

24 January 2007

Dr Kathleen Dermody
Secretary
Senate Foreign Affairs Trade Committee
SI.57
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Dr Dermody,

INQUIRY INTO THE NATURE AND CONDUCT OF AUSTRALIA'S PUBLIC DIPLOMACY

Thank you for the opportunity of providing a submission to the Inquiry into the nature and conduct of Australia's public diplomacy ("the Inquiry").

The City of Melbourne is committed to a comprehensive program of global engagement, with strong city to city relationships at the heart of the program. The Council has been extremely proactive in the development of international links:

- the first local government to establish an international office in China;
- the only Australian member of the Asian Business Partner City network – a network comprising 13 of Asia's major business centres (including Mumbai, Osaka, Tianjin, Shanghai, Bangkok, Seoul, Hong Kong, Kuala Lumpur and Singapore);
- a leader of business missions on behalf the City. In 2005 the Council led the largest business mission from Melbourne to China ever (resulting in Melbourne Biotech business sharing in a \$170 million clinical trial for the commercialization of traditional Chinese medicine); and
- has established a significant platform for building future relations with Delhi, a lasting legacy of the Melbourne 2006 Commonwealth Games.

The City of Melbourne's international relations program has been recognised as a leader in Australian local government. Through its formal connections with cities from around the world Council works in partnership with the Victorian Government, Australian Government and a wide range of business, cultural, educational and community organisations to harness opportunities to build benefits from these relationships for Melbourne and its partner cities.

In particular the Council greatly appreciates the on-going assistance and support given by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade to our program, through overseas posts and departmental officers in Canberra and Melbourne.

Growing identity of cities in public diplomacy

As the world is becoming increasingly urbanised and globalised, cities are forming the key elements of the framework of a new changing and more interconnected global geography. There is a growing focus of political activity around issues of global importance such as

climate change, international security and urban sustainability in major cities. Associated with this, is the growing profile of cities as units of engagement in global relationships.

Capital city councils, such as the City of Melbourne, are playing an important role in capital city leadership and building international relationships on behalf of their city constituency; in Melbourne's case a constituency which is very multicultural and with broadening global interests amongst the city businesses, institutions and other stakeholders. For example central Melbourne has one of, if not the highest per capita concentrations of international students in the world. From the Council's perspective, Melbourne is also attracting significant international interest for achievement in fields including standards of liveability, urban design and public space planning and major event management.

The City of Melbourne recognises the growing importance of global connectivity in city governance. This Inquiry provides an excellent opportunity to further explore the role and contribution of local government in the international context, and how its international activities can productively interface with and complement Federal and State Governments.

Key submissions

The City of Melbourne's key submissions to the Inquiry are:

- the need for greater recognition of the role of a capital city governments, such as the City of Melbourne, in Australia's public diplomacy;
- the Inquiry to embrace the relevant activities of local government, ie in addition to the activities of federal and state agencies;
- a review of opportunities for federal and state funding to be directed towards supporting and developing the activities of local government in facilitating Australian public diplomacy; and
- the need to explore further opportunities for collaborative public diplomacy activity between Australian capital city governments promoting the attributes of Australia's cities internationally.

The City of Melbourne would welcome the opportunity to elaborate the above submissions in more detail before the Standing Committee. It would also be happy to further expand on the Council's experience in international engagement and diplomacy and its future proposals for the development of its global program.

City of Melbourne's International Activities

The City of Melbourne continues to build broad-based relationships with cities and countries, networks and organisations around the world to maximise opportunities and leverage benefits for all partners. Overall the City of Melbourne embraces a global role in a range of ways (summarised under the following themes):

- *Building Prosperity* – sourcing tangible export/import opportunities for Melbourne businesses (primarily from China, India and the United States);
- *World Harmony and Global Fellowship* - participation in municipal, cultural, education and sporting exchange, and building humanitarian links;
- *City Governance and Urban Living* – building Melbourne's strong international reputation in city design and city management - sourcing opportunities in new urbanising economies and participating in technical exchanges to further strengthen Melbourne's expertise in this field;
- *The Environment* - international exchange and advocacy in areas such as climate change, urban environmental policy and sustainable built form.

