

WESTERN SYDNEY MRC

2021-2022 • ANNUAL REPORT • 16 pages • LIVERPOOL EDITION • wsnrc.org.au

WESTERN SYDNEY MRC ACKNOWLEDGE THE TRADITIONAL CUSTODIANS OF THE LAND ON WHICH WE MEET AND WORK, THE GADIGAL, DARUG AND DHARAWAL PEOPLE – AND WE PAY OUR RESPECTS TO ELDERS PAST, PRESENT AND EMERGING.



Settlement Engagement and Transition Support

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Practitioner experience meets research

CEO ADDRESS page2



TRAUMA INFORMED PRACTICE AND HUMANITARIAN HEARTS

CHAIR ADDRESS

2022 has been another big year for both the MRC and the world. The pandemic lingers on, we have war in Europe, cyber attacks on the increase and economic uncertainty. It creates a challenging environment for boards to navigate: Is lunging from one unforeseen crisis to the next the new normal?

Our staff's daily work should be praised more often. The skills and knowledge base of the team required to navigate and deliver service has been likened to 'Settlement GPs', navigating complex systems, advocating for change, and measuring impact through trauma-informed practice and humanitarian hearts.

Particular project highlights for me this year were the Civic Spotlight, Crisis Communications NSW Parliamentary Enquiry, and the Macarthur Settlement contract win.

The Civic Spotlight ran over several

months this year, informing and engaging the community in the lead-up to the May 2022 Federal election. The series ensured our communities could raise the issues most important to them while successfully navigating the Australian electoral system to ensure their vote counted. The series culminated in our traditional 'Meet the Candidates' forum, with a breadth and depth of political representation across our geographic footprint.

Following last year's Pulse report, MRC Policy Officer Dr Archana Voola and I have been invited to address the NSW Parliamentary inquiry into CALD crisis communications.

This is an important forum for the MRC to give the perspective of local communities on an ever-present issue. After the pandemic and multiple natural disasters, including bushfires and floods, there is a critical need to ensure organisations like the MRC are involved early and intensely in all phases of crisis response.



The year's major success was winning the Settlement Services tender in the Macarthur region. This win allows the MRC to grow on its traditional settlement service provision and stakeholder engagement strengths. The MRC has strong historical roots in this region, and I look forward to the opportunities this expansion brings, especially with the Macarthur region's many community groups and organisations.

And so to the future, with the organisation hard at work on our next strategic plan. Our strategy will set the course for the next five

years drawing on the learnings and growth of a turbulent few years behind us and some significant opportunities ahead.

Finally, thank you to everyone involved in this amazing organisation: staff, board, volunteers and stakeholders. We consistently punch above our weight to profoundly impact our communities and the sector.

Let us continue to be Powered by Community.

**Western Sydney MRC Chair,
Cllr Nathan Hagarty**

CRISIS MESSAGING TO CALD COMMUNITIES NEEDS IMPROVING



We are hoping that through this inquiry, the NSW Government will be better equipped to communicate during a crisis - Western Sydney MRC welcomes opportunities to collaborate in the implementation and support to further develop and enhance tailored solutions for our communities. Story continued on Page 6.

AUSTRALIA HUMANITARIAN PROGRAM COMMUNITY CONSULTATION 2021

In preparation for the Roundtable with the Minister for Immigration, Citizenship, Migrant Services and Multicultural Affairs, Hon. Alex Hawke MP, on the Humanitarian Program 2021-22 Western Sydney MRC held a community consultation attended by active community members to ensure the community insights were expressed as part of the round table. Visit our website:

wsnrc.org.au



TAKING THE PULSE OF SOUTH WESTERN SYDNEY

AMPLIFYING VOICES DURING COVID-19

We are grateful to the Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) community members of SWS that came forward to engage in the Pulse Survey. Capturing the experiences of 155 participants within 5 working days was possible because of the deep trust and extensive networks nurtured by the staff of Western Sydney MRC.

We thank all staff of the Western Sydney MRC for volunteering their time to supporting community members to complete the surveys that was the basis of this report. This research was conducted by Western

Sydney MRC based on the rapidly evolving COVID-19 Delta outbreak in Sydney, specifically South West Sydney (SWS). To develop rapid responses, Western Sydney MRC conducted a survey-based study to hear directly from the Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) communities living in the area.

The purpose of the research is to provide a platform for the voices of the SWS CALD communities in lockdown to be heard, recorded and amplified. Insights garnered from the report are drawn on to develop actionable recommendations that are

fit for purpose, both in the immediate and long term.

The data for this survey is represented by 155 respondents from the SWS region who participated in the study to provide their experience of the July 2021 stay-at-home orders. 5 key areas for recommendations were identified. Watch the launch video on YouTube. Story continued on Page 5.



youtu.be/hLgMd7TXxMw

CEO ADDRESS

OUR ASPIRATION IS FIRMLY PLACED FOR THE ORGANISATION IN OUR COMMUNITIES' ASPIRATIONS.



We entered the current financial year with Western Sydney in what turned out to be a protracted lockdown. The long-term impacts, just as long COVID, still need to be fully understood.

Western Sydney MRC set out to ensure it was responsive to the immediate and changing needs of the local community.

Embarking on a rapid response initiative involving all levels of Government, we built on our unique social capital and our relationship with our local community. Alongside delivering over 300 digital sessions, essential home packages for isolated families and providing further support to vulnerable and high-needs clients, we continued to support clients in a hybrid remote-on-site model whilst building new relationships with ADF, volunteers and other wraparound service-based organisations.

We coupled our practitioner experience with research, resulting in the projects like 'Pulse Report', which set out to identify issues, themes and possible responses in as close to real-time as possible. Our efforts resulted in amplifying the voices and needs of our communities to key decision- and policy-makers.

We also could start new services to encourage women to become economically dependent with the MiLivelihood employment initiative and to support women and families to escape family violence or coercion. We also established support for those in our community on temporary visas that had no other assistance available, with the integral support of the NSW State Government.

The EnCompass MyAgedCare Multicultural Connector program, supported by the Federation of Ethnic Communities Council of Australia, linking the Aging population to Aged Care Services, has been a successful and well-needed project and one we anticipate continuing to build in the future.

As we moved out of the acute phases of lockdown, our return to office work resumed creating a sense of 'normal' workdays, but the reality was that people, families and communities were emotionally fractured. Regular face-to-face time with clients and communities is essential in healing, and the need for our ongoing work never seemed more essential. The work in orientation, supporting communities and encouraging families to partake in local mainstream life is just as relevant today as ever. We are rebuilding many of our established systems, links and partnerships to adapt to the changing environment we face.

We are overjoyed to hear the sounds and songs of playgroups returning to life as we also hear the demands for respite services in Aged Care programs in full swing.

My heartfelt thanks to the hardworking and dedicated team at Western Sydney MRC. The organisation has been fortunate to have hardworking, dedicated and passionate people who reflect our communities. We are sad to have lost staff from our ranks but equally excited and energised to have new and vibrant faces amongst us.

However, like many other organisations, the workforce challenges intertwined with compliance requirements and reduced real income have resulted in us being in uncharted territory as we navigate the following year.

In this report, you will see an organisation that both felt with and for the community. We are healing with the community with which we are ensconced. Our aspiration is firmly placed for the organisation in our communities' aspirations. With a vision of creating culturally safe spaces for our communities to meet and develop, we look towards further providing an exceptional service in the future for all of Western Sydney.

**Western Sydney MRC,
Chief Executive Officer,
Kamalle Dabboussy**

AT A GLANCE

Citizenship Fees

August 2021, Western Sydney
Migrant Resource Centre

Dear Ms Kargar,

I refer to my previous letter dated 12th January 2021 advising that I had written to the Minister regarding your concerns about the eligibility of JobSeeker recipients for a fee concession when applying for Australian citizenship. Please find enclosed the response I have received from the Minister for Immigration. I note that concession cards will no longer need to show the payment type to be eligible for the discounted fee. Should you require further assistance on this matter, or any other Federal Government matter, please do not hesitate to contact my office on 8783 0977.

**Anne Stanley MP, Opposition Whip,
Federal Member for Werriwa**

Volunteer Maria and her friend Jorge

Prior to COVID, Jorge, a resident at Bossley Park from Opal HealthCare enjoyed a meaningful friendship with Maria, a Spanish volunteer from Western Sydney MRC; their conversations always brightened Jorge's day. Maria hasn't been able to visit Jorge for some time due to COVID, but this hasn't tarnished their flourishing friendship. They ensure they spend time together, sharing heartwarming conversations over Zoom.

