



MINUTES – DRAFT UNTIL APPROVED

MEETING OF KNOX INTER-FAITH NETWORK

Held Monday 25 July 2011 at Knox Civic Centre

PRESENT:

Representatives of Faith Communities present:

(Secretary)	St Simons Catholic Church, Rowville
(Treasurer)	Temple Society Australia
	Temple Society Australia
	Director, Janssen Spirituality Centre, Boronia
	Janssen Spirituality Centre, Boronia
	Islamic Society of Melbourne, Eastern Region (ISOMER)
	Egyptian Coptic Church
plus	
Amy Gough	Knox Council, Access and Inclusion Officer

GUESTS

David Cohan	Blood 4 Harmony Program
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APOLOGIES:

(Vice-President)	Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints
	Uniting Church, FTG
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	Knox Presbyterian Church, Wantirna
Cr Sue McMillan	Knox City Council, Dobson Ward and Mayor

WELCOME AND OPENING PRAYER:

Peter opened the meeting at 7:45pm and the meeting started with a prayer by Michael.

1. INTRODUCTORY MATTERS

- 1.1 The agenda was agreed as drafted.

2. FUNDING FROM VMC / KNOX CDF GRANT APPLICATION

- 2.1 Mark confirmed that VMC (now OAMC - Office of Multicultural Affairs and Citizenship) have agreed to our request for funding to the value of \$3,000. We have the cheque.
- 2.2 The funding had conditions attached. This included tightening the geographical scope to have local implications and broadening the scope to cover two additional topics – the Golden Rule and local policing. It also requires three speakers (one from each faith) and a facilitator, with the latter to be approved by OAMC prior to the event.
- 2.3 The Executive has considered this and decided:
 - 2.3.1 To agree to the OAMC funding with the constraints.
 - 2.3.2 To consider applying for an additional grant from Knox Council under the Community Development Fund (CDF).

- 2.4 Mark has spoken with Knox Council staff about the possibility of funding.
- 2.5 The original topic and the added topic on The Golden Rule could be the subject of a successful funding application to Knox Council; the topic on local policing cannot be as it is a state service which cannot be funded through the CDF.
- 2.6 Mark, Gwenda and Riad met on Monday 18 July to discuss this possibility.
- 2.7 The event could be structured:
 - 2.7.1 An introduction.
 - 2.7.2 An overview of The Golden Rule – likely to be a single speaker for 30 minutes.
 - 2.7.3 A break.
 - 2.7.4 Three panel speakers – each for 15-20 minutes.
 - 2.7.5 Panel discussion session.
- 2.8 Discussion ensued about whether the Network should apply for funding under CDF.
- 2.9 **DECISION:** Network Members present decided to continue with an application.
- 2.10 Work continued on the CDF application, with Amy Gough not participating in the discussion to prevent any perceived or actual conflict of interest for all parties.

3. CHALLENGES FOR COPTIC CHRISTIANS IN EGYPT

- 3.1 Maher shared further information beyond what he had distributed prior to the meeting.
- 3.2 The Coptic community in Victoria numbers 30,000, with 8 churches in Melbourne; 4 of these churches are in south-eastern Melbourne. 150 Coptic families live in Rowville.
- 3.3 Maher is the Social Welfare Coordinator. He explained the basis on which some elements are persecuting the Coptic community in Egypt. He also gave some background on the demographic and socio-economic situation relevant to some challenges in Egypt, including the fact there is no social security. This allows people to be influenced by provision of small living allowances. A strict implementation of Sharia law would mean Copts are not permitted to worship in Egypt.
- 3.4 Should there be severe and ongoing repression, it is likely the Coptic community will eventually react, which will lead to a (one-sided) civil war.
- 3.5 Maher has arranged meetings with members of parliament, including the Hon. Alan Tudge, the federal member for Aston. At the meeting, concerns were raised about the plight faced by Copts in Egypt. Liberal Party policy relevant to the situation was explored and explained at the meeting. A motion proposed by the Victorian Coptic Community was presented; this has subsequently been approved by the Liberal Party for presentation to Federal Parliament after the winter recess.
- 3.6 Maher has also met with Labor Party parliamentarians to seek support (including the Hon. Martin Ferguson and the Hon. Anna Burke). The information will be presented to the Labor Party Caucus.
- 3.7 Riad noted he has also discussed the matter with his friends and colleagues and noted the need to consider all points of view in the discussion.

