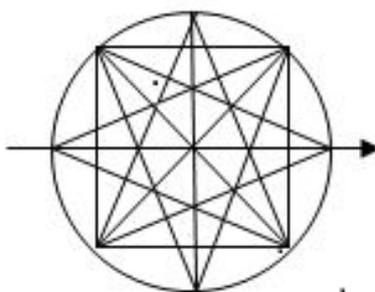


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MIGRANT SETTLEMENT COMMITTEE (Eastern Region)

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

Reg. No. A0017562S

Minutes

Friday, February 6th 2015

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

1. Present

Leonie Burnham	ECLC, Manager Inner East Office
Jeska Chamberlain	Victoria Police, Multicultural Liaison Officer
Gitta Clayton	AMES Outer East Volunteer Tutor Program, VTP Coordinator
Karen Connolly	Swinburne University
Chris Cosgriff	Anchor Chair, CCOEI
Heather Cosgriff	CCOEI
Glenis Crocker	CCOEI
Maria deMonte	DHS Centrelink, Multicultural Services Officer
Leigh Gilmore	DOJ, Sheriff Office Ringwood, Senior Sheriff Officer and Multicultural and Indigenous Liaison Officer
Dianne Godfrey	DHS, Multicultural Services Officer
Belinda Haydon	Women's Health East, Health Communication Officer
Teena Lee	Eastern Health Child Youth Mental Health Services, Promotions Officer
Sam Navarria	CCOEI
Fiona Nicholls	Anchor, Acting CEO
Andree O'Donnell	AMES Settlement, HSS Caseworker
Madeleine Parker	DET, EMR, School Development Officer ESL
Kirsten Reedy	City of Manningham, Planning and Development Officer
Cynthia Shaw	CCOEI
Elizabeth Sidiropoulos	Victoria Police, Multicultural Liaison Officer
Bwe Thay	Swinburne University, AMEP Pathway Councillor
Sui Ting Tse	CCOEI
Clary Verbunt	Dutch Community, CCOEI
Fred Warren	Holmesglen TAFE, AMEP Coordinator

Apologies

Jessica Bishop	MIC, Settlement, Community Development Officer
Jane Curry	Swinburne TAFE, AMEP Counsellor and ESL Teacher
Serren Duyal	DHS Centrelink, Multicultural Services Officer
Twanny Farrugia	DonatLife Community Champion, CCOEI
Belinda Gillam-Derry	ECLC Yarra Ranges, Coordinator
Michael Hardie	Dorish Maru College Box Hill, Rector
Cindy Kung	Louise Multicultural Community Centre, Program Coordinator
Jasmina Mulugeta	Foundation House, Eastern Region Team Coordinator
Stephen Noy	Victoria Police, Inspector, Community Engagement, EMR
Saturnino Onyala	MIC, Settlement Support Worker
Railey Orger	City of Whitehorse, Community Development Officer Diversity
Joan Pepi	Knox City Council, Multicultural Communities
Alaine Prime	Victoria Legal Aid, Community Educator
Michael Smith	ECLC, CEO

Guests

Josh Prosser	Assistant Director, Settlement Services, Department of Social Services
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Teresa Lee
Tori Densley
Judy McDougall
Jack Intsiadis
Maria deMonte

AMES, Humanitarian Settlement Services
AMES, Asylum Seeker Programs
Project Worker, Settlement Grants Program, MIC;
Multicultural Services Officer Department of Human Services
Multicultural Services Officer, Department of Human Services

2. Minutes December 2014 meeting

Minutes circulated electronically. Moved Chris Cosgriff, Seconded: Maria deMonte. Accepted.

3. Business Arising – incorporated in the agenda

4. Issues and concerns template

MSC members/organisations can use the template to highlight issues for the attention of the Victorian Multicultural Commission (VMC) and the local Regional Advisory Council (RAC).

