

**ORDINARY MEETING OF COUNCIL
29 JANUARY 2008**

ORDER OF THE DAY

ORDER 6

**ANNUAL REPORT FOR THE
MULTICULTURAL FORUM
INCORPORATING MULTICULTURAL
CELEBRATION FUND PROPOSAL**

LOCATION/ADDRESS:

RESPONSIBLE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR:

**STEPHEN COOPER, ACTING EXECUTIVE
DIRECTOR**

AUTHOR:

**CHRISTINA DEL FRATE,
MULTICULTURAL LIAISON OFFICER**

FILE NO.:

46/01/32

ATTACHMENTS:

**2007 MULTICULTURAL FORUM ANNUAL
REPORT**

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1. This Council report provides information on the progress and outcomes of the City of Port Phillip Multicultural Forum (MF). The 2007 Multicultural Forum Annual Report is tabled at Attachment 1.
- 1.2. This report recommends that the forum continue in 2008 in its existing form with no changes to its terms of reference or structure.
- 1.3. This report also recommends a strategic approach to cultural and religious festivals by planning for Harmony Day, International Women's Day, and World Refugee Day in its Multicultural Programs budget, and endorsing a Multicultural Celebration Fund as a response to cater for and acknowledge all other cultural and religious days of significance.

2. BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

- 2.1. The City of Port Phillip's Multicultural Forum (MF) facilitates discussion and advises Council about policies and plans to support the Port Phillip multicultural and wider community.
 - 2.2. The terms of reference for the MF state that they will:
 - 2.2.1. work within the existing Multicultural Strategic Framework, which has the goals of *valuing cultural diversity, improving service delivery and increasing participation*.
 - 2.2.2. act as a resource and provide direction to the community;
 - 2.2.3. represent the views and needs of the Port Phillip community;
 - 2.2.4. advise Council officers about lobbying other levels of Government and agencies where appropriate;
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- 2.2.5. advise Council about how it can most effectively promote the social, cultural and health interests of the multicultural community; and
- 2.2.6. ensure effective communication between Council and the community.
- 2.3. The forum is chaired by Councillor Judith Klepner. It consists of representatives of the multicultural communities of Port Phillip, including the Greek, Russian, Jewish, Italian, Chinese, Polish and Mauritian communities, as well as representatives from key service providers in the City of Port Phillip.
- 2.4. The forum has an extensive membership list. Further progress could be made, however, to increase the diversity of the membership by including new and emerging migrant groups such as people from the Horn of Africa and younger representatives. The City of Port Phillip has a negligible number of newly arrived residents from these countries, but has seen an increase in the number of people born in India over the past five years.
- 2.5. The 2007 work programme for the MF included:
 - 2.5.1. Advising on various matters: the Council's Community Health and Well-Being Plan, the Community Summit, the Community Bus Survey, a review of the Multicultural Forum's program and activities (see below), and planning for Harmony Day 2008.
 - 2.5.2. *Participation in information sharing and networking opportunities both with each other, and with external agency representatives.*
 - 2.5.3. *Guest speakers presented on the following topics: Centrelink Age Pension changes, Port Phillip's Community Summit, Medicare changes for people with chronic conditions, Port Phillip Gives Initiative, Refugee Week and Asylum Seeker issues and Winter Home Fire Safety.*
 - 2.5.4. *Members of the MF endorsed the Postcard campaign undertaken this year by Council to urge the Federal government to maintain multiculturalism on the Federal agenda, as well as a submission to Minister Andrews on the changes to Australia's Humanitarian intake and its impact on the existing Sudanese communities in Australia, as well as racial tensions in the community.*
 - 2.5.5. *Two members of the MF attended the Diversity in Emergency Services conference in Oct/Nov as representatives of the MF and aired coverage on Channel 31.*
- 2.6. A review was undertaken in 2007 to ascertain if changes needed to be made to the structure, terms of reference, or program according to the needs of its members. The MF was assessed against the strategic framework and its capacity to value cultural diversity, improve service delivery and increase participation.

