

# Content

<b>Our Objectives .....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Our Mission Statement.....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Chairperson's Report .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Centre Coordinator's Report .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Administration and Coordination .....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Client Services.....</b>	<b>6</b>
Tenancy Information, Advice and Advocacy .....	6
Settlement, Humanitarian and Refugee Case Management (POST IHSS) .....	7
Migration Advice .....	8
Tax Help .....	8
Bilingual Sessional Services .....	8
Justice of the Peace Service .....	8
<b>Client Statistics .....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Policy Reforms.....</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>Special Projects &amp; Events.....</b>	<b>14</b>
Renting Guide for Refugess .....	14
Mother's Group .....	14
Youth Camps .....	14
Senior's Week .....	15
Mentoring Program .....	15
International Women's Day .....	16
MRC Open Day .....	16
Sudanese Soccer Team16	
Refugee Week 2003.....	16
UNHEARD TESTIMONY .....	17
<b>Pictorial .....</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>Committee Representation .....</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>MRC Management Committee .....</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>MRC Staff.....</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>Current MRC Bilingual Casework Services .....</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>Use of MRC Meeting Rooms in 2002 .....</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>Treasurer's Report.....</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>Audited Financial Report .....</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>notes .....</b>	<b>35</b>

## **Our Mission Statement**

**The Canterbury Bankstown Migrant Resource Centre works with and represents a diversity of communities and individuals through the provision of high quality community services.**

### **Our Objectives**

- To identify and address the needs of people of Non-English Speaking Backgrounds (NESB) in the local government areas, paying particular attention to special needs groups within NESB communities.
- To identify and address gaps in services and resources for people of NESB in the local area.
- To resource NESB communities.
- To provide information, referral and advocacy services to NESB individuals and groups using a community development model.
- To promote the planning and co-ordination of relevant services and to organise multicultural activities in the area.
- To monitor and evaluate the services provided by the MRC to ensure that they are relevant to the needs of NESB people.
- To establish close links with other NSW MRC's and relevant peak groups to work on issues of common concern.
- To encourage representative participation of target groups in the activities and management of the Centre.
- To provide a supportive, safe and equitable workplace which promotes the delivery of the above objectives and professional development of staff.

# Chairperson's Report

Once again, I am very happy to present the 2003 Annual Report of the Canterbury Bankstown Migrant Resource Centre and I must add that each year the MRC seems to have been busier than the previous one in a number of fronts. The reports from the various projects on activities and the statistics bear witness to this and I do urge you to read them.

The past twelve months has seen the MRC continue providing high quality specialist direct settlement and tenancy services as well as its active role in community development and representation. The MRC constantly assesses local needs and tries to meet them wherever possible and in this regard we welcome the refunding of our CSSS Arabic Speaking Refugees and Humanitarian Entrants Project for a further two years. This project covers not only Canterbury-Bankstown but also Central West Sydney including Parramatta and Holroyd. We hope to see a lot of new valuable initiatives for this client group in the next two years. We also received an extra CSSS grant for a project catering for the Small and Emerging communities in the Canterbury-Bankstown LGAs and this has been very timely since many new arrivals especially from the African and Indian Continents have recently settled in the Region.

We are also very pleased to have received other smaller funding which would enable us to get some projects off the ground. The Mentoring Program for Pacific Islands Students received some money from the Clubs NSW Community Development Support Expenditure (CDSE) Scheme, Canterbury, through the Bulldogs Leagues Club and Canterbury-Hurlstone Park Leagues Club and Bankstown Council supported our Youth Camps. CDSE Bankstown is supporting our Community Cultural Development Program Project, which we submitted in partnership with the South West

Legal Centre. We thank all these funding bodies but most especially the Department of Immigration Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs and the Office of Fair Trading.

The MRC constantly assesses local needs and tries to meet them wherever possible and in this regard we welcome the refunding of our CSSS Arabic Speaking Refugees and Humanitarian Entrants Project for a further two years.

The Centre has continued to comply with reporting and accounting requirements and has received positive feedback from funding bodies but most importantly from our clients and communities.

