

SETSCoP

Communique: QLD COVID-19 and Best Practice Meeting Videoconference – 16 June 2022

On 16 June 2022, the SETS Community of Practice (SETSCoP) held a videoconference for CoP members in Queensland to share their best practice and innovative service delivery, along with challenges faced through the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

MyAus

Information about MyAus app and the 12 languages currently available with more upcoming was presented. The MyAus app has a user focus, with information in-language which summarises in more simple language important topics relevant to settlement. The app brings government information together in one place and encourages clients to self-navigate services. It includes links to some state-based services in some topics, such as SETS providers and mental health service providers.

Information categories covered include:

- Housing
- Finance and money
- Centrelink and government support
- Legal system and Government
- Relationships and Family
- Migration and Citizenship
- Staying safe
- Pre-departure and arrival
- Destinations
- History and culture
- Getting around
- Media
- Environment and climate
- Sports
- Study and education
- Health and wellbeing
- COVID-19
- Bringing up children
- Working in Australia
- Relationships and family
- Health system.

Providers commented that languages, such as Assyrian would be helpful to be added, so that the app could be used by their clients.

Highlights

Providers have been delivering **Tenancy Skills Queensland courses**, which allows participants to get a certificate and empowers clients with knowledge and understanding about rental maintenance and systems.

Women are participating in **driving theory preparation lessons** in English and providers are partnering with organisations to provide physical driving lessons also.

Over the last 4 – 5 years MetroSouth Health have been working proactively around multicultural practice awareness, including using nurse navigators, multicultural advisors and more. Metro-North now looking to improve their multicultural awareness and practice regarding wrap around support. This includes looking to systems and looking holistically and finding ways to create efficiencies because of missed appointments or systems understanding related to communication etc

COVID-19 Updates

There is a **vaccine bus** which has been going to various parts of Toowoomba giving vaccines, including to offices of settlement service providers. Clients are proactively encouraged to attend whenever the bus is close by.

Service provider **staff have been getting COVID-19**, which means that services have had numbers of staff away and having to manage delivery of services.

COVID-19 has **dropped out of mainstream media** and this has fuelled the sentiment in the community that it is no longer a big issue. Very few people in the community are wearing masks.

Other challenges

Housing is also reported as ongoing issue of concern. Due to the housing shortage, in particular in rural and regional areas, compared to the number of jobs available, there is a lot of competition for rentals (currently in Toowoomba there is a 0.3% rental vacancy rate). This is impacting other services systems, such as hospitals, who are struggling to get housing for their staff. Settlement services are receiving a lot of requests for support with housing from clients who are not eligible for SETS support. Complex housing issues take a lot of time and effort on behalf of staff. Due to the large number of clients who are requesting support with housing, the short and long-term wellbeing of clients is of concern.

Service providers are concerned about the number of people in Australia who request for support and are **eligible to sit the citizenship test**, however, due to their literacy skills are unable to do so successfully. A number of these people have an incorrect date of birth on their documentation, and are older than what is recorded on their documents. This means these people are asked to complete job search requirements and do other activities that they find difficult due to their age and skills, and are not able to access other supports, due to their documentation or citizenship status. Providers would like the **literacy component of the citizenship test reviewed**.

Some clients are **moving interstate without having secured** housing and putting their family or friend's at risk, due to their need to stay with them, without agreement of the landlord, for long periods until housing is found.

An increased number of clients have been looking to citizenship. Due to borders opening again, there has been an **increase in the number of resident return visa requests**. This is challenges for those who have expired immicards and need to renew them, which is taking a long time.

Some settlement providers are concerned about the motivation for some client families wanting to **return to their home country** and have some of their family members remain there, such as elderly parents or children, if a parent has passed away. Providers are unsure of elderly family members understanding of the reasons for the travel and are required to sensitively navigate these difficult conversations.