



metro assist

Empowering communities
Creating positive impact



ANNUAL REPORT 2025

Acknowledgment of Country

Metro Assist would like to acknowledge the Gadigal people of the Eora Nation, the Traditional Custodians of the land on which we operate. We pay our respects to Elders past, present and emerging and celebrate the diversity of First Nations people and their ongoing cultures and connections to our lands and waters.

About Metro Assist

Metro Assist was established in 1986 as a Migrant Resource Centre. We have extensive history of delivering services to vulnerable individuals, families and communities in Canterbury Bankstown, Inner West, Burwood, Canada Bay and Strathfield Local Government Areas.

Some of our services support people across different LGAs of NSW. We have specialist knowledge of the experiences and needs of culturally and linguistically diverse communities. We are committed to promoting diversity and social inclusion through our services and collaborative sector advocacy work.

Our Vision

A fair society that respects diversity and enables all people to reach their full potential.

Mission

To empower individuals, families and communities of diverse backgrounds through professional person-centred services.



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CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

Metro Assist's role in supporting individuals, families and communities in the areas we service has never been more important. Cost-of-living pressures remain high despite easing inflation and lower interest rates. For newly arrived residents and other vulnerable groups – such as people and families experiencing relationship breakdown or going through rental crisis or financial hardships – these challenging socio-economic conditions make it increasingly difficult to survive and thrive. Organisations like ours are pivotal in providing support for a better and more just life.

Many in our client cohort include refugees and migrants who are at their most vulnerable when they first come to the country. Our clients often face multiple barriers to settling into their new lives. For some, the pathway to building a successful life is long and complex. This is

where Metro Assist provides an invaluable role. We support new as well as established culturally diverse families, individuals and communities through a diverse range of services by providing both emotional and practical assistance. While demand for these services continues to expand, we are proud that the quality delivered and our care for our clients remains high.

We simply couldn't deliver these valued services without the backing of our many supporters. I extend my thanks to our funders in federal, state and local government, along with our private sector partners for their continued financial support and commitment.

“ *While demand for these services continues to expand, we are proud that the quality delivered and our care for our clients remains high.* ”

On behalf of the Board, I would like to acknowledge the great work of our CEO Nina Shahi, her leadership team and all the Metro Assist staff and volunteers. We have a committed and passionate workforce who believe in what they are doing. Our team continues to find new and meaningful ways to make a positive difference to the lives of our clients and their families. The organisation has done well in a tough economic climate. Workforce shortages, while easing, are still creating

pressure. Nonetheless, our teams work hard to maintain the high-quality services they are known for.

I acknowledge our directors who are passionate about Metro Assist's work and outcomes. We value their dedication, volunteering their time around existing family and work commitments. Each of them brings unique skills, expertise and perspective to make well-informed decisions. I also extend my heartfelt thanks to retiring directors Susan Loane and Catherine Dai, for their hard work and leadership through the past couple of years.

I am pleased to confirm that after 18 months of collaboration and work, Metro Assist has merged with like-minded organisation Community for Better Living Ltd (CABL). This

merger represents a strategic objective to enhance the services we provide to our communities and to build on our collective strengths.

Together with CABL we look forward to building a stronger organisation that can deliver greater impact. The year ahead will be an exciting one as we leverage our skills and resources to expand our collective reach and elevate the support we offer to the communities we serve.



Richard Wonders

Director and Chairperson

CEO'S REPORT

Our communities have navigated significant challenges this year. Rising living costs, a deepening housing crisis, family violence and growing social divisions. Global humanitarian crises have also added uncertainty for many. Against this backdrop, Metro Assist has remained a trusted source of support, offering client-centred innovative services that build stability, confidence and connection.

2024–25 has been a year of resilience, learning and growth for Metro Assist. Our dedicated team has been the driving force behind our impact, working tirelessly with care, compassion and commitment.

We are grateful for collaborators, community leaders and all levels of government we work alongside. These important partnerships enable us to collectively achieve social impact.

That collaborative approach is embodied in our recent merger with Community Action for Better Living (CABL), a significant milestone. We are excited to join forces with this like-minded organisation that shares our mission and values. With the merger, we look forward to using our collective resources to better address the complex and evolving needs of our communities.

Throughout the year, Metro Assist's innovative programs continued to adapt and grow to meet the needs and aspirations of the communities we serve. We are delivering Settlement Engagement and Transition Support (SETS) through our new CBINW SETS regional consortium established this year. A successful Department of Social Services (DSS) tender has also allowed expansion of our Financial Counselling Program.

This means we can deliver the program throughout Sydney's Inner South West, supporting more people to achieve financial stability and confidence.

We rolled out new health education initiatives this year. These include the Multicultural Health Navigators Program, delivered in partnership with Advance Diversity Services, and the Multicultural Cancer Awareness Program, funded by Cancer Institute NSW. The programs help people facing language and literacy barriers confidently access health services and navigate complex systems.

