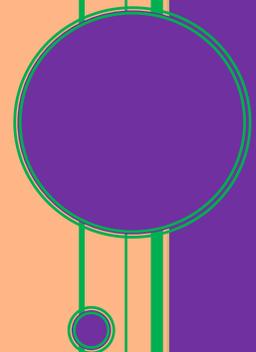


MIGRANT WOMEN'S EMERGENCY SUPPORT SERVICE INC.

IMMIGRANT WOMEN'S SUPPORT SERVICE

Once again, the experiences and voices of the women and their children have informed and enriched our practice. Thanks to the courageous women who have trusted us with their stories and hopes for a future without violence.



MIGRANT WOMEN'S EMERGENCY SUPPORT SERVICE INC.

IMMIGRANT WOMEN'S SUPPORT SERVICE

OUR VISION AND MISSION AND VALUES

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

The Migrant Women's Emergency Support Service Inc. operating as the Immigrant women's Support Service was established in 1986.

IWSS is the only service of its kind in Queensland and since adopting an integrated service delivery model it has become the only service in Australia providing a specialist domestic violence and sexual assault service response to women from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds and their children.

IWSS receives state and commonwealth funding. Services are offered free of charge through an integrated service delivery model utilising a holistic approach that involves crisis intervention, case management, and counselling/advocacy.

All Caseworkers are qualified in the social/behavioural sciences and are culturally competent, aware of the impact of pre and post migration experience, respectful of cultural diversity, competent in the engagement of interpreters and work from a feminist framework.

Women and their children accessing our services are provided with a confidential, safe and a women-only environment where they can tell their stories without being judged or pressured into making decisions.

We value client-centred and ethical practice based on feminist ethos. We also value equality and collaboration and place violence against women as a human rights violation.

Support is available Monday to Friday, face to face and over the phone and includes information about rights and options as well as practical support at times of crisis, e.g. when escaping from a situation of violence or when reporting sexual assault.

Women are offered counselling from a counselling/advocacy model that assists women in assessing their needs, setting goals, considering their options, discussing their safety and other concerns, talking about their feelings, working on triggers, and planning for the future.

Women are also supported in dealing with the impact of the violence on children; and for the women whose children have been sexually abused IWSS provides facilitated referrals to appropriate services for the children while also supporting the women in understanding the impact of this type of abuse.

We can be contacted on 3846 3490 between 9:00am and 4:00pm

Our website is <http://www.iwss.org.au/>

ABBHEY RICHARDS - CHAIRPERSON

MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

Abbey Richards - Chairperson

Abbey Richards is a Lawyer at Caxton Legal Centre Inc. 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's passion for social justice led her to Caxton Legal Centre in mid-2014 and, as a General Civil Lawyer; Abbey provides advice to disadvantaged clients with a focus on Employment Law.

Abbey was recently named the 2015 Queensland Emergent Woman Lawyer of the Year. Further, she has previously held a position on the management committee of QPILCH, has been featured in Queensland Law Society's publication 'Proctor' for her pro bono work, and received the UQ Vice- Chancellor's Equity and Diversity Award as one of the founding members of the UQ Asylum and Refugee Law Project in 2011.

Abbey is also a strong advocate for women within the legal profession. She currently mentors four young women in the early stages of their legal career and has a real passion for ensuring that women entering the profession are well-equipped with knowledge, confidence and mentors they can reach out to.

Annie Webster – Vice Chairperson

Annie holds a qualification in health promotion and in her last employment before retirement in 2013 she produced resources, organised seminars and coordinated the annual Indigenous Family Violence Prevention Forum for the Qld Centre for Domestic and Family Violence Research (QCDFVR). Since retirement and after nine years with QCDFVR, Annie has travelled extensively whilst maintaining her commitment to the IWSS Management Committee.

Ayesha Murray - Treasurer

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, Multi Channel Network 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 and is the current President and Board Member for the Zonta Club of Brisbane Breakfast, an organisation of professionals empowering women through service and advocacy.

