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INTERCULTURAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

held on 29 September 2021 at 6.30pm on Zoom

Present:

Cr Steve Abboushi	Councillor (Joined at 6.40pm)
Cr Lara Carli	Councillor
Cr Bob Turner	Councillor
Laura Di Pasquale	Community Service Organisation representative
Abe Dunovits	Community Service Organisation representative
Gary Verma	Local Intercultural Community representative
Liuvao Logo	Local Intercultural Community representative
Altaf Ali Mohammed	Local Intercultural Community representative (joined at 7:01pm)
Durba Dhiman	Local Intercultural Community representative
Madhvi Tandon	Local Intercultural Community representative (left at 7.20pm)
Patrick Kariuki	Local Intercultural Community representative
Sana Zia	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)
Kimberly Stephens	Access & Support Outreach Officer (Ex Officio)

In Attendance:

Menka Kitanovski	Multicultural Service Officer Services Australia (left at 7.35pm)
Peter Balbata	Jobs Victoria Advocate, Melton City Council (left at 7.30pm)

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 opened the meeting with an Acknowledgment of Country.

*MINUTES***2. Apologies**

Cr Moira Deeming	Councillor
Vera Mitrovska	Local Intercultural Community representative
Christina Akon	Local Intercultural Community representative
George Oliapuram	Local Intercultural Community representative
Vonivate Tawase Drui	Local Intercultural Community representative
Dal Khadka	Local Intercultural Community representative

3. Declaration of interests and/or conflict of interests

Nil

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

Mover/Seconder G Verma/ Di Pasquale

That the Committee note that Council adopted the Minutes of previous committee meeting held on 30 June 2021 at its Meeting held on 2 August 2021.

CARRIED

5. Business Arising

- Nil

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

- 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. **Actioned**

- E Dileri to circulate VEOHRC presentation to all committee members. **Actioned**

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

- E Dileri to investigate the possibility of business cards for IAC members and report back to the Committee Actioned. Council informed that they would not be proceeding with distributing business cards to any Committee members. **Actioned**

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

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



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6.2 Jobs Victoria Advocate

P Balbata, Jobs Victoria Advocate, Melton City Council presented on the Jobs Victoria Advocate program. Many people are not aware of the different supports available to them or do not know where to go for the help and advice they need to find work. Jobs Victoria Advocates support people who are looking for work by connecting them to information, advice and the right services.

If people are looking for work, Jobs Victoria Advocates can:

- refer them to a local Jobs Victoria Partner who can help them update your resume, prepare for job interviews, and connect them with local employers
- connect them to local skills and training opportunities through Work and Learning Centres, TAFE Skills and Jobs Centres, and apprenticeship programs
- help them apply for jobs in your local area through the Jobs Victoria online hub.

The service is available to residents of Victoria aged 15 years or older. There are no eligibility criteria.

Melton Advocates are specialists in working with CALD communities, youth, mature job seekers, and people living with a disability. An interpreter service is available. The program provides people with a conversation with Melton Jobs Victoria Advocate to unpack where they are professionally now and where they would like to be, as well as further information on education and employment services that can support people to get a job. Advocates can assist to make any necessary referrals.

G Verma asked if the program could help some job applicants with drafting key selection criteria as this section in the job application process can be complex.

P Balbata responded that they could support potential candidates with the job application process. If needs be, they could refer them to the appropriate services where they could receive assistance.

S Zia asked if they provided support with resume and cover-letter on a one on one basis. P Balbata responded that they could provide assistance with resume and cover-letter on a one on one basis and if required a further referral will be made.

L Di Pasquale asked if the service only covered the City of Melton. P Balbata responded that the program only covers the City of Melton but that there were Jobs Victoria Advocates in other regions that people could be connected to. D Dhiman asked if newly arrived people could access their services. P Balbata responded that newly arrived people could access their service.

D Ye asked if information about jobs and employers could be provided. P Balbata responded that they could provide that information too.

Action

E Dileri to forward a copy of P Balbata's presentation and contact details onto the Committee.

