



الاتحاد النسائي المسلم  
MUSLIM WOMEN ASSOCIATION

Established 1983  
[www.mwa.org.au](http://www.mwa.org.au)

2018

35<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL REPORT

## ABOUT MUSLIM WOMEN ASSOCIATION

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The Muslim Women Association (MWA) has been supporting and advocating on behalf of all women and Muslim women in particular for over 35 years. At the heart of the MWA is a commitment to fairness, equality and justice in all our interactions and activities that support Muslim women.

The MWA is now recognised as the leading voice for Muslim women and is sought for advice and consultation at all levels of government on women's issues generally and specifically those matters impacting on Muslim women.

### GOALS OF MWA

- To improve the level of access and equity participation of Muslim women into all facets of Australian life.
- To improve the level of participation. The association will identify and respond to issues of concern preventing Muslim women participation.
- To improve the quality of service provision.
- To provide information, education and training on Islamic Practices and beliefs with a view to correct misinformation and misconceptions about Muslim women.

We will achieve our goals by:

Working in partnership with all groups and service providers who are providing programs and services. These goals will be achieved through interactive liaison with management, staff, volunteers and relevant stakeholders / groups.

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### VALUES AND PRINCIPLES OF MWA

The Association's philosophy is guided by the following values and principles that ensure our aims and objectives are achieved. All members of the management, staff and volunteers are committed to these values. They include:

- Responsiveness
- Respect
- Access & Equity
- Creativity
- Timeliness
- Co-operation
- Safety
- Personal Leadership
- Accountability
- Quality
- Honesty & Integrity

## MANAGEMENT OF MUSLIM WOMEN ASSOCIATION

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<b>President</b>	Shaza Rifi
<b>Secretary</b>	Nemat Kharboutli
<b>Treasurer</b>	Amna Elghoul
<b>Vice President</b>	Maryam Zahid
<b>Assistant Secretary</b>	Lina Daher
<b>Assistant Treasurer</b>	Dena Abdel-Fatah
<b>Committee Member</b>	Rouba Zakzouk



## PRESIDENT'S WELCOME

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*Assalam alaykum wa rahmatullahi wa barakatuh.*

May the peace and blessings of God be upon you all.

As I reflect on the year that has been, it makes me humbly proud to be a part of this organisation.

The MWA has continued to provide its longstanding services to the community from the Linking Hearts program which serves all families, women and children experiencing homelessness and domestic violence, to our SAYIT program which builds capacity in our young girls and our new MWA Seniors Group which provides a platform for the established members of our community to reconnect and nurture their social and physical wellbeing.

Of course these are only a few of the many more programs and initiatives the MWA leads, however these particularly highlight the MWA's strength in its diversity to cater for women of all ages and all stages in life. 2018 has seen the revival of the MWA's heart in Lakemba, and we are proud to be operating out of this humble location with our doors open.

While the MWA continues to cement its presence within the community in 2018, it hasn't come without its challenges. In order for an organisation to stay committed to its purpose in service and sincerity, it still requires change to enable growth.

I'd like to take this opportunity to thank our dedicated CEO, Maha Abdo, my fellow board members, our partners and above all our staff who work on the ground and are at the forefront of everything we do, for being a part of this journey of change and growth with us.

This year the MWA celebrates its 35<sup>th</sup> year – a milestone we look forward to sharing with you all. I look forward to the year ahead with hope and faith that the MWA's plans to serve more Australian's will come to fruition, as we maintain focused and driven by integrity and sincerity.

Thank you.

Shaza Rifi

**President, MWA**



# CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER REPORT

It gives me great honour to present to you our 35<sup>th</sup> Annual Report, which highlights the efforts of the Muslim Women Association to help give Muslim women safety and assurance in difficult and trying circumstances. We continue to work at the local, national and international levels advising government on policy, services and strategies to create a harmonious community for future generations of Muslim and non-Muslim women.

I would like to acknowledge the dedication of our President, and members of the Management Committee and the hard working staff. Also I would like to thank our volunteers, funders, supporters and community stakeholders for their support to our organisation.

This year we have farewelled some valued members of staff that we wish all the success in their future endeavours. We have also welcomed new staff who bring diverse levels of expertise.

**Maha Krayem Abdo OAM**  
Chief Executive Officer



White Ribbon Lakemba March



Meeting with Dr Nik Salida, Commissioner of the Malaysian National Human Rights Commission and senior lecturer at University Sains Islam Malaysia and specialises in international and Islamic human rights law, women's rights and Islamic family law.



MWA Executive Officer Hajeh Maha Abdo presenting the Keynote Address on "Empowerment through Faith" on Day 2 of the DVNSW 2017 Conference by Domestic Violence NSW.



MWA Management Committee Members with Minister Ray Williams MP, Minister for Multiculturalism at the 2017 Together for Humanity dinner.



A truly special evening at the Asylum Seekers Centre Refugee Week 2018 event. Inspiring speakers including MWA CEO Maha Abdo.





A brilliant two days at the Sydney University Law School's Symposium on the Agency of Muslim Women in the Australian Context in February 2018.



Minister for Women Tanya Davies, MWA CEO Maha Abdo, MWA President Shaza Rifi and Premier of NSW Gladys Berejiklian at the NSW Women of the Year Awards where MWA President was awarded 2018 NSW Young Woman of the Year.



MWA and Linking Hearts team at the Homelessness NSW Conference 2018, Housing Ends Homelessness, showing that together we can Fix the System.



