

TOWNSVILLE MULTICULTURAL
SUPPORT GROUP INC.

ANNUAL REPORT

2018-2019



Inspired by Cultural Diversity





PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Over the past year the TMSG community has negotiated a number of challenges associated with the transition to the Federal Government's new funding framework for humanitarian settlement in Australia. Together we made some difficult decisions in order to ensure our sustainability and I want to personally thank every individual involved for their commitment and endurance through the changes. In 2018/2019 we reorganised and realigned our staffing; refined our claims processes; strengthened our internal systems; outsourced the provision of Basic Household Goods packages; and exercised advocacy upwards to have the multiple and complex barriers facing new arrivals recognised and resourced appropriately. I am pleased to advise that thanks to the cumulative efforts of the team we have clawed back financial losses incurred in 2017/18 to return TMSG to a strong, healthy financial position and acquired a new vehicle. The icing on the cake has been the much-needed office facelift, and an enhanced digital and online presence (including website redevelopment) thanks to the skilled hands of Heidi Turner of Crystal Clear PR, with ongoing support from our IT guru Chris Blyth.

TMSG is extremely grateful to our local partners for their support in 2018-19. A special mention goes out to the Blessed Mary Mackillop Parish Office for their generosity in supplying the office premises from which we operate, as well as Townsville City Council and Mercy Community Services who generously provide us with properties which are used as a short-term accommodation option for newly arrived humanitarian entrants.

TMSG's volunteer contribution to Townsville has leaped enormously this year, with a total of 2180 hours of volunteer contributions, significantly boosting the capacity of the organisation. It is a reciprocal giving arrangement, which enriches our community, as, shared learning, acceptance and understanding grows into strong bonds of understanding across life experiences, sowing seeds of peace and unity. There have been groups arriving en masse from

Youth With A Mission (YWAM) and visiting Thai education students who willingly cleaned, gardened and prepped the reception and corridor of the office for our facelift. Each act of volunteering is priceless. So a big thank you to all volunteers and the community for the donations of time, energy and goodwill which sustain us!

2018-2019 saw a number of changes in the staff team and we sadly farewelled a number of dedicated team members, including Alison Macdiarmid, Adam Al-Nawawi, Darcy Orr, Shinila Varghese along with Bicultural Support Workers Abdi Bashir Mohammad and Nafaac Musdaf Ahmed, all of whom have left for full-time employment, higher education or to reunite with family in other cities. We welcomed new staff in the revised Settlement Engagement and Transition program - Dev Stewart and Danielle Carlin - and Debbie Shaw and Anong Inthaboualy were employed in the Humanitarian Settlement Program along with Rose Kibet as Bicultural Support Worker.

Looking ahead, we expect to see a greater proportion of humanitarian entrants being settled in regional Australia, more skilled migrants spending time in regional communities in order to be eligible for permanent residency, and greater incentives for international students to study in regional Australia as the Federal Government uses the policy levers at its disposal to try to decentralise Australia's population away from urban centres. As a result we anticipate growing numbers of migrants, students and humanitarian entrants to Townsville in the years ahead. This is an opportunity for us to extend the warm welcome for which we are known and to invite the community to take the journey with us, to build new understandings, embrace new perspectives, and create a diverse and inclusive Townsville. TMSG hopes to extend our partnerships with local businesses, schools, governments and community groups in 2019-20 by inviting the community on a journey to cultural inclusion, to realise our vision that settlement is everyone's business. We look forward to launching our Call to Action Cultural Inclusion Campaign in 2019-20 in an effort to boost the number of cultural safe workplaces and agencies in Townsville for new arrivals.

We are aware that we will soon be farewelling our trusted and dedicated Finance Manager and dear friend Mr Terry Ryan who has navigated us safely through some tricky financial waters to see TMSG emerge in a strong and resilient financial position, well positioned for any challenges which may lie ahead. Terry – thank you for all your contributions and leaving the books and the organisation in a wonderful position in 2018-2019. Our organisation is as extraordinary as our people.

Rachel Montgomery, President

Get recycling and donate to TMSG at the same time by using our Containers for Change scheme ID when you drop off your empties.





