



Community First Step



A photograph of a classroom activity. In the foreground, several young children are wearing bright yellow safety vests over their clothes. They are holding blue metal jingles with yellow handles. One child in the foreground is looking to the right with an open mouth, as if speaking or singing. In the background, two adults are visible; one is wearing a blue face mask and has her hands clasped. The room has a grey door and a wall with some posters and photos.

Community First Step
25 Barbara Street,
Fairfield NSW 2165
(02) 9727 4333
cfs@cfs.asn.au
www.cfs.asn.au



Acknowledgement of Country

Community First Step acknowledges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the Traditional Owners and Custodians of this country and their connection to land, water, and community. We extend that acknowledgement to the local Awabakal people, on which we are located.

We pay our respects to them, their culture and customs and to their Elders past, present and emerging. We believe that reconciliation must live in the hearts and minds of all Australians. We are committed to an ongoing journey towards truth telling and reconciliation. We also recognize and value the contribution of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees, carers, people we support and communities who are involved in our journey together.

We acknowledge your rich culture and your unique role here in the Fairfield region. Your heritage and traditions are important to us all, and part and parcel of the great history of Australia.

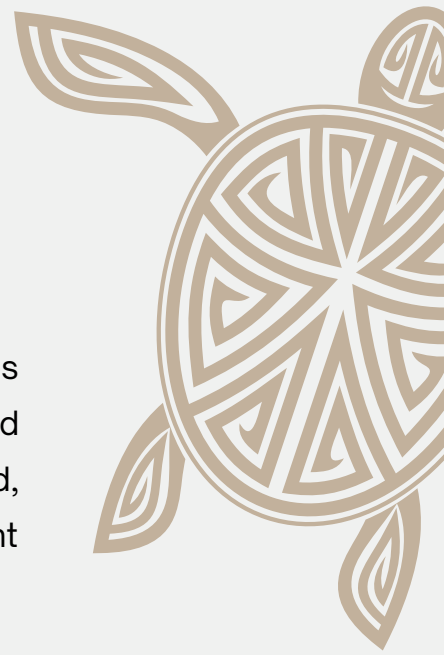
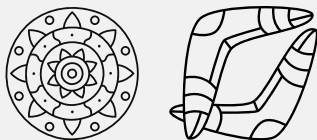


Table of Contents

Our Purpose, Vision, and Values	1
Chairs and Directors Overview	3
A word from the CEO	4
Meet our board members	6
Meet our management team	9
Farewell to John	14
Yearly Highlights	16
Snapshot of our Staff	17
Snapshot of our Community	18
Snapshot of our volunteers and students	20
Snapshot of our finances	21
Opening new OSHC Services: Lurnea and Warwick Farm	23
Tangerine Street OSHC: Meeting National Quality Standards	24
Recommencing working with the community and Parks Occasional and Vacation Care Excursions	25
Our Staff Story - Narkis's Story	26
Meet Lexi	28
Our Youth Team	30
Feedbacks from our Youth	32
SIL house Opening and Respite Services in West Hoxton and Marayong	34
COVID testing and creating a COVID- safe environment for the Day Program and Services	35
Meet Nicola	36
Our Staff Story - Cristina's Story	38
Hub Support	40
Emergency Relief Program	42
Emergency Relief Support Expo	43
Testimonials from our Emergency Relief Program Clients	44
Our Staff Story - Kate and Sang's Story	46
Meet Sheena	48
Women's Support Group	50
Meet Sudeus	52
Meet Faten	53
Quality Assurance Committee and Risk Committee	54

Our Purpose, Vision and Values

Our **purpose** is to empower the Community in South Western Sydney to overcome social and economic disadvantage by identifying community need and supporting sustainable capacity building. Our **vision** is Communities in South Western Sydney have equal opportunities to thrive in their lives and livelihoods.

Our Values are:



Respect

We will listen to you and hear what you say. We will encourage independence and respect your decisions, opinions and views.



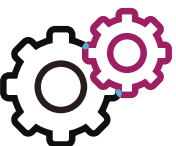
Honesty

We will be trustworthy, tell the truth and keep our promise to you and always provide the highest quality we can.



Confidentiality

We believe privacy and confidentiality is of most importance for you and the organisation.



Development & Improvement

We will identify where we can develop projects and always work to improve our services and to maintain our service standards with your feedback.



Harmonious Environment

We will make sure we have a positive working environment that provides support, guidance, acceptance and harmony for all.



Chairs and Directors Overview

Community First Step was founded 40 years ago, when a group of locals banded together to help neighbours in need. We remain a vibrant part of the service sector today because our organisation reflects the resilience and diversity of the community we serve. This was demonstrated clearly during the devastating COVID-19 outbreak and subsequent lockdown from July to September 2021, when the spotlight was turned onto Fairfield.

We saw then the dependency of the broader community on the Fairfield workforce many of whom were prevented from travelling to work. We saw the determination of men and women supporting large families, who cued up to be tested every 3 days in order to continue providing essential services. We saw the impact on children and families under severe financial, physical and emotional stress, compounded in many cases by language barriers.

We have yet to dismantle the hurdles that prevent refugees, new migrants and others experiencing disadvantage from contributing in accordance with their skills and capabilities. As a society, we have yet to create the infrastructure to guarantee the basic human rights of secure shelter, nutrition, and safety for all. At CFS, we believe this is worth working for.

The CFS Board is proud of our team's achievements in 2021/21. As a place-based organisation, Community First Step was able to understand and respond to the pressing needs of communities in South Western Sydney, providing a point of continuity and support for around 9,000 clients. The board took the opportunity this year to refresh our frameworks for governance of risk and strategy in response to our changing health, social, technological and natural environments.

We value our partner organisations, funders and supporters who have worked with us to optimise outcomes through our existing services and new programs such as multi-cultural grant to support vulnerable temporary visa holders and asylum seekers.

On behalf of the Board and Staff, I would like to extend a special thank you to Matthew Day for his skilful guidance to the Board and organisation over the last 4.5 years as Chair of Community First Step. Matthew stepped down from the Chair on the 15th March and we are grateful for his ongoing support through the transition period. I would also like to thank our outgoing CEO, John Gilmore, for his dedicated leadership of the team over the last three years. Usha Rao, Chief Operating Officer, took over the reigns as acting CEO in July 2022 and will provide the executive report for this year. I commend to you this year in review.

Helen Wilson, Chair

A Word from the CEO

It is with great honour I present to you this year's Community First Step Annual Report. This year has been challenging as it has been exciting navigating through various initiatives and implementing different activities and services to support and empower our local community. Community First Step ended this year with a small surplus which has given us a great opportunity to continue to source this money in our community and provide training to all staff.

As we entered our third year of the COVID-19 impact, Community First Step embarked on a journey with new aspirations, determination, and hope. The team has grown stronger, passionate, and more resilient with these challenges, channeling their work into providing meaningful and approachable services.

As of this year our staff have transitioned back to the office as we all knew, with our community waiting for us. And what a success it was – our innovative and exciting programs were delivered by the most skilled and hardworking team within CFS, whilst establishing two new centres for Children's Services Out of School Care in Liverpool LGA.

This year we not only achieved our targeted outcomes within our three sectors but progressively reached a larger community within Campbelltown LGA. This expansion to newer LGAs has proved Community First Step is an organisation that provides need-based and place-based support to Southwestern Sydney. Our three services have transitioned to working more collaboratively, combining the strengths and unique experience of all staff.

Disability Services have held strong by continuing to provide quality services to clients living with a disability through flexible service provisions. Through the successes of Disability Services, a new SIL accommodation has been opened in West Hoxton.

Our three services have transitioned to working more collaboratively, combining the strengths and unique experience of all staff. Disability Services have held strong by continuing to provide quality services to clients living with a disability through flexible service provisions. Through the successes of Disability Services, a new SIL accommodation has been opened in West Hoxton.

Children's Services have provided much needed support to the local families by providing Before and After School Care, Vacation Care, and Early Childhood Services. Excitingly two new centres at Lurnea and Warwick Farm have opened to support the communities in Liverpool LGA. Community Services' Youth Team were provided a unique opportunity to participate in the Innovation Grant to further support and build the resilience of young people.



Fairfield's Youth were supported by educational and recreational programs such as physical health workshops, mental health workshops and CFS literacy programs where students were given free tutoring and textbooks to assist in their studies.

Through gallant efforts by Zehra Hussain, we were successful in receiving the Emergency Relief and NGO Support Grant by Multicultural NSW that greatly contributed to CFS extending their aid to refugee, asylum seekers, and temporary visa holders. Community First Step was able to reach over 600 people to support their needs financially, emotionally, and socially.

I would like to extend my gratitude to Baber Rasheed, Ann Munar and Ogechi Mbaegbu as under their leadership their highly motivated teams within Community Services, Children's Services, and Disability Services achieved outstanding outcomes whilst still ensuring a safe and operable environment due to the COVID-19 impact.

