



PORT'S PEOPLE

A

Slice of Life

IN PORT MELBOURNE



If the truth were told, Melbourne Bakehouse owner and 'cakeologist' Nick Dimitrokallis might admit to enjoying a bit of a sleep-in during these pandemic times. And after many years of 105-hour working weeks with 2am starts, you have to forgive him if he's appreciating the break, starting work at the leisurely hour of 5am. But nothing, not even coronavirus, will stop him supplying his loyal customers with the bread, cakes and coffee they crave.

"I'd like to think I'm an essential service. I do make people happy," he says.

COVID-19 has hit Melbourne Bakehouse hard. Nick says he's been lucky to break even, and with the second lockdown, things are even quieter. But he's battening down the hatches, trying to do the right thing by his staff, being there for his customers and supporting his community.

"If you give to your community, they'll give back to you and nothing will break the strong community we have here in Port Melbourne – not even the coronavirus."

Fifty five year old Nick is Port Melbourne born and bred. As you may have guessed from his surname, he's the son of Greek immigrants who came off their boat at Station Pier, settled down and stayed.

"My mum worked at the Kraft factory until she was eight months pregnant with me. Her bosses didn't even realise; they thought she was getting fat!"

Nick attended Middle Park Primary and Albert Park High. He worked at Melbourne Bakehouse for a couple of years in the 90s, eventually buying the rundown business in 2005, relocating the shop and working hard to build it into the success it is today.

"After all," he says, "I went to school with a lot of my customers. I want to be able to walk down Bay Street with my head held high."

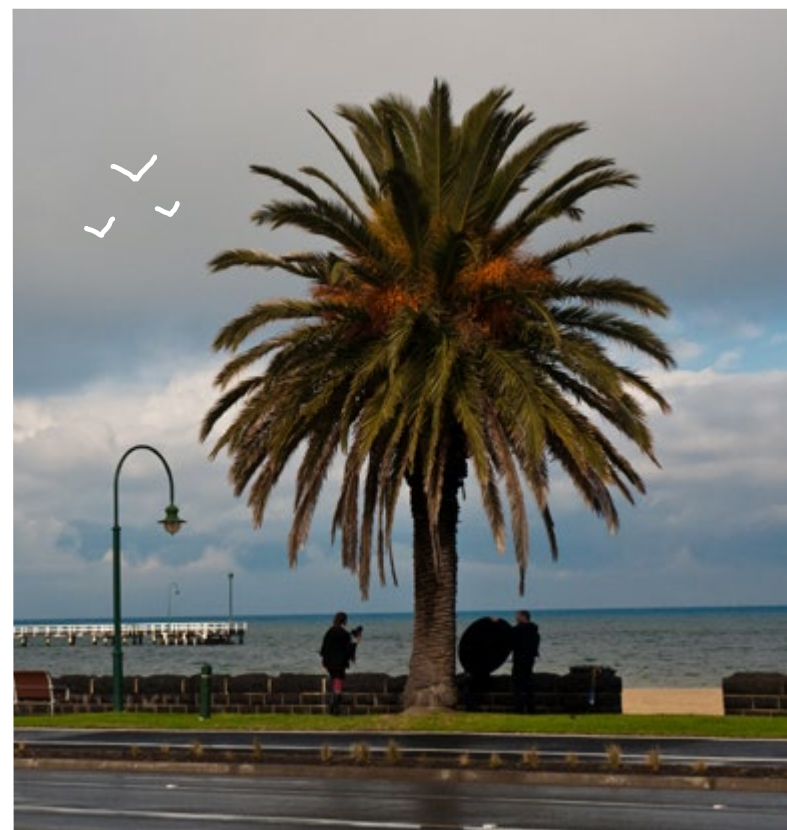
Married with two adult kids, Nick says he thinks of the business as his third child. It is absolutely his pride and joy, and he has plenty to be proud of, like that time last year when he baked Prime

Minister Scott Morrison's birthday cake. If you don't believe him, ask him to show you the photo on his phone.

These days you'll find Nick out of the kitchen and behind the counter, cranking out coffees and finding something to chat about with everyone. He says his workday is like one big social interaction with the whole community, and he loves it!

"People have been great supporting us through the pandemic and I want to do everything I can to be there for the community and show everyone how much I appreciate their support."

Best of all, by supporting Nick and Melbourne Bakehouse, you can have your cake and eat it too!



