

inTouch Multicultural Centre Against Family Violence

inTouch

Annual Report

2021

—2022

inTouch





inTouch acknowledges the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as the first inhabitants of this nation and the Traditional Custodians of the land on which we work and live. We pay our respects to their Elders, past and present. We express our gratitude for the sharing of this land, our sorrow for the personal, spiritual and cultural costs of that sharing and hope that we may move forward together in harmony and in the spirit of healing.

We acknowledge the countless women who have experienced family violence, in particular women from migrant and refugee backgrounds. We recognise the courageous path they have travelled to rebuild their lives and honour their stories which continue to inspire and drive our work.

inTouch is a Rainbow Tick accredited organisation. We value and celebrate diversity, and are respectful of a person's culture, identity, beliefs, gender and sexuality.



Message from Chair and CEO



Miriam Silva AM
Chair

In our 38th year COVID continued to be a presence in our lives, our work, and our communities.

At inTouch, our enduring resilience and flexibility in the face of a global pandemic has served as a strong foundation, underpinning our growth and vision for the future.

With the input of our staff and the women we work with, inTouch developed and released our Strategic Plan, which outlines the organisation's direction for the next three years. We have updated our vision, purpose, values and strategic priorities to align inTouch with the current challenges and trends we have identified as well as the priorities acknowledged by Government and the service sector as we journey towards a holistic, national approach to family violence. As COVID restrictions were lifted, we increased our advocacy and policy work, meeting with a number of key Government leaders to discuss and challenge assumptions around family violence.

We know that in order to end family violence, we must meet individuals and their communities where they are at. This remains the core of our work. Through our *inLanguage*, *inCulture* delivery model, we successfully embed language, culture, faith, migration and settlement into all of our service responses, ensuring that migrant and refugee women and their families can move beyond their experiences of family violence and thrive.

This year we celebrated the 10th anniversary of our legal centre which was established to address the unique barriers that women from migrant and refugee backgrounds can experience when accessing the legal and justice systems. Over the past 10 years we have built a specialist, in-house service at the intersection of family and migration law, supporting hundreds of women and children every year by providing our clients with culturally appropriate legal and migration support within an existing relationship of trust.

Thank you to our CEO Michal Morris, and the inTouch team who have contributed to the continued success and growth of our organisation.

I would like to thank everyone for their efforts in support of our work including my fellow Board and committee members, who generously volunteer their time to guide and support the evolution and growth of inTouch. Your insights, wise counsel and passion are greatly appreciated.

I'm genuinely excited by what lies ahead for inTouch and what we can achieve building on the solid foundations laid this year.



Michal Morris
Chief Executive Officer

It has been another eventful year at inTouch. Our team reached many important milestones and continued to refine and expand our critical services.

Our growth and adaptability is evident across all our programs and can be highlighted through the work of our Sector and Community unit, which strengthens our relationships with multicultural and family violence organisations by delivering evidence-based projects, capacity building initiatives and community-based recovery programs.

Last year, our Learning and Development team trained people from 126 organisations across the multicultural, health, government, education and family violence sectors, extending our reach nationally and building the capacity of community and sector workers to provide better outcomes for migrant and refugee women who have experienced family violence. inTouch's curriculum and case studies continue to be informed by our client facing programs- our case management services for victim-survivors, community legal centre and Motivation for Change program.

Our Strategic Plan, endorsed by the Board this year iterated inTouch's desire for growth, influence and leadership on a national stage. It outlines our commitment to our people and culture and assures our organisational stability through financial diversity. Our vision will be critical in directing our priorities and building our services over the coming years. I thank our board, staff and NOOR Family Violence Survivor-Advocates for their contributions and insight in the development of this important piece of work.

We continue to solidify our influence across the family violence continuum through our policy and advocacy work. This year, inTouch advocated for increased investment in culturally responsive service delivery within the family violence sector and the establishment of a special visa for temporary visa holders who are victim-survivors of family violence. We also highlighted the importance of expanding the capability of multicultural organisations to work with the family violence sector, increasing service response and the safety of clients. As always, the voices of victim-survivors must remain paramount to these considerations.

However, none of this work would happen without the support of our donors and funders and the dedication of our Board and Committee members, particularly our Chair, Miriam Silva AM.

To our incredible inTouch team and our lived experience survivor-advocate group, NOOR- none of this would be possible without your passion, drive and expertise. Lastly, we continue this work for victim-survivors and their communities, in the hope that we can end family violence with our lifetimes.

Who We Are

For 38 years, inTouch Multicultural Centre Against Family Violence has supported migrant and refugee women and their communities to move on from experiences of family violence and thrive.

Our Mission and Purpose

We use our unique understanding of culture, family violence, family law and immigration to support our clients and the service system.

We continuously recognise and integrate the expertise of people with lived experience of family violence to guide inTouch in its work.

We are a strong, trusted and inclusive voice, driving structural and systematic change to address the problem of family violence in our communities.

We are a highly culturally diverse organisation that leverages cultural understanding and experience to tailor our offerings to meet the unique needs of our clients.

We are committed to providing compassionate and culturally appropriate support.

Our Values



Integrity —

We value and respect our colleagues, clients and the people we work with; our actions are transparent and demonstrate fairness, compassion, humanity and honesty



Excellence —

We value actively seeking ways to make positive change to continually drive our standards higher



Transformation —

We value our own and our organisation's growth and seek ways for us all to thrive



Influence —

We value our thought leadership, experience, and advocacy, making a positive difference to everyone we work with, every day.



