

**IMMIGRANT  
WOMEN'S  
SPEAK OUT**  
ASSOCIATION NSW



# **ANNUAL REPORT**

## **2020-2021**

# 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* Gayathri Dharmagesan

The Immigrant Women's Speakout Association has journeyed with many successes this year. At the core of IWSA/Speakout's success is our compliance to the ASES (Australian Service Excellence Standards) SHS (Specialist Homelessness Services) Service Standards. We have reviewed our policies and procedures and reflected on our practice in service provision. Speakout/IWSA is now ASES accredited and in the cusp of receiving our ASES Certificate for excellency in service provision in 2021. In this context, IWSA/Speakout looks forward to a bright future, as we journey towards our 40<sup>th</sup> Foundation Anniversary in March 2022.

I also, have to report that we successfully survived and surmount the impact of the COVID 19 Surge. We learned to adapt, and this has strengthened our resilience in surmounting the havoc that COVID 19 Delta variant has brought to our community. The discoveries we have made pointed to us the new ways we can work with clients and volunteers and achieved the outcomes we have targeted.

Our success in procuring funds to increase the IWSA/Speakout capacity and capability in service provision in using technology for remote access to service has been successful. Staff has been trained in cyber safety and have engaged an IT consultant to monitor and maintain the safety of our computer and communication system and access to the different internet platforms. Volunteers and clients have participated in information sessions on keeping up to date with recent scams and how to be safe in online transactions.

The need for crisis accommodation for those who are homeless and are escaping domestic and family violence has increased this year. Reopening the IWSA Multicultural Women's Shelter (MWS), is another ray of light shining on lives of clients. The MWS clients and the IWSA thank the Women's New South Wales for the grant that allowed us to re-open the MWS. Anecdotal reports show migrant women are more confident in escaping from domestic violence and family violence if they know they have a place to go and support is available such as food, access to communication and transportation. The Women's New South Wales grant has been used for this package of support (accommodation, as food, access to communication and transportation).

All throughout the year, IWSA/Speakout services have integrated information dissemination on COVID 19 Infection Control and Motivating and Encouraging its members, clients, volunteers, and the whole community to go for COVID 19 Vaccination. All IWSA Staff members and most volunteers have been vaccinated.

Overall, IWSA/Speakout have delivered its services with outputs in accordance with our service agreement. Most client outcomes have been achieved in particular, for those who have exited from HoMWISS (Homeless Multicultural Women Integrated Support Service).

Once again, I thank all our members, my co-members of the Management Committee, Vivi Germanos-Koutsounadis, Nelia Sumcad, Kyungja Jung, Fatema Hasan, Margaret Ng (Sister), Radha Ravindran, the IWSA Executive Officer, Jane Brock, all staff members, Rukhshana Sarwar, Mariam James, Marichu Gloria, Carielyn Tunion, Evelyn Boehring, Summera Hafiz, Kawkab Jida, and our accountant, Mohan Packianathan.

Our gratitude goes to the Department of Communities and Justice (DCJ), the Multicultural New South Wales and the Women's New South Wales for the funding resources that made us deliver the much-needed services for the migrant women and their families. I also thank Ozen Zemali – DCJ CPO



## *Executive Officer's Report* Jane Brock

The Immigrant Women's Speakout Association has been connecting the disconnect and made sense of the local and global events that we faced this year. COVID 19 Surge in June 2021 had put the spotlight on the disadvantaged and deprived conditions of many Australians. Despite of the Lockdown, those who reside in the twelve Local Government Areas of Concern continued to have high level of COVID 19 infections because they need to go out very often to work and have income. The NSW Department of Communities and Justice's Supplementary Fund and lately the Partnership in COVID 19 Response has provided the much needed material aid to reduce the impact of COVID 19 Surge in June 2021.

The ABS (Australian Bureau of Statistics) says in its June 2021 survey on Household Impacts of COVID 19:

- *almost one in four (23%) women experienced high or very high levels of psychological distress compared with 17% of men*
- *almost one in three (30%) younger Australians (aged 18 to 34 years) experienced high or very high levels of psychological distress, compared with 18% of people aged 35 to 64 years and 10% of people aged 65 years and over*

In the case of IWSA clients, anecdotal evidence shows increased level of distress due to domestic and family violence. Many clients also reported loss of income due to their workplaces that have to shut down during the lockdown. These are the clients that received material aid from the DCJ's Supplementary Fund and then the Partnership on Response to COVID 19.

On the other hand, staff members at IWSA/Speakout have to provide support service remotely in the last week of June 2021. The DCJ's Social Support Transformation Fund (SSTF) provided the financial resources that made IWSA/Speakout technology-ready, which gave increased confidence to staff in working remotely. Safety in the Cyber space is also one of the major steps we put in place to ensure protection from hackers and data miners. IWSA/Speakout has ran Information dissemination on preventing and avoiding cyber scammers and data miners.

IWSA/Speakout members have also reflected on the impact of the situation of women and children in Afghanistan. In particular, IWSA/Speakout member, the Afghan Women's Support Network shared their concerns about the safety of their relatives, especially, the young women. The Afghan Women's Support Network members are working with international aid organisations to send welfare assistance and raised their concern for women in Afghanistan, to human rights agencies. The Afghan women in Australia are facing the challenges of the COVID 19 Surge and at the same time the human rights of their relatives in Afghanistan.

While we have closed the 2020-2021 financial year with surviving the COVID 19 Surge, we look forward to next year with excitement because it is IWSA/Speakout's 40<sup>th</sup> Foundation Anniversary. With that note, I thank all of members, clients, volunteers, Management Committee members, staff members, partner service agencies and organisations (both Government and Non-Government) and our funding bodies – the Department of Communities and Justice, Women's New South Wales and the Multicultural New South Wales.





# Treasurer's Report

## Nelia Sumcad

The year 2020-2021 brought many mix bag events that brought challenges as well as positive outcomes. I can say the staff effort and with the leadership of the Executive Officer, Jane Brock were magnificent. They worked wholeheartedly to put IWSA/Speakout in preparing for the ASES (Australia Service Excellence Standards) and External Assessment and continue to do so while at the same time performing their normal workload.

Well done to you all and a very grateful thank you from the Management Committee. I also thank my co-Management Committee members for their support in my role as Treasurer, Mohan Packianathan-IWSA/Speakout Accountant and Evelyn Boehringer-IWSA/Speakout Admin Officer for ensuring the in-flows and outflows of funds are documented in accordance with the Financial Accountability Standards of our funding partners.

Non-government organisations have long been important partners of the Australian government in delivering its community programs. Speakout values its partnership with all the government agencies we work with. This enables us to continue to provide services and resources to immigrant and refugee women, children and families.

During the financial year 2020-2021 IWSA/Speakout completed two short-term projects, these were the -

- 1) COVID-19 Emergency Relief Grant for Vulnerable Temporary Visa Holders during COVID 19 Pandemic - grant from Multicultural New South Wales.
- 2) COVID 19 – Stimulus (Assistance for CALD Women Escaping Domestic and Family Violence During COVID 19 Pandemic)
- 3) Social Transformation Program 1 – grant from DCJ

At the same time, IWSA/Speakout continued to deliver its ongoing services:

- Immigrant Women's Resource Centre (IWRC) being funded by Department of Community Services (DCJ) from 2021 - 2024
- Homeless Multicultural Women Integrated Support Service (HoMWISS ) support service for Migrant and Refugee Women in Domestic Violence – this is also being funded by DCJ the years 2020 – 2025.

In keeping with its commitment to seek funding and respond to emerging needs and have IWSA/Speakout continue its work in the community as a key organisation and service provider, we were successful with our funding submissions for the following new short-term and one- off services which commenced in 2021:

- 1) Multicultural Women Support Initiative (Shelter) – grant from Women's New South Wales
- 2) Social Transformation Fund 2 – funding from DCJ
- 3) Partnership Response During COVID 19 Surge – grant from DCJ

Once again, we ended the year with IWSA/Speakout in sound financial position, its finances successfully managed and can pay its payables when they fall due. I present the Audited Financial Reports for the year ended 30 June 2021. The statements of financial performance attached to the AGM Report, give a true and fair view of IWSA/Speakout's income and expenditure and financial position for the year 2020-2021.

