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MISSION STATEMENT



*Liverpool Migrant Resource
Centre is a community-
based non-profit organisation
established to actively and
directly relieve the situation of
immigrants and refugees whose
social condition renders them
disadvantaged.*

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

Dr Amad Mtashar



It has been an extremely busy year with growth of the agency and growth in demand through the increase in refugee clients. As the Manager will point out and as is evident throughout the report cases of the clients have become more complex, various with high needs.

It is the Liverpool MRC's business to support some of the most vulnerable and disadvantaged people in enabling them to settle in Australia.

This involves providing them with assistance and guide them in the obtaining of knowledge and understanding of the way of life and systems in Australia.

The Liverpool MRC is working hard to fulfil its potential, the wants of its members and the needs of its clients and stakeholders to develop its base and broaden its spectrum of activities to address the gaps in support in the area.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Board, Manager Staff, and Volunteers.

Our Thanks also to our supporters and funding bodies who recognise the valuable work that we do.



MESSAGE FROM THE MANAGER

Kamalle Dabboussy



It is with great pride in achievement that Liverpool MRC presents its Annual Report. The hard work of all the team is nothing short of breathtaking, and it is the staff and their passions that keep me energised and focussed.

The organisation is now in a more prominent position due to the nature of the current migration and refugee trends, with Liverpool being one of the most important destination for newly arrived refugees. Clearly the trend is for increased families from very traumatised areas that continue to arrive to the area.

It is the challenge of our programs to ensure that we build on strengths of individuals, families and communities to ensure that they can have a successful settlement and participation in local life. Liverpool MRC has as one of its core values the need to see that in all people are strengths and that we work with and build on these strengths.

At the core of all of work needs to be our vision, daily demands as well as the contractual demands made on us can often lead to 'Vision Creep' - in our case this can lead to us being seen as just a service delivery arm of settlement.

Liverpool MRC works with highly vulnerable and disadvantaged clients and through the building of confidence, trust and selfreliance aims toward capacity building and community development.

Settlement and its service is one important arm: it sits as an entry point to other services, such as the family support programs, and to other partner organisations. DIAC has increased resources in the Liverpool MRC and the growth of the agency and influx of refugees has resulted in more demand and challenges. However, we look to rebuilding our cultural programs, our outreach services in order to be a more reaching and therefore more effective agency for all of Liverpool.

In this path, we have had a hectic 12 months, to look forward. We have undertaken training for the organization to improve their communication skills. We have improved our resources in the community development team, reviewed our promotional material, implementing a social media strategy that will also remodel our website and other tools - to value add to the area. Most importantly, we are working to enhance the ability of staff, increasing their effectiveness.

Liverpool's population is over 60% from non-English speaking background, what is in benefit of our target group is in benefit of the whole area. We will be working to become good local citizens in the coming year, building partnerships and networks where opportunities arise and in building our capacity where needed to enhance services in Liverpool. Liverpool MRC as one of the largest Community based organisations in the area needs to take a leadership role – in the way our Prevention of Family Violence project did with the establishment of central reference and coordination committee – a project that only works with the goodwill of all partners and stakeholders.

This last year also witnessed the consolidation of the Humanitarian Settlement Services (HSS) program at Liverpool and the growth in that team. What a baptism of fire! It has now grown to be effective and supportive structure that has become integral in the operation of LMRC. With a team of 8 people, this team should be bigger, if only for the space constraints that apply. And looking forward, this needs to be addressed, not only for HSS, but also for LMRC as a whole.

Liverpool MRC has another busy year ahead, not only in its core work, but in looking forward. In building its capacity, its partnerships, taking on a leadership role, reviewing its governance and policy operations and in promoting the issues that affect all of Liverpool.

Without the team of Management Committee Members, staff, volunteers and our friends Liverpool MRC would not have enjoyed the success that it has.



LIVERPOOL MIGRANT RESOURCE CENTRE ACTIVITIES AT A GLANCE -

1st July 2011 to 30th June 2012

- 7402 Clients were served at the Front-desk
- 986 Clients were serviced for Casework
- 11 Primary clients with a total of 50 family members supported through Complex Case Support
- 44 Clients were assisted with the ATO's Tax Help Program
- 12 Volunteer supervised in administration work
- 20 Ethnic community groups used our meeting-rooms facility on a regular basis
- 250 Service flyers / CD's displayed at the "Multilingual HUB"

62 Information sessions held with a wide range of life skills and other topics, amongst other:

- | | |
|--|---------------------------|
| • Accommodation | • Family relationships |
| • Centrelink | • Financial management |
| • Child development | • Health and Wellbeing |
| • Consumer Rights and Responsibilities | • Immigration information |
| • Education | • Legal system |
| • Employment | • Taxation system |
| | • Aged care system |

Outreach services to:

Lurnea and Miller Intensive English language Centres (IECs)
and Miller HUB

- 3 Support Groups
- 6 Playgroups operating in Liverpool CBD, Heckenburg, Hinchinbrook
- 4 Consultations and Forums

12 Community events were auspiced and/or supported:

- | | |
|---|---|
| • Afghan Women's Group | • Local Multicultural Refugee |
| • African Australian Islamic Association | • Women's Artists Group |
| • Family Interagency Project | • Mandaean-Australian Community Cultural Club |
| • Igbo Community Australia | • Mandaean Women's Group |
| • Liverpool Australian Sudanese Community | • The Liverpool Goan Community |
| • Liverpool Sudanese Australian Union | • Tongan Youth Development Project |
| | • United Kurdish Community |

- 10 Inter-agencies or networks co-convened and/or supported



The Liverpool MRC was established in 1979 and has evolved over the years as the major focal point for migrants and refugees alike in Liverpool: as yet there is no established infra-structure for ethnic communities in Liverpool.

Liverpool MRC's vision and aim is expressed in its Mission Statement:

“Liverpool Migrant Resource Centre is a community-based non-profit organisation established to actively and directly relieve the situation of immigrants and refugees whose social condition renders them disadvantaged”

One of the core values of the Liverpool MRC is aimed at building resilience and non-dependency of its clients, however, it will not leave clients without appropriate support.

