

**ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2009-2010
MANAGER'S REPORT
(Plus a power point presentation)**

The year July 2009 –June 30, 2010, commenced with the Declaration by Townsville City Council of the city as a refugee welcome zone...a harbinger to a year where our numbers tripled and Townsville Multicultural Support Group Inc. (TMSG)finally welcomed the 'critical mass' of refugees which had been requested/argued for, for many years. It is exciting to reflect on all the work that has been done in this year. Congratulations to a wonderful team.

Thank you to our wonderful President who is so committed with her time and energy and diverse wisdom. Thank you to Management Committee members who attend the monthly meetings despite their more than full time work and family commitments.

TMSG received a "Creating Inclusive Communities Award" from the Townsville City Council, September 2009, for a program in partnership with Cootharinga in delivering cultural information craft sessions to disability groups in Townsville.

TMSG was represented at the National FECCA conference held in Shepparton. Thank you to Masalam Damey and Abdi Musse Shirwa for their efforts and contributions.

2009-2010 was a year of challenge, change and testing of our strength. As Sheila has indicated, as program fundings ceased, we farewelled staff who have worked hard and achieved goals. As we wished them well, we also felt disappointed that governments continue to fund in a 'stop start' manner.

1. WELCOMING/ HOSPITALITY

Our statistics from the Welcoming Office for this financial year 2009-2010:

Walk In (recorded)	3,302	Female: 1,943	Male: 1,359
Phone Calls (recorded)	5,125	3,767	1,358
Sewing Group	2,114	2,110	4
* Volunteer run Classes: *English	345	280	65
*Monthly Women's Group	90	86	4

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2009-2010
MANAGER'S REPORT
(Plus a power point presentation)

REFUGEE SUPPORT PROGRAM (Integrated Humanitarian Settlement Strategy) I acknowledge all our service personnel...(see Acknowledgements) There have been some major changes in the Refugee Support Program:

- TMSG assumed responsibility for the delivery of Household Kits under the guidance and bravery of Carmel Cannon.
- TMSG accepted our first camp group late in August 2009 and in the period from December-March, another camp group arrived but over a period of weeks. Our total numbers tripled 112% intake and (147% in fact as people remained in Townsville). The increase had a big impact on staffing and on administration as TMSG employed additional casual staff and head leased houses.
- The tender for the next 3-7 years was done from late March to late May. We remain in limbo with an extension of the 2005-2010 contract until January 31st, 2011.
- TMSG has been advocating to Queensland Education for increased support for young people to settle in to the school environments. The transition into schools is fraught with difficulties for students, families, teachers and school communities.
- Successful advocacy for a proposed family to reunite with family in Townsville and support to raise funds to contribute to the cost of air fares.
- A submission to Townsville City Council regarding a future lease arrangement for the use of 62 Anne Street as initial accommodation for refugees.

Volunteers

Presently we have twenty volunteers who contribute every week. They give more than twenty four hours of contact time to TMSG clients. They participate in English tutoring in the home, Friday classes, the sewing group, tutoring at Aitkenvale State School and making of resources. Other Friends of TMSG help with donations, social activities and some fund raising. We have held information and sharing nights and greatly value the role many wonderful people play in supporting TMSG.

Feedback received from DIAC quality assurance auditor by telephone 16th August 2010:

"I was really impressed with a number of practices. Your commitment and that of your team beams out of you. You clearly have a culture at TMSG concerned about people and grounded in local environment –having strong ties with a range of services-this is very apparent and is a strength of work being done. We were really impressed that the caseload has tripled but as a team you were reflecting on what that means for your processes and work practice."

Refugee Week activities in Townsville

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2009-2010
MANAGER'S REPORT
(Plus a power point presentation)

TMSG Refugee Week activities were featured on the DIAC settlement Bulletin August, 2010.

Townsville Multicultural Support Group (TMSG) hosted a variety of cultural and educational events from 22 to 25 June to promote human rights through the 'Freedom from Fear' theme. In partnership with Amnesty International, North Qld Domestic Violence Resource Service and with assistance from volunteers, TMSG conducted two Human Rights Workshops on Freedom from Fear and four Articles of the Declaration of Human Rights.

Attendees included: eleven (11) school staff, five (5) bicultural workers, two (2) TMSG staff and six (6) volunteers who participated in the school activities.

Attendees at Human Rights Workshops and the Multifaith Discussion: sixty (60) adults, thirty (30) High school students, two hundred (200) Primary School students.

Bi Cultural Workers included people from Iraq, Afghanistan, Sudan, Somalia,

Communities who attended included: Pacific Islander, Filipino, Singaporean, Papua New Guinea, Irish, Bhutanese, Karen, Chinese and Somalian

Comment of the week...from a primary school child: "Do refugees come from Tasmania?"

