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| **Mayoral and Councillor Taskforce Supporting People Seeking Asylum****Minutes – Meeting No. 42 – Wednesday 26 March 2025**1pm-2.39pm online via Microsoft Teams |
| **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 Helen Davidson (Merri-bek) **Attendees:** Mayor Cr Thuy Dang (Brimbank), Stephen Sibanda (Brimbank), Cr Kim Ross (Casey), Shelley Karpathakis (Casey), Peter Johnstone (CGD), Ann Ly (CGD), Shabaz Fattah (Darebin), Mayor Cr Kristine Olaris OAM (Darebin), Celia Chang (Hume), Cr Hadi Saab (Kingston), Nikita Swami (Kingston), Mayor Cr Pradeep Tiwari (Maribyrnong), Emma Sampson (Merri-bek), Nelum Buddhadasa (Merri-bek), Mayor Cr Paul Klisaris (Monash), Cr Nicky Luo (Monash), Kate Wijeyesinghe (Monash), Mayor Cr Tony Mileto (Orange), Tina Kordrostami (Ryde), Dalal Sleiman (Whittlesea), Cr Jennie Barrera (Wyndham), Jenna House (Wyndham), Cristina Del Frate (Yarra).**Guests:** Rebecca Langton (Refugee Council of Australia), Professor Daniel Ghezelbash (Kaldor Centre for International Refugee Law) and Saul Wodak (Behavioural Insights Team).**Apologies: VIC:** Mayor Cr Jo Armstrong (Ararat), Cr Bob Sanders (Ararat), Mayor Cr Tracey Hargreaves (Ballarat), John Drennan (Ballarat), Suzannah Burton (Ballarat), Mayor Cr Elizabeth Nealy (Banyule), Lisa King (Banyule), Mayor Cr Andrea Metcalf (Bendigo), Pinar Maher (Bendigo), Nikki Williams (Bendigo), Cr Virginia Tachos (Brimbank), Raewyn Afu (Brimbank), Elyse Rider (Brimbank), Lynley Dumble (Brimbank), Mayor Cr Jack Kowarzik (Cardinia), Mayor Cr Stefan Koomen (Casey), Sadia Ali (Casey), Mayor Cr Jim Memeti (CGD), Thiviya Nagenthiram (CGD), 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), Suzanne Bray (Kingston), Charlie McFadden (Kingston), Mayor Cr Daria Kellander (Hobsons Bay), Cathy Miles (Hobson Bay), Ben Pollard (Hobsons Bay), Narda Shanley (Hume), Mayor Cr Jarrod Bell (Hume), Mayor Cr Dominic Bonanno (Macedon Ranges), Jennifer Anderson (Macedon Ranges), Mayor Cr Kylie Spears (Maroondah), Paul MacDonald (Maroondah), Chris Riseley (Maroondah), Lord Mayor Cr Nicholas Reece (Melbourne), Kara Barnett (Melbourne), Mayor Cr Helen Davidson (Merri-bek), Petr Svoboda (Merri-bek), 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 Dominic Bonanno (Macedon Ranges), Mayor Cr Louise Crawford (Port Phillip), Ewa Zysk (Port Phillip), Mayor Cr Di Rule (Queenscliffe Borough), Mayor Cr Aidan McLindon (Whittlesea), Uzma Akhlaq (Whittlesea), Stephen McKay (Whittlesea), Mayor Cr Mia Shaw (Wyndham), Mayor Cr Stephen Jolly (Yarra), Deputy Mayor Cr Sarah McKenzie (Yarra), Cr Kenneth Gomez (Yarra), Amani Godwin (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), 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:** Mayor Cr Claire Boan (Port Adelaide Enfield), Tracy Hart (Port Adelaide Enfield), Alicja Clisby (Port Adelaide Enfield), **TAS:** Lord Mayor Cr Anna Reynolds (Hobart), Alison Hines (Hobart); Mayor Matthew Garwood (Launceston). |