CVS Program

Volunteer Sandra and her friend Nino

When I first met Nino, he admitted to me that he's not a good talker because he doesn't like to talk. Despite this, every time I have a call with him on zoom, we never run out of things to say. We have conversations about food, soccer, the weather, his peers and his family, and the list just continues. Something to commend about Nino is his continuous gratitude towards everyone who takes care of him, his willingness to share his memories and life experiences, as well as his persistent hope to someday walk again.

CVS Program

Arkan and Bossley Nursing Home

Arkan has been one of our long-standing Volunteer supporting residents who have limited or no English in Arabic and Chaldean languages. Arkan is one of our CVS Volunteers for clients in the (Principal Bossley Park - Opal Aged Care Nursing Home (high care facility)). Clients enjoy the company of Arkan and his positive attitude towards clients. He brings hope and laughter into his clients' lives.



MINISTER FOR MULTICULTURALISM MP MARK COURE VISITS



A great opportunity for the Minister for Multiculturalism Mark Coure MP, Melanie Gibbons MP, Mayor for Liverpool Ned Mannoun - Mayor of Liverpool and our Chair Councillor Nathan Hagarty to acknowledge - Marist Sydney Old Pupils Association Team through our Circle of Volunteers program.

These volunteers have continued supporting our vulnerable families impacted with the recent floods across Liverpool, Bankstown-Canterbury, Campbelltown LGA's delivering much needed food hampers.

On behalf of the community, families and individuals you have supported - we thank you. Western Sydney MRC is grateful for your dedication and continued compassion.

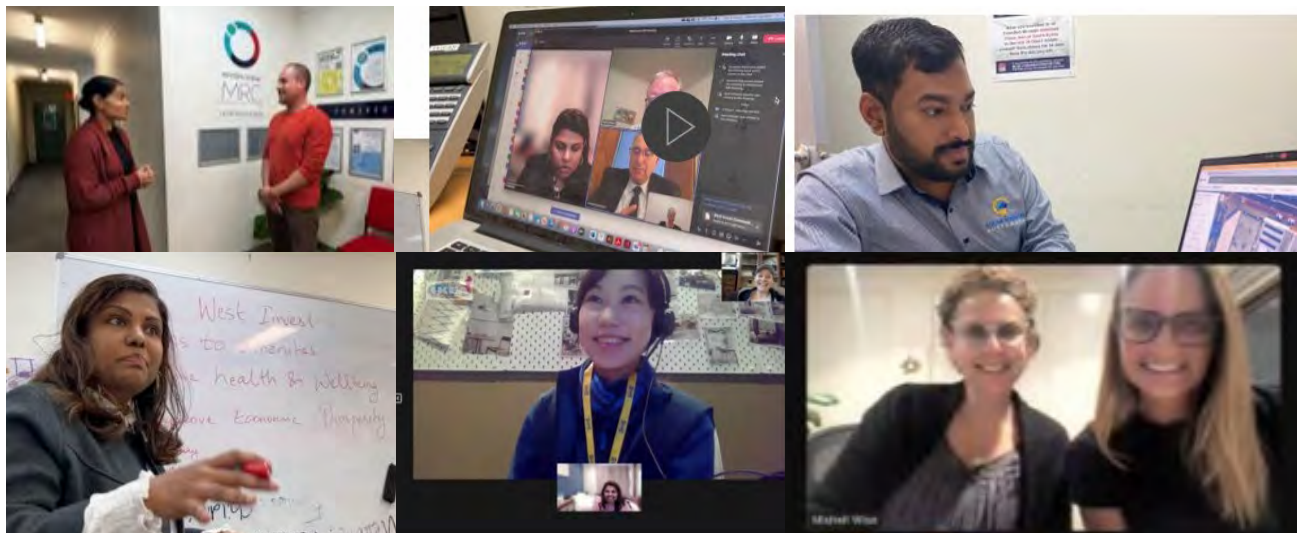
Western Sydney MRC CEO interviews Liverpool City Council Mayoral Candidates.

Ahead of Election Day, 4th December Western Sydney MRC CEO Kamalle Dabboussy sat down with five (5) Liverpool City Council Mayoral Candidates to understand their position on critical issues identified by community leaders. Liverpool. The impact that the mayor has on the community in Western Sydney has an important significance to the decisions that are made to benefit the local government area. It is important to understand each candidate's position on issues concerning the community and the strategies they will use to enrich Liverpool.



WEST INVEST PROJECT, MIHUB ENLIVEN COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE VISION

The MiHub EnLIVEN project will provide a much needed safe, accessible and community driven infrastructure



MiHub EnLIVEN is a community infrastructure project that will bring culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) people of Liverpool LGA together and enable a diverse range of activities.

According to Liverpool City Council statistics, close to 70% of Liverpool's population works outside the LGA, reflecting a long-standing structural imbalance of jobs between Western and Eastern Sydney. (Source: Liverpool City Council, 2020).

The rapid investment-driven densification of Liverpool city has led to uneven green spaces, reduced walkability and increased apartment dwelling all of which are having negative health and wellbeing outcomes for the

multicultural communities in the area. Additionally, the recent crisis related to COVID-19, floods and bushfires have demonstrated that community trust in government and other institutions have been on the decline.

The MiHub EnLIVEN project will provide a much needed safe, accessible and community driven infrastructure that will improve economic recovery, improve service delivery and promote social cohesion.

Western Sydney MRC is at the centre of diverse communities in the Liverpool LGA for the past 42 years, nurturing trust among 20,000+ clients and over 44 cultural associations, such as, African, Iraqi, Syrian, Iranian, Vietnamese and more. Whilst the decision

is still outstanding we want to acknowledge the tremendous effort in making this application possible and would like to pay special thanks to Mishell Wise and Shellie Conway from Conway, Ben Armstrong from atiyah and Anruo from Ikea Business Team.

"Supporting people to access a comprehensive range of services will offer substantial benefits such as financial independence, improved mental and physical health outcomes, and a fuller experience of community in South Western Sydney." Community Leader

VISITORS

ENGAGING POLICY MAKERS POST LOCKDOWN

"...in the longer term, we've got to invest in the west." Chris Minns



Chris Minns MP and Stephen Kamper MP joined Councillor Nathan Hagarty in leading the discussion into how future decision-making policies needed to be formulated.

Western Sydney MRC CEO Kamalle Dabboussy facilitated a candid interview that asked questions concerning the recovery of Western Sydney. These questions were curated directly from the local community leaders who have been working tirelessly on the frontline of the Delta outbreak in South West Sydney.

Policy Officer Dr. Archana Voola presented the findings from the Western Sydney MRC's Pulse Report as one of many highlights of the visit. As an organisation, having rigorous survey data to outline concerns of the refugees and migrant families during the stay-at-home order was crucial to bring authentic voices to the foreground as well as the presentation adding weight to the suggested recommendations.



Watch the full interview on YouTube
<https://youtu.be/dgtogiH52QE>

PATHWAYS TO BELONGING

Volunteer Jamal runs weekly sessions supporting communities to apply for citizenship. The majority of our community members begin to study, learn and practice for their citizenship soon after they arrive. Our new community members value their place in Australian society, and the goal of citizenship is one that is a tangible sense of belonging. 'Settlement is a long-term investment into the future of Australia and an opportunity for Government and providers to nurture that investment,' said Kamalle. Jamal's own experience allows him to be one of the best teachers and mentors we know.



FINANCIAL CRISIS ON THE HORIZON... EMERGENCY RELIEF AT ALL TIME HIGH

Western Sydney MRC has seen a significant increase in referrals for temporary visa holders and those seeking asylum throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, intensifying since the end of June 2021 in line with the Delta outbreak in South West Sydney.

In particular, the requests for support have been for emergency housing support for large families at risk of homelessness. Temporary visa holders are ineligible for the Settlement Engagement and Transition Support (SETS) program and are often left with limited support. Wherever possible temporary visa holders are supported through Western Sydney MRC's Emergency Relief program and casework support; however, having limited capacity to meet the increasing need. Through the previous funding from Multicultural NSW for supporting temporary visa holders, Western Sydney MRC found that the majority of clients supported had complex needs and required ongoing case management to help them alongside the delivery of Emergency Relief support.

Impact

Through this program, we have assisted multiple clients with food vouchers used to support families with purchasing groceries, fruits and vegetables, baby needs (such as nappies, creams and formula) and clothing.

Referrals

The Jesuit Refugee Service referred a family of 4 to the Emergency Relief Temporary Visa Program for assistance with rental arrears. On subsequent assessment, our caseworker identified that the family had not left their two-bedroom flat for a prolonged time and were very isolated. We made internal referrals to our parenting program, and the client reported that attending the program

benefited her in interacting with other new parents and exchanging information about parenting, including challenges. The program also supported the children's social and physical development through social connections and fine and gross motor activities alongside parental education around key milestones.

