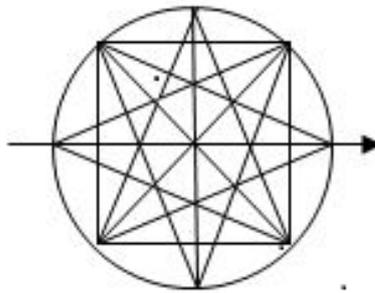


Chairs:

Sam Navarria: Mob: 0432 975 558
Cynthia Shaw: Mob: 0466 157 906



P O Box 94
Forest Hill VIC 3131
Email: chair.msc@gmail.com
Website: www.ccoei.org.au

MIGRANT SETTLEMENT COMMITTEE (Eastern Region)

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

Reg. No. A0017562S

Minutes

October 1, 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)**. After the acknowledgment of Country Chris announced funding received by Mullum Mullum Indigenous Gathering Place to purchase the property which they have been leasing. On behalf of the MSC Sam congratulated Mullum Mullum.

3. Attendance

Present

Tina Andriotis	BH Institute
Sally Brooks	MIC
Iresha Butthgamuwa	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
Krishiani Dassanayake	CCOEI, Community member
Geoff de Young	Services Australia MLO
Malcom Hill	Melbourne Polytechnic, AMEP VTS Engagement Officer
Helen Jurcevic OAM	Women's Friendship Group Manningham, President
Poli Lim	CCOEI Volunteer
Ada Ly	ATO, CALD Program Lead
Sarah Martinelli	City of Whitehorse, Community Development Officer – Diversity, Community Development and Engagement
Sam Navarria	CCOEI, MSC
Tamika O'Brien	NEAMI National, Peer Support Worker
Saarah Ozeer	Bounce, CCOEI
Con Pagonis	CCOEI, ECCV Senior Volunteer
Ken Pang	CCOEI
Bec Paterson	Foundation House Ringwood, Team Leader
Cynthia Shaw	CCOEI, MSC
Russ Townsend	ICT/Jeeves Multilingual Messaging
Sui Ting Tse	CCOEI President
Apologies	
Dilnaz Billimoria	Whitehorse Interfaith Network and CCOEI
Gita Clayton	CHBC/Winter Shelter and Sharing Hope
Katrine Gabb	Manningham Council, Community Development Officer, Access & Inclusion
Jenny Mitchell	Whitehorse Manningham Libraries, CALD Branch Manager

Daniele Noel	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
Clary Verbunt	Community Volunteer, Dutch Community, CCOEI
Emma Wilkinson	Boroondara Council, Social Inclusion Projects and Policy Officer
Guests	
Tonina Gucciardo-Masci	ECCV, Ageing Well Lead
Alex Mills	Link Health and Community, Community Engagement Officer

4. **Minutes - MSC September 3 2021 meeting.** Moved Heather Cosgriff, seconded Cynthia Shaw.
5. **Business Arising** – Incorporated in the meeting agenda.
6. **Correspondence** – Circulated by Ken Pang. Noted correspondence with regard to food relief for people in hardship. Funding is from the Victorian Government and is part of the CCOEI Multicultural Priority Response project. Cynthia Shaw provided an update.
 - Poli Lim surveying community leaders and bilingual and cultural workers about what is a culturally appropriate and respectful food. MSC members have also been invited for input;
 - Parcels are for people experiencing hardship but who are not in quarantine or forced isolation.
7. **MSC 2021 Calendar (Sam Navarria)** – November meeting: Liz Jones, Head of Collaborative Projects, Good Things Foundation Australia. Their vision: *a world where everyone benefits from digital*. They manage big programs such as *Be Connected*. It continues the focus on digital literacy and bridging the digital divide.

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, and Victorian Local Government Association (VLGA)</i> 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, Head of Collaborative Projects – Good Things Foundation Australia	Chair: Ken Pang, Sam Navarria	
03 Dec	Review of MSC Calendar 2021 and planning 2022. End of year celebration		

8. **“Cooee!” (Con Pagonis):** Cooee! Now published via the CCOEI LinkedIn account giving it an organisation look. Inviting cover art work for the newsletter, multicultural Australiana or indigenous theme required. Currently weekly, and published on Monday morning and deadlines for contributions Friday before publication. Pandemic and vaccination receiving prominence.

9. Agency reports and information

9.1 Migrant Information Centre (Sally Brooks and Mervat Dahdloue)

- MIC offices closed due to lockdown, but all programs are being delivered.
- Accepting referrals for family violence counselling. No visa restrictions. Referrals via the form on the MIC website – www.miceastmelb.com.au Appointments can be held remotely and discreetly. In person can also be arranged depending on the situation.
- Employment Program: 3 employment mentors - help with resumes, interview skills and linking to employers. MIC's Community Employment Connector, Lian, connecting with communities to help link them to suitable employment and employment services.
- State government funding for Covid-19 impacted people: food vouchers. Contact Sally.
- Youth team running school; holiday programs – fitness challenge.
- Support for older people at risk of isolation through the Community Visitors' program. For further information about MIC programs, contact MIC on 9285 4888, and check website.

