

Future Melbourne Youth Strategic Planning Forum (28 May 2008)

A strategic planning meeting of
Years 9 to 12 students in the City of Melbourne
to discuss the *Future Melbourne* plan

Report on Outcomes

by Jana Scomazzon (forum facilitator)

Client

City of Melbourne
Strategic Planning Department

Youth Strategic Planning Forum
Docklands, 28 May 2008

Facilitator

Jana Scomazzon, LTG

T: 03 9532 8809

M: 0417 58 14 65

E: jana@ltg.net.au

A: PO Box 59

Elsternwick VIC 3185

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Executive Summary

On 28 May 2008 the City of Melbourne held a strategic planning meeting for Years 9 to 12 students. 18 students from four participating schools within the City of Melbourne met at the Docklands to discuss their views on the six goals of the *Future Melbourne* plan.

The venue supported the day's 'world café' style theme; the Digital Harbour Theatre space at the Docklands (both internal and external) allowing participants to:

- fully engage in the varied program (such as group discussion, beach ball activity, lunch-time art production)
- explore the different zones in the venue with ease (such as open air areas during breaks, art table area, photograph session with the Acting Lord Mayor).

Participants were quietly enthusiastic throughout the day, demonstrating willingness to:

- participate in and contribute to all aspects of the day's program
- communicate on a broad range of issues, expressing their personal opinion and demonstrating interest in and respect for the opinion of others
- provide considered feedback on the day's key questions
- cooperate individually and as a group.

The forum's program, developed by the City of Melbourne in consultation with the facilitator, was well received and effective; providing scope, flexibility and responsiveness in the capacity building and information gathering purpose of the day.

As a capacity building exercise, the project team worked with participants to sustain and develop interest in and commitment to their role in a future Melbourne. At the conclusion of the forum students strongly expressed their appreciation of the opportunity that the day had provided to have input (both at the forum and in an ongoing sense through the *Future Melbourne* wiki) into the planning process. Teachers sought information from City of Melbourne staff as to how continued contact with the City of Melbourne could be sustained.

As a strategic planning exercise, the forum provided opportunity for participants to explore and express their views on the goals and pathways of the Future Melbourne plan. While it was evident throughout the day's discussions that these secondary school participants were not aware of the differing roles and responsibilities of the three tiers of government – raising state and federal issues such as free education, improved transport infrastructure and lower ticket prices as issues they would like the City of Melbourne to address – the themes underlying the issues they raised were relevant to the Future Melbourne planning process. Namely:

- making services and facilities affordable to all, including providing for the less advantaged
- enhancing connections – both in a tangible sense (i.e. to transport, to technology) and an intangible sense (i.e. within communities, between different cultural groups)
- improving access to and range of facilities.

The facilitator's view of the perspective of the youth present at this forum, is that they were more than happy to invest the City of Melbourne with the power to plan for their future, provided council consults meaningfully with them first to determine their needs and wants, and then provides them with an ongoing mechanism to remain connected to the evolving process and its outcomes.

1 Methodology

1.1 Format for the day

The technique used to engage the participants was the 'world café' approach¹, interspersed with 'ice breaker' activities.

Participants were initially seated at tables according to which of the Future Melbourne goals they had identified on arrival as of particular interest; each table having been assigned two of the six goal themes.

Table discussion of one of the three key questions was followed by short feedback from each table to the group.

At the end of each feedback session on a key question, participants could choose to move to a different table (i.e. goal theme).

1.2 Program for the day

The forum consisted principally of three sessions, each centred on one of the following key questions:

- What does a (*insert goal*) city mean to you?
- What are the greatest challenges we face to 2020 and beyond in regard to this goal?
- Do you think the path we are heading down will meet these challenges?

The six goals for *Future Melbourne* were discussed in each session.

See Appendix 1 for the detailed forum program developed by the City of Melbourne in consultation with the facilitator.

