

SydWest MSI



2013

Annual Report

Editing and Design:
Anne Howell
Editorial Team:
Susan Vogels
Marilena Rubbo
Nikolayka Bentcheva
Zee Zarifi
Elfa Moraitakis
Sree Vithya Harilingam
Bernadette Agyepong
Geodhini Sivaraj
Mustapha Bangura
Abulla Agwa
Marian Wilcox
Mary Rose Leona
Ambika Dhungyel and
Khatol Ahmadzay.

**Special thanks to
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images
of the Governor General
on her visits
to SydWest MSI and
with Sisters on the Move.**



**Printing: G Print Media
(mobile) 0447 55 99 67
(office) 02 9905 1978
6 Short Street, Brookvale NSW 2100**



Contents

Management Reports	4-5
SydWest MSI overview	6
Volunteers	7
Events	8-13
CALD Aged Care, Disability & Refugee Services	14-23
Settlement & Beyond	24-31
Youth Projects	32-35
CALD Early Intervention Family Support Project	36-39



Management Reports



CEO Susan Vogels

This organisation is in an interesting position within the welfare sector. We have grown to be larger than what a small not for profit offers while at the same time trying to still provide that area of individual expertise for which the small organizations are renowned. The unusual collaboration of Settlement Services International with all MRC's is evidence of that growth and person centred care model. A lot of what has happened this year has been to discover where we are going especially with the many challenges and changes being instituted throughout the sector. One of our conclusions was that we needed to become a Company Limited by Guarantee and so the new constitution is presented tonight for you to vote on. I would like to acknowledge the incredible interaction and professionalism of Corrs Chambers Westgarth Lawyers who prepared the proposed constitution for a company Limited by Guarantee with SydWest MSI management. Their efficiency, patience and knowledge were evident at all times.

Also coming from the strategic plan which was presented last year we have with the assistance and support of Pat Johnson and the driving enthusiasm of Nikolayka Bentcheva completed an effective, living Policy and Procedure manual. Operational plans are now a part of the working environment implemented with consultation with our clients and workers. Their grass roots experience is the driving force for the interactions and plans. We are very excited to be participating in the Blacktown Council's "Racism it stops with me" campaign. An intervention which is close to us in assisting all people to be able to be insightful about the occurrence of Racism. A strong emphasis we have taken on is encouraging all communities to participate with each other and so learn to respect and value all Australians.

As you look through the pages of this Annual Report I am sure you will see the overall direction of SydWest MSI which is reflected within the Mission and Vision Statements. Finally, I would like to acknowledge our many volunteers for their valuable contributions. Some of whom are highlighted within this report.
Yours sincerely

Susan Vogels
CEO



Chair Ejaz Khan

It has been an honour and privilege to serve as chair on the Management Committee of SydWest Multicultural Services for the past few years. I would like to acknowledge the many organisations that have recognised SydWest MSI's vision and assisted us to continue make that vision a reality. So many organisations have collaborated with us to create great working teams that add value to the community at large. Special thanks to our funding bodies the Department of Immigration & Citizenship; the Department of Health and Ageing; Community Services, Department of Family and Community Services NSW; Ageing, Disability and Home Care, Department of Family and Community Services NSW; the Department of Family, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs; and Community Relations Commission. We would also like to acknowledge the support given to our benevolent activities by donations from Sidney Myer Fund and Telstra Foundation.



During the last financial year the centre management and the management committee have worked alongside Corrs Chambers Westgarth Lawyers in preparation of the Proposed Constitution which will be presented at the Annual General Meeting. The proposed Constitution is fundamental in transferring SydWest MSI from incorporated association to a company limited by guarantee which is a more appropriate legal structure. I wish to thank Corrs Chambers Westgarth Lawyers for their professional assistance in this matter.



On behalf of the Management Committee I would like to acknowledge and thank the professionalism, passion and dedication of our staff under the leadership of Susan Vogels, the Chief Executive Officer. Without this commitment to our organisation and our clients SydWest MSI would not be in a position to achieve the excellent quality and range of support services which it does.

Yours sincerely

Ejaz Khan
Chairman

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; Chandrika Subramaniyan, Treasurer; Noel Hiffernan, Secretary; Dr. Russel Dickens, M/C Member; Balraj Sangha, M/C Member; Om Dhungel, M/C Member.



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.

Thank you to all administration and finance staff for your hard work and outstanding contribution during the year. We know how much time and energy the 'background' work demands and we deeply appreciate all of your effort in contributing towards the SydWest MSI vision. Your effective and efficient work is highly valued.



Our Volunteers



SydWest MSI could not succeed without its volunteers. Whether it be their help in one session or five years worth, we wish to thank all volunteers for their hard work and dedication. Below is a tribute to some - but these profiles offer a glimpse of the work done by all. Thank you.

The Gavel Club has run for the last five years at SydWest MSI, facilitated by volunteers Noel and Amanda Annabel. The Club ran along similar lines to a Toastmasters club, aiming

at teaching public speaking. Noel and Amanda are distinguished Toastmaster officials, and could see that SydWest MSI clients would benefit from a free service offered in a Gavel Club setting especially for refugee and migrant participants. They learnt a lot from those who attended, especially about Africa. In the early days, participants were primarily Sudanese, and the six-minute ice breaker speech was peppered with stories about the war in Sudan and how people came to Australia. "The stories were mostly horrific, but we could see they were cathartic," Amanda says. "We learnt so much about what people had been through – we gained a personal understanding."

They both came to appreciate their African pupils' absolute devotion to learning and their reverence for teachers. Recently, the Sudanese were joined by Indians, then Bhutanese. Of the many highlights, they watched key people come out of their shell through the club, and also Amanda met the Governor-General, the Honourable Quentin Bryce when the Sisters on the Move Gavel Club was visited by her Excellency in 2010. Thank you also to the following long-term volunteers:

- Husband and wife team Monica and David Rose, from Whalan, have taught English classes on a volunteer basis for over five years.



