

OFFICERS REPORT**HOME TO BILOELA**

Submitting Councillor: Dr Josh Fergeus

MOTION

That Council:

- 1. Supports the return of Priya and Nades Murugappan and their daughters Kopika and Tharnicaa to their home in Biloela, in line with the wishes of their community;*
- 2. Writes to the Minister for Home Affairs, Karen Andrews MP, detailing Council's support for their return.*

BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

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

IMPACT ON INTERNAL RESOURCES

The Community Strengthening Department is regularly involved in advocacy activities and initiatives which support refugees and asylum seekers. It is assumed that advocacy would effectively be an extension of this work and therefore no additional impact on internal resources is anticipated as a result of 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.

This commitment to welcome refugees sends a positive message throughout the community, raises awareness and highlights the good work of Councils who are involved in implementing a range of policies, programs and activities to build more inclusive and socially cohesive communities.

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.

Monash Council does not tolerate racial discrimination of any kind and advocates for social justice and the humane and equitable treatment of all community members, regardless of visa status or cultural background.

RELEVANCE TO WORK ALREADY UNDERTAKEN BY OFFICERS OR COMMITTEES

This motion is in line with Council's commitment to multiculturalism and to the principles of human rights, access and equity and social justice.

When Monash Council became a Refugee Welcome Zone, it made a public commitment to welcome refugees into the community, to encourage empathy and understanding and to promote positive attitudes towards refugees and asylum seekers.

Monash Council has been a leading advocate on multicultural and social justice issues, including those relating to support refugees and asylum seekers. Monash Council is one of the lead Councils involved with the Local Government Mayoral Taskforce Supporting People Seeking Asylum, seeking to advocate for the rights of refugees and asylum seekers, mainly through improved policy implementation and service provision.

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 and are made to feel welcome in the community.

FURTHER CONSIDERATIONS

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