




Multicultural Centre  
Against Family Violence

# Annual Report 2018–19





inTouch acknowledges the Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as the first inhabitants of the nation and the Traditional Custodians of the land on which we work and live. We pay our respect to their Elders, past, present and emerging.

inTouch acknowledges 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 their stories which continue to inspire and drive our work.

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# Who we are

inTouch Multicultural Centre Against Family Violence (inTouch) is an organisation that provides integrated, culturally appropriate services to migrant and refugee communities experiencing family violence across Victoria. Over the past 35 years, we have addressed the specific needs of these communities and have helped over 18,000 women experiencing family violence.

## What makes us different?

inTouch is a critical piece in Victoria's family violence response system.

We are unique in many ways:

- > We work across the family violence continuum, from prevention and early intervention, to supporting women in crisis, post crisis intervention and recovery. We build capacity in the service sector and provide leadership nationally through our research and evidence-based advocacy work.
- > We developed an integrated, culturally responsive model *inLanguage*, *inCulture* where our case managers have specialised understanding of the issues related to the intersection of family violence, culture, temporary migration, family law and the legal system.
- > Our programs are guided and informed by the Inspire for Change advisory group - women that inTouch have assisted in the past, from different cultural backgrounds and with lived experiences of family violence.
- > Our case managers speak more than 20 languages and understand the potential impacts of culture and migration journey, on women experiencing family violence, and the barriers women face when trying to seek help.
- > Most of our case managers are migrants or refugees themselves and have a first-hand understanding of the migration journey.
- > Case managers provide a bridge between countries and cultures as they are able to assist clients build their understanding and help them navigate Australian systems and laws compared to the systems from their own country.
- > We specialise in culturally tailored support and programs for both victim-survivors and perpetrators of family violence.
- > We have an in-house accredited community legal centre, the only one of its kind in a specialist family violence service, which provides legal advice, court advocacy and immigration support.
- > We help build the capacity of specialist and non-specialist family violence providers, and community organisations to better deliver support to refugee and migrant women experiencing family violence.
- > We work with many organisations on prevention and developing skills and knowledge, deliver a public training calendar and resources to support the sector.

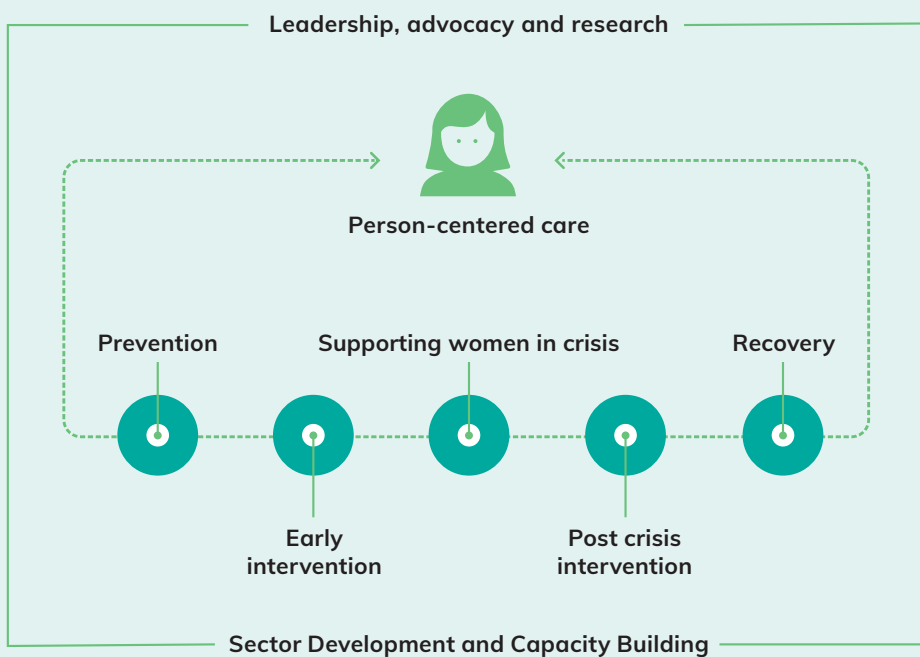
## Our vision

For culturally diverse families  
to live free from violence

## Our purpose

We are committed to changing lives  
and transforming communities

## Our work







## Message from the Chair, Faye Spiteri

**There have been many milestones during my years at inTouch.**

I'm immensely proud of the arc of our story, where we are today, and how we have matured as an organisation. We are recognised as a leader in the sector and beyond. A genuine multidisciplinary centre supporting and providing direct client services for over 1,400 women and their children a year – really living its purpose and fulfilling its mission.

