

MIGRANT SETTLEMENT COMMITTEE REPORT 2011-2012

MSC key role: *assist service providers to achieve better outcomes for migrants and refugees during their initial and long-term settlement periods, as well as address local settlement issues.*

MSC core objectives:

- *to provide a forum in which workers from local settlement service agencies (and related agencies) can discuss settlement service issues;*
- *to encourage settlement service agencies to work collaboratively by proposing strategies; and*
- *plan for effective service improvements*

In the financial year reporting period of 2011-2012, as in previous years, the MSC continued to engage government and non government organisations, as well as individual community members, to discuss, to learn and to share solutions and good practice in relation to the resettlement of refugee and humanitarian entrants, and migrants, in the Eastern Region of Melbourne. The long standing MSC practice and approach of inclusiveness and consultation has continued and all member contributions welcomed and valued.

The inclusive and consultative approach is apparent in the way the MSC calendar, a flexible operational framework, is developed and reviewed during the year. The flexibility is also evident in the dynamism and fluidity of the MSC that allows for new members with a strong interest in multicultural issues and the resettlement of refugees to access the MSC and to contribute to its operations. There are of course long standing members that provide continuity and support to the work of the MSC.



“A key function of the MSC is to provide networking opportunities. Over the years, it has been noted that some lasting partnerships and interesting projects and forums have originated in the networking that takes place at the MSC”. This quotation is from the previous MSC annual report and stands true today as it did in the past. The active participation in forums and projects, and the consistent contribution to the monthly meetings are testimony to the vibrancy and commitment of the MSC membership.

Agency Reporting: It is important to acknowledge the regular reporting at every MSC meeting by agencies, organisations and community members. This is an important share-and-tell feature of the meetings. Reports include those by providers of the AMEP (AMES, Swinburne University, and Holmesglen TAFE), government agencies and departments, local government and other key organisations (full list of organisations at the end of this report).

Forums 2011- 2012: The Migrant Settlement Committee and members organise key information and awareness raising forums each year that benefit migrants and refugees.

1. **Employment, Education and Training expo/forum** at Swinburne Wantirna campus. Held 11 November 2011. Focus: skilled migrants and refugees. Working group: Convenor from Centrelink, Serena, Belinda, Swinburne and CCOEI reps.

2. **Family Violence Forum (Convenors: Leonie Burnham & Glenis Crocker)** – Held 25th May. This forum was very successful with over 90 people booked in advance at the Mooroolbark Community Centre.
3. The **Refugee Health Forum** – 15 September 2011.

 <p>2011 Outer East Refugee Health Forum</p> <p><u>Refugee Health Across all Sectors:</u> Can good refugee health be created outside the health sector?</p> <p>The Outer East Health & Community Support Alliance, in partnership with the Migrant Settlement Committee (East Melbourne), would like to invite you to the 2011 Refugee Health Forum.</p> <p>WHAT: This free informative forum will showcase local projects across the community that support refugee health and wellbeing. Presentations will include healthy mothers healthy babies, schools, settlement support, training and employment opportunities, and English language support, among others.</p> <p>WHO: This forum is open to anyone working or interested in Refugee Health & Wellbeing.</p> <p>WHERE: Federation Estate, 32 Greenwood Avenue, Ringwood</p> <p>WHEN: September 15th, 9am—1.30pm, Lunch and refreshments provided</p> <p>HOW: RSVP by Friday 9th September to gloria.morrison@oepecp.org.au</p> <p>For further details contact: Meg Scolyer (03) 9871 2608 or mscolyer@each.com.au</p> 	<p>The theme “Refugee Health Across all Sectors explored a health promoting approach to refugee health and wellbeing beyond the health sector, highlighting the importance of social determinants of health and well-being that make positive impacts. The forum showcased projects and programs that promote health and wellbeing in the environments where people work, play, and live.</p> <p>Presenters were from AMES, BELS, EACH, Foundation House, MIC, and Swinburne University.</p> <p>The forum highlighted the working partnerships for refugee health and wellbeing that exist in the Outer East.</p> <p>Feedback was overwhelmingly</p>
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Highlights of 2011 – 2012 MSC Meetings:

August 2011.

