



# Minutes Multicultural Committee

3 May 2023

## Meeting details

<b>Date of meeting</b>	Wednesday, 3 May 2023
<b>Time</b>	6.00pm-7.30pm
<b>Venue</b>	Ivanhoe Library and Cultural Hub, 275 Upper Heidelberg Road
<b>Chair/Facilitator</b>	Cr Fiona Mitsinikos
<b>Minutes</b>	Lisa King

## Acknowledgement of the Traditional Custodians

“Banyule City Council is proud to acknowledge the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people as Traditional Custodians of the land and we pay respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elders, past, present and emerging, who have resided in the area and have been an integral part of the region’s history.”

## 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>
Cr Fiona Mitsinikos	Councillor Hawdon Ward
Louisa Ong	Community Member
Ginger (Lan) Jiang	Community Member
Samira Liban	Community Member
Jeyarajah (Raj) Ramanathan	Community Member
Alaa Elzokm	Community Member
Albert Fatileh	Community Member
Ansum Sadik	Community Member
Lisa King	Community & Social Planner, Banyule City Council

## Apologies

<b>Name</b>	<b>Affiliation/Organisation</b>
Melina Linardotos	Community Member
Naaz Fahmida	Community Member
Susan Zhou	Community Member

## 1. Introduction 6.00 – 6.05pm – Cr Fiona Mitsinikos

Acknowledgement of traditional custodians  
Diversity Statement

**A quorum was not reached at this meeting due to attendance.**

Since meeting in February, the Multicultural Committee has received three resignations. Mandira Panday, Baljit Singh and Linda Liwewe were thanked for their contribution and time on the committee.

As a result, there are vacancies on the Multicultural Committee. Council will start the process to recruit for new members. If any committee members know of people from their community who would be interested in joining the committee, you are invited to contact Lisa King to discuss.

The following days of religious and cultural significance were acknowledged:

- Holi – 8 March - Hindu festival that celebrates love, spring and the victory of good over evil.
- Easter and Orthodox Easter – 9 April and 16 April – Celebrating the resurrection of Jesus Christ following his death by crucifixion.
- Eid ul Fitr – 22 April – Celebrated by Muslims worldwide that celebrates the end of Ramadan, the Islamic holy month of fasting.
- Vesak / Buddha Day – Friday 5 May – major Buddhist festival, celebrating the birth, enlightenment, and death of the Buddha.

### Action

Lisa King to check if the days of significance calendar is available on Council website.

Lisa King to check if Naw Ruz has been included on the calendar.

Naw Ruz is the first day of the Bahá'í calendar year and Persian New Year, it is celebrated in countries with significant Persian cultural influence, including Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, India, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Pakistan, Turkey, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan.

## 2. Minutes from previous meeting 6.05 – 6.10pm – Cr Fiona Mitsinikos

AGENDA ITEM	ACTION ARISING	PROGRESS
ICAN		At a council meeting on 20 March 2023, Council endorsed the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons Cities Appeal. Council have written to Ms Kate Thwaites MP to state Banyule warmly welcomes the adoption of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons by the United Nations in 2017 and calls on the Australian Government to sign and ratify the Treaty without delay. The Multicultural Committee are thanked for providing their recommendation regarding this issue.

## 3. Standing Agenda Item 6.10-7.10 – Cr Fiona Mitsinikos and Lisa King

Information share for committee members

**Soccer marathon event – Sheikh Alaa**

Sheikh Alaa with support from Soccer Victoria and Melbourne Victory plan to run a soccer marathon event which aims to raise awareness and support for refugees. The original plans had to be postponed due to a clash in soccer season but hope to run an event in October-November 2023. The event will include a focus on mental health, bringing multifaith communities together, gender equity and engaging young people. Banyule City Council will support the planning and promotion of the event. More details to be provided closer to the event.

### **Women's World Cup – Sheikh Alaa**

The 2023 FIFA Women's World Cup will be jointly hosted by Australia and New Zealand. Sheikh Alaa has been selected as one of 15 people to support and promote the event. Information will be shared.

Sheikh Alaa will use his platform at the mosque to talk about women playing soccer.

In August 2021, 35 young girls and women came to Australia on humanitarian visas. They were active members of the Afghan National Women's Team football program and were targeted by the Taliban. The team is supported by Melbourne Victory to now play and train in Australia. The team have not been given formal recognition from Fifa which means they cannot compete in professional matches or receive the funding they need to support their players and staff. The team will play friendly matches before the start of the World Cup. Through his advocacy, Sheikh Alaa continues to bring attention to these issues through the community and the Muslim community.

#### **Action**

Lisa King to speak to Banyule City Council's Sport and Recreation team and share information about the World Cup.

### **Older adults social group for Tamil speaking residents –Jeyarajah (Raj) Ramanathan**

Raj identified there is a need and community request to support the development of a social group for older Tamil speaking residents in Heidelberg.

#### **Action**

Lisa King to link Raj with Kim Phu, the Age Friendly Community Development Officer to support the establishment of the group.

