

**Report to Council****Agenda item 7.1****Council****Post travel report, Deputy Lord Mayor, China, April 2023****30 May 2023****Presenter:** Deputy Lord Mayor Nicholas Reece**Purpose and background**

1. The purpose of this report is to provide the Council with information on the travel undertaken by Deputy Lord Mayor Nicholas Reece to China associated with the 2023 Green Economy Opportunities Australia China Business Council (ACBC) China delegation for the period 23 to 28 April 2023.
2. On 18 April 2023, Council approved the proposal for the Deputy Lord Mayor to undertake commitments in Hong Kong, Shenzhen, Beijing and Tianjin as a member of an ACBC Green Economy Opportunities delegation.
3. As a globally-engaged city, targeted international visit programs are an important part of profiling Melbourne's capability globally, facilitating new connections and fostering long-term relationships. The intimate scale and tailored nature of the ACBC program optimises interactions between program delegates, Chinese officials and industry representatives, through forums, meetings and networking functions.
4. The Deputy Lord Mayor was the first representative from local government in Australia to visit China since 2019. The ACBC delegation was the first industry-wide business delegation to both Hong Kong and mainland China in over three years and was viewed as an important signal to China about the desire of Australian businesses, government and community to remain engaged with China.

**Key issues**

5. The primary purpose of the trip was to participate in the ACBC Green Economy Opportunities delegation. With a focus on cities of the future, delegates were provided unique opportunities to hear first-hand from Australian and Chinese officials about China's new high-growth plans and opportunities to collaborate and invest in Australian businesses. Participation in a high profile delegation such as the ACBC program provided the City of Melbourne excellent access to key decision makers in the Australia-China relationship and ensured strong audiences for the Deputy Lord Mayor to profile the City of Melbourne through speech and presentation opportunities.
6. Tianjin has been Melbourne's sister city since 1980 and is supported through a Melbourne office located in Tianjin. After a three year hiatus of face to face interactions imposed by COVID-19, the opportunity to reconnect with the Tianjin Municipal Government while in China was also considered extremely valuable. As such, an individually tailored itinerary to Tianjin was arranged which included a meeting with Tianjin Vice Mayor Mr Yang Bing. During the meeting, Vice Mayor Bing reaffirmed the importance of the Melbourne Tianjin relationship and as a former alumni, supported the recommencement of the long running Tianjin Government Leaders Program. For over 20 years the Tianjin-City of Melbourne program has seen over 450 Tianjin government leaders spend up to three months in Melbourne to participate in a formal learning program supported by RMIT.
7. The two leaders also discussed opportunities to collaborate around green economy initiatives, co-branded activities on the strength of the relationship and people to people exchanges. A suggestion was also put forward to showcase Tianjin's distinctive food culture at the renowned Melbourne Food and Wine Festival (MFWF).
8. The Deputy Lord Mayor also attended a series of events and visits with the biggest company in Tianjin Rockcheck Tewoo. This included a corporate celebration of the second anniversary of their merger and the announcement that RCT will establish a head office in City of Melbourne. Rockcheck is a top 30 private company in China with over 8,000 employees. The new Rockcheck Australian Head Office is a valuable boost to Melbourne's standing as a business and financial centre.

