

Report to Council**Agenda item 7.1****Opportunity for international engagement – InnoEx Forum, Hong Kong****28 March 2023****Presenter: Councillor Philip Le Liu****Purpose and background**

1. The purpose of this report is to seek Council approval for Councillor Philip Le Liu to represent City of Melbourne (CoM) at the InnoEx Forum in Hong Kong between 12 and 15 April 2023. Councillor Le Liu proposes to participate following an invitation by the Hong Kong Trade Development Council.
2. InnoEx is an exhibition and forum which focuses on showcasing next-gen smart solutions including AI and robotics, smart living, transport and mobility. It will be hosted by the Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region and Hong Kong Trade Development Council.
3. As part of his visit, Councillor Le Liu proposes to undertake a program of meetings and engagements with diplomatic, business and industry officials. He also proposes to explore Hong Kong's approach to provision of affordable housing.

Key issues

4. Tech-enabled innovation has become a major driver of economic growth and is increasingly critical to the future wellbeing and prosperity of communities across cities around the world. InnoEx will showcase cutting-edge technologies and disruptive innovations, facilitating regional and cross-sector collaborations among enterprise and government bodies. Representation will see international participation from government, industry and business, academia and research and development centres.
5. As the Portfolio Lead of Finance, Governance and Risk and Deputy Portfolio Lead of Education and Innovation, Councillor Le Liu proposes to make connections and raise the profile of Melbourne's innovation ecosystem. International trends and experiences are particularly important as CoM looks to better support the development of globally competitive innovation systems including innovation districts and support for current and emerging industries.
6. Engagement with international cities and networks positions Melbourne as a globally connected and world leading city. It allows the city to position itself to leverage opportunities that build on Melbourne's reputation as a preferred destination in which to invest and do business. Councillor Le Liu's participation in InnoEx will be supported by a program of commitments allowing him to engage with diplomatic, government and business leaders located in the Asia Pacific region or visiting Hong Kong for the event.
7. Whilst in Hong Kong, Councillor Le Liu will also explore Hong Kong's approach to affordable housing, a key area of focus for CoM. Hong Kong has been one of the least affordable housing destinations for almost a decade and is currently seeing significant focus and investment towards tackling the problem. Councillor Le Liu proposes to gain insight into the current strategy and policy approach.
8. The Hong Kong Trade Development Council will cover InnoEx registration fees. All other costs associated with travel by Councillor Le Liu will be met by CoM.

Recommendation

9. That Council:
 - 9.1. Approves participation by Councillor Philip Le Liu in the InnoEx Forum and a program of commitments with government and industry officials in Hong Kong between 12 and 15 April 2023 at a cost to Council of \$11,575.
 - 9.2. Notes that Councillor Le Liu will prepare a report to the Future Melbourne Committee or Council within 60 days of return from travel.

Attachments:

1. Supporting Attachment (Page 2 of 2)

Supporting Attachment

Finance

1. The estimated cost to CoM associated with proposed travel is \$11,575 and includes airfare (\$7,300), accommodation (\$2,500) and incidental costs (\$1,775). Registration fees associated with participation at InnoEx will be met by the Hong Kong Trade Development Council.
2. Costs will be met from the existing budget allocation.

Conflict of interest

3. No member of Council staff, or other person engaged under a contract, involved in advising on or preparing this report has declared a general or material conflict of interest in relation to the matter of the report.

Health and Safety

4. In developing this proposal, no occupational health and safety issues or opportunities have been identified.
5. In undertaking international travel, Councillor Le Liu will adhere to and be guided by international health, safety and security measures including those identified by Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade.

Relation to Council policy

6. The Director Governance has confirmed that the travel proposal accords with the requirements of the travel guidelines outlined in the Council Expenses Policy.
7. The objectives associated with this proposal align with key policy positions adopted by Council namely those aligned to Council Plan 2021-25 strategic objectives 'innovation ecosystem' and 'access and affordability'.

Environmental sustainability

8. The carbon emissions resulting from air travel will be offset with the purchase of credits.