



9.1 **MULTICULTURAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT 2020**

EXECUTIVE MEMBER: TONY KEENAN, GENERAL MANAGER, COMMUNITY WELLBEING AND INCLUSION

PREPARED BY: EWA ZYSK, DIVERSITY OFFICER

1. PURPOSE

- 1.1 To present to Council the Multicultural Advisory Committee (MAC) Annual Report 2020 (provided at Attachment 1).

2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 2.1 On 12 December 2018, Council endorsed the establishment of a new Multicultural Advisory Committee. Thirteen Advisory Committee members were endorsed by Council on the 16 October 2019. The Committee members' cultural and religious backgrounds reflect the cultural and religious diversity of City of Port Phillip and include representatives from established communities, newly emerging communities, people seeking asylum, former refugees and young people.
- 2.2 The purpose of MAC is to provide Council with advice and feedback on all issues that affect multicultural, refugee and asylum seeker communities in the City of Port Phillip.
- 2.3 The Committee held its first meeting on 3 December 2019 and an Action Plan was subsequently developed. Through this Annual Report, the MAC would like to present to Council the breadth of work they have completed and highlight their key achievements.

3. RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

- 3.1 Receives and acknowledges the Multicultural Advisory Committee (MAC) Annual Report 2020 and thanks the Committee for their work and achievements.

4. KEY POINTS/ISSUES

Cultural profile

- 4.1 A higher proportion of our population was born overseas when compared with the Victorian average. 31.4 per cent of the population in the City of Port Phillip are born overseas, 51.8 per cent have at least one parent who was born overseas and 20.5 per cent of Port Phillip residents speak a language other than English at home.
- 4.2 Between 2011 and 2016, the number of people born overseas increased 11.7%. Over this time, the largest changes in the birthplace of the Port Phillip population were for those born in China, United Kingdom, Italy and Brazil.
- 4.3 According to the Department of Education and Training, 2,709 international students reside in Port Phillip, which is lower when compared to two of our surrounding municipalities of Glen Eira and Stonnington (3,967 and 5,003 respectively).

Establishment of Committee

- 4.4 On 12 December 2018, Council endorsed the establishment of the new Multicultural Advisory Committee. Thirteen Advisory Committee members were endorsed by Council on the 16 October 2019 (refer to Attachment 1 for membership details).



- 4.5 An induction session for the incoming Committee members was held on 19 November 2019, where members were orientated to the draft Terms of Reference (ToR) and completed an 'Active Citizenships' workshop with the Victorian Electoral Commission.
- 4.6 At the inaugural Committee meeting on the 3 December 2019, the draft ToR was reviewed by the Committee. Committee members nominated to meet monthly until June 2020 and thereafter bi-monthly. As the Committee was newly established, the members nominated the Councillor Representative to act as Chairperson for the first three months. Many of members of the Committee are new migrants to the municipality and they requested more time to orientate themselves to Local Government.
- 4.7 The ToR were adopted by Council on 5 February 2020 (Attachment 2: Multi-cultural Advisory Committee Terms of Reference) after further consultation was undertaken with the community and the incoming Committee.
- 4.8 The MAC Chair, Georgina Tsolidis, was elected at the April 2020 meeting and the Deputy Chair, Mireille Kayeye, was elected at the May 2020 meeting.

Action Plan and Welcoming Cities Framework

- 4.9 In January 2020, the Committee started developing an action plan identifying key issues for multicultural communities in the region and constructing key actions. The action plan was aligned to key outcomes of the Council Plan 2017-2027.
- 4.10 In the first half of 2020, further orientation sessions were held about the Council Plan and Budget 2017-27 and the group was introduced to the Welcoming Cities Standards as a guide to assist them in their work.
- 4.11 The MAC have identified the value of the Welcoming Cities Standard as they enable the Committee to benchmark current activity against six categories: Leadership; Social and Cultural Inclusion; Economic Development; Learning and Skills Development; Civic Development; Places and Spaces.
- 4.12 The Welcoming Cities Standard sets the National Standard for cultural diversity and inclusion policy and practice in Local Government, helping to create communities where everyone can belong. Welcoming Cities is an initiative of Welcoming Australia, supported by the Scanlon Foundation. There are over 250 member municipalities across the world with 51 in Australia. City of Port Phillip is not a member organisation year to date.
- 4.13 The Committee agreed to ensure that the MAC Action Plan 2020/21 (provided at Attachment 3) becomes an on-going piece of work throughout the Committee's existence. It is reviewed at each meeting to ensure it remains aligned to community need. The action plan is divided into the six categories reflected in the Welcoming Cities Standards.

