



**Australian Parliament
Joint Standing Committee on Migration
Submission No. 486**

PO Box 965, Mount Gambier, SA 5290

Telephone: (08) 8725 5455 Fax: (08) 8724 9303

email: info@tenison.adl.catholic.edu.au

website: www.tenison.adl.catholic.edu.au

JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON MIGRATION

Multiculturalism in Australia

Attention: Loes Slattery

We wish to make our submission under heading three in the committee's terms of reference:

Settlement and participation

3. Innovative ideas for settlement programs for new migrants, including refugees, that support their full participation and integration into the broader Australian society;

Attached to these comments is a publication (Flexible Learning Program Refugee) that outlines the nature of our program and the latter part of that publication gives the specifics for the program that we've adapted for the refugees in our community. Our school operates a flexible learning program for about 90 external students as well as the refugee program. We operate out of the school premises and have approximately 7 staff. The second attachment (Flexible Learning Program 2011) is to provide to give a sense of the overall program.

The genesis of our refugee program lies in the work of Suzanne Pepe who has her own personal associations with multicultural groups in our town and is an ESL teacher at Tenison Woods College (TWC). Suzanne has supported a number of school-age and adult re-entry refugees into typical mainstream programs where these students generally have a pathway tertiary education. As a result of her work Suzanne has established a relationship with the Migrant Resource Centre in Mt Gambier. We met with the manager of the centre who described the problem where refugees in our community particularly those who originated from Burma had exhausted their opportunities under AMEP and other settlement programs and did not have sufficient language capacity to function in the workplace and limited ability to meet the requirements of Centrelink.

In approaching the needs of this community it became apparent that programme needed to accommodate the background and past experiences of this community on an individual basis. With those who have accessed education, whether in the Thailand/Indian refugee camp or Burma, the exposure to a language based on an alphabet system has been minimal, if at all. A verbal check revealed that some members of the community had no previous opportunities for schooling. On an educational level this means that they have minimal theoretical knowledge of their own language and so therefore second language acquisition is compromised. The challenge then for the adult additional language learner is to learn English on a limited existing language framework.

Another aspect in working with those people who are out of mainstream schooling is that very often we have to address the well-being issues before we can proceed to be fundamental learning. In

talking to our colleagues who have delivered AMEP they have raised concerns about the capacity of the learners, and our experience has taught us that often those people who have experienced trauma in their lives, lack of language development in infancy and interrupted schooling, or for that matter no schooling, may display learning difficulties in a similar way to those who have been diagnosed with a specific learning difficulty. In responding there are two aspects which we apply:

Firstly that the learner may have specific entitlements and adjustments under the disability guidelines generated from the Equal Opportunity Act:

(http://www.ag.gov.au/www/agd/agd.nsf/Page/Humanrightsandanti-discrimination_DisabilityStandardsforEducation), hence we start from a basis of what the individual learner requires based on an overview of their individual circumstances and this may mean that it is not just the learning activities which may need to be altered at the place where it is delivered. For example it is possible to see placement on work experience as part of the language development and we can use a recognition process under community learning to validate the learners practical language development on site. In this sense we see the learning in the workplace as being on the same basis as learning in the classroom environment, and that, due to the practical and visual nature, it may be more accessible.

Secondly as we start from the circumstance of trauma and disrupted lifestyle as creating challenges to the learning, we can utilise this for learning. We treat, as a learning experience, understanding of well-being, how stress and mental health can affect learning. We place learning about self-management of well-being as a fundamental learning task within the curriculum plan, then use this so that the client can inform us about what is possible for them, what their capacity is given their circumstances. If their interactions with us then generate interagency support (e.g. gym program, counselling, drug and alcohol etc.) then we are not just providing wrap around support, we are seeing this as fundamental learning about Australian society and how to navigate (albeit with support) so that the student has a sense of effective citizenship, they gain a sense of self determination and responsibility. One of our students from Burundi has followed the process outlined above. She is seeing now not just how she can participate (she is working and completed two certificate three qualifications for her year 12, financial service and children's service) but she has also for one subject created project where she will have a plan as to how she can return to Africa to use her skills to work in the orphanages she came from.

Taking account of both of these factors you will see in the attachment the ideas that we put down as to how to design program for these people. And there are two specific activities that we would point to apart from the traditional ESL approach that we utilise.

Firstly we have established a relationship with Interwork a local disability job service agency who through their own funding and the possible entitlements for clients have worked collaboratively with TWC designing a program which is similar in character to mainstream programs which are used in rehabilitating workers who may need support in engaging them work, but with an ESL understanding.

Secondly we have commenced a discussion with those agencies that are funded to support the mental health of refugees and we are in the process of providing those who are enrolled in our program, and any other members of the community who may wish to access the service, an opportunity to have information sessions on mental health. To achieve this we are developing a

framework with STTARS and are able to support this with funding from the South Australian Catholic Education Office for supporting new arrivals with counselling. This fits with the model that we use with the students generally in our program in that we have an emphasis the development of well-being being treated as a learning experience. To add to this, as with our other FLP students we are going to work with the refugees in our program on how they can access mental health care programs such as the GP mental health care plan and then provide the support that we would ensure the student is able to get to the appointment and to have the appropriate interpreting services available. We are encouraging local counselling services to participate in cultural awareness sessions (funded by us) which will assist the counsellor to understand cultural sensitivities. We are aware that there are some very specific and tailored services are available in capital cities. The success in regional communities who support the refugee and their educational development can perhaps best be achieved by having an interagency approach and support other agencies to have understandings which will support the community objective, to help these people.