The Council also plays an important role in supporting inbound activity from overseas markets:

- *Visit* – supporting important high yielding international visitor markets, such as business and international major events, backpacker markets with targeted information, services and infrastructure;
- *Study* - nurturing the long term sustainability of the international student market. (International students now comprise approximately 20 % of the City of Melbourne’s resident population);
- *Attracting Business*- being a support resource for new and prospective business and investment; and
- *As a place to Live* – providing inclusive support to new migrants settling in Melbourne.

The City of Melbourne also makes a significant contribution in mobilising further connections and building collaboration across the various sectors and agencies in the city with global links. Council often provides a conduit at the grassroots level to other levels of government and supports a broader base of community involvement in its international relationships.

Framework of International Connections

City of Melbourne’s current international framework reflects many years of Council commitment to connecting Melbourne internationally. The Council makes its international connections and promotes its interests in a range of ways:

- directly through one to one, city to city relationships eg Sister City partnerships, cooperative trade agreements;
- being part of network of cities aligned to a particular purpose eg Business Partner City Network, C20 Large Cities Leadership Group on Climate Change;
- as a member of other organisations or associations with international networks eg Commonwealth Local Government Forum; and
- one-off international exchanges.

The City of Melbourne’s international program was built from foundation of sister (or friendship) city partnerships. The first of these connections was established with Osaka, Japan in 1978. After Osaka followed Tianjin (1980 - Melbourne being first Australian municipality to sign an economic, diplomatic and sister city agreement with a Chinese city) - Thessaloniki, Greece(1984), Boston, USA (1985), St Petersburg, Russia (1989) (the first link between an Australian and Russian city) and most recently Milan, Italy (2004).

The activity levels for each of these sister city relationships has varied and Council’s approach has been to allocate resources and effort where there is greatest return. Currently priority is attached to the Tianjin, Milan and Osaka relationships. Council is committed to developing these relationships beyond a civic ceremonial basis into productive connections of broad social, economic and cultural benefit to Melbourne.

Tianjin, China

The sister city relationship between Melbourne and Tianjin has brought substantial economic and social benefits to both cities through 27 years of friendship and commitment.

In 1998, the City of Melbourne became the first local government authority to establish a representative office in China in partnership with the Australia China Business Council, RMIT University, and Taylors College. The Melbourne Office Tianjin currently with four full-time staff coordinates a range of sister city activities but in particular it facilitates export

and investment opportunities between the two cities and has been granted Trade Correspondent Status by Austrade in Beijing. Over the past 18 months, the office has helped 35 companies generate business of a total export value in excess of \$20 million. Melbourne's 2004 Business Partner City China Mission (to Tianjin and Shanghai) facilitated assistance for six companies generating business of a combined estimated export value of over \$42 million. And, as already described, the Council led a major biotechnology business mission to China in 2005 (Beijing, Tianjin, Guangzhou and Hong Kong). An outcome of this mission was a multi million dollar agreement between Tianjin Pharmaceutical Holdings Ltd, the China Development Bank Tianjin Branch and the Melbourne based International Program Funds of Australia to develop Chinese medicine in Australia and other western markets.

“As a direct result of our visit to Tianjin, my intention is to encourage Melbourne (and Victorian) companies to contact the City of Melbourne Tianjin office should they be considering developing business with China.”

Timothy Piper, Director – Victoria, Australian Industry Group (2005)

Our connections and on the ground intelligence through Melbourne's Tianjin office will provide further opportunities with Tianjin being named one of five Chinese host cities for the 2008 Olympic Games. The Chinese Central Government has also designated Tianjin's Binhai New Area as the next national development zone, which follows the dramatic growth of Shenzhen in 1980s and Shanghai in 1990s. Tianjin will become the growth engine for northern China and act as a financial services and logistics hub for Beijing.

