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# Migrant and Refugee Women's Forum Report 2019

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CELEBRATING MIGRANT AND  
REFUGEE WOMEN'S ACHIEVEMENTS



AMRC



This report was prepared by Georgia Prattis and Eugenia Tsoulis OAM.

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# Setting the Context

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## INTRODUCTION

The International Women's Day Forum was hosted by the Australian Migrant Resource Centre and the Council of Migrant and Refugee Women of SA (CMRW) at the Adelaide Festival Centre on Monday 4 March 2019. Over 300 women attended including government representatives, peak women's organisations, service providers, community leaders and community women from a breadth of communities in South Australia.

The Forum offered an opportunity to hear about women's leadership at a national and state level, community women's voices and to celebrate the migrant and refugee women of South Australia.

Delegates were welcomed by Eugenia Tsoulis OAM, CEO of the Australian Migrant Resource Centre (AMRC) who shared the Centre's Statement of Commitment to Preventing and Responding to Violence Against Women. Ms Tsoulis highlighted that the AMRC was the first multicultural organisation to pilot family violence prevention initiatives with White Ribbon and has since undertaken a plethora of projects around preventing family violence in migrant and refugee communities.

Delegates were also welcomed by Vanessa Swan, Honorary Chair, Council of Migrant and Refugee Women of SA (CMRW) who spoke about the Council's commitment to progressing educational and other goals of women and in ensuring that their voices continue to be heard. The opening address was provided by the Honourable Jing Lee MLC, Assistant Minister to the Premier of South Australia, who paid tribute to the AMRC for their work with women, and expressed a strong commitment in ensuring the women's contributions at the forum would guide the future directions of the SA government.



"I admire you all for your strength and resilience to do the work you do but I also admire your vulnerability because without this you can't respond with your heart and soul. Your ideas transform us."

Honourable Jing Lee MLC,  
Assistant Minister to the Premier  
of South Australia

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# Recommendations to further language, education and employment opportunities for migrant and refugee women

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The following key recommendations are proposed by migrant and refugee women to further English Language, Education and Training, and Employment opportunities:

### SETTLEMENT TRANSITION:

- Acknowledgement that settlement is not a short-term goal.
- Acknowledgement of the importance of women's roles as carers with limited time and resources to pursue their settlement transitions within the first few years of arrival in Australia.
- Acknowledgement of continuation of working with refugee and migrant women in all levels of decision making processes.
- Empower women to gain knowledge of their rights and responsibilities and how to navigate systems that support their settlement transition.

### ENGLISH LANGUAGE:

- Provide free and flexible English language classes supported by free childcare and including equal access for women living in regional areas.
- Ensure the provision of free or subsidised vocational courses at TAFE.
- Utilise the initial settlement period to encourage men to support their partner to participate in English language classes.

### EDUCATION AND TRAINING:

- Ensure free and accessible education for migrant and refugee women.
- Improve the recognition of overseas qualifications and skills assessment process.
- Provide employment pathways for temporary visa holders, particularly Save Haven Enterprise Visas (SHEV) and Temporary Protection Visas (TPVs) who are not eligible for Higher Education Contribution Scheme (HECS) assistance.
- Introduce family violence prevention programs.
- Support women's leadership programs.
- Train community educators (including women) to engage with new arrivals to support their settlement.
- Provide equitable training and employment models for women who are isolated and cannot afford traditional courses.

### EMPLOYMENT:

- Educate employers on the benefits of having a culturally diverse work place.
- Provide access to long term and affordable housing especially for single women and/or women with children so they are able to focus on gaining employment.
- Provide opportunities for local work experience, in particular for long term unemployed women.
- Improve recognition of overseas qualifications and skills.
- Improve linkages between job providers, settlement services and the wider community.



“A big part of our work is about changing the marginalisation of women’s voices. We need to recognise that those of us who came here earlier have voice and privilege. It is time for us to stand aside and give voice to those arriving now and to show our support for those doing it tough.”

Maria Dimopoulos,  
Chair, Harmony Alliance

## GUEST SPEAKERS

The morning session involved four key speakers who shared the work their respective organisations were undertaking to support migrant and refugee women to realise their aspirations.

**Esther Bogaart**, Assistant Secretary, Office for Women, Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, spoke about key government focus areas at a national level including addressing family and domestic violence, economic security for women and progressing women’s leadership.

**Annie Francis**, Acting Director, Office for Women SA highlighted the commitment of her Office in achieving equality and ending violence against women. She also mentioned ‘Committed to Safety’, the recently launched SA government’s response to family and domestic violence in South Australia.

**Maria Dimopoulos**, Chair, Harmony Alliance: Migrant and Refugee Women for Change highlighted the Alliance’s commitment to working in partnership with Indigenous women to address the injustices that continue to exist today. She reminded women of the power of their voices and encouraged their active participation in dialogue with the Alliance.

The final speaker for the morning session was **Zita Adut Deng Ngor**, CEO, Women’s Legal Service SA who spoke of the Service’s vision in achieving justice for all women. Ms Adut Deng Ngor explained that the Service helps over 3000 women each year, representing over 70 different ethnic groups.





## ROUND TABLE DISCUSSION

Following a celebratory lunch, women were invited to participate in an afternoon workshop to explore:

- Intersecting issues that affect access pathways to participation for women from migrant and refugee backgrounds
- Best practice examples and opportunities that strengthen the ability of women to achieve education, employment and other goals
- Strategies for inclusion in employment and civic initiatives
- Successful case studies, social enterprise and women's leadership

Women worked in small groups to ensure that all had the opportunity to contribute and have their voices heard. Each group was supported by a facilitator and scribe to ensure all feedback was captured.