6.3 Menka Kitanovski, Multicultural Service Officer, Services Australia to deliver her presentation.

M Kitanovski, Multicultural Service Officer, Services Australia delivered her presentation focusing on COVID-19 disaster payments and scams.

What is the COVID-19 Disaster Payment?

The Australian Government is paying the COVID-19 Disaster Payment to help workers unable to earn an income due to the Victorian COVID-19 public health order. Public health orders may involve a COVID-19 hotspot, lockdown or period of restricted movement.

Who can get the COVID-19 Disaster Payment?

- People must meet the general eligibility rules as well as the rules for the COVID-19 health order that is affecting them.
- People need to meet all these general eligibility rules:
 - o be 17 years or older
 - o not getting the Pandemic Leave Disaster Payment, Dad and Partner Pay, Parental Leave Pay, a state pandemic payment or a state small business payment for the same period
 - o lost hours of work and income and didn't have enough pandemic-related paid leave entitlements
 - o unable to work and earn their usual income of 8 hours or more or a full day's work because they were in the COVID-19 hotspot and are subject to restricted movement order or they live or work from other areas of Victoria.
 - o not getting their usual income and their employer is not getting Retaining Domestic Airline Capability payments on their behalf
 - o lived or worked in or visited a Commonwealth-declared COVID-19 hotspot in Victoria that is subject to restricted movement order or they lived or work from other areas of Victoria.
- People meet the requirement of living or working in a Commonwealth-declared COVID-19 hotspot if both of these apply:
 - o they live or work in an area which isn't locked down
 - o they can't work because they're unable to cross into or out of the lockdown area.
- People need to use any appropriate pandemic-related paid leave entitlements before they can get the payment.
- Pandemic-related leave is any leave entitlement paid by their employer when they lose hours or income due to a state public health order or lockdown.
- People are not required to take annual leave, unpaid leave, paid sick or carer's leave, long service leave or compassionate leave to get the payment.
- If someone decides to take paid leave, they will not have lost income and won't be eligible for COVID-19 Disaster Payment.



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- Victorian construction industry shut down

They must meet all other eligibility rules. They can make a claim for COVID-19 Disaster Payment from 24 September 2021 for the period 17-23 September 2021.

How do people claim the COVID-19 Disaster Payment?

- If someone is a member of a couple, they can both claim this payment. They and their partner will need to make separate claims and both meet the eligibility requirements.
- Australian residents
- Australian residents must claim online.
- To claim online, they need a myGov account linked to a Centrelink online account. If they don't have a myGov account, they need to create one.
- If their myGov account isn't linked to Centrelink, they can prove who they are through myGov to link to Centrelink.
- New customers can submit their claim after linking their myGov and Centrelink online accounts. Identity documents will be requested as part of that process. People do not need to go into a service centre to confirm their identity.

M Kitanosvski also talked about the scams which are going on now especially during the COVID-19 pandemic. She mentioned that some scammers are posing as Services Australia or other government department employees and trying to scam people. She said Services Australia will not call clients or ask them to provide documents urgently with consequences if not provided. Services Australia will send emails via MyGov. She encouraged the Committee to be vigilant about the scammers as they are using people's vulnerability to scam them.

Cr Carli asked if M Kitanosvski could share the presentation with the Committee. She responded that she couldn't share the presentation but will provide documents with further information on COVID-19 Disaster payments for circulation to the Committee.

Cr Abboushi asked if someone being told to self-isolate could apply for payment. M Kitanosvski replied that they can apply for pandemic leave payment. Once they have exhausted that, they can apply for COVID-19 Disaster Payment.

Cr Abboushi asked whether payments are affected by COVID-19 vaccination status.

M Kitanosvski responded when 70% of people 16 years or older in your state or territory are fully vaccinated with 2 doses of a COVID-19 vaccine, automatic COVID-19 Disaster Payments will stop.

When 80% of people 16 years or older in your state or territory are fully vaccinated with 2 doses of a COVID-19 vaccine, there will be further changes to the COVID-19 Disaster Payment.

The COVID-19 Disaster Payment amount will reduce over a period of up to 2 weeks.

