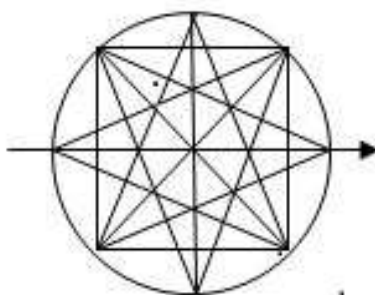


**Chairs:**

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Standing Committee of the Communities' Council on Ethnic Issues (Eastern Region)

Inc.

Reg. No. A0017562S

**Minutes****September 6, 2019****Whitehorse Community Centre, Level 1 Conference Room,  
79 Mahoneys Road, Forest Hill.****1. Welcome/Acknowledgement of Country**

The Acknowledgement of Country was undertaken by Clary Verbunt, Swinburne University and CCOEI

**2. Present**

Sally Brooks	Migrant Information Centre
Iresha Buthgamnwa	Eastern Community Legal Centre
Gitta Clayton	CHBC/Winter Shelter and Sharing Hope
Julie Conan-Davies	Swinburne University
Geoff de Young	Dept. of Human Services, MSO
Sally Nadj	Link Health and Community
Rose Juan	Latrobe Community Health Services Ringwood, Com. Dev. & Cap Building
Cindy Kung	Louise Multicultural Community Centre
Ben Lam	CPSSN, Volunteer
Sarah Martinelli	City of Whitehorse, Com. Dev. Officer - Diversity
Madeleine Parker	DET Senior Project Officer
Vicki Selimi	Dept. of Human Services, MSO
Cynthia Shaw	CCOEI
Bwe Thay	Swinburne University. CCOEI
Sui Ting Tse	CCOEI, President
Clary Verbunt	Nieuw Holland Dutch Elderly Social Club
Janse Hendrey	Manningham Council, Social Planer
Trish Cameron	ECLC
Andreas Pohl	Melbourne Polytechnic Program Leader
Kelly Maughan	Melbourne AMEP, Melbourne Polytechnic
Sherman Wong	CCOEI Volunteer
Julie McLean	Sharing Hope/TLC Church, Minister
Melinda Mann	Settlement Services International
Ashish Ambekar	CCOEI Volunteer
Lady Marsigit	Louise Multicultural Community Centre
<b>Apologies</b>	
Kunle Adegbola,	Swinburne University Student
Helen JurcevicOAM	Women's Friendship Group
Helen Forbes-Mewett	Monash University
Leigh Gilmore	Sheriff's Office – Eastern
Digna Libera	Holmesglen TAFE
Sam Navarria	MSC/CCOEI

### **Guests and presenters**

Gitta Clayton	Winter Shelter Project, CHBC LINKS, Sharing Hope
Julie McLean	Sharing Hope/TLC Church, Minister
Dianne Thomas	CHBC/Sharing Hope
Melinda Mann	Settlement Services International

3. **Minutes of the August 2019 meeting** – Moved Cynthia Shaw, seconded Sui Ting Tse. Accepted

4. **Business Arising** – incorporated in the agenda

5. **Correspondence** – various; circulated via email. Email from Digna Libera. Digna is leaving Holmesglen TAFE for another position so can no longer participate on the MSC. Cynthia said that it was sad to lose Digna who had contributed to the MSC in a positive way for a number of years.

Bwe promoted three events: Swinburne “Take a step toward your dream career” event, the Mental Health Australia Festival on 5<sup>th</sup> October 2019 and the Mental Health Walk (last year over 7000 people attended). Bwe also raised awareness that there are vacancies for the VMC Regional Committee, he encourages people to apply.

### **6.1 Meeting Focus - Overseas supported project – Sharing Hope Project**

Presented by Julie McLean, Sharing Hope/TLC Church, Minister; Gitta Clayton, Croydon Hills Baptist Church, Winter Shelter Program Coordinator and Dianna Thomas, CHBC

#### **Presentation by Gitta and Dianna**

##### **Living in the refugee camp.**

- Dianna was born in a refugee camp.
- Houses there were made of leaves and bamboo, when it rained the water ran down the walls. After heavy rain storms houses often needed to be rebuilt.
- Dianna’s family lived in a house with 1 room and a kitchen, this was for 5 people. They all huddled together in one room at night. When they came to Australia it felt unnatural to use separate rooms.
- Water was not filtered, the village shared one tap for cooking etc. There were many gastro problems
- The clinic was a house in the village
- In the camp they were not allowed to leave, if they left the confines of the camp and were caught “it was a very bad experience”
- Dianna’s parents told her of how they lived in fear due to the threat of a Burmese military attack at any time. When her parents escaped their village they walked overland and over mountainous terrain for many days before they reached the refugee camp.