Collaboration —

We value exploring and growing our partnerships to develop a cooperative working environment and inclusive solutions



Diversity & Inclusion —

We value the cultural diversity of our staff, clients and community and seek ways to embed and be inclusive of all diversity in everything we do

Our Services

- Case management that encompasses a first-hand understanding of the migration journey and unique cultural barriers women may face when seeking assistance
- Learning and development programs for family violence providers and multicultural organisations to build their knowledge and skills when supporting women from refugee and migrant communities
- Post-recovery initiatives for victim-survivors, focusing on economic independence, social and family connection and emotional wellbeing
- Prevention projects and resource development for migrant and refugee communities
- Programs focusing on trauma and culturally-informed perpetrator intervention
- A survivor-advocate advisory group that provides guidance to inTouch as well as government, sector and peak bodies
- An accredited community legal centre working at the intersection of migration and family law
- A dedicated policy, advocacy and research unit informed by inTouch's unique service expertise and the experiences of victim-survivors.

2021—2022

Our Services— A Snapshot

1431

individual clients were supported through direct services

1223

of those 1431 clients had children in their care



74 women attended our community recovery groups, receiving support in English, Chinese, Arabic and South Asian languages



108 men were supported by inTouch's Motivation for Change program, exceeding target by 118%



The inSpire initiative reached 250 women and their children with COVID-19 vaccine information and support through the VaxHub Project



inTouch's Learning and Development Team ran 154 training and information sessions

Community Legal Centre



314

clients assisted with immigration matters by our Community Legal Centre

498

clients assisted with general legal matters by our Community Legal Centre

Our Staff



Came from 21 different countries



Spoke 40 languages



71% were born somewhere other than Australia



84% had at least one parent born overseas

Direct Services

It has been another tremendously busy year for inTouch's Direct Services team. Our *inLanguage*, *inCulture* integrated model continues to play a pivotal role in our service delivery, resulting in positive outcomes for our clients.

inTouch's direct services staff have continued to shape our case management response to meet our clients' needs as we all navigate the post-lockdown stages of the pandemic, with borders reopening and many people returning to work.

Our team has continued to provide clients with up-to-date information and support in relation to changes in the family violence sector, legal system and health and safety.

inTouch has also improved and refined our use of the Family Violence Multi-Agency Risk Assessment and Management Framework (MARAM) and the Information Sharing Provisions. These recent reforms provide guidance and outline the responsibilities in assessing and managing family violence risk, enabling organisations to work more effectively together and ensure the safety and wellbeing of victim-survivors. Our team has valued the opportunity to improve our services as well as our ability to use these tools in accordance with best practice — while also upholding and complying with the ethical standards of the industry.

Along with our direct work with clients, the Direct Services team also provides secondary consultations to assist specialist family violence sector workers in responding appropriately and working effectively with clients from migrant and refugee backgrounds. Our case managers' nuanced, first-hand understanding of language, culture and the migration journey has guaranteed that this service remained in high demand throughout the year.

Our relationships with key stakeholders and our referral pathways have also continued to strengthen, ensuring we provide the best possible service to our clients.

Partnership with Safe Steps

inTouch has formalised our referral pathway with Safe Steps for women who are in crisis or emergency accommodation. This partnership fast tracks women who are being supported by Safe Steps' brief intervention team into our case management service, with the aim of supporting a smooth transition from crisis response to specialist family violence services, reducing the time women have to wait between referral and allocation. We expect to grow this partnership into the future, engaging collaboratively and increasing service accessibility through joint case planning and ongoing consultation for clients, as required.

Partnership with NHARP

inTouch is working with Berry Street and Kids First Australia to operate the Northern Healing and Recovery Program (NHARP). This program provides therapeutic interventions for victim-survivors and their families within the Hume Moreland and North Eastern Melbourne areas in Victoria.

This growing partnership will refine the referral pathways between Berry Street and Kids First Australia, providing a range of services for migrant and refugee women who experience family violence, and their children. These services will identify and address unmet needs for clients in the relevant local government areas by using existing community connections and knowledge, delivering staff training and secondary consultations, and facilitating therapeutic groupwork.

Case Study

Prisha has been engaged with the NHARP program through support services at Berry Street. Her and two daughters have been accessing trauma services to recover from the mental health impacts of the family's experiences of family violence. Through involvement with Berry Street, Prisha's case manager identified there had been some recent incidents of family violence due to renewed contact with Prisha's ex-partner. Using the NHARP partnership, a referral was made directly to inTouch. Our intake practitioner contacted Prisha to explore any immediate risks, create a safety plan and complete a needs assessment.

It was identified that Prisha and her children needed support with increasing security in their home, assistance navigating the legal system and help connecting with their community. inTouch's case manager was able to provide Prisha with further emotional support and applied for new locks for the family home through the family violence Personal Safety Initiative. Her case manager also helped Prisha connect with mothers' groups as well as multicultural community organisations in her area.

Motivation for Change

We know that Australia’s cultural and linguistic composition continues to diversify — and so too must our family violence prevention strategies. Currently, there is limited guidance around tailoring programs to maximise the engagement of men from migrant and refugee backgrounds who use violence.

Working with men who use violence can be complex, and intersecting barriers affecting culturally diverse men can make prevention and response a challenging process. Differences in language, culture and faith can also impact the ability of these individuals to seek help, whether it is from traditional family violence services or their own community. This can be compounded by trauma associated with the migration and settlement journey and a lack of understanding of Australian laws and our justice system.

“The concept of mediation, restorative practice or behaviour change is a western notion — there is a lot of misunderstanding in some communities about what these are. We can encourage understanding as we work with men.”

— Ali Hussain, Motivation for Change Team Lead

inTouch’s Motivation for Change utilises our pioneering *inLanguage, inCulture* delivery model to challenge harmful attitudes and behaviours using culture, language and community as a strength-based response.

The program holds groups on a rolling basis, which means participants can begin attending at any point, often with men who have been in the program longer assuming guiding roles for newer members.

Enrolments in the program continued to be well above inTouch’s targets for the year, due to courts resuming business as usual after COVID lockdowns. Despite illness and many men returning to onsite working, attendance remained high, with actively engaged group members.