The majority of Liverpool MRC's current clients are refugees, have experienced trauma, lived in refugee camps and for all those who arrived by boat, trauma was further exacerbated by detention in Australia, living yet again in limbo, not knowing if - let alone when - they would be able to build up their lives again. These factors all combine and have great impact on their ability to settle in Australia.

Many of the clients come with complex issues even if it might initially be presented as a single issue, such as the ability to pay a bill. For many issues

were related to accommodation, trauma and mental health, domestic and family violence. However, different sections of the various communities may also have specific issues related to their age and gender, such as disadvantaged women and children, single men, young people and older refugees. While the majority of Liverpool MRC's clients were Mandeans originally from Iraq, many others came also through its doors.

The threat of poverty is a real issue for refugees as they try to establish themselves in Australia and learning the Australian way of life. Essential to the Liverpool MRC is that there be a holistic approach and addressing the whole-of-life spectrum, hence, programs and services of the agency are interconnected to provide the optimum possible options and outcomes for all clients it serves. It is in this context that the report should be viewed.





INFORMATION AND ADMINISTRATION

The first encounter with the Liverpool MRC for clients - whether face-toface or by phone - and service providers is at the 'Front Desk' and this point of entry therefore is the 'business-card' of the Liverpool MRC.



At the counter

Staff at the counter are the first point of call for new refugees and clients. This requires an astute knowledge of services available within and outside the Liverpool MRC, provision of information and referral, documents and booking appointments with caseworkers. The increased and still increasing influx of new refugees and migrants places an enormous pressure on staff at the 'Front Desk', let alone when clients come in distress.

Multi-lingual Hub

There is a multi-lingual Hub available in the foyer of the Liverpool MRC with multi-lingual printed material on various services as well as a TV-screen which displays various multi-lingual CD's which may be of relevance to clients. Material is regularly up-dated and replenished to ensure clients have the most recent information.

Presentations

The Liverpool MRC provides regularly presentation on the development of refugee intake in Liverpool and issues facing them at inter-agencies and forums. This is essential information to enable service providers to take into consideration potential requirements to provide appropriate services for the client.

Achievements

Front Desk staff have competently managed to service the clientele in a professional manner, despite the ever increasing numbers. The Administration Team also works as an essential and smooth operator of the multiplying administrative tasks in the scheme of the Liverpool MRC.

Casework

After the 'Front Desk' the client, if necessary, will be allocated a caseworker and/or referred to an appropriate mainstream service. Casework at the Liverpool MRC supposedly operates on two (2) different levels:

- **Casework / Co-ordination** involving 'simple' assessment, provision of information and referral to appropriate services
- **Case management** where short crisis intervention up to a fortnight or as case management services up to six (6) months.

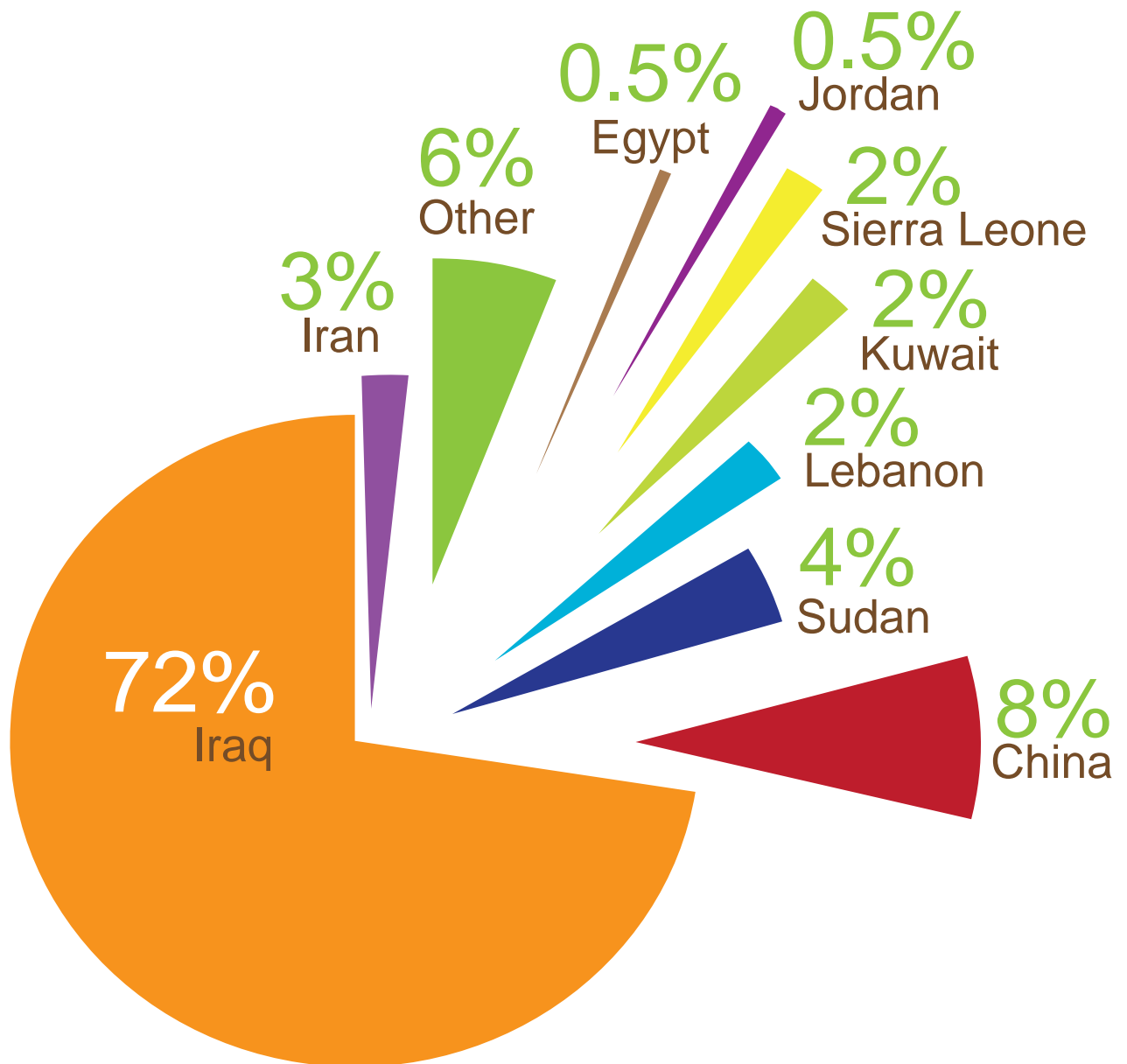
However, many of the clients have multiple / complex needs in which case provision of information and referral would prove totally inadequate. Frequently, clients return to the Liverpool MRC because they find that the service they were referred to does not appropriately cater for their needs.

