

Heartache, Strength and Hope

Celebrating 25 Years of Migrant and Refugee Resettlement in North Queensland through the Townsville Multicultural Support Group Inc.

WE DID IT! Twenty-five years of TMSG history has been completed!

Editor extraordinaire - Ann Roebuck coordinated the delivery of a great piece of journalism by Ian Frazer assisted by Madilyn Beplate; Heidi Heatherall and her team and TMSG members past and present. The important herstories and histories of resettled populations and the documentation of settlement in Townsville through the eyes and ears of Townsville Multicultural Support Group Inc. is still the buzz around the city. What a beautiful setting, morning and gathering it was at The Ville on Tuesday July 31st at 7a.m.! We were so delighted that the esteemed Paul Power CEO of the Refugee Council of Australia could attend and officially launch the book and I think he summed it all up in his foreword:

"I am pleased to commend this history of TMSG to all. It reminds us of what open-minded and open-hearted people can achieve when they work together in the knowledge that everyone benefits when newcomers to a community are welcomed and included."

The Author's Talk at Mary Who recently was well attended. You can purchase a copy there or through the TMSG website which continues to buzz with ongoing purchases. TMSG is currently promoting the book with libraries, schools and interested community groups.

Thank you to everyone associated with TMSG for your hard work during the collation of stories and sifting through records and for your ongoing support. TMSG was particularly appreciative of support from Qld Government of \$5000 for funds to assist with the project.

Meg Davis, Manager.

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Statement of Apology and Reconciliation

To all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People, your families and communities. We apologise for the human suffering and injustice that you have experienced as a result of colonisation and generations of discrimination and marginalisation that has resulted from that. We acknowledge your right to self-determination. We commit to working in solidarity with you in ways that you choose and determine. We recognise your leadership, we honor your visions and we join with you in your hopes for your future and for our futures together.



Celebrating 25 Years of Migrant and Refugee Resettlement in North Queensland through the Townsville Multicultural Support Group Inc.

You did it!
Congratulations



Congratulations to the most recent graduates of the Community Leadership Program! This program focused on public speaking, with six sessions facilitated by Dr Betty Mclellan. All members of the group confidently presented well-rehearsed speeches at the graduation ceremony on 28 June.

The next program will begin on Thursday 11 October and will focus on a variety of topics with the aim of supporting emerging leaders to:

- Increase their leadership capacity
- Develop community engagement and advocacy skills
- Link with established communities
- Network with other community leaders
- Gain knowledge of community associations and governance

Contact Teneale at TMSG for more information or to register your interest.

The Community Leadership Program is a partnership between Ethnic Communities Council Qld and TMSG. The program is funded by the Australian Government Department of Social Services.



Refugee Week Breakfast

TMSG's annual Refugee Week Breakfast was held on Tuesday 31 July at The Ville Resort-Casino and was a huge success. Almost 120 guests enjoyed sea views, a buffet breakfast as well as inspiring presentations by Mi Mi Khaine who settled in Townsville, Abdul Razaq, an asylum seeker from Dandenong and Marie Sellstrom from Rural Australians for Refugees. Sibbo Sengabo was once again a wonderful MC.

Feedback from guests below:

Hello Teneale, Thank you for organising such a successful event this morning. It was just such a smooth operation it had to mean huge behind the scenes stuff to make it so. The opportunity to meet old friends, catch up with people and meet new people was great and so were the topics and the guest speakers and I found myself going home with too many ideas for my old demented brain, and trying to scribble them down when I got to a red light!

On top of all that the venue and venue staff were so impressive as was the breakfast itself. Many thanks Teneale (I'm sure there is a role for you as an event organiser any time you are looking for a change of vocation!)

Regards, Loma Tonnochy, St Vincent de Paul VRAP Coordinator

Good morning Teneale, Thank you for inviting us to the Refugee Week Breakfast and Book Launch at the Ville this morning. Rene Flores and I attended the event this morning and both really enjoyed ourselves. Personally, I was moved by the presentations given by Mi Mi Khaine and Abdul Razaq. There were multiple 'take aways' for me following the presentations this morning one of which was Abdul's statement where he highlighted the importance of being a Peace Maker by comparing it to a cardiac pace maker. Rene and I spoke with Sibbo, apologies that we didn't manage to catch up with you. Thank you again. We look forward to working with you for future events.

Yours faithfully, Kaylene Gregory, Associate, Maurice Blackburn Lawyers



The Ville

General Updates

QLD Multicultural Awards

TMSG congratulates the **Townsville City Council Construction, Maintenance and Operations** for winning the Qld Minister's Multicultural Award for its support and promotion of the benefits of cultural diversity for targeting the full participation of people of diversity – in particular Work Skills Trainees, funded under the Skilling Queenslanders for Work Program. Well done to our local council!!

