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| **Local Government Mayoral Taskforce supporting People Seeking Asylum**  **Minutes – Executive Meeting No. 24 – Thursday 8 December 2022**  1-2.10pm via Microsoft Teams |
| **Chairperson:** Mayor Cr Eden Foster (Greater Dandenong Council (CGD))  **Invitees:** Cr Rhonda Garad (CGD), Cr Lana Formoso (CGD), Elisabetta Robecchi (Kingston), Mayor Cr Hadi Saab (Kingston), Cr Steve Staikos (Kingston), Mayor Cr Tina Samardzija (Monash), Celia Chang (Hume), Mayor Cr Angelica Panopoulos (Merri-bek), Cr Mark Riley (Merri-bek), Nelum Buddhadasa (Merri-bek), Emma Sampson (Merri-bek), Tara Bewley (Yarra), Sadia Ali (Casey), Mayor Cr Bruce Lancashire (Brimbank), Wambui Thirimu (Brimbank), Peter Johnstone (CGD), Marek Krol (CGD) and Ann Ly (CGD) – Minute Taker.  **Guests:** Daniel Scoullar (Social Change Projects), Claire Galvin (Mildura), Dom Diocera (Greater Geelong), Cr Robert Samuel (Willoughby), Mayor Cr Tanya Taylor (Willoughby), Paul Schmidt (Communify Qld) and Stuart Gibb (Willoughby).  **Apologies:** Teresa Thomson (Casey), Petr Svoboda (Merri-bek), Cr Stuart James (Monash), Cr Joseph Haweil (Hume), Mayor Cr Joseph Haweil (Hume), Cr Carly Moore (Hume), Mayor Cr Lina Messina (Darebin), Cr Susan Rennie (Darebin), Mayor Cr Claudia Nguyen (Yarra), Cr Sophie Wade (Yarra), Cr Gabrielle de Vietri (Yarra), Cr Peter Hemphill (Hobsons Bay), Pamela Kosij (Monash), Cristina Del Frate (Yarra), Lynley Dumble (Brimbank), Callum Pattie (Casey), Renae Buckley (Casey), Pradeep Peteti (Casey), Cr Gaetano Greco (Darebin), Cr Jim Memeti (Greater Dandenong), Mayor Cr Tony Briffa (Hobsons Bay), Cr Jonathan Marsden (Hobsons Bay), Julie Andrews (Hume), Susan Quach (Kingston), Cr Brian Little (Monash), Cr Josh Fergeus (Monash), Colin Bostock (Monash), Fee Harrison (Monash), Cr Jasmine Nguyen (Brimbank), Cr Susanne Newton (Darebin), Shabaz Fattah (Darebin), Urmila Ravikumar (Merri-bek), Mayor Cr Zoë Baker (North Sydney), Cr Roy McCullagh (Willoughby), Mayor Cr Samantha Byrne (Moonee Valley), Cr Rose Iser (Moonee Valley), Meghan Hopper (Moonee Valley) and Greta Williams (Moonee Valley). |

| **Item** | **Action** |
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| 1. **Welcome and Introductions**   Chair welcomed attendees and introductions by attendees. |  |
| 1. **Endorsement of Minutes of Previous Meeting**   Minutes endorsed by Cr Rhonda Garad (CGD) and seconded by Peter Johnstone (CGD). |  |
| 1. **Review of Outstanding Action Items**   N/A |  |
| 1. **Summary and Evaluation – Back Your Neighbour (BYN) Campaign - Daniel Scoullar (Social Change Projects)**  * In September, Taskforce representatives and people with lived experience met with MPs, including Minister Giles and Attorney-General Mark Dreyfus, in Melbourne, as part of the 100-day post-election BYN campaign. At the meetings, Taskforce representatives were told SRSS eligibility criteria would be restored, there would be an announcement on temporary visas, and further changes for socio-economic support; however, October budget did not see the desired funding allocations to Taskforce advocacy asks. * Good success in securing meetings with MPs, good hearing from people with lived experience and local Councils. * Current status on campaign advocacy asks:  1. Replace existing fast track system with single Refugee Status Determination process and an independent, timely and fair merits review.    * Government recognizes flaws in the process but currently resisting in any action that may encourage more boat arrivals. 2. Abolish temporary visas like TPVs and SHEVs and replace them with permanent protection visas and pathways to citizenship for all humanitarian arrivals.    * A commitment was made to replace temporary protection visas with permanent protection and pathway to citizenship; have not had an announcement yet. 3. Invest resources to urgently clear the backlog of asylum applications/appeals in order to create an efficient system.    * October budget saw allocation of resourcing to clear back log and backlog has started to reduce. This process is taking longer than initially thought. 4. Provide access to Medicare, income support, employment support, mental health, NDIS and other vital services. No action. 5. Ensure people seeking asylum have work and study rights, including access to local fees for university and TAFE.  * Recognition by Minister Giles that this needs to be looked at and not a constructive means to deny people work rights and basic services. Situation with study rights is more complex depending on visa status. To date, not much has changed in this space. * Changes to travel permissions were welcomed. * Daniel Scoullar commented on the importance of community support and understanding their needs to have a clearer picture on priorities moving forward. |  |
| 1. **Next Steps for Mayoral Taskforce**  * Reviewing priorities   + Cr Rhonda Garad (CGD) and Mayor Angelica Panopoulos (Merri-bek) recommended expanding the Taskforce and to increase advocacy by the Taskforce, including attending more public advocacy events.   + Mayor Cr Hadi Saab (Kingston) suggested a workshop for Executive members to review and refine advocacy asks. Cr Rhonda Garad (CGD) suggested including people with lived experience to help co-design priorities. Cr Mark Riley (Merri-bek) suggested involving some of the broader sector representatives in that conversation too. Nelum Buddhadasa (Merri-bek) suggested involving asylum seeker service providers as well.   + Daniel Scoullar (Social Change Projects) indicated that one of the challenges is finding consensus across our national membership around priorities and getting active participation from more member councils. A workshop could help us understand what would make us attractive to more councils and what kinds of activities (if any) different councils would support. * Membership model   + Existing model is three tier – Executive, General and Supporter levels.   + Members supported an additional fourth tier for individual Councillors to expand impact and send a stronger message. * Taskforce resourcing   + Cr Mark Riley (Merri-bek) suggested a review of current resourcing needed and have an equitable model to share across Executive members.   + Cr Steve Staikos (Kingston) suggested to reflect on approach taken to engage consultant services for the BYN campaign. A single contract encompassing a pre- and post-election campaign may have worked better. * Members agreed on a workshop in late January/February 2023 to review Taskforce’s priorities, membership model and resourcing. | Organise workshop to review priorities in early 2023– CGD. |
| 1. **Other Business**   N/A |  |
| 1. **Next Meeting**   TBC |  |
| 1. **Close**   Meeting closed 2.10pm |  |