



2021

ANNUAL

REPORT

"Strengthening the capacity of our diverse communities"

TMN wishes to acknowledge the Daruk and Eora people as the original inhabitants of the Bankstown and Canterbury area and the owners of the land where our organisation stands.

What We Do



'Strengthen the capacity of our diverse communities'



How We Do It



TMN uses a collaborative community development approach to support, resource and advocate for our diverse communities in South West Sydney.



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OUR VISION

The Multicultural Network's vision is to empower and strengthen the multicultural communities of South West Sydney.

A secular non-profit independent community based and managed organisation, The Multicultural Network Inc. (TMN) works to support, resource, and advocate for the diverse communities in South West Sydney to bring about positive social change and improve the lives of the most vulnerable.

TMN represents the diverse interests of the community amongst the wider Australian society, working towards an inclusive harmonious and rich relationship with indigenous, Anglo-Australian and ethnic communities. TMN values its relationships with all communities which are built on mutual respect, acknowledgement and support of each other's values.

The values that underpin The Multicultural Network's work are:

Equality

Regardless of creed, race, age or gender, we believe everyone has the right to the information and support they need.

Empowerment

We encourage the development of confidence and the skills people need to be self-determining in their life choices.

Community

We believe that strong healthy communities are the foundation of secure, happy people and society.

Growth

We believe that we all have the capacity to evolve, change and learn for the betterment of ourselves, community and world.

Diversity

We recognise and value our differences and believe in one inclusive society.

TMN MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

Chairperson:	Layla Naji (Acting) Sue Huxtable-Jones till August 2021
Vice Chairperson:	Layla Naji
Secretary/Public Officer:	Wafa Zaim
Treasurer:	Nga Nguyen
Ordinary Members:	Boshra Masri Lola Simmons Loubna Hammoud Anne Rogers

TMN STAFF MEMBERS

Executive Officer	Roxana Rascon (Consultant)
Multicultural Community Development Worker	Fatmata Bangura
	Joy Siamoa
SWS Sector Support and Development Officer/ Team Leader	Eunice Sansour
SWS Multicultural Access Project Worker	Lorena Recabarren
Multicultural Access & Referral Service Coordinator	Francisca Loyola-Sandoval
Aboriginal Sector Support and Development Officer	Taylor-Jai McAlister
Zero Barriers Director	Sue Huxtable-Jones (Consultant)
Zero Barriers Project Coordinator	Rafa McNulty
Accounts Officer	Evon Kostanti
Administration Officer	Le Pham

CONSULTANTS

Con Kostanti	Onsite Computer Experts
Jenny Ettia	Website Developer
Petra Will-Heart	Facilitator

CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

Layla Naji/Sue Huxtable-Jones
Chairperson

It is with much pleasure that I present to you The Multicultural Network (TMN) 2021 Annual Report.

There is no doubt that 2021 has been a difficult year for our organisation, bringing more and new barriers, leading to the team and the committee to raise to its best of their capabilities. COVID-19 restrictions made us draw from our combined strengths, abilities, and knowledge to re-design the way we function and continue working for the good of our communities.

Continuing contact with our communities during lockdown, in particular with those with limited IT skills and/or poor technological resources, has been one of the biggest challenges we have faced. We had to further develop our communication strategies to reach out to people through different ways. Although older people tend to steer away from accessing information through browsing the internet, we found that many people in this group were quite active in social media and chat groups, in particular CALD older people who seem to be accustomed to communicating with their overseas relatives through this media. We contacted ethnic Facebook groups and CALD group leaders to offer information to their communities in these preferred formats. We created a Facebook page and disseminated relevant information on how to access services, updates on Covid 19 restrictions and pop-up vaccination hubs to a wide number of people in Sydney South West. We also continue resourcing our communities through the TMNLinks website and through the sector for a wider dissemination.

We continued to observe that the social isolation rules saw the emergence of socio-economic pressures in families, as well as isolation, insecurity, and strain in relationships. As lockdown set in again, new parents were not able to continue attending much needed playgroups, leading to concerns in toddlers' development and the further development of parenting skills. Data shows that children in Canterbury-Bankstown are displaying significant levels of developmental vulnerability in physical health and wellbeing, social competence, language and cognitive skills, communication skills and general knowledge when compared to children in NSW. Approximately a quarter of children are vulnerable on one or more domains in Canterbury Bankstown City. Our Multicultural Communities Development Project focuses on supporting young families to ensure child's full developmental stages through education, resources, and support in an early intervention approach. Much of this work is interactive and face-to-face, but the project developed strategies to continue their work with parents and children to minimize the impact of Covid19 restrictions on children's development. Other issues observed in disadvantaged families since the breakout of the pandemic include a rise in unemployment and job insecurity, loss of income, homelessness and an increase in substance abuse exacerbated incidence of domestic violence. We have been working in partnership with the DCJ and local services to support people affected by Covid or in isolation to meet their basic or pressing needs.

Our good governance practices, sound policies and responsive attitude towards rapidly changing needs made TMN rise above difficult times, and the united, committed and skilled Management Committee and team made us stronger and well equipped to continue functioning well during this crisis. My sincerest gratitude to all and each of them, as they are the backbone of this well-respected organization.

EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S REPORT

Roxana Rascon
Executive Officer

This report finds me again reflecting on another challenging year for TMN, and again on another year that I'm proud to recount as our committed and talented team have once more overcome those challenges.

As many of our team members' report, our services operation was strongly influenced by the pandemic again. Sydney Southwest was strongly affected by Covid 19 in the latest crisis period that started at the end of June 2021. High numbers of infections were recorded in the area and stricter lockdown rules were implemented to control the spread of the virus. Unfortunately, some of the monitoring strategies of lockdown rules compliance had a strong authoritarian presence in the community, triggering traumatic memories for refugees and migrants affected by war. Police presence in horses and helicopters flying over the area raised concerns in the community and local government, triggering a meeting with the Premier to request equality of treatment of the Sydney South West communities. Also, a Parliamentary Inquiry into the management of Covid-19 in Western Sydney by the state government conducted in September 2021, was told people in west and southwest Sydney have been made to feel like criminals in their own homes. This was very concerning for TMN and its constituents.