- **Louise Olliff**, Settlement Policy Coordinator, **Refugee Council of Australia (RCOA)** spoke about the RCOA, a national, not for profit, peak body representing over 640 individuals and member organizations acknowledged for its practical and policy work to promote the adoption of flexible, humane and constructive policies towards refugees, asylum seekers and displaced persons by the Australian and other Governments. The key area of ongoing interest for the RCOA is to monitor shifts in policy relating to refugees and asylum seekers and to engage in discussions focused on developing a Strategic Settlement Framework that maps settlement goals, and needs and services across Federal, State and Local governments.
- **Fiona Brown** Senior Policy and Project Officer, **City of Boroondara**, spoke about their CALD Outreach Project. The project looked at the challenges faced by more recent settlement in the city, particularly international students who present issues that require address. Based on the project findings, Boroondara is developing a resource kit that encourages new residents to look to council for assistance.

September 2011.

- **Neil Sheldon**, CEO of **METEC**, a community not-for-profit self-funded organisation, and **Chris Cosgriff**, President of **CCOEI**, spoke about the driver education and training centre situated in Bayswater North. The centre, built on 10 hectares of land, has about 5km of private roads with many features to provide an ideal learner training experience.
- **Meg Scolyer from EACH** presented in relation to the following:
 - the Evaluation of the Refugee Health Nurse Program
 - a survey of a Maternity Model for Refugee Women in the east
 - the Immunization Advocacy Project and discussion paper
- **Julie Simpson from Victoria Police** spoke about the “**L to P**” program. L to P is one strategy to manage the required 120 hours of driving practice. The MIC also supports driving practice through a program funded by Vic Roads, DIAC, and VMC.
- **Cynthia Shaw, Louise Multicultural Community Centre:** DHS Neighbourhood House funding has resulted in LMCC establishing a program to increase participation in community centres and neighbourhood houses by migrants with a disability.
- **Chris Cosgriff** spoke about the **William Barak** project which aims to re-enact the mid 1800 William Barak walk from Healesville to Melbourne covering 6 municipalities.

October 2011.

Guest presenters: **Meg Scolyer**, **EACH** Health Promotions Officer and **Margot Hennessy**, **AMES** Youth Program Coordinator.

Meg presented on the successful 2011 Outer East Refugee Health Forum held in September (please see “2011 – 2012 MSC Forums” above.)

Margot spoke about **AMES Youth Programs** in the West, South and Central regions of Melbourne and a new program in the East. In 2010, 644 youth between the ages of 18 and 25 were enrolled in youth specific classes and the 2011 enrolment was strong. The biggest groups are from Afghanistan, Vietnam, Myanmar, China, Ethiopia, India, Sudan, Sri Lanka, Cambodia and Iran.

A recent AMES Youth Program is the *Transition to TAFE* course. Through research it was found that young people were asking for support to transition to TAFE study. The AMES *Transition to TAFE* youth curriculum includes orientation to TAFE; communication and IT Skills; study skills; a focus on pathways etc.

November 2011.

Chin Tan, Victorian Multicultural Commission (newly appointed Chairperson). Chin provided an overview of the work of the VMC and the new Office of Multicultural Affairs and Citizenship (OMAC), which drives Victorian Government multicultural policy and program implementation, with a focus on the settlement of newly arrived migrants. Some of the policy and program functions formerly with the VMC have been transferred to OMAC within the Department of Premier and Cabinet.

December 2011 – Planning Meeting for 2012

The MSC reviewed the 2011 program and planned for 2012. One source of feedback about MSC 2011 was the Survey Monkey information with 24 responses which were incorporated in the 2012 calendar. At the meeting MSC members noted that they were

happy with the quality of the speakers and the forums and that city councils should be approached for funding. They also noted that the MSC was a good source of information; a forum for sharing ideas, spreading information, raising awareness of other organisations and an opportunity for learning and for workers in various sectors to recharge their batteries. The collaborative approach at meetings, on forums and projects was greatly valued. Members suggested that the MSC could be more action focused and could highlight issues and challenges faced by organisations, and projects run by organisations, and that a workshop approach might be a good approach to spread good practice.

February 2012.

Red Cross International Tracing Services with **Jane Billings**, Tracing Caseworker, Australian Red Cross, providing an overview of the service. The International Tracing Service assists people separated by war, conflict and natural disasters around the world. The service in Australia is part of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent global tracing network, which aims to re-establish contact between separated family members and clarify the fate of missing people. Search avenues include record checks (refugee camps, government, etc.) as well as visits to prisons and detention centres.

Railey Orger, City of Whitehorse, Community Development Officer, Diversity and Healthy Ageing spoke about the **Whitehorse Diversity Policy and Action Plan** which was being reviewed via a series of community consultations that will feed into the new policy to be submitted to council. The main components of the plan are cultural, linguistic, ethnic and religious considerations.

