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## One year of Adira

NSW Multicultural Centre  
for Women's and Family Safety

June 2025

# One year of Adira

Established in 2024 and funded by the NSW Government, the NSW Multicultural Centre for Women's and Family Safety (the Adira Centre) works across NSW to enhance culturally responsive domestic, family and sexual violence prevention and response in migrant and refugee communities. This report outlines the Adira Centre's key achievements in its first year.



SSI staff and CEO Violet Roumeliotis at the official launch of the Adira Centre in May 2024 with the NSW Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Jodie Harrison, Deputy Premier Prue Car, Member for Fairfield David Saliba and Member for Parramatta Donna Davis.

SSI acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the lands where we live, learn and work. We remain committed to reconciliation and to working to realise *Makarrata*, a Yolngu word meaning the coming together after a struggle.

## Capacity building through practice

The Adira Centre drives culturally responsive, evidence-based solutions to domestic, family, and sexual violence (DFSV) across NSW. By collaborating across the women's safety, multicultural, and settlement sectors, Adira enhances the capacity of services to support migrant and refugee women and children facing DFSV, ensuring that care is both expert and culturally informed.

### Collaborative model of practice

Over the course of the first year, the Adira team developed and promoted a unique collaborative model of DFSV practice. Adira's collaborative practice offers flexible casework advice, support and/or co-case management to peers in the women's safety and multicultural and settlement sectors. Collaboration is focused on gradually building service and practitioner capacity to respond to the cultural and structural barriers to seeking safety that migrant and refugee women and children face. Collaborative practice is informed by Adira's ongoing direct casework in Southwest Sydney.

## Casework

### Information, advice, and referrals:

The Centre provided support to 207 clients, including 21 from regional areas.

### In-depth consultations:

12 one-off, in-depth consultations were conducted, including six for clients in regional areas.

### Collaborative casework:

34 adults and 37 children were supported, including one regional client.

### Direct casework:

220 clients were supported with direct casework, including 92 children, and 40 adult clients received brokerage funds. Additionally, clients were supported with recovery counselling.

### Language support:

Clients required interpreting in 23 languages, ensuring equitable access to services.

## Peer consultations with practitioners

Adira facilitated 14 peer-to-peer consultations to support the capacity of DFSV and settlement practitioners working with migrant and refugee clients.

*“I started believing in the humanity again because Adira team are there for me”*

Adira client

*“We would like to express our huge thanks and gratitude to the persistent / never giving up on us efforts, and I remember very vividly...I was so tired from all the rejections and even though we got a lot of support from other services no one has ever in my life treated me in a way where they have listened to me and took everything that I say seriously and your immediate responses to the crisis that we had in our lives have made it worthwhile”*

Adira client

## Rani's Story

Rani had moved from overseas to regional New South Wales where she was staying on a prospective partner visa. She had no support or network outside of her husband who was the perpetrator of violence against her.

Rani had been physically assaulted on multiple occasions and was regularly threatened and verbally abused.

She had accessed a community health service for support but was reluctant to access safety support for cultural reasons, including shame and stigma.

The service reached out to the Adira Centre for consultation and advice, and a specialist practitioner spoke to Rani about domestic violence and coercive control in her language.

The practitioner and Rani discussed their mutual understanding of cultural stigma and shame around disclosing abuse.

Following the consultation, Rani felt comfortable to continue engaging with local services with the support of the Adira Centre's practitioner and understands her safety options and support services she can access.

## Capacity building through community engagement

### Lived Experience Advisory group

Established and engaged 10 women, providing invaluable insights that inform all aspects of Adira practice, engagement and policy advice.

### Supporting U

Empowered 13 migrant and refugee women with training, resources and connections to support early intervention to DFSV in their communities.

### Community education

Delivered 54 sessions focused on understanding DFSV and Health relationships across 5 regions, reaching 1,029 participants from 20 diverse communities.

In 2024-25, community engagement initiatives focused on capacity building through education, mobilisation, and harnessing the voices of individuals with lived experience of DFSV.