An issue of concern that has been identified through this program are women that have entered Australia on a Spousal Visa who are vulnerable to being threatened with their partners citizenship. The support provided is a band-aid solution and that once this program finishes these clients will once again be at risk of homelessness. A major concern is the mental health of those that are already suffering from PTSD, exclusion and discrimination.

Future solutions

The lasting impacts of the pandemic's isolation and lockdown are now becoming more noticeable. Additional wraparound services are required to respond to complex and varying client needs. The additional funding from Multicultural NSW has allowed us to reach the most vulnerable client base. A sector-wide response and collaboration are welcomed to support longer-term solutions and outcomes. How can we work collaboratively to increase our impact footprint? How do we leverage our skilled sector-wide initiatives to reach more individuals and families out of site?



IN THE MEDIA

Meanwhile, Ms Haywood said the MRC's small team has been struggling to deal with the many questions and queries for help from clients, particularly around mental health, during the current lockdown.

"We are receiving many questions around vaccine hesitancy, and overall people are feeling more depleted," she said.

She said she would like to see more funding and support for the community leaders and groups volunteering extra time to conduct community outreach.



Rachel Haywood (bottom left) with members of the team at Western Sydney Migrant Resource Centre in June. Source: Facebook/westernsydnymrc

Western Sydney MRC
625 followers
6mo · Edited ·

We love it when mainstream news media engages directly with us and our communities. Thanks Feng Guo for the strong advocacy and consultation provided to Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC) last night. ...see more



Rep
issu
communities

Published: Sep 26, 2021 - 12:00 Updated: Sep 26, 2021 - 12:08



For those who endured the hard lockdown in Sydney's hotspots, the long-term impact will be felt for some time. The Western Sydney Migrant Resource Centre has found distrust and mental health are two of the biggest issues stemming from lockdown. Report author, Archana Voola says it will take time to rebuild trust and a sense of unity in greater Sydney.

COVID-19 lockdown with Sydney hotspots, new report

ABC Western Sydney / By Maryanne Taouk

Posted Tue 28 Sep 2021 at 5:06am, updated Tue 28 Sep 2021 at 7:09am



Help keep family & friends informed by

COVID failings in hotspots



The Western Sydney Migrant Resource Centre has released a report on attitudes to the lockdown in south-west Sydney. (AAP: Mick Tuckey)

A new report from a... of the failings...

VIDEO: Lockdown impact on Western Sydney likely to linger, report finds

Posted Tue 28 Sep 2021 at 7:23pm



Lockdown impact on Western Sydney likely to linger, report finds

Pulse of South West Sydney CALD communities

Amplifying voices during COVID-19

SEPTEMBER 2021

As a fissure between the western suburbs and the rest of the city, it won't just heal with restrictions ending, it will grow, and distrust grows," Dr Voola said.



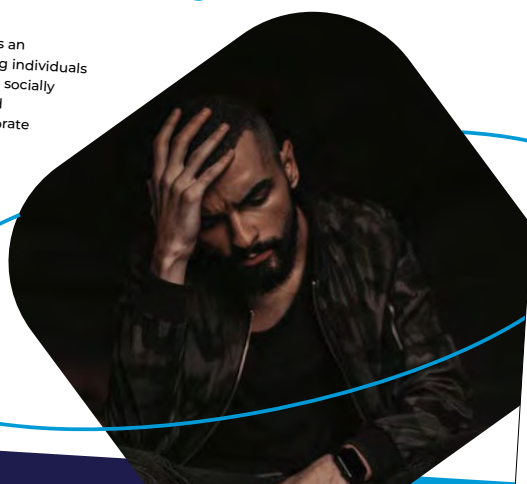
The lockdown has left many scars in Western and south-west Sydney, report author Archana Voola says. (Supplied)



Emergency Relief Support and Services

About us

Western Sydney MRC is an organisation supporting individuals and communities to be socially connected, empowered and informed. We celebrate diversity and everyone is welcome here.



01 Staying at home versus having a home

02 Conflicting norms of 'family' and 'household groups'

03 Vaccination is driven by access, messaging and digital literacy

04 Trust and social cohesion in a crisis

05 Co-designing CALD community connections

PULSE OF SOUTH WEST SYDNEY CALD COMMUNITIES

Continued from front page

These deep insights have been drawn on to develop recommendations that can be practically actioned now and more strategically applied in the long term. By using a framework of five priority service areas, the recommendations provide nuance and opportunities for replication and scale. The recommendations have been listed as 'Practical Initiatives' and 'Strategy' so that multiple stakeholders can engage with them. The practical initiatives are specific and focussed allowing for rapid adoption by practitioners (such as health professionals, social workers, police) serving at the front line in the SWS communities, especially with vulnerable cohorts.

The strategies, on the other hand, are boarder in remit to be employed by policymakers, politicians and think tanks planning future recovery and repair post lockdowns and during a transition from pandemic toward normalcy.

Special thanks to the Community Leaders that supported the launch of this report, Basim Shamaon JP, Ihlam Dawoud, Joshua Karras, Tu Le, Bashar Hanna OAM, Najla Turk and to the staff that made this report possible through client interviews.

Read the full report

wsnrc.org.au/resources-research-reports/



Taking the pulse of South West Sydney

Amplifying voices during COVID-19

Tuesday 28th
September 2021
1.00pm - 2.30pm

6 well-respected community leaders will present to the policymakers the short term and long-term effects of the current pandemic. Western Sydney MRC will facilitate the meeting and provide the qualitative data to support community leaders and their concerns. The full report will be made available after the session. Additionally, recommendations and a report summary of the data collected by Western Sydney MRC will be released to the attendees. Register today.



Mental Health & Wellbeing



Employment



Families



Aged Care



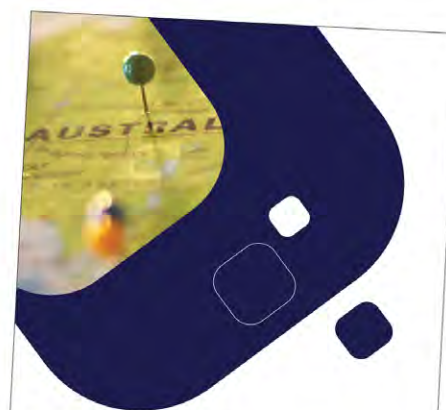
Social Cohesion



Taking the Pulse of South West Sydney.

Amplifying voices during COVID-19

Read our report



Pulse of South West Sydney
CALD communities

Amplifying voices during COVID-19

SEPTEMBER 2021

"MY TIME WITH THE MRC HAS BEEN FULFILLING AND MEANINGFUL AND HAS MADE ME A BETTER PERSON... I AM FOREVER GRATEFUL."

"I was initially motivated to apply to share some of the knowledge and experience I have gained over the years as a lawyer."

"The vision and mission of the Western Sydney MRC are close to my heart, and little did I know that I would come to gain a new family in the form of fellow board members and staff whom I got to know well over the years.

Over these three years, I have gained a sense of perspective that I did not have before. I have gained practical experience as a director and as a Chair. I have implemented these skills to the benefit of the future growth and prosperity of the organisation.

I have been reminded of the importance of community and giving back, and I will continue to do so moving forward. My time on the board has taught me how much more gets done when people work together and how critical a good team dynamic is for better decision-making.

While I am sad that moving to the United States means I can no longer partake in board meetings, my time with the Western Sydney MRC has been fulfilling and meaningful and has made me a better person. For this, I am forever grateful.

I wish to send a message of love and support to the Western Sydney Community and the clients we support - the MRC exists solely to serve and empower, and your strength and resilience have been a true inspiration."

Western Sydney MRC Board Director, Feng Guo Esq.



Civic Spotlight, Behind the Scenes

SOUTH-WEST SYDNEY COMMUNITY LEADERS STAY INFORMED AND CONNECTED

In keeping with our mission to empower, inform and connect the diverse communities in Liverpool and surrounding areas, Western Sydney MRC in partnership with CORE CS, Metro Assist and SSI organised the South-West Sydney COVID-19 Rapid Response targeted Community Leader meeting on July 8, 2021.



The COVID-19 community leaders meeting stemmed from similar meetings held in 2020 to engage multicultural community leaders on COVID 19 messaging and communication within multicultural communities. The initiative is a recognition of the important role that community and religious leaders play, as trusted and influential individuals that provide important COVID-19 messaging to their community.

