



**YEARS OF COMMUNITY SERVICE**





# A MESSAGE FROM THE CEO



As a community organisation, our focus has always been to service the needs of the local community. However, when we look at what we do, where we've come from and who we service, a larger picture is formed.

Our service area of South West Sydney is one of the most culturally diverse in Australia, and proudly so. Our roots are fed by years of immigration and taking in communities of people who have been forced to re-establish themselves far beyond their homelands. In this way, our existence is very much influenced by world events.

This 40th anniversary publication follows an important tradition established by former CEO, Jan Collie, where every 10 years, our organisation looks back on our achievements and growth, and our hopes for the future.

This time however we also have a different perspective where we have endeavoured to not only take account of the local influences that have driven our cause and reason, but also the international and national events which have continued to change the makeup of our community and their changing needs.

While terror, displacement and political battles have placed so many into our region, what we see every day at CORE is community resilience, value and a desire to achieve more, flooding the hearts and souls of every single person.

Our organisation has been very fortunate to have attracted very talented and dedicated people who have been highly adaptable in responding quickly to the needs of the community and to 'hit the ground running'.

Additionally, we have been lucky to have the support of volunteers who have value added to CORE. Without volunteers, we could not have done what we have. Their commitment and generosity of time and effort to give back to the community has been tremendous.

CORE today has 170 full-time and part-time staff, with some 30 volunteers helping with clients across the organisation. It is amazing to realise we now support some 14,000 clients annually. Looking back on our 40-year-history, that figure becomes many hundreds of thousands of people we have assisted.

Reaching 40 years is a milestone in our development, however compared to others such as nation-wide groups who have been around for over a hundred years, we are still quite young. CORE must look forward to its 50th anniversary and then a century of service.

I expect the next decade will see our organisation continue to cement its place in the community, and to keep building on partnerships and collaboration with others to deliver services whatever the needs of our clients. Some needs won't change with new influxes of refugees who will still require support with housing and employment, but in other areas such as aged care and Australia's aging population, we will need to respond and expand those services.

CORE is responding to the challenges of disability support, employment, homelessness, domestic and family violence and greater demand for early education and childcare services, among many other services needed by our clients. We are committed to helping our community whatever their needs.

We are proud and honoured to work with the people we do and are committed to continuing a high standard and quality service influenced by the community's voice.

Speak up, we will hear you, we will serve you.

Thank you for supporting us over the last 40 years.

Juana Reinoso  
CEO, CORE Community Services

## Acknowledgement of the land

We acknowledge the traditional custodians of the lands on which we work, and we pay our respects to the elders past, present and future, for they hold the memories, the culture and dreams of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. We recognise and respect their cultural heritage, beliefs and continual relationship with the land and we recognise the importance of the young people who are the future leaders.



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1970s

The Setting

1970 Fairfield area was a melting pot of cultural diversity, primarily made up of lower skilled migrants who had fled war-torn homelands.

Post WWII, an economic and defence-based policy mantra of ‘populate or perish’ saw some 2.5 million migrants from the United Kingdom, Germany, the Netherlands, Poland, Malta, Italy, Greece and the former Yugoslavia settle in Australia.

The Liverpool and Fairfield areas drew a significant portion of these immigrants due to the Cabramatta Migrant Hostel, the Westbridge (now Villawood) Migrant Centre, and cheaper public and private housing.

Ethnic concentrations have shaped Fairfield and Liverpool areas into what they are today, but none so much as the arrival of the Indo-Chinese community in the late 1970s.

The first wave of boat people from Vietnam in April 1976 comprised of 56 boats and approximately 2,100 people. At the time, the Australian Government and Department of Immigration had few concerns about the ‘bona fides’ of these people due to the war, and they were processed for permanent residence immediately on arrival.

**1970** Fairfield Local Government area is largely a lower-skilled migrant community with Post WWII migrants from the United Kingdom, Germany, the Netherlands, Poland, Malta, Italy, Greece and the former Yugoslavia having settled there.

**May 1970** More than 150,000 people participate in a moratorium march organised to protest Australia’s involvement in the Vietnam War (1962–72). These are the largest street demonstrations in Australia’s history.

**3 July 1971** Gough Whitlam (as opposition leader) becomes the first Western leader to visit China as an expression of prioritising regionalism and internationalism with “great and powerful friends.” Three weeks after winning Government, Whitlam signs the joint communiqué establishing diplomatic relations with China.



**August 1971** Prime Minister announces the majority of the Australian troops serving in Vietnam will return home by Christmas. The last RAAF plane on service in Vietnam returns to Australia in February 1972.

**1972** Sir Donald Bradman, Chairman of the Australian Cricket Board, declares there will be no further cricket tours involving South Africa until their teams are chosen on a non-racial basis. The Whitlam Government follows suite after election, banning South African sporting teams from touring until policy is changed.



In 1977 the Fraser Government launched Australia’s first planned Humanitarian Program. The humanitarian entrants and the boat people were predominately initially housed together at the Westbridge Migrant Centre. Subsequently upon release, many stayed in the area where an emerging community was growing.

However, this community – like the migrant communities before them – faced strong rhetoric from a still very racist Australia. This was compounded by lingering trauma from the war, family fragmentation, and corruption overlaid by economic exploitation. Robert Merton describes the situation as “anomie”, where cultural values and social opportunities do not mesh.

Isolated culturally and economically, with few structures or services available to them, some Vietnamese youth began to tap into the local Italian criminal groups and the heroin trade which was brought to Australia from Southeast Asia primarily by American serviceman.

A migrant community struggling for a “fair go”, in a new country with limited English language skills sets the scene for how CORE Community Services (and all its previous iterations) came to be.

*Pictured above: (L) visit to Cabramatta/Villawood migrant camp by Governor-General Sir William Slim February 1957 NAA C5102 26, (R) Two of several small wooden fishing vessels in Darwin harbour on 2 November 1977 126 men 44 women 89 children NAA A6180 8127824.*



# The Beginning

The modern-day professional organisation known as CORE Community Services had humble beginnings that can be traced back to the volunteer work of Ulla Bartels with the then-named Fairfield Neighbourhood Centre in 1978.

Ulla Bartels – herself an immigrant from Germany - recognised the difficulties faced by non-English speaking people who arrived in Australia and established a free tutoring service teaching conversational English.

What began as assistance to a single Indo-Chinese refugee in Ulla’s own home in the suburb of Carramar, within weeks grew to a class of 20 people. English language lessons were highly valued, but Ulla soon discovered her students also needed help with a whole host of settlement concerns ranging from housing to employment and accessing social services.

## A social service

Existing social service organisations in Fairfield worked independently, and they were overwhelmed and often ill-equipped to meet the needs of the new arrivals who were often suffering from starvation, torture, family loss and separation. An expanded and combined approach was clearly needed.

Ulla found herself working full-time from her home and began recruiting more volunteers along with partnering with other organisations to meet the huge demand for social services. Her efforts led to the Adult Migrant Education Service running English classes in Carramar inside the Church of Christ Hall, with local volunteers providing childcare for students attending lessons.

**1972** Gough Whitlam wins the election with the slogan ‘It’s Time’. In the first days of government Whitlam abolishes conscription, ends all military involvement in Indochina, and requests the Arbitration Court reopen its inquiry into equal pay for women.

**1973** The legal end to the White Australia Policy occurs when the Whitlam Government implements a series of amendments preventing the enforcement of racial aspects of the immigration law.



**1973** A free Emergency Telephone Interpreting Service to assist non-English speakers establishes.

**1973** Chilean refugees begin arriving in Australia after the overthrow of the Allende Government.

**1973** Minister for Immigration, Al Grassby delivers a speech titled *A Multi-Cultural Society for the Future*. It is the first time the term ‘multi-cultural society’ is used in an official Australian Government policy statement.



## Carramar Activity Group

In 1979, Ulla’s growing volunteer team became known as the Carramar Activity Group. It was largely unfunded apart from community donations, support from Fairfield Council and the volunteers themselves, and contributions from the Fairfield Neighbourhood Centre for operating expenses.

By the end of the decade, the ever-expanding services provided by the Carramar Activity Group included: Direct information and referral help, a playgroup, English classes, organised community events and excursions, as well as Vacation Care funded by the Department of Youth and Community Services.

The volunteer group had reached operational capacity. They realised that a formal and funded organisation with qualified and paid workers was now needed to meet the huge demand for services by refugees flowing into Fairfield. To reflect this change, the Carramar Activity Group was renamed and constituted to South East Asian Community Assistance (or SEACA) at the end of 1979.



Ulla Bartels teaching conversational English 1979 Fairfield Advance.

**16 March 1974** Australia’s first emergency safe haven for women and children subject to domestic violence opens in Glebe, known as *Elsie Women’s Refuge Night Shelter*.

Domestic violence was not recognised by the law at this time. Women were not eligible for emergency housing as long as the matrimonial home existed and the Department of Housing would not then house women and children without a husband.

Influences by Elsie’s, Commonwealth Government funding of women’s refuges commences in 1975 and 11 women’s refuges establish nationwide.



# Ulla Bartels: The founding mother who ‘never shut the door on anyone needing help’



Forty years ago, a woman with a single-minded determination to help those in need began teaching Conversational English to one Vietnamese family at her daughter Ricci’s townhouse in Carramar.

One week later, 30 people turned up for lessons and the numbers then just kept growing week after week. The support needed also grew from learning English to helping with a plethora of issues affecting Australia’s newest refugees from Indochina.

Ulla Bartels had started a new era in volunteer community services and the foundation for what was to ... *continued over the page...*

**24 July 1974** The Turkish invasion of Cyprus ends the Greek Military Junta of 1967-1974 and triggers the final wave of large-scale Hellenic migration to Sydney.

**1974** Reports conclude that 80,000 South Vietnamese soldiers and civilians have been killed fighting this year alone.

**1975** Led by Marxist Dictator Pol Pot, the Khmer Rouge regime attempts to create a Cambodian ‘master race’ through social engineering that ultimately leads to the deaths of more than two million people.

**1975** *Commonwealth Racial Discrimination Act 1975* is introduced to protect people from unfair treatment on the basis of their race, colour, descent, or national or ethnic origin. Racial vilification also becomes illegal. At a ceremony proclaiming the Act, Whitlam refers to Australia as a “multicultural nation”.

**1976** Lebanese migrants fleeing the Lebanese Civil War start arriving in Australia.

**26 April 1976** The first wave of boat people from Vietnam arrive in Darwin on 56 boats. 2,100 refugees are granted resettlement in Australia, they predominately settle in the Fairfield LGA.



Two of several small wooden fishing vessels in Darwin harbour

**20 April 1975** Saigon falls and victory is given to the North Vietnamese. Many thousands of South Vietnamese flee from the Vietcong communist government as refugees and the last few Americans are airlifted out. North Vietnamese Colonel Bui Tin, accepting the surrender of South Vietnam later in the day, remarks, “*You have nothing to fear; between Vietnamese there are no victors and no vanquished. Only the Americans have been defeated.*”

**1975** *Operation Baby Lift* sees more than 3,000 Vietnamese refugee babies airlifted from orphanages and adopted by couples internationally, including Australia.

**February 1975** Australian unemployment figures reach 5.2%, the highest rate since the 1930s Great Depression.

## 70s POP CULTURE: What’s Happening?

Colour television is introduced in Australia in 1975 and by 1978 70% of households in Sydney have colour TV. In 1976, the government imposes a 50% local content quota on Australian television between 4pm and 10pm. Countdown and Hey Hey It’s Saturday rise to be top-rated shows on Australian TV.

Blockbusters such as Jaws (1975), Star Wars (1977), Superman (1978), Rocky (1977) and Grease (1978) take over the big screens.

Daddy Cool, Skyhooks, the Eagles, Split Ends, Dragon and Sherbet dominate music charts in Australia. Sadly, on 16 August 1977 Elvis Presley is found dead.

In August 1974 Beverly Johnson becomes the first black model on the cover of Vogue or any other major fashion magazine.

Floppy disks (1971), emails (1971), the Sony Walkman (1979), Atari 2600 (1972), mobile phones (1973), post it notes (1974), the Rubik’s Cube (1974), the McDonald’s Happy Meal (1979), and Microsoft (1975) are all invented in the 1970s.

Australians pioneer two significant medical discoveries in the 70s. In 1978 Professor Graeme Clark successfully implants the first adult with a cochlear implant. In the same year, John Shine becomes the ‘father of cloning’ when he discovers the ribosomal RNA sequence and clones the human rennin and endorphin genes.





Caption from Ricci: “This photo has deep emotional resonance. We were sending mum off to Stockholm for cutting edge aneurism treatment in March 1990. I met up with mum post treatment in Bremen and spent some time with her. In late April she flew back to Sydney. Sending mum off from Bremen airport was the last time I was with her. Ulla died in July 1990 when I was still overseas”.

... become CORE Community Services - an organisation that today employs many hundreds of people and provides a huge range of critical services. Ulla was born in 1928 in the small harbour town of Varel in North Germany, and lived through the war years with her sister in Bremen near Hamburg.

Her daughter Ricci (who later also played a critical role in assisting refugees and immigrants coming to Australia) tells the story of her mother getting into trouble for feeding Polish detainees through a fenced enclosure.

*“Police told her (Ulla’s) mother to control her daughter or there would be serious consequences!”*

*“Ulla had no idea of the holocaust. She witnessed and remembered Crystal Night in 1938 – the burning of books, smashing shopfront windows*

*owned by Jewish families and the vandalising of shops including that of a family of her close girlfriend who was Jewish. The memory of Crystal Night and subsequent removal of her girlfriend and family was forever etched in her mind. At the age of 10 years, she knew something was terribly wrong.”*

After the war, Ricci says her mother was 17 when she worked with American soldiers who told her about the holocaust which she didn’t believe initially, until she saw films and became interested in the truth. “She (Ulla) became extremely outspoken against racism”.

Ulla remained in Germany, married and had children but in January 1965, Ricci says her mother, stepfather and siblings spent six weeks on a ship to immigrate to Australia.

Back then, there were concerns that Germany could elect ultra-right-wing political leader Franz Joseph Strauss which could lead to further political instability. “The wall (between East and West Germany) was built and strengthened between 1961 to 1965. It was a volatile time. She (Ulla) didn’t want her children to suffer from economic and political turmoil,” Ricci recalls her mother saying as the reason her family immigrated to Australia.

Ulla was an independent woman with strong social values who believed in honesty and integrity – something she continued to exercise even at the migrant hostel at Villawood where she worked in the kitchen (pictured below).

*“On more than one occasion, the food was covered in fungus,”* says Ricci leading to bitter complaints to the hostel manager by her mother that it was unsuitable for human consumption, but also leading to Ulla being fired from her job.

In 1966, the Bartels family moved to Cabramatta along with many other European immigrants. Ulla managed to get a job with a German newspaper and tried unsuccessfully to get work in a factory but was told she was ‘over-qualified’ because her English was too good.



**1976** Beginning in the late 70s is the Central American crisis. It is, in part, a reaction by the lower classes of Latin American society to unjust land tenure, labour coercion and unequal political representation. The Nicaragua Revolution, the Salvadoran Civil War and the Guatemalan Civil War form the crisis which kills hundreds of thousands of people.

**7 January 1978** The Islamic Revolution begins in Iran with the overthrow of the last monarch of Iran and the replacement of his government with an Islamic republic.

**1978** Recognising the difficulties faced by non-English speaking people arriving in Australia, Ulla Bartels – herself an immigrant from Germany – establishes a free tutoring service from her home in Carramar teaching conversational English.

**April 1978** The Migrant Services and Programs Report (‘The Galbally Report’), leads to a shift in policy framework towards supporting multiculturalism. Existing settlement services (English classes, on-arrival accommodation and orientation assistance, interpreting and translating services, assistance with overseas qualifications recognition) expand, and new programs and services are introduced (ethnic radio and the SBS, Migrant Resource Centres and grants to ethnic community organisations).

**24 June 1978** The Gay Solidarity Group gather more than 500 people on Oxford St calling for the end of discrimination against homosexuals. The event becomes the annual Sydney Mardi Gras.

By 1978, Ricci says her mother was living with her in her townhouse when a welfare student from the College of Advanced Education, Milperra sparked an interest in the difficulties faced by Indochinese refugees coming to Australia. So, Ulla volunteered to teach conversational English at Ricci’s townhouse in Carramar.

Starting with one family one week, the popularity of Ulla’s classes exploded but also identified a need for assistance by refugees in many other areas, and an unexpected conflict.

Ricci explains that Indochinese refugees included those with Vietnamese, Lao and Cambodian and other ethnic backgrounds from those countries. Due to historical conflicts in that region refugees were reluctant to come together for information and English language sessions.

Ulla however wouldn’t tolerate that and said: “You will all have to adapt to a new culture and work together” by pointing out what they all had in common.

Increasing numbers of volunteers were needed to teach conversational English, but more was needed to support new arrivals.

*“Casework became a fulltime volunteer task for Ulla. Many people who arrived in Australia in 1975 and 1976 were looking for family members. Relative tracing became a priority and Ulla got in touch with the Red Cross. She also got a reputation for ‘not giving in’ when she was dealing with embassies and Canberra.”*

Ricci says her mother “reunited a lot of families between 1978 and 80”, but she was also there to help them with things like medical issues, family matters and housing. “Mum had a mantra: save money, learn English and buy a house. She became known in the Indochinese community as the ‘Queen of Carramar’. Ulla provided a 24/7 support service and never shut the door on anyone needing help”.



**1979** The Carramar Activity Group forms. The group is orchestrated by Ulla and incorporates running English classes with volunteer-administered childcare for students. Community events and excursions are also added to the program.

**26 March 1979** Egypt signs the Egypt-Israel Peace Treaty, becoming the first Arab State to officially recognise Israel.

**1979** The Australian Institute of Multicultural Affairs establishes with objectives to raise awareness of cultural diversity and promote social cohesion, understanding and tolerance.

**May 1979** Funding is received from the Department of Youth and Community Services for a highly desired Vacation Care Program.

**1979** The Carramar Activity Group changes its name to the South East Asian Community Assistance Centre to better meet the growing scope of work required to assist incoming refugees.

**1979** Anti-immigration group National Action organises demonstrations at migrant centres in Cabramatta, protesting against the ‘Asian invasion’.

**December 1979** The nine-year long Soviet-Afghan War begins. It causes an estimated 2 million deaths and 5 million people become refugees.

**18 December 1979** The United Nations General Assembly adopts the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women. It is the first international legal instrument to stipulate what constitutes as discrimination against women.

The huge support provided by Ulla and her band of volunteers (who had become known as the Carramar Activity Group) for the new arrivals in Australia saw it become the newly named South East Asian Community Assistance (or SEACA) organisation towards the end of 1979. Funding of \$14,470 was also secured for the appointment of a part-time Co-ordinator through the Western Sydney Area Assistance Scheme and Ulla was able to scale back her involvement in the early 80s as SEACA professionalised its services and the Cabramatta Community Centre came to life. She retired in 1982.

*“I am very proud of the work done by my mother. Of course, we’ve had amazing staff and people who helped in the growth and depth of the organisation since those early days, but none of us would have been there, and certainly wouldn’t have reached the pinnacles of community development without the strong foundation provided by Ulla,”* Ricci says.

Ulla Bartels passed away in 1990 at the age of 62.



Ricci (left) with her Mum Ulla (right)





Sue Brittain unloading pamphlets as SEACA moves into the upstairs office at the Civic Centre in 1980

## A decade of change

The 1980s heralded a decade of change for the newly named South East Asian Community Assistance (SEACA) organisation starting with a grant for office equipment from the Department of Immigration and provision of an office within the Cabramatta Civic Centre by the Fairfield City Council.

SEACA was also able to secure funding from the Ethnic Affairs Commission for a part-time social worker, a contribution by the Department of Youth and Community Services for vacation care, and a major boost from the newly created Western Sydney Area Assistance Scheme to employ a paid full-time Co-ordinator.

### Full-time Co-ordinator

By April 1980, Don Karannogoda had been appointed as Co-ordinator and by June that year a record 800 plus people had been provided direct assistance. Services offered by SEACA had also expanded to offer youth activities and camps; volunteer support for after-school study assistance and home tutoring; childcare services in Carramar and Cabramatta; and an increased number of community events.

A milestone was reached in August 1980 with the first Annual General Meeting of the organisation and the election of a management committee largely comprising volunteers who had worked with Ulla Bartels or those who had been assisted by her in the past. Ulla's daughter, Ricci Bartels, was elected as the first President.

The pace of progress continued with the appointment the following year of four part-time bilingual workers funded by the Department of Community Services, and the employment of a full-time welfare worker to free-up the Co-ordinator Don Karannogoda to focus on organisational development.

In June 1981 however, Don Karannogoda resigned as Co-ordinator for family reasons, leading to the promotion of the recently arrived welfare officer, Sue Brittain, and the employment of a new welfare officer. A Youth Development Worker also joined the team.

### Name Change

SEACA's exponential growth and the changing population dynamics in Cabramatta led to the organisation changing its name to Cabramatta Community Centre (CCC) at the end of 1981. The new name reflected the centre's services as available not only to refugees, but to all ethnic groups.

The years that followed saw the CCC engaged in a wide range of civil issues as well as continuing to meet record demand for much-needed community support services. By 1983, the centre had a new Co-ordinator Nada Spasojevic, and comprised of three full-time and 14 part-time staff, casual vacation care workers and volunteers.

Major concerns included the exploitation of non-English speaking clients in the private rental market, prejudice experienced by Asian residents in housing commission estates and issues between Police and Indo-Chinese residents in Cabramatta. Active intervention by the CCC to address these concerns

led to changes in the Tenancy Act and the formation of the first Community/Police Liaison Committee.

In 1984, the community centre again faced major changes with the appointment of new Co-ordinator Sophie Symeou, and a dramatic increase in staff to address the need for childcare services, youth employment, and the establishment of a co-located Migrant Resource Centre in Fairfield.

### Growing Pains

By the second half of the 1980s, the CCC was facing new challenges including increased media-driven racism and resultant violence against their clients, and the arrival of new ethnic communities in the Fairfield area from Central America, Poland, Arabic-speaking countries, the Philippines and Timor. The leadership of the centre had also again changed with the appointment of Jan Collie as Co-ordinator.

Limited office space within the Cabramatta Community Centre and the lack of administrative support were creating growing pains for an organisation that by 1986 had now attracted funding for pilot programmes from the Federal Office of Youth Affairs. The Centre also had funds provided for study assistance programmes, recreation projects and numerous employment and community training programmes – all requiring additional staff and resources.

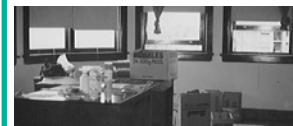
Co-ordinator Jan Collie reported that Cabramatta Community Centre was facing a potential crisis with many of the centre's projects attracting only short-term or pilot funding that made it difficult for longer term planning and created expectations these projects would continue once funding stopped. Attracting experienced staff for short-term appointments was a problem.

The growth of the community centre's operations continued however in 1987 with projects to raise funds for small youth groups targeting Timorese, Jordanian and Khmer youth. The organisation also identified a need to assist elderly residents in Fairfield, the requirement for transport services and childcare services in the city's outlying areas and expanding demand for education support for non-English speaking students.



Cabramatta Community Centre picnic during the early 1980s

**1980** Permission is given by Fairfield City Council to use Cabramatta Civic Centre for operations.



**1980** Youth services increase to include a basketball team (established with Cabramatta Police Boys Club), youth activities and camps, after school study assistance, extended home tutoring, social events and childcare services.

**1980** Evidence suggests that HIV is present, and being transmitted, in Europe, the Americas, Africa and Australia. The disease has travelled unseen and unchecked and it is estimated that as many as 300,000 people may already be infected worldwide.

**April 1980** Don Karannogoda is employed as the first paid Co-ordinator of the service.



**1980** By June more than 800 people are already directly assisted with settlement issues by the service.

**August 1980** First Annual General Meeting held. First elected committee includes Ricci Bartels (President), Em Luu Doan (VP), Sue James (VP), Anne Falappi (Secretary), Khamphan Sittadah (Treasurer), Kim Meng Tran, Robyn Vote, Gary Lee, Oudonne Souvannarath, Meng Kongmalavong, La Soy Chommanivong, Quang Tu Nguyen.

**11 September 1980** Iran–Iraq War begins when Iraq invades Iran. It does not end until 20 August 1988 when Iran accepted the UN-brokered ceasefire. During this time, Sydney's Muslim population increases by 90%.

**1981** Funding is received to employ four part time bilingual workers from Vietnamese, Khmer, Hmong and Lao backgrounds.

**1981** Formally recognised and funded as a Migrant Neighbourhood Centre, the only one in New South Wales.

**1981** Occasional Child Care Service extends to four mornings per week at Carramar and Cabramatta.



**1981** Name changes from South East Asian Community Assistance Centre to Cabramatta Community Centre. 1982 Annual Report states: "with this name change it is envisaged that not only refugees, but all ethnic groups will come to identify the Centre as a place where they can get together for friendship, action on community issues, exchange of information, and mutual support."



Sue Brittain, Alan Haynes and Rod Plant in the office

**1981** Cabramatta Youth Team roots establish with the employment of a Youth Development Worker.



## Cabramatta Image

Looming large for the Cabramatta Community Centre was the need to improve the image of the suburb which had been battered by media reporting on Indo-Chinese criminal activity particularly related to illegal drug distribution and usage. By 1988, the Centre was also dealing with de-funding of the community arts programme, on-going housing issues for migrants, high youth unemployment and cuts to youth support projects. The CCC however continued to take on more projects adding to administrative wows, funding constraints and putting further pressure on limited office space.

The outlook improved in the final year of the decade with Fairfield City Council promising to refurbish the centre's offices. The Council also agreed to refurbish an old caretaker's flat to house the Youth Team whose services had expanded to include drug and alcohol counselling, and a funded Study Assistance Programme. This eased some of the overcrowding issues for the CCC which had also changed leadership with the appointment of Acting Executive Officer Ricci Bartels, following the departure in June of Co-ordinator Jan Collie to take up a teaching role.

The decade closed with a major and highly successful initiative to form the Racial Equality Action Lobby (REAL). Media skills were provided to local community services staff to help them address negative stereotypes and racism in news reporting. Enormous support was received from print, radio and TV journalists who volunteered their time to run workshops.



English classes at the church hall in Carramar. Fairfield Advance 1981.

## Executive Committee signals change

Ricci Bartels realised that official funding for the first time, appointment of a part-time co-ordinator and professionalising of an organisation with an inaugural Annual General Meeting in 1980 to elect an executive committee was a major catalyst for change.

*"I remember thinking at the time – we've really got to perform now."*

The legacy of the organisation founded through the efforts of Ricci's mother, Ulla, and many other volunteers was unmatched, but formal funding brought with it a requirement for financial accountability and a more centralised and co-ordinated approach to service provision.

In 1980, the South East Asian Community Assistance (SEACA) body set about meeting the challenges of the new decade by successfully seeking more grants for community services and pushing for a Migrant Resource Centre for Fairfield.

Ricci recalls one of the first moves was for another name change to broaden understanding within the community of the services provided by the SEACA organisation. *"We did change the name to the Cabramatta Community Centre (CCC) (at the end of 1981) and it did assist in diversifying our client base and in getting more grants ... so I guess it made sense".*

For the decades that followed, Ricci served in various capacities as a volunteer on the executive board of SEACA and CCC including as President.



Ricci Bartels in 1989 as Acting Executive Officer

# ETHNIC GROUP ROLE IS PRAISED

She was employed as Co-ordinator of the Fairfield Migrant Resource Centre (FMRC) division of CCC from 1988 to 1990 before resigning to travel overseas. Ricci re-applied successfully for the position of FMRC Co-ordinator in the latter part of 1990. She left prior to the organisation's more recent name change to CORE Community Services.

*"Looking back, so many things were achieved, but if I had to pick one it would be that we ran the only Community Centre based needle exchange program (to prevent drug users discarding needles and syringes in public places and potentially infecting others and themselves with HIV and other diseases). I am very proud of that."*

She also reflects on the *"amazing work"* done in aged care, youth services and other areas in more recent years.

*"I am very proud to have been part the journey begun under Ulla in 1978 – an indomitable fighter. It has been an exceptional journey in community development unmatched by any other organisation."*

*"I really wish CORE another 40 years of incredible service, and to create their own legacy."*

**A senior member of a State Government committee has claimed that ethnic communities in the Fairfield district will play a vital role in the future growth of New South Wales.**

In an exclusive interview with The Guardian, Mr Paulo Totaro, chairman of The NSW Ethnic Affairs Commission, said the district would be a testing ground for "community relations of the future."

Speaking at the Cabramatta Community Centre, where he handed over a \$13,000 cheque on behalf of the commission, Mr Totaro declared the Fairfield and Cabramatta areas to be of vital importance.

### Watch

"The commission firmly believes that in the past few years, Australia has been a marvellous place for the integration of people from many countries."

"There are more than 20 nationalities in Fairfield and Cabramatta."

district.

"And this has meant two main things," he emphasised.

"From an economic viewpoint, migrants were given an education, child care facilities and jobs."

"And secondly, they are given an integration of the heart by forming friendships with Australians."

Mr Totaro said Cabramatta-Fairfield had the potential to become one of the most important areas in Australia for ethnic relations.

The 11 commissioners visited Cabramatta after holding their monthly meeting at the Fairfield City Council chambers.

Attending the meeting were The Mayor, Aid Keith Dunn and council welfare officers.

Totaro said.

"Only 10,000 of the 190,000 books in the Cabramatta library are in foreign languages," Mr Totaro explained.

A main objective of the commission is to encourage ethnic people to enter in local community life.

All aspects of ethnic affairs are monitored by the commission, which recommends suitable State Government action.

The \$13,000 was accepted from the commission by Sue Brittain, the Cabramatta Community Centre co-ordinator.

Vietnamese, Laotian and Cambodian welfare workers, employed by the centre, will benefit from the grant.

**1981** The NSW Government becomes the first Australian government to appoint a taskforce to conduct an inquiry into domestic violence, leading to significant policy changes.

**1981** Special Humanitarian Program is established by Fraser Government for people who are outside their home country and have experienced gross violations of human rights, therefore cannot return.

**1981** A review of the Galbally Report implementation by the Australian Institute for Multicultural Affairs, finds there are inadequacies in migrant programs and services, and makes a further 89 recommendations at a net cost of \$6 million.

**August 1981** A working party examines the Tenancy Act after local migrants increasingly deal with exploitation issues. A report titled *Reforming A Feudal Law* is compiled for the Australian Consumer's Association.

**RENTAL RIP-OFFS**  
A meeting was held in the Cabramatta Civic Centre last week to discuss the tenancy problems of South East Asians and other newly arrived migrants. Representatives from nine organisations attended the meeting which was called by the SEACA Centre. From the discussion it became quite

**1982** Operations increase and more space is utilised at the Cabramatta Civic Centre, including offices and the reception area. 2,062 enquiries and on average 18 clients per day visit the Cabramatta centre. By 1982, 55,000 Vietnamese refugees have been resettled in Australia with 20% residing in Cabramatta.



Among the first migrants from Vietnam

**October 1982** Professor Ronald Penny, an immunologist at St Vincent's Hospital in Sydney, identifies the first case of AIDS in Australia.

**23 December 1982** A bomb explodes outside the Israeli Consulate in Sydney, injuring two and causing extensive damage. A few hours later, a bomb partially explodes outside a Jewish soccer club.

**1983** Sue Brittan (right) resigns as Coordinator and is replaced by Nada Spasojevic.



**1983** Khmer Interagency establishes. Staff cohort includes three full time, fourteen part time, and casual vacation care workers.

**1983** Western Sydney Community Forum establishes to coordinate and enhance the outcomes of community groups in Western Sydney.

**1983** First ever Community/Police Liaison Committee establishes due to complaints received about prejudice experienced by local Asian residents and an increase in issues with law enforcement.

## 80s POP CULTURE: What's Happening?

The first Automatic Teller Machines (ATMs) are introduced for bank customers in Sydney and in June 1988 the \$2 coin goes into circulation replacing the \$2 note.

MTV goes on the air for the first time on August 1st 1981 with the words: *"Ladies and gentlemen, rock and roll"*. The first music video to air on the station is *"Video Killed the Radio Star"* by The Buggles.

MacIntosh computers (1984), the World Wide Web (1989), Nintendo Gameboys (1989), the world's first artificial heart (1982) and the world's first commercials compact disk player (1982) are invented. Australia's first test-tube baby, Candice Reed, is also born (June 23 1980).

Dr. Alec Jeffreys discovers repetitive patterns of DNA in humans, effectively discovering that each of us has individual DNA and genetic fingerprinting can be used to solve crimes.

On **April 24th 1986** *Crocodile Dundee* is released, putting Australian culture on the world stage.

Australian acts AC/DC, INXS, Midnight Oil and Kylie Minogue garner international success with their albums.

**8 December 1980**, English musician John Lennon, formerly of the Beatles, is fatally shot in New York City.

On Sunday **September 1st 1985** the Titanic wreck (sunk in 1912) is found.

Cultural phenomenon *The Simpsons* premieres on **December 17th 1989**.



# TENACITY IS A KEY TO SUE'S SUCCESS

WITH HER bright blue eyes, serious smile and experience that belies her years, Sue Brittain is all set to change people's lives.

Change people's lives through the South East Asian Community Assistance, that is.

At 22 years of age, Sue is a very youthful co-ordinator of the SEACA centre at Cabramatta.

And she is determined not to let her age and lack of years hinder

her from fulfilling a very important task.

"Since 1976, 5,100 Indo-Chinese refugees have moved into the Fairfield area," she said.

"And to cope with this number we need plenty of volunteers to help out with English classes and orientation programs, youth centre, and vacation care programs that SEACA runs.

"But I never feel that I am out on a limb as I have the SEACA committee to back me up all the time."

As co-ordinator of SEACA, it is Sue's job to organise, community development to ensure that migrants to Fairfield are blended into the community of Fairfield as smoothly as possible.

"People say that I am young for the job that I have, but I just don't think about it," said Sue.

"The fact that I am 22 just doesn't crop up in the daily situations that I handle."

"I see myself as a practical person, more of a realist than an idealist."

