



**9.2** **MULTICULTURAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE UPDATE AND "ALL ONE TOGETHER" ANTI-RACISM CAMPAIGN**

**EXECUTIVE MEMBER:** **TONY KEENAN, GENERAL MANAGER, COMMUNITY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

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**1. PURPOSE**

- 1.1 To present an update to Council of the work of the Multicultural Advisory Committee (MAC) since its inception in 16 October 2019.
- 1.2 To seek Council support to join "All One Together" anti-racism campaign.
- 1.3 To seek an extension of the current term of MAC members to 7 May 2021.

**2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

- 2.1 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.
- 2.2 Thirteen Advisory Committee members were endorsed by Council on the 16 October 2019. Committee members' cultural and religious backgrounds are in par with the cultural and religious diversity of City of Port Phillip including representatives from established communities, newly emerging communities, people seeking asylum, former refugees and young people.
- 2.3 The Committee held its first meeting on 3 December 2019 and an Action Plan has been developed. The MAC would like to present to Council the breadth of work they have completed and highlight their key achievements, thus far.
- 2.4 On 20 April 2020, the newly elected Chair wrote to Council seeking that Council join a cross-sectoral coalition the "All One Together" campaign, a Victoria-wide anti-racism response. This report presents to Council background information about the campaign and the steps Council needs to take to join the campaign.
- 2.5 At a MAC meeting on the 2 June 2020, the Committee's current tenure was discussed. MAC members would like Council to consider an extension of their term on the Committee from October 2020 to May 2021.

**3. RECOMMENDATION**

That Council:

- 3.1 Receive and acknowledge the MAC update.
- 3.2 Endorse an extension of the current MAC members until 7 May 2021.
- 3.3 Endorse Council to take the "All One Together" pledge.

**4. KEY POINTS/ISSUES**

**MAC Update**

- 4.1 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.

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- 4.2 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.
- 4.3 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 is newly established, the members decided to nominate that a Councillor Representative 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.
- 4.4 The TOR were endorsed by Council on 15 May 2019 where an alternative motion was put forward that the ToR be subjected to further consultation and be brought back for adoption at a future Council meeting. The ToR were adopted by Council on 5 February 2020 after further consultation was undertaken with the community and the incoming Committee.
- 4.5 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.
- 4.6 In January, 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 and the Welcoming Cities Framework (Attachment 1 – Welcoming Cities Standard). Further orientation sessions were held about the Council Plan and Budget 2017-27 and the Welcoming Cities Standard.
- 4.7 The Welcoming Cities Standard is a central element of the Welcoming Cities network. The Standard establishes the framework for local Councils to:
  - 4.7.1 Benchmark their cultural diversity and inclusion policies and practices across the organisation.
  - 4.7.2 Identify where and how further efforts could be directed.
  - 4.7.3 Assess progress over time.
- 4.8 The Standard allows Council to benchmark current activity against six categories: Leadership; Social and Cultural Inclusion; Economic Development; Learning and Skills Development; Civic Development; Places and Spaces.
- 4.9 The Committee agreed to ensure that the MAC Action Plan 2020/21 (Attachment 2 – MAC Action Plan 2020/21) becomes an ongoing piece of work throughout the Committee's existence and is reviewed thoroughly at each meeting to ensure it is aligned to community need. The Action Plan is divided into the six categories that have been prescribed by the Welcoming Cities Standards.
- 4.10 Year to date, the Committee provided feedback in relations to the following Council services and policies:
  - 4.10.1 Future Ready: City of Port Phillip Multicultural Seniors Groups Review
  - 4.10.2 City of Port Phillip Draft Customer Charter
  - 4.10.3 Library Services Adult Programming
- 4.11 Since the Committee's inception, the following working groups have been formed:



- 4.11.1 Cultural Diversity working Group
- 4.11.2 Refugee Week working group
- 4.11.3 Council Budget 2020/21 working group.
- 4.12 To acknowledge Cultural Diversity Week, the Committee requested that Council display “Refugee Welcome Here” banners outside the St Kilda Town Hall from the 16 March to 21 May 2020. The Committee wrote to the CEO about the banners and this request was assessed under Council’s Port Phillip Council Flag Protocol. A key action for the committee this year is to work towards ensuring that within the municipality there is visible signage to make everyone feel welcome aligned with Direction One in the Council Plan and the Welcoming Cities Standards.
- 4.13 The Committee also developed short videos profiling the settlement stories of four members incorporating what makes them feel included in Port Phillip. These short videos were going to be shared on Council’s social media as part of Cultural Diversity Week, however due to COVID-19 the Victorian Multicultural Commission postponed Diversity Week activities and this initiative was put on hold.
- 4.14 As part of Refugee Week two members of the MAC ran an online story-time session in collaboration with Port Phillip library on World Refugee Day, 20 June 2020.
- 4.15 Since COVID-19 lockdown the Committee has been meeting monthly via WebEx. Their attention has turned to providing feedback to Council about the needs and emerging issues of multicultural communities and supporting co-designing a recovery model. The Committee has become an important stakeholder in mapping vulnerable persons in the municipality, and Agency Coordination Reporting. They have provided Council with valuable information on what has been happening for our local community members and organisations in the municipality which has informed our local relief and recovery efforts.
- 4.16 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:
  - 4.16.1 Translations of key COVID-19 factsheets in Russian, Polish and Hebrew.
  - 4.16.2 Linking up of organisations that support international students and asylum seekers to “Share the Food” Project.
  - 4.16.3 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).
  - 4.16.4 The submission of several funding applications that support the digital inclusion multicultural seniors and families residing in Park Towers and Emerald Hill Court.
  - 4.16.5 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.

**“All One Together” Campaign**

- 4.17 At the MAC meeting held 3 March 2020, Zuleika Arashiro Advocacy Leader from the Ethnic Communities’ Council of Victoria (ECCV) addressed the Committee about the “All One Together” campaign. A major element in this campaign is to provide



opportunities for organisations to collaborate and tackle discrimination. Organisations are asked to join the campaign and commit to delivering an action to address racism, they include:

- 4.17.1 Establish a senior led culture of no tolerance to racism, implementing specific policies and procedures to address complaints.
  - 4.17.2 Review employment policies to detect biases in recruitment and career pathways.
  - 4.17.3 Develop mentor and role-modelling programs for new migrants.
  - 4.17.4 Make legislation that protects all citizens against racism widely known, including official channels for complaints outside your organisation.
  - 4.17.5 Invest in culturally responsive practices and services.
- 4.18 The MAC affirmed unanimously its support for the campaign and agreed that a letter be sent requesting that Council consider joining the campaign and its relevance due to the impact of COVID-19 on multicultural communities. The Chair wrote to the Mayor on the 20 April 2020 asking Council to consider joining the Campaign.
- 4.19 Port Phillip has a strong history of welcoming migrants and asylum seekers. Through Council pledging their support to this campaign it will show publicly Council's ongoing commitment to challenging racism in practical ways. This is particularly important at a time when there is exacerbated racism through misinformation about the COVID-19, an increase in anti-Semitism and Islamophobia, and suspicion about those seeking to enter the community from overseas.
- 4.20 In the last decade, Council has been proactive in supporting similar campaigns:
- 4.20.1 2006, Council endorsed a Statement of Commitment to Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) Communities which states that, "We welcome refugees, migrants, asylum seekers and visitors to our city".
  - 4.20.2 2011, Council endorsed City of Port Phillip Social Justice Charter. The Charter provides a leadership framework that promotes advocacy for causes connected with Social Justice and Human Rights.
  - 4.20.3 2013, Council endorsed the Anti-Racism Campaign. The initiative is part of the Racism - It Stops With Me campaign launched by the Federal Government in August 2012. In addition, in 2014 Council voted to oppose proposed amendments to the Racial Discrimination Act 1975
  - 4.20.4 2014 - Council supports the Joint statement by local governments in Victoria on asylum seekers
  - 4.20.5 2018 – Council membership of the Local Government Mayoral Taskforce Supporting People Seeking Asylum.
  - 4.20.6 2017 - Council called for the Manus Island evacuation and the banners were erected on temporary basis to publicly support asylum seekers on Manus Island and reconfirm Council's commitment as a Welcome Refugee Zone.
  - 4.20.7 2019 – Council reaffirms its commitment as a Welcome Refugee Zone by signing the Welcome Refugee Scroll.
- 4.21 To join the cross-sectoral campaign the following actions need to be taken by Council:



- 4.21.1 1. Take the “All One Together” Pledge. All partners who take the pledge will be highlighted on the campaign website (Attachment 3 – “All One Together” Pledge).
- 4.21.2 2. Provide a ‘Statement of Commitment’. Issue a message from your organisation’s Chief Executive Officer (Attachment 4 – CEO example Statement Moreland City Council):
  - (i) Specifying why Council supports the “All One Together” campaign,
  - (ii) Defining one action Council will implement to tackle racism and discrimination. The action Council chooses to take should align with the council Plan and be fit purpose, and readiness.