This year, inTouch received funding through the Migration Council of Australia to work with recently arrived Afghan refugees on family violence education and early intervention, allowing us to provide direct support to men from Afghan backgrounds and their families. The program takes into account this cohort’s existing trauma from recent events in Afghanistan as well as their migration journey which is mapped out in initial sessions through drawing and genograms. The group continues to work together to unpack expectations in their relationships — challenging their choice to use violence using the familiar basis of religion and culture.

In addition to Motivation for Change’s work with these clients and our existing program with men from South East Asia, foundational work was also undertaken this year to establish a new cohort from the Horn of Africa. This will provide inTouch with the opportunity to demonstrate the effectiveness of Motivation for Change across other cultural groups. Additional funding from the Migration Council of Victoria has supported an expansion of the initial group program, enabling us to proactively engage with the community and further educate the broader sector.

Case Study

Esmat is originally from Afghanistan and has been in Australia since 2019, sponsored by his fiancée, Shabana. Due to the recent takeover of Afghanistan by the Taliban, Esmat is deeply concerned for the safety of his remaining family and wants to bring them from Kabul to Australia.

Recent COVID lockdowns have resulted in loss of income because Esmat has been unable to go to his casual job as a construction worker. He feels frustrated and has started becoming abusive towards Shabana and their newborn child.

The police attended Esmat and Shabana’s home after the neighbours reported loud shouting and noises. An interim IVO was put in place, which resulted in Esmat staying in a hotel until the court date.

After speaking to the Men’s Referral Service via an interpreter, he was referred to Motivation for Change’s in-language group and case management program.

Esmat agreed to an online assessment and interview with a case manager, who inducted him into the program and provided technical support so Esmat could attend online group sessions conducted in Dari every Saturday. After five weeks, Esmat expressed that he was finding the group to be beneficial and enjoyed sharing his thoughts with other men who understood his background and challenges as well as his concerns for his family in Afghanistan.

At the end of the 15 sessions, Esmat wanted to attend further group work as he was still not working due to the lockdown and had connected with the other Afghan men.

Legal Centre

This year, inTouch's Community Legal Centre celebrated ten years of operation.

Our Legal Centre was established following research funded by the Victoria Law Foundation, which identified that navigating the justice system is a particularly challenging process for migrant and refugee women who experience family violence.

The research concluded that this cohort of women experience multiple obstacles when seeking support with legal matters, such as language barriers (which were not effectively overcome by the use of interpreters), limited knowledge of the Australian legal system, prejudicial attitudes, and inadequate support from services.

To address this, inTouch established an embedded, specialised community legal centre that operates at the intersection of family violence, migration and family law, providing assistance to clients who are already receiving support from inTouch's case management. We are proud to be the first multidisciplinary practice in Australia to provide this type of inclusive and concurrent service response.

Our expert team of lawyers and migration agents provide the following services:

- Protection from family violence – intervention orders
- Family law – dispute resolution
- Small property settlements and financial matters
- Immigration and Visa assistance
- Victims of Crime Assistance Tribunal (VOCAT) applications
- Divorce and advice clinics

It has been a significant and transformative period for inTouch's Legal Centre. For the first time, we have received enough funding to ensure our financial viability while growing our service capacity. This has allowed us to expand our team and provide greater job security for our existing staff.

This year, our Legal Centre welcomed a new Principal Lawyer as well as a Legal Centre Manager, who worked with staff to transition to a digital legal practice management system, establish a volunteer program to support staff, and strengthen our stakeholder relations and project strategies. This leadership team brought our complement of staff and volunteers to nine, our largest yet.

Key to the Legal Centre's continuous and successful operation is the work of our Migration Agent, Luba Tanevski, who continues to be a steady and effective advocate for our clients, and this year celebrates 26 years of service at inTouch.

Luba's work is renowned across the migration and refugee law sector, as is her strong, reciprocal partnership with the Department of Home Affairs. Luba provides extensive advice and support on a range of visa conditions, but primarily specialises in providing support to victim-survivors of family violence who have arrived in Australia on a spousal visa and have subsequently experienced violence perpetrated by their sponsor. Alongside her case work, Luba provides guidance to sector workers through secondary consultations as well as training and professional development throughout the sector.

The importance of specialised migration support cannot be understated. Navigating the justice system can be incredibly challenging for our clients, who are often facing multiple legal issues. inTouch's continuum of support offers clients a comprehensive and tailored service, providing the best foundation possible for healing and recovery.

Case Study

Taraji first met her husband, Nicholas, in 2007 and married him in 2013 in her hometown of Nairobi. Soon after this, Taraji's husband applied for a partner visa so she could join him in his home in Australia. As soon as Taraji arrived in Australia, Nicholas' behaviour changed — he became aggressive, jealous and verbally abusive. He worked long hours as a taxi driver and instructed Taraji to stay at home during his shifts, forbidding her from studying or leaving the house by herself.

While Nicholas provided food and paid their household bills, he did not allow Taraji access to any of the couple's finances.

Taraji fell pregnant six months into their relationship. Nicholas refused to acknowledge that he was the father of Taraji's baby and became physically violent towards her. For her own safety, and that of her unborn child, Taraji decided to leave their home and stay with a family from the African community that the couple had met at church.

Nicholas did not attend the birth of his child, refused to sign the Birth Certificate and left Taraji in hospital to care for their son on her own.

Taraji was referred to inTouch by staff at the hospital and was allocated a case manager from the same cultural background. The case manager also identified numerous legal issues, including the need for immigration assistance and support with an intervention order. inTouch's migration agent, family lawyer and case manager worked with the client to help her understand her options, rights and the legal process.