Casework / Co-ordination

The casework team has been extremely busy with the new influx of refugees, many of whom who presented with multiple / complex issues, however, were not recognised by DIAC as requiring Complex Case Support. Essentially, many clients require support beyond simple assessment and referral. Frequently, clients come back to the Liverpool MRC, because the services they were referred to do not really assist them or language issues prevent from adequate and proper understanding.



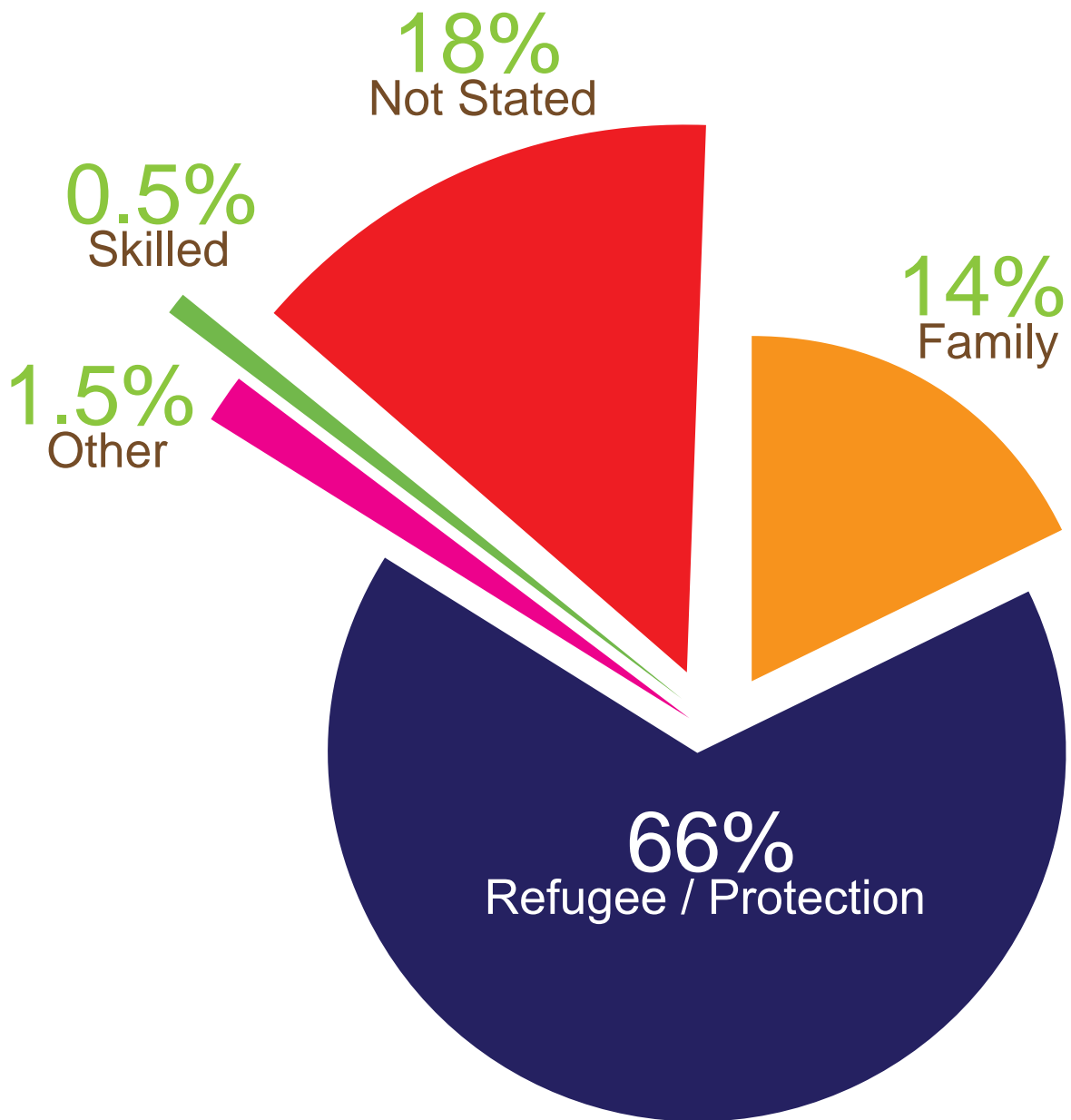
COUNTRY OF BIRTH of Liverpool MRC's casework clients



* Other (30): 30 Countries from which came one, two or three entrants
Most people from Iraq in Liverpool are Mandaean, however, there are also Assyrian, Chaldean and Kurdish communities.

VISA TYPE

Type of Visa of Liverpool MRC's casework clientele



The vast majority came on Refugee / Protection Visa (654), Family was the second largest identified group (138), while another significant proportion (176) was not stated.

Recurrent and other issues

Many of the issues presented of course have to do with settlement itself, however, most prevalent are the issues of language barrier, trauma, financial hardship, mental health and domestic / family violence. The latter often a result from the accumulating effects of the previous factors and trying to deal with settling in a new country / society where their needs may not be appreciated or well understood.

