

Improving culturally safe cancer care for people from refugee backgrounds in a regional setting

Presenter: Lisa Carson, Refugee Cancer Support Project Officer
Bendigo Health



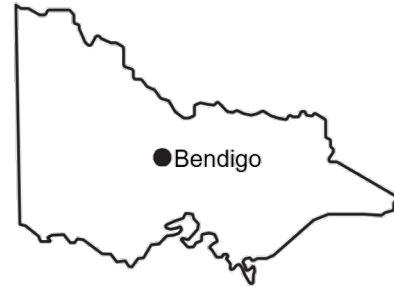
This work represents a collaboration between:



Background



Bendigo Health (BH)
Bendigo Regional Cancer Centre (BRCC)



Large communities of former refugees



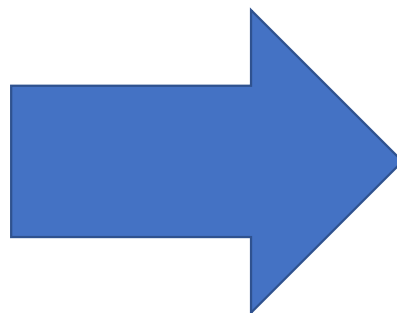
Evidence of Need

What we saw:

- Late-stage cancer diagnoses
- Poor cancer outcomes

What we heard:

- Delayed health-care seeking behaviours
- Reluctance to engage with cancer services

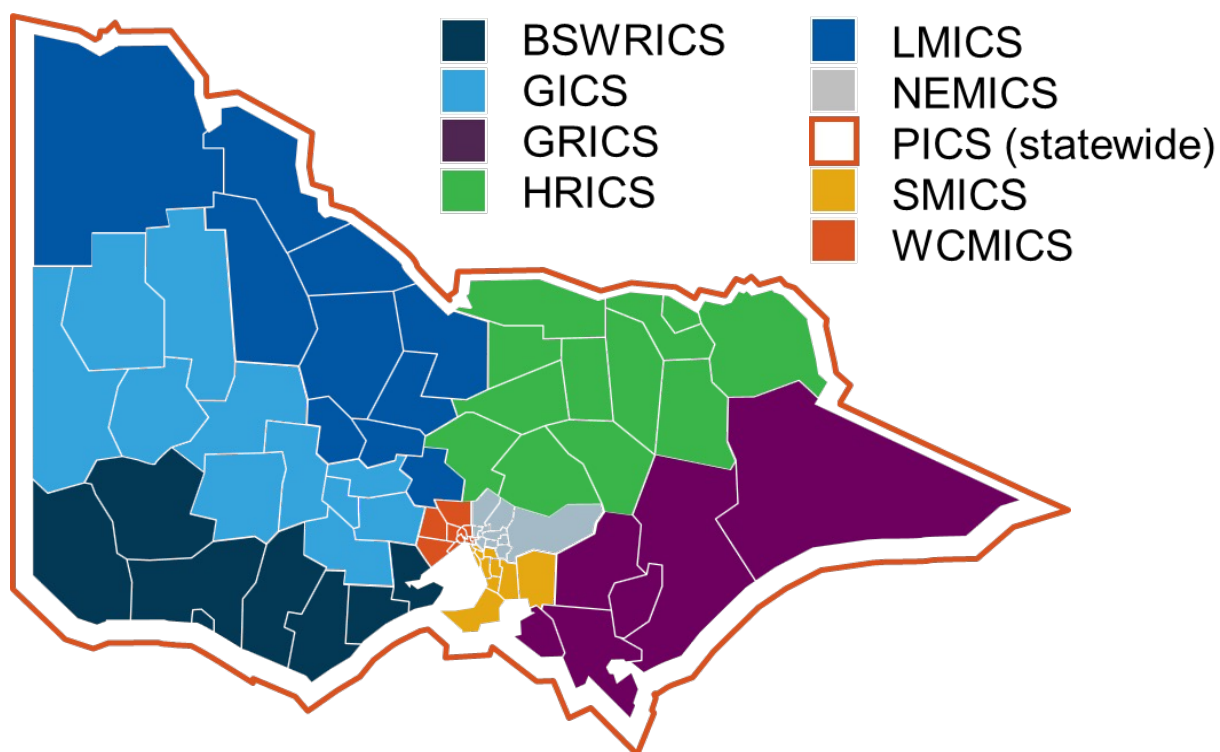


What we needed:

An approach that addressed:

- Community perspective and experiences
- Service system barriers and enablers

Victorian Integrated Cancer Services (VICS)



Bendigo Community Health Services (BCHS)



- New arrival settlement program
- Refugee health clinic
- Engagement and transition support
- Education, capacity and advocacy programs
- Trauma and torture counselling
- AOD support



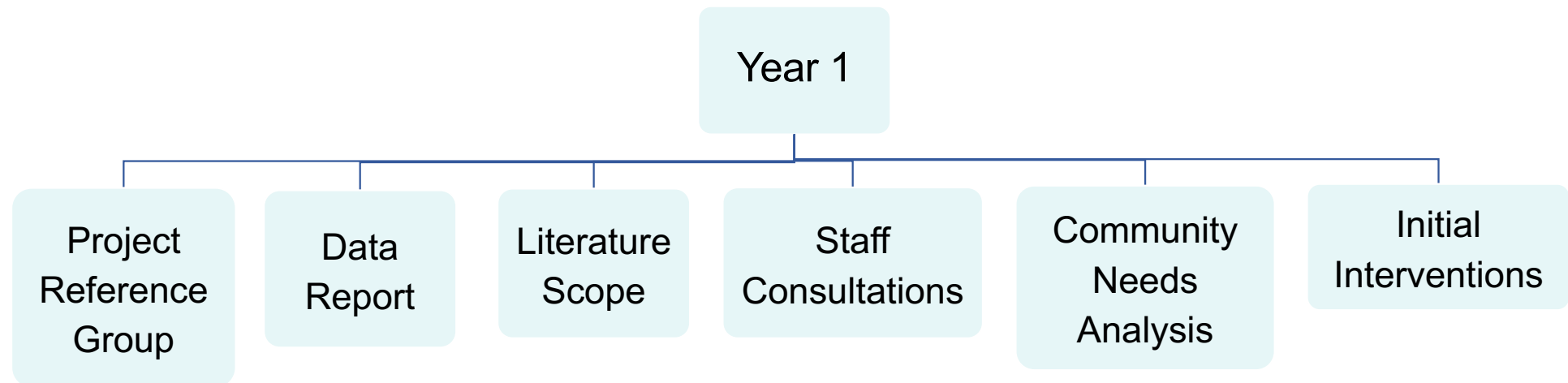
Project Aim

To improve equitable access to culturally safe cancer education, screening, treatment, and care for communities of refugee background.



Project Design: Phase 1

Understanding the Story



What we heard from the Community:

Fears and Beliefs about Cancer

- Cancer cannot be treated
- There is no hope if you have cancer
- Cancer is contagious
- Cancer may be caused by wounds, injuries or weather
- Cancer can be treated by traditional herbs or “black magic”
- Treatment decisions may be influenced by religious beliefs
- Doctors kill

Barriers to Accessing Care

- Language and communication
- Complex health systems and services
- Limitations in understanding anatomy and body function
- Limitations in health literacy and understanding early intervention
- Lack of trust in Western clinicians
- Cultural ethos of *Ana* – feeling of guilt for burdening others
- Competing priorities

What we heard from Service Providers:

Communication & System Barriers

- Language barriers
- Lack of confidence accessing interpreters
- Interpreter availability
- Interpreter oncology knowledge
- Lack of translated materials
- Complex health system

Patient Understanding, Beliefs & Experiences

- Low health literacy
- Limited value of early care
- Fear of cancer/treatment
- Negative past experiences
- Religious influences on care

Cultural & Engagement Factors

- Limited staff cultural awareness of refugee communities
- Perceived low patient and family engagement

Value seen in:

- In-language education
- Patient navigator roles

Project Milestones 2023-2024

2023

- ✓ Project funded by Victorian Department of Health for 2 years.
- ✓ Extensive needs analysis with former refugee communities and service providers
- ✓ Commencement of community-based Cancer Navigator program.

