



MARSS Australia Inc. News Letter

October - December 2025



MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

It gives me great pleasure to see our MARSS staff members back to work after a well-deserved break, delivering services and supports to our clients from refugee and migrant backgrounds. As we enter the Lenten and Ramadan seasons I wish all followers a blessed and holy season of fasting and reflection. MARSS will host an Eid celebration at the end of Ramadan and I do look forward to seeing you there.

At MARSS we are driving a continued focus on support for our clients; enhancing and creating policies to cover operations and governance; establish a culture of ‘continuous improvement’, which focuses on training and staff development to enhance skills and knowledge, and providing space and encouragement for staff ideas and creative ways to improve the client experience in the settlement journey

Wishing you a prosperous and cultural new year. May 2026 bring with it blessings and prosperity for all.

Nic Manikis
PSM
Chair of Board
MARSS Australia Inc.



Message From The Chief Executive Officer

This past quarter has witnessed a number of joyous and festive occasions for our multicultural communities of Canberra, and MARSS has played a significant role to support them. MARSS Multicultural Christmas Party was a wonderful festive celebration of musical performances, gifts and delicious food, and a chance to celebrate with all our communities. The Multicultural Young Women's Prom, hosted together with the Multicultural Hub and the Zam Zam Foundation brought an opportunity for young women from culturally diverse backgrounds to come together, network and celebrate the end of year for their studies and other achievements. We were happy in the past year that our very own volunteer Kent Brown won the prestigious ACT Volunteer Diversity and Inclusion Award at the awards ceremony last year.

This coming year will bring even more opportunities to come together, share culture, and celebrate and we do hope to see you there. Look out for the Nawruz festival hosted by the Afghan Embassy, as well as our Eid celebration and International Women's Day event.

Wishing everyone a happy new year! May 2026 bring you a year of fulfillment and peace.

SONIA DI MEZZA

*Chief Executive Officer
MARSS Australia Inc.*



Programs Highlights

COMMUNITY EVENTS
DIGITAL LITERACY
SEWING CLASSES
ENGLISH CLASSES
ACT-PRE-LEARNER LICENCE PROGRAM
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS
DRIVING SCHOOL
EMPLOYMENT PROGRAMS

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.

SETS WORKSHOPS & INFORMATION SESSIONS

Appreciative Leadership Workshop – 11 of Nov. 2025

SETS DFV – Health info session, women only 21 Oct. 2025

Migration Advice – Afghan consultation with Legal Aid- 11 Nov. 2025

Health and Wellbeing session to be held in Oct. 2025.

Crisis Support services – Session to be held in Oct. 2025.

BUILDING EMPLOYABILITY AND INDEPENDENCE



WORK EXPERIENCE REFLECTION BY RITA SALIBA:

SINCE ARRIVING IN AUSTRALIA, MARSS AUSTRALIA INC. HAS SUPPORTED ME FROM THE VERY BEGINNING. THEY HELPED ME ENROL IN AN ENGLISH LANGUAGE COURSE AT NAVITAS AND HAVE PROVIDED ONGOING GUIDANCE AND ENCOURAGEMENT THROUGHOUT MY SETTLEMENT JOURNEY.

THROUGH THE MARSS EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM, I WAS ALSO GIVEN THE OPPORTUNITY TO VOLUNTEER AT THE MARSS CIVIC OFFICE, WHICH ALLOWED ME TO GAIN VALUABLE PRACTICAL WORK EXPERIENCE. THIS EXPERIENCE HELPED BUILD MY CONFIDENCE, MOTIVATED ME TO KEEP LEARNING, AND SUPPORTED ME IN MAKING A CLEAR DECISION ABOUT WHAT I WOULD LIKE TO STUDY.

IN ADDITION, MARSS ENROLLED ME IN THE ACT WESP PROGRAM TO FURTHER DEVELOP MY ADMINISTRATIVE SKILLS AND GAIN WORKPLACE EXPERIENCE WITHIN A GOVERNMENT OFFICE SETTING.

