



2023/2024

# ANNUAL REPORT

Empowered. Informed. Connected.



WESTERN SYDNEY  
MRC





# **2023-24 ANNUAL REPORT**



# ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

The Western Sydney Migrant Resource Centre proudly acknowledges the traditional custodians of the lands on which we work and serve the community, the Cabrogal people of the Darug Nation and the Dharawal people, and we pay our deep respect to elders past and present.

We recognise that the first peoples of Australia have a deep and continuous connection to Country and that it is our responsibility as newcomers to care for each other and this place we call home.





# ANNUAL REPORT

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# WSMRC CELEBRATING 45 YEARS OF CONNECTING COMMUNITIES



## About Us

Established in 1979, Western Sydney Migrant Resource Centre is a for purpose, place-based, community organisation serving migrant and refugee communities in South West Sydney and the Macarthur Region.

We provide a range of services and tailored support to ensure that all individuals who come to Australia to start a new life feel respected and valued as Australian community members, and have access to the support they need to reach their full potential.

Recognising that we cannot do this work alone, we prioritise working in partnership to ensure the delivery of best practice, innovative, and well-coordinated services.

## Vision

Our vision is for an inclusive Australia where diversity is celebrated.

## Mission

Our mission is to champion our diverse communities to be empowered, informed, & connected.

## Values



**Collaboration**



**Trust**



**Equity**





# WSMRC KEY PROGRAMS & STATS FOR 2023-2024

1043+

SETS Casework Clients

1088+

Youth Interactions

2593

Hours of Flexible & Centre-based Respite

2000+

Volunteer Hours

480+

Group Information Sessions, Activities & Events



DLAP - Driving Lessons



Legal Aid - Legal Advice Sessions



Settlement Engagement Transitional Support



Domestic & Family Violence Support



Specialised Intensive Support - Tier 3



Youth Programs: MiWay & COMPACT



Playgroups & Parenting Support



Multicultural Elder Connect



CHSP Flexible & Centre-based Respite



Aged Care Volunteer Visitor Scheme



Women's Mentoring & Employment Support



Emergency Relief & EAPA Vouchers



# A MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

## A YEAR OF TRANSFORMATION AND GROWTH

As we celebrate our 45th year of service to the communities of South West Sydney, we reflect on another year of meaningful progress at WSMRC. 2023/24 has been a period of significant transformation, as we have navigated leadership transitions, evolving partnerships, changes in funding, & shifts in policy with agility and resilience. These changes have only strengthened our commitment to the communities we serve, and I am grateful for the dedication and expertise of our Board and incredible staff throughout this transition.

I would like to extend our sincere thanks to Mohan Gunesekera, Acting CEO, & Nathan Burbridge, Interim CEO, for their service and leadership in 2023/24. Their stewardship during a time of change has been invaluable. We are equally excited to welcome Maeve Brown as the new CEO of WSMRC. Maeve brings over 19 years of experience in the community sector, along with a profound commitment to social justice and empowering migrant and refugee communities. Under her leadership, we are confident in WSMRC's continued growth and impact.

WSMRC continues to provide high-quality programs that have a tangible and positive impact on individuals, families, and communities in South-West Sydney and the Macarthur region. Our programs not only meet the immediate needs of those we serve, but also empower them for long-term success. We have made significant strides in ensuring the sustainability of our programs, including maintaining our ISO 9001 accreditation through to 2027, and meeting all deliverables set by our funding bodies.

Notably, the combined strength of the CALD Women's Leadership Project & the MiLivelihoods program has been a resounding success, offering leadership training, vital employment pathways, and mentoring support for women from CALD backgrounds. These efforts are helping women gain economic independence and integrate more fully into the workforce, with excellent outcomes for both participants and their families.

We are also excited for new partnerships on the horizon that will contribute to greater social cohesion and youth empowerment through the MNSW COMPACT program, connect young women and girls to sports and recreation programs through the Department of Health and Aged Care funded Play Our Way program, and of course, build on the strengths of the new Western Sydney Region Settlement Consortium, to deliver collaborative and innovative SETS services and programs funded by the Department of Home Affairs.

As we look to 2025 and beyond, our commitment to our strategic goals remains unwavering. We are focused on ensuring the sustainability and growth of WSMRC, striving to serve our communities with excellence for years to come. This includes strengthening our operational planning to enhance program delivery and outcomes, and investing in staff development to maintain a skilled and motivated team. While much work lies ahead, we are confident in the capabilities of our team, the quality of our work, the resilience of our communities, and the leadership of our Board and Management. Together, we will build on our successes and continue to move forward with purpose and vision.



