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| **Local Government Mayoral Taskforce Supporting People Seeking Asylum****Minutes– Meeting No. 31 – Wednesday 13 December 2023**1pm-2.50pm via Microsoft Teams |
| **Chairperson:** Mayor Cr Lana Formoso (Greater Dandenong (CGD))**Attendees:**VIC: Mayor Cr Bob Sanders (Ararat), Cr Jo Armstrong (Ararat), Lisa King (Banyule), Amy Bennett (Bass Coast), Wambui Thirimu (Brimbank), Mayor Cr Jack Kowarzik (Cardinia), Pradeep Peteti (Casey), Peter Johnstone (CGD), Ann Ly (CGD), Thiviya Nagenthiram (CGD), Mayor Cr Susanne Newton (Darebin), Shabaz Fattah (Darebin), Ben Pollard (Hobsons Bay), Celia Chang (Hume), Meg Lawton (Hume), Cr Hadi Saab (Kingston), Tracey Collins (Kingston), Mayor Cr Annette Death (Macedon Ranges), Catherine Dwyer (Maribyrnong), Mayor Cr Adam Pulford (Merri-bek), Cr Angelica Panopoulos (Merri-bek), Emma Sampson (Merri-bek), Nelum Buddhadasa (Merri-bek), Mayor Cr Nicky Luo (Monash), Amey Rountree (Monash), Cr Dr Elizabeth Adamczyk (Newcastle), Lisa Davis (Newcastle), Mayor Cr Denise Massoud (Whitehorse), Dalal Sleiman (Whittlesea), Deputy Mayor Cr Anab Mohamud (Yarra);NSW: Michael Maxwell (Blacktown), Cr David Mallard (Orange), Mayor Cr Philipa Veitch (Randwick);**Apologies:** Josephine Frawley (Ararat), Mayor Cr Des Hudson (Ballarat), John Drennan (Ballarat), Frances Salenga (Ballarat), Mayor Cr Tom Melican (Banyule), Cr Peter Castaldo (Banyule), Mayor Cr Clare Le Serve (Bass Coast), Mayor Cr Andrea Metcalf (Bendigo), Nikki Williams (Bendigo), Pinar Maher (Bendigo), Mayor Cr Ranka Rasic (Brimbank), Lynley Dumble (Brimbank), Teresa Lawler (Casey), Cr Gaetano Greco (Darebin), Cr Belinda Moloney (Geelong), Jane Wager (Geelong), Mayor Cr Matt Tyler (Hobsons Bay), Cathy Miles (Hobsons Bay), Mayor Cr Naim Kurt (Hume), Julie Andrews (Hume), Mayor Cr Jenna Davey-Burns (Kingston), Susan Quach (Kingston), Jennifer Anderson (Macedon Ranges), Mayor Cr Cuc Lam (Maribyrnong), Mayor Cr Kylie Spears (Maroondah), Chris Riseley (Maroondah), Paul MacDonald (Maroondah), Lord Mayor Sally Capp (Melbourne), Deputy Lord Mayor Nicolas Reece (Melbourne), Cr Elizabeth Mary Doidge (Melbourne), Cr Rohan Leppert (Melbourne), Cr Roshena Campbell (Melbourne), Cr Kevin Louey (Melbourne), Cr Philip Le Liu (Melbourne), Cr Jamal Hakim (Melbourne), Cr Dr Olivia Ball (Melbourne), Cr Jason Chang (Melbourne), Cr Davydd Griffiths (Melbourne), Kara Barnett (Melbourne), Petr Svoboda (Merri-bek), Mayor Cr Pierce Tyson (Moonee Valley), Cr Rose Iser (Moonee Valley), Sally Abbott (Moonee Valley), Cr Sarah Race (Mornington Peninsula), Chris Munro (Mornington Peninsula), Simone Soeters (Newcastle), Mayor Cr Ben Ramcharan (Nillumbik), Deputy Mayor Cr Geoff Paine (Nillumbik), April Wilson (Nillumbik), Mayor Cr Heather Cunsolo (Port Phillip), Ewa Zysk (Port Phillip), Mayor Cr Isabelle Tolhurst (Queenscliffe), Mayor Cr Ian Bye (Wellington), Zoe Quinn (Whitehorse), Sana Saiyed (Whittlesea), Mayor Cr Jennie Barrera (Wyndham), Cr Sahana Ramesh (Wyndham), Liana Thompson (Wyndham), Amani Nyikang (Yarra), Cristina Del Frate (Yarra), Milica Latu (Yarra); Mayor Cr Kylie King (Albury), Mayor Cr Tony Bleasdale (Blacktown), Mayor Cr Bilal El-Hayek (Canterbury Bankstown), Graeme Beattie (Canterbury Bankstown), Garry Starr (Canterbury Bankstown), Mayor Cr Sarah McMahon (Hawkesbury), Danielle Wheeler (Hawkesbury), Mary Lyons-Buckett (Hawkesbury), Mayor Cr Darcy Byrne (Inner West), Cr Pauline Lockie (Inner West), Cr Justine Langford (Inner West), Cr Marghanita Da Cruz (Inner West), Mayor Cr Jason Hamling (Orange), Catherine Davis (Orange), Cr Kym Chapple (Randwick), Cr Rafaela Pandolfini (Randwick), Mayor Cr Dallas Tout (Wagga Wagga); Mayor Cr Michael Coxon (West Torrens), Adriana Christopoulos (West Torrens); Lord Mayor Cr Anna Reynolds (Hobart), Alison Hines (Hobart). |

| **Agenda Item** | **Action** |
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| 1. **Welcome and Acknowledgement of Country**

