



Committee for Geelong - New York & LA Visit - June 2011

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Pre-Amble

The board will be aware from previous discussions and background reports that the Executive Director, Chairman and Mayor of City of Greater Geelong visited the USA during the month of June this year.

The Executive Director travelled direct with the Mayor and the Chairman joined the delegation for meetings in New York City.

The main purpose of the exercise was to visit the head office of Alcoa International and conduct a presentation on behalf of the City of Greater Geelong for Alcoa's contribution and citizenship to the community of Geelong. Other meetings and interviews were held in and around the Alcoa anchor meeting.

The following are some observations from meetings that were attended by both the Executive Director and in the case of Alcoa the Chairman of the Committee for Geelong.

Monday 27th June

Long Beach City Council

Bob Foster, Mayor, Long Beach City Council
William Doll, Special Assistant to Mayor, Long Beach City Council
Peter Dorling, Executive Director, Committee for Geelong
John Mitchell, Mayor, City of Greater Geelong

Observations:

There is no doubt that Long Beach California has similarities to the City of Greater Geelong. Both are seaside communities and rely heavily on Tourism.

Of interest to me was the fact that Mayor Foster made it quite clear to beware of "Icons". He was referring to the Queen Mary ship and museum which is a permanent icon parked at Long Beach. His point was that unless you maintain these Icons and the operators provide an excellent experience the icon can become a symbol of a not so well run city. Fortunately in their case the Queen Mary has been in the hands of a good operator for some time and is now providing a good experience.



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The other observation that hit me was the importance of their convention centre to the city. They aggressively market Long Beach as a destination for conventions and use the convention centre to spill out to a number of other tourist attractions in the area. As well accommodation houses and entertainment precincts feed off the convention centre. There is a very strong collegiate approach to working the convention centre to its maximum capacity.

A lesson for Geelong is that if we do go down the convention centre track we need to make it more than just a standalone operation. All operators including accommodation houses and hotels are part of the plan and should contribute accordingly.

Wednesday 29th June

With Alcoa Executives at the New York Stock Exchange

Nacema Blake, communications Manager, Alcoa Foundation

Chris Ayers, Executive Vice President, Alcoa

William F Oplinger, Chief Financial Officer, Alcoa Global

Jonathan Robins, Manager international, Public & Government Affairs, Alcoa

Libby Ferguson, manager, Government Liaison, State Govt Victoria

Michael Betts, Chairman, Committee for Geelong

Peter Dorling

Mayor John Mitchell

Alcoa USA

LUNCH & EXCHANGE OF GIFTS:

Alcoa USA

Observations:

The Meeting with Alcoa went very much to plan and was appreciated by the Alcoa executives.

Alcoa is a dynamic company and continues to expand across the globe. Their operations in Australia are some 50 years old however we did not get the impression they were planning to scale down at any level.

They were interested to know whether getting a job at Alcoa was important to people in Geelong and whether they were an employer of choice. They asked a number of questions about their image in Geelong.

The Mayor and Chairman of Committee for Geelong answered all their questions and certainly made them feel comfortable that they were an important employer of Geelong. It was made clear their



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contribution and commitment to Geelong over the 50 year period was appreciated. This was certainly acknowledged by the executives and in particular the Nacema Blake who is the communications manager for the Alcoa Foundation.

Opening up a dialogue at an international level between Geelong and Alcoa was timely and very important. As this country moves forward into areas of Carbon Tax and Carbon Trading it is important that we continue to make our international corporate bodies feel comfortable in the knowledge that the city community will use their best endeavours to help articulate the company position to government at all levels.

The meeting with the Alcoa executives was semi formal but what impressed our delegation was the fact that all the Alcoa executives stayed on for some time after the formal meeting to exchange general views on their personal observations of Geelong and Australia.

Thursday 30th June

New York Housing Authority

John B Rhea, Chairman,
Deidra Gilliard, Assistant Deputy General Manager for Community Operations
Brian P Clarke, Assistant Deputy General Manager for Operations for Support Services
David Downs AICP, Leed-AP, Associate Housing Development Specialist
Peter Dorling, Committee for Geelong
Mayor John Mitchell, City of Greater Geelong

This was an interesting meeting in that we met the Chairman John B Rhea who was a dynamic African/ American operator. He left us in no doubt that the New York Housing Authority had a clear mandate from Mayor Bloomberg to deliver affordable housing across Manhattan and New York. His team were dedicated to the project and looked at affordable housing from a number of perspectives. They have a general housing stock owned by the New York Council but they also work hand in hand with private developers to create housing opportunities based on supply and demand. If the demand is right then the developers will build and immediately fill their tenancies. The catalyst here is and somewhat the cartilage is the New York Housing Authority.

