

# Big Outcomes: Integrating an oral health wellness program into a nurse-led refugee health service

**Key Words:** Refugee, Prevention, Oral Health, Model of Care.

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## We asked the question how long is the wait list?

### Background

- ➔ Refugees are eligible within the first 12 months of arrival in Queensland (QLD)
- ➔ Over 215 ethnicities, 26% born overseas
- ➔ Newly arrived people present with lack of trust and fear due to previous experience
- ➔ Poor oral health due to no previous access to care & periods of deprivation
- ➔ Social disadvantage due to resettlement, language barrier & poor health literacy
- ➔ Healthy Oral Health (OH) care impacts on overall health outcomes
- ➔ OH service capacity unable to meet local population growth

### Objective

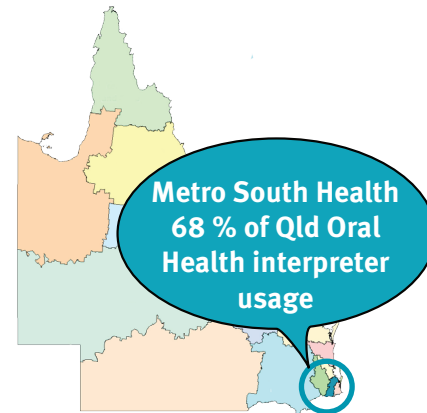
- ➔ Determine the wait list for newly arrived people
- ➔ Increase preventative OH care delivery
- ➔ Review cultural responsiveness of Oral Health Services (OHS)
- ➔ Explore alternative model of care to deliver timely care
- ➔ Interventions needed to be cost neutral

### Methods

- ➔ Comprehensive review of the waiting list data
- ➔ Review interpreter usage
- ➔ Map existing health pathways
- ➔ Identification of key partners



In 2015 2yr wait list = 700 people



March 2016 wait list reduce to 28 days  
1236 people assessed in 18 months

### Initial Outcomes

- ➔ Integrating OHS at the same time as the nursing health assessment
- ➔ Redesign of services: Oral Health Therapists delivers early assessment, triage, first line treatment and education
  - Clinician lead innovation, building rapport & trust with key partners & communities
  - Screening Tool
  - New South Wales Refugee Health Appointment Reminder Translation Tool
  - Strengthened partner relationships and communication
- **Program delivered with no additional costs**



### Big Picture Outcomes

- ➔ Contributed to the development - Refugee Health & Wellbeing Policy Action Plan for QLD 2017-20
- ➔ Qld Oral Health Refugee Health Working Group
- ➔ Intersectoral collaboration across Hospital and Health Services & 11 organisations
- ➔ Sharing of pathway, tools & resources at State and National levels
- ➔ Intersectoral knowledge of wait times & referral pathways
- ➔ Dental Fairs in partnership with the Tzu Chi Foundation
- ➔ Building cultural sensitivity in staff
- ➔ Resources developed - 8 languages that are culturally, linguistically & literary appropriate



### References

- <https://metrosouth.health.qld.gov.au/oral-health/tips-to-care-for-your-teeth>
- <https://metrosouth.health.qld.gov.au/health-equity-and-access/refugees-and-asylum-seekers>
- <https://www.swslhd.health.nsw.gov.au/refugee/appointment/>