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Good Governance and Collaboration key to Melbourne's COVID-19 Road to Recovery

For many years Melbourne has enjoyed global status as one of the world's most liveable cities. We are Australia's undisputed sporting, arts and cultural, events, hospitality, education and collaboration capital.

The essence of Melbourne's success has been its liveability, supported by a vibrant economy, an educated workforce, a strong research and innovation agenda, and a resilient and diverse civil society.

The COVID-19 health crisis has not been well managed in Victoria - the facts are clear. Not since the economic downturn of the 1980s has Melbourne's position as one of the world's great global cities been so profoundly challenged.

Rather than dwelling on why we are in this position, however, we need to focus on what Victoria and Melbourne need to do to emerge strongly from the COVID-19 health crisis.

Melbourne has the human, industry and intellectual resources to shape our road to recovery, and to build an even better Melbourne, and an even better Victoria. We are 25% of Australia's GDP. What happens here matters to our city, our state and our nation.

In 1985 proud Melburnian business, civic and labour leaders formed the Committee for Melbourne to work with Melbourne's political leadership, with bold and transformational ideas to restore Melbourne's fortunes. The hallmarks of their success were collaboration, a commitment to the city, its citizens, and its civic and economic institutions. They also held the government to account to ensure it delivered outcomes that were good for the city and the state.

Our Road to Recovery campaign, launched in April this year, evokes that spirit of shared endeavour to aid recovery, improve the delivery of growth and restore Melbourne's brand and liveability through genuine partnership, based on science and transparency.

Our members have expressed their concerns and frustrations with the situation in which our great city and state finds itself where fear is being cultivated rather than challenge. Other cities are trying to poach our research, engineering and technical talent, and doing what they can to attract job creating investments that in the past would have come our way. We need to turn this situation around.

For our recovery we should focus on these four key priorities. We must:

Tackle health and economic emergencies together.

Government must **both** effectively manage the health crisis and have a plan for opening the economy. This is not an "either-or" choice – we need a "both-and" approach. As such we need political leadership and a bureaucracy that is up to the challenge of being able to do both.

Furthermore, we need to ensure that in respect of the health emergency we have one eye on the COVID-19 pandemic and the other on the broader health and well-being of the community.

Whilst the initial focus on the spread of COVID-19 was justifiable, to focus on this to the exclusion of other health effects and societal effects at this stage seems inadequate.

Secure a successful and safe return to work strategy

This should be based on a robust tracking and control systems which generate trust and confidence in our health systems, and where government and community can deal with breakouts without shutting down the economy.

It means the ability to rapidly identify and isolate cases, and then track and trace contacts, and deep clean any contaminated environments. This system should generate confidence that we can get on top of issues quickly and continue life as close to normal as quickly as possible. This may involve isolating affected environments and even suburbs. A broad-based suppression strategy for a problem that can be isolated is overkill.

Benchmarking our performance against the performance of other cities and systems and leveraging wherever possible technology and innovations that improve outcomes is essential. Sustainability and resilience in our road to recovery will be key. In some sectors prolonged closure or a significantly modified “normal” may be necessary. An outcome focused approach which prioritises the speedy and safe return to normal for the community at large and for business will be critical.

Create accountability, trust and confidence in our government and bureaucracy.

Whilst the unprecedented nature of what we have faced and continue to face is well understood, the response to it must be done within the framework of our democratic processes and freedoms, operating on the basis of transparency and consultation with the community. Our parliaments must be able to continue to fulfil their mandate for oversight and holding government and bureaucracies to account.

Clear accountability for systemic errors and learning from those errors by rectifying and remediating processes which have not delivered the right result will help build community confidence. This is also critical for investor, business and consumer confidence. Working with other jurisdictions to develop common responses to the health pandemic is equally critical for community and business confidence. Developing common standards and regulatory reform across jurisdictions will be key to rebuilding our state and our nation.

Promote Government – Industry Consultation and Collaboration.

One of our undoubted strengths in Australia is our market based economy and private enterprise which government can leverage. For some of our most intractable and urgent problems we must draw on all of the resources and capabilities available to our society, engage widely and bring various groups of stakeholders together on the journey. This will help build consensus on the outcome we seek and how we need to get there.

