|  |
| --- |
| **Mayoral and Councillor Taskforce Supporting People Seeking Asylum**  **Minutes – Meeting No. 43 – Wednesday 30 April 2025**  1pm-2.29pm in-person, Media Presentation Suite, Melbourne Town Hall |
| **Back Your Neighbour Advocacy Asks as outlined in the Taskforce’s Terms of Reference:**   1. Provide people with a valid visa with work, travel and study rights. 2. Expand the [support program](https://immi.homeaffairs.gov.au/what-we-do/status-resolution-service/status-resolution-support-services) eligibility criteria and simplify the application so that people in need can access health care, accommodation support and other essential services. 3. Ensure an independent, timely and fair humanitarian application and review. 4. Provide people refused protection under the ‘Fast Track’ system a fair review. 5. Continue to clear the backlog of asylum applications and appeals. 6. Abolish temporary visas and replace them with permanent protection pathways to citizenship for all humanitarian arrivals.   **Chair:** Mayor Cr Jim Memeti (Greater Dandenong)  **Attendees:** John Drennan (Ballarat), Cr Virginia Tachos (Brimbank), Raewyn Afu (Brimbank), Cr Scott Dowling (Casey), Shelley Karpathakis (Casey), Shabaz Fattah (Darebin), Peter Johnstone (Greater Dandenong), Ann Ly (Greater Dandenong), Cr Hadi Saab (Kingston), Suzanne Bray (Kingston), Lord Mayor Cr Nicholas Reece (Melbourne), Rebecca Wringe (Melbourne), Kara Barnett (Melbourne), Mayor Cr Helen Davidson (Merri-bek), Emma Sampson (Merri-bek), Nelum Buddhadasa (Merri-bek), Kate Wijeyesinghe (Monash), Cr Fran Cosgriff (Moonee Valley), Mayor Cr Pradeep Tiwari (Maribyrnong), Jenna House (Wyndham), Amani Godwin (Yarra), Mayor Cr Claire Boan (Port Adelaide Enfield, SA).  **Apologies VIC:** Mayor Cr Jo Armstrong (Ararat), Cr Bob Sanders (Ararat), Mayor Cr Tracey Hargreaves (Ballarat), Suzannah Burton (Ballarat), Mayor Cr Elizabeth Nealy (Banyule), Lisa King (Banyule), Mayor Cr Andrea Metcalf (Bendigo), Pinar Maher (Bendigo), Nikki Williams (Bendigo), Mayor Cr Thuy Dang (Brimbank), Elyse Rider (Brimbank), Lynley Dumble (Brimbank), Mayor Cr Jack Kowarzik (Cardinia), Mayor Cr Stefan Koomen (Casey), Cr Kim Ross (Casey), Sadia Ali (Casey), Mayor Cr Kristine Olaris OAM (Darebin), Cr Emily Dimitriadis (Darebin), Amelia Basset (Darebin), Michele Burton (Darebin), Yusuke Akai (Darebin), Mayor Cr Stretch Kontelj OAM (Geelong), Cr Trent Sullivan (Geelong), Sally Beck (Geelong), Mayor Cr Georgina Oxley (Kingston), Charlie McFadden (Kingston), Mayor Cr Jarrod Bell (Hume), Celia Chang (Hume), Narda Shanley (Hume), Mayor Cr Kylie Spears (Maroondah), Paul MacDonald (Maroondah), Chris Riseley (Maroondah), Petr Svoboda (Merri-bek), Mayor Cr Paul Klisaris (Monash), Cr Nicky Luo (Monash), Tracey Egan (Monash), Mayor Cr Ava Adams (Moonee Valley), Jason Triolo (Moonee Valley), Chris Munro (Mornington Peninsula), Mayor Cr John Dumaresq (Nillumbik), Mayor Cr Mike Bodsworth (Surf Coast), Cr Liz Pattison (Surf Coast), Mayor Cr Andrew Davenport (Whitehorse), Zoe Quinn (Whitehorse), Mayor Cr Scott Rossetti (Wellington), Catherine Dwyer (Maribyrnong), Brooke Hobson (Maribyrnong), Kelsey Laffy (Maribyrnong), Mayor Cr Louise Crawford (Port Phillip), Ewa Zysk (Port Phillip), Mayor Cr Di Rule (Queenscliffe Borough), Uzma Akhlaq (Whittlesea), Dalal Sleiman (Whittlesea), Stephen McKay (Whittlesea), Mayor Cr Mia Shaw (Wyndham), Cr Jennie Barrera (Wyndham), Mayor Cr Stephen Jolly (Yarra), Deputy Mayor Cr Sarah McKenzie (Yarra), Cr Kenneth Gomez (Yarra), Cristina Del Frate (Yarra).  **NSW**: Mayor Cr Mark Greenhill OAM (Blue Mountains), Deputy Mayor Cr Romola Hollywood (Blue Mountains), Cr Brent Hoare (Blue Mountains), Tracy Burgess (Blue Mountains), Mayor Cr Brad Bunting (Blacktown), Kerry Robinson (Blacktown), Claire Simmonds (Blacktown), Michael Maxwell (Blacktown), Mayor Cr Darcy Byrne (Inner West), Cr Liz Atkins (Inner West), Sue Pym (Inner West), Mayor Cr Dylan Parker (Randwick), Cr Philipa Veitch (Randwick), Mayor Cr Bilal El-Hayek (Canterbury Bankstown), Graeme Beattie (Canterbury Bankstown), Garry Starr (Canterbury Bankstown), Cr Elizabeth Adamczyk (Newcastle), Melanie Hill (Newcastle), Petria Jukes (Newcastle), Mayor Cr Ross Kerridge (Newcastle), Anni Gallagher (Orange), Cr David Mallard (Orange), Mayor Cr Tony Mileto (Orange), Catherine Davis (Orange), Mayor Cr Kevin Mack (Albury), Deputy Mayor Cr Jessica Kellahan (Albury), Cr Kylie King (Albury), Frank Zaknich (Albury), Mayor Cr Dallas Tout (Wagga Wagga), Deputy Mayor Cr Georgie Davies (Wagga Wagga), Cassandra Webster (Wagga Wagga)  **SA:** Tracy Hart (Port Adelaide Enfield) **TAS:** Lord Mayor Cr Anna Reynolds (Hobart), Alison Hines (Hobart); Mayor Matthew Garwood (Launceston). **Guests:** Rebecca Langton (Refugee Council of Australia). |

