

POWERED BY COMMUNITY



WESTERN SYDNEY
MRC

ANNUAL REPORT

2016/17



8778 1200
www.wsmrc.org.au

A woman with dark curly hair and glasses, wearing a red blazer, is smiling and signing a blue and yellow book. In the background, other people are visible, including a young woman with dark hair smiling. The scene appears to be an indoor community event.

**We believe in
the power
of our community.”**

”

WESTERN SYDNEY MRC



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Content guide

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CHAIRPERSON'S Address

// **I am delighted
and proud of the
achievements that
the organisation
has made...** ”

This year has seen an accelerated expansion that is unprecedented for the Western Sydney MRC. Changes in the settlement services sector, client needs, funding and government priorities have been the impetus in emboldening the path and direction of the organisation.



**As evident in this report,
engagement with clients,
communities
and stakeholders is
innovative and holistic."**

”

I am delighted and proud of the achievements that the organisation has made over the past year in partnership and collaboration with several partners, communities, funding agencies and support of many groups and individuals. In the past year, the organisation rendered services to over 1000 clients.

The Board, with the assistance of the CEO and management embarked on reforms and strategic repositioning to strengthen organisational governance going forward, to achieve this the Western Sydney MRC transitioned from an Association to a Company Limited by Guarantee. Board reforms saw the establishment of three Board Sub Committees in the areas of Finance & Audit, Compliance & Risk and Strategy. The Western Sydney MRC is in a position that is strategic, accountable and performance driven.

The implementation of the Western Sydney MRC reforms demonstrated and confirmed the belief of the Board and Management on the pathway and opportunities of the present and the future. The repositioning, renaming and rebranding of the Western Sydney MRC prepare the organisation to meet the challenges and opportunities of a changing sector.

As Chair, I work alongside a committed Board that has foresight and passion for the work of the organisation. It has been my privilege to serve on the Board for over ten years. This has afforded me the opportunity to see the fundamental growth and expertise that are evidence of strategic outcomes that have led to the strong leadership and governance that exists today.

As evident in this report, engagement with clients, communities and stakeholders is innovative and holistic. New partnerships have emerged and existing partnerships thrive through our commitment to working cooperatively with partners and funding agencies to improve the capacity, quality and diversity of services to meet the needs of refugee and migrant communities.

Increasingly, the Western Sydney MRC is actively connected with the community and have broadened our reach through innovative marketing strategies and intensified the use of social media and communication tools. This has come about through the hard work of responsive staff.

I would like to acknowledge the contribution of the members of the Board, staff, volunteers and students who have worked with dedication and who personify the core values of the Western Sydney MRC.

It is with great pleasure that the Board and the Western Sydney MRC look forward to a future of strength, a future of more growth and more responsive to the needs and services to our clients and community in a changing sector. Our partners and funding agencies, to whom we are very grateful, can look forward to capable, accountable, performance oriented and purpose driven organisation.

Vincent Ogu



CEO Speech



// Welcome to our Annual Report 2016-2017.



Rising to the Change

We are a changing organisation in a rapidly changing environment. New opportunities and ways of operating are needed to meet the aspiration and needs of our communities and the organisation finds itself in one of the most exciting and important points in its history. With great courage and foresight, the organisation has changed its name, changed its legal structure and changed the board structure – each in its own right a major undertaking.

Our vision is to complement our existing services and partnerships with new initiatives and opportunities.

To more accurately reflect our current footprint of operations and to better position ourselves for the future, Western Sydney MRC was given life. This name has the benefit of providing a clear indication of our geographical location

provides an alignment to one of Australia's most vibrant and dynamic locations, able to influence beyond its own boundaries.

Governance and confidence has been enhanced with the move to Company limited by guarantee, with its increased compliance and oversight. This already compliments the existing development of the capacity of the Board in the area of Risk, Finance, Strategic Planning, a structured and enhanced process for the board sub committees and an enhanced external audit process.

These are not processes unto themselves, they are there to help ensure that communities voices are heard throughout the organisation and that develop systems to ensure this is an ongoing and valued exercise.



Looking towards the future, the organisation courageously undertook a change of the way the board is constituted establishing a skills based board. Recruiting to skills aligned to the strategic needs, this compliments the existing community representation and this fusion will ensure that Western Sydney MRC is an organisation to support the community well into the future.

In reflection of the year that has passed, I am humbled by the contribution made by the organisation, through its Board, Volunteers but most importantly its staff.

There has been a focus on ensuring that the work we do is the best possible work that we can undertake. We have been building on existing capacity, ensuring the work we undertake is to our best ability and as a result, we are confident that we are amongst industry leaders in the work we undertake.

We continue to put at the centre of all our work, our clients.

We have continued to increase the individual capacity of our clients with record numbers of clients assisted and an equally impressive development of our case management system.

Working with the aspirations of the community we have supported several community driven events, allowing the community to shine and take the spotlight – ensuring that their place in local society is developed and acknowledged.

We have continued to work in partnership to deliver the range and breadth of services that is Western Sydney MRC, all to resounding success in reach and impact. Following changes in our organisation, we reviewed and restructured our Youth Services.

Undertaking an evaluation of the service, we reaffirmed the value of our existing services but needing to grow and develop the program and its profile to meet changing and growing needs of our community. The community wants opportunities and connectedness for all people in communities, and this is especially so for young people.

There are particular areas that we need to focus on into the future, such as support to Primary School aged young people, employment pathways and remedial education. I am confident to deliver in these areas with the right support and investment. We have developed innovation in the way we deliver our employment

programs, not only working with communities, but also engaging with employers and building links directly with employers and the communities. This has provided new social benefit and goodwill that we aim to further develop and capitalise on.

We have also revamped our profile and promoting various aspects of our work – building our profile to continue to make our services better known, increase our reach make a positive difference. You can more easily find us on Facebook, LinkedIn and our new Website, alongside a range of additional strategies that we have been implementing.

Western Sydney MRC also represented the communities' views to Government in response to discussion papers, relating to Citizenship, Humanitarian Program, or Parliamentary Inquiry, and to the inquiry on settlement.

We continue to take an opportunity to present the communities view on policy and process that affects the community.

This report highlights the activities and events and achievements that positively impacts the lives and the community. It underscores the thousands of hours of work, the intellectual input, the passion and commitment and upholding of values and mission that has made this last year an extraordinary one. We will continue to work with the aspirations and needs of the community, in their daily lives, that of their families and the communities in which they live and work in.

In keeping with representing communities' views, policy makers have made known their commitment to immigration and the humanitarian policy. These policies, in inviting people to Australia - to the way we support them when they arrive, need to be driven by evidence, positive goals and transparency.

In our discussions and feedback from the community we have heard this message very strongly, alongside the aspirations they have for their families and youth in the community – and we agree. We will work to bring to life these aspirations, as Western Sydney MRC is powered by the community.

Kamalle Dabboussy



Our Values

// Vision

Our vision is to create a socially just and inclusive organisation. We hope to venture into new opportunities of growth for both ourselves as an organisation and the wider community.

Acceptance of and respect for all people is central to our organisation."



// Mission

The Western Sydney MRC seeks to champion and respond to the needs of refugees, migrants and the cultural, linguistic and religious diversity of Liverpool and its catchments, to create a socially just and inclusive society in which both individuals and communities are celebrated and have the opportunities to reach their potential.



**key
to our
success**

Diversity & Inclusion

Acceptance of and respect for all people is central to our organisation. This is reflected in our focus on the advancement of the disadvantaged and the diversity of our own staff and management team.

Ethics, Equity & Integrity

We strive to promote positive interaction within our organisation by upholding standards that oppose any form of discrimination, bullying and harassment or breaches in confidentiality. Whilst encouraging valuable contributions made by clientele, staff and the management team, organisational relations remain equitable and fair.

Teamwork & Collaboration

Powered by the community, we work closely with our partners, clients and other stakeholders, fostering positive relationships within the organisation and wider society.

