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| **Mayoral and Councillor Taskforce Supporting People Seeking Asylum**  **Minutes – Meeting No. 45 – Wednesday 9 July 2025**  1pm-2.02pm, MS Teams |
| **Chair:** Mayor Cr Jim Memeti (Greater Dandenong)  **Attendees:** John Drennan (Ballarat), Mayor Cr Thuy Dang (Brimbank), Raewyn Afu (Brimbank), Mayor Cr Stefan Koomen (Casey), Shelley Karpathakis (Casey), Ann Ly (Greater Dandenong), Cr Rayane Hawli (Hobsons Bay), Celia Chang (Hume), Cr Hadi Saab (Kingston), Suzanne Bray (Kingston), Mayor Cr Pradeep Tiwari (Maribyrnong), Heath Pickering (Melbourne), Kara Barnett (Melbourne), Mayor Cr Steve Abboushi (Melton), Mayor Cr Helen Davidson (Merri-bek), Emma Sampson (Merri-bek), Nelum Buddhadasa (Merri-bek), Cr Brian Little (Monash), Kate Wijeyesinghe (Monash), Mayor Cr Ava Adams (Moonee Valley), Dalal Sleiman (Whittlesea), Uzma Akhlaq (Whittlesea), Cr Jennie Barrera (Wyndham), Jenna House (Wyndham), Cr Meca Ho (Yarra).  **NSW:** Cr David Mallard (Orange); **WA:** Mayor Cr Alison Xamon (City of Vincent); **Guest:** Rebecca Langton (Refugee Council of Australia).  **Apologies:**  **NSW:** Mayor Cr Kevin Mack (Albury), Deputy Mayor Cr Jessica Kellahan (Albury), Frank Zaknich (Albury), Cr Kylie King (Albury); Mayor Cr Brad Bunting (Blacktown), Claire Simmonds (Blacktown), Kerry Robinson (Blacktown), Linda Guiance (Blacktown), Michael Maxwell (Blacktown); Mayor Cr Mark Greenhill OAM (Blue Mountains), Deputy Mayor Cr Romola Hollywood (Blue Mountains), Cr Brent Hoare (Blue Mountains); Tracy Burgess (Blue Mountains); Garry Starr (Canterbury Bankstown), Graeme Beattie (Canterbury Bankstown); Mayor Cr Bilal El-Hayek (Canterbury Bankstown); Mayor Cr Doug Curran (Griffith), Cr Jenny Ellis (Griffith); Cr Liz Atkins (Inner West); Mayor Cr Darcy Byrne (Inner West), Sue Pym (Inner West); Cr Tina Kordrostami (Ryde); Mayor Cr Ross Kerridge (Newcastle), Cr Elizabeth Adamczyk (Newcastle), Melanie Hill (Newcastle), Petria Jukes (Newcastle); Mayor Cr Tony Mileto (Orange), Anni Gallagher (Orange), Catherine Davis (Orange),; Cr Philipa Veitch (Randwick), Mayor Cr Dylan Parker (Randwick); 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); Angelo Cadiz (Port Adelaide Enfield); **TAS**: Lord Mayor Cr Anna Reynolds (Hobart), Alison Hines (Hobart); Mayor Matthew Garwood (Launceston)  **VIC:**  Mayor Cr Jo Armstrong (Ararat), Cr Bob Sanders (Ararat); Mayor Cr Tracey Hargreaves (Ballarat), **J**ohn Drennan (Ballarat), Suzannah Burton (Ballarat); Mayor Cr Elizabeth Nealy (Banyule), Lisa King (Banyule); Mayor Cr Andrea Metcalf (Bendigo), Nikki Williams (Bendigo), Pinar Maher (Bendigo), Cr Victoria Borg (Brimbank), Cr Virginia Tachos (Brimbank), Elyse Rider (Brimbank), Lynley Dumble (Brimbank); Mayor Cr Jack Kowarzik (Cardinia); Cr Scott Dowling (Casey), Cr Kim Ross (Casey), Sadia Ali (Casey), Mayor Cr Kristine Olaris (Darebin), Amelia Basset (Darebin), Cr Emily Dimitriadis (Darebin), Michele Burton (Darebin), Shabaz Fattah (Darebin), Yusuke Akai (Darebin); Cr Andrew Katos (Geelong), Sally Beck (Geelong); Cr Sophie Tan (Greater Dandenong), Peter Johnstone (Greater Dandenong), Mayor Cr Jarrod Bell (Hume), Narda Shanley (Hume), Bandana Pandey (Hume), Charlie McFadden (Kingston); Brooke Hobson (Maribyrnong), Catherine Dwyer (Maribyrnong), Kelsey Laffy (Maribyrnong); Chris Riseley (Maroondah), Mayor Cr Kylie Spears (Maroondah), Paul MacDonald (Maroondah); Lord Mayor Cr Nicholas Reece (Melbourne), Rebecca Wringe (Melbourne); Petr Svoboda (Merri-bek), Cr Nicky Luo (Monash), Tracey Egan (Monash), Cr Fran Cosgriff (Moonee Valley), Jason Triolo (Moonee Valley), Mayor Cr John Dumaresq (Nillumbik); Ewa Zysk (Port Phillip), Mayor Cr Louise Crawford (Port Phillip); Mayor Cr Di Rule (Queenscliffe Borough); Mayor Cr Mike Bodsworth (Surf Coast), Cr Liz Pattison (Surf Coast); Mayor Cr Scott Rossetti (Wellington), Mayor Cr Andrew Davenport (Whitehorse), Zoe Quinn (Whitehorse); Stephen McKay (Whittlesea), Mayor Cr Mia Shaw (Wyndham), Cristina Del Frate (Yarra), Amani Godwin (Yarra). |

| **Item** | **Action** |
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| 1. **Welcome and Acknowledgement of Country**   Welcome to new General members –Melton City Council (Mayor Cr Steve Abboushi), new Executive members – Maribyrnong City Council (Mayor Cr Pradeep Tiwari) and Melbourne City Council (Lord Mayor Nick Reece apology. Council officer representatives - Heath Pickering & Kara Barnett).  Mayors Cr Steve Abboushi and Cr Pradeep Tiwari shared insights into their community demographics and the motivations behind their decision to join or upgrade their membership with the Taskforce. Their contributions highlighted an understanding for the refugee journey, advocacy and commitment to supporting refugee and asylum seeker communities. | - |
