



**MARSS Australia Inc.**  
Migrant and Refugee Settlement Services

# News Letter

July - September 2025



# MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

As we reflect on the past three months, I am filled with immense pride and gratitude for the dedication, compassion, and resilience demonstrated by our staff, volunteers, and community partners.

This quarter has been a time of both challenge and achievement. With global events continuing to impact the flow of migrants and refugees, MARSS has remained steadfast in its mission to provide critical support, settlement services, and pathways to independence for those seeking safety and a new beginning in Australia.

We've seen the successful rollout of new language and employment programs designed to help newly arrived individuals gain confidence and find meaningful opportunities. Our youth and women's empowerment initiatives have continued to thrive, offering safe and inclusive spaces where belonging and growth can flourish.

I want to especially thank our frontline teams, who work tirelessly to support clients with compassion and professionalism. Your work is not only transformative for individuals and families, it strengthens the social fabric of our broader community.

To our partners, funders, and friends: thank you for standing with us. Your continued support enables MARSS to remain a trusted and responsive organisation in an ever-changing environment.

As we look ahead to the final months of 2025, we remain committed to innovation, advocacy, and collaboration. Together, we will continue building a more inclusive and equitable society for all.

Warm regards,

**Nic Manikis**  
**PSM**  
**Chair of Board**  
**MARSS Australia Inc.**



# Message From The Chief Executive Officer

*It's a great time to be in Canberra now that winter is past us and we have entered into the spring season. The MARSS team is as busy as ever, working with our clients from refugee and migrant backgrounds to settle successfully in the Canberra region. This month sees us welcome four new staff members to MARSS: it's so exciting to see our organisation growing. I'm sure they will bring additional skills and perspectives to our collective work.*

*We have been running cybersecurity awareness sessions for our community members, ensuring that people have the knowledge and skills they need to stay safe in a cyber environment. Coming up soon, MARSS will facilitate our annual Christmas party. This event is our way of saying a big 'thank you' to staff members, volunteers, board members, and community for everything they do to support MARSS, and ensure that the important work is ongoing. We do hope to see you then.*

**SONIA DI MEZZA**

*Chief Executive Officer  
MARSS Australia Inc.*



# Programs Highlights



## **Settlement Engagement & Transition Support (SETS)**

**Supporting New Beginnings:**

**MARSS Australia Inc. continues to support newly arrived migrants and humanitarian entrants in Canberra through the Settlement Engagement and Transition Support (SETS) program.**

**In the past three months, MARSS has delivered tailored casework and practical support to help clients navigate housing, education, healthcare, legal services, and more.**

**From enrolling children in school to securing stable housing, MARSS remains committed to empowering clients with culturally sensitive, one-on-one support during their early settlement journey.**

# Building Employability and Independence

## Work Placement Spotlights

### Work Placement Reflection:

#### My Journey at MARSS

As part of my Community Services course at Reach for Training, I began my placement with MARSS on 19 August 2025. From day one, I felt welcomed and supported by the entire team, which helped me quickly build confidence in a new professional environment.

Throughout my time at MARSS, I've had the opportunity to participate in a range of activities, receive comprehensive training, and gradually take on more responsibilities, including working independently with clients. These experiences have been incredibly valuable in developing both my skills and self-assurance.

I am especially thankful to the leadership at MARSS for providing this opportunity and for the guidance I've received along the way. It has been a meaningful and inspiring experience that will positively shape my future in the community services sector.



## SCANLON FOUNDATION'S EMPLOYMENT

*Many of MARSS clients face employment barriers due to limited English, lack of local work experience, or unfamiliarity with Australian workplace culture. MARSS helps bridge that gap by offering:*

*Free English Classes including English for Employment  
Employment-focused casework  
Resume and interview preparation  
Provide job training and work placement programs at MARSS Office.*

**MULTICULTURAL DISABILITY EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM (MDEP)**  
MARSS Australia Inc., in partnership with Nexus Human Services, proudly delivers the Multicultural Disability Employment Program (MDEP)—a program designed to support individuals from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) backgrounds who are living with physical, mental health, or other life challenges.

# DRIVING SUPPORT

## EMPOWERING MOBILITY AND OPPORTUNITY

Gaining access to a driver's licence is a critical milestone for many newly arrived migrants and refugees – not only for independence but also for employment opportunities.

Through The Pre-Learner Licence courses and the Learn to Drive program, MARSS equips clients with the knowledge and confidence they need to become safe, capable drivers on Australian roads. These programs are more than just driving lessons – they are stepping stones to independence, social participation, and long-term success in Australia.



### Multicultural Road Safety Workshops

The CALD Road Safety Program was created to enhance road safety awareness and practices among Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) communities. It does this through targeted, multilingual workshops and accessible educational resources.

MARSS Australia has delivered Road Safety Workshops in Arabic, Dari, Farsi, Spanish, and Ukrainian—empowering participants to gain a strong understanding of Australian road rules and safe driving practices through education presented in their first language.

Voiceovers are also available in all five languages, making the resources even more accessible. Learn more here: <https://marss.org.au/driving-programs/>

Five new sessions are scheduled to begin in late October, delivered in Arabic and Dari.