**Rola Hijwel**  
Chairperson





# WSMRC

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS



Rola Hijwel,  
Chairperson



Anita Kumar



Helen Worthham



Mustafa Agha



Michael Cullen



Elisa Chian



Jerel David

WSMRC is guided by a diverse and committed Board of Directors who provide strategic direction, oversee policies, and ensure compliance with legal and regulatory requirements.

To efficiently address specific aspects of governance and operations, the Board has established the following subcommittees:

### Finance & Audit

To oversee financial reporting, budgeting, and ensuring adherence to financial regulations.

### Risk & Compliance

To monitor compliance with legal and regulatory requirements, upholding ethical operations.

### People & Culture

To nurture a supportive organisational culture and evaluating the impact of WSMRC's services and programs on its clients and staff. It focuses on enhancing the wellbeing and effectiveness of both the team and the beneficiaries.

# A MESSAGE FROM THE CEO

## STRENGTH AND UNITY IN DIVERSITY

WSMRC has a long and trusted history of leading responsive and innovative settlement service delivery in South West Sydney, particularly in relation to ensuring that people from migrant and refugee backgrounds have the information and support they need; access to opportunities and the tools for self-empowerment; and are well connected within the local community. I am humbled and excited to join the dedicated team at WSMRC in support of this vision and mission.

In the short time since joining WSMRC, I have been greatly impressed by the expertise, care, and commitment of our team; the volume and the range of services that we provide; and the strength of the partnerships we have developed. I'm looking forward to exploring the many opportunities available for further collaboration and growth, while continuing to build upon the quality and the reach of our existing programs.

I've also enjoyed getting to meet so many of the people and community groups we support. The South West and Macarthur regions are home to a rich diversity of cultures, a wide range of skills, creativity, and life experiences, all of which are a tremendous asset to Australia. However, it's crucial to recognise that, despite these strengths, the potential of these communities is often overlooked. This year has also been particularly difficult for many of those we serve, and their resilience deserves greater acknowledgment.

Families are struggling with the cost of living and are increasingly seeking support through emergency relief. Highly skilled and experienced people from migrant and refugee backgrounds remain unemployed or underemployed, even in industries where there are skills shortages. Domestic & Family Violence continues to impact all communities, but the intersecting vulnerabilities and barriers to accessing services puts CALD women, particularly women on bridging and temporary visas, at greater risk. Communities are also hurting and feeling disconnected as conflicts and forced displacement overseas continues without any end in sight.

But, this is part of the reason that Migrant Resource Centres were formed over 45 years ago: to respond to the concerns of migrant and refugee communities, to ensure that their voices reach decision makers, to assist people through crises and challenges, and to provide people with the support they need to become empowered, informed, better connected, and ultimately thrive.

I am honoured to be entrusted with the role of CEO at WSMRC and I look forward to continuing this vital work in collaboration with staff and volunteers, the Board, partners, supporters, and the communities we serve.



**Maeve Brown**  
CEO



# CELEBRATING OUR STAFF & VOLUNTEERS



WSMRC is grateful to be staffed by a team of caring, highly skilled, professional bilingual workers who are dedicated to supporting our clients and communities across their settlement journeys and across the different stages in their lives. We would also like to thank Purpose Accounting, Source HR & Source Legal, SDJA Accounting, and Active IT for their ongoing support and expertise.

During 2023/2024 we provided opportunities to over 40 volunteers to gain new skills and experience for their community service career. Our volunteers were able to achieve some of their goals by finding employment or studying opportunities with the support of the WSMRC. We also had a very special Volunteer Week celebration as we organised an opportunity to our volunteers to visit the new Western Sydney International Airport.





# WE ARE GRATEFUL FOR OUR PARTNERS & SUPPORTERS

Australian Government Department of Health and Aged Care  
 Australian Government Department of Home Affairs  
 Australian Government of Industry, Science and Resources  
 Australian Government Department of Social Services  
 Australian Government Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet  
 Campbelltown City Council  
 Liverpool City Council  
 Multicultural NSW  
 NSW Department of Communities & Justice  
 Settlement Services International (SSI)  
 South Western Sydney Primary Health Network (SWSPHN)

ACON  
 Afghan Fajar Association Inc.  
 Afghan Women on the Move  
 African Australia Communities United  
 Africa Health Australia  
 Ahmadiyya Muslim Community Australia  
 Anglicare  
 Arts & Community Development  
 Assyrian Aid Society  
 Assyrian Democratic Movement  
 Assyrian Church  
 Australian Arab Cultural Forum  
 Australian Burmese Rohingya Assoc. Inc.  
 Australian Karen Organisation Inc.  
 Australian Mandaean Sports Club  
 Australian Mesopotamian Cultural Assoc.  
 Australian Red Cross  
 Babylon Chaldean Sport Club  
 Belgravia Leisure  
 Chaldean Australian Society  
 Chaldean Catholic Church  
 Chaldean League  
 Community Care Kitchen  
 Democracy in Colour  
 Ethnic Communities Council of NSW Inc  
 FECCA  
 Fiji Diaspora Women’s Alliance  
 Gandangara Local Aboriginal Land Council  
 Gymea Community Aid and Information Service  
 Headspace  
 Himyana Social Services  
 Igbo Community Australia

