

CMYI eNEWS – APRIL 2005

Dear,

Monday, 21st March marked the *International Day for the Elimination of Racism* (Harmony Day) and coincided with Cultural Diversity Week in Victoria. The week aims to encourage Victorians to come together and celebrate the rich mosaic of culture and heritage that characterises the Victorian population.

The Centre for Multicultural Youth Issues (CMYI) recognises that, despite this rich diversity, discrimination and racism continue to be experienced by CLD young people in Australia. While Cultural Diversity Week is an important celebration, the recognition of the intrinsic value of diversity and the combating of all forms of racism should be an ever-present commitment within government and the community.

Enjoy the April edition of CMYI e-News.

Feature article

RURAL RESETTLEMENT AND REFUGEE YOUNG PEOPLE

By Jen Couch, Young Refugees in the Picture Project Coordinator

I did a double take last time I was in Maroopna and saw three young Sudanese men on the side of the road waiting for a bus. We rarely think of country towns as the sites of refugee and migrant settlement, but in some of the most unlikely of places there are initiatives underway that are providing resettlement options and opportunities for refugee families and young people.

In fact, Recommendation 29 of the Settlement Services Review (DIMIA, p.177) proposed that DIMIA seek further opportunities to settle humanitarian entrants in regional Australia where appropriate employment opportunities exist and community support exists or may be developed. This is to be achieved both by increasing the number of refugees settling in current regional settlement locations (such as Shepparton and Warrnambool in Victoria), and by identifying new regional locations that may be suitable for refugee resettlement.

Over the past year, Warrnambool has seen the settlement of 10 Sudanese families, Wonthaggi has employed several Sudanese workers in its meat works, Warragul has provided resettlement assistance for five migrant workers through the Flavorite tomato company and Shepparton now hosts the largest community of Iraqis in Australia. In other areas of Victoria, settlement planning committees have been established to encourage skilled and unskilled migration to their area.

In 2004, the federal government announced \$12.4 million in funding to support settlement in regional Australia, including increased funding under the Community Settlement Services Scheme for additional information and referral services for new arrivals who settle in regional Australia. It has also been announced that in 2005 specific regional areas will be selected for increased regional resettlement, an aim being to double the number of refugees settling in rural Australia by 2006.

CMYI cautiously welcomes the initiatives of rural resettlement. Our experience in working in Shepparton has shown that for some refugees who have spent long periods in refugee camps or in transition, and for those from rural backgrounds, resettling in a rural area is embraced. In some cases refugees and their families decide for their own personal reasons to move to a rural location where their presence attracts others from their community.

Additionally, some refugees move to rural areas due to family sponsorship. However the notion of planned resettlement of families and young people has particular needs associated with it that require careful consideration.

Many urban-based agencies are now aware of the services that are required to successfully resettle refugee young people and their families. Based on the CMYI partnership model with Cutting Edge Uniting Care in Shepparton, CMYI plans to develop partnerships with agencies in other rural resettlement areas to scope and map services available for refugee young people. This aims to ascertain not only the services they currently offer, but also to examine the potential for service growth and development to meet the settlement needs of young refugees. Part of this process is to engage in capacity building to ensure that agencies are resourced at both practical and organisational levels to provide services.

In Shepparton, mentoring of youth workers by CMYI staff has greatly assisted in the development of programs for refugee young people and it is hoped the learning's from this can be transferred to other key locations. CMYI also acknowledges that staff in rural locations may be very isolated in efforts to assist refugee young people and aim to create a number of networking opportunities.

Finally, one of the most important considerations is that refugee families and young people are provided with information about the opportunities within regional and rural areas and are provided with realistic choices about where they settle. Failure to do this will result in young people moving on and potentially becoming transient and ultimately falling through the gap in resettlement service provision.

What's new at CMYI

CMYI DIRECTOR RECOGNISED ON VICTORIAN HONOUR ROLL OF WOMEN, INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY 2005

Established in 2001, the most recent Victorian Honour Roll of Women listed 332 women who are recognised for their outstanding contributions to their communities. In March 2005, Carmel Guerra, Director of CMYI, was recognised for her work with CLD young people. In accepting the award, Carmel said she is 'looking forward to a time when the issues of young people, gender and migration aren't just the work of CMYI, but are considered by governments generally as a matter of course.'



