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| **Local Government Mayoral Taskforce Supporting People Seeking Asylum****Minutes– Meeting No. 33 – Wednesday 20 March 2024**1pm-2.20pm via Microsoft Teams |
| **Chairperson:** Mayor Cr Adam Pulford (Merri-bek)**Attendees:**VIC: Mayor Cr Bob Sanders (Ararat), Cr Jo Armstrong (Ararat), Mayor Cr Tom Melican (Banyule), Lisa King (Banyule), Tahira Sheikh (Brimbank), Peter Johnstone (CGD), Ann Ly (CGD), Mayor Cr Susanne Newton (Darebin), Ben Pollard (Hobsons Bay), Mayor Cr Naim Kurt (Hume), Celia Chang (Hume), Ilily Aba-Omer (Hume), Mayor Cr Jenna Davey-Burns (Kingston), Cr Hadi Saab (Kingston), Susan Quach (Kingston), Kelsey Laffy (Maribyrnong), Mayor Cr Adam Pulford (Merri-bek), Emma Sampson (Merri-bek), Nelum Buddhadasa (Merri-bek), Cr Brian Little (Monash), Amey Rountree (Monash), Cr Dr Elizabeth Adamczyk (Newcastle), Melanie Hill (Newcastle), Mayor Cr Liz Pattison (Surf Coast), Mayor Cr Denise Massoud (Whitehorse), Dalal Sleiman (Whittlesea), Jenna House (Wyndham), Cr Anab Mohamud (Yarra);NSW: Julia Vesval (Albury), Colin Henderson (Blacktown).**Apologies:** VIC: Josephine Frawley (Ararat), Mayor Cr Des Hudson (Ballarat), John Drennan (Ballarat), Frances Salenga (Ballarat), Cr Peter Castaldo (Banyule), Mayor Cr Clare Le Serve (Bass Coast), Amy Bennett (Bass Coast), Mayor Cr Andrea Metcalf (Bendigo), Nikki Williams (Bendigo), Pinar Maher (Bendigo), Mayor Cr Ranka Rasic (Brimbank), Lynley Dumble (Brimbank), Wambui Thirimu (Brimbank), Mayor Cr Jack Kowarzik (Cardinia), Pradeep Peteti (Casey), Mayor Cr Lana Formoso (Greater Dandenong (CGD), Thiviya Nagenthiram (CGD), Cr Gaetano Greco (Darebin), Shabaz Fattah (Darebin), Cr Belinda Moloney (Geelong), Mayor Cr Matt Tyler (Hobsons Bay), Julie Andrews (Hume), Meg Lawton (Hume), Jennifer Anderson (Macedon Ranges), Mayor Cr Annette Death (Macedon Ranges), Mayor Cr Cuc Lam (Maribyrnong), Catherine Dwyer (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), Cr Angelica Panopoulos (Merri-bek), Petr Svoboda (Merri-bek), Mayor Cr Nicky Luo (Monash), Mayor Cr Pierce Tyson (Moonee Valley), Cr Rose Iser (Moonee Valley), Sally Abbott (Moonee Valley), 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), Amani Nyikang (Yarra), Cristina Del Frate (Yarra), Milica Latu (Yarra); NSW: Mayor Cr Kylie King (Albury), Mayor Cr Tony Bleasdale (Blacktown), Michael Maxwell (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), Cr David Mallard (Orange), Catherine Davis (Orange), Anni Gallagher (Orange), Mayor Cr Philipa Veitch (Randwick), Cr Kym Chapple (Randwick), Cr Rafaela Pandolfini (Randwick), Mayor Cr Dallas Tout (Wagga Wagga); SA: Mayor Cr Michael Coxon (West Torrens), Adriana Christopoulos (West Torrens); TAS: Lord Mayor Cr Anna Reynolds (Hobart), Alison Hines (Hobart).**Guests:** Barat Batoor, Rebecca Langton, Jam Rodolfo, Naavya Thapa (Refugee Council of Australia). |

| **Agenda Item** | **Action** |
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| 1. **Welcome and Acknowledgement of Country**
* Chair welcomed attendees, acknowledged Country and introduced new Member Council Surf Coast Shire.