The summary of our submission is that the success we have had in our program is we utilise the concept of school education as it has a broad concern for the context of the student and a capacity to work on the pastoral needs of the students. We are still trying to improve a program for refugees so that they may acquire language to be an effective citizen and worker. The basis of our approach is individual, flexible, case managed, interagency and which has the premise of establishing cultural and citizenship understandings as the fundamental starting point. It is underpinned by entitlement to education (SA has a great record in Adult Re-entry programs) and by the flexibilities for the South Australian Certificate of Education.

Thank you for the opportunity to place our ideas before the committee, we are happy to receive any questions you may have and can link up by phone if you wish.

Joe Moriarty
Manager Flexible Learning Program

Suzanne Pepe
Case Manager Refugee Program



Flexible Learning Program Refugees

Origins:

The Flexible Learning Program is inspired by the work of our combined school founders who each had a clear commitment to working with those who are most in need:

- Saint Mary MacKillop, and the work of the Sisters of St Joseph
- Father Julian Tenison Woods, in his role as priest and Director of SA Catholic Education
- Catherine McAuley and the work of the Sisters of Mercy
- Marcellin Champagnat and the work of the Marist Brothers.

And by the Catholic Church where the Bishops have made a clear statement that urges us to support migrants and refugees "particularly to those who in their country of origin have experienced discrimination, ethnic and racial hatred and persecution. Christ himself teaches us: "By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another " http://www.acmro.catholic.org.au/policies/pastoral_care.htm

Legislation:

The Australian Government, based on Equal Opportunity legislation, has developed the Disability Standards for Education that provides a framework to ensure that students with disability are able to access and participate in education on the same basis as other students. These standards inform the Special Provisions in Curriculum and Assessment in the SACE and SACCSA.

What is the Flexible Learning Program?

- The Flexible Learning Program (FLP) is an alternate senior school education option, which enables students to complete their South Australian Certificate of Education (SACE).
- The FLP is run by qualified teachers through a case management model, with each student being allocated a case manager to oversee their educational program.
- Support staff, such as ESO's, administration and health professionals, are also crucial to the running of the program.
- Within the FLP, teaching is not undertaken in the traditional classroom setting, rather, a range of community based learning activities are utilised, such as employment, TAFE studies and volunteer or community work.
- These community learning experiences are then packaged as SACE Stage One and Two Community Studies subjects, with students required to collect and collate evidence of their learning, and reflect upon this learning, as part of their subject.
- The emphasis is on individual student personal **development**, recognising prior learning and enhancing skills and knowledge for future participation in the community.

Who are our students?

At Tenison Woods College we have utilised the flexibilities of the SACE to create a program to service the needs of refugees in our local community. We have two distinct groups those who come from African countries and have a background in European languages and those who come from Burma who have no background in European languages written or spoken. The main thrust of this project is those refugees who have not acquired language sufficient to allow them to engage in work. The students in this program are mainly adults who have limited or no experience of schooling and who have had limited opportunity to acquire skills to participate in the lifestyle of an urban environment.

Partners:

Migrant Resource Centre, Mt Gambier and Adelaide.
Interwork

The Program

The character of this program is to develop language learning to enhance the student's ability to access work and to build capacity to engage with and enjoy Australian lifestyle. The key component is also to allow them to participate in our democracy by empowering them to understand the tenants of our democratic society.

- Language Acquisition: Create a language learning program in conjunction with into work and based on their program Give It a Go. This course is an adaptation of an entry-level work preparation course delivered in buying into work with support from ESL teachers and support workers.
- ICT: Undertake an ICT training program to develop basic skills as an access strategy for work and to empower students in accessing training and knowledge of Australian society.
- Work: Support students to engage with the case management approach to work placement undertaken by staff from Tenison Woods College and Interwork. This will involve interpreting services and support workers helping the students analyse strengths in their prior work skills and helping to identify realistic work goals and to put in place an opportunity for work experience. The case management process will involve individual reviews to establish development of individual goals and future career planning.
- Community Cultural Development: provide a series of workshops on community participation and assertiveness training to enhance skills in interpersonal relationships in work and community interactions. A significant part of

these workshops will be to enhance civics skills by analysing current news items and role-playing appropriate civic responses to understanding issues and resolving concerns in the community.

- Cultural Sharing. Enhance student language development by inviting groups of refugees students to share their culture with classes through workshops to Groups of students will be invited to link with school classes at Tenison Woods College by actively engaging classes in hands-on activities such as art weaving and cooking.
- Enterprise: Explore with some community leaders as to the opportunities for enterprise development.

