

City of Port Phillip Multicultural Forum 2007 ANNUAL REPORT

1. Introduction

This is the twelfth Annual Report of the City of Port Phillip Multicultural Forum which covers the activities of the Forum for the period January to December 2007.

The Forum is the successor to the Multicultural Advisory Committee which was established in 1995 to advise Council officers and the Council about policies and plans supporting the multicultural community.

2. Membership

The membership structure of the Forum consists of representatives of the multicultural communities of Port Phillip, including the Greek, Russian, Jewish, Italian, Chinese, Polish, and Mauritian communities, and representatives from key service providers in the City of Port Phillip. The forum is chaired by Councillor Judith Klepner.

Membership includes:

Mr Rudolph Khaikan	Association for ex WW2 veterans of the former USSR
Mr Alexander Brosleksoi	Association for ex WW2 veterans of the former USSR
Mrs Maria Kulezsa	Astry Polish Senior Citizens Club
Mrs Lucyna Huczek	Astry Polish Senior Citizens Club
Ms Deb Casey	Elwood/St Kilda Neighbourhood Learning Centre
Mr Nick Grivas	Eremia Greek Elderly Association of Port Melb
Mrs Maria Kallinteridis	Galini Greek Elderly Association of Port Melb
Mr Chris Fotopolous	Galini Greek Elderly Association of Port Melb
Mr Stan Gravias	Greek Community Seniors
Mr George Cristoulis	Greek Community Seniors
Ms Helen Bell	Inner South Community Health Service
Mrs Rosa Coluccio	Italian Senior Citizens
Ms Jade Bloom	JewishCare
Dr Helen Light	Jewish Museum of Australia
Ms Judy Turner	Jewish Museum of Australia
Mr Antonis Aloteris	Lemnian Senior Citizens Group
Mr Bob Whareau	Maori P.I.C. Group
Mr Vladimir Kievski	Menora Magazine
Ms Inna Shcherbakova	Nadezhda Russian Senior Citizens Club
Ms Larissa Pasika	Nadezhda Russian Senior Citizens Club
Mr Michael Metaxas	New Life Greek Senior Citizens Club
Snr Constable D. Nettur	Police Multicultural Liaison Unit
Snr Constable A. Lovos	Police Multicultural Liaison Unit
Ms Ellen Ching	Port Phillip Chinese Women's Association
Ms Sandy Joffe	Port Phillip Community Group
Mr Roman Merkus	Shalom Association
Ms Lara Jacika	Serbian Artists Association
Mr Efim Kordonski	Shalom Association
Ms Mary Chydiriotis	South Central Region Migrant Resource Centre
Mrs Irene Andreanakis	South Melb and Albert Park Greek Senior Citizens Club
Mr Gregory Vaisman	Sputnik Russian Television Association
Mr Nik Sarantinos	St Kilda Greek Senior Citizens Group
Ms Jacinta Maloney	St Kilda Legal Service
Mrs Lucy Scholastique	St Kilda Mauritian Social Club
Ms Maria Palomares	Centrelink – Multicultural Services Officer

Ms Jutta Guntermann	AMES
Ms Jun Xi	Federation of Chinese Associations
Ms Renae Handsaker	Hanover Women's Housing
Sister Bridget Arthur	Brigidine Asylum Seeker Program

It should be noted that although membership is quite extensive, the average number of attendees to meetings numbers approximately 15-20. All members are sent copies of minutes from meetings.

3. Meetings

The Multicultural Forum met on six occasions during 2007, on a bimonthly basis in the months of February, April, June, August, October and December.

Meetings were conducted mainly at the St Kilda Town Hall Council Chambers, although the August meeting was undertaken at the Eastern Hill Fire Services Museum, after an invitation from the Metropolitan Fire Brigade. Attendance was high at this meeting and members were overwhelmingly positive about the experience and feedback indicated that more outings to offsite venues would be welcomed.

Administration support was provided by Christina Del Frate (Multicultural Liaison Officer – CoPP)

4. Work Program and Issues Arising

- The Multicultural Forum's program included:
 - Advising on various matters, including: the Council's Community Health & Wellbeing 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.
 - Participation in information sharing and networking opportunities both with each other, and with external agency representatives.
 - 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.
 - Members of the forum 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 Kevin Andrews on the issue of changes to Australia's Humanitarian intake and its impact on the existing Sudanese communities in Australia, as well as racial tensions in the community.
 - 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.

- The Committee's objectives are to:
 - Work within the existing Multicultural Strategic Framework, which has the goals of valuing cultural diversity, increasing participation and improving service delivery.
 - Act as a resource and provide direction to the community.
 - Represent the views and needs of the Port Phillip community.
 - Advise council officers about lobbying other levels of government and agencies where appropriate.

