

## **The Multicultural Neighbourhood Centre Response to COVID 19**

In light of the evolving COVID-19 pandemic, the Multicultural Neighbourhood Centre wishes as far as possible to protect its clients, its staff, its volunteers, and the general public from infection or contagion by epidemics and/or pandemics.

Multicultural Neighbourhood Centre will facilitate, through its policies and procedures, strategies designed to reduce risks to its clients, its staff, its volunteers, and the general public. Multicultural Neighbourhood Centre will comply with all directions from authorised public health officers and recognised medical authorities in relation to the epidemic or pandemic. The Multicultural Neighbourhood Centre will also continue to comply with the advice / direction from our funding body, NSW Department of Communities and Justice.

The MNC Board of Governance decided that paid workers will work from home for the immediate future and that volunteers will continue their support via online meeting platform for programs like Free English classes. The Centre will be closed as of 26<sup>th</sup> March until further notice or when we are allowed to re-open.

Remote Contact Details for MNC Manager:

Email: [amany@mncinc.org.au](mailto:amany@mncinc.org.au)

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/MulticulturalNeighbourhoodCentre>

The MNC contingency plan as follows:

- **Information/Advice/Referral**

The Multicultural Neighbourhood Centre will continue to provide Information/Advice/Referral to our target groups via phone, email, Facebook page and when possible via online meeting platform; i.e. "Zoom".

- **Education and Skills Building**

### Free English Classes

Volunteer teachers and participants of all our Free English Classes have been informed that classes will be suspended until further notice. However, we are going to develop an alternative way of supporting people to improve their English online – we are in the process of establishing online classes using one of the available and

free platform “Zoom” which is an online method to virtually meet with others - either by video or audio-only or both. As soon as we establish that, we will then announce on our website and Facebook page the link and how to join the online Free English classes. We will also send email / text messages to clients we have on records to encourage them to join the online classes.

## - **Social Participation**

### Playgroup

Normally the MNC based Playgroup is open every Friday during school terms and closed during school holidays. Those attending reflect a socially isolated group of parents who have originated from many different countries. The Playgroup offers a space where children are able to interact with other children and learn consistency through the activities presented. These activities include general play, sharing and shaping playdough, painting and other craft have a story time, have a song time and to share fruit provided as a morning tea. Some of the noted outcomes are those of learning to share with peers, being creative, to wash hands prior to having morning tea, to become more confident on a balance board and a slippery slide and to take turns with song and reading.

The Playgroup is managed by a skilled and very experienced Coordinator and support staff.

As a response to the Covid-19 virus we have put the following into operation:

- 1) Playgroup will be suspended until further notice. Parents with children attending the Playgroup will be advised of a return to normal operations when the MNC is appropriately advised.
- 2) We have instituted a cleaning regime whereby we clean all our toys and equipment before and after each playgroup session.
- 3) While we have always had a policy of cleaning hands and teaching this as an appropriate behaviour for the children we have introduced more hand cleaning with making hand sanitizer, paper towels, tissues and liquid hand wash available at all times.
- 4) We are also encouraging the children and adults to wash their hands regularly to meet the public health requirements.

5) Use of tissues is required for those coughing or sneezing. Some of our activities include teaching the children to wash their hands, use tissues and cough into their elbows as part of a sneeze, cough and cold etiquette.

In addition, throughout the Centre Health (Covid-19) warning signs are placed in strategic locations including the Play group area encouraging people to follow the Policy of the MNC which is based on both the Public Health and Federal Government statements.

### Gardening Group

The MNC Gardening group currently comprises fifteen regular gardeners with space for another four to replace those who have just left the group. It has been the policy of the Gardening Group to meeting as a group monthly. At other time Gardeners tend their gardens as they wish and are under no instructions to modify this behaviour.

The operations of the MNC Gardening group is overseen by a Coordinator and a Secretary who arrange the allocation of the Garden bed and advise of any changes that may have to be implemented, meeting times, working bees, purchase of soil, mulch, etc.

As a response to the COVID 19 virus

- 1) The Monthly Gardening group meeting has been suspended until further notice. Contact with Gardeners will be maintained through our existing email list to advice of updates in respect of this policy.
- 2) Gardeners should be aware that they are free to garden at any time in the Community Garden but that the MNC is being guided by the Covid -19 policy developed by NSW Health and the rules established by the Australian Government.

### **- Advocacy and Support**

The Multicultural Neighbourhood Centre will continue to advocate and support for the target group as necessary by phone, emails Facebook page and when possible via online meeting platform; i.e. "Zoom".

MNC will also continue to work with other organisations and partners to support the target group. Staff will attend virtual meeting such as Interagencies, Forums and existing Networks as required using online platforms; i.e. Zoom, go meeting...etc.

OzHarvest will not be available at the MNC from 24<sup>th</sup> March until further notice as the centre will be shut.

### The Multicultural Youth Project

The MNC Youth Project aims to continue its valuable support for CALD young people aged 12-17 & their families during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Our service delivery will be as follows from 24 March until further notice:

- Information, advice & referral support will continue via phone, email , SMS, whats app and other online tools including Zoom, MNC Youth Project Instagram & Facebook;
- Individual Case Support will continue with face-to-face meetings replaced by phone, email & other online contact tools as requested by young people currently receiving support. Current school site visits for meetings have been suspended to be replaced with alternate contact methods.
- Regular Youth Engagement will continue using online platforms & social media apps. Planning and consultation with young people & supporting partners is underway for online engagement opportunities via social media platforms & groups.
- Attendance at Interagency & network meetings will continue via online meeting platforms, phone conferencing & email.
- Remote contact details:

Dale Garbutt

Multicultural Youth & Family Project

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Facebook- [www.facebook.com/MNCyouthproject](https://www.facebook.com/MNCyouthproject)

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