
Committee for Melbourne Annual Dinner – 26 May 2016

Martine Letts, CEO

Melbourne has an extraordinary reputation these days, but we know it was not always so.

In 1985 the Committee was formed and, from the very start, it brought together a broad group of individuals and organisations who knew they needed to work collaboratively to help Melbourne thrive, with a clear vision for Melbourne.

For over 30 years, the Committee for Melbourne has been an agent for positive transformational change for Melbourne, to make Melbourne better as it gets bigger, and to secure its status as one of the world's great cities.

Some of our best know ideas and initiatives have included:

- Bringing additional international flights to Melbourne and connecting Melbourne to the growing Asia-Pacific region;
- Proposing a vibrant waterfront community at Docklands
- Establishing the BioMelbourne Network to promote Victoria's biotech capabilities
- Building our reputation as Australia's capital for arts and culture with the Melbourne Festival
- Introducing our architectural treasures to a new audience with Open House Melbourne
- Transforming our city's approach to planning via the establishment of an independent infrastructure planning body, Infrastructure Victoria

In all our initiatives, we involved our members at every step. For example, our influential publications under the "Melbourne Beyond 5 million report", cited almost 100 members as contributors.

The Committee will be building on its great history of being a leading Melbourne change agent and influencer by working with you all to meet the challenges of an economy which is changing with bewildering speed.

In his address, Scott Tanner referred to some of the global economic, technological and geopolitical forces which will have a profound impact on our city, on its economy, its liveability, urban landscape, and infrastructure. Our Patron, Governor Dessau referred to the megatrends which will profoundly change the way we live, work and do business.

This will affect all of us, from those who are thriving to our city's most vulnerable.

We can all agree that these forces and trends are making cities the focal points of our global economy-but we do struggle to get our heads around the scale and effect of the disruption going on around us.

Over the coming months, the Committee will be working with its members and other key stakeholders, including government, to help Melbourne prepare for what is often referred to as the

“Fourth Industrial Revolution”.

In my meetings with our members over the past 100 days I have sensed an enormous appetite to develop in partnership with us common understandings of what lies ahead and to jointly develop a roadmap and program of work for responding to the challenges. I look forward to meeting with all our members over the next few months and to using their ideas, expertise and connections to make it happen.

As Scott suggested, we will be forced to think differently, and with longer time horizons than the relatively short term political cycle. More than ever we need an organisation like the Committee to bring together all the expertise in this room-and outside this room-to anticipate those futures.

And we need to look for that expertise well beyond business and government, outside our traditional reference points. Melbourne has plenty to offer all over this city in every discipline, at world-class universities and research centres, in start-up companies, innovation hubs, in its creative industries.

We know that our creative industries have an increasingly strong role to play in contributing to a strong, resilient and vibrant Melbourne economy.

Our creative industries are already at the forefront of Victoria’s future growth and prosperity.

Melbourne’s arts and cultural offerings make an important economic contribution to Victoria – the industry generates around \$1.4 billion in exports and attracts \$1 billion in cultural tourism each year and is a significant source of employment.

The design sector contributes more than \$5 billion to the Victorian economy.

Creative industries make an important social contribution to our identity and well-being.

They strengthen Melbourne’s global connections and reputation, through supporting greater cultural exchange and artistic and cultural exports.

They contribute to the creation of new ideas, products, industries and jobs.

They are a key element in our high liveability standards. Points in these areas help keep Melbourne ahead overall in the EIU's Global Liveability ranking.

Melbourne already has major strengths in the creative industries:

- With an international reputation and a number of vibrant arts and theatre precincts
- With a citizenship of enthusiastic consumers of the arts and cultural activities (94% of the Victorian population over the age of 16 are culturally active)

Melbourne is known as an international Sporting and Events capital. We ought to be known as an international Arts and Design capital. They are not mutually exclusive, but mutually reinforcing.

To paraphrase the composer Richard Mills, Melbourne should be developing a **“confident cultural**

economy". We want to make this a focus of the Committee's work.

Conclusion

The years spent representing Australia internationally, and my previous roles in the world of ideas, international business connections and humanitarian work have one thing in common: the importance of connecting Australia to the world with the public interest in mind.

It is therefore a very great privilege to have been given the opportunity as the Committee's new CEO to lead the Committee, and to work with you Scott, the Board and the terrific team in the Secretariat to Shape an even Better Future for Melbourne. I want to thank Sander van Amelsvort for so ably leading the team before I commenced on 1 March. Sander is now leading our strategic work.

I look forward to working with the Future Focus Group, our unique business and civic leadership program, one of the great incubators of ideas for Melbourne's future success. Happy 20th birthday FFG!

I look forward to working with Melbourne leaders, our decision shapers and decision makers who carry such a great responsibility for connecting Melbourne even better into this dynamic Asia-Pacific region and to consolidate its status as one of the world's great global cities.

Above all, I look forward to working with our members, many of which are here tonight. You are our lifeblood and, quite literally, none of our work would be possible without you.

Thank you for your support and commitment to our city.

I look forward to working and collaborating with all of you.

It now gives me great pleasure to welcome our Chair Scott Tanner back to the Podium to announce the Committee's 2017 Melbourne Achiever Award.

The Committee for Melbourne's Melbourne Achiever Award is presented to an individual or organisation that has made a significant and sustained contribution to our city, and which will leave a lasting legacy.

Tonight's winner will join an exclusive list of Melbourne Achiever Award winners including the Walter and Eliza Hall Institute of Medical Research; Dame Elizabeth Murdoch; the Royal Children's Hospital; the Myer Family; the Australian Open Tennis Championships and last year's winner Clayton-based CSIRO Manufacturing Flagship.