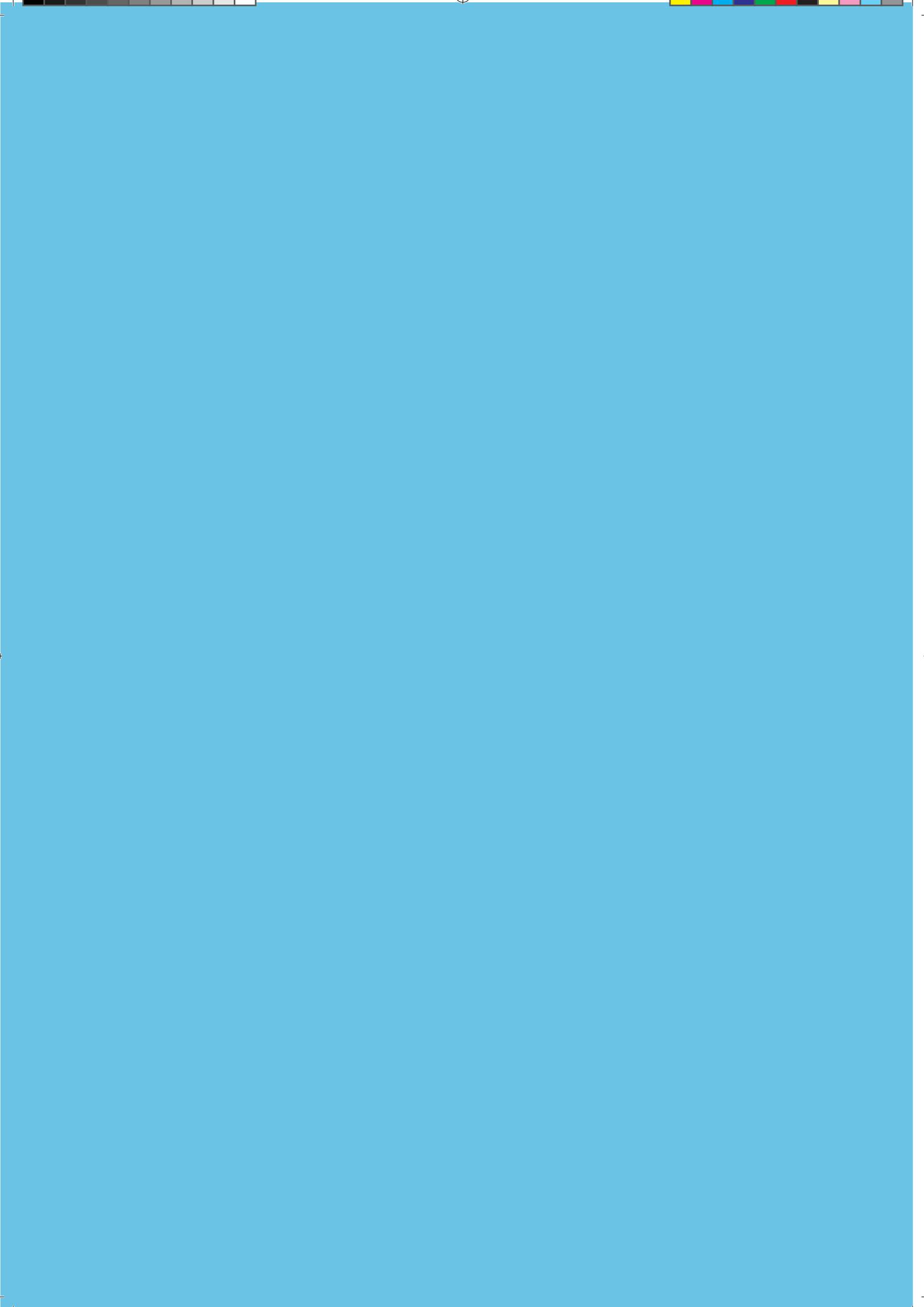




ANNUAL REPORT 2013





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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.



CHAIR'S ADDRESS

I wish to congratulate the staff at Liverpool MRC for what has been another great year. High numbers of new arrivals, complex needs and reductions in state based services have created an unstable environment that has presented the organisation with many challenges.

I am very proud to be associated with an organisation that for over 30 years has worked to welcome new Australians into the community and help them get the best start possible in the country they now call home.

Liverpool has warmly welcomed the refugee community, and in the country of mateship and a 'fair go' we need to work with our partners and colleagues to make sure that these are not just slogans. We need to address issues of access to services, tackle low employment and better access to aged care services. Australia is a rich and diverse country with an ability to ensure that all people, including Indigenous and the most recently arrived have access to basic services and are supported to reach their full potential in life.

As I write this, a new Australian Government has just been elected, and the Liverpool MRC looks forward to working with the new Liberal/National Government towards an active community, that is able to be independent at their earliest point and be able to contribute positively as the history of migration and refugee settlement has shown.

Dr. Amad Mtashar
Chairman



Dr. Mtashar (left) receiving 'Friend of Africa Award' from the Moroccan Ambassador to Australia (right).



"I AM PROUD OF ALL THE STAFF
AT LIVERPOOL MRC AND OF THEIR
ACHIEVEMENTS OVER THIS YEAR."



MANAGER'S ADDRESS

The 2012-2013 financial year has seen Liverpool continue to grow and meet the challenges it has. In a time when continued asylum seeker and humanitarian policy changes this has meant a change in the nature and number of clients that appear for assistance at the organisation.

With the changing nature of clients this has also challenged the Liverpool MRC and the range of services in the area. With the Federal Government announcing the increase to the humanitarian intake to 20,000 from 13,750, and in that mix the expediting of large number of Iraqi families in Syria (the most vulnerable in a vulnerable situation), we have seen the increase of family arrivals in the area, and we have the majority of newly arrived clients with children under the age of 18.

Of particular interest over the last few years has been the pressure on other services, the need to ensure that clients do not over-rely on settlement services and engage with mainstream services as soon as possible is met with several challenges, primary amongst these has been the reduction in support in the State services, the over-demand on existing services, lack of awareness of how to engage and cultural competency, or gaps in local services.

This has had a huge impact in client's ability to participate in mainstream life with a longer term reliance on Settlement Services. In many instances, return referrals are being made – that is once a client is referred by staff of Liverpool MRC to a mainstream agency for support, they are in turn referred back to us. Not only is there a concern for access and equity provisions, but the frustration, and often anger, for the client is an unnecessary event.

In response to these needs, staff at the Liverpool MRC have increasingly responded with some targeted activities to address some needs. We have undertaken an employment assistance program (Multicultural Job Club) to support some clients with how and where to look for employment in the 'Australian Context', we have also run complimentary programs for young people to look for casual and part time

employment; a farming and perma-culture project was implemented in Partnership with MECA and Mamre Plains Homestead, providing both therapeutic and practical perma-culture skills to newly arrived refugees, aged community and a stand-alone youth group; our Parenting support programs through the supported playgroups, whilst they have had to scale down due to challenges with funding resources, is now providing some increased case management and home visiting. These only name of few projects and activities and I am sure that you will see examples in this report.

I am proud of all the staff at Liverpool MRC and of their achievements over this year.

And I think that the future holds much more to come.

