



World
Wellness
Group

Annual Report

2019 - 20

www.worldwellnessgroup.org.au



Legacy & learnings from 2020

"There can be no health for all if we leave certain groups behind"

The start of the 2019-20 financial year was a period of consolidation and growth for World Wellness Group. However, six months later, the impact of the coronavirus pandemic was experienced by staff, practitioners and our clients. As a health service with a high proportion of vulnerable clientele, the pandemic had a large impact. Most notably, demand for mental health services doubled in a short period of time.

There were many learnings about multicultural health throughout Australia in 2020. The importance of a responsive and accessible health system took centre stage. Undoubtedly, the Australian health system was not ready for COVID-19 and the gaps and cracks that we have advocated about for so long, became visible to all. The pandemic exposed inequities that we grapple with daily at WWG:

- with no investment in services closest to multicultural communities you cannot reach them during an emergency;
- there is no adequate Australian multicultural health data to plan and evaluate services. We still don't know how multicultural communities really fared in the pandemic from hard data;
- a lack of cultural competency in the health system shut the most vulnerable people out;
- there are simply no safety nets for large populations in Australia due to visa eligibility and they are also the most vulnerable to being exploited.

What we ultimately learned as a society was that there can be no health for all if we leave certain groups behind. Opportunities arose in 2020 for our voices to be heard, informed by lived experience, clinical expertise and culturally informed models of care. In 2020 the health needs of multicultural communities finally received the attention it deserves. Our work is by no means done – it has just started with a few more willing ears to listen! We carry this into 2021 with optimism that these learnings will be used to build a more equitable health system with investment in people and services closest to the community, ensuring that healthcare is in reach for all.

WWG Board

This year the Board remained stable with no resignations and one additional Board member joined up in June 2020. The WWG Board comprised:

Rita Prasad-Ildes (founding Director)
Nera Komaric (founding Director)
Marina Chand (founding Director)
Hamza Vayani
Dragos Ileana
Dr Megan Evans
Roger Collins-Woolcock
Dr Dinesh Palipana



Board members Marina, Dinesh, Roger, Megan, Hamza, Rita, Dragos & Megan (L-R)

Ambassadorship program

WWG was delighted to launch an Ambassadorship Program in October 2019 and welcome our first Ambassador, Professor Munjed Al Muderis.

Professor Al Muderis is a high-profile former asylum seeker who pioneered a world-leading surgical technique that has been life changing for amputees. Professor Al Muderis featured on The Today Show on behalf of WWG in October 2019 and was the guest speaker at a WWG function at Parliament House in November 2019, alongside celebrities Meshel Laurie and Mel Buttle.

Four activity areas

This year we re-oriented our work under four key activity areas and redeveloped our website to reflect this.

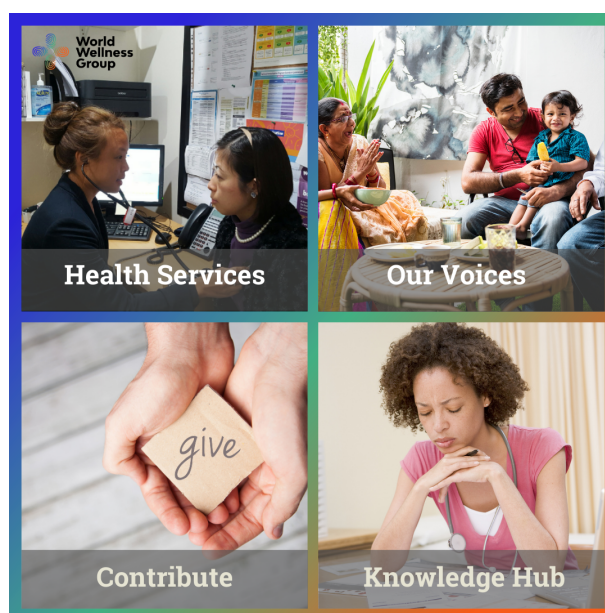
Health Services incorporates all our health and wellness services;

Our Voices embeds the voices of lived experience in our service and informs all that we do;

Contribute seeks partnership and contributions from companies and individuals who support our mission;

Knowledge Hub is a depository of our expertise, research, data, training and innovate service solutions that has been seeded and we will grow with time.

