



Newtown  
Neighbourhood  
Centre Inc.

# Multicultural Carer Support Project

Final Evaluation Report - August 2007

Funded by NSW Health

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# Evaluation Report: Three Year Multicultural Carer Support Project

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# Introduction: about the Multicultural Carer Support Project

The Multicultural Carer Support Project has been a three year NSW Carers Program – Local Carers Grants project funded by NSW Health and auspiced by Newtown Neighbourhood Centre (NNC). It was set up to assist carers from the following communities living in the Marrickville and Leichhardt LGAs from the following communities:

- Aboriginal
- Arabic
- Chinese (both Cantonese and Mandarin speaking)
- CFF Yugoslavia (Croatian, Macedonian, Serbian)
- Greek
- Vietnamese

The following report is an overview of the outcomes of the evaluation process that was developed and implemented as part of the project design. It provides details of the project activities over the three years of the project and specifically is an annual activity report for the third year 2006-07. It captures the outcomes and issues at the end of the 3 year project.

## Aim of the project

The aim of the Multicultural Carer Support Project was to provide access and equity to carers from the identified Aboriginal community as well as CALD communities, including Arabic, Chinese, Communities From Former Yugoslavia (Croatian, Serbian, Macedonian), Greek and Vietnamese, in Marrickville and Leichhardt LGAs and surrounding areas.

## Objectives of the project

- To enhance the emotional well being of carers
- To inform, educate and support carers in their first language
- To reduce social isolation through support networks
- To assist CALD carers to access available services.

## Project Design

The following activities were proposed in the project design:

- Plan, promote and hold separate carer forums in community languages for the five specified CALD communities
- Plan, promote and hold one culturally specific carer forum for Aboriginal carers
- Establish 6 informal support networks, following from the six carer forums
- Make referrals for carers as required.

The project design also included an ongoing process for capturing data from the project and for evaluating the forums and support networks to inform the project development over the three years. The evaluation process included data on forum participants, feedback on ideas for ongoing support networks and feedback on the forums and support. This has enabled significant data on support needs of carers in the target CALD and Indigenous communities.

# Project Process and Strategies

The project was initially funded in August 2004 and after recruitment processes (the first worker left after a short time) it commenced again in June 2005. The following strategies were used in the development and implementation of the project over the past two and a half years:

## Ongoing during the project

1. Networking with other agencies, in particular:
  - HACC and other community care service providers in the Inner West
  - Ethno specific agencies and bi-lingual workers, both locally based NGOs and bi-lingual workers in government agencies such as Centrelink, NSW Health (both Marrickville and Canterbury Community Health and Sydney and South Western Sydney Area Health Service)
  - Carers NSW

This was done through ongoing participation in the HACC Forum and attending local networking events and meetings and regional and state-wide networks (eg Multicultural Carers Alliance hosted by Carers NSW)

2. Promotion of the project – the project has been promoted in the following ways:
  - Via community service, HACC and community care networks
  - Through Councils and local libraries
  - Via ethno specific agencies and bi-lingual workers
  - Via ethnic media, both print media and community radio
  - Via Centrelink directly writing to carers from particular communities inviting them to the forums

The promotional activities undertaken fall into three categories:

- general promotion – to raise awareness of the project
- promotion of the CALD specific and Indigenous Carers Forums – through networks of bi-lingual workers, Centrelink, other agencies and ethnic media
- promotion of multicultural events to carers from CALD communities (2005 summer luncheon, 2006 Carers Week event, 2007 Seniors Week lunch/event)

During 2007 a summary project report to promote the Multicultural Carer Support Service and its key outcomes was distributed to

- Marrickville and Leichhardt State and Federal MPs
- NSW Department of Ageing Disability and Home Care
- NSW Department of Health
- Marrickville Aged Services Forum
- Inner West HACC Forum
- HACC Development Officer
- Carers NSW

3. Project support via Project Steering Committee

The project was also supported by a Project Steering Committee that has played a role in planning project activities. This group has had core of members (Newtown Neighbourhood Centre, Centrelink, Health, Commonwealth Carelink) as well as other members, as

workers from different ethno specific services and agencies participated for the planning of different forums and initiatives during the project.

Representatives from across all agencies participated in a project evaluation workshop in August 2006 which reviewed the work of the project over the previous year and lead into the project recommendations.

During the three years of the project, the Steering Committee shifted with different ethno specific services and bi-lingual workers for periods of time to plan each of the Forums.

