

**Local Government Mayoral Taskforce supporting People Seeking Asylum
Minutes –Meeting No. 28 – Wednesday 28 June 2023**

1pm-3pm via Microsoft Teams

Chairperson: Mayor Cr Eden Foster (Greater Dandenong Council (CGD))

Attendees:

Mayor Cr Angelica Panopoulos (Merri-bek), Lee Tozzi (Merri-bek), Mayor Cr Hadi Saab (Kingston), Mayor Cr Julie Williams (Darebin), Deputy Mayor Cr Susanne Newton (Darebin), Kwabena Ansah (Darebin), Cr Rhonda Garad (CGD), Peter Johnstone (CGD), Kara Barnett (Melbourne), Deputy Mayor Cr Nicky Luo (Monash), Cr Rose Iser (Moonee Valley), Cr Marghanita Da Cruz (Inner West), Sana Saiyed (Whittlesea), Susan Quach (Kingston), Amey Rountree (Monash), Sandra Khazam (Port Phillip), Amani Nyikang (Yarra), Michelle Allen (Hobart), Amy Bennett (Bass Coast) and Ann Ly (CGD) – Minute taker.

Apologies:

Cr Dr Olivia Ball (Melbourne), Hedeeyeh Saberian (Mornington Peninsula), Chris Munro (Mornington Peninsula), Cr Gaetano Greco (Darebin), Emma Sampson (Merri-bek), Cr Mark Riley (Merri-bek), Nelum Buddhadasa (Merri-bek), Petr Svoboda (Merri-bek), Cr Anab Mohamud (Yarra), Cristina Del Frate (Yarra), Tara Bewley (Yarra), Mayor Cr Joseph Haweii (Hume), Celia Chang (Hume), Julie Andrews (Hume), Geoff Paine (Nillumbik), Cr Jennie Barrera (Wyndham), Dalal Sleiman (Whittlesea), Mayor Cr Bruce Lancashire (Brimbank), Cr Jasmine Nguyen (Brimbank), Lynley Dumble (Brimbank), Courtney Boi (Casey), Teresa Lawler (Casey), Sadia Ali (Casey), Calum Pattie (Casey), Cr Brian Little (Monash), Colin Bostock (Monash), Mayor Cr Des Hudson (Ballarat), Frances Salenga (Ballarat), Nikki Williams (Bendigo), Mayor Cr Andrea Metcalf (Bendigo), Lisa King (Banyule), Cr Peter Castaldo (Banyule), Mayor Cr Tammy Radford (Cardinia), Mayor Cr Sarah Carter (Maribyrnong), Catherine Dwyer (Maribyrnong), Lord Mayor Sally Capp (Melbourne), Deputy Lord Mayor Nicolas Reece (Melbourne), Cr Roshena Campbell (Melbourne), Cr Jason Chang (Melbourne), Cr Elizabeth Mary Doidge (Melbourne), Cr Davydd Griffiths (Melbourne), Cr Jamal Hakim (Melbourne), Cr Philip Le Liu (Melbourne), Cr Rohan Leppert (Melbourne), Cr Kevin Louey (Melbourne), Mayor Cr Ben Ramcharan (Nillumbik), April Wilson (Nillumbik), Garry Starr (Canterbury Bankstown), Cr Bilal El-Hayek (Canterbury Bankstown) Cr Jim Mason (Geelong), Jane Wager (Geelong), Mayor Cr Mark Lane (Whitehorse), Debbie Seddon (Whitehorse), Mayor Cr Heather Cunsolo (Port Phillip), Sally Abbott (Moonee Valley), Celia Rice (Moonee Valley), Meghan Hopper (Moonee Valley), Mayor Cr Susan McIntyre (Wyndham), Liana Thompson (Wyndham), Emily Harris (Bass Coast), Cr Jennifer Anderson (Macedon Ranges), Mayor Cr Annette Death (Macedon Ranges), Mayor Cr Rob Steane (Maroondah), Chris Riseley (Maroondah), Mayor Cr Isabelle Tolhurst (Queenscliffe), Mayor Cr Ian Bye (Wellington), Mayor Cr Tony Briffa (Hobsons Bay), and Cr Jonathon Marsden (Hobsons Bay), Cr Sarah Race (Mornington Peninsula), Pradeep Peteti (Casey), Suzanne Bray (Kingston), John Drennan (Ballarat), Kathie Duncan (Darebin), Ben Pollard (Hobsons Bay), Wambui Thirimu (Brimbank) and Shabaz Fattah (Kingston).

Agenda Item	Action
<p>1. Welcome, Acknowledgement of Country and Introductions We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of this land, the Bunurong People, and pays respect to their Elders past and present. We recognise and respect their continuing connections to climate, Culture, Country and waters.</p>	-
<p>2. Endorsement of Minutes of Previous Meeting Minutes endorsed.</p>	-
<p>3. Letter of Support for Iranian Women’s Association Mayor Cr Angelica provided an overview of Iranian Women’s Association advocacy and alignment with Taskforce advocacy asks. Taskforce members agreed for a letter of support to be sent to Minister Clare O’Neil and Minister Andrew Giles from Chair of Taskforce.</p>	Secretariat to draft letters of support.

