



Migrant and Refugee
Settlement Services
of the ACT Inc.

MIGRANT AND REFUGEE SETTLEMENT SERVICES of the ACT Inc.

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MULTICULTURAL MONITOR

END OF YEAR EDITION

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JOIN MARSS AS A MEMBER

ASSOCIATE MEMBERSHIP

- Can enjoy the benefits and resources of MARSS
- Can access the MARSS meeting and computer rooms during office hours

FULL MEMBERSHIP

- Can enjoy all the above benefits plus nominate members to become a part of MARSS board

MORE INFORMATION

- Membership fee for one year: **\$5**
- Membership fee for three years: **\$10**
- Membership applications are on the MARSS website or can be collected from the MARSS office in Civic and Queanbeyan

FREE SERVICES AT MARSS

- Connect to Legal Aid
- Connect to Tax Help
- Access to Interpreting Services
- Access to a Computer Room

UPCOMING EVENTS

SAPPHIRE COAST EXCURSION

April 2019

In April 2018, a group of families from MARSS went on an excursion to the Sapphire Coast. The excursion included various activities such as some time at the beach, a BBQ lunch, a visit to the native animal sanctuary and more. We are excited to announce that MARSS is partnering with the Social Justice Advocates of the Sapphire Coast to plan another excursion to the Sapphire Coast in April 2019.

All are welcome! If you are interested in joining us for the Sapphire Coast excursion next year, contact us on marss@marss.org.au, or call the MARSS reception on 6248 8577.

IN HER WORDS PRODUCTION

June 2019

A theatre production using traditional dance, storytelling, poetry, music and film to showcase the dreams, strength and resilience of women. To break the stereotype that domestic violence is endorsed by any culture, the production will use cultural deities, folk heroines and political or community female icons to illustrate how women have been recognised for their strengths in all cultures. The production will take place on the 15th June 2019 and rehearsals will be from February on 11am—1pm Sundays. For more information, ticket booking or to participate as a performer contact Asavari Deonath at ea@marss.org.au.

THE MARSS TEAM

Chief Executive Officer

Dewani Bakkum

Accountant

Yepeng Wang

Administration Officers

Emmanuel Bovell

Asavari Deonath

Lauren Wilson-Bygrave

Settlement Services Officers

Joshua Alexander

Chime Dema

Niran Karaeni

Andrew Kazar

Madhuri Sharma

BOARD OF MANAGEMENT

Chairperson

Andrew Alwast OAM

Deputy Chair

Raewyn Bastion

Treasurer

Steve Taskovski

Secretary

Mithun Alexander

Public Officer

David Ng

Board Members

Borhan Uddin Ahmed

Patricia McLean

Simon Kwan Kit Ng

Juan de la Torre

Hashmat Shafaq



CEO'S MESSAGE

Welcome to the end of year edition of the MARSS newsletter!

On behalf of the MARSS team, I thank all of our readers and hope that you have enjoyed reading about the work that MARSS has done throughout the year.

In this final newsletter for this year you will find some of the program highlights and events that we have participated in. I would like this opportunity to reflect on the past months activities.

These include:

- African Awards Dinner on the 22nd of September in which MARSS donated \$600 to orphans in Africa.
- The Youth Symposium on the 11th of October, run by the Australian Migrant Resource Centre in Adelaide. The symposium provided young people from migrant and refugee backgrounds with a voice and solutions for their future training and employment aspirations with the theme of "Leading for Our Future".
- The Metropolis Conference from the 29th of October to the 2nd of November at the International Convention Centre in Sydney. It explored important topics relating to migration, diversity and international matters surrounding these topics.
- Industry Summit by the Department of Home Affairs on the 31st of October which involved an interactive discussion of how industry and government can work together efficiently and in an interconnected manner to maximise Australia's growth and security.
- Diwali Celebrations organised by the Fiji High Commission on the 1st of November.
- ACT Multicultural Summit on the 23rd of November discussed how the development of multicultural life in Canberra can be enhanced and encouraged in a cohesive manner.
- A commemorative concert to celebrate the Centenary of Poland's Regaining Independence on the 25th of November. This event was organised by the Council of Polish Organisations in the ACT and the Embassy of the Republic of Poland in Canberra.

Overall, it has been rewarding and productive year for MARSS and we look forward to continuing our successful services and bring you new events to celebrate in the year to come.

I would like to wish you all a prosperous 2019.

