



## Yarra Multicultural Advisory Group

Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> March 2022

10am – 11.30am

**(online via Teams)**

### MINUTES

- **Welcome and Introductions**

**Cr Mohamud:** Yarra City Council acknowledges the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung people as the Traditional Owners and true sovereigns of the land now known as Yarra. We also acknowledge the significant contributions made by other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to life in Yarra. We pay our respects to Elders from all nations here today – and to their Elders past, present and future.

**Introductions:**

- Deniz Aslan – Bicultural Liaison Officer, Yarra Council
- Cristina Del Frate – Coordinator, Social Strategy and Community Development, Yarra Council
- Kylie Carlson - Senior Coordinator Library Services and Partnerships, Yarra Libraries
- Betsy Rajan - CALD Engagement Worker – Partners in Wellbeing, NEAMI National
- Jonathan Amey - Community Employment Connector, Brotherhood of St Laurence
- Kim Chua - Collingwood resident, involved in this group for I don't know how many years!
- Lin - Richmond resident, obtained community services certificate last year
- Maria Ibrahim - FARREP Worker, Community Worker, cohealth
- Marcia McGinley - Team Leader Community Programs & Outreach, Fitzroy Library
- Sara Mohsen - Volunteer Tutor Scheme, Melbourne Polytechnic
- Jean Tai – Bicultural Liaison Officer & Yarra Leisure Officer, Yarra Council
- Tania Stone - Community Employment Connector, Brotherhood of St Laurence
- Dinesh Nettur - Leading Senior Constable, Melbourne East Police Station
- Laura Duncan – Community Development Officer, Multicultural Partnerships, Yarra Council
- Semir – Richmond resident

- **Councillor introduction and update**

(Cr Anab Mohamud)



- **YMAG Overview** (Laura Duncan)

The Multicultural Advisory Group has an open membership and welcomes participation from:

- any member of Yarra's culturally religiously and linguistically diverse community
- residents
- community organisations, agencies and service providers who have a focus on provision of services to multicultural communities in Yarra
- community groups in Yarra

The YMAG:

- provides feedback and advice to Council on its policies, plans and services that impact multicultural communities.
- considers and provides advice on key Government initiatives, programs and reviews.
- advocates on behalf of multicultural communities.
- shares information and resources between community groups and their representatives.
- provides advice to Council with its communication, engagement and consultation with multicultural communities.

The YMAG meets every 2-3 months and we hope to meet in person at our next meeting on **Wednesday 4 May 10am-11.30am**.

Please feel free to reach out to me if you would like to be added to the YMAG Mailing list to receive invites to future meetings.

- **Cr Anab Mohamud:** great opportunity for everyone to come in and share their backgrounds, and involve other communities from your organisations who we don't hear from most of the time, they don't have a platform to share concerns/issues, helpful if you can encourage quieter residents to come along!

- **Presentation: Community Employment Program** (Tania Stone, BSL)

Brotherhood of St Laurence

*(See presentation slides at Attachment A)*

*Questions & Answers following presentation:*

- **Sara:** question regarding age group, is it limited to 16-25 year olds?
- **Tania:** this is a program for non-youth as well, all adults. We do have a youth-specific program, but aside from that both Jonathan and I work with adults.
- **Sara:** type of Visas, should they hold PR or citizenship?

