

# Migrant Women's Emergency Support Service Inc.

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Annual Report 2017-18



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We honour the women and children who courageously took us with them in their journey to safety from domestic and sexual violence. We also pay our respects to the women and children who lost their lives to violence.

The Migrant Women's Emergency Support Service Management Committee, members and staff acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the land where IWSS stands and pay our respects to Elders past, present and emerging, and acknowledge their role in our community.



# Migrant Women's

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Annual Report 2017-18

# Migrant Women's Emergency Support Service Inc.

Operating as Immigrant Women's Support Service (IWSS)

## Vision

In Queensland, women from non-English speaking backgrounds and their children are safe, independent and hopeful for their future.

## Mission

IWSS provides timely and high quality services to women from non-English speaking backgrounds and their children who experience domestic and/or sexual violence.

## Values

- Violence against women is a human rights violation
- Client-centred
- Ethical practice
- Feminist ethos
- Equality
- Collaboration

# Management Committee

## Zoe Rathus AM – Chairperson

Zoe has worked with survivors of domestic violence since 1981 when she started working as articled clerk in Brisbane. She has a law degree from the University of Queensland and now works as senior lecturer and Director of the Clinical Legal Education Program at Griffith University Law School. She teaches family law and ethics and professional responsibility as well as some of the clinical courses. Zoe's research focuses on the family law system with an emphasis on family violence, women and children. She worked in private practice from 1981 until becoming coordinator of the Women's Legal Service in 1989 until 2004, engaging in

extensive law reform activities for women. She has served on a number of Boards and committees and worked in South Africa on gender issues in the mid-1990s. Zoe has received a number of accolades for her work including Australian Young Lawyer of the Year in 1990 and Queensland Woman Lawyer of the Year in 2001. Zoe was awarded an Order of Australia in 2011 for her services to women, the law, Indigenous peoples and education.

Zoe has a long standing relationship with the domestic violence sector and has provided legal advice and support to immigrant and refugee women since IWSS was first established.

## Chris d'Aquino – Vice-Chairperson

Chris' father is of Portuguese background; he was born and raised in Shanghai, China, later migrating to Australia with his family after the communist takeover. Chris' mother is second generation Irish Australian. Also reflective of diversity; Chris' work history spans both the community and public service sectors. She has been working in the field of domestic violence since 1983, firstly in women's shelters and later as a Coordinator of one of the first domestic violence services in Queensland. During this time, Chris also worked as a volunteer with the Women's Legal Service as well as a member of their management committee. In 1993, Chris joined the Office for Women for a number of years before moving to Legal Aid Queensland where she worked on several

projects supporting access to justice, especially for women in rural areas. While at Legal Aid Queensland, Chris also had the privilege of supervising the Spanish and Vietnamese bilingual information services. In 2008 Chris commenced working for the then Department of Child Safety, and managed a Child Safety Service Centre for over 10 years, currently is seconded to work to progress the Carmody recommendations in South West Queensland. Additionally, during her time with the Department, Chris also managed a Youth Justice Service.

Chris has a strong personal commitment to social justice issues especially in the area of justice and domestic violence.

## Robyn Mayes - Treasurer

Dr Robyn Mayes is an Associate Professor in the Queensland University of Technology Business School. She is a feminist human geographer with long-standing research interests in

gender and equality, labour migration, and the enactment of community. She has published widely on these themes and been invited to speak at a range of national and international fora.

### Nik Preston – Secretary

Nik worked in UK in information management roles for the National Health Service, local government, non-profit organisations and academic institutions, before moving to Australia in 2005. She is currently a manager in Procurement and Contract Management, Department of Communities, Disability Services and Seniors. She has a BA Honours degree in Applied Social Sciences, an MA in Information Management and postgraduate Allied Health qualifications. She has been involved in the domestic violence sector since 2005, working in policy and program management with Department of Communities and with Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships, including in the Office for

### Jude Clarkin - Member

Jude has worked in the fields of Finance and Administration for over 30 years, mostly in the community sector. During that time she was Administration Manager at Women's Legal Service for 17 years, and has worked with Tenants Qld since 2012.

### Sgt Leisa Wathen - Member

Sgt Wathen has been a serving Police officer since 1989 and has over 29 years of Policing experience. She is currently working as a Shift supervisor at the Holland Park Police station. She recently worked at the Domestic, Family Violence and Vulnerable Persons Unit as the Elder Abuse Project officer. Sgt Wathen has experience across a range of policing roles having been a Detective at the Inala CPIU for nine years and a member of the SCAN team. Sgt Wathen was appointed to the role of the South Brisbane District Domestic Family Violence Co-ordinator in April 2004. Due to her service in this role Sgt Wathen has contributed to numerous working parties, projects and committees addressing domestic violence. Sgt Wathen has developed sound

Homelessness, Office for Women and the Violence Prevention Unit. Past projects have included managing Queensland homelessness data for the Supported Accommodation Assistance Program, delivering data training to remote Indigenous women's shelters, and supporting the implementation of Indigenous Domestic and Family Violence Counselling services in Queensland.