In relation to accommodation two (2) major concerns were raised by clients. One was the concern that they would be removed from the Housing NSW Housing Register for not updating their details; a common concern was the proficiency of clients to communicate in English. The second issue was the reduction of rent start and bond assistance. Clients were concerned at not being able to enter the private rental market due to the associated upfront costs involved in obtain private rental.



Accessing mainstream services and activities remains a major obstacle race, with service providers frequently unable to provide the required assistance. Instances of not providing interpreters , even when made available, are common and rights and responsibilities are often not explained with the result that the client often finds her- or himself caught out.

There appears to be an assumption that mainstream services are able to provide services in culturally and linguistically appropriate manner. While we congratulate the fact that in this past year Access & Equity has been returned as a Government policy, that does not necessarily mean that mainstream services are equipped and ready to service clients from NESB and particularly refugee clients.

A clear example is in relation to one of the most essential elements for settlement: communication with Real Estate Agents. Though private, Interpreter service can be provided by DIAC, no Real Estate agency in Liverpool appeared to display this facility, nor make it available. Hence, information, understanding of their rights and responsibilities on all tenancy issues in the private rental market are rarely, if at all, conveyed to the client.



Tenancy Rights and Responsibilities Resource Booklet

A booklet was produced to assist clients to better understand their rights and responsibilities in the private rental market which is easy to read, understand and can be referred to for assistance throughout the term of a client's tenancy.

ISSUES IMPACTING ON SETTLEMENT

**Accommodation /
Housing –**
lack of affordable /
suitable housing /
community housing

**Life skills,
Understanding
Australian culture,
life style and
systems**

**Mental Health,
including Trauma
experiences**

**Financial Hardship
/ Financial and
Household
Management**

**Employment and
Training –**
Australian work
culture

**Language barriers /
skills, both literacy
in own language
and English**

**Not only have these issues a major impact
in themselves they also may exacerbate**

- **Family Relationships break-down
/ Inter-generational Conflict**
- **Domestic and Family Violence**

**Law and the legal
system, including
Family Law**

Isolation

**Rights and
Responsibilities**

Health

**Education –
gaps in education**

Complex Case Support

For the fourth year the Liverpool MRC has delivered the Complex Casework Support (CCS) Program which involves specialised and intensive case management services to newly arrived refugee and humanitarian entrants on behalf of the Department of Immigration And Citizenship.

Eligible families and individuals with complex needs and issues, that place themselves and their families at risk, can be referred to access the program. Clients may present several intense or critical needs that require access to multiple services including mental health, physical health, family violence intervention, personal, grief or family relationship counselling, special services for children or youth or support to manage accommodation, financial or legal issues.

Clients can be referred to DIAC by any service provider and organisation by completing a CCS referral form and emailing it to the Complex Case Support team. Each accepted referral requires a holistic assessment of barriers, needs, goals and motivations and each individually tailored case management plan (CMP) aims to address those needs through a strength based approach. CCS services can be provided as a short crisis intervention up to fourteen (14) days or as case management services up to six (6) months.

Immediate needs are addressed through appropriate support and by assisting the client to build their knowledge and capacity to manage their needs in the future. With this program the case managers can provide support to the clients accessing services outside the LMRC office and facilitate warm referrals to services.

The program works in collaboration with other services and provides case coordination, advocacy and referrals to holistically address the needs of individuals and family members and successfully link them with available mainstream and specialist support services.

Family Support

The Cultural Connect Project, funded by Families NSW, continues to assist young non-English speaking background (NESB) families to decrease their level of isolation as in the case of families who were undergoing the initial stages of settlement process upon arrival in Australia. Frequently, they are some of the most vulnerable families in the community with children who may have high needs, including autism spectrum disorder, and succeeds in providing referral pathways to assist its clients. Families have been linked to other families from their own culture, language and/or religion. Through friendships and feelings of connectedness families gradually are moving to use other Liverpool MRC services and mainstream services.

The Cultural Connect Project Team had a very successful year and achieved great results for both families and their children with 116 families and 140 children enrolled until December 2011. Cultural Connect Project facilitated six Playgroups in partnership with Miller TAFE Outreach, Liverpool TAFE Outreach and Miller TAFE Early Childhood studies.

In addition, with the support of our partners parents also continued to enrol into TAFE Programs.



Domestic Violence Education and Support (DVES)

The Domestic Violence Education and Support (DVES) Project was a newly funded project by the Commonwealth Attorney General's Department looking at Domestic and Family Violence issues and focussed on:

- Healthy family relationships,
- Anger management,
- Domestic Violence legislations,
- Inter generational gaps,
- Mental health issues

Right from the start the Project was successful in establishing a Reference Group including representatives from Liverpool Women's Health Centre, Green Valley Liverpool Domestic Violence Services, Legal Aid Service, Immigrant Women's Health Service, STARTTS, Immigrant Women's Speakout Association, Liverpool Police, Transcultural Mental Health Centre and DV Liaison Committee.

The Project managed to reach out to the community through local schools, local radio and our partners and undertook eleven (11) sessions, focusing on issues such as healthy family relationships and anger management.

Interim feedback has been highly encouraging: the Project was progressing well in reaching out to the communities and in informing them on ways of strengthening family relationships as well as educating service providers in the issues which may contribute in vulnerable families to family violence.



Community Capacity Building & Development



Community capacity building and development is about bonding, connectedness and strengthening of individuals, families and communities. It is also about identifying entry pathways to build confidence, self-reliance and trust. Liverpool MRC clients are some of the most vulnerable and disadvantaged people and need support in dealing with trauma and subsequent consequences, amongst other mental health: this may and does take many forms of interventions.

Information sessions and Discovery Tours

The provision of life skills, orientation and information sessions is an essential part of the individual's ability to build self-reliance and inform them about the way of life in Australia. The sessions are based on clients' needs as assessed by the caseworkers. Usually they follow closely issues as identified under casework.

