



## MINUTES

### INTERCULTURAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

held on 6 February 2019 at 6.30pm at Melton Library and Learning Hub

**Present:** Cr Bob Turner, Councillor, City of Melton  
Jessica Trijsburg, Coordinator Community Capacity, Melton City Council  
Essan Dileri, Intercultural Development Officer, Melton City Council  
Lynette Dawson, Djerriwarrh Community and Education Services  
Tutana Bradshaw, Home of Multicultural Exchange (HOME)  
David Cowan, Melton Interfaith Network  
Kubir Khanal, Bhutanese Community Melton Inc  
Gurpreet (Gary) Verma, Vice President Sri Durga Temple  
Sasee Devaraja, Tamil Ethnic Language School  
Amy McDonald, Home of Multicultural Exchange  
René de Sant'Anna, Odyssey House Victoria  
Joanne Mutsaerts, Victoria Police  
Asvin Phorugngam, Victorian Electoral Commission (VEC)

**Chairperson:** Cr Bob Turner, City of Melton

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**1. Welcome**

Chairperson began the meeting with Melton City Council Acknowledgment of Country.

**2. Introductions**

Chairperson welcomed Committee members.

**3. Apologies**

Cr Melissa De Santis, Councillor, City of Melton  
Christina Prakanthan, Natyatharu School of Performing Arts/ Bharathanatya Aacharya Association of Victoria  
Deepti Alurkar, Mums Dance Club - Founder and President, Connectwest No Hunger Community Leadership Program  
Lillian Campos, Service Coordination Officer, Melton City Council  
Hammam Dewanyang, South Sudan  
Vishma Guatam, Nepalese Community in Melton  
Tigist Kebede, Ethiopian Community  
Robert Aduer, South Sudanese  
Vonivate Tawase Drui, Fijian Community Association Victoria Inc

**4. Declaration of interests and/or conflict of interests**

Nil



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### 5. Confirmation of minutes of previous meeting

#### Motion

G Verma/ S Devaraja

That the Committee adopts the minutes of the Intercultural Advisory Committee meeting held on 21 November 2018.

### 6. Business arising from previous meeting

- E Dileri to forward feedback of the Committee members to Council's Events Team regarding the long queues at the Djerriwarrh Festival 2018. **Actioned.**
- E Dileri to pass contact details of Council Officer looking after the Amphitheatre onto the Committee. **Actioned.**
- E Dileri to forward Committee members' input to Council Officer looking after the Amphitheatre. **Actioned.**
- E Dileri to speak with Council's Communications Team if they could share a link to voting centres in the municipality on Council's Facebook. **Actioned.**
- E Dileri to schedule Committee meetings every two months. **Actioned.**
- Committee members who would like to host future IAC meetings to liaise with E Dileri. **Actioned.**
- E Dileri to send the contact details of relevant Melton Young Communities staff who organise Teenage Holiday Program. **Actioned.**

### 7. African Communities Working Group (ACWG)

J Trijsburg presented a summary of ACWG's meeting held on 21 November 2018. It was a half-combined meeting with the IAC, occurring in the last hour of the meeting. The meeting focussed on reflection and debriefing. Some of the key discussions at the meeting were as follows:

- Members reflected on their activities in 2018, including conferences they have presented at, joint initiatives, and some of the challenges they have experienced.
- ACWG members discussed the need for strategic direction along with the annual review of the Terms of Reference to help clarify the working group's purpose, role and intention. The Group will have a strategic planning day on 2 March 2019.

In the second half of the meeting, ACWG and IAC came together and Cr De Santis asked everyone to introduce themselves and thanked members of the IAC and ACWG for their contribution in 2018.

ACWG members gave feedback to IAC: R Aduer said many communities outside the municipality speak highly of Melton City Council's commitment in the Intercultural programming. T Kebede said Melton City Council's approach in the diversity space is different and is leading the way in this space.

Committee members spoke about the Djerriwarrh Festival – Intercultural Stage on 10 November 2018.

Cr De Santis invited Committee members to share what is happening in their respective communities. Committee members took turns to talk about events happening in the communities.