- 2.7. The results of the review indicated:
- 90% of respondents indicated satisfaction with the number and frequency of meetings.
 - 100% of the respondents indicated the meetings were useful
 - 100% also reported they fed back information from the forum to their respective community groups.
 - 80% of respondents have an interest in participating in other Council forums and committees.
 - That the MF continues due to its ability to provide advice on matters concerning the multicultural communities of Port Phillip. The long-established relationship between Council and its members is an invaluable tool in community consultation; as well as maintaining its current terms of reference.
 - Suggestions for the future indicated a considerable interest on community issues such as health and safety, as well as finding out more about Council programs and initiatives. A large proportion of respondents also indicated the desire for more cultural and social events.
- 2.8. The issue of cultural celebrations was highlighted in the review as members of the MF are enthusiastic participants and initiators of such events. It was noted that Council required a strategic approach in managing the myriad cultural and religious dates of significance.
- 2.9. Key events that the City of Port Phillip will actively promote and celebrate were decided upon based on their inclusiveness of all cultures and faiths, and their global and national recognition:
- International Women's Day – 8 March*
Harmony Day / International Day for the Elimination of Racism – 21 March
World Refugee Day – 20 June
- Budget monies and resources in the 07-08 work plan have been allocated to each of these events, and external sources of funding are also sought.
- 2.10. In order to cater to the high number of other potential days of celebration, it is proposed that Council establish a **Multicultural Celebration Fund** to allow community groups to apply for small amounts of funding to celebrate their own nominated days of significance.
- 2.10.1. The program will be open all year round to all multicultural community groups and organisations in the City of Port Phillip that primarily benefit culturally and linguistically diverse communities, and a maximum amount of \$400 will be granted for each event.
- 2.10.2. Each grant application will have to comply with certain conditions such as being inclusive to all and demonstrate the value of Victoria's rich multicultural heritage; increase the participation and inclusion of

communities who may be marginalised, disadvantaged or have special needs; and demonstrate consultation with community members that results in activities that are culturally / religiously significant. The new program will be administered and assessed by Council officers and promoted through the Multicultural Forum. A communication strategy will be developed.

3. RECOMMENDED OPTION

Criterion for recommendation

That the Council resolve to:

- 3.1. Support the continuance of the Multicultural Forum in 2008
It is recommended that Council support the continuance of the Multicultural Forum in 2008 recognising its ability to provide advice on matters concerning the multicultural communities of Port Phillip and most importantly the maintenance of the long-established relationship between council and members of the forum.
- 3.2. Support the current terms of reference into 2008.
- 3.3. Endorse the key events that Council will plan for in its Multicultural Programs budget to include; Harmony Day, International Women’s Day in collaboration with other key agencies, and World Refugee Day.
- 3.4. Endorse a Multicultural Celebration Fund as a response to cater for and acknowledge all other cultural and religious days of significance.

3.5. Sustainability assessment

Social Pillar	The continued endorsement of the MF supports the principles of the Social Equity pillar. The MF allows for equal access to council’s services and participation in planning and governance. Endorsement of the MF and Multicultural Celebration Fund will lead to a more equitable social situation and promote exchange between communities. Increased interaction by CALD communities within the City of Port Phillip will improve social markers such as health, well-being and safety throughout the community.
Economic Pillar	There are minimal economic implications associated with this proposal as funds have been factored into the 07-08 budget for both the MF and the Multicultural celebration Fund.
Environmental Pillar	There are minimal environmental implications associated with this proposal.

Cultural Pillar	<p>Endorsement of the MF and the Multicultural Celebration Fund will support the Cultural Pillar. It will provide an opportunity for community governance by promoting effective dialogue and active citizenship across all cultures in the community. Through continued support of the MF, council will acknowledge the vast and rich cultural heritage of the City of Port Phillip valuing the experiences of others and informing a shared vision for the future.</p> <p>The MF is a reflection of the vitality of diverse cultures, and the Multicultural Celebration Fund is a tool to celebrate diversity in the community. It will provide groups with opportunities to celebrate cultural and/or religious days of significance, allowing for equal participation of all cultures in services within the City of Port Phillip and builds on the physical and cultural heritage of the area.</p>
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3.6. **Policy and legislative implications**

- 3.6.1. The Multicultural Victoria Act 2004 was passed by Parliament in December 2004 and came into operation on 1 January 2005. The Act consolidates and expands existing policy and legislative frameworks. The Multicultural Act 2004 enshrines the Victorian Government's commitment to all Victorians. It ensures that all Victorians are treated with equality, fairness and respect and recognises the social, cultural and economic contribution of Victoria's multicultural community
- 3.6.2. In September 2006, Council endorsed the Multicultural Strategic Framework including a Multicultural Statement.

