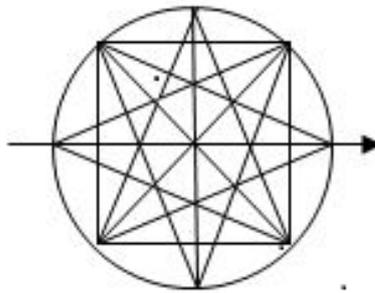


**Chairs:**

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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**

**May 7, 2021**

**Zoom 9:30 am – 11:00 am**

**Hosted by Melbourne Polytechnic**

**Chair: Carole Pondevie-Lay**

1. **Welcome** – Ken Pang welcomed members and guests of the MSC and presenters from Melbourne Polytechnic, and invited Chris to do the Acknowledgment of Country.
2. **Acknowledgement of Country – Chris Cosgriff.** Given Zoom meetings, we are spread widely but most of us would be on the lands of the Kulin Nation. We pay respect to the leaders in the Kulin Nation and their up and coming leaders and the leaders of the organisations and groups that are part of this meeting.
3. **Attendance**

**Present**

David Alexander	Rotary Club Manningham, Foundation Chair
Tina Andriotis	BH Institute
Dilnaz Billimoria	Whitehorse Interfaith Network
Iresha Buthgamuwa	ECLC, Community Development Coordinator
Chris Cosgriff	CCOEI, Mullum Mullum Indigenous Gathering Place Ambassador
Heather Cosgriff	CCOEI, Mullum Mullum Indigenous Gathering Place Ambassador
Mervat Dahdoule	MIC
Geoff de Young	Services Australia, Multicultural Services Officer
Katrine Gabb	Manningham Council, Community Development Officer, Access and Inclusion
Marilyn Gurry	CCOEI
Capella Henderson	ECLC
Helen Jurcevic OAM	Women's Friendship Group Manningham, President
Sarah Martinelli	City of Whitehorse, Community Development Officer - Diversity
Jenny Mitchell	Whitehorse Manningham Libraries, CALD Branch Manager
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
Asvin Porunggam	Victorian Electoral Commission, Electoral Inclusion Officer
Barbara Reeckman	Melbourne Polytechnic, Pathways Guidance Coordinator
Robin Steward	ATO, Migrant Education
Sui Ting Tse	CCOEI President
Wenyu	EDVOS
Emma Wilkinson	Boroondara Council, Social Inclusion Projects and Policy Officer

### Apologies

Krishiani Dassanayake  
Helen Forbes-Mewett  
Vicki Selimi  
Cynthia Shaw

CCOEI, Community member  
Monash University, Associate Professor Sociology  
Services Australia Multicultural Services Officer  
CCOEI, MSC

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

Moved Dilnaz Billimoria, seconded Con Pagonis

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

6. **Correspondence** – Letters from Sui Ting Tse, CCOEI President, to the Mayors of the seven municipalities in the Eastern Metropolitan Region inviting them to engage with CCOEI and the MSC and to consider joining the Welcoming Cities initiative, and participating in the August meeting which will focus on local government. All other correspondence has been circulated by Ken and Sam to the MSC group.

#### 7. MSC 2021 Calendar (Sam Navarria)

Calendar on track. June meeting focuses on Covid-19's impact on mental health of CALD youth and Families.

#### 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: Jacqui Robson, Centre for Multicultural Youth (CMY) and Maria Loupetis, Refugee Health Nurse Program (RHNP) - shared presentation.	Chair: Kern Pang and Sam Navarria	
02 July	NO MEETING		
06 August	<b>LGAs and engaging CALD communities.</b> Speakers: Welcoming Cities CEO Aleem Ali, and Victorian Local Government Association (VLGA) Inclusion and Diversity Lead Deborah Wu.	TBA	