- Don Jacobs and Margaret Smith have held English conversation classes for eight years.

- Ferdinand Wittmann, who has volunteered since doing his placement with us many years ago.

The Grassroots World Music Festival 2013 & Family Fun Day



For this year's Refugee Week, SydWest MSI and Blacktown Arts Centre hosted the second World Grassroots Music Festival featuring musicians and performers from people with refugee backgrounds/former refugees from all over the world, creating music and dance together. As well as the evening event, there was a full day of music, dance, food and cultural activities for the whole family staged in Blacktown. The combination helped to celebrate Refugee Week 2013, and showcased the diverse cultural heritage of the people of western Sydney.



What People Said

"The artists and musicians were fantastic to watch and the location was perfect, it really had such a great feel to it all."

"I am writing to thank Blacktown Council, their Arts section and the SydWest Multicultural Services Inc. for organising the recent event of the Grass Roots World Music Festival on Saturday 15 June 2013 at the Blacktown Arts Centre."

"Myself, my family and friends truly enjoyed this day and event. It is great to have an event such as this close to home."

"I hope this event continues and congratulations for organizing an enjoyable and innovative event."

"I attended the Grass Roots World Music Festival at the Blacktown Arts Centre. It was a truly inspiring event. There were people from many different cultures performing music that was Ghanaian, Chilean/Latin American, Persian Fusion, Kurdish, Filipino, Uyghur East Turkistanian, Sudanese, Ethiopian styles and there was some Hip Hop in there too. It was a celebration of Australia's amazing multiculturalism. I was in awe of the sense of community present at this event. I went there knowing no one but came away feeling like I'd been to some great family gathering. Absolutely tremendous."



International Women's Day

Attended by more than 200 clients and 50 children on the 8th of March at the Blacktown RSL. Great partnership with Blacktown Women's & Girls Health Centre enabled us to celebrate the event. Other supporters were Macquarie Community College Blacktown and the Maternity Liaison officers from Blacktown Hospital. There were Indian and African dance performances, health information offered from Went West, speeches, as well as a lunch that had the clients entertained for the day. Students from Blacktown Girls High School enjoyed the event and wanted to be more involved in next year's event. The theme this year was "Education" which meant our aim was to empower women attending through awareness.



What they said of IWD Blacktown

"We enjoyed the program so much and we hope you have something like this next year too". "Can we also perform next year as we feel so much at home".

IWD in Mt DrUITT

International Women's Day 2013, titled "Women from Around the Globe Welcome to Your New Home", was celebrated in Mt DrUITT. SydWest MSI worked in partnership with Macquarie Community College and Relationships Australia. The program was a huge success attracting 130 women from different parts of the world and from all walks of life. Social planning coordinator from Blacktown City Council Carol Ashworth was the guest speaker. Participants enjoyed international cuisine and entertainment. The women were empowered and encouraged to improve themselves through education and training. Event partners were: Mission Australia; Settlement Services International; Ability Options Employment; the Department of Human Services (Centrelink); Health Western Sydney Local Health District, Mt DrUITT Violence Services, and Blacktown Council.



Harmony Day



Along the theme “Many Stories – One Australia”, Harmony Day 2013 was celebrated at the Village Green, Blacktown, with over 300 people attending. There were speeches by dignitaries and members of the community as well as information and cultural stalls. Multicultural performances included SydWest’s youth group Multiconnect (see below). Other event highlights included a singing program by the St. Patrick’s School Choir, a show for children by ‘Bug Bee Butterfly’, a dance performance by SydWest MSI’s Chinese seniors group, Nepalese dancing and an Indigenous performance. The event was hosted by SydWest MSI, Blacktown Council, Macquarie Community College, Hillsong City Care, Breakthru People Solutions, Relationships Australia, Department of Human Services, Settlement Services Inc, Women’s and Girls’ Health Centre, Legal Aid, Blacktown Police, Children First, Wesley Mission, Medicare and Brighter Futures.

What they said:

“I felt at home and accepted as part of the community during the celebrations.”

“Harmony Day is important to me. There is always a sense of belonging and acceptance despite our differences.”

“Resourcefulness and innovation are hallmarks of the team.”



Youth Events



Youth Projects conducted a range of powerful and innovative confidence and self-esteem building youth events this financial year.

Photo 1: Girls team after winning their division in Canberra

Photo 2: Indoor rock climbing during the school holidays

Photo 3: Basketball competition at Kevin Betts Stadium

Photo 4: Players chilling out at the Parliament Building during the tournament in Canberra

Photo 5: Multicultural performance

Photo 6: Annual National Sudanese Tournament held in December 2012. Star Basketball won the Boys under 20 and the Girls tournaments

Photo 7: Youth using iPads, donated by Testra, in the homework program

Aged Care: Multicultural Days

This year, Aged Care and a partnership with Meals on Wheels resulted in some very successful Multicultural Days. Our service users had a choice of dishes to taste and enjoyed themselves with a variety of magic tricks and by winning lots of bingo prizes. Please see pages 14-21 of this report for information on aged-care related events like Seniors Week.



Community Services EXPO



The 2012 Community Services Expo, an outcome of the Blacktown and Mt Druitt Migrant Interagency, attracted a record number of over 1,000 visitors. Over 80 stalls holders were there on this one day event to let people know how community service providers are facilitating refugees, humanitarian entrants and migrants in the Blacktown LGA. SydWest MSI's new co-convenors Sree Vithya Harilingam and Tenneh Kpaka publicised the event with the aid of a new dedicated event website thanks to a partnership with Community Resource Network (CRN). Tenneh appeared in a You Tube promotion with a song sung on behalf of all refugees and humanitarian entrants who have made Australia their home. Event partners were: SydWest MSI, Community Resource Network (CRN) Blacktown City Council, Department of Human Services, Hillsong City Care, NSW Police, Macquarie Community College, TAFE Western Sydney Institute, Australian Red Cross, Care Connect, and NSW Health.



