



POSITION DESCRIPTION

STARTTS is committed to Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) and anti-discrimination policies.

POSITION NUMBER: 1107

Date reviewed/created: April 2024

POSITION TITLE: Direct Services Rural and Regional Counsellor/Project Officer - Newcastle

TEAM: Direct Services – Rural & Regional Team

LOCATION: Newcastle (with provision of counselling in Armidale and other Rural & Regional areas, requiring fortnightly travel)

AGREEMENT: “NSW (Non-Declared) Affiliated Health Organisations’ Professional and Associated Staff Agreement 2022”.

CLASSIFICATION: Health Education Officer, or other relevant classification based on qualifications, experience and requirements of the role.

A generous salary packaging scheme is also offered.

VACCINATION REQUIREMENT: Category A.

PERIOD OF APPRAISAL: Performance will be assessed within 3 months of commencement and a 6 month probationary/qualifying period will also apply.

Background to STARTTS

STARTTS is a state-wide service funded by the NSW Department of Health and Commonwealth Department of Health to provide high quality assessment, treatment and rehabilitation services to people living in NSW who have experienced organised violence or trauma associated with the refugee experience. STARTTS is an Affiliated Health Organisation (AHO), a Non-Government Organisation whose services are deemed to be part of the NSW public health system.

STARTTS’ service provision philosophy is predicated on a bio-psycho-social framework that incorporates a large range of clinical and psycho-social interventions informed by the latest advances in neuroscience and evidence based practice in relevant fields. As such, STARTTS provides a broad range of services including assessment; counselling for all age groups; psychiatric assessment and interventions; family therapy; group interventions; body-focused interventions such as massage, physiotherapy, acupuncture and pain management groups; support groups; programs for children and youth; and various strategies to increase the capacity of support networks and refugee communities to sustain their members.

The focus of the STARTTS’ approach is on building capacity and empowering people and communities to take control over their own lives, using a strengths-based approach and building on individual, family, community and cultural strengths.

Background to the Program Area of the Position

This position forms part of STARTTS Direct Services program and will service clients who have entered Australia as asylum seekers and who are permanent residents, who arrived recently and have settled under the Humanitarian Settlement Strategy (HSS) and those who have resided longer. The position is to provide a comprehensive assessment, referral and counselling service to Refugee and Special Humanitarian Program entrants living in Rural and Regional areas. The Direct Services program offers a holistic range of services including short to medium term culturally appropriate counselling, group work and community development.

ORGANISATIONAL RELATIONSHIPS:

1. Responsible to: *Direct Services Rural and Regional Team Leader/Counsellor (Northern Region of NSW)*
2. Responsible for: *NIL*

ESSENTIAL REQUIREMENTS:

1. Relevant tertiary qualifications in counselling, social work, behavioural or social sciences, psychology, or a related field with eligibility for membership of the relevant professional association.
2. Demonstrated assessment and counselling experience in a cross-cultural context.
3. Demonstrated understanding of the issues affecting refugees in particular resettlement issues, and the effects of torture on individuals, young people, families, and communities.
4. Demonstrated relevant group work experience and training skills
5. Demonstrated knowledge of the cultures and health needs of refugee communities in Hunter and Armidale Region.
6. Demonstrated knowledge and experience in community development, community liaison and advocacy.
7. Excellent oral, written & interpersonal communication skills and proficiency in the use of Microsoft Office and ability to work independently and as part of a multidisciplinary team within a multicultural environment.
8. Current NSW Driver's License

Desirable Requirements:

1. Experience in working with children and adolescents in a clinical setting.

*This position is considered child-related employment and will require a Working with Children Check and a National Police Check.

