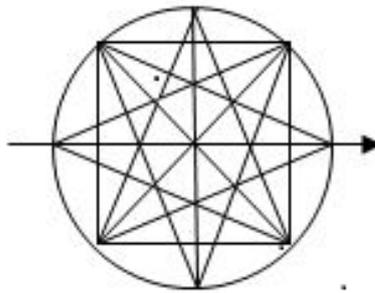


**Chairs:**

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## **MIGRANT SETTLEMENT COMMITTEE (Eastern Region)**

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

Reg. No. A0017562S

### **Minutes**

**August 6, 2021**

**Zoom 9:30 am – 11:00 am**

**Chair: Ken Pang and Sam Navarria**

- Welcome – Ken Pang** welcomed members and guests of the MSC.
- Acknowledgement of Country – Chris Cosgriff.** Acknowledged the indigenous elders past and present and their upcoming leaders, and the leaders and upcoming leaders of all communities represented at this meeting.

### **3. Attendance**

#### **Present**

Aseel AL-Hakeem	MIC, student on placement
Tina Andriotis	BH Institute
Dilnaz Billimoria	Whitehorse Interfaith Network and CCOEI
Sally Brooks	MIC
Iresha Butthgamuwa	ECLC, Community Development Coordinator
Cr Anna Chen	Deputy Mayor, Manningham Council
Chris Cosgriff	CCOEI, Mullum Mullum Indigenous Gathering Place Ambassador
Heather Cosgriff	CCOEI, Mullum Mullum Indigenous Gathering Place Ambassador
Mervat Dahdoule	MIC
Katrine Gabb	Manningham Council, Community Development Officer, Access & Inclusion
David Hayes	Jeeves.plus
Helen Jurcevic OAM	Women's Friendship Group Manningham, President
Rakhi Khanna	Yarra Ranges Council, Community Support, Early Years
Sarah Martinelli	City of Whitehorse
Jenny Mitchell	Whitehorse Manningham Libraries, CALD Branch Manager
Sam Navarria	CCOEI, MSC
Saarah Ozeer	Bounce, CCOEI
Con Pagonis	CCOEI, ECCV Senior Volunteer
Ken Pang	CCOEI
Madeleine Parker	DET Senior Project Officer EAL
Joan Pepi	Knox City Council Community Development Officer - Access & Equity
Carole Pondevie-Lay	Melbourne Polytechnic Community Liaison and Engagement Manager
Deb Seddon	City of Whitehorse
Vicki Selimi	Services Australia Multicultural Services Officer
Cynthia Shaw	CCOEI, MSC
Liz Shield	Hume City Council Community Development officer
Sui Ting Tse	CCOEI President
Russ Townsend (Ramesvara)	ICT Group
Emma Wilkinson	Boroondara Council, Social Inclusion Projects and Policy Officer

### Apologies

Gita Clayton	CHBC/Winter Shelter and Sharing Hope
Krishiani Dassanayake	CCOEI, Community member
Helen Forbes-Mewett	Monash University, Associate Professor Sociology
Robin Steward	ATO, Migrant Education
Clary Verbunt	Community Volunteer, Dutch Community, CCOEI

### Guests

Aleem Ali	Welcoming Australia CEO, Welcoming Cities
Bel Schenk	Welcoming Cities, Victorian Coordinator
Deborah Wu	VLGA. Inclusion and Diversity Lead

#### 4. Minutes - MSC June 4 2021 meeting

Minutes circulated. Moved Chris Cosgriff, seconded Con Pagonis. Accepted.

#### 5. Business Arising – incorporated in the meeting agenda.

#### 6. Correspondence – Ken Pang circulated correspondence to the MSC.

#### 7. MSC 2021 Calendar (Sam Navarria) Calendar change – focus in September is *The Orange Door*, family safety and support services in Melbourne's East.

