

Council Plan Actions 14.3 and 14.4 - Cultural Diversity Statement and the Refugee Welcome Zone Action Plan

9 June 2015

Presenter: Ian Hicks, Manager Community Strengthening

Purpose and background

1. To seek endorsement of the Cultural Diversity Statement and the Refugee Welcome Zone Action Plan (refer Attachment 2 and 3) as outcomes of Council Plan Actions 14.3 and 14.4.
2. Council Plan Action 14.3 is to 'Review the Refugee Welcome Zone Declaration and recommit to activities that fall within local government's responsibility'. The Refugee Welcome Zone is a commitment in spirit to welcoming refugees into our community, upholding the human rights of refugees, demonstrating compassion for refugees and enhancing cultural and religious diversity in our community.' Council signed the Refugee Welcome Zone Declaration in June 2002.
3. A review of the Declaration found there has been no significant administrative or other change to what Council signed in 2002. The review also identified opportunities for Council to better coordinate the way in which it works with asylum seekers and refugees living in the City of Melbourne. Development of the Refugee Welcome Zone Action Plan provides Council with a coordinated and collaborative 'whole of Council' response to its commitment in signing the Declaration.
4. Council Plan Action 14.4 is to renew the CoM Multicultural Policy or draft a Cultural Diversity Statement containing an acknowledgment and recognition of the contribution refugees and asylum seekers make. The Cultural Diversity Statement developed brings together a set of principles that captures the way in which Council values and approaches multiculturalism in our municipality and as a capital city.

Key issues

5. The City of Melbourne values and respects our community's cultural, religious and linguistic diversity and acknowledges the significant contribution successive waves of migration have made to our city. It is also recognises that there are vulnerable communities within the municipality that continues to require specific support.
6. The proposed Cultural Diversity Statement is designed to:
 - 6.1. Reflect the fact that the City of Melbourne is already a culturally diverse multicultural city.
 - 6.2. Ensure that Council has a visible and clearly articulated commitment to cultural diversity.
 - 6.3. Re-state Council's commitment to the Refugee Welcome Zone, previously adopted in 2002.
 - 6.4. Expand upon the existing obligation to protect 'Cultural Rights' under the *Charter for Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006*.
7. The Cultural Diversity Statement also supports a number of current strategies, including "*Melbourne for all People*, and provides an overarching framework that allows for further programs, services and plans to be developed (from time to time) in response to the evolving needs and expectations of our culturally and linguistically diverse community (refer Attachment 2).
8. In the context of Council's on-going commitment to cultural diversity, Council is also a signatory to the Refugee Welcome Zone. Council Plan Action 14.3 is to recommit to activities that fall within local government's responsibility. The proposed Refugee Welcome Zone Action Plan (refer Attachment 3) incorporates a combination of current and ongoing activities, as well as several new initiatives to be delivered over the next three years. The action plan sits within the framework of the Cultural Diversity Statement and provides a coordinated and collaborative 'whole of Council' approach for how the City of Melbourne supports refugee and asylum seeker communities living in our community.

Recommendation from management

9. That the Future Melbourne Committee endorses the Cultural Diversity Statement and Refugee Welcome Zone Action Plan and authorises the Director Community Development to make any further minor editorial changes prior to publication

Attachments:

1. Supporting Attachment
2. Cultural Diversity Statement
3. Refugee Welcome Zone Action Plan

Supporting Attachment

Legal

1. There are no direct Legal issues arising from the recommendation from management.

Finance

2. There are no budget implications resulting from the development of the Cultural Diversity Statement. The majority of actions outlined in the Refugee Welcome Zone Action Plan will be resourced from within the operational budgets of responsible branches. Future budget bids will be made for any initiatives requiring further resources, as identified during implementation of the action plan.

Conflict of interest

3. No member of Council staff, or other person engaged under a contract, involved in advising on or preparing this report has declared a direct or indirect interest in relation to the matter of the report.

