

the
multicultural
network Inc.



ANNUAL
REPORT

2020



"Strengthening the capacity of our diverse communities"

What We Do



'Strengthen the capacity of our diverse communities'



How We Do It



TMN uses a collaborative community development approach to support, resource and advocate for our diverse communities in South West Sydney.



TMN wishes to acknowledge the Daruk and Eora people as the original inhabitants of the Bankstown and Canterbury area and the owners of the land where our organisation stands.

CONTENTS

Our Vision **Page 2**

TMN Management Committee **Page 3**

TMN Staff and Consultants **Page 3**

REPORTS

Chairperson's Report **Page 4**

Executive Officer's Report **Page 5**

Multicultural Community Development Project (MCDP) **Page 8**

SWS Sector Support and Development Officer (SSDO) **Page 13**

SWS Multicultural Access Project (MAP) **Page 16**

Multicultural Access & referral Service (MARS) **Page 19**

Sector Support & Development Officer (SSDO) **Page 22**

The NSW Gathering **Page 24**

Acknowledgments **Page 34**

OUR VISION

The Multicultural Network's vision is to empower and strengthen the multicultural communities of South West Sydney.

A secular non-profit independent community based and managed organisation, The Multicultural Network Inc. (TMN) works to support, resource, and advocate for the diverse communities in South West Sydney to bring about positive social change and improve the lives of the most vulnerable.

TMN represents the diverse interests of the community amongst the wider Australian society, working towards an inclusive harmonious and rich relationship with indigenous, Anglo-Australian and ethnic communities. TMN values its relationships with all communities which are built on mutual respect, acknowledgement and support of each other's values.

The values that underpin The Multicultural Network's work are:

Equality

Regardless of creed, race, age or gender, we believe everyone has the right to the information and support they need.

Empowerment

We encourage the development of confidence and the skills people need to be self-determining in their life choices.

Community

We believe that strong healthy communities are the foundation of secure, happy people and society.

Growth

We believe that we all have the capacity to evolve, change and learn for the betterment of ourselves, community and world.

Diversity

We recognise and value our differences and believe in one inclusive society.

TMN MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

Chairperson:	Sue Huxtable-Jones
Vice Chairperson:	Layla Naji
Secretary/Public Officer:	Wafa Zaim
Treasurer:	Nga Nguyen
Ordinary Members:	Boshra Masri Lola Simmons Loubna Hammoud Anne Rogers

TMN STAFF MEMBERS

Executive Officer	Roxana Rascon (Consultant)
Multicultural Community Development Worker	Eunice Sansour (until 12/2019) Fatmata Bangura (from 1/2020)
SWS Sector Support and Development Officer/ Team Leader	Eunice Sansour (from August 2020)
Aboriginal Sector Support and Development Officer	Taylor-Jai McAlister (from July 2020)
SWS Multicultural Access Project Worker	Daniela Oliveiro (resigned July 2020)
Multicultural Access & Referral Service Coordinator	Francisca Loyola-Sandoval
Multicultural Communities Sector Support Officer	Zana Brasnovic (end of contract June 2020)
The NSW Gathering Project Officer	Taylor-Jai McAlister (resigned February 2020)
Accounts Officer	Evon Kostanti
Administration Officer	Le Pham

CONSULTANTS

Joanna Kuskey	Accountant/ bookkeeper
Con Kostanti	Onsite Computer Experts
Jenny Ettia	Website Developer
Marley Minogue	Website Developer
Petra Will-Heart	Facilitator
Yan Pin Wang	Facilitator

CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

*Sue Huxtable-Jones
Chairperson*

It is with much pleasure that I present to you The Multicultural Network (TMN) 2020 Annual Report.



Roxana Rascon, Wafa Zaim and Sue Huxtable-Jones at International Day of People with Disability Gala Night Dec. 2019

There is no doubt that 2020 has been a significant year all around the world and one that it brought new and unexpected challenges to our organisation. During its 29 years of operation, TMN has faced operational, financial and strategic barriers, but has never had to deal with a pandemic that saw staff, clients and the entire community at serious risk. COVID-19 made us draw from our combined strengths, abilities and knowledge to re-design the way we function and continue working for our communities. Although it was clear we needed to engage with clients and peers virtually, it was a great challenge to find effective ways to ensure that our communities and the sector felt engaged with us, and found us responsive to their new needs.

Perhaps the biggest challenge during this year was continuing contact with those with limited virtual skills and poor IT resources, namely the elderly and those socio-economically disadvantaged. In our work with ageing communities, we have often identified limited knowledge on how to use the internet and access web information as one of the most significant barriers for them to access aged care information and engage services. We were able to address this by offering both, basic training IT literacy training on accessing My Aged Care online and face-to-face information sessions of the aged care program and services as well as an annual Seniors Expo with stalls, interactive workshops and ready information . However, Covid19 redefined our strategies, making them now no longer suitable. The original barrier we have overcome had now become a larger obstacle that we haven't encountered before. Older people are among the most at risk of serious Covid19 health complications and therefore the ones with most restricted social isolation rules. Face-to face interactions were ruled out and virtual workshops were not a suitable solution either. Furthermore, the restrictive isolation rules prompted the emerging of new services for the older population, including for those not receiving aged care. Meals services and phone social contacting services were available now for all, but the promotion of these services was difficult. We resourced to using ethnic radio to broadcast information; we distributed information to our networks of services to display, share and send to their clients and we encouraged families and carers to pass on information we updated daily on



Sue Huxtable-Jones and Wafa Zaim at International Day of People with Disability Gala Night December 2019

our TMNLinks community website to the older members of their family.



Nga Nguyen – Treasurer, Management Committee

The social isolation rules also saw the emergence of socio-economic pressures in families, as well as isolation, insecurity and strain in relationships. New parents were not able to continue attending much needed playgroups, toddler development activities and parenting workshops; families with school-aged children had to adapt to guiding their kids through online learning.

In most disadvantaged families, additional issues such as constrained living space, job insecurity, loss of income and an increase in substance abuse exacerbated incidence of domestic violence and limited opportunities for victims to seek help.

In view of these emerging changes we had to respond with ready information and new resources that could alleviate some of these pressing needs. We increased the volume and prioritise information in our TMNLinks website; we collaborated with local agencies to coordinate efforts and share information on crisis relief packs available to the community.

