

Management report to Council

Agenda item 6.4

Consideration of proposal to renew City of Melbourne Chair in Resilient Cities partnership with University of Melbourne

Council

Presenter: Toby Kent, Chief Resilience Officer

29 October 2019

Purpose and background

1. The purpose of this report is to seek Council endorsement of a new five year partnership with the University of Melbourne in supporting a 'City of Melbourne Chair in Urban Resilience and Innovation'.
2. In April 2015 Council endorsed creating and jointly funding a 'City of Melbourne Chair in Resilient Cities' with The University of Melbourne. The position's aim is to lead urban resilience research in ways that directly enhance Melbourne's understanding and ability to take practical actions to build our metropolitan resilience. See Attachment 2 for the focus agreed within the contract of 9 December 2015 for a term of five years. Council contributes \$137,470 per annum being approximately 50 percent of the professorial Chair's salary.
3. The University of Melbourne led a global recruitment process for the Chair, and engaged the Council's Director of Operations, Chief Resilience Officer and Chief Digital Officer in the Chair Selection Committee. Professor Lars Coenen was formally appointed as the inaugural City of Melbourne Chair in Resilient Cities for five years, commencing in mid-January 2017.
4. Professor Coenen recently advised that he will return to Europe at the end of 2019. With Professor Coenen's resignation, future payments from Council will be suspended until a new agreement is reached on the future of the position. This presents a natural moment to review the agreement between the two parties.

Key issues

5. We are currently three years into the five year agreement. It previously took approximately one year to identify the candidate and for Professor Coenen to start in the role. Should the Council choose to continue co-funding the position, the duration of the agreement would need to be reviewed, as it may not be possible to recruit an academic of the right calibre, if the Chair's role was to only be for the remaining two years.
6. The inaugural City of Melbourne Chair in Resilient Cities has played a notable role in attracting world-renowned urban scholars to Melbourne. His academic publications have been prolific and strong foundations put in place for any future Chair to build upon.
7. The relationship between the Resilient Melbourne team has been positive, including having the Chair attend Resilient Melbourne Steering Committee meetings and providing informal advice, to having a PhD candidate embedded in the team to review the Melbourne Renewal Energy Project to consider extending the model metropolitan-wide.
8. The relationship with other parts of Council, information flows, and visibility of research to Council could be enhanced for the benefit of Council and our ratepayers. A summary of strengths and challenges is provided in Attachment 3. City of Melbourne considerations regarding future options for the partnership are provided in Attachment 4A. The University has proposed to address highlighted challenges through the measures outlined in Attachment 4B, which officers support.
9. From the university's perspective, Professor Coenen's appointment and his prolific academic output represent success. The university's assessment of impact is provided in Attachment 5.
10. The cost of supporting a new position of 'City of Melbourne Chair in Urban Resilience and Innovation' will be approximately \$700,000 over five years (\$140,000/year).

Recommendation from management

11. That Council approves a new five year agreement with The University of Melbourne to co-fund the 'Professorial Chair in Urban Resilience and Innovation' at an annual cost to Council of \$140,000 over the five year term, with the role to have a broader focus, incorporating innovation into resilience research, enhanced Council reporting and engagement requirements.

Attachments:

1. Supporting Attachment (Page 3 of 10)
2. Research and associated activities as stipulated in the contract of December 2015 (Page 4 of 10)
3. City Of Melbourne considerations of partnership to-date (Page 5 of 10)
4. A) Considerations for any future arrangement; B) University proposed reporting and engagement cycle (Page 6 of 10)
5. University of Melbourne self-assessment of impact (January 2017 – September 2019) (Page 8 of 10)

Supporting Attachment

Legal

1. As the new agreement will incur expenditure in future budget years, a Council resolution is required to enable it to be entered into. As part of the negotiation of the new agreement, the existing agreement will be ended.

Finance

2. A decision to extend the partnership would incur costs to Council of \$700,000 over five years.

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.

Health and Safety

4. In developing this proposal, no Occupational Health and Safety issues or opportunities have been identified.

Stakeholder consultation

5. A number of Councillors have direct contact with Professor Coenen and have an interest in the Chair's work. The Lord Mayor met with the University's Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research) Jim McCluskey, Vice President of Strategy and Culture Julie Wells, and Professor Brendan Gleeson of MSSl, on 26 September 2019.
6. Council officers have their own relationships with the Chair and colleagues and have discussed the future of the position. No community engagement has been undertaken with regards the future of the partnership.