4.22 Year to date, the following organisations have taken the pledge and issued a “Statement of Commitment”: Moreland City Council, Australian Conservation Foundation, Welcoming Australia, Australian Multicultural Foundation, Think HQ, Victoria University, Yarra Valley Water, Capire Consulting Group and Football Victoria.

#### **Extension of MAC Term**

- 4.23 The Committee’s tenure was recently discussed at the 2 June 2020. The current term of the committee ceases in October 2020. It was agreed that a request to extend the membership of the Committee until May 2020 be sought.
- 4.24 The Committee is only recently established, and the ToR endorsed in May 2020.
- 4.25 By extending the term of the MAC this will allow for incoming Councillors to have sufficient time to be fully oriented and able to consider needs relating to reference committees.

### **5. CONSULTATION AND STAKEHOLDERS**

- 5.1 Since the establishment of the MAC they have contributed and provided advice to Council on issues impacting Multicultural communities, this has included:
  - 5.1.1 Future Ready: City of Port Phillip Multicultural Seniors Groups Review.
  - 5.1.2 City of Port Phillip Draft Customer Charter.
  - 5.1.3 Library Services Adult Programming.
  - 5.1.4 COVID-19 vulnerable persons mapping and agency cohort update.
- 5.2 At the MAC meeting held 3 March 2020, Zuleika Arashiro Advocacy Leader from the Ethnic Communities’ Council of Victoria (ECCV) addressed the Committee about the “All One Together” campaign
- 5.3 At the MAC meeting held 5 May the Committee was informed about issues raised by the Multifaith network of the concern with the rise of Ant-Semitism in the community and in particular recent mainstream reporting about the Ultra-Orthodox Jewish, community and COVID-19.
- 5.4 During the 2 June 2020 MAC meeting Committee members requested the Committee’s tenure be extended.

### **6. LEGAL AND RISK IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 There are no known legal or risk implications.



**7. FINANCIAL IMPACT**

7.1 No sitting fees are applicable for the Advisory Committee.

**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 relevant community views, knowledge and advice and builds on local strengths of keeping 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 Port Phillip Inspector Nigel McGuire-White stated that Police patrols near synagogues and other places of significance would be increased in response to rising anti-Semitic violence against individuals in the area (Leader, 11 September 2019). This has been prompted by increased local reports to the Police of people being attacked because of their faiths.

9.5 The current situation in Australia and internationally shows the importance of committing to racial justice, as a collective action, many local organisations have made public statements showing solidarity with communities who are the survivors of racism, and want to acknowledge the experiences of First Nations people and their long-term struggle for justice and equity.

9.6 In February, the Australian Human Rights Commission recorded more complaints under the Racial Discrimination Act than at any time over the past twelve months. One third of all racism complaints made to the Commission since the start of February have been related to COVID-19. The Anti-Defamation Commission has expressed its deep concerns about the explosion of Covid-19 related anti-Semitic posts, memes and pages blaming the Jewish community. A database of racist incidents against Asian Australians has also greatly increased since the onset of the pandemic.

**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:

10.1.1 A safe and active community with strong social connections.

10.1.2 Access to services that support the health and wellbeing of our growing community.

10.1.3 Community diversity is valued and celebrated



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## 11. IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

### 11.1 TIMELINE

- 11.1.1 Council extends the current MAC membership to May 2021.
- 11.1.2 Council joins the “All One Together” campaign and “Statement of Commitment” is developed by the CEO Office in July 2020 defining one action Council will implement to tackle racism and discrimination.
- 11.1.3 Council implements its one action that tackles racism and discrimination in second half of 2020.
- 11.1.4 A report on MAC activities undertaken during this extended period will be presented to Council in June 2021.

### 11.2 COMMUNICATION

- 11.2.1 The outcome of the Council meeting will be communicated at the MAC meeting on 9 August 2020 and will be recorded in the minutes of the meeting.
- 11.2.2 Council’s “Statement of Commitment” is available on Council’s and “All One Together” Campaign website.

## 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.

**TRIM FILE NO:** 46/03/22

### ATTACHMENTS

1. Attachment 1 - Welcoming Cities Standard
2. Attachment 2 - Multicultural Advisory Committee Action Plan 2020/21
3. Attachment 3 - All One Together Pledge
4. Attachment 4 - CEO Example Statement Moreland City Council