Maha Abdo OAM, CEO of MWA in Canberra as part of the 1800RESPECT National Sector Advisory Group meeting. The Advisory Group is made up of domestic and family violence and sexual assault experts.

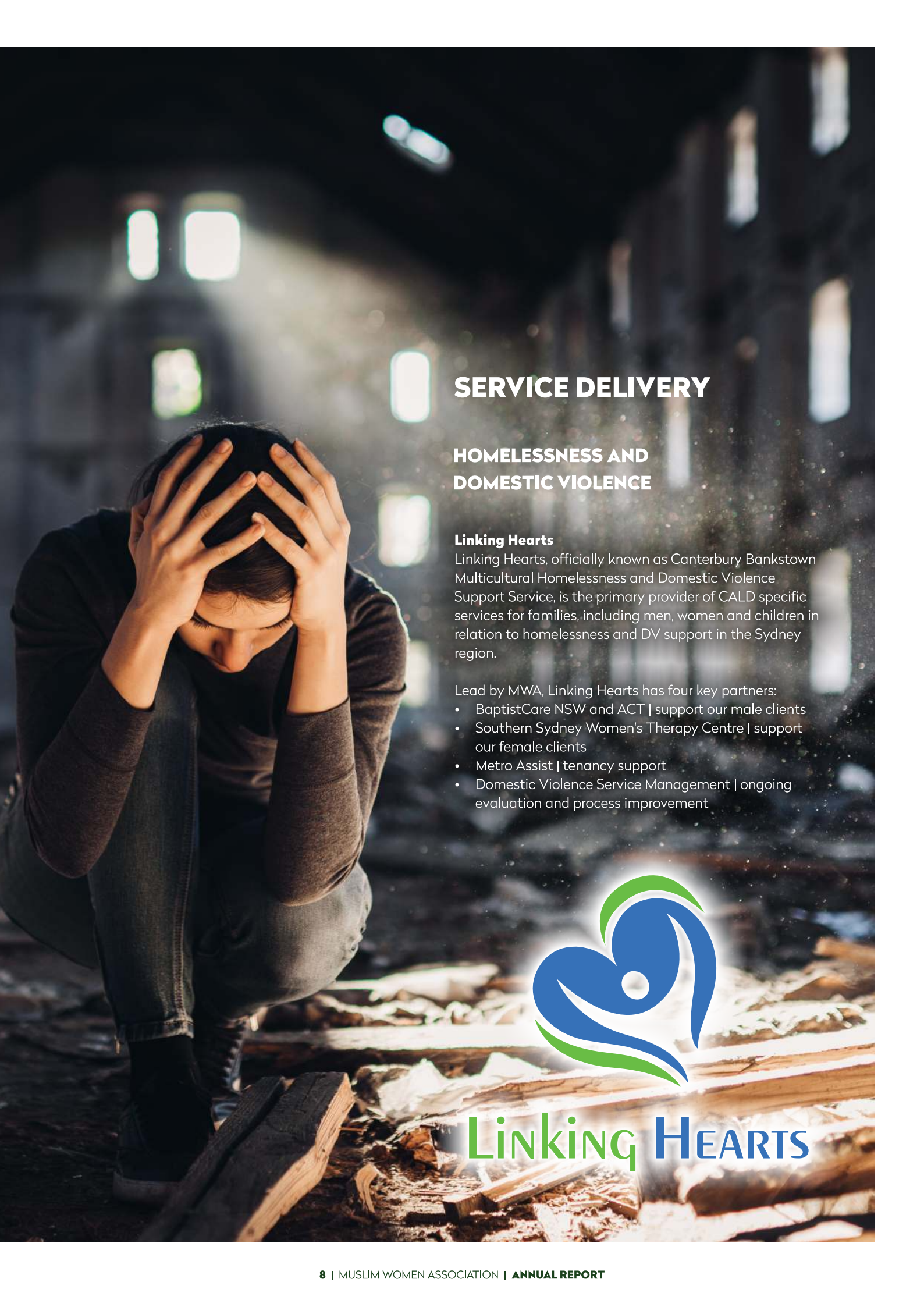


MWA CEO Hajeh Maha Abdo visited the Haj Ibrahim Zoabi at Voice of Islam 87.6FM offices this morning to congratulate them on an amazing 20 years of service to the community.



President of MWA Shaza Rifi (left) and CEO Hajeh Maha Abdo (right) with Dr Ibrahim Abu Mohammed (centre), Mufti of Australia, thanking him for his continuous support and service to the community.





## SERVICE DELIVERY

### HOMELESSNESS AND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

#### Linking Hearts

Linking Hearts, officially known as Canterbury Bankstown Multicultural Homelessness and Domestic Violence Support Service, is the primary provider of CALD specific services for families, including men, women and children in relation to homelessness and DV support in the Sydney region.

