

Local Government Mayoral Taskforce Supporting People Seeking Asylum Minutes – Executive Meeting No. 14 – Wednesday 4 December 2019 City of Hume, Council Chambers, 1093 Pascoe Vale Rd, Broadmeadows

Chairperson: Cr Matthew Kirwan (*Greater Dandenong*) representing the Mayor of Greater Dandenong, Cr Jim Memeti

Attendees: Wambui Thirimu (*Brimbank*), Mayor Cr Susan Rennie (*Darebin*), Peter Johnstone (*Greater Dandenong*), Marek Krol (*Greater Dandenong*) – Minute Taker, Cr Jonathon Marsden (*Hobsons Bay*), Kristen Cherry (*Hume*), David Henry (*Hume*), Sintiya Khananiskoo (*Hume*), Siobhan Wood (*Monash*), Pamela Kosij (*Monash*), Mayor Cr Lambros Tapinos (*Moreland*), Petr Svoboda (*Moreland*), Cristina Del Frate (*Yarra*).

Guests: Meghan Hopper (*Moonee Valley*)

Apologies: Cr Victoria Borg (*Brimbank*), Deputy Mayor Cr Susanne Newton (*Darebin*), Mandy Bathgate (*Darebin*), Amber Cassidy (*Hobsons Bay*), Mayor Cr Stuart James (*Monash*), Cr Josh Fergeus (*Monash*), Cr Shane McCluskey (*Monash*), Cr Natalie Abboud (*Moreland*)

| Agenda Item | Discussion Points/Comments | Follow up Actions / Who |
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| Welcome and Introductions | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cr Matthew Kirwan welcomed all representatives attending Hume City Council and acknowledged Traditional Owners. • Apologies noted. | |
| Endorsement of Minutes of Previous Meeting | Previous minutes moved by Marek Krol, seconded by Cr Jonathon Marsden. | |
| Review of Outstanding Action Items | One action was carried on from previous meeting – inviting new Mayors to join the Taskforce. Due to Council elections this was not completed earlier. | Letters to be sent to new mayors inviting them to join the Taskforce – Marek Krol. |

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| General Update on the SRSS Situation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Peter Johnstone reported that the PSAARD Taskforce is meeting 29 January to discuss updates regarding SRSS exits and how support agencies are coping. • Meeting arranged on 11 December with a representative from the Department of Home Affairs (Melbourne Office) to discuss possibilities for greater access to data for SRSS exits. Accurate data would assist in future advocacy efforts in securing continued State Government funding. | |
| General Update on Taskforce activities (Oct – Nov 2019) a) MP meetings b) Andrew Giles visit c) Ballarat forum d) Vic Gov lobbying e) Vic Interfaith Network Conference | <p>a) <u>MP meetings:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Mayoral Taskforce was nominated as a finalist for the Migration and Settlement Awards in Canberra being held on Wednesday 23 October. ○ Cr Matthew Kirwan, Cr Youhorn Chea and Peter Johnstone travelled to Canberra for the awards ceremony, whilst also securing nine meetings with Federal MPs and Senators (or their advisors) – Mark Dreyfus MP (ALP), Anthony Albanese MP’s advisor (ALP), Julian Hill MP (ALP), Rebekah Sharkie MP’s advisor (Centre Alliance), Clare O’Neil MP (ALP), Jason Clare MP (ALP), Zali Steggall MP (Ind.), Senator Stirling Griff’s advisor (Centre Alliance), Andrew Giles MP (ALP). ○ MPs and advisors were consistent in their assessments that the government will not be persuaded to reverse SRSS cuts, however - <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Zali Steggall and Senator Griff’s advisor indicated they would meet with Minister Coleman to discuss SRSS impact and difficulties with the legacy caseload. ○ There is opportunity for MPs to provide the Taskforce with a warm welcome to their local councils and councillors. Particularly Zali Steggall, due to her local councils of Mosman and Northern Beaches comprising of many small ‘l’ Liberals, who are socially progressive. Enlisting such councils would provide the Taskforce with greater political leverage with Federal Government. ○ A number of MPs also offered to raise during Question Time the issue of SRSS exit data being made available and public. | |