These four activity areas contribute directly to our mission.



Audited financial statement

The 2019-20 WWG audited financial statement was prepared by C and N Audit Services. The report is available on the WWG website (www.worldwellnessgroup.org.au).

Social impact

This year we completed our Social Impact Framework (SIF) with the support of our partner Risk Insights. The Framework sets the blue-print for our future data collection and impact measurement work. The World Wellness Group Theory of Change identifies two key activity areas to create improved health equity for people from CALD backgrounds:

1. The provision of accessible, culturally appropriate and wrap-around health and wellness services to people from CALD backgrounds
2. Health system interventions to produce a more CALD inclusive, accessible and responsive health care system



This year we are able to report on the following outcome data:

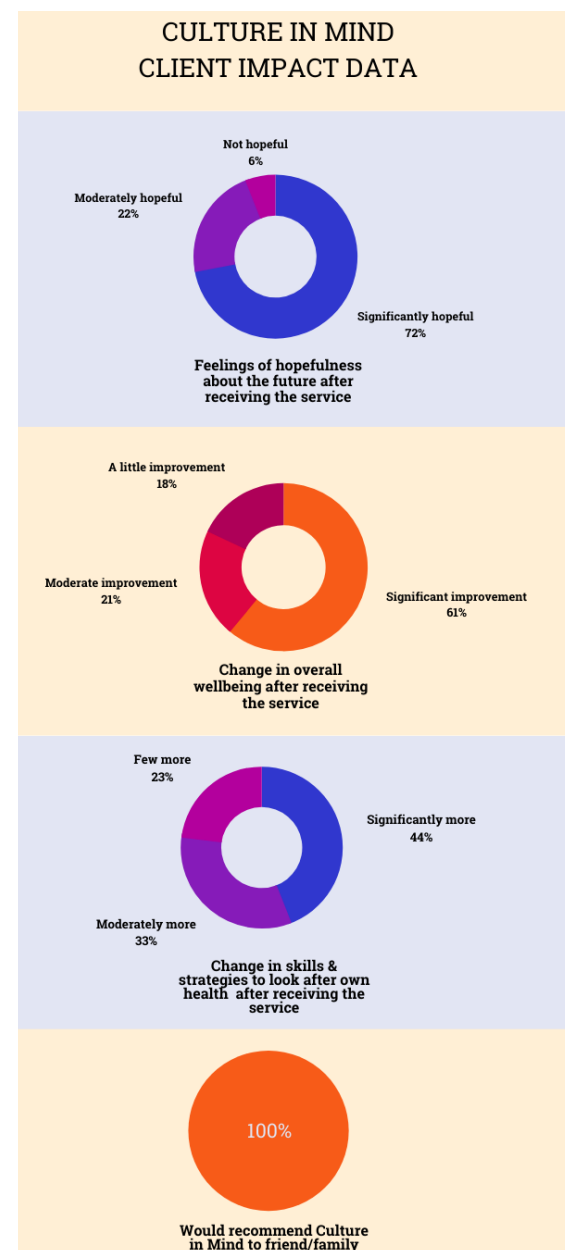
- Improvements in determinants of health: Culture in Mind Program
- Improvements in safety and wellbeing: Health Justice Program
- CALD policy, planning & investment
- Culturally competent health workforce and CALD data & research

As we continue to implement the Social Impact Framework, we will be able to report on additional outcome areas.

Improved determinants of health

Culture in Mind provides a range of psycho-social supports to improve mental health, wellbeing, recovery, social inclusion and participation. It provides services to people with moderate to severe mental health problems from multicultural backgrounds.

Our routine feedback processes for 2019-20 recorded the following client impacts (see adjacent chart) which demonstrate the overall positive impact the program had on the health and wellbeing of clients. Seventy-two per cent of clients reported feeling significantly hopeful after receiving services; 61% reported a significant improvement in wellbeing; 44% reported a significant improvement in skills and strategies to look after their own health; and 100% of clients would recommend the service to friends and family.