As an organization committed to eliminate all forms of discrimination, we feel strongly about educating communities and advocating for equality of access to health, education, employment, services, civil and socio-economic participation and contributing to building the capacity of the most disadvantaged and strengthen their position in society. With that aim, we have been working in a number of initiatives to and collaborations with external partners such as:

- educating the public through community events on positive contributions made by refugees to Australian society and celebrating their resilience
- raise awareness about poverty in our community during anti-poverty week and supporting the most vulnerable
- building knowledge in the aged care sector on the special needs of older migrants, refugees and ATSI older people, their cultural backgrounds, barriers, trauma or disadvantaged suffered that shapes their needs in ageing
- providing the Australian College of Applied Professions – Psychology Clinic with input into building cultural competency in emotional and mental health support professionals
- participating in the '*Multilingual and Multicultural Australia: A language inclusive future*' roundtable led by Macquarie University and the NSW State Library with the aim to develop an auditing tool for agencies to identify, value and better utilize bilingual employees skills.
- participating in a Covid19 management consultation with the then NSW Premier Gladys Berejiklian, raising concerns about the treatment of South West Sydney communities being different to other areas with similar number of cases
- engaging in consultation with local services and Dep of Communities and Justice to provide input into how to convey appropriate health information to CALD communities in a timely manner and coordination of crisis assistance.

This year we have also continued working intensively to eliminate barriers for people with disability to be able to shop, use services and participate in community activities like everyone else. We had achieved significant work with our NDIA funded Zero Barriers project in this area in 2019, but we felt that this was just the beginning and the incredibly positive response from the sector and participants for this award-winning project reinforced our view: a lot was still to be done. We decided to create a membership funded project for Councils to partner with us in making shops, services and institutions in their area more disability inclusive by implementing simple steps and solutions that significantly improve access for people with disability. The project is growing quickly again and we are thrilled to see the business, services and government working side-by-side to build better communities.

Our aged care team continued to deliver information and support to aging communities to ensure that when the time comes to engage aged care services, they feel knowledgeable and can make informed decisions. The team also works closely with the sector to support, resource and provide training to aged care services so that CALD, Aboriginal and older people with special needs can receive services that are culturally appropriate, and feel understood and supported in their needs. We have also continued providing frail aged clients with casework services in different languages to help them navigate the aged care system, choose and engage a service for their needs.

Another area of our work focuses on supporting young families with children of 0 to 12 years old to increase their parenting skills, develop knowledge of child developmental milestones and build capacity to overcome barriers that, if left unaddressed, would result in disadvantage for the child. This program continues to excel in strengthening newly arrived parents and other disadvantaged families, achieving tangible outcomes for families and children.

The sector collaborated well again when facing a crisis. The sudden development of Covid 19 hotspots in the area brought agencies together to better support our communities and the Department of Communities and Justice provided us with the resources required to act quickly. We have been involved in supporting people with Covid or in isolation to access basic needs.

A more comprehensive detail of our work can be found in the individual projects' reports. I hope you enjoy reading them.

I would like to take the opportunity to thank our funding bodies, Department of Communities and Justice (MCDP grant) and Dep of Social Services (SSDO, Aboriginal SSDO, MAP and MARS grant). My gratitude also to City of Canterbury Bankstown Council for their partnerships, support and project grants, in particular their commitment to Zero Barriers and to Bankstown Sports Club for their unrelenting support with our Senior Expo events.

Finally, I am profoundly grateful to my Management Committee and TMN Team. All and each of you inspire me every day with your commitment, knowledge, creativity and team spirit. You make TMN a strong, professional, caring and responsive organization.



SWS SECTOR SUPPORT AND DEVELOPMENT OFFICER (SSDO)

Eunice Sansour(SWS SSDO)

The Sector Support and Development Project is funded by the Department of Health to support Commonwealth Home Support program (CHSP) funded aged care service providers with information, resources, and guidelines on best practice on provision of aged care. The Project also supports consumers to ensure they have access to information and updates on the range of age care services and programs available to them and the pathways to access them. During the past year, many activities have been combined with the Multicultural Access Project (MAP), as well as undertaken interchangeably by the aged care Sector Support Officers from other regions with existing resources available.

As COVID-19 restrictions on gatherings and social physical distancing requirements have continued throughout 2021, this has meant we had to adapt our approach to working with the sector. Connecting with communities face-to-face during covid had been cancelled and we had to think of innovative ways to continue informing and supporting our aging communities. Social media provided us with a platform to disseminate information, continuing education on how to access aged care programs and remain in contact with older people and their carers.

Regarding our work with the aged care sector, we continued to disseminate information via our Support Services newsletter and through our networks, as well as convening and participation in meetings and interagencies via ZOOM and MS team online platforms. These methods of engagement ensured that the sector continued to be well-informed.

The extension of CHSP funding, including Sector Support funding for our project until 2022, will inform part of The Department of Health's strategy to review CHSP services and the impact of the proposed amalgamation of CHSP and HCP in 2022 under the 'Supported Home Program' consumer funded model. The introduction of this new program will significantly impact on the planning, delivering and reporting requirements for service providers. A key role of the Sector Support and Development Officer (SSDO) position will be assisting and supporting organisations in the transition to these new quality and auditing systems.

This year, The Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety Final Report: 'Care, Dignity and Respect.' was released. The report sent a strong message to everyone about the importance of treating all older Australians with dignity and respect, as individuals with their own identity, goals, values, and preferences. Aged Care reforms are already underway in several areas identified by The Royal Commission. Notably, the commencement of the Serious Incident Response Scheme, represented a significant step up in existing compulsory reporting requirements, with the aim of ensuring providers are taking necessary steps to prevent and reduce the risk of harm to residents in aged care.

The Government's 2021 – 2022 budget measures in response to the Royal Commission into Aged Care Safety and Quality, announced funded reform initiatives around five key pillars - home care, residential aged care quality and safety, residential aged care services and sustainability, workforce, and governance.

In response to these reforms, the project continued supporting organisations and commenced guiding them through these proposed reforms. In collaboration with the Sector Support and Development Network (SSDN), Business Continuity as well as Clinical Governance training for CHSP services was delivered across NSW, with over 600 attendees across both sessions. Moving forward, the SSDN will be facilitating training in payment in arrears and aged care reforms.

Weekly newsletter, forums and information sessions

The TMN Sector Support and Development team resources and manages the *Support Services website*: www.supportservices.org.au

The primary focus is to provide information to the aged care sector, following the changes in the home aged care program (CHSP). There are currently 415 active members who receive weekly newsletter updates of information and resources available to the sector. We continue to encourage members to actively contribute to the platform through online tutorials and resource guides in how to use their Support Services' accounts to post content on the website.



Elder Abuse Campaign 2021

Training sessions

The CHSP Best Practice forum focused on Wellness and Reablement, and was delivered in collaboration with Inner West SSDO, Canterbury Marrickville SSDO and Canterbury- Bankstown City Council in April with over 60 registrants. The good response indicated the need for us to continue to develop further training initiatives in the future.

