Transformation: The Way Ahead



Annual Report 2018-2019

Chairpersons Report



As Chair of Metro Assist Limited, I am pleased to be presenting our Annual Report for 2018-19.

Metro Assist continues to provide quality vital community services to the people and

communities of the Inner West and Canterbury-Bankstown. The organisation addresses key issues including migrant and refugee settlement, emergency relief, tenant advocacy and financial counselling, early intervention support for families and support in gaining training and employment; all highly relevant and important programs which contribute to people's wellbeing.

I am grateful to have very skilled and engaged directors on the Board, and thank them for their commitment and energy.

Helen Miller Janice Poynton Sanyu Mugambwa Jemma Hollonds Philippa Scott Jasmine Calleja Fiona McQueen Alex Maitland

The Board is pleased with the performance of the management team, employees and volunteers headed by CEO, Lou Bacchiella. I wish to acknowledge their commitment and application of the organisation's values in the work and support they provide to their clients and the community (often after hours). It is fair to say that almost all the Directors are relative newcomers to the organisation and while we come to grips with getting to know the organisation, we are constantly surprised by the complexity of needs of the people

who present to our services and the passion and skills that our management and frontline workers apply to helping them.

I would also like to acknowledge our funding government agencies, clubs, sponsors and donors for their continued confidence in our organisation and for providing the resources to enable us to do what we do for our clients. One key partner in our work is Settlement Services International which shares its history with Metro Assist and the other migrant resource centres across NSW, and through which we deliver a number of programs. As part of a much bigger service network of specialised services, I acknowledge the importance of strong collaboration in helping empower people and contributing to their resilience.

Our most recent strategic plan focused on transforming the organisation and our way of working to adapt to the new requirements of operating in this sector. The organisation is now on a sound financial footing with robust policies and processes in place, and systems to support the important work of our caseworkers, counsellors and community development staff across the various programs.

The future is exciting for Metro Assist. Our new strategic plan will focus on:

- Clients and communities
- Strategic partnerships
- People and culture
- Business development and growth

This strategy is designed to provide great outcomes for our clients, value for money for our funding bodies and a great place to work for our team.

I look forward to sharing our successes with you next year.

Scott Machin Chairperson

CEO Report



It gives me great pleasure to report on the organisation's achievements and highlights for 2018-19.

Metro Assist continues to deliver a range of targeted services to meet the community's needs continues and to expand offering. This

annual report provides a snapshot of achievements and activities across key areas over the 2018-19 reporting period.

With strong competition for funding, we started the year with a reduction in our settlement funding and had to make some changes to retain very highly skilled workers which was achieved through the team volunteering to sacrifice some of their hours while other transitioned to other programs. I wish to acknowledge the team's commitment and preparedness to consult in what were difficult circumstances; and I'm happy to report that most of the hours have been restored through subsequent funding.

We are also seeing local communities coming under increasing financial pressure, which impact on relationships, mental health and wellbeing. This translates into greater demand for assistance across our programs. Our financial inclusion team are seeing more people facing housing and financial crises and in need of emergency relief and utilities assistance. We are also supporting people through the NILS program with a trebling of loans capital from the National Australia Bank. This has enabled us to extend NILS loans to people in regional areas through arrangements with local organisations.

The focus of the Commonwealth's Settlement Engagement and Transition Support (SETS) program for newly-arrived migrants and refugees is on service delivery through casework, information and referral on housing, health, domestic violence, migration advice and many other social issues; as well as community information sessions on Citizenship training, driver training and material support through Foodbank and Dress for Work. The SETS program has a strong emphasis on English, education and employment. A new service to Metro Assist is the Immigration Advice and Application Assistance Scheme (IAAAS), under subcontract to SSI to deliver advice and application support as part of a national network, utilising the expert skills and experience of our two migration advisers.

The Pratto social enterprise continues to excite and capture people's interest. In 2018-19, around 30 women completed training in catering and hospitality through the Pratto, bringing the total of trainees since starting the project two years ago, to around 60, with around 10 women securing jobs. TAFE NSW has been an exceptional training partner and the Pratten Park Community Sports and Bowling Club in Ashfield has been highly supportive. The project has an organic feel among the many stakeholders who are working to reenergise the Club. I thank the Club's Board, Inner West Council, our local State and Federal MPs, the Inner West Music Festival and ClubGrants for their collaboration and support for the project.

Our Employment Support team continues to deliver outcomes for many clients of the Refugee Employment Support Program, Parents Next and PowerME programs. The team works with other parts of the organisation and external providers to deliver a suite of employment related activities such as resume writing, interview tips and job-seeking skills, as well as linking people into vocational training and work placements through collaborations with training organisations and employers.

The year saw the establishment of a psychological counselling role, which has been strongly welcomed by parents, and we engaged with the Targeted Early Intervention reforms. The Family Services team engages through community events and activities, provides information and referral; and delivers casework support to individuals and families experiencing domestic violence; drug and alcohol dependency, relationship breakdown, mental health and developmental disorders.

Health awareness is an emerging area where we received funding from the Cancer Institute NSW to raise awareness in diverse communities around cancer and early detection through breast and cervical screening. We are grateful for the support of community leaders, GPs and health workers, BreastScreen NSW and the Institute's support in getting this vital information out to communities.

