

Report to Council**Agenda item 7.1****Opportunity for international engagement, Deputy Lord Mayor, China****18 April 2023****Presenter:** Deputy Lord Mayor Nicholas Reece**Purpose and background**

1. The purpose of this report is to seek Council approval for the Deputy Lord Mayor to participate in a business delegation to China led by the Australia China Business Council (ACBC). The delegation will also include undertakings to re-establish relations that foster ongoing business and cultural connections.
2. The focus of the ACBC delegation will be to explore green economy opportunities. The delegation includes approximately 20 senior corporate leaders, with guidance and support from government agencies and diplomatic channels. The proposed program will see the Deputy Lord Mayor undertake commitments in Hong Kong, Shenzhen, Beijing and Tianjin between 23 and 28 April 2023. Tianjin has been Melbourne's Sister City since 1980 and is supported through a Melbourne office located in Tianjin.

Key issues

3. The ACBC delegation will be the first industry-wide business delegation to both Hong Kong and the mainland in over three years and will be seen as an important signal to China about the desire of Australian businesses, government and community to remain engaged with China. An overview of key commitments to feature in the ACBC program and other engagements in Tianjin are included as Attachment 2.
4. With a focus on cities of the future, delegates will be given unique opportunities to hear first-hand from Australian and Chinese officials about China's new high-growth plans and opportunities to collaborate and invest in Australian businesses.
5. Austrade, AustCham, Victoria's Commissioner to Greater China, Australian and Chinese consular and embassy officials will feature as part of support for the delegation, which includes senior representatives from major Australian corporations in technology, development, construction and financial, legal and business consulting sectors.
6. The Deputy Lord Mayor's proposed participation follows an invitation from the ACBC. The benefits of City of Melbourne (CoM) participation are multi layered and present strategic value through the following:
 - 6.1. With the recent re-opening of China, the timing of the delegation allows CoM to feature in a leadership mission aimed at reforging stronger business and cultural connections. This comes at a time of rapidly evolving economic and geopolitical conditions.
 - 6.2. The opportunity positions CoM to advance Melbourne as the leading city for international students and to advocate for the strengthening of a sector which is key to Melbourne's economic and cultural vitality. To support this, the Deputy Lord Mayor will make connections with and promote Melbourne university alumni success stories based in various cities to be visited.
 - 6.3. The theme aligns with and fosters the priorities underpinning CoM's Economic Development Strategy, namely that Melbourne is a smart, diverse, innovative and business friendly city.
 - 6.4. It will provide fresh insight and allows CoM to leverage potential opportunities in the Asia Pacific region, a key market proposed to feature prominently in a revised international engagement framework to be considered by Council in coming months. International collaborations are key elements in all delegation commitments as part of the program. Melbourne's office in Tianjin provides an important local based avenue for connection and engagement opportunities.
7. Advancing Melbourne's reputation and leadership in sustainability. In recognition of this, the Deputy Lord Mayor will deliver a presentation on Melbourne's approach to green cities and an employment centre of a resilient zero-carbon economy.

8. The cost of the Deputy Lord Mayor's participation is estimated at \$15,900.

Recommendation

9. That Council:
 - 9.1. Approves the Deputy Lord Mayor's proposed participation in the ACBC delegation to China and to undertake other meetings to re-establish relations that foster ongoing business and cultural connections at a cost to Council of \$15,900.
 - 9.2. Notes that the Deputy Lord Mayor will prepare a report to the Future Melbourne Committee or Council within 60 days of return from travel.

Attachments:

1. Supporting Attachment (Page 3 of 5)
2. Overview of key commitments (Page 4 of 5)

Supporting Attachment

Finance

1. The estimated cost to CoM associated with proposed travel is \$15,900 and includes airfare (\$8,200), accommodation (\$2,200), ACBC delegation administration fee (\$5,000) and incidental costs (\$500).
2. Costs will be met from the existing budget allocation.

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 general or material 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.
5. In undertaking international travel, the Deputy Lord Mayor will adhere to and be guided by international health, safety and security measures including those identified by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade.

