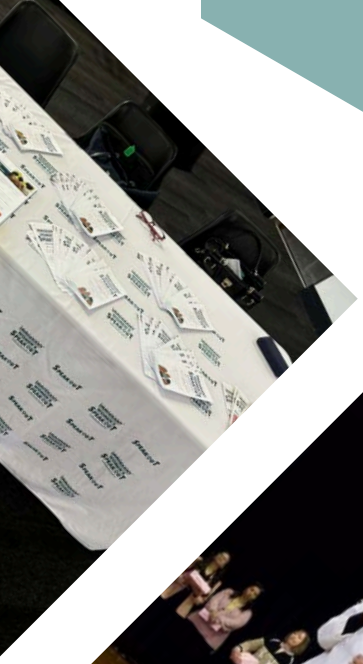
IMMIGRANT WOMEN'S SPEAKOUT ASSOCIATION NSW INC.







IMMIGRANT WOMEN'S SPEAKOUT

ANNUAL REPORT 2025-2026











Immigrant Women's SpeakOut Association works across the Dharug Nation. Our office is located on the traditional lands of the Burramattagal people.

We pay our deep respect to Elders past and present and are grateful to First Nations partners who have taught us a great deal. We look forward to ongoing relationships with traditional owners, and we acknowledge the land was never seeded. We commit to allyship in the pursuit of safety and equity.

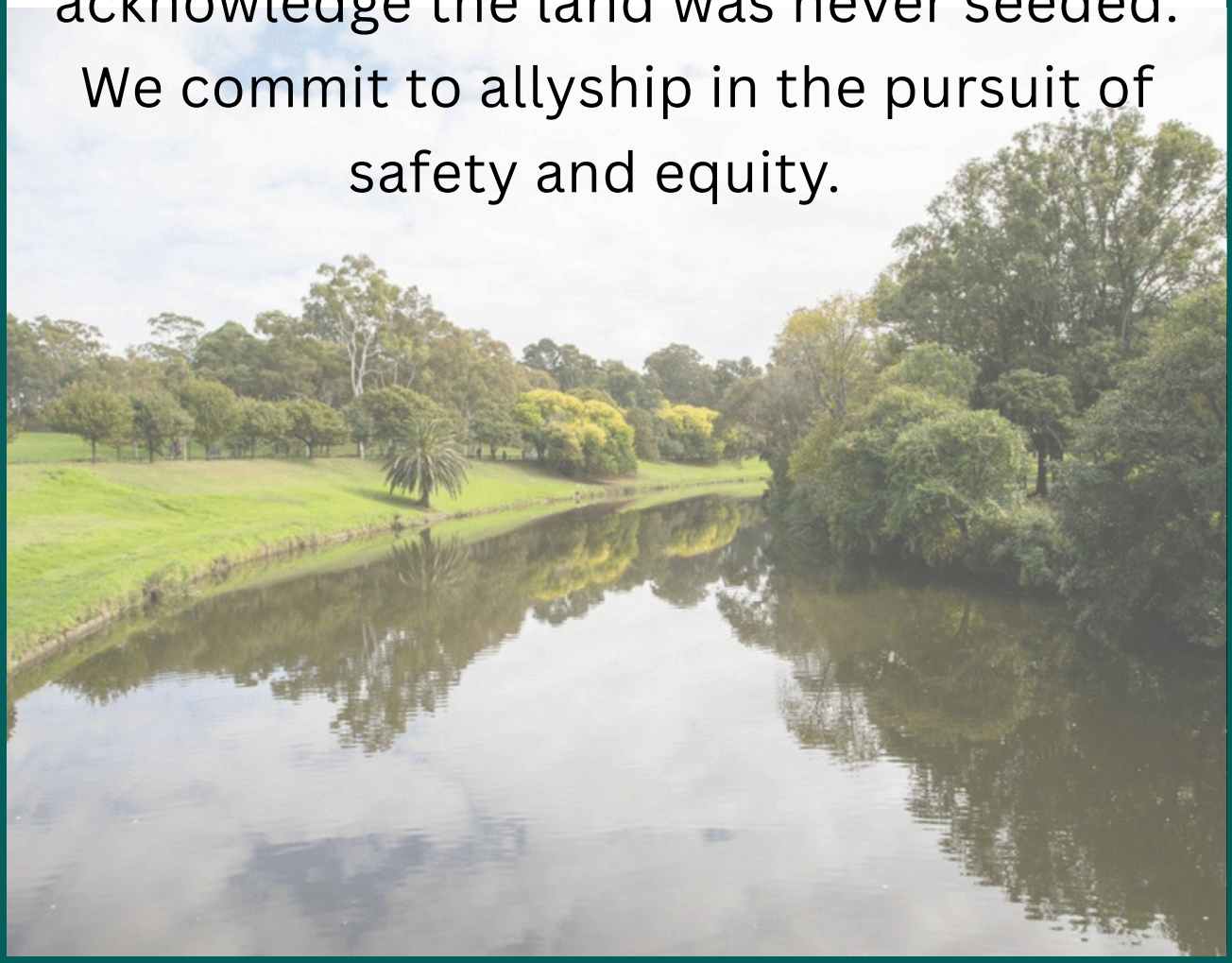


Table of Contents

ANNUAL REPORT 2025–2026	1
WELCOME TO SPEAKOUT	2
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S REPORT	4
CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT	5
TREASURER'S REPORT	6
FINANCIAL REPORT	7
OUR VISION AND VALUES	8
MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE	9
OUR TEAM & VOLUNTEERS	10
SNAPSHOT – SERVICES OFFERED	11
MULTICULTURAL WOMEN'S SHELTER	12
HOMELESSNESS SUPPORT – CASE STUDY	13
HOMELESSNESS SUPPORT – CASE STUDY	14
SPECIALIST HOMELESSNESS SERVICE REPORT	15
HOMELESSNESS SUPPORT REPORT	16
HOMELESSNESS SUPPORT REPORT	17
NPA DFSV REPORT	18
NPA DFSV UPSTANDER AWARENESS PROGRAM	19
COUNSELLING	20
CAFS WOMEN'S WELL-BEING PROGRAM	21
TARGETED EARLIER INTERVENTION & COMMUNITY SUPPORT	22
TARGETED EARLIER INTERVENTION – IMPACT AT A GLANCE	23
OUR PARTNERS	24
EMPLOYMENT PATHWAYS PROGRAM	25

