



Minutes Multicultural Committee

20 October 2021

Present**Members**

Ansum Sadik (Victoria Police), Baljit Singh, Ginger (Lan) Jiang, Jeyarajah (Raj) Ramanathan, Linda Liwewe, Louisa Ong, Naaz Fahmida, Samira Liban, Saqib Awan, Susan Zhou, Suzanne Crenlin (Olympic Adult Education)

Councillor

Cr Fiona Mitinikos

Council Staff

Cheree Hunter, Acting Manager Health Aged & Community Planning
Theonie Tacticos, Community & Social Planning Coordinator
Lisa King - Community & Social Planner

Guests

Kent MacCarter – Digital Content Officer

Apologies

Mandira Panday, Saqib Awan, Alaa Elzokm (Heidelberg Mosque), Albert Fatileh (Victoria Police)

1. Welcome and introductions

Due to technical difficulties experienced by the Chair, the meeting was opened by Theonie Tacticos at 6.17pm. An acknowledgement of the traditional custodians of the land, the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people and the Banyule Diversity Statement were read. Committee members were welcomed.

Acknowledgment of Traditional Owners:

We acknowledge this virtual meeting is taking place on many First Nations Peoples lands and we acknowledge Council operates on the traditional lands of the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people and we pay our respects to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elders, past, present and emerging, who have resided in the Banyule area and have been an integral part of the region's history.

Inclusive Banyule Statement:

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

Committee members who were apologies for the first meeting introduced themselves and explained why they had joined the committee.

Cheree Hunter, Acting Manager of Health Aged & Community Planning introduced herself and her role.

2. General Discussion**Multicultural Plan update**

Lisa King informed of an operational decision made to extend the timeframe for the completion and adoption of the next Multicultural Plan. The plan will now to be completed by the end of the current financial year (June 2022).

The timeframe extension allows for greater opportunities for consultations with stakeholders and the community. Furthermore, it allows more opportunities for the committee to be involved in the development of the plan.

An update on preliminary themes which have emerged from consultations undertaken so far was provided. See appendix for a copy of the document.

- COVID-19 – isolation and separation, social isolation, anxiety.
- Employment – resume development, unemployment/under employment/casual workforce. racism and discrimination when applying for work, discrimination.
- Education – learning language, supporting children with remote learning, parenting support.
- Mental health – past trauma, access to mental health services.
- Racism and discrimination.
- Housing – discrimination in renting or buying.
- Transportation – driving education, access to car/ transportation.

Additional feedback from discussion with Committee:

- Safety at home, family violence.
- The intersectionality between issues – e.g. Lack of employment and family violence.
- Transportation – missing bus linkages.
- The impact of lockdown and exacerbated some of these issues.
- The need for culturally appropriate mental health support – counsellors need a more thorough understanding of issues facing multicultural communities.
- The impact and challenges experienced with larger households. In many circumstances, households include extended family which adds additional pressure during lockdown. There is a higher risk of COVID-19 exposure, harder to isolate and additional challenges working from home
- Housing stress and the need for safe and appropriate housing. In many circumstances housing is not suitable, especially for larger families living in small houses. It has been very difficult during lockdown, not enough desk space for multiple children to undertake remote learning. Issues with conflictual history and slow movement for public housing.
- Misinformation about vaccinations – vaccine hesitance in some individuals and communities
- Mental health challenges for children and young people.
- Anxiety around lockdown ending and re-joining society, how do you go back to “normal” “will I be safe”.
- Need further investigation around some of the issues raised, for example, is it a lack of access to services e.g. English language or is there a disconnect and community do not know they are there or are they not providing a quality service that is culturally appropriate?

COVID-19 Support for Multicultural Communities

Banyule City Council has received funding to promote vaccines to the community. As part of this work research was undertaken to understand community concerns and hesitations in order to provide a more targeted response. A number of other organisations in Banyule including Banyule Community Health and the Austin Health have also received funding for projects targeting certain populations. Both Banyule Community Health and Austin Health have access to and can administer the vaccine.

Over the next 12 months, Inclusive Banyule will have a focus on social inclusion and the impact on COVID-19 has had on the community. What Council will do to address this will be discussed and developed by the Inclusive Banyule Advisory Community. It will take a systematic approach, working with partners to collectively address the issue.

Banyule Community Health have received funding to deliver the High-risk Accommodation Response (HRAR). HRAR is a service model that enables the rapid delivery of prevention, preparedness and outbreak response for people living in high-risk accommodation settings. It works to ensure appropriate public health measures are in place to protect the health and wellbeing of residents

Banyule Community Health is an approved Commonwealth Government vaccination provider for the COVID-19 vaccines and has been running COVID-19 testing clinics at the drive-through testing clinic at RMIT Bundoora.