MANAGER'S REPORT

TMSG has continued to operate in 2018-2019 within a context of disturbing global and national economic and political tyrannies, massacres, and a resurgence of inflammatory nationalism. Do we really know what peace and democracy look like anymore? These are indeed challenging times that directly affect the daily lives of people who seek asylum, who seek new opportunities and a new life, but who may also be grieving for loved ones left behind in horrific circumstances. These factors affect a difficult backdrop to the work of TMSG and its partners across Townsville.

TMSG accounts and statistics demonstrate how TMSG is contributing significantly to economic and social capital through the increasing numbers of migrant groups seeking to access goods and services, employment, volunteering and educational opportunities.

In reflecting on the work of TMSG 2018-2019, the words Fortitude! Change! Challenge! Responsiveness! and a Focus on being greener! are phrases that come to mind. The astute direction of a hardworking, dedicated, and skilled Management Committee has been critical to the capacity of TMSG to be steadfast in direction and operation. Fortitude and skill are definitely the hallmark of all staff who have worked under enormous pressures of budget constraints, increased needs, constant change and unprecedented events internationally, nationally, and locally. The staff are indeed remarkable! We have continued to engage in professional development and training opportunities. TMSG engaged extensively with volunteers, documented submissions, engaged in research to influence policy, supported community groups in their projects, and weathered the February monsoon.

Our core business of settlement support through the Humanitarian Settlement subcontract, the Settlement Engagement and Transition program, and Status Resolution Support Services has continued to expand in line with the Federal Government's commitment to regional migration.

The Humanitarian Service Program, TMSG's largest program as subcontractor with Multicultural Development Australia Ltd (now Multicultural Australia), recovered financially with a steadier flow of entrants, strategic decisions by the committee, and a restructure of roles. A staggering total of 9571 individual points of service in this financial year have been delivered! TMSG has been honoured to be the first HSP service in Australia to settle people from the Central African Republic coming out of Chad. We rose valiantly to the challenge of just one SANGO interpreter in Australia (Justin Kanga) who we hosted in Townsville for a week in late June, to assist all key services to respond to needs of the entrants. We have continued as a key national service to accept arrivals of the Women at Risk visa category.

Wraparound support services inclusive of the Community Action for a Multicultural Society (CAMS), the Safer Pathways Program for Women (SPW), mental health support through a subcontract with selectability (six months only), community information sessions, and the Multicultural Women's Group activities have been critical to expanding pathways for social, educational, and economic participation by people as they arrive.

Strategic participation in operational/research partnerships and publications has added to TMSG's commitment to social justice. Involvement with peak bodies (Refugee Council of Australia, Settlement Council of Australia, Qld Council of Social Services (QCOSS), Qld Refugee Health Network, James Cook University (JCU), Australia's National Research Organisation for Women's Safety (ANROWS) and Forced Migration Research Network) continues to inform and influence inclusive practice, reflecting Queensland human rights law and multicultural legislation, national settlement outcomes standards and national access and equity policies.

TMSG has also commenced the respectful process of documenting a Reconciliation Action Plan which we expect to be finalised in 2020.

TMSG has made enormous contributions within the community through its commitment to facilitating a learning environment for students of life, providing guest speakers at education institutions of all levels and local businesses, services and clubs, hosting secondary student work experience, and supervising a range of tertiary students on placements from JCU and Denmark. TMSG will face many challenges as we progress into 2019-2020 but our experience and commitment will hold us steadfast to our Vision.

Meg Davis, Manager





MULTICULTURAL WOMEN'S GROUP REPORT

The Multicultural Women's Group (MWG) remains committed to improving women's quality of life through promoting social connections and providing encouragement for economic participation of the MWG members. TMSG acknowledges that MWG has been supported through the Queensland Government-funded CAMS Program. The monthly MWG activity is one of the regular activities in the CAMS work plan which has influenced development of other activities at the request of the women. These have included:

- Expanded English conversation opportunities,
- Information sessions on waste management and recycling,
- Showcasing traditional culture (cooking, music and dance) at local events,
- Attending workshops on micro business as a means of learning how to showcase and market handcraft and artwork items, and
- Participating in other TMSG and local programs, for example, Family Fun Day, Cyclone Sunday, tour of Aitkenvale Library, local festivals (Harmony Day, Mental Health Week, Pineapple Festival, Pasifika Festival, Chinese Moonlight Festival, Townsville Cultural Festival and Stable on The Strand), and celebrating the 2018 End of Year Celebration.

