



QPASTT

Queensland program of assistance
to survivors of torture and trauma

Newsletter November, 2015

From the Director

QPASTT Provides 20 Years of Support



This year marks the 20th Anniversary of specialised mental health services for people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds in Queensland. In 1995 the Queensland Government released a Non-English Speaking Background (NESB) Mental Health Policy Statement to assist specialised mental health services to promote, improve and maintain the mental health of people from a non-English speaking background in Queensland.

The Policy Statement outlined for the first time clear directions for change in the planning, organisation, resource distribution and delivery of specialised mental health services for people from non-English speaking backgrounds in Queensland. The Policy aimed to translate this recognition into the better delivery of appropriate and accessible mental health services to people from non-English speaking backgrounds.

Out of this policy Queensland Government funding became available to:

- The Queensland Program of Assistance to Survivors of Torture and Trauma (QPASTT);
- The Queensland Transcultural Mental Health Centre (QTMHC); and
- The Queensland Centre for Multicultural Mental Health and Wellbeing (Harmony Place)
- Townsville Intercultural Centre

The funding provided to QPASTT was to match Federal Government funding allocated specifically for refugee survivors of torture and trauma. QPASTT opened its doors in August 1995 with 2 positions and 3 staff. The organisation has since grown to over 60 staff providing services to 2000 people across 12 locations in Queensland each year.

QPASTT was established to be a holistic wrap around community based service established for and by people from refugee background as a complement to the medical model. It remains true to these principles today.

QPASTT continues to work closely with the other services funded through this initiative to provide mental health services for people from an extensive number of cultural groups. QPASTT alone provides services to people from more than 70 ethnic backgrounds speaking more than 50 languages. The staff group at QPASTT reflects the diversity of its client group with staff coming from 35 different ethnic groups.

Tracy Worrall – Director



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Community Leaders Event

Community Leaders making a huge difference at QPASTT/MDA Dinner



Ongoing Community Leaders' Dinners are a forum whose themes and wide ranging topics are based on leaders' requests and community needs.

QPASTT and MDA convene this dinner every three months at Brisbane Multicultural Centre, 28 Dibley St, Woolloongabba. The event starts with a dinner at 5:30pm sharp. Experts present on various issues/topics as requested by the community leaders. Last month we heard from presenters about education and training pathways. This last session we had more than 60 leaders attending. Apart from the opportunity to ask questions there is always also a chance for the community leaders to give updates about

upcoming events, meetings, social groups and ongoing projects within their respective communities. Our next Community Leaders' Dinner will take place on Thursday 17th December 2015. For this Dinner we won't be discussing any specific topic. Instead, QPASTT and MDA will take the opportunity to thank the leaders for their support, collaboration and participation during the year. It will be a time to get together and celebrate. We hope you can all make it.

Fernanda Torresi (Community Relationships & Capacity Building Manager)

Update!

Ipswich Principles Breakfast

On the 15th of October 2015, QPASTT teamed up with Ipswich City Council and hosted an exclusive Principals' Breakfast Forum in Ipswich to discuss strategies for addressing the needs of school students of refugee background within Ipswich and surrounding areas. The forum was attended by over 55 school principals and senior staff. The following topics were discussed:

- Ideas and strategies for establishing sustainable and mutually supportive networks;
- Facilitating exchange of ideas between schools and local agencies in Ipswich and surrounding areas; and
- Implementing ongoing support with individual schools in Ipswich and surrounding areas through information sharing, professional development training, provision of professional expertise and resources across schools and agencies.

A number of services also had information stalls on the day. Overall the event was a great success that was proudly supported by the Community Action for a Multicultural Society (CAMS) Program.

NEW Homework Club Support – Meadowbrook!

The doors are open to homework support in Logan

HeadSpace Meadowbrook and QPASTT will be offering homework support to students (aged 12-24 years) from a refugee background every Thursday between 3pm – 5:30pm during school terms. Light snacks will also be provided at the HeadSpace Meadowbrook building at 260 Loganlea Road. If you would like more information please call Amin or Hayley on 3391 6677. Alternatively you can also email the regional team coordinator Nilissa at nilissalivingstone@qpastt.org.au



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QPASTT Homework Club and Volunteers 'Thank You' Evening

QPASTT utilises the services of about 70 volunteers each semester. Our volunteers include university students, community members and retirees who have made strong commitment to making the world a better place for young people from refugee backgrounds and their families. Our volunteers make time to assist students from refugee backgrounds with their homework, assignments and school projects in the Homework Club from Monday to Wednesday 3:00pm – 5:00pm during school terms.

