

## Meeting Summary Communiqué

### **INSIGHTS: Spaces for conversation**

- Welcoming and belonging initiatives:
  - Sister's Circle (VIC) and playgroups proved to be popular as a way to establish trust and safe spaces to share.
  - Toowoomba – Yazidi men's group participates in museum visits to learn more about local knowledge, and key events and create connections.
- Regional - Welcoming events in collaboration with other service providers such as welcome bus tours help newly arrived migrants get to know the local area as well as access the Orange Door, policy and legal services.
- New skills workshops such as 'financial literacy' are a great way to engage community members with information about DFV awareness, prevention and more. These spaces facilitated the disclosure of issues such as financial abuse. In one example, community members were self-identified and sparked open and honest conversation.
- Driving program for women: while providing practical driving skills also created a space to discuss a range of topics, including DFV, health and how to access services (i.e., legal advice and even a divorce clinic). For example, facilitators were able to support a victim-survivor who was able to get lessons and a license.
- TAFE beauty course delivered for women from a close-knit Assyrian-Armenian community. During classes, attendees heard from speakers from legal aid, police, Service NSW, and housing. This enabled community members to connect with the government/police, where they may have previously felt intimidated. Due to the success of the program, it was offered at another centre too. These spaces have also allowed attendees to talk privately about issues that they were being affected by. However, one challenge remained as attendees were not as willing to provide details for DEX.

### **INSIGHTS: Working with the Community and Collaboration across the sector**

- Engaging local leaders (community and faith leaders) is important as they are highly respected and are seen as experts.
  - Healthy Respectful Advisory Group - Members were working closely with them to build trust, to find out how they were viewing issues in the community, and what they needed to support their communities so they could create opportunities to build their capacity. An example provided for a community leader capacity building was around a Muslim woman who had followed Islamic rules around divorcing from her husband but had not been legally divorced according to local law. Community leaders can mediate these situations. However, sometimes their roles and responsibilities are unclear, and their workload can be very demanding.
- Collaboration with other services was also a consistent theme, with one member doing safety planning with the wider multicultural network and linking in with translators. A great example was a regular mutual mentoring session between a member based in a community health setting, together with trauma counselling advisors, InTouch and more, where they share a story each time and look at ways to utilise their resources. One member highlighted that all schools (in VIC) have a culture coordinator to support young people from CALD backgrounds and advised that people should connect with them and the wellbeing team in schools. Another member talked about a project collaborating with multicultural organisations and mainstream organisations related to family violence and sexual abuse. It's focussing on co-location, with a case manager co-locating in their office for ½ a day a week. Thanks to the working group, they are learning how to assess clients' risk levels, using the Family Violence Multi-Agency Risk Assessment and Management Framework ([MARAM](#)) tool.

### **CHALLENGES**

- Logistical hurdles of accommodating multiple languages in programs and initiatives.
  - A member had tackled this by using pictorials for training and the response had been good. Deeper and more consistent collaboration - and referral pathways - with mainstream DFV and other services - were critical to bridging gaps in support.

- Co-location initiatives, where different services are offered in the same location, were identified as an effective means to improve accessibility and streamline support. In addition, after-work hours support was needed to effectively reach CALD community members - having *“we go to communities rather than them come to us”*.
- Advocacy for increased funding and resources for these initiatives, including recognising and paying community leaders and staff who work after-hours - as well as localised and culturally-specific (and in language) service provision was critical.
- On that, many members shared that they have resources and toolkits available in language - which will be useful to bring together in the outcome (described below).
- To boost internal capacity building within their organisation, members had developed practice frameworks about how to respond in CALD-specific DV situations, and also for broader SETS casework, where a DFV situation had been disclosed. A member highlighted that new policies were being put in place and everyone in their organisation was being trained to understand them, regardless of their role.
- Some of the recurring issues with community members included;
  - isolation, lack of family connections and lack of trust in the system.
  - One member highlighted the vulnerabilities of women who come over on a spouse-sponsored visa and are concerned about how they often have no access to funds, housing, or security and are also unable to work.
  - Another highlighted the issue they build a sense of trust over the first five years with community members, but when they want to come back for support after five years, they are not able to and we have to turn them away.
- The lack of affordable housing was highlighted as an issue that put already vulnerable women and young people in precarious situations. Members emphasised the need for localised support services and referral pathways to address the housing needs of CALD communities effectively, including how to safely support people who had disclosed DFV during broader casework.
  - An example of why this is important was shared - that when someone goes to another mainstream service, and says they feel unsafe and they need housing, they are told *“they are not a housing service”*.
  - Another example was around providing responsive support, for example, if a service provider rings a family once or twice and there’s no answer, they shouldn’t “close the file” which has happened - they should consider that perhaps the woman won’t necessarily pick-up if they are with their husband. Phone outreach can be problematic and there needs to be some flexibility.

**Subgroup Outcome:**

- **Responding effectively to DFV in migrant communities guide**  
This could include previous examples from SETS providers in 2023 and cover:
  - **Culturally-relevant assessment and intervention:** Identifies strategies for building trust and understanding diverse cultural norms when assessing risks and needs.
  - **Collaboration and referral pathways:** Highlighting established protocols and resources available for SETS providers to access additional support, including additional training.

This will be prepared based on discussions from across the year, with an early version circulated to team members for input. If members are interested in sharing anything in advance, please contact the Secretariat.

**Attendees (29 SETS Staff / 26 SETS Providers):**

Katrina Swanston (SETSCoP Secretariat)  
Nick Ross (SPG – SETSCoP Secretariat)  
Chai Oonnankat (SPG – SETSCoP Secretariat)  
Ahmad (Multicultural Australia QLD)  
Jen (Cultura VIC)  
Shalini (MCS Central Australia NT)  
Linda (Goldfields Legal WA)  
Hannia (Stirling WA)  
Tracy (Anglicare NT)  
Mal (SMRC VIC)  
Sana (SECL VIC)  
Abrar (Ballarat Regional MC VIC)  
Monica (SSI NSW)  
Nithu (54 Reasons VIC)  
Sandy (Latrobe CHS VIC)  
Katie (CatholicCare TAS)  
Ngun Bor (WCEC VIC)  
Nicole (Chinese CSSCI VIC)  
Carmen (Assyrian AA NSW)  
Andrea (SECL)  
Jantina (SSI QLD)  
Rowayda (Arabic Welfare VIC)  
Farida (Communicare WA)  
Marijo (MIC East VIC)  
Mimi (Jesuit Social Services VIC)  
Hiba (Whittlesea CC VIC)  
Urika (Muslim Women’s Association SA)  
Tashkah (Ballarat Community Health VIC)  
Heeyoung (Ballarat Regional MC VIC)  
Kate (South West HC Warrnambool VIC)  
Hayley (South West HC Warrnambool VIC)  
Maggie (Bundaberg QLD)