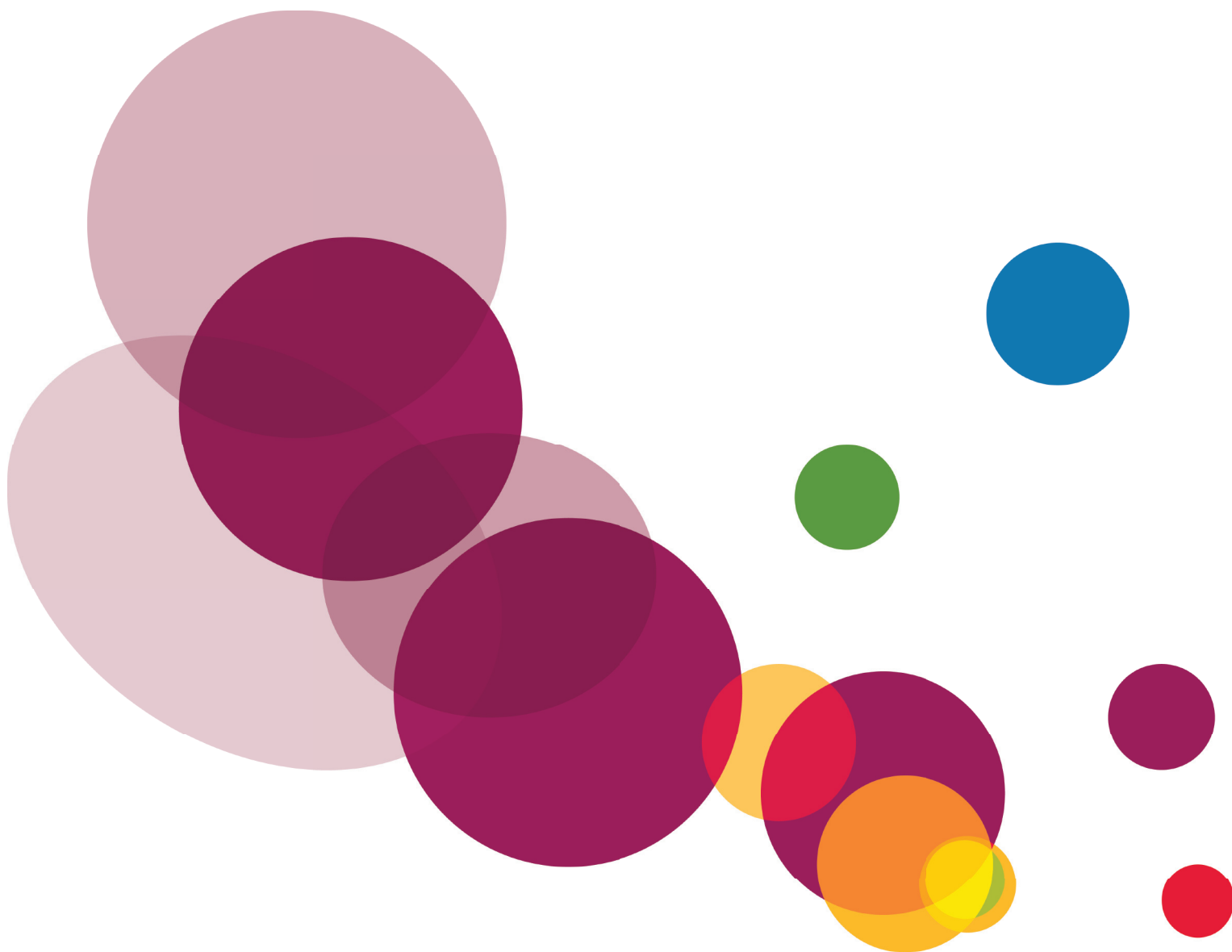

ANNUAL REPORT

2017 - 2018



metro assist

Our mission

To empower individuals, families and communities of diverse backgrounds through innovative, professional and responsive services.

Chairperson's Report

It is my pleasure, as Chair of Metro Assist, to present the report for 2017-18.

It has been a year of changes in our environment. We are seeing a gradual shift from block funding towards fee-for-service arrangements and outcomes-based payments in a number of areas. In many cases, the income is streamed in through sub-contracted arrangements. This has impacted service design and delivery, and necessitated investment in some of our systems in accounting, payroll and reporting to enhance efficiencies.

This change has focused the Board and management's attention on the organisation's finances to ensure the sustainability of programs and services. We have also achieved the majority of the objectives we established in our strategic plan, and I am confident that we have effectively put the organisation in a stronger position to accommodate new and perhaps different programs, designed to meet ever changing client and community needs.

In presenting the 2017-18 Annual Report, I wish to inform our members, partners, staff and other stakeholders that I will be stepping down as a Director and Chair on the Board of Metro Assist. I have been associated with this organisation since 2012, firstly on the management committee of the Metro Migrant Resource Centre Inc, then as Metro Assist Inc, and now as Metro Assist Limited. While the name and legal entity may have changed, the spirit and values of the organisation have been steadfast and the work of this wonderful body of dedicated people has always been true to the organisation's mission of empowering people.

I am grateful to the support of my fellow Directors throughout the year for their dedication and guidance in this time of change. They include:

Ting Lim (resigned)
Helen Miller
Scott Machin
Harriet Davidson
Janice Poynton
Sanyu Mugambwa
Jemma Hollonds
Philippa Scott

I also thank the management team and staff, headed by CEO, Lou Bacchiella. Their commitment to the organisation and its clients has been exemplary. I also wish to acknowledge the work of our volunteers, who do remarkable work each day and are committed to making clients' lives better. I thank our funding bodies – government agencies, councils, clubs, sponsors and donors for providing the resources to enable us to do what we do.

In retiring from my role, I wish Metro Assist continued success and I am proud to have served with this community organisation.

Elena Berrocal Capdevila
Chairperson



CEO Report

It gives me great pleasure to report on the organisation's achievements and activities for 2017-18. The year commenced with the implementation of the organisation's strategic plan and I am pleased to say that we are very much on track in meeting objectives. I wish to acknowledge the Board's direction and the management team's implementation of the plan. It is a plan that will consolidate the organisation's preparedness for future development.

SERVICES

Our services continue to meet the diverse needs of clients and local communities, but there are always challenges in balancing expectations in the face of growing financial pressures and social pressures faced by our communities. There is a constant demand for assistance through our settlement support, financial and tenant advice, family support, emergency relief and employment support; and we are seeing more clients presenting with complex matters including difficulties experienced with the NDIS. We have successfully demonstrated our ability to tailor support to pressing needs and one example of this was the establishment of psychological counselling within the Inner West Families team for children with behavioural issues. Referrals have been growing steadily with some very positive responses from parents.

