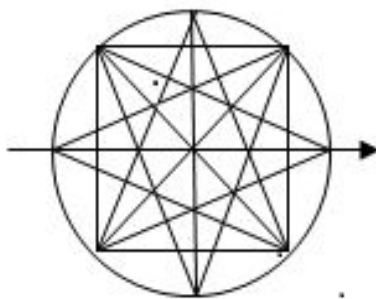


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Forest Hill VIC 3131**Email:** [chair.msc@ccoehi.org.au](mailto:chair.msc@ccoehi.org.au)**Website:** [www.ccoehi.org.au](http://www.ccoehi.org.au)**MIGRANT SETTLEMENT COMMITTEE**

MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON

1 MARCH 2024 AT

MONASH COMMUNITY CENTER

293 SPRINGVALE ROAD

GLEN WAVERLEY 3150

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

Jess Mathew: Department of Families, Fairness &amp; Housing

Rose Ensor: Maroondah City Council

Nuru Johnston: Manningham Council

Dana Kearney: Link Health and Community - Partner of the NDIS

Ali Yaghobi: Victoria Legal Aid

Tara Morrell: ECASA

Madeleine Parker: Department of Education

Eva Kladio: PRONIA (registered as Australian Greek

Welfare Society Ltd)

Minwen Wu: CCOEI

Andromahi Basdekis: Melbourne Poly Technic

Ann Hoang: Louise Multicultural Community Centre

Cindy Kung: Louise Multicultural Community Centre

Dilnaz Billimoria: CCOEI

Floraine Dardenne: Services Australia

Geraldine Jeremiah: Migrant Information Center

Iresha Buthgamuwa: ECLC

Jess Mathew: DFFH

Juliana Mutum

Krishani Dassanayake: CCOEI

Lorna Gillespie:

Madeleine Parker: Department of Education and Training

Nicole Lam: Chinese Community Social Services Network Inc

Paige Redman: Healthability

Rose Ensor: Maroondah Council

Sabastian Lai: Knox Interfaith Network

Shane McCluskey: Monash City Council

Shashi Kochhar: Monash Interfaith Network

Tara Morrell: Eastern Health

Tawana Basutu: Crime Stoppers Victoria

Yuli Liang: Migrant Information Center

Kate Wijeyesinghe: Monash City Council

Amey Roundtree: Monash City Council

Sarah Chong: MiCare

Helen Tran: MiCare

Husna Amani: MiCare

Jacquie Arulanandam: Migrant Information Center

Anne Crisp

**Proceedings:**

Jess Ness – Chair MSC moderated the proceedings.

1. **The meeting commenced with the Acknowledgement of Country by the Chair.**

**CCOEI President's Welcome**

2. President CCOEI: Daniele Noel welcomed all present and acknowledged the presence of Cr Shane McCluskey and Kate Wijeyesinghe of Monash City Council. She thanked Kate for sponsoring the venue and food and the Chair and Secretary for organising the meet.

3. The Strategic Plan for CCOEI which was being finalised with the help of Jess Bishop, CEO of the Migrant Information Center. The plan would bring advocacy on issues of Multiculturalism with passion and commitment. She mentioned the prevalence of rare diseases in the communities. It is a focus of her work while also being afflicted, she highlighted the significance of the last day of February a month known for having rare numbers, being observed as National Rare Disease Day. She briefly spoke of her association with Sarah Chong, the speaker of the day who has extensive experience in gender equity.

**Introduction to Sarah Chong, the speaker of the Day by the Chair**

4. Sarah Chong is a Multicultural community leader, activist, connector, and an overseas volunteer. She is currently the Women's Empowerment and Safety Team Leader with MiCare, where she manages the family violence portfolio and primary

prevention activities. She is a secondary consultant for staff and services, and a peer learning provider on family violence in multicultural communities.

5. She is a consultant and mentor on Community Development and Capacity building. As an Overseas Volunteer she has participated in projects such as: Feminist Peace and Social Justice: with a focus on Leadership, Advocacy, Grants, and Income Generation Activities.

### Meeting Focus

6. 'The Many Hats of Sarah': Empowerment of Migrant and Refugee Women in a Multicultural Society. Sarah's lively and inspirational presentation was on her work in the multi-cultural and gender equality areas. Her story began with being the child of Chinese migrants who came in the era of the White Australia Policy. She narrated her father's anecdotes and described the difficulties and discrimination she faced growing up.