The Diversity Framework and Aged Care Quality Standards

The SSDO team delivered comprehensive training on The Diversity Framework and Aged Care Quality Standards. The training was developed by TMN and ACON Pride Training and presented in partnership with Canterbury -Bankstown council. The online session was well attended by 47 registrants.

MAC Working Party

Through our My Aged Care (MAC) community information sessions, overarching issues were identified in accessing the system which included; understanding the MAC process, how to access suitable services and how to report feedback. The SSD project facilitated in collaboration with the Sector Support and Development Network, a MAC Working party to create a round house table discussion on MAC systematic issues. The aim of the working group is to share information and findings with peak aged care bodies, so that we can contribute to the best practice strategies for our services and their clients accessing the MAC system. Ongoing engagement with the aged care sector, will allow us the opportunity to better understand the needs of ageing communities, especially during and post COVID-19, so we can continue to share relevant and consistent information, concisely.

Introduction to Working in Aged Care (Front line workers) information session

To ensure all services are working in compliance with the Commonwealth Home Support Programme (CHSP) Manual, the Charter of Aged Care Rights and the Aged Care Quality Standards, TMN's Sector Support team developed a short, but comprehensive training for new and frontline workers. In response to the reform initiatives in workforce development, we plan for more in-depth training in the future.

Inclusive Practice with Older LGBTI people and Human rights and Older People workshops

We engaged Carrie Hayter and Associates to facilitate training focused on the inclusivity of working with our diverse communities. The initiative was presented in delivered in partnership with Canterbury- Bankstown City Council.

Community Capacity Building

The Canterbury Bankstown Seniors Wellbeing and Safety seminar was held on 15 June at the Bankstown Sports Club.

There were over 200 attendees and service providers on the day. Information stalls as well as interactive activities emphasised the importance of preserving mental and physical well-being as an older person, and to maintain independence and quality of life. The day was well received and provided ample opportunity to share information on My Aged Care to many seniors who were yet to be linked to services. Participants also enjoyed the free event with fun and interactive entertainment, as well as a great lunch! The SSD also contributed to the 2021 Seniors Week Expo on 20 April at the Fairfield Showground. Regularly participating in community activities provides us with good opportunities to engage with seniors and gain further insight into gaps in the delivery of aged care.

During this year, the SSDO was involved in several key forums, interagencies and networking opportunities including:

- SWS Elder Abuse Awareness Collaborative
- SWS Ageing and Disability forum
- State-wide NSW Sector Support Development Network (SSDN)
- Macarthur Disability Network (MDN)
- NSW Community Aged Care Forum (CACF)

Thank you

I would like to thank the Department of NSW Health for supporting us with their funding and partnership, to enable us to deliver a range of activities to develop and strengthen the home support service system and enable our CHSP service providers to continue to operate effectively.

Our partnerships and collaborations throughout 2021 have been important and invaluable. They have allowed us to deliver coordinated support and information to the sector and community. I take this opportunity to thank our partners:

- Canterbury Bankstown Council
- Ethnic Communities Council
- Fairfield City Council
- Liverpool City Council
- Macarthur Disability Services
- The NSW Sector Support and Development Network (SSDN)
- Canterbury Marrickville Sector Support Development project
- Sector Support and Development Project, Inner West
- SWS Local Health District
- ACON Pride Training
- Carrie Hayter Consulting
- Lorraine Poulos and Associates

Finally, thank you to my wonderful colleagues at The Multicultural Network. It's a pleasure to be a part of such a professional and dedicated team. Thank you to our EO and mentor, Roxana Rascon for your continued guidance and support, and to the MC Committee for the opportunity to contribute to the goals of The Multicultural Network.



SWS MULTICULTURAL ACCESS PROJECT

Lorena Recabarren

The South West Sydney Multicultural Access Project works ensure that the local CHSP and Aged Care Service system provide culturally and linguistically appropriate services to older people from CALD communities so they feel empowered to manage their own health and remain living independently in their own homes.

The project is funded by the Commonwealth Department of Health and it is designed to provide ongoing support, resources and training to the Aged Care sector and aging CALD communities in the local government areas of Bankstown, Liverpool and Fairfield.

According to the Census 2016, the South West Sydney local government region highlight the immense culturally diverse population we have in the area and it also gives us insight to which different ethnic groups and nationalities are retaining their own languages in their own homes.

These statistics show that in Fairfield LGA. 75% of residents speak a language other than English at home, 63% in Canterbury- Bankstown and 57% in Liverpool LGAs. The dominant language groups are Arabic in the Canterbury-Bankstown and Liverpool and Vietnamese in Fairfield.

These figures also convey that there is a wide broad of languages across our region which will increase the demand for extra resources and assistance. These languages are Khmer, Greek, Mandarin, Hindi, Cantonese, Serbian, Assyrian and Spanish.

Over the years the introduction and changes of My Aged Care has presented many additional hurdles for our multicultural communities to understand and overcome the structural barriers to accessing the system. These barriers include English language and computer literacy skills to navigate through a complex system of My Aged Care and understand the stages of home care packages.

The number of costs associated with a Home Care Package and how this will depend on the home care provider you choose and your income assessment is another area of concern for older people entering the system. And an understanding that not all approved services can deliver specific programs due to lack of funding or vacancy.



Lorena, Mr Robert Fitzgerald, NSW Ageing and Disability Commissioner and Eunice at Seniors Wellbeing and Safety seminar 2021

Developing partnerships with key organisations

The Seniors Safety & Wellbeing Seminar in 2021 in partnership with Bankstown City Council, CASS and Bankstown Sports Club was a huge success with a capacity attendance of 200 guests. This coincided with World Elder Awareness Abuse Day and it showcased the range of programs being delivered by providers with an emphasis on the Safety and Wellbeing. Having bilingual interpreters on the day provided us with the opportunity to really engage with our local CALD seniors and enabling them to reach out to the different resources available to them within our community and provide ways to continuing to live independently and improve quality of life. Such a successful event has brought interest to hold this event on a larger scale for 2022. We look forward to reconnecting and partnering with key organisations and stakeholders to make this happen.

The 2021 Fairfield Seniors Expo held by Fairfield City Council was another successful event with information stalls, activities, entertainment and video presentations. It had an attendance of over 300 participants. The Multicultural Network had the opportunity to set up stall and engage with approximately 50-70 seniors and provide resources about My Aged Care. This was also distributed in specific languages with the assistance of our Linkworkers in Lao, Vietnamese, Chinese and Spanish. We also had the opportunity to engage with other stall holders from other associations such as The Country Women's Association and Home Caring Association who are interested in conducting Generalist and Vietnamese My Aged Care information sessions in the near future.