We have a brief to work with all Multicultural Communities in Liverpool and surrounding areas. To that we are now engaging more with stakeholders to raise our profile and understanding in a broader range of areas. We are increasing our community development activities and roles to support increasing needs of families. We are also continuing to redevelop our role and functions, looking at our infrastructure needs as well as staffing needs. Liverpool MRC will be more active in promoting the needs of clients to services and policy makers, and in promoting the value and importance of access and equity.

We look forward to continue to work with our friends to ensure a fairer and just Liverpool that welcomes all people to the area and remains a great place for people to live and prosper.

Kamalle Dabboussy
Manager

ADMINISTRATION REPORT

By increasing the capacity of clients to deal with common settlement issues by increasing level of information available to them linking to mainstream services, and providing a space and support for groups to meet and support each other, the Administration team support successful settlement and participation into mainstream life.

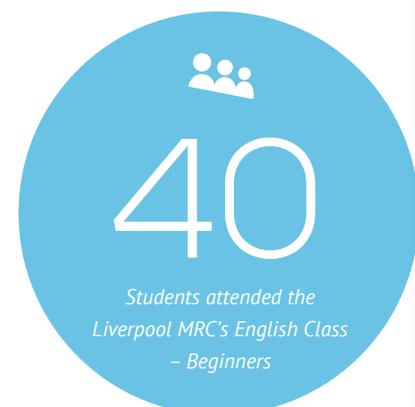
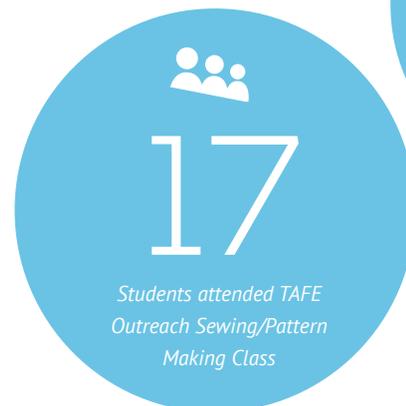
A year of outstanding achievement with a record number of clients seen through the front counter. Additionally, Legal Aid NSW provided valuable outreach services which were Immigration advice and Family Law clinic. The highlights of the activities undertaken by this project are listed below.

A total of 8276 clients were provided with information and referral, appropriate appointments with caseworkers; Justice of the Peace Services; access to forms and centre facilities, registration into Liverpool MRC programs and activities as well as support in general queries.

The Administration Team also assisted in facilitating events including:

African Cultural Nite – attended by over 700 guests
Liverpool MRC Annual General meeting – 50 members and guests
Other community events and forums including Harmony Day and Refugee Week

In the second half of the year sadly we lost TAFE outreach classes due to a withdrawal of services by the NSW Government, which has an adverse impact on our clients. TAFE Outreach classes not only gave our clients skills but were good for their social wellbeing and a stepping stone to business and careers. The team took part in lobbying to retain these worthwhile courses and are looking for funding in other departments. The administration team would like to "Thank" all volunteers, course coordinators; and everyone involved in making this year yet another successful year.





Quarterly Newsletters distributed to services and clients monthly calendar of events distributed to over 300 clients



16

Students attended TAFE Outreach English Intermediate Class



14

Promotional activities held at various community events in Liverpool LGA



48

Clients assisted with Tax Help through ATO's tax help program



300

Monthly calendar of events distributed to over 300 clients



250

Service flyers/audio/CD's displayed at the "Multilingual Information HUB"



8276

A total of 8276 clients were serviced through the Front Desk, providing direct information, appropriate appointments with caseworkers; certifying documents; printing of forms; centre facilities, enrolling for centre courses and providing answers to general queries.



96

Clients assisted with access to the Legal Aid NSW Immigration Advice Service



11

Students attended TAFE Outreach Floristry Class



14

Volunteers/Students provided with Work Placement opportunities within the Liverpool MRC



60

Clients assisted with access to the Legal Aid NSW - Family Law - Early Intervention Unit



YOUTH PROGRAM

CASEWORK

For many young people, coming to Australia presents with anxiety and excitement. The idea of limitless opportunities is often confronted with barriers and struggles. Employment, education and training were of the top priority issues addressed as young people sought advice regarding finding employment and information about their options beyond study in the Intensive English Centres (IEC's) and high school.

Young people were also provided with information and advocacy to assist their orientation with mainstream services and life in Australia. Casework services supported young people in understanding how Australian institutions and systems work as well as their rights and responsibilities, therefore helping to promote their personal capacity and independence.

Access to recreational opportunities was another issue presented in casework as young people sought occasions to participate in sport and other activities after school and on the weekend. Such opportunities were discussed as a means of coping with settlement related stresses, overcoming boredom and addressing youth mental health associated with depression and ongoing trauma. Referrals to youth based programs were made alongside possible referrals to available counselling services.

113

Young people accessed Liverpool MRC casework services this year

157

Casework contacts being provided through the Youth Program

INFORMATION SESSIONS

To address the common and broader barriers that the youth community faces a number of information sessions were held to break down some these obstacles and provide opportunities to partake into mainstream life in Liverpool. Information sessions were offered to young people and their parents to provide solutions to navigate services, pathways available, as well as to facilitate better understanding between parents and their children.

The sessions organised to increase clients' understanding of supports available to assist their settlement, as well as their rights and responsibilities when accessing services. A session organised around the topic of employment also helped young people develop an understanding of how to access and protect their rights in the Australian labour market.

A session conducted with parents at Liverpool Boys Highschool by the Liverpool MRC Domestic Violence Project Officer and Youth Worker was very successful in facilitating understanding between parents and their children. The topic of family relationships was discussed within the context of settlement and the refugee experience, and parents were provided the opportunity to discuss challenges they experienced at home. The session thus provided the opportunity to address some of these issues, and develop further understanding around healthy family dynamics.

THE LIVERPOOL MRC IS VERY PROUD TO HAVE ARKAN AS PART OF THE TEAM AND CONGRATULATES HIM ON HIS SUCCESS

LIVERPOOL MRC'S HOMEWORK PROGRAM

Once a week on Monday afternoons, a cacophony of young voices can be heard from the Liverpool MRC meeting rooms. In these rooms, young people gather to socialise with new and old friends, while at the same time, trying to get through a mountain of schoolwork.

Since its inception, the Liverpool MRC Homework Program has successfully been established as a positive and routine space for young people to come together and receive support with their schooling each week. Young people of refugee background often experience disrupted schooling through their time in conflict and transit overseas, and many come to Australia having experienced a gap in their education. Through the Homework Program, young people are able to receive support through this transition, particularly as they navigate their way through a tough Australian school curriculum.

The Homework Program has been well enjoyed by the students and volunteers alike, and the program has grown this year to accommodate the growing numbers of students attending each week. Ten (10) to fifteen (15) students attend the program on weekly, with some busy weeks seeing up to 20 students. Volunteers have been recruited to teach across various subject areas and year levels, allowing the students to receive specialist support in learning syllabus content. Through their attendance in the program, many students have reported an improvement in their school marks and an increased understanding of their classroom learning.

ARKAN'S STORY

Arkan Yousef, one of the Liverpool MRC's Homework Program volunteers received an award at the Liverpool City Council 'Refugee Week' ceremony for his contributions to the Liverpool MRC's Homework Program and the Liverpool community. He later also became a State finalist for a Pride of Australia Award under the 'Fair Go' medal category.

Arkan taught mathematics in Iraq for 19 years before being forced to flee due to a hostile political environment. Once he received recognition of his refugee status, and with a choice to go anywhere in the world, he knew it had to be Australia.