¹ The 'world café' technique seeks to 'awaken and engage collective intelligence through conversation about questions that matter'. (Accessed from www.theworldcafe.com 1 May 2008)

2 Outcomes of Forum

The section below provides a general overview of the outcomes of each of the three sessions for each of the six goals. **See Appendix 2** for further detail.

2.1 Goal 1: A City for People

Key meaning:

A city of people is culturally inclusive, with diversity of values encouraged and the superficiality and selfishness of the American mentality spurned. It is egalitarian, with improved housing for the poor, affordable and accessible health care, tertiary and higher education cheaper, and more social workers addressing social justice issues. It is a safe city, where the 'huge problem of alcohol' is addressed by such things as increased police presence and restricted opening hours, pokies are removed to help those gambling, and safe injecting rooms are considered. Public transport is equitable and money-intensive, ineffective systems like the myki are not funded.

Greatest challenges we face to reaching the goal:

Substance abuse and transport were the greatest reported challenges:

- Stop selling alcohol after a certain time, make fewer places open late and enforce lock out (although larger numbers outside could cause more violence). Address drug use through safe injecting rooms (although this could attract drug dealers)
- Increase public access to bikes using overseas models of making bikes available freely, and make public transport accessible and affordable

Path we're on:

Local council should make the city more 'community' and canvass residents to find out what communities want.

Parklands should be further developed as they are key aspects for people in a city to sit, relax and exercise.

2.2 Goal 2: A Prosperous City

Key meaning:

A prosperous city sustains the local economy and local produce, and supports people in establishing small to medium-sized local enterprises. It makes public transport more reliable and cheaper, and education physically and financially more accessible. It creates an icon, so that the city has an identifiable unique feature, different to any other city in Australia. It educates its residents in order to reduce racism.

Greatest challenges we face to reaching the goal:

Providing incentives to new and local trade was the greatest reported challenge:

- Government funding for local businesses
- Lower taxes for new businesses
- Awareness building programs for unemployed to open new businesses
- Micro-financing, supporting low interest loans

Path we're on:

Forum participants felt we were on the path to making Melbourne a prosperous city, but that to continue attracting people we need to ensure it is an international city, with transport and technology supporting this goal.

2.3 Goal 3: An Eco City

Key meaning:

In an eco city public transport is a viable, attractive option to people. It is safe, reliable, cheap, fast, environmentally-friendly and comfortable. An eco city is a 'walking city', with effective and safe bike lanes and a fuel tax to discourage car use. The use of alternative power (e.g. solar) in buildings is a feature, as is the balance between inner and outer suburban areas. The expanded city connects multiple villages and is integrated so that outer-lying areas are not isolated.

Greatest challenges we face to reaching the goal:

Improved public transport, sustainable practice and attracting more people to the city were the greatest reported challenges:

- Improved public transport including, city to airport train, station reviews with more physical infrastructure, more user friendly (e.g. entertainment like videos on trains), expanded routes and more frequent service
- Increased housing in the city, not just for business people
- Sustainability promoted as a key influence for businesses, including using renewable energy power sources
- Improved infrastructure aimed at promoting environmentally friendly practices, like recycling water to use in toilets and gardens, establishing a desalination plant
- Awareness raising campaign and associated financial and physical support to encourage sustainability, e.g. recycling plastic, harvesting rainwater, not using potable water for toilets, using solar energy (e.g. rebates), etc.
- A cleaner city for all, including cleaning the Yarra river

Path we're on:

Local councils should teach younger generations about the environment through culture. They should reward businesses contributing to the environment. Planning should ensure that the city is built up, not out to reduce the sprawl and make it environmentally friendly. The public transport network should be expanded to include such things as a train to the airport.

2.4 Goal 4: A Knowledge City

Key meaning:

Melbourne as a knowledge city would encourage international visitors to study and then remain to work, which will contribute to its uniqueness. It is a city of equal opportunity, demonstrated by such facilities as well-resourced libraries in outer lying areas.