In conclusion I would like to thank fellow management members for their commitment and support as well as giving up their valuable time throughout the year to ensure the appropriate management of the Centre and staff. Be assured that your knowledge, experience and wisdom are very much valued by all and we hope to have your continued participation in the coming year. And last but not least, thank you to the two Job Share Coordinators for having worked well under a lot of pressure in a rather difficult year, to the dedicated staff for their relentless efforts in providing the best possible service to our diverse communities.

**Jon Soemarjano**  
**Chairperson**

# Centre Coordinator's Report

Looking back over the past year we are proud to say that like every other year, the Canterbury-Bankstown Migrant Resource Centre has been very active in many arenas, very busy providing the much needed settlement services required, survived many challenges and has been a strong advocate for the betterment of its client group.

The Job Share arrangement is going very well and the work is so much easier with the help of committed and professional staff and management on whom we can count on for moral support in difficult times. However, the arrangement has given us both better insight into better management of the Centre and working collaboratively to achieve its aims and objectives.

Our initiative of introducing Peer Supervision has seen fruit and is very much welcomed by staff and sessional workers alike. This takes place once a month for one hour and the MRC has included the sessional workers since the majority of them would not have the opportunity or afford such support. Performance Appraisal of all staff has also been carried out to ensure that required standard of staff performance is maintained and that issues are resolved so as not to hinder the progress and growth of the Centre as well as the staff. We have also got our interview room for which we have been waiting for a while; this would ensure privacy and client confidentiality, which has been an issue because of the open environment of the Centre.

It is also worthy to note that as a part of a major development in boosting the human resources of our Centre, we have developed a new and very comprehensive Policy and Procedures Manual which has contributed to a better and more efficient delivery of service provision. We have also successfully completed computerizing our filing system, which has made our work easier and more efficient. We would like to acknowledge the contribution by Microsoft Australia of the latest software to update all our computers. Another important achievement was the positive result of our Strategic Planning Day held in February this year, where Manage-

ment, Staff and Sessional workers participated and contributed to the development of the Centre's Strategic Plan for the next twelve months.

The SSTAAS service has continued to grow in size as well as in strength and productivity. There have been some staff changes but the team has managed to carry a very big workload and are to be congratulated for their high percentage of successful cases at the Tribunal. Credit must also be attributed to Roxana Rascon, the team Coordinator for her leadership and foresight especially in relation to the Renting Guides for Refugees kit.

It would indeed be remiss on our part if we did not acknowledge the hard work of the core staff and the CSSS workers in conducting training, information sessions, special events and other activities for the community workers as well as for the client groups. Thank you all for the commitment and the great teamwork throughout the year.

The Report on the Review of Settlement Services to which MRCs and other organisations made comprehensive submissions is now out and recommendations favour the combination the MRC and the CSSS fundings and then open it up to all organisations to apply for projects. The current model of MRCs with core funding will no longer be in existence. We are currently looking at implementing the recommendations of the review that is from the 2004-2005 funding year, work programs will clearly articulate the settlement roles of MRC/MSA and expressed in terms of outcome and outputs.

Finally we would like to thank our DIMIA Consultant, Margaret Bousamra for her support and advice during the year, it has been a good and productive working partnership and we are sure that we all have gained mutual benefits from it. Our grateful thanks to the management committee for their never tiring support and to Jon, our Chairperson, a very, very special thank you for never saying "NO" to the various demands on your time.

**Violet Roumeliotis  
Maggie Moa  
Coordinators**

# Administration and Coordination

The year has gone so quickly and it is hard to believe that it is Annual Report time again and Christmas is just around the corner. We are happy to report however, that we were not idle during this time but managed to complete many things that were outstanding from last year. Our IT support has gone on to the second stage of the installation of the central server and the merger of the two computer platforms. Although there are clear improvements in this area, we are still at the early stages and are having some teething problems, which we hope to overcome soon and continue the efficient running of these services. The CBMRC Website has been available on the web for almost a year and receiving a significant number of visitors and feedback has been very positive. Also, our internal filing system has been finalized and has been operating without external assistance for several months, making the search for documents more efficient.

