



**migrant resource centre**  
southern tasmania inc.

*Issue 21, January 2012*

## **In This Issue: January Overview**

### **MRC EVENTS**

**Immigrant and Refugee Women's Narratives**

**Australia Day Participation**

**People of Australia Ambassadors for Tasmania**

**MRC Day Centre Client's BBQ**

**MRC Daycentres' Christmas Celebrations**

**Best Community Group Award - Christmas Pageant 2011**

### **Update from MRC Programs**

**National Suicide Prevention Program**

**'Connect' – MRC's Employment Support Services**

**Personal Helpers & Mentors Services (PHaMs)**

### **MRC Positions Vacant**

### **MRC New Staff**

**Focus on our Volunteers: Pirjo Berens – German Day Centre**

**Cultural Calendar Dates – February 2012**

## MRC EVENTS

### Immigrant and Refugee Women's Narratives : Overcoming the discouraged workers affect

There are 10,056,039 females living in Australia, 2,397, 296 of whom self identified as immigrant and refugees, equating to 23.8% of the total Australian female population. If we account for the women born in Australia with one or more parents born overseas, the percentage of culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) women living in Australia accounts for 40% of total population. Yet, despite the high percentage of CALD women living in Australia, immigrant and refugee women continue to face multiple barriers to equal participation in the workforce. Many of these barriers are systemic in nature, indicative of intersecting discriminations arising due to cultural, religious and linguistic background as well as gender.

Although, the inequity in workplace participation for CALD women is becoming increasingly evident, there has been little research at a national level into the reasoning behind this inequity, and as a result there remains a gap in knowledge across Australia, and the Australian Government about the barriers immigrant and refugee women as a population group face in entering and engaging in the labour force.



**Participants at the Hobart consultations**

The MRC joined forces with the Australian Immigrant and Refugee Women's Alliance

(AIRWA) a peak advocacy body for immigrant and refugee women in Australia, to consult and initiate conversations with women of immigrant and refugee backgrounds in Tasmania about barriers faced in entering and engaging in the Australian work force. The consultation was held at the MRC Acacia Room on Thursday, 19 January 2012.

AIRWA will be conducting a series of consultations / conversations on this topic across Australia with the aim of developing a paper which will more fully articulate some of the key issues which the Government could consider in the context of increasing participation and economic security for women.

[\(Back to top\)](#)

### Australia Day Participation

On 25 January, MRC CEO Cedric Manen attended the Premier of Tasmania the Hon Lara Gidding's Australia Day function at the Henry Jones Arts Hotel. Cedric and 350 other community, private and public sector stakeholders welcomed in Australia Day.

On 26 January, Cedric attended the Hobart Regatta where he and members of the welcoming party observed 36 participants from 19 different countries become Australian Citizens. Our congratulations go to Nene Manasseh from Students Against Racism who is the Hobart City Council's Youth Citizen of the year 2012. Her award was presented by the Lord Mayor of Hobart City Council, the Hon. Damon Thomas.



[\(Back to top\)](#)

## People of Australia Ambassadors for Tasmania

The Australian Multicultural Council (AMC) welcomed the announcement of the 40 People of Australia ambassadors nominated by the Australian public.

The ambassadors will provide advice to the council and Australian Government about effective initiatives which promote inclusion and build stronger communities.

'The new ambassadors include teachers, doctors, students, youth leaders and business people, who have demonstrated a commitment to their community,' the AMC chair, Judge Rauf Soulio, said.

Communities work best when there is strong local leadership and when people are encouraged to participate and join in neighbourhood activities.

These ambassadors embody these qualities and proactively make a contribution to the Australian community.

'The council looks forward to receiving feedback from the ambassadors and to working with them to progress multiculturalism.'

More than 350 applications for the People of Australia Ambassadors Program were considered by the 10 members of the AMC following a public nomination process.

MRC congratulates Tasmania's very own people of Australia Ambassadors –

### Mrs Sajini Sumar



Born in Kerala, India, Mrs Sajini Sumar is a long-term volunteer amongst the migrant community in Tasmania and is the founding member and convenor of the Multicultural Women's Council of Tasmania. Mrs Sumar has served on many

community boards including the Migrant Centre, the International Wall of Friendship and the Multicultural Council for Tasmania. She is also currently the Tasmanian counsellor for National Ethnic Disability Alliance (NEDA) and a member of Network of Immigrant and Refugee Women Australia (NIRWA). As a founding and current member of Networking for Harmony in Tasmania, Mrs Sumar has a strong commitment to social justice and inclusion for all Tasmanians, and a desire to work towards the promotion of a socially just and inclusive society, which treats everyone with compassion and respect, and which values of our multicultural diversity.

