



The purpose of the Multicultural Advisory Committee (MAC) is to assist Council to provide advice and feedback on all issues that affect multicultural, refugee or asylum seeker communities in the City of Port Phillip.

NAME: Multicultural Advisory Committee	
DEPARTMENT: Community Building and Inclusion	DATE: 28 May 2021
PANEL: Cr Tim Baxter, Georgina Tsolidis (MAC Chair), Ewa Zysk (Diversity Officer)	

The following community members have renominated for term 2021-2024:

Georgina Tsolidis	Elwood	Greek
Alba Chliakhtine	Port Melbourne	Brazilian
Tina Khabbazian Zanjani	St Kilda	Iranian
Altaf Ali Mohammed	St Kilda East	Indian
James Seow	South Melbourne	South East Asian
Anu Bajwa	Balaclava	Indian
Vasileios (Bill) Tsialtas	St Kilda	Greek

The following new members are recommended for term 2021-2024:

Naomi Sherborne	St Kilda	Jewish
Dr Helene Kammoun	St Kilda East	French
Leonardo Pereira dos Santos	Elwood	Brazilian
Wellington Bertalha	Balaclava	Brazilian

Outgoing members from term 2019-2021:

Mireille "Mimi" Kayeye	St Kilda	Burundian
Kamal Ibrahim	Port Melbourne	Ethiopian
Corey Lovell	Elwood	Aboriginal

Outgoing Organisations term 2019-2021:

Sister Brigid Arthur	Brigidine Asylum Seekers Project
Marilyn Kraner	Jewish Care

Renominations 2021-2024

Georgina Tsolidis is an Elwood resident born in Egypt of Greek heritage. Georgina arrived in Australia in 1965 and remains connected to the local Greek Community. Georgina is a Professor of Education and has worked for 40 years in education publishing extensively in diversity and inclusion particularly with reference to multiculturalism and gender equality. Georgina is keen to bring to the committee an academic perspective in relation to multiculturalism, interculturalism and racism. Georgina also advocates for purposeful urban development and the hazards of gentrification. Noting the importance of diversity reflected through a city, which does not become monocultural and continues to celebrate our rich multicultural history.

Community Involvement/Representation

- Member of the City of Port Phillip Older Persons Consultative Committee
- Adjunct Professor, Alfred Deakin Institute for Citizenship and Globalisation, Deakin University
- Board member of Research Committee on Racism, Nationalism, Indigeneity and Ethnicity, International Sociological Association

Focus/interests/key issues

- Policy and multiculturalism
 - Gender equity
 - Interculturalism and cosmopolitanism
 - Racism
 - Families and children
 - Heritage preservation
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Alba Chliakhtine is a Port Melbourne resident born in Brazil. Alba has been living in Australia for 30 years of which 25 have been within the City of Port Phillip. She has a professional background in supply chain management, but since 2002 has built a parallel career in volunteering, being one of the founders of the Brazilian Association and the Portuguese Language School in Victoria. Alba has been active in supporting the emerging Latin American community to settle in the municipality. Alba's aim is to contribute her knowledge and energy to the committee, to ensure that multicultural communities are thoughtfully connected to the wider community.

Community Involvement/Representation

- Founders of the Brazilian Association in Victoria and Portuguese Language School
- Member of Regional Advisory Council (Victorian Multicultural Commission)
- Chair of Victorian Immigrant and Refugee Women's Coalition

Focus/interests/key issues

- Social isolation for new migrants
 - Employment and training
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Tina Khabbazian Zanjani was born in Iran and she has recently settled in St Kilda. Tina is an author, actor and director with ten years of experience in the field of creating theatre for children and adolescents, as well as fifteen years of acting experience in theatre and television in Iran.

Tina's recent migration experience has had a profound impact on her in particularly in terms of her sense of self. In Iran, she was a successful professional, whereas now she is grappling with issues such as housing, language barriers, mental health and unemployment. Tina has struggled with the trauma of her settlement experience but has rediscovered solace and convalescence in theatre. Recently, she started running theatre classes in Iranian for other individuals with refugee experience with the hope that it allows for a similar safe space to tell their story and heal. Tina hopes that through her involvement in the committee, she can advocate for the arts as a social inclusion tool.

Community activities/Groups involved with:

- Founder of ART STARS

Focus/interests/key issues:

- Using the arts to encourage social inclusion
 - Family violence
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Altat Ali Mohammed settled in City of Port Phillip 15 years ago from Hyderabad, India. About ten years ago, with a group of residents, Ali started one of the first Muslim prayer groups in St Kilda. The group has been pro-active in reaching out to the wider community and in particular the Jewish and Aboriginal community to create inter-faith dialogue and to raise awareness about Islam.