CALD Aged Care, Disability and Refugee Services

Through the Year

CALD Aged Care, Disability and Refugee Services is a continually growing service with quality improvement being our first and foremost concern in both service delivery and staff satisfaction. Strong partnerships and staff wellness have been our main focus this year to ensure a vital and vibrant future for both consumers and staff. This year the fundamental aim of the Living Longer, Living Better aged care reform as well as the Living Life My Way reforms in the disability sector allowed us a clear vision on how to create a consumer-led and directed service system. The reform's aims should:

- **Empower a person (senior or with a disability) to continue to manage their own life;**
- **Be offered within a re-ablement framework to enable the client to be as independent as possible;**
- **Enhance the well-being and quality of life for consumers and their carers;**
- **Acknowledge a person's right to individualised services and support.**
- **Enable the service user to move easily between higher and lower levels of support without repeating their story; and**
- **Ensure that CALD communities have equal access to service provision and decision making.**

This year provided us with a greater understanding on the Consumer Directed Care Packages (CDCs) and the NDIS rollout. By June 2015 the design and operational elements of our services related to both sectors will have to provide consumers with:

- **An individualised and transparent budget;**
- **A control and decision making framework; and**
- **An ongoing management and communication approach.**

With consumers able to make their own choices for the future, CALD Aged Care, Disability and Refugee Services will be leading the way in language and culture links for consumers, allowing them not only to feel comfortable within their familiar environments, but also assisting them in accessing mainstream services. Our HACC, Community Care Support and Package services will continue leading the way and connecting people for the benefit of our local communities and will keep partnering up with local agencies and service providers for a more inclusive, happier and healthier community.



Stanislaw Kaczor, 95

Rooty Hill resident, Mr Stanislaw Kaczor is 95 years of age. Born in Poland, he emigrated to Australia in 1949 and came to live in Sydney's greater west. His wife passed away 30 years ago, and he has been leading a solitary life since.

He has had a SydWest MSI care worker come once a week to assist since 2006. The care worker, Iwona Minda's, services and the fact she speaks his language, are appreciated by Mr Kaczor. Other than Iwona's weekly visits, Mr Kaczor is practically all alone when at home, his only hobbies being gardening and attending the Polish Social Support Group, which he has for the past 15 years. As Mr Kaczor is still very mobile, alert and active, Iwona takes him shopping which is a treat he awaits eagerly. Iwona's cleanliness and neat household work has greatly impressed our client. In Mr Kaczor's scant English, he says: "Iwona is very good woman, and helpful."

The loving and kind care given by Iwona, coupled with the support of his daughters, have done much to ease the loneliness for Mr Kaczor.

Mrs Valentyna Mulas, 90

Ukrainian-born Mrs Valentyna Mulas has been receiving services from SydWest MSI since the year her husband passed away in 1987. It was then she started attending the Ukrainian Social Support Group in our office. Even at 90 she is alert, active and very intelligent. Her hobbies are doing the "Search The World Quiz", drawing and gardening. Her current care worker is Vanya Sarajlic who has been very loving, compassionate and concerned about Valentyna's health. Mrs Mulas has had many other care workers throughout the years and she loves them very much for their kindness and sincere work.

The care worker takes the client out shopping which helps to lessen the monotony of being shut in the house all the time. Mrs Mulas is a very positive-minded person, judging from her beliefs which are, "Never give-up. Even if you have pain, never give up thinking positively." Mrs Mulas says she cannot be considered isolated as she has the company of our care workers, whom she loves very much.



CALD Aged Care, Disability and Refugee Services

Power Through Social Support

The positive impact our social support program has on our seniors is evident from the feedback provided and the evaluation taking place every year. This year our local partners were a vital part of our seniors' lives offering them a variety of talks and information. Our exercise classes were full and an eight week 'Stepping on Program' from our Medicare Local, Western Sydney Local Health District was very successful. Talks focused on health topics such as Diabetes, Dementia, Asthma, medicine management, Hearing, Nutrition, Aged Care Rights and many more. Personal and Road Safety, Financial Management, Energy Saving and Family Harmony were also some of the topics presented to the groups. A number of English conversation classes took place and a range of activities were enjoyed such as Tai Chi classes, Yoga, meditation and a number of excursions. Seniors Week was once more a great event for the year as it is evident in this report.

Although CALD Aged Care, Disability and Refugee Services staff have formed strong bonds with the members of our social support senior groups, we recognise that without the assistance of our volunteer facilitators the outcomes would have been very difficult to reach and we thank them for their time and effort.

What they said:

"Your services helped my mother-in-law immensely. She is so much happier now" - Ms Retnam





Blacktown Seniors Multicultural Family Day

Once again our seniors took ownership of their event. The large number of participants organised their own Seniors Multicultural Family Day with a Cultural Costume Parade Competition being the highlight of the day. Some seniors spent a lot of time sewing the costumes themselves and their weekly get-togethers offered the space for their song and parade rehearsals. The day involved a number of physical activities such as Zumba and Tai Chi, as well as a variety of cultural performances. Stalls with cultural artefacts showcased their cultures and our local agencies had the opportunity to share information on their services with the seniors.





What they said:
" I am alone every day and have no one to talk to. I have suffered severe depression. This group was my saviour and all the ladies started visiting me from time to time to make sure I am doing ok " - Mrs G.



What they said:
" I cannot wait to meet my friends every week. This is OUR time " - Mrs Stella



CALD Aged Care, Disability and Refugee Services

Power Through Partners



CALD Aged Care, Disability and Refugee Services were always supporters of building partnerships with our local agencies for the benefit of our consumers. We consider ourselves lucky that a number of our partners share the same vision as we do and show initiative in addressing immigration trends and becoming more inclusive for the future of our local communities. Partners such as Blacktown Meals on Wheels introduced our seniors to a mainstream service which they embraced and altered accordingly to meet their needs. Medicare Local tailored their 'Stepping on Program' to assist CALD communities. Lessons were learnt from this partnership and future initiatives will be taking place to service seniors with limited or no English skills. This year further relationships were built with Blacktown Community Transport that continues with great flexibility to assist CALD seniors. Only through such partnerships, where positive impact for the local communities and common objectives is the focus, trust with our CALD seniors can be built to feel empowered enough in accessing mainstream services.