Lead by MWA, Linking Hearts has four key partners:

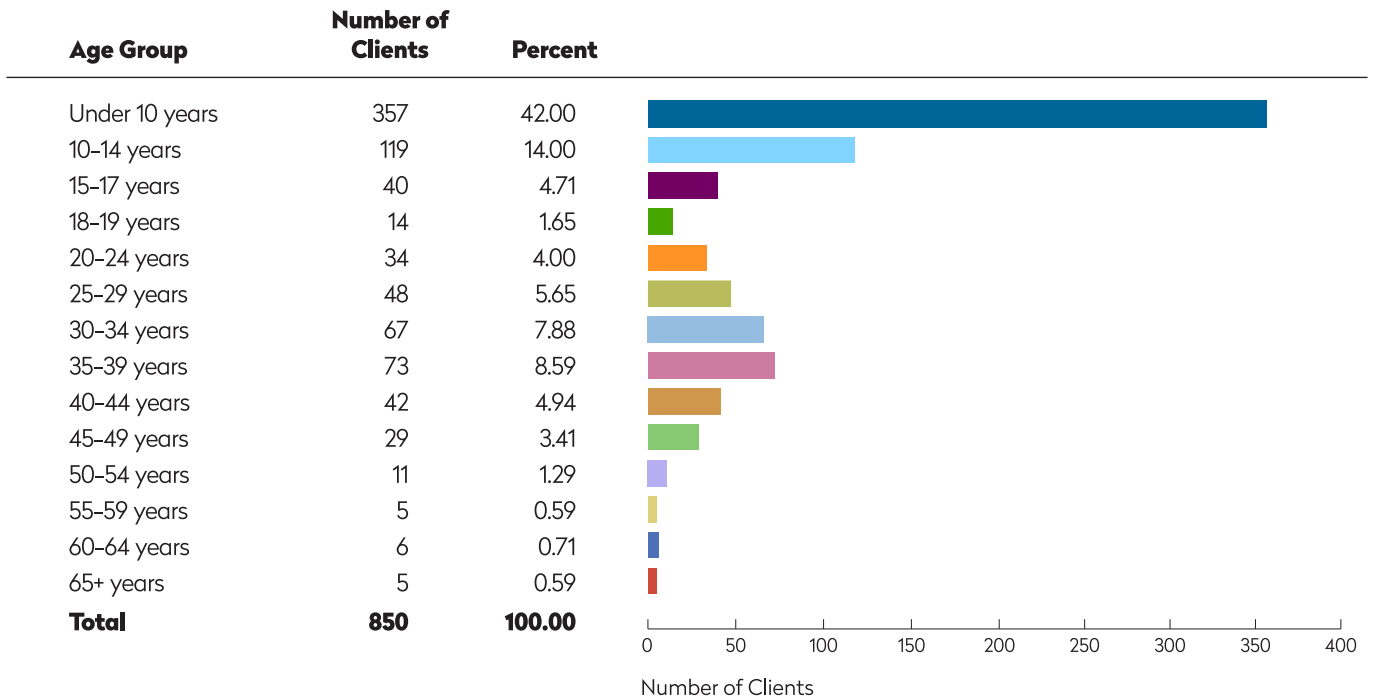
- BaptistCare NSW and ACT | support our male clients
- Southern Sydney Women's Therapy Centre | support our female clients
- Metro Assist | tenancy support
- Domestic Violence Service Management | ongoing evaluation and process improvement



