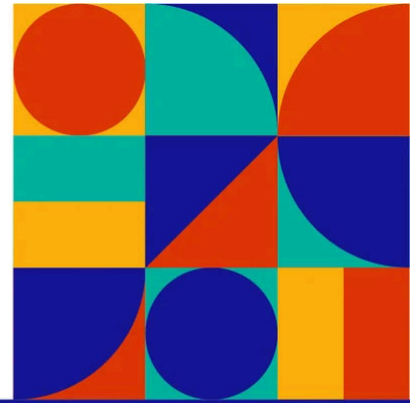
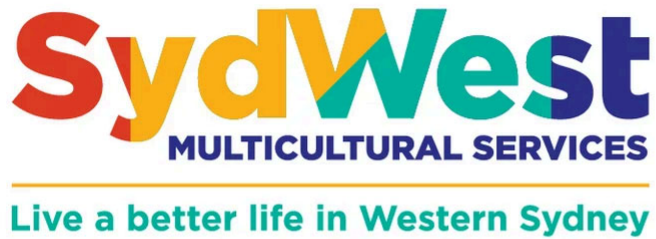


[View in browser](#)

CommunityConnections

Issue 1, 2023

CEO Message



SydWest Multicultural Services has published its submission to the Albanese Government on the issues they should consider when finalising the Commonwealth's 2023/2024 Budget which they will hand down in May this year.

While recognising the need for fiscal restraint in this budget cycle is essential, I need to emphasise that there is still a great need for the Australian Government to undertake crucial spending to aid and support vulnerable migrant and refugee communities, as they continue to deal with and recover from the worst of the COVID pandemic.

A primary focus of this budget should be to address the cost-of-living pressures that provides immediate financial relief, particularly with rising rental costs and some concessions for skilled workers that are finding it difficult to gain employment.

The submission by SydWest to the Commonwealth reports that some two-thirds of its clients are spending more than 30 per cent of their income on rent, with examples of households having less than \$250 available each week after paying rent.

Some of our vulnerable communities in Western Sydney become even more vulnerable during an economic downturn than they would be otherwise. The current inflationary impacts and cost pressures are just making things so much worse.

Our submission to the Commonwealth is arguing for proposed budget measures that will address specific problems migrants and refugee communities experience in areas of employment, mental health, and women and the general cost pressures faced by organisations like SydWest in delivering the Settlement Engagement and Transition Support (SETS) and the Commonwealth's Home Care Programs.

Culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) peoples make up almost half of Australia's population, however CALD specific budget measures to better support them were proportionally lower in the 2022/2023 budget.

To read the submission in full here, please see [SydWestMS Commonwealth Pre Budget Submission 2023-2024 Treasury.pdf](#)

Elfa Moraitakis
Chief Executive Officer

Upcoming Events

10 March

International Women's Day 2023, Workers Club Blacktown

20-26 March Harmony Week 2023

21 March

SydWest Harmony Week Celebration, Glenwood

Seniors Expo 2023

SydWest's Aged Care team enjoyed two days of visitors and enquiries at the recent [Seniors Festival Expo](#), held 2-3 February at the International Convention Centre, Sydney.

More than 19,000 seniors attended the Expo, which were amazing numbers and SydWest was delighted to be a part of it.



Floriade visit by Seniors Social Support Groups

Several busloads of our Seniors enjoyed a day out to visit Floriade in Canberra recently. In total more than 200 clients went to Floriade this year!

While it was a long bus ride, some of our seniors even brought instruments for music and singing along the way and the trip made faster!

Seniors Social Support Groups that enjoyed the outing included: Indian-Fijian, Turkish, Coptic, Chinese Mandarin, Maltese, Iranian, Spanish, Serbian, Filipino and our multicultural groups. The Centre based respite clients also joined in the fun too!

The day was filled with colour and everyone enjoyed wandering around, taking in the various entertainments on offer and relaxing over a shared lunch. Everyone loved taking photos with the flowers and the shows.