# Immigrant Women's Resource Centre (IWRC)

## (Targeted Earlier Intervention)

At the tail end of June 2021, the COVID 19 Surge had crept in the midst of trying up the loose ends of IWRC's plan 2020-2021. Before the COVID 19 Surge, we have amplified information dissemination on COVID 19 Infection Control and the NSW Health COVID 19 Vaccination Campaign. We have done the information dissemination through the key activities of the IWRC and in our work with groups and in the different events that we held. Data on these activities are collected with the consent of participants and were entered on the Online data collection system – the DEX (Data Exchange). Some of the activities are described below.

### Computer Class



This year the Computer Literacy lessons covered Microsoft Office –Word, Excel, and PowerPoint. At the beginning of the lesson, students and teacher interact with each other by assessing student expectations and level of knowledge and skills in using the Computer. The lessons they learned in Computer Class had prepared the participants in developing their career employment pathway. For those who are enrolled in TAFE courses, they have used the skills they learned in doing their assignments and other school projects. After each lesson the Computer Class teacher had ran feedback sessions to know, their learning experience and improve the delivery of lessons to meet the highest standard possible. We also have encouraged the students

to practice what they have learned and offered them the opportunity to do so using the desk top computers at IWRC.

From July 2020 – mid June 2021, the Computer Class held extra sessions to make up for the time that we cannot hold the classes due to the COVID 19 Pandemic. Just as we have resumed the momentum of the Computer Class, in the last week of June, the Lockdown came due to the COVID 19 Surge. Considering all our achievements and the group discussions on COVID 19 vaccination and Infection Control that we have had during the Computer Classes; we will surely catch up once again as soon the COVID 19 restrictions.

IWSA/Speakout says thank you to all Computer Class participants and to DCJ Targeted Earlier Intervention Program for providing the funds for the IWRC, which runs the Computer Classes.

#### Feedback:

*-I have learn Basic Computer Skills and how to use internet— Create Email Address, use zoom as well.*

*- I learned some skills to make powerpoint presentations to prepare language lessons for my community.*

# Immigrant Women's Resource Centre (IWRC)

## (Targeted Earlier Intervention)

### Angela Sarino – Computer Class Teacher

#### Computer Class

The IWSA/Speakout has a collaborative partnership with the Cumberland Multicultural Community Services (CMCS).

We have had an agreement to run a Computer Class at the Berala Community Centre. There were 10 sessions from April to June 2021,

with 10 participants each session. Before the conclusion of the term, Angela Sarino, the Computer Class teacher had assessed the participants.

Most of the participants said, they have reached their goals and they felt more connected using the social media as well as feeling they are valued as part of the community.



#### Sewing Class

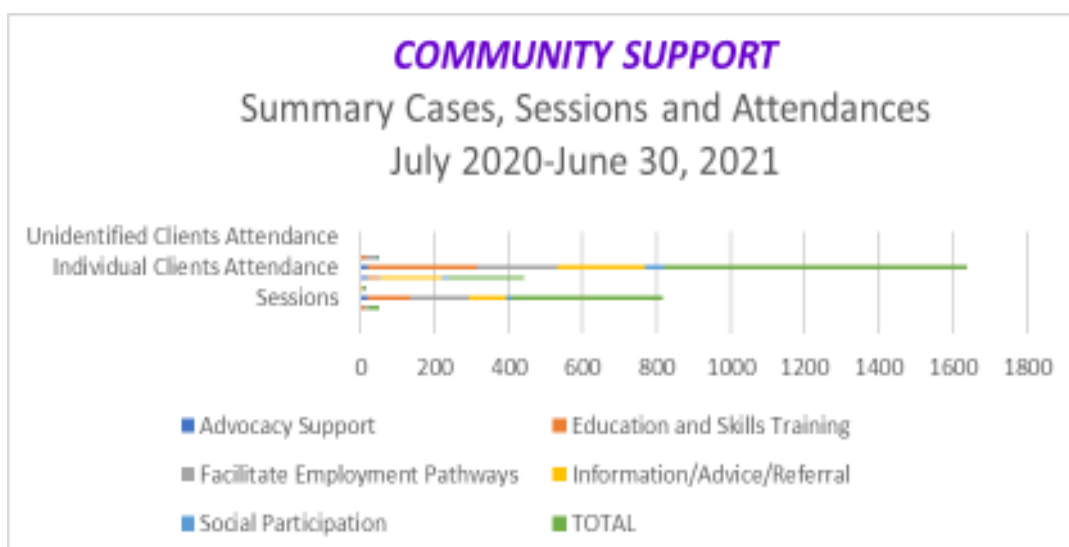
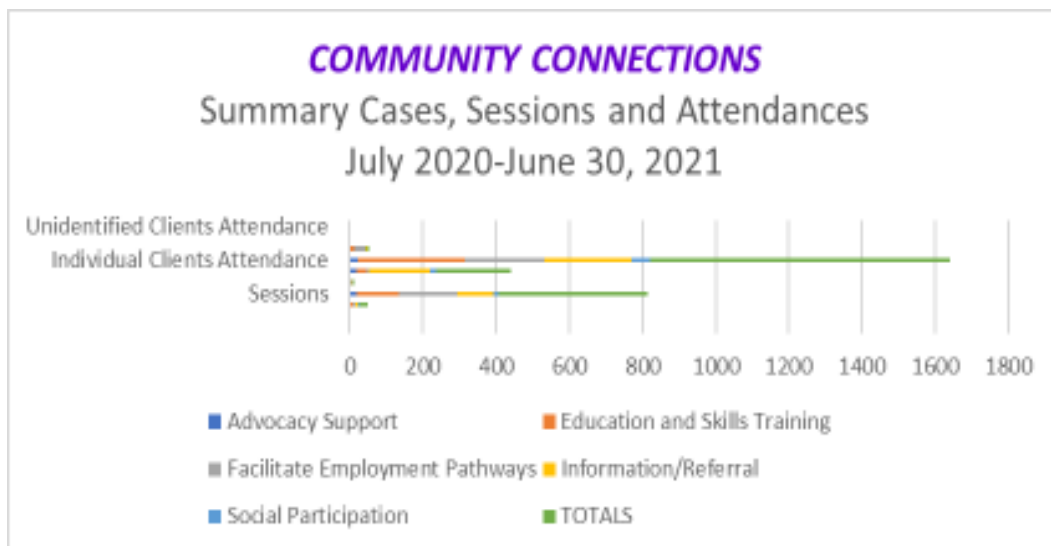
The Sewing Class had an extraordinary project this year. The participants had learned how to sew a quilt. In the IWSA Sewing Class resource box, there were many collections of embroidery patches as well as colourful, printed, and plain fabrics. With cutting and stitching, the participants made different patterns and put these together as one big tablecloth for the IWSA meeting room.

Students worked hard to complete the Brig Quilt project. With this project they learnt a lot of techniques on how to make different patterns. The outcome were the participants' group work increased their sense of belonging and self-determination.





# Immigrant Women's Resource Centre (IWRC) (Targeted Earlier Intervention)



# Immigrant Women's Resource Centre (IWRC)

## (Targeted Earlier Intervention)

### English Class

In most sessions our focus was on how to maintain safety and not get infected with COVID 19. Later on the topics were centred on the importance of COVID 19 vaccination. The English Conversation Class facilitator also explained why there are restrictions and shared updates on all new rules and regulations by NSW Department of Health.

