

Report to the Future Melbourne Committee

Agenda item 6.3

City of Melbourne Emerging Technology Testbed Update

4 May 2021

Presenter: Michelle Fitzgerald, Director Technology and Digital Innovation**Purpose and background**

1. The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the City of Melbourne's Emerging Technology Testbed function and seek endorsement for three finalists of the recent 'Reimagining the City' challenge.
2. Management is working with business, academic and community partners to ensure that our local economy is prepared to lead in 'fourth industrial revolution' activities (e.g. 5G, Artificial Intelligence, Internet of Things, Digital Twins, open data) that will stimulate next-generation jobs and businesses in our municipality.
3. Council's 2020–21 Annual Plan Initiative 8.10 'Trial 5G and IOT (internet of things) urban infrastructure and services' builds on Australia's first local government-led Emerging Technology Testbed, which Council established in 2019 with 26 local businesses, startups, universities, telecommunications carriers, hardware and software companies and community members.

Key issues

4. A key part of Testbed activity in 2020–21 is running the 'Reimagining the City' challenge.
5. The challenge was launched to attract startups, technology companies and researchers to pitch digital and data solutions that can be tested and trialled across the municipality in ways that attract visitors, workers and residents to come in to the city as part of the COVID-safe reopening of Melbourne.
6. The challenge was launched over December 2020 – February 2021. Forty submissions were received and seven finalists were selected. The finalists pitched to the community and a panel of judges at a live online event on 18 March, followed by a two-week community voting period on [Participate Melbourne](#) which comprised 20 percent of the overall score.
7. This process shortlisted three finalists:
 - 7.1. MV Arcade will create digitised arcade games in a 10x10 metre physical area to ensure physical distancing, and aims to attract and entertain visitors to parks and gardens in the municipality. The games are designed to accommodate diverse users including non-English speakers and wheelchair users. It is led by Swinburne University with two Melbourne-based businesses.
 - 7.2. Social Spaces will transform a public space to feel more socially connected. They will take a data-led approach and work with a local community in the municipality to co-design and physically deliver a pilot in the public realm. Social Spaces includes two Melbourne-based businesses.
 - 7.3. Micro-Labs is a new shop-front typology that provides space and digital resources for small business owners, researchers, artists and students that have been displaced and impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. Micro-Labs is led by AECOM.
8. The finalists will work with Management to deliver their pilots in 2021–22.
9. Testbed outcomes will be measured, and new datasets that are generated in the Testbed will be shared on Council's Open Data Platform.

Recommendation from management

10. That the Future Melbourne Committee:
 - 10.1. Notes the work completed on the Emerging Technology Testbed function
 - 10.2. Endorses MV Arcade, Social Spaces and Micro-Labs as the three finalists for the 'Reimagining the City' Challenge.

Attachment:

1. Supporting Attachment (Page 2 of 2)

Supporting Attachment

Legal

1. There are no specific legal implications for this report.

Finance

2. There are no specific financial implications of recommendation.

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 material or general 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.

Stakeholder consultation

5. The 'Reimagining the City' Challenge was publicly launched on the Participate Melbourne platform in December 2020. Ongoing opportunities for community engagement with the new pilots will be made available via this platform in 2021–22.

Relation to Council policy (if applicable)

6. Recommendations are consistent with the Council Plan 2017–21 Knowledge City goal, and Council's COVID-19 Reactivation and Recovery Plan.

Environmental sustainability

7. No direct environmental sustainability issues or opportunities have been identified in the in 'Reimagining the City' challenge to date. This will be monitored and addressed in the piloting phase if required.