Innovation & Leadership

Through our dynamic approach at internal and external levels of our operation, we endeavor to learn, and to utilise advanced systems of information and technology, to maintain a sustainable leading position in community engagement and access to information in identifying and addressing the needs of disadvantaged groups.

Quality & Performance

By setting challenging goals for the organisation we ensure that we remain accountable and disciplined in maintaining a high standard of performance. Our evidence-based methods of progress and innovation promote accuracy in addressing community needs.





// An Interview with

Q&A

Q

What was your favourite activity / event you were involved in at Western Sydney MRC this year?

A

Well there have been so many, however a stand-out one for me was a weekend event with the Mormon Church. We had heard from a few of our young people that there had been a few issues with both communities, so we got together to help address, and connect the two communities. People are still talking about the event to this day - it was a great success.

Q

Tell us about something that surprised you?

A

I am surprised all the time. The young people are so open and want to make a new start in Australia. They treat me like family. And I feel honoured to be part of their lives.



Sarah Elfoul Youth Worker

Sarah is one of our dedicated Youth Workers. She lives and breathes what she does. Her passion is reflected in the number of young people enrolling in her programs. Her re-ignition of the homework support program has been one of her many achievements and we are lucky to have her on our team.

To find out more about Sarah's interview visit us online and watch her full interview alongside Rachel Haywood.



wsmrc.org.au/annual-reports
or watch on our youtube channel

Q

Is there one thing that stands out for you when coming to the MRC?

A

The diversity of the people I work with. Its not often that you have such an eclectic mix of individuals both as clients and as colleagues. Gender, race, religion, background and culture, we have such a mix at the Western Sydney MRC. I think that makes us really unique and reminds us of one of our goals, inclusion and a sense of belonging.

Q

Tell us about what your planning for next year, what would you like to achieve?

A

It's difficult to plan without locked in funding. Our young people want to explore more of Australia. I would also like to run more programs alongside the schools, getting them up-skilled, so our young people can really begin to integrate through all aspects of their lives.



// An Interview with

Q&A

Q

What was your favourite activity / event you were involved in at Western Sydney MRC this year?

A

That's a really difficult one. I think I have two stand outs for two different reasons. The first, our Multicultural Wellness Festival. This was an amazing introduction to our community and our team. I was so tired at the end of the day but what an amazing event. My second has to be the '2 Worlds 2 Words' campaign. Working with the 3 sisters and an amazing production and creative team was a dream come true. Seeing this campaign come to life has been spectacular.

Q

Tell us about something that surprised you?

A

My biggest surprise was initially my own lack of knowledge. I have worked in Marketing for years and truly thought I was a seasoned individual, but my preconceptions and my standard approaches have all been challenged. I feel like I have grown so much in my short time here.

Rachel Haywood Marketing Manager

Rachel joined the Western Sydney MRC on 1st November 2016. Coming from the corporate world, and with a background in healthcare communications, Rachel was the perfect fit for our corporate team. She has shown that with a little thought and planning - we can be our best. But being the best takes time, and takes continued effort.

To find out more about Rachel's interview visit us online and watch her full interview alongside Sarah Elfoul.



wsmrc.org.au/annual-reports
or watch on our youtube channel

Q

Is there one thing that stands out for you when coming to the MRC?

A

The knowledge of the organisation about the community. Our caseworkers are so dedicated, insightful and passionate. That is extremely humbling. I come to work everyday knowing I will hear stories of sadness, happiness, growth and belonging. It can be a lot to take on board but I believe feeling this is part of truly wanting to create change.

Q

Tell us about what your planning for next year, what would you like to achieve?

A

Where to start. Other than being on maternity leave, I will stay very connected. With the rebrand launch and 2 Worlds campaign just taking off, I want to ensure both of these projects reach their full potential. Aside from that I want to look at our marketing strategies and channel planning and understand how we can continue to reach our community in a way that benefits them.





PERFORMANCE SUMMARY 2016/17



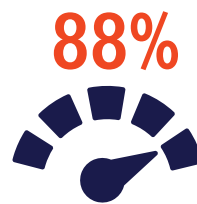


// Settlement Support

In a snapshot casework survey completed by 100 participants



of clients informed that they received helpful information that they did not know before.



reported an improvement to circumstances against SCORE outcome measures.



>20,000

phone calls and interactions through front desk information and referral officers



2774
SESSIONS

Through casework and emergency relief support we assisted more than 1000 clients



>6000

people were linked in to referral services



>1500

email inquiries about programs and general information



30 participants attending an 8 week program to review and master content of the citizenship test and gain assistance in applying for citizenship



902

instances of young people participating in our centre's sporting and recreational activities





Financial hardship has emerged as a primary issue impacting upon our clients.



With an increased intake of Syrian and Iraqi refugees to Australia in 2016-17, the team at Western Sydney MRC have been busier than ever in extending settlement support to newly arrived migrants and refugees.

Through casework and emergency relief support alone, we assisted more than 1000 clients over 2774 sessions. This doesn't even begin to include the clients we engaged through group activities - which, by the way, involved delivery of 180 activities over the last year! In addition to this, over 6000 people were linked in to support by our front desk Information and Referral Officers, who have had more than 20,000 people and phone calls pass their way this year.

With a small, dedicated team behind all this settlement support, I think we can say busy is the operative word!

In anticipation of increased arrivals, Western Sydney MRC led a process of refugee sector coordination for the Liverpool LGA in collaboration with Liverpool City Council. We are pleased to have published the Liverpool Refugee Action Plan to help services better coordinate and respond to the needs of refugees settling into the area, and to have this inform the work of the Joint Party Working Group for refugee resettlement led by Professor Peter Shergold.



Under the Settlement Support Programme, as part of the NSW Settlement Partnership, Western Sydney MRC has delivered a host of initiatives to support newly arrived migrants and refugees this year.

We are particularly proud of *Lead the Way*, a new employment preparation program co-created with a career coaching specialist, tailored to meet the needs of newly arrived migrants and refugees.

In addition to delivery of employment preparation workshops, the program has linked participants to industry mentors whose experiences range from finance to engineering, through to psychology.

In addition to the challenges that come with building the skills, knowledge and confidence in navigating Australian systems and services and settling into local life, financial hardship has emerged as a primary issue impacting upon our clients. The emergency relief support we deliver has been needed more than ever.

The year has also seen an increase in refugee young people arriving, which has meant a very busy year for our youth workers.

In addition to weekly homework support, we had a whopping 902 instances of young people participating in our Centre's sporting and recreational activities.

This included Drop Zone / Box Fit sessions in partnership with PCYC, and school holiday activities – highlights of which





