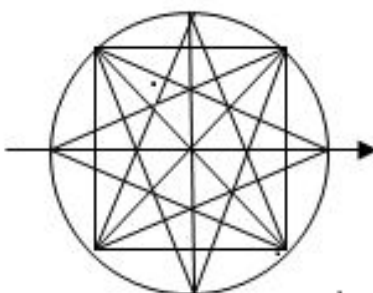


Chairs:

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Cynthia Shaw: Mob: 0466 157 906



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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, September 7, 2018****Whitehorse Community Centre, Level 1 Conference Room,
79 Mahoneys Road, Forest Hill.**1. **Welcome** – Cynthia welcomed MSC members and guests.2. **Present**

David Atkinson	Box Hill Institute, Academic Manager
Sally Brooks	MIC, Strategic Engagement Coordinator
Marisa Bryant	Career Seekers, Advisor
Iresha Butngamwa	ECLC, Community Development Coordinator
Geoff DeYoung	DHS, MSO
Gina Etienne	Eastern Health, Manager Consumer Community
Leigh Gilmore	Sheriff Office Eastern, Sheriff Officer – Koori and Multicultural Liaison
Kate Jeffery	Link Health and Community, Senior Research and Planning Officer
Ben Lam	Chinese Parents Special Support Network, Volunteer
Margeaux Loos	ATO, Migrant Education
Sam Navarria	CCOEI
Madeleine Parker	DET, Senior Project Officer EAL
Suresh Ramachandraiah	ECLC
Barbara Reeckman	Melbourne Polytechnic, AMEP, Pathways Guidance Coordinator,
Cynthia Shaw	CCOEI
Lyudmila Theodore	Holmesglen TAFE, AMEP Coordinator
Johnny Tran	Victoria Police MLO
Sui Ting Tse	CCOEI, President
Clary Verbunt	Dutch Community, CCOEI
Chris Walsh	ECLC, Director Partnerships and Community Development

Apologies

Dilnaz Billimoria	Interfaith network
Rick Comfort	DHS Centrelink MSO
Gitta Clayton	Links – CHBC, Community Engagement Coordinator
Julie Conan-Davies	Swinburne University, AMEP Coordinator
Marg Greenhalf	Box Hill Institute
Saba Irfan	Women's Friendship Group Inc
Helen Jurcevic	Women's Friendship Group Inc
Judy McDougall	MIC
Jenny Mitchell	Whitehorse/ Manningham Libraries, CALD Branch Manager
Katrina Myers	Box Hill Institute, Program Manager AMEP & SEE
Vicki Selimi	DHS, Centrelink, Multicultural Services Officer
Rosemary Sheehan	Whitehorse Council, Diversity Officer
Bwe Thay	Swinburne University. CCOEI
Rebecca Wickes	Monash University, Associate Professor
Emma Wilkinson	City of Boroondara, Social Inclusion Policy and Project Officer

Guest

Dr Helen Forbes-Mewett

Monash University, Senior Lecturer and Researcher

3. Minutes MSC August 2018

Moved Sui Ting Tse, seconded Cynthia Shaw. Accepted.

4. Business Arising

Incorporated in the agenda.

5. Correspondence. Information circulated via email and at the meeting

6. Meeting focus: Social cohesion in multicultural Australia – stats and stories:

(a) Together forever: Chinese immigrants, funeral rites and belonging in Australia.

(b) The New Security: Individual, Community and Cultural Experiences.

Dr Helen Forbes-Mewett, Senior Lecturer and Researcher, School of Social Sciences, Monash University

Helen spoke on the research project Chinese immigrant funeral rites, and belonging in Australia. The research highlighted:

- (a) identity and belonging;
- (b) funeral rites and traditions as powerful expressions that link families and keep them together;
- (c) multiculturalism policy making it possible for traditions and culture to be maintained;
- (d) the tradition of funeral rites makes for continuity and bonding between generations, parents and children, families and communities.

