



# Annual Report 2023

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# Acknowledgments

## Acknowledgement of Country

The Social Policy Group acknowledges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples across Australia as the First Peoples and the Traditional Custodians and owners of the lands on which we live and work across Australia.

We acknowledge the Ngunnawal and Ngambri people, the Wurundjeri people of the Kulin Nation, and the Turrbal and Jagera peoples, as the Traditional Custodians and Owners of the land on which our offices are situated. We pay our respects to their elders, past and present, and recognise their continuing connection to the land, waters, and communities.

As an organisation committed to advocating for social cohesion and the well-being of disadvantaged populations across the nation, we acknowledge and celebrate the diverse cultures, histories, and contributions of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to our country.

We extend our respects to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples throughout Australia, past, present, and future. We recognise their ongoing resilience, strength, and stewardship of the land and commit ourselves to ongoing efforts of reconciliation, understanding, and collaboration.

## LGBTQI+ acknowledgement

The Social Policy Group acknowledge that we respect everyone's right to freely identify and affirm their sexual or romantic orientation and gender identity, including terms such as lesbian, gay, transgender, non-binary, gender diverse, genderqueer, queer, aromantic, asexual, bisexual, pansexual, sistergirls and brotherboys. We support the rights of people born with intersex variations to be free from discrimination and mistreatment on the basis of their sex characteristics.

We pay our respects to our community's lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and gender diverse, intersex and queer pioneers and acknowledge the lives of those LGBTQI+ persons who never made it to safety.

As an organisation committed to designing and advocating for inclusive social policy, we celebrate our community's diversity and work to eliminate all forms of discrimination throughout Australia's systems.

## Victim survivor acknowledgement

The Social Policy Group acknowledges the significant impact of family and domestic violence on individuals, families and communities. We acknowledge the strength and resilience of the children, young people and adults who have, and are still, experiencing this violence and pay our respects to those who did not survive, and to their loved ones.

# From the CEO



As we present the 2023 Annual Report, I am filled with a profound sense of gratitude, pride, and optimism. This past year has been an extraordinary journey of growth, challenge, and significant impact, driven by our unwavering commitment to fostering social cohesion, inclusion, and equity across Australia.

In 2023, we have continued to diligently pursue our mission focusing on putting diversity, inclusivity, equality, and equity on the map in innovative ways. Our initiatives, ranging from supporting migrant and refugee integration to championing gender equality and mental health, have been both challenging and rewarding. Further, the launch of inventive projects like the Centre for Digital Wellbeing and the THRIVE Logan initiative underscore our commitment to addressing emerging societal challenges.

The successful collaboration with the Australian Electoral Commission to foster democratic processes inclusive for all, the impactful training programs across various sectors, and our digital and multilingual projects have significantly boosted our outreach and impact. Moreover, our research initiatives, policy advice, and advocacy have continued to shape effective social policies. We are proud that across the design and delivery of our work themes of respect, recognition and empowerment were foundational pillars.

As we look to the future, we are energised by the possibilities that lie ahead. Our commitment to creating a more inclusive and cohesive society remains steadfast as we continue to leverage our expertise, partnerships, and innovative approaches to address the complex challenges of our times.

I would like to express my deepest appreciation to our dedicated team, our partners, and all of you who have supported us in this journey. Your commitment, expertise, and passion have been the driving force behind our accomplishments.

Together, let us continue to strive towards a society where diversity is celebrated, equity is the norm, and every individual has the opportunity to thrive.

**Carla Wilshire OAM**  
CEO, the Social Policy Group



# SECTION 01

## The Social Policy Group

# About us

The Social Policy Group (SPG) is a national, non-government, not-for-profit body with specialist expertise in social policy and program design with a focus on population diversity, social and community cohesion, gender equality, community participation and inclusion, systems responsiveness, and community outreach and engagement.

The SPG combines strong governance and a comprehensive national approach, with a powerful community focus and a commitment to access and equity. We are passionate about social policy and program design that is evidence-based, community- and sector-informed and centered, and responsive to Australia's population in all its diversity.

The SPG is a registered charity and holds a special consultative status with the UN Economic and Social Council.



# Our Work

At the SPG, our work is anchored in a profound commitment to addressing societal challenges with a particular focus on population diversity, social cohesion, gender equality, and community inclusion. Our work extends across multiple domains, encapsulating several pivotal areas.

First and foremost, our efforts are concentrated on supporting integration and fostering better settlement outcomes for migrants and refugees. Through the **SETS Community of Practice (SETSCoP)** and other collaborative initiatives (such as our recent work with the Australian Electoral Commission (AEC) in the lead-up to the 2023 Referendum), we forge partnerships among communities, industries, and governmental bodies to advocate and provide a national voice for successful migration and settlement programs.

Our work with **Harmony Alliance** is driven by a strong gender lens, empowering women from migrant and refugee backgrounds to actively participate in every sphere of social, economic, cultural, civil, and political life. This pursuit of gender equality and equity extends and forms an integral aspect of all our initiatives.

Additionally, the SPG acknowledges migration- and ethnicity-related factors as critical social determinants of health. We are deeply committed to addressing inequalities in health status and access to health services among migrants and refugees. In our work with the **Migrant and Refugee Health and Mental Health Partnerships (MRHP and MRMHP)**, we aim to elucidate these disparities and advocate for equitable healthcare provisions and practices.

Moreover, our commitment to fostering inclusivity encompasses the provision of culturally sensitive training guidelines. These guidelines equip organisations at all levels to effectively engage with participants, clients, and colleagues from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds, with particular emphasis on those from migrant and refugee backgrounds.