03 Sept	Opening Doors. Speakers/presenters Alex Mills and Opening Doors graduates	TBA	
01 Oct	Covid-19 Recovery and CALD communities ECCV – Chris Christoforou Executive Officer (TBC); VMC - Hakan Akyol, Director (TBC)	ECCV (TBA)	
05 Nov	Digital Literacy: a human rights issue. Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission. Australian Digital Inclusion Index.  CCOEI AGM		
03 Dec	Review of MSC Calendar 2021 and planning 2022. End of year celebration		

**8. Meeting Focus: Education, Training and Community Engagement: a collaborative design and delivery approach in partnership with CALD communities, service providers and industry.**

Barbara Reeckman, Pathways Guidance Coordinator across the 5 regions of the Melbourne AMEP, and Carole Pondevie Lay, Community Liaison and Engagement Manager, both from Melbourne Polytechnic, work with communities, AMEP and mainstream service providers and employers. Their presentation focused on how collaborations across services and providers enhance the experience of students in the AMEP, and how their needs are being met. They presented three examples of collaboration: (i) collaboration that supports students as they exit the AMEP; (ii) collaboration that occurs more organically to respond flexibly to an emerging need; (iii) conscious collaboration that has been thought through and worked on prior to engaging with students.

**Example 1: Engineering Pathways Project 2019-2021 – Kangan Institute, Melbourne Polytechnic and Latrobe University.** The issue: significant numbers of engineers from Syria and Iraq on humanitarian visas, and those on skilled and spouse visas from India, China and Iran, settling in the North West of Melbourne and participating in the AMEP were struggling to find work in engineering despite the fact that they had had successful careers overseas.

Melbourne AMEP and La Trobe University organised a focus group of AMEP students from engineering backgrounds attending Kangan and Melbourne Polytechnic AMEP programs in 2019. La Trobe University engineering staff, Melbourne AMEP Pathways and teaching staff, and Engineers Australia explored barriers to their success and needs. The focus group found that the engineers wanted field specific language programs and local work experience, and a tour of the La Trobe School of Engineering in Bendigo was organised in November 2019. Engineer clients from Spectrum and AMES HSP were also invited, and La Trobe agreed to explore the development of a bridging course with work placement.

23 engineers, male and female, from Melbourne AMEP providers such as Chisholm and Box Hill Institutes, Spectrum and AMES attended. Federal MPs from Calwell, Scullen and Bendigo, representatives of the Department of Home Affairs, La Trobe senior staff, and Melbourne AMEP Staff from Melbourne Polytechnic, and Kangan also participated. The students toured La Trobe's Bendigo Engineering facilities and had the opportunity to talk to members of parliament and La Trobe staff on the barriers they faced to find professional employment.

Feedback about the tour and the bridging course was very positive. La Trobe University also agreed to share engineering jobs with the Melbourne AMEP engineers' group. Several have had job interviews, some have had interview coaching, and two have obtained engineering jobs in Bendigo in 2020.

La Trobe presented a model for the course in 2020 involving a 2 week orientation course followed by a 6-month paid work placement. Hume JobLink agreed to pay for Hume residents to do the training, and AMES Employment agreed to use the job fund to fund other places. The course was rescheduled to start in late 2020 or early 2021 but Covid-19 and the university financial crisis impacted. The project will conclude on 30 June, 2021.

### **Example 2: *Threads for Life* 2020 – Box Hill Institute and SisterWorks**

AMEP providers offer electives and extension classes to AMEP students to focus on an area of English they would like to improve on or to learn English in an applied learning framework, dual course, or electives etc. The *Threads for Life* elective involved a class of women from BI institute. Teaching material and content was centred on developing English language related to designing, interpreting and sewing patterns, marketing and selling products. The program developed 'organically', with the idea presented to students and their teacher, to give students an enhanced learning experience.

One of the goals was to sell products at the BH Institute Winter Market, but the market was cancelled due to Covid-19, and the course was moved online due to lockdown. Goals were re-aligned: supplies were posted to students or dropped off at homes, and students took advantage of new opportunities to develop online skills.

