



# Annual Report 2019-2020



**Affirming our Strengths  
We tell our Stories**

# About Us



**Immigrant Women's Speakout Association of NSW (IWSA)** is a key women organisation which values and acknowledges the cultural and linguistic, multigenerational diversity of migrant and refugee women. It is an organisation that empowers these women to achieve gender equality in all areas of their lives. IWSA provides education, information and other direct services to women of Non-English Speaking Background (NESB)/Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) backgrounds in NSW.

**IWSA** represents the issues and ideas of migrant and refugee women to all levels of government, in the community services and industrial sectors, and to the media.

**SpeakOut** is an independent advocate representing the issues and ideas of immigrant and refugee women at all levels of government, in community services and industrial sectors, and to the media.

**SpeakOut** hopes to create and sustain lasting change by:

- Giving women the tools and confidence to achieve complete political, social, and economic autonomy,
- Creating awareness of the issues that face our clients and their communities through policy research and advocacy, consultation groups, and training programs,
- Educating and protecting immigrant and refugee women who want to live free from domestic and family violence, and
- Providing a forum and opportunity for these women to have their voices heard.

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# Chairperson's Report

Chairperson: GAYA DHARMAGESAN

I can say with confidence that the Immigrant Women's Speakout Association (IWSA) emerged as courageous and resilient amidst the challenges we faced this year. I congratulate and thank my co-members of the Speakout/IWSA Management Committee, Jane Brock – the IWSA Executive Officer and other IWSA workers, service recipients, IWSA membership, volunteers, students in placement, partner organisations and service providers in this whole year's journey.

The first half of the year July to December 2019 progressed with IWSA having achieved most of its target outputs and outcomes planned for the Immigrant Women's Resource Centre and the Homeless Multicultural Women Integrated Support Service. Speakout/IWSA is on track with all the deliverables as well as providing the services that correspond to the needs and circumstances of individual service recipients.

I also need to share the highlights of the previous Annual General Meeting. We had experienced a very heart-warming AGM 2019. We did a flash mob dance to mark the One Billion Rising, the annual campaign calling out for Elimination of Violence Against Women. This One Billion Rising event uses flash mob dance in getting the whole community be involved in the Prevention of Violence Against Women. Speakout/IWSA has started the One Billion Rising campaign in Western Sydney in 2013.

At last year's AGM the **Guest Speaker, Ms Jodi McKay** – Leader of the Opposition and Shadow Minister for Multiculturalism had said that the Labor Party has a strong commitment to reducing domestic violence. She emphasised that there should be a safe place for women where families can go. The future Labor government will ensure that women's refuges that were closed down because of the Going Home and Staying Home Reform will be returned.

On the other hand, the current NSW Coalition Government has provided extra funding to IWSA/Speakout for our HoMWISS (Homeless Multicultural Women Integrated Support Service). This extra funding is for clients who are in need of food packs, communication and transport financial assistance during the COVID 19 Pandemic.

Indeed, the COVID 19 Pandemic has put us in a situation where we have to make significant changes to the way we deliver services to our clients. We have ensured that our clients are safe from domestic violence and at the same time safe from COVID 19 infection.

Both IWSA's core services, the Immigrant Women's Resource Centre (IWRC) and the Homeless Multicultural Women Integrated Support Service (HoMWISS) delivery of services became channels for COVID 19 infection prevention. Our Casework and the Information and Referral activities became the points for information dissemination on COVID 19 Infection Control. This role is integrated with the core tasks of Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence and Early and Crisis Intervention for victims/survivors in the midst of escaping and ending violence in their lives.

In view of the availability of the vaccine against COVID 19, I look to the future with rays of hope for humankind and in particular the CALD migrant and refugee women that we serve. I can also say with confidence that the Immigrant Women's Speakout Association will achieve its goals for the next years to come, especially the status of excellence in service provision for migrant and refugee women. This service excellence is the Australian Service Excellence Standards (ASES) accreditation.

**Once again I thank our funding partners, the Family and Community Services, the Women NSW of the Department of Communities and Justice and the Multicultural New South Wales for providing the financial resources that we need to respond to the needs of the migrant and refugee women. #**



# Executive Officer's Report

Executive Officer: JANE BROCK

**T**he Immigrant Women's Speakout Association is one of the essential organisations that kept its services open during the height of the COVID 19 Pandemic. We felt like we provided a beacon of light in the midst of uncertainty as bushfires ravaged our environment and COVID 19 took lives and continuous to make us all vulnerable. As migrant and refugee women had received the information that our services are open, they became confident that there someone they can talk to and who can provide information and advise as well as much needed access to food at this time of crisis. Indeed, we have to make sure that no one is left behind.

During the height of the lockdown, we have been connecting, communicating and sharing with other organisations and other service providers of how we were going during the Bushfires and the COVID 19 Pandemic. These are very important processes that we have to avoid isolation and falling into despair. Our peak bodies and some Government interagencies had provided the platform for this to happen. **We thank the Local Community Services Association (LCSA) , Fams (Peak body for serices that work with children and families, Lead Professional Development Association Inc, Domestic Violence NSW, Women's Alliance, Homelessness NSW, Harmony Alliance and ERA Women's Alliance** who made sure that were included in all of the webinars and online forums that they are running. IWSA/Speakout had participated in almost all of the webinars and online forum as well as meetings.

Internally, the Immigrant Women's Speakout Association has put in place immediately the steps to secure the safety and well-being of all workers and our clients at the onset of the COVID 19 Pandemic. The staff and the Management Committee had reviewed the IWSA Risk Management Plan. After this, introduced new Policies and Procedures on COVID 19 Protocol in particular, the Infection Control. Staff members and clients diligently follow these protocols with the goal of saving lives and controlling the spread of the COVID 19. Up to the writing of this report, we continue to implement the updated IWSA Risk Management Plan by having all staff members and those entering our premises to do the step by step process of infection control with the goal of saving and protecting lives.