COVID Response

- 4.14 Since COVID-19 lockdown the Committee has been meeting monthly via Microsoft Teams. In June 2020, the Committee agreed to continue to meet monthly until May 2021.
- 4.15 As from March, the Committee's attention turned to providing feedback to Council about the needs and emerging issues of multicultural communities and supporting social and economic recovery from COVID-19. The Committee has become an important stakeholder in mapping vulnerable persons in the municipality, and agency coordination and reporting. They have provided Council with valuable information on



what has been happening for our local community members and organisations in the municipality. This feedback has informed Council's local relief and recovery efforts.

Annual Report

4.16 The MAC Annual Report 2020 outlines the committee's achievements, including:

- 4.16.1 Providing feedback and advice on a range of policies and issues (outlined in detail in section 5).
- 4.16.2 Overseeing Refugee and Cultural Diversity week celebrations in City of Port Phillip.
- 4.16.3 Highlighting to Council matters affecting CALD communities, as a consequence of COVID (outlined in detail in section 9.4).
- 4.16.4 "All One Together" anti-racism racism campaign endorsement as follows:
 - At the Ordinary meeting of Council 15 July 2020 Council received a report on the Multicultural Advisory Committee and a recommendation that Council join the "All One Together" anti-racism racism campaign.
 - Council chose to endorse the campaign and took the "All One Together" pledge.
 - As part of the campaign, Council needs to define one action that it will implement to tackle racism and discrimination. Council supported the MAC recommendation that Council review employment policies to detect biases in recruitment and career pathways and work towards developing a diversity-sensitive recruitment policy.
 - Council requested that this commitment be presented to the community via a written statement from the CEO. This statement will be publicly released during Cultural Diversity Week 2021 (21-28 March). The week coincides with the United Nations Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination and Harmony Day on 21 March.

4.17 The Committee has also developed key relationships with external organisations that support policy work by the Local Government sector relevant to multicultural communities including:

- Victorian Electoral Commission
- Ethnic Communities Council of Victoria
- Welcoming Cities Australia
- Victorian Multicultural Commission Regional Advisory Council
- Welcoming Sports Australia.

4.18 The year 2020 posed many challenges and opportunities for the newly formed committee, however the MAC was able to quickly re-group and focus on its purpose and objectives.

5. CONSULTATION AND STAKEHOLDERS

5.1 The Annual Report outlines the role of the MAC in various consultation and stakeholder engagement processes, and the contribution and advice provided to Council by the



MAC, along with external parties, on issues impacting multicultural communities in the City of Port Phillip.

5.2 Committee provided input into the following Council Polices/Reviews:

- Council Annual Budget 2020/21
- Draft City of Port Phillip Public Space Strategy
- Vulnerable Persons Mapping and Agency Coordination
- City of Port Phillip Customer Service Charter
- Council's Community Engagement Policy
- Health and Wellbeing Implementation Strategy planning
- Council's Language Services Guidelines.

5.3 The following key issues have been highlighted by the MAC members as key consequences of COVID affecting CALD communities:

- 5.3.1 The rise of racism during the pandemic, particularly targeting Asian Australians and the local Jewish community.
- 5.3.2 The intensifying of digital divide particularly impacting residents of public housing estates and multicultural seniors.
- 5.3.3 COVID-19 has disproportionately affected temporary visa holders both socially and economically.
- 5.3.4 Unemployment, financial wellbeing and social isolation as the top three areas of concerns for the future (resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic). Mental Health was fourth.
- 5.3.5 Difficulties in accessing updated, official information in different languages, in a timely manner.