With the **Centre for Digital Wellbeing (CDW)**, our focus extends to studying the impact of technology on society. The SPG engages in formulating human-centered policy solutions to ensure responsible development and use of technology, advocating for healthy and ethical digital practices, and empowering users to navigate these spaces safely and responsibly.

Finally, through the **Judicial Council on Diversity and Inclusion (JCDI)** and the **Diversity and Inclusion Justice Network (DIJN)**, the SPG aims to promote procedural fairness and equality of treatment to all court users. Our work seeks to promote public trust and confidence in Australian courts and the judiciary among the population in all its diversity.

As a registered charity holding special consultative status with the UN Economic and Social Council, the SPG remains steadfast in our pursuit of informed, inclusive, and transformative social policies. Our dedication to evidence-based approaches, community consultation, and equitable outcomes remains unwavering as we strive to create a more inclusive and cohesive society for all.



# Our People



**Carla Wilshire OAM** (she/her)  
Chief Executive Office



**Jamila Padhee** (she/her)  
Leader of Operations



**Gail Ker OAM** (she/her)  
Special Advisor



**Ine Beerens** (she/her)  
Senior Manager



**Sara Staino** (she/her)  
Project Manager



**Nuria Alarcón Lopez** (she/her)  
Senior Manager



**Nick Ross** (he/him)  
Senior Policy Advisor



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Senior Health Policy Advisor



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Data Analyst



**Marta Jasińska** (she/her)  
Communications Advisor



**Varsha Patil** (she/her)  
Project Administrator -  
Digital and Multilingual  
Communications



**Chai Oonnankat** (he/him)  
Digital Content Officer



**Shixi Guo** (he/him)  
Policy and Project  
Support Worker



**Maria Rosales** (she/her)  
Project and Administration  
Officer



**Liz Irvine** (she/her)  
Community and Economic  
Development Lead

**Tarina Rubis** (she/her)  
Health and Mental Health  
Manager

**Pieta Merheb** (she/her)  
Project Manager

**Chloe Xu** (she/her)  
Finance and Administration  
Officer

**Alexis Cleary** (she/her)  
Executive Assistant to  
the CEO

**SECTION**

# 02

**Overview of  
Activities**

# The Social Policy Group

## Inclusive Democracy

In 2023, Australia held its first referendum in over 20 years, prompting the Australian Electoral Commission (AEC) to work with the SPG to support a better understanding of referendum processes among culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities.

The Social Policy Group implemented a comprehensive multifaceted outreach strategy for the successful delivery of targeted community information sessions. This approach involved the development of graphic assets for visual communication, effective social media campaigns, email campaigns within existing networks, and engaging phone calls and email campaigns to establish direct connections with relevant organisations and stakeholders.

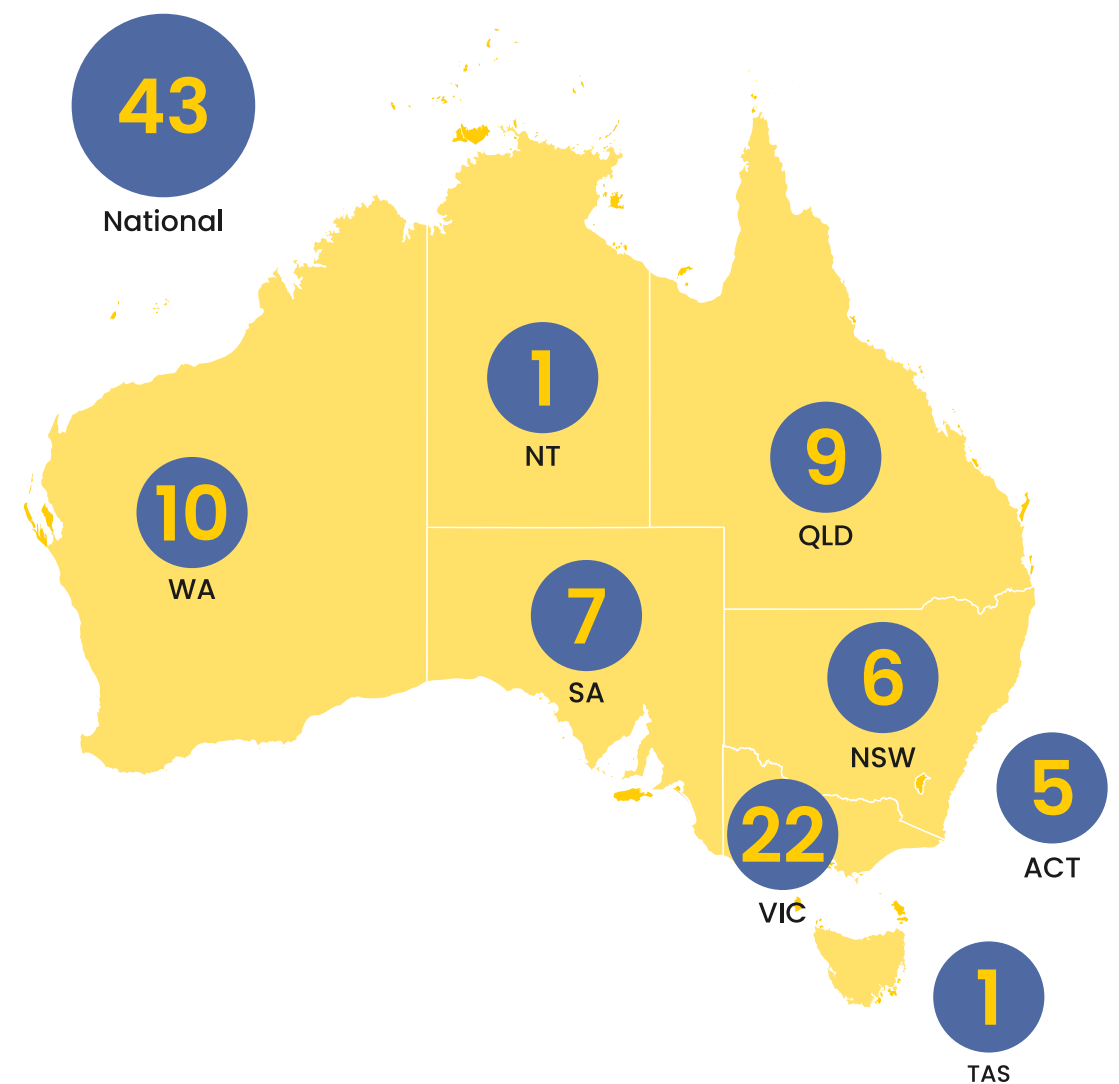
Tailored sessions were also offered for specific groups like women, community leaders, and youth, accompanied by 'Education Kits' and train-the-trainer programs for bicultural workers and engagement coordinators working with multicultural communities.