“ We are grateful for collaborators, community leaders and all levels of government we work alongside. These important partnerships enable us to collectively achieve social impact

Beyond service delivery, Metro Assist continued to amplify community voices through policy engagement and advocacy throughout 2024-25. We work with government and sector partners to inform program reforms and policy decisions. Our goal is to ensure the perspectives of migrants, refugees, families, children, women and tenants are heard and included.

Metro Assist maintains a strong financial position, ending the year with a healthy surplus. This is vital to ensuring our sustainability in an increasingly volatile funding environment.

Internally, we made important investments in service governance, leadership development and information security. By upgrading systems and policies, we strengthened our ability to meet the highest quality and

governance standards, information security, risk management and service delivery. We are also proud to have maintained our ISO 27001:2022 accreditation, demonstrating our commitment to data security and privacy.

This year's achievements are a direct reflection of the hard work and commitment of our team at Metro Assist. My deepest appreciation goes to all our staff including our dedicated leaders and managers. Their professionalism, passion and teamwork delivered outstanding results for the people and communities we serve.

I also extend sincere thanks to our funding bodies and stakeholders whose trust, support and collaboration

enable us to deliver meaningful and lasting impact.

Finally, I acknowledge the leadership, vision and governance of our Chair, Richard Wonders, and our Board of Directors. Thank you for ensuring we stay focused on our mission to achieve the best outcomes for our communities.



Nina Shahi
CEO

OUR IMPACT

Over the past year Metro Assist has continued its work to break down the barriers faced by vulnerable people and communities. Our services and programs focus on supporting people who are culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD), migrants and refugees and First Nations people.

We deliver comprehensive one-on-one, group and community-based initiatives to address issues around employment, family health and safety, tenancy, financial wellbeing and settlement.

We work with other organisations and government bodies to advocate for and create safe and welcoming spaces in which to engage, connect and support one another.

Our holistic approach promotes long-term wellbeing, self-sufficiency and resilience, supporting people to contribute meaningfully to their communities.



*'Freedom is not just safety.
It's being able to dream again.'*



SERVICE HIGHLIGHTS

- Referred over **2,400** people to health, housing and employment agencies.
- Hosted **226** settlement group sessions and community events.
- Delivered **692** financial counselling sessions.
- Provided **\$190,582** in emergency relief funding.
- Delivered **4,166** early intervention sessions for families.
- Prevented **724** evictions and **728** cases of homelessness.
- Provided **15,741** tenancy service sessions.
- Supported more than **175** people with employment services.
- Created the **Youth Week: Future Pathways Expo** attended by more than **500** young people and more than **50** exhibitors.
- Expanded our domestic and family violence support with a second **Love and Hope Hub**.



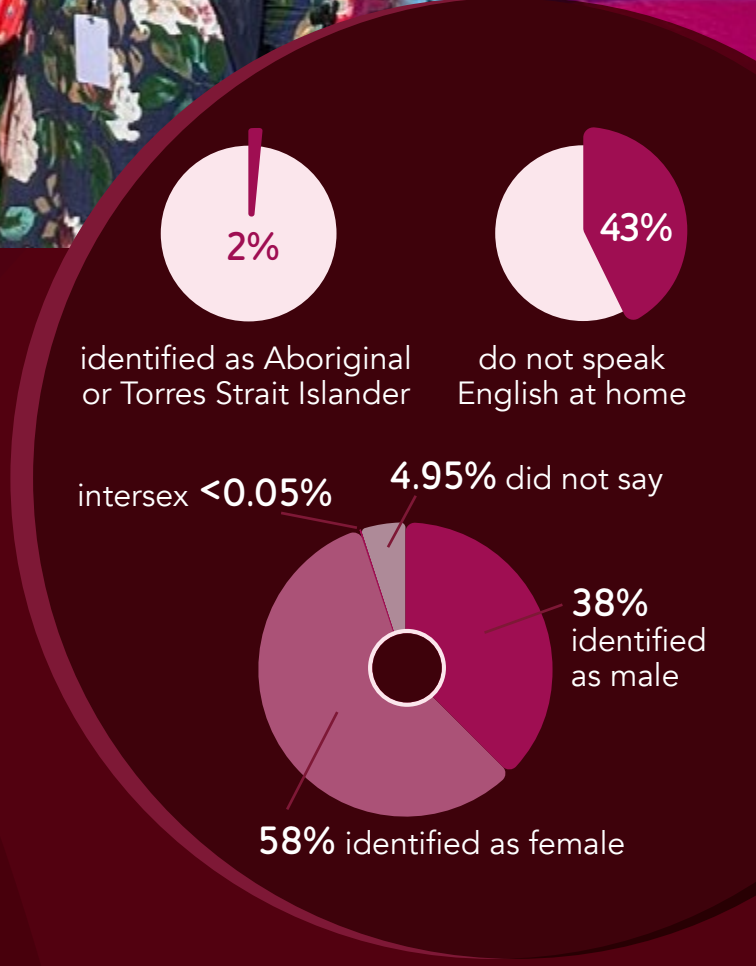
WHO WE SERVE

We supported
10,007 people across
 all services

Top 5 Languages spoken



1. Arabic
2. Mandarin
3. Bengali
4. Dari
5. Vietnamese



“ *‘These services create real pathways from uncertainty to belonging, offering a lifeline to those most in need.’*

*The Hon. Jason Yat-sen Li, MP for Strathfield
 Community Recognition Statement
 NSW Parliament, June 2025*

'You helped me rediscover my self-worth and opened a pathway to a better future.... Thank you for believing in me, and for continuing to uplift those who need it most.'



