

Future Melbourne Committee

Agenda item 7.1

15 March 2022

Notice of Motion: Cr Leppert: LGBTIQ+ programs

Motion

That the Future Melbourne Committee:

1. Notes the current Council services and programs supporting LGBTIQ+ communities (attachment 1).
2. Notes the Council's progress towards the Victorian Pride Lobby's Local Council Candidate Pledge, asked of candidates in the lead up to the 2020 election (attachment 2).
3. Notes that the Local Government Equality Index, created by the Victorian Pride Lobby after the 2020 election, compares Councils based on how many of the five actions in the pre-election Local Council Candidate Pledge have been implemented while ignoring the output or impact of a Council's services and programs, and so cannot be said to measure or benchmark equality in any meaningful way.
4. Requests that management provide a briefing paper to councillors addressing the questions arising (attachment 2).

Background

An account of current City of Melbourne LGBTIQ+ services and programs is found at attachment 1.¹

In 2020, the Victorian Pride Lobby surveyed candidates for the October 2020 Victorian council elections, requesting that all candidates sign a 'Local Council Candidate Pledge.' Nine of 11 elected Melbourne City Councillors signed the pledge.²

The pledge, along with an account of how the five elements have been implemented to date, as well as questions arising, are found at attachment 2.

After the 2020 election, the Victorian Pride Lobby assessed the extent to which each Council had implemented the five initiatives in the 'Local Council Candidate Pledge' in order to create a 'Local Government Equality Index'. Despite none of the five initiatives measuring equality of outcome, and without considering the services and programs for LGBTIQ+ communities provided by any Council, the Victorian Pride Lobby has scored every Council out of five, and has treated these scores as a measure of Councils' equality and inclusion. The Lobby declared the Council which implemented five out of five elements to be "the most LGBTIQA+ inclusive council in Victoria".³

To ensure that the City of Melbourne continues to focus its services and programs for LGBTIQ+ communities as effectively as it can, to facilitate equity and to eliminate discrimination, it is important that the Council looks to measurable strategies and plans and not only be influenced by third party scorecards and accreditation.

Mover: Cr Rohan Leppert

Seconder: Cr Jamal Hakim

Attachment 1: Current City of Melbourne services and programs supporting LGBTIQ+ communities.

Attachment 2: Progress towards the Victorian Pride Lobby's 'Local Council Candidate Pledge', and next steps.

¹ The use of the LGBTIQ+ acronym is taken from the Victorian Government's [LGBTIQ+ Inclusive Language Guide](#). Council's services and programs are targeted towards lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and queer communities. The Council's services for intersex communities are more limited. The Victorian Pride Lobby has also asked Councils to also consider strategies for asexual (A) communities, and uses the acronym LGBTIQA+.

² <https://rainbowvotes.com.au/melbourne>

³ <https://www.starobserver.com.au/news/banyule-tops-equality-index-in-victoria-melbourne-fares-poorly/199928>

Current City of Melbourne services and programs supporting LGBTIQ+ communities.

In 2021, the City of Melbourne pursued the following services, programs, grants, sponsorships and other initiatives:

Council Grants to LGBTIQ+ organisations and individuals

- City of Melbourne is Principal Partner of **Midsumma**. Support includes cash, event permit fee waivers, and full fee waiver to use Alexandra Gardens for Victoria's largest annual LGBTIQ+ communities gathering.

Midsumma's audience is 209,523, with 84 community group partnerships.

- City of Melbourne is Principal Partner of the **Melbourne Queer Film Festival**. Support includes cash and in kind support. MQFF's audience is 24,000, with 171 Artists employed.



- Through the **Event Partnership Program** and the **City Revitalisation Event Grants** City of Melbourne has supported the following events:
 - *Queer* NGV exhibition - expansive thematic presentation of over 300 works relating to queer stories ever presented in an Australian art institution.
 - Victorian Senior's Festival – the festival partners with *All the Queens Men* to support LGBTIQ+ elders.
 - Indian Film Festival - Annual celebration of Indian cinema with productions from across the entire region. A specific film about LGBTIQ+ community in Melbourne will be created by Victorian talent.
 - Run Melbourne - A fund-raising mass participation fun run/walk, including a half marathon, 10km and 5km. Partner with LGTIQA group *Melbourne Frontrunners*
 - Scratch Arts Hub - An independent hub of contemporary and queer events presenting as a part of Midsumma festival that will run over 2 weeks in April.
- Council directly supported LGBTIQ+ community service organisations, and LGBTIQ+ customers in other community organisations, through **community grants**:
 - Connected Communities grants:
 - All the Queens Men – Coming Back Out Concert + Digital Dance Club (online).
 - The Equality Project – Beyond the Rainbow and LGTIQA+ Health and Wellbeing Day.
 - Social Partnerships:
 - RMIT University.
 - The Pinnacle Foundation – Partnership for a City of Melbourne Scholarship.
 - Laneway Learning – Laneway Learning and Unicorns Presents *Queer Social*.
 - Social Innovation Partnerships:
 - Diverse Community and Social Services (DCSS) – Community Justice and Rehabilitation Program – providing services to many sectors of the community.
 - St Kilda Legal Service – Trans and Gender Diverse Legal Service.
 - Community Use of Town Halls Scheme
 - Australian Deaf LGTIQA+ Community- Midsumma Australia-Wide Deaf Rainbow Conference 2021 (impacted by COVID).
 - Melbourne Gay and Lesbian Chorus – 30th Anniversary Gala Concert (impacted by COVID).