The efforts focused on providing multicultural communities with access to information about six topics, including what a constitution and referendum are, how to participate, how to enrol to vote, how to vote formally and how results are decided.

## Achievements

# 104

Referendum Information Sessions delivered







## Achievements



**21** face-to-face sessions

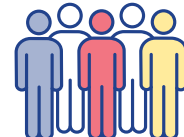


**83** online sessions



**37** sessions in English

**67** sessions in community languages



**1,235** community members participated



**82.4%** of participants were very satisfied with the referendum information sessions



**16** Community Network Meetings held



**8** community networks established



**682** community grassroots, ethno-specific organisations, multicultural focused bodies and religious organisations reached



consulted **79** peak bodies, multicultural community organisations, and CALD service providers across Australia



Information produced and delivered in **35** community languages



**385** digital assets developed and distributed



**114** social media posts



**10** educational referendum videos produced with

subtitles in **3** community languages



**36** audio explainers produced and translated into

**3** community languages

# Training

SPG Training is dedicated to delivering practical guidelines that can be universally adopted across organisations at all levels to prepare staff for working with participants, clients and colleagues from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

**With a focus on Culturally Responsive Practice (CRP) – SPG Training provides fit-for-purpose training sessions in a range of formats and durations to accommodate the unique needs of different organisations.**

SPG Training has been engaged in numerous impactful programs and initiatives throughout the past year. Notable highlights include:

## Telstra Health information sessions

Telstra Health engaged the SPG to deliver culturally responsive practice training to new employees during their induction process. The training is delivered virtually once a fortnight and through a case study, focuses on intersectionality and gender.

## National Employment Services Association (NESA) Presentation, Sydney

SPG Training delivered a session on Culturally Responsive Practice (CRP) with an employability lens at the National Employment Services Association's Conference. The session was well received and led to a continuing relationship where SPG is NESA's trainer of choice for CRP and Trauma Informed Practice training. Through these training programs, NESA's staff are equipped with the skills and knowledge to improve their practices when working with clients from refugee and migrant backgrounds.

## Training for Judicial Officers – Canberra, SA Tribunal, VIC Judicial College

We extended our training reach to judicial officers across ACT, SA and VIC. This training was delivered in partnership with the JCDI and included CRP and the Recommended National Standards for Working with Interpreters in Courts and Tribunals.