The community need for face masks was seen as an opportunity to generate employment, and SisterWorks, a social enterprise, approached the class with work. Students who were interested had to apply formally and 5 students were employed to make face masks for the social enterprise and the product was sold online. For these women this was the first time they had had a job.

Learning and social outcomes included language, digital literacy skills and numeracy skills (WhatsApp group, applying online, following up on emails, invoicing, etc.); gaining employability skills and confidence; communication skills; connecting with others, contributing to local community supplying face masks at cost price.

The *Threads for Life* elective is an interesting example of low level English students were able to engage and develop during a difficult time because of Covid. Links for more information on the project are at the Cooeei news no. 21 August3, 2020 and the BHI website.

### **Example 3: *Health Navigator Elective* – Northern Health and Melbourne Polytechnic partnership.**

The goal was to increase understanding of Australia's health system among recently arrived people whose first language is not English, and included EAL students at MP interested in a career in health. The elective also covers the role of volunteers: co-investigation, mentoring, support, and review. This project is still continuing.

Northern Health and Melbourne Polytechnic identified the need for the elective. Both organisations have a strong volunteering culture; complementary skills, goals and objectives.

MP integrating 'health' elective was for six weeks and addressed the settlement, language development and pathway needs of students. A co-design approach was used including expert input, linked to term 2 curriculum focus on health and exploring the health system in the North, cross-cultural contexts, navigating language specific to the health sector, pathways and volunteering opportunities within the health sector.

Melbourne Polytechnic considered the EAL students to perform as health navigators for family peers and friends. Northern Health offered a bridge from learning to practice - volunteering in health sector involves police checks, working with children checks, Covid immunization, volunteer mentoring, 3 week placement, patient simulation activity.

The three examples highlight the value of AMEP delivery through partnerships, and each is underpinned by identifying need and opportunities to collaborate, building partnerships where goals align, using a co design or co delivery model or approach to develop resources, exploring pathways, scaffolding learning, and enabling students to broaden experience.

The presentation generated much interest and discussion for other collaboration opportunities. Asvin, VEC, floated the idea of MP considering having an elective on electoral education as part of their English language courses. The opportunity to collaborate to co design electives that address the need for electoral education and the broader aspect of democratic participation and inclusion was well received. In relation to local government and participation Manningham Council has a forthcoming forum on what local government does and invited Electoral Commission to speak about the work of the commission. Asvin noted the initiative by the VEC to have

democracy ambassadors to become champions for their community whether for youth, a particular ethnic group, or women. It was noted that the August meeting of the MSC will focus on local government and participation and will feature Welcoming Cities, the Victorian Local Government Association and local government input, and some of these issues could be presented at that meeting. (Asvin also mentioned the *Talking Democracy Kit* that he co designed with the Carringbush Education which will be available to the MSC. The ECLC noted the work done by the democracy project funded by the Victorian Parliament). Asvin provided the MSC with his contact details. [asvin.phorugngam@vec.vic.gov.au](mailto:asvin.phorugngam@vec.vic.gov.au) and Iresha with her contact at the ECLC [Ireshab@eclc.org.au](mailto:Ireshab@eclc.org.au)

Sam congratulated Carole and Barbara, MP and AMEP Providers and all agencies involved in the programs exhibited today and noted that what happens in the classroom is important but just as important is what happens outside of the classroom, the partnerships and the community engagement that makes it happen.

9. **“Cooee!” (Con Pagonis):** The newsletter is now published monthly; 300-400 people opening it and readership increasing. The current newsletter features the recent reforms to the AMEP and notes the launch of a new regional ethnic communities’ council that covers Cardinia, Casey and Greater Dandenong. Contact details about the launch and joining the new council are in the newsletter. Next issue is on 7/6 and invited contributions by the end of May.

## 10. Agency reports and information

10.1 **Rotary (David Alexander):** Would be good to explore opportunities between Rotary and CCOEI.

