



# Community Connections

## Issue 4, 2023

### CEO message



Recently, my colleagues and I attended and supported the Settlement Council of Australia's (SCOA) 2023 Conference in Melbourne. Members of the NSW Settlement Partnership Consortium and settlement workers and supporters across the nation came together to discuss the progress of the [Road to Belonging Strategy](#), and hear from the sector.

It is always inspiring when like-minded people gather and reflect on their practices and on the future of a sector that relies heavily on government funding and is becoming increasingly competitive. My heart was filled with warmth and a sense of fulfillment when people with lived experience shared the impact our work had on their lives. The reflection of individuals with very different experiences, visa statuses and ways of arrival to the country on "the key to their successful settlement" was my highlight and they all received a standing ovation from the almost 400 colleagues in the room.

Settlement providers were the ones who played the key role in connecting them with community, assisting them with their own individualised needs and plans, and empowered them to become positive contributors to the Australian society and role models within their own communities. No matter how often government priorities change no one can take away the quality of our work throughout the years.

This recognition was not only echoed by Minister for Immigration, Citizenship and Multicultural Affairs, Andrew Giles, but also resonated in the words of the inspiring Senator Fatima Payman from Western Australia. Both acknowledged our sector's adaptability in an

ever-changing environment and the instrumental role settlement providers play in shaping a successful multicultural society.

The settlement sector is also one that consists of individuals with lived experience, and it was truly positive to hear that government recognises the need for our practices to be informed by refugees and their experiences. We are a step ahead since the sector is already strongly equipped to keep facing the humanitarian crisis in front of us.

SydWest is committed to remaining a key partner, aiding the Federal Government in meeting its priorities. Through robust governance, community connection, diverse accredited services, and innovative practices, we will persist in supporting the challenging journeys of individuals settling in Western Sydney. Together, we will continue shaping a more inclusive and vibrant Australia.

Elfa Moraitakis  
Chief Executive Officer

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## Blacktown walk to end family violence



Last week more than 70 community members walked through the Blacktown CBD to raise awareness of domestic and family violence and to say no to violence in all of its forms.

The gathering was part of the international campaign, 16 days of Activism Against Gender-based Violence, organised locally by the Outer West Domestic Violence Network.

Along with SydWest Multicultural Services, representatives at the walk included Mt Druitt and Blacktown police, Blacktown Council, The WASH House, the Harman Foundation, DV West, the Women's Domestic Violence Court Assistance Service, Catholic Care, Workers Lifestyle Group and other community groups.

SydWest Settlement and Community Programs Manager, Clement Meru, said domestic violence reporting was high in the Blacktown local government area.

"It's important for all of us to collaborate and for the community to understand that we have a collective responsibility to address family violence," he said.

"The aim of the walk is to be visible and draw attention to this critical issue."

Bilingual domestic violence support workers remained at the Village Green between 10am and 2pm to provide information and support to community members.

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## Helping people with disability navigate relationships, sexuality and identity

Our NDIS team will develop a series of short videos aimed at helping people with disability become more confident in decision-making about relationships, sexuality and identity.

The project is being funded by a *My Rights Matter* grant from the Council of Intellectual Disability, and the videos will be co-produced by people with disability.

The video resources are aimed at those with an intellectual disability, autism spectrum or psycho-social disability.

They will also be used as a training tool for frontline disability support workers so they understand the rights of people with disability and can facilitate discussions.

Executive Manager, Disability Supports and Business Growth, Thom Calma said there are few resources around that support discussions for people with disability around these issues.

"What we really want to do is promote what 'good' looks like in terms of supporting people with disability and to create awareness about what they can and should expect in terms of being able to navigate these issues in their lives," he said.

"It also helps set that expectation with support staff."

While the videos can be used on their own to spark discussion, they will also be used in a series of larger workshops PA will host in early to mid-2024.

This project follows the production of a [series of videos](#) featuring PA clients that were made earlier this year to help disseminate information about The Voice referendum to people with disability.

Both projects are part of our work to support people with disability to live full lives as full members of the community.

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## Bhutan migration history book launched at AGM



Launched at the SydWest Multicultural Services-Participate Australia AGM on 2 November 2023, [Bhutanese Migration History – a life in three countries](#) is an important contribution to the history of migration to Australia.

This [recent video](#) features Om Dhungel, a local Bhutanese community leader and key contributor to this recording of history, talking about the project.

This book was published by SydWest Multicultural Services and written by Virginia Macleod, with the assistance of the Australian Historical Society and the NSW Government through the Create NSW Cultural Grants Program and in collaboration with the Bhutanese community.

"The book, with its rich historical narrative, holds a special place in my heart, as it beautifully encompasses my own story within its pages," said Nanda Bhandari, President, Association of Bhutanese in Australia, Sydney.