9.2 Melbourne AMEP (Malcom Hill)

- Workshop on Orange Door for VTS volunteers 13/10 2.30pm.
- Two other workshops planned: Services Australia Centrelink; and CFA Travelling safely in summer;
- Held information session for new volunteers – great response;
- Connecting digitally – All tutoring online for the rest of the year. Tutors have connected with students digitally, in some cases with the help of the student's family to get English language activities to them.

9.3 City of Whitehorse (Sarah Martinelli)

- Council in partnership with Indiancare hosted a wellbeing event for members of the South Asian community on 26/9. The event was planned to be in person but had to be online. 37 attended. A chance to acknowledge the huge trauma and loss experienced by South Asian communities;
- Council is recruiting *Working for Victoria* positions: 5 short term positions in the Community Development team. 2 will work in multicultural outreach. Talking with groups about barriers and co design projects. 2 digital literacy positions, one focusing on CALD seniors.

9.4 Women's Friendship Group Manningham (Helen Jurgevic). Finished 439 hygiene kits for indigenous children in Tenant Creek, and for women in domestic violence shelters. New project: Pamper Packs for frontline workers: 1000 for St Vincent's and 200 for Box Hill Hospital nurses, and 300 for the police. Show appreciation for frontline workers who are doing it tough. Women's hospital will be coming on board as well – up to 1500. More volunteers to sew string bags welcome. Gives the Friendship Group women something to do in this stressful time, and benefits recipients. \$3,000 from Manningham Council to purchase items for the pack.

9.5 Foundation House Ringwood (Bec Paterson)

Services are provided online and offsite weather permitting. Onsite only when absolutely necessary. Supporting people from Chin background due to continuing unrest in Burma, and working with schools on this topic. Afghan emergency response to evacuees likely to settle in south east, mostly in the south if they are connected to family or where accommodation is available. Some have finished quarantine and have relocated to temporary accommodation, and serviced by AMES, and will move to more permanent accommodation.

9.6 ECLC (Iresha Buthgamuwa) ECLC services are at present online. ECLC is available to deliver information sessions on various topics – contact ECLC to arrange.

9.7 CCOEI (Ken Pang) Planning the employment forum on November 11, as part of the Priority Response Phase 2 Multicultural Community initiative. Acknowledgement and thanks: Sally Brooks (MIC) and Rick Comfort (Services Australia) for playing a major role on the forum planning committee. Flyer ready soon. Rick is the main facilitator of the forum and engaging with service providers, e.g. Swinburne, Melbourne Polytechnic, EACH, Fair work Ombudsman, ECLC and others. There will also be employers and speakers from the Employment Connect MIC program.

9.8 Services Australia (Geoff de Young)

Customer calling Medicare and Child Support no longer need to call TIS first. Customers call Medicare (132011) or Child Support Agency (131272) and the service officer will engage an accredited on demand interpreter to assist the customer.

A trial is about to start shortly to enable customers to link their digital vaccination certificate to the Services Victoria app. This will enable them to QR code check-in and prove vaccination status all in one application. The Medicare Express contains the information which can be also viewed offline, saved and the option to print a copy. Customers can also now add this to their digital wallet, such as Google Pay or Apple Pay.

Afghan arrivals into Victoria are also occurring, and more expected over the coming months. Many are in short term accommodation in the inner city, but many are expected to be settled in the Dandenong area.

Announcement on Changes to the COVID 19 Disaster Payments. Importantly these claims can still be lodged and are able to be back dated to the start of the lockdown. All payments are tax free, do not need to be declared to the Australian Tax Office, nor included in Family Tax Benefit estimates. In the information below when referring to vaccination rates, it is benchmarked against the population 16 years and over.

At 70 % double vaccination rate, these payments will stop being automatically paid to customers. They will need to lodge a new claim for every week they require support.

At 80% double vaccination rate the payment will reduce over two weeks before ceasing.

The rate will change to a flat rate of \$450 for the first week. Those who received the higher \$750 amount previously will qualify for this amount, those receiving the \$450 amount will stay on this amount.

The second and final week, the payment will be \$320.

If customers require support beyond this time, they will need to lodge a claim for income support payments such as Jobseeker.

For customers receiving an income support payment and the COVID 19 ISP Disaster Payments, they will receive \$100 per week (down from \$200) when we reach 80% vaccination. The following week there will be no payment.

Importantly customers who are receiving these payments do not need to do anything right now. More communication will occur over the coming weeks as we approach the targets. If you have any questions please reach out.

