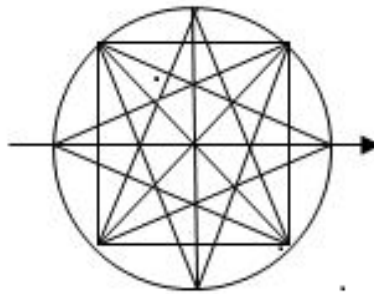


Chairs:

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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

November 5, 2021

Zoom 9:30 am – 11:00 am

Chair: Ken Pang and Sam Navarria

1. **Welcome – Ken Pang** welcomed members and guests of the MSC.
2. **Acknowledgement of Country - Chris Cosgriff.**

3. **Attendance**

Present

Dilnaz Billimoria	Whitehorse Interfaith Network and CCOEI
Sally Brooks	MIC
Megan Cook	Services Australia, MSO Glen Waverley/Oakleigh
Chris Cosgriff	CCOEI, Mullum Mullum Indigenous Gathering Place Ambassador
Heather Cosgriff	CCOEI, Mullum Mullum Indigenous Gathering Place Ambassador
Paul Croft	Eastern Regional Libraries, Team Leader Digital Literacies
Mervat Dahdoue	MIC
Krishiani Dassanayake	CCOEI
Paul Fleming	Services Australia, Aged Care Specialist Officer (ACSO)
Sarah Martinelli	City of Whitehorse, Community Development Officer – Diversity, Community Development and Engagement
Sam Navarria	CCOEI, MSC
Saarah Ozeer	Bounce, CCOEI
Con Pagonis	CCOEI, ECCV Senior Volunteer
Ken Pang	CCOEI
Carole Pondevie-Lay	Melbourne Polytechnic Community Liaison and Engagement Manager
Peter Redden	Access Health and Community, Community Partnerships Manager
Vicki Selimi	Services Australia, Multicultural Services Officer
Cynthia Shaw	CCOEI, MSC
Sui Ting Tse	CCOEI President

Apologies

Iresha Buthgamuwa	ECLC, Community Development Coordinator
Gina Etienne	Eastern Health, Manager Consumer and Community Engagement
Madeleine Parker	Department of Education and Training
Clary Verbunt	Community Volunteer, Dutch Community, CCOEI

Guest

Liz Jones	Good Things Foundation Australia, Director Strategic partnerships and growth
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4. **Minutes - MSC October 1 2021 meeting.** Moved Chris Cosgriff, seconded Heather Cosgriff. Accepted.

5. **Business Arising** – Incorporated in the meeting agenda.
6. **Correspondence** – Circulated by Ken Pang. Special note: correspondence from Vicki Selimi, Services Australia MSO, relocating from Glen Waverley/Oakleigh to Dandenong/Rowville. On behalf of the MSC, Sam thanked Vicki for her considerable contribution to the MSC network over many years. The MSC has enjoyed and appreciated Vicki's input and information, and wish her success. The MSC welcomes Megan Cook to the Glen Waverley/Oakleigh MSO role.
7. **MSC 2021 Calendar (Sam Navarria)**. The calendar is on track. Focus for the December meeting: review 2021 MSC program and plan the 2022 calendar. Everyone's input is important and welcome. The new calendar will be circulated in mid-January 2022. The MSC first meeting in 2022 will be in February.

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	LGAs engaging CALD communities. 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 Presenter: Brendan Wilson, <i>The Orange Door</i> Inner Eastern Melbourne, Service System Navigator, Family Safety Victoria,	Chair: Ken Pang, Sam Navarria Dilnaz Billimoria	

01 Oct	(a) Building Digital Literacy of CALD Seniors Clubs. Presenter: Tonina Gucciardo-Masci, Ageing Well Lead, Ethnic Communities' Council of Victoria (ECCV); (b) Shared Housing Accommodation Response to Covid-19: supporting international students during lockdown. Presenter: Alex Mills, Community Engagement Officer (SHAR) Link Health and Community	Chair: Ken Pang, Sam Navarria	
05 Nov	Bridging the digital divide: digital inclusion initiatives, programs and events, Good Things Foundation Australia Speaker: Liz Jones, Formerly Head of Collaborative Projects – Good Things Foundation Australia and now Director Partnerships and Growth, GTF Australia	Chair: Ken Pang, Sam Navarria	
03 Dec	Review of MSC Calendar 2021 and planning 2022. End of year celebration	Chair: Ken Pang and Sam Navarria	

8. **“Cooee!” (Con Pagonis):** *Cooee!* has been published over the last two years: monthly, fortnightly and weekly. Thanks to all contributors to the newsletter. Deadlines for contributions: Friday before publication.

