

THE WATER WELL PROJECT Q&A Fact Sheet

Background

- **What is The Water Well Project?**

The Water Well Project is a Melbourne-based, not-for-profit health initiative delivered by volunteer doctors, medical students and allied health practitioners throughout Victoria.

The project works with key migrant and refugee organisations including the Brotherhood of St Laurence, Spectrum Migrant Resource Centre and Foundation House to deliver free, culturally-appropriate, interactive health information sessions to migrant and refugee community groups.

A unique opportunity is provided to migrants and refugees to engage with doctors and allied health professionals within their desired cultural environment (outside of hospitals and clinics) enabling participants to feel comfortable asking questions about specific health issues and access to health care and resources.

Ultimately, *The Water Well Project* aims to enhance health literacy amongst communities and thus improve access to local health care and resources. We believe that this will facilitate more effective, informed health consultations with medical services including local hospitals and GP clinics; as well as doctors, refugee health nurses and the wider healthcare system.

- **What are the Goals & Objectives for The Water Well Project?**

See link: <http://www.thewaterwellproject.org/about-the-project/our-vision/>

- **Who are The Water Well Project Partner Organisations?**

We work closely with refugee organisations and support services to link in with community groups.

See link: <http://www.thewaterwellproject.org/meet-the-team/relationships/>

- **Which communities does The Water Well Project service?**

Currently, migrant, refugee and asylum seeker groups linked to the northwest offices of the Brotherhood of St Laurence, Spectrum Migrant Resource Centre and New Hope Foundation. We are happy to receive referrals from other organisations. Please contact us: <http://www.thewaterwellproject.org/contact-us/>

- **Does The Water Well Project receive Funding?**

Yes. A Community Services Grant from the City of Melbourne provides assistance with sessions within this municipality. We hosted a 'Healthy Eating Family Picnic' in Werribee with a Healthy Eating Grant from AMA Victoria. *The Water Well Project* is listed as a not-for-profit charity under the ATO. If you would like to support the project with information resources, or provide a donation, we would love to hear from you- please email our chair-linny@thewaterwellproject.org.

Information on Sessions

- **How are the sessions run?**

Each session runs for approximately 1-1.5 hours and is facilitated by two volunteers (usually 2 doctors or 1 doctor and 1 medical student or allied health professional) to 10-20 community members. The topics and venue are chosen by the community.

- **Do you use a Professional Interpreting Service during the sessions?**

Although this would be ideal for all sessions, as a not-for-profit, we have not been able to fund the use of professional interpreters, but hope to do so in the future. We have applied to the Australian Government for exemption from interpreter charges.

The requirement for interpreters has varied depending on the organisation(s) and group(s) involved. Some migrant/refugee organisations have interpreters who work within their organisations. Other groups have community members who are happy to act as interpreters.

- **What Health Topics do you cover?**

The first session incorporates 'Navigating the Australian Healthcare System'. Other topics covered are at the request of the group. Popular topics include healthy eating, diabetes, heart health, mental illness, contraception and

allergies. We recommend volunteers start with non-invasive topics then progress to more sensitive topics as they develop rapport with their group.

- **Does The Water Well Project offer Health Consultations to community participants?**

No. Our volunteers provide health education only and not individual medical advice. However, referrals to health services are made as appropriate.

Volunteers

- **Who can volunteer for The Water Well Project?**

Doctors and allied health professionals.

We are also hoping to involve final year medical students in delivery of our sessions; but are happy to receive expressions of interest from other interested medical or allied health students.

- **How do I volunteer?**

1. Complete the Registration Form on our website: <http://www.thewaterwellproject.org/wp-login.php?action=register>
2. Join our Facebook Group- <https://www.facebook.com/groups/thewaterwellproject/>
3. Attend an Induction Session
4. Complete a Volunteer Declaration
5. Commit to 6-12 consecutive months participation

- **How often do you accept new volunteers?**

Website registration is ongoing. Induction sessions are held every 3-6 months and are advertised on our website and on our Facebook page. Enrolment for an Induction session is limited to 30 new inductees per session.

- **How does The Water Well Project support its volunteers?**

Induction Sessions provide volunteers with information about the project, partners, migrant/refugee health issues, referral options, as well as basic facilitator training. Topic templates are provided on our interactive website to guide sessions. Resources boxes containing relevant props and brochures/ posters, are also available for loan, and coordinated with session dates/ times with our Project Administrator and Resource Coordinator.

- **Why should I volunteer?**

The Water Well Project provides a unique opportunity to:

- Meaningfully contribute to the lives of people who are often underprivileged
- Enhance your understanding of health issues specific to migrants/refugees and appropriate resources and referral services available
- Strengthen your communication skills
- Establish trusting relationships with your community group

Migrant and Refugee Organisations

- **My Organisation/Community Group is interested in being involved - who do we contact?**

<http://www.thewaterwellproject.org/contact-us/>

- **Can my Community Group have a single session delivered?**

Yes. We have volunteers available for single sessions or a series of sessions, depending on what the community group needs.

- **What are our Obligations as a group?**

It is expected your group would:

- Provide an appropriate space for sessions
- Give 1 weeks' notice for cancellation
- Complete anonymous feedback forms at the end of each session
 - Find out what other topics are of interest within the group
 - So that we can provide feedback to our volunteer doctors
 - Improve how we deliver sessions and what resources may be required
- Inform us if interpreters are required
- Realise that doctors are not to be used for individual medical advice

- **Where can I direct further questions about The Water Well Project?**

Please feel free to email mail@thewaterwellproject.org. We will try to reply within 3-5 business working days.