9. As one of the world's leading education cities, international education remains one of Melbourne's most important export markets. While in China, the Deputy Lord Mayor visited the Hong Kong Arts Centre, which is celebrating its 25<sup>th</sup> year of partnership with RMIT University. The BA (Fine Art) program run by RMIT University and Hong Kong Arts Centre is a leading example of Australian tertiary institutions providing world class education in China and educating the next generation of artists and creatives.
10. Similarly, a visit to the Tianjin Haileybury International School provided first-hand knowledge of the world class education which includes the Victorian Certificate of Education (VCE) being offered by that school in China. As a sister school of Haileybury Australia, this educational partnership provides a strong link between Australia and China with close connections and exchanges between teachers, management and student visits. It is a practical manifestation of the sister city relationship between the Cities of Melbourne and Tianjin. As part of the visit, the Deputy Lord Mayor participated in a school assembly to celebrate the 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Haileybury International School Tianjin.
11. The Deputy Lord Mayor also met with University alumni from Melbourne in Hong Kong, Shenzhen and Beijing. The past students had fond recollections of life in Melbourne and shared amusing reflections on life Down Under including favourite restaurants, coffee shops, football teams, trips to the beach and going bush. With more than one million alumni from Australian universities living in China, a major opportunity to retain professional connections exist as they excel in their professional careers. One such example is an alumni who has established a startup company that has developed wearable med-tech that can predict cardiac arrest. The company is considering establishing their Australian headquarters in Melbourne, which Invest Melbourne will help to support and is a strong example of an alumni's full circle journey of interactions with City of Melbourne.
12. During the visit to Hong Kong, the Deputy Lord Mayor participated in the ANZAC Day Dawn Service, where on behalf of the City of Melbourne, he laid a wreath to commemorate those who have given their lives in the defence of our country. Hong Kong is home to three Commonwealth war graves that hold 1700 service personnel including 33 Australians and one New Zealander. While the ANZACs did not serve in Hong Kong, they were transferred there to rest from other theatres in the Pacific. While in Hong Kong the Deputy Lord Mayor met with senior representatives of the Far East Consortium who advised of their strong outlook for Melbourne and confirmed plans to proceed with major new investments in the City of Melbourne.
13. A full description of key observations, commitments and outcomes associated with travel can be found in Attachment 2.

### **Recommendation**

14. That Council:
  - 14.1. Notes the report by the Deputy Lord Mayor on his participation in the ACBC delegation to China and other commitments in April 2023 at a cost to Council of \$16,096.38.
  - 14.2. Requests that management follow up on business and investment leads created during the China visit.

### **Attachments:**

1. Supporting Attachment (Page 3 of 11)
2. Key observations, commitments and outcomes (Page 4 of 11)

## **Supporting Attachment**

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### **Finance**

1. The cost associated with travel by Deputy Lord Mayor was \$16,096.38. This includes airfares (\$8,732.74), accommodation (\$2,134.48), ACBC delegate fees (\$5,000) and incidentals (\$229.16).

### **Conflict of interest**

2. 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.

### **Relation to Council policy**

3. The Executive Officer Councillor Liaison has confirmed that the travel costs accord with the requirements of the travel guidelines outlined in the Council Expenses Policy.
4. The theme and objectives behind the delegation and associated meetings align with a range of CoM strategies and Major Initiatives (MI), namely:
  - 4.1. Implementation of the Economic Development Strategy (MI3)
  - 4.2. Review and optimise Melbourne's international relationships (MI8)
  - 4.3. Employment centre of a resilient zero-carbon economy (MI29)

