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**5 SUPPORTING DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION IN THE CITY OF RYDE - Councillor Trenton Brown****File Number: CLM/20/1/1/6 - BP20/580**

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**MOTION:**

That the City of Ryde commit itself to the following actions:-

- (a) Acknowledge the correspondence received from the *Chinese Australian Forum* Vice President, Mr Steve Khouw.
- (b) Acknowledge that some Asian Australians have been impacted by an increase in racial vilification.
- (c) Support the campaign to call for national unity during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- (d) Promote the #UnityOverFear petition asking all Australians to choose #UnityOverFear and to reject racism and defend our national cohesion.
- (e) Offer support to this campaign by having the City of Ryde co-sign and make our logo available as a supporting institution on the attached Open Letter.
- (f) Use the social media platforms of Council to promote a link to this petition and encourage Councillors, staff and residents to sign up and support this petition.



Chinese Australian  
*forum*

**Mr Trenton Brown**  
Councillor  
City of Ryde Council  
PO Box 3615  
Marsfield NSW 2122

Monday, 1 June 2020

By email: TBrown@ryde.nsw.gov.au

Dear Trenton,

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.

Profoundly 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](http://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](http://bit.ly/unityoverfear).

### What we need from you

CAF seeks your support by inviting your organisation to support and add the City of Ryde Council's logo to the attached Letter of Support, as well as encourage your 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 the City of Ryde Council 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,

Steve Khouw  
Vice President  
Chinese Australian Forum

#### Key Links:

Petition: [bit.ly/unityoverfear](http://bit.ly/unityoverfear)

Open Letter: [bit.ly/uof-letter](http://bit.ly/uof-letter)

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



## 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 Turramurra 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.

## **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.