Additionally, other volunteers provide mentoring support for young people ages 16-25 through our Ucan2 project which operates at TAFE youth classes during TAFE terms. Ucan2 is an ongoing Australian cultural orientation and settlement support project that engages participants in three main areas: trauma-informed group work to address psychosocial issues, further education and training pathways and development of new social support networks to address social isolation.

These very worthwhile projects wouldn't have been such success stories without the decisive commitments of our hard working volunteers. On behalf of QPASTT, we would like to extend our wholehearted thanks and appreciation to all our volunteers past and present. You have all indeed contributed to restoring hope, upholding human rights and dignity and making our world a better and much liveable place for all.

Please feel free to join us on Wednesday 2nd December 2015 from 5:00pm at our end of year and volunteers 'thanks-you' party. For further information, please feel free to contact Victor Kollie on: 0408 817 155 or email: victorkollie@qpastt.org.au



Mental Health Resources

Multicultural Mental Health Australia provides information in different languages about a range of topics including:

- What is an anxiety disorder?
- What is a bipolar mood disorder?
- Challenging behaviours
- What is a depressive disorder?
- What is an eating disorder?
- What is mental illness?
- What is schizophrenia?
- Supporting parents and families: the mental health and well-being of children and young people



MHMA
Mental Health in Multicultural Australia

To access these resources jump on their webpage - <http://www.mhima.org.au/resources-and-information/Translated-information/translated-mental-health-information-resources>

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Are you experiencing long delays when applying for citizenship?

The Refugee Council of Australia (RCOA) has recently released a report on people experiencing delays when they apply for citizenship. The evidence collected by RCOA suggests that these delays are disproportionately affecting those who arrived in Australia by boat and are having a significant negative impact on the people affected, in particular through preventing them from being able to reunite with their families. You can read the report, [Citizenship Delays for Permanent Refugees](#).

If you **have been waiting over 9 months since your application**, and want to make a complaint about your situation, RCOA are helping people to prepare a complaint to the Commonwealth Ombudsman. Here is a bit more information about this process.

Who is the Commonwealth Ombudsman?

The Commonwealth Ombudsman considers and investigates complaints from people who believe they have been treated unfairly or unreasonably by an Australian Government department. The Commonwealth Ombudsman is very interested in investigating this issue. However, they need more information about it. They have asked us to compile complaints from people who are experiencing citizenship application delays.

Confidentiality

You can choose to make a confidential complaint. However, if you do remain confidential the Commonwealth Ombudsman may not be able to investigate your claim further. It is illegal for an authority to victimise a person for making a complaint to the Ombudsman.

What do we need you to do?

The following are the steps we will take to lodge your complaint concerning your citizenship application delay, if you choose to do so.

1. **Freedom of Information Request:** This is a request that the Department of Immigration give you all the files that they have about you. This may help you understand why your application has been delayed. This is free. This will not affect your citizenship application; it will give you access to documents about your application from the Department of Immigration.
2. **Make a complaint to the Department of Immigration and Border Protection:** We also request you make a complaint directly to the Department of Immigration and Border Protection. If you have done this before and have details of your complaint, we can use that information for the complaint to the Commonwealth Ombudsman. If you have not lodged a complaint with the Department, or if you wish to do so again, we can help you do this.
3. **Make a complaint to the Commonwealth Ombudsman:** This will be made through filling in a form, providing details of your application process. We can help you complete this form.

Charlotte Inge from RCOA will be available to help you with each of these steps. If you need an interpreter, let her know and she can arrange that for you. Please contact her as soon as possible at the RCOA office on (03) 9600 3302 or at intern1@refugeecouncil.org.au

QPASTT Women's Fellowship

Psycho-educational group facilitated on the Gold Coast



This Gold Coast group started on the 7th of August with women from Sudan, Ethiopia and Eritrea. A few of the women already knew each other from the refugee camps the rest met here in Australia

The participants initially got to know each other and built connections as a group by doing a shared drawing activity in the first session.

The group also went on to do some creative artwork which included beading, knitting, crochet and flower arrangements.

