

6.3 Proposed Travel, City of Sydney, May 2025

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Executive Leader: Kirsty Pearce, Chief of Staff Office of the CEO

Executive Summary

1. As part of on-going engagement and exchange between Cities of Melbourne and Sydney, a program of meetings and site visits with the City of Sydney is proposed for 29 and 30 May 2025 to consider issues of mutual interest.
2. As the most comparable capital city, Sydney deals with issues and challenges similar to those faced by Melbourne in providing for and balancing the needs of residents, businesses and visitors. There is an opportunity to further develop the strong relationship between the two cities on respective approaches and strategies.
3. The Lord Mayor (LM) and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) propose to lead engagements with City of Sydney counterparts in late May 2025. One of the key topics of discussion will be approaches to major events programming and delivery. This report proposes participation by Councillors Mark Scott as the Portfolio Head, Tourism and Events and Philip Le Liu as Portfolio Head Creative and Arts.

Recommendation from management

4. That the Future Melbourne Committee approves participation by Councillors Mark Scott and Philip Le Liu in a City of Melbourne visit to the City of Sydney between 29 and 30 May 2025 to explore issues and programs of mutual interest at an estimated cost of \$2,350 per participant.

Purpose

5. To seek Future Melbourne Committee approval for Councillors Mark Scott and Philip Le Liu to participate in a program of meetings and site visits with the City of Sydney between 29 and 30 May 2025.

Background

6. As the most comparable capital city, Sydney deals with issues and challenges similar to those faced by Melbourne in providing for and balancing the needs of residents, business and visitors.
7. Following local government elections in late 2024, both the City of Melbourne (CoM) and the City of Sydney (CoS) are in early phases of reviewing and setting the future direction of their cities through new strategic plans and priorities.
8. This visit provides a timely opportunity for Councillors to engage with Sydney's major events, projects and leadership, gaining insights relevant to Melbourne's own planning and delivery.
9. The proposed visit complements engagement and deliberations through other forums and further supports the development of relationships and channels of exchange between cities.

Key considerations

10. The program for the proposed visit will seek to explore policy and program approaches in a range of event delivery, city activation, amenity improvements as well as urban renewal and infrastructure. These will explore the impact on tourism and visitation levels, economic activity and city vitality as a destination in which to do business, visit or live. The following will feature in the visit:
 - 10.1. Sydney's Vivid Festival as the centre piece of Sydney's winter events calendar. In 2024, the festival attracted 2.42 million visitors and generated over \$180 million in visitor expenditure. The festival is seen as playing a central role in stimulating economic activity, supporting local businesses, and enhancing Sydney's profile as a vibrant, creative city. Sydney's approach will be relevant to Melbourne as it reviews the approach to the major events calendar and opportunities to build in a strong winter component as part of an annual program.
 - 10.2. George Street Pedestrianisation which saw the street converted into a pedestrian-friendly boulevard to enhance urban mobility, support local businesses, and improve public space. Of particular interest will be the insights gained during implementation and impact on local businesses and how they were supported by CoS during the delivery phase.
 - 10.3. City cleaning and graffiti management initiatives which will be relevant to current priorities of CoM to improve amenity and the environment.
 - 10.4. Green Square development as an example of urban renewal and planning. This will be relevant to deliberations around future plans for Fishermans Bend.
 - 10.5. Sydney Metro City, launched in late 2024, as part of a significant extension of the city's rapid transit network and Sydney's commitment to creating a more connected, sustainable, and accessible urban environment. The Sydney experience will be relevant to Melbourne with the opening of the Melbourne Metro Tunnel expected by the end of the year.
11. The cost per participant is estimated at \$2,350.

Legal

12. There are no direct legal implications as a result of the recommendation from management.

Finance

13. The cost associated with participation in the visit is estimated at \$2,350 per person. This includes airfare (\$700), accommodation for two nights (\$750), event registration fees (\$400) and incidental costs (\$500).
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Conflict of interest

14. No member of Council staff, or other person engaged under a contract, involved in advising on or preparing this report has declared a material or general conflict of interest in relation to the matter of the report.
15. The LM's participation in the visit has been approved by the CEO in accordance the Council Expenses Policy. The Policy does not require Committee or Council approval for interstate travel by the LM. The CEO's participation has been approved by the LM in accordance with Staff Travel Policy.

Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities

16. The recommendation contained in this report is compatible with the *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities 2006* as it does not raise any human rights issues.

Health and Safety

17. Councillors travelling to Sydney will undertake personal safety and awareness precautionary steps which apply to interstate travel.

Consultation

18. In developing this proposal, no consultation was required.

Relevance to Council Plan and Council Policies

19. The topics proposed to be covered relate to CoM strategies in the areas of event planning, city activation and economic and business development. These will be relevant as CoM works towards developing a new Council Plan.
20. The proposed visit accords with travel guidelines contained in the Council Expenses Policy.

Social and environmental impacts

21. No social and environmental impacts were identified in developing this proposal.
22. The carbon emissions resulting from air travel to Sydney will be offset with the purchase of credits.

Attachment List

Nil