

NOTICE OF MOTION: FLYING OF YELLOW CO VANG VIETNAMESE REFUGEE FLAG**Notice of Motion No: 264****Councillor: Cr Nam Quach**

BACKGROUND

Council has received a request from the Vietnamese Community in Australia (VCA) Victoria Chapter, for formal recognition of the Vietnamese heritage flag, known as 'Co Vang' (shown as a yellow background with three horizontal red stripes). A list of long serving local community organisations, have also provided letters supporting this request, including senior citizens associations, veterans associations, elderly refugee groups, community groups, local traders, news-print and TV media organisations.

The *Co Vang* flag is an important symbol of social justice for the Vietnamese community in Australia, many of whom arrived as refugees from the mid-nineteen seventies. The request has come as part of the 40 year anniversary of Vietnamese refugee settlement in Australia. After the end of the Vietnam war, thousands of Vietnamese fled Vietnam as refugees in the pursuit of freedom and democracy, and were re-settled harmoniously in Australia. Their arrival also marked Australia's abolishment of the 'White Australia' policy, and is a very significant period in our nation's history. The City of Maribyrnong, in particular holds special significance to the Vietnamese community, as many refugees started their new beginnings of freedom at the Midway Hostel, here in Maribyrnong.

In marking the 40 year anniversary of Vietnamese settlement in Australia, the local community, co-ordinated by the VCA, has embarked on a suite of activities under a banner of "Thank-you Australia", which has included fundraising of over \$500,000 for the Royal Children's Hospital, supporting the underprivileged community through a soup van initiative, fostering community leadership and volunteerism through youth leadership programs and other local initiatives. The activities reflect and demonstrate a strong ethos of community building and community service. The request for recognition of the *Co Vang* flag, comes at a significant time of commemoration for the Vietnamese refugee community across several generations, living here in the City of Maribyrnong.

Council has a long history of supporting the local Vietnamese community through partnerships, service delivery and key policies such as the *Multicultural Policy and Action Plan 2012-2017* and the *Human Rights and Social Justice Framework 2013-2016*. A significant proportion of the City of Maribyrnong's population are of Vietnamese descent. Based on Census 2011 figures, 10% of the City's population were born in Vietnam and 12% speak Vietnamese in the home.

The Victorian Department of Premier and Cabinet have advised that there is no impediment to Council flying the *Co Vang* flag at relevant times as long as it does not replace the Australian or Aboriginal and Torres Strait flags. It is also noted that a number of other Australian and international cities have a long standing practice of flying the *Co Vang* flag during times of special significance to the Vietnamese community. This is also true for a number of RSLs across the nation.

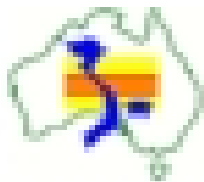
ATTACHMENT

1. Letter from Vietnamese Community in Australia – Vic Chapter dated 8 September 2015

MOTION

That Council:

- 1. Supports the 40th anniversary year of Vietnamese refugee settlement in Australia, by formally recognising the yellow 'Co Vang' flag, symbolising the identity of the Australian Vietnamese community and their refugee experience.**
 - 2. Fly the yellow 'Co Vang' flag during times of special significance to the Australian Vietnamese community, at the Monument of Gratitude (Jensen Reserve, Footscray) and other suitable public locations, such as Town Hall.**
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VIETNAMESE COMMUNITY IN AUSTRALIA - VIC CHAPTER
CỘNG ĐỒNG NGƯỜI VIỆT TỰ DO ỨC CHÂU - VIC

ABN 99 026 498 448

Level L, 68 - 68 Nicholson St, Footscray P.O. BOX 2115 Footscray VIC 3011

Tuesday 8th September 2015

Cr Nam Quach
Mayor of Maribyrnong
PO Box 58
Footscray Vic 3011

Dear Cr Quach

RE: Request to have the Vietnamese yellow flag be recognised in the City of Maribyrnong

We write to seek the Maribyrnong Councillor's support to recognise the Vietnamese yellow flag, on the occasion of the 40th Anniversary.

As a people with a long and proud history of nearly 5000 years, the Diaspora marked one of the darkest chapters in recent memory. Having to flee our homeland in such circumstances and having received the compassion from Australia and her people, the Vietnamese have held an unshakable sense of gratitude and determination to make their contribution to this nation.

40 years on, this sense of gratitude and determination have manifested into the many success stories that have become the hallmark of this nation. The Vietnamese community has proven itself to be the triumph in the decision to abolish the White Australia policy, the success of the multiculturalism policy, and added to the richness of Australia's culture.

Maribyrnong holds a special place in the Vietnamese community settlement with the Midway Hostel was the first place where many Vietnamese refugees finally tasted freedom, hope and a new beginning.

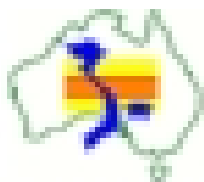
On this 40th anniversary occasion, the community believes strongly in the recognition of the identity that bears the characteristics of the Vietnamese community in Australia. Co Vang is the strongest symbol of this identity not for the first generation but more the second and the future generations of Vietnamese Australians who, the future leaders of this country.

Such recognition by the Council will bring about greater benefits to the people of Maribyrnong and beyond.

The VCA Vic has been in discussion, privately, with a number of members of Parliament at both federal and state levels, community leaders and foreign affairs experts on the matter of Co Vang as a Vietnamese identity flag for a number of years. We think it is appropriate for us to raise this matter with the Maribyrnong Council and seek your support.

We provide a brief outline of our request below:

Objective: To have Co Vang be recognised in, the Maribyrnong council and over time other local councils and to have a number of activities be undertaken throughout the year at no cost to the Council.



VIETNAMESE COMMUNITY IN AUSTRALIA - VIC CHAPTER
CỘNG ĐỒNG NGƯỜI VIỆT TỰ DO ỨC CHÂU - VIC

ABN 99 026 998 668

Level L, 68 - 68 Nicholson St, Footscray P.O. BOX 2115 Footscray VIC 3011

Proposed actions for consideration by the Maribyrnong Council:

- Have the flag be recognised at Council meetings where it is appropriate and adds to the purpose of that/those meeting(s)
- To support a community "accord" where organisations, schools, community centres, businesses or local residents can formally recognise the cultural diversity and the contribution made by all members of society
- Have the flag be flown at the Council Town Hall at significant Vietnamese cultural events including TET, 30th April, or during the Cultural Diversity week

Proposed benefits:

- Greater community engagement via the activities to be undertaken
- Increase the social cohesiveness in the Maribyrnong council

In addition to these, the benefits to the Council are numerous, not least the strengthening of the multicultural landscape, and the innovative and forward thinking characterisation underpinning your support.

We have canvassed support from members of the community and organisations and their support letters will be forthcoming.

Thank you for your support. Should further information be required please contact Viv Nguyen Vice President on 0412 188 920 or email viv_nguyen@tpg.com.au . Alternatively I can be contacted on 0411 616 453 or email bon.nguyen2012@yahoo.com.au

Yours Sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Bon' followed by a stylized flourish.

Bon Nguyen
President