TMSG was a finalist in the Multicultural Ambassador category of the 2018 Qld Multicultural Awards. Our Certificate is proudly displayed in reception. The award was nominated for TMSG's contribution to the local Townsville economy as a small business, contributing to local prosperity through its diverse humanitarian workforce of 47 staff. TMSG was also noted for its contribution to professional education as it hosts secondary and tertiary students, work experience placements, volunteers and interns across disciplines...effectively increasing community engagement and growing a local workforce that understands diversity and is capable and confident in working across difference.

*Sibbo Sengabo,
TMSG Ambassador
accepting the award
in Brisbane on
18 August.*



AMNESTY
INTERNATIONAL



Amnesty International Human Rights Forum

On 4 September, September 4, 150 people attended 2018 Amnesty International Human Rights Address: "The Global Refugee Crisis - how should we respond?" The forum included powerful and informed presentations from Paul Power...CEO of Australia's Refugee Council of Australia, Claire Mallinson the Amnesty International National Director and Shankar Kasynathan - Refugee Campaign Coordinator for Amnesty International Australia.

Paul's presentation was packed with figures and information of the numbers of displaced people around the world. He also spoke about the importance of the strength of the voice of the refugees at world forums. Paul presented some strategies for engagement by Australia to support the Asian Pacific countries who are currently examining policies to support refugees.

In her address AIA National Director Claire Mallinson spoke about the plight of the Rohingya people from Myanmar and her recent visit to the Rohingya Refugee Camp at Cox's Bazar in Bangladesh. Amnesty International Australia is calling on the Australian Government to cease supporting the Myanmar military who are responsible for the crimes against humanity committed against the Rohingya. Please sign the online action below.

Shankar shared his family's personal story of resettlement to Australia and proposed necessary changes to Australia's Community Support Program which is currently prohibitive in costs and complicated by design. Shankar outlined Canada's model which is much more accessible and involves harvesting the good will of community.

Community Support for Housing

Over the past two months, TMSG has welcomed over 80 new clients to our community. With this peak in arrivals, it has been challenging to house all clients on arrival and then source long term accommodation for families who are new to the Australian rental market. TMSG is grateful to a number of individuals, organisations and businesses who have supported us in this process.

Thank you to Ryan Community Centre / Good Shepherd Parish who have provided short term accommodation and support for a Congolese family.

Thank you to Sister Carmel King and colleagues from Mercy Community Services who have assisted with the costs of temporary motel accommodation.

Thank you to John Gribbin and his team at John Gribbin Realty as well as Leela Gopalan and her team at Townsville City Rentals for working with us to efficiently provide long term rental properties for a number of clients.

TMSG Accommodation Team

Program Updates

Diversity Safe Place Project (DSPP) started in September 2017 and will be completed in October 2018. The project has been run in consortium with two other organisations, one from Ethnic Community Services Co-operative in Sydney and Diversitat in Geelong. All organisations in these regions have been tasked with developing a specific resource. Townsville has worked on a barrier mapping tool, Sydney has put together a charter of commitment and Geelong has completed a self-audit tool. On top of these resources, the project has engaged CALD people with disabilities and carers to share stories focusing on inclusion and welcoming as the main objective of the project. In Townsville, the project was run in collaboration with community and disability programs, CALD people with disabilities, NDIA engagement team and Townsville City Council. Via this collaboration, the Project has been included in the array of projects that are recognised as a part of bringing the NDIS to life under the Action Group "Changing Lives, Changing Communities". This Action Group is led by Townsville City Council and QCOSS and in August 2018, a two-day forum was organised. The DSPP Project Coordinator with some CALD people attended and delivered a presentation. Moreover, the Project Coordinator has attended and presented in numerous network forums and meetings which have influenced many organisations and community members to become friendly when they assist and interact with CALD people with disabilities.

The Project is now in its final stage of making resources available to the public and organisations to access and learn how to be welcoming and inclusive. The website with all resources is now live. Currently, the working group members have been meeting to see how the outcomes of the project can be sustained beyond the project. Moreover, the working group members are working hard on ways to promote the resources with their networks. They will also evaluate the project/resources and ask their networks to participate in this process. For more information and for you to participate, please visit the website www.waystowelcome.org

Sibbo Sengabo, Project Coordinator



Global Compact on Refugees (GCR) Gender Implementation and Evaluation Project

TMSG is one of three partners with the University of New South Wales Forced Migration Research Network in a Global Compact on Refugees (GCR) Gender Implementation and Evaluation Project, funded by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT). A major task of the Project is working to complete Gender Audit reports of the Global Compact. Other partners include AMES Victoria and Australian National Council of Refugee Women (ANCORW). Participation by the Asia Pacific Refugee Rights Network (APRRN) is included. A document which cross references gender commitments in the GCR with the UNHCR AGD Framework (web reference) will be developed to guide the project and provided to partners who will contribute to consultations locally and internationally.