The migration agent and family lawyer worked closely together to secure her immigration status and the status of her son. Because Nicholas was not willing to sign the child's birth certificate, the family lawyer ordered a DNA test through the courts to prove paternity. After confirming that the child was born to an Australian citizen, Taraji's child's immigration status was settled, and our agent was able to apply for permanent residency for Taraji through the special family violence provisions in the migrations law.

inTouch's family lawyer also helped Taraji with parenting orders as well as a family violence intervention order to secure the ongoing safety and wellbeing of her and her son.

Sector and Community

Our Sector and Community unit combines the unique expertise derived from our client services team with a wide scope of dynamic partnerships — transforming organisational and community responses to family violence.



Centred and informed by the experiences of victim-survivors and highly responsive to the needs and demands of both the family violence and multicultural sectors, inTouch's Sector and Community team builds the capacity of organisations through learning and development, co-case management, community of practice facilitation and project management. We also work on a grassroots, community level through our inSpire initiative, *inLanguage*, *inCulture* therapeutic recovery groups and the activities of NOOR Family Violence Survivor-Advocates.

This year, COVID-19 has continued to impact how inTouch works and interacts with the community and broader service sector. Despite this, our Sector and Community team has expanded in both scope and size, delivering key projects and programs across the country.

“(The Refuge Project training) reinforced factors that I already had awareness of, but I really enjoyed hearing other workers’ case studies and situations I haven’t encountered, such as women having to leave Australia without their children or being caught up in legal visa battles for years. But I also have an increased confidence in the incredible support, expertise and passion that is available — and that some families get excellent outcomes and justice.”

— Participant, Women on Temporary Visas Training

Projects

inTouch has partnered with a variety of organisations to build family violence response capacity through specifically tailored projects.

Using the expertise of our Learning and Development team and inTouch's case managers, we work collaboratively with culturally diverse community organisations and the family violence sector, conducting comprehensive needs assessments and recommending actions to address gaps and build capacity. We develop and deliver tailored training, resources and other initiatives, improving service outcomes and creating meaningful change for migrant and refugee women who experience family violence, their families and their communities.

This year, these projects have included:

Migration Council Australia Project

“Strengthening the Capacity of SETS Providers in Domestic and Family Violence”

inTouch worked with the Migration Council of Australia to support the delivery of a Community of Practice to the 112 lead settlement service providers participating in the Settlement Engagement and Transition Support Program (SETS). The purpose of this ongoing partnership is to facilitate continuous sector engagement, capacity building, and the sharing of best practice to support better outcomes for migrant and refugee communities.

inTouch conducted a needs assessment and provided a capacity building program for settlement services across Australia, ensuring the initiative met family violence sector standards and had a strong focus on trauma informed, culturally-responsive practice.

Alongside a comprehensive training package, the project also developed content for an e-learning module to guide settlement workers who have identified family violence.

Family Safety Victoria Project

“Women on Temporary Visas in Refugee Service Strengthening Project”

The Victorian Government funds 30 refuges, employing approximately 250 people across Victoria to provide safe accommodation and support to individuals and families escaping family violence. Despite emergency funding being available to women on temporary visas, refuge workers often find it difficult to support this cohort due to a lack of suitable tools, resources and information.

Family Safety Victoria (FSV) contracted inTouch to undertake a comprehensive needs assessment of the refuge sector to better understand the current attitudes and behaviours of staff towards women on temporary visas, barriers faced by women on temporary visas when accessing refuges, and to identify appropriate capacity building initiatives.

Based on the findings of the needs assessment, inTouch developed resources for refuge workers, a webinar and bespoke online training facilitated by our Learning and Development team, in-house migration agent and a case manager.

Supporting Migrant and Refugee Women in Rural and Regional Victoria

Women from migrant and refugee backgrounds who have experienced family violence and are living in regional and rural areas face additional challenges when they seek support. inTouch’s research indicates that the lack of culturally appropriate and responsive services, social and geographical isolation, visa status, language and systemic barriers can all impact the ability of victim-survivors to obtain suitable assistance.

This year, inTouch established a new formalised co-case management program with a specialist family violence service in Bendigo to provide a more comprehensive service, with better outcomes for clients, their families and communities. inTouch’s culturally responsive model, coupled with the case management expertise of local Bendigo services, will provide wrap-around support to clients and build the capacity of the family violence workforce.

The project will improve collaboration between service providers and enable innovative ways to provide both culturally responsive and appropriate, localised family violence services.

Community-Based Recovery Groups

inTouch has a long history of facilitating recovery groups and is funded to deliver programs each year in the North, East and West regions of metropolitan Melbourne. We do this in partnership with community agencies, bringing together the skills, experience and expertise of each agency to deliver predominantly *inLanguage*, *inCulture* programs to support women in recovery.

This financial year, participation in the program doubled, with over 70 clients attending six culturally-responsive groups in English, Vietnamese, Chinese, Arabic and South Asian languages. The groups aim to provide a positive and safe therapeutic environment in order for victim-survivors to heal, build their confidence, explore healthy relationships, increase access to services and connect with other women who may have similar experiences.



Learning and Development

inTouch’s Learning and Development team create and deliver high quality, evidence-based professional development opportunities across the family violence and community sectors. We offer a range of organisations the chance to develop their understanding and skills when working with migrant and refugee women who experience family violence, and their communities.



inTouch’s in-person and online training focuses on creating a learning environment that is culturally responsive, person-centred and strengthened by a feminist, intersectional framework. Our program offerings align with the Family Violence Multi-Agency Risk Assessment and Management Framework (MARAM) and are developed through ongoing consultation with inTouch’s case managers, legal centre, NOOR Family Violence Survivor-Advocates and our policy and advocacy staff.

