

## ***Migrant Settlement Committee “jewel in the crown of CCOEI”***

### **The Migrant Settlement Committee (Eastern Region)**

The MSC was launched on 27 May 1994 by Senator the Hon. Nick Bolkus, the Minister for Immigration. At that time, Nunawading was home to nearly 17,000 migrants from a non-English speaking background.

The Migrant Settlement Committee (MSC) is the ***jewel in the crown of CCOEI***. Indeed, most of the work of CCOEI is undertaken through the MSC. This includes: holding network meetings; encouraging services to partner and work collaboratively; setting up task groups to organise educational and advocacy forums on topics that improve settlement outcomes for all migrants and refugees. For 20 years Sam Navarra has chaired the MSC in a volunteer capacity with a steady and professional hand. His work has been supported by a co-chair position occupied first by Marilyn Gurry (2005-2008) then Cynthia Shaw (2009-2020).

MSC meetings are held on the first Friday of the month except July and January. In 2020, due to CoVid-19 restrictions, meetings were cancelled (April May and June). Subsequently MSC meetings resumed online through Zoom.

The MSC has over 170 participating members. Membership is free, and one becomes a member automatically when placed on the mailing list. Members include representatives of organisations from a wide range of disciplines and services such as government and ethno- specific clubs/community organisations, government agencies, councils, police, health and mental health services, education providers etc. Meetings are open and all are welcome to attend. For a list of organisations represented at MSC meetings go to the [2019-2020 Annual Report page 22 to 24](#)

The MSC has been influential in migrant and refugee servicing in the Melbourne eastern region and has continued to have a high level of attendance, indicating the need for such a network. Members actively raise awareness of issues and concerns for migrants and their settlement challenges.

Efficiencies are gained through collaboration, building partnerships, training, shared knowledge and expertise resulting in the reduction of duplication across the seven councils of the Eastern Region. Speakers and presenters are selected for their expertise on specific topics which inform and address the information/learning needs of members. For a list of MSC meeting presentations 2019-2020 go to the [Annual Report page 19](#)

The MSC is thriving and has gained impetus through a range of partnerships to deliver forums and events to address gaps and barriers for CALD communities and to raise awareness.

Prevention is always high on the agenda as evidenced by the many forums undertaken such as the **“Matter of Trust”** forum (prevention of elder abuse), the **“Awareness First”** forum covering two prevention topics, (*Female Genital Mutilation* and *Forced Marriag*), as well as the many prevention of family violence forums undertaken. In addition, the promotion of harmony and social inclusion is at the centre of all work.

Feedback from MSC members continues to be positive. Analysis of the recent November 2020 MSC Survey demonstrated that participants of meetings highly valued

- *expanding their knowledge through specialist speakers and presentations;*
- *working collaboratively to enhance services to migrants and refugees and*
- *building partnerships that enhance services.*

92% of respondents indicated they found meetings either very useful or extremely useful.