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Pool at centre of \$100m Docklands 'reconnection' plan

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Stephen Drill



An artist's impressions of the Docklands development.

A \$100 million plan to redevelop a neglected Docklands pier with a public pool has been unveiled.

Architect Damian Rogers has floated the pool on the end of Central Pier in the middle of the precinct.

The pool was in addition to his planned surf park, which would turn part of the harbour into a wave pool.

Mr Rogers told the *Sunday Herald Sun* he wanted to make Docklands more accessible to the public.

"It was about helping make Docklands a more connected part of Melbourne by providing more public space," he said. "The way to do that was to enhance access to the water."

Mr Rogers said the plan was still in its early stages, but he planned to heat the public pool and wave pool.

Cafes and restaurants would be included.

The Docklands wave pool plan comes as a rival surf park has been given the green light, and is due to open late next year at Melbourne airport.

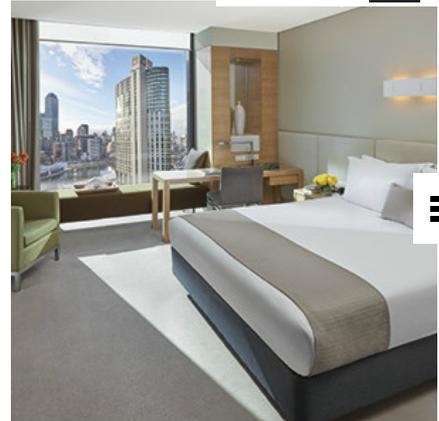
Lord Mayor Robert Doyle said there were logistical challenges with the pool and wave park. He said that part of the pier was a concrete carpark that would cost "tens of millions" to repair.

"We need not to repeat the mistakes we made in the early part of Docklands," he said. "We need to consider whether or not we want it closed off or an open waterway."

He said there were some plans to revitalise Harbour Esplanade, with the AFL's proposal to develop Etihad a key to the area, including a new focus on the water.

Committee for Melbourne chief executive **Martine** Letts said further community development was needed at Docklands.

"Anything that can be done to improve the liveability and the amenity of Docklands would be welcomed by the Committee for Melbourne," she said. "Docklands has not yet reached its full potential. It has, however, been growing organically, going forwards, not backwards."



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Places Victoria oversees the Docklands development.

Simon Wilson, general manager of precincts at Places Victoria, said: "Ideas for Central Pier need to be considered as part of the bigger picture opportunity to link the waterfront with the CBD.

"Any development of the pier would also need to be sympathetic to its status as a Melbourne icon and its heritage listing."

Building in Docklands began in 1997 but the area has been criticised for its lack of public spaces. The district was expected to have 20,000 residents and 80,000 workers by 2025.

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