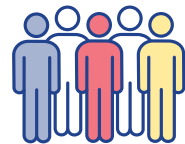




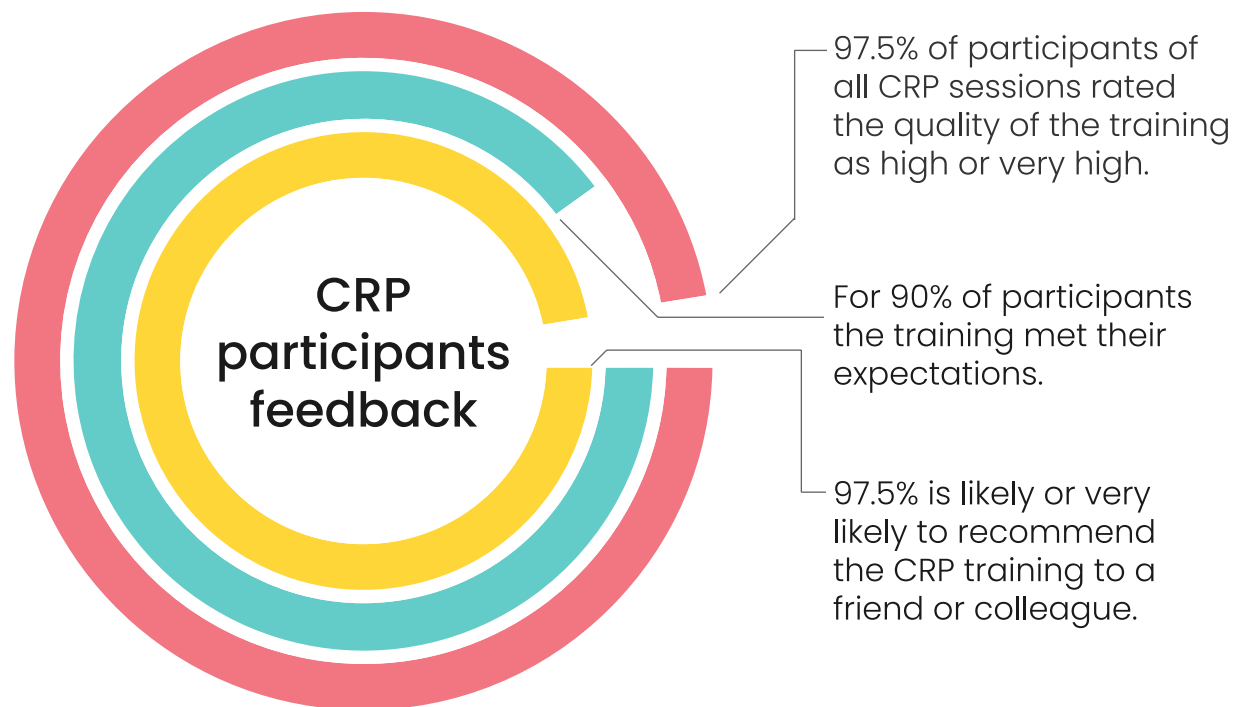
## Achievements



**39**  
sessions  
delivered



**561** total  
attendees across  
training sessions



"This training was insightful."

"This was useful to gain a basic understanding of quality practice for diverse clients, and the ways in which we can reflect on our own culture and diversity."

"I thought I already knew lots about cultural responsiveness, but I learnt so much in this session. I would highly recommend this program to anyone working in community services."



"This training is incredibly informative, and I would highly recommend it to anyone working with Migrants and CALD communities."

"The pace of the training was perfect. So much to learn and allowances were given to let the information absorb."

# Digital and Multilingual Projects

The SPG Digital and Multilingual Communications (DMC) team brings together a rare blend of communication and digital design expertise enabling us to fulfil our commitment to developing high-quality digital information and communication resources across a broad range of formats and languages.

## Achievements



**14** websites maintained

Information on New South Wales and Victorian Elections added to the Harmony Votes website in **10** languages

**2** websites developed for Healthy Horizons and THRIVE Logan projects



**12** eLearning courses maintained

**5** new eLearning courses designed and launched in collaboration with SETSCoP



Translated **512** assets into community languages including animations, factsheets, print resources, and social media tiles



MyAus App user base grown to **30,900**



**1205.82%** increase in users

**72.3%** engagement rate (iOS)

**90.3%** engagement rate (Android)

The SPG Multilingual and Digital Communications team has been engaged in numerous impactful projects and initiatives throughout the past year. Below are some highlights from 2023:

***Dowry Abuse – Education and Awareness Raising***

In partnership with the Harmony Alliance team, the DMC team established a co-design process to inform the development of and test multilingual and culturally responsive education and awareness resources about Dowry Abuse practices.

The materials developed in the project aimed to raise awareness of what is dowry abuse, the signs of someone who is a victim of abuse, how to get help and that dowry abuse exists within the Australian context.

**Achievements**



**15** informative animations developed in English and four community languages (Hindi, Punjabi, Sinhala and Telugu)



**50** social media tile packages developed in English and four community languages (Hindi, Punjabi, Sinhala and Telugu)

**71** social media posts published across LinkedIn, Facebook, Instagram and X (formerly Twitter)

social media content was reposted **83** times

Social media posts attracted **6604** impressions



**4** newsletter articles published

reaching **570** readers

[Social media data recorded on 23 November 2023]

## Fair Work Commission – Information sharing with CALD communities.

The DMC team collaborated with the Fair Work Commission (FWC) to increase community knowledge about what the FWC does and how they might be able to assist the community. The DMC team closely liaised with the FWC to provide expertise in the design of the resources and ensure messaging was culturally responsive.

The animation videos summarised the FWC's purpose and scope of work. The social media tiles and factsheet, on the other hand, explained how multicultural employees and employers can contact the FWC to resolve workplace issues and where to get legal advice.

## Organ and Tissue Donation

The DMC team in partnership with the health team, designed an animation video and developed a MyAus Article as part of the 2022 Community Awareness Grant by the Organ and Tissue Donation Authority. The purpose of the resources was to improve understanding of the registration processes, address common myths within CALD communities and provide culturally responsive information.

### Achievements



animations developed in English and  
**28** community languages



factsheets developed in English and  
**28** community languages



suite of social media tiles developed in English and  
**28** community languages



information integrated into MyAus App in  
**16** languages



Social media and newsletter campaigns gained  
**493** Reach



**20** animations developed in English and  
**19** community languages



**32** articles and  
**16** checklists integrated into MyAus App

**173** Reach  
**974** Views

# Centre for Digital Wellbeing

The Centre for Digital Wellbeing (CDW) is a policy research and design body focusing on technology's impact on overall health and wellbeing, safety, and social cohesion in the Australian community. Our purpose is to facilitate research about the impacts of technology, formulate policy responses and develop initiatives to assist users to better engage in healthy, ethical, and safe digital practices.

Throughout 2023, the Centre for Digital Wellbeing (CDW) has continued its work toward achieving commitment to fostering a healthier digital ecosystem for all Australians. The relatively young has continued to build relationships with relevant stakeholders across government and civil society, continuously furthering its capability to realise its vision.

Highlights of this year include:



## Responding to Gaming and Phone Addiction – Roundtable

At the start of the year, Centre Director Carla Wilshire OAM and Advisory Board Member Jocelyn Brewer MAPS attended the NSW roundtable to discuss the impact of phones, screens and video game addiction on children and their learning. This event was held by the then NSW Opposition leader and current NSW Premier, The Hon Chris Minns MP. The discussions resulted in a commitment of \$2.5 million to investigate the impact of screen-related addiction in young people with the first grant round opening end of 2023.