The launch of inSpire in February 2019 was a turning point – it completes the progression of inTouch to a true 'centre' of service delivery and response through rebuilding lives. This is particularly significant when I reflect on starting my term on the Board, when we were the Immigrant Women's Domestic Violence Service (IWDVS). inTouch doesn't look anything like IWDVS of the past. We're bigger, more resilient, and set up for the future.

Strategy and business operations are focussed more than ever on our clients and in the past year in particular, our pillars Leadership, Influence, Impact and Innovation, have underpinned our capacity to take on challenges and succeed like never before.

I can only make that observation thanks to the incredibly hard work and dedication of all my Board colleagues and team members – including those who have gone before - who have fought for women and families to live free of violence, and championed the work so passionately in order to change lives.

I've always believed that inTouch has a special responsibility to help find solutions for one of the most challenging social problems. My vision, of who the organisation could be, has come to fruition because we have rallied together and built a service that is genuine, driven by passion, commitment and true grit. Together, we've put the 'Changing Lives' motto into practice in all respects and we've been successful because we became the agents of that change.

Nevertheless, we cannot rest on our laurels. So when I decided to retire after 10 years as Chair, I wanted to ensure the board had a firm foundation. I am confident inTouch is in great hands with talented Board members who have the capacity to help it pivot into its next iteration.

I'd like to express my gratitude to all of our partners and supporters, in particular relevant Ministers who came on the journey with us and had faith in our capacity to deliver on a significant reform agenda.

I thank all my fellow Board members across the years, without whose major efforts inTouch would definitely not be in the shape it is. A huge thank you too, to Elizabeth Nunez who is leaving after 10 years on our Board, and also Maya Avdibegovic and Michal Morris who were wonderful, inspiring CEOs to work with.

I'm especially grateful for the contribution of each inTouch team member. Their passion and commitment to inTouch, and now inSpire, has guided me so strongly in my work as Chair.

Finally, a huge thank you to all those who trusted me over the years to lead this organisation. It's been an incredible privilege and great honour to play a part in shaping the story of inTouch.

# Message from the CEO, Michal Morris

**It is my pleasure to present the inTouch annual report for 2018-19.**

In the first few days of this financial year we released our strategic plan, outlining our ambitions for the next three years. We recommitted our purpose – changing lives, changing communities – and our vision – for culturally diverse families to live free of violence. And while these words have been important to inTouch for a number of years, each time we commit to them, we also reinvent their meaning. And this year they have shaped our work, and encouraged us to think beyond the expected.

We have continued to deliver through our case management, our capacity building, our service system projects, our work in prevention with communities, our migration and legal services, and our analysis of policies and reform. But we have also developed new programs that we believe will collectively leave an even greater impact.

Recognising that in order to work towards a society free from violence, we need to challenge the individuals who use violence. We developed and implemented Motivation for Change – a program for men from Afghani and South Asian communities who use violence. The same principles of working with an individual's culture and language that we developed 34 years ago – our *inLanguage*, *inCulture* case management model for victim-survivors – has been adapted for this program. And that is why I believe we have been so successful with a 90% completion rate, approximately double the standard across the sector. I strongly believe this success is because we embedded the client's uniqueness in their service response, and for this program it was their language and culture.

Focusing on the changing lives aspect of our purpose, this financial year we also launched our inSpire initiative. inSpire was established to support former clients of inTouch, refugee and migrant women who are moving on from experiencing family violence, in three areas: economic empowerment; building stronger families; and creating social connections. This is another important step for inTouch as we recognise our role goes beyond our funded programs, and that we need to do everything we possibly can to support these women when they need it.

