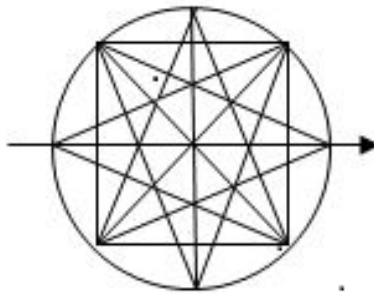


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MIGRANT SETTLEMENT COMMITTEE (Eastern Region)

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

Reg. No. A0017562S

Minutes

Friday, August 7th 2015

**Whitehorse Community Centre, Level 1 Conference Room,
 79 Mahoneys Road, Forest Hill.**

1. Present

Dilnaz Billimoria	Whitehorse Interfaith network
Leonie Burnham	ECLC, Manager Inner East Office
Linda Chen	Community Member, ESL Teacher
Gitta Clayton	AMES Outer East Volunteer Tutor Program (VTP) Coordinator
Chris Cosgriff	Anchor Chair, CCOEI
Heather Cosgriff	CCOEI
Leigh Gilmore	DOJ, Sheriff Office Ringwood, Senior Sheriff Officer & Indigenous & MLO
Dianne Godfrey	Department of Human Services, Multicultural Services Officer
Mohit Gupta	Swinburne University Team Leader
Marilyn Gurry	CCOEI, Swinburne University
Michael Hardie	Dorish Maru College Box Hill, Rector
Jack Intziadis	Department of Human Services, Multicultural Services Officer
Helen Jurcevic	Women's Friendship Group Inc., President
Patricia Kimda	Swinburne University of Technology
Penny Moore	City of Maroondah Community Development Officer
Sam Navarria	CCOEI
Saturnino Onyala	MIC, Settlement Worker
Saarah Ozeer	Bounce Program Refugee Youth Mentoring Program Director
Madeleine Parker	DET, North-Eastern Victoria Region, Senior Regional Project Officer EAL
Kirsten Reedy	City of Manningham, Planning and Development Officer
Jane Scott	MSO, DHS Centrelink
Cynthia Shaw	CCOEI
Bwe Thay	Swinburne University of Technology, Project Officer/AMEP Pathway Counsellor
Sui Ting Tse	CCOEI
Clary Verbunt	Dutch Community, CCOEI
Fred Warren	Holmesglen TAFE, AMEP Coordinator

Apologies

Sandy Ashton	Eastern Health, Diversity Coordinator
Glenis Crocker	CCOEI
Margot Hennessy	AMES, Manager Youth Programs
Cindy Kung	Louise Multicultural Community Centre, Program Coordinator
Fiona Nicholls	Anchor
Stephen Noy	Victoria Police Inspector Community Engagement EMR
Andree O'Donnell	AMES Settlement, Case Manager/Team Leader
Railey Orger	City of Whitehorse, Community Development Officer, Diversity
Joan Pepi	City of Knox Multicultural Communities
Samantha Press	Shire of Yarra Ranges Cultural Development Officer
Alaine Prime	Victoria Legal Aid, Community Educator
Elizabeth Sidiropoulos	VicPol, MLO, Eastern Region Community Engagement
Heidi Tucker	Anchor CEO

2. **Minutes June 2015 meeting:** Minutes circulated electronically. Moved Chris Cosgriff, Seconded: Sui Ting Tse. Accepted.
3. **Business Arising** – incorporated in the agenda.
4. **Issues and concerns:** (Template to be updated due to changes in the VMC)
 - Women's Friendship Group – Helen Jurcevic highlighted issue of immunisation costs for people on temporary visas. Helen reported that some parents were being charged \$300 per child which is impossible for parents with no income.
(Excerpt from the Government website:
<http://www.immunise.health.gov.au/internet/immunise/publishing.nsf/Content/about-the-program> *Immunisation not only protects individuals from life-threatening diseases, but also dramatically reduces transmission in the community. The more people who are vaccinated, the fewer opportunities a disease has to spread. The Australian Government's Immunise Australia Program implements the National Immunisation Program (NIP) Schedule, which currently includes vaccines against a total of 16 diseases. These include routine childhood vaccinations against diseases that were once widely fatal, such as measles, diphtheria and whooping cough, as well as more recently developed vaccines, such as Human Papillomavirus (HPV) and the meningococcal C vaccine).* The question being asked is: Why are some people being excluded from this important program when community health and safety is at risk? Helen is lobbying several MPs and will keep Migrant Settlement Committee members informed.
5. **Correspondence** – relevant correspondence (initiatives, services, programs circulated to MSC).
6. **Focus: Australian Refugee and Humanitarian Program 2015-2016: Community views, current challenges, and future directions.** Asher Hirsch, Policy Officer, Refugee Council of Australia (RCOA).