Seniors Wellbeing and Safety seminar 2021

While in my role I am privileged to be working with our bilingual Linkworkers from The Cambodian Australian Welfare Council, NSW SLSA and The Australian Macedonian Welfare and Wellbeing. This involved the planning and developing on educational sessions on My Aged Care and Wellness & Reablement to our CALD seniors in Lao, Khmer, Spanish and Macedonian.



Seniors Wellbeing and Safety seminar 2021

I am nonetheless humbled by the opportunity to engage with our seniors to provide them with the knowledge and confidence to navigate The My Aged Care system and promote the positive benefits of keeping healthy and active through a wellness and reablement approach.

Through feedback and surveys I am able to listen to their own experiences and concerns and guide them and tailor my educational sessions to address common questions and concerns. I look forward to continuing to hold these educational sessions in other languages such as Arabic, Vietnamese, Hindi, Greek and Chinese.

ject **Better Health through Better Living**. The concept consists of es to CALD older people on Wellness and Reablement and holding educational sessions in Arabic, vietnamese, khmer, Greek, Spanish and Lao. This is to promote the positive benefits of keeping healthy and active through a wellness and reablement approach by maximising their full potential, independence

and quality of life to assist them to remain in their homes for as long as they can and wish to do so. Embedding this approach within this sector has been a key goal for both the government and the broader aged care sector. This is especially important work for us now to prepare for Australia's ageing population forecast to rise rapidly over the next few decades.

The Multicultural Access Project continues to work closely with our Council partners Canterbury-Bankstown, Fairfield and Liverpool.

Continual collaboration and partnership projects are made possible by developing and maintaining these strong working relationships through the following networks and forums:

- South West Sydney Ageing Forum
- NSW Community Aged Care Forum
- Seniors Services Interagency
- MAP Monthly Sector Support Network and information sharing meetings.
- Weekly contribution to the Support Services Website
- Canterbury Bankstown Multicultural Interagency
- Fairfield Multicultural Interagency



Khmer session May 2021

I am very grateful for the continuous support and commitment from our community partners and look forward to the coming year and making a difference in my role.

Having only been in the role for less than a year I would like to acknowledge the valuable work, support and guidance from my colleagues and look forward to a busy year ahead with the team:

- Eunice Sansour Sector Support and Development Officer for overarching support and guidance to the Sector and the team
- Francisca Loyola-Sandoval MARS project connecting communities with bilingual and bicultural workers to help with individual referrals to My Aged Care



MULTICULTURAL COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PROJECT

Fatmata Parkinson
Joy Siamoa
MCDP Worker (Job-Share)

The Multicultural Community Development Project (MCDP) is funded by the Department of Communities and Justice

(DCJ) under the Targeted Early Intervention program to provide support to families with children aged 0-12 in South West Sydney, specifically in the City of Canterbury Bankstown, Fairfield and Liverpool.

Our organisation is funded to provide three service options under the Community Strengthening Stream. These are: Develop Community Connections, Community Centres and Community Support.

This year, DCJ's TEI reform moved to another stage, which is the development and implementation of our program logic. We are glad that the developmental phase has been completed and we are now in its implementation phase for this financial year. We have been given the tick of approval to use the program logic to guide our provision of service with tangible outcomes. Hence, we will be using our program logic information and format to guide our 2021 reporting.

There are more than 120 different cultures in Canterbury-Bankstown LGA. 44% of the population were born overseas, and 60.1% of people speak a language other than English at home. Furthermore, people who had both parents born overseas was 65.7% compared to 13.8% of people in the Australian population (34.4%).

The 2016 census data shows that the highest population in Bankstown are children aged 0-14years old.

According to the SEIFA index (Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas), Canterbury-Bankstown is in the lowest 17th percentile of relative socioeconomic disadvantage and a higher proportion of low-income households than the national average with 20.6 per cent of households earning less than \$650 a week.

Also, 7% of the total numbers of households with children in Canterbury-Bankstown are single-headed households with children under 15. Single-Headed Households can present a range of difficulties including family dynamics and financial stressors.

Parents who migrate to Australia continue to face many barriers and challenges as they transition, settle and assimilate into the Australian society. Some of the issues experienced by this group include language, cultural and communication barriers; lack of employment opportunities; lack of education or not in par with the Australian standards poverty; domestic violence, racial discrimination; lack of information and accessibility to services, mental health issue and limited knowledge of Australian social norms and laws, including child protection practices and legislation.

Overwhelming evidence in the AEDC and CSP shows that parents living in Bankstown are migrant families who are extremely disadvantaged and from low educational and socio-economic background. This has led to high unemployment level in these cohort. Children are also impacted by these issues and many experience a poor early childhood education. This has led to poor performance and high dropout rate.

Data shows that children in Canterbury-Bankstown are displaying significant levels of developmental vulnerability compared to children in NSW in physical health and wellbeing, social competence, language and cognitive skills, communication skills and general knowledge. Approximately a quarter of children are vulnerable on one or more domains in Canterbury Bankstown City.

Sector Support

As part of our continuous networking and professional development we participated and or attended in the following planning, inter-agencies, information sessions, training and conferences. Some of them were done face to face earlier this year prior to the lockdown but majority of them were attended online.

- The Canterbury Bankstown Child and Family Playgroup forums planning committee meetings and Forums.

- The Canterbury Bankstown City Council Annual Social planning.
- Canterbury Child and Families Interagency.
- Bankstown Child and Families Interagency.
- FaMS weekly support online meetings for DCJ Services
- Canterbury Bankstown Domestic Violence Liaison Committee
- Canterbury Bankstown City Council's strategic planning - CALD and Children and families.
- TAFE NSW Western Sydney CALD Communities Virtual Info Session
- SWSLHD CALD Covid-19 Advisory group virtual meeting
- CB City COVID-19 community Q&A
- The Smiths Family CFC strategic planning consultation and Early learning group meeting
- SWS Service Provider Covid Sector Briefing organized by DCJ
- Human Rights approaches (practice in service delivery) sessions 1 & 3 workshop
- CB City Resilience Strategy consultation meeting
- SWSLHD CALD COVID-19 weekly meetings
- SWSLHD AstraZenica webinar for CALD and community workers
- Meeting with Sarah Harison from Inner West Council to discuss CBMIA and English classes
- Grant writing intensive workshop organized by Western Sydney Community Forum and Fairfield City Council.
- Q & A for Covid disaster payment organized by Services Australia.
- Social enterprise workshop organized by Western Sydney Community Forum and Fairfield City Council.
- CB City community grant presentation ceremony

TMNLinks Website

The TMNLinks website (tmnlinks.net.au) and weekly newsletter allows agencies and the public to access current information of services and event in Canterbury-Bankstown as well as participate in the community. During the pandemic we added a new covid-19 information page to the website. All information could be accessed via www.tmnlinks.net.au.

