

Melbourne Spring Fashion Week 2015

12 May 2015

**Presenter:** Stephen Nagle, 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 Spring Fashion Week (MSFW) 2015.
2. Owned and produced by the Council, MSFW will be held from Friday 28 August to Friday 4 September 2015. MSFW is a seven day program of events designed to position Melbourne as Australia's fashion capital. MSFW provides a launching pad for emerging and established designers, models and brands which drives visitation, retail sales and economic development within the city.
3. The 2014 MSFW attracted 50,000 attendees to free and ticketed events with an overall attendance increase of 13 per cent on the prior year. In addition \$4.03 million of economic impact was injected into the municipality as a direct result of the event being staged.

**Key issue**

4. This year MSFW will have an overarching theme which will deliver an integrated and compelling customer experience by providing a consistent direction for all areas of the event design including marketing, commercial partnerships and programming.
5. In 2015, MSFW will engage an ambassador to amplify and leverage marketing and publicity opportunities that will raise event awareness whilst positively profiling the City of Melbourne.
6. 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.
7. Year 2 of the retail connection strategy will be implemented including a major retail event on the MSFW Opening Night, linking several retail precincts through retail activations, offers and exclusive experiences designed specifically to drive retail visitation and economic stimulus within the municipality.
8. Management will again seek to engage external organisations as commercial partners in line with Events Melbourne's commercial framework. Partners will be sought to relieve core programming costs (i.e. hair and make-up) and to enhance MSFW program elements through tailored activations.
9. The community will be engaged and invited to participate in the official event program via consultation and an Expression of Interest process. Community consultation has already begun with designers, precinct groups, retailers, fashion institutions, businesses, as well as other internal and external stakeholders who may be involved or impacted by the event. 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**

10. That the Future Melbourne Committee endorses the Melbourne Spring Fashion Week 2015 program.

## Supporting Attachment

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### 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 would be contained within approved budgets, assuming a similar Melbourne Spring Fashion Week budget to that of 2014–15, and subject to the outcome of Council's 2015–16 Annual Budget process.
3. The current 2015–16 draft budget stands at \$2,251,298 excluding net commercial revenue.

### Conflict of interest

4. No member of Council staff, or other persons 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.

### Stakeholder consultation

5. Consultation has occurred within the City Business Division, Councillors, Governance Services, city precinct groups and with industry stakeholders, contractors and key service suppliers in establishing the MSFW 2015 program and event concept.

### Relation to Council policy

6. This report is consistent with overall strategies contained in the Council Plan. Melbourne Spring Fashion Week is aligned to Goal 3 of the Council Plan 2013–17: A Prosperous City.

### Environmental sustainability

7. As part of the Council Plan, action 9.1, a pilot study of the environmental impact of our Premier Events is being undertaken with Moomba Festival 2015. A selection of findings from the study will be applicable across our Premier Events, allowing Council to identify opportunities to reduce the environmental impact of MSFW in future years. Additionally, a study to measure the environmental impact of MSFW is planned for 2016–17.

## MSFW 2015 HIGHLIGHTS

### Key priorities:

1. **Increase overall event attendance** - by 10 per cent.
2. **Strengthen the brand strategy** -reinforcing CoM ownership and build on the 2014 creative direction.
3. **Develop the retail connection strategy** - build on success of 2014 opening night; drive direct retail economic impact; strengthen partnerships with key retail precincts.
4. **Consolidate the week** - review the schedule; refine MSFW: Designer; enrich City Square venue and program; redevelop MSFW: Industry; strengthen MSFW: Curated; grow MSFW:Mr.
5. **Enhance the customer experience** - ensuring it is seamless; led by the creative direction; digitally driven.
6. **Showcase the MSFW: Hub** - the core entertainment precinct of City Square and Town Hall.
7. **Leverage the MSFW community** - showcase Melbourne's industry; engage local talent.
8. **Evolve MSFW - Designer** – ensure production and content is aspirational.

### Core programming areas:

1. **MSFW Hub:** The key entertainment destination located at City Square, which is free to the public and includes a morning to evening program of activity from Sunday, 30 August to Friday, 4 September 2015. The program will include fashion runways and activation workshops, Emerging Designer Market (Sunday), commercial partner activations and live entertainment.
2. **MSFW Designer:** Innovative state of the art runway shows presented at the Melbourne Town Hall. Across four evenings a mix of unique and aspirational shows will take place opening the week of designer showcases on Tuesday 1 to Friday 4 September 2015. Each runway will include a unique theme in line with the event's creative vision. Hospitality options will be available for public purchase to extend their entertainment experience, including premium seat and corporate hospitality packages. Fashion and talent content will include 70 per cent Melbourne talent, interstate designers and some international brands. All designer and brand content will be available for retail in Melbourne.
3. **MSFW Industry:** A series of seminars, discussions, workshops and networking opportunities presented by industry leaders and leading Melbourne retail and design experts designed to educate and enhance business skills and outcomes. The event will take place on Tuesday 1 and Wednesday 2 September 2015 in retail locations across the city.
4. **MSFW Emerging:** Runway productions to showcase the collections belonging to the final year fashion students from six of Melbourne's top fashion schools. Presented at Melbourne Town Hall on Sunday 30 August 2015, these shows will feature student designers from RMIT, Holmesglen, Box Hill Institute, Kangan Institute, Melbourne School of Fashion and Whitehouse Institute of Design Australia.
5. **MSFW Curated:** A platform for designers, retailers, artists, businesses and individuals to participate in MSFW by hosting their own fashion or retail event in the city throughout the official event week. Collaborating with 50 stakeholders who will produce their own events across a range of genres such as exhibitions, workshops and runways will participate in this year's program.
6. **MSFW Retail Connection:** The program, introduced last year as an initiative to drive retail visitation and direct economic impact will feature again in 2015 including opening the event on Friday 28 August with a city wide retail shopping night and weekend. Other features of this program will include capsule collections at the MSFW Hub and participating retailers and linked MSFW offers.

**Brand and Marketing strategy:**

1. Objectives:
  - 1.1. Enhance City of Melbourne and MSFW brand awareness.
  - 1.2. A creative direction delivers a consistent and compelling customer experience across all touch points on the customer journey.
  - 1.3. MSFW marketing activities demonstrate compelling reasons (Uniquely Melbourne) for residents, businesses and visitors to actively engage in the City of Melbourne.
  - 1.4. Integrated multi-channel marketing plans are developed to deliver a personalised and seamless (online and offline) MSFW experience.
  - 1.5. Media partnerships add value to the event experience through activation and media reach.
  - 1.6. Digital activities enhance the customer experience at each touch point of the customer journey.

**Key marketing communication channels:**

1. Digital: MSFW website, social media (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and Blogs).
2. Media partnerships: Channel 7, News Life Media and others currently being confirmed.
3. Print and ambient media.
4. Publicity including the key messaging to reinforce City of Melbourne event ownership and MSFW as a 'Uniquely Melbourne' fashion event.

**Commercial strategy:**

1. Acquire and implement sustainable commercial partnerships with tailored activation programs to support and add value to the MSFW event and audience experience.

**Key dates:**

1. Media Launch: 8 July 2015; and
2. MSFW 2015 Event: Friday 28 August to Friday 4 September 2015.