

2017-2018

Annual Report

Annual Report



Multicultural  
Development  
Australia

Annual Report  
2017—2018



## To create a better future for all we will

### Deliver for the Community

We will make a measurable difference by delivering work which enhances prosperity, inclusion and equality for new Queenslanders.

### Change the Conversation

We will seize opportunities to influence positive social change, creating welcome and a strong sense of belonging for new Queenslanders.

### Create Opportunities

True to our vision, we will invest in innovative new business opportunities for the community, diversifying our operations and improving our sustainability.

### Be Accountable

We will identify and measure the value of our work and ensure accountability to the people we work with, our partners and funders.

### Lead by Example

We will build and nurture partnerships that focus on leadership, collaboration and agility to create a positive social movement for change.

### Keep Fit for the Future

We will nurture an organisation that is future-fit, investing in the right skills and technologies to achieve our vision of creating a better future for all.



**Multicultural  
Development  
Australia**

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## Acknowledgement of Traditional Custodians

MDA (Multicultural Development Australia) acknowledges the traditional custodians of all the lands on which we meet, work and live. We recognise that this land has always been Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander land and always will be.

We pay our respects to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elders – past, present and emerging – and recognise the immense cultural and linguistic strength and diversity that has existed on this land for tens of thousands of years.

Every day, we work to welcome new Australians from across the world. As we do this, we acknowledge the history and current realities of our First Nations peoples and understand our individual and collective responsibility towards the achievement of justice, equality and reconciliation.

The MDA community, and the multicultural communities we work closely with, realise that understanding the past helps us shape a better future for all. We commit to learning from the knowledge, traditions, stories, spirituality and experiences of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

We, who come from many places, acknowledge the welcome offered to us by the traditional custodians of this land, the world's oldest living culture. We express our desire for deeper connection with Australia's First Nations peoples, as we learn to live on their land.

MDA respects and values the enormous resilience, courage, determination and often unrecognised contributions to the country's social and economic development of Australia's First Nations peoples. We walk together in solidarity, in shared pain of the past and with shared hope for the future.



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## Welcome

In a suburban Brisbane backyard in 1998, a group of Queenslanders huddled under a Hills Hoist and dreamed of a society where cultural diversity was welcomed and everybody had the opportunity to thrive and prosper. Upon that vision, MDA was founded and started working to welcome and support newly-arrived refugees and migrants, raise public awareness, and build the capacity of local communities and the sector.

20 years on, our vision is unchanged, even while our work has expanded. Today, we deliver a wide range of services that enhance inclusion and belonging for new Queenslanders. We advocate, train and engage all sectors to ensure that diversity is welcomed and embraced. We create opportunities that yield a social return. And we maintain a culture based on strong ethics and values and a commitment to quality in every aspect of our work.

Some of our best work happens when we partner with others. This year, MDA started a two-year partnership with Suncorp to improve the financial independence of newly arrived migrants and refugees. We continued our partnership with the Brisbane Lions, AFL Queensland and La Boite Theatre Company to change the narrative about refugees and migrants within the wider community. We also became a community partner of Brisbane Roar FC, an exciting new relationship. La Boite's theatrical depiction of refugee and asylum seeker journeys, 'The Village', featured at the Gold Coast Commonwealth Games festival and has been seen by more than 3,200 high school students since 2017.

We also look to make a difference through MDA's involvement in new and innovative social enterprises. Welcome Residential, Brisbane's first not-for-profit real estate agency, is enabling property owners and investors to achieve a social return on their investment, while generating income that funds MDA programs and initiatives.

As we look back at how MDA has evolved over 20 years, many things have changed, but we are proud that our vision, our values and our character remain steadfast.

**Peter Forday, Chair**  
**Kerrin Benson, CEO**

Image bottom right:  
In May 2018, MDA celebrated 20 years since incorporation with some of our founders, past and present board members, stakeholders, staff and alumni.



# Delivering for the Community

Making a measurable  
difference by enhancing  
prosperity, inclusion  
and equality for new  
Queenslanders.

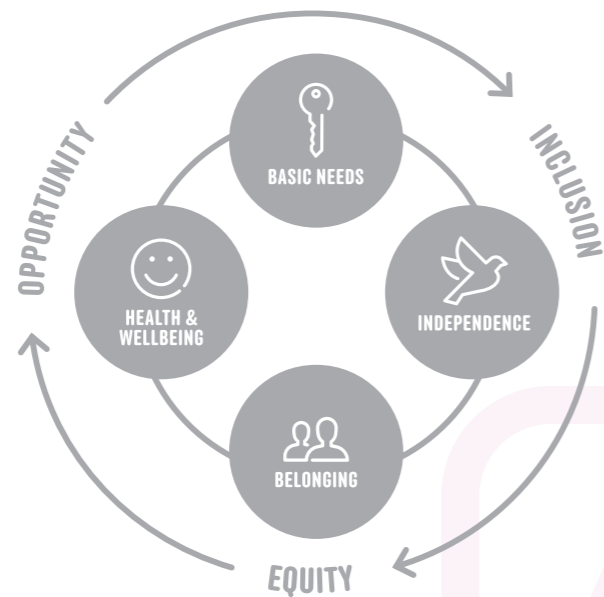
# 1.



# Our settlement practice

Settlement is the process of becoming part of the Australian community. The ultimate goal of MDA's settlement service is to help new Queenslanders integrate and become independent. Our settlement practice is built on the following principles:

- 1. A person-centred approach**
  - Our support for client aspirations and capabilities is critical for their independence and wellbeing.
- 2. The right expertise at the right time**
  - MDA's case managers are human service and/or mental health professionals whose practice is informed by trauma-recovery principles.
- 3. Understanding the complementary factors of successful settlement.**
  - A person's basic needs, independence, belonging and wellbeing are interdependent.
  - We take into account lifespan and intergenerational settlement success factors.



## Top Languages spoken by clients

- |        |          |
|--------|----------|
| Arabic | Tamil    |
| Farsi  | Swahili  |
| Somali | Hazaragi |
| Dari   | Tigrinya |
|        | Rohingya |
|        | Kurdish  |



## Top 10 countries our clients are from:

- |             |                              |
|-------------|------------------------------|
| Syria       | Sudan                        |
| Iraq        | Eritrea                      |
| Iran        | Democratic Republic of Congo |
| Afghanistan | Myanmar                      |
| Somalia     |                              |
| Sri Lanka   |                              |

### 4. Recognising that integration is a mutual process.

- Successful integration requires acculturation – the individual becomes bicultural by incorporating elements of Australian culture into their original identity.
- Successful integration also requires the Australian community to be welcoming and inclusive, providing opportunities for participation and upholding equity for new arrivals.



Clients enjoy an Aussie beach summer.

### 5. Providing ongoing community development for newly arrived communities to thrive.

- Building – enabling communities to come together and transcend difference.
- Bridging – helping communities integrate into the Australian community.
- Organising – supporting communities with organisational structures and legal and governance mechanisms.
- Educating – ensuring community members are properly informed about Australian laws and cultural norms.
- Developing – linking communities to appropriate mentors and partners for business and social enterprise opportunities.
- Capacity building – supporting community leaders to thrive in their role and successfully lead their communities.



**4,100+**  
Total MDA Settlement Clients



**104**  
Languages



**72**  
Countries



**53%**  
Male



**47%**  
Female



**51%**  
aged under 25 years



**35,358**  
Interactions with clients



**3,346**  
Clients in Brisbane



**220**  
Clients in Rockhampton



**568**  
Clients in Toowoomba



# Settlement programs

Creating welcome and belonging

## Humanitarian Settlement Program

MDA provides support to humanitarian entrants from point of arrival for up to 18-months, building the skills and knowledge they need to become independent, connected and contributing members of our community. Case managers provide holistic, practical and needs-based support to clients to create a solid foundation for their futures. We focus on meeting the most basic settlement needs, including housing, health, education, English acquisition, employment and training. The Humanitarian Settlement Program (HSP) is funded by the Commonwealth Department of Social Services.

## Settlement Grants Program

MDA supports migrants and refugees for up to 5 years after they settle in Australia, with case management support and group work initiatives. Our practice model is built on principles of professional expertise and cultural competence, employing qualified case managers and skilled bicultural workers. We build on the aspirations of individuals and communities to be socially and economically connected. We also respond to the needs of the most vulnerable clients in our community, including young people, people with disabilities and older clients. The Settlement Grants Program (SGP) is funded by the Commonwealth Department of Social Services.

## Status Resolution Support Services

MDA provides crucial support to people seeking asylum while their refugee status is being resolved. We aim to build their independence and prosperity and support them to feel welcomed in their communities. We connect clients with needs-based services to individuals and families, increasing their capacity to independently access medical services, employment, education and meaningful engagement activities. Our focus is ensuring that clients' basic human rights are met, increasing their freedom to explore the things that matter most to them. The Status Resolution Support Services program (SRSS) is funded by the Commonwealth Department of Home Affairs.

## Unaccompanied Humanitarian Minors

MDA works to ensure the wellbeing, independence, belonging and quality of life of unaccompanied humanitarian minors. We support young people in our custody and in kinship care arrangements. MDA's case management model delivers culturally appropriate support to children and young people in a manner that nurtures their aspirations, promotes independent living and active citizenship, and supports connection with family, peers and communities. We are not satisfied with simply meeting the care and welfare needs of young people – we create opportunities for them to thrive. The Unaccompanied Humanitarian Minors program (UHM) is funded by the Commonwealth Department of Home Affairs.