The following questions guided small group discussions.

1. What are some of the barriers that women from refugee and migrant backgrounds face when trying to participate in the South Australian community?
2. What are some of the strengths and abilities that women from culturally diverse backgrounds possess that our community could benefit from?
3. What are some practical strategies and approaches services could deliver to support migrant and refugee women's participation?
4. What three (3) prioritising strategies to further language, education and employment for migrant and refugee women, would you like to see emerge from this forum?

The remaining sections of the report document the voices of migrant and refugee women in responding to these questions.

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# Exploring barriers to participation

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# “We left everything behind and we are still striving”.

Forum Participant

Women consistently identified six key barriers to participation in their responses. These included:

1. Language limitations
2. Discrimination
3. Cultural barriers
4. Employment, qualifications and work experience
5. Family and domestic violence
6. Financial limitations

## LANGUAGE

Women expressed a lack of confidence in communicating in English and many explained that even when they had some English language skills they were not confident of their pronunciation and had difficulty understanding slang used by English speakers.

“High English is required for any job in Australia. I speak English but not high enough for what employers want.”

“Because we don’t speak English well, we don’t know what services exist.”

## DISCRIMINATION

Discrimination was raised in almost all small group discussions.

Women experienced discrimination in workplace settings, in services access and in the broader community. Some women believed their experiences went even further and were concerned about racism as a result of negative media portrayals of their communities.

“Accents put off employers.”

“There is a lack of acknowledgement of second language being an asset.”

“We are not being taken seriously or respected in the workplace, especially if you are in a leadership role in a team that includes men.”

“There is a lack of awareness in the workplace regarding cultural diversity.”

“Visa limitations prevent women from attending university and some visas limit the services women can access when it comes to Medicare, housing and social welfare.”

“Wearing a hijab makes me an easy target.”

“There are hostile attitudes towards new arrivals in the community.”

## CULTURAL BARRIERS

Women referred to cultural barriers both from their community perspective and the ‘mainstream’ community perspective. They expressed limited confidence in engaging outside their cultural groups and felt there was limited cultural sensitivity amongst the broader ‘mainstream’ community.

“We have limited knowledge about how to participate in the South Australian community.”

“Cultural shock and homesickness is a big issue.”

“We lack social connections and have social isolation. Being away from family and friends means that you don’t know who to turn to in difficult times. Also you don’t have long-term friendships.”

“We lack confidence to share experiences with those that have had very different lives from us.”

## EMPLOYMENT, QUALIFICATIONS AND WORK EXPERIENCE

Challenges in the employment space were raised consistently by each small group. Key issues included both gaining qualifications and having overseas qualifications recognised in Australia, gaining access to local work experience and accessing suitable employment.

“Even if your qualifications from your home country are recognised, it’s difficult to get a job if your language skills aren’t good. Ability, or lack of ability to communicate can affect confidence and self-esteem.”

“We do not have referees to vouch for work experience.”

“There is no way to transition skills from home country to Australia.”

“Finding jobs that are related to my education field is impossible.”

“No one will give you a chance without local work experience and we don’t have the networks to get this.”

“There is less hiring of people from migrant and refugee background.”

“Our qualifications are not recognised.”

“There is a lack of information on job pathways and availabilities.”

“There is inadequate guidance for employment and we don’t know our work rights.”

“South Australia is not large enough to provide work opportunities as other states.”



## FAMILY AND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Family and domestic violence was raised by many participants but there was a reluctance to go into further detail. Most women mentioned that this resulted in a range of family and parental issues that exacerbated barriers around participation but shied away from saying more. They did however highlight that there is a lack of female interpreters available in South Australia.

“Men are always thinking less of women and are wanting women to be submissive.”

Forum Participant

## FINANCIAL LIMITATIONS

Financial constraints were a significant barrier consistently raised by women in small group discussions. Limited financial means prevented access to education, housing, childcare and broader opportunities for social participation. Women also highlighted concerns around low financial literacy amongst their communities and the vulnerabilities this exposed them to.

“Financial barrier is stopping women from enrolling into courses.”

“I need to be able to drive to get a job and I don’t have money to pay for driving lessons.”

“Not knowing how to pay bills and what to do in certain situations results in reliance on others and loss of independence.”

“Not being able to find a job due to health issues (e.g. disability) or being a single mother.”

“Not having good finances results in housing difficulties.”

“There is no financial support to attend training courses and pay for childcare expenses so I can get the skills to get a job.”

Additional barriers to participation raised by women included:

- Family responsibilities such as caring for an unwell family member.
- Religion and traditional practices restricting opportunities for young women.
- Lack of understanding by General Practitioners on issues such as torture and trauma.
- Lack of adequate support for women with mental health issues.
- Lack of recognition and support for mental health issues

“Integrating is difficult when you’re suffering from mental health issues”



"We are resilient, passionate and understanding."

Forum Participant



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# Exploring potential contributions of migrant and refugee women

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The strengths and abilities of CALD women, that the broader community could benefit from, included:

- Diversity
- Resilience
- Unique skill sets
- Strong values and commitment

## DIVERSITY

Women explained that given their experiences of difference they brought a greater understanding and acceptance of diversity and were able to both share and appreciate diverse world views. They saw this as a benefit both for the workplace and the broader community.

