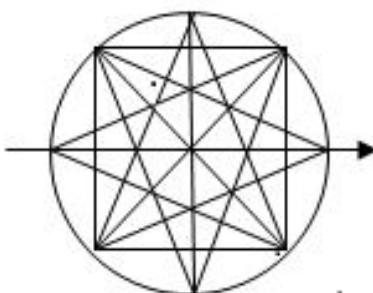


**Chairs:**

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Cynthia Shaw: Mob: 0434 080 977



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**Email:** chair.msc@gmail.com**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, April 7, 2017

**Whitehorse Community Centre, Level 1 Conference Room,  
79 Mahoneys Road, Forest Hill.**1. **Welcome** – Cynthia welcomed MSC members and guests.2. **Present**

Jaquie Arulanandam	MIC
Dilnaz Billimoria	Whitehorse Interfaith Network
Leonie Burnham	CCOEI
Iresha Butngamwa	ECLC, Community Development Coordinator
Emma Chege	CCOEI, Treasurer
Lillian De Bortoli	Swinburne University of Technology, Research Fellow
Krishiani Dassanaate	CCOEI
Gary Delez	Yarran Ranges Council
Helen Forbes-Mewett	Monash University, Senior Lecturer and Researcher
Leigh Gilmore	Sheriff Office Eastern, Koori and Multicultural Liaison
Dianne Godfrey	DHS, MSO
Marg Greenhalf	Box Hill Institute, Community Liaison Officer
Mohit Gupta	Swinburne University, Team Leader
Suzi Hayes	Knox City Council, Multicultural Communities Officer
Saba Irfan	Women's Friendship Group
Audrey Jones	VicPol, Crime Prevention Office
Helen Jurcevic	Women's Friendship Group Inc.
Teena Lee	Restore Program, Enjoy Church Mulgrave
Judy McDougall	MIC
Jasmina Mulugeta	Foundation House, Eastern Region Team Coordinator
Sam Navarria	CCOEI
Andree O'Donnell	AMES Settlement
Lowilla Okello	Catholic Care Eltham, Senior Support Settlement Worker
Saturnino Onyala	MIC, Settlement Worker
Madeleine Parker	Department of Education and Training, Senior Project Officer,
Cynthia Shaw	CCOEI
Elizabeth Sidiropoulos	VicPol, Multicultural Liaison Officer
Johnny Tran	VicPol, Multicultural Liaison Officer
Sui Ting Tse	CCOEI
James Tuang	ZCA
Clary Verbunt	Dutch Community, CCOEI
Rebecca Wickes	Monash University, Associate Professor

### Apologies

Gitta Clayton	AMES Australia, Volunteer Tutor Program Coordinator
Tim Hardiman	VicPol
Belinda Haydon	Link Health and Community, Community Development Officer
Kate Jeffery	Link Health and Community, Senior Research & Planning Officer
Josef Jin	Chinese Family Services, Coordinator
Zeenat Khan	DHS Centrelink
Alex Mills	Opening Doors
Kirsten Reedy	City of Manningham
Mhisti Rele	Opening Doors; CCOEI
Stuart Sorrell	VicPol, Eastern Region Community Engagement
Bwe Thay	Swinburne University, AMEP Pathway Counsellor; CCOEI
Sonia Vignjevic	ECLC, Director Partnerships and Community Development
Nicki Vlahakis	Counsellor/Advocate ECASA
Clive Williams	VicPol, Community Engagement Inspector East
<b>Guest</b>	
Simon Sang Hre	Myanmar Community Member

3. **Minutes MSC March 3, 2017.** Moved Clary Verbunt, seconded Sui Ting Tse Accepted.
4. **Business Arising.**  
Incorporated in the agenda
5. **Correspondence.** Various items of information circulated electronically. Correspondence and information received for circulation is in the information box available at the meeting.
6. **Meeting focus – Communities from Myanmar: challenges and issues, services, service gaps and some recommendations, Simon Sang Hre.**

Simon introduced his presentation by talking about the journey of people from Myanmar coming to Australia. They are predominantly refugees fleeing Myanmar travelling through Thailand (Thai/Burma border), Malaysia and India. Simon described their ethnicity as being mainly Chin or Karen. The Chin comprise around 1.5 million and the great majority are Christian. There are still in excess of 50,000 people from Chin State who are registered refugees seeking asylum and they are mainly in Malaysia and India. More than 50 dialects are spoken in Chin State and there is much diversity among its population

Simon gave demographic data of people from Myanmar who have settled in the eastern suburbs, with Hakka Chin constituting by far the greatest number with around 2,500 settled in Ringwood, Croydon and nearby suburbs. Other Chin groups have also settled in the area, particularly in the Ringwood area. Karen, also have settled in Ringwood and surrounds. A number of churches have been established as a result of this settlement. (Simon clarified that he researched the statistical and other information through the different Pastors in the relevant churches).

Simon noted that people are having to move further and further out due to the high cost of renting. He also noted that in his experience people have only started to settle after 5 years! Language is a major barrier. There are many dialects spoken by the Chin however some people also speak Burmese as it is the official language of Myanmar.

