
A Recovery and Revival Plan for Melbourne's CBD and Central City



UDIA Victoria's member-driven, thought leadership piece on the reopening and reactivation of Melbourne's CBD and central city in a COVIDSafe way.



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Introduction from UDIA Victoria



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The coronavirus pandemic has sharply disrupted how Victorians work, study, shop, socialise and play. The necessary measures to slow the spread of COVID-19 have had a disproportionate and devastating impact on Melbourne's CBD, central city and the city's economy. Melbourne's urban buzz has been put on hold, sharply reducing economic productivity, sociability and mobility.

Like many historical events that have gone before, the coronavirus pandemic constitutes an interruption to the evolution of our city and will undoubtedly be a watershed moment for Melbourne.

While we can be confident that the fundamentals of what make Melbourne such a successful global city will persist and will be at the core of our emergence from the pandemic, now is the time to plan for the city's future so that as restrictions start to ease, there are robust plans in place to support the reactivation of Melbourne's CBD and central city, and position the city for success going forward.

This is UDIA Victoria's visioning piece on what needs to happen to support the reactivation of the Melbourne CBD, city, and Victoria's return to economic glory.

UDIA Victoria recognises and commends the important work being done at all levels of Government, particularly by the Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions, and the City of Melbourne, which is currently considering its COVID-19 Reactivation and Recovery Plan.

The recently announced \$100 million – funded by the Victorian Government and the City of Melbourne – to reactivate the city as we progress towards a COVID-safe reopening is testament to government's commitment to safely welcoming people back into our city.

As such, the intent of this work is to compliment the work currently being done.

This work also builds on the recommendations relating to planning and fiscal policy, and greenfield and infill development settings that were put forward in UDIA's Roadmap to Recovery (May 2020).

UDIA Victoria is full to the brim of well thought-through and actionable ideas for Melbourne's CBD and central city's future. Now is the time for good ideas and we are committed to working with policy makers and our city's leaders to find the best ideas to pursue.

We know that Victoria's recovery will need an economic plan for the state, a fulsome, wide ranging plan for economic recovery following COVID-19. But before the Roadmap to Recovery initiatives can start to take effect, we need to reawaken Melbourne's CBD and central city.

The recommendations put forward in this paper are primarily focused on short-term, tangible initiatives that can support people returning to our CBD as a matter of urgency. It is a member-led response that has been informed by a series of workshops with industry experts sitting on the...

... UDIA Victoria Board of Directors, Planning, Urban Renewal and Built Form, and Tax and Finance Committees. These were working sessions in which we did not profess to have all the answers, rather encouraged lateral thinking and to cast a broad net of possible ideas for collective action.

The work has also been informed by the key role UDIA Victoria plays in formal public policy development, such as our position as a member of the Victorian Government's Building Victoria's Recovery Taskforce Steering Committee and the City of Melbourne's Economic Recovery Advisory Board along with key businesses leaders, academic institutions and industry associations.

What we've come up with is a set of actionable ideas, to be taken and implemented by government and industry leaders.

We look forward to continuing to play a lead role in this process with other industry and government leaders.

About UDIA Victoria

The Victorian Division of the Urban Development Institute of Australia (UDIA Victoria) is a non-profit advocacy, research and educational organisation supported by a membership of land use and property development organisations across the private sector and Victoria's public service.

