

# Local Government Mayoral Taskforce Supporting People Seeking Asylum Minutes – Executive Meeting No. 17 – Wednesday 8 September 2021

1-3pm via Microsoft Teams

**Chairperson:** Mayor Angela Long (*Greater Dandenong*).

**Attendees:** Fadi Qunqar (*Brimbank*), Shabaz Fattah (*Darebin*), Cr Rhonda Garad (*Greater Dandenong*), Cr Lana Formoso (*Greater Dandenong*), Peter Johnstone (*Greater Dandenong*), Marek Krol (*Greater Dandenong*) – Minute Taker, Mayor Jonathon Marsden (*Hobsons Bay*), Amber Cassidy (*Hobsons Bay*), Mayor Steve Staikos (*Kingston*), Colin Bostock (*Monash*), Mayor Annalivia Carli Hannan (*Moreland*), Emma Sampson (*Moreland*), Petr Svoboda (*Moreland*), Mayor Gabrielle de Vietri (*Yarra*) & Milica Latu (*Yarra*).

**Guests:** Cr Rose Iser (*Moonee Valley*), Meghan Hopper (*Moonee Valley*), Emma Patterson (*Moonee Valley*).

**Apologies:** Wambui Thirimu (*Brimbank*), Mayor Lina Messina (*Darebin*), Kristen Cherry (*Hume*), Mayor Brian Little (*Monash*), Pamela Kosij (*Monash*), Deputy Mayor Mark Riley (*Moreland*), Nalika Peiris (*Moreland*), Cristina Del Frate (*Yarra*).

Agenda Item	Discussion Points/Comments	Follow up Actions / Who
<b>Welcome and Introductions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mayor Angela Long welcomed all representatives attending and acknowledged Traditional Owners.</li> <li>• Apologies noted.</li> </ul>	
<b>Endorsement of Minutes of Previous Meeting</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Previous minutes moved and seconded.</li> </ul>	
<b>Review of Outstanding Action Items</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Actions carried over from previous meeting:</li> <li>• Develop list of marginal seats in Victoria</li> <li>• Develop map of existing detention centres amongst LGAs.</li> </ul>	Carried over actions to be followed up – Marek (CGD).

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<p><b>Afghan Crisis Response Discussion / Information Sharing</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>Greater Dandenong:</u> Joint statement was issued by Mayor Angela Long and the City of Casey in support of the Afghan community, and published in the local paper. Mayoral letters were sent to Members of Parliament advocating for support for people fleeing Afghanistan and for those living in Australia on Temporary Protection Visas. Greater Dandenong is currently involved with the Afghan Response Working Group in the southern metropolitan region, led by the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing. Six sub-groups focusing on health, housing, education, employment, legal services and material aid for new arrivals from Afghanistan.</li>   <li>• <u>Darebin:</u> In response to the motion passed by Darebin, Mayoral statement was issued in support of Afghan community. Mayoral letters were also sent to the Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs to increase intake of Afghans to 20,000. Darebin also signed Refugee Council of Australia joint statement.</li>   <li>• <u>Moreland:</u> Similar Notice of Motion to be raised by Moreland on 8 September 2021.</li> </ul>	<p>Share Darebin Notice of Motion with Taskforce Executive – Shabaz (Darebin) and Marek (CGD).</p> <p>Share Moreland Notice of Motion with Taskforce Executive – Emma (Moreland) and Marek (CGD).</p>

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<p><b>Phase 4a – 4c Back Your Neighbour Feedback and Discussion</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Peter (CGD) and Marek (CGD) recapped the proposal for Phase 4 Back Your Neighbour campaign. (Please touch base with Marek if you require a copy of the proposal).</li> <li>• <u>Feedback provided by the Executive:</u> Members mentioned that the federal election may be called earlier than what has been suggested by the proposal of a May 2022 election. It was agreed that to accommodate for an earlier election the Taskforce will have to move fast in terms of organisation and preparation for Phase 4.</li> </ul> <p>Recommendations were made to align campaign language and messaging with that of Refugee Council of Australia rather than ASRC.</p> <p>Participation by Mayors in the campaign was encouraged, depending on each Councils capacity.</p> <p>Suggestion was made to provide a one-page document for officers and Councillors to present to their respective Councils regarding financial and in-kind resourcing.</p>	<p>Develop and circulate one-page ask for financial and in-kind support for Phase 4 – Marek (CGD).</p>
<p><b>Financial Contributions Towards Media Agency Consultancy</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Greater Dandenong, Darebin, and Moreland Councils confirmed \$5,000 contributions to Phase 4 Back Your Neighbour.</li> <li>• It was agreed that all other Executive Councils will have until Tuesday 19 October to confirm their \$5,000 financial and in-kind contributions.</li> <li>• Funds raised will be used to engage a media consultancy agency to provide strategic advice to the Back Your Neighbour campaign and guide it to the next election.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Response to MP Karen Andrews MP, Minister for Home Affairs</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Response by MP Karen Andrews to the open letter (led by Yarra and supported by the Taskforce) was disappointing. The response was generic and did little to answer the concerns of the 17 signatories in relation to people seeking asylum who are living in the community e.g. access to universal services – Medicare, Centrelink, housing support etc.</li> </ul>	<p>Investigate options to publish the response on the Back Your Neighbour Facebook page and local papers / The Age – Mayor Gabrielle de Vietri (Yarra), Marek (CGD), All.</p>

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<b>Regional/Local Updates</b> a) PSAARD Network	a) PSAARD (People Seeking Asylum At Risk of Destitution) Network Life Without Barriers (LWB) reported that the Fast-Track process to review applications is not as swift as the Department has indicated. The need for legal referrals is less than anticipated. If an outcome is negative LWB connects clients with legal, mental health, financial supports. This information highlights the reasoning for Back Your Neighbour to advocate for a well-resourced Immigration and Citizenship Department to process visas, as the back log is large. According to LWB, increased number of people are seeking to reapply for the Status Resolution Support Services (SRSS) program.  ASRC Hub opening has been delayed by another few months.	
<b>Other business</b>	No other business reported	
<b>Next Meeting</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1-3PM, Wednesday 20 October, Microsoft Teams</li> </ul>	
<b>Close</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2:15PM</li> </ul>	