



Community Engagement

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VIC – Community Liaison Officer Engagement Report

Event	s. 47F(1)
Meeting details	s. 47F(1)
Principal attendees	• s. 47F(1) • s. 47F(1) • s. 47F(1) • The Hon Julian Hill MP – Federal Member for Bruce and Assistant Minister for Citizenship and Multicultural Affairs • The Hon Cassandra Fernando MP – Federal Member for Holt • The Hon Dr Michelle Ananda Rajah MP – Federal Member for Higgins (May 2022 – March 2025) • The Hon Brad Battin MP – State Member for Berwick • The Hon Lee Tarlamis MP – State MLC for South Eastern Metropolitan • The Hon Ann-Marie Hermans MP – State MLC for South Eastern Metropolitan • Cr Stefan Koomen – Mayor, City of Casey • Cr Rhonda Garad – Member for Cleeland Ward, City of Greater Dandenong • s. 22(1)(a)(ii) – Community Liaison Officer, Dept. of Home Affairs
Significance	s. 22(1)(a)(ii)
Key issue/s	Description or background of event attended Inter-faith or inter-ethnic tension within/between communities
Background	s. 22(1)(a)(ii) s. 22(1)(a)(ii) s. 22(1)(a)(ii)
Description or background of event attended ▪ s. 22(1)(a)(ii)	

s. 22(1)(a)(ii)

- s. 22(1)(a)(ii)

- s. 22(1)(a)(ii)

Speeches

- s. 22(1)(a)(ii)

- s. 22(1)(a)(ii)

- s. 22(1)(a)(ii)

- s. 22(1)(a)(ii)

Inter-faith or inter-ethnic tension within/between communities

- s. 22(1)(a)(ii)

- s. 47E(d)

- s. 22(1)(a)(ii)

- s. 22(1)(a)(ii)

Analysis/observations	
• s. 22(1)(a)(ii) [REDACTED]	
• s. 22(1)(a)(ii) [REDACTED]	
Follow-up	
s. 22(1)(a)(ii) [REDACTED]	
For more information/ feedback:	s. 22(1)(a)(ii), Community Liaison Officer, VIC
TRIM file	s. 22(1)(a)(ii) [REDACTED]

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From: [Mark GROOTE](#)
To: s. 22(1)(a)(ii)
Subject: FW: Home Affairs involvement w/Dandenong council matter [SEC=OFFICIAL]
Date: Saturday, 24 May 2025 9:02:52 PM
Attachments: s. 22(1)(a)(ii)
[Home Affairs sent in over Dandenong bazaar furore.pdf](#)
s. 22(1)(a)(ii)

OFFICIAL

Hi Team

For your visibility – a few articles from tonight.

I've been messaging with AM Hill this evening, and have just provided him with what we sent to The Age. He has concerns the council aren't separating the issue of street naming and our assistance enough, and I've agreed that I'll talk to council to reiterate our position on Monday.

s. 22(1)(a)(ii) – thanks so much for your work this afternoon in preparing the response!

Cheers
Mark

Mark Groote
First Assistant Secretary | Office of Community Cohesion
Department of Home Affairs

M: s. 22(1)(a)(ii)

I am sending this email at a time that is convenient for me, and don't expect you to respond outside of your working hours.

OFFICIAL

From: s. 22(1)(a)(ii) @homeaffairs.gov.au>
Sent: Saturday, 24 May 2025 8:20 PM
To: Mark GROOTE s. 22(1)(a)(ii) @HOMEAFFAIRS.GOV.AU>
Subject: Home Affairs involvement w/Dandenong council matter

Good evening Mark,

Please find attached a PDF of the article: 'Home Affairs sent in over Dandenong bazaar furore'.

It is also available at the following link: <https://links.streem.com.au/brisbane-times-20250524-QBmR8dGTTkGtOU1hVhRhkQrKm9>

I have included the response which went to the journalist for your reference, and I have included the noting email from OMHA's office.

Yours sincerely,

s. 22(1)(a)(ii)

Director Media and Social Media.

From: s. 22(1)(a)(ii)
To: s. 22(1)(a)(ii)
Subject: FW: SOSOG meeting [SEC=OFFICIAL:Sensitive]
Date: Tuesday, 29 July 2025 4:48:45 PM
Attachments: [SOSOG Agenda - 2 April 2025.docx](#)
[image001.jpg](#)
[Attachment A - Social Cohesion Operational Plan - City of Greater Dandenong - Ethnic Tensions within Diaspora Commu.docx](#)

s. 22(1)(a)(ii)

OFFICIAL: Sensitive

OFFICIAL: Sensitive

From: s. 22(1)(a)(ii) <s. 22(1)(a)(ii)@homeaffairs.gov.au>
Sent: Tuesday, 1 April 2025 9:14 AM
To: Mark GROOTE <s. 22(1)(a)(ii)@HOMEAFFAIRS.GOV.AU>
Cc: s. 22(1)(a)(ii) <s. 22(1)(a)(ii)@homeaffairs.gov.au>; s. 22(1)(a)(ii) <s. 22(1)(a)(ii)@homeaffairs.gov.au>; s. 22(1)(a)(ii) <s. 22(1)(a)(ii)@homeaffairs.gov.au>
Subject: FW: SOSOG meeting [SEC=OFFICIAL:Sensitive]

OFFICIAL: Sensitive

Hi Mark

With thanks to s. 22(1)(a)(ii) for preparing these points, please see the below and attached to support you in the SOSOG meeting on Wednesday 2 April from 2:00 – 4:00pm (CBR time).

Kind regards

s. 22(1)(a)(ii)

s. 22(1)(a)(ii)

A/g Executive Officer to Mark Groote
First Assistant Secretary | Office of Community Cohesion
Strengthening Democracy Taskforce
Department of Home Affairs
M: s. 22(1)(a)(ii)
E: s. 22(1)(a)(ii)@homeaffairs.gov.au | s. 22(1)(a)(ii)@homeaffairs.gov.au

cid:image001.jpg@01D869CB.3C4E1F60

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From: S. 22(1)(a)(ii) <[REDACTED]@homeaffairs.gov.au>
Sent: Monday, 31 March 2025 5:46 PM
To: S. 22(1)(a)(ii) <[REDACTED]@homeaffairs.gov.au>
Subject: FW: SOSOG meeting [SEC=OFFICIAL:Sensitive]

OFFICIAL: Sensitive

Hi [REDACTED] s. 22(1)(a)(ii)

Some dot points ahead of Wednesday's SOSOG meeting for Mark G as requested:

- In mid-November 2024, Assistant Minister Hill requested the Department undertake a deep dive on broader social cohesion issues associated with newly arrived migrants from Afghanistan since the Fall of Kabul in August 2021.
- At the Ministerial Forum on Multicultural Affairs on 6 December 2024, Refugee, Humanitarian and Settlement Division (RHSD) agreed to lead a project with state/territory government counterparts as part of the SOSOG work program – see: [Ministerial Forum on Multicultural Affairs – Communiqué](#). The projects aims to:
 - Map out the settlement programs provided by various levels of government
 - Analyse gaps in availability of settlement support services
 - Identify challenges around access to these services by the Afghan community.
- In December 2024, RHSD produced the Afghan community cohesion paper in December 2024.
 - As part of the project, RHSD indicated they would select two or three Local Government Areas in Victoria and NSW that have a high concentration of Afghan arrivals to explore any emerging issues and/or difficulties around access to services by newly-arrived Afghans to ascertain gaps in access/service provision.
- In January 2025, some Hazara business traders in the Thomas Street Cultural Precinct in Dandenong approached the City of Greater Dandenong Council to rename the precinct known since 2006 as the 'Afghan Bazaar'.
 - Tensions have since escalated with reports of death threats and physical altercations at schools, parks, pools, community organisations and businesses, with community leaders and the local council growing increasingly concerned

about community safety and cohesion.

- On 19 February 2025, Assistant Minister Hill contacted Regional Director VIC/TAS Melissa Kay to advise of growing tension and escalation of violence between ethnic communities from Afghanistan in central Dandenong.
 - This outreach coincided with the Mayor of Greater Dandenong, Cr Jim Memeti, writing to AM Hill's office seeking:
 - A meeting with elders from various diaspora communities from Afghanistan to issue a joint statement calling for calm and respectful behaviour. This meeting and a joint media release took place on 21 February 2025.
 - A tripartite working group, led by the Victorian Multicultural Commission, engaging women, youth and other community members from Afghanistan, to promote cohesion, settlement and integration.
 - Funding to the Victorian Multicultural Commission or Department of Premier and Cabinet Victoria to support the aforementioned project.
- On 13 March 2025, you met with the City of Greater Dandenong to discuss Council concerns and proposed initiative to strengthen social cohesion in collaboration with neighbouring councils – City of Casey and Shire of Cardinia.
 - The Office of Community Cohesion has agreed to provide an independent facilitator to help the three Councils run workshops to promote unity, respectful dialogue and social cohesion.
 - Current discussions are underway with the Victorian Multicultural Commission and three Councils to progress next steps, including establishing a Steering Group.
- RHSD see the SOSG project less of a separate piece of work but more something that can help inform/support further action over the longer term.

Attachments:

Attachment A – Social Cohesion Operational Plan – Ethnic tensions within diaspora communities from Afghanistan (Mar 2025)

s. 22(1)(a)(ii)

Thanks,

s. 22(1)(a)(ii)

s. 22(1)(a)(ii)

Director Engagement | Office of Community Cohesion
Executive Group

Department of Home Affairs

P: s. 22(1)(a)(ii) | M: s. 22(1)(a)(ii)

E: s. 22(1)(a)(ii) [@homeaffairs.gov.au](mailto:s.22(1)(a)(ii)@homeaffairs.gov.au)



OFFICIAL: Sensitive

Social Cohesion Operational Plan: City of Greater Dandenong – Ethnic Tensions within Diaspora Communities from Afghanistan

Date	19 March 2025	Version: 2
Contact Officer: Mark Groote First Assistant Secretary, Office of Community Cohesion	Ph: S. 22(1)(a)(ii)	

Background

- Afghanistan is home to several ethnic groups, with Pashtuns, Tajiks, Hazaras, Uzbeks and other ethnicities competing for political power, territory and resources. These tensions were amplified during the Taliban's rule in Afghanistan from 1994 to 2001 when they increased their persecution of minorities including Hazaras. These divisions further intensified following the withdrawal of the United States Armed Forces from Afghanistan and the Taliban's return to power in August 2021.
- In Australia, ethnic tensions have played out in diaspora communities from Afghanistan. Pashtuns, Tajiks, Hazaras and Uzbeks from Afghanistan often remain divided along ethnic lines, with their respective community organisations reflecting these divisions through their membership base, naming practices and advocacy.
- In Victoria, there has been a reported increase in ethnic-related conflict among young people arriving from Afghanistan since the fall of Kabul in August 2021. Victoria Police report an increase in young people from Afghanistan engaging in anti-social and criminal behaviour, and consequently coming into contact with the justice system.
- In January 2025, some Hazara business traders in the Thomas Street Cultural Precinct in the City of Greater Dandenong approached the Council to rename the precinct known since 2006 as the 'Afghan Bazaar'. Tensions have since escalated with reports of death threats and physical altercations at schools, parks, pools, community organisations and businesses, with community leaders and the local council growing increasingly concerned about community safety and cohesion.

Home Affairs response

- The Department of Home Affairs Regional Director VIC/TAS, Community Liaison Officer (CLO) network, Settlement Operations Network, and Countering Foreign Interference Coordination Centre (CFICC) are actively engaged with diaspora communities from Afghanistan in Victoria and service providers supporting communities.
- The Department's Office of Community Cohesion has convened several meetings with Victorian Government agencies, Council, and law enforcement agencies to address growing social cohesion concerns in the Greater Dandenong area.

S. 47E(d)

Council Response

- On 19 February 2025, Mayor Jim Memeti of the City of Greater Dandenong wrote a letter to the Assistant Minister for Citizenship and Multicultural Affairs, the Hon Julian Hill MP, and the Victorian State Minister for Multicultural Affairs, Ingrid Stitt MLC, detailing the divisions within diaspora communities from Afghanistan, and seeking an urgent meeting with community leaders and key government stakeholders.
- On 21 February 2025, the City of Greater Dandenong coordinated an Afghanistan diaspora community leaders' forum which included the Department of Home Affairs Regional Director VIC/TAS (representing Assistant Minister Hill) and CLO, alongside Victoria Police, Australian Federal Police (AFP), faith leaders and community representatives from the Afghanistan diaspora.
- On 21 February 2025, the City of Greater Dandenong issued a media release calling for peace and calm in the community. A joint statement was signed by those attending the community leaders' forum reiterating calls for calm.
- On 11 March 2025, the City of Greater Dandenong held their Council meeting online due to security concerns and based on advice from Victoria Police.
- On 13 March 2025, the City of Greater Dandenong issued a media release detailing next steps in setting up a community dialogue. The Council is seeking resources and funding from the Commonwealth and State Governments to commence the consultation process. Refer **Attachment B** for the Council's draft proposal, which was shared with the Department on 18 March 2025.