SETTLEMENT SERVICES



1,215

people received settlement support



2,400

referrals to support services



4,382

casework sessions delivered



226

group sessions and community activities hosted

Our settlement programs equip newly arrived migrants, refugees and humanitarian entrants with the confidence, knowledge and tools they need to build strong foundations in Australia.

Metro Assist delivers culturally safe, person-centred and innovative settlement support informed by lived experience and deep community insight. Our clients receive tailored assistance that strengthens independence, resilience and participation.

In 2024–25 we took the lead in an agency consortium delivering Settlement, Engagement and Transition Support (SETS) services across Canterbury Bankstown, Inner West, Burwood, Strathfield and Canada Bay. Partnering with the Lebanese Community Council (LCC) and Canterbury City Community Centre (4Cs), we have strengthened our regional impact.

Our settlement portfolio is strengthened by a suite of complementary programs. This year the Multicultural Road Safety and Driving Program provided free driving lessons to 80 people and 24 in-language road safety sessions to diverse communities. Through Multicultural Health Navigators we supported 80 people from Korean and Arabic-speaking communities to access the health system. Civic literacy sessions were delivered to 8 communities through the Empower Your Vote initiative, run in partnership with the NSW Electoral Commission. We also partnered with Football NSW to run a Multicultural Soccer Program for over 100 newly arrived children and young people aged 4 to 18 years.

These programs work alongside our core casework, workshops and partnerships to remove barriers and connect clients with health, housing, employment and legal supports.

Our settlement team also leads diverse community events and initiatives that foster inclusion, leadership and social connection for migrant and refugee communities.



CLIENT STORIES

MAHER

SETS Youth Support

When **MAHER** arrived in Australia under a humanitarian visa he had no income, limited digital skills and no clear path to permanent employment. He joined our 'Road safety: helping learner drivers become safer drivers' workshop.

“*The SETS team recognised Maher's potential and provided wrap-around support.*”

He received 8 free driving lessons to build his confidence and independence. We provided a laptop through our brokerage fund so he could access essential services, online learning and job platforms. Through one-on-one employment support, we helped Maher create a resume and coached him on job search skills, interview preparation and workplace expectations. We connected him to suitable opportunities and he secured an interview with Australia Post as a parcel sorter.

Maher was offered a full-time night shift role starting with a 3-month probation period. He now has stable income, increased confidence and is taking active steps toward independence. Maher said, 'I didn't know where to start. Without your help, I wouldn't have found this job. Now I feel like I have a future in Australia.'

(Names changed to protect client privacy)

YI

SETS DV Support

As a victim survivor of domestic and family violence, **YI** was referred to our Love and Hope Hub. She had not fully recognised the extent of violence she was experiencing and struggled to identify signs of abuse. She felt trapped in her circumstances and financially dependent on her perpetrator with no income or personal resources of her own.

“*Our caseworker developed a plan with Yi and guided her to become financially resilient.*”

We removed Yi from the unsafe environment and coordinated relocation. We applied for crisis financial support to assist with her move and connected her with domestic and family violence counselling services. We provided employment support and opportunities for social participation. We also assisted with her visa application after the sponsor was no longer involved.

Yi escaped the abusive relationship and secured work as a data entry clerk. This gave her financial independence and helped rebuild her sense of self-worth. Yi now feels empowered and confident about her future.

The Settlement Engagement and Transition Support (SETS) Program is funded by the Department of Home Affairs.

'I feel far more in control and confident about my financial path forward. Thank you for your empathy and dedication. It truly meant a lot to me.'



692

financial counselling sessions



507

people received emergency relief



241

no-interest loans approved

\$30,000

in energy bill vouchers

FINANCIAL WELLBEING

Our Financial Wellbeing programs support individuals and families facing financial difficulties. Run within Inner West and Canterbury Bankstown our services include financial counselling, no-interest loans and energy bill assistance. We also run financial literacy workshops to help people gain confidence managing their money.

In 2024–25 Metro Assist provided 692 financial counselling sessions. The top reasons for people seeking the service were limited money skills, domestic and family violence, unemployment and family breakdown. Support offered through the sessions included assistance to access entitlements, creditor issues, budgeting advice and support with mortgage or rental arrears.

