

# Refugee Health Flexible Fund

Online Forum #3

2 pm – 3.45 pm, Wednesday, 9 August 2023

## Summary Report

### Organisers

NSW Ministry of Health, Health and Social Policy Branch, Community Care and Priority Populations Unit: Nick Sandrejko (Senior Policy Officer), Jordan Cook (Policy Officer) and Dr Ilse Blignault (Consultant).

### Funding

NSW Government through the Refugee Health Flexible Fund 2021-22 to 2022-23 (RHFF).

### Attendance

56 people joined the forum.

### Forum Recording

A recording of the forum is available on the RHFF [webpage](#).

### Overview

Fifteen projects have been funded across NSW to address the goals and priorities of the [NSW Refugee Health Plan 2022-2027](#). They share a common purpose, i.e., to ensure access to timely, culturally responsive and trauma-informed healthcare for people from refugee and asylum seeker backgrounds. The projects focus on a range of healthcare needs and priority groups, including people living in rural and regional areas.

As the third of three online forums designed to promote knowledge exchange and learning, this forum had the following objectives:

1. To strengthen connections and encourage networking across the project teams
2. To share process, outcomes and lessons to date from selected projects
3. To showcase the range of work being undertaken to interested stakeholders.

### Forum Format

The forum began with an Acknowledgement of Country and opening remarks by Liz Junck (Director, Community Care and Priority Populations Unit, Health and Social Policy Branch). It featured extended presentations by six project teams, including initiatives from Justice Health and Forensic Mental Health Network, Western Sydney Local Health District (LHD), Sydney Children's Hospital Network, Illawarra Shoalhaven LHD, Northern Sydney LHD and South Western Sydney LHD.

Across the six presentations, which covered initiatives targeting adults, children, families and communities, and various language groups,

collaboration and co-design were highlighted. The extended presentations were followed by a round robin for other project teams to share important news. In closing, Laura Stevens, Principal Policy Officer, Community Care and Priority Populations Unit outlined the next steps for the RHFF project teams and thanked everyone for their participation.

### **Extended presentations**

– Watch the [forum recording](#) for more information and see [here](#) for contact details

### ***Justice Health and Forensic Mental Health Network***

– Jennifer Culph (At 08:08 to 21:20 of video)

Within the prison system, refugees are not considered a high-priority group. Thus, the ‘Harmony and Healing Project’ has adopted a universal approach to trauma-informed and culturally-responsive healthcare. Phase 2, which adopted a co-design methodology, involved clinician-facilitated focus groups with patients, staff and key stakeholders. Project outcomes include development of a Framework, Practice Guidelines and Implementation Plan. Findings and learnings may have relevance for other secure settings.

### ***Western Sydney LHD/Transcultural Mental Health Centre***

– Emalynne So (At 21:41 to 34:25 of video)

This ‘Emotional Wellbeing Clinic’ was designed to fill a service gap. The project was directed at Afghan and Sri Lankan (Tamil-speaking) adults and combined clinical and public health (community engagement and health promotion) approaches. It demonstrated the benefits of a targeted, flexible and time-limited mental health intervention in delivering holistic care, supporting access to evidence-based treatment and building mental health literacy. The THMC’s strategic position and existing connections were important enablers, along with the flexible approach to service delivery.

### ***Sydney Children’s Hospital Network (SCHN)***

– Nikola Morton (At 34:49 to 48:08 of video)

The ‘Refugee Mental Health Referral Pathways Project’, a collaboration between the SCHN and Service for Treatment and Rehabilitation of Torture and Trauma Survivors (STARTTS), aims to improve referral pathways and engagement in mental health services for refugee and asylum seeker families who access care at Westmead and Randwick Children’s Hospitals. Co-design workshops were held with 13 consumers and 24 staff. Internal

procedures and collaborative partnerships with STARTTS and Psychological Medicine have been identified as key areas for service improvement.