9.9 Australian Taxation Office (Ada Ly)

- ATO's free Tax Help program helps people earning \$60,000 or less lodge their tax return online. Tax Help is available from July to 31 October. You can receive Tax Help online or by phone or may get help face to face from Tax Help centres across Australia. When you are ready to make an appointment, phone the ATO on 13 28 61 (select option 3, then option 2) for Tax Help services available to you.
- The ATO has a pilot in-language podcast to help CALD individuals and small business owners feel confident navigating our tax and super systems. Recordings are in Arabic, Korean, Mandarin and Vietnamese about tax time. You can listen via the ATO website at www.ato.gov.au/podcastlanguages or click the below link for each language:
 - [ATO podcast in Arabic](#)
 - [ATO podcast in Korean](#)
 - [ATO podcast in Mandarin](#)
 - [ATO podcast in Vietnamese](#)
- Due to recent legislative changes, the COVID-19 Disaster Payment is a non-taxable payment and does not need to be included in your tax return.
 - If you've recently applied for the COVID-19 Disaster Payment with Services Australia and received the payment on or after 1 July 2021, you won't need to include the amount as assessable income in your tax return next year.
 - If you received a COVID-19 Disaster Payment in the 2020–21 income year and you haven't yet lodged your 2020–21 tax return, you don't need to include the payment as assessable income when you lodge.
 - If you have already lodged your 2020–21 tax return and included the payment as assessable income, you should amend your return because these payments are no longer taxable. You may get a refund.
- The ATO provides community education services to new migrants, refugees, youth, international students and CALD community to help them understand and engage with tax and super systems in Australia. Any enquiries on tax talks and events, please contact Ada Ly or email to multicultural@ato.gov.au

10. Meeting Focus

10.1 Building Digital Literacy of CALD Seniors Clubs, ECCV Digital Inclusion CALD U3A project
Speaker: Tonina Gucciardo-Masci, ECCV, Ageing Well Lead.

Background to the project: Many diverse CALD Seniors clubs in Victoria support thousands of people to connect and have positive ageing experiences. ECCV has a long standing commitment to, and advocacy for, CALD Senior groups in relation to grant programs. The move to online formats and changes to funding criteria have impacted seniors' groups, with a sharp reduction in the number of successful applications.

Needs assessment: consultation with seniors' associations in South East Melbourne LGAs; recommendations from DHHS on various issues but particularly digital literacy; and the impact of Covid 19 identified digital literacy as a key issue, which resulted in ECCV partnering with U3A to deliver CALD digital training to build digital skills. CALD leaders were trained by U3A volunteers who then trained their peers. The project also assisted access to digital devices in councils and libraries, and provided a 2 hour weekly drop in sessions for ongoing learning and support. 60 trained. Targeted 8 languages where the training was focused on applying for grants online,

The project provided the opportunity to look forward to the next stage: engage other seniors' clubs in other LGAs; develop collaboration with other organisations in other LGAs; offer information sessions to clubs across Victoria particularly on digital literacy and digital inclusion; and continue to advocate for the needs of CALD seniors' clubs. This stage is for the next two years.

Q&A: Many older migrant women have limited written and digital skills. Submitting for grants online is impossible – the corporate jargon is challenging even for those who are literate. What can be done for them? **A:** a huge challenge. ECCV constantly advocates about this issue. Working together and coordinate resources in the community and LGAs is what is being done. Whitehorse is considering one to one support, and employing bilingual staff to provide support. Access to digital devices may help, but if people cannot recognise the alphabet it is difficult to use them. A co-design approach would be good and Tonina encourages and welcomes collaboration.

10.2 Shared Housing Accommodation Response (SHAR) to Covid-19: supporting international students during lockdown.

Speaker: Alex Mills, Community Engagement Officer SHAR, Link Health and Community

SHAR's goal: support Monash residents living in public housing, community housing and rooming houses through the Covid 19 pandemic. State wide program funded by DFFH. The project was in response to the public housing experience in Flemington and North Melbourne community housing estates in 2020, and the lessons learned from that experience. The State wide approach involves DFFH and organisations working with residents to provide local support. As part of prevention and preparedness with regard to Covid-19, the project implemented site audits and assessments, safety and signage, supplies and resources, outbreak engagement, and Covid-19 vaccinations,

Ongoing engagement and relationship building with residents resulted in a broad range of linkages, connections and referrals, i.e. medical, council services, emergency food, material relief, direct engagement and community events, and outbreak support. The community has been magnificent in its response.

Q&A: Comment – Social isolation is a silent pandemic. It is taking a great toll. The sense of isolation is deep. It is the other pandemic sitting under Covid-19. The hope is that once the situation improves there will be a strong emphasis on connecting and reconnecting. People's alertness has also suffered, resulting in injuries. Alertness is a big factor in the re-adjustment.

On behalf of the MSC, Sam thanked and congratulated Tonina and Alex for their presentations and wished them ongoing success in their work.

11. Next MSC Meeting Friday November 5

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

Speaker: Liz Jones, Head of Collaborative Projects – Good Things Foundation Australia

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