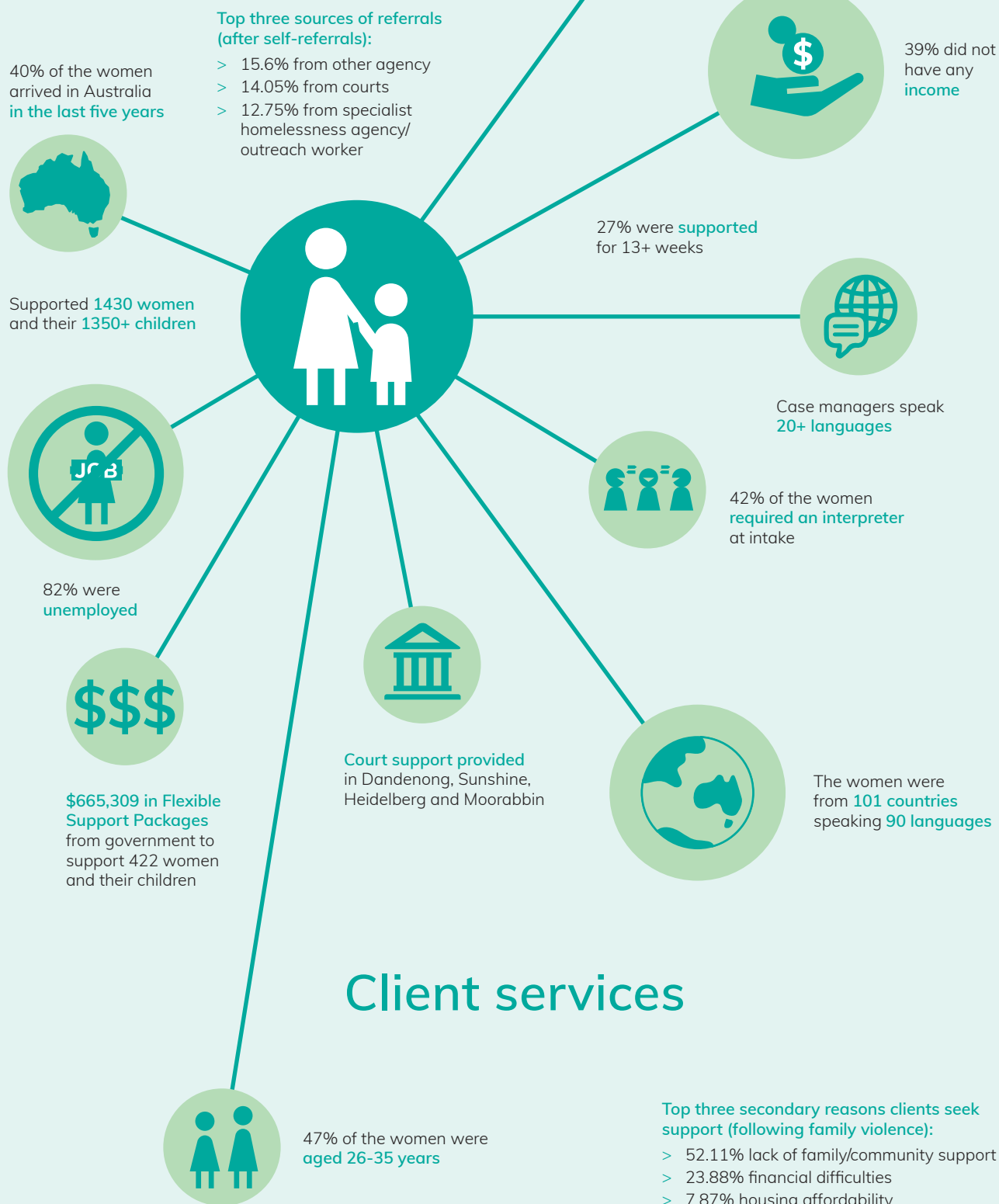
I would like to recognise that inTouch does not do this work alone and thank our funding bodies for their continued support, the specialist family violence sector, our partners in academia, the community, health, justice, advocacy and education sectors. Our work and incredible achievements, is proof that you can achieve so much more by working collaboratively with others.

I would like to acknowledge and thank inTouch's Board, an exceptional and committed group of women whose active leadership is inspiring. In particular, our Chair Faye Spiteri, whose tenure ends in August 2019. Faye has dedicated 14 years to the Board, and has been the Chair for the last 10. Her passion, leadership and vision drove inTouch to become an exceptional organisation.

Finally, I acknowledge and thank my incredible colleagues. Each and every day the inTouch team demonstrate their passion, commitment and skills to change lives and communities for the better.