Our good governance practices, sound policies and responsive attitude towards rapidly changing needs made TMN rise above difficult times, and the united, committee and skilled Management Committee and team made us stronger and well equipped to continue functioning well during this crisis. My sincerest gratitude to all and each them, as they are the backbone this well respected organisation



EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S REPORT

Roxana Rascon
Executive Officer

This year's report is, without doubt, one that I find equally difficult and proud to write. The onset of Covid-19 at the beginning of 2020 set for me one of the biggest challenges I had to encounter as a Manager over my career. It required of me to dig deep and find rapid responses to protect the team and our clients; to setup a remote work system and then a safe environment to return to office based work; to keep the team engaged and to maintain a good team morale in times of uncertainty and isolation; to think creatively on how to continue delivering services in a whole new manner and most of

all, to reassess our communities priorities and emerging needs to ensure we deal with those first.



EO Roxana Rascon running training for MC

The first concerns that we had was to reach out to vulnerable families with young children, as we anticipated that the lockdown, the onset of employment uncertainty and the stress associated with the pandemic's social restrictions would exacerbate risk such as domestic violence, family breakdown and child neglect in vulnerable families. According to research published in *JAMA Pediatrics* in June 2020 (Falster, K et al. *Cumulative Incidence of Child Protection Services Involvement Before Age 5 Years in 153 670 Australian Children*) by the time NSW children celebrate their fifth birthday, one in seven have been identified as being at risk of significant harm. Even by the time these children turned one, about 5 per cent have been reported to the state's Child Protection Helpline. Our

Communities Builders funded project works with vulnerable families in an early intervention strategy, building parents' capacity to be resilient under adverse circumstances, support their children's healthy development and to keep themselves able to overcome barriers. Our response to minimize risk was to continue liaising with these families and providing them with information and tools in the form of educational packs with sensory/emotional/cognitive development toys, exercise book and materials. The packs also contained information to access crisis and domestic violence services, income support and food hampers.

The sector collaboration in the face of new challenges was at its best. Services were open to network, coordinating responses and organizing quick interagency referrals for an immediate response to the crisis. We also received great support from Khal Assfour, Mayor of City of Canterbury Bankstown who early on the onset of the pandemic initiated contact with us and a few other key agencies to discuss the best way to coordinate efforts and see how the Council could help. It was inspiring for me to see these networks at its best.

The 2019 Senior's Expo was great success, with over 450 seniors attending the event. The Expo is a great opportunity to facilitate aged care information to those who are 65+ but still independently living at home. We bring together aged care services and initiatives to stay well and healthy, attracting this way a growing number of people who are aging well but can do with a bit of help at home. We ran a survey to identify how effective the Expo was to reach out to those with little or nil information on the Commonwealth Home Support Program (CHSP) and how to access My Aged Care. Almost half of the respondents didn't know the program or services they could obtain.



EO Roxana Rascon at International Day of People with Disability Gala Night December 2019

We launched a new version of our Support Services website in the second part of 2020. The website provides up-to-date critical resources and information for aged care services, assisting them to implement best practice in their service delivery and maintain worker's knowledge and professional development. The new site has over 650 members.

Students on placement at TMN always bring us opportunities to develop future professionals but they also give us their research, work and commitment, making this arrangement so mutually beneficial and rich. This year, one of our placement, Madina Sherzai, worked on researching loss of acquired languages in CALD elderly. This was important evidence for us to demonstrate that bilingual staff should be recognized as essential in care of elderly CALD even if the person was fluent in English all their lives, something we feel we need to continue advocating for.

I would like to take the opportunity to thank our funding bodies, Department of Communities and Justice (MCDP grant) and Dep of Social Services (SSDO, MAP and MARS grant). Dep of Communities and Justice has been a great partner in assisting us to improve children's development and strengthen parents to be resilient and build self-resourced families. We want to thank the Department for their 5 year commitment to our funding and the ongoing support we receive from our Commissioning and Planning Officer, Jamil Halaby.

I also thank our Department of Social Services Grant Managers Russell Brooks and Hermine Partamian, whose guidance and information help us implement our projects to the best of our abilities.

My gratitude also to City of Canterbury Council for their partnerships, support and project grants and to Bankstown Sports Club for their unrelenting support with our Senior Expo events.

Finally, I am profoundly grateful to my Management Committee and TMN Team. All and each of you inspire me every day with your commitment, knowledge, creativity and team spirit. You make TMN a strong, professional, caring and responsive organisation



SWS SECTOR SUPPORT AND DEVELOPMENT OFFICER
SWS MULTICULTURAL ACCESS PROJECT OFFICER
SWS ABORIGINAL SECTOR SUPPORT AND DEVELOPMENT

Eunice Sansour(SWS SSDO)
Daniela Oliveira (SWS MAP)
Taylor-Jai McAlister (SWS ASSDO)

The South West Sydney Sector Support & Development Officer (SWS SSDO) contributes towards the implementation of best practice in the aged care sector by sharing resources, research, findings and new developments with services

to inform their strategies. Both these roles are funded by the Department of Health. During the past year, a number of activities have been combined, as well as undertaken interchangeably by the aged care sector support officers with existing resources available.

The South West Sydney Multicultural Access project (SWS MAP) provides support, resources and training to the aged care sector so they can empower older people from CALD backgrounds to better access services and support.

Since March 2020, COVID-19 restrictions on gatherings and social physical distancing requirements meant we had to adapt our approach to working with the sector. We continued to disseminate information via our Support Services newsletter and through our networks, as well as convening and participate in meetings and interagencies via ZOOM and MS team online platforms.

Weekly newsletter, forums and information sessions

The TMN Sector Support and Development team resources and manages the South West Sydney Ageing and Disability Support Services website: www.supportservices.org.au.

In early 2020 following discussions with the TMN's SSD team and external expert's report, it was evident the website was in need of a software upgrade. Due to our existing platform's software expiring in June 2020, we decided to build a new website with features more adequate to our current needs. The COVID-19 pandemic resulted in an influx of updates from The Department of Health and it was important to deliver these messages as efficiently as possible.

TMN relaunched the Support Services website in July 2020, with the primary focus on providing information to the aged care sector, following the changes in the CHSP funding support. There are currently 654 active members who receive weekly newsletter updates of information and resources available to the sector. Since September 2020, there has been a 5.74% increase in membership, and continue to encourage members through online tutorials and resource guides in how to use their Support Services' accounts to post content on to the website.