SACE recognition

- establishing an individual Curriculum Plan for each student which will include recognition of their commitment to Catholic Education,
- recognition of learning through the VET accreditation procedure,
- Undertaking learning and assessment in the English, Maths, PLP and compulsory parts of the SACE
- writing Community Studies Contracts at Stage One or Two for each student, based around their lifestyle changes and work place learning,
- recognizing broader learning such as their continued participation in sport, music or other community activity,
- utilizing the Work Education Curriculum Statement for both Stage One and Stage Two subjects, particularly Work Place Practice,
- implementing the Recognition of Other Learning Policy of The SACE Board, and Community Learning
- providing learning support for completion of learning contracts and SACE requirements.

What are our links with the community?

The FLP works closely with a range of community organisations to support and enhance students' programs. These include:

- Migrant Resource Centre Mount Gambier
- local employers and businesses, employment agencies
- local education providers and registered training organisations, eg, TAFE, GTE.
- Government support agencies, eg Centrelink, Housing SA, Families SA, Disability SA
- Non-government organisations, eg. Centacare, Domestic Violence Service, Salvation Army
- Volunteer organisations, eg. Meals on Wheels, aged care facilities,
- Service organisations, eg. Navy cadets, One and All tall ships program, Duke of Edinburgh awards program
- Local health providers, eg. GP's, counsellors, community health, mental health services.

Who is in our team?

The Tenison Woods College Flexible Learning Program is staffed with a multidisciplinary team, designed to cater to the diverse learning and psycho-social needs of our students. The team who work with refugees includes:

Suzanne Pepe
Case Manager
87244655

Joe Moriarty
Case Manager
Ph.: 8724 4640

Dennise Howell
Educational Support Officer
Ph: 8724 4634



Flexible Learning Program

Origins:

The Flexible Learning Program is inspired by the work of our combined school founders who each had a clear commitment to working with those who are most in need:

- Saint Mary Of the Cross, McKillop, and the work of the Sisters of St Joseph
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Legislation:

The Australian Government, based on Equal Opportunity legislation, has developed the Disability Standards for Education that provides a framework to ensure that students with disability are able to access and participate in education on the same basis as other students. These standards inform the Special Provisions in Curriculum and Assessment in the SACE and SACCSA. The Minister for Education in South Australia has approved provisions for flexibility of attendance based on a student engagement within approved learning programs.

What is the Flexible Learning Program?

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- The FLP is run by qualified teachers through a case management model, with each student being allocated a case manager to oversee their educational program.
- Support staff, such as ESO's, administration and health professionals, are also crucial to the running of the program.
- Within the FLP, teaching is not undertaken in the traditional classroom setting, rather, a range of community based learning activities are utilised, such as employment, TAFE studies and volunteer or community work.
- These community learning experiences are then packaged as SACE Stage One and Two flexible subjects, with students required to collect and collate evidence of their learning, and reflect upon this learning, as part of their subject.
- The emphasis is on individual student personal development, recognising prior learning and enhancing skills and knowledge for future participation in the community.

Who are our students?

The FLP recognises that individual students often have diverse learning needs, and many may require an individualised program specifically designed these needs. For many young people the traditional model of schooling is not appropriate, this is often the case for students groups such as:

- Students who are more practical "hands on" learners
- Students who prefer/need to enter the workforce early, rather than remain at mainstream school
- Students who are in danger of becoming disengaged from education and learning.
- Students with disabilities, learning difficulties or mental health conditions, particularly depression or anxiety
- Students who are pregnant, are young parents, or are caring for others, e.g. family members.
- Students who are homeless or living in poverty
- Students who have experienced stress or trauma

What happens within a student's Flexible Learning Program?

Tenison Woods College is able to support these students in achieving their SACE by:

- establishing an individual Curriculum Plan for each student which will include recognition of their commitment to Catholic Education,
- recognition of learning through the VET accreditation procedure,
- undertaking learning and assessment in the English, Maths, PLP and compulsory parts of the SACE
- writing Community Studies Contracts at Stage One or Two for each student, based around their lifestyle changes and work place learning,
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The FLP works closely with a range of community organisations to support and enhance students' programs. These include:

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- Government support agencies, e.g. Centrelink, Housing SA, Families SA, Disability SA
- Non-government organisations, e.g. Centacare, Domestic Violence Service, Salvation Army

- Volunteer organisations, e.g. Meals on Wheels, aged care facilities,
- Service organisations, e.g. Navy cadets, One and All tall ships program, Duke of Edinburgh awards program
- Local health providers, e.g. GP's, counsellors, community health, mental health services.

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<i>Joe Moriarty</i> <i>Case Manager</i> <i>Ph: 8724 4640</i>	<i>Michael Perry</i> <i>Case Manager</i> <i>Ph: 8724 4655</i>	<i>Susie Boksem</i> <i>Case Manager</i> <i>Ph: 8724 4642</i>
<i>Dale Zampogna</i> <i>Case Manager</i> <i>Ph: 8724 4654</i>	<i>Annie Clifford</i> <i>Educational Support Officer</i> <i>Ph: 8724 4645</i>	<i>Dennise Howell</i> <i>Educational Support Officer</i> <i>Ph: 8724 4634</i>