Victorian Government response

- Stakeholders within the Victorian Government share concerns of the escalation in tension within diaspora communities from Afghanistan in the Greater Dandenong area, and are currently exploring ways to support the Council and local community.
- Department of Home Affairs Regional Director VIC/TAS and the Office of Community Cohesion is scheduled to meet with the Department of Premier and Cabinet and Victorian Multicultural Commission on 20 March 2025 to discuss collaboration opportunities and co-funding options, to ensure a joined up approach to any support.

Law enforcement response

- Victoria Police is currently monitoring the situation, and will continue to engage with relevant community and government stakeholders.
- AFP has encouraged stakeholders to report any foreign interference concerns to the National Security Hotline in accordance with standard practice.

Media

- How ethnic and religious divides in Afghanistan are contributing to violence against minorities (25 October 2021)
- Consideration of the name of the Cultural Precinct around Thomas Street | Greater Dandenong Council (13 February 2025)
- Tensions rise over TikTok threat | Dandenong Star Journal (10 March 2025)
- Mayor Sets Out Next Steps for Community Dialogue | Greater Dandenong Council (17 March 2025)

Key lines of effort to protect social cohesion

1. **Public communications:** Ensuring we have a proactive communications strategy to promote calm, unity and confidence.
2. **Engaging with the community:** Ensuring we have open engagement channels to hear the concerns of affected communities.
3. **Engaging with Victorian and Local Governments:** Ensuring our plan is informed by, and coordinated with, state government agencies.

Response Plan

Preliminary actions

- Joint statement signed by City of Greater Dandenong, Victoria Police and community leaders from Afghanistan calling for calm and reiterating the importance of community safety and peace.
- AFP and CFICC have encouraged concerned members of the community and the Council to report any allegations of foreign interference to the National Security Hotline.
- Council invited to outline settlement issues and gaps directly to Assistant Secretary Settlement.
- The Office of Community Cohesion has joined Regional Director VIC/TAS, CLO network and Assistant Secretary Settlement Branch to brief the City of Greater Dandenong Council on the draft whole-of-society Social Cohesion Engagement Framework to empower the Council to use it to conduct consultations with women, youth and community leaders.

Forward Plan

- Engage with the Victorian Department of Premier and Cabinet and Victorian Multicultural Commission (meeting scheduled 20 March 2025) to scope intercultural facilitator services to work with the Council and communities in the Greater Dandenong area.
 - The Department is looking to support Council through funding to employ an intercultural facilitator for 3 months to work with Council in developing the Steering Group and Engagement Strategy to meet the diaspora communities' needs. The Engagement Strategy will be informed by the Social Cohesion Engagement Framework and associated resources.
 - Supports **Stage One** and **Stage Two** in the Council's Proposal at **Attachment B**.
- The intercultural facilitator would advise and work with Council and Victorian Government to create an environment in which open and respectful exchange of views between individuals and groups with different ethnic, cultural, religious and linguistic backgrounds and heritage, on the basis of mutual understanding and respect.
 - Supports **Stage One** and **Stage Two** in the Council's Proposal at **Attachment B**.
- The Office of Community Cohesion plan to assess and monitor the effectiveness of the approach taken to support the City of Greater Dandenong, and consider applying the model to address other community cohesion issues across the country.
 - Supports **Stage Three** in the Council's Proposal at **Attachment B**.
- The Office of Community Cohesion and Regional Director VIC/TAS plan to brief support service providers in Dandenong on the Social Cohesion Engagement Framework, in particular organisations supporting young people and women s. 47F(1).
- Regional Director VIC/TAS to work with CLO Coordination and Reporting Section to ensure messaging is distributed to the CLO Network. Regional Director VIC/TAS will also brief Regional Directors across the network on current tensions should the issue manifest as heightened tensions in other jurisdictions.
- CLO Coordination and Reporting Section will support the coordination of communication and messaging to respective communities, and will monitor CLO reporting for relevant feedback.

Ongoing engagement

- CLO network, Regional Director VIC/TAS, Office of Community Cohesion, and Settlement Branch to continue engagement with relevant community stakeholders in the Greater Dandenong area.
- Regional Director VIC/TAS and the Office of Community Cohesion to continue engaging the Victorian Government and Council to support the co-design of the Engagement Strategy developed with the Social Cohesion Engagement Framework.

Further information

Multicultural Grants/Funding arrangements

- Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications and the Arts, Stronger Communities Programme Round 9
- Department of Home Affairs, Community Funding to Support Social Cohesion Initiatives

Settlement Support Project

- As agreed at the Ministerial Forum on Multicultural Affairs on 6 December 2024, the Department is leading a project with state/territory government counterparts as part of the work program for the Senior Officials Settlement Outcomes Group (SOSOG) to:
 - map out the settlement programs provided by various levels of government
 - analyse gaps in availability of settlement support services
 - identify challenges around access to these services by the diaspora communities from Afghanistan.
- The Settlement Support Project will inform and support longer-term actions in the Forward Plan above and the Council's detailed proposal at **Attachment B**.

CLEARANCE:

Cleared by	Title	Date cleared
s. 22(1)(a)(ii) [REDACTED]	Senior Director, Office of Community Cohesion	19/03/2025

CONSULTED:

Cleared by	Title	Date cleared
Melissa Kay	Regional Director VIC/TAS	19/03/2025
Meredith Byron	Multicultural Policy and Engagement	19/03/2025
Zoe Williams	Settlement	19/03/2025

From: s. 22(1)(a)(ii)
To: s. 22(1)(a)(ii)
Cc: s. 22(1)(a)(ii) s. 22(1)(a)(ii)
Subject: FW: URGENT: for review 27/2 AM Hill advice on social cohesion plan for Afghan communities in Dandenong [SEC=OFFICIAL:Sensitive]
Date: Wednesday, 5 March 2025 9:53:33 AM
Attachments: [image001.jpg](#)
s. 22(1)(a)(ii)
[City of Greater Dandenong - 04MAR2025.docx](#)
Importance: High

OFFICIAL: Sensitive

Hi s. 22(1)(a)(ii)

Some rough notes from yesterday's meeting with Council.

Next steps:

- RD VIC/TAS reaching out to Victorian government for clarity on their response plan – refer email trail attached.
- OCC to consider dove-tailing resources tailored from draft Social Cohesion Engagement Framework at end of month into any consultations being planned/funded by Council or state government (tbc).

S. 47E(d)

Happy to discuss further anytime.

Thanks,

s. 22(1)(a)(ii)

s. 22(1)(a)(ii)

Director Engagement | Office of Community Cohesion
Executive Group

Department of Home Affairs

P s. 22(1)(a)(ii) | M: s. 22(1)(a)(ii)

E s. 22(1)(a)(ii)@homeaffairs.gov.au

City of Greater Dandenong

4 March 2025 (3:30pm – 4pm)

Microsoft Teams

Attendees:

- s. 47F(1) [REDACTED], City of Greater Dandenong
- s. 47F(1) [REDACTED] City of Greater Dandenong
- Melissa Kay – Regional Director VIC/TAS, Department of Home Affairs
- s. 22(1)(a)(ii) – A/g Director Strategic Engagement VIC/TAS, Home Affairs
- s. 22(1)(a)(ii) – Community Liaison Officer, Home Affairs
- s. 22(1)(a)(ii) – Director Engagement, Office of Community Cohesion, Home Affairs

Key points raised:

- In 2007-08, Council started cultural tours as part of revitalisation efforts across the municipality.
- Traders in Thomas Street wanted similar a cultural tour to what was created for *Little India*, a cultural precinct also in the City of Greater Dandenong.
- Based on community consultations at the time, Council decided upon the camel symbol and naming of the *Afghan Bazaar*.
- In 2014, works were undertaken to improve the streetscape. Council went through further rounds of consultation with the community – where they first became aware that some Hazara traders wanted the name changed.
- Hazaras do not consider the term Afghan or Afghanistan represents their tribe/ethnicity.
- There was also strong opposition about the camel symbol – as this is more representative of Pashtuns than Hazaras.
- This led to the removal of the camel symbol from the sign – the hesitation was more around the camel than the name.
- *Afghan Bazaar* and *Little India* are just trading marks.
- In the past, some Hazaras were hesitant to engage with the Council due to uncertainty in their visa status.
- Four or five weeks in one of the public housing meetings at Council, one of the community members proposed to change the name of the cultural precinct in Thomas Street from *Afghan Bazaar* to *Little Bamyán*.
- Council Director as part of usual process in public question time advised the name had been through a process.
- One of the Councillors stood up and expressed admiration for the courage of the Hazaras in raising issues.
- Since then, the Council has been bombarded with petitions. Two groups have formed – one seeking to change the name, the other seeking to keep the name.
- Tension in the Council Chamber last Monday was hotter than the last fortnight. Temperature going up.
- s. 47F(1) [REDACTED]

- Triggered the Councillors and CEO that they must do something.
- Mayor called for peace talk last week – invited 20 people – 10 that support the change of name, 10 that do not. 20 leaders signed statement calling for peace.
- Thankful of RD and CLO, Victoria Police.
- Councillor wants to bring notice of motion next Tuesday night (11 March) – public Council meeting. Working with police to ensure safety of staff, community and Councillor.

Options put forward by Council:

- Formally register the name of the precinct – precinct was originally named more for branding and marketing purposes.
 - Believe this won't resolve the problem or tension.
- Council has lost trust with the community and will be perceived as being biased.
- Already seeing some community members abandoning the shops.
- Council seeking support from Commonwealth and Victorian state government to demonstrate the three tiers of government all promote social cohesion.
- Council is not anticipating to lead the consultation process – they are hoping for funds to arrange a third party, independent facilitator to lead the dialogue.
- Tight timeframe – if Council do not receive a commitment by next Tuesday, they may be left with the least preferred option of formally registering the precinct.
- Intend to write to AM Hill and Victorian state government later today.
- Council keen to focus on themes that would unite them – parked the issue of the name.

Office of Community Cohesion input:

- Outlined whole-of-society Social Cohesion Engagement Framework and offered to tailor resources to support Council, community leaders or third-party facilitator address current community tensions.
- Noted draft Framework will be received at the end of the month.
- Made clear that the decision to name/rename (or not name at all) precinct rests with local Council.

Regional Director

- Promised to follow up Victorian Government to find out what they are planning, noting Council is needing to know whether funding is available ahead of the next Council meeting on Tuesday 11 March.

s. 22(1)(a)(ii)

Director Engagement

Office of Community Engagement



Australian Government
Department of Home Affairs

Submission

For decision

PDMS Ref. Number: MS25-000537

Date of Clearance: 19/03/2025

To Assistant Minister for Citizenship and Multicultural Affairs
Subject Community Concerns Cultural Precinct Thomas Street Dandenong
Timing At your earliest convenience

Recommendations

That you:

1. note the attached Social Cohesion Operational Plan (SCOP) to support the City of Greater Dandenong Council and diaspora communities from Afghanistan at **Attachment A**; noted / please discuss
2. note the attached proposal from the City of Greater Dandenong Council to strengthen community cohesion at **Attachment B**; and noted / please discuss
3. note the Department of Home Affairs (the Department) will respond directly to the letter from Mayor Jim Memeti outlining the agreed actions in the SCOP. noted / please discuss

See comments.

Assistant Minister for Citizenship and Multicultural Affairs

s. 47F(1)

Signature..

Date: 21/3/2025

Assistant Minister's Comments

As per further verbal advice, please conceive of this as a broader community development exercise in SE Melbourne and seek to engage the City of Casey as a key partner. The Commonwealth has broader equities as have outlined, beyond just the CoGD proposal (and planning is a local responsibility of course). My want to engage Caledonian Shire as well.

s. 47F(1)

Released by Department of Home Affairs under the Freedom of Information Act 1982

Key Issues

1. On 19 February 2025, the Mayor of Greater Dandenong, Jim Memeti, wrote to your office seeking:
 - A meeting with elders from various diaspora communities from Afghanistan to issue a joint statement calling for calm and respectful behaviour. This meeting and a joint media release took place on 21 February 2025.
 - A tripartite working group, led by the Victorian Multicultural Commission, engaging women, youth and other community members from Afghanistan, to promote cohesion, settlement and integration.
 - Funding to the Victorian Multicultural Commission or Department of Premier and Cabinet Victoria to support the aforementioned project.
2. On 21 February 2025, the Mayor of Greater Dandenong, Jim Memeti, held a meeting with Afghanistan diaspora community leaders, where a joint media release was drafted and signed by attendees. The Department's Regional Director VIC/TAS attended on your behalf, along with the Melbourne-based Community Liaison Officer (CLO) for communities from Afghanistan.
3. On 21 February 2025, you requested that:
 - the Department draft a Social Cohesion Response Plan (refer **Attachment A**); and
 - the aforementioned letter from the Mayor of Greater Dandenong, Jim Memeti, be treated as formal correspondence;
 - this has been registered as MC25-005792 and the Department will respond directly, outlining the actions in the Social Cohesion Operational Plan.
4. On 5 March 2025, you asked the Department to engage with councils and the Victorian Government to explore a broader process to engage the community in a positive and enduring way, to ensure all people from Afghanistan settle in well to life in Australia.
 - Please refer to the Forward Plan (within the Social Cohesion Operational Plan) at **Attachment A** and Council Proposal in **Attachment B**.
5. On 18 March 2025, the City of Greater Dandenong Council submitted a proposal for strengthening community cohesion following a meeting with the Department on 13 March.
 - The proposal has been considered and incorporated in the approach.