### MSC Calendar 2021

MSC meeting dates	Focus, organisation(s) and speaker(s)	Host organisation and chair	Forums/events convenors and working groups
04 Jan	No meeting		
05 Feb	Humanitarian Settlement Program (HSP) in Eastern Melbourne. • MIC – Settlement in the EMR, Trends and MIC Program highlights - Judy McDougall, Senior Project Officer • AMES – Impact of COVID 19 on the HSP and Australian refugee intake – Christina Shi, AMES HSP Team Leader	Migrant Information Centre (MIC). Chair: Jessica Bishop, MIC Manager.	
05 March	Indigenous cultural traditions and history: Mullum Indigenous Gathering Place (MMIGP): a cultural perspective through art and craft. Presenter: Aunty Irene Norman, Elder and Artist	MMIGP. Chair: Chris Cosgriff	Harmony Day event – CCOEI and MMIGP. Event postponed to a later month Covid-19 restrictions permitting. Convenor: Chris; working group: Heather, Cynthia, Gitta, Dan, Howard Tankie (Whitehorse Friends for Reconciliation), Tom (Maroondah Movement for Reconciliation) Thong Tawng (Foundation House)
02 April	No meeting (Easter)		
07 May	Education, training, employment pathways and community engagement: a collaborative approach. Melbourne Polytechnic and Melbourne AMEP providers: Carole Pondevie-Lay, Barbara Reeckman.	Melbourne Polytechnic. Chair: Carole Pondevie-Lay	
04 June	Mental Health, CALD youth and families – the impact of Covid-19 on families, recovery and support: Ruth Bignell, Foundation House, and Maria Loupetis, Refugee Health Nurse (RHN) program - shared presentation.	Chair: Ken Pang and Sam Navarria	
02 July	NO MEETING		
06 August	<b>LGAs engaging CALD communities.</b> Speakers: Welcoming Australia CEO Aleem Ali on <i>Welcoming Cities</i> , and Victorian Local Government Association (VLGA) Inclusion and Diversity Lead Deborah Wu.	Chair: Ken Pang and Sam Navarria	

03 Sept	<i>The Orange Door</i> – Victorian Government family safety and support services initiative in the East. Presenter: Brendan Wilson	Chair: Ken Pang, Sam Navarria Dilnaz Billimoria	
01 Oct	<b>No meeting in October but MSC members are invited to participate in the Priority Response to Multicultural Communities Employment forum planned as a hybrid online/in person forum, Box Hill Town Hall.</b>		
05 Nov	Digital Literacy and human rights. Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission.(TBC) Australian Digital Inclusion Index. (TBC)  Covid-19 Recovery and CALD communities ECCV – Chris Christoforou Executive Officer (TBC); VMC - Hakan Akyol, Director (TBC)  Opening Doors. Speakers/presenters Alex Mills and Opening Doors graduates (TBC)  CCOEI AGM (TBC)		
03 Dec	Review of MSC Calendar 2021 and planning 2022. End of year celebration		

8. **“Cooee!” (Con Pagonis):** Invited contributions. Monday’s edition will feature Covid information, including multi lingual resources. The pandemic has been covered since March 2020. There will also be a section on the Census. The newsletter is read across Victoria, nationally and internationally.

## 9. Agency reports and information

### 9.1 Services Australia (Vicki Selimi)

- All Multicultural Service Officers’ (MSO) outreach activities are on hold until further notice. Specialist officers are currently redeployed to assist with high demand being experienced
- Revised service arrangements at Service Centres due to lockdown No.6 – restricted numbers in an office at any given time
- Appointment Based Service – pre-arranged appointments receive priority, please arrive 10 minutes before appointment time for pre-screening questions.

**COVID-19 Disaster Payment factsheet** available in 56 languages, and located via [Information in your language by product](#) under the title **COVID-19 Disaster Payment**.

**For more information people can:**

- Call **131 202** to speak with us in their language about Centrelink payments and services
- Go to [servicesaustralia.gov.au/yourlanguage](https://servicesaustralia.gov.au/yourlanguage) to read, listen or watch information in their language
- Go to [servicesaustralia.gov.au/covid19disasterpayment](https://servicesaustralia.gov.au/covid19disasterpayment) for more information in English.

### **COVID-19 Disaster Payment for Victoria**

The [How to claim the COVID-19 Disaster Payment](#) video now includes the phone number for work visa holders to call to make a claim: 180 22 66. **Claiming the COVID-19 Disaster Payment online - this video is about how people can prove their identity to claim the COVID-19 Disaster Payment online.**

**(NB.** The videos, available only in English, provide clear and simple messaging about how people can claim online and prove their identity).

### 9.2 MIC (Sally Brooks)

- MIC has secured 3 JVES (Jobs Victoria Employment Services) workers who will specialise in supporting people from CALD Backgrounds into employment. MIC is now taking referrals.
- Recruiting for a Community Employment Connector to work with communities to link them in to employment support.

- JVES eligibility: Australian residents who are citizens, Permanent Residents, Humanitarian Visa holders and asylum seekers who are at risk of long term unemployment, unemployed for 6 months or more, or working less than 12 hours per week.
- Questions or referrals for the JVES Program can be directed to Sally Brooks or Judy McDougall at MIC [sbrooks@miceastmelb.com.au](mailto:sbrooks@miceastmelb.com.au) or [jmcdougall@miceastmelb.com.au](mailto:jmcdougall@miceastmelb.com.au) or 92854888.
- MIC offices are closed during lockdown and operate remotely unless there are urgent/emergency matters that require face to face intervention. Once lockdown ceases, MIC offices will reopen.
- Additional item (Mervat Dahdule): due to the pandemic, all programs (e.g. Homework club) have transitioned to Zoom. Counselling service for women at risk and experiencing FV: taking referrals.

