

## **SETS Community of Practice**

### **Communique: COVID-19 Best Practice and Innovation Meeting (NT/WA)**

#### **Videoconference – 22 April 2020**

On 22 April, the SETS Community of Practice (SETS CoP) held its third videoconference for CoP members in NT and WA to share their emerging best practice and innovative service delivery through the current COVID-19 pandemic.

#### **Service delivery approaches**

Several attendees mentioned that they are slowly transitioning back to face to face service delivery while ensuring social distancing. However, are continuing to create a range of online resources and engage clients through online platforms, where possible.

Some providers have developed activity packages that they drop off to young people, within their SETS youth programs.

The JobKeeper initiative for employers was discussed, as some providers are considering to register for the initiative.

#### **Domestic and family violence**

Attendees agreed that they are seeing an increase in domestic and family violence among SETS clients.

Some risk factors for increased domestic and family violence noted by attendees include:

- being on a temporary visa (e.g. spousal visa);
- loss of employment;
- pre-existing family tensions or violence;
- social isolation impacting community support or ability to get help.

Some attendees expressed concerns that those with pre-existing domestic or family violence may be experiencing an increase of violence due to social isolation, however that the true extent of violence is difficult to gauge.

Some attendees mentioned working with their local child protection services and have voiced the necessity for a domestic and family violence taskforce for vulnerable people, to have a greater focus on CALD populations.

#### **Financial concerns**

Providers highlighted some of the financial implications of COVID-19 on SETS clients.

Particularly the accumulation of debt as a result of:

- clients misunderstanding implications of rental free periods;

- clients misunderstanding that the increase in Centrelink payments due to supplements is only temporary;
- loss of employment;
- increased bills (i.e. electricity and internet).

Additionally, attendees mentioned concerns around evictions for SETS clients from rental properties due to a lack of awareness of changed legislation and a limited understanding of their rights in the current environment.

Some providers reminded others of the No Interest Loan Scheme (NILS) where SETS clients may be eligible to receive a loan of \$1500, interest free.

### **Temporary visa holders**

Many attendees expressed their concern about SETS clients who are on spousal visas or who's partners are on temporary skilled visas. Providers mentioned the increase in need for emergency relief, as many have lost their employment and are struggling financially.

A few providers mentioned supporting SETS clients on temporary visas through employability coaches, to assist with their ability to gain stable employment during this time.

### **Education**

There was a general consensus that majority of children supported by SETS are doing well and will be returning to school next week. Some providers shared how some SETS clients have received refurbished computers by local city councils and community groups. However, SETS adult clients are concerned about the impacts of COVID-19 on their own education whether it be English through AMEP or other education. Attendees discussed how many are struggling to manage caring for children and the move to distance education for their classes.

### **Resources and links shared**

[Support for not-for-profit organisations fact sheet \(The Treasury\)](#)

[Boosting cash flow for employers \(Australian Taxation Office\)](#)

[Emergency relief service directory \(Department of Social Services\)](#)

[Emergency relief for temporary visas \(Australian Red Cross\)](#)

[Worker and wellbeing fund NT](#)

[Inspire me employability assistance program by Multicultural Futures \(WA\)](#)

[MercyCare Jobs and Skills Centre \(WA\)](#)