Following the changes occurring to the CHSP sector support funding, TMN with the South West Sydney Ageing and Disability forum executive felt strongly about the continuity of support to disability services. The Disability Forum and sector support was transferred to Macarthur Disability Network (MDN), a disability services peak organisation with the capacity to continue this work.

Training sessions

Best Practice forums with a focus on Wellness and Reablement were delivered in collaboration with Inner West SSDO and Canterbury- Bankstown City Council in November 2019. A session was also conducted by the SSDO at the **Ageing Well Conference** in Macarthur with over 120 people in attendance.

The SSDO also coordinated the **Introduction to Supported Decision Making for Aged Care Providers** workshop by the Trustee Guardian NSW in November 2019, in partnership with the Canterbury -Bankstown City Council. We are also

planning to deliver a summarised version of the workshop at the SWS Ageing Forum in the near future.

You Ain't Seen Nothin' Yet! 2020 CHSP Futures Conference

The You Ain't Seen Nothin' Yet! 2020 CHSP Futures Conference was held on 10 March 2020 at the NSW Teachers Federation Conference Centre in Surry Hills. There was a shared view amongst some sector support and development officers to facilitate the sharing of good practice in delivering CHSP services, as well as showcasing innovation in aged care. Some topics of the day included;

- Quality consumer-focused service through diversity and co-design
- Consumer engagement and participation
- Explore the latest research and developments in relation to:
- The CHSP workforce, including volunteers
- Technology



CHSP Futures Conference March 2020

The Conference was very well received and attended by over 260 participants. Attendees indicated they were pleased with the quality of the training provided on the day. Guest speakers and dignitaries in attendance included the Hon Richard Colbeck, Minister for Aged Care and Senior Australians, Minister for Youth and Sport; the Hon Tanya Plibersek MP, Member for Sydney, Shadow Minister for Education and Training Senator and Robert Fitzgerald, AM, NSW Ageing and Disability Commissioner as Keynote speaker. More Information about the Conference is available at: <http://www.youaintseennothin yet2020chspfuturesconference.com.au/>



Beatriz Cardona at CHSP Futures Conference



A speaker and guests at CHSP Futures Conference

Diversity Framework and Quality Standards

The SSDO team delivered a short introductory session on ***The Diversity Framework and Aged Care Quality Standards***. The training was developed by TMN and ACON Pride Training and presented in partnership with Canterbury-Bankstown council. The online session was well attended by 52 participants demonstrating the need to further develop the training into a more comprehensive training in 2021.

Bilingual Workforce Development TAFE Traineeship



Eunice Sansour with assistant Leo zooming from home

The SSD project in partnership with TAFE Bankstown sent out an expression of interest to Commonwealth Home Support Program (CHSP) providers and migrant services to learn more about the benefits of partaking in a TAFE Traineeship program, and offering placement to a bilingual-bicultural job seeker to meet the needs of the ageing CALD communities in South West Sydney.

COVID Working Party

The SSD project developed a '**COVID Safe Normal**' Working party to facilitate COVID-19 information updates. The aim of the working group is to disseminate available information and resources to services that can then pass onto their clients. Ongoing engagement with the aged care sector, will allow us the opportunity to better understand the needs of ageing communities during COVID-19, so we can continue to share relevant information in an effective way.

Introduction to Working in Aged Care (Front line workers) information session

It is paramount for all services to be working in compliance with the Commonwealth Home Support Programme (CHSP) Manual, the Charter of Aged Care Rights and the Aged Care Quality Standards. TMN's Sector Support Team developed a short, but comprehensive training for new and frontline workers, as well as others wanting to refresh

the foundations of running a compliant CHSP service. Further feedback from the training has enabled us to plan for more in-depth training in the future.

Engaging Older People and their Carers or Allies workshop

To effectively communicate with older people and their carers, is critical to building relationships and providing the right support at the right time. It is also a key outcome of the Aged Care Quality Standards. The SSD project in partnership with Canterbury-Bankstown council, delivered a webinar for aged care services, on **'Engaging Older People and their Carers or Allies'**. This practical workshop elaborated on what engagement with an older person means, and the importance of working in adherence with the Aged Care Quality Standards.

Community Capacity Building



Wellness Day for Seniors Expo February 2020

The **Canterbury – Bankstown Seniors Wellness Expo** was held in November in 2019 at the Bankstown Sports Club. There were over 400 participants and 40 service providers on the day. Information stalls as well as interactive activities emphasised the importance of preserving mental and physical well-being as an older person to maintain independence and quality of life. The day was well received following feedback from the attendees. There was ample opportunity to provide information and support on My Aged Care to many seniors who were yet to be linked to services.

The SSD team contributed to the **Wellness Day for Seniors** in Miller and Wetherill Park with over 400 participants, the **International Women's Day** Bankstown event in March with over 200 participants, and at the **Elders Olympics** in Liverpool with over 150 participants. Regularly participating in community activities provides us with good opportunities to engage with seniors and gain further insight into gaps in the delivery of aged care.

TAFE Bankstown Student Workforce Development opportunities

Students enrolled in aged care at TAFE Bankstown, volunteered their time at The Active Ageing Seniors expo in November 2019. Following the expo, 50% of the students were either offered employment or opportunities to volunteer in aged care. We support the value of volunteering and look forward to explore future local partnerships with The Liverpool Volunteer Resource Centre, whom we discussed potential collaborations for the near future.

Aboriginal Sector Support and Development

The Aboriginal Sector Support Officer worked across two areas over 2019. Firstly, the officer contributed to the TMN Website- updating community members on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander events, employment opportunities, training and information about services. Secondly, the officer developed and delivered training for two presentations. One program was aimed towards new entrants into the Aged Care workforce, titled: 'How to work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elders'. The second program focused on the Diversity Framework, and the Aboriginal Sector Support Officer provided a presentation on the diversity framework and the target group of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elders. Other resources and documents to support services were developed, including a manual for new entrants into the workforce, and information about the diversity framework.