- Council directly supported LGBTIQ+ artists through the 2022 **Annual Arts Grants program** (\$1.068m).
- Council supported LGBTIQ+ artists via arts organisations through **Arts and Creative Investment Partnership**: 35 major arts organisations are funded by Council, including Melbourne Queer Film Festival - all include projects, programs or artists who identify with the LGBTIQ+ community. In 2021, \$2,736,000 of funding was granted to support 6,877 activities, 7,113 artists including 107 LGBTIQ+ artists.

Support to LGBTIQ+ communities through Council programs

- Council introduced a new category to the Melbourne Awards: the **LGBTIQ+ Award**. *All the Queens Men* won this category in 2021 for their Coming Back Out Ball.

Members of the LGBTIQ+ community are also invited to serve as judges for the Melbourne Awards.



- **Flash forward**: Funded through the Melbourne City Recovery Fund, activating 40 laneways in the central city. This program included nearly 1,000 musicians, artists, video artists, designers and technical and it is estimated that 60% of those creatives were, or identified as, LGBTIQ+.
- **Melbourne Fashion Week** – a City of Melbourne event supporting the community. Included:
 - The NGV Fashion Exhibition and Student Runway curated by advocate Stuart Walford.
 - The Secret Garden runway and Underground Runway styled by advocates Carlos Mangubat and Joey Romano respectively.
 - All runways in the program featured queer talent as models.
 - Specifically the M/FW Opening Night runway championed inclusivity and fashion for everyone. It featured trans model AJ Clementine, LGBTIQ+ advocate Milo Hartill and runway styling by non-binary LGBTIQ+ advocate Deni Todorovic.
- **Melbourne Knowledge Week** – a City of Melbourne event supporting the community. Included:
 - *Melbourne in Motion* ran a parkour program for LGBTIQ+ communities.
 - Panel discussion - The post-gender bubble with speakers from diverse gender identities and backgrounds (Simona Castricum, Female Wizard (known as Brooke Powers), Nayuka Gorrie and Bobuq Sayed).
- **Melbourne Music Week** – MMW has been an advocate for the LGBTIQ+ community throughout the years and gives priority to programming that is inclusive and that promotes female and gender non-conforming artists. In the past this has included *Heaps Gay*, *House of Devine* dance classes at and Simona Castricum and Female Wizard.
- **ARTS HOUSE** produced multiple performances starring LGBTIQ+ artists and/or exploring LGBTIQ+ themes.
- **Melbourne Library** continues to provide targeted services to LGBTIQ+ library users. In 2021 this included:
 - Queer Book Club; which regularly attract 15 + participants;
 - Trans and gender diverse writing group; and
 - A Thousand Threads: Stories of Us.
- Community Services runs an **LGBTIQ+ Carers group** program.



- In conjunction with City of Melbourne Children's Services, Body Safe Victoria runs **Gender Glorious** sessions with parents and educators on acceptance, respect, inclusion and enablement of children.
- Council's **Melbourne Youth Services**, delivered with The Drum and Frontyard Youth Services, includes dedicated support for LGBTIQ+ youth. Drummond Street Youth Services regularly sees LGBTIQ+ participants (12% identifying as LGBTIQ+). Services run through The Drum include:
 - **Queerspace Youth**. The primary purpose of the Queerspace Youth program is to foster a safe and supportive space for LGBTQ youth to explore and feel supported in their identity, learn new skills and access new opportunities, and to meet other young peers and leaders.
 - **(in)visible Youth**. A community driven program that connects queer and trans people from diverse cultural and religious backgrounds aged 18-25 through workshops and events.
 - The **LGBTIQA+ Mentoring Project**. The purpose of the LGBTIQA+ Mentoring Projects is to create social connection as a form of primary suicide prevention. There were over 120 mentors and mentees as part of the project with 186 one-on-one sessions and 103 group sessions delivered in 2020/21.

Public realm and visibility initiatives

- Civic buildings flew the rainbow flag, and Melbourne Town Hall was lit in rainbow colours, on IDAHOBIT.



- City of Melbourne pride stickers were provided to shops to signal inclusive services.
- Council maintained its presence at Midsumma Carnival and Pride March.



