



Relationship is key to supporting new arrivals

Relationship has been central to Jesuit Social Services' work over our more than 40 years.

Building trust and understanding is at the heart of our settlement work, which supports newly arrived people and families to make connections, links them in with services and programs, and ultimately helps them settle into life in Australia.

"Having access to practical assistance can often be taken for granted by those who have lived in Australia for a long time and speak English," says Jesuit Social Services' Support Worker Nicole Attard. "However those who are newly arrived can struggle to know where to turn.

Our settlement program is flexible, dynamic and innovative in the way it supports participants to maximise their resources, skills and chances of living a happy and meaningful life in a new country," says Nicole.

The settlement program work spans individual casework, groups, workshops, information sessions and activities such as English Language Support Programs and a Homework Club, in which volunteer mentors assist primary and secondary students with their school work.

Participant Hawa arrived in Australia from Eritrea in 2014 and has settled in Melbourne with five of her children. She says the practical support provided by the settlement program has helped her family feel at home in Australia.

"Coming to Australia has been one of the greatest things that has happened to me and my family, and I am so happy to be a

part of this organisation which helped me and my kids be in a good and safe environment," she says.

"There have been challenges but with the help from the settlement program there is more hope in raising my children to achieve more, make a quality life and be great contributors to society."

Nicole says the work is equally rewarding for staff members and volunteers, who get to support people in their journey to participating more fully in society.

"Even assisting a participant to connect electricity or other utilities, we are able to work together to build independence and empowerment," she says.

"In every engagement there is opportunity to cultivate a positive experience for participants living in a new country."

Staff and participants at one of Jesuit Social Services' Settlement programs

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At the heart of community

Jesuit Social Services has proudly been helping people from newly arrived communities for decades. In 1996, we strengthened our engagement with the Vietnamese community, providing support with the challenges of settling in a new country, with a different culture and language.

Since that time, we have gone on to work with successive waves of migrants, including those from Somalia, Afghanistan and South Sudan. We have learned what is effective in helping newly arrived community groups settle in Australia and contribute to the rich fabric of our society.

Although culture, experiences and language change between communities, the underlying needs for meaningful engagement, valuing people's gifts and respecting differences do not. Being open, respectful and compassionate is the basis for our community building work.

It concerns me that in the broader society, this openness and welcoming attitude towards African young people has been compromised, especially following the recent media focus on youth crime in Victoria. This is not only disrespectful, it is counter-productive to achieving a just and safe society. We know the importance of community building strategies that increase cohesion and mitigate against anti-social and criminal behaviour. We know when we support young migrant people to be a part of society, ensure access to education and employment opportunities and connect with culture and community, that this fosters social cohesion that benefits us all.

In this newsletter, you'll see examples of the many positive and hopeful stories we come across every day in our settlement work and our broader community development programs. At the heart of this work is relationship. It's our starting point and our way of working. It's also critical to ensuring a safe and flourishing community for all.

Julie Edwards, CEO, Jesuit Social Services

Talking justice in Darwin

Youth justice has been in the spotlight across the country, and particularly in the Northern Territory since revelations of the abuse and neglect of young people in Darwin's Don Dale detention facility led to the establishment of a Royal Commission into the Protection and Detention of Children.

Prior to the Royal Commission handing down its final report and recommendations in November 2017, Jesuit Social Services hosted a breakfast forum in Darwin about the importance and effectiveness of restorative justice practices – an approach that focuses on the rehabilitation of offenders through reconciliation with victims and the wider community.

We have delivered youth justice group conferencing in Darwin and Palmerston since early 2017. This model supports young people who have committed offences to take responsibility for their actions, come face to face with those impacted by their actions – including victims, family and police – and make amends. The program is proven to reduce re-offending among young people.