Our clients-service recipients are very delighted to come back to the centre for their group activities – on Computer Literacy, English Conversation and Sewing. But we have to reduce the number of participants in each session into half. They have to wear facemask, as the IWSA premises are a confined space. Adjustments and markings have been done to ensure that COVID 19 protocols are implemented.

On 18<sup>th</sup> of December 2019, the IWSA/Speakout has held a Focus Group of Grandmothers on the topic of Children's Well-being. All those who participated are doing caring responsibilities for their grandchildren. Below are key discussion points that came out of the Focus Group. IWSA will hold another Focus Group.

Grandmothers are kind and they are able to provide a caring environment and with no monetary cost; Caring for grandchildren is an interaction if two different generations in terms of new toys, games and use electronic devices; Looking after grandchildren also provides the opportunity for grandma and grandpa to learn about using internet with a variety of social media platforms; There is confusing messages from parents and grandparents; The parents uses discipline them while grandparents are more lenient with their grandchildren; Children can get more benefits in learning and practicing the mother tongue or languages and many cultural traditions and customs; Grandmothers pamper their grandchildren by serving fast food; Most often grandmothers provide their grandchildren with highly processed and deep fried processed food; There is a need for more meaningful social interaction between extended families.

# Executive Officer's Report

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In the midst of protecting and fighting for our lives from COVID 19 , we commenced our data entry into the Data Exchange (DEX). At the same time we also attended and completed the workshops that were provided by DEX and hosted by Fams. These workshops were very useful in navigating through what seemed to be a very daunting process of DEX data entry. We are now more confident in collecting data and how to enter them on DEX. Hand in hand with our DEX data entry is completing the development of our Program Logic for our Targeted Earlier Intervention (TEI) service through the Immigrant Women's Resource Centre.

Our journey in ASES accreditation is ongoing and our target is to have our External Assessor do an Onsite Visit/Assessment by the next financial year. We envision that we can complete the ASES assessment and receive our certificate in 2021.

On the conclusion, I thank the IWSA Management Committee, co-staff members, the volunteers, students in placement, IWSA members and most of all the clients – service recipients and in particular, the survivors victims of gender-based violence. We welcomed several staff members for the Admin position, but after a while we bid farewell to the two of them and welcomed another one.

I also thank the Department of Communities and Justice for their continuing provision of financial resources and for the assurance that our two core services, the Immigrant Women's Resource Centre (IWRC) and the Homeless Multicultural Women Integrated Support Service (HoMWISS) have a block of years for ongoing funding and for one-off/12 months funding for CALD women in temporary partner visa and temporary work visa. We are in gratitude to Ozen Cemali– the Commissioning and Planning Officer who provided guidance to us in unpacking the TEI Reform as well as other matters about compliance to our service agreement and standards.

I also acknowledge and thank you to Multicultural New South Wales and Women New South Wales for the much needed financial resources to IWSA so that we can do service provision for CALD women escaping domestic and family violence who are in temporary visas. With those two financial resources IWSA is able to respond to the CALD women who are fighting for their lives and are in deep hardship due to the two pandemic – the COVID 19 and violence against women.

We look forward to a bright future knowing that communities and individuals are intensifying conversations on what would be a new normal with COVID 19 still lurking around the corner and the impact of economic recession continuous to flow in the different aspect of our lives. What is a New Normal looks like for 2021? For IWSA/ Speakout, it has to be framed within equitable distribution of this world's wealth and gender equality must be a top priority in goal setting.





# Treasurer's Report

Treasurer: Nelia Sumcad

And it is with immense confidence that we present our statement of financial performance. We present this short form of IWSA's financial reports for the year ended 30 June 2020. They are a true and accurate view of IWSA's financial position. I further state that IWSA is a sound organisation financially and will have no problem paying its debts as and when they fall due.

All our achievements are possible due not only to a great team of staff but also to sound management and support from a hardworking and dedicated Management Committee. On behalf of the IWSA, I say thank you to Mohan Packianathan our Accountant, Administration Officers Evelyn Boehringer, Maria Packiarajah and Cristina Alonzo, Lawrie Green our external Auditor and to Jane Brock – IWSA Executive Officer for great leadership.

The two core services of the Immigrant Women's Speakout Association continue to have ongoing funding based on a specific number of years as agreed on the service agreement with the Department of Communities and Justice. These services are the Immigrant Women's Resource Centre (IWRC) and the Homeless Multicultural Women Integrated Support Service (HoMWISS).

In 2020, we received two one-off with 12-month funding duration as response to the needs of the migrant women who are in temporary partner visa and temporary work visa. The funding sources are the Multicultural NSW and the Women NSW.

The Immigrant Women's Speakout Association deeply values our partnership with the Department of Communities and Justice, Multicultural NSW and Women NSW because the migrant and refugee women needing assistance and care in particular during the COVID 19 Pandemic would have faced more hardships if IWSA/Speakout lacked the resources that are needed.

The cash boost from the Federal Government are additional money that we received. We will use this fund for the IWSA Multicultural Women's Shelter (MWS).

As Treasurer, I must say that the Immigrant Women's Speakout Association (IWSA) has a great team of workers, volunteers and Management Committee members. I say a very big thank you for your hard work in service delivery and other support activities for clients.

