



# Minutes Multicultural Committee

8 December 2021

## Meeting details

<b>Date of meeting</b>	Wednesday, 8 December 2021
<b>Time</b>	6.00pm
<b>Venue</b>	Online
<b>Chair/Facilitator</b>	Cr Fiona Mitsinikos
<b>Minutes</b>	Lisa King

## Acknowledgement of the Traditional Custodians

"Our meeting is being held on the Traditional Land of the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people and, on behalf of Banyule City Council, I wish to acknowledge them as the Traditional Custodians. I would also like to pay my respects to the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Elders, past, present and emerging, and to acknowledge other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Elders joining us today."

## Diversity Statement

"Our community is made up of diverse cultures, beliefs, abilities, bodies, sexualities, ages and genders. We are committed to access, equity, participation and rights for everyone: principles which empower, foster harmony and increase the wellbeing of an inclusive community."

## Attendee

<b>Attendee name</b>	<b>Affiliation/Organisation</b>
Linda Liwewe	Community member
Jeyarajah Ramanathan	Community member
Louisa Ong	Community member
Susan Zhou	Community member
Ginger Jiang	Community member
Samira Liban	Community member
Albert Fatileh	Victoria Police
Ansum Sadik	Victoria Police
Suzanne Crenlin	Olympic Adult Education
Cr Fiona Mitsinikos	Banyule City Council Councillor
Cheree Hunter	Acting Manager, Health Aged & Community Planning
Theonie Tacticos	Community & Social Planning Coordinator

## Apologies

<b>Name</b>	<b>Affiliation/Organisation</b>
Naaz Fahmida	Community member
Baljit Singh	Community member
Mandira Panday	Community member
Saqib Awan	Community member
Alaa Elzokm	Heidelberg Mosque

# Items

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## 1. Welcome and Introduction

Acknowledgement of traditional custodians

Diversity Statement

## 2. General Discussion

### 2017-2021 Multicultural Plan achievements – Summary of achievements

The 2017-2021 Multicultural Plan achievements were presented to the Committee. Five goals were listed in the previous plan and specific achievements were detailed for each.

See Appendix.

### Revisit cohorts identified

6 cohorts or population groups have been identified and will be targeted as part of the consultation for the Multicultural Plan. Committee members were invited to provide further suggestions and feedback. The response was that members thought the population groups that were identified would work for the new plan:

- Refugee and Asylum Seekers
- Newly arrived
- Established communities
- International students
- Skilled migrants
- Interfaith communities

### Issues identified

A map of issues was present to Committee members. The list of issues has been developed by reviewing existing data, consultation data from the Council Planning process, interviews with stakeholders, consultations with the Committee. The feedback from the Committee was that the list of issues was quite comprehensive.

### Action

This list of issues presented to Committee members will be used to inform the development of the Multicultural Plan.

The list of issues presented to Committee members will be added to during further community consultations that support the development of the Multicultural Plan. Updates will be provided to the Committee at the next meeting.

See Appendix.

### In-depth discussion on racism and discrimination

A discussion relating to racism and discrimination was facilitated. Members of the committee were invited to provide information, insight and examples of racism and discrimination if they felt comfortable sharing. The discussion aimed to better understand where racism and discrimination was experienced, how experiences have impacted peoples ability to access or participate in community life.

The Committee felt that using the four pillars (access, equity, participation and human rights) to frame this conversation helped acknowledge the structural nature of racism and discrimination. They felt that if institutions are not inclusive, members of the community are unable to access, participate and enjoy the human rights and freedoms.

By looking at the structural nature of these issues, Council can take a lead role in address these to make an impact in the community.

There is a need for using evidence and best practice to approach to address the issue of racism and discrimination. The Committee asked if there was data on the prevalence of racism and discrimination locally or if any mapping projects have been undertaken.

Story telling could be a positive way to show diversity in the community. This could be in the form of a community series on social media or a podcast showcasing the diversity that exists in our community and normalising difference. Social media can play a significant role in breaking down stereotypes, build tolerance, understanding using social media.

The Committee felt that having greater diversity within Council and Council staff would be positive for the community and make diversity more visible. Council could show more diversity in the media, the Banner and could feature stories of Council staff to show the breadth of diversity across the staffing group.

### **Recommendation**

In cases of racism or discrimination experienced in the community, the Committee feels that a response from the Mayor/Council denouncing racism and discrimination and offering support to the victim would be welcomed by the multicultural community.

### **Timeline and steps**

The estimated timeframe was presented to the committee. Currently in the phase of building evidence and will be moving to consultations early in the new year.

See appendix.

### **Advocacy opportunities**

Council is unable to make changes in all areas of public life, but are able to advocate to government on issues that impact our local community.

A letter has been drafted to the Attorney General's office raising concerns around areas of the Religious Freedoms Bill. The pervious Multicultural, Disability, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and LGBTIQ+ Committees were consulted, a second letter is in developed and will be sent on behalf of Council.