## Improving Digital Wellbeing of South Australian Students

In April, the CDW was commissioned by the South Australian Department of Education to deliver the “Enhancing Digital Wellbeing in Schools” project. The project represented a vote of confidence in the CDW’s vision and a substantial investment in the future of South Australian students’ digital wellbeing. The main objective is to understand how student’s digital wellbeing and learning outcomes can be improved by building a shared understanding of students, teachers and parents/carers’ unique challenges related to technology usage.

The initiative seeks to consolidate the best practices to respond to and resolve these challenges. The purpose is to share potential solutions more widely with other school communities to ensure our schools, students and families have the capacity to support healthy relationships with technology in all facets of their lives.

## Youth and Gender Research Project

The CDW conducted research into the experiences of young individuals on online platforms and the impact on gender on these experiences. For this study, the Centre surveyed 112 young people, facilitated 14 small focus group discussions to create a deeper understanding of how young people engage online and directly consulted with 33 young men to further validate insights.

The study sought to inform future policies aiming to mitigate adverse outcomes and ensure equitable online engagements and experiences through the development of recommendations.

## Achievements



**6** roundtable and conferences attended



**4** projects commenced



**7** Submissions, Policy Papers and Briefs published



**168** young people and  
**44** parents consulted



# Harmony Alliance

Harmony Alliance: Migrant and Refugee Women for Change is one of the six National Women's Alliances supported by the Australian Government to promote the views of all Australian women and to ensure their voices are heard in decision-making processes.

Harmony Alliance's purpose is to provide a national inclusive, and informed voice on the multiplicity of issues impacting on experiences and outcomes of migrant and refugee women and to enable opportunities for women from migrant and refugee backgrounds to directly engage in driving positive change.

Australia's national migrant and refugee women's coalition, Harmony Alliance membership comprises over 180 organisations and individuals representing and/or working for the advancement and inclusion of migrant and refugee backgrounds and recognise the inherent value of each person of all backgrounds, genders, ages, abilities, social standings, sexual orientations, or religions. We promote the principles of dignity, equality, autonomy, non-discrimination, and mutual respect.



## National Women's Alliances Forum June 2023

Harmony Alliance was part of the 2023 National Women's Alliances Forum in June. The Forum is an annual event that brings together the National Women's Alliances, policymakers, government representatives and the Office for Women to discuss how to improve gender equality and equity in Australia.

The goals of the Forum were:

1. Provide a platform to hear from the National Women's Alliances directly and discuss key priorities for women.
2. Strengthen relationships between the National Women's Alliances and the Office for Women.
3. Elevate engagements and alignment of the National Women's Alliances and Government priorities.
4. Strengthen the capability of the Office for Women and the National Women's Alliances to collaborate and deliver outcomes.
5. Coordinate the strategic direction for the next 12 months and next steps.

Harmony Alliance was pleased to contribute and highlight what is needed to achieve gender equality in Australia, ensuring it is inclusive of migrant and refugee women and how an intersectional gender lens can be applied to policy development across government.



## Migrant and refugee women in Australia: A study of sexual harassment in the workplace

In August 2023, Harmony Alliances launched a new ground-breaking research study on the experiences of sexual harassment in Australian workplaces for migrant and refugee women. This study is a collaboration between Harmony Alliance, Monash University and Griffith University and covers an important gap that will lead to the necessary change to have safer workplaces in Australia.

This report represents the first stage of the national study and gives a comprehensive picture of the experiences of migrant and refugee women in Australian workplaces. The report draws on a national multilingual survey that captures **over 700 responses**.

### Key Findings:



**46%** of respondents experienced at least one form of sexual harassment in the workplace in the last 5 years.



Men were most frequently the harassers in the workplace and were often in senior positions or were clients or customers.



**37%** of migrant and migrant and refugee women did not report or disclose the sexual harassment because they felt responsible, they did not know what to do, or they were worried about their jobs.



**88%** of migrant and refugee women who disclosed the sexual harassment only sought informal support and shared this with a friend, family member or colleague.

## Accessing Formal Supports in Australia: The Experiences of Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) Women with Disabilities

Harmony Alliance has worked with Women with Disabilities Australia and the National Ethnic Disability Alliance to provide an evidence base to the experiences of migrant and refugee women and girls with disability in Australia when accessing formal supports and the impacts of gender, disability, race, ethnicity, culture, language, visa status, and citizenship status.

The report draws on a national multilingual survey and focus groups capturing over 70 voices and focuses on stigma, service systems, access barriers, community perspectives and self-advocacy, and COVID-19 impacts. The report will be released in the 2023-2024 financial year.



## Policy Advice and Advocacy

One of the main purposes of Harmony Alliance is to be a national inclusive voice and elevate migrant and refugee women's voices to achieve policies and systems that are inclusive for all. Harmony Alliance serves in a number of National Advisory Groups that cover key policy areas such as women's safety, women's health system reform, social services and advocacy groups.

In the last year, Harmony Alliance has actively engaged members and participated in the following policy reforms among others – through consultation, submissions, public hearings and ministerial meetings – to provide policy advice and achieve this goal. Below are some of the crucial works:

- National Plan Advisory Group (DSS)
- National Multicultural Advisory Group (Services Australia)
- 1800 RESPECT Collaborations
- National Advisory Group: Temporary Visa Holders Experiencing Family Domestic Violence Pilot (Red Cross and DSS)
- Dowry Abuse Working Group (Australasian Centre for Human Rights and Health, inTouch, Good Shepherd)
- National Advisory Group on Women on Temporary Visas Experiencing Violence – Executive Member
- National Advisory Group National Principles to Address Coercive Control (2 meetings)

- Policy and Advocacy Advisory Committee (PAAC)
- National Advisory Group – Adolescent Boys at Risk (3 meetings)
- National Women's Health Advisory Council (1 meeting)
- Australian Institute of Criminology Human Trafficking and Modern Slavery Research Network (2 meetings)
- Australian Human Rights Commission National Anti-Racism Framework Multicultural Advisory Group (6 meetings)

## IOM – UN Migration – GenMig Dialogue Series

GenMig – the Gender and Migration Research Policy Action Lab is an initiative under the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) that focuses on impact research for supporting gender-responsive policies, operations, programming and practices in migration.

