

## From the CEO — Sharon Daishe

Newcastle has a large Afghan community including hundreds of Afghan civilian interpreters who supported Australian troops in Afghanistan.

As the Taliban began their offensive earlier this year and then took control of Kabul on 15 August 2021, our local community watched in terror and horror. Lives and freedoms in Afghanistan are at risk for women and children, Hazaras, Shi'a Muslims, former interpreters and their extended families, and other minority groups. Our community, many of whom have been applying to bring their loved ones to safety for years, have told us their harrowing stories of loved ones killed, harmed and under constant threat.

Northern Settlement Services (NSS) has joined the torrent of sector advocacy urging the Australian government to reunite families, bring many more than 3,000 Afghans to safety in Australia, and grant permanent protection to Afghans who are in Australia now on a temporary visa or seeking asylum. In a partnership with Hunter Community Legal Centre, University of Newcastle Legal Centre, Catholic Care and local migration agents, we are facilitating increased access to migration services. Despite formidable barriers to success in obtaining a visa and escaping Taliban occupied Afghanistan, we will maintain hope and look forward with joy to supporting new arrivals to thrive.

Alongside the Afghanistan crisis, multicultural communities have been significantly impacted by the Delta outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic. It has been difficult enough for native English speakers to understand constantly changing restrictions. For the multicultural community this has been much harder. Families tell us of their fear and confusion, with some being too scared to leave their homes.

NSS has also taken a partnership approach to providing communities with COVID-19 resources and information in their own languages through various channels. We have reached over 2,000 people in multiple languages through direct phone calls and social media on the Central Coast thanks to funding from the Settlement Council of Australia. In Newcastle, community members and leaders have appreciated having their questions answered by experts at weekly Zoom meetings initially in English and now expanding to various languages. This has been made possible by the wonderful partnership with Hunter New England Health, NSW Police, STARTTS (NSW Service for the Treatment and Rehabilitation of Torture and Trauma), and Hunter Multicultural Communities.

This newsletter is full of happy pictures of NSS staff and clients enjoying face to face activities. We all want these freedoms again. The message from health professionals is to get vaccinated. High vaccination rates are the path to fewer restrictions, fewer deaths and less serious disease from COVID-19.

## Chinese Social Support Project—CSSP

In June 2021 we organised three group outings with two bus trips to Oakdale Wildlife Park. These trips were welcomed by our clients, and they had a chance to use their discover voucher from Service NSW.

We fed the baby animals at the feeding station, went on the tractor-trailer ride, explored the park, and listened to the talks from new and long-standing park members. We had a picnic just beside the playground, and enjoyed the beautiful sunny day in the middle of the winter.

The CSSP switched to online meetings since July due to COVID-19 restrictions.





## Newcastle Unity in Diversity Festival 2021.

Newcastle's sixth Celebrating Unity in Diversity Festival was held at Foreshore Park near the Tram Shed on Saturday 19th June 2021. The festival marked the start of Refugee Week 2021. It was a day with lots of happy faces and entertainment that included hair braiding, dancing and drumming workshops. There was a wonderful array of multicultural food stalls, cultural performances and activities. Despite the weather, people still came and enjoyed the day.



### An Expression of Happiness

The Unity in Diversity Festival was excellent and very successful. We appreciate and we are very grateful to all the people who worked hard and brought all the cultures together.



Those memorable moments will be recorded in history that all cultures came together with one voice (Unity) and showed respect to each other.

We will always support such cultural programs that bring all the cultures together.

I noticed the smiles and joy on everyone's faces at this Festival. From children to adults they were happy and enjoyed it. (Smiles, hugs, and welcoming eyes)

Delicious foods, interesting programs, lovely and respected people, dances, the excellent signs and messages in the March. And how good was it when I saw a local woman dancing with an Afghan woman to Afghan Music. I call it a very proud moment.

We all were like one family. I could see bright futures up ahead. Beautiful video clip of the day. Film credit @parv.jarecki [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qwuYp9\\_DPyE](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qwuYp9_DPyE)

Mohammad Sami Zakhil



## Multicultural Services Expo— 26 May 2021

Multicultural Neighbourhood Centre Services Expo 2021 was held on 26th May 2021 from 10 am to 2pm at the Station Newcastle.

It was a friendly and fun day that included multicultural food, entertainment, free sausage sizzle, and much more.

Newcastle Lord Mayor Nuatali Nelmes and State Member for Newcastle Tim Crakanthorp MP were also in attendance.