CoPP MAYOR'S MESSAGE OF

Hope

Cr Voss has had to make a lot of difficult decisions in the past few months. Her fourth and final term as Mayor has been full of unexpected scenarios.

"COVID-19 has of course, had a dramatic impact on Council. There have been significant changes in revenue projections, and services like libraries, aged care and youth services have been effected."

But, she stresses, the priority has always been to ensure the community is safe and looked after. And in order to do that, she's made yet another difficult decision.

"The most difficult choice that's had to be made has been the decision to adjust rates in line with the State government's Fair Go Rates system.

Many homeowners in our community may see this as a thoughtless action, when in fact, for me, it's quite the opposite. I have done a lot of soul searching."

The effect of the adjustment is an extra \$2.4million, which is an average of a \$35 increase over each rateable property. This will allow Council to provide relief for those that need it most.

"It is devastating to see the personal hardship, those without food, jobs, the multitude of permanent business closures and subsequent health impacts. Further to this, I am incredibly worried about what is coming in the months ahead, in terms of social need. But we need to make sure our budget is capable of delivering to our community the help, services and resources that are needed. We have cut and deferred many things to make this budget work, but at the end of the day, I supported a rate increase as it gives Council capacity to make the biggest difference to those most in need. And Council has a responsibility to help those most vulnerable, less able to bounce back and most impacted."

Cr Voss herself is no stranger to tough times. Formerly Bernadene Hug, she grew up in

country Victoria, and experienced the death of her famous football father and grandfather at age eight. She has forged her own way in life and her story is one of resilience, passion and sheer guts to get up and keep going with what you believe in.

This October will mark her eighth year as a councillor for the City of Port Phillip. The mother of three decided to run for Council and represent the community at a time when she was already on numerous committees and was developing a deep community interest. When someone tapped her on the shoulder and asked her to run, it seemed a natural progression.

As a Port Melbourne local of more than 20 years, she has made sure she focussed on the whole City of Port Phillip community and not just St Kilda. Some of her proudest achievements include giving local community groups a voice, and improving the transparency and governance in Council's decision making.

"I hope that my local community feel they have got value from their rates and can see the improvement in service, physical environment and local amenity. All I have ever done and have wanted is to represent my local community as best as I can. I have dedicated my last eight years to doing that in an at times difficult political environment. I look around and can see enormous improvements and change and I hope my community can see it too."

As she approaches the end of her final term, she pauses to reflect on what makes Port Melbourne so special, and so worth fighting for.

"Port Melbourne is the most beautiful place. The amazing community is generous and caring; people are interested in each other's well being. I love the mix of old and new and everything in between. The rugged history and lifestyle of the past gives a depth to the perspective I have of Port Melbourne. I learn new things about the past everyday. Also being close to the city and the bay are standouts."

The decision to step down can be seen as a further example of her commitment to her community.

"It is time to make way for others to come through the ranks, with new ideas and fresh energy. Good governance includes not getting too comfortable in your seat. It is my turn to tap others on the shoulder and encourage people to contribute positively to our community. You can be sure I will stay very close to what is going on in our local community. It is in my DNA."

"Through this challenging time, I have been proud of how the Port Phillip community has been supporting those most affected by COVID-19. Whether it's community group volunteers packing and distributing food or residents making a point of buying local, we all can make a difference. We are resilient. We have done this before. And we will come out of this together."



A Powerhouse OF POSITIVITY AT THE "PARIS" END OF Bay Street

Could there be anything worse for a hairdresser than to lose her hair?

Port's own Elizabeth Tedesco, founder and creative director of the True Colours salon is a breast cancer survivor and yes, that's what happened to her. She was verging on terminal when she was diagnosed with a rare form of breast cancer in 2013. She says losing her hair didn't frighten her. Her attitude was: "It's just hair, I don't need it to survive." But battling her cancer and losing her hair did send her on a journey that changed her life.

Rather than dwelling on the negatives, Elizabeth used her experience to help others. She has spent the past six years educating hairdressers on how to help other chemotherapy patients.

"So many women value themselves through their hair and hairdressers need to understand how to help them deal with its loss in a more sensitive way."

As a practical example, Elizabeth talks about how she arranges after-hours appointments for women who need to shave their heads due to excessive hair loss. And she has never charged for the service.

"It's been an incredible journey and it has made me who I am," she says.