Nik has been a member of the MWESS Management Committee for the last 12 months supporting the board as Secretary. She is strongly committed to feminist and social justice principles and feels privileged to support IWSS in continuing to protect and advocate for women and children.

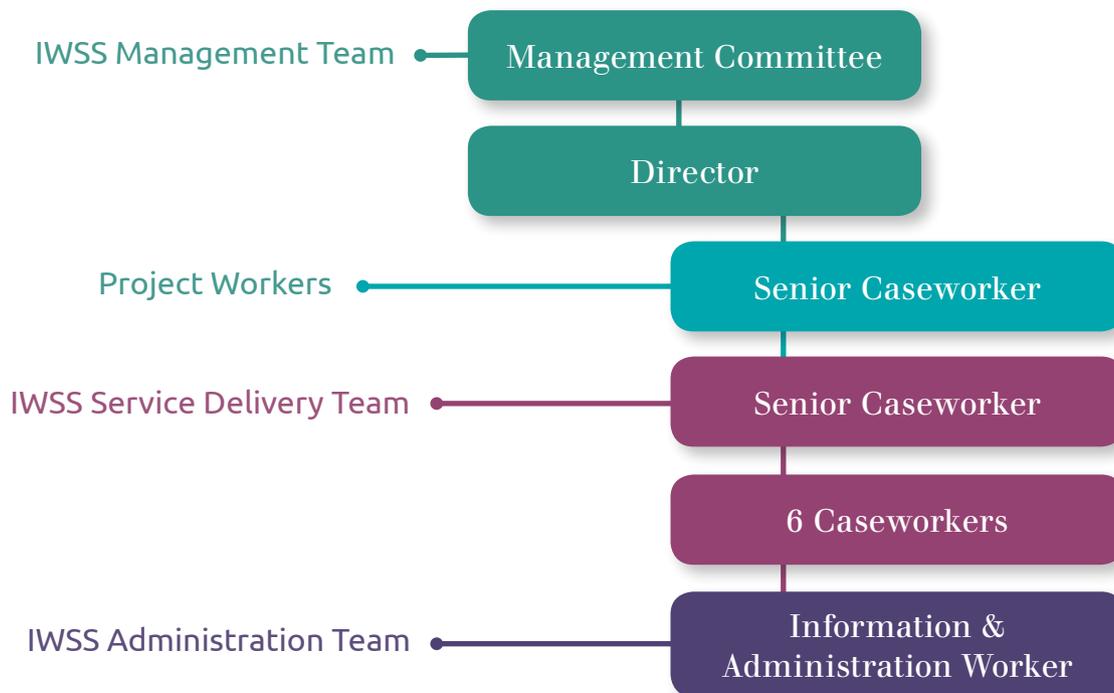
Recently Jude enjoyed spending 3 years as the Accreditation Coordinator at Community Legal Centres Queensland, undertaking organisational assessments of centres delivering community legal services throughout Queensland.

processes to respond to domestic violence issues and provision of proactive strategies to best support victims of domestic violence. She has brought these skills to the development of policies, strategies and resources to address Elder Abuse. Most recently Sgt Wathen played a pivotal role in the implementation of the South Brisbane Vulnerable Persons Unit that works in partnership with government and non-government agencies to provide a more cohesive and integrated response to those affected by a range of issues including domestic violence and mental health. It is envisaged that this experience in forming partnerships to address social complex issues will assist in developing responses to assist vulnerable members of the community.

# Staff

The Immigrant Women's Support Service is staffed by a total of 11 employees in the following roles: Senior Caseworker, 5 Caseworkers, 3 Defined Term positions (2 project workers and 1 Caseworker). The Information and Administration Worker, and Director. Casual staff are engaged on a need basis, e.g. backfilling staff on leave, and staff support as required.