### Women's Nights

Together with our volunteers, a Multicultural Women's Night was organised by IWSA/SpeakOut at the Granville Town Hall where 50 women from Afghan community attended and enjoyed this night out after the lockdown in 2020. The participants have had live music and dancing. This event resulted to improved level of personal well-being of those who have participated.

### Art and Craft Group

Fifteen women have had 6 sessions on Paper Flower Making and Fabric Painting. Creativity and self-expression made the participants felt a sense of achievement. Interactions during the group activities was vibrant and have brought laughter and fun to each participant.

### Women's Outings and Picnics

From July 2020 until mid-June 2021, picnics and walking about at Parramatta Park is a weekly activity of 20 Afghan women, except during rainy season and hard COVID 19 lockdown. This is also a physical fitness activity for them and felt better after their walk about.

Participants in all the IWRC activities were mothers, grandmothers and aunties who are caring for young children who are 3-5 years old. The core topic in all activities is child development and child protection. Each participant is being encouraged to share her ideas on child protection and child development and her family's traditions in bringing up children. Overall, the sharing shows the effect of cultural traditions on the development of young children. Next year, IWRC will provide information on the First 2000 Days of A Child's Life.

## Feedback

I'm so glad to be a member of this group. It was a wonderful experience of learning English, having fun, gaining life skills, and sharing information with other women."

"The COVID-19 pandemic has forced many changes in our life. being restricted at home and not face to face meeting in class or women's gathering. it was hard for us however we could manage at least to have conversation through mobile to sustain our friendship and contact on regular base."

"We used to have face to face learning in class at IWSA. We feel we have missed the moments of sharing food and having fun since the online class and phone conversations started."

We are very proud that we learned new words and new terminology like Group Chat, Zoom, Webinar, and.... That when our grand kids or family member talk about it we are familiar and not lost.

"It is true that it is not too late for an older person to learn. Honestly, we learned new skills how to use e-learning, through mobile phone, and recently using Zoom for conversation and meetings during the Covid-19 pandemic."

# Immigrant Women's Resource Centre (IWRC)

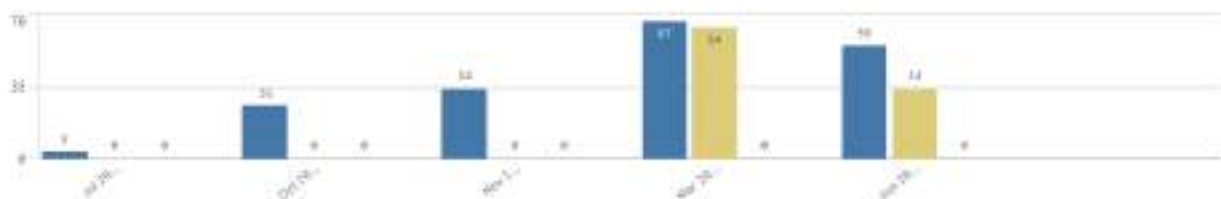
## Data Exchange Extracted Report July 2020 - June 2021

### Community Connection—Overview of Client Numbers



Clients and Support Persons per month

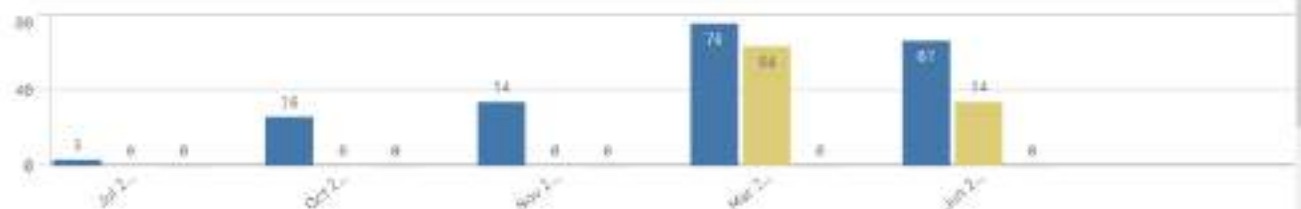
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### Community Connection—Attendances Per Month

Attendances per month

Note: By default, this chart shows the current month's period of last reporting period only. When any filter is applied, the default reference is a period of 12 months.



Summary of cases, sessions, and attendees

Delivery Organisation	Q	Q	Q	Q	Q	Q	Q	Q	Q	Average Attendance per Session	Individual Clients	Individual Client Attendance	Average Sessions per	Unidentified Clients			
Totals											7	13	27.6	137	190	1.4	98
Immigrant Women's Speaks	Immigr.	Param.	TI - Co.	Community Engagement							6	0	11.0	131	168	1.3	98
Immigrant Women's Speaks	Immigr.	Param.	TI - Co.	Information/Advice/Referral							1	2	1.5	6	0	1.0	0

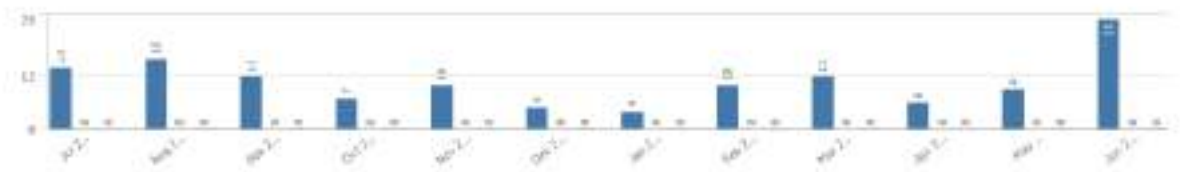
# Immigrant Women's Resource Centre (IWRC)

## Data Exchange Extracted Report July 2020 - June 2021 Community Centre—Overview of Client Numbers



**Clients and Support Persons per month**

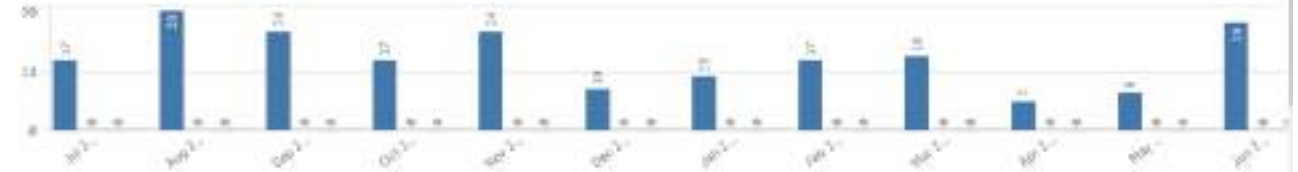
May 20 09:52:30 AM EDT. Data for the current reporting period (July 2020 - June 2021) is displayed. All data is subject to change as additional data is received.



## Community Centre—Attendances Per Month

**Attendances per month**

May 20 09:52:30 AM EDT. Data for the current reporting period (July 2020 - June 2021) is displayed. All data is subject to change as additional data is received.



**Summary of cases, sessions, and attendees**

Delivery Organization	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	A	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	A	Service type	CASES	SESSIONS	Average Attendance per Session	Individual CLIENTS	Individual Client Attendance	Average Sessions per Client	Unidentified CLIENTS
<b>Total</b>												<b>8</b>	<b>110</b>	<b>1.0</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>211</b>	<b>2.7</b>	<b>0</b>
Immigrant Women's Speakout	Emergr.	Paravol.	TEI - Co.	Community Engagement	1	1	1.0	15	1.5	1								
Immigrant Women's Speakout	Emergr.	Paravol.	TEI - Co.	Education and Skills Training	2	49	2.7	20	7.0	2								
Immigrant Women's Speakout	Emergr.	Paravol.	TEI - Co.	Developmental	2	62	3.1	11	5.5	2								



# Immigrant Women's Resource Centre (IWRC)

## Data Exchange Extracted Report July 2020 - June 2021

### Community Support—Overview of Client Numbers

Individual Clients

204

Unidentified Clients

0

Support Persons

0

Clients and Support Persons per Activity and service type

Activity	Service Type	Individual Clients	Unidentified Clients	Combined total Individual and Unidentified Clients	Support Persons
<b>Total</b>		<b>204</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>204</b>	<b>0</b>
TII - Community Support	Advocacy/Support	10	0	10	0
TII - Community Support	Education and Skills training	17	0	17	0
TII - Community Support	Resilience Employment Plan	7	0	7	0
TII - Community Support	Information/Advice/Referral	167	0	167	0

Clients and Support Persons per month

Note: By default, this chart shows the combined number of clients per reporting period. When any filter is applied, this chart behavior is overridden.