5. Correspondence – all correspondence relating to initiatives, AGMs, services and programs has been circulated to MSC.

6. Meeting focus - Settlement Services: Humanitarian Settlement Services (HSS) and Settlement Services Grants (SSG).

Josh Presser, DSS

HSS: the Humanitarian intake is set at 13, 750 places. Of these, 11,000 are for offshore entrants. The Special Humanitarian Program (SHP) component is around 5,500. SHPs are sponsored by proposers, usually friends or family, who are responsible for their settlement. 2,750 places are referred by the UNHCR. Those without links are usually settled in Victoria. The top 5 countries of settlement are Burma, Iraq, Syria, Thailand and Afghanistan.

Josh noted that the HSS contract has been extended until April 2017. The on arrival services of the HSS program are world class.

Settlement Services Grants: a huge response to the June 2014 funding round, with 5,500 applications received totalling \$3.9 Billion but only \$800M was available for the program. It has been a massive task to assess the applications. Letters were sent to successful applicants on 30th January. Streamlined and simplified reporting will give agencies more time to focus on program delivery.

Victoria has been awarded 29 grants. There has been no big change in Victoria of organisations receiving grants, with only two new agencies.

The focus of the grants is on English, Education and Employment, and participants should benefit in one or more of these areas. The main goal of the grants is to enable participants to better participate in social and economic activity.

Josh noted that the new SSG funding round will begin on June 26th 2015.

Teresa Lee, Humanitarian Settlement Services, AMES

In Victoria the AMES led consortium is responsible for the delivery of the HSS program across all regions. The HSS region that covers the EMR is the North East West. AMES partners in HSS delivery are Spectrum, and Redback who is responsible for picking up clients at the airport and taking them to their short term accommodation. Assistance provided to clients includes an initial food package. On entry, clients are assigned to case managers. The case manager organises and assists with banking (setting up a bank account), schooling for children, education (registering for the AMEP and other education programs), and links clients with other services and agencies such as Centrelink (for income support) and Medicare. The HSS team has long established working relationships with estate agents to secure suitable accommodation.

Orientation information is provided as early as practicable with scheduled settlement information sessions in the clients' own language in the 3rd or 4th week after arrival. Transport, money management, Centrelink, Australian law basics, Australian culture and expectations are some of the areas covered in the information sessions. The objective is to provide information that can support faster settlement, and quicker and greater independence.

An extensive volunteer tutor program supports individual refugees and families connect with community and keep vital appointments, such as medical appointments.

Local Area Coordination meetings are also part of the strategy to coordinate and support settlement. Meetings are organised around specific topics and participant agencies and providers are invited on the basis of the topic.

HSS assistance is for 6-12 months depending on how quickly clients become independent. After clients exit HSS, they are referred to SSG providers.

One key area is health. Health services in the region are provided by the Refugee Health Nurse Program. The program assists clients on a range of health needs such as dental, physiotherapy, and optometry.

Proposed HSS clients (around 70%) have a link or know someone in Melbourne, and their proposers have some responsibility for their settlement. All HSS clients are eligible for services on a needs basis. Case managers will assess and respond to individual needs.

One of the successful features of HSS is the Community Guides program. Community Guides speak the clients' own language and facilitate communication, orientation, cultural expectations and understanding. The guides are also employed as interpreters.

Tori Densley, Asylum Seeker Services, AMES

Tori spoke briefly about services to asylum seekers. She noted the living allowance that is paid to eligible clients by the Department of Human Services through Centrelink, under the Status Resolution Support Services (SRSS) payment. The allowance is for the period while people are waiting for a decision on their refugee claims. (A dedicated team at DHS Centrelink looks after these payments). Tori said that asylum seekers want to be an active part of the community. They are not permitted to work but can volunteer and many do. They enjoy volunteering as it keeps them engaged while waiting for decisions.

AMES in partnership with key agencies like the Brotherhood of St Laurence and the Salvation Army, provide asylum seekers with material aid that augments their limited SRSS allowance.