VACCINATION REQUIREMENTS

***This role is a Category A role.** It is mandatory for Category A workers to meet and maintain the vaccination criteria (as per the current NSW Health and STARTTS policies) including annual Influenza vaccinations. Two doses of an approved COVID-19 vaccine will be required to provide a record of your COVID-19 vaccination status. *If successful you must provide evidence of vaccination.*

Additionally, vaccination and/or assessment is required for Category A workers for the following transmissible diseases – measles, mumps, rubella, varicella (chickenpox), hepatitis B, diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis (whooping cough) and tuberculosis. *If successful you must also provide evidence of vaccination and/or assessment.*

Should you not be able to comply with vaccination requirements before your commencement date, the offer of employment may be withdrawn.

If you have a medical reason for why you cannot be vaccinated, a medical contraindication evidence will be required.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF ROLE

The position is to provide a comprehensive assessment, referral and counselling service to Refugee and Special Humanitarian Program entrants living in the Hunter and Armidale region of NSW.

PRIMARY OBJECTIVES:

1. To identify traumatised people in refugee communities in Newcastle, Armidale and other Rural & Regional areas and provide an assessment counselling and referral service to refugee families, children and adolescents.
2. To provide short to medium term counselling and support services to refugees both newly arrived and established, whose experience of torture and trauma is affecting settlement and other areas of their lives.
3. To develop and maintain productive partnerships between STARTTS and other services within Newcastle, Armidale and other Rural & Regional areas relevant to the needs of newly arrived and established refugees to ensure effective service provision.

4. To provide consultancy and/or training to other service providers working with newly arrived refugees and refugee communities including medical, allied health, counselling and other relevant service providers.
5. To provide services as per the terms of the (Programme of Assistance to Survivors of Torture and Trauma) PASTT contract and maintain productive working relationships with HSS service providers in the Newcastle, Armidale and other Rural & Regional NSW HSS Region.
6. In collaboration with other STARTTS services, develop and implement relevant community education and social support programs of benefit to people from affected refugee communities.

PRIMARY DUTIES:

1. Assessment, Counselling and Community Development

- 1.1. Provide a psycho-social and psychological assessment and referral service to refugee families, children and adolescents in accordance with PASTT contractual and other service delivery requirements.
- 1.2. Undertake training in use of the Refugee Comprehensive Assessment Tool (R-CAT) and utilise this tool when conducting assessments with refugee families, children and adolescents.
- 1.3. Support refugee families to develop a clear understanding of the issues which may affect them and their children, and to understand what services are available to them.
- 1.4. Develop and implement case plans in conjunction with refugee clients that will assist them to overcome psycho-social settlement difficulties, to manage their traumatic and psychological symptoms and to access relevant community resources.
- 1.5. Provide short to medium term counselling (an average of 8 sessions) to those newly arrived refugees whose experience of torture and trauma is affecting settlement and identify those requiring longer term support or specific interventions.
- 1.6. Liaise with HSS Case Coordinators in relation to the health and settlement needs of newly arrived refugees and facilitate their referral to mainstream health service providers, the Refugee Health Clinic, and/or relevant settlement services as determined by client need.
- 1.7. Provide counselling for clients that have been resident in Australia for more than twelve months and for clients exited from HSS on the basis of assessments conducted.
- 1.8. Promote assessment and counselling services through an information strategy including community information sessions, printed information in community languages and community radio. This includes translation of relevant information regarding STARTTS services where appropriate.
- 1.9. Introduce newly arrived and more established refugees to other STARTTS' programs specifically designed to assist people with their settlement process in Australia where these are available (such as the Families in Cultural Transition and residential programmes).
- 1.10. Maintain proper records of client contact and assessment, case plans, referral and follow up and interventions.
- 1.11. Develop and maintain productive partnerships between STARTTS and other services in Newcastle, Armidale and other Rural & Regional areas region relevant to the needs of refugees.
- 1.12. Work with local refugee communities to identify needs and encourage the development and maintenance of a supportive community infrastructure.
- 1.13. Gain thorough knowledge of the local community and services therein. Identify gaps in health care services and initiate new services in consultation with relevant STARTTS staff, local community organisations and refugee communities.