Asher provided an overview of the Refugee Council of Australia and their work. The purpose of the RCOA is to work with its members in promoting the development of humane, lawful and constructive policies towards refugees and asylum seekers by governments and communities.

Asher then went through the basics such as “who is a refugee” he informed members that every refugee at some stage had commenced as an asylum seeker. He stated that we should consider the language we use and speak of the person not a label. An example is to refer to refugees as “people from a refugee background” thus placing the person first. There are over 19.5 million refugees across the world and growing. Many live in protracted situations with little prospect of a solution and often under appalling conditions. The notion of there being a “queue” for refugees is a well-known myth. Australia is way behind in their assistance to refugees with only 13,750 places available.

RCOA Annual Consultations:

Asher provided an overview of the RCOA Annual consultations:
Consultations were undertaken October to December 2014 with 47 face-to-face consultations with service providers and refugee community representatives. Over 860 people in total were consulted with participation of at least 29 different national and ethnic groups.

Primary concern - family separation “My body is here but my mind is there”

- Including concern about safety and wellbeing of family members overseas
- This prevents people in Australia from being able to “move on” and plan for the future
- Boat arrivals now prevented from family reunion

Other issues identified through consultations:

- **Employment**, with participants again highlighting the inadequacy of the Job Services Australia program in supporting refugee and humanitarian entrants to secure sustainable employment and expressing concern about the possible withdrawal of specialised employment services, which were seen to be far more effective for these groups.
- **Education and training**, with participants raising ongoing concerns about the experiences of young people from refugee backgrounds in the secondary education system (particularly those of post-compulsory school age) and a range of issues relating to tertiary education.
- **English language tuition**, with concerns including the limited flexibility within the Adult Migrant English Program (AMEP) to respond to the diverse needs of students, the inadequacy of the eligibility period of 510 hours and the implications of moving the AMEP to the Department of Industry, which participants feared may undermine the program's settlement focus and its links with other settlement programs administered by the Department of Social Services.
- **Racism, prejudice and discrimination**, with recent events (such as the Ebola crises, acts of terrorism and international conflicts) seen as having led to an increase in racist acts directed towards people from refugee backgrounds, with negative consequences for the positive settlement of affected individuals and communities.
- **Regional settlement**, with service providers highlighting the significant impacts of fluctuations in settlement patterns on regional areas, the untapped potential of some regional areas and the need to ensure adequate support for new arrivals and the local community.
- **Citizenship**, with community members noting that limited literacy skills and the significant cost of citizenship applications can present barriers for people from refugee backgrounds.
- A range of issues and challenges affecting specific groups of refugee and humanitarian entrants, including **people with disabilities, women** and **young people**.

Recommendations: There were a number of recommendations made in the RCOA report.

1. RCOA recommends that the Australian Government develop, publish and implement a framework for Australia's refugee resettlement program based on:
 - priority resettlement to the most vulnerable refugees, including women at risk, culturally isolated groups of refugees (e.g. small groups of African refugees in South and South-East Asia), LGBTI refugees and other minorities at risk;
 - the promotion of family unity;
 - the strategic use of resettlement; and
 - the consideration of global resettlement needs in the development of regional allocations.
2. In view of pressing needs across the African continent, RCOA recommends that the Australian Government ensure that the 2015-16 regional target for resettlement from Africa be set at no lower than 25% of the offshore program.
3. RCOA recommends that the Australian Government and other resettlement states work with the Governments of Bangladesh, Malaysia and Thailand to develop a regional strategy for facilitating resettlement and brokering other durable solutions for Rohingya refugees, including through reinstating resettlement from Bangladesh.
4. RCOA recommends that the Refugee and Humanitarian Program be immediately restored to 20,000 places annually, delinked from onshore permanent Protection Visa grants.
5. RCOA recommends that the Australian Government, in light of escalating global protection needs, consider further expanding the Refugee and Humanitarian Program to between 25,000 and 30,000 places annually.
6. RCOA recommends that the Australian Government consider establishing an Emergency Response contingency quota over and above the annual Refugee and Humanitarian Program intake to provide additional capacity to respond to urgent protection needs during emergency situations, such as the current crisis in Syria.
7. RCOA recommends that the Australian Government overhaul the family reunion options for refugee and humanitarian entrants to Australia by developing a "Humanitarian Family Reunion Program" that is separate from the Refugee and Humanitarian Program and the family stream of the Migration Program

8. RCOA recommends that current restrictions on access to family reunion opportunities for Protection Visa holders who arrived by boat (including changes to processing priorities) be immediately removed.
9. RCOA recommends that the Australian Government abolish Temporary Protection Visas and grant permanent visas to all people who currently hold Temporary Protection, Temporary Humanitarian Concern or Temporary Safe Haven visas.