Minister for Youth, Jacinta Allan, and CMYI Director, Carmel Guerra

STATEWIDE MEETING: UNDERSTANDING CLD YOUNG MEN AND THE IMPACT OF VIOLENCE

By Alison Coelho, Community Policy Officer

On March 24 2005, CMYI held a Statewide Network Meeting focussing on the issue of CLD young men and violence. Dr. Santina Perrone from Crime Prevention Victoria (Senior Policy Officer – Program Development) presented information on current and on-going research in this area. Over 80 participants from across the sector were invited to share their experiences and knowledge. The Statewide was the first step in a process leading to the development of an issues paper on CLD young men and violence for the Minister for Youth Affairs.

The discussion and research presented did not claim that young men from CLD backgrounds were represented disproportionately as perpetrators of and victims of violence. Rather, the critical issues that arose from the discussion centred on the compounded feelings of isolation experienced by CLD young men and their disconnection from the broader community. Negative settlement factors included: instability experienced within the education system, home/family environment, reduced employment and training prospects, and racism. Anecdotally, it was thought that young men from CLD backgrounds were more likely to associate in groups to secure a sense of belonging in a community that is at times intolerant of difference.

One of the points of discussion at the Statewide was the need to respond in partnership to young men who have experienced significant previous violence and trauma, such as those from refugee backgrounds. A proactive approach to working closely with young men, and supporting families, emerging communities, schools, service systems and structures in the broader community, is seriously needed.

For more information on this or future Statewide Network meetings, contact Alison Coelho, CMYI Community Policy Officer, at acoelho@cmyi.net.au.

WILDERNESS ADVENTURE CAMP FOR SUDANESE YOUNG MEN

By Zara Bautista, Reconnect Youth Worker (Dandenong)

In late-February, REFS Wilderness and CMYI Reconnect Young Refugees joined forces to trial a wilderness therapy model for young Sudanese males. This model has been well tested with

other groups of young people but had not been explored as a model specifically for refugees. The aim of the camp was to provide them with a first hand understanding of the Australian bush; develop a positive self identity using the challenge of the wilderness as a catalyst; learn new skills including cooking, safety in the bush, canoeing etc, and; learn to work as a team and take on leadership roles.

To prepare, staff worked individually with the young men, taking them on an overnight practise camp to the Cathedral Ranges. For most of the participants, this was their first time canoeing, hiking and camping in Australia. The participants' families, school, DHS-Refugee Minor program and the South Sudanese community were consulted and played a key role in supporting the program.

Seven young people and three workers set out on the 9-day journey through the bush, including 3½ days canoeing down the Glenelg River and a beach walk finishing up at Lake Monibeong.

Having completed the camp, there are activities planned to catch-up, share photos and maintain the learnings and individual support. The experience of this journey exceeded all expectations. It also gave workers a chance to reflect on the model, which is hoped to influence future programs.



MULTICULTURAL SPORTS NEWSLETTER

CMYI is branching out into another e-Newsletter, this time focusing on the multicultural sports and recreation sector. The purpose of *CMYI Multicultural Sports News* is to keep workers from both the community sector and sports sector informed about issues affecting young people around sport and recreation. The newsletter will be sent quarterly, with the first edition expected out on 1st June.

If you would like to subscribe to this newsletter, or if you have any information or issues you would like to contribute, please contact Assunta Morrone, Multicultural Sports Officer, at amorrone@cmyi.net.au or on (03) 9349 3766.

TRAINING FOR REFUGEE AND NEWLY ARRIVED YOUTH GROUPS

The Centre for Multicultural Youth Issues is offering free training between April and June for emerging migrant and refugee youth groups in Melbourne. Topics covered include leadership development, communication skills, resolving conflict in groups, keeping your youth group happy: building teams, getting organised, financial management and applying for grants.

If you know a group of young people interested in being part of a training workshop, contact Kate O'Sullivan, CMYI's Refugee Youth Policy Officer on (03) 9349 3466 or email kateos@cmyi.net.au.

