

Communique:

Discussion points:

- The subgroup discussed rising housing and cost of living issues for clients. This included electricity and gas bill increases during winter. SETS providers shared issues clients had presented with, including negative coping mechanisms related to dietary changes, cutting back on essentials, and delaying medical procedures.
- SETS providers discussed commencing inter-agency collaboration and cooperation in local areas – with a specific example of SETS providers in western Melbourne working together. Experiences were shared from SETS staff who had previously established housing taskforces, including bringing together real estate agents, state government departments of housing, dedicated housing services, and tenant’s bodies.
- Funding reductions have had negative impacts on settlement service provision, including reductions in the number of settlement staff.
- There are increasing numbers of scams related to housing, with pressure from continual rental rejections and the desire to secure accommodation meaning SETS clients can be more susceptible to sending money to scammers. SETS providers are providing education around housing scams.
- Developing strong relationships with real estate agents is key to SETS work. This includes identifying which real estate agents are compliant with Tenancies Acts and which real estate agents to avoid.
- SETS providers have been delivering budgeting sessions to clients. A SETS provider commented on how they have a tailored budget template that is both in English and in-language, including with graphics for accessibility. Budget and finance knowledge is also linked to domestic and family violence (DFV), with the importance of budget understanding for women.

Subgroup outcomes:

- Explore how to advocate for housing systems information to be included in AMEP curriculum.
- Develop a resource with tips for SETS providers on how to approach and develop and maintain positive relationships with real estate agents.

Resources:

- [GIVIT](#) – Platform that a SETS provider is using to seek food vouchers and other items for clients in vulnerable situations.
- [Financial literacy training for women](#)
- Upcoming in August, St Vincent de Paul Society’s Children Education Fund in Queensland– financial support for children education costs including school fees and course materials. For further information, please contact [St Vincent de Paul Society](#).

Next meeting: The final subgroup meeting for 2023 is scheduled for Monday 6 November 2023 (2pm – 3pm AEST).

Attendees (15 SETS Staff):

Nick Ross (SETSCoP Secretariat - SPG)
Maria Rosales (SETSCoP Secretariat - SPG)
Kim (Jesuit Social Services)
Carmen (Assyrian Australian Association)
Vincent (Chinese CSSC VIC)
Jacqui (MercyCare WA)
Zac (SSI QLD)
Maggie (Bundaberg QLD)
Mariam (CCT)
Dominika (Centacare)

Ruth (Multicultural Australia)
Rachel (CatholicCare)
Steven (MIC East VIC)
Rallian (WCEC VIC)
Diana (VRB)
Hiba (Whittlesea Community Connections)
Jantina Kraai (SSI QLD)