



the story of us MDA 1998 — 2018



20 years of
creating welcome
in Queensland



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“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 celebrated as a strength.”



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

Faithful to the vision of a multicultural Australia

With almost half of Australia's population born or having a parent born overseas, our nation is and always will be multicultural.

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 celebrated as a strength. They dreamed of a society where everybody had the opportunity to thrive and prosper. Upon that vision, MDA was founded.

Our goal in those early years was to raise public awareness of the issues faced by people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. We sought to welcome newly-arrived refugees and migrants, and support them to establish a new life in Australia.

We worked strategically, by advocating, creating policy and lobbying to ensure governments and organisations were equipped to respond to the needs of diverse Queenslanders. We worked developmentally, by building the capacity of local communities and the sector through education, training and community projects.

In 2018, we continue to do this work, with an expanded focus. We **deliver for the community** through services that enhance inclusion and belonging for new Queenslanders. We **change the conversation** through advocacy, training, and community and media engagement to ensure that diversity is welcomed and embraced. We **create opportunities** and **lead by example** through partnership, collaboration and enterprises that yield a social return. We are **accountable**, with a culture based on strong ethics and values and a commitment to quality in every aspect of our work. We **keep fit for the future**, responding to emerging issues while ensuring MDA's direction remains aligned with our vision and purpose.

As we look back at the evolution of MDA over 20 years, many things have changed, but we are proud that our vision, our values and our character have remained steadfast.



Our vision and purpose, then and now...

2000

Vision: To be a major advocate for multiculturalism at a local and national level, and to be a quality provider of relevant education and of immigrant and refugee assistance services throughout Queensland.

2008

Vision: To be a lead specialist multicultural agency for Queensland, working towards a society which values, promotes and celebrates cultural diversity.

Purpose: To work in partnership with refugees and migrants in Queensland to achieve their aspirations by delivering quality services through advocacy, client service delivery, community development and multicultural sector development.

2018

Vision: To create a better future for all.

Purpose: To foster a welcoming, inclusive, globally-connected and economically strong community.

Acknowledgements

We who come from many places acknowledge the traditional custodians of this land and pay our respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elders throughout all time. We walk together in solidarity in the shared pain of the past and shared hope for the future.

MDA would like to thank clients, partners, founders, directors and staff whose achievements, stories and images are recorded in this report.





MDA staff, 2017



Enterprising new Australians: Mountain Mowing Men

Originally from Bhutan, Shree and Bhakta lived in a Nepali refugee camp for more than 20 years before they got the opportunity to resettle in Queensland in the early 2010s. In Bhutan, they tilled their own fields for subsistence and profit but in Australia finding a job was difficult. They didn't have any local employment experience and were still learning English. So MDA and the Nundah Community Enterprise Cooperative Ltd partnered to give Shree and Bhakta practical training in small business skills and development. By 2015, they had registered their own gardening service business, Mountain Mowing Men. Their insistence on weeding by hand and not using pesticides or poisons is a big point of difference from others in the Brisbane property maintenance market, along with their reliability, eyes for detail, strong work ethic and big smiles. Mountain Mowing Men epitomizes what is possible when the skills and aspirations of new arrivals are mentored by organisations that collaborate to create opportunities.

Watch the Mountain Mowing Men story at:
<http://bit.ly/MountainMowing>

Building capacity for a better future...

Queensland's diverse communities offer enormous potential. Often, transformational change just needs some practical support to bring people together and start conversations.

MDA has been privileged to facilitate many such conversations over the last 20 years. We have worked with others to build the confidence and skills of communities, and support their aspirations. The result has been the establishment of many independent community organisations, such as:

- Amparo Advocacy Inc.
- Somali Women's Association Inc.
- Eritrean Australian Women's & Families Support Network Inc (story on page 12).
- Queensland African Communities Council Inc.

Supporting people to develop their innate abilities and form meaningful connections to the community remains our main focus.



1998

MDA is founded and incorporated in Queensland

Commenced a 3 year Multicultural Advocacy Project (funded by the Queensland Government)

2001

Coordinated an independent Multicultural Disability Advocacy Organisation (becoming AMPARO in 2003, incorporated in 2004)

2006

Became largest refugee and migrant service provider in Queensland

Established a volunteer service (60 active volunteers by year's end)



Co-developed CS Net (the sector's first client management software)



Launched our Reconciliation Strategy

Celebrated our 10th anniversary!