Our tenant advocates work collaboratively with many organisations including the Muslim Women's Association in the delivery of the *Going Home Staying Home*, a program designed to assist people escaping domestic violence to find suitable long term private rental accommodation and we continue to build on our existing partnership with The Good Shepherd around financial literacy. Throughout the year we have assisted a growing number of clients with small *No Interest Loans* and extended *Emergency Relief* to people in difficult financial circumstances.

The settlement team has been extremely active in delivering a range of support and advice to newly-arrived migrants and refugees, including many of the special cohort of Syrian and Iraqi refugees which is steadily transitioning out of the Humanitarian Settlement Program delivered by Settlement Services International (SSI), and into our services. Activities have included information and referrals, housing support, immigration advice, employment support, citizenship training, driver training, Foodbank, Dress for Work, and much more.

Towards the end of the reporting period we began delivering *ParentsNext* and the *Refugee Employment Support Program* (RESP), both of which have been successfully established under sub-contract arrangements to Settlement Services International (SSI). Alongside other initiatives like *PowerME*, we have created our own employment support team which is very busy and driving some interesting collaborations with training and industry partners. Our collaboration with construction company Multiplex, has led to us establishing an outreach service and second studio for *Dress for Work* in the Westmead Connectivity Centre, where we are seeing some excellent training and employment focussed collaborations emerging.

The year saw the commencement of a BreastScreen awareness project funded by the NSW Cancer Institute in response to a lower take up of screening by women in culturally and linguistically diverse communities. Engagement with our diverse communities has been astounding and some women are hearing about the risk of breast cancer and the importance of screening for the first time. I am pleased to also report that we have been awarded a second grant to deliver information on cervical screening and the Human Papillomavirus. We consider these initiatives to be life-saving and whilst alarming, the project has seen a number of women referred to follow-up tests.



FUTURE-THINKING

At the time of writing this report we were notified of our success as part of a consortium headed by SSI to deliver the Settlement Engagement and Transition Support (SETS) program for newly-arrived migrants and refugees. We're also at the commissioning stage of new service arrangements arising from the Targeted Early Intervention reforms with NSW Family and Community Services.

The organisation has embraced the steadily changing revenue environment as we increasingly see a shift away from block funding in some areas, towards outcomes-based, milestone and fee-for-service arrangements. We have updated our systems and accounting software to ensure that the work is tracked and invoiced in a timely manner to ensure cashflow and sustainability.

The nature of some of our programs is also changing in which we are examining the possibility of undertaking some of the more intense and therapeutic support work, particularly in the family services area. Increasingly, governments are looking for effective solutions and are introducing internationally tried evidence-based programs to address critical areas such as child protection. This means we need to assess our capabilities and prepare for new intensive programs; and be able to extend these into culturally and linguistically diverse families and communities. The way ahead therefore, is assessing what the future needs of the organisation might be, and building that into our training and recruitment.

LEADERSHIP

I wish to acknowledge the strategic direction and guidance by our Directors and their contribution to the organisation. While it has been a relatively short period since becoming a company, we have benefited tremendously by the skills and commitment shown by

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 and volunteers.

Directors. I particularly wish to acknowledge and thank our departing Chair, Elena Berrocal Capdevila, for her passion and commitment to Metro Assist over a long time. The relationship between the Chair and CEO is crucial to effective governance, and I am grateful for the confidence Elena has had in me.

I am hugely grateful to our management team for the amazing work they do in keeping this organisation at the forefront of the game. Our corporate services team has done an astounding job in promoting the organisation, introducing quality management practices and skilling up our staff. The finance team has introduced a heightened level of accountability and introduced systems to make reporting simpler and more transparent. The frontline managers in settlement, employment, families and financial inclusion have demonstrated a commitment which I truly believe cannot be matched in any other similarly-sized organisation which has the complexity and breadth of programs we carry.

Our staff have demonstrated tremendous commitment to their clients and regularly go above and beyond to ensure someone is safe; and they do it each and every day. A huge thank you to our volunteers for their support; and to the student placements who have chosen Metro Assist as the organisation to develop their knowledge and experience. And a massive thank you to our funding bodies and stakeholders. Without your ongoing support, we can't do what we do so brilliantly.

Thank you and best wishes for the coming year.

Lou Bacchiella
CEO

The Board

- Elena Berrocal Capdevila (Chairperson)
- Helen Miller (Deputy Chair)
- Scott Machin (Treasurer)
- Ting Lim
- Harriet Davidson
- Janice Poynton
- Sanyu Mugambwa
- Jemma Hollonds
- Philippa Scott

Employment Support

HIGHLIGHTS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

In July 2017, SkillME began its third and last year of service. In the nine months from July 2017 to March 2018 when the funding from Multicultural NSW expired, we assisted 280 migrant and refugee job seekers. We ran three Skilled Migrant Development Programs in partnership with TAFE Digital supporting over 50 highly skilled migrants and refugees to prepare for their professional employment and to gain local work experience. We also ran five full vocational qualification-training programs.

We continued to strengthen our collaborative and creative intervention-training model for employment. We engaged stakeholders in the training and employment sector and applied our person-centred model to support a job seeker's needs with English language skills, vocational and job seeking skills development, as well as engagement with employers.

We are one of the key partners in the Westmead Hospital Redevelopment collaborative group led by the construction firm Multiplex. In February 2018, Multiplex launched the "Connectivity Centre" and SkillME was invited to have an ongoing presence alongside other social support and training organisations. We were very excited to become part of this initiative to pursue training and employment opportunities for migrant and refugee job seekers through Multiplex and its sub-contractor and supplier networks.

ParentsNext is all about helping 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 children. From July 2017 to June 2018, we assisted 137 participants in the former Bankstown LGA.

In April 2018, we were thrilled 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.

Since 2016, we have been running a program to help refugees to enter the logistics industry. The program includes a full Certificate III in Driving Operations that teaches participants the rules and obligations that apply to heavy vehicle drivers, as well as the assessment to obtain a Heavy Rigid vehicle license. The course increases participant's awareness of legislation requirements in the transport industry and enhances their skills in safety, route planning, road craft, fatigue management, load restraint and more. This course has enabled more than fifty humanitarian migrants to acquire a full qualification in addition to their unrestricted HR licence. The course also prepares



participants for the Australian workforce, by engaging them in information sessions about Work Rights, Employment Law and Australian Workplace culture. At the end of the course, we introduce participants to employers as an opportunity to gain long-term sustainable employment.

