



**Using social media and  
electronic communication to  
enhance the lives of refugee  
and migrant women**



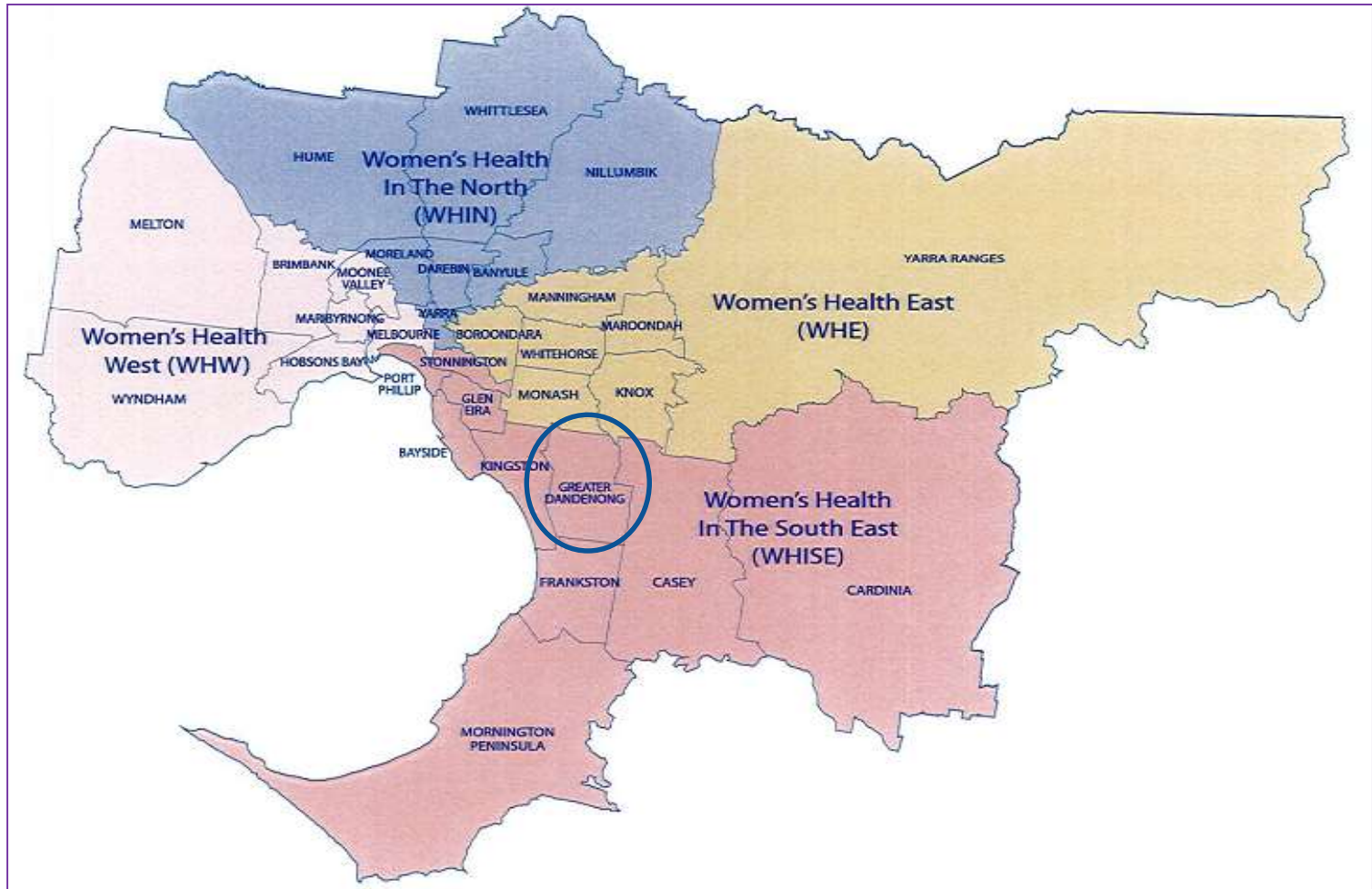
Women's Health in the South East (WHISE) is the regional women's health service for the Southern Metropolitan Region.

WHISE aims to improve the health and well-being of women in the Southern Metropolitan Region of Melbourne within a Social Model of Health and within a feminist perspective.

The Southern Metropolitan Region comprises of 10 Local Government Area's

# Local Government Areas

Victoria Women's Health Program Services : Metropolitan Areas



*\*Adapted by Women's Health Victoria with permission from the Department of Human Services 2012*

# City of Greater Dandenong

- 60% of residents born overseas
- 150 different birthplaces
- 55% of residents from non-English speaking backgrounds.



