

Media Release

8 September 2020

SydWest launches new Neighbourhood Buddies Program for Blacktown and Mt Druitt

SydWest Multicultural Services and Mt Druitt Ethnic Communities Agency (MECA) are pleased to announce a new initiative, the Neighbourhood Buddies, that will connect new settlers and their families with a resident local to Blacktown or Mt Druitt. The process will assist in building networks, knowledge, navigation skills, social and cultural participation that will improve social cohesion and a sense of belonging.

Neighbourhood Buddies – both the volunteer host and the newly arrived family - will be encouraged to share stories and culture as well as participate in local events and outings. The process will help to build a more cohesive and inclusive Blacktown LGA.

We are looking forward to facilitating this new connection between new settlers and members from the mainstream society to help improve integration into the local community, said Elfa Moraitakis, CEO at SydWest Multicultural Services.

Neighbourhood Buddies will assist our emerging community to improve their language skills and cultural understanding by being closely linked to a local mainstream family. This will also allow for greater cross-cultural understanding and a sense of safety and belonging, she added.

The Neighbourhood Buddies volunteers will share their knowledge and experiences of living and navigating the Australian way of life; they will also be a friendly familiar face for our new settlers. SydWest, in partnership with MECA, are currently looking for local people in Blacktown and Mt Druitt to volunteer for this program and help build a relationship of friendship, orientation, participation and inclusion with new arrival settlers.

SydWest Multicultural Services and Mt Druitt Ethnic Communities Agency are members of the NSW Settlement Partnership, a consortium of community organisations led by Settlement Services International delivering settlement services in agreed areas of NSW under the Department of Home Affairs the Settlement Engagement and Transition Support (SETS) program.

STATEMENT ENDS /

For further information or to arrange an interview with the Neighbourhood Buddies coordinator, please contact Vikki Hine, Public Affairs & Communications on vikki.hine@sydwestms.org.au or 9621 6633.

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SydWest Multicultural Services is a leading organisation for all cultural diversity issues responding to community needs and opportunities. Established more than 35 years ago, SydWest provides a range of services to culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) individuals and communities to assist with settling and living productive and independent lives in the community.

We offer flexible and integrated service models across the life course of refugees and migrants, supporting the self-determination and empowerment of our diverse communities. SydWest is an innovative employer of choice, with passionate, qualified and experienced bilingual and bicultural staff who are sensitive to the languages and cultures of the communities we represent. With locations in Blacktown, Mt Druitt, Penrith and Rouse Hill, we cover all matters of cultural diversity in the region.