

Report to the Future Melbourne Committee

Agenda item 7.1

Post travel report by Councillor Susan Riley, Chengdu, China, August 2017

17 October 2017

Presenter: Councillor Susan Riley

Purpose and background

1. To report to the Future Melbourne Committee (Committee) on travel undertaken by Councillor Susan Riley to Chengdu, China in August 2017.
2. On 15 August 2017, the Committee approved the proposal by Councillor Riley to represent the City of Melbourne at meetings with Victorian State Government officials in Chengdu, China whilst on private travel to Chengdu.
3. Chengdu is a city of 14 million people in Sichuan province, southwest China. It is very picturesque and clean, with wide streets surrounded by trees.

Key issues

4. A successful meeting was held with Victorian State Government representatives on Tuesday 23 August 2017. Present were Commissioner Tim Dillon and Deputy Commissioner Lisa Renkin. Also in attendance was Julian Wei, an entrepreneur whose current project is a world-class hotel and apartment development in the heart of Chengdu, in collaboration with Tonino Lamborghini of Lamborghini fame.
5. Commissioner Dillon was excited to hear about the project, in particular the proposed international supermarket to be housed within the apartment complex, providing considerable opportunity for Victorian wine, cheese, produce and specialty goods to gain entry into this burgeoning Chengdu market.
6. Deputy Commissioner Renkin was briefed on the City of Melbourne's WeChat foray. She commented that already there were several comments made by people in Chengdu about Melbourne's WeChat entry.
7. The City of Chengdu is seeking to connect with more cultural experiences unique to Melbourne. A range of possibilities were discussed including the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra, the Australian Ballet and Australia Ballet School, Chamber Made Orchestra and more.
8. Deputy Commissioner Renkin highlighted that the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between Sichuan Province and the City of Melbourne dovetails into all of these trade, investment, cultural and tourism opportunities, and once the scope of the MoU has been defined, further advances may be made to bring some of these exchanges to fruition.
9. The Deputy Commissioner attended a recent ceremony at the Melbourne Town Hall on 19 June 2017 to welcome Mr Lou Qiang, Mayor of Chengdu. This was the Mayor's first visit to the City of Melbourne. It was during this visit when a MoU was signed to form a collaborative partnership between Melbourne and Chengdu. The MoU will leverage existing sister-state resources and facilitate Melbourne businesses trade opportunities with Chengdu and Sichuan Province. In 2016, the Victorian Government entered into a sister state agreement with the Sichuan Provincial Government.
10. Overall, a very positive and constructive meeting was held with Commissioner Dillon and Deputy Commissioner Renkin. All parties are keen to explore any varied activities and opportunities that could emanate from this meeting.
11. The City of Melbourne bore no cost associated with this visit.

Recommendation

12. That the Future Melbourne Committee notes the report by Councillor Susan Riley on meetings undertaken whilst on private travel to Chengdu, China in August 2017.

Attachments:

1. Supporting Attachment (page 2 of 2)

Supporting Attachment

Finance

1. Councillor Riley's travel was privately funded and there was no cost to Council.

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 Manager Governance and Legal has confirmed that the travel accords with the requirements of the travel guidelines outlined in the Councillor Expenses and Resources Guidelines.
4. Engagement with Victorian Government officials in China supports efforts and objectives aimed at fostering global business relationships and investment attraction. It also supports the principles that underpin Council's *Melbourne: Doing Business Globally*, which seeks to increase trade and investment opportunities for businesses from Council's international activities.

Environmental sustainability

5. There are no environmental sustainability impacts associated with the recommendation in this report.
6. The purchase of carbon offsets reduced the carbon emissions impact of the flights.