

## 7.1 Post travel report: Councillor Philip Le Liu, Chengdu, China

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

### Executive Summary

1. To report to Council on travel undertaken by Councillor Philip Le Liu to Chengdu, China in April 2025.
2. In April 2025, the Future Melbourne Committee approved the proposal for Councillor Le Liu to participate in the Chengdu International Friendship Cities Cooperation and Development Conference (Conference).
3. Councillor Le Liu was invited to attend the Conference by the Director General, Foreign Affairs Office, Chengdu Municipal Peoples Government.
4. The Conference was held between 16 and 17 April 2025.

### Recommendation from management

5. That Council notes the overview of key commitments and observations by Councillor Philip Le Liu on travel undertaken to Chengdu, China in April 2025 to participate in the Chengdu International Friendship Cities Cooperation and Development Conference at no cost to Council.

### Purpose

6. To report to Council on the travel undertaken by Councillor Le Liu to Chengdu, China in April 2025 to participate in the Chengdu International Friendship Cities Cooperation and Development Conference (Conference).

### Background

7. Councillor Le Liu received an invitation from the Director General, Foreign Affairs Office, Chengdu Municipal Peoples Government to participate in the 2025 Conference.
8. The theme for the Conference was 'Working Together to Promote Win-Win Cooperation' and included a Mayors' Roundtable, technical site visits and opportunities for exchange and dialogue among city leaders worldwide.
9. Chengdu has hosted six such gatherings since 2016, fostering ongoing bonds of friendship and establishing robust economic and trade links with 113 sister and friendship cities globally.
10. Melbourne and Chengdu have a longstanding partnership, underscored by a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) that encourages collaboration across various sectors, including economy, culture, sports and education. Chengdu is also one of Melbourne's priority partner cities.
11. In 2024, Chengdu proactively advanced city to city engagement through an approach of consistently broadening the international 'circle of friends', constantly optimising the friendship city network, and expediting the upgrading of Chengdu's international collaboration and openness.

### Key considerations

12. An overview by Councillor Le Liu of his key commitments and observations is included as Attachment 1.
13. One of the key commitments Councillor Le Liu was invited to deliver a presentation on the strong economic partnership between Melbourne and Chengdu at the Mayors' Roundtable that featured as part of the Conference. Councillor Le Liu's presentation also promoted Melbourne as a global destination for business, investment and tourism.

14. Councillor Le Liu's participation in the Conference provided an opportunity to engage in global dialogue with international city leaders, exchange best practices and collaborate across various sectors.
15. Councillor Le Liu's participation also provided an opportunity to strengthen diplomatic and economic relations between Melbourne and Chengdu in the lead up to the City of Melbourne Business Mission to North Asia, that includes Chengdu, in September 2025.

### **Legal**

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

### **Finance**

17. Participation at the Conference was funded by the Chengdu Municipal People Government (CMPG), and Councillor Le Liu personally. There was no cost to Council. The CMPG covered the cost of airfares, accommodation and incidentals.

### **Conflict of interest**

18. 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.

### **Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities**

19. 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**

20. Councillor Le Liu undertook personal safety and awareness precautionary steps that apply to all travel destinations.

### **Consultation**

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

### **Relevance to Council Plan and Council Policies**

22. The report supports the following Council policies:
  - 22.1. The Melbourne Advantage, Economic Development Strategy 2030 Strategic Opportunity and;
  - 22.2. International Engagement Framework priority: Facilitate inbound and outbound missions and visits to support Council achieving its objectives.

### **Social and environmental impacts**

23. The proposed activity and outcomes are expected to positively impact local commerce by the facilitation of enhanced credibility and visibility in overseas markets.

### **Gender Impact Assessment**

24. A Gender Impact Assessment is not considered necessary for this report.

### **Environmental impacts**

25. Carbon emissions resulting from air travel were offset with the purchase of credits.

**Attachment List**

1. Cr Le Liu's overview of key commitments and observations, Chengdu, China

Attachment 1

## **Overview of key commitments, observations and opportunities**

### **City of Melbourne participation in the 2025 Chengdu International Friendship Cities Cooperation and Development Conference**