We provided \$190,582 of emergency relief funding this year. Of the 507 people receiving emergency relief more than 70% were women. The most requested relief was for food vouchers, household items, and medical and utility bills.

Other financial support provided this year included \$30,000 in Energy Account Payment Assistance vouchers, as well as 241 No-interest Loan Scheme (NILS) approvals totalling \$27,875. The loans supported applicants with items such as furniture and white goods, car expenses, educational needs and medical expenses.

We also ran [community events](#) including financial literacy workshops and a Bills Assist Day to help ease cost-of-living pressures.



“ CLIENT STORIES

CEM

Financial Counselling

CEM, 49 and single, had been unemployed for 3 years. For 20 years he'd held senior positions with financial institutions. After using his redundancy money and savings for 2 years to pay his mortgage, his savings ran out leaving him \$34,000 in arrears. When the bank's initial 12-month payment pause expired, Cem asked for an extension. The bank referred him to our financial counselling service. Cem feared selling his unit and facing Sydney's competitive rental market while on JobSeeker.

“ We created a money plan and gave Cem food vouchers and energy bill relief to ease immediate financial pressure.

We also successfully advocated to the bank to give Cem a 3-month extension while he continued his job search. We connected Cem with recruitment agencies and worked with him to rebuild his confidence and self-belief.

Within a month, Cem secured a senior position and successfully resumed mortgage payments.

FATIMA

No Interest Loan Scheme

FATIMA works in food and beverage attendance with a large hotel chain. She came to us seeking a NILS loan for training to improve her career prospects in hospitality. Fatima hoped to complete a Quality Assurance and Food Safety Management course costing \$1,560.

Fatima attended her appointment on time and supplied all required documents, including her latest pay slips as evidence of income. Her budget showed she had a surplus after rent, bills and expenses, indicating she could meet loan repayments. We assessed her application and determined she was eligible for a NILS loan.

“ Fatima's application was approved, enabling her to pay for the training with no stress of interest or lending charges.

NILS allowed Fatima to invest in her professional development and future career prospects in the hospitality industry without financial burden.

Our Financial Counselling services are funded by NSW Fair Trading and the Department of Social Services

(Names changed to protect client privacy)



'When my caseworker from Metro Assist visits, I feel happy and excited. Her visits make me feel less lonely and more supported, knowing that someone is checking in on us.'



4,166

TEI sessions held with families



1,607

event and training attendees



130

families in Family Preservation programs



2,236

caseworker sessions

FAMILY SERVICES

Family services support children from birth to 18 years and their parents. With a focus on CALD families and those experiencing social or financial disadvantage, we provide culturally responsive casework, counselling, parenting programs and group activities. We also support a range of family-friendly [community events](#) throughout the year.

In 2024–25, TEI parenting programs have included 123 Magic and emotion coaching, Black Box Workshop, Bringing Up Great Kids and Tuning in to Kids.

Working closely with the NSW Department of Communities and Justice (DCJ), schools, health services and community partners, our team of CALD caseworkers strengthens family safety, wellbeing and functioning through the Families Together program. Reasons for seeking our services include concerns about family function and age-appropriate development, mental health, wellbeing and self-care.

Our work makes a difference, with families reporting increased parenting confidence, stronger relationships with their children, improved housing stability and renewed engagement with education.



“ CLIENT STORIES

AMARA

Psychological support

AMARA, a single mother of 2 from Sierra Leone, accessed our TEI services via Sydney Local Health District’s Healthy Homes and Neighbourhoods Program. She was experiencing significant trauma from domestic and family violence and a 6-month hospital stay for post-natal depression. She was also under severe financial hardship after Centrelink unexpectedly suspended her payments.

“ Metro Assist stepped in with comprehensive support including home security cameras for safety.

We also provided food vouchers and food bank connections for immediate relief and financial counselling to rebuild stability. The team met with her children’s school, arranged access to bulk-billing psychology services and connected her with free dental care for urgent treatment.

Through case management and integrated support services, Amara’s mental health and parenting capacity improved and she gained financial independence.

Her family now lives with greater safety, security and access to essential services, demonstrating the effectiveness of early intervention for vulnerable families facing multiple challenges.

(Names changed to protect client privacy)

JOHN AND KELLY

Bringing Up Great Kids

The couple was referred to the Family Preservation program by DCJ amid escalating concerns for their 3 children’s wellbeing. Their 17-year-old was having suicidal ideation and self-harm requiring hospital admission. At the same time, 2 other children needed ongoing medical treatment and John was in rental arrears with Centrelink stopping payments.

“ Metro Assist’s case management team cleared rental arrears through brokerage, restored Centrelink payments and secured community housing.

The caseworker attended mental health appointments with the family, supported an autism assessment and NDIS application and developed a safety plan. The family was connected with appropriate mental health services and youth mentoring.

They now have greater stability with improved service access and parental confidence. The young person receives coordinated mental health and disability support, including life skills development and driving lessons, fostering independence and hope for their future.