## Organisational structure



## Funding

We value and acknowledge the funding received from:

- **Department of Child Safety, Youth and Women –** Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault services
- **Department of Housing and Public Works –** CAP properties for office use
- **Department of Social Services –** Emergency Relief Service
- **Department of Education and Training –** Children Helping Children Heal (one-off project)



### Queensland Government

- **Brisbane Rape and Incest Survivors Support Centre –** Brisbane Southwest Support – Sexual Violence Prevention Service
- **Consulate General of Japan in Brisbane –** Japanese speaking Caseworker position (Defined term)
- **Lifeline –** Multicultural DV-Alert

## Donors

We are fortunate to receive ongoing support for our Emergency Relief service. This year we acknowledge the donations from:

- Brisbane City Council Lord Mayor's Charity Trust
- Friends with Dignity
- Kui Store
- OzHarvest
- Rize Up
- Share the Dignity
- Telstra Safe Connections program
- Zephyr Education Inc
- Zonta Club of Brisbane Breakfast
- Zonta Club of Brisbane South

Our donors, including those who support us anonymously, make a significant contribution to our work, and efforts in upholding women's and children's basic human rights. We appreciate all donations received this year.

# Chairperson's Report

Zoe Rathus AM

It continues to be a privilege to serve on the management committee of IWSS. On behalf of all members of the committee I thank the staff for their incredibly hard work through 2017-18 and for the excellent operation of the organisation, which ensures the most effective delivery of services to some of Queensland's most vulnerable women. I am also grateful to the other members of management committee who are dedicated to work of IWSS and bring a range of skills and knowledge to their role. I thank Chris D'Aquino and Robyn Mayes for their on-going commitment and have been delighted to welcome newcomers Jude Clarkin, Nik Preston and Leisa Wathen.

I commend the reports of our fabulous director Cecilia Barassi-Rubio and our brilliant senior caseworker, Ingrid Green. These reports describe some of the daily work and recurring challenges dealt with by our staff, as well as outlining our funding arrangements and collaborations. I record our thanks to our various funders who make our work possible. It was exciting this year to be able to implement the funding increase from the Department of Child Safety, Youth and Women we received last year by employing additional caseworkers to meet the ever-growing demand for our services and expertise.

As can be seen from the detailed reports, the clients who seek assistance from IWSS are in extremely complex personal and legal circumstances, often with absolutely no access to money because of their immigration status. The Emergency Relief Service funding from the Department of Social Services is critical. Many of our clients have experienced serious past trauma and are now suffering domestic violence at the hands of their partner, or have experienced sexual violence.

The breadth of our client base is extraordinary. Over 40% of our DV clients and about a third of our sexual assault clients required interpreters, as well as many women who received brief intervention assistance. The numbers expose the diversity – DV support to women from 67 countries, sexual assault support to women from 39 countries and 100s of clients requiring interpreters. Some of trends that emerged during the year included the complete poverty of our client base, disclosures of strangulation in both the DV and sexual assault client base, women being named as respondents in DV protection order matters, women on very limited visas (eg tourist visas) making them totally dependent on abusive partners, and an increase in reporting of sexual assault by employers.

We were excited to be able to roll out our new Japanese caseworker position which is funded by the Japanese Consulate-General. Kaz has been building the profile of the position and is developing a new client base and community education for a group of women who had only occasionally accessed IWSS services previously.

As mentioned in Cecilia's report, we are involved in many collaborative arrangements for delivery of services and we consider this to be an important way to work. Our collaborations with Women's Legal Service, RAILS, Legal Aid Qld, Centrelink, BRISCC, Zig Zag, Murrigunyah and others and the various networks which we participate in mean that we contribute to and benefit from the work of the women's sector generally. We are well respected and are called on to participate in law reform, policy development and professional and community education.

## Chair's Report cont'd

The *Children Helping Children Heal Project*, funded by the Department of Education, has advanced and been translated into a number of languages.

During the year we have also been undertaking an inclusive strategic planning process. While building our plan, it has provided the opportunity for everybody to be a part of thinking about what we do, how we do it, and how the future should look. Thanks to Norelle McHugh for her guidance.

Cecilia's report contains more detail on these activities and Ingrid's provides more insight into our clients and the work of our staff. And that is who I wish to thank again – our amazing staff who give such care so deeply about our clients, and provide them with an expert, skilled and practical service. And thanks to those who look after everything like the money and admin so that everything runs smoothly and to the project workers and casual staff who allow us to do innovative and creative work. And finally thanks to Cecilia for her dedication, commitment and organisational diligence which allow IWSS to thrive.

# Treasurer's Report

Robyn Mayes

The Migrant Women's Emergency Support Service Inc. (MWESS), operating as the Immigrant Women's Support Service, continued to receive government funding for the delivery of essential services. For the 2017-2018 financial year, the funding for the delivery of core services and activities was provided by:

- Department of Child Safety, Youth and Women (formerly Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services)– Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Services
- Department of Social Services - Emergency Relief Service
- Department of Housing and Public Works – provides CAP properties for office use
- Department of Education and Training - Children Helping Children Heal (one-off funding)
- Brisbane Rape and Incest Survivors Support Centre (BRISSC) – Brisbane Southwest Support- Sexual Violence Prevention Service
- Consulate General of Japan in Brisbane – Defined term funding, Japanese Speaking Caseworker position
- Lifeline – Multicultural DV-Alert

The ongoing funding received from the Department of Child Safety, Youth and Women allowed us once again to provide essential domestic violence and sexual assault service responses to women from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds and their children. The implementation of the funding enhancement provided the team with additional resources to meet the increasing demand for domestic violence service support.

