



**Maroondah Partners in Community Health & Wellbeing Committee**  
**Tuesday 11 February 2020**  
**9.30am - 11:30am**  
**Meeting Room 4, Braeside Avenue, Ringwood**

**Present:** Cr Tasa Damante (Maroondah City Council)  
Cr Samantha Mazzuchelli (Maroondah City Council)  
Aman Mehta (Maroondah City Council)  
Catherine Darcy (EACH)  
Edwina Ricci (Maroondah Positive Education Network)  
Jacky Close (Outer East Primary Care Partnership)  
Judy McDougall (Migrant Information Centre)  
Kevin Gregg-Rowan (Department of Health and Human Services)  
Kham Lian (EACH)  
Lee Barker (Eastern Volunteers)  
Liz Senior (EACH)  
Peter Feeney (Communities of Wellbeing Inc)  
Viv Cunningham Smith (Eastern Volunteers)

Support

Brian Tu (Maroondah City Council)  
Fiona Burrige (Maroondah City Council)  
Phil Medley (Maroondah City Council)

**Apologies:** Angela Draper (Yarra Ranges Shire Council)  
Edward Marrinan (Neami National)  
Fiona Purcell (Outer Eastern Local Learning & Employment Network)  
Jennifer Small (Department of Education and Training)  
Jenny Royle (Outer Eastern Local Learning & Employment Network)  
Kirsten Jenkins (Maroondah City Council)  
Maggie Palmer (EACH)  
Rachel Hughes (Eastern Melbourne Primary Health Network)  
Rebecca Dunsdon (Migrant Information Centre)  
Vicki Bryce (Uniting Wesley)

**Apologies**

**1. Welcome and apologies**

- Acknowledgement of Country
- Welcome and Introductions

*Cr Tasa Damante (Chairperson)*

**2. Declaring a Conflict of Interest**

No conflicts of interest were declared.

*Cr Tasa Damante (Chairperson)*

**3. Confirmation of Minutes of last meeting**

Moved - Edwina Ricci, Seconded - Kevin Gregg-Rowan

*Cr Tasa Damante (Chairperson)*

#### **4. Business arising from last meeting**

*Cr Tasa Damante (Chairperson)*

A video highlighting the outcomes from the Appreciative Inquiry workshop, “Flourishing together: building wellbeing in Maroondah” has yet to be circulated. Peter Feeney confirmed that a video of the will soon be placed on the Communities of Wellbeing website.

#### **5. Update on Committee Charter**

*Phil Medley, Team Leader  
Council and Community  
Planning, Maroondah City  
Council*

Discussion was held on meeting frequencies for the second half of 2020 due to the forthcoming Council elections. There will be three meetings held during the 2020 calendar year rather than the usual four meetings. The Committee will reconvene in February 2021. Information can still be circulated to Committee members through Brian Tu.

The following dates for the 2020 meetings were proposed:

- Tuesday 19 May
- Tuesday 11 August

No objections were made around the dates and arrangements.

#### **6. Liveability and Wellbeing Strategy**

*Fiona Burridge, Acting Social  
Planning and Development  
Officer, Maroondah City Council*

Council's current Health and Wellbeing Plan is set to conclude in 2021. As a result, Council has an opportunity to develop a more holistic Liveability and Wellbeing Strategy that includes consideration of a broader range of community and social planning issues.

Fiona Burridge provided an update on achievements from the Maroondah Health and Wellbeing Plan 2017-2021 and the development of a new Maroondah Liveability and Wellbeing Strategy 2021-2031.

Eight key areas of focus have been identified for community consultation:

1. Community Learning
2. Healthy Lifestyle
3. Liveable Neighbourhoods
4. Safe communities
5. Social Inclusion
6. Social Influences
7. Sustainable Environments

A range of engagement methods have been applied to date to maximise input from across the local community.

#### Discussion

- A question was asked on the interest from community members when consulting at events and from different age groups. It was advised that there was a highly positive response from community members at events. People were engaged and taking time to complete the survey fully. There has been a great response from people aged 35 to 45. Efforts will turn to targeting forthcoming engagement with other age and population groups (e.g. distributing surveys through Meals on Wheels to target seniors).
- The input from various cultural groups was raised. Council's Citizenship ceremonies have been a great avenue for engagement with different cultures within our community represented. Further

work is being undertaken with Mullum Mullum Indigenous Gathering Place and key Burmese cultural groups. It was suggested that the Maroondah Chinese Seniors group and the Chin after school care program could be a good avenue given increasing numbers in this cohort. The Chin Community Leaders Network Meeting could be another useful consultation option.