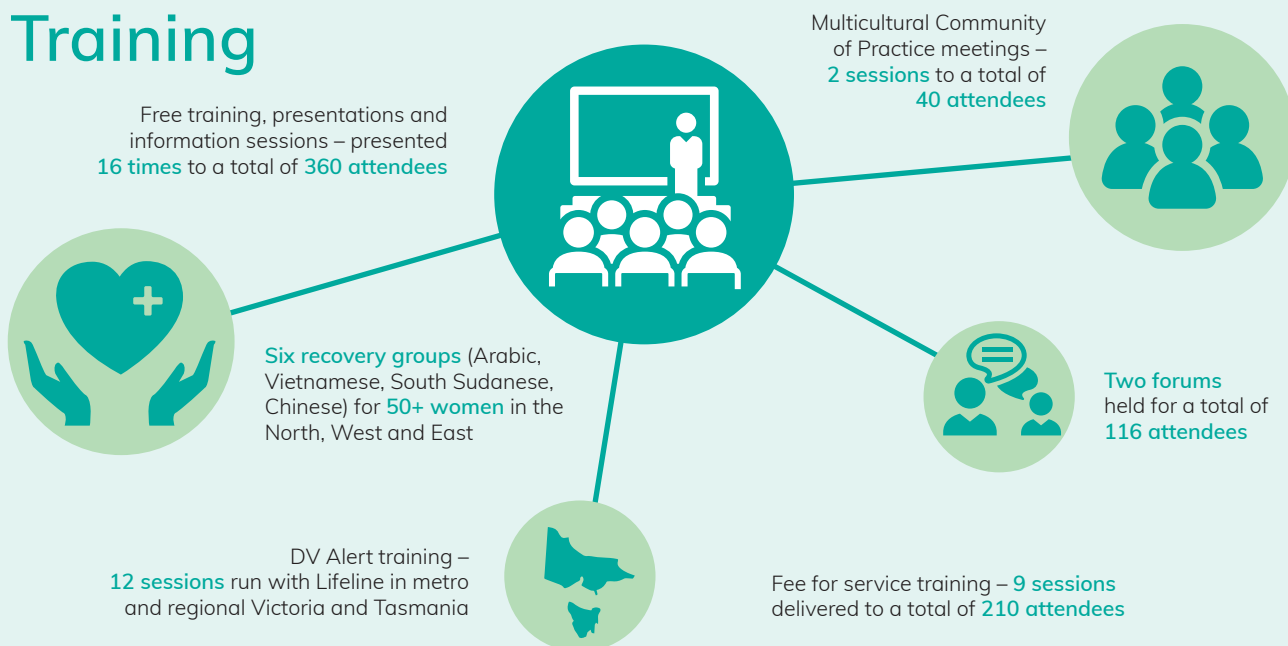
# 2018-19 in review



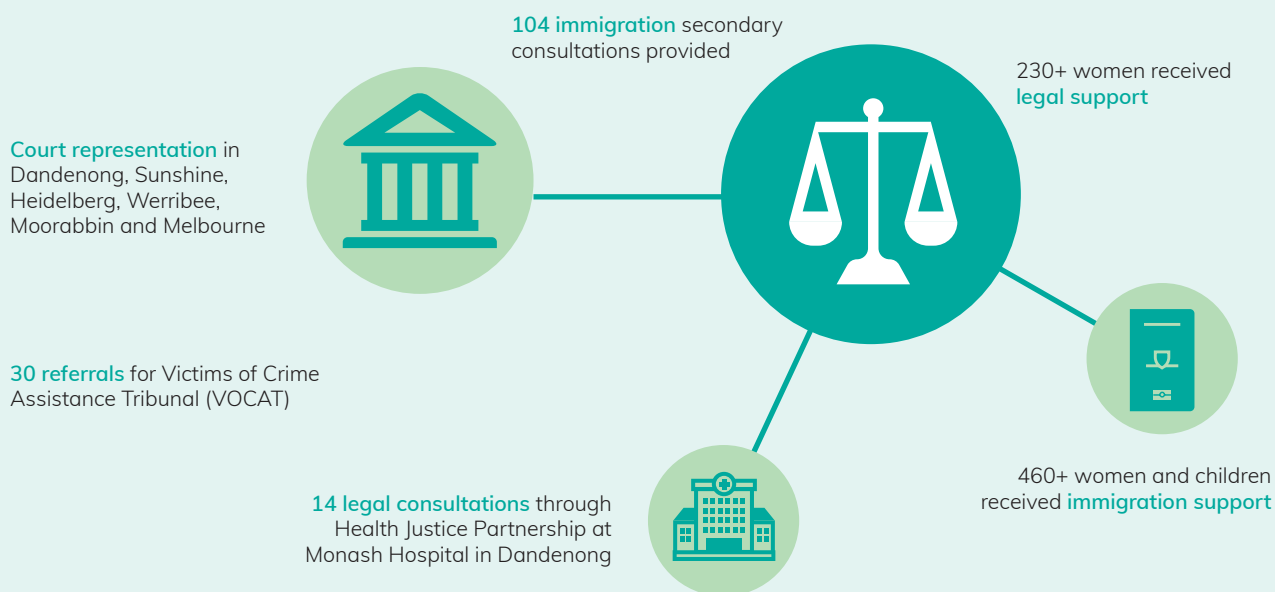
## Client services



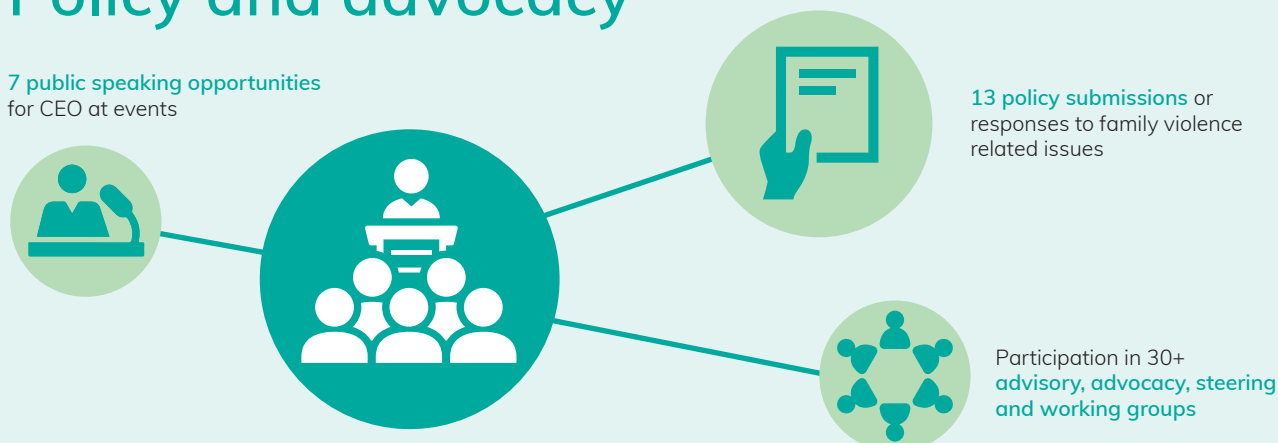
## Training



## Legal centre services



## Policy and advocacy



# Board of Directors

inTouch is a company limited by guarantee. We are governed by a constitution and an eminent Board of Directors.

Our Board meets monthly and is comprised of a diverse array of individuals with backgrounds in business, law, human resources, finance, communications and non-profit leadership.

## Chair

**Faye Spiteri**, joined Board in 2005, Chair since 2009

## Deputy Chair

**Azmeena Hussain**, joined Board in 2012, Deputy Chair since 2017

## Board members

**Elizabeth Nunez**, joined Board in 2008

**Nevein Versace**, joined Board in 2014

**Alecia Rathbone**, joined Board in 2018

**Karina Posanzini**, joined Board in 2018

**Professor Prasuna Reddy**, joined Board in 2018

Further information on each of our Board members can be found on our website [intouch.org.au](http://intouch.org.au)

CEO, members of our Board and Sarah from Inspire for Change advisory group at the inSpire launch, February 2019



# Inspire for Change: Multicultural voices of lived experiences

In 2018 inTouch established the Inspire for Change victim-survivor advisory group. Made up of former inTouch clients from different cultural backgrounds with lived experiences, the group provides expert advice in the prevention and response to violence against women and children.

The group is often consulted by external stakeholders on family violence issues. To date, they have advised Family Safety Victoria, Department of Justice and Education, the Courts and Department of Health and Human Services.

inTouch's programs are also guided and informed by Inspire for Change and their experiences underpin our advocacy for reforms to the system and support services. The group has assisted us with our direct client services delivery model, strategic plan and in developing our Motivation for Change men's program.