The partnership with BRISSC, Murrigunyah and Zig Zag for the delivery of the Brisbane Southwest Support- Sexual Violence Prevention service continues to offer support to women requiring assistance due to sexual violence. An IWSS Caseworker is available at Richlands one day a week.

We are also honoured to have a defined term service agreement with the Consulate General of Japan in Brisbane, for a 2.5 day a week position to provide support services to Japanese women affected by domestic and family violence in Australia.

The Emergency Relief Service, funded by the Department of Social Services, provided practical assistance to people in financial distress. Funding for this service has been extended to December 2018, as the funding thereafter will be open for tender at a date to be announced. Access to emergency relief resources is in high demand, and the funding allocation is limited. Therefore, we are also grateful to our supporters for their donations throughout the year.

The contract with Lifeline to co-facilitate the delivery of the Multicultural DV-Alert program in Queensland and the Northern Territory continued to equip frontline workers with the knowledge and resources required to appropriately recognise, respond and refer people affected by domestic and family violence.

The organisation complied with the grant requirements from the Department of Education and Training for the Children Helping Children Heal project and the resultant resource continues to be promoted amongst service providers such as refuge workers.

## Treasurer's Report cont'd

I am pleased to report that the organisation complied with all financial and performance reporting obligations with respect to all funding received. All services were provided according to our contractual obligations. The audited financial report was prepared by Andrew G. Marshall, from Andrew G. Marshall Chartered Accountants. I can report with confidence that the Migrant Women's Emergency Support Service Inc. will be able to meet its financial obligations in the new financial year.

A full copy of the audited financial report for the organisation will be available at the Annual General Meeting, and the report will be submitted to relevant funding bodies, and the Australian Charities and Non-profits Commission.

## Statement of Profit and Loss and Other Comprehensive Income for the Year Ended 30 June 2017

INCOME	2017-2018	2016-2017
Revenue	\$1,089,770.65	\$922,026.93
Other Income	-	\$9,018.83
	\$1,089,770.65	\$931,045.76
<b>EXPENDITURE</b>		
Advertising expenses	(1,1050.00)	(260.00)
Auditor's remuneration	(3,000.00)	(3,000.00)
Bad and doubtful debt expenses	(40.00)	-
Depreciation and amortization expenses	(7,764.38)	(2,291.50)
Employee benefits expenses	(743,045.23)	(719,562.71)
Other expenses	(297,217.49)	(135,507.83)
Profit For The Year	\$37,598.55	\$70,423.72
<b>Total Comprehensive Income For The Year</b>	<b>\$37,598.55</b>	<b>\$70,423.72</b>

A full copy of the audited financial report for the organisation will be available at the Annual General Meeting and the report will be submitted to relevant funding bodies and the Australian Charities and Non-profits Commission.

# Director's Report

Cecilia Barassi-Rubio

The experience of women and their children and the impact of the violence in their lives continued to shape the work of the Immigrant Women's Support Service (IWSS) for 2017-2018. As usual, this year we supported women who escaped domestic violence as well as women who, for a range of reasons, remained in the relationship or living under the same roof as the perpetrator. This is mainly due to lack of options, to avoid disrupting children's education, and lack of income support to access the private rental market. We also assisted women who experienced sexual violence from intimate partners or acquaintances. As a service, we observed more women willing to report sexual violence, and whilst a number of women were successful, others faced systemic challenges in their attempts.

The women's experience in the process of seeking support provided the basis for systemic and individual advocacy, as frequently, they experienced barriers to access justice and resources, such as housing, interpreters, and income to cover basic needs. Despite these challenges, we worked hard at providing timely and appropriate service responses to meet the multiple issues faced by women accessing IWSS for support. Below, there is a brief description of some of the services and activities for the 2017-2018 financial year.

The increased demand for domestic violence services was acknowledged by the funding body through a funding enhancement for a new Caseworker position. This position, and a recent vacancy were filled through an open recruitment process, which resulted in the employment of two Caseworkers, Nas and Miryeong.

