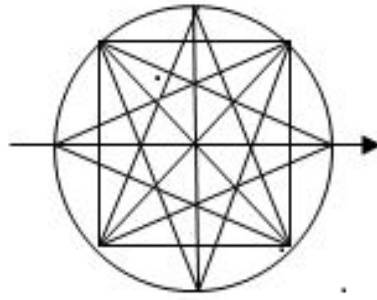


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## **MIGRANT SETTLEMENT COMMITTEE (Eastern Region)**

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

Reg. No. A0017562S

**Minutes – Friday 8 September 2023**

**Venue: Knox Civic Centre, 511 Burwood Hwy, Wantirna South, VIC 3152**

Chairperson: Jess Ness - MSC Chair

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

### 2. ATTENDEES

Jess Ness – Chair MSC

Daniele Noel – President CCOEI

Pradeep Kanthan – Secretary CCOEI

Nora Fernandes – CCOEI

Jaya Manchikanti –President Indiacare: Guest Speaker

Chris Cosgriff – MMIGP

Heather Cosgriff – MMIGP

Con Pagonis – CCOEI: Speaker

Chris Campbell – Whitehorse Interfaith Network

Anju Kulkarni – Services Victoria

Mervat Dahdoule – MIC

Kass Halastanis – Knox City Council

Iresha Buthagamuwa – CCOEI

Kylie Wilmot – Knox City Council

Katherine Nauta

Sally Brods – MICKate Wijeyesinghe - Monash City Council

Nuru Johnston – Manningham City Council

Dana Kearney – NDIS

Kirti Singh – AIFS

Rose Ensor – Maroondah City Council

### Meeting Focus:

**Jess Ness – Chair MSC** – welcomed all to the meeting. The theme of the meeting she said, was to get feedback for the submission on 'A New National Agenda For Multicultural Australia', specifically: 'What would make a difference in Melbourne's Eastern Region'?

### 3. REPORTS

**Daniel Noel - President CCOEI** - thanked Knox City Council for hosting the meeting. She mentioned that CCOEI a volunteer organisation is going through a strategic thinking exercise with the help of Richard Dent OAM, FAICD who has offered his services pro bono. The life members will be welcomed to join in the sessions soon to give their valuable inputs. Further, she announced that the CCOEI AGM is to be held in the first week of November.

**Nuru Johnston of Manningham City Council** highlighted a programme by the council to welcome international students.

**Kirti Singh of Australian Institute of Family Services** informed about the work and interest within the multicultural space.

**Kass Halastanis of Knox City Council** reported on the Multicultural Active Committee Knox Research into the friendliness of public spaces, an Info Nite on the Referendum, and a Mental Health programme.

**Nora Fernandes of CCOEI** informed about the AGM, the Doncaster Diwali Festival on 24 September from 1 to 6 PM.

**Mervat Dahdoule of MIC** informed that MIC was planning a holiday programme to support refugee children less than 5 years old.

**Kate Wijeyesinghe of Manningham City Council** informed about the Council's Cultural Advisory Committee, which holds a workshop once a month.

**Rose Ensor of the Maroondah City Council** spoke of a programme for recent migrants.

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**Dana** Kearney of NDIS spoke about the 'Early Intervention for Children programme' that needs to be informed to migrant communities.

**Iresha Buthagamuwa of CCOEI and Eastern Community Legal Centre** spoke about an event held, Leadership Day with Local MPs. An advisory group had been formed for a Project Legal Voices and 4 activities have been planned in the next 4 months.

**Sally Brods of MIC** spoke about the training of services for specific cultures.

**Kylie Wilmot of Knox City Council** spoke about the Artwork and display of cultural artifacts in the Civic Center.

**Con Pagonis of CCOEI** mentioned about the Yes Referendum held at Springvale City. Further, he informs of CCOEI's state peak organisation – the ECCV – is leading the Victorian Multicultural Voices for 'Yes' campaign: (<https://eccv.org.au/projects/first-nations-advocacy/>). As part of this, ECCV is holding a series of community forums around Melbourne; the next one is at Coburg Town Hall on the evening of September 25th. (<https://www.eventbrite.com.au/e/why-yes-why-now-multicultural-communities-and-the-voice-eccv-forum-tickets-709256905497>)

**Pradeep Kanthan-Secretary CCOEI:** informed about the CCOEI newsletter. Article contributions from all were welcome. Contact [editor@ccoEI.org.au](mailto:editor@ccoEI.org.au) to get on to the mailing list as well as submission of articles.