Watch this space as the project unfolds ...post initial meetings in Sydney and Bangkok late October 2018!

Meg Davis, TMSG Manager

New program!

The **Big Brother** program is a partnership between TMSG and Townsville State High School which will be starting in Term 4. The program is designed to support young boys at Town high who might be struggling at home with identity issues due to a lack of male figures in the house and are at risk of disorientation.



The **Soccer** program has been running every weekend on Saturday and young people continue to show great engagement. Many of the youth are looking forward to participating in the soccer tournament organised by the Islamic Society. TMSG Settlement Services will be supporting them to organise teams.

Innocent Rwamahuzi, Settlement Services Practitioner

TMSG Annual General Meeting

We look forward to your attendance at the Annual General Meeting of the Townsville Multicultural Support Group Inc.

Date: Wednesday 11 October

Time: 6pm

Venue: TMSG Annex, 63 Ross River Rd, Mundingburra

A highlight of the occasion will be the naming of the new area after the formalities of the AGM.

The Sheila Hawthorn Annex

Refreshments will be served 'on the green'.

Sharing our Culture

In July, Settlement Services (SS) organised a Sharing our Culture event at Sherriff Park which marked the beginning of NAIDOC Week. The event aimed to bring awareness of Indigenous culture for our Multicultural clients and their families. In collaboration with one of the Traditional Owner groups in Townsville, the Wulgurukaba peoples, the event aimed to build cross cultural awareness.



This event was a joint project between C.A.M.S and S.S. with support from SELECTABILITY. This partnership proved highly successful, with over 100 participants and children. The free family fun day was held during the first Friday of school holidays and S.S. invited clients from TMSG as well as the neighbouring St Joseph Mundingburra's Vacation Care students. SS also invited visiting musician Uncle Jeff Timor from Mackay cultural group to participate as well.

The event program included, Sing a long, Indonesian Ungklung lessons, Martial arts demonstration, Henna Art with 2x community volunteers, one from Somalia and one from Congo. The event had a number of active volunteers and a beautiful multicultural feast afterwards. All in all, a positive event which many people thanked us for organising.

Isla Swan, Settlement Services Practitioner



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STUDENT PROFILES

My name is **Loraine Paidamwoyo Sithole**. I come from Zimbabwe and I am an international student at James Cook University studying for a Master of Social work degree. I am currently in my first year doing my first placement at Townsville Multicultural Support Group Inc (TMSG) for 14 weeks. I have loved working at TMSG as it is a culturally diverse and inclusive environment with clients and staff from different nationalities. At TMSG have largely learnt what it means to work from a human rights perspective. The team at TMSG is very professional and has supported me in both my professional and personal development. Although the work at TMSG is very challenging it is also extremely gratifying. Thank you TMSG for the opportunity.

My name is **Marco Casanova**, born in Chile, South America. I arrived with my wife and then my only child 10 years ago. After many highs and lows and literally blood, sweat and tears, we became Australian citizens last year. Proud of all the family achievements and specially of the resilience of my gorgeous wife and my two lovely boys. I am a registered nurse, and now am doing a Master in Social Work through JCU. I have been allocated to TMSG for my professional practice. I have been here for already 2 months and there are another 6 weeks still to go. Luckily for the student TMSG staff has been very supportive and make always time within their busy schedule to attend our questions and issues. Working with refugee families has provided me with a deep insight of the disadvantages experienced by these families and am happy to assist them in accordance the TMSG core line of work, acceptance and fairness. A big thank you to everyone in TMSG, you are world changing spirits. Peace.

Hi, my name is **Ruping Shi**. I am an international student who is from China and currently studying Master of Social Work at James Cook University. It has been a great opportunity for me to take my placement at Townsville Multicultural Support Group for 3 months. TMSG has the wonderful teams and staff who are always friendly, supportive and professional. I articulate different theoretical and practical knowledge from different programs and practise my communication and interpersonal skills with people from different cultural backgrounds. I really appreciate that I can take my final placement at TMSG and it is a wonderful experience for me to reflect on my social work practice.