10.2 **Services Australia (Geoff de Young):** Services Australia: continuing covax information sessions for the people in the community in relation to how the vaccinations will be recorded and how they can access information about vaccinations. Session with Fairwork Australia (Fairwork ombudsman) and includes the ATO and ECLC. The four organisations have put together information that is relevant to employee rights: entitlements, recognise dodgy contracts, etc. Organisations interested in having the information session for can contact Geoff at Services Australia or Iresha at ECLC.

10.3 **Australian Taxation Office (Robin Steward, Migrant Education ATO).** New scam – people are getting emails to a fake mygov log in. links to the scam information: <https://www.facebook.com/atogovau/posts/4122126227807992> and <https://www.ato.gov.au/General/Online-services/Identity-security/Scam-alerts/#May2021emailscamupdateyourmygoviddetails> The ATO has a dedicated scam webinar for CALD and organisations working with CALD are welcome to get in touch. The ATO also delivers the standard tax in Australia webinars that give an overview of the tax system. For more information about free ATO Migrant Education webinars designed for CALD audiences, including a webinar dedicated to protecting yourself from scams, email: [robin.steward@ato.gov.au](mailto:robin.steward@ato.gov.au)

10.4 **ECLC (Iresha Buthgamuwa):** doing legal sessions in partnership with the Whitehorse Manningham library for Law Week. One session on employment rights and the second on Wills and power of attorney, targeting more seniors. More information about the forums <https://eclc.org.au/news-resources/> or contact [Ireshab@eclc.org.au](mailto:Ireshab@eclc.org.au)

**ECLC (Capella Henderson)** - working on primary prevention of family violence project with Karen and Chin communities. Information has been delivered in their language by women from those communities, and the sessions have been recorded and soon available on the ECLC website. 6 videos on family violence, family law, etc. developing modules in different community languages will be on the ECLC website. ECLC will be recording video on scams in Karen and Falam Chin and will be available on the ECLC website in a few weeks.

## 10.5 CCOEI

- **Jobs Victoria (Dilnaz Billimoria)** helps people with getting into employment - resumes, interviews, etc. Free of charge. Available in Manningham, Boroondara and Whitehorse. Contacts for the service will be circulated by Ken.
- ***Racism it stops with me* campaign (Con Pagonis)** - CCOEI has lodged an application via to the Australian Human Rights Commission to become an official supporter of *Racism it stops with me*.
- **Welcoming Cities (Con Pagonis)** had their annual national symposium (which has been covered in the newsletter). Drew attention to two publications that were launched at the symposium: "*Stories of Welcome*" and "*10 Years of Welcoming*". Links in this week's newsletter to both publications, materials and resources which all feed into the August meeting of the MSC on Local Government.

**10.6 Whitehorse Council (Sarah Martinelli)** Noted that the Council is putting together 4 key planning documents: health plan, council plan, asset plan, financial plan. First phase of consultation has been done with all plans to avoid the need for consultation on each individual; plan. Reaching out to cultural and faith groups inviting their participation. It has been a very positive process with lots of engagement, including one recently with the Chinese community and their leaders.

**10.7 Manningham Council (Katrine Gabb)** Council has started the Welcoming Cities journey. Working on how to best engage communities, understand needs and build stronger relationships. Manningham Council is screening short films for National Reconciliation Week.

**10.8 Boroondara Council (Emma Wilkinson):** Council services could be considered as an elective in English language programs integrated into a partnership program with institutes. Boroondara has now 12 cultural champion volunteers to involve diverse communities in civic participation, other council opportunities and activities. English conversation group from Boroondara library could be channelled to AMEP program.

**10.9 MIC (Mervat Dahdoule):** Various support available to clients to attain employment, including via dedicated employment support workers, connections with employers, e.g. fruit picking, cleaning.

**11. Next MSC Meeting Friday June 4: Mental health youth and CALD families – CMY and RHNP.**

**General note: MSC members were asked to submit brief written reports to ensure accuracy.**

**Important dates: Sorry Day 26 May. Mother's Day 9 May.**

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