



Telephone: (07) 4775 1588
Fax: (07) 4725 5833
Email: admin@tmsg.org.au
Address: 63 Ross River Road
Mundingburra QLD 4812
Post Address: PO Box 1801
Aitkenvale QLD 4814

Please visit our website:
www.tmsg.org.au

Inside this issue:

Editorial	1
TMSG Workers	2, 5
Refugee Conference	3
Annual General Meeting	4
Manager's Award	5
2011 Census Review	5
Volunteers	5
Activities	6

From the Editors

TMSG's overall Mission Statement is to bring together people of different ethnic backgrounds working in a spirit of friendship; to address needs through greater participation in and contribution to a better quality of life for our multicultural society.

Friendship and participation, of course, are always enriched and made real by the concern and involvement of the wider community. The organisation is really grateful to the many volunteers, friends, community and other groups who assist in a multitude of ways to make TMSG's clients achieve a better quality of life within our society. Among these groups is the Mundingburra Rotary Club who has adopted a refugee family from Rwanda as "part of a new charter for the Club and international goodwill in assisting refugees to assimilate into the Townsville Community". At a recent meeting of the Club "Bill (Kennedy) introduced Innocent (21), Yvonne (23) and Mapendo (15) from a family of 9, born in Democratic Republic of Congo, initially granted refugee status in Rwanda, and arriving in Townsville last November.

The group performed a number of traditional dances and were joined by YEP students Adrian and Maria as well as Trish Day and Annette Nelson". (With permission from Mundingburra Rotary Club 'Spinifex' June 2011).

Carmel Cannon, a TMSG Worker, spoke to the Mundingburra Rotary Club about the impact of literacy skill on refugees. Carmel was accompanied by Annonciata Nsabimara who talked of her experience learning English as a refugee.

Our links with the Townsville City Council continue to be reinforced through membership of the family Advisory Committee and various projects with City Libraries.

In May TMSG joined several other organisations to sign a new (Council) charter dedicated to meeting the needs of all Townsville families.

"Dear TMSG,

A big thank you for your support, valuable tips, positivity and visits during this important transition period with the boys. We very much look forward to working closely with you all in the near future to develop some fun projects for these boys.

Best wishes,

The team at City Libraries"

From the Mail Box (Nepal)

Hello beautiful people

What an amazing country. So much diversity and strong tradition... I'm doing my artwork in the Patan Museum if you want to google it. What a privilege. On Fridays I volunteer in an Art Workshop for deaf and blind Nepali children. I went on an amazing 5 days walk to a hot springs surrounded by snow. The earth is an amazing place.

Much love to all.

Michelle

Hi, I am Mr Abdi Musse, Somali by nationality. I came to Australia/Townsville in November 2008 from Kenya where I have been living for 17 years as an asylum seeker. In Kenya I worked with International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), Kenya Red Cross Society (KRCS), United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) both in Nairobi Branch-Office and in Kenya refugee camps, International Rescue Committee (IRC), Lutheran World Federation/Department of World Services LWF/DWS, GTZ, Film Aid, Windle Trust and local Kenyan Authorities who were mostly refugees and humanitarian service providers.

When I came here in Townsville I found it has good environment to live. I enrolled in the Barrier Reef Institute of TAFE (City Campus) where I did my Level IV for further study or work, Information Technology (IT), Social Services Course and recently completed Certificate IV in Youth Work. I have been offered three months of work experience by Townsville Intercultural Centre. I am currently having work training with Townsville Multicultural Support Group Inc. (TMSG) as my Host Organisation and I feel very comfortable and enjoy working with TMSG lovely staff members.

I also work with Translating and Interpreting Services under the Department of Immigration and Citizenship and have some other community based responsibilities as I was appointed as the President of The Bright Horn of Africa Team - BHOAT which is one of emerging community organisations based here in Townsville. I hope this short note is enough to introduce myself as requested by editorial team and thanks a lot.