NSS Staff — Elena, Sharon, John and Pet at the Expo



Lord Mayor of Newcastle Nuatali Nelmes and State Member for Newcastle Tim Crakanthorp MP with NSS Staff and clients at the Multicultural Services Expo



Lord Mayor of Newcastle Nuatali Nelmes (centre) with NSS CEO Sharon Daishe (far left) and NSS Staff and clients at the Multicultural Services Expo



## Playing Around the World Playgroups – Central Coast

The Entrance and Blue Haven Playing Around the World Playgroups have enjoyed meeting up to explore some interesting countries over the past few months including Peru, Papua New Guinea, France, and Japan.

Families are enjoying the art and craft activities at playgroup and have made some beautiful suncatchers using wattle plants while visiting Peru, and Birds of Paradise while visiting Papua New Guinea.

During Refugee Week families made collage pictures of multicultural families and some wonderful leaf paintings were made during the first online playgroup for Reconciliation Week.

Playgroup sessions are now running online every week due to COVID-19 restrictions on the Central Coast. More families are joining in each week making it a great way for everyone to catch up with each other and keep connected during the lockdown.



*Blue Haven PAW Playgroup*



*Blue Haven PAW Playgroup*





Left: The Entrance Playgroup  
And Below: Messy play at  
Blue Haven Playgroup





## Playing Around the World — Central Coast

Definitely has been a challenging year for our Playing Around the World session with all the COVID-19 restrictions but families are engaging and enjoying the activities with other members from the group. We enjoyed meeting at the park giving us an opportunity to explore nature, taste new flavours with the cooking class, trying new movements with the dance tips, craft and story time together. For the last 8 weeks we are doing our best to keep engaged during lockdown, to stay connected, and support each other through online platforms with a lot of information sessions, parenting tips, craft ideas and story time.





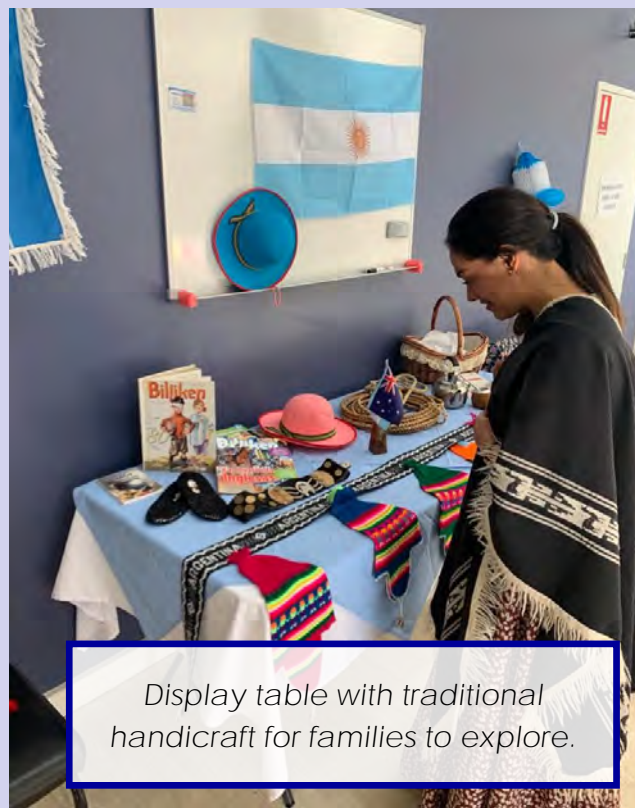
## Playing Around the World — Central Coast



Family wearing traditional Peruvian clothing.



Travelling to Peru during story time.



Display table with traditional handicraft for families to explore.



## Playing Around the World — Central Coast

*Preparing traditional tea for morning tea.*



*Kids playing the traditional drum  
"Bombo" from Argentina*





## Karen Action Group – In Action

### 04 August 2021, Tamworth NSW

In May 2021 the Tamworth Karen community came together for a large meeting to discuss some community priorities. As part of this meeting, a Karen action



group was formed, and the twelve members of this group came together on 4th August to discuss their next steps.

Everyone rolled up their sleeves and set to work strategizing on ways to achieve the community priorities outlined in the May meeting. These priorities included a Karen language school and a place to play their traditional cane ball game - 'sepak takraw'.

The consultation was run in English with a local Karen member offering interpreting throughout the event. Debbie Carstens, who facilitated the meeting, had a wonderful 'paper-plate' session with the community members, in which they organised their actions and discussed the next steps to take in achieving their community needs. It was a wonderful event with catering from a local Thai restaurant. Spring rolls and curry puffs – Yum





## Fiesta Fusion – Multicultural Food Fest

26 June 2021, Tamworth NSW



After many rainy days, the sun finally began to shine on Saturday 26<sup>th</sup> June, just in time for an event that everyone had been looking forward to for a long time: the Tamworth Fiesta Fusion.

With zero COVID-19 cases, no lockdowns and sunny weather the crowds came out in force! Held at the Tamworth Bicentennial Park, the event brought together many people from different multicultural backgrounds with the stalls selling a range of traditional home-made foods. With cuisines ranging from Asian, Arabic, South American to Pacific, there was something for everyone!