I AM TRULY GRATEFUL TO MARSS AUSTRALIA INC. FOR SUPPORTING ME TO TAKE MY FIRST STEPS INTO THE WORKFORCE AND FOR HELPING ME BUILD A STRONG PROFESSIONAL FUTURE IN AUSTRALIA.

MULTICULTURAL DISABILITY EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM (MDEP) SUCCESS STORY

FROM LONG-TERM UNEMPLOYMENT TO EMPLOYMENT STABILITY
WHEN THE CLIENT JOINED MDEP, SHE HAD BEEN OUT OF WORK FOR OVER SEVEN YEARS AND LIVING ON A BRIDGING VISA FOR MORE THAN A DECADE. DESPITE HOLDING MULTIPLE QUALIFICATIONS AND COMPLETING UNPAID PLACEMENTS, SHE FACED REPEATED REJECTION, WHICH IMPACTED HER MENTAL HEALTH AND CONFIDENCE.

MARSS AND NEXUS PROVIDED TRAUMA-INFORMED SUPPORT THROUGH REGULAR CHECK-INS, AN INDIVIDUAL EMPLOYMENT SUPPORT PLAN, INTERVIEW COACHING, VOLUNTEERING OPPORTUNITIES, AND TRAINING TO REBUILD HER CONFIDENCE AND WORKPLACE READINESS. AFTER SEVERAL SETBACKS, SHE SECURED HER FIRST PAID ROLE IN OVER SEVEN YEARS AND LATER PROGRESSED INTO AGED CARE AND SUPPORT WORK. THIS OUTCOME IMPROVED HER WELLBEING AND EASED FINANCIAL PRESSURE FOR HER FAMILY, HIGHLIGHTING THE VALUE OF LONG-TERM, CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE EMPLOYMENT SUPPORT.

BUILD YOUR FUTURE

EMPLOYMENT INFORMATION SESSION



MARSS
Australia Inc.
Migrant and Refugee
Settlement Services

Supporting people from multicultural backgrounds to achieve meaningful employment.

**Program/
Organisation / Presenter**

3:15pm Migrant And Refugee Settlement Services (MARSS)/Eman Basheer

3:30pm Education and Training Provider (CIT)/ Lesley Cioccarelli

3:45pm Apprenticeship Support Services - Training and Employment (MEGT)/Richard Gillespie

**4:00pm Multicultural Hub (MHUB)
Zakia Patel**

**Date: Thursday, 20 November 2025
Time: 3:00 PM – 5:00 PM
Venue: Function Room, Theo Notaras
Multicultural Centre
Host: MARSS Australia Inc**

**Food and Drinks
will be provided
during the session**

<https://marss.org.au/>

info@marss.org.au

(02) 6248 8577

**EMPLOYMENT
INFORMATION SESSION
HELD ON WEDNESDAY,
THE 20 NOVEMBER
2025**

**55 CLIENTS ATTENDED
AND INTRODUCED TO
EMPLOYMENT
PATHWAYS AND
APPRENTICESHIP
OPPORTUNITIES**



Skill Building Through Creativity

MARSS Sewing Classes

MARSS Sewing Classes

MARSS Sewing Classes offer a friendly space for people from diverse backgrounds to learn practical sewing skills, build confidence, and connect with others.

Participants can make and repair clothes, explore small business ideas, or pursue further training. Open to all CALD clients, the classes are taught by experienced instructors who make learning easy and enjoyable.



MARSS SEWING CLASSES NOW RUN AT THE KAMBERRA FUNCTION CENTRE

Youth Engagement & Wellbeing

CALD Youth Nutrition & Physical Activity Program



HEAL and PASS Programs Update
HEAL and PASS programs continue to support young people from CALD communities through engaging health, wellbeing, and learning activities.