Iraqi Australian Christian Association  
 Iraqi Australian University Graduates Forum  
 Islamic Council of NWS  
 Islamic Women’s Association Australia  
 Khmer Community of NSW Inc.  
 Lao Oz Inc.  
 Legal Aid NSW  
 Lebanese Muslim Association (LMA)  
 Liverpool Australian Sudanese Community  
 Manda House in Australia Inc.  
 Mandaean Association of Australia  
 Mandaean Australian Community Cultural Club  
 Mandaean Media Network  
 Mandaean World Congress  
 Melkite Catholic Eparchy  
 Mesopotamian Social Group Inc.  
 MIA - Liverpool Islamic Centre  
 Multicultural Youth Affairs Network  
 Multicultural African Communities Network  
 Muslim Women’s Welfare of Australia  
 NSW Al Ahwaz Community  
 NSW Settlement Partnership (NSP)  
 NSW Refugee Health  
 Refugee Council of Australia (RCOA)  
 Saint Zaia Assyrian Language School  
 Settlement Council of Australia (SCOA)  
 South West Sydney Local Health District  
 STARTTS  
 St Luke’s Anglican Church Liverpool  
 St Mary’s Assumption Chaldean Catholic Parish  
 Sumer Association for Culture and Arts  
 Sydney Community Connect Association  
 TAFE NSW  
 The Mandaean Women’s Union in Australia  
 The Nasoraean Mandaean Association Inc.  
 Thread Together  
 Uniting  
 University of NSW  
 University of Wollongong  
 Vietnamese Community NSW Chapter Inc.  
 Western Sydney Community Forum  
 Western Sydney University  
 YCollab  
 Youth for Global Peace





# CAMPBELLTOWN OFFICE OPENING

## BUILDING FUTURES, TOGETHER IN THE MACARTHUR



In July 2023, Greg Warren MP, Member for Campbelltown, presented WSMRC with a plaque to celebrate the opening of our Campbelltown Office.

With a long history of supporting communities across South West Sydney, WSMRC will now be able to better serve clients in the Macarthur region from our Queen Street Office.

Casework, youth work, support groups, and information sessions are regularly held in the space with newly arrived clients, as well as longer term residents from migrant & refugee backgrounds accessing programs.



# SETS

## SETTLEMENT SUPPORT

Settlement Engagement and Transition Support (SETS) Service is a Commonwealth Government initiative. It aims at helping newly arrived migrants, refugees, and humanitarian entrants settle into their new communities. It provides a range of services and support to assist these individuals and families in becoming self-reliant and participating fully in Australian society.

WSMRC is a sub-contracted service provider of SETS through its consortium partnership with leading not-for profit and charity, settlement Services International (SSI).

Key services provided under the SETS program include:

- **Orientation and Information:** Essential guidance on Australian society, including legal responsibilities, education, healthcare access, and employment.
- **Language Support:** Assistance with improving English language proficiency to facilitate successful settlement.
- **Citizenship Support:** Courses to prepare clients for Australian citizenship, covering rights, responsibilities, and the application process.
- **Housing Assistance:** Support in securing suitable accommodation for individuals and families.
- **Health and Wellness Workshops:** Information on health rights and resources to promote overall well-being.
- **Social Support and Community Engagement:** Initiatives to encourage social interaction and community involvement, combating isolation and fostering a sense of belonging.
- **Cultural Orientation:** Guidance on navigating Australian customs, culture, and systems to facilitate integration.





# SETS HIGHLIGHTS

## CLIENT & COMMUNITY SESSIONS





# SETS

## DOMESTIC & FAMILY VIOLENCE



WSMRC's Domestic and Family Violence (DFV) program supports victim survivors by connecting them to the available support services, raising community awareness, and encouraging abusers to access behaviour change programs.

Key achievements of the DFV program during the 2023-2024 include:

- Conducting **7 information sessions** focussed on primary prevention
- Supporting **65 clients**
- **88 referrals made**, both internally and externally

### Rana's Story

Rana\* (*name changed*) is 25 years old and arrived in Australia in late 2021 on a spouse visa. She later fled domestic and family violence and domestic servitude perpetrated by her husband and his family.

She experienced sexual, financial, physical, verbal, and emotional abuse, social exclusion, and body-shaming by her ex-husband. Her in-laws forced her to do housework, cook for seven people daily, controlled her movements, and threatened to deport her if she questioned their authority.

