

Media Release

From Western Sydney MRC

Friday 20th August 2021

Western Sydney MRC welcomes Minister Natalie Ward's announcement for urgent funding to support Asylum Seekers and temporary Visa holders

Western Sydney MRC welcomes the announcement made on Wednesday 18th August of the \$5.5 million to support temporary visa holders, including asylum seekers through grassroots, community organisations.

Specialist organisations supporting asylum seekers and temporary visa holders who need emergency support can now apply for a share of funds in response to the current COVID-19 outbreak.

Having successfully applied for and delivered two rounds of similar funding in 2020-2021, Western Sydney MRC could provide direct financial and casework support in an area that requires further resources and focus. Support areas included employment and resume help, visa enquiries, application forms, referrals to legal support, child, and family support services (internal and external), Domestic Violence support services, alongside liaising with other organisations and government departments to aid the client with a variety of challenges and enquiries.

"Over the past financial year (2020-2021), Western Sydney MRC delivered case management and emergency relief support through similar Multicultural NSW grants to over 100 families on temporary visas. Support ranged from housing support, medical bills, basic food supplies, domestic and family violence, as well as advocacy and language support" Acting CEO Anna-Marie Kanaan said.

"This current COVID-19 outbreak has seen a significant increase in support requests from temporary visa holders, who are some of the most vulnerable. Unstable employment, homelessness and poverty due to this crisis are some of the key areas of need. We hope that the funding announcement will assist community organisations like our own to support the most vulnerable in our communities during this challenging time."

The total funding package to support asylum seekers and temporary visa holders in response to the current outbreak is now \$6.25 million, including \$5.5 million for this program and \$750,000 initially allocated for emergency relief. You can find more information on the grants on the Multicultural NSW website: <https://multicultural.nsw.gov.au/grants>

Chair of Western Sydney MRC Cllr Nathan Hagarty said, "I welcome the announcement of urgent funding for asylum seekers and temporary visa holders. While COVID-19 has impacted every one of us, it has had a disproportionate effect on our most vulnerable. Funding grassroots organisations, such as Western Sydney MRC, means support can get to where it's needed quicker."

State Member for Holsworthy, Melanie Gibbons MP said she has loved seeing the life-changing and community building work the Western Sydney MRC have been doing in the South West Sydney region.

“Funding opportunities like these help to build the MRC’s capacity to deliver more programs and services for differing migrant communities – including asylum seekers.” Ms Gibbons said.

Western MRC staff highlighted, "It was a chance to have a meaningful and lasting impact on the lives of those with particular yet diverse needs."

ABOUT THE WESTERN SYDNEY MRC

Western Sydney MRC is a not for profit organisation working with newly arrived migrants, refugees, and diverse communities. Our approach to project, service and program design ensures our clients' and community needs and wants are met. We champion our diverse community to be empowered, informed and connected. A range of wrap-around programs supports our flagship casework services. These include family services, playgroups, disability and mental health supports, youth activities, and a variety of information-based sessions, including safe driving, employment, education, and citizenship sessions delivered in adjacency with additional community development support through leadership programs, capacity building one-2-one support and on and offline event assistance.

For more information on Western Sydney MRC visit wsmrc.org.au

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