- **Liverpool MRC services**
- **Accommodation – public & social housing, private accommodation**
- **Centrelink – Family payments A and B**
- **Child development – social emotional development**
- **Consumer Rights and Responsibilities – Contract Plans, Tenancy, etc.**
- **Education – Ready for school, transition to High School**
- **Employment – Work and study pathways**
- **Family relationships – strengthening family bonds**
- **Financial management - budgeting**
- **Health – Health system and various specific health issues, nutrition and health**
- **Mental Health and Wellbeing – relaxation**
- **Immigration information**
- **Legal system – General Law, Family Law, Tenancy Law**
- **Role of Police**
- **Taxation system – Education Tax Refund, Family Tax Benefit**
- **Aged care system – available assistance**



Discovery Tours

Discovery Tours have included visits to Liverpool CBD, Hospital Emergency Department and facilities at Liverpool Library.

Achievements

Clients appreciated better knowledge and understanding of other services, hence, have better skills to navigate the 'system'.

Homework assistance program

The re-established Homework Program has successfully established itself as a resource for young people to seek assistance regarding their schooling. Participants have appreciated the positive learning environment provided, where they are able to complete schoolwork with the support and company of their friends and volunteers.



COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES AND DEVELOPMENT

The Liverpool MRC endeavours for individual, family and community to increase sense of value to enable better settlement in Australia.

The casework under SGP (DIAC) informs the type of activities or projects provided under the Therapeutic Arts Program (TAP) funded by the Department of Family, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaHCSIA). In particular the program is about building trust, to enable clients to proceed in settling in Australia. Important aspects are bonding with the community and to strengthen their sense of worth. Hence, a range of community activities were organised to break down isolation, increase social participation of vulnerable and disadvantaged people in order to build confidence and self-reliance. It is also about learning new skills and/or finding different ways of expressing themselves and learning about their new environment. Furthermore, it is to encourage the building of community capacity and development.

The activities took several forms: sometimes as a one-off event, others sustained over a longer period depending on the specific targeted group. Some of these groups were: newly arrived refugees generally from African and Middle Eastern countries, young people, families with young children, women and older people.



Activities focused on, but were not exclusive to, and included the following accomplishments:

- **Exploring the environment**
 - Visited new areas of Sydney
 - Improve knowledge of Sydney's geography and its facilities
 - Group cohesion and relationships
- **Using public transport**
 - Learn and understand use of maps, time-tables and ticketing
 - Learn about different modes of transport
 - Confidence building and increased mobility independence
- **Building relationships - intra-cultural, cross-cultural and inter-generational**
 - Acquire new knowledge and skills
 - Ability to observe different ways of behaviour by children
 - Ability to distinguish between appropriate and inappropriate behaviour
 - Learn about healthy family relationships
 - Development of new friendships within and between groups
 - Development of opportunities to gain confidence and trust
 - Encourage community harmony
- **Alternative expression forms**
 - Learn new skills in art and/or craft as a way of expressing oneself
 - Creation of decorative items
 - Use of different modes of expression
 - Ability to express process of settlement
 - Increase resilience

COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES AND DEVELOPMENT

- **Healthy food production - catering for food safety at Mamre Heritage Homestead**
 - o Learn about Farm Workplace Health & Safety
 - o Acquire knowledge and skills in horticultural farming
 - o Learn about alternative pesticides which are less damaging or dangerous
 - o Learn about teamwork skills
- **Physical health promotion**
 - o Engagement with mixed cultural groups
 - o Learn about benefits of physical health



Mamre Heritage Homestead

All the activities were aimed at and assisted in building individual / family resilience, connecting with communities and thus enable them to address and overcome issues of trauma.



Farming at Mamre



Seed raising at Mamre

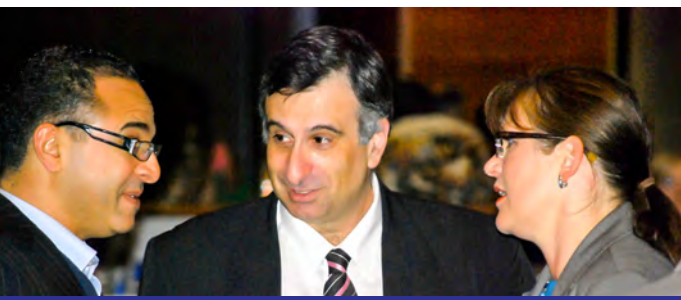


Hard yakka at Mamre



African Cultural and Dinner Nite

The inaugural African Cultural and Dinner Nite was held on 4 August 2011 at the Liverpool Catholic Club. The event was organised by the IGBO Community Australia (ICA) in partnership with the Liverpool Migrant Resource Centre (Liverpool MRC). The 'Nite' was well received and attended by about 700 people from about twenty (20) African country backgrounds, State and Federal ministers, State and Federal MPs, Mayors, Councillors, non-governmental organisations and community leaders. Among the special guests that attended included, Senator Kate Lundy, Federal Minister for Sports and Multicultural Affairs (then Parliamentary Secretary for Multicultural Affairs and Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister), Hon Victor Dominello, NSW Minister for Communities and Indigenous Affairs, Alison McLaren, President, Western Sydney Regional Organisation of Councils (WSROC) and the Pino Migliorino, Chair, Federation of Ethnic Communities' Councils of Australia (FECCA).



The 'Nite' achieved:

- An opportunity for African-Australians and other Australians to participate in cultural and social evening to foster sense of community and networking;
- Contributed to the break-down of social and cultural isolation of African's new and emerging communities, including refugee communities, by creating a conducive forum to build connections, foster cultural sense of belonging and self esteem;
- Creative opportunities for selected African communities and artists to showcase cultural performances and to foster and promote African emerging artistic talents;
- An opportunity to highlight issues affecting new and emerging African communities and people in settling in the Australian society.

The key highlights of the event were cultural performances by the ICA Women Dance and the Asia Reef Drumming Thunder, among other performances. The keynote address was presented by Dr Vincent Ogu, President, IGBO Community Australia and Chairman Liverpool MRC at the time. Dr Ogu emphasised the need for all tiers of government to effectively liaise with African communities on policy and strategy issues that affect African people and families, including breaking down of barriers to services and employment and education opportunities.



