

Report to the Future Melbourne Committee

Agenda item 6.5

Opportunity for international engagement - Business Partner Cities Network Roundtable, Manila

7 February 2023

Presenter: Andrew Wear, Director Economic Development and International

Purpose and background

1. The purpose of this report is to seek Committee approval for Councillor Kevin Louey (as Chair of the Business and Global Opportunities portfolio) to represent City of Melbourne at the Business Partner Cities (BPC) Network Roundtable in Manila, Philippines which will be held on 17 March 2023.
2. The proposed theme for the 2023 BPC Network Roundtable is 'Technology and Innovation Responses for Cities in A Post-COVID Economic Climate'. Councillor Louey's participation presents an ideal opportunity for the City of Melbourne to reconnect with major cities in Asia and to explore ways of strengthening innovation and entrepreneurial ecosystems in the economic climate following the COVID crisis.
3. Councillor Louey will participate in roundtable discussions that bring together leaders from municipal governments and Chambers of Commerce from 15 cities to discuss challenges and opportunities they face in the current economic climate around a shared theme. BPC Member cities are: Osaka, Hong Kong, Singapore, Bangkok, Kuala Lumpur, Manila, Jakarta, Seoul, Shanghai, Ho Chi Minh City, Mumbai, Melbourne, Tianjin, Auckland and Hamburg.

Key issues

4. City of Melbourne has been a member of the BPC network since 1999 and has attended each annual Roundtable. As a globally-engaged city, targeted international visit programs are an important part of profiling Melbourne's capability globally, facilitating new connections and fostering long-term relationships. The intimate scale and tailored nature of the BPC program optimises interactions between program delegates, officials and industry representatives, through forums, and networking functions.
5. With technology and innovation as key themes, City of Melbourne is well placed to provide leadership through concrete examples of recovery programs to help inspire and inform the development of similar initiatives in other member cities. As each city is allotted time to present at the Roundtable, case studies of programs such as Business Concierge, Melbourne Money and the Zero Carbon Jobs Cluster can be introduced to demonstrate leading municipal strategies for economic recovery.
6. At the same time, Melbourne can proactively leverage this important regional network to gain valuable insights into how mutual challenges and opportunities in Indo-Pacific regional cities are faced.
7. In addition to sharing ideas and knowledge, the Roundtable will also provide an opportunity for City of Melbourne to promote its strengths in international education, tourism, industry capability and a premium business investment location.
8. Participation will be supported by a comprehensive program that includes the BPC Roundtable Conference, seminars, networking and city connection and relationship building activities. Some of the key networking and engagement commitments include:
 - 8.1. City of Melbourne hosted networking event with key government, academic and business association stakeholders.
 - 8.2. Courtesy call and in-market briefing with Australian Ambassador to The Philippines, Ms Hae Kyong Yu and Austrade representatives.
 - 8.3. Meeting with Mr Christian R Gonzales, Executive Vice President, International Container Terminal Services Inc.
 - 8.4. Meeting and site visit with QBO Innovation Hub to connect with Manila's innovation and startup ecosystem and provide a valuable working example of physical innovation hubs as Melbourne looks to further develop its own innovation districts.

Recommendation from management

9. That the Future Melbourne Committee:
 - 9.1. Approves participation by Councillor Kevin Louey at the Business Partner Cities Network Roundtable in Manila, Philippines at an estimated cost to Council of \$6880.
 - 9.2. Notes that Councillor Louey will prepare a report to the Future Melbourne Committee or Council within 60 days of return from travel.

Attachments:

1. Supporting Attachment (Page 3 of 3)

Supporting Attachment

Finance

1. The cost associated with this travel proposal will be approximately \$6880 and comprises airfare (\$5700), accommodation for four nights (\$800) and incidental costs (\$380).
2. All City of Melbourne costs will be met from the existing budget allocation.

Conflict of interest

3. No member of Council staff, or other person engaged under a contract, involved in advising on or preparing this report has declared a general or material interest in relation to the matter of the report.

Health and Safety

4. In developing this proposal, no occupational health and safety issues or opportunities have been identified.
5. In undertaking international travel, Councillor Louey will adhere to and be guided by international health, safety and security measures including those identified by Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade

Relation to Council policy

6. The Director Economic Development and International has confirmed that the travel proposal accords with the requirements of the travel guidelines outlined in the Council Expenses Policy.
7. The objectives associated with this proposal align with key policy and strategic positions adopted by Council namely:
 - 7.1. Council Plan 2021-25 strategic objective Economy of the Future.
 - 7.2. Council Plan 2021-25 Major initiative 8: Review Melbourne's international relationships to optimise future and existing partnerships to enable mutual growth and opportunity, which includes the service and support of existing partnerships/commitments and relationships.
 - 7.3. Council Plan 2021-25 Major initiative 9: Support the development of globally competitive innovation ecosystems').

Environmental sustainability

8. The carbon emissions resulting from air travel will be offset with the purchase of credits.