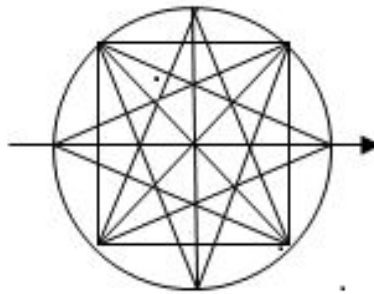


Chairs:

Sam Navarria: Mob: 0432 975 558
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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

February 5, 2021

Zoom meeting – 9:30 am – 11:00 am

1. **Welcome** – Ken Pang
2. **Acknowledgement of Country** – Ken Pang
3. **Attendance**

Present

Dilnaz Billimoria	Whitehorse Interfaith Network
Chris Cosgriff	CCOEI, Mullum Mullum Indigenous Gathering Place Ambassador
Heather Cosgriff	CCOEI, Mullum Mullum Indigenous Gathering Place Ambassador
Katrine Gabb	Manningham Council, Community Development Officer, Access and Inclusion
Helen Jurcevic OAM	Women's Friendship Group Manningham, President
Sam Navarria	MSC/CCOEI
Tamika O'Brien	NEAMI National, Peer Support Worker
Saarah Ozeer	Bounce
Con Pagonis	CCOEI, ECCV Senior Volunteer
Ken Pang	CCOEI
Madeleine Parker	DET Senior Project Officer EAL
Carole Pondevie-Lay	Melbourne Polytechnic Community Liaison and Engagement Manager
Vicki Selimi	Services Australia Multicultural Services Officer
Cynthia Shaw	CCOEI, MSC
Robin Steward	ATO
Bwe Thay	Swinburne University, Community Liaison Officer; VMC
Sui Ting Tse	CCOEI President
Felicity Zwalf	Foundation House

Apologies

Iresha Buthgamnwa	ECLC
Gitta Clayton	CHBC/Winter Shelter and Sharing Hope
Krishiani Dassanayake	CCOEI, Community member
Gina Etienne	Eastern Health, Manager consumer/community, CCOEI Secretary
Helen Forbes-Mewett	Monash University, Associate Professor Sociology
Sarah Martinelli	City of Whitehorse, Community Development Officer - Diversity
Dan Martinez	Silver Dollar Media
Elizabeth Sidiropoulos	MLO VicPol

Guests

Jessica Bishop	Manager, MIC East Melbourne (hosting and chairing)
Judy McDougall	Senior Project Officer, MIC, presenter
Christina Shi	Team Leader, AMES Settlement, presenter

4. Minutes - MSC December 2020 meeting

Amendment to attendance: Vicki Selimi, Services Australia, was present. Moved Chris Cosgriff, Seconded Sam Navarria.

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

6. **Correspondence** – circulated to members of the MSC

7. MSC 2021 Calendar

A survey/review of the MSC 2020 program has been used to develop the 2021 MSC calendar. The calendar to June was circulated prior to the MSC meeting, The MSC is trialling a host delivery model of meetings and whenever possible meetings will be chaired by the host organisation.

MSC Calendar to June 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 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 BREAK		
07 May	Education and Training, Employment pathways and community engagement. Melbourne Polytechnic: Carole Pondevie-Lay and 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: Jacqui Robson, Centre for Multicultural Youth (CMY) and Marilyn Spralling Refugee Health Nurse Program - (RHNP) (CMY) shared presentation	Organisation and chair TBA	
02 July	NO MEETING		

8. Meeting Focus: The Humanitarian Settlement Program and services in Eastern Melbourne Region. AMES HSP (Christina Shi, Team Leader AMES HSP)

Key points from Christina's presentation:

- AMES supports newly arrived refugees up to 18 months under the HSP
- AMES provides the HSP across regions and states, including the South East region
- The program is experiencing accommodation shortages due to Covid-19
- Main entrants in the Melbourne Eastern Region are from Iran, Afghanistan, and Burma
- August 2019 recorded the biggest number of new arrivals – 61 families

- Due to Covid-19, more services are being delivered on line. The focus is on digital literacy and employment; many clients don't know how to log onto sites, fill out forms online, etc. HSP has supported clients to improve their digital literacy capacity
- Increase of mental health, homelessness, and family violence issues
- Case managers contact clients regularly, to ensure they understand Covid safe rules
- AMES seeks to work with other organisations to support services.

Status Resolution Support Services (SRSS) - SRSS is not in Christina's portfolio. People on SRSS are in a very difficult situation, as they have no/little government support - some support is provided by government to eligible SRSS for basic living expenses while their status is being resolved. Charitable organisations are getting together to help. A recently established advocacy body, *Refugee Voices*, may provide some support.

