

17 March 2020

Notice of Motion, Deputy Lord Mayor Arron Wood: COVID-19 Business Support Summit

Motion

1. The Future Melbourne Committee requests management:
 - 1.1. Plan and host a COVID-19 Business Support Summit at the Melbourne Town Hall as soon as practicable, including covering any costs associated with the venue, catering and AV. This event is to be held in partnership with the Victorian Government, Department of Health and Human Services, relevant Federal Government representatives, Victoria's Chief Health officer and Victorian Chamber of Commerce and Industry.
 - 1.2. Investigate a virtual town hall summit meeting as an additional avenue for businesses, associations and government representatives to participate remotely.
 - 1.3. Allocate \$50,000 of the discretionary fund to a once-off business grant round specifically aimed at developing business continuity plans, supporting businesses to enhance their current online and delivery options or to add these functions to their business if they do not already exist. This grant round should involve the business mentoring service.

Background

2. Destinations around the world are increasingly being affected by the cancellation or postponement of major events and conferences. The World Athletics Indoor Championships, scheduled to take place in Nanjing (13 – 15 March) has been postponed to March 2021. Google has cancelled its biggest event of the year, I/O 2020, Facebook has cancelled its annual F8 conference, and due to the string of high-profile cancellations from Apple, Twitter, Facebook and TikTok, one of the world's biggest annual tech, innovation, film and music conference South by Southwest (SXSW) has also been cancelled. Organisers of the world's biggest travel expo, the ITB travel trade fair in Berlin (4-7 March), cancelled the event, 160,000 attendees were expected at this event.
3. As large scale events are being cancelled and postponed in other parts of the world, it is prudent that our local businesses and industry sectors plan for all possible impacts of COVID-19 and the City Of Melbourne has an important role in supporting our local businesses in our city.
4. There are many steps that can be taken prior to a full shut down of a business, such as pre-planning, business continuity planning and implementing partial isolation initiatives. There is growing research about responses in other countries that we can learn from and it is imperative that the City Of Melbourne undertakes the role of conduit for factual, objective and data-driven information to our business community to allow them to make informed decisions.
5. The State and Federal Governments are the relevant authority to lead on crisis management, delivering health warnings, setting travel restrictions and tackling global economic challenges. The summit must occur with representatives from all levels of government but it will be specifically tailored to the business community of City of Melbourne.
6. The City Of Melbourne will continue to monitor the evolving situation and take advice from relevant authorities. In the event mass gatherings are banned, the option of a virtual town hall meeting is included to enable the City Of Melbourne to continue with the summit ensuring our business community receives support and access to high quality networks and guidance.

Moved: Deputy Lord Mayor Arron Wood

Seconded: Cr Beverley Pinder