



City venues

Celebrate big day in the city

Melbourne offers loads of possibilities when it comes to choosing a reception venue — from the grandest hotels to sublime seaside settings.

Rydges Melbourne

The recently refurbished Rydges Melbourne, in the heart of the city, holds stylish wedding receptions in the hotel's luxurious banquet rooms and event spaces — all seven of them.

Couples can choose from a range of options, from sit-down dinners for 70 guests at Chicago (dinner packages from \$99 per person) to cocktail events at Bobby McGee's for up to 660 guests (cocktail packages from \$95 per person).

After the festivities the happy couple can retire to a complimentary spa suite for a wedding night in the lap of luxury, and their parents can bed down in a comfy room also gratis at this stylish 4.5-star hotel. Phone 9635 1210, www.rydges.com

Bayview Eden

Near Albert Park Lake, Bayview Eden offers a range of all-inclusive reception packages including a standard 'wedding package' with canapes, a three-course dinner, 4.5-hour beverage package, table centrepieces, floral arrangements, for \$99 per person. It includes wedding night suite accommodation for the happy couple, a champagne breakfast, and the piece de resistance — complimentary overnight accommodation every anniversary for a lifetime. Phone 9250 2222, go to www.bayviewhotels/eden

The Langham

Make merry in an elegant function room at the luxury five-star Langham Hotel, on the banks of the Yarra River. The Langham's 'My Wedding'

package includes personal wedding coordinator, canapes, three-course dinner, five-hour beverage package, function accessories including table centrepieces, personalised menus, one night's accommodation for the bride and groom, and discounted accommodation for guests, for \$165 per person. Phone 8696 8888, visit www.melbourne.langhamhotels.com.au

The Atlantic

The Atlantic Group[v] operates four stylish event spaces at Central Pier in Docklands. In the past decade, Atlantic has hosted more than 2000 weddings, from epic sit-down dinners for more than 1400 guests to intimate celebrations for 50.

Atlantic's wedding coordinators assist the bride and groom in all aspects of the big day, from catering to entertainment options, table layouts and centrepieces. "These days it's not about offering a standard wedding package, it's all about individuality," says wedding coordinator Megan Adams. "Brides and grooms want their personalities reflected in every detail of their big day. The executive chef ensures the couple's favourite foods and wines are on the menu; wedding coordinators make sure flowers are perfect and table settings just right, and we offer a choice of stunning wedding cakes exclusive to our guests."

Four venues all of varying sizes are located side-by-side on the waterfront from glamorous Peninsula that caters to 1488 people for a sit-down event or 2500 cocktail-style; Sumac features Moroccan influences; the newly re-branded MAIA is a chic fusion of contemporary and historic, while Sketch is a sophisticated private dining room. Wedding packages start from \$125 per person. Phone 8623 9600, www.atlanticgroupv.com.au



FROM LEFT: Atlantic at Docklands; Bayview Eden.





Waterside revolution is only half finished

Melbourne Docklands – a \$12 billion waterfront development that has changed the face of the CBD – is Australia's biggest construction project and a large urban renewal project even by international standards.

Visitors to Docklands can already see a bustling harbourside community that has placed the CBD back in touch with its historic origins, but many people don't realise the development still has a long way to go.

VicUrban, the body in charge of Docklands, says the project is being developed in stages, and is currently approaching the halfway point of its development. When complete in 2020, it will almost double the size of the CBD.

Docklands is divided into precincts, each with its own distinct character and mix of residential, retail and commercial activities built around waterfront promenades with heritage-listed wharves and state-of-the-art marinas.

"Over the past 10 years, Docklands has gone from being the city's poor relation to a central part of our economic and social fabric," Planning Minister Justin Madden said when announcing the development's next stage.

"Although only 50 per cent has been developed, it is already a \$7 billion economic hub, home to more than 40 major national or international companies employing more than 19,000 people.

"But Docklands is much more than just an extension of Melbourne's business heart. It is also one of our newest suburbs, home to more than 6000 people living in 3400 homes, and the challenge now is to strengthen the community within this important growth area."

Community facilities at Docklands already include two medical centres, child care centres, gyms, pharmacies, four local bank branches, a post office and a supermarket, and there are now plans to add a local primary school at Harbour Esplanade. NewQuay, along with Waterfront City and Melbourne Central City Studios, make up the northern

precincts of Docklands, and the troubled gigantic Observation Wheel and bustling retail complex make the Waterfront City area hard to miss.

NewQuay, on the north-western edge of the harbour, is a mixed-use precinct, with a selection of restaurants, cafes and bars

lining the promenade along with shops and five residential towers.

A marina offers public and private berthing facilities and the NewQuay precinct's design, architecture and living environment have won several industry awards.

A business district, HQ NewQuay was launched in 2006 and includes Carrick Institute of Education with 1600 students and staff, and NewQuay's western precinct, is now introducing a range of new waterside residences and parklands.

With its distinctive peninsula in the heart of the Docklands, and direct connection to the CBD via Collins Street, the Victoria Harbour precinct has a mix of residential, office, retail and community open space set along 2.5 kilometres of water frontage.

Victoria Harbour has 30 hectares of space with promenades and parklands, and the Merchant Street retail precinct incorporates a shopping centre with cafes, restaurants, boutique outlets and convenience stores, including a Safeway supermarket.