*KIM'S STORY

Kim first came to ParentsNext program in November 2017. Despite her qualifications and experience in retail management and recruitment, she was unsuccessful in applying for jobs. The numerous unsuccessful job applications had resulted in Kim feeling discouraged and confused. Kim expressed these feelings of low self-worth and confusion to her ParentsNext facilitator who referred her to SkillME. Our SkillME consultant assisted Kim in securing an internship at a strata management company. ParentsNext paid for Kim's internship registration and a week prior to the completion of her internship, she was offered a permanent part-time position. Kim is currently employed and works flexible hours, which accommodates her parenting responsibilities. We received the below email from Kim on 23 April 2018 expressing her gratitude to the ParentsNext and SkillME team for their assistance in encouraging her to achieve both her employment and educational goals.

"I have worked in retail for 17 years. When my eldest daughter started school last year, I was forced to leave my job after 11 years. It was the hardest time in my life, a complete struggle to find a job in retail with "mum hours" and something close to home, to be able to juggle the realities of work/family life balance. Thanks to the hard work and dedication of ParentsNext and SkillME teams. They found an Internship in Property Management for me. I've always dreamed of working in this field of work, but unfortunately due to starting my family late in life I never had the chance to pursue it. Fortunately, after my Internship ended I was offered a Permanent Part-Time "Mum Hours" position in the company and am now working as a Strata Assistant. I have been also offered formal training and further development in gaining Certificates and Registration to obtain a Strata Licence within a year. I could never have achieved this without the support, motivation and dedication of the ParentsNext and SkillME teams. Thank you so much, I am so grateful. I'm still pinching myself that I have been given this fantastic opportunity!!"

*Not her real name

FERESHTEH'S STORY

"I am originally from Iran. I studied Business Administration and worked as an Insurance agent for more than 7 years. I came to Australia in 2017 with my husband. He got a job in his field after couple of months but I struggled to find a job. I attended the Skilled Migrant Development program (as part of SkillME). It was a great learning experience. I learned some good ways to apply for jobs, various tips and tricks for cracking an interview and building a good resume as well as a cover letter for a job. All this guidance has helped me in becoming more confident and fulfilling my career goals. I've just started a job at a legal company as an administrative officer and I am very happy."



MOHAMMED'S STORY

Mohammed arrived in Sydney from Iraq in 2015 with his family. He completed his Adult Migrant English Program (AMEP) classes before enrolling and completing Certificate III in Spoken and Written English with TAFE as well. In 2016, Mohammed came to us for assistance with future training and employment. Mohammed was an experienced truck driver in Iraq. We suggested he enrol in our Driving Operation qualification, which would teach him everything he needs to know about truck driving in NSW, as well as give him an opportunity to obtain his HR license without any cost. Within three months he completed the training and got his Heavy Rigid Vehicle driver's licence. Having previous mechanical skills and abilities and now equipped with improved English skills, Mohammed found a full-time job with a big logistic company in a short time.

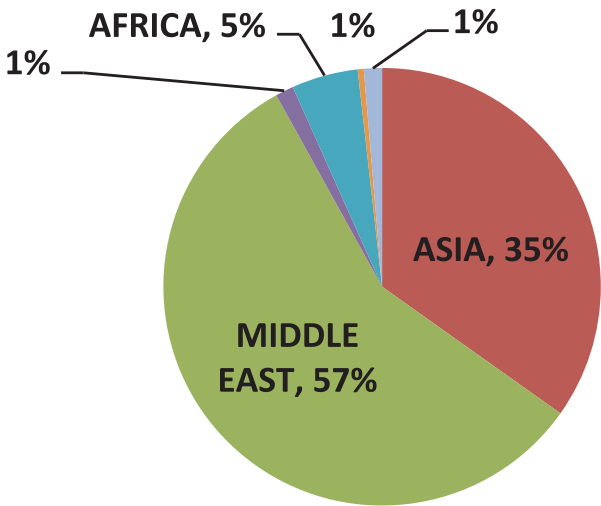


"Thank you so much, always keep me updated with your programs" (Mohammed, 2018).