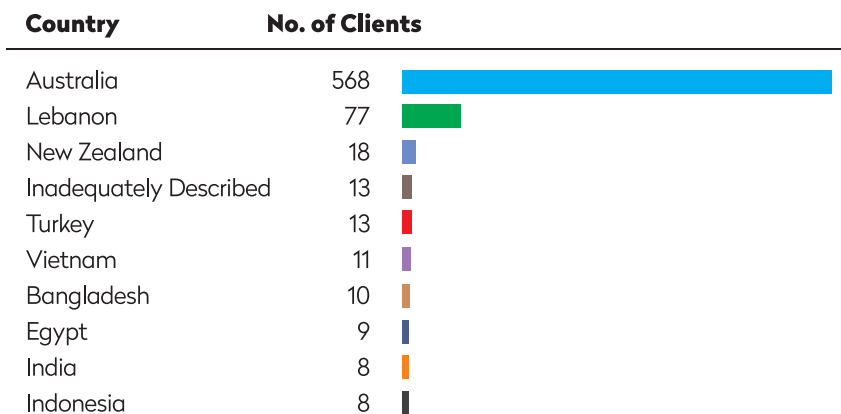
**Linking HEARTS**



## Age groups of clients

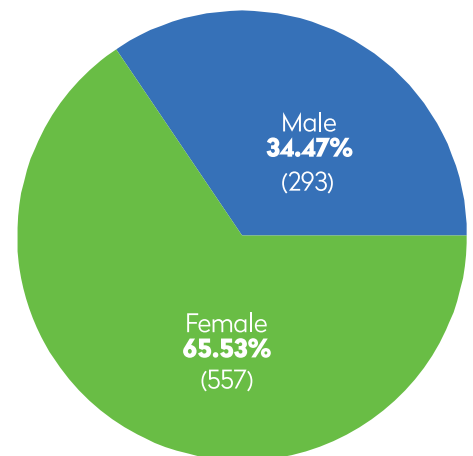


## Ten most common countries of birth

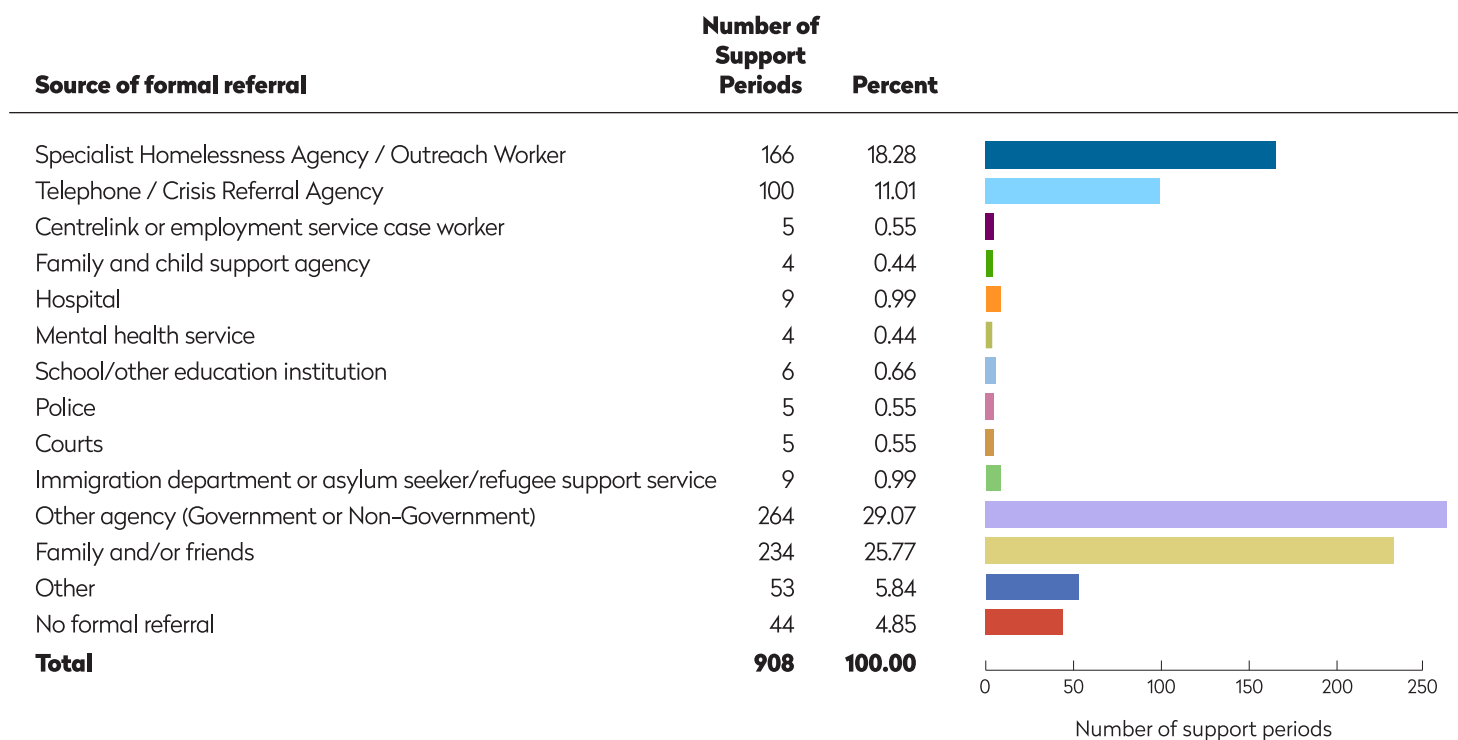


Report period: Jul 2017 to Jun 2018

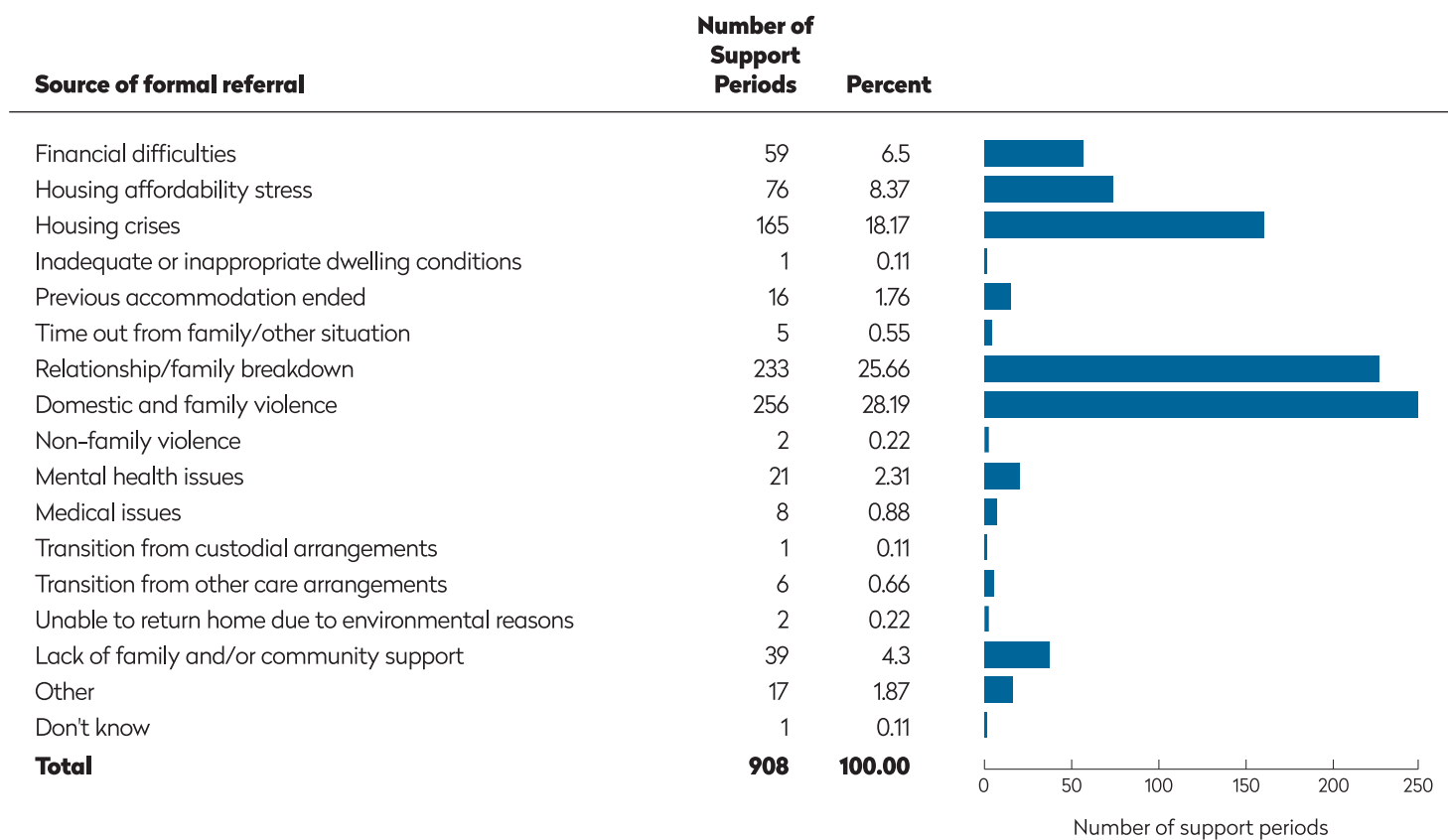
## Sex of clients



## Formal source of referral



## Main reason for seeking assistance



# HOMELESSNESS MATTERS



*Congratulations to Hajeh Feda Rifai on being awarded the 2018 Lifetime Achievement Award at the SHS Sector Good Practice Awards. Very well deserved!*



*A truly inspiring evening at the 2018 SHS Sector Good Practice Awards at the Homelessness NSW Conference. Recognising those most passionate about creating change and learning from those who are on the ground.*



*Congratulations to all the recipients of the 2018 SHS Good Practice Awards at the Homelessness NSW Conference, highlighting best practice models and the individuals, teams and organisations who are making a real difference.*