This financial year, we were also fortunate to receive time-defined funding, to March 2019, from the Consulate-General of Japan in Brisbane, for a Japanese Speaking Caseworker position to provide domestic violence services to Japanese women in Australia. Kaz was appointed to this position through an open process. The focus of this service is to provide direct services to Japanese women, as well as community education/awareness raising activities targeting the community and service providers. A total of seven women were supported in the financial year.

The Brisbane Southwest Support – Sexual Violence Support Service continued to provide sexual assault service support at Richlands to women in the Inala and surrounding areas. Our collaboration with BRISSC, Zig Zag and Murrigunyah resulted in ongoing support for the women accessing the service, who also benefit from the partner organisations' long-established resources and networks. Six women accessed counselling/advocacy support from IWSS for the financial year. Suzie, a Caseworker from IWSS is available at Richlands one day a week to provide counselling/advocacy and community education. The service, funded by the Department of Child Safety, Youth and Women, continues to build an identity as a critical component of the local service system.

The Emergency Relief Service, funded by the Department of Social Services, provided financial resources to assist people in financial distress. For the 2017-2018 financial year, a total of 120 people were assisted over 218 instances. The availability of emergency relief funds facilitated recipients' access to medical care, maintaining tenancy, payment of utility bills, and access to culturally appropriate food through gift vouchers. The funding

body announced a tendering process taking place in the new financial year, therefore, funding for the service was extended and is due to expire in December 2018.

Telstra Safe Connections program (WESNET) provided smartphones to assist women to maintain safe access to technology and keep their connection to social and family networks. A total of 9 smartphones were distributed for the reporting period, in conjunction with information on online safety.

IWSS renewed the partner agreement with the Referral Management Coordination System to continue receiving QPS referrals resulting from police attendance to domestic/sexual violence call outs. A total of 78 referrals were received and responded to in 2017-2018.

We continued to co-facilitate the delivery of Multicultural DV-Alert with Lifeline trainers. This year, hundreds of frontline workers attended workshops in Darwin, Northern Territory, and several locations across Queensland including Rockhampton, Townsville, Ipswich, Caboolture, Broadbeach, North Mackay, Toowoomba and Manly. Feedback from participants was positive, stating that after the training, they felt confident in recognising, responding and referring people affected by domestic and family violence to relevant local services for support.

The *Children Helping Children Heal* resources, funded by the Department of Education and Training, continue to be promoted throughout relevant networks and specialist children's workers. We are planning some additional activities for the new financial year, to encourage and make visible the views and voices of children affected by domestic and family violence.

IWSS collaborated with Professionals Australia and the Australian Institute of Interpreters and Translations to host a workshop on *Interpreting in a Domestic and Family Violence Setting*. According to participants, this is the first event of this nature in Queensland, and feedback from attendees suggests an interest in further professional development opportunities. Minister Di Farmer participated in a Q&A session, and the interpreters attending the session had an opportunity to talk to the Minister about industrial and professional development matters affecting interpreters in Queensland.

We also collaborated with Multicultural Service Officers and Social Workers from Centrelink to develop pathways for women affected by domestic violence who are eligible for income support through Centrelink. The pathways are due for review in the new financial year to establish required improvements to ensure women's access to income support is streamlined and claims appropriately assessed. This project was also a catalyst to host a meeting/consultation with service providers to discuss broader access issues to resources and support, e.g. by refugees, asylum seekers, and temporary visa holders.

IWSS joined the QCOSS Domestic Violence Working Group to provide advice to government on information needs and development of relevant resources about domestic and family violence for culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds communities in Queensland.

This year, we also took the organisation through the assessment process for certification under the Human Services Quality Framework, which was obtained in December 2017.

## Director's Report cont'd

Management Committee and staff provided me with invaluable support to successfully complete this task.

Our work would not be possible without the support from our colleagues who provide services that assist us in meeting the multiple and often complex needs of the women and children we support. There are too many services to name individually, but without their sustained support, the women and children would face even more systemic barriers. To ensure a seamless access to services, we have the following arrangements in place:

- Protocol with Women's Legal Service and Refugee and Immigration Legal Service
- Pathway with Legal Aid Queensland
- Pathway with Centrelink

IWSS also provided support and specialist advice to external service providers and agencies to promote best practice in the provision of services for women from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds and their children. A range of activities were delivered including cultural competencies advice and insights into the experience of the justice system for our cohort. Activities include:

- Brisbane Region Interagency Approach to Domestic and Family Violence – Domestic and Family Violence Subcommittee
- Building a Stronger Service System Advisory Group – Review Domestic and Family Violence Services Practice Standards Development
- Brisbane Region Domestic and Family Violence Crisis Accommodation Response Group

- Domestic and Family Violence Common Risk Assessment Framework
- Domestic and Family Violence Death Review and Advisory Board
- Stakeholder Advisory Group Child Protection Reform
- Women's Legal Service