Batman's Hill precinct is the interface between Docklands and the traditional CBD and includes *The Age* headquarters Media House, Kangan Batman TAFE, the Watergate apartment complex and historic Railway Goods Shed No 2. The southern precinct is home to Yarra's Edge, which runs along the Yarra River.

Planning powers over Docklands have been a contentious issue since the project's beginnings, with Melbourne City Council left out of the loop. However the council has been given increased planning powers for the area this year.

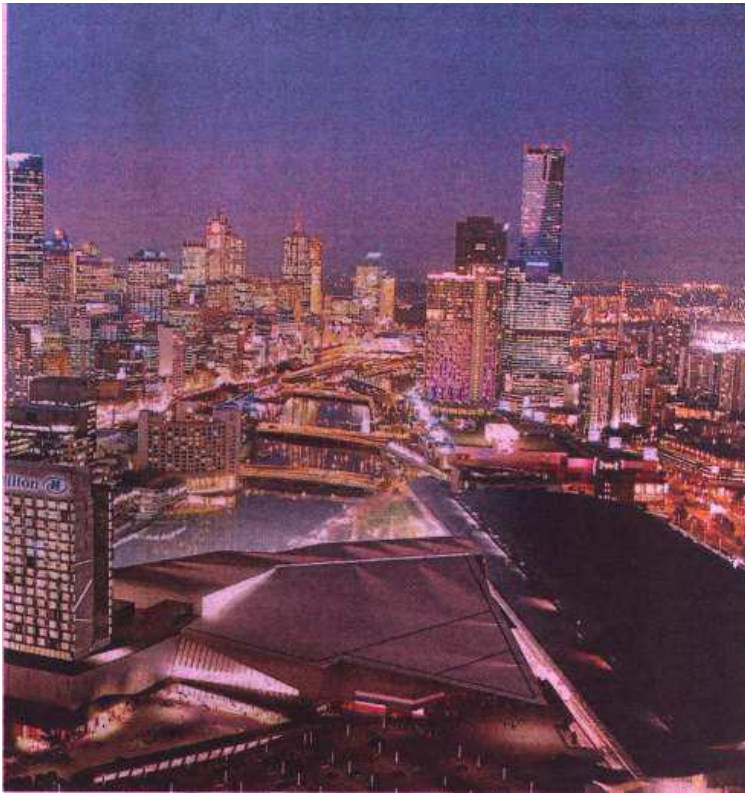
Lord Mayor Robert Doyle says it is critical that future planning for the harbour-side precinct married community infrastructure alongside private development.

"Private development needed to be the impetus of the first decade," he says. "But as we head towards 2020 we need to ensure the 'fine grain' of the precinct – the community infrastructure that gives a development its soul – is equally planned for."

Source: www.docklands.com



Docklands in 1935



Docklands: only half finished.



Docklands: the first decade

Docklands' first decade of development has included:

- \$6 billion investment in developing the first half of Docklands.
- \$1 billion investment in public infrastructure projects such as the Colson Street and La Trobe Street Bridges, the Harbour Esplanade, major roads and the Wharfedale.
- Lettable office space has grown to 475,000 square metres, an increase of 600 per cent since 2002 - with office vacancy rates have dropped to four per cent.
- Lettable retail space has grown to 158,000 square metres, an increase of more than 2000 per cent since 2002 while vacancy rates have dropped to 11 per cent.

- 653 businesses now operate in Docklands, a 600 per cent increase from 140 in 2002.
- 28 finance and insurance companies including ANZ, NAB, AMP and the Australian Taxation Office have clustered down at Docklands.
- 175 child care places have been created.
- 21,000 people are now employed in the area including 15,000 full time workers.
- Local and regional attractions such as Technozone, Central Pier function venues and Sobeau Stadium share more than 100 events a year.
- More than 120 restaurants, cafes, bars and eateries and 220 retail outlets are now located at Docklands.



Kings of the prime west are wild about win

BARBECUE ribs never tasted as good as they will this week at the town's latest winner in the national arena.

Restaurant owner Jo Gwatkin said sSs BBQ Barns in Port Macquarie now is recognised as Australia's best themed restaurant.

The dining establishment beat four other finalists at the 2010 National Savour Australia Restaurant and Catering Awards for Excellence, announced

at the Atlantic Peninsula in Melbourne's Docklands on Monday night.

"For us, this is the result of 3½ years of hard work as a family," Mrs Gwatkin said.

She said the restaurant was committed to quality in both preparation and presentation of meals and beverages.

Training was ongoing at the eatery, where customer service was of prime importance.

"We have some amazing staff, both past and present, and we thank

them for their loyalty and support.

"We also must thank the public, both locals and visitors, because we wouldn't be here without them."

The Gwatkins and their team were backing up after a big day on Sunday as a Tastings of the Hastings vendor.

Their specialty ribs and a decadent dessert were being snapped up as fast as they were cooked.

That didn't stop them getting ready for the

night's trade yesterday, with time out for a little celebration when they heard news of their Monday night win.

"Our biggest thanks needs to be reserved for our children – son Keiran and daughter-in-law Mel, and daughter Meaghan and son-in-law [and chef] Casey Luke.

"We want them to know how much they are appreciated," Mrs Gwatkin said.



□ **Number one:** sSs BBQ Barns franchisees Jo and Ross Gwatkin, with son-in-law chef Casey Luke and daughter Meaghan Gwatkin, celebrate their win yesterday.