India experience

I was privileged to be part of a contingent of interns from the Centre for Refugee Research University of New South Wales, to travel to India. There I participated in workshops with a range of ethnic Burmese (mainly Chin) who have fled over the border to India and live marginally in Mizoram (north east) or Delhi in the hope of resettlement. The technique of storyboarding and training delivery about counseling skills and advocacy has since been used by the staff and myself to contribute to talks in high schools and a submission to City Council with regards to the 62 Anne Street house.

TMSG is fortunate to have the links with the Centre for Refugee Research (CRR) and is currently contributing to the planning of a conference in June 2011:

Looking to the future: Learning from the Past

A conference to mark 60 years of the Refugee Convention

COMPLEX CASE SUPPORT

This year TMSG has been involved as sub contractors of Multicultural Development Agency in the delivery of intensive support through the Complex Case Support program of DIAC. The referrals for CCS were initially slow in the region but picked up after TMSG organized a seminar

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2009-2010
MANAGER'S REPORT
(Plus a power point presentation)

with Canberra officials and Service Providers, March 2010. Ongoing referrals are being made by Service providers Townsville and TMSG as a means of ensuring smoother transition for families and individuals from protracted refugee situations to the challenges of life in Australia.

SETTLEMENT GRANTS PROGRAM (0-5 years) funded by Department of Immigration and Citizenship (DIAC)

Figures recorded in SGP Report (2009-2010) on TMSG activity.

Casework related referrals made	200
casework contacts	149
front counter referrals	234
Network meetings attended	8
Forums	3
Promotions	10

Principal clientele issues included: Document Help, Accommodation, Life Skills, Legal, Education and Employment.

SGP's inaugural Community Services Expo, which was held in April, was highlighted as an innovative model in DIAC's internal staff newsletter and its Qld Settlement Bulletin, which is sent out to all Queensland service providers.(copy available for perusal at AGM)

COMMUNITY ACTION FOR A MULTICULTURAL SOCIETY (CAMS) This program was refunded in July 2009 with the stated purpose by Multicultural Affairs Queensland, of "enabling community organisations to employ multicultural community workers to undertake systemic and group advocacy, and community capacity-building activities for the benefit of Queenslanders from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds and to strengthen multiculturalism across the state. "

SOCIAL PLANNING, SOCIAL ACTION AND GROUP ADVOCACY

Number of local, statewide or national advocacy projects contributed to: 7, being: Education needs of CALD students...English as a Second Language Review, Multicultural Policy Review, Refugee recognition, Citizenship Education, Housing needs: ASHRAM and locally, Pacific Islanders needs and CAMS Network Advocacy Plans

**ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2009-2010
MANAGER'S REPORT
(Plus a power point presentation)**

CONTACT with AGENCIES in relation to needs of people from CALD backgrounds: 49 (including a joint meeting)

Queensland Government agencies	18
Commonwealth government	5
Local government	3
Non-government, including commercial	22

SERVICE SUPPORT AND DEVELOPMENT

Activities directed at coordinating Activities, information about cultural competency, minimising duplication

No. occasions that service support and development activities were undertaken	18
No. people who participated in service support and development activities	267

Activities included:

- Network Meetings locally, State and nationally
- Delivery of presentations at CAMS gatherings, local James Cook University
- Planning Meetings with Qld Health re Flip Charts for safety in the home
- Arranged consultations with Somalians by DIAC Canberra officials

COMMUNITY GROUP DEVELOPMENT AND SUPPORT

Promotion of greater public awareness of issues

community / cultural group development and support activities	29
No. people who participated in community / cultural group development and support activities	1325

RESIDENTIAL TENANCY TRAINING

This has become one of our most valued programs but funding has to be applied for each year. It is enormously important in the transition to life here. TMSG has developed sound working relationships with the Tenancy Advice and Advocacy Service, some Real Estate Agents and the Qld Housing and Homeless Service within the Department of Communities. The work of Kasma Hem in this project has been critical.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2009-2010
MANAGER'S REPORT
(Plus a power point presentation)

Nine (9) facilitators were trained over three (3) days of workshops with the assistance of the Tenants Advice Service Townsville and supportive Real Estate Agents. Kasma Hem and Rahila Talic completed the Social Housing Certificate IV training throughout the year and that information is highly valuable to TMSG and clientele.

