



## SydWest MSI Annual Report 2012

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## **Contents**

<b>Chairperson's Report</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Manager's Report</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>SydWest MSI</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Our Vision</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Events</b>	<b>8-11</b>
<b>CALD Aged Care, Disability &amp; Refugee Services</b>	<b>12-19</b>
<b>Settlement &amp; Beyond</b>	<b>20-27</b>
<b>Youth Projects</b>	<b>28-31</b>
<b>CALD Early Intervention Family Support Project</b>	<b>32-35</b>



## Chairperson's Report



SydWest MSI has continued in its role of providing vital services in relation to settlement of refugees and humanitarian entrants, care of aged and disabled clients, as well as early intervention for families with children. The needs of clients are identified and then appropriate services are provided with the aim of creating self-sufficient, capable and valuable members of Australian society. As you will see in the detail provided in the individual sections of this report, we have accomplished much in the twelve month period covered.

In July, 2011 we had the privilege of hosting a visit by the Governor General of Australia, Ms Quentin Bryce. Images of this visit are featured in this Annual Report. Ms Bryce met management and staff as well as groups such as the Tamil computer class, Toastmasters for the African Sisters on the Move and the school holiday drama group. The Governor General expressed genuine interest in and appreciation of services delivered at SydWest MSI. Our innovative approach to the delivery of programs is reflected in various ways. One example is the Diversity and Social Cohesion Project in which at risk young people from the Pacific Islands and Sudan attended various workshops culminating in the presentation of a series of public performances of cultural music and dance in the region.

In Aged Care we were successful in obtaining additional funding to provide Domestic Assistance to seniors in the Cumberland-Prospect region. The aim of these services is to provide much needed support and assistance in the home so as to maintain the independence and dignity of the elderly. A highlight in the Settlement Services team was the Driving Project which addressed the infrastructure issues preventing clients from obtaining their driver's licence. The success of this program will facilitate the finding of employment, among other things. This year Refugee Week was celebrated with the inaugural Grassroots World Music Festival showcasing the talent from emerging communities and strengthening the understanding within and between different cultural groups.

In our amalgamated section CALD Early Intervention Family Support Project, the Pakistani community in Mt. Druitt was selected to pilot a project on Oral Health. A DVD had the "Urdu" language added to its existing six languages and a forum attracted 80 guests in Mt Druitt. Other highlights of this year have been the part relocation and then the renovation of our offices on the ground floor in Main Street, Blacktown as well as our continued involvement in the work by the Blacktown and Mt Druitt Migrant Interagency on the re-invigorated Community Services Expo for 2012. I would like to acknowledge and thank the government departments who have shown their belief and trust in our organisation through their continued funding. These include the Department of Immigration and Citizenship; Department of Health and Ageing; Community Services, Department of Human Services NSW; Ageing, Disability and Home Care, Department of Human Services NSW; Department of Family, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs, Commonwealth Attorney General's Department.

I would further like to sincerely thank my colleagues on the Management Committee, our dedicated staff and volunteers as well as all our numerous partners. Their ongoing support has ensured we have been able to continue to provide relevant and vital services in line with our organisational mission statement.

Yours Sincerely

Ejaz Khan

# Manager's Report

Welcome to all.

Last year we presented you with the very bones of a Strategic Plan. We have drilled down over this past year to understand, and get a hold on, what that strategic plan meant for this organisation, its staff, clients and stakeholders. We asked many questions, and through these came to better understand our vision. Communication figured high on the priority list and it was decided that a website which more accurately demonstrates what we are about should be a priority. And so with this report, we launch the redesigned website. It has come about through the dedication and quick learning of Nikolayka Bentcheva and Anne Howell in a strong working partnership with our IT consultants, TechFlare Solutions.

Returning to our strategic plan, a forward looking document, although not one that ties down the organisation to the letter, but from which a direction emerges. This direction is that we are here to assist clients to become active participating and contributing Australians. SydWest Multicultural Services's focus is person-centred, enabling and growth focussed. If the service is to be enabling then a strong driving issue is for us to learn from our clients and to let them know how much we appreciate their contribution. In saying that, part of this focus also allows people to come and share experiences and begin to ground themselves in Australia. Come and meet, learn and recover and empower their history.

In each service area naturally there is a different way of accomplishing our aim. The original Settlement Grants Program (SGP) service at present funded by the Department of Immigration and Citizenship (DIAC), Community Builders-Department of Family and Community Services (FACS), Department of Families, Housing, Community Services, and Indigenous Affairs (FAHCSIA) with assistance from Police and Community Youth Centres (PCYC). Refugees and humanitarian services develop their sessions and activities with our focus as the underpinning element. An extremely positive program which has been run this year is the driving project funded by FACS. This project has allowed us to supply the infrastructure for clients to learn the rules thus enhancing safety. We have also been able to subsidise actual driving lessons.

The early intervention service is engaged with parents from prebirth of their child, to eight years olds. How better to add value to Australia than to support parents in their desire to raise healthy Australians, the service value supports and empowers the parents, helping them to understand what it means to be a parent in Australia. What is expected of them and in turn learning from them about their values and hopes and expectations for settling into a new country. With a positive, supportive welcome to Australia most refugees and migrants are more comfortable to adapt and they expect that the values which they bring with them will be valued and the workers can assist them to understand and come up with solutions which honour their background and also comply with Australian regulations.

The aged and disability service turns that thought around and seeks to honour those people who have made the journey earlier and have contributed so much to the Australian way of life. I thank them for their food, their work ethic, and their strength. Supporting all this is our management committee who worry about the ethical, governance and compliance issues while we get to have the fun working with the clients.

Yours Sincerely

Susan Vogels

## SydWest MSI

SydWest MSI provides and connects people from all cultures to services that meet individual, family and social needs to achieve the ultimate goal of becoming more self-sufficient, capable and valuable members of Australian society.

We focus specifically on people most in need during initial periods of settlement as humanitarian entrants, refugees, people with disabilities, seniors, youth and children.



### Management Committee

Thank you to our Management Committee members who have worked hard throughout the period under review: Ejaz Khan, Chairperson; Mark Wright, Vice Chairperson, Balraj Sangha, Treasurer; Noel Hiffernan, Secretary; Dr Russel Dickens, M/C Member; Chandrika Subramaniyan, M/C Member; and Om Dhungel, M/C Member.



# Our Vision

## Connecting Cultures. Building Community

### Connect – Be Resourceful

We connect people from all communities to our person centred services.  
We are proactive in seeking opportunities to expand and create services.

### Culture – Be Different

We celebrate difference across all cultures while creating a sense of unity and belonging.  
We champion new ways of creating harmonious communities through building mutual respect and understanding.

### Build – Be Innovative

We inspire our community, through transformational practices, to achieve our vision.  
We create diverse revenue streams and implement sustainable management strategies to maximize the use of resources.

### Community – Be Inspiring

We inspire people from all cultures to work together to create a community that values difference and embraces harmony.  
We are a place that engages and inspires all employees to achieve for themselves and others.