Providing administrative support to the Coordinators and Management Committee members has been the main task of this position in the last twelve months. This has included writing, organising and posting minutes and reports to MC members, preparing induction resource manuals for new MC members and organising Executive Committee meetings. Best Practices in centre management have been documented into forms, manuals and procedures, especially concerning Occupational Health and Safety issues, Industrial Relations, Recruitment, Induction and Orientation and the promotion of training courses, conferences and seminars relevant to staff.

Supervision is also very much a part of administration and this is provided to the Receptionist/ Information Officer and some students doing welfare placements, which has taken up a significant amount of time. Hopefully these placements have been positive learning experiences for the students involved,

as the Centre certainly benefited from their contribution. We have also been proactive in setting up the first Interagency for Assistant Coordinators, the purpose of which is to provide an environment for raising and discussing matters related to internal management processes, setting up new systems, handling grievances and conflict and other frontline management issues.

Best Practices in centre management have been documented into forms, manuals and procedures, especially concerning Occupational Health and Safety ...

We welcome the following workers who have taken up new positions at the MRC this year.

- Soraia Roche da Silva and Natasha Bobic, who respectively shared, and is currently sharing, the CPO position with Maggie.
- Thomas Brennan and Regina Cheung, our new Tenancy Workers;
- New Bilingual Sessional Workers – Li Lin (Chinese); Nubia Montero (Spanish); Nga Nguyen (Vietnamese); Pinkie Leung (Chinese Parent's Association); Kefah Maradweh (Palestinian); and Irene Leen (Gospel Fellowship).

We sadly farewelled Sita Leung (Chinese Parent Association Worker), Elaine Fung (Gospel Fellowship), Jack Chung (CASS), Ida Bacon (Indonesian Bilingual Worker), and Tesfay Johanes (Eritrean Worker) as their funding expired. We wish them all the very best in their new positions and thank them for all their hard work and commitment during their time at CBMRC.

# Client Services

## Tenancy Information, Advice and Advocacy

The Southern Sydney Tenancy Advice and Advocacy Service (SSTAAS) has completed its first year of a three year (2002-2005) funding grant from the Office of Fair Trading with many successes over a sometimes overwhelming workload. Although the current funding represented an increase of a 1.7 worker, the number of tenants we are currently servicing exceeds the estimated client's figures we are funded for.

## Case Work

The Service's main activity is casework through different approaches. We continue operating the advice line 26 hours per week. We also provide centre-based services when required.

### Casework Trends:

The increased volume of callers during March, April and May stood out as a trend.

- The service continues to assist a high number of NESB tenants in both private and public rental housing.
- The service continues to deal with a high number of Department of Housing tenants typically with repair issues or dealing with noise and nuisance complaints against them
- Clients with tenancy issues in the private market formed the bulk of callers on the advice line. Bond disputes as well as serious repair cases increased – as did repairs required to flood damage in the wake of the May rains. Termination for arrears remained a staple issue.

## Community Education

A number of community education sessions with the aim to empower tenants by being knowledgeable about their rights and responsibilities were conducted which included:

- Bankstown Community College: general tenancy information with particular emphasis on Tribunal Hearings. The group was made up of interpreting students who would find that most of their work in tenancy would take place at the CTTT.
- Cumberland House tenants: Cumberland House is a community housing provider and this seminar on general rights and obligations was given to its Arabic-speaking tenants.
- An information session to residents of a women's refuge on the new renewable tenancy agreements being used by Department of Housing.
- A St George Tenancy Day: information sessions in different languages.
- Information sessions for particular language groups through the year: Indonesian, Arabic and Spanish.
- Information session for a Pacific Islander mother's group.
- We also did a Guest Speaker presentation on "Working with Refugees" at the Tenancy Advice and Advocacy Program (TAAP) network meeting.