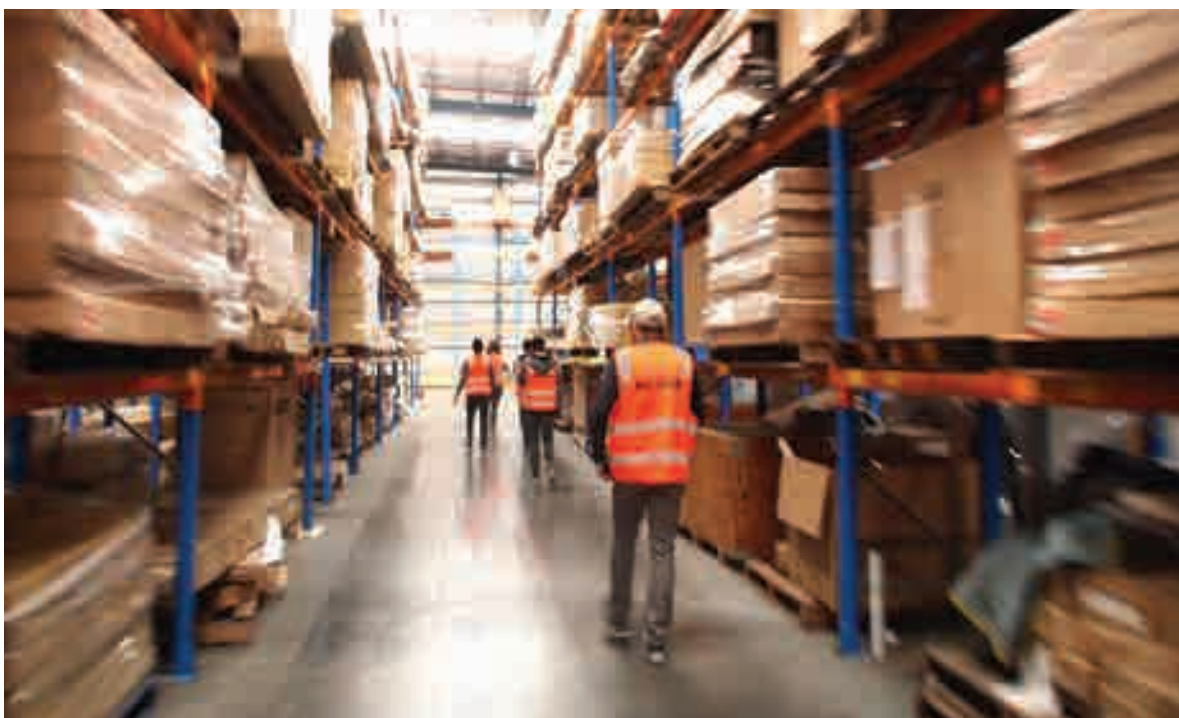
include a leadership camp at Stanwell Tops in partnership with Youth Off the Streets, and a swim school program, through which 30 young people developed swimming skills.

Partnerships have been pivotal to robust service delivery, and we are thankful for the co-located services offered from our Centre over the past year. Whilst Anglicare and the Salvation Army extended financial capability supports to clients of the MRC, Legal Aid continued to deliver much needed advice from our Centre twice weekly in the areas of immigration, family, and social security law.

In March, our centre welcomed the introduction of Legal Aid's multidisciplinary Refugee Team, established to address civil and broader legal issues faced by newly

arrived refugees more holistically. We were also thrilled to establish a partnership with the SPARK team at St. Vincent De Paul, through which more than 30 participants have been attending each week to master the content of the citizenship test and gain assistance in applying for citizenship.

We are extremely grateful to the many partners, volunteers and students who have supported our clients and Centre, and for the dedication of staff who have worked tirelessly over the past year to welcome and support the settlement of newly arrived migrants and refugees at Western Sydney MRC.





// Fact and figures

>1000

people attended the
Multicultural
Wellness Festival in
November 2016


6382

information and referral linkages
were provided at front desk

38

Strive
Sessions



2545

casework sessions
were conducted



180

group activities

2076

total participation in
group activities

60

school
engagements

3060

referrals were made
to external service
providers



Complex Case Support

 **97** CASES **415** CLIENTS

Workshop topics included:

Financial management
Citizenship
Australian Census
Information for Carers
Disability Support Pension

Social Media



Our Facebook page has seen a 200% growth in number of likes, with an organic reach of 22,426 unique users.

Provided Emergency Relief

 **421** INSTANCES


>200

Charcoal Chickens

Consumed by MRC staff at lunch time both on and off site


6

Training Sessions

were delivered to agencies on working with newly arrived migrants and refugees



Website Launch February 1st 2017

	February	March	April	May	June
Users	364	1015	720	892	921
Page Views	1559	3066	2125	2809	2710

Contact us and CPP information pages have been the most popular



19

Homework Support

sessions were delivered with 347 instances of participation



32

Sport and Recreation

were delivered to young people totalling over 900 instances of participation



34

Volunteers

were developed and trained to assist with SSP activities



42

Employment Workshops

delivered with an astounding 58% focused on youth employment



100

Law Expo Calendars

were given away in 1 hour



129

Clients supported

in engaging in employment and education support activities

// Circles of Social Life

Liverpool at the Intersection of Settlement & Disability

Circles of Social Life is a method used to enhance sustainability by making our cities, locales and organizations more reflective of social needs.

About

To better understand the requirements for the Liverpool community, it was important that we identified, mapped out and understood the complexities and contradictions that exist within the urban-scape.

Across key domains of the economy, the political, culture and ecology, contrasting distinctions in wealth and social advantages were apparent, with unemployment (particularly amongst youth) remaining high and inequalities in economic, educational and occupational opportunity being concentrated in specific population areas.

Objective

The main objective was to inform the community of practice in the settlement space, fostering better and more nuanced service improvements for new and recent arrivals, particularly those with disabilities and their carers.

To do this, the Circles of Social Life approach aimed for a top-level perspective in presenting complex data in a simple manner to better relationships and cultural competence with clientele whilst expanding service offerings.

The approach considers a wide range of stakeholders, including residents, businesses, community groups, service providers, local political representatives and more, in order to appropriately consider demographics relating to ethnicity, indigenous people, youth, women and people with disabilities.

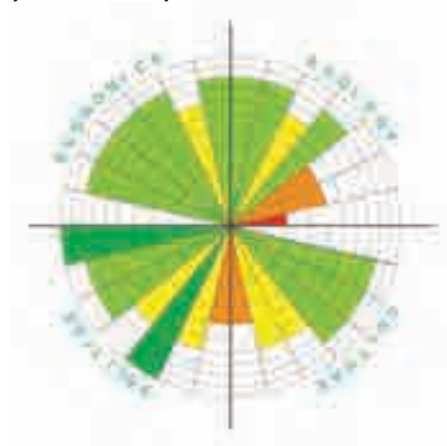


Iman Partoredjo and Arkan Yousef

The project activities:

- Generate an 'Urban Profile' for the City of Liverpool
- Go through a 'Critical Issues Identification Process'
- Conduct interviews with key stakeholders
- Disseminate the Circles of Social Life questionnaire

At the heart of the approach are four key principles about what a better city should embody:





These are based on the ECOCITY Summit series, one of the most globally significant forums for addressing the complex challenges facing humanity in a rapidly urbanising world. Each of these domains were analysed within the context of the Liverpool area and rated on a scale ranging from 'critical' to 'vibrant'.

From this investigation, gaps in areas of social sustainability were recognised. Inferences surrounding settlement, disability are still being distilled. With key focus groups held at Western Sydney MRC, the insight and data collected was invaluable to the study.

The Circles of Social Life: Liverpool at the intersection of settlement & disability project is still current and on-going.



To find out more about Circles of Social Life and the finalised report visit our website or www.circlesofsustainability.org.au





Employment Program

Lead the Way - Youth

Lead the Way is a program designed to deliver intense targeted industry training and opportunity placements for refugee youth located in the Liverpool and Fairfield local government areas.

Objective

The program targeted youth aged between 15-25 years who came from a refugee background and were living in the Fairfield and Liverpool local government areas or immediate surrounding areas

The program was organised to be delivered through workshops within an eight-month period for three different industry streams: retail and hospitality, health and wellbeing as well as logistics and supply chain. The four key objectives were education, vocational training, employment and social cohesion. This allowed for a broadening of participants' general skill set whilst providing industry led training.

Workshops were tailored to the needs of the targeted participants, with the program including on-site work experience, and other industry-specific methods of training.

Though it is too soon to be able to report on the employment outcomes of the participants, the impacts on individual participants has been evident.

Because they have had the opportunity to engage directly with potential employers, receive industry led training and encouragement to critically reflect on the self, participants have expressed that their confidence has been elevated and their understanding of the Australian workplace has increased.

About

Funded by the Department of Social Services, the Lebanese Muslim Association approached Western Sydney MRC to roll out an initiative targeting unemployment within refugee youth.

Between 2007 and 2011, 1172 young people ages 16 to 24 settled in Australia under the Humanitarian program. In the 2010-2011 financial year, 51% of these new arrivals were under the age of 25. In 2010-11, 34% of humanitarian entrants aged between 12 and 24 years arrived with six or fewer years of education.