Started delivering Complex Case Support Services for clients with complex needs

Launched MDA's website

2008



2010

Moved to new head-quarters at the Brisbane Multicultural Centre (joined by long-time partners Qld Program of Assistance for Survivors of Torture and Trauma in 2011)



2012

Started working with asylum seekers awaiting visa processing while living in the community

Started supporting young, unaccompanied minors under the Refugee Youth Support Pilot

Expanded regional delivery with direct outreach services in Cairns, Toowoomba and Gatton, as well as Townsville through Townsville Multicultural Support Group

2014



Became a founding member of the Queensland Community Alliance to address key social issues affecting our community

Started supporting Unaccompanied Humanitarian Minors

MDA became MDA Ltd (Multicultural Development Australia), a company limited by guarantee



2016

Launched #Create Welcome campaign to inspire the public to create messages of welcome and belonging for refugees and people seeking asylum (gets 3.3 million social media hits)

Provided job-readiness support to the broader Rockhampton community through the ParentsNext program (expanded in 2018 to Townsville and Toowoomba)

Launched the Migrant Youth Vision Project with key community partners, linking young people to education, training, employment and sport

Launched the Brisbane Student Hub, Qld's first support centre for international students, with Study Qld, Study Brisbane and the State Library of Qld



2018

Delivered the first national Regions of Welcome Conference with Toowoomba Regional Council and the Catholic Diocese of Toowoomba Social Justice Commission, looking at regional settlement successes and opportunities

Became a community partner of Suncorp

Became a 'Community & Charity Champion' of Brisbane Roar FC

Celebrated our 20 year anniversary at the MOSAIC Multicultural Festival



Became a founding member of the social enterprise Alliance for Leadership Learning



Launched Migrant Service Agency

Started settlement services to independent migrants under the Community Settlement Scheme

Started settling newly arrived refugees under the Integrated Humanitarian Settlement Strategy

2002

Started employment and training services for refugees and migrants



Started delivering services to migrants and refugees under the Settlement Grants Program

Opened our new office in Stanley Street, Woolloongabba

Held the first Candlelight Walk through Southbank (with Believing Women for a Culture of Peace) drawing public attention to the experiences and contributions of refugees

2007



2009

Held inaugural World Refugee Day Festival in Greenslopes (becoming MOSAIC Multicultural Festival in 2017, in Roma Street Parkland)



2011

Started delivering services under the Humanitarian Settlement Scheme.

Started delivering Work & Welcome, a workplace giving program to fund job placement opportunities for refugees and migrants.



Opened offices in Toowoomba and Rockhampton as humanitarian entrants settle into regional Queensland

Helped Multicultural Affairs Queensland develop the Queensland Government's first Multicultural Policy - A multicultural future for us all.

Opened second Brisbane office in Windsor.

2013



Moved Brisbane north services to our new Nundah office

Supported 200 Hazara Afghan women and children to make Toowoomba their home through the Women at Risk visa program

Created Welcome Hubs with community organisations across the south-east, offering spaces and activities to encourage cultural sharing and connection

Received certification by the International Organisation for Standardisation, recognising our commitment to quality



Established Connect Settlement Services with community organisations to assist the government of Nauru with refugee resettlement

Worked with the PNG Government to build the capacity of their refugee settlement program

2015

2017

Became a community partner of Brisbane Lions/AFL Queensland

Candlelight Walk for Refugees (now LUMINOUS Lantern Parade) celebrates 10th anniversary with more than 15,000 welcoming newly-arrived Queenslanders

Received certification under Queensland Government's Human Services Quality Framework



Launched social enterprise real estate agency Welcome Residential

Awarded 5 year contract for the Humanitarian Settlement Program in Queensland

Defined our organisational culture 'The MDA Way' - loyal, fearless, ethical, generous and we strive for impact



20 YEARS OF MDA





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 well-being.



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.



MDA Community Leader's Gathering, 2018



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 requires the Australian community to be welcoming and inclusive, providing opportunities for participation and upholding equity for new arrivals.



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

- Building – enabling communities to come together and transcend difference.
- Bridging – helping communities to integrate into the Australian community.
- Organising – supporting communities with organisational structures and legal and governance mechanisms.
- Education – ensuring community members are properly informed on Australian laws and cultural norms.
- Economic development – 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.





Thriving women, thriving world: Saba Abraham and the Eritrean Australian Women's & Families Support Network Inc

Saba arrived in Australia in the early 1990s after fleeing political persecution in Eritrea and Sudan. She held a lifelong desire to help build the social and economic capacity of women, believing that if you address the issues faced by women you can transform society. In 2003, realising that accessing employment is a big issue for new arrivals, she organised a regular meeting of 32 women to talk about how to gain skills and find work. She quickly identified the group's cooking skills as an economic opportunity waiting to be seized. With MDA's support and the profits of cooking at some festivals, they started their own catering service.

Saba and her gathering of women kept thinking of their big vision of creating employment opportunities for women. In 2006, they formed the Eritrean Australian Women's and Family Support Network Inc to run the catering business and give women practical job training and work experience. Two years later, they opened Mu'ooz restaurant, a social enterprise enabling women to access formal hospitality training while gaining practical work experience at the restaurant.

Since 2008, more than 170 women have participated and 98% have jobs. Mu'ooz continues to offer isolated women a sense of purpose and belonging as they develop practical skills and experience for working life in Australia.