"It was inspiring to see the commitment of SydWest to shed light on such an important aspect of our migration history," he said.

SydWest CEO Elfa Moraitakis said she felt humbled to be able to contribute to this significant piece of Western Sydney's history.

"Having collaborated with the Bhutanese community for nearly 15 years, I have developed a deep appreciation for their kindness and the strong bonds they share, ensuring the success of their settlement in Blacktown," she said.

We are distributing copies of the book to select libraries and other select stakeholders. For more information, please contact [marketingcommunications@sydwestms.org.au](mailto:marketingcommunications@sydwestms.org.au)

## New chair welcomed to SydWest board



Angela Tsoukatos is the new chair of the SydWest Multicultural Services board.

Angela was elected following SydWest's annual general meeting. She assumes the role from Dr Chandrika Subramaniyan.

Angela is an experienced and versatile executive general manager with a successful track record working in Australia's largest water utility, local government and the not-for-profit sector.

She has extensive experience in service provision, transformation and leading high performing teams, as well as delivering outstanding business results. Angela holds a Bachelor of Social Work, a Masters of Management in Public Management, and is a recognised champion of diversity and inclusion.

She was also the CEO of disability provider Participate Australia, which recently merged with SydWest.

SydWest CEO Elfa Moraitakis said she was delighted to welcome Angela to the role.

'Angela has been a member of our board for the past two years and knows our business well, we are looking forward to an exciting year of growth ahead.'

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## Caring at end of life critical part of aged care and disability services

SydWest is proud to have been selected to participate in a national project funded by the Department of Health and Aged Care to develop and support palliative and advance care planning in aged care.

This program is known as ELDAC Linkages and is a sub-program of [End-of-Life Directions for Aged Care](#).

Our clinical staff have become the trainers in-house and will work closely with ELDAC to ensure we build the best possible service.

As part of this work we are advocating for the development of resources for advance care planning in different community languages, and our staff will be trained to provide high level palliative care support to clients in the community.

At the same time, we are building linkages with local primary health networks, palliative care providers and other health professionals to establish a seamless process between hospital and home care providers. This is critical to ensure that no one falls through the gap while being at end of life care.

In building the resources, training and skills within our staff, we will be delivering to both our aged care and disability clients to ensure best quality end of life care for our clients and their families.

We look forward to seeing the ongoing growth and development of our care teams as we learn and work with local experts to expand our palliative care services.

For further information, please contact our clinical services team.



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## Excursion shows new arrivals democracy in action



SydWest's Settlement Team recently organised a visit to the NSW parliament with some of our community leaders and new settlement clients.

The tour is part of our civic education program and included a short meeting with Stephen Bali MP, Member for Blacktown.

The group also had the opportunity to speak with the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly, the Hon Greg Piper MP.

The tour group also observed a question time session and appreciated the chance to experience what happens as a part of parliamentary business.

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## Advocating for our community

The SydWest leadership team has continued to actively advocate for community across a number of areas in the past few months.

CEO Elfa Moraitakis presented at NSW Parliament House on the cost-of-living crisis, facilitated a session on healthy ageing at the recent Multicultural Health and Wellbeing Conference, and has met with a range of stakeholders about affordable housing.

Our Settlement and Community Programs Manager Clement Meru recently spoke to new police recruits at the Goulburn Police Academy about engaging with multicultural communities and attendees, and moderated a panel at the Men's Interfaith Domestic Violence Forum, which aims to prevent family violence through education and awareness.



## SydWest seeks volunteers for new Aged Care Visitors Scheme

SydWest is delighted to advise that we are now delivering the Aged Care Volunteer Visitor Scheme for seniors who are socially isolated in the Nepean and South West Sydney regions.

We are seeking volunteers to join our team to visit an older person who lives in one, or both, of these areas.

There are a range of visitor activities we encourage our volunteers to participate in with their seniors, such as:

- Having conversations over a cuppa
- Going for short walks
- Playing board games, chess, complete puzzles
- Doing light gardening with the care recipients
- Arts and crafts, needlework
- Going on outings

More details can be found in our flyer [here](#). For further information please contact Jess Boenawan, Social Support and Volunteer Coordinator 0481 962 402 or [Jesika.Boenawan@sydwestms.org.au](mailto:Jesika.Boenawan@sydwestms.org.au)

Also, if you are a home care provider in the South Western Sydney or Nepean regions, we also invite you to refer your care recipient to the ACVVS program. Contact Jess Boenawan to discuss further as per the details above.





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## Our Christmas office hours

Please be advised that offices for both SydWest and Participate Australia will be closed from Monday, December 25, and will reopen on Monday, January 8, 2024.

We wish our clients, partners, and supporters a safe and joyful festive season and we look forward to working with you in the new year.



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[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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