It was found that unemployment was continuing for longer than expected and companies were experiencing a mismatch of recruiting candidates.



LEAD THE WAY | 2017

A YELOW INITIATIVE



John Cafferatta from Darcy Street Project



Northcott Disability Support Services visit



This project wouldn't have been possible without funding body Lebanese Muslim Association (LMA) and our corporate mentors Lee Vossen from Allroad Group and Nick Ferguson from Levant Consulting.

Other companies and organisations supporting this program include Darcy Street Project, Northcott Disability Support Services, Liverpool City Council, Fairfield Council, Unitrans Distribution, Sleepwear, Dixie Cummings and Mainfreight.





// Liverpool Law Expo 2017

In conjunction with National Law Week, the Liverpool Law Expo, May 2017 was an opportunity for our local community to meet local service providers to assist with queries and questions about a range of topics including:

- NSW Police Force
- Victims Services
- How to change your name
- Writing a will
- Traffic and driving law
- Legal Aid NSW

Organised by NSW Department of Justice alongside an amazing team of event organisers including Western Sydney MRC, Navitas, NSW Police, Legal Aid and Liverpool City Council, the turn out was amazing.



Listen to SBS Arabic 24 radio interview with Sam Borka from NSW Department of Justice.

www.sbs.com.au/yourlanguage/arabic/en/audiotrack/liverpool-law-expo

A number of workshop sessions provided information in relation to driving laws, fines, general safety and tenancy issues.

Sessions were prefaced with a scenario put together by Navitas Students. Whilst the sessions were delivered to a large group, a smaller breakout session was delivered to an intimate group of around 20 and we found this to be a more effective way to facilitate sharing of information and an opportunity to have more in-depth information sessions.

With over 24 stall holders, information in language covering a variety of relevant topics was available.

Western Sydney MRC were one of the many stall holders and gave away free calendars with content focussing specifically on the law related information.



Navitas, NSW Police, NSW Dept. of Justice, Western Sydney MRC and Legal Aid



The day saw over 200 attendees and 21 organisations, certainly a record for the Hilda Davis Centre. Participants received free resources from many organisations including our very popular calendars.



Breakout sessions with smaller groups were a chance for direct one on one interactions, allowing attendees to gain specific help and information from service providers.



Navitas Students were involved in creating scenarios that were used as a technique to create conversations around typical situations that may arise, knowing your rights and tips on how to deal with these scenarios.



// Programs

A black and white photograph of two women smiling. The woman in the foreground has dark hair and glasses. The woman behind her is partially visible. In the background, a city skyline with a river is visible.

“

For many of our community's female carers, there are common themes including changing social and family roles, feelings of being overwhelmed, low self-esteem, alongside disappointment in and disconnection to Australia.”



Anna-Marie
Settlement Services
Manager

Case Study



STRIVE Women's Group

Refugee settlement is a challenging and complex experience for many new arrivals. The challenges are compounded for female carers whose roles can significantly alter when settling in a new country. Female carers frequently have reduced access to English education opportunities, increased family and community responsibilities.

For many female carers, changing social and family roles, feelings of being overwhelmed, low self-esteem, alongside disappointment in and disconnection to Australia is common.

[FIND OUT MORE >>](#)

STRIVE Women's Group

STRIVE

Our primary goal other than that of participation was to create changes in social connection, in self-reported language proficiency, in knowledge and in skills, be it hobby or professional, targeted towards newly arrived women who are carers.





The STRIVE women's group's activities provide space for participants to chat, relax and share with one other. During sessions, women exchange budgeting skills and tips between each other, discuss changes in family roles as a result of settlement, and engage in a self-initiated recipe exchange, sharing recipes that are best suited to being short on time."

We reached out to the community through Caseworkers, event attendance, flyers, onsite and via our website and social media channels in the hope of women signing up, especially those that are newly arrived.

Weekly women's group sessions were held for participants to connect over a two-hour period. In the first hour English classes were facilitated, and the second hour centred on skills and knowledge development activities such as craft skills, and delivery of information sessions.

Information sessions and skills / knowledge development activities were delivered which provided information about key issues, developed skills, and established connections for participants to local services.

Activities conducted were driven by the expressed wants of participants, and were an opportunity to develop their English language skills.





Topics, activities and services engaged in and with included:



Immigration law,
conducted by Legal Aid



Gardening in
Australia, including
community gardens,
facilitated by
Liverpool Women's
Resource Centre.



Women's
empowerment,
rights and roles
on International
Women's Day, with
Liverpool Women's
Resource Centre.



Women's Health,
conducted by the
Liverpool Women's
Health Centre



Yoga in the city on
International Yoga
Day, facilitated by
Yoga Hive

The STRIVE women's group's activities provided space for participants to chat, relax and share with each other. For example, during sessions, participating women exchanged budgeting skills and tips between each

other, discussed changes in family roles as a result of settlement, and engaged in a self-initiated recipe exchange, sharing recipes that are best suited to being short on time.

Excursions

Quarterly excursions were conducted at Sydney Opera House, Manly Beach, Blue Mountains and Taronga Zoo.

Sydney Opera House Visit

- Through this excursion, participants were shown how to purchase tickets, check Opal Card balances and become familiar with the system, and how to check train time tables.
- Participants practiced English in purchasing tickets and understanding directions from NSW Transport staff, reading station names, and took pictures to help independent travel in future.
- Opera House staff shared the history of Opera House as a historical building, and discussions were held regarding cultural aspects of Opera and the performing arts in Australia and they shared their own musical cultural experiences with one another.
- Participants learnt about affordable events in Australia.

transport, which was later undertaken by some participants.

Participants provided feedback on the wellbeing impacts of the excursions.

Manly Beach

- Beach safety information was provided to the women, including what to look and listen out for in English whilst at the beach.
- English language was developed through the provision of this information and they practiced in communicating with shop keepers and public transport.

Taronga Zoo

- Participants developed English through listening to demonstrations, reading maps as they self-guided themselves through the zoo, and ordering food at the cafe. Developing English surrounding animals such as animal names were developed.

Blue Mountains Excursion

- Information about Aboriginal culture was shared with participants, including the story and history of the three sisters. Information was also provided to the participants on how to reach by public



Outcomes / Learnings

We indeed aim to improve all planned program. In a survey the women gave us the following feedback:

38 sessions with

376

instances of participation

80%

felt more socially connected and experienced an increase in their self-confidence as a result of engaging with the women's group

76%

gained new knowledge from participating in the women's group

75%

self-evaluated that they improved their English "a lot" through the women's group, while

Case Study



Courageous Journeys

A Family Portrait

Courageous Journeys project, in partnership with Melkite Catholic Welfare Association, sought to celebrate the refugee journey and provide a space within which refugee families could be celebrated and welcomed. The project aimed to capture their aspirations for their future, shifting the focus from their past experience to that of the possibility and hopes for their future.

[FIND OUT MORE >>](#)



Courageous Journeys



The project set out to do this using professional family portraits that were exhibited and compiled into a book, accompanied by short interviews with families. All profit from sales of the book were reinvested into MCWA and Lost in Books (a Think + DO Tank Foundation initiative), community projects benefitting refugees and new migrants.



As a celebration of diversity, Courageous Journeys acknowledged the tenacity of refugees and reignited a community spirit, countering negative and deficit-based portrayals of refugees."

Courageous Journeys assisted to build community connection, belonging and hope among refugees and the wider community through photography and storytelling.

STAGE 1 involved the production and exhibition of a series of family portraits, reflecting the settlement journeys of refugee families.

A professional photographer, Saskia Wilson, took photos of families over several days at Bigge Park in Liverpool and Bankstown Memorial Park, Bankstown. The portraits were framed and displayed at Bankstown Arts Centre throughout Refugee week 2016.