Dynamic Team of Carers



Carers were another strong focus of CALD Aged Care, Disability and Refugee Services this year. The first multicultural group meets in Blacktown and has managed to establish strong relationships and support outside this setting. The second group which consists of mothers with children with disabilities meets in our Mt. Druitt outreach office on a monthly basis and share their experiences and knowledge on a range of behavioural issues and ways to manage their caring roles. Both groups come together for outings and relaxation time while respite is provided through our Home and Community Care Service.



CALD Aged Care, Disability and Refugee Services



Success Through Collaboration

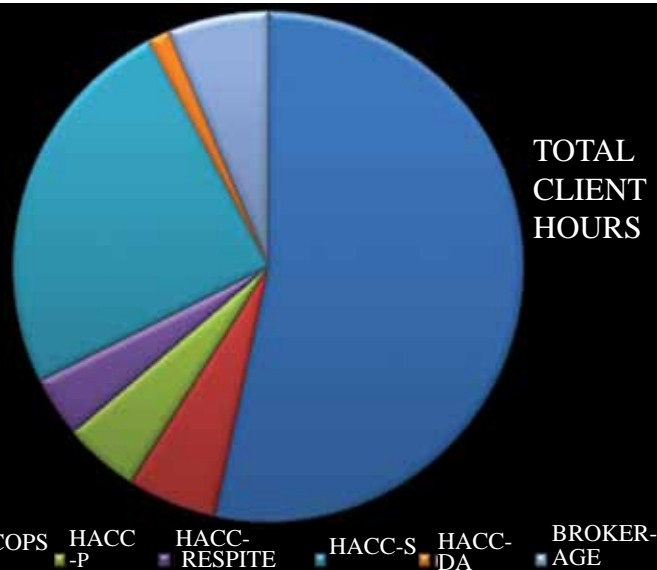
No services and no program would have reached the desired outcomes if it wasn't for the dedicated staff and volunteers of the Service. A lot of training on consumer directed care, budgeting, and enablement approach were organised for both office and field staff to prepare for the changing world of our community sector. At the same time, our extensive Wellness Program has sought successfully to lessen the effects of the stressful, at times, environment of aged care and disability services. Activities such as Yoga, Zumba, Meditation classes and laughter therapy are a vital part of the team's office life.





Quality of Services

Right after the 'split' of responsibilities and funding between the Commonwealth and the State, our service underwent a Quality Review with great feedback on service initiatives. Although times remain quite uncertain and the future has become difficult to plan, the quality of our services remains first in our list of priorities. This year all service users across all programs were reviewed to ensure goals were clearly identified and plans were in line with our enablement approach. Although at times it seemed like a never ending road, the majority of our CALD seniors surprised us with the understanding of their goals and their identified needs to maintain their independence.



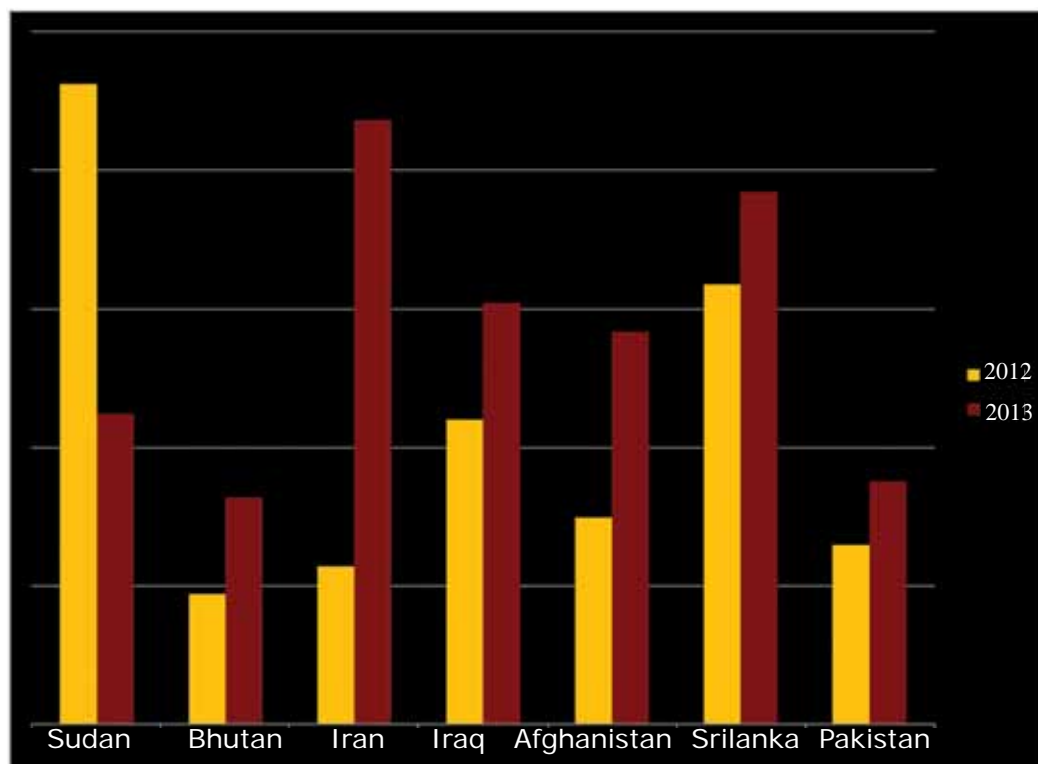
Settlement Services & Beyond Overview

SydWest MSI's Settlement Services & Beyond section provides casework, direct support and assistance to newly-arrived refugees, humanitarian entrants and their families to equip them to reach their full potential, to live independent rewarding lives and to contribute to their new country. We achieve this through the provision of casework, information sessions, skills training and community development initiatives.