Dewani Bakkum, CEO

STRONG AND RESILIENT COMMUNITIES ACTIVITY:

MULTICULTURAL LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

This program enhances communication, managerial, business, media, planning and event delivery skills to promote community cohesion, engagement, respect, acceptance, motivation and resilience.

This aims to upskill existing and potential community members from new and emerging migrant communities so they can learn and improve their leadership skills. This will assist them in advocating their needs and interests with local government and other agencies, landlords and businesses to assist individual migrants and their families find employment, education, training and social integration.

The program resume in the first week of February in 2019 and will continue to run for three years, so there will be multiple opportunities for involvement. If you are an interested member of your community and wish to participate, please contact reception on **6248 8577** or marss@marss.org.au.



Volunteers from Defence in conversation with MARSS clients

CALD NATIONAL INITIATIVES: MEN’S OUTREACH WORKSHOPS

This program aims to raise awareness in the community on how to prevent and combat domestic and family violence (DFV). MOW is a Department of Social Services-funded project and the CALD men’s only workshops help participants to develop knowledge and awareness on the issue to build the conversation within their own communities and within the mainstream community. Participants learned about the importance of positive family relationships and how to prevent and combat DFV through community awareness and education.

The first session focused on men from Sudanese, Sierra Leone and other nationalities while the second focussed on Afghanistan, Iraq, Iran, and other nationalities. Community leaders and members from the Indian, Sri Lankan, Bengali, Karen and Mon communities participated in the last session of the year held on Saturday, 27 October. Positive feedback has been received from the participants overall. The next workshops will be held in late February 23rd, April 20 and June 22 next year. **If you are interested in registering please contact Andrew Kazar on cdp@marss.org.au**



African Awards Dinner 2018



Youth Symposium 2018



Metropolis Conference 2018



Metropolis Conference 2018



Diwali Celebrations 2018



Metropolis Conference 2018

NEWS AND EVENTS



MULTICULTURAL MATTERS MEETING (MuMaMe)

On the 15th of August MARSS held their seasonal Multicultural Matters Meeting (MuMaMe). The MuMaMe invites Canberran organisations that provide services for and affecting multicultural clients to attend and speak about what they offer and any issues they would like MARSS to take forward. In this meeting we had Warrick Eppelstun from Unitingcare Kippax presenting on Home Interaction Program for Parents and Youngsters (HIPPY) Belconnen and Chief Magistrate Walker from the ACT Magistrates Court explaining the court process and suggestions from *A Path to Justice: Migrant and Refugee Women's Experience of the Courts*.



and female relatives. The production will break the stereotype that domestic violence is endorsed by any of the participant's cultures through traditional dance, storytelling, poetry, music and film. Weekly dance rehearsals followed by lunch will begin on February 10th 2019 on Sundays from 11am to 1pm, providing a great opportunity for multicultural women to share and connect with each other.



Contact Asavari Deonath if you would like to participate in the performance on **6248 8577** or marss@marss.org.au.



IN HER WORDS PROGRAM

This new program is focused on educating CALD women about Domestic and Family Violence (DFV), empowering them to speak about it, and reduce it. The program is women's only and consists of 2 main components: workshops with presentations from agencies that deal with DFV and a dance production showcasing the strengths of women.

The first workshop took place on the 11th of October, featuring three presentations on what to expect from the upcoming dance production, definitions and forms of domestic violence, Australian law and order measures, access to local service providers, preventative measures, (when and how to get help, risks involved) and access to local service providers. We had volunteers to engage clients' children in painting activities during the talks. After the presentations everyone was invited to Floriade for an opportunity to continue conversation, meet other migrant women and unwind following the discussion.



Our last workshop was held on the 28th of November from midday to commemorate the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women. We held four presentations followed by a visit to the ANU School of Art and Design's Graduating Exhibition 2018. The workshops had an overwhelmingly positive response, with half the participants rating it a 10!

MARSS will continue the program with a theatre production in June 2019 under the experienced guidance of Padma Menon of Moving Archetypes Dance School. It will showcase the strengths of women using cultural archetypes of folk heroines, goddesses, historical figures



MARSS Board Members

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

MARSS held its Annual General Meeting on 6pm on the 10th of October. Preceding this there was a Special General Meeting in which we passed a motion to apply for a name change from Migrant and Refugee Settlement Services of the ACT Inc. to MARSS Australia. In the Annual General Meeting we accepted the minutes from the last meeting and the treasurer's presentation of the 2017-18 Annual Report. Stakeholders can request a copy of the 2017-18 Annual Report from the MARSS Office.



