



Premier's Economic and Social Recovery Advisory Council | Submission

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Migrant Resource Centre Tasmania

Migrant Resource Centre Tasmania (MRC Tas) provides targeted and meaningful services to meet the needs of migrants, humanitarian entrants and refugees living in Tasmania. Our vision is an equitable, just, culturally diverse and inclusive society, our mission is to support and encourage culturally diverse community members to reach their potential. (For more information on MRC Tas please see appendix).

Overview

This period provides a unique opportunity to leverage the capacity, motivation and skills of Tasmania's culturally and linguistically diverse population (CALD) to participate in the recovery and rebuild of Tasmania Post COVID 19

Key opportunities include:

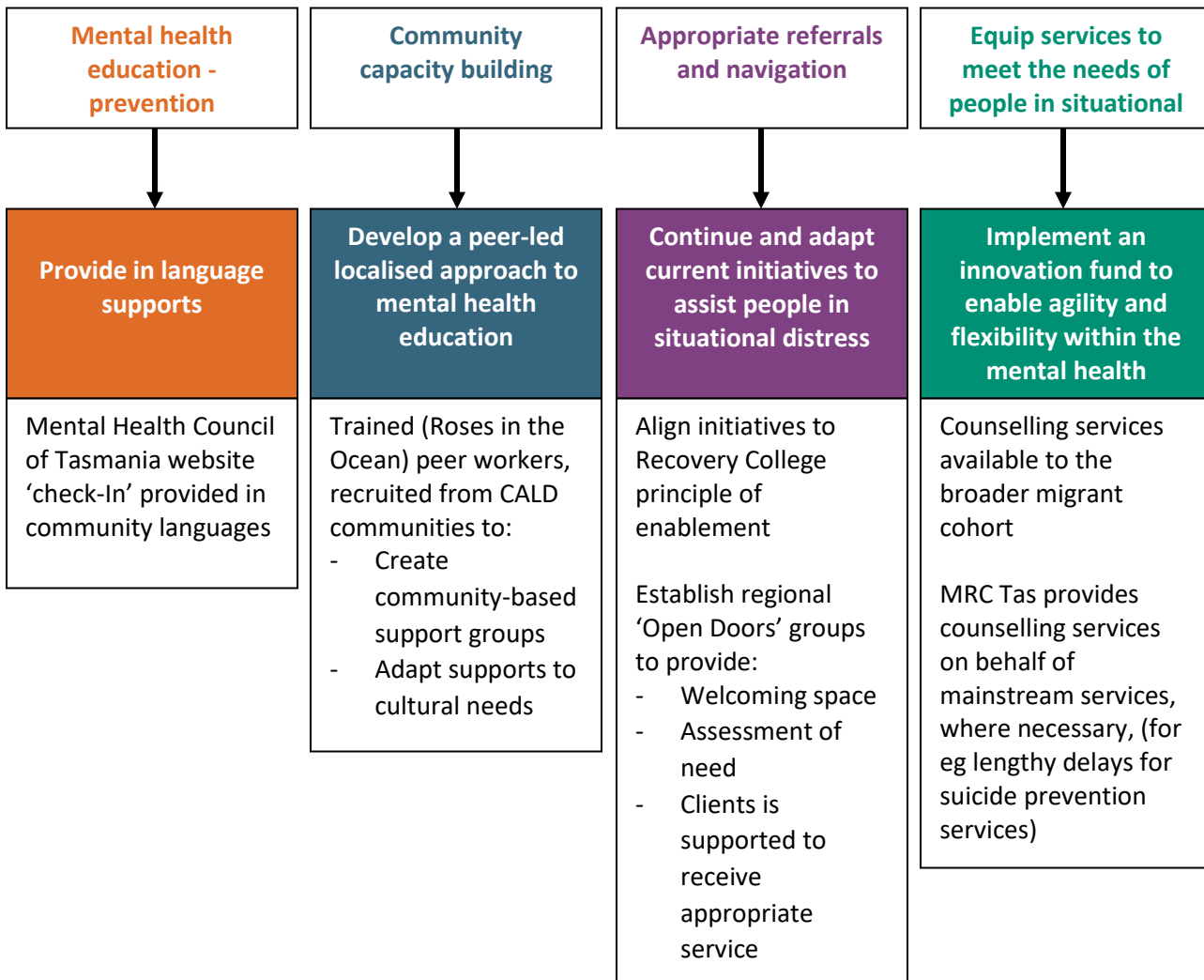
- Forming collaborative partnerships between government, industries and the not for profit sector to co-design culturally appropriate recovery and rebuild responses that are flexible and are focused on long term outcomes
- Creating the conditions for collaboration across government departments, sectors and services to meet the needs of CALD communities, focusing on health and wellbeing and supporting engagement in education, training and employment
- Leveraging the expertise, social capital, relationships and expertise that community service organisations, such as MRC Tas, have with the community
- Addressing the impact on those most affected, young CALD people, temporary migrants and women from a refugee and migrant background
- Increasing access to digital infrastructure and flexible learning opportunities to build digital capacity.

This submission provides two examples of approaches that will deliver practical outcomes for the CALD community within a 2-5-year timeframe.