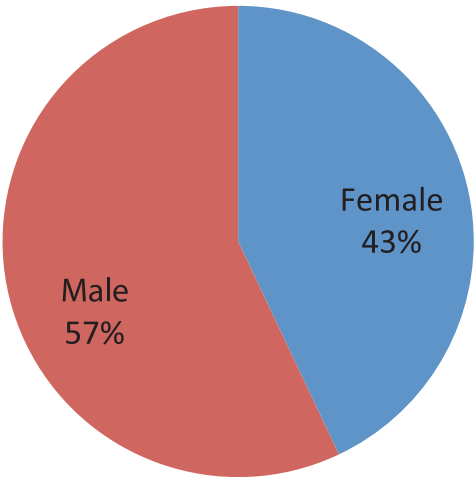
PROGRAM STATISTICS

Total number of clients seen between July 2016 and March 2017: 280

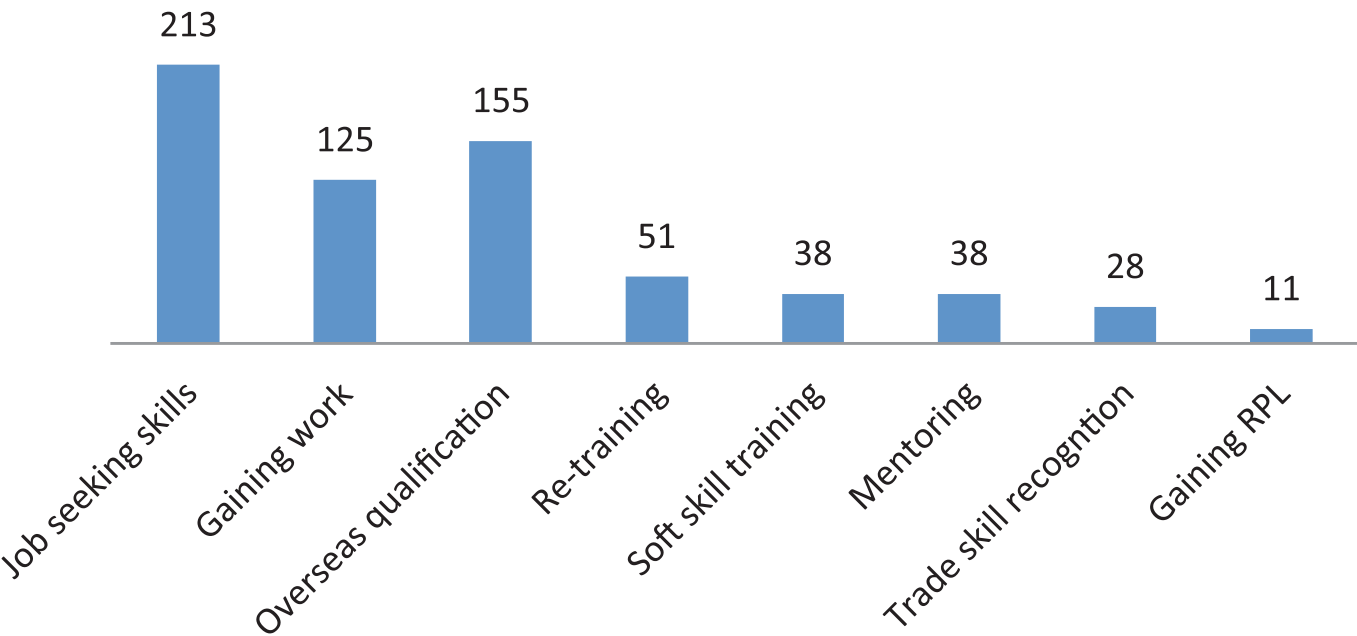
COUNTRY OF ORIGIN



GENDER



ASSISTANCE PROVIDED



Family Services

HIGHLIGHTS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

Our Family Services area saw some significant changes in broader policy and practice reforms within child protection and early intervention programmes across the sector. We have embarked on an extensive process with the Department of Family and Community Services (FaCS) and other services and providers in the district, under The Targeted Earlier Intervention (TEI) reforms. The reforms will provide targeted services at the point where they can have the most impact - early in life and early in need. Metro Assist was invited to join the TEI working party group to represent Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CaLD) communities, which gave us the opportunity to ensure that their concerns are raised at a local level.

Metro Assist was also invited to participate in the TEI data collecting trial. Our Family team provided valuable feedback with data collecting that has helped shape the process of data capturing to the department. The reforms will focus on a TEI Program Outcomes Framework. By measuring outcomes that matter to clients, our program will empower us to have a better understanding of the impact we have in supporting clients to achieve their goals.

Through the reforms, we have welcomed our new specialist psychologist service. This service has benefited and complimented our caseworkers in supporting and empowering clients. Our new psychological service provides a holistic approach in supporting family, children and young people who can have their needs met in a safe and supportive environment that is inclusive. The aim of this service is to support family, children, and young people during difficult points in their lives and provide them with realistic tools and skills in setting them up to get things back on track.

Both Brighter Futures and Inner West Family team have been using the Human Services Outcomes Framework as a platform to collect data and measure the outcomes for clients. Collecting this data allowed the team to keep the client's needs front and centre. Using this approach also adds benefits for staff; it allows staff to grow and provides them with the opportunity to

take a step back and reflect on the outcomes of their work. Our Brighter Futures program now reaches out to three local government areas Bankstown, Fairfield and Liverpool. Brighter Futures enthusiastically welcomed this invitation by FaCS to extend our service provision to areas within Liverpool, which helps support the needs of identified at risk CALD families.

NISHA'S STORY

Nisha and her three young children arrived in Australia seeking asylum 18 months ago. Nisha attended our Tuning in to Kids program where she learnt about Metro Assist's Family Support Program and started working with one of our caseworkers. Nisha had a dream to find a good job, but getting her youngest daughter into childcare was an expensive barrier. After our caseworker advocated to local childcare centres and supported Nisha to gain affordable rates, Nisha's youngest daughter was enrolled two days per week, which has enabled Nisha to secure part time employment to support her family!



MARY'S STORY

Mary is a young parent; she has a 10 month old and gave birth to a premature newborn that was in hospital for a number of weeks. As a young mother, it can be very overwhelming and isolating having two young babies. The family caseworker supported Mary in accessing emergency relief and provided her with a new double pram. This made it possible for her to take

both children out of the house. The family caseworker made a referral to the BUMP program, a young parents mentoring program. Mary enjoyed the group, made friends with other young parents, and was connected to a mentor. She will be receiving ongoing mentoring from the service and will receive family support from a young parent's program caseworker. Using an early intervention focus, this young family was helped early to get ongoing supports in place.



Program Statistics

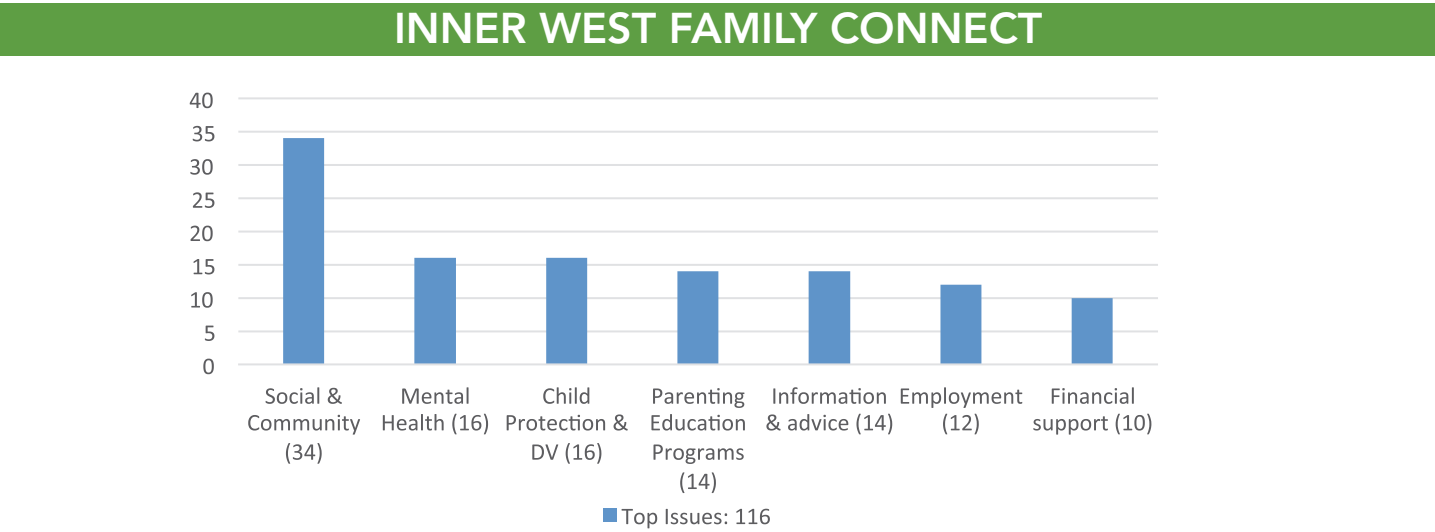
Community Hubs

Ashfield	Total	Target
Number of services coordinated through the hub	451	160
Number of people attended community consults	63	60
Number of people attended community plans	80	25
Number of people at events	1102	80
Number of partnership with the hubs	158	15
Number of people that used infrastructure	2990	1920

Strathfield	Total	Target
Number of services coordinated through the hub	113	100
Number of people attended community consults	50	50
Number of people attended community plans	21	15
Number of people at events	206	80
Number of partnership with the hubs	80	10
Number of people that used infrastructure	2208	960

