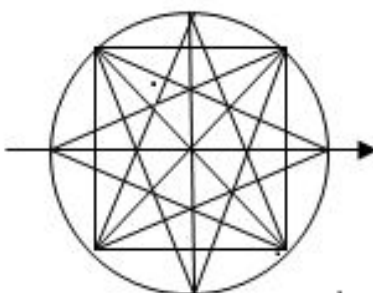


**Chairs:**

Sam Navarria: Mob: 0432 975 558

Cynthia Shaw: Mob: 0434 080 977



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

Inc.

Reg. No. A0017562S

**Minutes**

Friday, June 2, 2017

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

1. **Welcome** – Sam welcomed MSC members and guests.2. **Present**

Fadak Alfayadh	Community Development Coordinator, ECLC
Dilnaz Billimoria	Interfaith Network
Iresha Butngamnwa	ECLC
Emma Chege	CCOEI, Treasurer
Gitta Clayton	AMES Australia, Volunteer Tutor Program Coordinator
Rayce Coyte	IMVC, National Disability Coordinator Officer
Krishani Dassanayake	CCOEI
Phil Di Pietro	ATO (for Margeaux Loos)
Jacqui D'Sylva	ECLC
Felicity Ewart	Foundation House (for Jasmina Mulugeta)
Jack Fatoul	ASC
Helen Forbes-Mewett	Monash University, Senior Lecturer and Researcher
Dusko Gjurginovski	DSS, MCLO
Dianne Godfrey	DHS, MSO
Mahshid Ghorbani	AISOU, volunteer
Mira Gowigati	ASC
Marg Greenhalf	Box Hill Institute, Community Liaison Officer
Marilyn Gurry	CCOEI
Aline Inci	DHS, MSO
Saba Irfan	Women's Friendship Group Inc.
Helen Jurcevic	Women's Friendship Group Inc.
Geoff Kloot	Neighbourhood Watch Victoria, Secretary
Cindy Kung	Louise Multicultural Community Centre, Program Coordinator
Teena Lee	Restore Program, Enjoy Church Mulgrave
Tina Mifsud	NEAMI National
Sam Navarria	CCOEI
Andree O'Donnell	AMES Settlement, HSS
Madeleine Parker	Department of Education and Training, Senior Project Officer,
Suresh Ramachandriah	ECLC
Barbara Reeckman	Melbourne Polytechnic, AMEP Counselling Service Coordinator
Mhisti Rele	CCOEI
Gianluigi Rotondo	Monash University PHD Student

Cynthia Shaw	CCOEI
Elizabeth Sidiropoulos	Multicultural Liaison Unit, MSO, Victoria Police;
Bwe Thay	Swinburne University, AMEP Pathway Counsellor; CCOEI
Sui Ting Tse	CCOEI
Nicki Vlahakis	Counsellor/Advocate ECASA
<b>Apologies</b>	
Chris Cosgriff	CCOEI
Heather Cosgriff	CCOEI
Leigh Gilmore	Sheriff Officer, Koori and Multicultural Education, DOJ and Regulation Eastern
Margeaux Loos	ATO
Jasmina Mulugeta	Foundation House, Eastern Region Team Coordinator
Saarah Ozeer	Bounce, CCOEI
Clary Verbunt	Dutch Community, CCOEI
Rebecca Wickes	Monash University, Associate Professor
Emma Wilkinson	City of Boroondara, Community Planning and Development, Social Inclusion Officer and Projects Officer
Zehra Yalcin	Kara House
<b>Guest presenters</b>	
Father Samir Haddad	Australian Syrian Charity, Parish Priest
Tomasa Morales	CatholicCare Manager Refugee Settlement Services, Eastern
Lowilla Okello	CatholicCare Senior Settlement Support Worker, Refugee and Settlement Services

**3. Minutes MSC May, 2017.**

Moved Cynthia Shaw, seconded Liz Sidiropoulos. Accepted.

**4. Business Arising.**

Incorporated in the agenda.

**5. Correspondence.** Information circulated electronically. Correspondence and information included in the information box and shared at the meeting.

**6. Meeting focus: CALD from Syria – settlement needs and services**

**Lowilla Okello, Senior Settlement Support Worker, Refugee and Settlement Services, CatholicCare**

The Refugee Settlement Program equips newly arrived refugee and humanitarian entrants with social and life skills to integrate and settle into the Australian community. Mental health issues, unemployment, language barriers and social isolation can make refugees very vulnerable. The aim is to increase people's life skills, health and wellbeing. This program is not funded by government, but by CatholicCare and private donors. It has 1.6 staff.