Monash University and Southern Metropolitan Cemeteries Trust collaborated on the project. Helen described the conceptual framework for the project, and noted the significance of Australia's multicultural policy (1979) and the ending of the White Australia Policy. The research highlighted the experience of migration and the adoption of a new country, and a sense of belonging defined by relationships and not by geography. The Chinese community freely shared their stories and their journey. They linked the migrant journey to post life where the bond between parents and children continues.

The research method included:

- 2016-2017 (controlled snowballing through community leaders)
- 41 interviews (16 stakeholders and 25 individuals)
- 25 Cantonese, 11 Mandarin and 5 English speakers
- Participatory, observations and cemetery tour.

The research highlighted the view that one can be Chinese and belong in Australia, and that it is possible to negotiate differences and adapt to or adopt other (Australian) ways. In the words of one interviewee who has lived in Australia for more than 60 years, "I can still associate with us Chinese and follow our traditions and ways of life without any problem". (Raymond, retiree, 70s). For Chinese immigrants it has been possible to be part of the local culture, maintain Chineseness, and merge cultures through traditions like funeral rites.

The new Chineseness extends to how cemeteries are perceived: "they become a lot more acceptable to the topics of death and funerals. I think the cemetery itself actually plays a part in transforming people's perception about the end of life". (Jack, retiree 60s).

Another key finding was the notion of together for life and beyond, and four themes: Family; Filial piety; Economics; Community. The belief that families can remain close beyond life is physical - people buy plots close to each other to be together. Filial piety was evident in the ritual of visiting the memorial site for prayer. One respondent noted the importance of the "younger generations to re-engage with the traditional values and rituals.

It's part of their culture. We should preserve the good parts of our traditional culture.It's a way they learn about their own traditions and cultures". (Michael, retiree, 70s). Economic considerations also matter "they want to maximise the space purchase and the money [that is] spent for most things – cost effective". (Jason, stonemason, 30s). And finally purchasing plots close to each other strengthen the notion of community: "I see many of our church members will purchase a grave-spot next to one another, become neighbours". (Alvin, 50s).

Helen summarised the main findings:

- Open-mindedness allowing for the merging of cultures
 - Individual preferences rather culturally specific
 - Chineseness was broad and variable
- Perception that their views were different to that of Westerners, but strong evidence of a Chinese-Western interface
- Want to make own arrangements and many have them in place before age 70
- Prior education and religion tended to influence views and determine approach
- Females more receptive to the idea of pre-planning
- Preference for cremation
- Staying together linked the living migrant journey to post-life
- Continuing bond between parents and children
- Keeping family and friends together
- Able to negotiate about differences and adapt/adopt the Australian ways.

Helen concluded her presentation with a reference to the Chinese tradition of Qingming – Memorial Day or Ancestor Day, essentially a day of respect for the dead. On Qingming:

- People sweep the graves of ancestors and make offerings
- The whole family attends
- Food offerings, and burning of joss sticks and joss paper, are a sign of respect

The Qing Ming Festival has been practised by the Chinese for over 2500 years.

The New Security. Individual, Community and Cultural Experiences

Helen spoke about her new book which is a collection of case studies on the theme of security. She defined security in terms of what it means to people, individuals and communities. Understanding of the new security is shaped by background and culture, employment, belonging, safety of family, surveillance, housing, shelter and financial support, ability to save for emergencies, and other features. It is a more personal view of security in a culturally diverse society, different to the traditional view of security understood in terms of international relations.

On behalf of the MSC, Sam thanked Helen and wished her well in future research.

Ben Ma – the Autism Lanyard project

Ben spoke about the Autism Lanyard project. With community support over 10,000 individuals can have access to Autism ID and relevant products, which will help them access the community safely and receive the appropriate assistance when they need it. Ben encouraged people to vote for the project on "Pick my Project" <https://cpsn.org.au/2018/08/14/pick-my-project/> and select projects in Forest Hill. People can choose 3 projects to support.

