

Report to the Future Melbourne Committee

Agenda item 7.3

Post travel report by Councillor Jackie Watts, Yangon, Myanmar, November 2018

19 February 2019

Presenter: Councillor Jackie Watts

Purpose and background

1. The purpose of this report is to inform the Future Melbourne Committee on the meetings and activities Councillor Jackie Watts undertook in Yangon, Myanmar November 2018.
2. Councillor Watts previously represented the City of Melbourne, whilst on private travel, when visiting Yangon. The 2018 meetings aimed to build on discussions held and connections made in 2014, 2015 and 2016.

Key issues

3. Councillor Watts attended the following meetings and events and these are further explained in Attachment 2.
 - 2.1 *Women in Business Leadership and Development Conference*: hosted by Jody Weedon, Australian Chamber of Commerce.
 - 2.2 *Memory*: International Film Heritage Festival event.
 - 2.3 Plaque Installation Program: Yangon Heritage Trust (YHT) installed two commemorative plaques on heritage school buildings of social significance in and around Yangon.
 - 2.4 Meeting with the Secretary of Yangon City Development Committee (YCDC).
 - 2.5 Meeting with Dr Mya Kinn, Yangon University to discuss the Australia Myanmar Conference scheduled for 2020.
 - 2.6 Tour of Rosewood International Hotel Management Company's multimillion dollar riverside/docklands hotel redevelopment project.
 - 2.7 Bogyoke Aung San Municipal Market: tour of heritage market and clock tower.
 - 2.8 Meeting with Annie Bell, Board Member Pomelo Non-profit Enterprise, Yangon.
3. The costs associated with Councillor Watts' travel were privately funded.

Recommendation

4. That the Future Melbourne Committee:
 - 4.1 Notes the report by Councillor Jackie Watts on outcomes of travel to Yangon, Myanmar whilst on private travel November to December 2018.
 - 4.2 Notes that there is continued enthusiasm in the Yangon municipal bureaucracy for a closer city-to-city relationship between Yangon and Melbourne, which augurs well for further opportunities to support local government enhancement in Yangon and for fertile commercial ventures.

Attachments:

1. Supporting Attachment (Page 2 of 6)
2. Details of meetings and events: Visit by Councillor Jackie Watts to Yangon, Myanmar, November 2018 (Page 3 of 6)

Supporting attachment

Legal

1. There are no direct legal implications arising from the recommendation contained in this report.

Finance

2. There is no cost to Council associated with this travel proposal. Councillor Watts will be personally funding her travel.

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 direct or indirect interest in relation to the matter of the report.

Occupational Health and Safety

4. The travel advice of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade was noted and appropriate safety and awareness precautionary steps were undertaken.

Relation to Council policy

6. The Manager Governance and Legal has confirmed that the travel proposal accords with the requirements of the travel guidelines outlined in the Councillor Expenses and Resources Guidelines.

Environmental sustainability

7. The carbon emission resulting from air travel will be offset with the purchase of credits.

DETAILS OF MEETINGS AND EVENTS: VISIT BY COUNCILLOR JACKIE WATTS TO YANGON, MYANMAR, NOVEMBER 2018

1. **Women in Business Leadership and Development Conference:** Approximately 800 women in leadership positions in the public and private sectors attended the conference. Gender equity was a theme. Exhibitors included public and private sector non-government organisations for example, Fintech, IT, engineering, construction, consultancies and start-ups.
2. **Memory:** Myanmar has a rich cinema history dating all the way back to the 1920s. Continuing the tradition of the very few heritage film festivals in existence, this festival brought films that were barely accessible for several decades in this country into the public realm.
3. **Yangon Heritage Trust Plaque Installation Program:** Two commemorative plaques were installed on the former Myanmar State High School (now known as BEHS(2) Dagon) and St John's No 1 School. This program is an initiative of the YHT and was initially sponsored by Philips Electronics Singapore. The plaques are sourced from Melbourne.

These installation events attract great numbers of alumni, many of whom are now key community members in Myanmar. The events also attract wide media coverage.

The YHT, founded in 2012, engages not only in heritage preservation but also in urban strategy. The YHT Urban Strategy refers to Melbourne as a model.

4. **Yangon City Development Committee:** Cr Watts met with the Secretary of YCDC, Daw Hlaing Maw Oo. Daw Hlaing Maw Oo is also the Regional CEO overseeing five million constituents. Moe Moe Lwin, Director of YHT also attended the meeting. Discussion topics included planning regulatory controls, specifically risk management, community engagement, sustainability and Myanmar's emerging new economy.
5. **Yangon University:** Cr Watts met with Dr Mya Kinn, Department of Anthropology to discuss the Australia Myanmar Conference scheduled for 2020 and her research relating to capturing social heritage. Professor Dr Daw Than Nwe, Myanmar Academy of Arts and Science and retired Human Rights Commissioner also attended the meeting.
6. **Rosewood International Hotel Management Company:** Nathalie Leung Shing escorted Cr Watts on a tour of the company's multimillion dollar riverside/docklands hotel redevelopment. The project, conducted in close collaboration with the YHT, involves the re-purposing and exemplary restoration of a most significant 19th century former High Court building. The project is funded through a United States-Thailand partnership.
7. **Bogyoke Aung San Municipal Market:** Wah Wah Than, Managing Director Stamford Cities Business Institute, Aung San Win, Myanmar Integrated Engineering Group and other officers from the YHT and the YCDC escorted Cr Watts on a tour of the heritage market and clock tower.
8. **Pomelo Non-profit Enterprise:** Cr Watts and Annie Bell discussed the potential for collaboration with the Myanmar diaspora in Melbourne. See <http://pomeloformyanmar.org>

YANGON VISIT: IMAGES



Image 1: Yangon Heritage Trust Plaque Installation Program – plaques sourced from Melbourne



Image 2: Public library, Yangon



Image 3: Bogyoke Aung San Municipal Market



Image 4: Heritage goods sheds, Irrawaddy River, Yangon



Image 5: Former High Court building