## **During year 2 – 2005-06**

### **Forums for CALD communities**

4. Planned, organised and ran a half day Chinese Carers Forum in September 2005 at the Marrickville Town Hall
  - Interpreters available in both Mandarin and Cantonese
  - Information sessions on issues relevant to the carer's role provided in both Mandarin and Cantonese
  - Written material available for carers on a wide range of issues relevant to carers, in both Mandarin and Cantonese – via information stalls. Many of the information stalls were also staffed by workers from other agencies who had an opportunity to talk to the carers and answer questions
  - Gentle exercise/Tai Chi session as a relaxation and healthy activity for carers
  - A culturally appropriate Chinese meal provided for lunch; this also provided an opportunity for carers to meet and talk
  
5. Planned, organised and ran a half day Vietnamese Carers Forum in November 2005 at the Herbert Greedy Hall in Marrickville
  - Interpreters available in Vietnamese
  - Information sessions on issues relevant to the carer's role provided in Vietnamese
  - Written material available for carers on a wide range of issues relevant to carers, in Vietnamese – via information stalls. Some of the information stalls were also staffed by workers from other agencies who had an opportunity to talk to the carers and answer questions
  - Gentle exercise/Tai Chi session as a relaxation and healthy activity for carers
  - A culturally appropriate Vietnamese meal provided for lunch; this also provided an opportunity for carers to meet and talk
  
6. Planned, organised and ran a half day Arabic Carers Forum in May 2006 at Canterbury City Community Centre in Lakemba
  - Interpreters available in Arabic
  - Information sessions on issues relevant to the carer's role provided in Arabic
  - Written material available for carers on a wide range of issues relevant to carers, in Arabic.
  - Gentle exercise session as a relaxation and healthy activity for carers
  - A culturally appropriate Arabic meal provided for lunch; this also provided an opportunity for carers to meet and talk.

7. Planned, organised and ran a half day Greek Carers Forum in June 2006 at the Cyprus Club in Stanmore (Marrickville LGA)
  - Interpreters available in Greek
  - Information sessions on issues relevant to the carer's role provided in Greek
  - Written material available for carers on a wide range of issues relevant to carers, in Greek. Some of the information stalls were also staffed by workers from other agencies who had an opportunity to talk to the carers and answer questions
  - Gentle exercise session as a relaxation and healthy activity for carers
  - A culturally appropriate Greek meal provided for lunch; this also provided an opportunity for carers to meet and talk. The setting in the club worked well for this and encouraged groups of carers to talk

### **Follow up support networks and events for carers**

8. Planned and organised a multicultural summer luncheon in December 2005 as a follow up activity and to provide an opportunity for carers from different cultural backgrounds to gather together and share a meal. Carers who attended the two forums (Chinese and Vietnamese) were invited and attended, as well as other carers that NNC has contact with.
9. Produced and distributed quarterly newsletters to Chinese carers:
  - people who attended the Chinese Carers Forum
  - mailing list of CASS
10. Organised a Vietnamese carers support group, operated in partnership with the Vietnamese worker at May Murray Neighbourhood Centre in Marrickville and to meet on a bi-monthly basis, with guest speakers

## **During year 3 – 2006-07**

### **Forums for CALD communities**

11. Planned, organised and ran a half day Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander's Carers Gathering at Inner West Aboriginal Community Company (IWACC) in November 2006
  - Promoted via event poster including acknowledgement of funding sources and Indigenous art work
  - this was a large gathering with a lot of Indigenous workers present as well as carers. It provided an opportunity for the project to engage with the community
  - The 'gathering' program was facilitated by an Indigenous Community Development Officer from a local Centrelink office acting the role of MC
  - Information sessions on issues relevant to the carer's role provided; also a number of Aboriginal services attended and workers from each gave a brief introduction to their service
  - Written material available for carers at Information Stalls on a wide range of issues relevant to carers, in particular material that was culturally appropriate to carers from Indigenous communities. Information included Alzheimer's Australia, Care Connect, NSW Dept of Housing, Medicare, Carers NSW, Association of Genetic Support of Australia, Aboriginal Mental Health Unit RPA Hospital, Centrelink
  - Laughter workshop provided a relaxing activity for carers
  - A culturally appropriate 'bush tucker' meal provided for lunch, catered by IWACC; this also provided an opportunity for carers to meet and talk

12. Planned, organised and ran a half day CFF Yugoslavia (Croatia, Serbia, Macedonia) Forum at Newtown Neighbourhood Centre in May 2007
- Information sessions on issues relevant to the carer's role provided in the three community languages; 6 interpreters from Health Care Interpreter Service and Centrelink
  - Written material available for carers on a wide range of issues relevant to carers, in community languages
  - Gentle exercise session as a relaxation and healthy activity for carers
  - A culturally appropriate lunch provided for the group; this provided an opportunity for carers to meet and talk

### **Follow up support networks and events for carers**

13. Ongoing networking and support for carers from target CALD communities for this project occurred in the following ways:

<b>Chinese carers</b>	<p>The project produced and distributed bi monthly newsletters to Chinese carers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· people who attended the Chinese Carers Forum</li> <li>· mailing list of CASS</li> <li>· via Chinese worker at Marrickville Community Health.</li> </ul> <p>Each newsletter included information on topics of interest to carers and information about forthcoming events, all translated into Traditional Chinese.</p> <p>Topics covered in the newsletters (5 in 2006 and 3 in 2007) were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Carelink Brochure</li> <li>Home Care Service Brochure</li> <li>Diabetes Fact Sheet</li> <li>Autism Association of NSW Brochure</li> <li>Chinese Australian Services Society Information Sheet</li> <li>Carers NSW Brochure</li> <li>Chinese Dementia Helpline Brochure</li> <li>Cantonese Support Group</li> <li>St George Multicultural Carers Support Information</li> <li>Carers Questionnaire</li> <li>CanRevive Carers Project – Carers of Chinese cancer patients</li> <li>Association of Genetic Support of Australasia Brochure</li> <li>Muscular Dystrophy Association Brochure</li> </ul> <p>In April 2007 a questionnaire was sent out with the newsletter and 13 were returned (52% response rate). This survey demonstrated that Chinese carers who had attended forum and received the newsletter understand more about the role of carers, have a better knowledge of services available to carers. 77% had used services or attended events for carers as a result of reading newsletter, 100% found the newsletter interesting and informative and 92% would like to continue to receive the newsletter and would be interested in reading about food / diet, specific health issues, sport / exercise and respite care options.</p>
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<p><b>Vietnamese carers</b></p>	<p>The project organised a Vietnamese carers support group. This group operated in partnership with the Vietnamese worker at May Murray Neighbourhood Centre in Marrickville and met bi-monthly with a guest speaker. The Multicultural Carer Support Project organised a program of speakers, lined up speakers and organised an interpreter for these information sessions. It was promoted via the existing Vietnamese groups at May Murray, other local networks and via ethnic media including SBS. It has been a valuable group for carers but a key lesson is that groups like this take time to develop.</p> <p>This group met five times in 2006 and once in 2007. Guest speakers covered topics such as</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Caring for someone with dementia</li> <li>Community services</li> <li>Falls prevention and safe lifting</li> <li>Arthritis</li> <li>Support information and care for people with muscular dystrophy</li> <li>Support for people who care for someone with a genetic condition</li> <li>Nutrition for older people</li> <li>Mind your Mind – keeping your brain active and healthy</li> <li>Stress management (cancelled due to room unavailability)</li> </ul>
<p><b>Greek carers</b></p>	<p>The project attempted to set up a group in Newtown, but it was difficult to get local partner agency involved and committed to promoting the event. There was one information session organised with St Basil's Homes as the service presenting, however low attendance.</p> <p>A second information session at Cyprus Club was more successful, promoted via May Murray, NNC Greek Neighbour Aid group, and Marrickville Community Health. This session presented and reflected on 'a carer's journey' and provided carers with an opportunity to meet and talk</p>
<p><b>Arabic carers</b></p>	<p>A support group providing information sessions was set up with the intention of a monthly meeting rotating between Canterbury and Marrickville. Two meetings were held, one at each location, but did not continue due to a number of factors (room not available in Canterbury, bi-lingual worker on extended family leave) – see also discussion on ongoing support in section on lessons from the project</p>
<p><b>Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander carers</b></p>	<p>The Project Worker attended Seniors Week event at IWACC and engaged with a group of Aboriginal carers; she then was invited to their group</p> <p>Two follow up bus trips were organised, using the bus from Tom Foster Community Centre. They were primarily social events and provided an environment for social contact. The first was organised in conjunction with IWACC and was a large outing. The second was more widely promoted but only a small number attended: it provided an opportunity for carers of children with a</p>

	disability to make contact and discuss issues. It was organised in partnership with AGSA (a non Aboriginal organisation)
<b>CFF Yugoslav carers</b>	No follow up activities organised as this forum was near end of 3 year project and there was no capacity for ongoing support However carers and care recipients were linked in to the Day Care Centre at NNC

14. Organised a Multicultural Carers Lunch in October 2006 (part of Carers Week events, organised with financial support from Leichhardt Council). It provided an opportunity for carers who had participated in forums, together with other CALD carers who had been identified by the project and project partner organisations, to come together, discuss carer issues, participate in gentle exercise and have lunch. This event was also used as an opportunity to get feedback in focus groups on the Forums and on the ongoing support provided under the Multicultural Carers Project.
15. Organised 2 tables of carers from CALD communities to attend a Seniors Week event (lunch and performance) at Petersham RSL, put on by Marrickville Council. A total of 16 carers organised by NNC attended this event which provided an opportunity for carers to meet and network with other carers, as well as have some respite from caring.
16. Organising a final Carers Luncheon in August 2007 (with financial support from Leichhardt Council)

## Project participation and access

The project aimed to access carers from 5 CALD communities and Aboriginal carers. Over the three years of the project carers from each of these groups have accessed the project, as the data below indicates:

- carers from six communities participated in ethno-specific carer forums organised by the Multicultural Carers project

<b>CALD Community</b>	<b>Number of people who participated</b>	<b>Number who identified as carers</b>
Chinese	50	29
Vietnamese	35	11
Arabic	30	12
Greek	43	23
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	25	7 *
CFF Yugoslavia (Croatian, Serbian and Macedonian)	45	20

\* number who identified as carers on the 16 of official Carers Follow up Forms completed. Others may have been carers

- carers from five of the six target communities participating in ethno specific ongoing support networks and activities:

Chinese carers	Eight 'The Choice to Care' Chinese Carers Newsletters (translated, bi monthly) sent as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>directly to 25 carers</li> <li>8 copies to CASS</li> <li>8 copies to Marrickville Community Health Centre, Chinese Worker</li> </ul>
Vietnamese carers – information sessions	5 Information Sessions held with 16 to 24 carers attending each session: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>May 06 – 17 attended</li> <li>July 06 – 22 attended</li> <li>Sept 06 – 16 attended</li> <li>Nov 06 – 24 attended</li> <li>Mar 07 – 18 attended</li> <li>May 07 – cancelled due to hall availability</li> </ul>
Greek carers – information sessions	October 2006 – 2 attended (at NNC) May 2007 – 18 attended Cyprus Club Stanmore
Arabic carers – information sessions	Nov 06 – 10 attended Canterbury City Community Centre Jan 07 – 22 attended Herb Greedy Hall Marrickville
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander carers -	April 07 – 16 on bus trip May 07 – 4 on bus trip
CFF Yugoslav carers	No follow up activities or support organised as this forum was near end of 3 year project and there was no capacity for ongoing support

- Numbers for other CALD Carer Events held during the project were:

Summer Luncheon 2005	65 (Vietnamese/Chinese/Former Yugoslavia/Indigenous) carers, including carers from the Chinese and Vietnamese communities who had made contact with the project via the Forums participated in a multicultural end of year luncheon
Carers Week Event October 2006	45 attended Newtown RSL Club (this event funded by grant from Leichhardt Council)
Christmas Cards 2006	25 Chinese, 20 Arabic, 27 Greek, 6 ATSI sent
Seniors Week Event March 2007	16 carers contacted by NNC attended lunch and performance organised by Marrickville Council

## Impact of the Project for carers: participant feedback

Participant feedback was obtained at the end of each of the Forums and overall carers highly valued the Forums in terms of

- Finding the forum beneficial
- Obtaining information that will help them in their role as a carer
- Having a better idea where to get services to help in their role as a carer
- Knowing how to get in touch with services
- Knowing where to go to get support if they feel isolated and lonely

Feedback from carers from each of the target CALD communities on the Forums and the value of the ongoing support networks was obtained via focus groups held as part of the Carers Week gathering organised by NNC in October 2006. All carers who participated in this program were invited to this event. It highlighted:

#### About the Forums/future forums

- the forums were valued by all groups – the participants found the information good, and also enjoyed the meals, the gentle exercise and the opportunity to meet with carers of same language
- would like a later start (Greek)
- have less speakers so that they have more time and talk in more detail
- interpreters need to be inclusive and helpful to all groups (Mandarin)
- more information from Centrelink
- more information on rights and responsibilities of carers
- more information on services, waiting times etc
- it was suggested that the invitation letter be translated (not understood in English – mentioned by Cantonese group)
- need for more material to be translated (Cantonese group,
- instructor for gentle exercise spoke English and was not understood (Cantonese)
- promotion in ethnic media (newspapers)

#### Suggestions for ongoing support for carers

- Overall carers indicated that they feel isolated in the caring role and find it difficult to get out; they often reported that they don't know any other carers
- Carers support once per month (Cantonese)/give carers a break in the form of a support group (Cantonese)
- Carer meetings, regular meetings, group or lunch to meet other people and get information about services (as well as have time out) (Cantonese, Arabic, Greek, CFF Yugoslavia); prefer ethno specific group (Greek)
- More events and activities so carers can go and meet others
- Get together with other communities also good as a way of socialising with other cultural groups in the same situation
- Like Chinese newsletter (important to have translated into a Chinese language) – would like this type of information to continue and would like a broad range of topics; would like more information on Centrelink, heart disease and mental health (Chinese)
- More written information sent out eg on Home Care, Respite, list of services, what to do in an emergency, ageing parent carer issues, accommodation (Chinese, Arabic, Greek, CFF Yugoslavia)
- More information to access services but also when do access services want a worker with language eg from Home Care (Arabic)
- information session at Centrelink; regular information desk with Chinese worker at Centrelink - say one afternoon per week; more information on Centrelink (Cantonese, Mandarin, Arabic)
- Phone support/buddy via phone would be difficult as the care recipient does not like it (Mandarin)

# Evaluation of how the forums were organised

## What has worked well?

### ***Working in partnership with Centrelink***

The project worked in partnership with Centrelink, with Centrelink doing the following:

- A mailout to carers registered with Centrelink from each of the six targeted communities to promote each forum. At each forum carers arrived carrying the letters from Centrelink, so this was demonstrated to be an effective way of getting information out to carers. It was also a particularly good way of accessing carers from low socio-economic backgrounds. However it is recognised that this strategy did not contribute to the project getting to 'hidden carers' so it was important that it was only one of the promotional strategies used.
- A mailout to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander carers registered with the NSW Department of Housing
- Providing interpreters for each forum
- Having Centrelink staff available to provide information at each forum
- Actively participating in the project Steering Committee

This was an effective and positive partnership for the Multicultural Carer Support Project and creates opportunities for future carers projects and initiatives to work in partnership with Centrelink. It is a good opportunity and may also help build a trust relationship between carers and Centrelink, addressing fears or concerns

### ***The ethnic media responded well***

NNC's project received a significant amount of free of charge advertising in the ethnic media, both radio and newspapers. It appeared that it was easier to engage the media for CALD communities as the ethnic media shows a strong concern about their communities.

