



Media Release: 6 December 2022

Award Winning Program Supporting Refugee Men's Mental Health and Wellbeing in South-Western Sydney Facing Uncertainty Following Funding Shortages

Mentoring Men, in collaboration with CORE Community Services, is very proud to announce that our program *Supporting Refugees and Migrants through Life Mentoring Skills* has won a second award. This important program has supported more than 75 Arabic speaking refugee men in South-Western Sydney and, in 2022, won both the Western Sydney Community Forum Zest Awards in the category of *Outstanding Project Promoting Social Cohesion and Harmony* and the WayAhead Mental Health Matters *Community Initiative Award*.

The program aims to reduce the social isolation of recently arrived, Arabic speaking refugee men, by providing free, long-term, one-to-one life mentoring with a professionally trained volunteer Mentor. However, with funding expiring, this program faces an uncertain future.

"This grassroots program connects men within their community who can support each other in their own language" says Mentoring Men CEO, Simon Jarvis. "Despite winning two prestigious awards, we do not have any funding to continue delivering this program."

Simon Jarvis continues "Both awards recognise the outstanding contribution this project makes in significantly increasing a sense of belonging, attachment to community and willingness to participate within community; as well as helping to break down the stigma of men's mental health and wellbeing. But, without ongoing funding we will not be able to extend this program beyond the current cohorts."

CORE Community Services Multicultural Communities Program Manager John Buraho says "delivering the training in Arabic is vital in maximising the impact and understanding about mentoring other men through life's inevitable challenges and cultural perspectives. The program provides our Arabic men's group with additional much needed support. Without ongoing funding, the program is at risk."

Mentoring Men and CORE Community Services is calling on Government and businesses to dedicate more funding to programs at a grassroots level that reach socially isolated men before they reach crisis point.

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About Mentoring Men is a registered Australian charity providing free, long-term one-to-one life mentoring for men who are going through some challenges or changes in their life. We focus on a proactive approach, engaging with men who need help before they spiral into crisis. Sometimes just having someone listen, without judgement or agenda, can be the difference between life and death. Our volunteer Mentors provide vital support for men which in turn creates stronger, healthier families and communities.

Why only MEN? In short, men represent 75% of all suicides in Australia and yet most suicide prevention support services are more effective at reaching women not men.

More information about our program can be found at <https://mentoringmen.org.au>

About CORE Community Services is a not-for-profit community organisation which has been operating in South West Sydney for almost 40 years. Previously known as Cabramatta Community Centre, but due to growth and the far-reaching nature of our services, was re-branded in 2015 to CORE Community Services to highlight their dedication to all local communities in South West Sydney.

CORE Community Services offers a wide range of services, activities and programs across our key service areas – Aged & Disability Care, Children’s Services, Multicultural Communities and Youth Services. More information can be found at <https://corecs.org.au>