**9.3 Knox City Council (Joan Pepi)** Knox has Priority Response for Multicultural Communities funding, targeting Iranian and Zhomi refugees, and working in partnership with EACH. Aim: provide in language information of Covid safe practices, testing, and vaccination - two bilingual bicultural workers who have networks with their communities. Refer clients of these backgrounds who live in Knox to Joan.

**9.4 ECLC (Iresha Buthgamuwa)** Financial resources in traditional and simplified Chinese available. Bilingual Karen worker supporting Karen community.

**9.5 Manningham Council (Katrine Gabb)** Whitehorse (Sarah), Boroondara (Emma) and Manningham (Katrine) partnered to host an anti-racism forum. Well attended. Facilitated by the VEOHRC and VicPol. Developing Strength through Connections Community Forum postponed to September.

**9.6 Community announcements (Dilnaz Billimoria)** Census reminder especially for CALD networks and migrant communities. Help is available through the census hotline. Refugee week – amazing online and in person events by councils despite pandemic difficulties. Attended the Monash refugee week event. NAIDOC week – many councils participated.

**9.7 City of Whitehorse (Sarah Martinelli)** Developing an Engagement Handbook to support Council's engagement policy. Posting online workshops targeting CALD communities – dates to be advised. With Indian Care planning to host a wellbeing session in person in September for the Indian community. Acknowledging the trauma in the community given the impact of Covid in India. Second round of community grants opening on Monday and closing at the end of August.

**9.8 CCOEI (Ken Pang)** CCOEI has a small grant from the Priority Response Phase 2 Multicultural Community. The project is 4 major activities: activity 1 - multicultural concert - successfully delivered in July with integrated multilingual Covid safe messages. Reached over 10,000 people online. Activity 2 is a mental health workshop partnering with MHFA and involving a panel of specialist mental health experts and staff from the Health Department. Activity 3 is an employment forum. Activity 4 is community outreach engagement activities, when restrictions ease. Working group is meeting and includes councils, the interfaith network, Services Australia, ECLC, MIC, MHFA and others.

**9.9 Women's Friendship Group Manningham (Helen Jurgevic).** Despite sitting IELTS around 10 times, the individual Helen has been advocating for over many years re PR, successfully passed the Citizenship test.

## **10. Meeting Focus: LGAs engaging CALD communities**

**Note:** Deborah Wu's and Aleem Ali's presentations have been circulated to MSC members post meeting. These notes are of some of the key points of the presentations and MSC questions and comments.

### **Victorian Local Government Association (VLGA) – Deborah Wu**

The VLGA is an independent governance organisation supporting councils and councillors on initiatives that enhance local democracy through capacity building and projects to increase diversity in local government. Its Value Proposition is to "... *advocate for participation in local democracy that is inclusive and represents the*

*diversity of the community and deliver programs that build the capacity of candidates and councillors.”* VLGA Strategic Plan 2018-2022, Advocacy & Policy.

As Inclusion and Diversity Lead, Deborah works to assist councils with implementing the Gender Equality Act; diversity & inclusion training for councillors and staff; supporting achieving the councillor 50% gender equity target; increasing the participation of first nation's people in local government; and progress *A Seat at the Table* initiative with the Scanlon Foundation and Welcoming Cities.

Referred to the Local Government Act 2020. As part of the Act, there is a requirement for councils to meaningfully consult and engage – *deliberative engagement* - on council policies. Deliberative engagement aims to place people closer to the affairs of government, that they are represented and their voices heard.

Greater community engagement means greater understanding of the role of local government and the decision making process, and greater satisfaction with the process and achievements. Resources for meaningful engagement are essential, for example language support – bilingual workers and information in different languages, and services. Darebin and Manningham are good examples of this in practice.

The VLGA in 2020 ran a series of workshops and panels under the banner of *A Seat at the Table*, particularly relevant to the disenfranchised and disempowered communities of the Community Housing Towers in inner Melbourne that had been under hard lockdown and wanted re-engagement. The VLGA has been funded by the Scanlon Foundation for *A Seat at the Table* pilot project. The aim is to develop resources in collaboration with Welcoming Cities, of the experiences of culturally diverse councillors in Victoria.

Q&A: Re: *meaningful engagement*: Try to switch the focus from hard to reach to 'hardly-reached and seldom-heard', so a little more work needed to engage more vulnerable communities, particularly those who do not have English skills (Dilnaz), to get a more representative view. Deborah agreed.

On behalf of the MSC, Sam thanked Deborah for a thought provoking presentation and wished the VLGA success to reach the 50% gender equity on local government at the next election.