# Immigrant Women's Resource Centre

## *Community Skills Development*

The **Immigrant Women's Resource Centre** had delivered group sessions and individual support sessions within the **Targeted Earlier Intervention (TEI)** Framework. Placing great emphasis on community development through a variety of activities for CALD women is one of our achievements. The group sessions or classes in CALD Women's English, Computer and Sewing had enabled the formation of support network with the ethnic community groups of migrant and refugee women such as Afghan, Chinese, Indonesian, Arabic, Indian, Pakistani, Iranian, Sri Lankan and Vietnamese.

These activities have led the women to empower and assisted them to learn the English conversation through the social interaction with different communities. The social interaction has strengthened the women's solidarity in Western Sydney to voice their concerns and to be heard by the State and Federal Government. The women who attend these classes are mostly look after young children in their roles as mothers, aunts, grandmothers and family friends, so building the capacity of community groups such as Afghan women, Indian and Iranian women through the Women's learning activities is the major outcome. Over this time, sessions addressing a range of important issues and information concerning women issues such as Child Protection and Safety, Women's Health, Domestic Violence, Parenting Skills, Safety and Technology, use a Safe Computer and "Stories to Make You Think" thoughtful stories, motivational tales, and pieces of wisdom from around the world for discussion and interaction.

These sessions assisted women to learn information and gain the confidence to become more aware in the above-mentioned topics. It also gave opportunity to migrant and refugee women to develop new skills and in sharing their own knowledge in a supportive environment. It was also great occasion for women to get together in an environment where they feel comfortable discussing issues of concern with each other and exchange their opinions. These sessions assisted women to improve their self-esteem and get confidence to make appointments with their GP, read, write and understand phone messages sent to them. Attending these sessions provided the environment of development of the women's support and friendship network in a friendly space where they can have fun and relax.

However, in March 2020 during the COVID 19 Pandemic, which created a period of uncertainty, social and emotional concerns and panic, the face-to-face sessions of IWSA activates either stopped or restricted. COVID-19 Pandemic had an incredible impact on all aspects of life such as health, socialization, work and education.

IWSA made every effort to keep our Women's group engaged and supported. IWSA developed a plan for maintaining contact with women's group via telephone and internet to provide a way of keeping connected. Therefore, through online (Facebook, Viber, Messenger, phone messages and Zoom). the information about raising awareness about the COVID 19 Pandemic and how to protect, were carried over every week to the participants of the English, Computer and Sewing classes. Tips on practicing good hygiene, including washing hands, covering coughs and using sanitizers, physical distancing, wearing mask and isolation or Quarantine were highlighted and sent weekly to the women. COVID 19 posters and resources in different languages such as Farsi, Dari, Urdu, Arabic, Chinese were uploaded on the IWSA Facebook and updated information were sent to them regularly. This helped the women to be more careful and cautious to protect their family in reducing the spread of virus in the community.

In the context of COVID-19 significant attention has been paid to the senior women living by themselves and have no family. They would possibly be less likely to seek help due to language barrier. IWSA also helped these women to be familiar with the latest application of Zoom used in their mobiles.

However, it was hard to use social media on their mobile because were they cannot afford the Internet. The application was installed for a few women yet difficult to have a group to carry out the conversation class and get all the women connected through Zoom .

## Sewing Class

The **sewing class** initiated (the Mask Project), to teach participants how to sew facemask. The masks made by women were given to participants, family members, IWSA clients and volunteers for free to reduce the spread of virus in the households, work place and in the community.



### Sewing classes 2019-2020



The IWSA **sewing class** participants learned how to create Cushions, Cloth Bags and dress.



## English Class

The English conversation have led women to empower women and assisted them through the social interaction with different communities. The social interaction has strengthened the women's solidarity in Western Sydney to voice their concerns and to be heard by the State and Federal Government. The women who attend these classes are mostly look after young children in their roles as mothers, aunts, grandmothers and family friends, so building the capacity of community groups such as Afghan women, Indian and Iranian women through the Women's learning activities is the major outcome. Over this time, sessions addressing a range of important issues and information concerning women issues such as Child Protection and Safety, Women's Health, Domestic Violence, Parenting Skills, Safety and Technology, use a Safe Computer and "Stories to Make You Think" thoughtful stories, motivational tales, and pieces of wisdom from around the world for discussion and interaction.



## Computer Class

IWSA provide computer literacy as one of its services to CALD women. Computer learning to such as basic computer skills, web-based emails, social media and Microsoft Office package were among the set of technological skills and workshops for learners. This leads to success in education and employment since computer skills are integral to all areas of study and work. Also, learning computer technical knowledge is a significant means of communication and to stay connected with the families, relatives and friends.



# Immigrant Women's Resource Centre

The following are feedbacks are from students of English, Computer and Sewing classes.

*"I like the topics and how it is taught." It is clear and useful to understand "*

*"English class provides good environment for open discussion sharing experiencing with each other and time to have fun and learning."*

*"Teachers are very friendly and kind. They are good at engaging women to feel comfortable participating in the class. They are very approachable, knowledgeable, and interesting to listen to."*

*"The English class has given the skills to understand when someone speaks to me, and allowing me to develop more my conversational ability."*

*"The English class topics are interesting because they refer to real issues and scenarios which women need to know and discuss."*

*"It is interesting to understand how exactly a computer works. The teacher makes things easy to understand by being very helpful, patiently explaining and practicing a lot of exercises in the class."*

*"Learning PowerPoint is very interesting and useful. I used it when I did my assignment for TAFE."*

*"Good interaction with the other women from different culture, making new friends and extended network happens when we are attending the sewing class."*

*"Attending the English, computer and sewing classes are very interesting and entertaining. These classes provide opportunity to motivate ourselves to learn, express our thoughts and to feel confident."*

## Community Connection

**Community Connection** activities such as organising cultural events and excursions for women with young children and the carers of children and Days or Occasions with Significance such as International Women's Day, March One Billion Raising, were planned, however Covid-19 has prevented us from delivering our usual face-to-face programs. On the other hand, an information session about Covid-19, following health guidelines e.g. handwashing, using masks sanitizers and isolation, application of restricted rules was presented to 20 women in an open area at Parramatta Park to help women to implement it daily, particularly when they get to gather to celebrate holy days, and other significant occasions.