“We are more patient and respectful of diversity.”

“We bring different perspectives and experiences in the workplace and a positive atmosphere.”

“Difference makes you more enthusiastic and adaptable.”

“Bringing diversity through cultural events, food, clothes and traditions, which help to build on Australia’s multiculturalism.”

“More accepting and understanding of different cultures.”

“I can see both sides of the world – Australia and my own culture.”

## RESILIENCE

The resilience of migrant and refugee women was raised consistently in small group discussions. Women spoke of their migration experiences and how these had shaped their ability to withstand hardship. They recognised their ability to adapt and continue to strive for a better future.

“we are resilient, passionate and understanding.”

“Spiritual and hardworking.”

“Supportive, strong and accepting.”

“Fighting spirit - All of us are fighters, as we were strong enough to start a new life here. We are resilient”

“We can bounce back from anything.”

“We have good problem solving skills and are strong due to past struggles.”

“We are courageous and can learn quickly and adapt to a changing environment.”

## UNIQUE SKILLS SETS

Women were confident in recognising that they brought with them not only unique skill sets particular to their culture and traditions but also a breadth of language skills that could add value in a society that embraced the many opportunities that multilingualism offers.

“Expertise in cultural arts and crafts.”

“Many languages and dialects.”

“Sharing cultural knowledge and wisdom.”

“Able to provide cultural advice for example in crisis situations such as domestic violence.”

“Overseas experience”

## STRONG VALUES AND COMMITMENT

Across all small group discussions women unfailingly demonstrated a genuine desire and determination to make positive contributions as members of the community. They drew strength from their cultural identity and families and recognised that they had much to contribute by embracing opportunities offered in South Australia.

“Strong cultural identity, family and community support.”

“Strong family values and family support networks”

“Want to empower other refugee women to become independent and give time and energy back to the community.”

“Working in collaboration with others and making wide community links.”

“Contribution to the small business sector in South Australia and Australia’s multicultural society.”

“Working hard to help their own communities and families, and to support Australia as a whole.”

“Willingness to improve, learn new skills and contribute to the Australian society through volunteering.”

“Creative in business and enterprising because coming from countries with no social support, we’ve had to be creative.”

“Ambitious and strong work ethic - determination to work hard to build a better life.”

“Fighting spirit - All of us are fighters, as we were strong enough to start a new life here. We are resilient”

Forum Participant

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# Practical strategies and approaches to support migrant and refugee women's participation

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# “Building women’s confidence by being with and learning from other women.”

Forum Participant

Practical strategies and approaches services could deliver to support migrant and refugee women’s participation included:

- Women’s networks and programs
- Improved settlement support
- Education and Employment
- Culturally Responsive Services

## WOMEN’S NETWORKS AND PROGRAMS

Women were keen to see more educational programs, social networking and support groups targeted at migrant and refugee women. They saw these opportunities as critical to their mental health and ability to adapt in a new setting.

“Regular support groups for women.”

“Education and creating awareness of our rights and opportunities.”

“Building women’s confidence by being with and learning from other women.”

“Wellbeing support for mental health such as providing dance classes or support groups”.

## IMPROVED SETTLEMENT SUPPORT

Women expressed a need for improved settlement support in specific areas including accessing transport, navigating services, housing and employment.

“Financial support to start a small business.”

“Greater education on how to access public transport.”

“Greater education on how to navigate the Australian system including women’s rights.”

“Free or discounted driving lessons.”

“Housing support.”

“Driving license support - some women don’t have family to supervise their driving hours.”

## EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT

Greater targeted supports around accessing education and employment were the most frequently raised requests in small group discussions. The demand for English language classes was higher than what is currently available and women wanted to see more targeted information provided in these settings including on topics such as women’s safety and rights. They also wanted to see targeted initiatives around accessing employment.

“More hours of English language classes through the Adult Migrant English Program (AMEP) - 510 hours isn’t enough.”

“Higher levels of English classes through AMEP - TAFE.”

“Greater information on the Australian education system and how it works.”

“Improving women’s computer literacy.”

“Courses on Australian history and legislation, road safety education.”

“Education on how women can be safe in the community.”

“Recognition of prior qualifications.”

“Employment of bilingual women in mainstream services.”

“Mentoring CALD women in the workplace.”

“Orientation and training on Australia’s job markets.”

“Employers to be more active in bridging the gap between the employer and jobseeker”

“Providing job training to familiarise jobseekers with Australian work ethics and workplace culture.”

## CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE SERVICES

Finally, women wanted to see improved cultural responsiveness amongst mainstream service providers. A number of women raised examples of experiences around service inflexibility and a lack of cultural awareness which served to exclude women from service access.

“Greater education on health services - where and how to access them, but also workers that understand our culture.”

“Cross-cultural competence training for service providers.”

“Assistance with affordable housing.”

“More culturally appropriate service delivery especially for clients who have health and family issues, children with challenging behaviours or have experienced domestic violence.”

“More access to CALD psychologists.”

“Accessing appropriate interpreters - A male interpreter is interpreting a domestic violence situation and is telling the women that she’s putting her husband in trouble and could lose her visa.”

“Access to a mental health care plan for women with mental health issues using a culturally sensitive approach.”