## Settlement, Humanitarian and Refugee Case Management (POST IHSS)

The provision of professional, efficient and accurate casework services offering advice and information is an essential aspect of the project work. The key issues presenting are: income support, immigration, health, housing and accommodation, education and training, employment, English classes and other settlement related issues. There is also assistance with general enquires and provision of information and direct assistance, through the completion of forms, referral to government and community agencies, and the provision of information and direct assistance in negotiating services such as Department of Housing, community housing, job network services, charities, Centrelink, Department of Immigration, and others. Other assistance involves letter-writing, migration information and taxation issues.

The MRC was fortunate enough to receive funding for two CSSS projects from DIMIA in the past year. One project provided direct services and information to Post Integrated Humanitarian Settlement Scheme (IHSS) clients from various communities lacking a specific worker- such as African (e.g. Sudanese, Ethiopian), Indian Subcontinent, Iraqi and Iranian and others and the other was specifically for Arabic Speaking with a special focus on women and youth, in the Canterbury Bankstown Local Government Areas.

Both projects provide comprehensive settlement assistance and case management and casework services to the newly arrived refugees and humanitarian entrants who have exited the IHSS (Integrated Humanitarian Settlement Scheme). They have assisted a total of 1347 face-to-face clients and 1066 clients over the phone for a period of twelve months and conducted some twenty nine ses-

sions, with approximately seven hundred and sixty six attendees, on a range cross-cultural and information. The major needs and issues presented and assisted with were in relation to accessing affordable housing, material assistance, immigration, financial hardship and income support, dental, school education and employment, tenancy, civics education and fair trading issues.

Many cases have required ongoing assistance and representation to various key service providers and a good number of cases felt case management as necessary, supportive and helpful. Some clients are becoming more confident about talking to some service providers. However, there is a large group of clients who rely longer on the case management relationship, due to some barriers, and appreciate the ongoing support that allows them to talk and discuss matters in a frank and confidential environment. These clients are more vulnerable because of their trauma and the loss of status and employment.

Through the provision of timely after-exiting IHSS assistance and the special attention given in reaching clients in the earliest stage, the position has brought about increased access to a broad range of essential services already mentioned on the one hand as well as increase the awareness of service providers to the target group issues and needs on the other. The Projects have also initiated and placed a particular focus on increased client involvement in decision making processes and increased empowerment with clients measuring and evaluating their progress, through organisation and facilitation of group/s work.

Additional casework services are provided by the Assistant Coordinator and the Community Project Officer as well as the Receptionist who provides information as first point of contact and refer clients as appropriate.

In all, without the coordinated assistance of the workers, people would find it extremely difficult to know about and negotiate the system so early in their settlement.

## Migration Advice

The MRC has now been providing free migration advice for ten years to different client groups and we are proud to say that we have had some difficult cases, which have been successful. Since the Centre receives a wide range of enquiries and in order to make better use of our limited resources, they are screened and priority is given to the most urgent cases such as refugee cases, parents, spouse visa inquiries and cases under the Domestic Violence provision. We have three registered migration agents who attend regular training with different providers during the year to update their knowledge and skills especially when policies and regulations change all the time. Advice is provided free mainly on the phone and appointments are granted depending upon the availability of the migration agents.

Our MRC has consolidated as a hub for small ethnic organisations by accommodating five of them (AKWA, PIC, SAC, Chinese Parents Association with Families with Children with Disabilities and the Gospel Fellowship).

## Tax Help

The MRC continues to run a very successful Tax-help service every year. It targets low income earners such as pensioners, unemployed people, Centrelink allowance recipients, Indigenous people as well as people from a Non-English Speaking Background.

The assistance consists of filling in tax return forms and giving advice and information over the telephone or face to face. The Tax Help program is provided by MRC staff rather than outside volunteers. Hopefully we will still be able to continue providing this service in future years as we have seen how beneficial it is to our clients.

