

MULTICULTURAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE MINUTES

Wednesday 10 June 2026

1. Welcome and Acknowledgement of Country

Acknowledgement of Country was conducted by Mayor Cr Will Nemesh.

2. Present

Councillors	
Clr Will Nemesh	Mayor/Chair
Clr Keri Spooner	Deputy Mayor
Clr Ludovico Fabiano	Councillor
Clr Margaret Merten	Councillor
Community Members	
Anna F.	Community Member
Florence K.	Community Member
Elena S.	Community Member
Emmanuel D.	Community Member
Raphael C.	Community Member
Jingmin R.	Expert Member
Angela W.	Community Member
Robert G	Service Representative

Council officers in attendance to support the meeting, including:

- Rebecca Rodwell, Acting Executive Manager, Community Programs
- Ben Thompson, Director, Community, Culture and Customer Experience

3. Apologies

Clr Frazer, Clr Lewis (Deputy Chair), Clr Stephenson, Lana K., Rozy D., Katrina W.

4. Acceptance of previous minutes & business arising

The minutes were accepted via email. No business arising.

5. Declarations of Pecuniary and Non-Pecuniary Interests

NIL

6. Recovering from the Bondi terror attack

Council officers provided the latest update on Council's response and supports available to the community.

Council officers invited MAC members to visit the Bondi Pavilion Art Gallery to view the Holding Light exhibition before it closes on 28 June. Curated by the Shalom Collective and supported by Waverley Council, the exhibition brings together professional artists and community members in a creative, healing response to the Bondi Beach terror attack.

Three community wellbeing sessions 'Finding Strength in Difficult Times' were held on 13 May, 3 and 4 June in partnership with the NSW Government.

A special community Shabbat Dinner brought together 250 people at the Bondi Pavilion Courtyard on 29 May. The event was co-hosted by Waverley Council and the NSW Jewish Board of Deputies. Attendees included elected officials, members of the Jewish community, local faith representatives, first responders and other community members who expressed interest via a community ballot. The event attracted a high level of corporate and individual sponsorship. It was the first large-scale shabbat dinner organised by a local council and was very symbolic. Feedback received was very positive, MAC members commended Council for its efforts in bringing the community together and noted that the food was delicious. Security will continue to be an important consideration to help make the community feel safe. The event model could be applied for future events with a different theme.

A full-time Community Resilience and Engagement Coordinator was recruited to support community recovery activities thanks to funding from the NSW Reconstruction Authority. The position is embedded in the Community Programs team. Similar positions were funded with Chabad of Bondi, the NSW Jewish Board of Deputies, Kesser Torah College, Multicultural NSW, the National Council of Jewish Women NSW and Surf Life Saving NSW. In addition, funding was made available to support for some Resilience Support Services to deliver person-centred services with 54 Reasons Youth Services, Jewish Care, Jewish Family Centre, Jewish House, and the Junction Neighbourhood Centre.

Council officers invited MAC members to share feedback and suggestions on supporting community resilience:

- While events are thoughtful and well organised, community members are not necessarily aware of them or learn about the events too late.
- Council is also encouraged to expand its work on supporting dialogue and creating more awareness of different religions, in partnership with faith leaders to reduce the pressure on the affected community to do the work.

- There is an opportunity to make the broader community more inclusive and supportive with a focus on shared values with potential training.
- Community sentiment is changing with some wanting to live in the present and focus on the future and others needing time to reflect and remember the terror attack. Council's role in navigating this is critical.
- A query was raised about memorialisation. While initial conversations have happened, Waverley Council will be supported by the NSW Government with this complex process.
- Local businesses also need to be supported.
- While the terror attack happened in Bondi, this is a broader issue that needs to involve all of local government together.
- It is important for Council to pre-empt any negative remarks related to the National Local Government Summit on Social Cohesion and co-hosted with the Combat Antisemitism Movement.

The summit will be held on November 26 and 27 and bring together mayors, councilors, senior officers and community representatives.

7. Council's broader diversity initiatives

Council officers noted recent events held since the last meeting:

- Perfect Strangers on World Art Day
- Culture Waves Cross-City program

Council officers mentioned that Jingmin was a participating artist in the latest Perfect Strangers event. Feedback was very positive, demonstrating the need to create more opportunities for community members to connect more meaningfully.

The Culture Waves Cross-City Program brought 26 high school students from the Liverpool and Bondi area on 21 May. The program day was held in Bondi Beach and included a visit to the Holding Light exhibition. The second and last program day will be held in late June in Liverpool.

Waverley Council is considering the future of the program given that the Australian Government has recently committed funding to an organisation to work with schools over the next few years.

8. Upcoming events and initiatives

Council officers raised upcoming events and initiatives, which will be shared by email:

- Refugee Week Talk on 18 June at Waverley Library
- Unveiling of memorial plaque for the Hungarian community at Waverley Park

- Bondi Festival starting on 3 July
- NAIDOC Week film screening on 10 July at Waverley Library
- Feedback on Draft Bondi Junction Vision and Master Plan by 24 June.

9. Other business

Waverley Council was a finalist for eight projects at the NSW Local Government Excellence Awards and won the award for Customer Excellence.

The MAC also moved a motion to congratulate Madly B. on her recent win for the Individual Award at the Welcoming Australia Awards for embedding diversity and inclusion into everyday council practice through community engagement and storytelling.

MAC members were invited to continue to share any suggestions on supporting resilience after the meeting.

10. Next Meeting

Next meeting date to be confirmed by email.

Meeting closed at 7.21pm.