We have improved our systems and corporate services area to support our widening array of services and to manage fee-for-service arrangements in some programs, which are a departure from block funding. I acknowledge the work of the Corporate Services Team who work tirelessly in providing administrative support, IT systems, HR, Marketing and policy support,

and establishing robust risk management systems and quality standards. I thank the leadership team for their dedication and support, and our Board for its guidance and ensuring that we remain fit for purpose in meeting the needs of people and communities. And I am grateful to our many stakeholders and partners through which we have established strong working relationships, especially SSI with which we hold a number of subcontracts.

Of course, nothing would be possible without the dedication of our staff, volunteers and students to clients and communities and we are ever grateful to our funding bodies for resourcing very important services. Thank you for your support throughout the year and I look forward to continued success over the coming year.

Lou Bacchiella **CEO**



Artwork "Brown Dingo Tracks" by Lanita Numina.

Acknowledgements

Metro Assist acknowledges the Traditional Owners of the land on which we operate and we pay our respects to elders, past and present, and to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

We also wish to acknowledge the Board, staff, volunteers and our stakeholders for their valuable contribution to the work we do.

Employment Services

2018-19 was an exciting year for the Employment Support Team. It was the first year we delivered the full scale of ParentsNext across eight sites as part of the SSI consortium. It was also the first full year of the PowerME rollout, a training and employment support project funded by DSS, building on the success and resources SkillME has developed. We were also in full operation delivering the Refugee Employment Support Program. Here are some highlights and achievements from the team:

ParentsNext

Funded the Commonwealth government, ParentsNext aims to help parents with pre-school aged children prepare for their future. We assist participants with their day-to-day parenting needs and challenges, help them with their career planning, connect them with education opportunities and assist them to become job ready while they are still caring for their young children. When delivering the program, we focus on our point of difference - our person-centred and holistic approach where we understand what our participants are going through and we work with them closely to address all those issues that are preventing them from becoming job ready.

Focussing on employment preparation, we work with each participant to address their barriers to employment readiness and support them to take small steps on their training and employment journey. In many cases, we provide the much needed motivation and guidance for our participants when they struggle to take the first step.

In 2018/19, overall 65% of our participants have reported improvement in their work readiness, 20% have commenced education and 15% have found some type of employment. We are very proud of these outcomes and we are working hard to help participants to achieve even better outcomes in the future.

PowerME/SkillME

Funded by the Department of Social Services, PowerME is an employment support program for migrants and refugees who may not be eligible for other government funded employment services. Building on the foundation the SkillME project developed from 2015 to 2018, PowerME runs training programs and works with employers to help our clients find employment that is commensurate to their skills and experience.

More than 60 overseas-trained newly arrived skilled migrants attended our flagship Skilled Migrant Development Program. In this 8-week training course, newly arrived migrants with professional skills and experience learn about job seeking skills specific to the Australian labour market and Australia's workplace culture. They also receive assistance in writing the best resume for the right job and practice their interview skills. Through our internship placement support, many of them obtain the opportunity to work in a role that matches their level of skills and experience for a short time. 26% of the people who participated in the program are able to find a professional job within three months after they complete the program.

We have also developed an exciting communication and confidence building workshop for female job seekers. This workshop is a response to many of the women we work with who have amazing skills and experience but struggle with confidence. Using creative, artistic and theatrical means, we help migrant women build their strength and resilience, which will then be translated into their job-seeking journey.

We continue to develop our work with a range of employers in order to better support our job seekers. Our employer partners support us by providing probono job seeking advice, information sessions, work experience, mentoring as well as job opportunities.

Refugee Employment Support Program

In April 2018 we were excited to become a service delivery partner for the Refugee Employment Support Program (RESP) under the consortium led by SSI. Funded by the NSW government, the program aims to provide a range of support for refugees and asylum seekers to achieve milestones and outcomes towards employment. We offer a person-centred triage model service to help participants develop an individual plan to achieve their education and employment goals. In 2018/19, we helped dozens of refugees to achieve multiple milestones towards their employment, including over 150 hours of free driving lessons to those who struggle to obtain their driver's license due to the high costs of learning to drive.

April Pan

Employment Services Manager

Rabah Al-Hatoum arrived from Syria on a humanitarian visa with his young family in early 2017. In the first few months in Sydney, Rabah completed his AMEP hours then gradually started exploring vocational courses to increase his employability skills. He used to work in the transport and logistics industry in Syria and he saw himself as a good and reliable driver.

That was why Rabah was so excited when he found out about Metro Assist's Cert. III in Driving Operations class in 2018. Over the 16 weeks of class he not only developed a broad range of competencies around Australia's transport and logistics industry but also very importantly he learned about legislation requirements in the industry and enhanced his skills in safety, customer service, route planning, road craft, fatigue management and load restraint. At the end of the course, Rabah successfully gained his Cert III in Driving Operations, as well as his Heavy Rigid Vehicle (HR) licence.

The employment team continued to support Rabah by helping him develop his resume, refer him to jobs and even attended job interviews with him. To broaden his chances of employment, we also assisted Rabah to complete his Bus Driver Authority training course, after which Rabah successfully obtained his Bus Authority with our financial support.

