

**Report to the Future Melbourne Committee****Agenda item 6.6****Melbourne Knowledge Week 2022 Planning Phase****16 November 2021****Presenter:** Louise Scott, Director Tourism and Events**Purpose and background**

1. The purpose of this report is to present the concept and strategy for Melbourne Knowledge Week 2022 (MKW) as part of the planning phase of the events management cycle.
2. MKW is a City of Melbourne owned and delivered annual event for a smart and knowledge-led city. It showcases innovation, shares knowledge, builds digital literacy, and teaches skills, by engaging citizens in experiences that can test new ideas and the innovations of today to achieve a desired tomorrow.
3. The 2021 festival delivered 114 events in 23 venues. It attracted 36,100 participants to the city and involved 127 event partners. 88 per cent of events were free to attend and attendance increased by 19 per cent on 2019 (pre-Covid-19). Of those attending 93 per cent rated it as a positive experience.
4. In December 2018, Council endorsed a three-year growth plan for MKW to grow the event's reach, impact and outcomes between 2019–21. Attendance has grown 62 per cent since 2018.

**Key issues**

5. MKW's substantial attendance growth since 2018 illustrates the key role it plays in providing a vital public engagement platform for Melbourne's thriving knowledge sector. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, the knowledge sector accounted for nearly two out of every three jobs in the city. It continues to be interlinked with the international education, biotech, fintech, creative and visitor economies, and future knowledge precincts such as Arden and Fisherman's Bend.
6. MKW is perfectly positioned to be at the vanguard of the fourth industrial revolution, otherwise known as Industry 4.0, which includes 5G, Internet of Things, artificial intelligence, advanced automation and robotics, virtual and extended reality, as well as the broader entrepreneurship, innovation and startup sectors. The next five years are critical for cementing MKW's position as a leading knowledge event for the city.
7. MKW will run from Monday 9 May to Sunday 15 May 2022, focusing on four key themes: Economy, Technology, Earth, and Community + Culture.
8. A public Expression of Interest process in October 2021 attracted nearly 110 submissions from across the knowledge sector, with applicants ranging from leading education institutions to Aboriginal knowledge holders, startups, community groups, science communicators and biomedical innovators.
9. Event types will include talks and panels, workshops, breakfasts, performance and film, pitches and hacks. An international keynote will be delivered digitally to a local live audience, and Prototype Street at Wesley Place will feature an immersive set of installations enabling the audience to step into the future of their city. Curated dining experiences at selected restaurants will explore food futures and innovation.
10. Interactive and "Instagrammable" public realm installations will invite participants to playfully engage with new ideas, and an expanded youth program will include events for school excursion groups, children and families. MKW will also provide participation opportunities for volunteers and international students.
11. MKW will create a knowledge precinct along Little Lonsdale Street between State Library Victoria and Wesley Place, incorporating multiple venues such as The Wheeler Centre, The Commons QV co-working space and Queen Victoria Women's Centre. Additional activations will take place at Melbourne Connect, The Capitol Theatre and Town Hall Commons, plus other venues across the municipality.
12. Data shows that the greatest spending on retail, dining and entertainment is on days when the city hosts its biggest events. MKW's expanding profile and footprint will capitalise on this trend, encouraging visitation and spend across multiple city locations, and creating walk-by trade for retail and hospitality.
13. MKW's commercial partnership revenues (inclusive of cash and value-in-kind) are increasing year-on-year, an upwards trend that is projected to continue as the event's profile and impact also rise. Confirmed commercial partners for 2022 include Charter Hall, State Library Victoria, Ticketek and Monash University.

**Recommendation from management**

14. That the Future Melbourne Committee endorses the 2022 Melbourne Knowledge Week strategy and concept.

**Attachments:**

1. Supporting Attachment (Page 2 of 2)

## **Supporting Attachment**

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### **Legal**

1. No direct legal issues arise from the recommendation from management. Legal advice will be provided as and when required.

### **Finance**

2. Council's 2021–22 budget includes \$810,000 operating budget for the delivery of MKW, and \$150,000 in capital funding for the MKW Hub.

### **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. The Occupational Health and Safety of the staff, contractors and event attendees is embedded into planning for MKW, including any risks arising from the COVID-19 pandemic. A number of strategies are put in place to ensure the event environment is safe and enjoyable for all. Management and the appointed Risk Manager are responsible for all safety and emergency management plans for this event.

### **Stakeholder consultation**

5. During the planning phase of MKW, consultation has occurred with a range of external stakeholders. These include past event partners, knowledge sector entities, key contractors, corporate partners and previous MKW attendees. MKW also regularly consults with an external Aboriginal Advisory Group that is convened with the guidance of Aboriginal Melbourne.

### **Relation to Council policy**

6. This report is consistent with overall strategies contained in the Council Plan 2021–25 – Melbourne's unique identity and place.
7. It also supports the Economic Development Strategy 2031 – Key Priority 7: Digitally connected city.

### **Environmental sustainability**

8. Planning is underway to achieve a carbon neutral event for the third year.
9. Management will engage with internal and external sustainability leaders for feedback, collaboration and innovative approaches to sustainable event practice. It will also engage service suppliers that undertake environmental and social practices. Audiences to free and paid events can opt-in to provide a financial contribution to carbon offset costs at the time of event registration.
10. MKW programs many events every year on sustainability and sustainable practices, in order to educate the public and encourage behaviour change in audiences.