

**Endorsement of Living Melbourne: Our metropolitan Urban Forest Strategy**

**Date: 15 April 2019**

**Purpose and background**

- The purpose of this report is to seek Whitehorse City Council endorsement of *Living Melbourne: our metropolitan urban forest* strategy developed by The Nature Conservancy and Resilient Melbourne with input from metropolitan councils, the Victorian government, statutory authorities, academics and others ([Attachment 2](#)). Endorsement of *Living Melbourne* means support for *Living Melbourne's* Vision, Goals and Actions and a commitment to work in partnership with the other endorsing organisations towards its implementation.
- Resilient Melbourne was instigated by the 100 Resilient Cities (100RC) initiative, pioneered by The Rockefeller Foundation in 2015. This global initiative aims to help cities around the world become more resilient to the physical, social and economic challenges that are a growing part of the 21st century. Melbourne was selected from 372 applicant cities around the world to be in the first wave of 33 cities to join the network.
  1. Following significant engagement across metropolitan Melbourne, including all local councils, Victorian government, and many other stakeholders, the Resilient Melbourne strategy was released in May 2016 – the first ever metropolitan-wide strategy led by local government. While still part of the 100RC network, Resilient Melbourne is 100% locally owned and funded.
  2. 100 Resilient Cities – pioneered by the Rockefeller Foundation, has invested significantly in the development of *Living Melbourne* by facilitating pro-bono services to the project, including project partner The Nature Conservancy, satellite imagery from Digital Globe, and data analysis and software provided by Trimble.
- Urban forest initiatives have been established by several metropolitan Melbourne local governments, the Victorian government, non-governmental and community organisations, private land owners and others to protect and enhance Melbourne's metropolitan urban forest. What has been missing until now is a way for this work to be coordinated and supported at a metropolitan scale. The purpose of *Living Melbourne* is to galvanise support for a collaborative effort across sectors and organisations, jurisdictions and land tenures.
- *Living Melbourne: our metropolitan urban forest* strategy is supported by *Living Melbourne: Technical report*. The technical report ([Attachment 3](#)) provides technical evidence underpinning the strategy - both are intended to be read as stand alone documents.

**Key issues**

- As a flagship action of the Resilient Melbourne strategy, *Living Melbourne* provides a business case for nature as a driver of urban resilience and liveability. Its proposed framework aims to assist metropolitan Melbourne, and its communities, adapt, survive and thrive in the face of acute shocks and chronic stresses challenging our city, both now and in the future.
- The *Living Melbourne* strategic framework includes a vision; *our thriving communities are resilient and connected through nature*, three goals; *healthy people, abundant nature and natural infrastructure*, and six key actions; 1) *Protect, restore species habitat and enhance connectivity*, 2) *Set targets and track progress*, 3) *Scale up greening the private realm*, 4) *Collaborate across sectors and regions*, 5) *Build a toolkit of resources to underpin implementation* and 6) *Fund the protection and enhancement of the urban forest*.
- Endorsement of the strategy supports the *Whitehorse City Council* Vision "We aspire to be a healthy, vibrant, prosperous and sustainable community supported by strong leadership and community partnerships" and the Council Plan Objectives as follows:
  - Support a healthy, vibrant, inclusive and diverse community
  - Maintain and enhance our built environment to ensure a liveable and sustainable city
  - Protect and enhance our open spaces and natural environments

**Attachments:**

1. Supporting Attachment

- Benefits for endorsing organisations include the following: Licence to host mapping derivatives on website; use of satellite imagery for internal use; co-branding plus logo placement in final designed version of *Living Melbourne*, access to future financial investment for actions and aligned media opportunities, opportunity to demonstrate collective leadership regarding Melbourne's future liveability and opportunity to leverage collective metropolitan support to extend existing work.
- *Living Melbourne* has been developed with the assistance of a broad range of stakeholders, coupled with advice from a Senior Reference Group ([Attachment 1](#)) and a Technical Advisory Group. Extensive consultation on the document occurred from December 2018 to March 2019, with 36 organisations providing feedback in Round One and 18 providing feedback in Round Two. Further information regarding the stakeholder engagement process is provided in [Attachment 1](#).

#### **Recommendation from management**

4. That Whitehorse City Council:
  - 4.1. Endorses *Living Melbourne: our metropolitan urban forest* which means supporting *Living Melbourne's* Vision, Goals and Actions and committing to work in partnership with the other endorsing organisations towards its implementation; and
  - 4.2. Authorises the use of *Whitehorse City Council* logo to appear as an endorsing organisation in the designed version of *Living Melbourne* which will be launched in June 2019.