This year, CFS have been given many opportunities and generous donations to extend and strengthen our ability to support our local community. Our staff members Terry Tierney and Tien Dawson have achieved accreditations as a Mental Health First Aid Training and CPI Safety Intervention ensuring all staff can grow their skillsets to continue to provide much needed mental health support to the community.

Generous donations from Halyard and PPE Supply allowed staff and clients to engage in activities safely whilst still ensuring our community were able to access these services.



I would also like to extend my gratitude to Multicultural NSW who generously provided RAT kits that staff and clients could use. This provided CFS an added layer of protection and relief during the COVID-19 impact and allowed us to move freely within activities. Fairfield Netball Federation has given Community First Step an incredibly generous donation to allow us to continue to provide support to the community.

Lastly, I would like to say farewell and thank you to John Gilmore who has stepped down as CEO. John has been an excellent leader who believed in the strength of his staff and the power of collaborations within the community. We will continue his legacy within the coming year and hope to continue to strive to build connections within South Western Sydney to fortify our community.

Warm Regards,
Usha Rao
Acting CEO

Meet Our Board Members



HELEN WILSON

BSpPath(Hons) MBA GAICD
CHAIR

Helen brings over 30 years' experience within the health, aged care and community service sectors, including 20 spent in South West Sydney. She is an experienced non-executive director, having served on 3 Boards. She also works as an executive consultant, specialising in business development, service models and quality improvement. Helen has previous experience as a CEO and general manager in a range of mid-size to large organisation. She also has a clinical background as a speech pathologist.

Special Responsibilities:

- Member Risk Committee (1 July 21 - 21 March 2022)
- Chair Remuneration and Nominations Committee (March 2022)

MARK WEBB
BSc Computing BEng electrical engineering, MBA
DEPUTY CHAIR



Mark's professional background includes work across the private sector, and more than 15 years' experience in senior executive roles in the federal and state public sectors. His experience includes work in the technology industry, and public policy areas such as employment, the environment and heritage, planning and central government functions. He is currently the Chief Executive of the NSW Department of Parliamentary Services, a specialist service department working to support the operation of the NSW Parliament. Mark's skills include policy, government, strategy, change management, business process and improvement and corporate governance. Mark is also Vice President of the Institute of Public Administration-NSW Division.

Special Responsibilities:

- Chair Risk Committee (21 March 2022)
- Member Remuneration and Nomination Committee



EDWARD PARKER
BBUS MBA ACA
NON EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Edward's experience includes 30 years in finance and accounting roles across the spectrum of national and multinational organisations including KPMG and DXC (formally CSC). Edward is currently CFO for Industrie & Co and is responsible for financial strategy & governance, IT services, legal and company secretarial functions.

Special Responsibilities:

- Chair of Finance Committee



MATTHEW DAY
BSc (Hons) FCMA CGMA GAICD
NON EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Matthew has more than 30 years of international executive and finance management experience predominantly working for global IT companies including CFO of DXC (formally CSC) and President, Asia Pacific of Ventyx. He is Asia Pacific CFO for O&M Halyard Health. Matthew is a director of MJKA Pty Ltd and has been Director of CSC Australia Pty Ltd, Paxus Pty Ltd, Mynd Asia Pacific Pty Ltd and a number of subsidiary companies.

Special Responsibilities:

- Previous Chair (March 2022)
- Member of Finance Committee



IAN ROSS
BBus MCom FAICD
NON EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Ian has over 30 years' experience in commercial operations management with a background in retail, fuel distribution, sports marketing and FMCG industries including petroleum, media, telco, and alcohol. He has widely diversified skills across industries and functions. With 20 years' of directorship experience in non-executive, executive and managing director roles serving on a number of Australian boards across a range of industries, including transport and distribution, convenience retailing and emergency response services.

Special Responsibilities:

- Chair of Risk Committee

**TARA LE FRIEDMAN**

BSc, BEng (Chemical), MBA (Exec), MAICD
NON EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Tara has over 23 years of experience in the oil, energy, and financial services sectors. She has held numerous senior executive roles across strategy, transformation, and business operations. Her skills include strategy development and organisation design, productivity / cost optimisation, operational risk management, strategic investments, organisational change management, and vendor/partner management. Tara's expertise is in leading strategic development and delivery of large-scale business and technology transformation. Tara is currently the Transformation Director for QBE and is responsible for leading their digital transformation for AUSPAC. Tara is a passionate advocate for diversity and inclusion in the workplace and supporting new migrants build a better future.

Special Responsibilities:

- Member Remuneration and Nominations Committee

LAURA SAMPSON
LLB BA GDLP
COMPANY SECRETARY



Laura graduated from Western Sydney University in 2017 with a Bachelor of Laws/Bachelor of Arts and commenced working as a lawyer in August 2018. Laura has experience in tort claims, and has spent a number of years working as a Paralegal in the Parramatta and Liverpool areas. Laura is presently working in a large Plaintiff-focused personal injury law firm. Through personal circumstances and her work, Laura has gained experience and is committed to assisting the disabled community in Western Sydney.

Meet Our Management Team



John Gilmore
Chief Executive Officer

John was appointed in October 2019. John's diverse career has seen him work in private enterprise, politics, the NSW public sector, philanthropy and the NGO sector. Especially skilled at developing and articulating strategic vision around organisation change, his excellent ability with people results in high levels of stakeholder engagement.



Usha Rao
Chief Operating Officer

Usha was appointed Chief Operating Officer in March 2021. As an integral part of Community First Step for the past 15 years, Usha is passionate about the empowerment of migrant communities and their ability to strengthen their capacity and connections. Usha is always looking for innovative ways to introduce new programs and projects to the service.

Yomna Touni
Leader of People, Quality & Safeguards



Yomna has been with CFS since June 2021 and was previously a Compliance Officer at a Disability Services organisation and has previously worked as a Business/Data Analyst at multiple government agencies. She is currently studying her Masters in Health Services Management and is passionate about human rights and the safety and livelihood of people in the community.



Baber Rasheed
Manager of Community Services

Baber has been with CFS since 2015 and has held the position of Team Leader before being appointed as Manager of Community Services. He is passionate about building the capacity of community members to achieve their dreams.

Ann Munar
Manager of Children's Services



Ann has been with CFS for over 13 years. She started as an coordinator in our Before and After School Care, and was then promoted to OSHC Area Team Leader. She has now taken on the role of Team Leader in Children Services and has led the team in their accreditation process of our centres.

Ogechi Mbaegbu
Manager of Disability Services



Ogechi joined CFS in 2021 to continue her remarkable career as Manager Disability Services following over 10 years in the industry. She is passionate about the delivery of person-centred supports in a holistic manner and leading her teams towards personal and professional development.



Zehra Hussain
Project Manager

Zehra has been at CFS since 2017 in the capacity of Administration Assistance and Family Support Worker. She was appointed Project Manager in 2020 to overlook communities for children projects and pursue further grant opportunities. Zehra is passionate about bottom-up community development and empowering families and individuals through asset mapping.

Martine Burnette
Hub Coordinator



Martine has been working with CFS since 2015 and was originally in the role of receptionist. She now leads a team of hub support workers and is often the first person our clients meet when engaging with our service. Martine is also a caseworker for families and individuals experiencing hardship and is passionate about their development through capacity building.



Shazia Rashid
Guildford OSHC Coordinator

Shazia joined us in 2018 as the Playgroups and Roving Officer. She then moved on to Assistant Coordinator at Parks Occasional Care. She is now the Area OSHC coordinator at Guildford OSHC, St Johns park OSHC, Tangerine St OSHC, and Warwick Farm OSHC.



Shareen Nair,
Parks Occasional Care Coordinator

Shareen has been with CFS since 2019, working within management of the Childrens Services team. Shareen is also known to be the Educational Leader for Children Services helping all services work towards implementing quality and engaging curriculums and activities. Shareen also has a passion for working amongst the community team delivery evidence-based workshops which help support children and parents. For the last year Shareen has been assisting in Coordinating The Parks Occasional Care and helping the team at Parks create a quality service while working towards the National Quality Framework.



Farewell to John

John Gilmore, CEO, has sadly stepped down in the month of August 2022 to focus on his health and his family. When first arriving at Community First Step in November of 2019, John had recently worked within a social enterprise with multiple businesses and training streams. His expertise in stabilising organisations during periods of significant change was a key factor in his appointment, and his influence within CFS. John has been passionate about collaboration within the local community and with local organisations, strengthening not only the relationship CFS has with other community organisations but ensured a holistic and place-based approach to the members of Fairfield. Through these collaborations, many new and exciting projects were launched to aid the community during the COVID-19 impact.

One such collaboration was the Kid's Focus Program, in partnership with The Parks Community Network, where both organisations supported children in person, ensuring they continued to receive help with their homework whilst lockdown ensued and were given opportunities to play and connect with other children, removing the isolation most felt during this lockdown period. Through these collaborations, Community First Step was awarded the Exceptional Community Partnership Award. With the impact of COVID-19, John received the Social Sector Fund that allowed CFS to upgrade our services, ensuring a smoother transition to working from home during the lockdown periods. This upgrade allowed staff to support the local community continuously and tirelessly from home and continue to service the needs of local families.