Canterbury Bankstown Multicultural Interagency (CBMIA)

The CBMIA is co-convened with Metro Assist and it is a network of government and non-government agencies whose target groups are migrants, refugees and humanitarian entrants in the Canterbury-Bankstown LGA. Further information could be accessed via our website www.cbmia.org.au.

We had a total of 257 attendances to our CBMIA meetings this year. The CBMIA email group has been pivotal during the pandemic as we were keeping our community with up-to-date information of public orders, forums, services and resources pertaining to the Covid-19 pandemic. Also the Refugee Week and Anti-poverty Week working party was innovative in the planning of both events.

Refugee week

Refugee week is Australia's peak annual activity to inform the public about refugees and celebrate positive contributions made by refugees to Australian society as well as their creativity and resilience. It is a unique opportunity for us all to experience and celebrate the rich diversity of refugee communities through music, theatre, film and other events which take place all over Australia. The 2021 Theme was Unity: The Way Forward. Stronger, Safer, Healthier, Happier Together. To celebrate Refugee Week 2021 the Canterbury Bankstown Multicultural Interagency organised 2 film screening events.

One of the event was targeting year 10 and 11 students from local schools to watch short films made by refugees at Bankstown Art Centre. There was also some entertainment and a young guest speaker from MYAN. The second event was organised for the general public to be held at Campsie Library but had to be cancelled at the last minute due to Covid-19. Students from 7 local high schools attended the first event and there were 100 participants. 43 participants were registered on Eventbrite for the second event. The Working party was comprised of 11 agencies. We also had support from other agencies.

Antipoverty week

Antipoverty week is an annual event in Australia to raise awareness about poverty in our community and support the most vulnerable. This year the Canterbury Bankstown planning committee is organising an online forum that is aimed at discussing the impact of COVID-19 on different communities as well as to showcase and promote services to alleviate poverty caused by the pandemic. The working party also submitted an application to Canterbury Bankstown Council Covid-19 Relief grant which is auspiced by The Multicultural Network to support the most vulnerable members of our community such as migrant families and individuals living in CB City who have been financially affected by Covid-19. The aim is to temporarily relieve them of their household financial stress as well as giving them the necessary support needed and or referal to other agencies. However, we are awaiting the outcome of the grant.

The following presenters are invited; NCOSS, Asylum Seekers Centre, Lifeline, Canterbury Bankstown City Council, Canterbury City Community Centre, Redcross, Services Australia, Energy and Water Ombudsman NSW, Service NSW, Sydney Water. An average of 80 participants attended the event. Working party is made up of 16 agencies. In addition, the anti-poverty week directory has been updated and added to 600 oz hampers that were distributed to vulnerable families and elderly members in our local community.

International Women's Day 2021

A variety concert was held on Tuesday 9th March, 2021 at Bryan Brown Theatre. The theme was "#Choose to Challenge". We had an Aboriginal Welcome, Cultural Performances, Canterbury Bankstown Women's Award, Refreshments and Child Minding was provided, Women's Health & COVID-19 Health Information was delivered online by our Official Guest Speakers - Dr Kerry Chant (On video) & Mayor Khal Asfour.

An average of 250 people attended this annual event in Canterbury Bankstown City. The working party was comprised of 10 agencies. Show bags were distributed to all participants with information brochures from many relevant services targeting disadvantaged women and their families in South West Sydney.

Community Support

English classes: Beginners and pre-intermediate

TAFE NSW Short Courses and Employment Pathways: This program is to help bring awareness of short courses particularly for parents who are job ready and are wanting to gain a qualification to help them prepare for a future work. The workshop was cancelled due to the pandemic and will be revived again in the new year.

Retail Certificate II in Retail Services by ARA - Wiley Park Public School



Information session at Wiley Park Public School
Retail course

The Retail Course is designed as a pre-employment pathway program to equip parents with skills and knowledge for ensuring job-readiness in the retail sector. Participants learnt a range of retail operational skills and customer service. The retail course included six-weeks online training with two weeks simulated work experience with a potential employer. Eight women completed the eight-week Retail Course, and they all received their nationally recognised Certificate II in Retail Services. For some of these women it is their first qualification and the first-time they have been employed. Two women from the group gained employment and another two women in the group were preparing for job interviews at the time of writing this report. The participants became independent and established their own Whatsapp group to keep each other motivated. By the end

of the program, they were feeling very empowered and had developed close friendships and networks. We are very grateful for our partnership with Jenny and Linda from ARA and their continuous support, even after the women completed the course.

Social Participation

The goal of these parenting & children's workshops is to help provide early intervention for families before they reach crisis point. The workshops help to strengthen the family unit and provide them with tools and strategies to help raise happy and healthy children. In the past year we have successfully ran 13 parenting and child workshops and seen families flourish, gain confidence & valuable knowledge and life skills to create healthy and happy families. This is a list of workshops that we have run throughout the year.

Parenting workshops and Workshops for children

- TMN Zoom Workshop : ***How do I get my child to listen***
- Warwick Farm Public School: ***Milestones of child development***
- Ashcroft Public School: ***Milestones of child development***
- Warwick Farm Public School: ***When is behaviour misbehaviour?***
- Wiley Park Public School: ***Communication and school success***
- Moorebank / Nuwarra Public School, Warwick Farm Public School, Ashcroft Public School, Canley Vale Public School, Villawood Public School, Prairie Vale Public School and TMN: ***Parenting Capacity Building Workshops***
- Online Zoom Parenting Session: ***What makes your child happy*** workshops to help parents understand the social needs and the things that nurture the emotional wellbeing of their children.
- Online Zoom Parenting Session: ***Dealing with child and parent anxiety after covid*** workshop in preparation for the return to school after lockdown. The aim of these workshops was to help lessen the anxiety of children returning to school as well as help parents recognize behavioral signs of children struggling with the lockdowns and the anxiety of going back to school.