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### 8. Victoria Police presentation

J Mutsaerts, Leading Senior Constable presented on Victoria Police Family Violence (FV) approach. Victoria Police will act to protect people harmed by family violence, and to prohibit any more violent actions or behaviour from the person who has harmed their partner and/or family.

The Code of Practice for the Investigation of FV directs how Victoria Police responds to family violence.

The Victorian Family Violence Protection Act 2008 defines family violence as behaviour by a family member that creates fear and control over their partner, ex-partner or other family members.

These behaviours can include:

- Physical assault (e.g. hitting, pushing, burning or choking, rough or neglectful care giving)
- Sexual violence (e.g. being forced to perform sexual acts)
- Financial abuse (e.g. withholding money, food, medicine, property damage, or dowry related abuse)
- Psychological and/or verbal abuse (such as threats, repeated put downs, name calling, sexist, racist, ageist, ableist or homophobic abuse)
- Causing a child to hear, see or be aware of violent acts (for example by hearing fights, seeing injuries or damage).

Victoria Police will respond positively to community group's request to deliver workshops on FV considering their cultural aspects including language barriers and use interpreters if required.

G Verma asked if there was a brief information sheet on FV community members could utilise.

#### Action

J Mutsaerts to send relevant flyers, information sheet and a copy of her presentation to E Dileri to be forwarded onto the Committee members.

### 9. Active Citizenship – Victorian Electoral Commission

A Phorugngam, Electoral Inclusion Officer did an introductory presentation on Active Citizenship using the model they developed. The overall objective of the model is to empower people with the knowledge and skills to think critically about issues and actively participate in making change within their community, including voting in elections'. The model has three prongs. They are Knowledge & Values, Skills and Actions. Under each prong there are many elements which capture major features of active citizenship.

G Verma asked about fines issued for people who didn't vote. A Phorugngam responded voting in Australia is compulsory and you have to vote if you are over 18 years old. Unfortunately, many people from diverse backgrounds fail to vote and receive fines. In this connection, VEC works with diverse communities to raise their awareness and encourage them to take necessary steps to participate in the elections and practice their democratic rights.

T Bradshaw asked if VEC could present to her community group. A Phorugngam replied he would be glad to attend any community meeting to present.

A Phorugngam will be invited to discuss the elements of Active Citizenship in future meetings of the IAC.

#### Action

A Phorugngam to send a copy of his presentation to E Dileri to be forwarded onto the Committee members.



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### 10. Harmony Day

E Dileri presented on Council's Harmony Day celebration happening on 16 March 2019 from 11.00am to 3.00pm at Morton Homestead. Committee members were encouraged to participate and inform E Dileri if their groups want to perform or have a presence to share their culture.

#### Action

- Committee members to contact E Dileri if their group wants to perform by 15 February 2019.
- E Dileri to send Harmony Day flyers to the Committee members.

### 11. Community Engagement Framework Review

J Trijsburg talked about Council's Community Engagement Framework Review. She added under the current Community Engagement Framework, Melton City Council has made a commitment to ensure Council includes feedback from diverse communities when consulting and engaging with the community. This is to ensure we understand their specific needs, perspectives, and insights to be incorporated in our Community Engagement Framework. J Trijsburg asked the Committee members what would be the best way to engage with your community and what would increase the likelihood of participation? The Committee members emphasised to apply a multi-pronged approach which may include some or a combination of the following:

- At public transport hubs and/or on transport itself. Victoria Police have tried this, and it has been effective and well received.
- Don't door knock or call people on the phone for surveys. This makes people feel unsafe and irritated.
- Go to the people - schools, drop in centres, health centres, faith institutions, other places where people congregate.
- Community events such as Council's Harmony Day, Djerriwarrh Festive etc and also other events organised by local communities.
- Use Facebook - target postcodes for boosting so that we could engage with a more relevant cohort.
- Use other social media with young people who are IT savvy for example Snapchat, Instagram etc.
- Provide incentives and entertainment to attract people to come talk with you.
- Set up pop up stations at shopping centres.
- Apply more traditional methods such as face to face with older people.
- Go to AMEP classes and other support programs where people come together.
- Don't use written methods to engage with new migrant communities, don't door knock, or phone or use online surveys with people who aren't IT savvy.
- Recognise that some communities are not used to being asked their opinion by government. You will need to explain the background information in clear, simple and easy language.
- Involve people in different phases of community engagement by giving them responsibility, and letting them help design the tool and methods. They will feel more invested in the outcome and help you reach their communities. Remember to invest time, practice patience and apply inclusive practices.
- Recruit ambassadors to help with community engagement. Train them to make sure they are ready to represent Council. Reward them for their time.



