

MWESS INC

ANNUAL REPORT 2013-2014

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CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT – Ayesha Murray

The Immigrant Women's Support Service (IWSS) provides a vital service to non-English speaking women and their children within our community who experience domestic violence and/or sexual assault. As a specialist organisation, IWSS provides: crisis support; case management; counselling/advocacy; information and facilitated referrals; community education; and specialist support to service providers. Each year brings new challenges in ensuring a high level of service is provided to our clients, and that the specialised needs that IWSS provides are able to be delivered efficiently and effectively.

Across 2014 IWSS has seen an increased demand for our services, with 597 women and 526 accompanying children seeking assistance. In addition, IWSS provided information and resources to over 160 service providers to enhance a culturally appropriate response from their services, and 40 people contacted IWSS on behalf of women affected by domestic violence and/or sexual assault seeking information to support their family members and friends.

I have great admiration for the many women who have courageously sought support from IWSS to pursue a life free from violence for their children and themselves. The challenges immigrant and refugee women face in their pursuit are compounded by issues such as immigration status; level of English language proficiency; lack of knowledge of the Australian legal and social systems; ongoing threats of deportation by the perpetrator; racism; and a myriad of other issues that impact on their ability to seek help and decision making. The courage and resilience of these women, and their own resistance to the violence serves as an ongoing reminder to keep their experiences at the forefront of our service delivery.

We are grateful to the generous donors and supporters who provide assistance that enables IWSS to meet the high demands for our specialist services, including emergency relief assistance and the provision of fresh and non-perishable food items. This support allows us to assist in particular our "women without income" group, who are,

Increased Service Demand

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in our view, our most disadvantaged group as they often can't access income support, medical care or public housing due to their immigration status. Your provisions allow us to supply these women with basic and essential items that we take for granted such as food, medication and shelter.

An organisation such as IWSS is only efficient and effective in its service delivery if it has an amazing support team. I would like to commend Cecilia Barassi-Rubio and her team for the dedication, professionalism and enthusiasm they have committed to ensuring that the vision, mission and values of IWSS are upheld. Cecilia is a strong and progressive leader, continually striving to create opportunities for the advancement of IWSS; and to advocate and educate the government, policy-makers and the broader community of the barriers faced by immigrant and refugee women in their attempts to stop violence affecting their lives. On behalf of the Management Committee, I would like to extend my heartfelt thanks to Cecilia for her contribution across 2014.

Finally, thank you to the 2014 Management Committee - Annie, Chris, Heather and Abbey. I have appreciated your advice, support and commitment to assisting in meeting the duties of the Management Committee. To Annie, Chris and Heather who will be resigning at the end of this term, I wish you all the best in your future endeavours and am pleased that whilst you may be stepping down from the Management Committee, you will remain vital members of the Association.

As we enter 2015, IWSS will be there, ensuring that in Queensland the women from non-English speaking backgrounds and their children are safe, independent and hopeful about their future; and that the vital service that IWSS provides continues to be made available to all who need it.

MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

The Migrant Women's Emergency Support Service Inc. is incorporated as an Association and operates within the legal requirements under the *Associations Incorporation Act 1981 (Qld)*.

The Management Committee provides a governance role and is responsible for overseeing the overall management and administration of the affairs, property and funds of the Association.

Ayesha Murray – Chairperson

Ayesha is a business development and marketing professional who after completing a dual degree at the University of Queensland started her career as a civilian with the Department of Defence. During her time with Defence, Ayesha worked across strategic international policy, internal audit and the Department's long-term strategic management and finance plans. Relocating to London in 2005, Ayesha moved into the world of media and began her career in media sales. Since then Ayesha has worked for the Financial Times, Nine Network, Foxtel and WIN NBN. Her media sales career has allowed Ayesha to indulge in her passion for sports and the arts; and has also allowed her to travel, filling her passport with as many stamps as possible under the guise of "working"!