March 2012.

The focus was asylum seekers with the **Red Cross Sarah Brown**, Team Leader, speaking about the Community Detention (CD) Program. This program is under contract with the Department of Immigration and Citizenship (DIAC) and Red Cross supports people who have been placed in community detention while their immigration status is being resolved. The program provides asylum seekers with community based accommodation, support services and care. Since 2005 the program has experienced a significant increase in client numbers. For more information go to: <http://www.redcross.org.au/community-detention-program.aspx>

Andrea Brookes, Team Leader, **Red Cross** spoke about the Asylum Seeker Assistance Scheme (ASAS), a DIAC program administered by the Red Cross since 1993. It provides limited support to asylum seekers. Under ASAS, asylum seekers are eligible for income support, rent assistance and travel concessions. For more information go to the following link: <http://www.redcross.org.au/asylum-seeker-assistance-scheme.aspx>

Michael Hardie, Director of the **JANSSEN Spirituality Centre**, spoke about their work. Janssen's involvement with Community Detention (CD) clients was a response to the Federal Government's appeal for convention centres and other venues to accommodate asylum seekers. The Catholic Church responded by providing accommodation with 15 rooms within a large grounds setting. Muslim men aged between 20 – 26 years have been assisted.

Harmony Day celebrations March 2012: Various activities took place in March, and many of MSC member organisations such as Victoria Police, local governments, ECLC, the MIC, and AMES were actively participating and promoting community harmony and community connection.

May 2012.

Louise Oliff, Refugee Council of Australia. Settlement Policy Coordinator returned to update the MSC on the work of the RCOA. Louise spoke of the RCOA submission to DIAC on the annual refugee intake; income management, vocational education and training; international issues; and the home stay network. For more information go to: <http://www.refugeecouncil.org.au/a/who.php>. The RCOA welcomes feedback on issues that are happening in local areas to take up at a national level.

June 2012.

Huss Mustafa, Chairperson - Eastern Regional Advisory Council (RAC) of the Victorian Multicultural Commission (VMC), spoke about the newly formed RACs in Victoria. 8 RACs, 3 in the metro area and 5 rural, were set up in 2011 through the Multicultural Act and launched in March 2012. RACs are advisory and not decision making bodies. For more information go to: <http://www.multicultural.vic.gov.au/regional-advisory-councils>. Huss noted 4 critical issues in the Eastern Region: Health (includes aged care and mental health); Education; Employment and Service Coordination.

Refugee Week 2012. For a range of reasons a **Refugee Week Forum** was not held as in previous years, however MSC members participated in many community functions to provide support for Refugee Week. In addition, the Refugee Health Forum focused on refugees.

MSC Participants in 2011 - 2012

Adult Multicultural Education Services Education (AMES), Box Hill and Oakleigh
Adult Multicultural Education Services Settlement (AMES) consortium)
ANCHOR
BELS
City of Boroondara
City of Knox
City of Manningham
City of Maroondah
City of Whitehorse
Communities Council on Ethnic Issues (CCOEI)
Community members and volunteers
Consumer Affairs Victoria EMR
Croydon Hills Baptist Church (CHBC)
Deakin University (International Students)
Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (DEECD)
Department of Human Services (Centrelink) Box Hill, Glen Waverley, Ringwood etc.
Department of Immigration and Citizenship
Department of Justice
Department of Planning and Community Development
Disability Sports Victoria
Dutch Community

MSC Participants in 2011 – 2012 (continued)

Eastern Access Community Health (EACH)
Eastern Community Legal Centre (ECLC)
Eastern Health
Holmesglen TAFE
JANSSEN Spirituality Centre
Louise Multicultural Community Centre
Maurice Blackburn Lawyers
Melbourne Fire Brigade (MFB)
Metropolitan Traffic Education Centre (METEC)
Migrant Information Centre (Eastern Melbourne)
Ngwala East Willumbong
PHaMs Mind Central East-Whitehorse
Privacy Victoria
Proability
Red Cross ASAS
Red Cross CDP
Red Cross International tracing service
Refugee Council of Australia
SES Nunawading
Sheriff Offices Box Hill and Ringwood
Swinburne University
Victoria Police region 4 Multicultural Liaison Unit
Victoria University
Victorian Foundation for the Survivors of Torture and Trauma
Victorian Multicultural Commission
Yarra Ranges Council