*Shaza Rifi, President of MWA and NSW Young Woman of the Year presented today at the Youth Homelessness Matters Day organised by Yfoundations, the NSW peak body on youth homelessness.*

## ROUNDTABLE ON PREVENTING DOMESTIC AND FAMILY VIOLENCE

MWA and Linking Hearts Senior Staff were invited to attend a Community Roundtable on Domestic Violence with Terri Butler, Shadow Assistant Minister for Preventing Family Violence and Tony Burke, Shadow Minister for Multiculturalism & Citizenship and Member for Watson. This was a chance to hear from key community groups on Domestic Violence services available and the work that is being done.





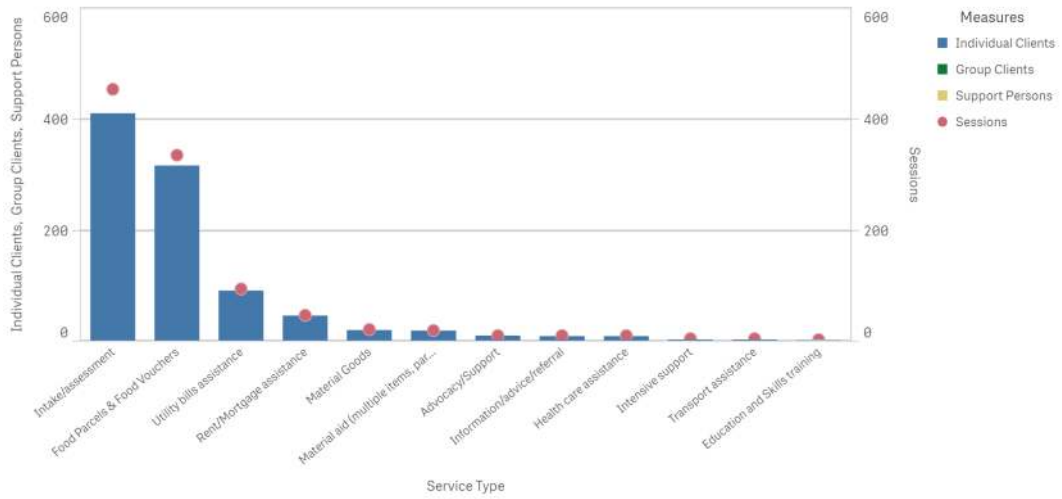


## **EMERGENCY RELIEF**

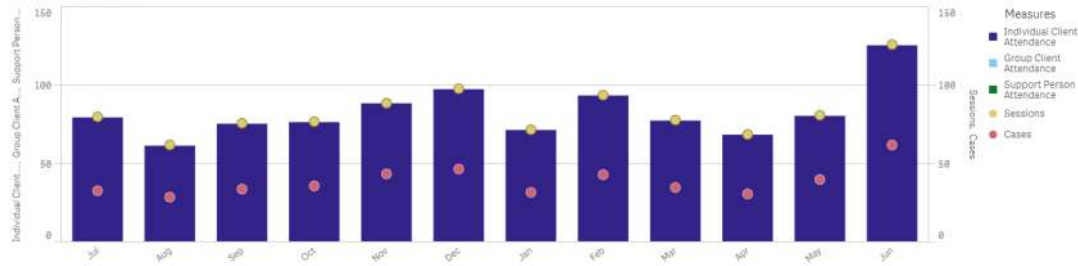
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The MWA provides Emergency Relief (ER) support to people in financial need. The ER service has supported a various number of clients from different ethnicities and religious backgrounds, as well as newly arrived migrants who are on no income, low income earners and/or experiencing financial hardships.