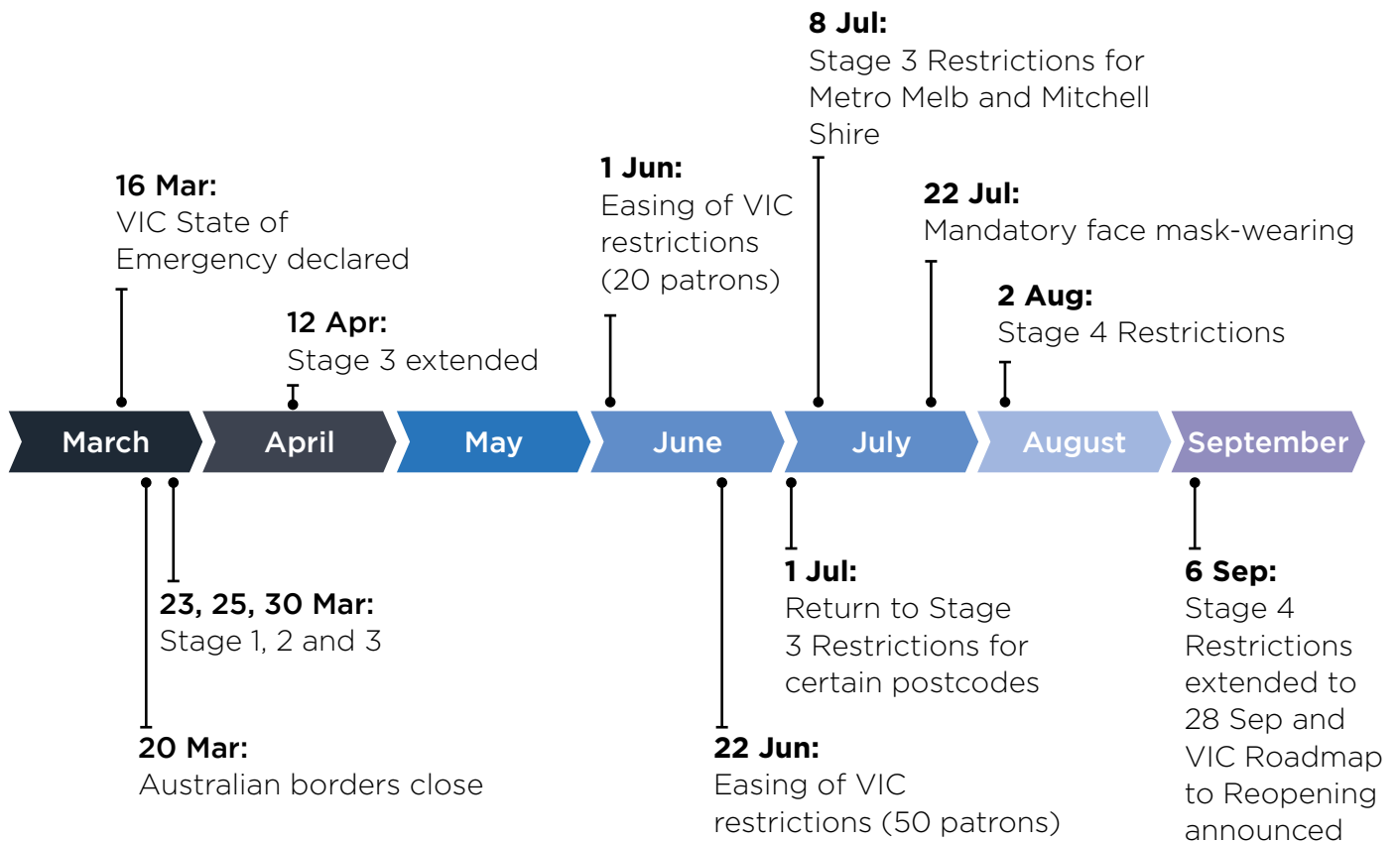
We are committed to working with both industry and Government to deliver housing, infrastructure and liveable communities for all Victorians.

On behalf of UDIA Victoria's Board and team members, we acknowledge the important and tireless efforts of our Committee members in UDIA Victoria's advocacy.

We have worked diligently with our members to advise Government throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. The COVID-19 Action Plan for Government and Industry (March 2020) in conjunction with the Roadmap to Recovery (May 2020) has guided our work throughout the crisis and remains relevant and useful today.

We have continued to support and assist our members throughout with a COVID-19 Pandemic Management Toolkit and a range of important resources, information and updates, all of which can be found on our website: www.udiavic.com.au

Government Actions So Far



Since March 2020, the Federal and Victorian Governments have taken various steps and enacted a range of policies to slow the spread of coronavirus. As a consequence of this, the Melbourne CBD has experienced significantly reduced levels of activation to what is now a record low under Stage 4 restrictions.