Our sessions reflect inTouch’s areas of expertise and touch on a variety of subjects including:

- Understanding and responding to family violence in multicultural communities
- Culturally responsive practice and intersectionality
- How culture and migration history impacts client capacity to seek and sustain support
- Working with women on temporary visas
- Complex family dynamics
- Cross-cultural engagement
- Risk assessment and safety planning for culturally diverse clients

Throughout the year, our team strengthened both our delivery process and our internal collaborations with other inTouch departments in order to diversify our program. In response to COVID-19 and increased demand, Learning and Development continued to adapt and refine inTouch’s capacity for online training. This has increased our reach and ability to deliver sessions to organisations throughout Victoria and nationally, particularly through our ongoing partnership with the Orange Door, who provide support and safety for people experiencing family violence in many regional areas across the state.

“inTouch’s training provided me with a deeper understanding of placing clients at the centre of support — acknowledging the need to be curious to understand how culture impacts a client’s life and decision-making.”

— Orange Door Training Participant

inTouch's Motivation for Change program facilitators also worked with Learning and Development to create a one-off webinar, *Collusion Versus Engagement: Culturally Responsive Practice with Men Who Use Violence*. There was high demand for this specialist training, with 140 people attending the session exploring the impact of culture on engagement, using insights from Motivation for Change to inform the discussion.

Our capacity to create responsive, tailored training was also an essential part of the delivery of inTouch's partnership with the Settlement Engagement and Transition Support Program (SETS). The project, funded by the Social Policy Group and facilitated by Migration Council Australia, worked with settlement providers to build capacity and best practice for practitioners working with migrant and refugee women who have experienced family violence. This online training was offered to settlement services in all states and territories across Australia and each session was tailored to state-based law, available tools, resources and referral pathways.

The package included:

- Family violence definitions, indicators, and risk factors
- Principles of culturally responsive practice and intersectionality
- Systemic barriers and discrimination that clients from migrant and refugee backgrounds may face when seeking support
- Response to disclosures, safety planning and referral

The project also developed content for an e-learning module on similar topics and resources to guide settlement workers who have identified family violence. inTouch's partnership with SETS is a three-year project and training will continue to be offered over the next two years, moving from online to in-person delivery.

“This will go a long way in giving me confidence in my ability to approach and help our customers.”

— Migration Council Training Participant



Learning and Development in 2021-2022

154

training and information sessions delivered

126

organisations reached

1708

individuals participated in training



inSpire

inTouch's case managers do a terrific job ensuring the safety and wellbeing of the women that seek our support, but healing from the trauma of family violence is often a long and complicated process.

For migrant and refugee women, it can be even more difficult to engage with the community post-crisis — which is where inTouch's inSpire initiative steps in.

inSpire was established in 2018, following the identification of a gap in support experienced by women from refugee and migrant backgrounds post-crisis.

It was clear these women were encountering a number of institutional, cultural, social and financial barriers after incidents of family violence. Our clients told us that they needed assistance boosting their confidence, skills and connections in order to safely connect with the community and live a life of their own choosing.

inSpire is the only post-recovery program in Australia embedded within a trusted specialist service provider, offering a bridge between family violence and migrant and multicultural communities. It is designed and utilised by migrant and refugee women who have experienced family violence and focuses on two core streams of programming — Economic Independence and Social Connection.

This financial year, the inSpire initiative experienced a period of growth and maturity, most notably through the development of three-year business and implementation plans. Focusing

on transitioning our pilot programs to sustainable, holistic initiatives and strengthening our business and community partnerships are key to our plans moving forward. This strategic guidance and direction across both program streams will ensure that women remain active, engaged and supported.

Since its inception, inSpire has inducted 170 clients into the program, with sixty women and their children joining inSpire over the last financial year. We continue to connect with former clients, building our engagement and understanding so we can support them with programs that are fit for purpose.

With COVID restrictions easing this year, the inSpire team was able to expand in-person activities. We continued to support clients on their journey to sustainable employment and financial independence through a series of initiatives with our sector partners. We assisted inSpire program participants in refining their skills and building their confidence through job preparedness and employment workshops, individualised career support and an employment mentoring program. We also continued to deliver financial assistance through our scholarship program, allowing clients to access childcare, enrol in technical training and acquire technology to improve their employment outcomes.

We were also proud to host a number of social outings and cultural celebrations for women and their children. For migrant and refugee women who have experienced family violence, healing and rebuilding their lives post-crisis can feel difficult during times of cultural significance, which is why inSpire marks holidays like Eid, Diwali and Christmas with special celebration. Events like these create lasting friendships and a sense of community among women and their children, who may have similar experiences, or share culture and language.

This year, we held a social outing at SeaLife Aquarium to celebrate Christmas and an Eid event at Luna Park — inSpire’s biggest celebration yet, with 70 women and their children attending. Clients also participated in a Diwali event, a private tour and morning tea at Government House, laughter therapy, cooking classes and music therapy.

“We don’t go out normally. Thanks very much for inviting us to the Luna Park Festival — my daughter was so excited while I was telling her that we were invited to Luna Park, because she has always wanted to go but I haven’t been able to take her. We really appreciate it.”

— inSpire Program Participant

In addition, inSpire continued to target the financial barriers that can make extracurricular activities a challenging prospect for single-parent households. Children that play sports and participate in arts-based programs outside of school form crucial connections with their communities, which results in a positive outcome for their parents, too. This year, inSpire funded several scholarships to remove these financial barriers to participation, so that mothers and their children can create positive memories together.

149

women participated in social outings & cultural celebrations

177

women participated in employment programs & career workshops

Vax Hub

This year inSpire received a grant from the Victorian Government to support our clients in receiving COVID-19 vaccinations.

Beginning in March 2022, inSpire’s Vax Hub project officers engaged with 250 clients and their dependents to determine their vaccination status, encourage “COVID-safe” behaviours and answer questions about vaccine safety and availability.