### **Environmental sustainability**

5. Carbon emissions resulting from air travel to China were offset with the purchase of credits.

## KEY OBSERVATIONS, COMMITMENTS AND OUTCOMES

### Deputy Lord Mayor, China April 2023 - Hong Kong, Shenzhen, Beijing and Tianjin

#### 1. Melbourne Tianjin Sister city relationship

- 1.1. Tianjin has been Melbourne's sister city since 1980 and is supported through a Melbourne office located in Tianjin. After a three year hiatus of face to face interactions imposed by COVID-19, the opportunity to reconnect with the Tianjin Municipal Government while in China was extremely valuable. As part of his itinerary, the Deputy Lord Mayor paid a courtesy call to Tianjin Vice Mayor Mr Yang Bing. During the meeting, Vice Mayor Bing reaffirmed the importance of the Melbourne Tianjin relationship and as a former alumni, supported the recommencement of the long running Tianjin Government Leaders Program.
- 1.2. Through the Program, RMIT University has trained more than 20 groups (450+ personnel) of government and business leaders from government agencies, universities, enterprises and other sectors. Participants have been from sectors of banking, public finance and taxation, education and scientific research, urban planning and architecture design, media, governance and law, trade union, administrative licensing and quality supervision. The program has generated over \$4.6m worth of education export revenue for Melbourne's economy. Participants of these programs have returned to their positions with a strong pro-Melbourne sentiment and have become ambassadors to promote and support mutual cooperation and exchange between the two cities in their own respective fields.
- 1.3. Vice Mayor Bing also proposed opportunities to collaborate around green economy initiatives as both cities transition to net zero. During the discussion, as a leading Chinese manufacturing city, Mayor Bing put forward that trade opportunities include the supply of green building materials and energy efficient equipment such as street lights to Melbourne for sustainable urban development that can contribute to Melbourne's achievement of its zero carbon emissions goal by 2040.
- 1.4. A further area for investigation and cooperation was discussed around co-branded activities to strengthen the Tianjin Melbourne relationship and people to people exchanges.
- 1.5. Tianjin is very proud of its distinctive local cuisine and vibrant food culture. One idea discussed is the inclusion of a Tianjin Cuisine Event at next year's Melbourne Food and Wine Festival.
- 1.6. As environmental protection, sustainable urban development and climate change are shared challenges for both cities, these issues are likely to form the basis for knowledge exchange programs and ongoing business collaboration.
- 1.7. During his stay in Tianjin, the Deputy Lord Mayor also conducted site visits to three areas where Melbourne has benefited from the sister city engagement as a result of architectural design projects completed by Melbourne firms. Melbourne and Tianjin have a long history of collaborating in urban planning and architectural design. Everywhere you turn in Tianjin you see the work of Australian architects: China National Maritime Museum (Cox Architecture), Central City Power Plant Renewal (Woods Bagot), the Waterfront Railway Station (Lab Architects), Tianjin Eco City Business Park (Hassell) and Haihe River Redevelopment Project (Urbis JHD). The Haihe River Redevelopment (2002) saw Tianjin urban planners and designers visit Melbourne and model much of their city's river front renewal on the Yarra River Southbank development.

## **2. Investment Leads**

- 2.1.** While in Hong Kong, the Deputy Lord Mayor met with executives from the Far East Consortium (FEC) including Managing Director Chris Hoong and Chairman David Chiu. FEC continues to invest heavily into Melbourne with investment levels of more than \$AUD3.8 billion. These assets include the Ritz Carlton Hotel, Dorsett Hotels and car parking operator Care Park. FEC have recently purchased another city property on Bourke Street and confirmed their plans to proceed with further major investments in Melbourne. FEC are bullish about Melbourne as a preferred investment destination and the City of Melbourne will actively work with the company to unlock further opportunities.
- 2.2.** In Tianjin the Deputy Lord Mayor met with the RockCheck Tewoo (RCT) organisation at a celebratory event of the second anniversary of a public private merger between Rockcheck Group and Tewoo. RCT is one of the biggest private companies in China with diverse business lines that include iron and steel making, trading of bulk commodities, food and beverage, health products and financial services. In discussions with RCT Chair, Ms Zhang Ronghua, the company informed that they would be establishing their Australian New Zealand headquarters in Melbourne in the coming year. The City of Melbourne will offer support in their search for suitable accommodation through investment agency Invest Melbourne.

## **3. Education/Alumni**

- 3.1.** While in China, the Deputy Lord Mayor met with six University of Melbourne student alumni in Hong Kong, Shenzhen and Beijing to understand their journey in transitioning from study to career development. With now more than one million alumni from Australian universities living in China, these highly educated professionals represent a major opportunity for Melbourne – China linkages. By way of example, one such alumni has established a startup company that has developed wearable med-tech that can predict cardiac arrest. The company is considering to establish their Australian headquarters in Melbourne, which City of Melbourne will help to support through local advice. This represents a strong example of an alumni's full circle journey of interactions with City of Melbourne.
- 3.2.** The Deputy Lord Mayor also visited Hong Kong Art School which has a 25 year education partnership with RMIT University. Launched in 1998, the HKAC relationship is one of RMIT's longstanding international program delivery partnerships in Asia and enables delivery of the University's Bachelor of Arts (Fine Art). Graduates influence local and regional arts sectors, and RMIT enjoys an excellent reputation as a significant contributor to the Hong Kong arts scene.
- 3.3.** In Tianjin, Deputy Lord Mayor visited Haileybury College. Haileybury Tianjin has two private schools – a compulsory curriculum Junior School (Year 1 - 9) and a senior school for Years 10 – 12 where they offer the VCE. There are more than 800 students and 200 staff members living and studying on campus. During the visit, the Deputy Lord Mayor participated in a special school assembly to celebrate the 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Haileybury College Tianjin.