The Victorian Government response to date has been centred around the management of the health and economic crisis that has been brought on by COVID-19. UDIA Victoria welcomed the Government's decision to keep the industry open as an Essential Service, and to secure a pipeline of shovel-ready projects through the new Building Victoria's Recovery Taskforce.

We commend the collaborative action taken by Government and industry to keep the construction industry open and operating throughout the pandemic

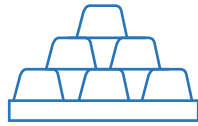
- a clear reflection of the significant contribution of the sector to the State's economy. The industry has effectively implemented physical distancing and hygiene measures to protect the health, safety and wellbeing of workers - a testament to the tireless efforts of the industry bodies, unions, private sector and Government.

The decision to keep the pilot light on for the industry during Stage 4 restrictions was a positive outcome that appropriately recognised the building, construction and development industry's diligent management and minimisation of COVID-19 on worksites. Notwithstanding, it has had extensive impacts on the productivity and viability of the sector. It is imperative that we reignite the industry as soon as possible by removing the workforce restrictions to construction sites as a matter of urgency.

Impact of Coronavirus

Impact of Coronavirus

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, the City of Melbourne's economy was booming:



\$104 billion in Gross Local Product - a record



Central city economy home to almost 500,000 jobs



The CBD alone supplying more than 240,000 jobs



Docklands home to more than 72,000 jobs



52,000 international students live or study in central Melbourne, supporting our tertiary sector and stimulating our economy



1 million pedestrians on any given weekday



Impact of Coronavirus

The coronavirus pandemic has decimated the local economy and activation of the Melbourne CBD, with the Melbourne economy predicted to suffer the single largest economic contraction of all Australian capital cities. The cumulative reduction to Gross Local Product in the City of Melbourne over the next five years could be up to \$110 billion lower than pre COVID-19 predictions.

Workers

From March onwards many office workers were encouraged or instructed to work from home, particularly big business, causing office occupancy to fall dramatically.

This coupled with the Government directive to Stay at Home and the introduction of Stage 4 restrictions has exacerbated the unprecedentedly low levels of office occupancy.

Residents

The Melbourne CBD has a higher proportion of intermittent visitors and non-permanent residents living in it than the rest of the State. As a consequence of international border closures, many city residents have not been able to return.

The CBD rental market is highly reliant on a migrant population (international students and temporary visa holders). Consequently, vacancy rates will remain high until some time after international borders reopen particularly as 2020-21 will see a historic high level of new residential apartment completions.

Melbourne CBD

Students

Many international students have been unable to return to study at Victorian universities after the summer break. A travel ban on foreign nationals travelling from China came into effect in early February 2020, with Australia closing its borders to all non-citizens and non-residents from 20 March.

Study has generally moved online for all students, reducing on campus populations to near zero.

Visitors

Government directives to Stay at Home and Stage 4 restrictions have eliminated metropolitan, domestic and international visitors' ability to visit Melbourne.

Australia's international borders have been closed to all non-citizens and non-residents from 20 March 2020, effectively eliminating the international visitor market. Interstate borders with Victoria have also been closed also eliminating the interstate visitor market.

The combined impact has been a massive reduction in visitation to Melbourne's CBD and central city areas.

Visitation to the Melbourne CBD has been brought to a standstill and the city's economy has been devastated by COVID-19. All key customer segments that would normally enliven our city have been dramatically impacted and reduced to a bare minimum. The Melbourne economy is predicted to suffer the single largest economic contraction of all Australian capital cities and the City of Melbourne expect daily visitation in 2020-21 to decrease to 64% of pre-COVID-19 figures.

Impact of Coronavirus



Residents

The city's residential population is highly reliant on a migrant population including international students and people on work visas. With our international and interstate borders closed, the vacancy rate in the Melbourne CBD is projected to have increased significantly to 10% in September 2020, from 2.8% in February 2020. That's one in every 10 homes in Melbourne's CBD sitting vacant as a result of the pandemic.