- **Tania:** no, any visa is eligible. We work with people holding any visa including asylum seekers, international students, people on bridging visas - we do not discriminate.
- **Sara:** the type of jobs, are all of the jobs casual in specific areas? Or you offer different industries? e.g. my volunteers are interested in working in childcare or education.
- **Tania:** we don't provide jobs, what we are more about is linking people into employment programs that we are aware of in peoples' area. There will always be people who, because of their visa status, there may not be services which we can link them into; in which case we will assist them more intensively to find employment. We are more of a linking program; and traditionally when we work with women, their areas of interest are childcare, aged care, hospitality. If women need to upskill or get some training we would be familiar with a range of training programs which they may be able to attend, both paid and free.
- **Sara:** if I would like to refer someone to you, how do I do that?
- **Tania:** no referral form, you can contact us by phone or email - we're very flexible, whatever works best for you. We also have a website, we have a dedicated email address ([cec@bsl.org.au](mailto:cec@bsl.org.au)) that puts you in touch with the whole team.
- **Jonathan:** if you go to the BSL website and through Jobs Victoria there's a link to our program. We also get referrals straight in from BSL. We have very strong relationships with BSL programs and we're able to refer into them. Those industries you were talking about, Sara, there are some wonderful opportunities for traineeships, particularly in education support. We can organise a consultation with anyone you're in touch with. What we'll often do is finding 'survival' jobs for people while they're looking for their perfect job and completing bridging courses.
- **Kim:** do you advertise to the neighbourhood learning centre or english classes? Especially the past two years, I know so many people on working visas can't go back to their country and they don't know where to go. I want to know how do you advertise to let most of the people know.
- **Tania:** Because we're a relatively new service throughout Victoria (since Aug of last year); we're really at the beginning. We've linked in as far as possible to service providers, community leaders, employment programs, agencies that assist international students ... and we are constantly trying to reach out to more and more networks as we're doing even today. Obviously it's a never-ending process especially because we work across six LGAs. We are also receiving referrals from agencies as they become aware of our service.
- **Jonathan:** re: difficulty in regards to their visa status, some opportunities are open to some and not for others, it can be very difficult to place people in education and a lot of people don't have work rights. What we're often doing is finding alternative services or trying to find ways around that. There are opportunities - an example is that the State Gov have announced an asylum seeker VET programs, they can access training for free. We can certainly talk to people and explore what opportunities are available.

- **Tania:** part of our role too is to advocate, feeding back to state gov about perceived gaps and what we're hearing, with a view for programs to be created.
  - **Lin:** I have certificate of Community Services, I wonder, how many community services opportunities can be provided to us?
  - **Jonathan:** it's a fantastic course to do, Lin! It opens up a lot of career opportunities. With Community Services, there's a lot of different ways you can go with it. If you wanted to organise a consultation with Tania or I you are welcome. Your qualification is really well respected in the sector.
  - **Tania:** sometimes one step is to link people into volunteer programs where they can get Australian-based work experience which is valuable for employers to know about.
  - **Deniz:** I was thinking to study the same program - Diploma of CS - Lin, do you have any suggestions to me because I will apply in May with RMIT? Did you get some training at school?
  - **Lin:** I did my placement at BANH, and teachers sometimes showed me their experience, answered our questions about our placement.
  - **Deniz:** I heard it was 100 hours for a placement, or do some schools give 400 hours?
  - **Lin:** My worker at HRAR team organised two programs, according to resident needs, they want to exercise with line and square dancing, when they were at the neighbourhood house.
  - **Cr Anab Mohamud:** I can answer your question too Deniz, I worked at BSL for my course, it was right next door to me. While we were doing training and studying, we were also working at the same time and it opened doors into hospitality, there's so much you can do with community services. We can even meet up in person too if you want to learn more.
- **Presentation: Partners in Wellbeing Program** (Betsy Rajan, NEAMI)  
NEAMI National  
*(See presentation slides at Attachment B)*

**Link to Partners in Wellbeing resources:**

<https://www.partnersinwellbeing.org.au/resources>

*Questions & Answers following presentation:*

- **Jonathan:** in regards to hwo much support is available, is it 6-10 sessions, or ... ?
- **Betsy:** case by case, we provide 6 sessions, the main goal - it is short term support - our main aim is to link clients to long term support that meets their need and interests. More sessions can be provided and **it's completely free**. You don't need medicare or visa requirements. No waitlist at the moment either.
- **Cristina:** did you say it's only funded to June this year?
- **Betsy:** that's right, we're trying to advertise it as much as possible so people can get this free support.

- **Cristina:** I know traditionally people from CALD communities may be less engaged, are you finding there is more take up?
- **Betsy:** in terms of data, in all of Victoria, 13% are from CALD communities calling in. That's still quite less, but just knowing that there is that number feels good.
- **Cr Anab Mohamud:** I think the more we share this information it will be less taboo for CALD communities.
- **Maria:** can you send us the flyer or presentation?
- **Betsy:** yes, and I also want to point out on our website, if there are specific languages you're looking for - I will put a link in the chat.
- **Maria:** can interpreters be arranged?
- **Betsy:** yes, and it's free too.
  
