

# Western LDAT Summary Report

Prepared by IndianCare, June 2020

IndianCare led a successful Local Drug Action Team (LDAT) in the Western region, funded by The Alcohol and Drug Foundation, during 2019- 2020. Focusing on young people and seniors from South Asian communities, it aimed to increase community connections, resilience and improved physical, mental and social wellbeing of participants.

**Western LDAT**, known as WAAT, was an evidence-informed, preventative, community program, bringing together five organisations -  
IndianCare (lead agency),  
Club 60 senior's group,  
Brothers and Sisters Foundation (B&SF),  
Wyndham Social Cricket League (WSCL),  
Australian Multicultural Community Services (AMCS).

Community Action Plans, tailored to the local needs, were co-designed and implemented. Goals were largely exceeded and even when impacted by the COVID-19 lockdown, the project pivoted to online activities to successfully complete the plan, with participants individually assisted to use online platforms, where needed.

The project was truly a team effort, led by the dedication and passion of staff, board members, volunteers and students from IndianCare and other partner organisations. Other factors contributing to its success include the close, trusting community relationships; strong buy-in from community; respect and inclusion of all voices.

100+ people were involved in various face-to-face programs and approximately 5025 people were reached through online activities.

**Some key achievements** were as follows:

**10 conversational English Classes** for 17 Indian seniors from Club 60, facilitated by Wyndham CEC at Penrose Community Centre, Tarneit. A safe space for the participants to learn and practice their language skills was created and there was excellent attendance, engagement and participation rates, with high levels of energy, as reported by the teachers and volunteers. These classes were conducted face to face and then via online streaming in lock down.

Feedback surveys indicated that 85% reported their English language had improved since they joined the classes, with 68% reporting an increase in their ability to socialise with other community members, as they feel more confident to talk to the local people. The online learning was embraced, with comments such as "Learning in this age is remarkably interesting", "This learning is going to improve our knowledge and ability to make strong relationships with our grandchildren." A 69-year-old Indian male said, "I was scared to walk to the park before because there were many Australian people who always say hello to me, and I was not comfortable to talk to them. But now, I feel confident to talk to them."

2 **outdoor activities** at Lady Northcote outdoor adventure camp, Bacchus Marsh, for 51 seniors of Club 60. These were conducted by YMCA, in collaboration with AMCS's *Moving for Life* Program. For a lot of the senior participants, this camp day was the first time they had done anything like this. After the camp, surveys indicated 100% satisfaction rate. One participant reported, "This was the best experience of my life" while another said he "felt highly alive after the activity and loved the group experience."

This activity was covered in The Indian Sun newspaper: [theindiansun](http://theindiansun.com.au) ,as well as in the adf newsletter: [community.adf.org.au](http://community.adf.org.au)

2 **Work Readiness** community sessions were conducted by Geetha Chetty from Enlightened Mind, for participants from B&SF and WSCL at Penrose Community Centre, Tarneit. These sessions assist participants to secure a desirable job by boosting their confidence and skills in the application process with effective resumes and well addressed key selection criteria and interview skills. There was a low turnout, possibly due to the program being disrupted by the onset of COVID-19 crisis.

Feedback indicated a satisfactory response from the participants. 91% participants indicated that they feel confident applying for jobs effectively. One participant commented, "It increased my confidence to prepare a perfect resume according to the job criteria." 85% participants reported that after consulting individually with the facilitator they felt confidence to attend the interview. Again, as a participant said, "It has boosted my confidence to apply for a desired job."

**Family resilience sessions** were not conducted face-to-face due to COVID-19, rather video links were shared and posted online to IndianCare and partner's Facebook page and social media platforms. 4 videos on Positive Parenting, communication and conflict resolution skills to Improve family cohesion and harmony were shared with B&SF and WSCL which reached out to approximately 600 people.

91% participants indicated in the survey that the videos assists them to manage the behaviours of their children, with 70 % participants agreeing they assist them to sustain a calm environment in the family and cope with the current situation. One participant commented, "I feel calm and cooperative while handling a conflict between my children." 50% women reported in the survey that they are able to better manage conflict in the family.

Some unexpected findings while working in the community were the high levels of enthusiasm and the 'have a go' attitude for the adventure activities by Indian seniors. In lockdown, some seniors have also readily pivoted to online platforms and supported each other via ZOOM meetings.

As all the activities were completed successfully, there were some challenges also encountered. Some sessions were attended by limited numbers of participants, reportedly due to a shift in priorities due to impacts of COVID 19 crisis, such as focus on loss of employment, financial hardship, housing and visa instability, health issues, etc. Reaching out to the Indian youth was difficult as these groups are busy with multiple commitments. The transition to online learning had mixed responses based on digital literacy and level of comfort using online platforms.

**Conclusion:** The LDAT team are keen for the project to be rolled out another year with a focus on digital activities to accommodate current restrictions and health concerns.