### Our clients are...



1,070

Newly arrived refugees (HSS + HSP clients)

1,354

People continuing settlement (SGP)

844

people seeking asylum (SRSS clients)

with 866 from other settlement programs





## HSP clients in Queensland

**BNE**  
703  
Clients in Brisbane

**L/GC**  
754  
Clients in Logan / Gold Coast


**TWB**  
603  
Clients in Toowoomba


**TSV**  
232  
Clients in Townsville

**CNS**  
155  
Clients in Cairns

**71 | 29**  
71% Settled in regional areas / 29% in Brisbane

 **49%**  
aged under 25 years across the state

 **49%**  
Male across the state

 **51%**  
Female across the state

# Humanitarian settlement outcomes

Leading sector collaboration to build communities of opportunity for new Queenslanders

## Building communities of practice

MDA is focused on finding and nurturing opportunities for every new arrival to thrive and contribute. To do this, we are leading a 'communities of practice' model for Humanitarian Settlement Program (HSP) across Queensland, working with subcontractors, the broader multicultural and settlement sector and mainstream service providers to combine our expertise and ideas. This state-wide approach means all relevant organisations work to a shared vision and ensures that service delivery is consistent for every client no matter where they are settled. Together, the community of practice is learning from each other, collaborating on good ideas and improving services for our clients.

## Collaborating for outcomes

Improving long term settlement outcomes for families and individuals requires effective cooperation at the local level, in addition to state-wide collaboration. MDA has taken a proactive approach by establishing a Local Area Collaborative (LAC) in each settlement location – Brisbane, Logan, Gold Coast, Toowoomba, Townsville and Cairns. Each LAC comprises local representatives from all relevant government agencies and service providers, as well as representatives from refugee communities and any other interested organisations. LACs take a collective approach to solving local settlement issues. They are locally focussed but strategically informed, and work on common national priorities, such as employment, education, mental and social wellbeing, family and domestic violence, health and social inclusion.

 **68%**  
easy to make new friendships (adult clients)

**85%**  
new home was a good place to bring up children



Image above: MDA hosted an HSP Forum for our Queensland subcontractors and service providers in October 2017.

# Housing

## Creating homes for our newest Queenslanders

MDA's accommodation program supports clients to settle in their first Australian home. By sourcing private rental accommodation before clients arrive, our service model not only provides a home, it lets clients experience renting from the outset. Clients are supported to understand their tenancy rights and responsibilities and sign a lease on their very first home. We undertake settlement mapping with community leaders and case managers to ensure the most suitable home is ready for the new arrival and furnished with basic household goods. We pride ourselves on providing suitable and affordable housing that says 'Welcome Home' to Queensland's newest residents.



We meet our largest ever single family arrival at Brisbane airport.

## Collaborating to achieve an unlikely goal

Asende and Edouard grew up in Congo but fled to Tanzania in 1994. After 24 years of living in refugee camps, they and 14 members of their family were offered resettlement in Brisbane. It was MDA's largest ever single family arrival. Keeping the family together looked unlikely, but our accommodation and case management teams worked tirelessly, and finally found a 2-dwelling property. The family expressed enormous gratitude at having a home for all of them to live together.

## Supported with housing

**BNE**  
284  
client cases in Brisbane

**TWB**  
228  
client cases in Toowoomba

 **77%**  
Transitioned to independent accom leases





Brisbane's diverse communities dance together each October at the MOSAIC Multicultural Festival in Roma St Parkland.

# Settlement orientation

## Creating welcome in action

### Lifeskills program

MDA's Settlement Orientation Lifeskills Program creates a welcoming and safe space where clients can ask questions, share stories and learn more about Australian culture and their local communities. All new arrivals are offered the program within 6 weeks of arrival. The program provides practical advice on topics as diverse as shopping, public transport, money, Australian law, renting and education, to help them feel at home. Guest speakers from organisations like the Queensland Police Service and the Department of Human Services attend classes to share information and answer questions.

### A traditional Aussie welcome

This year, newly-arrived Queenslanders had the chance to engage with Queensland Police Service officers over a traditional Aussie barbeque. More than 50 students from countries including Iraq, Syria, Rwanda, Afghanistan and Congo asked questions they would not normally have had the chance to ask in their homelands. It helped break down barriers and misconceptions about police in Australia. In turn, the police officers were able to pass on important information about Policelink, the triple zero service, police stations and police officers on the streets.



QPS put on a BBQ for Lifeskills clients at the Brisbane Multicultural Centre.

Since the HSP commenced in November 2017, across Brisbane and Toowoomba, we facilitated:



**600**  
hours of  
lifeskills



**FOR**  
**794**  
clients



**IN**  
**32**  
languages



**AND**  
**99%**  
felt very welcomed  
at their orientation  
workshops.



# Employment

We worked with:

- 27 kindergartens and day care providers
- 15 professional development sessions to industry were delivered, with
- 120 industry staff attending and developing their skills
- 40 refugee and asylum seeker children supported to enroll in kindergartens with a 98% retention rate



Supporting people to contribute

## Building skills to build independence

This year, MDA delivered four Skilling Queenslanders for Work (SQW) programs to help unemployed Queenslanders with accredited training and on-the-job experience with our partner organisations. This included 48 traineeships. So far, 12 trainees have commenced a Certificate I in Construction hosted by the Caboolture Heritage Village and another 12 trainees have commenced a Certificate I in Conservation and Land Management hosted by the Wolston and Centenary Creek Catchments Inc. The SQW program is funded by the Queensland Department of Employment, Small Business and Training.

SQW trainees completing a Certificate I in Construction were able to help a part of Queensland's history find a home at the Caboolture Heritage Village. Ken Done's iconic Expo '88 signs were unveiled in October 2018 after an eight-month mission to save and restore them in time for the Expo '88's 30th anniversary celebrations.

[Read the ABC Brisbane story here.](#)

## Giving back to the community – Amal's story

Amal arrived in Australia in February 2017 from Syria with six family members. Holding a bachelor's degree and fluency in French, she dreamed of continuing the teaching career she had started in Aleppo. However, her basic level of English was a barrier to employment in Australia. Through MDA's SQW Multicultural Teacher Aide Program, Amal completed a Certificate III in Education Support. Later, she was selected for a teacher aide placement at Padua College in Kedron as part of the Work & Welcome program. Feedback on Amal's work has been extremely positive and she has been offered an additional term contract.



Amal in class.



14

SQW Programs

325

participants (completed and current)

173

employment outcomes

# Work & Welcome

MDA's Work & Welcome (W&W) program continued to help new arrivals take the first step into employment. W&W provides refugees and migrants with paid work experience positions, provided by schools, companies and government agencies. The program gives participants local work experience, and enables participating organisations to directly experience the impact of their own philanthropy. They gain direct cross-cultural experiences while having the opportunity to work alongside and mentor people whose lives they are changing. This year, 43 new Queenslanders were placed with W&W partners, and 67% of them found continuing employment. The program was recently expanded thanks to additional funding by the Department of Local Government, Racing and Multicultural Affairs.

[Watch Queensland Urban Utilities talk about how they're changing lives with Work & Welcome as their chosen workplace social responsibility program.](#) More and more, businesses are understanding that social capital shapes their organisation's purpose. They see the business sense in building diverse, globally connected workforces.



Ghada at work with QUU.

## Bringing skills and wisdom to Australian workplaces - Ghada's Story

Ghada arrived in Australia as a refugee from Iraq with her husband and son in 2016. She holds a Bachelor of Science in Civil Engineering and managed \$100 million in contracts in Baghdad. But, as a mature aged migrant, she struggled finding suitable employment in Australia. In February 2018, Ghada secured a W&W placement with Queensland Urban Utilities (QUU), which was impressed with her great work ethic, diligence and experience. Her QUU contract has been extended several times and she is looking to remain there long-term.



44

placements commenced this year

31

employment outcomes for participants

36

host employers



# Youth settlement

Supporting our future leaders



## Supporting emerging leaders

MDA's Settlement Grants youth program works intensively with high school students from diverse backgrounds to develop their leadership skills. We offer mentoring, formal leadership training as well as access to leadership conferences and workshops. For example, at Yeronga State High School, participants in MDA's young leaders program for Indigenous Australians, refugees and asylum seekers, later went on to make up one third of the grade 10 student leaders as voted by students and teachers. Their rise to school leadership demonstrates the value of the program, equipping them with the confidence and skills to take on further leadership opportunities within their communities.

## Supporting young people to flourish – Meera's story

After arriving from Syria, Meera enrolled in Year 10 at Aspley State High School aged 17, but struggled to feel a part of the school community. A teacher noticed she seemed isolated and referred her to MDA's youth settlement worker. The worker encouraged Meera to join the school's Multicultural Welcome Group, an initiative of MDA and the school, where she could practice English and meet other students. Meera quickly became an active member of the group, and has contributed in other areas of school life. She was recently nominated for the school's Multicultural Captain position in 2019.

## Supporting young people in our care

We consider MDA's greatest indicator of success to be the achievements of our youngest clients. We realise the critical importance of education and stability in the development of young people in our care, so we're very proud that 100% of our young people are attending secondary or tertiary education and that our kinship placements provided safe and predictable care over the last year. Community engagement is also a huge factor in overall health and wellbeing, and we're happy to report that 85% of young people in our care were engaged in sport or recreational activities.