When he is not busy completing studies in TAFE, Arkan likes to spend his time volunteering and giving back to the community.



YOU ARE HERE PROJECT

A series of workshops were organised in collaboration with CuriousWorks, where young people were provided the opportunity to write, film and act in a couple of short films. Two films were produced, including a dramatic, video-game style portrayal of refugee young peoples' experiences of growing up in Australia, as well as comedic documentary "welcoming" viewers to the Liverpool area.

The films were launched at an event in the Liverpool Library Youth Space over two (2) nights, on the 1st and 2nd of November 2012. The event was well attended by the members of the Liverpool MRC client group and the wider community, and the films were enjoyed by all.

The project provided an opportunity for young people to develop their creative and dramatic skills, where they could then showcase their cooperative efforts to their friends, family and the wider community.



YOUTH CONSULTATION

Findings from the Liverpool MRC Youth Consultation were officially published in a report earlier this year. This follows from a consultation with a group of young people who completed a survey regarding their experiences of settlement in Australia. Some of the key findings contained in the report are as follows-

92%

Of participants indicated they had missed anywhere up to 5 years of schooling, if not more.

64%

Of participants indicated they were looking for work. Some of the difficulties young people expressed in regards to finding employment included a lack of understanding around where and how to apply for jobs, lack of Australian work experience, as well as low level English skills.

Cost was an issue raised as possibly limiting young people's ability to participate in recreational activities. This includes access to mainstream sports, where associated membership costs sometimes exclude low-income young people from participating.

An electronic copy may be found on the Liverpool MRC website at www.lmrc.org.au

ENGAGING SCHOOLS AND COMMUNITY FORUM

The Engaging Schools and Community Forum was held at Liverpool Boys High School on Wednesday 22 May 2013. The forum sought to connect schools with service providers from across the Fairfield and Liverpool areas to share resources and information around local programs and services available to support young people. The underlying goal of the forum was to more effectively support schools assisting young people's ongoing engagement in education and training.

The forum was a joint operation by the Liverpool MRC, MTC Work Solutions, Youth Connections, Liverpool City Council, Department of Education and Communities, Catholic Education Office, Department of Human Services (Centrelink), Inspire Community Services, Liverpool Youth Accommodation Assistance Company (LYAAC), Rosemount Good Shepherd, Liverpool Boys High School and South West Connect.

Keynote speakers were invited to discuss the topic of "cyber bullying", an issue which affects many young people in schools. A second presenter then discussed early intervention and prevention programs being organised in schools.

Representatives from various Liverpool-Fairfield high schools were provided the opportunity to network with service providers from the areas of health, housing, refugee support, youth and family services, education and employment to name a few. The program was well attended and enjoyed, and included a special guest appearance by Member for Fowler, Hon. Chris Hayes MP.





4366

INFORMATION AND ORIENTATION PROGRAM

In this year, the Casework Team addressed 4,366 issues that clients presented with.

The Liverpool MRC's Information and Orientation Program helps bridge the gap for migrants and refugees settling into a new life in Australia. By facilitating linkages to mainstream and specialist services, caseworkers at the Liverpool MRC seek to develop client capacity, promote individual and family resilience in dealing with settlement related challenges. Access to the Casework services is voluntary and targets migrants and refugees who have been in the country for less than five (5) years.

In addition, the Casework team organised information sessions on different topics related to legal systems and the law in Australia, health and navigating the health care system and a client's rights and responsibilities in accessing mainstream services in Australia.

All Liverpool MRC's clients are encouraged to attend these sessions which are also promoted externally with the aim to increase clients' knowledge and capacity and to instil confidence and independence particularly when accessing mainstream services

Clients are referred to the Liverpool MRC from mainstream or specialist services, such as the Humanitarian Settlement Service (HSS) Program - Settlement Services International (SSI). Clients may also often self-refer or have accessed the service previously.

The Casework team consists of six (6) caseworkers as follows:

- Humanitarian case worker
- Complex Case Support Worker
- Youth Caseworker
- Iraqi Case Worker
- Housing Support worker
- Family Stream Caseworker

Caseworkers work with clients based on their needs to help identify and address issues and barriers they may be facing related to settlement. Some of the issues addressed by the Casework services include financial hardship, problems with household utilities, accommodation, parenting skills, NSW Police and courts.

FINANCIAL COUNSELLING AT THE LIVERPOOL MRC:

A relationship has existed between the Liverpool MRC and the CatholicCare Financial Counselling Service for over ten (10) years. During the last financial year this collaboration has flourished to the extent that the Liverpool MRC was able to offer a Financial Counselling service on a regular basis. In addition the Financial Counselling service has facilitated Money Management and Awareness workshops.

Each Thursday the Financial Counsellor and the Senior Case Manager at the Liverpool MRC work with client's on a variety of financial issues. These issues include:

- Mobile Phone debt
- Credit Card issues
- Debts relating to Motor Vehicle Accidents
- Exorbitant Internet Service debts
- Electricity and Gas debts

Anecdotal evidence is emerging which supports the theory that people who have not been in Australia for long are vulnerable to the vagaries of the Australian Economy. It is also apparent that there is a strong need for people arriving in Australia to be educated on the general principles of budgeting and making ends meet from a financial perspective.

While Financial Counselling in many instances at the Liverpool MRC comes about because of a crisis or immediate need, for it to be 100% effective it has to have an educational component. In addition to the need to read and understand documents before signing we have been able to educate clients about the need for car insurance, the need to manage your income and outgoings on your terms as well as the need to manage debt and the implications of debt.

Clients have often presented to the Liverpool MRC facing financial and legal difficulty with services such as utilities, financial institutions and government organisations due to a lack of understanding around complex Australian systems. Sometimes this may be due to limited English language proficiency, knowledge and capacity, as well as ongoing mental health issues related to trauma. Similarly, these issues impact on client's ability to access essential mainstream support services

COMPLEX CASEWORK SERVICES

The Complex Case Support (CCS) Program is a service that was offered by the Department of Immigration and Citizenship (DIAC) to address acute and complex needs of migrants and refugees who have been less than five (5) years in Australia. Clients are referred to the Department for an assessment and upon acceptance, the Liverpool MRC as a contracted service provider delivers complex case management services. Cases are often of a high intensity and require a great degree of intervention and case coordination is required across a variety of services.

Focus is on the primary client but also addressing issues impacting on partners and/or children. In some cases this meant building the capacity of carers or supporting family members to ensure continued support for the primary client.

Delivering the CCS program at the Liverpool MRC includes intense networking and working in co-operation with other service providers to meet the needs of clients and to ensure appropriate linkages and referrals to organisations are successful. In each case, the clients receive intensive support to address critical issues, complex needs and develop the capacity to deal with challenges more independently in the future.

