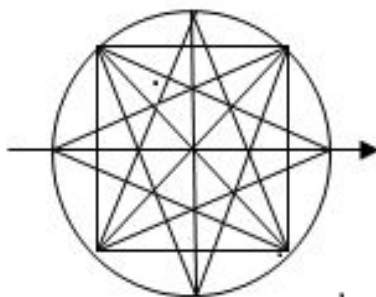


Contact:

Jess Ness: 0413 846 227

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P O Box 94
Forest Hill VIC 3131**Email:** chair.msc@ccoai.org.au**Website:** www.ccoai.org.au**MIGRANT SETTLEMENT COMMITTEE**

MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON

2 FEBRUARY 2024 AT

WHITEHORSE COMMUNITY RESOURCE CENTER

79 MAHONEY'S ROAD

9.30 AM TO 11 AM

Chairperson: Jess Ness Chair MSC and Vice President CCOEI

The following were present:

Daniele Noel: CCOEI - President
 Jess Ness: CCOEI - Chair MSC and Vice President
 Pradeep Kanthan: CCOEI- Secretary
 Bronwyn:Arnold: Whitehorse Manningham Libraries
 Melinda Brown: City of Boroondara
 Ding Cai: Victoria Police
 Julie Conan-Davies: Swinburne University of Technology
 Heather Cosgriff: CCOEI & MMIGP
 Chris Cosgriff: CCOEI & MMIGP
 Maddy Cursio: City of Monash
 Gerardine Daniels :Department of Families, Fairness & Housing
 Jaime Edge: Whitehorse City Council
 Rose Ensor: Maroondah City Council
 Farida Fakhri: Manningham MC Network, Whitehorse IF, MSC, MC Advisory Committee
 Zakir Fakhri: Manningham MC Network, Whitehorse IF, MSC, MC Advisory Committee
 Carla Fuentes: Polaron Language Services
 Tim Habel: Vafa
 Nuru Johnston: Manningham Council
 Deepak Joshi: The Humanism Project

Dana Kearney: Link Health and Community - Partner of the NDIS
 Anju Kulkarni: Services Australia
 Shivani Mahesh: The LOTE Agency
 Jaya Manchikanti: IndianCare
 Denise Massoud: Mayor Whitehorse Council
 Sophie McKenzie: Migrant Information Centre
 Tara Morrell: ECASA
 Lisa Moseley: Foundation House
 David Ng: Oncall Training College
 Madeleine Parker: Department of Education
 Carole Pondevie-Lay : Melbourne AMEP-VTS
 Cynthia Shaw: Life Member CCOEI
 Rachel Soh: Eastern Health
 Mary Sophou: PRONIA (registered as Australian Greek Welfare Society Ltd)
 Sheridan Stone: Knox City Council
 Thong Za Tawng: Foundation House
 Malavika Vasanth: Genetic support network of Victoria
 Clary Verbunt: Life Member CCOEI
 Nyima Lhamo Wangchuk: LOTE Agency
 Minwen Wu:CCOEI

Proceedings:

Jess Ness – Chair MSC moderated the proceedings.

- The meeting commenced with the Acknowledgement of Country** by Chris Cosgriff of the Mullum Mullum Indigenous Gathering Place (MMIGP).
- CCOEI President's Welcome:** President CCOEI: Daniele Noel welcomed all present and acknowledged the presence of Mayor Massoud of Whitehorse City.
- MSC Meeting Plan:** Daniele briefly explained the plan for MSC Meetings for the year, notably the venues would be in all the seven councils and speakers would be invited to speak on topics of interest to the attendees of MSC meetings. She welcomed those who wish to present/talk about their organisations and how they engage with the community. They could send an email either to chair.msc@ccoai.org or secretary@ccoai.org.au.

She then proceeded to introduce and welcome the guest speaker of the day Anthea Hancocks, who is the CEO of the Scanlon Foundation and the Scanlon Foundation Research Institute. She has an extensive background in strategic planning, business development, community service, education, communications, and relationship and services marketing through senior leadership experience in private, ASX listed, government, professional services, academia and not for profit organisations here and in the US. Anthea is Chair of Welcoming Australia, Chair of the Huddle Advisory Committee, and a Fellow of the Australian Institute of Company Directors.

4. **Meeting Focus: 'Social Cohesion Mapping':** A short presentation on the findings of the Mapping Social Cohesion Report of 2023 and their implications for local governments.

In her presentation Anthea played a short video that gave an overview of the idea of social cohesion, in terms of pluses and minuses of a social cohesion survey. The research was conducted by the Scanlon Foundation and Research Institute. She said while the results convey a generally negative picture of social cohesion, the positivity lies in the marginal improvement in the results in some areas over the years. The study/research was in collaboration with index data from the Australian Bureau of Statistics.

The research which commenced in 2019, provide, for the first time in Australian social research, a series of detailed surveys on social cohesion, immigration, and population issues. A prime objective of the surveys is to further understanding of the social impact of Australia's increasingly diverse immigration program.