## Finding belonging

MDA hosted a three day Christmas camp for 10 young people in our care in Queensland's Scenic Rim region. Activities included tennis, basketball, hiking, swimming and a shared Christmas lunch, including a visit from Santa. The activities were designed to give them a typical Aussie experience – a Christmas holiday. For many, it was the first time they had left the city. One young person reported, "I'm looking forward to going back to school to tell my friends about the trip and how we made a fire and I went hiking."

## Early Childhood Kindergarten Pilot

MDA's Refugee and Asylum Seeker Early Childhood Kindergarten Pilot program is helping kindergartens and long day care centres work with children from refugee and asylum seeker backgrounds. The program provides cross-cultural training and mentoring, access to bicultural support workers and bilingual resources. It also helps newly-arrived parents with enrolment processes.

**Meera quickly became an active member of the group... She was recently nominated for the school's Multicultural Captain position in 2019.**

# Brisbane Student Hub

Supporting a globally connected Queensland

MDA's Brisbane Student Hub welcomes international students with information, advice and support to help them navigate life and study in Queensland. The Hub offers case management services, skill-building workshops, mentoring, events, volunteering opportunities, employment advice and a suite of other services. It is a recognition of the importance of happy and supported international student to Queensland's economy and international collaboration. The Brisbane Student Hub is a partnership between MDA, Study Queensland and Study Brisbane.



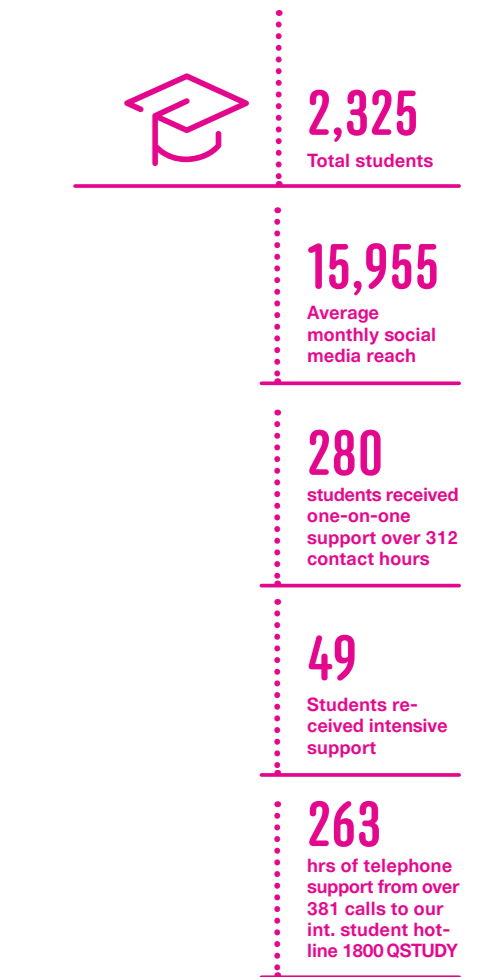
International students volunteering at the MOSAIC Multicultural Festival.

## Contributing to the community through volunteering

MDA finds volunteering opportunities for international students through our extensive network of corporate and community partners. Volunteering allows students to experience Australian culture, meet new people, learn new skills, build their professional network and learn more about Brisbane. This year, the Brisbane Student Hub helped to find volunteering opportunities for 164 students, who gave over 1600 hours of their time back to the Brisbane community.

## Building a global network through the Brisbane Student Hub

"I first discovered the Brisbane Student Hub through the Study Brisbane student ambassador program. I started joining the English conversations and workshops. Since 2017, I've volunteered in countless events through the Student Hub, making new friends from around the world and Australia. This has helped me understand Australian culture and build a strong network base of connections that has expanded my career in marketing and communications." Nia Arteta, international student.



## Students who accessed support came from:

- Colombia
- Brazil
- Japan
- China
- Korea
- India
- Taiwan
- Spain
- Sierra Leone
- Indonesia





# Migrant Youth Vision Project

Supporting youth to achieve their aspirations



Siganto Digital Learning Workshops at the State Library of Queensland.

MDA's Migrant Youth Vision Project (MYVP) links young people with learning, employment and volunteering opportunities to prepare them for life as a fully engaged member of the community. For example, this year we partnered with The Edge at the State Library of Queensland to provide digital learning workshops for 30 young people from a refugee background. The Siganto Digital Learning Workshops (presented by the State Library of Queensland with the support of Queensland Library Foundation) provided young people with an understanding of computer hardware and gave them practical skills in operating systems, software, social media and online safety. 25 of the young people graduated successfully, and received their own computer.

Funded by the Commonwealth Department of Social Services, MYVP is a pilot program that has partnered with the Brighter Futures Collective (Islamic Council of Queensland), Welcome to the Game, Queensland African Community Council and Queensland Program of Assistance to Survivors of Torture and Trauma.

## Pathways to employment – Asma's story

In 2016, MYVP client Asma was captain of a local football team when she had the opportunity to volunteer with Welcome to the Game (WTG). Since then, Asma has assisted with preparing for tournaments, coordinating events and refereeing. Through volunteering, Asma has obtained accredited qualifications and has recently gained employment as Tournament Coordinator for the El Salvador Soccer Club and Welcome Sports. Originally from Somalia, Asma challenges the traditional roles of females in the Somali community and the stereotypes of young female Muslims in Australia. Her proud demeanour and strong sense of self have made her a wonderful role model for young women in her community.



Asma (centre) at the launch of Welcome Sports in 2018.



**1,687**  
young people engaged in the MYVP program



**488**  
young people connected with employment activities\*



**148**  
young people supported in education opportunities



**120**  
young people supported in vocational training



**897**  
young people engaged in sporting activities

\*(work readiness training, work experience, employment)

## Building an inclusive Queensland – GradConnect Mentoring Program

The GradConnect Mentoring Program links Queensland Government graduates with talented young people from a refugee background. The graduates mentor the young people over a 6-month period, giving them career guidance and job-seeking advice. A partnership with the Public Service Commission, the program is designed to make entry into the Queensland Public Sector easier for all young people, especially those who face significant barriers to employment such as young refugees. The program also helps to build strong leaders in the Queensland Government who promote diversity and inclusion. So far, 5 mentor/mentee pairings have resulted in 2 young people gaining employment and the other 3 continuing study.



Mentors and mentees in the GradConnect Mentoring Program.



ROK

195  
clients

840  
case management sessions

87  
employment outcomes

## Creating regions of welcome

MDA recognises that settlement is a mutual process. In addition to all the work put in by the refugees themselves, successful integration happens when the local community is welcoming and inclusive, provides opportunities for participation and upholds equity for new arrivals. Our regional settlement model involves engaging the local community from the very beginning, recognising that the host community has its own aspirations and vision for success. MDA facilitates conversations between key community groups on ways to achieve successful settlement. We work across levels of government, with local church and community organisations and with key service providers.

## Rockhampton

MDA's Rockhampton team helps new arrivals to the region find housing and employment, and access government services. We also work with schools to support new students and provide information to principals and teachers about the refugee journey.

### Belonging in Emerald – Fayas' story

"My name is Fayas Noor. I am around 52 years old from the Rohingya community of Myanmar. I used to live in Rockhampton, and with the support of the MDA team I secured employment in a local meat works. After working for a couple years I left Rocky and went to NSW, but due to my age it was very hard for me to get a job. After being out of a job for a year I decided to come back to Rockhampton and ask MDA to support me again. The MDA Settlement Grants Program case manager signed me up for Skilling Queenslanders for Work where I could get some training while being paid to work.

After I finished a Certificate 1 in Horticulture, MDA helped me to move to Emerald and supported me to start a job at the Hinkler Park Macadamia Farm. I have been assisted by my case manager to secure long term accommodation. I am very happy with my job because I can support myself and my family and am doing a job that I am expert in (due to my experience back in my country being a farmer). I love being part of the Emerald community now."

### Skilling up our regions

MDA Rockhampton's Skilling Queenslanders for Work programs offer educational and job seeking support to students who need help to complete a vocational training course. In the past year we have partnered with the Queensland Government and local training organisations to design and deliver 10 diverse programs in Rockhampton. The programs give jobseekers the qualifications, skills and motivation they need to find and maintain work in the local community. Our traineeship and certificate programs have helped 142 people get jobs. Many of these graduates had not worked for more than a year or had never been employed.



### Tucker Time

Our Tucker Time traineeship food rescue program delivers around \$3000 per week worth of fresh fruit and vegetables to our community partners to feed families that would otherwise go hungry. With 1 in 6 Australians reporting they have experienced food shortage in the last year, the 40-week paid traineeship strengthens partnerships between organisations involved in food distribution and reduces food waste and hunger in Rockhampton.

### Kaddie's story

Following graduation from Tucker Time, Kaddie gained a full-time traineeship with the Department of Employment, Small Business and Training. Kaddie told us, "I can see the change in myself. I am more vocal than when I first started. I have learnt more about working with people from various backgrounds. I have also been given the opportunity to improve my skills in approaching businesses."

**"I can see the change in myself... I have also been given the opportunity to improve my skills in approaching businesses."**



Tucker Time trainee Saba Nawakie.





