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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 – September 7th 2012

Whitehorse Community Centre, 79 Mahoneys Road, Forest Hill

Cynthia welcomed MSC members to the meeting and guests Con Pagonis, Multicultural Policy Advisor MAV.

1. Welcome: Cynthia welcomed members
2. **Present**

Fiona Brown	City of Boroondara
Lionie Burnham	Eastern Community Legal Centre
Karen Connolly	Swinburne University, Team Leader CALD
Chris Cosgriff	CCOEI President, ANCHOR
Glenis Crocker	CCOEI, Secretary
Rebecca Dunsdon	MIC, Settlement and Community Development
Belinda Gillam	Knox City Council, Community Development Officer, ANCHOR
Eugenia Grammatikakis	Monash City Council
Michael Hardie	JANSSEN Spirituality Centre, Director
Margi Jelovcic	Central East Whitehorse MIND
Suzette Kabaila	AMES Oakley Education Unit Manager
Deborah Lawrence	Eastern Health Child and Mental Health Services
Railey Orger	City of Whitehorse, Diversity and Ageing Officer
Meg Scolyer	EACH, Health Promotion Officer
Cynthia Shaw	CCOEI
Bwe Thay	Swinburne AMEP Pathway Counsellor
Sui Ting Tse	Louise Multicultural Community Centre, CCOEI
Clary Verbunt	CCOEI
Fred Warren	Holmesglen TAFE,

Apologies:

Joseph Agwalama	Department of Justice, Multicultural Liaison Officer
Janet Dean	Swinburne AMEP Coordinator
Maria De Monte	DHS Centrelink MSO
Rebecca Dunsdon	Migrant Information Centre
Twanny Farrugia	CCOEI Treasurer
Daisy Luo	DIAC
Sam Navarria	AMES, CCOEI
Shahan Tan	Box Hill AMES

Guests

Con Pagonis	Multicultural Policy Advisor MAV
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3. **Minutes** of August 3rd 2012 meeting Moved Chris Cosgriff Seconded Clary Verbunt
Minutes circulated prior to the meeting. No amendments received.
4. **Business Arising** - incorporated in the meeting agenda.
5. **Settlement Needs in your Area** – on going item for input to DIAC re unmet needs.

Meg Scolyer provided additional information to members about the issue of some young people dropping out of the system re immunization depending when they arrive in Australia (either before or after Year 7) With no eligibility new arrivals not receiving immunization can be up for 3 x \$150. Meg stated that this issue results in undermining of existing immunization in the community. The next step is to gain support around this issue. Meg will send an electronic copy for distribution to MSC members.

6. **Calendar of meetings and forums** – Calendar reflects updates to forums.

MSC Meeting DATE	MEETING FOCUS	Proposed Forums/activities and dates TBC = "to be confirmed"	International Multicultural Calendar events in 2012
January	No meeting		Jan
03 Feb	The Red Cross – International Tracing Services, Jane Billings Whitehorse City Council Diversity Policy and Action Plan – Railey Orger		Feb
02 March	Community Detention (Team Leader Sarah Brown, Red Cross) and Asylum Seeker Assistance Scheme (Team Leader Andrea Brookes, Red Cross); Hotham Mission Asylum Seeker Project (Community Liaison Coordinator Samantha Charlesworth) Michael Hardie, Director, JANSSEN Spirituality Centre		March 21: <u>Harmony Day</u>
No meeting in April			April 7 - <u>World Health Day</u> , recognized by the UN
04 May	RCOA Update: Louise Olliff, Settlement Policy Coordinator, RCOA	Family Violence Forum (date 25/5, Mooroolbark Community Centre) Leonie (Convenor); Glenis, Jeska, Meg, Jasmina, Judy (MIC), MSO Centrelink, local councils (Knox, Maroondah, Whitehorse, Yarra Ranges, etc).	May 21 - <u>World Day for Cultural Diversity for Dialogue and Development</u> ,
01 June	Eastern Region Regional Advisory Council (RAC). Guest: Huss Mustafa, Chair RAC.		June 20 – <u>World Refugee Day</u> , June 26 - <u>Day - Support of Victims of Torture</u>
July	No meeting		
03 Aug	Fire safety and water safety and CALD communities, Stephen O'Malley, MFB and David Holland, Life Saving Victoria		Aug
07 Sept	Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV) and Local Governments and their work with CALD communities – Con Pagonis and LGA reps.	(Date & month TBC) Contact: TBC; Shahan, AMES Employment Services; Thomas, Jennifer, Maria; Karen; MIC (TBC)	Sep
05 Oct	Asylum Seeker Resource Centre (ASRC) Speaker Hayley Mansfield, Education Coordinator, ASRC	Employment Expo Date: Friday October 19 th Employment Expo focus on services, jobs targeting refugees and migrants. Convenor: Karen Conolly (Swinburne)	October 17- <u>International Day for the Eradication of Poverty</u> , recognized by UN
02 Nov	Review MSC 2012 program; plan MSC 2013 program		November 16 - <u>International Day for Tolerance</u> November 25 - <u>International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women</u> ,
07 Dec	Meeting to be advised.	Forum entitled "disAbility Voices" a focus on disability in CALD communities. Information Education and Raising Awareness of Barriers.	Dec 3 rd : International Day for People with a disability. http://www.idpwd.com.au/

Other focus areas: Successful CALD associations; family support programs and services; Provisional spouse entrants: access/lack of access to services; refugee health and mental health; council grants; interfaith networks.

7. Guest Speaker Presentation: The work of the Municipal Association of Victoria

Con Pagonis, Multicultural Policy Adviser, MAV.

Mr Pagonis gave an overview of the Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV) focusing on its history, aims & objectives, its roles and responsibilities, and current challenges in the settlement and multicultural affairs policy area.