Yet with his English much improved and having all the qualifications and permits he needed to work in the transport industry, Rabah still faced big challenges like many recently arrived refugees. Finding and keeping a job was not easy. He tried a number of jobs but they could not be sustained for many reasons.

But Rabah didn't give up. We continued to mentor him and helped him understand what exactly he wanted to do. Rabah realised that his goal was to become a truck driver in a reputable company. He stopped applying for jobs everywhere and focussed only on the logistics industry. Now Rabah has gained a full-time truck driver's role with a big freight transportation services.

Meanwhile, the employment team continues to provide Rabah with mentoring and post-employment support to help him retain his job.

"Thank you Metro Assist for all the support and mentoring you've given me, you guys were always there for me."

Rabah Al-Hatoum



Employment Services 2018/2019

ParentsNext

- Over 700 parents received one on one support
- Service delivered across our 8 sites in the Inner West and Canterbury Bankstown LGA



OUTCOME ACHIEVED

- · 65% of reported improvement in their work readiness
- 20% have commenced education
- 15% have found some type of employment

PowerMe

MIGRANTS ASSISTED

 Over 60 overseas-trained migrants attended Skilled Migrant Development Program



OUTCOME ACHIEVED

26% of the people found a job in their profession within 3 months of completing the program

RESP

REFUGEES SUPPORTED

• Over 100 newly arrived refugees engaged with Refugee **Employment Support Program**



OUTCOME ACHIEVED

- 18% achieved education outcomes
- 60% achieved knowledge on work readiness via our workshops
- 80% acquired driving skills via our driving lesson program

"Your Rights at Work" workshop facilitated by Legal Aid.



Family Fun Day included local community service providers, entertainment & activities.



Family Services

Metro Assist Family service team believes that empowerment provides dignity and hope, and we want people to discover that for themselves and their families, and to grow in resilience and strength. The team aims to improve the wellbeing and safety of children by ensuring that families receive the right support at the right time for children and themselves to thrive.

One of the issues that we are often addressing in our family support work is domestic and family violence. Working in our particular sector, means sometimes responding very quickly to seize opportunities or respond to crises. The caseworkers support families to engage with the police, as well as any housing, advocacy and support services they may need. In those situations, we see our caseworkers needing to be flexible and agile to provide the support that the family needs to feel safe.

Inner West Family team

Our Psychological service is a unique service to individuals, children, young people and families experiencing relationship issues, behavioural issues, domestic and family violence and mental health concerns. In the lead up to Targeted Early Intervention (TEI) reforms, we introduced a psychologist service in 2017, and extended an outreach service to the Aboriginal Women's & Children's Crisis Service (AWCCS). The inclusion of the psychologist service has enhanced the services provided internally as well as by AWCCS and improved the overall Inner West family service capacity in engaging families in a safe and supportive environment that is flexible, inclusive and culturally sensitive. This free and optional service does not require a referral from a doctor, and includes assessments, behavioural interventions, one to one parenting programs, and support letters. The service provides an opportunity for families we worked with and the women at the refuge to receive ongoing evidence based support to recognise their strengths, resilience, and abilities in order to make the positive changes they aspire to.

We are seeing more and more families who are in a vulnerable state when they start working us and some are at a point of crisis. In these scenarios, our aim is to ensure our families are safe. We will walk alongside the families to help them strengthen their community connections and family relationships. We have seen a diverse array of families including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, culturally and linguistically diverse communities, new parents and youth.

Many families have achieved outcomes that have made positive impacts within their lives, such as moving on from

a domestic violence relationship to safe accommodation or negotiating changing family dynamics as teenagers mature and find their identity, and through education and setting up appropriate support for families to keep their children safe at home and in the community.

As we welcome the TEI reform the Inner West Family caseworkers continue to outreach at Newtown Neighbourhood Centre, Family Law Court, The Marrickville South playgroup, Canterbury Community Centre and through involvement with Prosper, Campsie. With our key community partnership, the family team are able to connect with those who have been isolated and have experienced difficulties accessing family support services. For example, the Newtown Neighbourhood Centre collaboration is focussed on women and children who are unfamiliar with service provision and are affected by domestic and family violence. By providing outreach casework support, women are empowered to feel confident, safe, and supported during a critical time in their lives.

Inner West Community Development Team

The community development team has had an incredibly busy and successful year providing information/referrals, parenting groups, organising events and focussing on services that keep residents connected to their community. The delivered programs are responsive to the needs of the local residents that have been identified through various consultations. The consultations have provided communities an opportunity to offer feedback on the service and voice their concerns. The feedback has enabled the team to identify strategies to address the community concerns and tailor services to meet the needs of both existing and new groups and is also used as way to link families to services.

The community development team delivered a variety of parenting programs in the Strathfield, Burwood, Canada Bay and Inner West areas. These included Tuning in to Kids and 1-2-3 Magic, the evidence based parenting programs whereby intervention is demonstrated to have positive outcomes. Fourteen parenting programs were delivered within twelve months. Parents were provided with information and practice sessions on emotion coaching, encouraging parent/child attachment, child protection and self-care.