During this year, the SSDO and the MAP Officer were involved in several key forums, interagencies and networking opportunities including:

- Canterbury-Bankstown Multicultural Interagency (CBMIA)
- The City of Fairfield Senior Services Interagency (SSI)
- Fairfield Multicultural Interagency (FM)
- SWS Elder Abuse Awareness Collaborative
- SWS Ageing and Disability forum
- State-wide NSW Sector Support Development Network (SSDN)
- Macarthur Disability Network (MDN)
- Multicultural Access Project (MAP) Network
- NSW Community Aged Care Forum (CACF)

Our partnerships and collaborations throughout 2020 have been important and invaluable. They have allowed us to deliver coordinated support and information to the sector and community. We would like to take this opportunity to thank our partners:

- Canterbury Bankstown Council
- Fairfield City Council
- Liverpool City Council
- Sector Support and Development Project Inner West
- Core Community services,
- Macarthur Disability Services
- South West Sydney Disability Services
- TAFE, SWS Bankstown Campus
- Macquarie University, Ethnic Communities Council
- Aged Care services NSW
- Skills, Training and Resource Service
- Canterbury Marrickville Sector Support Development Officer
- Map Officer, Ethnic Community Services Cooperative
- Liverpool Volunteer Resource Centre
- SWS Local Health District
- The Junction Neighbourhood Centre (VAST Training)
- Sector Support Development Officer, Inner Sydney Voice
- Carrie Hayter Consulting
- ACON Pride Training
- The Trustee Guardian NSW



MULTICULTURAL COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PROJECT

*Fatmata Parkinson
MCDP Worker*

The Multicultural Community Development project (MCDP) is funded by the Department of Communities and Justice (DCJ) to provide support to multicultural families with children aged 0-12 in South West Sydney, specifically Canterbury Bankstown, Fairfield and Liverpool LGAs.

This report is guided by the new Targeted Earlier Intervention (TEI) program and how it applies to our project and the services we deliver to our target groups. It is important to note that COVID-19 has had a significant impact in our service delivery and this is also reflected in this report.

According to the Department of Communities and Justice, “the number of children reported at risk of significant harm continues to grow, and evidence says we need to provide support earlier”. Hence, the TEI program is designed to provide support to people who need it earlier on, to prevent and restore any issues faced by the most vulnerable members of

our community, in particular children. The target population and priority groups for the Program are vulnerable children, young people, families and their communities within NSW.

Services are delivered under two broad streams:

- Community Strengthening Stream – activities that facilitate greater cohesion, inclusion and wellbeing of all communities, and empowerment of Aboriginal communities.
- Wellbeing and Safety Stream – activities which support families and individuals and provide opportunities for personal development.

Our organisation is funded to provide three Service Options under the Community Strengthening Stream. These are as follow:

Service Option 1 – Community Connection

1. Community Sector Planning

This focuses on assisting organisations and community networks on the planning and coordination of activities for their communities, designed to attain the TEI outcomes.

We ongoingly engage with our existing partners to discuss future projects and to identify the needs of their client groups. We also monitor our communities' needs via informal and formal surveys so that we can tailor our programs according to the families' emerging issues.

The CBMIA co-convene with Metro Assist is a network of service providers including government and non-government whose target groups are migrants, refugees and humanitarian entrants in the Canterbury-Bankstown LGA. We organize our annual evaluation, consultation and planning in the beginning of the year to identify issues, gaps and strategies for implementation of best practice to help services to provide best outcomes for their clients. CBMIA also has an email group of over 100 members to whom we circulate relevant up to date information and resources.

We also host the TMNLinks website, created as a result of feedback we received from our partner organisations for the need of coordinated local information to the community. It's a platform that provides information on services, events and activities in Canterbury-Bankstown and surrounding areas. TMNLinks allows the public to see what's happening in Canterbury-Bankstown and makes it easier for the community to join and participate. A weekly newsletter is also circulated to all members and various networks. It could be accessed through www.tmnlinks.net.au.

I also participated and or attended the following planning, interagencies, information sessions and conferences for our continuous education, networking and planning. Some of them were done face to face earlier this year but majority of them were done online.

- The Canterbury Bankstown Child and Family reference group Leadership Forum at Campsie
- The Canterbury Bankstown Council social planning on the 25th and 26th of February.
- Working party with CBCity, Police, TAFE NSW, Metro Assist to address issues around COVID-19 and how to respond to FAQs in various languages. It was dissolved when it was discovered that ABC has relevant resources online that is accessible to the community.

- The Canterbury Bankstown Child and Families Playgroup forum was held online on the 31st of August, and 28th of October, 2020.
- Canterbury Child and Families Interagency.
- Bankstown Child and Families Interagency.
- Canterbury Bankstown Domestic Violence Liaison Committee (CBDVLC)
- Canterbury Bankstown Workers With Youth Network (CBWWYN)
- FaMS “Getting ready for TEI” workshop on the 9th of April as the workshop at Liverpool Catholic club was changed to virtual workshop.
- Training with Tania from Sector Support about DEX reporting
- Online forum - Intersection of racism and sexism: understanding unique forms of violence and discrimination against migrant and refugee women.
- DCJ MAG (Multicultural Access Group) newsletters
- FaMS weekly support online meeting for service providers
- DCJ and FaMS weekly online DEX portal reporting training, information sessions and Q & A for TEI-funded services providers.
- DCJ program logic eLearning
- Brighter Beginnings conference: the first 2000 days of life. The importance of first 2000 days.

2. Community Sector Coordination

The CBMIA facilitate sector coordination aim through its objectives to:

- Identify issues, needs and gaps in our community
- Exchange information among services and the community at large
- Provide an overview of issues and advocate on behalf of services and the migrant community
- Provide sector support through resources, training, collaboration and partnerships.

For further details, please visit www.cbmia.org.au.

This year we had 9 interagency meetings. We had 2 face to face meetings which included the planning and evaluation meeting in February. Due to COVID-19 we moved the rest of the meetings online via zoom and we were only able to accommodate one guest speaker at each meeting. The online meetings started with less than fifteen services for a couple of months but steadily increase to at least 26 or more participants each month. The guest speakers were invited according to the request and emerging needs. They are as follow

- ASANLIFE - Social Enterprise for immigrants
- Red Cross – Presentation on various programs Red Cross delivers which include Social Support programs, Migration Support Programs and Emergency Services.
- MTC Skills for Education and Employment (SEE Program)
- TMN - The Multicultural Access Project and the Support Services Website.
- MELS Migrant Employment Legal Services
- SWSLC South West Sydney Legal Centre

- Diabetes NSW and ACT
- Immigration Advice and Rights Centre
- Services Australia - Specialists Roles: Information about the role of Specialist officer in the community. We have the Community Engagement Officer, Indigenous Service Officer and Multicultural Service Officer their roles in community and building community connections.

