

Report to the Future Melbourne Committee

Agenda item 6.8

Bi-annual report to Council on the activities of the M9 group of Councils

6 December 2022

Presenter: Alison Leighton, Acting Chief Executive Officer**Purpose and background**

1. The purpose of this report is to provide a bi-annual update to Councillors on M9 advocacy as resolved by Council on 25 May 2021.
2. M9 is an alliance of nine inner Melbourne councils to advocate for issues across inner Melbourne collectively. M9 represents 1 in 5 Victorians and more than a third of Victoria's Gross State Product.
3. M9 includes the local governments of Darebin, Hobsons Bay, Maribyrnong, Melbourne, Moonee Valley, Merri-bek, Port Phillip, Stonnington and Yarra.

Key issues

4. M9 has maintained regular meetings and proactively sought to engage with state and federal counterparts. The past six months have seen a positive uplift in M9 engagement, which has put the partnership in good stead for further advocacy and collaboration.
5. M9 formally launched its partnership and advocacy priorities (Attachment 2) at the Parliament of Victoria on 18 August 2022. The launch was well attended by Members of Parliament from state and federal government and included representatives from major and minor parties. The event included an address from Minister for Local Government, the Hon. Melissa Horne MP, and Shadow Minister for Local Government, Richard Riordan MP.
6. The City of Stonnington led the amendment of economic recovery advocacy priorities following several announcements that met the needs of the previous priorities, which included, the return of International Students, COVID events insurance scheme, enhanced Jobs Victoria, and support for retail, hospitality, and creative sectors. The updated advocacy priorities are:
 - 6.1. Initiate a campaign amongst inter- and intra- state and international visitors to encourage greater visitation to the M9 Councils, consistent with the strategic direction of their Victoria Economy Masterplan Directions Paper.
 - 6.2. State Government partners with M9 Councils to develop customised precinct support programs to reinvigorate and regenerate high streets and commercial precincts by awarding \$5 million over two years to M9. Programs will include shopfront activation interventions, local area marketing campaigns and public realm enhancement initiatives based on what is most relevant and will benefit each municipality most.
7. The Cities of Hobsons Bay and Maribyrnong have been liaising with Northern Alliance for Greenhouse Action (NAGA) on future advocacy opportunities due to advocacy alignment. NAGA is leading a coalition of environmental/climate groups to advocate for mandatory climate change-related minimum standards in planning schemes; this group includes the Council Alliance for a Sustainable Built Environment.
8. The Cities of Port Phillip and Merri-bek led the process of making a submission on behalf of the M9 to Homes Victoria's engagement process for the *Draft Social and Affordable Housing Compact with Local Government*. The Social and Affordable Housing Compact will document a strengthened partnership between state and local government that gives councils a 'seat at the table' in identifying priorities for social and affordable housing growth in their municipalities. The State Government is still reviewing feedback.
9. Following positive preliminary discussions with the Minister for Transport Infrastructure, the Hon. Jacinta Allan MP, regarding Melbourne Metro 2, and the Minister for Public Transport, the Hon. Ben Carroll MP, regarding Active Transport (Strategic Cycling Corridors), M9 sent correspondence seeking further examination of these issues. Both Ministers have advised that further communication will be attended to following the Victorian election.

10. M9 spent considerable time and resources exploring the likelihood of the State Government returning the assessment and enforcement of buildings with cladding to the local government sector. As part of this work M9 researched the viability of a shared-service to mitigate impacts and address existing challenges. After much consideration, M9 determined that the transition back to local government poses too great a risks to community safety, and for those reasons, formed a position to advocate the State Government to reconsider any plans to change the responsibility of assessment and enforcement.
11. M9 Councils commissioned further work on the feasibility of waste shared services to address market failures in Food Organics Garden Organics, glass and recycling processing and residual waste streams. These business cases continue to be developed and will be presented to the State Government in 2023.
12. Following Mayoral elections at fellow M9 Councils, new Mayor Representatives were inducted and provided an overview of M9 advocacy priorities on 2 December 2022.

Recommendation from management

13. That the Future Melbourne Committee notes M9's progress over the last six months.

Attachments:

1. Supporting Attachment (Page 3 of 5)
2. M9 Objectives and Priorities (Page 4 of 5)

Supporting Attachment

Legal

1. No direct legal issues arise from the recommendation from management. The M9 Committee was formed and is governed under a MoU.

Finance

2. The costs associated with the operation of M9 are provided for in the current M9 budget.

Conflict of interest

3. The Lord Mayor and ACEO are current representatives of M9.
4. No member of Council staff, or other person engaged under a contract, involved in advising on or preparing this report has declared a material or general conflict of interest in relation to the matter of the report.