Elizabeth and Port Melbourne go way back. On October 15th 1969, when she was eight years old, she migrated from Italy, stepping off the boat and onto Station Pier.

"I have a very clear memory of arriving at Station Pier and stopping off at a milk bar for ice-cream. It was the first time in my life I'd had creamy ice-cream – not gelato, and it was amazing; a fantastic introduction to a sweet new life."

Then, 18 years later, to the day, she opened True Colours at the 'Paris' end of Bay Street, quickly establishing a loyal clientele. She became known for her European aesthetic, eye for design and passion for colouring. Work in film, television and theatre soon followed and cemented her place as a sought-after educator and presenter.

Before COVID-19 hit, and after 33 years in the business, Elizabeth wasn't accepting new clients, but just like everyone, she's had to change with the times, wearing masks, taking people's temperature and she says it's been lovely welcoming new visitors to her salon to replace those who can't travel from interstate. At first, she was angry with the government for putting hairdressers at risk. Over time, she has come to understand how she is providing an essential service.

"Hairdressers have a licence to touch; they are allowed to touch people. I joke with some of my clients that I should have a Medicare number, but seriously, now more than ever, we need to remember how powerful that connection is."

Elizabeth says that during the pandemic, she can see firsthand how people are craving connection and community. Port Melbourne may

have changed a lot in the past 33 years, but the one thing that's stayed constant is its incredible local community, and the connections people have with their local traders. And she's experienced this herself with the generous outpouring of encouragement, food and even offers of financial support from her clients.

"I grew up in a village in Italy, and Port Melbourne is my village. That sense of community is hard to find, but I've found it here. I want people to understand that community is the glue that keeps us all together and without local traders, there's no community – just a suburb."

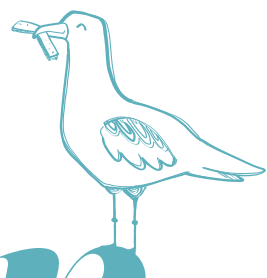
"Port Melbourne has an incredible energy and I think coronavirus will help us see this, and pave the way forward for our local traders. Things may look dire right now, but moving forward, I think this period will lead to a whole new appreciation for our local community. I believe the Bay Street shopping strip will come back. Coronavirus could end up being the worst and the best thing that's ever happened to us."

So, as you can see, Elizabeth is very good at turning negatives into positives. Perhaps that's something we can all learn from during these unprecedented times. And that we really are all in this together.



BEACON COVE

Battler



Meet Port Melbourne local, Eddie Micaleff - an extremely active 78 year old who is making a real difference in his community during these unprecedented times.

Eddie is taking the pandemic 'covidcoaster' in his stride, working from home, Zooming in for meetings and relishing his dual roles as President of the Beacon Cove Neighbourhood Association (BCNA) and as Chairperson for the Ethnic Communities Council of Victoria (ECCV).

And despite the potential damage this disease can cause, Eddie remains optimistic. "There is no doubt coronavirus is the greatest challenge we've had since the Second World War, but I think we can manage it."

Eddie's passion for community involvement goes way back. In 1958 he apprenticed as a fitter and turner for the Melbourne City Council and took on his first industrial campaign to rid the city's power station of asbestos. By his early 20s he was a spokesperson for 12 unions and represented 1300 workers. He was the first full time official appointed by a trade union in Australia with occupational health and safety responsibilities.

Elected as the member for Springvale in 1983, Eddie served in the Victorian Parliament until September 1999, with responsibilities covering Health, Industrial relations, Work cover & Multicultural affairs. And when he left politics, he used his experience in Occupational and Community Health in his next role as director of the Inner South Community Health Service, moving to Beacon Cove to enjoy the lifestyle of being by the sea.

Given his background as a son of Maltese migrants who was bullied and name called at school, it's not surprising he has devoted his life to community advocacy. Eddie's work at the ECCV, where he lobbies all levels of government on behalf of multicultural communities, has become even more important during the COVID-19 pandemic.

"With around 50 per cent of the Victorian population either born overseas, or having at least one parent who was born overseas, it's obvious we need to make sure the government is connecting with vulnerable groups and making sure the message of social distancing is getting across."