Case Management	Total
Inner West Family Connect	152
Child, Youth and Family Services	354

TOP ISSUES PRESENTED



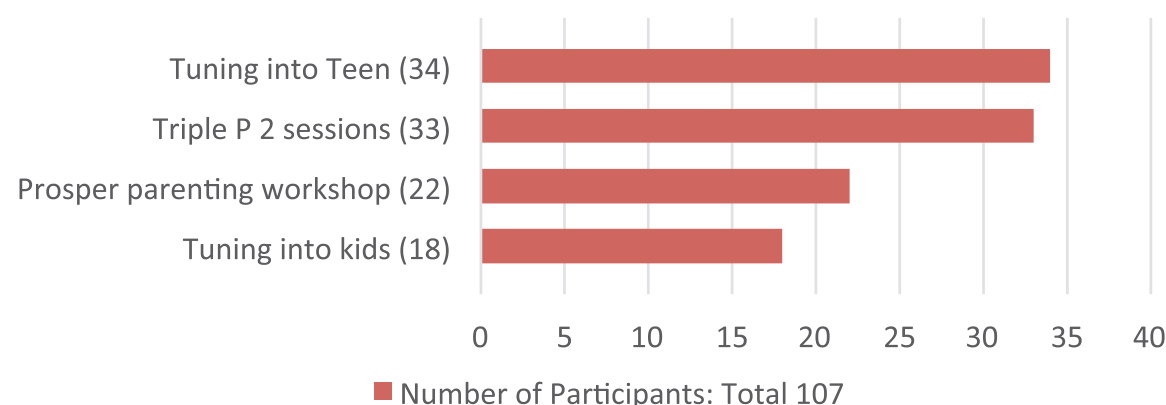
CHILD YOUTH AND FAMILY SERVICES



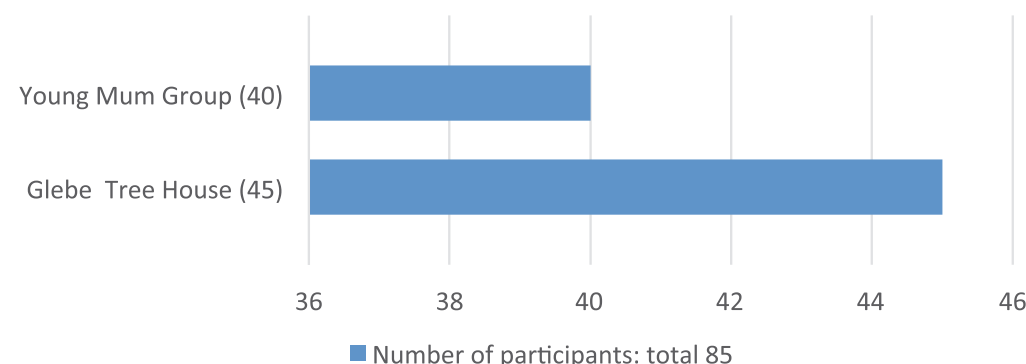
BRIGHTER FUTURES TOP ISSUES



PARENTING WORKSHOP PARTICIPANTS



OUTREACH GROUP PARTICIPANTS



Settlement Services Program

HIGHLIGHTS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

Metro Assist celebrated our annual Refugee Week Awards in June at the Bankstown Senior Citizen's Centre. The awards celebrate exceptional commitment by individuals from refugee and asylum seeker backgrounds in the areas of Community, Youth Leadership & Mentoring, Volunteering & Development, and Early Intervention on Crime and Domestic Violence against Women. Our Pratto Project Hospitality Students catered a Ramadan Dinner/Iftar. The event celebrated the positive contribution that refugees make to our community, and reminded people that while a refugee's journey begins with danger, it also begins with hope!

Group activities such as the Arabic Women's Group, are vital as they aim to increase the inclusion and participation of Arabic women in the wider community. They also aim to educate Arabic women from disadvantaged backgrounds about health, Family Law and Australian Law. The information sessions proved to be very beneficial, as the majority of participants were recent arrivals in Australia and were unaware of the services, resources and different programs available to them. Through these activities refugee women connected with various service providers like St. Michaels Women's group and gave the women and their families a greater understanding of the Australian community and the services available to them.

Special Tutorial & Assistance Program (STAP) is one of original initiatives of Metro Assist – piloted in 2003-2004, STAP continues as a school based holistic approach to supporting families with children in a school-based setting. STAP provides academic tutoring, behavioural, and social skills mentoring for newly arrived children and their parents and in the Metro Assist catchments. STAP collaborates with Western Sydney University through the Classroom without Borders community engagement department, which provide us with student tutors who mentor our young students. Metro Assist is grateful to our partners – Western Sydney University, Local Community Volunteers, and the local school communities – for their commitment to supporting families.

The Housing Advocacy Project (HAP) delivered through Metro Assist frequently partners with a range of community service providers and specialist homelessness services in NSW to deliver complex and holistic case management housing services to culturally and linguistically diverse (CaLD) clients. The HAP aims

to enhance client's lives through social housing options. These include placing candidates on the Housing NSW priority and general waitlist and sourcing affordable accommodation including temporary and transitional housing options for homeless or at-risk clients.

The Australian Citizenship test support program - Mentoring and Guidance for Imminent Citizens (MAGIC) had a 91% completion rate of its 85 registered participants. Four night courses were delivered to accommodate those who work during the daytime. There was an average of twenty clients per course. All participants were assisted with their citizenship application form so that the clients did not have their application returned, which can increase the already lengthy process period.

Some of our employment workshops and leadership training courses include The Skilled Migrant Development program, which was delivered in partnership with the SkillMe team and TAFE Digital, the Organisation and Resume Writing Course and the Developing Employability Skills workshop. Clients learned about the Australian workplace and culture, and job application skills. Many participants have gone on to land part time and full time work.

In October 2017, in partnership with the Inner-West Council, a Settlement Services Program worker initiated a conversational English group called the English Conversation Club. By November 2017 the group capitalized on the new partnership between Metro Assist and Pratten Park community Sports and Bowling Club, Ashfield. Every week there are up to 90 migrants who attend activities focusing on English communication skills, understanding the Australian system and values, pathways to further studies, healthy living and positive ageing.

THE *SADIKI FAMILY'S STORY

Mr and Mrs Sadiki, a Syrian refugee couple arrived in Australia with their three children in 2015. The family did not have a Settlement Services International (SSI) case manager and through word of mouth, they were directed to a support service in Liverpool area, but as they needed an Arabic speaking worker around the Bankstown area, they were referred on to Metro Assist. The family's youngest son was diagnosed with Autism and it was very hard for them to navigate the system especially with the announcement of the National

Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS). The family did not know where and how to start, and were so confused when they were told about their son's case. They were overwhelmed and thought they will not be able to treat their son. As a refugee family, they were not aware about the support services and resources available to them. We provided extensive information and encouraged the family to attend information sessions and consultations about the NDIS.

