



# Victoria Quay Waterfront

Opportunities for a vibrant civic,  
commercial and tourist destination



**VICTORIA QUAY**  
FREMANTLE

# The opportunity

Historic Victoria Quay, on the southern side of Fremantle Harbour, has enormous potential as a vibrant civic, commercial and tourist destination.

Throughout the world, port waterfront precincts have been re-imagined, creating new and revitalised areas that are highly popular with locals and tourists. There are many immediate development opportunities in the expansive western end.

Victoria Quay is not a green-fields site. It has essential infrastructure, harbour vistas, heritage buildings, public transport, the architecturally-stunning WA Maritime Museum, a busy ferry terminal servicing Rottnest Island, retail and a degree of place activation already occurring. It sits alongside Bathers Beach and Western Australia's oldest building, the historic

Round House and is flanked by the city's iconic West End. However, Victoria Quay can become so much more.

Victoria Quay is an unpolished gem that will further enhance the port city. For the State of Western Australia, this is an opportunity to create a new tourism and community destination, generate jobs, make great use of existing transport connections and offer a significant new attraction for incoming cruise passengers. All of these are in alignment with State Government priorities.

Re-development of Victoria Quay will deliver a new civic and commercial space to all Western Australians and overseas and interstate visitors, while celebrating an iconic location of historical significance and cultural meaning.

# The work already done

In response to a Government priority to develop Victoria Quay, the Victoria Quay Waterfront Steering Group (VQWSG) was formed in November 2018 to chart a new vision for Victoria Quay. Chaired by Simone McGurk MLA and reporting to the Minister for Ports, its membership comprised:

- Fremantle Ports
- DevelopmentWA
- City of Fremantle
- Department of Transport
- Fremantle Chamber of Commerce
- WA Museum
- Tourism WA
- Department of Planning, Lands and Heritage
- Westport Taskforce
- Department of Jobs, Tourism, Science, and Innovation.

The steering group reviewed existing planning work, undertook a high-level opportunities assessment and explored the issues and what is possible for the whole of Victoria Quay.

However, the large part of the work of the steering group focused on the west end because this is where the immediate opportunities exist. The remainder of Victoria Quay (east of D Shed) is currently vital for port operations and further assessment of opportunities for this area will be explored in the future and guided by port master planning outcomes.

The steering group recognised that three overarching themes existed with regards to the future of Victoria Quay. These were:

- Connectors
- Development
- Place





## CONNECTORS

The steering group determined Victoria Quay is significantly disconnected from the Fremantle CBD and this has inhibited the waterfront's redevelopment as a vibrant people place. If people do not have easy and inviting access to the precinct, the area's potential cannot be fulfilled.

As the gateway to Rottnest Island and the Swan River for around 800,000 tourists a year the physical connectors into Victoria Quay are critical.

The connectors between the Victoria Quay waterfront and the city are confusing, disjointed and unattractive. The Cliff Street connections, pedestrian rail crossings and the Fremantle Railway Station/bus terminal all require redesign and improvements, but will require collaboration between the Public Transport Authority, City of Fremantle, Main Roads WA and Fremantle Ports. Furthermore, the WA Maritime Museum is spectacular, yet remains isolated until new pedestrian pathways reach down to it.

The steering group found in particular that the redevelopment of Fremantle Railway Station's forecourt and bus interchange is essential to deliver improved connectivity between the city and Victoria Quay.

## DEVELOPMENT

Victoria Quay needs catalysts for development to occur, such as one or more significant commercial projects, which would in turn encourage further investment.

Early development needs to be geographically concentrated, because the western end of Victoria Quay is a comparatively large area. Focusing on smaller zones within it and progressively implementing development in a staged and planned way will bring success.

## PLACE

It is only when Victoria Quay has a base level of physical infrastructure and place activation that it will become a 'public realm' truly attractive to developers, investors, business operators, tourists and Western Australians.

The western end of Victoria Quay currently has some physical limitations that inhibit place activation. People congregate in places where they feel comfortable, that are attractive, have good facilities and offer a memorable experience. That missing foundational infrastructure includes adequate seating, shade, street furniture, free public Wi-Fi, street art, buskers' stands, running/walking loops, play spaces and better wayfinding.