| **Item** | **Action** |
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| 1. **Welcome and Acknowledgement of Country**
	* Chair welcomed attendees and acknowledged Country.
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| 1. **Endorsement of Minutes of Previous Meeting**
* Celia Chang (Hume) moved and Mayor Cr Pradeep Tiwari (Maribyrnong) seconded previous minutes.
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| 1. **Outstanding Action Items**
	* ALGA National General Assembly and MAV Motion submissions – endorsements received from Brimbank, Cardinia, Darebin, Hume, Merri-bek, Monash and Wyndham Councils.
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| 1. **Countering misinformation about refugees and migrants: An evidence-based framework**
	* Presentation by Professor Daniel Ghezelbash (Director, UNSW Kaldor Centre for International Refugee Law) and Saul Wodak (Behavioural Insights Team, a social purpose consulting firm) onthe behavioral science of misinformation, step by step framework for countering misinformation and tips for engagement strategies to maximize impact.
		+ Refugee and migration issues are an area where misinformation is pervasive, especially in the lead up to elections. While this puts us all at risk, the worst consequences, discrimination, social exclusion and harmful policies impact refugees and migrants themselves.
		+ Sometimes misinformation is specifically targeted at migrant communities to sow division and influence elections. Political actors shift blame for social issues onto refugees and migrants, because spreading fear is an easy win for political gain.
	* What is misinformation and how does it spread?
		+ 6 key behavioural principles are central to the spread of misinformation.
		+ If the information is not widely known, ‘pre bunking’ exposes us to small doses of misinformation and helps us build resistance to future exposures. Effective pre bunking has two key elements: a motivational warning and pre-emptive refutation.
			- The motivational warning alerts people to bad faith actors and we can think of this as the ‘why’ of misinformation - calling out the why encourages skepticism and critical thinking in audiences. E.g. Political actors shift blame for social issues onto refugees and migrants, because spreading fear is an easy win for political gain.
			- Pre-emptive refutation can involve explaining how misinformation is false, highlighting the persuasive tactics that misinformation spreaders use, e.g. emotional manipulation or the cherry picking of data; as well as educating audiences to have a deeper understanding of a specific issue.
		+ If misinformation is already circulating, you want to ask yourself, is it prominent? Is it persuasive, and is it proximate?
			- If no, then you want to ignore it and reframe the agenda. If yes, then we want to use a strategy called debunking.
			- FMFF method: Fact about the issue, followed by brief warning about the Misinformation, thirdly, you want to explain what the Fallacy is in the misinformation and finally, you want to reinforce the correct information by ending with the same Fact.
		+ Appealing to values and emotions - facts alone aren't enough and you want to connect to your audience on what matters to them i.e. their values.
	* Questions from attendees:
		+ Mayor Cr Paul Klisaris (Monash): misinformation from politicians: Daniel recommends having allies on board with a similar reach to intervene and counteract misinformation in the public realm.
		+ Cr Kim Ross (Casey): what makes information prominent (whether it's gaining traction or visibility), persuasive (likely to change attitudes and beliefs behaviour?) and proximate (sources close to audience? E.g. location, social network).
		+ MPs who are supportive of your issue can act as a counterweight to those that are disseminating misinformation via their big public platform. Daniel suggests that you can let them know of this framework which they can use e.g. “we can help you with talking points and using this framework to counteract misinformation”. Saul suggests identifying shared values e.g. positive contributions by refugees, how cruel policies divide families, and focusing on what will cut through and connect with the values of those people.
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| 1. **Palm Sunday Walk Sunday 13 April** **2025, Melbourne and Sydney**
* Melbourne Palm Sunday Gathering

1pm Walk from Princes Bridge to Tom’s Block, St Kilda Road2pm -3.45pm Program of speakers Banner Display at 1pm on Princes Bridge followed by walk to Tom’s Block for the program from 1.45pm.  See more via the link [Palm Sunday Gathering for Justice 13 April 2025](https://urldefense.com/v3/__https%3A/www.facebook.com/events/1015756910395902__;!!OQUPkg!UEuF-eXRDakcZdo4KjMUABk6vTEIDeEPIhwwUIBtFFSzUrS_dkt6cz19VQ_bar_fSO61KbkBJDiZLV8PlPNQZZqoF0tbnxAW0g$).   * Sydney event - Educate for Peace; Refugees Need Permanent Visas

It will be held at 2pm Sunday April 13 at Belmore Park, near Central Station. The march will proceed up Broadway to Victoria Park where it will disperse. | - |
| 1. **ALGA National General Assembly 2025 and Taskforce Delegation update**
	* Booked Morning Tea (Wednesday 25 June 11am, Torrens Room) and Exhibition Booth
	* Opportunity - Voice of Lived experience Expression of Interest open until 16 April.
 | Secretariat will distribute EOI form to Members. |
| 1. **Back Your Neighbour (BYN) Campaign: Before the election is called**
	* Taskforce has received positive feedback about our advocacy
	* Federal Election Candidates and Key Seats – engagement and meeting invitations. See working spreadsheet
	* Member Recruitment – follow up and new invitations
	* Pre-election analysis, key candidates, possible election outcomes – members encouraged to use the [Email your MP – Back Your Neighbour](https://backyourneighbour.com.au/email-your-mp/) online template.
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| 1. **Other Business**
	* [Open letter urges major parties to avoid divisive discourse during election campaign](https://asylumseekerscentre.org.au/open-letter-urges-major-parties-to-avoid-divisive-discourse-during-election-campaign/) on 21 March signed by Taskforce Chair
	* Refugee Council of Australia joint policy briefs finalised and distributed amongst Taskforce members.
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| 1. **Next Meeting**
* Wednesday 30 April 1pm-3pm, In person, at Melbourne Town Hall. Chair: Mayor Cr Jim Memeti
* Wednesday 21 May 1pm-3pm, online. Chair Cr Jennie Barrera
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| 1. **Meeting closed 2.39pm**
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