476

ParentsNext participants



130

parents participated in vocational & skill building training



26

parents have already secured employment

**“If it wasn’t for the help from ParentsNext I would not have had the confidence to push myself to achieve my goals.”**

# ParentsNext

Supporting people to be work-ready

## Changing futures, changing lives

The ParentsNext program supports parents of pre-school age children to develop the skills and confidence to be work-ready by the time their children start school. We help parents identify their skills, interests and motivations. Then we work with them to develop short and long term employment goals, and support them with activities that help them reach these goals. ParentsNext contributes over \$1 million back into local communities as we engage local services and businesses for training, activities and support services for our participants. This year, MDA received Federal Government funding to extend our ParentsNext delivery into Fitzroy, the Darling Downs and Townsville from July 2018.

## Patrina’s story

“I am the proud mother of 7 children and 1 grandson. I am a single parent and for the past 11 years I have stayed at home to care for my children. 2 years ago Centrelink told me to go to MDA and join ParentsNext. I knew that I wanted to help people, so I enrolled in a Certificate III in Community Services. When I finished, I decided I wanted to be a nurse and to work in Aboriginal health. I did a Ready for Work Course to help me prepare. I have just enrolled in a Diploma in Nursing at Central Queensland University. These have been big steps for me and I am excited to start University. When my children are older, my goal is to work in a remote Aboriginal community. If it wasn’t for the help from ParentsNext I would not have had the confidence to push myself to achieve my goals.”

## Creative opportunities

30% of our ParentsNext participants are Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people. Some of these parents told us that they would like to pursue artistic activities that take advantage of their creative skills. We provided art supplies and encouraged them to paint. 10 participants created 16 pieces of art, and an art evaluator guided them on how to price their work for sale. In June 2018, we held an art exhibition to celebrate their work and many of the paintings were sold.



Image left: The ParentsNext art exhibition.

Image right: ParentsNext client Patrina is achieving her goals.

# Toowoomba

Toowoomba is a thriving community, full of opportunity for new arrivals. It is welcoming and inclusive, healthy and safe, as well as economically thriving with a range of employment and education opportunities. 2017 saw a 60 percent increase in the number of people we settled in Toowoomba through the HSP.

Toowoomba really is a model of successful regional settlement in Australia. [Watch this SBS report on Toowoomba settlement from the 2018 Toowoomba Languages and Cultural Festival.](#)

[Watch the local news coverage on the Regional Settlement Conference.](#)

[Read the ABC News story on the Conference.](#)

## Finding safety in the Darling Downs

In Toowoomba, the council has championed settlement in the region, helping to develop a welcoming community where new arrivals find a strong sense of belonging. Mayor Paul Antonio described Toowoomba’s commitment to welcome and diversity saying, “we are passionate about resettling (refugees) and welcoming them to our beautiful city and region. The Darling Downs has historically welcomed people from the four corners of the world who continue to contribute to the amazing cultural diversity that we have here today.” A recent study of 155 newly arrived refugee adults and 59 children found that those who settled in Toowoomba have had the easiest time integrating and feeling a part of their local communities.



230

people attended the Regions of Welcome Conference

22,000

attended the Toowoomba Languages and Cultures Festival

568

refugees settled in Toowoomba







**“the work gives me a very good financial situation where I can secure all the requirements of my family. The best thing is that I have new friends.”**

## Supporting refugees to contribute

This year, MDA hosted Toowoomba's first Refugee Employment and Information Expo with the Queensland Department of Employment, Small Business and Training. 300 refugees attended the expo, which featured potential employment opportunities across 15 local businesses. It also offered recruitment and employment workshops for new arrivals on topics such as understanding Australian workplace culture, rights and responsibilities of employees, career pathways, resume and cover letter writing, and interview techniques.

## Finding welcome and safety

In 2017-18, Toowoomba welcomed over 500 Yazidi refugees from northern Iraq – the largest settlement in Australia of this new and emerging community. For hundreds of years this stateless, ethno-religious minority have been persecuted because of their religious beliefs that date back to 600 BCE. In Toowoomba they have found a new home of welcome and safety.

## Providing for family and making new friends

Jenkey is a Yazidi man who arrived in Australia in 2017. He attended the Refugee Employment Expo to develop his job-readiness skills, meet potential employers and build his confidence to enter the Australian workplace culture. Following the expo, Jenkey applied for several jobs and secured a permanent full time position at the iconic Weis ice-cream factory in Toowoomba. Jenkey is thrilled to be able to contribute to the Toowoomba community and provide for his family. He says “the work is not too tiring, and it gives me a very good financial situation where I can secure all the requirements of my family. The best thing is that I have new friends.”



## New Queenslanders supporting our farmers

Many of our newest arrivals hail from generations of farmers, with skills in agriculture and a strong connection to the land. At the same time, many local Queensland farms have trouble attracting and retaining a labour force. Recognising an opportunity to match local labour shortages with the employment needs of new arrivals, MDA developed the AgWork Mentorship Program with Bare Essentials Farm, Grow.com, TAFE Qld, FarmReady Hub and the Toowoomba Job Active Providers. The program provides industry-specific training, excursions to farms interested in employing refugees, on-farm inductions and work trials. Successful candidates receive employment opportunities, ongoing mentorship, training and further development. So far, 12 refugees have been offered employment and another 10 are on a waiting list to commence a work trial in the next 2 months.

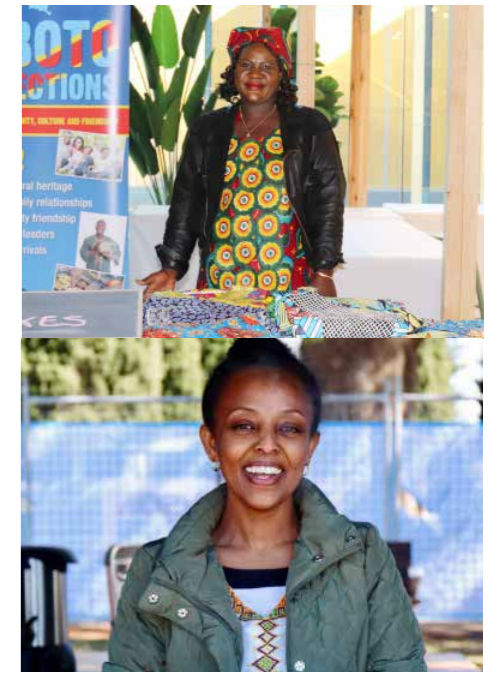
18 year-old Louie, originally from Iraq, reports being “very happy with my new job on the farm harvesting vegetables...I am happy because I have made new friends from Australia and other countries in my job. Because I have been working hard, the employer has taught me a new job that I do in the packing shed.”

## World Refugee Week

At Toowoomba's Refugee Week celebrations, local organisations and refugee communities showcased traditional food and homemade arts, crafts, jewellery and clothing. Launched by MDA and the Commonwealth Department of Home Affairs, the successful market-style event welcomed refugees and encouraged social inclusion. Over 350 members of the Toowoomba community sampled cuisines made by our newest arrivals from Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan and Congo, and were encouraged to join in the dancing and cooking demonstrations. All profits were invested in stock, supplies and advertising material for refugee cottage businesses.

## The Toowoomba Languages and Cultures Festival

Last year, 22,000 people celebrated the region's diversity and delighted in the annual showcase of talents and colour from across the world, at the Toowoomba Languages and Cultures Festival. MDA continued to support new and emerging refugee communities showcase their skills and talents, in particular through market stalls selling traditional cuisines from Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria and African communities. Over 100 community groups, service providers and local organisations supported the festival and all profits were reinvested in developing the capacity of community groups and supporting their economic ventures. With the theme 'One World Many Faces', the festival is coordinated by the Toowoomba International Multicultural Society and supported by MDA, Toowoomba Regional Council, Multicultural Affairs Queensland and the University of Southern Queensland.







## Regions of Welcome – Regional Settlement Conference

Australians have traditionally viewed refugee settlement as a capital city phenomenon, with much of the country's attention and research focused on our largest metropolitan areas. But refugees are making new lives all across Australia and many success stories can be found in Australia's regions. Research and national attention are increasingly pointing to the benefits of settlement in regional Australia. In this context, MDA was happy to host the Regions of Welcome: Regional Settlement Conference in Toowoomba in August 2018, with Toowoomba Regional Council and the Social Justice Commission for the Catholic Diocese of Toowoomba.

This exciting event focused on the role of local communities and community champions in supporting refugee settlement. It also high-lighted the positive contributions of refugees and humanitarian arrivals. The conference examined policy and service gaps, looked at the role of regional settlement in addressing the skills needs of regional areas, and highlighted success stories from towns and cities around the country, including Toowoomba.

230 delegates from across the nation attended, including mayors of regional towns, community leaders, council representatives, policy makers and practitioners. It attracted extensive media coverage from SBS and the ABC. Key sponsors included the Department of Social Services, the Queensland Department of Local Government and Multicultural Affairs, the Settlement Council of Australia and key settlement service providers AMES, SSI, and QPASTT.

Delegates found the Conference welcoming, stimulating and inspiring:

*The Regional Settlement Conference was, without a doubt, one of the best conferences I have ever been to. There was a fabulous mix of 'heart' and 'mind' and all of this came together in a way that made me feel like I was spending a couple of days with friends and extended family... ..I learnt a lot (the discussions, conference papers and concurrent sessions) were intellectually stimulating, provided lots of food for thought, and ideas for the future. The conference set the tone, (and) 'opened the doors' for future conversations, connections and collaborative action.* Julie McDougall, Director, Multicultural Affairs Queensland

The Conference and the potential of regional settlement even got a mention in Queensland Parliament:

*Regional settlement is a win-win for Queensland. It gives refugee families the opportunity to start a new life outside of our busy and sometimes chaotic capital cities, but it can also breathe life into our small towns... In August, Toowoomba hosted the first national regional resettlement conference to great success. Mayors from south-west Queensland councils have said that they are interested in the potential of such a program and they want more people to call their town's home...and I look forward to seeing more regional communities opening their arms in the same way.* The Hon. Stirling Hinchliffe, MP. Minister for Local Government, Minister for Racing, and Minister for Multicultural Affairs (20/09/2018).