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### 12. Priorities for the Committee

Cr Turner facilitated a session to discuss the priorities of the Committee for 2019. Two Committee members couldn't attend the meeting and emailed their priorities.

R Aduer

- Increase active community participation and intercultural engagement among our communities within the City of Melton through community projects.
- More sporting outreach and recreational centre for young and elderly, such public parks built with tennis and basketball courts whereby the community can access and engage positively.
- Increase community health projects to address mental health and domestic violence situation.
- Building a community Precinct Centre which it can accommodate Art & Performance and is also multipurpose centre.

C Prakanthan

- Implement a strategy for the safety of our local surroundings/ suburbs – more police patrol
- Maintain local parks and lakes regularly - the Lake Caroline is polluted.

D Cowan

- Develop a database of cultural groups which may also include a description of the makeup of the group with contact details of community leaders. This database could be made available to community groups to send invites to events to help increase inclusiveness.
- Look at how the various cultural groups can be more involved in community events such as Harmony Day, ANZAC Day, Australia Day and Djerriwarrh Festival.
- Ensure all Council documents are available in all languages of the various cultural groups.

G Verma

- Safety of the community – working the African Communities Working Group more vigorously
- Salient discrimination in the recruitment processes at different organisations – working with local business and organisation to raise their understanding on the value of diversity
- Programs to engage with the senior citizens from diverse backgrounds. They are often isolated and stay at home.
- Newly arrived communities to be informed about existing opportunities within the City of Melton.
- Melton City Council's website is so complex and not easy to navigate.
- Space for major community events not easy to access while neighbouring Councils welcome community groups to organise major events in their outdoors facilities such as parks.

Cr Turner

- Encourage community groups to be more active and establish their own group to collaborate with the wider community.

L Dawson

- We can work with people in the first five years of their arrival to Australia. We can structure our AMEP classes based on their needs.

J Trijsburg



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- Events Team from Council could come and present how they can help community groups organise major events.

T Bradshaw

- Training to community groups on how to run their community organisations more effectively.
- A trip to New Zealand to learn from different community groups on how they manage their community events and activities.

J Trijsburg highlighted the Training Calendar which was part of information pack provided to Committee members in the meeting. She also added Committee members could come with training ideas matching their needs. D Cowan mentioned Council Community Leadership Program which may be helpful for community groups.

Due to shortage of time, Cr Turner requested the Committee members to email their priorities if any to E Dileri by 8 February 2019.

### Action

E Dileri to invite a Council Officer from Events Team present information on Council's support to community groups organising events.

### 13. Other Business

Cr Turner opened the floor for the Committee members to share what is happening in their respective communities.

T Bradshaw talked about HOME's program during school holiday which will be a combination of arts and cultural activities. A McDonald added there may be a movie night in the park on 29 March 2019.

K Khanal informed the Committee about the Bhutanese Language School run for children on Saturdays to teach them about their culture and language.

D Cowan talked about the Bus Tour of Places of Worship and other events organised by Melton Interfaith Network.

G Verma talked about events to be organised by Sri Durga Temple on 4 and 24 March 2019.

L Dawson talked about volunteer opportunities at AMEP to help students who can't attend classes at school. This is a home-based AMEP program. Full training and support will be available to prepare volunteers to undertake their duties.

J Trijsburg acknowledged the work led by Essan Dileri in partnership with Melton Interfaith Network that resulted in Council's Interfaith Strategy which has been shortlisted for an LG Pro Award for Excellence.

### Actions

Committee members to send information and flyers related to their activities to E Dileri to be forwarded onto the Committee



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**14. Close of Business and future meeting dates**

- 22 May 2019 - Caroline Springs Library and Learning Hub
- 21 August 2019 - Melton Library and Learning Hub
- 2 October 2019 - Caroline Springs Library and Learning Hub
- 20 November 2019 - Caroline Springs Library and Learning Hub

The meeting closed at 8.15pm.