Individual Clients

204

Unidentified Clients

0

Support Persons

0

Clients and Support Persons per Activity and service type

Activity	Service Type	Individual Clients	Unidentified Clients	Combined total Individual and Unidentified Clients	Support Persons
<b>Total</b>		<b>204</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>204</b>	<b>0</b>
TII - Community Support	Resilience Employment Plan	7	0	7	0
TII - Community Support	Information/Advice/Referral	167	0	167	0
TII - Community Support	Skills participation	17	0	17	0

Clients and Support Persons per month

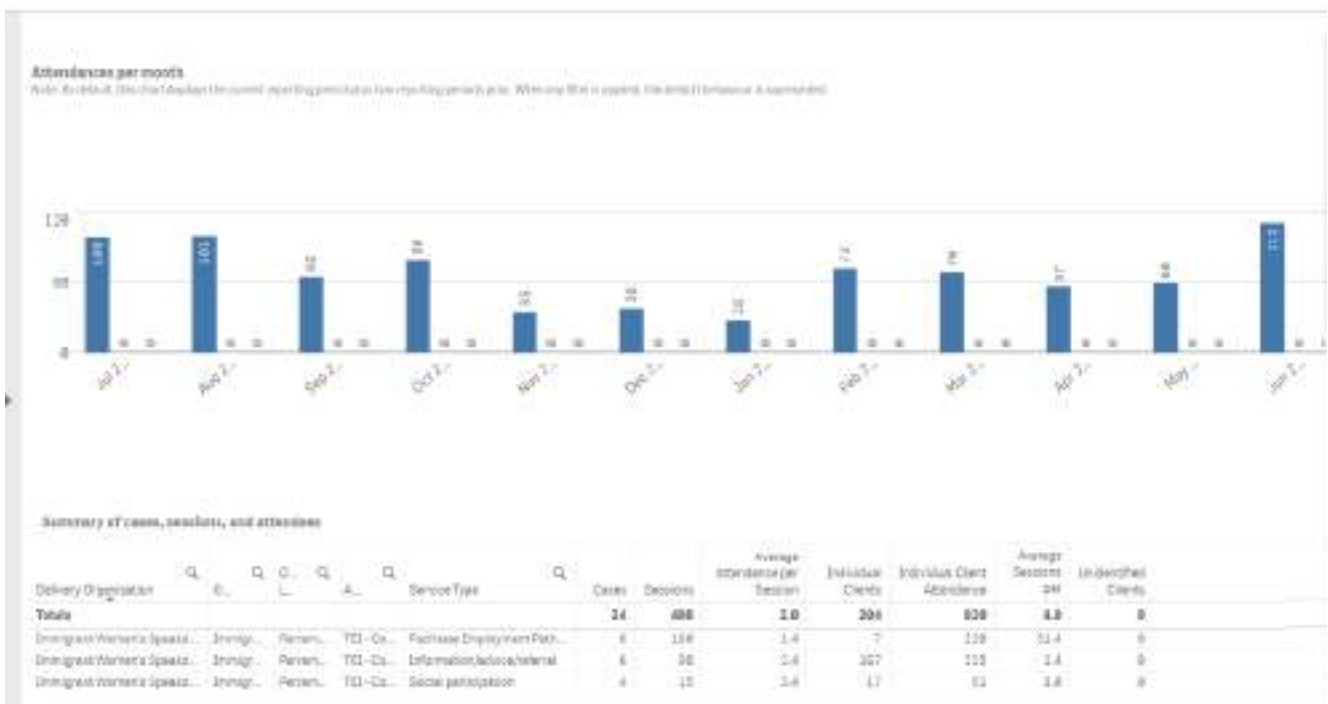
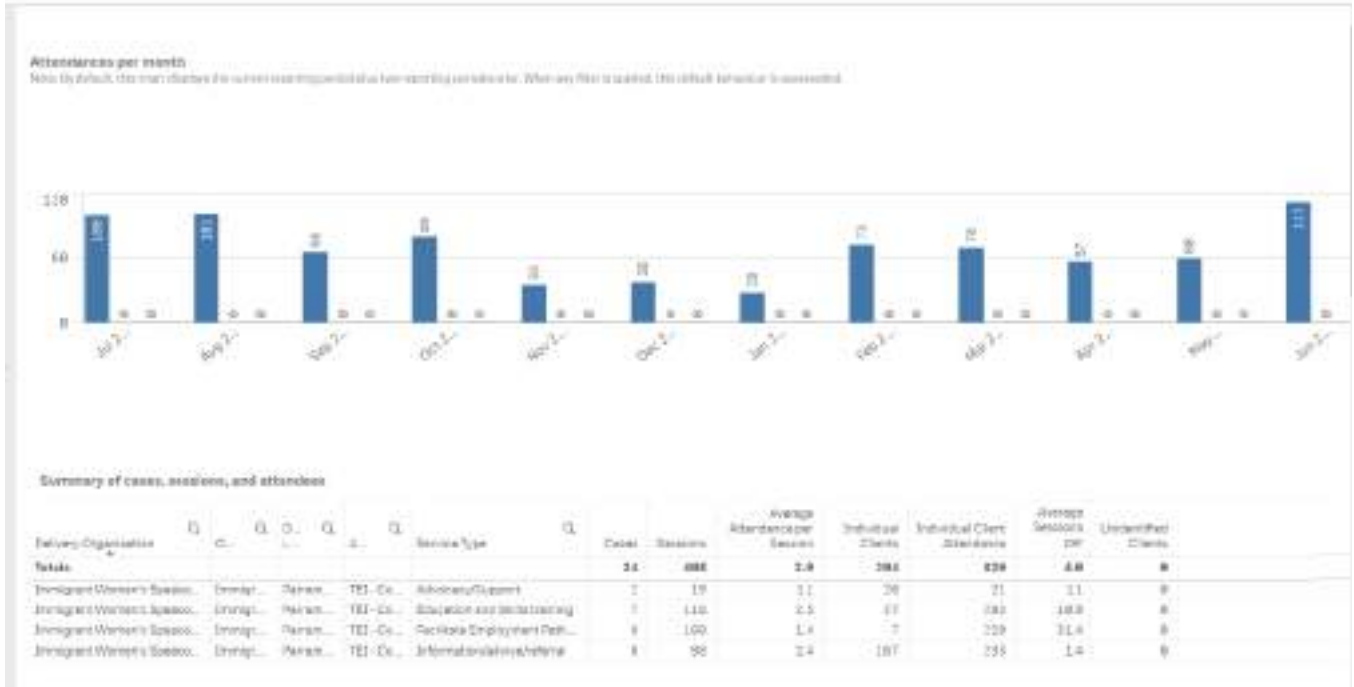
Note: By default, this chart shows the combined number of clients per reporting period. When any filter is applied, this chart behavior is overridden.



# Immigrant Women's Resource Centre (IWRC)

## Data Exchange Extracted Report July 2020 - June 2021

### Community Support—Attendances Per Month



# Homeless Multicultural Women Integrated Support Service (HoMWISS)

IWSA /Speakout Project Officers/Caseworkers have been highly effective in responding to women (including children) from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) backgrounds who are escaping domestic and family violence. Speakout team members have worked tirelessly to provide support and assistance to women who became homeless, and those who are at risk of being homeless, due to domestic and family violence (DFV). These women and their children continue to show challenging and urgent needs resulting from their perpetrators' abuse. They have struggled so much to be able to live especially during this time of COVID 19 pandemic. Most of these women lost their jobs, and only a few were able to access financial assistance due to their residence status.