STAGE 2 saw a short narrative developed outlining the life stories of the participating refugee families, with accompanying photos chosen by participants to symbolise their hopes and aspirations for the future.

The portraits, photos and stories were compiled into a photography book launched in November 2016.

Proceeds from the sale of the books were used to support existing projects of the Melkite Catholic Welfare Association and Lost in Books (a Think + DO Tank Foundation initiative) to benefit newly arrived refugees.



Courageous Journeys allowed us to share the hopes and aspirations of our clients for their future and gave them the opportunity to meet new people and feel celebrated.

The project was a huge success, with all Courageous Journeys books selling out, both events well attended and all participant families feeding back how welcomed, happy and celebrated they had felt throughout the project. Attendees to the events reflected on the theme of the project, family portraits, and commented on how connected they felt to participants, who expressed the same love and aspirations for their families. It showed us how powerful art can be when bringing the community together.

MEDIA COVERAGE





Partnership Case Study

Arts on Prescription



For the eight weeks, beginning April 2017, participants attended a pilot program, 'Arts on Prescription', run by aged care facility HammondCare at our head office in Liverpool. The referral-based drawing and painting workshop brings together refugees over 60 years - living in the local area.



Ibrahim exploring new techniques using pencils and water

For many of the people who use the MRC, art has been integral to their culture and is an important connection to their past."

Mrs Al Doulimi, speaking through a translator, said she was being treated for psychological stress, trauma and anxiety. She has low self-esteem and said she had only started to realise that she had to proactively recover from her experiences. As part of her medical plan, Mrs Al Doulimi has been prescribed art therapy by her doctor as a method to help her overcome anxiety and post-traumatic stress.

The program prescribed art as an alternative to medicine with experienced artist Annette Innis working with a small group of aged refugee community to explore their own creativity and learn new skills, while at the same time focusing on specific health and wellness needs. Now in its second year, the program was offered free of charge to our clients for the first time.

Annette says "The idea that a doctor or a medical professional may officially suggest it (Art) to a patient really highlights it's something that is recommended and is a much easier way than more medication or different healthcare approaches." The idea is that art and creativity is really good for older people. It has a lot of mental health benefits and general wellbeing benefits."

"Art and creativity is really good for older people. It has a lot of mental health benefits and general wellbeing benefits."

The program brought participants together for an hour or two every week exploring drawing, painting, colour and different textures. For many of the people who use the MRC, art has been integral to their culture and is an important connection to their past. The program will allow them to re-engage with a previous interest or develop a new one.

Arts on Prescription Manager and Artist, Michelle Heldon, said creating art can help with a range of wellness needs from anxiety, depression and fragility, to people experiencing social isolation or going through periods of bereavement.





Bahrain



Nabeel



Jabbar



Madiha



Abdul



Warda



Saaydiyeh



Ibrahim



Sanaa



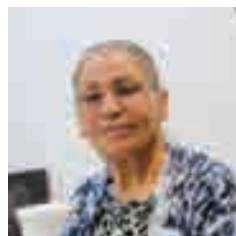
Annette, HammondCare



Adil



Maida



Jamea



Hajar



We would like to acknowledge the team for making this program possible, Annette whose inspiring art skills and passion has made this project an extremely fulfilling process for all our participants. In addition Michelle Heldon, Michelle Anthony and Nikki Cripps from HammondCare; Doria Chafic, Jenny Jesson, Ayman Al Haboub and Rachel Haywood as part of the Western Sydney MRC team. We would also like to thank Amanda Hoh , ABC Journalist, for covering the program.



2 Worlds 2 Words



Our first BIG campaign

wsmrc.org.au/2worlds2words

2 Worlds 2 Words campaign was created by Surry Hills based creative agency Ward 6. As part of a department of Family & Community Services, Liveable Communities Grants Program, 2 Worlds gave us the opportunity to reach our aged refugee community in living active healthy lifestyles.

We would like to acknowledge the amazing team that helped make this project come to life with special thanks to Ward 6, Photoplay, Michael Corridore, our staff and most importantly Mansoorah, Sameerah and Layla. We thank you for sharing your stories with us and giving us insight into your settlement journey into calling Australia home.

[FIND OUT MORE >>](#)



Our 2 Worlds 2 Words campaign highlights the story of our refugee and migrant community leaving behind their world to come to a new world, Australia."



Sameerah, Mansoorah and Layla

In some ways they are still living in two worlds. 2 Worlds 2 Words is a project that asks us to share two words of hope, strength, confidence or advice for both newly arrived and established individuals.

Objective

The overarching objective was to help our community build independence, allowing an individual to explore the local area, with a goal of staying active and healthy as they get older and generally less mobile.

The more confident and stress-free they feel, the more open they'll be to the increased activity and independence of exploring beyond their comfort zone.

The research

Before any successful message could be created, understanding our community and their perceptions of what active, healthy living means was key. We undertook two small focus groups to explore this with not only our community but our caseworkers too. Gaining each group's insight unlocked interesting findings.

Firstly, being active and healthy for our community didn't mean going to the gym each day and eating certain foods, it meant so much more, it was more a meeting of healthy mind - healthy body, as well as the ability to perform simple tasks - like going to the shops, cooking a meal or even seeing a friend for coffee. They see 'active healthy living' as being about the mind first, body second.

Many older migrants and refugees are at risk of becoming extremely isolated, putting both their mental and physical health at risk.





At the end of photography the team felt like they had created a unique bond, and felt humbled to have been on the 3 sisters' journey

The solution

With the connection that the Western Sydney MRC both creates and builds on with the newly arrived and existing communities, our strategy became clear through these conversations; we needed to show new refugees and migrants the help and confidence that both the MRC can provide, using the stories of those who have been in the situation before.

The big idea

Thinking about the complexities of cultural differences between Arabic and English, Ward6 developed an idea based on simplicity of language.

2 Worlds, 2 Words

Each story was built around a relevant two-word phrase, to clearly and simply bridge the gap between newly arrived migrants/refugees' home countries, and their new home in Australia - focused for launch on Healthy Active Ageing.

The idea was designed to be flexible, allowing maximum scope for community and volunteer involvement. These simple two words can be spoken in any language and become the inspirational cornerstone for refugees to live independently, and build confidence in their new world.

Watch our video and follow the story of 3 sisters, Layla, Mansoorah and Sameerah, and how they have settled in Liverpool, NSW. We followed the sisters on a visit to their local shops, shopping for fresh fruit and seeing how they have settled within their community to begin to live happy and independent lives.

Listen to their 2 words of advice and know that anything is possible when you begin to explore your new surroundings. A range of resources can now be found on our website as well as launch video.

The future

We hope to bring 2 words from organisations near and far covering many different areas of focus.

Watch the 3 sisters' settlement journey on our website or search MRC 2 worlds 2 words in your browser!





// Our Partnerships



Macarthur Diversity Services Initiative

Outreach project to provide settlement and re-settlement services for migrants and refugees residing in the Macarthur region.



Anglicare

Not-for-profit organisation providing a range of community services in aged care and family support, and for migrants and refugees.



Benevolent Society

Not-for-profit organisation helping people with disabilities, children, families and older Australians through the provision of support to maintain independence and promotion of physical, mental, emotional and social wellbeing.



NSW Department Health

NSW Government agency responsible for public hospitals and healthcare facilities in South Western Sydney.



HammondCare

Charitable organisation specialising in dementia and aged care, palliative care, rehabilitation and older persons' mental health.



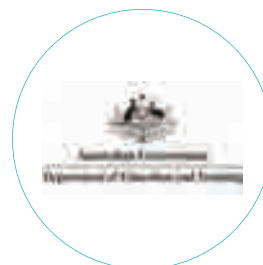
Fairfield City Council

Local council providing services, facilities and resources to support the community.