Zoe Rathus - Secretary

Zoe has worked with survivors of domestic violence since 1981 when she started working as articled clerk in Brisbane. She has law degree from the University of Queensland and now works as senior lecturer and the 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. She worked there 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 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 whilst she was an articled clerk, she worked together with Chris d'Aquino, another IWSS committee member, as far back as 1983. Zoe has provided legal advice and support to immigrant and refugee women since IWSS was first established.

Chris d'Aquino - Member

Chris' father is Portuguese, born and raised in Shanghai, China, who migrated to Australia with his family after the communist takeover. Her mother is second generation from Ireland. Chris has a work history as diverse as her background, in 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 then as 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 a

number of projects supporting access to justice, especially in rural areas. While at Legal Aid Queensland, Chris also had the privilege of supervising the Spanish and Vietnamese bilingual information services for a few years before commencing work as a Manager with the then Department of Child Safety in 2008. Chris is still a Manager for a Child Safety Service Centre but has also during this time managed a Youth Justice Service.

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

AYESHA MURRAY TREASURER

The 2014-2015 Audited Financial Report was completed by Andrew G. Marshall from Andrew G. Marshall Chartered Accountants.

CECILIA BARASSI-RUBIO DIRECTOR

Another year goes and as I reflect on our service's contribution to ending violence against immigrant and refugee women and their children I feel that is such a privilege to be able to work alongside the many women who have approached the Immigrant Women's Support Service seeking support and information. For many women, making the decision to seek support means an enormous undertaking as often this decision leads to change, challenges, and uncertainty. Fortunately, this decision also offers opportunities, and the most important one is the opportunity to live a life free from violence.

It is in this journey that we join the women and their children in the hope that we can assist them to achieve their dreams whilst they negotiate the often difficult maze of services and legislation available to them. This work would not be possible without the remarkable commitment of the IWSS team. Thanks to Ranjika, Ambyr, Hrisoula, Maria, Hayley, Caroline, Sally, Ana and Maree for their support and hard work during the year. Once again, I feel privileged to work every day with such an inspiring, enthusiastic, dedicated and compassionate team. I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate Ambyr and Hayley for completing their placements with IWSS and for continuing working with us.

Whilst there has been some additions to the core IWSS team, other team members have moved on to pursue other interests and/or employment. Our heartfelt thanks go to Caro, Jess, Carla and Chris for their contributions and support whilst working with IWSS and we wish them all the best in their new ventures.

In the process of providing our services, a range of ongoing trends and emerging issues have been identified including: disruption to settlement; lack of access to income; women unrepresented in court, particularly in family law proceedings; disclosures of intimate partner sexual violence and historical sexual violence pre-migration; and women presenting with complex and multiple issues. Additionally, the issue of limited refuge vacancies continues to hinder women's options to leave a perpetrator of violence whilst a positive trend is the support provided to women who continue living with the perpetrator but seek information and emotional support whilst they make a decision about their future.

Additionally, we also provided brief intervention support to a total of 458 women for domestic violence and sexual assault related matters. This is a significant increase compared to the previous year when this type of service was provided to 89 women. Furthermore, this year we also supported service providers and family and friends of women experiencing violence in their lives, either domestic violence or sexual assault. A total of 472 people were provided with information and resources, of these, 39 were family/friends whilst we supported 433 service providers. Brief interventions and support to service providers and family members and friends are

essential services as often the information/resources we provide assist in encouraging women to seek support from IWSS at a later date when they are ready to do so.

Once again, on behalf of myself and that of the IWSS team, many thanks to the management committee for their vital support and contribution to making of IWSS a great service, accessible and available to the women and children who need it. The management committee supported the service throughout the year through generously donating their time in proactively working for the betterment of the organisation and ensuring its vision and mission are reflected in our overall work and decision making. Abbey, Annie, Zoe, Chris and Ayesha provided sound guidance and unwavering support to the team and particularly to me in my role of Director. Each member unreservedly contributed to make of IWSS a feminist workplace and a great service.

SERVICE DELIVERY

For the 2014-2015 financial year, a total of 917 women received assistance from IWSS. Of these, 459 women were assisted by the service through case management support for domestic violence and sexual assault, whilst 458 women received support through brief interventions, i.e. women are provided with information, support and referrals but they choose to not become ongoing clients of the service.

