



# Community Connections

Issue 1, 2025

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## From the CEO



### **Celebrating Unity and Diversity: Blacktown's Harmony Day 2025**

In a time when social cohesion in Australia has been tested, it is more important than ever to come together and reaffirm the values that make our society strong: inclusivity, respect, and

belonging.

Sponsored by Blacktown City Council, SydWest's Harmony Day celebration will take place on the 21st March. This year, the Day Against Racial Discrimination should be a powerful reminder that "everyone belongs" and that diversity is not a challenge, but a source of strength and resilience for our community.

Our event will showcase the rich cultural fabric of Blacktown, bringing people together to celebrate, learn, and reflect on the importance of unity. Through engaging speakers, cultural performances, and meaningful discussions, we will highlight how our differences and shared experiences enrich our society, making Australia a better place for all.

Now more than ever, we must stand against division and ensure that everyone - regardless of background - feels valued and included. This event is not just a celebration; it is a call to action to support our new comers, embrace our diversity, and strengthen the bonds that unite us. Only together, we can build a more inclusive and harmonious future for all.

We invite the community to join us, celebrate with us, and be part of the conversation on how we can continue to foster a society where every individual feels safe, respected, and at home.

Elfa Moraitakis  
CEO

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## Backswing is Back!

Western Sydney Backswing kicking off for 2025



We are thrilled to announce the return of the **Western Sydney Backswing project in 2025!**

This innovative program is designed to help people with disabilities, including those from multicultural backgrounds, prepare for jobs and connect with employers.

Participants will gain valuable job skills and have the opportunity to gain work experience with local employers. The project aims to highlight the benefits of employing people with disabilities, especially those from CALD backgrounds. And the best part? It's completely FREE!

SydWest's Backswing commences the week of Monday 17th March, with classes scheduled across Sydney! Our main groups will be in Blacktown and Mt Druitt. Participants are excited to start soon, to learn how to become more employable, and to meet real bosses and managers!

Our VIP guests from different industries are scheduled for Friday 20th June. On that day we'll have a performance and a meet n' greet for our participants. It will be an exciting end, with photos, lunch, drinks and fun for all.

Want to learn more or get involved? Contact Michael Voulgaropoulos, Backswing Coordinator, at 0419 373 153 or [Michael.v@sydwestms.org.au](mailto:Michael.v@sydwestms.org.au).

[Click here](#) to read more about how the Western Sydney Backswing program works. This project is funded by the Department of Social Services.

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## Zawmyo's story of settlement

### An inspiring success story



In 2017, Zawmyo arrived in Australia from Myanmar, facing numerous challenges, including language barriers, finding employment, and navigating the citizenship process. With the dedicated support of the SydWest Settlement Services team, Zawmyo embarked on a transformative journey.

Through our step-by-step guidance, Zawmyo attended our citizenship classes, significantly improving his English language skills. We also provided comprehensive assistance with his citizenship application and job search.

Not long after, Zawmyo reached out to express his heartfelt gratitude: "Thank you so much for your support. With your citizenship classes and the services provided through SydWest, I secured a job at the well-known store Fabre Castell Pencils in Seven Hills and successfully passed the citizenship test!"

Zawmyo's story is a testament to the power of perseverance and the impact of community support. His success inspires us all and highlights the importance of the services we provide at SydWest Multicultural Services.

## Harmony Day 2025

**We're celebrating!**



We're pleased to advise that we're hosting our annual Harmony Week celebration event on Wednesday 19th March from 10am at Bowman Hall, Blacktown.

Our event is sponsored by Blacktown City Council and promises to come together with community to celebrate the cultural diversity in our area and spread the message of 'everyone belongs'.

Coming together is important in promoting our cultural diversity. It creates an opportunity to think, talk about and recognise how our differences and our similarities make Australia a great place to live.

With some great speakers and entertainment, we are offering a thought provoking and entertaining event.

We hope everyone will learn about how we can all contribute to making sure everyone feels like they belong in their community.

We hope you also learn more about the challenges that new arrivals face and the many contributions everyone can make to a better society.

For more information, contact [info@sydwestms.org.au](mailto:info@sydwestms.org.au) or Tel 9621-6633.

## Success story: Job readiness in construction

the importance of collaboration between the sector and NFP



For the past three years, SydWest has teamed up with John Holland and TAFE NSW to help newly arrived migrants and refugees kickstart careers in construction. The latest 9-week program, completed in late 2024, saw 15 participants gain essential skills, hands-on experience, and a White Card.

### Meet the Participants:

- **Adam:** A civil engineer from Sudan, Adam improved his English at TAFE NSW while completing the program. He's now working part-time with a local construction company.

- **Reza:** From Afghanistan, Reza specialized in bricklaying and concreting. The program boosted his confidence and skills, leading to full-time work with a building contractor in south-west Sydney.
- **Jonathan:** Originally from Tanzania, Jonathan recently finished high school in Australia. Excelling in the program, he secured a full-time job with a large landscape and civil construction service.

With another program starting mid-2025, interest is already high. This success is thanks to the strong partnership between SydWest, TAFE NSW, and John Holland, ensuring smooth transitions into the workforce for migrants and refugees.

For more information, contact SydWest on [info@sydwestms.org.au](mailto:info@sydwestms.org.au)

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## Art without Limits

### Celebrating Creativity and Inclusion



(R-L) Artists Yin and Lex Tan with our Chair Angela Tsoukatos and her daughter Anastasia

We recently hosted our first-ever **Art Without Limits** event at the Croydon Hub, thanks to funding from the Inner West Council. This event celebrated the amazing talents of artists with disabilities in our community.

#### Highlights:

- **101 attendees**, with nearly a quarter being people with disabilities.
- **10 artists** (8 with disabilities and 2 collaborators) showcased their work.
- **38 artworks** including textiles, drawings, paintings, photography, jewelry, and mixed media.

- **Over \$3000** worth of art sold, with all proceeds going directly to the artists.

Unsold artworks are now available on our Instagram page. Check them out!

A huge thank you to everyone who made this event a success and to all who attended. Your support means the world to us!

This was just the beginning. Here's to many more celebrations of creativity and inclusion!

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## Youth Study Centre Opens in Mt Druitt



Starting from February 20th, SydWest's Youth Team is thrilled to announce the opening of our new Study Centre at the Mt Druitt office. Sessions are held every Thursday during school terms from 4-6pm.

Our Study Centre provides FREE study support from a qualified tutor who specialises in subjects like science, biology, physics, chemistry, mathematics, and more! This fantastic resource is available exclusively for youth aged 12-25 years old.

For more information or to register your interest, please contact Engela Mati at [engela.mati@sydwestms.org.au](mailto:engela.mati@sydwestms.org.au) or Ahmed Shmela at [ahmed.shmela@sydwestms.org.au](mailto:ahmed.shmela@sydwestms.org.au).

Don't miss out on this great opportunity! [Click here](#) to download the flyer.

# BMI - are you in the loop?



Did you know that SydWest runs the Blacktown Multicultural Interagency? We have meetings every bi-monthly on last Friday of the month and a wide range of services who support the CALD community are members.

So if you want to get involved, get on the mailing list and get invited to meetings, contact our [Saurav.Shrestha@sydwestms.org.au](mailto:Saurav.Shrestha@sydwestms.org.au)

## For the diary

- March 19 - Harmony Day 2025, Blacktown

Submit email enquiry

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, 9621 6633

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