

## SETSCoP

### Communique: Fourth meeting of the Regional settlement sub-group

#### Videoconference – 29 July 2021

On 29 July 2021, SETSCoP held its fourth meeting for members of the Regional settlement sub-group. The meeting predominately focused on how SETS providers build capacity in regional and rural areas, particularly in light of limited resourcing and access to services.

#### **Building capacity in regional areas**

There was general consensus that an important, yet mostly hidden aspect of SETS work is building the capacity of mainstream services to enhance the provision of appropriate supports to newly arrived migrant and refugees.

Attendees discussed some of the approaches that they have utilised to build capacity in their region. Some of capacity building activities shared by providers include:

- brief cross-cultural and ‘how to use an interpreter’ training with mainstream services (e.g. mental health and family and domestic violence services) to ensure culturally – responsive practice
- facilitating collaborations between community leaders, local government, mainstream services and local business through sporting events and cross-sector network meetings
- developing leadership and governance skills of community leaders and community organisations.

One attendee shared an initiative they are working on with their local Country Women’s Association (CWA) where they are engaging with clients who attend a parenting program, with view of developing connections so that clients have an opportunity to volunteer at local CWA stores.

Through their SETS Innovation project, another provider described how they are working with AMEP providers in regional areas of NSW to ensure more flexibility around English language learning and to provide targeted cultural-responsiveness training for local employers.

Another provider shared how they are empowering community and religious leaders through hosting network meetings. The meetings include leaders, the settlement organisation, and mainstream services such as police, schools, health services, and other relevant stakeholders. The purpose of the meetings is to create linkages between community groups and mainstream services, and to enhance their sustainability and ability to engage with services independently.

A further notable example of building capacity was shared by a provider who in collaboration with a refugee health service, held a breast screening information session for

community leaders. The successful linkage between the health service and community leaders in turn supported the development of a women's health empowerment day for community members.

There was general consensus of the necessity to build strong and collaborative partnerships between settlement service organisations and external stakeholders in regional areas to counteract issues providers face with resources and limited funding.

Some attendees also shared the value of volunteers, particularly for initiatives such as mentoring programs or English conversation classes.

### **Challenges for SETS in regional areas**

Attendees discussed some of the common challenges they are facing in providing SETS services in regional areas.

One of the greatest challenges for SETS clients in regional areas, is that there are very small numbers of clients from one particular cultural or ethnic group. In addition to the challenges around isolation, this too impacts the access to interpreters for particular language groups and limits the cultural-awareness of mainstream services.

Lastly, sub-group members mentioned that SETS clients are experiencing significant barriers with accessing Centrelink services due to high demand. Further, some regional areas have limited access to Multicultural Service Officers (MSO) and social workers.

### **Resources shared**

[Insights into regional settlement in practice report \(NSW Settlement Partnership/SSI\)](#)

[Insights into regional settlement in practice online launch \(NSW Settlement Partnership/SSI\)](#)