John introduced many new and innovative initiatives within CFS such as introducing weekly meetings for all Children's Services, Disability Services and Community Services staff to feel connected and engaged. We have continued to do these meetings gaining more knowledge and allowing for meaningful collaborations internally.

The Quality Assurance Committee was also established as John lead our NDIS accreditation. We successfully passed this accreditation, and the Quality Assurance Committee continues to meet to ensure CFS prioritises quality for all staff, our services, and the local community. Our Year in Review event was established by John, allowing our staff an opportunity to showcase their hard work and successes with the community and all stakeholders involved. John has established our footprint within local parliament as well, ensuring Fairfield is at the heart of social change and social justice.

John has taught us here at Community First Step that leadership is empathetic, warm, and open. John's open-door policy has made us all feel welcomed and equal. John's leadership allowed many to progress within the organisation as he recognised the strengths of staff and provided opportunities for growth for many individuals. We will sincerely and deeply miss John's presence in the office. For making us laugh during tough times, for providing advice to all staff regardless of the issue, and for continuing to make each individual feel supported and cared for.

At Community First Step, we strive to work alongside one another as family, and John will always have a place within this family. We wish him and his family the best and will continue to honour his passions by supporting this community a day at a time.



Yearly Highlights

July 2021 - June 2022



1,800+

People trusted us to provide community services



More than

43

People living with disability chose us to provide services



Over

275

Children supported



More than

6,600

Young people supported



We have welcomed and supported over

600

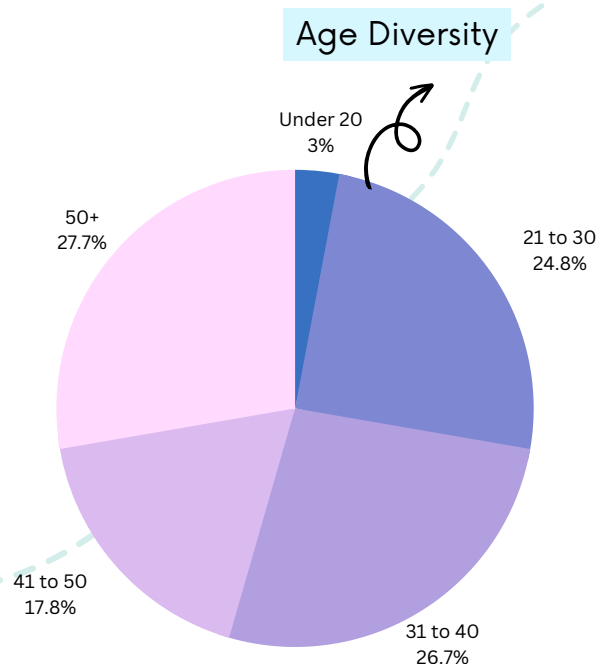
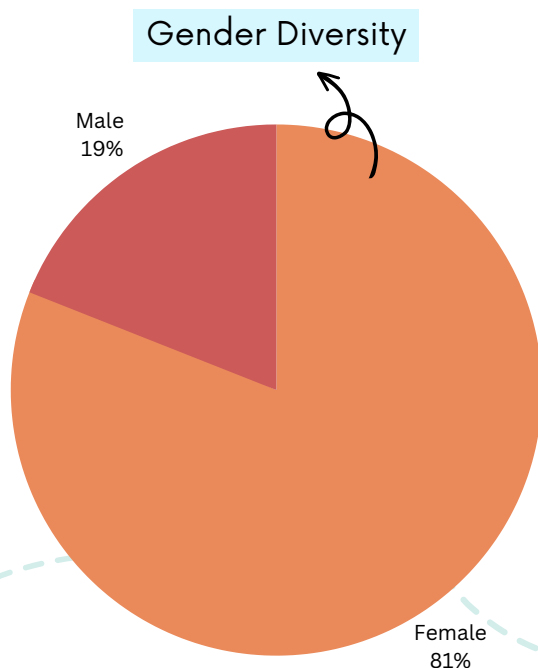
Temporary Visa Holders, Immigrants and Asylum Seekers

Snapshot of Our Staff

Our Community First Step team, much like our community, is rich with diversity and knowledge from around the world. We are a diverse workforce with people from various cultural backgrounds, ancestries, religions, creeds and languages, all working together in harmony.

Our ancestry within Community First Step includes Aboriginal, Assyrian, Australian, British, Cambodian, Egyptian, Fijian, Filipino, Ghanaian, Iraqi, Irish, Italian, Indian, Japanese, Lebanese, Nigerian, Pakistani, Burmese, Polish, Sri Lankan, South African, Samoan, Sudan, Thai and Vietnamese.

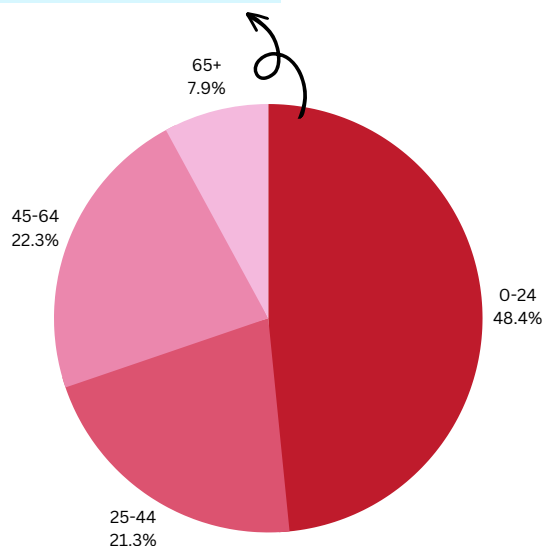
Community First Step speaks Arabic, Assyrian, Burmese, Japanese, Cantonese, Creole, Chaldean, English, Fullani, Hindi, Mandarin, Marathi, Malayalam, Polish, Singhalese, Sudanese, Tagalog, Telegu, Thai, Urdu and Vietnamese.



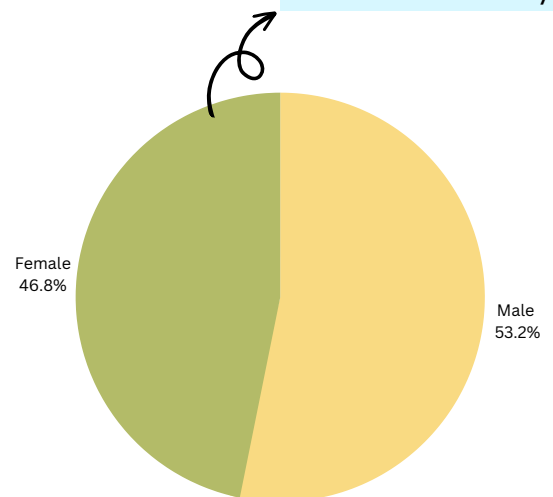
Snapshot of Our Community

Within Fairfield LGA, our community is a myriad of cultures, diversity, languages, wisdom, knowledge and experiences. We pride ourselves in working with inclusivity and awareness of all the beautiful cultures that make up Australia.

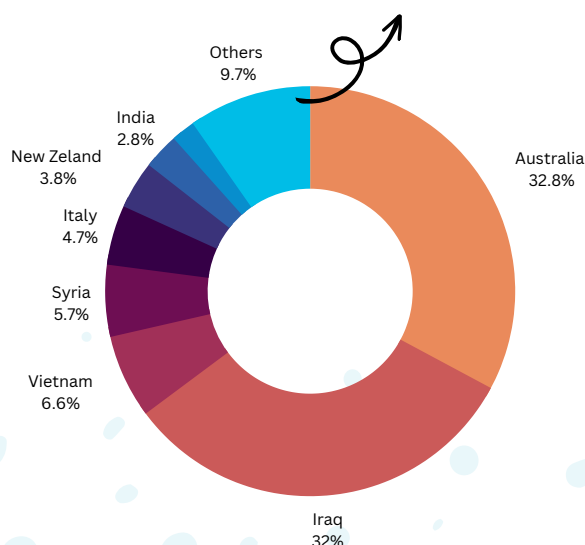
Our Age Diversity



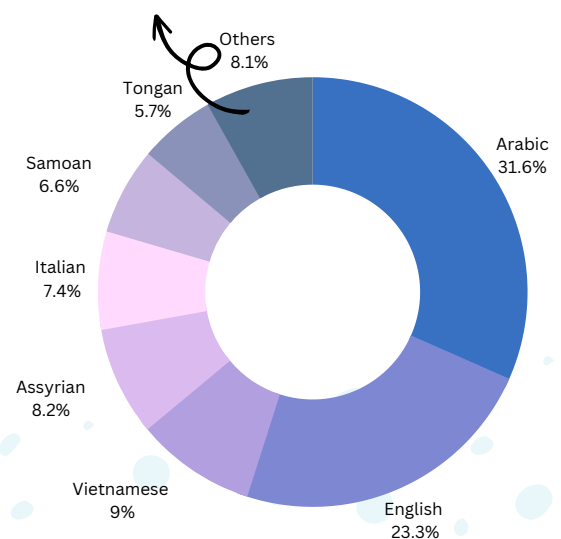
Gender Diversity



Our Ancestry Diversity



Our Multilingual Community





Snapshot of Our Volunteers and Students

Community First Step would like to take the opportunity to thank all the amazing volunteers and student placement who have contributed to our organisation in the last year:

Protima Dey
Rabina Khatri
Nguyen Le (Tina)
Pawannpreet Maan
Merquelyn Aler
Ruby Santos
Darling Neri

One of our hardworking students Protima has given her feedback about her experience at CFS.