For more information please go to the RCOA website at <http://www.refugeecouncil.org.au/> or email: settlement@refugeecouncil.org.au

The Power Point presentation will be attached to the minutes and made available on the CCOEI website at http://www.ccoei.org.au/docs/RCOA_presentation_August_2015_MSC_meeting.pdf

7. **MSC 2015 Calendar:** the calendar is a guide of meeting focus, activities and events of the MSC. It may change to take into account developments during the year.

MSC 2015 CALENDAR

MSC meeting dates	Meeting focus	Forums/functions/events dates and working groups	International Multicultural events Calendar
January 2	No meeting		
06 Feb	Part A: Settlement Services in Victoria: Humanitarian Settlement Services (HSS) and the Settlement Services Grants (SSG) – panel of speakers from HSS and SSG providers (Teresa Lee and Tori Densley AMES; Judy McDougall MIC), the Department of Social Services (Josh Presser, DSS), and the Department of Human Services (Jack Intziadis and Maria deMonte DHS).	Forum: Community Safety and Crime prevention: Financial risks, elderly guarantors from Chinese background 10/02, Manningham. Forum: Domestic Violence 19/02. (Leonie, Jeska, Glenis, EACH, Foundation House).	February 1-7 United Nations Interfaith Harmony Week
06 March	Part B: Refugee and asylum seekers: the policy landscape and its challenges for advocacy organizations – Refugee and Immigration Legal Centre (RILC). Speaker: David Manne, Executive Director, Principal Solicitor and Migration Agent, RILC, and a RILC lawyer.	Harmony Day events. Forum: Community Safety and crime prevention project: Elderly guarantors from Indian background and financial risks, late March.	March 21: <u>Harmony Day</u>
03 April	Good Friday – no meeting.	Forum: Community Safety and crime prevention: Elderly guarantors from Greek background and financial risks, late April (Effie, Athena/Adonis)	April 7 – World Health Organisation <u>World Health Day</u>
01 May	Part A: Refugee Women's Health: how are services responding to the needs of refugee women, particularly young women? Part B: Refugee Men's Health: what are the main areas of concern and are men accessing available health services? Speakers: Merylyn Spratling (Refugee Health Nurse Program, Refugee Health Nurse Coordinator, Clinical Services) and Dr Marion Bailes, Specialist GP.		May 21 - <u>World Day for Cultural Diversity for Dialogue and Development</u> ,
05 June	Initiatives and innovations that make a difference: brief presentations across sectors: Settled and Safe: Elaine Prime, Community Liaison Educator, Victoria Legal Aid Women's Friendship Group: Helen Jurcevic, President, Women's Friendship Group Inc. AMES Youth Program: Margot Hennessy, Manager Youth Programs, AMES MIC Access and Support Program: Wanling Zhang,	Refugee Week: celebration of settlement in EMR. MSC/CCOEI, City of Manningham (Convenor: Kirsten; Cynthia, Sam, Bwe, Saturnino, Gitta, Elizabeth, Jasmina).	June 20 – UN <u>World Refugee Day</u> , June 26 – UN <u>Day - Support of Victims of Torture</u>