"You just have to have those sort of qualities to do a good job," she said.



## Excitement, compassion and tears for 'eye-opening' role in Cabramatta

Sue Brittain recalls her excitement at being offered her first professional role as Welfare Officer and shortly after as Co-ordinator in a place in south-west Sydney called Cabramatta.

*"I was fresh out of Uni and had been working with the Australian Bureau of Statistics when I got the Cabramatta job. I'd never been to Cabramatta before and I knew the pressure would be on to provide practical help to migrants and refugees."*

*"It is important to just listen and what I learnt was a total eye-opener for a young person. Sometimes, I would sit at my desk in tears after hearing what people had been through,"* Sue says.

Her work was guided by showing compassion and helping make life a little easier for clients.

*"I recall a Cambodian refugee needing help to sponsor her relative from Cambodia. As we filled out her sponsorship application it became*

*apparent that she had lost her entire family and only had one remaining relative in a refugee camp that she desperately wanted to bring to Australia."*

What really helped says Sue was the appointment of bilingual language officers, adding that personally being able to speak some French did assist her with some clients, but having the bilingual team took away a lot of the stress.

Cabramatta in the early eighties experienced a backlash against the influx of Indo-Chinese refugees which made their transition into Australian culture difficult.

Real Estate agencies were also taking advantage of refugees and immigrants. They were refusing to refund bonds, charging excessive rents, and entering rental premises without permission, Sue says, adding that this made life difficult because a stable and secure home is critical to the future settlement of those coming into Australia.

*"We were able to produce a booklet to tell our clients about rental procedures, and we worked with the Tenant's Union to bring about changes to the Residential Tenancies Act that provided some protection for our clients."*

A myriad of immigration issues kept the Cabramatta Community Centre busy, but the introduction of voluntary community-based programs helped with the settlement of new arrivals into Australia.

*"Unaccompanied minors were supported by the Youth Team. We also had family picnics that attracted hundreds of people. There were various Youth activities and Community concerts in which families from all the different communities actively participated. We established school holiday programs for the Indo-Chinese community children. Volunteers also helped with a homework*

*program,"* Sue explains.

*"The management committee and volunteers provided great support. They were so dedicated."*

*"What I experienced at the time was challenging, inspiring and exciting. It was a massive learning curve. Today, we have such a vibrant community, whereas I remember when there was only one Vietnamese restaurant."*

Sue Brittain pays tribute to the founders of CORE (and its predecessor organisations) such as Ulla and Rikki Bartels who deserve real credit for their efforts in establishing an organisation that has now lasted 40 years, and undoubtedly will achieve a half-century of operations in 10 years' time.

She concludes that CORE has come a long way from a single one-room operation to what the organisation is today.



Sue Brittain face painting at CCC picnic in 1981

**July 1983** Australia's first AIDS death occurs at Melbourne's Prince Henry's Hospital. There are seven other confirmed cases of AIDS in 1983 in Australia.

**1983 A** mobile office is built at Villawood Primary School after funding is received for the Carramar Community Project.



**1984** Comments by Professor Blainey regarding immigration policies see an increase in overt racism and violence in the area and many requests for comment from media. Blainey claimed that the pace of Asian migration was too high, that it threatened the "social cohesion" of Australia, that migrants generally took "Australian" jobs and unless major changes were made to immigration policy, racial conflict and violence would ensue.

**1984** Nada Spasojevic resigns as Coordinator and is replaced by Sophie Symeou.

**1984 Fairfield** Multicultural Youth Project takes 30 young people away at a time during school holidays to bridge an understanding between young people from different backgrounds.



**1984** Two years of funding is received for an Ethnic Youth Worker Training Program, enabling eight young people from Khmer, Vietnamese, Spanish and former-Yugoslavia backgrounds to be employed and trained in all areas of youth work.



**February 1984** The highly controversial Medicare system is introduced, establishing basic health care for all Australians.

**1984** The Childcare service moves to the Arthur West Hall in Cabra Vale Park and is better provided with staff and equipment thanks to a partnership with the Kindergarten Union.



**1984** The first Dragon Boat races are organised by Sing Tao newspaper, they are still an annual Sydney event.

**February 1985** Sophie Symeou resigns as Coordinator and is replaced by Jan Collie (pictured), who holds the position for 26 years.



**December 1984** With the aid of China, Iran opens a nuclear research center in Isfahan. The United States announces concerns that the nuclear energy program could lead to the development of nuclear weapons.

**16 November 1984** In Sydney, following reports of blood being donated by a gay man and infecting children causing three infant deaths, a group of angry men roam Oxford Street bashing homosexuals and kicking in the doors of gay bars.

**1984** Centre involves itself with the Schools and Community Advancing Racial Equity Group which aims to combat the current spate of racism emerging in the community and media.


**September 1984** Prime Minister Bob Hawke stands in front of television cameras with tears rolling down his cheeks after being questioned about drugs and his daughter's heroin addiction. Hawke convenes a special premiers' conference in April 1985 to conceive a National Drug Strategy.

**1984** A new Multicultural Children's Project develops multicultural resources for childcare centres and implements a Multicultural Child Care Policy at the Centre's services.

**1984** An Informational/Clerical Unit trains four young immigrant women with administration skills, helping each to enter fulltime employment.


**1984** A federal task force is set up to coordinate the campaign against AIDS.



 **1985** Centre purchases two Adler computers – the first computers the organisation owns. A fully computerised accounting package is implemented. Five years later, the Centre will get its first fax machine.

 **1985** Ricci Bartels resigns from the Management Committee.

 **April 1985** The Australian Prime Minister, State Premiers and Territory leaders convene a Drug Summit to decide upon a national approach to rising usage of illicit drugs. It is the first time since WWII that Australia's political leaders meet to discuss non-financial matters. "Harm minimisation" is approved and endorsed as the basis for Australia's response to the abuse of illicit drugs.

 **9 April 1985** A suicide car bomber drives an explosive-laden vehicle into an Israeli army patrol, killing two soldiers. This is the world's first female suicide bomber at just 17 years old.

 **October 1985** Funding for the Fairfield Migrant Resource Centre is obtained and sold as an Australian pilot due to it being the only Migrant Resource Centre attached to a Neighbourhood Centre.

 **26 October 1985** Uluru is handed back to the traditional owners, the Anangu.



NAA A8746 KV4718533

 **December 1985** First Needle and Syringe exchange programs begin operating illegally in NSW.

 **1986** Girls Just Wanna Have Fun Project (now the Young Women's Project) commences supporting young local women.

## Jan Collie – a 'Hand's On CEO' for 26 years



After giving 26 years of her working life as the longest serving Chief Executive Officer for the previously named Cabramatta Community Centre, Jan Collie likes to think her efforts "have been useful to others".


Jan joined the Cabramatta Community Centre in February 1985 and continuously served with the organisation until 2011, other than for a brief absence in 1989 to take on a teaching role with TAFE while also doing post-graduate studies.


Reflecting back on her experience, she says: "I worked with some really wonderful people. I respect enormously the work they did and the commitment they gave. They had an attachment to the local (Fairfield) area and they need acknowledgement for their achievements. They are fantastic people."

Before accepting the role as its CEO in 1985, Jan ran a childcare centre for a few years while also being on the management committee for the Cabramatta Community Centre.

The title of CEO had been changed from Co-ordinator before Jan's time, but she says the role really was a hands-on management role that also demanded she do the staff wages and other administrative tasks.

One of the biggest challenges for a community centre is having a growing organisation depending largely on short-term funding which, when the funding stops, means services can't be sustained.

 **1986** Serge Zorino from the Combined Unions Against Racism group speaks at the Annual General Meeting about the creation of the group in the wake of Professor Blainey's statements, how group members have suffered physical violence after attempting to undertake media interview anonymously, and how the group's anti-racism campaign has been largely categorised as propaganda. He states: "racism will not decline, it is a continuing battle and it is only by banding together that people will be allowed the basic right to live together in harmony."

 **26 April 1986** Chernobyl nuclear disaster forces the evacuation of 135,000 people. Airborne radioactive contamination is released for about nine days afterwards, reaching parts of the USSR and western Europe. Current estimates have exposure-related deaths at 4,000–16,000.



 **1986** The Community and Youth Worker Training Programs provide ten people from non-English speaking backgrounds training and experience as community and youth workers.

 **1986** Centre is formally incorporated as an association and is able to receive funding directly from the Department of Immigration. Prior to this Fairfield City Council had to auspice.

"Growth was outpacing the structures we had in place," says Jan. "The whole of Cabramatta had been inundated with migration which made some locals uncomfortable. There were no services and even the existing Migrant Resource Centre was only receiving pilot funding. There was an enormous need.

"The major difficulty was language. The new migrants didn't speak English, and everything needed to be translated - even information needed to apply for a driver's licence."

Jan recalls that quite a lot of work was done by the Youth workers in the late 80s particularly for unaccompanied minors, and the bilingual team had a wide range of translation tasks for a lot of different services. "The interpreter program was really needed when people visited doctors or specialists where having their (the non-English speaking patient's) 11-year-old children translating for them would not be appropriate". Domestic violence was also an issue where help was needed.

The 1990s brought new challenges for the Cabramatta Community Centre and one incident in 1994 was to have a profound effect on staff and lead to many leaving their employment and volunteer work.

A young client shot at Youth Team members using a loaded weapon before taking his own life. "This incident at the centre shook the staff – it took all of us completely out of our comfort zones. A lot of people left. It was understandable," Jan admits.

The other challenging issue at the time was heroin. There had been a crack-down on Heroin in Kings Cross which led to the problem moving to Cabramatta, she says. "It was everywhere, and the number of young people dying from overdoses was heart-breaking. Trying to help people who had collapsed from overdoses became




an everyday event. I can still hear the voice of Valasi Sulusi (our receptionist), paging Mark Hankin, one of the youth workers (and a nurse), to say that there had been a "drop" in the park and she had called an ambulance. Mark then ran and provided artificial respiration until the ambulance arrived to provide a shot of Narcan".


The centre's Youth Team established a needle and syringe exchange program to stop these items being discarded in the streets and parks, and even conducted sweeps of public areas to reduce the hazard of accidental infections including HIV. An outreach service was also provided.


"Most of the comments I received at the time from Vietnamese residents were that they wished the actions of a few members of their community didn't mean that the whole Vietnamese community was regarded with suspicion and fear. When the leader of 5T (a Vietnamese gang publicly accused of drug distribution) was shot and killed, the dealing became even more dispersed with a free-for-all for more small dealers," Jan says.

However, with the start of the new century the focus of the Cabramatta Community Centre began to change with drug use and HIV eventually no longer a primary concern. The influx of migrants from different parts of the world into the Fairfield Local Government Area continued which now created different specific cultural needs.

 **1986** Study Assistance Program receives start-up funds to help local high school students with tutoring and learning support.

 **1986** Cabramatta High School convenes a meeting to discuss the Russian Chinese community. As a result of the consultation, funding is acquired to develop the Russian Chinese Project to support the community.

 **1986** Police Community Liaison Working Party establishes to break down the barriers between police and the people of Cabramatta. One initiative undertaken this year is a police station open day for people of Chinese, Turkish, Vietnamese, Khmer and Jordanian backgrounds to talk about their issues of concern.

 **1986** Carramar Community Centre undertakes a survey of Villawood Primary School parents about the kinds of classes they would be interested in. Cooking, Turkish cooking, adult literacy, sewing, fun and fitness, and English classes result.

 **August 1986** Fairfield floods occur, residents are evacuated to old Civic Hall and staff are stuck at Centre.

 **September 1986** Australia's credit rating in the USA is reduced from AAA to AA1. In the same year, Australia's gross foreign debt passes \$100 billion leading to economic instability and the collapse of a number of organisations. This recession hit the Vietnamese Australian community hard. After initial success in finding manufacturing jobs in Western Sydney, they suffer one of the highest rates of unemployment (30%) in Australia due to the collapse of the garment industry and the restructuring of the manufacturing sector, particularly in the auto industry.



Jan was given a surprise farwell in 2011 when she left.



# 1986 Fairfield floods

Three workers, Joanna Ximenes, Paula Nikolov and Barbara Hillman returned to the Cabramatta Civic Centre at 6pm after spending the afternoon surveying local residents. Soaked by the rain they had endured while on-foot, the women took solace in the empty, dark Centre, readying themselves to head home after a tiring day.

A hot roast dinner is taken off the agenda however when the State Emergency Services (SES) called and informed the three that the roads were cut at Canley Vale due to flooding and they were stuck in Cabramatta. After phone calls to family and an invitation from a kind Timorese family to spend the night with them, the women watched the storm roll on outside.

Through the windows at 7:30pm, the women saw the SES evacuating people to the old Civic Hall next door. The evacuees were evidently soaking wet, hungry and freezing, so the women ran around the Centre gathering up anything that could be used to make the evacuees more comfortable. Electric heaters, tea, coffee, milk and any other edible thing that can be found was taken next door.

At 9:30pm, after having done the best they can for the evacuees, the women left to try and share a taxi home. After two hours at the taxi rank with a long line of other people trying to get home, finally they managed to sweet talk a taxi driver into giving them a lift and were 'rescued' from the Fairfield Floods of 1986.

**13 November 1986** The first pilot Australian Needle and Syringe Program (NSP) begins in Darlinghurst, Sydney, as a trial project at St Vincent's Hospital. It focusses on access, education, consumer involvement and the free supply and exchange of equipment.

**December 1986** *The Community Work Game* publication is developed by staff and dedicated to Youth Work Trainer, Kim Back who passed away in a motorcycle accident.



**December 1986** With support from the Centre, the *Sydney Turkish Development Centre* forms via a public meeting and incorporates in 1987 with the main aim of creating a Turkish Public School in the area.



The first assisted Turkish migrants arrive in Sydney 1968 NAA A142111 1968427

**December 1986** Needle exchange begins in NSW pharmacies (the Pharmacy Distribution Scheme, later renamed the Pharmacy Fitpack Scheme) with the objectives of increasing access and encouraging the exchange of used syringes for new ones.

**1987** Hamas is founded as an offshoot of the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood. Soon after the First Intifada breaks out. The Hamas Charter affirms that Hamas has been founded to liberate Palestine, including modern-day Israel, from Israeli occupation and to establish an Islamic state in the area that is now Israel, the West Bank and the Gaza Strip.



Left: Staff and friends in 1985. Right: Sue Brittain with clients in the SEACA office 1981 Fairfield Champion.

**October 1987** The Department of Housing contacts the Centre with a request to accommodate three bilingual workers who can provide housing information in Spanish, Chinese and Vietnamese. Given the mounting housing crisis, the centre agrees and the workers start in November 1987.

**17 January 1988** The Chinese Garden of Friendship (designed by Sydney's sister city, Guangzhou) is officially opened as part of Sydney's Bicentennial Celebrations to symbolise the bond established between China and Australia.

**March 1988** A busload of women are taken to Blacktown to attend a seminar on education for women as part of *International Women's Day*.

**1988** Number of clients has doubled over a two-year period and due to a 45% increase in casework services demand (especially for Chinese and Vietnamese welfare workers), the centre temporarily changes from individual to group explanation and assistance services.

**1988** *Street Work Project* pilots a karate class at Cabramatta for youths.

**4 September 1987** Timorese Australia Council becomes an Incorporated Association and fully responsible for the Grant-In-Aid funds.



**1987** The *Study Assistance Program* loses funding leaving many young people so concerned they set up and pay for a class at the Centre, helped by a small contribution from the Youth Sub-Committee for a tutor.

**1987** A dinner to raise funds for local multicultural youth groups is held. John Newman MP Member for Cabramatta MC's the event and auctioneers several donated gifts helping to raise \$5,000.

**April 1987** The Government launches a \$2.9 million National HIV/AIDS Education Campaign, spearheaded by the controversial Grim Reaper television commercial. The Grim Reaper Campaign is thought to be one of the most damaging social awareness campaigns this country has seen. By utilising children, pregnant women and the elderly, the campaign reinforces a nation-wide fear about AIDS.

**1988 A** Detached Family Counsellor to help reconcile young people and their families starts work.

**1988** Ricci Bartels becomes the Migrant Resource Centre coordinator.



**1988** *Multicultural Women's Theatre Group* establishes.

**September 1988** Australia records its 1,000th case of AIDS. 500 Australians have died from HIV/AIDS since the first case was notified, approximately the same number of Australians that died in the Vietnam War.

**1988** Centre helps establish the Chilean Association.

**1988** Centre becomes a sponsor for the *Management Skills in the Community Sector Programme* which provides training and work experience for 14 women to enable them to re-enter the workforce.

**1988** The Somali Civil War begins when clan-based armed opposition groups seek to overthrow the Barre Government. After successfully overthrowing the government, the armed factions begin competing for power and there has been little stability since with violence still ongoing. An estimated 500,000 have been killed and more than 1.1 million displaced.

**1989** Youth Team expands to include the *Drug and Alcohol Early Intervention Program*, the *Study Assistance Program*, and a larger *Girl's Project*.



**May 1989** Carramar Community Centre secures funding for a full time, rather than part time, coordinator.

**15 April 1989** Tiananmen Square Protests and Massacre shock the world. In response, the Australian Government creates temporary visas for People's Republic of China students who are in Australia at the time. Students on these temporary visas are eventually permitted to remain in Australia permanently.



**April 1989** Mr Bill Hayden Governor General of Australia visits the centre to find out more about the experience of racism within the community.



**1989** *Home Modification and Maintenance Program* establishes to provide low-cost modification and maintenance services to local seniors and people with disabilities. Work predominantly involves building access ramps, installing hand and grab rails and handheld showers, making alterations to bathrooms and increasing the height of beds and chairs.

**1989** Carramar Community Centre starts Introduction to Computers classes for adults, utilising computers at Villawood Public School.



**June 1989** Jan Collie resigns, Ricci Bartels becomes acting Executive Officer and Nicaraguan Association is Incorporated.

**June 1989** Following years of Communist oppression, the political party and union *Solidarity* wins a landslide victory over the Communists in Poland's first free elections.

**1989** *Fairfield Language Aides Project* expands languages to include Chinese (Mandarin and Cantonese), Arabic, Khmer, Spanish, Turkish, Laotian, Tetum, Serbian, Vietnamese and Portuguese, with plans in place to add Italian, Russian and Polish.

**1989** *The Racial Equality Action Lobby* is established to provide media skills to local workers, enabling them to work with the media on negating racial stereotypes. A number of print, radio and TV journalists voluntarily run the workshops.

**1989** The first significant numbers of refugees start to arrive from Africa, most of them from Ethiopia.

**August 1989** The Centre (riddled with German cockroaches, temporary partitions, electrical and space problems) receives a refurbishment commitment from the Mayor of Fairfield, including to refurbish the old Caretaker's flat.

**1989** Women's drama group, *Women in Wonderland* perform own drama *Looking Up Down Under* at Villawood Public School.

**1989** A tender submitted to Fairfield City Council to develop a youth facility in Cabramatta. This is a continuous and unprioritised government issue significantly affecting local youth who have "nowhere to go".

**1989** of young female university students six weeks of their time to cook, clean and shop for elderly residents. They culminate the experience by organising a Christmas Concert.

**1989** School building used for Before and After School Care is gutted by fire for a second time.

**28 November 1989** The 'Second Wave' of boat people begin to arrive in Australia, mainly from Cambodia. As with the 'First Wave' from Vietnam, they are sent to Westbridge Migrant Centre for processing.

**17 November 1989** *The Velvet Revolution* ends the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia's rule and subsequently collapses the communist regime, the *Romanian Revolution* follows in December.

**9 November 1989** The head of the East German Communist Party announces that citizens of the GDR can cross the border whenever they please. That night, ecstatic crowds swarm the Berlin Wall, some bringing hammers and picks to chip away at the wall itself.

**1989** *RAGE Discovery* under 18s dance party held in Cabramatta, kicking off a series of youth dance parties across New South Wales.



**1989** *Migration Legislation Amendment Act 1989* introduces changes to the system of processing boat arrivals, allowing officers to arrest and detain anyone suspected of being an 'illegal entrant'.

**1989** Australia introduces the Women at Risk Visa Class to align with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) priority to protect refugee women in particularly vulnerable situations.

**1989** Following community consultations and drawing on the advice of the Advisory Council for Multicultural Affairs, the Hawke Government produces the *National Agenda for a Multicultural Australia*.

**1989** Ethnic Aged Care Development provides a Vietnamese/ Chinese speaking worker to assist the After School and Vacation Care Programs and creates culturally relevant curriculum.



# 1990s



## Tough times

The 1990s heralded some of the toughest times for the Cabramatta Community Centre not only in terms of the ongoing battle for funding services, but also dealing with tragedy, unforeseen events and some of most serious issues to confront the local community.

Starting out in 1990 with the unexpected withdrawal of the Welfare Worker's position by the Ethnic Affairs Commission, the Centre then faced a funding freeze on projects sponsored by the Department of Community and Family Services. Adding to the organisation's woes, a fire destroyed the kitchen in the Centre mid-year and impacted on other parts of building. This took many months to repair and years to overcome sooty residue clinging to documents and files.

Sadly, the Centre's revered founder Ulla Bartels also passed away suddenly in August 1990.

### Serious Challenges

The serious challenges facing the Cabramatta Community Centre however were just beginning with a funding halt on a key bilingual project (later refunded), drug issues in Fairfield escalating, unemployment rising as part of the wider national recession which placed a high demand on assistance support services, and media coverage reflecting negatively on Cabramatta.

Adding to these challenges, the Centre took on critical new projects where funding was provided including an Indo-Chinese Young Women's Refuge service (Lotus House), a youth homelessness support scheme, as well as a refugee women's project and various youth and multicultural projects.

The operations of the Centre continued to meet the demands of the local community despite limited workspace for growing staff numbers, and an ongoing need for administrative support to handle the volume and diversity of work undertaken.

Some relief was received in 1992 with funding for a part-time administrative officer and the installation a new financial reporting system. Staff office space also improved with the relocation of the Adult Migrant Education Programme to a new premises.

### Drugs and HIV

The CCC had identified injecting drug use and dealing among youth in Cabramatta as a critical issue, and what started as a low-key needle and syringe programme (NSP) in 1992 operated by the Centre, a year later was being used extensively.

Another initiative taken to address the increasing problem was the establishment of an outreach bus service on Friday and Saturday nights to provide a drop-in and referral service, and a needle and syringe programme (later to be funded by the AIDS Bureau in 1993).

Heroin usage escalated to the point that the NSP operated initially by CCC volunteers and later by two paid part-time staff funded by the Centre was under extreme financial and work pressure to close in 1995. The South Western Sydney Area Health Service however agreed to fund a full-time worker until mid-1996.

It was not until 1997 before the Cabramatta Community Centre was able to completely hand-over the needle and syringe program with the establishment of the Drug Intervention Service – Cabramatta (DISC) by the Federal Government.

Cabramatta had become known as a place for the blatant purchase and use of Heroin. Drug overdoses, crime and violence painted a very negative image – one perpetuated by the media.

The issue of drug use only started to subside when Police conducted a major operation in 1998 that helped take drug dealing and injecting off the streets, needle and disposal programs were increased, and the Home Detoxification Project established by the CCC was expanded by other agencies.

### Terrible Events

The 90s for many were characterised by a series of terrible and shocking events. In 1994, a young client entered the Youth Team Office with a shotgun and shot at his girlfriend and two staff members. He then committed suicide inside the office.

Later the same year, Cabramatta MP John Newman was murdered outside his home again bringing the local community, particularly the Vietnamese residents, under the media spotlight. This was followed by the shooting murder the following year in 1995 of two young men who were leaders of a local gang.

### End of the Century

The Cabramatta Community Centre ended the 20th Century still caring for the needs of refugees, migrants, youth and the elderly, families needing childcare, women in crisis and many others by providing critical services and support.

In a previous publication, 'The CCC History' edited by Jan Collie, she states: *"It will be very interesting to see what happens to Cabramatta over the next 20 years, and whether CCC will even survive to make the next 20th anniversary in 2019 ..."*

The Centre has survived and thrived ... and this publication celebrates another 20 years of operation and a 40th Anniversary success story.



**1990** Cabramatta Migrant Hostel closes.



**1990** Funding freeze on projects of the Department of Family and Community Services and a funding withdraw for the Coordinator Welfare Workers position means the centre loses some of its capability, having to prop up projects with interest income earnings.

**1990** A decision is made not to run vacation care at Cabramatta due to the Police Youth club running a free vacation activities centre across the road at the same time, making the service unviable.

**1990** Community Arts Officer is successfully funded and employed at the new Carramar Community Centre.

**11 February 1990** Nelson Mandela, the symbolic leader of the anti-apartheid movement, is freed. On June 17 the following year, the South African Parliament overturns apartheid laws (apartheid laws are sanctioned racial segregation and political and economic discrimination against non-whites). In May 1994, Mandela is elected President in South Africa's first interracial election.

**April 1990** Street Video Project pilots on the premise of using video to improve self-esteem, basic education and social skills in 15 to 14 year-old unemployed youth from non-English speaking backgrounds.



**April 1990** Chilean Community Services Network commences providing settlement services to the Chilean community.



**20 June 1990** The Centre's 40-place long day care opens on the grounds of Villawood Public School.

**23 June 1990** Refugees As Heroes chosen as the Refugee Week theme with 150 people attending the first ever celebration event in Fairfield.

**July 1990** Almost one year to the day, Jan Collie returns as Executive Officer.

**July 1990** A fire in the Cabramatta Civic Centre overnight destroys the kitchen and leaves smoke, soot and water to ruin the rest of the building. *"Every surface, every piece of paper, every wall, filing cabinet, poster, chair and telephone was filthy...it was years before we stopped having funding agreements, Ministerial letters and submissions with sooty smears all over them"* – Jan Collie.



**1990** Study Assistance Program revitalises with new funding and three AIDS workshops held for local community workers in conjunction with the Aids Bureau.

**August 1990** Centre Founder, Ulla Bartels passes away suddenly.





# Public health issues draw young graduate into community services action

Sue Heard’s interaction with the Cabramatta Community Centre began as an outsider employed by the South Western Sydney Area Health Service during one of the most controversial periods in Australia’s history.

Cabramatta in the 1990s was labelled the drug capital of Australia by the media with heroin deals blatantly taking place in the streets, needles and syringes being discarded in public places and drug overdoses by addicts sometimes leading to death seen as commonplace. Vietnamese gangs ran riot and extortion and money laundering made the news.

The political assassination of Cabramatta Member of Parliament, John Newman, outside his home in 1994 – the first and only political assassination in Australia – added to the heady mix of stories about a dangerous place that symbolised the failure of multiculturalism.

“I was straight out of Uni,” recalls Sue when she started work in 1993 with the health promotion section of the region’s area health service.

“I loved working in south-west Sydney and the partnerships we formed with community organisations.”

At the start of her career, Sue’s work focussed on the health promotion and public health environment. This included mapping the initial roll out of the needle syringe program in South Western Sydney, an important public health initiative as the potential for HIV and Hepatitis C transmission through shared use of needles among people who inject drugs was a significant concern.

She became aware of the innovative work of the Youth Team at the Cabramatta Community Centre in establishing a needle and syringe program for drug users, and the operation of an outreach service from a bus.

Moving into the Youth Health area in 1994, Sue started working closely with the team at the community centre to help address the issues of drug use and reducing the potential for the spread of infectious diseases.

“In the 90s, there was a lot street-level drug dealing that were creating issues in the community –legal, health, policing, politics and the media. I look at drug use as a health issue and prevention being better than a cure. Services that help reduce the harms associated with drug use and assist people to make changes are important,” she says.

“South West Sydney is unique. The people and commitment to their community meant that all sorts of innovative things came out of this area. I loved working in this sector.”

Sue describes the challenges with dealing directly with young people in the early days who had issues with drugs. “Finding opportunities to help them was difficult. Some were homeless or had dropped out of school. It was a complex situation for many young people and addressing drug use without other support structures around them was often challenging”.

She says an examination of the bigger picture at a community forum came up with several recommendations. “One was to secure funding for the development of a primary health service for young people with drug problems. This included the establishment of a steering committee made up of a range of key stakeholders who developed submissions and gained support.”

Sue was seconded from the youth health service to co-manage the set-up of DISC – the Drug Intervention Service Cabramatta – and to work with the Cabramatta Community Centre’s CEO, Jan Collie, and the Cabramatta Youth Team.

While the prevalence of HIV transmission was low, the risk of blood borne virus transmission through shared injection equipment was significant for drug users, Sue says. She confidently states that the work done with needle

syringe programs made a difference and because of this important public health initiative, Australia continues to have a very low prevalence of HIV among people who inject drugs. The establishment of a 1800 needle clean-up hotline where the public could notify the location of discarded needles for collection also reduced the risk to the general public.

“Numerous studies show that needle syringe programs work as a significant disease prevention measure, and this has been a key public health strategy in Australia in reducing the transmission of blood borne viruses.”

The work of the DISC and community centre Youth Team stretched their resources. “We were busy the whole time, with significant numbers of clients accessing the services and complex challenges in addressing the needs of these clients”.

In 2000, Sue Heard left full-time employment with the South West Area Health Service and travelled overseas. However, her association with the Cabramatta Community Centre resumed after several years’ absence.

“I worked with the Cabramatta Community Centre in a range of capacities from 2001 to 2015 including contract, part-time and full-time roles in policy development, work health and safety, service management and operational projects.”

Since 2015, Sue has been undertaking public health research at UNSW Sydney including national surveillance of HIV and Hepatitis C prevalence among people who inject drugs, and national data collection on the needle syringe programs including distribution of equipment, client occasion of service snapshot and location and types of services.

Reflecting on her work with the community centre and what became CORE Community Services, Sue describes it as an organisation able to adapt to the real concerns of a community, identify issues, and do something about it.

“I think they’ll (CORE) be around for a long time. They provide a great range of services and with increasing funding they’ll continue to grow. CORE has been able to adapt and not lose sight of the community’s needs which will always be challenge. With this underpinning commitment, they’ll be around for another 40 years.”

She concludes she is grateful for the opportunities, mentoring and friendships that came with working with and for the organisation over more than 25 years.



Street scene in the Sydney suburb of Cabramatta 1991

**2 August 1990** A two-day Invasion of Kuwait is conducted by Iraq under Saddam Hussein. This results in a seven-month long occupation of the country. Iraq refuses to withdraw by a United Nations deadline and in response, a United Nations coalition force is sent in to intervene in what becomes known as the first Gulf War. 60% of refugees arriving in Australia from the Middle East over the next decade come from Iraq, many trying to flee Saddam Hussein’s socialist regime.

**1990** Carramar Community Centre staff celebrate moving to a new premises at Denison Street Carramar.



**1990** Peter Manning, Controller of News and Current Affairs at the ABC, is invited as the guest speaker at the Annual General Meeting due to ongoing issues with media profiling of Cabramatta.

**1 October 1990** Rwandan Civil War between the Rwandan Armed Forces and the rebel Rwandan Patriotic Force begins. Fuelled by a long-running dispute between the Hutu and Tutsi groups, 40% of the population flees or is killed.

**1991** The National Integrated Settlement Strategy is introduced to better coordinate settlement services across Commonwealth and State portfolios and departments and non-government agencies.

**1991** The Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation Act 1991 (Cth) is passed to promote reconciliation between Indigenous Australians and the wider Australian community.

**1991** Funding is received for the Getting It Together Scheme (youth homelessness project), the Refugee Women’s Project, the Circuit Breaker Project, the Multicultural Aged Resources Project, and a full-time staff member for the Fairfield Multicultural Youth Project.



**February 1991** Mount Pritchard Cabramatta West Community Centre establishes three days per week at the Early Childhood Centre Mt Pritchard premises. Services include casework and referrals, a multicultural playgroup, vacation care and English classes.



**22 July 1991** The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees issues Guidelines on the Protection of Refugee Women, which calls for special protection for refugee women and girls.

## 90s POP CULTURE: What’s Happening?

Australian-made movies top box office charts with Priscilla Queen of the Desert (1994), Muriel’s Wedding (1994) and Strictly Ballroom (1992).

At the 1994 Commonwealth Games in Canada, Cathy Freeman is the first Indigenous Australian athlete to win a track event, winning the 200-metre and 400-metre sprints. She runs her victory lap holding both the Australian and the Aboriginal flags.

The 1990s were the decade for Disney movies. Beauty and the Beast, Aladdin, The Lion King, The Jungle Book, Pocahontas, Toy Story 1 & 2, The Hunchback of Notre Dame, Hercules, Mulan, A Bug’s Life, Tarzan, all debut around the world.

1990s inventions include the DVD (1995), text messaging (1992), the Google search engine (1998) and Dolly the sheep – the first confirmed animal to be cloned from an adult cell (5 July 1996).

Unknowingly starting a worldwide hysteria, in June 1997 J. K. Rowling publishes the first Harry Potter book.


Pop, Hip Hop and Rock dominate the 1990s music scene. Artists such as Nirvana, Foo Fighters, Britney Spears, Backstreet Boys, Spice Girls, Dr. Dre and Lauryn Hill all grace the top 10 charts. The Wiggles also form in Sydney in 1991.

Television grows exponentially in the 1990s. Sitcoms are a favourite with shows like Friends, Seinfeld and Will & Grace having audiences laugh out loud. The Practice, JAG and E Street provide non-reality drama for viewing pleasure.





 **1991** A Latin American Women's Support Group and an Arabic Women's Group establish.




 **July 1991** Street Work Project for Young Women begins, targeting street-frequenting Indo-Chinese women. The project gives young women access to a resource person who put them in touch with local and mainstream services.

 **1991** Pai Lau Gateway to Cabramatta Pedestrian Mall opens, functioning as a symbol of the South-East Asian communities and as a welcoming monument and celebration of freedom and democracy.

 **1991** The REAL Useful Media Kit is first produced. It is requested so frequently that by 1996 it is updated and printed by Ettinger House.

 **1991** Yugoslav Wars begin and do not end until 2001. Described as the deadliest European conflict since WWII, widespread ethnic cleansing of Bosnian Muslims and Bosnian Croats is carried out by Bosnian Serbs, and similar cleansing carried out by Bosnian Croats in response. The war leads to the breakup of the Yugoslav state, the loss of an estimated 140,000 lives, and the displacement of 4 million people.