Relation to Council policy

7. The scope of the position means that it has links to all of our Council goals and any future endeavour should consider how activities can be reported against them.
8. While the focus of the Professorial Chair's research may support environmental outcomes, there are limited direct environmental impacts to be considered.

SCHEDULE OF VARIATIONS

1. Amend Recital C of the Sponsored Chair Agreement to read as follows:

- C. The University and the City of Melbourne have agreed that the University will establish the position of the City of Melbourne Chair in Resilient Cities in the Faculty of Architecture, Building and Planning, located in the Melbourne Sustainable Society Institute with the aim to further research and research training in the field of "Resilient Cities", including in relation to the following:
- (a) taking action to strengthen Melbourne's resilience ~~in the face of expected global warming~~;
 - (b) undertaking research that informs and enhances policy response to economic, social and environmental change; ~~including in particular climate change~~;
 - (c) undertaking research and responses that acknowledge the interdependencies of physical, social and economic factors in framing effective policy action to secure and enhance resilience; and
 - (d) securing and enhancing the community's resilience to address chronic stresses and preparedness in planning for, acting during and recovering from ~~acute shocks~~ extreme events.

Strengths

1. The City of Melbourne Chair in Resilient Cities reports to the Faculty of Architecture, Building and Planning at the University of Melbourne, and works closely with the Melbourne Sustainability Society Institute, Resilient Melbourne and the Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions.
2. Professor Coenen has published and fostered publication of a significant number of peer reviewed academic papers, focussed on urban resilience, including analysing Resilient Melbourne efforts.
3. The presence of the Chair has helped University of Melbourne to develop an increasingly well-recognised urban practice, including the creation of an 'urban observatory' led by Professor Michele Acuto, a world-renowned academic attracted to Melbourne, in part by the existence of the City of Melbourne's Chair in Resilient Cities. Indeed, the relationship between the City and the University has attracted international attention and has played a part in drawing high calibre academics, Professor Coenen included.
 - This has correlated with an increase of renowned academics specialising in the field of urban studies across Melbourne's major academic institutions, although how much of this can be attributed to University of Melbourne playing a catalysing role is unknown.
4. Professor Coenen has helped to advance thinking about the connection between urban resilience and innovation. This has manifested in contributions to Melbourne Knowledge Week, participation in a panel on open innovation in a 'Citymart' urban challenge.
5. Professor Coenen, particularly through his work supporting the Latrobe Valley Authority, has helped the Victorian Government to have a clearer understanding of the interdependencies of urban centres and regional cities and communities. The investment received by the University of Melbourne for this work directly supported a post-doctoral researcher working on issues relating to Resilient Melbourne.

Challenges

6. For all these strengths, University of Melbourne has had mixed success in communicating these contributions, and Council, specifically, has had poor visibility of the outputs and results achieved by the position.
7. While there is a need for academic independence, given the investment, City of Melbourne was intending for the Chair's academic research to include a focus on City of Melbourne priorities and initiatives that were taking place within the municipality, such as the Melbourne Innovation Districts. Multiple offers were made by City of Melbourne officers to brief the Chair on related programs and opportunities. This has been noted by both parties as an improvement opportunity, should the position continue in a second phase.

4A. City of Melbourne considerations

1. One of the strengths that Professor Coenen has brought to the Chair's role is to articulate the profound links between the practice of urban resilience and innovation. In the spirit of innovation, the inaugural Chair in Resilient Cities, should itself be considered a pilot or 'prototype'. There have been elements of the partnership to-date that could have been stronger but this does not mean that the undertaking was misguided.
2. The University has proposed that they amend the title and accordingly refine the search for a new 'Professorial Chair in Urban Resilience and Innovation', reflecting the importance of innovation in this work and a desire to maintain that link in any further appointment.
3. The University agrees that there should be clearer reporting lines with the City of Melbourne, including agreed City Of Melbourne success measures, a specifically articulated role in supporting the development of the Melbourne Innovation Districts, Melbourne Knowledge Week, and regular presentations to Council. A proposed draft timetable for engagements is set out in this Attachment 2, below
4. Four options for the future of the partnership are set out here.
 - 4.1 Cancel the contract. The arrangement with the University is for five years and considers the role not the person in it. Theoretically, the resignation of Professor Coenen should thus not affect the contract but in reality without a professor in post it fundamentally alters the relationship.
 - 4.2 Complete the existing contract, noting that the University of Melbourne does not feel it will be feasible to recruit anyone of calibre with only two years remaining in the contract.
 - 4.3 Amend the current contract to initiate a new five year agreement, with the broadened title and scope of 'Professorial Chair in Urban Resilience and Innovation'. This would see a similar arrangement in place as currently exists, allowing the University of Melbourne to recruit a new high-profile professorial Chair, while bearing in mind the new performance criteria and reporting to Council, as per point 11, above.
 - 4.4 Consider a ten year arrangement, with the broadened title and scope of 'Professorial Chair in Urban Resilience and Innovation', with a break clause at five years to conduct a deep review of performance and consideration of broader City Of Melbourne priorities and contexts..
 - 4.4.1 Such an arrangement would further strengthen the University's ability to attract candidates of the highest calibre. It would send a clear signal about the strength of relationship between the two organisations, incentivise the University to be very focused on meeting the terms of specified agreements, while managing the risk of over-commitment. However, the nature of such arrangements is that City Of Melbourne would likely find itself under pressure to renew the arrangement at five years so should there be any misgivings about the current investment, this runs the risk of 'doubling down' at a point of uncertainty.