Businesses

Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) payroll jobs data shows that inner Melbourne had a 10.3% reduction in jobs from March to August – the worst affected area in Australia.

A City of Melbourne survey shows 7.5% of food businesses have closed permanently, with a further 8% considering closing.

City of Melbourne predictions estimate 31.7% of local businesses have applied for JobKeeper.



Workers

The City of Melbourne expect daily visitation of workers to decrease to 50% of pre-COVID-19 figures in 2020-21, and a projected loss of 15% of jobs in 2020.

The latest ABS Labour Force data shows that Victoria's unemployment rates increased to 7.1% in August, up from 6.8% in July. This is higher than the national average which was 6.8% in August.

Google Community Mobility Data shows that even before the second wave, Melburnians were more reluctant than residents in other Australian cities to return to their place of work (although this was due to the continuing encouragement of workers to work from home where possible).



Students

52,000 international students live or study in central Melbourne, supporting our tertiary sector and stimulating our economy. Many international students have not been able to return to Victorian universities following border closures in March 2020.

ABS data shows that for every \$1 lost in university tuition fees, another \$1.15 is lost in the broader economy due to student spending.



Visitors

The ABS Overseas Travel Statistics which provides provisional statistics on international arrivals and departures, recorded a 99.1% decline in overseas arrivals to Australia in the month of July 2020 compared to the corresponding month of the previous year. The State's tourism expenditure is expected to drop by 72% by the end of December 2020.

Recommendations

Recommendations

The economic impact from job losses, reduced migration, tourism and consumer spending will be immense. The time for deliberate, bold, proactive and collaborative action is now and is urgent to ensure the continued contribution of Australia's second-largest economic cluster.

UDIA Victoria has developed six key recommendations for consideration by the Victorian Government and the City of Melbourne which we believe will support the recovery and revival of Melbourne's CBD and central city.



1.
**Build confidence
and trust**



2.
**Initiatives to increase
transport capacity
and safety**



3.
**Business to return to
office-based working**



4.
**Reinvent and leverage
Melbourne's event
calendar**



5.
**Reopen borders to
support short- and long-
term immigration**



6.
**Supercharge built form
opportunities**



1. Build Confidence and Trust

To date, the Victorian Government has been focused on dealing with the coronavirus pandemic as a health crisis and the messaging has reflected this through the Stay at Home directives and Stage 4 restrictions.

The health message must remain strong, but it is important that we channel efforts into planning for reopening, so that when it's safe to do so, the appropriate plans are in place for people to return to the city with confidence. It is vital this happens in the remaining period of 2020 in order to keep our city afloat and enable the best possible restoration of confidence and sentiment with the new year in 2021.

As restrictions ease and the Victorian economy is restarted, the Government must provide industry and community alike, with clarity, certainty and confidence in how we live with and manage the potential health and other impacts virus.

1.1. Put forward clear policies on how we manage life with the virus, rather than only planning for the highly ambitious task of total elimination. This must be a flexible approach that is continually reviewed to capitalise on any opportunity to reopen the economy and community to responsibly re-establish activity.

1.2. Adjust the public discourse and language to focus on how we will live with the virus, rather than eliminate it. This will be a deeply important factor for restoring overall public and community confidence and empowerment.

1.3. Proactively engage with industry bodies and relevant stakeholders, to develop a clear State Government plan on what the hurdle rates and health criteria are, and what 'open for business' should look like.

1.4. Apply a clear and consistent definition of 'hotspots' to ensure reliable benchmarking on the hurdles for reopening.

1.5. Collaborate with the City of Melbourne and private sector to understand the barriers to people coming to the city, and to break down those barriers through proactive initiatives and messaging.

1.6. Consider what lessons can be learnt from how cities around the world have encouraged people to come back to the city after major catastrophic events. For example, the Christchurch earthquake.

1.7. Implement a visible, proactive customer service program focused on keeping

Melburnians COVIDSafe through teams conducting temperature checks, sanitising surfaces, ensuring proper mask-wearing and conveying clear information.