 **1992** Prior to 1992, asylum seekers in Australia are held in detention on a discretionary basis. In 1992, mandatory detention is introduced in response to a wave of Indochinese boat arrivals. A new Act provides for unlawful arrivals to be detained until such time as an application for asylum has been processed and status finally determined. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) estimates the world refugee population in 1992 at 17.8 million.

## Helping others at Villawood Migrant Hostel leads to lifelong career



As refugees from Chile, Yolanda Encina and her husband Carlos, are very aware of the difficulties facing non-English speaking people – starting with their arrival at the Villawood Migrant Hostel where they helped translate for those needing to communicate with the authorities.

*"My husband and I were able to learn basic English language skills in our country and continued to learn when we first arrived, and we assisted others in the hostel," Yolanda says, adding that later after her family moved to Fairfield in Sydney's West, she volunteered as a Spanish language speaker at the Carramar and Mt Pritchard divisions of Cabramatta Community Centre.*

*"I was studying English and Welfare at TAFE and my first job was as a Community Liaison Officer at the Fairfield Public School. I liked working with the community and helped the school establish networks and links to get the community involved in education issues as part of the Department of Education's Community Participation Program".*

But, needing to balance her family needs, work and study, Yolanda left the school role to take up a part-time position three days a week with the Cabramatta Community Centre which gave her more flexibility.

The job involved developing training packages and co-ordinating seven Spanish-speaking bilingual workers to assist with the resettlement in the 1990s into the Fairfield area of refugees and migrants from Arabic speaking countries, South East Asia, South and Central America, Samoa and other countries.

Yolanda says most of the matters she and her team dealt with involved access to community



Aged care clients and staff through the 90s

services, housing, medical assistance, schooling, childcare and other life and settlement issues.

However, she also found herself increasingly involved in the Fairfield Immigrants and refugee Women's Network - that now exists as the 'Women of Wellness (WOW)' - and the Australian National Consultative Committee on Refugee Women (ANCORW). A number of workers from the centre were strongly supported, mentored and coached by these organisations to engage with the plight of refugee women and the impact of rape in war, and in supporting campaigns against domestic violence.

1998 lead to a change in direction for Yolanda when she was asked by a fellow worker at the community centre involved in ethnic aged care to attend a conference on aging at Sydney University where *"I heard how the aging population that was happening in Australia was going to lead to huge changes and demands in the future. Training for aged care at the time was limited so we developed training about work ethics. Most carers were mums with community language skills but without a professional background.*

*"Not long after, a fulltime position came up and I applied," says Yolanda. "Not many people were working with the elderly and I had a strong link with my grandmother and love for elderly people, particularly women who had many of their dreams and aspirations shattered because of societal expectations in their youth. I wanted them to feel empowered, appreciated and celebrated".*

Among her many successes was the development of the International Day of the Older People's program, the recognition of the 'Older People Bill of Rights' being promoted by the Australian Rights Commission with Fairfield Council, and in writing articles for the national campaign against the elderly being forced to sell or lose control of their family home to enter a nursing home.

Yolanda is a passionate advocate for the elderly, and in 2000 she made another career move while continuing her study at the University of Technology - Sydney. She took the position as Community Project Officer – Aged and Disability at Fairfield City Council as part of Council's Social and Community Development unit.



Estela (left) & Yolanda (right)

Her work with aged care sector development, advocating on behalf of the elderly, planning and delivering community events in partnership with the community sector is a large part her job, which she says has also enabled her to continue her association with CORE.


As for the future for CORE Community Services, Yolanda says the organisation should "keep up the work good in supporting new and emerging communities".


*"CORE is providing excellent support to residents in diverse languages especially for the NDIS (National Disabled Insurance Scheme) and aged care. As a big organisation, it can assist smaller community groups and continue to partner with Council and other community organisations in providing sector development and advocacy, which is important for this city. The work it has done has been outstanding."*


Yolanda concludes that she believes that CORE workers in future will be expected to have more academic training, but she hopes that field experience, coaching and mentoring offered by the organisation will encourage them to have the passion and commitment to people that is needed and is important in the community (people's) sector. She says: *"CORE must continue to be the place that introduces social change and empowerment to staff and clients".*

 **1992** The Adult Migrant Education program moves to a new premises on Hughes Street.

 **1992** The Cabramatta Civic Centre is revamped by Fairfield City Council, meaning the service has to be temporally relocated to Arthur Street.

 **1992** Lotus House secures a rented premises in Fairfield, recruits staff and opens its doors. Lotus House is a medium-term (3-12 months) supported accommodation service for homeless Indo-Chinese young women aged 14-18 years old.

 **June 1992** Special Assistance Program for East Timorese people introduced by the Department of Immigration.

 **3 July 1992** The UNHCR begins airlifts into Sarajevo. The humanitarian air-bridge is in place for more than three years helping about 3.5 million people in the former Yugoslavia.

 **1992** Funding received to produce a Spanish language women's magazine called Nosotras which turns out to be a great success culturally and for community development.

 **1992** Semi-supported medium-to-long-term accommodation is newly provided through the Youth Accommodation Service.


 **1992** HIV/AIDS conference targeting workers in Western Sydney held in Cabramatta, called Spread The Word – Not The Virus.




 **1992** Funding received to establish an Innovative After School Care Program at Harrington Street Public School.



 **November 1992** Australia's unemployment rate reaches 11.4% of the workforce; the highest rate since the Great Depression of the 1930s. Fairfield Local Government Area is hardest hit with unemployment rates above the State and National averages at 18.2% compared to 10.1%.

 **1992** A low-key secondary outlet needle and syringe exchange program is initiated at Cabramatta.

 **1993** Mount Pritchard Cabramatta West Community Centre extends services to include a fruit and vegetable cooperative, a Spanish over 50s group, an Arabic Women's group and fortnightly shopping trips for Seniors.

 **1993** A shooting incident at Cabramatta railway station leads to the formation of a crime task force incorporating local agencies and Cabramatta Police.



**1994** Estimates have the youth unemployment rate in Cabramatta at a staggering 52%. Answering to the unemployment crisis, the Federal Government releases a white paper on employment and training called *A Working Nation*. The paper sees to the abolition of unemployment benefits for young people, replacing them with a suggestively misguided *Youth Training Allowance* which further disadvantages young people in high risk areas such as the homeless, from non-English speaking backgrounds and people with disabilities by failing to provide legitimate opportunity for skills progression.

**February 1994** Fairfield East Community Organisation extends services for children with disabilities by establishing a special needs vacation care program at the old Cooina school and starting a *Post-School Options program*.

**February 1994** Year-round *Out of School Hours Service (OOSH)* establishes at Harrington Street Public School and Mount Pritchard Public School.



**March 1994** Civic Centre refurbishments finish. Staff move back into the building and the Occasional Child Care is relocated from the Arthur West Hall to a purpose-built facility, meaning the staff can finally leave children's equipment and artwork out, rather than pack away into storage every day to avoid vandalism by other hall users.



**8 March 1994** International Women's Day event themed *Women Today* is attended by 200 women from non-English speaking backgrounds. The event highlights the diversity of roles women play in society, and that women's achievements and contributions have had, and continue to have, a positive impact on society.

**March 1994** *Indo-Chinese Youth Development Project* divides into two distinct work areas/ staff roles: A Youth Activity Worker organises activities amongst Hmong and ethnic Chinese youth, and a Policy Worker focuses on all Indo-Chinese youth issues.



**1994** Space for a Resource Library at Fairfield Migrant Resource Centre is acquired. The library catalogue includes extensive immigration and service information for immigrants.

**1994** *Aged Care Worker (assistant in Nursing Homes)* Course is held, developing the skills of non-English speaking background migrants for employment in the aged care sector.

**1994** Indo-Chinese Women Childcare Course held in three parts (childcare studies, English language support, first aid) to give local Indo-Chinese women the skills to enter the childcare sector.

**1994** *Computerised Bookkeeping Course* held for Accountants and Bookkeepers from non-English speaking backgrounds. Participants learn about Lotus 1-2-3, Attache 4 and other basic job skills. Seven participants go on to full time employment, and two onto further TAFE studies. Participant Amir Shakir starts his own business in Fairfield.



**1994** Mt Pritchard Cabramatta West Community Centre runs shopping trips to Liverpool Westfield every fortnight for locals who have difficulties using buses, walking, or carrying heavy bags. They also start running English classes.



**1993-94** 34,123 syringes are distributed through the Needle and Syringe Exchange Program. The top local issue is "*the visible increase in injecting drug use and dealing among young people in the area*" – 1993 AGM Report. Heroin problems continue to escalate in Cabramatta, stretching worn out staff who work long hours on the *Outreach Bus* and packing needles for fit packs at the office.

**20 December 1993** The *United Nations General Assembly* formally adopts the *Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women*, which condemns any act causing physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women in the family or community, regardless of claimed religious, custom or tradition grounds.

**3 December 1993** *Refugee Resettlement: Lets Get It Right In Australia* conference held.

**December 1993** Canley Heights research project undertaken. Analysis finds a severe lack of affordable/ accessible children's services and social outlets for youth.

**November 1993** The Nicaraguan worker travels to Manila for the *Asian and Pacific Symposium of NGO's on Women In Development*. This attendance ensures refugee and migrant women from Australia have their issues and concerns recognised and considered by the United Nations Conventions.

**1993** *SAAP Strategic Direction Report* receives Government endorsement for its primary objective to encourage homeless people to attain the maximum possible degree of self-reliance through 12 strategies, one of those being a case management approach. The Fairfield East Community Organisation is selected to pilot one of the case management advisor projects.

**September 1993** Former President of Chile, Patricio Aylwin Azocar visits Australia to formalise negotiations between both countries. The President is welcomed by Prime Minister Paul Keating at a reception at Parliament House which is attended by Chilean Community Service Network representatives who advocate a number of community concerns to the President.



**1993** Women from the *Young Women's Project* help produce a video kit called *Cinderella Takes Drugs*. The kit is an educational resource which covers issues around peer pressure, media/advertising, diet pills and laxatives, and illegal and prescription drug use. The kit successfully sells nationally and internationally.

## Women's lot is no fairytale

A VIDEO about young women and drugs in Fairfield City has been launched at Cabramatta Community Centre. *Cinderella Takes Drugs* explores the myths and realities of young women, drugs, peer pressure, body image, the media and advertising. The kit was funded by the NSW Community Services Department and involved the Cabramatta Young Women's Project and Parent and Youth Drug and Alcohol Project.



**1993** *Fairfield Court Support System* establishes, giving young women facing court access to a supportive female worker, information and police officers on hand to answer questions. This has proven particularly helpful for victims of domestic violence.



**1993** *Outreach Needle and Syringe Service* establishes in Cabramatta on Friday and Saturday nights. Run from a borrowed '*Outreach Bus*', the service provides NSP equipment, food, drinks, drop-in and referral services.



**1993** *English As A Second Language (ESL) Strategy Group* is created to address inadequate English language provision and promote better integration of ESL courses.

**March 1993** The *Fairfield Home Modification and Maintenance Service* receives funding to rent a workshop in Smithfield and employ a full-time handyperson.

**1993** Minister for Immigration introduces a *Special Assistance Program for Cambodians* which is designed to encourage Port Hedland and Villawood detainees to return voluntarily to Cambodia, on the proviso that a new immigration category will return them to Australia after 12 months. In December 1993, 30 Cambodians return via this scheme and are assisted by settlement organisations, including CCC.

**1993** New legislation caps the maximum number of hours for English classes for adult migrants (regardless of beginning proficiency) at 510 hours. New arrivals must also register with an Adult Migrant English Service within three months of arrival and complete the hours within three years. This has massive implications on migrants who, after 510 hours, are mostly still not at a proficiency level suitable for TAFE or other courses. Migrants retrenched during the recession also face problems as English courses are only available to newly arrived migrants.



**1993** For the first time the *Study Assistance Program* teams up with Wetherill Park TAFE to provide 'taster' courses for 30 students in Mechanical Engineering, Accounting and Computers.

**July 1993** *Outreach Bus* clients are targeted by undercover police which leads to a major conflict requiring mediation by Fairfield City Council.

**1993** Carramar Community Centre becomes incorporated independently as Fairfield East Community Organisation.

**1993** '*Discoveries*' exhibition is developed which later goes on to tour Darwin.




**1993** New laws mean the free immigration advice previously given to a significant portion of clients, is required to be delivered by registered migration agents. Staff undergo training to meet the criteria.


**1993** *Migrant Job Club* establishes to help local migrants find employment.

**1993** A research proposal investigating the needs of street-frequenting young people in Fairfield, Bankstown, Liverpool and Campbelltown is developed.







**7 April 1994** The Rwandan Genocide begins. It is a mass slaughter of Tutsi and moderate Hutu in Rwanda, taking place during the Rwandan Civil War. Over the course of about 100 days, between 500,000 and 1 million Tutsi and moderate Hutu are killed, about 70% of the Tutsi population.




**April 1994** Fairfield Migrant Resource Centre coordinator joins the management committee of the *Australian National Consultative Committee on Refugee Women Jobskills Program Cooperative*, which aims to empower refugee women through the provision of culturally sensitive and appropriate training, work skills and experience, and increasing employment opportunities.




**April 1994** North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) carries out first airstrikes in its history - against Bosnian Serbs.




**28 April 1994** *Stop Domestic Violence Day* orchestrated with an information stall at Fairfield Mall and a march through Fairfield streets to raise public awareness about domestic violence being a crime.




**May 1994** Submission for funding to purchase cultural costumes to improve identity among the Hmong community is approved.







**1994** Assistant Coordinator at the Fairfield Migrant Resource Centre helps clients with Change of Status applications on refugee grounds, and clients - already determined as refugees - sponsor their remaining relatives in East Timor through the *Family Reunion Program*.




**13 June 1994** Neena Bisen, a youth worker, is killed at Bankstown Refuge by two girls aged 15 and 17 as part of a planned robbery. The murder sends shockwaves through the welfare sector who attribute the senseless act to a severe lack of sector funding and the ongoing, unaddressed disadvantage many young people experience.




**June 1994** After helping a local student successfully battle the court system to waive an Austudy debt (which was claimed by the Department to be incurred by "deliberate misinformation"), the *Youth Justice Coalition Group* develops *The Austudy maze: problems for young students* discussion paper and presents it to Canberra.





**June 1994** *Latin American Fashion Workshops* held for women who have been unemployed long-term and lack the skills to compete in the job market. Three sewing machines are lent by Wetherill Park TAFE and childcare is provided through funds set aside by the Fairfield Migrant Resource Centre.







**June 1994** 83% of *Circuit Breaker Project* participants over the last year are accepted into TAFE and/or university courses others choose to repeat year 12 or successfully gain fulltime employment.







**1 July 1994** The Civic Centre siege occurs. A client terrorises staff with a shotgun, shoots at his girlfriend and two staff members and then commits suicide in the office. Police break through upstairs windows to free hiding and trapped staff.






**1994** The *Joyride Project* orchestrates a three-day camp for 37 young people to the Snowtels Caravan Park in Cooma, most enjoying their first time to the snow. All participants get together to create a mural to be displayed at the Vietnamese Drug and Alcohol Conference.





**1994** 15 unemployed women gain valuable skills through a Patisserie Certificate and subjects accredited to a Certificate in Catering. From this course they can work in bakeries, cake shops, canteens and hospitals.





**2 November 1994** Estela Torredimare establishes the *Amistad Latina Spanish Speaking Group*.





**October 1994** A peace rally is held at Cabra-Vale Park to attempt to combat the negative media storm surrounding the community in the wake of John Newman's murder. One young person writes: *"Cabramatta is where my heritage and spirit lies. It gives Asians the chance for the cultural expression, otherwise part of our identity dies. Cabramatta represents what Australia can give - insight into so many nationalities and how other people live. Cabramatta is the balance, the even ground, not so negative or a town of failure because it's the symbolic Asian heart of Australia"* - May Kourch.





**September 1994** John Newman, Member for Cabramatta, is murdered outside his home by a rival politician who had immigrated from Vietnam. It is Australia's first and only political assassination. Following the murder, and the subsequent national and international negative media about the Vietnamese community, there are reports of Vietnamese Elderly people being spat on in the streets and staff members being verbally harassed outside Cabramatta area.





**1994** The Youth Team's Annual Report cover illustrates the community-harming, negative media portrayal of Cabramatta. *"Cabramatta is a vibrant, beautiful place where multiculturalism is supported passionately by the community and community workers. The illustration is a powerful depiction of the deliberate destruction of their community by the media. The media exaggerates and reinforces erroneous information, playing on misguided stereotypes and splashing them all over our TVs, newspapers and radios. The unisex and multiracial figure represents the people of Cabramatta and how it is slowly being killed and tortured by the media. The media is fuelling the storm."*





**1994** The *Early Start Case Management Employment Program* starts growing, eventually turning into the employment services offering at the Fairfield Migrant Resource Centre.



**1994** 13 women from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds are selected to participate in the *Work Opportunities for Women (WOW)* course through Wetherill Park TAFE with the aim of setting them up for future education opportunities.




**1994** Lotus House incorporation proceedings to become independent begin and the *Refugees Women's and Children's Grant-In-Aid* receives start-up funding.





**1994** Fairfield Migrant Resource Centre Coordinator works on the *Fairfield/Liverpool Tourism Study* which produces a 24-page publicity brochure highlighting eating places, hotels and cultural events in the region. An innovative strategy is co-developed to position Cabramatta as a potential tourist destination.



**1994** Due to there being no Nicaraguan Embassy in Australia, the Nicaraguan community worker negotiates for the Department of Foreign Affairs in Nicaragua to be the channel for Nicaraguan people to obtain entry visas, passports and other legal documents.



**November 1994** *Young Women's Festival* held allowing young women to experience educational workshops on health, safety, drug/alcohol use, unemployment, and discover employment options and careers. The festival also features performances from local female bands and theatre groups.



**1994** Videos produced by local youth through the *Street Video Project* this year go on to win awards and be screened at venues including the Australian Museum, the Powerhouse Museum, Creating Cultures Forum, Sydney Media Network, Metro TV, Picture State, and Western Sydney University.





**11 December 1994** More than 100,000 are killed during the *First Chechen War* rebellion by the Chechen Republic of Ichkeria against the Russian Federation.



**December 1994** Fairfield Migrant Resource Centre, as part of the *Fairfield English Literacy in Neighbourhood Centres Lobby Group*, helps produce a report titled *Chances...Choices... Chasms - A study of the need for English provision in the Fairfield Local Government Area* to address the need for English language tuition in the area.



**1994-95** *Liverpool Night Patrol* makes contact with 8,000 people, a large number are young and homeless living in groups in garages, squats and on the street.



**1995** The number of clients using the *Needle and Syringe Program* doubles in the first half of the year, leading to a funding agreement for more staff resources as it is the only free service in Cabramatta.



**1995** *National Health and Medical Research Council* report finds men are just as likely to suffer mental health issues as women.



**January 1995** Policy changes mean older refugees and sole refugee parents (women) with children are now able to ask for a social security pension without having to have lived in the country for 10 and 5 years respectively.



**1995** After growing national concern about the extent of elder abuse, the *Elder Abuse Committee* - with input from the Multicultural Aged Resources Service - produces *Abuse of Older People Services Directory for the Fairfield/Liverpool Area* to help people working with local elderly detect abuse and locate appropriate services.



**1995** *Toymakers Group* starts at Villawood Senior Citizens Centre teaching seniors how to make wooden toys.



**10 March 1995** *Opiate Overdose Forum* held at Cabramatta Community Hall. A number of working parties are generated as a result including the *Home Detoxification Service*, the *Primary Drug and Alcohol Service* and the *Vein Care Working Party*.



**March 1995** The United Nations High Commissioner issues *Guidelines on the Prevention and Response to Sexual Violence Against Refugees*.



**1995** *Fairfield Immigrant and Refugee Women's Network* utilises events throughout the year to promote the 'Women Stand Together Against Violence' theme. They also receive funding to employ a worker who will co-ordinate an anti-violence campaign with the aim to: *"Build community awareness with the immigrant and refugee communities in the Fairfield LGA regarding the unacceptably high incidence of violence against women, in particular domestic violence and sexual assault"*.



**22 April 1995** The *Kibeho Massacre* occurs in a camp for internally displaced persons near Kibeho, south-west Rwanda. It's estimated at least 4,000 people in the camp are killed.



**30 April 1995** *Fairfield Festival of the Nations* is put on by Fairfield Council as part of the *Global Cultural Diversity Conference and International Year of Tolerance*.







**1996** Lotus House research study finds young Indo-Chinese women released from juvenile justice centres are nearly all sentenced due to drug-related issues and, once released, still have drug and alcohol dependence.



**1996** *Outreach Bus* Project wins second prize at the *Health Services Association Community Outreach Awards*.



**September 1996** Youth workers lobby against *The Street Safety Bill* proposed by the NSW Government which would increase police power to disperse a group of three or more people where there was a suspicion of a crime being committed. Youth workers believe the bill will further complicate Indo-Chinese youth and police relationships.



**Push to fight Bill**  
by MERRYN PORTER  
FAIRFIELD Youth workers have rejected a proposal by Police Minister Paul Whelan to outlaw young people from hanging around city streets. Representatives from the Fairfield Youth Workers Network last week lobbied local State MPs to stop the Street Safety Bill which, they say, is an infringement of human rights.



**September 1996** Taliban Muslim fundamentalists capture Kabul. This triggers an increase in humanitarian and illegal entrant immigration to Australia by people from Afghanistan.



**October 1996** *International Seniors Day* celebrations take place at the Assyrian Nineveh Club. 400 local seniors representing a myriad of nationalities enjoy live entertainment and food.



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**March 1997** Drop in centre for unemployed migrants and refugees starts at Fairfield Migrant Resource Centre.



**1997** *Fairfield Multicultural Youth Project* establishes a connection with Joy's Creative Management and secures acting roles – extras and speaking – for local young people on Australian TV series *Wildside*. Some of these youths go on to other acting opportunities, including major roles in Australian films.



**1996** Lotus House research study finds young Indo-Chinese women released from juvenile justice centres are nearly all sentenced due to drug-related issues and, once released, still have drug and alcohol dependence.



**1996** *Outreach Bus* Project wins second prize at the *Health Services Association Community Outreach Awards*.



**September 1996** Youth workers lobby against *The Street Safety Bill* proposed by the NSW Government which would increase police power to disperse a group of three or more people where there was a suspicion of a crime being committed. Youth workers believe the bill will further complicate Indo-Chinese youth and police relationships.



**Push to fight Bill**  
by MERRYN PORTER  
FAIRFIELD Youth workers have rejected a proposal by Police Minister Paul Whelan to outlaw young people from hanging around city streets. Representatives from the Fairfield Youth Workers Network last week lobbied local State MPs to stop the Street Safety Bill which, they say, is an infringement of human rights.



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**1996** *Urimbirra Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders Corporation* requests support from the *Young Women's Project* to hold a six-day camp at Alpine Lodge in Jindabyne for thirteen young women. In between skiing, horse riding and bush walking, the camp raises awareness about hygiene, drugs, alcohol and safe sex.



**28 June 1996** *Our House Youth Accommodation Service* launches with two independent gender-specific houses in Fairfield and Liverpool for young people. Residents are from families where they had experience abuse, neglect, emotional distress and homelessness. One of the residents says: "*I always thought that when you step out into the real world there is no one to give you a helping hand, but I was wrong. Not only has Cabramatta Community Centre provided me the basic needs, but also heaps of support. I consider them part of my family.*"



**28 June 1996** *Homebased Detoxification Project* pilot runs, seeking to minimise the risks associated with physical withdrawal from heroin. The first of its kind targeting young people from non-English speaking backgrounds, the project provides individual support to family and friends of the client to help them successfully detox at home. 31 clients successfully detox in the first twelve months.



**May 1996** *Many Voices, Different Stories* conference held to address sexual assault issues for women of non-English speaking backgrounds. From this a small working group plans to develop a model for a multicultural sexual assault service.



**1996** Due to an influx in humanitarian entrants, the *Study Assistance Program* identifies a growing demand for programs catering to Bosnia-Herzegovina, Iraq and Syrian born youth.



**1996** NSW Government elects to set up a *Place Management Project* in Cabramatta and a primary drug and alcohol service and residential detoxification centre at Fairfield Hospital.



**April 1996** *Down and Out* comic book launches in Vietnamese and English at the Youth Week Festival. The comic, written and produced by local youth, staff and a doctor, tackles the problem of drug use/abuse and highlights issues of concern including family conflict, homelessness, and peer pressure.



**April 1996** An Organisational Review is released recommending the Centre streamline management and projects organisation-wide.



**15 March 1996** Kamira Cottage in Villawood - providing youth referral outreach services including specifically for young women - holds a semi-formal opening.



**1995-96** *Needle and Syringe Exchange Program* doubles the number of clients seen the previous year to 80 per day, 35% of which come in for Methadone injecting equipment. During 1996, 73,381 1ml syringes, 18,965 other sized syringes, and 33,283 vein infusion kits are distributed. Due to a low return rate though, workers implement a 'fun-size' chocolate bar reward scheme which successfully increases the amount of used equipment returned, many young people taking it upon themselves to "*clean up Cabramatta*" in return for chocolate.



**December 1995** Nicaraguan Community Organisation puts on the Nicaraguan Community Art Festival at Casula Powerhouse.



**November 1995** Fairfield Migrant Resource Centre makes decision to re-apply for Grant-In-Aid funding to support the immigrant population in Parks Area.



**November 1995** *Opiate Overdose Forum "The Sequel"* held, acting as a catalyst for the establishment of the *Young Heroin Smoking Project* in April 1996.



**October 1995** The *Domestic Violence Project* is established by the Fairfield Migrant Resource Centre to assist women and children escaping domestic violence. In many cultures, domestic violence is regarded as "family business". With the addition of language barriers, many local women find themselves in dire situations and require a culturally tailored service (which continues today). In 2004 nearly 50% of DV clients have pending applications to stay in Australia based on relationship grounds. In cases of domestic violence, this creates an additional platform of control by abusers who are regularly found to be threatening deportation should the victim leave the relationship. While legally proved cases of domestic violence nullify the requirement to stay together (otherwise face deportation) many victims are sheltered by both language barriers and abuser efforts, so unaware of their rights.



**1995** *Outreach Bus* expands service to Liverpool CBD and attends schools, community events, and other community organisations.



**1995** *Fairfield Home Modification and Maintenance Service* Builder/Supervisor, John Gergelifi is selected as 'Force' in the popular TV show *Gladiators*. Unfortunately, his new career is short lived due to an injury and he is back at the service a few months later.



**May 1995** Federal Budget allocates additional \$2 million to the *National Migrant Resource Centre Program*, leading to an increase in staff and services at Fairfield Migrant Resource Centre.



**1995** A Health Forum in partnership with Fairfield City Council and Fairfield Health Sector, identifies three immediate local health priorities: Health Literacy (improving knowledge of services in culturally applicable contexts), increasing rates of breast cancer screenings and pap smears, and needle and syringe disposal.



**1 June 1995** "*On the first on June 1995 there was an influx of heroin which was tested to be in excess of 80% pure. Between the hours of 8:30am and 11:00am on that day, it was recorded that seven people overdosed in Cabramatta and the ambulance service was answering calls continuously.*" – Mark Inwood.



**10 June 1995** In response to a Sydney Morning Herald article, one local youth writes: "*I buy a newspaper every day to find current information, current issues for my economic and English subjects and to keep myself up to date with the Australian economy. On June 10th 1995 I read an article called 'Smack on the face of the law' written by Paul L Toohey in the Sydney Morning Herald. Mr Toohey was one eyed open when looking at Cabramatta... these kids (young people in Cabramatta) study very hard in aiming to achieve high Tertiary Entry Rankings. They stay in their schools and you can find them in libraries after school hours. These kids are not as wayward as you exaggerated.*" – Tuyet Nguyen.



**1 July 1995** Fairfield East Community Organisation (now rebranded to Woodville Community Services) becomes completely independent of the Centre.



**1995** *Beauty and Skincare Course* is run in conjunction with Wetherill Park TAFE for young women, supporting direction for further study.



**1995** Youth worker Vincent Doan attends the *Police/Ethnic Youth National Summit* as the delegate for NSW. One of the recommendations from the summit is for Police to receive more training about understanding youth from non-English speaking backgrounds. To do this, Vincent and local youth create a two-day training program delivered at the NSW Police Academy with much success.



**August 1995** 21-year-old Tri Minh Tran, the leader of the ST Gang, is murdered causing a reignition of media sensationalism about the area and a Centre-wide embargo on staff speaking to any media publications.



**4 September 1995** Fairfield Migrant Resource Centre becomes the only local organisation in Australia (and possibly the world) to be accredited as Non-Government Organisation (NGO) observers at the official *4th United Nations World Conference on Women* in Beijing. Four staff attend the conference, as well as a parallel *NGO Forum for Women* also in Beijing.



**1995** Nicaraguan Association members develop two Nicaraguan baseball teams in Macarthur, one for adults and young people, and one for children under 12.



**October 1995** *Fairfield Multicultural Youth Project* teams up with the *Timorese Australia Council* to provide a range of youth activities for East Timorese youth.



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**1997** Changes to the *Humanitarian Program* allow for immediate family members of Humanitarian Entrants and Protection Visa Holders (spouse, child, or parent if person is under 18) permission to live permanently in Australia.



**1997** Research by Bob Birrell and associates at the *Centre for Population & Urban Research* at Monash University perpetuates migrant group stereotypes and is used by the media to claim “*ethnic enclaves*” are forming, and reliant on and abusing welfare.



**1 May 1997** The *Parks Partners* formally launches, bringing together the Fairfield Migrant Resource Centre, *The Parks Community Network*, *Fairfield Multicultural Family Planning*, *Fairfield Legal Aid* and the *Women’s Legal Centre* to provide direct services for culturally and linguistically diverse residents.



**Network offers free advice**




**1997** Baby Health Clinic starts at the Lansdowne Caravan Park office every Tuesday morning and Lotus House becomes completely independent.




**1997** *Life Experience Counts* course run for unemployed women seeking to return to work or study. The course promotes recognition of prior learning and encourages women to value the skills they have from life experience.





**1997** *Woman in the Mirror* resource booklet for service providers who come across Domestic Violence Victims/ Survivors is created.







**1997** A partnership with the *Spastic Centre of NSW* in Prairiewood and the *Macarthur Community Transport Scheme* provides recreational and respite service to families with children with disabilities through the *Special Needs Vacation Care and Integration Programs*.



**1997** *Fairfield Migrant Inter-Agency* successfully lobbies against the Government’s plan to move the Fairfield/Liverpool Mental Health Service from Fairfield to Liverpool in the wake of local objection due to poor public transport links and the recent closure of the afterhours service.



**1 July 1997** Federal Government’s decision to abolish Operational Subsidies to Community based Centres comes into effect, putting extensive financial strain on the Carramar Child Care Centre which has to increase fees as well as hire new staff to meet State Legislation ratio provisions introduced in September 1996.



**July 1997** Ten additional Ethnic Aged Care Packages are funded. To facilitate the service, ten more bilingual case workers are employed.



**July 1997** *Outlying Areas Network* sets up, incorporating a number of local organisations who come together to address the needs and issues affecting residents in suburbs on the outskirts of Fairfield City.




**July 1997** *Arabic Women’s Group* undertakes a ceramic course run by Liverpool TAFE.






**1997** Centre unsuccessfully lobbies for vending machines dispensing clean injecting equipment to be placed around Cabramatta and Fairfield hospital due to chemists closing at 9pm and a black market selling clean equipment during twilight hours establishing.



**1997** Young multicultural client is selected (and paid) to paint the youth services wall at Liverpool Centrelink.



# Personal experience as a child refugee leads to career in human services

Child refugee Echo Morgan grew up in Australia with a very personal understanding from a young age of the issues confronting women who came here from different cultures with little or no English language skills.

Her mother - a Timorese widow, Echo and two other siblings reached the shores of Australia in 1975. Along with thousands of other Indo-Chinese refugees they spent time in temporary accommodation before settling in Fairfield in Western Sydney.

Echo recalls the struggles and desperate need for assistance experienced by her mother even with basic things most of us living in Australia just take for granted.

*“This is probably why I was attracted to a career in human services helping immigrants and those in need,”* she says.

After working as a volunteer assisting the Timorese community, Echo took on the job of Refugee Women’s Project Officer in 1994 with the Cabramatta Community Centre. This role put her right in the centre of bringing together a myriad of government and agency services, and to providing direct help to refugee women and children.

*“I was there to raise the profile of refugee women and their needs. I met with those providing counselling support, Local and Federal Government representatives, The Refugee Council of Australia, the Australian National Council of Refugee Women where I was a committee member, and with numerous other ethnic organisations.*

*“A big need was understanding government and other services and I advocated for information to be translated into different languages,”* Echo recalls. She also cites the need for future job opportunities for refugee women and children and her contribution to establishing a close relationship with TAFE and using their numerous resources.

At a big picture level, two things stood out as major difficulties in Echo’s work in helping her clients adjust to life in Australia.

*“The feeling of isolation really affected refugee women. They were used to close-knit communities, but Australia is vast and wide. Geographically, even Fairfield was big and meeting up with their friends was a challenge. The other thing was language. Fitting into the wider community was hard without speaking English, and grocery shopping – particularly for food they were accustomed to -could be difficult.*

*“Even ordinary everyday things such as going to the doctor, accessing public housing and social security, getting transport could be overwhelming,”* she says.

Echo laughingly recalls acting as a bus driver, taking women to personal appointments and assisting with ordinary things whenever she could. “Work doesn’t stop at 5pm. We did whatever it is that is needed, even on weekends”.



While much of Echo’s work provided direct assistance and benefits to her clients, she also faced extreme challenges.

*“I remember having to deal with many sad and confronting circumstances,”* she says, before recalling two incidents that forever remain in her memory.

*“An asylum seeker fell pregnant to her sister’s husband ... and this led to a termination. She wanted me to come in with her (to the surgery). It was so hard to dismiss my own feelings”.* Another heartbreaking situation was the death of a client.