Simon cited a range of challenges and issues for these communities including:

- Lack of education;
- Alcohol consumption (resulting from feelings of hopelessness, depression, anxiety and family issues);
- Family violence (lack of legal knowledge and information);
- Language barriers (causing a lack of access to employment, education and services);

- Low support networks, lack of understanding of systems;
- Lack of engagement from local authorities such as councils and police.

He offered a number of recommendations to address some of these issues, including:

1. Encourage councils and local agencies or employers to 'open' doors;
2. Conduct assessment of cultural diversity within the Myanmar community;
3. Provide a new strategy of community engagement;
4. Initiate robust training for non-English speaking communities for community leaders and elders by local councils or other authorities;
5. Provide effective funding for programs relating to youth, empowering women, family health and elders;
6. Improve engagement particularly with youth on youth issues;
7. Engage with church based organizations;
8. Provide a direct approach through community liaison such as health; legal and family related information.

Simon noted during question time that agencies and authorities like local government should be proactive in engaging with communities from Myanmar because culturally these communities do not come forward to express their needs.

Simon's presentation can be found on this [link](#).

On behalf of the MSC Sam thanked Simon. It is hoped that as a result of the presentation, agencies and local government will initiate and make greater contact with these communities.

7. **MSC 2017 Calendar** – The calendar is on track. The proposed delivery of forums/events for 2017 has been amended from the latest input.

#### MSC 2017 Calendar

MSC meeting dates	Meeting focus	Forums/functions/events dates and working groups	International Multicultural events Calendar
01 Jan	No meeting		
03 Feb	The Ethnic Communities Council of Victoria (ECCV): overview, achievements over the past year, and priorities in 2017. Marion Lau, Deputy Chair ECCV.		February 1-7 United Nations Interfaith Harmony Week
03 March	Indigenous history and culture: from the perspective of historian and novelist. Mick Woivod	<b>Harmony Day events.</b>	March 21: <a href="#">Harmony Day</a>
07 April	CALD from Myanmar: a focus on needs and services. Current and future services and innovations. Speaker Simon Sang Hre; AND Celebrate Diversity at the MSC: bring a plate		<b>April 7</b> – World Health Organisation <a href="#">World Health Day</a>
05 May	The interfaith network: purpose, achievements, and challenges. Dilnaz Billimoria and speakers from various agencies.	<b>Family violence forum:</b> theme – culturally sensitive approaches. Working group: Sandy; Saarah O; Sarah S, Mhisti; Judy M, Suresh; Leigh; Iresha; Nicki Vlahakis, Leonie.	<b>May 21</b> - <a href="#">World Day for Cultural Diversity for Dialogue and Development</a> .
02 June	CALD from Syria – a focus on needs and services. Speaker TBC		<b>June 20</b> – UN <a href="#">World Refugee Day</a> , <b>June 26</b> – UN <a href="#">Day - Support of Victims of Torture</a>
01 July	No meeting		

04 Aug	Immigrant Settlement in regional Victoria: What works in Greater Shepparton? Researchers: Helen Forbes-Mewett and Rebecca Wickes, Monash University.	<b>Refugee health forum:</b> theme – health literacy mental health Working group: Dianne; Kate; Jacky, Helen, Lilian.	
01 Sept	CALD from Iran; Afghanistan and Iraq: focus on needs and services. Current and future services and innovations. Speakers TBC		
06 Oct	CALD from South Sudan: needs and services. Current and future services and innovations Speakers TBC. CCOEI AGM	<b>CALD employment, training and community engagement forum</b> “My choice My life” Working group: Bwe; Saarah; Suzie; Suresh; Leigh; Iresha, Krishiani, Mohit,	<b>October 17- <a href="#">International Day for the Eradication of Poverty</a></b> , UN calendar
03 Nov	Australian Refugee and Humanitarian Program 2017 - 2018: Community views, current challenges, and future directions. Asher Hirsch, Policy Officer, Refugee Council of Australia (RCOA). <b>MSC review of 2017 activity.</b>		<b>November 16 - <a href="#">International Day for Tolerance</a></b> <b>November 25 - <a href="#">International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women</a></b> ,
01 Dec	Finalize 2018 MSC Calendar. The Australian Multicultural Foundation (AMF) in 2018: priorities, challenges and key events (AMF Executive Director, Dr Hass Dellal AO)		Dec 3 <sup>rd</sup> : <a href="#">International Day for People with a disability</a> <a href="http://www.idpwd.com.au/">http://www.idpwd.com.au/</a>

Other areas:

- Meet and greet your new neighbours and get to know your changing community.
- Human Rights Law Centre – focus on CALD;
- Cultural responsiveness of LGAs in the Eastern Metropolitan Region.
- Community safety and security.