3. Community engagement

International Women's Day



International Women's Day 2020



International Women's Day Working party

This event focuses on promoting women's empowering programs, further education and training; facilitates social enterprise and business education as well as health and well-being for women and their families. We aim to build personal confidence, strengthen cultural identity and friendship, link women with local support services and strengthen social networks in the community by conducting appropriate workshops and activities at this increasing popular

gathering.

We had a very successful event at the Bankstown Sports club on Wednesday the 11th of March, 2020. The 2020 theme is “An Equal World is an Enabled World”. We had 317 people registered to attend. However, only 200 people attended the event due to COVID-19 scare. We had performance and workshops from Asian Women at Work Drumming Group, Relaxation, Belly Dancing, Zumba and Greek Older Women’s Network dancing group. There was the launching of two videos in Bangla and Rohingya “Purple Reminder” and “I Did It You Do it Too” as part of a campaign to raise awareness about cervical screening. We also had an inspiring guest speaker Sharon Kerr from TAFE NSW who at the time was a Relieving Deputy Regional General Manager in Western Sydney but her substantive role is Head of Infrastructure, Energy and Construction in Wester Sydney Region. Ms Kerr spoke about her professional development as a woman in a male dominated field. There were 18 agencies including government and non-government organisations who either provided information and or activities to the women and children.



Cultural performance at International Women's Day 2020

Refugee week 2020

This event celebrates the contribution of people from refugee backgrounds make to our society. The week is also about raising awareness and commemorating the perilous journey that refugees and asylum seekers often take to reach Australia. The theme this year is “The Year of Welcome” The theme has the objective of raising awareness of issues affecting refugees helping the community to understand what is like to be a refugee. The theme also endorses public recognition of government and non-government agencies in formal statements of welcoming refugees to the area.

Due to COVID-19 we celebrated Refugee week differently this year and did not organise a face to face event. Our virtual refugee week event was very successful although we had a very short time to plan due to the lockdown. We showcased some creative works that have been submitted by people from refugee backgrounds who are either living, working, studying or accessing services in Canterbury Bankstown City. We had 8 participants who submitted their work in the “Canterbury Bankstown Got Talent” competition and their work was showcased throughout the Refugee week through our networks and social media platforms. We also had a short promotional video with CBCity which was published on their facebook platform as well. We created and distributed a directory of services providing information about support services for refugees, asylum seekers and international students during COVID-19 period. The service directory was very popular and became very useful even after the Refugee week event.

Anti-poverty week – Community Assist



Anti-poverty Week

Anti-Poverty Week is about raising awareness by helping the Australian community to have a better understanding of poverty as well as to encourage members of the community to collectively take action to minimize or end poverty. In 2020, Anti-Poverty Week was held from the 11th to the 17th of October.

This year, Canterbury Bankstown Multicultural Interagency (CBMIA) worked in partnership with Bankstown Community Drug Action Team (CDAT) to

- create community awareness about poverty in Australia by creating a short video and broadcasting it on CBTv and our various networks. Here is the link
- developed and distributed essential services directory for services and members of our community

who are below the poverty line.

- prepared and donated packs with essential items to the most vulnerable and disadvantaged individuals and families who are struggling financially.
- Metro Assist’s Tenancy team and CBCity collaborated to visit the boarding houses in Canterbury Bankstown. There are over 50 registered boarding houses in the LGA. According to the feedback from Rita and Joanna, the tenants were pleasantly surprised to be visited and provided with some pack and the directory.

4. Social Participation

Sierra Leone parents Whatsapp group

During the COVID-19 lockdown we developed a WhatsApp group for Sierra Leonean parents to provide relevant

information about COVID-19, parenting support, as well as keep members of the community up to date with current affairs as members of the community were either misinformed or unaware of the frequent changes happening during the lockdown. We continue to provide relevant information to the parents. For instance, some of the parents have done some of the TAFE courses I circulated on the platform.

Educational Packs

We developed a pack of educational books, toys, charts, play-dough, flashcards, drawing books, coloring pencils and online resources for children aged from 0 to 5 years living in South West Sydney. We also attached recipes of some fun and easy to make educational materials at home for their kids. We also included a booklet of information on emergency and essential services that are available for their families.

We had 150 parents who registered a total of 202 children. We put together the packs and took them to the doors of the families.

We included a letter to inform parents that The Multicultural Network is there to support them and their families during these challenging times. We informed them that the educational pack is to help them and their children play and learn at home.

We have had very positive feedback, that it's a great idea for families with children living in isolation due to the COVID-19 pandemic as there were also little or no activities available for preschool kids.



Educational packs

Service Option 2 – Community Centres

1. Social participation

Our Centre is usually a hub of activities and through the years we have hosted many services who have either held meetings, organize workshops, information sessions, trainings etc. We also engage in lots of partnership programs in our Centre. This year our Centre was only utilized by the following programs and organisations in the first three months prior to the COVID-19 lockdown. However, some of the programs continued online.

- Vietnamese Family support program - Metro Assists
- Arabic Language School meetings
- English classes – TAFE NSW
- Macedonian Support Group - Macedonian Australian Welfare association

- MARS Meeting – TMN
- My aged Care meeting – TMN
- Care Seniors

Service Option 3 – Community Support

1. Education and Skills training

English classes

The Multicultural Network is in the Bankstown LGA, which is one of the most disadvantaged LGA in the Sydney Statistical Division. More than 92% of students at Bankstown are from non-English speaking backgrounds, including newly arrived migrants and refugees. Many families often struggle to meet the challenges of settling in a new country. With low education levels and no history of work, many new arrivals find it difficult to seek employment and/or undertake any vocational training. The lack of English language skills has certainly been one of the major contributing factors. Additionally, many of these long-term settlers have low to medium literacy and general language skills.

TAFE Petersham English programs, in partnership with TMN, has been successfully engaging newly arrived adult migrants in their education programs. The classes have always been well received and highly valued by participants. We run Monday classes for Intermediate and Thursday classes for beginners. We also continue to provide information and referrals to refugees and newly arrived migrants to get help from local services, including education, health, family support and even domestic violence.