The Targeted Early Intervention (TEI) and Family Preservation initiatives are funded by the NSW Department of Communities and Justice.



'I can't begin to tell you how happy and grateful I am for all your hard work on my case.'



724
evictions prevented



15,741
service sessions



3,000+
tenants given direct advice

TENANCY SERVICES

Metro Assist provides information, advice and assistance to private and public housing tenants through the Southern Sydney Tenants Advice and Advocacy Service (SSTAAS). Funded by NSW Fair Trading, our work includes communicating with landlords and real estate agents as well as preparing for, and attending, consumer tribunal hearings.

As one of the state's top-performing tenant advocacy services, our team supports renters facing multiple barriers. We prioritise those experiencing family and domestic violence, living with mental ill health or disability, from CALD communities and First Nations backgrounds and who are LGBTQIA+.

Services include the Tenants' Advice and Advocacy Program across Southern Sydney, Duty Advocacy Services at NCAT and outreach tenancy advice services in Bankstown, Chester Hill and Hurstville.

In 2024–25 we provided more than 15,700 service sessions, prepared over 1,000 NCAT applications and made 367 hearing representations. We are proud that our services prevented 728 cases of homelessness and 724 evictions.

SSTAAS is expanding its outreach services and working with community partners to provide in-language sessions for CALD tenants. We are also enhancing early intervention and negotiation support for vulnerable tenants to reduce tribunal escalations.



“ CLIENT STORIES

MOHAMMAD

MOHAMMAD, an NDIS participant with cerebral palsy and an intellectual disability, was struggling in a Homes NSW property plagued by mould, ceiling leaks and severe structural damage.

Despite 9 repair requests and medical evidence of mould-related health complications, no action was taken. He and his family were forced to sleep in the lounge room to avoid collapsing ceilings. Mohammad’s care, health and schooling were severely affected by the unsafe and overcrowded conditions.

Our tenancy team intervened, lodging an application and representing Mohammad at NCAT.

“Through our advocacy, we secured temporary emergency accommodation funded by Homes NSW while repairs were completed.

Although the family’s transfer application for a larger property has been raised to priority status, delays continue to cause distress and disruption. SSTAAS continues to advocate to ensure they are permanently rehoused in a suitable property and never again left to endure uninhabitable public housing.

(Names changed to protect client privacy)

MINA

MINA, an international student with limited support, was unlawfully locked out of her studio apartment by her real estate agent without notice. She found herself homeless, sleeping at train stations and in parks. Most of her belongings remained locked inside the apartment, with a notice threatening disposal within 14 days.

Our tenancy team assessed the situation and found that although the real estate agent claimed the property was a boarding house, it met the criteria of a residential tenancy. We helped Mina apply for an urgent NCAT hearing, compile evidence and prepare submissions.

“At the hearing, we successfully argued that the lockout breached the Residential Tenancies Act.

The Tribunal ruled in her favour, agreeing it was a residential tenancy, awarding Mina \$5,000 in compensation and ordering the landlord to not dispose of her possessions.

With our team’s support, Mina later secured new accommodation and regained stability.

SSTAAS is funded by NSW Fair Trading through the Tenants’ Advice and Advocacy Program (TAAP), supported by the Rental Bond Interest Account.

“

It not only opened closed doors, it also helped me to create pathways which have never been there before. Besides, it also enhanced my skills and self-confidence.'

'I feel like I know my place now in my own world'



EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

Metro Assist’s Employment Services support all people to find meaningful, ongoing work regardless of age, background or ability. We mainly do this work through the SkillME and Dress for Work programs.

SkillMe assists refugees, asylum seekers and skilled migrants as they navigate the Australian job market. The program aims to remove barriers through customised, culturally responsive support. It does this with one-on-one support, advocacy and skill development to create long-term economic and social inclusion.

Among its initiatives is the LinkedIn Employment Support Program, which this year assisted more than 120 people with employment placements, upskilling and job readiness training. The program included employment coaching, LinkedIn Premium access, resume and interview support, and mentorship.

Also under SkillME is the Rising Sisters Program, aimed at women from CALD, refugee and migrant communities. Starting with an individual assessment to explore personal strengths and goals, the 55 participants then accessed a range of tailored services and group activities. Offerings included skill-building and job-readiness workshops, peer support and networking, mentoring and career coaching. The women could also get subsidies for driving lessons, training fees and work-related costs.

Through shared experiences and community-building, Rising Sisters created a safe and empowering environment where women supported each other to gain independence and take control of their future.

Beyond the practical support, SkillME program participants reported having increased confidence, expanded networks and deeper understanding of Australia’s work culture.



120+

people supported with employment assistance



55+

participants in the Rising Sisters program



193

supported by Dress for Work program



Our **Dress for Work** program continues to empower boys and men with quality clothing and job training. Since starting in 2021 the initiative – which includes workshops, mentoring and a professional suiting program – has helped more than 2,600 clients prepare for employment or formal education.

