presence in the area, so when it came time to expand, it seemed obvious to erect new glass and steel office buildings near their Southbank industrial sites, rather than in the CBD. Bates Smart & McCutcheon designed the high-rise office buildings for both firms between 1959 and 1961.[170]



**Figure 86    Mobil Oil and APM buildings, South Melbourne, with the Southgate fountain in Snowden Gardens in the foreground (Mark Strizic, 1972, State Library of Victoria  H2011.55/1869)**

While in the late-1960s, development focus was on the creation of the Arts Precinct on St Kilda Road, the focus of change expanded to the Southbank Area in the early-1980s. One story puts Minister for Planning Evan Walker and Minister for the Arts Race Mathews at a function at the top of the new Rialto Tower. Looking out the window, Minister Walker pointed down to Southbank below. 'That is sufficient legacy for us,' he said, 'if we are remembered for nothing else and begin to get that right.'[171] Walker brought a proposal to Cabinet to redevelop Southbank. 'We had to buy out a whole host of derelict industrial, commercial and warehouse buildings on Southbank which were on long Crown leases,' he recalled.[172]

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[170] Goad, Philip & Bates Smart (Firm) (2004), *Bates Smart: 150 years of Australian Architecture*. Thames and Hudson Australia, Fishermans Bend, Vic.

[171] Arts Victoria's 40th Anniversary. Accessed online, from http://40yearsof.arts.vic.gov.au/pages/eighties/milestone39/.

[172] 'Visionary' former minister Evan Walker dies at 79', James Campbell, *Herald Sun*, 17 February 2015.

One of the earliest residential developments in the Southbank area was Coventry Gardens, constructed in 1993 by Central Equity as medium-rise housing on the site of the Commonwealth Clothing Factory. It was soon followed by Central Equity's Southside Gardens at 100 Southbank Boulevard and Southbank Gardens at 120 Dodds St. One of the largest buildings built in the Southbank area was IBM House at the south end of Sturt Street. This was a 13-storey concrete and glass office block built in 1970, which was heavily altered for conversion into apartments in 1996.

Along with redevelopment of the buildings in Southbank, there were also substantial changes made to the street patterns. Comparing Melway maps today against those of the 1960s shows that the original Riverside Avenue and Yarra Bank Road, which ran beside the river between St Kilda Road and Clarendon Street, have disappeared and been replaced by the Southgate and Crown promenades, while Lorimer Street has been diverted around the new Exhibition Centre.

A number of streets have also changed names. Maffra Street and Nolan Street are now both part of Southbank Boulevard, Brown Street and Aikman Street became the two ends of the new Southgate Avenue, and Byrne Street is Riverside Quay. Other streets, such as Kirby Grove and Bright Street, have disappeared completely.