A true participatory event, the meeting had representatives from various branches of the Government – NSW Health, Multicultural NSW, NSW Police, and local MPs as well as representatives from over 250 community leaders representing local businesses, charities, religious groups and cultural community groups. All in attendance with the genuine intention to ensure the local community can navigate the current surge of the virus, Government expectations and everyday life.

In the opening address CEO of Western Sydney MRC Kamalle Dabboussy said 'COVID-19 does not see ethnicity, language, religion or politics, and that we want informed communities, with understanding and cooperation, hence this forum.

Key areas of discussion in the meeting were anchored in the questions raised by the local community responses surrounding the virus itself, livelihoods, care responsibilities, mental health and policing. Dr. Jan Fizzell from NSW Health highlighted the quick and contagious nature of the COVID-19 Delta variant infecting whole households.

Key messaging there was to ensure that people leave their homes only for essential reasons. This messaging was met positively by the participants who wanted to know how and what information they can take back to their families, friends and larger community groups. Specifically, messages around wearing masks, understanding vaccines, accessing vaccination sites, partnering with multicultural doctors, video messaging from leaders in various languages and creating more Facebook live content.

This meeting provided a powerful platform for the South-West Sydney community to directly raise their voice and self-advocate for issues concerning their every life in a safe and trusted environment. The policing deployment was an issue raised by community members and addressed by Assistant Commissioner Tony Cooke.

NSW Police reiterating that the bulk of the police deployed are from the South-West Region who are trained in engaging with multicultural communities and are part of ongoing Police support and enforcement to ensure our communities remain safe.

The Premier reiterated that her government's goal is to ensure the messaging to diverse groups community is effective. It was a positive meeting, with many participants expressing their gratitude to the organisers.

THANK YOU TO OUR STAFF OF 2021-2022

Admon Yokhana
PeerLink Connector

Adriana La Spina -
Aged Care
Coordinator

Andrea David -
Senior Caseworker

Anna-Marie Kanaan
Service Manager

Dr Archana Preeti Voola
Policy Officer

Darren Chan
Youth Worker

Dhafir Muhsin
Encompass
Coordinator

Fatin Alrawi
SETS Caseworker

Gizem Berberoglu
Youth Worker

Iylene Antoniou
EnCompass
Connector

Kamalle Dabboussy
Chief Executive
Officer

Kim McCausland
Acting Service
Manager

Lina Rehayem
PeerLink Connector

Maria (Karameli) Manouso
Office Manager &
Company Secretary

Marina Mandoukos
Marketing
Coordinator

Mary Hilmi
Family & Domestic
Violence Worker

Michelle Perera
Settlement Team
Leader

Monineath (Jess) Roth
EnCompass
Connector

Moshtari Wakili
CALD Family
Program
Coordinator

Nadia Bouchti
Community
Engagement Officer

Natalie Pauls
SETS Caseworker

Noora Jasim
Receptionist

Pio Macri
Family & Children's
Program
Coordinator

Rachel Haywood
Marketing &
Communications
Manager

Rosaria Raco
CHSP Project
Officer

Setayesh Noor
Women in
Settlement
Employment
Coordinator

Shuman (Iman) Partoredjo
Community
Cohesion
Coordinator

Sophia Strickland
Executive Assistant
to CEO

Syed Sakib
Pathway Project
Officer

Sana Al-Ahmar
SETS Caseworker

Tahereh Kargar
SETS Caseworker

Taylor Lemmon
Administration
Officer

Yordanos Dagne
Emergency Relief
Worker

Zinah Al-Haidari
Youth Worker

Casual Staff

Aseel Khalaf
Childcare Worker

Marija Hvalica
CHSP Care Worker

Michelle Ashton

CHSP Care Worker

Shahad Al-Majidi
Receptionist

Suhad Khalaf
Childcare Worker

Wafaa Hovey
CHSP Care Worker

Xuan Thi Bui
Childcare Worker

Casual Citizen Researchers

Abby McGrath

Amal Dib

Dhafir Muhsin

Jonah Naja

Meyer Nashed

Yawar Ifen

CRISIS COMMUNICATIONS

Western Sydney MRC welcomes opportunities to collaborate in the implementation and support

Continued from front page

Our key recommendations are to:

1 Expand the range of languages in which crisis communications are disseminated. Tailor messages in simple ways using images, text, audio and video

2 Implement a dedicated media infrastructure for South/ Western Sydney, subsidised by the government (newspapers, radio, social media and TV) to enable tailored and trusted messaging to CALD communities;

3 Develop public health campaigns and wellbeing infrastructure in partnership with trusted local community-based organisations to ensure visibility of CALD communities in communication planning and delivery;

4 Employ strength-based and empowering strategies when addressing CALD groups, especially from vulnerable backgrounds normalising their diverse CALD family structures, living arrangements and cultural values;

5 Proactively include CALD communities in crisis communications, planning and integrating them with emergency management systems for tailored response and recovery.

Read our full submission here:
wsmerc.org.au/improving-cald-crisis-communications/

EMPLOYMENT SUCCESS THROUGH COVID-19



Through the COVID-19 lockdown restrictions, many people faced uncertainty and clarity on the future that lay ahead.

At Western Sydney MRC our MiWork employment program continued to operate and facilitate training online to support those who were registered in the program. The MiWork employment program aims to assist individuals in identifying their skills and interests and begin career pathways towards success. The program is designed to create strategies that generate employment opportunities. This program will provide career and further education advice for the betterment of your future.

FIDA'S TOP TIPS ON EMPLOYMENT

- Don't lose sight or focus on your goals.
- Make sure you show up – the MiWork employment program was a big part of my success.
- Even when you are surrounded by uncertainty, keep your faith and keep trying.
- Reach out to your social networks for support and direction – my cousin introduced me to the program initially.

After spending weeks with a profile on seek.com, Fida knew she needed additional assistance with gaining employment in Australia.

Since her arrival in November 2020, she had spent the time settling her 4 children into school and setting up her home. Fida decided to look at her employment opportunities in Australia after focusing on settling her children to new life in Australia. Unfortunately, when Fida was ready to focus on her own aspirations, COVID-19 swept the nation with hard lockdowns and restrictions. Despite this situation, she was determined to gain employment and equip herself with the tools she needed to make that a reality.

While in lockdown, the MiWork employment program continued to operate. Syed delivered weekly zoom sessions, alongside one-on-one coaching. This allowed Fida to continue building her capacity in the employment sector while lockdown took place.

While working together, Syed and Fida worked on a plan to find employment in the retail pharmacy industry. Over 6 weeks, our pathways officer delivered sessions highlighting interview skills, writing a successful resume and cover letter, and other ways to find work aside from the online recruitment platforms available.

Once this process was completed, Fida hit the pavement with confidence. She approached her local pharmacy retail stores with her resume and cover letter in tow. In just a few weeks Fida had an interview and was given a trial period to commence her employment. Now Fida has a full-time job and is relieved that she can finally start focusing on attaining accreditation as a pharmacist in Australia.

'When I got the job, my entire family was celebrating for me, it was such a good feeling! I was concerned about finding work during such a hard time when everyone was losing hope, but working with Syed and having him as a sounding board kept me going.'

All Employment enquires, partnerships and contact can be made to Syed via email at syed@wsnrc.org.au.

BRINGING THE YOUNG VOICE TO THE TABLE

Why, how and where to next? During the COVID-19 Delta outbreak in NSW in September 2021, there were devastating consequences across different demographics. One segment of the population continued slipping through the cracks, young people from migrant backgrounds.



Recent research on youth and COVID-19 impacts documents 'labour market scarring', wherein young people's pandemic induced unemployment could be prolonged making it harder for them to re-enter the labour market. Young people, including those born overseas, are bearing the brunt of COVID restrictions, particularly in the hospitality and retail sectors.

The webinar was a fantastic opportunity for the youth to get accurate information from medical health professionals who work in the local areas such as Liverpool Hospital.

Our Community Development Coordinator Nadia Bouchti has been working on building and nurturing these connections. Bringing together medical experts who are culturally competent and linguistically diverse is no small feat. Such collaborations are built on trust and deep community connections which the local organisations have nurtured over the years.

The primary takeaway from this youth engagement is the need for a platform to empower, inform and connect.

We believe in the agency of the youth to make the best possible decision for themselves relying upon facts and figures

When we come out of the lockdown, what supports would youth require? – Income supports, Mental Health and Employment Pathways.



In addition to the loss of jobs, lockdown restrictions and police presence, there is a vast amount of misinformation regarding vaccinations circulating in our youth communities. Direct engagement with youth, specifically in the South West Sydney region, highlighted the need for a platform where they could come to the table, register their concerns, get responses to their queries and be visible.