Our office also works closely with the Tianjin Municipal People's Government to develop and deliver other programs, such as the Tianjin Government Leaders Training Program. This program is an excellent example of how one course can develop substantial benefits and follow-on programs. Since 2001, over 140 senior Tianjin government officials from a range of bureaus and state-owned organisations have spent 12 weeks in Melbourne undertaking an executive public administration course at RMIT and conducting site visits organised by the Council. The program has led to significant business activity between Melbourne and Tianjin and provides excellent access to Tianjin's decision makers and leaders across a range of sectors. It has also generated flow on education business, a further \$2.5 million in course fees in government training for RMIT International. (A more detailed case study of the Tianjin Government Leaders Training and Work Placement program is included as Attachment 1)

Osaka and Milan

Also in the context of sister city connections, examples of recent activities with Osaka and Milan include:

- City of Melbourne 's significant contribution the Federal Governments '2006 *Australia Japan Year of Exchange*' initiative by working with the City of Osaka to coordinate a range of activities including a visit by performers from Osaka's National Bunraku Theatre, the UNESCO World Heritage listed art form, to Melbourne and regional Victoria . The tour included public performances in Melbourne and Ballarat as well as interactive workshops for children and performing arts community in set making and stage production activities. The City of Melbourne in conjunction with the Victorian State Government also presented a classical music concert with Melbourne musicians *Duo Sol* in Osaka in November 2006;
- In February 2007 in collaboration with the Comune di Milano, the City of Melbourne will showcase Melbourne in Milan through the *Melbourne a Milano* program. *Melbourne a Milano* will promote Melbourne as a destination for business, mainly in the area of design, and tourism. The program will involve 11 events over 3 days (some continuing until April) and is being delivered in cooperation with a range of

other agencies including the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra, Tourism Victoria and diplomatic postings in Italy.

Other International Projects

The City of Melbourne has broadened its city and other diplomatic connections in many other ways beyond its sister city connections, for example:

- Melbourne actively participates as the only Australian member city of the Business Partner City Network (BPC)¹, formed to improve opportunities across the Asia Pacific for small to mediums sized businesses. Melbourne participates in the annual BPC Roundtable (and will host in 2007) and supports Melbourne and Victorian business missions to and from BPC cities;
- By facilitating a range of cooperative trade agreements with key Chinese cities such as the Melbourne Guangzhou Biotechnology partnership, as well as other agreements with Fengxian District, Shanghai and Nanjing, Jiangsu Province which focus on senior government leadership training and other business exchange;
- Supporting the funding and operation of Victorian Government (Invest Victoria's) network of international business offices and providing local support in the leads from these offices;
- Participation in global advocacy on climate change through various groups including the C20 Large Cities Leadership Group on Climate Change (Clinton Foundation), the International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives (ICLEI), The United Nations Global Compact Cities Program, and the World Mayors' Council on Climate Change.

In May 2006, Melbourne hosted an International Study Mission to Melbourne conducted by the Trade Development Alliance of Greater Seattle. The visit has facilitated further ongoing joint cooperation and significant potential future business exchange and trade development, jointly involving both the Victorian Government and the City of Melbourne. Sectors of specific benefit and interest are advanced manufacturing (especially aerospace), ITC and biomedical research. A return Melbourne mission to Seattle is being planned for 2007/ 08. The Seattle Mission was an excellent example of collaborative partnership between Council and the State Government, particularly Invest Victoria.

An important legacy of the Commonwealth Games has been a close connection with Delhi. During the Commonwealth Games the City of Melbourne adopted India as Melbourne's 'second' team with associated cultural events and business exchange activity. During the Games a letter of intent was presented to the National Capital Territory of Delhi regarding formalising a future strategic city alliance between Melbourne and Delhi. This alliance will embrace a 'knowledge transfer' program of relevant IP attached to the host city management elements of the delivery of the Melbourne Commonwealth Games, as well as potential exchange in other areas including arts & culture, business and trade (eg ICT, financial services, environmental management, education), city management and amenity, tourism and sport. Consolidating this relationship is an immediate priority for Council.