7. She then went on to describe her role as a Women's Empowerment and Safety Team Leader with MiCare. The Prevention of Family Violence before it occurs, is the key area of her work. To achieve her goals, she has a focused on co designing activities with communities on various topics which contribute to building safer and stronger communities and empowering women.

8. As an active international volunteer Sarah narrated her experience and adaptation to life in Kenya and Kibera (in Nairobi, Kenya), where she has worked for 13 years, entirely on her own accord. She dreamt of Africa and followed her passion to Kenya. She overcame barriers starting from home, getting to know the communities, and developing a connection over 13 years. The focus was always the Empowerment of Women.

9. She advocates and trains for Courageous Leadership, which entails being there on the ground. She directs a women's leadership programme that trains to remove hesitancy through activism, financial autonomy, building intersectionality ... getting the confidence to say: "I can be the change I want to see in the world".

10. The aim is to move from the margins to the mainstream by supporting grassroots leadership with best practices while promoting intersectionality. The other area of Sarah's activism is 'Plotting the Fall of Patriarchy'.

### Q and A and discussion

11. Dilnaz Billimoria commented on patriarchy. She mentioned that there were good men, and the idea is to take everyone along in addressing toxic masculinity and gender norms that create conflicts.

12. Sebastian Lai asked Sarah why she choose Africa over working in Asia. Sarah cited the difficulties of being an Australian born Chinese with limited Mandarin facing a similar disconnect with expectations of a host population. A common experience of second-generation migrants.

### Announcements

13. Kate Wijeyesinghe presented details of Monash City which had a population of 190,000 of which 54% were born overseas. It has a diverse population predominantly from China, India, Sri Lanka, besides the rest of Asia. 15% spoke Mandarin.

- 'The Monash Children's Walk' on 3<sup>rd</sup> March along with the Friends Of the Children Foundation Inc.
- Monash promotes inclusiveness through several grassroots programmes, cultural activities and has libraries with books in 4 to 5 languages.

14. Jess Mathew, Senior Communications Advisor at Victorian Department of Families, Fairness & Housing announced the research into community profiles. The research aims at providing greater details of community profiles to understand diversity within the larger community. The better practice guide available on the DFFH website will be an excellent resource for multicultural communication. She suggested visiting the following links: [Better practice guide](#) and [Community profiles](#).

15. Shashi Kochhar of Friends Of the Children Foundation spoke about the rights and responsibilities of citizens in the area of multiculturalism. Every individual must have a purpose, an object and goal to work. He announced the two events in March:

- 'The Monash Children's Walk' on 3<sup>rd</sup> March along with the Friends Of the Children Foundation Inc.
- Community Awakening Day on 16 March 2024.

16. Paige Redman of Healthability spoke about Service Connection (Care Finder) that health Ability and Access provided in the Whitehorse, Boroondara, Banyule, Nillumbik and Murrindindi LGA's and also the After-Hours Mental Health Nursing Service which covers 12 LGA's including Monash. She mentioned that anonymity could be maintained by the callers.

17. Cr Shane McClusky of Monash who is also the Station Officer Fire Rescue Victoria, and Multicultural Liaison Officer Southern Zone 1, spoke of fire safety being a shared responsibility. He drew attention to the resources available on the [website](#).

18. Jacquie Arulanandam of Migrant Information Center announced the Youth Forum of 13 March 2024. This is to connect young people. Venue is Boxhill Town Hall from 9.30 to 12. Registration is \$30 per head.
19. Dana Kearney of NDIS announced the Volunteer Coordination Programme related to aged care services for persons with disability above 65 years of age.
20. Tara Morrell of Eastern Health announced a free online service. April being a 'self-awareness' month.
21. Eva Kladou of Pronia (Australian Greek Community) announced a special aged care programme.
22. Helen Tran of MiCare announced a workshop for personal safety for new migrants and a 'Welcome to Monash' programme.
23. Andromahi Basdekis of Melbourne Polytechnic announced that 500 hours limit for AMEP was lifted. This will give more opportunities to improve language skills.

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

Next meeting will be on Friday 5 April 2024 from 9.30 to 11 AM.  
Venue: Knox City: TBC.  
Please send your agenda points by 25 March 2024.