**The Eltham accommodation – The Butterfly Project.** The Eltham Units comprise 50 furnished units. 29 residents, including women and children are living there. Many volunteers help with a range of tasks. The project has seen a wonderful community response with over 200 volunteers expressing interest in assisting. There are morning teas arranged and both Aged Care and new residents share and get to know each other. Information sessions are fun for families and the Refugee Health Nurse comes to the units for medical assessments.

**Issues**

- (a) Employment: they are often highly educated and skilled (doctors, engineers, nurses) but don't know how to access the job market; they are looking for a second chance and finding communication traumatic in terms of meeting expectations between Job Network and Centrelink;

- (b) Loss and grief: residents have often lost everything including loved ones;
- (c) Difficulty communicating effectively with bureaucracy: DHS-Centrelink: letters, Job Network, English classes;
- (d) Mental Health: asking for help;
- (e) Future accommodation uncertainty. The project will end after 2 years. Residents are already very fearful about where they will live after they leave the shelter of this project. A Real Estate agent is working to assist.

To help improve confidence and empower residents many information sessions are organised. Sessions have included topics such as Housing, Victoria Police and Centrelink. Linking residents with external services has also proved helpful. Only those people from Iraq and Syria are eligible for accommodation through this project and workers have felt heartbroken when there have been urgent requests from services which have had to be denied.

For more information go to <http://www.ccam.org.au/news/52/a-new-community-flourishes>

**Tomasa Morales, Manager, Refugee Settlement Services Eastern, CatholicCare**

The project sees the collaboration of agencies to support Syrian and Iraqi refugees resettle, with case management provided by AMES HSS. She noted that there has been a considerable positive contribution by the Eltham community who has welcomed the resettlement of refugees in Eltham. Their continuing support, and the support and participation of many agencies, has facilitated settlement and will still be needed by refugees as they transition out of the Eltham units particularly towards the end of the project.

Post meeting, Tomasa provided a video about the Eltham project – *The Butterfly Project*. <https://vimeo.com/215862006>

**Father Samir Haddad, President, Australian Syrian Charity, and Parish Priest St. Joseph Melkite Catholic Church.**

Father Samir's presentation included two videos: one of contrasting images of Syria, and another *Echoes from Ugarit* featuring Syrian composer and pianist Malek — 'the first arrangement of the oldest music notation in the world'.

Through a PowerPoint presentation, Father Samir gave an overview of the historical, cultural and religious aspects of Syria, the history of settlement in Australia and the work of the Australian Syrian Charity. He noted that Syria is 74% Sunni, 13% Shia, 10% Christian, and spoke of Syrian traditions of marriage, food, and music.

The tragic consequences of the civil war are well known – the UNHCR report of September 2015 details out of 22 million Syrians:

- 3,984,393 refugees including over one million children
- 8,180,000 people displaced
- 265,085 people detained
- 205,890 physically wounded including loss of limbs
- 102,595 men, women and children missing.

The death toll includes 18,500 women and 14,857 children.

Syrian refugees are in Turkey, Lebanon, Jordan and Iraq with many millions inside Syria needing assistance.

Father Samir spoke of the history of refugee resettlement in Australia. The Australian Government's resettlement response of 12,000 people from Syria was announced in September 2015, and most have arrived.

As part of the resettlement of refugees in Australia, and assisting refugees outside of Australia, Father Samir spoke of the work of the Australian Syrian Charity particularly in the areas of immigration & family reunion; affordable & appropriate housing; torture and trauma counselling; financial needs; social Isolation; language and cultural barriers; health and well-being; employment and education; and family relationships. He noted the creation of a marching band which brings together talented youth to make Middle Eastern musical traditions better known; English conversation classes, and the involvement of countless volunteers. The ASC organises artificial limbs to Syria which are urgently needed.

On behalf of MSC Sam thanked presenters.

- 7. MSC 2017 Calendar** – Calendar on track. Names have been added to the steering committees and forum working groups.