Creating a diplomatic partnership with Delhi will not only enable the Council to benefit from its investment of resources in the delivery of the Melbourne 2006 Commonwealth Games but also share this experience for the benefit of Delhi.

A further more comprehensive summary of City of Melbourne's current international connections and activities is included within the City of Melbourne's *International Statement – 2006/2007*, adopted by Council in November 2006 (refer Attachment 2). A printed

¹ Participating cities are: Osaka (founding city), Hong Kong, Singapore, Bangkok, Kuala Lumpur, Manila, Jakarta, Seoul, Shanghai, Ho Chi Minh City, Mumbai, Melbourne, and Tianjin.

brochure summarising Council's current International Strategy is also enclosed (refer Attachment 3.)

City of Melbourne's city partnerships offer excellent models for relationships for consideration by other national, state, and capital city governments. We believe the Council's international framework offers significant opportunity to contribute positively at a broader level in Australia's public diplomacy programs, particularly as a capital city government.

The City of Melbourne is committed to building international connections and supports developing long term strategies to support Melbourne and Australia's global profile and would welcome the opportunity to further elaborate on these submissions before the Senate Standing Committee.

Should you have any questions related to this submission the relevant contact at the City of Melbourne is Ms Jane Sharwood, Manager Melbourne International, Ph: 9658 9854 or email jane.sharwood@melbourne.vic.gov.au.

Yours sincerely

David Pitchford
Chief Executive

Encl.

CoM reference # 3998662

Tianjin Government Leaders Training Program

An initiative of the Melbourne – Tianjin Sister City Relationship

Partners:

**City of Melbourne
Melbourne Office Tianjin
Tianjin Municipal People's Government
RMIT International Pty Ltd**

The 'opening up' of China's economy, privatisation and the lead up to its entry into the World Trade Organisation have influenced significant reform within the Chinese central, provincial and city governments over the past ten years. The City of Melbourne recognises the government of China's requirement for government leaders at all levels to receive exposure to western management, government and business policies. Thus, government agencies such as the Tianjin Municipal People's Government have recognised the importance of providing its senior officials with access to international training and immersion of western cultures.

The Tianjin Government Leaders Program is a 12 week training course managed by RMIT that covers marketing, international trade, commerce and e-commerce, finance, entrepreneurship, management and public governance. In addition, participants undertake an English refresher course and conduct site visits to leading Melbourne companies and organisations. The City of Melbourne also organises briefings and guest speakers, social program, business mentors and a welcome and closing ceremony.

The objectives of the City of Melbourne for the Tianjin Government Leaders Program are to:

- Establish links in all sectors of the Tianjin government and business that will strengthen the sister city relationship.
- Develop a growing interest and awareness of Melbourne in Tianjin by its next generation of leaders.
- Provide opportunities to Melbourne government departments and businesses to promote their products and services to the leaders that could result in future linkages and business opportunities in Tianjin.
- Provide opportunities for Melbourne's educational institutions to promote their institutions and courses.
- Provide the opportunity for Melbourne business and government leaders to interact with Tianjin business and government leaders and learn from each other.

The program represents a major investment by the Tianjin Municipal People's Government in training the next generation of business and government leaders. The leaders are specifically chosen by the Tianjin Municipal People's Government as people who will hold senior positions in Tianjin's business and government sector. The involvement of these people in the program will influence Tianjin's future development in:

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- international cooperation and economic growth
- the broadening and expansion of the current styles of leadership and government in Tianjin
- creating direct links with businesses in Melbourne that could lead to joint venture and investment projects in the future
- understanding business and government policies in Australia

Since 2001, 8 groups and 140 leaders have completed the program, which has led to increased economic activity. Specific outcomes include UrbisJHD winning substantial design contracts from the US\$15 billion Haihe River Redevelopment program, \$250 million 5 year dairy cattle export contract for China Cattle Ltd, increased executive training programs for RMIT. The real strength of this program is that it allows incredible high level access for Melbourne businesses and organisations across all sectors of the Tianjin government, which is maintained and facilitated by our Melbourne Office Tianjin.

