

SETS Community of Practice

Communique: COVID-19 Best Practice and Innovation Meeting (VIC/SA)

Videoconference – 18 June 2020

On 18 June, the SETS Community of Practice (SETS CoP) held its seventh videoconference for CoP members in VIC and SA to share their emerging best practice and innovative service delivery through the COVID-19 pandemic.

Service delivery

Many attendees mentioned returning to the office either part time or full time, while adhering to public health measures.

SETS services continue to be delivered through:

- phone calls
- some groups and casework through online platforms (i.e. Messenger, Zoom and WeChat)
- some small groups and casework face to face

With some groups returning face to face, providers have shared resourcing challenges with facilitating smaller groups more often, and the challenge of some clients not adhering to social distancing.

Some of the challenges with continuing online engagement include:

- time needed to support clients to learn digital literacy skills
- some frustration from clients with how time-consuming supporting with documentation and form filling takes, due to social distancing
- some communities are better with online engagement than others
- the most vulnerable are the hardest to reach
- hard to identify domestic and family violence (DFV) or child abuse.

Client numbers

There were mixed comments about SETS client numbers, with some attendees mentioning a decline in new SETS clients, others noting no difference to pre-COVID-19 and others noting an increase in client numbers. Those noting an increase shared that this is due to more self-referrals as a result of COVID-19 impacts.

There was some concern from providers about the impact that international border closures will have on the future of migration and despite limited concern about the immediate effects on SETS, some expressed concern about the long-term implications on migration programs, particularly the humanitarian program and family sponsorship.

Additionally, some have noted a decrease in engagement and active client numbers, particularly with older adults due to challenges with digital literacy.

SETS Workplan

Providers discussed the impact of COVID-19 on current and future SETS workplans. Some advised that they are making changes to the workplan for next financial year to cover changes to client numbers and services delivered face to face and online.

There was a general consensus that COVID-19 has highlighted the importance of forward planning and flexibility, as service delivery under SETS can change quickly due to outside factors such as COVID-19.

Client challenges

Some of the most common challenges for SETS clients at current include:

- loss of employment and financial implications
- digital literacy and access issues
- challenges with MyGov
- housing issues, particularly loss of rental accommodation (i.e. landlords moving in) or being taken advantage by some landlords or agents (i.e. unreasonable increases to rent)
- domestic and family violence (DFV)
- racism and discrimination
- mental health issues
- those most vulnerable and needing urgent emergency relief are those ineligible for SETS, either those over 5 years since arriving to Australia or on ineligible visa types (e.g. international students).

Many SETS clients have been affected by job losses as many work in casual positions and industries affected by COVID-19. Despite being on Jobkeeper or Jobseeker payments at current, some providers expressed concern for September once supplement payments cease.

One provider has created and shared some MyGov process slides for volunteers and has requested feedback from SETSCoP colleagues (see under Resources Shared).

Many providers have noted an increase in support with completing citizenship applications and a sense of urgency from clients in becoming citizens, due to COVID-19.

Refugee Week

Some of the Refugee Week celebrations shared by attendees include:

- online celebrations with staff and clients
- short videos and regular posts on social media
- sharing of YouTube videos
- digital stories targeted to mums and young people
- poster competitions

SETSCoP sub-groups

The SETSCoP will be returning to its original model with operational and thematic groups commencing in the next month. More information will be shared to the SETSCoP via email.

Resources shared

[Refugee Photo & Painting Online Exhibition \(Wyndham CEC\)](#)

[MyGov Jobseeker process slides \(Wimmera Development Association\)](#)

[Volunteer recruitment and client matching \(Wimmera Development Association\)](#)

[#BendigoTogether \(Bendigo Community Health Services\)](#)

[Refugee Week Bendigo \(Bendigo Community Health Services\)](#)

[Coronavirus Bendigo Refugee Resource Hub: Information in Karen, Dari and Dinka \(Bendigo Community Health Services\)](#)

[Bendigo Health COVID-19 clinic \(Karen flyer\)](#)

[Bendigo Health COVID-19 clinic \(Dari flyer\)](#)

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