## Bilingual Sessional Services

Bilingual Sessional workers have been providing settlement services from the MRC for many years now and they are very much part of the Centre. Every year we see new workers come and sadly some leave due to their grant not being refunded. This year we lost two long standing sessional workers (Eritrean and Indonesian) because of this but hopefully we will get replacements soon. However, two new sessional workers have joined our team: Nga Nguyen who assists the Vietnamese community and Kefah Maradweh assisting the Palestinian community. On a more positive note, our MRC has consolidated as a hub for small ethnic organisations by accommodating five of them (AKWA, PIC, SAC, Chinese Parents Association with Families with Children with Disabilities and the Gospel Fellowship). We have been contacted by more organisations who would like to place their workers here at the Centre so in the new year we may have three more workers joining the team.

The MRC always welcomes new organisations and sees it as a part of its role to support and resource smaller community organisations to facilitate their service provision to their client groups. We currently have thirteen sessional workers providing settlement services from the Centre.

## Justice of the Peace Service

Justices of the Peace are very much in demand as they perform a very important function especially in certifying and attesting to legal and other documents. For the first time, the MRC has added to the diversity of its services, three Justices of the Peace who are also members of the staff. The process did take some time but it has been worthwhile and for newly arrived migrants and refugees, it has turned into a valuable resource, as they need certification for the translated copies of their personal and professional papers and certificates for settlement purposes.



# Client Statistics

Centre Statistics 1/10/2002 to 30/09/2003

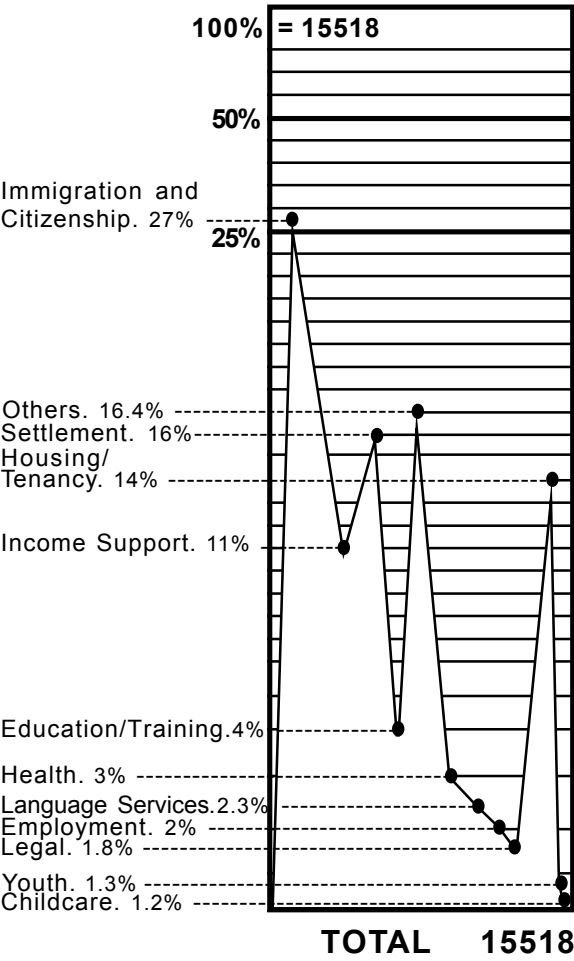


**CLIENT CONTACTS**

**ISSUES**

**LANGUAGE SPOKEN**

Arabic	3415
English	1881
Chinese	1557
Spanish	1491
Indonesian	1015
Tongan	966
Italian	701
Samoan	662
Fijian	464
Asante	412
Tigrinya	326
Korean	321
Greek	189
Vietnamese	139
Hindi	117
Others	1862
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>15518</b>



Client statistics

## Tenancy service - Statistics 01/07/2002 - 30/06/2003

Client statistics

### OUTCOMES

	Number of contacts	Percent
General rights/responsibilities	181	12.47%
Compensation claim client	85	5.86%
DOH general advice	56	3.86%
Access general advice	55	3.74%
DOH other	50	3.45%
Compensation - Landlord	36	2.48%
Dispute with neighbour	34	2.34%
Access - dispute	30	2.07%
Agent/Land breach of quiet enjoyment	23	1.59%
Fees & other charges	16	1.10%
Domestic Violence	13	0.90%
DOH - Priority rehousing	13	0.90%
Start Tenancy dispute	13	0.90%
Others	846	58.34%
<b>TOTAL CONTACTS</b>	<b>1451</b>	<b>= 100%</b>

### LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREAS

	Number of contacts	Percent
Bankstown	171	11.78%
Canterbury	320	22.05%
Hurstville	214	14.75%
Kogarah	37	2.55%
Outside Catchment	130	8.96%
Rockdale	232	15.99%
Sutherland	340	23.43%
<b>TOTAL CONTACTS</b>	<b>1451</b>	<b>100%</b>

# Community Development

The MRC is very committed to assisting, encouraging and empowering its client group through community development and capacity building so that they can become independent and manage their own affairs.

Throughout the year, communities have been assisted in a variety of ways so that they can be better informed and understand the structure of the community and the roles they have in accelerating their full and active participation in the new society.

To facilitate this development, information sessions were conducted on different issues relevant to the settlement needs of the client

The MRC supports community groups who use our meeting rooms during working hours as well as after hours and the weekends.

group, such as Centrelink, Immigration, Civics Education and Citizenship, Fair Trading and housing issues covering the Department of Housing as well as Community Housing.

As a part of its ongoing supporting and resourcing role, the Community Project Officers (CPOs) arranged training for community workers on Occupational Health and Safety as required by law and a Train the Trainer session on Civics Education and Citizenship. They also work with the local Domestic Violence Committee, Councils and other agencies in the area to overcome barriers that hinder the full development of the target groups. Assistance is also given to groups with funding submission writing, either to meet some of their present needs or to expand or supplement the existing funding which does not cover all areas of their work.

The CPOs have also initiated and participated in submitting funding applications and were successful in obtaining funding for the Indonesian Community for Seniors Week from the Department of Ageing, Disability and Home Care, one for the Pacific Islands Mentoring Project from the NSW Clubs Community Development Support Expenditure funds sponsored by the Canterbury Bulldogs and one for the Canterbury Domestic Violence Committee also funded by Clubs NSW.

## Resourcing and Supporting Community Organisations and Groups

The MRC also feels that it is very important to support and resource other organizations in their activities by being members of their management committees. The CPO represents the MRC at the Inner South West Community Development Organisation (CDO). The CDO is regional and covers Canterbury and it has been very active in conducting conferences, training and workshops as well as supporting, resourcing and advocating for community organizations in the area. Other management committees where the MRC is represented include Bankstown Area Multicultural Network, the Innovative Modules for Police And Community Training (IMPACT), South West Legal Centre as well as Schools as a Community. These are regional and local organizations that provide support, resources, information, community development and advocacy for community organizations and groups in the area.

The CPO continues to convene the RMAC and co-convene the Canterbury-Bankstown Migrant Interagency (CBMIA). The CBMIA has continued to grow and members have been active in organising a refugee week event through its

Refugee Working Party, which will be a luncheon with a focus on celebrating the contribution of refugees to the local area. The Working Party has also been instrumental and successful in coordinating efforts to encourage both Canterbury and Bankstown Councils to proclaim their LGAs as "refugee welcome zone". The CBMIA through other working parties has also been very proactive in making representations on certain issues that affect their clients, a recent example being the changes to TAFE fees.

The MRC also supports other community groups who use our meeting rooms during working hours as well as after hours and the weekends. Groups such as the Italian Social

group who have been using our room for over ten years and are here every Wednesday without fail to meet, talk exchange information, play bingo, hold information sessions on relevant topics or just to have lunch as many of them are retired and live alone in isolation. The Pacific Islands Playgroup meets every Monday and the children get the chance to play and enjoy other activities while the mothers have an information session on certain issues that are appropriate for them as mothers of young children. The Arabic and Spanish speaking groups as well as the Asian Women At Work group continue to enjoy their English classes on Thursdays and Fridays while during the week ends seven other communities use the rooms for social and community activities.



*Play Group for Pacific Island Children*