Chief Executive Officer

Maria Kissouri



It is with great pleasure that I provide my first CEO report for Immigrant Women's SpeakOut. I thank Sunila Kotwal for her leadership of the organisation until January 2026. After joining on 12 January 2026, I quickly realised I became part of a talented, dedicated, committed and vibrant team; both on the frontline and behind-the-scenes at this great organisation. This year has been a year of change and stability. Although these might seem contradictory, the change is due to changing leadership and key personnel in the team, and the stability came through the achievement of longer-term contracts awarded by DCJ for our key domestic family and sexual violence programs.

During the year the team reflected thoughtfully about the opportunities and challenges presented to the organisation when running a 12 bed unfunded shelter service. Despite rising operational costs competing with the rising demand for homelessness support services and crisis accommodation, the organisation remains committed to delivering our shelter service at the highest standard for women who would not otherwise have a safe home to live. Our shelter service would not be viable if it were not for the financial assistance of many partners named later in this report. Their support allows us to get on with important case work assisting women out of homelessness.

This year, our communities face increasing challenges, including:

- Increased cost of living, especially housing costs.
- Increased rates of domestic family and sexual violence.
- Increased scrutiny of migration to Australia and a growing sense of disharmony and intolerance.

These challenges place a great weight on the shoulders of our small organisation, but also fuel us to strive for improved and enhanced outcomes for multicultural communities across New South Wales, particularly Western Sydney. Like all of our sister organisations across the homelessness and domestic and family violence sectors, the demand for our support surpasses our capacity to provide services to everybody who needs it.

I'm grateful to the women and children who come through our doors, who trust us with their story and compel us to work to seek justice for them as individuals, future generations and all migrant communities in Australia. Every day we see women and children walk through the door determined to establish a life free from violence with financial independence and with a sense of dignity and hope about their future.

Our small but mighty team of nine professional, culturally and linguistically diverse women, have supported each other and newcomers and welcomed volunteers to strengthen the quality of our support and the outcomes for all who come to our service. I want to acknowledge Rukshana and Mariam for over 20 years dedicated service to the organisation. Their knowledge and expertise in the migration application process for women and children escaping domestic family and sexual violence is commendable. Their long-standing commitment is reflected throughout their long-standing connections across the sector and in community. I also want to acknowledge Marichu Gloria who left our service to take on a new opportunity.

Although our resources are limited, we are able to achieve a great deal with the assistance of volunteers. Sahar is a dedicated and committed community member who shows up weekly to support our women and to support our staff to deliver wellbeing programs. A huge thanks goes to Paco who dedicates time on a fortnightly basis to assist with website updates and content. I appreciate the assistance of Kathy and Georgina who have volunteered their time to provide advice on financial strategy and planning. A warm thank you to Dr Dershini who turns up every week to support our wellbeing and education programs. Thank you to you all for making the experience of women and children supported by Speakout a much richer one.

I am looking forward to 2026/27 as a year of enhancing our practice excellence, joining the voice for positive change in immigration, and continuing our culturally informed primary prevention work with multicultural communities.

Chairperson's Report

Charity Danquah



2026 has a been a year of significant change for SpeakOut. For starters, this year we appointed and welcomed Maria Kissouri as SpeakOut's new CEO. Maria is a seasoned professional with years of experience, and expertise from government and the not-for profit sector.

It has been an honour to work alongside her as we explore and map out the strategic direction of the organisation now and into the future. While there is a lot of work ahead of us, Maria's passion, vision and strategic approach has been instrumental in us finalising and securing longer term funding for the Specialist Homelessness Service and the NPA Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence contract with the Department of Communities and Justice.

Maria took over the contract negotiations from SpeakOut's former Executive Officer, Sunila Kotwal, who stepped down from her role at the beginning of the year. On behalf of the SpeakOut Management Committee I want to formally acknowledge Sunila for guiding the organisation through a complex and evolving period in her tenure. Thank you, Sunila, for your steadfast commitment to fulfilling your duties during a time of significant transition, and we appreciate the time dedicated to supporting the management committee.

After 12 years of service, a cherished member of the SpeakOut family Marichu Gloria moved on to another opportunity within the sector. I want to also acknowledge the work of Jane Banzon and Samanatha Lim for their dedicated work at SpeakOut. On behalf of the management committee, we extend our deepest gratitude to all former staff members for their exceptional service and dedication. Their work will always form part of the important work Speakout does in supporting culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) women and communities.

I want to also welcome new staff who have joined the organisation recently, thank you for coming along this journey with us. SpeakOut is an extraordinary organisation with a deep-seated history in the women's sector and doing important work across a multitude of communities. SpeakOut is an organisation made up of a diverse group of CALD women who are all part of a vibrant and multicultural Australia society. I want us all to remember this, in this particular time as the seeds of mistrust and hate are being sown about so many CALD communities. We are always stronger together than apart; I look forward to working alongside all my SpeakOut colleagues and allies as we continue build upon and progress our work in creating a better future for all.