Watch Kagi's story about the impact of Saba's mentorship at: <http://bit.ly/KagiStory>

The ethics of success

From the beginning, MDA's leadership team has deliberately sought to embed ethics and quality into our services and operations. This approach is built on our respect for human rights and social justice principles of fairness, equity, dignity and opportunity for all people.

Our unwavering commitment to ethical practice and decision-making is reflected in our systems and processes:

- best practice policies and procedures
- strong corporate governance framework
- ISO:9001 and Human Service Quality Framework certifications
- rigorous risk management approach
- comprehensive continuous improvement strategies
- strong alignment of new enterprises with our vision and purpose.

We can directly attribute much of our success to our reputation for ethics and quality.

At a glance then and now...

Total refugee and asylum seeker clients...



327*
In 2001/02

4106
In 2017/18

*total referrals under IHSS

Staff...



2
We started with 2 staff in 1998/1999...

322
In 2018 we had 322 staff

Volunteers...



60
We launched a volunteer program in 2005/06 with 60 volunteers

200
In 2018 we had 200 active volunteers

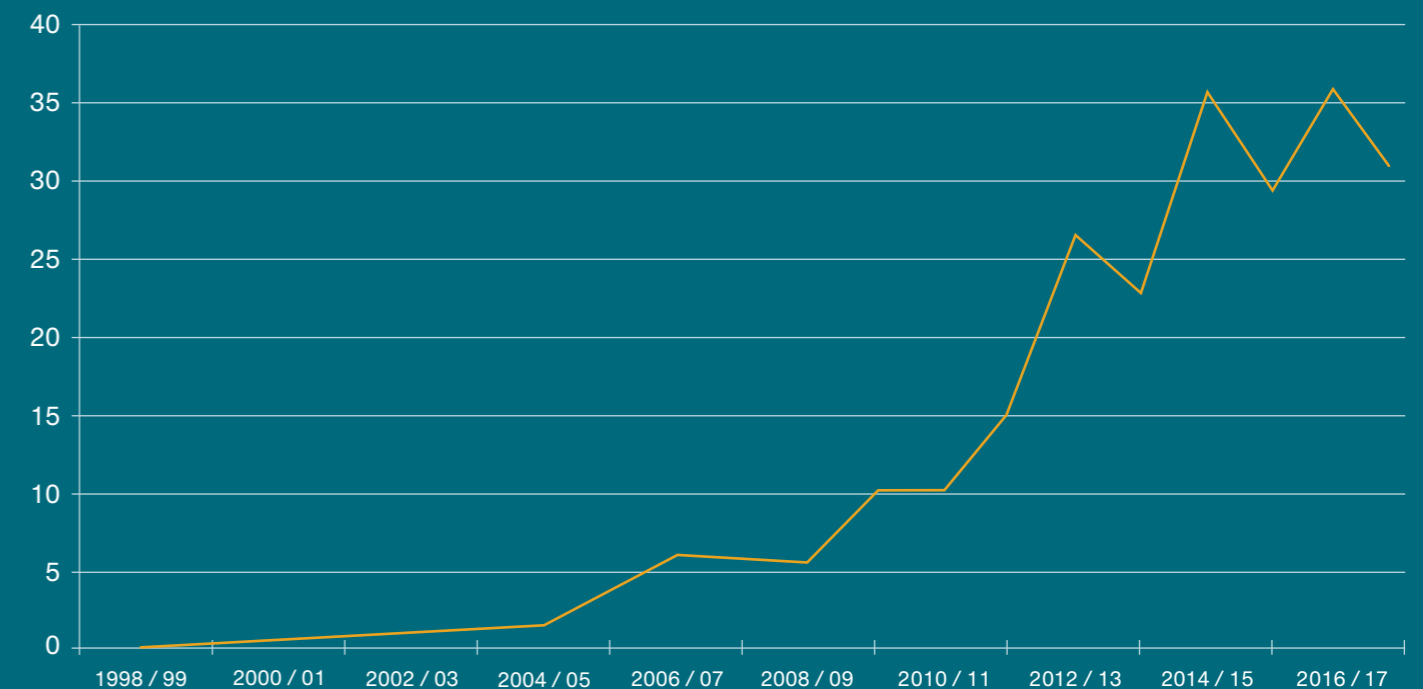


Where our new Queenslanders have come from...

2002/03	2017/18
1. Sudan	1. Syria
2. Iraq	2. Iraq
3. Afghanistan	3. Iran
4. Serbia	4. Afghanistan
5. Bosnia	5. Somalia
6. Ethiopia	6. Sri Lanka
7. Liberia	7. Sudan
8. Pakistan	8. Eritrea
9. Sierra Leone	9. D. R. Congo
10. Eritrea	10. Myanmar

Annual Revenue 1998 – 2018 (\$M)

In 1998/1999 we received approximately \$200,000 in funding. By 2018, our annual revenue was \$31.7 million.



Source: all 'at a glance' statistics are sourced from MDA annual reports.

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#createwelcome



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