

CASE STUDY:

Empowering Refugees through Digital Literacy



Migrant Resource Centre Tasmania promotes digital literacy skills.

Empowering Refugees through Digital Literacy

Access to Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS) registered interpreters is both essential and especially challenging in regional resettlement areas. If there are only one or two interpreters registered per language, there's a risk that group programs could grind to a halt with a change in the interpreter's life circumstances.

A few years ago, this risk became reality when one of the few interpreters for a key community language left Tasmania to take up a job offer in Canberra. This left services with a significant reduction in the capacity to use onsite interpreters.

Recognising the importance of creating professional opportunities for potential translators to build a career pathway and the confidence and skills to become a NAATI accredited translator the Migrant Resource Centre (Southern Tasmania) activated its role in strengthening the capacity of TIS services through talent identification and capacity building.

As part of this work the Migrant Resource Centre discovered that many aspirant interpreters needed support to manage the TIS application online. Suddenly, digital literacy skills were center-stage and it became clear that if potential interpreters needed help with digital literacy to submit an online TIS application, who else needed help?

Collaborating with TasTAFE Library Services, the Migrant Resource Centre launched the Karen Digital Literacy group. All participants were very new to computers, no one had used computers before arriving in Australia nor did participants have access to a home computer. The group participated in a range of online activities, led by Migrant Resource Centre staff, TasTAFE workers, Migrant Resource Centre volunteers and students on placement. After the Digital Literacy Group was featured on ABC radio rural Tasmanians also participated in the group. This created dynamic opportunities for real online exchanges, opportunities to learn how to email, use Google Maps, attach files, and exchange photographs.

In Southern Tasmania seasonal agricultural work is an important source of income for people with low English levels. Digital literacy skills are essential for these community members, enabling them to report on earnings and complete tax returns. Digital literacy unlocks settlement skills and strengthens viable education and work pathways and the demand for the program is growing. The Migrant Resource Centre is now working with other agencies to expand the program into additional locations and for other community language groups.

AT A GLANCE



Target Participants
Refugees and Migrants



Aim
To provide training and skills in digital literacy.



Organisations Involved
Migrant Resource Centre
Tasmania



Location
Hobart, Tasmania



Funding
Department of Social Services

At the end of each school term the group has listed their highlights of the group as "I showed my husband", "now I don't need to go to Centrelink", and the future aspiration to own their own home computer.

Anonymous

For More Information Visit:

<http://mrctas.org.au/>