Individual Client, and Sessions by Activity -> Service Type

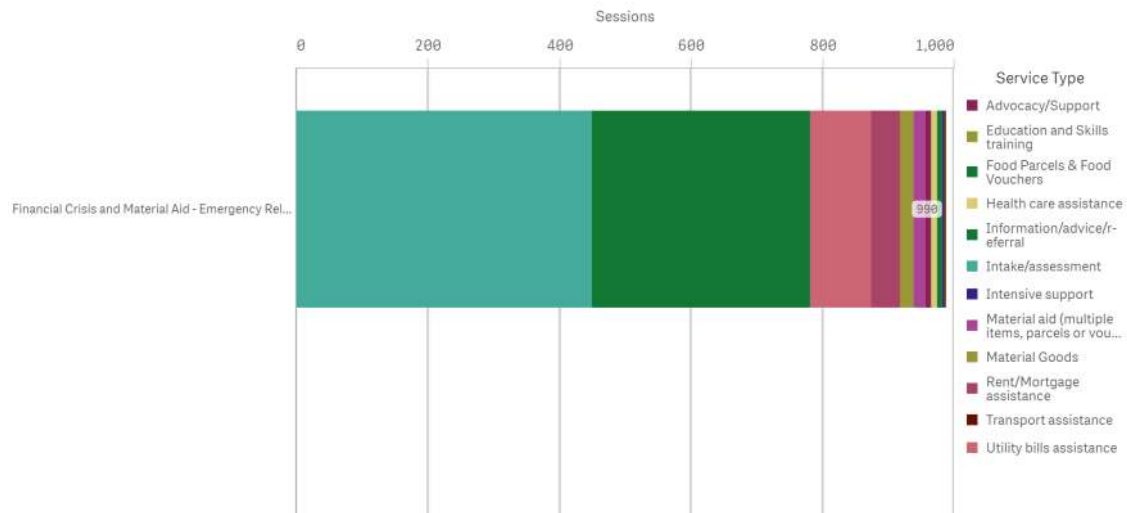


Attendances per month

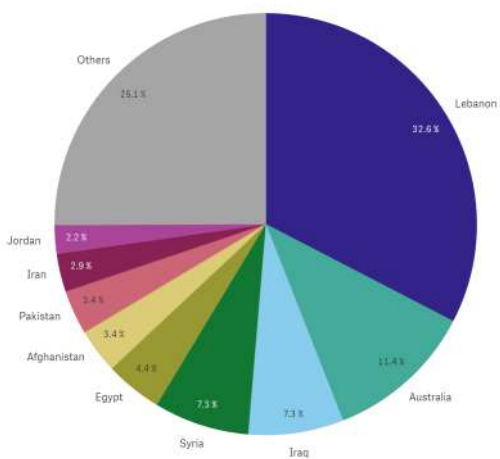


Individual Client **411**  
 Attendances **990**  
 Sessions **990**  
 Cases **451**  
 Avg. Clients per case **1.0**  
 Avg. attendance per session **1.0**  
 Avg. sessions per client **2.4**  
 Avg. sessions per case **2.2**

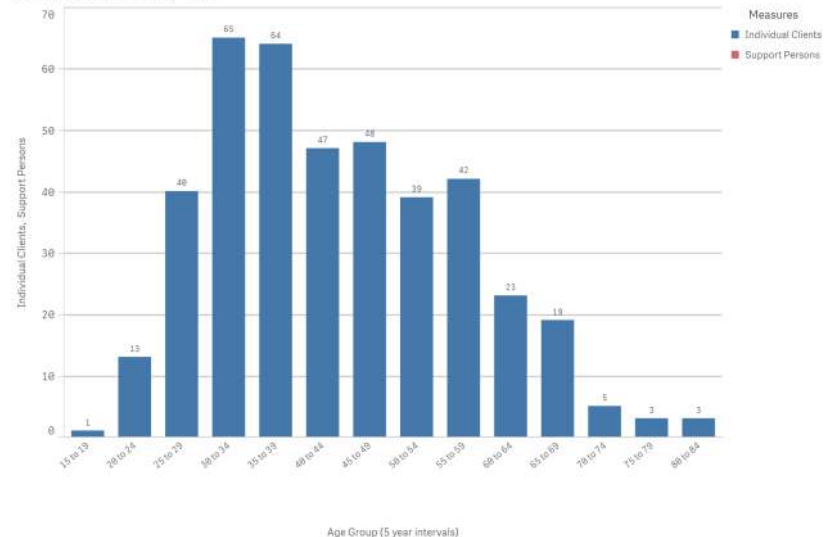
Individual Client Sessions by Activity and Service Type



Individual Clients by Country of Birth Top 10



Individual Clients by Age Group -> Age







## **SETTLEMENT GRANTS PROGRAM**

The Settlement Grants Program aimed to increase self-reliance and promote participation in the wider community for Muslim Women who have been in Australia for 5 years or less. This has been achieved through the provision of casework services, referrals, information sessions, support groups, community advocacy and consultations to address settlement needs.

Clients have gained life skills, secured affordable accommodation, improved Language\Literacy skills, and accessed services such as Legal Aid, Centrelink, Health, Education, as well as participated in many social and educational activities. MWA also provided clients with EAPA/Food Vouchers to assist them financially.