Agenda Item	Action
<p>4. Review of Outstanding Action Items</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Taskforce membership – member councils to confirm for 2023-24 if not already. • Cr Marghanita Da Cruz (Inner West) advised of advocacy by Inner West Council with Asylum Seeker Centre, NSW and queried potential alignment with advocacy of the Mayoral Taskforce. 	<p>Council members to confirm with Secretariat their membership.</p> <p>Secretariat to send Inner West Council the Mayoral Taskforce Notion of Motion Template and Terms of Reference.</p>
<p>5. ALGA Taskforce Canberra Delegation Reflections and Outcomes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Morning Tea at the National General Assembly - Interstate Membership Recruitment The Taskforce hosted a morning tea in Canberra at the Australian Local Government Association’s National General Assembly on Wednesday 14 June. The event was led by Mayor Cr Eden Foster, Mayor Cr Hadi Saab of Kingston Council and community advocate Mahshid to promote the Taskforce’s Back Your Neighbour campaign and advocacy. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Mayor Cr Hadi Saab collected a list of names of attendees at the morning tea. ○ Mayor Cr Angelica Panopoulos indicated Mount Alexander Shire Council was unable to attend morning tea but is interested to join the Taskforce. • MP/Ministerial meetings in Canberra – A delegation comprising of Taskforce representatives and Hazara refugees Mahshid and Nahid met with Minister Clare O’Neil, Greens and Independent MPs to call on the Federal Government for better support for all people seeking asylum in our communities. The meetings were overall positive attended by Mayor Cr Eden Foster, Mayor Cr Angelica Panopoulos, Cr Rhonda Garad, Cr Steve Staikos, Mayor Cr Julie Williams, Deputy Mayor Cr Susanne Newton, Cr Sara Race, Cr Rose Iser, Mahshid and Nahid. <p>Reflections and key actions that came out from meetings (see Meeting Notes for full details):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Elizabeth Watson-Brown – encouraged more public advocacy and gave tips on framing the Back Your Neighbour campaign messaging. ○ David Pocock (adviser) – already on board with advocacy asks, recommended more public advocacy and using topic in meetings. ○ Clare O’Neil – Good opportunity to talk to the Minister; she indicated that there is a “high proportion of non-meritorious claims” and abuse of system– perhaps something that the Taskforce should clarify with Clare O’Neil’s office and potentially challenge if this is her position. Need clarification with UNHCR on the exact figure on non-meritorious claims. Further details also needed re changes (if any) to the Refugee Status Determination system. ○ Zoe Daniel – supportive of the Taskforce’s advocacy asks; suggested for the Taskforce to connect with the Refugee Council Parliamentary Friends Group. ○ Allegra Spender – offered to send the Taskforce’s questions to the Migration Committee, which she sits on. ○ Kylea Tink - Councils to ask their local federal member to promote the Community Refugee Integration and Settlement Pilot (CRISP) and lobby to Federal MPs in local area with community cases e.g. to stall immediate deportation orders. Kylea emphasized the ‘behind the scene’ track to get individual cases resolved due to Labor Government’s fear of negative perceptions. Mayor Cr Angelica Panopoulos raised that this presents privacy and consent issues, thus might be more appropriate to gather de-identified, collective data. 	<p>Secretariat to send follow up email to attendees of ALGA morning tea from Chair.</p> <p>Deputy Mayor Cr Susanne Newton to reach out to Hepburn Shire and Mount Alexander Shire Council re joining Taskforce.</p> <p>Secretariat to send letter of appreciation to MPs for meeting with delegation.</p> <p>Questions for Allegra Spender to be circulated by Secretariat to Taskforce members for feedback and then send to Allegra’s office.</p>

Agenda Item	Action
<p>6. Back Your Neighbour (BYN) Campaign Next Steps Key ideas that were proposed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refugee Action Collective Rally for permanent visas on 22 July in Melbourne, Victoria – Taskforce representation and endorsement sought. • Growing the Taskforce as a unified Local Government voice – Cr Rhonda Garad suggested future campaigns need a “one voice” branding for “all Australian Local Governments”. • BYN pledge on specific date – promote pledge on social media by Taskforce Council Members, potential new members and Council election candidates, followed by ask to support BYN or petition letter as per currently on BYN website. 	<p>Secretariat to seek members’ endorsement and interest to attend 22 July Rally in Melbourne.</p>
<p>7. Other Business None</p>	<p>-</p>
<p>8. Next Meeting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attendees agreed for ongoing meetings to be held bi-monthly. • Next Meeting Wednesday 30th August 1pm-3pm, MS Teams. 	<p>Secretariat to send meeting invitation to all members.</p>