2. Training

- 2.1. With the support of the Training Team conduct training programs for medical, allied health, counselling and other relevant service providers and volunteer groups working with refugees.
- 2.2. Provide input to development of training materials relevant to the needs of services working with refugees focusing on the difficulties confronted in the initial period after arrival.

3. Administration

- 3.1. Ensure that a minimum counselling workload consistent with contractual obligations, service goals and financial accountability requirements are maintained.
- 3.2. Complete client-based documentation associated with Direct Services HSS and non-HSS interventions as required.
- 3.3. Participate in the evaluation of the effectiveness of services provided.

4. Reporting

- 4.1. Provide bimonthly progress reports to the Team Leader.
- 4.2. Prepare other reports as required.

5. Personnel

- 5.1. Contribute to the STARTTS strategic planning process and report on relevant Strategic Plan Key Performance Indicators (KPIs).
- 5.2. Participate actively in the STARTTS Performance Management program and contribute to the development of an annual work plan that aligns with the organisation's Strategic Plan.
- 5.3. Be an active participant in team meetings to maximise contribution to the work of the team.
- 5.4. Participate in STARTTS staff meetings and other relevant meetings.
- 5.5. Work to ensure professional and co-operative working relationships within own team and with other departments across STARTTS.
- 5.6. Participate in identifying quality improvement initiatives/strategies.
- 5.7. Attend and participate in all training opportunities identified for the role.
- 5.8. Liaise with and seek senior advice as required.

6. As a STARTTS employee you are expected to:

- Have commitment to Human Rights, EEO, WHS and Safe Work Practices.
- Carry out the role and responsibilities in a manner that is consistent with delegations, policies, procedures and operations systems of STARTTS and in line with STARTTS Code of Conduct.
- Maintain confidentiality and exercise discretion in relation to all STARTTS matters.
- Actively seek to improve skills and knowledge that will benefit the organisation.
- Project a professional image at all times and in all situations.
- Undertake any other duties that may be required within the area of work.

Equal Employment Opportunity and Staff Relationships:

- STARTTS is an Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) employer and encompasses its philosophy and practice.
- STARTTS rejects racism and sexism in all its forms and is committed to the elimination of racial and gender discrimination including direct and indirect racism and sexism, racial vilification, and harassment.

STARTTS Workplace Policies

You must observe and comply with the provisions set out in any and all written policy, practice or procedure of STARTTS. A breach of STARTTS' policies, practices and procedures may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination of your employment.

Induction and Orientation:

- Participate in an Induction and Orientation program with STARTTS.
- Obtain access to Trello and Organimi, which are tools STARTTS utilises for planning, coordination, and project management.
- Provide a clear, passport-style photograph for your profiles on each platform to maintain a visible and identifiable contact within the organisation.

Work Health & Safety Responsibilities:

- Comply with STARTTS WHS policies and procedures.

- Work with due care and consideration to safeguard your own health and safety and the health and safety of others, and to report to your Supervisor any potential hazards, mishaps, incidents or injuries that may occur or become aware of during the course of work.

Risk Management Responsibilities: All staff have a responsibility to identify any risks (i.e., the chance of something happening that will have an impact on the objectives of the organisation) in the course of their work and to inform their supervisor, as per the *STARTTS Risk Management Policy and Program*.

Smoke-free Workplace

STARTTS is completely smoke-free. This means that smoking is not allowed in any STARTTS' buildings, vehicles or grounds, there are no designated smoking areas. As an employee you are required to comply with the 'Non-smoking' Policy.

I have read the **Direct Services Rural and Regional Counsellor/Project Officer - Newcastle** Position Description, understand its contents and agree to work in accordance with the requirements of the position. I understand and accept that I must also comply with STARTTS' policies and procedures and can be required to work in any location under the jurisdiction of STARTTS.

I also agree to strictly observe STARTTS' policy on confidentiality of client information or such other sensitive or confidential information that I may come across in the course of my employment.

Employee Name:

Please print

Employee Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER: Jorge Aroche

Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

The review for this Position Description is due: April 2026