[BHOAT has recently received assistance from Self Help Qld Inc. For a Mental Health Programme]

Abdi Musse Shirwa



*Spinifex Edition "48" 10/11
Rotary Club of Mundingburra Inc 14th June 2011*

Innocent has hit the road running (metaphorically speaking) with Graduate School of Motoring.

The initial program will be a weekly 2-hour professional lesson, interspersed with some "Rotarian-assisted practice!"

Interestingly, early lessons not only guide the student to "find the wheel and the pedals", they quickly progress to hill starts and reversing.

Innocent has been assigned to Steve Barson, who has over 30 years" experience in driver training, and previously was the owner of Graduate School of Motoring.

I met (Bill Kennedy) with Heath Ward, the current owner, and his Training Manager, Penny. We shared a lot of ideas and aspirations, principally to do with refugees, but also covering school students and young folk with disabilities – all matters which are potential programs for Rotary.

Introducing: Teresa Phillips HSS Case Manager

Hi Everyone

My name is Teresa Phillips. I have just been welcomed to the amazing team at TMSG (Townsville Multicultural Support Group). I am stepping into a position previously held by Consy Sakaria, who is moving into an area much needed to Townsville, which I'm sure we'll hear more about in the very near future. As I wish Consy all the best for her new journey, I say thank you for the CTs' (Consy Tips) over the last few weeks.

I am of Italian origin from a post war migrant family. I bring to this position enthusiasm and support as each new CALDB (Cultural and Linguistically Diverse Background) entrant arrives in Australia with trust in us and hope of a safe and better life.

My role as Case Manager will see me introducing to Townsville refugee families and assisting them with their settlement processes into Australia.

Since my recent arrival in Townsville, (after travelling most of the East Coast and regional QLD), I have already seen the tremendous support of this caring community, including the staff from our various service providers.

I am proud to be working with these most humble Multi Cultural people and invite everyone in the community to welcome with us our new families as this is the 'Ozzie' way.

Please feel free to come in visit TMSG so we can meet and network. or call us and see how you can join in. See you soon. The kettle is always on.

Teresa





Meg receiving a Certificate of Recognition "of an extraordinary contribution to Qld" from the Premier, the Hon. Anna Bligh, MP, and Minister for Women, Community Services and Housing, the Hon Karen Struthers MP, in honor of the 100th International Women's Day Celebrations.



We are grateful for the many donations received from the community that directly benefit our families. However it has been

*particularly difficult recently to redistribute donations of clothing and soft furnishings. Storage has been an issue. We ask that such donations are given to St Vincent de Paul, Lifeline or The Salvation Army because they support us and our clients are shown where their **Op shops** are situated.*

Household furniture in good condition can be collected by us. Coffee tables and student desks are always being requested!

Hello Everyone,

My name is Rukiye Apaydin and I'm one of the new Case Managers at the TMSG.

I love meeting new people and learning about different cultures and religions. It is my passion and, I think, my purpose in life to help people in need.

I love my job at the TMSG and feel privileged to work with the staff here, especially serving our clients.

Rukiye Apaydin

The 2011 Census

Did you get your Census returns in on time? The collectors are still going around so it's not too late. However of the people that did theirs online, it was widely reported that 640,000 failed to hit the submit button after completing the form. Just goes to show that Murphy's Law is still as true as ever.

The first population counts of Australia were known as musters and were conducted as early as 1788. Musters involved all members of the community gathering at specified locations to be counted. These were important as a means of matching food and other supplies to the number of people needing them. Things have changed somewhat in 2011: the Census is not about distributing food supplies. However it is still vital for governments to know the profile of its population so as to better plan for current needs and future trends.

In 2011, the Australian Census focussed on gathering information from the Culturally and Linguistically Diverse community (CALD). The reason for that focus was to identify the issues that affect people who speak English as a 2nd (or 3rd!!) language: their country of birth; language spoken at home and proficiency in English and how these populations are dispersed throughout the country. Many thanks to those people who worked to first spread the news into the linguistically diverse communities and groups that Townsville now hosts and thanks to those people who participated in distributing out and then collecting the census material from the CALD communities.