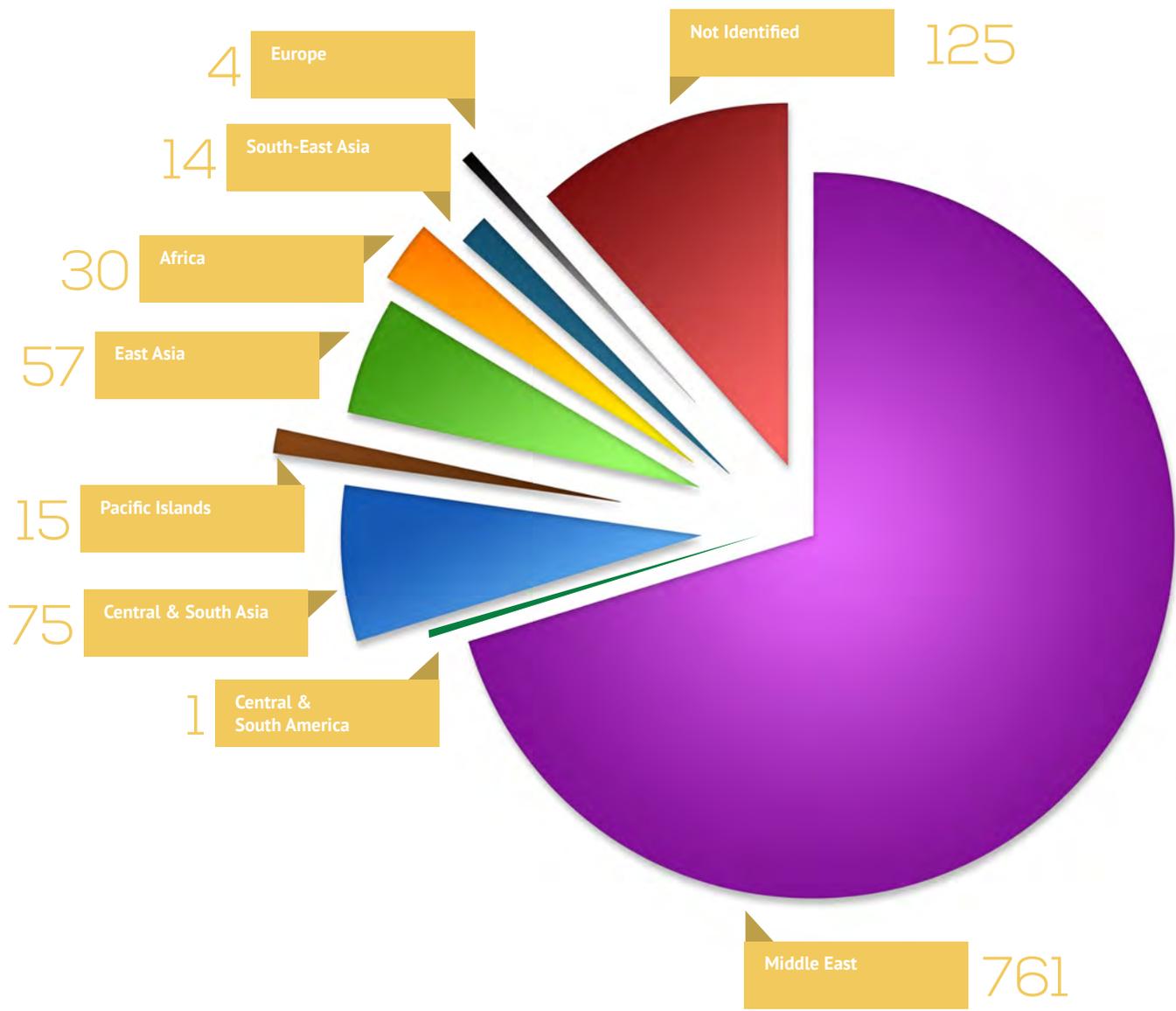
Mental health, language barriers, lack of orientation to appropriate services and knowledge of access procedures were identified as some of the main challenges to the successful delivery of the CCS program at the Liverpool MRC.

There have been many success stories of clients who have participated in the CCS program. Clients have been able to manage legal challenges successfully, obtain long term accommodation, address severe health issues, improve parenting skills, overcome financial crisis, increase their English language skills and better access to mainstream services.

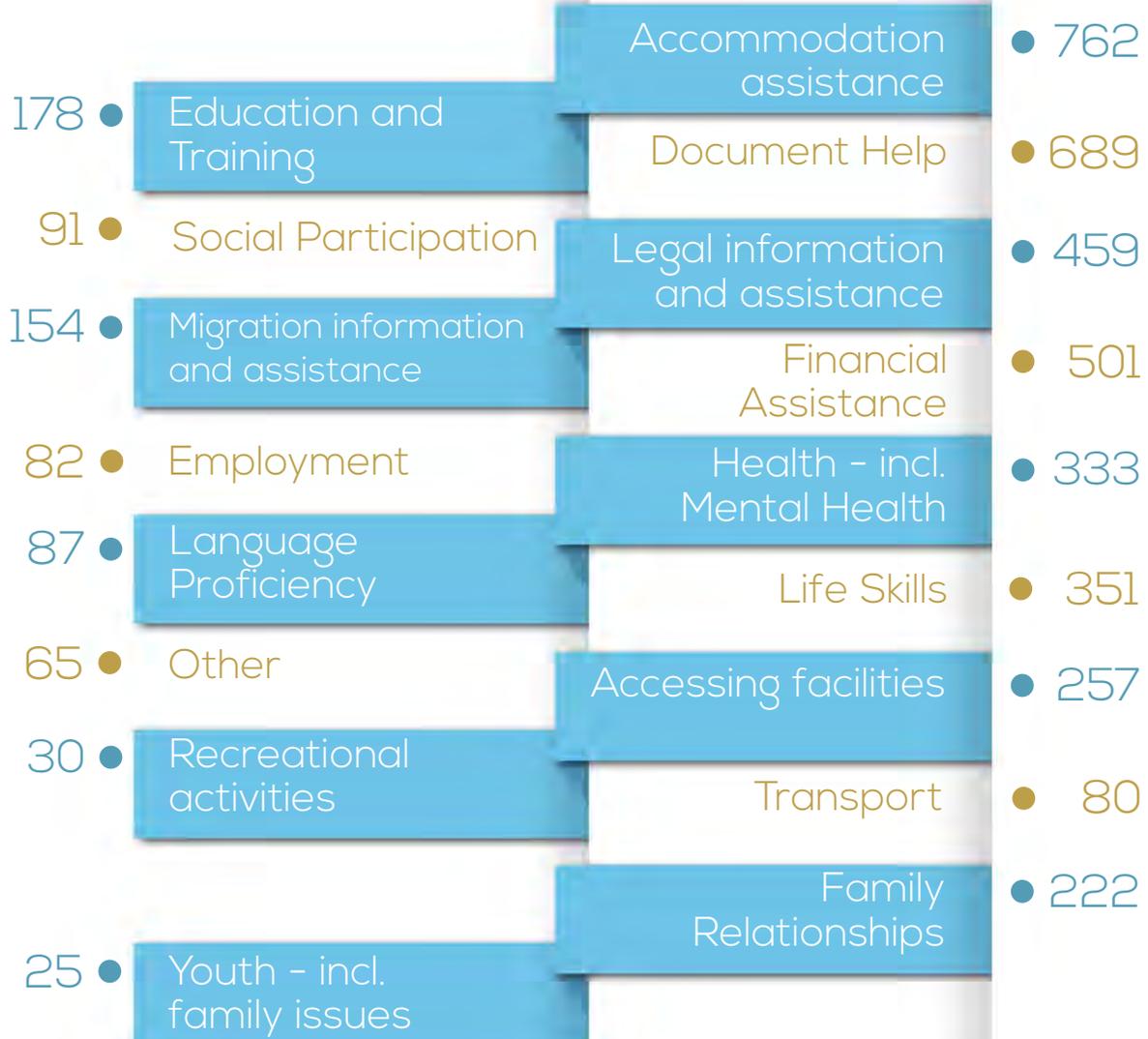
The current CCS program has had a 50 percent acceptance rate over the previous years, and in the last eighteen (18) months eight (8) families were assisted. The duration of support provided by this program ranged from roughly four (4) to six (6) months. Furthermore, the referral criteria to successfully access the program has changed in the past year resulting in a high number of cases not being accepted.