Cynthia thanked Ben and wished the lanyard autism project much success.

The MSC was grateful to Johnny Tran for the much needed technical support.

7. MSC 2018 Calendar

The 2018 Calendar is on track. The calendar is flexible, driven by MSC input.

MSC 2018 Calendar

MSC meeting dates	Meeting focus	Forums/functions/events dates and working groups	International Multicultural events Calendar
01 Jan	No meeting		
02 Feb	Settlement services and programs - focus on Victoria & Eastern Metropolitan Region: who is settling in the Eastern Region, and where, what are their needs and aspirations? Sarah Daly, Settlement Senior Manager, AMES; Judy McDougall, Senior Project Officer, MIC.		February 1-7 United Nations Interfaith Harmony Week
02 March	Celebrating harmony and inclusiveness - CALD choir (Karen) and the Mullum Mullum Choir combine to tell stories through song and music. (Working Group members include: Chris; Heather; Gitta; Jasmina and Cynthia). Venue Mullum Mullum Indigenous Gathering Place, Ringwood.	Harmony Day events.	March 21: Harmony Day
06 April	Regional Advisory Councils (RAC) of the VMC: <i>RACs progressing the Victorian multicultural agenda - key developments and projects</i> : RAC Commissioner Sonia Vignjevic presented with RAC members James Thangman and Bwe Thay. Helen Forbes-Mewett (apology).		April 7 – World Health Organisation World Health Day
04 May	The NDIS and CALD communities – access and participation in the EMR, and exploring the need for a forum in the EMR. Panel of speakers: Chris Cahill and Sharna Goulding, NDIA; Megan Kearney and Eli Niall (NDIS); ADEC; Sophie Dutertre, (CEH); Olivia Killeen, (ECCV); Emily Ma, Chairperson, Chinese Parents Special Support Network (CPSSN).		May 21 - World Day for Cultural Diversity for Dialogue and Development ,
01 June	Adult education and training: progressing social and economic inclusion: AMEP, SEE, Skills First; pre-accredited to accredited training: Rochelle Beatty (unable to attend) Barbara Reeckman (MP) and Sally Brennan (Swinburne University); Karen Sims My Health Record (MHR).		June 20 – UN World Refugee Day , June 26 – UN Day - Support of Victims of Torture
01 July	No meeting		
03 Aug	Cultural responsiveness of LGAs in the Eastern Metropolitan Region – focus on a project. Knox City Council, Joan Pepi, Multicultural Communities Officer. Project: <i>Working in the Multicultural Space</i> Maroondah City Council, Penny Moore, Community Development Officer. Project: <i>Nurturing Partnerships between Sport and Newly Arrived Communities</i> Yarra Ranges Council, Wendy Blakis, Best Start Community Facilitator, & Rakhi Khanna. Project: <i>Stepping stones to service connections and engagement for CALD families.</i>	CALD NDIS access and participation Working Group. First meeting held 10 August 2018. Participating organisations include NDIA, NDIA, CEH, ECCV, ADEC, Link Health and Community, Latrobe Community Health Service, Uniting Care Life Assist, MIC, Neami National and Local Government organisations. CPPSN contributes at the community level. Family violence forum (see entry under November 2018)	