The MAV is an association of local councils representing the interests of local government in Victoria. It was formed 133 years ago, in 1879. We are incorporated by an Act of State Parliament. The Municipal Association Act 1907 defines our purpose, sets out how we operate and empowers our members to make rules to further clarify our role and processes. The State Council is our governing body. It is made up of all the representatives of our member councils. Our Rules of Association set out the obligations and functions of the MAV's Board. In 2011 the MAV Board established a Multicultural Committee to advise it on policy development in this area. Today (7/9/12) for example, the monthly Board meeting is considering the adoption of a new *MAV Statement of Commitment to Cultural Diversity*.

The MAV today is a driving and influential force behind a strong and strategically positioned local government sector in Victoria. We have a sectoral representation and advocacy role in engaging other levels of government and the business and community sectors. We organise a range of professional development seminars and workshops for councillors and local council managers and officers. For example, the MAV convened an ethnicity data information session for local government social planners earlier this week.

In this context, the MAV's multicultural policy adviser position:

- addresses sectoral local government issues to enable increased responsiveness to cultural diversity
- supports strategic and social planning to inform local government diversity policy and service development
- develops partnerships and relationships between local government and ethnic community sectors
- assists local government with advocacy to advance the multicultural affairs agenda
- networks with relevant peak bodies and committees such as the Ethnic Communities Council of Victoria
- supports and promotes the Victorian Local Government Multicultural Issues Network (VLGMIN)
- works closely with other levels of government on cultural diversity issues

This position is currently funded by the Victorian Government's Department of Health to work with councils on home and community care services. It is also funded by the Victorian Health Promotion Foundation (Vic. Health) to work with councils on the Localities Embracing and Accepting Diversity (LEAD) Program.

MAV maintains an email distribution list for local government staff responsible for multicultural services and policy development. Through this e-network, MAV regularly disseminates information on new resources, upcoming forums and events, news and advice.

The MAV submission to the current federal parliamentary Inquiry into Multiculturalism in Australia and the Australian Local Government Association's keynote address to the Settlement Council of Australia's national conference held in June 2012 in Adelaide will be circulated with the minutes of this meeting. The following six recommendations appear in both documents. They seek from federal and state governments:

1. A more clearly articulated, strategic and mutually agreed position on the respective roles and responsibilities of federal, state and local governments around settlement and cultural diversity policy and programs;
2. greater inter-governmental engagement and co-ordination from the federal government;
3. access to DIAC-funded settlement services for skilled migration entrants;
4. more effective delivery of settlement support for new arrivals to regional municipalities and shires;
5. a modest investment in collaboratively developing a national multicultural good practice handbook to guide Australia's councils; and
6. consideration for conducting a national biennial "local government and multiculturalism" conference to progress policy development, program design and service delivery.

The MAV seeks to position the local government sector as a key player in addressing good migrant and refugee settlement practice, and in playing a leadership role in local community responses to cultural diversity.

For further information contact Con Pagonis on ph. 9667 5544 or Email cpagonis@mav.asn.au

Following the MAV presentation council representatives provided updates to members of the MSC with regard to initiatives being implemented in their regions: The following councils were represented:

- Boroondara – Fiona Brown Senior - Policy and Project Officer
- City of Monash – Eugenia Grammatikakis - Community Development Officer
- City of Whitehorse – Raeley Orger - Diversity and Healthy Ageing Officer
- Knox City Council – Belinda Gillam - Community Development Officer

8 Forum and agency reports

Disability Forum (Cynthia Shaw - MSC)

Forum focus on disability in CALD communities (information Education and Raising Awareness of the Barriers).

The forum is a partnership between the Migrant Settlement Committee, the City of Whitehorse, EACH, DHS Centrelink and the Disability Action Group Eastern Region (DAGER).

Convenors: Cynthia Shaw and Woody Marriott. MSC members: Maria de Monte, Twanny Farrugia and Cynthia Shaw 0434080977

Employment Expo (Karen Connolly - Swinburne)

Employment expo on Friday 19 October at Croydon Swinburne auditorium. Karen has received funding and is seeking interested members of the MSC to participate in the mock Job Interview section. Also seeking participation from local employers. Contact Karen (9214 5337 / 0400 166630)

Agency Reports

AMEP Report for Box Hill and Oakleigh AMES.

- Planning is in progress for term 4.
- SLPET/Skilling up for Work:
 - Box Hill will be running a Preparation for Aged Care and Childcare courses
 - Oakleigh will be running a Skilling Up for work in hospitality, aged care, hospitals, hotels and manufacturing.
- The Volunteer Tutor Program is a wonderful program. Students can now request a tutor if they are studying 10 hours or less in English class. The tutors give wonderful support in the English language and also in information on settlement needs.
- New e-learning modules are now available to students who are in class or waiting for a class.
- Distance Learning is available for students who can't come to class. It is conducted by phone and Skype linking up with a teacher each week and is another great way to study.
- The Ringwood East parents' class is still running successfully for parents with small children. Childcare is available on-site.

Suzette Kabaila - AMES is moving to another role within AMES. MSC members wished her success with her new role and expressed their sincere thanks for her input to the MSC which has been consistent and at a high level over many years. We will miss Suzette.

Joseph Agwalama – Department of Justice is moving to another role as the Justice for Refugee program has been moved. Unfortunately Joseph was unable to attend this meeting however MSC members passed on their sincere thanks for his input.

Next Meeting: Friday 5th October 2012

Focus: Asylum Seeker Resource Centre (ASRC) overview; 2012 outcomes, 2013 plans.

Speaker: Hayley Mansfield, Education Coordinator, ASRC.