Another Step Forward in Community Collaboration

The Iraqi Australasian Medical Association and Arab Council Australia came forward with the support of Western Sydney MRC to organise a 'Youth COVID-19 Vaccine Information Session'. The webinar was codesigned to answer migrant young peoples' questions around COVID-19 directly from health professionals and community leaders.

rather than opinions and myths. Enabling platforms specifically designed to address young people's concerns are much needed due to misinformation, disinformation and vast information coming from different directions.

Therefore, having culturally competent and linguistically diverse professionals like doctors & mental health counsellors answering specific/ complex questions while providing explanations could be better understood during an online session.

Bringing the youth voice to the table is essential as we start planning for life after lockdowns that is inclusive and just.

Visit our website to download the youth consultation summary.

**Authored Gizem Berberoglu
& Dr. Archana P. Voola**

HARMONY MAKES SMALL THINGS GROW



**HARMONY
WEEK**



On Thursday, 17th March 2022, Community leaders, members, health professionals, Government representatives, staff and friends joined for our second Community Leader Harmony Dinner. Following a very successful 2021 event, we decided to come together again.

Held at Hammurabi in Fairfield Heights, the event acknowledged our community leaders, allowing key stakeholders and officials to recognise the valuable contribution and support future participation and collaboration.

Harmony Week celebrates Australia's cultural diversity. This year's theme is 'Everyone Belongs'. Happy Harmony

Week 2022 from Western Sydney MRC and CORE Community Services - it's about inclusiveness, respect, and a sense of belonging for everyone.

The event was opened with a Welcome

to Country from Uncle Tony Scholes/Donovan Chairperson from Gandangara Aboriginal Land Council.

We acknowledged community leaders through a short ceremony where various VIPs gave out our 2022 recognition pins.

A message of support and acknowledgement was played via video from Minister Alex Hawke.

In attendance VIPs this year included Multicultural NSW CEO Joseph La Posta, Guy Zangari MP, Anne Stanley MP, Chris Hayes MP, Paul Lynch MP, Deputy Mayor Councillor Dai Le,

Assistant Commissioner NSW Police, Anthony Cooke, Senior Medical Adviser for NSW Health, Dr Jan Fizzell and CEO of SWS Local Health District, Ms Amanda Larkin and Settlement Service International CEO, Violet Roumeliotis.

Joint Master of Ceremonies, Davy Nguyen and Rafal Ganni made everyone feel welcomed at ease and a joint speech by CEOs Kamalle Dabboussy and Juana Reinoso as well as a special acknowledgement to Chris Hayes MP by both organisation's chairs, Yvonne Santalucia, CORE Community Services and Nathan Hagarty, Western Sydney MRC.

With over 20 cultures and 29 community organisations represented, the night was a visual melting pot of Western Sydney.

Special mention to Nadia Bouchti, Community Development Officer and Rachel Haywood from Western Sydney MRC and John Buraho, Acting Service Manager and Murshid Amer from CORE CS, for their ongoing commitment to the community and organising the evening.

Special thanks to the community leaders interviewed and highlighted as part of the community spotlight.



VOLUNTEER IMPACT

5539

BASED ON 47 WEEKS JULY 2021 - JUNE 2022

volunteer hours

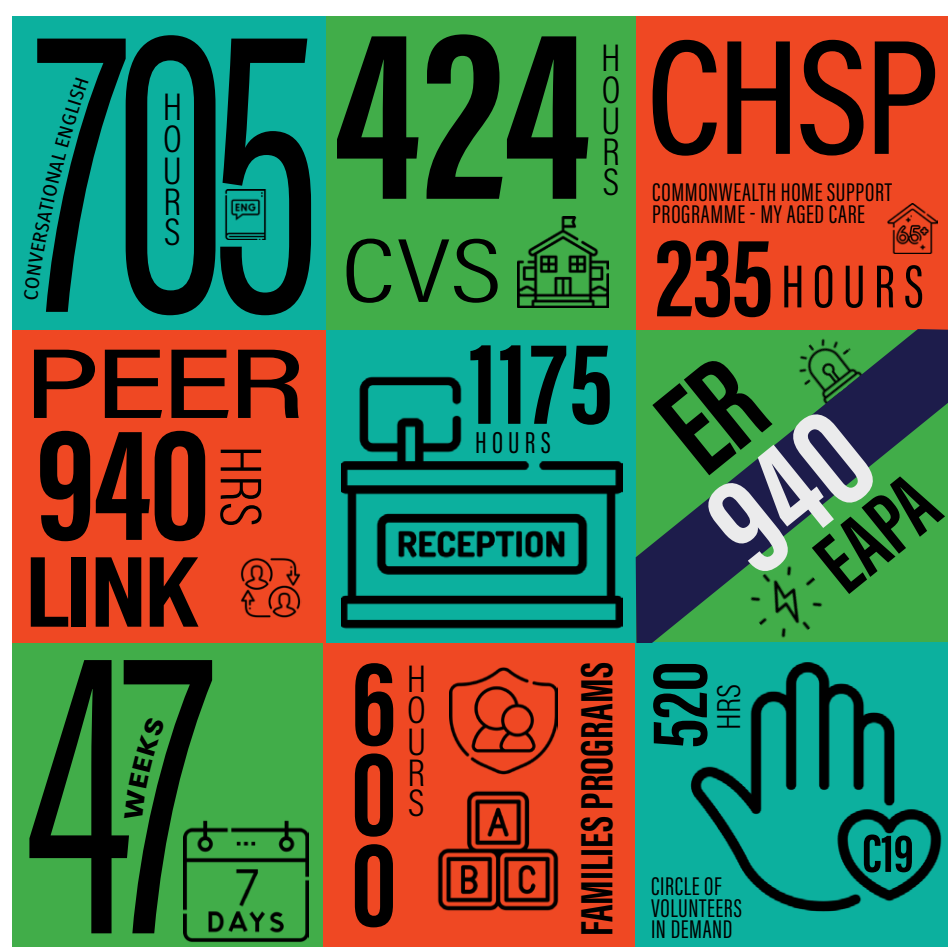
CVS is celebrating 30 years of community connection this year, so it's only fitting we reflect on the people who make it all possible – our volunteers. Our volunteers make a difference in the lives of many by supporting programs for our CALD communities, making these programs continue to be inclusive and accessible to those who need them most.

Volunteers have continued that community connection in a year when many have experienced increased loneliness, mental health or financial stress.

Working in the community sector is hard work, but it's work that fills our volunteer team with endless passion and positivity.

There are many other notable staff member stories that we cannot mention, but we thank all of our amazing staff members for their dedication and commitment, setting the example for us all to follow.

When we help others in our community or give our time to a cause we value, we also give back to ourselves.



TO YOU WE SAY THANK YOU

Abby McGrath	Imam Al-helli	Noora Jasim
Admon Yokhana	Isabella Smythe	Noura Tegoan
Ali Al Mahdawi	Jamal Al Mindwy	Phuong Bui
Alice Guirguis	Jamil Khuri	Prashanthi Raviraj
Amal Shijar	Jehan Al Galmash	Rahim Sahan
Amanda Orellana	Julie Adamson	Ramsen Shallow
Aneesa Takyan	Juliet Warda	Riam Nasir
Angela Robayo genes	June Sun	Rita Chaloub
Ardwan Alkuheli	Khalid Fenjan	Romilda Philips
Arkan Yousef	Kloud Gardner	Sandra Carina Virga
Azhar Yeswo	Lamyaa Rahi	Sarah Shabo
Basma Koro	Mahal Rashid	Shams Adam
Candy Mathews	Maral Ibrahim	Sheenagh Dabbagh
Carol Sprod	Maria Valdes	Simran Pillay
Clara Bucarey	Mary Gardner	Suha Abood
Diana Adam	Mim Saraya	Uncle Malcolm Maccoll
Duaa Alwahed	Mirvet Al Zuhairi	Veronica Zapata
Erum Adnan Khan	Mona Dawoud	Vevyan Mansor
Faiza Khan	Nadia Al Anzi	Vivienne Harb
Farida Hashim	Nadine Abou-Daher	Wan Wen Li
Fatema Mayahi	Natalia Moreno	Yamamah Abbood
Fouzi Jamhour	Niam Saeed	Yordana Dagne
Georges Kilzi	Nieta	Zahra Alhassani
Guadalupe Alvarez	Noor Rashid	Zinah Al-Haidari
Ilisapesi Coskun	Noor Abdelwahd	Zunilda Navarro

Board of Directors

Councillor Nathan Hagarty - Chairperson
Helen Wortham
Feng Guo
Vijhai Utheyan
Myee Gregory
Dr Amad Mtashar
Rola Hijwel

Finance & Audit Subcommittee

Helen Wortham – Chair
Jerel David - External Advisor
Vijhai Utheyan - Board Director
Myee Gregory - Board Director

Compliance & Risk Subcommittee

Feng Guo - Chair
Farabi Chowdhury - External Advisor
Dr Amad Mtashar - Board Director
Rola Hijwel - Board Director

CEO Compensation Subcommittee

Rola Hijwel - Chair
Councillor Nathan Hagarty – Board Chair
Gaurav Singh - External Advisor

COMMUNITY WELLBEING

COMMUNITY MENTAL HEALTH, FUNDAMENTAL TO OUR FUTURE

As part of the mental health response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Australian Government is providing funding to support access to services for vulnerable people in the community who may be disproportionately impacted by the pandemic.