## Supporting Attachment

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### Legal

1. *Living Melbourne* is not a legislative requirement nor does it diminish individual council's rights or ability to develop localised urban forest approaches. It is aligned with the Victorian Government's Action 91 in Plan Melbourne and aligned with existing visions and objectives, of endorsing organisations.

### Finance

2. There is no requirement for endorsing organisations to commit funding alongside endorsement. Action 6 of *Living Melbourne* outlines work being undertaken to raise and leverage finance for its implementation.

### 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 direct or indirect interest in relation to the matter of the report.

### Occupational Health and Safety

4. In developing this proposal, the health benefits of our metropolitan urban forest have been identified.

### Stakeholder consultation

1. *Living Melbourne* has been developed with a broad range of stakeholders, coupled with advice from a Senior Reference Group and a Technical Advisory Group.
  - 1.1. The Senior Reference Group included: Department Environment Land Water and Planning, City of Brimbank, The Nature Conservancy, Melbourne Water, City of Monash, City of Stonnington, Resilient Melbourne, City of Frankston, City of Melbourne, Parks Victoria, City of Hume.
2. Stakeholder involvement included a series of workshops to guide development of the strategy, incorporate stakeholder perspectives and review the strategy as it progressed and was finalised. The four major workshops focused on:
  1. Establishing the baseline and setting the initial vision;
  2. Developing the strategic foundation;
  3. Technical evidence to guide the strategy; and
  4. Draft strategy framing and development.
3. Stakeholders who contributed to the development of *Living Melbourne* include metropolitan Melbourne local government authorities, Victorian Government departments and statutory agencies, technical experts, land managers, policy makers, planners, academics developers and some community representatives (see the Acknowledgements section within *Living Melbourne* for a full list).
  - 3.1. Round 1 consultation on the early draft *Living Melbourne* strategy occurred December 2018 – January 2019. The draft *Living Melbourne* strategy was circulated to over 60 organisations, including all metropolitan councils, relevant Victorian Government departments and agencies, as well as a range of statutory authorities. Insightful, constructive feedback was received from 36 organisations, totalling 640 individual items of feedback demonstrating their commitment to *Living Melbourne* and involvement in its release and implementation.
  - 3.2. Melbourne Water circulated information inviting Healthy Waterways stakeholders (community organisations and community members) to respond to a questionnaire on *Living Melbourne*. 100% of respondents either strongly agreed or agreed with a metropolitan wide approach to improve greening efforts and better protect nature across Melbourne. 100% of respondents either strongly agreed or agreed with the vision and goals of the *Living Melbourne* strategy and 100% of respondents stated they would be likely to recommend that their local council endorses *Living Melbourne*.
  - 3.3. A stakeholder briefing session was held on 13 February 2019 to provide an update on *Living Melbourne* for endorsing organisations plus additional organisations involved in *Living Melbourne*'s development.
  - 3.4. Round 2 consultation on the draft strategy occurred from 22 February 2019 to 15 March 2019. Round 2 consultation asked organisations what needed to change in order for them to support or endorse the strategy. We received over 130 mostly positive comments from 18 organisations, with no submissions

indicating a reticence to endorse. Overall stakeholders have indicated their support for the collective approach that *Living Melbourne* is proposing.

3.5. Living Melbourne responded to feedback and updated the strategy to ensure the final version is representative of the needs of the diverse partnership.

4. Endorsement for Living Melbourne is being sought from the following organisations which have been involved in its development:

- 32 metropolitan Melbourne Local Government Authorities
- Victorian Government – through DELWP)
- Municipal Association Victoria
- Melbourne Water
- Yarra Valley Water
- South East Water
- City West Water
- Parks Victoria
- Vic Roads
- Victorian Planning Authority
- Australian Institute of Landscape Architects
- Environment Protection Authority
- Port Phillip and Westernport Catchment Management Authority

#### **Relation to Council policy**

5. The following Council policies are consistent with *Living Melbourne*:

- 4.1. The Whitehorse Planning Scheme
- 4.2. The Whitehorse Health and Wellbeing Plan
- 4.3. The Whitehorse Urban Forest Strategy 2018
- 4.4. The Whitehorse Urban Biodiversity Strategy 2014

#### **Environmental sustainability**

5. In developing *Living Melbourne*, the following environmental sustainability matters have been considered:

- 5.1. *Living Melbourne* considers the current and future threats to Melbourne's liveability and proposes actions to extend and improve the metropolitan urban forest to both mitigate impacts and provide a long term strategic approach for its future sustainability.