Brighter Futures

The Metro Assist Brighter Futures team at Condell Park have had another successful year supporting vulnerable families within the Bankstown, Fairfield and Liverpool LGAs. Our culturally diverse and skilled team engaged

over 55 families throughout the year, presenting with a chronic history of mental health issues, family dysfunction and child protection related concerns. Over the year, the Brighter Futures team managed to successfully transition almost 20 families out of the program by helping them with individualised support plans, generalised life skills and positive parenting skills.

Our service is being acknowledged by the Department of Human Services and local community services as a valuable support program for families from culturally and linguistically diverse communities.

Michelle Lazaris

Family Services Manager

Family Services 2018/2019

ASHFIELD HUB

- 212 services coordinated
- 118 people attended community consultations
- 1106 people at hub events
- 39 partnerships created
- 2050 people used infrastructure

STRATHFIELD HUB

- 297 services coordinated
- 74 people attended consultations
- 2120 people at hub events
- 53 partnerships created
- 1032 people used infrastructure

OUTCOMES FOR 2018/19 EXCEEDED ALL TARGETS

7 OUTREACH GROUPS

FAMILIES ASSISTED

IIWFC 169 CYFS 352 BF 55

PRESENTING ISSUES

- 1. Social & Community
- 2. Family Support
- 3. Home/Housing
- 4. Parenting education

- 1. Domestic violence
- 2. Mental Health
- 3. Home/Housing
- 4. Empowerment

- Child behaviour
 Mental Health
- 3. Domestic Violence
- 4. Housing

GENDER PROFILE

5% male 73% female

22% unspecified

BIRTH COUNTRIES

- 1. Lebanon
- 2. Vietnam
- 3. Australia
- 4. Bangladesh

- 1. Australia
- 2. China
- Vietnam
- 4. Pakistan

- 1. Australia
- 2. Bangladesh
- 3. China
- 4. Vietnam

WITH 205 PARTICIPANTS

Events

Tuning into Kids 1-2-3 Magic Safe Series Workshops

Parenting Workshops

Family Fun Day White Ribbon Day Paint the Town Read



Nu was referred to Brighter Futures by SWS Family Referral Service, for support with risks relating to domestic violence, homelessness, parental mental health, severe financial hardship, and concerns relating to children's safety and wellbeing.

Nu is a 28 year old single mother of two children aged 2 and 3, she migrated from Vietnam five years ago. Nu separated from her husband in early 2018 due to domestic violence. Nu has obtained permanent residency in Australia however, was not yet eligible for parenting payment from Centrelink.

Prior to engaging with the Brighter Futures program, Nu experienced great difficulties with obtaining stable accommodation due to her limited income, parenting circumstances and mental health. Nu resorted to sending her youngest child to Vietnam to live with her family until Nu was able to obtain suitable accommodation, a stable income and improve her mental health.

During Nu's initial months in the program, her goals were to restore her youngest child back into her care through obtaining stable long-term accommodation, a consistent income stream and effective management of her mental health symptoms.

The Brighter Futures program was able to provide various methods of support for Nu in addressing her and her children's need by working towards Nu's goals. The types of support included being assigned a bilingual caseworker who was able to converse with Nu in her native language. Assistance with completing application forms and ongoing advocacy for income and housing support, referrals for material aid and financial management support, obtaining vocational training, engagement with health professionals, general advice and information regarding positive parenting, and incidental counselling.

Nu has obtained stable accommodation through the Start Safely program at Housing NSW, obtained Special Benefit payment from Centrelink, and has her youngest back in her care, she has also completed a Certificate IV in Community Services, and is now doing a Diploma of Community Services. She is engaging regularly with health professionals to manage her mental health symptoms.

Nu Phuong An Ton



Settlement Engagement and Transition support (SETS)

With the support of the Department of Social Services, the SETS Program continues to deliver services that assist new settlers to become self-reliant and participate equitably in Australian society as soon as possible after arrival. It has been a challenging but nonetheless successful year in 2018-19 with the SSI led NSW Settlement Partnership (NSP).

Approaching almost thirty-five years of delivering settlement services, we are still as responsive as ever to changing settlement patterns and needs. We provided one on one assistance to 1283 newly-arrived migrants and refugees. We run a diverse suite of programs targeted towards those communities and locations in greatest need of settlement assistance.

These programs include but are not limited to, language support programs geared towards enhancing English conversation skills; skills enhancement programs aimed at increasing employability and providing more pathways to employment; support programs to encourage and support education and further training; youth early intervention activities encompassing multimedia activities, arts, music, and sports; crime prevention programs; emergency relief and FoodBank assistance; social inclusion; family support programs as well as programs addressing intergenerational conflicts. The following provide a glimpse into the extensive range of programs within the settlement services:

English Conversation Class

Since October 2017, in partnership with the Inner West Council, Settlement Service has been involved in delivering a program focused on improving spoken English skills among newly arrived migrants in the Inner West Local Government Area. The program is run with the help of volunteers, as well as a professional ESOL tutor and has more than 40 regular participants. The class will continue to provide opportunities for migrants to improve their spoken English and gain a better understanding of Australian culture and society, as well as foster pathways to further studies, healthy living and positive ageing. The success of the program is a great example of community partnership between the Inner West Council, Metro Assist and local volunteers.