### Mr Fayia Isaiah Lahai

Mr Fayia Isaiah Lahai arrived in Tasmania in November 2006 after fleeing Sierra Leone and



spending 14 years in a refugee camp in Guinea. Mr Lahai has become deeply involved with his new community in Hobart, as a student at the University of Tasmania, founding member of the African Communities Council of Tasmania, former chair of the Sierra Leone and Liberia community, and serving on the Advisory Council on Multicultural Affairs. He and his wife have four children, two of whom were born in Australia.

[\(Back to top\)](#)

### MRC Day Centre Client's BBQ

In recognition of the fact that the festive season can be a difficult time for some of its multicultural elderly with little or no access to family or social support, the MRC's Home and Community Care (HACC) team with the help of its invaluable volunteers: Otto, Betty and Martin, organised a BBQ for its day centre clients.

The event was held at Tolosa Park, Glenorchy on a balmy Friday, 20 January with approximately 60 clients from the four day centres indulging in an array of meats and salads on offer at the BBQ. Many compliments went to our wonderful cook, Zarko with very few left overs at the end of the meal.



**Two most important people at a BBQ – cooks, Zarko and Martin**

All the clients were very happy for this opportunity to socialise due to the fact that the MRC Day Centres are not operational until the formal opening 2012 HACC Day Centre program on Monday, 7 February.

[\(Back to top\)](#)

### **MRC Daycentres' Christmas Celebrations**

In 2011, Christmas was celebrated by all MRC day centres in their respective clubs. Staff cooked delicious traditional and regional foods, which was served onto tables festooned with Christmas decorations.

In the Croatian day centre, clients had practised singing together as a choir for a few weeks beforehand and all the clients participated in the choir on the day and gave a beautiful rendition of Silent night in their mother-tongue. It was a moving experience to witness them gather together to sing as a big family.

In the German day centre the choir stood up and gave an impromptu Christmas concert. Traditional ethnic and Christmas music was played with extra entertainment provided by Mr Doug Fletcher who attended all four day centres. His repertoire was extensive and clients showed their enthusiasm by joining in dancing and singing.

Games, lucky-door prizes and Christmas presents all combined to make a wonderful occasion close the year 2011 with cheer and goodwill.

[\(Back to top\)](#)

### **MRC Winner of Best Community Group Award for Hobart Myer Christmas Pageant 2011**

MRC won the Best Community Group at the Hobart Myer Christmas pageant held on Saturday, 19 November 2011. Thanks to Virginia Bashford and the Settlements team for their co-ordination of the event which provided an opportunity for around 150 community members to showcase their national costumes in the streets of Hobart. We acknowledge the contributions of our communities and other staff members who participated in the march.



**Zemonay Gebremichael – community representative and Natalie Pausin – MRC staff member**

[\(Back to top\)](#)

### **Update from MRC Programs**

#### **National Suicide Prevention Program**

The NSPP has had a few busy months, hosting and co-hosting a number of workshops and trainings.

On 25 November 2011 and 2 December 2011 a two day Mental Health First Aid course for community members was organised. Mental Health First Aid is an award winning training program ideal for bi-cultural workers, community

leaders and those who work in areas with increased contact with people having serious health and well-being issues. It increases knowledge, reduces stigma and, most importantly, increases supportive actions.

The 17 CALD community members who attended the training provided very positive feedback and felt they had a better understanding of mental health issues, and would feel more confident helping someone in need. As one participant quoted

*"I would recommend for this training to be offered regularly so that individuals within the CALD communities better understand and help educate their communities."*

On 6 & 7 December, The Centre for Culture, Ethnicity and Health was engaged to conduct three workshops. The first was 'Conducting Focus Groups with CALD Communities', which took participants through a step-by-step process for planning, resourcing and conducting focus groups with CALD participants.

The second workshop, 'Sustained Engagement with CALD Community members' made a strong case for sustained engagement with target communities and showed how issues of culture and language affect engagement strategies.

'Culturally Competent Health Assessments' was our final and most popular workshop. It was aimed at nursing, allied health, counselling and early childhood providers, and helped participants understand how to ask the right questions and in the right ways to get the information needed from clients.

All three workshops were very well received and many kind and positive comments were made to Phoenix staff and via evaluations.

*"Thank you. I look forward to promoting inclusion of more specific questions in our clinical assessment tool"* Mental Health worker, and *"Excellent. Broader understanding of issues*

*regarding cultural mores and our own interpretations of these."* Health Education worker.