Ruping, Marco & Loraine

CAMS (Community Action for a Multicultural Society)

CAMS - English Conversation is a venue for participants to build self-confidence, to have fun as well as to improve their English conversational skills. Watching a video of Mr. Duncan's English Lesson, holding info sessions, inviting guest speakers and vocabulary enrichment were part of the English Conversation activities in this quarter. The purpose of the activities is to update information about services available and to improve the participants' social and economic connectedness. For example, Ben Patterson from ACCESS Community Services shared info about Business – Administration Traineeships. One of the guest speakers in the sessions was Sheila Hawthorn – former president of TMSG Management Committee. She shared with the participants a history of English conversation class and she was very happy to witness how many participants they are and how keen they were to learn English. The beauty of the sessions is that participants having sound English such as Ramla and Zakaria enthusiastically assist by interpreting the session. Social connectedness was also demonstrated by Rex Grattidge who shared an Australian souvenir – a bag with Indigenous design - with Lee, a Taiwanese Rotary Exchange Student.



Chamber of Commerce warmly welcomes and facilitates TMSG clients developing their business network

TMSG – CAMS Program is committed to assisting clients with developing their business network. This helps in seeking a job as well as in promoting their small start-up businesses. Up to now, 7 skilled migrants from Philippines, Malaysia, Indonesia, Pakistan, India, Thailand and PNG have gained an experience to develop their business network. Recently, for example, Nancy Waffi, a skilled migrant from PNG gave a two minute presentation in front of business communities at Chamber of Commerce Coffee Galore at Cannon Park and Bulletin Square. Nancy promoted her “billum”, a small business producing bags, especially needed now since plastic shopping bags have been banned. The good news is that she found a partner to collaboratively run her business. Congratulations Nancy! We hope that you will be a role model for others. Thank you to Marie-Claude Brown, CEO Chamber Commerce and Michael Kopittke, Chamber Board Member, for your constant support.

Johanna Kodoatie-Cahill, CAMS Practitioner

Women's Group The Multicultural Women's Group celebrated Refugee and Migrant Week with a theme of **Cultural Diversity and Language Exchange**. The event on 22 June 2018 began with enriching vocabulary led by Jean Dartnall, followed by an information session about Anti-Discrimination by Anne Franzmann. One of the Australian volunteers – Rex Grattidge – shared the story behind **Waltzing Matilda** song. A summary of the story was interpreted into different languages including Somalian and Swahili. The activities were concluded with sharing home-made traditional food with a ukulele music background. More than 50 people from 19 countries of birth and from 5 continents: Africa, Asia, Australia, Europe and Latin America attended the celebration, some wearing their traditional outfits.



The TMSG Multicultural Women's Group keeps maintaining TMSG'S mission to quality of life through greater participation in and contribution to our multicultural society. If you would like to join the Women's Group Contact Johanna or Rahila at TMSG.

Donate your time through volunteering!

We have a number of highly engaged and inspiring people who donate their time to assist with our services to our clients. The type of things our volunteers do are broad ranging from helping in the English conversation and sewing classes, shopping and setting up the short or long term accommodation, being at the airport on arrival and reception. Recently our volunteers have been helpful in assisting and reinforcing transport orientation by assisting clients on the bus to their dental and medical appointments and getting an 18+ card.

We have monthly Volunteer information Sessions and our next session will be on Thursday 11 October, 2pm - 4pm.

A very sincere thank you to all our volunteers – the delivery of our services would so much harder without your help, we appreciate all that you bring to TMSG and all that you do!

“If our hopes of building a better and safer world are to become more than wishful thinking, we will need the engagement of volunteers more than ever.” — Kofi Annan

Finally a large thanks to **Nawres Younus** who is leaving Townsville. Nawres has been instrumental in volunteering her time to develop the TMSG photographic archive - a fantastic resource of the changing face of TMSG, recording staff and community events. Images were included



Nawres with TMSG staff receiving her gift and certificate

recently in the TMSG book.

Thank you to all for your ongoing support!

Thank You!

HSP Team Leader, Gabe Cairns recently visited St Margaret Mary's College to accept a kind donation of welcome meals from their year ten hospitality class. Gabe spoke with the students about TMSG's refugee settlement program and how welcoming it is for clients to receive a home cooked meal on arrival.



Donations

Thank you MORRIS FAMILY FOUNDATION for your recent donation of \$21,500 to assist with promotions and marketing. This will be invaluable in our work to connect with businesses and philanthropic associations around the world.

How humbled and delighted was I to be called to St Margaret Mary's College to collect a cheque for \$1007 raised by the young women of tomorrow....our future leaders, in response to a call out for assistance and support for newly arrived refugee families. The money was able to assist in securing long term housing for a family new to Australia and Townsville.

Mr Sibbo Sengabo joined me on the School Assembly August 31st to share information about his journey to Australia and the work of Townsville Multicultural Support Group Inc. Delightfully, two students of the college were so happy to speak with Sibbo in their first language of Swahili at the end of the ceremony!

Meg Davis, Manager.