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| | <p>b) <u>Andrew Giles visit:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Resulting from the meetings, Andrew Giles MP committed to visiting Dandenong in November, to better understand the impact of SRSS cuts. Andrew met with local housing and settlement providers, as well as, local material aid provider and the Red Cross. ○ Andrew Giles is a key stakeholder as he is in charge of ALP policy platform regarding SRSS and people seeking asylum. <p>c) <u>Ballarat forum:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ City of Ballarat and Rural Australians for Refugees hosted a community forum - 'SRSS Cuts: Mending the Safety Net'. Marek Krol attended the event and spoke to the group about Back Your Neighbour and Taskforce. The group was provided with an update of the Taskforce's recent advocacy efforts and was encouraged to send letters to local MPs and support the Back Your Neighbour campaign. ○ ASRC also presented on the day. Main focus was on the additional funding they received from the State Government, amounting to \$1.2 million. ○ Bulk of the ASRC money was spent on homelessness assistance, including 290 people being assisted per month. ○ \$75,000 was also spent on employment services for people seeking asylum. ○ ASRC will again be applying for this funding. ○ Good media coverage on the day by Ballarat Courier. <p>d) <u>Victorian Government:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Letters from the Taskforce requesting additional funding to be provided by the Victorian State Government have been sent to key MPs – Martin Foley, Luke Donnellan, Richard Wynne, and Gabrielle Williams. A higher amount of funding has been requested for the next financial year due to the rise in SRSS exits. <p>e) <u>Victorian Interfaith Network Conference:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Cr Matthew Kirwan presented information about the Taskforce and the Back Your Neighbour Campaign to a workshop of about 60 people. Positive response from Whitehorse and Manningham Interfaith Networks. Such networks can assist in establishing links with community groups in marginal or Liberal seats. These need to be followed up. | <p>Letters to be sent to the different Interfaith groups – Marek Krol</p> |
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| Draft Back Your Neighbour – Phase 3 Campaign Strategy and Plan | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Questions/comments were taken on the first draft of the Back Your Neighbour Phase 3 Campaign Strategy and Plan that had been sent out with the agenda. Cr Matthew Kirwan walked through the Table of Contents to describe the different elements of the document. • It was agreed that better mobilisation of different community groups particular people seeking asylum communities needed to be done in the next phase. • Meeting endorsed this first draft as being acceptable to circular to both Executive and Member Council feedback by Friday, 20th December. | Circulate draft Back Your Neighbour Strategy amongst Executive and General Members for feedback – Marek Krol by Friday, 20 th December |
| Power Mapping Workshop | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mayor Cr Susan Rennie facilitated a power mapping exercise to identify how change can be achieved amongst political stakeholders. • A power map essentially conceptualises who has influence, who are the key stakeholders, and how they can exercise their influence to change a decision. It identifies the degree of power each stakeholder has, and the degree of support they share for a particular cause. • Power mapping allows campaigners to reduce the power of unsupportive stakeholders and increase the power of supporters. For example, dividing stakeholders can weaken their power. | |
| Regional/Local Updates a) Northern Alliance b) PSAARD Taskforce | Northern Alliance: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alliance has stopped meeting. Councils are now working on individual projects within the people seeking asylum space. • Darebin is working on accreditation process of Welcoming Cities. • Moreland is working with Amnesty International to host three conversation events within libraries. • Hume’s multicultural framework is focusing on the barriers to Council services that people seeking asylum face. • Yarra is meeting with Refugee Council of Australia (RCOA) and Amnesty International to work on events centred on people seeking asylum. Also raising awareness about people seeking asylum internally. | |

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| | <p>PSAARD:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Next meeting set 29 January. • Two material aid and emergency response grants have recently been approved under the Consortium of local service providers. This has included funding for a food truck delivery and dispersion of food amongst Consortium partners. Second grant has involved South East Community Links, Life Without Barriers, and Springvale Learning and Activity Centre developing and piloting a place based and client centred collaboration model aimed at achieving self-sufficiency and reducing dependency on material aid. • Peter Johnstone provided a summary of the Material Aid Consortium, which first began as a coordinated approach by organisations to provide material aid in Greater Dandenong. Greater Dandenong Council provided a fulltime coordination officer and over \$200,000 in grants to Consortium members. | |
| Other business | <p>Proposed meeting dates for next year were endorsed except:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mayor Susan Rennie mentioned to avoid setting June meeting over ALGA dates. • Cristina Del Frate will be away for all of April. Moreland to host April meeting instead of Yarra. | |
| Close | <p>Wednesday 19 February 2019, 1:00pm-3:00pm Monash City Council Monash Council, 293 Springvale Road, Glen Waverley</p> | |