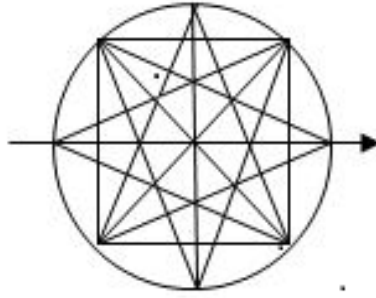


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MIGRANT SETTLEMENT COMMITTEE (Eastern Region)

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

Reg. No. A0017562S

Minutes – Friday 1 December 2023

Whitehorse Community Center

Mahoneys Road, Forest Hill, Vic 3131

Chairperson: Jess Ness – Vice President

After the acknowledgement of country by Chris Cosgriff, the meeting commenced with the Chair introducing Minwen Wu, the speaker/ presenter for the meet.

Presentation on Chinese Australian Network

Minwen Wu is the founder president of the Chinese Australian Network Inc, (CAN), an organisation which is a member of CCOEI. Minwen was recently elected to the board of the Ethnic Communities Council of Victoria.

He presented the growth of English Language Learning through the CAN. He traced the history of the organisation to the 1980s, when Jack Ma the Chinese billionaire philanthropist started the concept of English Corner (EC) on mainland China. On 29 November 2020, an EC was started at Box Hill. Later Zoom ECs in July 2021 and at Glen Waverly in February 2023.

A language exchange programme was conducted in partnership with Australian Conservation Foundation Chisholm. Minwen supported the idea of Bilingualism in a multicultural society. He mentioned 6 December to be a World Bilingual Day and a great occasion to raise the idea.

CAN held several meetings, notable was the Chinese Community Roundtable which was held on 2 June 2023. It was proposed to have a Chinese Communication and Leadership Corner.

He concluded the presentation by appreciating the work done by the Adult Migrant English Programme (AMEP). However, he suggested that EC could be part of the AMEP to meet the requirements of the Chinese community.

(The chair mentioned that efforts were underway to:

- Foster community collaboration.
- Tailor courses to meet needs.
- Niche programmes.
- Use of Community Houses for the said purpose.
- TAFE could feed into the programme.
- Learner centric methods of delivering the courses).

Key Information Roundup

The Chair then asked all present to introduce and advise of activities in the organisations they represent. The key information is as follows:

Jamie Edge: Announced a Whitehorse Council Project, a festival on 17 March 2024. It would be a cultural festival and he invited all communities to participate in the food, craft, music, and dance event.

Kelly Maugham: Spoke of the changes made to the AMEP, allowing more migrants to enrol and stay in the program for longer. See details: Reform of AMEP.

Anju Kulkarni: Highlighted the Information Sessions, which can be booked online.

Con Pagonis: Mentioned The Boite that holds concerts once a month. He spoke about the Welcoming Cities programme by the Scanlan Foundation.

Nuru Johnston: Highlighted the fact that most migrants are not aware of the Neighbour Hood House. She spoke of anti-racism and that 21 March is International Day for Elimination of Racial Discrimination. The Victorian government is committed to ending racial discrimination. Manningham City Council will be forming focus groups and they will present their findings.

Jackie Arulanandam: Spoke about the specific challenges faced by community groups such as the Burmese, Iranian, Chinese and Afghan communities. She will provide data that could be useful in knowing the diverse communities in the EMC.

Nora Fernandes: Highlighted the problems of migrants in getting jobs. The challenge is to get a job with no prior experience.

(In a further discussion on the subject it was suggested to incorporate employment agencies into the multicultural framework).

Feedback from attendees

In continuation of the ideas presented in previous meetings, the Chair then opened the house to get suggestions on the future topics and presenters for MSC meetings. It was CCOEI's plan to hold the MSC meetings in all the seven council areas. A feedback paper was passed to gather topics for discussion.

Con Pagonis suggested ECCV as a source for topics and speakers.

Compilation of Suggestions:

Topics and potential presenters:

1. Subject focused meetings on Employment, Education, Housing, Mental Health,
2. Presentation by MIC on new arrivals, data, trends, challenges, and services.
3. Engage recruitment agencies.
4. Isolation of parental migration and support services for them.
5. Discussion on more AMEP opportunities as the delivery of new AMEP policy is scheduled for 1 January 2025.
6. A presentation by LGA's Community Development (Diversity) team/officer on how the LGAs are helping local migrants to settle.
7. Invite AMEP Melbourne to present.
8. Multi-Cultural Framework Review will be finalised in March 2024. Invite Ranaa from Multicultural Youth Advocacy Network (MYAN) to present as she is on the reference group.
9. Get representatives from ECCV Policy Advisory Committees to present on Employment, Health, Ageing, Emerging communities. (Listed on their Annual Report).
10. Welcoming Cities to present on their project.
11. Engage with ECCV for Anti-racism, community consultations in the EMR, Establish relationship with VMC's Eastern Regional Advisory Committee (RAC).
12. Hold Harmony Week/Refugee week celebrations at MMGP.
13. Auntie Irene Norman for Cultural Exchange.
14. Safety: Invite Frank Yaman of Metropolitan Fire Brigade, Multiculturalism Officer.
15. Anchor Inc: Invite Heidi Tucker for Homelessness, Foster care etc.

Venues:

A common suggestion was to hold MSC meetings in all seven council areas, to build a relationship with the councils.

There being no other business, the Chair declared the meeting closed.

Next MSC meeting: 2 February 2024

Venue: TBC.