Many students from English classes undertake further studies at Bankstown TAFE and eventually finding employment. We will continue to work with TAFE in motivating participants and supporting them in planning pathways to all educational opportunities.

Computer class

We also ran in partnership with Bankstown TAFE NSW –Course in Vocational and Community Engagement online (4 hour per weeks x 9 weeks). It was delivered online using Microsoft Teams, a connected learning environment. We had over 10 people registered and 9 people who completed the course.

The units offered were as follow:

- VCODIG101 Use emerging technology
- VCODIG102 Use free or inexpensive technology - Locate free technologies available for personal use. Know where to locate support to use free technologies.

2. Facilitate employment pathways

No employment program was facilitated due to COVID-19.

3. Social Participation

As a Multicultural Community Development worker one of our main priorities is to engage families from CALD background with children 0 to 12 years of age. The following parenting programs were ran in m 1 at the Schools HUBS.

- Guiding Young Children's Behavior at Wiley Park Public School.
- The Impact of Screen Technology on a Young Child's Brain Development and Social Skills at Wiley Park Public School.
- Developing Self Esteem and Supporting Young Children's Insecurities at Wiley Park Public School.
- Raising Bilingual Children at Warwick Farm Public School.
- Raising Bilingual Children at Canley Vale Public School.
- Guiding Young Children's Behavior at Nuwarra Public School Moorebank.
- Helping your child get along with each other at Nuwarra Public School Moorebank.

4. Advocacy and Support

This year we took a proactive role in our advocacy and support through the various events and campaigns that we organized throughout the year such as the International Women's Day event, Refugee Week and Anti-poverty week campaign. It also included participation in other interagency and forums listed above. We raised awareness about issues affecting asylum seekers and International students during Refugee Week. As part of the Anti-poverty week campaign, some services have mobilized to join the Raise the Rate campaign, lead by ACOSS, to advocate for an increase in income support benefits.

Main upcoming challenges for our projects, services or communities

Our major challenge this year has been adapting to the impact of the COVID-19 and the changes in our communities, projects and most importantly to the vulnerable members of our communities. We believe that the following issues will continue to impact our projects, wider communities and families;

- Access to internet, new technologies and online programs. Many families who are living bellow the poverty level would not be able to have access to new technologies. Also, many CALD families with very little or no English skills will not be able to have access to many of the online programs on offer.
- Face to face programs will be very limited or will come at a cost if we are to book bigger venues to adhere to social distancing measures.
- Many families will continue to struggle with unemployment, poverty, domestic violence, mental health issues and would require continuous support to access essential services. We will continue to share the directories and other relevant information to make these services available to our families and communities.
- Social isolation and anxiety around COVID-19 would continue to affect children's development and mental health. This will be one of our major priorities and we will be developing and delivering programs to address some of these issues.

Despite the impact of COVID-19, we have worked so hard and developed great networks, partnerships and collaboration with government and non-government organisations to support vulnerable members of our communities as best as we could. I would like to thank the following organisation and individuals for their excellent support and all the amazing projects we have worked on this year:

Canterbury Bankstown City, Metro Assist, Melkite Catholic Welfare Association, The Smith Family Communities for Children, Bankstown Community Resource Group, Services Australia, Settlement Services International, Lifeline Macarthur, Diabetes NSW & ACT, TAFE NSW, Greenacre Area Community Centre, Muslim Women Australia, Salvation Army (Communities of Hope - Villawood), Mission Australia, Youth Off the Street, CESPAN (Central & Eastern Sydney Primary Health Network), Navitas Bankstown, Older Women's Network, Lebanese Muslim Association, Bankstown Women's Health Centre, Bankstown Sports, South West Sydney Local Health District.

Petra Will-Herat – Contract Facilitator

Estella YuEn – English Teacher Petersham TAFE

MULTICULTURAL ACCESS AND REFERRAL SERVICE -MARS

*Francisca Loyola-Sandoval
MARS Coordinator*

The Multicultural Access and Referral Service partners with Ethno-specific and multicultural organisations to assist Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) aged people to access aged care services available in their local area.

The Multicultural Access and Referral Service (MARS Project), was established in 2012, it is funded by the Commonwealth Home Support Program- CHSP and covers the South West Sydney Local Government Areas, providing information, support, advocacy and referral services to the Arabic, Assyrian, Croatian, Khmer, Lao, Macedonian and Spanish communities.

MARS project delivers its service through bilingual Link Workers, who have been actively participating in trainings and activities to ensure that CALD aged people become familiar with the Aged Care System in Australia and access needed services to stay independent in their homes and in their communities for as long as possible.

MARS Project team in conjunction with TMS's Multicultural Community Support Service Officer-MCSSO participated in various promotional and educational sessions regarding My Aged Care and Commonwealth Home Support Program - CHSP. The information delivered intended to create awareness of the existence of services available within local areas, the benefits that these services bring to elder people's lives, cost involved and how the Government assist with those costs.



Lihnida Taseska, Susan Isaacs, Omethip Phommachanh and Rosa Moises at the Senior's Expo 2019

In November 2019, the MARS team participated in the Seniors Expo, organised by the Bankstown and Canterbury City Council and The Multicultural Network, providing information to participants in their own language and assisting the event's organisers to communicate with people from a Non-English-Speaking background. More than 450 people attended the event.

The last couple of months, it has been a tough for everybody, COVID-19 not only brought us fear to all of us, it also forced us to be isolated and unfortunately, older people has been affected the most. Thanks to the close relationship that our Link Workers have with consumers, it has been easier for MARS team to perceive, identify or capture main concerns through CALD communities.

During the last couple of months, we noticed that the distress from older people to access services has increased, this is due to a risk of being infected with coronavirus, the

lack of awareness of services available within local areas and the misinformation about the positive impact that services could bring to their lives. Consequently, MARS's referrals to My Aged Care drastically decreased, however with easy COVID restrictions, this situation is expected to be reverted withing the next couple of months.

MARS Project, as any other community service, has been adapting the way that services are delivered. MARS team have been contacting and assisting older people over the phone and seeking for assistance on their behalf. The link workers have been organising purchases of groceries, free food boxes, referring consumers to other organisations withing their local areas and providing them with emotional support during this stressful time of isolation.

