



MARSS Australia Inc.

(Migrant and Refugee Settlement Services of the ACT)

MULTICULTURAL MONITOR



ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

MARSS held its Annual General Meeting on the 22nd of August 2023 in the Reception Room at the ACT Legislative Assembly, in attendance were MARSS members and staff.

It was an effective meeting where the achievements of everyone who is a part of MARSS were detailed and displayed in this year's annual report, which is available on our website.

The new Board was elected at the meeting where the positions Chair, Deputy Chair, Treasurer, Secretary and Public Officer were allocated:

Mr Nic Manikis PSM - Chairperson
Ms Toa Takiari Faonetam - Deputy Chair
Mr Bashir Fayaq - Secretary
Ms Nim Osborne - Treasurer
Mr Borhan Ahmed - Public Officer
Mr Isaac Cotter - Committee Member
Ms Maria Ocana - Committee Member
Mr Kofi Osei Bonsu - Committee Member
Mr Jatinder Pal Singh - Committee Member
Mr Syed A. As-Sayeed - Committee Member



MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

Message from Nic Manikis PSM

I am delighted to have been recently elected to the board of the Migrant and Refugee Settlement Services Australia (MARSS) and I thank my Board colleagues for placing confidence in me to lead the organisation as Chair. I look forward to working with a diverse and talented board to achieve optimum outcomes for our clients and a safe and satisfying work environment for our staff.

I also look forward to working collaboratively with all stakeholders and to achieve even better outcomes for our clients through an increased engagement with our member organisations and the local business sector so that a wider range of contributions can be made to the settlement experience of our clients.

It is a privilege to be in a position to give back to our community through leading the governance and operational oversight of an organisation such as MARSS. I know my fellow colleagues on the Board also feel this way.

The organisation has been providing an excellent level of service for more than 40 years to former refugees and new migrants choosing to reside in our city. I acknowledge the dedication and hard work of all staff to ensure that services are effectively delivered to clients who have arrived in Canberra often from traumatic circumstances in their countries of origin.

As Chair I will ensure the board functions effectively, that MARSS continues to be managed properly and, to this end, I will provide support and supervision to the Chief Executive Officer and the senior management team so that they can continue the excellent work MARSS has been doing to settle its clients into community life in Canberra.

On behalf of the Board, I acknowledge the hard work of MARSS staff, the dedicated management team's desire to achieve best outcomes for clients and staff and the need to regularly inform our member organisations and stakeholders of the good work that MARSS does to assist new arrivals to make the best possible start to their life in our city.

The new Board members and I look forward to hearing all ideas about better ways to support and assist new arrivals to settle in community life in Canberra.

Dewani recently tendered her resignation from her role as CEO MARSS. I take this opportunity to acknowledge the dedicated work undertaken by Dewani over many years to bring MARSS to the position it enjoys today. Dewani should be proud of her achievements and the solid legacy she leaves behind. On behalf of the board, I wish Dewani continued success in her future endeavours.

Nic Manikis PSM

Chair

Migrant and Refugee Settlement Services Australia



FAREWELL FROM THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Farewell from the Chief Executive Officer

It has been an honour and a privilege to serve for 17 years as the Chief Executive Officer of MARSS.

This role has given me the opportunity to do work based on my passion for helping people every single day. In this role I've had the opportunity to meet, learn from, and work with so many passionate and dedicated people in the settlement sector and in community services in the ACT and across the country.

I have had the privilege of participating in national and international refugee resettlement consultations over many years where I had the opportunity to learn about humanitarian and settlement policy. This has been the focus of MARSS' work – to support new and emerging communities in the ACT of refugee background to settle successfully in our region. There are many wonderful organisations in the ACT that promote multiculturalism, and over the years MARSS has established itself as a place for multicultural communities to meet, socialise, and promote and preserve their cultural identities. However, settlement is at the core of what MARSS delivers, and I am proud of the team at MARSS who will carry on delivering specialised and culturally sensitive casework advocacy and referral services to refugees and asylum seekers building their lives in the Canberra region.

To all of MARSS' wonderful clients - I remain inspired every day by your resilience and strength. It has been the most enjoyable part of my role to help new migrants and refugees to overcome significant barriers and to settle successfully in our region.

To the many colleagues that I have worked with across the community sector over the years, I thank you for your partnership, collaboration, and support.

To MARSS staff and volunteers - thank you for your hard work, dedication, and passion over the years. So many of you have made a difference to the experience of our clients on their settlement journey.

I wish the MARSS team and clients all the very best for the future.

Dewani Bakkum AM

Chief Executive Officer
MARSS Australia Inc.





AUSTRALIA DAY

MARSS organised an Australia Day function in Glebe Park on 26 January 2023. There were about 200 clients who registered on the day to attend the COVID-safe event. The event was of a high standard with community groups and members dancing, singing and holding a range of outdoor activities for families to watch and participate in.



MULTICULTURAL FESTIVAL



MARSS held a very successful food stall at the National Multicultural Festival on 18 February 2023 to raise funds for the victims of the earthquakes in Turkey and Syria. The \$20,000 raised, including \$10,000 donated by the Office of the ACT Chief Minister Andrew Barr, will be donated to UNHCR in Canberra.



We thank all of our families, volunteers and patrons that contributed their time and energy.



INTERNATIONAL WOMENS DAY



MARSS held a successful International Women's Day event at MARSS' Gungahlin Office on 9 March 2023. There were 26 women who attended the event where they learnt different way to wear headscarves and enjoyed a lunch and cake.



HARMONY DAY

MARSS organised a Harmony Day in the Function Room on 23 March 2023. More than 30 clients attended the event.



EID UL-FITR

There were about 180 clients who attended an Eid celebration organised by MARSS in the Multicultural Centre on 10 May 2023. Sheikh Muhammad Imtiaz spoke at the event, where there were performances by Afghan and Chinese dance groups and an Afghan band. Greens MLA Andrew Braddock attended the event.



VOLUNTEER DAY

MARSS held a successful Volunteer Day function in the Multicultural Centre on 19 May 2023.

There were 16 volunteers who attended event to celebrate their dedication and time to MARSS.



REFUGEE DAY & OPEN DAY



There were about 250 clients who attended a Refugee Week and MARSS Open Day event at Albert Hall on 22 June 2023.

The event included a giveaway for clients. Speakers at the event included representatives from the ACT Government and Greens MLA Andrew Braddock, where there were performances by the East African Community Association Dance Group.



MULTICULTURAL CAREERS DAY

MARSS held a Multicultural Careers Day focusing on Home Care on the 23rd of August 2023.

There were 10 stall holders present, including 4 Home Care Providers (Axis Supports, BaptistCare, Community Services #1 and MCCI), along with 2 training providers (Apprenticeship Careers Australia and CIT), Women's Legal and Volunteering ACT.



GET INVOLVED

BECOME A MEMBER

Membership at MARSS will give your organisation the opportunity to help develop our services for migrants, refugees and humanitarian entrants in the ACT and its surrounding regions. Please call (02) 6248 8577 for more information.

VOLUNTEER

Our volunteers ensure that we can keep effectively running our wide range of programs. If you are interested in volunteering with MARSS, please register your interest at www.marss.org.au or call (02) 6248 8577.

DONATE

You can make a donation and take advantage of this incredible opportunity to lend your support. Please visit www.marss.org.au to find out more.

CONTACT DETAILS

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MARSS Australia Inc.

Migrant and Refugee Settlement Services

Leaders in settlement and related services for migrants, refugees, humanitarian entrants and asylum seekers in the ACT and surrounding regions.