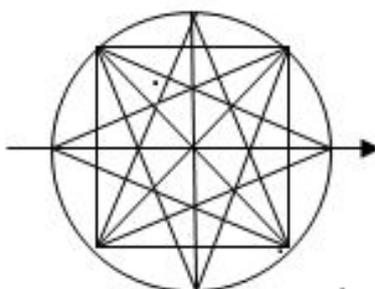


**Chairs:**

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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, March 6<sup>th</sup> 2015**

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

#### **1. Present**

Jessica Bishop	MIC, Settlement, Community Development Officer
Ben Boyson	DSS
Leonie Burnham	ECLC, Manager Inner East Office
Linda Chen	Community Member, ESL Teacher
Gitta Clayton	AMES Outer East Volunteer Tutor Program, VTP Coordinator
Glenis Crocker	CCOEI
Isabelle Droulers	Deakin University, International Student Advisor
Marilyn Gurry	CCOEI
Michael Hardie	Dorish Maru College Box Hill, Rector
Margot Hennessy	AMES, Youth Coordinator
Jack Intziadis	Department of Human Services, Multicultural Services Officer
Jasmina Mulugeta	Foundation House, Eastern Region Team Coordinator
Dianne Godfrey	Department of Human Services, Multicultural Services Officer
Sam Navarria	CCOEI
Andree O'Donnell	AMES Settlement, HSS Caseworker
Jane Ormonde	DSS
Kirsten Reedy	City of Manningham, Planning and Development Officer
Cynthia Shaw	CCOEI
Stuart Sorrell	VicPol, East Region Community Engagement
Sui Ting Tse	CCOEI
Clary Verbunt	Dutch Community, CCOEI
Fred Warren	Holmesglen TAFE, AMEP Coordinator

#### **Apologies**

Jeska Chamberlain	Victoria Police, Multicultural Liaison Officer
Chris Cosgriff	Anchor Chair, CCOEI
Heather Cosgriff	CCOEI
Magdallene Ektoros	DIBP
Twanny Farrugia	DonatLife Community Champion, CCOEI
Leigh Gilmore	DOJ, Sheriff Office Ringwood, Senior Sheriff Officer and Multicultural and Indigenous Liaison Officer
Ross Graham	Victoria Police, A/Inspector, Community Engagement, EMR
Belinda Haydon	Women's Health East, Health Communication Officer
Zoe Holbeche	DIBP
Cindy Kung	Louise Multicultural Community Centre, Program Coordinator
Teena Lee	Eastern Health Child Youth Mental Health Services, Promotions Officer
Penny Moore	City of Maroondah,
Fiona Nicholls	Anchor, Acting CEO
Madeleine Parker	DET, EMR, School Development Officer ESL
Joan Pepi	Knox City Council, Multicultural Communities
Carolyn Poljski	MonashLink Community Health Service
Alaine Prime	Victoria Legal Aid, Community Educator

Bwe Thay

Swinburne University, AMEP Pathway Councillor

**Guests**

Greg Hanson

Refugee and Immigration Legal Centre, Solicitor,

David Manne

Refugee and Immigration Legal Centre, Executive Director

**2. Minutes February 2015 meeting**

Minutes circulated electronically. Moved Chris Cosgriff, Seconded: Gitta Clayton. Accepted.

**(Note:** post meeting, Jack Intziadis (DHS, Centrelink), clarified the work of DHS in relation to SRSS as follows: *DIBP provides information regarding Asylum Seekers to DHS which they then input into their system. DHS is only able to assist those Asylum Seekers whose details have been provided to them. Asylum Seeker eligibility to SRSS is based on assessment of income and assets that they possess*).

**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** The refugee and asylum seeker policy landscape: a challenge for advocacy agencies – an overview of the work of the Refugee and Immigration Legal Centre (RILC) and challenges in 2015

**Guest speakers:** David Manne, Executive Director, Principal Solicitor and Migration Agent, RILC, and Greg Hanson, Solicitor, RILC.

David introduced himself and Greg and noted that he has attended MSC meetings over the years and recognised people who have been involved in assisting refugees and asylum seekers. During this time there have been many changes to immigration policy and law.