Harmony Alliance has contributed to GenMig, including as a keynote speaker at the GenMig Dialogue Series – Enhancing protection and tailoring support and access to service through migrant women's participation. Building on Harmony Alliance's experience facilitating the COVID-19 vaccine rollout through migrant and refugee women's co-design, Harmony Alliance shared key learnings and considerations to improve systems design and equity.

## Achievements



**15** consultations and roundtables attended



**4** ministerial meetings



**6** Submissions and Policy Papers published





# Migrant and Refugee Health Partnership (MRHP)

The Migrant and Refugee Health Partnership (MRHP) is a national peak body that brings together health professionals and the community sector to address systemic barriers to health access for migrant and refugee communities.

The MRHP develops and promotes strategies to enhance health access, experience and outcomes for migrant and refugee communities. To achieve this, the Partnership supports the sharing of good practice and collaboration among clinicians, community, health care services, and government agencies.

To understand migrant and refugee community health and their ability to navigate the healthcare system, the MRHP focuses both on the capacity of migrant and refugee communities and the capability of clinicians and health service organisations to provide culturally responsive care. 2023 activities include:



## Ethical Conduct in Research with people from Migrant, Refugee and Refugee-like Backgrounds

The Partnership's central focus in 2022-23 was on the issue of ethical conduct in research. Research with migrant and refugee communities is important to improve access to health services, understand lived experiences of health, and identify baseline health literacy and gaps in service delivery to develop evidence-based policies and interventions for improved healthcare, outcomes, and equity.

Having identified a significant gap, the Partnership has undertaken a comprehensive engagement process with the health research sector and community groups to support the development of stand-alone guidelines for ethical conduct in research with people from migrant, refugee and refugee-like backgrounds. This has involved convening a technical reference group, conducting a comprehensive systematic review of ethical guidelines for research and delivering presentations at conferences across Australia to raise awareness and foster partnerships.

This project is ongoing.

## Creating systemic change through policy advice

The MRHP authored a submission to the Australian Government Department of Health and Aged Care emphasising the importance of a cultural responsiveness lens in the roles and functions of an Australian Centre for Disease Control. The Partnership also presented its policy brief on integrating CALD communities in rapid responses to public health crises to the Tasmanian Transcultural Mental Health Network and the World Congress of Sociology.

## Community engagement and health promotion

As members of the Department's CALD Vaccine Strategy Advisory Group, SPG and the Partnership, using the networks of Harmony Alliance and SETSCoP, delivered a series of multilingual resources in 32 languages promoting COVID-19 vaccination uptake among CALD populations.

Community health engagement initiatives delivered as part of this strategy focused on both preventative health and COVID-19.







### VIC, Melbourne, Somali Health Expo

In partnership with Somali Healthcare Professionals, this event brought together industry experts, organisations and community members alike, united in their shared goal of improving health outcomes and addressing challenging health topics relating to mental health, women's health, immunisations, including COVID-19 and practical ways of staying well and active.



### NSW, Western Sydney, Afghan Community Health Forum

Together with Afghan Women on the Move Inc., Kateb Hazara Association Inc. and NSW Service for the Treatment and Rehabilitation of Torture and Trauma Survivors (STARTTS) hosted an event for newly arrived Afghan refugees in New South Wales. Pashtun, Tajik and Hazara community members attended the event which explored the effects and concerns related to long COVID-19, provided comprehensive vaccine information, promoted physical wellbeing and addressed mental health challenges experienced by the community.



### QLD, Logan, The Shared Table

In collaboration with Ethni, this event focused on creating an environment to promote community health and wellbeing by bringing services to spaces in the common locality where Arabic-speaking youth gathered and encouraged their families to attend. Participants received expert advice from health officials as well as updates and information around access to COVID-19 booster vaccine and broader health promotion education. The event facilitated a space where young people from Arabic-speaking backgrounds could enhance social connections, improve health literacy and ask questions to trusted community members and health services providers.

# Migrant and Refugee Mental Health Partnership (MRMHP)

The Migrant and Refugee Mental Health Partnership (MRMHP) has grown from the efforts of the Migrant and Refugee Health Partnership and similarly aims to improve mental health access, experience and outcomes for migrants and refugees through collaboration and the sharing of good practices.

The Mental Health Partnership brings together dedicated and respected expertise in refugee and migrant mental health, with a diverse range of national leaders representing mental health practitioners, academic and research institutions, torture and trauma counselling services, settlement service providers and people with lived experience. Key highlights from 2023 include:



MIGRANT AND REFUGEE  
**MENTAL HEALTH  
PARTNERSHIP**

## Roundtable on interpreting in mental health

The MRMHP collaborated with the Australian Institute of Interpreters and Translators Inc (AUSIT) to host a roundtable discussion and consult with interpreters, mental health practitioners and consumers regarding their experiences with interpreting in mental health service delivery. The roundtable mapped the challenges associated with interpreting in the mental health sector from a variety of perspectives and explored opportunities to provide practical guidance to support the effectiveness of interpreters working in this space.

