

Refugee Health Flexible Fund

Online Forum #1

2 pm – 4 pm, Wednesday, 2 November 2022

Summary Report

Organisers

NSW Ministry of Health, Health and Social Policy Branch:

Nick Sandrejko (Senior Policy Officer – Refugee Health Policy) and Dr Ilse Blignault (Consultant).

Funding

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

Attendance

Sixty-nine people joined the forum via Microsoft Teams

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](#). The projects focus on a range of healthcare needs and priority groups, including people living in rural and regional areas.

As the first of three online forums to promote knowledge exchange and learning across the projects, this forum had three objectives:

1. To bring together the 15 project teams to introduce their initiatives, build and strengthen connections and encourage networking
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

We allowed two hours for the first forum as we wanted to introduce all 15 projects. This was done through eleven short presentations (each 3 minutes) and four feature presentations (10 to 15 minutes including questions).¹ PowerPoint templates were provided to presenters beforehand (3 slides for the short presentations).

After Acknowledgement of Country and opening remarks by Tish Bruce (Executive Director, Health and Social Policy Branch), groups of short presentations were each followed by a feature presentation. Time was allocated at the end for general questions and information about the next forums.

1. On the day, feature presenters spoke for all their allotted time, so there was limited time for questions.

Forum Invitations

Invitations were emailed to the RHFF project teams and other contacts in the refugee health field, about 90 people in all. Project teams were encouraged to share the invitation with any interested stakeholders. Sixty-nine people joined the forum, of whom around 50 were online for the full two hours. They included representatives from 11 local health districts (LHDs), speciality health networks, the Ministry of Health and its pillars and organisations, statewide services and non-government organisations (NGOs).

Projects

Prior to the forum, each project team was asked to update their project title, description and key contact details. This [summary of projects](#) was attached to the forum calendar invitation, together with the program (see below).

Purpose and focus

The 15 projects share a common purpose, i.e. to ensure access to timely, culturally responsive and trauma-informed healthcare services for people from refuge and asylum seeker backgrounds. Two focus on physical health conditions (cancer or chronic disease), two on mental health and one on oral health.

Setting

Five projects have a statewide reach, with three incorporating both regional and metropolitan LHDs and two only regional LHDs. The rest are based in either metropolitan (7) or regional (3) LHDs.

Target Groups

Seven projects did not specify a target language group or country of origin. Three targeted many language groups (21 in the case of Multicultural Health Communication Service) and five targeted 1-4 language groups (Tibetan families in the case of Northern Sydney LHD). Five projects did not specify a target age group. Seven projects focused on adults, one on children (0-16) and two on families with children aged less than 5 years.

Partners

Twelve projects had partnered with other NSW Health organisations (five with the NSW Refugee Health Service and three with STARTTS) and ten with NGOs, including locally-based organisations and peak bodies. Several involved an academic partner (e.g., for literature review or evaluation).

Objectives

While specific objectives vary by project, six projects are directed mainly at organisations, three mainly at communities, and six at both organisations and communities.

Status

One project, subject of the first extended presentation by Dominique Holt from the Agency for Clinical Innovation, has been completed. This project has produced an interactive [website](#) providing information and guidance on the key elements required to establish a new refugee health service in regional LHDs to aid future settlement sites. The [guide](#) for healthcare workers and their community partners is an excellent resource on how to establish trauma-informed and culturally-safe health services for refugee communities and will support future settlement in regional NSW.

RHFF Webpage

To foster knowledge exchange and enhance collaboration across NSW Health, the Ministry has created [a hub for the RHFF](#). NSW Health will use this webpage as a hub for recordings of the forums, as well as new resources, literature reviews, and evaluations, which have been supported through the Fund and will be a lasting resource for refugee health.

Future Forums and Plans

The next two online forums will be held in April and August 2023. Both will be 1.5 hours in duration and feature five projects (15 minutes for each presentation and questions). A final in-person forum to discuss promising practices and learnings for the RHFF overall is scheduled for February 2024.

Nick Sandrejko indicated that another RHFF funding round is planned from 2024-25, subject to approval. It will be an opportunity to build on current projects or start new ones. Sustainability is expected not just from continued funding, but from resource creation and capacity building activities.

Forum Follow-up

Immediately after the forum, most presenters indicated that they found the forum interesting and useful; five had already reached out to other projects or were intending to connect.

Program

Time	Item	Presenter
2.00	Acknowledgement of Country Welcome	Tish Bruce, Executive Director, Health and Social Policy Branch
	Opening remarks – NSW RHP and RHFFP	Tish Bruce
	Today's program	Ilse Blignault
2.10	Short presentations (3 mins each) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cancer Institute NSW • Centre for Oral Health Strategy • Illawarra Shoalhaven LHD 	Sheetal Challam Angela Masoe Leissa West (Pitts)
2.20	Extended presentation (15 mins including questions) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agency for Clinical Innovation 	Dominique Holt
2.35	Short presentations (3 mins each) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Justice Health & Forensic Mental Health Network • Mid North Coast LHD • Northern NSW LHD 	Julia Bowman Michele Greenwood Rita Youseff-Price
2.45	Extended presentation (15 mins including questions) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hunter New England LHD 	Ashley Young
3.00	Short presentations (3 mins each) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Northern Sydney LHD • South Western Sydney LHD – Natural Helper • South Western Sydney LHD – Digital Health Literacy 	Kim Lyle Golsa Saberi Jaithoon Venkateshwar
3.10	Extended presentation (15 mins including questions) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mindgardens 	Simon Rosenbaum
3.25	Short presentations (3 mins each) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sydney Children's Hospitals Network • Transcultural Mental Health Centre 	Avalon Tissue Emalynne So
3.35	Extended presentation (10 mins including questions) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NSW Multicultural Health Communication Service 	Sylvia Giannone
3.45	Discussion, wrap up and close Timing for 2023 Forums	Ilse Blignault

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