



Community Connections Issue 1, 2022

CEO Message



Last week, the Settlement sector welcomed the additional 16,500 humanitarian places announced in the Federal Budget, for the Afghan nationals over the next four years.

We welcomed the allocation of \$50 million over the next 2 years for the Safer Communities grants, a program that has proven to be effective and innovative for community organisations.

The steps toward improving early mental health intervention activities for the general population, and women's health, safety and economic security packages are looking positive. We are yet to discover how accessible these packages will be to our culturally and linguistically diverse communities.

At SydWest, we were looking forward to the extension of the Youth in Transition support further to the next 12 months, a commitment which had already been announced in the 2020-21 budget for a program that supports young refugees and migrants to increase engagement in education participation and transition into employment.

We also hope to see an announcement on additional migration opportunities that will address existing workforce shortages, and bring change in setting the 13,750

humanitarian support places as a target, rather than a ceiling.

The \$250 one off pension payment will be a positive cash injection for our pensioners, but it is a short term solution that does not address the rising daily costs of living. A more flexible arrangement on the pension wage income was expected, to assist not only with our seniors quality of life, but with skills shortages in the workforce.

It is unfortunate that we did not see a commitment to increase wages for our aged care workforce, a sector that is mainly dominated by women and have proven to be the backbone of the care and support sector - especially during lockdowns in 2021.

How much longer will we be able to sustain an already lowly paid workforce, at \$26 per hour? With an ageing population and foreseeable increase in demand for care support over the next few decades, radical change is needed to make working in the sector a lot more attractive. The 50% reduction on fuel excise for the next 6 months will definitely assist a workforce that is required to travel to get to work, but this alone is not enough.

We also anticipated a commitment to assist in addressing sustainable and culturally appropriate social housing, an ongoing issue that requires immediate attention.

Regardless of the outcome of the upcoming elections, there are a lot of areas of concern - already exacerbated by COVID-19 that require attention for a safer, a more inclusive and cohesive society.

SydWest will continue advocating for diverse communities across Western Sydney, for our seniors and care staff, the rights of women to live violence free lives, as well as our migrant and refugee communities settling to make Australia home.

I hope you enjoy the first issue of our Community Connections newsletter for 2022.

SydWest re-opens doors to community

With the phased lifting of restrictions by NSW Health since January, we reopened our doors to the community at large as of Monday, 14 February 2022, re-introducing face-to-face sessions and group activities.

It is wonderful to see people coming together and reconnecting with each other again, giving us a sense of pre COVID-19 norms. To preserve this dynamic, SydWest COVID-19 Policy and Procedures have been updated in accordance with NSW Health guidelines.

International Women's Day, 8 March

#breakthebias #domesticviolence

Amani Haydar joined us to share her lived experience of family and domestic violence, challenging stereotypes that operate around us. Stereotypes hinder recognition and awareness that family and domestic violence can take shape in many forms beyond physical violence and be psychological, often involving coercive control.



Haydar also touched on how those biases operate against people, especially CALD women who do not have the resources to advocate effectively for themselves or adequate access to services in areas of mental health support, such as counselling.

[Read more here](#)

Harmony Week (15– 21 March)

Harmony Week 2022: Everyone Belongs

A large and dedicated group of collaborators worked together to deliver our diverse program of events and activities to celebrate Harmony Week.

Community Story Sharing was an opportunity for members of our local community to share their stories and celebrate a sense of belonging.

The Stakeholder Forum is a part of Blacktown's Harmony Week 2022 celebrations and presents an opportunity for stakeholders, organisations and community leaders to come together, share their perspectives and experiences about cultural diversity and harmony at an organisational level.



Everyone was able to participate in Harmony Week celebrations with our unique **Arts Competition**. Winning entries are currently on display at the Blacktown City Library.

A big thank you to **Blacktown City Council** and the Mayor, as well as all our partners involved in the events during Harmony Week 2022.

Seniors social support groups

We have 17 cultural social support groups for our seniors in Western Sydney. With the easing of restrictions, our seniors have started to catch up and connect over morning tea and/or lunch, sports activities such as bowling, and physiotherapy sessions at our Blacktown premises.

