

**SETS Community of Practice**  
**Communique: Employment Subgroup Meeting**  
**Videoconference – 18 July 2022**

On 18<sup>th</sup> July 2022, SETSCoP facilitated the next Employment subgroup meeting. The focus of this group is to discuss Best Practice strategies used and trends and issues identified through the delivery of employment support for SETS clients. Attendees comprise SETCoP members from around Australia with an interest in employment and employment related supports for refugees and migrants.

**Service Provider Presentation**

Multicultural Australia (MA) shared information about their approach to supporting clients into employment. This includes working with clients from a range of programs within the organisation, including SETS. Their Employment team supports clients from a diverse cultural background, independently of visa status or length of time in Australia. This is possible through a combination of different employment programs that support their service delivery model. This team is funded through program and state-based funding.

MA's Employment model is client centred and client driven. MA focus on engaging with clients and understanding their individual skills, work experiences and career aspirations that are used to build individual career plans. This includes making an agreement with the clients, talking about what they can expect and what the client is expected to do, such as attend interviews and engage in employment activities. Those employment related activities are created to build each client's capacity and address any barriers to employment. Activities can be: training/upskilling, wrap around supports/referrals to other services of support, job preparation courses, drop-in spaces, career coaching sessions, information sessions around employment topics, visits to employers, career mentoring and internship programs such as MA Work and Welcome Program (12 week paid internship program). Other activities may include English as a focus before other options, as a higher level of English language opens different opportunities for the client.

Once clients build their employment capacity, they are supported into meaningful and sustainable employment that matches their career aspirations in a supportive employer

The employment team at MA also works with businesses and employers who value diversity, have good employment practices and want to support a new and diverse workforce into their organisation. Ongoing support is provided to both client and employer up to 6 months of employment as well as cultural capability training.

## **Discussion**

MA shared about the changing environment due to the impacts of COVID-19, which has meant that employers after being educated are willing to consider applications from migrants and refugees who may not align with their ideal candidate.

The changes to the new Workforce Australia program are yet to be seen as a number of new service providers are in the process of getting up and running. Previous existing relationships with Job Active providers are no longer providing these services.

Throughout lockdown periods of the COVID-19 pandemic in Melbourne, some women who are SETS clients began their own home business. They had completed some study and had previously completed higher education overseas. The home business was suitable for them, as they had child care responsibilities. These clients were supported with digital literacy by SETS staff. One of these clients is now working on weekends and evenings as a pharmacy assistant.

Some clients are still hesitant to come out of the house, due to their experiences throughout the pandemic.

A challenging cohort is women who explicitly state they have no intention of working. These women need different and early intervention, it might take more than 5 years before they realise that life with their only income being from Centrelink is very challenging and then they may re-approach services for help.

## **Pre-employment information to be shared with clients**

Providers discussed essential information they propose should be shared with SETS clients before they engage with employment opportunities in Australia.

- Rights within a workplace and the risks of cash in hand work
- Comparison of Centrelink income, income through employment, the benefits of part time work and the impact upon payments
- Superannuation and access to other payments, such as Workcover
- The impact of employment upon eligibility to access loans in the future
- Resume support and consideration what to include for Australian employers
- Job search skills
- Confidence building
- Transferable skills that do not require work experience, such as self efficacy
- Realistic and achievable goals
- The Australian labour market
- Training and it's impact upon future opportunities
- Types of jobs and salaries

- Tax returns and taxable income