3.7. **Risk implications**

- 3.7.1. The Multicultural Forum comprises members of Port Phillip's multicultural communities who have shown a dedication and enthusiasm to working together with Council to ensure an equitable partnership. This relationship should be maintained in the future, so as not to negatively impact on their participation with Council in the future.

3.8. **Resource implications**

There are minimal resource implications for this current 07-08 Budget that has been factored in. An allocation of \$2000 has been allotted for the January – June 2008 period for the Multicultural Celebration Fund.

4. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

4.1. Alternative 1

The alternative is to disband the MF and instead of the introduction of the Multicultural Celebration Fund to run key community events ourselves within the organisation.

4.1.1. **Sustainability assessment**

Social Equity Pillar	The dissolution of the MF would not give multicultural community groups and individuals the opportunity to be active participants in the community, leading to decreased access to services and programs and general governance.
Economic Viability Pillar	There would be a minimal saving if we were to disband the Multicultural Forum as there are minimal costs associated with the administration of the meetings. If we were to manage key community events ourselves, there would be a significant economic investment. Resources would be required to manage all of the events as well as the funding to host the events ourselves and overseeing the invitations and advertising. Increased staffing and resources would be required to manage this event component of the role without compromising the other activities of the Multicultural Liaison Unit.
Environmental Responsibility Pillar	There are minimal environmental implications associated with either option presented in this report.
Cultural Vitality Pillar	The dissolution of the MF would devalue the experiences and contributions of communities in Port Phillip. By not endorsing the Multicultural Celebration Fund and hosting the events ourselves, we will still be acknowledging the vast and rich cultural heritage of the City of Port Phillip, but we are preventing ownership of these events by the groups themselves. We are also at risk of not having the capacity of capturing every day of significance as these days are subject to change and new groups may establish themselves before we have the opportunity to recognize their significant date.

4.1.2. **Policy and legislative implications**

Declining to continue to support the MF and Multicultural Celebration Fund means that the Council ceases to support the Multicultural Strategic Framework which values diversity, and aims to improve services and increase participation.

4.1.3. **Risk implications**

The alternative will potentially attract more risk, in that the loss of the MF will mean the loss of a relationship and ensuing dialogue with multicultural communities in Port Phillip.

4.1.4. **Resource implications**

More funds would need to be allocated in the 07-08 budget to accommodate for more events required throughout the year.

5. PARTICIPATION AND ENGAGEMENT

5.1. **Internal**

5.1.1. The people who have been engaged with in relation to this issue are:

- Councillor Janet Bolitho, Mayor
- Councillor Judith Klepner, Albert Park Ward
- Carol Mayell, Manager, Community Development
- Natalie Gnanakone, Coordinator, Social Planning and Policy
- Christina Del Frate, Multicultural Liaison Officer

5.1.2. Advice and consultation has been positive in support of the MF and the introduction of the Multicultural Celebration Fund.

5.2. **External**

5.2.1. The external people and/or organisations who have been engaged with in relation to this issue are:

Members of the Port Phillip Multicultural Forum

5.2.2. In undergoing the review of the MF, members indicated overwhelming support for the MF to continue in its current structure, aims and program, and raised the issue repeatedly of a desire to participate in more community and multicultural events.

6. RECOMMENDATION

6.1. That the Council resolve to:

6.1.1. Support the continuance of the Multicultural Forum in 2008

It is recommended that Council support the continuance of the Multicultural Forum in 2008 recognising its ability to provide advice on matters concerning the multicultural communities of Port Phillip and most importantly the maintenance of the long-established relationship between council and members of the forum.

6.1.2. Support the current terms of reference into 2008.

6.1.3. Endorse the key events that Council will plan for in its Multicultural Programs budget to include; Harmony Day, International Women's Day, and World Refugee Day.

6.1.4. Endorse a Multicultural Celebration Fund as a response to cater for and acknowledge all other cultural and religious days of significance.