- It was suggested that Council seek input from social welfare students at Swinburne Croydon on targeted engagement with specific population groups.
- The Strategy is also a good opportunity to consider formalising pathways for volunteering.

### Consultation

An engagement activity was undertaken with the Committee that considered the following questions:

1. *What are some of the key initiatives/programs offered to encourage the health & wellbeing of our community?*
2. *What are the areas that need addressing to ensure we continue to improve health and wellbeing in Maroondah?*
3. *How could we work together to help address these needs?*

An extensive list of current initiatives/programs was provided that gives Council possible consultation sources as well as knowledge on successful programs in the Maroondah community.

After further discussion, a few common themes arose from the groups with regards to the needs of our community:

- Addressing mental health needs
- Social isolation/loneliness
- Impacts of climate change
- Knowledge of and access to services
- Giving people a purpose

The input from this consultation will help to inform development of the Liveability and Wellbeing Strategy 2021-2031.

The group also identified a desire to work on future approaches to asset-based community development and promotion of volunteerism in Maroondah. These may form the basis of future discussions.

## **7. Croydon Structure Plan**

*Aman Mehta, Strategic Planner,  
Maroondah City Council*

Aman Mehta, Strategic Planner at Maroondah City Council, presented an overview of the current status of the Croydon Structure Plan. The Plan is a land use planning document to guide future land use and development of the area. It will support efforts to revitalise the centre and guide Council's capital works improvements in the area. The Plan will also consider issues of residential and commercial capacity to meet future needs.

Development of the Croydon Structure Plan involves a series of steps, including background research, preparation of a discussion paper on issues and opportunities, preparation of a draft structure plan and an implementation program.

The Croydon Structure Plan supports a "third place" for the community, that is, the social surroundings separate from the "first place" (home) and "second place" (workplace). Current boundaries of the Croydon Activity Area were identified as well as some of the key features of the area.

The Plan will consider population growth, demographic shifts, business and employment, transport and movement and business and activity spaces. The Plan will also consider a broad range of place associated issues with further engagement to be undertaken in the coming months.

The Plan is currently in the background research phase. This involves identifying some of the issues and opportunities in the Croydon Activity Centre area.

#### Consultation with Committee

The Committee discussed the following issues and opportunities in the area:

- Local park is being used for homeless people and for alcohol consumption. Victorian Chin Baptist Church is seeking to work with the local Burmese community but cannot build accommodation due to zoning of their land.
- There is a need for a basketball court in Croydon Park which could help provide a focus for young people in the area.
- There is no space for new groups in existing community facilities due to capacity constraints. This should be considered for future developments. Use of Dorset Reserve enables the public to play in the space. Croydon could apply a similar model.
- Use of land and sense of ownership by sporting clubs was raised. Creating a sense of ownership for community groups has benefits but can result in some groups being unable to access facilities.
- How can we promote higher standard of housing, prevent flooding, support resilience to climate change? Aman Mehta advised there will be a paper that considers climate proofing infrastructure in the structure plan area. In addition, Cr Mazzuchelli noted that drainage has been improved within the Croydon Structure Plan area by Council in recent years.
- New female changing facilities have been included in local sporting facility upgrades.
- There is potential in Croydon for a high quality interactive sustainable space that is similar to the Burwood Brickworks rooftop garden. This will require ownership of such a vision and its implementation.
- Consider how can we challenge status quo for public spaces e.g. community spaces that are friendly for Burmese communities?
- The model for East Ringwood Reserve has worked well with a mix of community and sporting user groups utilising the space. Could this model be applied to other facilities?
- What could be done with the structure plan area being dissected by Mt Dandenong Road resulting in separation in the community. Cr Damante described Council's plans for the Croydon Community Precinct that involve better connecting Croydon Park and Library area with Main Street, the new carpark and station precinct.
- It is important to consider supporting multiple demographics. There needs to be opportunities for playgroups and places for young families with children, neighbourhood spaces - not just sporting groups. Cr Damante advised that Council's redevelopment of sporting facilities typically incorporates multipurpose uses.