*(Brown , H & Smith, M 2013, A profile of health and wellbeing in Greater Dandenong, City of Greater Dandenong, Melbourne).*



# City of Greater Dandenong

- 13,700 refugee and migrants have made the City of Greater Dandenong home in the past 5 years.<sup>1</sup>
- Most refugees/humanitarian entrants came from Afghanistan, Sri Lanka and Burma, followed by large numbers from Iraq, Pakistan and Cambodia.<sup>2</sup>
- The past 12 months have seen a rapid increase in community detainees, made up mostly of people from Sri Lanka, Iran and Afghanistan.<sup>3</sup>

## Notes

1. (Brown , H & Smith, M 2013, *A profile of health and wellbeing in Greater Dandenong, City of Greater Dandenong, Melbourne*).
2. (Newcombe, J & Achren, L 2010, *CALD Settlement and ACE Possibilities: Southern Metropolitan Region, AMES, Melbourne*).
3. (Department of Immigration and Citizenship 2013, 'Immigration Detention Statistics Summary', <http://www.immi.gov.au/managing-australias-borders/detention/facilities/statistics/>).



# Issues

- Limited English language skills
- Limited work and education opportunities
- Unfamiliarity of the Australian culture and local area
- Existing physical and mental health conditions
- Separation from loved ones
- Loss of family connections and community support
- Social isolation.

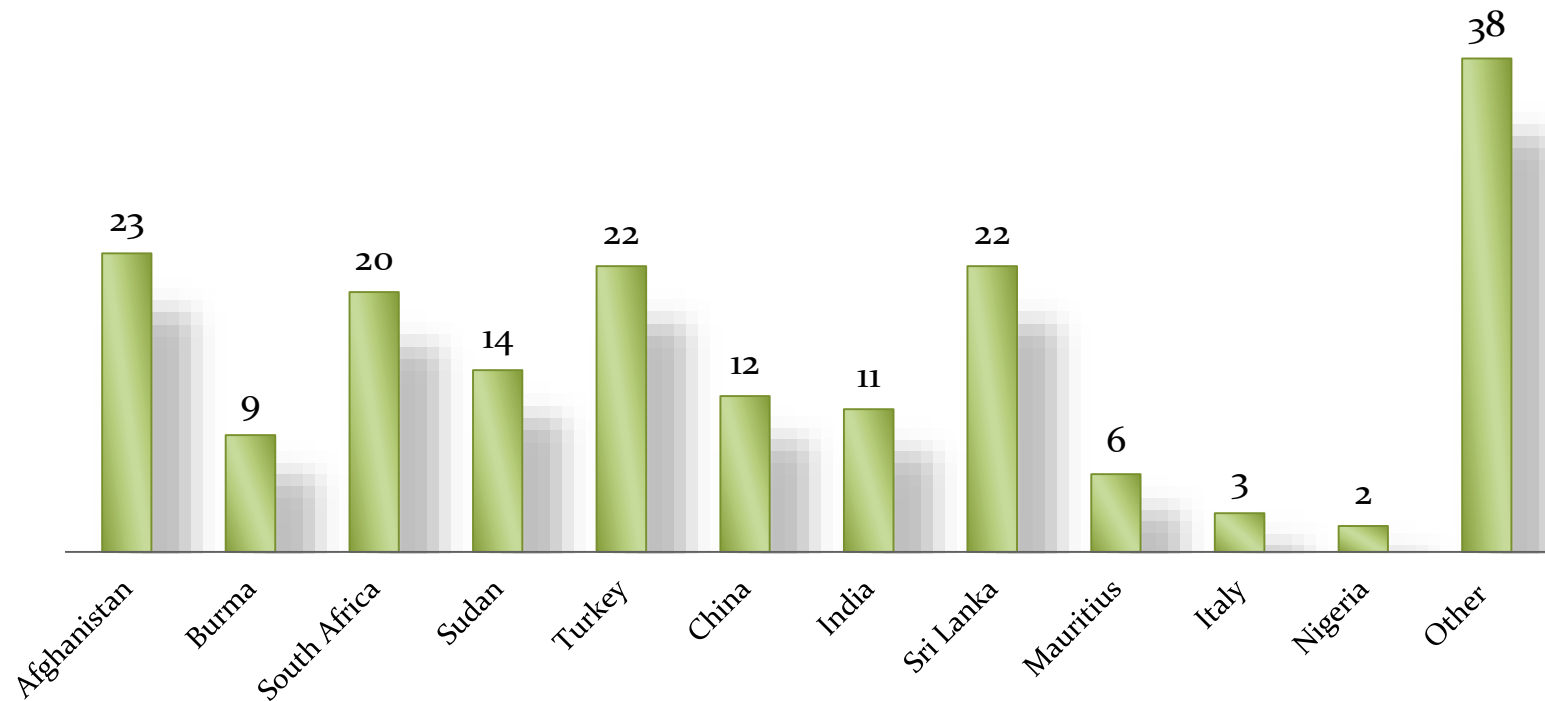
# IT Training

- Provided training for refugee and migrant women
- 12 week program of small groups
- Affordable option to connect to the virtual world
- Started with basic computer and advanced to Internet, Skype and facebook
- Received a certificate at completion.