Ayesha enjoys giving back to the community, and currently serves on the MWESS Inc. Management Committee as well as President and Board Member for the Zonta Club of Brisbane Breakfast, an organisation of executives and professionals working to advance the status of women through service and advocacy.

Annie Webster – Secretary

I joined the IWSS management committee in 2013 after retiring from working at the Qld Centre for Domestic and Family Violence (CDFVR). I have a graduate qualification in health promotion and a passion for health in its broader sense. During my time as education officer with CDFVR I produced a range of educational materials including fact sheets and articles for CDFVR's quarterly publication; organised seminars and developed resources that emanated from those presentations; and coordinated the annual Indigenous Family Violence Prevention Forum.

During my time as education officer, I developed a warm and mutually beneficial relationship with IWSS' director, Cecilia Barassi-Rubio, and it was with great pleasure that I joined the management committee this year. Unfortunately my travel plans have interfered with my consistent contribution to the management committee and it is for this reason that I hand over my secretarial baton in the 2015.

Chris Munsie – Treasurer

Chris is a domestic violence consultant with Mission Australia with the Inala Goodna Referral for Active Intervention Team.

She has a Bachelor of Social Science from the Queensland University of Technology and a Bachelor of Social Work from Monash University. Chris has worked in the area of domestic and family violence since 1989. Her experience includes as a women's refuge support worker, women and children's counsellor, and policy and program roles in the Department of Communities.

She has worked in numerous voluntary roles within the community including as a committee member, housing support worker, financial counsellor and lay advocate with the Welfare Rights Centre.

Heather Nancarrow – Member

Heather is a founding member of IWSS and is currently the CEO of ANROWS. Previously she was the Director of the Queensland Centre for Domestic and Family Violence Research, Central Queensland University. Heather was the Chairperson of the IWSS Management Committee in 2006 and her involvement with IWSS dates back to the earlier years when IWSS was auspiced by Chisholm Inc. where Heather was the Coordinator. Heather is a feminist who has played a major role in advocating for women rights at national and state levels. Heather is recognized for her strong commitment to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and immigrant and refugee women.

Abbey Richards – (Chairperson first quarter)

Abbey Richards is a lawyer at Caxton Legal Centre. Prior to her involvement in the community sector, Abbey was a commercial litigator at Holding Redlich Lawyers and was also the firm's Pro Bono Coordinator and the Coordinator of the Homeless Persons' Legal Clinic. Abbey has previously held a position on the management committee of QPILCH and was a finalist for the award of Queensland Emergent Woman Lawyer of the Year in 2013.

As a General Civil Lawyer at Caxton Legal Centre, Abbey provides advice to disadvantaged clients with a focus on Employment and Consumer Credit Law. Abbey coordinates an evening advice clinic, undertakes general casework and supervises a referral project with private law firms which provides representation at unfair dismissal conciliations.

TREASURER'S REPORT – Chris Munsie

The 2013-2014 Audited Financial Report was completed by Andrew G. Marshall from Andrew G. Marshall Chartered Accountants who once again provided his time and expertise. This report will be tabled at the Annual General Meeting and is available upon request.

The Migrant Women's Emergency Support Service Inc. acknowledges core funding from the Australian and Queensland government; and non-recurrent funding from Brisbane City Council, Lord Mayor Charitable Trust and Second Chance, an independent non-profit organisation.

FUNDER	ACTIVITY	ALLOCATION
Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services	Sexual Assault	\$243,300.00
Department of Housing and Public Works	Domestic Violence	\$483,967.00
Department of Social Services	Emergency Relief	\$12,830.00

FINANCE SUMMARY

Income	2013-2014	2012-2013
Grants	\$743,629.00	\$731,762.11
Donations	\$471.50	\$3,445.27
Fundraising	\$228.00	\$1,586.00
Other Revenue	\$16,291.63	\$11,531.81
Total	\$760,621.10	\$748,325.19

DIRECTOR'S REPORT – Cecilia Barassi-Rubio

This has been another busy year for the Immigrant Women's Support Service (IWSS). We have continued to provide our range of services to women of non-English speaking backgrounds and their children in the Greater Brisbane area.

