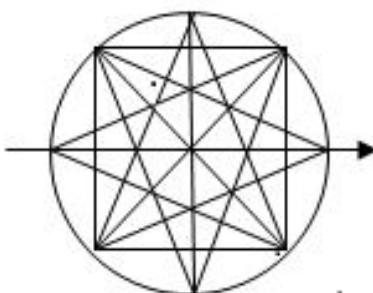


**Chairs:**

Sam Navarria: Mob: 0432 975 558

Cynthia Shaw: Mob: 0434 080 977



P O Box 94

Forest Hill VIC 3131

**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, August 4, 2017****Whitehorse Community Centre, Level 1 Conference Room,  
79 Mahoneys Road, Forest Hill.****1. Welcome** – Sam welcomed MSC members**2. Present**

Karen Arvidsson	Holmesglen TAFE, Senior Area Manager, NEIS Victoria
Iresha Butngamnwa	ECLC
Emma Chege	CCOEI, Treasurer
Krishani Dassanayake	CCOEI
Jen Dunian	Uniting Life Assist, Team Leader Carers Disability
Helen Forbes-Mewett	Monash University, Senior Lecturer and Researcher
Leigh Gilmore	DOJ and Regulation Eastern, Sheriff Officer, Koori and Multicultural Education
Dianne Godfrey	DHS, MSO
Lisa Gray	Victoria Police, Community Engagement
Marilyn Gurry	CCOEI
Chris Hortin	Foundation House, Counsellor/Advocate
Saba Irfan	Women's Friendship Group Inc
Helen Jurcevic	Women's Friendship Group Inc
Ellen Kimball	Whitehorse Council, Community Development Officer, Diversity
Cindy Kung	Louise Multicultural Community Centre, Program Coordinator
Digna Libera	Holmesglen TAFE, Chadstone & Moorabbin, Campus Manager
Margeaux Loos	ATO, Migrant Program Manager
Ari Moses	Holmesglen TAFE
Sam Navarria	CCOEI
Saarah Ozeer	Bounce, CCOEI
Madeleine Parker	Department of Education and Training, Senior Project Officer
Alaine Prime	Victoria Legal Aid, Community Educator
Barbara Reeckman	Melbourne Polytechnic, AMEP
Kirsten Reedy	Manningham City Council, Social Planning and Development Officer
Gianluigi Rotondo	Monash University PHD Student
Simon Sang Hre	Myanmar Organisation
Cynthia Shaw	CCOEI
Bwe Thay	Swinburne University, AMEP
Sui Ting Tse	CCOEI
Clary Verbunt	Dutch Community, CCOEI
Zehra Yalcin	Kara House

### **Apologies**

Dilnaz Billimoria	Interfaith Network
Gitta Clayton	Community
Rayce Coyte	IMVC, National Disability Coordinator Officer
Suzi Hayes	Knox City Council, Multicultural Communities Officer
Kate Jeffery	Link Health and Community, Senior Research and Planning Officer
Jasmina Mulugeta	Foundation House, Eastern Region Team Coordinator
Andree O'Donnell	AMES Settlement, HSS
Lyudmila Theodore	Holmesglen TAFE, Campus Manager
Johnny Tran	Vic Pol MLO
Rebecca Wickes	Monash University, Associate Professor
Linette Harriott	CMY, Sector Development and Training Officer

### **Guest presenters**

David Manne	Refugee Legal, Executive Director
Kate Bones	Refugee Legal, Solicitor and Migration Agent

### **3. Minutes MSC June, 2017.**

Moved Cynthia Shaw, seconded Helen Forbes-Mewett. Accepted.

### **4. Business Arising.**

Incorporated in the agenda

### **5. Correspondence.** Information circulated electronically and at the meeting.

### **6. Meeting focus: Refugee Legal (RL)**

**Speakers:** David Manne, Executive Director RL; Kate Bones, Solicitor and Migration Agent RL.

**David provided an overview and key functions of Refugee Legal**, which was established in 1998, and is the operating name (since December 2015) of the legal entity, Refugee & Immigration Legal Centre (RILC) Inc. RL is a non-profit specialist legal service, providing substantial legal advice and casework for asylum seekers, refugees and disadvantaged migrants in the community and in immigration detention in Victoria and across Australia. It advises, assists, educates and advocates. In 2016 it assisted over 12,300 people with free legal services. Its services include:

- Telephone Advice Line
- Evening Advice Service
- Day time casework, including full legal representation
- Temporary Protection Visa (TPV) Clinics
- Strategic 'test case' litigation
- Client and community information sessions

RL is the longest running legal service of its kind in Australia. Its challenges in the High Court are well known (e.g. the Malaysia case, indefinite detention cases, government cap on protection visas case), winning all of the nine legal challenges to date. David emphasised that it is not only a matter of winning a case for an individual, which has implications beyond the individual, but of educating individuals and the community about their rights and their obligations, and pursue options open to them.