Greatest challenges we face to reaching the goal:

Accessible and affordable education and transport were seen as key challenges for a knowledge city. Namely:

- Improving funding for universities so that higher education is accessible to all and affordable
- Increasing international education, though not to jeopardise local fee-supported students
- Ensuring that government and private schools are equal in delivery and outcomes
- Supporting the production of such things as free media, supported by young people
- Increasing the capacity and accessibility of public transport

Path we're on:

Forum participants felt we were on the path to making Melbourne a knowledge city, but that Melbourne needs to continue attracting people so that it becomes an international city.

2.5 Goal 5: A Bold and Inspirational City

Key meaning:

A bold and inspirational city would improve facilities through increased funding for the arts. It would seek to find out what youth want in a city through such means as a survey (e.g. more sport, music, concerts, games and art) and then subsidise those activities, making them inexpensive and fun and reducing the financial pressure on families. Accessible pods would be created for younger generations – where food is cheap, films are free, spaces are conducive to youth, cultural centres are active – and tap into an effective way of spreading the word about these pods. A bold and inspirational city would encourage community recognition that kids need activities, and would promote these activities widely in communities and schools; helping to create a communication mechanism to connect schools and share ideas.

Such a city would encourage its own unique architecture unique.

Greatest challenges we face to reaching the goal:

The greatest challenge to this goal is in reducing the time it takes to get things done and delivering on time by planning around all the variables.

Path we're on:

The City of Melbourne should focus on establishing activities in Melbourne with which youth identify.

2.6 Goal 6: A Connected City

Key meaning:

A connected city has greater technology connections, including improved WiFi accessibility. It ensures a more equitable connection for all, through such means as a better bike path network and a more centralised and effective public transport system, including higher frequency public transport, diverse means (e.g. monorails). It encourages greater use of public transport by improving transport and taxing those who use cars in the CBD.

Greatest challenges we face to reaching the goal:

Improved transport infrastructure and international trade connections were the greatest reported challenges:

- Increased funding for major infrastructure so that Melbourne is more connected to other places in Australia (e.g. by a tunnel to Tasmania)
- Providing more trains, trams and buses and lowering the amount needed to travel on them
- Connecting local trade internationally, improving local products and funding for local businesses, and inspiring other countries to be innovative

Path we're on:

Facilities and funding to all demographic areas of the city should be equal to encourage connection, not just to the wealthier areas. Families from other countries coming to Melbourne should be encouraged. An icon specific to Melbourne would connect more people.

Appendix 1 Future Melbourne Youth Forum Program

Future Melbourne Forum for Schools

Program 9:00-2:30: Wednesday 28th of May Docklands

From 8am	9-9:15	9:15-9:20	9:20-9:30	9:30- 9:40	9:40-10:15	10:15-10:30	10:30-11:00
Set up	Registration	Overview	Ice-breaker Activity	Welcome and wiki introduction	Session 1 (Part 1)	Session 1 (Part 2)	Morning Tea
<p>Jana and Sarah at space setting up room</p> <p>Set up four rego portals which include Name (first name only) School What I'm interested in</p>	<p>Students will be able to 'wonder' through the exhibition that has already been developed.</p> <p>Students to be directed to sit at area that interests them, as per their registration form (Jana and Sarah to make sure that schools are split where possible across tables – cf rego details).</p>	<p>Jana to provide brief overview of the day.</p>	<p>Fact or Fiction</p>	<p>Welcome- 5 min CoM</p> <p>Wiki- 5 min introduction to the wiki by member of FM Team.</p>	<p>This discussion will be a general overview of the goal</p> <p>Q: "What does a _____city mean to you?"</p> <p>There will be no goal statements on the table at this point in time.</p>	<p>Reporting back on discussion Jana noting key messages on whiteboard. FM experts taking more detailed notes</p>	