2024

- ✓ Workforce training for bicultural staff and interpreters
- ✓ Co-designed education resources and community sessions
- ✓ Simplified screening access pathways developed
- ✓ Funding extended to embed system change

Examples of interventions

ကသပ်တံ၊မာသ်ဒိလၢအကသိပ်သးညိၣ်နီၣ်တဖၣ်-ကသပ်မၤစိၣ်					
ကသိပ်တံ၊မာသ်ဒိ		၀၀၅၁-၁	၀၀၅၁-၂	၀၀၅၁-၃	၀၀၅၁-၄
တၢ်ဂၢၢ်ဆိၣ်ဆါ					၃၀ နီၣ်ဆူအမိၣ်
တၢ်သးတဖၣ်		ဆိပ်တၢ်ဆိၣ်တၢ်ညိၣ်နီၣ် အလံး	ဆိပ်တၢ်ဆိၣ်တၢ် လီၤလံး	ဆိပ်တၢ်ဆိၣ်တၢ် သဝၢၣ် ခါး	တၢ်ဆိပ်တၢ်ဆိၣ်တၢ် တၢ်ဂၢၢ်
					
တဖၣ်		၁ - ၂ ဝှံၣ် လၢတၢ်န့ၣ်အတၢ်ဖျၢ	၃ - ၅ ဝှံၣ် လၢတၢ်န့ၣ်အတၢ်ဖျၢ	၆ ဝှံၣ်နီၣ်ဆူအမိၣ် လၢတၢ်န့ၣ်	နီၣ်သ့ၤလၢ



ခဲစာနိတ်တၢ်ကွၢ်ထွဲတၢ်န့ၣ်ကျဲအတၢ်ရဲၣ်တၢ်ကျဲ
Cancer Care Navigator Program

တၢ်တိၣ်ကျဲၤအံၤမၤစၢၤဝဲၣ်ပုၤလၢအဟဲၣ်လၢဘၣ်ကီၤဘၣ်ခဲသ့ၣ်တဖၣ် လၢအဆိၣ်ဒီးခဲစၢၣ်တၢ်ဆါ, လၢကမၤဂ့ၤထီၣ်တၢ်မၤန့ၣ်ခဲစၢၣ် တၢ်ကၢၢ်ထဲၣ် အကျိၤကျဲၤသ့ၣ်တဖၣ်န့ၣ်လီၤ.

പഠനത്തിനായി-

- န်ပါနနီကစီစဉ်ဆင်နွှဲဆောင်ရွက်ထိုင်အသေးလနနီပျံ့အပူလုပ်.
- န်ပါမတေသွင်တဖင်လကမသကီးတီလနနီကွဲထွေအပူ.
- န်ပါနတီကူဝါယျါဒီးကသံဉ်ကသီတဖင်.
- လဲလတတသွင်နံအသီအလီ.
- န်ပါတီတံတကျီလတတဝဲအီလတသွင်အစားကတီအကတီ.
- တဲတီးဝဲကျီလနနီတူင်လနနီအသေးတဖင်လနနီကတလနနီကစီစဉ်.
- ဆဲကျဆဲကျီးနတီလိာ်သွင်တဖင်ဒီးနတီအိဉ်ဆိုင်ဆိုင်ချတီကွဲထွေကန.

နမူနာအိတ်ဒီးကတိတော်ဒီးပုတကတဘဉ်ဃးဒီးတၢ်ရဲဉ်တၢ်ကျဲအံဝံသးစူဆဲးကျိးဘဉ်
ဘဲဒ်ဉ်ကိဉ်တၢ်ဆူဉ်ရဲဉ်ကျိး -

ဘိဉ္ဇာ (Boe Htoo)

0429 475 719

boehtoo@bchs.com.au



Bendigo Community Health Services

درمان سرطان Cancer Treatments

استرالیا امکانات بسیار خوبی برای تداوی سرطان دارد که برای بسیاری از افراد، اعم از مرد و زن، در هر سنی قابل استفاده است.

داکتران سرطان با مریض و فامیلش همکاری میکنند تا بهترین برنامه را برای مریض تهیه کنند.



Australia has very good treatments for cancer that work for many people, male and female, at any age.

Cancer doctors work together with the patient and their family, to make a plan that is best for the patient.



