



18 April 2016

Mr David Mayes  
Project Director  
Future Melbourne  
City of Melbourne  
90-120 Swanston Street  
Melbourne VIC 3000

Dear David

## **Outdoor Media Association: Submission Future Melbourne 2026**

### **Introduction**

The Outdoor Media Association (OMA) would like to engage in the consultation process for the Future Melbourne 2026 Project.

The purpose of this letter is to provide an introduction to the OMA and also to provide some comments about the OMA's interest in the Future Melbourne 2026 Project.

### **Background**

The OMA is the peak national industry body representing 90% of Australia's Out of Home (OOH) media display and media production companies, as well as some media display asset owners.

OMA members display advertisements on billboards, free-standing advertising panels, buses, trams, taxis, pedestrian bridges and street furniture (including bus/tram shelters, public toilets, phone booths and street kiosks). OMA members also display advertisements in bus stations and train stations, at shopping centres, universities and airport precincts.

Advertising and marketing plays a fundamental role in the Australian economy, contributing some \$7.2 billion a year in revenue to the economy and employing around 183,000 people throughout its industries.<sup>1</sup> In 2015, the OOH industry experienced unprecedented growth, posting a 17% overall increase on net revenue, from \$579.3 million in 2014 to \$677.8 million in 2015.

Outdoor advertising is used by many businesses in Australia, with a range of clients from small organisations through to established multi-national companies. The benefits of advertising also have a knock-on effect for employment extending beyond consumers and brand owners, to manufacturers, retailers, suppliers, printers, production houses and many others.

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<sup>1</sup> Valuing Australia's Creative Industries, Creative Industries Innovation Centre December 2013

In Australia, the OOH industry contributes over 17,000 items of infrastructure to the community, including pedestrian bridges, bus shelters, kiosks, phones, park benches and bicycles. The replacement value of these items to date is approximately \$275 million.

The OOH industry plays an important role in supporting the arts, sports and charitable organisations and is widely used by government bodies to advertise community messages such as road safety messages and health awareness campaigns.

Government and superannuation funds profit from OOH through rents paid on leasing inventory stock from roads, railways and buildings.

Part of the role of the OMA is to develop constructive relationships with state and local governments and to contribute to the process of developing policies for outdoor advertising that are fair and equitable to the industry, governments and the community.

### **Support for the Future Melbourne 2026 Project**

The OMA recognises that the purpose of the project consultation process is to promote conversation with stakeholders, experts and the community about the challenges facing Melbourne within the strategic planning context. This includes discussion around the five trends of 'Urban Growth and Density', 'Digital City', 'Climate Change', 'Future Economies' and 'Citizens and Government'.

The OMA has itself undertaken some research into the changing nature of cities and notes UNICEF's prediction that by 2050, 94% of Australia's population will be urbanised (up from 89% in 2010). What this will entail for Australia's capital cities is almost a doubling of population over the next 35 years. Increasingly, federal and state governments are acknowledging the benefits of partnering with industry to tackle big issues facing cities such as housing, congestion, sustainable development, pollution, public transport, infrastructure, safety and security.

The OMA believes that technology will help cities tackle these challenges, and that 'smart' digital OOH technology will play its part in making cities more sustainable and livable. Now is a time of vast growth and change for cities and the OOH can play an important role in providing utility to the cities of the future.

Outdoor advertisers are increasingly transitioning from being producers of vinyl format advertising to providing the following types of inventory and utility:

- digital inventory that utilises interactive technology
- street furniture that creates social urban spaces for the community
- bike schemes which improve public mobility and fitness goals, and reduce congestion
- interactive mobile technology that helps people experience and navigate cities
- structures that are self-maintaining with technology built-in to ensure they are working, up-to-date, clean and safe.

The OMA believes there is an opportunity for governments to enter into a dialogue with the OOH industry to allow it to positively contribute to the operation of cities, while also providing an opportunity to make urban spaces vibrant.

Within the urban planning context, the OMA advocates for planning policy, and planning systems across Australia, that deliver the following:

- the recognition of outdoor advertising signage as a legitimate land use
- provision of a set of fair and reasonable development policies that are appropriate for signage land use
- provision within legislation for the conversion of existing and development of new advertising signs to meet the digital age that we are in
- guidance in strategic and statutory plans on the installation and operation of digital signage
- the removal of the distinction between 'on-premise' and 'third-party' signage in planning policy and local laws.

### **Future Cities**

Cities are changing at an unprecedented rate and the OMA believes they will need to become more user-friendly and interactive to meet the needs of citizens. The OMA submits that the OOH industry can make an important contribution to the utility of cities in the future and that this can be reflected in planning policy and legislation.

The OOH industry can make cities smarter and help tackle some future challenges by:

- enhancing the vibrancy of cities by creating dynamic and interesting urban spaces
- providing the community with technology 'hot-spots' and information tools to navigate the city
- continuing to provide community and transport infrastructure such as bus shelters, street furniture etc.
- providing a revenue stream for governments through the leasing of sites for OOH
- providing emergency and information channels for governments, and opportunities for charities to secure advertising space.

The OMA is passionate in its advocacy for the role of digital technology in future cities and is running a series of events in late April 2016 to bring together city thinkers and strategists to discuss and debate the future of Australia's cities. This will include insights on visions for the future of cities and the role of technology. Postcards promoting the Conference are enclosed for your information.

The OMA invites Melbourne City Councillors, Executive and Planning Staff to attend the Melbourne conference which will be held on Friday of this week at ZINC, Federation Square, Melbourne. The link to the microsite for the Melbourne registration is <http://omaevents.com.au/>. As we are nearing the event, the registration line may soon be closing and if this is the case please call Ailing Huang at the OMA on 02 9357 9900 and she will be able to secure places for you. There is no charge for the conference.

Thank you for the time that you have taken to review this submission. Should you wish to discuss any of the issues raised in more detail, please contact either myself or the OMA's Planning and Policy Officer, Cathy Towers on 02 9357 9900 or [cathy.towers@oma.org.au](mailto:cathy.towers@oma.org.au).

Yours sincerely



Tess Phillips  
**Senior Policy Adviser**

**Encl.**