Strong school participation and new partnerships are expanding the program. In 2024–25 we delivered Dress for Work to 193 people in Sydney and across 20 regional NSW locations.

The Employment Services team has also hosted [community events](#) including a successful jobs expo as part of Youth Week.

“ CLIENT STORIES

CONDELL PARK HIGH SCHOOL

A group of disengaged students began to dream big after joining a 10-week Dress for Work program.

Run in collaboration with Condell Park High School, the program worked with 20 boys from Year 10. It aimed to build the confidence of young men who felt misplaced in school.

“ *The Thursday sessions quickly became a favourite for many participants, with 85% of students achieving perfect attendance.*

Program highlights included a visit from Bankstown Bruins professional basketballer Andre Wolford. The NBL1 guard talked to the students about chasing dreams while always having a back-up plan.

Condell Park careers advisor Jenny McGrath said the changes in the students had been amazing adding, ‘teachers are seeing a rapid improvement in the behaviour of the boys’.

From 20 young boys who entered the program to the 20 young men who graduated, their transformations brought to life the program motto: One Suit. Unlimited Possibilities.

But the program’s impact was perhaps best captured by one participant, Mosa, who said, ‘I feel like I know my place now in my own world’.

Condell Park have scheduled a follow-up program for Year 7 students to address bullying, behaviour and respect issues.



(Names changed to protect client privacy)



'This wasn't just a celebration. It was healing. It was powerful. It reminded us that every refugee story is a story of courage, and every culture is a thread in the fabric of Australia.'



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Refugee Week: Gala Dinner

More than 200 refugee families, community leaders, settlement sector partners and political representatives came together on 20 June for our annual Refugee Week Gala Dinner.

Held in Bankstown, this event celebrated human resilience, the strength of refugee communities and the hope that comes with finding freedom.

This year's theme, 'Finding freedom: diversity in community', came to life through refugee voices and personal experiences, honouring the journeys of those who have found belonging in Australia.

Guests heard addresses from the Hon. Jihad Dib MP and James Jegasothy, Deputy CEO of Multicultural NSW (pictured left), and enjoyed performances showcasing traditional culture and identity. Young people from Palestine shared stories of displacement, resettlement and triumph over adversity. Clients from Afghanistan and Ukraine spoke of their dreams for a better future, reminding everyone that Australia is made richer by its diversity.

A highlight was the 'My Hopes for a Multicultural Australia' video, with personal stories from Metro Assist clients and community leaders. For many refugees attending, this was their first formal community event since arriving. It marked a significant milestone in building confidence and identity in their new home.

High-profile attendance from state ministers, MPs and community partners demonstrated strong institutional support, highlighting Metro Assist's role in shaping inclusive policy and practice.

Beyond our in-house services, Metro Assist delivers events and programs celebrating diversity and bringing communities together. These programs support refugees, families, women and youth at risk of isolation, enabling them to actively participate in community life.



Youth Week: Future Pathways Expo

Young clients told us about the uncertainty they face when leaving high school. This included limited awareness of options, difficulties with job applications and interviews, confusion about apprenticeships and traineeships, and financial pressures around study and living costs.

With Canterbury Bankstown Council, Western Sydney University and Canterbury Bankstown Chamber of Commerce, Metro Assist created the Future Pathways Expo during Youth Week 2025. At the event young people could access education providers, employers and support services in one place.

More than 500 young people attended the expo, which brought together about 50 universities, training organisations, employers, apprenticeship providers and youth support services. Young people connected directly with opportunities, gained practical guidance on training and employment and learned about the support available to help them pursue their career goals.

We are now working with our partners to make the expo an annual event.

Bills Assist Day



The cost-of-living crisis hit vulnerable communities particularly hard in 2024–25. Newly arrived migrants, refugees and humanitarian entrants faced compounding pressures while navigating settlement and housing instability.

Metro Assist addressed the issue with dignity and direct support through Bills Assist Day. The initiative brought together government and non-government agencies under one roof to provide information, advice and assistance. It delivered direct, on-the-spot help with bills, fines, tenancy issues, rebate claims and other financial challenges. Over 60 clients attended, many facing overdue utility bills, rental stress and Centrelink difficulties.

Through partnerships with Services NSW, Sydney Water, legal support centres and financial counselling services, clients received immediate help with critical issues. The event also connected people to ongoing support services and gave information on accessing government assistance in the future.

Financial literacy workshops

Our financial literacy sessions offer practical information to assist CALD community members plan for expenses and manage their money with greater confidence.

In 2024–25 we ran a session for Bengali women and another for recently arrived Arabic-speaking women. Sessions were presented in English with interpreters available.

The workshops covered topics including navigating different types of bank accounts, credit systems, fees and how to spot a potential scam. They covered planning for large expenses and managing the cost of living. Participants also learned about the support services available to them through Metro Assist.

