

6.1 Refugee Welcome Zone Leadership Councils

Submitting Councillor: Josh Fergeus

MOTION

That Council:

1. *Commits to becoming a Refugee Welcome Zone Leadership Council;*
2. *Allocates an amount of \$5000 in its recurrent budget for the purposes of membership with the Refugee Council of Australia as a Leadership Council, and;*
3. *Authorises Officers to undertake the necessary actions to fulfil this commitment.*

BACKGROUND/DISCUSSION

Council is an important organisation in the community and plays a vital role providing leadership on a range of substantive issues.

The City of Monash has made a commitment to welcoming refugees into the community, upholding the human rights of refugees, and demonstrating compassion for refugees as a result of signing the Refugee Welcome Zone Declaration in 2002.

Over recent years, Council has supported the Palm Sunday Walk for refugees, Amnesty Victoria's My New Neighbour campaign, and is a leading member within the Local Government Mayoral Taskforce on People Seeking Asylum.

RELEVANCE TO COUNCIL PRIORITIES

This report is in line with Council's commitment to multiculturalism and to the principles of human rights, access and equity and social justice. In practice Monash Council has demonstrated this commitment through the following initiatives:

- A Healthy and Resilient Monash: Integrated Plan 2017-2021
- Council Plan 2017-2021
- Council's position on the Executive of the Mayoral Taskforce on the Status Resolution Support Service (SRSS)
- Being a supporter of the 'Racism it Stops with Me' campaign since its introduction in 2012

- Being a signatory to the Refugee Welcome Zone Declaration since 2002 and as such having Monash declared a Refugee Welcome Zone
- Being a signatory to the Joint Statement in support of allocation of resources to Councils by the Australian Government to provide appropriate responses to the complex needs of asylum seekers living in our community
- Being a strong advocate against proposed amendments to the Racial Discrimination Act by the Australian Government
- Offering support to the Australian and Victorian Governments for the settlement of Syrian and Iraqi refugees in Australia and Victoria

CONCLUSION

As a Refugee Welcome Zone and a committed supporter of multiculturalism, human rights, inclusion and diversity, Council should contribute to the ongoing strength and direction of the Refugee Welcome Zone initiative by joining the group of RWZ Leadership Councils.

This will enable Council to be actively involved in the direction of the initiative and provide Council valuable support with our policy development and advocacy efforts.