Furthermore, taking in consideration language barriers and limited understanding of technologies, MARS workers were involved on a radio segment project, created and coordinated by The Multicultural Network. This project intended to provide information and support to CALD communities through radio stations. The link workers were interviewed by Assyrian, Macedonian, Lao and Spanish radio broadcasting programs and informed consumers about places where to obtain assistance during the lock down and to inform these communities about updates from Government entities, regarding to COVID-19 in their own languages. As a result, the Link Workers obtained numerous phone calls from older people and their carers, who needed more information about coronavirus procedures, as most of the information was provided through media in English.

MARS's team members, participate on regular meetings to be able to cover latest updated withing the CHSP and to address matters, as mentioned above. The link workers have noticed that My Aged Care has been more flexible to address issues, however the timeframe between assessment process and approving services, continue being a problem

for consumers. MARS link workers have been involved in applications that could long last a few months before older people access the needed services, resulting in some cases on the rejection before the application finalises.

The MARS project team is very optimistic for the upcoming months and eager to continue working with our diverse community.

I would like to express my profound gratitude to Community radio programs, who voluntarily gave us the opportunity to use their platform to deliver information during COVID-19 lockdown.

- Assyrian SBS radio program
- Macedonian SBS radio program
- Campbelltown Lao Community radio station
- Marco Poblete Benitez – Spanish community MC and radio host

In addition, I would like to acknowledge the collaboration of the Ethno-specific organisations that have been partnering with us to bring MARS project alive and the unconditional commitment and hard work from our link workers:

- Thin Em – Khmer Link Worker from Cambodian Australian Welfare Council of NSW
- Omethip Phommachanh – Lao Link Worker from Cambodian Australian Welfare Council of NSW
- Lihnida Taseska- Macedonian Link Worker from MAWA
- Rosa Moises – Spanish link worker from SLASA

To conclude, as the MARS Coordinator, I would like to give a farewell to the Assyrian and Arabic Link Worker, Susan Isaacs from Parks Community Network and Maria Oreskovic the Croatian Link Worker, from Croatian Australian Welfare Centre, that sadly are no longer part of MARS Project, but both have been an important asset to our project and its success through these years.



MULTICULTURAL COMMUNITIES AND SECTOR SUPPORT OFFICER

Zana Brasnovic MCSSO

The MCSSO position focuses on capacity building for CALD communities, in particular seniors and their carers and provides community education to ensure they have access to information on the full range of aged care services and programs available to them. The role also contributed to the CHSP Sector Support objective of increasing volunteers in the aged care sector and facilitating opportunities for bilingual job seekers to work in aged, hence increasing the bilingual/bicultural workforce.

Before the outbreak of the coronavirus the MCSSO was running face-to-face My Aged Care Community Education Program for seniors, their carers' and community service providers. The Department of Health has identified that seniors especially of CALD background find it difficult to gain access to information, in particular online, missing out on valuable

services that they could be accessing. In many instances CALD seniors are not English language competent or not feeling confident in communicating in English. In the presentation participants are provided with My Aged Care Fact Sheets in their first language with information on how to access TIS interpreting service to assist with communicating with My Aged Care.

These are some of the Community Education Programs conducted throughout the year

- Ingham Institute Multicultural Mothers' Day Information Stall at Liverpool

100 people attended, mainly of CALD background. My Aged Care promotional material was handed out; fridge magnets with contact details, flyers, booklets and multilingual MAC fact sheets.

- My AGED CARE Presentation at MILLER CORE

MCSSO provided a PowerPoint presentation to Social Knitting Group, 24 people attended the session. On this occasion MAC fact sheets handed out in Arabic and English.

- My Aged Care presentation at NAVITAS English College Fairfield

A very good turn up of participants who were part of the mature students groups over the age of 45. MCSSO organised two bilinguals Farsi and Arabic to assist with interpreters for the presentations as the CALD students had limited English skills.

During the session there was a great interest in the Aged Care industry and available work opportunities. Many of the students wanted to know more on how to become aged care workers. MCSSO had promised them a short session providing them with the relevant information and returned a week later with a presentation on the Aged Care Industry, steps in becoming an aged care worker for migrants and refugees. At the end of the session 12 students advised they were very interested in gaining skills and qualifications in this area.

- Seniors Week celebrations at Manor on Elizabeth Street, Wetherill Park

The MCSSO organised My Aged Care promotion through an information stall at Wellness Expo in Wetherill Park. TMN staff handed out My Aged Care brochures, booklets and fact sheets in numerous languages. We had over 300 participants on the day, with many highly interested in our educational material and seeking advice on steps to access MAC services. MARS bilingual workers at the stall provided relevant information in Spanish, Assyrian and Arabic.

- My Aged Care Community Education Program at NAVITAS English College, LIVERPOOL

A PowerPoint presentation delivered to 3 classes which had over 22 students in each class. Navitas bilingual workers assisted with interpreting. Handed out MAC Multilingual Fact Sheets to students mostly in Arabic, Vietnamese and English. Delivered short presentation on how to become an aged care worker.

- Macedonian Senior Group at Yagoona MAC PowerPoint Presentation

The Macedonian Seniors Group had 25 attendees to the session. The Macedonian MARS Link worker interpreted on

the day

- International Women's Day celebrations at Bankstown Sports Club

We provided information on My Aged Care through a TMN stall. There were over 200 participants on the day, a majority of attendees took informational material and were advised on steps to accessing MAC. Some expressed barriers and issues with accessing services, this being valuable information for our services to identify barriers and improve access.

- Elders Olympics, Whitlam Centre Liverpool

There were 10 teams of older people participating in the event, with trophies given out at the end of the day. Over 150 participants on the day took educational material from our information stall and were advised on steps to accessing MAC. Some expressed issues with accessing services. There were many Aboriginal elders approaching our stall and discussing the service in MAC they are accessing.

Active Seniors Expo at Bankstown Sports Club and MAC Knowledge Survey

The MCCSO collaborated with the TMN aged care team in the organising and running of the Active Seniors Expo at the Bankstown Sports Club, a yearly event we run in partnership with Canterbury-Bankstown City Council. We set up an information hub with relevant pamphlets, booklets and MAC multilingual fact sheets to give out on the day. MARS Link workers were present at the stall to provide general information on accessing MAC services in different languages, including Macedonian, Arabic, Assyrian and Spanish. There were over 400 participants on the day.