### ***Illawarra Shoalhaven LHD***

– Leissa West, Delia Ramboldini-Gooding and Sofia Lema (At 48:31 to 1:01:28 of video)

The maternity services arm of the ‘Improving Refugee Children’s Outcomes Now (IRCON) Project’, developed in collaboration with the University of Wollongong and others, has led to the production of a co-designed culturally-responsive care training package for maternity services staff. Modules are Informed decision-making and consent, Communication during and post pregnancy, Understanding cultural nuances, Support during and after childbirth and Trauma-informed care. Videos include families from the Farsi, Arabic, Burmese, Swahili and Karenni communities and maternity staff.

### ***Northern Sydney LHD***

– Cathy Butler (At 1:01:45 to 1:15:22 of video)

The ‘Tibetan Refugee Families’ Pathways’ project aims to improve access to culturally responsive child health and developmental services and resources for Tibetan refugee families with children aged 0–5 years. Outcomes to date include stronger community connections, improved referral pathways and a targeted mentor program for families with young children. Engagement of the Tibetan Community of Australia (NSW) and participation of a Tibetan Bilingual Health Worker (Project Officer) and Health Care Interpreter have been important enablers.

### ***South Western Sydney LHD***

– Michael Camit (At 1:19:12 to 1:27:58 of video)

The ‘Digital Health Literacy’ project aims to build digital health literacy and social media skills in refugee communities in South West Sydney. It involved recruiting and training community members (25 participants representing 12 languages) and piloting a closed online platform as a forum for communication with the local Public Health Unit. The project leveraged the wealth and diversity of talent that exists in refugee communities and reinforced the benefits of grass roots collaboration. Lessons learned include the need to be clear about the purpose of engagement and provide appropriate remuneration for the time involved (e.g., producing in language videos).

### ***Round Robin***

(At 1:29:51 to 1:40:31 of video)

## Agenda

Time	Item	Presenter
<b>Opening</b>		
2.00	Acknowledgement of Country Welcome to RHFF Forum 3	Liz Junck, Director, Community Care and Priority Populations Unit, Health and Social Policy Branch
	Today's program	Ilse Blignault
<b>Extended presentations</b>		
2.10	Harmony and Healing Project: A Trauma-Informed and Culturally Responsive Framework for Secure Settings	Jennifer Culph Justice Health and Forensic Mental Health Network
2.22	Culturally Responsive Emotional Wellbeing Clinical Services for People with Refugee or Asylum Seeker Experiences	Emalynne So Western Sydney LHD Transcultural Mental Health Centre
2.46	Improving Refugee Children's Outcomes Now (IRCON)	Leissa West Illawarra Shoalhaven LHD
2.58	Tibetan Refugee Families' Pathways to Community Child and Family Health Services	Cathy Butler Northern Sydney LHD
3.10	The Digital Health Literacy and Refugee Project	Michael Camit South Western Sydney LHD
<b>Round Robin</b>		
3.22	News from other current projects <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CINSW, Refugee Cancer Screening Partnership Project, Sheetal Challam</li> <li>• COHS, Enhancing Oral Health Care for Refugees in NSW, Angela Masoe</li> <li>• HNELHD, Embedding Health Equity to Regional Settlement in Armidale, Ashley Young</li> <li>• MHB/Mindgardens, 'Addi Moves' – A Co-Designed Lifestyle Program for Women from a Refugee or Asylum Seeker Background, Simon Rosenbaum</li> <li>• MNCLHD, Holistic Health Care Clinic for Refugees, Michele Greenwood</li> <li>• NNSWLHD, Strengthening the Cultural Responsiveness of Mainstream Services in Northern NSW, Rita Youseff-Price</li> <li>• SESLHD/MHCS, Translated Health Resources for Refugee Communities, Sylvia Giannone</li> <li>• SWSLHD, Natural Helper Approach to Culturally Responsive Healthcare, Bernadette Brady</li> </ul>	
<b>Wrap up and close</b>		
3.35	Next steps for RHFF project teams	Laura Stevens, Principal Policy Officer, Community Care and Priority Populations Unit, Health and Social Policy Branch
3.45	Wrap up and close	

Proudly funded by



The forum was proudly funded by the NSW Government through the Refugee Health Flexible Fund 2021-22 to 2022-23.