

**Submission
No 28**

**IMPROVING CRISIS COMMUNICATIONS TO CULTURALLY AND
LINGUISTICALLY DIVERSE COMMUNITIES**

Organisation: Shayna Humanitarian

Date Received: 30 June 2022

To the:

29 June 2022

Hon. Melinda Pavey MP, Committee Chair
Hon. Justin Clancy MP, Deputy Chair
Hon. Trish Doyle MP, Member
Hon. Melanie Gibbons MP, Member
Hon. David Harris MP, Member
Hon. Jenny Leong MP, Member
Hon. Nichole Overall MP, Member

**Committee on Community Services
Legislative Assembly
NSW Parliament**

Submission on

Improving crisis communications to culturally and linguistically diverse communities

Submitted by

Shayna Humanitarian Services Inc.
Entity registered under the Associations Incorporation Act 2009 (NSW)

Submitted via email to: communityservices@parliament.nsw.gov.au

via email to: communityservices@parliament.nsw.gov.au

Dear Committee on Community Services,

RE: Submission on the Inquiry into improving crisis communications to CALD Communities

We are making submissions to the inquiry into and report on improving crisis communications to culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities and address these three key areas as outlined in the terms of reference:

- a) use of multicultural and CALD community groups and networks to distribute in-language information
- b) ways to improve channels of communication with CALD communities
- c) addressing racism and discrimination related to crisis communications.

What did Shayna Humanitarian Services Inc. do during lockdown?

At the point of lockdown in NSW, particularly south-west Sydney, Fairfield and Liverpool LGAs, Shayna Humanitarian was the first volunteer-driven not-for-profit, to immediately take action in supporting vulnerable and disadvantaged communities affected by the lockdown and restrictions.

Shayna Humanitarian was disseminating immediate and clear information to service providers, community organisations, religious and cultural institutions about the Covid restrictions and requirements.

Care Package – Delivery program during lockdown 2021

Shayna Humanitarian also took action by providing grocery, household and hygiene items to senior citizens, people with a disability and victim-survivors of domestic and family violence, including refugees, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and people experiencing homelessness, who were in dire situations and had great needs. This was all provided by volunteers and self-funded, as well as community and some business support. This was provided through 'Care Package' delivery, at no cost to the individuals or households.

There were referral processes in place, booking systems, volunteer drivers and volunteer shopping and packing organised by Shayna Humanitarian Services. We received hundreds of warm-referrals from organisations and religious institutions to support the community.

Vulnerable and disadvantaged communities were struggling and faced many challenges during this time, we stood by them and supported them where we can with the resources at hand, the support of the community and NSW Police.

Groceries and items were safely delivered, in accordance with the restrictions and guidance of the NSW Police, while in constant communication with the Department and Health NSW at all times during the service provision.

We also were contacted by Local City Councils and other NGOs asking about the program and how they would be able to replicate it during lockdown.

Shayna Humanitarian also provided information packs to support households with contact details to immediate support services.

Had we received support from the Department of Health and support in resources, we would have expanded this initiative. In a period of 9 weeks, we reached 500 households through our direct delivery of Care Packages. With our Drive-Thru initiative with communities, we reached 2500 households in a one day drive-thru service in three (3) separate locations.

Submission for this Inquiry

We will address several key areas, including our experiences with government services and with communities, when information is being adequately and ethically provided.

In this submission, we also focus on *'access and equity'*, and the importance of clear, concise and simple information.

We thank you for providing us with the opportunity to make submissions regarding this inquiry.

Enclosed is our three-page (3) submission.

Please do not hesitate to contact us should you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Oliver Slewa
CEO | Founder
E: Contact.shaynahumanitarian@gmail.com

29 June 2022



Shayna Humanitarian Services Inc.

29 June 2022

Submission by Shayna Humanitarian Services Inc. to the Committee on Community Services

RE: Submission on the Inquiry into improving crisis communications to CALD Communities

We have been actively involved in providing information to communities regarding urgent health, legal and justice matters in NSW.

Our organisation and members have been involved in advisory committees and volunteered as consultants with State and Local Government Departments, requesting experience on the best practice information distribution to communities.

