

40 STORIES IN 40 YEARS

The Russian Ethnic Representative Council of Victoria (RERC) | Anna Yarkova & Rose*

Anna Yarkova has been working with the Russian Ethnic Representative Council of Victoria (RERC) for the past year and a half.

RERC is a community organisation founded in 1984 whose aim is to unite and represent Russian speaking people living in Victoria. As the umbrella organisation of the Russian community, RERC extends its support to members in different ways through grants, marketing support, networking, and participation.

“At RERC, we support Russian organisations while also organising events of cultural significance. These allow the Russian community in Victoria to preserve and develop Russian culture and introduce its beauty and variety to the wider Australian community. Our favourite events are Melbourne Russian Festival, Day of Russia and Victory Day Picnic.”

As well as running events, RERC engages in social projects such as Family Violence, Dementia Awareness and Gambling Awareness campaigns, computer training for older people and more. They also coordinate a range of services to support Russian speaking elders and people living with disabilities, such as the Commonwealth Home Support Programme, Community Visitors Scheme, Palliative Care and Brokerage Services.

“We work closely with Palliative Care Victoria to run Palliative Care Ancillary Service Programs for Russian speaking clients who are suffering life-limiting illnesses in their homes. We provide practical, social, informational, and emotional support in a culturally sensitive way.”

“Our program attends to not just basic everyday needs but strives to satisfy a person’s emotional needs by fulfilling wishes from the client’s bucket list.”

“In June 2018, our organisation received a fixed term ancillary services grant. Since then, Palliative Care Ancillary Services Program has been supporting clients with life-limiting illnesses.”

“The program assumes an individualised approach and tailors care for each client based on personal needs, health condition, and current support from other organisations. Not only does our program attend basic everyday needs, but it aims to also satisfy a person’s emotional needs by fulfilling wishes from the client’s bucket list.”

For palliative care patient and RERC client, Rose*, the team have been “nothing but angels” when it comes to supporting her through her cancer diagnosis.

“I didn’t know about palliative care before, but some of my Russian friends told me about RERC and helped me to get in touch with them. The RERC team helped me to understand what palliative care is and how it can help me.”

“They have become my friends and my family. My family is all still in Russia, and my husband died recently, so I have no other support.”

“I do not have enough words to express how much I appreciate Alex, Olga and Anna from RERC. They have become my friends and my family.”

“I do not drive, so they (RERC) take me to and from my appointments and also support me with home care two times per week, where they help me to do washing, cooking and cleaning.”

“I do not have enough words to express how much I appreciate Alex, Olga and Anna. They have been so helpful to me and I don’t know what I would do without them.”

****name has been changed.***

