

Centre for Multicultural Youth (CMY)

CMY is a community based organisation that provides services to and advocates for the needs of young people from migrant and refugee backgrounds.

Introduction

The Victorian Government has committed to funding the establishment of two new CMY offices in regional Victoria over four years. The aim of this initiative is to provide services to support disadvantaged young people from culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) backgrounds living in regional areas to actively participate in their communities.

About CMY

CMY was the first organisation in Australia to work exclusively with young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds. Over the past twenty years we have successfully carved out a niche that combines service delivery with practical, evidence based advice to government and other service providers.

With over 60 staff, 800 volunteers and four metropolitan offices we currently serve the fastest growing and most diverse communities in Victoria. This means that young people can access more culturally appropriate support and leadership opportunities as they settle and build positive lives in Victoria and Australia.

What we do

We work with young people from diverse cultural backgrounds 12-25 years old with a particular priority on those that are newly arrived to Australia (up to seven years in the country).

Some of the young people we work with face a number of challenges as they settle in Australia. We start where the young person is at. We focus on their strengths and capacities, build trust and understanding and support them to connect with family, community and broader society.

Our capacity building and sector development services include facilitating regional network meetings and forums, providing professional development and specialist advice to workers and organisations, and joint work on a range of local and state projects and programs.

CMY also undertakes advocacy for and with young people from diverse cultural backgrounds to inform and influence key policy at a state and national level, and participates in a range of research programs to document the issues facing our young people.

We deliver outcomes in areas such as resettlement, education, employment, justice, homelessness, sport and the arts.

CMY in Gippsland

Over the past five years we have provided occasional training and support to community agencies, sporting clubs and homework groups in Gippsland. Based on this work and following background research and local consultations, CMY has determined the most appropriate place to establish our first rural office is in the Gippsland region.

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Why Gippsland?

The Latrobe Valley was built on the back of post-war migration and has a highly diverse population. As the fourth largest rural region in Victoria with a population of over 75,000 it has the second highest proportion of overseas-born residents in regional Victoria. In the past few years a significant number of newcomers from South Sudan with refugee background have settled in the region, adding to the existing diversity. They are joining communities where there are significant pockets of existing disadvantage.

A small but growing number of refugee and migrant young people and families are also moving to Wonthaggi, Sale, Bairnsdale and other communities within the Gippsland region and would also benefit from youth programs. Local services have welcomed further support so that they can best meet the needs of these newly emerging communities with high numbers of young people.

Effective partnerships operating through the Latrobe Settlement Committee lay an important foundation for further work. Services have identified that while some big steps have been taken, the Latrobe Valley and surrounding areas would benefit from a specific focus on migrant and refugee young people to complement existing service provision. This is an opportunity to provide some early intervention work help address disadvantage and strengthen young people's participation in the local community and their access to employment and educational pathways, recreation options and other life opportunities.

What will the program do?

CMY will employ two part-time staff, where possible from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. One position will focus on training, capacity building and developing local partnership projects, and the other on providing direct services to young people by way of group programs, training and project work. We will further develop the program model in consultation with existing providers based on local needs.

Next steps

The CMY office will be co-located with Anglicare Victoria in Morwell and is scheduled to open in Early 2012. This location will allow us to outreach within the Gippsland region to the towns where young people live, work or study.

Further details

We welcome any enquiries or interest in partnerships.

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