The breakfast forum was an opportunity to reflect on this approach, and the specific cultural needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people. A panel discussion featured Lynette Hansen (a victim of crime who participated in a conference in Palmerston), Simone Clagnan (Victims Support Agency in Victoria), Kim Mulholland (cultural mentor) and Delsey Tamiano (Danila Dilba Health Service).

It was pleasing to note that the final report of the Royal Commission included a number of recommendations about expanding and enhancing diversion options for young people in the Territory.

We look forward to a greater use of restorative justice approaches across the country, to steer young people towards positive pathways and create safer communities.



Jesuit Social Services' General Manager in the NT, Jared Sharp, speaks at the forum

No more borders or boundaries

Rosi Matlhabaphiri-Quaremba's resume featured a remarkable breadth of experience, including roles with the United Nations Population Fund and as a lecturer in communications.

But after settling in Australia from her native Botswana, Rosi encountered significant and "emotionally taxing" challenges to securing corporate employment, applying unsuccessfully for almost 300 roles.

Through the African-Australian Inclusion Program (AAIP), a partnership between Jesuit Social Services and NAB, Rosi was able to get a foot in the door at one of Australia's big four banks.

The AAIP was established in 2009 to provide paid work opportunities to skilled African-Australians who often encounter barriers to work due to a lack of local work history. More than 340 people have completed the six-month program since it began, with over 90 per cent of graduates from the most recent round securing ongoing work at NAB or elsewhere in their chosen field.

Rosi is flourishing in her Enterprise Events role. Her People Leader at NAB Matt Oster, Head of Enterprise Events, says he has also developed a deeper understanding and appreciation of the barriers faced by the African-Australian community.

"It's important to remember, and easy to forget that not everyone is afforded the equal opportunity to participate in meaningful work," he says.

Rosi says her involvement in the program has benefited her in a number of ways – in her career path, and also in her outlook on life.

"I no longer see any boundaries and borders – now I see hope, opportunities, career advancement and security."

Last year, Jesuit Social Services received funding from the Victorian Government to expand this successful model to other corporate partners including the Australian Taxation Office (ATO).

If you're interested in discussing opportunities for your business, please contact the Corporate Diversity Partnerships team – info@corporatediversity.org.au



AAIP participant Rosi and her People Leader at NAB, Matt

Provocative rhetoric undermines the capacity for communities to thrive

Jesuit Social Services' long-standing work supporting the settlement of newly arrived communities is based on our belief that all new arrivals to Australia deserve a chance to flourish.

For over 40 years Jesuit Social Services has been engaging effectively with successive waves of new migrant groups to improve personal resilience and build a strong sense of belonging and social cohesiveness.

More recently, refugee and asylum seeker issues have become increasingly divisive and Australia's treatment of refugees has rarely been far from the headlines. In Victoria, recent media coverage of youth crime has reignited debate around migration and the rights and responsibilities of newly arrived communities.

The highly politicised and inflammatory reports of 'African youth crime', which include calls for more punitive responses, have fanned the flames of fear surrounding this contentious issue.

This coverage stands in stark contrast to what we know works to improve social cohesion and achieve positive migrant outcomes.

Jesuit Social Services supports the need for people to be held accountable for their actions, and we also know that preventative approaches that engage constructively with local communities are the most effective way to tackle the issue.

Strong leadership is required at all levels of government to deliver a response that unites the community in a shared approach to ensure a safe and thriving society.

Late last year, the Joint Standing Committee on Migration concluded its Inquiry into migrant settlement outcomes which focussed on many of these issues. Jesuit Social Services was given the opportunity to respond and present our submission to the Committee in early 2017.

In our submission, we acknowledged some of the pre-arrival challenges faced by newly arrived migrants, such as learning English and barriers to employment. We also focused on the importance of strengthening social cohesion to ensure positive migration outcomes.

The Committee's final Report – *No one teaches you to become an Australian* – made a number of promising recommendations, including increasing the accessibility

of English language classes and improving housing opportunities for newly arrived migrants.