Jenny Stirling
CAMS/ TMSG

The Friends of TMSG were once again generous in providing goods for our Jumble Stall at the Mary McKillop Parish Day recently. We raised \$400 by selling a variety of pre-loved items. This money will be spent on backpacks and lunch boxes for primary school children.

Volunteer Lois shared some valuable strategies for teaching English at our last Information & Sharing Night. There was much laughter. Come along and enjoy the next evening on Tuesday 6 September at 5.30pm. If you know someone who is curious about TMSG tell them about the night.

Carmel Cannon

Activities for 2011

Sewing and Craft Classes	10.00 am - 12.00 noon	1st, 2nd, 3rd & 5th Friday
English language Classes	11.00 am - 12.00 noon	1st, 2nd, 3rd & 5th Friday
Multicultural Women's Group	10.00 am - 12.00 noon	4th Friday of every month
		28th October - next Women's Group gathering

Everyone is welcomed to all activities

Print Post Approved 42402200780

Surface Mail

**Postage
Paid
Australia**

If undelivered, Please return to

TMSG Inc

63 Ross River Road, Mundingburra, Townsville

Or PO Box 1801, AITKENVALE QLD 4814

TO:

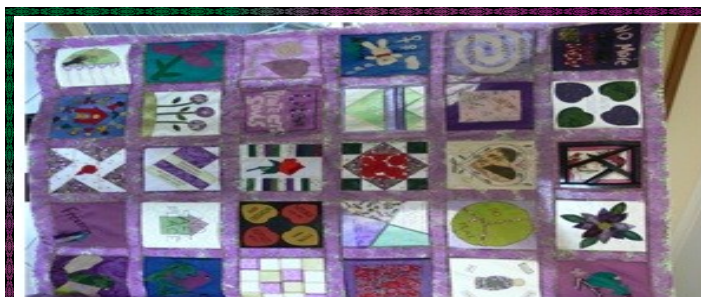
TMSG's Management Committee 2010 - 11

President: Sheila Hawthorn
Vice president: Elodie Oxenham
Secretary:
Treasurer: Marivel Dayday
Members: Amanda Smith Mick McCabe
 Diana Innes Linda Davis

Women's Group Coordinator: Helga Wiederhecker

Newsletter Editor:

Sheila Hawthorn and Meg Davis



TMSG Sewing Group contributed 3 squares to a National Remembrance Quilt in memory of women and children killed by Domestic Violence which is currently on tour around Australia.

The contents, information, advice and opinions expressed in this newsletter are those of TMSG and not the Department of Immigration and Citizenship (DIAC)

Feed back about the newsletters always welcome, please email: admin@tmsg.org.au

REFUGEE CONFERENCE: LOOKING TO THE FUTURE, LEARNING FROM THE PAST

A Conference at the University of New South Wales June 14 – 17 to mark 60 years of the Refugee Convention

After a lot of planning and teleconferencing, the conference above went ahead and was a resounding success.

Several TMSG staff members attended the Conference and have made some comments about their experiences at it.

From Meg Davis (Manager)

It was a tremendous learning experience to be part of the planning committee for such a conference and to participate in the International Women's Dialogues (Thailand) and the Australian Dialogues.

Going to Sydney and being able to witness the conference all coming together was fantastic. The participation and representation by the refugee women of Townsville and the staff of TMSG at such an international event was a rewarding and proud experience. Congratulations to Iraha Umotomi and Banery Banery for their presentation at the Australian Women's Dialogues preceding the conference. Congratulations to Masalam Damey who co-presented on Women at Risk needs with Rebecca Eckert from University of New South Wales Centre for Refugee Research, and who also stars in a video created by the University <http://tv.unsw.edu.au/video/refugee-voices>

I appreciated every session I went to and felt that the depth of the discussions heightened my awareness of the need to be continuously reviewing practice methods of service delivery.