**“The conference set the tone, (and) ‘opened the doors’ for future conversations, connections and collaborative action”**

Image top:  
Cr Paul Antonio, Mayor of Toowoomba addresses the conference.

Image middle:  
Michael Hing chairs a panel session featuring Paris Aristotle AM, Sharon Bailey from Department of Social Services and Jack Archer from the Regional Australia Institute.

Image bottom:  
Josh Arnold from Small Town Culture and local school students perform at the conference.

## Redbank Plains Community Centre

Supporting communities to achieve their aspirations

### A meeting place for all

This year, MDA secured the contract to manage the brand new, purpose built Redbank Plains Community Centre, an initiative of the Ipswich City Council and the Queensland Government. With Ipswich City Council, we started by asking the community about their strengths, challenges and aspirations for their future. The responses of 116 local residents indicated that their community has great community spirit, and is friendly, diverse, welcoming and great for families. They said they wanted a community centre that brings different cultures together, enables people to socialise and feel included (especially young parents and older people), provides a safe space, and recognises people's skills and abilities. MDA is now providing a range of services and activities from the centre focused on these community priorities.

### Project Nourish

Project Nourish provides free bags of groceries donated by OzHarvest to needy residents and is one of the most popular activities at the Redbank Plains Community Centre. In just under 3 months, it has served more than 400 local families. On average, the project has enabled 40 families per week to save \$50-\$90 on their weekly grocery spend (more than \$600 in savings for each family since the program was introduced). Project Nourish does more than just save people money. It connects local families in this diverse and rapidly growing community.

### Holistic service delivery for healthy communities

The programs at Redbank Plains Community Centre have been designed to enable visitors to access a range of complementary services. For example, residents picking up groceries from Project Nourish are also able to access UnitingCare's financial counselling. Pregnant women accessing the West Moreton Health Midwifery Clinics are able to attend appointments closer to their home, avoiding long waiting times at hospital. Learner and provisional drivers who don't have access to a car can increase their driving hours through PCYC's Braking the Cycle program. Parents and young children can attend child health services and children's activities on the same day, through Ipswich Libraries Programs.



1400+  
visits since  
May 2018

86%

of our visitors  
live in Redbank  
Plains or other  
Ipswich suburbs

14

active  
volunteers

### Top 5 country of origin of Centre visitors

49% Australia  
11% New Zealand  
3% Samoa  
5% South Sudan  
3% Sudan

### Visiting Services

- UnitingCare Financial Counselling
- Ipswich Libraries Programs
- West Moreton Health Midwifery Clinic
- Child Health Clinic
- EACH Early Childhood Early Intervention
- Police and Citizens Youth Club
- Ipswich City Council
- Redbank Plains Neighbourhood Watch





# Changing the Conversation

Seizing opportunities to influence positive social change, creating welcome and a strong sense of belonging for new Queenslanders

# 2.



# LUMINOUS Lantern Parade

## Creating a welcoming Queensland

MDA's LUMINOUS Lantern Parade gives the Queensland community the stage to say a very public "welcome" to newly arrived Queenslanders. 2018's LUMINOUS saw the largest gathering of people walking to express their support for diversity in the event's 11-year history. Held in Queensland Week, LUMINOUS has become the largest welcome event for migrants and refugees in Australia, and possibly the world (according to the UNHCR's Regional Representative Mr Thomas Albrecht who was delighted to walk alongside the crowds).

Each year over 15,000 people from southeast Queensland gather in Southbank Parkland for LUMINOUS. Thousands of people lined the parade route, sometimes 5-6 people deep, to see the beautiful lanterns carried aloft by community groups from dozens of different cultures, as well as educational institutions, private businesses and government agencies. More than 1000 people walked in the parade to show their support for refugees and commitment to multiculturalism. This year MDA was so proud to see students, staff and communities of 15 Brisbane schools show up to create welcome and celebrate our diversity at LUMINOUS.

Following the parade, which snaked its way around Southbank, the crowd also enjoyed food from around the world and a concert featuring diverse performances. Each year, the success of the event can be judged by the smiles on everyone's faces – the communities in the parade and the public welcoming them.

A sample of attendees found that 60% of people came to see the lantern parade, 54% came to support multiculturalism, 24% came to support a multicultural event, 20% came to advocate for refugees and asylum seekers, and 19% came to welcome new Queenslanders.

[Watch Suncorp help create welcome at the 2018 LUMINOUS Lantern Parade.](#)

[Watch our LUMINOUS champions' community "shout-out" videos!](#)  
[Kate Miller Heidke](#)  
[Brisbane Lions](#)  
[St Rita's College](#)



**15,000**

attended the parade and cultural concert

**1,100**

registered to walk

**120**

organisations & groups walked in the parade

**40**

cultural groups and artists performed

**42**

sponsors

**400**

lanterns

### Attendees came to:

- 60% see the lantern parade
- 54% support multiculturalism
- 24% support a multicultural event
- 20% support refugees & asylum seekers
- 19% welcome new Queenslanders

L-R: The Hon. Stirling Hinchliffe, MP (Minister for Multicultural Affairs), Lord Mayor of Brisbane Graham Quirk, Brisbane Roar goalkeeper Jamie Young, MDA CEO Kerrin Benson, and The Hon. Shayne Neumann, MP (Shadow Minister for Immigration and Border Protection) lead the LUMINOUS Lantern Parade.









# World Refugee Day – Our Journey

Our Journey, a concert to mark World Refugee Day 2018, showcased performers from refugee backgrounds sharing their experiences through stories, music and dance in the Queen Street Mall. Hosted by MDA and the Brisbane City Council, the concert drew an audience of hundreds of people, who enjoyed the program of storytellers and artists from Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander, Iranian, Iraqi, Colombian, Tibetan and African backgrounds. Shoppers, business people and visitors alike all learned something about some of our newest communities.



# MOSAIC Multicultural Festival



**72%**  
attendees born overseas from 86 countries



**28%**  
born in Australia



**48%**  
never attended MDA event



**98%**  
satisfied with MOSAIC and said they would come again

In October 2017, more than 10,000 people joined us to celebrate diversity and welcome refugees at MDA's inaugural MOSAIC Multicultural Festival. Held in Roma Street Parkland, the highly successful event featured more than 50 performances, including music, dance and storytelling, by more than 250 artists from 80 different cultures. Food stalls showcased cuisine from new and emerging communities, as well as traditional favourites. The event also allowed our many volunteers and partner organisations to distribute a wide range of information – helping new arrivals access services, and raising public awareness of multicultural communities.

The audience was a wonderful mixture of diverse communities and the general public, who travelled from around Brisbane and south-east Queensland to be there. The spirit and enthusiasm of the acts was contagious, with many audience members joining in the singing and dancing. Never has changing the conversation been so much fun!

A survey of attendees at MOSAIC revealed an amazing cross section of our diverse communities with 72% of people being born overseas from 86 countries. We reached new audiences with almost half of attendee's surveyed coming to an MDA event for the first time. 98% of people said they would come again to the festival. The things that people enjoyed most about MOSAIC were the cultural foods, music and dance performances, celebrating our diversity, and learning more about the refugees and migrants who call Brisbane home.

[Watch the MOSAIC Festival trailer!](#)



**798,504**  
website visits

**14,000+**  
social media followers (all platforms)

**20,865**  
highest daily FB reach







# Cultural training

## Building cultural understanding across Queensland

MDA helps mainstream individuals and organisations understand and engage with diverse communities with a suite of cultural capability training. Our courses equip people with the knowledge and skills to work across cultures – with refugees, multicultural communities and international students. Better interactions open up opportunities for all, with improved services, willing clients, an expanded customer base and a more diverse workforce.

Our training programs help participants understand the norms and biases of different cultures in a fun and interactive way. We use case-studies and role-playing to help people understand the journeys of new arrivals and learn the most effective ways to engage with people from diverse backgrounds. We leave participants with ready-to-apply tips, and tailor our training to the needs of businesses and government agencies.

Last year we provided training to a wide range of organisations, including the Commonwealth Department of Human Services, Queensland Rail and the National Disability Insurance Scheme. Overwhelmingly, participants enjoy the training and find it useful for their business. They seem to especially like the tailored discussions and real-world scenarios. The training inspired one recent participant to write an article about cultural capability in a professional association’s magazine to “challenge (members) to see if they are doing enough or if they really know about the issues facing our new Aussies.”



Gail Hyslop OAM leads MDA’s cultural competency training.

## 8 Training locations across Australia



1019  
individuals  
trained



39  
training  
sessions

# Volunteering

## Connecting communities

MDA’s Volunteer Program enables members of the public to connect with, and help, newly arrived families and individuals. Over 200 active MDA volunteers assist newcomers to navigate their new life in Australia, understand social norms and local practices, and access our structures and institutions. Our volunteers share the vision of a multicultural Queensland where everyone has the opportunity to contribute and thrive. They help to make a difference on a personal level, sharing their experiences and forming relationships with newly-arrived Queenslanders.