## Harmony Day

**H**armony Day was held this year on March 21st at Blacktown's Village Green. Some 350 people attended and speakers included the Deputy Mayor, Cr Bleasdale and Greens Senator, John Kaye. The event was the outcome of partnerships formed between SydWest MSI, Blacktown City Council, Breakthru, Macquarie

Community College, Brighter Futures Wesley Mission, Centrelink, Blacktown Police, Relationships Australia, Settlement Services International and Hillsong City Care. A broad multicultural entertainment program included performances of Youth Project's Pacific Island dancers.



## Seniors Week

**C**ALD Aged Care, Disability and Refugee Services joined forces with Blacktown City Council and Commonwealth Carelink for this year's Seniors Week event. This unique event brought together seniors of all cultures for a two day fun-filled program at the Mt. Druitt Hub. The program involved a series of talks on health, healthy diet, cooking and exercises. A healthy tasting of sumptuous and nutritious breakfast and lunches was offered and all seniors enjoyed the 'healthy living' experience!







## The Grassroots World Music Festival . . . is Born

To celebrate Refugee Week 2012, Settlement & Beyond, formerly Settlement Services, hosted the first of a series of Grassroots Music Festivals which aim to showcase artistic talent from emerging refugee communities in western Sydney by presenting their work in professional public performances.

This year a group of artists from emerging communities in North Sudan, South Sudan, Liberia, Kurdistan, Sri Lanka and India came together to display their cultural heritage, by forming an ensemble that performed traditional music from their cultures on event night.

The project arose from a partnership between SydWest MSI, the Blacktown Arts Centre, Cultural Perspectives and Blacktown City Council, and will hold the music festival for three years. The Grassroots World Music Festival will prove to be a leading cultural festival because of its unique cultural production, plus the atmosphere of cultural celebration and inclusiveness which it offers. The inaugural performance received rave reviews from spectators young and old.





## The Governor General's Visit

The Governor-General of the Commonwealth of Australia, Ms Quentin Bryce AC CVO, first visited SydWest MSI in Blacktown, in July 2011, to learn about our activities in supporting refugees and humanitarian entrants and speak with key groups including our African Women's group, Sisters on the Move. Entertained and greeted by the Sisters with traditional dance and song, the Governor-General was then given an office tour by Centre Manager, Susan Vogels, and joined the Management Committee and senior staff for discussions about the achievements and obstacles facing SydWest MSI and our clients. Ms Bryce also met with Bhutanese community members and some young participants in Youth Services programs.



## International Women's Day

The International Women's Day, staged on the theme of Connecting Women, Inspiring Futures, was held on March 9th, 2012, at Max Webber Library, Blacktown.

Blacktown Woman of the Year for 2011, Karen Tyler from Dean Park Community Development Project shared her experience as a community worker for 25 years with those present.

SydWest MSI partnered with Blacktown Max Webber Library to support mothers to instill the importance of reading in their children.

Women from different cultures shared their stories, including migrant and refugee stories, in the "Living Stories" session. Famous storyteller, Lee Castledine shared some valuable tips with mothers and grandmothers on how to best read books to children. There was also an interactive Tai-chi demonstration, including some clever moves in handling swords, to the delight of the participants.

A total of 84 adults attended, including guests from Indian-subcontinent, Sudan, Bhutan, China, Burma and Filipino, as well as 20 workers and 40 children.





## Youth's Strikers

An all-girls' team, The Strikers, participated in the three day tournament held in December, 2011, in Melbourne. The team obtained a place in the semi-finals, where they won trophies and a silver medal.



## Blacktown and Mount Druitt Migrant Interagency

Blacktown and Mount Druitt Migrant Interagency has over 175 members, with core participants of 30 people on average attending each monthly meeting. Members are made up of professionals working in community services who support refugees, humanitarian entrants and migrants in Blacktown and Mt Druitt LGAs.

This year, as well as hosting further hot topic and community representative speakers on alternative months, the MI reinvigorated the Community Services Expo for 2012. Working Party members were from the following organisations: host SydWest MSI, Blacktown City Council, Community Resource Network (CRN) Inc, Australian Government's Department of Human Services, Hillsong City Care, NSW Police Force, Macquarie Community College, the Western Sydney Institute of TAFE, Australian Red Cross, Care Connect and NSW Government Health District. The Expo itself falls in the following financial year.



## CALD Aged Care, Disability and Refugee Services



CALD Aged Care, Disability and Refugee Services is a growing and specialised service that excels in the quality of service delivery provided, in building partnerships with a number of organisations in the Cumberland – Prospect region and with building on the quality of its Bilingual Community Care field staff with a strong social enterprise Brokerage program.

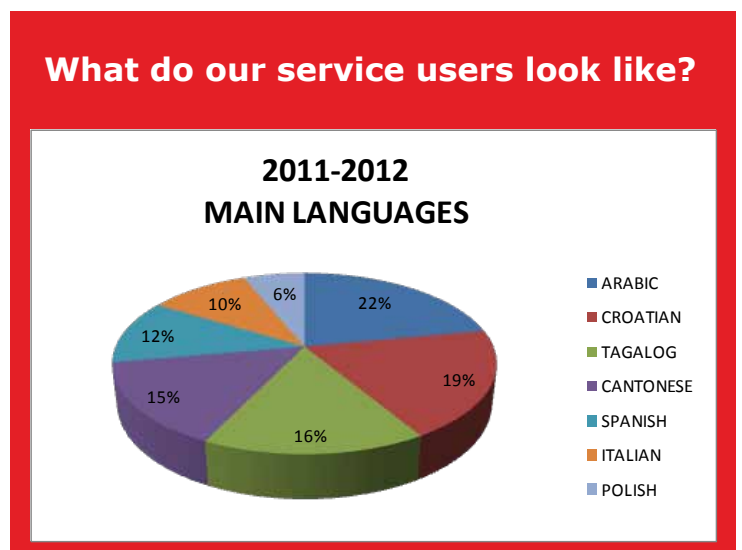
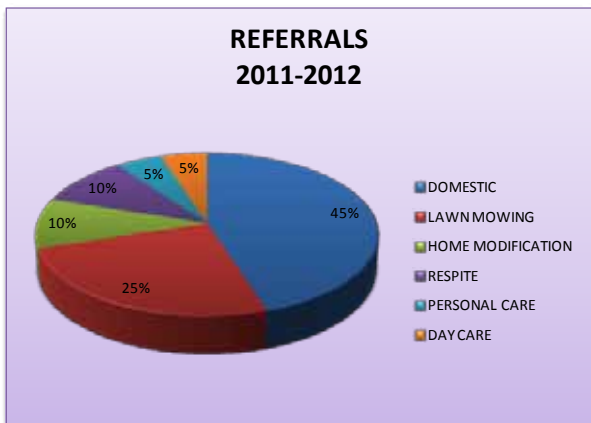
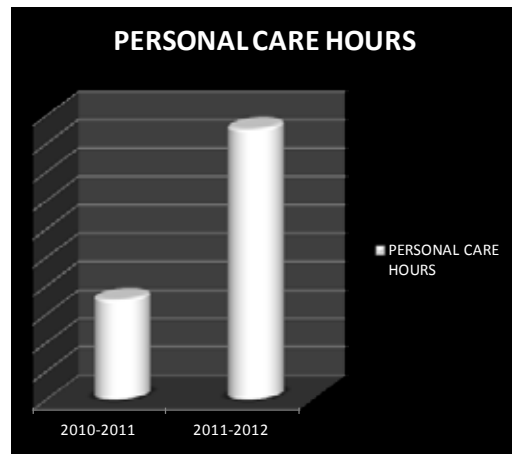
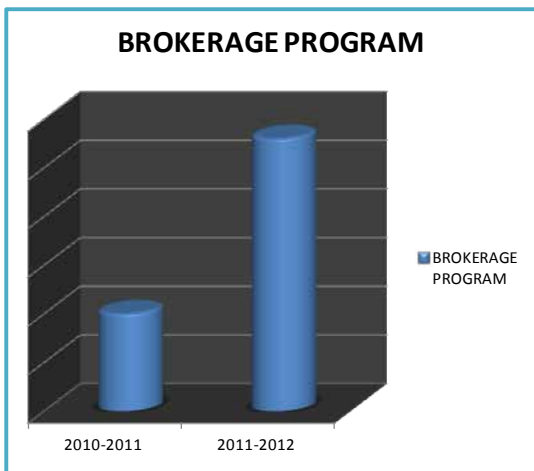
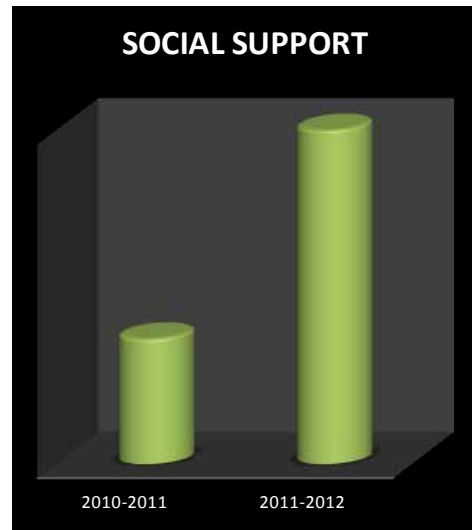
Our growing service this year focused on four different areas:

- To provide ongoing quality to all its programs and services;
- To ensure that the Social Support Program was not only established but also our service users goals were met;
- To establish the newly funded Domestic Assistance Service for the Cumberland – Prospect region; and
- To commence repositioning our services in order to meet the challenging shift within the community sector.

Our service users and the wider Culturally and Linguistically Diverse community (CALD) actively participated in the consultations on Stage 3 of the Person Centred Approach for the last two years coordinated by the NSW Department of Family and Community Services. With our aim always being the appropriateness and the quality of services available to our care recipients we made sure to provide as much feedback as possible to our funding bodies regarding changes in the Aged Care and the Disability sector and we continue to do so. As an organisation we will continue to advocate for more appropriate CALD services in the coming years and work together with both the State and the Federal Government to achieve it. With the ever growing population in NSW and the statistics showing that by 2021, older people from CALD backgrounds will reach 30% of the population representing over one million people, specialised CALD services are imperative for the healthy ageing of our CALD seniors. We strongly believe we will not just be there to provide our services but we will assist mainstream providers to do so in a variety of different ways.



## Our Services at a Glimpse



# CALD Aged Care, Disability and Refugee Services

## Our Social Life

As we are all aware, social isolation is a major factor for depression amongst seniors. Hand in hand with language difficulties and migration or refugee experiences, it can have severe consequences within our CALD communities. A large number of CALD seniors continue to join our Social Support Program and enjoy a number of group activities, cultural events, excursions and outings. The feedback we receive is that the program has a very positive impact on their overall wellbeing. This year new Social Support groups joined our large family. They are the Filipino Seniors group that gets together every fortnight and the Fijian Indian Sub-Continent Seniors who meet twice a month.



*The Chinese Seniors Group had a lovely day out in Mt. Tomah and thoroughly enjoyed their day in Bowral*



*Our new Filipino group of seniors enjoyed a day in Canberra*

Some 'ME' time for our Punjabi speaking ladies in Glenwood. The morning was a very generous offer of the Blacktown Women's and Girls' Health Centre Inc.



## Information and Events

### Home Power Savings

CALD Aged Care, Disability and Refugee Support Services in partnership with the State Government's Home Power Savings Program organised a Seniors Week Morning Tea to encourage local seniors to take advantage of the Program.



The event provided seniors with the opportunity to socialise while learning the best and most effective ways to save on their energy bills. A number of participants signed up on the day for the free service.

### Finding Happiness

A very enlightening program was organised with Dr. Ben de Silva, who is a GP in the Blue Mountains practising both Modern Medicine and Natural Therapies. He teaches relaxation-meditation, which is non-denominational, and runs regular retreats. Dr. Ben de Silva conducted a 1.5 hour session on the subject "Finding Happiness".



Dr. Ben explained the connection between a person's body, mind and soul and also gave tips on how a man could reap the best benefits of one's life on this earth.



### Fire & Rescue NSW

Seniors groups found the series of information sessions by the members of the Blacktown NSW Fire Brigade extremely useful. Tips on checking their homes and appliances as well as what to do in case of an emergency empowered our seniors on how to deal with such a difficult situation.

It is not all about social activities and fun for our groups. The CALD Aged Care, Disability and Refugee Services Turkish Social Support group actively participated at the seminar on cancer prevention at the Auburn Town Hall, organized by The Tamil Senior Citizens' Association (NSW) Inc. The forum gave the opportunity to a number of CALD seniors to provide feedback on the best possible way a message can reach their communities and assist to reduce the number of cancer incidents.

# CALD Aged Care, Disability and Refugee Services

## Information and Events (cont)

### Mother's Day

Mother's Day was celebrated on a grand scale by the Tamil Senior Citizens' Association (NSW) Inc., at the Homebush Community Centre. There was a variety of entertainment and Tamil speaking seniors actively participated by singing and reciting poems dedicated to mothers.



### Xmas Outing

Another enjoyable Christmas celebration at the Blacktown Sports Club brought together all our Community Aged Care Package clients with their friends and carers. Clients enjoyed a lovely buffet and a series of mind games with the assistance of their Bilingual Community Care staff.



### Chinese New Year

Chinese New Year is the longest and most important festivity in the Chinese calendar. On January 27th, our Chinese social support groups ensured they made their presence felt with their celebrations, their colourful lanterns and their tasty food. Have you ever wondered why so much red? Red symbolises fire in the Chinese culture and fire drives away bad luck, therefore there was a lot of red around during the day!





## Carers

Our Carer Support groups continue meeting on a monthly and fortnightly basis. The Carers Multicultural group is a great example of an empowered group of carers who have managed to build relationships amongst themselves outside their group context and supporting each other. The Filipino mothers of young children with disabilities group meet in SydWest MSI's Mt. Druitt premises and are continuously reaching out to their community hoping to bring more mothers together and break down some of those cultural barriers surrounding disability. The groups enjoyed some well-deserved outings and some time out of their stressful caring roles.



### Mt. Druitt Outreach

CALD Aged Care, Disability and Refugee Support partnered up with the Department of Family and Community Services to provide information and advice on support services for people with special needs and/or intellectual disabilities. Every Tuesday a Case Manager from the Prospect Integrated Team at Ageing, Disability and Home Care (ADHC) is available at the SydWest Multicultural Services office at Shop 8, Ralph Place, Mt. Druitt to speak to families and service providers who might require further information.