### ***Working in partnership with the ethno specific organisations***

The Multicultural Carer Support Project experienced a very high level of goodwill from ethno-specific organisations and services to work cooperatively on the project. These agencies and services used their contacts and reputations to promote the forums in their communities and were willing to engage actively in the project planning and organising (eg via attending the Steering Committee meetings, promoting through their organisations and contacts and participating in planning and setting up.

The work with Indigenous carers indicated the importance of working in partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and the time that it takes to build trust, relationships and joint initiatives. This work provided opportunities for the Project Worker to engage with Indigenous workers and community members involved with IWACC which helped support project initiatives. However, it is recognised that longer term relationships are important to engaging and developing joint initiatives.

### ***Process for registering***

Aspects of the process for carers registering to attend the forums that worked especially well were:

- Registering via an ethno-specific organisation eg Chinese carers

registering via CASS. This worked well as CASS is in contact with the wider Chinese community, were able to talk to carers and this meant less costs for interpreters in getting the Forums organised

- Registering via NNC for communities where NNC has a bi-lingual work i.e. Greek carers could speak to the Greek NA worker at NNC
- Links with day centres – the involvement of the bi-lingual workers communicating with carers about the forums was important

Having people available who speak community languages was important in getting carers to attend the forums.

A streamlined process for collecting information and feedback at the forums was developed for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander forum and this proved more useful for the final two forums in 2006-07.

***Translation of flyers and promotional material***

Translation of promotional material and flyers for the forums done by an official translation service and verified by an ethno-specific agency. This had a number of benefits:

- it was done well: it was clear and consistent in the community context
- the ethno specific agencies understand the field well
- cost savings to the Multicultural Carer Support Project

A culturally appropriate flyer using Indigenous Art was important for promoting the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Gathering.

In summary, the planning of the forums has established the role of NNC in working with CALD agencies and carers from different communities.

## Evaluation of how the forums actually ran

### What has worked well?

***All sessions were interpreted in community languages***

- Meant that carers were able to participate and get information in their first language

***Information available for carers***

- Stalls at each Forum had a lot of information for carers from other providers; there was a mass of information for carers
- Information provided was in community languages
- Information was available from a wide range of organisations, so carers got a wide range of information. Observations from workers present were that carers were very interested in collecting this information

***Registration process was refined***

- The registration process for each of the forums was refined based on experience from earlier forums and also based on information and advice provided by the ethno-specific agencies working with NNC on each forum. A result of this was that the Multicultural Carer Support

Project obtained good information on the people present to add it its database of contacts for multicultural carers

***Format of the forum***

- Time allocated was good
- There was a good range of speakers
- The gentle exercise or Tai Chi was good. It was popular and people found it relaxing. Many inquired where they could do something similar

***Food provided at the forums***

- The food was good – having culturally appropriate food was important and people appreciated it. It is important not to cut costs on food a culturally appropriate meal was a good way for people to engage and for carers to meet.
- There were initially some problems with food for the Arabic forum, as it was important for much of the group that it be Halal. However, the organisers were able to get a certificate to indicate that the food was Halal and that was taken along on the day
- In the Greek forum people present were able to sit down together for a lunch at tables and chairs. While this takes time and is costly, it provided a very positive opportunity for carers to meet and share experiences
- Planning and budgeting for catering at the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Gathering was challenging; it highlighted the need for greater funding and resources to work effectively with this community

***Specific details of particular forums***

- Chinese – had both Mandarin and Cantonese speaking people who were organised in two groups with interpreters in their own language
- Arabic – were able to reach both groups in one go
- CFF Yugoslavia forum – breaking into language groups was challenging but whole group activities like the lunch and exercise brought the group together
- Indigenous gathering – opportunities for individual services present to outline what they provide was useful

## **Challenges and areas that could have been organised differently**

***Information for carers provided at the forums***

- It was suggested that carers would have liked the types of information provided in a carers handbook or carers kit. Carers would have liked a format like this which is condensed with all information in one place and a contact list

***Speakers***

- The speakers were a bit 'hit and miss'. Some were excellent but some were not good at communicating with a large group or working with interpreters. They need cultural awareness and sensitivity as well as

good communication skills and experience at working with an interpreter. Time available in the project to research speakers was limited and it is hard to control and plan the speakers. It has been a learning experience and the project has made changes

***Gentle exercise***

- The gentle exercise was a bit tiring for some participants; it was important to explain that they only need to do what they can/feel comfortable to do
- A laughter workshop was held as part of the Indigenous gathering

***Chinese forum***

- At the Chinese forum, the Mandarin and Cantonese speakers were in separate groups in a large hall. Separating people arriving in to the two groups meant registration took time.
- The venue did not work well as the space was too big and there were two separate groups. It was a large hall and it was difficult for people to make contact. It would have been better for the two groups to be in separate spaces, coming together for morning tea, the exercise session and lunch
- The evaluation session in the form of a facilitated discussion by bi-lingual workers did not work well for participants and did not result in much feedback

***Arabic forum***

- The venue for the Arabic forum was confusing to find, as some people went to the wrong place. Literacy levels meant that some people could not read the flyers, so went to the wrong place or did not come at all. In addition, the day was very wet, making it difficult for people to get out, also affecting participation. It had been hard to organise the venue for the Arabic forum in Canterbury
- Some carers left their care recipient at the forum and had an expectation that the care recipient would be taken home. There was some misunderstanding of the purpose of the session