Doc # 4009818

Melbourne International Statement 2006/7

Introduction

Melbourne has been an international gateway and hub for international connections since its earliest days. Global business and trade, diplomatic, cultural, education, sports, political and family connections are at the heart of Melbourne's way of life.

The City of Melbourne has formal connections with cities from around the world and works in partnership with Victorian Government, Australian Government and a wide range of business, cultural, educational and community organisations to harness opportunity to build long term benefits from these relationship for Melbourne and its partner cities. As the world and its cities are becoming more interconnected, there is increasing importance for Melbourne to be proactive in its global diplomacy.


Building on Melbourne's reputation as an international city, work has commenced on the development of a global positioning strategy for the city as a major element in the development of Council's long term strategic plan. This exploratory work will focus on maximising opportunities for Melbourne embracing themes of urban living and city governance, environment, prosperity, peace, harmony and global citizenship.

In this era of globalisation, the City of Melbourne is committed to the continued development of strong international partnerships to ensure the continued prosperity of our city and build on Melbourne's status as a thriving and sophisticated multi-cultural centre.

The Melbourne International Statement 2006/7 outlines Council's continuing commitment to maximising the benefits (both in the short and long term) for Melbourne through its international relations program. The statement describes the key themes and further directions of the program.

Context

The Melbourne International statement will deliver outcomes linked to Council's Plan 2005 – 2009 Strategic Objective One (1.2) - to ensure Melbourne is a *Connected and Accessible City*, through a four year strategy to build international relationships that consolidate Melbourne's capital city role and promote social equity, environmental quality and economic prosperity.

In 2005/6 Council approved the Melbourne International Strategy. The Melbourne International Statement builds on this strategy and forms the building blocks for the next development phase of the Council's global positioning.  global positioning strategy being developed is a more fundamental review of Council's international role in the longer term. The strategies and actions to be recommended will support the further development of Melbourne's global reputation and profile, capitalising on its sectoral strengths. The strategy has a particular focus on strengthening connections with China, India and the US.

Existing international relationships

Council's existing international relationships can be described in three ways.

Firstly long term, permanent and multi dimensional relationships (embracing education, culture, sport, business, city management, civic and people to people activities, public diplomacy activities to a greater or lesser extent) that have been traditionally described as sister cities or friendships cities. These city to city relationships form the foundation to Council's international engagement.

Melbourne currently has six of these relationships:

- Osaka (Japan) (established 1978); (strong program across all aspects of program)
- Tianjin (China) (established 1980); (strong program across all aspects of program)
- Thessaloniki, Greece (established 1984); (emerging – community and cultural focus)
- Boston, USA (established 1985); (emerging – education, youth and business focus)
- St Petersburg (Russia) (established 1989); (emerging – cultural focus) and
- Milan (Italy) (established 2004) (strong program across all aspects of program).

Secondly, during the past four years, Council has entered in to a limited number of short term (up to three years), specific purpose/activity cooperative agreements (focusing on issues such as education, business, senior government leader training) with a number of cities. These are:

- Fengxian, China (2002) (senior government leader training, business and city management exchange);
- Nanjing, China (2002) supporting the Victorian Government sister state relationships with Jiangsu Province, (senior government leader training, education, business and city management exchange);
- Guangzhou Biotechnology Partnership, China (2003); in conjunction with BioMelbourne focusing on knowledge exchange in biotechnology and commercialisation opportunities for traditional Chinese Medicine;
- Port Louis, Mauritius (2004) (business, education and medical training);
- Foshan, China (2006), (government leader training and environmental management);
- Southern Province, Sri Lanka (2006) focusing on the delivery of a number of community focused Tsunami relief projects and other exchange opportunities supported by Council and Melbourne based organizations.

Joint reviews, with the relevant signatories of the outcome and future direction of each of the Fengxian and Nanjing cooperative agreements will be undertaken during 2006/7.

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Thirdly, Council has become a member of a number of international network organisations, to pursue business, environmental, urban conservation and civic connections.