SUPPORT GROUPS

Many of the newly arrived refugees need support in just maintaining themselves other than information and education; they need support through peer engagement. To this end support groups were established.

Men's Support Group

A Men's Support Group was formed to build capacity in a supportive environment with newly arrived participants from Iraqi communities including Assyrian, Mandaean and Arabic backgrounds. Educational planting activities and information sessions were utilised to bring them together and work with them closely to support them with their needs in terms of linking participants to services and other opportunities, which previously they did not know about. Successful personal outcomes were gained, as well as peer support.

Women's Support Group

A Women's Support Group targeting disadvantaged Iraqi women from refugee background was organised to provide information and "hands on" practical skills. Participants benefited from the ten sessions which had a focus on knowledge of seeds – both native and non-native – and planting skills in Australia. All participants appreciated the program and provided feedback that through this program they both have increased their proficiency in conversational English as well as their vocabulary relating to horticulture.

Seniors' Support Group

Though Immigration Policy does not encourage entry of older refugees they do arrive in Australia and the fact of their limited numbers, their trauma experiences, perhaps their limited capacity and the very different social; life style engagements in Australia, as well as their age of arrival all have a tremendous impact on their ability to settle. As the younger generation - also dealing with trauma experiences - seeks to gain entry into education, training and employment older refugees frequently are isolated and the prospects of learning English language skills or other learning or engagement are often greatly diminished. Refugees may also age prematurely due to trauma and resettlement.

The Liverpool MRC has long established from client and community contact that older refugees are isolated and the very fact that there are few in their community exacerbates the issue: in successful settlement especially for older people it is important to be able to share their stories - even if they come from different areas, there are still experiences to share. To that end Liverpool MRC sought to establish a seniors' support group to provide them with the opportunity to gain information, learn about issues and regulations in Australia, enhance bonding and capacity.

Liverpool MRC has undertaken the Seniors Support Group which is designed to engage the newly arrived older refugees. With the assistance of other staff in their various programs newly arrived older refugees were encouraged to join the support group. At an initial session participating clients were asked what they would be interested in to learn more about, hence a program of monthly information sessions was developed many of which were related to better understanding of and how to maintain their health. With the assistance of health care professionals in the Liverpool area these sessions - which included the digestive system, diabetes, smoking, depression, cholesterol and arthritis - were much appreciated.

This format has contributed to prevent older refugees from becoming isolated and enable them to engage with the community.

LEADERSHIP

Auspicing of Community Groups

Auspicing new emerging and/or small ethnic communities assists in strengthening their capacity and acquire further skills in developing much needed

Seven (7) organisations were auspiced within the funding period:

- Australian African Islamic Association
- Igbo Community Australia
- Local Multicultural Refugee Women's Artists Group
- Mandaean Women's Group
- Family Interagency Project
- The Liverpool Goan Community
- Mandaean Community Cultural Club



Young Women's Leadership Program

Following its success from previous years, the Young Women's Leadership Program was conducted in partnership with STARTTS and Liverpool City Council. Twelve young women from various high schools came together to participate in a ten (10) week program to develop further skills in leadership and confidence building so that they could achieve their full potential and become active members of the wider community. Through a range of activities including art, dance, drama, mindfulness and self defence, the program sought to develop participants' knowledge and skills around various areas, such as stress management, goal setting and achievement, problem solving, conflict management, leadership, confidence and team building. The weekly activities were well enjoyed by all who attended and provided participants with the opportunity to reflect on their goals, skills and strengths- already existing or further gained. It is with great hope that the renewed confidence and skills developed through the program will be carried into the future endeavours of these young leaders.

Community Leadership Training

The Liverpool MRC has undertaken the Leadership Training Program in the past year and has grown from strength to strength. It has addressed topics, such as:

- Role of the management committee
- Legal responsibilities of an incorporated organisation
- Preparing applications for funding
- Employment practices

Interest from participants is keen and in particular, these sessions aim to build a social infrastructure for newly arrived communities in Liverpool.

Liverpool multicultural leadership forum

Both Liverpool MRC and Liverpool City Council for some time found that there was no adequate platform for NESB or new / small emerging communities to express their specific concerns to any level of Local, State or Federal Government.

The Liverpool Multicultural Leaders Forum (LMLF) aims to develop a forum of leaders among NESB communities to enhance their ability and opportunity to be involved in local decision making and governance.

The Liverpool Multicultural Leaders Forum provides the necessary infrastructure to address needs of ethnic communities, and to provide a platform to raise pertinent issues affecting new and emerging, refugee communities within the Liverpool LGA.

An initial meeting was held in May 2012 attended by eight (8) local community leaders, who expressed a greater need for education, training and capacity building within ethnic communities.

Advocacy

Strategic promotion and advocacy are essential components in the provision of services for the Liverpool MRC's clients. This can take the form of presentations at a local, State and/or Federal level. It can also be in response to Inquiries which affect clients of the Liverpool MRC.

The Liverpool MRC submitted to both Access and Equity and National Anti-Racism Partnership and Strategy. The Liverpool MRC appreciated the return of Access and Equity as it affects directly its clients.

Co-convening and/or supporting Inter-agencies

Networking and promotion are crucial in the delivery of services: all staff members were active in networking through inter-agencies, their own networks and promoted their specific target groups to service providers through these means. These included:

- Liverpool Refugee & Migrant Inter-agency (LRMI)
- Community Sector Management Forum (CSMF)
- Human Services Planning Group (HSPG)
- Local Ethnic Affairs Priority Statement(LEAPS) Taskforce
- Liverpool Family & Children's Services Network (LFCSN)
- Liverpool Youth Workers Network (LYWN)
- Warwick Farm Inter-agency
- 2168 Inter-agency & Network
- Settlement Council of Australia (SCOA)
- Settlement Services International (SSI)
- CVS Regional Forum

FORUMS AND CONSULTATIONS

Forums and Consultations are another way of raising issues, as well as educating service providers on the impact of these issues on the clients. From the numbers in participation it has been evident that these forums and consultation are essential and participants frequently ask for more of them.

