

OFFICERS REPORT**ADVOCACY FOR THE EXPANSION OF THE COMMONWEALTH COMMUNITY SPONSORSHIP PROGRAM**

Submitting Councillor: Cr Josh Fergeus

MOTION

That Council:

- 1) *Notes Amnesty International's advocacy for the expansion and improvement to the Commonwealth Government's Community Support Program;*
- 2) *Offers its support to Amnesty's advocacy efforts by writing to the Commonwealth Government, to request the future expansion and improvement of the Community Support Program, to assist refugees and people seeking asylum with their settlement in the City of Monash;*
- 3) *Requests that Australian Local Government Association (ALGA) write to local Federal Members of Parliament, Prime Minister the Hon. Scott Morrison, the leader of the Opposition the Hon. Anthony Albanese, and the Federal Minister of Immigration, Citizenship and Multicultural Affairs, the Hon. David Coleman, to call on improving and expanding the current Community Support Program (CSP) by:*
 - i adopting a more affordable visa structure for the CSP to make it more accessible to sponsors, including community organisations, families and businesses;*
 - ii making the CSP places additional to the current Government humanitarian program intake, in order to recognise the generosity of our communities and businesses, rather than shifting both the costs and responsibility to them*
 - iii providing adequate support and services to assist with re-settlement and community integration; and*
 - iv ensuring people in need of protection are prioritised to settle in Australia.*
- 4) *Submit a motion to the 2020 ALGA Assembly seeking expansion and improvement of the CSP as outlined above.*

BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

No impact to Council's budget is anticipated as a result of support for this Motion.

IMPACT ON INTERNAL RESOURCES

No impact on internal resources are anticipated as a result of support for this Motion.

COUNCIL PLAN AND COUNCIL POLICIES

In 2017 Council adopted *A Healthy & Resilient Monash: Integrated Plan 2017-2021* as the guiding strategic document. This Plan provides context to Council's work in relation to the health and wellbeing of the Monash community, including those from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

The City of Monash signed the Refugee Welcome Zone Declaration in 2002. A Refugee Welcome Zone is a local government area that has made a commitment to welcoming refugees into the community, upholding their human rights, demonstrating compassion and enhancing cultural and religious diversity in the community.

Monash Council has a strong commitment to its community, supports cultural diversity and values and respects the expression of difference. Monash Council has demonstrated significant leadership in the areas of multicultural policy development, service provision and support for culturally and linguistically diverse residents.

RELEVANCE TO WORK ALREADY UNDERTAKEN BY OFFICERS OR COMMITTEES

Monash Council has been a leading advocate on multicultural issues, including those relating to support for refugees and people seeking asylum and resettlement in Australia.

Monash officers work closely with a range of non-Government organisations and community service providers through formal networks such as the Monash Multicultural Settlement Services Network to ensure that refugees and asylum seekers living in the Monash area are well-supported.

FURTHER CONSIDERATIONS

There are no further considerations to be raised in relation to this proposed advocacy.

Officers are aware of local Monash community organisations who are currently sponsoring under the Community Support Program.