## Building relationships with Banana Life

Our volunteers are not just individuals but businesses as well. Banana Life, a company specialising in team-building, volunteered to take young people from our Unaccompanied Minors Program to Stradbroke Island for a team development session. The experience helped the young people build teamwork skills and created stronger friendships within the group. Banana Life also coordinated the donation of 24 bicycles from corporate sponsors for our clients. Owning a bicycle helps people move more easily around the city without spending money on public transport. It allows them to pursue work and study opportunities while saving their income for other needs.



## Specialist skills making a difference

One of our champion volunteers turned 77 in June. This year he repaired and delivered 104 second-hand computers to our clients. Having access to fundamental equipment like a personal computer enables clients to improve their computer literacy and opens educational opportunities. For example, a computer enables them to study at home rather than traveling to public libraries.

## An empathetic welcome

Many of our skilled volunteers come from culturally diverse backgrounds and understand the challenges of adopting a new country. They seek to help others with the transition. Ani is a teacher who fled war in Syria and arrived in Australia in February 2017. Eight months later she started an Arabic Language Club with her younger sister. Ani’s work is having a profound impact on newly arrived Syrians. The club is strengthening families and communities by preserving language and culture in the next generation and fostering new friendships. It also led to the establishment of an English Conversation Club for mothers. Learning English has built their confidence to apply for work and has created a supportive environment for women who have previously felt isolated. The mothers have also made English-speaking friends and become more connected with the local community.





**1000**  
people attended  
#createwelcome  
week



**5**  
grants access work-  
shops in Townsville,  
Mackay, Bundaberg,  
Toowoomba & Inala



**FOR**  
**180**  
clients



**FROM**  
**35**  
cultures



**AND**  
**\$800,000**  
accessed with  
our support

**MDA works with our Welcome Hubs to present #CreateWelcome Week to celebrate world refugee day in June. This year, local communities hosted 10 events to over 1000 people from around 35 different cultures.**

# Community development

Creating integrated, thriving communities

## Welcome Hubs

Every week, Welcome Hubs across Brisbane welcome hundreds of refugees and migrants and connect them with their local communities. With support from the Queensland Government and Brisbane City Council, Welcome Hubs provide activities that support integration, including English classes, sewing and craft groups, vocational training, volunteer opportunities and community meals. For example, at the 'Culture in the Kitchen' event long term residents and newly-arrived Queenslanders shared their stories, traditions and cultures. So far, Welcome Hubs have enabled over 3700 people from more than 35 different cultures to engage in more than 60 events and activities that build cultural understanding and support social connections.

## Community leaders say 'Not now not ever'

Every month, MDA convenes the Community Leaders Gathering, where leaders of new and emerging communities support each other, exchange settlement experience, and address common issues of concern. In late 2016, the group decided to take a lead in addressing domestic and family violence in their communities. Working in collaboration with MDA and South Community Hub, they formed a steering group to drive this work forward. The Steering group worked together to plan the 'Stronger Families and Communities' forum in August 2018. In preparation for this they introduced a 'community conversation guide' to help communities talk about this difficult and often taboo topic. More than 25 community conversations were held involving more than 160 people across 12 different cultures. In August another 60 community members and service providers came together for the forum. The results of the community conversations and the forum are now informing service providers and community action plans as the work of the steering group continues. As one community leader said, "(Domestic and Family Violence) is too important not to talk about. We believe we can do something about this. Today we begin!".

## Community Funding Access Program

Last year, MDA's community funding access advisor assisted more than 180 clients from 35 different communities to secure over \$800,000 in grant funding. These grants have helped communities across Queensland hold community events and cultural celebrations, deliver meaningful community projects and activities, purchase equipment and upgrade community facilities.



Brisbane's Welcome Hubs in action.





# Creating Opportunities

Investing in innovative business opportunities for the community, diversifying our operations and improving our sustainability.

3.



# Welcome Residential

## Creating social enterprise

Launched in August 2017, Welcome Residential is Brisbane's first not-for-profit real estate agency. At Welcome Residential we do real estate differently – we help owners achieve their property goals while effortlessly giving back to the community. This is done by providing top tier real estate services while working to increase the supply of affordable housing and supporting refugees and other newly arrived Queenslanders. All profits are used by MDA to help newly arrived Queenslanders settle and thrive in their local communities. Welcome Residential services the greater Brisbane area with a full range of property management services, including residential properties and student accommodation. We provide our landlords with a service guarantee and a commitment to innovation and best industry practice.

[Watch the Welcome Residential “explainer” video!](#)

## A ‘home away from home’ for international students.

Two residences have been home to hundreds of Brisbane's international students since owners Luke and Andreas opened the doors in 2010. For international students, finding a home that is safe, welcoming and close to services is a challenge. Andreas and Luke's families both migrated to Australia, so they have first-hand experience in making a home in a new place, and embraced Welcome Residential's approach. The houses are melting pots of the world's cultures, with students from Europe, England, Ireland and France, alongside new arrivals from Uganda and Rwanda. They are always buzzing with food and music from around the world.



**The houses are melting pots of the world's cultures... they are always buzzing with food and music from around the world.**



**93**  
properties under management



**16%**  
of properties are home to refugee clients



**61%**  
of stock is accessible for low-income earners





L-R: Martyn Hancock (Sport and Recreation, Queensland Government), Cr Peter Matic (Brisbane City Council), Kerrin Benson (MDA), Jamie Young (Brisbane Roar), Erin Hatton (Sport and Recreation, Queensland Government) and Vanessa Fabre (MDA) at the launch of Welcome Sports.

# Welcome Sports

**Building active and inclusive communities through sport**

This year MDA launched Welcome Sports, our unique not-for-profit sporting hub dedicated to giving all members of our community the opportunity to get involved, get active and get connected. Our aim is to build an active and welcoming community through sport. Welcome Sports provides migrants and refugees with opportunities to connect with their communities and the broader community. A joint initiative between the El Salvador Soccer Club and MDA, our motto is Join In, Play On, Belong.

One of this year's most successful sports programs was the Refugee Migrant Soccer Program, delivered with the Migrant Youth Vision Project and Welcome to the Game. The program involved 15 teams of over 160 young men and women from migrant and refugee backgrounds. The program fostered social connections and opened up opportunities for training and employment, including refereeing for 12 young people.

[Watch Brisbane Roar goalkeeper Jamie Young talk about Welcome Sports.](#)



Anar at Welcome Sports.



## Young women leading the charge – Anar's story

Anar is a player in the Brisbane Lightning women's football team, which participated in the 2018 Refugee Migrant Soccer Program. Anar is originally from Afghanistan and migrated to Australia with her family to pursue better opportunities and leave difficult circumstances behind. Many women like Anar have left gender-oppressive environments, countries and regimes, where women are not allowed to participate in sport and recreation. Anar is a leader in the Brisbane Lightning team and has a deep appreciation for the role football plays for herself and her team mates. Anar speaks about the importance of coming to Welcome Sports each week to play football and having a place to belong:

*In Afghanistan...girls and women weren't even allowed to go outside if they weren't covered head to toe... Soccer brings you together in a way other things can't. Everything else you have going on is put aside and you all have one goal you're trying to achieve together. Anar*

[Watch Anar's story.](#)

We are proud that some of Queensland's most recognisable and accomplished sports people are supporting Welcome Sports as our ambassadors, including:



**Jose Rodolfo Barahona**  
ESSC over 40s Player



**Sabrina Frederick-Traub**  
Brisbane Lions Player



**Jamie Young**  
Brisbane Roar Goalkeeper  
Hyundai A-League Goalkeeper of the Year 2018



**Kimberley Sue See**  
Old Women's Touch Football Player  
Aust Women's Touch Football Player



**Charlie Cameron**  
Brisbane Lions Player





Saba Abraham and Kagi Kowa.

# Being Accountable

Identifying and measuring the value of our work and ensuring accountability to the people we work with, our partners and funders.



The Hon. Stirling Hinchliffe, MP, Minister for Local Government, Minister for Racing and Minister for Multicultural Affairs visits MDA at the Brisbane Multicultural Centre in January, 2018.





Image above:  
Kelly Yip (MDA's first Coordinator) and  
Gail Hyslop (one of MDA's founders).

## Governance

### Our commitment to ethics and quality.

Led by a full-time Company Secretary, MDA's approach to governance is centred on transparency and accountability, supported by a robust and ethical governance framework. We believe that strong governance is integral to achieving high quality social and business outcomes. We have embedded a culture of continuous improvement across the organisation by promoting the value of contemporary risk and governance practices and supporting staff at all levels to deliver successful, compliant services.

MDA proudly holds quality accreditations under the Queensland Government's Human Services Quality Framework (HSQF) and the ISO9001:2015 Quality Management standard. Our Quality and Risk Team reports to an experienced and diverse board of directors. They provide oversight and independent advice to uphold the accuracy and integrity of MDA's quality management practices, ensuring strict compliance with statutory and regulatory obligations.

