

# Local Government Mayoral Taskforce Supporting People Seeking Asylum

## Minutes – Executive Meeting No. 9 – Wednesday 17 April 2019

### Greater Dandenong Council, 225 Lonsdale Street, Dandenong

**Chairperson:** Mayor, Cr Roz Blades AM (*Greater Dandenong*)

**Attendees:** Mayor, Cr Susan Rennie (*Darebin*), Cr Matthew Kirwan (*Greater Dandenong*), Marek Krol (*Greater Dandenong*) – Minute Taker, Peter Johnstone (*Greater Dandenong*), Mandy Bathgate (*Darebin*), Mayor, Cr Jonathon Marsden (*Hobsons Bay*), Amber Cassidy (*Hobsons Bay*), Julie Andrews (*Hume*) Cristina Del Frate (*Yarra*)

**Guests:** Daniel Scoullar (*Social Change Projects*)

**Apologies:** Mandy Bathgate (*Darebin*), Fee Harrison (*Monash*), Pamela Kosij (*Monash*), Nalika Peiris (*Moreland*), Mayor, Cr Natalie Abboud (*Moreland*).

Agenda Item	Discussion Points/Comments	Follow up Actions / Who
<b>Welcome and Introductions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mayor, Cr Roz Blades welcomed all representatives attending Greater Dandenong Council.</li> <li>Apologies noted.</li> </ul>	
<b>Endorsement of Minutes of Previous Meeting</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Previous minutes moved by Mayor, Cr Jonathon Marsden, seconded by Cr Matthew Kirwan.</li> </ul>	
<b>Review of Outstanding Action Items</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Contact made with Jo Tabit (BSL) and Emily Webb (Monash) for further info. Still awaiting response</li> <li>Still awaiting on Councils to submit media stories backing BYN</li> <li>Follow up Councils to send letters to their local State Government representatives asking for interim support wider taskforce.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ascertain required information from Jo Tabit (BSL) and Emily Webb</li> <li>Submit BYN media stories - ALL</li> <li>Councils to send letters to State Government - ALL</li> </ul>
<b>General Update on the SRSS Situation</b>	<p>Peter Johnstone presented latest info from Victorian SRSS service providers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reports that demand for material aid and housing is increasing among aid agencies due to SRSS cuts. Also in regional areas such as Shepparton</li> <li>PSAARD Taskforce have written to Red Cross requesting they create a housing account to address homelessness in the Greater Dandenong area.</li> </ul>	

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<p><b>Back Your Neighbour Phase 2 Campaign Update</b> <i>(with activity status updates from individual Councils and media update)</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>Phase Two update:</u></li> <li>• 900 people have emailed their Federal MP so far</li> <li>• Daniel received 40 emails from the public indicating they had called Minister Coleman's office on 3 April in response to the Facebook post and emails to take action</li> <li>• Received a number of stock standard responses from the ALP responding to Taskforce letters</li> <li>• Minister David Coleman's response indicated that the current SRSS program is delivering desirable outcomes to the community</li> <li>• Approximately 3,500 people on our supporter list (up from 300), 2,000 people on Facebook (approximately 600 engaging with our content)</li> <li>• Difficulties with organising media coverage. Potential to evaluate how we package our stories for the media</li> <li>• Federal election period – need to focus our attention on State Government during this period. Approach Minister Wynne's office to discuss State involvement</li> <li>• Mayor Roz Blades thanked Daniel Scoullar for all his work with Phase Two of the Back Your Neighbour Campaign.</li> <li>• <u>Post-election period:</u></li> <li>• Future campaign direction dependent on election result eg Labor victory, Coalition victory, 'hung parliament'</li> <li>• Campaign response to Labor victory will involve applying pressure for new government to act fast in reversing SRSS cuts</li> <li>• Marek Krol's contract finish date 30 June. Daniel's contract finish date 17 May. Future resourcing yet unknown, to be further discussed at following meeting</li> <li>• Refugee Week 16 June – 22 June coincides with ALGA General Assembly in Canberra. Opportunity to participate in media release and promote Campaign.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Organise meeting with Minister Richard Wynne – CGD</li> <li>• Develop a campaign timeframe/calendar outlining key dates e.g. State timeframe, Federal timeframe, Social media timeframe – Marek Krol (CGD)</li> </ul>
<p><b>Election Scorecard</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• BYN Campaign response during election period</li> <li>• Notify BYN supporters where each of the three main parties stand eg Liberal, Labor, and Greens</li> <li>• Concern was raised about individual councils coming across as partisan during the election campaign. Wording to be redrafted to appear more neutral</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Election scorecard to be redrafted – Daniel Scoullar</li> </ul>