Background

6. Afghanistan is home to several ethnic groups, with Pashtuns, Tajiks, Hazaras, Uzbeks and other ethnicities competing for political power, territory and resources. These tensions were amplified during the Taliban's rule in Afghanistan from 1994 to 2001 when they increased their persecution of minorities including Hazaras. These divisions further intensified following the United States Armed Forces withdrawal from Afghanistan and the Taliban's return to power in August 2021.

7. In Australia, these ethnic tensions have played out in diaspora communities from Afghanistan. Pashtuns, Tajiks, Hazaras and Uzbeks from Afghanistan often remain divided along ethnic lines, with their respective community organisations reflecting these divisions through their membership base, naming practices and advocacy.
8. Stakeholders report an increase in ethnic related conflict among young people from Afghanistan coinciding with the arrivals since the Fall of Kabul in August 2021. There are also reports of an increase in young people engaging in anti-social and criminal behaviour, and consequently coming into contact with the justice system.
9. In January 2025, some Hazara business traders in the Thomas Street Cultural Precinct in Dandenong approached the City of Greater Dandenong Council to rename the precinct known since 2006 as the 'Afghan Bazaar'. Tensions have since escalated with reports of death threats and physical altercations at schools, parks, pools, community organisations and businesses, with community leaders and the local council growing increasingly concerned about community safety and cohesion.

Consultation – Internal/External

10. Internal – Regional Director VIC/TAS, Community Engagement VIC, CLO Coordination, Settlement Branch, and Countering Foreign Interference Coordination Centre.
11. External – Victoria Police, Victorian Multicultural Commission, Department of Premier and Cabinet, AFP and City of Greater Dandenong Council.

Consultation – Secretary / Associate Secretary Immigration / ABF Commissioner

12. The Secretary was consulted on this submission.
13. The ABF Commissioner was not consulted on this submission.

Client Service Implications

14. Nil.

Risks and Sensitivities

15. Recent escalations are a symptom of deeper-seated ethnic tensions. City of Greater Dandenong Council suggest that it is clear that pain and trauma from conflicts in Afghanistan are driving some of the sentiment and division.
16. There are risks of further escalation and spill over to other councils, states and community settings, such as schools, workplaces and public spaces.

Financial/Systems/Legal/Deregulation/Media Implications

17. On 17 March 2025, the Department received a media enquiry from ABC 7:30 regarding the renaming of the Afghan Bazaar in Dandenong.

Attachments

Attachment A Social Cohesion Operational Plan: City of Greater Dandenong – Ethnic Tensions within Diaspora Communities from Afghanistan

Attachment B

s. 22(1)(a)(ii)

Released by Department of Home Affairs
under the Freedom of Information Act 1982

Authorising Officer

Cleared by:

Mark Groote
First Assistant Secretary
Office of Community Cohesion

Date: 19/03/2025

Ph: s. 22(1)(a)(ii)

Contact Officer s. 22(1)(a)(ii) Senior Director, Office of Community Cohesion, Ph: s. 22(1)(a)(ii)**CC**

Secretary
DS Executive
GM Immigration Programs
FAS Citizenship and Multicultural Affairs
FAS Refugee, Humanitarian and Settlement
FAS Office of Community Cohesion

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Australian Government
Department of Home Affairs

Submission

For decision

PDMS Ref. Number: MS25-000537

Date of Clearance: 27/02/2025

To Assistant Minister for Citizenship and Multicultural Affairs
Subject Community Concerns Cultural Precinct Thomas Street Dandenong
Timing *Not time critical.*

Recommendations

That you:

- | | |
|---|------------------------|
| 1. Note the attached Social Cohesion Operation Plan (SCOP) to support Afghan communities in Dandenong, Victoria, at Attachment A ; | Noted / please discuss |
| 2. Note the Department will respond directly to the letter from Mayor Memeti outlining the agreed actions in the SCOP; and | Noted/ please discuss |
| 3. Note the proposed approach to facilitate intra-community dialogue, leveraging the existing contact between the Department and communications consultant SenateSHJ. | Noted/ please discuss |

Assistant Minister for Citizenship and Multicultural Affairs

Signature.....

Date:...../...../2025

Assistant Minister's Comments

Key Issues

1. On 19 February 2025, Mayor of Greater Dandenong, Jim Memeti, wrote to your office seeking:
 - a. A meeting with the elders from various Afghan communities to issue a joint statement calling for calm and respectful behaviour. This meeting and a joint media release took place on 21 February 2025. Please refer paragraph 2.
 - b. A tripartite working group, led by the Victorian Multicultural Commission, engaging women, youth and other community members from Afghanistan, to promote cohesion, settlement, and integration.
 - c. Funding to the Victorian Multicultural Commission or Department of Premier and Cabinet Victoria to support the aforementioned project.
2. On 21 February 2025, the Mayor of Greater Dandenong, Jim Memeti, held a meeting with Afghan community leaders, where a joint media release was drafted and signed by attendees. Home Affairs Regional Director VIC/TAS attended on your behalf, along with the Melbourne-based Community Liaison Officer for communities from Afghanistan.
3. On 21 February 2025, you requested that:
 - a. the Department draft a Social Cohesion Response Plan;
 - i. this can be found at **Attachment A**;
 - b. the aforementioned letter from Mayor of Greater Dandenong, Jim Memeti, be treated as formal correspondence;
 - i. this has been registered as MC25-005792 and the Department will respond directly, outlining the actions in the Social Cohesion Operational Plan; and
 - c. the Department consider and identify appropriate funding to support intra-community dialogue, particularly engaging youth, women, and leaders, to ensure cohesion and prevent spill over or escalations.
 - i. Please refer paragraphs 4-6.
4. In addition to further and continued engagement supported by Regional Director VIC/TAS and the Community Liaison Officer for communities from Afghanistan, the Office of Community Cohesion (the Office) recommends leveraging the existing contract between the Department and strategic communications firm SenateSHJ, to support intra-community dialogue and structured discussion to promote social cohesion.
5. The Department has contracted the services of SenateSHJ to develop a *Whole-of-Society Social Cohesion Engagement Framework*, including support for extensive stakeholder engagement and consultation. This provides a constructive and directly relevant means to engage across Afghan communities in Dandenong, Victoria, while also supporting a nationally relevant framework and tools to support social cohesion.
 - a. The initial contract is valued at \$171,250 (GST Exclusive).

- b. The framework will include shared principles for promoting social cohesion across society, and methods of engagement and collaboration between levels of government, communities and individuals.
 - c. The Framework has been co-designed through an extensive engagement program, which has included engagement with Commonwealth Departments, all state and territory governments (including the Victorian Multicultural Commission), peak bodies, and community organisations.
6. Once finalised in March 2025, SenateSHJ will submit:
- a. The *Framework*, which includes a vision, pillars and narrative promoting social cohesion.
 - b. An *activation plan*, which will include how to use the messages in the Framework for different stages of a social cohesion crisis.
 - c. A *comprehensive toolkit* that can be tailored different sectors/stakeholders should this be required.
7. The Office of Community Cohesion has considered the benefits of a bespoke funding arrangement to support community dialogue with youth, women, and leaders.
- a. The Framework will provide practical information and tools to support organisations, businesses, and individuals to understand the role they can play in strengthening and protecting Australia's social cohesion.
 - b. Local councils and service providers will be able to draw upon and leverage the range of resources that will become available through the Framework and toolkit.
 - c. The Office suggests that once finalised in March 2025, the Regional Director VIC/TAS and Community Liaison Network VIC would share the framework and toolkit with Greater Dandenong City Council and assist the Council and Victorian Multicultural Commission to use these resources in the community dialogue with youth, women, and leaders.
 - d. The Office considers the use of the framework and toolkit will achieve the intended outcome of the proposed funded intra-community dialogue (paragraph 3.c.).

Background

- 8. The Department of Home Affairs Community Liaison Officer Network in Victoria has been engaging with local community members in Dandenong in response to recent community tensions surrounding the naming of the Thomas Street Cultural Precinct.
- 9. Escalations including physical altercations and threats of violence have been reported.
- 10. A group of Hazara community members are seeking the renaming of the 'Afghan Bazaar' to 'Little Bاميان' as they claim the term *Afghan* is not inclusive of their community.
- 11. Other community members wish to retain the name, indicating that it represents the long-standing historical ties between Australia and Afghanistan, and the contribution of Afghan immigrants to the Dandenong area.

12. Council have indicated that many businesses in Thomas Street are operated by members of the Hazara community and that there are also more than 20 businesses operated by people of Pashtun, Tajik, or other ethnic backgrounds, with links to Afghanistan and/or Pakistan.

Consultation – Internal/External

13. Internal – Regional Director VIC/TAS, Community Liaison Network VIC, and Countering Foreign Interference Coordination Centre.
14. External – Victoria Police, AFP and City of Greater Dandenong Council.

Consultation – Secretary / Associate Secretary Immigration / ABF Commissioner

15. The Secretary was not consulted on this submission.
16. The Associate Secretary Immigration was not consulted on this submission.
17. The ABF Commissioner was not consulted on this submission.

Client Service Implications

18. Nil

Risks and Sensitivities

19. Council has indicated that whilst there are genuinely and strongly held views about the naming of the cultural precinct in Dandenong, these are a symptom of deeper-seated ethnic tensions. Council suggest that it is clear that pain and trauma from conflicts in Afghanistan are driving some of the sentiment and division.
20. There are risks of further escalation and spill over to other states and other community settings, such as schools and other community spaces.

Financial/Systems/Legal/Deregulation/Media Implications

21. The Office has contracted the services of strategic communications firm SenateSHJ, to develop a Whole-of-Society Social Cohesion Engagement Framework. Resources will be tailored to address the specific concerns relating to the Thomas Street Cultural Precinct.
22. Nil media implications for the Department as upcoming consultations with communities will be led by the City of Greater Dandenong Council and/or Victorian Multicultural Commission.

Attachments

- Attachment A** City of Greater Dandenong – Thomas Street Cultural Precinct: Social Cohesion Operational Plan

Authorising Officer
Cleared by: S. 22(1)(a)(ii) Senior Director Office of Community Cohesion Date: 27/02/2025 Ph: S. 22(1)(a)(ii)

Contact Officer S. 22(1)(a)(ii) , Acting First Assistant Secretary, Office of Community Cohesion, Ph: S. 22(1)(a)(ii)

CC Secretary
Associate Secretary Immigration
DS Executive
GM Immigration Programs
FAS Citizenship and Multicultural Affairs
FAS Office of Community Cohesion



OFFICIAL: Sensitive

City of Greater Dandenong – Thomas Street Cultural Precinct: Social Cohesion Operational Plan

Date	27 February 2025	Version: 1
Contact Officer: s. 22(1)(a)(ii) Director, Office of Community Cohesion (OCC)		Ph: s. 22(1)(a)(ii)

Background

- Afghanistan is home to several ethnic groups, with Pashtuns, Tajiks, Hazaras, Uzbeks and others competing for political power, territory and resources. These tensions were amplified during the Taliban's rule in Afghanistan from 1994 to 2001 when they increased their persecution of the Hazara minority. These divisions further intensified following the United States' withdrawal from Afghanistan and the Taliban's return to power in August 2021.
- In Australia, these ethnic tensions have played out in diaspora communities from Afghanistan. Pashtuns, Tajiks, Hazaras and Uzbeks from Afghanistan often remain divided along ethnic lines, with their respective community organisations reflecting these divisions through their membership, naming and advocacy.
- In January 2025, Hazara business traders in the Thomas Street Cultural Precinct in the City of Greater Dandenong (known as 'Afghan Bazaar' when upgraded in 2014) approached the Council to rename the precinct "Little Bamyán". Bamyán is a province in central Afghanistan with a large Hazara population. Tensions have since escalated with reports of death threats and physical altercations, with community leaders and the local council growing increasingly concerned about community safety and cohesion.

Home Affairs response

- The Department of Home Affairs is actively engaged with the communities from Afghanistan and wider community in Victoria,. Recent engagements and activities relevant to this matter include:
 - o 10 February 2025
 - City of Casey (Regional Director (RD) VIC/TAS and Community Liaison Officer (CLO))
 - o 12 February 2025
 - s. 47F(1)
 - s. 47F(1)
 - City of Greater Dandenong (RD VIC/TAS, CLO and Counter Foreign Interference Coordination Centre (CFICC))
 - s. 47F(1)

- o 17 February 2025
 - Department of Premier and Cabinet, Victorian Government (CFICC)
 - S. 47F(1)
- o 18 February 2025
 - S. 47F(1)
 - S. 47F(1)
- o 21 February 2025
 - City of Greater Dandenong community leaders forum (RD VIC/TAS and CLO)
 - Victoria Police (CLO)
 - S. 47F(1)
- o 25 February 2025
 - S. 47F(1)

S. 47E(d)

Council Response

- On 19 February 2025, Mayor Jim Memeti of the City of Greater Dandenong sent a letter to the Assistant Minister for Citizenship and Multicultural Affairs, the Hon Julian Hill MP, and the Victorian State Minister for Multicultural Affairs, Ingrid Stitt MLC, detailing the divisions within the communities from Afghanistan and seeking an urgent meeting with community leaders and key government stakeholders.