- Advise Council about how it can most effectively promote the social, cultural and health interests of the multicultural community.
- Ensure effective communication between Council and the community.
- Councillor Klepner should be acknowledged for her strong commitment to the needs of Port Phillip's multicultural communities and her ongoing work in ensuring council services are culturally and linguistically responsive.
- The Multicultural Forum comprises members of Port Phillip's multicultural communities who are extremely dedicated to their groups and enthusiastic about working together with Council to ensure an equitable partnership. They should be commended for the time they donate in participating in this process.
- As outlined above, the Multicultural 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 and the youth. The City of Port Phillip will be working with the New Hope Migrant Resource Centre to increase participation from a broader demographic.

5. 2007 Review of the Multicultural Forum

Following a recommendation from last year's annual report, a review was undertaken this year to determine the ongoing usefulness of the MF, and its relevance to members. The MF was assessed against the strategic framework and its capacity to value cultural diversity, improve service delivery and increase participation.

A survey was distributed to community members and service provider members, with a slight difference between the two surveys to target the participants more effectively. Questions asked include the length of time of involvement in the forum, what topics had been useful in the past, and suggestions for future topics, how did members view the frequency of the meetings, and what changes would improve the MF's program or structure.

Feedback from the returned surveys gave the following information:

- 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/organisations.
- Suggestions for future topics included community issues such as health and safety, as well as finding out more about Council programs and initiatives.
- 80% of respondents also indicated an interest in participating in other Council forums and committees.
- A large proportion of respondents indicated the desire for more cultural and social events.

5.1 Issues arising from the Review

Generally, respondents were very positive about the role of the MF, and would like to see it continue in its current format. Suggestions were given for presentation of future topics, however, in terms of its structure, meeting times, and purpose, respondents were almost unanimous in their support for its continuance. The value of maintaining an already established group, which takes its role seriously is immeasurable and its loss would be a great deficit to Council .

Council's relationship with the MF is valued, particularly its advisory capacity, and the continuation of this is essential to upholding the core values of Council's Multicultural Strategic Framework.

The issue of responding to cultural events and celebrations is one that is mentioned periodically at meetings and was particularly highlighted in the review. Members are always interested in attending cultural events or publicising their own. For example, several members participated in the recent Senior's Week Small Grants Program, in which they applied for funding from Council to run their own Senior's Week events. Members have also been involved in the consultation and planning of Harmony Day celebrations each year. As a result, Social Planning and Policy are investigating strategies to manage this issue.

6. Reporting

A copy of the minutes of every Multicultural Forum meeting is circulated to each member of the Multicultural Forum.

The Committee's Annual Report to Council outlines the activities of the Committee each year.

7. Recommendations

7.1. Term of Committee

The current term of the Multicultural Forum expires on 31 December 2007. We recommend that the Multicultural Forum continues due to its ability to provide advice on matters concerning the multicultural communities of Port Phillip, and the long-established relationship between Council and its members, which is an invaluable tool in community consultation.

7.2. Terms of Reference

Due to the feedback from the review supporting the current structure, purpose and program of the MF, we recommend that the MF maintains its current terms of reference. The current terms of reference are as follows:

<u>Purpose</u>	The City of Port Phillip's Multicultural Forum facilitates discussion and advises Council offices and the Council about policies and plans supporting the multicultural community.
Objectives	The Multicultural forum will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work within the existing Multicultural Plan Strategic Framework, which has the goals of valuing cultural diversity, improving service delivery and increasing participation. • Act as a resource and provide direction to the community. • Represent the views and needs of the Port Phillip community. • Advise Council officers about lobbying other levels of government and agencies where appropriate. • Advise Council about how it can most effectively promote the social, cultural, and health interests of the multicultural community. • Ensure effective communication between Council and the community.
Policy Framework	The work of the Multicultural Forum is informed by the Council's Multicultural Plan.
Membership	The following people are invited to forum meetings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Representatives of multicultural groups, organisations, and agencies. • Interested individuals • A Councillor appointed by the Council • Relevant Council Staff
Meetings	Forum meetings will be chaired by the attending Councillor. The forum will usually meet four times per year.
Resourcing	The Multicultural Liaison Officer will ensure that participants are notified of meetings, interpreters are booked, minutes and agendas are distributed, and actions are followed up and reported back to the forum.

This report was prepared by Christina Del Frate and confirmed by the Committee's Chairperson, Councillor Judith Klepner.

Signature _____

Date _____