*“I had known Angela for two years because she committed suicide. She was an asylum seeker and the wait inside the detention centre became too much for her.”*

For Echo though, the positive impact on people’s lives is a powerful reminder of her work at the Cabramatta Community Centre or the more recently named CORE. *“CORE is a creative organisation not bound by geographical boundaries or limited in the services or skills they can offer. It has strong partnerships with other organisations and charities, and a positive philosophy of going where the need is. It is an innovative organisation with a very positive identity”.*

*“My time (with the organisation) was a big learning curve in working with refugee women and children. I have very fond memories. Every one of my colleagues held strong values in wanting to support those in need,”* she says.

*“The future is bright for CORE. It is receptive to community needs and issues. It is respected. People know who CORE is.”*

Echo Morgan today works as Manager – Multicultural Services for the NSW Department of Communities and Justice. She departed CCC or CORE in 1995 to take up a position with Parramatta City Council in community development.





**1997** Carramar Childcare Centre receives funding to build a new playground with fixed equipment and soft fall especially designed for children under three years old.

**1997** The Government announces a new National Multicultural Advisory Council (NMAC) and the Chilean Community Service Network contributes to the Department of Communications DVD *Rainbow Serpent to Dragon Boat* which celebrates the contributions made to the development of a multicultural Australia.

**September 1997** *Indo-Chinese Youth Support Project* originates, providing support to 14-25 year old's who are having difficulties accessing Austudy, Centrelink, housing, health services, education, the court system, satisfactory police conduct and recreational activities.

**1997** The Serbian youth group attends the *Wogboys* production (twice!), a three-day camp, personal development workshops and the musical *Sweet Charity*. They also have professional photographs taken and participate in a video production program.



**1 October 1997** *Aged Care Act* passes meaning nursing homes and hostels will be able to ask new residents for a bond, returnable upon the person leaving the place, less an amount of \$2,600 per year per five years which the facility will be able to retain. Residents will also now be subject to a stringent income assessment which includes the family home. This inclusion has significant effects.

On the first weekend in October, two Seniors in Western Australia commit suicide, leaving a note attributing the action to the Act changes which would mean they would have to sell their home. Feedback suggests seniors mostly cannot fathom selling their home even when entering care and tend to hold onto the hope of returning.

**October 1997** *Cabramatta Drug Forum* held, as result an *Indo-Chinese Youth Forum* establishes in 1998.

**28 November 1997** *Multiculturalism – A Part of the Landscape* event held in support with the NSW Vietnamese Community. 300 people attend.



**1997** The *Integrated Humanitarian Settlement Strategy (IHSS)* establishes to provide a more targeted approach to settlement services for humanitarian entrants.

**19 December 1997** The *Needle Syringe Exchange Program* run at Cabramatta Civic Centre closes. New Government-run *Drug Intervention Service Cabramatta (DISC)* takes over the program, running a mobile service from 9am – 9pm. A Needle Clean Up Hotline is introduced in response to community disquiet generated through disposal of syringes. It appears to significantly reduce visible community complaints about discarded needles.

**31 December 1997** Ettinger House de-funded due to a Federal Government budget decision to cut funding for Family Resource Centres nationally.

**1997-98** 54,644 clean syringes are distributed to clients predominately aged between 16-24 through the Outreach Bus Service (a 42% increase).

**1998** The *Ethnic Aged Care Program* receives funding for another 20 packages, including five Arabic and five Assyrian packages. It also employs a doctor, a registered nurse and an occupational therapist. The *Occasional Childcare Service* also receives funding to extend service hours to 3pm each day.

**June 1998** Minister for Immigration and Multicultural Affairs announces an updated *Migration Program* giving spouses, dependant children, fiancées and interdependent partners of sponsors in Australia priority immigration. Parents, aged dependent relatives, last remaining relatives and special needs relatives have lower priority.

**June 1998** A 'no upfront payment' funding policy change leads to the loss of three *Employment & Labour Market Services* staff and exceptional financial difficulties across the national Job Network employment system, the Minister, David Kemp MP, is forced to step in and save the network from collapsing.

**1998** The Communist Party of China starts *The Great Firewall of China* project successfully aiming to censor the internet by blocking access to selected foreign websites and slowing down cross-border internet traffic.

**26 May 1998** The first *Sorry Day* is held to commemorate the forced removal of Aboriginal children from their families.

**1998** The 'New York style' police blitz known as *Operation Puccini* is put into action. It includes 45 additional police stationed to Cabramatta and video cameras installed throughout the main CBD. This improves the situation in Cabramatta's business area – where the train to there was labelled the "Junkie Express" by Police - but drives dealers to the suburbs where they are less detectable. The zero-tolerance approach is seen as "incredibly

aggressive" and does not decrease the amount of users as a result, however does add to the mistrust of law enforcement by the local community. Residents, who viewed the crackdown as racist and targeting their youth, are scared to call triple zero if someone they know overdoses because Police regularly attend. One resident says: "*So many times we'd call the ambulance and the police would come or show up with the ambulance*". Tensions continue to rise as the drug problem escalates.

**1998** Alarming local experiences of young Indo-Chinese people with Law enforcement agents are collated and presented to the NSW Ombudsman.

**27 April 1998** Government withdraws all funding for Outside of School Hours Cares Services (OOSH), resulting in the *Before School Centre* closing and the Harrington Street Public School OOSH service being forced to merge with Mt Pritchard Public School OOSH service.



**April 1998** *Cultural Appropriateness or Plain Customer Service – Legal Needs of the NESB Residents* in Fairfield report launches, identifying several structural barriers for people from non-English speaking backgrounds, including access to interpreters, long waiting times, and lack of services.

**1998** *Post Detox Peer Support Project* runs, providing life skills and support to young people who have recently detoxified from heroin (or other substances).

**13 March 1998** Two publications launch at the Spanish Speaking Seniors' Day held at Parramatta Hall. Research titled *The Needs of nursing care for Spanish speaking elderly people* and a booklet titled *The Spanish speaking grandparent's healthy recipes* which was compiled of recipes entered during a competition.

**1998** Fairfield City Council plans to introduce a *Loitering Bill* for the Cabramatta Business area after concerns raised by local businesses that drug-using youths and gangs hanging outside their businesses are scaring away potential customers.

**February 1998** The *Outreach Bus* participates in the Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras and Villawood Neighbourhood Centre secures establishment funding.

**June 1998** *Indo-Chinese Youth Forum* helps to establish partnerships with other service providers and tackle issues affecting local Indo-Chinese youth. One major project from the forum is the Police Youth Committee aiming to promote positive relationships between police and young people through activities such as soccer competitions, legal workshops and excursions.



**3 July 1998** *Post School Options Program* ceases operations at Yagoona but remains at Carramar and Panania.

**August 1998** *Ethnic Communities Council Community Harmony Project* launches.

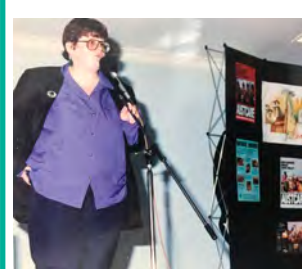
**August 1998** The *Second Congo War* breaks out. Nine African countries and around twenty-five armed groups become involved in the war. 5.4 million deaths result, principally through disease and starvation, making the Second Congo War the deadliest conflict worldwide since World War II. Another 2 million people are displaced from their homes or seek asylum in neighbouring countries.

**1998** Fairfield City Council is lobbied to extend its restriction of brothels to the isolated Wetherill Park Industrial Zone due to increasing health and safety risks. Council are also pushed to recognise home-based workers and smaller operators in the local area and provide worker protection via Local Government Regulation to stop the industry going underground placing workers and residents at risk.

**September 1998** *Parks Multicultural Women's Group* establishes, providing health and settlement activities, and social outings to combat isolation.



**1998** English version of the *Heroin Booklet* launches at Annual General Meeting.



**1998** Cocaine is introduced to the local area, leading to the *Youth Team Drug and Alcohol Project* workers working overtime to research and distribute information about the effects.

**October 1998** *One People Many Faces* festival and street parade held.



**October 1998** Hurricane Mitch, the deadliest hurricane in Central American history, devastates Central America leaving 11,000 fatalities in its wake. In response, the Spanish-speaking community rallies together to organise several fundraising activities, including a major festival which the Premier of NSW attends and donates \$60,000 towards the relief of hurricane victims.

**October 1998** *Fairvale Youth Group* establishes to provide Fairvale High School Students with stimulating after school activities such as folk art, pottery and self-defence lessons.







**November 1998** Australian Aids Memorial Quilt, in memory of those who have died from AIDS, exhibits in the Cabramatta Community Centre foyer. Families, lovers and friends design each of the sewn panels in memory of a person or group lost to the disease.

**November 1998** Youth Drop-in Centre at Mt Pritchard establishes after feedback from a survey of local high school students was conducted. Activities include jewellery making, song writing, badminton, table tennis and cooking classes.



**November 1998** Staff attend and present two papers at the *1st International Conference on Drugs & Young People* in Melbourne. The papers discuss the developmental process of producing the Vietnamese language booklet 'A Guide for Coming off Heroin' and experiences with running the *Heroin Home Based Detoxification Program*.



**1998** Australia Coalition '99 forms to plan activities and celebrations for the United Nations declared International Year of the Older Persons 1999. The Coalition decides to theme local events around 'Fairfield a Multicultural City, Golden Wisdom'.

**1 December 1998** Residents of Lotus House celebrate World AIDS Day with others by producing a colourful mural in Freedom Plaza Cabramatta. The mural represents HIV/AIDS and its impact on not only those affected by the virus but on the community as a whole.

**1998-99** 69,368 items of needle and syringe equipment are distributed through the AIDS Project and 7,302 occasions of service undertaken (including information, resources and a needle and syringe program). 43.5% of clients are 'white Australian' and 38.7% 'Asian'. Overdoses peak at 1,116 heroin deaths in 1999.



**January 1999** Ethnic Aged Care Package clients take a trip to the Chinese Gardens at Darling Harbour.

**1999** Another house for crisis accommodation is secured in Fairfield, the *Assyrian Youth Network* establishes, and the *Vietnamese Youth Magazine* publishes three issues, completely produced from start to finish by local young people.

**1999** *Police and Community Training Project* establishes to build better relationships between local young people (especially those of non-English speaking backgrounds aged between 12-24) and Police. The project is structured as a two-way platform so Police can learn more about their communities and communities can learn more about Police in a friendly, safe environment. On average, 150 participants attend each session.



**13 March 1999** *International Year of the Older Persons* opening ceremony held at Fairfield Forum Plaza.



**1999** Mt Pritchard Over 50s Group receives a Council On The Ageing (NSW) recognition award in the 1999 Awards for Good Practice in Senior's Clubs, Centres and Local Councils for their engagement of older people in the local community.

**June 1999** Immigration Minister Paul Ruddock MP helps launch the Lao Workers Network Kit for parents titled *The Bridge Between Parents and Children*.



**June 1999** 15 young women enrol in a new five-week *Car Maintenance Course* to learn how to look after their car and gain useful tips on purchasing a used car.

**1999** Arabic lessons are conducted for children from Arabic-speaking families whose parents want to help them master their native tongue.



**1999** *Study Assistance Program* caters for 90 year nine, 10 and 11 students, providing three hours of literacy and numeracy tuition per week.



**April 1999** Through 'Operation Safe Haven', Australia creates 'safe haven' visas for about 4,000 Kosovars fleeing the war. By July, all are temporarily resettled in Australia at various safe haven centres, but most elect to return home when the war finishes.

**April 1999** *Employment Labour Market Services* program receives an award for Most Improved Performance at the National Conference of JOB futures.

**April 1999** *Thunder in Cabramatta* puts 70 youths through physical and mental challenges in celebration of Youth Week.



**April 1999** *GP Outreach Worker* initiative starts with the hiring of a General Practitioner who contacts other GPs in Fairfield and Liverpool to discuss and promote the existence of the Community Aged Care Packages available to their clients.

**1999** The Ethnic Communities Council creates the *Community Harmony Project*, developing 5,000 kits which are distributed by community service providers such as CCC.

**24 March 1999** The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) commences air strikes against Yugoslavia with the bombing of Serbian military positions in the Yugoslav province of Kosovo. The NATO offensive comes in response to a new wave of ethnic cleansing launched by Serbian forces against the Kosovar Albanians. "We saw sheep in the mountains and I thought 'even the sheep are luckier than us. The mountains is their home. We have nowhere.'" - Refugee fleeing Kosovo.

**21 March 1999** Australia's first *Harmony Day* is celebrated to coincide with the United Nations *International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination*.

**1999** Youth worker, Luat Nguyen represents young people and the wider community at the three-week NSW Government Drug Summit. Meanwhile, tobacco companies finally admit their products harm smokers.

**21 July 1999** Fairfield Film and Video Screening takes place at Cabramatta Rugby League Club. 100 people enjoy short videos produced through the *Street Video Project* such as: a seven-minute comedy questioning the main characters perception of reality; a 30 second comedy about a doctor looking for files in another doctor's office, and a three-minute music clip of an original rap song. Four young people completing the projects receive scholarships at the Australian Theatre for Young People.



**Lights, camera, action on job front**  
A 100% success rate in the job market for graduates of the HELP Holiday Program is the headline for the group of young people who have completed their training and are now on the job. The group, consisting of 10 young people, are the first to have completed the program and are now working in various roles. The program was a success, with all graduates finding employment within a short period of time. The graduates are proud of their achievements and are looking forward to their new roles. The program was a great success, with all graduates finding employment within a short period of time. The graduates are proud of their achievements and are looking forward to their new roles.

**1999** *HELP Holiday Program* sends young people bushwalking at Stanwell tops and participating in other recreational activities such as horse riding and ice skating.



**1 July 1999** Canley Heights Community Centre officially launches at an open day attended by Mrs Shirley Barrett OAM, Councillor Ken Chapman and more than 150 residents. Vivid entertainment by local groups is enjoyed along with food and art displays.



**July 1999** *Street Video Project* becomes *Multi-Media Project* which now includes three modules from the Certificate II in Information Technology and the ability to apply and finish the course at TAFE afterwards.

**1999** 15 young women secure complimentary tickets to the *Australis Girl - Young Women in Business* conference in Parramatta, learning firsthand from successful women some skills and 'tricks of the trade'.



**1999** The Australian Government initiates a major campaign against unlawful arrivals and the 'people smugglers' who help get them to Australia. The aim is to detect, deter and detain any such arrivals.

**August 1999** Parents and carers from the *Multicultural Playgroup* participate in a Paediatric 1st Aid Course conducted by the Paramedial Service.



**1999** The Nicaraguan Association produces a report titled *Not Only As Refugees* about the needs and culture of Nicaraguans in Australia.

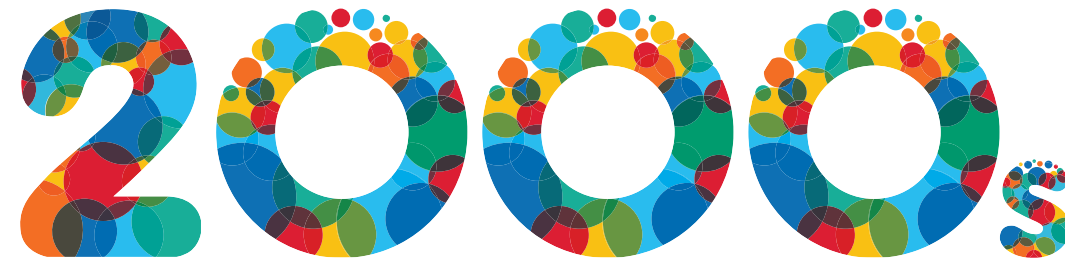




**1999** The Centre's 20th Anniversary is celebrated at Cabra-Vale Diggers during the Annual General Meeting. Via the Ceramic Painting Workshops, young people produce 20 signature designed coffee cups as gifts for the AGM. The 20th year mission statement is "to ensure that disadvantaged local residents enjoy the life opportunities experienced by other Australians".



**1999** *Be Safe – Be Healthy Cabramatta Walk* held as part of International Year of the Older Persons celebrations. Seniors and their family members choose to walk 4km or 6km at their own pace, with multiple check points providing rest and safety information opportunities. Fairfield City Council mascot "Mr Alert" heralds the walk, showing children participating how to safely cross the road.



## Modern century

The beginning of the new millennium signalled the need for organisational restructuring to deal with major changes to government regulations and to introduce management and co-ordination processes that better equipped the Cabramatta Community Centre (CCC) for new challenges.

Serious issues carried over from the previous Century such as drug abuse, crime and a damaged local community reputation remained, but greater funding for more projects that tackled these matters and others along with changes to existing projects to make them more client-focussed were to have a positive impact.

The Australian economy started to dramatically improve from the recession of the 90s and the related high unemployment, however not all citizens benefitted - reflecting a growing wealth inequality in the nation.

### New Rules

The early years brought changes to childcare with the new Child Care and Protection Act requiring staff checks which impacted on the Centre's divisions undertaking children's services. Licensing and accreditation approvals had to be met. A new case management reporting system required by the Federal Government also presented challenges for migrant resource and community support service workers.

Compliance with regulatory standards resulting from Occupational Health and Safety legislation, the implementation of new Department of Community Services service plans, and meeting the cost of spiralling public liability insurance provided challenging administrative workloads for staff and costs for the CCC outside of service provision.

The introduction of the Goods and Services Tax (GST) also placed the organisation's administrative operations under pressure.



**January 2000** World Health Organisation declares 2000-2010 the *Bone Density and Joint Decade*. This prompts the establishment of the *Older Women's Bone Density Project* to promote the prevention of muscular-skeletal disorders and empower women through information and education campaigns.



**2000** *Outreach Bus* sees 100-200 clients every Friday and Saturday night, an increase from the (on average) 80 per night in 1999.



**2000** New *Child Care and Protection Act* introduced requiring all staff to undergo police checks.



**2000** By popular demand a *Coffee Shop Course* is run with Wetherill Park TAFE so local young people can take advantage of the numerous hospitality sector opportunities created by the Sydney Olympics.



**2000** Cabramatta Occasional Child Care celebrates their 20-year anniversary with a mobile farm visit for parents and children.



## Immigration in the 90s

The 1990s are tainted internationally by war and internal displacement, leading to Australia admitting more than 100,000 refugees and other humanitarian entrants between 1992-2002. The majority come from Europe, principally fleeing former Yugoslavia (45%), while the Middle East and North Africa (25%, mostly from Iraq) follows in second. The African intake almost doubles during this decade. In 2004, of the main countries which settle refugees through UNHCR, the USA accounts for 63%, Australia 19%, and Canada 13%.



**1999** Mount Pritchard OOSH service receives a Fairfield Small Business Award.



**September 1999** 'Operation Safe Haven' provides 1,900 temporary protection visas for East Timorese people fleeing conflict.



**September 1999** The United Nations Headquarters in Dili fills with refugees in the aftermath of the killings and violence following from the East Timor vote for independence. On 10 September, the RAAF begins airlifting UN staff and refugees from the headquarters. Six days later, Indonesia abrogates the 1995 mutual security treaty that had been signed by Australian Prime Minister Paul Keating and Indonesian president Suharto. On 20 September, Australian troops lead a peace-keeping force into East Timor.



**October 1999** Ricci Bartels (daughter of founder, Ulla Bartels) is presented with a plaque in memory of her mother to hang at the Centre.



**20 October 1999** The Australian Government *Migration Amendment Regulations no. 12* establishes a three-year Temporary Protection Visa for unauthorised arrivals who are assessed as requiring protection, replacing a Permanent Protection Visa as granted previously. Between 1999-2001, 9,500 unauthorised boat arrivals (predominantly from the Middle East) hit Australia's shores. This is in comparison to just 2,760 boat arrivals between 1976-1994. In 1999 alone, 86 boats arrive unlawfully in Australia.



**28 October 1999** *One People Many Faces* festival held to promote the positive aspects of cultural diversity. Messages about culture and multiculturalism are written on coloured ribbons and linked in chains creating 'the chain of many colours'.







Olly, Syd and Millie a group of three official mascots for the 2000 Summer Olympics in Sydney NAA A13966 970843.

## External Events

Major events – both uplifting and heartbreaking – set the scene for Australia in the early part of the new Century.

The Sydney 2000 Olympics brought positivity and pride to the nation and the city, yet less than a year later, the terrorist attack on the Twin Towers in New York ushered in a new era in world politics, civil rights and protections and of course, community attitudes. The wars in the middle east involving Australia continue today.

Closer to home, an issue that had plagued the Cabramatta community since 1994 with the murder of the local Member of Parliament John Newman finally reached a conclusion in June 2001 with the conviction of Phuong Ngo for ordering Newman's killing. Ngo was a refugee who became a prominent businessman and Vietnamese community leader. He was alleged to have had an association with the local Vietnamese crime gang 5T. Ngo was elected as an Independent Councillor to Fairfield Council in 1993, before his arrest in March 1998.

**2000 Fairfield Multicultural Youth Project** participates in an interview and photoshoot for Cabramatta High School's Anti-Racism website. The website aims to promote the positive aspects of Cabramatta and its cultural diversity.

**2000 Food Share Program** establishes. *The Food Share Program* is a self-help program where participants perform two hours of voluntary work and pay \$15 every month. In return they receive the box of fresh fruit and vegetables worth \$30-\$35. Approximately 45 boxes are provided every month.

**2000** Funding is received for the *Indo-Chinese Youth Support Project*.

**5 June 2000** The *Six-Day War*, a series of armed confrontations between Ugandan and Rwandan forces, results in around 1,000 deaths and wounds at least 3,000, the majority civilians.

**June 2000** Carnations are handed out at a Refugee Week event titled *Recognition Respect Reflection* to acknowledge the suffering and struggle of refugees.

**2000** In response to the 1998 *Healthy Aging Green Paper*, a number of programs are investigated to keep local seniors active and healthy as they age. One such program piloted is the *Fairfield City Walkers Program*.



**2000** Due to an increasing number of young people being rejected for Youth Allowance payments, a Youth Allowance Evaluation and a forum are conducted to assess the situation and help young people lodge appeals.

## Aging Population

The Cabramatta Community Centre continued to offer a wide range of critical support services for children, youth, migrants, families, women and in community engagement generally, but an increasing area of demand was help for the elderly and disabled.

The growth of the Multicultural Aged and Disability Services and staffing levels echoed the expanding need for aged care home packages, home modification for the disabled, providing respite for carers and programs for seniors' groups.

It was clear that Australia's aging population – including its migrant population – would have increasing needs in the future after leaving the workforce. Financial support, home help, health services and programmes aiding general well-being for the elderly would be critical for the next decade and beyond.



**November 2000 Outreach Youth Worker** position establishes aimed at educating young people on drug and alcohol issues. The position runs the *Getting Away Drug Alternative Program* which provides 13-24 year old's with an alternative to drug use and introduces them to youth workers and services they can utilise.



**October 2000 Living With Cancer Education Program** run for Spanish-speaking women and their carers who had previously suffered in physical and emotion isolation due to their inability to access culturally catered information.



**2000 The Multicultural Aged Resources Service** implements Senior's ID Health Cards to provide basic information to health professionals for seniors not fluent in English.

**September 2000 Summer Olympics** are held in Sydney costing more than \$6.6 billion, but helps to put Australia on the world map.

**4 September 2000 Young Women's Project** for Women of All Cultures starts. Activities run include self-defence classes, retreats, Virtual Baby Program, Vietnamese dance classes, excursions and involvement in International Women's Day.



**September 2000 Peer-led advertising initiative In Your Face Big Screen Project** gets young people at risk of engaging in unsafe drug, alcohol or sexual practices to star in advertisements which are screened on big screens in Cabramatta and Fairfield during the Olympics.

**September 2000** A period of intensified Israeli-Palestinian violence called *The Second Intifada* begins. Palestinians describe it as an uprising against Israel. The death toll, including both military and civilian, is estimated to be about 3,000 Palestinians and 1,000 Israelis, as well as 64 foreigners.

**2000 Fairfield Migrant Resource Centre** holds a picnic for communities from non-English speaking backgrounds to promote settlement services. Activities, free transport, food, drink and educational opportunities are enjoyed by more than 350 attendees.



**10 August** Fourteen Lebanese Australian youths led by Bilal Skaf attack and rape several young women in South West Sydney, reportedly as ethnically-motivated hate crimes. These horrific attacks lead to wide-spread fear mongering about Arabic-speaking communities. Racial-driven vandalism, verbal and physical abuse ensues.

**2000 When Harry Gets Too Hard Resource Package** developed to disseminate information on how to get off heroin and the services available to help.

**2000 Multimedia Project** students attend the *FOX STUDIOS BACKLOT TOUR!* Where they get to experience the live singing and dancing show *Titanic "Lights! Camera! Chaos!"*, a TV tour, a look at makeup and SFX rooms, and meet TV cartoon characters at the *Simpsons Down Under Show*.

**1 July 2000** Goods and Services Tax (GST) goes into operation. Welfare groups argue against the "*regressive*" tax, saying it has a more pronounced effect on low income earners as it consumes a higher proportion of their income. It also affects welfare organisations.

**July 2000** A drug and alcohol awareness vacation program targeting 11-14 year olds in Cabramatta and Bonnyrigg, is piloted.

**2000** The Multicultural Aged & Disability Services division is established incorporating Ethnic Aged Care, Fairfield Home Modification and Maintenance Service, and the Multicultural Aged Resources Service.

**2000 The Ethnic Aged Care Project** secures funding for 70 packages including five Vietnamese packages in the Bankstown area. 29 case workers are employed at this time.

## 2000s POP CULTURE: What's Happening?

43% of Australians access the internet in **2000**, ranking Australia seventh in the world in internet use. By **2009**, 74.1% access the internet.

The *Sydney Olympics* form a pivotal cultural influence in Australia in **2000**. From three native animal mascots (Olly, Syd and Millie), to a young Nicki Webster, to the Millennium Choir (made up of local Greeks who sing the Olympic Hymn in original Hellenic for the first time since the 1896 Olympic Games in Athens), the Sydney 2000 Olympics put Australia on the world stage and open up opportunities for Sydneysiders seeking work.


At the end of **June 2007**, Apple releases the first smartphone, the iPhone. In just over two months, 1 million iPhones are sold.

As the clocks tick over from **1999 to 2000**, IT experts brace themselves fearfully. Planes falling from the sky, banks crashing, and computer systems totally failing are all expectations of the Y2K scare (also known as the "*Millennium Bug*"). Thankfully, clocks are able to tick over without a problem.

Two of the largest social media channels we know today launch in the 2000s, "*The Facebook*" on **February 4 2004** and *YouTube* on **April 24 2005** (the first video uploaded is titled 'me at the zoo'). Defunct (but then popular) *Myspace* also sets up in **2003**.

\$3 billion dollars and a decade later, on **June 26th 2000** the human genome sequence is finally deciphered.



 **November 2000** Needs consultation held which identifies affordable housing as a priority issue. This finding leads to the establishment of the *Fairfield Housing Committee* in March 2001. Survey of local young women finds primary issues of concern are unemployment (86%) and poverty (62%).

 **December 2000** *Healthy Lifestyle Network's* end-of-year Picnic held.




 **December 2000** Aged care staff and clients enjoy a Christmas cruise.



 **December 2000** The *Multi-Media and Circuit Breaker* projects are cancelled due to government funding restructures.

 **December 2000** In the last two weeks of December 2000, 12 boats arrive unlawfully in Australia carrying about 800 people.

 **2001** The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) estimates the 2001 world refugee population at 12 million, and an extra 19.7 million are 'persons of concern'. Figures from the UNHCR reveal Australia resettles 42 refugees per 100,000 of its population in 2001, putting it ahead of Canada (33) and the United States (29). Also in 2001, 51 boats carrying 4,141 arrive unlawfully in Australia.

## Taking a sad situation and making it better

Hundreds of the many thousands of young Indo-Chinese women aged between 14 and 18 came to Australia as unaccompanied minors to escape the terror of war and often brutal regimes only to become victims of abuse and homelessness.

Their life stories however get better thanks to the effort of Cabramatta's Youth Workers and volunteers.

Suna Er, Youth Services Team Leader and previously Co-ordinator of Lotus House Women's Refuge for more than a decade, tells of the sad circumstances facing many female refugees provided emergency accommodation and assistance by the refuge.

*"Quite a lot of young people from Vietnam, Cambodia and China arrived in Australia without parents,"* Suna says.

*"For some ... maybe they went to live with an aunt or uncle who took them in for admirable reasons, but relationships broke down. Sometimes they were emotionally, sexually and physically abused and escaped from that unhealthy environment. These young women found themselves homeless. A few were forced into unimaginable living arrangements because they were on the street with nowhere to go."*

Lotus House was established in 1991 as part of the Cabramatta Community Centre after receiving funding to address the identified plight of homeless young females from Indo-China. It then operated independently from 1995 to 2014 before it

was remerged with the community centre following changes to Government reforms. Suna's job was to provide accommodation and support for up to six young women at any time.

*"We were very focussed on education and on and family mediation where appropriate,"* Suna says, adding that the refuge stressed that education was the way to improve a person's circumstances and prospects in the future.

*"The girls went to school and we brought in tutors for one-on-one support. Many became the first in their generation to achieve junior and higher school certificates. They were also encouraged and shown how to save, budget and shop as part of our independent living skills program. Many left the refuge with a good understanding of living skills and the opportunity to have saved money in their bank accounts."*

Hundreds of young women given assistance by Lotus House between 1991 and 2014 emerged with significantly better skills and opportunities, and a brighter future.

Others were helped in other ways, according to Suna, including a special situation where a young female aged 16 who had been homeless and addicted to heroin since the age of 12 was given extra resources and support to undergo home detoxification at the refuge.

*"Workers and volunteers provided 24-hour a day support for two weeks,"* Suna says, recounting the suffering and screams that echoed through the refuge, and the reaction by other young women who *"swore never to touch drugs"*.


The detoxification worked, but there were relapses that lessened

 **2001** 20,804.25 hours of direct service are provided by the *Ethnic Aged Care* project this year. Clients are on average 77 years old and mostly female. Overall, in 2001 the Centre employs 80 staff and manages 35 different projects.

 **2001** Mt Pritchard OOSH Service and Canley Heights Community Centre broken into twice, respectively.

 **2001** Department of Education and Training reveals, statistically, young people from non-English speaking backgrounds have significantly higher suspension rates, particularly Indo-Chinese youth. This leads to the Centre campaigning for better support.

 **1 January 2001** A parade in Sydney celebrates the *Centenary of Federation* is celebrated, acknowledging the 100th anniversary of the Proclamation of the Commonwealth of Australia.

 **January 2001** 11 young women attend the Warrigal Retreat over three days to introduce them to life with a 'virtual' baby. By the end of the program, the girls had had enough of the babies they could not get to stop crying, particularly during a cinema outing where they are almost kicked out.



over time before the drug addiction was controlled. The young woman however went on present at a number of forums in Australia and overseas, and used her experience to guide policy makers.

The Refuge with the help of the Cabramatta Community Centre became involved at a personal level with those in their care.

*"We had one refugee – a young woman – who was very ill because she needed a kidney transplant. We were able to find her mother in Cambodia and bring her out here (as a kidney donor for her daughter). Minister (for Immigration) (Philip) Ruddock supported the mother coming to Australia with costs covered by Medicare. The mother was then allowed to stay in Australia."*

Suna also recalls the took in refuge a legally blind young woman who was brought out to Australia by the Cambodian community to perform as a singer. *"She had an amazing voice and we were able to get her sponsored to stay here. After staying two years at the refuge and learning to be independent, she left our care and later married"*.


*"I am very positive about the work of the Refuge and support by the Cabramatta Community Centre,"* Suna reflects, but in a startling revelation, adds: *"That's not to say we didn't have to attend some funeral services along the way"*.

She gives an account of a young woman who had once stayed at the refuge. The young woman and her boyfriend were found deceased. *"The young woman's family claimed her body and gave her a funeral. But despite working with the Red Cross and Interpol, no-one came forward to claim his (the boyfriend's) body."* Suna says her organisation claimed the young man's body and provided him with a proper funeral.

For Suna Er, working in the welfare system with the young and very vulnerable is a privilege. *"It is a privilege to be invited into people's lives and to be able to help"*.

Leaving Lotus House at the end of 2014, Suna today is employed as a Community Co-ordinator for another organisation, but describes the work of CORE and the 40th Anniversary as *"amazing"*.

*"I think CORE will go from strength-to-strength. It has a fantastic leader in Juana (CEO, Juana Reinoso). All of the staff are amazing, and they are prepared to take on the big challenges."*

 **March 2001** *Hoop 2 Hoop Friday Night* Basketball competition for 12-24-year old's starts. The competition has on average 20-30 participants, with the grand final peaking at 400-500 as part of the Youth Week celebration. Participants enjoy additional entertainment by a DJ and a sausage sizzle to keep energy up. Western Sydney Razorbacks basketball team also step in and provide two training sessions.



 **March 2001** *Spanish Speaking Senior Creative Writing Competition* launches with 35 seniors entering original poems and short stories.



Fairfield Advance 24/6/1997

## Channary's second chance

by MERRYNN PORTER

CHANNARY Yem, the Cambodian refugee who desperately needed a kidney transplant, has been given a second chance at life.

The 22-year-old received her new kidney during a five-hour operation at the Royal Prince Alfred Hospital in August and is now recovering at her Canley Vale home.

The *Advance* reported back in May that Ms Yem had to undergo hours of painful dialysis three times a week to stay alive and desperately needed a kidney transplant.

Ms Yem's 64-year-old mother, Seng Lee, who lives in Cambodia, had offered to donate one of her kidneys but would have had to pay for her own operation and post-operative care because she is not an Australian citizen.

Lotus House women's refuge co-ordinator Suna Er began raising money to bring Mrs Lee to Australia soon after Ms Yem was struck down by kidney failure.

Ms Er helped raise about \$4000 thanks to donations by Fairfield Lions Club, Cabramatta Community Centre and the community, but Health Minister Andrew Refshauge later agreed to let Medicare to foot the bill, allowing the transplant to go ahead.

The \$4000 has gone towards Mrs Lee's medication, transport to and from the hospital and general living expenses while she recovers.

Ms Yem last week paid tribute to her mother. "My mother is very special," Ms Yem said.