Protima started her student placement at CFS for her community services diploma at Lead College. It was her first work placement as a community service professional, and she expressed she had a positive experience with the staff and hub coordinator. She was able to learn different skillsets during her work placement such as identifying community needs, communicating to clients, assisting them with form filling, getting their food parcel requests and thinking innovatively to incorporate a flexible service that suits client lifestyles. Protima also engaged with admin related tasks and was given the responsibility to run the Conversational English Classes. Protima was able to connect clients from different background with activities that cater to their interests and assist according to their needs and preferences.



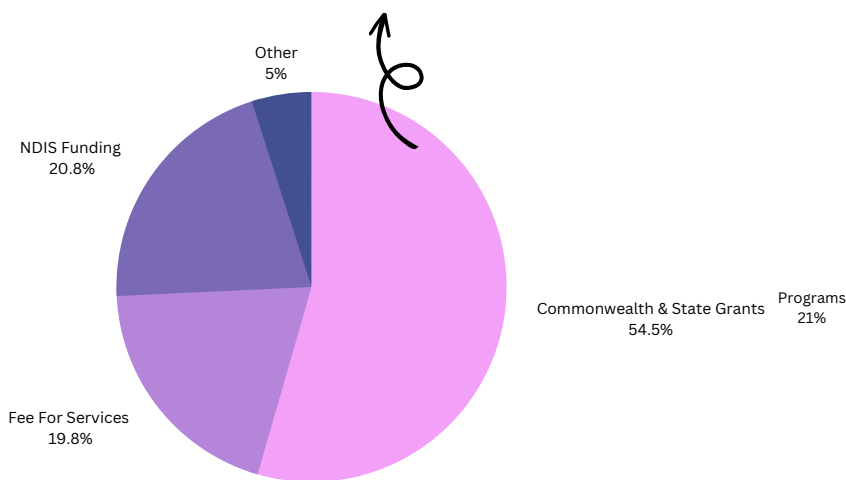
CFS gave amazing platform where I got the chance to get connected with community people, learned the ways how to identify, navigate and understand their interests and needs which helped me to offer the services they need. I have got the brief idea of how community service profession looks like and I believe it will help me to land my dream career in coming days.



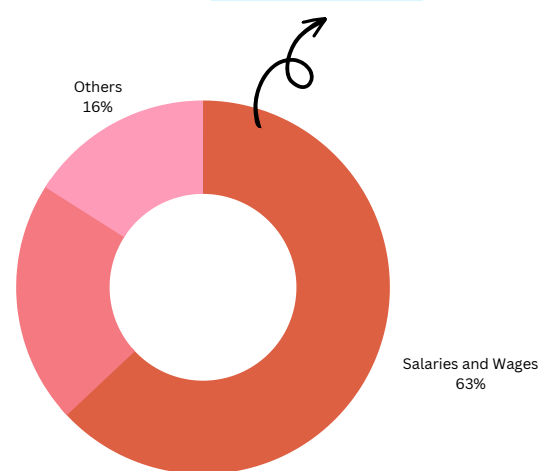
- Protima
(Student Placement)

Snapshot of Our Finances

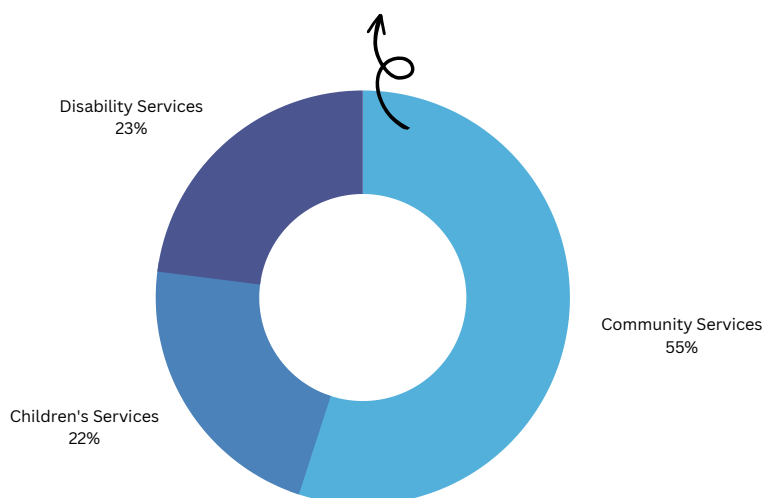
Sources of Funding



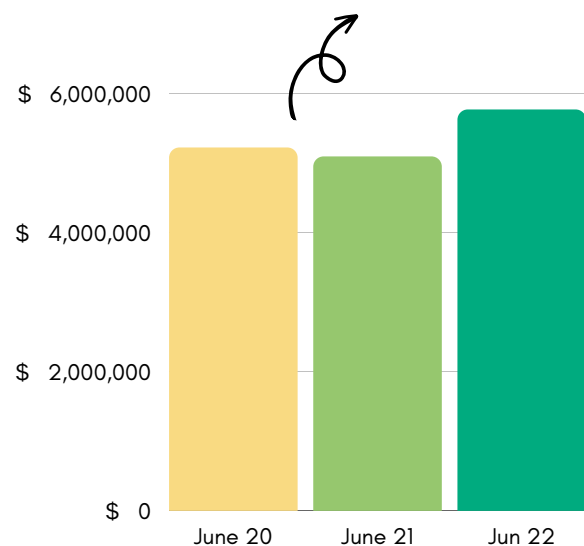
Expenditure



Revenue by Streams



Income





Opening New OSHC Services

Lurnea and Warwick Farm

In March 2022, we received notification that Community First Step was successful in a tender application for a “Group of Schools Licence for Liverpool Local Government Area.” This was the beginning of two new OSHC services for CFS.

Lurnea OSHC is located at Lurnea Public School and services Lurnea Public School, Ashcroft Public School, Cartwright Public School, and recently St. Francis Xavier Catholic Primary School. Warwick Farm OSHC is located at Warwick Farm Public School as a standalone service. Both services are operating vacation care during the school holidays and servicing the wider community.

Both centres commenced operation on the first day of Term 2 on the 27th of April 2022 to provide vacation care to children and families. Each centre successfully held its information open day for families and the community in the local areas. Our families and children had an amazing time at the open days by participating in activities, games, and received information about our different services.

After two months of operation, the centres went through their “post-approval compliance visit” from the NSW Department of Education and Communities. Both services successfully met all compliance and regulatory requirements with ease and positive feedback from the compliance officers. Both Lurnea and Warwick Farm OSHC services have been operating successfully and continue to provide vacation care catering to our families' and children's needs.



Tangerine Street OSHC: Meeting National Quality Standards

Tangerine Street OSHC has been offering Before and After School Care to students from Kindergarten to Year 6 for more than two years now. Tangerine Street OSHC commenced operation in January 2020 and has gone through tough and trialing times especially with the impact of COVID-19 just after opening the service. However, Tangerine Street OSHC continued to provide for those families in the community needing before and after-school care services.

Tangerine Street OSHC is currently operating in the afternoons only, and picks up children from four local schools. After two years, Tangerine Street OSHC commenced its first Assessment and Rating with the Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA) on the 24th of May 2022. We have proudly achieved an overall rating of "Meeting National Quality Standards." We continue to ensure the quality and service at Tangerine Street is supportive and nurturing towards our children and their families.



Recommencing working with the community and Parks Occasional and Vacation Care excursions

Since 2020, COVID-19 has taken a toll on many services and caused disruptions in both service operation and building relationships with the community. Children's Services also have been struggling with continuing normal operations and activities in the midst of COVID-19.

With operations commencing back to normalcy, our Children's Services team was excited to recommence working with the community and organising fun and engaging activities and excursions.

Last year, the Parks Occasional Care and Vacation Care aimed to strengthen their involvement in the community and work towards their National Quality Area 6, identified within the National Quality Framework, which is to form collaborative partnerships with families and communities. These collaborative relationships with families are fundamental to achieving quality outcomes for children. We have aimed to form community partnerships that are based on active communication, consultation, and collaboration.

As parents were able to visit the centres again, our Children's Services Centres held morning teas and other recreational activities to provide those collaborative opportunities with families. The team has also continued to do welfare checks with families, an initiative that took place during the COVID-19 impact.

One of our initiatives has been that our Educators implemented workshops for families to help them gain a better understanding of their parenting styles. Many parents struggled with their children's behaviours and learning during the lockdown period.