The Committee were asked to share any advocacy opportunities they had identified in their community. No ideas were provided during the meeting and members were encouraged to think about potential advocacy opportunities in the future.

### **Action**

Council staff to progress actions around inputing into the Religious Discrimination Bill Inquiry

### **Inclusive Banyule Advisory Committee**

The Inclusive Banyule Advisory Committee is made up of representatives from the Multicultural, LGBTIQ+, RAP, Disability and Age Friendly Committees and senior management representatives from organisations working across Banyule. This includes CEO's of Banyule Community Health Service, Women's Health In the North, Healthy Communities, District Director's for Department of Families, Fairness and Housing and Department of Justice.

First twelve-months of implementation will be focusing on impacts COVID-19 has had on social inclusion and how the how community can move forward and recover.

Two mapping workshops have been held to identify shared priority areas and themes. The themes identified include: social connection and mental wellbeing, social housing, family violence and employment as key areas of social inequality and exclusion that were significantly impacted by COVID-19

Committee is exploring the role of shared local level messaging driven through community to promote social connection and mental wellbeing. This includes messaging around COVID safety in reference to reducing fear and anxiety of reengaging in community, and promoting social connection.

The second meeting included presentations from Housing Victoria and Women's Health In the North on social housing and family violence respectively. These presentations provided subject leaders' insights into the current status and barriers experienced in Banyule, and how the committee can support work in this space.

In February, there will be conversations for areas of collective advocacy as we head into state and federal elections and budgets.

Linda Liwewe is the Multicultural representative on the committee. Linda provided an update on her experience to date as a member of the committee. Linda told that group about that she had shared details of the discussions held in the Multicultural Committee meetings including identifying issues from the community, participating in a consultation about website translations with the Communications team.

Linda flagged that social connection could be an area the Multicultural Committee to become involved in and the Committee could play a role in reactivation activities or event in the community.

### **Communication outside of committee meetings**

The Committee discussed the best ways to communicate outside of the committee meetings.

Lisa King explained that the MS Teams channel had been set up a few months back and has uploaded information to the channel over the past few weeks.

The Committee responded that they had not accessed the channel.

#### **Action**

Lisa King to resend the log in details and guidelines for use of MS Teams to all Committee members.

The Committee to trial using MS teams between now and next year and the Committee will revisit its useability at the February meeting. This includes Lisa King trailing different methods of communicating with the Committee on MS Teams.

### **Meeting structure for 2022**

Instructions have been received that Council's Committees are to continue online until April 2022. This supports a decision made by Council that all council meetings are to continue online for this period of time. There is an intention for Council to revisit this decision again in March 2022.

## **3. Consultation – Response from previous meeting**

The Banyule Communications Team thanked the Committee for the feedback provided at the previous meeting, and reported that they are still strategising on the final decision regarding translations on the website.

Comments from multiple committee members about accentuating telephone translation services was particularly noted. Council already does this, but feels it could be more prominent in site-wide messaging.

Communications will convey their next steps at the first meeting of the committee in 2022.

## 4. Other Business

### Christmas Day Gathering For Isolating or Underprivileged People

This year, Banyule Council has put out an Expression of Interest for community organizations to apply for funding to hold Christmas celebrations for members of the community experiencing disadvantage.

5 events will be held over the next few weeks, hosted by community organisations and churches. They are a mix of private and public events.

Feedback from the Committee was sought to better understand if there is interest in broadening a grant round to include other religious or cultural days of significance.

This year the focus has been providing an opportunity for connection for people experiencing disadvantage due to the impact of COVID. Another possibility is that the focus of these events could be celebrating inclusion and providing education to other members of the community who do not celebrate the religious or cultural occasion.

The Committee was interested in learning more about opportunities for celebration events around diversity and inclusion broadly. In previous years, the Bell Street Traders Association had taken a lead on hosting events during Cultural Diversity Week. The Committee discussed their interest in supporting the development of an event to celebrate Cultural Diversity Week in March 2022.

The Committee expressed interest in Council holding events which do not just focus on a specific community or culture. An event which encourages interaction and learning about diversity more broadly.

### Action

Lisa to circulate the Australian Government Calendar of cultural and religious dates to all Committee members.

The Department of Home Affairs, Harmony Week [Calendar of cultural and religious dates \(harmony.gov.au\)](https://www.harmony.gov.au)

Lisa King to start conversations around Cultural Diversity Week celebration in January 2022.

## 5. Thank you & Next Meeting

Cr Fiona Mitsinikos thanked the committee for taking time out of their day to help Banyule Council learn. She wished everyone a great, break and looks forward to see everyone in the new year.

Council staff also thanked the committee for their work and input over the past few months and look forward to working together in the new year.

Meeting closed at 7.26pm

**Next meeting: Wednesday 16<sup>th</sup> February 2022, 6.00-7.30pm**