In April 2019, the advisory group was proud to celebrate their one-year anniversary. They are currently undertaking leadership training, helping them build their personal and professional skills and values. We are helping the women to build their confidence, and to use their voice to get their message out and help others.

*Advisory group and inTouch staff celebrating their one-year anniversary*





## inSpire

inTouch was thrilled to launch inSpire in February 2019. inSpire is an inTouch initiative that supports Victorian refugee and migrant women moving beyond family violence, helping them rebuild their lives.

There are many challenges for women in this crucial time moving beyond family violence, especially when facing language barriers, visa issues, financial stress and community and family isolation. inSpire helps women overcome these hardships, feel empowered and reconnected with the community.

The inSpire fund offers assistance in three focus areas:

- > Economic empowerment – building skills to strengthen women's financial independence.
- > Building stronger families – strengthening the bond between a mother and her children.
- > Creating social connections – building a sense of community amongst women.

The initiative is a first for inTouch, expanding our level of support to former inTouch clients. It falls outside of our government funding and relies on help from the community through donations and grants.

### .Thanks to our supporters

We were so delighted to have generous individuals and organisations donate more than \$1,000 to help get inSpire off the ground. A big thank you to our Founding Donors:

- > Arty and Carlo Richetti, Cititec Systems
- > Alecia Rathbone
- > Steve Walsh

We would also like to acknowledge StreetSmart Australia and Bank Australia for their grants supporting inSpire.

### Looking forward

Support from the community is vital and goes towards developing and maintaining programs for these vulnerable women and children in need. Plans are well underway for inSpire to help offer pathways to employment for the women, scholarships for extracurricular activities, as well as offer a program of events to celebrate cultural festivities, kicking off with Diwali in October 2019.

If you'd like to make a donation to help support victim-survivors of family violence rebuild their lives, visit our website [intouch.org.au](https://intouch.org.au)





*inSpire helps women like me, who have moved beyond family violence, feel empowered and supported to rebuild their lives.*

– Sarah, member of Inspire for Change Advisory Group





# Motivation for Change: Working with men

In 2018 inTouch received an innovation grant from Family Safety Victoria to develop and implement an early intervention program for men who use violence in refugee and migrant communities – Motivation for Change (MFC).

Based on our successful *inLanguage*, *inCulture* model for victim-survivors, the program is the first of its kind as it is specifically tailored to men from culturally and linguistically diverse communities who use violence towards family members.

This trauma-informed program helps engage men who otherwise may come to the attention of police, courts and other service providers, and yet, for a number of reasons, are unable to access services to assist them in stopping their use of violence.

The MFC program comprises of one-on-one case management and group sessions. It aims to help men reflect on their behaviours, learn ways to relate without using violence, as well as access services to help them change their behaviour.

In June 2019, the MFC program completed its trial program in Dandenong and Sunshine working with men from South Asian countries (India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Bhutan, and Maldives) and Afghanistan. Most were referred from the Magistrates courts in Dandenong and Sunshine, and Child Protection.

*A total of 37 men completed the program, a highly successful 90% completion rate.*

Case closure and individual exit plans were given highest importance towards the end of the program and a total of 15 participants reunited with their families during the course of the program.

*"I can feel that this is gradually becoming a life changing experience. I am very thankful for the facilitators for their efforts and guidance in conducting this program on weekly basis...I have learnt a lot from self-reflection, seeing myself in situations and challenges where my behaviour is tested. I have also realised this, my marriage, my relationship, is all an ongoing continuum. I have to take this seriously and make it work on a day to day basis, for the rest of my life here."*

– Motivation for Change participant



## Meet Ahmed and Maryam

Ahmed\* was a participant of the MFC program. His partner, Maryam\* was a client of inTouch and received case management support from our Dari speaking case manager. Their stories demonstrate the comprehensive range of support that inTouch offers. Here are their stories.

\*Names changed

### Maryam

Maryam is from the Middle East and speaks little to no English. She had been married to her husband Ahmed for 15 years and has several children, with the youngest child being born in Melbourne. Ahmed was using Ice on a regular basis and became abusive towards Maryam and the children. Maryam left the house leaving all of her possessions behind and went to the police to get an intervention order. She and the children stayed with a friend temporarily and were afraid to go back home. Maryam was on a temporary partner visa and Ahmed threatened to get her deported and kill himself. Maryam only had \$50 in her wallet when she left and had always been financially reliant on Ahmed. The police notified Child Protection who investigated the matter and Maryam had to attend a court hearing. The magistrate referred her husband Ahmed to see the respondent practitioner at the court who then referred him to the MFC program.