The Refugee & Immigration Legal Centre is an independent community legal centre specialising in all aspects of immigration law, policy and practice. RILC has been assisting asylum seekers, refugees and disadvantaged migrants in the community and in detention for more than 26 years. They not only provide assistance with refugee related issues but also general immigration matters. RILC continues to be the largest provider of such services in Australia, and Victoria's only specialist community legal centre in the jurisdiction. Their assistance is broad ranging and includes family reunion, partners, family violence, and visa related issues such as cancellations. Each year they assist over 5,000 people directly.

RILC's work involves providing key legal assistance to those who could not otherwise obtain it due to financial and other forms of distinct disadvantage often related to their CALD backgrounds or experiences of torture or trauma. RILC have a large workload so initiatives are in place to assist as many people as possible such as a dedicated telephone immigration advice service. Matters identified via the telephone advice service, and other client contact services, may in some cases end up in court. Any litigation action springs from the client base and may result in action that escalates to the High Court level. Through one case in court many thousands can be helped indirectly who may be similarly affected.

RILC also provides education programs to support workers and legal professionals, and migration agents where they may be working with similar clients.

In terms of advocacy, the key for RILC is to translate client experiences (trying not to be too legal) and focus on due process and what it means to the client in terms of fairness and their human rights. The advocacy effort, which is firmly based on client experience, is directed towards law reform. The fundamental principles of procedural fairness and rule of law guide RILC action – these areas are difficult for the general public and

government department representatives to comprehend. Part of the work of RILC is to clarify these areas in simple and accessible terms. RILC also undertake submissions to Parliamentary Enquiries.

The organisation has in excess of 100 volunteers who support clients and services under supervision. RILC also employs 12-15 lawyers, and growing. Due to this significant growth, RILC will soon be relocating from its Fitzroy premises to Collingwood at a site formerly used by TAFE which is 5 times bigger than the current one.

Funding has suffered a major cutback of late and this is impacting clients. There are big issues with restrictive policies which mean that people will find it even more difficult to make their claims or have an understanding of their situation or the system. This has never been more serious in terms of the implications for disadvantaged people obtaining fair hearings. The policies of pushing people back, boat arrivals denying people the ability to put in a claim, mandatory off shore detention, and the reintroduction of Temporary Protection Visas (TPVs) are some of the areas that have created significant difficulty and hardship.

Currently there are around 10,000 people in the community in Victoria who are not allowed to sponsor relatives. With TPV clients not being able to secure permanency, the best they can hope for is another TPV for a further three years. Across Australia there are around 30,000 people who are affected by this policy and who will need to be processed soon, with many of them frustrated and feeling that they will not get a fair hearing. The court system brings further disillusionment - time in court extends their time without their family. The policies are complicated in relation to when and how they can obtain a TPV. David noted that TPV policy has been a fundamentally failed public policy that has resulted in much trauma, and that the current TPV policy is even worse than the previous one with no hope of permanent residence.

Greg noted that he worked with DIAC for four years, then as a lawyer on the Refugee Review Tribunal for two years and now with RILC for the last two years. Greg reiterated that there are approximately 10,000 people in Victoria alone for potential processing. The TPV Visa and its implications are incredibly complicated - possibly the most complicated in the world. Many hundreds of clients are affected by visa cancellations. There is also a developing message by government to repeal the citizenship of people of criminal character sentenced by courts. There is much anxiety in the community with regard to these developments. RILC is fast tracking system clients for processing to assist them to make claims. RILC is linked to 18 lawyers during this challenging period.

Comments following presentation:

- Boat arrivals and arrivals by plane are sent to Nauru (PNG) for off shore processing under PNG laws;
- Jasmina noted that details of thousands of asylum seekers were published on the Internet and such data breach might result in staying in Australia. The matter is with the Privacy Commissioner;
- Policies have been punitive for asylum seekers arriving by boat;
- Efforts should continue to be made to encourage a proper dialogue in Australia – the number of negative stories in the media should be countered by many stories of successful settlement;
- No attempt to focus the debate on resettlement – the story should not be about boats, jumping queues, branding asylum seekers illegal, and efforts should be made to provide the public with a correct picture;
- Previous TPVs worked in rural areas – a success story built on relationships;
- There is a strong social movement gathering in support of TPVs.