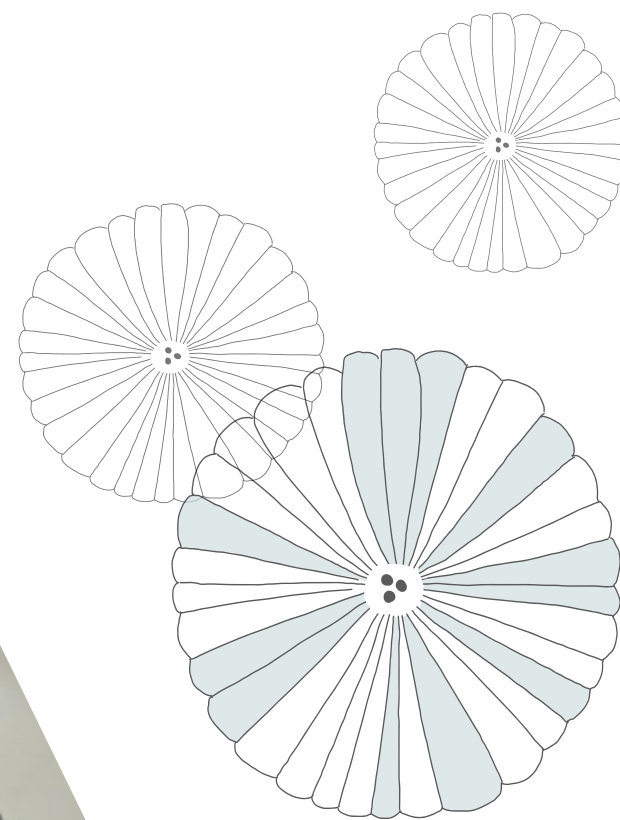
What's even more concerning to Eddie is the potential for ethnic communities to be blamed for the spread of the disease.

"People need to come together, not alienate members of our community. The spread of COVID-19 has nothing to do with ethnicity. Coronavirus does not discriminate. Now is not the time for us to be divided through fear and hateful narratives."

These are important times for Beacon Cove as well, as the BCNA calls on the state government to "step-up" and redevelop the deteriorating Station Pier and Waterfront Place precinct. As a key gateway feeding into central Melbourne, the recent announcement by Spirit of Tasmania operator TT-Line that it would be relocating its services from Station Pier to Geelong has renewed calls for the precinct to be reimaged. At the moment, an abandoned building and a series of struggling cafes and restaurants are what some 700,000 annual passengers are met with upon arrival. Eddie believes the relocation of Spirit of Tasmania and the demise of the cruise ship industry as a result of COVID-19 means the precinct requires urgent attention.

"We feel this is a unique opportunity to reconsider and co-create a plan for the future of Station Pier to become a place that is not only attractive and useful for locals all year round, but is an engaging welcome for cruise visitors."

There's no doubt, Eddie is definitely someone you want on your side; a battler you want battling for you. And it doesn't look like he'll be slowing down any time soon.

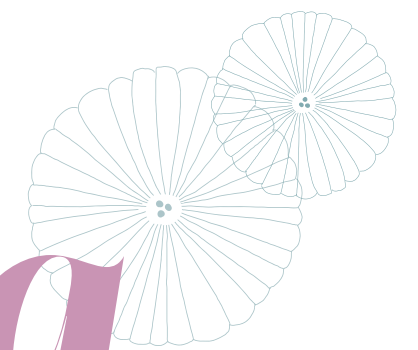


Selling

HOUSES IN

Stage 3

LOCKDOWN



reached department manager. He then moved into hospitality and fell in love with it, eventually finding his way to London and Paris, Noosa and then back to Melbourne, where the 80-90 hour working weeks typical in restaurants finally got the better of him.

"Working at Woolworths, I was taught about great customer service, about going above and beyond the call of duty and doing more than expected. Then, in hospitality, it was all about dealing with a variety of people and staying calm under pressure. In many ways, it feels like everything I've ever done has prepared me perfectly for the real estate role I'm in now."

Jason has lived in this, his 22nd home, here in Port Melbourne, for six whole years now and he says it's probably the longest time he's lived in one place, ever. For now, there's no plan to move on to house number 23.

"I love the Port Melbourne community that we have here, and the way I'm always bumping into people that I know, everywhere I go. We're a five-minute walk from everything; the shops on Bay Street, the beach and several playgrounds. In Port Melbourne, everything we need is right on our doorstep."

Port Melbourne real estate agent, Jason De Stefano, has certainly done his research. Throughout his life, he's lived in 22 different houses! So who better to turn to when you're looking for a home of your own?