## Factors that protect and promote refugee mental health

Currently, more is known about factors that can predict mental ill health than factors that may protect refugees from poor mental health outcomes or promote resilience. As such, the MRMHP, through the SPG, commissioned the Refugee Trauma and Recovery Program at the School of Psychology, University of New South Wales to further investigate these issues.

A systematic review identified the factors that protect refugees from poor mental health outcomes and promote greater positive mental health outcomes. The research findings seek to inform settlement policy by highlighting tangible targets for supporting positive mental health in refugees.

## Community consultation for culturally responsive service design

SPG also consulted with culturally and linguistically diverse communities in Northern Adelaide and provided advice to the Northern Area Local Health Network regarding enabling factors for culturally responsive service design for a combined Head to Health/Crisis Stabilisation facility.



# Settlement Engagement and Transition Support Community of Practice (SETSCoP)

The SPG facilitates the Settlement Engagement and Transition Support (SETS) Community of Practice (CoP), a collaboration of settlement service providers across Australia, who support vulnerable migrants and refugees under the Australian Government Settlement Engagement and Transition Support (SETS) program. The SETSCoP brings together over 100 settlement organisations to share best practices, innovation, and solutions to local, state and national issues affecting vulnerable migrants and refugees. Main activities of 2023 include:

## National SETSCoP Member Forum

SPG hosted the 2022 National SETS Member Forum on 31 August in Old Parliament House, Canberra. The forum brought together over 130 participants from across the SETSCoP, as well as keynote speakers and panels which included the Hon. Andrew Giles MP, Minister for Immigration, Citizenship and Multicultural Affairs and specialists and experts from across government, policy, academia, and the private sector.

The forum also included a series of workshops based on five major issue areas in SETS:

- housing;
- funding;
- eligibility;
- employment; and
- gender.

The workshops focussed on solutions and aimed to inform both policy and practice for SETS moving forward.



**SETSCoP**

Settlement Engagement  
& Transition Support  
Community of Practice





## State and Territory Best Practice Meetings

The SETSCoP held seven State & Territory Best Practice Meetings across March and April 2023. The meetings were held in person with hybrid call-in options and brought together SETS providers in each state and territory. The meetings offered a platform for connections between SETS organisations and staff, an opportunity for updates from officials from the Department of Home Affairs, and workshops to collaboratively contribute to the Independent Evaluation of the SETS Program.

## Thematic Subgroup Meetings

The SETSCoP facilitated regular subgroup meetings, bringing together SETS providers from across the nation to share and collaborate. The subgroup structure was reviewed and adjusted at the start of 2023 while maintaining focus areas including operations, employment, community capacity building, youth (co-facilitated with peak body Multicultural Youth Advocacy Network (MYAN)), and domestic and family violence.

## Resources and the SETS Insider News newsletter

SETS providers across the sector collaborated on shared outcomes and resources throughout the year. These resources were disseminated within subgroups but also in the fortnightly SETS Insider News newsletter.

SETS Insider News has a subscriber base of over 700 people, with materials and information reaching hundreds of SETS staff and other settlement stakeholders each fortnight. This includes the dissemination of important information relevant to the sector such as government programs for migrants, grant opportunities, connections within and outside the settlement sector, and SETSCoP events.

SETSCoP resources and tools to support the sector from the year included:

#### Domestic and family violence needs analysis and tools

- Domestic and Family Violence Support in Settlement: Sector Needs Analysis
- Decision tree to help practitioners provide support to those experiencing DFV
- Guidance document for risk assessment and safety planning
- Directory of DFV services – National, State and Territory
- Operations case note guide and Q&A series regarding Data Exchange (DEX) reporting
- Tips and Tricks for supporting clients in housing
- Pre-work information check-list for SETS clients

## Events

We were pleased to run an exciting series of online professional development and wellbeing events across the year, with experts joining for webinars, training sessions and workshops.

This included the Forcibly Displaced People's Network (FDPN) for a series of workshops on working with people from the LGBTQI+ communities, the Scanlon Foundation and Australian National University on social cohesion, and the Burnout Project on how settlement staff can take care of their mental health while experiencing vicarious trauma.

#### The SETSCoP organised the following events:

NAATI Community Language Assessment	26-Jul-22
Men's Mental Health	17-Aug-22
What do successful settlement outcomes look like for LGBTQI+ refugees?	24-Aug-22
Can self-efficacy improve outcomes for new arrivals? And how can we do this?	11-Oct-22
Should I ask if my client is LGBTQI+?	12-Oct-22
Working with LBQ Women: Beyond Patriarchal Views on Womanhood	19-Oct-22
Cyber Security for CEOs and Senior Managers	3-Nov-22
Working with Trans Clients	23-Nov-22
Cyber-security for settlement front-line workers	17-Nov-22
SETSCoP e-Learning Courses – Online Launch	22-Feb-23
Ukrainian Community Members & SETS	9-Mar-23
DEX Training (DSS)	23-Mar-23
Social Cohesion & Settlement Workshop	6-Apr-23
Preventing Burnout and Promoting Wellbeing for SETS Staff	29-May-23
Superannuation in settlement	28-Jun-23

## Achievements



**37** Thematic Subgroup meetings held



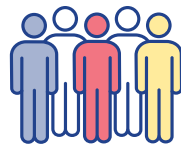
**8** major resources developed



**45** fortnightly newsletters sent over the 2022–2023 Financial Year



**19** sector events hosted/facilitated



**550+** attendees across events bringing together SETS staff from across the sector on the latest cutting-edge issues



**119** organisations currently make up the SETS Community of Practice



# THRIVE Logan

## Logan's diversity is an asset and strength worth investing in!

The SPG has been engaged by the Queensland Government's Department of Treaty, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships, Communities and the Arts (DTATSIPCA) to deliver the three-year Logan Cultural Diversity Trial project, known as THRIVE Logan.

