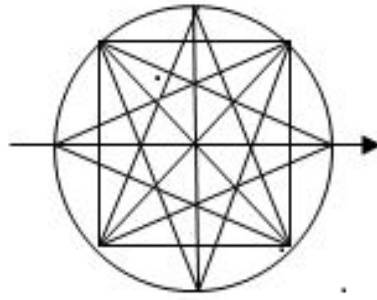


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Forest Hill VIC 3131**Email:** chair.msc@ccoEI.org.au**Website:** www.ccoEI.org.au**MIGRANT SETTLEMENT COMMITTEE (Eastern Region)**

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

Reg. No. A0017562S

Minutes – Friday 4 August 2023**Venue: Whitehorse room, Box Hill Town Hall, 1022 Whitehorse Road, Box Hill**

Chairperson: Jess Ness - MSC Chair

1. **Acknowledgement of Country** – Chris Cosgriff - Mullum Mullum Indigenous Gathering Place (MMIGP)**2. ATTENDEES**

Jess Ness – Chair MSC

Pradeep Kanthan – Secretary CCOEI

Nora Fernandes – CCOEI

Dilnaz Billimoria – CCOEI

Robyn Kilpatrick – Guest Speaker

Minwen Wu - Chinese Australian Network

Chris Cosgriff – MMIGP

Heather Cosgriff – MMIGP

Con Pagonis – CCOEI

Chris Campbell – Whitehorse Interfaith Network

Cindy Kung – Louise Multicultural Community Centre

Deepak Joshi – The Humanism Project

Ding Cai – Victoria Police

Anju Kulkarni – Services Victoria

Mervat Dahdoule – MIC

Helen Jurcevic – Women's Friendship Group

Kass Halastanis – Knox City Council

Bass Luke – Yarra Valley Water

Jamie Edge – Whitehorse City Council

Virginia Burns – Whitehorse Friends for Reconciliation

Maria Rigoni

Katerine Gabb – Manningham City Council

Lina Kim - Louise Multicultural Community Centre

Kathy Ruan - Louise Multicultural Community Centre

Carole Pondevie-Lay – AMEP

Gerardine Daniels - DFFH

3. REPORTS

Chris and Heather Cosgriff of Mullum Mullum Indigenous Gathering Place (MMIGP) presented a framed photograph of The Scar Tree Banner painted by the young people of MMIGP and MMIGP Men's worker Chris Hume. Titled: 'What Reconciliation Means to Me'.

Virginia Burns – Whitehorse Friends for Reconciliation (WFFR) – and Minwen Wu – Chinese Australian Network announced the Mandarin translation of the book 'Nobody's Child.'

Virginia Burns – Whitehorse Friends for Reconciliation (WFFR) – drew attention to the 'Uluru Statement From The Heart' – to read it: <https://voice.gov.au/about-voice/uluru-statement> and to watch: <http://www.sbs.com.au/ondemand/watch/1914731075862>

Con Pagonis – CCOEI – Save the date for the upcoming town hall forum - Multicultural Australia for the Voice. Sunday 13 August 2023, 12:00 PM - 2.30 PM at Springvale City Hall.

Meeting Focus:

Jess Ness – Chair MSC – Opened the meeting with a message about the Voice referendum. She highlighted the need for established communities as well as new migrants to understand the purpose and process of the referendum. The referendum being a process of direct democracy and the last one having been held in 1999, there is a lot to know about the process and purpose of the Voice referendum. There are publications in several languages to guide the migrant communities.

Chris Cosgriff - Mullum Mullum Indigenous Gathering Place (MMIGP) volunteer - Shared the difference in approaches of MMIGP and Willum Warrain Gathering Place, summarised discussions with community, and the difference between The Voice in the Constitution and the legislation that will follow. While the Yes campaign recognises Indigenous people having a voice, there is a confusion about 'who' and 'how'. Essentially political parties

can make constitutional changes. Thus the 'Voice' couldn't go far enough. The Voice exists, there are structured organisations, however there are many 'voices'. He suggested doing research on the subject and not depending entirely on social media. No 'Voice' would mean nothing has been achieved. There is potential of getting Indigenous people together in the process.

A Q & A followed to reveal resources are available in 44 languages, encourage communities to do some background research and getting guest speakers to know Indigenous history.

Dilnaz Billimoria - CCOEI - Shared stories from her recent trip across the Kulumburu Community and the Kimberleys in Western Australia. While there, she availed of many opportunities to meet with First Nations communities, discuss bridging the Gap, and listened to their feedback on The Voice. The trip was over 13 days and covered approximately 3,500 kms. It gave her a first-hand experience of the deprived state of the Aboriginal communities. She spoke about three traits i.e.: Respect and Compassion on her t-shirt and Harmony on her hat, that was questioned by community elders as the missing elements when a bottle of Coca cola was cheaper than water! The three elements of 'E' that is Education, Employment and Engagement were visibly missing in the community. The stores, supermarkets were fenced off at Kununurra. Schools had pools, but 'no school, but a pool' seemed to be more like 'no school-no pool'. In short no educational facilities. She met 90-year-old Uncle Moses who told her about the youth that have been neglected, going in and out of jail. He took her to a cattle station in Broome and said that such a station run by the indigenous people would give the youth employment.

Robyn Kilpatrick - Yes 23 - *Why I'm Voting Yes in 2023 for the Voice to Parliament Referendum*

An Anglo Celtic born in rural Australia; Robyn's professional background was in nursing. After living in Germany, England, and Hong Kong for nearly 22 years, she became involved in human rights and working with refugees and asylum seekers. On return to Australia, she continued her involvement with social justice whilst working as a Settlement Worker at the Migrant Information Centre (MIC). Since retiring, Robyn has been able to continue her advocacy for issues she is passionate about - most recently the Yes 23 Campaign. The highlights of her talk 'Why I am Voting Yes' was from a historical perspective. She said that even as Australia was a pretty good country, it had failed to recognise the Aboriginal people. One cannot believe how the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people were treated. There was a period of institutional racism. She suggested reading 'The Voice to Parliament' by Thomas Mayo and Kerry O'Brien. In deciding to vote Yes, she compared the representation enjoyed by indigenous population around the world, notably The Treaty of Waitangi (1840) in New Zealand. The Yes vote will see an alteration to the constitution: A Bill for an Act to alter the Constitution to recognise the First Peoples of Australia by establishing an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Voice. This can then only be abolished by a referendum. A reason to vote 'Yes'!

Next MSC meeting:

- Friday 8 September 2023 at Knox Civic Centre.
- Theme for discussion: Group Multicultural Framework Review submissions.
- Guest speaker: IndianCare Inc.