Health and Safety

5. Provide In developing this proposal, no Occupational Health and Safety issues or opportunities have been identified.

Stakeholder consultation

6. Members of M9 were consulted and involved in all advocacy activities.

Relation to Council policy

7. On 25 May 2021 Council resolved to dissolve its membership of IMAP and join M9. Management are required to provide a bi-annual update on M9 advocacy activity.

Environmental sustainability

8. In developing this proposal, no environmental sustainability issues or opportunities have been identified.



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The M9 objectives are to:

- undertake strategic, evidence-based, targeted and effective advocacy campaigns
- engage strategically with key decision-makers to advocate on priority areas and build a genuine partnership with government representatives
- enable best practices to be shared across Greater Melbourne Councils, and
- undertake joint partnerships and collective action, particularly where market failures and/or policy gaps exist.

The M9 priorities:



Waste & Circular Economy

- The EPA Landfill Levy be utilised to support the rollout of the Circular Economy Policy, focusing on the rollout of the four-service model.
- More flexible State Government funding models to support projects such as local FOGO processing options presented by M9 or other innovative projects that enhance the circular economy, drive local markets and divert material from the landfill stream.
- State Government funding to support M9 Councils to undertake targeted engagement programs and initiatives to address waste reduction, resource recovery and recycling contamination aligned with inner metropolitan settings and communities.



Affordable & Social Housing

- Introduce mandatory affordable housing controls in the Victorian Planning System to deliver social and affordable housing with certainty and scale.
- Establish sustained and diverse funding streams to deliver long-term social and affordable housing.
- Deliver new supported social housing and resourcing for assertive outreach to address the homelessness and rough sleeping need across the M9 region.



Climate Change & Renewable Energy

- Leverage and expand the City of Melbourne battery feasibility study (Power Melbourne) to encompass all M9 Councils to establish a battery storage network in strategic locations throughout the M9 region, including red tape reduction that may inhibit this expansion.
- State Government funding to enable increased investment in electric vehicles by expanding the network of charging stations throughout the region and by establishing policy, standards and pilot opportunities for Multi-Unit Developments (MUDs) and areas limited to on-street car parking.
- In partnership with the Councils Alliance for a Sustainable Built Environment (CASBE), establish a Zero Carbon Planning Scheme.



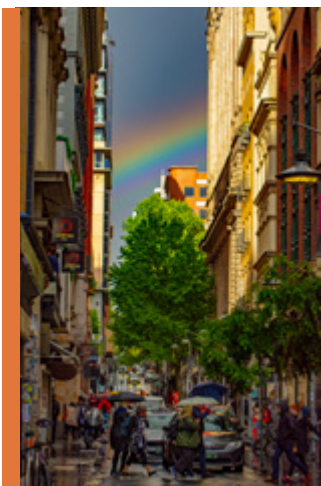
Economic Recovery

- Initiate a campaign amongst inter- and intra- state and international visitors to encourage greater visitation to the M9 Councils, consistent with the strategic direction of their Victoria Economy Masterplan Directions Paper.
- State Government partners with M9 Councils to develop customised precinct support programs to reinvigorate and regenerate high streets and commercial precincts by awarding \$5 million over two years to M9. Programs will include shopfront activation interventions, local area marketing campaigns and public realm enhancement initiatives based on what is most relevant and will benefit each municipality most.



Active Transport

- Commit to early works and scoping for Melbourne Metro 2, per Infrastructure Victoria's recommendations.
- Commit to commence works for reconfiguring the City Loop in line with the timed completion of Metro Tunnel 1.
- Improve frequency of all-day, everyday rail and bus services on Melbourne routes to improve public transport patronage as Melbourne re-opens.
- Undertake a public transport promotion and behaviour change program to encourage a return to public transport.
- Update the Strategic Cycling Corridor Network and continue to fund and implement works on the SCCs.
- Fund a grants program to support local walking, wheeling and riding improvements.
- State Government to partner with M9 councils with funding and support for the next phase of the 'Let's Ride Melbourne' behaviour change program to encourage uptake and user confidence for active transport to and around inner Melbourne.



Community Resilience

- Increased sustained investment in community safety measures, including that address the social and built environments
- Increased sustained investment in the accessible and tailored community and clinical mental health services and the full implementation of the Victorian Government's Royal Commission into the Mental Health System.
- Increased community volunteering, digital inclusion and evidence-based initiatives that address youth engagement.
- Increased investment for place-based community development, including emergency preparedness, response and recovery plans.
- Partnerships adopt a collective approach to integrated support services and address issues through education, prevention and early intervention.

If you wish to access further information or to contact M9, please visit m9.org.au.