Refugee Council of Australia

Liverpool MRC worked with the Refugee Council of Australia to conduct its yearly consultation on immigration to be submitted in a report to the Minister. The sessions were well attended by members of the communities and many issues were raised, in particular also concern about fellow country people left behind.

Domestic & Family Violence Forum

One of the major highlights during the period was the Forum for service providers on: “Strengthening Family Relationships in reducing family violence”. The aim of the Forum was to create awareness of refugee families and impact of family violence (FV) on them; to share information on available services relating to FV for refugee families; and to identify gaps in the provision of Family Violence services to recommend strategies for addressing the gaps.

Dr. Eman Sharobeem, Rahat Chowdhury, Chris Hayes MP, Fowler, Laurie Ferguson, MP- Werriwa, Paul Lynch, Member for Liverpool were amongst the guest speakers and Liverpool City Council Mayor Wendy Waller launched the Critical Incident Protocol at the Forum.

This initiative led by Liverpool MRC was a joint initiative of service providers in Liverpool LGA including Liverpool Police, Liverpool Women’s Health Centre, GVLDS, Liverpool Legal Aid Services, Immigrant Women’s Health Service, STARTTS and Immigrant Women’s Speak out.

The Forum was attended by 83 participants from almost 60 agencies from a diverse range of service providers dealing with Domestic and Family Violence.

Youth Consultation

A consultation was conducted with young people to help identify the needs and experiences of young refugees settling in the Liverpool area. Some of the key findings contained in the report are as follows:

- Over 50 percent of participants indicated that they had missed up to five (5) years of school;
- The majority of participants said they would be interested in improving their English language skills;
- Participants had difficulty with where to look or how to apply for a job, understanding Australian workplace culture;
- Participants also expressed difficulty with accessing recreational activities due to lack of knowledge about where to access, cost and transport.

866 Visa Holders Information session and Consultation

Over the past year the Liverpool MRC identified a significant, in fact the biggest increase in the number of 866 visa holders (originally termed Illegal Maritime Arrivals [IMA's]) on its doorstep. This is a reflection of an overall trend in NSW with more arrivals being released from detention centres.

Liverpool MRC took a lead role in organising and conducting an information session and consultation with local service providers focusing on 866 visa holders. This provided an opportunity for service providers to better understand this target group and accordingly ensure that their services are meeting their identified needs. There were six (6) presenters and 21 providers from Liverpool representing a wide variety of services which include Charities, Local Council, Education, Health, Human Services (Centrelink), Legal, Mental Health, Police, Housing NSW and Refugee and migrant services. The experience of torture and/or trauma and the placing in detention centre with lingering uncertainty of whether asylum seekers could stay has dire detrimental consequences for them:

FECCA Conference

The Liverpool MRC presented issues as encountered on the ground at the Federation of Ethnic Communities' Councils of Australia (FECCA) Conference. The Conference organised by a national peak body provides another important platform to advocate on behalf of its clients.

- For many this has resulted in severe mental health issues
- Getting the family over to Australia is the utmost priority
- Having been subjected to a closed structured system upon 'release' many have to re-learn dealing with basic life skills independently again while at the same time negotiating unfamiliarity with the Australian system and way of life;
- Compounded with mental health issues this has major impact on the ability to take in new information and/or learning skills;
- Having lost role models many have difficulty in essential basic social skills which may contribute to domestic and family violence.

Service providers were well engaged and eager to learn more. A report with findings of the day was compiled and distributed to all participants who took part on the day.

Celebration of Community in Liverpool

Celebrating the various events is one way of making new communities welcome to Australia. The Liverpool MRC has consistently contributed to these events which include:

- International Women's Day
- Harmony Day
- Seniors Week
- Youth Week
- Refugee Week
- Family Week
- White Ribbon Day



International Women's Day Governor General's Address

A group of women from the Liverpool Migrant Resource Centre were invited in March to attend the Governor General's Reception for International Women's Day. Held on March 8 at Kirribilli House, the event sought to celebrate the social, economic and political achievements of women across the world and was attended by such notable women from all over the Sydney area.

She acknowledged the plight of many women around the world who are continually denied such basic rights and freedoms, further adding that the lives of immigrant women and refugees were inspiring symbols of "courage, fortitude, strength and determination".

The event provided an opportunity for women to meet and discuss their work across the community, as well as speak with the Governor General herself, however briefly. Liverpool MRC representative Asia Fahad took this opportunity to present. Her Excellency with some information on the Mandaean community, a minority religious sub-group from Iraq who have largely sought refuge in Australia, Sweden and the United States having fled from persecution.





Attendance at these events is generally more than good and provides an opportunity for clients and community to have some enjoyable time as entertainment is provided.





Community Visitors Scheme (CVS)

The Liverpool MRC has hosted the Community Visitors Scheme (CVS) funded by the Commonwealth Department of Health and Ageing since 1993. CVS aims to engage the residents at aged care hostels and nursing homes who have been identified as being lonely or socially isolated.

In the case of non-English speaking background (NESB) residents this is even more prevalent.

The Liverpool MRC recruits and co-ordinates a team of volunteers from the Arabic- and Spanish-speaking communities, matching them with a resident at aged care facilities in South-West Sydney. Volunteers from at least the same language background are matched with residents through one-to-one visits.

HUMANITARIAN SETTLEMENT SERVICES (HSS) AT LIVERPOOL MRC

Settlement Services International (SSI) is an agency which was formed by all NSW MRC's getting together and forming an infrastructure that can work across regions and between multiple MRC's on projects. In 2011 SSI was successful in being awarded the Humanitarian Settlement Services (HSS) Program in a unique model that means whilst a central office manages the administration and strategic management, the delivery is undertaken by the placement of staff at member organisations such as the Liverpool MRC. This model has proved to be very successful and resilient.