Pratten Park Employment Initiative

The Pratten Park employment initiative aims to assist newly arrived refugees and humanitarian visa holders

to become more self-reliant, through the provision of courses in hospitality and retail services, employment readiness workshops and work experience at the Pratto. The initiative is a partnership between Metro Assist, Pratten Park Community Sports and Bowling Club, Inner west Music Festival and TAFE NSW.

Since 2017, under this initiative 60 participants have completed TAFE certified education in hospitality. The course was customised to meet the needs of participants with low English proficiency, and taught by the English language teacher as well as a hospitality educator. This approach has improved the development of English proficiency necessary for the workplace and enabled learners to consolidate their learning in a timely manner.

Metro Assist uses and promotes the Pratto facilities via organisational activities such as Family Fun Days, the Mid-Autumn Moon Festival, Inner West Music Festival and the Annual General Meeting. In addition to café services, the employment initiative also offers catering services. At present, the enterprise is catering for at least one special event per week including birthday parties, corporate and music/performance events. Upgrades to the interior facilities were made possible due to local government funding, and we hope to secure more funding to enhance the exterior of the facilities to make the outdoor space more useable and attract more customers. We will continue to engage our community through digital engagement via our website and social media channels.

The Pratto team hard at work for a private function



Arabic Women's Groups

Group activities have been effective in increasing the level of knowledge and awareness around new ways of life among the newly arrived women and men. Arabic Women's Group is one of the many groups the Settlement service runs regularly. We have the highest numbers of the newly arrived migrants and refugees from Arabic background settling in the areas, and through these group activities the women in particular not only build social connections, they learn about the Australian systems, customs, and acquire information around the services and resource available for them to use while navigating through their settlement process. Activities are focused on the need of group, and include information sessions or interactive events on health education, domestic violence awareness, family law and many more pertinent topics and issues.

Dare to Be Sensible

The Dare to Be Sensible program is a brainchild of Metro Assist. It was developed as an early intervention program to engage young people from migrant, refugee and mainstream communities in activities that are safe and healthy, while promoting sensible choices about social behaviour. The program has two components: educational sessions provided by the workers and the expert quest speakers and excursions. These sessions and activities aim to encourage students to participate, engage, reflect, and ultimately reach a more positive self-image. In recognising the settlement needs for newly arrived migrants and refugees, this year, the Dare to be Sensible project was delivered as an elective subject across the high school term, on a weekly basis at the Intensive English Centre within the Bankstown Senior College. The subject had such positive learning experiences for the students that the head teacher considered the project invaluable, as such Dare to be Sensible will be offered as an ongoing elective subject.

Dress for Work

In 2019, Dress for Work delivered its first Accredited Volunteer and Training Program, made possible by generous funding from the Bankstown Sports Club as part of the ClubGRANTS scheme. The funding facilitated community capacity building in the form of recruiting and training local residents from the Bankstown LGA, with a specific focus on recruiting job seekers from refugee and newly arrived migrant, indigenous, and long-term unemployed backgrounds. All participants undertook the one day Fundamentals of Customer Skills Workshop, with a focus on delivering a person-centred approach to Dress for Work service delivery. Dress for Work looks forward to seeing all the volunteers utilising their skills, knowledge and unique local experiences as they begin to undertake volunteering placements at both our Bankstown and Westmead sites to assist Dress for Work clients, and ultimately develop and strengthen their employability skills for future job opportunities.

Dress for Work continues to service clients from over 60 Service Providers across NSW and serviced over 1000 clients in the last year alone. In addition to individual client bookings, Dress for Work has seen an uptake in group bookings. In particular, PCYC Bankstown has utilised the Dress for Work service as an integral component of its Fit for Work program, where at-risk young men between the ages of 14-18 are trained and empowered to engage in the employment market. The end of the training is marked by the young men attending Dress for Work to obtain business attire for their graduation and future employment opportunities. The experience was such a success by the young clients that other branches of PCYC including groups from Liverpool, Balmain and from as far away as Wollongong have come to Bankstown and Westmead to utilise the Dress for Work service as a regular component of the program.

Losena Fuko

Settlement Services Manager

PCYC Liverpool "Fit For Work" graduation group



Settlement Services 2018/2019

SERVICES TO INDIVIDUALS BASED ON NEED

26%	Information/advice/referral
23%	Education and skills training
17%	Advocacy/support
15%	Social participation
8%	Information/advice/referral – medium intensity
7%	Facilitate employment pathways
2%	Intake/assessment
2%	Facilitate English learning pathways
1%	Settlement services workshop
0.10%	Child/youth focussed groups

OUTCOME ACHIEVED (SCORE assessment)

Service made positive changes in the circumstances to **80%** of clients served

Service helped **86%** of clients with their goals

93% are satisfied with the service





1283

Individual
one on one
client
support
provided

2488

Participated in group activities





- 1. Syria
- 2. China
- 3. Vietnam
- 4. India
- 5. Iraq

Top countries of birth

- 6. Myanmar
- 7. Bangladesh
- 8. Lebanon
- 9. Pakistan
- 10. Iran

INDIVIDUAL CLIENTS AGE GROUP



*Fatima arrived in Australia in 2013 on a Contributory Parent visa and stayed with her adult daughter and grandchild in Sydney. In 2014, Fatima's daughter left the country, leaving her child behind. Due to financial hardships caused by her migration status, she and her grandchild returned to her home country but came back to Australia because as an Australian citizen, her grandchild was not eligible for free education in that country.