The 2023 survey was conducted with 90 questions across 28 independent demographic indices, 7,700 people participated, 7,500 of them online and 251 targeted surveys were conducted with certain ethnic communities. 55 in depth qualitative interviews were conducted with people who have migrated to Australia over the years. She explained the methodology and goals to assessing social capital, economic integration, education, and awareness of the political system. Social cohesion has been under pressure and declining. While the economy is a number one concern for many people, climate change and global conflict weighs heavily on the minds of Australians. Trust in the government has eroded since Covid 19, along with economic inequality there has been a decline in the sense of national pride and belonging.

What can we do?

- (a) Government bodies need to be transparent in their services to communities.
- (b) Communities should develop measures to build their civic knowledge.
- (c) There is a need for supporting voices so that they are heard.
- (d) Youth play a key role as they can provide the optimism for the future.
 - (i) By attending long established as well as traditional establishments.
 - (ii) Focus on social cohesion.

The meeting was opened to a Q and A session and discussion. Attendees raised the impact of global conflicts on the communities in Australia and asked what is being done to address the issue, especially as they tend to divide communities.

Racism was discussed. It was felt that it boils down to putting a label on a few people who do not behave in a civil manner. Like in many other countries, it has been a complex and ongoing issue in Australia. While progress has been made in addressing and combating racism, it would be inaccurate to claim that it has been completely eradicated.

The perception of racism may vary among individuals and communities, and experiences of discrimination can differ. While there have been positive steps forward, it is essential to continue the conversation and efforts to build a more inclusive and tolerant society. Public discourse, education, and policy changes play crucial roles in addressing and reducing racism in any country, including Australia.

5. **Announcements by attendees:**

- (a) Ding Cai of Victoria Police: Reminded everyone that they are there to help the community.
- (b) Rachel Soh said she is the new contact for Eastern Health.
- (c) Anju Kulkarni of Services Australia announced that 40 years of Medicare is being celebrated and a new look Medicare card is being released. This could be obtained as a replacement.
- (d) Julie Conan-Davies of Swinburne University of Technology announced programmes for CALD communities.
- (e) Sophie McKenzie of Migrant Information Centre announced the following events run by MIC:

Craft your Career is a resume writing workshop for 15-25 y/o wanting to learn how to write an Australian resume. The program is this coming Monday 5th February 5.30-7.30pm so we are now taking final registrations. Career Practitioners from Swinburne Skills and Jobs Centre will guide participants in writing a professional Australian resume, with support from the MIC Youth Settlement team.

Please find program flyer and link to register: <https://forms.office.com/r/beD6xsCUj8>

MIC Youth Wave: Swimming program is a 10-week program for 13 to 17 y/o starting on 7th Feb. Although the current eligibility has opened for those who have lived in Australia for a while, we still prioritise those who are recent arrivals.

Please see program calendar and link to register: <https://forms.office.com/r/qGt1LRwyR2>

Youth English Conversation Corner is a weekly English conversation group for 16–25-year-olds from refugee and migrant backgrounds. We are currently taking expressions of interest from refugee young people who are keen to improve their conversational English and make friends at the same time! The group will be held in the evenings, but the exact date/time is to be determined depending on the expressions of interest we receive.

Please find program flyer attached and link to register: <https://forms.office.com/r/jSUdPMb7cc>

Youth Forum will be held on 13th March for service providers and professionals to increase understanding about how to effectively engage and work with CALD youth. The forum will look at strategies to engage and empower young people in services and community and will bring together the learnings of the youth settlement and ECYEM programs.

- (f) Chris Cosgriff CCOEI & MMIGP conveyed a message on behalf of Con Pagonis to request everyone present to encourage any talented emerging culturally and linguistically diverse or First Nations musicians to apply for The Boîte 'Portfolio Project'. Successful applicants will get support, performance opportunities, gain new skills and build confidence with The Boîte's close-knit multicultural musical community. Applications for the program close at 5pm on Sunday 25 February 2024. The Boîte's Portfolio Project Manager is Ellen Chan; her email is: ellen@boite.com.au Find out more and apply [here](#).
- (g) David Ng of Oncall Training College: mentioned the courses that the college runs in aged care. This is a practical pathway to a job, especially for new migrants and he urged everyone to encourage their communities to join these courses, which are subsidised.
- (h) Tara Morrell of ECASA announced that ECASA provides a provides a free counselling and support service to people who have experienced sexual assault either recently or in the past.
- (i) Gerardine Daniels of Department of Families, Fairness & Housing made everyone aware of the services provided by DFFH ([Home - DFFH Services](#)).
- (j) Carole Pondevie-Lay : Melbourne AMEP-VTS announced : Melbourne AMEP Volunteer Tutor Information Session - Wednesday 21st February, 6:30pm. Sign up to volunteer: <https://www.melbourneamep.com.au/volunteer/>

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

Next meeting will be on Friday 1 March 2024 from 9.30 to 11 AM.

Venue: City of Monash TBC.

Please send your agenda points by 20 February 2024.