In October, we delivered tennis and outdoor soccer sessions and ran cooking classes for young people aged 11–16 as part of the CALD Youth Nutrition & Physical Activity Grant, receiving excellent participation and positive feedback.

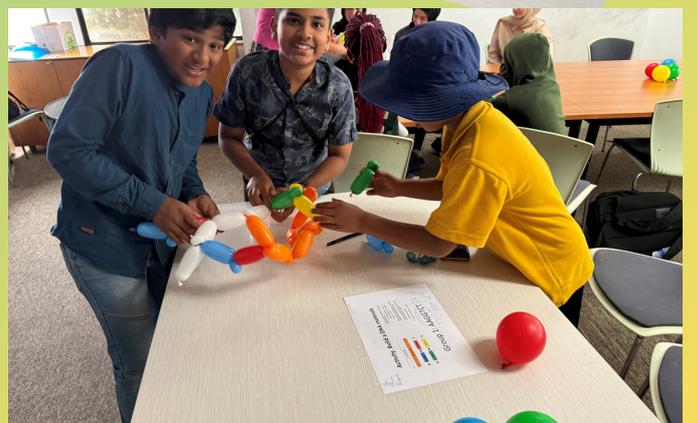


PASS sessions continued successfully



In December, we delivered a fun and interactive DNA workshop with Dr Chloe, where young people learned about genetics and created DNA models using balloons.

Overall, both programs have provided valuable opportunities for young people to stay active, learn new skills, and build confidence.



Sapphire Coast Trip from 6-9th of November 2025

MARSS organised by the Social Justice Team and MARSS from 6-9 November, brought together 14 families (48 participants) from communities including Eritrea, Afghanistan, Iran, Ukraine, Palestine, and Syria. Families enjoyed visiting local schools, experiencing the beach for the first time, and attending workshops on racism awareness and healthy relationships. Children were safely supervised during sessions, allowing parents to fully participate. We sincerely thank the MARSS team for their support in making the trip safe, meaningful, and memorable for everyone.



MARSS CHRISTMAS PARTY 2025

The MARS Christmas Party 2025 was a joyful celebration that brought together families, community members, staff, and volunteers to share the festive season in a warm and welcoming environment.

The event included festive decorations, shared food, and fun activities for children and families. We also sincerely thank the Ukulele Band for their wonderful performance, which made the party even more enjoyable and created a cheerful atmosphere for everyone.

Overall, it was a meaningful way to end the year and celebrate the spirit of community and togetherness.



MARSS Appreciation for Our Volunteers

At our Christmas party, MARSS was delighted to present gifts and Certificates of Appreciation to our volunteers in recognition of their incredible contributions.



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.

BUSINESS UNIT UPDATE – FINANCE & SYSTEMS

Following our successful transition from MYOB to Xero earlier this year, we are now advancing into the next phase of our digital transformation.

We have adopted enhanced Xero features, including Budget Manager, enabling improved real-time budget tracking, monitoring, and reporting across programs.

We have further strengthened internal controls through the digitalisation of payment and expense approval processes, enhancing efficiency, transparency, and accountability.

In addition, comprehensive compliance checks have been implemented for all employees and individuals engaged with MARSS to ensure we continue to uphold the highest governance standards.

I am pleased to share that our annual audit has been successfully completed, reflecting the robustness of our financial management systems and controls.

We remain committed to continuously strengthening our systems, governance, and financial oversight in the months ahead.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Women Health Information Session 17/03/2026

International Women's Day 03/03/2026

Nawruz Festival 22/03/2026

Eid 23/03/2026

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 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 or call (02) 6248 8577.

STAY CONNECTED

MARSS Australia Inc.

P: 02 6248 8577 | www.marss.org.au

*Address: Level 2, Theo Notaras Multicultural Centre, 180 London Circuit,
Canberra ACT, 2601 (GPO Box 697 Canberra ACT 2601)*

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