Domestic Violence - a total of 349 women from 69 countries were supported in the reporting period. Accredited interpreters were provided to 150 women who required language support.

Sexual assault - a total of 110 women from 51 countries were provided with support in relation to sexual assault, including intimate partner sexual violence. Of these, 18 required an interpreter.

Brief intervention – a total of 458 women were supported on a one-off basis with information about their options, emotional support, safety planning and referrals. Additionally, 433 service providers and 39 family/friends of women experiencing violence in their lives were supported through information and resources.

Accompanying children - a total of 584 children accompanied the 470 women who were provided with case management support for domestic violence and sexual assault.

SupportLink – IWSS receives referrals from government agencies, community organisations and self-referrals. Additionally, IWSS is a support agency referral for Supportlink. This year, a total of 103 referrals were received through SupportLink. This put our service in contact with women who had experienced abuse involving police contact soon after an incident had been recorded. The majority of the women referred via SupportLink received case management support from IWSS. Only 11 referrals were closed due to unsuccessful multiple contact attempts.

Emergency relief – a total of 126 people, mainly women in financial crisis, were assisted over 228 instances of support from the emergency relief service funded by the Department of Social Services.

The emergency relief service was complemented by donations from the following supporters distributed to over 208 women:

Women's Law Section, Maurice Blackburn Lawyers – 48 women supported over 71 instances

Second Chance - 30 women supported over 61 instances

Cafesmart/Streetmart- 30 women supported over 35 instances

OzHarvest provided fresh food donations and other items that were distributed to over 100 women.

We are also grateful to our individual donors as well as Zonta Club for providing toys, crockery, toiletries and other essential items distributed to the women and children we serve. Especially for the women who arrive at our service with literally the clothes on their back, these small items can be a tremendous comfort.

SERVICE DELIVERY SUMMARY

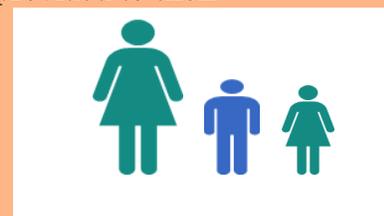
Almost **3 in 5** women required and were provided with an interpreter. All women were provided with culturally appropriate support.



Main languages spoken by women accessing support for domestic violence and sexual assault

Afrikaans – Amharic – Arabic – Bengali – Bosnian – Bulgarian – Burmese – Cantonese – Chinese – Dari – Dinka – English – Filipino – French – Gaelic – German – Hazaraghi – Hindi – Hmong – Hungarian – Igbo – Italian – Japanese – Khmer – Kirundi – Korean – Macedonian – Madi – Malay – Mandarin – Nepali – Nuer - Pidgins/Creoles – Oromo – Persian – Polish – Portuguese – Punjabi – Rohingya – Russian – Sinhalese – Solomon Is Pijin – Somali – Spanish – Swahili – Tagalog – Thai – Tigrinya – Ukrainian – Urdu – Vietnamese

584 accompanying children benefitted through support provided to their mothers/carers including access to safe accommodation, financial support to pay for essential items, services and activities.



COMMUNITY EDUCATION

IWSS provided a total of 35 community education sessions to a range of community groups and service providers including but not limited to Griffith University, Master of Social Work course; Harmony Place; Multicultural Development Association; Professional Counselling Association of Australia; multiple TAFE campuses; Ethnic Communities Council of Queensland; and Griffith University Logan campus.

LAW REFORM

Senate Inquiry into Domestic Violence – IWSS completed section (f) Other related matters: - Women from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Backgrounds as a contribution to the Queensland Domestic Violence Services Network submission to the Senate Inquiry into Domestic Violence.

Queensland Parliamentary Inquiry into Crime – Attended the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee private hearing with to speak on intimate partner sexual violence; some of the deterrents to reporting this type of violence and some strategies to support victims through the reporting process.

Special Taskforce on Domestic and Family Violence – Participated in the Summit held in October 2014 in Brisbane.

SYSTEMS ADVOCACY

Queensland Accessing Interpreting Services Working Group – IWSS has been an active participant and contributor to this group. This year the group has focused on interpreting and translating as a profession. IWSS continues to support the implementation of the QAIWG work plan that includes the development of a blueprint document for establishing an interpreting and translating service in Queensland.