In February 2024, Rana left the abusive relationship with the help of police and DV specialised service supports and relocated to Sydney, where she contacted WSMRC for support. Despite the trauma, she hoped for a better future.

The WSMRC DFV caseworker referred her to Legal Aid, Red Cross, SSI, Victim services, and Centrelink. The referrals and support letters written resulted in Rana being able to access payments from Red Cross and Victim's Service and special benefits payments from Services Australia. Rana was also able to engage with counselling support.

In August 2024, Rana was granted permanent residency, and she was transitioned to youth payment. She is now feeling safer, happier, and she has had a few job interviews. and is planning to travel overseas to visit her family.

# SETS

## PACIFIC ENGAGEMENT VISA (PEV)

### Pacific Engagement Visa (PEV) Program: Empowering Pacific Island Communities

The Pacific Engagement Visa (PEV) is a new permanent residence visa for Pacific Island countries and Timor-Leste, enhancing Australia’s ties with the region.

From February 2024, WSMRC received this opportunity through the Settlement Engagement and Transition Support (SETS) Program.

In collaboration with Pacific Island community leaders, WSMRC organised workshops and events to support Pacific Island communities, raising awareness about successfully assimilating into Australian life and culture. This collaboration promotes inclusion, belonging, and mutual respect within our diverse community.



Key initiatives included co-designed workshops for Pacific Island community members supporting new arrivals. These workshops facilitated smooth transitions, empowering communities to access vital services such as housing, employment, and education.

### Achievements:

- Delivered workshops for Pacific Island workers, including those on the Pacific Australia Labour Mobility (PALM) scheme, with positive feedback.
- Supported families in settling through housing, employment, and education services.
- Empowered communities to share success stories, excelling in education, employment, and sports.
- Hosted multi-sport tournaments and charity events, promoting physical activity, teamwork, and social support.
- These initiatives fostered empowerment and successful integration for Pacific Island communities in Australia.





# YOUTH SUPPORT COMPACT - STREET JOURNAL

The 2023/24 Street Journal project, was funded by Multicultural NSW within the Compact Program. The project involved young people from WSMRC's community contributing to an online Instagram page with the aim to increase understanding and promote trust between diverse communities in Western Sydney and service providers/government to build prepared, collaborative and responsive communities.

Throughout the project, 10 young people – labelled as 'content creators' – were recruited by WSMRC's Youth Team to design and develop an Instagram page. The young people created over 60 posts that aimed to bring the community together, inclusive of; stories about people who inspire and support them, their perspectives on current issues, and their experiences immersing themselves in cultural events different from their own.

Highlights included:

- Documenting Liverpool City Council's Lantern and Lights Festival, attending All About Women at the Sydney Opera House and supporting newly arrived young people at Treehouse Production's Forced to Flee.
- Partnering with Matavai and the Lao community to run cultural workshops for newly arrived young people
- Hosting Stories out West at the WSMRC, as facilitated by ACON
- Facilitating a Mental Health Workshop for local young people with FLYHT
- Hosting a crafting space for young people with YCollab and Democracy in Colour
- Taking a group of newly arrived young men to participate in activities with the Western Sydney Wanderers

Overall, these events and workshops brought together another 150 young people in varying capacities.





# YOUTH SUPPORT

## MIWAY

The MiWay project, funded by the Australian Government Department of Industry, Science and Resources, targets disengaged youth aged 14-18 from refugee, migrant, and culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds in Liverpool and Campbelltown.

The program aims to reduce the risk of youth involvement in the criminal justice system by offering tailored support through evidence-based, strength-based, and trauma-informed approaches. MiWay provides a range of activities, including wellbeing workshops, vocational programs, conflict resolution sessions, educational tours, creative arts, and sports activities.

Key outcomes of MiWay, include: re-engaging youth in education and vocational pathways while promoting social inclusion and community resilience. Programs like the 'Rock and Water' workshops, which focus on conflict resolution, have empowered participants to manage disputes and build positive relationships. Additionally, educational tours, such as visits to the Western Sydney Airport and local universities, provided exposure to career opportunities, helping participants make informed choices about their future.

### Key Highlights:

- **Engagement and Re-integration:** Over 24 months, MiWay has documented 1,088 interactions with young people, re-engaging them in educational and social settings.
- **Case Management:** 54 youth received personalised case management, addressing risk factors like anti-social behaviour, poor family functioning, and substance use.
- **Program Reach:** MiWay delivered 62 program sessions, covering areas like wellbeing, sports, creative arts, and skill development.
- **Improved Attendance:** Schools involved in the project reported improved attendance and a reduction in anti-social behaviour among young people who participated.
- **Community Engagement:** Events such as Harmony Week and Refugee Week fostered a sense of inclusion and strengthened cultural ties.