While growing up, Jason's family moved around a lot for his Dads work., and as an adult, he's lived overseas and interstate. He knows all about the stresses of moving and the challenges of changing locations. But with all that moving around came some unexpected benefits.

"I really enjoy meeting new people, and that comes in handy when you work in real estate," he says with a smile.

Like many businesses, those in real estate have had to think outside the box during the COVID-19 pandemic. Property auctions have pivoted to become online auctions or private sales. Appraisals are done via Zoom, and online inspection videos give potential buyers a room-by-room guided tour from the comfort of their own couches. And despite all of the changes, Jason says what he thought was going to be a

quiet time, has been quite busy after all.

"Perhaps it is because there's nothing like being stuck inside your house for three months to make you feel like you need a bigger place.

"With his positive attitude, Jason has found even more to appreciate during these unprecedented times. As a dad to two young boys, aged 5 and 2, he's often W.F.H. (Working From Home) while they're playing soccer and footy in the living room. But he says spending more time with his family has been wonderful.

"I've spent every day at home with the boys, watching them grow up. I've been able to teach my oldest how to ride a bike and we've spent time together, counting, reading and playing educational games. And when I am working, I'm more productive with the time that I have than I've ever been in the past."

Jason had an interesting career journey before he went down the real estate road. As a teenager, he started working at Woolies, rising through the ranks from trolley boy until he





FACEBOOK'S *Focus* ON PORT MELBOURNE



Have you lost a pet? Do you need a new cleaner? Are you looking for a restaurant recommendation? Or do you want to share a family-friendly find? Then log on to Facebook, search Port Melbourne Focus and join the more than 5,300 members of your local online community.

In case you've missed it, Facebook groups are like current day Rotary clubs: they're places for communities to share information, support each other, and do good deeds. And that's exactly what Heather Cunsolo was aiming for when she created this group – Port Melbourne Focus – three and a half years ago.

Born in California but married to an Aussie, Heather is a 35-year-old Building Designer and mum of three littlies. She came up with the idea for the group and called it Port Melbourne Mums in January 2017, when she wanted to share family focussed news and reviews with her friends and neighbours. The group grew and grew, morphing first into Port Melbourne Families, and then settling into Port Melbourne Focus, where the content and membership could become more diverse.

For the first two years, Heather ran the group alone, sometimes making difficult decisions to reject posts or delete comments. These days Kate, Sophie and Monica help out as admins and keep the content focussed in the best interests of the group.

The most popular posts are the stunning photos people share, highlighting the natural beauty of our area. The most gratifying are those that reunite lost pets with owners. And those that have sparked the most comments? "Well, everyone has an opinion when it comes to issues affecting the precinct, and that's encouraging to see."

Heather says the group has been very rewarding to run and she is thankful for what it has brought her. "I like reading about local stuff and sharing it to the group. Overall, it's been a very positive experience and it has given me a very good understanding of my community."

For Heather, Port Melbourne is more than just a place she lives – it's all about the community. Her husband's family has roots in the area and the house where his grandfather was born is still standing around the corner from their home. She's involved at the local school and in the kids' sports clubs. And no, most people don't know she's "that Heather" from the Facebook group. That may be about to change, though, as she gears up to run for local council.

"I'm all about empowering our community and giving people a voice. I've done that with Port

Melbourne Focus, and now I want to run as an independent candidate and work to unite other community groups so we can all work together."

Port Melbourne Focus has also been a place people can come together when we need to be apart. During COVID-19, the group has played an even more crucial role, connecting neighbours and traders at a time when we need each other more than ever before.

"Prior to coronavirus, we limited posts by local businesses but we see now that we can help them to survive. Local traders can have a voice in our group and we encourage them to engage with our community by posting special offers and keeping us up to date when they have news or events to promote."

The group not only gives local traders an opportunity to talk to their customers, it also allows customers to communicate and let local businesses know what they are looking for as well.

Heather says, "Running Port Melbourne Focus doesn't feel like work, it's more like a hobby, but of course, none of its success would be possible without its 5,300 plus members and I want to thank them for the incredible community they have helped create."

So, if you haven't already, then Like, Share, Follow and Join the conversation!

Sure, Coronavirus has sent supermarkets into a spin, made business boom at Bunnings and has taken takeaway food to whole new heights, but pause for a moment and consider the impact it has had on Port Melbourne local, Michael McNamara.