## CALD Aged Care, Disability and Refugee Services Community Partners Program



### Jesmond Aged Care Facility Visit

In February the Community Partners Program organised a visit to the only Indian specific residential facility in Strathfield, Jesmond Aged Care. Participants had the opportunity to better understand the operations of an Aged Care facility that services their community. They discussed a number of issues with the residents and asked a lot of questions. It was another move of the Program to break the myths surrounding residential facilities and assist in the breakdown of those cultural barriers that prevent people from being informed and planning for their future.

### Cultural Tour



Cultural tours this year assisted mainstream providers to better understand their Tamil and Hindi care recipients. Visits were organised to the Glenwood Sikh Temple and comprehensive presentations were organised with a number of Aged Care service providers.

### Tamil Seniors Association

In accordance with the decision taken by the Community Partners Program Advisory Committee, the CPP Coordinator regularly visited the group members at the Strathfield Community Centre to provide information on available services for the aged in the region. A number of information sessions were also coordinated for seniors such as the role of ACAT and the assessment process in Concord Hospital, Community Transport services and Podiatry services.



## Our Staff

CALD Aged Care, Disability and Refugee Services Staff have given their best this year and managed to bond with seniors and external providers in order to assist themselves in their wellness and their difficult daily roles. A staff wellness team have organised a range of programs for themselves including meditation, information sessions and exercise. With the assistance of Chinese seniors, staff participated in a Tai Chi session, organised a lovely Christmas party for some time out and a talk on Mental Health by Multicultural Mental Health Services.



## Exercise Classes

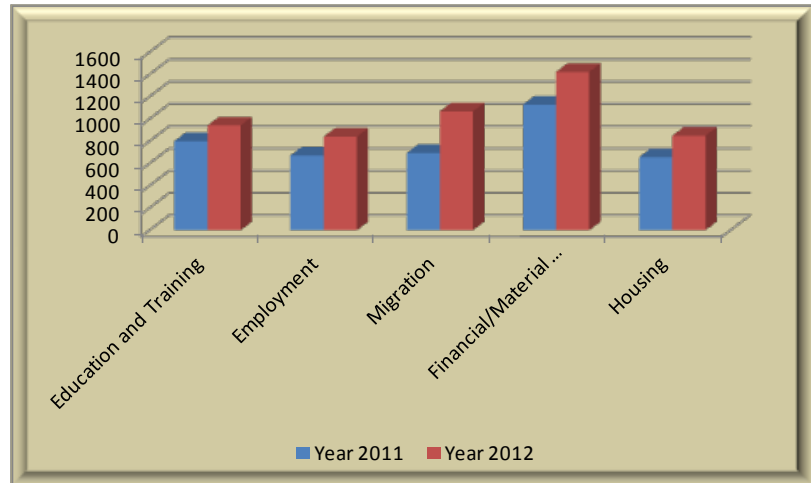
SydWest MSI places a great deal of great importance in preventing and/or improving the health of our seniors.

This is the reason why we ran a number of exercise classes for seniors that assist in muscle strengthening and falls prevention.



## Settlement Services & Beyond

Settlement Services & Beyond, formerly Settlement Services, provides direct support and assistance to newly-arrived refugees, humanitarian entrants and their families. This is done through providing casework and community capacity building initiatives aimed at empowering and assisting them to reach their full potential to contribute to, and participate equitably in Australian society and contribute to the building of a strong sense of community.

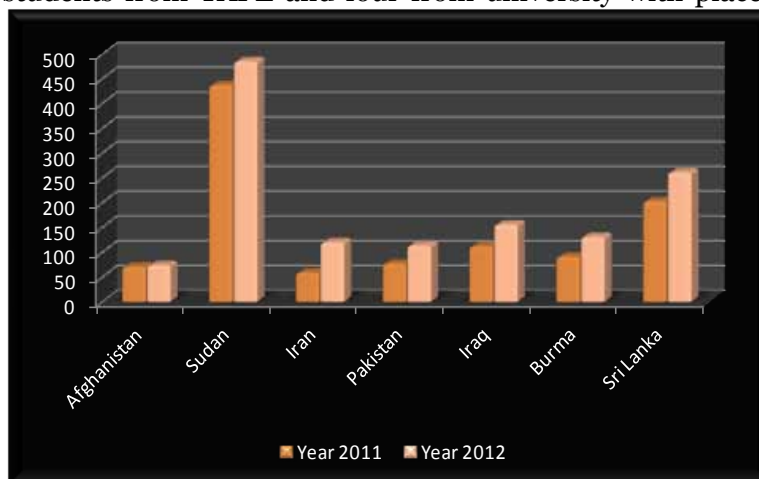


*Top five issues addressed in casework*

The Settlement Services continue to build on the solid foundations that have been established with clients and service providers in previous years and have increased its cooperation with stakeholders resulting in better engagement of service providers and other stakeholders in understanding issues affecting refugee and humanitarian entrants.

The team has assisted in building the capacity of mainstream services in the provision of services to clients from diverse backgrounds through cultural education and collaboration. Partnerships have been broadened and strengthened to increase resources and also to improve service provision

Community Leaders and volunteers were also given skills to enable them to work effectively with their communities and to be able to present issues affecting them to service providers, Politicians and other Interest groups. Staff development and training was enhanced to give staff the required skills to deal with issues as they arise. The Team provided 12 welfare students from TAFE and four from university with placement as part of our commitment



*Top seven client backgrounds*

to give practical experience and support to students in welfare and social work fields in the period under review.

We continue to focus on reaching the new emerging refugee communities living in the Blacktown Local Government Area (LGA) and the outer west comprehensively. To achieve this, bilingual workers employed reflect the diversity of the emerging communities settling in our catchment area.

## Refugee Driving Project

Being able to drive in Australia is a necessity and not a luxury. Most work opportunities require applicants to have access to a comprehensively insured car and be able to drive due to the unreliability of public transport.

This project provides assistance to new arrivals to obtain driving licences and to learn about road rules and road safety, the role of Highway Patrol, buying a second hand car, the need for insurances, basic car maintenance such as checking tyre pressure, changing oil and more. Participants in the program were given seminars on risk minimisation and safety on the road by 'Youth Safe'. This was an interactive session that assisted the participants to explore the concept of risk, its consequences and safer choices that can be made to avoid accidents and injury. The second seminar raised awareness of the physical and mental tasks associated with driving and strategies to deal with these on the road.

The Project also used community Mentors to assist clients with practical driving experience to supplement their number of practice hours in order to obtain a NSW Provisional Driving Licences. A total of 368 clients benefitted from 21 group information sessions and 41 clients obtained their Provisional Driving Licences after receiving assistance to increase their on road practical driving experience thanks to the Project.



## Settlement Services & Beyond



### Shine

**S**hine for Girls was funded by Blacktown Commonwealth Bank staff. The program was delivered through themed activities such as art, drama and dancing sessions, which covered a range of youth issues such as leadership, positive friendship, self-esteem, identity and the influence of media on young people's lives. The aim of the program was to provide a safe and free recreational space for young girls, to break social isolation, to reduce antisocial behaviour, increase self-esteem, interpersonal skills, social networks and enhance their ability to cope with past trauma.

The program has resulted in breaking social isolation, reducing antisocial behaviour and promoting interaction among the group. Furthermore, increased self-confidence has occurred through various activities including public speaking. Other activities included fine art, creating jewelry, collage and henna designs. Overall, they found the experience energising, empowering and motivating.

