

Muslim Women Australia (MWA)

About Muslim Women Australia

Muslim Women Australia (MWA) is a representative body for Muslim women working to enrich humanity, advocating for the rights of all women, through authentic leadership based on our Islamic principles. MWA delivers an array of holistic, integrated, culturally and religiously appropriate intervention and support services while providing community development and capacity building initiatives.

MWA has been supporting and advocating on behalf of all women, and Muslim women in particular, for over 39 years. At the heart of the MWA is a commitment to fairness, equality and justice in all our interactions and activities that support Muslim women.

Responses to the COVID pandemic

MWA, as part of its COVID-19 Delta response, worked to provide hope over fear and a sense of calm and dignity in service delivery while advocating fiercely for measured solutions to support CALD communities in South-West Sydney. MWA developed messaging that responded to community concerns regarding unfair lockdown policies while still ensuring that families stayed safe and supported.

MWA support for community members who tested positive for COVID-19 took place in terms of direct service settings across domestic violence, homelessness and settlement support; as well as community engagement settings, offering radical practical help, psycho-social supports and spiritual activism where appropriate. MWA provided trauma-informed case management for women and children impacted by violence and families at risk of homelessness. This was provided alongside food and material aid, maintaining connections during lockdowns through targeted communications strategies inclusive of regular check-ins, virtual visits, the provision of COVID Care packs and developing and adapting online activities for women and their families.

Client Case Study:

Complex Case Management for COVID Positive Family at risk of Homelessness

Amidst the Delta outbreak a multicultural family of 6 had contracted COVID-19. The wife and mother who was the sole breadwinner unfortunately died at home from COVID-19. The family (father with 5 children) was referred to MWA Linking Hearts service by community leaders to provide complex case management support. The youngest daughter had an intellectual disability with high needs and had not received any appropriate intervention, nor was she accessing NDIS.

The family was grieving and in dire circumstances. They were from an 'LGA of concern' at a time when strict public health orders were implemented restricting movement. They were at risk of homelessness with an overloaded service system amidst the pandemic. Their existing networks, local community and GP attempted to support them, seeking guidance from and referral to MWA. MWA supported the family with intensive case management including eight months' rent assistance, financial relief, disability support, employment and education pathways as well as parenting support. MWA provided six months' disability support upfront, inclusive of material aid and medical expenses while applying for an NDIS package.

The father and youngest daughter contracted the virus a second time and the family experienced elevated levels of trauma and distress having experienced the death of their mother with an overwhelming fear of the impact on the child with special needs. MWAs' trauma informed model ensured effective outcomes for this family and included extensive capacity building of the community networks associated, via information, referral and leadership so they could provide capable post support to this family and informed responses to members of their respective communities.

MWA supported this family and built the capacity of community leaders to respond and refer while feeding back key issues to identified stakeholders to enhance policy settings and resourcing, developing awareness of needs, complexities and supports.

Client case study provided by Muslim Women Australia Linking Hearts Frontline Worker