

Report to the Future Melbourne (Major Events) Committee

Agenda item 6.3

Melbourne Fashion Week 2019

21 May 2019

Presenter: Louise Scott, Manager Events Melbourne

Purpose and background

1. The purpose of this report is to present the producing phase of the events management cycle for Melbourne Fashion Week (MFW) 2019.
2. Owned and produced by City of Melbourne, MFW will be held from Wednesday 28 August to Thursday 5 September 2019. MFW will be a nine day program of events designed to position Melbourne as Australia's fashion and retail capital. MFW provides a launching pad for emerging and established designers, talent and brands, driving visitation, retail sales and direct economic impact to businesses within the city.
3. MFW is exposed to over two million attendees annually with a unique primary attendance of 100,000 in 2018. Unique attendance counts only patrons from outside the municipality who purposely attend the event, but does not include a count of patrons to free citywide programming.
4. In 2018, economic impact of \$13.1 million was injected into the municipality as a direct result of the event.

Key issues

5. MFW 2018 delivered a highly successful dispersed event model and Melbourne focussed brand campaign that brought the Melbourne streets alive. MFW 2019 will build on the success of this event model progressing City of Melbourne's credentials as a creative and innovative city. In 2019, MFW will extend its approach to diversity and inclusion, grow its focus on sustainability, build on the first carbon neutral MFW in 2018 and increase national and international appeal into Asia.
6. The creative direction for MFW 2019 will build on the success of the M/FW rebrand and deliver a bold and impactful campaign that will once again hero Melbourne as a key character. Key messages will continue to focus on a direct call to action to purchase tickets and showcase the designer/program line-up.
7. A high-profile ambassador and a range of influencers will be engaged for MFW 2019 to amplify reach and leverage PR opportunities.
8. The program will include a range of free and ticketed events that will draw a variety of audiences into the city to explore its unique and iconic fashion, retail, hospitality and cultural hubs.
9. The retail connection strategies will be amplified by enhanced partnerships with key retail precincts, stronger links between runway and retail, delivery of Vogue Fashion's Night Out and runways, events and activations placed in high traffic retail, arts and hospitality precincts across the whole MFW week.
10. MFW free city experiences will be achieved through a week long program of free fashion, music, entertainment and activations. The forecourt at the Melbourne Town Hall will be a key destination in this strategy as well as free street runways, fashion pop-ups and exhibitions across Melbourne including laneways, Collins Street, Southbank, Docklands and central CBD areas (amongst others).
11. Management will again seek to engage external organisations as commercial partners. Partners will be sought to relieve core programming costs (i.e. hair and make-up) and to enhance MFW program elements through tailored activations.
12. The fashion, retail and business community has been engaged and invited to participate in the official event program via consultation and an expression of interest process. Consultation has been held with designers, precinct groups, retailers, fashion institutions, businesses, as well as other internal and external stakeholders.
13. Details of key objectives, the program, the brand and marketing strategy, communication channels and the commercial strategy are set out in Attachment 2.

Recommendation from management

14. That the Future Melbourne Committee endorses the Melbourne Fashion Week 2019 program.

Attachments:

1. Supporting Attachment (Page 2 of 5)
2. MFW 2019 Highlights (Page 3 of 5)

Supporting Attachment

Legal

1. No direct legal issues arise from the recommendation from management.

Finance

2. There are no financial implications resulting from the recommendation. All proposed expenditure is contained within approved budgets.
3. At the time of writing of this report, Council's draft 2019–20 Annual Budget includes \$2,974,009 (ex GST) for delivery of the Melbourne Fashion Week event, excluding net commercial revenue and event revenue.

Conflict of interest

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

Health and Safety

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

Stakeholder consultation

6. Consultation has occurred across the organisation and externally with city precinct groups, industry stakeholders, contractors and key service suppliers in establishing the MFW 2019 program and event concept.

Relation to Council policy

7. Melbourne Fashion Week aligns with priorities and goals as identified in the Council Plan 2017–21 (A city for people; A creative city; and A prosperous city).

Environmental sustainability

8. Events Melbourne will engage with internal and external sustainability leaders for feedback, collaboration and innovative approaches to sustainable event practice, including engagement of service suppliers that undertake environmental and social practices and will deliver a carbon neutral MFW 2019.

MFW 2019 HIGHLIGHTS

Key priorities:

1. Showcase Melbourne with over 85 per cent of content to feature Melbourne talent, businesses and retailers. Everything is available to purchase in Melbourne.
2. Build on the success of the dispersed event model activating and driving visitation to iconic locations and precincts to showcase all Melbourne has to offer.
3. Further celebrate the streets of Melbourne by bringing the streets alive in programming, campaigns and activations.
4. Further develop the retail connection strategy to drive direct economic impact and to further strengthen partnerships with key retail precincts. The focus for 2019 will be in developing stronger links between runway and retail, delivery of Vogue Fashion's Night Out and scheduling of runways, events and activations placed in high traffic retail, arts and hospitality precincts across the whole MFW week.
5. Grow national and international appeal to profile Melbourne as a fashion destination and Melbourne designers on a global scale, especially into rising Asian markets as well as a focus on driving local and visiting Asian millennials to shop in CoM retail stores.
6. Strengthen and grow industry partnerships, positioning MFW as the industry vehicle for designers, retailers and brands to showcase their products.
7. Maintain overall event attendance and increase revenue streams through high quality programming, partnerships and ticketing packages.
8. Further develop industry respect as a valuable voice in Melbourne Fashion through association with ambassadors and spokespeople with Melbourne stories to tell and building on industry events to bring leading speakers to the local market.
9. Build on support for Melbourne's emerging and independent talent through programming, profile, sales and media opportunities.
10. Strengthen the integration of sustainability through delivery of a carbon neutral MFW, incorporation of sustainable event practices to reduce the carbon and environmental footprint, profile and support for sustainable and ethical fashion labels and industry discussions around sustainability and the effect of the fashion industry on the environment.
11. Extend the approach to diversity and inclusion in designers, artists, models and talent across the program and marketing campaign.
12. Enhance and extend the customer experience at Melbourne Town Hall in particular, to expand this beyond the runway show to add additional value and encourage visitation across the city.