The grant enabled inSpire to promote existing pop-up clinics, facilitate or connect with *inLanguage*, *inCulture* COVID-19 information sessions, coordinate vaccine bookings and transportation, and work with health partners to provide vaccines in clients’ homes.

Our activities allowed us to:

- Reduce COVID-19 vaccine misinformation and hesitancy
- Remove practical barriers to accessing the COVID-19 vaccine
- Increase uptake of the COVID-19 vaccine amongst priority groups
- Support 19 clients to get vaccinated



NOOR

Migrant and refugee women who have survived family violence are powerful advocates for change and inform inTouch’s work at every level. By sharing their experiences, survivor-advocates influence sector and government reforms, the development of policy, media reporting and attitudes to family violence in the broader community.

The NOOR Family Violence Survivor Advocates group was created in 2018 as part of the response to the Royal Commission into Family Violence. Unlike other survivor-advocate groups, NOOR’s purpose is to platform the voices of migrant and refugee women who have experienced family violence, and is the only group in Australia to do so.

All NOOR members are former inTouch clients who are post-crisis, from a variety of different cultural, linguistic and professional backgrounds and are on their own individual journeys to recovery. They provide expert advice on a variety of issues relating to their own experiences of family violence, migration and culture, and work to ensure that the perspectives of migrant and refugee women are present in legislation, policy, services systems and the media.

“If a woman shares about what is going on in her home, we all have a duty to call it out and act.”

— NOOR Family Violence Survivor Advocate,
MamaMia, May 2022

Requests for NOOR’s expertise have increased again this year, which has seen members navigate consultations with community organisations, higher education, government and the family violence sector. NOOR have also assisted inTouch in the development of our Strategic Plan 2022-2025, our policy paper exploring the causes and consequences of misidentification, sector seminars in collaboration with inTouch’s Learning and Development team, and appeared at our public forum, *Setting the Agenda: Multicultural Communities on Family Violence*.

Over the past twelve months, NOOR have also contributed to the public narrative around family violence by appearing throughout the media, commenting on topics like coercive control, misidentification and barriers to support for migrant and refugee women experiencing family violence.

Embedding lived experience of family violence and the family violence system into policy development and service delivery will lead to better outcomes for victim survivors and for Victoria. inTouch is proud to work with NOOR in facilitating a safe and supportive environment where every member feels confident in sharing her story.

‘Noor’ means ‘light’ in many languages around the world and is also a common first name used throughout South Asia. It reflects the multicultural nature of the group, while also highlighting their role shining a light on issues faced by victim-survivors — a beacon of hope for other women experiencing family violence.

NOOR also stands for ‘Narrating Our Own Resilience’, acknowledging that these women’s stories are powerful, and that they are strong, resilient and expert advocates contributing to the development of an appropriate and responsive system that reflects the experiences and needs of victim-survivors.

They represent the resilience, strength and determination of survivors who are dedicated to using their experiences to make the lives of others better and safer — lighting the path ahead.



Policy and Advocacy

Our policy and advocacy work continues to place inTouch at the forefront of family violence response and prevention and underpins the organisation's work into the future.

inTouch's Policy and Advocacy unit focuses on issues that impact our clients, such as Australia's visa and migration systems, settlement services, legal, judicial and law enforcement processes, as well as specific forms of family violence that disproportionately impact clients from migrant and refugee backgrounds such as forced marriage and dowry abuse. This work is informed by the advice and expertise of inTouch's case managers, our legal and migration specialists, our survivor-advocate advisory group (NOOR), and the lived experiences of the women we work with.

In addition to sharing our knowledge and experience with government departments, advisory groups, committees, boards and working groups, inTouch actively participates in media commentary to change broader, prevailing attitudes and assumptions around family violence.

Our work this year concentrated on the further building of our evidence base and widening our sphere of influence across the following issues:

Misidentification of the predominant aggressor

Misidentification, an issue highlighted in the Royal Commission into Family Violence, occurs when the victim-survivor of family violence is incorrectly identified as the predominant aggressor by law enforcement and the justice system. It is estimated to occur in every one in ten cases — and significantly more when incidents take place in culturally and linguistically diverse communities. inTouch estimates that a third of clients

engaging with our services have experienced misidentification. This can have far-reaching and devastating consequences for victim-survivors: criminal charges, detrimental legal outcomes, visa loss and a reduction in access to support services. Some women will even lose custody of their children.

inTouch's position paper explored the cause and consequences of these issues and made a series of recommendations, supported by wide-ranging coverage in the media. In addition, we continue to participate in workshops, consultations and advisory groups that examine misidentification, including the Family Violence Justice Advocacy Network, the Federation of Community Legal Centres' Family Violence Working Group and the Victoria Police Family Violence Command Service Delivery Stakeholder Network.

Temporary visa holders

Our advocacy around the rights and access to services for temporary visa holders who experience family violence continues. With approximately 40 percent of our clients at inTouch being on some form of a temporary visa, we are acutely aware of the challenges they face to become safe in Australia. These include barriers to accessing free public health, housing, education, employment and social security. Our advocacy seeks to shed light on these issues and the profound impacts they can have on victim-survivors.

We continue to call on the Federal Government to introduce a new visa for temporary visa holders who

“Misidentification can occur when law enforcement are responding to or investigating an incident and due to language or cultural barriers, there is not a clear understanding of who is in need of protection. If you add extreme emotional distress or physical self-defence to that situation, a police officer will often misconstrue the situation and arrest the wrong person — the victim-survivor.”

— Michal Morris, inTouch CEO



have experienced family violence. This temporary visa would provide access to social security, health, housing, education and working rights to eligible people, avoiding the disadvantages they would otherwise face.