The year 2012-2013 has been successful for the team with 3994 clients assisted with casework, 434 group sessions held with 8113 participants compared to 2642 clients for casework and 353 group sessions with 5808 participants in the previous year.

Settlement Services built on the strengths of clients, encouraging and assisting them to problem-solve using their strengths. This approach builds the capacity and confidence of clients to be able to independently problem-solve at the end of their intervention.

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 have also been 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 seven welfare students from TAFE and five from University of Western Sydney, Australian Catholic University and the University of Sydney, with placement as part of our commitment to give practical experience and support to students in welfare and social work fields in the period under review.

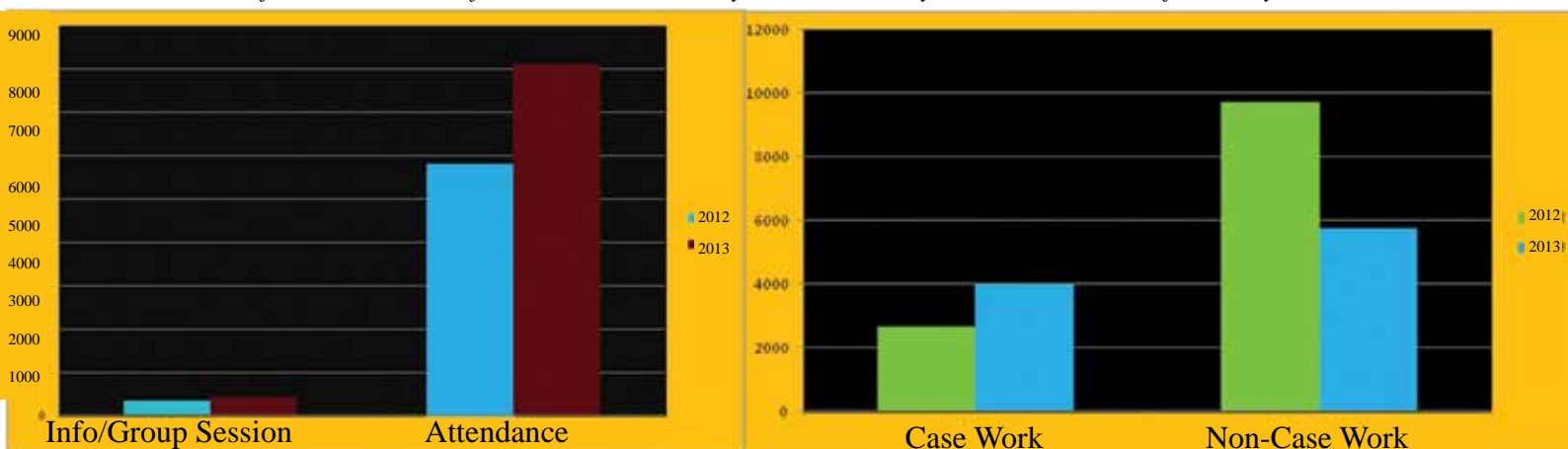


Refugee Driving Project

The Refugee Driving Project provides assistance to clients to pass the knowledge test and obtain a Learner's permit and on-road practical driving assistance to obtain a full license. Eligible clients are given information on the road rules, the role of Highway

Patrol, how the fine system works, demerit points, insurances, buying a second-hand car and basic car maintenance. The project aims to assist refugees to integrate into the community by facilitating effective driver and road safety skills. Doing this will assist in providing access to mainstream facilities, employment and education. In the period under review, 74 participants obtained a Learner's Permit (L plates) through DKT sessions run at Sydwest MSI, 19 gained a full Licences, and 20 obtained Provisional Licences (P plates).

Statistics for casework and information sessions run by Settlement & Beyond in the 2012-2013 financial year.



Settlement Services & Beyond



Women's Health Support

Shape for Women

For eight weeks, the Multicultural Women's group participated in the Shape Program. This year the program attracted Afghani, Bhutanese and African women. The group has given the 13 participants involved the chance to decrease their social isolation. This year, the SHAPE program was provided by Wentwest Limited, with classes including exercise and information sessions on nutrition and diet. Topics covered were: healthy eating; nutrition and diet; eating out; physical exercise; buying healthy food; and setting goals for a healthy lifestyle. The following positive outcome were achieved:

- The comparative health assessments conducted at the beginning of the program revealed all participants lost weight as a consequence of their new healthy eating strategies;
- They reported learning new skills to help them maintain a healthy weight, and all over health;
- They learnt how to prioritise the buying of healthy food, involving reading labels on food items;
- They were able to set long and short goals for a healthy life style.

Shine for Girls

Mixing tradition and contemporary dance, the Shine for Girls social group this year focussed on dance. Meeting on a weekly basis at SydWest MSI's Blacktown office, the group engaged multicultural teenage girls from Bhutan, Pakistan and India in the main, living in the Blacktown LGA, by creating a venue for them to meet, build new connections and get creative together. Other activities Shine offered this year included tips on make-up, hair, nails and hand massage.



What they said

"I enjoyed the Shape classes so much as it helped me to achieve my lifestyle goals. I will recommend it to anyone."



Welcome to Australia

Orientation Sessions for the Newly Arrived

Welcome to Australia sessions quarterly for new arrivals settling in our catchment area. This aims to introduce the clients to SydWest MSI, the staff, key service providers in the area and the various programs available to the new clients.

Sessions held included information on healthy eating and a healthy lifestyle; oral health; banking in Australia; credit and debt issues; emergency ready plans, local community services and how to access them.

