

## Report to the Future Melbourne Committee

Agenda item 7.2

### Post travel report by Councillor Pinder-Mortimer: Guangzhou International Urban Innovation Conference and 2014 Chinese International Friendship City Conference, Guangzhou, China November 2014

10 February 2015

**Presenter:** Councillor Beverley Pinder-Mortimer

#### Purpose and background

1. To report to the Future Melbourne Committee on the travel undertaken by Councillor Beverley Pinder-Mortimer to Guangzhou, China associated with attending the Guangzhou International Urban Innovation Conference and the 2014 Chinese International Friendship City Conference.
2. On 11 November 2014, the Future Melbourne Committee approved the proposal for Councillor Beverley Pinder-Mortimer to travel to Guangzhou for the period 26 to 29 November 2014.
3. Councillor Pinder-Mortimer was accompanied by the Team Leader of Urban Forest and Ecology who provided advice and a technical presentation on the Urban Landscapes Climate Adaptation Program which was shortlisted as one of 15 finalists from 259 international projects the for 2014 Guangzhou Innovation Award.
4. A representative of the Melbourne Office Tianjin also travelled to Guangzhou to provide high level advice and support for the International Friendship City Conference and interactions with the Guangzhou Government.

#### Key issues

5. Attendance at the Guangzhou International Urban Innovation Conference provided an opportunity to gain valuable information into urban governance developments and innovative sustainability programs from leading cities internationally.
6. In particular, significant insights on innovative carbon neutral waste management technologies were gained from the City of Linköping, Sweden. These technologies are not in use in Australia and are worth exploring for feasibility of application in Melbourne. Attachment 2 outlines these opportunities in detail.
7. City of Melbourne was presented with a Friendship City Award at the 2014 Chinese International Friendship City Conference by the Mayor of Guangzhou. This award, which was accepted by Councillor Pinder-Mortimer, acknowledges City of Melbourne's longstanding and successful sister city relationship with the City of Tianjin.
8. This conference allowed an opportunity for Councillor Pinder-Mortimer to strengthen Melbourne's long standing connections with the City of Boston as well as facilitating a beneficial exchange on citizen participation methods to advance current practice, particularly in the area of youth engagement.
9. Both conferences allowed Cr Pinder-Mortimer to promote Melbourne's position as a global leader for climate adaptation. The replicability of the Urban Landscapes Adaptation Program was discussed with several cities.
10. The cost associated with travel by Councillor Beverley Pinder-Mortimer was \$195.39.

#### Recommendation

11. That the Future Melbourne Committee:
  - 11.1. Notes this report and the attached summary of key observations and opportunities
  - 11.2. Notes that City of Melbourne was presented with a Friendship City Award at the 2014 Chinese International Friendship City Conference by the Mayor of Guangzhou.

#### Attachments:

1. Supporting Attachment
2. Summary of key observations and opportunities
3. Photos

**Supporting Attachment**

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**Finance**

1. The flights, accommodation costs and local travel expenses were met by the City of Guangzhou. Costs attributed to Council were \$195.39 which related to incidental expenditure.

**Conflict of interest**

2. 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.

**Relation to Council policy**

3. The Director City Design has confirmed that the travel costs accord with the requirements of the travel guidelines outlined in the Councillor Expenses and Resources Guidelines.
4. The proposed travel will supported Council's international leadership position on climate adaptation and further promote Melbourne's reputation as a global innovator supporting both our Future Melbourne Eco City and Prosperous City Goals.

**Environmental sustainability**

5. Strategies promoting environmental sustainability featured heavily in the program agenda for the Guangzhou Urban Innovation Conference. These strategies provided an opportunity to learn more about how we can further improve climate change mitigation outcomes for the city. Attachment 2 provides further detail.

## Key Observations and Opportunities



(China International Friendship Cities Conference opening 27 November 2014)

### Summary

Over 600 participants from cities around the globe convened from 27 to 29 November 2014 in Guangzhou to attend the 2014 China International Friendship Cities Conference (CIFCC) and the 2nd Guangzhou International Urban Innovation Conference (GIUIC).

Participants included more than 30 Vice Mayors and higher level officials of Chinese cities, more than 80 Director Generals and Vice Director Generals of Chinese provincial or municipal foreign affairs offices and more than 60 foreign Mayors and head of local government organizations from 277 cities and organizations of 56 countries and regions attended the conference

In particular, the GIUIC provided an opportunity to understand, in detail, a range of innovative environmental and smart city initiatives from a range of international leaders. Stand out programs presented at the GIUIC were from the City of Linköping and the City of Boston, these programs are detailed below.