Darcy Street Project

Social Enterprise café helping disadvantaged communities from all ages and cultures into employment and education. Participated in the Refugee Youth Employment Program, providing training in retail and hospitality



Dept of Education and Training

Government department responsible for national policies and programs that help Australians access quality and affordable early child care and childhood education, school education, higher education, vocational education and training, international education and research.



Multicultural Disability Advocacy Association

Peak body in NSW providing advocacy for people from a culturally and linguistically diverse, or non-English speaking background with a disability, their families, and carers.



Navitas

One of the largest providers of English language training in Australia, delivering services and courses to strengthen language skills and employability of students.



Create NSW

NSW Government agency for arts, screen, and culture in NSW, providing advice on how to sustain and develop an innovative arts and cultural sector.



NSW Legal Aid

NSW State-wide organisation providing legal services to socially and economically disadvantaged people.



Families NSW

NSW Government initiative providing services and various projects aimed at the enhancement of health and wellbeing within families.



PCYC Liverpool

Liverpool branch of one of Australia's leading youth organisations offering a range of programs in sport, music, art & culture.



IGBO Community

Community association for the promotion of African-Australian socio-economic achievements.



Arab Council Australia

Not-for-profit organisation assisting with coordination, advocacy and leadership, information dissemination, and in facilitating a range of welfare services, activities and events within the community.



MYANO

State-wide specialist youth organisation engaging, connecting and building the capacity for the youth, settlement, and multicultural sectors to address the needs of young people, particularly those from refugee and migrant backgrounds.



Department of Social Services

Government department responsible for social policy aiming to improve the lifetime wellbeing of people and families in Australia.



// Our Partnerships



Partners in Recovery - SWS

Organisation focusing on a systematic improvement within the mental health sector and providing support for people with a mental illness



White Ribbon Australia

National violence prevention campaign aiming to raise awareness among Australian men and boys about the roles they can play to prevent violence against women.



Clubs NSW

Representative body providing news, promotions and events for registered clubs in NSW.



Casula Powerhouse Arts Centre

Cultural facility of the Liverpool City Council working to expand and diversify arts in the local area and become a multi-disciplinary arts centre.



ATO

Australian Government's agency for revenue collection, managing and shaping the tax, excise and superannuation systems.



Ashcroft Primary School

Local primary school actively working to cater for students of diverse backgrounds.



Refugee Council of Australia

National body for refugees and organisations and individuals that support them working to address policy, support for refugees, support for members, community education, and administration.



Catholic Care

Social services agency of the Catholic Church in Sydney, assisting in aged care, employment, and foster care.



Mission Australia

An integration of nationwide services helping people find safe and affordable housing, support disadvantaged children and families, empower troubled young people, assist people with mental illness and disabilities, and more.



Department of Human Services

The Department of Human Services is a department of the Government of Australia charged with responsibility for delivering a range of welfare, public aid, health and other services to the people of Australia.



Muslim Women Association

Australian not-for-profit organisation providing support for women who suffer from domestic violence and other forms of abuse at home.



NO WRONG DOOR

Government funded program working with service providers to improve the provision of services to people with severe and persistent mental illness.



SSI

Leading community-based not-for-profit organisation providing a range of services in relating to refugee settlement.



NSW Police

A variety of Police officers and offices spanning the Western Sydney region including Liverpool and Fairfield.



Dept of Immigration & Border Protection

Government department responsible for immigration and customs border policy.



PHN

Government initiative dedicated to supporting general practitioners, practice nurses, and other primary health providers to deliver quality care for patients and improve access to local health care for the whole community.



LMA

Organisation that works to provide social, religious, educational and recreational services for the Muslim community through initiatives that advocate for social harmony.



Western Sydney University

Sydney based university focusing on community engagement to ensure they are responsive to local issues and a focal point for the community.



// Our Partnerships



Refugee Yoga Project

Program offering weekly yoga classes to a range of refugee groups in Western Sydney to assist in healing from torture and trauma.



Community 2168 Project

Liverpool City Council initiative working to address issues relating to the community, urban renewal, employment and skill development, education and training, community safety and health and wellbeing.



Allroad Traffic

Traffic management organisation who participated in the Refugee Youth Employment Program providing training in logistics and supply chains.



Australia Council for the Arts

Government arts funding and advisory body working to make more visible the vitality of our arts and culture with a commitment to ensuring the arts are more accessible to all Australians.



NSW Department of Fair Trading

NSW Government agency responsible for the protection of the rights of consumers and businesses, providing advice on fair and ethical practice.



Department of FACS

NSW Government agency responsible for the protection of children & young people, working with vulnerable people and promoting participation in social and economic life and the building of stronger communities.



Levant Consulting

Melbourne-based consulting firm who participated in the Refugee Youth Employment Program, providing training in health and well-being.



Liverpool City Council

Local Council providing services, facilities, and resources to support the community.



Liverpool Boys High School

Local boys high school that caters for a multi-cultural community and is working to provide opportunities for students from a background of socio-economic disadvantage.



Circles of Social Life

Research association collaborating with various universities and international organizations to determine and apply methods that contribute to the development of a more sustainable planet.



The Welcome Dinner Project

Government funded program working with service providers to improve the provision of services to people with severe and persistent mental illness.



Lost in Books

Local children's multilingual bookshop-café providing a creative learning centre, language exchange hub and a safe space for women.



Dept Office of Environment & Heritage

NSW Government agency responsible for the protection of the environment and Aboriginal country, as well as cultural and built heritage.



NSW Refugee Health Service

NSW Government agency working to protect and promote the health of refugees and people of refugee-like backgrounds living in NSW.



The Salvation Army

Charitable organisation providing services to vulnerable people in society, helping with addiction recovery, aged care, emergency and disaster recovery services and more.



Schizophrenia Fellowship

Institute committed to improving the circumstances and welfare of people with a serious mental illness, their relatives and carers, and professionals working in the area.



STARTTS

NSW service specialising in the rehabilitation of torture and trauma survivors, through culturally appropriate psychological treatment and other methods of rehabilitation.



St. Vincent de Paul Society

Organisation assisting people living in poverty, working to promote compassion and address issues of social justice.



// Our Partnerships



Youth Collective

A network of multicultural organisations and young people that works to make sure multicultural youth services in NSW improve the planning, implementation, and outcomes of youth services, particularly for young people of a migrant and refugee background.



University of NSW

Sydney-based university leading in research and teaching throughout the country.



UnitingCare

Out-of-home care program providing long-term foster care, planning placements, and short-term care for children and young people aged 0-18 years and aftercare services for young people who have left foster care aged 18-25 years.



Settlement Council of Australia

National peak body for settlement agencies providing settlement solutions for migrants and refugees settling in Australia.



Moroccan Sydney Association

Community association facilitating connections between and with Moroccans in Australia whilst encouraging interactions that lead to a greater understanding of the Moroccan culture.

Without these partnerships, connections and advocates our reach, services and impact would not be possible. Thank you to you all for your commitment to the Western Sydney MRC, and more importantly to the commitment to our clients and our community.



// Playgroups

The Western Sydney MRC has had another successful year of delivering our Multicultural Playgroups. We saw our services expand as we shifted to a partnership service delivery model.

The Multicultural Playgroups increased and ran in partnership with Fairfield City Council, Liverpool City Council, Benevolent Society, Mission Australia and Liverpool Public School. The service continues to run in and around the Liverpool CBD to ensure ease of access for families and address the high level of need within this area.

We continued to deliver high quality, supported playgroups to diverse families with children between 0-5 years. Families who attended the Multicultural Playgroups come from all over the world, including Iraq, India, Fiji and Vietnam. The playgroups

encourage learning through play based activities, connect parents to new friends and activities, develop English language skills and share information with families. We have continued to see great outcomes for children and their parents or carers, across school readiness, literacy, parent-child engagement and information sharing facilitated by our experienced and dedicated Families team.