Stakeholder consultation

4. The Draft Cultural Diversity Statement was circulated to local peak organisations and government departments providing services and support to refugees and asylum seekers in the municipality. A workshop was then held with those organisations on 18 March 2015 to consider the draft statement and seek feedback on any issues, ideas or actions that could be undertaken to further Council's commitment as a signatory to the Refugee Welcome Zone, with notes of the workshop distributed to all participants.
5. A Draft Refugee Welcome Zone Action Plan was circulated to the identified stakeholders with feedback incorporated.
6. Key stakeholders engaged have included: Department of Social Services, Office of Multicultural Affairs and Citizenship, Municipal Association of Victoria, Centre for Multicultural Youth, Refugee Council of Australia, AMES, Red Cross, CoHealth, Drummond Street Services, Asylum Seeker Resource Centre, Carlton Local Agencies Network, North Melbourne Agency Collective, St Joseph's Flexible Learning Centre and the Ethnic Communities Council of Victoria.

Relation to Council policy

7. Development of the Cultural Diversity Statement and Action plan is aligned to the following policies:
 - 7.1. Council Plan & Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan
 - 7.2. Melbourne for all People Strategy
 - 7.3. The Active Melbourne Strategy: A plan for physical activity
 - 7.4. We Need to Talk – Preventing Violence Against Women Strategy 2013–2017
 - 7.5. Beyond the Safe City Strategy 2014–17
 - 7.6. Disability Action Plan
 - 7.7. Melbourne Library Service Strategic Plan
 - 7.8. A Great Place to Study: International Student Strategy 2013–2017

Environmental sustainability

8. Environmental sustainability issues and / or opportunities will be considered during implementation of initiatives outlined in the Refugee Welcome Zone Action Plan.

CULTURAL DIVERSITY STATEMENT

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF TRADITIONAL OWNERS

The City of Melbourne respectfully acknowledges the Traditional Owners of the land. For the Woiwurrung (Wurundjeri), Boonwurrung, Taungurong, Dja Dja Wurrung and the Wathaurung groups who form the Kulin Nation, Melbourne has always been an important meeting place for events of social, educational, sporting and cultural significance.

Today we are proud to say that Melbourne is a significant gathering place for all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

The City of Melbourne is one of the most liveable cities in the world. Melbourne has an established national and international reputation as a successful 'multicultural' city. The City of Melbourne recognises the significant contribution successive waves of migration have made to make our city what it is today.

The City of Melbourne is a public authority that must act in a way that is compatible with human rights as provided for in the *Charter for Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006*. With reference to the principle of Cultural Rights, the City of Melbourne reaffirms that:

- Aboriginal persons hold distinct cultural rights and must not be denied the right, with other members of their community: to enjoy their identity and culture; to maintain the use of their language; to maintain their kinship ties; and to maintain their distinctive spiritual, material and economic relationship with the land and waters and other resources with which they have a connection under traditional laws and customs; and
- That all persons with a particular cultural, religious, racial or linguistic background must not be denied the right, in community with other persons of that background, to enjoy his or her culture, to declare and practise his or her religion and to use his or her language.

The City of Melbourne is a multicultural city. We are a City that values and respects our cultural, religious, and linguistic diversity and acknowledges there are vulnerable communities within our multicultural city who require our support.

As a multicultural city, the City of Melbourne makes the following commitments in respect of Cultural Diversity.

We acknowledge the status of Aboriginal people as the First Australians

The City of Melbourne will develop plans and commit to actions that progress the cause of reconciliation and aim to protect and respect Aboriginal cultural heritage within the City.

We acknowledge the contribution that refugees and asylum seekers make to our community.

As a signatory to the Refugee Welcome Zone Declaration, the City of Melbourne will develop plans and programs in partnership with refugee communities and service providers to promote capacity building and foster sustained engagement and connections between the council and newly arrived communities.

We celebrate cultural diversity in all its forms through a range of public programs and initiatives that continue to promote community harmony.

The City of Melbourne will strive to support and deliver programs that aim to promote social cohesion, increase awareness and respect for difference and build trust and co-operation among diverse communities within the City.