#### 4. Schedule of key commitments including the ACBC delegation program

Date & location	Activity
Sunday 23/4 Hong Kong SAR	Meeting with Mr Chris Hoong - Managing Director, Far East Consortium  Welcome Reception and Australian Government briefing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ms Elizabeth Ward, Australia's Consul General to Hong Kong and Macau</li> <li>• Ms Shannon Powell, Austrade Senior Trade and Investment Commissioner</li> <li>• Mr David Olsson, National President, ACBC</li> </ul> Informal pre-delegation dinner and networking event Hosted by King & Wood Mallesons.  Welcome remarks by Hon Bernard Chan, Chairman of M+ Board
Monday 24/4 Hong Kong SAR	Session hosted by HSBC Venue: HSBC Main Building, 1 Queen's Road Central, Central "Hong Kong's role in the GBA" <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Guest Speaker, Hon Bernard Chan, former Hong Kong deputy to the NPC, PRC and former Convenor of the Non-Official Members of the Executive Council (2017-2022)</li> <li>• Panel discussion               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Moderator: Ms. Michelle Kwok, Managing Director, HSBC Research</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Panelists:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mr James Hogan (ex HSBC IM and Director of Australian Chamber of Commerce)</li> <li>• Mr Raymond Fan, Deputy Director-General, Office for Attracting Strategic Enterprises (OASES)</li> </ul> </li> </ul> Hong Kong SAR Government briefings Venue: Hong Kong Government offices (Admiralty) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mr Paul Chan, Financial Secretary of the Hong Kong SAR Government</li> <li>• Mr Philip Yung, Director-General, Office for Attracting Strategic Enterprises (OASES)</li> <li>• Mr Eddie Yue, CEO, Hong Kong Monetary Authority</li> <li>• Mr Laurence Li, Chairman Hong Kong Financial Services Development Council</li> </ul> Site Visit - Hong Kong Art School (RMIT University academic partner) Meeting with UoM alumni Alvina Chan and Danny Ng in Lobby Lounge.

