

Inner Melbourne Action Plan
Briefing Paper
Action 7.2 Support Creative Businesses

Purpose

1. To report on the first meeting of the Action 7.2 Creative Business group and request seed funding for some initial work in this area through the IMAP Three Year Implementation Plan process.

Background

2. IMAP's Strategy 7 to "*Promote the Inner Melbourne Region as an investment location for knowledge rich business sectors*" includes Action 7.2 "Support Creative Businesses". This action aims to:
 - *Develop a support package for new and emerging businesses aimed at businesses with a focus on the practical implementation of new knowledge and ideas, design or creative endeavours.*

The Inner Melbourne Action Plan also notes:

- *that Melbourne ranks highly as a creative city, with a strong knowledge and education economy. Maintaining liveability for the creative workforce is a key part of sound economic management.*
 - *Coordinated programs that bring together industry, state government and local government representatives around broad issues and specific clusters of activity are required.*
3. Action 7.2 was included as a new project on IMAP's Implementation Plan last year as a number of the IMAP Councils were undertaking work in this area or had identified this sector as a priority in their Council plans. In addition, DBI's Victorian Government Business Office for the Inner Melbourne Region also identified the creative business sector as an area to target and support.
 4. In the same way as occurs with the regional tourism project (Strategy 11), IMAP proposes to support the work of the municipalities and DBI working in this sector, through coordination and identification of synergies across the organisations, not through duplication of effort.

Discussion

5. A preliminary meeting was held on 9 November 2012 to consult with staff representatives from the 5 IMAP council's economic development and arts and culture departments, Melbourne's City Research department and DBI's key senior staff.
6. The meeting identified some of the key issues being:
 - Business skill training – it was noted this sector is not unique in this requirement and currently has the opportunity to participate in small businesses training already being provided

- Businesses need further assistance to help them learn from each other, and create networks within the creative sector
 - Creative spaces need “making space” that is inexpensive to rent
 - Sites for incubator space and how to create synergies between the businesses – eg Incubator space urgently required for up to 70 businesses in Yarra as their accommodation is being taken over
 - Definition of “creative businesses” varies across the councils and state government – CoM’s current research into this may assist in gaining a consistent definition.
 - Developing collaborations with the research institutions to discover what they want to achieve
 - The CoPP has the highest number of employers of creative industries nationally – how does this fit with development proposals for Fishermans Bend and environs? What keeps them there?
 - The needs of the industries in the creative sector need defining – how do they connect with suppliers? How do they develop their businesses?
 - Would a Melbourne-based trade fair approach assist in connecting creative businesses to some large, local clients?
 - Would a techshop concept with state of the art tools work in Melbourne?
7. The discussion also identified a broad range of activities currently being undertaken with creative businesses by all Councils. It was not possible to identify them all at the meeting, and indeed, some of the key staff were not able to be present. While further research was not recommended (DBI identifying that much has already been said on the issue), to enable a quick review of current effort, it was felt that the range of activities being undertaken across the Councils should be documented.
 8. The working group identified that some seed funding to enable this to be undertaken by a researcher working with the 5 Councils staff this financial year would be helpful to assist the development of some practical assistance by IMAP and DBI.
 9. The group agreed to meet at the end of January in Port Phillip to review the Research Project CoPP is currently undertaking and to further discuss that council’s current strategies.
 10. With some collation of current work being undertaken across the IMAP Councils and further discussion with wider input, the group would bring back a Project Brief to the IMAP Implementation Committee later in the new year.

Recommendation

11. That the IMAP Implementation Committee **resolves** to make provision in the IMAP Three Year Implementation Plan for \$10,000 in the current financial year to fund:
 - a. initial data collection of work being undertaken across the 5 IMAP Councils in the creative businesses sector
 - b. analysis, as required, to assist in the development of a Project Brief for Action 7.2.