The centres have also started incursions to allow other recreational programs and activities to participate in the services routine. One of these programs delivered by The Parks Community Network was called "Fun Friends". The Fun Friends program builds emotional and social skills for young children by using fun and play-based group activities to facilitate a smooth transition into school life. Fun friends nurtures positive relationships with family and peers, encouraging children to thrive.

At the beginning of 2022, our pre-schoolers started to participate in a series of excursions including visiting our community team programs at the Youth Centre and the disability Day Program. On the 24th of May, our pre-schoolers joined the walk organised by Community First Step community team to show support for Lifeline's "10,000 steps in Day in May" challenge. Our team and children had fun being involved in this amazing challenge to increase their physical movement while enjoying activities and refreshments.

Our children's services also had a fun day visit to the Disability Day Program for lunch and some interactive activities with the disability team and clients. The Day started with different activities such as painting and colouring, story time from the disability team, and playing in the garden with the clients and staff. Our excursion ended with a delicious lunch and taking photos together to remember the fun day at the Day Program.

Our OSHC Educators at the Parks and Vacation Care continue to make engaging vacation care programs for the children to participate in different fun and interesting activities every week. We are also networking with small businesses that may have resources or offer certain programs that help create engaging and exciting programs. The children's services team is excited to recommence the activities within the community and start building a better foundation together with the parents and families to create a better and brighter future for the kids.



Our Staff Story

(Narkis's Story)

Narkis joined the roving and playgroup at the Community First Step as a parent when her son was one year old. She wanted to meet like-minded people from different cultures, learn more about parenting styles and give her son the opportunity to make new friends.

She helped educators with activities and started taking care of kids not only as a parent but also as an educator. The staff saw her patience with the kids and suggested she apply for a job at CFS.

In the beginning, she started out as a volunteer and applied for a job at roving and playgroup. She started working as a playgroup educator at different schools and enjoyed working with children. She also occasionally worked as casual staff at the disability Day Program Centre to help the staff with clients. Narkis has a passion for taking care of children and clients who have a disability and being responsive to their needs and well-being.

Narkis also volunteered at the Community Hub in Fairfield during COVID to give out masks to the community and dropped off food hampers to families. She had a fun time organizing busy bags for families during COVID with activities for the children since the childcare activities were paused at that time.

After her many volunteering experiences in different services at CFS, Narkis decided to do Certificate 3 - Early Childhood Education and did the work placement at the Parks Occasional Care last year. At the beginning of 2022, she decided to join the Parks as a casual staff. Narkis said she loves kids and seeing them happy when she does something for them warms her heart. She enjoys organising programs for children and each day she learns something about how to deal with different situations by observing how the children manage struggles or problems



I really appreciate the support I got since I started at the Parks from the school coordinator and co-workers which helped me to learn more about how to observe kids and policies that I needed to know.



The practical experience of working in the centre and learning from the coordinator has given her opportunities to reflect on her passion for working with and supporting children.

Training at CFS has equipped Narkis the skills and ability to take on more responsibility and implement different strategies to support children and their well-being. Narkis said she cherished every step of her journey with CFS from being a parent participant, volunteer, staff member, and now, a member of the casual staff working at the Parks. Being able to work in different services was a truly valuable experience for Narkis, and she cannot wait to continue her journey with CFS and make more memories with the kids and educators at Parks Occasional Care.





Meet Lexi

Hi, my name is Lexi Ronson. I am a proud student at Allambie Road OSHC. I have been at OSHC for 7 years and want to share some of my most memorable moments.

My first memory at OSHC happened on my second day of kindergarten. It was 2016 and I was 2 weeks away from my fifth birthday. I was just like any other kid meeting new people; small, shy, and awkward, but I soon realised how friendly and caring all the people were. The children and all the teachers were amazing, and I was happy to be there.

My most memorable moment at OSHC was my second Christmas party. We had delicious food, trendy music (which I sang to while one of my best friends danced), and much more fun activities. It was truly one of the most fun nights ever!



When you walk into the centre; whether you are a teacher, student, or visitor you are made to feel welcome instantly. OSHC is an ideal place for children that are growing and developing.



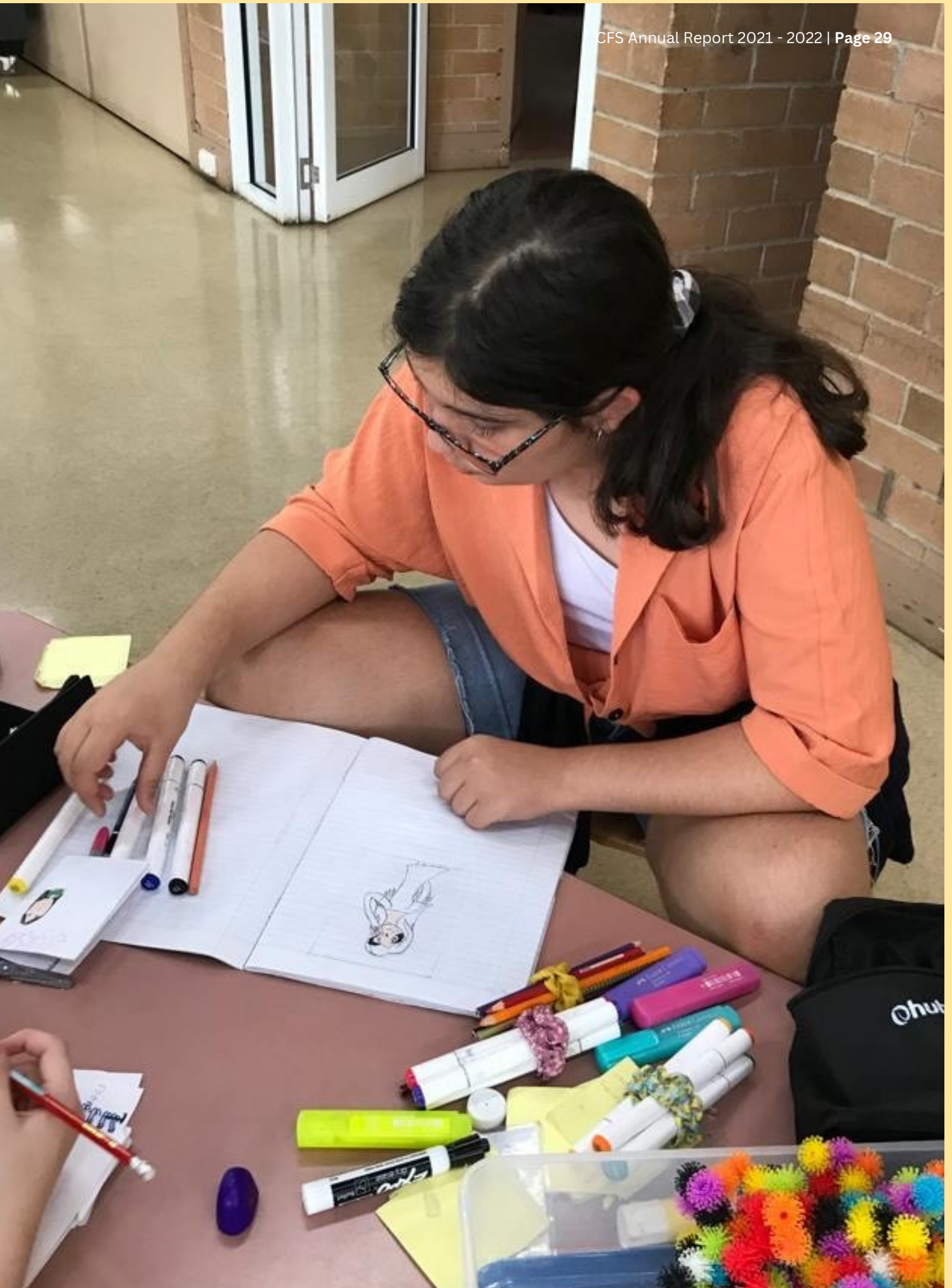
The teachers at OSHC are all unique people. However, they do have traits in common; they are all caring, fun, and good-natured. They are always there to help and support you and they make the centre feel like a home away from home.

We are a family at Allambie Road OSHC. After seven years I would recommend OSHC, before and after-school care and vacation care. As an 11-year-old child soon going onto high school I have only 12 weeks left, and I plan to enjoy each and every day.

When I am old enough, I plan to come back as a volunteer and until then I will visit my beloved teachers that guided me through primary school.

I hope the best for the future of both the OSHC students and teachers and wish them all the best for 2023 and beyond.