A jointly designed economic recovery roadmap which complements a sustainable community health strategy should leverage any successful best practice programs – whether from interstate or overseas, including and importantly from private enterprise. Such an approach will build confidence, should speed progress, and retain and attract investment, thereby creating jobs and delivering a more sustainable recovery.

A Call to Action

Proud Melburnians led the response and ideas for Melbourne’s recovery in the 1980s. Ideas like the redevelopment of Docklands and Melbourne’s sporting precincts, the introduction of Sunday trading, investment in Melbourne Airport and the highways, tunnels and bridges that would become CityLink were driven by the Committee’s convening power with industry, government and unions which drive collaboration and revival.

Proud Melburnians are once again energised to drive and implement actions that will reinvigorate Melbourne. Since the pandemic, the Committee's Board with Directors from the arts, business, education, start-up and the community sectors, has dedicated its time to developing ideas for the recovery efforts. The Deputy Chair of the Board, Gerard Dalbosco, is overseeing those efforts as Chair of the Committee's Road to Recovery Taskforce.

Committee for Melbourne's membership draws on the ideas and contributions from individuals and organisations across Melbourne that have a vision for its future. For the Road to Recovery campaign, the Committee has convened its members and stakeholders to contribute ideas for the revival of the visitor economy, arts and culture, not-for-profit, transport, digital, research and innovation sectors.

The Committee calls on the Government to commit to a collaborative effort which draws on our ideas and consolidates and drives deliverable outcomes for the future of Melbourne. More than ever, collaboration by leaders who are passionate about restoring the vibrancy and success of Melbourne, is what is needed.

That is what we are fighting for.

The Committees work on the road to recovery

Since April we have held more than 35 events with 280 organisations and close to 2000 Melburnians in attendance, published 80 thought leadership pieces and submissions, coordinated 14 dedicated working groups and-perhaps most importantly- listened to over 200 members and stakeholders to help shape Melbourne's way forward.

Proud Melburnian Launch

A group of leading Melburnians meets with the Hon. Linda Dessau AC, Governor of Victoria in late October to share ideas and programs for Melbourne's economic recovery

Members and stakeholders are powering the following Taskforces preparing recommendations for the Road to Recovery in the following sectors:

- *Visitor Economy Reference Group*: Chair, Clive Scott, General Manager, Sofitel Melbourne on Collins
- *International Education Economy*: Chair, Vice Chancellor of University of Melbourne, Duncan Maskell
- *Affordable Housing Taskforce*: Chair, Jane Hodder, partner at Herbert Smith Freehills. CfM Director and Deputy Chair of the Queen Victoria Markets
- *Transport Taskforce*: Chair Ishaan Nangia, Partner, McKinsey and Co
- *Not for Profit Taskforce*: Chair, Scott Chapman, CEO Royal Flying Doctors Service
- *Future Skills Taskforce*: Chair, Derek Scott, CEO| Principal, Haileybury
- *Arts and Culture Taskforce*: mapping out the future resilience of the Melbourne's Creative and Performance Sector, Chair, CfM CEO Martine Letts
- *AI and Digital Economy Taskforce*: Chair, CfM Chair Scott Tanner.

Members and stakeholders are powering the following forums and Initiatives:

- A Comprehensive Plan for Business Investment in Melbourne
- Energy Forums
- Commercial Real Estate Forums
- Innovation Precincts (Fishermans Bend)

City of Melbourne Bringing Back a better Melbourne Reference Group

CfM Chair Scott Tanner and CfM Director Kee Wong are members of City of Melbourne's Bringing Back a Better Melbourne Group (BBBM) reference group which has designed a plan with proactive and practical ways to encourage people back into the city safely. Used for advocacy with State and Federal governments, the plan covers 5 focus areas: Workers Returning to the Workplace, Attracting Visitors, Education and Entrepreneurship, Growing Our Resident Population and Dedication to Progress.

CfM CEO Martine Letts is a member of the Bringing People Back subcommittee of the City' Economy Advisory Board.

We look forward to working with you on our Road to Recovery.



Scott Tanner, Chair



Martine Letts, CEO

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