



## Community Connections Issue 3, 2022

### CEO Message



Over the last few months, SydWest Multicultural Services had the privilege to be invited to present in two major NSW State inquiries providing valuable information to government on two key issues: homelessness amongst older people over the age of 55 in NSW, and that of providing communications to culturally and linguistically diverse communities during crises.

In addition, we had the opportunity to provide submissions on the issues of improving access to social housing and the review of Australia's response to COVID-19.

Reflecting on where we were a year ago and observing the impact COVID has left on our diverse communities, it is important that moving forward, all levels of government acknowledge the role multicultural organisations play during periods of crisis and act accordingly to ensure communication is accurate, timely and culturally responsive.

Our recommendations suggested that multicultural organisations play an integral part in filtering through information because of their strong connection to local communities and their agility to respond immediately.

Organisations like SydWest can also integrate information within their service delivery programs. The mapping of religious and cultural assets is important because trusted leaders and religious representatives can be utilised to take ownership and share information. Translations unfortunately address only a part of the response.

It is important to understand how each community receives and understands information and the way they are disseminated. Access to digital devices should not be considered a given and targeted campaigns that are created and shared by young people should be supported. All this can be facilitated by a taskforce of CALD representatives in regions across the State in alongside Health and other local agencies such as the Police, local, state and federal MPs and ethnospecific representatives.

The rates of homelessness among people over the age of 55 has been rapidly increasing in Western Sydney and access to housing by diverse communities is not equal to the rest of the population, especially when the assessment process has proven to be challenging due to linguistic and cultural barriers.

Although we appreciate the announcement by the Federal government on new social and accessible housing, we should also acknowledge that it will not solve the problem. We need to acknowledge that rent has been rapidly increasing in Western Sydney. In the 10 years from 2011 to 2021, median rent of all dwellings had increased by nearly 45% while in the 5 years from 2016 to 2021, the increase had been nearly 20%. These increases, combined with added competition within the private rental market and the increased cost of living, will only maintain the difficulty in placing vulnerable and homeless individuals in safe long-term accommodation.

Finally, all levels of Government need to acknowledge that the community sector will always be the first to respond in situations of crisis and need. The recent predictions that we are rapidly moving into a period of recession means that our services will be in increasing demand and additional resources need to become available to support the sector.

At SydWest, we will continue consulting with our local communities to make sure that we provide government with the information needed for meaningful planning of both state and federally funded services.

Elfa Moraitakis  
**Chief Executive Officer**

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# Upcoming Events

**24 October**

[WEXPO](#) at Blacktown Workers Club

**4 November**

Launch of ACU Report into SydWest's Employment Services

**17 November**

SydWest Annual General Meeting 2022

**23 November**

Sydney Greater West Migrant and Refugee Employment Round Table in partnership with Local Jobs

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## Investment in Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) specific mental health initiatives

**#WEXPO 2022**

SydWest Multicultural Services will be hosting the community leaders ideas forum in partnership with WentWest. Shedding insight into the importance of culturally responsive mental health services and the introduction of early intervention initiatives to address childhood trauma for children 5 years and under, SydWest Multicultural Services and WentWest will be seeking feedback and shared experiences from community leaders in Western Sydney.

Our proposal is for the development of a *CALD Specialist Peer Support Workforce model* to sit alongside government health agencies, to increase access and engagement with mental health services. This forum seeks to address the gap in Greater Western Sydney, specifically in the areas of Nepean Blue Mountains, Western and South Western Sydney LHD/PHNs, to ensure mental health services are delivered in culturally responsive ways to benefit individuals.

Special guest speaker Daniel Angus, Deputy Commissioner of the NSW Mental Commission, joins us for the community leaders forum on 24 October, 2022. Daniel is also an experienced clinical advisor and supervisor for psychologists with the College of Professional Psychology, and the Better Health Generation. Daniel has also worked with young people and families in the adolescent mental health sector in Western Sydney.

For more information on this community leaders forum or to register, contact **Michael Walls** on **0407 783 413**.

Visit our stall at  
**WEXPO 2022**  
October 24, 2022  
Blacktown Workers Club



Monday, October 24, 2022

2.30 – 4 pm

Ballroom, Blacktown Workers Club

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## Family Fun Day

**Helping build community connections**

Recently, the Women & Families team partnered with the Sathya Sai organisation to host a special Family Fun Day to break social isolation, make new friendships and build a stronger sense of community.

[Click to read more](#)



## Inquiry into improving crisis communication to CALD communities

**Providing culturally appropriate in-language resources**

In response to the recent NSW Government inquiry into improving crisis communications to CALD communities, SydWest Multicultural Services was pleased to provide the following key recommendations to government to assist communication and planning with multicultural organisations and community leaders by involving them at the decision-making table.

**Using Cultural and Religious facilities as conduits to channel into CALD communities.** We would recommend that these community assets be mapped in order that they are ready to go when a crisis communication has to be distributed quickly.

**Tailored communications to effectively engage young people with practical examples for ease of understanding.**

**Community service organisations with a bilingual workforce to share messages with the community and those we serve** - through our programs and services such as home care, and disability support services. Our staff have the rapport, connection, linguistic and cultural understanding, as well as the trust of those who we serve and would make for more effective communications.