9. **Agency reports and information**

9.1 **CCOEI (Ken Pang)** Employment forum on November 11, as part of the Priority Response Phase 2 Multicultural Community initiative. CCOEI in partnership with Services Australia and the MIC is hosting the forum. It will be streamed live on Facebook and U tube at 1.00pm on Thursday 11 and Friday 12 November. Details will be circulated. Acknowledged the considerable support of stakeholders including Rick Comfort (SA), Sally Brooks (MIC), Iresha Buthgamuwa (ECLC), and local councils.

9.2 **Services Australia (Paul Fleming – Aged Care Specialist Officer, based at SA Glen Waverley).**

The ACSO is a new role. For an overview of services provided at Services Australia for My Aged Care visit [My Aged Care face-to-face services - Services Australia](#)

[My Aged Care face-to-face services - Aged Care Specialist Officer - Services Australia](#)

Due to Covid restrictions, in person appointments are not available, but hoping that restrictions will soon lift. Available to present to community groups and organisations in regards to Aged Care and how to access it – contact via email ACSO.SEVIC@servicesaustralia.gov.au

9.3 **Eastern Regional Libraries (Paul Croft – Team Leader, Digital Literacies),** Eastern Regional Libraries cover Knox, Yarra Ranges and Maroondah. Your Libraries opening Monday November 4 and offer walk in support for accessing digital certificate. Hoping to offer technology outreach support in local community centres, cultural or otherwise. A free tutoring service roll out next year which has great options for EAL students. We are open to conversations about new services, partnerships and outreach opportunities. Contact details paul.croft@erl.vic.gov.au

9.4 **Services Australia (Megan Cook, Multicultural Services Officer)**

- Service Centres operating under level 2 restrictions.
- Services Australia is modernising service centres across Australia over the next two years. New features include digital coaching stations for one-on-one coaching; moving to appointment system;
- Customers can now link their vaccination certificate to the Services Victoria app.
- The International Vaccination Certificate is now available. A valid passport is required to access the certificate, which can be saved, or printed.
- For language specific information see the bottom right of the Services Australia website (icon example below). Many languages are represented and there are resources in audio, video and text;

Languages



- Afghan arrivals into Victoria continuing - more are expected to move into the South East (Casey) over coming months. Many are in short term accommodation in the inner city, and many are expected to settle in the Dandenong area. MSOs across the South East Region have been conducting seminars with new arrivals to advise them of Agency supports, services and obligations. We are focussed on debt prevention and the programs SA offers. Interpreters are sourced in the customer's language and we ensure all adult members of a family group are involved in the seminar.
- Covid-19 Disaster Payment ceasing - no longer paid automatically. See website for the tapering rates.

Services Australia Multicultural Service officers are available to run information sessions with community groups on a variety of subjects, please contact us via email. MS Teams preferred.

sevic.multicultural.service.officers@servicesaustralia.gov.au

9.5 City of Whitehorse (Sarah Martinelli)

- Council hosted a vaccine voices information session for Mandarin speakers. Other sessions to follow.
- Second round of grants – allocated \$70,000 to 42 community groups. Focus is recovery.
- Working on the cultural diversity action plan until March 2022. Will begin consultations with community groups this month. The plan will inform what Council commits to for the next 5 years.

9.6 Melbourne AMEP (Carole Pondevie-Lay)

- Collaborating with Foundation House to promote the Early Years program being rolled out by the State Government. Getting the message to AMEP clients – some clients may be eligible for up to 15 hours per week. Melbourne Polytechnic has identified high level students who are interested and confident about the program and want to be involved as Early Years navigators and promote it. The students have been invited to attend the information session online following which a more targeted language specific session will take place. The students have been selected across the MAMEP network, and opportunities offered to those from different cultural backgrounds and community languages. Foundation House have their own Early Years navigators.
- Slow return to campus. Messaging students re proof of vaccination requirements. Using digital is proving to be hard but teachers and Services Australia are trying hard to get this message across.

