



**Thriving  
Multicultural  
Communities**

THE MIGRANT CENTRE ORGANISATION INC.

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**Supplementary submission**

**Parliamentary Inquiry into the opportunities to improve  
mental health outcomes for Queenslanders**

**8 April 2022**

## Introduction

The Migrant Centre Organisation Inc, trading as Thriving Multicultural Communities (TMC), provided a submission to the Parliamentary Inquiry into the opportunities to improve mental health outcomes for Queenslanders on 4 February 2022.

TMC representatives also attended the Parliamentary Inquiry public hearings in Brisbane on 11 March 2022 and provided additional information for the Committee's consideration.

TMC has taken a proactive approach to its submission to the Parliamentary Inquiry by:

- presenting information to assist the Parliamentary Inquiry Committee in better understanding the extent of demand for mental health services, particularly among people of culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds who have settled in the Gold Coast Region over the past 5 years
- suggesting a solution to address escalating needs for mental health services within the Gold Coast Region that is person centred, leverages existing service infrastructure and integrates available services.

This supplementary information has been submitted at the request of the Parliamentary Inquiry Committee. It provides details of the suggested solution referenced in TMC's written submission.

TMC has commenced planning for the establishment of a Gold Coast Mental Health Hub which would improve mental health outcomes by understanding and responding to emerging and escalating demand by people of CALD background.

While the concept targets the specific needs of people of CALD backgrounds, in line with TMC policy it will not preclude access to people who are not of CALD background.

In the development of a solution, TMC has consulted with other professionals who also witness the escalation of the mental health support needs of people from CALD backgrounds, including Dr Dinesh Palipana who provides the following insight:

*Being a doctor in an emergency department, lawyer, and disability advocate while also being a person with a disability from culturally and linguistically diverse roots, I have the privilege of an intersectional view of mental health in the city of Gold Coast.*

*Currently, the city is experiencing an unprecedented demand for mental health services, which are overwhelmed. The existing infrastructure needs support. Additionally, culturally and linguistically diverse people requiring these services need skilled providers, versed in the nuances. I have provided feedback to inform the work of The Migrant Centre in identifying the emerging and escalating mental health issues impacting the Gold Coast Region and, in particular those impacting people of culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. I also support the work of The Migrant Centre in developing a sustainable solution which has shaped the establishment of the proposed Gold Coast Mental Health Hub. In addition to having the necessary skill set, knowledge, and understanding of nuances, this team has the most important ingredient – a humanistic approach.*

*Dinesh Palipana OAM, LLB, MD*

## **Proposed Gold Coast Mental Health Unit for CALD people**

To establish a Gold Coast Mental Health Hub for responding to the mental health needs of CALD people.

### **Principles underlying this proposal**

- focus on prevention and supporting mental well being rather than clinical intervention, to achieve better outcomes for the individual, their family, and the community
- develop a community-based service that provides a safe place for clients to present and discuss their issues with service providers they trust
- align with government priorities – safeguarding our health, growing our regions, backing our frontline services, encourage community engagement – to ensure coordination of existing services and value for money
- consultation and collaboration to identify and examine opportunities for cross agency collaboration and a unified approach
- link and leverage existing services where possible and create a transparent and person centred service delivery pathway
- document the planning and implementation of the initiative based on mutually agreed evaluation criteria
- ensure organisational capacity and individual capability to manage proposed service delivery.

### **Key elements of the proposed hub**

It would be cost effective to base such a unit within an established organisation that already has specialist services that can be leveraged and is trusted within the community. Trust is a key element in engaging with CALD people struggling with mental health issues. Many may never seek medical help; and by the time they do, and clinical intervention is necessary, the situation will have become entrenched and difficult to address.

For the purpose of demonstrating how the proposed hub would work in practice, this submission uses TMC as the existing service around which the hub could be established.