On behalf of the MSC, Sam thanked David and Greg and wished RILC much continued success. RILC can be supported through donations. Visit RILC website for more information <http://www.rilc.org.au/Home/Home.htm>

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: <b>Settlement Services in Victoria:</b> 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).	<b>Forum:</b> Community Safety and Crime prevention: Financial risks, elderly guarantors from Chinese background 10/02, Manningham. <b>Forum: Domestic Violence</b> 19/02. (Leonie, Jeska, Glenis, EACH, Foundation House).	February 1-7 United Nations Interfaith Harmony Week
06 March	Part B: Refugee and asylum seekers: <b>the policy landscape and its challenges for advocacy organizations</b> – Refugee and Immigration Legal Centre (RILC). Speaker: David Manne, Executive Director, Principal Solicitor and Migration Agent, RILC, and a RILC lawyer.	<b>Harmony Day events.</b> <b>Forum:</b> 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.	<b>Forum:</b> Community Safety and crime prevention: Elderly guarantors from Greek background and financial risks, late April (Effie, Athena/Adonis)	<b>April 7</b> – World Health Organisation <u>World Health Day</u>
01 May	<b>Part A: Refugee Women’s Health:</b> how are services responding to the needs of refugee women, particularly young women? <b>Part B: Refugee Men’s Health:</b> what are the main areas of concern and are men accessing available health services? Speakers: Marilyn Spratling (Refugee Health Nurse Program, Refugee Health Nurse Coordinator, Clinical Services) and Dr Marion Bailes, GP.	<b>Refugee youth (to be reviewed):</b> (Maria, Margot, CMY, BELS, Gateway LLENS): policy, programs, services, sharing good practice & opportunities.	<b>May 21</b> - <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.	<b>Refugee Week:</b> celebration of settlement in EMR. MSC/CCOEI, City of Manningham (Kirsten, Cynthia, Sam, Belinda H., Bwe, Saturnino, Gitta, Elizabeth, Jasmina)	<b>June 20</b> – UN <u>World Refugee Day</u> , <b>June 26</b> – UN <u>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);	<b>CALD and mental health (to be reviewed):</b> (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.	<b>Education and Training expo:</b> 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.	<b>Refugee health forum:</b> services for refugee and humanitarian entrants (EACH; Eastern Health; Glenis, Belinda, Refugee Nurse. MIC?)	<b>October 17- International Day for the Eradication of Poverty</b> , 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.	<b>Disability forum:</b> how are CALD with a disability faring under the NDIS? (Knox, Twanny, Cynthia, others)	<b>November 16 - International Day for Tolerance</b> <b>November 25 - International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women</b> ,
04 Dec	Finalize meeting and events calendar 2016. Meeting focus to be advised.		Dec 3 <sup>rd</sup> : <b>International Day for People with a disability</b> . <a href="http://www.idpwd.com.au/">http://www.idpwd.com.au/</a>

**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 (Leonie Burnham) – *Tip Toeing Around***, held on the 19<sup>th</sup> Feb 2015: The forum was well attended with over 50 people and very successful. There were many new participants on the day and much knowledge shared with strong interest by the audience. Participants appreciated the narrative story telling case study approach. The venue, the Whitehorse Room, Box Hill Town Hall, was spacious and comfortable.

**Refugee Week Celebration 2015 (Kirsten Reedy)**

The celebration will take place at the Manningham City Council on the 26<sup>th</sup> June from 10 – 12:30 am. Mr Thomas Albrecht, the UNHCR Representative for Australia and the Pacific Region, will be the keynote speaker. The program will include refugee stories, a celebration and artwork. A preliminary working group meeting will take place right after the MSC meeting.

**Crime Prevention Community Safety CCOEI project *A Matter of Trust*: (CCOEI and Steering Committee).**

The project focuses on financial abuse of elderly CALD, and is an initiative funded by the Victorian Government. The Chinese session was held on Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup> Feb 2015 which included a segment where participants shared their stories. The stories have been written up in English and in Chinese, will be photographed and laminated for promotional and educational usage. They are part of a resource kit to facilitate forums and educational activity. Further sessions are likely to target the Greek and Indian communities. Leonie reminded members of the MSC that there is a similar project being undertaken with the City of Whitehorse through the ECLC. The narrative story telling approach works well in focusing on the topic and generating discussion.