Mrs Lee is still quite sore from the surgery and is recovering at home with her daughter.



Hope for the future ... kidney transplant recipient Channary Yem (right) gets a hug from her mum, Seng Lee PHOTO: Daniel Griffiths

She will remain in Australia until at least early next year but is considering applying for residency to be close to her daughter.

"I would like her to stay because I have been

lonely and I miss my mother," Ms Yem said.

She said doctors were very happy with her progress and she now visits the hospital three times a week for her check-up.

"They say I am special

because I am recovering so quickly," she said.

While convalescing in hospital Ms Yem practised her English with the nurses and hopes to return to English classes once she is fully recovered.



# The Unsung Heroes

Volunteers are a backbone to community organisations such as CORE Community Services, providing much needed support to help people in need.

For long time volunteer, John Tucker volunteering is a two-way street giving him learning and socialising opportunities as well as a “fuzzy feeling that you’ve helped someone in need”.

*“We’re only on this earth for a short period of time and it’s always been my philosophy to help other people as much as I can,” says John. “I’ve made good friends with the staff and quite often I get passed in the street by people we’ve helped and they’ll come up to me and ask how I’m going. It’s a happy feeling knowing you’ve helped someone.”*

John, like many other volunteers, assists the CORE Community Engagement team with all-rounder support from gardening to JP services, English lessons to class lists and office work. After being made redundant after a 28-year career with one company, John found volunteering gives him a way to keep connected with the local community – a community he was born into in 1951 and has seen change significantly over time.

*“There was a migrant hospital just down the road from where I lived and they used to mainly be British and then over the years they brought in the Europeans and the Vietnamese,” says John.*

*“I find the multicultural groups try to mix in with people and try and learn. They want to work hard, make a living, and it’s obvious when you look around Cabramatta or Fairfield shopping centres they really get in and they’ve got more get up and go because they value what they’ve got and make a go of it.”*

It’s not always easy for new migrants to make a go of it when funds are hard to come by and job opportunities not always available. Volunteers and staff at CORE regularly work to provide monetary, translation, social and advocate support services. John says the programs and services available through CORE are irreplaceable.

*“I reckon CORE staff and volunteers do a terrific job. They do things to help people and don’t brag about what they do but people know we’re here. They’re unsung heroes in my book,” says John.*



Volunteer appreciation day 2019



2008 African Young Women’s Project

**March 2001** Seniors Week is celebrated by a cohort of 110 clients and staff visiting the Fairfield Heritage Museum and Exhibition Gallery and enjoying a lively morning tea afterward.



**6 April 2001** Youth Week is celebrated by more than 400 young people at the first *Bring It On* youth festival. Local young people are professionally trained beforehand with new skills and help plan and implement the festival.



**2001** Guidebook *Communication between Spanish-Speaking Migrant Parents and their Adolescents* is published after extensive workshop and focus group consultations. Cover art is designed by local competition-winning youth.



**May 2001** Ethnic Aged Care Project staff attend the Cultural Diversity in Health, and Aged and the Community Services Association conferences where they present a paper titled *Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Service: You Can Do It Too!*.

**1 May 2001** The NSW Medically Supervised Injecting Centre opens in Kings Cross and is the first legally sanctioned injecting centre for injecting drug users in the English-speaking world.

**2001** Right Combinations youth boxing program attracts unemployed, homeless or at-risk-of-drug-using young people. Participants reign in their excitement when World Boxing Champ, Kostya Tszyu visits to sign autographs and answer all their questions.



**June 2001** Pinatas Workshop held for relaxation, stress management, and cultural appreciation. Pikachu, Winnie the Pooh, bears and dolls are crafted and sold during a community festival celebrating Australia’s Centenary of Federation. One participant says: “I would like to express that this course has given me an opportunity to learn new

skills, to share opinions, learn different slang from other countries even though we speak the same language and the most important thing is that I could overcome my fears to participate in a group. My husband is also waiting for me every day to read all the material regarding stress and relaxation techniques and we are putting them into practice.”



**2001** *Getting Ready* Program held for young women in years 10, 11, 12 to help them prepare for the HSC, TAFE, university and/or future employment. The program provides critical social experiences and assists in developing communication skills, assertiveness and personal grooming habits.



**1 August 2001** 30 local Spanish-speaking men officially launch a poster to promote mental health awareness (usually typified as a “women’s issue”). The poster is devised with participants during the *Spanish Speaking Older Men & Depression Project*.



**July 2001** Premier’s Cabramatta Anti-Drug Strategy launches. The four-year \$18.8 million plan has four components: a criminal justice plan giving police new powers; a compulsory treatment plan providing more treatment and accommodation options for drug users, a community relations plan, and a prevention and early intervention plan to increase local education. The Centre is a major contributor to the strategy rollout.



**2001** Fairfield Migrant Resource Centre website launches.

**2001** With support from a community artist *Links to Learning* year nine students create an art mural on a brick wall at the Greenfield Park Childcare Centre.



**July 2001** *Mental and Physical Wellbeing Project* run for Spanish-speaking men to address issues such as depression and anxiety, and to help participants develop skills to be able to recognise and deal with symptoms.



**7 July 2001** The Under 20s Men’s Federation Cup Basketball Competition is held at Cabra-Vale Park which brings together young men from various cultural backgrounds. Thanks to sponsors, the Mt Pritchard Cabramatta West Community Centre team all receive new uniforms.



**3 July 2001** 300 people attend the first ever *Job Expo for overseas IT skilled migrants*.

**2001** Childcare benefit introduced, leading to more families utilising the OOSH service.

**2001** Local youth get away from drugs and get into activities such as rock climbing and canoeing through the new *Getting Away Program*.





**September 2001** Nicaraguan Association abandoned due to lost funding.

**11 September 2001** Terrorist attacks on the New York World Trade Centre and the Pentagon signal the beginning of the 'War on Terrorism'. Australia becomes a key ally, agreeing to send Australian military personnel to Afghanistan in October 2001 and to Iraq in 2003 and 2005. In October 2001, Australia provides 1,550 troops to Afghanistan for 'Operation Enduring Freedom', a conflict that ousts the Taliban government.

**27 September 2001** International Year of Volunteers is acknowledged at an awards ceremony held by Fairfield City Council. 40 Fairfield District Seniors Network volunteers receive awards for their consistent dedication.



**6 October 2001** A wooden hulled vessel carrying 223 asylum seekers and believed to be operated by people smugglers sinks and is intercepted by HMAS Adelaide 190 kilometres north of Christmas Island.

**19 October 2001** A boat, known as the SIEV-X, sinks in the Indian Ocean killing 353 asylum seekers.

**23 October 2001** Bud-Wiser Program starts targeting 16-25 year olds who want to reduce or stop their cannabis use.

**2001** The Out of Hours School Service is nominated for a Small Business of the Year Award for the third year in a row.

**2001** 26 women graduate from the Childcare Studies course held in conjunction with Liverpool TAFE.



**2001** The Ethnic Aged Care Project (EACP) receives funding for 100 packages in nine different languages. One client says of the service:

*"My life has completely changed since I received the service. I feel so much more secure and safe and do not have to mind when I have a doctor's appointment about how to get there. My carer looks after my medical appointments and reminds me a day before. If the doctor's surgery is far away I do not need to worry because my carer will take me there by car. I particularly like when my carer is cleaning and sings a song in my language. Then I know she likes her job and my company. It cheers me up and even my headache is not as strong as usual! I am extremely pleased to receive care from EACP for more than a year. I have a large family but I live alone and usually they visit me at the end of the week. I just cannot imagine my life without my carer and her assistance with showering, meal preparation, transport, dressing, also without her company because of the friendship that has developed. In this situation I feel the service is my second family."*



EACP staff in 2001

**April 2003** Fairfield Aid Centre riots are a powerful example of the poverty experienced locally and used by staff as a case study during the Senate Inquiry into Poverty and Financial Hardship.

**April 2003** Fairfield Migrant Resource Centre Open Day is attended by approximately 300 people.



**December 2002** Ethnic Aged Care Project clients and staff are invited by the owner of Maxims Restaurant to have their Christmas party there. Attendees are entertained by various cultural performances.



**2003** Domestic Violence Project undertakes 1,664 occasions of service with the four largest groups being of Vietnamese, Khmer, Arabic-speaking and former Yugoslavian backgrounds.

**November 2002** A 'fifties' musical based on the movie Grease involving local women and youths is staged at Riverside Theatre Parramatta to an audience of 900.



**12 October 2002** Islamic militant extremists carry out a terrorist attack in Kuta, the tourist district of Bali. An initial bomb goes off inside Paddy's Bar and shortly afterwards a car bomb explodes on the street where many people had run after the first bomb detonated. 202 people are killed including 88 Australians, the highest number of any nationality. Many burns victims are kept submerged in local hotel swimming pools and then flown to special burns units in Perth and Darwin.

**2002** Mount Pritchard Cabramatta West Community Centre establishes small computer training room and receives funding for computer classes for seniors and Tai Chi classes.



**2001** Spanish Speaking Health Awareness Group gives Spanish-speaking women the opportunity to undertake physical activity and learn about relevant health issues. "I am participating in this group to help improve my depression. I've got friends and I feel better since I started. I am learning nutrition and how to balance my daily diet and the exercises encourage my life, give me happiness and make me feel young" – Monica.



**April 2003** Domestic violence campaign targeting Spanish-speaking communities runs, receiving alarming rates of feedback from both women and men in domestic violence situations.

**2003** Drug Intervention Service Cabramatta (DISC) closes, leaving a number of co-case managed clients and partnership programs hanging.

**2003** Parents, Youth, Drug & Alcohol Project distributes 300 Stay Clean Packs to homeless people.

**2003** The We Are One 2 Project takes place, involving music workshops, the production of a CD by local young artists, and a final launch and performance extravaganza.

**2003** Step Forward Project starts for young mothers to develop pathways towards education and employment. Free childcare during the program proves exceptionally attractive.



**2003** Mount Pritchard Cabramatta West Community Centre secures funding for a No Interest Loans Scheme which provides loans of up to \$660 for people on low incomes to buy essential items.

**2003** Parents, Youth, Drug and Alcohol Project assists DRUG ARM to write and produce a video for friends and families of alcohol or drug dependant people about how to help.

**2003** Mt Pritchard Cabramatta West Community Centre organises relaxation and massage classes for residents to learn basic massage and meditation techniques to relieve stress.

**2003** Three boats carrying 82 people arrive unlawfully in Australia.

**2003** Fairfield Migrant Resource Centre distributes \$66,000 worth of vouchers to more than 800 clients experiencing extreme financial hardship. Top three client concerns are: immigration, income support and material aid, and housing/accommodation. Arabic, Assyrian and Vietnamese are the top three client language groups represented.

**2003** 92.47% of the Ethnic Aged Care Project's clients are deemed as 'persons with financial hardship' while the Government sets a minimum target for providers of 27%. This has a great effect on how the service can efficiently run and charge out. 30,938 hours of direct client care and support services are provided in 2003.

**2003** Five participants from the Multimedia Project win a TAFE photoshop design course at the Pine Street Film Festival for their movie 'Freaky Streets'.

**2003** Young Dads Project pilots for 15-30 year old men, providing parenting skills information, legal advice, health awareness, and medical advice.

**29 March 2003** Harmony Day event held at Fairfield Amphitheatre and attended by 500 people. The event showcases the commitment elderly people have to a peaceful future for themselves and their families, free from the threat of war. The program includes information stalls for seniors, cultural performances, and the re-launch of the Guide for Seniors in Fairfield LGA.

**2003** Centre successfully lobbies to have the parking out the front of the Occasional Child Care Service changed to five minutes for easier drop off.

**2002** Valuable Time program runs which combines Laughter Therapy and mask expression art workshops for men experiencing anxiety, depression, isolation and other physical health problems. The project enables participants to express their feelings in a safe and supportive environment and gives them tools to minimise anxiety and depression levels.



**August 2002** Ethnic Aged Care Project clients attended a social outing at Mt Pritchard Community Centre where they experience and join in a traditional Lao dance performed by a staff member and her daughter.



**2002** An Outreach Worker is placed at Cabramatta Community Centre due to increasing numbers of clients presenting with gambling issues. A Problem Gambling Forum is also coordinated for local workers to discuss problem gambling and its implications, particularly on culturally and linguistically diverse people and communities.

**July 2002** 16 young women aged 13-17 attend the Naamaroo Virtual Babies Camp to learn the realities of life with a baby.



**June 2002** Cabramatta Occasional Child Care raises money for AIDS via a Red Nose Day event.



**2002** A directory of local services for refugees and humanitarian entrants titled New Arrivals Information Kit is produced and proves exceptionally helpful to emerging communities.

**2002** 1,002 Apprehended Violence Orders (AVOs) are granted in Fairfield and Liverpool local courts in 2002. This represents 284.4 cases per 100,000 residents and is the highest rate in Sydney metropolitan area (followed by St. George and Blacktown).

**2002** In response to 'move on' laws introduced in Cabramatta, staff work to introduce ID Cards for youth clients that demonstrate they have genuine business in Cabramatta.

**2002** Canley Heights Community Centre introduces new classes: salsa dancing, international cooking, beauty and natural care, make-up and beauty tips and food carving.

**February 2002** Cabramatta Restart builds employment skills in 14 young people.



**2002** Establishment Lease Project starts, assisting with the establishment of new housing leases for homeless, drug-reliant youth and assistance with assembling white goods. One client says "In October we were on the streets, it was hard, horrible, shocking. We had no support, no one to help us. We are now stable, have a good home, I am getting my daughter back and clean now."

**2002** Through the Bonnyrigg Legal Walls Project young people are mentored to create legal graffiti artworks at selected council-approved locations.





# Aged Care reforms challenge sector

Lin Hing Ye came to Australia 30 years ago from China and the first job she applied for and was successful, was in the aged care support sector with CORE Community Services – a sector where she remains employed today.

Lin joined CORE (then known as Cabramatta Community Centre) in 2002 to take on the role of Home Care Package Case Manager which supported clients with care planning, care coordination and a regular care plan review.

She later became the Extended Aged Care Package or EACH Co-ordinator (then known as Home Care Package Level 4). *“The EACH package provides support to clients with high-level care needs, equivalent to nursing home level of care in their own home,”* Lin says.

According to Lin, the challenge for aged care in a multicultural environment is understanding the specific service needs for people with different backgrounds. There are cultural and linguistic differences that need to be understood by the support workers. Matching clients with those who can speak their language helps address their needs.

*“There are so many languages and even dialects, so every time we received a referral to help a person who speaks a language we don’t have (spoken by a support worker), we would try to employ and train a new support worker who can speak their language. Rostering of workers to clients by matching their language, cultural and care needs could be very challenging, but we managed pretty well,”* Lin recalls.

*“We had nearly 70 support workers, who speak more than 20 different languages and dialects to provide support to more than 200 elderlies.”*

Referring to her 14 years working with CORE until 2016, Lin says the changes that occurred with Government reforms in the aged care sector were significant. The Aged Care Reform Plan brought about major changes in process focussed on Australia’s aging population

with actions such as getting resources for Living Longer, Living Better a priority.

*“Clients were given more choices to address their own needs. It was client-centric”.*

Lin describes her experience working with CORE as a *“good experience”*. *“It’s why I stayed so long,”* she says, but adds that with government reforms *“the industry changed from being a service care model to a business model. My job as a co-ordinator changed from less of a focus on clients to meeting Budgets. I spent so much of my working time on reports and numbers”*.

She says the aged care industry has come very competitive. Service providers now are all looking for different ways to attract clients. *“Where previously there were less than 10 package care providers in the area, now clients can choose between 100,”* including CORE.

*“Juana (the CEO of CORE) has done an excellent job in helping the organisation to grow. I hope CORE continues to be successful. I was there when it celebrated 30 years of operation. It has grown to be a bigger and stronger organisation, and I hope it continues to help people in the community. I feel proud of CORE and its achievements.”*

Since leaving CORE three years ago, Lin Ye Hong has worked with My Aged Care – a central referral system operated by the Federal Government – as a Home Support Assessor. She assesses the care needs of clients and helps organise a support plan and referral to a service provider.

**May 2003**  
Mt Pritchard Cabramatta West Community Centre holds a Biggest Morning Tea event, raising \$800 for cancer research.



**May 2003** Youths from non-English speaking backgrounds living in Campbelltown become a major focus due to their inability to access local youth services. Fairfield Migrant Resource Centre successfully coordinates *Working with Refugee Young People* and *Youth from Small and Emerging Communities* training sessions for Campbelltown youth workers which help address the issue.

**30 June 2003** *Healthy Lifestyle Expo* held giving local 160 local seniors the opportunity to learn about health issues in their native language.



**October 2003**  
Three-day Capacity Building Training Camp held for 50 local seniors group leaders to improve their leader and mentorship skills.



**July 2003** The *Second Congo War* officially ends. Despite a formal end to the war and an agreement by the former belligerents to create a government of national unity, 1,000 people die daily in 2004 from easily preventable cases of malnutrition and disease.

**July 2003** *Checking The Pulse of Fairfield* conference held resulting in papers about settlement issues such as housing, employment and health being formally launched by The Hon. Gary Hardgrave, Minister for Citizenship and Multicultural Affairs on 7th July 2004.



**23 October 2003**  
The Australian Health Department releases a report *Returns on Investment in Needles and Syringe Programs* in Australia showing there has been at least 25,000 cases of HIV avoided, leading to a lifetime saving of over \$7 million from the program.

**2003 Crime Prevention Project** gives young people a chance to learn from a professional aerosol artist and create legal graffiti murals in Bolivia Street Cabramatta and under the cycle way near Canley Vale Station.

**November 2003** *Celeste Seniors Group* hold a *Seashell Exhibition* at Cabramatta Library. Many shells are crafted into jewellery, toys and craft by the group.



**2003** The year ends with a friendly soccer match between Cabramatta Community Centre and the Fairfield Community Resource Centre. The results are a three all draw, a broken rib and a broken collarbone. *Links to Learning* and *Skilled Migrant Placement* programs also lose funding two weeks before Christmas.

**January 2004**  
*“JAMMED”* Back to School themed Under 18s alcohol and drug-free dance party attracts well over 100 youths and impromptu hip hop and break-dancing performances.




**2004 AIDS Outreach Bus Project** sees a reduced number of clients from 100 per day to 20-30, with most now approaching for information or food rather than the NSP equipment.


**2004** Fairfield Migrant Resource Centre (FMRC) receives a part-time grant to provide information, referrals and supports on settlement issues to the Iraqi and African communities in Fairfield Local Government Area. FMRC estimates that 70% of the humanitarian program over the next five years will be focused on African refugees.




 **2004** As a result of lobbying, a demountable building in Peel Street Canley Heights is built as a meeting and group space for residents.

 **4 February 2004** Pakistani scientist Abdul Qadeer Khan, then famous for his role in developing Pakistan's nuclear arsenal, confesses on live television to having illegally proliferated nuclear weapons technology to Iran, Libya, and North Korea over the course of decades.

 **March 2004** For the *International Women's Day* event, a local artist creates a dress that the 400 attendees can paint, write and draw on to capture the spirit of the day.

 **March 2004** *Young Mums Playgroup* runs for mothers aged 14-25 years old who don't feel comfortable being in all-ages playgroups.

 **March 2004** *Women's Safety After Separation* focus group held involving 17 women from Vietnamese, Khmer, Chinese and Anglo backgrounds. The group identifies case workers as critical to women from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds who otherwise cannot comprehend complex brochures about services available to them.

 **29 March 2004** The Fairfield Migrant Resource Centre holds a large-scale open day attended by 200 mostly newly arrived refugees and migrants. Sessions are held in 11 different languages to facilitate effective information dissemination about services available.

 **April 2004** CBS News publishes photographs of Abu Ghraib torture and prisoner abuse by American military personnel, leading to worldwide outrage.

 **2004** *Miller Bed-Sit Project* gives young people on Department of Housing waitlists the opportunity to access bed-sit accommodation while undertaking the *Intensive Support and Living Program*.


## The clients of 2004: Aged Care

In 2004 South West Sydney had a total of 360 subsidised aged care packages. 100 were managed by the Ethnic Aged Care Project (EACP) alone, with the oldest client being 101 years old.

One client at the time said about the service: *"I would like to thank the EACP so much for being a great part of my mother's life in her last few years. Words cannot describe our thanks to you. Some of your carers would say as they did before "It's only part of our job" but believe me, it's not just a job. All carers who were helping my mother during the last three years were not just performing a job. They came to my mother with all their heart and their compassion. They were so well-trained. They gave opportunities to my mother to enjoy every single weekly visit, the outing and everything. My mother told them so many times that once she is in heaven she will pour all her blessings onto the program that made her so happy. Now she still needs your prayers to attain that stage."*

 **2004** *Ethnic Aged Care Project* invests in assisting support workers to complete *Certificate III in Home and Community Care*, ensuring all workers have industry qualifications.



 **June 2004** An Aboriginal Dance Trainer supports 25 youths through the *Koori Kids Cultural Development Program*, culminating in a performance for NAIDOC Week in Villawood.

 **June 2004** The second three-day *Capacity Building Training Camp* is held for 30 local seniors group leaders to improve their leader and mentorship skills.



Nigel Hoffman distributing New Arrivals Informations Kits

## The clients of 2004: Migrants


In July 2004 a young family from the Horn of Africa was successfully reunited after being assisted by the Fairfield Migrant Resource Centre.

Referred by Settlement Services International – SSI, the family's infant child required refugee status in order to join them in Australia. The team coordinated the lodging of a child refugee application at an overseas post, organised DNA samples to prove paternity, helped the family access the No-Interest Loans Scheme to fly the child to Australia, and organised for a representative from the International Organisation for Migration to accompany the child as required by law. With a happy reunion and further settlement assistance, the head of the family was able to study and retrain as a primary school teacher.


 **July 2004** *Celeste Seniors Group* makes six blankets and five long scarves which are donated during Homeless Week to Mission Australia.



 **August 2004** Young women's softball team, *Fairfield Phoenix* receives sponsorship from the *Young Women's Project* to participate in the local competition.

 **August 2004** *The King & I Musical*, performed entirely by local newly arrived young people goes to stage. Participants perform three shows and help design sets and other production pieces.



 **2004** 18 young people and three youth workers attend a four-day camp at Telford Conference Centre in the Royal National Park. Highlights of the camp include a worker nearly losing an arm to a rampaging kookaburra, abseiling down a 30-metre cliff face, and staying up late to catch all the young people trying to sneak out of their rooms.



## The clients of 2004: Youth

In 2004 a *Harm Minimisation Needs Analysis of Young Injecting Drug Users* in Fairfield and Liverpool report found:

*"...local young people engaging in injecting drugs use had adequate understanding and practices of HIV prevention, but relatively little knowledge of the Hepatitis C Virus. The Report recognised the injecting practices that place young people at particularly high risk of Hepatitis C transmission and reflected the wider body of blood borne virus research whereby Australia's injecting drug users represent some of the highest Hepatitis C rates in the world, with significant clustering in Sydney's South West"* – Trina Soulos AIDS Project Health Promotion worker.

To increase Hepatitis C awareness, in 2006 local youth were collaborated with to design fitpack stickers informing injecting drug users of the multiple strains of Hepatitis C.



**November 2006** *Post Release Project* starts, providing intensive case management, brokerage, advocacy and support services to young people age 18 to 25 who have recently been released from custody starts.



**2006** Fairfield Migrant Resource Centre receives funding for the *Tenancy Advice and Advocacy Project*, *Emergency Relief* funds, and the *Brighter Futures Early Intervention Program*. However, a government funding restructure means staffing levels are halved, meeting rooms and the hall can no longer be leased, Immigration Advice from a Registered Migration Agent is no longer financially viable, and the information library closes.

**July 2006** *In-home Respite Care Program* starts providing services to local carers from diverse ethnic communities. The service focusses on supporting carers by giving them respite and time on their own to engage in personal and family activities while support workers look after the care recipient at home.

**1 July 2006** Migrant Resource Centre and Community Settlement Services Scheme funding programs are replaced with the *Settlement Grants Program*. The *Humanitarian Entrant and Refugees Settlement Services Coordinator* project commences, under the new Program.

**2006** The *Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs* publishes booklets on African refugees, their backgrounds and issues associated with settlement, especially relating to the refugee experience. The booklets aim to raise awareness and increase understanding of African refugees in the broader Australian community.

**2006** *Iraqi Settlement Project* receives funding to provide settlement services to newly arrived Iraqi refugees and humanitarian entrants (with a focus on Chaldean and Mandaeen communities).

**2006** Mount Pritchard Cabramatta West Community Centre auspices a bulk-billed counselling service by a trained psychologist.

**April 2006** Australian troops spearhead peacekeeping forces in the Solomon Islands and East Timor following unrest in both countries.

**April 2006** *Fairfield Kings* youth soccer team gets together and plays in a multicultural youth week soccer tournament in Busby.

**2006** A series of *Ice Is Not Cool* forums are held giving up to date information and resources to workers, young people and parents.

**10 March 2006** It is reported that HIV treatment for new refugees to Australia (some of who were not screened by the Immigration Department and only discovered they had the illness after entering Australia) is costing NSW \$2 million annually. The following year, the Prime Minister seeks to change

the law so as to refuse migrants and refugees who have HIV entry into Australia. This follows an analysis that immigrants are largely responsible for the increase in HIV notifications in Victoria. Individuals and HIV/AIDS community organisations both in Australia and overseas are outraged at the comments.

**December 2005** *Acholi Cultural Dance Group* comprised of locals originating from war-torn Sudan, performs at the Sudanese Exhibition at the Fairfield City Museum. They are further invited to other events, including in Canberra.

**11 December 2005** *Cronulla Riots* break out triggered by a previous altercation between a group of youths of Middle Eastern appearance and Anglo-Australian lifeguards. Media coverage following the event causes a racially motivated rally which turns into the riots.

**January 2006** President Bush announces he will send a "surge" of 20,000 more troops to Iraq in addition to the 130,000 already there. In Iraq, violence between different sects increases. The UN estimates that more than 34,000 Iraqi civilians are killed in 2006 alone as a result of the fighting.

**25 January 2006** A Palestinian legislative election secures a victory for Hamas, a Palestinian Sunni-Islamist fundamentalist organisation. It is regarded, either in whole or in part, as a terrorist organisation by several countries and international organisations, most notably by Israel.

**2006** Refurbishments to Canley Heights, Mt Pritchard and Cabramatta offices give working spaces some vitality. Additionally, a new telephone system means staff have direct lines which reducing the number of calls being patched through reception.



**2006** *Multicultural Community Care Services* changes its name and expands services, prompting an office move from Cabramatta Civic Centre to Fisher Street Cabramatta. The *Ethnic Aged Care Project* now has funding for 133 packages including eight for the Hindi and three for the Former Yugoslavian communities.



**2006** The *Leadership, Access and Employment Program* begins, aiming to help newly arrived young people develop their leadership skills and increase access to and interest in local youth activities.



**March 2006** *Arabic Women's Group* in Mt Pritchard starts up.



**March 2006** Staff member Gary Lee – the only professional Hmong welfare worker in Australia – assists the Queensland Government with communicating with QLD Hmong banana farmers affected by Cyclone Larry.

**2005** Artworks created during the *Revitalisation Carers Project* go on exhibition at the Liverpool Arts for Health Gallery.

**4 November 2005** Workers and family members gather at St Andrews Cathedral Town Hall to participate in a remembrance ceremony for all those who have lost their lives to drug and alcohol overdose.

**2005** Three mass graves in the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of the Congo are discovered in late 2005 – remnants of the atrocities which occurred in Africa from 1993-2003. A UN Mapping Report finds most of the victims are children, women, elderly people and the sick, who posed no threat to the attacking forces.

**8 October 2005** *Multicultural Youth Festival* is held with 1,100 in attendance. Performances, stalls, giveaways, show bags, rides and a sausage sizzle create an exhilarating atmosphere for the attendees.



**2005** *African Project* establishes to provide culturally specific settlement support services.



**1 August 2005** *Extended Aged Care at Home* program establishes, providing 20 packages for frail aged people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

**2005** Mount Pritchard OOSH receives funding from the Australian Sports Commission to pilot a free, structured after school program giving children the opportunity to experience a range of sports and physical activities under the supervision of professional coaches. The pilot is a major success and funding is continued for the newly named *Active After School Communities* program.



**July 2005** The first *Bankstown Bites Food Festival* takes place. It's estimated 10,000 people now attend each year with themed food discovery tours including Asian Explorer, European Delights, Aboriginal bush tucker food and Treats from the Middle East.

**July 2005** *Youth Support Project* and *Fairfield Multicultural Youth Project* merge to become the *Multicultural Youth Support Project*.

**3 September 2004** A *National Accreditation Authority for Translators and Interpreters* workshop is held at the Fairfield Migrant Resource Centre aiming to increase and develop language resources for emerging communities. More than 100 attended with many going on to further study and examinations.

**28 September 2004** Iran's Foreign Minister rejects claims the country wants an atomic bomb but vows to defend its nuclear facilities against any attack by Israel. Over the following years Iran is referred to the UN Security Council over its uranium enrichment programs and lack of transparency with inspection

authorities. In December 2006, after the newly elected President of Iran defiantly peruses nuclear ambitions, the Security Council votes unanimously to impose sanctions on Iran. This has led to the tensions we know today between Iran and President Trump. Still in 2019, no nuclear agreement has been struck with Iran and other Nations.

**23 October 2004** Daily Telegraph article reports that domestic violence costs Australia \$8.1 billion a year and causes more ill health and premature deaths than illicit drugs or unsafe sex.

**2004** Fairfield Seniors Network receives a *Seniors Week Award for Education and Lifelong Learning*. The award is presented at a morning tea attended by journalist Jessica Rowe and comedian Kamal.

**26 December 2004** The Boxing Day Tsunami kills an estimated 227,898 people in 14 countries. The earthquake is one of the deadliest natural disasters in recorded history. The plight of the affected people and countries prompts a worldwide humanitarian response, with donations totalling more than US\$14 billion.

**2005** Four boats carrying 56 people arrive unlawfully in Australia.

**March 2005** Tsunami Relief Under 18s Dance Event held raising money for victims of the Boxing Day Tsunami.

**April 2005** *Food-Share Australia* temporarily ceases operations at the Mt Pritchard Cabramatta West Community centre due to financial difficulties.

**2005** The Bonnyrigg Housing Estate redevelopment Ministerial announcement causes issues with residents ill-informed and concerned as many had already been relocated from the Villawood Housing Estate. One young person is quoted saying "I am not going to move and if they

want another riot like Macquarie Fields, we can have one." This leads to the Youth Team starting the *Bonnyrigg Independent Tenant Advocacy Service* which advocates for and provides information to 833 households who are to be rehoused under the *Bonnyrigg Living Communities Project*.



**2006** In partnership with the Crime Prevention office at Fairfield City Council and Fairfield Police, a friendly soccer game is held between police and African youth to help build positive relations.

**2007** Three boats carrying 25 people arrive unlawfully in Australia.

**February 2007** *Brighter Futures Early Intervention Program* commences to support culturally and linguistically diverse families with children ages 0-8 years old.

**February 2007** *Sudan Strategic Planning Meeting* is held at Merrylands Conference Centre with the Southern Sudan and Other Marginalised Area's Inc organisation.

**10 February 2007** A group of 85 asylum seekers - most from Sri Lanka - are intercepted on a boat heading to Christmas Island.

**2007** The *Eco-Friendly Communities program* - which aims to raise awareness about environmental stability - inspires the Spanish Seniors Group Amistad Latina to create a water efficient vegetable garden by applying the non-dig technique taught at the workshops.

**2007** *Mi Casa* medium-term accommodation project at Cartwright is conceived with support from the Department of Housing.

**March 2007** Smithfield drop-in at Brenan Park Community Hall reopens its doors for young people aged 12 to 18.

**2007** A registered nurse is hired by the *Extended Aged Care at Home Service* to conduct a clinical assessment of each client's health condition on a monthly or bi-monthly basis enabling the service to pick up changes early on and avoid clients' conditions advancing to a stage where more intensive treatment is necessary.

**10 August 2007** Disney's *High School Musical* is performed by 35 local young people aged 12 to 25 years old.

**September 2007** *Vietnamese Community Support Group* sets up to give Vietnamese community members social and recreational opportunities.

**November 2007** Funding for a new *Social Support Program* reduces levels of social isolation in frail aged people, people with disabilities and their carers.

**20 November 2007** The Royal Australian Navy rescues 16 Indonesians including three men, three women and 10 children, from a leaking boat in the Timor Sea.

**19 June 2008** Lasting five months, a Israel-Hama ceasefire comes into effect for the Gaza area. A 98% reduction in rockets and mortar shell launchings quiets the area over the months, however, the Islamic Jihad breaks the truce when militants fire rockets on Israel.

**May 2008** Gentle exercises are added to the *Healthy Lifestyle Network* suite of services at Canley Heights.

**2008** Funding sees a new kitchen go in at the *Mt Pritchard Out of School Hours Service and Vacation Care* premises.

**March 2008** The Hon. Linda Burney MP, Minister for Fair Trading, Minister for Youth, Minister for Volunteering, launches Fairfield Migrant Resource Centre's *Tenancy Check DVD* for African communities.

**2008** *Through Our Eyes* project gives young women the opportunity to learn photographic techniques and share their everyday activities.

**March 2008** *Home Sweet Home - Home Hazards and Falls Prevention DVD* launches as a joint initiative between the Multicultural Aged Resources Project, Western Sydney University and Fairfield Hospitals Arts for Health Program.

**March 2008** *Fairfield Housing Task Force* establishes to address the housing crisis in Fairfield Local Government Area. Almost 60 service providers attend a *Housing Interaction Forum* held by the task force.

**2008** Young people have the opportunity to learn Argentinian Folkloric Music through newly established *Argentinian Drumming*.

**13 February 2008** Prime Minister Kevin Rudd formally apologises to the Stolen Generation.

**2008** Mount Pritchard Cabramatta West Community Centre and Canley Heights Community Centre rebrand to The Heights Community Services to reflect current and projected development of the division.

**2007-08** The top five countries of birth for women receiving grants through the *Woman at Risk humanitarian program* are Afghanistan, Burma, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Iraq, and Somalia.