AMES was encouraged to reach to community to support HSP and other entrants. Christina can be contacted at: shic@ames.net.au

MIC HSP (Judy McDougall, Senior Project Officer, MIC)

Judy gave an overview of MIC services and the work of the MIC. Her presentation *Humanitarian Settlement in the Eastern Metropolitan Region and Settlement Support Programs* included the following information:

- Between 2015-2020, humanitarian settlement is relatively low compared to Family Reunion and Skilled Migrants streams, with Skilled Migrants by far the largest group settling in the region. In the 2019-2020 period, Humanitarian settlement has decreased compared to previous years. The City of Maroondah by far out performs other LGAs in the EMR with regard to humanitarian settlement
- Top 5 countries of birth: China and India, followed by Myanmar, Iran and Malaysia
- Communities from Burma: 7 different ethnicities - Hakha Chin, Zomi, Karen, Falam Chin; Mizo; Zo; Matu. The biggest groups are Hakka Chin, Zomi, Karen, and Falam Chin.
- Irregular Maritime Arrivals (IMA) BE holders (asylum seekers): biggest number in Manningham;
- Asylum seekers, TPV and SHEV holders accessing MIC services between Dec 18 and Dec 20 has steadily increased
- Successful settlement is a collaborative and cooperative effort between agencies
- MIC settlement services include:
 - Help with employment and education pathways
 - Information about services
 - Life skills programs
 - Recreational/social activities
 - Finding affordable housing
 - Playgroups
 - Support for young people
 - Youth and children's programs
 - linking individuals and families to volunteers
 - migration advice and assistance
- Other programs:
 - Road Safety Programs
 - Family Violence counselling for CALD women and group therapy programs
 - Gender equity programs and prevention of family violence
 - Community capacity building and community development for refugee and migrant communities
 - Assisting with access to services such as aged care and disability services for people who cannot access services themselves because of their diversity
 - Assisting younger people with disability to access the NDIS
 - Volunteer visiting program to residential aged care facilities and older people living independently and receive a Home Care Package
- Funding sources: local, state and federal, specific agencies and philanthropy

- Settlement is a very complex multistage journey

Sam thanked the MIC and AMES for their presentations. For more details/referrals contact MIC and AMES.

9. Agency reports and information

9.1 eNews (Con Pagonis): the newsletter is changing name, shifting from LinkedIn to mail chimp, and will be published on the first Monday of the month. Contributions – good news stories - are welcome.

9.2 Services Australia (Vicki Selimi): (i) Coronavirus supplement is taxable income and must be taken into account when estimating income. To avoid being overpaid, recipients should check and update their income estimate by:

- Going to the myGov website and signing in to access their Centrelink online account. Select 'My Family' from the menu, then 'Family Assistance' and then 'Update family income estimate'
- Using the Express Plus Centrelink mobile app and selecting 'Income Estimate'
- If registered, calling 136 240 for phone self-service.

(ii) [Restarting Centrelink debt recovery after the COVID-19 debt pause - YouTube](#) General Manager, Hank Jongen, explains the resumption of debt recovery, the means of repaying debt, help with payment, and a review of the decision.

9.3 ATO (Robin Steward) Community Education Update

The ATO **Migrant Education program** continues to offer free webinars, currently online but hopefully face to face later in the year, for CALD audiences who are interested to learn about the Australian tax and superannuation systems. These sessions are approximately an hour and cover a variety of topics, including:

- how the Australian tax and superannuation systems work
- how to lodge your tax return
- ATO measures and tailored support during COVID-19 (e.g., JobKeeper payment, early release of super, working from home deductions, etc.)
- protecting yourself from scams impersonating the ATO.

ATO presenters can answer questions about tax and super.

For more information about ATO webinars and the range of free brochures in other languages, please get in touch: communityeducation@ato.gov.au

Working from home shortcut method: The shortcut method (80¢ per work hour) has been extended until 30 June 2021. For more information, see: <https://www.ato.gov.au/wfh>

JobKeeper Payment – information in other languages Information about the JobKeeper payment, including the recent changes, has been translated in 16 community languages and is available at: <https://www.ato.gov.au/jobkeepertranslations>

9.4 Women's Friendship Group (Helen Jurcevic). IELTS: Bruce Atkinson, MP, is gathering information of peoples' experience of the IELTS test. MSC members were asked to ask their clients, friends or anyone they are aware of who has sat the IELTS, PTE tests for Permanent Residence Status to provide feedback on their experience, and forward the information to Helen who will progress it to Bruce.

9.5 Melbourne AMEP (Carole Pondevie-Lay) Reforms of the AMEP expected to be implemented in March.

9.6 Bwe Thay (i) Burmese protest on Saturday 6/2, will adhere to Covid-19 rules; (ii) vaccination rollout needs all to work together; (iii) educate new communities on the history of the first peoples.

Members of the MSC were asked to submit written reports to ensure accuracy. Keep reports brief.

10. Next MSC Meeting: Friday 5 March 2021 – Indigenous culture and traditions through art and craft. Presenter Aunty Irene Norman; Chair Chris Cosgriff, Host: Mullum Mullum Indigenous Gathering Place (MMIGP).

NOTE: To contact Ken Pang or Sam Navarria use chair.msc@gmail.com