Focus on Shepparton

YOUNG LEADERS OF TODAY, SHEPPARTON

From March 21-23, the Young Leaders of Today program was run in Shepparton with 25 young people from CLD backgrounds. The goal of the program was to enhance participants' leadership skills and increase their confidence to participate in activities in their local community. The program also provided a forum for young people to share their cultural experiences, learn skills and draw strength from one another.

CLD young people living in rural areas are some of the most isolated young people in Victoria. This was illustrated by the issues that were raised during the training, such as the lack of English as a Second Language support and opportunities for part-time employment, as well as the young people's experiences of racism and a lack of understanding in the community.

Anna Hutchens, CMYI's Leadership and Mentoring Project Worker, said that one of the greatest outcomes of the program was the sense of social cohesion and connectedness achieved within the group. Participants came from a wide range of backgrounds, including newly arrived young Iraqis and second generation young people from Italian backgrounds, however the group came together and were able to celebrate their cultural heritages.

The program was run by CMYI in partnership with Cutting Edge UnitingCare and the Australian Red Cross and is the third time the program has been held in a regional area. The Cutting Edge youth worker in Shepparton will be working with this group to support them in their future activities in the community.



STORIES FROM HOME

Stories from Home is a book where young people tell their stories of settling in the Goulburn Valley. Produced by Cutting Edge Youth services in Shepparton, the book was written and produced by a group of young people involved in a community jobs program. The participants wrote their stories and then interviewed other people in the community about why, how, when and where they had settled there. Young people researched the history of settlement in the area and gathered facts and figures that can be used alongside the stories that give insight into the recent wave of settlement in the area.

CMYI is working in partnership with Cutting Edge through the *Young Refugees in the Picture* project undertaking capacity building with agencies in the Shepparton district. The booklet is a valuable resource and is available by contacting Cutting Edge on (03) 5831 6157.

Young Refugee Resettlement News

Kate O'Sullivan, Refugee Youth Policy Officer

OLDER AND UNACCOMPANIED YOUNG PEOPLE AT A DISADVANTAGE?

On 3rd March, 2005, CMYI called together a group of experts in direct service provision to newly arrived and refugee young people to explore two emerging policy issues. Workers from housing, settlement, education, and government sectors spent the first half of the session exploring the issues that young people who arrive without their biological parents face in the process of settlement. We looked at the nature of support provided by siblings, aunts and uncles, and other extended family members taking on a parent-like role, and the complexities that flow from this role for young people and guardians alike.

Recommendations considered included: the need for greater support for non-parent carers, specialist on-arrival case planning for all newly arrived young people, follow up with extended family groupings who are at risk during the initial settlement stage, and to encourage and expedite family reunification for young people who have located parents overseas.

The second half of the session focused on young people who arrive in Australia in late-adolescence, and how age on arrival impacts on young people's settlement. We noted with concern the growing number of young people arriving who have had no previous education (as opposed to disrupted education), and the great need for specialist support for these young people who are unlikely to fit into generalist educational settings without significant and intense assistance. We looked at the difficulties for newly arrived young people over 18, and the need for an extension of age eligibility for services to accommodate their settlement needs and delayed adolescence. We also looked at the sensitive issue of discrepancies between the age on a young person's visa and their biological age, and questioned whether we can continue to take for granted the idea of 'adolescence', given that in many communities there is no such category – you move from child to adult. Certainly many so-called young people have arrived in Australia after years of adult responsibilities - as soldiers in war, as parents, as independent and responsible workers.

These conversations and further consultations with workers and young people will form the basis for two policy papers with detailed recommendations which will be developed in the coming months and available later in 2005 via CMYI's website. CMYI invites anyone interested in having input into these policy papers to contact Kate O'Sullivan, Refugee Youth Policy Officer on (03) 9340 3710, or email kateos@cmyi.net.au

REFUGEES AND UNIVERSITY – EMERGING ISSUES AND EVENTS

University scholarships seek to meet the gap for TPVs and Asylum Seekers

Victoria University (VU) in Melbourne's West has recently sought to respond to the needs of asylum seekers on bridging visas and refugees on temporary protection visas (TPVs) by providing a number of scholarships to those who have previously been barred from accessing HECS-funded university places due to the Federal policy of charging full International Student fees to these students.

