

MAYORAL MINUTE

(ITEM) BURWOOD COUNCIL'S POSITION ON RACISM

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MAYORAL MINUTE BY CR JOHN FAKER (MAYOR)

Summary

Burwood Council has always taken a positive approach to multiculturalism and has long valued the diversity in our local community. Not only is Council a Refugee Welcome Zone, we have held numerous Harmony Day events and developed a board game for use in local schools called Different People Different Voices which sought to break down racial stereotypes.

Since the COVID-19 pandemic began there has been increasing evidence, both from data and anecdotally, that racism in Australia is on the rise. Whilst the picture is not entirely clear in Burwood, I have heard reports of incidents occurring such as a person being verbally abused in public for wearing a mask and false rumours being circulated about the Chinese speaking community and links to COVID-19.

This is truly disappointing but I believe it does not represent the views of many people in our community.

However, it is important that Council shows leadership on this matter by speaking out about this issue; I propose that Burwood Council adopts a stance opposing all forms of racism including the growing incidents occurring during the COVID-19 pandemic.

As we do not know the extent of the problem locally, I believe the best way to move forward would be to continue to promote the value of multiculturalism, harmony and diversity. I believe this positive approach will help to create a sense of inclusiveness and belonging for the whole community. We can remind our community that there are different ways to report any incidents of racism, either formally through the Police or through organisations like the Asian Australian Alliance. It is imperative that we also implement actions that support the community whilst continuing to gather information to help us better understand the impacts of racism locally.

Operational Plan Objective

- 1.2 A well informed, supported and engaged community
- 1.3 A safe community for residents, workers and visitors
- 1.4 A proud and inclusive community that celebrates diversity

I therefore move that:

1. Council adopts a stance opposing all forms of racism including the growing incidents occurring during the COVID-19 pandemic.
2. The General Manager implements a communications strategy that promotes positive messages in relation to the value of multiculturalism, harmony and diversity.
3. The General Manager continues to research the extent and impacts of racism locally through all appropriate sources, including the Council's Multicultural Advisory Committee (MAC).
4. The General Manager implements any current projects and activities and reports back to Council in three months on additional projects and activities that can help to reduce racism

and enhance community inclusiveness and belonging.

5. Council actively promotes the different means available to the local community to report any incidents of racism.
6. Council develops a statement opposing all forms of racism with input from the MAC and other key cultural groups.

Attachments

There are no attachments for this report.