Relation to Council policy

6. The Executive Officer Councillor Liaison has confirmed that the travel proposal accords with the requirements of the travel guidelines outlined in the Council Expenses Policy.
7. The theme and objectives behind the delegation and associated meetings align with a range of CoM strategies and Major Initiatives (MI), namely:
 - 7.1. Implementation of the Economic Development Strategy (MI3)
 - 7.2. Review and optimise Melbourne's international relationships (MI8)
 - 7.3. Employment centre of a resilient zero-carbon economy (MI29)

Environmental sustainability

8. The carbon emissions resulting from air travel will be offset with the purchase of credits.

OVERVIEW OF KEY ENGAGEMENTS - HONG KONG SAR, SHENZHEN, BEIJING AND TIANJIN ACBC DELEGATION AND OTHER PROPOSED COMMITMENTS

HONG KONG SAR

Australian Government Briefing and Welcome Reception

Key Speakers/Representatives from:

- Australian Consul-General to Hong Kong SAR and Macau
- Senior Trade and Investment Commissioner, Austrade

Panel Discussion: Topic: Hong Kong SAR's role in the Greater Bay Area

Key Speakers/Representatives from:

- National People's Congress
- HSBC and other invited firms

Hong Kong SAR Government Briefing

Key Speakers/Representatives from:

- Hong Kong SAR Government. Office for Attracting Strategic Enterprises
- Hong Kong Monetary Authority
- Hong Kong Financial Services Development Council

Site visit: Hong Kong Science & Technology Park

Key Speakers/Representatives from:

- Hong Kong Science & Technology Park
- Telstra (North Asia lead)

Panel Discussion: Australian and Hong Kong Companies in the Hong Kong Science & Technology Park - Experiences and Insights

Panel Discussion: Hosted by AustCham Hong Kong

Hong Kong and the Greater Bay Area: Opportunities for Australian Businesses

Key Speakers/Representatives from:

- CK Hutchinson Holdings
- Chinese Chamber of Commerce
- Hong Kong Airport

SHENZHEN

Site Visit: Shenzhen Science & Technology Zone

Hosted by TusHoldings GBA (Shenzhen)

Panel Discussion: The Greater Bay Area

Key Speakers/Representatives from:

- Department of Commerce, Guangdong Province: Introduction to Guangdong–Hong Kong–Macau (Greater Bay Area) 2030 Carbon Peak Action Plan
- TusHoldings GBA: International Collaboration on Innovation and Technology Commercialisation
- Shenzhen High-Tech Industry Development Centre

Briefing: Australian Government

Key Speakers/Representatives from:

- Australian Consulate, Guangzhou
- Austrade

BEIJING

Industry Briefings :

1. Opportunities for Australia in China's High Quality Growth Agenda

Key Speakers/Representatives from:

- International Association of Science Parks and Areas of Innovation
- Association of Green Industrial Zones
- Global Alliance of Special Economic Zones
- EU-China Environment Project and China's evolving Carbon markets

2. Australia's Green Economy opportunities in China

Key Speakers/Representatives from:

- Australian Ambassador to China
- Chinese Government officials
- Australian Business Leaders

Site Visit and Panel Discussion:

Tsinghua University & TusPark (Haidian)

Key Speakers/Representatives from:

- TusHoldings and TusStar - China's Triple Helix Approach to Industrial Transformation
- Introduction to Zhongguancun and China's Innovation and Entrepreneurship Ecosystem

Panel Discussion

- Tsinghua Centre for Industrial Development and Environmental Guidance on APEC Green Finance models
- Beijing Clean Energy International on investing in Australia
- TusEnergy Ganus BioEnergy on Brazil JV
- Ministry of Science and Technology China Agenda 21 on international collaboration on climate change.

TIANJIN

Melbourne Office Tianjin

- Tour and briefing from team at the Melbourne Office Tianjin

Tianjin Municipal People's Government

- Attend courtesy call with Tianjin Municipal People's Government

Site Visit: Tianjin Binhai

- Tianjin Binhai New Area City Planning Exhibition Hall

TEDA ECO Centre

- Permanent Secretariat of Green Partnership of Industrial Park

Site Visit:

- Tianjin Economic Development Authority

Session: Opportunities for Australian companies in Jing-Jin-Ji

Industry Briefings:

- Tianjin-Singapore Eco City collaboration
- Opportunities to collaborate on China's Peak Carbon 2030 and Net Zero 2060 goals