***Greek forum***

- Transport was an issue. The organisers did not expect the response from Leichhardt and needed a shuttle bus

***Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Carers Gathering***

- Venue to be larger when Information Stalls were such a big part of the event i.e. people needing to access them while still having room to be seated listening to presentations. Different venue for future gathering – rotate venues to avoid potential isolation of organisations/individuals in the community
- Large mail-outs and broad media/organisational promotion did not seem to bring people in large numbers to the event
- Longer presentations by services. Different approach by some workers and the way they seem to want to communicate with audience.
- Catering needs made clearer in lead up to the event eg. limitations and objectives of funding for project between different organisations
- Provide a bus and organise client pick up with Aboriginal specific organisations. This takes time, planning resources, and trust between

service providers

***CFF Yugoslavia Gathering***

- Translations in 3 Community Languages worked well. Large group consulted at beginning of the day about having presentations in 2 different rooms: Macedonian and Croatian/Serbian. Language groups coming together for exercise relieved tension created by division between rooms
- Interpreters in 3 Community Languages – briefed as co-facilitators to lead participants through the program
- Many couples who came (carer + care recipient) – highlights appropriate nature of this type of relaxed community event where RSVP flexible
- Venue – easy access preferred but everyone managed fine (made clear re no easy access on promotional material)

***Transport to the forums***

- Ideally it would have been better to provide transport from home as the bus picking people up from the station did not always work. Picking up from one point like a station did not work, except for the bus from Ashfield for the Chinese forum. Individual pick up could have been arranged after the Multicultural Carer Support Project had details of who was attending although this may have taken time and would have been more expensive

***Geographic area covered***

- The project was initially funded for carers from Marrickville and Leichhardt LGAs. However, carers travelled from much further a field, beyond Marrickville and Leichhardt LGAs, and beyond the Inner West, in some cases from outer suburbs and the Eastern suburbs. It has become clear that geographic boundaries mean nothing. Carers heard about the forums from the ethnic media and people travelled significant distances to attend. This preparedness to travel distances indicates a need for these types of programs

***Evaluation process***

- The evaluation at the end of each session was hard work and was sometimes chaotic, meaning there is some concern about how effective it was. Low literacy levels in first language were also a barrier to participating in the evaluation, although in some cases people got direct help eg the Vietnamese group. Because of the difficulties experienced from the first group, the project tried different approaches to end of forum evaluation
- Evaluation at end of the forums – it has proved difficult to do this effectively. Future approaches could try breaking people into small groups or to make finding out what people want into an activity as one of the specific sessions.
- Combined registration and feedback worked better

# About ongoing networking with CALD carers

The project also aimed to provide ongoing support networks for CALD carers beyond the forums. Details of how this has been provided is outlined in the section Project Process and Strategies above. It has been provided through:

- the Chinese carers via a regular translated carers newsletter and invitations to a carers' summer lunch. This has provided information and has profiled a service. It was well translated. This is distributed more widely to a mailing list of Chinese carers through CASS and Marrickville Community Health. The newsletter became a good resource which is getting widespread distribution in the community. It could be further developed by working with Centrelink to send it with their carers news to all Chinese carers on their books
- a Vietnamese carers monthly carers support group in conjunction with May Murray
- one off information sessions with Arabic and Greek carers (two sessions for each community held)
- bus trips for Indigenous carers
- CFF Yugoslavia carers and carer recipients were linked in to the Day Care Centre at NNC

Other ideas that were considered for this follow up and networking were:

	<b>Details and comments</b>
Phone buddy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>· The idea here was to encourage carers participating in the forums to buddy up and keep in touch with each other after the sessions</li><li>· Workers feel that this would not work as the person is not in control of when the calls would be made and there is likely to be fear among carers of giving details to a person they have barely met</li></ul>
Further information sessions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>· Sessions with speakers providing information on carers services – this could be additional information beyond the forums or updates</li></ul>
Setting up smaller groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>· Setting up smaller mutual aid groups</li></ul>
Teleconferencing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>· Could organise a teleconference support group, with about 8 people to bring the people together regularly. This would require some capacity to follow up by a bi-lingual worker if any issues emerged in the group.</li><li>· The main barrier to this approach is the availability of workers time</li></ul>

In planning and organising follow-up and networking for carers who attended the Forums organised by the Multicultural Carer Support Project there has been reliance on the goodwill of the ethno-specific organisations, in terms of doing mailouts, organising interpreters and making contact with the carers.

This follow up and support requires resources and effectively means that the Multicultural Carer Support Project is getting bigger as it goes along as no longer is the focus on just planning and organising the forums but ongoing support is required for each of the CALD groups.

In the last six months of the project, when NNC was not able to make a commitment about ongoing involvement, because the funding was due to end in June/July 2007, it became more

difficult to engage partner agencies in setting up and resourcing ongoing support activities, groups and networks for carers from the target CALD communities. NNC was not able to commit to any ongoing involvement as the project had not been refunded and resources are not available. As a result, ongoing support initiatives including the Chinese newsletter, Arabic, Greek and Vietnamese groups / information sessions, outings for ATSI carers, and a follow-up event with carers from CFF Yugoslavia, were not able to continue.