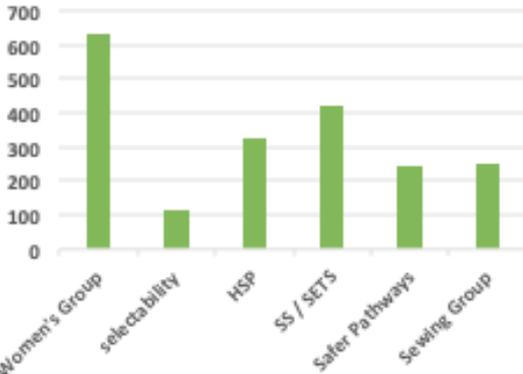
Sharing music has been an effective means to connect people across generations, culture and languages. Playing Angklung has connected the MWG members with wider communities including nursing home residents (Regis and Loreto) and with Grammar School students.

The MWG was approved to participate in the 2019 Pop-Up North Queensland (PUNQ) Festival run by Umbrella Studio, positioning TMSG with local Townsville artists and business communities ... another demonstration of women leading the way!

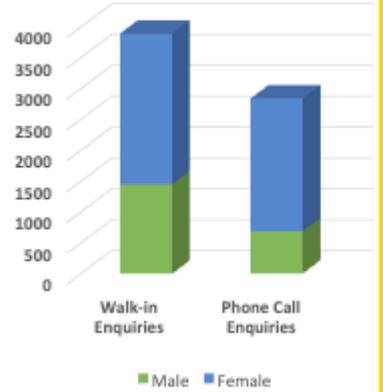


STATISTICS 2018-19

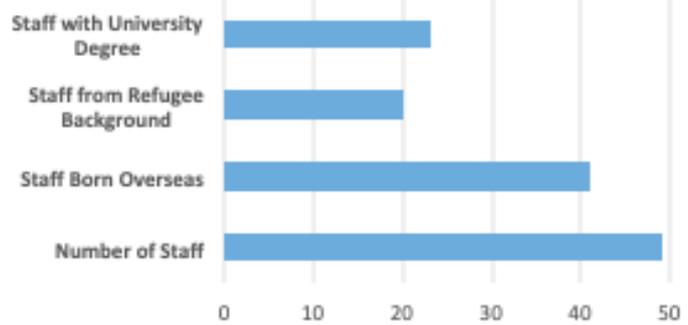
Client Numbers by Key Program



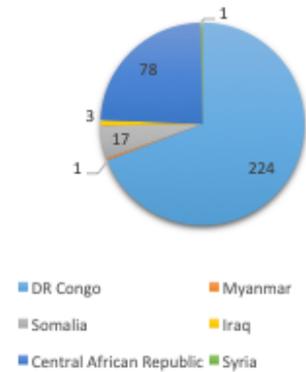
Reception



TMSG Staff Profile



Humanitarian Arrivals to Townsville, NQ by cultural identity

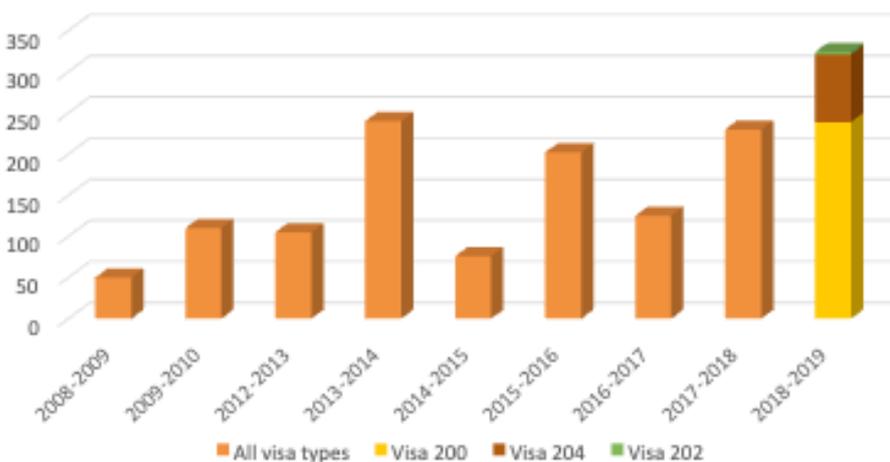


**2,180
VOLUNTEER
HOURS DONATED**

Students



Settlement of Humanitarian Entrants - Townsville, NQ



FUNDING BODIES & CONTRACTS

Australian Government Department of Social Services, Ethnic Communities Council Qld, Ethnic Communities Services Co-operative, Morris Family Foundation, Multicultural Development Australia Ltd, Qld Government Department of Local Government, Racing and Multicultural Affairs, Qld Program of Assistance to Survivors of Torture and Trauma, Refugee and Immigration Legal Service, Selectability.

PARTNERS, SUPPORTERS & DONORS

Access Community Services Ltd, Aitkenvale Primary School, Amnesty International Townsville, Blessed Mary MacKillop Parish, Boots for Liberia, Bright Horn of Africa Inc., Calvary Christian Women's Ministry, Catholic Diocese Townsville, Centacare Cairns and Townsville, Chris Blyth, CityLibraries Townsville, Coast to Country Housing Company, Community Leaders Communities for Children Townsville West, Crystal Clear Marketing, Dancenorth, Dawn Aboriginal Consultancy, Department of Human Services, Dr Betty McLellan, Entire Wellbeing Family Law Pathways Network, Heart Foundation, Individual community donors, James Cook University, Maurice Blackburn Lawyers, Mercy Community