Lexi Ronson
Proud Allambie Road OSHC student



Our Youth Team

[TEI – Department of Communities and Justice Grant]

The Community First Step Youth Team is made up of hardworking and passionate social workers, youth workers, and volunteers. We are committed to ensuring our youth gets to be heard, supported, advocated for, and encouraged. Our Youth team has been working tirelessly this year, especially in the mid of the COVID-19 pandemic to ensure all youth feel supported and heard during this time. Last year, amid lockdown, we tried our best to ensure the well-being of youth and family and we have achieved :



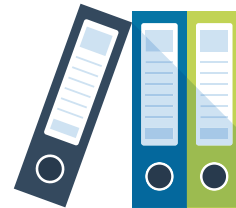
More than
6,000
Youth attended the
Youth Centre



470+
New Attendees



4000
Youth participated in
Basketball, Volleyball,
Soccer, Touch Football,
Pool, Tennis, Arcade and
Card Games



We supported more than

26
Youth with Case
Management



300+
Welfare calls were made
during lockdown to youth and
their families for food parcels
and linking with the hub, case
management



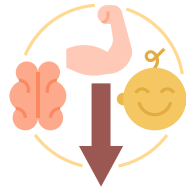
30

Youth participants
attended **Mental
Health Workshop**



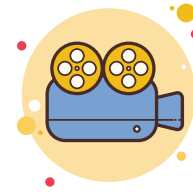
25

Youth participants
attended **Physical
Health workshop**



20

Youth participants
attended **IEC
Physical Health
Workshop**



46

Youth participants
attended
**Videography
workshop**

The Community First Step Youth team also took part in Bring it on! Festival on the 10th of April organized by Fairfield City Council. More than four thousand people attended, and we held a footy-throwing competition with prizes to be won. Youth People across the local areas had an amazing time celebrating with sport, music, dance, and art. We also celebrated Youth week from the 11th to the 14th of April at Fairfield Youth and Community Centre. A week was full of activities, competitions for the youth to participate in, and prizes to be won.

As a response to COVID-19 and the lockdown period, our Youth Team worked tirelessly to connect with our youth participants who were struggling during the lockdown period by providing welfare calls, and food parcels, linking them to hub activities, and case management. Our youth team has also given away textbooks, jerseys, and organized tutoring sessions for the youth in the community.

Feedback from our Youth

I feel better and more confident with dealing with life. My emotions have improved much since you guys here. Thank you.

I have learnt how to use my English more effectively in order to express my own feelings

I think if more people started to care more about the [Mental Health] workshop it will become worldwide and make our world a better place

I started to think and feel better about myself because of this workshop

-Mental Health Workshop youth participants

My overall experience with the workshop is I like it very much, as there were a lot of opportunities too learn new and different things, and the boxing lessons was one of my favourites

[The workshop] is good as it is an active as I expected when they told me there was going to be activities and even, we can learn new things (e.g. boxing or yoga). These activities just help me through my general life as a youth, with breathing technique or even just self-defence.

Overall, in my opinion this work shop was very successful due to the fact that they taught me many great and useful things that I will use in the future and in my life such as how to stretch before doing any severe workout, hand and eye coordination, and many things.

This workshop was not only fun but informative, exciting and a feel good experience. Being both free and entertaining the work truly has been the joy of my week of the last three weeks, I found it to be helpful and a productive way to spend my time.

-Physical Health Workshop youth participants



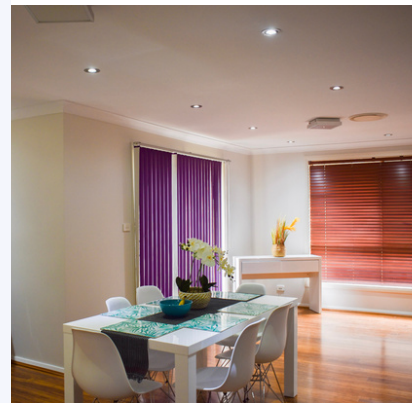
SIL houses Opening and Respite Services in West Hoxton and Marayong

Supported Independent Living (SIL) and Respite Services were introduced to Community First Step at our West Hoxton and Marayong houses. This exciting new venture has allowed our staff to provide personal support for people living with disabilities including personal care, medical appointments, preparing meals, daily activities and many more. This new journey into SIL accommodation has allowed us to provide holistic support to our clients and support them to reach their goals whilst exercising their choices and freedoms.

Our Respite Services have been able to provide short-term relief for a primary carer for an afternoon, several days or weeks, whilst ensuring our clients are taken care for and enjoying the activities provided by staff. Respite Service Workers at Community First Step provide supervision, companionship, and personal care services.

“The Respite Services have been very helpful to me, and I would love to continue using the services for my son” - Angela Alvaro (Nicola, one of our client's mom)

Our clients have been enjoying both SIL and Respite Services at the new houses opening in West Hoxton and Marayong, and our staff is working restlessly to provide the best quality services for the families and clients.



COVID testing and creating a COVID-safe environment for the Day Program and Services

The COVID-19 pandemic has brought us unprecedented challenges but during this time we have leaned on our values and kept our pandemic plan as a priority to keep our services a COVID-safe environment throughout the lockdown last year. Instead of shutting down, our Disability Services implemented different approaches to strive our best to support our clients and families.

Last year, we made sure our staff and clients got tested three days a week and complied with NSW Public Health Order to organize activities. For community access as part of the Day Program, we engaged only with low-risk environments and open places to reduce community transition. We also encouraged our clients to enjoy more indoor activities while practicing good hygiene and social distancing.

"I am happy how they did their best to continue to run Day Program specially the staff and management team. I was able to attend during COVID restrictions"
-Aaron, Day Program Client

As a result of our COVID safe plan, our disability Services have steered clear of the COVID -19 outbreaks at our Day Program and other disability services last year.

"We achieved a COVID safe service delivery by strict compliance with Public Health Guidelines and collaboration with other relevant stakeholders in the industry. We are proud that our employees have achieved 100% vaccination rate! All staff are also compliant with the COVID safe training module facilitated by NSW Health. Finally, with the support of staff, participants and families, we successfully implemented regular testing regime with the RAT kits. Our record of COVID safe service delivery ensured that we were among the very few services still in operation during the pandemic. We provided person-centered service delivery to individuals and their families." - Ogechi, Disability Service Manager



Meet Nicola

Nicola Alvaro is one of our disability participants who started using services as a post-school option and has now been attending services at the Day Program and Community Access for more than 29 years now.

Nicola was diagnosed with cerebral palsy and due to his condition, he prefers a familiar environment and staff who he has known for a long time. Ann and Parvin are staff members at Community First Step who have been taking care of Nicola for years now. They have been caring for Nicola with his daily activities and needs and encouraging him to be involved in different activities. The staff have said that Nicola loves the bus ride in the morning so much that when the bus arrives, they can see the excitement on his face. He loves to travel on the bus and enjoys riding from home to the center every week.

Nicola is a huge fan of sensory things and has a tambourine everywhere he goes in his hand. He loves rolling magazine papers and anything that feels soothing to touch. Ann says that Nicola loves to sit down in the sun under the tree every time after lunch and loves to feel the grass, leaves, and the sandy area at the centre.



He enjoys participating in many activities such as going to the park, art classes, Zumba, and going to cafes, pubs, and restaurants. After working with Nicola for many years, Ann and Parvin had expressed how much Nicola has improved in allowing newer people in his environment and his ability to adapt to different situations. With many new clients joining the Day Program, Nicola has been more content and settled in well with the group dynamic now.

Angela, Nicola's mother has expressed that Nicola's participation in the Day Program and Community Access has given her time to run errands and finish some of her commitments. She loves that the staff at Community First Step are gentle and kind toward Nicola, and that he has formed a lifelong bond with the staff who have been with him for years, knowing how to navigate problems together.



Our Staff Story

(Cristina's Story)

Cristina used to work at the Nursing home in Aged Care before and she left the job when she had her kids. Once the kids started going to school, she decided that it was time for her to start working again. She saw a Facebook post from the Community First Step about the employment expo and came in to get more information about jobs and training in the local area. CFS just opened the first SIL house in Marayong and was looking for staff to work at the house at that time. Christina met the managers and applied for the role because of her curiosity to work in different services and her passion to support the community.

Since 2020, just right before COVID, she started working as a support worker at Marayong house and took care of the clients and she has been enjoying working in disability service since then. Now, she works as both an assistant service coordinator and support worker at the SIL houses (Marayong and West Hoxton house), and Day Program. She not only takes care of the clients but also takes on the responsibility to manage the roster for the staff at SIL houses. Her working day is full of assisting clients with meal prep, personal care, organizing medical appointments, looking for volunteer work and jobs, taking clients out in the community, and supporting them to reach their goals.



Working as a support worker is rewarding when you see the improvements with the client and helping them with building the rapport is rewarding.



Support from the coordinator and managers has allowed Cristina to study and learn from the experience and share strategy with other staff. One of the memorable days at work for her was when the client communicated with her and checked on her how she was, and she felt cared from her clients. She also loves that she is trusted by her clients with their daily activities. As a working mom herself, she struggles with managing work and taking care of her kids, however, CFS has given her the flexibility to balance her work schedule and personal life.

A few things that Cristina learned from her journey so far working at SIL houses are to know and respect clients' choices under NDIS, understand their conditions, and not take anything personally or seriously. With the training that she got from CFS has equipped her to deal with clients and share strategies with her co-workers. Cristina wants to study mental health diploma in the future to enhance her knowledge and use her skills to care for clients at CFS.