Treasurer's Report

Vrushali Dongre

On behalf of the Management Committee, I thank the **Department of Communities and Justice** (DCJ) for funding the core services at the Immigrant Women's SpeakOut Association (SpeakOut).

On behalf of the Management Committee I also thank the following organisations for their support this year in the form of grants we received:

- Mercy Foundation for employment support services
- StreetSmart Australia for Multicultural Women's Shelter
- Aunties Fund for Multicultural Women's Shelter

I report that we made the following acquittals this year:

- DCJ: $911,313
- Mercy Foundation: $ 42,493
- St Michaels Fund: $ 6,451
- Cumberland Council: $ 8,316
- StreetSmart Australia: $ 6,500
- Aunties Fund for Multicultural Women's Shelter $ 4,500

This year we continued to raise money through in-house fundraising efforts like Bunnings barbecue, bake sales and other fundraising events.

Our organisation has Deductible Gift Recipient (DGR) status from the Australian Taxation Office and all donations received by us will be tax free for the people/organisations making the donations.

The financial statements for the period provide detailed information about our income and expenses and financial position. I appreciate the help of Ram Kokularamanan, the SpeakOut Accountant and Stephen Sproats, the SpeakOut Auditor.

I thank the Management Committee, Executive Officers and all staff for their support during this year.

Financial Report

IMMIGRANT WOMEN'S SPEAKOUT ASSOCIATION OF NSW INC

STATEMENT OF COMPREHENSIVE INCOME
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2026

		2026	2025
REVENUE			
Grants Received	(Note 10)	863,301.28	852,201.59
Sundry Income & Membership		43,416.71	71,354.55
Interest		2,712.57	2,979.88
Balance of funds -Brought forward		122,902.12	26,141.69
TOTAL REVENUE		**1,032,332.68**	**952,677.71**
EXPENDITURE			
Accounting		11,060.42	8,786.47
Association Expenses		694.44	695.34
Advertising		7,658.80	
Audit		3,900.00	3,900.00
Balance of funds - Carried forward		16,097.93	122,902.12
Bank Charges		159.79	213.54
IT support		5,075.21	4,819.93
Equipment		10,979.95	-
Electricity and gas		8,771.49	7,519.22
General Insurance		7,019.09	7,181.12
Internet		2,233.36	1,400.00
Long Service Levy		5,949.18	
Printing Postage & Stationery		1,017.32	3,241.43
Professional Development		2,527.73	2,786.50
Project		74,529.02	30,361.28
Provisons - Annual Leave		- 7,862.22	- 4,024.93
Provisons- Long Service Leave		- 5,181.49	9,966.71
Provision for Projects		24,800.00	
Rent		98,449.01	104,245.13
Repairs -MWSI Shelter Maintenance		430.45	2,644.72
Repairs Security & Maintenance		8,930.78	6,356.84
Salaries & Wages		653,114.63	529,710.19
Staff Amenities & Sundries		4,179.89	11,315.91
Subscriptions		3,854.34	3,501.86
Superannuation		73,003.34	65,323.54
Telephone		2,603.02	3,793.30
Travel		116.03	8.18
Workers Compensation		16,407.03	17,481.51
		1,030,518.54	**944,129.91**
SURPLUS (DEFICIT)		**1,814.14**	**8,547.80**
OTHER REVENUE		-	-
NET SURPLUS FOR YEAR		**1,814.14**	**8,547.80**
TOTAL COMPREHENSIVE INCOME FOR YEAR		**1,814.14**	**8,547.80**

Immigrant Women's SpeakOut Association of NSW Inc. acknowledges and values the cultural, linguistic and religious diversity of migrant and refugee women. We have the priviledge of witnessing the rich contributions made by migrants in Australia and we are honoured to walk alongside survivors.

SpeakOut aims to represent migrant women's desire for equity in all areas of their lives. We do this via our individual and systems advocacy. We do this by providing education, information, support, guidance and resources to migrant and refugee women. We commit to maintaining a focus on advocacy; enabling and representing women's experience at all levels of government, community and in the media.

OUR VISION

A society that values the rich and diverse contributions of migrant and refugee women.



OUR VALUES

DIGNITY



We uphold every woman's right to dignity, choice and independence.
We take a strength-based approach to empower immigrant women to speak, act and make choices with enhanced knowledge and confidence.

RESPECT



We operate on the principles of respect and anti-discrimination.
We strive towards equity and equality for multicultural women by

- respecting their views and choices;
- fighting for their rights;
- challenging the stereotypes in media and other sectors of the community.

SAFETY



Women's safety is our priority.
We provide culturally safe and appropriate services to migrant and refugee women.
We ensure that in all aspects of our work, their rights and privacy are upheld.

SOCIAL JUSTICE



We aim to break down the barriers that prevent migrant and refugee women from participating fully in the Australian society.

Management Committee

A dedicated team of volunteer Management Committee members govern the organisation. As a diverse team of professionas, they bring a range of experience, knowledge and ideas as they come together monthly to plan, review and oversee the organisation's strategic directions.



