PURPOSE

To endorse the Lord Mayor to attend Next City’s World Stage: World Urban Forum 9 (WUF9) in Kuala Lumpur from 7 to 13 February 2018.

RECOMMENDATION

1. That Council:
   
   i) Approves the Lord Mayor to attend Next City’s World Stage: World Urban Forum 9 in Kuala Lumpur from 7 to 13 February 2018.

   ii) Notes that Next City will cover the costs of airfares, accommodation and daily expenses for the Lord Mayor through a grant received from the Institute of International Education's Global Travel and Learning.

KEY ISSUES

2 On 17 January 2018, it was confirmed that the Lord Mayor had been invited to represent the City of Newcastle Next City’s World Stage during the UN’s World Urban Forum 9 in Kuala Lumpur from 7 to 13 February 2018 and the costs associated with her attendance would be paid for through the Institute of International Education's Global Travel and Learning.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

3 Next City will cover the costs of airfares, accommodation and daily expenses for the Lord Mayor through a grant received from the Institute of International Education's Global Travel and Learning and there will be costs to Council.

COMMUNITY STRATEGIC PLAN ALIGNMENT

4 Open and Collaborative Leadership

5 Liveable and Distinctive Built Environment

6 Smart and Innovative City

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN/IMPLICATIONS

7 The travel arrangements will be made by staff in the Lord Mayor's office.
RISK ASSESSMENT AND MITIGATION

8 The Payment of Expenses and Provision of Facilities to Councillors Policy requires overseas travel to be approved by the elected Council. While there is no cost to Council, it is still appropriate for the Lord Mayor's attendance and travel overseas to be approved by Council.

9 Councillors and staff are covered by Council's insurance policy when travelling overseas. Council staff will notify Council's insurer to ensure coverage.

RELATED PREVIOUS DECISIONS

10 Nil

CONSULTATION

11 Nil

OPTIONS

Option 1

12 The recommendation as at Paragraph 1. This is the recommended option.

Option 2

13 Council does not proceed with the endorsement of the Lord Mayor's attendance to the UN’s World Urban Forum 9. This is not the recommended option.

BACKGROUND

14 The WUF9 website provides the following background:

"WUF9 provides a great opportunity to garner the efforts of all relevant actors to deliberate on, identify and commit to implementation of concrete solutions for the transformative commitments made in the New Urban Agenda (which are also fully aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals):

- Sustainable urban development for social inclusion and ending poverty
- Sustainable and inclusive urban prosperity and opportunities for all
- Environmentally sustainable and resilient urban development

WUF9 will mobilize urban actors in national governments, subnational and local governments, civil society, private sector and academia to share knowledge and solutions for sustainable urban development; facilitate stakeholders’ inputs to monitoring and reporting on the New Urban Agenda and facilitate strong multi stakeholder partnerships".
REFERENCES

Next City: https://nextcity.org/

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A: Newcastle Herald Opinion Piece by Next City President, Tom Dallessio entitled *Uniting to imagine next step for our city*
Attachment B: Next City piece by Gregory Scruggs entitled *From Quito to Kuala Lumpur: What to expect from World Urban Forum 9*
Uniting to imagine next step for our city

Tom Dallessio

THIS week, we are making history.

Between November 6 and November 10, 50 brilliant rising leaders from cities across the globe will converge in Newcastle to learn what happens when the people of a city come together with regional government to imagine new ways to thrive and compete in the global economy.

I am the chief executive, president and publisher of Next City, an American organisation with a mission to inspire change in cities through journalism and events.

You may know Next City from our website, NextCity.org, where we publish our award-winning reporting on urban innovation in US cities and around the world.

But as Newcastle will soon see, we are more than a website. The Next City Vanguard conference is an experiential leadership program that brings together inspiring young urban change-makers and this week we are holding our first Vanguard Australia program.

It will be the first Next City conference held outside of North America, hosted by a local committee that includes representatives of the New South Wales government, Newcastle City Council, the University of Newcastle, Hunter Development Corporation, and Transport for New South Wales.

Newcastle lord mayor Nustali Nelmes is another one of our generous hosts. She uses three adjectives to describe her city’s future: smart, livable and sustainable.

It’s an aspiration undoubtedly familiar to anyone who has been paying attention to the turnaround efforts of older industrial cities worldwide. From Pittsburgh to Marseilles, France, cities are working to build cleaner economies and more livable neighborhoods.

The theme of the Vanguard Australia conference is sustainable, equitable and accountable reinvention. It is an idea at the heart of Next City’s mission to inspire better cities — and at the centre of ongoing global conversation about fighting climate change, growing inequality and other challenges of the 21st century.

At Next City, we always strive to ensure that our conferences lead to impact. With that in mind, this Vanguard conference will culminate in Newcastle’s first Big Idea Challenge.