| 1. **Endorsement of Minutes of Previous Meeting**   Previous minutes endorsed by Mayor Cr Ava Adams (Moonee Valley) and seconded by Mayor Cr Thuy Dang (Brimbank). | - |
| 1. **Review: Back Your Neighbour (BYN) ALGA National General Assembly 24-27 June**    * Motion (#192) was passed during the NGA. Thank you to Brimbank, Randwick, Newcastle, Monash and Darebin Councils who submitted supporting motions.    * Presentation of National General Assembly BYN achievements:    * Over 60 NGA delegates joined for morning tea on Wednesday, 26 June.    * The exhibition stand welcomed 70 new sign-ups to Friends of the Taskforce.    * June content (primarily ALGA and Refugee Week) saw a 600% average increase in views across Facebook (29k) and Instagram (16k). Instagram followers grew by 25% during ALGA week. Views from non-followers surged by over 600%, showing strong outreach beyond our existing audience.    * Members expressed enthusiasm and support for the outcomes of the event.    * Photos from the event are available on social media — follow us @backyourneighbour.    * Chair provided a summary of meeting outcomes with the Hon Julian Hill MP, Hon Alicia Payne MP and the Hon Anne Aly MP’s adviser.    * The Federal Government is exploring alternative visa options for individuals in the legacy caseload who meet eligibility criteria. However, there remains significant hesitation around formally announcing a new pathway.    * The Taskforce will continue to advocate strongly for the Labor Government to implement necessary regulatory changes, acknowledging their current political strength and capacity to lead on this issue. | - |
| 1. **Membership**    * A reminder for all members re renewal invoices for their 2025/26 membership.   *Executive Member Council ($4000 plus GST per annum)*  *General Member Council ($1000 plus GST per annum)*  *Supporter Member Council (free)*  Member responsibilities - Terms of Reference: <https://backyourneighbour.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/Local-Government-Mayoral-Taskforce-Supporting-People-Seeking-Asylum-Terms-of-Reference-v2.1-Revised-13-December-2023-A10324242.pdf>. | Please contact Secretariat with any queries about membership. |
| 1. **Scheduled meetings with MPs – Canberra delegation during sitting week**  * Scheduled upcoming meetings with Matt Gregg MP (Deakin) and Josh Burns MP in Melbourne * Members supported a proposed Canberra delegation in sitting week - 2-3 September   + Two lived experience delegates from Brimbank and Merri-bek   + Two team delegation recommendation and officer support   + Meeting acceptances from Mary Doyle MP and Tom French MP   + Secretariat will liaise with Brimbank and Merri-bek members to organize delegation. * Chair encouraged members to identify Federal MPs in their area for a Back Your Neighbour meeting. Attendees suggested MP connections they could assist with. | All members to request with their Federal MPs for a specific meeting for Back Your Neighbour for Canberra (or locally). |
| 1. **Membership recruitment new opportunities**  * A meeting is being proposed in the City of Sydney this September, bringing together Lord Mayors from Australia’s capital cities. The primary goal is to encourage additional capital cities to join the Taskforce. Members expressed strong support for the initiative, recognising it as a valuable opportunity to expand national collaboration and strengthen advocacy efforts. * LGNSW annual conference in Sydney 23-25 November   + Exhibition stand option - $5250 +GST. Members agreed with this proposal to better recruit NSW councils.   + Cr David Mallard (Orange) offered to assist with motion submission to LGNSW. * Funding will come from existing Taskforce membership fees; no extra contributions needed. | Secretariat will proceed to organize meetings and BYN representation at LGNSW conference. |
| 1. **Other Business**  * Refugee Week celebrations. Members shared their various events delivered in June and where they were able to promote BYN. | - |
| 1. **Next Meeting**  * Taskforce meetings to be bi-monthly (nominally)   + Chair sought feedback for preferred day of the week for future Taskforce meetings.   + Attendee indicated Wednesdays clash with Council meetings.   + Proposed a poll or rotating day of the week so that the same members don’t continually miss out due to Council commitments. * Members approved for Taskforce meeting invitation to extend to Councillor Friends. | Secretariat will send out next meeting invite for mid-September. |
| 1. **Meeting closed 2.02pm** | - |