Seisum (Charity) Danquah
Chairperson

"Speakout is an extraordinary organisation with a deep-seated history in the women's sector and doing important work across a multitude of communities. Speakout is an organisation made up of diverse group CALD women who are all part of a vibrant and multicultural Australia society." Chairperson's reflection



Vrushali Dongre
Treasurer



Dr Astrid Perry OAM
Secretary



Sumati Advani
Member



Nalika Padmasena OAM
Member



Tabitha Ponnambalam
Member



Robina Yasmin
Member

Our Team

Maria Kissouri
Chief Executive Officer
from 12 January 2026

Sunila Kotwal
Executive Officer
till 16 January 2026



Rukhshana Sarwar
Project Officer
Caseworker

Mariam James
Project Officer
Caseworker

Evelyn Boehringer
Operations Officer

Stella Nwosu
Trainee Officer

Marichu Gloria
Project Officer
till April 2026

Jane Banzon
Project Officer
till July 2026



Varsha Tembe
Counsellor

Samantha Lim
Employment Pathways Officer

Roop Kaur
Student in Placement
from 17 June 2026

Tammy Bixiao
Project Officer
from 16 April 2026

Sarita Subedi
Student in Placement
March - June 2026

Our Volunteers

- Elaheh Khazi (Volunteer Intern)
- Georgina Smart
- Kathy Kissouri
- Paco Ortiz
- Sahar Noras
- Dr Dershini Kumar

SNAPSHOT

Services offered



DCJ funds two Domestic, family and sexual violence programs:

Specialist Homelessness Service covering Blacktown, Parramatta, The Hills and Cumberland LGAs



New Partnership Agreement covering the Parramatta LGA



Many people who approach our service tell us they have tried calling several organisations to try to find a place to get help.

Our Immigrant Women's Resource Centre provides general information, referral and guided referral to community members. We take inquiries from family members who are concerned about someone's relationship, families seeking financial assistance, people navigating legal processes and much more. Our staff offer timely responses, and seek to help people find the right service.



TEI and Community & Family Support programs reached

949

community members in community strengthening activities

Multicultural Women's Shelter

Temporary accommodation for single women

26 women

3534 bed nights

provided shelter after escaping domestic, family or sexual violence

- Culturally appropriate care and home environment
- One on one support from case manager
- In-house counselling
- Visa related guidance and support
- English speaking classes & computer classes
- Programs to improve their mental and physical health
- Personalised recruitment support to get their first job in Australia
- Guidance and support to achieve their goals
- Referral to support services
- Community connections

Women are staying an average of 21 nights longer compared to 2024-2025. Longer wait times for Home Affairs determination and rising cost of living is the likely cause of this change.

- Women staying in the shelter were on a range of temporary visas including Student, Partner, Visitor, Bridging and Protection Visas.
- Fifteen different languages were spoken by the women.
- Less than 20% were working at the time of entry, some due to visa restrictions not allowing them to work.
- Most exited into private rental accommodation sharing with other community members.
- Some received permanent residency and accessed social housing or Start Safely rental subsidy from Homes NSW.

"Thank you Speakout, you made my life have future."



"I am truly grateful for your prompt assistance, understanding, and kind support throughout this difficult time. Having your support means a great deal to me."

Homelessness support Case study

Migration experience:
Ama (name withheld) arrived on a prospective spouse visa in early 2026.
Cultural background
Ama is from Iraq and speaks Arabic fluently but has limited English language.
Domestic violence experience
Ama experienced both domestic and family violence from her ex-partner and his family, her experience was very complex due to communication barriers. Ama and her ex-partner completed their marriage rites in Ama's home country. Prior to Ama's visa being granted her mother was diagnosed with a terminal illness which made her ex-partner and family to treat Ama differently. Ama was severely isolated and she did not know what to do. Ama experienced coercive control from her ex-partner. When she reported this to Police, she did not have access to an interpreter on the day. Her ex-partner threatened Ama to return to her home country despite it being unsafe. The situation impacted on Ama's psychological wellbeing.
Education & Employment history:
Ama obtained a formal education and was working in an executive role in her country. She was referred to Western Sydney Migrant Resource Centre for English classes and other supports. She accessed SpeakOut's Employment Pathways Officer funded by the Mercy Foundation and she improved in her English proficiency. As a result of her determination and strength, she has excelled. Ama currently works in hospitality and continues to work toward her personal goals.
Support provided
*Safe accommodation: Ama was provided a safe and culturally appropriate accommodation at SpeakOut's Multicultural Women Shelter where she made close social connections.
* Emotional wellbeing: Ama accessed a psychologist which helped enable her to regain her self-confidence and self-worth following her traumatic experience from her ex-partner and family.
*Financial support: Ama was not able to access financial support from the Leaving Violence Program and Victim Services Scheme. **Western Sydney Community Migrant Resource Centre** provided sponsorship for Ama's accommodation expenses for 13 weeks.
*Ama has obtained her learners drivers licence with the assistance of **Cumberland Women's Health Centre.**
*Legal advice: Ama was referred to **Legal Aid** for to assist her to understand the Australian legal system make informed decisions about her immigration application.
*Empowerment: Ama stated she felt disempowered as she could not navigate services previously. The Telephone Interpreter Service was used for communication early in the support period but was not required by the end.
To her caseworker, Ama now appears more confident and assertive. Ama displays a positive attitude and feels empowered.
Support networks: Ama maintained contact with distant relatives and moved into their home when she left crisis accommodation. Ama felt safe there as they gave her support during that critical time. She continues to participate in social gatherings at SpeakOut and maintained a relationship with the other women she lived with at the shelter.

Homelessness support Case study

Migration experience:
Ann (name withheld) married in China and came to Australia on a tourist visa in 2023. Later she applied for a partner visa.

Cultural background:
Ann speaks Mandarin and does not speak English; a Telephone Interpreter Service was used to access an interpreter for all service interactions.