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<p><b>MP Advocacy Updates</b> <i>(with activity status updates from individual Councils)</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify local MPs that would champion this cause eg Tim Watts, Ged Kearney, Julian Hill, Mark Dreyfus, Shayne Neumann, Claire O'Neill</li> <li>• Will have to reengage with new government after election concerning reversal of SRSS cuts. Congratulatory letter to be sent out by each council, asking to put SRSS 'back in the budget'</li> <li>• Mayor Roz Blades suggested increasing our advocacy efforts with NSW State Government. NSW Councils could send letters asking for increased emergency relief funding from their State counterparts.</li> <li>• Opportunity to organise coordinated BYN publicity event that coincides with ALGA and Refugee Week, if there has been no progress made thus far with reversal of SRSS cuts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Councils to identify their local Federal MP champions – ALL</li> <li>• Prepare template letters for councils to send out first week after election to newly elected government, stating to put SRSS 'back in the budget' – Marek Krol (CGD)</li> <li>• Send NSW Members template letter to State Government including details of Queensland Government response – Marek Krol (CGD)</li> </ul>
<p><b>Draft MAV Motion</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Agreed upon wording for MAV Motion:  'Given the rising number of people seeking asylum that have already been removed by the Federal Government, funding for humanitarian relief is immediately required. MAV call on the State to: 1. Advocate to restore SRSS support for people seeking asylum in the community 2. Increase Victorian Government funding for emergency relief support for people seeking asylum while awaiting the full reinstatement of SRSS policy by Federal Government'</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Circulate reminder for Member Councils to support MAV Motion at State Council Meeting Friday 17 May – Marek Krol (CGD)</li> </ul>
<p><b>Planning for ALGA General Assembly – 16<sup>th</sup> – 19<sup>th</sup> June, Canberra</b> <i>(Motion and other activities – delegations, joint stmt etc)</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Proposed ALGA delegation meetings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Minister for Immigration, Citizenship and Multicultural Affairs</li> <li>○ Minister for Home Affairs</li> <li>○ Minister for Jobs and Industrial Relations</li> <li>○ Minister for Families and Social Services</li> <li>○ Treasurer</li> <li>○ Identified champion MPs</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Deliver joint statement and participate in media release on the day</li> </ul>	

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<b>Taskforce Administration, Governance and Membership Update</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A follow up letter was sent to Melbourne City Council inviting them to join the Taskforce. Awaiting response</li> <li>• Negotiating with volunteer to provide campaign support. Approx. 2 hours a week</li> <li>• Hornsby Shire Council voted against joining the Taskforce</li> <li>• Randwick City Council to vote at upcoming Council meeting</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cr Mathew Kirwan (CGD) to follow up again with Melbourne City Council about joining Taskforce</li> </ul>
<b>Regional/Local Updates</b> <b>a) Northern Alliance</b>  <b>b) PSAARD Taskforce – South-East Melbourne Regional Aid / Humanitarian Response Collaboration</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Northern Alliance: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Mandy Bathgate (Darebin) was an apology but provided update via email</li> <li>○ Northern Alliance met in March at Darebin Council</li> <li>○ The Alliance has contributed local service support and referral information to BSL who are preparing a community guide. This is near completion and Alliance waiting on BSL to finalise so it can be disseminated</li> <li>○ The meeting discussed structure and whether other models for regional coordination may be considered moving forward including link up with existing networks in the North</li> <li>○ Further meeting was scheduled for April but was postponed and will be rescheduled for May.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• PSAARD: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Forming a homelessness working group focusing on asylum seekers.</li> <li>○ Focusing on mentoring with people seeking asylum in regards to employment.</li> <li>○ Material aid consortium processing grant applications in terms of how the consortium can better serve people that have been exited from the SRSS program.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	
<b>Other Business</b>		
<b>Next Meeting:</b>	<b>Wednesday 22 May 2019, 1:00pm-3:00pm</b> <b>Yarra City Council</b> <b>Wurundjeri Room, Collingwood Town Hall, 140 Hoddle Street, Abbotsford</b>	
<b>Close</b>	2:57pm	

Other proposed meeting dates and venues

- Wednesday, 26 June Darebin
- Thursday, 24 July Brimbank
- Wednesday, 21 August Moreland