## Information Sessions and Workshops

- MWA ran a "How to Vote" information session on 5<sup>th</sup> September. The speaker showed the participants how to fill out ballot forms step by step. Positive feedback was given from the participants.
- An information session was held at MWA Lakemba regarding an educational course on Ageing Support.
- On 26<sup>th</sup> September, an information session was held about the significance of Breast Screening (17 participants attended). Some women had the chance to do the breast screening on the day and others made appointments. This was organised in partnership with BreastScreen NSW.
- An information session was held on 14<sup>th</sup> November 2017 in partnership with Centrelink with the total of 17 participants attended. Information were given about payment changes, how to register online, submit your reports, lodge documents, using my Gov app. Time was allocated for the participants to ask questions that were related to their situations and the speaker offered to give them another session. Feedback from the women showed that most of the attendees' questions were answered.
- On the 5<sup>th</sup> February, MWA ran an education information session in partnership with St Leonards TAFE to give our women an opportunity to study English languages (for our newly arrived women). 8 participants attended the session and women showed interest in enrolling in the English class.
- MWA conducted an employment information session in partnership with Bankstown TAFE for women to encourage them to seek jobs. The information session was an introductory to a Beauty course which gives women an idea about makeup and hair. 7 Participants attended the session that showed interest in the course and most of them enrolled.
- In partnership with Canterbury Family Day Care Centre, Muslim Women Association held an information session with a total of 8 women who are studying the Diploma in children's services. The speaker explained the following: What is a Family Day Care Educator, questions to ask Family Day Care Services, the Family Assistance Law: your obligations and rights, induction – Key things you need to know when starting as a Family Day Care educator, tips for New Educators, starting out right – making sure you are acting lawfully, the New Child Care Package

## Settlement Support Groups

English support group in partnership with Parramatta College Adult Basic Education started on 14<sup>th</sup> August with a total of 15 women registered till December. The course is to develop knowledge and literacy skills for initial work, community involvement and/or further learning.

Another support group commenced in February in partnership with St Leonards TAFE with a total of 9 women most of them are newly arrived. The group started end of February and will be running till the end of June.

## ENERGY ACCOUNTS PAYMENT ASSISTANCE (EAPA)

Help is provided to presenting clients in a variety of forms. Utility bills assistance (gas and electricity), and chemist bills. Our statistics demonstrate that EAPA was provided to 415 clients from a variety of Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) backgrounds during this financial year.

## OUTREACH SERVICES

### Legal Advice

In partnership with Legal Aid NSW, MWA has been providing free legal aid services from our Lakemba office every fortnight.

### Financial Counselling

In partnership with Salvation Army Money Care, Financial Counsellors provided assistance to MWA clients from our premises once a week in relation to budgeting services, including regular income and expenditure, assets and liabilities, advise and assist with problems related to debt and debt enforcement and advocate and negotiate with banks and other lenders.



## COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

### Connection to Faith

Women are strengthened by their connection to faith and MWA is pleased to have continued providing this support from our Lakemba office and Felicity House. Weekly classes in Arabic and Quranic recitation have continued this year, with women increasing their fluency in Arabic with the aim of being able to read the Quran. We have also had weekly spiritual classes in English for women wanting to increase their knowledge about different aspects of Islam and be able to implement this knowledge in their lives. These classes are part of our mandate as a Muslim women's organisation to support the spiritual needs of our community.

### Muslim Women Association Seniors Support Group

The MWA Seniors Support Group is an opportunity for women over 50 to come together in a safe and comfortable environment and nurture their social, emotional and physical health and well being. Some of the activities have been a Seniors Day Out where they enjoyed the panoramic views of Bulli, and an inspiring session of art therapy where every woman decorated her own tote bag, expressing her feelings and identity through words and art.





## MOTHERS INSPIRING MOTHERS (MIM)

MIM provides a chance for mothers to meet up and learn from each other and share each other's stories and experiences. MIM has provided an excellent support base for mothers facing everyday challenges and trying to balance out their various commitments and demands. MIM provides a reprieve from the pressures of motherhood and a much needed recharge to focus on the purpose and meaning of motherhood.



## MOVING TOWARDS MIDDLE GROUND

Supporting local solutions-based project, Moving Towards Middle Ground is a project funded by Multicultural NSW under Community Partnership Action (COMPACT) program. This project brings young Australians together to promote positive behaviours and engage critically, creatively and constructively on local and global issues impacting on social cohesion and community harmony.

## MWA KEY SERVICE DELIVERY PARTNER CONSULTATION



## MUSLIM WOMEN ASSOCIATION ARABIC SCHOOL

As one of the first Arabic schools in NSW, the MWA Saturday Arabic School provides a holistic educational approach for each student, offering a range of opportunities for boys and girls aged 4 to 16 years.

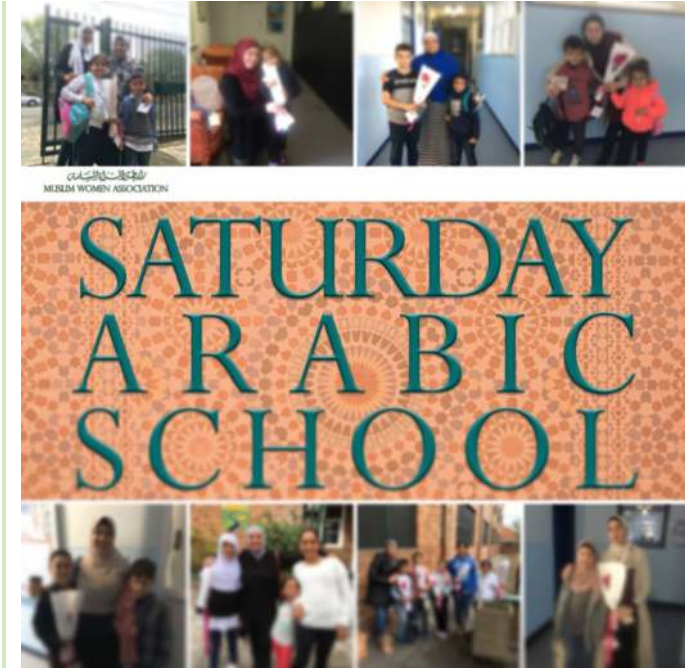




## HARMONY DAY

### MOTHER'S DAY CELEBRATION AT THE MWA ARABIC SCHOOL

Mothers, aunties, grandmothers, friends and cousins attended were in for a special treat at the MWA Arabic School.