While the crowd enjoyed their morish meals, they were treated to cultural dance performances from the Philippine community, belly-jiggling Zumba classes, and a range of music from other countries. People were enjoying their freedom for the first time since being able to gather and there was so much fun and enjoyment to be had by all!





## Multicultural Social Support — Woy Woy & Kanwal Groups — Central Coast

These photos are from 22<sup>nd</sup> April. We did Karaoke in the Woy Woy Group. Nearly everyone had a go and enjoyed it very much.

*Helena (aged 96) singing in Polish and Karl (aged 94) helping her*



*The last information session and presentation for Kanwal Social Group before lockdown! Jenelyn from ConnectAbility presented some information about Elder Abuse and answered the questions while senior clients from Wyong area were enjoying their lunch at Wallarah Recreation Club on 7th June 2021*



## Multicultural Social Support — Woy Woy & Kanwal Groups — Central Coast

*On 18 June 2021, just a week before lockdown, the senior Kanwal group had the last gathering in The Ary at Club Toukley.*

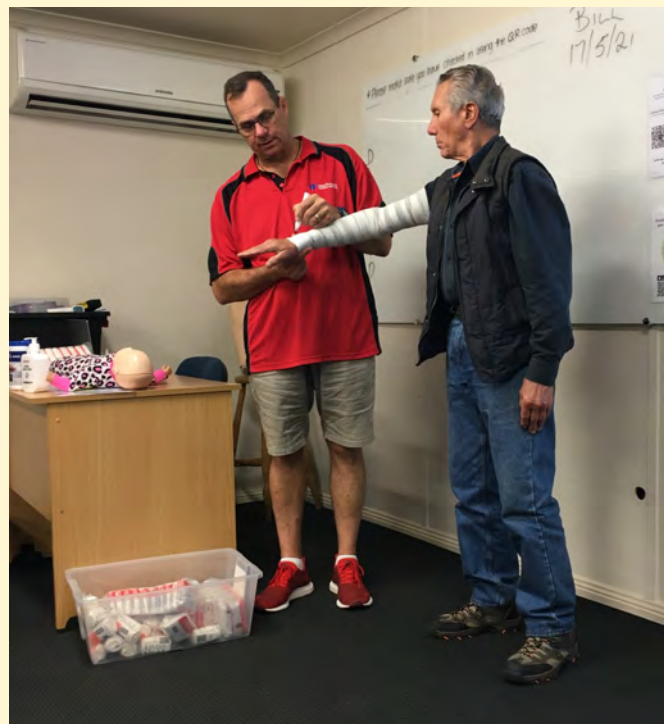
*From the left Johanna (Dutch), Jean (Australian) and Bronislawa (Polish) - three 90-year-old members of the group from different backgrounds shared their memories and life stories with the group which everyone enjoyed!*

*All the group members missed our gathering, enjoying the companionship and having laughter.*



*On 17<sup>th</sup> May 2021, NSS had a First Aid training course for volunteers and support workers.*

*The instructor is volunteer Ramon doing the bandages. He was the model for the day. As shown below the class had fun learning how to apply bandages in the correct manner.*







You can be a member of Northern Settlement Services and make a difference for multicultural people and communities.

Northern Settlement Services Ltd (NSS) is a registered charity serving multicultural people and communities for over 40 years in Newcastle and surrounding areas.

Today, NSS delivers services and support to thousands of people young and old across Newcastle and the Hunter, Tamworth and Armidale in New England, and throughout Lake Macquarie and the Central Coast.

Our programs include settlement services, aged care and support for vulnerable families.

You can play a part in our vision of a connected community in which diversity defines and nourishes us.

Please download an application form from our website [www.nsservices.com.au](http://www.nsservices.com.au)



it's time to  
**RENEW YOUR  
MEMBERSHIP**







**Help us**

**stop the spread**





**Clean your hands thoroughly**  
for at least 20 seconds with soap and water,  
or an alcohol-based hand rub.



**Cover your nose and mouth**  
when coughing and sneezing with a tissue  
or a flexed elbow. Put the tissues in the bin.



**Avoid close contact**  
with anyone with cold or flu-like symptoms.



**Stay home** if you are sick.



**ARM**  
**yourself**  
**AGAINST**  
**COVID-19**

**Find out when you can get vaccinated**

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COVID-19  
VACCINATION

Authorised by the Australian Government, Canberra.

Translated information from NSW Health

Reliable COVID-19 information in different languages can be found on the NSW Health Website.

<https://www.health.nsw.gov.au/infectious/covid-19/pages/translated/topics.aspx>



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COVID-19  
VACCINATION

**Get your second dose**



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