

## Report to the Future Melbourne Committee

Agenda item 6.4

### Making Melbourne the world's best city for student experience – 2023 priorities

21 February 2023

**Presenter:** Andrew Wear, Director Economic Development and International

#### Purpose and background

1. The purpose of this report is to seek endorsement of 2023 priorities that will contribute towards making Melbourne the world's best city for student experience.
2. On 14 December 2021, Council endorsed a strategic framework to retain Melbourne as Australia's best student city and to position Melbourne as the world's leading city for student experience in the global QS Best Student Cities Ranking.
3. At the end of the 2022 academic year (as at 14 November 2022), there were over 106,400 international student visa holders in Australia, studying at Victorian tertiary institutions. This was up 50 per cent compared to the same time in 2021 and is 70 per cent of pre-COVID visa numbers.
4. In 2023, key City of Melbourne (CoM)-based universities, RMIT and the University of Melbourne, will return to delivery of undergraduate course on-campus, with only limited exceptions. Most other universities will offer dual-delivery.

#### Key issues

5. CoM's proposed approach to enhancing student experience in 2023 addresses the key elements of the QS World Rankings that influence 'student experience' (diversity and inclusion, friendliness, ease of getting around, nightlife, arts and culture as well as employment opportunities).
6. The proposed approach for 2023 includes the following elements:
  - 6.1 *Advocacy.* Strengthen Melbourne's reputation as an exciting and inclusive study destination known internationally for its excellence and innovation, culture, safety and employment opportunities after graduation
    - 6.1.1 Engage with representatives from QS to communicate and profile CoM's efforts to improve student experience
    - 6.1.2 Renew CoM's advocacy position with the aim of ensuring that Australia's post study work rights are the most generous among comparable countries to make Australia an even more attractive destination for international students
    - 6.1.3 Provide thought-leadership on the advisory panel for the 'Best Practice – International Student Engagement project,' an Australian Government funded initiative under the International Education Innovation Fund that aims to support the international education sector to innovate, diversify and grow.
  - 6.2 *Welcome and Student Wellbeing.* Inspire students to have a positive experience studying, working and living in Melbourne through a comprehensive program that welcomes, supports and empowers international students
    - 6.2.1 Deliver a comprehensive, month-long Lord Mayor's Student Welcome event in March 2023 in partnership with key stakeholders including Queen Victoria Market, Moomba, Melbourne Fashion Week and the Melbourne International Flower and Garden Show
    - 6.2.2 Work closely with the Victorian government, Committee for Melbourne and sector stakeholders to implement a wide-ranging welcome (back) program to engage, support and empower international students including the Melbourne International Student Week 2023
    - 6.2.3 Work with education institutions to enhance the safe return to a vibrant, on campus life study experience with off-campus, city-wide activities through the 'My Melbourne' program

- 6.2.4 Elevate the delivery of health and wellbeing programs at The Couch to address mental health, legal and food security issues, with concentrated efforts to support international students studying in private colleges
- 6.2.5 Investigate the merits and viability of a possible 'Student Welcome Centre'.
- 6.3 **Employability.** Nurture international student talent, employability, entrepreneurship and leadership skills; create pathways to employment; and establishing life-long relationships with international students, graduates and alumni.
  - 6.3.1 Join key partners from the *Victorian Government's Commitment to Action - Improving international students' employment* initiative to improve pathways to relevant and quality employment opportunities for international students and graduates in Victoria by pledging to employ more international students, offer more work experiences, remove barriers to employment and share success stories
  - 6.3.2 Explore the development and delivery of an international student internship program, including mentoring and work integrated learning opportunities to improve international students' employability and provide a richer experience during their time in Melbourne
  - 6.3.3 Deliver the 2023 Open Innovation Challenge between March and June 2023, inviting innovators, entrepreneurs, students and community members to respond to this challenge: "How might we make Melbourne a more inclusive city for international students and alumni so they can thrive, contribute to and share in our economic prosperity?".
- 6.4 **Marketing and Promotion.** Deliver a communications strategy that promotes Melbourne as a welcoming and safe city to international students and their families.
  - 6.4.1 Develop marketing messages on our strengths as a leading global education city to be utilised by Austrade and the Victorian Government as part of their overseas promotional efforts
  - 6.4.2 Leverage Study Melbourne's innovative and targeted domestic and international marketing campaigns aimed at driving cutting-edge research and development, attracting global talent and international investment, supporting precinct development, boosting the visitor economy through visiting friends and relatives, and helping to meet future skills needs across Melbourne
  - 6.4.3 Raise Melbourne's profile as a city that cares for international students through CoM's corporate platforms. Connecting international students to the resources they need to feel safe and supported will lead to positive word-of-mouth recommendations that can span decades.

### **Recommendations from management**

- 7. That the Future Melbourne Committee endorses the proposed priorities for 2023 that will contribute towards making Melbourne the world's best city for student experience, covering advocacy, welcome and student wellbeing, employability, and marketing and promotion.

#### Attachments:

- 1. Supporting Attachment (Page 3 of 3)

## Supporting Attachment

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### Legal

1. There are no legal issues arising from the recommendation from management.

### Finance

2. No significant implications arise from the recommendations contained in this report.

### 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 material or general conflict of 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.

### Stakeholder consultation

5. Management has had discussions with a range of stakeholders, including representatives from the universities, student groups, and government.

### Relation to Council policy

6. This proposal is consistent with *Melbourne's Thriving Economic Future: Economic Development Strategy 2031*.

### Environmental sustainability

7. In developing this paper, environmental sustainability issues have been considered and no direct issues were identified.