We congratulate the University on the move, which provides opportunities for a few students. Deakin University and a number of other Universities also offer scholarships each year. The University of Sydney currently offer seventeen. While the VU scholarships have been filled for 2005, we encourage the university to continue to support this important initiative.

Special benefit restricts full time study

Many students on TPVs who may be eligible for University scholarships may have no access to income support if they study full time. The Special Benefit, the only Centrelink payment for

which they are eligible, has up until now forced higher education students on TPVs to choose between part time study or a loss of income support. However, according to legal advice given to the RMIT Refugee & Asylum Seeker Project, the Social Security Act itself gives Centrelink officers quite broad powers to allow TPV holders to study full time. Currently, it is Centrelink policy that they can only study courses of less than twelve months in duration if they want to study full time. For those interested in discussion on this issue, contact Kate at CMYI kateos@cmyi.net.au

New HECS 'Citizenship' enforcement excludes many from accessible education options

Phoebe Churches, VU Student Advocacy & Information Unit and Kate O'Sullivan, CMYI

The passage of the commonwealth *Higher Education Support Act 2003* altered the fee structures for Higher Education courses and provided for different categories of fee liability and access to government support. One of the changes related to the status of Permanent Residents and their capacity to access the deferred payment regime now called HECS-HELP. For students starting a Uni course in 2005, only Australian citizens can access publicly funded places and the HECS-HELP loans scheme. Humanitarian and refugee visa holders, as well as 866 visa holders who were previously TPV holders, are also able to access HECS-HELP loans.

Non humanitarian Permanent Residents are entitled to access tertiary places at the same fee rates as Australian citizens and humanitarian entrants, however they can't access the HECS-HELP loan arrangements and are required to pay their full HECS fees upfront or have their enrolment terminated. It has been reported that this could affect up to 2500 students in Victoria and that 10,041 Permanent Residents commenced Higher Education in Australia in 2004 (*The Age* 31/1/05). This has come as a great surprise to many who received letters in the mail recently advising them of their \$2,000 bill.

If the Permanent Resident decides to apply for Australian citizenship the process is lengthy; usually it takes a number of months before citizenship is formally conferred. The Student Advocacy & Information Unit at Victoria University has had some luck fast-tracking ceremonies and has also convinced the University to extend deadlines for the Permanent Residents who couldn't get citizenship before the cut off date.

RESETTLEMENT NEWS

On Friday 18th March, Western Young People's Independent Network (WYPIN) launched the Refugee and Aboriginal Youth Anti-Racism Education Project at the Immigration Museum. Using music, dance and drama, young people from Melbourne and regional Victoria will develop their own performances during a 3-day camp in June and perform to their peers. The project will support Aboriginal and refugee young people to deal with discrimination in a constructive manner.

Funded by a DIMIA Living in Harmony grant and AMES, the project will build on a 2004 project between Eaglehawk Secondary College and WYPIN. In 2005 the project partners will also include Australians for Native Title And Reconciliation (ANTaR), Museum Victoria, Dulin Inc., Cutting Edge Youth Services, and Maribyrnong Reservoir and Eaglehawk Secondary Colleges. For more information, contact WYPIN [Click here for the WYPIN website](#) or contact Kavitha Chandra-Shekeran on (03) 9680 8265 or email wypin@mcm.org.au

Postcard from the West

Alex Prado, Refugee Alternative Pathways Officer, Western Region

Victoria University ESL Employment Group

CMYI's JPET West has partnered with Victoria University (VU) to deliver a project for refugee young people studying English as a Second Language that aims to increase their prospects of finding part time employment. The project aims to increase participants' skills in looking for work, their knowledge of labour market options and pathways, skills in resume writing, and to increase participants' communication and interviewing skills.