Below is what the women said about the group:
"...what I have learnt in this group in two weeks is more important than what I have learnt in my past two years. The information is more applicable to my day to day life with my family"

"The breathing exercises have really helped me to calm down when I am angry and they also help me to respond rather than react to situations"

QPASTT Final Training Opportunities for 2015

- **Working Cross-Culturally in the Trauma and Re-Settlement Context** - Tuesday 10th November 2015 9:30am @ Brisbane Multicultural Centre, Rooms 5 & 6, 28 Dibley Street, Woolloongabba
- **Vicarious Trauma, Burnout and Self-Care** – Thursday 26th November 2015 9:30am @ Brisbane Multicultural Centre, Rooms 5 & 6, 28 Dibley Street, Woolloongabba
For more information or to register go to the QPASTT website - www.qpastt.org.au/training. There is a cost for this training but talk to our Training Coordinator, Elise Barton about a discount for Community Leaders

Upcoming Event!!

African Australian Women's' Network End of Year Celebration

The African Australian Women's Network is holding an end of year party at the African House, 10 Jean Howie Drive, Morningside on Sunday the 29th November from 1:00pm onwards. All welcome! For more information please email Mavice Hove – MaviceHove@qpastt.org.au

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Major Event!

Time to Shine: African Australian Awards Queensland 2015 reminder

African Australian Awards Qld 2015 event is around the corner and tickets are selling out fast so please jump online and grab yours to avoid disappointment.

The Queensland African Australian Awards Queensland 2015 promote awareness of the contribution of Africans across different sectors in Queensland. The awards are an opportunity to celebrate African Australian individual, community, friend and business efforts and volunteering that make Queensland a better place. The winners of the 2015 African Australian Awards Queensland will be announced at a spectacular Awards night hosted by the Honourable Shannon Fentiman, Minister for Communities, Women and Youth, Minister for Child Safety and Minister for Multicultural Affairs at Queensland Parliament House on Friday, 13 November 2015.

Tickets on sale now at <https://celebrateafricanaustraliansawards.eventbrite.com.au>
OR phone either Elijah on 0423040875 or Kelly on 0449840506.

QLD AFRICAN COMMUNITIES COUNCIL & CELEBRATE AWARDS QLD

AFRICAN AUSTRALIANS AWARDS QUEENSLAND 2015

AN EVENING OF CELEBRATION, ENTERTAINMENT AND FASHION
Friday November 13TH 2015, 6:00 till 10:00pm
PREMIERS & SPEAKERS HALL
QUEENSLAND PARLIAMENT HOUSE

Co-Hosted by: Hon. Shannon FENTIMAN Minister for Communities, Women and Youth,
Minister for Child Safety and Minister for Multicultural Affairs

Live Entertainment - Dance - Fashion Show

• Cocktail food, Alcoholic beverages and Soft Drinks •
• \$35 AUD per person • Doors open 6pm • Paid parking available at QUT parking •
• ID required for security checks at arrival •



Celebration of African Australians and Queensland African Communities Council (QACC)
join forces to celebrate the achievements and contributions of African Australians in Queensland

Gold Sponsors



Silver Sponsors



Supporters



also supported by: Hon. Cameron Dick, the Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance services

- More information available online at www.qacc.com.au
- Phone: Robert Mukombozi 0401 795 776 or Elijah Buol 0423 040 875
- E-mail: coordinator@celebrateafricanaustraliansqld.org and president@qacc.com.au

• Premiers and Speakers Hall, Parliamentary Annexe, Alice Street, Brisbane •

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Meet QPASTT Staff



Meet Sam!

Sam Anywar is a Capacity Building and Support Worker at QPASTT and has worked at QPASTT for the last 8 years. His main role is to support schools to plan and action priority areas relating to the Whole of School Approach (WOSA) to working with students from refugee and asylum seekers backgrounds.

Outside of QPASTT, Sam enjoys gags with friends, watching movies (sports and cooking shows), playing acoustic guitar, dancing and helping in the community. Sam loves steak but sadly, hates cake....poor Sam!



Meet Kathleen!

Kathleen is a counsellor who works with individuals, families and groups. She is a Social Worker with a Masters of Social Work studies specializing in Family Therapy from the University of Queensland (2011). She has many years' experience of developing, implementing and evaluating therapeutic, training, employment and housing programs in Australia and the United Kingdom.

In her free time Kathleen enjoys sewing, watching English comedy shows, cycling and running with friends – she tries to go to Park Run with friends every Saturday.

The Editorial Team

QPASTT - Community Relationships and Capacity Building Team

Have something you want to add to the next newsletter? Email elisebarton@qpastt.org.au

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