The Liverpool MRC looks forward to the continued delivery of the CCS program, providing essential services to meet the complex needs of clients settling into the community

CLIENT BY REGION



ISSUES



HOUSING SUPPORT PROJECT

Although the Housing Support Project's main activities involved Casework, there were many indirect and direct activities that were also undertaken for active engagement with relevant stakeholders. These activities aimed to improve understanding among real estate agents (REAs) and Housing NSW regarding difficulties encountered by newly arrived migrants and refugees in accessing the private rental market as well as general tenancy and accommodation issues. Full support and representation was given to clients in resolving dispute situations by the Housing Support Officer and Tenants Advocacy organisations to secure the best outcome for clients.

Although the Housing Support Project was a short term project with funding ceased at the end of the 2012 - 2013 financial year, the Liverpool MRC hopes to sustain this groundwork through established contacts and contributing to the progressive development of future policies and advocacies. The Liverpool MRC wishes to do this through involvement with the Liverpool - Fairfield Housing Taskforce and other relevant activities and/or forums.

As there had not been an existing housing workgroup with representative standing in Liverpool, the Project Officer sought engagement with the Fairfield Housing Taskforce to incorporate the Liverpool area. This partnership which included Liverpool City Council (LCC) and relevant stakeholders resulted in the establishment of the Fairfield - Liverpool Housing Taskforce

Participation in the development of a Western Sydney Housing Coalition submission in response to the State Environment Planning Policy's (SEPP) White Paper: 'A new Planning System for NSW'.

The development and translation of publications: Tenancy Rights and Responsibilities Booklet, and a resource booklet on Share Accommodation in Arabic.

Some of the following issues were identified for advocacy and follow-up:

The impact of changes to the rent and bond assistance arrangement provided by NSW Housing which became a loan for applicants accessible via Dept. of Human Services (Centrelink);

Increased risk of homelessness due to financial hardship and/or family breakdown

Issues regarding shared accommodation: Single persons who are unable to afford private accommodation due to limited income are often forced to share with friends and sometimes strangers. However this can exacerbate issues and cause conflict, particularly when there are ongoing issues of trauma and concern for family still overseas. Being unable to access the rental market, such individuals are forced to wait on the Housing Waiting List or face homelessness

Inadequate use by Real Estate Agents (REAs) of the free Translating and Interpreting Services (TIS) provided by the Department of Immigration and Citizenship. This can cause problems when tenants are unable to fully understand the nature of their tenancy agreement, or resolve issues in their property with their landlord or REA. As a result, a large number of disputes were taken to the Consumer, Trader and Tenancy Tribunal NSW (CTTT).

Active and positive engagement with the various housing stakeholders such as; Housing NSW, Tenancy Advice and Advocacy Service, NSW Fair Trading, Consumer, Trader and Tenancy Tribunal (CTTT) NSW and the Australian Courts to name a few;

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AFRICAN CULTURAL NITE

The African Cultural and Dinner Nite 2012 (African Nite) was held at the Liverpool Catholic Club on Saturday, 4th of August 2012. It was the second annual event to date. The event was organised by the IGBO Community Australia in partnership with the Liverpool MRC. The event was also supported by the NSW Community Relations Commission (CRC), Liverpool City Council (LCC), Anglicare, Mount Druitt Ethnic Communities Agency (MECA), NSW Justice and Attorney General Department, Settlement Services International (SSI), Navitas English, Australian Human Rights Commission, RIA Financial Services and Finest Hair N Beauty Supplies.

Hundreds of families attended from various African-country backgrounds. There was strong representation from all three tiers of government, the community sector, as well as multicultural Australia.

The major African event was organised to provide an opportunity for African-Australians and other Australians to network; foster a sense of community; participate in a vibrant cultural and social evening by celebrating African-Australian cultural identity.

Kamalle Dabboussy, Manager at the Liverpool MRC noted that one important objective of this event was to create an opportunity to highlight issues affecting new and emerging African communities and people settling in Australia, particularly issues affecting children and young people.



This breathtaking event attracted African cultural dancers, entertainers, performers and other African-Australians from different parts of Australia. Cultural displays were from Igbo Community Australia Women Dance, Sudanese Dance Group, Ethiopian Choir, Odinala Cultural Dance, Tutu African Cultural Display, and an African Fashion Parade.

Dignitaries who attended the evening included:

Representing the Prime Minister, Julia Gillard and the Minister for Multicultural Affairs, Senator Kate Lundy, was the Hon. Laurie Ferguson.

Representing the NSW Premier, Hon. Barry O'Farrell was Hon. Andrew Rohan.

Other Federal, State and Local Members of Parliament that attended included:

Hon. Guy Zangari, Member for Fairfield,
Hon. Andrew MacDonald, Member for Macquarie Fields and
Hon. Paul Lynch, Member for Liverpool.
Mayor Wendy Waller of Liverpool City Council.
Several Councillors attended from Liverpool and Bankstown LGAs.

Keynote address was presented by

Dr. Vincent Ogu, President, IGBO Community Australia
Deputy Chair, Liverpool MRC
Member of African Ministerial Consultative Committee





THE THEME FOR 2013 WAS 'MANY STORIES, ONE AUSTRALIA'



HARMONY DAY

FESTIVAL 2013

In partnership with Liverpool City Council (LCC), the Liverpool MRC participated in the annual Harmony Day Festival held at Macquarie Street Mall on the 21st of March 2013.

Every year Harmony Day aims to foster harmony by promoting respect and a sense of belonging for the community, to celebrate multiculturalism and also fight racism. The festival celebrated the diversity of cultures in Liverpool and the Liverpool MRC supported the Sudanese Men's Group to take part and perform at the festival. They were part of an assortment of other performers from Fiji, Sierra Leone, Australia as well as a medley of cultures comprising the MTC Training Solutions Choir.

The theme for this year was 'Many stories, One Australia' and as part of the Shout! Women with Voice Project. A client of the Liverpool MRC's Playgroups Program was supported in sharing her story on stage. She also sent messages of hope and inspiration, which were affixed to jars of traditional, home-made pickles made during the project, which festival goers could take home. The project helped to illustrate the variety of stories and inspirations that multicultural Liverpool provides.



THE THEME FOR 2013
WAS 'RESTORING HOPE'



REFUGEE WEEK

FESTIVAL 2013

This year's Refugee Week Festival took place on the 20th of June at Macquarie Street Mall in partnership with Liverpool City Council. Refugee Week offers an opportunity to highlight the significant journey refugees and asylum seekers make when coming to Australia, as well as demonstrate the positive impacts and achievements of refugees in the community. Around 300 people attended the celebration, enjoyed information stalls and had the opportunity to take part in a community art activity on the day.

With the theme 'Restoring Hope', the festival raised community awareness and acknowledged the contributions made by refugees through the 'Annual Refugee Week Awards Ceremony'. Arkan Yousef won a Refugee Week Award under the category of 'Contributing Local Volunteer' for his dedication and work with the Liverpool MRC's Homework Support Program.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

The Liverpool MRC has a range of activities and programs which provide communities with support to ensure that they address disadvantage in line with the Liverpool MRC's objectives. Success in this area is more than just engagement; it requires planning and true community partnerships

For the Liverpool MRC, community development consists of capacity building: the essence of which is about enhancing (individual) and community reliance, further strengthening both through the connection and interaction with their own communities and actively participate in the wider Australian society.