# Demographics

Number of Participants



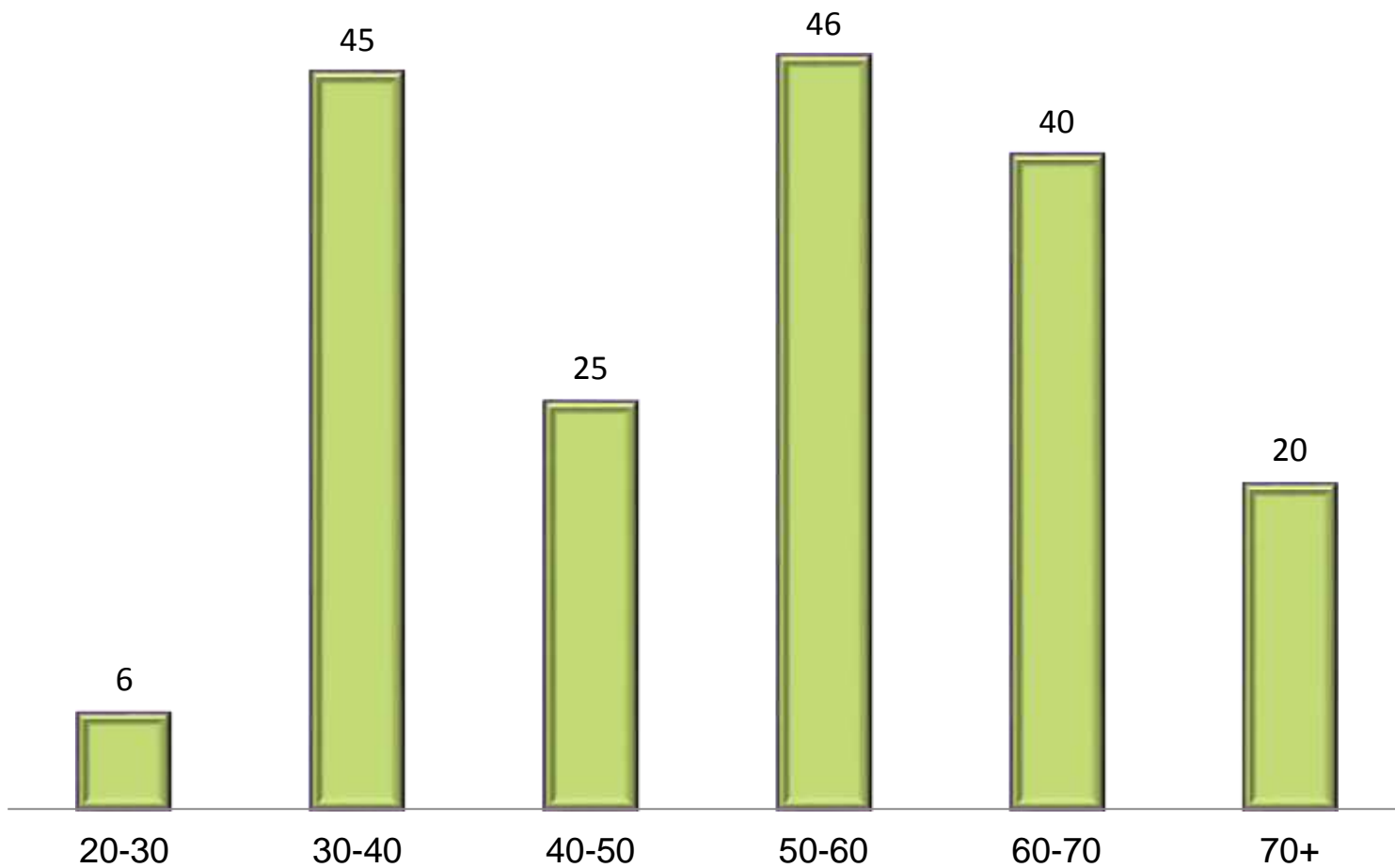
Other countries include:

Croatia, Singapore, Nigeria, Ethiopia, Germany, Greece, Holland, Pakistan, Vietnam



# Age Group

Number of Participants



# Students





# Outcomes

- Made new friends with other participants
- Made new friends in the virtual world
- Connected with old friends and family members
- Opportunity to get out of the house
- Reduced feelings of isolation
- Talked to others with similar backgrounds
- Increased their sense of social connection
- More confident
- Feeling more part of the community.





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