Core programming areas:

1. MFW Town Hall Runways: Innovative state of the art runway shows presented at the Melbourne Town Hall. From Friday 30 August to Thursday 5 September, five evenings with seven runways, featuring a mix of emerging and established designers, showcasing bold, unique and aspirational designs accessible to all audiences. Premium package options will be available for the public to purchase, extending the entertainment experience. Fashion and talent content will include 85 per cent Melbourne talent, interstate designers and some international retailers.
2. MFW Underground Runways: Opening the MFW week on Wednesday 28 August, this uniquely Melbourne program supports emerging Melbourne designers and will feature two runways showcasing male and female fashion set in an edgy, iconic and non-traditional runway space in Melbourne.
3. MFW Student Collections Runway: Showcasing the final year fashion students from six of Melbourne's top fashion schools, presented at Melbourne Town Hall on Sunday 1 September. Student designers will be engaged from RMIT, Holmesglen, Box Hill Institute, Kangan Institute, The Masters Institute of Creative Education and Whitehouse Institute of Design Australia.

4. Vogue Fashion's Night Out: Partnering with Vogue Australia and key retail precincts, the second day of the MFW program on Thursday 29 August will feature Vogue's Fashion's Night Out Melbourne (fifth year of partnership) encouraging audiences to move through multiple retail precincts and be treated to special on-street activations and retail incentives. Offers will be valid from 10am to 10pm to allow consumers more time to engage in the activity and to drive further economic impact to businesses. Due to the extended timings, hospitality businesses will be encouraged to participate along with the traditional retailers. The event has been moved to a Thursday to drive a higher uplift in sales on a quieter retail night of the week.
5. MFW Free City Experiences: achieved through a week long program of free fashion, music, entertainment and activations in key retail and hospitality precincts throughout Melbourne, this program will disperse visitors across the city to further drive direct economic impact and link to retail spend. The program of events will include energetic street runways in laneways across Melbourne, pop-up fashion activations in iconic Melbourne locations and the Forecourt at the Melbourne Town Hall providing live performances from Melbourne artists, brand activations, hospitality offerings and pop-up shopping experiences. The Fashion Capsules exhibitions will be dispersed in six public locations across the city showcasing artistic interpretations of fashion in all its forms from Melbourne's emerging and independent designers and collaborators.
6. MFW Industry: Headlining the industry program will be the Fashion Forum conference on Monday 2 September, bringing together retailers, designers, institutions and industry representatives in a forum designed to inspire, educate and enhance business skills. An inspiring speaker line up will address and discuss industry issues and themes. The bite size MFW Conversations sessions held as three one hour sessions across the week will provide shorter and accessible discussions around industry issues.
7. MFW Asian Strategy: As part of MFW's commitment to developing national and international appeal and engagement into Asia, MFW will be incorporating an Asian themed street runway, industry discussions as well as a pop-up store and invitations for Key Opinion Leaders from Asia to attend. MFW will also be including a showcase of Melbourne sister city Osaka's fashion student work in the MFW Student Runway.
8. MFW Independent Events Program: A platform for designers, retailers, artists, photographers, businesses and individuals to participate in MFW by hosting their own fashion or retail event in the city throughout the official event week. This program is a collaboration with 20-30 stakeholders across a range of genres such as exhibitions, workshops, runways and events.

Brand and marketing communications:

1. A comprehensive media campaign will be rolled out 6-7 weeks prior to the event, and will use ticket purchase and attendance data in the planning process.
2. The campaign will focus on building anticipation of the event and will once again hero 'Melbourne' in the creative execution, with a strong call to action to purchase tickets.
3. Key campaign elements:
 - 3.1. Creative campaign will be driven by global fashion trends
 - 3.2. All assets and messaging will be developed with 'social channels' primarily in mind
 - 3.3. Strategic and highly targeted media buy with tracked ROI results
 - 3.4. Strong retail message to drive ticket conversions
 - 3.5. Engaging and meaningful content involving local designers, models, artists, creatives.

Commercial plan:

1. The purpose of commercial partnerships is to enhance the MFW event and audience experience through tailored activation programs and leveraging activities. Commercial partners contribute to expanding the reach and engagement of the event to new audiences, enhancing the brand positioning and accessing resources, talent and value that could not be achieved otherwise.
2. Commercial partnerships provide support through a combination of cash, budget relieving and product value-in-kind.

3. Confirmed partnerships include:

- 3.1. Kevin Murphy
- 3.2. Mecca Cosmetics
- 3.3. Creative Victoria
- 3.4. Specsavers
- 3.5. Emporium
- 3.6. Lovables
- 3.7. PR Asia
- 3.8. Epicure / Spotless
- 3.9. Levantine Hill (Wine)
- 3.10. Ticketek.

Key dates:

1. Media Launch: 15 July, TBC depending on ambassador availability.
2. MFW 2019 Event: Wednesday 28 August to Thursday 5 September 2019.