**2007** *Health Check: Information for recently arrived African communities in Australia DVD* receives the NSW Multicultural Health Communication Award 2007 in three audio visual categories.

**20 June 2008** A Refugee Day event at Cabramatta PCYC has *OROK* (a group of Iraqi artists) performing a play showing the love and appreciation of Australia by refugee communities.

**21 June 2008** *CALD Cup Indoor Soccer Tournament* takes place as part of Refugee Week celebrations. 135 young people attend.

**July 2008** Christmas in July dance party held for young people with disabilities.

**July 2008** *World Youth Day*, the largest youth event in the world, attracts 223,000 pilgrims to the event held in Sydney.

**2008** Mt Pritchard Out of School Hours Service receives \$2,000 from the Woolworths *Healthy Kids* competition to facilitate '*Fruity Fridays*' where children participate in a nutrition program to learn healthier eating habits.

**August 2008** *The Heights Multicultural Seniors Group* commences bringing seniors from different backgrounds together in a social environment.

**2008** *Imagez Of my Ability* photography program for young people from refugee backgrounds produces a calendar and launches it at the Centre's AGM.

**September 2008** 99 clients from The Heights visit Canberra for Floriade.

**October 2008** Fairfield Migrant Resource Centre is selected to deliver short-term specialised intensive case management to refugee and asylum seeker families with exceptional or multiple needs.

**October 2008** *The Heights* forms a fundraising group and holds an open day and garage sale event raising \$1,984.45. Over the rest of their first year they raise more than \$5,000.

**19 November 2008** The Royal Australian Navy rescues 12 asylum seekers from a sinking boat off the Ashmore Islands off Australia's north-west coast.

**27 December 2008** A three-week armed conflict known as *The Gaza War* breaks out between Palestinians and Israel. Almost 1,500 people are killed.

**2008-09** *After-Hours Needle and Syringe Program* changes hours from 5pm-10pm to 3pm-8pm and sees a slight increase in attendance from the predominantly male 25-29 year old client base.

**2009** *Congolese Community of Australia* establishes itself for the newly emerging community and assistance is given to help establish the *Australian Burundian Community Organisation*.

**2009** Young Parents sessions run at Fairfield hospital every fortnight educating young parents on nutrition, parenting skills and other health and education issues.

**May 2009** *Refugee and Migrant Employment Pathways Expo* is attended by 850 clients from more than 20 cultural backgrounds.

**May 2009** *I Am Just Like You* arts-based program is created in partnership with Woodville Community Services Disability team. The program helps people with disabilities improve their art skills and techniques, increases positive community awareness about disabilities and promotes systematic change in society about perceptions of disabilities. Participants design a canvas which is presented to Paul Lynch, Minister for Disabilities, and go on to launch an exhibition in April 2012.

**2009** Rugby *Union Project* is coordinated with Parramatta Rugby Club after significant interest expressed by local youth. A group of 21 create an under 20s team, training and playing three times a week.

**2009** 55 young people participate in Cardiovascular and weight training sessions held every Monday and Tuesday.

**April 2009** In a survey of 200 local young people 15% said lack of recreational opportunities is the biggest issue facing local youth, followed by employment opportunities (13%) and bullying (11%).

**April 2009** During the month, 201 asylum seekers are picked up trying to come to Australia.

**2009** *Young People in Harmony Project* connects five culturally diverse artists with ten young people to conduct various art workshops.

**16 March 2009** The Royal Australian Navy intercepts a boat carrying 54 people, thought to be Afghanis, near the Cobourg Peninsula.

**2009** *Freedom from Financial Stress forum* gives 70 refugee attendees access to lawyers from Legal Aid.

**2009** United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), Antonio Guterres, visits the Fairfield Migrant Resource Centre and hears from several refugees who speak about their positive Australian experience and their anxiety and concern for family members suffering in overseas refugee camps. An emphasis is put on the need for UNHCR to improve registration processes in these refugee camps to quicken the uniting of families.

**February 2009** *Seniors Week* event titled *Dance for Health to a Multicultural Tune* held at Edessa Hall with 550 tickets sold.

**16 February 2009** 18 community workers are trained through the *1-2-3 Magic Parenting Program* to help parents manage difficult behaviour in children aged 2-12.





# 2010s

## The face of change

The Cabramatta Community Centre had long been associated with helping Indo-Chinese immigrants make a successful transition into Australian society, but the rapid intake of refugees and migrants from other parts of world at the end of the last decade and more recently has changed the face of the local area.

People from Africa, the Middle East, South America, India and Asia have taken up residence in the Fairfield area – bringing an even greater multicultural presence to an already diverse community.

Services provided by the CCC (or the renamed CORE) have continued to expand this decade and change cultural focus to meet the needs of new arrivals, while maintaining support to traditional groups suffering disadvantage or needing help.

### CORE Change

Care, Opportunity, Respect, Empowerment (CORE) symbolise the work of staff and volunteers of the Cabramatta Community Centre which had long offered services way beyond the city boundaries of Cabramatta.

CORE was launched in 2015 as the new name for the organisation following 37 years of operation as CCC. A new structure also merged services into five main areas including Aged and Disability Care, Children's Services, Community Engagement, Multicultural Services and Youth Services.

The changes reflected the need to respond to reforms in Government funding for social services which made the sector more competitive, and to take a pro-active approach to marketing the success of the organisation.



- 2009** Beginners swimming program initiated for Mandeian women, some of who go on to complete an advanced course to become swim instructors. Feedback from participants includes: "swimming makes lots of stress go away" following her traumatic experiences in Iraq, and I'm happy I "now know what to do in an emergency since Australia is surrounded by water."
- 2009** Young Parents sessions run at Fairfield hospital every fortnight educating young parents on nutrition, parenting skills and other health and education issues.
- 2009** Out of Cabra Project takes a group of local Indigenous young people to numerous Aboriginal communities and sacred sites throughout NSW through the *Urban Dreaming* camp.
- 2009** Girls on the 'Move' fitness small group program is run based on requests for privacy and individualised training from young women.
- 2009** Centre celebrates 30 years of service to the South West Sydney community. The Centre's oldest client (who has been with the Multicultural Community Care Service for 12 years) turns 110.



- 2009** One participant of an Outreach Project Floristry Course establishes her own floristry shop and employs some students from the class. Other participants also find work in floristry.
- July 2009** Poverty – *Whose Responsibility* two-day conference is attended by more than 70 local and interstate delegates, the Fairfield Mayor Nick Lalich and the Hon. Laurie Ferguson Parliamentary Secretary for Multicultural Affairs and Settlement Services. The conference aims to bring to light the extent and levels of poverty in Fairfield, explore poverty perspectives/ theories and their roots, and hear individual stories.



- 1 July 2009** Housing Support Project amalgamates with the *Getting It Together Scheme* and renames to the *Accommodation Brokerage Youth Service*.
- June 2009** Fairfield Migrant Resource Centre Coordinator, Ricci Bartels represents the Australian delegation of the Settlement Council of Australia at the United Nations Convention For Refugees in Geneva.

- May 2009** Collaboration helps produce "a brave leap forward in Iraqi theatre for Australians from Iraqi backgrounds" with a play about eastern history called *The Robe* being produced by locals.
- May 2009** The Multicultural Community Care Service spends May and June scrambling to find new accommodation after being told to vacant the Fisher Street office in Cabramatta to make way for a multistorey carpark. They find a new premises in Wetherill Park.
- 3 June 2009** Careers evening for 15 to 19 year olds is held to encourage young Australians to take personal responsibility and ownership of their own career directions.
- 11 June 2009** Fairfield Migrant Resource Centre establishes the Equatoria Community Welfare Association (The Sudanese settlement service) in Blacktown. The Hon. Laurie Ferguson, Parliamentary Secretary for Multicultural Affairs and Settlement Services attends the official launch.
- 23 June 2009** Apprenticeship Information Evening held at Cabra-Vale Diggers Clubs for more than 80 young people and their parents to increase awareness of and access to apprenticeship information.



- 2010** In early 2010 what is known as the *Arab Spring* starts with protests in Tunisia. Driven by social media, a series of anti-government protests, uprisings and armed rebellions spread across North Africa and the Middle East. Many leaders are ousted and Government reforms undertaken as a result. 61,080 people are estimated to have died.
- 2010** Public housing lists are close to two decades long and up to 40 people are forced to compete per property on the local private rental market in Fairfield.
- 2010** Vietnamese Women's Domestic Violence Support Group establishes due to women from Vietnamese backgrounds being the highest represented in domestic violence clients year-on.
- 2010** The Heights – *Project Mobility* provides door-to-door pick up and drop off for elderly clients and people with disabilities who have mobility problems and wish to participate in organised outings.



- March 2010** NSW Refugee Health Services produces a Tuberculosis DVD resource to empower and encourage refugees with the disease to confidently access services.
- 2010** Aboriginal dot painting workshops held.







## Serious Issue

The use and abuse of illegal drugs has long been a serious issue in the local community, but a new and more frightening drug colloquially called Ice (crystal methamphetamine) began hitting the streets in the previous decade, and as in many other disadvantaged parts of the country, has reached concerning levels in the local area.

The Youth Services team which pioneered a successful needle and syringe programme, and provided an innovative outreach service back in the 1980s to address Heroin use and the transfer of HIV, has been active in dealing with the fallout from Ice – a cheap, sinister and highly addictive drug, but also alcohol and Cannabis abuse in particular.

As part of the Drug and Alcohol Project, the youth team provided counselling support and continued to be actively involved in presenting preventative measures, community awareness campaigns, conducting public forums, and speaking directly to students at local schools.

Positive measures undertaken in the youth services area also included assistance with pathways to education, vocational training and employment, and helping with homelessness.

## Leading the way

The Fairfield Migrant Resource Centre (now part of the Multicultural Communities division) has led the way this decade in addressing the adjustment by different cultures into Australia by establishing specific programmes. Some of these include the African Project, Burmese Project, Arabic Speaking Women's Project, Iraqi Settlement Grants Project and the Humanitarian Entrants and Refugees Settlement Service.

In more recent times, the immigration of people of Iraqi and Assyrian backgrounds has brought about a significant demand for services provided by the migrant resource centre and by other divisions/areas within CCC/CORE.

## Domestic Violence

Public awareness of domestic and family violence is recognised as a critical to addressing an issue that affects all cultures, social groups and income levels.

At the close of this decade, CORE with funding from the Fairfield City Council and the NSW Department of Justice, has helped many hundreds of victims of domestic and family violence. Assistance has included case management and co-ordination, crisis counselling, referrals to other services and group activities.

Setting the new standard in awareness, CORE has recently hosted conferences engaging government, academics and other service agencies to build understanding and skills for those responding to domestic violence.

## Aiming for 50 years

CORE (and its predecessor organisations) has operated for 40 years to answer the needs of its community and to lend a helping hand in times of trouble.

Services and support offered to migrants from around the world, youth, women, families, the elderly and disabled and many others symbolise the strength and humanity of the staff and volunteers who have contributed to the organisation's amazing success.

Another decade will bring a new milestone – 50 years or a bi-centennial of continuous operation. The challenges may evolve or be completely different, but CORE will continue to answer the community's call for help.



**April 2010**  
Sudanese Court Support Program launches.



**19 April 2010** Fairfield Migrant Resource Centre orchestrates a consultation between African community leaders and the new Fairfield Police Commander due to deteriorating relationships between local police and the African community, particularly youth.

**2010** African Youth Health and Fitness program receives initial funding to give local youth recreational alternatives (such as soccer) to reduce isolation and potential risk of involvement in criminal activities.



**2010** Drum making workshops for the Burundian community are held fostering intergenerational respect and creating a potential income platform for participants.



**2010** Brennan Park Boot Camp is the solution to the call for more "fitness stuff" by local youth. Fitness tests, muscle exercises, 1km runs, boxing, nukem ball and more are used by two fitness instructors to improve fitness outputs.

**May 2010** Fairfield Migrant Resource Centre forms the Lifeline Western Sydney Financial Counselling service in partnership with Lifeline to help migrant and refugee clients with financial issues. On average, 4.25 hours are spent with each client.

**7 May 2010** African Men's Community Kitchen workshops commence, designed to develop skills in cooking, food handling, and nutrition education.



**20 May 2010** A 3D chalk artist draws an engaging artwork in Freedom Plaza as part of the Love Ya Liver event. The artwork gives workers and volunteers the opportunity to talk with passers-by about Hepatitis.



**2010** Young Women's Project re-structured into the Early Intervention and Prevention Program to focus solely on providing direct services to young women aged 12-18 and young mothers with children under 13.





# Aspiration met to work in human services

After spending 10 years as a volunteer committee member and then on the executive Board of CORE Community Services, Adrian Wong (pictured left) has finally taken on a permanent role in the sector where he has always aspired to work.

With double degrees in Law and Commerce, Adrian this year took the leap from corporate and government into the not-for-profit sector, where he had a long, but previously only voluntary involvement.

Today, in 2019, he is the full-time Disability Program Manager at CORE Community Services. Adrian explains that he has lived in Cabramatta for three decades and began his association with CORE, when he was approached to volunteer as a member of the sub-committee in the Cabramatta Youth Team in 2009 by the then President of the Cabramatta Community Centre, Julio Gruttulini JP.

*“At the time, the organisation, CCC wanted more young people to get involved,”* he says. From 2009 until 2018, Adrian continued voluntary services on various sub-committees and the executive management committee associated with CORE Community Services. More recently, this included appointments as Company Secretary/Director for the organisation until 2016, and as Chairperson and Advisory Group member for CORE Multicultural Communities.

Adrian’s professional career in this time had taken him from corporate taxation law and senior parliamentary adviser to working on the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) for several years. In 2019, he saw his opportunity to work full-time in the community services sector.

His work now as the program manager at CORE Aged & Disability Care requires a hands-on approach, where he visits clients as well as undertaking management responsibilities. Around 100 people are employed in the Aged & Disability Care at CORE – including 80 support

workers – who undertake social support, community access and home assistance tasks, such as cleaning, personal showering, attending medical appointments, cooking and much more for many clients, who otherwise would be institutionalised or placed in a nursing home.

Government deregulation of block funding has provided challenges and a new era of consumer-directed care, says Adrian, but he adds that CORE is well-equipped to meet the demand in a way that cannot be matched by smaller service providers.

*“CORE is a leading provider in aged care and disability services in the South West Sydney area. We are the first and one of the largest organisations. Clients have tested and tried our services, and we have a good name in the community,”* Adrian says.

He points out the strength of the organisation is its 40-year history in community services, efficient teams, strong governance, skilled and trained workers, who must meet strict criteria, and the necessary back-up support to ensure the needs of vulnerable clients can be met.

*“We have a good reputation with the local hospitals for being able to take on the difficult cases, where for many other service providers, it is not feasible because of cost. As a not-for-profit organisation, we have the scale and resources to deal with difficult cases.”*

Adrian gives an example of a recent client referred to CORE from Bankstown Hospital, who previously

received five hours of support only once per week on Tuesday mornings by another provider. The client needed help spread out over a week for showering, cooking and getting to appointments – meaning one hour’s support every day – to live comfortably.

One of the other big challenges facing carers in the aged and disability care sector is the isolation suffered by many clients, and the need to encourage informal support networks of family and friends.

People who have acquired a disability often cannot readily join their family and friends socially, and this becomes stressful, and even the elderly who are looked after by a son or daughter, need support, Adrian says. Some are not even able to use the Internet and email. *“We always try to get family and friends involved”.*

*“Over the past 10 years, CORE Community Services has changed to become more professionalised – largely because of government and local community expectations. The organisation has attracted younger people with corporate backgrounds,”* Adrian says.

He reflects on his upbringing and having had the opportunity to get a good education, but also his desire to volunteer to help others in the local community, who otherwise might be invisible to the rest of Australian society.

*“I have had the opportunity to get to know our local community. Volunteering changed my outlook and I have come back to CORE.”*




**29 May 2010** Afro-Latino Festival is held at Fairfield High School fostering integration between established refugee/migrant communities and newly arrived ones. It celebrates the common cultural heritage between Africans and Latinos.



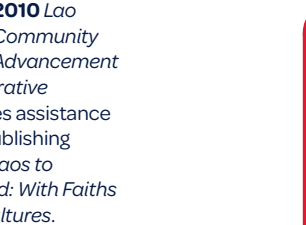



**June 2010** Hmong Australia Society gets assistance to host a Hmong students exchange group from the USA.






**2010** Lao Community Advancement Cooperative receives assistance with publishing *From Laos to Fairfield: With Faiths and Cultures*.





**2010** Funding dries up for the youth strength & fitness program *BODIFY*, however due to intense interest the program is continued without funding. Clients participate in a sevens rugby competition and strength sports, with one male even being selected for the Australian Rugby Union High Performance Unit and a female going on to win several powerlifting competitions and become a personal trainer.





**2010** Vietnamese Support Group visits Auburn Botanic Gardens.





**2010** Vietnamese Support Group visits Auburn Botanic Gardens.



## 2010s POP CULTURE: What’s Happening?

-  A **2013** KPMG report estimates that within 10 years, the surname *Nguyen* will be more common than *Smith* in Australian metropolitan areas.
-  The *Marvel* universe dominates cinema screens along with *Twilight* and *Avatar*. On smaller screens (including the newly invented iPad in **2010**), *Game of Thrones*, *Keeping Up With The Kardashians* and a host of other reality shows reign supreme.
-  The highest ever birth numbers combined with the lowest ever death rate and record net migration have seen Australia’s population grow to 22 million in **2010**. Looking forward, during the next decade it is expected only one-third of population growth will be through natural increase and two-thirds through net migration.
-  In **May 2010** the first artificial lifeform is created leading to questions about the essence of life and scientists “playing God”.
-  A new technological era sees the invention of smart watches, Google Glass, drones, self-driving cars, augmented reality, touch sensors, electric cars, and 3D printing. In **2017**, there are more web-connected video devices worldwide than people (8.2 billion vs 7.4 billion).
-  Climate change is a hot topic. Internationally, Governments are being pushed to implement policies to reverse or stop the effects while the scientific community is divided on whether it exists.
-  The Mayan calendar end is exploited by movies and media, leading many to fear the world will end or transform on **December 21st 2012**. It doesn’t.
-  A trip to space is one step closer to a reality for the average Joe with the opening of the first commercial Spaceport in 2011. Once confirmed safe, trips will start at \$200,000 for six minutes of zero-G joy looking down at earth. Eventually it is assumed competing space tourism companies will bring costs down.



## Entrepreneurship support

In 2010, social enterprise program *Multicultural Enterprises Australia* established to tap into the skills and knowledge migrants and refugees bring with them and support them to establish successful enterprises or small businesses in Australia. Several projects secured support including:

**Africa Konnect:** aims to build an African-Australian identity though setting up a retail outlet which sells culturally inspired products, and organising an annual fashion show with African inspired designers, hair and makeup artists.

**Multicultural Women in Business Network:** aims to support, train and empower women from multicultural backgrounds through providing mentorship and opportunities to create strategic alliances.

**Rent-a-Chair (Perfect Touch):** a hairdressing salon in Fairfield which rents chairs to aspiring hairdressers and mentors them to move towards establishing their own hair dressing businesses.



Models from Africa Konnect's Casula Powerhouse Event by Warren Duncan.

- 2010** Cabramatta Youth Team and Community First Step successfully apply to become the new managers of Bonnyrigg Youth Centre.
- August 2010** Challenging the attitudes and behaviours that allow violence against women to occur information sessions held for 55 Mandaean women.
- September 2010** Carers looking after frail elderly or people with a disability are given a much-needed 'spring break' with a bus trip to Bowral Tulip Garden.



- 20 September 2010** AIDS Outreach Bus formally ceases operations after a significant decline in numbers and inability to meet funding objectives.

- 2010** As part of a social enterprise initiative, local Arabic and Karen women participate in jewellery and plate decoration classes.



- October 2010** Centre helps promote Fairfield City Council's 100 Minute Makeover where information and advice is provided to residents by music, theatre and dance professionals on how to present themselves professionally and gain employment.

- 2010** Al Batul Muslim Women's Association starts with mentoring support from the Arabic Women's Project Officer.

## Critically acclaimed

In 2011, Fairfield Migrant Resource Centre (FMRC) and Director/Writer, Barry Gamba, produces an educational DVD titled *Night Ride*.

*Night Ride* portrayed four youths out in a car looking for some excitement, who throw eggs at a young African man in a deserted street with terrible consequences. Are they gang members who have carried out an anti-African attack, or the tragic products of years of racism? The boys, all refugees/immigrants themselves, describe the isolation and fear that has shaped who are they.

*Night Ride* was met with considerable and unexpected national and international success. It was a finalist in the 2011 ATOM Awards for Best Secondary Education Video Resource, and was screened at COMMFEST (Global) Community Film Festival in Canada, the United Film Festival in Chicago, and at the New York Hell's Kitchen Film Festival.

*Night Ride* was the first part of an *Anti-Racism Education Trilogy* which was developed over a number of years by the Centre.

Part Two, titled *Kids' Games* explored the role of the media and how it influences societies on the question and politics surrounding asylum seekers, in particular boat people. It further

depicted how we as adults/parents pass negative and arguably racist messages on to our children which is re-enacted on the playground. Kids Games also achieved international acclaim:

*"We are very excited to accept your film "Kids' Games" for screening at the Show Me Justice Film Festival. It is an amazing film that got very high marks from our judges. Thanks for submitting it!"* – Mark von Schlemmer, Phd/Filmmaker and Director of the Show Me Justice Film Festival, Missouri.



A still from Night Ride

- March 2011** All levels of Government get together and announce funding will be put forward to rebuild the Rumbria Hall located next to the Canley Heights Centre, giving local community groups and residents a place to hold meetings, forums and community events.

- 2011** Mt Pritchard Out Of Hours School Care undergoes accreditation process by the National Childcare Accreditation Council, obtaining a High Quality in all eight quality areas.



- February 2011** Fairfield Youth Space launches monthly providing a 'one stop shop' of local services and providers for young people.



- 17 February 2011** The Libyan Revolution begins with civil unrest continuing to this day. Tens of thousands of people have been killed and attempts by the UN and coalition forces to protect civilians are ongoing.

- 2011** A Seniors Art Program is trialled. Although participation rates are high and outcomes positive, only one year of funding is received leading to local artist and mentor, Vince Aquilina deciding to volunteer his time every week afterwards.



# settle big wave refugees

## ASSYRIAN FAMILY TELLS WHY THEY NEED TO FLEE TO SAFETY AND SECURITY

Rosaline Walters

TWELVE thousand refugee places. 12,000 stories of fear and terror. 12,000 chances at a new life.

Fairfield mother of three Ghaydaa Ajja, 36, is hoping desperately her brother, Moshtak Anwar, 40, and her two nieces, aged 7 and 5, will be among them.

Moshtak and his children, Assyrian refugees from Iraq, are sheltering in Lebanon after Mrs Ajja's sister-in-law, Thred, was dragged from her car, raped and shot by Islamic militants.

"She was very beautiful," Mrs Ajja said. "She was so

### IN SUPPORT

■ Western Sydney Regional Organisation of Councils (WSROC) president Tony Hadchiti has spoken of the region's preparedness to help potential refugees

■ "Western Sydney is ready and willing to accommodate those Syrians seeking asylum in Australia as long as the resources are provided for us to undertake this task," Mr Hadchiti said

honest and a very kind person. She was really happy with my brother."

Thred and Moshtak had fled with their children to

Lebanon after IS militants entered their village and demanded they pay a ransom, convert to Islam or be killed.

The threats were the latest in a series of ever tightening rules forced on the Assyrian population, among which were requirements that women wear hijabs and hide crucifix necklaces and pendants.

But Moshtak's father remained in Iraq and in July sent word that he was gravely ill.

After his father begged to see them one last time, Moshtak and Thred decided to try and brave the militants to visit him.

Sadly, as they drove to Baghdad, Moshtak and Thred's car was stopped by armed men who demanded money.

When the couple said they had none, they took Thred away. Three days later her body was found by police.

"I can't believe how they are suffering," Mrs Ajja said. "I am really worried about the girls – their safety and future."

Mrs Ajja and her husband Esam are beneficiaries of Australia's humanitarian program, having fled Iraq for Australia in 2006.

They live in Fairfield and their children, a girl, 13, and

two boys, aged 10 and 6, attend local schools.

Mrs Ajja is currently doing all she can to help her brother's refugee application progress through the Australian immigration system. Her dream is to look after her nieces, as well as her own three children, while her brother works.

"As a Christian, I have hope that God will help me bring them to Australia," she said. "We love Australia so much. It is so very nice and safe."

"I hope other people will understand what Assyrians are going through by listening to my story."

### FROM FACEBOOK

As an original I say welcome to them all. We have a big country I hope that they settle in and feel at home here in Australia. It's not about dumping them in certain suburbs, it's about how they will fit into these suburbs

GYPSEY MAREE

Why don't they set them up in less populated cities? I'm all for helping these souls but come on manage these proceedings properly. In these suburbs people are already paying ridiculous rent. There are almost no jobs

ALE QUINONES



Fairfield Migrant Resource Centre service manager Clement Meru and staff prepare to help a new wave of refugees.

Picture: TIM CLAPIN

## Helping them all build new lives

Frances Sacco

GOODWILL is in no short supply when it comes to accepting refugees fleeing Syria, but Fairfield Migrant Resource Centre service manager Clement Meru says finding housing may prove difficult.

Mr Meru said his team was

more than ready to help, as were many in the community.

"We have the capacity and the experience necessary to provide support," he said.

"The Australian community is a very generous community. There is a lot of goodwill out there."

A part of Cabramatta Com-

munity Centre, the Fairfield Migrant Resource Centre was set up in the mid-1970s to meet the needs of refugees from South East Asia in the wake of the Vietnam War.

Forty years on, the centre is still helping migrants connect to services such as those in health, employment and language.

"People tend to settle in communities in areas where they have social links," Mr Meru said.

"This could mean accessing traditional food, language support. We have the refugee health service in Liverpool ... and we have STARTTS in Carramar, to name a few."

He said it would be hard to house a large group of refugees in western Sydney, but he expected them to make a positive impact on the area.

"Public housing stock is low and private housing rents are increasing, so there needs to be some investment from the state and federal governments."

## Planning action for settlement success

Successfully resettling 7,500 refugees from the Middle East into the Fairfield local government area as part of the Fairfield City Settlement Action Plan is a proud moment in time for Clement Meru.

"It was the highlight of my career," says Clement who played a key role in formulating the action plan when employed as the Service Manager for the Multicultural Communities division of CORE.

"Local services had been operating in silos, but when the Federal Government announced that Australia would take 12,000 refugees caught up in the Middle Eastern crisis in late 2015, we had to act. Fairfield already had the largest number of Assyrian and Iraqi people so we decided to engage in early intervention to deal with 7,500 that would come to the local area," Clement says.

He spoke to the Fairfield City Council and together CORE and the Council drove the planning exercise. "We had to look at key issues the new refugees would face and workshop solutions. We identified key agencies that needed to be involved, then conducted a settlement symposium leading to the formation of the Fairfield Action Plan working group. Over many months and involving many stakeholders, we were able to finalise our plan. Our report was launched in June 2017".

Clement comments that the plan fitted in well with the NSW Government. "Planning at local level had never happened before. Previously, settlement of refugees and humanitarian entrants was considered Federal Government responsibility," but now more co-ordination involving State Government and local agencies set a new standard.

He remembers the hysteria in certain sections of the community when the Federal Government announced its decision to accept 12,000 refugees. Media reports and comments from local officials fuelled fear in the minds of Fairfield residents about the influx of new people, lack of resources and issues connected to crime.

"The fact is we have settled large numbers before, and secondly the services were available with the Government providing additional resources to organisations like CORE to provide on the ground support. Our local organisations knew what each other was doing. It made sense that CORE and the Fairfield Council had a plan in place," Clement says.

The involvement of Clement Meru in settlement and migrant services extends back nearly 15 years to when he arrived in Australia and took up his first job in 2004 as the Iraqi and Sudanese Community Settlement Services Worker with what was then known as the Cabramatta Community Centre.

Clement speaks multiple languages including English, Arabic and two South Sudanese dialects. He fled to Egypt from the Sudan in 2001 where he had been studying Animal Production at university, but also involved in the student peace movement which brought him to the attention of the fundamentalist Islamic government.

"In Egypt, I taught English to African refugees but also to a few people from Yemen. The two-and-a-half to three years there exposed me to the many issues facing asylum seekers. It shifted me to a career in human services which was more aligned to my values.

"I was referred through the United Nations for settlement in Australia based on my capacity to integrate and interest in education."

Arriving in Australia in 2003, Clement took on a volunteer role with the Saint Vincent De Paul Society before being offered a part-time position in community settlement services in Cabramatta.

"My first job involved casework support. I organised workshops to assist settlers in many ways such as understanding Australian road rules, and I co-ordinated social activities. However, the organisation was not used to dealing with the influx of refugees from Africa that were coming to Australia in greater numbers, and after one year, I was offered a full-time position as an African Community Settlement Services Worker."

The circumstances with Africans are different, Clement explains. "The differences are clear and based on capacity. Europeans came here from an industrial society whereas some Africans came from rural parts of their country. For some of them, speaking English was a huge challenge whereas it is different for the Iraqis and Syrians who arrived in Australia at the same time and often have a good education".

"Speaking English impacts on a person's ability to settle. Most humanitarian entrants also come with a lot of trauma, and counselling is a foreign concept to them. In their individual

communities, help is provided in a communal setting, not professional. They don't talk to strangers."

He says that often if the trauma suffered by humanitarian entrants is not treated effectively, it can be triggered later by events in Australia. "The language, living in a different society, being removed from their family and not having a close community safety-net impacts greatly some African settlers".

From 2006 until 2017, Clement continued to take on more senior roles in migrant resources, policy and administration, and management until he left CORE to take up a position as Manager, Community Services & Engagement at SydWest Multicultural Services.

Reflecting back on his time with CORE Community Services, Clement comments: "I think CORE will remain important in the history of settlement in Australia. It started from humble beginnings and grew to play a leadership role in the community sector. CORE provided great support to lot of people now are in leading roles in various industries."

He adds that he hopes CORE will continue to respond to the needs of disadvantaged groups and continue to play an influential role in supporting the local community.

"I wish CORE all the best."



Clement (centre back) with FMRC staff in the 1990s

**24 May 2011** Pathways to Employment Expo 2011 held at Cabravale Leisure Centre. 17 presentation topics and 24 exhibition stands provide education and training guidance for more than 1,400 people.



**2011** Mt Pritchard Before School Care – operating 7am-9am during school terms – is forced to close due to the Department of Education increasing rent by over 200%.

**2011** South-East Asian Internet Group starts up, providing training to seniors computer class tutors.



**June 2011** Handcraft production for income generation classes held for the Burundian Women's Group.







**2012** Fairfield Migrant Resource Centre provides input for the National Racism Strategy and attends launch of the *Racism, It Stop With Me Campaign*.



**2012** Foodbank Project conceived giving basic food hampers to families and individuals facing financial difficulties.



**2012** Assyrian Women's Group for Mature Aged Women is put together. They meet fortnightly at the Fairfield Hospital Community Hall.



**23 January 2012** Jhan Leach accepts the position of CEO, replacing Jan Collie.



**January 2012** Mali Civil War erupts between the northern and southern parts of Mali in Africa. With low-level violence still occurring today, almost 2,000 people have been killed, 230,000 internally displaced and 144,000 refugees have fled abroad.



**2012** Two new settlement support groups establish: the *Ahwazi Association* and the *Mandaen Youth Group*.



**2011** Community Aged Care Packages clients and staff celebrate Christmas.



**December 2011** CEO Jan Collie retires after 26 years' of service. Staff farewell her with a surprise party at Bach Dang in Canley Vale.



**1 December 2011** To acknowledge *World AIDS Day*, T-shirts featuring logos from the Days inception in 1996 are hung down the stairwell at the Centre.



**2011** Three members of the African community get self-employment opportunities through the provision of capital and farming land at St Mary's Mamre homestead and a *Certificate II in Horticulture*.



**2011** The Burundian Drumming Group goes strong with support and capacity building.



**3 November 2011** Chris Hayes MP, Federal Member for Fowler, dedicates a speech in Parliament to the "admirable" work the Centre undertakes. He thanks staff for "their hard work in furthering the interests of people through delivering quality services in south-west Sydney". He says multiculturalism "did not happen by chance in south-west Sydney, it happened through the commitment of places such as Cabramatta Community Centre and people such as Jan Collie who worked hard to achieve this".



**November 2011** Vietnamese Boat People Monument unveiled in Saigon Place Bankstown to symbolise the immense struggle, hardship and sacrifices endured by the Vietnamese in search of freedom and democracy.



**25 November 2011** The Minister for Immigration and Citizenship announces that the first group of long term asylum seeker detainees will be released on bridging visas under a new arrangement. As at 31 December 2012, 10,356 bridging visas have been granted since the program began (2,760 subsequently granted protection visas).



**2011** A partnership with the *Australian Refugee Film Festival* gives five local refugees 40 hours of filmmaking training under the *Western Sydney Moviemakers* project name.



**2011** Youth workers attend Canley Vale High School to participate in a *Mock Job Interview Day* for year 10 students, helping to develop their interview skills.



**October 2011** Karen Community Workers Forum establishes with the main aim of discussing and evaluating the Karen settlement services around Australia.



**October 2011** Carers/Care recipients' Social Event held at Marconi Club as a way to celebrate the working relationship with clients.



**September 2011** In-conjunction with American Express, a Sydney University student sets up the *Drummer Restaurant* aiming to expose mainstream society to refugee communities and vice versa by sharing refugee stories, culture and food. During the restaurant's week-long existence, eight local young people from Sudan and Burma form part of the catering staff at the restaurant, with two going on to secure work in the hospitality industry.



**September 2011** *Multicultural Enterprises Farm* establishes. The sustainable urban farm is located at the Macarthur Centre for Sustainable Living in Mt Annan and educates clients about sustainable urban farming practices and supplies fresh, locally grown vegetables and herbs to a weekly sales event at Cabramatta Community Centre.



**August 2011** *Specialist Housing Support Services* project starts up, providing assistance and guidance to humanitarian entrants in finding and sustaining suitable accommodation for themselves and their families. Over 90% of clients are Iraqi.