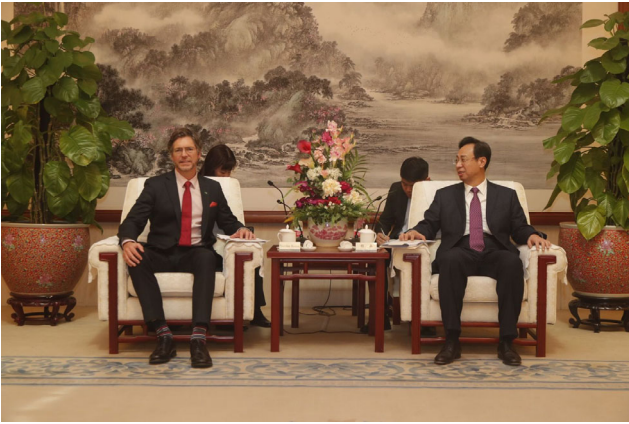
	<p>AustCham Hong Kong Reception and Dinner Hosted by AustCham HKG</p> <p>Guest speaker and panel session “Hong Kong and the Greater Bay Area – opportunities for Australian businesses.”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mr Hing (HL) Kam, Deputy Managing Director, CK Hutchinson Holdings</li> <li>• Dr Jonathon Choi, Chairman Chinese Chamber of Commerce</li> <li>• Mrs Vivian Cheung, COO Hong Kong Airport</li> <li>• Mr Raymond Yeung, Chief Economist, Greater China, ANZ</li> <li>• Mr Robert Quinlivan, Chair, AustCham Hong Kong</li> </ul>
<p>Tuesday 25/4 Shenzhen</p>	<p>ANZAC Day Dawn Service The Cenotaph, Chater Road, Central</p> <p>“Gunfire Breakfast”</p> <p>Dot Cod, B4, Prince’s Building, 10 Chater Road, Central hosted by the Australian Consul General</p> <p>Site Visit - Shenzhen Science &amp; Technology Zone Hosted by Shenzhen Municipal Bureau of Commerce</p> <p>Presenters:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ji Zhihong, Deputy Director of Investment Promotion and Enterprise Service Center of Futian District</li> <li>• Hu Yanjianjun Secretary-General of Shenzhen International Investment Promotion Federation</li> <li>• Zhang Qiaoyu, Deputy Secretary-General of Shenzhen International Investment Promotion Federation</li> </ul> <p>• Liu Jin, Director of Shenzhen Foreign-invested Enterprise Rights Protection Service</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mr Wei Jiashen, General Manager, TusStar (Shenzhen)</li> <li>• Ms Chen Yaohui (Ravenna), CEO TusStar (South-East Asia)</li> </ul> <p>Pre-dinner briefing - Australian Government</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mr Anthony Aspen, Australian Consul General, Guangzhou</li> <li>• Ms Andrea Myles, Senior Trade and Investment Commissioner, Guangzhou, Austrade</li> </ul> <p>Meeting with UoM alumni Alex Wang and Weiwei Lin in Hotel café</p> <p>Reception and dinner Host: AustCham South China “Australians in Shenzhen and the Greater Bay Area”</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consul General of Australia to Shenzhen</li> <li>• Chair, AustCham SC</li> <li>• Guest Speaker, HSBC</li> </ul>
<p>Wednesday 26/4 Beijing</p> <p>Tianjin</p>	<p>Haileybury College Tianjin Campus arrival</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meeting with school management</li> <li>• Campus tour</li> <li>• Speech to students</li> </ul> <p>Exclusive VIP meeting with key stakeholders in Tianjin</p> <p>RockCheck Tewoo event. Event proceedings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promotion video of RockCheck Tewoo</li> <li>• Formal speeches *DLM for speech</li> <li>• Signing ceremony</li> </ul> <p>Reception to celebrate the 2<sup>nd</sup> Anniversary of Tewoo's successful strategic restructuring with RockCheck Group</p> <p>Meeting with Mr Xiao Lianwang, former Chief Designer of Haihe Redevelopment Project and Mr Wang Xuebin, Secretary-General of Tianjin Urban Planning Association</p>
<p>Thursday 27/4 Tianjin</p>	<p>Site visit to National Maritime Museum of China – the latest landmark of Tianjin Binhai designed by Cox Architecture who won a 2013 international competition to design the museum.</p> <p>Site visit to Tianjin Binhai New Area City Planning Exhibition Hall</p> <p>Courtesy call with Mr Yang Bing, Vice Mayor of Tianjin Municipal Government</p> <p>Welcome lunch hosted by Tianjin Government</p> <p>Site visit to Cotton Mill 3 Creative Industry Park</p> <p>Cotton Mill 3 Creative Industry Park is a new urban complex project alongside Haihe River, including office, hotel, commercial and residential properties. It is a leading urban renewal example of an industrial mill into a modern creative industrial park.</p> <p>Visit to Tiananmen Square</p> <p>Meeting with UoM alumni Sophie Wang and Xiaoli Wang. Hotel café</p> <p>Reception &amp; Dinner - AustCham Beijing in China World Summit Wing hotel</p> <p>Event topic: "Australia's Green Economy opportunities in China"</p> <p>Speakers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mats Harborn, President Scania China</li> <li>• Jun Wang, Kinzon Capital (previously CDH)</li> <li>• Professor Ma Linwei, Tsinghua University</li> </ul>



## 5. Images – Deputy Lord Mayor commitments

### Meeting with Tianjin Vice Mayor Mr Yang Bing



### Meeting with Rockcheck Tewoo Group



### Meeting with Hong Kong Arts Centre



### Tianjin Haileybury International School visit



### University of Melbourne Alumni



### ANZAC Day Ceremony



### Meeting with Tianjin urban design masters

