

Whittlesea Community Connections Multicultural Women's Group Grant Program

Ten Year Snapshot (2014-2023)

Background

In 2012, a number of local partners developed the **Whittlesea CALD Family Violence Project (WCFVP)** as a place-based, integrated model addressing family violence within CALD communities in the City of Whittlesea, Melbourne. In 2014, the Whittlesea Multicultural Women's Groups Grants program was created as part of the overall WCFVP project.

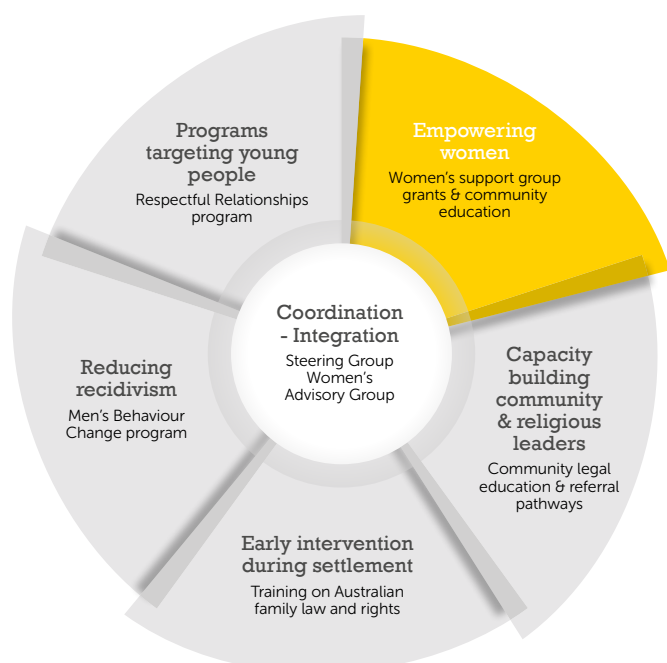
The grants program was funded by Victorian Women's Trust and a philanthropic partner, Sunshine and Crocodiles Pty Ltd whose continued funding has been critical to maintaining the program over ten years. Grants were provided to women's groups to reduce social isolation and enhance women's knowledge on family violence, the law and their rights in Australia and services they can access.

Impacts



Key outcomes for women were:

- Awareness of rights and family violence and other support services.
- Knowledge of family violence within a new cultural and legal context.
- Greater social connectedness and access to social support networks.
- Safe and supported disclosures of family violence linked to support services.
- Empowerment and sense of independence.



Over ten years

\$181,765

has been provided to
**45 multicultural
women's groups**,
both new, emerging
and established groups.



Each group received between **\$1000-\$5000**
to cover the cost of activities and resources of
their choice.

During COVID additional support was provided to improve mental health and transition activities online by covering costs for Zoom subscriptions, microphones and online facilitators.

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Over 1716 women

participated in the program.

Cultural backgrounds included Iranian, Sri Lankan, Iraqi, Syrian, Indian, Nepali, Pakistani, African and Turkish.



Many of the women participating in the groups arrived in Australia as refugees, people seeking asylum or on partner visas. Refugee and asylum seekers face greater health disparities and have very limited social support in Australia. Many women on partner visas are isolated and subjected to visa abuse, increasing the value of women's groups for connection and information.

The multicultural women's groups hosted over 580 social, recreation or education activities including arts and crafts, swimming, cooking, mindfulness, Zumba and martial arts. For many women it was their first opportunity to participate in such activities.

100%

of women's group facilitators stated that it increased social connections among the women.



“

Multicultural women migrate away from their families... when they move to Australia, they felt isolated...this is a very good opportunity to meet new people and get some more information on Australian life.”

WOMEN'S GROUP LEADER

Information sessions built women's knowledge and skillset on different topics including financial literacy, nutrition and exercise, mental health and well-being, family violence, tenant rights and sexual and reproductive health.

86 information sessions on family violence



were delivered by Whittlesea Community Connections in partnership with specialist family violence services such as Berry Street and Victoria Police.

Women were provided with information about the gendered drivers and different forms of family violence, legal rights and available support services. Women found the groups to be a safe space to disclose their different experiences.

“

The Information sessions were really good. We didn't know about the types of family violence and abuse. We didn't know women's rights versus our duty as a wife.”

WOMEN'S GROUP MEMBER



Healthy Minds



Sikh Community Connection