Adira established a Lived Experience Advisory Group of 10 migrant and refugee women. In the first year, the group provided invaluable insights to inform the Centre's culturally responsive model of practice, specialised projects and policy advice. The group also acted as a resource for the wider sector, participating in external consultations for academic research, with government and other stakeholders, and contributing to media coverage of migrant and refugee women's experiences of DFSV and access to support.

The Supporting U program engaged 13 trusted and respected migrant and refugee women and worked with them to strengthen community capacities for early intervention and positive social responses to DFSV. Supporting U members were equipped with training, resources and ongoing connection and insights via learning circles to build their confidence and capacity to support others in their communities. Members facilitated community consultations to understand the dynamics of DFSV in their communities and community-based strategies for response, providing important community insights to inform Adira's ongoing work.

A key element of the community engagement efforts was the delivery of 54 education sessions focused on **Understanding DFSV** and **Healthy Relationships**.

- Sessions reached 1,029 participants from 20 diverse communities in Sydney, Newcastle, Coffs Harbour, Tamworth, and Armidale
- To ensure accessibility, these sessions were delivered in English and interpreted into 15 languages.

Participants in the Healthy Relationships sessions expressed a strong eagerness to learn more about support systems and the different types of DFSV. Post-session survey results revealed the following:

- 82% of respondents found the information very useful.
- 68% felt confident in understanding the difference between healthy and unhealthy relationships.
- 71% were confident in knowing how to seek support if they were in an unhealthy relationship.
- 100% reported learning something new to help them maintain healthy relationships.

## Capacity building through sector engagement

### Safety in Settlement Community of Practice (SISCoP)

Adira established the Safety in Settlement Community of Practice (SISCoP) in July 2024, bringing together 24 multicultural and settlement organisations across NSW to share knowledge, reflect on practice, and share strategies for effective DFSV prevention and response in migrant and refugee communities. SISCoP comprises subgroups on prevention/early intervention and response/recovery. Members actively engaged in discussion and collaboration around good practice and practice challenges related to primary prevention, engaging with men, and coercive control.

### Research – Scoping the gap

Drawing on the experience of SISCoP members, the Adira Centre initiated Scoping the Gap, a project seeking to uncover and quantify the extent of unfunded DFSV support provided by multicultural and settlement organisations to migrant and refugee women and children across NSW, and the residual unmet service need. By identifying service gaps and the pressures placed on providers, this project aims to build the evidence base for appropriate resourcing of this work and to improve outcomes for migrant and refugee populations affected by DFSV.

### Sector training

- 96 community workers in the multicultural, women's safety or related sectors participated in training on culturally responsive practice in the context of DFSV or identifying and responding to DFSV.
- Two workshops with individual specialist DFSV and settlement providers focused on supporting migrant and refugee clients in regional areas.
- Five Training of Trainer sessions were delivered to 27 sector workers across various regions to support extended reach of community education activities.

### Policy advice

The Adira Centre develops policy advice based on insights from casework practice, the Lived Experience Advisory Group, community and sector consultations, and the SISCoP. In the first year, key focus areas included:

- Access to crisis accommodation for individuals on temporary visas.
- Review of domestic violence rental laws in NSW.
- Addressing financial abuse and migrant and refugee child protection in DFSV contexts.
- Tackling modern slavery and promoting cultural responsiveness in DFSV responses.
- Addressing workforce needs and providing expert advice in relation to responses to family violence within the migration system.

### The year ahead

The Adira Centre enters its second year energised to further strengthen and promote the collaborative model of practice and to enhance sector partnerships to improve outcomes for migrant and refugee women and children seeking safety.

### **For more information**

contact the Adira Centre at  
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We're SSI.

We stand for a world in which everyone  
has access to equal opportunity.

We are driven by equality, empathy,  
and celebration of every individual.

**ssi.org.au**



Cover: Adira's senior team with the  
Governor-General, Her Excellency the  
Honourable Ms Sam Mostyn AC  
during her visit to the Centre in  
February 2025.