Our advocacy on this issue includes our continued participation in the National Advocacy Group for Women on Temporary Visas Experiencing Violence. This group comprises over 40 organisations across Australia who work with women on temporary visas and are aware of the challenges and the disadvantages they face. inTouch also participates in the advisory group for the national pilot project with Australian Red Cross and the Department of Social Services, which provides brokerage funding and referrals to women on temporary visas who experience family violence. In addition, we met with senior staff at the Department of Home Affairs, ministers, and political party representatives to bring attention to this issue.

National policy platform— A call to embed the voices of migrant and refugee communities in public policy

Following our remarks on the development of the National Plan to Eliminate Violence against Women and Children and changes at the federal political level, inTouch developed an 11-point policy platform to identify and address key issues specific to family violence occurring in migrant and refugee communities.

The platform, *“Embed Migrant and Refugee Voices and Experiences into the National Response to Family Violence,”* called for urgent investment in several key categories.

Critical to a comprehensive national strategy is the embedding of culturally safe care into service provision through the use of interpreters, specialist training and

bilingual/bicultural case management, as is a broad, national investment into specialist services like inTouch. Additionally, the platform called for: the implementation of refined referral and assistance pathways and data collection, additional training for law enforcement and the judicial system and increased capacity for specialist legal services. Lastly, to inform a truly comprehensive family violence response, legislators must be in constant collaboration with migrant and refugee communities and led by women with lived experience.

This policy document and its recommendations were shared among all political parties during the Federal Election in 2022.

inTouch forum

To highlight the issues outlined in inTouch’s policy platform, inTouch held a forum called *“Setting the Agenda: Multicultural Communities on Family Violence.”*

The event and live stream featured opening remarks from Dr Anne Aly MP, Federal Minister for Youth and Minister for Early Childhood Education and Gabrielle Williams MP, the Victorian Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, Prevention of Family Violence and Minister for Women.

The discussion was moderated by Juliana Nkrumah AM and driven by the unique expertise of our curated panel of guests, Ash (NOOR Family Violence Survivor-Advocate, family violence sector worker, activist), Miriam Silva AM (Chair, inTouch), Kate Fitz-Gibbon (Director of the Monash Gender and Family Violence Prevention Centre), Dr Emma Fulu (Founder and Executive Director of the Equality Institute, VOICE) Nassim Khadem (ABC News, the Age, Sydney Morning Herald) and Michal Morris (CEO, inTouch).



Financial Summary for Year Ending 30 June 2022

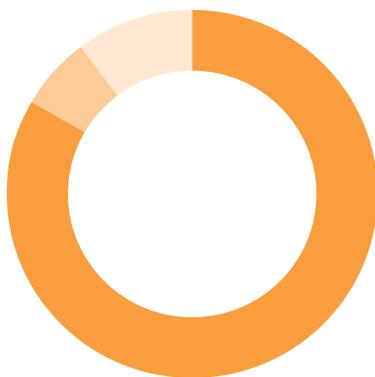
inTouch concluded the financial year 2022 in a sound position financially, recognising a surplus of \$377,677 from a deficit in the previous year (\$45,177).

The key driver behind the surplus was higher than expected funding received in FY22. Changed ways of working during the COVID-19 pandemic led to lower project costs than were forecast in the budget. Challenges in recruiting for vacant roles during sustained periods of lockdown and business interruption contributed to lower- than-expected staffing costs.

The Department of Families, Fairness and Housing continues to be our largest funding body. This includes funding received from Family Safety Victoria. Revenue was also received in the form of funding and/or donations from Victorian Legal Aid, the Migration Council of Australia, and several philanthropic organisations.

As we look to the future, surplus achieved will be held in reserve for Board consideration. In 2022, \$245,000 was reallocated from retained surplus to inSpire Reserves. Investment by the Board to support the inSpire program will continue over the coming financial year, with a view to seeing inSpire become financially self-sufficient by 2025.

In addition to building the inSpire program, significant business transformation projects planned to commence in FY23 will facilitate growth and enabling capacity across the organisation in alignment with the inTouch Strategic Plan 2022-2025.



Total Income

DFFH (including FSV)	83.7%
Victoria Legal Aid	6.2%
Other	10.2%



Income by Program

Direct Services	48.4%
Sector and Community	12.8%
Brokerage	17.5%
inSpire	2.5%
Motivation for Change	10.2%
Legal Centre	7.7%
Other	1.0%



Expenditure

(Program vs. Admin)

Program and services	87.3%
Operations and administration	12.7%

Board of Directors 2021–2022

inTouch is a company limited by guarantee. We are governed by a constitution and a Board of Directors chaired by Miriam Silva AM.

Miriam Silva AM

Miriam was appointed as Board Chair in September 2019. She has more than 20 years' experience managing large and geographically diverse teams, across multiple industries including pharmaceuticals, banking and agribusiness. Her influence extends across business, Government, media, Muslim and broader Australian communities. In 2012, Miriam was named as one of Australia's inaugural 100 Women of Influence in the Westpac and Australian Financial Review Awards. Miriam is a Member of the Order of Australia (2022), the South Australian Women's Honour Roll (2011) and is the recipient of the 2012 Governor's Multicultural Award for the Private Sector.

Tassia Michaleas

Tassia has extensive experience in the not-for-profit and community sector. She is a current Board member of Mental Health Victoria and is the Chief Executive Officer at Merri Health in Melbourne's north. Tassia has a Bachelor of Economics, a Bachelor of Social Work and a Master of Business Management and is a Graduate of the Australian Institute of Company Directors.

Alecia Rathbone

Alecia joined the Board of inTouch in 2018 and serves as the Chair of the Finance Committee and member of the Audit & Risk and Strategy & New Business Committees. Alecia is the Chief Social Enterprise Officer of Housing Hub, a social enterprise that supports people with disabilities to find appropriate housing. Prior to this, she was the Deputy CEO at the Foundation for Young Australians and Chief Operating Officer of Girl Guides Victoria, which is part of the largest organisation for girls and young women in the world. She is currently a Non-Executive Director of cohealth, a large community health organisation in Melbourne.