Migrant and Refugee Youthlink Sub-committee (MaRYS)

This month the MaRYS network looked at the gaps for newly arrived young people and identified three main issues: intergenerational conflict, which in many cases is leading to young people becoming homeless; education, especially with the transition from the English School into mainstream education; and recreation, in terms of looking at unstructured leisure activities that are sustainable, do not have a cost and target after school and during school holidays. If you work with newly arrived young people in the West, the MaRYS committee urge you to join this group to plan responses to these issues.

Mentoring Pilot Project for Refugee Young People

CMYI's JPET West is currently negotiating a partnership with Brimbank Youth Services to deliver a Mentoring Pilot Project for refugee young people. We envisage that the mentors will undergo an 8-week peer mentoring training program prior to embarking on their activities with the newly arrived refugee young people. My role in the program would be to plan, deliver and evaluate workshops re: newly arrived young refugees and employment issues. These workshops would be delivered to the newly arrived young people with their mentors.

What's new in the sector

NEW RESOURCES, EVENTS, CONFERENCES

Details of upcoming events, conferences and new resources in the CLD youth sector. If you have an event or resource you want promoted through this newsletter, please send details to info@cmyi.net.au

NEW RESOURCES

- The Victorian Government has released the new edition of **Growing Victoria Together: A Vision for Victoria to 2010 and Beyond**, to be used as a framework for community discussion. All information relating to GVT, including copies of *A Vision for Victoria to 2010 and Beyond* and GVT Progress Reports, can be accessed through the Department of Premier & Cabinet website (<http://www.growingvictoria.vic.gov.au/>) or by calling 1300 366 356.
- **DIMIA Settlement Reports** is an up-to-date online database that allows users to create their own statistical tables on arrivals to Australia by such categories as family size, gender, age, religion, migration categories and languages spoken. To access this database, go to <http://www.settlement.immi.gov.au/settlement/enterSelectReport.do>
- **There is No Place Like Home** is an anthology of stories by young people for young people about racism and the experiences of refugees and indigenous Australians. A unique resource in human rights and social justice arts and education, *There is No Place Like Home* includes the twelve winning stories from a nationwide young writers' competition. All proceeds go to *Australians Against Racism Inc.* For more information go to www.australiansagainstracism.org or email info@australiansagainstracism.org
- **Deported to Danger: What happens to Australia's rejected asylum seekers?** A new research report can be downloaded from the Edmund Rice Centre at <http://www.erc.org.au/research/1096416029.shtml>

EVENTS

- **Through the Wire: The inside story on refugees.** Thought-provoking theatre that tells powerful stories of the human spirit. *Through the Wire* recounts gripping true tales of repression and exile, dangerous escapes, powerful friendships, resilience and survival inside Australian detention centres. Season runs from 11-28 May at the Grant Street Theatre, Grant Street, Southbank. For bookings call (03) 9685 5111
- **Reach Training for Youth Professionals: Methodologies for engaging and inspiring young people in clinical practice.** Tuesday 10th May, 9am-3pm, Collingwood. Registration \$100 per participant. For more information contact Romi Kaufman or Clair Griffiths at the Reach Office on (03) 9412 0900.

CONFERENCES

- **Victorian Transcultural Mental Health Research Conference 2005.** The main aim of the inaugural Transcultural Mental Health research Conference is to enable Victorian researchers and post-graduate students to share research findings, discuss transcultural research methods and explore possibilities for collaboration. Call for abstracts closes on 27 May. The conference is to be held on Thursday 25th August, 2005. For more information go to the Victorian Transcultural Psychiatry Unit website (<http://www.vtpu.org.au/>) or call (03) 9417 4300.

PROJECTS, PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

Information and updates on new projects, programs and services in the sector. If you are involved in a project that you would like others in the sector to know about, send details to info@cmyi.net.au

PROJECTS

- **Refugee Education Partnership Project**

This 3-year project aims to establish a more coordinated system to support refugee children, young people and their families across the community, education and government sectors, so that they experience improved well-being and educational achievement. The partnership consists of CMYI, Debney Park Secondary College, the Department of Education and Training, the Department for Victorian Communities, VicHealth, the Victorian Foundation for Survivors of Torture and the Victorian Schools Innovation Commission and a private family trust.

