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Removal of settlement service accessibility constraints – is it financially viable?

SydWest Multicultural Services welcomes the Government's decision to remove the 5-year eligibility criteria for migrants and refugees to access settlement services. We also welcome the ease of cost-of-living pressures and the \$4bn injection to fully fund frontline workers' wages for the community sector, who play an integral role supporting some of the most vulnerable and marginalised members of our communities.

There is a mixed response of disappointment and concern about the lack of funding adjustment in the 2023 Federal Budget to facilitate the expected increase in service up-take.

SydWest, one of the NSW Settlement Partnership Consortium members that has been supporting migrants and refugees through its Settlement Engagement and Transition Support (SETS) program in the Outer West of Sydney, has been one of the partners on the receiving end of funding cuts, no provision for indexation, increased operational costs that may potentially paralyse and threaten the quality of its services, if these substantial issues are not addressed.

'Under-resourcing our settlement programs whilst expanding the life cycle of service delivery to support those most in need will continue adding pressures to service providers already experiencing the financial strains.'

'There will be an increase in demand for services, and it is inevitable that staff will feel the pressures of higher caseloads which is not sustainable for the long term,' said Elfa Moraitakis, CEO of SydWest Multicultural Services.

Settlement service providers welcome thousands of newly-arrived refugees and migrants to Australia each year, but struggle to meet the pressures of increasing service delivery and staffing costs.



'What we need is scalable funding to reflect the longer life span of access to services, to maintain the quality and caring support our staff need to provide the community to ensure successful settlement outcomes. More action and equal and fair acknowledgment of the contribution of our highly skilled settlement services to society is needed. Our services need to be financially sustainable to deliver on community and settlement focused outcomes,' said Elfa.

STATEMENT ENDS /

Media Enquiries:

For further information or to arrange interviews and photo opportunities, contact Vikki Hine, Media and Events, SydWest Multicultural Services on vikki.hine@sydwestms.org.au or 0428-109-215.

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Established nearly 40 years ago, SydWest Multicultural Services is a leading organisation for all cultural diversity issues responding to community needs and opportunities across Greater Western Sydney. SydWest provides a range of services to Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) communities to assist with settling and living productive and independent lives in the community. We offer flexible and integrated service models across the life course of refugees and migrants, supporting the self-determination and empowerment of our diverse communities. SydWest is an innovative employer of choice, with passionate, qualified and experienced bilingual and bicultural staff who are sensitive to the languages and cultures of the communities we represent.