Making the most of being in Canberra, the groups also visited Parliament House while in Canberra. It was a great success and some of our seniors had never visited Canberra before!



Wexpo (October 24)

#wexpo22

The inaugural WEXPO was held end of October at Blacktown Workers Club. The event was a combination of special topic forums and presentations, together with a business exposition, showcasing the services and specialities available across greater Western Sydney.

SydWest with WentWest delivered a great session on Building Community Infrastructure with a focus on the mental health sector. A special thanks to Jim_Taggart OAM for his Forum facilitator duties.

This forum was one of the most popular and well-attended at WEXPO and we hope the conversation for innovative and transformed responses to mental health care will continue long after. With this in mind, SydWest also visited NSW Parliament to further discuss the need for a specialist CALD peer workforce (see article below in this newsletter).



SydWest goes to Canberra, ACT

Recently around 30 participants from SydWest's community leaders and SydWest's SETS clients recently visited Parliament House for an opportunity to tour the venue, learn more about how our democratic system works and meet with some politicians.

The visit was a part of our Community Capacity Building Program and Civic Education Sessions focus for new arrivals.

During the visit, our group met with Michelle Rowland MP, Minister for Communications and with Ed Husic MP, Minister for Industry and Science.

For more information on SydWest's Settlement Services and Community Leaders program, contact info@sydwestms.org.au.

NSW State Parliament visit - SydWest Presents at NSW Parliament

SydWest presented to the NSW Parliament in mid November 2022 with a recommendation from the WEXPO on the Specialist CALD Peer Workforce model which will improve access to mental health services by people from CALD backgrounds. The model which has an early intervention focus will train and employ people with lived experience.

Some facts: out of 12,000 registered psychologists in NSW only 3.65% are from CALD backgrounds.

Led by Clement Meru, Community Engagement and Disabilities Manager, we also referred to the employability report that highlighted the untapped skills of refugees, humanitarian entrants who highly skilled and experienced.





SydWest proposed scholarships/training that offer opportunities for local experience targeting high-credentialed individuals.

Many thanks to @Stephen Bali MP, Member for Blacktown for bringing Western Sydney to Parliament House. We are looking forward to future opportunities to present to our local members and the NSW Government.

This is her story – NDIS client

Rachael* lands work experience opportunity to lead into employment

Rachael has cerebral palsy and uses a wheelchair for mobility. Rachael completed her participation in Backswing, a program that is designed to help people living with a disability increase their work readiness and employability skills.

She has always wanted to have independence wanting economic participation, but with no prior work experience, feeling like her chair was a barrier to employment and being very shy, she found the process a challenge.

As a first step, SydWest staff worked with Rachael to help build up her confidence and provided her with the tools she needed to seek work experience. Rachael emailed disability organisations for work experience and after many knock backs, she has been offered to start work experience with Diversity and Disability Alliance. This is a big achievement for Rachael, who at 32 felt like her life was not going to ever be different or change for the better. Through SydWest, Rachael has been connected with a peer support buddy, who also has cerebral palsy and works at Diversity and Disability Alliance.

Rachael was so pleased with the support she received during and after her participation in Backswing, she has signed up with SydWest Disability services for support coordination to assist her with her NDIS plan. SydWest will also continue supporting Rachael to explore independent living options to help her achieve her goals.

*Names have been changed to maintain client confidentiality.

Keeping Active with SydWest

a Home Care Client's success

Mr Reginald Hutt 95-year-old HCP L3 client with SydWest. He started HCP services with SydWest in early May 2022, closely followed by signing up to our Centre-based respite (CBR) program, where he attends the Friday sessions @ the Glenwood Community Hub.

Reginald has been very engaged at the CBR sessions, pleased to be not home alone and pleased to be out with others. He is fully engaged in all the varied form of activities and programs organised during the CBR sessions. His paintings are just wonderful and he loves to share his various talents (see [bell playing video](#)).

The CBR Team has been working closely with his Care Worker Shahanaz too, as she is usually spending respite time at home with him.

