

## SETSCoP

### Communique: TAS COVID-19 Response Meeting

#### Videoconference – 2 September 2021

On 2 September 2021, SETSCoP members from Tasmania attended a Tasmania-specific meeting to discuss resources and strategies they are using to support clients with ongoing issues due to the COVID-19 pandemic and to identify areas where there is a need for further support.

#### **COVID-19 vaccines**

Attendees discussed strategies being implemented to inform and assist SETS clients to get vaccinated.

Providers have worked with the State Government and other multicultural stakeholders to deliver information sessions and train bilingual staff to support the delivery of vaccination information. Some information sessions have been delivered in conjunction with other topics. Some providers reported difficulties finding health practitioners to support the delivery of these sessions, although others were able to find volunteer GPs to attend.

One provider conducted follow-up phone calls to assess the effectiveness of their information sessions and confirm if clients asked further questions in a one-on-one conversation. They found that sessions were successful with no further questions being asked.

Some providers are assisting community organisations to apply for funding themselves, so that additional information sessions can be delivered directly by these groups.

In addition, providers are helping individuals one-on-one to book vaccine appointments.

#### **Key concerns for clients**

Providers shared some of the most common challenges for their clients, which include:

- The challenge of the vaccine booking systems
- Difficulty accessing transport to get to vaccination clinics
- Difficulty accessing interpreters
- The spread of misleading information and myths regarding vaccines
- Lack of translated resources and information, in particular for the Oromo language
- High levels of stress and trauma associated with heightened conflicts in country of origin. Recently, this has been particularly evident in the Afghan and Ethiopian communities

#### **Ongoing impacts of COVID-19**

Providers are preparing for a potential future lockdown. This includes working with schools to support preparation for home schooling.

Providers also mentioned the ongoing costs which are being absorbed by their organisation for masks and sanitisers and the continued requests from clients and volunteers for support with these items.

#### **Ongoing challenges faced by clients**

The COVID-19 pandemic has also highlighted existing issues faced by clients, which include:

- The gap in digital literacy levels – for some this has increased and for others it is taking a lot of support and time to learn digital skills

- Increased anxiety and pressure to send funds to family in the client's country of birth
- Unemployment and under-employment of SETS clients