Advocacy and Support

Bill Assist Day

The Bill Assist Day virtual program was the first pilot program in Sydney to deliver short term emergency relief and legal support for vulnerable members of our community during the second pandemic lockdown. The Bill Assist two-day event was a partnership with EWON, Sydney Water, Service NSW, Centrelink, Community Legal Centre, and Legal AID. Its aim was to provide telephone service support to clients who were struggling financially due to high energy bills, debts, fines and covid19 penalties. It also provided external referrals to housing, domestic violence services and mental health support. One of the key messages highlighted during the two-day event was the lack of awareness of local services and support that are available to our clients to help them through their situation. Combined with the mental stress and financial strain Covid19 is having on families and individuals. These services have helped, and continue to help, our clients make informed decisions and act before they reach crisis point. Eighty six people in total received support during the two-day event.

Whatsapp group for Sierra Leone parents: This platform has been used to communicate, share relevant information and engage Sierra Leonean parents. The group members have been proactive in sharing useful information for the benefit of all group members. It has also been pivotal in sharing information about covid-19, public orders as well as vaccination hubs. There are 23 members in the group.



Educational pack

Educational Packs for Children: The educational packs were designed to support family with children 0 to 5 years during the COVID-19 lockdown or isolation. The resources were provided to help children play and learn at home with their families. They include story books, playdough and cutters, toys, drawing pads, flash cards, colouring book, A3 charts of letters, numbers, shapes, colours. It also includes recipes of some fun and easy to make educational materials as well as indoor and outdoor activities at home for the family. We have a booklet of information on emergency relief services as well as other

support services like mental health for parents. This year we received Covid-19 Community Support grant from Multicultural NSW to do a second round of 100 educational packs. We are working with playgroup facilitators and other service providers in Canterbury Bankstown to identify some families who would benefit from these packs.

DCJ Covid-19 Partnership grant: Covid-19 Partnership grant was received from DCJ for Covid-19 for welfare checks and support for DCJ clients in particularly families and communities affected by COVID-19 that are struggling to access assistance and support for basic needs.

Community Centres: Every year we work in partnership with and host several agencies who hold meetings, workshops, information sessions, trainings and events in our centre. Due to covid-19 lockdown, however, we couldn't organise as many partnership programs or host a significant number of agencies in our Centre. We supported the following groups to

use our centre:

- Vietnamese Community Family support – yoga classes
- Metro Assists – Citizenship program for Arabic communities
- DAWA - Arabic Language School

Main challenges for our projects, services or communities

Adapting to the impact of the COVID-19, the changes in our communities as well as the delivery of services to the most vulnerable has been the most challenging part of 2021. The following issues will continue to impact our projects, wider communities and families:

- access to internet, new technologies and online programs. Many families who are living below the poverty level are not be able to have access to new technologies. Also, many CALD families with very little or no English skills are not be able to have access to many of the online programs on offer;
- many families continue to struggle with unemployment, poverty, domestic violence, mental health issues worsened by the pressure brought by Covid 19 restrictions and will require continuous support to access essential services;
- social isolation and anxiety around COVID-19 continues to affect children's development and mental health;
- children from disadvantaged backgrounds, in particular migrant families, lag behind in their educational milestone and struggle to catch up with their peers in school due to the prolonged lockdown experienced this year.

Our main aim for the near future is the continuous development and delivery of programs to address some of these issues.

Acknowledgement

We would like to thank our funding body, the Department of Communities and Justice, and in particular Jamil Halaby, Commissioner and Planning Officer, whose support and true commitment to disadvantaged communities places us in a true partnership.

We would also like to thank the incredible support and hard work of our partner agencies in helping us achieve amazing outcomes for our families and multicultural communities in South West Sydney. They are:

- Canterbury Bankstown City, Melkite Catholic Welfare Association, The Smith Family Communities for Children, Bankstown Community Resource Group, Services Australia, Settlement Services International & School Hubs, Lifeline Macarthur, Diabetes NSW & ACT, TAFE NSW, Muslim Women Australia, Older Women's Network, Lebanese Muslim Association, Fairfield Supported Playgroups – Fairfield City Council, Punchbowl School as Community Centres, Willey Park Schools as Community Centres, Nuwarra Public School, Bankstown Women's Health Centre, Bankstown Sports, South West Sydney Local Health District, OTPN NSW, DAWA, Urban Theatre Projects, Olivetree Women's Network, Addison Road Community Centre, Energy & Water Ombudsman NSW, Salvation Army, Sydney Water, Services NSW, Legal Aid, Human Rights Australia, Australian Retail Association, Legal AID, Metro Assist and Community Legal Centre
- Petra Will-Herat – Contract Facilitator
- Yasmin Zreika – Bachelor of Social Work Student on placement from Western Sydney University.

MULTICULTURAL ACCESS AND REFERRAL SERVICE -MARS

*Francisca Loyola-Sandoval
MARS Coordinator*

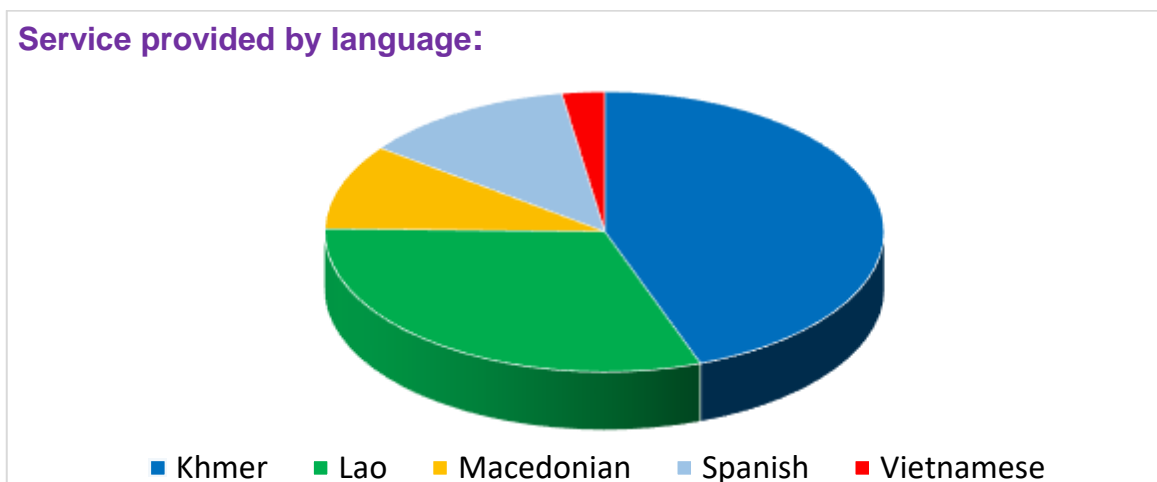
The Multicultural Access and Referral Service (MARS), was established in 2012, and it is funded by the Commonwealth Home Support Program - CHSP and managed by The Multicultural Network.