5.4 General feedback to Council in direct relation to its services and programs includes:

- 5.4.1 The availability of (need for) translated and plain English as part of Council's approach to community engagement.
- 5.4.2 Ongoing commitment of Council to feature diverse narratives in all of Council's communications and publications.
- 5.4.3 Ensuring that Council public spaces are culturally inclusive in the form of signage and celebration of diverse narratives.

6. LEGAL AND RISK IMPLICATIONS

6.1 There are no known legal or risk implications associated with endorsement of the annual report or work of the advisory committee.

7. FINANCIAL IMPACT

- 7.1 There is no expense, other than officer time, associated with the production of the Annual Report. It is drafted and produced internally.
- 7.2 The annual Council budget provides an amount of \$3000 for MAC running costs including administration, printing, volunteer reimbursements, events and refreshments.



8. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

- 8.1 MAC meeting Agenda and Minutes are provided digitally. Hard copies are provided to member by request only.
- 8.2 Additional documentation is displayed electronically during meetings.

9. COMMUNITY IMPACT

- 9.1 The MAC provides a direct civic engagement opportunity for our multicultural community. It provides to Council and its officers with relevant community views, knowledge and advice and builds community strength to keep people informed and connected.
- 9.2 The MAC addresses Council's Good Governance principles. Through the Committee, Council recognises and encourages community leadership, and seeks to maximise community feedback in its decision-making process. It improves public confidence through demonstrating active community participation in the decision-making process.
- 9.3 The MAC provides an opportunity to test engagement techniques and audiences to improve community engagement outcomes on issues impacting Council and multicultural communities.
- 9.4 Due to the direct feedback from the Committee, Council has been able to address some emerging needs for multicultural communities directly related to COVID-19 pandemic and develop a recovery response, including:
 - 9.4.1 Translations of key COVID-19 factsheets in Russian, Polish and Hebrew.
 - 9.4.2 Assistance in starting a local food delivery service that particularly targets international students and individuals residing on a temporary visa (Food for Life – Hare Krishna Albert Park Temple).
 - 9.4.3 The submission of several funding applications that support the digital inclusion multicultural seniors and families residing in Park Towers and Emerald Hill Court.
 - 9.4.4 Inclusion of two reporting tools (Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission and the Asian Australian Alliance) on Council's website that enable resident to report discrimination and vilification.
 - 9.4.5 Inclusion of emerging issues of multicultural communities into the Working for Victoria position funded by the State Government including:
 - Development of a local services directory targeting new and emerging communities and temporary visa holders.
 - The delivery of COVID-19 related community information sessions (online and in person) in a culturally appropriate manner to new and emerging communities and temporary visa holders. Session will be focussed on employment and workers' rights.
 - The initiation of a women's circle at Park Towers Housing Estate to address the issue of social isolation for CALD women residents due to Covid19 lockdowns and social restrictions.



10. ALIGNMENT TO COUNCIL PLAN AND COUNCIL POLICY

10.1 The MAC aligns with Direction One of the Council Plan 2017-2027: We embrace difference, and people belong, and it also meets the following Council priorities:

- A safe and active community with strong social connections.
- Access to services that support the health and wellbeing of our growing community.
- Community diversity is valued and celebrated.

11. IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

11.1 TIMELINE

11.1.1 The Annual Report will be placed on Council's website after this meeting.

11.2 COMMUNICATION.

11.2.1 The outcome of the Council meeting will be communicated at the MAC meeting on 4 May 2021 and will be recorded in the minutes of the meeting.

12. OFFICER DIRECT OR INDIRECT INTEREST

12.1 No officers involved in the preparation of this report have any direct or indirect interest in the matter.

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ATTACHMENTS

1. Attachment 1: Multicultural Advisory Committee Annual Report 2020
2. Attachment 2: Multicultural Advisory Committee Terms of Reference
3. Attachment 3: Multicultural Advisory Committee Action Plan 2020