



SUPPLEMENTARY BUSINESS PAPER

(Mayoral Minute MM3/20 Item 9)

GENERAL MEETING

**Wednesday 13 May 2020
at 6:30PM**



TABLE OF CONTENTS

SUPPLEMENTARY ITEMS

Item 9	MM3/20 Representations From the Chinese Australian Forum - Unity Over Fear	1
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9 REPRESENTATIONS FROM THE CHINESE AUSTRALIAN FORUM - UNITY OVER FEAR

I have recently received a letter (copy attached) from the Vice President of the Chinese Australian Forum (CAF) seeking Council's support for a campaign that CAF are running to call for national unity during the COVID-19 pandemic.

CAF are a non-partisan body established in 1985 as a response to anti-Asian racism and to provide the Chinese community in Australia with a voice. Their core objectives include promoting the integration of Australians of Chinese heritage into mainstream Australian society, raising the political awareness of its communities and encouraging the participation of Chinese Australians in public office.

CAF believe that since the start of the COVID-19 crisis, there has been a deeply disturbing rise in racial vilification of Asian Australians which poses a serious threat to national unity and social cohesion.

As a consequence, CAF is seeking Council's agreement to add its logo to an Open Letter of Support (copy also attached) which has been written by 16 prominent Chinese Australians including Adam Liaw, Dr John Yu, Dr Cindy Pan, Benjamin Law and Jason Yat-Sen Li.

CAF's intent is to have a large and diverse range of organisations from across the Australian community endorsing the Open Letter and to have as many people as possible sign an online Unity Over Fear Petition which can be found at bit.ly/unityoverfear.



RECOMMENDATION**THAT:**

1. Council note the correspondence received from the Vice President of the Chinese Australian Forum (CAF).
2. Council acknowledges that Australia is a party to international obligations affirming that on matters of race, culture, religion and like factors, we are totally non-discriminatory.
3. Hornsby Shire has more than one third of its population overseas born and reflecting great diversity in the source countries, cultures and religions from which people have come.
4. While Council is not aware of any acts of discrimination locally, it regrets reports that that has not been the case elsewhere.
5. Council affirms strongly its view in these present circumstances there is no place for racial, cultural or religious vilification of any Australians.

The Honourable Cr PHILIP RUDDOCK

Mayor

Attachments:

1.   Chinese Australian Forum

File Reference: F2020/00082-006

Document Number: D07914380

ITEM 9



Chinese Australian
forum

The Hon Philip Ruddock
Mayor
Hornsby Shire Council
PO Box 37
Hornsby NSW 2077

Tuesday, 5 May 2020

By email: pruddock@hornsby.nsw.gov.au

Dear Philip,

We seek your support for a campaign the Chinese Australian Forum (CAF) is running to call for national unity during the COVID-19 pandemic. Since the start of the crisis, there has been a deeply disturbing rise in racial vilification of Asian Australians. We believe this poses a serious threat to our national unity and social cohesion.

Deeply alarmed by this escalation in racial abuse, 16 prominent Chinese Australians including Adam Liaw, Dr John Yu, Dr Cindy Pan, Benjamin Law and Jason Yat-Sen Li - have written an open letter urging all Australians to stand work together to reject racism. You can read the full letter here: bit.ly/uof-letter.

Alongside the open letter, CAF has launched a petition asking all Australians to choose #UnityOverFear, to reject racism and to defend our social cohesion. The petition has enjoyed significant media coverage, currently has over 50,000 signatures and continues to grow. Here is a link to the petition: bit.ly/unityoverfear.

What we need from you

CAF seeks your support by inviting your organisation to support and add your organisation's logo to the attached Letter of Support, as well as encourage Hornsby Shire Council's ratepayers & workers to sign the #UnityOverFear petition.

Our goal is to have a large and diverse range of organisations from across the Australian community support this letter. We also hope that you can share the letter and the petition with your personal networks and your organisation's ratepayers & workers. We want to show that Australians in large numbers will vocally support and defend our multiculturalism.

CAF hopes your organisation will join with us to show Australians that only by being united, tolerant and helping each other can we get through this crisis that threatens not only our nation's physical health, but also our wellbeing as a harmonious society.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Steve Khouw'.