**Future forums for 2015:** Due to changes in the roles of people who had nominated to assist in planned projects, two are being reviewed. If they go ahead, new working groups will be formed: 1) Refugee Youth; 2) CALD Mental Health.

**Agency and individual reports**

**Holmesglen TAFE (Fred Warren)** - Fewer students at Chadstone campus but more at Waverley campus. Courses a more employment focused.

**MIC (Jessica Bishop). Activities include:** Zomi Parenting program; Falam and Mizo Employment course (resumes, cover letters); Running warehousing at cert 2 and cert 3; Holiday Programs.

**Dorish Maru College (Michael Hardie):** Overseas students at Dorish Maru College in Box Hill; offering support with services and visas etc. College also offers scholarships.

**CCOEI (Sui Ting Tse and Cynthia Shaw)**

- Sui Ting commented that the *Matter of Trust* Chinese information forum was held on the 10<sup>th</sup> of February with excellent results. He also stated that the CCOEI supported forum on Domestic Violence on the 19<sup>th</sup> of February was very successful judging by the strong interest demonstrated by participants.
- CCOEI has been supporting Australia Zo Organisation, a relatively new group trying to establish itself. For more information visit their face book page.

**AMES Volunteer Tutor Program (Gitta Clayton):** “Dress a girl around the world” project. (<http://www.dressagirlaustralia.com.au/>) Volunteers have been assisting this cause where sourced fabric, boys’ shorts and tops are sent overseas to places like Chin State and the Thai Myanmar border.

**AMES Youth Program (Margot Hennessy):**

- The AMES Youth Program is currently operating in seven sites across Melbourne, supported by twenty teaching staff, four youth specific counsellors and an AMES Manager. New classes at Werribee AMES and Springvale AMES have been established in 2015;
- AMES was successful in its application in two regions for the Engage! funding for the next three years from the Victorian State Government. This will allow for many active learning opportunities which will enhance curriculum delivery options. Box Hill AMES has two classes;
- Ucan2, a partnership with Foundation House, CMY and AMES, will run at Box Hill AMES this semester, providing psycho social support for refugee background clients and part time work experience opportunities for students in the retail industry;
- Water safety and swimming programs have also been made available to Box Hill students through grants from the City of Whitehorse;
- AMES teaching and settlement staff now working in Nauru.

**Victoria Police (Stuart Sorrell).** Focus on training police to better understand the Islamic community and working with families on being more aware of parenting and radicalization.

**Foundation House (Jasmina Mulugeta):** Lots of changes in the organisation. Foundation is currently working with Child, Adolescent and Family (CAF) program. The CAF team has child and adolescent counsellors and work with families. For referrals contact 9388 0022 [www.foundationhouse.org.au](http://www.foundationhouse.org.au)

**ECLC (Leonie Burnham)**

- Works with vulnerable clients, feed issues up the line if indicative of systemic problem;
- Offers limited migration agent service – migration agent helps international students with their visas;
- Sexting program experienced some success;
- *Common threads* – partnerships with MIC, Women’s Health, and others. Various activities;
- Celebration of Women – Possum Coats;
- Indigenous community dance group at Lilydale Lake. Mayor of Yarra Ranges will launch. There will be a Sister Works stall (*Sister Works enables asylum seeker, refugee and migrant women to work towards financial independence by developing the skills they need to settle.* <http://www.sisterworks.org.au/>)
- The Louise Multicultural Community Centre are holding an AFL Football Clinic

**DSS (Ben Boyson and Jane Ormond):** New to the role. There is an e-newsletter – which is different to SPU. Newsletter to be emailed for circulation.

**City of Manningham (Kirsten Reedy).**

- Harmony Day Celebration - Respect Tournament 1,000 people attended. 26 teams undertaking a round robin. This program breaks down barriers.
- Unfortunately the library has lost its Cantonese volunteer telling stories to children.

**Next MSC Meeting:** Friday 1<sup>st</sup> May 2014, 9.30 – 12.00

**Focus -** Refugee Women's and Men's health

**Guest speakers:** Marilyn Spratling, Refugee Health Nurse Program Coordinator and Dr Marion Bailes.

**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](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)