Improved safety and wellbeing

The Health Justice Program embeds legal advocacy and if required, representation, in our health service. It is a much needed and unique service - the first of its kind in Australia. The table presents the life changing outcomes that were achieved with one Legal Advocate and a volunteer Supervising Lawyer in 2019-20.

Cultural safety, visa safety, physical safety and justice are important client outcomes achieved by this program and essential to improving the health outcomes of people from CALD backgrounds.

CALD policy, planning & investment

WWG participated in planning and advisory committees and boards and also had active engagement in new COVID-19 related committees:

- Metro North Hospital & Health Service Community Advisory Board
- Metro South Multicultural Advisory Group
- Queensland Health CALD Covid-19 Working Group
- Queensland Health Covid-19 Testing Hard To Reach Populations Working Group
- Queensland Network to End Slavery and Trafficking and the Awareness Raising Sub Group.

These planning and policy mechanisms were crucial to our systems work and ability to influence for better multicultural health outcomes.

Through advocacy, alliances and networks, we secured resources for medical services for people seeking asylum, including medication costs. This was a major policy shift that resulted in many more people seeking asylum gaining access to healthcare. We established our state-wide Asylum Healthcare Program from these resources. We also secured resources for the new Multicultural Connect Line. Both these new services are state-wide.



*Nursing team and Asylum Healthcare nurses
Yvonne, Jemma, Shannah & Heidar*

2019-20 Health Justice client outcomes

- 10 Successful immigration outcomes
- 8 Large fines waived (between \$2k-\$55k)
- 4 Successful child safety matters
- 2 Successful family law matters
- 2 Successful criminal law matters
- 1 Successful administrative law matter

CALD health research & data

WWG initiated engagement with the Minister for Health and subsequently Queensland Health to improve CALD health data. Two CALD data round-tables were held to identify multicultural datasets, data improvement plans and improved data reporting. One more round-table is due to be held in 2020-21.

WWG was a key partner in the national Culture Well project that sought systems-level solutions to the health and wellbeing issues of three ethnic communities in South East Queensland. Several publications were published from this work and the project is ongoing.

The early part of the COVID-19 pandemic triggered the WWG team to conduct hundreds of vulnerability checks with people with identified vulnerabilities. We collected data from these checks that subsequently was developed into a journal article which was submitted for publication in an Australian health journal in 2020-21.



*Health Justice
lawyer Yasmin
Ildes with a happy
client*

Service activity 2019-20

Coronavirus Pandemic Responses

This financial year, our service activity was greatly impacted by the coronavirus pandemic. We responded to the pandemic swiftly with targeted services and outreach strategies, and keeping abreast of the changing issues impacting on our service delivery and our clients.

The summary table presents the work we undertook directly in response to the coronavirus pandemic.

Some of this work is ongoing as the pandemic continues on.

Impact of the pandemic	Our response
Impact on WWG	
Compliant working arrangements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Non-client facing staff worked from home/ off site Telehealth or telephone appts where possible Additional office space rented Physical entry and triaging arrangements Suspension of traditional medicine program
Increase in mental health service demand	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demand for Culture in Mind tripled Demand for Multicultural Psychological Therapies doubled Reason for calls to the Multicultural Connect Line were financial distress, mental health & immigration visa issues (descending order)
Expertise on multicultural health & communication required by government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> WWG participated on several Government policy advisory committees WWG submitted a journal article for publication to an Australian Health Journal
Impact on WWG clients	
Fear, uncertainty & practical aid required by vulnerable clients	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 580 clients contacted by phone for vulnerability check 311 vulnerability check completed in-language 3 person response team established
Confusion on navigating safety nets, support systems and eligibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Established the Queensland Multicultural Connect Line in June 2020 March to July 2020 378 cases required Response Team follow up
Lack of safety nets for clients on temporary visas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> WWG increased capability of our food pantry with community support Number one reason for calling the Multicultural Connect Line was financial distress



Multicultural Connect Line

WWG's most innovative service response to the pandemic was the establishment of the Multicultural Connect Line in June 2020. The MCL was designed to provide a 'front door' to the moving feast of support and eligibility criteria for assistance for Queensland's multicultural population.