No. TRAINED FACILITATORS: 11

No. INFORMATION SESSIONS DELIVERED:6

Afghan	15
Karen (Burmese)	14
Niue (Pacific Islander)	15
Rwandan	7
Tokelau(Pacific Islander)	11
Somali	11

Feedback from Residential Tenancy Authority (RTA), August 2010:

“The RTA would like to take this opportunity to congratulate you and the staff in your organization on completing a very successful community education project. We are particularly impressed with the group sessions conducted with six diverse communities in the region.”

HEALTHY EATING PROGRAM

Four (4) series of workshops involving partnerships with Queensland Health (Health Promotion Unit) The seven Natural Physicians, Townsville City Council and Red Cross.

Topics included:

1. Nutrition and healthy food and major diseases and disease prevention
2. Food labels, food system supply and supermarket tour
3. Budgeting
4. Food safety and kitchen hygiene
5. The importance of physical activity and adequate hydration; and
6. Healthy cooking sessions.

The first series of workshops involved partnership with the Queensland Health (Health Promotion Unit) and a health professional, the Community Nutritionist delivered the workshop sessions. The ‘Food Cents’ Project Officer from Red Cross also facilitated the session on budgeting and assisted with the supermarket tour. Sixteen (16) refugees and migrants commenced this course and five (5) participants completed it. Countries represented were Indonesia, Fiji, Burundi and Rwanda.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2009-2010
MANAGER'S REPORT
(Plus a power point presentation)

Workshops	Enrolled	Completed	Countries of Origin
Nutrition	16	5	Indonesia, Fiji, Burundi and Rwanda.
7 Natural Physicians	8	6	Philippines, Spain, Papua New Guinea, Iraq, Sudan, Vietnam, Fiji and Somalia
March	11	6	Somalia
May-	6	6	Somali

During Nutrition Week, an event was held on World Food Day, 16 October 2009, as an extension of this series of workshops.

Department of Communities Report Feedback on the Healthy Eating Project, received by email 19/8/2010:

"I must say it is one of the best reports we have received!"

CULTURAL OUTREACH TO SCHOOLS PROGRAM

1. A total of 60 presentations were conducted by 12 participants from 11 different countries.
2. Feedback from teachers indicated that presentations and displays created greater understanding amongst school students, teachers and the Townsville community of people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds (CALD backgrounds) and their way of life.

"I believe that this program helps children to develop an awareness and acceptance of different peoples and cultures and an interesting insight into the lives of others." Mundingburra State School Prep Teacher

"Having people speak to the students first hand creates another level of understanding that cannot be provided through books and visual aids. The students are able to appreciate and understand in a greater context the plight and experiences of people from other parts of the world." Townsville State High School

LIVING LIBRARIES PROJECT

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2009-2010
MANAGER'S REPORT
(Plus a power point presentation)

This delightful project developed out of a spontaneous response to a chance email from the Lifelong Learning Team, Townsville City Libraries interest in applying for funding.

The 'Don't judge a book by its Cover' held April 27th, was well attended. Out of a possible 42 loans, the Books were borrowed thirty-one (31) times. There were twenty four Readers in total- with one Reader borrowing 3 different Book and five Readers borrowed 2 Books each.

All Books (7) enjoyed being a Living Book, felt that they had learnt something from being a Living Book, and found the Living Library space easy to use.

BI CULTURAL SUPPORT PROGRAM FOR CHILD CARE CENTRES

TMSG has been subcontracted by Multicultural Development Agency (MDA) to provide bi cultural support orientation to staff of child care centres... A recent decision August 2010, by MDA to deliver support from Brisbane is disappointing and concerning given the increased refugee numbers to Townsville. TMSG is currently engaging in discussions about this program.

STUDENTS

TMSG has been pleased to provide tertiary student placements to local and International Social Work and Community Welfare students from James Cook University and TAFE Townsville. Andreas Dano (Denmark), Rika (Japan), Shazra (Maldives), Reika Kondo, Cailin O'Rourke, Trine Mikkelson (Denmark) Erin O'Reilly and Ishraga Furawi (current) have contributed insight and valuable practical skills. Ms. Sandra Duncan from Tasmania University joined us late August 2010.

TMSG also provided work placements in partnership with the Townsville Intercultural Centre to Athoui Kawik and Thelma Piotto.

TMSG's reputation for providing educational opportunities has gathered momentum and we have negotiated with the Occupational Therapy Department at James Cook University for students to commence September 2010.

TMSG staff and bi cultural contacts delivered lectures to University Social Work Department, Medical School and the Anton Brienl Centre for Public Health and Tropical Medicine 2009-2010, which is a significant contribution to cultural competency within professions whose work impacts on migrants and refugees.

I thank you all and all our supports (see Acknowledgements) and look forward to continued work for peace in a wonderful diverse world and local community.