



Picture: Carmela Roche

## Language a kickstarter for Marwah

### Lawrence Machado

MARWAH AL-KHAMEESI, whose family fled Iraq because of the war, wants to pursue a career in nursing so she can help others.

Ms Al-Khameesi, whose family of four lived in fear in Baghdad before eventually settling in Sydney in 2016, said refugees must not give up.

Speaking ahead of Refugee Week, Ms Al-Khameesi said: "It is hard when you start as you don't know the language but you have to

learn English first because we now live in Australia. I learnt English for one year and because I passed, I was allowed to do a course in nursing, which I love.

"I have been studying at Bankstown Senior College for more than two years and I want to later finish a degree in nursing because I like to help people."

Ms Al-Khameesi won a Settlement Services International Allianz scholarship last year.

Sydney is holding several events to mark Refugee Week this week.

# Hospitals' wait times skyrocket

### Lawrence Machado

WAITING times have increased for emergency patients at Bankstown-Lidcombe Hospital and Canterbury Hospital for the first quarter of the year, compared with the same period in 2018.

The Bureau of Health Information report shows less than half (47.2 per cent) of triage 2 patients at Bankstown-Lidcombe's emergency department were seen within the recommended time from January to March, compared with 55.1 per cent last year. Triage 2 are emergencies such as chest pain and severe burns.

The report said 59.9 per cent of all emergency patients at Bankstown were

treated on time, compared with 69.8 per cent in 2018. The median time for patients to leave hospital is three hours and 14 minutes — 10 minutes longer than last year.

At Canterbury Hospital, 59.6 per cent of triage 2 patients were seen on time, a sizeable drop from 73.2 per cent in 2018. The ED treated 705 more patients (up 6.4 per cent) in the first quarter this year.

Bankstown-Lidcombe Hospital general manager Peter Rophail said their staff were doing a great job despite the ED experiencing a rise in demand, with a 7.8 per cent increase in presentations.

"Among these presentations were increasingly complex cases falling into the top

three triage categories — resuscitation, emergency and urgent," Mr Rophail said.

A Sydney Local Health District spokeswoman said Canterbury Hospital's ED was undergoing a \$6.5 million expansion and it was performing better than its peer group in four of the triage sections. Its median transfer of care time for patients arriving by ambulance is 12 minutes — the NSW benchmark is 30 minutes.

Bankstown state Labor MP Tania Mihailuk said Bankstown Hospital was being neglected by the State Government, while Canterbury state Labor MP Sophie Cotsis has submitted a petition calling on the government to better fund and resource Canterbury Hospital.

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