This included funding through Primary Health Networks to support the enhanced delivery of targeted mental health services to culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities.

The Background

From July 2020 onwards, CORE CS and Western Sydney MRC have consulted with Community Leaders from the Fairfield and Liverpool area on the impact of COVID-19. These discussions raised community members' mental health and wellbeing as one key priority. There was a strong consensus that mental health and wellbeing should underpin most activities delivered to multicultural communities within their organisations, particularly post COVID-19.

Since the dawn of history, different peoples have contributed to different branches of social cohesion, across cultures separated by large distances.

July 2021

The following project proposal was developed based on our engagement and consultation with community

leaders. Community Leaders volunteer their time to support their communities. This project also aims to recognise and partially reconcile their expertise in supporting them to implement programs within their communities.

As phase one of the initiative, BrandUnity delivered workshops covering mental health literacy, self-care, 5 ways to wellbeing, and a strength-based approach to planning and community support. The co-designed activities were then designed by the leaders in partnership. Western Sydney MRC's Community Development Officer Nadia provided ongoing support for the scheduled activities.

A strengths-based approach empowers and supports peoples' independence, wellbeing and ability to make choices and control their own lives. The strength-based approach allows people to see themselves at their best, to truly see their value. It's about recognising people's history, hobbies, interests, strengths and skills and connecting them with what matters. This can lead to more meaningful contact with others and increased confidence to take action and responsibility, which can lead to other positive changes.



PICTURE PERFECT SAYS THE AUSTRALIAN ARAB CULTURAL FORUM



Picnic and landscape painting On Saturday, January 29, 2022, the Australian Arab Cultural Forum held its event entitled: Day of Joy, at Chipping Norton.

The event was attended by many CALD community members and community leaders from Iraq, Syria, Egypt, Lebanon, Jordan and Africa.

Even though it was a hot day, the attendees were all engaged with the painting activity and each one took time to learn and try to paint their own landscape, everyone was in harmony and joy through participating in the painting workshop, singing traditional songs, participating in cultural conversations, and eating lunch on one table with joy and love.

Amira Hassan





MENTAL HEALTH, A COMMUNITY RESPONSE



The Australian Mesopotamian Cultural Association have produced two educational videos in Arabic, subtitled in English, to highlight PTSD triggers, how to look after your well-being, and how to seek professional intervention when needed.

The Australian Mesopotamian Cultural Association have produced two educational videos in Arabic, subtitled in English, to highlight PTSD triggers, how to look after your wellbeing, and how to seek professional intervention when needed.

The video engaged local members to act, gain the endorsement of the entire production, and engage with local mental health professionals.

The production engaged eight community actors, one local mental health professional, a local Artistic director firm and a local visual production business. The production process took two months. The videos were posted on social media platforms for public viewing.

The videos were widely accepted by many members of the Western Sydney local community, and we have received positive feedback, including group watching and online discussions.

**Australian Mesopotamian Cultural Association,
Bashar Hanna**



youtu.be/UlufJ4VgGLI

617 views

youtu.be/Vkq69DAFgcg

331 views

FINDING MEDITATION AND MINDFULNESS MOMENTS

Sumer Association for Culture and Arts (SACA) organised a Meditation Day in partnership with Conscious Whispers community group.



MINDFULNESS MEDICATIONS BY SACA AND CONCIOUS WHISPERS

The project is organised by SACA and partnered with the Conscious Whispers community group in its delivery. The management committee were representative from both groups.

The two groups are mainly Arabic-speaking CALD communities.

The event was run in both Arabic and English by facilitator Hamsa Abboud. The event was widely advertised through the SACA network, and Western Sydney MRC supported circulating the event within the other communities. 27 adult women and 27 children attended, in addition to 5 volunteers who helped support running the activities.

93% want a second event.

Hiring the Library venue meant it would be less than the estimated budget, so the group decided to use the extra fund to hire a qualified entertainer from within the local Liverpool area, which was a bonus.

Feedback from the participants highlighted the high standard of the sessions, with 93% wanting a second event.

Nawfel Alfaris

CHALDEAN COMMUNITY DAY OF WELLBEING

The Wellbeing Day happened in Chaldean League Hall in Mount Druitt



CHALDEAN LEAGUE

Our community members had the opportunity to reconnect after a long time of lockdown, we played games and danced to Chaldean music, and the community members were so happy to spend these happy moments with each other and with the people who were supporting their community during lockdown.

The community members were excited and engaged with the games and with the questions we asked especially the ones related to the citizenship test as they said it's an opportunity to revise and test their knowledge not only to pass the test but to have knowledge about their second home Australia.

The speakers shared many funny stories with the community members, the room full of laughs, and joy. It was an opportunity for the community members who have been heavily impacted by COVID to share their feelings with others. Appreciation awards to doctors and community organisations who supported us, were distributed, signed by our president and local MPs.

Maisoon Yalda

THE MANDAEAN WOMEN'S UNION IN AUSTRALIA



Opening the exhibition by Fairfield Mayor, MPs, Mandaean religious leader in Australia, Community leaders, community organizations, Core Community Services, members of Fairfield resident and Al Iraqi TV which documentary the event.

Community members had a chance to exhibit their art and craft that helped their mental wellbeing, such as drawing, handmade jewelry, candles, Mandaean wooden religious symbols, folkloric figures and laser print, Attendees have been going around the participant exhibits and they were expressed their admiration for the exhibits and the talents of the participants

Traditional music by DJ and singer, the participants and The Mandaean Women's Union Committee shared dance and fun together. The event was also covered in ALAHAD Newspaper, Facebook and by Fairfield City Police Area Command.

Nedhal Amir

MANDAEAN AUSTRALIAN COMMUNITY CULTURAL CLUB

A much needed retreat for the cultural club, recharge, reconnect and re-centre.



Group of 20 women spent 3 nights together, it was part of networking, sharing the stories of the hardship they went through and how they dealt with it.

Resilience, Lessons learnt and mental health discussion. Activities included cooking competition and sharing health cooking recipes, mediation- breathing sessions, walking, swimming and a yoga session.

Sharing perspectives and approaches to situations was one activity that was valued by all. Relieving and sharing of enjoyed past experiences, took the group back to many memories they treasured. Almost all of the women would welcome an opportunity to attend such an event again.

Asia Fahad



AFRICAN COMMUNITY MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING

The African Mental Health Forum was an opportunity for African community leaders, influencers, and experts to unpack mental health and wellbeing from a community perspective.

AFRICA HEALTH AUSTRALIA BRINGS YOU

COMMUNITY LEADERS FORUM 2022

The Mental Health and Wellbeing of the African Community during the COVID-19 Pandemic

- 1 Keynote Speaker**
Dr Cidi Olujie
Director of Psychology
Central Coast Local Health District.
- 2 Breakout room**
An opportunity for experts and African community leaders and influencers to unpack mental health and wellbeing from community perspectives.
- 3 Q&A Panel**

REGISTER TODAY
24th January 2022
6.00pm - 7.30pm
Register online:
<https://bit.ly/3rrX14L>

africahealthaustralia.com.au

For more information contact us:
info@africahealthaustralia.com.au Or message us directly on Facebook

The Forum featured an expert Clinical Psychologist and experienced breakout session facilitators. It was also participatory and engaging conversation for African community leaders and community influencers.

The forum was attended by community leaders from the following communities:

- Igbo
- Nigerian
- Ghanaian
- Rwandian
- Mauritius
- Kenyan



The outcome of the forum will be available to over 300 people. In addition to the Forum, we have created Mental Wellbeing videos in English, Arabic, Igbo and Swahili that are being distributed on social media channels like Facebook and Instagram as well as on our website for easy-to-understand messaging to address cultural hesitancy and stereotypes and barriers to accessing services.

The messaging is informed by the key issues identified in the forum.

Dr Vincent Ogu

COMMUNITY HEART - FIJI DIASPORA WOMEN'S ALLIANCE INC



As part of the Fiji Diaspora Women's Alliance Inc event, they codesigned a Memorial Service for Fijian Families who lost loved ones due to COVID-19.



