



Community Connections

Issue 3, 2023

CEO Message



The most recent "Barely Hanging On" report on the Cost of Living in NSW has been recently released by NCOSS, shedding light on the challenges faced by our communities as they contend with low incomes or find themselves below the poverty line. The outcomes of this report did not catch service providers, such as SydWest, off guard. Our organizations have been closely engaged with families grappling to meet their basic needs and predicted these results during the pandemic.

Despite consistently witnessing a surge in pleas for assistance throughout western Sydney, the situation has taken a particularly worrisome turn.

This year's report incorporates insights from a more extensive pool of participants from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, bringing to light noteworthy findings such as the relatively youthful age of individuals with dependents or those residing within multi-family households.

Respondents from CALD backgrounds face notably higher risks of housing-related financial strain, with 70% experiencing housing stress by allocating from 30% up to 50% of their earnings toward housing expenses.

Despite an 81% reported employment rate among this group, with a substantial number engaged in full-time or multiple jobs, a disconcerting 61% conveyed instances of forgoing essential needs, and 24% disclosed instances of missing meals within the preceding year. Tragic and grim findings.

Conducted in collaboration with the University of Technology, the research has raised an alarm among stakeholders. Joanna Quilty, CEO of NCOSS, will be joining forces with Clement Meru of SydWest and Michael Fox of Mission Australia in a conversation involving community members and service providers, aimed at amplifying the voice of Western Sydney. Najwa Tirezi, with linguistic support from our case worker Mervat Atarazi, will enrich the panel with firsthand experiences and insights into the impact on her family.

We eagerly anticipate a profoundly insightful dialogue, wherein the community can contribute to potential solutions. If you have not yet registered, we invite you to participate in the conversation by following the link provided below.

Elfa Moraitakis
Chief Executive Officer

WEXPO 2023

We are proud to announce our continued partnership as a premium sponsor for this year's Wexpo, to be held in Blacktown on **September 5, 2023**. WEXPO Blacktown features two unique round table sessions where hand-picked guests experience presentations on Workplace Health and Community Infrastructure, and **a full day of workshops, forums, entertainment, and special guest speakers.**

Are you interested? Find out more about the events happening [here!](#) We will be at stall number 2 and holding a [Cost of Living Forum](#) with Community Leaders.



SydWest Social Support Group: Now in Cumberland!

We have expanded our Senior Social Support Group program to Cumberland to provide workshops, social activities, and community connections for our seniors aged 65 plus from the Blacktown/Cumberland LGA Areas.

Find out more about our range of wonderful social support programs by calling us at (02) 9621 6633.



Africultures

Africultures Festival is Australia’s largest African festival showcasing the many vibrant cultures of the African continent. This one-day festival draws thousands of people from across Australia to immerse in the culture, food, music, and arts of Africa. From bustling market stalls selling arts and fashion to a vibrant lineup of dancers and musicians to delicious food from around Africa, this festival is a jam-packed day full of fun for the whole family.

[Get your tickets here](#) and come find our stall on the 2nd of September at Cathy Freeman Park!



From SydWest Client to Employee: A Success Story

When Ledyia, a single mother, arrived in Australia as a refugee, she sought out support from our Settlement Support Services to help connect her with her new community. She was encouraged to volunteer with SydWest and joined our Arabic Social Group Activities and Information Sessions, which improved her communication skills and self-esteem.

After attending these sessions, Ledyia began a casual job as a receptionist with us and has now joined SydWest as a Customer Service Officer in our Mt. DrUITT Office.

"Thank you to SydWest for giving me an employment opportunity, in particular, Settlement Team Caseworkers", said Ledyia.

"You supported me during my settlement journey empowered me to gain employment and improved my social engagement skills."

Good Neighbours Program

Fostering intergenerational connection through creativity

We are currently holding art workshops with senior clients in collaboration with [Good Neighbours](#) and [Art Bubbles](#), to encourage our seniors to engage with their community and improve emotional wellbeing.

"Today's event, through art creation and learning, brings participants and young volunteers an interactive mode, which is a great opportunity to adjust to life and learn to socialize," said participant Wen Zhao.

"I deeply feel the harmony and warmth of this big family. We would like to thank the community for caring about the lives of our elderly, and especially inviting art teachers and volunteers to give us art classes to enrich the lives of our elderly", said another client.

To find out more about the program, please contact us at (02) 9621 6633



Mental Health Workshop for Youth Clients

Our Youth team held a workshop to provide youth clients with a better understanding of mental health, stress management, and programs to seek support from.

For many youths, mental health is a taboo topic that is not spoken freely about in families that come from multicultural backgrounds. This workshop has assisted the clients that mental health is a real-life issue, and develop the confidence to seek help if needed.



Multicultural Women's Support Group

Our Women and Families team is holding a free Women 's Support Group for migrant and refugee women with a child from 0-8 years old!

This program has career-building workshops, parenting discussions, self-care activities, and more!

We will be holding these sessions every Thursday (excluding School Holidays) from 10 am-12 pm in Blacktown, if you're interested please call us at (02) 9621 6633 or contact Ambreen at ambreen.kamran@sydwestms.org.au



SydWest Attends Penrith Networking Session

It is predicted that by 2041 Penrith will grow by 57%, with a growth of 10,000 people per capita per year every year and 19.6% of the population speaks a language other than English at home.

This session, held at Astina and hosted by Penrith City Council, demonstrated how working with the multicultural community in the Penrith area will help us build our business plan.

We would like to thank the council for the wonderful event and networking opportunity, and guest speaker Om Dhungel for sharing his stories and insights.



Support for Penrith Settlement

During Refugee Week SydWest, in partnership with Nepean Multicultural Access, SSI, and Penrith City Council, hosted a successful event to support Penrith settlement.

The aim of the event which attracted over 50 stakeholders was to create awareness of the opportunities presented through economic growth in the Badgerys Creek area and the need for coordination of local support to ensure a positive settlement experience for refugees, humanitarian entrants, and migrants.

Key stakeholders included Joseph La Posta (MNSW CEO) and Penrith Council's GM, CRISP (Community Refugee Integration Support Pilot). While we are working on the next steps of the implementation Strategy and engaging additional stakeholders, the Federal Member for Lindsay, Melissa McIntosh, visited our SydWest head offices to discuss the strategy further and offer her full support.



[Submit email enquiry](#)

We hope you enjoyed catching up on SydWest news, events and personal success stories of our clients and customers.



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