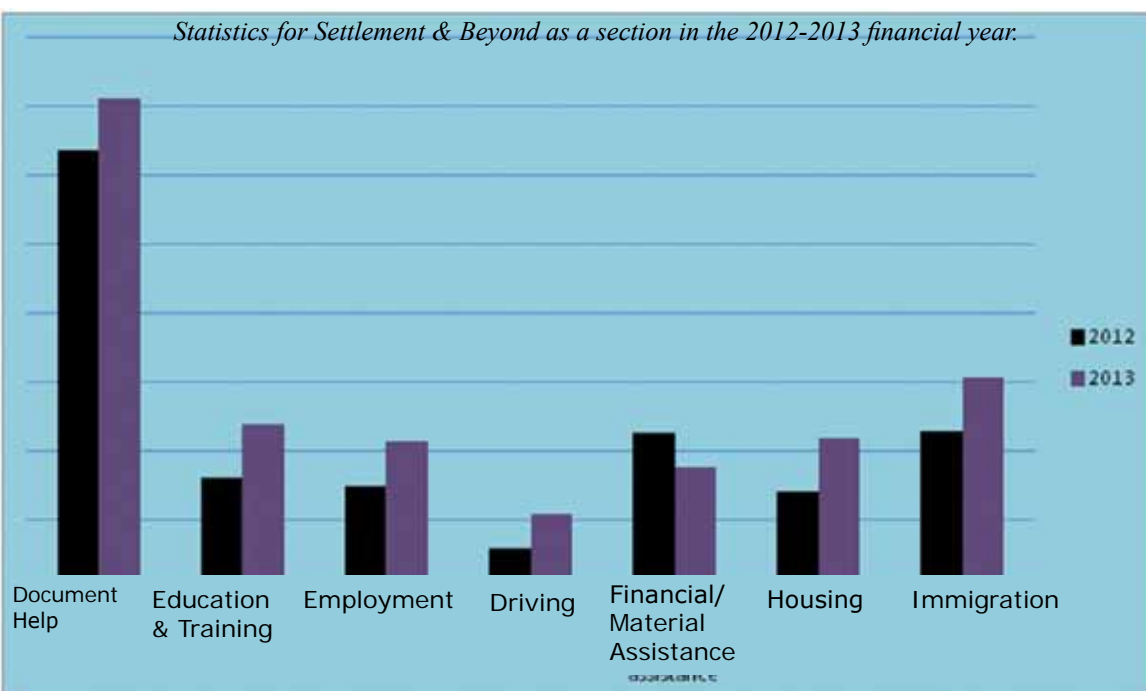
These forums are popular with clients. In the 2012-2013 financial year, two of such seminars were organised with a total of 100 people attending.

What they said

“The session was informative and easy to understand.”

“I learned a lot and met other new arrivals from my community which was good.”

Statistics for Settlement & Beyond as a section in the 2012-2013 financial year.





Sisters On The Move

Women's empowerment through work, family, joining forces, building connections and sharing ideas. That was the underlying message for African women delivered through the African Sisters on the Move Annual Conference in December 2012 held at the SydWest MSI Blacktown office. The Governor-General, Her Excellency the Honourable Quentin Bryce AC CVO, who visited the group for the second time, had linked it to President of African Women's Council W.A, Dr. Casta Tungaraza, who was a guest speaker at the conference. Olivia Mensah Kamara, President of Women from Africa Serving the Nation and Making a Difference, also from WA, was the Master of Ceremonies at the dinner dance at Bowman Hall. There DJ prince, a fashion parade, dancing and fun were had by all.

Multicultural Women



Our Multicultural Women's group meet weekly to break social isolation, build networks, share experiences and learn new skills.

The group participated in various activities including, jewelry making, photography, knitting, walking to keep fit and art and craft classes using disposable materials.

Participants were from Iran, Iraq, Afghanistan, Sri Lanka, Burma, Bhutan and Africa.

Men's Social Groups

Issues affecting refugee and humanitarian entrant men include social isolation, limited networking capacity and gender role reversal. To address these, the Settlement Grant Project (SGP) team formed the Blacktown Multicultural Men's Social Group, Mt Druitt Multicultural Men's Social Group and the Afghani Men's Social Group.

In the period, the Multicultural Men's Social Group met 54 times, with 100 men participating and benefiting from the project. Key partners were: Blacktown and Mt Druitt Mt Druitt Community Health, Blacktown Police and UnitingCare Burnside. Information sessions were on topics such as men's health, Australia's work culture and legal system.

The Multicultural Men's Social Group received a ZEST Award for its role as an outstanding project in a CALD organisation that works effectively in delivering capacity building, advocacy and leadership to men in great western Sydney.



Intergenerational Conflict

One of the major issues affecting new arrivals in Australia is intergenerational conflict between family members. To address this, trainings and information sessions were held which focussed on effective communication, family conflict resolution and the concept of child discipline in Australia. Four outings were held in the period including a Fathers and Sons Camping Weekend to Yarramundi.



Settlement Services & Beyond

Family Harmony



The Family Harmony Project uses a variety of soft entry and targeted activities in engaging families experiencing high levels of disadvantage and risk situations. 'Keep Them Safe' sessions are assisting clients in gaining better understanding of the child protection system in Australia as well as building their capacity and confidence to recognise and to deal with abuse and neglect of children.

The Project assisted 462 clients in the year under review. It used partnerships and collaboration with other services in achieving all the performance indicators set by the funding body. The activities and services met client needs and improved their access to and engagement with services. Community capacity and confidence was enhanced to such an extent that participants were able to share effective parenting skills learnt with other community members experiencing difficulties managing the relationship with their children.

What Clients Said

"I learnt a lot. It improved my relationship with my children. I am already using descriptive praise and I am applying whatever I learnt and it is helping me. It changed my attitude; I did not know these things before."

"The weekend away with the Family Harmony people at SydWest opened my eyes in many ways. It has helped me to better approach my teenager children and enjoyed passing on these skills to other parents. Now I am relaxed and have very happy daughters." - Mother of four.

Partnerships

The Settlement and Beyond Team has formed valuable partnerships with mainstream and not-for-profit organisations that provide services which are complementary to the assistance and support we provide to newly arrived refugees and migrants.