### SYDNEY INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY BREAKFAST 2018

MWA Staff including the Linking Hearts team at the UN Women National Committee Australia 2018 Sydney International Women's Day Breakfast with Senator the Hon Concetta Fierravanti-Wells, Minister for International Development and the Pacific.



MWA Management Committee at the Premier's Harmony Dinner hosted by Multicultural NSW.



Celebrating Harmony Day with the MWA Seniors Support Group, discussing what harmony means to them and how they apply it in their lives everyday, as well as the struggles they have overcome and the amazing achievements they have attained.



Maha Abdo, CEO presented at the Fire and Rescue NSW Harmony Day event on the meaning of harmony, community belonging and social inclusion, speaking from the heart to the heart.



## MINDFUL PARENTING IN AN ISLAMIC CONTEXT

As part of the MIM initiative, MWA has developed resources and workshops on mindfulness and motherhood and mindful parenting. We have delivered workshops and courses for parents at various locations including the Arabic Australian Child Care Centre, Riverwood Community Centre, and Punchbowl Boys High School.



## SATURDAY AFTERNOON YOUTH INTENSIVE (SAYIT)

MWA is committed to providing young Australian Muslim women of all backgrounds opportunities to being skilful leaders in their own respective communities. SAYIT is a leadership program that has been running for over seven years focusing on faith as a tool of empowerment, a platform for high achievement and a voice for social goodness. The SAYIT leadership program aims to develop an Islamic and social awareness amongst female youth in the Australian Muslim Community.



## MUSLIM WOMEN ASSOCIATION OPEN DAY

MWA Open Day was an amazing display of sisterhood, partnership, celebration and fun. Service providers attended and represented their organisations in an inclusive and open way.





# MUSLIM WOMEN ASSOCIATION RAMADAN IFTAR

A very special evening shared by over 100 women and children tonight at the MWA Women's Ramadan Iftar in Lakemba. The kids enjoyed some fun activities, a quiz and prizes, coordinated by some of our very own SAYIT girls.



# BREAST SCREENING INFORMATION SESSION

The Breast Screen Information Session in Lakemba was a great opportunity for women today to learn more about the importance of screening campaign being launched by the Cancer Institute NSW. Useful and beneficial feedback provided by all the women who were in attendance. A generous thank you to all women involved.



# INDONESIAN DELEGATION VISIT TO MWA

MWA Staff welcoming the 2018 Indonesian delegates as part of the Australia Indonesia Muslim Exchange Program to MWA Lakemba.





## VISIT OF DR NIK SALIDA, COMMISSIONER OF THE MALAYSIAN NATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION

The purpose of Dr Salida's visit was to give her exposure to Australian approaches to human rights, multicultural policies and religious tolerance to help inform and shape her own work in Malaysia and to make useful connections with Australian institutions and people working in human rights and legal reform.



## HABIB KADHIM'S VISIT TO AUSTRALIA

MWA was honoured to be part of the Habib Kadhim Tour of Australia. MWA hosted two women only events for the International Guest Speaker to address issues of concern to women in Sydney.

Habib Kadhim al-Saqqaf is a Senior Lecturer at Dar al-Mustafa Islamic Seminary in Tarim, Yemen. He spoke on Islamic spirituality and wayfaring, the importance of studying the Islamic sciences and shared beneficial counsels and advice on a variety of topics.





# UNITED MUSLIM WOMEN ASSOCIATION INCORPORATED OPERATING AS MUSLIM WOMEN ASSOCIATION

ABN 50 594 813 317

## STATEMENT OF COMPREHENSIVE INCOME YEAR ENDING 30<sup>TH</sup> JUNE 2018

	<u>2018</u>	<u>2017</u>
<b>Revenue</b>		
Dividend and interest received	716	1,143
Donation received	6,175	3,064
Government grants	2,652,805	2,680,939
Membership fees received	9,240	9,257
Rent received	218,303	130,183
Service fees and other income	4,422	22,289
	<u>2,891,661</u>	<u>2,846,874</u>
<b>Expenses</b>		
Accounting and audit charges	58,453	37,405
Administration expenses	413,250	407,534
Depreciation charges	58,453	31,193
Education and community services	532,948	824,535
Employee and related expenses	925,255	945,726
Rent, rates insurance and water	141,405	96,814
	<u>2,274,586</u>	<u>2,343,226</u>
<b>Profit before income tax</b>	<b>617,075</b>	<b>503,648</b>
Income tax expense	-	-
<b>Profit for the year</b>	<u><b>617,075</b></u>	<u><b>503,648</b></u>

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF FUNDING BODIES

## FEDERAL GOVERNMENT FUNDING AGENCY

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Australian Government

Department of Social Services

## NSW GOVERNMENT FUNDING AGENCIES

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Family &  
Community  
Services



Multicultural  
NSW



Planning &  
Environment



Education





الرابطة النسائية المسلمة

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