Unable to navigate the Australian system, a community member recommended that Fatima approach Metro Assist. A Settlement Services caseworker assisted Fatima and her family with application for guardianship over her grandchild, as well as Family Tax Benefit, Opal cards, Internet, and suitable affordable accommodation.

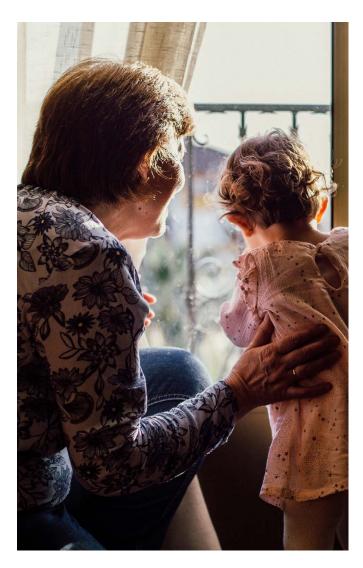
Fatima and her husband are on Resident Return visas and are not entitled to any social security payments. They live on their overseas pension and their grandchild's Family Tax Benefit. Fatima works casually in a food-processing factory, however, due to health conditions, she will not be able to continue working much longer.

After consultation, it was decided to appeal to Family and Community Services (FACS) to provide the family with social housing, and Fatima was assisted with her application. A local MP was involved to support her application. As the guardian of a minor who is an Australian citizen, Fatima was placed on a priority list for social housing. A few months later, the family were offered a property, which they accepted without hesitation. Unfortunately, the housing provider withdrew the offer the next day, as an elderly couple with a child they were not actually eligible for the over 55's property that was on offer. Further investigation of the couple's eligibility for housing needs to be conducted.

The couple and their grandchild remain in financial hardship and emotional stress. The caseworker continues to assist with providing emotional, and wherever possible, financial support for the family.

Fatima

*Name has been changed





Bernadette passed her citizenship test in six minutes, after completing the Citizenship Course.

I arrived from Egypt in 2011 and searched everywhere for someone to help me get my citizenship. I discovered Metro Assist's Citizenship course. It was very useful; the teacher was good, friendly and helpful. He talked and explained everything about Australian law, and government.

Thank you so much for this help. Because many people with second language it is very hard to study by yourself. Meeting new people to encourage you to study together.

Australia is safe and beautiful. More than any country, Australia is best. I am proud that I am an Australian citizen. My husband is already a citizen and my son will be applying as well. My daughter just applied.

Australia is so safe – quiet. My children are 20 and 22; their transition to a new country was not too bad. I was shocked that my daughter was so strong and independent. I am proud.

I am not sure but I think I will study more. I wanted to change my life. After all these years, I finally have the opportunity to change my career. In Egypt, I studied media and communications. Generally under Vatican embassy I was helping refugees finding a way to live, with hospital, education, food, now that I am a citizen I am hoping to do the same in Australia.

Boshra helped me with language. She's very nice. I can understand English but I can't talk very well. Many ladies in the class do not speak English. Very helpful – she was very encouraging. All the time she told me – Bernadette you will pass, I believe in you. I feel very confident in myself and happy to begin my life here.

Bernadette Abdelshahed

Cancer Awareness Program

With funding from Cancer Institute NSW, Metro Assist runs Cancer Awareness Campaigns on breast and cervical screening for communities from diverse backgrounds. Metro Assist recently successfully completed the Breast Screening Awareness Project for multicultural communities. The program is independently evaluated by the University of Sydney, and the evidence gathered showed that the project was successful in improving uptake of screening mammography and breast selfexamination as well as in promoting discussion about cancer and decreasing associated fears, fatalism and stigma among the CALD communities.

Multiple strategies that were utilised to address literacy and language barriers including: the recruitment of community champions, community events, radio ads, community newsletters, and multilingual videos and information sheets made the project hugely successful. Community leaders played a significant role in not only recruiting and retaining participants in the educational program but also in supporting women to obtain a mammogram. Combining this approach with other

access-enhancing strategies such as bilingual brochures, arrangement of appointments, individual reminders, transportation, and accompaniment, screening uptake was more effective.

One successful highlight of the campaign was a multicultural video project to raise awareness of the Breast Screening project produced in Arabic, Bangla, Hindi, Indonesian and Urdu, and promoted widely. An informative and culturally appropriate video was also produced for the Rohingya community. This video was the first Rohingya language awareness video produced in Australia.

The awareness campaign on cervical screening "Let's Talk" was launched this year. Within the CALD communities in NSW, women need to feel empowered to take part in the National Screening Program. The project emphasises on increasing awareness through community social networks, and involving partners, family, friends, neighbours, women's groups, religious groups, or associations with which women may be affiliated.

International Women's Day was an opportunity to host a Breast Screening Project event which included activites, demonstrations, cultural performances and the launch of the multilingual Breast Screen Awareness video.



8 education sessions were delivered and more than 200 women attended the education sessions. We partnered with Sydney Local Health District, Can Get Health, Family Planning and Leichardt Women Health Centre, and schools to deliver health related sessions to women. During the evaluation of the sessions, it was identified that only 5% of the attendants knew about the pap smear test changes and most didn't know about the cervical screening and its importance. The project organised innovative learning excursion trips in partnership with the SETS team, and created a safe space for women participants to share their experiences and learn from each other.

