

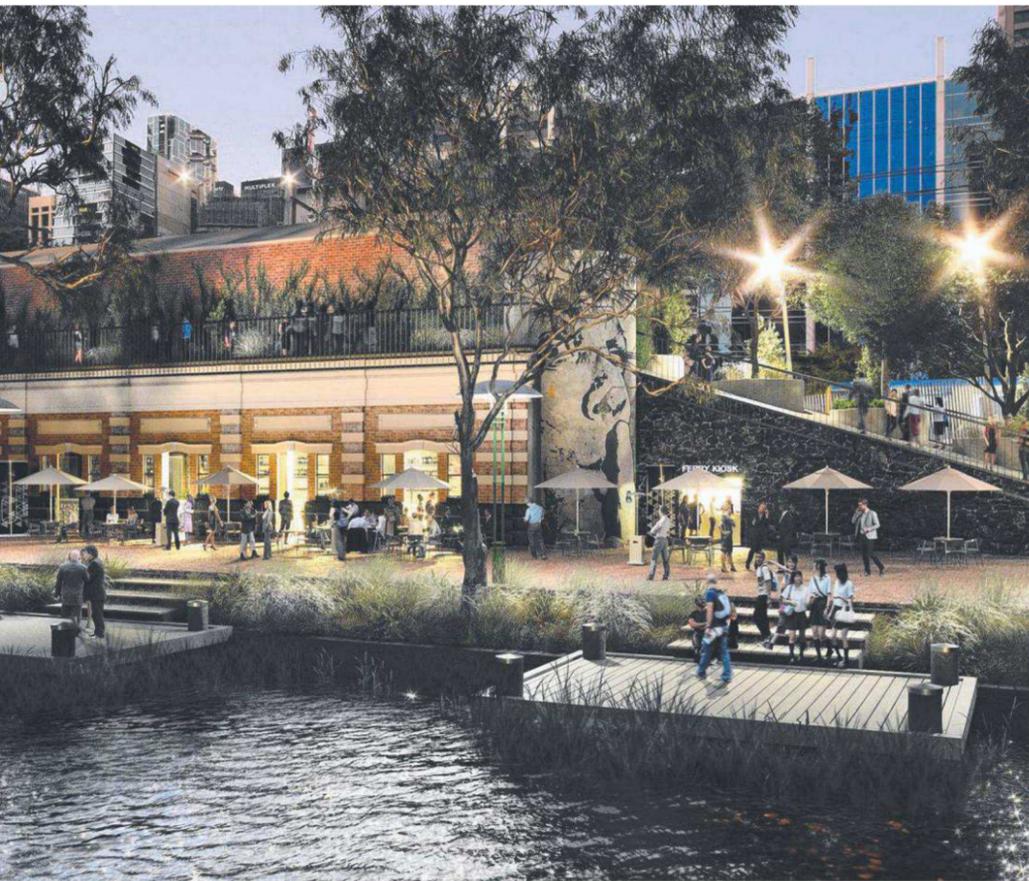
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 Victorian Chamber of Commerce and Industry



New Crown Melbourne chief executive Mike Volkert on the Riverwalk outside Crown; and (above) images of the planned Greenline River Park precinct. Picture: Wayne Taylor



Herald Sun
TOMORROW VICTORIA'S HOSPITAL CONSTRUCTION BOOM

We need an economy of experience

Lobbyists call for mindset change

JOHN MASANAUSKAS

CITY businesses should consider staying open later to cash in on Melbourne's booming night-time economy, a lobby group says.

And an employers' organisation wants Melbourne to host a world-class business conference to bring the best minds to the city for an event that would be syndicated globally.

As the inner city continues to recover from pandemic lockdowns, trends are emerging on how people work and visit the CBD.

Office occupancy rates are still well below 50 per cent, but the city is often buzzing with activity on week nights, and on weekends.

Committee for Melbourne chief executive Mark Melvin said the way some people worked had changed permanently with many working part of their weeks from home.

"It is therefore important that we find a way of developing an experience economy that means that city workers are encouraged to come in to work, and also participate in activities in the CBD," he said.

"CBD businesses might consider changing their ways of working. Since the night-time economy is booming, then maybe retail and arts organisations could open longer into the evening to take advantage of the increased foot traffic."

Mr Melvin said it was crucial a revitalisation process for the CBD considered Greater Melbourne, and how residents across the whole city took part in the work and life of the city.

"Where projects in the CBD can be accessible from across



Outdoor dining during the Street Feasts festival; (below) city workers have not returned in the same numbers as pre-pandemic. Pictures Getty Images, Ian Currie

the whole of the city, or allow the public to participate – such as more green areas and experience spaces – these are ways of attracting residents into the CBD," he said.

Victorian Chamber of Commerce and Industry chief executive Paul Guerra said work patterns were still a work in progress, but it was likely employees would return to offices about three days a week.

"There could be an opportunity for companies to share accommodation," he said.

"We might say, let's take a floor, three days a week for the first week I'll take it, you take it two days, and then the next week we swap."

"We may get to the point of universities expanding into a CBD office environment. There's a way to run before we panic about turning it all into housing."

Mr Guerra said Melbourne needed to attract more corporate head offices, and create a world-class business conference of its own.

"It should have a Melbourne flavour, and become the go-to event from anywhere

in the world so that any business leader would want to attend," he said.

"Let's bring the bright minds of the state together. We understand how to run events, we understand how to run conferences, now let's get the right people together to say what are the best conferences in the world."

"What's the hallmark of those, and how do we then develop our own for Melbourne to attract the best of the world to be at?"

The chamber's aim would be that within five years the conference was syndicated globally.

Mr Guerra said Melbourne also had the opportunity to better showcase the state's Indigenous heritage, such as creating a major Aboriginal cultural centre.

City of Melbourne is planning to undertake a feasibility study and business case for a First Nations Cultural Precinct designed with Indigenous groups where "First Peoples can practise continuity of customs and traditions".

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