These networks include:

- Business Partner City Network;
- International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives;
- C20 large Cities Climate Group;
- League of Historical Cities;
- Mayors for Peace;
- Great Wine Capitals Global Network; and
- Commonwealth Local Government Forum.

The level of Council's active engagement in each of these networks varies however through each of these networks there are opportunities for collaborations with a wide range of potential international partner cities.

Opportunities to build links as a legacy of the Melbourne 2006 Commonwealth Games

Melbourne has an important opportunity to build on the success of the delivery of the Melbourne 2006 Commonwealth Games. There are now opportunities to explore new connections with cities across the Commonwealth, specifically Delhi as the host city for the 2010 Commonwealth Games and those cities bidding for the 2014 Games. In addition the City's expertise in pre-event planning, city operations and presentation are of considerable interest to other cities preparing for large sporting and cultural events. The Games Knowledge transfer program has the capacity to provide practical information and expertise to other city governments, planning for similar events.

Council has initiated discussions with senior representative from the National Capital Territory of Delhi and the Delhi Municipal Corporation to explore the opportunity to develop a longer term partnership with Delhi, initially focusing on knowledge transfer leading to the 2010 Commonwealth Games. Given the strong community, sporting, cultural, education and business connections between Australia and India, it is considered timely to also consider a new model for city to city connection between Melbourne and Delhi.

Through membership of the Commonwealth Local Government Forum, Council will be able to actively contribute to projects that will promote democratic values and good local governance, profile Melbourne's initiatives, contribute to the strengthening of local government capacity (particularly in the Pacific region) and build stronger local government connections through out the Commonwealth.


Capital City Positioning

The role played by the Lord Mayor, Councillors and the Town Hall as the focus of civic life in Melbourne is significant in the way the Council interacts with its domestic and international stakeholders.

Through interactions with new Ambassadors, High Commissioners and other visiting international dignitaries (such as politicians, school groups, cultural performers, sports people) at the Town Hall, Lord Mayor and Councillors have an important opportunity to articulate the Council's vision and priorities to current and future international opinion leaders.

Encouraging broad based community involvement in activities such as the sister city component of Summer Fun in the City, national day celebrations and support for multi-cultural community organisations demonstrates the Council's commitment to Melbourne being an inclusive and engaging city. All these activities, seek to contribute to greater harmony and a more peaceful and understanding world.

Themes and priorities

The Melbourne International Strategy contains seven themes that are woven through the delivery of the program. The Melbourne International Statement 2006/7 builds on these themes, through international alliances, and adapts to the increasing depth and complexity of Melbourne's international connections. 

Opening the doors to business

The Melbourne International Statement will build on current and foster new partnerships that will contribute to sustainable economic development outcomes for Melbourne. Building trust and understanding between partners through face to face contact and joint activities remains a core philosophy of Council's international programs.

Future directions

- Consolidate and grow the profile of the Melbourne Office Tianjin, in both Melbourne and Tianjin to facilitate increased two way business activity;
- Support Melbourne's membership of Business Partner City Network and contribute to the development of program for Melbourne 2007 Roundtable;
- Use significant international partnership activities to facilitate opportunities for business connections - Melbourne a Milano, BIO 2007 Boston, Melbourne Osaka Cup 2007, Delhi activities;
- Deliver the China In-Country Professional Development Program – an intensive, self funded cultural and business immersion program in China, facilitated through the Melbourne Office Tianjin;
- Contribute to business mission activities (both inbound and outbound); and

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- Undertake joint review of existing 3 year cooperative agreements with Fengxian, China (2002) and Nanjing, China (2002) to assess future directions and priorities;

Encouraging excellence through education

Melbourne has a strong international reputation as a centre of educational excellence which is significantly enhanced by the number of university campuses located in the central activity district. In 2004 tertiary students comprised 36% of the city's resident population and of these 20% are international students. It is anticipated that the proportion of students would be even higher today.

