



## COVID-19: Committees for our Cities and Regions stand ready to support recovery

Thursday 25 March 2020

Committees representing more than twenty Australian and New Zealand cities and regions met via video link this week to discuss their contribution to assist their members with the current COVID-19 crisis and how to rebuild economic strength in the wake of the pandemic.

More than ever we need to collaborate on solutions that will ensure our cities and regions can return to the vibrant and safe places we have come to expect.

The Committees for Cities and Regions is a unique network in Australia and New Zealand of like-minded member-based organisations operating for the benefit of their respective communities.

Committee membership is drawn from the world of business, knowledge sector, local government, community and not for profit sectors and statutory authorities.

We have a great opportunity to tap into the collective wisdom of our diverse membership to find ways in which our community can work together to build resilience through adversity.

The primary objective must be the health and safety of our community, especially those working on the front line, such as health workers, supermarket retail staff and other essential services personnel.

Each of the committees will continue to adhere to safety standards and ensure that regular communication of key information is provided to thousands of individuals within the membership as they manage this crisis.

More broadly, economic recovery, and importantly, future jobs, depend on key areas which are shared across our cities and regions.

As a first step, we strongly encourage the efforts of governments to fund short term initiatives to help businesses and Not for Profits survive to be positioned to rebound in the recovery phase.

While this will be a whole of economy effort, here are some of the sectors that should be turbocharged on the road to recovery:

- **Construction and infrastructure** is one of the largest full-time employer across Australia and New Zealand and contributes to the backbone of our communities, especially in transport, schools, parks, hospitals and homes.
  - Government and private investment in projects that can commence quickly will be preeminent to drive economic recovery. They can help with the Australian bushfire recovery efforts. Clear and transparent planning around those projects and investments will drive confidence in the sector.

Representing Committees for Adelaide, Auckland (NZ), Ballarat, Brisbane, Broome, Canterbury (NZ), Cairns, Echuca Moama, Geelong, Gippsland, Greater Frankston, Greater Shepparton, the Hunter, Melbourne, Perth, Portland, Sydney, Wagga and Wyndham



- **Advanced skills:** Invest in the most advanced skills as we adopt new methods of working and living, relying even more on digital technologies for our daily lives, and as our biomedical researchers accelerate their efforts towards creating a vaccine.
  - Incentives and policies towards educating, attracting and retaining-and, as necessary, importing, specific skills need to be an immediate consideration as we move towards recovery.
- **Domestic Tourism:** Mount aggressive campaigns to draw visitors to our cities and regions once travel and recreation recommence with investment to reactivate small business enterprises such as ‘experience based’ tourism product, cafes, restaurants and micro food producers.
- Vulnerable sectors like **arts and culture and not-for-profit sectors**, that rely heavily on discretionary spending and donations, will rely on specific support initiatives if they are to remain viable.
  - The full spectrum of the community, including our members, philanthropic donors and governments need to contribute through money and in-kind support, remembering their contribution to the broader economy and social well-being
- **Retail:** Support our local traders buy purchasing online from Australian businesses and provide urgent training and support to make them digitally ready and/or re-deployed to other sectors.
- **Energy and water security**-transitioning towards lower emissions sources of energy such as gas and renewables
- **Agribusiness**- investment in a diverse and sustainable agricultural sector, with investment innovation, people and climate adaptation and mitigation.
- **Innovators and entrepreneurs**-Never has it been more important to tap into this talent pool to build future businesses and jobs. Government and business can accelerate aggressive seed funding for start-up businesses as critical building blocks of our future economy.

### How can the “Committees for” Network help?

The Committees’ cross-sectoral membership provides unique business insights and sounding boards for governments.

Our “Committees for” are not politically motivated. They are a unifying voice and do not advance the self-interest of any individual member organisation.

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That is why we are uniquely positioned to bring all sectors in the community together to collaborate in support of recovery efforts. We will be using our networks and communications channels as well as links into state and federal governments, to provide their support towards rebuilding communities and the economy.

Now more than ever we need cross-sectoral and impartial collaboration to help us on the road to recovery.

**But we can't do it without your support.**

Financial support for our members and for our Committees will help us survive and must be considered a sound investment in our nations' recovery.

For more information please contact Laura Kerr Melvin, Manager Communications, Events and Engagement [lmelvin@melbourne.org.au](mailto:lmelvin@melbourne.org.au) or visit [melbourne.org.au](http://melbourne.org.au)

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