Chair welcomed attendees and acknowledged Country. New Mayors briefly introduced themselves. | - |
| 1. **Endorsement of Minutes of Previous Meeting**

Minutes of previous meeting were endorsed - moved by Peter Johnstone (CGD) and seconded by Cr Angelica Panopoulos (Merri-bek). | - |
| 1. **Review of Outstanding Action Items**
* Secretariat (CGD) provided a brief overview of the Taskforce history and direction.
* Taskforce 2023-24 membership – General Member Councils: Canterbury Bankstown, Greater Bendigo and Blue Mountains Council have yet to confirm membership.
* New member recruitment update:
	+ Prioritising RWZ Councils and Councils with large cohorts of people seeking asylum – monitoring via Advoc8. Secretariat is researching and undertaking mapping of Councils for new member recruitment. Attendee raised the need to also identify key municipalities where settlement agencies and other service providers supply initial transitional accommodation for new arrivals.
	+ Communify in Queensland has suggested for the Taskforce to hold an online information session for Queensland service providers to link to Queensland Councils to join the Taskforce. Taskforce members will be invited by Secretariat to speak at this information session when a date is organized for early 2024.
 | Chair Mayor Cr Lana Formoso to reach out to outstanding Councils to confirm membership (CGD).All Member Councils to provide central Councillor contact to Secretariat.Secretariat to share Council invitation letter template with members.All Members to advise Secretariat of any existing contacts/invitations sent to non-member Councils to join the Taskforce. |
| 1. **Back Your Neighbour Asks and Revised Terms of Reference (TOR)**
* The revised Taskforce advocacy asks were presented in the updated TOR.
* Feedback provided state that people seeking asylum wish to support themselves while studying and therefore, need both work and study rights to do so; also changes in Status Resolution Support Services eligibility criteria are reportedly not being implemented by some service providers and this will require further investigation into potential access barriers.
* The following dot point to be added to priority 6) Abolish temporary visas like Temporary Protection Visas (TPVs) and Safe Haven Enterprise Visas (SHEVs) and replace them with permanent protection visas and pathways to citizenship for all humanitarian arrivals:
	+ In circumstances where proof of identity for application of citizenship cannot be provided that the Department considers other mechanisms for appropriate identification to be provided by applicant.
* Updated TOR was endorsed by attendees.
* Acronyms in TOR explained in context.
 | Secretariat to update TOR based on feedback (CGD). |
| 1. **Refugee Council of Australia Strategy Group – Tanck Proposal for Advocacy Support**
* Secretariat provided an overview of the proposal from Tanck and Refugee Council of Australia for the Refugee Sector Strategy Group, which is represented by Secretariat (CGD) on behalf of the Taskforce.
* The proposal entails strategic support and ongoing sector upskilling from Tanck for Refugee Sector Strategy Group for 2024 and has two levels of membership investment that organisations can choose:
	1. Strategic Members: meeting once every two months to develop a high-level approach to overall sector campaigns, set the agenda for the Parliamentary Friendship Group, and articulate the strategy and articulation of policy goals for the remainder of the current Federal Parliament. Strategic Members can also opt-in to join the fortnightly Steering Committee: working through the campaign framing, engagement approach, and data mapping. Steering Committee members will take a more hands-on approach to campaign delivery than those in the General Advocacy Group.
	2. General Advocacy Members: gaining access to shared strategy, quarterly training sessions and some content and collateral. General Advocacy Members will be encouraged to work closely with the Steering Committee outside of session to deliver on the campaign strategy.
* Secretariat Officer recommended the Taskforce to join the initiative as a Strategic Member. Membership fee for the above will be covered by existing Taskforce funds and no additional costs will be incurred by Taskforce Members.
* Learnings from the initiative will be incorporated into the delivery of the Taskforce Campaign Strategy 2023-24 and ensure alignment with advocacy by the Refugee Council and the broader sector.
 | Secretariat to share proposal and further background about Tanck with members for feedback by 20 December 2023. |
| 1. **Back Your Neighbour 2023-24 Campaign Strategy and Communications Plan**
* Refer to Monthly Engagement Plan – December 2023 -January 2024
	+ Mayors and Councillors encouraged to share a photo or video of their commitment to the purpose of the Taskforce and mobilise a Back Your Neighbour movement on social media.
	+ Mayors and Councillors encouraged to write to local MP about the Taskforce’s renewed advocacy priorities.
* Member Councils are welcome to share initiatives/events supporting people seeking asylum for promotion on Back Your Neighbour platforms.
 | Secretariat to share guidelines on social media pledge and letter template with members. |
| 1. **Other Business**

n/a | - |
| 1. **Next Meeting**
* Rotating Chair for 2024 meetings
* Next meeting to be held on Wednesday 21 February 2024, 1-3pm, MS Teams. Chair will be Cr Dr Liz Adamczyk (Newcastle).
* 2024 meeting schedule as follows:
	+ Wedesday 20 March 2024, 1-3pm – tentative Meeting Chair: Mayor Cr Adam Pulford (Merri-bek)
	+ Wednesday 17 April 2024, 1-3pm – meeting Chair TBD
	+ Wednesday 15 May 2024, 1-3pm (ALGA delegates meet)
 | Secretariat to send out 2024 meeting invitations. |
| 1. **Meeting closed 2.50pm**
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