Feedback received is that our seniors enjoy bowling and are already looking for the next visit to Zone Bowling - perhaps we might even start running a competition in teams!





Celebrating Seniors Festival (24 Mar - 3 Apr)

The annual Seniors Festival is an opportunity to spotlight Seniors and encourage active participation in everyday life. SydWest's Home Care team will be supporting a series of Blacktown City's seniors events, an opportunity to promote our home care services and meet new potential care recipients. SydWest has participated across multiple events from 20-31 March at Blacktown Workers Club and a Seniors Dance Class.

For more information, contact our Home Care team on 9621 6633, or click on the button below to send us an email.

[Submit email enquiry](#)

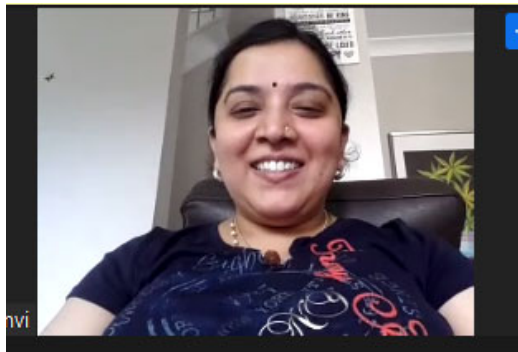


From a refugee to a dedicated community leader

We share with you Solmaz's journey who arrived from Iran to Australia in 2019 as a refugee.

Today she is an active community leader, a new Australian citizen driven by the motivation to support others from diverse cultural backgrounds.

[Read more](#)



SydWest Family shares good news story

Manvi Karthikeyan had a very young child with special needs and was relatively isolated at home.

Joining the SydWest Mothers Support Group opened her to a world of opportunities to help build her confidence, capacity and social networks.

We are proud to see Manvi achieve her goals, secure full time employment and build new friendships and networks to keep her connected.

[Read more](#)



Most inspirational person of the year

Our very own Khatol Ahmadzay has been awarded the Inspirational Person of the Year title at the Blacktown City Multicultural Awards 2022, on Friday 25 March.

With more than 14 years of experience working in the sector, Khatol has assisted over one thousand refugees and newly arrivals in their settlement journey in the Blacktown Local Government area.

We take this opportunity to acknowledge Khatol's commitment to the sector and the communities we serve across Western Sydney. Congratulations Khatol Ahmadzay!



Technology at the forefront of reducing emissions

The Australian Government's Long term emissions reduction plan sets a focus on technology to help cut emissions.

Australia aims to achieve net zero emissions by 2050. The six technologies that will help us achieve this is clean hydrogen, roof top solar, energy storage, electric vehicle infrastructure, pumped hydro and seaweed for feed.

[Read more](#)



JobPass: Making it easier where the work is

From 1 July 2022 more work licences and registrations will be automatically recognised interstate without delays, additional fees and lengthy paperwork.

[Find out more](#)

Settlement Services success story

Congratulations to Ranim Astanboly

SydWest has provided supports to Ranim as a settlement services client. We'd like to thank Ranim for sharing her good news and journey with us, in her own words:-

'I arrive to Australia when I was 16 years old. I start studying English to improve my language, my plan was studying interpreter to improve my English and I can find many job during this course, but I had hard luck because there is no classes under my language.'



After that one of my friend gave me a suggestion to do a Real Estate course, I did it but it wasn't interesting for me, but I never stopped looking for my hopes and what I would like to be. Finally, I find out what I would like to be, I want to be a nurse, because I like to help all people and care about them.

I started with Health Administration after we finish the course our teacher suggest to do the Blood Collection to get better job, after finishing the course I started looking on the website for job and I never give up until I have a job, and now I am working as a COVID Collector with the best Company in Australia (Australian Clinical Labs).

I am really grateful to God to be in this beautiful country where dreams come true with will and determinations.'
Ranim Astanboly

**This brings us to the end of the first issue of our newsletter for 2022.
We hope you enjoyed catching up on SydWest news, events and personal success stories of our clients and customers.**



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