The Settlement Team would like to take this opportunity to thank all our partners and funding bodies profoundly for the work they do for our clients. Macquarie Community College, Relationships Australia, Centrelink, Blacktown Council, The Blacktown Arts Centre, Wesley Mission Brighter Futures, Children's First, Women and Girls Health Centre, Western Sydney TAFE Outreach, Department of Education especially Evans Intensive English Centre and local High Schools, Western Sydney Area Health Service, Department of Immigration and Border Protection (DIBP) FACHSIA and all other organisations who have either worked in collaboration with us or provided funding for our programs.



Scenes from the World Music Grassroots Festival 2013, a strong partnership with Blacktown Arts Centre Please see Page 8 for more details.

SydWest MSI Mount DrUITT Office

The new SydWest MSI Office in Mount 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, Police and Community Action Group, Safety for CALD communities and Family Harmony.

Youth Projects

The youth projects target young people aged 12-24 using a needs-based approach to assist their settlement process in Australia. Clients are predominantly refugees, humanitarian entrants and migrant young people who had lived in Australia for a period of five years or less.

Our services and activities for young people are as follows:

- Sport and Recreation
- Humanitarian Programs
- Social Cohesion
- Education and Employment Support Programs
- School Holiday Activities

The youth performance troupe Multi-Konnect entertained guests and passers-by alike on March 7th, 2013, at WestPoint Stage 4, level 4.

There was interaction and cultural exchanges among the group. Young people have shown great excitement and profound passion in promoting social cohesion among themselves.



Sports & Recreation

Basketball & Soccer

A total of 150 young people from Afghanistan, Iraq, Iran, Sudan, Sierra Leone, Liberia, Kenya and Philippines attended sports training every week with basketball taking the fore of Youth Projects sports this year.



Youth Project's STAR basketball teams made headlines in national media, with their local, and state performances.

Five teams participated in the two seasonal basketball tournaments at Kevin Betts Stadium, Mount Druitt. There were wins for both the under-18 and under-20 boys in the first and second competitions.

In July 2012, STAR Basketball's five teams competed in Melbourne against 31 other teams from across Australia and went on to play again in December in Canberra. The under 18 boys won their division and the girls were runners-up. In the Canberra tournament, the under 20s took the championship and remained undefeated throughout the tournament, whilst the girls' team won their division.

These biannual Sudanese National Basketball Tournaments received attention from local newspapers, television journalists, sport organisations and attracted hundreds of jubilant young fans. Ferous Ngoth of the girls' team and Chier Mathiang of the victorious under 20 team received individual awards for being the most outstanding players in their divisions.

The Saturday Football in the Park was run in partnership with Football United each week at Campbell Reserve and an after school program at Evans High School, Blacktown. A Soccer Camp, in partnership with Football United, was held at Sydney Academy of Sport and Recreation in Narrabeen. Sport activities and programs formed part of their human and social development and contributed 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.

Humanitarian Project

The project assisted refugee and migrant youth to access mainstream service providers, develop independence and participate fully in their immediate and broader community through casework, referrals and information sessions. Clients were able to navigate mainstream service providers independently and became increasingly aware of the different youth services in the area.

Due to referrals to other service providers, the clients have increased self-confidence and service knowledge. They can make appointments on their own with these service providers and attend these appointments on time. Referrals to services have reduced dependency.

Finally, needs-based consultations were held, the issues raised formed the foundation for developing future programs and provided an advocacy tool for young participants.



Youth: Social Cohesion

This project engaged young people from African, Pacific Islander and Philippino backgrounds backgrounds and the wider community in drumming, singing, a cultural fashion parade, cultural performances, multicultural community events, information sessions and skits. The project delivery model was a broad-based interaction across cultures to promote social cohesion among 50-60 young people of mixed backgrounds.

After a streak of rehearsals in cultural activities, the group dubbed "Multi-Konnect" did three thrilling performances at the Imperial Band Hall within Blacktown Showground, Blacktown WestPoint, Level 4, and during the 2013 Harmony Day celebration. These included both solo and mixed cultural group performances in singing, drumming and dancing and highlights of these performances were the African songs "Azonto" and "Waka-Waka"; the Bhutanese cultural performance and the Pacific Islander slap dance and haka. This project brings young people together to work closely, share and understand each other's culture through singing, drumming and dancing. Young people have shown profound excitement to learn about other cultures and have promoted social cohesion among themselves as demonstrated in the group performances. This gave them a broader view of inclusiveness, diversity, respect and a sense of belonging in the community.

What they said

"I couldn't believe that I would dance Azonto in front of a crowd; this is amazing", a Pacific Islander participant.

Education & Employment Support

In the 2012-13 period, both on-site and off-site education support programs were delivered for the target group of 12-24 year old new arrivals settling in Blacktown LGA. Programs held at the SydWest MSI offices included homework support services in Blacktown, Mount Druitt and St. Marys, HSC study workshops, creative writing skills, arts and drama. External programs such as resilience building activities and life skills were mostly held at schools with high refugee populations within the Blacktown LGA. Employability skills training including apprenticeships and traineeship programs for 45 culturally diverse young people in classes of 15, was provided in partnership with TAFE. A new program that bridges the digital divide for new Australians was introduced this year. The program educated participants about basic computer skills, developed their online skills, learnt about social networking sites, and how to safely use facilities like online banking. The number of participants in these activities increased by 10% in relation to the previous financial year.



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:

- In July 2012, a group of 33 young people of mixed ethnicity visited North Sydney, walked across the Harbour Bridge and played ping pong underneath the bridge. 6 staff accompanied.
- In September 2012, a Father and Son Camp was organised in partnership with Family Harmony Project worker at Yarramundi. About 15 youth attended.
- A three day hip-hop dance classes for 12 Bhutanese and Nepalese girls was organised in September.
- An outing to Clovelly Beach was undertaken by 32 young people from South Sudan, Bhutan, Sierra Leone, Iraq, Pakistan and Afghanistan.