**Virtual door-knocking was a crucial tool for contacting hard-to-reach populations,** especially those who were at risk of being shut out from crisis communications, such as COVID-19 vaccinations and updates to COVID-19 restrictions.

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## Homelessness amongst older people aged 55 and over

SydWest Multicultural Services provided a submission to the inquiry into homelessness amongst older people aged over 55 in New South Wales, which was recently conducted by the NSW Government's Standing Committee.

While data shows that the homelessness status for citizens over 55 years is growing, we know that housing pathway options are minimal for Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) older adults to access accommodation at an early stage. Improved partnerships between Housing NSW and the not for profit sector would help address the risk of homelessness for older persons.

CALD older people with language barriers struggle to initiate contact with housing providers, and even if they make contact successfully, there are many other challenges and barriers faced during this engagement process.

SydWest Multicultural Services provides support with housing, to help people maintain their tenancy, and/or provide supports to secure housing, medium or long term.

We look forward to finding results from the inquiries that can provide housing pathways to address homelessness amongst older people over 55, especially in Western Sydney.

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# Sydney Disability Expos

Across July and August, our SydWest Disability Services team ambitiously took part in two disability exhibitions to promote our range of person-centred services.



Combined, roughly 10,000 potential customers and carers attended these exhibitions and proved to be a great initiative to establish our brand presence. Whilst having the benefits of engaging with potential care recipients shopping around for their next care provider, it also provided networking opportunities with other organisations in the sector.



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# Youth Advisory Committee is launched

The SydWest Multicultural Services Youth Advisory Committee provides an opportunity for young people from migrant and refugee backgrounds to advise, plan and make recommendations on SydWest Multicultural Services Youth programs and service provision.

Through regular consultation, the Committee will provide strategic input to shape the direction and key priorities of the youth programs, ensuring the voice of young people is at the centre of all work undertaken by our Youth team.

## Please welcome our Committee Members



### **Nasrullah Rajab Ali**

19 year old IT student, from Afghanistan.

*I want to be a voice for the youth in Western Sydney, address the issues that young people experience, and advocate for change that will help young people.*

*I fluently speak three languages: English, Hindu and Dari.*



## Baset UI Islam

21 year old Bengali humanitarian development student and retail worker.

*Joining YAC for me is a great opportunity to reach out, help people and make a difference. I'm passionate about helping people, playing games and driving.*

*I speak five different languages.*



## Jaipreet Singh

20 year old of Punjabi background, business administration and IT student working in retail.

*This presents me with opportunities to analyse issues impacting youth, build my organisational and leadership skills.*

*I speak 4 languages: Hindi, Punjabi, Urdu, and English.*



## Farzana Nazari

19 year old from Afghanistan, Social Science / Law student and retail worker.

*I joined to be around good people and help others, be kind and learn leadership skills.*

*I am passionate about helping people, being kind to the people around me and bringing positive change in the world.*





## Melak Al-Zuhairi

19 year old Iraqi, currently studying interior design

*I joined for the opportunity to learn more skills, express myself, share stories with others and learn new things.*

*I am passionate about design, helping others, making positive change in the world, and helping animals.*

*I like singing, acting, art, making good food and everyone happy.*



## Henrietta Adomako

20 year old Ghanaian, currently studying medical science.

*I joined YAC to make a difference, help my peers and young people in need.*

*I'm passionate about food, healthy living, science, and my studies.*

*Food brings me joy, and I would trade anything to make my family happy.*

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# Minister Coure talks community

Community talks with NSW Minister for Multiculturalism and Seniors

SydWest Multicultural Services was pleased to support Multicultural NSW with their latest Community Forum with the Hon Mark Coure MP, Minister for Multiculturalism, on Thursday 25 August 2022 in Seven Hills.

The event was a great opportunity for our clients and community leaders to come together and discuss multicultural matters important to the community of Blacktown, Seven Hills and surrounds, in person with the Minister.



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## This is my story: Ambreen Mohammadi

Ambreen is one of our Riverstone Mums and Bubs Group members who has succeeded with her enthusiasm in education and teaching, going on to set up her own business in an area her passion lies.



*As an immigrant arriving in Australia I've managed to set up my own business and if I can do it, so many more can do it too!*

[Click to read full story](#)

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## Social support groups for seniors at Blacktown Showground

**#healthandwellness**

Our seniors regularly go down to Blacktown Showground to engage in social activities that help them exercise, meet new friends and have a laugh together.

Executive Manager, Nathan Burbridge joins the seniors in their physical activities and laughter therapy too! Enjoy this quick video giving you an insight to how much fun they have when they meet together - and it's bound to put a smile on your face too 😊



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## We are rebranding!



In 1985, SydWest Multicultural Services was born in the heart of Blacktown.

Our new brand design has been derived from the map of Blacktown City - as we look back at our history, growth of the organisation and current footprint across the Greater Western Sydney region today.

Our new vibrant colours reflect the colourful diversity of language and culture, especially within Blacktown and Western Sydney communities.

Keep an eye out for our new branding, soon to be launched at the upcoming Wexpo on 24 October!

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[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.**



SydWest Multicultural Services, Level 2 125 Main St, Blacktown, NSW 2148, Australia

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