IWSS is a member of the following:

- Combined Women's Refuge Group (CWRG)
- Emergency Relief service providers
- Ending Violence Against Women in Queensland (EVAWQ)
- Greater Brisbane Sexual Assault Interagency Network – responding to people who have experienced historical and/or recent sexual violence
- Multicultural Women's Health Australia
- Queensland Accessing Interpreting Services Working Group (QAIWG)
- Queensland Domestic Violence Services Network (QDVSN)
- Queensland Sexual Assault Network (QSAN)
- Victim Services Interagency Organisation Network (VISION)
- WESNET

### **We also celebrate!**

The best part of ending the year involves a celebration with the women and children we support. The End of Year Celebration for 2017 was held at a local café with approximately 70 women and children in attendance. We successfully sought funding from The Lord Mayor's Charitable Trust for this activity, which included lovely food and entertainment for the children. Gifts for the children were donated by The Lord Mayor's Charitable Trust,

whilst gifts for the women were donated by Share the Dignity and Zonta Club Brisbane Breakfast. This activity brings together the IWSS team with women and their children from diverse ethnic and religious backgrounds to celebrate in solidarity their courage and resistance to violence in their lives.

### Acknowledgments

Once again, the Migrant Women's Emergency Support Service (MWESS) Management Committee provided me and the team with ongoing support, and shared with us their expertise and wisdom. At the AGM in 2017, we farewelled Ayesha Murray and Annie Webster, who generously provided invaluable knowledge, support and their time to MWESS. At the same time, we also welcomed three new members, Jude, Nik and Leisa who bring diverse skills and expertise to the governance of the organisation. On behalf of the IWSS team, our heartfelt thanks go to Zoe, Chris, Robyn, Leisa, Jude and Nik for providing good governance and leadership throughout the year. The commitment and support of individual Management Committee members is greatly appreciated and valued.

Our contractors also provided us with excellent services and expert support throughout the year. Camille Rumble and Katie Henderson from Quintessential Administration Services provided bookkeeping services, and John Quinones, IT support.

We are always grateful to the students who choose IWSS to share their knowledge and enhance their learning with us. We wish well to Sally who completed her social work placement at IWSS.

I also would like to acknowledge the IWSS team for their hard work and commitment to feminist practice and upholding human rights for the women and children accessing the service. A big thank you to Ingrid for leading the service delivery team comprised by Caroline, Miryeong, Suzie, Nas, Kaz and Claudia. Thanks to Ranjika for providing outstanding administrative support to the service. Thanks to Ana, and Ambyr for their great work on a range of projects over the financial year. This year, we also farewelled some team members who supported our work, through casual or permanent employment. Our best wishes to Anastasiia, Hayley, Jayani, Lyn, Maria, Marisol, and Nancy.

I commend the IWSS team for their dedication and compassion, and for placing the women and children at the heart of the service and their practice.

To the women and children, thank you for your trust and the opportunity to assist. We have learnt from you, and your experience informs how we deliver our services and the expectations we have from external service providers and systems. We do our best to understand your concerns, fears, and uncertainties whilst we also appreciate, value and admire your courage.

# Senior Caseworker

## Ingrid Green

For the 2017-2018 financial year, a total of 786 women received assistance from IWSS. Of these, 416 women were assisted by the service through case management support for domestic violence and/or sexual assault, whilst 370 women received support through brief interventions. A total of 291 women required an interpreter.

### Domestic Violence

A total of 325 women ranging from 15 years old to 65 plus years, the major cohort accessing IWSS were from 20 to 49 year olds. The women were from 67 countries and they were supported in relation to physical, psychological, social, verbal, property damage, threats and economic abuse. The ten most common countries of birth were: China (excludes SARs and Taiwan), India, Vietnam, Philippines, Afghanistan, Thailand, Colombia, Iran and Taiwan. Accredited interpreters were provided to 135 women who required language support, therefore 41.5% of these women required an interpreter.

30% of clients identified that they had had a permanent address less than 1 week prior accessing IWSS. 315 clients identified that they lived in Queensland the week prior to seeking support, 2 lived in NSW, 2 moved from Western Australia, and 1 moved from Victoria.

The major source of referrals were: telephone/ crisis referral agencies, self-referrals, other agencies government and non-government (Health and Educational Institutions), Specialist Homelessness Agency/ outreach workers and Queensland Police Service.

The main support period time with clients is between 6 to 13 weeks.

Financial assistance was provided for short term or emergency accommodation, establishing and maintaining tenancy, accessing other external services and for other payments or bills. Approximately 29.8% of these clients identified as having nil income and 61% were not in receipt of a registered benefit, pension or allowance.