**June 2011** *Revolution Romance Realities*, a film featuring local refugees and migrants talking about their culture using objects they brought from overseas, showcases at the *Arab Film Festival*.



**June 2011** Refugee Week creates awareness about refugees and their local contributions through the theme 'Freedom From Fear'.



**June 2011** Fairfield Multicultural Choir establishes and in August 2012 joins with four other local choirs in its first public performance called *The Choir Spectacular*.



**2011** *Smithie's YUM YUM Cookery* 7-week project has young people creating their own healthy recipes and getting involved in both the shopping and cleaning process.



**2011** Students studying youth/welfare work at Nirimba TAFE, a Society and Culture class from Hunter Valley Maitland School and Brookvale TAFE students are given an operations tour to help them learn about multicultural issues and cultural diversity in Fairfield.



**July 2011** Following decades of conflict with the north – in which 1.5 million people died – South Sudan is seceded from Sudan, becoming the 193rd country recognised by the UN and the 54th member state in Africa.



**2011** Approval granted to be a *Broadband Seniors Internet Kiosk* host venue.



**2011** *Fairfield Home Modification and Maintenance* receives additional funding to hire a part time occupational therapist who can undertake timelier assessments than the long-winded public service process affecting clients due to local shortages.



**2011** *Lawn Bowling for Youth* at St Johns Park Bowling Club wipes out 'old people sport' stigma, and even provides an opportunity to meet and play with the Australian Bowls Squad.

## Cabramatta: My how we've grown!



1943 Cabramatta



Photo Credits: Before <https://maps.six.nsw.gov.au/> After <https://maps.six.nsw.gov.au/>



2019 Cabramatta





# Virtual babies work a treat

In 2012 the *Virtual Babies and Pregnancy Program* is established due to a growing number of young women presenting at the youth office with pregnancies or stating they wanted to become pregnant. The program gives young people an insight – through virtual babies, a pregnancy belly and a sexual health kit – to what being a parent is really like. Since establishing, it becomes one of the most requested programs by local schools, TAFE's refugees and young women. Comments from participants include:

*"We really wanted a child, but after three days of constant crying, lack of sleep, trying to organise babysitting, struggling on public transport with a pram and nappy bag, we decided we were not ready to become parents yet"* – male, 17 years old.

*"I thought having a baby would make my life complete. Not only did I struggle to cope with a crying baby that always seemed to cry at night but taking the baby with me to school was very hard. It was also hard to study while the baby cried. I now want to finish my education, get a job and think about a baby way in the future!"* – female, 15 years old.



**2012** Through the *Burmese Project*, 12 students living in social housing or registered with NSW Housing are successfully helped with their entries into the *Housing NSW Youth Scholarship* project. Each student receives \$2,000 to complete their Higher School Certificate.



**October 2012** Fairfield Home Modification and Maintenance Service moves to a larger premises with increased storage allowing for bulk-purchase savings on building materials.



**2012** *Let's Cook Together* DVD is produced by The Heights Community Services.



**13 October 2012** *Multicultural Arts Club*, which supports local artists in earning an income from their work, holds its first exhibition titled *Across The Waters*.



MCCS's Fairfield CBD premises opening 2012



**2012** Community jewellery making classes held.



**2012** *Cabramatta Tobacco Project* educates the local – particularly Vietnamese – community about the effects of smoking and works to combat the regular sale of cigarettes to minors in Cabramatta Town Centre.



**2012** Nine volunteer refugees and migrants receive train-the-trainer skills in computing, first aid and community development to enhance their volunteering capacity.



**2012** *Overseas Qualified Engineers Employment Pathways Project* begins to address the growing needs of unemployed or underemployed migrant engineers.



**9 July 2012** Two-day soccer tournament held at Knight Park in Yennora with six teams of culturally and linguistically diverse youth participating.



**2012** Community Kitchen and Hub opens in Liverpool providing hot meals, social and recreational activities, case management, advocacy and support for Liverpool locals experiencing social disadvantage.



**2012** *Jieng (Dinka) Community Education & Capacity Building Project* is funded for 12 months.



**June 2012** With food insecurity fears most prevalent in refugee African communities, *African Settlement Project* clients are given free box containers during information and training sessions to grow their own vegetables at home.



**June 2012** The Heights at Canley Heights vacate their premises at 41 Peel Street to allow the council to demolish and rebuild a new centre. During construction the team runs programs and services from different local locations.



**7 June 2012** Staff attend Conference on *Cultural Diversity in Ageing* in Melbourne, presenting to attendees on community engagement. In 2012 the Multicultural Community Care Service has 143 community aged care packages and 30 extended aged care packages.



**24 May 2012** *Arabic Speaking Women's Project* commences a weekly playgroup.



**2 May 2012** Her Excellency Professor Marie Bashir AC, Governor of New South Wales officially opens Multicultural Community Care's new – owner occupied – premises in the heart of Fairfield CBD (pictures above).



**10 February 2012** Chinese New Year is celebrated at the centre by 150 seniors from Ultimo and Fairfield Local Government Areas.



**February 2012** Due to the success of the *Parent Café Program* at Fairfield High School (where migrant and refugee families are given the opportunity to learn about the Australian schooling system and interact with the school their children attend), the program is

further rolled out as a national pilot and recognised as one of the most successful resettlement programs in the world. In February 2012, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Antonio Guterres and other UNHCR representatives visit the *Parent Café* to find out more.



**2012** Fairfield Migrant Resource Centre participates in the *DIAC Humanitarian Settlement Services Consultation* to address budget issues, service provision and the impact of increasing numbers in detention being granted permanent protection visas.



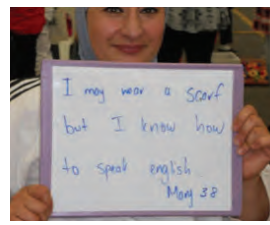
**2012** *Real Rhythm* music studio in Fairfield puts on 11 weeks of hip hop classes to teach local youths some very "cool" hip hop routines, develop friendships and increase self esteem.



**2012** The Hon. Chris Bowen, Minister for Immigration, officially launches the new *Settlement Grants Program* from the Centre. The program will benefit ethno-specific agencies by creating longer-term grants to better assist migrants and refugees.



**April 2012** Through the Youth Week Women's Space at the Bring It On Festival, local young women contribute messages to a banners about what it means to be a young woman in Fairfield. Some messages include: *"I may be homeless, but we still make our future"*, *"I might be strange sometimes but I still have feelings"*, *"I may wear a scarf, but I know how to speak English"*.



**2012** *Hepatitis B – Let's Talk About It* program to address stigma and misinformation about liver disease in local culturally and linguistically diverse communities launches.



**2012** Three course meals, socialising and activities are introduced to the agenda at Canley Heights with the *Community Restaurant* project giving seniors and people with a disability the opportunity to enjoy fully-catered lunches...so long as they can get their name on the booking sheet, with lunches booking out months in advance.



# Migrant poverty rampant

On the 14th of October 2012, a press conference was held in partnership with The Australian Council of Social Service during *Anti-Poverty Week* to launch a report on poverty in Australia. Aired live on SBS, a significant focus was about refugees and migrants experiencing chronic poverty, with clients in attendance and able to share their stories directly with media representatives.

Report findings included: 2,265,000 people in Australia live below the poverty line (12.8% of the population) including 575,000 children (17.3%). More women (54%) than men (46%) live below the line, and 26% of adults living in households below the poverty line come from a non-English speaking country.

Cost of living was the most pressing issue for refugees and migrants who faced exclusion periods for support payments and relied on funds brought with them or finding a job (which was exceptionally difficult when language barriers, inherent racism and a lack of understanding about Western practices came into play).

Iraqi Settlement Project worker, Deena Yako documents in the 2013 Annual Report some of her clients' experiences:

*This report is dedicated to all my clients who struggle on a daily basis but keep on going regardless of what circumstances they are in.*

*To my 36-year-old client who is currently undergoing Chemotherapy treatments for a rare type of cancer and who is fighting so hard to get another chance at living and raising her 14 month old baby boy and her newborn baby girl. I dedicate this to you.*

*To my 17-year-old client who lost both parents in a car bombing in Baghdad in 2011 and despite everything has a smile on his face. He is scared, traumatised and does not have a clue what the future holds for him. I dedicate this to you.*

*To my 35-year-old client who has a history of breast cancer and must maintain her breast screenings every three months but cannot afford to pay for the MRIs as they are not covered by Medicare. She regularly misses appointments in order to feed her children and pay her rent. I dedicate this to you.*

*To my elderly client who is a widow with stomach cancer and has undergone extensive surgery and Chemo therapy treatments, lives by herself in a granny flat and has to travel over 90 minutes by public transport to visit her doctor, but apparently is not a priority for public housing. I dedicate this to you.*

*To my client who is an amputee and has to hop to a bathroom so narrow he has fallen on many occasions and has injured himself after breaking the shower screen (he is lucky to be alive after that accident). He apparently must wait 20 years for public housing that is suitable for his disability. I dedicate this to you.*



**November 2012** Vietface TV produces a documentary on the White Ribbon Day breakfast and Cabramatta White Ribbon day event.





**November 2012** 16 Days of Activism is campaign supported by a 560 person attended dinner to raise awareness about forced marriage and trafficking.





**28 November 2012** Female Jieng (Dinka) leaders visit Canberra to learn about Parliament history and processes and meet with Julie Owens MP, Federal Member for Parramatta.





**2012** Ex-CEO Jan Collie is named as Fairfield City 2012 Citizen of the Year for her significant contribution to the local community. She also receives a Hall Of Fame award in the 2012 Greater Western Sydney ZEST Awards.



**2013** Croatian Community Group starts up, filling their schedule with bus outings and computer classes.



**30 January 2013** Salsa for Seniors conducts a trial run of courses facilitated by the Global Dance Company.



**January 2013** 230 newly arrived refugee children aged 5-12 years old, participate in the Kids in the Kitchen workshop.



**2013** Humanitarian Settlement Scheme clients increase by 38.5%. \$442,038.02 worth of material aid is distributed by the Fairfield Migrant Resource Centre through food cards, vouchers and cheques to clients experiencing financial hardship.



**2013** Cabramatta Community Centre Preschool and Mt Pritchard Out of Hours School Care and Vacation Care join to become Cabramatta Community Centre Children's Services Division.







**10 December 2012** The Central African Republic Conflict begins involving the government, rebels from the Séléka coalition, and anti-balaka militias. With sectarian violence still ongoing, to date 5,186 people have been killed, 700,000 displaced and more than 288,000 refugees created.




**December 2012** Legal Aid Outreach Service sets up from Fairfield and Cabramatta offices.




**2013** Get Active project sees local youth participating in various sports, the most popular being soccer and beginners swimming lessons. The project also pays club registration and gear fees for 24 young people.




**2013** Karen and Burmese Playgroup starts, empowering families to support their children's development through socialisation, speech therapy and language development, nutrition, health, stories time or other activities.







**21 March 2013** Seniors Day EXPO is held at Marconi Club for more than 1,100 seniors who enjoy lunch, information stalls, a raffle and also participate in providing entertainment including salsa and ballroom dancing.




**31 March 2013** Silk Flower Group concludes their activities.





**10 May 2013** First of two Team Development Days are held for Multicultural Community Care Service support workers.





**July 2013** Staff member, Abdul Hekmat represents the Centre at the UNHCR Consultations with Non-Government Organisations in Geneva.





**July 2013** Papua New Guinea agrees to take in asylum seekers picked up trying to reach Australia.



**14 June 2013** Fairfield Group Bus Tour commences for newly arrived parents settling in the Fairfield area. The tour gives parents the opportunity to find out what services are available to their families.





**June 2013** A celebration organised by the Immigrant and Refugee Women's Network for Refugee Week is attended by The Hon. Victor Domenillo, Minister for Citizenship and Communities.







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## Cabramatta

2019



Photo Credits: Before Fairfield City Open Libraries After Fairfield City Open Libraries



**28 July 2013**  
Hepatitis Awareness Day celebrated in Cabramatta with a mascot Panda and Liver promoting the need to "love ya liver". Educational resources are so sort after they need to be restocked from Liverpool twice.



**August 2013**  
Carer's Support Group starts to give local carers of people with a disability or the frail aged, an occasion to socialise with others experiencing the same situation.



**August 2013** 143 Community Aged Care Packages transition to the new Home Care Packages Program which sets four levels of care (previously there were two) and aims to give clients greater choice and flexibility through a Consumer Directed Care Model. The model empowers recipients to choose their own care provider, rather than be allocated one. For example, one new funding

stream is the Individual Funding Packages Program which allocates funds to a person to meet their disability-related support needs. Using this package one client, Omar has worked with support workers to identify goals and uses the funds to achieve these, such as purchasing an exercise bike to lose weight and financing a male support worker who has become a "mate" he can socialise with.



**August 2013**  
Fairfield Area Home Modification and Maintenance Service (FAHMOS) receives funding to increase sort-after lawn mowing and gardening services.



**2013** Karen Housing Cooperative helps 10 Burmese residents and their families secure housing in Merrylands.



**October 2013** The Australian Government adopts a new policy of naval vessels intercepting boats of migrants and directing them back to Indonesia. Subsequently, there is a dramatic reduction in unlawful arrivals.



**2013** Through catering to social enterprises Fairfield Highschool's Centre for Sustainable Living project creates part and full time employment opportunities for students completing the TAFE horticulture course.



**2013** Regulation of electronic gambling machines in Fairfield becomes a strong focus of advocacy. A written submission, a representation at a public hearing, and a subsequent supporting paper are put forward objecting to a Mounties application.

In the 2015-16 financial year, people from Fairfield local government area – the most

disadvantaged in Sydney according to the Australian Bureau of Statistics – spent \$8.27 billion and lost \$681,219,755 playing poker machines. That equates to \$4,171 in losses per Fairfield resident who on average earns \$39,936. Additionally, according to the Australian Medical Association for every person who suffers from a gambling problem, five to ten others also suffer as a consequence.



**2013** Fairfield Multicultural Choir establishes a cross-cultural performance group which develops and performs songs together aiming to create harmony in society.



**2013** Fairfield Migrant Resource Centre holds team building day doing the Bondi to Bronte walk.



**2013** Local artist, Steve Vaughan facilitates a drawing workshop for the Mt Pritchard Vacation Care children.



**December 2013**  
The South Sudanese Civil War breaks out and is still ongoing today. So far, 383,000 people have died, 1.5 million civilians have fled South Sudan, and 2.1 million are internally displaced.



**January 2014**  
Iraqi Civil War begins, spurred by actions undertaken by the Islamic State of Iraq (also known as ISIS). 194,871 people die and 5,625,024 are displaced.



**2014** Backyard Growers Co-Operative gives newly arrived and established locals the opportunity to generate income by growing vegetables and herbs in their backyards.



**February 2014**  
Following a period of civil unrest in Ukraine where the President is removed from power, the Russo-Ukrainian War breaks out. More than 8,000 people have been killed and the conflict is still going in 2019.



**2014**  
Community Rhythm Project brings together more than 20 residents aged 40-80 years old each week to share their love of music and singing.



**2014** Migrant Youth City Excursion and Competition has local youths running around Sydney CBD finding historical monuments and navigating their way using public information platforms.



**2015** Community Kitchen program run for newly arrived Iraqi and Arabic communities to develop their food knowledge, cooking skills and improve employment prospects.



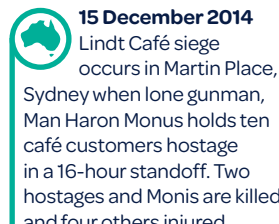
**2015** Vietnamese Seniors Pedestrian Safety program runs.



**2015** 80 young people participate in the Street Workout Program, creating a safe environment for them to develop self-esteem and empowerment through teamwork and physical activity.



**2015** You can Eat Well on a Budget workshops held to improve nutritional understanding and give locals the skills to budget for and prepare healthy food.



**15 December 2014**  
Lindt Café siege occurs in Martin Place, Sydney when lone gunman, Man Haron Monus holds ten café customers hostage in a 16-hour standoff. Two hostages and Monus are killed and four others injured.



**October 2014**  
Juana Reinoso becomes CEO. Right: flashback picture from the 1990s.



**2014** Away for the Day program gives more than 200 local seniors the opportunity to avoid social isolation and join others on stimulating bus trips.



**June 2014** The Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL/ISIS) proclaims itself a worldwide caliphate. As a caliphate, it claims religious, political and military authority over all Muslims worldwide. Its claim is vehemently rejected by mainstream Muslim groups and other Nations. During its time it enforces sharia law on millions of people and is held responsible by the United Nations for human rights abuses, war crimes and crimes against humanity.



**2014**  
Youth and Children's Services teams join together for PAINT THE TOWN REAd early literacy project.



**2014** Lotus House women's refuge reemerges with Cabramatta Community Centre following Government reforms after operating independently since 1995.



**December 2017** Aged & Disability Care Services attains a full accreditation under the Australian Aged Care Quality Agency (AACQA). It is expected this service will grow exponentially, with statistics showing by 2020 there will be more 65-year olds than 1-year olds and almost one in five Australians will be aged over 60. The life expectancy will exceed 81 for males and 86 for females. Aged care services and services providing social support for seniors will be critical for Australia's population.

**9 December 2017** Iraq Prime Minister, Haider al-Abadi announces victory over ISIL (ISIS), ending the Iraqi Civil War.

**9 December 2017** Same-sex marriage is legalised in Australia following a national survey showing 61% of voters support the change.

**November 2017** Domestic and Family Violence Conference led by CORE is attended by 260 people as part of 16 Days of Action.

**October 2017** NSW Premier's Award recognises the work of the UpFront Youth Homelessness program.

**October 2017** *The Me Too* movement against sexual harassment and sexual assault begins via a social media hashtag campaign.

**September 2017** *Anglophone Crisis* (also known as the Ambazonia War) begins when separatists declare independence and fight against the Government of Cameroon. Still ongoing, the crisis has so far killed 650 civilians, displaced 530,000 people and pushed 40,000 refugees into Nigeria.

**September 2017** Expansion of social support services for Aged and Disability Care Service clients with more groups in Chinese, Vietnamese and Spanish.

**August 2017** Mounties Group Charity award a generous \$60,000 donation to address homelessness among young people.

**July 2017** Miller Hub Service commences offering a wide range of services promoting social inclusion and participation.

**2016** White Ribbon Day march held.

**2016** Police Engagement Day held.

**2016-17** More than 6,000 refugees of mostly Syrian and Iraqi backgrounds settle in Fairfield area under the Humanitarian Program, a 50% increase. The UNHCR reports there are 68.5 million forcibly displaced people worldwide in 2017. That's 44,400 new displacements every day. More than two thirds of refugees come from five countries: Syrian Arab Republic, Afghanistan, South Sudan, Myanmar, Somalia. Australia accepts more refugees to its shores than any year since it began a dedicated humanitarian migration program. 24,162 humanitarian arrivals settle in Australia in 2017.

**2017** Staff participate in the World's Greatest Shave.

**2017** International Women's Day celebrated.

**2017** Food Relief Project volunteers pull together on average 90 food parcels every fortnight for locals experiencing financial hardship.

**February 2017** Home Care Packages change, giving the power to clients to manage their own package and select their preferred provider, rather than providers being allocated the packages.

**2017** Cabra-Vale Diggers signs on to assist refugees through our work experience program.

**Refugees get helping hand**

**2017** Yoga classes are put on the Reaching the Heights Project calendar.

**May 2017** Aged & Disability Care clients visit the Vivid festival.

**10 December 2016** *Women In Harmony* concert held with performances by refugee women who received eight weeks of music tutorage beforehand.

**2016** Soccer tournament held for local youth.

**8 November 2016** Donald Trump is elected President of the Unites States of America, sending shockwaves of surprise both nationally and internationally.

**2016** CORE takes home award at the ZEST awards.

**September 2016** In-home visits with Aged & Disability Care clients and carers begin to help them understand the incoming National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) changes.

**17 August 2016** Australia and Papua New Guinea announce that the Manus Island detention centre will be closed but none of the 850 people held there will resettle in Australia.

**August 2016** *Discovery Bus Tour* initiative starts for newly arrived refugee families with children under five. The initiative provides an orientation to local services including playgroups, childcare centres and family health centres.

**2016** *Quit Cup* run at Cabramatta High School to educate young people on cannabis. Sporting activities, quizzes and role playing engage 120 students.

**2016** Mini Olympics held for preschool children and their families at Cabra Vale Park.

**2016** Staff with help from *Habitat for Humanity* volunteers pull together to give the preschool a backyard makeover. The volunteers have previously built a new covered BBQ area at one of the youth refuges.

**2016** *Actively Caring Through Sharing* project gives local carers the opportunity to participate in a workshop called Boxwars where, through direction from French artist Olivier Grossetete, they use boxes to create The Ephemeral City as part of the Sydney Festival.

**December 2015** Staff Christmas party held.

**June 2015** *Emergency Relief* Service providing material aid for migrants, ceases to operate due to loss of funding.

**25 June 2015** Preschool children and carers adventure out to Taronga Zoo.

**2015** Mt Pritchard Outside School Hours Care/Vacation Care closes.

**2015** Fairfield Migrant Resource Centre opens second location in heart of Fairfield CBD.

**7 August 2015** *Nite Under the Stars* sleep rough event held at Neeta City to promote awareness of local youth homelessness.

**August 2015** Arabic Men's Group establishes to address gaps in services for men aged 25 and above. Feedback from one member: "*Before I come to the group I was isolated and I always complained about everything at home. I was in constant pain and stress, but after I became engaged with the men's group I have found likeminded people with whom I have become friends. In the group we are provided with sessions on health that has helped me to understand things in detail. I feel very comfortable in the group.*"

**September 2015** Australian Government announces Australia will receive an additional 12,000 refugees from Iraq and Syria. A refugee sector briefing is held to coordinate organisations and all levels of government ahead of the increasing arrivals. The briefing becomes a catalyst for the *Fairfield Settlement Action Plan* which sets out a specific strategy for fostering services collaboration.

**2015** Cabramatta Community Centre rebrands to CORE Community Services (Care Opportunity Respect Empowerment). A full internal restructure also means each of the service divisions are now incorporated under the CORE brand. Multicultural Communities (Fairfield Migrant Resource Centre), Children's Services (Preschool), Aged & Disability Services (Multicultural Community Care Service), Community Engagement (The Heights, Multilingual Outreach Service and Multicultural Aged Resource Service), and the Youth Service (Youth team) make up the five new streams, each with their own brand colour.

**30 October 2015** *UpFront Youth Program* participates in the Macarthur Homeless Hub which is a local one-stop access point giving homeless (or at risk of being homeless) people access to essential services and resources. Youth Services also takes over operations of the *UpFront Crisis Refuge* in November.



**2018** The Settlement Engagement and Transition Support program replaces the Settlement Grants program to focus more on settlement, finding work and emphasising migrant youth needs. Services include assisting with English language skills, building employment readiness and encouraging homework for school students.

**January 2018** Refugee Youth Peer Mentoring commences with three consortium partners to assist up to 900 young refugees. As the lead agency, CORE oversees the two year pilot which provides the opportunity for young people

from refugee backgrounds to be paired with a peer mentor and explore goals around education, employment, access to services, building connections in their community and participating in community life and the wider Australian society.



**February 2018** ZEST Award is won for the Safer Relationships Project addressing domestic violence.

**2018** Learn to Drive program starts to help migrant women obtain a driver's licence. It is conceived based on evidence that newly arrived women from refugee backgrounds typically wait longer than men to obtain their driver's license. In 2018 more than 50 women participate in the program.



Aged & Disability Care division staff development day 2018 at Marconi Club



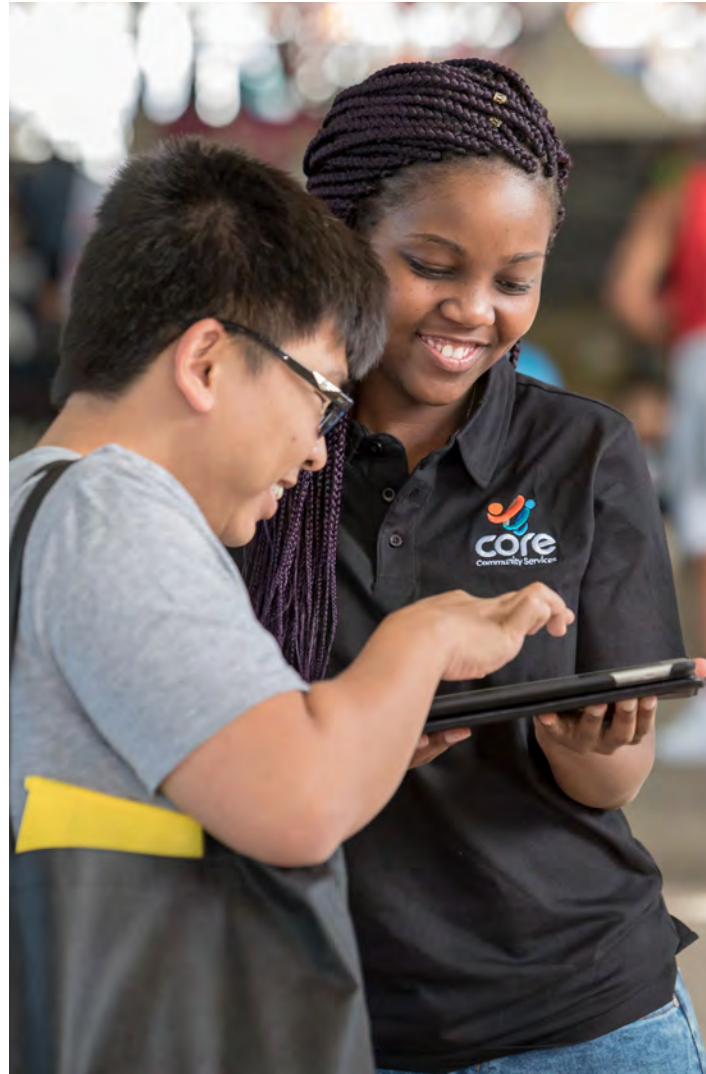
**March 2018** Wellbeing of Women network convened in-conjunction with International Women's Day.

**March 2018** The China-United States trade wars begin when Donald Trump announces tariffs on Chinese imports. China, now a world superpower, is increasingly drawing concern from the United States and tensions continue to rise in the Asian Pacific in 2019.

**2018** The Child, Youth and Families Project begins working with young women aged 12 to 18 'at risk' and/or marginalised including young mothers.



**April 2018** #ChoicenotForce Campaign raises awareness of forced marriages of young people and child brides.



**2018** My Voice, Our Journey program starts enabling adult refugees to engage with others and share their story through art and theatre.



**May 2018** Over 40 representatives participate in a workshop to gauge progress made in the Fairfield City Settlement Action Plan's first year of implementation. The workshop is attended by the NSW Government Refugee Coordinator-General, Professor Peter Shergold and facilitated by the Department of Premier and Cabinet.



**2018** CORE leads the Fairfield Emerging Communities Action Partnership employment working group to organise the first Business Breakfast under the 'place-based' Fairfield Settlement Action Plan. Over 90 people attend and discuss the local refugee/migrant landscape including demographics and support services.



# 2018/19

## Annual Report



Moon festival 2019



This year has been an exciting year for CORE Community Services for getting our strategic planning ready to go forward into the future in a more co-ordinated and collaborative way that is underpinned by good communication.

Investment of some of our resources to ensure capacity to undertake future projects and for the organisation to become more self-sufficient is a priority. We all understand

that we need Government and philanthropic funding support, and we must make every dollar count. However, the challenge for CORE is to take on projects that don't necessarily attract up-front funding to meet community needs.

Many things can be done now. Huge community demand for children's services and in aged care for instance require more resources which aren't met through Government funding and priorities. Our community has needs and CORE requires a financial capacity to spend on bricks and mortar, and infrastructure, to meet those needs. Sometimes, to move forward, we also need to be able to match dollar-for-dollar contributions from government or other donors.

I believe every birthday provides us with an opportunity to reflect on our organisation and its achievements. From very humble beginnings teaching English in Cabramatta 40 years ago, we have learnt and matured to build a workforce based on experience. Everything gets better with age. Looking back at what we've achieved and even mistakes we've made is about learning, so our organisation will continue to serve our community for a long time to come.

I am pleased to be surrounded by very passionate and committed people who are all trying to do that little bit better and working together across the teams to help our clients in their moment of need. Some clients may need a longer time and more assistance from us, while others move on quickly with their life.

CORE is continuing its journey and working collaboratively in teams and with partners to deliver for our community. We must never let go of our

passion and commitment. With good governance and good financial management, we can also do more in future and stand on our own two legs.

I see CORE in 10 years' time being able to address the gap in children's services and being able to help our community even more in areas of need. We need to focus on our goals and get them right to make us strong and resilient. I want us also to become an Employer of Choice and for our organisation to be one where the volunteer Board and our people want to be a part.

I want to congratulate everyone in CORE for their individual efforts to reach our huge collective achievements in 2019 and in previous years. I admire your capacity, commitment and passion.

It's people who make a difference and we have lots of good people who make CORE. Feedback from our clients shows how effective and responsive we have been as an organisation. Our future is ensured by remaining a very client-centric community service.

**Yvonne Santalucia**  
CORE Chairperson

## Board members



**Alejandro Arvelo**  
Secretary  
Year started: 2015



**Jasvinder Pal Kaur**  
Director  
Year started: 2015



**Katina Varelis**  
Director  
Year started: 2014



**Ali Mokhtar**  
Director  
Year started: 2014



**Naomi Knight**  
Director  
Year started: 2017



**Karina Santolin**  
Director  
Year started: 2017

**2018**  
CORE Chairperson, Yvonne Santalucia is inducted into the 2017 ZEST Awards Hall of Fame in recognition of her exceptional commitment and sustained efforts in growing and developing the community and in working for the benefit of others (photo of acceptance speech above).

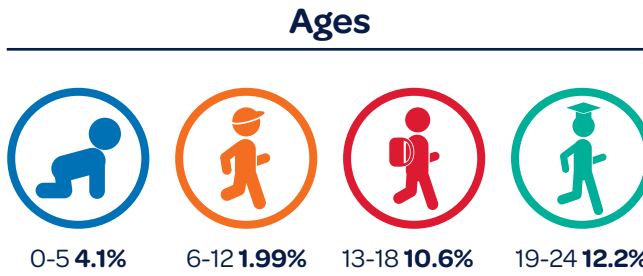
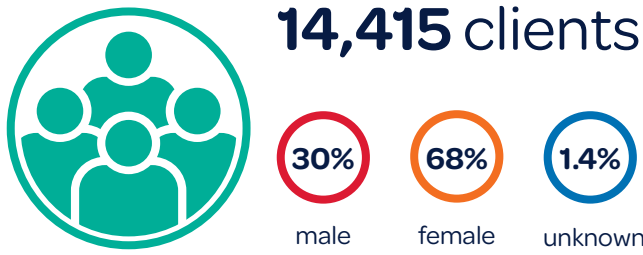
**2018**  
CORE's Vision: Vibrant local communities that advocate for social justice, equal participation in decision-making, celebration in diversity and non-discrimination at all levels of society.

**2018** CORE's Mission is to facilitate equitable access to life opportunities experienced by all Australians.



Yvonne accepting her ZEST Hall of Fame award





- |            |            |                |                |
|------------|------------|----------------|----------------|
| Aboriginal | Croatian   | Laos           | South American |
| Afghani    | Egyptian   | Lebanese       | Spanish        |
| Armenian   | Fijian     | New            | Syrian         |
| Australian | German     | Zealander      | Tongan         |
| Assyrian   | Greek      | Papua New      | Turkish        |
| Bosnian    | Hungarian  | Guinean        | Vietnamese     |
| Brazilian  | Indian     | Philippino     |                |
| Cambodian  | Indonesian | Romanian       |                |
| Chaldean   | Iraqi      | Samoan         |                |
| Chilean    | Iranian    | Sierra Leonean |                |
| Chinese    | Italian    | Serbian        |                |

## Achievements



**101,129**  
Occasions of service



**9,500**  
Referrals



**6,284.3 hours**  
Case management



**46,221.28**  
Direct hours/  
hours registered



**925**  
Allied Health sessions



**994**  
Youth advocacy cases



**153**  
Information sessions

### Aged & Disability Care

**1,180** clients

**35,314** occasions of service

**5,380** case management

**45,807.28** direct hours/hours registered

**204,734 km** travelled

**887** Allied Health sessions

#### Top ethnicities:

Vietnamese (9.1%), Chinese (3.2%), South American (33%), and Arabic & Assyrian (2.6%)

### Children's Services

**176** clients

**6,406** occasions of service

**40** information sessions on health and wellbeing, nutrition, autism, transition to school, play, routines, social development, culture, anxiety in children

#### Programs:

early education, finger skills workshops, preschool, parental sessions, playgroups

#### Networks:

Paint Fairfield REaD, Fairfield Events Working Group, Fairfield Early Childhood Network

### Community Engagement

**6,532** clients

**31,922** occasions of service

#### Top ethnicities:

Vietnamese 30%, Arabic 15%, Chinese 12%

**6** social inclusion programs

**9** active life style programs

**10** skills and development programs

**5** employment and training courses

**16,567** face to face information enquiries

### Multicultural Communities

**3,591** clients

**8,320** occasions of service

#### Top Settlement Services ethnicities:

Arabic 50%, Assyrian 30%, Chaldean 16%, Vietnamese 12%

#### Top DV client ethnicities:

Iraq/Syrian 27.6%, Vietnamese 26%, Australian 9.75%, Cambodian 8.9%,

#### Top issues:

community participation, employment and training, domestic violence, housing, mental and phsyical health, financial and legal issues

### Youth Services

**2,936** clients

**19,169** occasions of service

**31** networks

#### Client issues:

trauma, mental health, homelessness, AOD, divorce, education, disengagement, financial stress, grief, psychological abuse, physical abuse, settlement, learning English

#### Group work topics:

parenting, painting, fashion, art, tennis, life skills, social, hobby, education, training, employment, life style, AOD



## Meeting demand in aged and disability care

Providing high quality affordable care for the aged and disabled, and meeting the challenges of recruitment and ongoing staff training for new government regulatory standards has been a critical focus for CORE’s Aged & Disability Care service in 2019.