- On 21 February 2025, the City of Greater Dandenong coordinated an Afghan community leaders' forum which included Home Affairs Regional Director VIC/TAS (representing Assistant Minister Hill) and CLO, alongside Victoria Police, Australian Federal Police (AFP), and representatives and faith leaders across the communities from Afghanistan.
- On 21 February 2025, the City of Greater Dandenong issued a media release calling for peace and calm in the community. A joint statement was signed by those attending the community leaders' forum reiterating calls for calm.
- The Council is planning further consultation as part of the formal process when considering any name change proposed by the community. However, the Council is concerned about the evolving nature of the issue, and the underlying cracks in community cohesion that will not ultimately be addressed through a Council process.

Victorian Government response

- No known response, however Home Affairs Regional Director VIC/TAS is scheduled to meet with the Victorian Multicultural Commission on 28 February 2025 to discuss the issue.

Law enforcement response

- Victoria Police is currently monitoring the situation, and will continue to engage with relevant community and government stakeholders.
- AFP has encouraged stakeholders to report any foreign interference concerns to the National Security Hotline.

Media

- [Hazara push to rename Dandenong precinct | Dandenong Star Journal](#) (30 January 2025)
- [Fight over 'divisive' Afghan Bazaar change | Dandenong Star Journal](#) (10 February 2025)
- [Council weighs up Afghan Bazaar debate | Dandenong Star Journal](#) (11 February 2025)
- [Consideration of the name of the Cultural Precinct around Thomas Street | Greater Dandenong Council](#) (13 February 2025)

Key lines of effort to protect social cohesion

1. **Public communications:** Ensuring we have a proactive communications strategy to promote calm, unity and confidence.
2. **Engaging with the community:** Ensuring we have open engagement channels to hear the concerns of affected communities.
3. **Engaging with VIC and Local Governments:** Ensuring our plan is informed by and coordinated with state government agencies.

Response Plan

Communications approach

Preliminary actions

- Joint statement signed by City of Greater Dandenong, Victoria Police and community leaders from Afghanistan calling for calm and reiterating importance of community safety and peace.
- AFP and CFICC have encouraged concerned members of the community and the Council to report any allegations of foreign interference to the National Security Hotline.

Forward Plan

- The Office of Community Cohesion (the Office) will join RD VIC/TAS to brief the City of Greater Dandenong Council on the draft Whole-of-Society Social Cohesion Engagement Framework to empower the Council to use the tools available to conduct consultations with women, youth and community leaders.
- The Office and RD VIC/TAS to brief support service providers in Dandenong on the Social Cohesion Engagement Framework, in particular organisations supporting youth and women s. 47F(1).
- RD VIC/TAS to brief Regional Directors across the network on current tensions should the issue manifest as heightened tensions in other jurisdictions.

Ongoing engagement

- The Office, RD VIC/TAS and CLO will next meet with the City of Greater Dandenong Council on 4 March 2025.
- CLO to continue engagement with relevant community stakeholders in the Dandenong area.
- The Office to continue engaging the Victorian Government in the co-design of the Social Cohesion Engagement Framework.

Further information

Multicultural Grants/Funding arrangements

- Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications and the Arts, Stronger Communities Programme Round 9
- Department of Home Affairs, Community Funding to Support Social Cohesion Initiatives

CLEARANCE:

Cleared by	Title	Date cleared
s. 22(1)(a)(ii) [REDACTED]	Senior Director, Office of Community Cohesion	27 February 2025

CONSULTED:

Cleared by	Title	Date cleared
Melissa Kay	Regional Director VIC/TAS	27 February 2025

**Home Affairs Portfolio
Department of Home Affairs
Budget Estimates Hearing – March 2025**

BACK POCKET BRIEF

Topic: Community Cohesion Incident Response

Group: Executive

Division: Office of Community Cohesion

- s. 22(1)(a)(ii) [REDACTED]
 - s. 22(1)(a)(ii) [REDACTED]
- s. 22(1)(a)(ii) [REDACTED]
 - s. 22(1)(a)(ii) [REDACTED]
 - s. 22(1)(a)(ii) [REDACTED]
 - s. 22(1)(a)(ii) [REDACTED]
- s. 22(1)(a)(ii) [REDACTED]
- s. 22(1)(a)(ii) [REDACTED]
- s. 22(1)(a)(ii) [REDACTED]
 - s. 22(1)(a)(ii) [REDACTED]
 - s. 22(1)(a)(ii) [REDACTED]
 - s. 22(1)(a)(ii) [REDACTED]
 - s. 22(1)(a)(ii) [REDACTED]
 - s. 22(1)(a)(ii) [REDACTED]

- s. 22(1)(a)(ii)

- s. 22(1)(a)(ii)

- s. 22(1)(a)(ii)

- s. 22(1)(a)(ii)

- s. 22(1)(a)(ii)

- s. 22(1)(a)(ii)

- s. 22(1)(a)(ii)

- s. 22(1)(a)(ii)

- s. 22(1)(a)(ii)

- s. 22(1)(a)(ii)

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s. 22(1)(a)(ii)

- s. 22(1)(a)(ii)

- s. 22(1)(a)(ii)

- s. 22(1)(a)(ii)

- s. 22(1)(a)(ii)

s. 22(1)(a)(ii)

City of Greater Dandenong – Ethnic Tension within Diaspora Communities from Afghanistan

- On 19 February 2025, the Mayor of Greater Dandenong, Cr Jim Memeti, wrote to the Assistant Minister for Citizenship and Multicultural Affairs, the Hon. Julian Hill MP, and the Victorian Minister for Multicultural Affairs, Ms Ingrid Stitt MLC, seeking:
 - A meeting with elders from various diaspora communities from Afghanistan to issue a joint statement calling for calm and respectful behaviour. This meeting and a joint media release took place on 21 February 2025.
 - A tripartite working group, led by the Victorian Multicultural Commission, engaging women, youth and other community members from Afghanistan, to promote cohesion, settlement, and integration.
 - Funding to the Victorian Multicultural Commission or Department of Premier and Cabinet Victoria to support the aforementioned project.
- On 24 February 2025, a Hazara man living in Dandenong made three live, public posts on TikTok in which he allegedly made threats to “leave a record that a Hazara youngster has stabbed a Pashtun.”
- The Community Cohesion Incident Response capability was activated in response to this incident.
 - A social cohesion operational plan (SCOP) was developed and updated as the situation progressed.
 - On 21 February 2025, the City of Greater Dandenong coordinated a community leaders’ forum which included the Department of Home Affairs Regional Director VIC/TAS (representing Assistant Minister Hill) and Community Liaison Officer, alongside Victoria Police, Australian Federal Police (AFP), faith leaders and representatives from ethnic communities from Afghanistan.
 - On 21 February 2025, the City of Greater Dandenong issued a media release calling for peace and calm in the community. A joint statement was signed by those attending the community leaders’ forum reiterating calls for calm.
 - On 5 March 2025, Assistant Minister Hill met with senior Departmental officials to discuss ethnic tensions, incidents of threatened or actual violence, and concern of role that settlement policy plays.
 - Assistant Minister Hill asked the Department to work with relevant local councils and the Victorian State government to develop a project to address the community cohesion concerns

- On 6 March 2025, Assistant Minister Hill attended a roundtable hosted by the City of Greater Dandenong together with senior representatives from the Department, the Victorian Minister for Multicultural Affairs and Victorian Multicultural Commission to discuss the development of a comprehensive, coordinated response across the three levels of government.
- On 13 March 2025, the Office – along with representatives from Victoria Police and the Victorian Multicultural Commission met with the City of Greater Dandenong to further discuss concerns and challenges arising from unrest in the community.
- On 20 March 2025, the ABC 730 Report aired a program titled *'Bazaar Name Change'* which focused on the joint-agency meeting at Council with Victoria Police, the AFP and the Department on 21 February 2025.
- The Department is working with Councils in South-East Melbourne and the Victorian Multicultural Commission to provide an independent facilitator to assist with strengthening relationships and trust among diverse ethnic groups from Afghanistan through inclusive intercultural dialogue, collaboration, and shared experiences.

s. 22(1)(a)(ii)

- s. 22(1)(a)(ii)
- s. 22(1)(a)(ii)
- s. 22(1)(a)(ii)
- s. 22(1)(a)(ii)
 - s. 22(1)(a)(ii)
 - s. 22(1)(a)(ii)
 - s. 22(1)(a)(ii)
- s. 22(1)(a)(ii)

s. 22(1)(a)(ii)

OFFICIAL: Sensitive

From: s. 22(1)(a)(ii) @HOMEAFFAIRS.GOV.AU>
Date: Wednesday 19 February 2025 at 12:57:34 pm
To: "Melissa KAY" s. 22(1)(a)(ii) @homeaffairs.gov.au>
Cc: s. 22(1)(a)(ii) @HOMEAFFAIRS.GOV.AU>
Subject: Afghan community sentiment in Dandenong [SEC=OFFICIAL:Sensitive, ACCESS=Personal-Privacy]

**OFFICIAL: Sensitive
Personal-Privacy**

Hi Mel,

The CLO Network and Countering Foreign Interference Coordination Centre (CFICC) have recently been engaging with a range of stakeholders around rising tensions in the Afghan community. This relates to the proposed renaming of the Afghan Bazaar, which is a cultural shopping precinct in Dandenong. The proposal is to rename the precinct Little Bamyān, which is considered to be more inclusive of the Hazara community - [Hazara push to rename Dandenong precinct | Dandenong Star Journal](#)

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Recent engagements with the Afghan and wider community that have raised this issue include:

- City of Casey – Mon 10 Feb (CLO)
- s. 47F(1)
- s. 47F(1)
- City of Greater Dandenong – Wed 12 Feb (RD VIC/TAS, CLO and CFICC)
- s. 47F(1)
- Department of Premier & Cabinet, Victorian Government – Mon 17 Feb (CFICC)
- s. 47F(1)
- s. 47F(1)

Further engagements with Afghan community stakeholders and Victoria Police's Multicultural Liaison Unit in Dandenong are currently being scheduled for Fri 21 February.

Some of the key points from these engagements are:

s. 47E(d)

A further update can be provided after Friday's engagements.

Please advise if you need any further information.

Kind regards,

s. 22(1)(a)(ii)

A/g Director Strategic Engagement Victoria
Immigration Group

Department of Home Affairs

T: s. 22(1)(a)(ii) M: s. 22(1)(a)(ii)

E: s. 22(1)(a)(ii) [\[REDACTED\]@homeaffairs.gov.au](mailto: [REDACTED]@homeaffairs.gov.au)

signature-block-graphic.JPG



Personal-Privacy
OFFICIAL: Sensitive

s. 22(1)(a)(ii)

From: S. 47F(1) [redacted] <[\[redacted\]@cgd.vic.gov.au](mailto:[redacted]@cgd.vic.gov.au)> on behalf of S. 47F(1) [redacted]
S. 47F(1) [redacted] <[\[redacted\]@cgd.vic.gov.au](mailto:[redacted]@cgd.vic.gov.au)>
Sent: Wednesday, March 5, 2025 10:43
To: Hill, Julian (MP) <Julian.Hill.MP@aph.gov.au>; S. 22(1)(a)(ii) [redacted]
S. 22(1)(a)(ii) [redacted] <[\[redacted\]@minstaff.vic.gov.au](mailto:[redacted]@minstaff.vic.gov.au)>; S. 22(1)(a)(ii) [redacted] <[\[redacted\]@parliament.vic.gov.au](mailto:[redacted]@parliament.vic.gov.au)>
S. 22(1)(a)(ii) [redacted] <[\[redacted\]@parliament.vic.gov.au](mailto:[redacted]@parliament.vic.gov.au)>
Cc: S. 22(1)(a)(ii) [redacted] <[\[redacted\]@cgd.vic.gov.au](mailto:[redacted]@cgd.vic.gov.au)>
Subject: Cultural precinct on Thomas Street, Dandenong

Dear Jullian and S. 22(1)(a)(ii) [redacted],

I am writing to urgently seek your support in addressing an escalating community concern regarding the name of the cultural precinct on Thomas Street, Dandenong. The situation has intensified in recent weeks, with deep divisions emerging within the community over the use of the name “Afghan Bazaar.”

Council has now received well over 100 pieces of correspondence and two formal petitions, each signed by hundreds of residents—one petition calling for a renaming to “Little Bamiyan” and the other strongly opposing any change. The heightened tensions have placed significant pressure on Council to take immediate action and ensure a fair, transparent, and inclusive process moving forward.

It is important to clarify that Council has never undertaken a formal naming process for either the “Afghan Bazaar” or “Little India” cultural precincts. These names were registered purely for branding and marketing purposes and were not formally designated as place names under Geographic Place Names Victoria. The official street name remains Thomas Street.