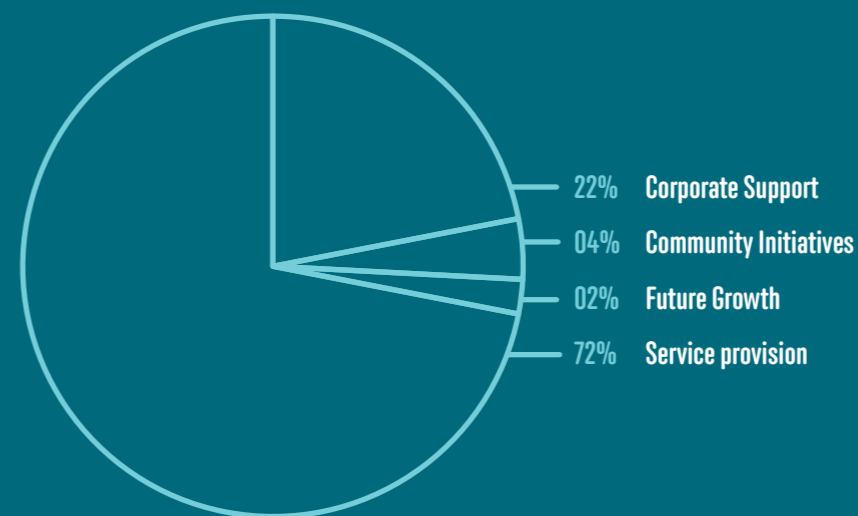
## Finance

The 2017-18 year has been a year of solid financial consolidation for MDA, with a small deficit for the financial year of \$1000. The year saw a decrease in overall revenue compared with the previous year, from \$35.8 million to \$31.7 million, due to our final exit from international work in early 2017. However, we were able to minimise the impact of this through our success in securing the five year Humanitarian Services Program contract to deliver services to refugees across Queensland. MDA also continues to support those seeking asylum in Queensland through the securing of a two-year extension to the Status Resolution Support Services Program. These contracts contributed to an increase in revenue received from government funding of 8% for the period.

We remain committed to being efficient and accountable stewards of our resources. A focus of the year was critically reviewing expenditure throughout the organisation. This focus resulted in a reduction in wages, infrastructure and other support costs by 7% as we work to maximise the value of every dollar we receive.

MDA maintains a healthy asset to liability ratio with a robust balance sheet and steady retained earnings. We maintained an efficient accrual process to allow for future liabilities, including leave and rent provisions. It allows for effective risk management and a sustainable and healthy financial position for future years.

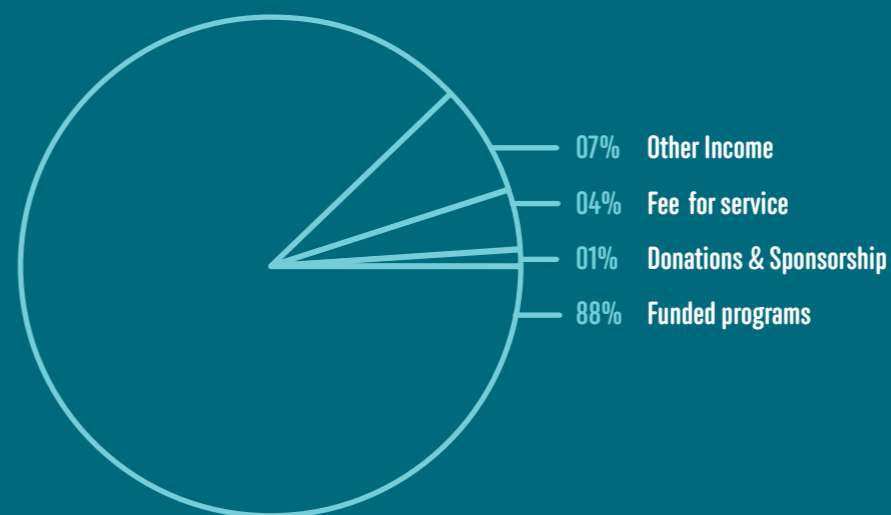
### FY18 Expense Breakdown



 **\$31.7m**  
Total Revenue  
for FY18

**3.04:1**  
Asset to  
Liability Ratio

### FY18 Revenue Breakdown



### 4 year cash flow trend (\$'000)

**2015** **\$5,015**

**2016** **\$8,666**

**2017** **\$14,397**

**2018** **\$14,464**

### Revenue breakdown by funded programs

Funded programs	2018 (\$'000)
Department of Social Services	\$17,350
Department of Home Affairs	\$6,084
Department of Education, Training and Employment	\$1,889
Queensland Health	\$690
Department of Employment	\$676
Other	\$1,224
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$27,913</b>





# Leading by Example

Building and nurturing  
partnerships to create a  
positive social movement  
for change

5.



**MDA continued its strong collaborations with government, community and corporate partners to lead social change and build opportunities for new Queenslanders.**

## Strategic Partnerships

Collaborating for social change

### Suncorp

This year, MDA was proud to become Suncorp's community partner, cementing a relationship with one of Queensland's largest companies and a leading financial institution. The two-year partnership will see us working to improve the financial literacy and independence of newly arrived migrants and refugees. Together we will deliver financial literacy training, employment pathways, job readiness training and career mentoring opportunities to our clients in Brisbane and Toowoomba. It will also see MDA providing cultural capability training, cultural immersion and volunteering roles for Suncorp staff, supporting their organisation's commitment to inclusion and diversity. We are delighted that Suncorp will also continue as a major partner in the LUMINOUS Lantern Parade and MOSAIC Multicultural Festival.

### Big business seeking diverse employees to drive success

Our collaboration with Suncorp has resulted in a pilot recruitment project. As part of their commitment to diversity, Suncorp will employ young migrants who have demonstrated the requisite skills and enthusiasm. So far, 11 people have gained employment with Suncorp, providing them with their first step into economic participation as well as greater independence for them and their families.

Suncorp is finding value in spending time with MDA staff and clients to better understand the issues faced by refugees. According to Sara Parrott, Executive Manager of Corporate Responsibility, "the more we understand and connect with them, the more we can be involved, add real value and build supportive relationships. Suncorp people want to get involved, make a difference and create a better community

[Watch Ata's story of gaining employment at Suncorp.](#)

[Watch Anna Low from Suncorp talk about the importance of diversity to successful business.](#)

Suncorp staff hear more about the diverse experiences of refugees and migrants (left) and help to create a welcoming Queensland, walking in the LUMINOUS Lantern parade (right).



## Creating opportunities through culture and sport

Sport and the arts can play a critical role in influencing positive social change, creating welcome and building a sense of belonging for diverse communities. This year MDA continued its partnership with the Brisbane Lions, AFL Queensland and La Boite Theatre Company to create opportunities for new arrivals and change the narrative about refugees in the wider community.



### Changing the conversation through immersive theatre

The Village is an immersive theatre production, which takes audiences through the extraordinary journeys of six refugees and asylum seekers. The production continues to receive rave reviews and positive feedback from audiences about the impact it has on their thinking. Of 156 survey respondents who attended The Village, 89% said that it had taught them something new about asylum seekers or refugees. One audience member said it was an "incredible experience which cuts through all the media, prejudice and misrepresentation to deliver a deeply human set of stories that are relevant to our understanding as a nation."

In 2017-18, The Village expanded with a school-based pilot program, led by Yeronga State High School. It allows young refugees to share their settlement journeys within the school setting. The Village also reached a whole new audience when it was featured at Festival 18 as part of the Gold Coast Commonwealth Games and at MDA's Regions of Welcome Conference in Toowoomba.



### The Village



500

people saw The Village at Festival 18 & at the Toowoomba Regions of Welcome Conference.

3200

students

FROM

113

high schools have seen The Village

ACROSS

2017/18

seasons



## Welcoming new citizens with the Brisbane Lions and AFL Queensland

MDA partnered with the Brisbane Lions, AFL Queensland, the Anti-Discrimination Commission of Queensland and Multicultural Affairs Queensland to host a citizenship ceremony at an AFL game to welcome our newest Australians. Fifty refugees and migrants received their Australian citizenship at the ceremony. The new Australians were joined by over 100 family members and friends who stayed on to watch the Brisbane Lions play the Adelaide Crows. The ceremony was a great opportunity to introduce migrants to Australian Rules Football and foster inclusion and participation.

## Employing new Australians through Auskick

Last year, MDA and AFL Queensland continued to provide employment opportunities to refugees and international students through the Auskick program. Over 25 young people have been employed by the program, which is expanding across Queensland. Participants are excited to learn and earn by teaching young children how to play team sport, while improving their English language skills.

[Watch the Auskick recruitment video.](#)

[Watch how the AUSKICK program lives the values of the Multicultural Queensland Charter](#)

## Social businesses at Springfield's sport facility

MDA is working with the Brisbane Lions as they undertake a major project to develop a new stadium and community sports facility at Springfield. The project will see financial support from the Brisbane Lions, AFL Queensland, Ipswich City Council and Springfield City Group to develop a state-of-the-art sports and community facility. MDA is excited to be part of this major project. We will explore new social and business opportunities for Springfield's diverse community.





**ALL is a unique social enterprise that helps leaders navigate complex issues and clearly demonstrate the social benefit of an enterprise**



## Alliance for Leadership Learning

MDA has always believed that good leadership is crucial to success and we have worked to lead by example. Today's leaders face challenges that are global, fluid and multidimensional. Issues, including change, must be managed within an increasingly complex environment. To meet these challenges, in 2018 we were delighted to be a founding member of the Alliance for Leadership Learning (ALL) with lead partner and founder Archersfield Consulting and Management. ALL is a unique social enterprise that helps leaders navigate complex issues and clearly demonstrate the social benefit of an enterprise. ALL is a cross-sectoral community that brings together leadership practitioners across the globe, supporting place-based innovation in local communities. Leaders share and learn from each other, and pass on their knowledge to our clients.