Health Guidelines COVID-19 Infection Control Information Session were given to 20 women.

The activity was held in Parramatta Park, NSW

# Homeless Multicultural Women Integrated Support Service

## (HoMWISS)

### Support for CALD Women in Domestic and Family Violence Situation

In the year 2019-2020, IWSA/Speakout had provided a significant level of assistance to Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) women (Including children) who are homeless and those at risk of becoming homeless because of domestic and family violence. They were provided with support through the Homeless Multicultural Women Integrated Support Service (HomWISS). This year HomWISS has provided support and assistance to 236 clients.

The COVID 19 pandemic has ushered in the most challenging year in the service provision for the Immigrant Women's Speakout Association.

In the pre-COVID 19 period, issues of housing/accommodation, financial difficulties, mental health and employment are already prevalent to CALD women escaping domestic and family violence. These problems became worst during the pandemic. Domestic and family violence incidents increased due to lockdown and stay home orders. The option of staying with their friends was reduced which resulted to high stress to our clients and their children.

Out of 236 clients, 90% are on temporary visas. Access to support is very limited because of their migration status. Although, they can continue with their permanent residence application, it was very hard for them to cope with the deprivation that they face. Those who used be employed were stood down because their workplace closed down. Financial support is very limited and for those on Bridging Visa, there is no financial support at all. COVID 19 pandemic has created multiple stressors to women experiencing domestic and family violence particularly during the lockdown from March to May. Uncertainty about the future and fear for their safety had a negative impact of their mental health.

## CASEWORK

The Immigrant Women's Speakout Association continued its service delivery even during the lockdown. We made sure that they could call us on our work mobile phone as well as the Speakout landline. The clients felt confident that they are able to speak with someone who can provide advice and support.

Despite of all the restrictions due to COVID 19, Speakout Project Officers continued to provide the needed support and assistance to CALD women and their children who are homeless and those at risk of homelessness due to domestic and family violence.

Clients who were not eligible for income support due to their migration status were referred to Centrelink for special benefit on the ground of financial hardship and those not eligible for any income support were referred to large Charitable organisations who have brokerage funds to support temporary visa holders during the time of pandemic.

Clients who were on Partner Temporary Visas were provided support and assistance to get permanent residency so that they can have full access to Government and Non-Government services.

HomWISS team also provided information on how to stay safe during the pandemic through emailing them brochures from the NSW Health Services. We remained in contact with our clients through the phone, giving them advice and information.

# Homeless Multicultural Women Integrated Support Service

## (HoMWISS)

### Difficulty in accessing interpreting and counselling service during the peak of the COVID 19 pandemic (March – May 2020)

**50% of our clients** required TIS onsite or telephone interpreters in different languages for assessment. (Arabic, Mandarin, Persian, Dari, Tamil, Gujrati, Burmese, Korean, Bengali, Malay Rohingya, and Turkish). However, disruptions in communication system during COVID-19 have made access to interpreters very difficult. IWSA has to wait for more than a week to get an appointment for an interpreter. TIS interpreting service have said that there was congestion in telephone lines because of client calls to Centrelink.

For our clients who need referral from GPs for counselling have to wait for a long time before they can get a referral for counselling due to lack of immediate interpreting service.

### Referral to crisis accommodation:

Most of our clients that we referred for crisis accommodation told us that they are afraid to go to shelters due to fear of being infected with COVID 19. Many of them stayed with friends even though they sleep on the floor or couch.

### Food voucher:

We provided food vouchers for our clients who have lost jobs and are not able to access assistance due to their temporary resident status. The Department of Communities and Justice gave an additional funds to be used for food vouchers of those in temporary visa.

### Life Skills during COVID 19 pandemic:

The IWSA Project Officers made phone calls to all clients and informed them about COVID 19 and the important steps they have to take to avoid transmission and infection at their home. Before a client enters the Speakout premises for face-to-face support sessions she has to hand sanitise, then wear masks and her body temperature has to be taken.

