

## SETSCoP

### Communique: Second meeting of the Regional Settlement sub-group

#### Videoconference – 26 November 2020

On 26 November, SETSCoP held its second meeting for members of the Regional Settlement sub-group. The meeting focused on the sharing of best practice across the domains of employment and English.

#### Employment

Attendees noted that COVID-19 has made employment even more of a priority for SETS clients. Opportunities are available in regional areas, however SETS providers need resources to invest time and need to possess employment knowledge and expertise in linking clients to such opportunities.

Some of the employment-related initiatives and activities shared by sub-group members include:

- Supporting clients with opportunities through state-based initiatives such as the Skilling QLD for Work Initiative
- Sourcing apprenticeships for clients
- Supporting clients to run market stalls
- Establishing a pop-up café social enterprise
- Volunteering opportunities
- Developing a relationship with an RTO who tailors courses to cultural groups.

Many of the initiatives shared focused on providing Australian work experience and enhancing English language skills.

One attendee shared of a close partnership they have developed with an NDIS provider who is employing newly arrived migrants and refugees as support workers. Transferrable skills developed by caring for parents or family members have been useful in the successful matching of jobseekers with the roles.

Discussion moved to some new and future opportunities for employment in regional areas. Upcoming industry opportunities for employment shared by attendees include:

- Snowy 2.0 hydropower project
- Dairy industry
- Meatworks

#### Employment considerations

Attendees noted the importance of engaging with employers and being a bridge between clients and employers for successful employment outcomes. Many are using funding from other projects to support with this work, while others acknowledge this as future consideration.

Sub-group members discussed some of the considerations required to facilitate effective employment outcomes through SETS. These include:

- allocated funding for employment
- opportunity for a specific employment officer role, to possess the skills and knowledge to engage with employers and provide ongoing pre- and post-employment support
- ensure job readiness includes an understanding of WHS requirements, rights and responsibilities
- ensure understanding of workplace language
- developing clients' digital literacy, including mobile phone literacy.

A common barrier to sustainable employment in regional areas, is the lack of available housing. Attendees shared of some case examples where jobs are available, however due to limited housing availability, positions remain unfilled.

Attendees also noted that worker exploitation remains an issue that requires awareness through education and support. Again, the development of strong relationships with employers who appropriately engage employees and provide support and training, is necessary.

### **English**

Attendees shared that English language groups are very rarely delivered in isolation, but rather are generally delivered with focuses on a range of topics and issues, such as:

- Emergency preparedness
- Women's health classes
- Friendship groups

One friendship group shared has a diverse range of cultures, with the common language being English. This provides clients with an opportunity develop their English language skills in an informal and supportive way, while participating in activities such as parenting groups, exercise and arts.

### **Emergency preparedness**

Attendees highlighted the importance of training and providing resources around emergencies for their clients, particularly as demonstrated by the recent pandemic and bush fires.

Some providers have encouraged their SETS clients to volunteer at the local Red Cross for social participation but to also develop a greater understanding of emergency responses and supports, and to be able to share this with their communities.

### **Next meeting**

Sub-group members agreed that the focus of the next meeting would be on sharing of best practice in the support of vulnerable women in regional areas.

### **Resources shared**

[Preparing for Emergencies \(Australian Red Cross\)](#)

[Community Conversations \(Australian Red Cross\)](#)

[Safe Work Australia](#)

[Comcare](#)