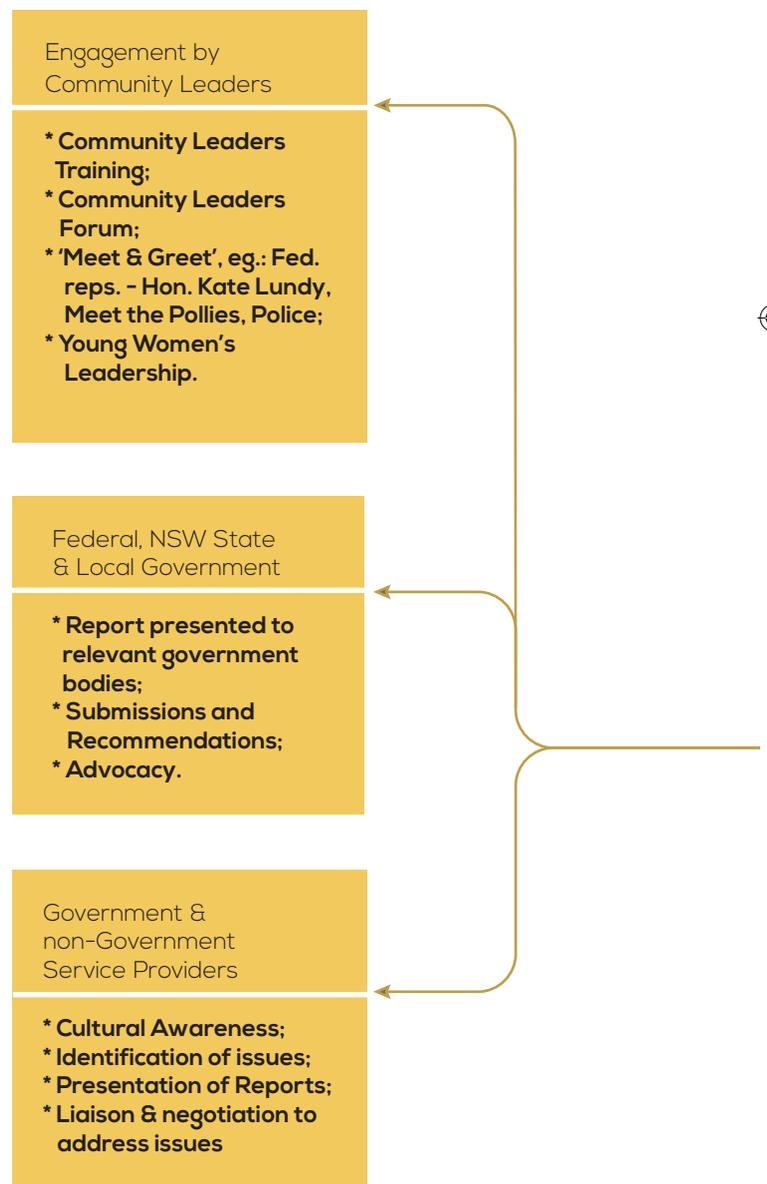
Thus, the Liverpool MRC's primary stakeholders consist of:

- Clients**, whom - amongst other - the Liverpool MRC recognises:
- Families and children;
 - Men;
 - Older people;
 - Women;
 - Young people; and
 - The range of specific issues each of these groups may face;

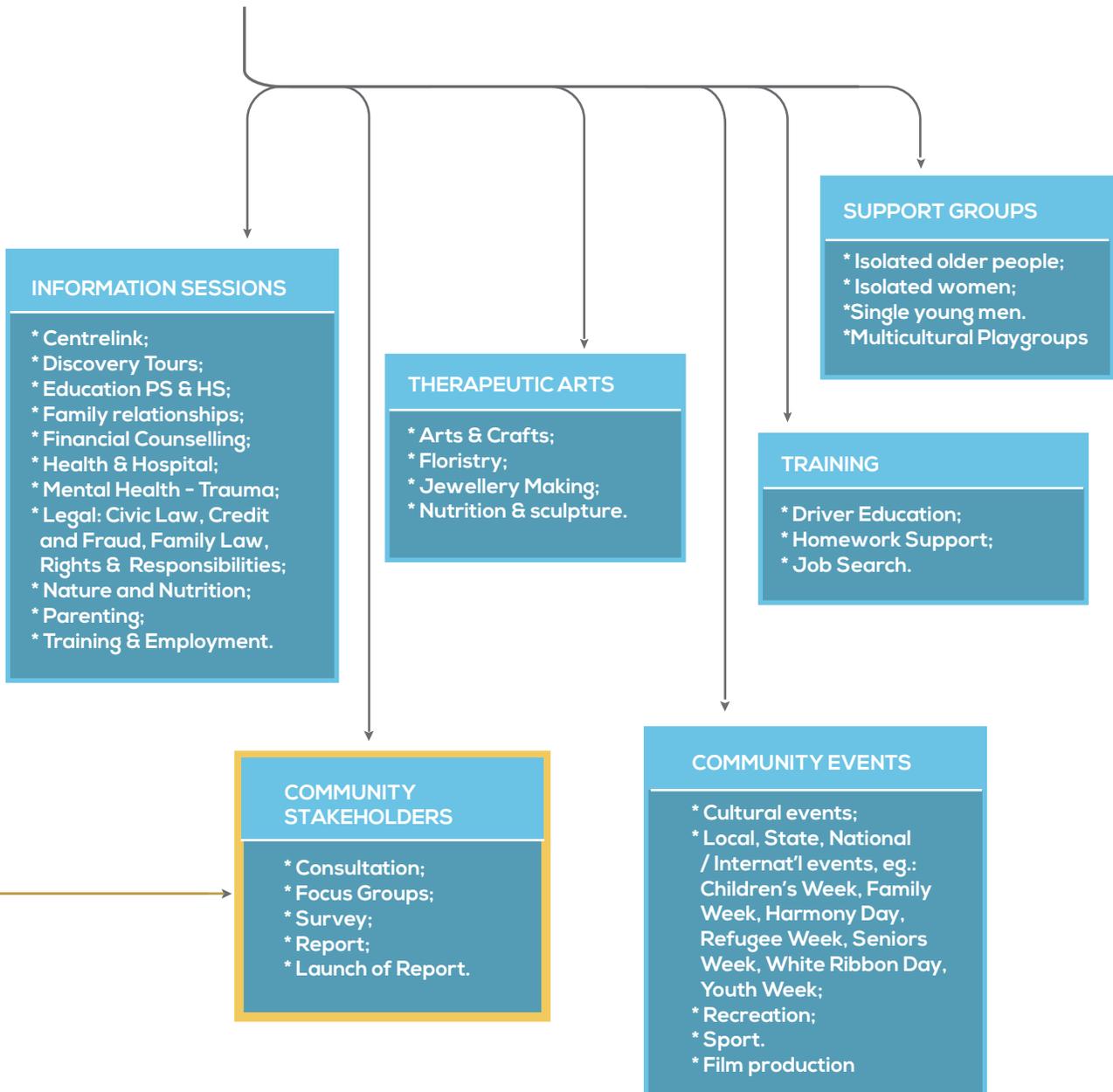
Engagement by:

- Community Leaders;
- Ethnic Communities
- Service providers; and
- Federal, NSW State and/or Local Government.