#### 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 Woiwod	<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>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.	<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, Emma, Jasmina, Helen J.	
04 Aug	Refugee Legal (formerly Refugee and Immigration Legal Centre – David Manne, Executive Director.	<b>Refugee health forum:</b> theme <b>FGM/C and Forced Marriage.</b> Working group: Dianne; Kate;	

		Jacky, Helen, Lilian, Saba, Sandy, rep from Australian Healing Centre for Women's Rights, Liz (Liz follow up AFP), Women's Health East, Lowilla.	
01 Sept	Immigrant Settlement in regional Victoria: What works in Greater Shepparton? Researchers: Helen Forbes-Mewett and Rebecca Wickes, Monash University.		
06 Oct	CALD from Iran; Afghanistan and 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>CALD employment, training and community engagement forum</b> "My choice My life" Working group: Bwe; Saarah; Suzie; Suresh; Leigh; Iresha, Krishiani, Mohit, Saba, Dianne.	<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.** Work on the forum is continuing. The July date needs to be confirmed.
- Health Forum 2017.** FGM/C and Forced Marriage forum on 11<sup>th</sup> August. Working group meeting will follow the MSC meeting.
- Employment Training and Community Engagement Forum 2017 "My Choice, My Life"** in October 2017. First meeting of the working group will be in July 2017.

### Organisations

- ATO (Phil for Margeaux)** information sessions about the ATO regulations etc. – the ATO can support with tax return and pop-up sessions, and come to organisations to deliver information;
- Local Government Welcome dinner project( Dilnaz):** a successful event;
- Louise Multicultural Community Centre (Cindy)** Invitation to the Elder Abuse Forum;
- Melbourne Polytechnic (Barbara)** AMEP delivery locations;
- Refugee Week (Madelaine Parker)** – will provide link.

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

## **10. A matter of Trust: elder abuse project - Jacqui D'Sylva, Manager, Partnerships and Community Development, Outer East, Eastern Community Legal Centre.**

This project builds on the success of the *Matter of Trust* pilot initiative undertaken by Communities' Council on Ethnic Issues (CCOEI) in 2015 in partnership with the Sheriff's Office, Victoria Police, the Eastern Community Legal Centre, CALD organisations and Local Government. Due to its success, and also significant unmet need, ECLC took carriage of the project with the blessing of CCOEI.

The ECLC *Matter of Trust* project team continued to work closely with community advisors to plan and deliver three workshops - one each with the Greek, Indian and Chinese communities. The workshops used ECCV's short films on elder abuse '*Within My Walls*', and a story building technique (similar to that used by Victoria Legal Aid in their '*Settled and Safe Project*') to construct a fictitious family situation which demonstrated financial elder abuse.

Services participating in the workshops (the Sheriff's Office; Victoria Police; Centrelink; Family Relationship Centre and ECLC) used the family story to explain what assistance they could provide to the older person and their family, as commonly in situations of elder abuse, family members may be experiencing problems and need help too. A key message was that asking for help didn't have to mean the breakdown of family, but that services would work together to support all members of the family if needed.

The evaluation demonstrated that workshop participants had more understanding of financial elder abuse and how it can happen in families, greater awareness of the services that are available to help (and confidence to seek help if needed), and were more willing to talk about the issue with other members of the community.

The feedback supported the need for ongoing conversations about this important community issue, and in particular, delivering this information to adult sons and daughters. There was also a need for more information on visa conditions and what services newly-arrived older migrants may be entitled to. The need for more information on carer support services was also identified.

A toolkit was produced to help community leaders and services continue conversations about elder abuse prevention. This toolkit is awaiting final editing and approval before it can be distributed. A short film was also created based on the workshop with the Indian community, and funding is being sought to develop this concept film into a teaching tool. Please see the link for ECLC's concept short film *Ram and Sita – From Grandparents to Grandparents* <https://vimeo.com/185467661> password: matteroftrust2016

And finally, the project is going from strength to strength following a grant from the Victorian Multicultural Commission. The next stage will focus on the family forums with the Greek, Indian and Chinese communities. These workshops will include the Dept. Immigration & Border Protection, and also Carer Services. And beyond that, the team will work with faith leaders to support them in raising awareness of elder abuse prevention in their communities.

**Note of thanks:** this was Jacqui's last MSC meeting. Cynthia and Sam thanked her for her valuable contribution to the MSC and wished her well for the future.

**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: Refugee Legal (formerly Refugee and Immigration Legal Centre)**

**David Manne, Refugee Legal Executive Director.**

**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)