- Rainbow Alley street signage was changed (unveiled 1 Dec 2020).



City of Melbourne plans and strategies

The following strategies and plans developed in 2021 specifically considered LGBTIQ+ inclusion and diversity, and consulted with LGBTIQ+ people:

- Council Plan 2021-25
- Inclusive Melbourne Strategy 2022-32 (Draft 2021)
- Women's Safety and Empowerment Action Plan 2021-2024

City of Melbourne workforce initiatives*

- The Pride Network continued to meet and provide advice to the organisation as a whole.
- Workforce programs and awareness in the lead up to and on IDAHOBIT and Wear It Purple Day.
- City of Melbourne is a member of ACON's Pride In Diversity since 2017, and participates in Australian Workplace Equality Index audits.
- Staff and councillors are provided with pride lanyards.
- Various training modules and workforce policies apply to ensure an inclusive workplace.
- Wear it Purple Day strives to foster supportive, safe, empowering and inclusive environments for LGBTIQ+ young people. The theme for 2021 was "Start the conversation and keep it going".



*Note that under the *Local Government Act 2020*, staffing and workforce decisions are the responsibility of the Chief Executive Officer, not the Council.

Progress towards the Victorian Pride Lobby's 'Local Council Candidate Pledge', and next steps

The Victorian Pride Lobby's Local Council Candidate Pledge began:

I will always act to further equality for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, queer and asexual (LGBTIQ+) people, work to end discrimination, and stand up for human rights. I take seriously the impact that my actions and decisions both as candidate for local council, and a councillor, can have on my local LGBTIQ+ community. I will actively consider and consult with LGBTIQ+ members of the community and provide them with an opportunity to be heard.

The pledge then required candidates, "if elected, [to] pledge to campaign for and support" five specific initiatives. The five initiatives, an account of how the City of Melbourne has worked towards each initiative, and matters identified as requiring further advice, follow:

<u>Pledge initiative</u>	<u>City of Melbourne progress</u>	<u>Questions arising</u>
1. Undertaking Rainbow Tick accreditation for council run services.	<p>A decision was made under delegation in 2017 to join ACON's Pride In Diversity program. The City of Melbourne participates in that program's Australian Workplace Equality Index (AWEI). The AWEI assesses conditions for staff as well as customers, and so there is some overlap with the Rainbow Tick standards. Submitting to the AWEI requires very significant staff resources.</p> <p>The City of Melbourne has not sought Rainbow Tick accreditation from Rainbow Health Australia to date. Focusing resources on reporting under multiple accreditation schemes (AWEI, Rainbow Tick and the Victorian Pride Lobby's new and evolving Local Government Equality Index), rather than focusing on delivering services and programs, may not be efficient.</p>	<p>Is the City of Melbourne Pride Network adequately supported, and are there processes in place for HR and Executives to formally consider its advice?</p> <p>What are the costs and benefits of Pride In Diversity membership and are AWEI audits providing value?</p> <p>Have any publicly facing services or programs been changed as a result of AWEI advice?</p> <p>Would any Council services be suitable for Rainbow Tick assessment?</p>
2. Establishing or continuing an LGBTIQ+ advisory committee to council.	<p>The creation of new action plans and new advisory committees was not pursued while the Inclusive Melbourne Strategy 2022-32 was completed. This strategy was endorsed by the Future Melbourne Committee on 15 February 2022 (hence the timing of this motion).</p>	<p>What is the best way to consult LGBTIQ+ communities on Council policies, plans and programs?</p>
3. Developing and implementing an LGBTIQ+ action plan for council.	<p>The strategy was subject to extensive community consultation: "We consulted people with a disability, people of all ages including children and young people, faith-based, lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and queer community members."</p> <p>The strategy sets the framework for subsidiary action plans: "Further plans will be developed to deliver on our priorities for an Inclusive city..."</p>	<p>What might the purpose, scope and timing be for a potential action plan addressing LGBTIQ+ communities?</p>
4. Flying the rainbow flag from council buildings on LGBTIQ+ awareness days.	<p>This already happens.</p> <p>While the Council Flag Policy is unlike other Councils' policies (due to the need to regularly respond to directions by the Premier's and Prime Minister's protocol offices), the rainbow flag is flown on occasion. Council regularly lights Melbourne Town Hall in rainbow colours, recently on Wear It Purple Day, Pride March and Melbourne Pride 2022.</p>	<p>Can existing practice be made policy? i.e. Flying the rainbow flag and lighting the Melbourne Town Hall in rainbow colours annually on IDAHOBIT and Wear It Purple Day.</p>
5. Marching at Pride March under a council banner or participating in Midsumma or local pride events.	<p>This already happens.</p>	<p>Can existing practice be made policy? i.e. City of Melbourne annual presence at Carnival and/or Pride March.</p>