The focus of support was to advocate on the family's behalf and put in a submission for funding from Autism Spectrum Australia; we also supported the family to put in an NDIS application, and followed up with the NDIA

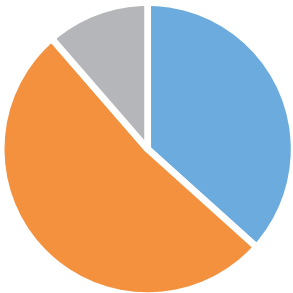
and the NSW Autism Advisor until the family received funding to start the early intervention program for their son. We also followed up the matter with therapists to make sure the right services and sessions are provided. The family are now more aware of support services and understand their options and choices. The family's feedback was extremely positive and they were very grateful for the support provided to achieve such a positive outcome. They are now able to access services that are relevant to their day-to-day activities, and more specifically their link to NDIS has changed their quality of life.

**Not their real name*

PROGRAM STATISTICS

- Individual Clients: 1934
- Number of Cases: 3189

Top 10 issues presented
Education and Employment
Community Participation
Financial Resilience
Housing
Advocacy/Support
Mental Health
Parenting practices
Family harmony
Physical Health



Gender: Total 3189

- Male (709)
- Female (1005)
- Unspecified (220)

TOP FIVE COUNTRIES OF BIRTH



DRESS FOR WORK

In 2017 -2018 alone, Dress for Work received referrals from over 60 service providers in NSW, with over 1000 clients assisted with clothing support and job training. Dress for Work additionally continued to deliver Job Readiness Training with Dress for Work facilitators conducting over 20 outreach Job Ready Training Workshops at high schools, expos and community organisations across New South Wales.

In the second half of the year, Dress for Work celebrated the launch of a new storage facility at its Bankstown site as part of funding received under the Stronger Communities grant. Federal Member for Blaxland, Jason Clare, officially launched the building which has enabled the project to accept more clothing donations as well as provide additional space for volunteers and staff to undertake the practical day-to-day activities of the project including tagging and sorting of donated stock.

Dress for Work boosted to help battlers



BANKSTOWN Metro Assist's new Dress for Work showroom and storage facility was officially launched last week by Federal MP for Blaxland, Jason Clare (pictured). Dress for Work is a free service that provides professional business attire and support to men from disadvantaged backgrounds in order to attend job interviews and other important appointments. In the last year, Dress for Work has as-

sisted over 1,500 clients. "Dress for Work is a great local initiative helping men who cannot afford to purchase a suit put their best foot forward to find employment," Mr Clare said. "Modelled on the women's service, 'Dress for Success', Dress for Work is the only program of its kind in NSW, and caters for men all across Sydney and beyond."

The Torch Newspaper, July 2018

Dress for Work additionally launched a second site at the Westmead Connectivity Centre along with SkillMe as part of a community development initiative by Multiplex to deliver employment opportunities for clients in the greater Western Sydney region. The Dress for Work Westmead branch has seen over 50 clients through its doors since its launch 6 months ago and continues to forge strong partnerships with a variety of community partners that are co-located within the Centre.

Corporate partnerships continue to play an important role. Partnerships not only yielded much-needed donations but also strengthened unique joint training opportunities to support our clients into employment. One such example includes the partnership with the global organisation LinkedIn, to deliver a training course for migrants focusing on aspects of online recruitment.

Many of our activities could not have been possible without support from our generous financial and clothing donors including but not limited to 2day FM CBRE, Kingsgrove Uniting Church and Juren Beauty, and Thread Together without which we would not be able to continue our work of supporting clients with practical employments assistance all over New South Wales.

BREAST SCREEN AWARENESS IN MULTICULTURAL COMMUNITIES PROJECT

This project aims to raise awareness and participation rates in breast screening among Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) communities. The project launched in May 2018 in Lakemba. Deputy Mayor Nadia Saleh gave a very inspiring opening speech and the personal stories of Breast Cancer survivors were showcased. We are working closely with BreastScreen NSW and by the advisory committee members from various community organisations, academics and health services. Breast Screening Education Programs were organised for the Arabic, Chinese, Vietnamese, Indonesian and Indian Subcontinent communities. More than 300 women have so far attended education sessions.

A leading academic researcher, physicians, health educators, and bilingual workers delivered the sessions. They focused on breast health, prevention of breast cancer, and the importance of mammograms. In addition to the twelve education classes, a mobile mammography van provided on the spot screenings. Community leaders were engaged throughout this project to increase awareness of the importance of breast cancer screening within their communities.

Workshops such as sewing classes and cake decorating, combined with information sessions also created a space where women could share their stories and discuss their understanding of breast cancer.



NUSRAT AND ABIDA'S STORY

My mum attended the Breast Screening education session organised by Metro Assist and was encouraged to have a mammogram because of her age. After doing the screening through BreastScreen NSW, she was recalled for further assessment, but she was reluctant. The Metro Assist worker and I convinced her that early detection could be a lifesaving step if she is diagnosed. It was not easy for her to take that step, but finally she went for the assessment.



Unfortunately, after the second mammogram she was diagnosed with breast cancer. She wanted to keep it private and confidential, but later my mother was brave enough to break this news to Probashi Bangladeshi Women's Association. It was a very emotional journey for her, but she received a great emotional support from the group, which was very crucial for her at that moment.

I would like to thank Probashi Bangladeshi Women's group for giving emotional support to my mother, Metro Assist and BreastScreen NSW. It was a friendly and easy to access service. If it wasn't for the early detection and screening program, my mum would not be here today to see her daughter get married and her two amazing grandchildren. I also would like to say as a young person we can encourage our mothers or sisters to do the mammogram as sometimes they really need encouragement from us.

PRATTEN PARK EMPLOYMENT INITIATIVE

The Pratten Park Capacity Employment Initiative is a partnership between Metro Assist, Pratten Park Community Sports and Bowling Club and TAFE NSW SWSI. The purpose of the initiative is to support catering and hospitality training and work placements for newly arrived migrants and refugees.

Fifty Participants received a TAFE qualification in catering and hospitality utilising the newly renovated kitchen facilities at Pratten Park Community Sports and Bowling Club and TAFE NSW Campbelltown Campus. The first cohort has finished their training, graduates will be running a restaurant, The Pratto Café and Catering, at Pratten Park Community Sports and Bowling Club which will give them valuable work experience and generate capital to extend training opportunities to other newly-arrived migrants and refugees. Gaining employment is empowering to migrants as it helps families meet their financial responsibilities and can be a pathway to secure accommodation. The funds granted through the Inner West ClubGrants 2017 has enabled the employment of a part-time coordinator for this initiative.