Ali is keen to bring to the committee some of the issues unique to recent arrivals on skilled visas, such as underemployment, racism, and affordable housing. Many people like Ali have completed higher education but are struggling to find employment in their chosen field forced instead to accept menial employment such as taxi drivers and call centre jobs. Ali feels strongly that many migrants bring a wealth of skills and experience and it is through the lack of local knowledge of the Australian system and professional networks that individuals find themselves underemployed. Many individuals also want to live in inner-city suburbs, but simply cannot afford the housing and they are forced to move to the outer suburbs.

Through his involvement with the committee, Ali wants to bring the issues of skilled migrants to Council's attention along with raising awareness and providing education regarding the presence of the small number of Muslims in the Port Phillip area.

Community activities/Groups involved with:

- St Kilda Muslim community

Focus/interests/key issues:

- Employment
 - Affordable housing
 - Racism and Islamophobia
 - Families
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James Seow is a trilingual skilled migrant from Singapore and a resident of South Melbourne. James originally came to Australia as an international student and has now moved here to live permanently as a skilled migrant. James is involved with The Welcome Dinner Project Victoria. The dinners are organised across Victoria to help newly arrived residents (including refugees, asylum seekers, skilled migrants and international students) to connect with local and professionally established Australians. James is interested in making the community more culturally vibrant, welcoming and connected, and this is the main reason James wished to join the committee.

Community activities/Groups involved with:

- The Welcome Dinner Project Victoria
- Thorne Harbour Health
- Victorian Pride Centre
- National Intimate Partner Violence Prevention Advisory Group member
- Switchboard – Queer, Trans & Intersex People of Colour Advisory Committee member
- Mind Australia – LGBTIQ+ Suicide Prevention Advisory Committee

Focus/interests/key issues:

- Social inclusion
 - LGBTIQ+
 - Cross-cultural learning and leadership
 - International students
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Dr Anu Bajwa is a migrant from India, and has lived in Balaclava for the last ten years. Anu is fluent in English, Hindi, Punjabi and French. Anu has only recently become involved in the community after working across several projects with Space 2b which addressed social isolation. Anu works with Victoria Police as a researcher on the issue of family violence.

When she settled in Australia, Anu experienced firsthand issues relating to the migration experience such as isolation, cultural difference, and a lack of awareness of support services such as childcare. Because of her experience, she has become inspired to work with the broader migrant community, especially the newly emerging Indian community to create opportunities for social inclusion. Anu has been active in organising the first ever Diwali festival in Port Phillip and the Chat and Chai event, a social support group for newly arrived migrants. Through her involvement in the committee, Anu wants to ensure that Council actively addresses the issue of social isolation for new migrants and that opportunities for intercultural dialogue are created on an ongoing basis.

Community activities/Groups involved with:

- Diwali Festival
- St Kilda Primary School
- Space 2b Social Design
- Victoria Police

Focus/interests/key issues:

- Social inclusion
- Families and children
- Family violence

Vasileios (Bill) Tsialtas came here as a 4-year-old child from Greece in 1966, and he currently resides in St Kilda. Bill has been a resident of Port Phillip for most of his life and he volunteers with wide variety of local organisations such as Port Phillip Community Group, and South Port Community Centre. He is a consumer representative on Star Health's Diversity Working Group, holding the Multicultural and LGBTQIA+ portfolios. Bill is a strong advocate of the concept of Interculturalism in which communities have a deep understanding and respect for all cultures. In an intercultural society, no one is left unchanged because everyone learns from one another and grows together. Bill is interested in bringing his passion for interculturalism to the committee and his lived experience as gay Greek Australian man with intersecting identities.

Community activities/Groups involved with:

- Voices of the Southside
- Consumer representative for Star Health holding the Multicultural and LGBTIQ+ portfolios.

Focus/interests/key issues:

- LGBTIQ+
- Mental health
- Social inclusion
- Interculturalism
- Housing and homelessness

New nominations 2021-24

Naomi Sherborne has work experience in journalism, public health and most recently health promotion. Currently, Naomi is a Health Promotion Officer (family violence) at Jewish Care, where she has led work around developing a family violence resource program. The focus of her program has been educating the general Jewish community, community groups and organisations about family violence in order to reduce the incidence of violence and to enhance bystander action. Naomi holds a Master of Public Health and a Bachelor of Arts (Major Communications & English Literature) and has extensive written and editing experience across media and public health.