[\(Back to top\)](#)

## **'Connect' – MRC's Employment Support Services**

### **Job Coaching at 'Connect'**

Connect's Job Coaching Program will be commencing again in late January 2012 on a weekly basis.

This program is suitable for jobseekers from a refugee or humanitarian background who meet the following criteria:

- Have a good basic understanding of English
- Are registered with a Job Services Australia agency
- Can commit to attending every week.
- Are not in full-time study

Connect ran this program from October to December last year with 75% of participants securing employment as a result.

### **IT Training at 'Connect'**

Connect had its last IT training session on 16 December 2012 with all five participants successfully completing their training. Connect provided a light luncheon to celebrate the achievement of the participants. The clients as well as the volunteer trainer Michael Collinson enjoyed the chance to mingle and chat before beginning their last lesson. All the participants received certificates to mark the hard work that they put in and were very pleased with their achievement. With the success of the training being provided at Connect another round of IT training in the near future is in the works with the hope that even more participants will pass on their new knowledge to their communities.

### **Job Coaching at 'Connect' North**

Connect north based in Launceston finished its first round of Job coaching late December last year and has continued the Job Coaching Program with the first session in 2012

commencing on 12 January. Five new job seekers from a diverse range of backgrounds will be participating in this round of job coaching conducted by Alister Mackinnon.

### **Seasonal Work- Falls Festival**

In December 2011 Connect North and South provided the Falls Festival with another excellent group of workers for the cleanup effort during and post festival phase. The Falls Festival coordinator was very impressed with Connect's coordination of the Falls Festival workers last year and put aside many more positions within the Green Team (for work during the festival and post festival clean up) for the 2011 Falls Festival. Connect South sent six people to work as a part of the Green team during the festival with both North and South sending 14 people each for the post festival cleanup.

The team members came from a variety of communities ranging from the Sudanese to Bhutanese and Karen communities and all the feedback received has been positive. Many lasting friendships were made, fun camping experiences had and valuable work experience gained.

### **Seasonal Work- Fruit Picking and Farm Work**

Connect has also repeated last year success with the Westerway raspberry farm where owner Richard Clark again invited the Karen community to work. Richard praised the fantastic work ethic of the workers from last year and was keen to see people from the community work there during the 2011 Raspberry season. Connect organised for 10 people to work at the farm with 3 members of the community driving the rest to the site.

Connect has fostered an excellent reputation with the orchard owners in Richmond and Derwent valley area by assisting its hard working clients find seasonal work. This reputation has seen other companies like the Frogmore Creek Vinery who are the makers of the 42 Degrees South and Storm Bay wines offer work to Connect clients to help put up the wires on which

the grape vines grow. The farm located in the Coal River Valley region has employed six people from the Bhutanese community with the clients gaining valuable work experience and a chance to enjoy more of Tasmania's beautiful landscape.

Connect would also like to thank Peter Jones (MRC volunteer) for assisting Connect in the coordination of the Karen community workers for another successful round of seasonal work.

[\(Back to top\)](#)

## **Personal Helpers & Mentors Services (PHaMs)**

Since mid 2010 MRC commenced delivering the Personal Helpers & Mentors Services (PHaMs) in collaboration with Anglicare's Greater Hobart PHaMs program. A Personal Helper and Mentor is based at the Phoenix Centre and specialises in assisting people from refugee and humanitarian background.

PHaMs provides support to people with mental health issues, including problems resulting from trauma and torture, that impact their daily life. There is no formal mental health diagnosis necessary and clients can self-refer or be referred by other services, GPs or mental health teams.

The personal helper and mentor works one-on-one with clients supporting them to overcome isolation, to improve their living conditions, and increase self-reliance and inclusion into the wider community.

The personal mentor will support clients

- to set realistic and achievable goals and to work towards them
- to access other services like accommodation support services, emergency aid providers, employment services, or financial counselling
- to tackle problems like high debts, legal or housing issues
- to navigate the complex 'Australian Systems', for example help in dealing with schools or government services like Centrelink, which can be difficult for people with poor mental health

particularly if people find it challenging to communicate in English.

- to help with family issues and to improve family relationships
- to access appropriate health care services and health professionals

In the past year the personal mentor at Phoenix Centre provided intensive support for 17 clients and their families. PHaMs is based on a relationship of respect, trust and understanding between the mentor and client and takes into account the language or cultural challenges that often increase isolation and poor mental health.

For further information about Phoenix Centre's PHaMs service, please contact Ute Gonsior on [ugonsior@mrchobart.org.au](mailto:ugonsior@mrchobart.org.au).