In this current COVID 19 Surge, we exerted more efforts to deal with clients' needs. It has been a very intense year for the HoMWISS team. The team provided direct services including referral, advocacy, and co-case management along with other SHS services including mainstream services.

For this year 2020-2021, IWSA's HoMWISS Project Officers worked creatively to provide immediate support and assistance while addressing all issues of clients who reached out to IWSA. Our HoMWISS team provided support and assistance to 192 CALD women (including children). Of these clients, 84 are homeless and 108 were at risk of being homeless. DFV and homelessness continued to be an intensifying problem in Australia, and it worsened due to the global issue – COVID 19.

## Casework

IWSA's HoMWISS team assisted and supported clients to access different services such as the Department of Home Affairs, Centrelink, Victim's Services and to link them to those services providing financial assistance if they are not eligible for Centrelink payment due to their visa status. The new waiting period made it harder to access Centrelink benefits/payments.

It is particularly important for CALD women with children who approached the service to live in a safe and healthy environment. Single Women were provided accommodation through the IWSA's Multicultural Women's Shelter and Women with children were referred to shelters that specialized on families.

The team continued to assist the clients who were on temporary visa to access the Family Violence Provisions (FVP) of the Migration Rules.

It is undeniable that domestic and family violence is everywhere – in every post code, in every community. The HoMWISS team provided information to clients on how to stay safe and they were given instructions on how they can be safe if they decide to stay with the perpetrator during the COVID Surge. We provided instructions how to contact the Police (000) or the ambulance in case of emergency.

## Assistance to clients during the COVID 19 Lockdown

Due to this global pandemic, people lost their jobs because of business closures. There was a surge in the infection rate brought about by COVID 19. As the infection rate went up, cases of domestic violence also increased. IWSA clients escaping domestic and family violence were affected by this economic crisis especially if they lived in Local Government Areas (LGA's) such as Parramatta, Cumberland and Holroyd, Blacktown, and Penrith. Most of them are not eligible for any government assistance due to their visa status. Those who lost their jobs due to the restrictions on mobility were referred to other organisation who have brokerage for financial assistance. Clients were also assisted to access compensation from Victim Services and the Domestic Violence Financial Assistance program of the Red Cross.



# Homeless Multicultural Women Integrated Support Service (HoMWISS)

## Food Voucher and Opal Card

Due to economic crisis brought by the COVID 19 pandemic, most of our clients lost their jobs. IWSA/Speakout provided food vouchers and opal cards for their transportation.

We quote three typical client reactions:

*“I thank the Speakout and NSW Department of Communities and Justice, very much for the food voucher. I am excited and very humbled that you thought of me. I thank you for your support.”*

*“My fridge was empty. I went straight to the shop and bought nutritious food and fresh fruits and vegetables that my kids must have, thank you for your generosity.”*

*“Thank you very much Speakout for the food voucher. It helped me to buy fresh food and nappies for my child. Honestly, we ran out of shampoo and cereal for breakfast for my children.”*

## Information dissemination/Advice and Information

With the current situation regarding COVID 19 in our area of responsibility, the team continued to provide information through email and phone calls regarding the NSW health rules and protocols. They were encouraged to roll up their sleeves and get vaccinated.

## Life Skills

Clients were also mentored in order that they can look after themselves including getting job ready. They were also reminded to open their doors to other aspect of their life such as studying or training. IWSA made sure that they understood the benefits that they could get in training and education.

Before the COVID 19 Surge – July 2020 to May 2021, clients were motivated to actively participate in community events face to face and other training to develop their communication skill, including decision making, creative thinking and critical thinking. Of course, we had to modify our advice due to the Government restrictions on face-to-face interactions. It is important that clients understand how to cope with all challenging issues that come along to avoid re-traumatisation, especially during this time of pandemic. Although they were trained to learn how to assert their rights, they also learnt to understand the feelings of other people.

## Emotional Support

The 192 clients have been offered encouragement, re-assurance, and compassion. Clients who needed Police assistance were accompanied to the nearest police station. Some were given moral support when attending their court matters such as ADVO.





# Homeless Multicultural Women Integrated Support Service (HoMWISS)

## COLLABORATIVE PARTNERSHIP

IWSA collaborative partnership with community-based organizations helped the HoMWISS team to coordinate services effectively. IWSA aims to maximise the use of resources and improve client outcomes for CALD women escaping domestic and family violence. As a result, the 192 clients were incredibly happy and were able to achieve their goals.

IWSA continued to work in partnership through co-case management with different organisations such as Link2Home, Domestic violence Help line, Women's Domestic Violence Court Advocacy Services DVCAS, Family Advocacy and Support Services FASS, NSW Legal Aid, Centrelink and other charitable organisations.

Other than direct services to clients, IWSA advocated for clients' safety including temporary accommodation and financial support to live independently when they leave the abusive relationship. Most of IWSA clients are from Culturally and Linguistically (CALD) backgrounds, holding temporary visas. Out of the 192 clients, 25% had difficulty communicating in English. The team utilised Translating and Interpreting Services (TIS) to communicate with the clients during assessment and throughout the services. The IWSA team worked collaboratively with the Department of Home Affairs (DHA) to help eligible clients to get permanent residency under the Family Violence Provisions (FVP) of the Migration Regulations.

IWSA developed and utilised referral networks to effectively meet the needs of CALD women and children. Clients were referred to Doctors and Psychologists for therapeutic treatment and to improve their mental and psychological wellbeing. Most clients were referred to Cumberland Women's Health Centre and Blacktown Women's Support Centre. Others were referred to Victims Services that provide funds to engage a Counsellor and for general financial assistance.

The IWSA Project Officers also linked the clients to their communities if appropriate and if they agree. The partnership with organisations such as: Noor Association, Chinese Australian Service, Thai Welfare Service, Muslim Women's Association, Philippine Australian Community Services (PACSI) pave the way to hold events such as: training of volunteers and Domestic Violence awareness sessions to support their volunteer and clients.

The Speakout team would like to extend their heartfelt gratitude to all organizations who collaborated with us for the purpose of providing wrap-around support and assistance to CALD women.

*The team attended forums, information sessions and meetings via Zoom, to have better understanding of good practice and referral system:*

- Insidious Entrapment: Understanding the Challenges of Coercive Control Forum
- Update on COVID 19 for Multicultural Media
- Victim Support Scheme Information session
- Impact of COVID 19 Pandemic on Domestic and Family Violence
- Centrelink update on new changes for clients on temporary spouse visa experiencing domestic violence.
- Community Language school consultation for uploading Educational Materials on Portal

IWSA also attended and worked with other networks and DV committees such as: Outer West Domestic Violence Network (OWDVN), Metwest, Violence Prevention Network, the, Domestic Violence Community of Practice, Cumberland Holroyd Domestic Violence Committee, and other interagency meetings to address the issues and concerns of migrant and refugee women. One of the topics discussed was "Forced Marriage." The staff who attended, shared with the group how IWSA assisted clients who have been forced to marry. IWSA developed "Forced Marriage" Radio Plays that were recorded on CD in different community languages and is available at the IWSA office and on the IWSA website.

The Speakout team would like to extend their heartfelt gratitude to all organizations who collaborated with us for the purpose of providing wrap-around support and assistance to CALD women.

# Homeless Multicultural Women Integrated Support Service (HoMWISS)

## Success Stories

### ***“ The Best is Yet to come ”***

The husband started to inflict physical injuries upon Dess. She started to feel worthless and developed a low mood. It affected her physical and mental health.

Dess contacted the Police, and police took her to the hospital.

The perpetrator followed her into the hospital. She was able to hide, but she was very scared for her safety. An Apprehended Domestic Violence Order was issued against her husband. She was referred by the hospital to IWSA for support and assistance.