- **Laura:** Following Betsy's presentation, I also wanted to raise awareness of the **Counselling and Casework Program (Attachments C & D)** delivered by North Richmond Community Health.
  
- **Council Updates** (Laura Duncan)  
*(See presentation slides at Attachment E)*
  
- **Information sharing** (All)
  - **Sara Mohsen, Volunteer Tutor Scheme, Melbourne Polytechnic:** I was aiming to share with you our need for volunteer tutors, we have many students have been referred for the last 2 months because of the Afghani refugees who recently arrived, in north region we have many students who are not able to attend classes in AMEP, we are looking for tutors to support them 1 to 1. No experience is needed from volunteers in teaching, we offer training that is quite straight forward, online and self-paced. After training they need to apply for Working with Children Check (we cover cost); 1 hour per week of tutoring - online or face to face, or both, depending on availability of tutor. I was aiming to send, e.g. Tania or Jonathan - if you could refer anyone to us who might be looking to volunteer. I am finding it hard, honestly, to find volunteers at the moment. Our program is looking to enhance employability skills of people looking for employment - we have workshops: CV, LinkedIn Profiles, Settlement Services, but again the word of mouth is much better than attending information sessions. Volunteers are not only needed in North West - it covers metropolitan Melbourne. I can share the **application link and my contact details:**

**Sara Mohsen**

[saramohsen@melbournepolytechnic.edu.au](mailto:saramohsen@melbournepolytechnic.edu.au)

9269 1155

**Link to application:** <https://app.betterimpact.com/PublicOrganization/b80b0186-2ffe-40e5-a574-778bd24b261f/1>

- **Deniz:** thank you, I'm getting free AMEP one hour per week English class. It's really good for people from all backgrounds! Please share that information!
- **Tania:** just wanting to confirm, the volunteer program is for adults? What level of English should they themselves have?
- **Sara:** intermediate level and above, because some students have zero level of english, so they are looking for someone to look after the basics - introductions, booking an appointments ...up to upper-intermediate students.
- **Cr Anab Mohamud:** I would just encourage everyone to share the YMAG Network, to get as many people as possible involved, it would be great to hear from different people and to see different ways we can work together to improve our community.
- **Kim:** I've been involved in so many years in this group, this is the first time I've seen so many young guests attending, I hope in face to face they can still come. Maybe the Council has to do something to encourage them to attend. I am the oldest of you, 70 this year, ive been involved in this meeting because I want to know what the Council provides to our community. I have links to Chinese communities in different backgrounds/at different estates; so many years I've been involved in sharing information from YMAG to different groups. My role is a bridge between Council and community groups; it's the first time I've seen so many young people attending - the Council needs to do something, and in which way, how to attract more young people to the group. Especially when you ask about child care program, I'm sorry - we don't have young mother attending this group. The ? Officers from council in the last few years, we see them a lot walking around at estate, when we see someone walking on the street we still feel safe in our community, when I see people wearing their lanyards, health concierges ... I feel the city still has life! I want to say thank you, they're doing a great job. Laura I want to say thank you for sending us information from Council ...
  - **Cr Anab Mohamud:** I agree with Kim, it's really important to hear from people of all ages, not only to share information but also issues we have and how we can work together better and as one.
- **Semir:** I just have a concern around car parking in Yarra. There has been a lot of, ever since they took out parking space, especially on Elizabeth Street, parking permits on Anderson and Williams Court, they don't have an access where every car can come in and out - residents are getting a lot of fines. Is there any thing that's happening about car parks in Yarra.
- **Cr Anab Mohamud:** I think a lot of people have raised that directly with Council. Residents can raise issues and concerns with Council - Councillors can come and see you face to face - and if there are ongoing issues, all



you have to do is email us.

- **Action item (Laura):** put together basic flyer to support community to understand how to raise concerns with Council.

**Next YMAG Meeting:** Wednesday 4 May 10am-11.30am

**To join the YMAG, contact:** Laura Duncan

Community Development Officer – Multicultural Partnerships  
9205 5106

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