Mental Health in focus

A recent MRC Tas survey with newly arrived people from a refugee and humanitarian background has shown that many people have demonstrated great strength and resilience in the face of the impacts of COVID 19 (November 2020). We also know that for those whose mental health have been impacted by COVID -19 that there are barriers to accessing mainstream mental health supports and services. A tailored approach is required to ensure that the mental health needs of CALD community members are meet. In response to PESRAC Interim Report, Recommendation 61, the following model has been developed. It demonstrates how all Tasmanian’s can access the mental health services, ‘check in’, seek help and be aware of newly funded access points for help.

Enhancing mental health literacy strategy for CALD communities



Working together to diversify the building and construction industry

The following case study demonstrates how co-design and partnerships across Government, industry, vocational education and community service organisations can support employment outcomes in growth industries and aligns to PESRAC Interim Report Recommendations 40, 41, 42, 44, 47 and 50.

MRC Tas is supporting multicultural community members in Southern Tasmania to work in the building and construction industry. Together with program partners, MRC Tas is developing a sustainable framework of workforce development. This will be used to inform a state-wide approach to enabling the participation of multicultural Tasmanian community members in building and construction. This approach is adaptable to other key growth industries.

Leveraging its unique relationship with multicultural community members and as a trusted source of information, youth, employment and case management services, MRC Tas is:

- Raising awareness of the employment opportunities in and pathways to a career in building and construction to CALD communities
- Positively raising the profile of multicultural Tasmanian community members as a reliable and untapped pool of workers
- Supporting interested multicultural Tasmanian community members to gain the understandings, experiences and skills necessary to work in the construction and building sector, including the delivery of a tailored pre employment steppingstones program delivered by Tas TAFE
- Supporting the recruitment and retention of multicultural Tasmanian community members into building and construction related apprenticeships and employment through working with and providing ongoing support, mentoring and liaison between MRC Tas and multicultural Tasmanian community members, employers and industry associations.

Program Partners include:

Tasmanian Government, Skills Tasmania, Department of State Growth

Keystone Tasmania (formerly TBCITB)

Master Builders Association of Tasmania

Master Builders Association of Tasmania

Tas TAFE, Building and Construction and Vocational Preparation and English Language Services

Master Plumbers Association of Tasmania

Tas BGas

MEGT

Labour Hire Company- Divergence

Conclusion

Migration has played an important role in the recent population and economic growth of Tasmania. There is a high degree of volatility associated with Australia's future migration strategies. Maximising the potential and leveraging CALD community members capabilities will play a primary role in supporting Tasmania's economic and social revival. MRC Tas welcomes further opportunities to provide information, community feedback and ultimately to

work with PESRAC and the Tasmanian Government to support the enablement of the potential for CALD Tasmanians to support the social and economic recovery of Tasmania.

Appendix

About MRC Tasmania

MRC Tas sits on a broad range of advisory groups for Federal, State and Local Government. The organisation is represented as Executive at national peak level including the Settlement Council of Australia, and Multicultural Youth Advocacy Network and the Harmony Alliance. MRC Tas also provides advice to State and Local Government as a Strategic Community and Industry Partner, the COVID- 19 Mental Health Sector Network and the COVID-19 Psychosocial Supports Working Group, Migrant Support Network COVID – 19 and the newly established Glenorchy Jobs Hub Reference Group. The organisation provides services for all ages, from infants through to the elderly and works collaboratively with culturally diverse communities to understand needs and strengths and uses this knowledge, along with research evidence and experience, to form tailored solutions which build capacity for independence and sustainable settlement.

The majority of 105 staff (60%) and over half of volunteers (250+) of MRC Tas speak a language other than English with a high number of new and emerging community members engaged. All staff complete compulsory cultural awareness training and are skilled at using interpreters. Many have further training in areas such as family violence, suicide prevention, trauma informed service principles, working with refugees in a health sector, and working with young people. MRC Tas workforce experiences validates that rich reward can be derived when actively working with community members to overcome potential barriers to secure employment and achieve successful settlement in Tasmania.

During the COVID-19 pandemic MRC Tas worked to adapt our service model to the latest health advice. In the early stages of the pandemic, MRC Tas focus was on supporting the health and wellbeing of newly arrived humanitarian entrants. As the situation changed, we moved rapidly to providing responsive communication and information sharing. Supporting both multicultural community members and stakeholders with up to date and translated communication materials. Working with our bicultural workers and program staff and collaboratively with Public Health Tasmania we were able to ensure that our multicultural community members were able to access reliable and up to date information. We continued to advocate on behalf of our clients to other state government departments. By working in partnership with state and federal government and philanthropic funders we have been able to extend our services providing emergency food relief, advice, information and referrals for community members, support to the elderly, as well as tailored mental health services.

MRC Tas operates from a strengths-based perspective to support the community to address needs and improve social participation and economic wellbeing. Services provided are determined through clear intake and assessment processes, with emphasis on gaining independence to access mainstream services. Services are further underpinned by a trauma recovery framework, reflecting that well-being is affected by an interplay of prior experiences, risk, protective and cross-cultural factors.

In addition to delivering services, MRC Tas is committed to building the evidence base for delivery of culturally competent programs. Recent research activities include exploration of training and employment outcomes for Tasmanian humanitarian entrants (Van Den Enyde, 2018) and current research on social cohesion for arrivals on 204 visas (Merrick, 2020)