# CALD WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP CELEBRATING OUR GRADUATES & MENTORS



In December 2023, WSMRC celebrated the CALD Women Leadership Program graduation ceremony at NSW Parliament House. Women from diverse backgrounds who had participated in the program gathered in the prestigious Jubilee Room in the NSW Parliament House to mark the culmination of a transformative CALD Women's Leadership Program.

Generously funded by Multicultural NSW and SSI - Settlement Services International Innovation Fund, the program equipped these women with essential skills in leadership, advocacy, and mentorship for personal and professional growth. Notable guests, included the Hon. Steve Kamper MP, Hon. Jodie Harrison MP, Joseph La Posta, Charishma Kaliyanda MP, Nathan Hagarty MP, Tina Ayyad MP, Greg Warren MP and our Board of Directors who gathered to celebrate the achievements of the graduates.

Rola Hijwel, Western Sydney MRC Chairperson, noted:

*"This graduation signifies not just an end,  
but a new beginning for these empowered women.  
Their dedication and potential are truly remarkable."*

Beyond celebrating individual efforts, the ceremony honoured mentors and organisations that contributed to the program's success, including Aspire Leadership Network and Federation of Ethnic Communities' Councils of Australia - FECCA, emphasising the collective effort needed to foster growth and achievement.

The new graduates also went on to offer mentorship support to women participating in the [MiLivelihoods Program](#), which is also dedicated to assisting women who are entering the workforce for the first time in their lives or for the first time in Australia, demonstrating the power of longterm tailored support and mentorship for newly arrived CALD women as a key factor in economic empowerment.





# CHILD & FAMILIES

## CREATIVE EXPLORER

The WSMRC Child and Family Program implemented an after-school art and music program targeting Pacific and CALD students from disadvantaged backgrounds at Ashcroft Public School in Liverpool. The program aimed to provide a safe and supportive environment for students to develop their artistic and musical skills, while also fostering confidence, communication, and a sense of belonging.

### Project Goals

- To provide a safe and inclusive space for CALD children to express themselves.
- To enhance students' confidence, communication, and critical thinking skills.
- To bridge cultural heritage with community integration.
- To improve students' emotional well-being and reduce stress and anxiety.
- To empower students to realise their potential and become active community members.

### Project Implementation

The program ran for six terms from March 2023 to October 2024. Participants were selected by school authorities and received healthy meals prior to attending after-school classes. Bilingual professionals taught the art and music classes, and the WSMRC Child and Family Program Coordinator oversaw student supervision post-school.

### Project Outcomes

- Students felt more confident and comfortable expressing themselves.
- Students developed stronger communication and interpersonal skills.
- Students to appreciate their own cultural heritage and better understand the cultures of others.
- Students reported lower levels of stress and anxiety.
- Participation in the program was linked to improved academic performance for some students.

140

Program  
Participants

70

Art Class  
Participants

47

Music Class  
Participants



# CHILD & FAMILIES

## MULTICULTURAL PLAYGROUPS

The WSMRC Multicultural Playgroups are funded through the NSW Department of Communities and Justice (DCJ) Targeted Early Intervention (TEI) program, focussing on safety and wellbeing initiatives.

These playgroups offer three weekly sessions, facilitated by three experienced educators, for 15-30 parents and their toddlers. They provide a safe and inclusive space for families from diverse cultural backgrounds to connect, learn, and grow together.

### Key Objectives:

- Foster cultural understanding by encouraging families to learn about different cultures, traditions, and languages.
- Promote child development by offering activities that support children's physical, social, emotional, and cognitive development.
- Build community by creating a sense of belonging and connection among families.
- Provide resources by offering information and support on parenting, child development, and early education.
- Prepare children for school by helping them develop social skills, interact with peers, and build early literacy skills.

### Membership:

Over 115 parents, along with their toddlers, from CALD and Pacific communities have participated in the playgroup annually. The playgroup is free and open to parents and children for at least six months.

### Additional Services:

The WSMRC child and family team also provides individual assessments, advice, and referrals to other agencies for families in need. They have made 25 referrals annually for various support services, including housing, counselling, domestic violence assistance, financial support, and child development services. The team has collaborated with local services and partners to provide comprehensive support to their clients. However, challenges such as service provider waiting lists and lack of culturally appropriate services have sometimes hindered engagement with clients.

**Activities:** The playgroups offer a variety of activities, including arts and crafts, music and movement, outdoor play, sensory play, and social play. We have also provided comprehensive parenting programs, including:

- **123 Magic:** A positive discipline strategy for managing challenging behaviours.
- **Health and Wellbeing Sessions:** Information for parents and children on maintaining physical and mental health.
- **School Readiness Program:** Preparing children for a successful transition to school.
- **Children's Health and Nutrition:** Guidance on healthy eating habits and child development.
- **Kids Gardening:** Hands-on activities promoting environmental awareness and healthy lifestyles.
- **Fire Safety:** Essential information and skills for preventing and responding to fires.
- **Child Protection Sessions:** Education on child safety and recognizing signs of abuse.
- **Local Child and Family Services Promotion:** Information about available resources and support networks."