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# Findings of the Forum Evaluation survey

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Please list three things that you found useful about the forum:

### NUMBER 1:

- Information received regarding women's services available.
- Opportunity for migrant and refugee women to discuss issues and share their problems.
- The encouragement and empowerment of women.
- Having a diversity of cultures ("It was lovely to see so many women from different backgrounds" and "It was great to see women of different ages and cultures coming together").
- Gaining greater information on women's rights in Australia.
- Learning about civic rights in Australia.
- Information provided by panel speakers ("Inspirational speeches").
- Sharing of information, and learning about challenges and practical ideas moving forward.
- Roundtable discussion.
- Networking with other participants and service providers, and making new connections.
- Becoming aware of the many ways migrant and refugee women are supported.
- Opportunity for migrant and refugee women to speak and to be heard.
- Encouraging women to be confident ("The forum inspired me to do something for the community").
- Opportunity to hear directly from migrant and refugee women.
- Opportunity for migrant and refugee women to share their stories, experiences and needs.
- Celebrating women's achievements.
- Learning more about the English language barrier.
- Gaining knowledge about the Office for Women at both a state and national level.
- Greater understanding of services and assistance available ("I found out about services I didn't know existed").
- Openness and willingness of participants to share their experiences.
- Learning about the different statistics and why change is necessary.
- Learning in a group setting.
- Opportunity to discuss different issues impacting migrant and refugee women.
- Motivating speeches.
- Sharing of ideas and skills.
- Brainstorming solutions to challenges.
- Receiving contact details ("When we have a problem, we now know who to contact").
- Information on women's rights in Australia.

### NUMBER 2:

- Gaining knowledge on different services available.
- Roundtable discussion and learning about a diversity of challenges.
- Conversation with other participants of different cultures and languages.
- Positive and friendly atmosphere.
- Sharing of ideas and issues.
- "The forum supported migrant and refugee women."
- "The forum made us feel as though we are one."
- Learning more about active women in the community.
- Networking and meeting new people.
- "Opportunity to hear from women in high-ranking positions."
- Encouragement of women ("The forum made me trust in myself").
- Review of services provided by organisations.
- Hearing from speakers and learning about different government strategies.

### NUMBER 3:

- Networking and making new connections ("I was able to meet strong women").
- Roundtable discussion ("There was lots of good ideas!").
- Positive energy of speakers and their encouragement of migrant and refugee women.
- Information on women's organisations and services.
- Opportunity to propose feedback on how to make changes to the system to ensure positive outcomes for migrant and refugee women.
- Celebrating women's achievements and their positive contribution to the South Australian community.
- Empowerment of women ("This forum didn't make me feel alone in my confusion and problems").
- Receiving information about different organisations and services available.
- Discussing women's issues, opportunities, strategies and employment.
- Learning new skills.
- Roundtable facilitators representing different issues.
- Greater awareness of current programs offered by different organisations.
- "The women were very reflective and thoughtful."
- The participation and support of male participants ("It was good to see men participate in the forum").



“I was impressed by the young women from schools.”

Forum Participant

## PLEASE OUTLINE ANYTHING ABOUT THE DAY THAT YOU DID NOT FIND USEFUL OR THINGS THAT YOU WOULD CHANGE:

Most participants indicated that they would change nothing about the day. Individual participants made the following comments:

- “Speakers didn’t have enough time to speak. Lesser speeches would have allowed for speakers to go more in-depth.”
- “I would have liked to hear more from migrant and refugee women themselves.”
- “I would have liked to hear more presentations from government officials.”
- “I thought we would hear more personal success stories from the speakers, but I heard these from the women on my table.”
- “The people at our discussion table who probably had the most insight were those with little English. How could we have heard their perspectives?”
- “I would have liked more mingling activities to help us meet ladies from other tables.”
- 8 participants indicated that the food could be improved.
- 7 participants indicated that there was not enough food.

## WHAT FURTHER FORUMS OR ACTIVITIES WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE OFFERED FOR WOMEN FROM REFUGEE AND MIGRANT BACKGROUNDS IN SA?

- A forum addressing health and wellbeing issues.
- A forum on Domestic Violence.
- A forum on employment.
- A forum on the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS).
- Domestic violence awareness training for frontline workers.
- Mentoring and Peer Support Training.
- Information session on services available to migrant and refugee women.
- A forum on the Women’s Legal Service SA (WLSSA).
- Discussion on how to build the self-esteem of migrant and refugee women.
- A multicultural women’s day celebration to be held in the city for next year’s International Women’s Day.
- A forum on immigration policies and detention of asylum seekers.
- A forum on education and economic empowerment.
- A forum on housing and homelessness.
- “An expo not just for migrant and refugee women, but for women in general.”

## ANY OTHER COMMENTS YOU WOULD LIKE TO MAKE:

- "Thank you, it was a nice day."
- "Thank you for preparing everything."
- "It was good and I enjoyed it."
- "Overall, it was good. Keep it up!"
- "I found myself confident being here."
- "I found this event useful. Thank you!"
- "Thank you. It was a very productive day."
- "It was nice to be here."
- "Everything was good."
- "Such a great program."
- "It was great to be part of the day."
- "I was impressed by the young women from schools."
- "I really enjoyed the day!  
Thank you very much for inviting me."
- "I would like to have more forums like this."
- "It was very good and we all enjoyed it."
- "I had a new and good experience."
- "The day was good and I really enjoyed sharing my ideas."
- "I really enjoyed the forum. Hopefully another forum like this will happen."
- "I loved the program."