She also reflected on her journey with CFS and how far she has come from her interview with managers and now she is involving in the interviewing process for the new staff. Cristina said she is grateful for her co-workers and managers who supported her throughout the journey with CFS so far and she is looking forward to learning more skills and using them where it is needed.



Hub Support

[TEI – Department of Communities and Justice Grant]

More than

150+

Families received food hampers, frozen meal distribution, and Good 360 PPE equipment (cleaning supplies, vitamin drinks, books)

During COVID lockdown, we assisted Core Community with **welfare call to over**

300

families for case management, referral services, food parcel/vouchers and hub support

100%

of Hub Activities clients attended weekly to Conversational English classes, Knitting and Sewing Group

We supported more than

22

Families affected by pandemic through **the Community Boost Grant with food packs, and vouchers**



Supported and Cared for more than

100

multilingual families in

- Fairfield
- Cabramatta
- Canley Heights
- Chester Hill
- Edensor Park
- Guildford
- Merryland
- Smith field
- Villawood
- Wakeley
- Wetherill Park
- Bonnyrigg
- Bossley Park



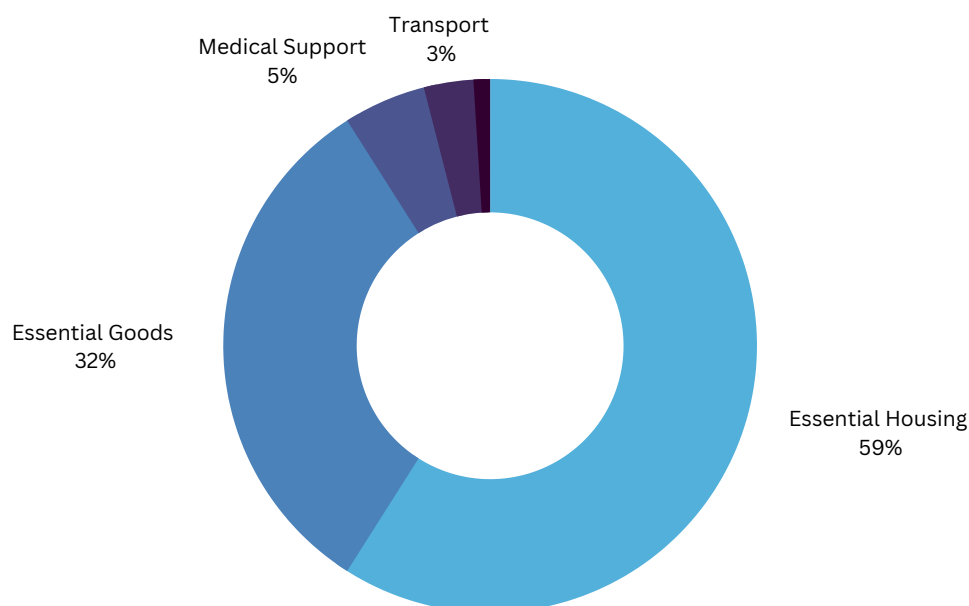
Emergency Relief Program

[Multicultural NSW Grant]

Community First Step received funding from Multicultural NSW to operate the Emergency Relief Program from October 2021 to June 2022. The aim of the program was to provide direct emergency relief to vulnerable temporary visa holders and asylum seekers who were not eligible for Commonwealth Government income and experiencing hardship due to the impact of COVID-19.

The Program operated across the Fairfield, Canterbury-Bankstown, Cumberland, Campbelltown, and Liverpool Local Government Areas (LGAs). A large population of refugees and migrants settle within these LGAs, which have been highlighted as the most vulnerable communities in Southwestern Sydney. Emergency Relief Program delivers direct emergency financial assistance to those who had insufficient funds for essentials under the categories of Emergency Relief Essentials, Personal Health Safety, Medical Support, Telecommunications, Transport, and Essential Housing. We also built the capacity of asylum seekers and temporary visa holders to become independent by developing referral pathways and community networks for further holistic support for individuals and families to access. One-on-one casework support was also provided to link to internal and external services.

We have provided emergency relief support to more than 300 individuals and their families across the 5 LGAs of the program.



Emergency Relief Support Expo

On the 31st of March 2022, the Program successfully held an Emergency Relief Support Expo Event at Fairfield Youth and Community Centre. The event aimed to connect with asylum seekers and temporary visa holders to address urgent basic living needs, assess them for financial relief, and provide an opportunity for them to meet with services and organisations to create greater community networks for additional support.



The event was attended by almost 100 existing and new clients. Essential items such as groceries and baby items were available for collection by clients. Organisations including the Asylum Seekers Centre, Jesuit Refugee Service, NSW Refugee Health Service, Uniting Care, Refugee Advice & Casework Service, Community Migrant Resource Centre, and Woodville Alliance were present with their staff and information about their programs and services. Clients were able to connect with services and receive further support with parenting, legal, financial, and health issues, as well as information about other community programs.



This event also greatly enhanced collaboration with other organisations and services and led to a notable increase in referrals to the Program.

Our Community Development Officer, Kate, said that it was wonderful to see so many clients face to face and be able to directly provide them with groceries, baby items, and other essential goods. Sheena, a client who volunteered at the event said that she enjoyed helping us with packing hampers with essential items and meeting other services. The event enabled the team to gain more insight into the families' needs and collaborate with other organisations to forge partnerships and possible referral pathways for clients.



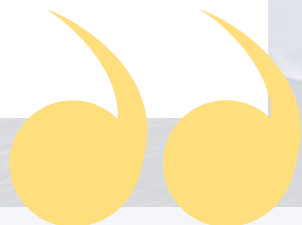
Testimonials from Our Emergency Relief Program Clients



I was feeling very down because due to the pandemic we were experiencing financial hardship. I have a bridging visa, so I was not receiving any financial assistance from the government. Covid also made it very hard to work and look for work. This program has given me a lifeline so that we can have food, shelter, and overall good health. I felt supported because you listened and understood my circumstances.

My situation was utterly terrible before... [CFS] handled my case very politely and decently. Actually, I was unable to pay my rent and buy our medicines as well. But with the help of this program [CFS] organised to pay my rent and buy the medicines from chemist shop. To be honest I am expressing my gratitude from the bottom of my heart, really the community needed all the time to helping real sufferers.

I was not receiving any form of income to help pay for my rent and food. I was in a dire situation as my visa had been rejected and my work visa had been cancelled. I was going to get evicted from my home. The program was so helpful they paid for my rent and gave me vouchers for food and household goods. They gave me roof over my head and something to eat. Though it's finished and I am still in need of the same help, it was very helpful and I am very grateful and appreciative of it.



Testimonials from Our Emergency Relief Program Clients



When we first decided to apply the emergency relief, we felt like we were coming to a dead end. I lost my fixed income job due to my health and just doing food delivery to make sure there's food on the table for my wife and my 3 daughters. With rent and outstanding electricity bill to be paid. The program has helped us so much especially with the rent and electricity bill so I can save a little of my income for upcoming utilities and necessities. With that I would like to express my ultimate gratitude for all kind assistance and wishing for this program to be continued so that we can help more people in need.

When I first came I was extremely distressed as I'm struggling to make ends meet with two very young children. This program eased my burden for few months to help me fulfil my all legitimate necessities of life. This program gave me confidence and a sense of independence where Being a single mum I'm struggling financially everyday. Such programs are really beneficial for vulnerable people who struggles everyday for a better life. These programs not only give you confidence but also help you to live your life like every normal person you have the financial stability in their lives.

The help the program provided me meant a lot to me as it saved me from being homeless. Such programs around makes life easier for people like myself who do not have access to other services. I am really grateful for your support and wish it was little longer. Wish you luck and thank you from the deepest core of my heart



Our Staff Story

(Kate and Sang's Story)

Our Emergency Relief Program team is made up of staff members who are passionate about supporting those in need in the community. Kate and Sang started working on the Emergency Relief Program in October 2021 as a team to support asylum seekers and temporary visa holders who were impacted by COVID-19. Kate, our Community Development Officer, worked at CFS in 2010 and re-joined our organisation to work on the Emergency Relief Program. Sang, our Community Program Officer, has been working with CFS since 2009. Sonia was our caseworker for the program from November to April.

Kate, Sang, and Sonia worked collaboratively to support asylum seeker and temporary visa holder members of the community impacted by COVID-19 and experiencing financial hardship. Sang said that the program was extremely helpful to clients, especially after the COVID-19 pandemic. He continues "many families could not pay their rents, many clients could not afford to see doctors, many boys and girls could not follow their careers, and many people were hungry in this beautiful country." This program has allowed Kate and Sang to support people in vulnerable situations in a practical way and make a real difference in their lives. They enjoyed working with people from a diverse range of backgrounds and learned a lot simply by meeting them.