Women's art therapy

We delivered a 5-week women's art therapy program with the Lebanese Muslim Association. The 10 participants – who spoke Urdu, Indonesian and Bangla – used art to explore themes including home life and responsibilities, hopes, gratitude and relationships. With their children minded by Diversity4Kids, the culturally safe space gave the women feelings of peace, happiness and pride in their creations.

Dumpling making

Cooking is a great way to bring people together and it was no exception at our dumpling making events this year.

The SETS team ran its third annual dumpling making event as part of Lunar New Year celebrations. Held at Ashfield Bowls Club, the session was enjoyed by 100 clients from diverse backgrounds, as well as community leaders and local service providers.

We held another dumpling making session during Youth Week in partnership with Canada Bay Council, Concord High School and Rhodes Multicultural Community Association. The event brought together 91 Chinese seniors and secondary school students from diverse backgrounds for a fun and delicious day of learning and connection.

Youth Employment Hub

Our Youth Employment Hub ran in partnership with Intensive English Centres and youth centres to deliver employment and education to disengaged young people. The hub is a one-year initiative funded by the Australian Government's Strong and Resilient Communities program. In 2025 we assisted 212 young people through 12 job readiness workshops and 4 TAFE, university and employment-related excursions.

COLLABORATION AND ADVOCACY

Through partnerships and sector advocacy we amplify our efforts to create a fair and inclusive society for all migrant and refugee communities. Evidence of this is shown throughout this report. This section highlights some examples.



Government engagement and sector advocacy

As the DCJ began recommissioning the [Families Together](#) program, we played an active advocacy role to ensure the voices of CALD communities were heard. Our focus was on shaping a framework that is inclusive, culturally responsive and that strengthens the wellbeing and safety of children, young people and families.

In Tenancy Services we have stayed engaged in TAAP Network meetings and with the Tenant Union and Fair Trading. Our work aims to strengthen systemic advocacy and contribute to tenancy policy reforms.

Our [Employment Services](#) team continues to collaborate with companies, community organisations, government and educational institutions to advocate for inclusive hiring practices. We have also delivered presentations within the NSW Department of Education's Regional Industry Education Partnerships promoting early intervention for young men at risk of disengagement.

Metro Assist is proud to champion inclusive employment practices while helping individuals on their journey to independence and self-reliance through the SkillME program.

Love and Hope Hub

Our critical domestic and family violence support services have expanded into Burwood with a second Love and Hope Hub.

The first Love and Hope Hub launched in Lakemba in December 2023, during the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence. The hubs are a one-stop service supporting women from diverse backgrounds experiencing domestic and family violence. They bring together Metro Assist, Legal Aid, Services Australia, Women's Domestic Violence Court Advocacy Service and police liaison officers under one roof. This prevents women having to repeat their traumatic stories to multiple providers or travel between different service locations.

In the past year more than 180 women have attended sessions across the 2 hubs.

The hubs run weekly, providing personal safety assistance, legal aid, financial support and employment programs in a safe, culturally sensitive environment.

Partnership with Saint Nectarios Church

We're grateful for the continued generosity and Christmas cheer shared by Saint Nectarios Church, Burwood, through hampers for our clients.

Youth in Action volunteers together with the Joy of Giving initiative delivered dozens of families and children with the warmth of community and love through seasonal hampers and thoughtful toys. Their kindness not only brightened the holiday season but reminded everyone that they are never alone in their journey.

CBIWSETS Network

Launched this year, CBIWSETS Network is a regional community of practice. It brings together settlement service providers across the Canterbury Bankstown and Inner West regions.

The new network fosters collaboration, shared learning and coordinated advocacy. It works on dismantling systemic barriers to integration and amplifying service effectiveness.

Metro Assist led the establishment of CBIWSETS Network, officially launching in May 2025. Among its objectives, the network aims to reduce duplication, strengthen referral pathways and create opportunities for joint advocacy and training.

In its first year the network held 3 strategic meetings attended by SETS providers, government stakeholders and peak bodies.

The CBIWSETS Network will continue to meet bi-monthly, with a vision to co-host a regional settlement event in 2026. Metro Assist is proud to champion this collaborative practice model, reinforcing the principle that stronger systems lead to stronger outcomes for our communities.

FINANCIAL REPORT

Statement of Profit and Loss and Other Comprehensive Income

	Year Ended 30 June 2025	Year Ended 30 June 2024
Total Revenue	7,326,286	6,643,703
Less Expenses		
Employee benefits expense	4,788,239	4,521,854
Program expenses	818,765	527,267
Property, rent & utilities	397,151	400,973
IT expenses & ISO certification costs	222,283	196,298
Staff development and amenities	186,005	189,124
Other expenses	380,185	306,803
Total Expenses	6,792,628	6,142,319
Total profit for the year attributable to the members	533,658	501,384

Statement of Financial Position

	30 June 2025	30 June 2024
Assets		
Current	5,424,826	4,565,511
Non-current	89,134	68,527
Total Assets	5,513,960	4,634,038
Liabilities		
Current	1,611,340	1,309,155
Non-current	216,317	172,238
Total Liabilities	1,827,657	1,481,393
NET ASSETS	3,686,303	3,152,645
Equity		
Retained surpluses	3,686,303	3,152,645
TOTAL EQUITY	3,686,303	3,152,645

In 2024-25, Metro Assist achieved a revenue of \$7.3 million and delivered an operating surplus of \$0.53 million. The total equity at 30 June 2025 is \$3.68 million.