CALD Early Intervention Family Support Service

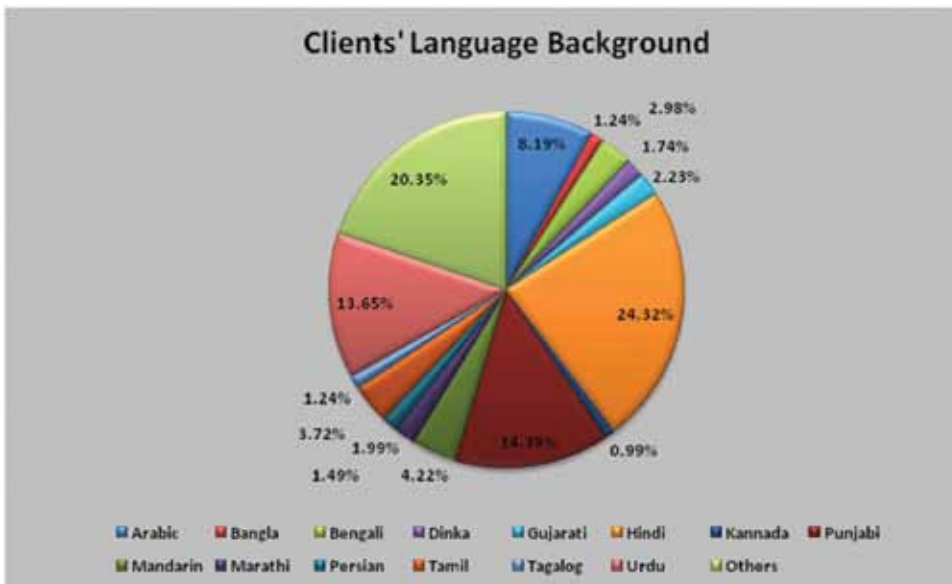
The **CALD Early Intervention Family Support Service (EIFSS)** is funded by Family and Community Services and is a NSW Government Initiative. The project is led by the project manager and comprises a Senior Project Officer and a number of project officers. We provide services to CALD families via Support Groups and Play Groups for new and emerging communities. Due to the diversity of our clients, all project officers have excellent knowledge and remarkable experience working with people from different cultural backgrounds. Project officers organise different services providers to offer services/information about health, education, parenting and local services. We also provide group work and outreach from a number of locations in the community. As part of the service we offer Home Visits to those facing challenges such as experiences of difficulty through pregnancy, depression after the birth of a baby, domestic violence, isolation and related issues.

What We Do

EIFSS provides support to families with children aged from 0 to 8 who are from culturally and linguistically diverse communities in the Blacktown and Baulkham Hills LGA. Our main aim is to assist parents to raise a happy and healthy family by helping them address their issues in a supportive environment. The project officers assist service providers to work more effectively with the target communities by sharing information on cultural issues.

The Language Diversity of Clients Served

The clients that we are servicing are very diverse in terms of their language spoken (54 languages are recorded). The chart to the left offers a glimpse of the diversity of our client in the last financial year.



Support Through Events



Christmas Party

Gave participants an opportunity to meet and mingle with people from other cultural backgrounds and to appreciate the richness of cultural diversity in Australia.



Family Matters

Assisted parents to foster a healthy and positive routine for living.



Mother's Day

Honored mothers' contribution to, and the influence on, their society. Build up women's self-esteem and self-confidence.



Paint Mt Druitt REaD

This activity fostered in children a love of books which may last a lifetime and helped to build a healthy reading routine at home.



School Holiday Program

Provided learning opportunities to school-aged children who were not attending groups during school terms. It also helped to foster a better relationship within families and reduce household stress.

CALD Early Intervention Family Support Service Women's Support Groups Highlights



African Women Group (Positive Parenting Program): Participants were happier and reported being less stressed because they obtained the skills to focus on their children's good behaviour.



Blacktown Indian Group (Healthy Lunch): Indian mothers prepare a healthy lunch, i.e. fruits skewers as part of our project's effort to promote a healthy lifestyle.



Glenwood Indian Women Group (Engaging Children During School Holidays): The mothers were taught how to make simple craft items that will engage their children during school holidays.



(Above) Hills Group (Shape Program): After the sessions, participants were able to identify solutions to overcome the challenges they face everyday such as diabetes. Many of them have increased their hours of exercise and have reduced the consumption of softdrinks. Some participants decided to join a yoga class for healthier living.



(Left) Mt. Druitt Women Group (Intro to Fabric, Paints, Markers & Brushes). The mothers proudly show their finished product on fabric painting and other materials. Creating artworks was different and new for these mothers.

Highlights of Supported Play Groups



Bert Oldfield Playgroup: Children enjoyed one of their outdoor activities and thereby developed their socialisation skills.



Blacktown Playgroup: The children and their mothers listened intently to the book reading and actively participated in activities.



Lalor Park Playgroup (Free Play Activity): Parents started to realise what their children were learning through “playing”.



Mt. Druitt Multicultural Playgroup (Sing & Grow Session): Kids learned to play some easy musical instruments.



Seven Hills Playgroup (Story Time): Children built a reading habit to improve their literacy capacity and developed their social skills through the weekly book readings. Mums started to regularly read books to their children at home.



Seven Hills Multicultural Playgroup: Children and mothers enjoyed dancing along to nursery rhyme.



Abulla Agwa and Jospheh Makuei at Restoring Hope, Refugee Week 2013, Blacktown

SydWest Multicultural Services Inc

Address: Level 2 and Ground,
125 Main Street Blacktown 2148
Website: www.sydwestmsi.org.au
Email: info@sydwestmsi.org.au

Main Office:

Phone: (02) 9621 6633
Fax: (02) 9831 5625

CALDACS Office:

Fax: (02) 9621 4702

Mt DrUITT Office

Shop 3 & 9, 6-10 Mount St (enter via Ralph Place)
Mt DrUITT NSW 2770

Phone: (02) 9625 0455
Fax: (02) 9625 0322