This year our existing partnerships and collaborative activities were enhanced and new ones were developed. IWSS is now an active partner in the Supportlink network, a national referral gateway for police (and other emergency services) to provide responses that support early intervention.

IWSS also entered into a partnership with Lifeline to deliver the multicultural chapter of the DV-Alert program. This is an exciting project to be completed in the new financial year.

We are always grateful to our existing partners for their ongoing support and collaboration in meeting the complex and multiple needs of our mutual clients. Without their timely advice and support our work would be extremely difficult. Together we have been able to achieve many positive outcomes for women and children affected by domestic and/or sexual violence.

The Management Committee provided outstanding support and expertise over the year and fulfilled their obligations under the *Associations Incorporations Act 1981 (Qld)*.

Our appreciation goes to Ayesha, Annie, Heather, Chris, and Abbey for their dedication, encouragement and achievements during their term in the Management Committee. This year the committee worked hard at completing the review of the Certified Agreement while also providing support and advice on the negotiation of service agreements, advising on policy work and fulfilling their duties in relation to staffing employment and welfare. Each member of the committee volunteered their time despite their busy schedules and responsibilities. They were generous with their knowledge and provided valuable direction to the organisation.

Thanks to all committee members for sharing the journey with us. It has been an extremely busy year, with some uncertainties and increased demand for services. Ayesha provided great leadership in her role as Chairperson; it was a great experience working under her gentle guidance. To Ayesha and Abbey thank you for staying for another term to continue advancing our work, your support is highly valued and treasured. To Annie (Secretary), Chris (Treasurer), and Heather (Member), a heartfelt thank you for your many contributions and ongoing support, the time you have given to MWESS in your different roles will be always appreciated.

The IWSS team, once again did a fantastic job. The core team, Sally, Caro, Caroline, Hrisoula, Carla and Ranjika were joined by Maree, Pia, Vilma, Jess and Esperanza, whilst Isabel (Australian Psychology Internship, Lewis and Clark College) and Ambyr (University of Queensland) commenced their student placements with IWSS.

The team's work with the many women and children accessing IWSS' services is vital and they did it to the best of their ability and beyond. This year, as new team members were welcomed, we also farewelled Carla who resigned from IWSS to complete her studies and other professional and personal projects. We wish Carla all the best and her contributions to the team and great sense of humour will be missed. I commend the team's hard work. Their commitment and passion shape and permeate IWSS service delivery and provide the foundation that sustains a great organisation. My appreciation also goes to Katie and Camille for their bookkeeping support and to John for IT support.

I value very highly the privilege of working with my IWSS colleagues and Management Committee; all team members, without exception, worked tirelessly to achieve the best possible outcomes for the women and children we support and for making of IWSS a dynamic workplace and a responsive service.

As always, I am grateful to the women and their children who once again trusted us with their stories and embarked on a journey with us to free themselves from violence in their lives. The courage and strength shown by every single woman accessing support from IWSS gives us encouragement to continue with our work and ignites our passion for a society free of violence against women and children.

SERVICE DELIVERY

IWSS services are confidential and free of charge and are provided either face to face or over the phone. In delivering services we are aware of the impact of pre and post migration experience; we are respectful of cultural diversity; and engage interpreters to ensure appropriate communication.

The IWSS' integrated service delivery model is in its second year of implementation and has gone from strength to strength. We continue focusing on meeting need as identified by the women who access support from IWSS and guided by their experiences in the development of support plans and ongoing support.

IWSS is staffed by professionally qualified Caseworkers who provide practical and emotional support to women presenting to the service with domestic violence and/or sexual assault matters. The Caseworkers provide services within a framework of goal setting and working towards optimizing women's emotional wellbeing and access to resources.

Direct service delivery

This year, a total of 597 women and 526 accompanying children accessed services from IWSS, including information and referrals, ongoing case management, counselling and crisis support services. Of these, 422 women received ongoing case management services for domestic violence, whilst 82 women accessed counselling/advocacy services. The remaining 89 women were supported on a one-off basis with information, emotional support and referrals.