In the first week after a state or territory reaches 80% fully vaccinated, the COVID-19 Disaster Payment will be one payment of:

- \$450 if you've lost more than 8 hours of work and you're not getting an eligible Centrelink or Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA) payment

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- \$100 if you've lost more than 8 hours of work and you're getting an eligible Centrelink or DVA payment.

In the second week after a state or territory reaches 80% fully vaccinated, the COVID-19 Disaster Payment will:

- be one \$320 payment if you've lost more than 8 hours of work and you're not getting an eligible Centrelink or DVA payment
- end if you're getting an eligible Centrelink or DVA payment.

After this period, the COVID-19 Disaster Payment won't be available in your area.

Cr Turner asked if people who are sick but without work could access COVID-19 Disaster Payment. M Kitanovski responded that it depends on their situation and will be dealt with case by case. They might be put on Job Seeker Payment or other types of payments. Please remember anyone who has been put off work due to pandemic, can access COVID-19 Disaster Payment.

Action

M Kitanovski to send the information to E Dileri to be circulated to the Committee.

E Dileri to circulate Menka's contact details to the Committee.

6.4 New Plan Development

D Mardesich provided an update on the development of new plan. She said that it will take time to develop. We are in the process of doing background research and developing an engagement plan. The committee will be kept informed about the plan's progress at each meeting.

6.5 African Communities Working Group (ACWG)

E Dileri briefly talked about the ACWG's meeting held on 22 June 2021 and presented a summary of their discussion. This was the last meeting of the current term. The members also reflected on the last two years of their involvement, celebrated some of their achievements and reflected on areas that could be further worked out in the next term of the ACWG. The members were given certificates of participation signed by the City of Melton's Mayor. The members were gratefully thanked for their contribution and commitment.

6.6 Updates from members

Cr Carli invited members to provide any updates from their respective communities.

- G Verma informed the Committee about the conversations the Hindu community has had with both Federal and State Governments regarding the anti-vilification bill on the Nazi Swastika. The Hindu community proposed amendments to the bill to name the Nazi Swastika as Nazi Symbol. The bill is due to go to the Parliament. Cr Carli asked if G Verma had contacted the local MP in Melton. G Verma said that they have been in contact with the local MP to keep him updated on the matter.
- S Zia asked a question about food assistance. Cr Carli mentioned that Council runs three Community Connector Hubs with food relief initiatives. D Mardesich said there is a grant program specifically for COVID-19 and is open at the moment. These grants will be assessed on a monthly basis. This grant program has been going one for a year. You can contact Council's Community Grants Officer for more information. She also



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mentioned Melton Local Partnership project providing food relief to specific communities through local service providers who are the partners of the project.

- Cr Turner said that the Sikh Temple in Plumpton also does food relief. Melton South Community Centre has a food relief program every Friday from 10am to 12pm.
- A Mohammad said he is involved in a network that can provide support on a one on one basis. There are no mosques in Melton to organise food relief. Anyone from an Islamic faith can contact Ali if they need support. He can make referrals to an appropriate service.
- K Stephens briefly talked about her role. She provides COVID-19 and general support to people who have additional barriers due to disability and need support. Please contact K Stephens regarding clients with additional needs who require support.
- A Mohammad asked how IAC is associated with Council. Cr Carli said IAC is an advisory committee. Members aren't considered employees of Council. D Mardesich said that members can put on their resume that they are members of the IAC. D Mardesich said that if there is anything specific Ali is seeking, we can follow up outside the meeting and provide assistance through the right department. Cr Carli also said if any wants to discuss any issue all Councillors are here to help. Cr Turner let the group know that they can call any of the Councillors and share their thoughts and concerns if any. Cr Carli suggested that Ali could also share thoughts and ideas in the development of the new plan.
- D Mardesich mentioned that the Community Achievement Awards were open for nominations and encouraged everyone to nominate people who have volunteered and made a difference in the community.

Action

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

E Dileri to pass on the Community Grants Officer's contact details onto the Committee.

7. Next Meeting

The next meeting is to be held on 24 November 2021 commencing at 6.30pm at Caroline Springs Library and Learning Hub.

8. Close of Business

The meeting closed at 7.56 pm.