Services, Museum of Tropical Queensland, National Disability Insurance Agency, Northern Australia Primary Health Ltd, NQ Combined Women's Services Inc., NQ Domestic Violence Resource Service Inc., NQ Women's Legal Service, NQ Primary Health Network, On Bundock Services, PCYC Townsville, PH Painting Service, Qld Fire and Emergency Services, Qld Health, Qld Housing, Qld Human Rights Commission (previously ADCQ), Qld Police Service, QSTARS, Refugee Council of Australia, Refugee Health Network Queensland, Settlement Council of Australia, Southern Cross Catholic College, Surf Life Saving Qld Taubmans, The Smith Family, TMSG Volunteer Team, TMSG Members, Society of St Vincent De Paul, St Margaret Mary's College, TAFE North, Telstra, Townsville Bulletin, Townsville City Council, Townsville Chamber of Commerce, Townsville Islamic Society, Townsville State High School, University of New South Wales, Youth With a Mission.

STAFF

Abdi, Adam, Ali, Amy, Anong, Belesila, Danielle, Debbie, Dev, Donna, Gabe, Gary, Innocent, Iraha, Iris, Isla, Isse, Jacky, Jenny, Jit, Johanna, Jolie, Kasma, Maria, Meg, Mi Mi, Naafac, Nancy, Neeta, Paw Wah, Rachel, Rahila, Ramla, Rose, Ruchi, Rukiye, Ruping, Saida, Shinila, Sibbo, Tahlia, Teneale, Terry, Thelma, Tra, Tshika, Uweza, Yasmin, Zakaria.

MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE 2018-2019

President – Rachel Montgomery, Vice-President – Danni Bruch, Secretary – Ann Roebuck, Treasurer – Alan Carpenter, Member – Linda Davis, Member – Mick McCabe.

TMSG VISION

To address needs through greater participation in and contribution to a better quality of life for our multicultural society.

STATEMENT OF APOLOGY & 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 honour your visions, and we join with you in your hopes for your future and for our lives together.

TMSG respectfully acknowledge the Wulgurukaba, Bindal and Nwyagi Traditional Owners of the land on which we work and learn, and we pay our respects to their elders, past, present and emerging.



Australian Government
Department of Social Services