### Implementing the NSW Health Department COVID 19 transmission prevention:

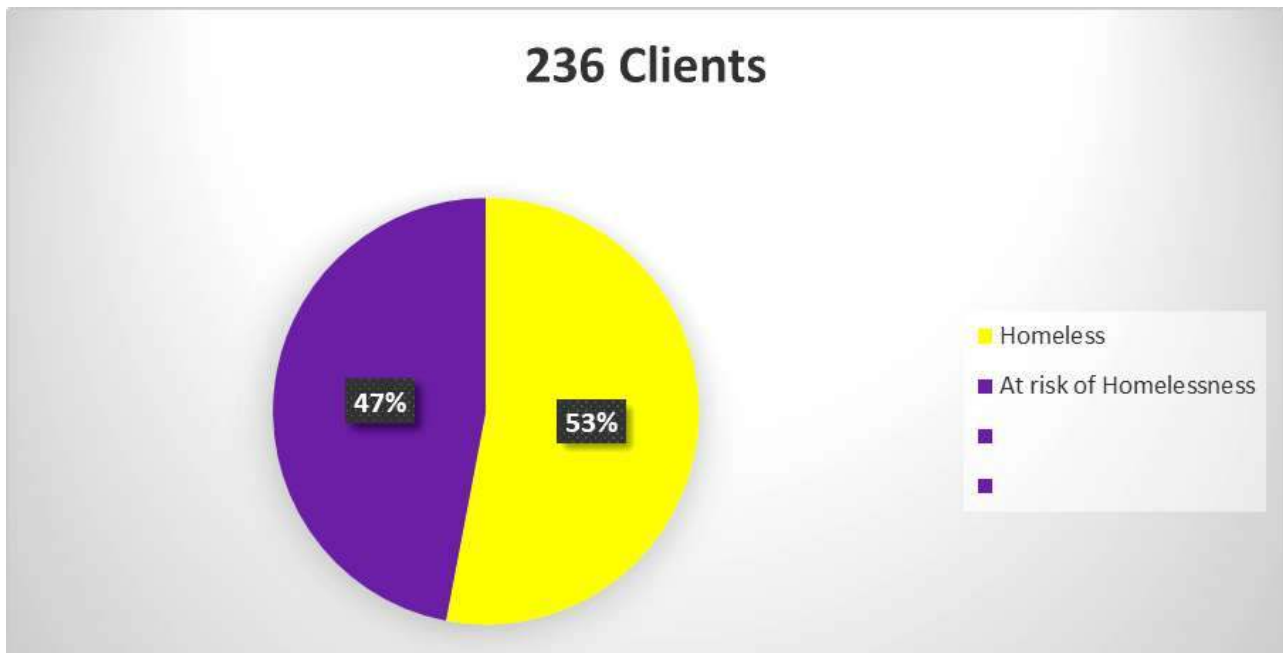
IWSA have a Screening Process over the phone before a client comes for a HoMWISS face to face support session.

## Partnership and Collaboration

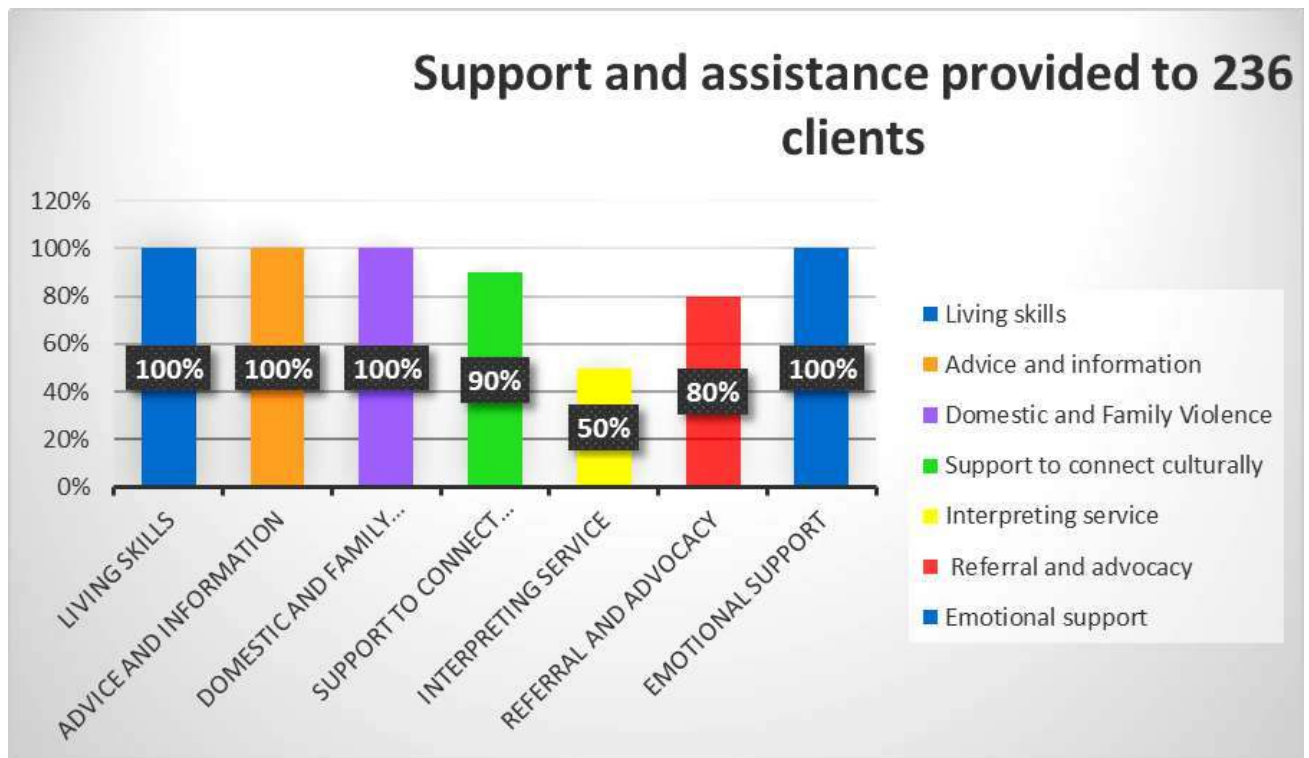
**Speakout** team also worked in collaboration with the following organisations: Philippine Australian Community Services ((PACSI), Westmead Hospital, Domestic Violence Service Management (DVSM), Women's Domestic Violence Court Assistance Services (WDCAS), Hornsby Women's Shelter, Cumberland Women's Health Centre, Doctors and Psychologists, FASS (Family Advocacy and Support Service) – NSW Legal Aid, Women's Housing Company, Link2Home, Victims Services, Open Support, Cumberland Linker Network, Translation and Interpreting Service (TIS), Department of Home Affairs, Relationship Australia, Centrelink and TAFE.