Given the complexity and sensitivity of the issue, Council strongly believes that a simple name change process alone will not resolve the underlying divisions. Instead, we are committed to undertaking a thorough, independent consultation to objectively assess the concerns and foster constructive dialogue within the community. Our goal is to promote social cohesion and resilience among the diverse

people of all ethnic backgrounds in Afghanistan living in the Melbourne southeast.

To implement this approach effectively, we urgently request a joint contribution from both Federal and State governments to support Council in managing this matter. The community expects a clear response at the upcoming public meeting on Tuesday, 11 March. Without confirmation of support from higher levels of government, Council will have no choice but to initiate the Geographic Place Naming process—an approach we know will not adequately address the broader community concerns.

Given the urgency, I would appreciate the opportunity to meet with you both (online or in-person) to discuss this matter further. My office will be in touch to arrange a suitable time for a joint meeting in the next couple of days.

Thank you for your immediate attention to this pressing issue. I look forward to your prompt response.

Regards,

s. 47F(1)

s. 47F(1) (she/her)

Chief Executive Officer

P: s. 47F(1)

PO Box 200 Dandenong Vic 3175

www.greaterdandenong.vic.gov.au



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Unless otherwise stated, any views or opinions presented are solely those of the author.

s. 22(1)(a)(ii)

OFFICIAL: Sensitive

From: Melissa KAY s. 22(1)(a)(ii)@homeaffairs.gov.au>
Sent: Saturday, 22 February 2025 10:39 AM
To: s. 22(1)(a)(ii)@homeaffairs.gov.au>; DLO.Hill
s. 22(1)(a)(ii)@homeaffairs.gov.au>; James WATSON s. 22(1)(a)(ii)@homeaffairs.gov.au>
Cc: s. 22(1)(a)(ii)@homeaffairs.gov.au>; s. 22(1)(a)(ii) s. 22(1)(a)(ii)@homeaffairs.gov.au>;
Andrew KILEY s. 22(1)(a)(ii)@homeaffairs.gov.au>; s. 22(1)(a)(ii)
s. 22(1)(a)(ii)@homeaffairs.gov.au>; s. 22(1)(a)(ii)
s. 22(1)(a)(ii)@HOMEAFFAIRS.GOV.AU>
Subject: RE: Hon Julian Hill and Hon Ingrid Stitt - Community Concerns Cultural Precinct Thomas
Street Dandenong[SEC=OFFICIAL:Sensitive]

OFFICIAL: Sensitive

Hi s. 22(1)(a)(ii)

Further to last/and our conversation yesterday afternoon, I took a call from AM Hill last night in relation to this matter.

I gave him a read out of the meeting in Dandenong that CLO s. 22(1)(a)(ii) and I attended yesterday alongside VICPOL and AFP. The meeting by all accounts went well, was respectful, and while at some points became a little emotive, all community leaders engaged in the process and signed the statement, committing to peace and calm in the community. A copy of the MR is attached.

AM Hill said he wants the letter from the Mayor treated as formal correspondence (reattached for ref), and he wants a brief from the Department ("from RD and OCC") on a cohesion response and plan forward by **Friday, 28 February 2025**.

While the renaming of the bazaar will be managed by council in terms of an appropriate outcome following consultation, AM Hill reiterated that there is the underlying issue and the need to support community dialogue. Noting the process itself is the thing that will ensure cohesion, because through that dialogue the community will learn to better work together, and avoid the risk of this issue culminating into something substantially more serious. He noted that already the issue is creating unrest amongst youth groups who are resorting to violence and

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death threats within the community, and while the community leader meeting yesterday was a positive sign, there is more work to be done to address the issues at all levels. [NB stakeholders have reporting tensions are escalating, e.g. a stakeholder mentioned yesterday that a physical altercation broke out in her otherwise previous calm English class on Thursday between two females, one Hazara and one Pashtun]

In the plan from the Department, he expects funding to be committed to support a community dialogue on this ("6 figures"), because it will take time, effort and energy to do it right, and engage through all three levels – youth, women, leaders. The dialogue process itself is the intended outcome (rather than just whether a street/bazaar gets renamed or not) to get communities working better together to avoid future issues. He has in the past mentioned there are local service providers like 'Cultural Lens' (nfd, I am trying to identify this company) which work to bring the relevant threads together.

James – including you in noting you/Emma may receive a call from him directly on this, he commented he wouldn't hesitate to escalate seniority to ensure an adequate response. I assured him I would loop you in.

§ 22 – Did you already register the Min Corro/can you please let me know the PDR? NB I was at an event when he called and the service was patchy, so please share any other insights if mentioned to you directly.

I know everyone is tied up with Estimates prep, and I am committed to hosting a number of Citz Ceremonies Mon/Tues with Minister Burke – but grateful if we can find a time to move this forward noting Friday deadline.

Kind regards

Mel

Melissa Kay
Regional Director Victoria and Tasmania
Immigration Group
Department of Home Affairs
M: s. 22(1)(a)(ii)
E: s. 22(1)(a)(ii)@homeaffairs.gov.au
EA/EO: s. 22(1)(a)(ii)@homeaffairs.gov.au

OFFICIAL: Sensitive

s. 22(1)(a)(i)



19 February 2025

Hon. Julian Hill MP
Assistant Minister for Citizenship and Multicultural Affairs (Cth)

The Hon. Ingrid Stitt MP
Minister for Multicultural Affairs (VIC)

Dear Minister Hill and Minister Stitt,

Community Concerns Re: Name of the Cultural Precinct in Thomas Street, Dandenong

I am writing to seek your urgent assistance regarding recent community unrest and divisions that have arisen in the context of a marketing name used to promote the Thomas Street precinct. Over time this vibrant and bustling street has become commonly known as the 'Afghan Bazaar Cultural Precinct' although this name has never been formally adopted as a place name.

A community dispute has arisen over whether this marketing name should be changed to or formally adopted as Little Bamyán, retained as is, or named something else. The community is divided largely though not exclusively along ethnic lines.

Worryingly, the issue has escalated rapidly over the past fortnight, with reports of death threats and physical altercations in public. This matter has engaged people across southeast Melbourne and even spread to relatives in Afghanistan, Pakistan and across the globe. Local community elders and leaders have expressed concerns about community safety and about the behaviour of some community members both online and in the local area.

What has been revealed through this process is that while there are genuinely and strongly held views about the naming issue, these are a symptom of deeper seated and worrying ethnic tensions that are beyond the ability of a single Council to resolve.

Every Australian has the right to feel safe and included in Australia and especially so in the City of Greater Dandenong, one of the most multicultural local government areas. The vast majority of Australians do not want ethnic tensions or rivalries to impact daily life. I am concerned that if left unaddressed the current tensions may set a dangerous example for the younger generation of Australians of how to discuss and resolve differences. I am also concerned that such aggressive behaviour by so-called community leaders and stoking of ethnic tensions may undermine broader public support for Australia's generous resettlement of people from Afghanistan who contribute so much to our local community.

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.2.

However we seek your assistance in broader matters including to:

1.Support an urgent meeting of elders from the various ethnic communities involved and key government leaders, with the view to issuing a joint statement calling for calm, respectful, and safe behaviours, and committing to a future, methodical process of community consultation on this issue. We would especially welcome the participation of Minister Hill as the local Federal MP.

2.Establish a tripartite working group, to be led by the Victorian Multicultural Commission (VMC) of the Victorian office of Multicultural Affairs, and involving senior representatives from the three levels of government – local, state and federal government. This working group would commission a series of broader community dialogues in the 2025-26 year involving community leaders, women, youth and other community members from all parts of the community of people from Afghanistan. The objectives would be to find constructive ways to address differences when they arise and to promote cohesion and community resilience among the various communities from Afghanistan in the southeast and support their settlement and integration with the broader Australian community. (It is worth noting that Council undertook an Afghan Community Centre Feasibility Study in 2023 on behalf of and funded by the Victorian Government. A final report was delivered to the Victorian Government in March 2024. We understand Minister Stitt is yet to be briefed on the report and its outcomes.)

3.Provide sufficient funding to the VMC or DPC Victoria to support this activity, noting the complexity of the undertaking.

The project should also seek to support all of our great local businesses in this precinct to continue to grow and flourish. To succeed, the project would need to be undertaken in partnership with the City of Casey, and with financial support from all levels of Government.

Background

The thriving cultural and commercial precinct in Thomas Street, Dandenong, is not registered as a place name with Geographic Place Names Victoria. We have not yet found a record of any formal decision to name the precinct.

Many businesses in the street are operated by members of the Hazara community, but we understand there are also more than 20 businesses operated by people of Pashtun, Tajik, or other ethnic backgrounds, with links to Afghanistan and/or Pakistan.

Submissions from members of the Hazara community, proposing that the precinct be renamed as Little Bamyán, take the position that the word 'Afghan' is not inclusive of their people. There is strong resistance from others, who do not regard Little Bamyán as representative of all people from Afghanistan. It is fair to conclude that the broader Australian community understand the term 'Afghan' to simply mean any people from Afghanistan and do not understand the historical and nuanced issues.

We have received well over 100 pieces of correspondence and two petitions with thousands of signatures. I have taken meetings with several community leaders from various perspectives. What all of these engagements have in common is a passionate, heartfelt advocacy for strongly held positions. Unfortunately, in the weeks since the issue arose, feelings have escalated significantly. It is clear that pain and trauma from conflicts in Afghanistan are driving some of the current sentiment and division.

.3.

Council is dismayed at the current situation. Thomas Street has been a thriving precinct for two decades, and it is a credit to the many traders who have established these businesses. It is a gathering place for people across the east and southeast, and attracts people from all backgrounds.

We are proud of the social cohesion that usually characterises the diverse community of Greater Dandenong, and we seek your support in restoring this cohesion and promoting community resilience in times of disagreement.

I welcome a discussion on this matter and seek an urgent response.

Yours sincerely,

s. 47F(1)

Cr Jim Memeti
Mayor of Greater Dandenong

Cc Dr Jeni Whelan
First Assistant Secretary, Community Cohesion, Department Home Affairs (Commonwealth)

Cc Mr Jeremi Moule
Secretary of Department of Premier and Cabinet

s. 22(1)(a)(ii)

OFFICIAL: Sensitive

From: s. 22(1)(a)(ii) @homeaffairs.gov.au>
Sent: Friday, 7 February 2025 5:41 PM
To: s. 22(1)(a)(ii) @HOMEAFFAIRS.GOV.AU>; s. 22(1)(a)(ii) s. 22(1)(a)(ii) @homeaffairs.gov.au>; s. 22(1)(a)(ii) s. 22(1)(a)(ii) @homeaffairs.gov.au>
Cc: Melissa KAY s. 22(1)(a)(ii) @homeaffairs.gov.au>; s. 22(1)(a)(ii) s. 22(1)(a)(ii) @homeaffairs.gov.au>; s. 22(1)(a)(ii) @homeaffairs.gov.au>
Subject: Tasking request from AM Hill via RD Mel Kay [SEC=OFFICIAL:Sensitive]

OFFICIAL: Sensitive

Hi all,

I am writing to apprise you in on a developing issue with Afghan communities in the Dandenong LGA area which is background to the tasking request from Minister Hill's Office (see below).

A group of Hazara's based in Dandenong LGA are seeking a name change of the Afghan Bazar Cultural Precinct to one that reflects Hazara contributions. Council reached out to us as, according to them, it is suspected that there is an FI link behind this. We have been advised that this issue is playing out in the community and there are concerns of possible violence.

I spoke with s. 47F(1) Business Development and Investment from Dandenong Council this afternoon who stated that the there is a Council meeting on Monday 10 Feb in the evening, where it is expected that petitions on this issue will be made. Given the concerns for violence, VicPol has been notified and Council will meet with them Monday lunchtime.

I offered an in-person meeting with Dandenong Council as part of RD Mel Kay's visit out there

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under the Freedom of Information Act 1982

next Wednesday 12 Feb, 4pm. s. 47F(1) asked that we pencil that in, but would be subject to the outcome of the council meeting on Monday night.

There are a number of things to unpack with this and likely interests with work of RD, CLOs, OCC as well. There may be a need to reach out to other agencies eg AFP, but will consult with you on that at a later stage.

Please note this is not an issue that has come up in any of my discussions with communities locally.

Tasking Request

Minister Hill has reached out to our RD about this issue and was requesting information on any holdings we may have in relation to FI affecting the Afghan community. s. 22(1)(a), are we placed to look into this with some priority on Monday? Mel Kay needs to get back to the Minister. Happy to discuss further.

Also, let me know if I've inadvertently left anyone out who should receive this email.