"I found myself  
confident being here."

Forum Participant



# Forum Program

9.30am	Registration
9.55am	Bhutanese Women's Performance (Rani Dance)
10.00am	<p><b>Kaurna Acknowledgement</b> Elizabeth Ho OAM, Deputy Chair, Australian Migrant Resource Centre (AMRC)</p> <p>Statement of Commitment to Preventing and Responding to Violence Against Women <b>MC: Eugenia Tsoulis OAM</b>, Chief Executive Officer, Australian Migrant Resource Centre (AMRC)</p> <p><b>Welcome</b> Vanessa Swan, Honorary Chair, Council of Migrant and Refugee Women of SA (CMRW)</p> <p><b>Opening Address</b> The Honourable Jing Lee MLC, Assistant Minister to the Premier, Hon. Steven Marshall MP</p>
10.15am	<p><b>Speakers</b> Esther Bogaart, Assistant Secretary Office for Women, Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet</p> <p>Maria Dimopoulos, Chair Harmony Alliance: Migrant and Refugee Women for Change</p> <p>Zita Adut Deng Ngor, CEO Women's Legal Service (SA): WLSSA</p> <p>Annie Francis, Acting Director Office for Women</p> <p><b>Vote of Thanks</b> Hiba Alwani, Youth Leader, Young Arabic Women's Voices, SA</p>
11.15am	Brunch
12.30pm	<p><b>MC: Maria Dimopoulos, Georgia Prattis</b> <b>Roundtable Workshops:</b> Pathways to Full Participation - Language, Education and Employment</p>
1.45pm	<p><b>Roundtable Report Back</b> Maria Dimopoulos, Georgia Prattis</p>
2.15pm	<p><b>Performance</b> - Introducing the AMRC Launch into Work Interns Cynthia Caird</p>
2.25pm	<p><b>Closing Remarks</b> Elizabeth Ho OAM, Deputy Chair, Australian Migrant Resource Centre (AMRC)</p>
2.30pm	<p><b>Afternoon Tea and Ongoing Celebrations</b> Dance for all participants led by <b>Mirsia Bunjaku</b>, Member, Albanian Community of SA</p>

# Speaker Biographies

## HONOURABLE JING LEE MLC

*Member of the Legislative Council in the South Australian Parliament and Assistant Minister to the Premier*

Jing made history in 2010 for changing the political landscape of South Australia for being the first Malaysian born Chinese migrant to be elected to State Parliament. Since 2010, Jing has been entrusted with a number of key portfolios, which included small business, education, trade and investments and multicultural affairs. She currently holds an important position within the new Marshall Liberal Government as the Assistant Minister to the Premier of South Australia. Jing arrived in Adelaide with her family in 1979 and is a proud South Australian that values her rich cultural heritage. For over 30 years, Jing has volunteered her time and effort to helping others. She is a strong campaigner for small business, exporters and multicultural communities. Prior to entering Parliament, Jing was a successful business woman with over 20 years of management and international trade experience. Jing has held many senior management roles across the private and public sectors and worked successfully in Australia, Malaysia, Singapore, Hong Kong and China. Jing also serves as a Justice of the Peace (JP) for South Australia and plays a significant role in building community capacities.

## VANESSA SWAN

*Honorary Chair, Council of Migrant and Refugee Women of SA (CMRW)*

Vanessa's passion for women's rights stems from her mother, Nazik Jumblatt, a Lebanese Druze. Nazik migrated to Australia as an adult in the 1950s and worked for many years as an Arabic interpreter. Vanessa is a non-executive member of the White Ribbon Australia Board and Shine SA Board. Prior to this, she was the Director of the South Australian Office for Women, a position she held for four and a half years. She was previously the Director of Yarrow Place, Rape and Sexual Assault Service for nine years, and the South Australian forensic sexual assault service. Vanessa was a member of the Parole Board of South Australia for nine years and a member of the National Council to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children. She was the chair of the National Association of Services Against Sexual Violence, the peak body for sexual assault organizations. She has also been chair of the South Australian Attorney General's Victims of Crime Ministerial Advisory Committee for two years and a member of Medical Professional Misconduct Tribunal for five years. Prior to this she worked in Canada and the United Kingdom. In 2010 she was the recipient of a Public Service Medal in the Queen's Birthday Awards and in 2009; she was inducted onto the South Australian Women's Honour Roll. Vanessa is currently the Executive Director Offender Development at the South Australian Department for Correctional Services.

## ESTHER BOGAART

*Assistant Secretary, Office for Women, Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet*

Esther Bogaart is an Assistant Secretary in the Office for Women, in the Commonwealth Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet. In this role, Esther is responsible for whole of government policy on women's safety, sport and health, as well as having oversight of the Women's Leadership and Development Program. Esther has worked in the federal public service for 15 years, primarily in the Attorney-General's Department on social and legal policy issues including family violence, family law, legal assistance services and inter country adoption. In her personal capacity, Esther is on the Board of Karinya House, a Canberra-based community organisation that assists pregnant and parenting mothers and their children, with crisis and accommodation support.