Speakout team sends our deepest gratitude to our partner organisations and service institutions that worked with hand in hand to provide support and assistance to all our clients this year.

## SNAPSHOT OF CLIENT INTAKE FOR 2019-2020



## TYPES OF ASSISTANCE PROVIDED TO HomWISS CLIENTS



## **COVID Impact on CALD Communities**

**By Rukhshana Sarwar, Project Officer, Marichu Gloria, Project Officer and Mariam James, Project Officer**

The Immigrant Women's Speakout Association had been running a short-term and snap shot survey with our clients during this COVID 19 Pandemic. Below are highlights of the survey responses and reflections by our clients.

### **On Education of young people**

The Covid-19 pandemic impacted all people across Australia, including immigrants and refugee communities. The impact of school closures is of particular concern for all families especially for CALD communities.

The changes to a student's day-to-day life, the move to online schooling and the restrictions on outside play as a result of physical distancing requirements poses a significant risk for weight gain and obesity among children. Being at home all day and having too many snacks has doubled the parents' worries and stress in dealing with their children. Parents from the CALD communities are helpless to support the children in their daily studies and school programs. They needed more Internet data, equipment, such a computer or webcam. However, it is very difficult for the CALD communities to provide computer for two or three children doing online schooling at the same time in the household. They can't afford to pay the cost of internet meanwhile there are not enough rooms for children to have their own private place while they are studying online with the teachers. The excessive noises of small children cry and household works like vacuuming, kitchen utensil sounds to prepare food for lunch distracted the focus of children while they are doing online schooling.

Another significant issue for the immigrant and refugee communities is monitoring the children while they are online. Parents' lack of language and knowledge about computer and programs parents develop a lot of stress and anxiety about the safety of the children while they are online.

Stress, anxiety and loneliness are the main emotional experiences affecting children particularly the teenage girls and boys doing home schooling. As parents could not afford to buy materials for a hobby or leisure activity for children and for teenagers they spend most of their time using online browsing with and fail to do physical exercise.

### **On safety of CALD women and their families**

*"When a domestic violence is locked down at home with a perpetrator, it difficult to reach out for help, and that's what made it so worrying - home isn't a safe place for domestic abuse victims."  
(One of the HoMWISS clients.)*

During lockdown and stay home orders in March until May 2020, for many families in this period could bring about conflicts and heightened emotions. As a result, mental health issues could be more pronounced are expected to rise dramatically. It has been reported that cases of separation and divorce have increased during this period.

The impact of COVID 19 pandemic is not immediately obvious but in long run we can witness the damaging effect in the society. It is imperative that relevant organisations collaboratively develop the early intervention strategies to prevent the long-term consequences on children and parent's mental health. It is importance for the government to fund community organisations that working together in initiating new projects as part of the COVID-19 pandemic response

## My story in fighting for safety against violence and COVID 19

**“IWSA has provided me with great support that empowered me in both the personal and social aspects of my life, and this changed my life for the better.”**

Ulmarra is 52 years old from the Southeast Asia. The West Connect DV Services referred her to IWSA in 2019. An Australian citizen sponsored Ulmarra. She came to Australia on Temporary Spouse Visa 309. She did not know what were her rights in Australia. Ulmarra had disclosed that her husband had constantly assaulted her physically and emotionally. She tried her best to work hard to keep her marriage safe and respectful. Finally, on the 29<sup>th</sup> of August 2019, she left husband and rented a shared accommodation in Western Sydney.

As a result of constant assault by her husband, Ulmarra experienced low self-esteem, anxiety, and loss appetite, and hatred towards herself. She was very scared that husband would send her back to her country of origin. She also recognised that she needed assistance in navigating the legal system as well as domestic violence services.

The Project Officer of HoMWISS provided a client-centred support and was mapped out on her Case Management Plan and Safety Plan. She was assisted in completing the Victims Services and the Department of Home Affairs forms that deals with her immigration status. Her access to a psychologist was processed through Victim Services.

Ulmarra found a part-time job at a marketing warehouse. Unfortunately, during the COVID 19 pandemic she lost her job. This had caused a very deep stress for her and she felt helpless and vulnerable. She did not have any financial support to cover her daily expenses. She applied for Centrelink however she was not eligible to receive any benefit due to her temporary residency visa status. In the case of Ulmarra, it is clear that COVID-19 has created multiple financial and social stresses, particularly during the lock down and stay at home protocols.

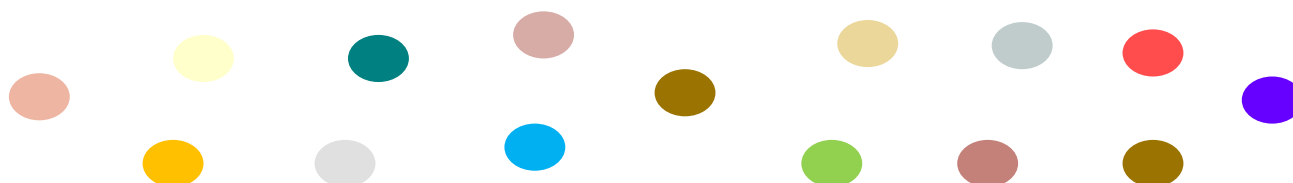
The IWSA Project Officer had regular contact with client and needed to pass information and referral, which supported client in financial assistance to maintaining health and wellbeing by focusing on preventative practices about COVID 19 by emails and other social media.

IWSA also provide voucher to assist those visa holders who are not eligible for any benefit from the government to cover expenses and household goods.