### **Proposed Committee Extension**

- Feedback has been received from across the Advisory and Population Committees.
- A report will go up to Council in June and an update provided.

### **Population Committee Updates**

See Briefing Paper for updates.

The Age Friendly Committee is focusing on Council's support for the EveryAGE Counts campaign. EveryAGE Counts is an advocacy campaign aimed at tackling ageism against older Australians.

### **Harmony Day**

Cr Mitsinikos provided an update on the Harmony Day event held on 21 March 2023 at Bellfield Community Hub. The Committee were shown photographs and told about stories from the event.

The Committee also noted the feedback provided by the Age Friendly Committee regarding making the event even more inclusive in the future by inviting more multicultural groups from the community.

Opportunities for future engagement identified:

- Macleod College have an international students and intensive English language program for students. They have an international student coordinator, multicultural education aides and intensive language education program manager who work together to maximise student learning and cultural experiences. Victoria Police have delivered sessions at Macleod College in the past.

## Racism

Banyule Council has an opportunity to participate in an anti-racism project called Understanding Reporting Barriers and Supporting Needs of People Experiencing Racism run by VicHealth. The project seeks to listen to communities through community forums, focus groups and a community survey. The results from the project will provide Council with a more in-depth understanding of racism in Banyule, the barriers to reporting and supports needed.

### Discussion

The Committee supported the idea to participate in this project.

- Sheikh Alaa is currently working with the Islamic Council of Victoria regarding reporting islamophobia. Other work includes visiting non-Muslim schools to provide cultural awareness.
- The committee reported a need for people to report racism.
- The committee reported hearing reports of crimes targeting different racial groups including house burglaries and street crime.
- The committee noted the importance of working with the Reconciliation Action Plan committee on this project to record and hear the voices of First Nations community.

### Action

Lisa King to engage with the Victoria University to understand more about the research project and the requirements for participation.

## Welcoming Cities

The committee was provided and overview of Welcoming Cities and the standards (see Briefing Note). The committee were then asked to identify areas which Council can strengthen their action and supports for multicultural communities.

### Discussion

- The committee identified the need for more awareness raising opportunities that provide information and understanding about other cultures, backgrounds and religions. This could include more events which bring people of different backgrounds together, sharing of information about key days of cultural or religious significance, community members from different background attending key cultural or religious celebrations like Ramadan and Eid. Large scale, community messages acknowledging days of significance which show a visual commitment to inclusion and diversity.
- More cross generational opportunities like Harmony Week where members of the community can share stories, things from their own culture to help show the similarities and difference that exist.
- More opportunities for grants that encourage different cultural or religious groups who have not previously worked together to collaborate on projects.
- Create opportunities in the community to be involved in sporting activities. For example, programs like Melbourne Victory school holiday programs that give opportunities for Muslim girls to be part soccer. Provide funding support to opportunities like this.

## Refugee Welcome Kit

- The refugee welcome kit has been drafted (see attached).
- Gaps and opportunities – discussion with committee

### Discussion

Feedback from the committee noted:

- If the resource is for the community translation into community languages is necessary
- Include list of free activities available locally
- Include list of peer support opportunities – opportunities to volunteer
- Social connection for refugees, asylum seekers and newly arrived migrants is important
- Events targeting members of multicultural backgrounds should be promoted eg. Women's only swim nights, Refugee Week events

## Refugee Week

World Refugee Day – 20 June

Celebrates the strength and courage of people who have been forced to flee their home country to escape conflict or persecution.

Refugee Week - Sunday 18 June – Saturday 24 June

Annual activity to inform the public about refugees and celebrate positive contributions made by refugees to Australian society.

### Community Event/Engagement opportunity

Suggested idea to be youth focused where young people have an opportunity to develop their own community message about supporting refugees. This event could include an opportunity to learn more about experiences of refugees and the challenges they face when settling in Australia.

The event could include an art therapist to work with the group to create the message or artistic representation of their message. This message could then be shared with the wider community.

### Action

Lisa King to invite member of the Afghanistan Women's Football Team to speak to the committee

## **4. Council updates 7.10 – 7.20 – Lisa King**

### Next Joint-Committee Event

Planning is underway for the next Joint-Committee Networking Event, this will be hosted by the Reconciliation Action Plan Committee at Barrbunin Beek in June 2023.

More details will be provided.

### 2023 Banyule Volunteer Celebration

Invitation to join the Banyule Volunteer Celebration on Wednesday 17 May, 5.40pm arrival for a 6.00pm start at The Centre Ivanhoe. The evening will be hosted by radio broadcaster and writer Jacinta Parsons.

Please let Lisa know as soon as possible if you would like to attend.

## **5. Any Other Business AOB 7.20pm-7.30pm – Lisa King**

### Malahang Festival – 12 November 2023

Due to time constraints, this item was not discussed fully and will be discussed at the June meeting. If members have any ideas for the event, any specific things to be included or recommendations for cultural performances or activities please contact Lisa King.

### Annual Victoria Police Community Sentiment Survey – 2023

Survey now closed

## **6. Close and date of next meeting**

21 June 2023