MARSS Staff and Board Members

INTERNATIONAL DAY OF THE GIRL CHILD CELEBRATION

On the 11th of October, MARSS celebrated the International Day of the Girl Child with the first women's only workshop of our new *Women, United We Stand* program. This workshop was complemented with painting activities for the client's children and a trip to Floriade. Read more about this program and the day's festivities on page 18 and 19.



PROGRAM FOR AFTER SCHOOL STUDIES (PASS)

PASS helps clients between the ages of 8 and 25 who are from non-English speaking backgrounds with homework, reading, writing, and speaking skills, acquiring study skills, as well as using resources provided by MARSS.

PASS operates from MARSS' Civic Office on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays from 3:30 to 6:30pm, and in Belconnen Community Services' upstairs meeting room from 4 to 5:30pm on Mondays. Clients benefit greatly from the support provided by our generous volunteer tutors.



On the 8th of October, we celebrated the spring school holidays with a barbecue. We invited PASS Belconnen tutors and students, and other MARSS client families to join us at John Knight Memorial Park for food, fun and games.



ENGLISH FOR LIVING

This program offers free English classes to clients of all ages from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds who are not attending CIT or Navitas. Our clients are provided with the opportunity to learn English in an informal and friendly setting. Our volunteer English teachers dedicate their time and expertise to allow for successful and positive learning. This program in particular has proven to be of real benefit to clients as it allows for like-minded clients to challenge themselves whilst developing friendships along the way.

On Wednesday September 26, Judith's Wednesday morning English class was driven to Floriade. We were delighted Lyn, another teacher, could join us. It was a great opportunity for everyone to learn and revise English words for types of flowers and vast range of colours, as well as to enjoy celebrating the end of term. On Friday the 28th of September, Friday's English Advanced class also went to Floriade to celebrate their end of term as well, and to enjoy the start of Spring.



INTERNATIONAL DAY FOR THE ELIMINATION OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

The International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women is held on November the 25th. Three days later we commemorated this day with a women's only workshop to raise awareness about domestic violence, and a trip to the ANU School of Art and Design's Graduating Exhibition 2018. This was the last workshop component of our *Women, United We Stand* program. Read more about this workshop on pages 18 and 19.



PROGRAM UPDATES

SETTLEMENT GRANTS PROGRAM (SGP)

MARSS has been providing casework, advocacy and referral services to eligible migrant and refugees in the ACT and surrounding region for more than thirty years. Under this program MARSS' caseworkers have provided services to 480 clients in 2017-18.

The program also holds life skill sessions to new and emerging communities throughout the year. In the last six months we have had sessions on Domestic Violence, Centrelink Services, Employment, ACTSmart Home Emergency Efficiency and Parenting.



MARSS Staff promoting our services at the ACT Multicultural Women's Expo



SGP Clients attending a ACT Health Services Information Session

MIGRANT SUPPORT SERVICES (MSS)

This program provides settlement services of migrant and refugees who have been in Australia for over five years. MSS provides a large range of services similar to the SGP program and is funded by the ACT government.

DIGITAL LITERACY

MARSS understands that seniors and mature-aged workers have difficulties with reskilling, reintegration back into employment to ensure they remain active and productive members in the community. This program offers a six week long courses to equip seniors and mature aged workers with the knowledge and skills to access and use these online services. MARSS is confident that the Digital Literacy for Seniors and Mature Aged Workers Program will contribute to addressing this gap by providing targeted training. We had 6 groups of 9 participants each go through the program in two terms during 2018, 52 participants received a certificate of completion.



SEWING AND CRAFT CLASS

This program for MARSS clients runs on Thursday and Friday mornings from 10am to 2pm in the MARSS office. Participants meet to learn and develop their sewing skills under the guidance of Lynne Johnson, the sewing co-ordinator. The above program was initially introduced in-order to allow women the opportunity to build a social network and of course enhance their sewing and crafting skills at the same time.

Through the program, participants gain knowledge and become proficient in the use of sewing machines, over-lockers and construction techniques. Our clients also gain lasting skills and experiences on how to start and run small businesses which helps them boost their confidence while making them independent.

With this program being so popular, the class had to be moved to a different location to accommodate for all of the demand!

