



The Water Well Project

Overview

[The Water Well Project](#) is an award-winning health promotion not-for-profit organisation with a purpose to promote good health and wellbeing to communities from migrant, refugee and asylum seeker background by improving their **health literacy**. We work with organisations already working within the refugee support sector to deliver interactive, inclusive health education sessions. These sessions are run by volunteer healthcare professionals and are tailored to the needs and interests of each community group. They are designed to be both culturally sensitive and encourage direct dialogue between community participants and our volunteer healthcare professionals, often utilising the provision of accredited interpreters provided by the Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS).

The Water Well Project is uniquely placed to respond to the needs within culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities. Our partnerships are inter-sectoral, working across health, education, settlement services; and also working at different levels of prominence from youth group groups to community centres and neighbourhood houses to smaller grassroots organisations.

Through our model of interactive sessions facilitated by qualified healthcare professionals, we aim to:

- Educate those from migrant, refugee, and asylum seeker background to understand the severity of COVID-19 and deliver culturally appropriate, accurate and current health information relating to COVID-19 including Government COVID-19 restrictions, QR code check-in and other topics.
- Update CALD communities regarding the COVID-19 vaccine rollout, differences between vaccinations, dispel misconceptions and myths regarding COVID-19 vaccination, direct communities to in-language resources and show how to obtain a digital vaccine record.
- Discuss ways to improve mental health and wellbeing plus stay connected during the COVID-19 pandemic, and where to seek help if experiencing mental distress.
- Ensure that individuals did not neglect other aspects of their health and wellbeing during the pandemic, given the decreased number of presentations/diagnoses regarding cardiovascular health, diabetes, cancer, and other chronic medical conditions. We also offer sessions on how to maintain a healthy lifestyle that includes information on drugs, alcohol, gambling and social media use.

Since March 2020, we have reached **7554 participants via 253 educational sessions**. These participants spoke a variety of different primary languages including Arabic, Burmese, Dari, Greek, Indian, Farsi, Fijian, Hakha Chin, Hazaragi, Karen, Kituba, Mandarin, Maori, Oromo, Punjabi, Spanish, Swahili, Tedim, Vietnamese and Zomi. Of note, these numbers reflect individuals who personally attended our sessions. There is a far-reaching impact beyond this cohort of individuals with flow-on information to families and friends, improving the overall health literacy and resourcefulness of these communities. This 'word of mouth' spread of information is particularly relevant in close-knit communities. We believe our sessions translate into improved health literacy at a CALD community level, which contributes to their long-term resilience.

The Water Well Project's vision is that individuals from migrant, refugee and asylum seeker backgrounds achieve **equitable access** to healthcare to enable them to live full lives and contribute to the wider community. We encourage community engagement and would welcome the opportunity to collaborate so that everyone in Australia has equitable access to timely, accurate health information.