This event hoped to bring the community together to honour and pay respects to our loved ones lost due to COVID-19, as many could not mourn together and follow our cultural protocols.

Coping with loss and grief in this way was a foreign concept. The community felt incomplete—the Fijian community usually mourn for 100 days, connected and supported. On the 100th day, they remove their mourning clothes and celebrate the life of their loved ones through a celebratory gathering with food, music, stories, tears, and laughter of the loved ones passed.

During the pandemic, isolation rules varied and changed, with minimal information in language, creating fear and confusion. As with many communities, they felt overwhelmed and unsupported. The strength and support they usually gained by coming together were missing. Creating a memorial day in a safe and informed way allowed the community and families to mourn and farewell to their loved ones, alongside celebrating their life achievements.

The Memorial Service was held Saturday 12th of March at the Hilda Davis Centre in Liverpool. Aboriginal Elder Uncle Russell, Elder of Darug Nation, delivered a Welcome to Country. Reverend Vinniana Ravetali officiated the service alongside Reverend Vinniana Ravetali and was ordained by the Uniting Church in Australia.

The Canterbury Fiji Parish Choir lead the service through Fijian Hymns.

We took this opportunity to hand out testing kits and food hampers donated by SWSLHD, with accompanying in-language resources on test usage, FDWA resources, and Lifeline flyers on grief and counselling, further supporting the community to be safe and informed.

We provided light refreshments of homemade cupcakes, slices, scones, and cassava cake with various drinks. The community came together to end the celebration with a song led by the Canterbury Fiji Parish Choir as a sign of lifting the mourning process. With over 50 in attendance, the initiative positively brought people together.

It was the first for a Fijian Community Event in Sydney to have an Aboriginal Elder present, and we felt proud to be informed and inclusive. Many messages of thanks were received from those who attended.

Western Sydney MRC staff, management and board directors would like to extend our condolences to those that lost a loved one during the pandemic. Grief is a heavy weight to carry and it's also an anchor in love. May the memories you hold bring a beacon of light in the toughest of times.

Emily Koroj, Monique McPheeter and Lizzie Wong
Fiji Diaspora Women's Alliance Inc.

ENCOMPASS PROGRAM HUGE WIN FOR COMMUNITY

Western Sydney MRC has been successful in its application to employ Multicultural Aged Care Community Linkers through the Federation of Ethnic Communities of Australia (FECCA) EnCompass program. With over 198 referrals into MyAgedCare, we think this is a huge step forward and a huge success.

EnCompass Connectors will support older people through contacting and engaging with MyAgedCare. Staff are to work primarily with Arabic, Khmer and Assyrian communities throughout SouthWest Sydney. As AgedCare is a key priority area in our strategic growth plan, this was a critical project that we focused on, and its success is the reaffirmation of the need there and the organisation's capacity. The EnCOMPASS program is evaluated regularly through monthly reports by the University of Charles Darwin. Western Sydney MRC has met its financial requirements and runs to a very detailed budget.

Through late 2021-2022 the fantastic team focused on engaging and connecting with communities. Community Festivals were a great opportunity to connect with community members alongside information sessions, workshops and cultural events in Arabic, Khmer and Burmese. Our broadcasts included Arabic promotion on 89.5 FM, Assyrian radio, SBS Khmer and SBS TV.

We are proud of our achievements this year, helping those in need and raising awareness about our services. Our multicultural team worked hard to deliver relevant and accessible services for clients from all walks of life.

'The unique situations, experiences and preferences of different CALD groups and individuals vary greatly. Notwithstanding this diversity, a number of challenges emerge consistently in the literature for some older CALD groups, including socio-economic disadvantage; English language barriers; cultural translation difficulties; lack of exposure to Australian services and systems; and } lower rates of access to services.

(Fecca website - accessed Nov 22).

A range of future program initiatives to allow for additional financial and time allowances will support EnCOMPASS connectors to help clients with MyAgedCare follow-ups further. Many clients' access to services is delayed due to various complex and specific needs. Failed out-of-hours connection attempts are a cause. Many individuals require carer support, translations and trusted individuals to support conversations. Through the early months of 2022 we have worked hard to encourage our Khmer-speaking clients to explore the Aged Care Service, but progress could be faster.

Their existing links to aged care services and family members play a significant part

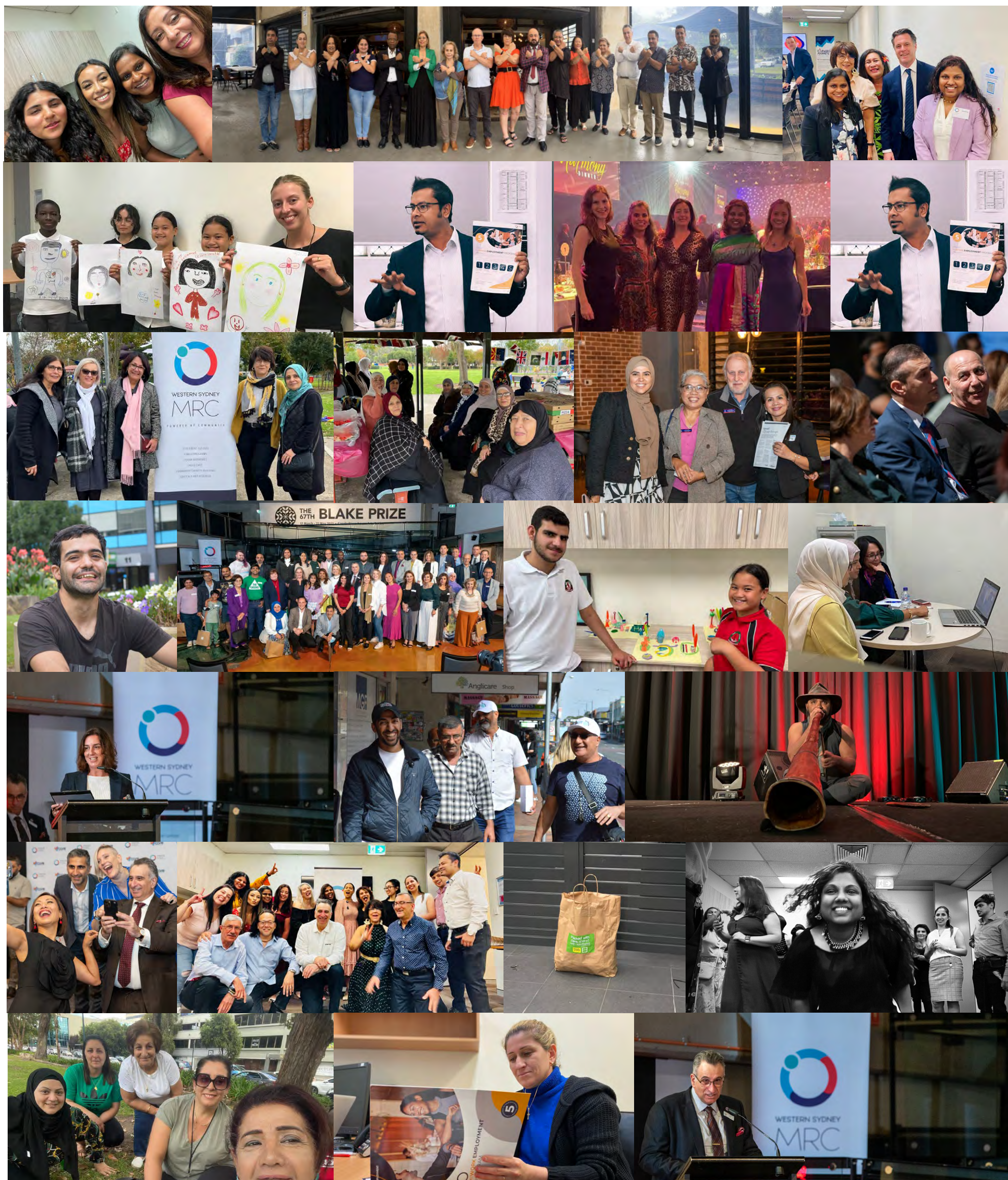


in building trust and connection amongst certain cultural groups and mainstream services. It is imperative that individuals feel connected with their cultural identity while exploring new service streams, especially in aged care or receiving aged care services. Seminars, town halls, community education and training, ongoing exposure, and discussion around normalised service access are recommended.

It is clear that within the reported reach and number of carer referrals, there may be extended work to identify carers and target specific family/extended family members to encourage carer respite and change the stigma attached to aged care support.