Cheers

s. 22(1)(a)(ii)

s. 22(1)(a)(ii) (she/her)

Assistant Director

Counter Foreign Interference Partnerships | VIC & TAS

Counter Foreign Interference Coordination Centre

Department of Home Affairs

Telephone: s. 22(1)(a)(ii) | Mobile: s. 22(1)(a)(ii)

Email: s. 22(1)(a)(ii) @homeaffairs.gov.au; s. 22(1)(a)(ii) @homeaffairs.gov.au

Acknowledgement of Country Signature Block Graphic 2022



OFFICIAL: Sensitive

s. 22(1)(a)(ii)

s. 22(1)(a)(ii)

From: Home Affairs Media <media@homeaffairs.gov.au>

Sent: Monday, 17 March 2025 1:11 PM

To: s. 22(1)(a)(ii) <[s.22\(1\)\(a\)\(ii\)@homeaffairs.gov.au](mailto:s.22(1)(a)(ii)@homeaffairs.gov.au)>; s. 22(1)(a)(ii) <[s.22\(1\)\(a\)\(ii\)@homeaffairs.gov.au](mailto:s.22(1)(a)(ii)@homeaffairs.gov.au)>; Melissa KAY <[s.22\(1\)\(a\)\(ii\)@homeaffairs.gov.au](mailto:s.22(1)(a)(ii)@homeaffairs.gov.au)>

Cc: Home Affairs Media <media@homeaffairs.gov.au>; Mark GROOTE

s. 22(1)(a)(ii) <[s.22\(1\)\(a\)\(ii\)@HOMEAFFAIRS.GOV.AU](mailto:s.22(1)(a)(ii)@HOMEAFFAIRS.GOV.AU)>; s. 22(1)(a)(ii)

s. 22(1)(a)(ii) <[s.22\(1\)\(a\)\(ii\)@homeaffairs.gov.au](mailto:s.22(1)(a)(ii)@homeaffairs.gov.au)>; s. 22(1)(a)(ii)

s. 22(1)(a)(ii) <[s.22\(1\)\(a\)\(ii\)@HOMEAFFAIRS.GOV.AU](mailto:s.22(1)(a)(ii)@HOMEAFFAIRS.GOV.AU)>

Subject: FW: For info: Media enquiry from s. 47G(1)(a) - February 21 'Peace Talks' Afghan Bazaar
[SEC=OFFICIAL]

OFFICIAL

Hi team,

As per below, s. 22(1)(a)(ii) called to confirm that the Assistant Minister spoke with the s. 47G(1)(a) producer and gave her some background, however he would like us to provide the below statement which has already been provided to the local paper.

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under the Freedom of Information Act 1982

He would also like us to prepare a response to some of s. 47G(1)(a) questions (not all) from the OCC, that centres around how we are working with the local council to work through the current issues.

I've attached a template for your input please, if possible by COB today/first thing tomorrow morning to meet the journalist's deadline for inclusion.

Happy to discuss.

Kind regards

s. 22(1)(a)(ii)

s. 22(1)(a)(ii)

Assistant Director | Media and Social Media

Media and Communication Branch | Executive Coordination Division

Department of Home Affairs

M: s. 22(1)(a)(ii) **Media line:** s. 22(1)(a)(ii)

E: s. 22(1)(a)(ii) [@homeaffairs.gov.au](mailto:s.22(1)(a)(ii)@homeaffairs.gov.au)

OFFICIAL

From: s. 22(1)(a)(ii) (J. Hill, MP) s. 22(1)(a)(ii) [@aph.gov.au](mailto:s.22(1)(a)(ii)@aph.gov.au)>

Sent: Monday, 17 March 2025 12:41 PM

To: Home Affairs Media <media@homeaffairs.gov.au>; s. 22(1)(a)(ii) (J. Hill, MP)

s. 22(1)(a)(ii) [@aph.gov.au](mailto:s.22(1)(a)(ii)@aph.gov.au)>

Cc: DLO.Hill s. 22(1)(a)(ii) [@homeaffairs.gov.au](mailto:s.22(1)(a)(ii)@homeaffairs.gov.au)>; s. 22(1)(a)(ii)

s. 22(1)(a)(ii) [@homeaffairs.gov.au](mailto:s.22(1)(a)(ii)@homeaffairs.gov.au)>; Home Affairs Media <media@homeaffairs.gov.au>;

s. 22(1)(a)(ii) [@HOMEAFFAIRS.GOV.AU](mailto:s.22(1)(a)(ii)@HOMEAFFAIRS.GOV.AU)>; s. 22(1)(a)(ii)

s. 22(1)(a)(ii) [@homeaffairs.gov.au](mailto:s.22(1)(a)(ii)@homeaffairs.gov.au)>; s. 22(1)(a)(ii)

s. 22(1)(a)(ii) [@homeaffairs.gov.au](mailto:s.22(1)(a)(ii)@homeaffairs.gov.au)>; Mark GROOTE

s. 22(1)(a)(ii) [@HOMEAFFAIRS.GOV.AU](mailto:s.22(1)(a)(ii)@HOMEAFFAIRS.GOV.AU)>; Melissa KAY s. 22(1)(a)(ii) [@homeaffairs.gov.au](mailto:s.22(1)(a)(ii)@homeaffairs.gov.au)>

Subject: Re: For info: Media enquiry from s. 47G(1)(a) - February 21 'Peace Talks' Afghan Bazaar
[SEC=OFFICIAL]

Hi s. 22(1)(a)(ii)

Statement as discussed which Julian has already given to the local paper:

“Obviously the naming of places is a matter for the local council as the Federal Parliament has no power under the Constitution about that sort of thing.

“I encourage the Council and everyone with a genuine view to look for a way forward that brings the whole community together.

“Hazara people have been persecuted for decades in many parts of the world and it’s a very sensitive issue which needs to be considered with respect.

“It is also clear that there are much broader issues than just a local place name. Reports of ethnic tensions and threats of violence and conflict in schools, parks, pools, community organisations and businesses are deeply worrying and beyond the ability of a single council to address.

“Every Australian has the right to feel safe, and the vast majority of Australians including people from Afghanistan do not want such conflicts to impact daily life in our country.

“It is especially important that all so-called leaders - whether political, faith or community leaders - set a positive example for the younger generation of Australians in how to bring people together not divide the community and resolve differences in a courteous way.

“I have asked the Department of Home Affairs to engage with councils and the Victorian Government to explore a broader process to engage the community in a positive and enduring way, to ensure all people from Afghanistan settle in well to life in Australia.”

From: Home Affairs Media <media@homeaffairs.gov.au>

Sent: Monday, March 17, 2025 9:54 am

To: s. 22(1)(a)(ii) (J. Hill, MP) s. 22(1)(a)(ii) @aph.gov.au; s. 22(1)(a)(ii) (J. Hill, MP) s. 22(1)(a)(ii) @aph.gov.au>

Cc: DLO.Hill s. 22(1)(a)(ii) @homeaffairs.gov.au; s. 22(1)(a)(ii)

s. 22(1)(a)(ii) @homeaffairs.gov.au; Home Affairs Media

<media@homeaffairs.gov.au>; s. 22(1)(a)(ii)

s. 22(1)(a)(ii) @HOMEAFFAIRS.GOV.AU>; s. 22(1)(a)(ii)

s. 22(1)(a)(ii) @homeaffairs.gov.au; s. 22(1)(a)(ii)

s. 22(1)(a)(ii) @homeaffairs.gov.au; Mark GROOTE

s. 22(1)(a)(ii) @HOMEAFFAIRS.GOV.AU>; Melissa KAY

s. 22(1)(a)(ii) @homeaffairs.gov.au>

Subject: For info: Media enquiry from s. 47G(1)(a) - February 21 'Peace Talks' Afghan Bazaar
[SEC=OFFICIAL]

OFFICIAL

Good morning s. 22(1)(a)(ii) and s. 22(1)(a)(ii),

We received the below media enquiry from s. 47G(1)(a) regarding the Afghan Bazaar. Passing this on to you in case you would like to handle directly – please let us know your preferred approach, and if you would like us to prepare a response for your consideration.

Kind regards

s. 22(1)(a)(ii)

s. 22(1)(a)(ii)

Assistant Director | Media and Social Media

Media and Communication Branch | Executive Coordination Division

Department of Home Affairs

M: s. 22(1)(a)(ii) Media line: s. 22(1)(a)(ii)

E: s. 22(1)(a)(ii) [@homeaffairs.gov.au](mailto:s.22(1)(a)(ii)@homeaffairs.gov.au)

OFFICIAL

s. 22(1)(a)(ii)

From: s. 22(1)(a)(ii)
To: [Home Affairs Media](#); s. 22(1)(a)(ii); s. 22(1)(a)(iii); s. 22(1)(a)(iii)
Cc: [DLO Hill](#); s. 22(1)(a)(ii) [Mark GROOTE](#); [Melissa KAY](#); s. 22(1)(a)(ii) s. 22(1)(a)(ii) [DLO Burke](#); s. 22(1)(a)(ii) s. 22(1)(a)(ii) [Brian HICKEY](#); s. 22(1)(a)(ii) s. 22(1)(a)(ii) [DLO Burke](#); s. 22(1)(a)(ii) s. 22(1)(a)(ii) [Heike PHILLIPS](#); [James WATSON](#); [Joseph MARSDEN](#); [Michael THOMAS](#); [Michael WILLARD](#); s. 22(1)(a)(ii) [Sandra JEFFERY](#); s. 22(1)(a)(ii) ; s. 22(1)(a)(ii) ; s. 22(1)(a)(ii)
Subject: RE: FOR NOTING: Media enquiry from s. 47G(1)(a) - February 21 "Peace Talks" Afghan Bazaar [SEC=OFFICIAL]
Date: Tuesday, 18 March 2025 3:59:44 PM
Attachments: [image001.jpg](#)

OFFICIAL

AM Hill's office is looking after this one – we're happy if they are

Cheers

s. 22(1)(a)(ii)

OFFICIAL

From: Home Affairs Media <media@homeaffairs.gov.au>
Sent: Tuesday, 18 March 2025 1:36 PM
To: s. 22(1)(a)(ii) @HOMEAFFAIRS.GOV.AU>; s. 22(1)(a)(ii) s. 22(1)(a)(ii) @homeaffairs.gov.au>; s. 22(1)(a)(ii) s. 22(1)(a)(ii) @HOMEAFFAIRS.GOV.AU>; s. 22(1)(a)(ii) s. 22(1)(a)(ii) @HOMEAFFAIRS.GOV.AU>
Cc: DLO.Hill s. 22(1)(a)(ii) @homeaffairs.gov.au>; s. 22(1)(a)(ii) s. 22(1)(a)(ii) @homeaffairs.gov.au>; Mark GROOTE s. 22(1)(a)(ii) @HOMEAFFAIRS.GOV.AU>; Melissa KAY s. 22(1)(a)(ii) @homeaffairs.gov.au>; s. 22(1)(a)(ii) @aph.gov.au>; s. 22(1)(a)(ii) s. 22(1)(a)(ii) @HOMEAFFAIRS.GOV.AU>; s. 22(1)(a)(ii) @HOMEAFFAIRS.GOV.AU>; Brian HICKEY s. 22(1)(a)(ii) @homeaffairs.gov.au>; s. 22(1)(a)(ii) @HOMEAFFAIRS.GOV.AU>; s. 22(1)(a)(ii) @homeaffairs.gov.au>; DLO.Burke s. 22(1)(a)(ii) @homeaffairs.gov.au>; s. 22(1)(a)(ii) @homeaffairs.gov.au>; s. 22(1)(a)(ii) @HOMEAFFAIRS.GOV.AU>; Heike PHILLIPS s. 22(1)(a)(ii) @homeaffairs.gov.au>; Home Affairs Media <media@homeaffairs.gov.au>; James WATSON s. 22(1)(a)(ii) @homeaffairs.gov.au>; s. 22(1)(a)(ii) s. 22(1)(a)(ii) @HOMEAFFAIRS.GOV.AU>; Michael THOMAS s. 22(1)(a)(ii) @homeaffairs.gov.au>; Michael WILLARD s. 22(1)(a)(ii) @homeaffairs.gov.au>; s. 22(1)(a)(ii) s. 22(1)(a)(ii) @homeaffairs.gov.au>; Sandra JEFFERY s. 22(1)(a)(ii) @abf.gov.au>; s. 22(1)(a)(ii) s. 22(1)(a)(ii) @homeaffairs.gov.au>; s. 22(1)(a)(ii) @homeaffairs.gov.au>
Subject: FOR NOTING: Media enquiry from s. 47G(1)(a) - February 21 'Peace Talks' Afghan Bazaar [SEC=OFFICIAL]

OFFICIAL

Good afternoon,

Please find attached and below a response to s. 47G(1)(a) for your noting:

Attributable to a Departmental spokesperson:

- The Department of Home Affairs attended the community leaders forum in Dandenong on 21 February 2025 at the invitation of the City of Greater Dandenong.
- At the meeting, a [joint statement](#) was signed by elders and community leaders calling for calm and peace.
- The naming of places in the City of Greater Dandenong is a matter for the local Council.
- We will continue to work with councils, state and territory governments and across the community to foster greater social cohesion, understanding and inclusion of all communities that contribute to our vibrant and resilient multicultural society.