The training provided by TAFE SWSI gives trainees the skills, knowledge and understanding to gain employment as either a food and beverage attendant, barista, function attendant, guest service attendant or

restaurant server. Trainees can extend their studies by completing one of the hospitality pathway programs. Indirect benefits of this training for trainees has been an improvement in English suitable for the work place, social support and work experience. We acknowledge the outstanding work of TAFE SWSI in delivering this training effectively.

Metro Assist and Pratten Park Community Sports and Bowling Club are grateful for the funding received from Inner West ClubGrants 2017 and the enduring support of our federal member of parliament, Anthony Albanese, and our state Member of Parliament, Jo Haylen, Inner west Council, Wests Ashfield Leagues Club and Canterbury- Hurlstone Park Leagues Club.



Tenancy and Financial Inclusion

HIGHLIGHTS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

Southern Sydney Tenants Advice and Advocacy Service (SSTAAS) provides tenant's advice and advocacy to over 83,000 households in our area. This includes residential tenants in the private rental market, social housing, caravan parks and boarding houses. In 2017-2018, we assisted 1448 new clients. Over 30% of our clients spoke another language other than English at home. Of these, the largest language groups include Arabic, Chinese, Bengali, Greek, Spanish and Portuguese.

Tenants older than 55 years are also a significant group, as they make up at least 20% of our clients. They experience severe stress and distress at the possibility of homelessness, even when they have not breached their agreements. During this year, we provided extended assistance to older tenants in New South Wales Civil and Administrative Tribunal (NCAT). Some typical cases include an elderly tenant in social housing who required essential repairs so that her premises were safe to live in. Another example was of older tenants in public housing who had spent numerous years caring for frail aged parents, and then faced homelessness when their parents passed away. As well as a person over 85 years old experiencing harassment and threats of eviction from a private landlord.

SSTAAS covers a large area and we experience a huge demand from local tenants. Duty advocacy is one way to provide much needed assistance in a timely and cost effective manner. Disputes between tenants and landlords are heard at the NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal (NCAT); and most tenants are self-represented. Duty advocacy is an initiative of the Tenants Advice and Advocacy Network and SSTAAS provides duty advocacy three days per fortnight at Sutherland and Liverpool NCAT. It means we can give immediate advice to tenants so that they can successfully negotiate with landlords and settle their matters without the need for formal hearings. In 2017-18, we assisted 213 tenants at duty advocacy, and of these, we assisted 41 with the hearing on the day. Common matters at NCAT that we assist with are rental bond claims and terminations.

INNER WESTERN SYDNEY FINANCIAL COUNSELLING SERVICE

Being able to pay bills on time is essential to living a comfortable life. For many that is not possible, and this leads to stress due to constant worry of disconnection, a loss of a car or a loss of a home.

The Inner Western Sydney Financial Counselling Service is a partnership between Metro Assist and Good Shepherd NZ to assist residents facing financial stress and challenges. We operate out of Ashfield, Campsie and Marrickville and provide outreach in Lakemba and to Bridge Housing.

Most of our clients rent, with most debts centred around credit cards, utilities and rental arrears. However, we are seeing more clients facing mortgage defaults. Defaulting on a mortgage is particularly stressful as it often involves very high debts, has immense impact on relationships and can lead to the loss of an asset that represents decades of emotional investment. Working with mortgage defaults can have a high impact on clients and on staff.

EAPA

Energy Accounts Payment Assistance (EAPA) is more than just assisting clients with financial assistance to pay their utility accounts. During the year, EAPA successfully transitioned from a paper vouchers system to a digital system. We assisted over 400 clients during the year. Thanks to the initiative of two staff members - Doaa Dofalla and Nadwa Boushain - Metro Assist now provides Bill Assist days. These events are about educating clients about electricity accounts - how their usage is calculated, the different charges used, what rebates are available and safety with electricity in their homes.



Metro Assist worked with EWON and other local community agencies to hold energy assist days at Riverwood, Bankstown and Campsie.

GOING HOME STAYING HOME

Going Home Staying Home is delivered through a partnership called Linking Hearts and is headed by the Muslim Women’s Association. Metro Assist is one partner along with Baptist Care and Sydney Women’s Counselling Service, together we deliver transitional housing service for CaLD families facing homelessness in the Canterbury Bankstown area.

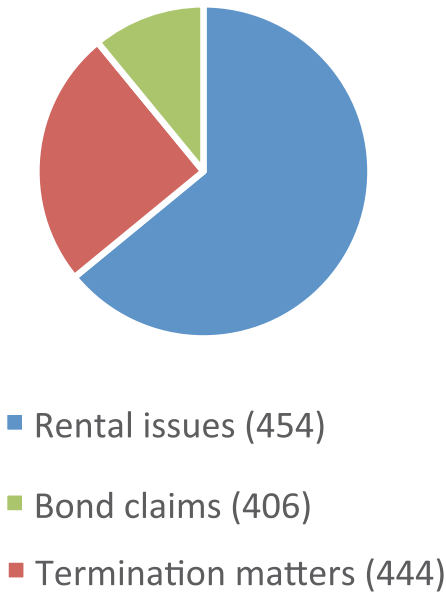
Finding accommodation when you are homeless or about to become homeless can be overwhelming. Our role in the project is to support families back into the rental housing market. During the year, we assisted 70 families, 10 of whom moved into social housing, and the remaining were found new rentals in the private rental market, predominantly in the Bankstown to Chester Hill area.

STATISTICS FOR TENANCY AND FINANCIAL INCLUSION TEAM 2017/18

SSTAAS:

- Number of new clients: 1448
- Over 405 clients assisted with duty advocacy
- Over 22% spoke another language at home
- The five largest language groups were: Arabic, Chinese, Bengali, Portuguese, Greek, Spanish
- Tenants living in units now account for most tenancy enquiries, and there are increasing numbers living in granny flats and shared accommodation.