Jack Intsiadis and Maria deMonte, Multicultural Services Officers, DHS (Centrelink) - Status Resolution Support Services Payment (SRSS)

DHS provides financial help for basic living expenses to asylum seekers living in the community while they wait for resolution of their immigration status. Centrelink administers the payment but does not determine who can get the payment or the level of payment. Eligibility and allowance are determined by the Department of Immigration and Border Protection (DIBP). The DIBP populates the DHS system with information and details about asylum seekers. It is a simpler system as there is usually no income or assets involved. DHS needs DIBP to load details on their system or they cannot help people. It must be made clear to clients that DHS (Centrelink), although handling the income support payment, has no role in determining the Refugee application. Service providers provide clients with additional support.

There are three components under the SRSS payments: the client receives a Living Allowance and, depending on their circumstances, they may receive the Rental Assistance Allowance or the Dependent Child Allowance, or both. Eligibility for these is determined by DIBP who regulate the allowance rate and refer to Centrelink for payment. Clients may also have access to Medicare. SRSS clients do not have access to other Centrelink payments or services.

MSOs emphasised that clients must immediately contact Centrelink if there is a change in their circumstances because it may affect their payment. Changes in the following areas must be reported to Centrelink as soon as they are known:

- change of address or contact details
- change of bank details
- have a child enter or leave their care
- start a new relationship or separate from their partner
- get a job, stop working or any income changes
- need to change a Centrelink appointment or need to make an appointment with Centrelink
- Plan to leave Australia.

Language specific face to face interviews are organised to obtain bank account details for the purpose of payments and for processing the blue Medicare card which is issued to non residents. Clients are also given an individual client information card that has personal details like language spoken and their Customer Reference Number (CRN), as well as the numbers to call if they need help with their SRSS payment (131202). The card has also the number to call for information about visa or immigration status (1300 853 773), and that for all other queries they should contact their SRSS service provider. The card is designed to facilitate and support contact with the Centrelink SRSS team.

Language specific group seminars are also organised to provide the necessary information people may require.

Along with a sample SRSS card, MSOs circulated information sheets on the *SRSS Payment* (brief summary of and the role of DSS, DIBP and Service Providers), and *How to Access DHS Refugee Services*.

Three Centrelink hubs manage SRSS in Melbourne – Dandenong, Sunshine and Broadmeadows - where specialist staff answers queries about SRSS payments.

Judy McDougall, Migrant Information Centre (MIC) - SSG provider.

The MIC provides SSG funded programs, and Judy gave an overview of the programs run by the MIC. The development of SSG programs is based on DSS guidelines, what programs already exist in the community, and input from customers through surveys in languages other than English. All programs are evaluated via surveys, including telephone surveys, and this information is built into future programs. The aim is to provide responsive programs and to avoid duplication.

MIC SSG programs have included information on employment and practical support with employment related letters and communication; migration advice, which is available to recently arrived refugees aged from 18 years to 60 years of age; private rental accommodation; casework services; community development services; and ethno specific community assistance with settlement. In general, settlement work is complemented by other funding such as the state funded Refugee Action Program.

Private rental accommodation includes support for people seeking rental. Up to February 6th this year 49 families have been helped. The MIC has good relationships with estate agents.

The MIC also delivers individual case coordination and coordination for community groups. It provides support for specific ethnic groups, e.g. Iranian men and women groups in 2015. Iranians like many other communities, such as those from Burma, are very diverse. There are many Farsi speaking Iranian support groups. Some of these groups are socially isolated and individuals have experienced stress, anxiety, depression, and homelessness. Some Iranians do not necessarily access Iranian social groups. Different religious and educational backgrounds add to the complexity of providing assistance.

Other programs and services delivered by the MIC include:

- parenting program to acclimatise new comers - one has been run with the Blackburn English Language School (BELS);
- Driver education program in partnership with VicPol, Vic Roads and RACV who subsidise the program. Driver mentors help with driving practice (a 'gifted' car is utilized by Driving Mentors);
- Swimming program for all migrants. The program is needed given the number of deaths from drowning. Learning to swim is important in a country like Australia;
- Leadership training for ethno specific groups – supports organisations with their constitution, grant submissions, etc. The MIC also meets with community leaders three times a year for collegiate support, learning and sharing;
- Playgroups – 62 in total with some having 50 children. Playgroups for women from Burma communities are especially popular;
- A number of youth programs are also run:
 - Employment Program for young people exploring how to write a resume, interview skills, work culture. A Hip Hop event was very popular;
 - Employment program for young people and their families;
 - Young Refugee Women Program;
 - Holiday program (this is very popular) and playgroups.

