

AT A GLANCE



Target Participants

Socially isolated and vulnerable, newly arrived (0-5 years) women and their children from migrant and humanitarian backgrounds in southern Tasmania



Aim

To increase integration, understanding and participation in events of Australian national and local significance



Organisations Involved

MRC Tas, Phoenix Centre, Red Cross, AFL Tas, Nepalese Cricket Association of Tasmania, YMCA, Glenorchy City Council, Hobart City Council, Playgroup Tasmania



Location

Southern Tasmania



Funding

Australian Government Community Grants Hub – Department of Home Affairs

CASE STUDY

Migrant Resource Centre Tasmania

The Links for Life project worked in collaboration with a number of organisations around Tasmania to show participants the events and activities that have cultural significance in Tasmania and across Australia.

About the program

Links for Life showed participants the events and activities that have cultural significance in Tasmania and across Australia.

The project focused on newly arrived migrants in southern Tasmania and prioritised women and their children. Within the priority group, women who were isolated and single parents were specifically targeted. This target group was chosen because research indicates women from female headed households are the most isolated and vulnerable members of migrant and new and emerging communities, requiring significant support for social interaction and integration (Vromans et al, 2018). Research also indicates well integrated women have a greater influence on the behaviour and beliefs of their children.

The project worked in collaboration with a range of organisations to expose the participants to events and activities that have cultural significance in Tasmania, and more broadly across Australia. Some of the events included:

- Participants learned the history of **AFL**, the importance of the game to many Australians, the rules, and enjoyed watching and playing the sport;
- An introduction to **cricket** with the Nepali Cricket Association of Tasmania;
- Participants visited **local attractions and events** such as a Taste of Tasmania, Bonorong Wildlife Park, the Museum of Old and New Art, the Royal Hobart Show, Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery, Tasmanian Botanical Gardens;
- A family **table tennis** day at YMCA was enjoyed by families, with the participants reporting that this was a very popular game in the refugee camps.
- A visit to **Kunyan** (Mt Wellington) where participants learned the history of the mountain, and the importance of it to the traditional owners, the Muwinina people.



- Fifteen young mothers and their children were introduced to Playgroup Tasmania’s **pop up play group** in Glenorchy. Playgroup Tasmania provided an information session, with all the local playgroups attending and inviting the mothers and their children to attend their groups. Many participants continue to attend playgroup sessions—they report it is something they look forward to each week, and say it reduces their isolation, and encourages new friendships from many diverse backgrounds.

Links for Life differed from other programs in that it established a group of volunteers to connect with participants, supporting them to engage in community events and activities outside normal business hours. The participants were provided information on each activity, with Bicultural Workers providing language support for each of the language groups. This had a far reaching effect as the Bicultural Workers, who are very often community influencers, also learned of culturally significant events, places and activities, and disseminated this information to other community members and networks.

Outcomes

1. Participants are now aware of local events, and many intend to continue experiencing them. Participants indicated their willingness to join in, and be a part of events of cultural significance.
2. Participants have now developed social connections within the same language group as well as with people from other cultural and language backgrounds.

Challenges

1. Engaging volunteers to assist participants outside of normal work hours had some risks in that project staff were unable to support them in the event of any mishaps. Risk mitigation strategies were put in place to address this and there were no times where the volunteer felt additional support was required during the out of hour’s activities.
2. On a number of occasions more participants attended events than were anticipated or expected. Although this was briefly challenging on each occasion, particularly when no language support had been organized for a specific language group, the enthusiasm of attendees to learn more about their new country overcame the obstacles of the day.
3. Preparing group activities that provided positive participation for all abilities was challenging at times, as there was a wide range of abilities within the program.

Key Learnings

This experience has generated the following key learnings for MRC Tasmania:

1. Newly arrived women and their children are keen to explore local events and opportunities to learn about Australia’s rich, interesting and colourful history
2. Newly arrived women and their children benefit from gaining knowledge of local areas, events and activities to explore

More information

For more information, visit <https://mrctas.org.au/>