Metro Assist continues to operate debt-free. Government funding is our major source of revenue, accounting for 94% of revenue in FY2025 (94% in FY2024). Employee costs and program expenses continued to represent a significant proportion of total expenses, consistent with historical trends. In FY2025, these components made up 83% of total expenditure (82% in FY2024).

The FY2025 external audit of Metro Assist was completed without any audit adjustments. It once again reflects our strong commitment to ensuring that appropriate financial governance processes are in place to meet all compliance requirements and the expectations of our funders.

OUR AUDITORS

ESV Business advice and accounting
Level 13, 68 York Street
Sydney NSW 2000

OUR FUNDERS

Metro Assist is grateful to the following organisations and agencies for the funding support during FY2025:

- › Advance Diversity Services
- › Australian Chinese Charity Foundation
- › Australian Human Rights Commission
- › Burwood Council
- › Cancer Institute NSW
- › Canterbury Bankstown Council
- › Canterbury League Club
- › Department of Home Affairs
- › Department of Social Services
- › Good Shepherd Microfinance
- › Inner West Council
- › Multicultural NSW
- › NSW Department of Communities and Justice
- › NSW Electoral Commission
- › NSW Fair Trading
- › Premier's Department
- › Settlement Services International
- › Silicon Valley Community Foundation
- › Transport for NSW
- › University of Technology Sydney

Metro Assist would also like to thank the many organisations, businesses and individuals who supported and donated time, expertise and financial resources to us.

PARTNERS

PARTNERS / COLLABORATORS

Advance Diversity Services	Department of Home Affairs	Picnic Point High School
Ajuga School	Department of Social Services	Police Citizen Youth Club
Amazon Films	Dior	Refugee Advice & Casework Services (RACS)
Anglicare	Dragonfly Network	Salter Brothers
APM Employment Services	Drummoyne Community Centre	Salvation Army
Ashfield Boys High	Engineers without Borders	Service NSW
Asuria	Fair Foundations	Services Australia
Atlas Disability Support	Headspace Ashfield and Camperdown	Settlement Services International
Australian Centre for Disability Law	Housing NSW	South Western Sydney Local Health District - Community Paediatric Clinic
Australian Tax Office	Immigration Advice and Rights Centre (IARC)	South Western Sydney Local Health District - Mental Health Services
Bankstown Senior College	Infant Child Adolescents Mental Health Service (ICAMHS)	Support Focus Therapies
Better Life Care Services	Inner West Council	STARTTS
Beverly Hills Intensive English Centre	Justice Support Centre	St Vincent de Paul's
Bonnie Support Services	KidsXpress	Strathfield Council
Breakthru	Lebanese Community Council of NSW (LCC)	Strathfield Girls High
Burwood Council	Legal Aid NSW	Sydney Local Health District
Campsie Public School	Macquarie	Sydney Secondary College Leichhardt
Canada Bay Council	Marrickville High School	TAFE NSW
Cancer Institute NSW (Health NSW)	Marrickville Intensive English Centre	The Deli Women and Children's Centre
Canterbury Bankstown Council	Max Employment	The Parks Community Network
Canterbury City Community Centre (4Cs)	Mission Australia	Tender Loving Care
Canterbury Hospital	Mott Macdonald	Transcultural Mental Health
Career Seekers	Multicultural NSW	u&u Recruitment Partners
CBRE	Multicultural Youth Advocacy Network Australia	Uniting
Centrelink	NSW Fair Trading	University of Technology Sydney
Channel 7	National Disability Insurance Scheme	Verona
Chester Hill Intensive English Centre	Navitas	Villawood East Public School
CMNL Academy	Nine Entertainment	Westpac
Co.As.It.	Northcott Disability	WHO'S
CORE Community Services	Office of Financial Research	Woman And Girls Emergency Centre
Creating Chances	Outloud	Youth services
Creating Links	Panania Public School	Zakat Foundation
Dandelion Support Network Inc.		
Department of Communities and Justice		

We extend our heartfelt thanks and acknowledgment to the families, children and young people who have entrusted our case workers, psychologists and community development workers with their personal stories of hardship. We deeply appreciate your courage in sharing these experiences. Our staff recognises the tremendous strength and resilience you have shown and we are grateful to walk alongside you on this journey.

We sincerely thank our funding departments for their continued support, confidence and trust in our organisation's reputation, skills and knowledge. Your support enables us to continue delivering impactful programs that make a real difference in the lives of vulnerable communities, families, children and young people we work in collaboration with.



metro assist

Empowering communities
Creating positive impact



Metro Assist

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