4B. University of Melbourne proposed reporting and engagement cycle (2020 onwards)

1. Reporting in:

- Induction process with City Of Melbourne
- Inaugural Public Oration with City of Melbourne

2. Annual reporting:

- Bimonthly reporting to Resilient Melbourne Delivery Office and Smart City Office
- Annual briefing to Council, and further as requested
- Biannual Steering Committee for the Chair including annual financial return and impact statement

3. Annual engagement

- Quarterly, Standing Observer, Resilient Melbourne Steering Group
- Steering committees and working groups, as requested, notably Melbourne Innovation District, Knowledge Week
- Other engagement as opportunities, requests emerge

4. Reporting out [For Professor Coenen in 2019 and for any future Chair]

- Public Oration at end of term
- Exit briefing for City of Melbourne

University of Melbourne self-assessment of impact regarding City of Melbourne Chair in Resilience (January 2017 – September 2019)

In 2017 Professor Lars Coenen took up the position as inaugural Chair in Resilient Cities at the Melbourne Sustainable Society Institute based on an innovative partnership between the City of Melbourne and the University of Melbourne. This partnership acknowledges the increased mutual dependence and close relationship between both organisations for the betterment of Melbourne. During his term Lars and team have built national and global awareness of Melbourne's work to become a more resilient city through continuous innovation, ambition and leadership. Importantly, it requires operating across the comfort-zones of disciplines and sectors. The Chair's knowledge-based approach to resilience building and innovation has brought the Resilient Melbourne Strategy and the Knowledge City Strategy in closer conversation and initiated parallel efforts to build resilience in Regional Victoria with the Latrobe Valley Authority.

Select Summary of Contributions

Support to Resilient Melbourne and Knowledge City Strategy

Since 2017, Professor Coenen and his team have worked closely with Resilient Melbourne, and the City of Melbourne generally, in support of its policy and program agendas. Collaborative research has investigated Resilient Melbourne's ability to test and implement experimental approaches to resilience building that can be applied to mainstream policy, practice, and institutions. Since 2019, the team has also expanded its scope to study the impact and innovation of Resilient City actions across the 100RC network and relevant related city networks (like C40). In addition, and in support of Council's Knowledge City agenda, the team has started to explore how the design and development of innovation precincts across metropolitan Melbourne could contribute to resilience building.

Key examples:

- Frequent exchanges with and contributions to the Resilient Melbourne Delivery Office (member of Advisory Board for Resilient Communities Action, attendance weekly team meetings, standing observer of the Resilient Melbourne Steering Group, member of the Citymart open innovation challenge).
- Participated in interviews and workshop on future operating and funding model of Resilient Melbourne Delivery Office.
- Delivery of Keynote for the Melbourne Innovation District Day during Melbourne Knowledge Week 2019.
- Various high-level presentations on the Resilient Melbourne Strategy, both domestic and overseas (e.g. Keynotes for 2019 annual strategy day of Swedish Strategic Innovation Program 'Viable Cities' and 2018 Fenner Conference of the Environment, Canberra).
- Facilitated workshop on 'Economic Transitions' for Resilient Melbourne - Metropolitan mayors and CEOs meeting 2017.
- Attendance at the EU World Cities Program 2017, which included a partnership between the Cities of Melbourne and Hamburg.
- Participation as Melbourne delegate in 100 Resilient Cities Summit in Rotterdam 2019.
- Eavesdrop on Experts Podcast facilitated by University of Melbourne 'Australia: liveability vs. sustainability'.
- Facilitated University of Melbourne School of Geography student capstone project 'Local sites, global connections' in collaboration with Resilient Melbourne.
- Organized session with Resilient Melbourne at the Eco-city Summit, Melbourne, 2017.