Our team has prepared a package of Mind/Brain Activity sheets tailored specifically for his interests and delivered through his care worker Shahanaz. She uses the activities while with Reginald during his services in the home.

Reginald recently shared that he loves the mind/brain activities, and he gets lots of joy and fun doing them.



Migrating from Settlement to Prosperity Launched!

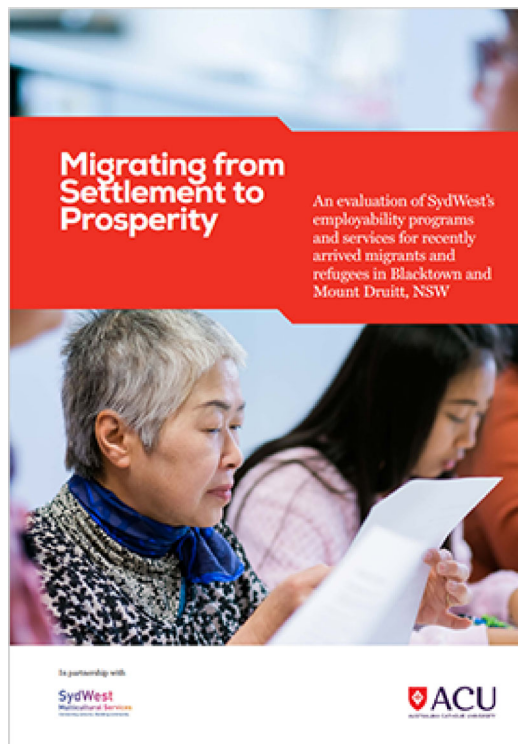
A report of findings of research undertaken by Australian Catholic University on SydWest's Settlement employment pathways programs found that *Highly skilled migrants and*

refugees are being locked out of the job market in Australia, facing policy and funding barriers and discrimination by employers.

A special event was held in early November 2022 to officially launch the report ***Migrating from Settlement to Prosperity: An evaluation of SydWest's employability programs and services for recently arrived migrants and refugees in Blacktown and Mount Druitt, NSW.***

This evaluation found that SydWest's employability services are well organised and administered with a range of successful outcomes for clients leading to employment.

The report made several recommendations, including the establishment of a formal network with a range of local partners with the specific focus of employment for migrants and refugees.



It also recommended partnering and developing plans with universities and technical colleges to develop bridging programs, professional trainee or work placements, specialist English programs, and other related occupational infrastructure, could enhance the settlement process for these clients.

The report also acknowledges the important role that SydWest type organisations have in aiding integration including economic participation through employment, into contemporary Australian society.

For a copy of the report, [please click here.](#)

Moving forward with strategies for employment success

SydWest in partnership with Local Jobs Australia and the Australian Catholic University hosted the Sydney Greater Western Migrant and Refugee Employment Roundtable 25 November 2022.

The roundtable builds on the launch of the Employability report *Migrating from Settlement to Prosperity* and discussed opportunities for collaboration between employment services and community organisations to achieve economic outcomes for refugees and migrants.

Led by SydWest's Settlement Services team, we thank all the participants for their participation. A special mention to [Simon Sogora](#) and [Livingston Chettipally](#) for share practical solutions by thinking outside the box and engaging stakeholders from various sectors. I would like to thank Jamie Petschey of Local Jobs Blacktown and [Caroline Allen](#) of ACU for their coordination and facilitation.

SydWest will also be establishing an employment and community services network following this event, which will seek solutions to addressing the challenges in employment.



African Australians and SydWest Celebrate!

At their recent event, Celebration of African Australians Inc NSW acknowledged some outstanding African Australians for their achievements over the past year.

SydWest Multicultural Services was also acknowledged for its support to African communities in Western Sydney with an award for Community Engagement in recognition of engagement with the African Australian community through events and projects.



Clement Meru, Community Engagement and Disability Services Manager was honoured to give the keynote address at the event and was awarded with an Appreciation Medal as Special Guest.