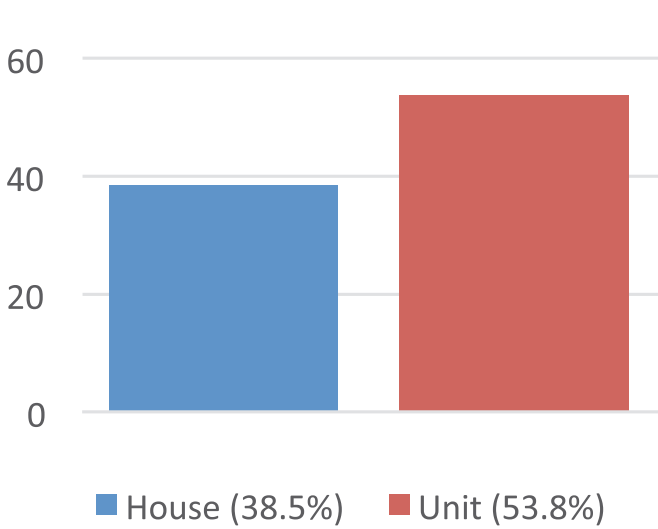
TYPE OF ISSUES PRESENTING



NILS

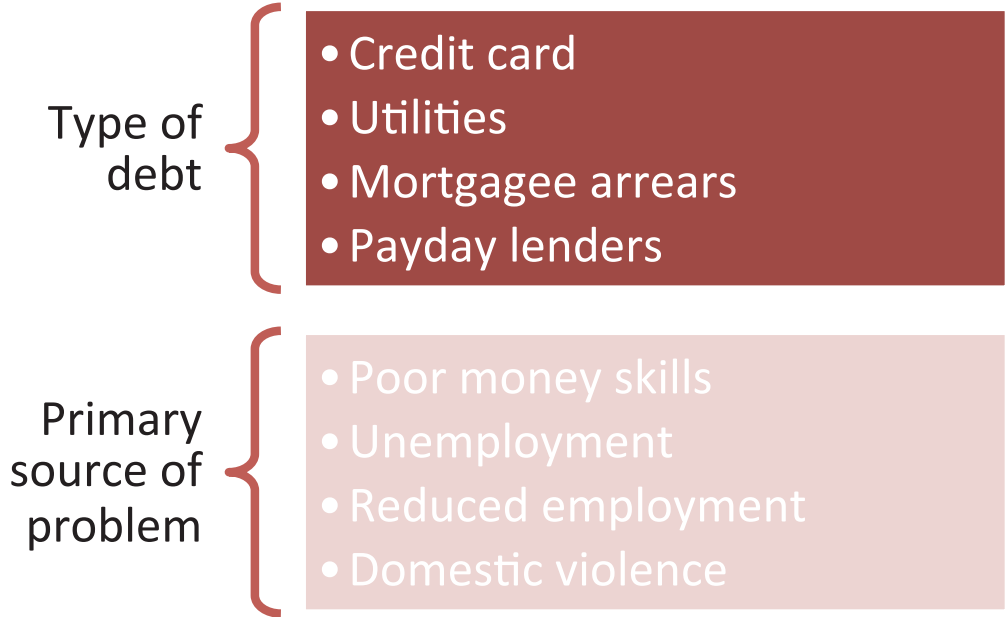
2017-2018 saw the No Interest Loans Schemes (NILS) project move to a new model of service delivery. NILS is now provided through a two-tier system – client service providers and loan providers. Metro Assist will move into the role of a loan provider. The transition commenced in April 2018 and is now fully complete. As a loan provider, we receive loan applications from client service providers. During 2018-19, we will promote the NILS programme throughout the Inner West and South West to increase access for low-income households, particularly amongst CALD communities, and to promote the service as a responsible and affordable form of credit.

TYPE OF DWELLING RENTED



INNER WESTERN SYDNEY FINANCIAL COUNSELLING SERVICE

- Number of new clients: 421 with 3437 sessions
- 38.6% spoke another language at home
- The largest language groups were Arabic, Vietnamese, Chinese, Filipino, Hindi and Urdu.
- 85% of clients rented their premises



NILS*

- *Statistics are only for July to December 2018 due to change in program, and data system used*
- 97 clients with 140 loans issued
 - The most common items for loans were vehicle registration, refrigerators and household appliances
 - 89% of NILS clients rented their premises
 - 73% were of Culturally and Linguistically Diverse background
 - 9% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait background

Going Home Staying home

- Assisted 70 clients, all from CaLD backgrounds to re-enter the housing market
- 10 found housing with social housing providers
- 60 were assisted back into the private rental market

Eapa AND Emergency Relief

- Assisted over 400 clients with EAPA payments
- Assisted approximately 180 clients with emergency relief



Financial Summary

The net surplus for the financial year 2017-2018 is \$248,961 after transferring \$39,862 to the Restructuring Fund from retained earnings leaving a balance of retained profits of \$1,423,906.

In 2017-2018, there was a substantial increase in Government grants due to CPI increases and the Equal Remuneration Order (ERO) payments received from funding bodies. This year we brought to account capital grants, additional funding earned from complex case work, additional NILS funding, additional club and council grants. Interest income increased 11% due to additional funds invested in term deposits attracting a higher interest rate.

The equity position of Metro Assist remains strong with total net assets of \$1,705,303.

For the continuity of the services, Directors recognise the need for assured funding and the organisation's ability to diversify its funding base into new areas of service. A social enterprise is being developed this coming year, and will be a source of income for the future.

ACKNOWLEDGING OUR FUNDING BODIES

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

- Department of Social Services
- Department of Employment
- NSW Department of Family and Community Services
- NSW Office of Fair Trading
- Multicultural NSW
- Local Councils and ClubGrants
- Charitable Trusts and Foundations for small grants
- Cancer Institute NSW

METRO ASSIST AUDITORS

William Buck
Chartered Accountants
Level 29, 66 Goulbourn Street
Sydney NSW 2000

Metro Assist Limited

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION AS AT 30 JUNE 2018

	Note	2018 \$	2017 \$
Assets			
Current assets			
Cash and cash equivalents	7	3,081,431	2,964,121
Trade and other receivables	8	78,375	112,235
Other current assets	9	49,962	57,888
Total current assets		<u>3,209,768</u>	<u>3,134,244</u>
Non-current assets			
Property, plant and equipment	10	263,212	211,156
Total non-current assets		<u>263,212</u>	<u>211,156</u>
Total assets		<u>3,472,980</u>	<u>3,345,400</u>
Liabilities			
Current liabilities			
Trade and other payables	11	190,380	184,389
Borrowings	12	62,326	103,885
Employee benefits	13	593,933	477,802
Other current liabilities	14	910,330	1,099,267
Total current liabilities		<u>1,756,969</u>	<u>1,865,343</u>
Non-current liabilities			
Employee benefits	15	10,708	23,715
Total non-current liabilities		<u>10,708</u>	<u>23,715</u>
Total liabilities		<u>1,767,677</u>	<u>1,889,058</u>
Net assets		<u>1,705,303</u>	<u>1,456,342</u>
Equity			
Reserves	16	281,397	241,535
Retained surpluses		<u>1,423,906</u>	<u>1,214,807</u>
Total equity		<u>1,705,303</u>	<u>1,456,342</u>



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