The Multicultural Access and Referral Service's objective is to provide culturally appropriate support, information, advocacy and referral services to frail aged and carers from a Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) background within Bankstown, Liverpool and Fairfield Local Government Areas. To deliver the service, the Multicultural Access and Referral Service works in partnership with Ethno-specific organisations, who allocate bilingual workers (Link Workers) to assist consumers in Khmer, Lao, Macedonian, Spanish, and Vietnamese languages.

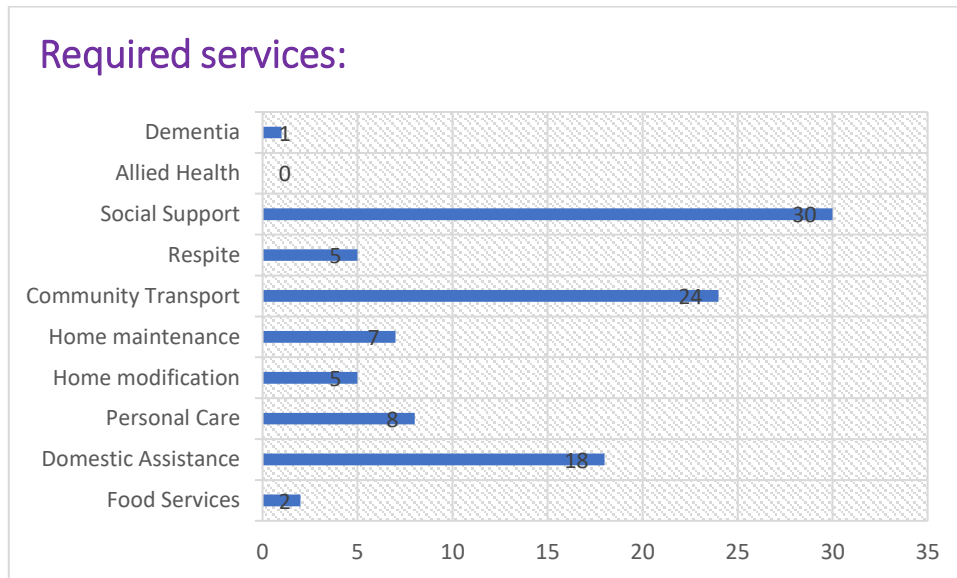
During the past year, with COVID-19 restrictions, the Multicultural Access and Referral Service has been supporting frail aged people and their carers through telephone consultations and through face-to-face interviews when permitted. Thanks to a trust relationship with our Link Workers, consumers have continued to be well informed about current events and available assistance.

Due to social restriction, the Multicultural Access and Referral Service, has been engaging with existing CALD groups through different media platforms, such as Facebook and WhatsApp. These platforms allow us to continue providing information about the Aged Care System, Aged Care rights, and the importance of staying mentally and physical well at home. Thanks to these forms of communication, consumers from a non-English speaking background and carers have been able to make informed decisions and become part of all aspects of the process before and during their engagement with services.

During the first semester of 2021, we have assisted 81 consumers in total, 36 were Khmer speaking consumers, 25 Laotian, 8 Macedonians, 10 Spanish and 2 Vietnamese. Out of these 81 consumers, 73 live in Fairfield LGA and 8 in Bankstown area.



In addition, the most common services requested by our consumers were Social Support, Community Transport and Domestic Assistance, some of these services were in combination with other services.



April 2021 was an important month for us. We excitedly partnered with the Vietnamese Community in Australia (VCA), and we had the pleasure to welcome two amazing Vietnamese workers to our team.

Furthermore, our Khmer, Lao and Spanish Link Workers participated at the 2021 Seniors Expo Week, an event organised by Fairfield City Council. At this event, our Link Workers had the opportunity to interact with consumers from different cultural backgrounds and had the opportunity to create community awareness about services available and the importance of an early access to continue living independently and safely at home.

Following the changing occurring in our diverse communities and adapting to new forms of communication, Canterbury Bankstown City Council has been supporting us with marketing strategies. On the upcoming weeks, we will be launching new brochures and short introductory videos about our service. This promotional material will be accessible to our consumers in 5 languages, which include Khmer, Lao, Macedonian, Spanish and Vietnamese and will help us to reach people that is unfamiliar with our service. Our partnerships and collaboration throughout 2021 have been important and valuable. They have allowed us to continue informing, supporting, and advocating on behalf of our frail aged, carers and family members. I would like to take this opportunity to thank our partners and our amazing Link Workers for their commitment, knowledge, and team spirit.

- Thin Em – Khmer Link Worker from Cambodian Australian Welfare Council of NSW
- Omethip Phommachanh – Lao Link Worker from Cambodian Australian Welfare Council of NSW
- Lihnida Taseska – Macedonian Link Worker from Australian Macedonian Welfare & Wellbeing NSW

- Rosa Moises – Spanish Link Worker from The NSW Spanish and Latin American Association for Social Assistance (NSW SLASA)
- Hang Nguyen and Vuong Dinh - our Vietnamese Link Workers, from Vietnamese Community in Australia (VCA)

2021 Fairfield Seniors Expo



I would like to express my profound gratitude to Edilia Porcu from South Western Sydney Local Health District for actively collaborating with us by referring consumers to our service; to Sandra Loyola-Sandoval from Canterbury Bankstown City Council for supporting with marketing strategies and to Marco Poblete Benitez from Clandestino Radio, who allows us to inform our Spanish Community through his radio program.



ZERO BARRIERS

Rafa Zaim
Project Coordinator

Zero Barriers is a project that supports businesses and services to become more accessible and inclusive of people with disability.

Zero Barriers aims to:

- educate businesses and services about accessibility and inclusion barriers encountered by people with disability
- support businesses and services to become more disability friendly
- recognise and promote businesses and services that are committed to eliminating barriers for people with disability

To date, Zero Barriers is being funded by The Multicultural Network the annual membership fee of councils who partner with us. There are two levels of membership: the full membership and a resource only membership. The resource only membership has been recommended to regional councils.



Introducing Zero Barriers to NSW Councils and Council Memberships

Following a successful pilot of the project in 2017-2018, The Multicultural Network recognised the need for this project to be reborn. Inspired by a vision to make NSW a Zero Barriers place for people with disability, we contacted all 128 councils across NSW, to invite them to partner with us.

We sent out personalised letters of invitation to all mayors, councillors and council officers and followed up with phone calls to start the conversation. We conducted face-to-face and online presentations to numerous councils to answer their questions about the project and to highlight the benefits both to council and the community. We identified that Zero Barriers can assist councils to implement their DIAP and could help in the economic development of council LGAs by building stronger business communities.