ALL will continue to deliver the Executive Challenge Academy leadership program and services for government, non-profit and private organisations. Built on principles of cross-sectoral collaboration, inclusion and innovation, our services include executive coaching, masterclasses, international 'live' case studies and regional transformation academies. Our purpose is to develop, support and connect leaders in whatever field they contribute their skills and knowledge so we can navigate successfully through complex and changing times and build innovative and adaptive communities and organisations for the future.

## Queensland Community Alliance

MDA is a founding member of Queensland Community Alliance (QCA), a network of faith groups, charities, unions, community organisations and ethnic associations working together for the common good. Through the year, QCA convened local 'listening groups' and heard the views and ideas of more than 1500 community members on topics that affect their lives. Equipped with that information, the QCA has achieved some key outcomes in the areas of disability and aged care services, health, and employment and training. Some outcomes are strategic, such as securing continued funding for disability advocates. Others are local, such as a new car park for Prince Charles Hospital.







# Keeping Fit for the Future

Nurturing an organisation  
that is future-fit, investing  
in the right skills and  
technologies to achieve  
our vision

6.



## Our people

Our employees have experienced great change and consolidation over the last year as we worked to ensure our human resources fit current and future needs. Following extensive staff and union consultation, a new enterprise bargaining agreement was delivered. The focus of the agreement was ensuring employees have a strong work-life balance, through initiatives such as mental health days, paid domestic violence leave, and flexible working and annual leave arrangements.

In October 2017, we implemented the MDA Workforce Strategy that led to the reduction in our employee numbers. This was a difficult time for all of us at MDA. However, we are proud of our commitment to providing fair redundancy packages to help valued members of our team transition to their next role and career opportunity. We continue to maintain a robust alumni group because employees of MDA always remain part of the MDA community

### Building a culture of high performance

In 2017-18 we continued to embed the 'MDA Way' across the organisation in all our work, and through our recruitment, induction and staff appraisal processes.

We use fun strategies to talk with each other about culture and accountability, such as making team iMovies that talk about how we demonstrate the MDA Way in our daily work. These are screened at biannual All Staff Days.



322

staff worked at MDA as at June 2018

129

permanent employees

193

fixed term or casual employees

80%

staff retention rate

75

different languages spoken by our staff

52

different cultural identities

75%

female staff

25%

male staff

**The MDA team is dedicated to building A BETTER FUTURE FOR ALL – creating welcoming communities and opportunities for everyone.**

## What defines how we work?

### We show up

- ✓ We show up for our client and our communities
- ✓ We show up for each other
- ✓ We are authentic in our roles

### We demonstrate loyalty

- ✓ We are faithful to our clients
- ✓ We focus on their aspirations and passions
- ✓ We develop their abilities to prosper and thrive

### We are generous of spirit

- ✓ We focus on the work that's needed, not the funding that's available
- ✓ We utilise resources wherever we can find them
- ✓ Our energy, commitment, ideas and partners are as critical as money

### We are fearless

- ✓ We act with conviction, compassion and curiosity
- ✓ We take smart risks and tough decisions without agonising
- ✓ We question actions that are inconsistent with our values

### We strive for impact

- ✓ We focus on making a difference
- ✓ We prioritise action over analysis
- ✓ We respond to challenges with creative solutions

### We are ethical

- ✓ We are honest in our actions and words
- ✓ We do what is right even if it's not in our personal or commercial interests
- ✓ We spend money as if it was our own and treat others as we would want to be treated



# Our Executive



## Kerrin Benson

### CEO

Now in her 14th year as CEO, Kerrin has overseen significant growth at MDA. Kerrin has extensive advisory experience at all three levels of government, including the Brisbane City Council's Inclusive Brisbane Board, Multicultural Queensland Advisory Council, and at the Federal level. She has a Bachelor of Social Work. Kerrin is inspired by the resilience of refugees and passionate about making a difference to their lives. She fosters a deep understanding of the hopes and dreams of clients, as the basis for MDA's work. Kerrin's management philosophy is to focus on making an impact, while inspiring a culture grounded in ethics and values. She believes that anything can be delivered with a good idea, hard work and goodwill.



## Jamila Padhee

### Deputy CEO

Jamila is responsible for leading MDA's direct services to clients and their communities. She is a qualified social worker and has worked at MDA since 2003. Jamila believes that the most important asset in any community is its people. She is committed to the vision of a prosperous, inclusive and equitable community where everybody has the opportunity to thrive.



## Mitra Khakbaz

### Executive Manager

Mitra manages MDA's regional development, economic participation, employment and settlement programs. She has worked in the multicultural sector for more than 20 years, and sits on the Board of Directors of the National Association of Australian Translators and Interpreters and Buddies Refugee Support Group. Mitra has masters degrees in social administration, community and social development and applied linguistics. She believes that living in Australia provides an opportunity to engage, learn from, and contribute to diverse communities. Her vision is creating a safer, better world for everyone.



## Zane Ali

### CFO & Executive Manager

Zane oversaw MDA's corporate services including finance, human resources and information technology in 2017-18. He is a qualified CPA who worked with MDA from 2015 to 2018. Zane prides himself on providing a voice for social cohesion, inclusiveness and equality. As the son of a migrant from Fijian-Indian background, growing up in the cultural melting pot of Inala and married to an El Salvadorian refugee, Zane has seen first-hand the value cultural diversity brings in enriching community fabric.



## Vanessa Fabre

### Executive Manager

Vanessa oversees corporate communication, major events, strategic partnerships and new business opportunities for MDA. She has over 20 years' experience in community and government sectors, joining MDA in 2015. She holds a Master of Health Science, Bachelor of Applied Science (Environmental Health) and Grad Dip in Health Promotion. Vanessa's vision is a community that collaborates to make Queensland a welcoming and inclusive place to live, work and play.



## Christina Skoien

### Company Secretary

Christina oversees MDA's corporate governance and manages compliance, quality and risk management. She joined MDA in 2015 with extensive state government experience in the areas of women's policy, seniors programs and homelessness. Christina holds a Certificate in Not-for-Profit Governance from the Governance Institute of Australia. She is a passionate advocate for gender equality, particularly for refugee and migrant women and girls.



# Our Board

## Peter Forday

### Chair

Peter joined MDA's Board in 2011 and has been Chair since 2016. He holds extensive ambassadorial and advisory roles within the community including Adjunct Research Fellow with Griffith University and Chair of the Police Ethnic Advisory Group. He also owns and operates a management consultancy specialising in organisational change, stakeholder engagement and leadership. Peter enjoys moments when leadership, change and community intersect. He is motivated by the need for his children and grandchildren to live in a great world.

## Pele Ramdhani

### Deputy Chair

Pele has been an MDA board member since 2016 and was appointed Deputy Chair in 2017. He is Head of Sales and Community Engagement at Goodlife Australia and serves as a multicultural community ambassador for the Gold Coast Suns. He is also a member of the AFL Queensland Advisory Board and a White Ribbon Ambassador. Pele has a passion for leadership, people, community and Queensland. His personal journey as a migrant inspires him to be part of the MDA community that is transforming and changing lives.

## Sally Isles

### Director

Sally has been an MDA board director for over ten years, and was Chair from 2013 to 2016. She is Chair of the Nominations and Remuneration Committee. Sally has over 25 years' experience in strategic human resources leadership and management. Sally now leads the hospital, prison and police chaplaincy teams for the Anglican Church of Southern Queensland. Her vision is for her grandchildren to live in a community that is rich in diversity, that is inherently kind and welcoming to all, and where race, gender and creed have no place in determining an individual's worth.

## Anh Bui

### Director

Anh joined the board in 2015 with over 10 years' experience in the finance industry. She is currently a risk assurance professional with PwC. Anh is admitted as a solicitor in the Supreme Court of Queensland, an associate member of CPA Australia, and a fellow of the Governance Institute of Australia. She is motivated to 'give back' by her family's experience of the kind of support MDA provides to refugees. Her vision is a movement that harnesses people's energy and passion to change the conversation and make a real difference.



The MDA Board of Directors (L-R: Giri Sivaraman, Sally Isles, Pele Ramdhani, Peter Forday, Anh Bui, and Fahim Khondaker)

## Fahim Khondaker

### Director

Fahim joined the MDA board in 2015. He heads the data analytics and insights division at BDO Brisbane and holds positions with a range of other community organisations including the Islamic Council of Queensland, the Crescent Institute, and the Queensland Government's Social Cohesion Implementation Committee. The notion of creating a level playing field is important to Fahim. Everyone is talented and capable but we face different challenges. Fahim's vision is for everyone to work together and use our strengths to help others overcome their weaknesses and vice versa.

## Giri Sivaraman

### Director

Giri Sivaraman joined the board in 2018. He is a principal and head of Maurice Blackburn's Queensland employment law department. He regularly advises trade unions and NGOs on governance, has acted for refugees in pro-bono matters, and ran the firm's pro bono scheme for underpaid 7-Eleven workers. He believes that migration is the bedrock of a successful Australia, and sees his own family journey as that of successful migration and contribution to this great country. He joined the MDA board to help the organisation ensure the continued success of migration to Queensland.



## Acknowledgements

This annual report documents MDA's activities, initiatives and achievements during 2017–18 and shows how we met our objectives for the year.

Copies of this report can be found at [www.mdaltd.org.au](http://www.mdaltd.org.au) or by contacting MDA at [communications@mdaltd.org.au](mailto:communications@mdaltd.org.au)

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MDA would like to thank the clients, staff, volunteers and partners whose images illustrate our year in review and acknowledge the staff who contributed content to this report.







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