# CHILD & FAMILIES

## MULTICULTURAL PLAYGROUPS

### Mehdi's Story

Mehdi\* (name changed) was born in 2020 into an Iraqi family. He has struggled to reach developmental milestones like other children. His parents migrated to Australia in 2016 and settled in Liverpool.

Mehdi was only three years old when his mother was referred to the WSMRC playgroup.



Recognising the signs of developmental delay, the playgroup staff suggested that something was amiss. Mehdi was not responding to directions, tracking objects, or playing with toys. Instead, he would remain motionless or cling to his mother.

During the assessment with the WSMRC playgroup worker, his parents mentioned taking him to places where he could interact with other children. However, Mehdi consistently avoided engagement and would run to his mother for comfort. Additionally, his mother shared that Mehdi had not spoken a single word in Arabic or English and refused to eat or drink anything but milk.

After several days of observation, the TEI program worker approached Mehdi's mother to discuss how they could support his physical and mental development. Mehdi was subsequently referred for speech, hearing, and physical assessments.

He completed twelve sessions of speech therapy and a behaviour support program from July to September 2023. Meanwhile, his mother continued attending the playgroups on Mondays and Fridays with WSMRC. She has also been making progress in her confidence and actively participating in parenting programs and sessions. She has even made friends within her own community.

### Mehdi Today

Since September 2023, Mehdi has made remarkable progress. He is now an active toddler, babbling, giggling, and engaging with other children at the playgroup. He enjoys eating with his peers, responds to music, and listens to stories with his mother. Mehdi is playing with toys, singing, and using his voice to say "Hi" and "Bye." He is also expressing his intentions verbally.

# AGED CARE

## MULTICULTURAL ELDER CONNECT

The Multicultural Elder Connect Program (Care Finder) was initiated by the Australian Government Department of Health and funded by the Primary Health Networks to provide specialist, intensive face-to-face support for people aged 65+ from CALD backgrounds and 50+ for aboriginal and homeless people to access My Aged Care and other relevant services and supports.

The aim of the program is to improve clients understanding of the aged care system and how to access it, improve engagement with the aged care system and to coordinate supports when seeking access to the aged care system.

Support provided to clients includes but not limited to the following: assistance to understand and access the aged care system through application to services, attending meetings and assessments with clients when appropriate, and support with finding appropriate service providers.

### Key Achievements:

During the 2023-2024 financial year, the Elder Connect team assisted more than **190 new clients** to register with MyAged Care and/or access subsidised aged care services.

More than **120 clients** were supported during RAS and ACAT assessments, and assisted the majority of those clients during intake and assessment process with service





# AGED CARE

## MULTICULTURAL ELDER CONNECT



### Yusuf's Story

Yusuf\* (name changed) is 79 years old and arrived in Australia as a refugee from Iraq in 2022. He was referred to the Care Finder program through the NSW Refugee Health Services (RHS) for assistance with accessing aged care services.

Yusuf had suffered a stroke that affected his cognitive function and mobility, and he was just starting to receive proper care. The referrer advised that the client was registered with My Aged Care and was approved for entry level services, but needed assistance with finding providers and following up with the case.

The Multicultural Elder Connect Team met with Yusuf and his family to gain understanding of his situation and explained how the program can help with finding the appropriate services for his needs. The family advised that due to being new in the country and the financial limitations, they would not be able to pay the gap fee for all the services Yusuf was approved for under MyAged Care.

The Elder Connector was able to find an occupational therapy service so that Yusuf can benefit from equipment that could make undertaking daily activities a little easier. The Elder Connector then supported Yusuf during his occupational therapy assessment and with contacting the equipment supplier after the assessment so that the items could be delivered quickly to the correct address.

Since then, the Yusuf underwent a comprehensive assessment and received a Level 4 Home Care Package. The Multicultural Elder Connect Team then supported Yusuf during the intake process with the HCP provider and continues to provide support and guidance as the Aged Care system is complex and confusing at times.

# AGED CARE

## CHSP - COMMONWEALTH HOME SUPPORT PROGRAM

Western Sydney MRC has been delivering Flexible Respite (FR) services and Centre Based Respite (CBR) Services under Care Relationship and Carer Support Services service group for CHSP program since 2017.

### Program Objectives:

- Support frail older clients aged 65 years and over (or 50 years and over for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people) by delivering quality and timely planned respite services to CHSP clients, to allow carers to take a break from their usual caring duties.
- Support clients to delay, or avoid altogether, the need to move into more complex aged care by being kept socially active and connected with their community.

