

SETS Community of Practice

Communique: VIC Specific COVID-19 Best Practice and Innovation Meeting

Videoconference – 29 September 2020

On 29 September, the SETS Community of Practice (SETSCoP) held its fourth videoconference for CoP members in Victoria to discuss the specific issues and share best practice.

Current overview of SETS

Some providers noted a significant decrease in new referrals for SETS, while others mentioned an influx of clients being referred from HSP. Attendees shared that as restrictions ease and the situation in Victoria becomes more stable, they are moving away from crisis management to focus on supporting SETS clients with employment and education. Overall, SETS clients are needing greater support during this time with more complex needs.

As public health restrictions change, providers have continued to translate and distribute information to keep clients informed. WhatsApp and Telegram are being used to broadcast these messages. There was discussion on the necessity for privacy (particularly for those with safety concerns) when using online platforms, to prevent unsolicited interactions between clients.

Citizenship

Attendees have noticed an increase in requests for support with Australia citizenship applications and shared some of the key challenges being face by SETS clients, which include:

- frequent requests for further documentation and identification
- extra documentation is difficult to complete
- SETS providers limited in the support they can provide, especially to those post 5 years
- citizenship application form not containing concession codes for JobSeeker or Youth Allowance benefits, requiring people to pay the full amount for the application
- limited or no access to inexpensive migration agents, many with long waitlists

Some attendees noted value in sharing citizenship resources with one another and the SETSCoP secretariat will facilitate exchange of contacts.

Employment

Employment has become the main focus for many providers, especially with changes to the JobSeeker and JobKeeper initiatives and the current unemployment rate in Victoria. Providers shared that state and local funding have been helpful with employment initiatives and projects.

Some of the work the providers are currently doing to support their clients with employment are:

- consultations with clients to uncover employment aspirations
- empowering clients through community and place-based supports
- providing practical supports such as training around digital literacy
- recruiting an employment navigator for more targeted employment support
- building relationships with employers

Mental Health and Wellbeing

Attendees highlighted the importance of continuing to focus on mental health and the social impact of COVID-19, that despite restrictions easing, the impacts will continue to be felt by SETS clients and SETS frontline staff.

Next VIC specific meeting

Attendees expressed interest in another VIC specific meeting in three weeks' time.

Resources shared

[COVID-19 Health Response Project \(Foundation House\)](#)

[Telegram App](#)

[Loddon Campaspe Multicultural Services Facebook page](#)

[MyAusCOVID-19 App \(Migration Council Australia\)](#)