The initial focus of activities and investigations will be on documenting and analysing existing educational programs, practices and policies to support refugee children and young people, and sharing this information across sectors. The more specific points of focus over the three years include: out-of-school-hours learning support programs; refugee support in schools; and advocacy, policy and networking. Over time, this work will lead to the development of recommendations about future policy directions and actions.

For more information, contact Tiffany Overall, Policy and Cross Sectoral Coordinator, on (03) 9349 4972 (tiffany.overall@vsic.org.au) or Pam Luizzi, Learning Support Program Coordinator, on (03) 9349 4973 (pam.luizzi@vsic.org.au)

- **Recreation Facility Tours for CLD women:** Free tours of recreation facilities are being run for CLD women, leaving from Braybrook Community Centre on Friday 29th April or Tuesday 3rd May, 9.30am – 1pm. Tour includes: visit to a range of different facilities (Braybrook Community Centre, RecWest, Maidstone Community Centre, etc.), a chance to meet staff and/or the manager at each facility, information about programs and activities, and coffee and cake at the end of the tour. RSVP by Friday 22nd April to Belinda Arbaci at Braybrook Community Centre (PO Box 108, Braybrook 3019) or call (03) 9334 6619.

PROGRAMS

- **Typo Station - Youth Opportunity Program.** Typo Station is an independent not-for-profit organisation operating a life skills and alternate education program for young men that are experiencing difficulties at school and/or home. Founded in 1993, Typo Station is also the name of a bush property located in the foothills of the Alpine National Park, near Whitfield in North-East Victoria. Through a program incorporating principles of simple living, community involvement and practical activities, we aim for young men to build the resilience, initiative and life skills necessary for a positive future.

Typo Station offers a unique *early intervention* program for young men aged between 14 and 17 years. The two-year journey involves a 4-week residential experience and ongoing mentoring. The program incorporates principles of simple living, community involvement, and practical activities.

The 4-week residential experience includes: basic skills, an 8-9 day expedition, living skills and home visits. At the completion of the residential experience, participants are linked to a mentor from the staff team. Mentoring ensures ongoing contact to maintain the relationship developed through weeks of shared experiences on the program.

Contributing towards the costs is a shared responsibility between all supporters. Given the different financial constraints of each applicant, Typo Station has very flexible options for contribution. This is to ensure finance's are not a limiting factor in applying to typo station.

This year, we are grateful to those who support our sponsorship fund, which is available to young men, who without this support would not be able to participate in our program because of financial hardship. In 2005, we have been provided sponsorships to support young men from culturally diverse background.

For more information about applying for the Typo Station program, contact Kylie Paine on 1300 723 317 or e-mail kylie@typostation.org.au.

FUNDING

- **Youth for Youth Investments.** The Foundation for Young Australians has funding available for organisations that work with young people aged 12 to 25. Grants will be made for initiatives that enhance youth participation or create opportunities for the development of young people. Grants of up to \$30,000 over one year or \$40,000 over

two years are available. Applications close Thursday 5th May 2005. Further information and application forms available on www.youngaustralians.org or call (03) 9670 5436.

IN THE NEWS

Multicultural youth issues in the media – what are some of the issues that are making it into the news? If you come across media articles you think should be highlighted in this newsletter, please forward to info@cmyi.net.au

- **Court overrules refugee 'offload' – The Age (03/03/05)**
Australia could not offload its responsibilities to protect refugees by arguing another "safe third country" was available to take them, the High Court ruled yesterday. In a unanimous decision, the full bench of the High Court found Australia owed protection to a Russian Jewish father and son, despite their right to settle in Israel. The pair's pleas for asylum were rejected by the Federal Court and the full bench of the Federal Court before being heard by the High Court. Justice Michael Kirby said accepting the Government's position that Australia owed the men no protection would potentially send asylum seekers "shuttling between multiple countries" and introduce "serious instability and uncertainty" into the Refugee Convention. He said such a proposition would allow Australia to shirk its responsibilities to any country with a more liberal refugee regime. "It would be an absurd result if the generosity of other states' refugee laws meant that Australia was thereby relieved of international obligations that it voluntarily accepted with other nations," he said.