There has been a very high take up of vaccines in Banyule, as of 18th October 2021:

- 90.9% first dose
- 72.9% second dose

GPs and Pharmacies have been identified as the chosen method for receiving vaccinations. It is believed that this might be due to the ease of booking and the trust and rapport people have with their GP or pharmacist.

3081 was identified as a hot spot area throughout the pandemic and additional focus has been on providing information and support to the affected community.

Banyule City Council recently met with the Department of Health around Pop Up Clinics for vaccinations. One was planned in Banyule and was supported by Council through promotion via social media.

Question proposed to the community:

- Vaccinations in pregnancy or while breastfeeding, could this information be helpful if provided in different languages?
- Are there are specific groups within the community who are hesitant about getting vaccinated and need more additional information?

The next stages of communication and messaging:

- Booster vaccinations for older and members of the community with medical issues
- Confidence building in the 12-15 years age group to increase vaccination rates
- You can still get COVID even after being vaccinated
- Checking in and adding vaccine certificate to Services Victoria app. If information is required about this in specific languages this can be fed back to Department of Health

Feedback from Committee:

- Sharing of vaccination information through trusted sources in the community is important
- Video testimonial with people who have had COVID and recovered

Multicultural Communications Outreach Program funding has recently closed, it was available to multicultural organisations and individuals to produce informative, engaging content that provides information about the COVID-19 vaccination program and encourages COVIDSafe behaviour. It is believed that Himilo Community Connect has applied for this round of funding and support has been offered.

Cultural Events

COVID-19 restrictions have meant that many Council events have had to be cancelled and postponed.

Cultural events are organised around specific days in the calendar e.g. Harmony Week, Refugee Week, Ramadan. The Neighbourhood Houses are also supported to organise events with the local community.

Council is currently developing an Event Permit process which will provide more support to the community about what Council can do to support events. For more information about running events, please contact with Lisa King.

Committee member suggestion: host an online musical event for the Indian community.

3. Consultation

Kent MacCarter, Digital Content Officer, Governance and Communication

Banyule City Council website accessibility – translation of content

A discussion was held to gather feedback around the translation of content to websites and how Committee Members currently negotiate accessing information on other government websites. Council are revisiting how information can be accessed by the community when English is not their first language. The feedback provided by the Committee will be used to inform what Council will do to improve access to information for non-English speakers.

Four options were provided to Committee Members with the meeting agenda to provide additional information on the pros and cons of each option.

Option 1: No translated content offered, rely on the use of an interpreter service

Option 2: A selected portion of useful Council information is provided on the website

Option 3: The same as option 2; but offering custom translations directly onto web pages as content, not a PDF document.

Option 4: Engage machine translator like Google Translation

Feedback from Committee:

- Option 1 would provide the most accurate way to get up to date and current information. If this was the option, there needs to be more thought on how access to this can be made more accessible. Interpreting services are helpful as they allow the community to hear accurate information about specific issues. Challenge is that it is only accessible during working hours.
- Option 2 could be helpful for people to understand services that relate to daily life.
- Option 4 could be suitable for people with some English language. The information provided is a guide only. Would this type of translation provide information to member of the Banyule community who most need it? Machine translation provides real-time translation whenever information is updated. A committee member noted their organisation uses machine translation for clients speaking other languages and despite some minor inaccuracies, people

generally can get the gist of the information. Adding a phone number was helpful when information was not understood. It was felt that there is a need for reliable translations.

- Non-English speakers are often supported to accessing information by an English speaker.
- There is a need to provide a combination of methods to meet the needs of the community.

4. Other business

Olympic Adult Education

Olympic Adult Education has a core business as a provider of English language, it is also a neighbourhood house and registered charity. They provide a variety of support to the community. With less people arriving in Australia and requiring English language through the AMEP program, they are reviewing their services. A consultant has been engaged and will be speaking to key stakeholders, the Multicultural Committee was identified as a valuable stakeholder. Suzanne will pass on information to the Committee if anyone wants to support the consultation process.

The meeting was declared closed at 7.35pm, with members thanked for their attendance.

One item on the agenda was unable to be discussed due to a lack of time. Instead Lisa King to seek Committee feedback about 'inclusive meeting facilitation' directly with members prior to the next meeting.

The next Multicultural Committee meeting will be Wednesday 8 December at 6.00pm