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PASSENGER TERMINAL

'A' SHED

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## Early opportunities

From the three overarching themes, the steering group identified six projects which, together, represent early opportunities to transform Victoria Quay in the short to medium term.

These projects have been prioritised as the most important:

1. Improving the Cliff Street entry
2. A Shed redevelopment
3. Enhancing the cruise ship experience
4. Exploring the potential for a film industry hub
5. Connecting Bathers Beach and the Slipways Precinct
6. Improving 'public realm' infrastructure and place activation



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## 1. Improving the Cliff Street entry

Cliff Street is the major vehicle and pedestrian access point to Victoria Quay, particularly for Rottneest holidaymakers.

Modifying and enhancing the Cliff Street entrance to Victoria Quay is not only required from a planning perspective but also offers the opportunity for a high-impact symbolic change.

The favoured option would greatly simplify road design by reducing rail crossings from three to two, and in addition, create a more pedestrian-friendly environment.

Critically, it would form a more attractive, safe and seamless continuation of Cliff Street, in and out of Victoria Quay. Collaboration between Fremantle Ports, the City of Fremantle, Public Transport Authority and Main Roads WA is required to achieve this outcome.

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## 2. A Shed redevelopment

Fremantle Ports and the WA Maritime Museum issued an Expression of Interest for the redevelopment of the historic A Shed, closest to the WA Maritime Museum on the harbour's edge. An announcement on the outcome of this process will be made in August 2020.

A Shed's emergence as a unique harbour-side asset is a huge opportunity for Victoria Quay.

This iconic heritage-listed building requires refurbishment but has the potential to be developed by a third-party into a major commercial and hospitality enterprise, which would act as a significant catalyst for further development on Victoria Quay by others. Currently Victoria Quay lacks such a major commercial operation that would spark the change sought.

A revitalised A Shed will provide a new visitor experience for locals, Rottnest Island and cruise ship visitors, as well as generate jobs and vibrancy. Its immediate proximity to the WA Maritime Museum will significantly increase visitation numbers to that internationally-recognised tourist attraction.



Indicative concept only showing raised garden bed with WA flora

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## 3. Enhancing the cruise ship visitor experience

Victoria Quay has an excellent facility in the Fremantle Passenger Terminal, that is both highly efficient and heritage-listed. Constructing a new passenger terminal further west along Victoria Quay at E berth was explored, but found to be prohibitively expensive.

The steering group believed the focus should instead be upon improving the connection between the existing terminal and the city/railway station.

To complement recent internal renovation work at the Fremantle Passenger Terminal and new entry canopy, a raised garden bed showcasing indigenous WA flora would enhance the arrival experience and soften with greenery the carpark forecourt.

The current pedestrian walkway to Victoria Quay and the city would receive enhanced wayfinding, shade and seating.

There is also an opportunity to improve temporary storage for cruise ship passengers' suitcases, by identifying a suitable location within the west end or the city centre for the secure storage of luggage to enable arriving passengers to spend a day in Fremantle before travelling to their accommodation.

This project will need to be progressed in the context of the impact that COVID-19 may have on future cruise ship visits to Fremantle.



## 4. Exploring the potential for a film industry hub

Victoria Quay could potentially become a Western Australian hub for the film industry. Filmmakers have consistently expressed a great desire to take advantage of Western Australia as a shooting location, yet no geographically-consolidated film industry centre exists in WA.

Fremantle, with its strong focus on the arts, is an ideal location for a film headquarters, potentially bringing jobs, an opportunity for an educational stream, innovation and skills development and creativity to Victoria Quay. It would offer value-adding economic opportunities for other industries, including graphic designers, editors, photographers, fashion, the retail and service industries.

This concept requires a detailed investigation to ascertain its potential.