### Ahmed

Ahmed is from the Middle East and arrived in Australia as a refugee without his wife and children in 2011. He did not have any skills but with the help of some friends found a job in the construction industry as a painter. In early 2013 he started taking Ice. That same year, his driving licence was suspended due to driving under the influence of drugs. In 2014 he was caught driving and his licence was suspended for three years and he lost his full time job. He continued using Ice over the next couple of years, couldn't hold down a job and lost all his important identification and travel documents. When his wife Maryam and their children arrived in Australia the couple began to argue about Ahmed's drug use and lack of stable employment and money. There was never any food for the children. Ahmed used physical, verbal, financial, and emotional abuse towards his wife. In an incident before Maryam finally left, he threatened to burn down the house. He made Maryam and the children watch him burn some of the children's clothes in the bathtub. An intervention order took place and Child Protection got involved. Ahmed became homeless because he was excluded from the premises. When Ahmed joined the MFC program, he was referred to a drug rehabilitation facility. After just two days, Ahmed left the program as he wanted to focus on finding a job and getting his licence back. He did not take Ice for more than 25 days and both Child Protection and the court allowed him to reunite with his family with a limited intervention order. Ahmed successfully completed the MFC program and the case manager assisted him in finding a full time job.

# Advocacy, policy and research

inTouch participates in a number of national advisory groups, working groups and steering groups which are focused on advocacy, core business, supporting the Victorian reforms and strengthening our work. Some of these are highlighted below..

## Advocacy

- > The Australian Women Against Violence Alliance Advisory Group (AWAVA) - representing the Harmony Alliance
- > National Advocacy Group for Women on Temporary Visas Experiencing Family Violence
- > Justice Advocacy Network
- > Dowry Abuse Working Group
- > Victoria Family Law and Migration Network
- > Working Group on Modern Slavery
- > Victorian Forced Marriage Network
- > National Multicultural Mental Health Advisory Group
- > South East Forced Marriage Network

## Core business – working with specialist family violence services

- > Domestic Violence Victoria
- > No to Violence Workforce Development Project Advisory Group
- > Northern Integrated Family Violence Services
- > Southern Metro Integrated Family Violence Network
- > Western Integrated Family Violence Network
- > Northern Community Legal Centre Indian Family Violence Steering Committee
- > Federation of Community Legal Centres

## Supporting the Victorian reforms

- > Multifaith Advisory Group Family Violence Working Group – Multicultural Affairs and Social Cohesion Division, Department of Premier and Cabinet
- > Safer and Stronger Communities Steering Group – Multicultural Affairs and Social Cohesion Division, Department of Premier and Cabinet
- > Ethical Framework Guidance Project Group, Victorian government engagement with communities with lived experience – Department of Premier and Cabinet and Family Safety Victoria
- > Statewide Family Violence Steering Committee
- > Orange Door Statewide Reference Group
- > Diverse Communities and Intersectionality Working Group
- > Industry Taskforce and Subcommittee
- > Family Violence Funding Reform Reference Group

## Strengthening our work

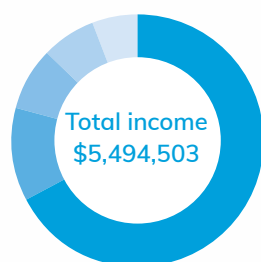
- > Health Justice Partnership Advisory Group, Pipeline, Operational Group, Learning Network
- > Harmony Project Steering and Advisory Committee's
- > Inspire for Change
- > Motivation for Change Advisory Group
- > Men's Behaviour Change Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Group

We also contribute to research and issues important to refugee and migrant women and over the past 12 months, inTouch has presented 13 policy statements or responses to changing laws, programs, policies and the circumstances of the clients we see.