Ending Violence Against Women Queensland Peak (EVAWQ) – The inaugural meeting of EVAWQ was held on 5 February with representatives from services from around Queensland in attendance. IWSS, as a member of Steering Committee and has participated in the establishment of the peak which aims to inform and share the depth and diversity of knowledge from specialist services within the women's sector to government and non-government stakeholders on gender-based violence against women.

Brisbane Integrated Response to Domestic Violence (BIRDV) – IWSS, together with representatives from a range of service providers from government and non-government agencies has participated in the development and establishment of the local integrated response to domestic and family violence.

IWSS is also a member of the Queensland Domestic Violence Services Network; Queensland Sexual Assault Services Network.

WOMEN'S VOICES

ANROWS – IWSS is a member of the advisory group on improving legal and justice responses to violence against women. The main role of the advisory group is to advise in refining the scope of the project; recommendations to the ANROWS Board on the relevant project; ongoing support and advice to the researchers selected by the ANROWS Board throughout the life of the project; and potentially participation in quality control activities (e.g. reviewing project deliverables).

Using law and Leaving Violence – Women's Voices – IWSS is facilitating Heather Douglas' access to women known to the service to participate in her research that seeks to incorporate the experiences of women from CALD backgrounds in accessing the justice system.

COLLABORATION AND PARTNERSHIPS

Multicultural DV-Alert – Lifeline partnered with IWSS in Queensland to deliver the Multicultural DV-Alert training. As part of the partnership, two IWSS staff members attended Train the Trainer sessions followed by two training sessions co-delivered in Rockhampton and Cairns in November 2014 and March 2015 respectively. Sessions were well attended in both sites. Additional training sessions are scheduled for the new financial year.

Kitchen table conversations with CALD communities – IWSS hosted a Kitchen table conversation as part of the 'listening tour' organised by the Family Safety Branch, Department of Social Services. The focus of this activity was on hearing and discussing the experiences of family violence of women in CALD communities.

Australian Internship Program – Through Global Education Designs, a student from Lewis & Clark College, in Portland, Oregon completed a four-week placement with IWSS. Amanda, a student majoring in Psychology completed a project that consisted in developing a toolkit resource informed by the counselling approaches utilised by the IWSS caseworkers.

University of Queensland Pro Bono Centre – May, a fourth year law student volunteered with IWSS to develop a resource for service providers on the main legal issues affecting women from CALD backgrounds who are also subjected to domestic violence or sexual assault. This project is in progress.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

At IWSS we have developed a culture of learning whereby staff are supported to take on opportunities to develop professionally. This year, the following activities were attended by team members:

Innovation Practice Program	Domestic Violence: Assessing Risk & Legal Options for Protection	Symposium/Child protection
Department of Social Services information session	Child Protection Seminar Cathy Humphreys	Abuse on Contact - Keeping children safe on contact
De-genderisation and sexual assault services	Pregnancy, violence and reproductive coercion - research, results and response	The Forgotten Known – Attachment Theory in practice
Supporting Survivors of Domestic and Family Violence: Challenges and Recommendations for Justice Responses	Domestic Violence Death Review	De facto break-ups and money
Abuse on Contact	Forced Marriage workshop	Child Protection in Islamic context
International Child Protection Seminar – Griffith University	Lifeline DV-Alert training	SHIP Training
Elder Abuse	Patterns of Domestic and Family Homicide: a Family Story	For Love or Money: Understanding Financial Abuse
Outcomes Working Group	Measuring Soft outcomes	Red Cross: Tracing Service Information/ Training
Improving Cross-Cultural Practice: Strategies and resources for working with women from CALD backgrounds	Sequencing Justice: thinking about retributive & restorative justice Griffith University	The Second Annual Refugee Conference
	The Logan City Community Safety	In-house workshop Impacts of trauma from a neurological perspective Dr Pieter Rossouw

FUNDING

We acknowledge the funding provided to IWSS by the Department of Housing and Public Works; Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services; and Department of Social Services.

Thanks to all our supporters and donors.