The MIC relies heavily on volunteers with 73 active volunteers. Volunteers are matched with preferred activities such as group related excursions, homework groups, playgroups, etc.

Judy noted the MIC Newsletter which provides details of other CALD programs and initiatives in the community. For more information or to have an article included in the newsletter contact Judy on email jmcdougall@miceastmelb.com.au

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. The meeting suggested that the forum on mental health and CALD communities in August could be broadened beyond the EMR by liaising with other regions to ensure we are across what is happening in Victoria and other parts of Australia.

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 Intsiadis 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	April 7 – World Health Organisation

		from Greek background and financial risks, late April (Effie, Athena/Adonis)	<u>World Health Day</u>
01 May	<p>Part A: Refugee Women's Health: how are services responding to the needs of refugee women, particularly young women?</p> <p>Part B: Refugee Men's Health: what are the main areas of concern and are men accessing available health services?</p> <p>Speakers: Marilyn Spratling (Refugee Health Nurse Program, Refugee Health Nurse Coordinator, Clinical Services) and Dr Marion Bailes, GP.</p>	Refugee youth: (Maria, Margot, CMY, BELS, Gateway LLENS): policy, programs, services, sharing good practice & opportunities.	May 21 - <u>World Day for Cultural Diversity for Dialogue and Development</u>,
05 June	Initiatives and innovations that make a difference: examples of programs and services from LGAs, community centres, health providers, employment education and training, holistic family programs with a CALD focus. Alternative: opportunity at every meeting rather than a focus.	Refugee Week: celebration of settlement in EMR. MSC/CCOEI, City of Manningham (Kirsten, Cynthia, Sam, Belinda H., Bwe, Saturnino, others?)	June 20 – <u>UN World Refugee Day</u>, June 26 – <u>UN Day - Support of Victims of Torture</u>
July 3	No meeting		
07 Aug	Assisting older migrants and refugees in general through the every day life maze (i.e. how to open a bank account, how to enrol kids in school, public transport, etc);	CALD and mental health: (Leonie, Maria, Teena, Railey). Further discussion required.	
04 Sept	Employment and training programs for CALD: do they respond effectively to needs. Speakers from JN providers, TAFE, ACE, employers and providers of settlement/education programs.	Education and Training expo: Gateway LLEN, Providers of the AMEP and VET (TAFE, AMES, Centrelink. (Centrelink, Bronwyn Henry, Outer Eastern LLEN – Maria to enquire with Gary)	
02 Oct	Understanding the paths for refugees through the visa system; Current visa types (i.e. T.P.V., Bridging, etc.) and the implications for refugees.	Refugee 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; Review MSC 2015 program and plan 2016 calendar of speakers, forums and events.	Disability forum: how are CALD with a disability faring under the NDIS? (Knox, Twanny, Cynthia, others)	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.		Dec 3 rd : <u>International Day for People with a disability</u> . http://www.idpwd.com.au/

Other areas of interest:

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

8. Forum and Agency Reports

Forum Reports

Domestic Violence Forum – *Tip Toeing Around* (Teena Lee)

The forum title is titled *Tip Toeing Around*. The forum is on 19/02/2015. Mental health remains the focus. The Flyer has been circulated.

Refugee Week Celebration 2015 (Kirsten Reedy)

As stated in other MSC meeting minutes the event is a partnership of the City of Manningham and CCOEI, and members of the MSC. Thomas Albrecht, the UNHCR Representative for Australia and the Pacific Region has been invited to be guest speaker. Awaiting a response. Working group: Kirsten (City of Manningham), Cynthia and Sam (CCOEI): Belinda (Women's Health East), Bwe (Swinburne University), and Saturnino (MIC). MSC members with a strong refugee and asylum seeker interest, and others, are welcome to join the working group.