Service Manager Nhu Tran explains that CORE’s specialty offering to multicultural clients to provide multilingual workers as part of their care, also adds another layer to the already challenging area of service delivery.

*“In the last three years the trend has been for significant changes in aged care services, and this year we have completed the implementation of our new Aged Care Standards, the new Charter of Aged Care Rights and published our Home Care pricing schedule on My Aged Care,”* Nhu says.

*“Our organisation competes in a quite competitive environment. We offer high quality services and well-trained staff while still being price competitive.”*

CORE Aged & Disability Care operates with more than 80 fulltime and part-time staff, and a small number of volunteer helpers, with a focus on South West Sydney. Disability care is available to those aged between 18 to 64, and aged care is for those 65 years and above.

Nhu explains the level of care offered varies from entry level through to very intensive and complex care. *“Our aim is to support people to stay independent through wellness and re-ablement approaches in their own homes”.*

The total number of clients cared for by Nhu ’s team is more than 400 with a growing number of those accessing disability services through the new National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS). *“We expect this number to increase in the very near future”.*

Also, we expect expanding demand particularly in aged care with the rise of a growing population of elderly people who are living longer.

Government funding is increasing in line with the need for aged care. It is also becoming more consumer-focussed with greater choice for the elderly. *“It is vital that our clients are made aware of what services are available to them, the choices and control they have”* says Nhu.

In her review of 2019, Nhu reflects on the special and ongoing challenge to retain the valuable workers employed by CORE.

*“Recruitment and retention of our staff is difficult. There is a high turnover. It is not an easy employment pathway for our workers to maintain regular working hours throughout the week.”*

The future however is positive according to Nhu with her service ready to grow in providing aged and disability care to a greater number of clients.

*“Our clients are our main focus. We have a simple goal to support our clients in achieving their goals”.*



**August 2018** Community Engagement is invited to a Club Grants Ceremony at Cabramatta Rugby Leagues Club where they receive funding from Cabra-Vale Diggers Club, Fairfield RSL and Mounties to run six different projects across Fairfield Local Government Area.



**October 2018** National Carers Week is celebrated to recognise the outstanding contribution unpaid carers make and the sacrifices they endure.

**October 2018** Anti-Poverty Week celebrated to strengthen public understanding of the causes and consequences of poverty and hardship and to encourage research, discussion and action to address these problems, but locally and nationally.

**3 October 2018** Youth Service expands their programs, services and reach, with a new location in Fairfield among hubs of other organisations to closely work together with. To celebrate, an Open Day is held for the community to visit and enjoy a fun day of entertainment and food. The new location provides a safe space where young people can go to and not feel intimidated.



## Cementing accessible homes for elderly

A concrete path and an extended doorway that provides access into his home for wheelchair-bound Roy Picton is the latest assistance provided by the Home Modification and Maintenance Team operating under CORE’s Aged & Disability Care Service.

Roy’s wife Betty explains that Roy is nearly 88 years of age, unable to walk and suffers from macular degeneration causing blindness.

Roy moved into a nursing care facility earlier this year, but he needed help from a support worker to traverse an uneven cobblestone path in his wheelchair and then switch into another wheelchair to get inside his family home on his regular visits to his wife in Rossnore in south-west Sydney.

*“They (the modifications team) started work on the 26th of August and took just three days to fix the doorway and build a new cement path,”* Betty says.

*“Roy is very happy. The cobblestones were not even because the sand starts to give way and the ground moves around here. The new path is wide and quite long and goes from the ramp right to the the end of the house where a car can pick us up.”*

Betty, who is also nearly 88 years old, says the path also helps her with access to her daughter’s home which is located on the same acreage property.

The support to the Pictons by CORE Community services has been provided for about a decade, Betty says, after her daughter first approached the organisation to assist her elderly parents with their mobility, home maintenance and safety needs.

*“They started helping us a long time ago. They put in a back step and rail, and a ramp from the back. I’ve had to have a toilet fixed and they’ve done that.”*

*“I don’t know what we would have done without them (CORE). They’ve been very good to us. They’re always on time, they do the job and it’s always been very good,”* Betty says.

Work completed at Betty and Roy Picton’s house







Geoffrey Young with trainer

## Aged care service is “marvellous”

Seventy-nine-year-old Geoffrey Young thinks the service provided by CORE’s Aged and Disability Service is “*marvellous*”, according to his daughter and carer Tanya Young.

Geoffrey’s house is cleaned weekly, his dog is washed once a month and Geoffrey attends exercise classes at Georges Hall every Monday and Friday under a Level Two care package that has just been upgraded to Level Three.

Two years ago, Geoffrey had travelled to Sydney from Port Macquarie for his grand-daughter’s birthday, but suffered a serious turn leading to open-heart surgery and a probable stroke in theatre. This affected his memory and suffering from dementia - leaving him unable to return home and in need of long-term care.

*“I had been looking after my mother who had died,”* says Tanya who then took on the role of carer for her father who now lives in a granny flat behind Tanya’s house in Fairfield West.

She explains that CORE began providing services for her father 18 months ago after she happened upon the organisation when in Fairfield and applied for assistance on his behalf.

*“They’re (CORE) great and their help gives me a break. Sam (from CORE) comes every week for two hours. He cleans for an hour, changes the beds and then spends the next hour talking and helping Dad. Dad is happy for the assistance and company.”*

Tanya adds that support from CORE is not limited to the services they provide. *“What is very valuable is the insight they provide into things that are available to help my Dad such as a 50 percent discount on taxi fares to take him to exercise classes. Kim (from CORE) is our case manager and she is very approachable”.*

Tanya comments that CORE has strong multicultural links particularly with the aging Asian community who form a large ethnic group in Fairfield - which is important given the makeup of the community. Many of the people working for CORE have ethnic backgrounds and speak other languages to help their clients.

Reflecting on the 40th Anniversary of CORE Community Services, Tanya says the organisation has a lot to offer and should continue to do well into the future. *“I think they’re very good”.*

*“Dad thinks it is marvellous. He can’t believe the help that he gets. He really appreciates it a lot and so do I. To have this service there and as he gets more dependent, it’s important to know that the services can be increased as Dad’s needs grow.”*



## Children’s Services

### Creative ways to meet ever-growing demand

Limited by physical space and a licence for only 20 children each day for five days a week has required ‘thinking outside the square’ to help meet increasing community demand for early childhood education and care.

CORE’s Children’s Services Manager, Debora (Debbie) Rose, reports that 2019 has been a year where the CORE Community Services Pre-school Centre is operating at licenced capacity, but 70 children remain on the centre’s waiting list.

*“We have kicked off a Playgroup service that operates one day a week, which is available to those on the waiting list, and we are looking for other ways to meet the community need,”* Debora says.

*“The playgroup operates for two hours and attracts up to 20 people on Monday each week. We’ve also extended the pre-school children’s workshop (first introduced last year) which focusses on finger skills such as writing and numbers. This takes place between 10 and 12 each Tuesday and there can be 10, 15 or even 18 children. We prefer to have a maximum of 15.”* The playgroup has 37 children and the workshop 75 children on the books.

The pre-school centre operates with two full-time teachers including Debora, and three part-time early childhood educators. The centre’s 88 pre-

school children attend either daily or at different times during the week, with the total number of children assisted including other programs adding up to 200 annually.

Debora says the centre is well-staffed and as a team they have “*looked outside the square*” to address the community demand by also offering the playgroup and workshop.

*“It’s space that limits our ability to grow capacity. We receive great support from CORE and offer a quality service.”*

The demand for positions at the pre-school centre comes from families wanting to enrol siblings following the positive experience of older children. The good relationship with the three local primary schools also means some children not ready for school are referred to the centre.

*“We are also seeing an increasing number of children with additional needs. Important government funding is used for training and upskilling staff to help these children during the very important early years.”*

The year has gone quickly according to Debora who reflects on the happy children confident in their relationship with educators at the centre. *“Our sector moved away many years ago from being a childminding industry to a highly skilled area which is not always recognised.”*

Debora’s wish-list includes getting a larger space in future to address the waiting list and help those children with additional needs. In the meantime, CORE’s Children’s Services will continue to upskill educators, deliver quality early childhood education and look at ways to increase support to the community.



CORE Pre-school Centre staff

**February 2019**  
Fairfield  
Settlement  
Action Plan  
community  
consultation  
held.

**February 2019**  
Juana, Marie,  
Morlai and Atem  
Atem (FCC) attend the  
Zest Awards with the  
Fairfield Settlement  
Action Plan taking  
home an award on the  
night.

**February 2019** Staff attend the Premier  
Harmony Awards at the Salty Dingo where  
they take home the Stepan Kerkyasharian  
AO Harmony Award – Organisation. The award  
recognises the contribution and achievement  
of an organisation in facilitating and promoting  
social cohesion, understanding and acceptance  
between members of different cultural or faith  
communities in New South Wales.



**March 2019**  
Staff  
Harmony  
Day event sees  
staff competing  
against each  
other for the  
best dressed  
prize.



**March 2019**  
Fairfield Police  
& Community  
Expo held to keep  
the community and  
law enforcement  
communication  
channels open.

**March 2019**  
International  
Women’s Day  
celebrated with a  
women and culture  
themed event.



**March 2019**  
Neighbourhood  
Centre Week  
celebrated with the  
theme “Bringing  
People Together”.



**4 April 2018**  
Gambling  
harm in  
Fairfield: Starting  
the conversation  
conference  
attended by CORE.  
Photo: Fairfield  
Advance.







Sokunthy Lim (centre) with Cherry and Ruth who she met doing the Cert II Community Services through CORE

## Pathing New Directions

Sokunthy Lim was drawn to the CORE Community Services Pre-School Centre by word of mouth tales about the excellent environment, little did she know the day she dropped her son off would inspire a completely new chapter in her life.

*"After dropping my son off for the first time (at the Pre-School) I had a few hours free so I decided to check out the CORE building next door," Sokunthy says.*

*"I entered the building – which I never knew existed – and saw all these pamphlets and brochures about all these activities. I took ones that were of interest to me and one of them was about a community services course."*

Being a single Mum who had not studied since 2002, Sokunthy was apprehensive about her ability to study with a child but found the flexible course hours and being located right next door integrated perfectly with the Pre-School schedule.

*"I found that the teaching environment and the courses CORE have available are very friendly and suitable for parents and people in the community who struggle, like for example as a single parent I might not think that I can study but by doing that course it showed me that I have the ability," says Sokunthy.*

What really pathed the way for a new life direction however was when Sokunthy's teacher approached her about volunteering at the CORE Pre-School. *"I didn't intentionally want to work with children because I thought I wasn't good enough, but when I took on the opportunity I really enjoyed it and found I have a really strong connection with children"*.

Sokunthy says volunteering alongside highly trained CORE Pre-School educators and watching how they interact with children has helped her understand and build a better relationship with her son. It has also inspired a new career direction. *"By volunteering at the Pre-School I got interested in wanting to do something with children in school or with childcare in the childcare system, so at present I am studying educational support"*.

From not knowing what she was going to do with her life, to now having a very clear and exciting career path ahead, Sokunthy says she owes it all to the courses and Pre-school volunteering opportunities at CORE Community Services. *"It has changed me a lot because I feel more confident and now I know where I want to go, I know what I want to do. I really appreciate everyone that is involved in the community because without those people working in the field we wouldn't have that support"*.

Volunteers are an integral part of the CORE Community Services program. If you would like to hear about volunteering opportunities, please contact 8707 0600.



## Community Engagement

### Successful year despite big challenges

CORE'S Community Engagement Service team made 2019 a very successful year by attracting funding channels for new, innovative programs and activities supported by the work of a dedicated team of volunteers.

Manager Estela Torredimare reports *"the CE Team organised a variety of community events attended by hundreds of people. We were lucky to hear moving speeches from participants during these events – including an outstanding presentation from Sokunthy Lim - at the International Women's Day Celebration.*

*"By listening to people who are part of our day-to-day activities, one can understand why the services provided by CORE remain so important over the years. The Community Christmas Party at The Hub at Miller stands out as one of the biggest events of the year and was organised in partnership with local services providers. The event was attended by over 350 people and more than 250 toys were distributed to children of all ages."*

Estela adds that 2019 gave her the chance to look back and celebrate CORE's history but most importantly, to look forward as the CE team prepares to meet new challenges and continues the journey of services provided. *"The team embraces an attitude of innovation reflected in the variety of services and programs offered to the local community. At The Hub at Miller*

*through partnerships, the service is able to offer on average 800 meals a month, which is significant but unfortunately doesn't meet the increasing demand. At Mt Pritchard through the Food Relief project, 80 families a month receive food hampers in exchange for a small nominal fee. This empowers them and allows their budgets to stretch further and more comfortably to cover the necessities such as rent, medical treatments and utilities bills."*

Looking ahead, Estela says the team will shift its focus towards meeting the needs of children, young people, families and communities experiencing or at risk of vulnerability as the service aligns with the new TEI program delivery. This year, staff have attended training programs to gain skills for a smooth transition into the new program priorities that are outcome-based and responsive to local needs.

*"Community Engagement drives innovative, integrated, inclusive, coordinated and responsive services in the communities we serve," Estela says. "Through our partnership with Health Services, Public Schools and Special Needs Schools, we have a range of programs delivered in Canley Heights, Canley Vale, Lansvale and Mt Pritchard. This includes parenting programs, cooking classes and children after school activities such as yoga, Zumba and art classes. By providing a broad variety of community activities we aim to support and enhance the wellbeing of families and children"*.

Estela reports CORE's Community Engagement Service has provided clients with 31,900 occasion of services.

*"Our community remains at the centre of everything we do. We are excited to be part of this journey by continuing to develop comprehensive programs, services and activities that assist, support and strengthen the local communities we serve. We look forward to the future in consultation with the community to support disadvantaged, vulnerable individuals and families to feel valued, connected and strengthened."*



parenting group in action



April 2019 Business Breakfast held.



April 2019 Annual Bring It On youth festival held, attracting large crowds of youths and many local service providers.



2019 Female youth soccer program runs with great success.



2019 Youth participating in the holiday program go to Sky Zone and play paintball.



May 2019 CORE partners with other agencies to empower communities at the annual Pathways to Employment expo.



June 2019 Refugee Week events run to celebrate the local community's cultural diversity.







Betty Nourse participating in various activities run by CORE

## Addressing a new epidemic

An increasing amount of international research is showing social isolation and loneliness can pose a bigger risk for premature death than smoking or obesity and is heading towards epidemic levels in many nations.

*“There is robust evidence that social isolation and loneliness significantly increases risk for premature mortality, and the magnitude of the risk exceeds that of many leading health indicators,”* Professor Julianne Holt-Lunstad told the 125th Annual Convention of the American Psychological Association in August 2017.

It is a startling area of research that solidifies that importance of services which help strengthen community bonds and negate social isolation, such as those provided by the Community Engagement team at CORE Community Services.

Betty Nourse, who has been actively involved with the service since 2009, says she frequently sees the effects of loneliness and the change in people when they connect with their community. *“People who no longer have a partner and always had some company to go out with are coming to our community groups and they become a person again,”* says Betty. *“They join us because they’ve got something in life to look forward to. I’ve seen big changes in quite a few of my friends”.*

According to VicHealth, the most effective way to reduce loneliness is to make people feel connected to their community.

That is what the Community Engagement team have been able to successfully do for decades. The provision of classes tailored to meet

community needs and the creation of a family-like environment involving staff, volunteers and participants (who often wear all three hats), is helping to address this growing public health issue.

Betty says she wished she knew about the service earlier. *“I had no idea what was available in the community. I was totally shocked because I would’ve retired earlier had I have known I could’ve been doing things like I ended up doing”.*

*“I don’t want to stay at home and die quietly. I want to be out in the public and where I can help and be caring to somebody, that’s what I want to do.”*

Betty participates in activities run by CORE four days a week including art and craft classes, line dancing, monthly bus trips, neighbourhood watch meetings and Canley Heights Community Group meetings (for which she is Treasurer), but says her favourite activity is the Gentle Exercise class on Monday’s.

*“When I first started ten years ago there was probably 10 in the class and about four years ago I started to look after it and now we have capped 30. 30 people and they have an hour of happiness and smiles,”* says Betty. *“We laugh a lot in that class...laughing makes you healthy and happy”.*

With researchers questioning what can be done to address loneliness, it appears the Community Engagement staff may have at least one effective method.

*“I give my blessings to Julie (Watton) who changed my life. I have admiration for everything that CORE does, total admiration. They are doing a wonderful job in our community. They are getting stronger and they have some very good leaders,”* says Betty.



## Settlement programmed for success

The work of CORE’s Multicultural Communities Service represents a vast range of critical support services helping refugees and migrants to adjust, thrive and deal with issues upon their arrival in the Fairfield Local Government Area and for some years later.

The Service’s manager, Shama Pande, explains that Fairfield has the largest settlement program for new arrivals in Australia, and is a model for interagency collaboration involving all levels of Government (Federal, State and Local), non-government and charity service providers such as CORE.

*“In 2017, CORE and Fairfield City Council took a lead role in developing the Fairfield City Settlement Action Plan, which was a proactive response to the large influx of refugees and humanitarian entrants settling in Fairfield between January 2016 and June*

*2018. More than 22 agencies formed a working group to enhance local collaboration and partnerships, and to utilise the expertise of each other in order to delivery better services and reduce services working in silos.”*

A Progress Report released this year highlights the achievements and lessons learnt to date. *“The report identifies many positive examples of collaboration which aimed at building the capacity of refugees and vulnerable migrants”,* according to Shama.

*“Based on recommendations made in the Progress Report the Plan has been further extended to June 2020. An updated Action Plan has been created, new agencies have joined the working group, and an evaluation of the Plan is being prepared.”*

In 2019, CORE Multicultural Communities Service helped 2759 new arrivals with settlement, while also providing case-work support for 3,591 clients that dealt individually with their needs. The Multicultural Communities team has 20 staff comprising 14 full-time and six part-time employees, and is assisted by volunteers.

Support was provided in the critical areas of housing, understanding Australia’s legal system, health matters, rights and responsibilities, employment, education and training, social engagement, life skills, contact with ethnic community organisations, and programs that address integrated domestic and family violence.

*“It is important to recognise that settlement does not happen in a linear way,”* says Shama, reflecting that people with a refugee background have different priorities, capacities and ...





... skills. *“One area where the system can be improved is through a gender approach. Settlement service delivery provides little differences between men and women, but the needs are very different. Mums are focussed on their children certainly in the first five years and can miss out (on support services)”.*

A big challenge according to Shama is employment, education and training for newly arrived refugees and migrants which is a key focus for her team.

*“We have brought businesses on board by conducting business breakfasts which inform them about the very skilful people we have as clients including engineers, IT professionals and dentists.”*

*“The Business breakfast aims to alleviate the challenges that refugees and vulnerable migrants face in seeking meaningful employment. By employing refugees and supporting the successful labour market integration of Refugees, business leaders and companies can make a positive impact on people’s lives.”*

Shama acknowledges Australia’s policies can play a key role in facilitating the integration process of newly arrived refugees and migrants, but she says the private sector can make a critical contribution in economic integration by training and employing refugees.

She refers to an event entitled ‘Take the LEAP into Employment’ where the Fairfield Emerging communities Action Partnership held its 14th Pathways to employment Expo in May this year involving key business partners and supporters. More than 650 active job seekers and people seeking career pathways largely from refugee and migrant backgrounds living in Fairfield and surrounding areas attended.

*“Employment is a significant settlement milestone for emerging communities. The Expo aims to*

*provide a local forum for migrant job-seekers to be inspired, encouraged and informed about employment and training opportunities available to them as well as to enable them take the next step or steps towards achieving their employment goals.”*

CORE’s efforts in the employment area also provide help for parents and the disabled seeking work.

Support to multicultural communities is provided in very different ways by CORE which has recently taken up a Tobacco Control Social Marketing Grant from the Cancer Institute NSW. *“We have been asked to undertake evidence-based activities to reduce tobacco use in the Fairfield area among Chinese, Vietnamese and Arabic residents using social marketing channels. We are developing concepts and will launch the campaign in November,”* Shama says.

One area where assistance is provided that afflicts all communities regardless of culture or socio-economic status is domestic violence. In 2019, 122 people were assisted under the Integrated Domestic and Family Violence program.

*“This program intervenes where violence has been identified usually by the police, health services, child protection agencies or other support services such as family support. It provides adults, young people and child victims with support to escape and recover from abuse. Ongoing practical and emotional support is provided,”* Shama explains.

In concluding her review of 2019, Shama reports that the use of services provided by her team has expanded to 8,320 occasions annually. She adds CORE’s Multicultural Communities Service has been able to design an innovative service model that is fluid enough to meet changing community needs. *“We must continue to respond to people’s needs and build on current collaborations that in future should include more private and corporate involvement”.*



Reem (left) with one of her mentees

## Mentoring Confidence in Refugee Youth

Imagine having no choice but to pack what you can carry, step out the front door and walk away from the only home you’ve ever known, forever.

Imagine making the decision to flee (or having that decision taken from you) and having no idea where you would go, what language you would need to speak or even if you would be able to stay with your family.

This is the situation many refugees face every single day. The United Nations Refugee Agency (UNHCR) estimated there were 24.7 million refugees at the end of 2017. Many of these refugees are waiting in camps for years to find safe haven in a country they most likely know very little - or nothing - about. They do not know the system, the cultural protocols, the social functions, or that there are services available to them to help with settlement.

Four years ago when Reem Qrma came to Australia, she was one of these people. *“I didn’t know when I arrived that there is help for refugees because I had to do everything myself,”* says Reem.

*“When you come as a migrant you feel like ‘I don’t know what is happening, where should I go, where can I find out about this thing?’ and that’s what happened to me actually, I didn’t know where to go I was just lost and I was like ‘will I survive or not?’ ‘what am I supposed to do?’”*

*“We are coming here not knowing what is available because in our countries there’s no such (support) services, you have to do everything yourself. You can’t ask the government, you can’t ask for anything.”*

Recurring situations like Reem’s has inspired CORE Community Services to establish a Refugee Youth Peer Mentoring Program. The program supports young people from refugee or refugee-like backgrounds aged 15-25 to navigate education and employment pathways, access the services they need and participate in their local communities. This is facilitated through a mentorship platform where young people are matched with a personal Mentor who can assist them with adjusting to a completely new way of life.

It’s a program, says Reem who is now a Mentor, that is very important for young refugees who acutely feel the weight of isolation and the impact of being responsible for parents, having to navigate a new language, and trying to find career pathways.

*“What I love about it is like refugee people are helping refugees,”* say Reem. *“I feel like [the program] is a great opportunity for new refugees to know that there are people who have gone through all of this and they have come over it. So you’re not talking to someone who has limited experience and can’t really share it with them.”*

Reem has worked with numerous Mentees who are usually drawn to and select her as a Mentor due to her inspiring dedication to tertiary education (Reem is currently studying physiotherapy after having found a pathway through TAFE) and her drive to get work experience (the only job she could find is two hours away from home, but she travels willingly knowing the experience will benefit her future career). Reem says her experience gives Mentees confidence to tackle their own challenges.

This sentiment is echoed by Sam Matty, the Program’s first Mentee.

*“At the time I felt a bit nervous about speaking English but [since doing the program] I started to get more confident and talk to people and stuff, so it is a really great opportunity to get more confident,”* says Sam.

Sam and his Mentor catch up monthly in the city or Parramatta and spend their time chatting and going on tours to learn about local history. Sam says CORE is playing a pivotal role in helping him adjust to a new country and offers opportunities he would never have had otherwise.

*“I just want to thank them (CORE staff) for their hard work and for all the things they’ve helped me with and they’re offering for young people,”* says Sam.

If you would like to become a Mentor for a young refugee, please go to [www.corecs.org.au/rypmp](http://www.corecs.org.au/rypmp)





## One-stop shop delivers for young people

Youth Service Manager Graeme Riddell describes CORE Youth Services as a one-stop shop for young people in south-west Sydney that offers programs ranging from social integration to more serious help to address the risk of homelessness.

*"Our role is to help young people find their place in the community, support the disadvantaged and assist them during a crisis situation. Our place-based service offers many different programs,"* Graeme says.

He adds that more than 5,000 young people have called on CORE this year to participate in a variety of group activities including school holiday and outreach programs, programs to assist young refugees, settlement advice, and multicultural youth support.

Youth homelessness however accounts for a large part of the work done by CORE's Youth Services area with around 800 young people requiring assistance through the Upfront Youth Homelessness Program this year. This support includes individual case management and clinical support for a combination of issues.

Funding from the NSW Department of Communities and Justice helps CORE work with young people to provide early intervention and prevention, crisis accommodation and transitional housing, followed by subsidised accommodation if available.

*"This is a big challenge,"* according to Graeme who cites family breakdowns, instances of physical abuse, mental health issues and alcohol and drug abuse as causes of youth homelessness.



*"We always attempt early intervention and prevention to mend family relationships and keep young people at home and school if possible".* But, he adds, homelessness is bigger than reflected in official figures because many young people 'couch-surf' between friend's houses and may not come to the attention of support services.

Reflecting on the past year, Graeme reveals a major concern for Youth Services has been the increasing number of clients presenting with mental illness. *"Finding safe accommodation where young clients are unable to return home is increasingly difficult particularly when they reach adult age. Increasingly young clients present to our service with 'co-morbidity' combined mental illness and alcohol and drug abuse symptoms, particularly with the use of (the drug) Ice which is highly addictive, cheap and readily available in the South West of Sydney."*

Early intervention and prevention strategies through education and outreach programs are being used to combat this problem.

*"The Miller area (suburb) in southwest Sydney is a high need area where demography and drug use are a problem. We are working with young people to provide outreach support to educate young people in the harm caused to themselves and their families. Harm minimisation is critical,"* explains Graeme.

The work of Youth Services has achieved significant results in youth settlement with an increasing number of refugees arriving in the Fairfield Local Government Area, Graeme says. *"Our multicultural youth support, refuge youth peer mentoring and youth settlement programs achieved really significant results through the integration of young people into the community. Young people from Assyrian, Chaldean and Arabic speaking backgrounds have made fantastic progress through working with our skilled and passionate staff".*

As for the future, Graeme says his team of 40 full-time and casual staff, as well as volunteers will advocate strongly to support young people suffering from mental illness where there is a major deficiency in available services and safe accommodation.

The team will also continue to address vital issues such as youth homelessness, drug and alcohol addiction, and be at the forefront of assistance to young people through settlement, mentoring, refugee, community and family support programs.

## Refuge more than just a roof for youth

The 2016 census recorded there are more than 37,000 homeless people in NSW. This figure is sobering when you realise 9,000 of those are children and that homelessness in Western Sydney jumped by 67 per cent from the 2011 census.

In Cabramatta alone the figure rose by 96.8 per cent, with over 2,000 people living without the security of a home in the Fairfield local government area.

Rental affordability has been blamed primarily for the rising numbers, followed by family violence impacting society's most vulnerable groups such as migrant communities, young people and women.

Salim Chebboub was just one number in those rising statistics who sort help through CORE Community Services' Upfront Youth Homelessness program.

*"My parents got divorced about six years ago and my mum moved to America soon after the divorce,"* says Salim. *"I lived with my dad and it just became a toxic environment for me as a young person growing up in Western Sydney. He's homophobic, and as I identify as gay he was starting to physically and emotionally abuse me. Basically it got to a night where he ended up burning me, punching me and I just felt really scared to go home so I went to my boss the next day and she took me to the police station and that's how I got in touch with CORE."*

Salim says the support received through CORE Youth Services has been invaluable to giving him stability and teaching him essential life skills.

*"Having lived at six or seven other refuges by far the facilities, just the care, the programs, the living skills and things that you learn at CORE are just amazing, nobody can put a value on that, that's what I believe."* says Salim.

*"All the things that I've learnt you know, how to hold myself together, how to be mature, how to be confident, leadership skills, basically all the things I needed to be School Captain (at his high school) were taught to me by CORE."*

Through the Youth Intensive Support program, CORE has also assisted Salim with transitional accommodation and ongoing case worker support which is essential when statically 65 per cent of those leaving out of home care (such as the refuge) have poor mental health outcomes, 35 per cent will be homeless within the first year and 29 per cent will be unemployed.

For Salim, who works full time, has a rental home and is studying Nursing, he is beating the statistics with thanks to the dedicated Youth Services staff.

*"Literally I couldn't have asked for a better team to help me get to where I am today and I'm not just saying that because they're my case workers,"* says Salim. *"The staff at the refuge became like family to me. They were there for me 24 hours a day, seven days a week whether I'm crying or whether I'm happy, they're always there for me. It got to the point when I had to leave it literally broke my heart so I go back and I see them quite regularly."*



Youth Services client Salim Chebboub



# Our Finances

2018/2019 was another successful year for CORE with strong financial performance. Revenue from general operations grew 5.9% from \$14.8m in 2017/2018 to \$15.7m as new programs were delivered and existing programs grew. Grant funding was fully expended in this financial year.

Overall, expenditure increased by 3.9%. Employee costs, the most significant cost to the organisation, increased by 7.2% from \$9.6m to \$10.2m as new jobs were added to improve services provided to clients. This included provision for CPI (Consumer Price Index) increases required under the Social and Community Services Award Equal Remuneration Order (ERO).

In recent years, a large proportion of the organisation’s assets were held as cash and cash equivalents, mainly in term deposit accounts. The low rate of return on these assets prompted the Board to seek professional investment advice. Perpetual Limited was selected to assist the Board develop an investment policy and manage a diversified portfolio of funds with an appropriate level of risk.

Over time this is expected to further strengthen CORE’s financial sustainability and support strategic growth of services and development of the organisation.

Our overall result for 2018/2019 was a net surplus of \$1.5m. The investment portfolio realised and unrealised gains has contributed around \$240,000 of the surplus. The market value movement in the investment portfolio of \$200,437 was recognised as surplus for the year.

Retained funds have increased from \$7.2m to \$8.7m as compared to last financial year. This strong financial position is a key element in the continued sustainability of the organisation.

Total current assets are more than adequate to cover total liabilities, provisions and employee entitlement provisions which amounts to 4m giving us a ratio of more than 2.

## Income and Expenditure 2018/19

Income	2018/2019	2017/2018
Grants	\$8,160,923	\$8,141,717
Commonwealth subsidy	\$3,548,112	\$3,167,479
Subcontracting	\$2,683,612	\$2,186,484
Client fees	\$840,493	\$734,390
Other Income	\$458,803	\$593,826
Total Income	\$15,691,943	\$14,823,897

Expenditure	2018/2019	2017/2018
Employee costs	\$10,247,820	\$9,562,536
Service delivery	\$1,712,821	\$2,029,051
Accommodation	\$813,251	\$417,384
Motor vehicle expenses	\$115,290	\$125,311
Depreciation	\$270,969	\$174,318
Insurance	\$37,931	\$30,012
Administration	\$583,362	\$568,347
Other expenses	\$595,325	\$932,356
Total Expenses	\$14,376,770	\$13,839,316

Income



Expenditure



# Acknowledgments

- Afaq Culture, Arts & Sports Association

Al-Khabur Village People Inc. (Syrian Community Association)

Argyle Housing

Asian Women at Work

Assyrian Resource Centre

Australian Border Force

Australian Iraqi Arts Academy

Autism Advisory and Support Service

Bonnie Support Services

Bonnyrigg High School

Borderless Community

Bossley Park High School

Budyari Community Health Centre

C3 Community Services

Campbelltown

Cabra Vale Diggers

Cabramatta High School – Intensive English

Canley Heights RSL

Canley Vale High School

Chaldean Association

Chaldean League of NSW

Community Early Learning Australia

Community First Step

Dandelion Support Network

Dandelions Support Network Inc.

Department of Education

Department of Energy and Environment NSW

Department of Family and Community Services

Department of Health

Department of Home Affairs

Department of Human Services

Department of Premier and Cabinet

Department of Social Services

Dimple Physiotherapy

Diversity & Disability Alliance

Evolve Housing

Exodus Foundation

Fairfield City Council

Fairfield High School – Intensive English Centre and Parents Café Inc

Fairfield Hospital

Fairfield Local Court

Fairfield Parents Café
- Fairstart

Fairvale High School

Great Lakes Agency for Peace & Development

Hume Community Housing

Immigration Advice and Rights Centre

Iraqi Australian Graduates Forum

Iraqi Women’s League

Juvenile Justice NSW

Karitane

Khmer Association NSW

Legal Aid NSW

Liverpool City Council

Liverpool Hospital

Local Community Services Association

Macquarie Community College

Mandaeen Women’s Union

Mary Mackillop Catholic College,

Wakeley

Mission Australia

Momentum Rehab

Mounties Group

Mounties Mekong

MTC Australia

Multicultural NSW

Multicultural Youth Advocacy Network (MYAN) NSW

My Foundations

Nakango Vision Community Care

Navitas

NSW Health

NSW NSP

NSW Police (Fairfield and Liverpool Police Area Command)

NSW Refugee Health Service

NSW Spanish and Latin American Association for Social Assistance Inc.

One Door Mental Health

One Step Walk

Oz Harvest

Partners in Recovery

PCYC Miller

Police Citizens Youth Club (Fairfield/ Cabramatta)

Prairiewood High School

Refugee Talent

RYPMP – consortium partners,
- Western Sydney MRC, Illawarra

Multicultural Services & Multicultural council of Wagga Wagga

Sawaki Group (TV& Medea).

Serbian Mandeian Association

Set 2 Learn

Settlement Services International (SSI)

Show Me The Way

South Western Sydney Community Forum

South Western Sydney Local Area Health District

Southern Districts Football Association

St Johns Park Bowling Club

St Vincent de Pauls Society

STARTTS

Street University

Sydney Community College

Sydney Thunder

TAFE NSW

TAX Help – ATO

Telskuf Association

The Community of South Sudan and Other Marginalised Areas Association

The Salvation Army

The Smith Family

The Smith Family

The Ted Noffs Foundation

Ultimate Soccer

Uniting Care

University of Sydney

Warakirri College

Western Sydney University

Why Documentaries

Youth Action
- Youth off the Streets (YOTS)