Capacity Building and Leverage

The Chair, in partnership with collaborators within the University of Melbourne and beyond (e.g. RMIT), has generated substantial research support, helping to establish Melbourne as a world-leading centre of applied resilience research for city impact. These resources have assisted the building and support of a team of world class applied researchers who have worked closely in support of Council's resilience and knowledge agendas. Several large funding requests from the Commonwealth are under consideration at the time of this report. Professor Coenen and his team have also made ongoing contributions to teaching and research supervision at the University of Melbourne that has helped to further develop Melbourne's research and professional capacities in the fields of resilience and place-based innovation.

Key examples:

- The Chair has raised approximately \$2.8m in research funding from the Victorian Government to conduct work on resilient regional development with the Latrobe Valley Authority through the Gippsland Smart Specialisation Project 2018-2019. Part of this funding has facilitated the recruitment of an additional post-doctoral research fellow, Dr. Svenja Keele to conduct research on Resilient Melbourne, and collaboration with Prof. Michele Acuto and his Connected Cities Lab to set up a database of global Resilient Cities.
- A 2019 study funded by Lord Mayor's Charitable Foundation that mapped the Melbourne knowledge ecosystem for healthy and sustainable cities. Budget: \$30,000.
- In partnership with Resilient Melbourne, study funded by RICS Research Trust UK: 'Participatory governance of integrated and resilient residential and mixed-use developments'. With Dr. Nader Naderpajouh, RMIT. Budget: approx. \$18,500.
- A 2019 study funded by DELWP on 'Objectives and priorities for climate adaptation in Victoria'. Led by Dr. Svenja Keele in collaboration with the School of Geography. Budget: \$42,000.
- A 2019 report for The Resilience Shift on 'The role of public policy in critical infrastructure resilience', led by Dr. Svenja Keele.
- 2 Australian Research Council Discovery applications focused on Resilient Melbourne, ARC Linkage proposal in development with City of Melbourne as Partner Organisation.
- City of Melbourne supported Cooperative Research Centre (CRC) Future Cities application. Lead by Prof. Deo Prasad (UNSW). Budget \$85m. Shortlisted for stage 2.
- Cooperative Research Centre (CRC) Transformative Cities application. Led by Prof. Tony Wong (Monash). Budget \$80m.

Public Engagement in Support of UoM-CoM Collaboration

- The Chair and team have undertaken regular public engagements to enhance the visibility and the impact of the Melbourne resilience and innovation agendas. Increasingly, Professor Coenen, has been invited to give international keynote presentations based on his Melbourne work, exemplifying the growing global recognition of and esteem for the City of Melbourne Chair and the collaboration it represents.
- **Key examples:**
- Professor Coenen delivered the annual MSSI Oration 'Resilience in the Face of Sustainability Crises: is Innovation the Problem or the Solution?' which drew on examples of innovations implemented through Resilient Melbourne. The Oration was fully booked and attended by an audience of over 200 participants. In connection to this he also provided a University of Melbourne 'Eavesdrop on Experts' podcast and authored a contribution to The Conversation.
- Invited to deliver the annual Tschudi lecture in Human Geography at the University of Oslo, 2018.
- Invited Guest Professor at the UNESCO sponsored Chair Bertrand Maris at the University of Toulouse (including lecture), 2019.
- Invited key-note panellist for State of Australian Cities Conference, Adelaide, 2019.
- Invited panellist for Melbourne Connect breakfast symposium on Melbourne Innovation Districts, 2019.

Key Visitors and Knowledge Exchange

The Chair has been a highly effective means for attracting key international resilience and innovation scholars to Melbourne who have shared their expertise in a range of applied forums with Council and other stakeholders and collaborators.

Key examples:

- Participation in the EU World City Exchange, 2017.
- Representative for Melbourne at the 100 Resilient Cities Summit in Rotterdam, 2019.

City-Region Knowledge

The Chair with university collaborators, including RMIT, have provided advice to the Victorian State Government on resilient futures for the Latrobe Valley. This work has helped their applied research to better situate the City of Melbourne in its broader socio-economic city-region context, and stimulated State awareness of place-based innovation for resilient futures.

Key examples:

- Gippsland Smart Specialisation Strategy in collaboration with Latrobe Valley Authority
- Smart Specialisation Roundtable organized by Department of Premier and Cabinet, 2018.
- Keynote at Regional Resilience and Transition Roundtable organized by Queensland Department of Science and the Environment, 2019.