### Sexual Assault

A total of 91 women from 39 countries were provided with support in relation to sexual assault, including intimate partner sexual violence, sexual assault from a non- intimate partner, suspected child sexual abuse (of own children), internet related sexual abuse, sexual assault experienced while living in detention and women disclosing historical sexual abuse while they were children. Of these women, 33 women were provided with support through accredited interpreters.

### Accompanying Children

A total of 261 children accompanied the 256 women who were provided with case management support for domestic violence and/or sexual assault.

## Brisbane Southwest Support – Sexual Violence Prevention Service

6 clients have been supported during this period. Two clients required interpreters for interactions. As identified by the clients countries of birth are: Australia, Ethiopia, Sierra Leone, Bangladesh, Burundi and Myanmar.

## Japanese Caseworker

7 clients have been supported from April 2018 to 30th of June 2018. The client's age range is from 21 to 55 years.

## Brief Intervention

A total of 370 women received brief intervention support, which included information about options, emotional support, safety planning and referrals. Brief intervention refers to the support of women who chose not to receive ongoing assistance from the service, therefore normally it is a one-off support. A brief intervention is an intervention that does not exceed 60 minutes. Of these women, 123 required interpreters in 48 languages.

## Specialist Support

A total of 216 service providers and 66 family/friends of women experiencing violence in their lives were supported through information and resources.

## Referral Management Coordination System (RMCS) - Queensland Police Service Referrals

A total of 78 referrals were received through QPS referrals during the financial year. This put our service in contact with women immediately after police responses to incidents of domestic violence and sexual abuse were recorded. The majority of the women referred via QPS referrals received case management support from IWSS. The age range of these women were from 18 to 85 years.

## Trends and Emerging Issues- Domestic Violence

- Women on student visas, without any income and separated from their partners as a result of domestic violence.
- Married women entering Australia on Tourists visas instead of spousal partner visas.
- Presentation of women with nil income and women being subjected to financial abuse whilst being in a relationship.
- The abuse escalating once the application for the spousal visa has been applied.
- Women on temporary partner visa subclass (820) and (309) seeking assistance for domestic violence, presented as having a lack of understanding of the family violence provisions and their legal rights in Australia.
- An emergence of women on tourist visas with children and their partners being unwilling to apply for a spousal visa and as a result women were vulnerable to having limited legal rights and options in Australia.

## Senior Caseworker's Report cont'd

- Family law issues and immigration issues remained predominant features of domestic violence presentations.
- Ongoing issue in relation to women named as respondents.
- Violence presenting once arrival to Australia in arranged and recent marriages.
- IWSS continued supporting women with no income due to their visa status restricting their access to Centrelink and work rights or being completely dependent on their abusive partners resulting in increased risk of abuse.
- Perpetrators threatening CALD women with immigration (deportation) and parenting rights.
- Women on certain temporary visas have limited access to resources and employment support, therefore, have to rely on informal online systems that place them at a heightened risk of abuse and exploitation.
- Access to affordable housing continued to be a barrier to meet long-term outcomes for women and their children after experiencing domestic violence.
- The impact of the withdrawal of the SRSS payments for women awaiting the Department of Home Affairs processing of the application for protection.

## Trends and Emerging Issues- Sexual Assault

- IWSS caseworkers supported women experiencing intimate partner sexual violence, historical sexual assault, sexual assault from a non-intimate partner, mothers of children reporting suspected child sexual abuse, and women who experienced sexual assault in the workplace.
- Cyber sexual assault and exposure through social media.

- Women have disclosed strangulation and choking techniques as perpetrated by the perpetrator.
- The service continued to support international students experiencing sexual assault in shared accommodation. Students report that limited financial resources restricts their capacity to access safe accommodation thus increasing safety risks.
- The younger cohort of women shared the apprehension of disclosing sexual assault cases for fear of shame upon themselves and their family.
- The impact of the withdrawal of the SRSS payments for women awaiting the Department of Home Affairs processing of the application for protection.

## Service Delivery Summary

- More than 1 in 3 women (37%) required and were provided with an interpreter. All women were provided with culturally appropriate support.
- Main languages spoken by women accessing support for domestic violence and sexual assault included: Amharic, Arabic, Bengali, Dari, Farsi, Hindi, Korean, Mandarin, Persian (excluding Dari), Portuguese, Spanish, Tagalog, Thai and Vietnamese.

## Community Education

IWSS provided a total of 36 community education and professional development sessions to a range of community groups and service providers. A total of 655 participants attended these sessions.