داری - Dari



Bendigo Community Health Services

Surgery عملیات

اگر سرطان در بدن تان یک غده تشکیل بدهد، ممکن است برای خارج کردن آن از عملیات استفاده شود



If cancer forms a lump in your body, Surgery may be used to:

- Completely remove a cancer
- Make a cancer smaller
- Reduce pain or problems caused

Surgery is done in a hospital. Some patients can go home the same day, others may stay in the hospital long time. Many surgeries for cancer are done in Australia.

به خانه بروند، بعضی دیگر ممکن است در بیمارستان بمانند.

بسیاری از عملیات در استرالیا به خوبی انجام میشود

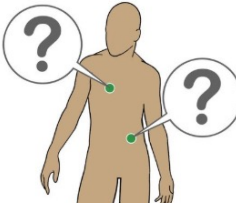
Information adapted from Cancer Council Australia

ACN 126 167 715

عوارض جانبی رادیوتراپی Side effects of radiotherapy




عوارض جانبی اثرات ناخواسته‌ای هستند که توسط رادیوتراپی ایجاد می‌شوند، مانند احساس خستگی یا احساس تهوع.



عوارض جانبی می‌تواند به آن قسمت بدن که تحت تداوی قرار دارد بستگی داشته باشد. داکتر و نرسان می‌توانند به شما بگویند که باید چه انتظاری داشته باشید.

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Project Milestones 2025-2026

2025

- ✓ Education for cancer service staff
- ✓ *Refugee Cancer Support* role commenced at Bendigo Regional Cancer Centre
- ✓ Expansion of in-language cancer resources and digital tools

2026

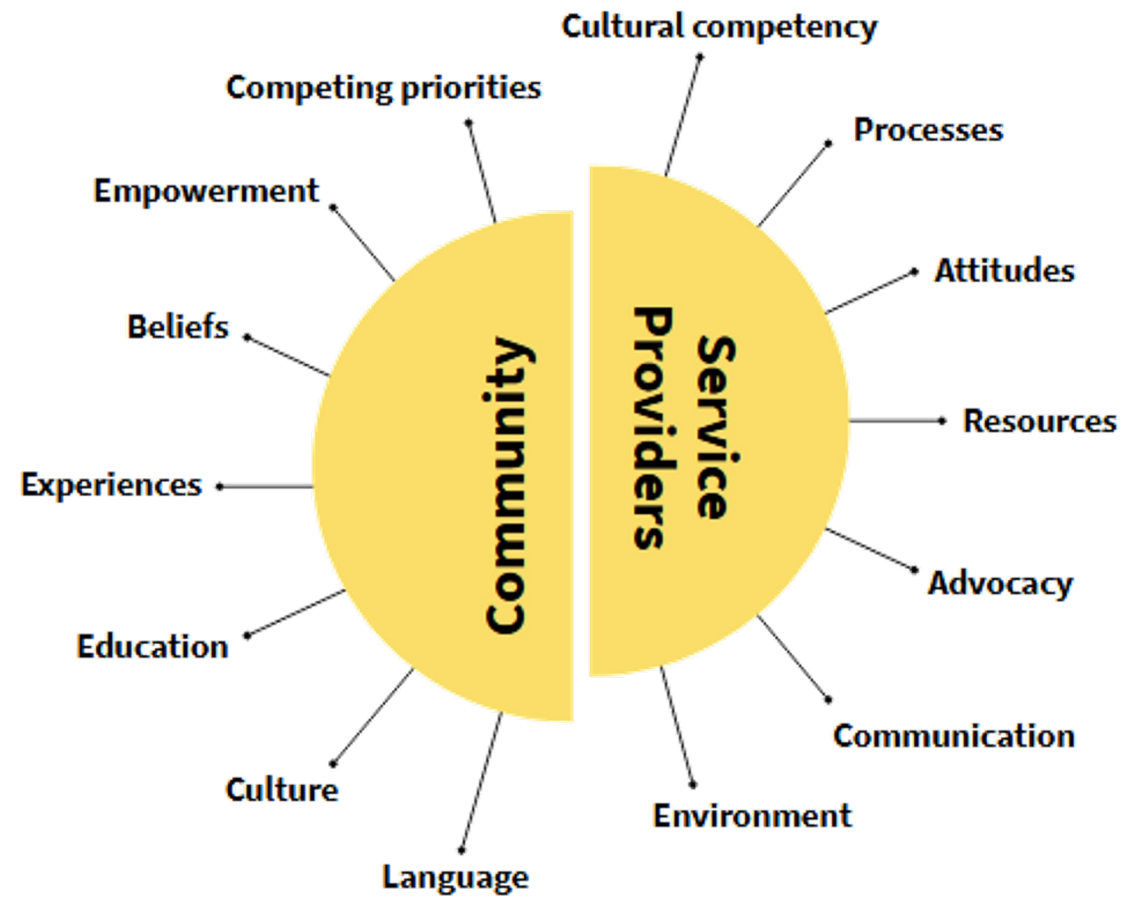
- ✓ Embedding sustainable service level changes
- ✓ Ongoing Cancer Navigator support in partnership with Bendigo Health Cultural Diversity team
- ✓ Continuation of work subject to ongoing funding.