Domestic violence experience:
Ann and her newborn baby spent more than a year experiencing abusive behaviour by Ann's husband. She was expecting that his behaviour would change however it never happened. When she was beaten and pushed against the wall, the situation escalated. She called Police and an Apprehended Domestic Violence Order was issued. She separated from her husband in late 2024 and the relationship ended. She was referred to crisis accommodation support for her and her child.

Education & Employment history:
Ann had previously run a small business however when she arrived in Australia, she did not secure work. When she fell pregnant, she was at home caring for her newborn baby. Ann was not eligible for Centrelink benefits or childcare subsidies due to her visa status.

Support provided:
Safety planning: Tech abuse information was provided including risk of surveillance by mobile tracking. A comprehensive safety plan was developed in partnership with Ann. A final AVO was granted.
Housing: Referred to crisis accommodation where she then secured transitional housing. She was able to access the Start Safely subsidy once she received her permanent residency.
Wellbeing: Referral to a suitable GP. Application and advocacy to access Victim Service to receive counselling.
She was assisted to access the Family Violence Provisions of the Migration Regulations (FVP) via specialist casework support. This was granted at the end of 2025.
Financial Support: Application and advocacy to access the Leaving Violence Payment for financial assistance which was granted.
Life Skills Education: Emotional and practical support and mentoring was provided to enable Ann to build social connections and build her general well-being to navigate mental health and medical issues. Advocacy to access benefits.

"Thank you for helping me in my difficult time. Your professional support and guidance helped me to get my PR and live independently. Your emotional support really gave me strength not to give up."

Specialist Homelessness Service Report

IMMIGRANT WOMEN'S SPEAKOUT ASSOCIATION NSW INC

Who we worked with

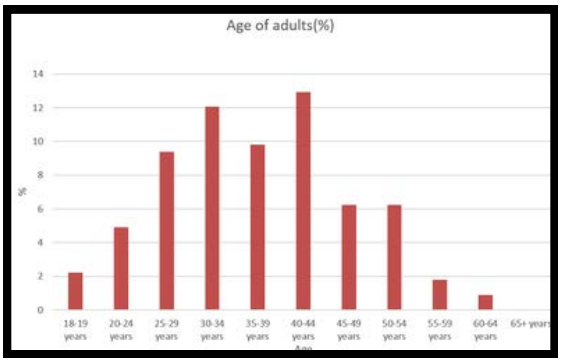
97%

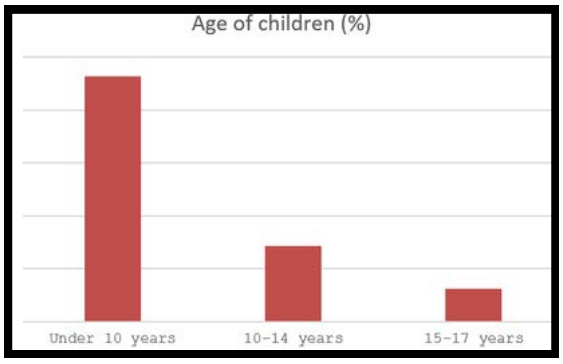
of people were seeking support due to domestic, family or sexual violence

Domestic and family violence remains the leading cause of homelessness in NSW. We see this reality every day, where women who face domestic or family violence have no financial means to support themselves and their children after leaving an abusive partner. These women are rebuilding their lives, while also navigating visa insecurity, financial hardship and the challenge of meeting essential living costs such as legal fees, medical bills and transport expenses.

We are a specialist CALD provider. Our homeless prevention and response services offer a lifeline to women and their children.

The tables below illustrate the diversity of the people we work with.

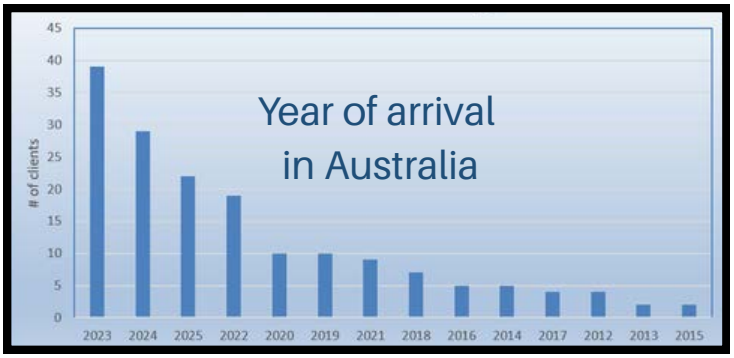




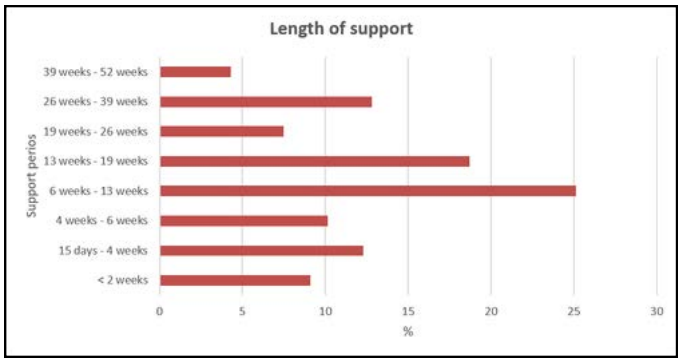
Our service remains accessible and culturally responsive to women from a broad range of cultural backgrounds. The women and children we support reflect the local communities of Western Sydney. The main countries of birth are India, Afghanistan, Pakistan, China, Thailand and Vietnam. The majority arrived in Australia within the last 3 years.