THRIVE Logan's objective is to harness Logan's rich diversity by connecting communities and partners to enhance social and economic participation, enabling all who live, work and visit Logan to thrive.

To deliver on this objective, the THRIVE Logan team is providing leadership, facilitation and coordination to build community capacity and leverage the strengths and opportunities of Logan's diversity and its unique economic environment. The work continues to focus on four core areas to maximise impact:

- Addressing social isolation and loneliness
- Improving economic participation
- Empowering local women
- Building community capacity

Leading the THRIVE Logan Team as Logan Coordination Office Lead is Gail Ker OAM DUniv. Gail is supported by her talented and capable team, Liz Irvine, Pieta Merheb and Maria Rosales. Together this dynamic team have created a fresh and innovative approach to putting Community Voice at the centre of the consultation, collaboration and coordination work they are delivering across Logan City.



Activities undertaken to achieve THRIVE Logan's objective include:

## Place-Based Research

THRIVE Logan invested heavily in place-based research as the foundation for work to identify, understand and empower Logan's CALD community voices. Of particular importance was the realisation that policies and programs for settlement and migration have been historically developed through a lens of barriers and problems. THRIVE Logan's narrative puts opportunity at the centre of our work, activating the potential to critically shift the CALD communities across Logan.



## Core Advisory Group

A Core Advisory Group (CAG) has been established to support the project. This Group comprises key leaders and experts from within the community, industry, peak body and government spheres. Their primary role is to provide advice on the direction of the project, to contribute to key planning work and documents, as well as introduce and engage stakeholders and project initiatives.

The Group is further supported by an Expert Advisory Panel which is representative of a wider range of stakeholders and subject matter experts, ensuring expertise can be accessed as required. We are also pleased to partner with Griffith University as our trusted and valued Project Evaluators.

As noted, Community Voice is central to our work and our esteemed community partners are involved heavily in directing and informing the project and its outcomes at all levels.

Our Core Advisory Group have actively participated in their roles and in the first six months of forming have met four times, conducted a project strategy session and continue to meet quarterly or as needed to ensure the important work of THRIVE Logan is delivered in the spirit intended and is working towards meeting its key objectives

## Our Work To Date

The first six months of THRIVE Logan have been focused on identifying, engaging and consulting with our extensive stakeholders and partners. With 23 representatives secured as Core Advisory Group Members and a further 45 members comprising the Expert Panel, the level of initial contact and discussions was significant in yielding rich data and insights used to guide and develop the THRIVE Logan focus.





## Case Study

Our first Case Study was undertaken on a Logan-based multicultural women's community-led organisation, with a powerful female leader at the helm. Supported by her small but trusted band of volunteers, the work of this group highlighted the range of issues, barriers and opportunities to be explored. These broadly represented our core focus areas; Addressing Social Isolation and Loneliness, Women's Empowerment, Economic Participation, Community Capacity Building and pointed to other areas of interest to be explored through the learnings discovered through a deep dive into this incredible grassroots group. In addition, ten more women leaders and several other small women's multicultural groups were also included in this Case Study.

## Art Exhibition

In partnership with Host International, THRIVE Logan co-hosted an art exhibition, "Finding Freedom" during World Refugee Week. An amazing event that not only raised funds but equally importantly, raised the focus on refugee experiences of those who make Australia their new home, particularly emphasising the challenges faced by our most at-risk women and girls. Corporate sponsors and guests, as well as our trusted friends and partners in the community and government generously supported this key event.

## Achievements



identified **30**  
suitable potential CAG  
members for THRIVE  
Logan

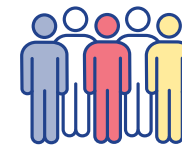


**4** CAG meetings  
held, fostering  
sustainable  
partnerships (i.e.  
Logan City Council  
with Inspiring Brighter  
Futures, Mabel Park  
State School with  
Australian Industry  
Group)

**18–23** CAG  
members attending  
each meeting



Raised **\$16000**  
at Finding Freedom Art  
Exhibition for participating  
artists and Helping Hands



**150** people attended  
the event Finding Freedom  
Art Exhibition



Engaged with **45**  
External Stakeholders  
for collaboration and  
partnership activities in the  
month of June alone



# Stay updated

## The Social Policy Group



[socialpolicy.org.au](https://socialpolicy.org.au)



[The Social Policy Group](#)



[The Social Policy Group - SPG](#)



[@SocialPolicyAUS](#)

## Centre for Digital Wellbeing



[digitalwellbeing.org.au](https://digitalwellbeing.org.au)



[Centre for Digital Wellbeing](#)



[@C4DWellbeing](#)

## Harmony Alliance



[harmonyalliance.org.au](https://harmonyalliance.org.au)



[Harmony Alliance: Migrant and Refugee Women for Change](#)



[Harmony Alliance: Migrant and Refugee Women for Change](#)



[@ausharmony](#)



[@aus\\_harmony](#)

## JCDI



[jcdi.org.au](https://jcdi.org.au)

## MRHP



[culturaldiversityhealth.org.au](https://culturaldiversityhealth.org.au)

## SETSCOP



[setscop.org.au](https://setscop.org.au)



[SETSCoP \(Settlement Engagement and Transition Support Community of Practice\)](#)

## THRIVE Logan



[thrivelogan.org.au](https://thrivelogan.org.au)



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