### Program Impact in 2023/24:

- Introduced various health sessions such as Arthritis management, Diabetes Awareness, Falls Injury Prevention, Medicine management, Strokesafe, etc. has been delivered.
- Strength training/ exercise has been introduced in as group activities. We have been getting amazing responses from the participants.

1,616	hours of CBR services delivered
977	hours of FR services delivered
37	# of clients engaged with





# AGED CARE

## CHSP - SUCCESS STORIES

### Mr Kamanai's Story

Mr Kamanai, a vibrant community member, experienced a life-altering stroke at the end of last year, which significantly impacted his physical mobility. After returning home from the hospital, he underwent six weeks of short-term restorative care. However, regaining his independence, especially his ability to walk and remain active, became his primary goal.

Recognising his determination, we introduced Mr Kamanai to our centre-based respite group, a space where individuals like him can engage in physical and social activities designed to support recovery and wellbeing.

His wife has been a constant companion, attending every session with him. Together, they have formed meaningful connections within the group, finding both joy and comfort in the weekly gatherings.

Over time, Mr Kamanai and his wife have expressed how much they look forward to these sessions, not only for the physical benefits but also for the social interaction and emotional support they've received. His progress has been inspiring, with each step reflecting his resilience and desire to lead an active and fulfilling life again.



### Mr Periera's Story

Mr Jaime Periera initially struggled to engage during his Flexible Respite services, often staying outside while his care worker focused on household chores. Feeling isolated due to a language barrier, Mr Periera showed little interest in interacting.

However, things changed when WSMRC introduced a wellness and re-ablement approach that encouraged clients to participate in activities.

With the introduction of stimulating games, Mr Periera completely transformed. He now eagerly awaits the respite visits, joining his wife in engaging activities that spark laughter and connection.

This shift not only improved Mr Periera's emotional wellbeing, but also strengthened his bond with his wife, turning respite visits into moments of joy and shared experiences.



# AGED CARE

## VOLUNTEER VISITOR SCHEME

ACVVS provides friendship and companionship to older people and helps develop social connections. It focuses on the needs of older people from particular linguistic, cultural backgrounds, with complex vulnerabilities, who may be at greater risk of social isolation.

### Placement Numbers:

The total number of placements is 40, comprising 20 Home Care Packages (HCPs) and 20 Residential Aged Care Home (RACH).

Each participant (volunteer) is expected to complete a minimum of 20 visits annually to ensure comprehensive engagement and support to the recipients.

### Overall Program Outcomes:

- ACVVS program prioritises client wellbeing and encourages in-person volunteer visits, offering support as needed.
- The program has experienced steady growth during this reporting period.
- Growth achieved through strong internal networking and referrals from WSMRC staff, as well as external connections.
- Successfully overcame challenges from the previous report, ensuring service durability through established processes.
- CALD volunteers have demonstrated resilience and kindness by addressing cultural needs during visits and sharing diverse experiences.
- Building rapport between clients and volunteers fosters gratitude and helps clients feel socially valued.





# **2023-24**

# **Audited**

# **Financial**

# **Statement**



WESTERN SYDNEY  
MRC

# WSMRC

## AUDITED FINANCIAL STATEMENT

**Western Sydney Migrant Resource Centre Ltd**  
**Directors' Report**  
**For the Financial Year Ended 30 June 2024**

The directors present their report, together with the financial statements, on the company for the year ended 30 June 2024.

**Directors**

The following persons were directors of the company during the whole of the financial year and up to the date of this report, unless otherwise stated:

- Ms Rola Hijwel (Chairperson)
- Dr Amad Mtashar (resigned during FY24)
- Ms Myee Gregory (resigned during FY24)
- Mr Vijhai Utheyan (resigned during FY24)
- Ms Helen Wortham
- Ms Anita Kumar (appointed during FY23)
- Mr Mustafa Agha (appointed during FY23)
- Michael Cullen (appointed during FY24)
- Elisa Chian (appointed during FY24)
- Jerel David (appointed during FY24)

**Principal activities**

The company is a community-based non-profit organisation established to actively and directly relieve the situation of immigrants and refugees whose social conditions render them disadvantaged.

The principal activities of the company during the financial year were:

- To ensure the quality of Western Sydney Migrant Resource Centre Ltd and programs through the efficient and effective management of the service and its projects;
- To develop and promote the resource role of Western Sydney Migrant Resource Centre Ltd to non-English speaking community groups, individuals and workers in the Liverpool area;
- To advocate for access and equity for people from non-English speaking backgrounds; and
- To identify and address the needs of particular disadvantaged groups.

**Operating results**

The surplus for the company for the financial year ended 30 June 2024 was \$338,391 (2023: surplus \$70,886).