The Multicultural Playgroups also ran information sessions on Centrelink benefits, local library access, nutrition information, visits from an early childhood nurse and information on dental care. Gogo the Gecko, the local mascot for Paint Liverpool REaD visited our playgroups, encouraging the families to read and sharing the excitement of storytelling.



// Youth Program - Homework Support



”

Support levels vary from basic guidance to more hands on methods to break down information.”

Background / the need

Many local high school and Intensive English Centre (IEC) students from refugee backgrounds were identified as requiring and seeking additional support in meeting their educational needs.

Many students from IECs need extra support in English language skills development; the program addresses this need by recruiting secondary and tertiary-level students, and community volunteers, especially if they can speak Arabic or other languages.

High school students also find their transition from IEC a challenge; combined with learning new subject matter, the increased complexity of English and skills required means students need continued support in the program.

This year's program supported local high school and Intensive English Centre students, including IEC students from Lurnea and Miller, and students from Liverpool Boys High, Liverpool Girls High, All Saints College, Lurnea High, and Miller Technology High and was mainly promoted to school assemblies through social media, and flyers at the Western Sydney MRC reception.



We have also made a focus of targeting young people at attended events.

Progress

Since the start of 2017, the program has run every Monday from 3:30-5:30pm during each school term.

Over 60 unique high school and Intensive English Centre students have accessed the program with an average attendance of 12 student per session. On average, 3-4 volunteer tutors per session.

Young people independently attend the Western Sydney MRC office after school. Upon arrival young people generally spend a few minutes catching up with their homework support buddies keeping them informed of how their week has been! Young people are then teamed up with a volunteer based on the support they need.

Support levels vary from basic guidance to more hands on methods to break down information. Snacks and drinks are provided with the all time favourite being Nutella and cheese toasties.

The program throughout the year highlighted the importance of social connections for facilitating learning pathways. Through observation, the MRC

created a positive environment for young people to network and build positive relationships with their youth cohort and staff. This environment further created a safe space where young people could 'make mistakes'. Young people, through the program, stated that they had built and developed meaningful relationships/ friendships that without this program would have not exist.

Overall young people through the year developed their English conversational skills in addition to educational based learning.

Throughout the year we have had an overwhelming number of youth volunteers facilitating our teaching. Looking ahead we aim to develop this notion of youth to youth peer tutoring. We would love to see this program grow into a two day a week offering, ensuring young people are getting the support they need throughout the week, focussing on different areas of need and perhaps allowing additional types of support to be implemented.





// The funding game

by Meredith Stuebe



”

There is such an enormous amount of work that goes into each application.

The funding game is a cyclical one, round and round again we go. It can be a tough game, with the rules, players and the key to winning changes at each round.

For better or worse, there are several mainstays of the funding game that any grant writer will attest to. The first, and most important, is swiftly acquiring working proficiency of ‘funding speak’.

This often involves translating multiple long and complex documents into workable language.

Then there is the constant searching for relevant funding, where that working proficiency (or perhaps now fluency) in funding speak comes in handy.

Once you have identified funding that is relevant and applicable, consulted, researched and planned for your project, budgeted and re-budgeted (and re-budgeted) and wrangled it into minute word limits, you can finally hit **SUBMIT**.



Western Sydney MRC and PCYC Liverpool Staff in front of the Community Heart Mural

Now into the final stage, of waiting for the outcome. This last leg of the funding games can last weeks, in fact mostly months.

Of course, it never fails to be disappointing to receive a negative outcome, particularly when paired with little to no feedback.

There is such an enormous amount of work that goes into each application, often for much needed services and activities for our clients and our community.

When the reverse happens it is a wonderful feeling, made all the more impactful by getting to see the resultant program, activity or event delivered to our clients and communities.

This year we have developed and delivered CALD specific respite services, research projects, youth programs, art programs and collaborations to name a few.

A real highlight for me as Funding and Policy Officer was securing funding from the Liverpool City Council for our project *Community Heart*, the development of a large moveable mural, that allowed us to hire three professional artists (*Helen Proctor, Buddy Martin and Mazin Ahmed*) and exhibit the mural at pop-up exhibitions throughout Western Sydney.

The mural aimed to convey a message of welcome to newly arrived refugees and migrants to the Liverpool LGA.

Another highlight was securing funding from Department of Health for the Commonwealth Home Support Program (CHSP) that funds Western Sydney MRC to deliver respite services.

CHSP allows us to move into a new area of growth, whilst also providing a much needed service to our community with our principles of equity and respect.

As a final note, I think it is telling that every funding round attracts an enormous number of applications, indicative of the level of need that exists or the drive to do something about it. As large funding bodies move to preferencing large organisations or consortium arrangements, we must again adapt to the new change in the funding game rules.




Messages of welcome left by our youth group



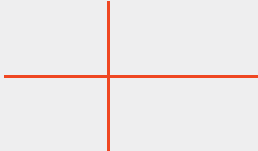
// A few of our favourite moments







Alongside the increased Syrian and Iraqi refugee intake there has been a surge of individuals with complex physical and mental health needs including a significant increase of new arrivals with disabilities."





Complex Case Support

NDIS and Disability



by Anna-Marie Kanaan

DISABILITY INCREASE

+

Alongside the increased Syrian and Iraqi refugee intake there has been a surge of individuals with complex physical and mental health needs including a significant increase of new arrivals with disabilities. As a result, there has been an increase in referrals for our Complex Case Support (CCS) program.

INCREDIBLE OUTCOMES

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This year, in partnership with Illawarra Multicultural Services, 96 families (totalling 415 individuals) were supported through CCS, almost double the previous year. Thanks to the dedication of the CCS team, clients have been supported to obtain incredible outcomes.

CCS

+++

A significant area of support has been provided around navigating the NDIS and My Aged Care systems.

Through CCS, many clients have been able to access disability and aged care supports to assist them to develop life skills and settle in Australia.

CASE STUDY

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Meet Ahmed. Ahmed has an intellectual disability and has been deaf since birth. He has never accessed traditional schooling and is eager to undertake education and find meaningful employment.

Due to Ahmed having been granted a Temporary Protection Visa, the NDIS process was more difficult than most. With support from a Western Sydney MRC Caseworker, Ahmed was able to advocate for his access to the NDIS.

Ahmed was supported through the pre-planning process and was able to access services once his plan was approved. Ahmed is now partaking in classes at the Dead Society and is well on his way to achieve his goal of employment.

NDIS

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The role out of the NDIS has posed significant challenges to refugees with disabilities. To better understand and respond to the growing need, we undertook research on the intersection of disability and resettlement. The research is ongoing and will be presented at the International Metropolis Conference in Hague.





// Testimonials

Our participant and volunteer testimonials tell the true story of the success and impact of our programs.



BASHAR

+ Lead the Way Participant Testimonial +

Moving to live in another country and begin establishing a new life from zero point is not an easy task but with the support I received, it reduced settlement pressure and helped me in building up a new and better life.

Being involved in the Lead the Way program at the Western Sydney Migrant Resource Centre made a great impact on providing me with help to set up a job search plan and it helped me to achieve employment goals. I was provided with information and direction that minimised the time I will take to find a job and to know what I need.

The program included some exercises that helped me to be able to identify my strengths and areas needed to work on to increase my chance to find a job. It was like a compass that helped me to find where I'm standing and the directing I'm heading.

Back in Syria I worked as [a] computer programmer. I had my own business and I studied mechanical engineering but my chance to find a job or to work in the same field could take a longer time as I need to do further study to be able to compete in the job search market. I become interested in working in an aged care service after I found there is a shortage in the job market. I enrolled myself at TAFE to receive the knowledge I need. I wasn't sure at the beginning but when I received the opportunity to work as a casual position support worker in home service, that made me confident. I am currently receiving a casual position from another aged care service too, to support my family financially. When migrants receive support from people who care in a great country like Australia, settlement gets easier."

At the time of publishing, Bashar had progressed to secure full time work in aged care.