The MCL was born out of our initial pandemic response which involved reaching out to 580 vulnerable clients by telephone, establishing a response team to deliver additional supports and aid. During the first half of 2020 we delivered 834 follow-up services to vulnerable people who received a vulnerability check

We undertook extensive grass-roots outreach and engagement with multicultural communities, established several community reference groups across the State and undertook extensive multicultural marketing and promotions to promote this new service in Queensland.



MCL establishment team Mohamed, Aurore, Sameera, Kaamna, Yasmin, Tania, Jackie & Amos (L-R)

Health services & client profile

The expansion of our mental health services saw a change in our client profile with just over 50% of our clients utilising our mental health services. The remainder utilised GP, traditional medicine and allied health services combined.

The infographic presents a snap-shot of demographic client information by ethnicity, age, preferred language and location.

Asylum Healthcare

Delivering accessible healthcare without any barriers such as visa rights to the most vulnerable in the community is a fundamental part of our mission. In 2019-20 our Asylum Healthcare provided medical services to 136 people seeking asylum. Our medical and nursing teams provided a wide range of health services and health advocacy including:

- medical & nursing care
- medication support
- Supporting clients through negotiating hospital
- fees waivers
- providing imaging and pathology costs
- education and information about health system and health rights
- finding pro-bono dentists
- capacity building by finding a GP in rural area where people seeking asylum live

In past years this work was entirely funded by WWG and we were fortunate to be financially supported by the Queensland Government for most of this financial year for this crucial work.

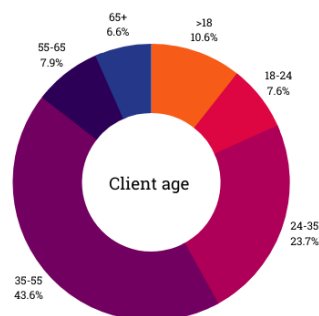
Multicultural Peer Support Workers

World Wellness Group has a dedicated workforce that provides cultural support to our clients. In 2019-20 we had capacity to deliver support to clients from **55 cultural groups** through 60

Multicultural Peer Support Workers (MPSWs). Our Multicultural Peer Support Workers delivered 941 sessions of cultural support and were at the forefront of our response during the corona virus pandemic by conducting vulnerability checks and working in the Response Team.

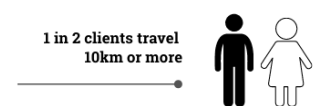
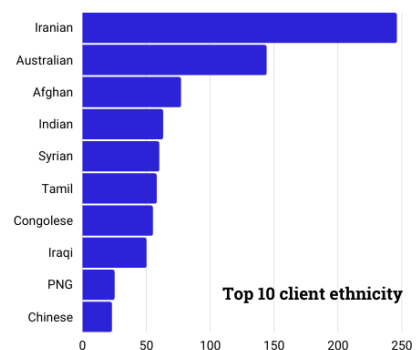
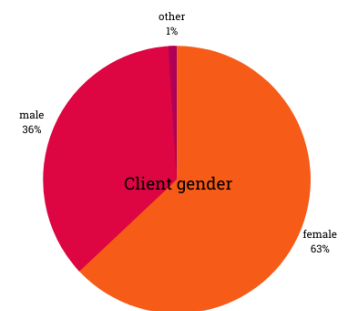
2228

CLIENTS



14,537

HEALTH SESSIONS



CALD health promotion

We expanded our culturally based physical activity program, with 105 sessions over the year with 2081 attendances! This is an average of 19 people per session and an overall increase of 35%. Our physical activity sessions were provided under the Brisbane City Council Active and Healthy Programs and reached a wide range of participants across Brisbane. Activities were delivered in Calamvale, Inala, Oxley, Everton Park, Zillmere and Sunnybank.

This financial year WWG developed a CALD health promotion framework for Queensland and will continue to work with Queensland Government for investment and implementation to achieve health equity.