##### **Culture – Australian/Karen**

- In Australia they don’t remove their shoes when entering a house
- Teachers in Australia are highly trained, in the village teachers are not qualified

#### **Presentation by Julie McLean**

Julie said that Sharing Hope is committed to working alongside the Karen people: partnering with locals in aid and infrastructure projects in refugee camps, villages and displaced communities along the Thai-Burma border. They have been partnering with Karen communities since 2010 to bring hope to refugees and displaced people.

The Karen State is located in Eastern Burma, (Myanmar) bordering Thailand. Today, many thousands of Karen are displaced inside Burma, or live in refugee camps in Thailand.

Sharing Hope asked villagers what they needed. The answer came back:

1. Education – teachers needed training

2. "Please don't forget us" – villagers are afraid they will be forgotten

The Karen community have experienced 60 years of civil unrest. 100000 people are still in refugee camps. The community needs include: medical kits, basic food supplies such as rice. Sharing hope have built a dormitory for orphans. A Pastor, nurse and a teacher look after the orphans.

Sharing Hope have funded:

- 141 Education projects
  - 60 Medical projects
  - 55 Infrastructure projects
- They are also working with other organisations to maximise benefits to the community

Challenges include:

- No safe water supply, no health care, landmines, family separation.

Cynthia and Bwe thanked Gitta, Dianna and Julie for the presentations which raised awareness of the situation on the Thai Burma border for the Karen community as well as the work of Sharing Hope.

## 6.2 [Immigration Advice and Application Assistance \(IAAAS\)](#) and [Multicultural Disability Hub](#)

Presented by Melinda Mann, Program Manager IAAAS

IAAAS provides Government funded access to professional immigration advice and application assistance for protection visa applicants who have entered Australia lawfully and meet the eligibility criteria or are minors (for any visa in Australia) for whom the Minister is guardian under the Immigration Guardianship of Children Act 1946.

Eligibility for IAAAS.

- arrived in Australia lawfully with a valid visa
- are seeking a protection visa in Australia, claiming well-founded fear of persecution.
- have not engaged or are no longer engaged with a Registered Migration Agent.
- have not previously had a valid protection application considered in Australia.
- are experiencing financial hardship.

In addition, they may be eligible for full application assistance under the IAAAS if they meet the above criteria and

- are exceptionally vulnerable due to the following circumstances – conditions affecting cognitive function (for example, down syndrome, autism, dementia) – mental illness – past experiences of torture and trauma – incapacitating illness – drug dependency.
- are a minor under the Immigration Guardianship of Children Act 1946

Mel said that eligibility for assistance is very tight. IAAAS provide advice about the merit of a case and assistance with how to write statements of claims that often have very complex scenarios.

### **Multicultural Disability Hub.**

This virtual hub consists of a national multilingual hotline and website that provides relevant and easily accessible information about disability and NDIS in various languages. Mel demonstrated access to a language online.

People from CALD backgrounds can select their language in the top right corner of the screen or return to the previous screen. English resources are not available through this Hub – however, where available, the English version of the translated resource is available beneath the in-language resource.

People from CALD backgrounds can also phone the 1800 number that corresponds with their language. Go to [www.disabilityinlanguage.info](http://www.disabilityinlanguage.info)