However, the undue focus on specific migrant communities, as well as the suggestion that mandatory visa cancellations be expanded (potentially impacting migrants under the age of 18) were particularly concerning.

Provocative and damaging rhetoric (as seen in the media coverage of African crime in Victoria), and the dangerous recommendations of the Committee that are currently under Government consideration, undermine the foundations of our long-standing work with African communities.

Programs such as our African Australian Inclusion Program, run in partnership with NAB, and our Settlement Program have promoted meaningful engagement and supported settlement for African community members. These programs provide successful role models and mentors to support people into meaningful activities such as education and employment.

Expanding programs that offer early intervention, prioritising youth aged 10-14, would assist in halting the well-worn path that many young people take into the justice system after disengaging from school, family and the wider community.

Settlement is an individualised, complex and lifelong endeavour. Some challenges will be overcome, while some will be overcome and then return; therefore our response must be adaptable and based on a person's unique support needs. We believe the best way to strengthen social cohesion is to address issues of belonging, leadership, social justice and equality, participation, acceptance and worth.

Fundamentally, we advocate for place-based approaches that support local communities to develop their own goals and increase community participation and wellbeing. Place-based initiatives bring the community together. For new migrants, this helps people build social connections and prevents isolation. This approach also fosters belonging and engagement, giving refugees and migrants a sense of control and purpose in their lives. Building trust, belonging and community engagement are essential elements in fostering social cohesion, helping people feel safe, included and valued in society.

'When I have no one at home to help me, I can come here'

Each week, around 40 primary and secondary school students gather in Flemington. Some sit around computers to complete class work, and others work one-on-one with volunteer mentors to explore textbooks, assignments and essays.

For more than 10 years, Jesuit Social Services' Homework Club has provided support to students aged eight to 18 who have recently arrived in Australia.

Grade six student Taycier has attended the program with her sister Tasneem for more than four years, and has benefited enormously from its support.

"Homework Club has made me bring all my tasks and finish them on time which takes away the stress of being asked about the unfinished task the next day in class and be down or embarrassed in front of other students," she says.

"I've made a lot of new friends from all different cultures and also when I have no one at home that can help me with my homework, I can come to Homework Club and tutors can help me."

Rachel Biar, Support Worker with the Homework Club, says students from a variety of cultural backgrounds including Ethiopian, Sudanese, Vietnamese and Chinese regularly attend the program.

Many of the volunteer mentors are university students, retired members of the community or currently practising teachers.

"In addition to getting help with their homework, students also have an opportunity to widen networks. This has led to greater opportunities when seeking employment, deciding on career pathways and linking in to sport and social clubs," she says.

"They also learn to look at things from different perspectives, outside the world view they usually live in."

Taycier says that the program has had a positive impact not only on her, but on her family.

"The help we get makes a lot of difference to our families, especially parents not having to stress about spending money and finding private tutors to help us with our education," she says.

The Homework Club receives no government funding and relies on grants and donations to continue supporting students like Taycier.

In late 2017, the Homework Club was a recipient of grants from The Readings Foundation and Collier Charitable Foundation. The program also receives ongoing donations from financial consulting firm, QMV.

If you would like to support the Homework Club by making a donation or volunteering, please call 03 9421 7600.



Rachel, left, with students from the Homework Club

Generosity helps Western Sydney work grow

This year, we celebrate our 10th anniversary of working in New South Wales.

Over the past decade, we have delivered a range of initiatives to communities in Mt Druitt and Emerton including the Ignite Food Store and Op Shop, and more recently we have taken a lead role in the revitalisation of the Willmot Community Hub.

The reason for the growth, says General Manager of Western Sydney Dave Hammond, has been the generous support of groups such as Our Lady of the Way Parish in North Sydney.

"The partnership with Our Lady of the Way parish has been of profound help to Jesuit Social Services in being able to remain deeply connected to the people of Mt Druitt," he says.

