

SETSCoP

Communique: NT and WA COVID-19 and Best Practice Meeting

Videoconference – 20 June 2022

On 20 June 2022, the SETS Community of Practice (SETSCoP) held a videoconference for CoP members in Northern Territory and Western Australia to share their best practice and innovative service delivery, along with challenges faced through the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

MyAus

Information was shared about MyAus app and the 12 languages currently available with more upcoming. 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 Tigrinya, Oromo, Dinka, Somali, Karen and Chin and Nuer would be helpful to be added, so that the app could be used by their clients.

Highlights

Several Service providers have been delivering **Refugee Week events**. Examples include a “Cup of Nations” soccer competition with teams with ten countries and Family Fun day in Perth. This event was popular and enjoyed by participants. In particular the Australian animals were of interest to attendees. Also included was a vaccine tent at the event, which allowed attendees to get free flu and COVID-19 vaccines.

In Alice Springs a **Harmony in June** event attracted more than 700 people from different communities. The event included singing and performances from various community groups. There will also be more events occurring for Refugee week.

Some providers have used the time where less face-to-face work is happening to implement **improved data collection systems**. One helpful approach has been to use voice-to-text apps, such as SpeechNotes, on phones to support the recording of case notes.

Work is being done to **engage CALD communities as volunteers**, in partnership with the Great Southern Volunteer conference. A service provider is speaking at this event as part of refugee week activities.

COVID-19 Challenges

Some clients are **hesitant to get their booster COVID-19 vaccines**. Parents are also hesitant to take their children to get vaccinated. Service providers have made many conference calls utilizing interpreters to discuss COVID-19, vaccinations, the need for isolation if infected and questions that the clients may have. These conversations have been needed, because there has been a lot of wrong information gathered through Facebook, overseas, or confusion about different regulations in different areas.

There was previously a level of **fear around COVID-19**, however, as more and more people were positive and recovered, along with increased sharing of information about how to manage isolation, how to be prepared with canned foods etc and why requirements are in place, this has eased. There has been work done to outreach to the Hazara community in Albany, who previously were unengaged with service providers. Connection has been established through partnering with mothers groups, TAFEs and collaboration with other providers to share important information.

Some clients are treating COVID-19 as “just a common cold” and therefore service providers are reinforcing to clients that they should **stay home** straight away if they test positive. For community groups who get infected at the same time, they find it difficult to get support to access food and groceries. Some providers have delivered online shopping and banking information sessions to support.

Clients who are employed on a casual basis and have had COVID-19 in some cases have had their **employment affected**. Some people’s employment was also affected if they were not vaccinated, which has moved some people to get vaccinated. Due to the loss of income, some people do not have emergency funds and are unable to pay their rent, or get food. Clients have been connected to **Emergency Relief and No Interest Loans** providers. Some No Interest Loans programs have recently improved, where, if someone is leaving a situation of Domestic and Family Violence, their service provider are able to be a second signature or reference to support their application.

Clients have reported **struggling to afford RAT tests**, in particular those who work casually or part time, who are not eligible for free RAT tests. Some providers are supplying families with free RAT tests from their offices.

Other Challenges

Previously service providers were able to support clients by taking them to **Centrelink** for support, however, due to **online services** being the main method of accessing support, now providers need to support clients to book on the phone. Phone booking takes a lot of time and the client needs to be able to enter their CRN and confirm before they can access an interpreter, which is very difficult for some people. Often communities help each other, or older children provide online support for their parents. This puts the child in a difficult position, with access to information which could be used inappropriately.