Members who participated were from Bhutanese, African and Pakistani backgrounds. The program ran throughout the financial year.

### Cancer Screening in CALD Communities Forum

**A**s the saying goes, 'A healthy mind is found in a healthy body'. SydWest MSI recognises the role of good health in the settlement of new arrivals. As a result, SydWest MSI is always working to link clients with Health Services and assisting Services to also provide culturally appropriate information on health services to new arrivals settling in Western Sydney.

Twenty nine health related sessions were held in the period under review, the highlight of which was the Cancer Screening Forum for the Indian sub-continent. This forum was held in April 2012 at the Sydwest MSI Offices in Blacktown with the assistance of a small grant from the Cancer Council. About 80 people from the following communities attended the Forum: Bhutanese, Tamil, Pakistani, Afghani and Chinese. Seminars were provided on Women's Cancers, Breast Cancer and mammogram, healthy lifestyle and cancer prevention, Cervical Cancer Screening.

Forum participants were given the opportunity to make appointments for mammograms and pap smears, coordinated through the Breast Cancer Institute, Westmead. As a result, 40 women undertook mammograms for the first time at Westpoint, Blacktown, with the help of interpreters. Participants were referred to their General Practitioners for pap smears.

## FORUM: Let's Talk

A community forum 'Parents and Young People: Let's Talk' was held at Sydwest MSI on June 21st, 2012. Its aim was to assist newly arrived immigrants and refugees build better parent-child relationships, while living with the influence of two different cultures. Some 86 participants from different age groups, and with different cultural backgrounds, attended. The guest speaker was Lyndal Power from Relationships Australia.

Topics addressed were: destructive behaviours such as criticism, contempt, defensiveness, and stonewalling. In addition, effective communications and positive behaviours like communicating with respect, acknowledgement of personal distress, strategies of walking away were highlighted to help participants understand the importance and ways of building mutually good relationships with their children, and vice versa. The talks were interpreted into different community languages with the help of SydWest MSI's bilingual case workers.

The forum allowed discussions and role plays, where women, men and young people took part by voicing their opinions and sharing their personal experiences. Participants were also made aware of other community service organisations, youth centres available to them to reach for help.

The success of the forum was measured through the result of evaluation obtained from the participants, as 90% of them agreed that the information delivered was informative and understandable (see Figure 2), as well as applicable to their parent-child relationship.

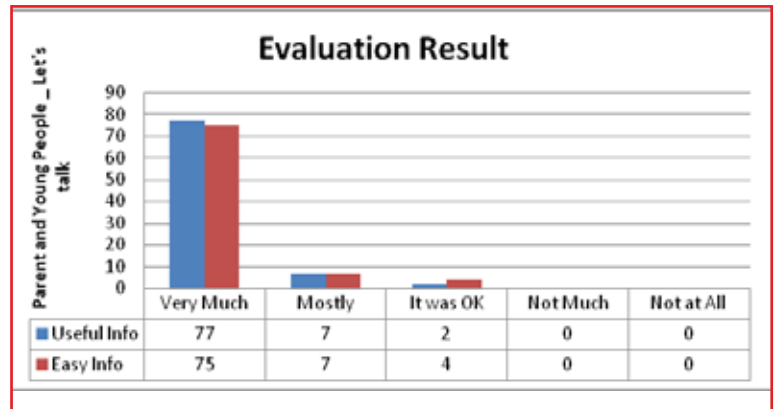


Figure 1

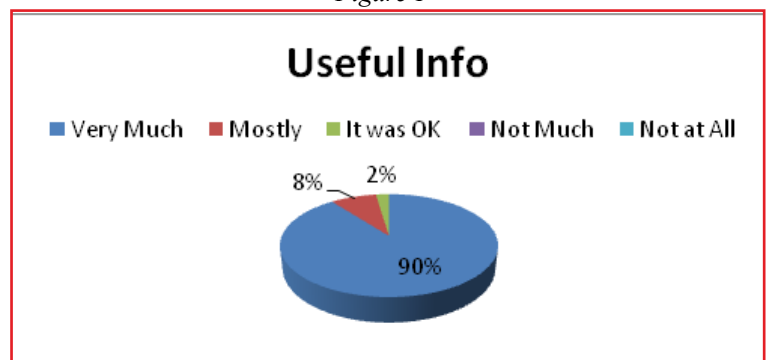


Figure 2

## Our Outreach Office in Mt DrUITt

The new Sydwest MSI Office in Mt DrUITt is becoming a hub for settlement activity and support. The office is staffed by bilingual caseworkers representing emerging communities settling in the Mt DrUITt area. Some of the activities that took place at the Centre in the period under review were: computer classes, the Multicultural Women's Group, Parenting Information seminars, Casework, Driver Knowledge Tests, Multicultural Men's Social Group, Arabic Speakers Senior Group and Police and Community Action Group.

## Settlement Services & Beyond

### The Family Safety Project

The Family Safety Project provided case work for clients escaping domestic violence. Referrals and advocacy on behalf of the clients were made to other service providers such as Housing NSW, Blacktown Centrelink, Blacktown Police to make sure that clients' needs were met. A multicultural women's support group and other capacity building programs were organised to support the women, survivors and those who were at risk of becoming victims. Workshops, training and information sessions were conducted for target groups and community leaders from various communities to increase community understanding and knowledge about DV issues including the effect that it has on the victims, children and families, plus the legal rights and responsibilities under Australian law and the support services available for victims.

The establishment of the Victims Support Group contributed to the success of the Project. Through participation in the Women's Group, women were able to share and listen to each other's life experiences and difficulties, as well as learn ideas and skills to solve their problems.

The exchange of cultural norms was a form of therapy helping them gain confidence to openly discuss Domestic Violence issues. Participants bonded well and gained confidence and increased emotional capacity to deal with DV issues. They shared food, religious festivals and learned words from each other's languages. An important achievement of the group was that they were able to work together to produce a patchwork of their cultural and country flags which was exhibited by SydWest during Refugee week celebrations.



The Family Safety Project Steering Committee provided strategic advice, to inform and guide the worker in the task of implementing the activities planned. Quarterly meetings were held to discuss issues affecting clients, strategies to achieve the aims and objectives of the Project and the training of staff to improve effective service delivery.

The project officer networked with other service providers in order to strengthen the implementation of the project and invited qualified guest speakers to deliver information sessions and training. 'White Ribbon Day Activities' and 'Stop DV Day' activities were organised with the Outer Western Domestic Violence Network and Western Sydney Area Health Services to increase awareness and to send a message to the community that violence to women and children should not be tolerated.

The Project also provided cultural competence assistance to mainstream Domestic Violence Services to improve service provision to CALD Domestic Violence Clients.



## The Family Harmony Program

The Family Harmony Program uses the train-the-trainer and peer mentoring models to address intergenerational conflict, which is one of the common problems that newly arrived migrant and refugee families face. Twenty three volunteers were trained to facilitate Family Harmony sessions in culturally and linguistically appropriate way to target communities.