1.8. Consider the implementation of 'COVIDSafe hubs' providing information and resources for people at key locations throughout the city. These hubs could issue COVIDSafe 'CBD day passes' where everyone is temperature-tested and provided with a CBD clearance for one day which will potentially enable easier contact-tracing and allow visitors to visit facilities more freely and support local businesses. In addition to hubs being in designated public areas across the CBD, office buildings or apartment buildings could fund their own COVIDSafe hubs which would evolve as testing regimes improve.

1.9. Explore technology initiatives that can help build trust and confidence in individual health and safety. There is opportunity for the City of Melbourne to communicate with people moving through the CBD via COVIDSafety alerts, updates and proactive communications, and look at technology solutions for 'COVIDSafe Hubs', akin to an airport check-in and checkout.

1.10. Introduce campaigns about how the Government is managing people's safety in and around our city; with clear and proactive messaging targeted at both individuals and businesses as well as to external audiences (interstate and international) given the recent impacts to Melbourne's reputation as one of the world's most liveable cities.

2. Initiatives to Increase Transport Capacity and Safety

Public transport safety remains one of the biggest concerns for employees returning to the office.

A survey conducted by the Australian Bureau of Statistics in late May indicated that 86.3% of Australian workers were somewhat uncomfortable or uncomfortable using public transport in light of the COVID-19 pandemic. Addressing issues relating to public transport and public comfort through increased mobility solutions and positive messaging, is a fundamental requirement to removing this barrier to people coming into the city.

A whole-of-network approach to public transport must be adopted that explores opportunities to increase the capacity and safety of public, active and vehicular transport networks alike. The speed of implementation will be paramount. There is a key window of opportunity to prioritise transport initiatives in the immediate term while the CBD is reawakening.

Public Transport:

- 2.1.** Mobilise roving cleaning teams and frequent mass-cleaning of public transport rolling stock and station / stop facilities.
- 2.2.** Introduce mandatory mask-wearing and glove-wearing on public transport.
- 2.3.** Implement changes to the public transport system to support physical distancing. For example, change how platforms work to disperse passenger queuing, on/off doors to separate people and improve efficiency, and remove seats from carriages.
- 2.4.** Prioritise public transport over cars on certain roads.
- 2.5.** Increase the frequency of public transport services, even out scheduling and use the capacity of the network to align with optimised timetabling. For example, services running every 10 minutes throughout the day.
- 2.6.** Stagger the peak and incentivise usage at off-peak times to minimise the number of people on the network at any one time.
- 2.7.** Public and private sector to work in partnership to align public transport scheduling and the overarching network solution with business working arrangements. For example, businesses could consider two 'shifts' in the working day to facilitate the staggered use of public transport.
- 2.8.** Leverage technology and digital platforms to improve the capacity and safety of public transport in more interactive ways. For example, consider real-time mapping systems which better signal COVID safe densities on carriages.

Initiatives to Increase Transport Capacity and Safety

Active Transport:

- 2.9.** Urgently increase the capacity of the active transport network.
- 2.10.** Consider the temporary removal of carpark/car lanes to make way for more pedestrians and cyclists in the immediate term. Consider greening up a cycle and pedestrian loop around the CBD.
- 2.11.** Leverage Melbourne's pool of creative talent to make active transport routes more dynamic, interesting, fulfilling and create a point of difference in peoples' commute to and from work.
- 2.12.** Businesses and landlords to support the increased capacity of the active transport network through good management of End of Trip facilities from a hygiene and safety perspective.
- 2.13.** Establish a network of 'Park and Ride' or 'Park and Walk' infrastructure for the "last mile" to support active transport options for residents from outer suburbs commuting to the CBD. Locations could include potential spare carparking capacity at Yarra Park, Docklands, Federation Square, Royal Park and the Queen Victoria Market.
- 2.14.** Prioritise residents on the periphery of the CBD grid (within say 10km) coming back into the CBD in the first instance via active transport networks to ensure greater COVID safe capacity on the public transport network.

