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INTERCULTURAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

held on 30 June 2021 at 6.30pm on Zoom

Present:

Cr Steve Abboushi	Councillor (<i>left at 7.30pm</i>)
Cr Lara Carli	Councillor
Cr Bob Turner	Councillor
Laura Di Pasquale	Community Service Organisation representative
Gary Verma	Local Intercultural Community representative
Vonivate Tawase Drui	Local Intercultural Community representative
Altaf Ali Mohammed	Local Intercultural Community representative
Dal Khadka	Local Intercultural Community representative
Durba Dhiman	Local Intercultural Community representative
Madhvi Tandon	Local Intercultural Community representative
Patrick Kariuki	Local Intercultural Community representative
Dongling Ye	Local Intercultural Community representative
Dayane Mardesich	Community Capacity Coordinator (Ex Officio)
Essan Dileri	Team Leader Diversity & Intercultural (Ex Officio)

In Attendance:

Monica Forson	Senior Adviser, the Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission
Elyse Rider	Manager Community Planning

Quorum: *Quorum will consist of two (2) Councillors, one (1) Council Officer, plus six (6) Local Intercultural Group and Community Services Organisation representatives.*

Chairperson: Cr Lara Carli

1. Welcome

Cr Carli welcomed all attendees to the meeting and proceeded with the Acknowledgment of Country. *'Melton City Council acknowledges the Traditional Owners of this land, the people of the Kulin Nations, and pays respects to their Elders, past, present and emerging.'*

2. Apologies

Cr Moira Deeming	Councillor
Abe Dunovits	Community Service Organisation representative
Vera Mitrovska	Local Intercultural Community representative
Christina Akon	Local Intercultural Community representative
George Oliapuram	Local Intercultural Community representative

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Sana Zia	Local Intercultural Community representative
Liuvao Logo	Local Intercultural Community representative
Kimberly Stephens	Access & Support Outreach Officer (Ex Officio)

3. Declaration of interests and/or conflict of interests

Nil

4. Confirmation of minutes of previous meeting**Motion**

Mover/Seconder G Verma/V Druil

That the Committee note that Council adopted the Minutes of previous committee meeting held on 8 April 2021 at its Meeting held 10 May 2021.

CARRIED

5. Business Arising

Nil

6. General Business**6.1 Update on Actions from previous meetings**

Committee members to send flyers and information about their community events to E Dileri to circulate. *Actioned*

6.2 Reducing Racism in Melton

M Forson, Senior Adviser, the Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission (VEOHRC) talked about VEOHRC and their role.

The VEOHRC is an independent organisation with responsibilities under Victoria's human rights laws. Their role is to protect and promote human rights in Victoria. They work to prevent discrimination and vilification through their education and engagement with communities, employers, government and the Victorian public. When things go wrong or human rights are at risk, they support Victorians to exercise their rights by helping to resolve discrimination complaints and intervening in court cases. They also strive for systemic change by undertaking investigations and independent reviews and advocating for stronger protections and greater respect for human rights and equality.

M Forson talked about the Reducing Racism project which is a three-year project addressing issues of racism in local communities. Initially, phase one of the project focused on Muslim communities and African Australians.

The project has the following aims:

- Empower communities experiencing racism, religious discrimination, and racial and religious vilification to understand and exercise their rights, including reporting instances of racism, discrimination and vilification
- Partner with councils and service providers in identified regions to build organisational capacity in using human rights and equality law to respond to racism



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under the Equal Opportunity Act (EOA) and the Racial and Religious Tolerance Act (RRTA)

- Increase people's reporting of racism, discrimination and vilification to the Commission through the development of digital communication strategies and enhancement and expansion of the Community Reporting Tool.

Phase two of the project focuses on broader communities in Melton, Wyndham, Shepparton and Geelong Local Government Areas. One of the components of the project is to conduct a Human Rights Advocates Course. This course will provide more insight and understanding of racism and how to work in this area. M Forson expressed that the Commission would like to run a Human Rights Advocate Course in Melton.

G Verma commented that he has not witnessed racism in Melton but had witnessed many incidents of racism and discrimination online on social media platforms. M Forson advised that online racism matters are beyond the scope of this program, but that VEOHRC can assist by referring groups to the appropriate body for support. She encouraged everyone to use Commission's Community Reporting Tool linked on Melton City Council's website.

E Rider said that Council could share Community Satisfaction Survey results and Community Vision consultation data with the Commission. This could help the Commission understand more about the community in the City of Melton.

M Ali asked about the enforcement of the Federal, State and local Acts with regards to employment and business. M Forson responded that under the Equal Opportunity Act your rights are protected with regards to workplace racism and discrimination.

Action

E Dileri to connect VEOHRC with the Melton Interfaith Network and African Communities Working Group to explore further opportunities to organise a Human Rights Advocate Course in Melton. An invitation will be sent to IAC's Community Service Organisation and Local Intercultural Community representatives.

E Dileri to circulate VEOHRC presentation to all committee members.

E Dileri to forward Community Satisfaction Survey and Community Vision consultation data to the Commission.

6.3 Intercultural Plan and Interfaith Strategy Reporting

E Dileri presented on Intercultural Plan and Interfaith Strategy (the Plans) and informed the Committee on the progress of these strategic documents' final year. The Plans supported Council's vision which is a thriving community where everyone belongs. The Plans provided a roadmap for Council's work in the areas of diversity, interculturalism, inclusion and interfaith. He highlighted several major achievements of the Plans over the past four years. The Plans expire in 2021.

E Rider talked about the new plan which will be developed following the adoption of the new Council and Wellbeing Plan 2021-25. The process will include building on the achievements of the Plans, researching current needs and priorities in the context of the changing community and COVID-19 recovery, building on the consultations of the Council and Wellbeing Plan and Community Vision and targeted community engagement including with the IAC.

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E Dileri briefly talked about the ACWG's meeting held on 22 June 2021 and presented a summary of their discussion.

6.5 Updates from members

Chairperson invited members to provide any updates from their respective communities.

- G Verma mentioned that a festival is being organised by Sri Durga Temple for August. He will send more information about it to IAC members.
- M Ali talked about the Melton Much More App and asked IAC members to promote it in their networks. He also asked whether IAC members could be issued business cards.

Action

E Dileri to investigate the possibility of business cards for IAC members and report back to the Committee.

- M Ali asked whether the frequency of IAC meetings could be increased. E Rider responded that advisory committees are formalised and run on a quarterly basis based on their terms of reference. However, there are many more opportunities for any IAC members to get involved in Council and community networks and initiatives.
- M Tandon talked about a Bollywood dance program which was successful. She is in the processing of organising yoga classes following community requests.

Action

E Dileri to support IAC members to participate in broader networks and initiatives of Council and in Melton.

Committee members to send flyers and information about their community events to E Dileri to circulate.

7. Next Meeting

The next meeting is to be held on 29 September 2021 commencing at 6.30pm at Caroline Springs Library and Learning Hub.

8. Close of Business

The meeting closed at 8.00 pm.