## MARIA DIMOPOULOS

*Chair, Harmony Alliance: Migrant and Refugee Women for Change*

Maria Dimopoulos is nationally and internationally recognised as an expert specialising in the intersections of diversity, gender equality and the law. She has had extensive experience in policy formulation for the Government sector, research for social planning and in community education. Much of Maria's work has been aimed at promoting and enhancing a gendered approach in the ongoing complex legal and political reform processes and in ensuring the meaningful inclusion of diverse women's voices and perspectives in those reform processes. Maria's expert contributions have included knowledge provision and advisory roles in gender justice, advocacy, bridging and supporting participation in mainstream processes, coordination, capacity-building, and piloting innovative projects. In 2008, she was appointed by the Federal government to the National Council to Reduce Violence Against Women and their Children. The Council provided expert advice to Government on reducing the incidence and impact of domestic and family violence and sexual assault on women and their children and was tasked with the development and distribution of a National Plan of Action. Maria was also a member of the Access and Equity Inquiry Panel which reported to Government in 2012 on the accessibility of government services to multicultural Australia. She is currently the Managing Director of Myriad International Consulting Services.

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# Speaker Biographies

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## ZITA ADUT DENG NGOR

*CEO, Women's Legal Service (SA): WLSSA*

Zita Ngor has had an active interest in working with disadvantaged and vulnerable groups including women in South Australia, having arrived with her family on a humanitarian visa. Her notable achievements include: 2001 Centenary Medal for service to the community and in 2013, she was selected as one of the three NGO delegates to the Australian Government Delegation to Commission on the Status of Women 57 (Theme- Elimination of all forms of gender based violence against women). She was also selected as one of the four South Australian finalists for the Australian of the Year Award in 2016. Zita graduated with Bachelor of Laws and Legal Practice (Hons) and a Bachelor of International Studies in 2003. In 2009, she completed Masters in Public and International Law from Melbourne University. She is currently the CEO of Women's Legal Service (SA) Limited and a board member of the CMRW.

## ANNIE FRANCIS

*Acting Director, Office for Women*

Annie has a diverse work history ranging from national sales and marketing roles in the wine industry; executive recruitment; delivering Commonwealth job network programs through regional not-for-profit organisations; local government; and in the past nine years working in state government project and policy positions. Her current role in the South Australian Office for Women involves managing the strategic policy agenda and implementation of initiatives addressing women's safety and wellbeing, employment and leadership in South Australia. Annie also participates in the state implementation of the National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children and coordinates South Australia's implementation of the National Outcome Standards for Perpetrator Interventions.

## GEORGIA PRATTIS

*Director, Myriad International Consulting Services*

Georgia has over 20 years' experience specialising in training development and delivery, research, evaluation, strategic planning, policy development, facilitation and stakeholder consultation. Areas of expertise include access and equity, cultural diversity, gender equality, equal opportunity, gender based violence, preventing bullying in the workplace and human rights. A summary of Georgia's professional history includes, accomplished consultant in diversity related organisational change, extensive policy reform experience, and management roles in adult education and training within the public sector with expertise in the Australian Quality Training Framework.



# Delegates

Alfo - Congolese Community of SA  
Alizadeh  
Haseema - TAFESA  
Mansoorah - TAFESA  
Minoo - Iranian Women's Community of SA  
Rahima - Afghan Community of SA  
Shahida - Afghan Community of SA  
Shahla - Afghan Community of SA  
Sima - Iranian Women's Community of SA  
Marwa Abouzeid - Iraqi Community of SA  
Krishna Kumari Adhikari - Bhutanese Community of SA  
Laura Adzanku - Relationships Australia SA  
Lina Afroz - Bangladeshi Community of SA  
Maqsood Ahmad - Pakistan Community of SA  
Mariam Akbari - Thebarton Senior College  
Aluel Akok - Dinka Community of SA  
Marita Aldridge - Breast Screen SA  
Gul Alemi - Afghan Community of SA  
Safar Ali - Afghan Community of SA  
Sophie Allouache - Senior Project Officer -  
Metro Coordinator, Department of Education  
Hiba Alwani - Syrian Community of SA  
Touseef Amed - Afghan Community of SA  
Bahareh Aminsaremi - Persian Community of SA  
Shikofa Anguri - Thebarton Senior College  
Zainab Anwari - Afghan Community of SA  
Ingrid Vanessa Arenas - TAFESA  
Benazir Asifi - Thebarton Senior College  
Nazneen Asifi - Thebarton Senior College  
Shumail Asifi - Thebarton Senior College  
Mary Awata - Anglicare SA  
Rahima Azada - Afghan Community of SA  
Alia Azimi - Afghan Community of SA  
Monir Baghai - Persian Community of SA  
Masoumeh Bahrami - TAFESA  
Mojgan Bakhtiyari - TAFESA  
Asha Basnet - Bhutanese Community of SA  
Beena Basnet - Bhutanese Community of SA  
Goma Basnet - Bhutanese Community of SA  
Halima Bayani - Afghan Community of SA  
Peter Begg - Education Manager, TAFESA  
Natalie Berg - Advocacy for Disability Access & Inclusion  
Ferial Betar - TAFESA  
Rudo Bhasvi - Zimbabwean Community of SA  
Sak Bhujel - Bhutanese Community of SA  
Bed Bista - Bhutanese Community of SA  
Kabita Bista - Bhutanese Community of SA  
Esther Bogaart - Assistant Secretary, Office for Women,

Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet  
Kaye Britton - King's Baptist Grammar School  
Susan Brunner - Muslim Women's Association  
Mirsia Bunjaku - Albanian Community of SA  
Sarah Ruth Burrage  
Cynthia Caird - Filipino Community of SA  
Sunshine Carumba - Filipino Community of SA  
Abigail Chambers - Sierra Leonean Community of SA  
Amela Chandra - Montenegrin Community of SA  
Kushum Chapagai - Bhutanese Community of SA  
Tatiana Chechurova - Russian Women's Association  
Bhim Maya Khadka Chhetri - Bhutanese Community of SA  
Damber Chhetri - Bhutanese Community of SA  
Hari Chhetri - Bhutanese Community of SA  
Saranya Chin - TAFESA  
Simon Cinzah - Burmese Chin Community of SA  
Cordelia Clay - Sierra Leonean Community of SA  
Antionietta Cocchiario OAM - South Australian Multicultural  
and Ethnic Affairs Commission (SAMEAC)  
Triphana Cooper - Liberian Women of South Australia  
Claudia Cream OAM - Chinese Community of SA  
Heewa Dahal - Bhutanese Community of SA  
Yani Dahal - Bhutanese Community of SA  
Clare Dallimore - TAFESA  
Christiana Davies - Sierra Leonean Community of SA  
Zita Adut Deng Ngor - Women's Legal Service (SA): WLSSA  
Mamie Dewee - Liberian Community of SA  
Patience Diessa - Congolese Community of SA  
Sebastian Dieu - Chinese Community of SA  
Michelle Dieu - Chinese Community of SA  
Maria Dimopolous - Harmony Alliance: Migrant  
and Refugee Women for Change  
Kirsty Drew - Junction Australia  
Akaj Dut - South Sudanese Community of SA  
Sinet Eang - TAFESA  
Mahdokht Eftekhari - Persian Community of SA  
Mami Ekanga - Congolese Community of SA  
Akhtar Esmail-zadeh - Iranian Women's Community of SA  
Rohan Feegrade - Lutheran Community Care SA/NT  
Nafisa Feizi - Afghan Community of SA  
Sharon Ferdinands - Nazareth Catholic Community  
Charlotte-May Fleming - Adelaide High School  
Farida Forogh - Afghan Community of SA  
Annie Francis - Office for Women  
Yan Ge - TAFESA  
Isis George - Women's Safety Services SA  
Jean Georgopolos - TAFE SA  
Amal Ghallab - AMES



Bishnu Maya Ghimire - Bhutanese Community of SA  
 Laxmi Ghimire - Bhutanese Community of SA  
 Pabitra Ghimire - Bhutanese Community of SA  
 Koula Giannini - Adelaide Secondary School of English  
 Tsige Girmay - YWCA Australia  
 Zeleka Habtegiorgis - Ethiopian Community of SA  
 Hatixhe Hadergjoni - Kosovo Community  
 Filloreta Hadergjoni - Kosovo Community  
 Barbara Hancock - Women's Legal Service  
 Fahim Hashimy - Afghan Community of SA  
 Yasin Hassanyar - MYLSA  
 Israa Adheem Hassooni - Thebarton Senior College  
 Michelle Hepworth - Thebarton Senior College  
 Hon. Katrine Hildyard - Shadow Minister for Multicultural Affairs and Shadow Minister for the Status of Women, Parliament of South Australia  
 Elizabeth Ho OAM - AMRC  
 Quyen Hoang - Vietnamese Community of SA  
 Ashley Hongyi Liang - Chinese Community of SA  
 Razieh Hosseni - TAFESA  
 Ciin Sian Huai - Burmese Community of SA  
 Helen Hughes - Filipino Community of SA  
 Sidra Hussain - TAFESA  
 Kimya Gul Hussaini - Thebarton Senior College  
 Georgette Ipassou - Congolese Community of SA  
 Adeeba Jabbar - Afghan Community of SA  
 Nouha Jaber - Lebanese Community Advisory Centre  
 Abdoul Qadir Jafari - Afghan Community of SA  
 Shakiba Jafari - Afghan Community of SA  
 Umul Banin Jafari - Thebarton Senior College  
 Neseema Batool Jaffari - Thebarton Senior College  
 Nayer Janamian - Iranian Community of SA  
 Hanna Jasinska - City of West Torrens  
 Dut Joul - South Sudanese Community of SA  
 Fanta Kabia - Sierra Leonean Community of SA  
 Cissy Kakai - Uniting Communities  
 Flavie Kalulwa - Congolese Community of SA  
 Salma Kamara - Sierra Leonean Community of SA  
 Neda Karami - Iranian Community of SA  
 Prem Kumari Katwal - Bhutanese Community of SA  
 Neda Kavami Moghadam - Bhutanese Community of SA  
 Ruth Kayee - Liberian Community of SA  
 Abbey Kendall - Working Women's Centre  
 Justine Kennedy - Department of the Premier and Cabinet (DPC)  
 Bhim Maya Khadka - Bhutanese Community of SA