1. Family Safety Victoria Inclusion and Equity Blueprint, June/July 2018
2. Joint submission to Family Safety Victoria: Family Violence Information Sharing and Risk Assessment and Risk Management Framework (in partnership with Domestic Violence Victoria, No to Violence, Domestic Violence Resource Centre Victoria, Djirra and Women with Disabilities Victoria), 10 July 2018
3. Response to Strengthening the Foundations: First Rolling Action Plan, 2 August 2018
4. Joint submission to the Senate Standing Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs: The Practice of Dowry and the Incidence of Dowry Abuse in Australia (in partnership with Good Shepherd Australia New Zealand), 16 August 2018
5. Modern Slavery Bill (endorsed Good Shepherd's Submission), August 2018
6. Letter of Support for Centre for Innovative Justice in relation to an application for approval to the Justice and Human Research Ethics Committee, August 2018
7. Submission to the Specialist Family Violence Case Management Urbis Review, 25 September 2018
8. Article for Domestic Violence Resource Centre Victoria Advocate Magazine – Specialisation in the system, response by Michal Morris 9 October 2018
9. Submission: inTouch second submission to the Specialist Family Violence Case Management Urbis Review, 10 December 2018
10. Article in New Community Journal - Family Violence Reform, the #MeToo movement, migrant and refugee women: what do they have in common? Written by Michal Morris January 2019
11. Position paper: inTouch position on Dowry Abuse, February 2019
12. Research brief: Monash Gender and Family Violence Prevention Centre Research and inTouch: Support options for migrant women on temporary visas experiencing family violence in Australia, March 2019
13. Research brief: Monash Gender and Family Violence Prevention Centre Research and inTouch: Forced Marriage in Australia Australian Law Reform Commission – Review of the Family Law System, March 2019

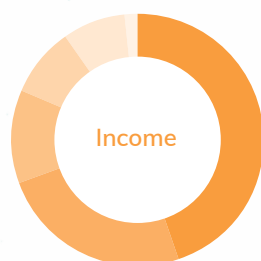
# Financials

## inTouch income



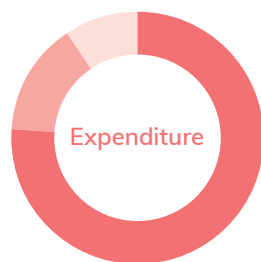
Family Safety Victoria	67.45%
Department of Premier and Cabinet, Multicultural Affairs and Social Cohesion	11.83%
Department of Justice and Regulation	8.19%
Other	6.82%
Department of Health and Human Services	5.71%

## Income by program



Client services	44.84%
Capacity building and projects	24.67%
Flexible support packages	12.11%
Motivation for change	8.73%
Legal services	8.19%
Other	1.47%

## Expenditure – programs and admin



Programs and services	76.17%
Operations and administration	14.49%
Surplus	9.34%



# Thank you

Our work wouldn't be possible without the support of the Victorian Government.

- > Family Safety Victoria
- > Department of Health and Human Services
- > Department of Premier and Cabinet – Multicultural Affairs and Social Cohesion
- > Department of Justice and Regulation

We'd also like to thank our supporters, partners, volunteers, community organisations and recognise their immense contribution to the work that we have done in 2018-19. This includes:

- > Multicultural Centre for Women's Health
- > WIRE
- > Ballarat Community Health
- > South East Community Links
- > Members of the Free From Violence Project Empowering Community Network:
  - Advocacy for Oromia
  - African Family Services
  - Australian Filipino Community Services
  - PRONIA
  - ETRAT Institute of Australia
  - Cambodian Association of Victoria
  - Community in Abundance
  - inConcert Music
  - Springvale Indo Chinese Community and Mutual Association
  - Indonesian Diaspora network


- > Board of Imans Victoria
- > Indian Care
- > Refugee Legal
- > WISHIN
- > Monash University's Gender and Family Violence Prevention Centre
- > Enhanced Pathways to Family Violence Project:
  - African Family Services
  - Australian Vietnamese Women Association
  - Board Of Imams Of Victoria
  - Carers of Africa
  - Chinese Community Social Services Centre Inc.
  - IndianCare Inc.
  - PRONIA
  - Southern Migrant and Refugees Centre
  - Springvale Indo – Chinese Mutual Assistance Association Inc.
  - Victorian Arabic Social Services
- > Domestic Violence Victoria
- > No to Violence
- > Domestic Violence Resource Centre Victoria
- > Respect Victoria
- > Monash Health
- > Health Justice Australia
- > Federation of Community Legal Centres
- > Women's Legal
- > Red Cross
- > La Trobe University
- > Good Shepherd Australia New Zealand

## Connect with us

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Free toll call to **1800 755 988** if you  
are experiencing family violence

Find out more at [intouch.org.au](http://intouch.org.au)



*inTouch acknowledges  
the support of the  
Victorian Government*