## Lessons from the project

### Key strengths of this approach

Working in partnership with a range of agencies

- The partnership approach, with NNC working in conjunction with day care centre groups, ethno specific agencies and bi-lingual workers. The model used relied on these agencies and workers supporting the project and would not have worked without this support. However, it has been very good to see ethno-specific agencies working in partnership with the neighbourhood centre
- Develops the skills and knowledge of bi-lingual workers in relation to issues for carers
- A model based on engaging with different organisations, enabling NNC to tap into the multicultural service framework while at the same time playing a coordinating role. This is enabling the project to cover a large number of communities
- A model which has enabled the project to help people identify as carers and tap into hidden carers

Providing support and information to different CALD communities

- An approach which has enabled support and information to be provided to many communities
- Enabled NNC to register with TIS and so can access interpreters

Providing capacity for other carer initiatives in the area

- The project enabled NNC to attract HACC funds to develop a resource kit for bi-lingual workers working with carers
- The project enabled NNC to attract funds from Leichhardt Council in 2006 and 2007 for a Carers Week Event, a multicultural carers lunch, to bring CALD carers contacted in the project together, meet with other carers and have some time out.

Developed a good database of carers

- the project has developed a database of carers in each of the six community groups and contact has been sustained with information and invitations to events and information sessions.
- If there is further funding in the near future to NNC for future carers initiatives, there will be an opportunity to use these contacts to keep in touch with these carers and to keep them engaged

### Challenges in the approach

Working with multiple language groups

- The project has not worked with one language group/community with a bi-lingual worker so it has been difficult to directly interact with carers beyond the forums.

- Language is a barrier and there are limited resources for interpreters. A significant amount of money in the project has also been spent on translations. The language barrier has also made it difficult to communicate with carers
- Translating is difficult – some of the words and concepts are sensitive which makes it difficult; translating needs to be reviewed by bi-lingual workers in the field
- Workers from service providers who presented at forums/information sessions did not always have the appropriate skills and experience working with groups and interpreters

#### Time and resource pressures

- Limited time to promote the project and visit other organisations and make presentations to networks and interagencies
- Limited time for project planning
- Time pressures in the project design – the forums were offered one after another and there was little time for follow up after each one. There was limited time for thinking, planning and communication with carers. Also the design of the project meant that as each forum was held a new group required work to plan and set up the ongoing support initiatives. This meant that the project got larger and larger as time went by, with the part time worker not only planning the next Forum but also supporting and planning for one, then two, three, four then five different support initiatives, as well as extra one off events such as Multicultural lunch etc
- The part time nature of the project worker, again putting pressure on the project. The project really needs a full time position, especially as it has gone on and 'snowballed' and got bigger with the addition of the support networks after the forums (will go from organising one forum to resourcing six support networks)
- The role of the project worker can be somewhat isolated and requires support in different areas. The Neighbourhood Centre context and management structure provided supervision and support – this was regular and helps keep the project on track. However, it can be a logistically overwhelming role and particularly challenging as it has involved establishing a new project.

## Other lessons learnt

### Working in partnership

- Working in partnership with other providers has been a key to success. It needs to be done in advance and it takes time to develop relationships with other agencies. It needs to be focussed on a long term relationship. It has also been important in working with other agencies to plan and structure the programs and initiatives and not just make a last minute call.
- The approach is based on the cooperative working arrangements with partner organisations – the ongoing sustainability of support for carers from these communities is reliant on this continuing
- There needs to be a focus on continuous communication and how NNC and the partner ethno specific and mainstream agencies work together in the future. In doing this it is important to recognise that different organisations do different things so different providers can offer choices
- The time limited nature of the project did make it difficult to sustain partnerships towards the end of the project and to plan ongoing support sessions for carers. In the last six months of the project, when NNC was not able to make a commitment about ongoing involvement, because the funding was due to end in June/July 2007, it became more difficult to engage partner agencies in setting up and resourcing ongoing support activities, groups and networks for carers from the target CALD communities.

### **Project planning to meet needs of different CALD communities**

- The lead in time is important – but we also need to recognise that the project did not have a lot of time
- It is important to trial different ways of doing things but at the same time we need to realise that the same approach does not work in all communities. One model of service delivery does not work in all communities
- Literacy levels in a community are important in determining how to organise forums and to develop ongoing support mechanisms for carers
- The importance of the logistics for each forum – planning for food, venue and transport all need enough time and doing this well is important in rolling out the program to different communities and to the success of the individual day
- There will be challenges in sustaining support and groups of carers on an ongoing basis
- Geographic boundaries (like LGAs) are not specifically relevant for CALD communities and this project has demonstrated that carers from a far wider geographic area will travel to carer groups and events for the language group. While this project was funded for Marrickville and Leichhardt LGAs, and surrounding areas, people travelled significant distances to attend forum.