In addition to accredited tertiary qualifications, Melbourne's tertiary institutions have a strong reputation for the development and delivery of specific short term training programs. Graduates of the Tianjin Government Leader Training program, (over 160 middle and senior level managers) since 2001, from a wide range of government bureaus and businesses spent three months living and learning in Melbourne. The graduates of this program are now in positions of influence in Tianjin government and important advocates for Melbourne in terms of business, education and future government collaborations.

The short term visits by secondary students, under the auspice of sister school activities, provides the opportunity for young people to build bridges of understanding. Civic recognition of these activities, through visits to the Town Hall and meeting with the Lord Mayor or Councillors endorses the Council's commitment to international activities at all levels.

Future directions

- Continue to promote Melbourne as a preferred destination for education and short term training programs;
- Support initiatives that engage international students in all aspects of the life of the city through Council's multicultural strategy;
- Promote the principles of international understanding, respect and friendship that contribute to Melbourne's diverse a community life – through programs such as sister school activities, education program as part of Melbourne Osaka Cup 2007;
- Support Tianjin Government Leader Training Program and the Tianjin Government Work Placement programs; and
- Support Melbourne Boston Medical Research Exchange Fellowship.

Attracting international visitors

Melbourne International will continue joint projects to promote Melbourne as an exciting and attractive visitor destination, particularly through targeted activities in key international markets with partners such as Tourism Australia and Tourism Victoria. Utilising Melbourne's profile in sister cities such as Osaka, Tianjin and Milan, Council will identify opportunities to maximise leverage through events in these key markets. Melbourne International will also continue to work closely with

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Tourism Melbourne ensure international visitors benefit from its range of services, particularly for the business event and international student markets.

Future directions

- Support growth of international tourism to Melbourne –through working with Tourism Victoria/sister city partnership on key projects such as 99 newly wed couples from Tianjin, Melbourne a Milano project, post Melbourne Osaka Cup 2007 events in Osaka;
- Support visiting journalist programs from Melbourne’s sister cities and other key markets; and
- Collaborate with Tourism Melbourne in the development of services to meet the needs of international visitors to Melbourne

Civic hospitality for high level visitors (HLV)

The Melbourne Town Hall is the focus of civic and community life in the city. The Lord Mayor and Councillors, play an important role in welcoming key international partners, visiting diplomats, dignitaries and international local government leaders. A visit to the Town Hall and the opportunity to meet with Lord Mayor and Councillors is often the highlight of international school visits to Melbourne.

Resulting from the success of the Melbourne 2006 Commonwealth Games, the Council has an important opportunity to consolidate its connections with key international partners through facilitating Games City Knowledge transfer with future Commonwealth Games hosting cities including Delhi and bidding cities for the 2014 Games.

Membership of the Commonwealth Local Government Forum will provide Council with an important opportunity to promote democratic values and good governance, demonstrate leadership in critical local government issues and contribute to the strengthening of local government capacity through out the Commonwealth.

Council’s ongoing membership of international local government based networks provides an opportunity to showcase initiatives and increase Melbourne’s standing as a local government service leader.

Future directions

- Build network of international Melbourne supporters by offering professional welcoming services to visiting diplomats, HLV city to city relationships and government visitors;
- Promote Melbourne’s strength and expertise in areas of environmental management, green building etc to key international partnerships;
- Active membership of Commonwealth Local Government Forum – to highlight Melbourne’s leadership in local government best practise – environmental programs, green buildings, international relationships, customer services; and

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- Work closely with Australian diplomatic posts, Victorian Government Business Offices (international), diplomatic representatives to ensure Melbourne's positive capital city positioning.

Levelling the playing fields through sports and art

Art and sporting activities do transcend national boundaries and bring people of different cultures, ages and backgrounds together. The Melbourne International program has the capacity to build relationships, through sporting and cultural pursuits. The Mayors' Cup between Melbourne and Tianjin, has created football (soccer) connections between the cities. This program has established a foundation for future sporting exchanges including basketball, Australian Rules Football and golf.

The Chamber Strings of Melbourne have performed in all Melbourne's sister cities during the past 15 years. In 2007, the Chamber Strings, an orchestra of young people aged between 15 and 26 years will perform in Milan as part of *Melbourne a Milano* program.