Examples of interventions

APPOINTMENT SUMMARY	
- ENSURE WRITING IS LEGIBLE - SHORT SENTENCES, SIMPLE WORDS - KEY INFORMATION ONLY	
Patient Name:	Eh Htee Say
Appointment with: (name and job title)	Dr Rob Campbell
SUMMARY OF APPOINTMENT (status, diagnosis, options etc.)	
Up to cycle 3 chemo Poor appetite, has lost weight	

ခဲစာ်တၢ်ကွၢ်ထွဲကဟုက်ယံ		Cancer Care Appointment Card Karen
တၢ်သ့ၣ်နီၤမးသီအကး		
ပုၤဆါအမံ- Patient Name:	Eh Htee Say	
တၢ်သ့ၣ်နီၤမးသီယုၤဒီး- Appointment with:	Chemotherapy nurse	
တၢ်သ့ၣ်နီၤမးသီအတၢ်လိၤတၢ်ကျဲ- Appointment Location:	Chemo Day Unit, Bendigo Cancer Centre	
တၢ်သ့ၣ်နီၤမးသီအဖျၢ်န့ၢ်- Appointment date:	04/06/2025	
တၢ်သ့ၣ်နီၤမးသီအဆၢကတီၢ်- Appointment time:	11:30	
မုၢ်တၢ်ကျဲၤဟံၣ်ပူၤကတီၢ်မၤဂ့ၢ်ထံတၢ်တာၤမၤ. Has an interpreter been organised?	Interpreter Organised	
တၢ်အံၤမုၢ်တၢ်သ့ၣ်နီၤမးသီ လၢလံၤတဲၤအိၣ်တၢ် အိၣ်ဆူၣ်အိၣ်ချ့အတၢ်စၢၤမၤ. Is this a Telehealth appointment?	Face-to-face	
မဲတၢ်အံၤမုၢ်တၢ်သ့ၣ်နီၤမးသီလၢလံၤတဲၤအိၣ်တၢ် အိၣ်ဆူၣ်အိၣ်ချ့အတၢ်စၢၤမၤဟ့ၣ် ဝဲသ့ၣ်တၢ်ဆဲးကျိၤလိၤတၢ်လိၤဆဲးတၢ်လိၤ. If this is a Telehealth appointment, the clinic will provide the contact details.		





Results to Date

Thank you for showing us, it helps us feel less frightened about cancer treatment

Cancer Centre tour participant

(The patient's) eyes lit up when he saw the information in his language

Medical oncologist

I feel I am better able to help my community if someone has a cancer diagnosis

Karen bi-cultural staff member

How can other services approach similar work?

Recommendations, resources and further reading:



Project team



 Abbie Lockwood BCHS	 Kaye Graves BCHS	 Cheryl Martin LMICS	 Simon Baker LMICS	 Nido Taveesupmai BCHS	 Rob Campbell BH
 Lisa Carson BCHS/BH	 April Gerolemou LMICS	 Boe Htoo BCHS	 Zahir Azimi BCHS	 Eh Ta Mue Lue BCHS	 Sei Sei Thien BH
 Ta Na Moo BCHS	 Masooma Naeem BCHS	 Iain Butterworth LMICS	 K'Pru Ku BCHS	 Bwe Ku BCHS	 Andy Sloane BH



Thank You

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