"Working on this program has made me reflect on how critical compassion is to understanding people's vulnerable situations and assessing how to support them. To me this means building upon empathy, the taking on of someone's perspective or feeling their emotions, to lead to the action of support. Importantly, when people feel heard and connected to the community they can develop their voice, and this is where social change starts. I feel very fortunate that I had the unique privilege of hearing people's stories and learning about their lives. Their incredible

Spirit and resilience despite facing countless barriers and hardships is very inspiring." - Kate (Community Development Officer)

Sang also shared that CFS has become very well known to those in need in Fairfield LGA and beyond for Emergency Relief support, and for empathising with clients' demanding situations and, listening to their concerns.

Actively listening to clients' stories had a great impact on our team's ability to tailor clients' needs. Kate was particularly affected by learning of the experiences of clients being placed in detention centres for significant lengths of time. She saw the devastating ripple impact detention had on clients' relationship with family, physical, and mental health, and general well-being.

She believes it is an unjust and inhumane to treat people who have fled their country to seek protection, denying their basic human rights and causing more problems for people who have already experienced hardship and loss.



The Emergency Relief Support program developed close partnerships with organizations and schools already working tirelessly to provide a support system for those settling in Australia. The team also successfully held an Emergency Relief Support Expo to meet with clients face to face, provided food hampers, and connect them to other organisations for further support. Sang shared that this was the first time some of his clients had participated in such an event despite living in Australia for years, and they were happy and grateful for the occasion.

The program became an established major referral point for community organizations with critical cases where their support could not address a client's immediate needs. Without the program, the flow of effects from financial hardship to their housing situation and health would have been left unaddressed. The program played a critical role in addressing the immediate needs of people when there are no sufficient protection health and well-being safety nets.

Most of the clients required emergency assistance on more than one occasion, as the financial hardship they faced because of a combination of barriers was not resolvable over a short period. In the delivery of the program, the emergency relief program team also found that many clients faced long-term severe financial hardship, with minimal support options available and no income.

Since the end of the program in July, the team is contacted daily by existing and new clients needing emergency relief support. Long-term funding is necessary to address the continuing settlement needs of asylum seekers and temporary visa holders, and reform is needed in our current immigration and welfare policies to ensure human rights are upheld.

The Program highlighted some critical issues currently being faced by asylum seekers and temporary visa holders in the community, including the impact of lack of work rights, employment loss and barriers, housing crisis, unmet medical needs, and a gap in support services. Although the funding for the program has ended, Emergency Relief Program team has valuable knowledge, expertise, and networks that they can use to continue to create and build support networks that respond to these needs.



Meet Sheena

The Emergency Relief Program supported many asylum seekers and temporary visa holder families, impacted by COVID-19. One of our clients, Sheena is the mother of three beautiful sons, and she came to Australia from Malaysia with her partner and kids five years ago. She is currently on a bridging visa and waiting for the protection visa. Sheena was active participant in the program, her enthusiasm to volunteer and build relationships was remarkable.

She first came to Community First Step with her friend to look for disability services support for her ten year old son who is autistic. She was referred to the Emergency Relief Program, and was supported by Sonia and Kate. Her relationship with Kate and Sonia grew through many interactions and supports, such as assistance with her rent and essential items when she and her whole family was COVID positive last year and her husband could not work during that time. Sheena said that working with Kate and Sonia was an amazing experience and she felt comfortable asking for support from them.

In March, Sheena volunteered at the Emergency Relief Support Expo which was held by our Emergency Relief team. Sonia, Kate, and Sang. She helped the team with putting together the food parcels and preparing to give them away to the families who came to the event. She said, "It was really an honour to be a part of the event because Community First Step has been helping me a lot and I am happy to help too". Sheena said she loves volunteering and has a good relationship with our staff at the community hub and our Emergency Relief Program Team.

Since the program ended, she joined some of our events such as the morning tea held by our community team, and is busy volunteering at her son's schools and supporting her sons to have a wonderful life in Australia. Sheena said moving to another country took a lot of courage and resilience, and during COVID, a lot of families were in a similar situation as her and were struggling to get their needs met.

She believes that programs such as the Emergency Relief Program have not only helped her family with their struggles during COVID but also gave them the chance to focus on adapting to the new culture and environment while getting the support they need. The Emergency Relief Team was inspired by the strength and resourcefulness Sheena has shown during the program and the courage to overcome so many difficult barriers to settle down and build a new life in the entire new country.





Women's support group meet up weekly for activities, excursions, and experiencing community beyond Fairfield

[TEI – Department of Communities and Justice Grant]

The women's support group was started nine years ago by Lila, our community development officer to create a safe space for Arabic women to be a part of community who are like-minded and have a common interest. A lot of women participants are refugees, immigrants and asylum seekers who are looking for a supportive group that allows them to learn more about Australia and other helpful services in our local community. Lila supported more than 39 women last year with knowledge about the community, educational sessions, and excursions around Sydney.

The women's support group went to Katoomba and the Botanical Garden in May and June last year and organized a women's get-together Morning Tea.

We have a conversation with our proud participants Faten and Sudeus to reflect their experience with the Women's support group so far and what they are looking forward to in the future.





Meet Sudeus



Sudeus has been participating in the Women's support group for more than 8 years now. She joined the group because she heard that this group at CFS offered a lot of educational sessions such as on health issues that are important for her family and herself.

Sudeus said she had attended many groups originally and she liked this group more than any other group in the local community. She loves socializing with other ladies and the way Lila organizes different activities, topics, and social outings every week. Even though she has the responsibility to take care of her family, Sudeus has been making time to be involved in the women's support group because she learned a lot of important things such as rules, services, and everything about Australia.

Being a part of Lila's group has also benefited Sudeus with her physical health and mental health when it comes to interacting with her family. She is fascinated by what CFS has offered her with knowledge and the ability to expand her social networks. Sudeus is looking forward to sharing her knowledge with her community and going on more excursions and participating in the different activities with the women's support group.



It gives me pleasure and makes me happy when I come to the centre, and when I go home, I am very happy because I attended the group, that is how I feel every week
- Sudeus



Meet Faten

Faten is one of the active participants in the women's support group since the group started 9 years ago. She was the first to join the group when she heard from the community about the women's support group at CFS when she was new in Australia. She joined the group because she wanted to be part of a community that speaks Arabic and to learn more about Australia. Before she was a carer to her mom, and she was active and involved in the community such as attending English classes at TAFE and going to discussions and meetings to learn more about the community.

Since she joined the group, Faten has been fascinated by how much CFS has provided her such as information about centre links, health care information, how to take care of herself, and diverse topics from the guest speaker. She also benefits from socializing with other women, inviting and encouraging women to come and join the group.

Faten enjoyed the excursion to the Katoomba and Auburn Botanical Garden because she learned a lot about Australia, and it is good to go on an excursion and enjoy the company of other ladies in the group. Faten has been living in Fairfield her whole life since she got to Australia, an excursion like this gave her opportunities to discover what is happening outside of her suburb.

She said that she loves to continue this weekly group and enjoyed learning new things from guest speakers and she appreciated Lila for organising the event and educational sessions. The group coordinator, Lila has been attentive to their needs, and she connected the group with guest speakers who can educate our ladies with important information.



This centre is amazing in every way, the women's group, the staff at the reception, and Lila, they have been helpful and provided a lot of help with our needs. - Faten



Since she has been in the group for nine years, many ladies in the group trust her to take care of them and assist Lila with organizing discussions and events such as morning tea and Christmas party. Faten is looking forward to supporting women who have a similar situation as her and don't know where to ask for help and she also loves to give back to the community in any way she can help.



Quality Assurance Committee and Risk Committee

Over the last 12 months, steering the Quality Assurance team and the Internal Risk Committee, I have been primarily focusing on continuous quality improvement of the organisation via research, and discussions amongst the committee members. Often additions to the continuous improvement register are based on ideas which help meet legislation requirements, requests for the need of change based on feedback or concerns from staff and/or clients, or due to general perceived gaps by committee members in general BAU work in the organisation.

Community First Step is currently undergoing a major client satisfaction survey, translated to prominent languages spoken in the community in order for us to be able to gather more responses and which should also add value to our continuous quality improvement.

The quality assurance team projects which have been completed are the clinical supervision framework, improvement of the participant intake framework for Disability Services, psychosocial recovery coaching, digitalisation of the incident management system to allow for improved incident response and investigation, and general

improvements in other areas of disability services such as service agreements, support coordination, and the referral process.

Current projects in focus are, cultural awareness, the induction framework of the organisation, various critical areas in the HR department such as the induction framework, improvement of identification and accountability.

To ensure the safety of our clients and staff, as well as ensuring that we are maintaining their rights such as diversity and inclusion, and their safety, and effective service delivery, trainings such as Mental Health First Aid, Crisis intervention, cultural awareness, manual handling, dysphagia and mealtime management have been procured.



Yomna Touni,
Leader of People, Quality & Safeguards



Community First Step
25 Barbara Street,
Fairfield NSW 2165
(02) 9727 4333
cfs@cfs.asn.au
www.cfs.asn.au

