

Media Response

28 February 2025

Background:

Information about the meeting and its purpose [were released to the media on Friday.](#) This includes the joint statement that arose from the meeting and a list of all community members who attended and signed the statement.

Quote attributable to Councillor Jim Memeti, Mayor of Greater Dandenong:

The named used for the Thomas Street precinct was not the topic of the meeting and nor was it discussed. It was referred to only for context.

I was hearing from community leaders and elders about escalating tensions and some concerning behaviour, online and in the local area. They were united in their concerns for community safety and their fears that someone could get hurt. In the course of these conversations, the idea of coming together to call for calm was raised.

I was pleased that Council was able to host this gathering at short notice. I was pleased we were joined by Victoria Police, the Australian Federal Police and the Department of Home Affairs.

As well as last Friday's meeting with community leaders, Council CEO, Jacqui Weatherill and I also spent extended time with community members listening to their views and answering questions following Monday night's council meeting. We will also respond in writing to each question formally submitted.

At the meeting on Friday, people from diverse ethnicities were well represented, along with different faith leaders. Apart from community safety, another strong theme was the democratic right to discuss opinions and even to disagree on matters, in a respectful and safe way.

Some expressed trust in Council and government leaders to facilitate a genuine and fair process for our community to engage on the matter of the precinct name, and there was recognition that it will likely take many months. No formal engagement plans have yet been made. Council has written to the Victorian Minister for Multicultural Affairs and the Assistant Minister for Citizenship and Multicultural Affairs seeking their support and cooperation in creating opportunities for this important community conversation.

I was pleased that all the community leaders present did not hesitate to sign a joint statement. I congratulate them on their leadership and wisdom in prioritising safety and respectful discourse.

ENDS

Media Enquiry

26 February 2025

From Dandenong Journal

The peace talk meeting with the community elders and leaders on Friday afternoon was held.

How were the participants of the meeting invited and what was considered at the time of inviting especially when they haven't been vocal on the Thomas St nickname?

The meeting addressed the opposing petitions and debates over Afghan Bazaar name change. Why weren't the traders of Thomas St or the petitioners involved in the meeting for a roundtable discussion?

Can you confirm if the petitioners were purposely excluded from this meeting?

Who and what was spoken about in the meeting?

Does council know of an incident or any violent attacks on any groups in the Greater Dandenong community due to the contentious opposing petitions?

Deadline is Thursday 5pm.

Thank you.