	Access and Support Program, MIC Safe Futures Foundation , Jin Jin Minehane, Gen Man Innovation & Foundation Development The VTP Program: Gitta Clayton, Volunteer Tutor Coordinator, AMES TAFE Taster and Transition to Higher Education , Bwe Thay, Project Officer/AMEP Pathways Counselor, Swinburne University of Technology.		
July 3	No meeting		
07 Aug	Australian Refugee and Humanitarian Program 2015-2016: Community views, current challenges, and future directions. Asher Hirsch, Policy Officer, Refugee Council of Australia (RCOA)	CALD and mental health (postponed to 2016) and working group to be formed to include, Leonie and Railey).	
04 Sept	Assisting refugees through the every day life maze (i.e. open a bank account; enrol kids in school, public transport, etc). Hamidullah Nida, AMES Settlement (HSS), Manager Orientation.	Education and Training expo moved to 2016: invitations to working group: Gateway LLEN, Providers of the AMEP and VET (TAFE, AMES), Centrelink.	
02 Oct	Family violence and elder abuse: The Elder Abuse Network, Kaz McKay; the <i>A Matter of Trust</i> project (Glenis Crocker, CCOEI) and projects building on <i>A Matter of Trust</i> (Leonie Burnham, ECLC). CCOEI AGM 12.00.- 12.30	Refugee health forum (for 2016 could combine with CALD mental health forum): services for refugee and humanitarian entrants (EACH; Eastern Health; Glenis, Belinda, Refugee Nurse. MIC).	October 17- <u>International Day for the Eradication of Poverty</u> , UN calendar
06 Nov	Refugee Council of Australia – the Refugee Communities Network – to be confirmed; OR Employment and training programs for CALD: do they respond effectively to needs (speakers from JN, TAFE, ACE, employers, settlement/education). OR Understanding the paths for refugees through the visa system (Zoe Holbeche and Magdallene Hektoras, DIBP, Current visa types (i.e. T.P.V., Bridging, etc.) and the implications for refugees TBC). Review MSC 2015 program and plan 2016 calendar of speakers, forums and events.	Refugee & CALD Youth Event. Conveners: Bwe and Sarah. Organisations participating: Swinburne, Bounce, MIC, CMY, ECLC, VicPol, AMES, BELS, Maroondah Council Youth Team and Foundation House): Purpose: Event to assist Refugees and CALD youth to achieve their aspirations. Will include: Pathways to further study and employment, innovative services and a fun element to attract young people on the day.	November 16 - <u>International Day for Tolerance</u> November 25 - <u>International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women</u> ,
04 Dec	Finalize meeting and events calendar 2016. Meeting focus to be advised.	(Disability forum: how are CALD with a disability faring under the NDIS? – postponed to first half of 2016)	Dec 3 rd : <u>International Day for People with a disability.</u> http://www.idpwd.com.au/

Other areas of interest:

- Human Rights Law Centre – a focus on CALD;
- Amnesty International – its work locally and globally
- How culturally responsive are LGAs in the Eastern Metropolitan Region

8. Forum and Agency Reports

Forum Reports

Refugee Welcome Celebration 2015 (Kirsten Reedy)

450 people attended the celebration and much positive feedback has been received. A very inclusive event with many activities: the human Library, AMES youth students' book launch of the refugee and migration experience; and the Refugee Welcome Trees displaying messages of welcome and support written on leaves. The trees will tour the eastern region. Organisations can book trees for their location. Thomas Albrecht, UNHCR Representative for Australia and the Pacific Region, gave a forceful and frank address. Organisations signed the

refugee welcome zone declaration, and Manningham will be included in the register on the RCOA website. Everyone was thanked for their participation and contributions to the event.

Other forums in 2015: Youth forum planned for November. Working group formed. The group will discuss audience and scope, date and length, location, program, etc. The forum program must be interactive.

Agency and individual reports

ECLC (Leonie Burnham).

- Mables - New project on family violence in Maroondah and Yarra Ranges. 30 Women involved.
- A Matter of Trust - the next step. Victorian Law Foundation funded project will focus on recognition of victims of abuse by their children. Much cultural complexity.

WFG (Helen Jurcevic).

- Information on elder abuse - 160 women attended. The extent of elder abuse is surprising.
- Christmas in July outing – 92 attended.
- Strengthening Partnerships provides free computer classes.

Swinburne University (Bwe Thay).

- 25th September Kitchen event, four communities to cook, and involve CALD communities in the college
- planning youth forum with CCOEI and MSC;
- transition to higher education to raise awareness of educational opportunities and pathway planning;
- 17th August taster program – migrant aspirations and pathways project.

Whitehorse Interfaith Network (Nildaz Billimoria) 16th August All Faiths Music Festival, Box Hill Town Hall. Flyer to be circulated.

DHS Centrelink (Dianne Godfrey) Presentation to Victorian Multicultural Advisory Forum (MAF) 14 August on Centrelink digital services, and mental health services. Flyer circulated.

MIC (Saturnino Onyala)

- Practical session on improving chances of people from refugee background obtaining employment – resume writing, interview techniques, etc.
- Information session by Centrelink MSO on employment and government benefits.

Dorish Maru College Box Hill (Michael Hardie) 4 under age minors received tickets to watch Real Madrid soccer match. Accommodation and meals provided by college.

Bounce (Saarah Ozeer) AFL Multicultural ambassador. AFL multicultural festival free tickets for the match.

Next MSC Meeting: Friday 4th September 2015, 9.30 – 12.00

Focus: Assisting refugees through the every day life maze (i.e. open a bank account; enrol kids in school, use public transport, etc).

Speaker: Hamidullah Nida, AMES Settlement (HSS), Manager Orientation.

Venue: Conference Room, Level 1, Whitehorse Community Centre, 79 Mahoneys Road, Forest Hill.

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