Refugee Legal has assisted people from over 114 different countries. The service has 30 staff and 580 volunteers, including over 130 corporate lawyers who provide their time and skills pro bono, time that totals millions of dollars annually. The most valuable resource is the diverse and complex skills volunteers bring to the service to support the most vulnerable in our community.

### **Services**

**Telephone Advice Line** - free, preliminary legal advice service on refugee and immigration matters operating twice a week. The telephone advice line handles thousands of calls annually, and is the first step to access RL services, including casework. Requests that arise from the Telephone Advice Line are escalated on the

basis of need and urgency. Demand far exceeds resources and, where appropriate, cases are referred to other providers.

**Temporary Protection Visa Clinics:** government policy to fast track asylum seekers - about 12,000 in Victoria out of 31,000 in Australia - applying for temporary protection visas (TPVs), has significantly increased the workload of RL and other providers in the sector. The deadline to submit TPV applications is 01/10/2017. The fast track policy applies to asylum seekers who arrived by boat in Australia without a visa between 13 August 2012 and 1 January 2014). RL has helped applicants prepare and lodge highly detailed applications of more than 100 questions with 1:1 assistance, a 'clinic model' delivered by corporate lawyers pro bono. This approach has been the practical way to address the unprecedented workload generated by the policy, and ever since government removed funding for asylum seeker legal services. Apart from corporate lawyers giving their time freely, RL has conducted fund raising campaigns and sought philanthropy. Presently 1700 people in Victoria alone are still to apply by the October 1 deadline.

**Strategic test case litigation in the High Court:** - To date 9 court cases have been presented and all nine have been successful. The cases have been litigated on system issues and democratic principles - due process, the rule of law, and human rights. These cases have had a flow on effect for thousands of asylum seekers. Preparing High Court challenges involves considerable time in partnership with pro bono corporate lawyers.

**Other areas of RL activity:** Kate Bones, RL solicitor and migration agent, addressed a number of areas of interest, and in particular citizenship issues:

- (a) delays in processing citizenship applications - some applicants have been waiting for over a year;
- (b) changes to the residence requirements of 4 years to apply for citizenship;
- (c) Changes to the Citizenship Act: if passed by the Senate will affect people disproportionately. The English language citizenship test is an issue – experts indicate that applicants would need IELTS level 6 to attempt the test successfully, a challenge even for native speakers of English;
- (d) Unresolved issues with identity relating to earlier assessments when applying for Citizenship.

Kate also noted concerns re automatic cancellations of visas, and issues of family violence – both these areas show noticeable increase.

She noted RL's submissions to government enquiries, e.g. to the Senate Legal and Constitutional Affairs Committee, on various matters affecting refugees and asylum seekers.

For more information on Refugee Legal, visit <http://refugeelegal.org.au/>

For more information on Fast Track and Temporary Protection Visas see Fact Sheet: Recent changes: [http://www.svmorgan.com/rl/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/InformationSheet-Client\\_Briefing-20150210.pdf](http://www.svmorgan.com/rl/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/InformationSheet-Client_Briefing-20150210.pdf)

On behalf of the MSC, Sam thanked David and Kate, and wished Refugee Legal continuing success.

**7. MSC 2017 Calendar** – Calendar on track but note changes to the dates of delivery of some events.

**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 Woitwod	<b>Harmony Day events.</b>	March 21: <u>Harmony Day</u>

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>May 21</b> - <a href="#">World Day for Cultural Diversity for Dialogue and Development</a> ,
02 June	CALD from Syria – settlement needs and services. Speakers: Lowilla Okello, Senior Settlement Support Worker, Refugee and Settlement Services CatholicCare; Fr. Samir Haddad, President of Australian Syrian Charity, Parish Priest of St. Joseph Melkite Catholic Church		<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	Usually no meeting – Father Samir invited MSC to attend a morning event that brings together the Australian Syrian Charity.		
04 Aug	Refugee and Immigration Legal Centre – Refugee Legal David Manne, Executive Director; Kate Bones, Solicitor and Migration Agent	<b>Health forum:</b> FGM/C, forced marriage, 11/08. Working group: Dianne; Kate; Jacky, Helen, Lilian, Saba, Sandy, Australian Healing Centre for Women’s Rights, Liz, AFP, Women’s Health East, Lowilla.	
01 Sept	Immigrant Settlement in regional Victoria: What works in Greater Shepparton? Multicultural bus tours: Inter-ethnic contact in Shepparton. Researchers: Dr Helen Forbes-Mewett, Monash University; and Associate Professor, Rebecca Wickes, Monash University.	<b>Family violence forum: 19/09</b> theme – culturally sensitive approaches. Working group: Sandy; Saarah O; Sarah S, Mhisti; Judy M, Suresh; Leigh; Iresha; Nicki Vlahakis, Leonie, Emma, Jasmina, Helen J.	
06 Oct	CALD from Iran; Afghanistan; Iraq: focus on needs and services. Current and future services and innovations. Speakers TBC CALD from South Sudan: needs and services. Current and future services and innovations Speakers TBC. CCOEI AGM	<b>Employment Training and Community Engagement Forum 2017 “My Choice, My Life” 26/10</b> Working group: Bwe; Saarah; Suzie; Suresh; Leigh; Iresha, Krishiani, Mohit, Saba, Dianne.	<b>October 17-</b> <a href="#">International Day for the Eradication of Poverty</a> , 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</b> - <a href="#">International Day for Tolerance</a> <b>November 25</b> - <a href="#">International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women</a> ,
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:

- (a) **Family Violence Forum 2017 (Cynthia Shaw)**. Forum will be held on the 19<sup>th</sup> of September, 9.30 am start, with guest speaker Helen Kapalos, Chair of the VMC. Matsudo Room, Box Hill Town Hall;
- (b) **Health Forum 2017 - FGM/C and Forced Marriage forum. (Helen Jurcevic)** 11<sup>th</sup> August. In its final stages of planning. Meeting of the working group will follow the meeting of the MSC. The forum will be held in Lower Templestowe. Helen noted presenters. In excess of 110 people attending. Emma is to MC. Helen thanked the working group for their hard work and input;
- (c) **Employment Training and Community Engagement Forum 2017 “My Choice, My Life” (Bwe Thay)** 26 October 2017. The second meeting of the working group was held on Thursday 3<sup>rd</sup> August, and the next meeting will be on the 24<sup>th</sup> of August. Workshops and expo. A short video of the previous forum held in 2015 was shown. The venue is Swinburne University Croydon Campus.

### Organisations update:

- (a) **CCOEI AGM (Cynthia Shaw)**: The AGM and the October meeting of the MSC will be held in the Willis Room, City of Whitehorse on 6 October. The AGM will be brief, followed by refreshments and a light lunch. The Burmese choir will be invited, and the AGM plans to highlight artifacts from communities. Everyone is invited and welcome to join the CCOEI and its Committee of Management. AGM papers, including membership application etc. were distributed.
- (b) **Melbourne Polytechnic (Barbara Reeckman)** Melbourne Polytechnic and subcontractors now deliver in all AMEP regions but one. Barbara provided an update of locations. Some services previously available will no longer be delivered under the new contract, including free translations which will be managed by DSS. Some clients may not avail themselves of this service given that access to it is no longer at the provider level. Agencies should refer clients to DSS. Barbara noted the AMEP handbook which is available in key community languages. The handbook has information on entitlement, obligations of service users and providers, agencies, etc. The Polytechnic also delivers SEE program;
- (c) **The Shepparton Project (Helen Forbes-Mewett)**. Presentation at the next meeting of the MSC;
- (d) **Centrelink DHS (Dianne Godfrey)** National multicultural priorities: reducing debt and encouraging people to go on line for services;
- (e) **City of Manningham (Kirsten Reedy)** Council event with MIC, VicPol, and emergency services: being safe outdoors, in October. Council Plan: inclusive Manningham strategy on diversity and inclusion;
- (f) **Uniting Life Assist, Carers Disability (Jen Dunian)** NDIS roll out in November. Organisation assists carers in LGAs including Boroondara, Manningham, Yarra Ranges. Brochure available. Available for information and will come to agencies;
- (g) **Department of Justice and Regulation, Sheriff’s office (Leigh Gilmore)** entered team in cricket carnival;
- (h) **Holmesglen TAFE (Karen Arvidsson and Ari Moses)** NEIS – business start-up program for unemployed, open to all including asylum seekers. Level: ISLPR 2 minimum. All clients screened. Free of charge to asylum seekers and refugees not on permanent visas. Program features: business plan and business mentoring plan; 12-18 months business support mentoring; receipt of Newstart allowance which is not tested for Centrelink clients; working with THRIVE (set up by Westpac Bank and AMES up to \$20,000 loans to be repaid over three years for asylum seekers and refugees);

- (i) **Domestic Violence Victoria (Leonie Burnham)** program is part of the response to the Royal Commission into Family Violence. Daily consultation with communities; invited input;
- (j) **Victoria Police (Lisa Gray)** The role of the Vic Pol Community Engagement Office is to add value to community strengthening aspects of police work. Emergency services lists being developed;
- (k) **Foundation House (Chris Hortin)** Conducts sessions relating to settlement for traumatised asylum seekers and refugees;
- (l) **Swinburne University (Bwe Thay)** Transition to Higher Education information event to be held at Hawthorn Campus 13/09/2017;
- (m) **Women's Friendship Group (Helen Jurcevic)** Medical equipment to Cambodia.

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

10. **Next MSC Meeting: Friday 4<sup>th</sup> August, 9.30 –12.00.**

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

**Focus: Multicultural bus tours: Inter-ethnic contact in Shepparton.**

**Speakers: Dr Helen Forbes-Mewett, Monash University; Associate Professor Rebecca Wickes, Monash University.**

**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)