Private Vehicles:

- 2.15.** Anticipate and cater for a short-term increase in private vehicle usage through a pause on car parking levies and free parking hubs for a period of 12 months.
 - 2.16.** Facilitate greater uptake of electric vehicles (cars, scooters and bikes) through subsidies and loosening of certain regulations.
- ### Medium to long-term:
- 2.17.** Support the ongoing pedestrianisation of CBD streets by reclaiming car lanes, widening footpaths and extending periods for car-free zones.
 - 2.18.** Introduce mini electric buses to support the broader public transport network at a more localised level.
 - 2.19.** Businesses and landlords to support the increased uptake of active transportation by expanding End of Trip facilities, where possible.
 - 2.20.** Supercharge transport infrastructure in areas 20-30km from the CBD to support the hub and spoke model some businesses may shift to.

3. Business to Return to Office-Based Working

In March 2020, many businesses responded to the global unrest about the coronavirus and increasing cases in Australia by shifting to working from home arrangements. This is particularly the case for big business who, for the most part, have continued to encourage or mandate employees work from home in accordance with State Government directions.

Concerns around public transport and how to safely manage workers in shared workplaces and building facilities will be the primary risk factors holding many businesses back from returning to the office. The return to office-based working for the majority of big business is now not on the cards for 2020. Many employers are taking a phased approach to ensure worker safety and wellbeing can be better managed and maintained.

Anecdotally, many workers are eager to return to the office but may not feel comfortable commuting to the office on public transport. It follows that the return to office-based working must be supported by proactive and immediate action to increase capacity and safety of the whole transport network.

Whilst the pandemic has demonstrated companies' ability to work from home, the requirement of the office for collaboration, learning, socialisation, innovation and productivity will persist. The office environment is a fundamental requirement in the creation of organisational culture, albeit a culture that may prioritise flexible working arrangements more than it ever has going forward. Ultimately, each business will need to establish what greater flexibility looks like for their organisation.

Increased flexible working arrangements will have flow on effects to other systems such as transport, education and childcare as well as CBD-based service businesses that require footfall to support viability. Therefore, there will need to be more flexibility built into these systems to support increased flexibility in working arrangements.

3.1. Reinforce a message to businesses to appropriately follow government directives in relation to employee working arrangements as restrictions start to ease.

3.2. With clear government policies in place on how we manage to live with the virus rather than eliminate it, businesses need to plan their return to the office. Big business must take a leadership role in responsibly bringing their workers back to office-based working at the appropriate time. A commitment from business leaders and CEOs to be proactive in this effort will greatly assist the revitalisation of Melbourne's CBD when the time is right.

3.3. Detail how the workplace and the built environment will adapt to safely operate in business return-to-work plans to foster a sense of confidence amongst workers. This includes consideration for how lifting and shared facilities will be managed to smooth out peak usage. The building, construction and development industry's Worksite Guidelines are a good example of how workplace practices and measure can be put in place to successfully facilitate businesses to continue operating.

Business to Return to Office-Based Working

3.4. Encourage businesses to share their return to office-based working plans with the State Government and the City of Melbourne, and work collaboratively to prepare for the return to the CBD so that best-practice approaches can be shared and implemented more broadly and more quickly.

3.5. Introduce a proactive communications campaigns specifically addressing the return to Melbourne's CBD and central city - what is being done; what might be different; how it will look/work; and what benefit it will have; so as to alleviate workers' perceptions of risk to their personal wellbeing.

3.6. Support business return to office plans and flexible working arrangements, through extensive investment and effective management of the public transport system.

3.7. Review school times and subsidise before and after school care programs, to bolster individuals' opportunity to adopt more flexible working arrangements.

3.8. Implement educational and knowledge sharing initiatives that address how cultural and structural changes to the workforce can be managed and capitalised. This may include the reprogramming of offices, splitting the workforce into teams, and splitting days in office and at home.

3.9. Consider how we can elevate the office-based working experience to encourage people to come to the city. There is opportunity to tap into Melbourne's events calendar and for landlords or businesses to explore what activities or events can support the return to office-based working.



4. Reopen Borders to Support Short- and Long-Term Immigration

One of the cornerstones of the Victorian economy is immigration. With Australian and Victorian borders having been closed to international and domestic migration for a prolonged period, and population growth from migration effectively paused, the economic impact will be immense.