ZINAH ALHAIDARI

+ English Class Volunteer Testimonial +

Q: What do you do at the Western Sydney MRC (WSMRC)?

A: Helping refugees through teaching them basic English to build up their language and to improve their communication skills.

Q: How long have you been volunteering with the WSMRC?

A: About four months.

Q: What made you choose to volunteer with us?

A: Firstly, the WSMRC is very popular in the local area of Liverpool and secondly, my current study which is Bachelor of Social Work has helped me in making the decision of volunteering with the WSMRC.

Q: What have you learnt since volunteering with us?

A: Helping anyone who ask for help, no matter what religion, language or background of that person. Also, I have improved my self- confidence and my communication and social skills through my voluntary work with the WSMRC.

Q: What would you say to someone thinking about volunteering with the WSMRC?

A: It is a good experience to have in helping people with different age groups, issues or backgrounds and also learn from that experience and improve in working.

Q: Is there anything else you would like to add about volunteering with us?

A: I would like to thank you for giving me the opportunity to be one of your members.



YAHYA, 16

+

"First, we met Sarah at school assembly at the end of 2016. She started to tell us about the MRC. And we started to go to the MRC every Monday after school to do activities and homework, and to make our English better. I also go to excursions with Sarah and Darren, and all the other guys. And we enjoy and have fun. The best thing about the MRC is that it's multicultural, many cultures and many friends. And we start hanging out together for almost one year."

Youth Program Participant

TAREQ, 17

+

"My dream is to be a soccer player.
The Western Sydney MRC is helping me with my dream."

Youth Program Participant



JASKIRAN

+

"I think it's a really great initiative because it allows me to learn about myself, and help people out when I can. It's a way for me to step out of my life for a little bit and help other people instead of just being focused on my life."

VIOLETTA

+

"I really love to be able to help people out. I also learn so much because helping people and explaining stuff is the best way to learn something, yourself. It's also awesome to see how much the kids develop and really take on board what we say. I value our relationships."

EYAD

+

"I think it's a great program; it gives us an opportunity to give back. We get to make friend with the students and make connections with them, and to help them integrate into the community better."

AREDWAN, 17

+

"The thing that the MRC has provided us is a great opportunity for the youth to really have a strong community, and to be part of a community that has been through a lot in life. I want to thank Sarah and Darren for their help. It's a great opportunity for me to volunteer and to help other youth with their studies and homework, and to help accomplish their own dreams. I'm very happy and grateful to be a part of the team."



// Online, on-air and in-print



Watch video on YouTube



Visit our website



Listen online



Visit us on social media

We feel extremely blessed to have been given considerable support this year by the media and community in sharing our work, involvement across multiple channels and platforms.

As with most not-for-profits we value the amount of space and time we are given to further our reach, to assist us in creating change and ensuring that the work of our staff and the achievements of our community and clients are far reaching. Here are just a few examples of our coverage online, on-air and in-print.







// Our 2016 - 2017 team

Our team are the core of who we are as an organisation. We pay respect and gratitude to their efforts in achieving our many goals. Without you this year would not have been possible.

STAFF

+

Alcina Desouza	Operations Manager	Karameli Manousso	Executive Assistant
Ayman Haboub	Senior Caseworker	Kassim Abood	Caseworker
Anna-Marie Kanaan	Settlement Services Manager	Kimberly Li	Senior Caseworker
Barbara Ruth Sargeant	Caseworker	Khadija Sifat	Information & Referral Officer
Ballina Gee	Socio Economic Developmental Manager	Lina Merdawi	Caseworker
Cassandra Cannon	Senior Caseworker	Linda Wheeler	Administration / Childcare worker
Charles Mahagodage	Accountant	Luma Al-Bayati	Senior Caseworker
Doria Chafic	Senior Support Worker	Margaret Barnett	Senior Caseworker
Darren Chan	Youth Worker	Mazin Ahmad	Caseworker
Emma McCarthy	Marketing and Communication Officer	Milena Da Costa	Administration Officer / CPP
Elham Mandwee	Administration Officer	Meredith Stuebe	Policy and Funding Officer
Eptesam Al Bankani	Caseworker	Natalie Pauls	Information and Referral Officer / Front Desk
Eithandee Aung	Community Development Officer	Olivia Nguy	Coordinator
Iman Partoredjo	Business and Strategic Development Senior Manager	Rassem Asmer	Client Service Manager
Janet Aslam	Senior Caseworker	Rachel Haywood	Migration Program Coordinator
Jennifer Jesson	Family Support Manager	Sandra Romanelli	Marketing and Communications Manager
Jennifer Hanson	Senior Caseworker	Sarah Elfoul	Family Support Worker
John Buraho	Senior Caseworker	Salome Joseph	Youth Worker
Kamalle Dabboussy	CEO	Tahereh Kargar	Administration Officer
Karren Osei	Senior Caseworker		Caseworker



VOLUNTEERS

+

Amal Shijar
Amanda Orellana
Aneesa Takyan
Arkan Yousef
Clara Bucarey
Fayhaa Al Zuhairi
Fouzi Jamhour
Guadalupe Alvarez
Jenny Tran
Juliet Warda
Khalid Fenjan
Lidya Anwia
Maria Valdes
Mohamed Sarnoh
Mona Dawoud
Noor Al Haida
Rahim Sahan
Rosalia Moreno
Sandra Carina Virga
Sarah Dawish
Suha Abood
Suzan Banna
Yamamah Abbood
Zinah Al Haidiri
Zunilda Navarro

BOARD MEMBERS

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Dr. Vincent Ogu	Chairperson
Rashid Ben Zerouk	Deputy Chairperson
Nashat Satar	Treasurer
Dr. Amad Mtashar	Member
Iryna Druzenko	Secretary
Iman Safsouf	Member
Joseph Meka	Member
Councillor Ali Karnib	Ex-officio Liverpool City Council
Councillor Nathan Hagarty	Ex-officio Liverpool City Council

FUNDING BODY LISTING

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Department of Social Services	Community Visitors Scheme Program (CVS) Complex Case Support Program Emergency Relief Program Settlement Services Program Community Proposal Pilot (CPP) Cultural Connect Project Seniors Week Liveable Communities CALD Wellness Festival Emergency Relief Program Community HeART Project Lead the Way Program STRIVE Women's Group
Settlement Services International (SSI) Department of Immigration & Border Protection Family and Community Services (FACS)	
Schizophrenia Fellowship of NSW Macarthur Diversity Services Liverpool City Council Lebanese Muslim Association Multicultural NSW	



// Getting involved

Find out more about Western Sydney MRC

If you would like to get involved with Western Sydney MRC, be it employment, partnerships, volunteering, internship or sponsorship then please contact us.

We are always looking for new opportunities to expand our reach and our current services to meet the needs of the community and our clients.

Visit our website, drop us an email, contact us via social media or visit our Liverpool head office. We are open from Monday - Friday 9am - 4pm, or just give us a call.



Facebook	@westernsydneymrc	YouTube	@westernsydneymrc
Instagram	@westernsydneymrc	Website	www.wsmrc.org.au
LinkedIn	@westernsydneymrc		

Address	108 Moore Street, Liverpool NSW 2170
Phone	02 8778 1200
Email	info@wsmrc.org.au





// Conclusion



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community

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Due to the ever-changing nature of our sector, evolution is key to meeting the demands of the world in which we live. In recognising this, we look forward to our future and all the changes that are to come.

We hope to expand our existing services and partnerships, enhancing them with new innovations to promote growth as an organisation, in order to better serve and meet the needs of refugee and migrant communities.

A future of strength, more growth and a heightened responsiveness to the needs of our clients and community is at the heart of our organisational change.

Our engagement with clients, the wider community, and other stakeholders is at an all time high, with exciting new opportunities emerging alongside our existing partnerships.

We hope to diversify the impact of our organisation, allowing us to endure in our commitment to improving the capacity, quality and diversity of the services we offer.