Community activities/groups involved with:

- Jewish Care
- Emerge Australia
- Research and writer for Click Foundation (volunteer)

Focus/interests/key issues:

- Health promotion
 - Gender equity
 - Community engagement
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Dr Helene Kammoun arrived in Australia ten years ago from France. Since Helene's arrival in Australia, she has been involved in the medical research sector, first as a researcher and more recently as an Innovative Manager. In the research sector, Helene has led work around gender equity, diversity, and inclusion. She currently chairs the Diversity and Inclusion committee at the Murdoch Children's Research Institute. Helene has been advocating for gender equity in science throughout her career.

Since becoming a parent, Helene has become a board member at her local childcare and kindergarten, advocating for 'bicultural families' and for information around raising bilingual children. The COVID19 pandemic has had a deep impact on Helene, which she expressed as not dissimilar to the experience of many migrants in Australia. The prospect of not returning to her country of birth for a long period to see family and friends is overwhelming, and additionally there is the constant worry if family and friends are safe overseas. Helene stated that "*there is a strong sense of distress to feel 'cut off' from their overseas relatives*". This is a pervasive current issue that needs addressing, as there are and will be strong mental health implications due to this situation, that does not have an end date in sight. Helene expressed that the voice of migrants during the pandemic is often a voice that is not seen and heard.

Community activities/groups involved with:

- Murdoch Children's Research Institute
- Founder of Nougatine catering
- Board members of Eildon Road Childcare and Kindergarten
- Science Australia Gender Equity

Focus/interests/key issues:

- Gender equity
 - Diversity and Inclusion
 - Children and families
 - COVID social and economic recovery
 - Mental Health
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Leonardo Pereira dos Santos settled in Australia in 2019. Leonardo is originally from Brazil where he was an electronic helicopter technician for over eight years. In Brazil, Leonardo was also a professional musician playing Samba and Forró. After arriving to Europe in 2009, he pursued a career as a musician and an event organiser in France, Sweden, and Norway.

Leo (as he likes to be known) arrived in Australia just before the pandemic which has posed many challenges for him and his family. Leo has been successfully proactive in overcoming these challenges by getting involved with the local community by teaching soccer, music and dance. Currently, Leo is studying English which has enabled him to develop a strong network with newly arrived migrants in Port Phillip.

One of the biggest barriers Leo has identified for new migrants is access to information about settling in Australia and as new parents. Leo and his family have struggled to navigate information about early childhood services available in Port Phillip.

Community activities/groups involved with:

- Elwood City Soccer Club
- Adult Migrant English Program (Melbourne Polytechnic)
- Space 2b Social Design
- ABRISA - Brazilian Association in Melbourne

Focus/interests/key issues:

- Sport and the Arts, as medium for engagement
 - Settlement information for new migrants
 - Families and children
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Wellington Bertalha is originally from Brazil. Wellington has just commenced a degree in social and political sciences at Monash University on a full paid scholarship. In a professional and a volunteer capacity, he has worked in the areas of inclusive practice, worker's rights and LGBTQIA+ safe spaces. Wellington is interested in understanding and influencing policy at a grassroots level, highlighting to Council the experience of migrant workers and of LGBTQIA+ people seeking asylum.

Wellington is also particularly interested in empowering and raising the voice of young people from multicultural backgrounds. Wellington seeks to address the challenges of negotiating hybrid identities and how this can have an impact on sense of inclusion, belonging and the mental health of young people.

Community activities/groups involved with:

- Migrant Workers Centre
- Thorne Harbour Health Services
- Asylum Seeker Resource Centre

Focus/interests/key issues:

- LGBTQIA+
- Asylum seekers
- Policy development
- Youth leadership
- Identity
- Migrant workers

Outgoing members 2019 – 2021

Sister Brigid Arthur is a Project Coordinator with Brigidine Asylum Seekers Project (BASP). Brigid, a Brigidine Sister, grew up in the Wimmera rural community of Kaniva, and was educated at St Brigid's College, Horsham. After her profession as a Brigidine, Brigid began her long and passionate engagement as an educator, mainly with secondary students in Brigidine Colleges throughout Victoria. Serving as Principal in several colleges and later a founding member of the Brigidine Secondary Schools Council, it became paramount that her passion was for education that encompasses and promotes the inclusion and growth of all young people.

In 2001, whilst continuing her work with education, Brigid's hospitality extended to the increasing needs of asylum seekers and refugees in society. In a less than welcoming climate, her established vision for students that 'all are welcome' – was now extended to the needs of asylum

seekers and refugees. Thus, with Catherine Kelly, BASP was born and continues to grow. Sr Brigid now supports countless individuals and families seeking asylum, some whom reside in City of Port Phillip. BASP provides practical support for asylum seekers, and Sr Brigid through her involvement in the committee wished to create awareness about the plight of asylum seekers and to advocate on a local level.