In March 2020, client received her permanent residency from the Department of Home Affairs. Now Ulmarra is more independent and able to decide for herself. She is currently receiving the New Start Allowance and waiting in a hope to restart her job. She is looking forward to passing the citizenship exam to be an Australian citizen. IWSA is regularly calls Ulmarra to catch up on how she is managing her safety from violence and from COVID 19.

Ulmarra said on her Feed Back Form: **“IWSA has provided me with great support that empowered me in both the personal and social aspects of my life, and this changed my life for the better.”**

Ulmarra is a registered nurse in her country of origin and she is very determined to get upgrading and achieve accreditation to work as a nurse in Australia.



## My story in asserting my right to be safe and self-care with the very timely assistance of the NSW Police

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Grace arrived in Australia on a partner visa 309. She met with her husband in her country of origin when she attended a cultural festival. They married 3 months later after intense and continuing communication on Facebook and other forms of social media.

Grace got her first job as a cleaner at the Casino. When Grace got a job, her partner stopped buying food at home and told Grace to look after all the house whole expenses because he is paying child support so he cannot have extra money to support her.

Since Grace want to safe her marriage, she kept quiet and was looking after everything but she could not save money to rent a decent accommodation. Later her partner suggested that it is better for Grace to buy a property than renting. But Grace told her partner that they should open a Bank account to save money and later buy a property. Her partner became very angry with her. Her partner insisted that Grace must transfer her savings for 15 years in to his account to buy a property, which Grace did not agree.

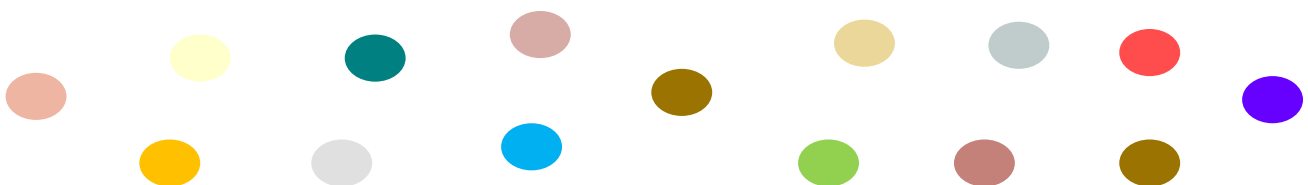
He started shouting and hitting her for minor arguments because Grace did not agree to buy the property with her money. He stopped giving a lift for Grace at the train station and Grace have to walk 30 minutes in the morning and 30 minutes in the afternoon to catch the Bus to the Train Station. And she was tired when she comes home from work. Grace was the one who have cook dinner after work. To keep the peace in their marriage even when she is tired, she did all housework. But her partner forces her to have sex even when she is very tired after work. If she cannot perform well in bed, her husband will tell her that she had affairs with another man at work that is why she cannot perform well in bed.

She told her partner that she walks 30 minutes to work and 30 minutes after work, when she arrived home, she has still have to cook and therefore so she has no energy to have sex. Her partner got angry and hit her. She called the Police and the Police came and took her statement. The Police asked her if she have somewhere to sleep. She said no and so the Police gave her a lift to a temporary accommodation and the following day, she was accosted to a Women's Refuge.

Grace called the Immigrant Women's Speakout Association of NSW for assistance. IWSA Project Officer provided advised in mapping her Safety Action Plan as well as Action Plan in dealing with her trauma and resolving her immigration status.

During the COVID 19 Pandemic, she lost her job for two months and later find another job. She had some savings and she survived on that until she secured another job. Grace was very melancholic doing the COVID 19 Pandemic lock down because she was did not have a job and was feeling isolated.

Grace has been successful with her permanent residency application under the Family Violence Provisions of the Migration Regulations.





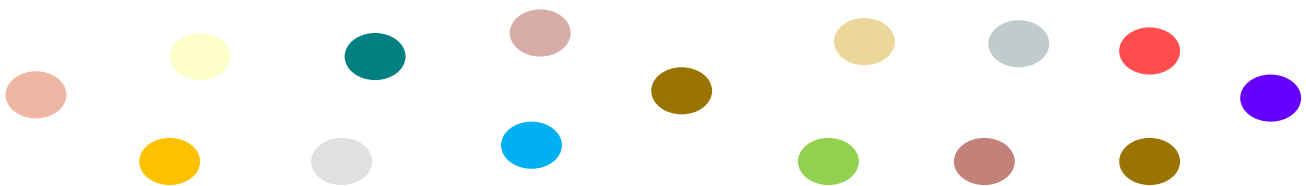
## My story: “There’s sunrise after storm”

Lydia was referred to us for assistance. She came here on a visitor’s visa to meet with her boyfriend John and eventually they got married. She applied for Partner Visa and was granted a Temporary Partner Visa. They started as a happy couple until her husband changed and showed aggressive behavior. When she started working, her husband quit her job. He started to drink a lot and gamble. As a result, all expenses in the house were shouldered by Lydia. Aside from paying all the bills John will still ask money and use it for gambling. If Lydia could not give him money, he would start shouting at her and calling her names such as “liar”, “fraud”, and he threatened her of cancelling her visa. Her life with John became so miserable. She said that “as if her life is worthless!” She said that her work has been affected because she cannot concentrate.

During the support period, Lydia was given information about domestic and family violence. It was explained to her the possible impact of domestic and family violence. She was advised to undergo Therapeutic Counselling to recover from her traumatic experience.

She underwent Counselling and she started to have positive thoughts. She decided to end the relationship, stayed at a shelter for two weeks, then moved to a rented a shared accommodation. She was advised to request her employer to transfer her to another place of business for her safety. She did as advised and was transferred to another branch. Lydia was assisted to continue with her Partner Visa application. She was assisted and guided through a case management plan tailored to her needs.