Assistance to service providers, family/friends seeking support for women experiencing domestic violence and/or sexual assault

A total of 160 service providers were assisted with information and resources to enhance a culturally appropriate response from their services. An additional 40 people contacted IWSS on behalf of women affected by domestic violence and/or sexual assault seeking information to support their family members and friends.

Emergency relief

IWSS provided a total of 225 emergency relief responses. Of these, 169 were funded by Department of Social Services and 49 responses were funded by Second Chance.

In addition to financial support, IWSS also provided assistance to women and children through the provision of fresh and non-perishable food. This was made possible through the ongoing weekly food drop offs from OzHarvest, the only food rescue organisation in Australia collecting surplus food from all types of food providers. Giving Grannies provided gorgeous Baby Welcome Kits which were distributed to our clients. The Baby Welcome Kit provided much needed baby items for many of IWSS clients and their new born babies.

IWSS acknowledges the core emergency relief funding from DSS; however without the additional resources provided by our supporters, including individual donors it would not have been possible to respond to the high demand for emergency relief assistance, particularly for women without income and women in financial distress.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Professional development is an integral to ensuring the IWSS team is abreast of new developments and best practice. The following are the professional development activities attended by team members for the financial year.

- DVO Applications - Legal Aid Qld
- The Impact of DV on Children Webinar
- Practical Ways to Work with Trauma
- Working with and for marginalised, victimised, racialised and criminalised women
- Witnesses with wings
- Accredited counselling course
- Hypnotherapy
- Writing Grant Submissions
- Family Violence Provisions
- Safe and together Making good decisions for children impacted by domestic violence
- The essentials for winning grants
- Results based accountability Forum
- Building an effective website
- Building Financial sustainability in your organisation
- Domestic and Family Violence and CALD communities
- Presenting financial reports to suit your Board
- Symposium on the intersection of child protection and domestic violence
- Child safety Implementation of the Child and Family Reforms Workshop session
- QHIP Training
- Swept under the carpet no more: a whole of Government Response to violence in the home
- Homicide : Precursors and Prevention
- David Adams training session
- Exploring Practical Ways of Helping Women and Children Who Have Experienced Domestic and Family Violence Stay in the Home
- Suicide Prevention
- DV Alert- Lifeline
- Technology Stalking and Domestic Violence
- Gendered Nature of Domestic and Family Violence

HIGHLIGHTS

WEBSITE LAUNCH

IWSS launched its new website in December 2013. A great deal of time and patience was required in its development. The website is easy to navigate with relevant and accurate information and it serves as one of the many points of access to the service. The website can be visited at

<http://www.iwss.org.au/>



RECORD ATTENDANCE AT END OF YEAR CELEBRATION



From L to R: Ayesha Murray (Zonta), Carla de Simone (IWSS), Ronald Van Weezel (Hilton) and Cecilia Barassi-Rubio (IWSS).

The women's end of year party was held on 17 December and was well attended by approximately 70 women and children – which has been the biggest turn out for many years. This EOYP saw the highest amount of support for the event with financial assistance from the Brisbane City Council Lord Mayor Charitable Trust.

Thanks to the Lord Mayor's financial assistance the women and

children attending the party were provided with a lovely spread of food; toys for the children who also were entertained by a magician and a face painter.

Once again the Zonta Club of Brisbane Breakfast were represented by Ayesha Murray who presented lovely gifts kindly donated by members of the club for the women and children. Ayesha also gave a lot of her time on the day to ensure the EOYP was a success.

The General Manager of the Hilton Brisbane, Ronald Van Weezel joined us at the EOP along with Laura Price and Tracey Chen who also brought a generous donation of toys for the children and beautiful gifts for the women. We are grateful to the Hilton Brisbane for their kindness and welcome their offer to host the 2014 EOYP at the Hilton Brisbane.