The Active Seniors Expo at the Bankstown Sports Club provided a good opportunity to ascertain seniors' awareness of support services that are available to them and how many people were engaged with My Aged Care services. We conducted a My Aged Care Knowledge Survey. The 2019 Active Seniors' Expo was well attended with over 450 participants visiting on the day.

Wellness and Reablement Fact Sheet

Using wellness and reablement (W&R) approaches to deliver support to older people is a key objective of the Commonwealth Home Support Program. W&R approaches to health care are closely associated with healthy ageing and improved wellbeing for older people. There is strong support for W&R approaches, and some great examples of the approaches are emerging across the country. However, W&R approaches are not yet deeply embedded or consistently applied across the aged care sector yet.

TMN provides training and education on Wellness and Reablement to the aged care sector and aging communities. The MCCSO put together a Wellness and Reablement Fact Sheet in simple and easy English aimed at seniors of CALD background. TMN is working on the translation of this resource into community languages, with the Serbian and Arabic along with the English version ready for distribution.

During 2020 partnerships and collaborations were established which were significant for the delivery of the MAC Community Education Program. I take this opportunity to thank our partners:

- ❖ Fairfield City Council

- ❖ Core Community Services
- ❖ Canterbury-Bankstown City Council
- ❖ Fairfield City Council
- ❖ Navitas English College
- ❖ South West Sydney Migrant Resource
- ❖ Centre Settlement Services International.
- ❖ Bankstown TAFE,
- ❖ Fairfield TAFE,
- ❖ STARTTS Carramar



THE GATHERING NSW

Taylor-Jai Mcalister

The Gathering NSW Project Officer

The NSW Aboriginal Gathering Project is funded through the former Department of Aged, Disability and Home Care (ADHC). The Multicultural Network is the auspice body for the project and facilitates the Project Officer in producing policy documents and contributing to collaborative projects around Aboriginal Aged Care and Disability sector support. The NSW Gathering Project Officer works under direction of the NSW Aboriginal Gathering Committee to formulate and update the Committee's policy position on best practice in service delivery to the community while ensuring consultation with and inclusion of Aboriginal communities in developing strategies to improve support for our elders, people with disabilities and their carers.

Community Capacity Building

The Gathering Project Officer was involved in many Committees and forums to ensure an Aboriginal presence in important events and projects, including:

- Being a part of the International Day for People with Disabilities Gala 2019 Planning Committee

Support to services and networks

The Gathering Project Officer attended the following events and meetings to provide support and connect with services and networks. Following from the NSW Aboriginal CHSP, Home Care & Network Day in August 2019, the Gathering Project Officer compiled information and discussions throughout the day to finalise a document for all attendees, and followed up on supporting organisations from this event. The Network Day identified a further need for supporting Aboriginal workers and organizations, particularly for specific issues and updates within the Aged Care System. A

newsletter was created for Aboriginal Aged Care Organizations to address these needs, and 2 issues were circulated to the attendees of the Network Day. The first two issues addressed specific topics raised in the Network Day: Grief & Trauma, and Staying Competitive in the Aged Care System.



The Gathering Project Officer also attended meetings with Riverwood Community Centre in regards to Aboriginal clients and how to support them in Aged Care & Disability services, and became a member of the Aboriginal Workforce Project Advisory Group. The AWPA Group focuses on retention of frontline Aboriginal workers and people in health, ageing and disability workforces. The Project Officer also was involved in facilitating some panels for Fairfield's Wellness Day and The Multicultural Network's contribution to the CHSP Conference.

Advocacy Work

The Gathering Project Officer attended the following events to ensure The Gatherings' approach is in line with current research and practice:

- Diversity Forum: Trauma-informed care
- Presented at the SWS Ageing and Disability Forum, titled: 'Wellness & Reablement for Aboriginal clients'
- Presented at the Aged Care & Disability Forum at Fairfield City Council on "Wellness & Reablement: what it means for our mob"
- Attended multiple Koori Interagencies across South-Western Sydney and Western Sydney
- Attended the NDIS Truth Telling Sydney Community Meeting at First People's Disability Network
- Attended the Canterbury/Bankstown Fairness and Justice Forum at Campsie Library and Knowledge Centre, with Aboriginal presenters.
- Attended the Australian Association of Gerontology pre-conference workshops and conference
- Attended and helped run the Active Ageing Expo in Bankstown
- Attended Western Sydney University's 'Yarramundi Lecture' as part of NAIDOC Week.

Thank you

The Management Committee and Staff wishes to thank our funding bodies for their partnership and ongoing commitment to our communities. Our work could not be possible without the support of:

- Commonwealth Department on Social Services – Commonwealth Home Support Program
- NSW Family and Community Services – Community Builders Program
- City of Canterbury-Bankstown Council
- NSW Clubs Grants

A big thank you to all our partners that generously continue to share their knowledge, resources and expertise with us to strengthen our communities:

Banksia Road Public School Community Hub
Bankstown Community Resource Group
Bankstown Public School Hub
Bass Hill Public school
Canterbury Bankstown Chamber of Commerce
Canterbury City Community Centre
Chester Hill Neighbourhood Centre
Core Community Services
Creating Links
Department of Fair Trading
Department of Human Services
Disabilities Services Australia
Ethnic Communities Council
Families NSW Facilitation Project
Gandangara Land Council
Humanity Matters
Macarthur Disability Services
Macquarie University
Melkite Catholic Welfare Association
Metro Assist
Mission Australia
Mums4Refugees
MYAN
Navitas English
NSW Refugee Health Service

Oversees Trained Professionals
Punchbowl Schools as Community Centre
Refugee Council of Australia
Save The Children
Sector Support and Development Project, Campsie
Sector Support and Development Project, Inner West
Settlement Services International
South Western Sydney Local Health District
St Brendan's Community Hub
St Jerome Primary School
St. Vincent the Paul
STARTTS
Sydney Local Health District
TAFE NSW
TAFE NSW
The Salvation Army
The Salvation Army
Villawood East Public School Hub
Western Sydney University.
Willey Park Public School as Communities Centre
Yagoona Public School Hub

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In this publication, The word Aboriginal is used to describe both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. The use of the word Aboriginal to describe Torres Strait Islander peoples is in no way meant to discriminate or lessen the value of the culture of Torres Strait Islander peoples.