

## Adelaide project to improve health access for refugees

Adelaide will develop more responsive health networks to assist refugees and new arrivals, thanks to a new project co-designed and commissioned by the Adelaide PHN.

The *Adelaide Refugees and New Arrival Project* will have two key functions;

- connecting refugees and new arrivals to the most appropriate medical services, and
- supporting a number of local GPs in delivering culturally appropriate care.

“If you have grown up in Australia, you know that you can access our health system and receive support and treatment for physical and mental health issues,” said Adelaide PHN CEO, Deb Lee.

“People from other countries with refugee experiences may have very different understanding and experiences of health - what services are available and how to find help or treatment.”

“The fact is, small issues can become big issues if not dealt with in a timely manner, which is a major part of our thinking,” Ms Lee said.

The services will be provided by the Australian Refugee Association (ARA) and Survivors of Torture and the Trauma Assistance and Rehabilitation Service (STTARS).

The two organisations will link and interact with existing community resources, as much as possible, and provide a seamless service for participants.

Those GP clinics taking part in the project will have doctors and staff trained in a range of issues that affect people newly arrived in Australia from refugee backgrounds, including signage in appropriate languages, use of interpreters and other services and supports that people need.

The services will work with people arriving in Adelaide over the past five years to ensure their physical and mental health needs are being addressed.

“At Adelaide PHN, one of our key functions is to identify and assist vulnerable groups, and people who have newly arrived in Australia with refugee backgrounds certainly fit into that category,” Ms Lee said.

“We have worked closely with ARA, STTARS and key organisations to develop services which will address the real issues people face.”

(more)

Importantly, the project will also help people to learn about their health and Australian health services, and develop the skills they need to look after their own health in the future.

“The *Adelaide Refugees and New Arrival Project* is a better way of doing things because it will deliver better outcomes more efficiently in the long term,” Ms Lee said.

Adelaide PHN would like to thank those who were involved in the consultations and co-design of the program. Working closely with the sector and benefiting from their experience and knowledge, it’s the job of the Adelaide PHN to ensure the health system better services people’s real needs.

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