### City of Guangzhou

#### Overview

The CIFCC and the GIUIC Conferences were organised by the City of Guangzhou in collaboration with a number of global city networks to position and showcase Guangzhou as an international city with a reputation for advancing innovation and international collaboration.

#### Discussion

Over 400 student volunteers were recruited by the City of Guangzhou to participate in the CIFCC and the GIUIC. The students were recruited from seven institutes of higher education including Guangdong University of Foreign Studies, Sun Yat-sen University, South China Normal University, Guangzhou University, Guangzhou Communication Polytechnic and Guangzhou City Polytechnic.

The role of the student volunteers was to provide translation services for foreign delegates, provide IT services and to provide general conference support. These young students were highly professional and provided a level of enthusiasm and energy that contributed to the vibrancy, professionalism and success of both conferences.

## Opportunity

The participation of the students provided mutual benefit for both the City of Guangzhou and the Universities, with the City effectively managing conference costs with a volunteer workforce and the students gaining invaluable professional insights and experience. It would be worth considering if the City of Melbourne can partner with local universities in a similar manner for keynote events. Feedback from participating students was complimentary and the opportunity for relevant work experience was highly valued.

## City of Linköping

### Overview

Linköping is a city with approximately 150,000 residents and is the fifth largest municipality in Sweden. A desire to reduce carbon emissions and to improve air quality has resulted in the development of a highly successful energy to waste initiative by the City Council.

Biogas, produced from local waste, is a core part of an integrated waste management system for the municipality. The City collects food waste, diverting it from a landfill system, and converts that waste to carbon neutral energy which in turn powers the city's entire bus fleet and taxis.

The City has developed three biogas production plants, 13 public fuelling stations, and bus depot. Bio-methane sales represent six per cent of the total vehicle fuel volume in Linköping.

More than 100,000 tons of garbage is converted annually into 4.7 million m<sup>3</sup> of fossil free fuel that is used in 64 buses and a number of trucks and light duty vehicles (private cars, taxis and distribution vehicles). Since 2002 there are only biogas buses in the urban transport fleet and the municipal CO<sub>2</sub>-emissions have been reduced by over 9,000 tonnes per year.



**(Image of a biogas bus from the City of Linköping urban transport fleet)**

Residues from the biogas production process are used as bio-fertilizers and sold to farmers, replacing fossil fertilizers and allowing for recycling of nutrients to land for organic food production. This provides an environmentally sound process for treatment of the organic waste in the region.

This waste to energy program is operated by a Council owned company called Tekniska verken Group.

## Discussion

This waste to energy program run by the City of Linköping has many demonstrated benefits, including:

- Landfill elimination - By reducing the waste volume through biogas generation, supported by recycling, only 5 per cent of the total waste in Linköping goes to landfill.
- Energy efficiency - instead of waste disposal in landfills the energy is recovered replacing 100,000 tons of fossil oil annually.

- Profitability - Along with reducing carbon emissions and environmental impacts, the City of Linköping is generating millions of euros annually which they use to support Council programs and infrastructure.

### **Opportunity**

The environmental and economic benefits associated with this waste to energy program are compelling. Further study of this approach is recommended to understand its success factors and its opportunities for Melbourne. Biogas generated from local waste can have many applications for energy use and can be used on both small and large scale.

## **City of Boston**

### **Overview**

Boston's Mayor sought a way to empower youth (age 12 to 25) to become active participants in civic affairs of their city government. His solution was a process of participatory budgeting for a US\$1 million capital works program with ideals of the program generated by youth participants and developed into full proposals then voted on by a city-wide youth vote process.

Over 450 ideas were generated, 14 projects made it to the ballot and seven were selected for implementation by the more than 1,500 young people casting a vote. Parks were most popular area of focus throughout the program with \$610,000 of the available US\$1 million budget being allocated to urban parks and play projects through the voting process.

### **Discussion**

City of Melbourne has already undertaken an extensive participatory budgeting process which was inclusive of all residents of all ages in the municipality. Whilst City of Melbourne is advanced in participatory budgeting, the lessons that resonated from Boston's program were specifically on engaging youth with civic participation with a beneficial educational element of to the process. It is worth noting the level of youth interest in urban parks and play spaces.

### **Opportunity**

An opportunity worth considering is to investigate the applicability of elements and lessons of the Boston program for key programs run through the Park Rangers Educational Strategy and Program and the Urban Landscapes Play Portfolio.



(Cr Pinder-Mortimer accepting the Friendship City Award at the 2014 Chinese International Friendship City Conference by the Mayor of Guangzhou)



(Cr Pinder-Mortimer speaking at the Guangzhou International Award for Urban Innovation)