**16-17 April 2025**

#### **Forum background**

1. The 2025 Chengdu International Friendship Cities Cooperation and Development Conference was held in Chengdu 16-17 April. With the theme "Working Together to Promote Win-win Cooperation", the conference welcomed the participation of 39 friendship city delegations from 29 countries around the world.
2. The event combined with a Mayor's Roundtable, a Welcoming Banquet, 3 streams of industrial visits to key cultural and technological areas of Chengdu, providing plenty of opportunities for international exchange and dialogue.
3. Since Chengdu and Montpellier established a sister city relationship in 1981, after 44 years of development and growth, Chengdu has built up an "international circle" with 241 global sister cities, accounting for more than 40% of the province. On this basis, since 2016, Chengdu has successfully held 6 international sister-city Mayor's exchange activities which consistently enhance the city's global reputation and impact. In 2025, Chengdu decided to upgrade the original international sister-city Mayor's exchange activity to the International Sister-city Cooperation and Development Conference.
4. Councilor Le Liu attended the opening ceremony and the Mayor's Roundtable on behalf of CoM. Cr Le Liu delivered a speech on the Melbourne-Chengdu connections that have strong foundations and achieved remarkable results. Cr Le Liu's presentation also promoted Melbourne as a global destination for business, investment and tourism.

#### **Participation objectives**

5. Sharing knowledge and successful experience of Melbourne-Chengdu connections with the global sister-city community, as well as learning best practices from each other.
6. Strengthening trade and investment, sustainable development, higher education, culture, tourism and sports, as well as technology and innovation in line with the MoU covering the Melbourne-Chengdu Friendly Cooperation Partnership.

Attachment 1

**Key commitments and observations****Date: 16 April**

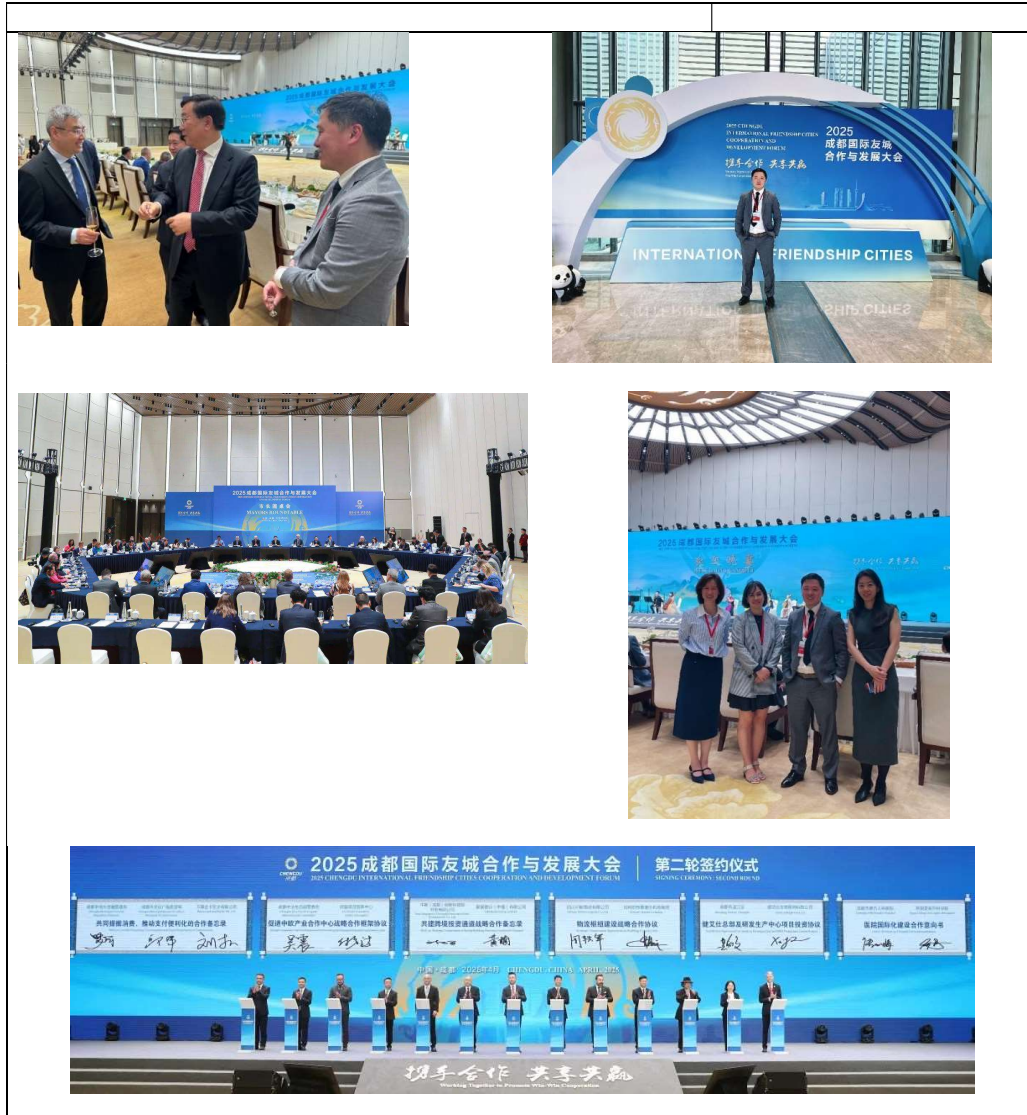
The opening ceremony and Mayor's Roundtable of the 2025 Chengdu International Friendship Cities Cooperation featured the following:

7. CoM representation by Cr Le Liu who shared history, best practices and achievements of the Melbourne-Chengdu friendship with the audiences, as well as notable exchanges between the two cities during 2024-2025 which greatly enhanced the cross-cultural understanding and bilateral collaborations in arts and sports as well.
8. There were 43 groups, including global cities, districts and international organisations in attendance in Chengdu and participated in the conference with over 140 attendees in total.
9. Regional breakdown included Asia and Africa (8 delegations from Malaysia, Myanmar, ROK, Uzbekistan, Mongolia, and Kenya); Europe (12 delegations from Belgium, Germany, UK, Hungary, Italy and France); America and Oceania (13 delegations from USA, Canada, Australia, Colombia, Argentina, and Chile); District-level Sister Cities (8 delegations from Japan, Malaysia, Hungary and Serbia); as well as 2 delegations from international organisations.
10. During the opening ceremony, the Chengdu Government issued the 2025 Chengdu international sister city cooperation and development conference friendly cooperation initiative (initiative), which focused on 5 aspects including innovative development, green development, open cooperation, cultural exchanges and sister city collaboration, to facilitate Chengdu achieving global targets and sustainability benefits through city diplomacy and cooperation.
11. 12 friendly cooperation agreements were signed under the Initiative, including newly established sister cities, cooperation on business, education and finance, medical and health care, AI and digital economy, ecological civilisation, legal services, logistics cooperation and industrial parks.
12. Key stakeholders from the Opening Ceremony and Mayor's Roundtable:
  - Mr Cao Lijun, Member of Standing Committee of the CPC Sichuan Provincial Committee and Secretary of the CPC Chengdu Municipal Committee;
  - Mr Wang Feng Chao, Deputy Secretary of the CPC Chengdu Municipal Committee, Mayor of Chengdu;
  - Mr Zhao Jian, Member of the Standing Committee of the CPC Chengdu Municipal Committee, Vice Mayor of Chengdu

Attachment 1

<b>2025 Chengdu International Friendship Cities Cooperation and Development Conference</b>	
	<p>Cr Le Liu delivering his speech and presentation during the Mayor's Roundtable</p>
	<p>Conference delegates participating in the Chengdu International Friendship Cities Co-operation and Development Conference</p>
	

Attachment 1



**Date:** 17 April 2025

**Morning - Chengdu Research Base of Giant Panda Breeding**

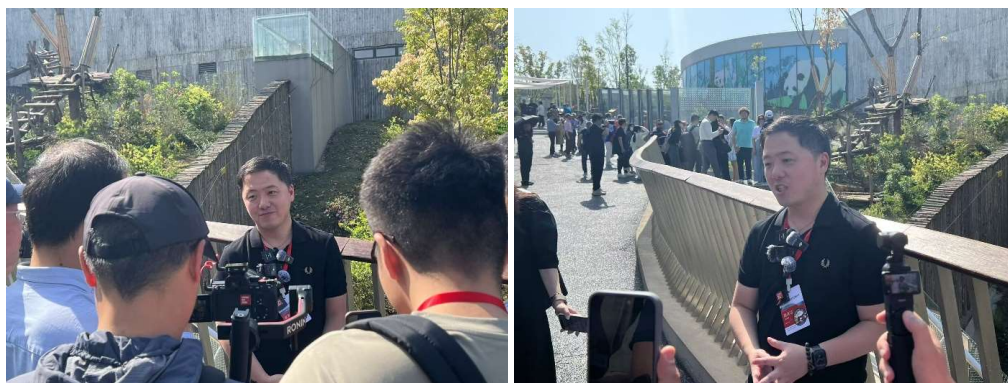
Cr Le Liu visited the Chengdu Research Base of Giant Panda Breeding with the other international delegates under the arrangement of the Chengdu Foreign Affairs Office (FAO).

The Panda Base was established in 1987 and is the world's preeminent institution for giant panda ex-situ conservation, scientific research, breeding, public education and cultural tourism.

## Attachment 1

The Panda Base was accredited as a National AAAA Tourist Attraction in 2006 and won the Global 500 Roll of Honor for Environmental Achievement, the UN's highest environmental award, twice.

Cr Le Liu spoke about Chengdu's gift exchange with Melbourne in 2017 involving large panda statues and noted that these giant panda statues are hugely popular and are still on display at both the Melbourne Airport and City of Melbourne Town Hall.