On background **OFFICIAL** (for use in reporting, not for attribution):

- The Department of Home Affairs' network of Regional Directors and Community Liaison Officers engage with a wide range of cultural, religious and ethnic community stakeholders around Australia, including:
 - multicultural community leaders and organisations
 - multicultural peak bodies
 - federal, state and local government representatives
 - not-for-profit organisations
 - service providers that provide services to multicultural communities
 - other organisations with multicultural stakeholders and clients.
- This network provides a mechanism for community members to share information about their priorities, concerns, and the impact of government policies and programs on their communities.

Kind regards,

s. 22(1)(a)(ii)

Assistant Director, Media

Media and Social Media | Media and Communication Branch

M: s. 22(1)(a)(ii) **Media line:** s. 22(1)(a)(ii)

E: s. 22(1)(a)(ii) [@homeaffairs.gov.au](mailto:s.22(1)(a)(ii)@homeaffairs.gov.au)

OFFICIAL

s. 22(1)(a)(ii)

From: s. 22(1)(a)(ii)
To: [Melissa KAY](#); [Mark GROOTE](#); [Home Affairs Media](#)
Cc: [Heike PHILLIPS](#); s. 22(1)(a)(ii)
Subject: RE: Media enquiry - Afghan Bazaar issue [SEC=OFFICIAL]
Date: Friday, 14 March 2025 8:07:03 AM
Attachments: [FOR VISIBILITY Media enquiry - Afghan Bazaar issue SECOFFICIAL.msg](#)
[image001.jpg](#)

OFFICIAL

Hi everyone

Just closing the loop on this one. My team will stand down now that AM Hill has indicated that he will handle this one himself.

If there are any updates on this issue, it would be great if you could keep us in the loop in case it pops up again.

Appreciate the call last night Mel so we could get on the front foot as much as possible.

Kind regards

s. 22(1)(a)(ii)

OFFICIAL

From: Melissa KAY s. 22(1)(a)(ii)@homeaffairs.gov.au>
Sent: Thursday, 13 March 2025 9:15 PM
To: Mark GROOTE s. 22(1)(a)(ii)@HOMEAFFAIRS.GOV.AU>; Home Affairs Media <media@homeaffairs.gov.au>; s. 22(1)(a)(ii) s. 22(1)(a)(ii)@HOMEAFFAIRS.GOV.AU>
Cc: Heike PHILLIPS s. 22(1)(a)(ii)@homeaffairs.gov.au>; s. 22(1)(a)(ii) s. 22(1)(a)(ii)@homeaffairs.gov.au>
Subject: RE: Media enquiry - Afghan Bazaar issue [SEC=OFFICIAL]

OFFICIAL

Thanks Mark, no need to apologise, it's late in the day!

Have included you on the email to AM Hill seeking his advice on the media enquiry and can work it out first thing tomorrow.

Great to hear about the Council meeting, happy to come together with the same group to talk next steps etc tomorrow if useful (am on a plane from s. 22(1)(a)(ii))

Mel

Melissa Kay
Regional Director Victoria and Tasmania
Immigration Group
Department of Home Affairs
M: s. 22(1)(a)(ii)
E: s. 22(1)(a)(ii) [@homeaffairs.gov.au](mailto:s.22(1)(a)(ii)@homeaffairs.gov.au)
EA/EO: s. 22(1)(a)(ii) [@homeaffairs.gov.au](mailto:s.22(1)(a)(ii)@homeaffairs.gov.au)

OFFICIAL

From: Mark GROOTE s. 22(1)(a)(ii) [@HOMEAFFAIRS.GOV.AU](mailto:s.22(1)(a)(ii)@HOMEAFFAIRS.GOV.AU)>
Sent: Thursday, 13 March 2025 9:11 PM
To: Melissa KAY s. 22(1)(a)(ii) [@homeaffairs.gov.au](mailto:s.22(1)(a)(ii)@homeaffairs.gov.au); Home Affairs Media
<media@homeaffairs.gov.au>; s. 22(1)(a)(ii) s. 22(1)(a)(ii) [@HOMEAFFAIRS.GOV.AU](mailto:s.22(1)(a)(ii)@HOMEAFFAIRS.GOV.AU)>
Cc: Heike PHILLIPS s. 22(1)(a)(ii) [@homeaffairs.gov.au](mailto:s.22(1)(a)(ii)@homeaffairs.gov.au); s. 22(1)(a)(ii)
s. 22(1)(a)(ii) [@homeaffairs.gov.au](mailto:s.22(1)(a)(ii)@homeaffairs.gov.au)>
Subject: RE: Media enquiry - Afghan Bazaar issue [SEC=OFFICIAL]

OFFICIAL

Hi all

The first I saw this was the below (apologies have just landed back in s. 22(1)(a)(ii)). Have had no direct contact from media.

We met with the Council today, but made no firm commitments, but have discussed (internally) a potential way forward that we will flesh out more tomorrow.

Cheers
Mark

Mark Groote
First Assistant Secretary | Office of Community Cohesion
Department of Home Affairs

T: s. 22(1)(a)(ii) | M: s. 22(1)(a)(ii)

OFFICIAL

From: Melissa KAY s. 22(1)(a)(ii) [@homeaffairs.gov.au](mailto:s.22(1)(a)(ii)@homeaffairs.gov.au)>
Sent: Thursday, 13 March 2025 8:53 PM

To: Home Affairs Media <media@homeaffairs.gov.au>; s. 22(1)(a)(ii) s. 22(1)(a)(ii) @HOMEAFFAIRS.GOV.AU>
Cc: Heike PHILLIPS s. 22(1)(a)(ii) @homeaffairs.gov.au>; Mark GROOTE s. 22(1)(a)(ii) @HOMEAFFAIRS.GOV.AU>; s. 22(1)(a)(ii) s. 22(1)(a)(ii) @homeaffairs.gov.au>
Subject: RE: Media enquiry - Afghan Bazaar issue [SEC=OFFICIAL]

OFFICIAL

Thanks s. 22(1)(a)(ii) for the chat just now, appreciate your advice that you hadn't received that either.

I have gone back to AM Hill now noting the same, and asked his preference on approach to response (ie him directly or us drafting) – have cc'd mailbox and will keep in touch with you tonight if he replies.

Thanks heaps! Sorry it's so late.

Mel

Melissa Kay
Regional Director Victoria and Tasmania
Immigration Group
Department of Home Affairs
M: s. 22(1)(a)(ii)
E: s. 22(1)(a)(ii) @homeaffairs.gov.au
EA/EO: s. 22(1)(a)(ii) @homeaffairs.gov.au

OFFICIAL

From: Melissa KAY
Sent: Thursday, 13 March 2025 8:30 PM
To: Home Affairs Media <media@homeaffairs.gov.au>; s. 22(1)(a)(ii) s. 22(1)(a)(ii) @HOMEAFFAIRS.GOV.AU>
Cc: Heike PHILLIPS s. 22(1)(a)(ii) @HOMEAFFAIRS.GOV.AU>; Mark GROOTE s. 22(1)(a)(ii) @HOMEAFFAIRS.GOV.AU>; s. 22(1)(a)(ii) s. 22(1)(a)(ii) @HOMEAFFAIRS.GOV.AU>
Subject: FW: Media enquiry - Afghan Bazaar issue [SEC=OFFICIAL]

OFFICIAL

Hi Mark – have we received this media request? s. 22(1)(a)(ii) - Will call media duty phone in a sec.

AM Hill is following up (this is the first I have seen it)

Melissa Kay
Regional Director Victoria and Tasmania
Immigration Group
Department of Home Affairs
M: s. 22(1)(a)(ii)
E: s. 22(1)(a)(ii) [@homeaffairs.gov.au](mailto:s.22(1)(a)(ii)@homeaffairs.gov.au)
EA/EO: s. 22(1)(a)(ii) [@homeaffairs.gov.au](mailto:s.22(1)(a)(ii)@homeaffairs.gov.au)

OFFICIAL

From: Hill, Julian (MP) <Julian.Hill.MP@aph.gov.au>
Sent: Thursday, 13 March 2025 7:02 PM
To: Melissa KAY s. 22(1)(a)(ii) [@homeaffairs.gov.au](mailto:s.22(1)(a)(ii)@homeaffairs.gov.au); s. 22(1)(a)(ii) s. 22(1)(a)(ii) [@aph.gov.au](mailto:s.22(1)(a)(ii)@aph.gov.au)>
Subject: Fw: Media enquiry - Afghan Bazaar issue

Mel - has Home Affairs provided any comments as yet?

Julian

Hon. Julian Hill MP, Federal Member for Bruce, Asst Minister for Citizenship and Multicultural Affairs
T: +61 3 9791 7770 | M: +61 422 67 5660 | E: Julian.Hill.MP@aph.gov.au
www.JulianHillMP.com | www.facebook.com/JulianHillMP | 45 Robinson Street, Dandenong VIC 3175

From: s. 47F(1)
Sent: Thursday, March 13, 2025 12:56:25 PM
To: Hill, Julian (MP) <Julian.Hill.MP@aph.gov.au>; s. 22(1)(a)(ii) s. 22(1)(a)(ii)
Subject: Media enquiry - Afghan Bazaar issue

Hi Julian and s. 22(1)(a)(ii)

As you're aware, the proposed renaming of Afghan Bazaar is a fraught issue.

City of Greater Dandenong is seeking state/federal funding for a thorough and independent community consultation to "bridge divisions" as well as resolve the issue.

It would possibly involve collaboration with neighbouring councils as well as state and federal governments.

1. Do you support this consultation as a means of resolution? And will you support the council's bid for federal funding for the consultation?

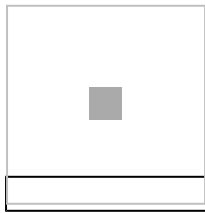
2. Any other ideas on how to progress this issue?

(deadline 10am Friday)

kind regards

s. 47F(1)

S. 47F(1)



From: [Home Affairs Media](#)
To: s. 22(1)(a)(ii)
Cc: [Home Affairs Media](#)
Subject: FOR VISIBILITY: Media enquiry - Afghan Bazaar issue [SEC=OFFICIAL]
Date: Friday, 14 March 2025 8:05:59 AM
Attachments: ~WRD000.jpg
Importance: High

OFFICIAL

Hi s. 22(1)(a)(ii)

As requested, please see below from AM Hill.

Kind regards,

s. 22(1)(a)(ii)

s. 22(1)(a)(ii) (They/Them)

Media Officer | Media and Social Media

Media and Communication Branch | Executive Coordination Division

Department of Home Affairs

Media Line: s. 22(1)(a)(ii)

E: s. 22(1)(a)(ii) [@homeaffairs.gov.au](mailto:s.22(1)(a)(ii)@homeaffairs.gov.au)

OFFICIAL

From: Hill, Julian (MP) <Julian.Hill.MP@aph.gov.au>

Sent: Thursday, 13 March 2025 10:31 PM

To: Melissa KAY s. 22(1)(a)(ii)@homeaffairs.gov.au; s. 22(1)(a)(ii)

s. 22(1)(a)(ii) @aph.gov.au>

Cc: s. 22(1)(a)(ii) @homeaffairs.gov.au; Mark GROOTE

s. 22(1)(a)(ii) @HOMEAFFAIRS.GOV.AU>; Home Affairs Media <media@homeaffairs.gov.au>;

s. 22(1)(a)(ii) @homeaffairs.gov.au>

Subject: Re: Media enquiry - Afghan Bazaar issue [SEC=OFFICIAL]

No worries all good I'll handle.

Julian

Hon. Julian Hill MP, Federal Member for Bruce, Asst Minister for Citizenship and Multicultural Affairs

T: +61 3 9791 7770 | M: +61 422 67 5660 | E: Julian.Hill.MP@aph.gov.au

www.JulianHillMP.com | www.facebook.com/JulianHillMP | 45 Robinson Street, Dandenong VIC 3175

From: Melissa KAY s. 22(1)(a)(ii)@homeaffairs.gov.au>

Sent: Thursday, March 13, 2025 7:49:04 PM

To: Hill, Julian (MP) <Julian.Hill.MP@aph.gov.au>; s. 22(1)(a)(ii) [REDACTED]
s. 22(1)(a)(ii) [\[REDACTED\]@aph.gov.au](mailto:[REDACTED]@aph.gov.au)>
Cc: s. 22(1)(a)(ii) [REDACTED] [\[REDACTED\]@homeaffairs.gov.au](mailto:[REDACTED]@homeaffairs.gov.au)>; Mark GROOTE
s. 22(1)(a)(ii) [\[REDACTED\]@HOMEAFFAIRS.GOV.AU](mailto:[REDACTED]@HOMEAFFAIRS.GOV.AU)>; Home Affairs Media <media@homeaffairs.gov.au>;
s. 22(1)(a)(ii) [\[REDACTED\]@homeaffairs.gov.au](mailto:[REDACTED]@homeaffairs.gov.au)>
Subject: RE: Media enquiry - Afghan Bazaar issue [SEC=OFFICIAL]

OFFICIAL

Hi Minister

I've just discussed with Media duty officer and unfortunately we were not aware of the below until now.

Are you comfortable with HA Media drafting a response to the enquiry for your noting? Otherwise, if you would prefer to engage on the response directly, please let me know.

