

Notice of Motion: Cr Dr Olivia Ball, Access to Council library services for immigration detainees in the municipal community

Motion

1. That the Future Melbourne Committee:
 - 1.1. Recognises that the City of Melbourne’s Refugee Welcome Zone Action Plan provides for a “whole-of-Council approach [to] how the City of Melbourne supports people from a refugee background and people seeking asylum living in our community”; and
 - 1.2. Asks management to endeavour to provide persons detained in the Park Hotel, or any other alternative place of detention in our municipality, with access to the programs and services normally available through City of Melbourne libraries, as far as is practicable, including, where possible, a mobile borrowing service visiting the site(s) on a routine basis to enable access to library materials; and strive to make detainees aware of these services.

Background

2. Access and affordability are central to the 2021-25 Council Plan, with particular regard for vulnerable groups. Our Health and Wellbeing Plan prioritises mental wellbeing and inclusion by ensuring ‘core services are accessible and affordable to everyone, with special attention to mental health, lifelong education and internet services.’
3. Council services are for everyone in the municipal community. The ‘municipal community’ includes “people who live in the municipal district of the Council.” Councils must “plan and deliver services to the municipal community” (*Local Government Act 2020*, ss 3 and 106).
4. Council is developing a new Inclusion Strategy, inclusive of a Diversity Plan and consideration of future Refugee Welcome Zone Action Plan initiatives, and this Strategy is some months from completion.
5. Our libraries have adapted to lockdowns by providing click and collect services, expanding the online collection and creating ‘pop up’ libraries, revitalising our city and increasing the reach of library services. Our librarians are leaving their conventional premises and taking library services to where people are to maximise access and inclusion.
6. The City of Darebin provided online library services and resources to immigration detainees when they resided at the Mantra Hotel in Preston. In December 2020, detainees were moved to the Park Hotel in Swanston St, with more arriving since and some leaving detention.
7. Libraries contribute to social inclusion and support the educational and economic wellbeing of individuals and communities. This motion seeks to increase accessibility, support adult education and mental wellbeing, and build community and cohesion for refugees and people claiming refugee status.

Moved by: Cr Dr Olivia Ball

Seconded by: Cr Jamal Hakim