

# Mayor in the market for a revamp of Queen Vic

July 6, 2013



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The 135-year-old Queen Victoria Market is being slated for an ambitious redevelopment. *Photo: Justin McManus*

The future of the iconic Queen Victoria Market is in peril unless ambitious redevelopment plans are implemented, lord mayor Robert Doyle has warned.

Traders at the 135-year-old market had told the council that without a major reinvestment over five years, many of them would be gone, Cr Doyle said.

"The traders have said they will go broke," Cr Doyle said. "No traders, no market."



### **Queen Victoria Market – History**

Vegetables stalls at the Victoria Market. July 27, 1965. *Photo: Fairfax Archives*

Cr Doyle's comments step up Melbourne City Council's push to overhaul the market, with the Town Hall still awaiting a state government sign-off on the project because Spring Street owns some of the land involved.

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Cr Doyle pledged the redevelopment plans would not destroy the market's atmosphere or role as a fresh food market. But he flagged the need for more sophisticated, varied offerings and keeping the market open more often.

"You don't need to mess around much with the front of the market - the poultry, fish and meat hall that fronts on to Elizabeth Street," he said.

"The real heart and soul of the market that needs help though are the historic sheds, and they simply don't have the facilities that the traders need.

"They don't have power, they don't have chilling, they don't have hot and cold running water, they don't have storage space. So we need to deal with that.

"But it's a market, so you don't want it to be supermarket-sterile. Anything that we did would have to lift up the sheds, do the work we needed to do, restore the sheds and put them down."

There has been a huge decline in the percentage of fresh food offered at the market since the 1970s. "What we don't want for the Queen Victoria Market is for it to be trash and treasure market for tourists at the weekend," Cr Doyle said.

Greg Smith, a representative of the general merchandise traders, said traders recognised there needed to be a renewal of the market, but they still did not have any details of what it might involve. "It would appear that he's a knight in shining armour as far as the market's concerned, and that's all good," Mr Smith said of Cr Doyle. "But it's really a question of detail, what a renewal will involve."

Traders recently declined to take part in a council video giving their views on renewing the market because they did not know what was being proposed.

The council has developed a refurbishment plan with a ballpark figure of \$100 million. The plan includes a role for private development on the market's fringe, including car parking. After the government signs off, the council will release the plans for public discussion.

Source: [www.theage.com.au](http://www.theage.com.au)