Kind regards

Mel

Melissa Kay
Regional Director Victoria and Tasmania
Immigration Group
Department of Home Affairs
M: s. 22(1)(a)(ii) [REDACTED]
E: s. 22(1)(a)(ii) [\[REDACTED\]@homeaffairs.gov.au](mailto:[REDACTED]@homeaffairs.gov.au)
EA/EO: s. 22(1)(a)(ii) [REDACTED] [\[REDACTED\]@homeaffairs.gov.au](mailto:[REDACTED]@homeaffairs.gov.au)

OFFICIAL

s. 22(1)(a)(i)

From: [Hill, Julian \(MP\)](#)
To: s. 22(1)(a)(ii); [Melissa KAY](#)
Cc: s. 22(1)(a)(ii) [Mark GROOTE](#); [Home Affairs Media](#); [DLO.Hill](#)
Subject: Re: Media enquiry - Afghan Bazaar issue[SEC=OFFICIAL]
Date: Friday, 14 March 2025 10:31:35 AM
Attachments: ~WRD000.jpg

Thank you

s. 22(1)(a)(ii)

Julian

Hon. Julian Hill MP, Federal Member for Bruce, Asst Minister for Citizenship and Multicultural Affairs
T: +61 3 9791 7770 | M: +61 422 67 5660 | E: Julian.Hill.MP@aph.gov.au
www.JulianHillMP.com | www.facebook.com/JulianHillMP | 45 Robinson Street, Dandenong VIC 3175

From: s. 22(1)(a)(ii) @aph.gov.au>
Sent: Friday, March 14, 2025 10:23:00 AM
To: Melissa KAY s. 22(1)(a)(ii) @homeaffairs.gov.au>; Hill, Julian (MP) <Julian.Hill.MP@aph.gov.au>
Cc: s. 22(1)(a)(ii) @homeaffairs.gov.au>; Mark GROOTE s. 22(1)(a)(ii) @HOMEAFFAIRS.GOV.AU>; Home Affairs Media <media@homeaffairs.gov.au>; DLO.Hill s. 22(1)(a)(ii) @homeaffairs.gov.au>
Subject: Re: Media enquiry - Afghan Bazaar issue[SEC=OFFICIAL]

Hi Mel

FYI - this is the statement that Julian has made to the Dandenong Star today. It should be reproduced in full on the website and will be cut down slightly in print versions.

Also, I have no idea why this email is in such large font but I cannot make it smaller on my iPad.

Cheers

s. 22(1)(a)(ii)

“Obviously the naming of places is a matter for the local council as the Federal Parliament has no power under the Constitution about that sort of thing.

“I encourage the Council and everyone with a genuine view to look for a way forward that brings the whole community together.

“Hazara people have been persecuted for decades in many parts of the world and it’s a very sensitive issue which needs to be considered with respect.

“It is also clear that there are much broader issues than just a local place name. Reports of ethnic tensions and threats of violence and conflict in schools, parks, pools, community organisations and businesses are deeply worrying and beyond the ability of a single council to address.

“Every Australian has the right to feel safe, and the vast majority of Australians including people from Afghanistan do not want such conflicts to impact daily life in our country.

“It is especially important that all so-called leaders - whether political, faith or community leaders - set a positive example for the younger generation of Australians in how to bring people together not divide the community and resolve differences in a courteous way.

“I have asked the Department of Home Affairs to engage with councils and the Victorian Government to explore a broader process to engage the community in a positive and enduring way, to ensure all people from Afghanistan settle in well to life in Australia.”

From: Melissa KAY **s. 22(1)(a)(ii)** @homeaffairs.gov.au>

Sent: Friday, March 14, 2025 6:37:55 AM

To: Hill, Julian (MP) <Julian.Hill.MP@aph.gov.au>; **s. 22(1)(a)(ii)**

s. 22(1)(a)(ii) @aph.gov.au>

Cc: s. 22(1)(a)(ii) @homeaffairs.gov.au; Mark GROOTE
s. 22(1)(a)(ii) @HOMEAFFAIRS.GOV.AU>; Home Affairs Media <media@homeaffairs.gov.au>;
DLO.Hill s. 22(1)(a)(ii) @homeaffairs.gov.au>
Subject: Re: Media enquiry - Afghan Bazaar issue[SEC=OFFICIAL]

OFFICIAL

Noted, thanks Minister.

Mel

Sent by Email+

Melissa Kay
Assistant Secretary
Home Affairs
s. 22(1)(a)(ii)

OFFICIAL

From: "Hill, Julian (MP)" <Julian.Hill.MP@aph.gov.au>
Date: Thursday 13 March 2025 at 10:31:45 pm
To: "Melissa KAY" s. 22(1)(a)(ii) @homeaffairs.gov.au>; s. 22(1)(a)(ii) s. 22(1)(a)(ii) @aph.gov.au>
Cc: s. 22(1)(a)(ii) @homeaffairs.gov.au>, "Mark GROOTE" s. 22(1)(a)(ii) @HOMEAFFAIRS.GOV.AU>, "Home Affairs Media" <media@homeaffairs.gov.au>, "DLO.Hill" s. 22(1)(a)(ii) @homeaffairs.gov.au>
Subject: Re: Media enquiry - Afghan Bazaar issue [SEC=OFFICIAL]

No worries all good I'll handle.

Julian

Hon. Julian Hill MP, Federal Member for Bruce, Asst Minister for Citizenship and Multicultural Affairs
T: +61 3 9791 7770 | M: +61 422 67 5660 | E: Julian.Hill.MP@aph.gov.au
www.JulianHillMP.com | www.facebook.com/JulianHillMP | 45 Robinson Street, Dandenong VIC 3175

From: Melissa KAY s. 22(1)(a)(ii) @homeaffairs.gov.au>
Sent: Thursday, March 13, 2025 7:49:04 PM
To: Hill, Julian (MP) <Julian.Hill.MP@aph.gov.au>; s. 22(1)(a)(ii) s. 22(1)(a)(ii) @aph.gov.au>
Cc: s. 22(1)(a)(ii) @homeaffairs.gov.au>; Mark GROOTE s. 22(1)(a)(ii) @HOMEAFFAIRS.GOV.AU>; Home Affairs Media <media@homeaffairs.gov.au>;
DLO.Hill s. 22(1)(a)(ii) @homeaffairs.gov.au>
Subject: RE: Media enquiry - Afghan Bazaar issue [SEC=OFFICIAL]

From: s. 22(1)(a)(ii)
To: [Melissa KAY](#), s. 22(1)(a)(ii)
Subject: Re: Submission 2 to the Senate, MPs, and local councils[SEC=OFFICIAL]
Date: Wednesday, 18 June 2025 7:38:43 PM

OFFICIAL

Thanks Mel,

I know several of the people named in this document, one that I speak with regularly and have been planning to catch up with soon. Obviously I won't mention this when we do meet.

I would agree that the document is probably fraudulent too but can discuss further tomorrow.

Regards,
s. 22(1)(a)(ii)

Sent by Email+

OFFICIAL

From: "Melissa KAY" s. 22(1)(a)(ii) [@homeaffairs.gov.au](mailto:s.22(1)(a)(ii)@homeaffairs.gov.au)>
Date: Wednesday, 18 June 2025 at 17:56:44
To: "s. 22(1)(a)(ii) [@homeaffairs.gov.au](mailto:s.22(1)(a)(ii)@homeaffairs.gov.au)", "s. 22(1)(a)(ii) " s. 22(1)(a)(ii) [@HOMEAFFAIRS.GOV.AU](mailto:s.22(1)(a)(ii)@HOMEAFFAIRS.GOV.AU)>
Subject: FW: Submission 2 to the Senate, MPs, and local councils[SEC=OFFICIAL]

OFFICIAL

For your visibility – nil further distribution outside the team pls.

Melissa Kay
Regional Director Victoria and Tasmania
Department of Home Affairs
M s. 22(1)(a)(ii)
E s. 22(1)(a)(ii) [@homeaffairs.gov.au](mailto:s.22(1)(a)(ii)@homeaffairs.gov.au)
EA/EO: s. 22(1)(a)(ii) [@homeaffairs.gov.au](mailto:s.22(1)(a)(ii)@homeaffairs.gov.au)

OFFICIAL

From: s. 22(1)(a)(ii) [@homeaffairs.gov.au](mailto:s.22(1)(a)(ii)@homeaffairs.gov.au)>
Sent: Wednesday, 18 June 2025 2:34 PM

To: Melissa KAY s. 22(1)(a)(ii)@homeaffairs.gov.au>
Cc: s. 22(1)(a)(ii)@homeaffairs.gov.au>; Mark GROOTE
s. 22(1)(a)(ii)@HOMEAFFAIRS.GOV.AU>
Subject: Fwd: Submission 2 to the Senate, MPs, and local councils[SEC=OFFICIAL]

OFFICIAL

Hi s. 22(1)(a)(ii)

s. 22(1)(a)(ii) has forwarded below for info, awareness. Let's check in ahead of next contact with Dandenong and other councils.

Cheers
s. 22(1)(a)(ii)

s. 22(1)(a)(ii)

Senior Director | Office of Community Cohesion
Executive Group | Department of Home Affairs

A: 4 National Cct, Barton ACT
M: s. 22(1)(a)(ii)
E s. 22(1)(a)(ii)@homeaffairs.gov.au

OFFICIAL

From: s. 22(1)(a)(ii) s. 22(1)(a)(ii)@aph.gov.au>
Date: Wednesday, 18 June 2025 at 1:49:33 pm
To: "Mark GROOTE" s. 22(1)(a)(ii)@HOMEAFFAIRS.GOV.AU>
Cc: s. 22(1)(a)(ii) s. 22(1)(a)(ii)@homeaffairs.gov.au>
Subject: Fw: Submission 2 to the Senate, MPs, and local councils

Hi Mark

Forwarding the below to your team for their information as this might be something that your team should be aware of given the OCC's current work in this area.

Kind regards

s. 22(1)(a)(ii)

s. 22(1)(a)(ii)
Chief of Staff
Office of Julian Hill MP

From: s. 22(1)(a)(ii)@aph.gov.au>
Sent: Wednesday, June 18, 2025 1:44 pm
To: s. 47F(1)@police.vic.gov.au>
Cc: Hill, Julian s. 22(1)(a)(ii)@aph.gov.au>; s. 22(1)(a)(ii)@casey.vic.gov.au
s. 22(1)(a)(ii)@casey.vic.gov.au>; s. 47F(1)@cgd.vic.gov.au
s. 47F(1)@cgd.vic.gov.au s. 47F(1)@cgd.vic.gov.au

s. 47F(1) @cgd.vic.gov.au>; s. 47F(1) @casey.vic.gov.au
s. 47F(1) @casey.vic.gov.au>; s. 47F(1) @parliament.vic.gov.au
s. 47F(1) @parliament

Subject: Fw: Submission 2 to the Senate, MPs, and local councils

Dear Snr Sergeant s. 47F(1),

Further to your discussion with Julian earlier, please find below the email and attached the document which was sent to Julian yesterday.

We are referring the document to Victoria Police for investigation because an initial investigation by our office has confirmed the document appears to be fraudulent and designed to inflame and incite ethnic tensions and vilify the Hazara community. The contents of the document are highly offensive to many and some of the statements are blatantly racist. None of the purported authors named on the front have knowledge of it, and report to have never having seen it or agreeing to having their names attached to it.

As you are aware the context for this which is very concerning includes:

1. s. 22(1)(a)(ii)
[Redacted]
2. The local naming controversy regarding Thomas St ('Afghan Bazaar' / 'Little Bamyar' etc) which has fostered quite serious ethnic tensions and community division.
3. s. 22(1)(a)(ii)
[Redacted]

The only plausible explanation community leaders and Julian can see is that this fraudulent document has been generated to further inflame community divisions. There is likely some political motive as it specifically seeks to tarnish leaders who were not supportive of the Liberal candidate but regardless it is a serious issue to perpetrate a fraud in this way designed to incite tensions which have been known to lead to violence and threats of violence and spread racist views.

Our office has no record or knowledge of the individual named who has shared the document. Community leaders have noted a Facebook page with the name, s. 47F(1), active in some local Facebook groups which they have understood to be a fake troll account, but it is unclear who this individual actually is or whether or not they actually exist.

Julian is concerned that should this document be circulated widely and people believe that it is a real document, it is likely to incite disunity in the local community and result in many people feeling vilified including the individuals named on the document as well as the various ethnic communities stereotyped and smeared.

I have copied in s. 47F(1) as the local State representative, as well as the local Councils as it is possible they have also received copies of this fake document.

I will also alert the Office for Community Cohesion in Home Affairs and through them the other partners to the social cohesion and settlement work.

Julian would appreciate your serious consideration of this matter and in particular investigation as to what criminal offences may have been committed.

Kind regards

s. 22(1)(a)(ii)

s. 22(1)(a)(ii)

Chief of Staff

Office of Julian Hill MP

From: S. 47F(1) @gmail.com>

Sent: Tuesday, June 17, 2025 10:42:21 AM

Subject: Submission 2 to the Senate, MPs, and local councils

Hello everyone,

We, the Afghan Diaspora, are sharing this submission with you all for your review and further consideration.

Best Regard

S. 47F(1)