She was given information about domestic and family violence. She was assisted to access the Family Violence Provisions of the Migration Regulations. A case management plan was mapped out, which was tailored to her needs, giving her the choice of her goals. She was also advised to undergo therapeutic treatment to which she agreed.

After several sessions with her counsellor, she said she was starting to recover her self-esteem. Her vision of living happily was starting to get back. She said that she is not “worthless” after all and is hoping that the best is yet to come in her life now that she is free from harm.

### ***“ I reclaimed my dignity ”***

Victoria arrived in Australia in the year 2018. Her visa was sponsored by her husband.

After six months of marriage, her husband became extremely aggressive and started asking her to give him money to pay off his loans. Victoria refused to give him money. He became very angry and started shouting at her. The husband always shouts at her and calls her names. Then it escalated to physical violence. When she could not tolerate the physical violence, she left her husband. She was so worried that he would withdraw his sponsorship and her visa would be cancelled.

She searched on the internet for women’s services that support migrant women. She found the Immigrant Women’s Speakout Association of NSW’s number and called immediately to seek assistance.

The Project officer/Case Worker provided her information about her rights in Australia. She was assisted to access the Family Violence Provision (FVP). Two (2) months after lodging her application she was granted a Permanent Residence (PR) visa. Aside from being assisted in obtaining her visa, she was also referred for counselling. Now, she is gainfully employed full-time with Communication Services. After saving money for a deposit, she moved to a private rental accommodation.

Victoria became very successful and decided to open a coffee bar in the Inner City. During the exit interview, the client appreciated IWSA for all the support she received that resulted in reclaiming self-determination.

She said she was able to gain her self-confidence, self-esteem, and was empowered to live independently. She believes that getting Permanent Residence helped her to become successful in life.

When she exited from IWSA service, the IWSA Project Officer asked her to reflect on how she feels. She gave herself an overall rating of 4 out of 5 with her Personal Well-being Index.

# Homeless Multicultural Women Integrated Support Service (HoMWISS)

## Success Stories

### *“ I must become a Lawyer ”*

Ms Yazd was a temporary partner visa holder when she arrived in Australia. A year after she arrived her husband started shouting at her and constantly put her down for no reason. The situation became unbearable when he pushed her down the stairs resulting in a broken hand. She called the Police, and was taken to the hospital. The Hospital Social Worker referred her to Immigrant Women’s Speakout Association for support and assistance.

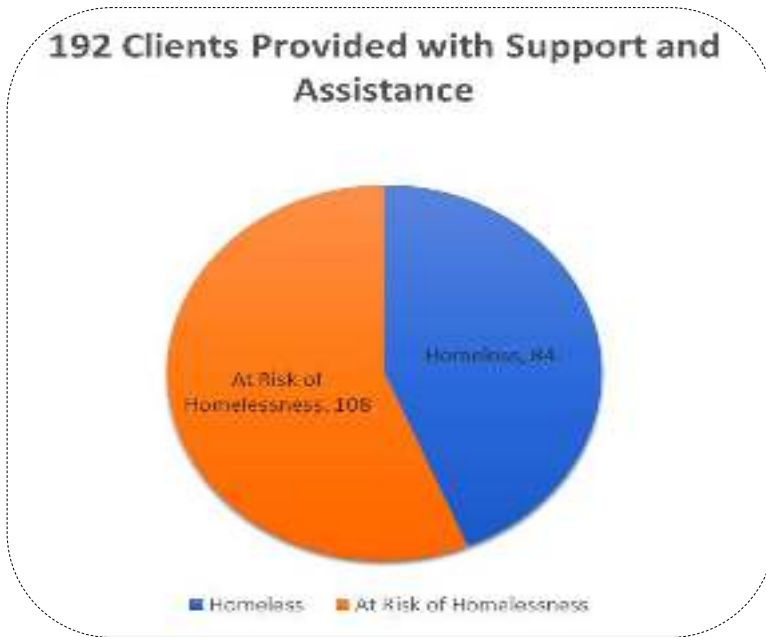
IWSA Project Officer assisted her to find a safe accommodation. She was accommodated at IWSA Multicultural Women’s Shelter for several months. She was referred to a psychologist and underwent therapeutic treatment. She was also assisted with resolving her visa status through the Family Violence Provisions (FVP) of the Migration Regulations.

The IWSA Project Officer also assisted Ms Yazd to look for shared accommodation in a private rental. Ms Yazd was connected to the Iranian community, where she was recruited as a teacher at the community language school. By constant encouragement, emotional support and providing information, she was empowered and tried her best to continue further tertiary education. First, she started volunteering in a law firm where it led her to enrol at the College of Law. She is now in the third year and is looking forward to finishing the course.

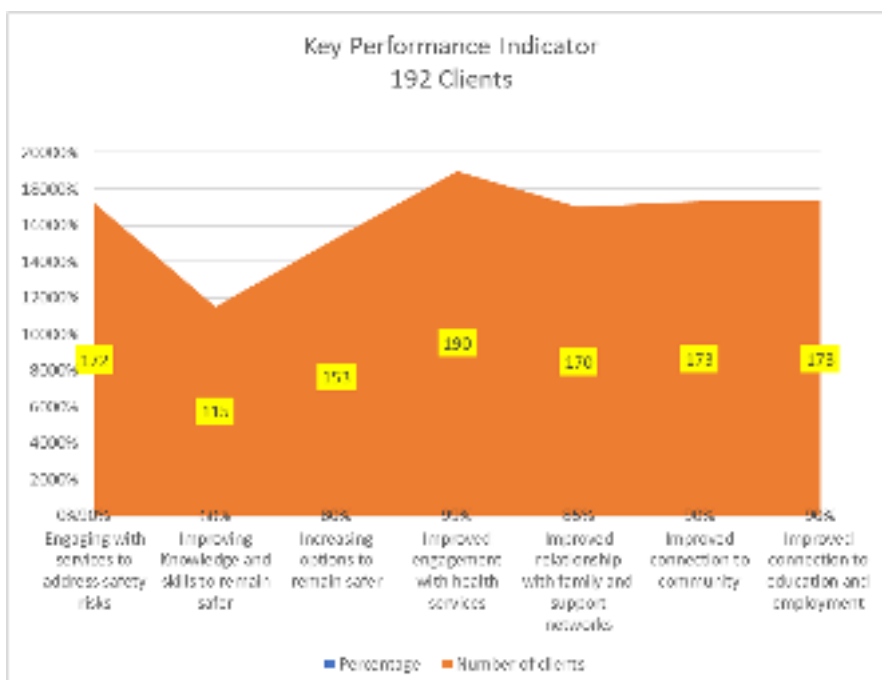
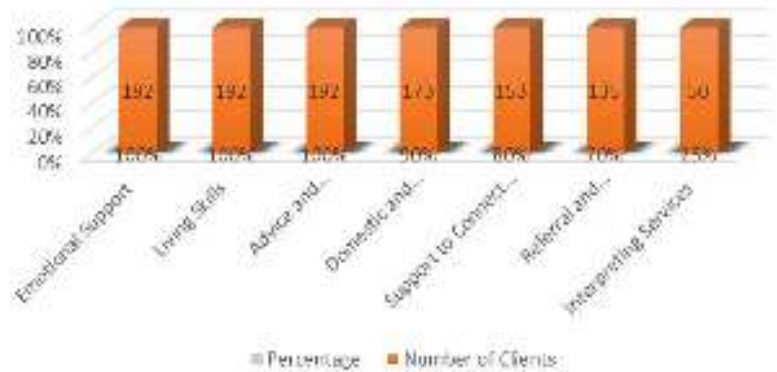
Share  
your  
**Story**



# Homeless Multicultural Women Integrated Support Service (HoMWISS)



### Support and Assistance Provided to the 192 Clients





# Multicultural Women Support Initiative (MWSI) - Shelter

In 2021, the IWSA Multicultural Women's Shelter has resumed its service provision through the Multicultural Women Support Initiative (MWSI) with funding from Women's New South Wales. It provided crisis accommodation for culturally and linguistically diverse women who are experiencing or are at risk of domestic and family violence and/or homelessness.