COMPUTER CLASS

In partnership with the Australian National University (ANU), MARSS provides basic computer training for eligible culturally and linguistically diverse clients. The six-week course offers clients with one-on-one training to improve their computer literacy with the help of volunteers from ANU. The course teaches clients basic and essential skills such as accessing and browsing the internet, using word processing, sending and checking emails, using Facebook, and downloading photos. The course aims to help clients become more independent and equip them with the skills needed to stay in touch with family, or search for jobs for example. Term 3 was the last implementation of this course, but it will return next year. This course is in high demand. To join the waitlist please contact marss@marss.org.au.



HARMONY SPORTS PROGRAM

The Harmony Players Program Provides Migrants and Refugees the opportunity to get involve in playing Volleyball and Futsal. This program gives new migrants the opportunity to make new friends and learn new skills while settling in Australia.

Players are from diverse cultural backgrounds and the Harmony Sports Program is a great way for people to learn about other cultures, or adjust to Australia ways of life. Games are played on a weekly basis and new players are always welcome to join.



JOB READY

The Job Ready Program involves assisting migrants and refugees in obtaining jobs that are relevant to their qualifications and work experience. This program also assigns a mentor, if required, to help improve their job readiness.

Throughout the program, an employment pathway is created for clients, which includes referring clients the MARSS English for Employment Program to improve their workplace English and job search skills. Clients are referred to the Work Experience Support Program offered by the Office of Multicultural Affairs as well as to courses run by MARSS, and courses offered by other Registered Training Organisations.

CLIENT'S SUCCESS STORY

A client of MARSS was recently facing an imminent eviction notice, while also having been unemployed for almost five months. A MARSS caseworker assessed the situation and contacted a local foundation which considered the client's circumstances, and was happy to consider an application.

The caseworker then engaged a MARSS volunteer to meet with the client to put together and submit a grant application.

Less than 24 hours of lodging the application, a representative from the foundation approved a grant— one week before Christmas – which has helped the client sustain her tenancy in the short term.

The volunteer is helping the client find work so she can sustain her tenancy, and MARSS' support is ongoing.

ENGLISH FOR EMPLOYMENT

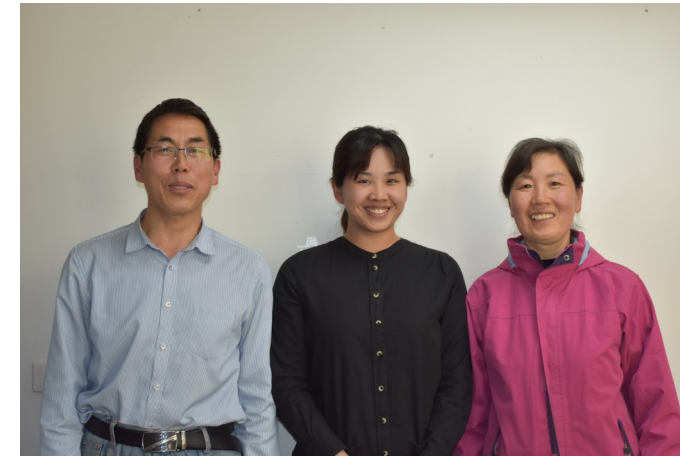
The English for Employment Program is designed to assist migrants and refugees and asylum seekers in building their English language skills to a level where they can successfully gain meaningful employment, or pursue their vocational education and training goals.

Throughout the year MARSS' English for Employment Program assisted a number of clients in improving their level of English for the workplace.



ROAD READY PROGRAM

The Road Ready Program at MARSS teaches its clients the essential knowledge required for students to start driving safely on roads in the ACT and the surrounding region. The course runs for 6 weeks and in that time the clients participate in interactive activities regarding road rules, road safety and essential theoretical understanding of all that driving involves. Following the end of the course, the clients are tested on their knowledge of the course and upon successful completion are then able to start driving lessons. Our last course for the year was completed in November with all 25 students passing the knowledge test, ready to get their Learner's licence. Due to high demand for this course, bookings are essential. Please contact marss@marss.org.au.



LEARN TO DRIVE

This program assists eligible migrants and refugees who are on their learner's licence work towards their provisional licence. We offer discounted driving lessons to these clients, and have recently partnered with Road Smart driving school to provide these services.

HOME TUTOR PROGRAM (HTP)

This program matches volunteer English language tutors with migrants and refugees who are unable to attend our regular English classes. Our tutors help our clients to improve their English skills within their homes. The secondary benefit is that clients gain social contact to diminish social isolation, foster independence and form lasting friendships. In the month of October we have made 10 new matches.

The Home Tutor program has a constant demand for tutors, for further information about the program or to volunteer contact http@marss.org.au.