4. MINUTES/ACTIONS FROM LAST NETWORK MEETING

- 4.1 Minutes of meeting of 6 June 2011: Mark noted a minor change to item 7.2 – the statement attributed to Tina should have been attributed to Pat. Minutes moved for acceptance with this change: Gwenda; Seconded: Maher. Approved.
- 4.2 AGM follow-up – remaining Office-bearer position: no candidates.
- 4.3 Blood for Harmony Program

David outlined that he has made a booking for Network members to give blood. This is for 18 slots on Thursday 6 October, at the Wantirna centre, Seventh Day Adventist Community Centre, 119 Mountain Highway, Wantirna. These are for five slots at 6:30pm, five slots at 7:00pm, three slots at 7:10pm, and five slots at 7:20pm. People need to complete an enrolment form if they are not already registered blood donors. Such people should arrive 15 minutes before their booking. Bookings should be made through David Cohan on 9866 1804 or Blood4Harmony@live.com

ACTION: Members are encouraged to promote this event within their communities as appropriate – David is willing to provide support as required.

The cutoff date for making bookings through David to fill the slots is **22 September**.

Amy will also promote this at the EMRIN meeting.

Members present thanked David for his efforts.

4.4 Banner Design.

Mark outlined the reasons for the proposed changes based on input from a representative of the company which would prepare the banner. Network Members broadly supported the design with a suggestion (which Mark will follow up) about the colour of the text for the web-site.

4.5 La Trobe University Research

Peter reported that the researcher needed the more detailed information before the July meeting – no further action is required.

4.6 Treasurer's Report: Mark reported that the balance in the account as at 30 June 2011 was \$XXX. Cheques from Knox Council and OAMC were deposited in July.

5. EVENT REPORTS

- *150th Anniversary of the founding of the Temple Society (19 June 2011)*. Mark reported on a very successful event for the community; Peter attended the formal session representing the Knox Inter-faith Network
- *JCMA Residential Conference (3-6 July 2011)*. Riad reported on very successful conference. Robust discussions were held in a secure and safe environment.
- *South East Inter-faith Forum (20 July 2011)*. Riad reported on this meeting. The forum is looking at enhancing existing visits programs and looking to extend these beyond Dandenong. He noted that they might set up a central booking office. Riad also noted that Helen Heath had been awarded an OAM.

6. FUTURE ITEMS OF INTEREST

- Items presented in the agenda were noted.
- The next meeting of EMRIN is on Wednesday 27 July 2011. Amy will attend.

7. CONCRETE PLANS FOR 2011

- 7.1 No discussion based on the time needed to review the CDF application.

8. MATTERS OF COMMON INTEREST

- 8.1 *VINAC Conference (Sunday, 21 August)*. Gwenda has received communication from Marta Balan (on behalf of the organisers). Peter offered to receive communication and forward it to Network Members; attendance to be resolved over email. (Post-meeting note: Further correspondence has indicated a change in date for the event to 6 November – attendance to be resolved at the October meeting.)

8.2 *Knox Christmas Carols*

Amy has had a request from Belinda Gillam to consider the annual event. Council is requesting children from different communities to participate in lighting candles and is requesting contacts. Riad suggested Nigel Ross could be contacted for the Jewish Community and he could be contacted for the Islamic Community.

9. NEXT MEETINGS

Monday, 3 October 2011

Monday, 28 November 2011 (Joint meeting with KMAC)

Meeting closed at 10:30 pm.