# Skill Building Through Creativity

## MARSS Sewing Classes



*MARSS Sewing Classes help people from different backgrounds learn useful skills in a safe and friendly place. In these classes, participants learn how to make and fix clothes. They also build confidence, make new friends, and feel more connected to the community. The classes can also help people explore ideas for small businesses or further training in sewing and design. Many women from refugee and migrant backgrounds enjoy the program, but it is open to all CALD clients. The classes are held regularly at the MARSS office and are taught by kind and experienced instructors who make learning easy for beginners.*



# Education & Training

## PASS Tutoring

Academic support remained a top priority throughout the school term and holidays.

42 tutoring sessions delivered (online and in-person)

Average attendance in September: 13–16 students per session

Students received targeted academic support to help them thrive in their studies



## English Language Support Program

59 students enrolled in Term 4

Low Intermediate

High Intermediate

Advanced

Home Tutoring program

English for Employment



# Youth Engagement & Wellbeing

## CALD Youth Nutrition & Physical Activity Program

This quarter saw vibrant youth participation through cooking, sports, and wellbeing activities:

7 Cooking Workshops in partnership with Nutrition Australia, teaching food safety and healthy meal preparation



## Sports sessions

during July school holidays included Futsal and Dodgeball (15 participants)

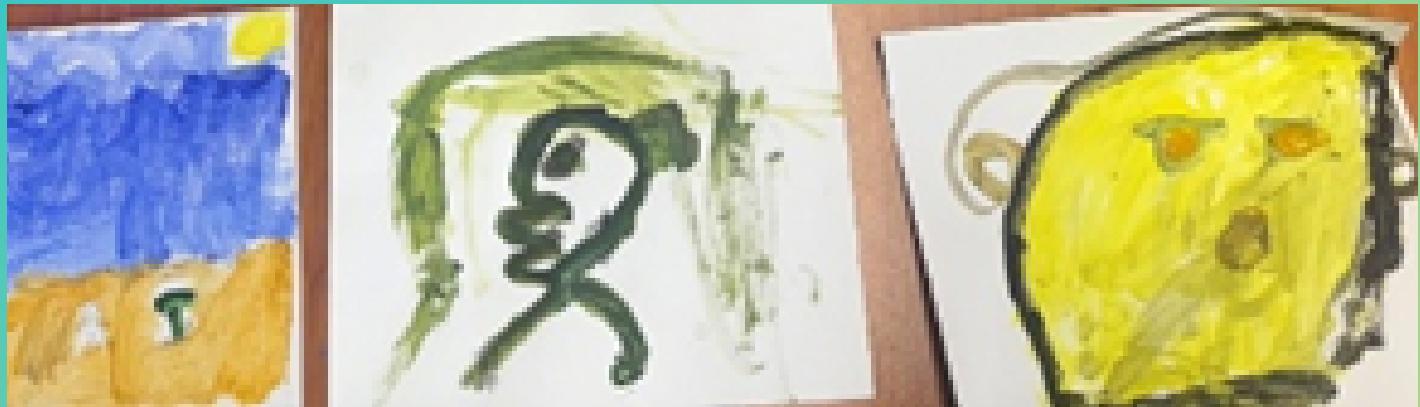
Sessions fostered teamwork, confidence, and life skills in a safe, inclusive space



# Arts & Craft Night

*Co-hosted in August with SETS and Global Shapers*

*Provided a relaxed, creative space for youth to express themselves. A vibrant evening that highlighted the importance of art in youth wellbeing*



## School holiday program

*MARSS hosted two exciting School Holiday Programs for children aged 5-15 — one at the cinema and another at Timezone. These fun-filled days gave kids the opportunity to make new friends, play together, and engage with Australian culture in a relaxed and welcoming environment. The positive impact extended beyond the children, with families connecting after the events and building lasting friendships and support networks within the community*



# ***MARSS Appreciation for Our Volunteers***

*We extend our heartfelt appreciation to all the volunteers across our programs. Your ongoing support and commitment make it possible for us to deliver regular sessions and meaningful assistance to the community. A special thank you to everyone who attended the Volunteer Meeting on 21 July, your dedication and contributions are truly valued and deeply appreciated.*



## EMERGENCY RELIEF & CLIENT ASSISTANCE

MARSS continues to provide critical support to clients facing financial hardship through the Emergency Relief Fund (ERF). This vital service ensures that vulnerable individuals and families can meet their basic needs during times of crisis.

## ACCOUNTS MESSAGE

### MARSS Business Unit Completes Transition to Xero and HR Partner Integration

We are proud to announce that our business unit has successfully transitioned from MYOB to Xero, now fully integrated with our HR system, HR Partner. This important milestone is part of MARSS's ongoing digital transformation, helping us operate more efficiently, transparently, and sustainably.

With this integration, our team now enjoys automated workflows, seamless payroll and HR processes, and real-time financial and human resource insights. The move also supports our commitment to being paperless, reducing manual processes, and making information more accessible for our team, clients, and stakeholders.

This achievement reflects MARSS's mission to empower and support individuals and families in our community. By modernising our systems, we are better equipped to serve our clients and community partners, deliver timely, accurate information, and continue building a smarter, more agile, and environmentally friendly organisation

## UPCOMING EVENTS

- Sapphire Coast Trip 6–9 November
- MARSS Annual General Meeting - 24 November
- MARSS Christmas Party - 12 December

# 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.

## DONATE

You can make a donation and take advantage of this incredible opportunity to lend your support. Please visit [www.marss.org.au](http://www.marss.org.au) to find out more.

## 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](http://www.marss.org.au) or call (02) 6248 8577.

# STAY CONNECTED

*MARSS Australia Inc.*

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