**Afternoon - Jinsha Site Museum**

Cr Le Liu visited the Jinsha Site Museum with the accompaniment of representatives from the Chengdu FAO and attended an event hosted by Chengdu Municipal Government.

Jinsha site is the urban centre of the ancient Shu Kingdom from the 12<sup>th</sup> century BC to the 7<sup>th</sup> century BC.

Discovered in 2001 in Chengdu, Sichuan Province, the Jinsha Site quickly gained international attention as one of China's most significant archaeological finds of the 21st century. Recognised as the first major discovery of its kind in the new century, the site has yielded an extraordinary array of artifacts—including ivory, gold, and jade—representing one of the most comprehensive collections from its historical period.

The discovery of Jinsha Site has revealed a cultural continuity of the Sanxingdui Civilization and unveiled the origin of Chengdu history.

In 2007, the Jinsha Site Museum was opened on the site of Jinsha site. The museum includes areas such as the Relics Hall, Exhibition Hall, Cultural Relics Protection and Restoration Centre, the Cultural Exchange Centre and the Youth Education and Experience area.

Meanwhile, as the two peaks of ancient Shu civilization, the Jinsha Site together with the Sanxingdui Site have been jointly listed on the Tentative List of China – UNESCO World Cultural Heritage. The two sites represent the advanced the achievements within the upper Yangtze River region during the climax stage of the Bronze Age and stand as authentic testimonies of the Ancient Shu State in historic literature.

Attachment 1

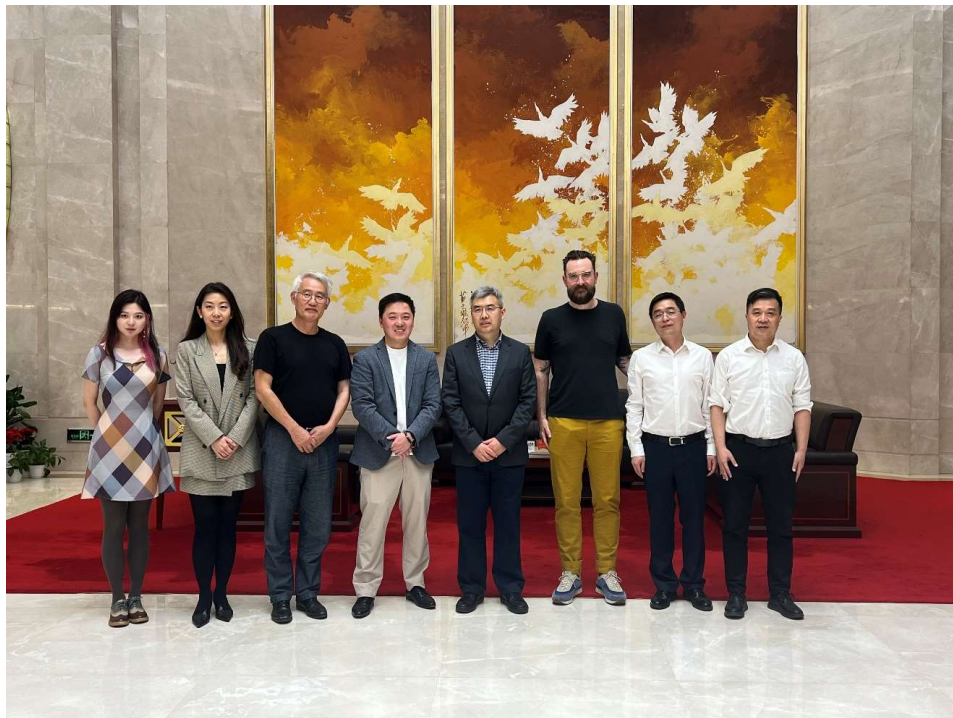
**Evening – Welcome dinner hosted Chengdu and Chengdu Municipal Government**

Attendees:

- Mr Zhao Jian, Vice Mayor of Chengdu
- Mr Jiang Bin, Director of Chengdu FAO
- Mr Zhong Xiang, General Manager of Chengdu Design Consulting Group Co Ltd
- Mr Jia Liuqiang, Deputy Director of Chengdu Housing and Urban-Rural Development Bureau

Highlights:

- Attendees noted that they were looking forward to the possibility of receiving a CoM mission to China in late September 2025.
- Discussion took place regarding the newly signed friendly partnership MoU between Chengdu and Melbourne in 2024 that paved the way for future collaboration and mutual development of the two cities.
- It was noted that Chengdu will enhance the exchange and cooperation with Melbourne in terms of sustainable urban development and architectural design in particular.



Councillor Le Liu and attendees at the welcome dinner hosted by Chengdu and Chengdu Municipal Government