A key driver of Melbourne's return to an activated city will involve reopening borders to facilitate the return of our student and visitor populations to aid economic recovery. It will be important that we stimulate not only local demand but also proactively encourage interstate visitation and migration to Victoria.

The importance of timing for the reopening of borders cannot be overstated. In order to keep our city afloat, it will be critical to capitalise on the Christmas trading period and spring/summer peak season to help businesses survive and stimulate our economy.

The education industry is a fundamental part of Melbourne's success and brand, with students being crucial to the vibrancy of our CBD. Immediate action is required to explore how we can support the return of international students ahead of the 2021 Semester 1 intake. Otherwise, we will be left waiting until mid 2021 or 2022 before we may see the return of international students in substantial numbers. This would be catastrophic to not only the education sector but also the Melbourne economy which has become structurally aligned to activity in this industry.

4.1. Proactively advocate for the responsible and appropriate reopening of Australian borders by the Federal Government.

4.2. Work with State Governments to support the reopening of interstate borders to interstate migration and domestic travel.

4.3. When appropriate, actively promote and accelerate marketing to all Australians and the world that Victoria is 'back open for business'. The messaging must be unwavering in its promotion of Victoria to attract domestic population growth, international students, tourists and investment to Victoria.

4.4. Leverage Australia's comparative advantage in safety, exemplified in the management of the coronavirus pandemic, and Victoria's lifestyle opportunity to reinforce Melbourne's position as one of the most liveable cities and a global centre for immigration, tourism and investment.

4.5. Promote Melbourne as the "Education Capital" of Australia.

4.6. As a priority, Victoria's Government and institutions must petition to reopen international borders to international students. Policy must have consideration for how valid health concerns can be effectively managed. For example, subsidise quarantine in hotels or student accommodation.

4.7. Consider the opportunity to encourage ex-patriot Australians to return home as an interim source of migration.

4.8. Better support and encourage non-permanent residents currently in Victoria (or Australia) to remain or migrate to Victoria so as to reduce the outflow of residents and economic impacts to the local economy

4.9. As the quality and online course offering increases, support initiatives that drive face-to-face learning. There is an opportunity for businesses and universities to work together to offer a unique proposition – industry experience and collaborative research – that cannot be replicated online.

5. Reinvent and Leverage Melbourne's Event Calendar

Melbourne's event calendar is engrained in the identity and fabric of our city. As restrictions ease, there will undoubtedly be a strong desire from Melburnians to gather once more and collectively experience both the simple pleasures and large-scale events that are at the core of our city's identity.

Events will be a critical part of the city's reactivation, but a new model will be required to adapt to dispersed population density requirements. Equally, there is significant opportunity to creatively add to our events calendar in order to support local talent and to drive more dispersed foot traffic and activity in the short-term.

As restrictions on gatherings are lifted and interstate borders reopen, there is the potential for a domestic-led recovery through the gradual resumption of domestic travel. All Australian states will be poised to accelerate marketing opportunities to secure market share of the tourism economy. The fight for the domestic tourist dollar will be fierce and Victoria must position itself for success as the 'Events Capital' of Australia.

Immediate action is required to capitalise on the Christmas trading period and spring/summer peak season in order to keep businesses and our economy alive.

5.1. Review the events calendar for the coming 12 months to address how events can be re-engineered and tailored to address dispersed population density requirements.

5.2. Through creative and lateral thinking, add new events to the calendar in the short-term with a focus on driving foot traffic in the Melbourne CBD and accommodating dispersed activity. For example, city-wide treasure hunts or cycle challenges. Consider opportunities to integrate with businesses and retailers to support their survival.

5.3. Identify experiences that are unique to the Melbourne CBD and cannot be experienced in the suburbs, to successfully encourage people to come in to the city to experience those new events.

5.4. Prioritise outdoor and street level activation with proactive and relaxed licensing in smaller streets (such as Flinders Lane, Little Collins Street, Little Bourke Street and Degraeves Street) to allow venues to operate in a dispersed and managed way in the open air for the spring/summer seasons.