During the past year the trained volunteers facilitated discussions on intergenerational conflict for 26 groups of families comprising 448 participants on improving relationships, disciplining, communication and negotiation, conflict resolution skills and Australian family and child protection laws. Participants from Sudan, Iran, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Afghanistan, Indonesia, Vietnam, India, Mauritius, Chile, Nepal, Burundi, Tanzania, Egypt, Bangladesh, Fiji, South Sudan, Liberia, Philippines, Kenya, Ethiopia, Syria and Iraq benefited from this program.

Over 90% of the participants thought the program was culturally relevant, improved their family relationships, gave them confidence in handling family issues and in seeking assistance when required.



**T**riple P is an evidence-based parenting program. It aims to increase and enhance parenting skills for beneficiaries. Fifteen workshops have been organised for 90 participants on developing good relationships with children, strategies to reduce problem behaviour and to promote self-control in children, good communication skills with children, as well as, showing affection to children.

**T**hree of the participants in the program have had their children restored to them by Family and Community Services due to improved parenting skills gained through the program, while two other families have succeeded in preventing their children being removed due to increased parenting skills.



## Settlement Services & Beyond Men



### African Foster Carer Social Group

The African Foster Carer Social Group was formed in June 2011 at the end of the African Foster Carer Recruitment Project. The Social Group has two main objectives. Firstly, to make sure that African children/teenagers are placed in culturally appropriate families to facilitate the maintenance of culture, language and values of the African community. Secondly, to create a venue for the social group to learn from each other through the sharing of experiences to better assist African children and teenagers in need of care. The Social Group meets bi-monthly at SydWest MSI with 10-15 members regularly attending meetings.

Five members of the Social Group have had children placed with them temporarily. Other applicants are undertaking assessment to determine their eligibility for authorisation. The social group is supported by SydWest MSI and Family and Community Services.

### African Men in Action: Out and About

Men from emerging communities met once a fortnight at Sydwest MSI. In the period under review, participants used their meetings to learn more about positive parenting in Australia, learnt new skills aimed at improving their self esteem and enhance their health. They used the opportunity to discuss issues affecting men in Australia. These sessions were facilitated by professionals with experience in working with men. The group organised a picnic at Nurranginy Reserve in June to bring activities of the year to a climax. Participants were from Iraq, Bhutan, Afghanistan and Africa.



## Women

### Multicultural Women's Group

Our Multicultural Women's group met weekly on Wednesdays to break isolation, share experiences and learn new skills and went on excursions to places of interest that assisted in facilitating settlement. In the period under review, the group visited Taronga Zoo, Nurringingy Reserve and other places of interest in the city of Sydney. The Women had henna sessions, jewellery making and gained new skills in knitting and the making of soft toys and soft furnishing for the house.

Our African women's group, Sisters on the Move, continue to break new grounds in Australia. These women were guests of honour at the Governor Generals' International Women's Day Celebration at the Governor Generals residence in Sydney in March 2012.



### The Food Hygiene and Food Safety

The Food Hygiene and Food Safety Course is organised by SydWest and Nirimba TAFE outreach to enhance the skills of participants in handling food and preparing healthy recipes for their families. Participants gain knowledge required to handle food safely during the storage, preparation and display of food in a range of situations. This is an introductory course to Food Handling Supervisor's Course. It is organised for 7 weeks during school term.



## Youth Projects

In 2011-2012 SydWest MSI improved the delivery of youth driven programs to support refugee and migrant young people aged 12-24. Numbers of participants in the youth programs increased by 17% in the year, with services and activities tailored to meet current and emerging needs. The section offers programs designed to reflect the needs of the target group to help create a smooth settlement process for these new arrivals, and also attract some long term youth in the area.

Sports and recreation, education support, school holiday activities, resilience building, diversity and social cohesion and case management (including referrals and workshops) were the broad spectrum of programs designed and implemented for the young people from diverse cultural backgrounds living in Blacktown Local Government Area (LGA). Through the efforts of a diligent team of youth workers and volunteers, as well as partners such as Football United, Youth off the Street (YOTS), Blacktown Youth Services Association (BYSA), Basketball Australia, Hillsong City Care, Western Sydney Institute of TAFE, The Australian College of Basketball in Melbourne, and the Department of Education and Communities (DEC), strong outcomes impacting on the integration process of these youths were achieved. Approximately 280



young people attended from both north and south Sudan, Sierra Leone, Liberia, Ethiopia, Iraq, the Pacific Islands, Uganda, Burma, Bhutan, Afghanistan, Ghana, Philippines and DR Congo. Programs in information and training activities are aimed to empower young people, assist them make healthy choices, decrease isolation and to accelerate their settlement process in Australia.

### Sports and Recreation

Sports and recreational programs are proven to be a powerful medium for social change. Our programs bridge cultural gaps and assist development of conflict resolution skills. About 70-80 young people from north and south Sudan, Sierra Leone, Liberia, Kenya and Philippines attended the basketball training program every week at Blacktown Police and Community Youth Clubs (PCYC).

The program forms part of their human and social development and contributes to social cohesion, tolerance and integration. It allows them to overcome barriers such as language and cultural differences and move towards integration and social inclusion.

### Soccer Programs

The Saturday Football in the Park was delivered in partnership with Football United with an average attendance of 50+ boys per week.

Soccer Camp held in partnership with Football United was held at Sydney Academy of Sport and Recreation in Narrabeen. It was a four-day residential camp held between 3rd - 6th October





targeting male and female young people currently engaged in weekly training programs as players, junior coaches and coordinators. The aim of this leadership camp was to provide an opportunity for the participants to engage with youth from different cultures, develop new friendships and enhance self-confidence and self-awareness through leadership, team building activities and football training sessions specific to young males and females from diverse backgrounds. Participants were Iraqi, Bhutanese, Togolese, Afghani, Sudan and Liberian.

### STAR Basketball Programs

In the course of this financial year, four training sessions in basketball were held at Blacktown PCYC, including Tuesday sessions for two teams of under 18s, another Thursday session for 18s and over, a Friday session for girls, and a final session for a mixed group, over 18s on Saturdays. Approximately 70 young people from 12-25 were involved in this program that began in 2007. The aim is to provide training for young people in a sporting area, with a strong leadership component, in order to create a safe place where they can play sports within a supervised and professional environment. Another aim is to link the participants with mainstream sport organisations and support them to build professional networks. This is part of the Youth Projects' broader strategy to provide avenues for integration for refugee youth in Australian society.

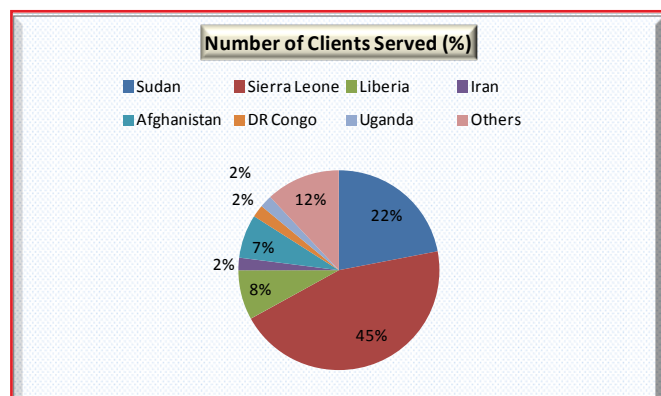
Over this financial year, there has been an increase of 10% in participation numbers. The boys' Minor Stars team won the under 18s in the championship game. They

also participate regularly in local competitions during the school terms. As a highlight of the tournament, six boys, who were recognised as outstanding at the tournament, from the Star Basketball team, were awarded scholarships to pursue Diplomas in Sports Science, which was provided by the Australian College of Basketball Association (ACBA) in Melbourne. Two other boys obtained scholarships in Sydney with the Australian Institute of Sports to assist them manage the High School system while continuing their interest in sport.