Community activities/Groups involved with:

- Founder of BASP

Focus/interests/key issues:

- Asylum seekers
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Marilyn Kraner is with Jewish Care, which provides aged care and community services for Jewish people throughout Victoria. There are a significant number of Jewish people living in the municipality. They come from a diverse range of countries including Russia, Poland and Israel and speak a range of different languages. Marilyn advocates that Judaism is religiously and culturally diverse. Assumptions are often made that language is the primary barrier to engagement but there is greater complexity to this. Understanding how the community organises itself, how it interacts/networks, the various sectors within the community adds richness and enhances strategies to address issues of representation and inclusion. Marilyn believes that many experiences of the Jewish community are transferrable to other communities - assumptions, racism, misjudgements are common themes across culturally diverse groups and even more so for religious minorities. Marilyn wished to bring to the committee the unique and diverse experiences of the Jewish community and their diversity, ensuring the specific needs of this minority religion are represented in Council's considerations and activities.

Community activities/Groups involved with:

- Manager of Individual and Family Services at Jewish Care

Focus/interests/key issues:

- Jewish community
- Housing and homelessness
- Family violence
- Child protection

Corey Lovell is a resident of Elwood and of Aboriginal background. Corey grew up in Western Victoria and he has been involved in Aboriginal affair for many decades. Corey was motivated to be part of the committee as he believes Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as the First Peoples need to actively engage in welcoming new communities who are settling and visiting the municipality. Corey is involved with the St Kilda Lifesaving Club and he has seen firsthand racism towards young people of African Australian background at St Kilda beach. In his interview Corey stated: "*whilst there was a problem, it was exaggerated by the media, thus influencing the population to believe that anyone with dark skin is bad. We need to break these draconian attitudes, ensure that all Australians are given a 'fair go' and treated according to contribution to society, not their race, colour or creed*".

Corey wished to be in the committee to engage in welcoming new communities to Port Phillip.

Kamal Ibrahim is an Ethiopian Australian footballer, who plays for Melbourne Knights FC in the National Premier Leagues Victoria and Port Melbourne Sharks. Kamal was born in Ethiopia and migrated to Victoria to escape civil war and conflict, settling in Port Melbourne with his mother, three brothers and two sisters in 2003. Kamal's refugee settlement experience in Port Melbourne has had profound impact in his formative years. As a young person of refugee background residing

in public housing in Port Melbourne, he struggled to access sporting opportunities due to financial barriers. During his interview he stated that:

"I struggled to fit in when I first came to Melbourne until I started playing soccer with other children. It instantly gave me a sense of purpose and belief. Children from the mainstream Australian communities have a lot of support. Parents drive them to every training and buy them whatever they need. However, those from disadvantaged communities don't have that kind of support. Often it is due to financial reasons, but cultural understanding and family priorities also play big roles."

Kamal started *One Ball*, an organisation which aims to develop positive cross-cultural relationships by integrating and uniting young people through fun sporting activities, irrespective of religion, culture or gender. Through the committee, Kamal wished to develop his community leadership skills and he also wanted to advocate for the needs of young people of refugee background.

Community activities/Groups involved with:

- Founder of One Ball
- Player for Melbourne Knights FC and Port Melbourne Sharks

Focus/interests/key issues:

- Youth Leadership
 - Sport as medium for youth engagement
 - Supporting girls of refugee background to be involved in sports
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Mireille "Mimi" Kayeye is a passionate and determined young person who hails from Burundi and resides in St Kilda. Mimi is of refugee background and currently seeking asylum in Australia. Mimi has over eight years' experience using media and communication in advocating for social change. Mimi is passionate about women's rights. Mimi is a keynote speaker at schools (Melbourne, Perth), community events and international conferences including the United Nations Summit in New York (2014) and a presidential town hall with Barack Obama in Washington (2015). Her inspiring presentation includes topics of youth leadership, sexual and gender-based violence, and women's empowerments with a focus on global health. Mimi holds a Master's in International Development Politics and Gender from the Australian National University. During her studies, Mimi focused specifically on the trafficking of African women for forced labour in Australia which has gone primarily unnoticed by African and the Australian governments. She organises activities to educate girls on gender issues, youth leadership and empowerment. Mimi speaks Kirundi, Swahili, French and English.

Mimi wanted to see that Council featured and celebrated in its communications more stories from people of colour, people from a refugee and humanitarian background who call Port Phillip home. She also wished like to raise awareness of the plight of asylum seekers.

Community activities/Groups involved with:

- Member of the Sacred Heart Church
- Project Officer at the Catholic Alliance of People Seeking Asylum (CAPSA) at the Jesuit Social Services
- Australian Burundian Community in Victoria (ABCV)
- SBS radio presenter

Focus/interests/key issues:

- Media and communication
- Social inclusion of African Australian
- Youth Leadership
- Asylum seekers