The project promoted cervical screening by organising and participating in multiple events, such as the Korean Health Expo, Moon Festival, stalls in Campsie mall, Lakemba market and other local events.

We developed cervical screening awareness videos in Bangla and Rohingya language in consultation with the community members. The project organised Chinese and Bangladeshi GP's to talk about cervical screening and its importance through SBS radio.

Moushumi Martin Project Leader



Harmony Day Breast Screening Event

Cervical Screening "Let's Talk" project launch, the project aim is to build awareness and increase participation in the new National Cervical Screening Program.



Tenancy and Financial Inclusion Service

The Tenancy and Financial Inclusion Service is funded by NSW Office of Fair Trading to deliver a range of consumer We assist tenants through our Southern Sydney Tenants Advice and Advocacy Service (SSTAAS), and provide information, advocacy and representation to tenants across southern Sydney. Our Inner Western Sydney Financial Counselling Service assists residents experiencing financial hardship, and provide budgeting assistance and advocacy with creditors. We have a No Interest Loans Scheme (NILS) service that we provide in conjunction with Good Shepherd Microfinance.

Backing up these programs, we also have financial supports through Energy Accounts Payment Assistance (EAPA) provided through NSW Planning, Industry and Environment, and emergency relief through the Commonwealth Department of Social Service.

Southern Sydney Tenancy Advice and Advocacy Service (SSTAAS)

The SSTAAS team assisted over 1400 new clients on tenancy matters. Majority of the clients were assisted with rental issues, predominantly rental arrears, rental bonds and compensation matters.

Over 260 clients assisted with duty advocacy at Sutherland NCAT and Liverpool NCAT, and this included providing on the spot advice so that tenants could make informed decisions, assistance with conciliation with negotiations with landlords and real estate agents.

Tenants living in units now account for most tenancy enquiries, and there are increasing numbers living in granny flats and shared accommodation. Tenants living in units continue to account for most tenancy enquiries. However there are increasing numbers living in granny flats; many of which are dwellings not approved for residential occupation by local councils.

In addition to one on one advocacy work, we are working with residents from Bass Hill residential parks to obtain a clearer and fairer means of calculating their electricity charges. Over the years, electricity charges have been a huge issue for residents in these residential parks, formerly known as caravan parks with tribunal decisions often being inconsistent. During 18/19 things are starting to change - there was a major decision known as Reckless and most recently a decision involving residents at Parklea. We continue to pursue our advocacy work with an aim to achieve fairer outcomes for the residents.

No Interest Loans Scheme (NILS)

Metro Assist NILS program extended its work scope into management of the loan from the year 2019. This means that in addition to interviewing clients for loans; we assess and manage loans received from other providers. We now assist over 400 clients per annum across the Inner West and South West of Sydney, other parts of Sydney and across New South Wales. Being a loan provider we are able engage with wider range of NILS providers across NSW including some regional providers.

The program interviewed and processed loan assessments for 406 clients, out of which 204 clients were interviewed by Metro Assist. A total of 392 loans were approved. The most common items for loans were: vehicle registration; fridges and washing machines. 16% of clients were of ATSI background. 94% of approved applicants rent the premises they live in, and of these over 45% rent on the private rental market.

Bill Assist days are an opportunity for people to receive advice and information.



Going Home Staying Home

Metro Assist delivered Going Home Staying Home program in partnership with the lead agency Muslim Women's Association until March 2019. We assisted 70 clients, all of CALD background who are at the risk homelessness to re-enter the housing market. Of these 10 found housing with social housing providers; and 60 were assisted back into the private rental market.

Inner Western Sydney Financial Counselling Service

During 2018/19 there was much focus on the banking royal commission. One of the outcomes of the Commission emphasised the risky practices that lenders and insurance companies had followed over many years which impacted the general public. Our financial counselling team have assisted local residents to have unfair loans waived, and often these include loans for amounts of \$10,000 and above. We assisted 358 new clients out of which 42% spoke another language at home representing 43 languages, and 85% of clients rented their premises.

Types of debt we assisted with were credit card, utilities bills, mortgagee arrears and debt with payday lenders. Primary source of problem are reported as poor money skills, unemployment, under-employment and domestic violence.

Emergency Relief

In 2018/19, we assisted over 399 clients undergoing financial hardship and facing potential disconnection with Energy Accounts Payment Assistance (EAPA) payments to the value of \$429,500.

As an EAPA provider, in addition to providing individual assistance, we also work with other agencies such as NSW Energy and Water Ombudsman to deliver Bill Assist Days. These events are held in community locations such as local libraries and halls. This year, we participated in 3 events and assisted over 120 clients on the spot.

We assisted over 180 clients with emergency relief support, with most clients receiving assistance with food vouchers but also with transport, purchasing of essential medicines, and basic removalist assistance when moving houses or escaping domestic violence. This service provides immediate short-term financial assistance to clients facing financial hardship.

Rita Wilkinson

Tenancy and Financial Inclusion Manager

NILS isn't just about loans for white goods. Our NILS officer received an application for a loan from Pedro. Pedro was an older gentleman on the age pension living on his own. He managed his money carefully, and bills were somehow paid on time.