11-11:20	11:20-11:35	11:35-11:50	11:50-11:55	11:55-12:10	12:10-12:30	12:30-12:45
Session 2 (Part 1)	Session 2 (Part 2)	Session 2 (Part 3)	Ice Breaker	Session 3 (Part 1)	Session 3 (Part 2)	Session 3 (Part 3)
<p>This round will look at goals (with no goal statement on the table)</p> <p>Q: "What are the greatest challenges we face to 2020 and beyond?"</p> <p>Students will be given the opportunity to change tables if they please. Alternatively they can stay where seated. We will have to manage expectations etc- make sure the balance remains.</p>	<p>Continue conversation from Part 1- but Goal Statements will be shown to the students.</p>	<p>Reporting back on the biggest challenges.</p>	<p>Beach Balls</p> <p>(4 Beach balls)</p>	<p>This will focus on pathways /outcomes</p> <p>"Do you think the path we are heading down will meet these challenges?"</p> <p>Stay on same table.</p> <p>First 15 minutes will be without the pathways in front of the students.</p>	<p>Pathways and outcomes will be placed in front of students and the conversation will continue around</p> <p>"Do you think we are heading down the right path to meet the challenge/ do these pathways/ outcomes meet these challenges"</p>	<p>Reporting back.</p>

<p>12:40-1:00</p> <p>Session 4</p> <p>What else should we be doing?</p> <p>Storyboards are placed next to tables and paper table cloths are on tables. Students move/ roam around the tables writing their ideas down.</p> <p>CoM experts are at the goal tables to answer questions and guide participants in 'rephrasing' ideas if meaning not clear.</p>	<p>1:00-1:05</p> <p>Discussion</p> <p>Jana to facilitate discussion/ feedback to participants.</p>	<p>1:05-2:00</p> <p>Lunch</p> <p>This will also incorporate art activities run by Phil Hall curator of the Art Exhibition.</p>	<p>2-2:15</p> <p>Student Presentations</p> <p>Each table has 2 minutes to present their findings, good ideas they've discussed and experiences of the day.</p>	<p>2:15-2:30</p> <p>Closing</p> <p>Closing and presentation of certificates- Deputy Lord Mayor, Gary Singer.</p> <p>Love to hear more from you.</p>
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Appendix 2 Detailed Forum Outcomes

SESSION 1: What does a (*insert goal*) city mean to you?

Goal 1: A City for People

Make Melbourne a safe city – alcohol is a 'huge problem', increase presence of police

Make health more affordable and more easily accessed

Increase the number of social workers who address social justice issues

Make public transport equitable and scrap money-intensive systems like the MYKI that don't deliver what and when they should

Get rid of pokies to help those who are losing money

Make tertiary education and technical schools cheaper

Encourage diversity of values in Melbourne

Avoid the American mentality of a superficial, selfish society

Improve housing – need community, social workers, statewide projects.

Goal 2: A Prosperous City

Educate/provide programs to reduce racism

Support SMEs to get off the ground

Support the local economy and local produce, making it more sustainable and so more prosperous

Creating an iconic Melbourne, with identifiable unique feature unlike any other city in Australia

Privatisation

Make public transport more reliable and cheaper

Make education cheaper and so more accessible

Goal 3: An Eco City

Improve public transport including, railway to airport, station reviews with more physical infrastructure, more user friendly trains, entertainment on trains (e.g. videos) to entice patrons, expanded train lines (more trains further out), more trains on existing lines

Make getting into the city easier, buses are unreliable and crowded

Make Melbourne a walking city – improve bike lanes, tax on fuel because if there are less cars there'll be more use of public transport

Use solar power in buildings

Improve the balance, e.g. between inner and outer suburban areas to reduce strain; integrating the expanded city so that outer lying areas are not isolated' connecting multiple villages

Goal 4: A Knowledge City

Encourage international visitors to study and work which will contribute to the uniqueness of Melbourne