| **Item** | **Action** |
| --- | --- |
| 1. **Welcome and Acknowledgement of Country**   Lord Mayor Cr Nicholas Reece welcomed attendees and acknowledged Country. | - |
| 1. **Endorsement of Minutes of Previous Meeting**   Cr Hadi Saab (Kingston) moved and Cr Virginia Tachos (Brimbank) seconded minutes. | - |
| 1. **Outstanding Action Items**    * New Member updates – City of Vincent, Griffith City Council and Melton City Council have joined the Taskforce as our newest member Councils.    * Event updates:      + Palm Sunday – Greater Dandenong, Merri-bek and Ballarat officers represented the Back Your Neighbour campaign at the Melbourne Palm Sunday event on 13 April. Officers promoted the Email your MP and Back Your Neighbour asks at an information stall.      + Secretariat presented at the Greater Dandenong Interfaith Network Executive Committee April meeting and will be attending their Members Day to engage faith groups about supporting the campaign.    * To date, 18 emails have been sent via Email Your MP on the BYN website. | - |
| 1. **ALGA National General Assembly 2025 and Taskforce Delegation 24-27 June**    * Lived experience Expressions of Interest received were presented by Secretariat and gave a recommendation to attendees of two candidates based on selection criteria and alignment with BYN asks.    * Attending Councillors expressed sincere appreciation for the people of lived experience who applied and their willingness to stand up and advocate for themselves and on behalf of their community.    * Attendees considered all applicants against BYN asks and consensus was reached to select the applicants as recommended by the Secretariat. | Secretariat will notify applicants of the selection outcome and proceed to organize successful candidates’ travel to Canberra. |
| 1. **Back Your Neighbour (BYN) Campaign: Key actions for post-election**    * Position of major parties on refugee policy, summarized and published at [www.backyourneighbour.com.au/election](http://www.backyourneighbour.com.au/election)      + Taskforce has received a letter response from Coalition re BYN asks      + Chair and Secretariat officer attended the Greens Party refugee policy launch with Senator David Shoebridge on 1 April at Multicultural Hub, Melbourne.    * Federal Election Candidates and Key Seats: Secretariat provided an update on replies received to date. The Taskforce has sent ‘good luck’ and meeting invitation letters to candidates in 48 seats and 35 MPs.    * Key actions post-election:      + Congratulatory (includes Canberra meeting invite) and commiseration letters will be sent by Taskforce Chair.      + All member Mayors are encouraged to use the provided template to send a meeting request for ALGA to their local Federal MPs. This will increase the opportunity of securing meetings in Canberra during ALGA and maximise the delegation opportunity. | Lord Mayor Cr Nicholas Reece (Melbourne), Cr Hadi Saab (Kingston), Cr Scott Jowling (Casey) agreed to send meeting invites post-election. Secretariat will provide members with the letter templates. |
| 1. **Other Business**     * BYN refugee stories – reels are ready for socials. Can members share via Council channels?The reels <90 seconds are to be scheduled on BYN socials – one per week for the month of June, therefore coinciding with Refugee Week. Taskforce members are invited to share the videos on their Council channels and/or at other available opportunities.    * Upcoming event opportunities – Refugee Week in June.    * Recommendation by Cr Hadi Saab (Kingston) and Mayor Cr Jim Memeti (CGD) to have a Taskforce delegation interstate for membership recruitment with Councils post-ALGA. Can be included on the July/August meeting agenda item. | Secretariat will share brief for refugee video stories. |
| 1. **Next Meeting**  * Wednesday 21 May 1pm-3pm, online. Chair Cr Jennie Barrera * Delegates meeting - Wednesday 11th or 18th June, TBD at May meeting, 1pm-2pm * Wednesday 9th July 1pm-3pm. Chair Cr Virginia Tachos tentative | - |
| 1. **Meeting closed 2.29pm** | - |