That all changed when Pedro received a call that his brother in a remote town had died unexpectedly, and not only did he need to fly there but needed to pay for the funeral as well. The NILS Officer assisted Pedro to connect with the social worker from Centrelink. The social worker confirmed that Pedro was not eligible for funeral assistance.



We assisted Pedro with a NILS loan, and contributed some funds through emergency relief. Pedro was able to put together funds for a flight, and we assisted him with his utility accounts through EAPA. The funeral firm learnt of Pedro's hardship and kindly waived some of the costs.

After returning from the funeral Pedro said he now understood the importance of having some surplus funds to pay for funerals. He has now opened a special savings fund to which he contributes small amounts each fortnight.

Pedro

Tenancy and Financial Inclusion Service 2018/2019

Southern Sydney Tenants Advice and Advocacy Service

TENANTS ASSISTED

- 1421 new clients
- · Over 267 clients assisted with duty advocacy

ASSISTANCE PROVIDED

- 455 Rental arrears
- · 428 Termination matters
- · 377 Bond claim

DWELLING RENTED

- 25% rented house
- 50% rented units including unapproved granny flats

CLIENT PROFILE

- Over 22% spoke a language other than English at home with 56 languages represented
- Main languages; Arabic, Chine Bengali, Urdu, Portuguese, Sp. and Pacific Island languages

Inner Western Sydney Financial **Counselling Service**

PEOPLE ASSISTED

- 358 new clients
- 3405 sessions

CLIENT PROFILE

- · 42% spoke another language at home representing 43 languages
- · Main languages; Arabic, Vietnamese, Chinese, Filipino, Hindi and Urdu. Arabic, Bengali, Spanish, Chinese, Nepali and Russian
- 85% of clients rented their premises

TOP FINANCIAL ISSUES

- · Credit card debt
- · Utilities bill arrears
- Mortgagee arrears
- Payday lenders debt

SOURCE OF ISSUES

- 48% presented with poor financial literacy skills
- 37% are unemployed or underemployed
- 14% reported Domestic violence

- Assisted 70 CALD clients at risk
- of homelessness 10 found housing with social
- housing providers
- 60 were assisted back into the private rental market



Emergency Relief

- Over 399 clients assisted with
- Utility bill payments to the value of \$429.500
- Over 120 clients assisted at 3 Bill Assist days
- Assisted 180 clients with emergency relief

No Interest Loan Scheme (NILS)

ASSISTANCE PROVIDED

- 406 client interviews and loan assessments
- 204 directly interviewed
- 392 Individuals or families approved loans
- · Top 3 Loans items vehicle registration, fridges and washing machines



CLIENT PROFILE

- 16% of clients were of ATSI background
- 94% of loan applicants rent the premises
- 45% of the applicants rent on the private rental market



Financial Summary

The net surplus for the Financial Year is \$13,654 and retained surpluses as at 30 June 2019 is \$1,447,396.

The equity position of Metro Assist remains strong with total net assets of \$1,718,957.

In response to changes such as fee-for-service arrangements and outcomes-based reporting in some program areas, Metro Assist invested in resources, training and skills development, improving IT infrastructure, enhancing database and accounting systems to streamline internal processes and strengthen the organisation's capabilities in meeting community needs.

Our commitment is to continue to invest in people and systems in light of an ever-evolving operational environment and to utilise resources responsibly to improve the lives of our clients and ensure the safety and wellbeing of our employees and volunteers.

We will always work to strengthen the organisations sustainability by diversifying our funding base and exploring new areas that contribute to client and community outcomes.

ACKNOWLEDGING OUR FUNDING ORGANISATIONS:

Metro Assist acknowledges the continued support of the following funding organisations:

- Department of Social Services
- Department of Employment, Skills, Small and Family Business
- NSW Department of Communities and Justice
- NSW Office of Fair Trading
- Multicultural NSW
- NSW Department of Premier and Cabinet
- Health NSW (Cancer Institute NSW)
- The NSW Community Building Partnership program
- Local Councils and Clubs

METRO ASSIST AUDITORS William Buck Chartered Accountants Level 29, 66 Goulburn Street Sydney NSW 2000

Metro Assist Limited Statement of financial position As at 30 June 2019

	2019 \$	2018 \$
Assets		
Current assets Cash and cash equivalents Trade and other receivables Other current assets Total current assets	2,584,248 181,042 77,481 2,842,771	3,081,431 16,049 49,962 3,147,442
Non-current assets Property, plant and equipment Intangibles Total non-current assets	251,624 1,800 253,424	263,212
Total assets	3,096,195	3,410,654
Current liabilities Trade and other payables Employee benefits	154,889 673,082	190,380 593,933
Other current liabilities	534,824	910,330
Total current liabilities Non-current liabilities Employee benefits Total non-current liabilities	1,362,795 14,443 14,443	1,694,643 10,708 10,708
Total liabilities	1,377,238	1,705,351
Net assets	1,718,957	1,705,303
Equity Reserves Retained surpluses	271,561 	281,397 1,423,906
Total equity	1,718,957	1,705,303



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T 02 9798 1700 F 02 9798 1717

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