## 6. MSC 2019 Calendar of meetings, events and forums.

### 2019 MSC CALENDAR

MSC meeting dates	Meeting focus	Forums/functions/events dates and working groups
04 Jan	No meeting	
01 Feb	Humanitarian Settlement Services - focus on Victoria & Eastern Metropolitan Region: overview of services; recent changes and data on new arrivals (country of birth, ethnicity, faith, gender, age, etc.), who is settling in the Eastern Region, and where, what are their needs and aspirations? Michael Cresham, Team Leader HSP, AMES Australia; Josh Power, Senior Manager SRSS, AMES.	
01 March	Indigenous Welcome and Traditions Explained: what is a Welcome Ceremony, who can officiate, what is the difference between a Welcome Ceremony and an Acknowledgement of Country, what is the correct wording to use when making a speech etc. Aunty Irene Norman, Elder, Mullum Mullum Community Member, Member of Yeng Gali, Talented Artists and Weaver; Jill West, Indigenous Service Officer, DHS The MSC meeting focus will lead into the Mullum Mullum CCOEI Harmony Day celebration planned for Saturday 16 <sup>th</sup> March.	<b>Harmony Day events – Mullum Mullum and CCOEI Harmony Day Celebration.</b> (Working Group: Chris; Heather; Gitta; Felicity, Thong, Leigh, Bwe and Cynthia). Speakers, participants and activities to be explored by the working group. <u>Venue:</u> Mullum Mullum Indigenous Gathering Place. <u>Date</u> Saturday 16 <sup>th</sup> March.
05 April	Law Week: Human Rights with a focus on CALD and family violence: ECLC, Marika Manioudakis, Senior Manager SAGE and MABEL program; VicPol FV Unit. Senior Sergeant Fiona CALKIN, VicPol Family Violence Regional Training Officer	
03 May	<b>Mapping Social Cohesion</b> Professor Andrew Markus, Monash University	
07 June	Refugee Week event will replace the normal MSC meeting. <u>Venue:</u> Willis Room, Whitehorse Civic Centre, 397 Whitehorse Road Nunawading. A focus on tracing refugee families through the Red Cross. Refugee stories: song, dance and crafts. TBA.	
01 July	No meeting	
02 Aug	<b>Homelessness.</b> The Winter Shelter Project (Gitta Clayton) Elijah Care (Geoff Marsh)	
06 Sept	<b>Overseas supported initiatives:</b> The Sharing Hope Project – Thai/Burma Border (Gitta Clayton, Dianna Thomas & Julie McLean); IAAAS & Multilingual Disability Hub (Melinda Mann – Program manager)	
04 Oct	MSC meeting and CCOEI AGM <u>Venue:</u> Willis Room, Whitehorse Civic Centre 397 Whitehorse Road, Nunawading Victoria Police – Youth Initiatives	Youth Education Training and Employment forum and expo. Will not take place this year but has been deferred to 2020 (See Bwe Thay)
02 Nov	<b>Safety and the environment with a focus on CALD:</b> Fire and Fisheries. The law and dangers. Concerns for new migrants who are unaware of the law/environmental and dangers; MSC review of 2019 and plan 2020 activity.	
06 Dec	Planning and celebration: Finalize 2020 MSC Calendar. End of year celebration.	

**Other MSC Calendar Topics suggested:** Emerging communities in the EMR; people seeking asylum and Temporary Protection Visa (TPV) holders; Refugee Health Nurse Service.

**World special days & local events to note:** (relevant to the work of the MSC for the rest of 2019)

~~21 March: Harmony Day (also the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination)~~

~~13-19 May: Law Week Victoria~~

~~21 May: World Day for Cultural Diversity for Dialogue and Development~~

~~20 June: World Refugee Day~~

10 October: World Homeless Day

16 November: International Day for Tolerance

25 November: International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women

3 December: International Day of Persons with Disabilities

10 December: Human Rights Day

18 December: International Migrants Day

## Reports

### **Department of Human Services – Centrelink (Vicki Selimi/ Geoff de Young)**

- Vicki provided a brochure “Helping you get online”. Vicki said that groups could organise a DHS worker to come out to speak to them about accessing their record online through the “My Gov” website.

### **Swinburne University (Julie Conan-Davies)**

- AMEP Program – Bricklaying course – report that more than half have found an apprenticeship
- Pilot program “How to run your own business”

### **Melbourne Polytechnic (Andreas Pohl)**

- Andreas provided members with the Overseas Qualifications Professionals Program brochure. Andreas said that the OQP has a practical placement component. For more information go to <https://www.melbournepolytechnic.edu.au/course-info/oqp/>

### **Migrant Information Centre (Sally Brooks)**

- Sally provided information on a number of programs and projects
  - Judy McDougall – working to help people with fines
  - Wesley Soccer program – 4-8 weeks
  - Healthy Lifestyle – Manningham
  - Understanding the Legal System
  - Understanding the Education System
  - Alcohol/drug counselling
  - English, Education and Employment Network meetings

### **Chinese Parents Special Support Network. (Ben Lam)**

- Provided information on Safety Information Kits as well as more information on the Lanyard initiative for people with Autism etc.

### **Eastern Community Legal Centre (Iresha Buthgamnwa)**

Iresha highlighted the Parliament of Victoria initiative for engagement with CALD communities regarding the inquiry into early childhood. An email has been circulated to members prior to the meeting. Iresha said that ECLC would host a group meeting and to get in touch with her if anyone or community was interested

**7. Initiatives and innovations (for noting)** – incorporated in the 2019 MSC calendar.

**8. Next MSC Meeting: Friday 4 October 2019, 9.30 –12.00.**

Focus: MSC Meeting and CCOEI AGM

Please note the venue is different.

Venue: Willis Room, Whitehorse Centre, 397 Whitehorse Road, Nunawading.

| **NOTES:** To contact Cynthia Shaw or Sam Navarria please use [chair.msc@gmail.com](mailto:chair.msc@gmail.com)