Sessions I enjoyed attending included one delivered by a New Zealand settlement service, which shared the involvement and welcome by traditional Maori people to refugees. It was a reminder to me to ensure the ongoing practice of introducing the Stolen Generation to Townsville refugees.

Another session which complemented some of the learning I experienced in Thailand was around the needs of Lesbian, Gay, Bi Sexual Transgender refugees and a motion that was adopted by the meeting to include in recommendations to the meetings with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees in Geneva immediately following the conference.

I found the role of delivering to a conference session challenging but rewarding.

The final morning conference and address by DIAC Minister, Chris Bowen, was interrupted by an angry demonstration about the Malaysian Solution. I was pleased there was a demonstration.

The learnings of the conference planning and participation provided solid foundation for ongoing work here at TMSG.

In the specific workshops **Kasma Hem (Accommodation Officer)** appreciated the opportunity of dialoguing with other refugee settlement workers around the very challenging issue of housing.

Because of Kasma's experience working in this important field, she was able to contribute much to very helpful discussions to highlight the need for more affordable housing and increased financial rent assistance.

Dr Melika Yasmin Sheik Eldin was one of the Conference speakers. She is a former Eritrean refugee, responsible for

strategic community relations which promote employment for refugees via Community Guides Network for AMES in Victoria. Dr Melike impressed upon the conference that Australia "has one of the best humanitarian resettlement programmes in the World."

After hearing a passionate presentation from Dr Chandrasan, a lawyer from India, **Jenny Stirling (CAMS)** was very interested to note that one population of refugees based their sustainability, capacity building, adaptation and advancement on a bottom up, value based approach as distinct from a top down, rights based approach, which is the UNHCR approach. The former is a community development model whereas the latter is a bureaucratic model.

On the last day of the Refugee Conference three (3) people were chosen to take recommendations to Geneva. Some of the Recommendations are:

Recommendations to Australian Refugee Organisation:

- I. Develop a robust and well-resourced whole of government initiative to end protracted refugee situations and resolve the root causes of protracted situations.

Recommendations to ALL actors assisting refugees:

- I. Recognise and better utilise the agency of refugee communities in Australia to strengthen the protection of refugees overseas by factoring in their knowledge skills, dedication and potential into Australian humanitarian and development programs and advocacy.

Some of the issues discussed regarding refugees were:

- ◆ Education
- ◆ Health
- ◆ Racism
- ◆ Intergenerational conflict
- ◆ Settlement Support
- ◆ Housing and employment

For **Rahila Talic (Welcoming Officer)** it was "a very good experience to listen and to learn. It made me more aware of how hard life is for asylum seekers in the camps and detention centres."

Of particular interest to **Gerald Nyasulu (Accommodation Services Coordinator)** was the concept of alternatives to mandatory detention. There was strong evidence from the different sessions and research papers that detention was not only counterproductive but also a total violation of the rights of the asylum seekers. Most people who have gone through the detention system have lots of emotional and mental problems which stay with them for the rest of their lives.

"Papers highlighted the challenges people face in refugee camps and their resilience to cope as well as navigate the system. It was imperative therefore that when these people arrive to be resettled in Australia, we should acknowledge the trauma they have from the experience in a refugee camp but also the strengths they possess. As a service provider, we need to explore those strengths and skills and better utilise them. People with such sets of skills are capable of easily tapping into their strengths and thereby improve their resettlement outcomes a hundredfold. Rather than regarding them as passive service recipients, they are active members of the society who have learnt to survive and therefore are resourceful as well as able to make choices".

*Townsville Multicultural
Support Group Inc.*

*The Management and Staff of TMSG
invite you to attend its
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING*

3:30 - 6:00 P.M

Friday, 16th September 2011

Mundingburra State School,

*Cnr Ross River Road & Burdekin Street,
Mundingburra.*

*Welcoming Humanitarian Entrants
to our Townsville Community
as well as regular AGM Business.*



*Please bring a plate of food
to share with friends!*