A public design competition to be held at Watts Street Arc on Thursday evening, the Big Idea Challenge will be an opportunity for our Vanguards to compete to provide Newcastle with visionary
adaptive reuse concepts for two dormant architecturally and culturally significant historic landmarks in the city center: the old Newcastle post office and the old Newcastle rail station.

As Novocastrians know, these two beautiful buildings hold the potential to be incredible destinations within a thriving city centre.

We are honored by the opportunity to participate in these historic revitalisation projects and want to hear from you about what you see for the future of these places.

Please connect with us on Twitter and Facebook under the handle @nextcityorg and look for the hashtag #VanguardQ2 to follow our trip. You can find me on Twitter at @TDallessio.

Then again, we hear Newcastle is the kind of city where you tend to run into people you want to see. So if you encounter a group of smartish-looking folks taking in the city sights over the next few days, please don’t hesitate to say hello and fill us in on what you love about your city.

We are here to learn from you.

Tom Dallessio is the Next City chief executive, publisher and president.
From Quito to Kuala Lumpur: What to Expect From World Urban Forum 9

BY GREGORY SCRUGGS JANUARY 18, 2018

Fifteen months ago, 50,000 people gathered in Quito, Ecuador, for Habitat III, the United Nations’ conference on human settlements that takes place every 20 years. At the four-day summit, 167 countries agreed on a voluntary, non-binding agreement known as the New Urban Agenda that had been painstakingly negotiated over months of diplomatic talks and years of gathering global input. Crafted from hard demographic data and moving personal stories, the 23-page document calls for compact cities, polycentric growth, transit-oriented development, adequate public space and reining in sprawl.

A little over a year later, the focus now shifts to implementation.

That’s the task that will bring delegates from across the globe to Kuala Lumpur for World Urban Forum 9(WUF9). Whereas Habitat III was a broad, UN-wide assessment of cities’ role in creating a more equitable, sustainable world, the UN-Habitat-hosted WUF9 is a roll-up-

the-sleeves opportunity for city leaders and urban practitioners to turn the aspirations of the New Urban Agenda into a reality.

WUF9 will offer urbanists from around the world an immersive space in which to share ideas and collaborate in advance of the U.N.’s annual review of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in July. The SDGs are a wide-ranging roadmap to improve the planet; each year a different set of goals are voluntarily reviewed by countries who present their progress – or lack thereof – on key issues like poverty, healthcare, and education. This year will be the first time that cities will be on the docket, as the global community reviews its progress on SDG 11, the so-called “urban SDG.”

But even though the SDGs were agreed upon by all U.N. member states at a star-studded gala in 2015 whose attendees ranged from Pope Francis to Shakira, there are still no hard and fast measurements ascribed to the targets in Goal 11, which among other things calls for countries to “strengthen efforts to protect and safeguard the world’s cultural and natural heritage” and “provide universal access to safe, inclusive and accessible, green and public spaces, in particular for women and children, older persons and persons with disabilities.”

Kuala Lumpur could be the place where such concrete measurements get established. The creation of monitoring frameworks for sustainable cities would help convert the political promise of the SDGs into action. Clear goals and targets from the UN could guide countries in their efforts to adopt and implement SDG-oriented policies. And if the urbanist community can come up with concrete ways for countries to improve their cities and measure the results, the ideals of the New Urban Agenda could ultimately be reflected in the minutiae of laws and regulations.

UN-Habitat is the UN’s lead agency on urban issues and it will be collecting feedback and best practices in the Malaysian capital to feed into the July review of the urban SDG. The forum will also be a coming out party for former Penang Island city council mayor Maimunah Mohd Sharif, who will make her first public appearance as UN-Habitat Executive Director in her home country. She will offer a vision for her first five-year mandate at the Nairobi-based agency, as well as work to cultivate new funding streams, which shrank under the leadership of outgoing executive director, former Barcelona mayor Joan Clos.

UN-Habitat’s work in Kuala Lumpur will be buttressed by the stakeholders who participated in the Habitat III process that delivered the New Urban Agenda: civil society and local governments. Civil society groups, from business representatives to indigenous leaders, coalesced under an umbrella called the General Assembly of Partners (GAP) in order to speak with a unified voice during the New Urban Agenda negotiations. Now they hope to see their hard work translated into actual policy.
“The New Urban Agenda established the principles and policy architecture for a better urban future,” said GAP Vice-President Greg Budworth of Compass Housing Services, an Australian NGO. “WUF9 is the major UN-Habitat forum post-Quito and it is anticipated that implementation guidelines for nations with the important role of stakeholders clearly described would be a good outcome.”

At major international forums like WUF9, mayors speak through their global network, United Cities and Local Governments. The network’s new secretary-general Emilia Saiz anticipates an important debate to refine the technical details around the New Urban Agenda.

“We would like to see a clear monitoring framework that involves all stakeholders,” she said, adding that the current political climate provides an important additional element. “We would like to defend the legacy of Habitat III that might be lost due to the current national and international context where there is a newfound focus on sovereignty and recentralization.”