

Dear Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Migration

I'm writing to you as the Multicultural Project Officer at Monaro Family Support Service in Cooma (NSW). I have been in this role for the last five year and have experience of settlement and participation issues of migrants/asylum seekers in our region which includes Cooma Monaro, Bombala and Snowy River Shire Councils.

In our region we have people from over 50 different nationalities and there is not one dominant ethnic group and the strengths in our region lays in our multicultural community.

I have established the MAGIC (Multicultural Activity Group In Cooma) and a Multicultural Forum where people from a diverse culturally and linguistically background come together to celebrate their culture and/or discuss multicultural issues.

The main objectives of the multicultural program is:

- 1) Early identification of new arrivals from overseas and assessment to facilitate their integration into the community.
- 2) Improved community awareness of the provision of a local multicultural program
- 3) Provision of one-to-one support to individuals and families from CALD backgrounds
- 4) Maintenance of the Monaro Multicultural Forum which advocates for the needs of residents from CALD backgrounds

The attached report details outcomes of the "More MAGIC" project. It demonstrates how new arrivals were identified and support was provided, how the community awareness of the multicultural program was raised and how the Multicultural Forum was maintained.

Main problems new migrants face in our region are:

- Not enough work opportunities for highly skilled migrants!
- Transport for isolated women from CALD backgrounds.
- No Medicare and family assistance for migrants with young families on regional skilled visas.
- Limited training and education opportunities including English Classes.

Future ideas include:

- Establishment of "Multicultural Catering Business" to provide training and work opportunities for women of CALD backgrounds.
- Creation of "Multicultural Education program" for local schools to increase multicultural awareness in our region facilitated by local people from CALD backgrounds.
- Formation of a "Migrant Mentoring Program" to help skilled professionals who have recognised overseas professional qualifications to gain experience and a job in a similar field in our region.

I have also attached an article published in the "Country Web" in 2009 to further illustrate the importance of a Multicultural program to provide social inclusion and participation of migrants/refugees.

For any further questions please don't hesitate to contact me.

With regards,

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