Our communication with councils has been quite fruitful and has laid the foundation for widescale uptake in the future. So far, we have had confirmed commitment from five councils; these are:

- City of Canterbury Bankstown
- Cumberland Council
- Fairfield City Council
- Lake Macquarie City Council
- Queanbeyan-Palerang Regional Council

Zero Barriers Website

We are currently in the process of building the Zero Barriers website. I am working closely with Jennifer Ettia from Sombrilla Digital to develop a website that is accessible, functional, and user-friendly. I have worked on writing the copy for each of the pages, updated the Self-Assessment Form and Accessibility Guide, and reconfigured the steps involved to joining. We want to make it as quick and easy as possible for businesses to become a part of this project to build a recognisable movement across our partner councils. We hope that by building recognition, other councils will see the

value of supporting this worthwhile project and will follow suit.

Zero Barriers Officers

I have come up with the title of Zero Barriers Officer to encompass the volunteers, student placements and council officers who will be the human resources of the Zero Barriers project. They will be the conversation starters, reaching out to businesses and services to raise awareness about the importance of Zero Barriers and to support businesses in joining. We have reached out to several universities and training institutions to source students that can undertake their community engagement experiences as Zero Barriers officers.

Currently, we have had promising feedback from Macquarie University and UNSW; both universities have indicated that they may be able to provide Psychology and Social Work students to work on the project. These students will be inducted trained before engaging with businesses and services. We are also hoping to source multilingual officers and volunteers who will be better equipped to engage effectively with the culturally and linguistically diverse business communities of partner councils.

Zero Barriers Officer Training

I am planning on developing two training modules for those who wish to become Zero Barriers Officers. The first will be a recorded video that provides an overview of the project. The second will be delivered live and will focus on the skills and knowledge required to undertake the role of Zero Barriers Officer. This training will equip Zero Barriers Officers with the skills, knowledge and confidence to engage with businesses and services to invite them to join Zero Barriers.

Zero Barriers Info Flyer

I have developed a flyer that succinctly outlines the benefits of the project to businesses and services and provides them with the steps to join. This will form part of the Zero Barriers Officer Toolkit. We will recommended that councils who partner with us distribute these flyers or that they make it digitally available to their local businesses. Ideally, we would also like to see these flyers translated to other community languages.



Challenges

Our main challenge to date has been trying to secure the support of as many NSW Councils as possible. Without council memberships, The Multicultural Network would not be able to fund the project going forward. However, we believe that the Zero Barriers Project should be a statewide initiative, and our goal is to make NSW the most disability inclusive state in Australia. We are working tirelessly to share this vision through liaising with all NSW councils at all levels; many have been responsive, and we anticipate a much larger uptake in 2022.

Future plans

Once we get final commitments by councils, we can start to work on the official rollout of the project. Our first port of call is to finalise the website; based on our projections, we are aiming to go live by the end of August 2021.

Alongside this, we will continue to work on developing the training for Zero Barriers officers, and create a Zero Barriers Toolkit that will assist officers in their work; this will include a Zero Barriers Step-By-Step Guide, Business Engagement Log and the Zero Barriers Info Flyer. The Zero Barriers Officer Step-By Step Guide will assist officers in their conversations with businesses and services by providing a sequential checklist of what officers need to mention and what information they need to obtain from their conversations. The Zero Barriers Engagement Log will be used to maintain a record of which businesses have been contacted, the response received and when to follow up with them.

We also intend on developing Council Instructional Guides to assist them in the rollout of the project in their council LGA.

Thereafter, we will set up an Advisory Committee, comprised of key stakeholders, with representatives from each of our partner councils. This committee will contribute feedback on the project, assist in its promotion and act as a think tank of sorts, to help grow Zero Barriers into a recognisable brand within our partner councils and beyond.

We also hope to set up a Zero Barriers Facebook page and monthly newsletter to broadcast project updates, good news stories, articles and related information. It will also feature some of the new businesses and services to join the project.

We are also planning to deliver and/or facilitate the delivery of Business Networking and Information Sessions across councils that partner with us. This will be a great way to promote the project to businesses and services that are confident to engage directly with councils.

Ideally, we hope to see at least 50 businesses and services join Zero Barriers in each of our partner council LGAs by June 2022.

Thank you

I would also like to thank our EO Roxana Rascon for her guidance and commitment to Zero Barriers; through her direction, Zero Barriers has been brought back to life and many councils are starting to see the vision that she inspires.

I would also like to thank the City of Canterbury Bankstown, Cumberland Council, Fairfield City Council, Lake Macquarie City Council and Queanbeyan-Palerang Regional Council and the dynamic council officers at each of those councils who have been in discussion with us and whose membership and support with facilitate the continuation and sustainability of the project.

Finally, I would like to thank the management of TMN for believing in the project and for their continued support and encouragement.

I look forward to the year ahead, and to working collaboratively with councils, stakeholders and business to see our vision of stronger, more inclusive communities for all people come to life.



Thank you

The Management Committee and Staff wishes to thank our funding bodies for their partnership and ongoing commitment to our communities. Our work could not be possible without the support of:

- Commonwealth Department on Social Services – Commonwealth Home Support Program
- NSW Family and Community Services – Community Builders Program
- City of Canterbury-Bankstown Council
- NSW Clubs Grants

A big thank you to all our partners that generously continue to share their knowledge, resources and expertise with us to strengthen our communities:

Banksia Road Public School Community Hub
Bankstown Community Resource Group
Bankstown Public School Hub
Bass Hill Public school
Canterbury Bankstown Chamber of Commerce
Canterbury City Community Centre
Chester Hill Neighbourhood Centre
Core Community Services
Creating Links
Department of Fair Trading
Department of Human Services
Disabilities Services Australia
Ethnic Communities Council
Families NSW Facilitation Project
Gandangara Land Council
Humanity Matters
Macarthur Disability Services
Macquarie University
Melkite Catholic Welfare Association
Metro Assist
Mission Australia
Mums4Refugees
MYAN
Navitas English
NSW Refugee Health Service
Oversees Trained Professionals
Punchbowl Schools as Community Centre
Refugee Council of Australia
Save The Children
Sector Support and Development Project, Campsie
Sector Support and Development Project, Inner

West
Settlement Services International
South Western Sydney Local Health District
St Brendan's Community Hub
St Jerome Primary School
St. Vincent the Paul
STARTTS
Sydney Local Health District
TAFE NSW
TAFE NSW
The Salvation Army
The Salvation Army
Villawood East Public School Hub
Western Sydney University.
Willey Park Public School as Communities Centre
Yagoona Public School Hub



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