We have provided 791 bed nights. As reports of domestic violence and financial hardships increased during the COVID-19 period, the MWSI-Shelter is a vital service for migrant and refugee women in our local communities. The MWSI-Shelter remains one of the few crisis accommodations available for temporary visa holders in Western Sydney and NSW.

## COVID-19 Safety

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic and consequent lockdowns and restrictions, MWSI- Shelter clients were given ample information about practicing COVID-19 safety. Printed materials with information about hand hygiene, facemasks, and social distancing were displayed prominently throughout the Shelter. Information about lockdown restrictions and regularly updated health and safety guidelines from NSW Health were also provided via phone, emails, and face-to-face, were safe. Clients were regularly advised to get tested and vaccinated, resulting in all current MWSI-Shelter clients being fully vaccinated.

## Welcome Kit

Clients are referred to the MWSI- Shelter through IWSA's HoMWISS case management service. When the referral is processed, clients are introduced to the Shelter through an orientation session with the MWSI- Shelter Project Officer, who informs the client about house rules, their rights and responsibilities, and terms of accommodation. This information is also provided through written materials found in the MWSI- Shelter Welcome Kit.

Most MWSI-Shelter clients who were accommodated at the Shelter have actively looked for employment, skills development, and safe private rental accommodation. Many were also seeking assistance with immigration issues and navigating the Australian social and justice systems. Some common barriers these women faced were lack of access and support, bureaucratic complexities, and challenges in managing their recent or past trauma.

The MWSI- Shelter offers a safe space for these women to work on their goals as they walk the path towards resilience, self-reliance, and recovery. We use a strengths-based approach to help re-empower our clients and increase protective factors in their lives. Clients are supported to better understand their rights in Australia, often resulting in improved access to services or information, and an increased sense of confidence to reach for their goals.

## Safety Action Plan

The MWSI- Shelter Project Officer had mapped out a Safety Action Plan in collaboration with the client, based on the client's immediate needs. The plan outlines simple safety strategies to reduce risk of harm to themselves or any MWSI- Shelter client. The Safety Action Plan also includes contact details for agencies, national hotlines, and emergency services. The Safety Action Plan is part of the agreement between the client and IWSA to take steps towards self-reliance and safety in support of the client's individual case management plan.

As a key part of their recovery, MWSI- Shelter clients are given information about domestic and family violence or intimate partner violence to aid in their understanding of their own experiences.

# Multicultural Women Support Initiative (MWSI) - Shelter

## Referrals and Collaborations with Other Services

Referrals to other agencies and service-providers are also made to best meet the holistic needs of MWSI-Shelter clients. These include referrals to:

- Mental health practitioners and service-providers
- Legal aid services
- Immigration services
- Financial support programs
- Food services
- Community organisations for local events and community engagement.

## Collaborative Partnerships

Collaborative partnerships within the Community Services sector serve the best interests of our clients – and assist workers in filling gaps in service provision. Collaborations with local community service provided pathways to clients to access food services, counselling, and self-development programs with group activities such as gardening, yoga, and meditation.

Partnership with TIS allows IWSA to provide services to clients from various language groups using the services of accredited translators.

Several MWSI- Shelter clients also benefited from IWSA's collaboration with the Australian Red Cross through their financial assistance program for temporary visa holders.

Other collaborations regarding MWSI- Shelter clients included Western Sydney Community Legal Centre, Western Sydney Mental Health Line, St. Vincent's Hospital, Western Sydney Public Health Unit, and TAFE NSW.

Clients are also advised to report to the Police and apply for ADVOs where applicable. The MWSI-Shelter works collaboratively with emergency services to ensure the safety and wellbeing of all MWSI-Shelter clients.

## Culturally Appropriate Services

All MWSI- Shelter clients are provided with culturally safe, respectful, and appropriate support services. Clients are given the option to have an Interpreter present during any meetings or sessions with IWSA staff. MWSI- Shelter clients are also given the phone number for the National Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS) and are encouraged to call them for any external meetings or sessions. IWSA does our best to account for and respect the various cultures, religions, and spiritual beliefs of our clients, who are encouraged to practice their traditional customs, given they do not adversely impact or cause harm to others in the Shelter.

## Material Aid

All MWSI- Shelter clients are provided with introductory food vouchers and a pre-loaded Opal card to assist with their immediate material needs. Clients are assisted to access financial supports through Victims Services NSW and/or Centrelink where eligible, as well as other programs available through other DFV agencies. Those who are not eligible to access financial support programs are provided with food voucher and Opal card top-up from IWSA once a fortnight.

## Vision

As we look forward to the IWSA/Speakout's 40<sup>th</sup> Foundation Anniversary, we see the IWSA Multicultural Women's Shelter with increased financial and other resources to support migrant and refugee women and children escaping domestic and family violence. As well, we will have more developed capacity in responding to the complex needs of clients in this cohort.

## COVID-19 Emergency Support for Vulnerable Temporary Visa Holders (Domestic and Family Violence) Stream 2

All throughout the Project Implementation (Sept 2020 – June 2021) IWSA had provided supportive case management to 22 ongoing clients. These cases are highly complex. In addition, IWSA/Speakout also had provided information to 68 one-off clients. The IWSA also had provided Information Sessions to 50 participants during its Outreach.

Clients' immediate needs were identified, then the Support Worker and the Client worked on the Case Action Plan and Safety Action Plan for the clients. Some of these clients were accommodated at the MWSI-Shelter while the others were accommodated in a shared accommodation and at other refuges in Sydney. It is the choice of the clients that was considered on the place where to stay. On the information on DFV and Family Violence Provisions (FVP) provided to the clients; the clients were well – informed of their rights as a wellbeing and to be assertive on their rights - to be treated with dignity and respect. The safety of the clients is the first and foremost that Support Workers must assess and ensure that a Safety Action Plan is mapped out and implemented by the Client and the Support Worker.

Clients assisted were offered wrap-around services for CALD women escaping DFV. This includes woman-to-woman case management and the option to access crisis accommodation. The Support Workers assisted clients by responding to their practical and emotional needs – and provided information and advocacy to them to navigate access to NSW community services and justice system. These supports were made available to clients through a thorough understanding of how DFV impacts people; and a working knowledge of the NSW community services and justice system – unique to specialist DFV services.

The Support Workers have had collaborative partnerships with other organisations and service providers to ensure the client's needs were best met through a network of supports. This included working with other community service groups such as Harris Park Community Centre, Cumberland Women's Health Centre, Mama Lana's Community Kitchen, and more – where they can avail food needs like vegetables, fruits, and other dietary items. The Support Workers also consistently reminded clients of hotline services available to them such as Beyond Blue, Lifeline, DV Line, 1800 RESPECT and others.

Collaboration with other agencies like the giving of Opal cards and food vouchers to the clients; and coordination with NSW Police was also provided to the clients so that the violence they experienced was duly recorded. We also have had collaborations with accredited interpreters for clients who are not able speak and understand English.

**Risk of non-compliance with COVID 19 Infection Control Protocol by Clients**

There were times when several Clients failed to adhere to COVID 19 Infection Control Protocol. Some have difficulty in implementing the measures laid out on during the information session as well as from the NSW Department of Health website in the language of their country of origin. Using hand sanitizer and face masks were some of the identified instructions that some clients failed to follow.

To reduce the risk of COVID 19 Infection:

- Educate and inform clients regarding client charter and confirm their understanding, utilise interpreters where necessary
- Update and review consent papers and handouts given to clients upon intake concerning their rights and responsibilities including COVID 19 Infection Control Protocol.
- Ensure Client Charter and COVID 19 Infection Control Protocol is displayed in a clear and accessible way within the IWSA office reception and other areas where clients may read it – provide copies on request with assistance of interpreter where necessary.