Key functions will include:

- Development of a community engagement and marketing strategy to promote the hub with its own branding to signal to clients a fresh start and differentiate the hub from previous bad experiences.
- Development of a process for the thorough assessment of clients presenting with mental health issues
- An audit of local services to identify potential collaborators for supporting people from different cultural backgrounds
- Collaboration with other organisations where there is a shared client focus and a commitment to reducing fragmentation and duplication of effort
- Risk reduction by appropriate resourcing, transparency, and ensuring the best use of public funds
- Capitalising on existing networks who use referral pathways to TMC, such as QLD Health, Gold Coast University Hospital, QPASTT, TAFE Gold Coast social workers, Act for Kids, MIFQ, Department of Human Services social workers, DVPC, Safe Haven
- Identifying service delivery gaps and developing solutions in consultation with service network
- Establishing local pathways for community support and clinical care to provide consistent and sustainable community-based support
- Providing community outreach through online and/or community workshops to promote mental health and well being

## Resourcing the proposed hub

The following budget identifies the need for a core dedicated staff including:

- Project Manager
- Intake Officer
- Administration Officer

It also includes basic costs for:

- Cultural competence training
- Office and related resources
- Development and implementation of outreach strategy
- Independent evaluation

Consideration has also been given to the provision of funding for a reasonable timeframe to allow for the establishment of the hub (years 1-3), evaluation (year 3), and sufficient time to consider and implement the evaluation outcomes without interrupting critical support to clients (year 4-5), or worse closure of the hub due to lack of ongoing funding. During this post evaluation period, a sustainable funding strategy can be developed and implemented. This may include a combination of government and private funding.

Existing TMC resources will also support the hub including the provision of cultural competency training, processes for intake and case management of clients, referral processes.

## References

The development of this draft proposal, aligns with:

*Shifting minds: Queensland Mental Health Alcohol and Other Drugs Strategic Plan 2018-2023*, which acknowledges the fundamental value of community mental health services—both in terms of benefits to service users, and reducing the need for more costly hospital-based services.

And *Wellbeing First, Queensland Alliance for Mental Health Report (31 July 2021)* which describes the mental health system in Australia as fragmented, siloed, difficult for the public to navigate and designed to gatekeep the limited resources at the clinical end. It acknowledges that better outcomes are obtained by intervening earlier and providing the right services at the right time, in the right place.

Other references included:

- Mental Health Research and Evaluation in Multicultural Australia: Developing a Culture of Inclusion (2013)
- QAMH The Community Mental Health Workforce Project (July 2021)
- QAMH –Mental Health Service System Changes – Experience of a COVID19 Project (July 2021)
- CALD Suicide Prevention Data, Victoria 2021

## DRAFT BUDGET: Gold Coast Mental Health Hub

Project co-managed by The Migrant Centre Org Inc (trading as Thriving Multicultural Communities)

4-Apr-22

EXPENSE ITEM - 52 weeks	Year 1 - SET UP AND PROGRAM DELIVERY	YEAR 2 - PROGRAM DELIVERY	YEAR 3 - PROGRAM DELIVERY AND EVALUATION	YEAR 4 - PROGRAM DELIVERY	YEAR 5 - PROGRAM DELIVERY & FINAL EVALUATION	TOTAL
Operational Cost						
Office rent, Office 3, 6 Lawson Street, Southport	6,500	6,650	6,800	6,950	7,200	34,100
ICT: laptops (and software), printer/scanner, phones, answering machine,	6,000	500	1,000	500	500	8,500
Transport	800	600	600	600	600	3200
Insurance: PL, Business, Prof Indemnity	1,300	1,400	1,500	1,600	1,700	7,500
Human Resources*						
Project Manager	80,000	82,000	84,000	86,000	88,000	420,000
Intake officer including data management	65,000	67,000	69,000	71,000	73,000	345,000
Administration Officer	48,000	49,000	50,000	51,000	52,000	250,000
Marketing and Project Promotion						
Community and stakeholder engagement, including venue hire and refreshments	3,500	3,000	1,500	1,500	1,500	11,000
Transport	600	600	600	600	600	3,000
Other						
Project Evaluation, data analysis	4,000	4,200	4,500	4,500	5,000	22,200
Cultural competency training. 6-hour training x 4 sessions p/year for up to 12 service agencies p/session. Venue hire, refreshments, resources, trainer/facilitator.	4,800	4,800	4,800	4,800	4,800	24,000
Reference Group: 4 sessions p/yr, venue, refreshments	1,600	1,700	1,800	1,800	1,900	8800
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>222,100</b>	<b>221,450</b>	<b>226,100</b>	<b>230,850</b>	<b>236,800</b>	<b>1,137,300</b>

\* The necessity to engage a mental health professional to assist with the design of intake documents and staff training will be assessed once other positions are recruited, and a skills matrix is developed to ensure that all the critical skills required and any gaps are identified and appropriately addressed.