Considerations are to be made around investment in aged care infrastructures within local community-based organisations, focusing on providing services in the context of the whole family. Including specialised transport, CALD representation in service provision agencies and interagency) alongside the training and recruiting of culturally competent and sensitive positions to deliver MyAgedCare are options to explore.

FAVOURITE MOMENTS

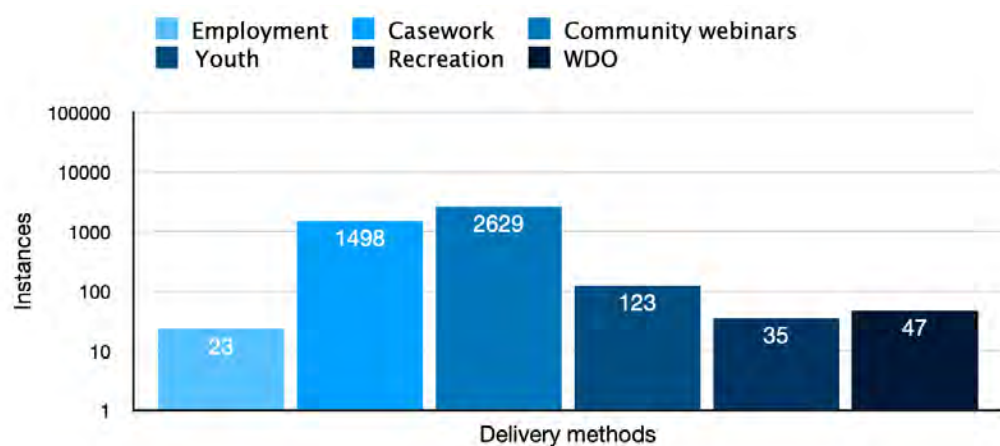




SETTLEMENT ENGAGEMENT AND TRANSITION SUPPORT PROGRAM

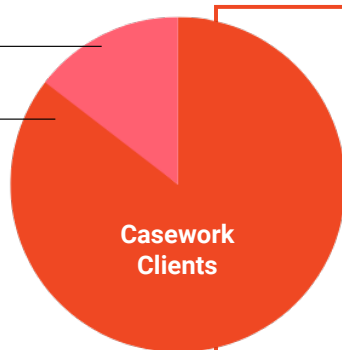
The SETS program aims to equip and empower humanitarian entrants, other eligible permanent migrants and their communities to address their settlement needs, in order to improve social participation, economic well-being, independence, personal well-being and community connectedness.

INSTANCES OF SUPPORT TOTAL 4308



Medium Intensity

Low Intensity



Intensity of services holds multiple contributing factors identified through a needs assessment model. Areas of analysis include mental and physical health and wellbeing, English, education and employment, living circumstances, financial security, independence, family relationships, and aspirations.

SUPPORT STILL STRONG DESPITE DISTANCE

With extended interruptions to in-person service delivery for our Cultural Connect playgroups and parenting programs, Western Sydney MRC continued to make weekly kindness call and playgroups moved to outdoor settings. Delivery of school readiness kits were given to children starting kindy.



INSTANCES OF SUPPORT TOTAL 2832

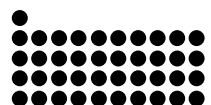


GROUP ACTIVITIES

Education and Training



140
casework sessions



41
clients enrolled in TAFE



70
referrals to parenting programs

English Acquisition



29
clients through 38 sessions

Youth



278
13-25 year support casework and groupwork

Housing



143
casework sessions, 30 referrals

Employment



50
young people, 10 zoom group sessions

Wellness



35
clients learning to swim

Justice



76
Legal Aid referrals

CONTINUOUS CIVIC ENGAGEMENT FOR OUR DIVERSE AND MULTICULTURAL COMMUNITIES

This event was part of a 'Civic Spotlight Initiative' that Western Sydney MRC has been spearheading over the last few months. Undertaking four community consultations across 3 LGAs and a youth consult, the Western Sydney MRC identified localised issues and distilled into priorities within a position paper launching next week.



In keeping with our mission to empower, inform and connect the diverse communities in Liverpool and surrounding areas, Western Sydney MRC held its 6th Meet the Candidates' Forum last night (May 4 2022) in the lead up to the Federal Election later this month - May 2022.

"We have organised 'Meet the Candidates' event for the last 20 years and have led continuous political engagement for our diverse and multicultural communities." Said Western Sydney MRC CEO Kamalle Dabboussy.

"The Civic Spotlight is the culmination of months of work by the MRC, working with locals and partner organisations to strengthen local participation in the democratic process." Western Sydney MRC Chair Councillor Nathan Hagarty said.

"It's vital that our communities

make sure their voices are heard and their votes counted. Local candidates and parties need to understand the issues that matter most to locals," said Mr. Hagarty.

Attended by 11 candidates and six political parties were represented across the three electorates of Fowler, Hughes & Werriwa and constituent questions covered many issues, including affordable housing, racism, employment, connection to CALD communities, and diversity representation, among others.

(In order of introduction at the event)

Jenny Ware – Liberal
Anne Stanley – Labour
Sam Kayal – Liberal
Apurva Shukla – Greens
Victor Tey – Liberal Democrats
Tony Nikolic – United Australia Party
Kristine Keneally - Labour
Dai Le – Independent
Lela Panich - United Australia Party
Avery Howard - Greens
Peter Runge – Liberal Democrats

In addition, multiple Councillors from Fairfield and Liverpool, joined the event alongside Senator Hollie Hughes and Liverpool City Council Mayor Ned Mannoun. SBS Radio, Assyrian Community Radio, Muslim Community Radio, Mandaean Media, ABC and Allora Media were on hand to interview candidates throughout the event. MC and moderator Julia Feder, Deputy Editor of ABC News, floored the questions.

Casula Powerhouse Arts Centre was the perfect space for the event. Attendees represented many community groups, including African, Sudanese, Iraqi, Italian, Syrian, Iranian, Indian, Vietnamese, Chaldean Catholic, Assyrian Orthodox and Mandaean and over 40 community leaders attended. With over 900 people reached through our Live-stream on Facebook.



A recording of the event:
fb.watch/cORB5afriC/



CIVIC COMMUNITY TOOLKIT



The event concluded with the launch of the Community Civic Participation Toolkit, available at wsmrc.org.au/civic-spotlight/, co-designed by Western Sydney MRC and FECCA, Kamalle Dabboussy was joined by Dr Janecke Wille, Senior Research and Policy Officer from FECCA, to outline the toolkits' vision and development.

It guides newly arrived refugee and migrant groups to understand civic participation processes such as setting up an organisation, lobbying politicians, gaining support and fundraising, community leadership and advocacy. It provides information on institutional processes such as the levels of government in Australia, the democratic system of government, the house of representative and references to translated materials.

Most uniquely, this toolkit provides a snapshot of some of the local government areas of Western Sydney to highlight the unique strengths and challenges of the local CALD communities. Western Sydney MRC is currently seeking funding to translate this toolkit. We are exploring opportunities to support the translation of this toolkit.

Access the toolkit on our website
wsmrc.org.au/civic-spotlight/

RECIPE OF THE YEAR

Ingredients

Dried chickpeas: Dried chickpeas (that have been soaked in water for 24 hours) are an important ingredient that will give your falafel the right consistency and taste. (Tip: I usually add about ½ teaspoon of baking soda to the soaking water to help soften the dry chickpeas.)

Fresh herbs: fresh parsley, cilantro, and dill are key to this authentic recipe.

Onion: Yellow onions, but white or red onions would work.

Garlic: for best flavor, use fresh garlic cloves.

Kosher salt and pepper: to taste.

Spices: cumin, coriander, and a little cayenne pepper for the bold authentic taste.

Baking powder: this is what gives falafel an airy, fluffy texture (many recipes skip this, causing the falafel to come out too dense.)

Sesame seeds: these are optional

Directions

1. Soak chickpeas for 24 hours. Cover them in plenty of water and add baking soda to help soften them as they soak. The chickpeas will at least double in size as they soak. Drain very well.
2. Make mixture - add chickpeas, fresh herbs (parsley, cilantro, and dill), garlic, onion, and spices to food processor and pulse a little bit at a time until the mixture is finely ground. It's ready when the texture is more like coarse meal. Refrigerate (important.) Transfer the falafel mixture to a bowl, cover and refrigerate for at least 1 hour or overnight.
3. Form patties or balls. Stir in baking powder and toasted sesame seeds, then scoop golf ball-sized balls and form into balls or patties
4. Frying is the traditional way to cook falafel and yields the most authentic and best result. Heat the oil on medium-high until it bubbles softly (your oil should be hot enough around 375F.