# COVID-19 Emergency Support for Vulnerable Temporary Visa Holders (Domestic and Family Violence) Stream 2

## SUCCESS STORY

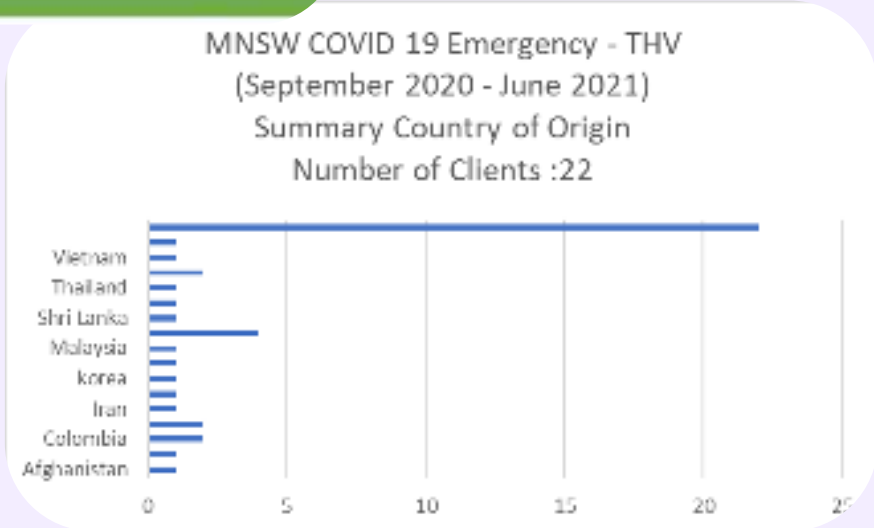
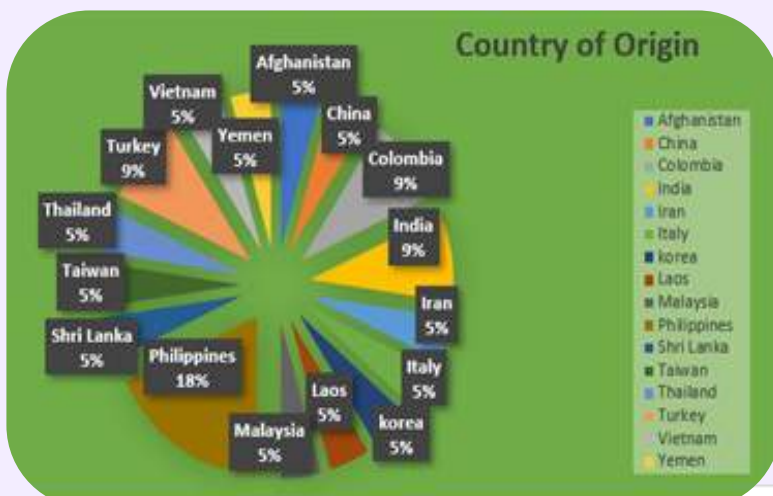
Fenny was subjected to domestic and family violence from more than one perpetrator. She had self-referred to Immigrant Women’s Speakout Association once before and was at risk of homelessness when she agreed to commence case-management with the IWSA Support Worker.

The Project/Support Worker assisted Fenny to identify her goals and provided her with wrap-around service including referral to the crisis accommodation at the Multicultural Women’s Shelter (MWS). She mentored Fenny in self-care, a safety action plan, and pathways to education and job-readiness. She was also referred to Counselling services and Specialist Medical Care.

While in the Shelter, Fenny shared her interest in Visual Arts with the Support Worker. The Support Worker gave encouragement to Fenny to keep painting as a Therapeutic Activity and a tool for wellness and recovery. Fenny has continued painting and is planning on offering community painting classes with IWSA in future.

With the support of IWSA, Fenny was able to find opportunity to train as a cashier. The Support Worker helped Fenny to prepare her resume and Fenny is now actively seeking paid work, Fenny has started with her English Language Course at TAFE.

In the meantime, Fenny was assisted by the Support Worker to complete her review task for Centrelink to ensure her payments would be continued while she continues looking for work, while studying English at TAFE.





# Years In Numbers

Number of clients provided with information and advice

**192 clients**

Number of women supported through HoMWISS

**192 clients**



Number of Bed nights MWSI

**791**

Number of attendances of Immigrant Resource Centre (IWRC) Activities

**Identified Clients - 1,237**

**Unidentified Clients - 98**

**Total Attendances 1,335**

# IWSA Management Committee and Staff 2020-2021

Management Committee	
<i>Gayathri Dharmagesan</i>	<i>Chairperson</i>
<i>Vivi Germanos – Koutsounadis</i>	<i>Vice Chairperson</i>
<i>Nelia Sumcad</i>	<i>Treasurer</i>
<i>Kyungja Jung</i>	<i>Secretary</i>
<i>Fatema Hasan</i>	<i>Committee member</i>
<i>Radha Ravindra</i>	<i>Committee member</i>
<i>Margaret Ng (Sister of St. Joseph)</i>	<i>Committee member</i>

Staff	
Jane Brock	Executive Officer
Rukhshana Sarwar	Project Officer
Mariam James	Project Officer
Marichu Gloria	Project Officer
Carielyn Tunion	Project Officer
Evelyn Boehringer	Admin Officer
Mohan Packianathan	Accountant
Summera Hafeez	Sewing Class Facilitator
Kawkab Jada	Caretaker
Efleda Gloria	Support Worker up to July 2021
Shafigheh Rafat	Support Worker up to July 2021

## IN GRATITUDE

*Thank you to our members  
and partners in the community sector*

*We said Farewell and Best Wishes to **Shafigheh Rafat** and **Efleda Gloria** for their work as Support Workers at SpeakOut.*

### Volunteers

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

Nadera Hakimi, Ravneet Kaur, Ivan Jane Banzon, Diksha Sharma, Maryam Maheen, Parminder Kaur Sanghe, Babita Gaire, Roji Barakoti, Evelyn Alejandro, Jojo Soverino Lovero, Meynardo Argana, Manuel Rosario, Marilex Lopez, Nadia Trinidad, Natividad Millarez, Rey Alejandro, Peter Geoffrey Brock, Anthony Montebello and Oliver Fernandes

### Staff

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

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

### Department of Communities and Justice (DCJ)

**For assistance and support to IWSA, Thank you DCJ staff:  
DCJ SHS TEI Commissioning and Planning officer Ozen Cemali**

# Photo Gallery 2020-2021

## 2020 Annual General Assembly





# Photo Gallery 2020-2021

## 2020 Annual General Assembly





# Photo Gallery 2020-2021

## Information Session



## Art and Workshop



# Photo Gallery 2020-2021

## Women's Gatherings and Picnics



## Community Events





# Photo Gallery 2020-2021





## 2021 – 2022 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 a member of an IWSA/Speakout member organization.	
Telephone: (H).....	(W)..... (M).....
Fax:	Email:
Language/s Spoken:	

INDIVIDUAL MEMBERSHIP:  New  Renewal

Individual membership (unwaged):	Free
Individual membership (waged):	
<input type="radio"/> Annual Income less than \$35 000pa	\$11 (incl GST)
<input type="radio"/> Annual Income \$35 000pa – \$50 000pa	\$16.50 (incl GST)
<input type="radio"/> Annual Income more than \$50 000pa	\$27.50 (incl GST)

ORGANISATION MEMBERSHIP:  New  Renewal

<input type="radio"/> Unfunded Organisations	Free	
<input type="radio"/> Funded Organisations	\$22 (incl GST)	
<input type="radio"/> 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
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**THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT**

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

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

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 Email: [women@cspeakout.org.au](mailto:women@cspeakout.org.au)

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