

### Summary

Recognising that many of their clients are not literate in their first language, CatholicCare in Toowoomba worked with the local Primary Health Network and the local hospital and developed audio translations of key restriction updates and health information.

These were then distributed to service providers, and widely shared through Facebook and WhatsApp. The audio resources have made it much easier for service providers to communicate with clients.

As a result of the information being in a format that is more accessible, and shared through mediums client groups already frequently accessed, the local community has a better understanding of the pandemic and current health advice.

### CASE STUDY

## CatholicCare Social Services Toowoomba Region

### Background

Toowoomba, in regional Queensland, has a strong record of successful settlement of humanitarian entrants. For the last few years, Toowoomba has been settling between 700-800 humanitarian entrants from a minority group from Northern Iraq and Syria who speak Kurdish Kurmanji, however, other previous large cohorts have included South Sudanese, Congolese and Afghan.

Being in a regional area, access to interpreters has been a long-standing challenge, making it difficult to refer clients to mainstream health services. This led to the establishment, prior to COVID-19, of the 'CatholicCare Interpreting Program,' through which CatholicCare screened and supported people to sit the NAATI accreditation course. This program has formed close working relationships with local hospitals, allied health professionals and NDIS providers. The pre-existing relationships developed through that program became instrumental in working together to distribute health information during COVID-19.

### How did CatholicCare adapt during COVID-19?

CatholicCare's pre-existing relationships with mainstream services provided a strong foundation for them to collaborate and respond quickly in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

CatholicCare initially worked with the local Primary Health Network (PHN) to create posters that were translated into the common community languages used in Toowoomba. With the information changing regularly, and additional information being released frequently from the Commonwealth government, these posters were constantly being updated.

However, CatholicCare quickly realised that the posters were not having a high uptake, as the majority of people that CatholicCare support in Toowoomba do not have high levels of digital literacy, and many are unlikely to be literate in their own language.

To address this CatholicCare changed their approach, and worked with the local Primary Health Network, hospitals and fever clinics to develop audio translated resources. These resources were sent out to service providers and uploaded on



their Facebook page. Community members were able to access the information on Facebook and share the resources via WhatsApp. Changing to an audio format that could be easily shared on Facebook and WhatsApp meant the information was circulated widely and community members were much more likely to understand information relating to the pandemic.

## Challenges

The constantly changing nature of the information relating to COVID-19 has been a key challenge for CatholicCare. However, CatholicCare has learnt to produce and update information based on the questions being frequently asked by their communities. That way, resources are being focused on the information and changes to information that are most relevant.

## Outcomes

Migrants and refugees in Toowoomba are much more likely to have understood relevant information about COVID-19 than if the information had only been available in written formats and through official channels.

## Key Learnings

### **This experience has generated three key learnings for MYAN NSW:**

- 1.** Having strong pre-existing relationships makes it easier to collaborate quickly when urgent needs arise.
- 2.** The provision of information in audio formats is important where clients are not literate in their first language.
- 3.** In translating information, it's helpful to focus on information communities are interested in, rather than translating all information irrespective of whether it is of interest or relevance to the community.

## More information

CatholicCare Social Services Toowoomba Region spoke about their work in response to COVID-19 on SCoA's webinar 'Settlement Service Innovation During COVID-19.' You can view the webinar at:

<http://scoa.org.au/innovation-centre/settlement-service-innovation-covid-19-webinar/>

You can also contact CatholicCare Social Services – Toowoomba Region through: calling the TRAMS team on 1300 477 433 or emailing [hello@catholiccare.services](mailto:hello@catholiccare.services)