Bishnu Maya Khadka - Bhutanese Community of SA  
 Moti Lal Khadka - Bhutanese Community of SA  
 Faryal Khanum - TAFESA  
 Bidhya Khatiwada - Thebarton Senior College  
 Aliona King - SLAVA Ukrainian Cultural Centre  
 Haja Koroma - Sierra Leonean Community of SA  
 Salimatu Koroma - African Women's Federation of SA (AWFOSA)  
 Shreshtha Kumar - Indian Community of SA  
 Mam Kwisha - Congolese Community of SA  
 Hon. Jing Lee MLC - Assistant Minister to the Premier, Parliament of South Australia  
 Bai Bahodur Lohar - Bhutanese Community of SA  
 Dhan Bahadur Lohar - Bhutanese Community of SA  
 Dhan Maya Lohar - Bhutanese Community of SA  
 Alycia Helene Lopat - Polish Community of SA  
 Mansora Maher - Thebarton Senior College  
 Galawiy Mahmadi - Afghan Community of SA  
 Chandra Majhi - Bhutanese Community of SA  
 Nadia Makdadi - Algerian Community of SA  
 Elvira Malimban - Filipino Community of SA  
 Dusyanti Manoharan - TAFESA  
 Wafa Mansoor - TAFESA  
 Vahedeh Mansoury - Middle Eastern Communities Council of SA (MECCSA)  
 Corrinna Markovic - Consumer and Business Services  
 Monica Amer Mayen - Sudanese Community of SA  
 Angelina Mbikoyo - Thebarton Senior College  
 Bronwen McClelland - Adelaide Secondary School of English  
 Edita Meskauskaite - TAFESA  
 Lily Michailov - Russian Women's Association  
 Theodora-Dorina Michas - Romanian Association of SA  
 Irina Milevski - Migrant Women's Support Program of SA  
 Farasar Mohammadi - Afghan Community of SA  
 Arefa Mohamoud - Migrant Women's Support Program of SA  
 Khan Maya Mohat - Bhutanese Community of SA  
 Anj Moliviatis - Indian Community of SA  
 WALAA Mosa - TAFESA  
 Marya Moshfeq - Afghan Community of SA  
 Leonora Mulaj - Kosovo Community of SA  
 Serajum Munira - Bangladeshi Community of SA  
 Nasrin Naderi - Afghan Community of SA  
 Laila Nazari - Thebarton Senior College  
 Fatima Nazari - Thebarton Senior College  
 Hamida Nazari - Thebarton Senior College  
 Suganya Neva - TAFESA



Bur Thang Ngala - Burmese Community of SA  
 Mercy Ngun Ceu - Burmese Chin Community of SA  
 Minh Anh Nguyen - Thebarton Senior College  
 Nfunta Nkonko - Congolese Community of SA  
 Aldhamad Noor - TAFESA  
 Ibrahim Nowrozi - Afghan Community of SA  
 Jane Nyaketeho - Ugandan Community of SA  
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 Jesika Nyiramaana - Congolese Community of SA  
 Helen O'Grady - Women's & Children's Health Network  
 Pamela Omondi - Kenyan Community of SA  
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 Anahid Paichuk - Armenian Community of SA  
 Nona Shamila Pakeer Ali - TAFESA  
 Alex Parken - AMRC  
 Wirawan Partington - TAFESA  
 Nathalina Masio Paul - South Sudanese Community of SA  
 Theresia Pius - Tanzanian Community of SA  
 Georgia Pratts - Myriad International Consulting Services  
 Keith Preston - AMRC  
 Sun Qi - TAFESA  
 Farah Rahbar - Iranian Community of SA  
 Rahmat Rahimi - Afghan Community of SA  
 Jeevan Devika Rai - Thebarton Senior College  
 Alma Ramcilovic - Montenegrin Community of SA  
 Azar Ravakoli - Afghan Community of SA  
 Behjar Ravakoli - Afghan Community of SA  
 Tahira Razai - Afghan Community of SA  
 Ayodelle Reffle - Sierra Leonean Community of SA  
 Sama Reid - Local Government Association of SA  
 Maria Reueruzzi - Anglicare SA  
 Amanullah Rezaie - Afghan Community of SA  
 Narges Rezaie - Afghan Community of SA  
 Parvin Rezaie - Flinders University  
 Jacqueline Riviere - SA Health Screening and Innovation Team  
 Iryna Roik - SLAVA Ukrainian Cultural Centre  
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 Fariha Safdar - TAFESA  
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 Martha Savva - Consumer and Business Services  
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 Mitra Shafiel - TAFESA  
 Soha Ebrahimi Shalkoohi - TAFESA

Priyasha Sharma - Adelaide High School  
 Josephine Sheriff - Sierra Leonean Community of SA  
 Lidan Shi - TAFESA  
 Didar Shojayie - Afghan Community of SA  
 Gul Shojayie - Afghan Community of SA  
 Renee Smart - MAS National  
 Enkenyelesh Solomon - African Community of SA  
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 Lisa Suzuki - Australian Tax Office  
 Vanessa Swan - Council of Migrant and Refugee Women of SA (CMRW)  
 Ehteram Taheri - Iranian Women's Community of SA  
 Mona Taheri - Iranian Women's Community of SA  
 Suk Maya Tamang - Bhutanese Community of SA  
 Malati Tamang - Thebarton Senior College  
 Shufang Tang - TAFESA  
 Kauila Thapa - Bhutanese Community of SA  
 Nan Mya Thida - Bhutanese Community of SA  
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 Van Bawi Tinhlawng - Burmese Chin Community of SA  
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 Gouzel Valiff - Tatar-Bashort Association  
 Milenka Vasekova - Migrant Women's Support Program of SA  
 Jason Veliskou - Australian Tax Office  
 Teresa Von Wasserling - Working Women's Centre  
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 Jenice Wheeler - TAFESA  
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 Garmi Workolo - Liberian Community of SA  
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 Lifeng Ye - TAFESA  
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