Additionally, two teams from Star Basketball also participated in the basketball tournament in Bankstown Sport Centre, which concluded in April-May 2012. One team was a runner-up and two players from STAR Basketball team received individual awards for their performances in the tournament.

### Education Programs

Many migrant and refugee young people face serious difficulties at school after missing several years of structured learning before migrating to Australia. Often difficulties arise when these students with severely limited literacy and acute settlement needs are placed in mainstream school classrooms after an initial supportive environment of the Intensive English Centre (IEC) at Evans High School. In this year, to address these issues, both on-site



## Youth Projects

and off-site school programs were delivered in partnership with schools, the Department of Education and Communities (DEC), TAFE and other relevant institutions for successful learning and quicker transition. On-site school programs included living-skills and resilience building programs delivered at Evans High School Intensive English Centre, Doonside Technology High School and Mitchell High School. Off-site school programs included the homework support programs at St Marys Community Centre and SydWest MSI, creative writing skills workshops, Higher School Certificate (HSC) preparation and study skills workshops, and education and service tours. The following is a selection of programs that ran in the period:

### **The homework support program:**

This ongoing program is delivered after school once a week at SydWest MSI, and as an outreach program in St Marys weekly for students from communities such as Uganda, Sierra Leone, Sudan, Liberia, India, Burma, Iraq, Afghanistan, Iran and Pakistan. Running for five years, it has provided a high level of academic support and social interaction to assist students in their cognitive and social development. The program also teaches ethical behaviour. Average weekly attendance at SydWest MSI was 24, and at St. Marys, 11. In addition to the homework program at SydWest MSI, there has been a series of HSC workshops on Chemistry, Biology and Mathematics. Thanks to the unwavering and diligent service of Ferdinand Wittmann, a student of High School teaching from University of Western Sydney (UWS).

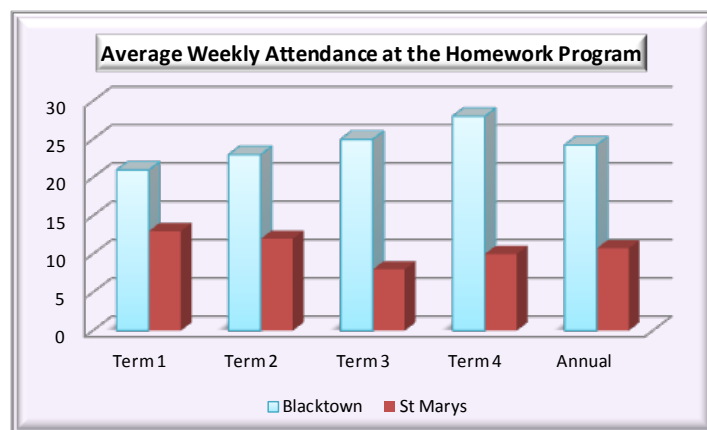
**Creative Writing:** Two-day workshops on creative writing and poetry were held for CALD young people from 12-18 years in order to improve their skills in logical



thinking, expression of thought and writing style. This was delivered at SydWest MSI.

### **HSC study skills and preparation:**

A one-day session was organised for seven 2012 HSC students at SydWest MSI Blacktown, to prepare them for HSC examination questions, with a special focus on English.



**A local education tour:** organised for IEC students at Evans High School with 10 students in attendance, ages 15 – 17 years, from Iraq, Jordan, Sierra Leone, Burma, and Uganda. Students visited SydWest MSI, Max Webber Library and Blacktown TAFE where the graduating students of the Migrant Access Course shared their experiences at TAFE with the high school students. A service tour was also organised and places visited were BYSA, Blacktown Centrelink, Blacktown PCYC and SydWest.

## Diversity and Social Cohesion Programs

Diversity and social cohesion programs combine youth engagement, leadership and mentoring activities for young people

targeting young people from Africa, Asia, Pacific Islander and other backgrounds to promote community harmony and intercultural understanding among young people from these communities. This was done through the developing of plays and music performances at WestPoint Shopping Centre and other mainstream performance space creating social harmony and dialogue. About 60-70 young people from the target communities participated in the different programs such as cultural singing, dancing and drumming. Highlight of the programs was the 2012 Harmony Day celebration, in which the group dubbed “Multi-Konnect” displayed strong multicultural performance in the form of music, dance and a skit. In that celebration, there were extensive cultural exchanges through music and dance as the dance troupe clad in their different cultural dress performed traditional African and Pacific Islander dances. Africans were involved in the cultural dance of the Pacific Islanders and vice versa. To crown it all, the group did a unity song titled “One World One Word” written by one of the participants and concluded by performing the “Hakka” a skit typical of Pacific Islanders.

### School Holiday Activities

- Tailored activities, both gender-specific and general, were designed and implemented during school holidays for young people from different cultural backgrounds. These featured:
  - An outing of young Burmese women was organised to Maroubra Beach and the city.
  - An outing to the Entrance for 34 young people from Ghana, Sudan, Sierra Leone, Hungary, Liberia, Bhutan and Ethiopia backgrounds to the Entrance. Games, exploration of the coastline, and a barbecue were enhanced by the presence of friendly

life-savers.

- A visit to Clovelly Beach was undertaken by 33 students. Young people from South Sudan, Pakistan, Ghana, Uganda, Bhutan, Nepal, Sierra Leone and Liberia attended.
- Excursion to Sydney Olympic Park with 17 young people mainly from the Sudanese and Bhutanese communities in attendance. This program aimed at inspiring the young girls to participate in sport activities particularly basketball and volleyball and strengthening their inter-community interaction.



### Case Management

In this financial year, 128 referrals were made to external services. A total of 32% were internal referrals made within the organisation, 15% of these referrals were made to TAFE/Technical College, 10% to Job Network Provider, 6% to Centrelink, 3% to Accommodation Provider, 3% to DIAC, and 2% were made to Youth Services.

A total of 36 information sessions were delivered, 661 young people attended these sessions giving an average attendance of 18 young people per session. As a result of casework the following outcomes were achieved, clients attained an increased: understanding of the different educational options including the different pathway programs at TAFE; understanding of job seeking activities; confidence and independence in accessing mainstream service providers such as TAFE/University, health service providers, Centrelink, RTA, Blacktown PCYC and the Blacktown Youth Centre. They have also obtained an increased understanding of Australian laws as well as the social and multicultural life in Australia.