Karina Posanzini

Karina is a qualified Certified Practising Accountant (CPA) with over 18 years' experience in senior leadership and governance positions in the not-for-profit and commercial sectors. She is currently the Chief Operating Officer and Head of Service Delivery for the Institute of Public Administration Australia. Karina has a strong commitment to community service and is passionate in supporting culturally and linguistically diverse families to achieve safety and independence from abuse.

Mark Pierce

Mark Pierce is a writer and a retired Foreign Service officer. He served Australia overseas in Canada, Israel, France, Germany, Italy, the United States and India. He has also worked as a chief of staff to Commonwealth ministers and as director of a research think tank.

Imaan Khan

Imaan joined the inTouch Board of Directors in August 2020 through the Young Women on Boards initiative. She is an advocate for enhancing accessibility and increasing organisational capacity to better respond to culturally diverse and/or minority groups in the wellness and human services spaces. She has extensive experience in the multicultural and social work sectors, including undertaking internships at Services Australia, Australian Muslim Women's Centre for Human Rights, Shine for Kids and Baptcare. Imaan has a Bachelor of Psychology and a Master of Social Work from The University of Melbourne.

Dr Niki Vincent

As Victoria's first Public Sector Gender Equality Commissioner, Dr Vincent is responsible for overseeing implementation of the Gender Equality Act 2020 and plays a key leadership role in promoting gender equality in the Victorian community and workplaces. Prior to her appointment as Commissioner for Equal Opportunity, Niki held the position of CEO of the Leaders Institute of South Australia as well as a concurrent appointment as a member of the Remuneration Tribunal of South Australia. She has also led major programs of research in previous roles and has established and run two successful not-for-profit organisations.

Ruth Barson

Ruth Barson is a committed human rights lawyer who is passionate about challenging injustice and advocating for equality and fairness. She is an experienced leader and board member and is currently a legal director at the Human Rights Law Centre. Prior to working at the Human Rights Law Centre, Ruth spent a number of years working for Aboriginal legal services in Darwin, Alice Springs and in remote Western Australia. She has also been an advisor to Government, worked as an advocate with Victoria Legal Aid and was employed by the former Victorian Attorney-General, Rob Hulls, at the Centre for Innovative Justice, to research and author a ground-breaking report looking at restorative justice responses to sexual assault.

Anna Hart

Anna Hart brings broad human resources experience to inTouch, having commenced her HR career in 1996 and having held generalist, specialist and management roles. Anna also has over 20 years' experience in volunteering and committee roles in community organisations, including council run childcare centres, junior football clubs and surf-life saving clubs. Anna is currently Senior Learning and Development Manager, Australia for Herbert Smith Freehills. Prior to this, she held a variety of HR leadership roles at Maurice Blackburn. Anna has a Master of Commerce (HRM) and is a Graduate of the Australian Institute of Company Directors.

inTouch Committees

Governance & People Committee:

CHAIR	Anna Hart
MEMBERS	Miriam Silva AM, Tassia Michaleas
CO-OPTED	Alyssa Rusciano

Finance Committee:

CHAIR	Alecia Rathbone
MEMBERS	Miriam Silva AM, Anna Hart, Karina Posanzini, Imaan Khan
CO-OPTED	Marini de Zilva, Samar Mcheileh

Risk and Audit Committee:

CHAIR	Karina Posanzin
MEMBERS	Miriam Silva AM, Alecia Rathbone, Imaan Khan, Ruth Barson
CO-OPTED	Belinda Fong-Gardner

Strategy & New Business Committee:

CHAIR	Miriam Silva AM
MEMBERS	Miriam Silva AM, Karina Posanzini, Alecia Rathbone, Mark Pierce, Niki Vincent
CO-OPTED	Jade Hart, Maria Hagias, Marie Segrave

Men's Advisory Committee:

CHAIR	Mark Pierce
MEMBERS	Miriam Silva AM
CO-OPTED	Dr Bulent Hass Dellal AO, Prof. Mohamad Abdalla AM, Andrew Do, Dr Robert Millard

Acknowledgements

We would like to recognise the immense contribution of our donors and funding bodies as well as our community, sector and research partners. This includes:

ANROWS	Monash Gender and Family Violence Prevention Centre
Attorney-General's Department (State)	Monash Health
Attorney-General's Department (Commonwealth)	Muslim Women Australia
Australian Muslim Women's Centre for Human Rights	No to Violence
Bendigo Bank Community Enterprise Foundation	Northern Integrated Family Violence Services
Centre for Multicultural Youth	The Orange Door - Dandenong
Chinese Community Social Services Centre Inc.	Quantum
City of Yarra	RAV – Relationships Australia
City of Casey	Refugee Legal
cohealth Footscray	Respect Victoria
DFV Support Section - Department of Home Affairs	Safe + Equal
Family Violence Reform Implementation Monitor	Safe Steps
FECCA	Settlement Services International
Federation of Community Legal Centres	The Social Policy Group
Fitzroy Legal Service	Victoria Legal Aid
GenWest	Victoria Police – Family Violence Command
Good Samaritan Inn	VincentCare
Harmony Alliance	WAYSS
Immigration Advice and Rights Centre	Wesnet
Justice Connect	Western Integrated Family Violence Committee
La Trobe University Law School	Whittlesea Community Connections
Migration Council of Australia	Women's Health in the North
	Women's Legal Service Victoria
	Your Community Health

inTouch's work would not be possible without the support of the Victorian Government.

Family Safety Victoria
Department of Families, Fairness and Housing
Department of Justice and Community Safety

The inSpire initiative would like to acknowledge the following supporters:

Professor Marie Segrave
Professor Kate Fitz-Gibbon
Dr Siru Tan
Dr Stef Vasil
Dr Manjula O'Connor

inTouch