5.5. Ensure participation from leaders in events to foster a sense of trust and confidence amongst Melburnians.

5.6. Consider the role Melbourne's event calendar can play in elevating and supporting the return to office-based working, as a reason for people to come to the city.

5.7. Implement proactive campaigns for building owners to activate the street space/public realm in and around their buildings to generate more foot traffic and activation.

5.8. Leverage the Melbourne events and arts culture to make active transport routes more dynamic and create a point of difference in peoples' commute to work.

5.9. Support arts and cultural businesses with an indoor focus, such as museums and galleries, to spread demand across the day to optimise revenues while still meeting social distancing requirements.

5.10. Support the safe return of professional sports, when appropriate, through mass COVID-19 testing and hotel quarantining.

5.11. Invest in a national tourism campaign focussed around unique Melbourne events, to attract a greater portion of domestic tourism as state and territory borders reopen.

6. Supercharge Built Form Opportunities

As we emerge from restrictions and look to reawaken the economy, the Victorian Government must provide the industry and community with much needed confidence that there is a solid pipeline of building, construction and development projects that will set the State up for long term revival.

This will be reliant on activating a pipeline of genuinely shovel-ready projects, fast-tracking planning processes, alleviating planning constraints, and investing in capital works and major infrastructure projects to get people back to work and turbo-charge productivity.

- 6.1.** Proactively identify and activate transitional uses while the city adapts to the impacts brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic.
- 6.2.** Prioritise funding for ‘micro-projects’ that can be implemented in the short-term to balance the heavy lifting of major infrastructure investment.
- 6.3.** Actively consider investment in local infrastructure and local facilities.
- 6.4.** Remove planning constraints on development in the city under C270 and Better Apartment Design Guidelines to supercharge the development capacity of the residential sector.
- 6.5.** Consider the temporary and targeted re-introduction of off-the-plan tax incentives (and removal of other cooling measures introduced in mid 2010s) for new residential projects to restore market and industry confidence in central Melbourne’s residential market and to stimulate economic recovery.

Medium to long-term:

- 6.6.** Unlock Melbourne’s potential competitive advantage by proactively pursuing built form development opportunities to position Melbourne as the ‘Project Capital’ of Australia.
- 6.7.** Prioritise key opportunities, including urban renewal precincts, affordable housing, Build-to-Rent and derelict sites in the CBD. Direct government incentives and funding to greater advantage by prioritising social infrastructure.
- 6.8.** Support and stimulate investment to Victoria with a reopening campaign that Victoria is ‘back open for business’.
- 6.9.** Proactively support Melbourne’s urban regeneration precincts through proactive and aligned planning and regulation to attract global capital.
- 6.10.** Consider the development of a central ‘education and entertainment district’ to directly cater to and attract international students.
- 6.11.** Explore what adaptive reuse opportunities exist to convert or repurpose existing city infrastructure and buildings. Landlords to consider opportunities to retrofit buildings to adapt to changes that have been fast-tracked or brought about by the coronavirus. For example, vacant C and D-grade office space could be converted to student accommodation or affordable housing.

Reviving Melbourne’s CBD and central city to secure Victoria’s recovery

Now is the time to plan for the future of Melbourne’s CBD and central city, to ensure there are robust plans in place to support the reactivation our great city, and to set us up for success as we recover from the devastating impacts of COVID-19.

The urban development industry will play a key role in the recovery of the city and is ready and willing to collaboratively deliver the activation and economic activity our city needs.

UDIA Victoria welcomes the opportunity to provide this thought leadership piece on behalf of our broad and diverse membership. We thank our deeply committed and passionate members for their involvement and engagement in UDIA Victoria’s advocacy to the Commonwealth Government, the Victorian Government and the City of Melbourne.

We are stronger together.

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Board	President: Ashley Williams, Evolve
Tax and Finance Committee	Chair: Richard Brice, EY
Planning Committee	Chair: John Cicero, Best Hooper
Urban Renewal and Built Form Committee	Chair: Andrew Fortey, PDS Group

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