"Through food and clothing donations, volunteers and critical financial support we have worked together side-by-side in one of Sydney's most challenging areas."

Trish Martin, from the Our Lady of the Way parish, says that parishioners regularly donate groceries to the Ignite Food Store and household items to the Op Shop.

"At Christmas time we donated lots of toys, books, hampers and Christmas food – it is wonderful to know that these donations make a real difference to families in Western Sydney," says Trish.

"Our parishioners are really committed to the cause and find it incredibly worthwhile being involved with Jesuit Social Services."

Dave Hammond says the parish also raised close to \$13,000 as part of its Christmas appeal "to help make Christmas a wonderful time in Willmot".

"It is hard to truly estimate the full meaning of this partnership, the physical help is obviously profound but it is also the supportive friendships that have grown," he says.

"Knowing that so many people have such a commitment to the people of Mt Druitt gives our team a wonderful sense of community."

***To find out about the many ways your parish or community group can support our work, please contact
Erin Hunter – erin.hunter@jss.org.au***



Dave Hammond (centre) and staff from the Jesuit Social Services Ignite Food Store in Mount Druitt

Helping boys and men flourish

As our 40th anniversary drew to a close in December 2017, we were proud to officially launch The Men's Project.

The Men's Project was founded out of recognition that many of the boys and men we have worked with over our 40 year history have been perpetrators of violence – and that many also struggle with complex issues such as substance abuse and mental illness.

We will develop a range of programs and interventions, with the aim of helping boys and men to live respectful and healthy lives free of violence.

At the launch, which featured speeches from former Victorian Minister for Corrections the Hon. Wade Noonan and President of the Children's Court of Victoria Judge Amanda Chambers, we were pleased to announce funding to pilot a restorative justice program for adolescents who use violence in the home.

This program will be based on the Youth Justice Group Conferencing model that we have delivered in Victoria for 15 years and in the Northern Territory since early 2017.

You can find out more about The Men's Project at www.themensproject.org.au and we look forward to sharing further updates from The Men's Project throughout the year.



(L-R): Patricia Faulkner (Chair, Jesuit Social Services), Ron Jones (Aboriginal elder), Julie Edwards (CEO, Jesuit Social Services), Judge Amanda Chambers (President, Children's Court of Victoria), Hon. Wade Noonan, Michael Livingstone (Executive Director, The Men's Project)

Serious Fun celebrates a decade of support

Ten years ago, Jesuit Social Services' Support After Suicide program established Serious Fun to support children impacted by the suicide of a loved one.

"Serious Fun allows children to meet and be with other children who have had similar experiences," says Bereavement Support Worker Colin Charles.

"The program lessens their sense of isolation, provides them with somewhere they are able to talk openly about the death of their loved ones and provides them with opportunities to express and talk about their grief in a variety of ways."

During school holidays, primary school aged children impacted by suicide gather for activity sessions based around a different theme each time, led by experienced counsellors and conveners.

Over 60 children have attended the program over the past 12 months.

In January, the program celebrated its 10th birthday with an event for past and current participants and family members at the Bush Hut.

CEO Julie Edwards was presented with a quilt featuring the painted hand prints of a number of children who have been involved with the program, and spoke about the importance of Serious Fun as a part of the various suicide bereavement services offered by Support After Suicide.

Julie, along with Serious Fun staff members, also spoke about the significant impact the program has had on the lives of children and their families over the past decade.



Staff, volunteers and current and former participants of Serious Fun with CEO Julie Edwards at the program's 10th birthday celebration

Our decades of experience working on the ground plus our extensive research means we know how to support communities in need.



Please make a donation to ensure we can continue to assist families and communities to flourish.

Want to help Jesuit Social Services?

Together we can build a just society by advocating for social change and promoting the wellbeing of disadvantaged people, family and communities.

I would like to make a donation of:

\$75 **\$150**

\$500 **\$1000**

\$

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