Committee members were encouraged to view the Croydon Community Precinct fly-through video on Council's website and the 3D model based at the Croydon library.

With reference to the presentation on the Croydon Structure Plan that has a significant focus on third places (public realm), a question was raised on what happens if the homeless people use the public realm as their home (first place) and work (second place) area. The members discussed that the Plan should identify that as an issue and consider appropriate options.

## 8. Chin Men's Health Promotion

*Presentation from Kham Lian,  
Community Engagement  
Worker, EACH*

Kham Lian, Community Engagement Officer at EACH presented to the group on the joint project between EACH and the Migrant Information Centre (MIC) to promote health among Chin Men in Maroondah. There is increasing unemployment, domestic violence, alcohol misuse, poor mental health within the men's Chin community. There are law and order issues, disengagement at school, untreated health issues, and a high risk of homelessness. As a result, the six-week Chin Men's Health Group program aims to upskill Burmese men in Maroondah and build their connections with health services.

Engagement with health and wellbeing services is comparatively low for this cohort, particularly young families. Community leaders have limited knowledge to support and educate families on how and where to receive help when issues escalate. Program facilitators are from Victoria Police, EACH and the Chin community.

The six-week Chin Men's Health Group Program involves:

- General car management
- Staying safe on the road
- Safe driving and health
- Practical car management
- Essential exercises for physical and mental wellbeing
- Skills on site

The Program has an evaluation process which involves pre and post testing of knowledge for participants. An evaluation of the program is to be sent to DHHS.

The main concern at present among Chin community members involves the prevalence of poor mental health. EACH and MIC are keen to work in educating this community and supporting them to address and prevent social isolation.

### Discussion

- A question was asked on the retention of participants throughout program. The program has had high retention rates with 12 completing the program, with another 9 expected to complete. It has been noted that it is more effective to have smaller focus groups.
- Viv Cunningham-Smith expressed a desire to work with Chin Community, particularly around community transport and encouraging volunteers.
- It was noted that the program is part of continuum of work related to health and wellbeing with the Hakha Chin community. There is a need to find topics to bring together men. MIC are looking to establish a train-the-trainer model around issues of mental health and gender equity.
- A question was raised whether if there's a correlation between length of time in Australia and issues arising? Kham responded that the biggest challenges are those who arrive in early teen years, rather than those who grow up here as they are usually more integrated.
- Kham Lian mentioned that Hughes Park in Croydon North is being well used as a base for the Australian Chin Community (ACC). Facilities are used seven days per week for futsal and/or volleyball.
- Judy McDougall noted that MIC is only funded to support people in the first five years of living in Australia, but many issues still arise with new migrants after this five-year period.
- The current education system presents issues to migrant young people (they are unrealistically expected to be at a certain level when entering the system).

- There are challenges for young people still learning how to speak English. Many families are supportive of the learning of English but there are high educational expectations on these students which can cause added pressures.
- English is not always spoken at home which can create a barrier between parents/kids i.e. kids don't want to go to church as don't always understand what is being said. Adult English classes are now being offered.
- It was noted that disengaged young people exist from all cultural backgrounds, not just newly arrived cultural groups.

#### Information Share

##### Phil Medley (Maroondah City Council)

- Council's Community Grants Program opens in March. Please see Council's website for details.
- A series of mental health workshops will be held in March, April and June. Details will be circulated with the minutes.

##### Vivienne Cunningham-Smith (Eastern Volunteers)

- Eastern Volunteers (EV) has been working with the Eastern Disability Action Group, which has recently been renamed as the Eastern Disability Advocacy Group.
- EV Program has recently commenced a new program aimed at encouraging students to volunteer.
- EV seeking board members to assist with a Maroondah based kindergarten.
- A new Disability Volunteering Program is being piloted.
- The Ready to Go Program has been active in recent months with a focus on supporting vulnerable people in time ahead of heat waves or extreme weather.
- A new Eastern Volunteer calendar has been launched.

##### Catherine Darcy (EACH)

- The recent launch of an aboriginal small grants program resulted in 63 local schools and early years settings take up funding aimed at creating culturally inclusive spaces.

Meeting closed at 11.55am

**Next meetings: May 19, August 11**