Christmas and end-of-year celebrations with our Clients!

#healthandwellness

All our teams and their clients have been celebrating end of year and Christmas 2022 recently!

Nearly 200 Seniors, seniors and volunteers, gathered at Glenwood Community Hub for a morning of fun performances, entertainment, food and much more! This year, many of the SydWest Seniors Social Support Groups put on a performance as part of the entertainment – a great expression of their love of SydWest and its services, as well as their ongoing social participation with each other.

Check out the [highlights photo album](#) from the Seniors event!

The Settlement Services and Women & Families teams enjoyed a combined end-of-year celebration event at Blacktown Showgrounds. The day was filled with fun activities and entertainment for everyone, with a visit from Santa's helpers too! Activities included a performance from the Arabic clients choir, a BBQ and Afghan Bolani (made by clients and volunteers), face painting and - lots of fun and games outdoors – a highlight was definitely Bubble Girl @bubbleheadssydney!

The event was an opportunity for nearly 200 clients to come together, share in the fun and make new connections in their local community too.

A very special Thank You to all the Settlement team volunteers, who were a huge help in making the day run smoothly. Enjoy a [highlights package from the day here](#)

Annual General Meeting 2022

SydWest's Annual General Meeting (AGM) was a joyful celebration this year, particularly with the fact that we could all come together face-to-face again and the fact that we were celebrating the 35th AGM!

We are pleased to welcome our **new Board members** and positions will be determined at the next Board Meeting:

- Dr Chandrika Subramaniyan
- Naveen Jayavarapu
- Angela Tsoukatos
- Emeritus Professor Peter Zelas, AM
- Peter Zangari
- Matt Pancino

For more information on our new Board, please visit <https://sydwestms.org.au/about/our-board/>

Our **2021-22 Annual Report** presented at the AGM provides a wonderful overview of the activities and achievements at SydWest during the past year, highlighted with some great client good news stories. [Click here](#) for 2022 Annual Report.



Better Elder Care - a partnership research report

At the AGM 2022, we also launched *Better Elder Care - Towards culturally appropriate aged care service provision for Culturally and Linguistically Diverse older (65+) adults in Greater Western Sydney*.

Research for this report was conducted as part of the Western Sydney University Research Partnerships Program with financial contributions from SydWest and Western Sydney University. Several of the SydWest Seniors Social Support Groups participated in the various workshops that contributed to the research – thanks to the Coptic, Filipino and Chinese/Mandarin groups. The WSU research group was led by Dr Nichole Georgeou, Associate Professor, Associate Dean International, School of Social Sciences, Western Sydney University.

The **Better Elder Care** report was undertaken to explore what it means to ‘age well’ and evaluate the importance of culture and language in provision of meaningful aged care services. Seven recommendations arose from the research covering the importance of bilingual staff, having a cultural wellbeing framework, expanding funding to cover important

social support activities, maintaining green space and public transport to support social connectedness and activities.

SydWest looks forward to building on this report and continuing to advocate for culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) seniors to be better supported for improved social participation and therefore overall wellbeing.

The report is available for download at [CLICK HERE](#).

Sewing Class Update

#everyone-grows

Mid November was the last class of Semester 2 for our Sewing course held at Mt. Office every Wednesday.

After the class everyone celebrated with lunch together, sharing the individual works that each student had made during the course.

Highlights of the course included:

- Participating in this Sewing Course has given client Fatimah Al- Tameemi the confidence to start her own small business. She is now confident in taking orders for personalized bags and making them for customers.
- Sabah Mansour now has the skills to do alterations, make costumes and other fashion outfits, allowing her to start making money from her home.

This course benefits the clients in many ways as it gives them a positive educational experience; it also helps improve their English language skills in communicating with the teacher and each other. Their reading skills are also improved as they learn to following pattern instructions, they use to complete their learning tasks.

The Sewing Course also empowers our students to have the confidence to go on to other courses which may lead to employment.



[Submit email enquiry](#)

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



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