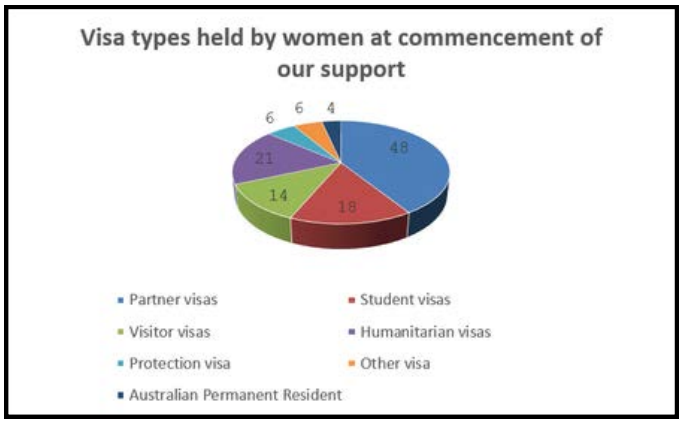






Homelessness Support Report





The case management service model is flexible, client-centred, trauma and violence informed. Our support periods and case planning are needs based. Where possible, our case management support is provided in language. We are a specialist provider for women on temporary and precarious visas who experience domestic, family and sexual violence. Our experienced case workers work in partnership with immigration legal services to provide tailored, expert assistance in the migration application process. This is essential in the pursuit of safety, stability and independence after escaping abuse.

Due to extended delays in visa application processing, clients of our services are engaged with support for a lengthy period of time. Generally, most case plan goals are being achieved between 3 - 5 months, with the exception of resolution of visa status.

Nevertheless, we saw positive results in achievement of permanent residency as shown here. We also saw positive results in the number of women who had no income at the commencement of support compared to the completion of their support period.

Positive change in visa status

4 **PR** at service commencement

17 **PR** at the end of support

The number of women with no income fell sharply following our support

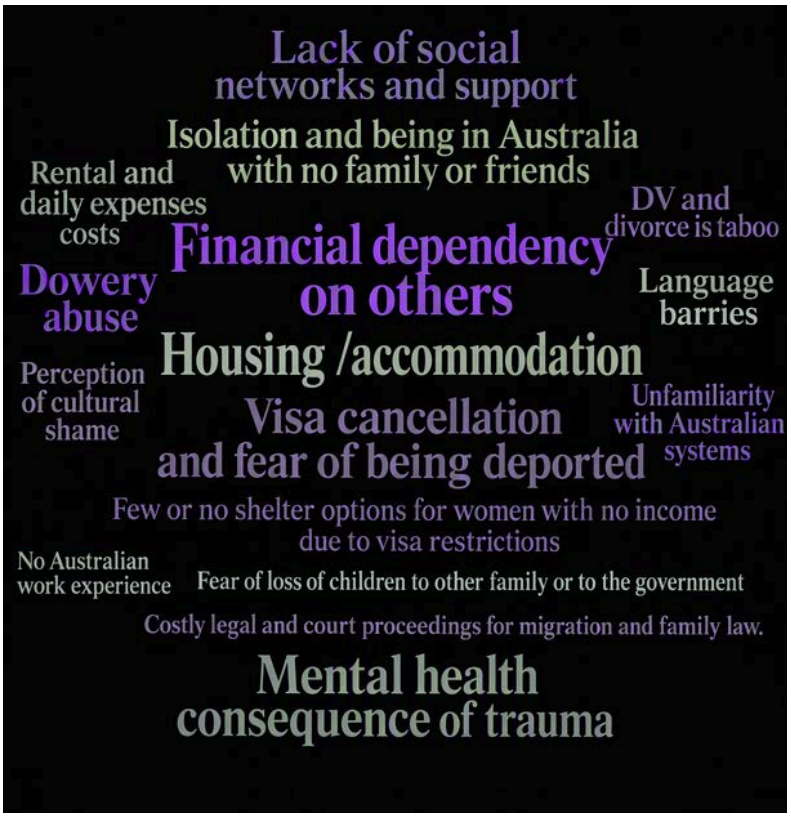
People with no income

113 at presentation → **21** in the last month of support

Homelessness Support Report

As a specialist domestic, family and sexual violence service, women presenting to us are more likely to experience hidden homelessness as they escape the violence.

The majority of women and children we supported who experienced risk of homelessness, and who were homeless, were living in private rental, independent accommodation. Separation from an abusive partner or family member is the leading cause of their homelessness.
Approximately half the women we supported had no income at the commencement of our service but this significantly reduced by the end of the support. A significant barrier to overcoming the risk of homelessness for a small proportion of our clients is the absence of work rights due to visa restriction. These women become dependant on a range of charities to survive.



The challenges experienced by people we supported are shown here.
Single adult women face significant risk of homelessness when separating from an abusive partner or family member. The risk of financial insecurity and homelessness is a significant factor in women's options for escaping violence. Single adult women made up 45% of the people we supported; and 54% were women with children. Our role is to provide information, resources and support to women to explore their options, identify and respond to the risks posed by their partner or family member, and plan toward improved safety and indepenence.
Case plan goals include obtaining and sustaining stable housing.

NPA DFSV Report

People supported



Types of Activities Delivered to Service Users	Client Outcome
Unlimited counselling sessions to recover from DFSV. Provide emotional support and tools to support trauma recovery. Referral to external providers if required. Provide counsellor's report and letter for victim's service.	Restoring self-image and confidence. Improved emotional independence and improved trust in therapeutic processes.
Intake, risk assessment, case management, safety planning, advocacy, referral and support coordination.	Access to financial aid, mental health support, employment support, housing support, legal support and Centrelink; improved knowledge of services available and legal rights.
Support and advocacy in accessing housing, crisis accommodation and housing pathways, and financial support (Victims Services, Leaving Violence Payment). Referral to specialist services such Women's Legal Service, Immigration Advice and Rights Centre etc.	Clients secured safe accommodation in the shelters. Rent Choice Start Safely housing pathway established. Financial support initiated. Emotional support provided. General mental and physical wellbeing improvements.

