

21 November 2006

**CITY OF MELBOURNE SUPPORT FOR THE PARLIAMENT OF
THE WORLD'S RELIGIONS 2009**

Division Marketing, Tourism and Major Events

Presenter Jenny Ford, Manager Tourism Melbourne

Purpose

1. To seek endorsement for the City of Melbourne's financial and in-kind support for the Parliament of the World's Religions in December 2009.

Recommendation from Management

2. That the Finance and Governance Committee recommend that Council support the Parliament of the World's Religions 2009, subject to State and Federal Government support.

Key Issues

3. Melbourne was provisionally announced as the successful city on 31 October 2006. This win is pending private and public financial support.
4. The Parliament of the World's Religions is expected to attract around 8,000 people to Melbourne and inject \$75 million into the economy. The previous event in Barcelona 2004 attracted over 8,000 delegates.
5. The Parliament is the world's largest interfaith event, held every five years. It brings together religious leaders and faith community members for a conference and forums in interreligious partnership.
6. High profile delegates such as Dalai Lama, Kofi Anan, Nelson Mandela and senior Vatican officials are expected to attend.
7. MCVB is responsible for preparing the bid documentation.
8. Cr David Wilson is on the Melbourne bid steering committee.
9. In addition to the increased visitor numbers and resultant economic impact, benefits include exposure through naming rights of the opening ceremony, the opportunity to meet high profile international religious leaders, knowledge exchange on issues of interfaith and social cohesion and opportunities for exposure through international media coverage.

Time Frame

10. The proposed dates for the Parliament are 2 to 8 December 2009.

Relation to Council Policy

11. The business events market has been identified as an important segment for Melbourne. Involvement in events such as the Parliament provides an opportunity to meet objectives set out in such strategies as:
 - 11.1. the Melbourne Marketing Strategy (particularly City Visitation and Tourism & Business Strategies);
 - 11.2. the City of Melbourne Tourism Plan; and
 - 11.3. Business Melbourne initiatives.

Consultation

12. All internal elements have been consulted.

Government Relations

13. MCVB have requested \$2 million from each the State and Federal Governments. Both have given in- principle support and will finalise the commitment by the end of November 2006.

Finance

14. MCVB have requested \$500,000 from the City of Melbourne. It is proposed that any City of Melbourne support would be subject to both State and Federal Government support.

Legal

15. No direct legal issues arise from the recommendation to the report.

Sustainability

16. Sponsorship of the Parliament of the World's Religions will have a positive sustainability impact relating to the themes of Innovation and Business Vitality and Inclusiveness and Engagement. There is likely to be a positive impact on city businesses and job creation. Staging of the Parliament will enhance Melbourne's reputation as a dynamic and multicultural city with a rich and vibrant cultural and community life. It will promote Melbourne as a destination of choice for staging business events, and showcase its capability in tourism and destination management.

Background

17. The Parliament is coordinated by the Council for a Parliament of the World's Religions (CPWR).
18. The purpose of the CPWR is to cultivate harmony among the world's religious and spiritual communities and foster their engagement with the world and its other guiding institutions in order to achieve a peaceful, just and sustainable world. Its motto is "*embracing difference, transforming the world*".
19. A site evaluation was conducted in September 2006, and the panel were reportedly impressed in the interfaith and multicultural activities at grass roots level and with their meetings with the Lord Mayor, State Minister for Tourism, John Pandazopoulos, the Federal Parliamentary Secretary for the Minister for Immigration and Multicultural Affairs, Andrew Robb MP and Attorney General, Philip Ruddock MP.

20. Competing cities for the Parliament were Singapore and New Delhi.
 21. Council needs to determine the level of support to ensure the successful running of this major initiative.
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FINANCE ATTACHMENT

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RELIGIONS 2009**

MCVB have requested \$500,000 from the City of Melbourne. The financial support for this program has not been included in the 2006/07 budget. Any future commitments would be subject to the normal budget process.

Joe Groher
Manager Financial Services

LEGAL ATTACHMENT

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RELIGIONS 2009**

No direct legal issues arise from the recommendation to the report.

Kim Wood
Manager Legal Services