Steve Khouw
Vice President
Chinese Australian Forum

Key Links:

Petition: bit.ly/unityoverfear

Open Letter: bit.ly/uof-letter

Campaign Kit: <https://bit.ly/uof-kit>

Chinese Australian Forum of NSW Inc (ABN 51 130 412 996)
PO Box 876 Turramurra NSW 2074 info@caf.org.au

ATTACHMENT 1 - ITEM 9



Chinese Australian
forum

ABOUT THE CHINESE AUSTRALIAN FORUM

CAF is a non-partisan body established in 1985 as a response to anti-Asian racism and to provide the Chinese community in Australia with a voice. Our core objectives include promoting the integration of Australians of Chinese heritage into mainstream Australian society, raising our community's political awareness and encouraging the participation of Chinese Australians in public office.

Major Initiatives

Some of CAF's achievements include:

1. Denunciation of Pauline Hanson's maiden speech (1996) and her unleashing of racially motivated attacks on Chinese Australians. The increase in racial attacks was confirmed by a survey that was reported worldwide.
2. In conjunction with the Victorian branch of the B'nai B'rith, successfully lobbying the Liberal Party to put One Nation last on its preference vote in the 1998 Federal election.
3. Successfully lobbying for police charges against Asian students to be dropped in relation to a fight at Turrumurra train station between a group of schoolboys in 1991.
4. Taking the Sydney Morning Herald to the Australian Press Council in 1993 for a hearing on the SMH's unsubstantiated comments that Chinese university students were plagiarising and cheating to a greater extent than other students.
5. Lobbying for the passage of the Federal Racial Hatred Act in 1995.
6. Part of the Chinese Australian community lobby for the Chinese students to be granted permanent residency following the Tiananmen incident in 1989
7. CAF was approached by the Australian Olympics Commission to be one of two community organisations to raise funds for the Australian Olympic Team for the 2008 Olympic Games in Beijing China.
8. Providing support for Major Ting Li during an appeal against his court martial and suspension following his protest at a racial slur (Ting Li vs Chief of the Army). The court martial was upheld in the Federal Court but quashed by the High Court in 2012.
9. Preventing the conversion into a cemetery of the Market Gardens at La Perouse which had been in place for over 100 years.
10. Appearing before the NSW Upper House Inquiry into Racial Vilification Laws in 2013.
11. Lodging protests against John Laws and Grant Goldman of 2SM for their comments that Asians had poor peripheral vision because of the shape of their eyes. Both presenters later apologised for their remarks.
12. Successfully lobbying against the repeal of Section 18C of the Federal Racial Discrimination Act in 2013. CAF joined a group comprising Indigenous, Jewish, Greek, Korean, Cypriot, Arabic and Armenian communities.
13. Successfully lobbying in 2018, together with a number of other community groups, for the NSW Racial Vilification Laws to be strengthened.

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PO Box 876 Turrumurra NSW 2074 info@caf.org.au

**WE SUPPORT #UNITYOVERFEAR
DURING THE CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC**

We are deeply concerned that the recent rise in anti-Chinese sentiment is driving a marked escalation in racial abuse towards Australians of Asian background. This poses a serious threat to our social cohesion.

We have been shocked by footage of the vilification of individuals that has circulated globally across social media with many of the victims targeted because of their Asian appearance. These instances are not isolated and alarmingly are sometimes accompanied by violence. In February 2020, the Australian Human Rights Commission reported that one in four people who lodged racial discrimination complaints in the past two months said they were targeted due to association with COVID-19 measures.

This disturbing trend is unacceptable and cannot continue unchallenged. We ask for fairness in our national debate, our media reporting and in our communities.

As we confront the COVID-19 pandemic, national unity is critical to our resilience and recovery. It is essential that the distrust, disenfranchisement and vilification of Australians of any racial background is not tolerated under any circumstances.

We support the online petition and campaign #UnityOverFear (<http://www.change.org/unityoverfear>) and urge Australians to sign and share it in order to demonstrate our unity and resolve in combating racism.

This is a time for all Australians to come together.

22 April 2020