Michael is the Chief Information Officer for the Federal Government. For the past two years he has run the entire tech side of Centrelink, Medicare, the NDIS, Aged Care, Childcare and Pension systems.

Obviously, he has been pretty busy lately implementing JobSeeker and helping the ATO set up JobKeeper. It has been, as he says, a fascinating time to be working for the Federal Government.

had a day off in 16 weeks. Each week he splits his time between Melbourne and Canberra, often flying back and forth through completely deserted airports with empty car parks and no flights up on the board.

"The story of my life right now is literally planes, trains and automobiles, figuring out how to get between Melbourne and Canberra. There are times when I get to the airport to find the one and only flight to Canberra has been cancelled, so I have to hop in a car and drive. When I'm alone in the airports and the only one on a flight, it feels surreal; it feels like the apocalypse."

Michael keeps his Port Melbourne home to be close to his 7-year-old daughter. Originally from Tipperary and Dublin in Ireland, he's had his place in Port since 2002 and lived off and on in

Sydney too. But he loves the community here and the lifestyle of living close to the water.

When everything settles down, Michael will continue his important work redesigning and modernising the MyGov systems. So next time you log on, send a word of thanks to this local Port Melbourne legend.

PORT'S *Top Tech* SUPPORT

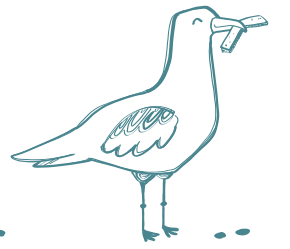
"Over the course of the last two to three months the number of people requiring welfare payments has increased by three million. In the first two weeks of coronavirus, we processed as many claims as we had for the entire previous year."

Michael was instrumental in setting up APS 2000, where 2000 public servants volunteered to help Services Australia cope with the enormous surge in phone inquiries from distressed people desperate for assistance after being suddenly thrown out of work by social isolation measures taken to slow the spread of the coronavirus. He set up systems allowing the public servants to work from home and process the extraordinary numbers of claims.

To say Michael is an essential worker is an understatement. At the time of writing he had not



PORT'S VOICES



WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE ON BAY STREET?

Question asked of Port Melbourne Focus Facebook group, here are some of the responses:

Let's be kind of honest. There is nothing really to attract people who don't live in the area to Bay St. It's pretty boring really. Pre-covid i would organize business meetings around Bay St but most associates would prefer Albert Park/ St.Kilda/ Sth Melb as meeting spots. Most of my friends/network outside the area don't think of Bay St as a destination, years ago there were some very popular pubs (like the flower, etc) which did attract people to the area. When you compare it to other strips in Melbourne there is no cinema, or park, or just general vibe and there is no tram running down the middle of it. Station Pier which should also be an active hub is pretty bland as well.
-Peter V.

I'd love to see some more communal community spaces! Definitely more greenery, and encouraging more makers and producers to open up here! Also the actual beach front is so bland, and would benefit from more of an esplanade kind of feel! I think Port Melbourne has so much potential to be a really trendy suburb, but currently it's just not quite there. Definitely bluesky thinking here, but we can dream!!
-Maddy T.

Personally I love the vibe of great food and beverage places bring. Love to see the level of quality lift. A great Mexican (Fonda style) Asian like hanoi hannah hawker hall etc...
-Linda B.

" I like the thought of a walking mall, combined with some great dining and local arts/crafts industry experiences"
-Kurt U.

I remember when there were 3 butchers on Bay Street. The convenience of supermarkets made it unviable for them to keep going. Since they closed I turned to South Melbourne Market and farmers' markets instead which are great alternatives. In all honesty I think Brewsters even had a hard time of it when they had a store here.
-Jane W.

Less cars = less customers = less revenue = empty shops / ghost town.
I'd love it if everyone walked or rode bikes but those more than 1-2kms away wouldn't come here as often or at all. Look at what less parking did to Fitzroy and Acland Streets.
-Andrew H

OUR IDEAS:



The Liardet St. Community space. For big and small daily/weekend events. Scaled to accommodate 4m social distancing.



Got an idea for Port's future?
We'd love to hear from you.
Let your **VOICE** be heard!
Submit on our website :
www.3207port.com.au/haveyoursay



Connecting Station Pier to Bay Street with an Art Project.