Equal opportunity, including more libraries for outer lying areas

Goal 5: A Bold and Inspirational City

Improve facilities

Increase funding for the arts

Encourage an architecture unique to Melbourne

Create accessible pods for younger generations – where food is cheap, films are free, spaces are conducive to youth, cultural centres are active, 'places in the city where you can go for free' – and tap into an effective way of spreading the word about these pods

Encourage community recognition that kids need activities and promote these activities widely in communities and schools

Subsidise inexpensive/fun activities to reduce pressure on families e.g. free concerts

Provide more sport, music, games, art, including such things as art on trams

Do a youth survey of what youth would want to see in the city

Help create a mechanism to connect schools so that they're communicating with each other, e.g. Student Representative Councils (SRC) supported by MCC to link up and share ideas.

Goal 6: A Connected City

Greater technology connections

Improve WiFi accessibility

Ensure more equitable connection for all, including improved accessibility by such means as centralised public transport system, higher frequency public transport, better bike path network, monorails

Encourage greater use of public transport, e.g. by a tax on those who drive into the CBD

▫ **SESSION 2: What are the greatest challenges we face to 2020 and beyond in regard to each goal?**

Goal 1: A City for People

Make fewer places open late and enforce lock out (say midnight) – although having larger numbers of people outside could cause more violence and make it less safe

Stronger policing around those places open later to make Melbourne a safer place

Make it safer – stop selling alcohol after a certain time

Public access to bikes (like overseas)

Eco village – inner city that demonstrates sustainable practices and inspires visitors

Public transport needs to be accessible and affordable

Address drug use – safe injecting rooms (although could attract drug dealers), minimise harm, provide community support

Goal 2: A Prosperous City

Need local trade for a prosperous city

Government funding for local businesses

Lower taxes for new businesses

Create awareness for unemployed to open new businesses

Micro-financing – supporting low interest loans

Goal 3: An Eco City

An environmentally friendly city is a city for people, where there are more people in the city

Need sustainability to influence business

Need people on public transport, so should make it safer, cheaper, better for the environment, a viable option for people driving or binge drinking

Housing – houses in outer suburbs are environmentally minded (e.g. solar powered), increase housing in city not just for business people

Make the city cleaner for all – clean the Yarra river

Provide infrastructure to recycle water for gardens and toilets

Plastic bags and bottles

Desalination to produce fresh water, consider power with renewable energy

Awareness campaign – educate everyone about sustainability, using solar panels, harvesting rainwater, not using potable water for toilets, support and promote sustainability

Give rebates on solar energy

Goal 4: A Knowledge City

Poor funding for universities

Education should be accessible to all and affordable through more funding

International education not to jeopardise local fee-supported students

Government and private schools should be equal in delivery

Young people need free media supported by young people

Public transport needs to have a higher capacity and be accessible to all

Goal 5: A Bold and Inspirational City

Increase the number of icons, like the MCG

Reduce the time it takes to get things done and deliver on time by recognising the variables and planning for them

Goal 6: A Connected City

Funding for major infrastructure so that Melbourne is more connected to other places in Australia (e.g. by a tunnel to Tasmania)

Inspiring other countries to be innovative

More trains and trams and paying less to travel on them

Connect local trade internationally, improving local products and funding for local businesses

▫ **SESSION 3: Do you think the path we are heading down will meet these challenges?**

Goals 1 and 3: A City for People/ An Eco City

Teach younger generations about the environment through culture

Train to the airport

Reward businesses contributing to the environment

Build the city up not out, reduce the sprawl – make it environmentally friendly (less concrete)

Local councils more jurisdiction, more communal, know what communities want

Parklands in the city to sit, relax, exercise – key aspects for people in a city

Goals 2 and 4: A Prosperous City/ A Knowledge City

Agreed that we're on the path

Need to make Melbourne an international city, attracting people

Goals 5 and 6: A Bold and Inspirational City/ A Connected City

Families from other countries coming to Melbourne

Something for youth to identify with in Melbourne

An icon specific to Melbourne

Equal funding to all demographic areas of the city – not just the wealthier