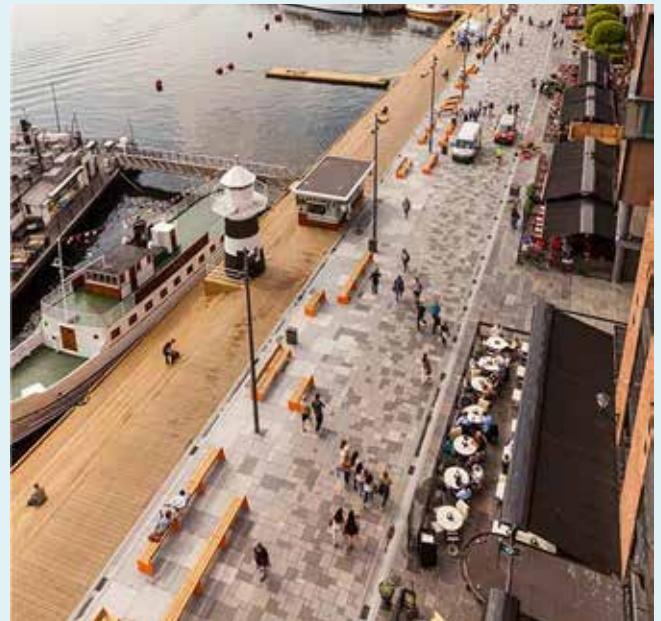
## 5. Connecting Bathers Beach to the Slipways precinct

There is an opportunity to improve the connector between the Slipways precinct near the WA Maritime Museum with the Fishing Boat Harbour, via Bathers Beach and J Shed, through the TAFE courtyard to WA Maritime Museum.

Currently, access to the Slipways precinct is limited, yet this area has enormous potential for tourism and future development such as short-stay accommodation.

The vision is for a new pedestrian and cycle boardwalk through one of Fremantle's most iconic and historical areas, again linking the city and the port. It would underpin future strategies for telling the Walyalup story, showcasing art installations and interpreting local history.

This newly-created boardwalk would be an important tourism development for Fremantle by linking two high-grade State assets - Fremantle's Fishing Boat Harbour and Victoria Quay.



Images are indicative only and boardwalk/connectors and landscaping still subject to detailed design

## 6. Improving public realm infrastructure and place activation

This project is in two parts - improving the 'public realm' infrastructure and activating place.

Public realm improvement is necessary to create the pre-conditions for further, larger, development. Practical changes that would need to occur would include:

- Improved seating, shade, feature lighting and greenery;
- High quality and consistent signage, banners and entry statements;
- Provision of playground infrastructure;
- Art installations;
- Maritime trails and wayfinding; and
- Free Wi-Fi

These physical changes should be accompanied by place activation strategies to encourage vibrant use-of-place.

Current best practice is for public places to have continual place activation management, to build their profile and attract people. Fremantle Ports has invested in two successive 'Quay to Summer' programs and has also prepared a longer-term activation plan, with input from the City of Fremantle, Tourism WA and the Fremantle Chamber of Commerce.

Going forward, more place activation measures should be implemented, comprising all those programmed and



spontaneous activities that make a location become a true 'people place'. Pivotal strategies for activation include:

- Managed seasonal and supporting event programs;
- Facilitating local community groups to take advantage of Victoria Quay;
- Running and walking loops and fitness classes;
- Busking corners; and
- Providing iconic social media photo opportunities that align with Fremantle's Destination Marketing Strategic Plan 2018-22.

## Next steps

These opportunities above can be pursued in the short term, while consideration continues to be given to mid to longer-term Victoria Quay initiatives, such as short-stay accommodation, additional future connectors and development of the commercial precinct. The Victoria Quay Waterfront Steering Group will now take the following steps:

1. Progress the implementation of some of the priority projects outlined which includes determining how these might best be funded, scoped and implemented.
2. Progress a working group comprising the Public Transport Authority, City of Fremantle, DevelopmentWA and Fremantle Ports to undertake a feasibility study around planning for the Fremantle Railway Station precinct.

3. Explore the longer-term development options and opportunities for the west end of Victoria Quay. This investigation would consider funding and how to best stage development.

This future investigative work may be progressed via a high-level business case prepared by DevelopmentWA, in conjunction with Fremantle Ports, taking input from all group members.

All of this will draw upon the significant research and planning done in the past 12 months and before that, to deliver on the vision of a redeveloped west end of Victoria Quay, so it can emerge as a premier tourism, community and commercial destination for Western Australia.