We say 'No to Racism' and do not tolerate discrimination.

The City of Melbourne will work to eliminate discrimination based on religious belief, colour, ethnicity or language wherever they impact on the people who live or visit our city in any form, consistent with the 'Racial and Religious Tolerance Act (2001)'.

We provide engagement and decision making processes that encourage citizenship amongst people from culturally and linguistically diverse communities.

The City of Melbourne strives to reduce barriers and improve its processes so people from across our community can participate in the civic life of our city.

We deliver services, programs, facilities and events that are inclusive and equitable to ensure that language, religion or cultural background does not inhibit access.

The City of Melbourne is committed to access and equity for all customers of our services regardless of their nationality, race, culture, sexual orientation or religious beliefs.

We seek to reflect the cultural diversity of the community we serve.

The City of Melbourne will pursue policies and practices that enhance the cultural competency and capacity of our organisation and reduce barriers to the employment of people from a diverse range of backgrounds.

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REFUGEE WELCOME ZONE ACTION PLAN

The Refugee Welcome Zone Action Plan provides a structured framework and a coordinated 'whole of Council' approach for how the City of Melbourne supports refugees and asylum seekers living in our community.

Theme	Actions	Measurable Outcome / Output	Partners	Time frame
Participation and a Sense of Belonging <i>The City of Melbourne is a place where people feel they can participate in their local community and feel like they belong</i>	Contribute to Internal operations and policy development to ensure our practices and processes enable a welcoming and inclusive environment for newly arrived communities to access.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of policies influenced relating to the inclusion of refugee and asylum seeker communities within the City of Melbourne 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Internal partners 	Over the course of the 3 year plan
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of opportunities / activities that involve participation of newly arrived communities in our community facilities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community Strengthening and Internal partners 	Ongoing
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The revised Social Enterprise Strategy is inclusive and accessible for refugee and asylum seeker communities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Business and Tourism 	Year 1
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop criteria and a process for managing free and low cost access to recreation programs in our leisure facilities for refugees and asylum seekers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recreation Services 	Year 2
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pilot of Cultural Diversity Awareness Training introduced for all front line staff in contact with community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community Strengthening Organisational Development 	Year 2
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prepare for Council endorsement, a revised 'Procurement Policy' that ensures supplier diversity with inclusion of vulnerable communities such as suppliers who are from a refugee or asylum seeker background. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community Strengthening Finance 	Year 3
	Work across Council and with our community partners to deliver a range of events and programs that celebrate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of events hosted and supported in Cultural Diversity and Refugee week Participation of refugee and asylum seeker communities in Cultural Diversity and 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Internal Partners Community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ongoing

Theme	Actions	Measurable Outcome / Output	Partners	Time frame
	Cultural Diversity and Refugee Week.	Refugee week events	Partners	
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Melbourne Library Service to deliver two community information sessions annually focussed on refugee and asylum seeker topics 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Melbourne Library Service 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commence Year 1
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> On-Street Compliance to attend a minimum of one community event / festival during Cultural Diversity week with local laws/ parking /animal management and other related services information 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> On Street Compliance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commence Year 1
	Work with our community partners to deliver local initiatives that are welcoming and support inclusion of refugees and asylum seekers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of local organisations funded through our funding programs to deliver initiatives that are tailored to meet the needs of refugees and asylum seekers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> City of Melbourne funding programs Community Partners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ongoing
<p>Accessible and responsive services</p> <p><i>The City of Melbourne will work with refugee and asylum seeker communities to deliver services, programs, facilities and events that are inclusive and equitable to ensure that language; religion or cultural background does not inhibit access</i></p>	Work across Council to support access of refugees and asylum seekers to our services, programs, facilities and events to improve health and wellbeing.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Water Safety Education session hosted during Water Safety week for refugees and asylum seekers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recreation Services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commence Year 1
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> On Street Compliance with Community Strengthening provide information sessions with refugees and asylum seekers on parking /animal management and other related services information as required 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community Strengthening On-Street Compliance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commence Year 1
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide New Arrival to Melbourne Information sessions to orient newly arrived families to Family Services and the City of Melbourne (Data No. of information sessions and No. of families engaged) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Family Services Community Strengthening 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commence Year 1
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide the Parent Information Program at venues and times that are accessible to refugee and asylum seeker families living in 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Family Services Community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commence Year 1