SSI has adopted a two-pronged approach to delivering the Humanitarian Settlement Services (HSS) Program that incorporates direct client services, based on sound assessment and support planning, and the coordination of access and delivery of a range of other essential settlement support services.

As part of SSI policy of providing settlement services to HSS clients locally, Liverpool MRC has housed a seven (7) member case management team of SSI. The team also includes up to thirteen (13) Bi-lingual Workers and fifteen (15) Volunteers, who assist the case management team to address client needs. Liverpool MRC has also been providing the

team with reception support, support to clients with complex needs and with complimentary programs such as emergency relief with power bills, family support programs and to groups such as floristry

and sewing as well as a range of information sessions. In addition, local cultural awareness training is also undertaken at the Liverpool MRC meeting rooms.

SSI Liverpool Team is equipped to take calls and action settlement 24 hours, 7 days a week if required. All clients and proposers are given written information in their language of preference providing information about when to call 000, how to ask for an interpreter, how to request either an ambulance, the police or fire brigade and how to provide their address or current location.

Since April 2011, when SSI began delivering HSS, the Liverpool SSI Team has received over 500 cases comprising single on-shore refugee clients, Unaccompanied Humanitarian Minors, Women at Risk and large families. The client base referred to the Team includes Arab, Mandaean, Assyrian, Chaldean, Kurdish, Iranian, Hazara and Rohingya communities.

MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE, MEMBERS, VOLUNTEERS AND WORKPLACE EXPERIENCE / STUDENTS

Management Committee, Members, Staff, Volunteers and Workplace placements 2011 - 2012

Management Committee Members

Dr. Amad Mtashar	Chairperson
Dr. Vincent Ogu	Deputy Chairperson
Denise Moses	Treasurer
Blanca Arely Espinoza	Secretary
Haidar Abdalla	Member
Doris Athanasio	Member
Abdul Wahab Talabani	Member
Najla Turk	Member
Casimir Ugochuku	Member
Simon Fox	Ex-officio Liverpool City Council
Clnr Ned Mannoun	Ex-Officio Liverpool City Council

Staff

Kamalle Dabboussy	Centre Manager
Kassim Abood	Senior Complex Caseworker
Ayman Al Haboub	Humanitarian Caseworker
Rassem Asmar	Housing Support Caseworker
Cai (Bing) Xiaobing	Family Stream Caseworker
Doria Chafic	Seniors Support Worker
Mariam Dabboussy	Information Officer
Alcina Desouza	Administration Team Leader
Pietty Greenwood	Multicultural Families Resource Coordinator
Fatema Rashid Hasan	Domestic Violence & Education Support Officer
Ian Macgregor	Farm Manager
Anke Kotte	Senior Complex Caseworker
Kimberly Li	Youth Worker
Elham Mandwee	Bilingual Receptionist
Maria Karameli Manousso	Family Support Clerical Worker till 31/12/2011
Maria Karameli Manousso	Executive Assistant from 29/2/2012
Linah Merdawi	Iraqi Support Worker
Jimmy Mtashar	Casework Team Leader
Salem Naja	Infrastructure & Development Coordinator
Maria Pereira	Project Assistant
Sandra Romanelli	Family Support Worker
Yomna Saber	Admin Support locum from 5/3/12 to 30/6/12
Mariëtte van der Meer	Community Projects Officer / Policy Officer
Paul White	Research & Policy Officer till 30/01/2012

Child care workers

Megumi Mamome
Lynette Pressman till
23/12/2011
Xuan Thi Bui
Julie Grime
Saja Haidar
Kelly Nugent till
22/7/2011
Nawal Salman

Volunteers**Admin Volunteers**

Sera Cakacka
Tuy-Kim Dao
Nazia Hasan
Noha Khalaf
Amal El-Masri
Neha Mascarenhas
Dhafira Muhsen
Ali Osman
Mayada Salahi

**Playgroup
Volunteers**

Shahla Alalwan
Ban Dawood
Preethi Eugene
Haifaa Gatea
Julie Grimes

Sessional Workers

Paola Sayegh - Melkite Welfare Association

**Home-work Program
Volunteers**

Yomna Abdelhalim
Resmi Radhamony Amma
Soulmaz Askariyahyavi
Rita Basso
Brent Chivers
Karima Gorgi
William Hey-

Cunningham
Qayssar Odeesho
Jessica Li
Oanh Ly
Clay MacDonnell
Maryam Mamipour
Kim Yen Nguyen

Stephen Pham
Yen Phan
Brittany Ross
Alma Telalovic
Maria Tran

CVS Volunteers**Arabic-speaking**

Ihssan Ahmed
Mervat Benyamin
Dalila Gorgis
Fouzi Jamhour
Roselin Laki
Abir Lotfi
Blendine Shlaimon
Nadia Shlaimon
Juliet Warda

Spanish-speaking

Guadalupe Alvarez
Eva Alvila
Ana Gloria Beltran
Clara Bucarey
Felisa Herrera
Rosalia Moreno
Francisca Murillo
Zunilda Navarro
Amanda Orellano
Sandra Virga

Joe Asfoura -
English Teacher

With thanks to our Funding Bodies

Federal Government

- Attorney-General's Department (AG) - Domestic Violence Education and Support (DVES)
- Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR) - Workplace English Language and Literacy (WELL) Program
- Department of Health and Ageing (DoHA) - Community Visitors Scheme (CVS)
- Department of Immigration And Citizenship (DIAC) - Settlement Grants Program (SGP)
- Department of Immigration And Citizenship (DIAC) - Complex Case Support (CCS)
- Department of Family, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaHCSIA - Community Investment Program [CIP]) - Therapeutic Arts Program (TAP)

State Government

- Department of Family and Community Services NSW (FaCS) - Families NSW - Cultural Connect
- Department of Family and Community Services NSW (FaCS) - Communities NSW - Better Futures
- Community Builders NSW - Infrastructure
- Community Relations Commission For a Multicultural NSW - Ethnic Leadership Training

Local Government

- Fairfield City Council – Communal Wisdom in CALD communities
- Liverpool City Council - Community Donations