[\(Back to top\)](#)

## Positions Vacant

MRC has an Administration Assistant position available on a short term contract from February – October 2012. This will be a full time role within its administration team and ideally the successful candidate will have -

- Sound knowledge of administration, accounting and reception procedures
- Good knowledge of MYOB accounting package
- Experience in a dynamic office environment
- Good MS Office skills
- Ability to work in a multi-cultural environment

Potential applicants should contact the Migrant Resource Centre, telephone (03) 6221 0999, or [reception@mrchobart.org.au](mailto:reception@mrchobart.org.au) for a copy of the Position Description and Selection Criteria.

Only applications which address all of the selection criteria will be considered.

Applications, together with the names of two referees, should be mailed to: [employment@mrchobart.org.au](mailto:employment@mrchobart.org.au) or by post to

The Chief Executive Officer  
Migrant Resource Centre  
49 Molle Street,  
Hobart, Tasmania 7000

**Closing date 5pm Tuesday, 14 February 2012**  
[\(Back to top\)](#)

## MRC New Staff

### **Maria Crowley – Phoenix Centre – Counsellor**

Maria joined the Phoenix Centre to work with clients that are currently in Pontville Detention Centre and Community Detention.

Maria is from England originally, however has lived in Hobart on and off for 20yrs.

Maria's work experience has primarily included; outreach with homeless youths and working with women and children who have experienced Domestic Violence. (Women's Refuge and the FVCSS - DHHS).

Maria's time with the Phoenix Centre will be short as she has taken a year's LWOP from the DHHS so that she can return home to her family in the UK for 8months beginning in April.

### **Paula Rooney – Phoenix Centre Counsellor / Advocate**

Paula joined the Phoenix Centre as CALD Community Connections Suicide Prevention Officer and as Counsellor/Advocate in the Early Intervention Program in late November, 2011. Paula is a newly graduated Social Worker from UTAS. Before Social Work, Paula had a range of careers – teacher, nurse and yoga teacher.

Paula loves to read, when she can. As a member of the Launceston Film Society, she indulges her passion for 'going to the pictures'. Paula and her partner, moved to Launceston from Brisbane six years ago but for Paula, it is a return to Tassie as she lived in Hobart as a child, attending Sacred Heart in New Town. For Paula, this position presents new challenges, new opportunities for learning and the privilege of working with CALD communities.

### **Nadine Picone-Wightman – Contract Receptionist**

Nadine joined the MRC in early December just in time for the Christmas celebrations! Her role is to provide general administrative support to the MRC head office in Molle Street.

Prior to working here, Nadine was employed as a legal secretary in various firms for approximately 10 years, though for the last three years she has taken a break from work in order to study full time. Nadine is really enjoying her return to employment, not least because “the Migrant Resource Centre is such an interesting and diverse workplace”.

### **Rebecca Loring – Phoenix Centre – Administrative Assistant**

Rebecca commenced with the Phoenix Centre in December as an Administrative Assistant. In the last twelve years, Rebecca has worked across a broad variety of industries, everything from real estate to retail to Government departments. After a six year stint as a Senior Account Manager for a financial firm, Rebecca moved to the non-profit sector, working first with clients with intellectual disabilities and acquired brain injuries, and now helping to organise the Phoenix staff’s busy days.

In her free time, Rebecca hangs out on the couch with her blind and neurotic cat, drags her friends to the beach whenever the weather climbs above 20 degrees, and sings along badly to trashy pop on the radio.

### **Emma Haywood – Phoenix Centre – Varied roles**

Emma has joined the Phoenix Centre to work across a variety of areas including Intake and Natural Therapies.

Emma is from Hobart originally, however has spent recent years based in Adelaide working as a Physiotherapist, with special interests in Chronic Pain Management, Brain Injuries and Paediatrics.

Emma has been a member of staff at Survivors of Torture and Trauma, Assistance and Rehabilitation (STARS) in Adelaide with

involvement in their referral and intake process, Wellbeing Group for Bhutanese Women, grant application and administrative duties.

Emma’s time with the Phoenix Centre will be short as she will be moving to Melbourne next month to pursue a Master of Art Therapy. She hopes to have continuing connections with the FASSTT network throughout her studies and looks forward to the day she can incorporate her great love of physical therapies, psychotherapies, human rights and the arts in to her practice as a therapist.

[\(Back to top\)](#)

### **Focus on our Volunteers: Pirjo Berens**

***Volunteering at the German Day Centre since July 2010***

**My Volunteering Interest At MRC:** After working for 33 years at the Royal Hobart Hospital, volunteering for me was a way of remaining involved in the community and meeting people. I enjoy seeing how much pleasure the senior’s day centre social interaction gives to the clients.