07 Sept	Social cohesion in multicultural Australia – stats and stories: findings from qualitative and quantitative research. Speakers from Monash University including Dr Helen Forbes-Mewett		
05 Oct	CCOEI AGM and a focus on emerging CALD groups in Eastern Metropolitan Region.	Youth services event: This event is held every 2nd year in partnership with Swinburne. A working group will be set up in 2019. Bwe Thay is the Convener. (Working group possible composition DET Victoria, IMVC, AMEP, Foundation House, ATO, ECLC)	October 17- International Day for the Eradication of Poverty, UN calendar
02 Nov	Australian Refugee and Humanitarian Program 2019 - 2020: Community views, current challenges, and future directions. Asher Hirsch, Senior Policy Officer, Refugee Council of Australia (RCOA). MSC review of 2018 and plan 2019 activity.	“Living in Two Worlds” Prevention of Family Violence / Refugee Youth Settlement Forum: Date: Tuesday 27 November 2018 10:00 am – 3:00 pm. Venue Whitehorse Room, Box Hill Town Hall. Cost: \$25.00 Lunch and Snacks provided. Register at http://BIT.LY/MICYF2018 . Or call Judy on 9285 4888. This is a Partnership between the Migrant Information Centre and CCOEI. We thank Judy McDougall for organising this event.	November 16 - International Day for Tolerance November 25 - International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women,
07 Dec	Finalize 2019 MSC Calendar. Some suggestions to date: (a) Human Rights Law Centre – focus on refugees and asylum seekers in offshore processing centres; (b) Victorian Fisheries Authority		Dec 3 rd : International Day for People with a disability http://www.idpwd.com.au/

8. Reports

CCOEI/MSO Forums and Events update

Prevention of Family Violence Forum/ Refugee Youth Settlement Forum (Sally Brooks) 27th November. Cost \$25

Organisations update

Migrant Information Centre (Sally Brooks) - English, Education and Employment Network will meet soon.

ECLC

Iresha Butngamwa - Matter of Trust Project - Matter of Trust, a financial elder abuse awareness project. Respecting your Elders - A Forum for Faith Communities to be held on *Tuesday 25th September at Knox Civic Centre from 6.30pm-8.30pm*. (Flyer sent to MSC members on 3 September).

Suresh Ramachandraiah - ECLC can provide Legal Education sessions tailored to meet the needs of communities. Interpreters provided. Organisations should contact ECLC to discuss.

Australian Taxation Office (Margeaux Loos)

Organisations should be aware of the ATO Toolkit, translated in a number of languages, to help with Tax. Be aware of Tax scams! <https://www.ato.gov.au/General/Online-services/Identity-security/Scam-alerts/>

Career Seekers (Marisa Bryant) – Career Seekers New Australian Internship Program is a non-profit social enterprise. It creates professional employment opportunities for refugees and people seeking asylum in Australia by enabling paid internships. For further information visit: www.careerseekers.org.au

Sheriff Office Eastern (Leigh Gilmore) – participating in elder abuse forums run by ECLC.

AMEP Box Hill TAFE (multiple sites, including Melbourne at Flinders Lane (David Atkinson)

- (a) Free TAFE courses from 2019. Information at <https://www.boxhill.edu.au/free-tafe-for-priority-courses/>
- (b) Taster courses, Community Services and Individual Support.

AMEP Melbourne Polytechnic (Barbara Reeckman) - AMEP Saturday classes, Boronia Library.

Department of Human Services Geoff de Young

- (a) Debt reduction – assisting people re debt reduction
- (b) Focus on Child Care changes - additional Child Care Subsidy for Grandparents;
- (c) Domestic and Family Violence awareness - access information at <https://www.humanservices.gov.au/individuals/subjects/how-we-can-help-you-family-and-domestic-violence-concerns>

CCOEI (Sui Ting Tse) Two events of note:

1. Swinburne World Kitchen & Round Table discussion. Attended by Cynthia Shaw.
2. CCOEI nomination for Bwe Thay – Victoria’s Emerging Leadership in Multiculturalism Award with the ceremony to be held at Government House on 12th September 2018. *[Subsequently attended, it is with great pleasure that we congratulate Bwe on receiving a “Highly Commended” Award].*

9. Initiatives and innovations (for noting) – none noted.

10. Next MSC Meeting: Friday 5th October, 2018, 9.30 –12.00.

Venue: Conference Room, Level 1, Whitehorse Community Resource Centre, 79 Mahoney’s Road, Forest Hill.

Focus: Ethnic Communities Council of Victoria (ECCV): brief overview and a focus on new and emerging communities in the EMR.

Guests: Chair and CEO, ECCV

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