It was quite clear to the Mayor and I that the Housing Authority needed to operate outside the general operations of the New York City Council. However Mayor Bloomberg expected them to reach their targets and report to the council on a regular basis.



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Taxi Commission

Ashwini K Chhabra, Deputy Commissioner Policy & Planning

Peter Dorling , Committee for Geelong

Mayor John Mitchell, City of Greater Geelong

This meeting was useful in so much as Melbourne and Geelong are involved in a review of the taxi Service. New York has more taxis per square kilometer than perhaps any city in the world.

They are acutely aware they need to upgrade their taxi stock and provide a better service to their community and the millions of visitors to New York City.

As such they are going to standardize the taxi service very much like London has done with their black cabs. They have picked a particular type of car which will have sliding doors, plenty of room for occupants and even a Perspex roof so you will be able to admire the skyline of New York City.

It has taken some time to get to this point but they are determined to make New York and particularly Manhattan a taxi friendly city - there is a lesson here for Melbourne and Geelong.

As a result the Mayor and I will be speaking to the Victorian taxi review committee in the near future about our observations of the New York plan.

New York City Economic Development Corporation & Centre for Economic Transformation

Seth W. Pinsky, President NYCEDC

Ann Li, Senior Director, Centre for Economic Transformation, NYCEDC

Peter Dorling , Committee for Geelong

Mayor John Mitchell, City of Greater Geelong

We were fortunate to have the opportunity to meet the President of the New York Economic Development Committee and his senior director. These two very switched on people have a very important task delegated to them by the New York City Mayor Bloomberg. The Mayor and the council recognised that Economic development needs to be intimately involved in discussions at a



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high business and commercial level. Therefore the corporation acts outside the normal operations of council.

As is the case with the New York Housing Authority the New York Economic Development Corporation needs to report regularly to the council on its operations. It has a set of targets, budgets and strict guidelines on how it must increase economic development across Manhattan and New York.

What really impressed the Mayor and I was their very strong relationship with the University network in New York. They form robust partnerships to enhance entrepreneurial training and economic development in New York.

The New York Economical Development Corporation is an impressive model and perhaps one we can look at in Geelong when we discuss the recommendations of the G21 Economic Development Strategy.

Friday 1st July

New York State University

Mitch Leventhal, Ph.D., Vice Chancellor for Global Affairs, The State University of New York
Thomas Moebus, Vice President, Levin Institute
Peter Dorling , Committee for Geelong
Mayor John Mitchell, City of Greater Geelong

At this meeting we quickly realized how strong the partnership was between New York State University and the New York economical Development Corporation. Both organisations knew each other intimately and are working together on a number of projects.

Again it was quite clear that the role of the university in the United States is very much attuned to public policy and economic development outcomes. Research is strong but it is targeted to specific outcomes and enhancement of the knowledge base of the community.

Mitch Leventhal the vice chancellor for Global Affairs has spent some time in Australia and his observations on where Australia is heading relative to what they are doing in New York city was quite interesting. He is a believer that Australia is a very strong position to capitalize on its strategic geographic advantage and its social capital.



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Saturday 2nd July

LUNCH MEETING:

With Australian Consul General in New York

Phillip H Scanlan AM, Consul General, Australian Consulate General

Gerard Seeber, Senior Trade Commissioner, Australia Trade Commission

Drew J Hart, Policy Officer, Australian Consulate General

Peter Dorling, Committee for Geelong

Mayor John Mitchell, City of Greater Geelong

Phil Scanlon, Consul General Australia was particularly helpful in his deliberations with the Mayor and myself. There weren't too many people he didn't know at a high level in Australia and had an intimate knowledge of Geelong and its surrounds. He is a close friend of Frank Costa.

His advice to us was to continue to create links around the world with Australian Government networks in the UK and America. He obviously offered his support at the USA level.

There is a very strong network of business connections either via the Victorian Government or Australian Government across the UK and USA and the meeting helped strengthen that relationship. It should open up doors for us in the future.

We are currently working through Philip Scanlon's network to help us to enhance other operations that we are involved in. Particularly the National Broadband Network with whom Phil has a close relationship.

Summary

The trip to the United States was well worth while and professionally organised. The meetings were fruitful and the connections will be of value for some time to come.

Over the last 10 years the Committee for Geelong has set up connections and relationships with cities all over the globe. Today we are still working those relationship lines and continuing the dialogue. Deakin University is also providing an international program which we have tapped into and that program to enhance this city's international experience.

For the Geelong community to reach its potential it must continually look outside its area and sometimes outside Australia to gain the confidence and the professionalism we need to move this city forward.