**Auditor's independence declaration**

A copy of the auditor's independence declaration as required under section 60-40 of the *Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012* is set out after this Directors' Report.

Signed in accordance with a resolution of the Board of Directors:

Ms Rola Hijwel  
Chairperson  
23/10/2024



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Ms Anita Kumar  
Finance & Audit Subcommittee Chair  
23/10/2024



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**Western Sydney Migrant Resource Centre Ltd**  
**Auditor's Independence Declaration to the Board of Directors of Western Sydney Migrant Resource Centre Ltd**  
**For the Financial Year Ended 30 June 2024**

In accordance with the requirements of section 60-40 of the *Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012*, as lead auditor for the audit of Western Sydney Migrant Resource Centre Ltd for the year ended 30 June 2024, I declare that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, there have been:

- a) No contraventions of the auditor independence requirements of the *Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012* in relation to the audit; and
- b) No contraventions of any applicable code of professional conduct in relation to the audit.

*SDJA*

**SDJA**

*SKumar*

**Sandeep Kumar**  
Partner  
23 October 2024  
Sydney, New South Wales

Liability limited by a scheme approved under Professional Standards Legislation

**Western Sydney Migrant Resource Centre Ltd**  
**Statement of Profit or Loss and Other Comprehensive Income**  
**For the Financial Year Ended 30 June 2024**

	Notes	2024 \$	2023 \$
<b>Revenue</b>			
Revenue from contracts with customers	4	3,758,880	4,001,272
Other income	5	213,342	406,083
<b>Total revenue</b>		<b>3,972,222</b>	<b>4,407,355</b>
<b>Expenses</b>			
Administration and other operating expenses		(217,526)	(329,023)
Audit fees		(15,900)	(13,200)
Bad debts		-	(2,050)
Catering		(12,264)	(12,851)
Cleaning		(55,564)	(44,766)
Computer expenses		(54,770)	(73,966)
Consultancy/facilitator fees		(82,134)	(69,433)
Depreciation		(431,188)	(263,161)
Electricity		(43,526)	(32,334)
Employee benefits expense		(2,153,252)	(2,374,345)
Insurance		(73,452)	(69,410)
Finance costs		(101,247)	(75,244)
Lease payments for short-term/low-value expenses		(7,757)	(48,472)
Legal fees		(58,707)	(381,967)
Motor vehicle expenses		(4,743)	(21,619)
Program costs		(259,708)	(458,360)
Repairs and maintenance		(16,983)	(28,759)
Telephone and internet		(30,447)	(33,136)
Travel and accommodation		(14,663)	(4,373)
<b>Total expenses</b>		<b>(3,633,831)</b>	<b>(4,336,469)</b>
<b>Net surplus for the year</b>		<b>338,391</b>	<b>70,886</b>
Income tax expense		-	-
<b>Surplus after income tax</b>		<b>338,391</b>	<b>70,886</b>
Other comprehensive income		-	-
<b>Total comprehensive income</b>		<b>338,391</b>	<b>70,886</b>





**Western Sydney Migrant Resource Centre Ltd**  
**Statement of Financial Position**  
**As at 30 June 2024**

	Notes	2024 \$	2023 \$
<b>Assets</b>			
<b>Current</b>			
Cash and cash equivalents	6	1,911,692	1,844,186
Trade and other receivables	7	381,048	600,372
Other assets	8	57,016	56,988
<b>Current assets</b>		<b>2,349,756</b>	<b>2,501,546</b>
<b>Non-current</b>			
Trade and other receivables	7	52,033	52,033
Property, plant and equipment	9	227,633	263,080
Right-of-use assets	10	968,391	1,307,240
<b>Non-current assets</b>		<b>1,248,057</b>	<b>1,622,353</b>
<b>Total assets</b>		<b>3,597,813</b>	<b>4,123,899</b>
<b>Liabilities</b>			
<b>Current</b>			
Trade and other payables	11	194,214	528,486
Provisions	12	140,698	155,010
Lease liabilities	13	286,396	247,347
Contract liabilities	14	236,038	512,494
<b>Current liabilities</b>		<b>857,346</b>	<b>1,443,337</b>
<b>Non-current</b>			
Provisions	12	141,273	139,302
Lease liabilities	13	739,130	1,019,587
<b>Non-current liabilities</b>		<b>880,403</b>	<b>1,158,889</b>
<b>Total liabilities</b>		<b>1,737,749</b>	<b>2,602,226</b>
<b>Net assets</b>		<b>1,860,064</b>	<b>1,521,673</b>
<b>Equity</b>			
Accumulated funds		1,860,064	1,521,673
<b>Total equity</b>		<b>1,860,064</b>	<b>1,521,673</b>











# CONTACT US



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Social Media



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