Joint projects with ArtPlay, such as the visit of the puppeteers from the National Bunraku Theatre, Osaka, provide a once in a life time opportunity for professional development of Australian puppeteers in addition to hands on learning opportunities for children .

Future directions

- Support and enhance Melbourne's status of a sporting and cultural capital of Australia;
- Provide opportunities for Melburnians to be involved in more international sporting and cultural activities with a sister city focus;
- Facilitate the Wei G'Day program in Tianjin in partnership with the Melbourne Football Club and AFL;
- Develop partnerships with sporting and cultural organisations that have links with Melbourne's key international partners– to promote opportunities for young people to be involved:
- Contribute to 2006 Australia Japan Year of Exchange through events in Melbourne and Osaka;
- Collaborate with ArtPlay to develop children's arts activities with international artists ; and
- Development of longer term collaborative projects that highlight Melbourne's cultural attributes and profile Melbourne's artists internationally, particularly focusing on key international partner cities.

Empowering young people

Young people are a significant proportion of the City of Melbourne's population. Many are local or international tertiary student who add great vitality to the life of the city. Opportunities will be investigated to enhance the international outlook of young people in the city, through participation in cultural exchange programs and contribution to international issues.

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Future directions

- Provide young people with opportunities to learn about other cultures;
- Encourage personal growth, broader understanding and open outlook on life;
- Work with Council's Youth Council to identify opportunities for future projects with an international focus..

Supporting communities

Building goodwill and friendship is important to the City of Melbourne in its role as a global citizen. These connections can be fostered through active membership of international organisations and coordinating response to humanitarian issues.

Future directions

- Support programs and initiative that support communities overseas;
- Responds to humanitarian causes and crises;
- Support for the Memorandum of Understanding signed between Council and Australian Volunteers International regarding opportunities for staff involvement on short term placements;
- Support the Cooperative Agreement signed by Council with the Southern Province of Sri Lanka focusing on post Tsunami reconstruction projects
- Build stronger connections with international humanitarian organisations based in Melbourne to identify opportunities for future cooperation.
- Support the involvement of Access Dinghies as part of Melbourne Osaka Cup 2007 pre race events.

Looking ahead 2006 to 2010.

The period ahead will see increasing levels of global interdependency between cities with increasingly active exchanges in knowledge, services and ideas. Many of the things Australians value, our national security, economic prosperity, the environment and our health are affected by events beyond our borders. Thinking globally and acting locally will underscore the way the city addresses many of the issues facing it and its constituents in the years forthcoming, requiring all areas of Council to become more "globally integrated".

The strategic positioning of Melbourne as an engine of economic growth with world class infrastructure, the most 'liveable' city, and as a vital and exciting city where innovation and creativity provide a competitive edge will be a key inputs for the development of the new City Plan/Council plan for the next 10 to 20 years.

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In the next five years there are a number of significant anniversaries and events, in Melbourne's long standing city to city relationships. These events present important opportunities to review and revitalise the direction of each of these connections, in the light of Council's international strategy.

Year	City to City relationship events of significance
2007	Melbourne Osaka Cup – 20 th anniversary of the first race in 1987
2008	30 th anniversary of Melbourne Osaka city to city relationship 10 th anniversary of the opening of the Melbourne Office Tianjin
2009	25 th anniversary of Melbourne Thessaloniki city to city relationship 20 th anniversary of Melbourne St Petersburg city to city relationship 5 th anniversary of Melbourne Milan city to city relationship
2010	30 th anniversary of Melbourne Tianjin city to city relationship 25 th anniversary of Melbourne Boston city to city relationship
2011	Melbourne Osaka Cup – 7 th race

Melbourne is geographically well positioned as the gateway to Asia-Pacific region, and with the further advantages of well developed personal and community connections, growing business partnerships, Melbourne is well placed to capitalise on the emerging Asian Pacific economies, China and India in particular. The City of Melbourne has a fortunate legacy of a broad base of international connections providing a strong platform for the international strategy going forward.