SpeakOut recognises Jane Banzon
for her work as case worker
throughout 2025 - 2026.

NPA DFSV Upstander Awareness Program

Community Education

SpeakOut's partnership with Euphony Films to create four awareness films have become a powerful bystander community awareness tool.

On Friday, June 19, 2026, SpeakOut in partnership with Euphony Films held its Film Launch Event, launching the four awareness films and serving as a night of community engagement and education. Throughout the event, SpeakOut received feedback from the audience about all four films to help inform future implementation of the program in community.

Overall, on average, **93%** of viewers thought that it was **Clear or Extremely clear** that all four of the films communicate the role that ordinary people can play in preventing domestic violence. Moreover, 92% of respondents thought that all four films were clear or extremely clear in showing how bystanders can intervene. In fact, **93%** were **likely to share** the message or film with their friends and family members. The four films have been extremely well-rated and approved by viewers, and it is clear that they can make a big impact on raising awareness about domestic violence in the NSW community.

Participant's feedback:

1. These films should be shared on social media and chat groups.
2. These films should be a part of work or student training for various institutions and offices about healthy relationships and domestic violence.
3. These films should be advertised and part of commercial breaks in media and movies in different locations.
4. These films should be part of community education and workshopping.

Thank you to the creators Pankaj Upadhayay, Sue Advani and Sunila Kotwal and all the cast and crew.

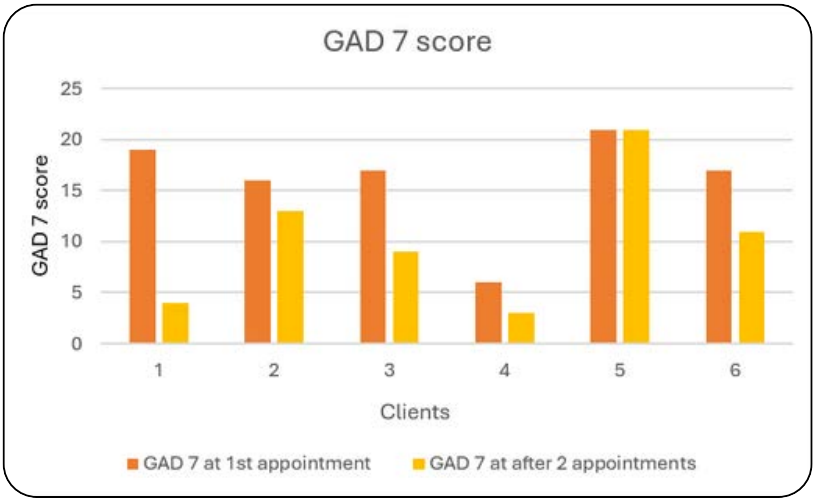


NPA DFSV Counselling

"She has helped me work through the trauma and emotional challenges from my marriage and has supported me in moving forward in my life with greater strength and courage.
I feel more confident in myself, more hopeful about my future, and more aware of my own abilities. I have started believing that I am capable of achieving many things and creating a better and happier life for myself."

30 women
accessed flexible, needs-based counselling

Counselling is offered to all women living in the SpeakOut shelter and this provides timely and specialised domestic, family and sexual violence therapy. In addition, women accessing the specialist homelessness program are also provided with access to counselling.
The counsellor prepares reports to assist counselling clients to provide government agencies such as DCJ with evidence of the impact of the violence on their lives.
A two-stage standardised anxiety assessment GAD-7 was used to understand the needs of counselling clients. The measurement was introduced in the later part of the year, therefore there are only results available for six counselling clients. The tool is used at the commencement of counselling and again later in the engagement. The table below shows a reduction in anxiety throughout the counselling process. A GAD-7 score of 15 to 20 indicates severe anxiety and indicates significant physiological and emotional distress impacting daily functioning.





SpeakOut recognises Varsha Tembe for her work as Counsellor throughout 2025 - 2026.

Thank you for being such a supportive and understanding person during my mental health crisis.
Your help has meant more to me than I can express.

CAFS Women's Wellbeing Program

Wellbeing & social participation

SpeakOut hosted a series of wellbeing workshops for immigrant women in the Cumberland and Parramatta areas. The series consisted of three workshops which were centred on various aspects of wellbeing as well as activities that allowed for social participation and community engagement. The program included a focus on raising awareness about local community services agencies. There was physical activity, craft and dynamic live music performances by SpeakOut staff and participants. The program was attended by 32 participants.

- 41% were 60+ years old
- 41% were aged 46-60 years
- 18% were aged 31-45

88%

of the women gave feedback that they felt the program brought a sense of belonging and connection with other women in the community.