Conversations: Seeking the Answers (Glenis Crocker)

Report and update on the series will be provided at future MSC meetings. Some specific areas of interest of the series will be touched on at the MSC meeting focus in May on refugee health, and possibly on a refugee youth forum tentatively scheduled in the latter part of 2015.

Crime Prevention Community Safety DOJ funded CCOEI project (Steering Committee members)

The DOJ funded project is now delivering the third phase of the project to specific communities (the first phase was a stakeholder forum held in the City of Whitehorse, followed by a forum involving members of the interfaith networks in the EMR and representatives from Senior Citizen Clubs which was held in Manningham in December 2014). The third phase focuses on ethnic communities with the first forum for the Chinese community to be delivered on the 10th of February 2015 in the City of Manningham. Cantonese and Mandarin interpreters have been organised. A brief overview of the forthcoming forum for people from Chinese background was provided.

Agency and individual reports

Swinburne University (Bwe Thay and Karen Connolly)

- Transition program - courses in community gardening and carpentry for CALD;
- Project to promote higher education opportunities for CALD – part of Bwe's role. A video to promote the Pathways program is being developed, and Bwe is mentoring students;
- Evening English class at Swinburne University;
- Cynthia congratulated Bwe on receiving the Swinburne Vice Chancellor Award. The video of the event has been circulated;
- Computer classes available at Swinburne.

Communities Council on Ethnic Issues (Sui Ting Tse, Chris Cosgriff, Glenis Crocker)

- CCOEI forums – see entries under forums above;
- MSC members invited to become members of CCOEI;
- On behalf of CCOEI a happy and prosperous Chinese New Year.

Department of Education and Training, DET (Madeleine Parker)

The Refugee Education Support Program (RESP) is a joint initiative of Foundation House, Centre for Multicultural Youth (CMY) and the Department of Education and Training. Throughout 2014-15 eight schools in eastern metropolitan Melbourne will receive targeted support to review their capacity to cater for students and their families from refugee backgrounds. The schools involved are located in Manningham, Maroondah and Yarra Ranges council areas. As part of the program CMY will be working closely with the Migrant Information Centre in Box Hill to deliver workshops for students that focus on learning and study skills and for parents on how best to support their children's education.

Eastern Health Child Youth Mental Health Services (Teena Lee).

- The long awaited article on mental health and CALD children featuring Teena Lee and Andree O'Donnell now published;
- Teena's team has been axed but she will continue with Eastern Health in a different position;
- Teena will continue her involvement with the MSC. The VCAG meetings will continue through Leonie Burnham and the ECLC;
- Teena is working with Lee Young at Connections with the Zomi Parent Group;

- Cynthia thanked Teena for her commitment and valuable contribution to working groups over the years and expressed her thanks for continuing as a volunteer.

DHS – Centrelink (Maria deMonte): due to changes at the agency level, Maria has been relocated and the new Centrelink MSO for the area is Dianne Godfrey, who will attend MSC meetings. She would appreciate remaining on the MSC mailing list. Cynthia thanked Maria for her considerable input to the MSC and her commitment and active participation on many workshops. Maria has demonstrated to a high level the valuable work of the Migrant Services Officers in Centrelink.

City of Manningham (Kirsten Reedy).

- Soccer tournament on March 1. The tournament involves Manningham, Vic Pol and an A League Melbourne club and is for children from 5 to 14 years of age. Sponsored by the VMC;
- Manningham Major and Minor community grants program opening soon — information will be sent to the MSC.

Women’s Health East (Belinda Haydon). The organisation in partnership with Health Australia is developing resources for women and ways to help them.

Other news: Railey Orger, City of Whitehorse, is on secondment.

Next MSC Meeting: Friday 6th March 2014, 9.30 – 12.00

Focus - The Refugee and Asylum Seeker Policy landscape: a challenge for advocacy agencies – the work of the Refugee and Immigration Legal Centre (RILC).

Guest speaker: David Manne, Executive Director, Principal Solicitor and Migration Agent, RILC.

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