Our recent experiences in supporting agencies deliver and improve their information publication to CALD communities' through consultation include:

1. ***NSW Health and Multicultural Health***, producing and publishing information to CALD communities in south-west Sydney during Covid Restrictions and Lockdown
 - a. Production and publication of information in community languages for:
 - i. Radio
 - ii. Video
 - iii. Posters and flyers
2. ***Multicultural Health NSW***
 - a. Distribution of information on Hepatitis
 - b. Distribution of information on smoking and health related matters
 - c. Distribution of information using publications and videos
3. ***Sydney University Health Literacy Lab***, assessing and surveying information distribution on health services for CALD communities
 - a. Access to immediate information from Health NSW and Health Australia regarding Covid related information
4. ***Ryde City Council*** in partnership with Macquarie University on the translation and distribution of information in language, suitable for communities, regarding Race Discrimination for their City Council Campaign on 'Make a stand against racism' (MASAR)
 - a. Which aimed at producing publication/flyers in language
 - b. Audio-visual information videos in language, with text and audio published on Youtube, their website, on social media and other platforms
5. ***Transport for NSW***
 - a. Production of published material in language, including the English language and community language translation

We have extensive experience in the sector on the production, publication, access of information in English, plain English and community languages, working alongside various organisations and institutions to ensure information is accessible and reaches the intended audience, utilising the avenues and channels for distribution.

We have consulted numerous times with CALD community members, ranging in various age groups, on their thoughts on accessible and easy-to-understand information and have received suggestions on potential platforms and avenues they would prefer to receive information and the manner in which they receive it.

Some of the suggestions include:

- Utilising community leaders' access to networks/platforms such as social media to share information
- Interactive videos available in language and easy to find online
- Workshop at Local community centres
- Community radio programs

Through trials and pilots programs, we have discovered the suitable avenues that successfully work for particular age groups and platforms/channels. Whether it be with the use of radio, audio, visual, publications or videos, and if it is distributed using social media or community programs.

a) use of multicultural and CALD community groups and networks to distribute in-language information

It is essential to use consultative type community groups that are educated in language and community services sector. We have led community consultative groups in the past directly with groups and relaying that information to government agencies for particular projects, programs or initiatives.

It is also important to keep that conversation going rather than one-off discussions.

We have a list of learned community members, actively volunteering in the community sector that would be ideal for such consultative groups.

Not every publication, video or audio in English will be easily translated/accepted for a community. There needs to be minor amendments and consultation before finalising that distribution of information.

We have seen various mistakes during Health NSW distribution of information and have personally sent many emails to Health NSW requesting editing, clarity and change of terms.

b) ways to improve channels of communication with CALD communities

Using various avenues of communication can be productive in access to information, especially where the source is reliable.

If one main government agency is actively providing information, in-language, they can firstly build a rapport with the community media teams, to share that information.

Using audio-visual resources, translated clearly and in simple language, even when translated. This requires the work of translators and team of community members who are actively distributing information to the communities.

An idea is, not to focus on one or two community or religious leaders in a community, it is best to branch out and work collaboratively with various members of the community, allowing for fair and ethical information and access and equity.

SMS and social media platforms work effectively for some types of information. Using doctors in communities and religious leaders, can sometimes not work for every type of message. We have seen many youth not appreciating that method.

c) addressing racism and discrimination related to crisis communications.

Access and equity is a major aim of many government organisations. Information needs to ensure it is not mis-interpreted, misunderstood, or misconceived.

Information shared in crisis situations, that may be perceived as targeting one ethnic, cultural community, is not appropriate and therefore governments should be cautious not to be misunderstood with the messages they are providing.

Information needs to support, guide and be understood clearly by community members, which can then share it with their contacts.

Further comments

We find that Government agencies duplicate information distribution from various channels, providing similar information, some is more difficult to understand than others. It is best suited for one government agency to be the main focal point of distributing crisis information, for easy access and communication by community leaders.

Government departments that produce information in language do not provide opportunity for reviews, feedback or consultation periods before distribution, with a panel of community leaders or advocates that can provide that support and guidance, it would work effectively in collaboration with those government agencies.

Opportunity for translators to provide feedback before material is finalised, as English terminology would not necessarily suit the language it is translated to, especially when focusing on plain English that is understood, however, would not provide a clear, contextual message when translated in a community language or make the information easily accessible.

END OF SUBMISSION

SHAYNA HUMANITARIAN SERVICES INC.

Contact.shaynahumanitarian@gmail.com