

Local Government Mayoral Taskforce supporting People Seeking Asylum

Minutes – Executive Meeting No. 22 - Wednesday 17 August 2022

1-3pm via Microsoft Teams

Chairperson: Cr Rhonda Garad (Greater Dandenong Council (CGD))

Attendees: Shabaz Fattah (Darebin), Cr Hadi Saab (Kingston), Elisabetta Robecchi (Kingston), Mayor Cr Jasmine Nguyen (Brimbank), Cr Susanne Newton (Darebin), Teresa Thomson (Casey), Wambui Thirimu (Brimbank), Mayor Cr Mark Riley (Moreland), Nelum Buddhadasa (Moreland), Cr Rhonda Garad (CGD), Peter Johnstone (CGD), Cynthia Laviolette (CGD), Marek Krol (CGD), and Ann Ly (CGD) – Minute Taker.

Guests: Daniel Scoullar (Social Change Projects)

Apologies: Lynley Dumble (Brimbank), Callum Pattie (Casey), Renae Buckley (Casey), Pradeep Peteti (Casey), Mayor Cr Lina Messina (Darebin), Cr Gaetano Greco (Darebin), Cr Susan Rennie (Darebin), Mayor Cr Jim Memeti (Greater Dandenong), Cr Lana Formoso (Greater Dandenong), Mayor Cr Peter Hemphill (Hobsons Bay), Cr Jonathan Marsden (Hobsons Bay), Mayor Cr Carly Moore (Hume), Cr Joseph Haweil (Hume), Kristen Cherry (Hume), Julie Andrews (Hume), Celia Chang (Hume), Mayor Cr Steve Staikos (Kingston), Susan Quach (Kingston), Elisabetta Robecchi (Kingston), Mayor Cr Stuart James (Monash), Cr Brian Little (Monash), Cr Josh Fergeus (Monash), Colin Bostock (Monash), Fee Harrison (Monash), Pamela Kosij (Monash), Emma Sampson (Moreland), Urmila Ravikumar (Moreland), Petr Svoboda (Moreland), Mayor Cr Sophie Wade (Yarra), Cr Gabrielle de Vietri (Yarra), Cristina Del Frate (Yarra) and Tara Bewley (Yarra).

Agenda Item	Discussion Points/Comments	Follow up Actions / Who
1. Welcome and Introductions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chair welcomed all representatives attending and acknowledged Traditional Owners. • Apologies noted. 	
2. Endorsement of Minutes of Previous Meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Previous minutes moved by Cr Rhonda Garad (CGD) and seconded by Shabaz Fattah (Darebin). 	
3. Review of Outstanding Action Items	<p>Individual Memberships</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investigating options in developing a fourth level of membership for individual Councillors to join the Taskforce. This action may require further discussion at the next Taskforce meeting. <p>Meeting with Federal Government</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Taskforce meet with Claire O’Neil MP and Andrew Giles MP. 	<p>Send meeting invite on behalf of Taskforce – Daniel Scoullar (Social Change Projects).</p>

Agenda Item	Discussion Points/Comments	Follow up Actions / Who
<p>4. Mayoral Taskforce and Sector Update</p>	<p>Mayoral Taskforce New Memberships:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Newcastle Council has joined the Taskforce as the 39th member. Ongoing discussions with Cumberland Council to join the Taskforce. Existing members, Wyndham Council and Mornington Council, are interested in more active involvement in the Taskforce and will be invited to future Executive meetings. <p>Sector Update:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sector still holding Labour to account regarding the pre-election promises, especially the re-introduction of the 90-day rule into the Migration Act 1958. ASRC visited Canberra and met with 25 MPs, Senators and advisors. Twelve MPs spoke about refugee-related issues in the House of Representatives. The Taskforce will build on this extraordinary effort and keep the pressure on the Federal Government. At a Refugee Council of Australia Strategy Meeting, frustration amongst the sector was conveyed about the ALP taking too long with implementing changes. There remain 10,000 people requiring SRSS support, but only 1900 receive it nationwide. <p>Post-Federal Election engagement with local MPs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mayor Cr Mark Riley (Moreland) met with Peter Khalil MP, Member for Wills, who suggested that the Government is not pursuing their pre-election promises, but still working on processing a backlog of 19,000 TPV/SHEVs, passport applications and managing staff shortages. Councillors can forward urgent cases to their local Federal MP, who have a liaison mechanism to raise to the Ministerial Office. Nelum Buddhadasa (Moreland) commented the need to ensure that MPs are ready and willing to triage urgent cases. Cr Rhonda Garad (CGD) shared that Claire O'Neil MP will not getting rid of TPVs. From Labor's perspective, there is different discourse about plane arrivals versus boat arrivals. 	<p>Promote to all Councils e.g. via MAV the triage pathway for urgent visa cases – Marek (CGD).</p>

Agenda Item	Discussion Points/Comments	Follow up Actions / Who
5. Back Your Neighbour (BYN) - Overview and Discussion of Proposal	<p>Overview and Discussion of Proposal</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social Change Projects presented an overview of the proposed next iteration of the BYN Campaign (August to October 2022) for the period of the first 100-days / October mini-budget, as per the Project Proposal. • Discussion and feedback: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Cr Rhonda Garad (CGD) raised that study and work rights as a high priority. ○ Mayor Cr Mark Riley (Moreland) agreed on advocacy for education and employment - suggested utilising data from Refugee Council of Australia that have approved TPVs, in contrast with the number of people trying to obtain visas. Also suggested to meet with local MPs and invite people with lived experience to these meetings; and stakeholder mapping of other Councils to invite and join Taskforce. ○ Cr Hadi Saab (Kingston) agreed on the above priorities and commented on the long waiting times for status determination. ○ Policy asks will delineate specific support services e.g. SRSS, work and study rights. ○ Nelum Buddhadasa (Moreland) mentioned on-shore detention centres in Broadmeadows and health care-related issues. Expirations and renewal of Medicare a priority. ○ Executive Members agreed on using consistent data to deliver a strong campaign message. ○ Advocating on policy asks but not targeting any political parties in campaign messaging. 	
6. Formal Endorsement of the Proposal and Funding Approval	<p>Confirmation of financial contributions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The following Executive Members confirmed a \$2000 contribution to the proposed BYN campaign: Kingston, Casey, Brimbank, Darebin, Greater Dandenong, Moreland. • Following Councils indicated their support via email prior to the meeting: Monash, Hume, Yarra. 	<p>Executive Members to be sent invoice - Marek (CGD).</p>
7. Canberra Delegation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The following Executive Members expressed interest and/or capacity in attending a two-day Canberra Delegation during the sitting week, in the second week of September– tentative dates are 12 and 13 September 2022: Moreland, Kingston, Brimbank, Darebin, and Greater Dandenong. • Seek Departmental meetings e.g. for SRSS eligibility criteria and coordination with service agencies such as ASRC. Also, seek potential meeting with Minister for Employment and Minister for Education and Training. 	<p>Confirm Delegation dates - Daniel Scoullar (Social Change Projects).</p> <p>Invite people with lived experience, and interstate Councils - Newcastle, Inner West to attend Delegation if possible – Marek (CGD).</p>
8. Other Business	<p>N/A</p>	

Agenda Item	Discussion Points/Comments	Follow up Actions / Who
9. Next Meeting	TBC	
10. Close	2.15pm	