### **Time limited project**

- The short term nature of the project (3 years funding) meant that there was not time to put in place ongoing support for carers that would be self sustaining. While there may be ongoing benefits for individual carers who are able to access other information, there will not be sustainable outcomes in terms of groups or formal support networks.
- Working with different communities meant that there had not been time in any of the groups established to identify and train a group leader who might sustain the group and the ethno specific services do not have resources to support groups of carers on an ongoing basis

### **Role of the Steering Committee**

- The role of the Steering Committee is important but it is not realistic to expect individual ethno specific organisations to have the resources to participate over a long period of time. Initially it was envisaged that the Steering Committee membership would be ongoing but over time the experience was that ethno specific agencies did not continue to attend after the forum for their community. As a result the role of the Steering Committee was revisited with a few key ongoing members plus ethno specific agencies in the period leading up to and following the relevant forum with an annual meeting of all agencies to review how the project is going and look at ongoing support networks. These changes meant different dynamics

It is suggested that the project be clearer about the role of the Steering Committee and that the structure could be formalised to have a Steering Committee that oversees the whole project and Working Parties with relevant agencies that plan and coordinate individual forums and events.

It needs to be recognised that resourcing the Steering Committee takes time for the project worker

### **Project timing**

- There was a significant delay between the earlier demonstration project run by NNC and the Multicultural Carer Support Project. This meant that a lot of contacts were lost and the project had to effectively start again.
- This is an important lesson in planning future carer support projects as if there is a gap again then the networks with services and the contact with individual CALD carers will be lost and the current database and carer contacts, as well as relationships with partner organisations, will not be able to be used.

# Outcomes for carers

The outcomes for carers from the six target communities have been:

- Access to information on services and support available to carers in community languages on an ongoing basis
- Improved basic access for carers to services, with carers having a contact point at NNC
- Provided resources in community languages
- Opportunities to participate in ongoing activities in order to address isolation of carers and to access ongoing information
- Making contact with other people who are in similar caring roles, both in their own community and in other cultural communities

## Recommendations for future programs

The project has demonstrated a clear need and significant benefits from carers from CALD communities being able to access information in their own language about services that can support them in their caring role and also about the benefits of bringing carers together to share experiences. The section explores ideas for future projects for NNC to build on the Multicultural Carer Support Project.

### Proposed model for future NNC multicultural carer support project

The proposed future model to support carers from CALD communities in the Inner West has a focus on addressing social isolation of carers and bring carers together, while at the same time ensuring that they have access to good and up to date information on carer services. The proposed approach includes a number of elements

- NNC to coordinate a program to employ sessional bi-lingual workers to support carers. This role (ideally full time) would involve:
  - ✦ Developing support structures in response to community needs in different communities (recognising that the same strategies are not appropriate for different communities)
  - ✦ Coordination of a range of information and support network strategies
  - ✦ Coordination of combined multicultural events
  - ✦ Collection of information on carer issues for inclusion in the newsletters
  - ✦ Supporting and guiding the bi-lingual workers
  - ✦ Raising awareness in the local community about carers branding
- The sessional bi lingual workers (part time roles) would be involved in
  - ✦ Acting as a direct point of contact for carers from CALD communities
  - ✦ Group work (eg resourcing small mutual support groups, resourcing carer support groups that provide information)
  - ✦ Production of newsletter
  - ✦ Exploring the buddy system
  - ✦ Piloting the teleconference model

More specifically this model would continue to expand the work targeting CALD carers:

- Continuing carers newsletter with information and resources on services and a focus on practical information – get this translated into the five languages plus produced as culturally appropriate for Indigenous carers; distribute to carers via NNC mailing list, through the ethno specific agencies and via other agencies in touch with carers such as Centrelink
- A couple of larger social events each year that bring all groups of carers together and encourage sharing and social interaction between carers
- Once a year each CALD group could come together for a forum that provides updated carer information

It is also suggested that:

- Any future project that builds on the outcomes of the Multicultural Carer Support Project needs to recognise that carers needs are ongoing especially with the ageing population in many communities, but that the needs of specific ethnic communities may change over time, so the approach needs to be flexible to respond to these changing needs
- The coordination role needs more resources than the current Multicultural Carer Support Project
- The project needs mechanisms for ongoing feedback: we need to be innovative about how we get feedback to better understand carers' needs and to fine tune the project
- The future project needs to be based on continuing and building the current partnerships between NNC and the ethno-specific agencies and focus on working with these agencies to enhance their work with carers. In developing these partnerships we need to be clear about what we mean by partnerships and ensure that initiatives are complementary and that the focus is on working together
- The project could also further develop and distribute resource tools on working with CALD carers for other organisations. This could include practical information and ideas for how agencies can work together in partnership (this element of the project would need research to ensure it does not duplicate existing work).

## **Final recommendations**

In considering a future Multicultural Carer Support Project the following need to be considered:

- Timing is important: it is important to have continuity and to continue the work done to date and not have gaps. If there is a significant break between projects time is lost in restarting, contacts and partnerships are lost and resources would be wasted
- The 'carer' message is hard to communicate in CALD communities. This project has demonstrated the value of raising awareness, of ensuring carers have access to relevant and translated material on carer services and on the caring role and that ethno-specific agencies are educated on the carer role and how to support carers to access information and support
- A future project, while based in the Inner West, could provide support for carers from CALD communities across the Inner West, South West Sydney and Southern Sydney and using promotion via community media will attract and support carers from a wider geographic area.