CREATING COMMUNITY AWARENESS

BUILDING SOCIAL PARTICIPATION

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

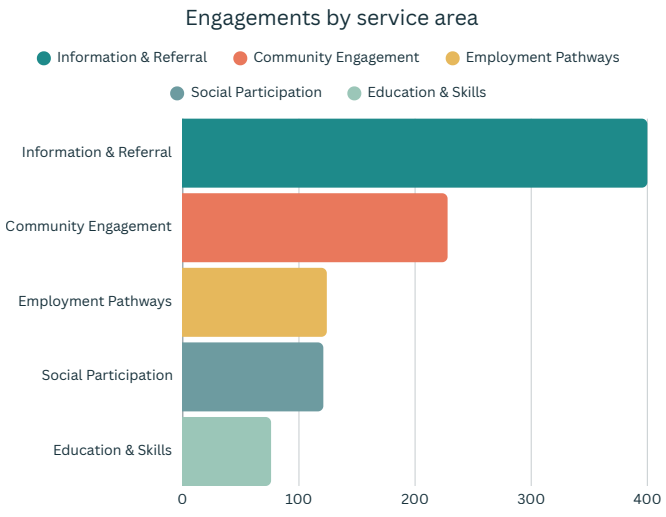
HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS EDUCATION

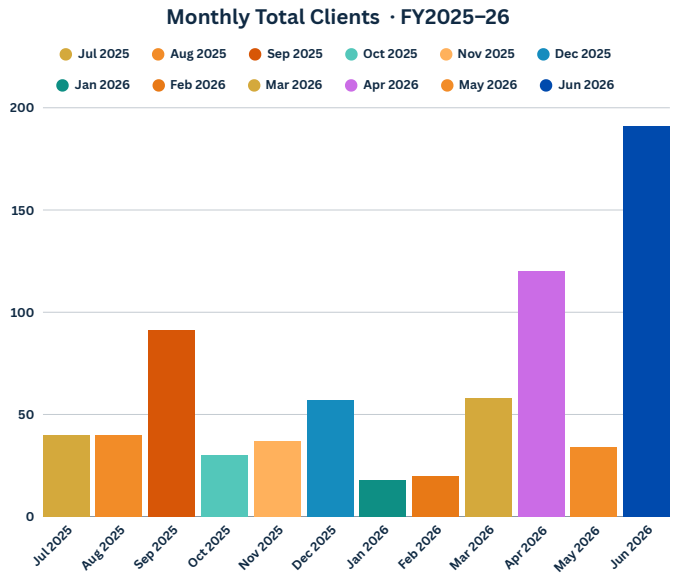
TARGETED EARLIER INTERVENTION & COMMUNITY AND FAMILY SUPPORT

IMPACT AT A GLANCE

The transition into Community and Family Support was seamless. We maintained our community strengthening activities with a focus on primary prevention activities as shown in the list below.

Learning & Skills	Community & Culture	Wellbeing & Support
English Classes	International Women's Day Celebration	Afghan Women's Wellbeing Program
First Nations Cultural Education Session	Eid al-Fitr Celebration	Self-Defense Workshops
Cross-Cultural Learning Workshop	Women's Picnic	Healthy Relationships Education Workshops
Baking Classes	Varied Information Stalls in Community	Referral Services
Sewing Classes		Gardening Program





TARGETED EARLIER INTERVENTION & COMMUNITY AND FAMILY SUPPORT

IMPACT AT A GLANCE

Social connection and community participation play a key role in strengthening communities. Our activities and programs aim to reduce isolation, build meaningful and sustained personal connections, and link vulnerable people with informal support networks.

The Community and Family Services (CAFS) program is an integral part of our service delivery. Our culturally rich, multilingual team share their skills, knowledge and community connections to make this program one that is reflective of community need.

Over the decades, SpeakOut has built strong connections with community leaders. Our CAFS program works in partnership with these community leaders to deliver programs that will have the greatest impact.

Key outcomes	Clients/Engagements	Percentage of clients
Improved Access to Services Information and referral engagements connected people to support	400	69.1%
Stronger Community Connections Community engagement activities increased participation and belonging	228	39.4%
Pathways to Employment Employment pathway interventions improved job readiness and opportunities	124	21.4%
Increased Skills & Confidence Education and skills training activities built knowledge and independence	76	13.1%
Reduced Social Isolation Social participation engagements promoted inclusion and wellbeing	121	20.9%









Our Partners

SpeakOut staff engage with service partners and community resources on a daily basis to meet the needs of people we support, particularly those who unwillingly depend on our service networks to survive. These are women who fall into homelessness as a consequence of someone else's abuse toward them. Without the financial assistance of SpeakOut and our partners such as **AusRelief**, **JRS**, **Asylum Seeker Centre**, **Zakat Foundation**, **WSMRC** these women would be rough sleeping and at greater risk of chronic illness, mental ill health and other co-morbidities.



JOINT CASEWORK

Anglicare 🎉 Co-case management: They provide financial support while SpeakOut led the rest of the case management.

Benevolent Society 🏡 Co-case management: They provided accommodation, and SpeakOut managed immigration application for Family Violence Provisions.

Barnardos 🗣️ SpeakOut advocated for resolving immigration issues under Family Violence Provisions, Barnardos assisted with evidence preparation, and provided childcare access.

Cumberland Women's Health Centre 🤝 Co-case management for several clients, ensuring comprehensive holistic support.

Jesuit Refugee Service 💼 Co-case management for homeless single women, where JRS provided financial aid, employment support, and social interaction opportunities.

Corporate Partners and Donors

Huge thanks to our corporate partner **Dateline Imports** for providing a year's supply of hair products for women staying in the Multicultural Women's Shelter.

Massive thanks to **Lions Club, Rotary and Ginger Restaurant** for providing Welcome Packs, staple food items, clothing and much more.



Employment Pathways Program

The Mercy Foundation provided a grant that enabled SpeakOut to deliver a specialist, trauma and violence infromed employment pathways program to survivors of domestic, family and sexual violence.

24 women

221 individual client meetings

Engaged in coaching, resume writing and jon interview skills, connection with employers, volunteering and education, awareness of Australian employee rights and connection to organisations to meet specific needs.



SpeakOut acknowledges Sam Lim for her work on this program over 2025-2026

