



## DOCKLANDS PROJECT – MELBOURNE, AUSTRALIA By Barry Schafer

### BACKGROUND:

Due to the change to larger shipping now used for freight the original Melbourne docking facilities were not suitable for modification as the river access could not be dredged to a sufficient depth. New facilities were established at the mouth of the river which freed up over 200 hectares of space of the original Victoria Docks, 160 hectares of which was useable land space with the rest being waterways. The location adjoined the central business district of Melbourne located on the western boundary as shown in Figure 1. The Victorian State Government, who owned the original Victoria Dock precinct, decided to redevelop the site with a mixture of residential, commercial, retail and recreational facilities. Due to the extreme nature of the redevelopment it was broken up into several distinct areas as shown in Figure 1 with different bodies responsible for the development within these areas with the overall development controlled by the Victorian Docklands Authority. The estimated total overall cost of the entire development is AUD\$8 Billion. The redevelopment commenced in 1997 and is due for completion in 2015.



Figure 1 – Location of Docklands Precinct to Melbourne CBD

### TIME FRAME AND FINANCING:

With such a large project, more than four times in size than any other redevelopment undertaken in Australia, it was too large to be funded from a single source, including Government. The Victorian Government undertook to 'kick start' the project with the initial developments being funded with one part Government funding to 10 parts from the private sector. It is planned that by the time the project is completed this funding ratio will be 1 part Government to 80 parts private, and it is currently running at 1 part Government to 34 parts private.

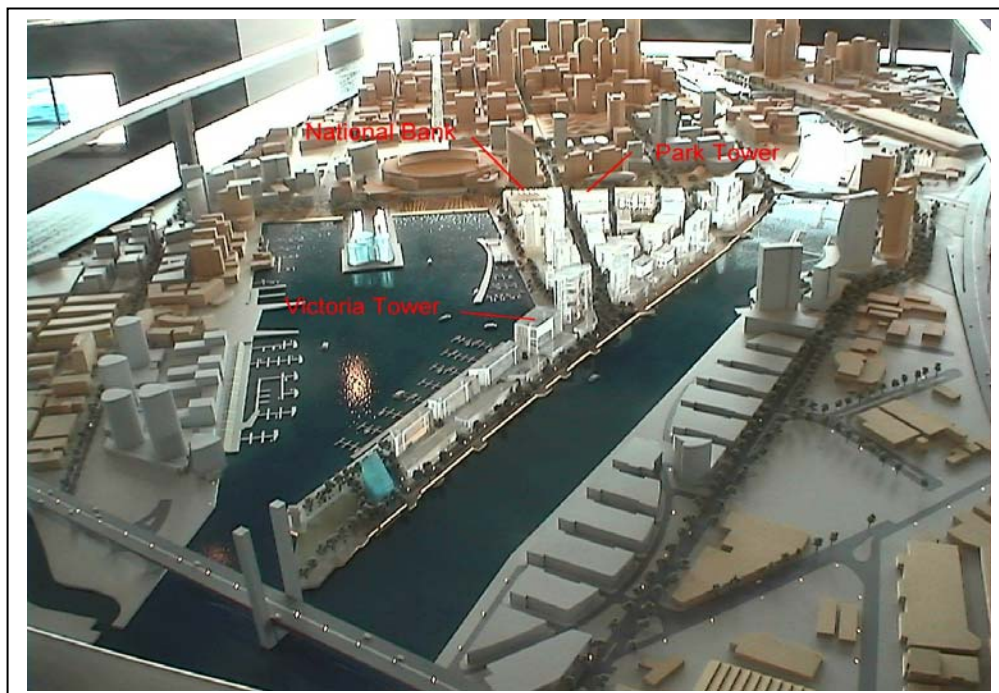
The initial project was the Stadium precinct started in 1997 and completed two years later. This sporting facility has many function facilities associated with it together with a major television network studios adjoining the main stadium. The stadium is used mainly for the Australian Rules Football competition and is the only facility which has a retractable roof for this type of sporting competition in Australia. It is also used for large concerts with its acoustics being designed to accommodate concert performances.

The second stage comprising three areas being the Village Docklands, Watergate and Dockland Studios. These three are nearing completion. These were developed at the same time as another area to the South of the Yarra river known as Yarra's Edge which is a completely residential development along the river bank. A further precinct, Victoria Harbour, is just commenced development with the first building, the National Bank headquarters, coming into service recently. This is by far the largest single development precinct accounting for 33 hectares of the total useable land space. The final three areas to be developed are Waterfront City, New Quay and Digital Harbour at Comtechport.

With such a large development there has been plenty of scope for architectural diversity.

### **VICTORIA HARBOUR**

Having just started in the last 18 months the first building has just started operation which is the headquarters of one of Australia's largest banks the National Bank. There are several retail stores also within this building. The total development comprises 33 hectares, 16 of which are open space, 10 for residential development, 4 for retail and 5 for commercial, and there will also be a marina with 200 berths situated mainly in front of the residential areas. The first two residential developments are currently being pre-sold, These are Park Tower and Victoria Tower which are shown in Figure 2 along with the National Bank building.



**Figure 2 – Victoria Harbour Precinct**

**CONCLUSION:**

The project is currently running to schedule with completion expected in 2015 and the distribution of funding between Government and the private sector is progressing as forecast. Developments such as this are only possible when land becomes available due to redevelopment of major facilities. It has been a very visionary concept to encompass such a variety of functions within the site. Some of the specialised facilities could only be built using a performance based Code because prescriptive Codes would be too restrictive as they are written around pre-conceived concepts of building design.