## 8. Reports

### Forums update:

- Family Violence Forum 2017.** Judy McDougall volunteered to convene the steering committee. Additional interest to participate expressed by Jasmina Mulugeta of Foundation House. **Action:** Cynthia to send details of all those who have nominated for the steering committee to Judy ASAP;
- Health Forum 2017.** Sandy Ashton was proposed as Convenor of the Refugee Health Forum. Health literacy, mental health and FGM are three areas of interest. It was suggested that the Refugee Health Network be included. It was also suggested that the Forced Marriage and FGM Seminar (see below) be substituted for the proposed Health Forum;
- Employment Training and Community Engagement Forum 2017.** Will be held on 26<sup>th</sup> October 2017. Convenor: Bwe Thay. Steering Committee will have its first meeting in July.

**Seminar: Forced Marriage and FGM.** The seminar has been proposed with Helen Jurcevic of the Women’s Friendship Group and Sandy Ashton of Eastern Health taking the lead. Helen has speakers available on both Forced Marriage and FGM. Members will be notified when more details become available. ECLC will be invited to participate in relation to legal matters.

### Organisations:

- Humanitarian Settlement Services, AMES Consortium (Andree O’Donnell)** No changes to previous report, with low numbers of refugees settling in the eastern region. Services are being delivered through Box Hill and Dandenong sites.

- (b) **Catholic Care Eltham (Lowilla Okello)** – Lowilla works in settlement at the 60 unit complex in Eltham available to Syrian and Iraqi refugees. 200 volunteers are ready to support current and future arrivals. Presently there are 20 residents at the site. Lowilla invited members of the MSC to visit. Contact with local schools has been very positive. Has seen some refugees coming from interstate to settle at Eltham. For more information go to [Eltham Refugee Housing and Support Project](#).
- (c) **MIC (Judy McDougall)** Various activity: government uniform expo event on 16 March with around 250 people attending. 18 displays. Sheriff office, VicPol and others. Holiday program: youth team delivering employment training, including barista course. Students have taken part in the Amazing Race activity, locating services and agencies etc. in Maroondah and Whitehorse as part of the activity. OMAC Community Capacity Building grant, with focus on Family Violence, and with separate activities for men and women. Focus on Respectful Relationship, also with schools in Croydon and others. Groups so far involved have been the Zomi Hakka Chin and Iranian. Three other groups to follow. Focusing on alcoholism and how to combat it in some of the more recently arrived communities, including Chin men. Issues of family violence arise from alcohol abuse, which is related to a number of complex issues. 244 settlement cases have been received from AMES for the current financial year. Skilled migration in the area is the highest in Victoria. Noted the incidence of elder abuse increasing, e.g. older Chinese joining families in Australia where they become dependent on immediate family and take on child caring roles. Visit the MIC website for more information <http://miceastmelb.com.au>
- (d) **Foundation House (Jasmina Mulugeta)** Now two counsellors focusing on children and adolescents. Croydon Primary school is building a multicultural hub. BELS is focusing on the Rainbow program.
- (e) **Zo Community Australia (James Tuang)** Invited the MSC to the Zo Cultural Show event (supported by the VMC) on Easter Monday 78 Cuthbert Street Heathmont 2pm onwards – all welcome.
- (f) **City of Knox (Suzi Hayes)** Knox multicultural community forum held in March. Thanked CCOEI for its support.
- (g) **Interfaith network and other information (Dilnaz Billimoria)** Cultural event at Manningham, Council. The council has set up a welcome bench. Also reported on a Manningham Interfaith event, and referred to the Whitehorse festival event.
- (h) **CCOEI (Sarah Ozeer and Leonie Burnham)** Reported on the Multicultural Gala Dinner which was a most enjoyable celebration of cultures and a great opportunity for networking.

**9. Initiatives and innovations (for noting) - Nil**

- 10. Harmony Day: Sharing cultural diversity from a personal perspective, Saturnino Onyala, Case Management, Advocacy and Referral, MIC** – Saturnino spoke of his personal; experience and shared his views about the meaning of harmony day. He was born in South Sudan during a time of war. The country still suffers conflict today - his village is under attack now as it was when he was growing up. Saturnino fled to Uganda in 2001 and came to Australia in 2003 where he started working with the MIC. At the MIC he understood the importance of Harmony in Action. Now works across cultures in settlement. Noted the theme of Harmony Day 2017: Everyone Belongs. A day to celebrate inclusion.

**Next MSC Meeting: Friday 5<sup>th</sup> May, 9.30 –12.00.**

**Venue: Conference Room, Level 1, Community Resource Centre, 79 Mahoney’s Road, Forest Hill**

**Focus: Relevance of Faith in Australian Society in 2017 and beyond.**

**The interfaith network: its achievements, and challenges. Dilnaz Billimoria, Whitehorse and Manningham Interfaith Networks, and speakers from various agencies including local government and Victoria Police.**

**NOTES: (1)** For past and current CCOEI and MSC documents, including meeting papers and guest presentations, visit [www.CCOEI.org.au](http://www.CCOEI.org.au) **(2)** To contact Cynthia Shaw or Sam Navarria on matters relating to the MSC please use [chair.msc@gmail.com](mailto:chair.msc@gmail.com)