

Docklands ice centre gets its skates on

By Clay Lucas

Stalled plans for a \$60 million ice-skating rink at Docklands have been revived, with a new site next to Monee Ponds Creek confirmed.

Ice Sports Australia last year got a \$10 million promise from the State Government to help build the centre.

But the consortium, which includes real estate giant ING and the Olympic Winter Institute of Australia, failed to secure finance for the project.

The original proposal was to build the sports centre atop a four-level car park but potential financiers were concerned the centre would be a commercial failure it was not a stand-alone facility.

Now a higher-profile site has been confirmed, wedged between the Southern Star Observation Wheel and the Moonee Ponds Creek.

The centre will feature two full-size ice rinks and will serve as a centre for Australia's Winter Olympics campaigns.

It will host international ice hockey, ice skating, curling and speed skating events, with seating for up to 1000 people. It will also be open to the public.

Ice Sports Australia's director, Andrew Shelton, said a lot of work had been done on the new location.

"It's cheaper to build (on the ground level), it will be more accessible and it will be more visible next to the big wheel," he said.

Olympic Winter Institute of Australia chief executive Geoff Lipshut said the proposal for a stand-alone centre rather than one on top of a four-storey car park was much better.

"Having this centre will make a big difference to ice sports in Victoria," Mr Lipshut said.

Melbourne has only one remaining ice-skating rink, in Oakleigh, after the Ringwood rink closed two years ago. The new centre, if approved by planning authority VicUrban, will take 15 months to build.

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