Theme	Actions	Measurable Outcome / Output	Partners	Time frame
		the City of Melbourne(Data No. of information sessions and No. of families engaged)	Strengthening	
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide opportunities for refugees and asylum seekers to develop social connections around food. E.g.: Welcome Dinners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Health Services Community Safety and Wellbeing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Year 1
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Individuals from refugee and asylum seeker backgrounds participating in Melbourne Library Service Conversation Circles (Data: No. of participants, no. of conversation circles) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Melbourne Library Service 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ongoing
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Outreach program to refugee and asylum seeker families to facilitate participation in ArtPlay programs (Data No. of families participating in programs) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Arts and Culture Community Partners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Year 2 & 3
	Provide opportunities for City of Melbourne staff to participate in workshops, information sessions and forums to increase understanding of the diverse needs of our community; to enable delivery of culturally appropriate, programs, services and facilities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of staff lunchbox information sessions hosted 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Internal Partners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ongoing
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quarterly internal network meeting established to discuss the Refugee Welcome Zone Action plan and current status on delivery of actions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Internal Partners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commence Year 1
	Develop a pilot volunteer program that enables refugees / asylum seekers to learn skills and develop experience that could lead to employment opportunities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pilot volunteer program implemented Experiences from pilot documented to inform future programming opportunities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Internal Partners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Year Three

Theme	Actions	Measurable Outcome / Output	Partners	Time frame
<p>Information and Communication</p> <p><i>The City of Melbourne will provide information in a culturally appropriate way and highlight the achievements of our new and emerging communities</i></p>	<p>Develop a communications plan for the Refugee Welcome Zone Action Plan that utilises a range of tools to promote “welcoming and positive” messages for and about refugees and asylum seekers in our community.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communications plan developed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communications and Strategic Marketing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of plan – Year1 • Implementation Year 2 and 3
	<p>Develop a platform for how Council can respond to positive messaging campaigns through strategic partnerships with other government departments e.g.: Federal - Racism it Stops with Me campaign.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear guidelines developed to enable Council to respond effectively to positive media campaigns focussed on Cultural Diversity, Racism and refugee and asylum seeker communities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Strengthening • Communications and Strategic Marketing • External Partners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Year 2
	<p>Develop a resource that provides information about programs and services available for asylum seekers and refugees in the City of Melbourne.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information resource developed that includes a summary of Council and community initiatives specific to engaging refugees and asylum seekers developed for the community sector 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internal Partners • Community Partners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Year 2
<p>Facilitation and Advocacy</p> <p><i>City of Melbourne will facilitate community connections and advocate where appropriate for resources and support for refugees and asylum seekers</i></p>	<p>City of Melbourne to facilitate a minimum of three networks per year with organisations working with refugees and asylum seekers in the municipality to enhance collaboration, share information of sector development/policy changes.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number Networks hosted • Organisations feedback the network meetings add value to their work with refugees and asylum seekers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Partners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commence Year 1
	<p>Undertake research to increase understanding of how people “feel like they belong” in their local community and people’s perception of racial discrimination across the municipality.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research completed to inform evidence based planning for future plans 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internal Partners • Community Partners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Year 3

Theme	Actions	Measurable Outcome / Output	Partners	Time frame
	Advocate for policy change around appropriate supports and resources for asylum seekers living in the community.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sign the Victorian Local Governments Joint Statement to the Australian Government in support of asylum seekers living in the community • Participation in networks and forums that advocate policy change for asylum seekers and support appropriately resourced settlement services for refugee communities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internal and External Partners • Community Partners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Year One

Notes: A monitoring and evaluation framework will be developed to sit alongside the Refugee Welcome Zone Action Plan and will include data collection and reporting mechanisms.