The diagram shown represents some of the activities for individuals and communities, as well as engagements with relevant stakeholders.



INDIVIDUALS & COMMUNITY



FAMILY SUPPORT - CULTURAL CONNECT PROJECT

During the period of July to December 2012, the Cultural Connect Project ran four (4) active playgroups, with a total of 85 families enrolled.

As has been the trend with all of the Liverpool MRC services, families needs have increased in complexity. Demand on the service grew to the point where we were no longer able to provide the same level of activities within the funding available. The project then faced a new model of service delivery based on a review by Families NSW with major changes to the delivery of the playgroups which resulted in a decrease in the number of playgroups available as from January 2013. Under this new model the number of operating playgroups was reduced to two (2) with a total of 28 families participating.

Playgroups are currently located as follows:

- Tuesday Liverpool Multicultural Playgroup from Liverpool CBD;
- Wednesday Vietnamese Playgroup from Heckenberg.

As part of the new service delivery model, different service specifications were established in consultation with the funding body. Each family enrolled in the playgroups is interviewed and a careplan is developed in consultation with the family. Needs identified through the care plans then formed the foundation on which information sessions were conducted. Information sessions assisted families to further develop/enhance their skills in parenting, nutrition, as well as learning about mainstream services and activities.

Due to the re-structure and changes to service delivery, the School Readiness Program was delivered for only the first six (6) months of the year. The ending of the School Readiness Program has left a significant gap in the support that the new model can offer to children starting school the following year. These changes also had an impact in the availability of employment of the School Readiness Teacher position which ceased once the School Readiness Program stopped

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In partnership with the Liverpool Australian Early Development Index (AEDI) Working Party a poster delivering early childhood development messages was produced in three (3) languages, including Samoan, Spanish and Vietnamese. This innovative project was launched in November 2012 and has been well received among service providers across the Liverpool LGA and the posters are now displayed in pre-schools, childcare centres, the Liverpool City Library, the Liverpool MRC and many other services.

83
FAMILIES
102
CHILDREN

COMMUNITY 2168 SPEAK-OUT PROJECT

The Community 2168 Project is a major community renewal and capacity building partnership focussed on the suburbs of Ashcroft, Busby, Cartwright, Green Valley, Heckenberg, Hinchinbrook, Miller and Sadleir. The Project adopted a whole-of-government and community partnership approach to improve outcomes for residents of the 2168 postcode.

This included a promotional campaign across all of the 2168 suburbs in order to increase the participation of the whole non-English speaking background (NESB) and refugee communities in the 2168 area.

The Speak-Out Project sought the engagement of three targeted groups in the activities planned:

- Youth,
- Seniors, and
- Families with young children.

The Liverpool MRC undertook the Community 2168 Speak-Out Program which delivered activities in three of the 2168 suburbs of Miller, Green Valley and Hinchinbrook.

Residents who participated in the activities were surveyed and a report with recommendations was produced at the end of the project. Findings were presented to the Community 2168 Management Committee to increase the capacity of NESB residents and promote greater engagement in the community.

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE EDUCATION AND SUPPORT

The aim of the Domestic Violence Education and Support (DVES) Project has been to work with refugees and emerging new communities to reduce family violence via promoting healthy relationships, increasing awareness and understanding about relevant services.

The DVES Reference Group organised a workshop for service providers which was held on the 23rd of October at the Liverpool MRC.

Key priorities identified included:

- Promoting the importance of strengthening family relationships and achieving family harmony;
- Key areas of service delivery and advocacy for refugee and migrant families affected by family violence;
- Development of culturally appropriate advocacy strategies to address family violence such as purpose driven service integration, collaboration and networking, case coordination, client safety and advocacy at a State Government level.



JOB SEARCH PROGRAM

The Liverpool MRC, in partnership with Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR), conducted a pilot orientation and support program for newly arrived migrant job seekers who are 'job-ready' but lacked the knowledge to navigate the Australian labour market.

Over 50 Expressions of Interest (EoI's) were received for the program through which a culling process selected fifteen (15) 'job-ready' participants were selected to part take in the program.

The Job Search Program provided an intensive four week orientation to work and support program for participants. Besides running two (2) weekly group sessions, the program provided individuals with support to identify their goals, plans, areas for extra support as well as to refine their interview skills.

After completion of the program, fortnightly phone support was offered to participants in order to provide on-going encouragement, access to Liverpool MRC centre facilities and services, such as use of laptops, phones and casework support.

Key achievements for the program were that all participants left with:

- A job search career goal;
- A targeted resumé and customised cover letter;
- A seek.com.au account and have subscribed to email job alerts;
- An understanding of how to source advertised and unadvertised job leads.



The program also highlighted a number of personal barriers to employment which affected some of the participants.

These included:

- Trauma due to war, migration and settlement in Australia, which had an impact on levels of concentration span;
- Medium to long-term unemployment led to low self-esteem, self-doubt and a lack of confidence to believe that they could be employed;
- Lack of ability to travel as some participants were unfamiliar with certain areas and did not have a driver's licence or car (only three participants had access to a car);

Practical barriers such as lack of knowledge of geographical areas, access to transport and family stresses compounded by the lack of opportunity, contributed to difficulty in finding suitable employment. culling process narrowed that down to fifteen (15).

CASE STUDY

Prior to undertaking the Job Search Program, Adam* was studying Certificate IV in Community Services and had applied for numerous jobs to no avail. He was also undertaking a number of volunteer jobs in the community services and settlement sector.

Adam had very good qualifications and communication skills, but had very little work experience in Australia which he saw as a barrier and contributed to his self-doubt. He did not feel confident and lacked the ability to demonstrate his skills in writing a resumé/cover-letter and in his presentation during the interview process.

The Job Search Program facilitator assisted Adam to identify where he needed support and provided tailored methods to support his development. After the completion of the program, Adam was also provided with fortnightly follow-up providing encouragement and support. As a result, three (3) months after the completion of the program, Adam was on his way to completing his certificate, and had applied to study for a Bachelor of Social Work degree. He also obtained employment as a Support Worker with a major service agency working with children that had developmental needs.

EDUCATION FORUM

The Liverpool MRC initiated an Education Forum for schools across Liverpool LGA which was held on the 13th of June.

Thirteen (13) attendees from eight (8) schools represented a cross-section of Primary/High Schools and Intensive English Centers (IEC's), as well as a variety of roles such as Deputy Principals, Community Liaison Officers, Head Teachers and Office Managers.

The forum proved to be valuable in providing a platform for schools to express current trends and concerns they were facing. It was also an opportunity for the Liverpool MRC to be informed on future programs and provision of support for the expected increase in refugee and migrant families.



A number of challenges were discussed related to supporting migrant and refugee children in schools with particular attention placed on::

- Irregular Maritime Arrivals (IMA's) and
- Young people on Bridging Visas.

These were of special concern to the teachers as very little knowledge and support was available to them.

Further to the necessity of capturing statistics and information in relation to children with trauma and behavioural issues, language and money were identified as barriers to full community participation.

Schools are very involved within their communities and expressed the need for further support to assist their migrant and refugee families. In particular, recreational activities such as sports were highlighted as a bridge to engage children and their families in schooling and to overcome challenges related to settlement.