9.7 Migrant Information Centre (Mervat Dahdoule)

- MIC offices have re-opened
- Community Visitor Scheme – the program supports older people experiencing loneliness and isolation living at home or in aged care facilities. The program matches older people with volunteer visitors who speak the same language and are from the same background. Many older people have shown remarkable uptake of Wee Chat, WhatsApp and other platforms, but many are looking forward to resuming in person activity.
- Tutoring program for secondary students resuming in person – highly welcomed after long periods of using Zoom during lockdowns.

9.8 Diwali (Dilnaz Billimoria) Good wishes to all for Diwali, the festival of light. Message is relevant in relation to the Covid experience where communities come together to overcome threats to wellbeing.

10. Meeting Focus: Bridging the digital divide: digital inclusion initiatives, programs and events, Good Things Foundation Australia

(Slides of the presentation *Bridging the digital divide for culturally and linguistically diverse communities* - circulated by Ken. Thanks to Liz Jones for sharing).

Good Things Foundation Australia, a not for profit organization supported by government and philanthropy is working to bridge the digital divide. The Foundation's vision is a world where everyone benefits from digital.

Each year the Foundation produces *Digital Nation*, a report on Australia's state of digital inclusion (or exclusion). The 2021 report shows that there is much to do. The groups most at risk of exclusion are people with disabilities, from low income, those not in the workforce, women, those with low levels of education, First Nation's People, new migrants and refugees, people living in rural and remote areas, people aged 65+.

Affordability and access are key priorities. Other areas are ability, confidence and skill gaps. Digital exclusion limits educational opportunities, exposes people to cyber bullying and digital abuse. Liz provided statistical information from the *Digital Nation* report. As expected, digital exclusion significantly impacts new migrants' and refugees' ability to settle and participate fully in the community. Culturally appropriate digital mentoring and translated learning materials can help to reduce the digital divide for migrant and refugee communities.

The Foundation builds capacity in community organisations through specialised training packages, grants and program support, and works with partners in government and business to develop programs that impact people's lives. The Foundation has a network of 3,500 providers involved in digital literacy programs locally in neighbourhood houses, men's sheds, community and CALD organisations, etc.

The Australian government has funded the Foundation to manage the *Be Connected* program which has been running for 4 years and supports digital skills activity for over 50s. Digital skills development can take place in art classes, cooking classes, group sessions, one to one support, including bilingual support. Looking to develop multilingual resources. Training is provided to different community based organisations. The *Be Connected* program has four elements: the network, the learning portal which has many materials, awareness campaign and grants. Grants are available continually throughout the year,

Impact of the *Be Connected* program: one million people have been supported to learn digital skills. A study by Swinburne University has shown increases in people's digital skills, confidence, social connection and online safety, and an increase in social return. The *Be Connected* program is funded for the next three years.

Q&A and comments.

Q: Next round of funding? **A:** February 2022. **Q** How is social return calculated? **A:** designed by Swinburne University. **Comment:** really good program, more promotion needed. Biggest challenge is how to connect the hardly reached. **A:** the Foundation works through community organizations. Community radio would be a good approach. Reaching people hardly literate in their own language – a huge challenge. **Comment:** Covid showed a gap in how to equip students digitally: partnerships, accessing equipment, but the gaps remain. New arrivals from Afghanistan and how best to connect them – they have a mobile but need more. The digital divide is affecting settlement.

Q. Digital bilingual mentors? **A.** the Foundation is working through the Be Connected program. Some organisations have said that they would use bilingual support in the program. The language of technology and in general may be a barrier and digital mentors are working to alleviate this. Visuals are essential in this training for people with low English literacy. Filling out forms – name fields are not long enough. Liz: raised this issue when working in My Health Record and authorities are aware of this.

On behalf of the MSC, Sam thanked and congratulated Liz Jones and wished Good Things Foundation Australia success in bridging the digital divide.

11. Next MSC Meeting Friday December 3. Focus: Review of MSC 2021 program and develop the 2022 Calendar.

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