**My Experience With Culturally And Linguistically Diverse (Cald) Communities :** Being a migrant of 52 years, I personally know how important a friendly introduction to the way of life in Tasmania is.

**My Favourite Life Experience:** Being a Grandmother to my six grand children, playing cards and Board games with them and to be involved with their education and sporting activities.

**I Presently Spend My Daylight Hours:** Most days by walking 40-50 minutes to maintain my fitness levels. Then the usual cooking, gardening etc. Collecting Scandinavian Glassware, Crystal and China which I usually find at the Sunday markets, second hand shops and op shops. I enjoy music by attending the Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra concerts.

**I Admire:** the generosity of David Walsh for giving us Tasmanians the gift of MONA.

**I Laugh When:** when my friends send me jokes and cartoons via email. Also the tried and true BBC comedies of Yes Minister and Yes Prime Minister, The Good Life etc.

**The Biggest Challenge I Find Is?** – to have enough time in the day to do what I want to and need to do

**My Hero: all volunteers** – the people who freely give their time and talents to improve the life of others.

[\(Back to top\)](#)

## Cultural Calendar Dates: February 2012

**February 4:** Independence Commemoration Day - Sri Lanka

**February 5:** Prophet Muhammad's Birthday - This date marks the birthday of Muhammad, regarded by Muslims as a messenger and prophet of God.

**February 6:** Waitangi Day -New Zealand

**February 7:** Independence Day -Grenada

**February 10:** National Multicultural Festival, Canberra (to 12 February) - The National Multicultural Festival features local, national and international music, dance, food and creative arts.-Festival

**February10:** Perth International Arts Festival (to 3 March) - This festival is Australia's oldest international arts festival and Western Australia's premier cultural event. It includes drama, theatre, music, film, visual arts, street arts, literature, comedy and free community events.

**February 11:** Carnevale Italian Festival, Adelaide (to 12 Feb) - This festival is an opportunity for South Australia's Italian communities to share their traditions with other Australians.

**February 11:** Victory of the Islamic Revolution in Iran

**February 13:** St Kilda Festival, Melbourne - This festival on St Kilda's foreshore celebrates Australia's musical talents.-Festival

**February 15:** National Day -Serbia

**February 15:** Nirvana Day - This day is an

observance of the death of the Buddha (Mahayana tradition).

**February 16:** Independence Day -Lithuania

**February 17:** Independence Day -Kosovo

**February 18:** National Day -Gambia

**February 21:** Shrove Tuesday - Shrove Tuesday is the day before Lent. Pancakes are traditionally eaten on this day.-Christian

**February 22:** National Day -Saint Lucia

**February 22:** Tibetan New Year (Losar) - Losar is an occasion to dispel the obstacles and negativities of the old year and is marked with activities that symbolise purification.

**February 22:** Ash Wednesday - Lent begins - Lent is the period of 40 days which comes before Easter in the Christian calendar, traditionally a time of fasting and reflection. It begins with Ash Wednesday.

**February 23:** National Day -Brunei Darussalam

**February 23:** National Day -Guyana

**February 24:** Adelaide Fringe (to 18 March) - This is an annual arts festival that takes place over three weeks across Adelaide.

**February 24:** Independence Day -Estonia

**February 25:** National Day -Kuwait

**February 25:** Greek Antipodes Festival, Melbourne (to 26 Feb) - The Antipodes Festival takes over Lonsdale Street to celebrate all things Greek (dates TBC). Outside of Greece, Melbourne is the largest Greek-speaking city in the world.

**February 25:** Greek Festival of Sydney (to 26 Feb) - The Greek Festival of Sydney, one of Australia's largest and longest running annual cultural events, is a celebration of Greek-Australian lifestyle, culture and heritage.

**February 25:** Pako Festa, Geelong - Pako Festa is a celebration of cultural diversity and attracts thousands of people to enjoy food, folk dancing, art exhibitions, films, craft, activities for children and the Pako Parade.

**February-27:** Independence Day -Dominican Republic

[\(Back to top\)](#)

**Tune in to Hobart FM 96.1 to get more updates from the Migrant Resource Centre (Southern Tasmania) Inc on the last Monday of every month. The next broadcast will be at 1pm on Monday, 27 February 2012.**

**If you'd like to contribute an article or story or publicise an event of relevance to the culturally and linguistically diverse community, please email it to [aanil@mrchobart.org.au](mailto:aanil@mrchobart.org.au)**

**Migrant Resource Centre (Southern Tasmania) Inc**

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