### **Welcoming Cities – Aleem Ali**

Aleem spoke about *Welcoming Australia*, a national not for profit organisation, and one of its key programs *Welcoming cities*, which began in 2016 with the support of the Scanlon Foundation. Apart from Scanlon, it is funded by grants, donations and state governments. Aleem gave the rationale for its existence, referring to the significant increase in people movement across the world for resettlement and work, and the diversity, complexity, social cohesion and economic participation challenges that these factors create. Welcoming Cities is inspired by notions of identity, inclusion and belonging: *“Communities where everyone can belong and participate in social, cultural, economic and civic life.”* Social cohesion and economic participation exist because of the choice to include all people of diverse backgrounds in community life. Inclusion done well requires more than intent: it requires collaboration, planning, partnerships, clear frameworks, expertise, ways of working and sustainable support for that work. This is the purpose of Welcoming Cities and its work with councils.

Aleem referred to the National Settlement Framework as the blueprint for all Australian governments to work in partnership to support the settlement of migrants and referred to nine priority areas of engagement which include language services, employment, health and wellbeing and civic participation.

The work of Welcoming Cities is informed by whole-of-community evidence and 'place-based approaches' and coordination, and tries to include all stakeholders in developing local solutions to local challenges, and building on local strengths. The role of councils is to facilitate and broker this complexity as it understands the local community better than state or federal levels. Councils can increase the wellbeing, social inclusion & economic participation of local people; increase engagement with local employers & developers; and enhance the overall economic prosperity of the local community.

Welcoming Cities helps councils in four key areas: knowledge sharing, partnership development (in council and across councils), celebrating success, standard & accreditation (benchmarking). The standard is a key pillar of

Welcoming Cities as it shows what success looks like in the areas of leadership, Social & Cultural Inclusion, Economic Development, Civic Participation, Learning & Skills Development, and Places & Spaces.

Welcoming Cities has 63 member councils nationally, accounting for more than 35% of Australia's population. 18 members in Victoria, 4 being regional. Councils are at different stages of embracing diversity and inclusion, and face different challenges, but there are also commonalities to those challenges.

An example of good practice is the employment-in-council initiative by Banyule Council. The initiative is based on the principle that achieving economic growth relies on having an inclusive economy that encourages the active participation of all residents including new arrivals and vulnerable groups at risk of economic and social exclusion. The council developed a strategy in partnership with those groups. It offered individuals in those groups 6 months of paid council employment. Banyule embedded this employment program as a whole of council and community approach and have taken the broader workforce on the journey of education and understanding at all stages of the employment process. They have also packaged all their learning, processes and tools - inclusive employment toolkit - which is available on their website, to equip and encourage other businesses, employers, and other councils, to consider a similar approach. The overall aim is to improve wellbeing and social and economic participation of the whole of community, and increase workforce diversity.

Aleem noted two other initiatives of Welcoming Australia: (a) *Welcoming Clubs* – inclusion and community building through sport. Councils have community sporting facilities assets and access to them beyond traditional use allows people of diverse backgrounds opportunities to engage. (b) *Welcoming International*, a network of more than 250 municipalities across Australia, New Zealand, the US, Canada, Germany, and the UK.

In conclusion Aleem acknowledged and praised the connecting, inclusive and empowering work councils do.

Q&A Really heartening to learn what this community is up to and of its initiatives. Are we moving as a country in the right direction overall? Aleem: The question is: where are we moving? The question for politicians is: what is your vision for this country? We need more aspirational leadership which is ready to stand on clear principles. I don't see that in the current news cycle and media. Leadership is happening at grassroots level - amazing work in the community every day, but not filtering up to the media, not getting recognition.

Q&A: accreditation for Welcoming Cities: do co-design and social capital play a role? Aleem: The standard has gone through a process of extensive public consultation, and details the indicators of success under broad categories. Councils need to provide the evidence – policies and practices that satisfy the indicators. It is not prescriptive – co-design, internal and external evaluation practices can also be evidence.

Q&A: Gender equity: could this be a bench mark for councils seeking membership of Welcoming Cities? Aleem: the standard considers cultural diversity and inclusion, and recognises their intersectionality but does not go deeply into those intersections. This is deliberate, because there are other mechanisms to measure that.

Q&A. How do you contact community groups to check if council is meeting the standard? Aleem: some councils are at a self-assessment level and not the full standard. It is not until the full standard that external assessment comes in. Monash University has the role to contact people and groups and involve them in that process.

On behalf of the MSC Sam thanked Aleem for his excellent presentation and wished Welcoming Australia, and Welcoming Cities, continuing success and growth.

## **11. Next MSC Meeting Friday September 3**

**Focus: *The Orange Door*: Family safety and support services - Victorian Government initiative**

**Presenter: Brendan Wilson, Service System Navigator, *The Orange Door*, Inner Eastern Melbourne, Family Safety Victoria.**

**Facilitator: Dilnaz Billimoria, CCOEI**

**NOTE:** To contact Ken Pang or Sam Navarria email [chair.msc@gmail.com](mailto:chair.msc@gmail.com)