* Barat Batoor, filmmaker and photographer, provided a brief overview of the Asylum Seeker Resource Centre ‘Home is Here’ campaign. The campaign works closely with asylum seekers impacted by Fast Track system with no pathway to permanency. Batoor has also documented his refugee journey from Afghanistan. Batoor explained that there are thousands of people stuck in transit in Indonesia for many years. Batoor is keen to meet with Taskforce Member Councillors to support advocacy with community members advocating for permanency. <https://www.batoor.com/about> ; [Home is Here - Email your MP (asrc.org.au)](https://action.asrc.org.au/home-is-here)
 | Information about the Home is Here campaign will be distributed to Members – Secretariat (CGD). |
| 1. **Endorsement of Minutes of Previous Meeting**

Previous minutes endorsed. | - |
| 1. **Review of Outstanding Action Items**
* New member recruitment update
	+ An online information session was held on Tuesday 5 March for Brisbane service providers including Multicultural Australia and Communify QLD. Mayor Cr Cuc Lam (Maribyrnong) and Cr Hadi Saab (Kingston) presented at the session. Invitations were subsequently sent to Brisbane Mayoral candidates and engagement will continue with the support of Communify Queensland.
* Big Walk 4 Refugees Walks
	+ Mayor Cr Lana Formoso led a local walk in Springvale (CGD) on March 2. The event was a success with attendance by community members, Asylum Seeker Resource Centre, Neil Para, Mayor Cr Nicky Luo (Monash) and Cr Richard Lim (CGD). Photos of the day have been shared on social media.
	+ Kingston Council will be hosting a walk at Karkarook Park on Saturday March 23.
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| 1. **Back Your Neighbour (BYN) Monthly Engagement Plan 2023-24**
* Secretariat provided a brief update on recent BYN Facebook analytics and encouraged Mayors and Councillors to share their photo/video pledges. Thanks to Greater Dandenong, Kingston, Wyndham and Monash Councillors for leading the movement.
* Member Councils’ initiatives/events supporting people seeking asylum are a great opportunity to promote the BYN petition and engage MPs about the campaign asks.
 | Post photo or video pledges using the photo signs on social media – All members Promote BYN at local events – All members |
| 1. **Taskforce Member Recruitment Strategy**
	* Secretariat shared an analysis of marginal seats vs Taskforce Member Councils vs BYN supporter numbers. Meeting attendees brainstormed potential actions for Taskforce recruitment:
		+ Growing supporter numbers via Member Councils located in the identified marginal seats
		+ Locally connected members sending invitations to Mayors in marginal seats to join Taskforce and to Federal MPs to meet
		+ Scorecard for Councillor candidates in Whittlesea (Andrew Giles is local MP) and Casey
		+ Local community groups to reach out to MPs with the support of Council officers
		+ Back Your Neighbour Pledge in the lead up to Council elections in October
		+ Northern Regional Mayor’s meeting to connect with Mayor of Mitchell
		+ Communications via Refugee Council to Refugee Welcome Zones
		+ Competition - prize for Member Council who collects the most petition signatures and sends the most recruitment letters by the National General Assembly in July.
 | Letter templates will be prepared for Members to send – Secretariat (CGD).Send invitation to meet with marginal seat Councils and MPs – All members. |
| 1. **Australian Local Government Association (ALGA) 2024 National General Assembly (NGA), Canberra, 2-4 July.**
* Update on Taskforce Motion submission
	+ MAV motion submitted and accepted for discussion at annual meeting.
	+ ALGA motion will be slightly updated to match word limit for online submission form. Motion endorsement will be going to Greater Dandenong Council (Secretariat) with a recommendation for endorsement on 22 April.
* Attendees endorsed the recommendation that the Taskforce hold a Morning Tea Event and Exhibition Booth using Taskforce budget. Members agreed both activities would increase the Taskforce exposure and is needed to raise campaign awareness. New Member Councillors highlighted that they became aware of the Taskforce from last year’s NGA. Member Councillors attending the conference will be rostered to assist at the Booth.
* Refugee Council of Australia will be able to help promote the morning tea event to Refugee Welcome Zones.
 | Secretariat will organize room booking for morning tea and an exhibition booth at ALGA conference (CGD).Members interested in participating as Taskforce delegates and speaking at the morning tea event are to advise the Secretariat. |
| 1. **Other Business**
	* Final reminder - Palm Sunday Walk Melbourne will take place at 10am Sunday 24 March 2024, Parliament Gardens. All members are encouraged to attend and walk under the Back Your Neighbour banner.
	* Refugee Week – 16-23 June 2024, theme is ‘Finding Freedom for Families’. Councils are invited to be a pick-up point for the Refugee Week posters <https://www.refugeeweek.org.au/poster-pick-up/> and raise awareness about the Week.
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| 1. **Next Meeting**
* Next Meeting schedule:
	+ Wednesday 17 April 2024, 1pm via MS Teams. Chair Cr Dr Liz Adamczyk (Newcastle)
	+ Wednesday 15 May 2024, 1pm. Chair TBD
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| 1. **Meeting close at 2.20pm**
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