SENIOR SUPPORT PROGRAM

While the media reports on new refugee arrivals, there is generally little attention or focus placed on older refugees. The experience of long sustained trauma may bring the early onset of ageing.

The Liverpool MRC's Senior Support Program is designed to engage newly arrived older refugees, many of whom have health issues. Monthly information sessions were organised with the assistance of health care professionals to improve their knowledge of how maintain their health. Topics included: arthritis, asthma, cholesterol, nutrition, ears, eyes and balance, lungs and pneumonia. These sessions were held every 2nd Tuesday of the month for two (2) hours, with twenty (20) seniors who also came to meet with fellow companions.

In addition, the Liverpool MRC was able to take the older refugees on outings such as to the Mayoral Senior's Concert and to the Mamre Heritage Homestead, the latter seeking to acquaint seniors with the therapeutic benefits of Australian nature and gardening

COMMUNITY VISITORS SCHEME

The Liverpool MRC has conducted the Community Visitors Scheme (CVS) for twenty (20) years, linking non-English speaking background (NESB) residents living in nursing homes or hostels with community volunteers to engage with the NESB residents in a one to one setting.

By contributing a couple of hours of their time every fortnight the Liverpool MRC volunteers make a social visit to 25 residents at various nursing homes.

The volunteers observe the positive impact such visits had on a resident's quality of life through the way the residents interact and welcome the volunteer.



MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE AND STAFF

2012-2013

MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Dr. Amad Mtashar	Chairperson
Dr. Vincent Ogu	Deputy Chairperson
Rashid Benzerouk	Secretary
Denise Moses	Treasurer
Haidar Abdalla	Member
Blanca Arely Espinoza	Member
Casimir Ugochuku	Member
Abdul Wahab Talabani	Member
Clr Gus Ballott	Ex-Officio Liverpool City Council



STAFF

Kamalle Dabboussy	Centre Manager
Hodan Ahmed	Community Development Worker
Ayman Al Haboub	Casework Team Leader
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 (till 30 March 2013)
Anke Kotte	Senior Complex Caseworker
Kimberly Li	Youth Worker
Elham Mandwee	Bi-lingual Receptionist
Maria Karameli Manouso	Executive Assistant
Linah Merdawi	Iraqi Support Worker
Jimmy Mtashar	Manager Stakeholder Engagement
Salem Naja	Business Development Coordinator
Shuman Irwanto Partoredjo	Farm Manager
Maria Pereira	Project Assistant
Sandra Romanelli	Family Support Worker
Yomna Saber	Bi-lingual Receptionist
Mariëtte van der Meer	Policy Officer

CHILDCARE WORKERS

Xuan Thi Bui
Julie Grime
Megumi Mamome
Renita Lee
Nawal Salman

SESSIONAL WORKERS

Joe Asfoura
English Teacher

Justine Conaty
Legal Aid – Immigration
Outreach Solicitor

Alison Geloff
Legal Aid – Solicitor Early
Intervention Unit

Paola Sayegh
Melkite Welfare
Association

Ammata Viravong
Legal Aid – Solicitor Early
Intervention Unit

Ramsen Shallow
Australian Taxation
Office (ATO) – Tax Help
Volunteer

WITH THANKS TO: FUNDING BODIES

COMMONWEALTH

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

NSW STATE

- Department of Family And Community Services (FACS) - Families NSW, Cultural Connect Program
- Community Relations Commission For a Multicultural NSW - Our Neighbourhood (Photography)
- Settlement Services Australia (SSI)

Local Government - Liverpool City Council

- 2168 Community Speak-out Project
- Home-school Program
- Remedial Education

STUDENTS AND VOLUNTEERS

Evan Aljhelie	Ardewan Amer
Rawiya Aljhelie	Holly Corpe
Reman Aljhelie	Hala Dishar
Resmi Amma	Salome Joseph
Hala Saleem	Simat Khamas
Rivana Zaki	Arshman Sahid
Mounira AbdulRahman	

CVS VOLUNTEERS

ARABIC SPEAKING

Jamama Aboud
Huda Ahmed
Ihssan Ahmed
Khalid Fenjan
Dalila Gorgis
Fouzi Jamhour
Rahim Sahan
Amal Shijar
Juliet Warda

SPANISH SPEAKING

Guadalupe Alvarez
Eva Avila
Clara Bucarey
Rosalia Moreno
Francisca Murillo
Zunilda Navarro
Amanda Orellano
Sandra Carina Virga



HOME-WORK SUPPORT PROGRAM VOLUNTEERS

Resmi Radhamony Amma
Soulmaz Askariyahyavi
Melinda Boutkasaka
Ivan Duong
William Hey-Cunningham
Ali Kamal
Gurpreet Kaur
Kristin Laurel
Oanh Ly
Stephanie Stevenson-Wong
Alma Telalovic
Samnang Thuy
Arkan Yousef

PARTNERS

- Anglicare
- Arab Council Australia
- Ashcroft Public School
- Australian Electoral Commission (AEC)
- Australian Early Development Index (AEDI) Working Party
- Casula Powerhouse
- CatholicCare
- Catholic Education Office
- Centrelink - Liverpool
- Curious Works
- DDM 3 Consulting
- Fairfield Housing Taskforce, to become: Fairfield - Liverpool Housing Taskforce
- Feature Creatures
- Football United
- Gardening Australia - ABC
- Green Valley Library
- Hills Holroyd Parramatta MRC
- Horn of Africa Relief and Development Agency (HARDA)
- Inspire Community
- Islamic Relief
- Junction Works
- Karitane
- Legal Aid - Family Law and Immigration
- Liverpool Boys High School
- Liverpool City Council
- Liverpool City Library
- Liverpool Families NSW Facilitation Project
- Liverpool Hospital - Emergency Department
- Liverpool Multicultural Health Service
- Liverpool Women's Health Centre (LWHC)
- Liverpool Women's Resource Centre (LWRC)
- Liverpool Youth Accommodation Assistance Company (LYAAC)
- Lurnea High School and IEC
- Mamre Farm - St Marys
- Mt Druitt Ethnic Communities Agency (MECA)
- Miller High School and IEC
- Miller Pre-School
- Mission Australia - Miller Pathways - Miller Communities for Children
- Mt. Annan Botanical Gardens
- MTC Training Solutions
- MTC Work Solutions
- Multicultural Disability Advocacy Association (MDAA)
- Multicultural HIV & Hep
- Navitas
- New Horizons
- NSW Department of Education and Communities
- NSW Fair Trading
- NSW Police - Green Valley and Liverpool LAC's
- NSW Refugee Health Services
- NSW TAFE - Liverpool and Miller
- Relationships Australia
- Rosemount Good Shepherd Service for the Treatment And Rehabilitation of Torture and Trauma Survivors (STARTTS)
- Settlement Services International (SSI)
- Seymour Centre
- Share Care - Liverpool
- Sisters of Mercy
- South West Connect
- South West Sydney (SWS) Legal Centre
- Tenants Advice & Advocacy Service
- Transcultural Mental Health Centre (TMHC)
- University of NSW
- Volunteers
- Western Sydney Community Forum
- Western Sydney Housing Coalition Working Group (WSHC): Fairfield MRC, Liverpool City Council, Liverpool MRC, MacArthur Housing Coalition, NorWest Lincs Tenants Advice and Advocacy and Western Sydney Community Forum
- Youth Connections



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