- Honorary Consul of the Brazilian Embassy – Domestic and Family Violence and Intimate Partner Sexual Violence
- Mater Refugee Health Service – ‘CALD women barriers and challenges reporting DFV & SA’
- AMEP TAFE South Bank and Bracken Ridge – ‘Healthy Relationships’
- QUT – Students undertaking Master of Social Work – ‘Responding to Domestic & Sexual Violence’
- QUT Psychology & Social Work Students & student completing a DV unit – ‘Responding to Domestic & Sexual Violence’
- Brisbane State High School Students – ‘What is a Healthy Relationship?’
- Community Connections say IWAC : Muslim communities
- Griffith University - DV Course – ‘Insight into DFV & SA’
- Youth leaders Domestic Violence Forum – QPASST – ‘Healthy Relationships Today’
- Communitify QLD – ‘Healthy Relationships’
- TAFE campuses – Bundamba and Southbank
- Inala PCYC
- Sexual Violence Awareness Month (SVAM) correspondence sent to schools, community organisations, health and education Institutions
- Symposium at Glenala State High School
- SVAM candle lighting vigil at IWSS
- Sexual Violence Consent and the Law Symposium
- Mary Mackillop College – SVAM – ‘What is Consent?’
- Domestic and Family Violence Common Risk & Safety Assessment Framework
- Students at Loganlea TAFE – ‘Healthy Relationships’

- IWSS, ACCORAS and Save the Children – Domestic and Family Violence Awareness Month Workshop (joint activity for mutual clients)
- Spanish Community Workshop – ‘Peaceful Relationships in the Family’
- Inspired NAFSi Women’s Leadership Group - Muslim women emerging community leaders
- Women’s Wellbeing Morning – in conjunction with Inala Youth Service
- CALD Listening Session - WESNET

### Professional Development Delivered by IWSS

- Queensland Police Service DFV and Vulnerable Persons Conference
- Domestic and Family Violence Death Review and Advisory Board
- Bracken Ridge TAFE – staff / teachers
- Training for Family & Domestic Violence Workers – in partnership with LAQ, RAILS and IWSS – ‘Family Violence and Visas’
- National Multicultural Women’s Health Conference – ‘Intimate Partner Sexual Violence and Health’
- Multicultural DV Alert – Redlands, Broadbeach, Ipswich, Nambour, Gatton, Darwin, Rockhampton, Townsville
- Mater Refugee Health Nurses professional day
- Red Cross Human Trafficking
- Interpreting in a Domestic & Family Violence Setting Workshop – Interpreters
- Pathways for CALD women impacted by domestic and family violence – IWSS and Centrelink

## Senior Caseworker's Report cont'd

- Brisbane High risk Team – Model Development
- Magistrates PD – presentation in partnership with RAILS & IWSS
- PD Staff at Brisbane State High School – 'Healthy Relationship'

## Professional Development attended by the IWSS team

- Inclusive Service Delivery: An overview of Practice Guidelines in the Family Violence Sector - The Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission
- Suicide Assessment and Prevention
- Pathways - Legal Aid Queensland
- SHIP training - Specialist Homelessness Services
- Evidence for Equity Conference - True Relationships & Reproductive Health and Multicultural Centre for Women's Health
- Brief on Community Status Resolution Service - Department of Immigration & Border Protection
- Information Session - Todd Jacob, Deputy State Director, Queensland Status Resolution Service
- Suicide Prevention Education Program - Migrant Support Program, Red Cross
- Safety Net Level 2 Training - WESNET Safety Net Australia
- Sexual Violence, Consent and the Law Symposium: What is required to create innovative criminal justice responses to survivors in Queensland?
- eSafetyWomen Empowering women to take control online - Office of the eSafety Commissioner
- Sexual Assault Counselling Privilege, Legal Assistance Services – LAQ
- First Aid course - CBD college
- More than 'Revenge Pornography': The Prevalence, Impacts and Available Responses to Image-Based Abuse in Australia
- Revisit QPS referral system - Shannon Cotter
- Domestic and Family Violence Common Risk and Safety Assessment Framework
- High Risk Team Model Development
- Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Client Management System – ICT Team
- Developing Integrated Responses to Domestic and Family Violence in Australia, The next step
- Introducing the Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) - Multicultural Psychological - Therapies Services - World Wellness Group (WWG)
- Legally Assisted and Culturally Appropriate FDR Team - Leanne Faucett
- Business Continuity in Times of Disaster
- Personal Liability under Fair Work Act
- The Safe & Together Model
- Coercive Control and Domestic Violence – QUT Law
- Staff Induction - For new Staff
- Digital and Business Development
- Queensland Trafficking Scoping Study - Red Cross





# Migrant Women's Emergency Support Service Inc.

An Integrated Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Service For  
Women of non-English speaking backgrounds

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