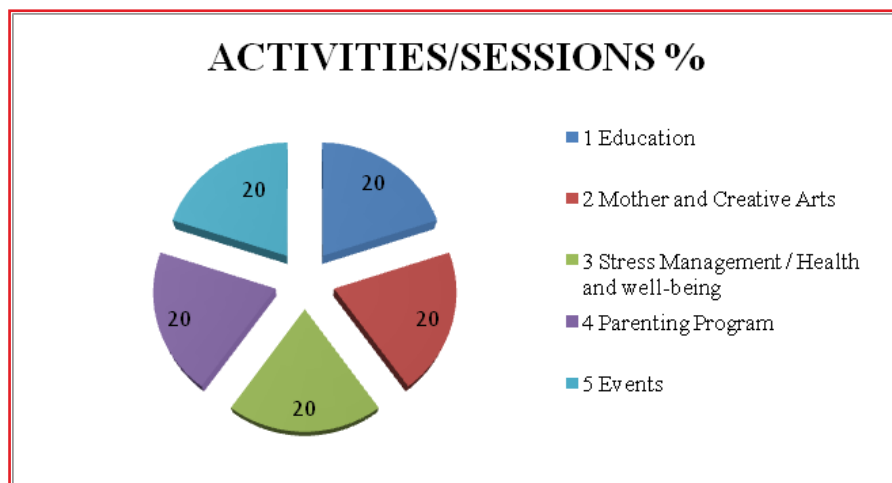
# CALD Early Intervention Family Support Service

Families NSW Project continues to strengthen its partnerships, and tailor its programs, to support refugee and migrant parents, and their children aged 0-8 years old, living in Sydney's western suburbs and surrounds. The CALD Early Intervention Family Support Service arose from an amalgamation of two former divisions: the Perinatal Project and Early Intervention Project. The Service is funded by Families and Community Services (FACS).



## Early Intervention Project

This project provides parenting workshops, and information sessions on topics such as law, health, education and family skills. It provides women's support groups and play groups, employment training, family activities, service tours, cultural events, home visits, support for parents with young children, and more. The division's activities form equal areas of focus in the fields of: Health, Education, Creative Arts, Parenting and Events.



## Pilot Project: Oral Health Forum

The Pakistani community in Mt. Druitt was selected to pilot a project called "Oral Health". Statistics indicated that the CALD community was not fully accessing oral health services and so there was a gap. The project started with a consultation to establish the needs of the clients, which was followed by Refugee Health presenting valuable information sessions to the group. The information being shared was very useful to the clients. An existing DVD in six languages, titled "Healthy Mouth Something to Smile About", was extended to add the Urdu language. Finally, a forum was held in June 2012 with more than 80 attendees attributing to its success. The forum was held for the Pakistani community in Mt. Druitt. Partnerships supporting the project were Refugee Health, Went West, Centre for Population Health, Westmead Centre for Oral Health, Multicultural Health Network, WSLHD and SydWest MSI.



## Support Through Events

### Mother's Day Celebrations

In the year under review, the project combined all groups to celebrate Mother's day with Hillsong provi Head and shoulder massages, manicure, hand scrubs and Henna Tattooing were some of the pampering services the clients enjoyed. ding Pamper service to about 80 women. Around 60 children were also present and they were amused and entertained by the Clown, face painting and even some outdoor activities.



### Family Matters

For the first time Family Matters was introduced in the Blacktown area. It was started in the Hills area and this year, the committee decided to move it where the demand for more information sessions for CALD communities is greater. Held at Max Webber Library, partners included Relationship Australia, PACSI, Health (WSLHD) and Catholic Care are just some of the new service providers who came on board.

Please also see articles on Harmony Day on page 8, and International Women's Day (IWD), page 10, the latter convened by CALD Early Intervention Family



# CALD Early Intervention Family Support Service



## Diabetes Forum

With statistics high for the CALD community in regards to gestational diabetes, an initiative in December 2011 by the Department of Health. Information on diabetes was provided for the Indian sub-continent community in Blacktown through presenters and stalls. About 135 mothers and children attended. Positive client feedback resulted, prompting plans to bring the information into the broader community.

As it was the end of the year a similar forum was held in Mt. Druitt in 2012 June at the Mt. Druitt Hub. The Families team had over 10 communities from the Indian sub-continent attend. Approximately 70 clients attended the forum with ten information stalls present on the day with six presenters providing information. Western Area Multicultural Health, Blacktown Hospital, Children and Youth Health and the Diabetes Centre were the main organisers and were supported by

## The Easter Hunt

Easter was an occasion for another celebratory day Families NSW hosted in the period to encourage clients to engage in a fun group experience with their young children.



## Families NSW Project Groups

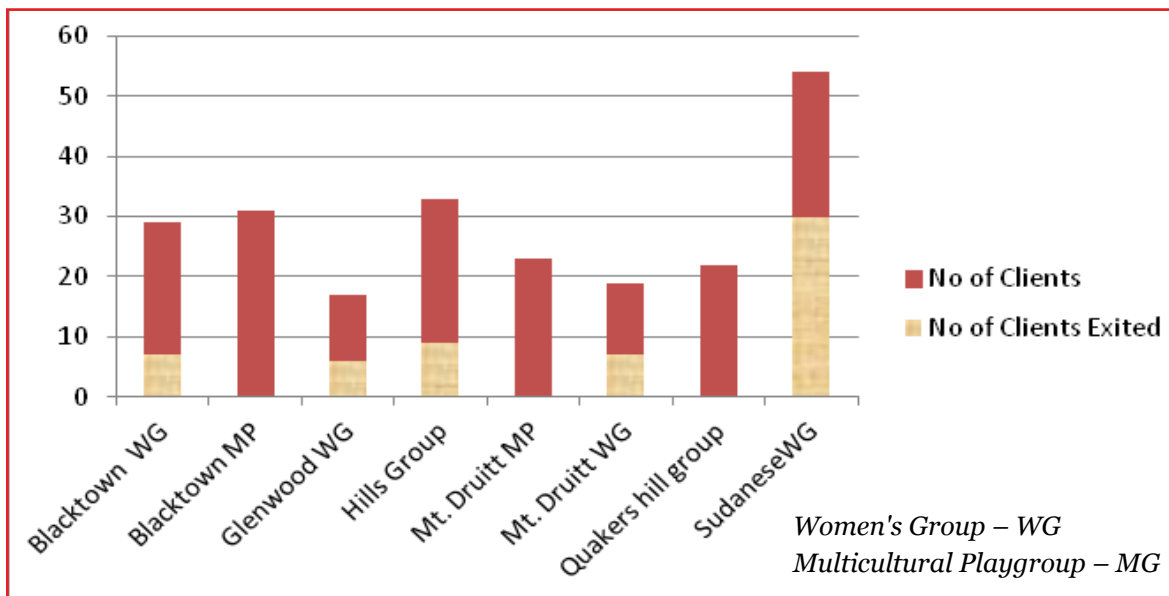
Families NSW Project services its clients through support groups and play groups on a regular basis throughout the year. All the groups service mothers, or carers with children aged 0-8 years of age. This method of providing support is the result of research conducted by the division that demonstrates that groups are the most effective way to provide support for the client-base. Group interaction brings out the broader issues that the clients face in resettling themselves in Australia, breaking their isolation. It also introduces them to information and activities in a congenial, safe and child-friendly setting.

### Mothers Groups

This Project provides assistance to families with children up to eight years of age. The main aim is to assist mothers to raise a happy and healthy family by helping them address their issues early. The group provides social interaction, breaking isolation and even exclusion of mothers and/or families from their community.



### Group Breakdown of Clients Served in the 2011-2012 Financial Year





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