Through counselling, she regained her self-esteem. She became independent and she moved to a private rental accommodation. Her Permanent Resident Visa was granted and she is now continuing her life without fear of being deported.



# Years In Numbers

**Number of women supported through HoMWISS**

**236**

**Number of clients provided with information and advice**

**1,736**

**Number of attendances of Immigrant Resource Centre (IWRC) Activities**

**846**

## IWSA Management Committee and Staff 2019-2020

MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE	
Gayathri Dharmagesan	Chairperson
Vivi Germanos – Koutsounadis	Vice Chairperson
Nelia Sumcad	Treasurer
Sheila Osias	Secretary (up to April 2020 only)
Fatema Hasan	Committee member
Radha Ravindra	Committee member
Kyungja Jung	Committee member
Priya Viswanathan	Committee member

STAFF	
Jane Brock	Executive Officer
Rukhshana Sarwar	Project Officer
Mariam James	Project Officer
Marichu Gloria	Project Officer
Summera Hafeez	Sewing Class Facilitator
Mohan Packianathan	Accountant
Evelyn Boehringer	Admin Officer (January 2020 - up to present)
Cristina Alonzo	Admin Officer (November - December 2019)
Maria Packiarajah	Admin Officer (August November 2019)
Kawkab Jada	Caretaker

### IN GRATITUDE

#### Thank you to our members and partners in the community sector.

We said Farewell and Best Wishes to Maria Packiarajah and Cristina Alonzo for their work as Admin Officers at SpeakOut.

#### Volunteers

**We thank our students in placement and volunteers for the priceless contribution to SpeakOut:**

Nadera Hakimi, Carla Alonzo, Zophia Jedzok, Madelina Vandale, Ravneet Kaur, Ivan Jane Banzon, Diksha Sharma, Evelyn Alejandro, Manuel Rosario, Marilex Lopez, Nadia Trinidad, Nadia Vahedi, Natividad Millarez, Rey Alejandro, Peter Geoffrey Brock, Anthony Montebello and Prima West.

#### Staff

**The Management Committee commends and says thank you to the Speakout staff members:**

Jane Brock, Evelyn Boehringer, Rukhshana Sarwar, Mariam James, Marichu Gloria, Summera Hafeez, Mohan Packianathan and Kawkab Jada

#### FACS of the Department of Communities and Justice (DCJ)

For assistance and support to IWSA, thank you to FACS staff: **FACS, Commissioning and Planning officer Ozen Cemali.**

# Photo Gallery 2019-2020

## 2019 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING



# 2019 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING



**AGM 2019 Guest Speaker:**

**Hon. Jodi McKay**, Leader of the Opposition and Shadow Minister for Multiculturalism



**Ms. Jane Brock –IWSA Executive Officer** gave a gift as symbol of appreciation to the **Hon. Jodi McKay**, Leader of the Opposition and Shadow Minister for Multiculturalism for her support to Speakout/IWSA



Speakout members with **Jodi McKay**, Leader of the Opposition and Shadow Minister for Multiculturalism



# Photo Gallery 2019-2020



During AGM 2019, the participants performed a flash mob dance to mark the One Billion Rising, an annual global campaign to End Violence Against Women



Grandmother's Consultation 2019

# Photo Gallery 2019-2020



Rukhshana Sarwar, IWSA Project Officer attended the Young Mums and Expecting Young Mums Drop-In Centre organized by Cumberland Linker Network. The activity take place in Auburn Hospital every Tuesday of the month.



# Photo Gallery 2019-2020

16 Days of Activism Against Gender Violence

*“What makes you different or weird, that’s your strength.”*

25th November 2020

Cabarita Park, NSW





# Photo Gallery 2019-2020



Covid-19 Information session following health guidelines e.g handwashing, using mask, sanitisers and isolation.



# Photo Gallery 2019-2020

Women's Gathering at  
Mulberry Lane, Penrith





## 2020 – 2021 MEMBERSHIP FORM

Name:	
Organisation:	
Tick the box <input type="checkbox"/> if your organisation is a member of IWSA/Speakout	
Contact Person of your organisation:	
Email address of contact person:	
<input type="checkbox"/> Please tick the box if you are an Individual Member or individual who is a member of an IWSA/Speakout member organisation	
Telephone: (H).....	(W)..... (M).....
Fax:	Email:
Language/s Spoken:	

INDIVIDUAL MEMBERSHIP:  New  Renewal

Individual membership (unwaged):	Free
Individual membership (waged):	
o Annual Income less than \$35 000pa	\$11 (incl GST)
o Annual Income \$35 000pa – \$50 000pa	\$16.50 (incl GST)
o Annual Income more than \$50 000pa	\$27.50 (incl GST)

ORGANISATION MEMBERSHIP:  New  Renewal

o Unfunded Organisations	Free	
o Funded Organisations	\$22 (incl GST)	
o Reciprocal Membership	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Your Organisation is (please tick all applicable):		
Ethno-specific Organisation	<input type="checkbox"/>	Multi-ethnic Organisation <input type="checkbox"/>
Women's Service	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Domestic Violence Service	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other <input type="checkbox"/>
Women's Organisation: Name -		

Account Name: Immigrant Women's Speakout Association of NSW  
 Commonwealth Bank  
 BSB: 062-194 Account No: 0090 4014

**DONATION**

Amount:

**THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT**

I agree to abide by the aims and objectives of Immigrant Women's Speakout Association Inc.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

PO Box 9031, Harris Park NSW 2150  
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 Email: [women@speakout.org.au](mailto:women@speakout.org.au)

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