#### 4. SPEAKERS

The meeting had two speakers Con Pagonis of CCOEI and Jaya Manchikanti of Indiacare.

**Nora Fernandes** introduced Jaya Manchikanti who is the President of IndiaCare.

**Jaya Manchikanti** spoke about Indiacare that was started in 2013 with a view to meet the needs of the growing Indian population. While the community fared well being from an English-speaking former colony, they had social stigmas that prevented sharing their problems. Indiacare was set up as a referral agency, to bridge the gap between the community and service providers. It no case management resources such as MARAM trained staff to work across 12 main languages. The organisation works through codesign and awareness of intersectionality. Indiacare extended its services at the behest of the Victorian Government, to include four countries of the South Asian Region. ([Indian Care](#)).

**Con Pagonis** traced the historical context of multiculturalism in Australia. He said that the rate of population growth of indigenous people and a threat of invasion led to large scale immigration at the end of the second world war. There was a hope that the new immigrants would be assimilated into the Anglo-Australian culture. This did not happen and by the early 70's the government moved away from racially based immigration selection to a multicultural public policy. This led to the formation of Ethnic Community Councils at state and federal levels. While several changes ensued in the intervening years, he said: a key challenge for multicultural public policy going forward, is how to respectfully juxtapose this with the issues and aspirations of Indigenous people. Consulting and accepting advice from Australia's Indigenous peoples on how they want their issues to be front and centre in the nation's broader social policy framework will be critical – so it works for all.

He opined that this Multicultural Framework Review is a historic opportunity to set things right if we wish to again aspire to be world's best practice in multicultural public policy.

The full text of his paper: "A new national agenda for multicultural Australia' is [here](#).

#### 5. Discussion and outcomes for a submission on the Multicultural Framework Review

The chair circulated some suggestions for CCOEI and MSC to advocate:

- (a) A new Access & Equity Strategy for all public funded programs and services.
- (b) An anti-racism strategy.
- (c) An Intercultural Community Relations Strategy.
- (d) Harnessing cultural diversity for better economic outcomes.
- (e) Stronger support for second language learning.
- (f) Endorsing of Welcoming Cities Standard for Local Government.
- (g) Streamline the Recognition of Overseas qualifications.
- (h) Stronger recognition of the role of Arts for achieving better social cohesion.

- (i) A legalised Multiculturalism Act.
- (j) Establish a National Multicultural policy and monitoring agency.
- (k) Establish a multicultural research institute.
- (l) Stronger Federal inter-governmental and community leadership on issues arising from cultural diversity: including re-establishing a Commonwealth-State Ministerial Council.
- (m) Better ethnic data collection by public service providers, including government-funded business and community organisations.
- (n) Stronger language services guidelines for government departments and agencies.
- (o) Rebadge 'Harmony Day' -March 21<sup>st</sup>- Elimination of Racial Discrimination Day!

Post discussion the attendees agreed on the following:

- (a) Government leadership, better cooperation between departments and an anti-racism policy.
- (b) Embed language, not watered-down language (i.e.: cohesion).
- (c) Importance of community leadership (grassroots engagement) – inclusion of local government representation.
- (d) Funding- greater certainty and greater investment.
- (e) Intergenerational engagement support.
- (f) Recognition of prior learning- Overseas Qualifications.
- (g) Celebrating contributions of migrant's strengths
- (h) Office of the Multicultural Affairs/ legislation.

**Conclusion:**

There being no further matters for discussion, the meeting was declared closed.

**Next MSC meeting:**

- Friday 6 October location: TBA.
- Theme for discussion:
- Guest speaker: