



# 2022-23 Annual Report



**25** years creating welcome  
and belonging



## Acknowledgement of Country

Multicultural 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 people and understand our individual and collective responsibility towards the achievement of justice, equality, and reconciliation.

Multicultural Australia and the multicultural communities we work closely with realise that understanding the past helps us shape the future. We commit to learning from the knowledge, traditions, stories, spirituality, worldviews, and experiences of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

We support the Uluru Statement from the Heart and stand in solidarity with our First Nations communities to achieve legal and structural reform.

We recognise the power of the three themes of the Uluru Statement from the Heart: voice, treaty, and truth – and pledge our support of self-determination, sovereignty, and reform for Australia's First Nations 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 people, as we learn to live on their land.

Multicultural Australia respects and values Australia's First Nations peoples' enormous resilience, courage, determination, and often unrecognised contributions to the country's social and economic development.

We walk together in solidarity, in the shared pain of the past and shared hope for the future.



# Contents

Our story	4	Toowoomba	41
Our vision	5	Connecting through arts	43
Our purpose	5	Cultural support services	44
Our strategic objectives	5	<b>Change the conversation</b>	45
Our values	5	Employment	47
Our key achievements	6	Work & Welcome	48
Message from our Chair	7	CareerConnectors	50
Message from our CEO	8	Diverse Queensland Workforce	51
Message from our Patron	9	Asylum Seeker and Refugee Assistance Employment Program	53
<b>Governance report</b>	<b>10</b>	Skilling Queenslanders for Work	54
Our Board	11	Future Leaders Advocacy Group	55
Our Executive Leadership Team	13	Events	56
<b>Our strategic pillars</b>	<b>15</b>	Volunteering	59
<b>Create belonging</b>	<b>16</b>	Connecting Through Sport	61
Humanitarian Settlement Program	18	<b>Fit for the future</b>	62
Unaccompanied Humanitarian Minors	21	Cultural training	64
Settlement Engagement and Transition Support	23	Culturability Accreditation	64
Status Resolution Support Services	26	Results based accountability	65
Community Support Program	27	Client Voice Reference Group	66
Community Development	28	Research and advocacy	67
Care Finder	30	Diversity and inclusion	68
ParentsNext	31	Partnerships and creative connections	70
Migrant Youth Vision Project	33	Digital transformation	72
Welcome Café	35	Leadership at all levels	73
International student support	36	<b>Financial reports</b>	75
Redbank Plains Community Centre	37		
Springfield community and engagement space	38		
Rockhampton	39		

# Our story

Multicultural Australia emerged from a community-based social movement to advance multiculturalism and build communities where everyone belongs.

Since 1998, we have welcomed tens of thousands of individuals from refugee, asylum seeker, international student, and migrant backgrounds - with the goal of creating a more equitable and prosperous society.

Today, we are a multicultural for-purpose organisation and settlement provider with a strong and connected physical presence across metropolitan and regional Queensland.

Our clients and community are at the heart of everything we do, and we are passionate about providing care and services in person-centred and compassionate ways.

We are also playing our part in influencing the multicultural landscape across Australia.

Our journey over the past 25 years has been driven by our unwavering commitment to creating welcome, promoting inclusion, and fostering belonging for all.

We achieve this through client service delivery, community development, advocacy, building cultural capability and community events, working with people, community, business, and government.

We are proud of the difference we make and we are committed to delivering real impact.





# Our vision

To create welcome, inclusion and belonging.

# Our purpose

We create spaces for new and established Australians to feel included and empowered to thrive in the community. We passionately promote positive conversations about inclusion and belonging for everyone.

# Our strategic objectives

**We will position Multicultural Australia to:**

- Grow and flourish in a changing landscape
- Lead the way and connect with others to build a welcoming, inclusive and connected community
- Remain true to our vision and values

# Our values

We authentically celebrate and embrace diversity, recognising our differences as strengths and with a passionate commitment to the wellbeing of our people and community.

## **Welcome**

We nurture and promote belonging, trust, and hope, to unite all communities to create a welcoming, safe, and inclusive place for everyone.

## **Connect**

We create a flourishing community that is connected, empowered and culturally rich.

## **Commit**

We strive to create impact and work for justice, driven by our compassion and commitment to our people, community, and future generations.

## **Empower**

We empower our people, our clients, and our community to amplify their voice through intentional and collaborative actions.

## **Respect**

We build on our deep respect for our people and cultures of our community and advocate for dignity, diversity and equality.



# Our key achievements



**1,700+**

clients settled in Queensland



**7,500+**

clients supported through our programs



**300+**

clients supported into employment



**100%**

of clients secured short and long-term housing



**2,100+**

participants in our ParentsNext program



**30,000+**

attended our events



# Message from our Chair

As we celebrate our twenty-fifth year of service, and on behalf of Multicultural Australia's Board of Directors, I am delighted to present our 2022-2023 Annual Report.

Every year, we witness the profound influence of global political and environmental forces that shape and transform our world. It is in this ever-changing landscape that we reflect on our response to these shifts, guided by our unwavering commitment to creating welcome, promoting inclusion, and fostering belonging for all.

Multicultural Australia's cause is to create welcome, inclusion and belonging. Our services reach beyond our core focus of settlement support, and include broader wrap-around client services and community development, as well as advocacy, cultural capability training and accreditation, and hosting events that bring our communities together. We do this in partnership with community and business leaders, and with the Australian and Queensland governments.

Over the past year, we have introduced aged care support for people from culturally diverse communities with the launch of Care Finder and, with continued funding from the State and Federal Governments, we have been able to build on the important work we do in the employment sector with Skilling Queenslanders for Work, and the Diverse Queensland Workforce programs. Our place-based delivery has also expanded, with new centres in Springfield and Townsville, and a new partnership in the Gold Coast region.

In 2022-23, the Board welcomed three new directors—Dr Diaswasti Mardiasmo, Dr Mellissa Naidoo and Mr Ben Bolt—whose expertise has already significantly contributed to advancing Multicultural Australia's vision and mission. After the end of the reporting period, on 6 September 2023, we farewelled Deputy Board Chair, Jade Demnar, with great appreciation for her five years of extensive contribution, commitment and service.

We also acknowledge the tremendous support we receive from our partners, stakeholders and the wider Queensland community. Without this support, we would not be able to achieve what we do in the service of others.



The Board extends its gratitude to Multicultural Australia's Chief Executive, Christine Castley, and the Executive Leadership Team, for their strong leadership during this challenging period. Their unwavering commitment and expertise has been instrumental in championing our focus on changing the conversation.

Finally, I want to take this opportunity to extend the Board's heartfelt appreciation to the passionate and multi-talented Multicultural Australia team — your dedication and hard work is the foundation of this great organisation's ongoing success.

Thank you for being a part of Multicultural Australia's journey. We look forward to the opportunity to create welcome, promote inclusion and foster belonging for all Australians in the years to come.

**Giri Sivaraman**  
Board Chair  
Multicultural Australia

# Message from our CEO

2023 marks 25 years of Multicultural Australia's work to create welcome, inclusion and belonging in Queensland. In that time, we have had the privilege of working with thousands of people from a wide range of cultural, ethnic, national and faith backgrounds, and who have unique life experiences and histories that contribute the rich and diverse fabric of the Australian community.

We do this through the settlement work we do for refugees, asylum-seekers and migrants, the employment programs we provide across Queensland and the work we do across community to provide connections, build cultural capability and create a vibrant and successful multicultural community.

We are both proud of and humbled by our role in providing welcome, safety and belonging for new and established Queenslanders.

This year, we have released our 2023-2025 Strategic Plan, affirming our commitment to welcome, inclusion and belonging, guided by our strategic pillars to create belonging, change the conversation and keep fit for the future.

We remain resolute in our commitment to human rights and on continuing to be an organisation that is driven by heart, where compassion, empathy and a genuine concern for people, particularly the most vulnerable in our community, are always at the core of our values and actions.

Throughout the 2022-2023 financial year, Multicultural Australia, under the guidance of our Board and Executive Leadership Team, has emphasised continuous improvement, striving to be the best that we can possibly be, and sustainability to ensure that our services remain responsive to the needs of the people and the communities we exist to serve.

Our focus continues to be on creating belonging for everyone regardless of who they are or where they come from and on changing the conversation to deliberately and actively promote a better and more inclusive future for all.

In this Annual Report, we offer a glimpse into the extensive body of work that underpins our strategic goals for a brighter future.

Multicultural Australia's purpose is to create spaces for new and established Australians to feel included and empowered to thrive in community.



This purpose drives the work of our committed and passionate Multicultural Australia team and is realised through the deep engagement and highly valued relationships we have with our partners, funders, volunteers, subcontractors, sponsors and supporters.

We look forward to growing and strengthening our connection with community, government, and corporate partners and stakeholders to deliver collective impact and seize every possible opportunity to tangibly transform the lives of individuals and communities.

I extend deep thanks on behalf of myself and the Multicultural Australia Executive Leadership Team to the incredible people who work at Multicultural Australia. Your dedication, resilience, adaptability and perseverance has not gone unnoticed. Your unwavering commitment and passion to make a difference is core to everything that Multicultural Australia has achieved in pursuing our mission and purpose and, for this, we are profoundly thankful. We also sincerely thank our Board for their guidance and extensive expertise; their leadership has been invaluable.

Finally and importantly, I reiterate Multicultural Australia's commitment to our clients as the guiding force behind every decision and action we take. We will continue to work to create pathways to belonging, to amplify the voices of our clients and communities and to build an enriched community where everyone feels welcome, valued and safe.

**Christine Castley**  
Chief Executive Officer  
Multicultural Australia



# Message from our Patron

As Governor and as Patron of Multicultural Australia, I am pleased to provide this message in support of an organisation that contributes so much to Queensland life.

Multicultural Australia plays a vital role in our State's economic and cultural development, not least by helping to settle and support thousands of refugees, migrants, asylum seekers and international students each year.

In the past year alone, Multicultural Australia has provided services and support to more than 7,500 Queenslanders from migrant and refugee backgrounds and overseen the process of welcoming and resettling more than 1,700 refugees.

Through advocacy, education and training, and concrete measures such as accommodation, and income and language support, it has ensured the smooth transition of these new Queenslanders into our communities, schools and workplaces.

From humble beginnings in a Brisbane backyard, Multicultural Australia has grown into a thriving and well-connected organisation that this year marked 25 years of operation with its Changing the Conversation series, delivered in partnership with the Queensland Performing Arts Centre.

Another milestone was the opening of the Brighton Homes Arena community space in Springfield, enabling residents from refugee and migrant backgrounds to access services and support to help them feel more connected and cared for.

Meanwhile, the LUMINOUS Lantern Parade and MOSAIC Festival, two spectacular public events designed to help welcome and celebrate our newest citizens and community members, have become highlights of our cultural calendar.



Queensland's rich cultural diversity owes much to the efforts of Multicultural Australia and its dedicated staff, supporters and volunteers.

I wish to thank you for your contributions and commend you on your heartfelt endeavours to create a community where everyone feels welcome, valued and respected regardless of where they came from, when or how.

**Her Excellency the Honourable Dr Jeanette Young AC PSM**  
Governor of Queensland



# Governance report

Multicultural Australia is committed to strong and transparent corporate governance and contemporary risk management practices that contribute to organisational sustainability and the delivery of meaningful client outcomes, and inspire stakeholder confidence in our work.

Our governance framework meets the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission (ACNC), Governance Standards, and complies with the Corporations Act and the Multicultural Australia Ltd Constitution. The governance framework is supported by a comprehensive suite of policies and procedures that are reviewed regularly to maintain good practice, and meet expectations and regulatory requirements. This framework establishes accountability, facilitates effective decision-making, and manages our contractual, legal and regulatory compliance.

Multicultural Australia's Board of Directors has an established Charter that sets-out the purpose, scope, key duties and membership in line with its Constitution. The Board meets 10 times a year, including quarterly strategic sessions with the Executive Leadership Team to discuss emerging issues and trends, and to review Multicultural Australia's performance against its approved strategies. In the year under review, the Board approved the organisation's revised Strategic Plan for 2023-2025, and completed a review of its performance and composition to ensure an appropriate mix of capability and diversity to effectively discharge its duties. The Board has two advisory sub-committees—the Audit and Risk Committee, and the People and Culture Committee.

The Board and the Executive Leadership Team is supported by Multicultural Australia's Governance, Quality and Risk team of governance, quality, risk, privacy and project management professionals, who collaborate across the organisation to enhance the understanding of good governance and its contribution to better client outcomes.

In 2022-23, Multicultural Australia achieved International Organisation for Standardisation accreditation under ISO 27001 Information Security Management Systems, to better manage the ever-evolving global cyber

threats environment, and maintain the confidentiality, integrity and accessibility of information held. Our data protection framework aligns with privacy legislation and principles, is regularly reviewed for effectiveness, and is supported by ongoing staff training.

Multicultural Australia's risk management processes are reviewed regularly, and aligned with best practice and ISO 31000:2018 Risk Management Guidelines. Full organisational risk reviews are conducted at least quarterly, with executive and senior level risk owners ensuring existing and emerging risks are identified, treated, monitored and tested for effectiveness.

Multicultural Australia has a long-held and strongly-embedded quality system, having held ISO 9001 certification since 2014, and Human Services Quality Framework (HSQF) accreditation for its Unaccompanied Humanitarian Minors program since 2018.

With its registered charity status, Multicultural Australia is a Deductible Gift Recipient (DGR), endorsed by the Australian Taxation Office.

Multicultural Australia engages an independent, external whistle-blower service to support transparency and ethical behaviour, and provide strict whistle-blower protections.



# Our Board



**Giri Sivaraman**  
Chair

Giri Sivaraman joined the Board in April 2018 and has held the role of Chair since 1 July 2021. He previously held the role Deputy Chair from November 2019, and is also a member of the People and Culture Committee.

Mr Sivaraman is a Principal at Maurice Blackburn Lawyers and holds a Bachelor of Laws (Honours) and a Bachelor of Arts (Psychology) from Macquarie University. He is also a member of the Queensland Multicultural Advisory Council.



**Jade Demnar**  
Deputy Chair

Jade Demnar joined the Board in September 2018 and has held the role of Deputy Chair since 1 July 2021. She is also the Chair of the People and Culture Committee.

Ms Demnar is a member of the senior executive service in the Federal Government and previously spent many years as a management consultant in a global professional services firm. She also serves as non-executive Director of the Australian Cervical Cancer Foundation.

Ms Demnar resigned from the board in September 2023.



**Ed Box**  
Director

Ed Box joined the Board in August 2021 and has held the role of Audit and Risk Committee Chair since November 2021. Mr Box has more than 30 years' of experience in financial services and a proven track record in business transformation and building high-performing businesses.

He has held senior executive roles in the banking sector, most recently as the Bank of Queensland's General Manager of Retail Distribution.

Mr Box was a member of BoQ's Diversity and Inclusion Council and Chair of their Multicultural Council and, at CBA, he oversaw Migrant Financial Services and established their Multicultural Council.



**Dr Jessica Gallagher**  
Director

Dr Jessica Gallagher joined the Board in August 2021 and is a member of the People and Culture Committee. She is the Deputy Vice-Chancellor of External Engagement at The University of Adelaide, and was previously the Pro-Vice-Chancellor of Global Engagement and Entrepreneurship at The University of Queensland.

She brings extensive experience in strategy development, delivery of innovative engagement programs, and building highly effective global partnerships across sectors.

Dr Gallagher is also a Director on the Board of the Kokoda Track Foundation, an organisation working to improve the lives and futures of Papua New Guineans.

# Our Board



**Peter Forday**  
Director

Peter Forday joined the Board in July 2011 and is a member of the Audit and Risk Committee.

He owns and operates a management consultancy specialising in leadership coaching and strategic group facilitation, and holds senior advisory roles with a number of not-for-profit organisations.

Mr Forday is the Chair and a non-executive Director of Mental Health Lived Experience Queensland Ltd, and a non-executive Director of Mercy Community Services South East Queensland Ltd, Mercy Health and Aged Care Central Queensland Ltd and Mercy Community Services North Queensland Ltd.



**Dr Mellissa Naidoo**  
Director

Dr Mellissa Naidoo joined the Board in August 2022, and is a member of the Audit and Risk Committee.

She brings extensive experience in healthcare and governance, having held several senior executive roles across the health and insurance industries, including Director of Medical Services with Ramsay Healthcare and UnitingCare Health and Chief Medical Officer for NIB.

Dr Naidoo is passionate about improving health outcomes in disadvantaged communities and holds a diverse non-executive portfolio spanning the arts, health and education sectors as social determinants of health and wellbeing. She is also a director with Metro Arts and on the UQ Senate.



**Ben Bolt**  
Director

Ben Bolt joined the Board in February 2023, after completing the Observership Program with the Board.

A proud Bundjalung man, Mr Bolt is committed to amplifying diverse voices to promote social cohesion and equity.

Mr Bolt has spent more than a decade in leadership and management roles within values-led organisations that provide important social services at scale, and is currently the acting Head of Human Resources with Relationships Australia.



**Dr Diaswati Mardiasmo**  
Director

Dr Asti Mardiasmo joined the Board in August 2022 and is a member of the Audit and Risk Committee.

She is the Chief Economist of PRD Real Estate, where she leads a nation-wide research team, and is an industry co-lecturer and research supervisor for QUT's Bachelor of Property Economics.

Dr Mardiasmo is a member of the Brisbane 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games Legacy Committee, the Residential Committee 2021-2022 for the Property Council of Australia, the Reserve Bank of Australia Liaison Program, and she sits on the Board of Directors for UPLIFT Affordable



# Our Executive Leadership Team



**Christine Castley**  
Chief Executive Officer

Christine was appointed Chief Executive Officer of Multicultural Australia in October 2020.

An experienced senior executive leader, Christine has substantial expertise in organisational transformation and change management, strategic governance, project management, policy, community engagement, operations, and service delivery.

She was previously Deputy Director-General in the Department of the Premier and Cabinet and the Department of Housing and Public Works.

Christine is a passionate advocate for equal access to justice and services for everyone regardless of their gender, beliefs, or circumstances, and committed to doing everything possible to help the most disadvantaged people in our community, including refugees, migrants and asylum seekers, to live in safety and to go about their lives free from danger or harm.



**Jo Nelson**  
Deputy CEO  
Company Secretary  
Executive Manager,  
Governance

Jo was appointed interim Deputy Chief Executive Officer in April 2023.

Working closely with Multicultural Australia's Board, Jo leads the organisation's governance framework of policies, procedures and accountability measures to deliver MA's strategic and operational goals.

With a wealth of corporate experience in business strategy, corporate performance, communication and governance, Jo is a values-driven executive who is passionate about equity, diversity and inclusion, and client-centred service delivery.



**Christina Skoien**  
Executive Manager,  
Governance and Risk  
Company Secretary

Christina served as Multicultural Australia's Company Secretary and Executive Manager, Governance and Risk, from March 2014 to April 2023.

Her skills in corporate governance, strategic leadership, policy development, risk and compliance management, and quality control/internal audit, helped the organisation develop a strong governance foundation.

As a strong advocate for women's rights and marginalised communities, Christina has held several senior roles in government that align with her passions.

Christina resigned in April 2023.

# Our Executive Leadership Team



**Rose Dash**  
Chief Client Officer

Appointed Chief Client Officer in March 2021, Rose leads Multicultural Australia's settlement services including the Humanitarian Settlement Program, Settlement Engagement and Transition Support, Unaccompanied Humanitarian Minors, Care Finder, and Community Support Program teams.

With over ten years' experience in the sector, Rose has delivered positive settlement outcomes and client service delivery in torture and trauma services and community development, and has worked holistically and collaboratively with diverse communities, and complex, vulnerable, resilient individuals and families.

She is passionate about leading teams to create impact for new arrivals through empowerment and opportunity generation.



**Jason Olsson-Seeto**  
Chief Development Officer

Commencing in the role of Chief Development Officer in September 2021, Jason leads Multicultural Australia's Communities, Development and Growth team, including Employment, Youth, Volunteering, Community Development, Cultural Training, Culturability Workplace Accreditation, Grants, Fundraising, Marketing, Communications and Events.

With extensive experience in engagement, marketing, communications and events in a wide range of sectors over more than twenty years, Jason has led many teams to success with care and compassion.

He is an advocate for Queensland's multicultural communities and is deeply committed to building a fair and inclusive future for all.



**Heath Goldfinch**  
Chief Operations Officer

Acting as Chief Operations Officer from October 2022 and officially appointed in the role in April 2023, Heath leads Multicultural Australia's Business Support teams, including Finance, Payroll, Human Resources, Information Technology and Facilities.

An experienced finance business partner, Heath has wide ranging experience leading business functions in construction, engineering, telecommunications, and not-for-profit organisations.

He currently serves as the Treasurer of the Northwest Youth Accommodation Service. A devoted Buddhist, his worldview is underpinned by kindness, compassion and social justice for all.



# Our strategic pillars



## Create belonging

We will work to create pathways to belonging and build an enriched community where all feel welcome, valued and safe.

We will work in ways that ensure settlement success, generate opportunities and build a collaborative community.

## Change the conversation

We will seize opportunities to advance multiculturalism and create welcome and belonging.

We will seek to have impact and influence, amplified voice and strong and strategic partnerships to ensure that the refugee and migrant community are represented in our society in meaningful ways.

## Fit for the future

We will invest in our people and community so they have the right skills, knowledge and resources to achieve our vision.

We will increase our impact and footprint, with a focus on inspired leadership, capability building and fit-for-purpose resources.



# Create belonging

We will work to create pathways to belonging and build an enriched community where all feel welcome, valued and safe.

We will work in ways that ensure settlement success, generate opportunities and build a collaborative community.



## Settlement success

Deliver exceptional services shaped by client and community voices and grounded in holistic, culturally humble and evidence-based practice.

Work with our clients to create a safe environment where they feel connected to their community and empowered to realise their aspirations.

## Generate opportunities

Deliver targeted pathways to belonging that provide our clients a high degree of self-reliance and enable them to prosper and contribute to their community.

## Collaborative communities

Establish authentic and meaningful collaboration to build a welcoming and inclusive environment where new and established Australians feel they belong and are empowered to contribute, grow, and establish independence.



# Create belonging

Explore the programs of work aligning with our strategic pillar to create belonging.

Humanitarian Settlement Program	18
Unaccompanied Humanitarian Minors	21
Settlement Engagement and Transition Support	23
Status Resolution Support Services	26
Community Support Program	27
Community Development	28
Care Finder	30
ParentsNext	31
Migrant Youth Vision Project	33
Welcome Cafe'	35
International students	36
Redbank Plains Community Centre	37
Springfield community and engagement space	38
Rockhampton	39
Toowoomba	41
Connecting through arts	43
Cultural support services	44





# Humanitarian Settlement Program

As Queensland's leading settlement provider, we have had the privilege of settling clients in Brisbane, Logan and Toowoomba, and Cairns, the Gold Coast and Townsville in partnership with our sub-contractors.

Our settlement support work continues to focus on empowering refugees, fostering their integration, and addressing their diverse needs. We aim to provide quality essential services, create a sense of belonging and contribute to the enrichment of our community.

We have continued to collaborate with government agencies, community organisations and volunteers to enhance the impact of our settlement services. Their support has allowed us to broaden our reach and effectiveness.

Our team reflects the communities we serve, with more than 80% of our settlement team from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. This cultural knowledge and lived experience is invaluable and ensures we provide culturally intelligent and informed care and support.

In the 2022 - 2023 financial year, we have seen an increased number of clients referred to our program with multiple and complex needs, and our Specialised and Intensive Services has ensured immediate and intensive support where needed. Additionally, we worked closely with healthcare and disability providers to strengthen relationships and ensure appropriate care and support was provided to every client.

Our clients have experienced positive settlement outcomes and the broader community is benefitting from the diversity of lived experience, worldviews, and cultures that our clients add to our increasingly multicultural society.

Our clients who have successfully secured employment through our programs are contributing to the local economy and ensured a diversity of skills, knowledge, talents and new ways of thinking and doing things therefore enhancing the productivity and competitiveness of our communities.

Through our community engagement we have ensured integration and participation in the community life and have created opportunities for meaningful connections with locals. This has created sense of belonging and decreased social isolation among our communities.

"First, I am very happy that I am in the best country in the world. Second, I am very grateful for all the help that the Australian government and MA have given us."

"I'm extremely thankful and grateful to Multicultural Australia. especially my case manager who always willing to help me and care about me and my Mom. I always thankful to the Government of Australia who give us new life. I'm Lucky to be in Australia. Thank you so much."

"Everything is good and thank you for the whole services provided by the Multicultural Australia."



**1,732**

clients settled  
in Queensland



**34**

in-language life  
skills workshops



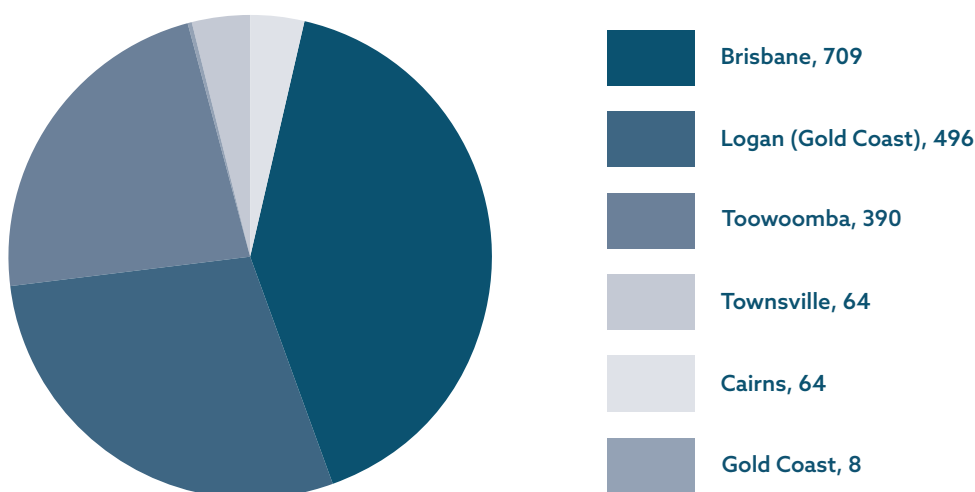
**100%**

of clients secured short  
and long-term housing

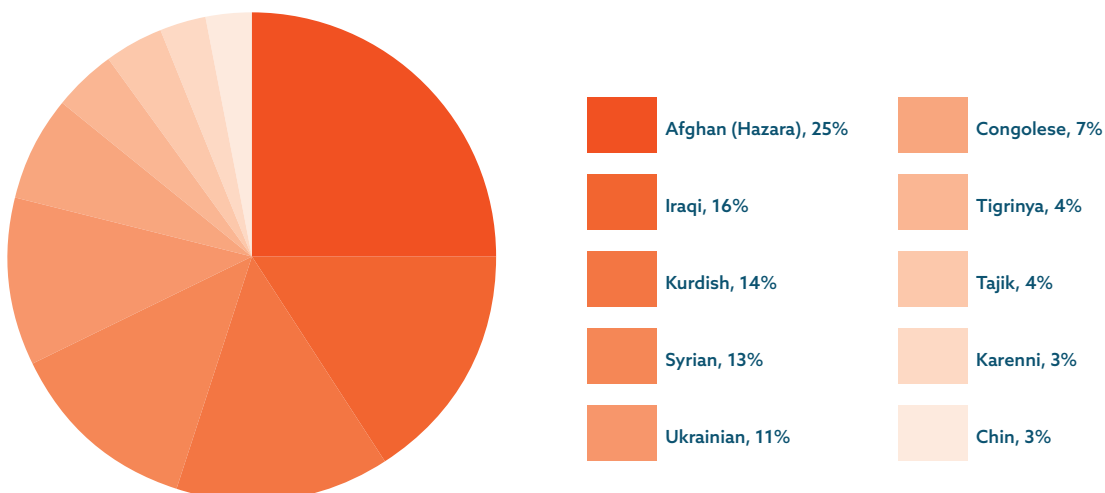
# Humanitarian Settlement Program

"I would like to say thank you to each and everyone of you who is supporting vulnerable people in difficult times. Upon my arrival, Multicultural Australia has provided me with a temporary accommodation - it was enormous support. The person who picked me up from the airport, has ordered pizza upon arrival, it was very touching that they considered a long journey to Australia and provided this additional welcome by organising dinner. All who I met at Multicultural Australia were nice and friendly. I would never forget this help and support I have received. Thank you very much!"

## Client arrivals by region



## Client arrivals by ethnicity





## Connecting over coffee

Coffee plays an inherently important part in 32-year-old Marsim Mohammed's life.

Born near Aleppo, Syria, where some of the oldest coffee houses in history were built, Marsim is rebuilding her life and finding her way back home one cup of coffee at a time.

Since her family fled Syria in 2013, Marsim has assumed the responsibility of looking after her mother, sister Amira, and her two brothers - who both have disabilities.

Through Big Sis, an initiative by our partners at Ethni, Marsim and her sister have found reprieve from carrying the load on their own. Marsim found a mentor in Nas, who regularly meets with her and encourages her to step out of her comfort zone.

"When we go out walking, we order coffee. I [didn't] know how to order coffee. So, first I was like [panicking]. But next time, she said 'You can order for yourself.' It's different now. I can do it perfectly. I just do it," Marsim shared.

This skill came in handy when Marsim started her barista training at Multicultural Australia's Welcome Café.

The guidance she received from Nas helped her appreciate coffee culture in a different way, along with the experience of seeing how coffee can connect people through the eyes of the one who makes it.

Marsim is thankful for the care she has received from Multicultural Australia. She hopes more families can receive the same support.

**"It is important. We are the children, but we also are the mums. I can't imagine my life without [my family], even if it's hard. When you take care of your family, [Multicultural Australia] takes care of you."**



# Unaccompanied Humanitarian Minors Program



45

clients



32

in Brisbane, Logan and  
the Sunshine Coast



13

in Toowoomba

Our Unaccompanied Humanitarian Minors (UHM) program provides accommodation, care, welfare and settlement services to children and young people who live in residential care or kinship care arrangements. Our experienced and passionate team provides tailored care and support to children and young people to ensure that the diverse needs of every individual is met.

This year, the UHM program partnered with QPASTT – the Queensland Program of Assistance for Survivors of Torture and Trauma – to deliver the Community Visitor Pilot. The purpose of the pilot program is to promote and protect the rights, interests, and wellbeing of unaccompanied minors, increase the skills and knowledge of the care team, clients and stakeholders involved in this work and offer a soft entry to counseling services.

This pilot has offered a unique opportunity to show increased accountability and commitment to our practice framework, and the values that the team seeks to uphold in promoting wellbeing, independence, belonging and quality of life.

#### **Our practice framework is**

- Trauma informed
- Culturally responsive
- Child centred.

#### **Our staff promote**

- Wellbeing
- Independence
- Belonging
- Quality of life.

### **Intended outcomes of the community visitor pilot program**

- The Community Visitor will ensure UHMs will have access to a greater support network including access to independent advocacy support when needed, mirroring support available to children and young people receiving state Child Protection
- Multicultural Australia's UHM team will be strengthened in their trauma-informed practice
- Multicultural Australia will obtain evidence to support discussions on the most impactful way to implement a Community Visitor model with UHM clients, for ongoing discussions with the Department of Home Affairs
- UHMs will be more willing to engage in trauma recovery activities as a result of their participation in 'soft entry' engagement with QPASTT

## Giving our clients the care they need

Before Covid-19, the UHM program had been planning a camping activity, which due to lockdowns and changing health circumstances, was delayed many times.

This year, the team were able to successfully facilitate a three-day, two-night camp at Tunnel Ridge Ranch on the Sunshine Coast.

The camp was a great opportunity for our children and young people to connect and spend time outdoors participating in a wide range of activities - from canoeing and horse-riding to a giant 'slip-and-slide' down the grassy hill, rope swing into the swimming dam and group games.

The camp also offered a great chance to share in some educational activities in a relaxing setting.

Our team facilitated a discussion around social media, online privacy and consent along with self-care activities, and plenty of time for relationship building.

Additionally, the QPASTT Community Visitor was able to attend and share more about the CV pilot between Multicultural Australia and QPASTT, creating opportunities for young people to feel familiar with the CV Pilot, and build young people's knowledge and understanding of this support to ensure their views, perspectives and needs are heard.

A highlight was watching how our young people supported and encouraged each other to overcome reservations and try new activities, with many 'firsts' - such as the first-time riding a horse, or first-time getting back into a canoe after being capsized.

The camp was a great success, with requests for more camps in the future.



# Settlement Engagement and Transition Support Program

Our Settlement Engagement and Transition Support (SETS) program helps individuals from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds build capacity within the first five years of settlement in Australia.

In March 2023, Multicultural Australia expanded its SETS program to the Townsville region to help facilitate the ongoing delivery of services to culturally and linguistically diverse clients and communities in the region.

Our SETS program is dedicated to empowering humanitarian entrants and migrants to thrive in their new communities, fostering a sense of belonging, engagement and building of capacity in the first five years of settlement.

Our highly experienced Case Managers complete client assessments and develop case management plans that address clients' unique settlement needs, with a key focus on social participation, economic wellbeing, independence and personal wellbeing.

## We offer

- Low to medium level case management support
- Targeted groupwork sessions
- Specialised youth support tailored to the unique challenges of young people

## We focus on

- Facilitating seamless referrals into mainstream services
- Building our clients' capacity for self-sufficiency



2,056

clients received case management support



39

cultural groups were supported



57

vulnerable women reached in our Toowoomba Women's Group



3,722

referrals to community support services



500+

youth engaged in outreach services



10+

group work activations facilitated







## Women helping women in Toowoomba

The SETS program in Toowoomba has partnered with local start-up company, Mosaic Hues, to deliver a weekly English class to refugee women.

The women's group is an opportunity for women from refugee backgrounds to engage in activities that support personal growth outside of their roles as caregivers and homemakers. Participants build relationships and become more connected in the community.

Some women who join the group have never held a pen before and are unable to introduce themselves in English. Over time and with the support of TESOL (Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages) trained teachers, Bi-Cultural Workers and community volunteers, the women make significant progress in language acquisition.

The facilitators use innovative teaching methods that promote active participation and cultural sensitivity and can be adapted to various learning needs.

As trust builds, discussion on topics such as healthy relationships and settlement challenges are addressed, to ensure the unique needs of settling cohorts in Toowoomba are effectively met.

By responding to these challenges, the group plays a crucial role in promoting successful integration and long-term settlement outcomes for refugee women. The initiative has enhanced settlement outcomes for women by reducing social isolation, fostering independence, and addressing key settlement challenges.

The women's group has become a retreat as well as safe learning environment for those significantly impacted by trauma, who find it challenging to sit in a traditional classroom setting or engage in formal training.

The partnership between SETS and Mosaic Hues demonstrates a comprehensive and innovative approach to settlement support.

By combining expertise in refugee settlement and community engagement, the collaboration ensures that resources and services are effectively delivered towards a common goal of empowering refugee women in Toowoomba.

**"This is the only activity I go out of the house for, thank you so much."**



# Status Resolution Support Services

On 30 June 2023, we completed our delivery of the SRSS program, after 12 years of delivering care and support to people seeking asylum under the SRSS programs and its previous iterations.

This was a significant milestone for our asylum seeker clients, for the SRSS team and for our organisation. At the peak of the program numbers in the early years, SRSS accounted for close to half the staff of Multicultural Australia (under MDA), being a huge focus of our work and inspiration behind our create belonging mission.

Large numbers of SRSS clients have been supported through the years with a range of needs, challenges, and aspirations.

In more recent times, we have supported many vulnerable clients to access the support they need as SRSS program that required significant eligibility criteria to be met, we supported many asylum seekers taking up third country resettlement options through this process and we provided some support to people seeking assistance but outside the SRSS program criteria.

In the last five months of the program, we underwent a significant transition process for clients, staff, and our organisation to ensure we were able to handover the work in good stead to the new SRSS service providers contracted to deliver the program over the coming years.

We are proud of the service we provided to people seeking asylum. Throughout the delivery of the program, we have had a committed and supportive team who provided quality care and support.

We are humbled by the resilience and strength of our SRSS clients and wish each and every person we worked with and walked alongside, the very best.





# Community Support Program

Our Community Support Program (CSP) enables individuals, families, communities, and businesses, to sponsor humanitarian visa applicants with employment prospects, and to support new arrivals in their journey to Australian settlement.

Over the past year, we worked with 290 CSP clients across Queensland – with more than two-thirds of our CSP clients based in Logan.

Our experience of delivering CSP shows that Australian Supporters are relatives of the humanitarian applicants they are sponsoring to come to Australia.

This shows the strength of family commitment amongst our clients and the positive impact of reuniting family members after years of separation.

Due to the requirements for CSP applicants to have work ready skills and English language ability, along with the planning made in conjunction with our Australian Supporters, many of our applicants are working within weeks of arrival.

They also arrive with strong community connections, enabling individuals and families to swiftly begin their new lives and contribute to our community.

## CSP clients making strides in Queensland

After their lives were endangered in their home city of Kabul, Noorullah, Hafiza, and their two daughters fled to Pakistan seeking safety in 2019.

For Afghan refugees, life in Pakistan comes with uncertainty, hardship, and safety concerns, particularly for women and young girls. Under the CSP, Noorullah and Hafiza were supported by a friend in Brisbane to lodge an application for humanitarian resettlement, with the hope of finding safety, security, and a new life in Australia.

In the short time since their arrival, the family have been assisted by their Australian supporter to achieve several milestones:

- Despite having no experience working in the industry, Noorullah secured full-time employment in construction
- Hafiza enrolled in the TAFE Adult Migrant English Program to begin learning English
- Having been unable to attend school while living in Pakistan, both of their daughters have started attending school in grades 1 and 3
- The family have moved out of their Australian supporter's home, securing their own private rental property
- The family are building their knowledge around Australian laws, cultural customs, and public transport navigation

As the family continue their Australian settlement journey, they hold many aspirations for the future:

- With a bachelor's degree in law, a business diploma, and experience running his own logistics, procurement, and travel businesses, Noorullah hopes to gain tertiary level qualifications in Australia, and eventually start his own business to give back to both his family and the community
- Hafiza plans to learn English to better support her family, and aspires of owning their own family home
- The eldest daughter loves riding bikes and playing football, and dreams of one day becoming a teacher who is kind to her students
- The youngest daughter loves learning English and riding her scooter, and wants to be a pilot when she grows up

# Community Development

Our Community Development (CD) team work alongside cultural communities and local communities to create welcome. Informed by community development frameworks, the team co-design and co-create approaches and initiatives with partners to build communities where all feel valued and safe.

The team support and initiate opportunities to change the conversation and amplify the voices of communities – promoting opportunities for social, cultural, and economic inclusion for all.

Our CD team collaborate with Welcome hub partners in local communities across Brisbane, Logan, and Ipswich to bring people together to create connection, share culture and learn from each other through events such as LUMINOUS in the Neighbourhood and the LUMINOUS Lantern Making Workshops preceding the community parades.

## Empowering communities

- New Queenslanders build on their skills through trainings and workshops around topics of financial literacy, digital literacy, and citizenship
- Queensland organisations develop skills to better engage with refugee and migrant communities through a cultural conversations program of work
- Our Community Leaders Gathering brings together Community Leaders representing a wide range of culturally diverse communities, monthly, to identify common challenges and aspirations, and amplify their voices to decision makers through consultations, shared submissions and meetings, around issues such as disaster management, underemployment, housing and homelessness and equity within the Justice system.

## Client feedback from LUMINOUS in the Neighbourhood events in Inala, Kingston East, Mount Gravatt, Redbank Plains and Zillmere

- 97% of respondents felt more connected to their community
- 97% believed more strongly that multiculturalism is good for Queensland
- 94% felt more strongly that they belong

## Digital literacy program

Our Digital Literacy program helps new Queenslanders gain computer literacy skills to access information, services and support that is often only available online. Participants of the program credit it with helping them build their confidence and become more independent.

Scan the QR code to hear from Multicultural Australia Community Development Officer, Grace Samuel, and a participant, about how our Digital Literacy program is changing lives.



**3,000+**

Queenslanders engaged in programs & activities



**30**

cultural communities connected with



**1,000+**

community members participated in LUMINOUS Neighbourhood events







# Care Finder

Launched in April 2023, the Care Finder Program is Multicultural Australia's newest program.

Designed to help vulnerable older people from cultural and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds in Brisbane South, the program helps clients navigate the aged care system and find support services to improve their quality of life.

Funded through Brisbane South PHN, this initiative addresses a gap for many seniors from migrant and newly settled communities, by linking them to services they need with appropriate cultural support.

Our team of Cultural Support Workers assist with interpreting and cultural familiarity to ensure that every client is understood and gets the help they need.



26

clients received intensive support in Brisbane South



46%

aged 70 -79



6

communities engaged to increase aged care services awareness





# ParentsNext

ParentsNext is a federally funded program that helps parents of young children build their skills for future employment.

Our participants have access to free driving lessons, accredited training, work checks, job readiness training and more to prepare for future work.

The program runs across 14 sites in Darling Downs, Central Queensland, and Townsville, and has a strong track-record of delivering culturally informed and appropriate care.

With nearly 40% of our clients from First Nations communities, we believe that it is important that our team reflects the diversity of the communities we serve, so a high number of ParentsNext staff are First Nations peoples.

**Our clients gain:**

- employability skills
- access to local services to address life challenges
- quality accredited training
- employment opportunities



## New doors opened with ParentsNext

Carol Blanch had already raised three grown-up daughters when she had her fourth child. After many years of raising children, Carol struggled to find her feet again and secure paid employment to support her five-year-old son.

"I was a single parent with 50/50 care of my son. I had no idea whatsoever what I was going to do to get back into the workforce," Carol said.

In a beautiful twist of fate, it was her two eldest daughters who helped her take the next step on her journey.

They led their mother to ParentsNext – a free support program that helps parents plan their steps towards study or work. As mothers themselves, they had found the same guidance and support that their mother needed through the program.

"I was a single parent with 50/50 care of my son. I had no idea whatsoever what I was going to do to get back into the workforce."

"I started with the program in January 2022. My first appointment with Fiona of Multicultural Australia (MA), we spent the time getting to know each other. She got a feel of what my interests were and where my goals could be set to find work," said the mother of four.

"It really did help having that person that understood being out of the workforce for so long."

Through ParentsNext, Carol was able able to obtain the qualifications needed to work in the food and beverage industry. The customer service aspect of the training helped her build confidence to engage in a business

environment and improve her communication skills. She puts all these to good use at her current job as a chef at a local pub in Rockhampton.

Carol credits the considerate and personalised approach that MA staff took to truly know her and help create a path that speaks to her own aspirations.

**"It's really important because they help you with training that's aligned with what you want to get into, instead of pushing into something that you don't want to do."**





# Migrant Youth Vision Project

Our Migrant Youth Vision Project (MYVP) program links young people to a wide range of education, training, employment, and sporting opportunities.

Delivered by an experienced and passionate team, MYVP participants are supported to develop their confidence, motivation, and creativity and achieve their aspirations.

This year, our team engaged more than 400 clients and helped over 100 young people secure paid work opportunities.

For many young people, it's their first job, and an exciting opportunity to develop transferable skills which prepare them to advance their careers and explore their options.





## MYVP initiatives

### Surf's up

Our annual youth beach trip, delivered in partnership with the Queensland Program for Survivors of Torture and Trauma (QPASTT), is a full-day trip to the Gold Coast for more than 50 of our young people. Activities include an in-water beach safety session hosted by Queensland Surf Lifesaving, team building, music, and lunch.

### Smashing goals

In collaboration with AFL Queensland, the youth team delivered our Diversity Umpires Program. Young people engaged with hands on training on how to become an umpire and learn techniques in managing game pressure and pace. Fourteen young people completed the program and continued on to paid work as an AFL umpire.

### Winner takes all

Multicultural Australia's youth team continued their proud tradition of the Multicultural Australia Youth Cup. In collaboration with Football Queensland, Lions Football Club, St James College, QPASTT and Multicultural Communities Council Gold Coast we ran this school holiday cup, with over 90 young people participating.

### In the zone

The youth team continued to work closely with our close neighbour, QPASTT. We helped support the UCAN2 program at Southbank TAFE, offering individualised support to participants around employment and training. Twelve young people were supported into further education, training and employment outcomes.

### Keys2Freedom

Our revised Learner Driver Preparation Program is delivered in collaboration with Queensland Police Service and Queensland learner Licence Support. The workshop prepared 36 participants for their Prep L courses as well and upskilled them in road safety.



# Welcome Café

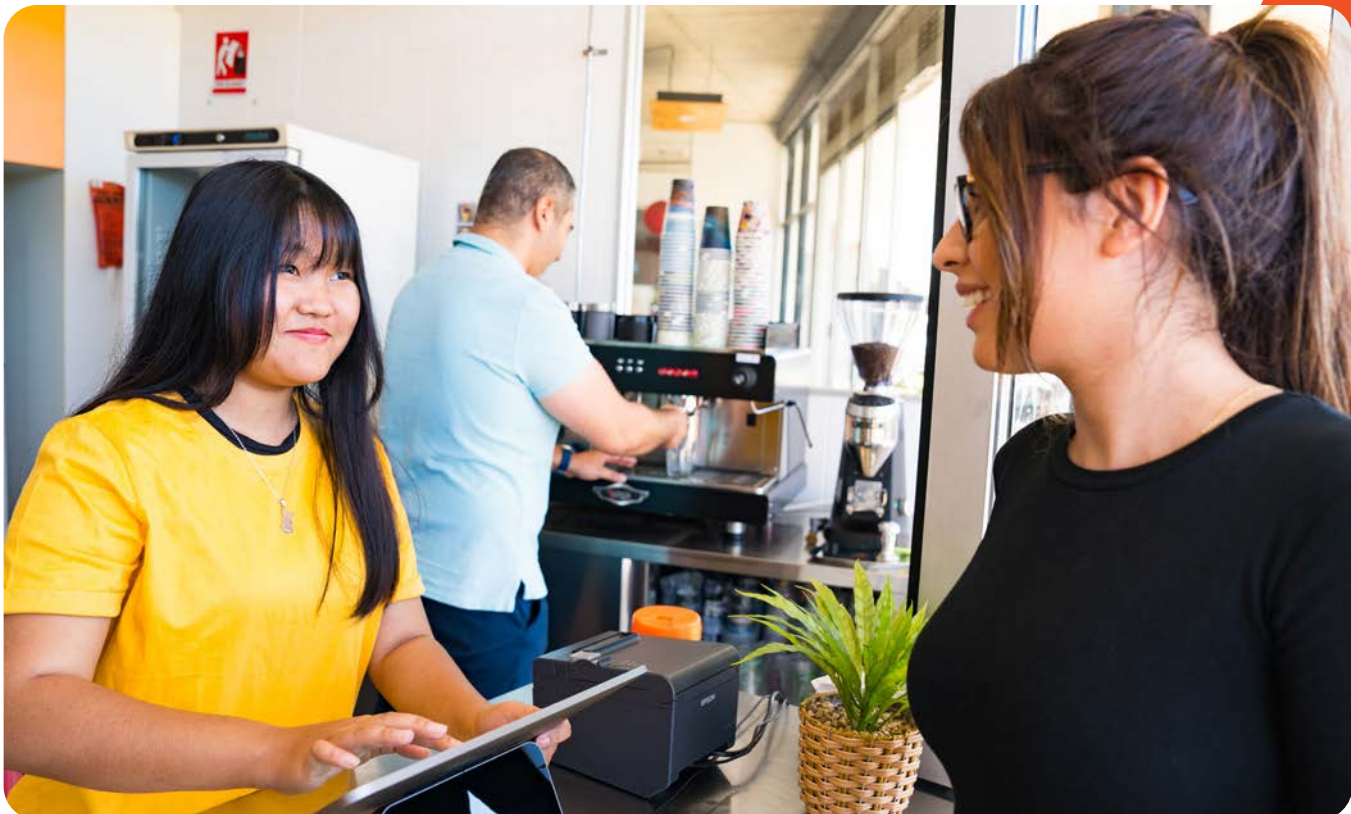
An initiative to provide young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds with barista skills, our Welcome Café also helps our youth build confidence, improve their communication, and grow their network.

Based at our Woolloongabba and Inala offices, the Welcome Café helps our young people prepare for exciting careers in hospitality and beyond.

The café also runs pop up activations at Multicultural Australia's LUMINOUS Lantern Parade and MOSAIC Festival.

This year, twelve clients from St James College, Milpera State High School, and Ipswich State High School completed Welcome Café work experience.

Learn more about how our Welcome Café partnership with the WISE Foundation is helping youth from refugee and migrant backgrounds secure full-time employment in this video.







# International student support

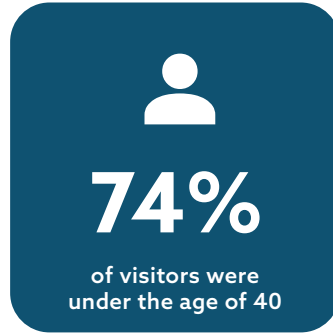
Our International Students team provides support and advice that helps students navigate life in Australia more easily. Now partnered with Study Gold Coast and the Gold Coast Student Hub for six years, we helped more than 100 students this year.

## Student workshops

- Storm Readiness with Suncorp
- Tax Returns with the Australian Tax Office
- Beach Safety with Queensland Surf Lifesaving
- English Conversation Classes
- Multicultural Australia and Randstad Mentoring Program

In partnership with the University of Queensland, we also launched a series of cooking classes to introduce international students to Australian cuisine that is healthy and easy to make.

# Redbank Plains Community Centre



The Redbank Plains Community Centre (RPCC) is a showcase of the transformative work we do to create belonging in communities across Queensland.

The centre delivers a wide range of programs that empower communities – particularly young families – through direct support and services.

The Immigration Minister, Hon. Andrew Giles, paid a visit to the centre during his regional tour this year, and thanked our team for their work in the local community.

## Key activities

- Project nourish – a weekly food program delivered in partnership with OzHarvest for those in need
- Women's group
- English conversation classes
- Midwifery clinics
- LUMINOUS lantern making workshops
- LUMINOUS in the Neighbourhood: Redbank Plains
- Events celebrating harmony day, neighbourhood Day and multiculturalism







# Springfield community and engagement space

In a significant collaboration with the Brisbane Lions, we officially opened our Springfield Community and Engagement space at Brighton Homes Arena in February 2023.

In the heart of Springfield, a community known for its diversity, the space delivers community development, employment, and youth services to multicultural members of the local community.

Since launching, we have hosted the Multicultural Jobs Forum, in partnership with the Springfield Regional Jobs Committee.

The event connected more than 40 jobseekers with employers in the region – creating opportunities for jobseekers to meet prospective employers, explore their options and build confidence as they prepare for the next step in their career.







# Rockhampton

We're making a greater impact on the lives of clients from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds with our employment, community development and engagement services and support in Rockhampton.

## Community Hubs

Our work with Community hubs helps build social cohesion in communities across the region. The hubs are welcoming places for families from diverse backgrounds – particularly mothers with pre-school children – to connect, share, and learn. In Rockhampton we partner with Berserker Street, Lakes Creek and Waraburra State schools to deliver the program.

Adults attended activities more than 2,300 times, and children attended activities more than 48,000 times. Activities included parent engagement, conversational English, Playgroups and early years, children's language and literacy, informal adult training and healthy lifestyle programs.

## Skilling Queenslanders for Work

We delivered five traineeships and four certificate courses, providing support to 170 students and trainees.

Our Building Foundations and Futures construction traineeship supported 26 trainees with 20 weeks of employment and training. The trainees diverted waste materials from the dump and used them to make furniture to assist people coming out of homelessness. They are currently assisting the Shelter Collective to renovate cottages for women who have experienced domestic violence.

Our hospitality traineeship, Tucker Time, collects excess food from local supermarkets and uses it to make meals for emergency food hampers, school breakfast programs and local support services. We recently commenced taking food and clothing out to Woorabinda, our local Aboriginal community. The food and clothing helps local children attend school.



## Gaining work ready skills in Rocky

"I pretty much made this coffee table. I never thought [I was capable of doing that]. Now, I can't get enough of it."

When 32-year-old Christopher Oram began his safe use of motorised carpentry tools training, he discovered how much he loved creating and building things.

He, along with dozens of other learners in Rockhampton, are part of our Upcycle Village traineeship, a 20-week paid training program delivered in partnership with the Rockhampton Regional Council.

At the Upcycle Village, disadvantaged youth and people from migrant and First Nations communities gain design and carpentry skills to upcycle furniture supplied by Resource Recovery Australia.

The finished items are then given to families transitioning from homelessness to secure housing.

Prior to starting the traineeship, the then stay-at-home father of three was looking for opportunities to develop new skills and experience outside of his farming background, something he'd always wanted since he started working in agriculture at 16 years old.

"Normally, I'm like out on the farm, like in the shadows," Christopher said.

"And then Into Jobs (Centrelink's job provider in the region), helped me and suggested that I go to Multicultural Australia."

"They said they're good people and that it would be a good experience."

Since starting the training in May 2023, Christopher has repurposed old furniture using wooden pallets and other resources often disregarded as waste.

"I didn't realize exactly how much you could make out of pallets! I was like, wow, we're making Christmas trees, snowman and bowling tables."

"I'd come home and talk to my kids about it, taking pictures of things that I'm making."

"We got some big old tables - we've been trying to fill in the old cracks and make it pretty again. We've had some people come up offering our supervisor like \$300. We haven't even finished the table!"

The circular economy of repurposing pre-loved items to reduce waste and help those in need has had a significant impact on Christopher.

It did not take long for Christopher Oram to reap the rewards of his traineeship at the Upcycle Village in Rockhampton. It happened when his first creation was raffled out.

"It was a really nice coffee table that Multicultural Australia raffled. I actually won the raffle."

But more than the thrill of gaining ownership of his first work, Christopher said it is the experience of working with different people from various backgrounds that he found to be truly rewarding.

"I've worked on the farm for so long that it was just like the old farmers and the old ways of how they work - rough and tough. When I came here, it was a completely different experience. People have different kinds of opinions and views on things. That helped me see a lot differently."

"We've [learned about] relationships in the workplace, and how to talk and respond to people," he said of the traineeship.

"They help out with just about anything. I think they just went out of their way to look for jobs [for us]."







# Toowoomba

Through the delivery of our Humanitarian Settlement Program, Settlement Engagement Transition Support, Unaccompanied Humanitarian Minors program, ParentsNext, Youth Hub, Refugee Health, and Employment programs, we have helped create a regional city that is more welcoming, diverse, and inclusive than ever before.

Our Toowoomba Multicultural Centre is a vibrant hub for communities to connect, share and learn. Flagship programs run through the centre include our weekly distribution of OzHarvest donations, multicultural women's group, the Queensland Police Service drop-in support and information sessions, refugee and immigration legal services, AMPARO advocacy, our Skill Up youth program, delivered in partnership with the University of Southern Queensland and much more.

The Toowoomba team receive funding through the Darling Downs and West Mortem Primary Health Network (DDWMPHN) to fund a Refugee Health Officer. The primary purpose of this role is to provide health support, capacity building, access, and referral to critical and urgent health care.

This role is invaluable in building the capacity of Primary Health Care providers in Toowoomba to engage effectively with refugee clients whilst supporting newly arrived refugees to gain access to critical or urgent specialist health services and allied health providers where appropriate.

The role additionally, supports newly arrived refugees to improve health literacy and understanding of the health systems in Australia.

## Our impact

- Expanded the number of refugees enabled general practices
- Quarterly clinical advisory group discussing barriers and challenges to refugees accessing medical and allied health support in Toowoomba
- Covid and immunisation vaccination bus attended the MA offices and vaccinated over 50 clients from the community aged from 8-70 years

## Ezidi community success in Toowoomba

With Toowoomba being identified as a key settlement zone for the Ezidi (also known as the Yazidi) community in 2017, following international displacement of Syrian communities as a result of the war, Multicultural Australia began settling community members in Queensland's Garden City.

Today, the Ezidi community in Toowoomba is more than 4,000, and their language, Kurdish Kurmanji, is the second most spoken language in the region.

A drive through Toowoomba in 2023 presents a strikingly different demographic landscape compared to just a decade ago.

The Ezidi community's impact on Toowoomba is not only demographic but also economic. Their integration is palpable, with numerous Ezidi-owned businesses now thriving in the CBD and surrounding suburbs.

Multicultural Australia's Settlement Engagement Transition Support (SETS) services have played a crucial role in facilitating this transition, fostering enduring connections within both the Ezidi and broader communities.

Our SETS programs encompass a variety of initiatives:

- Women's group: offering language support, access to social and mental health services, assistance for domestic and family violence, and educational opportunities.
- Men's group: providing a platform for open conversations about culture, family, and Australian law, while connecting male clients to services that address trauma.
- Healthy relationships education: a youth program engaging sixty Year 9 and 10 Ezidi students on relevant issues, ensuring they stay connected and supported.

We take pride in the robust relationships our team has cultivated with current and former clients. It is with excitement that we learn of the significant achievements within the Ezidi community – from home ownership to university studies, and inspiring tales of career aspirations being realised.

We remain committed to empowering the Ezidi community in Toowoomba and look forward to continuing this journey of growth and success together.







## Connecting through arts

Our Connecting Through Arts (CTA) program, launched in May 2023, links the multicultural community in Queensland to opportunities in the creative arts. Focused on increasing access and building equity in the arts, the program works with strategic partners in Queensland to deliver a wide range of initiatives.

Preceding the official launch of the CTA program, we launched the MOSAIC Choir at the 2022 MOSAIC Festival. Created to foster social cohesion and promote cultural exchange, the choir has already made a splash on the Queensland arts scene, with performance requests across Southeast Queensland, and a special performance at QPAC and QPASTT's Songs of Hope in June 2023.

The four-part Changing the Conversation series, unpacking key issues that affect all Australians, is also a CTA initiative. Delivered in partnership with the Queensland Performing Arts Centre, each discussions brings together multicultural voices from across the community to share their insights and wisdom. The first event in the series focused on the First Nations Voice to Parliament.

Other Connecting Through Arts initiatives include the Arts Roundtable – an opportunity for Queensland artists from the multicultural community to meet key influencers and leaders in the industry – and translated performances of select QPAC theatre productions.



# Cultural support services

Cultural Support Workers (CSWs) are employed on a casual basis to deliver culturally appropriate and responsive support to clients – from assistance with language support to capacity building and cultural competence.

Our CSWs have helped us deliver culturally informed services to thousands of clients across Southeast Queensland and Toowoomba over the past year.

Our pool of CSWs has also significantly grown over the past year, with over 170 cultural support workers across client services, community engagement and external fee-for-service.

All clients cared for in the humanitarian settlement program have benefited from the support of CSWs through language, cultural and practical settlement orientation tasks.

## Main language groups of our CSWs

- Afghan (Dari, Pashtun, Hazaragi, Urdu, Persian)
- Iraq/Syrian (Arabic, Kurdish, Kurmanji)
- Burma (Burmese - Chin- Mizo, Falam, Zome - Karen & Karreni)
- African (Somali, Swahili, Sudanese Arabic, Kinyarwanda, Kirundi, Tigrinya & Oromo)
- Ukraine (Ukrainian & Russian)

Through internal opportunities, fee-for-service work, and the commencement of the Care Finder program, we have been able to provide CSWs with additional casual hours. This has promoted staff retention within the CSW pool.

Fee for service work has also provided additional opportunities to generate revenue for the organisation and has created strong partnerships with external organisations including Queensland Health, Queensland Department of Communities, the Queensland Performing Arts Centre, C&K Kindergartens, the University of Queensland, and Griffith University.

These partnerships have created service delivery collaboration opportunities through a co-design process to ensure that other organisations can efficiently provide additional support to the clients that we work with.





# Change the conversation

We will seize opportunities to advance multiculturalism and create welcome and belonging. We will seek to have impact and influence, amplified voice, and strong and strategic partnerships to ensure that the refugee and migrant community is represented in our society.



## Impact and influence

Use our voice and actions to champion multiculturalism and use a research-led, evidence-based and embedded client voice framework to deliver measurable impact.

## Amplified voice

Celebrate the strengths of multiculturalism through services, programs, events and celebrations that advance and amplify the diversity of our community.

## Strong and strategic partnerships

Leverage and grow our strategic partnerships that are consistent with our vision and purpose.



# Change the conversation

Explore the programs of work aligning with our strategic pillar to change the conversation.

Employment	47
Work & Welcome	48
CareerConnectors	50
Diverse Queensland Workforce	51
Asylum Seeker and Refugee Assistance Employment Program	53
Skilling Queenslanders for Work	54
Future Leaders Advocacy Group	55
Events	56
Volunteering	59
Connecting Through Sport	61





# Employment

Our Employment Services team provide job readiness support, employment coaching and employment activities to increase our clients' skills and help them secure paid work opportunities.

A strength based and person-centred service delivery model, we initially meet with clients to understand their needs and aspirations, then provide tailored support to help them achieve their goals.

Clients have gained skills and knowledge from our wide range of formal and informal upskilling programs supported by partner organisations.

This year, our employment team helped 259 clients secure jobs, with nearly 80% of clients finding that their employment aligns with their career aspirations.

We also work with Employer Partners to help them recognise and realise the many benefits gained by engaging a diverse multicultural workforce.



**599**

referrals from Brisbane,  
Logan, GC & Toowoomba



**259**

secured employment



**79%**

still employed  
after 3 months



# Work & Welcome

A Multicultural Australia initiative, Work & Welcome connects jobseekers from refugee and asylum seeker backgrounds with Queensland schools, businesses, and government bodies.

The program creates opportunities for participants to secure their first paid job in Australia, while also developing skills, improving English, building connections, and gaining self-confidence.

Starting as a pilot program at Padua College in North Brisbane, Work & Welcome now partners with more than 40 organisations to build a more inclusive, diverse, and capable workforce.

Multicultural Australia identifies program candidates and works with partners (host organisations) to create employment opportunities in different industries. Those employment opportunities are based on the candidates' strengths, career goals and the needs of partner organisations.

The program includes work preparation and assessment of candidates, shortlisting and screening of candidates and tailored cultural support for the duration of the paid placement (minimum 12 weeks).

Host organisations get access to a diverse, motivated, and talented pool of candidates with a wide range of

experience, knowledge, and skills, while also creating a real impact in the lives of new Queenslanders.

Work & Welcome partners enjoy access to Multicultural Australia's cultural events, corporate volunteering opportunities, and networking events as well as knowledge of the partnership on our website, social channels, and promotional materials.

"Thanks a lot for your support in finding my first job in Australia! It was a pleasure to work with the team, and I felt supported and well-informed about everything. All the best to the team, and you are doing a very important job - helping refugees make Australia their home".

"This is a wonderful way for our community to provide support and a new start to people who are beginning their lives here in Brisbane. Our community gains important perspectives and understanding from each candidate we welcome, and the candidate gains valuable work experience in a safe environment, and the opportunity to form new friendships and professional acquaintances."



29

client placements



82%

secured employment



100%

of clients said they increased their self-confidence



100%

said they increased their level of English



100%

said they felt a greater sense of belonging



88%

said they increased their confidence in ability to find employment





## A brighter future with Work & Welcome

What started as a call out for staff to mentor newly arrived Queenslanders has evolved into a staff-led initiative that now funds the salary of some of our Work and Welcome (W&W) graduates.

Ten years ago, the Anglican Church Grammar School (Churchie) opened its doors to our community as a Host Partner in our W&W program, where select clients from refugee backgrounds were able to get valuable training and career mentorship.

W&W prepares our clients for paid employment in Australia - the first paid work opportunity for many participations. More than that, it creates pathways for them to pursue meaningful work aligned with their own career aspirations.

Rod Olsen, Head of Senior School at Churchie, recently told Multicultural Australia that their school community saw a space where they can "help provide an opportunity for a skilled refugee to gain the experience and skills required to get work in Australia."

"The idea was put to our staff that if they would like to be involved, which was entirely voluntary, they can make a donation, whatever people felt that they could contribute into a fund. That pays the employee from Work and Welcome", he said.

Mr Olsen said the success of the program extends beyond the Churchie community. Some of the W&W graduates who had worked there later gained fulltime employment in the areas of accountancy and IT in other organisations. But, he thinks the school has comparatively gained much more from the partnership.

"We're a boys' school with teenage boys aged between 12 years to 18 years old. Students have been fascinated by listening and hearing those stories and understanding more about some of the reasons why people are making Australia their home."

"We find the education that [the W&W graduates] can provide - in terms of the social, family, and compassionate aspects - have been very good in helping to educate our students."

"It enhances the school's relationships. And organisations like ours are built on relationships. It means that there is a greater understanding of differences and there's a greater feeling of inclusiveness."

# CareerConnectors

Our career mentoring program, CareerConnectors, previously known as Shaping Your Future, received the Minister's award at the 2022 Queensland Multicultural Awards.

The program supports new Australians from migrant and refugee backgrounds to improve their employment potential by matching them with mentors in their desired careers. It runs for six to eight weeks and includes two networking events where participants have an opportunity to share advice, experiences and their stories with each other.

Mentors complete cultural training delivered by Multicultural Australia to increase their cultural capability, and mentees participate in a networking session to develop their confidence and communication skills.

Our two intakes during the year paired mentees with mentors from Randstad, EY, John Holland, Deloitte, Queensland Government, Hastings Deerings, Suncorp and La Boite.







## Diverse Queensland Workforce

A Queensland Government funded initiative, the Diverse Queensland Workforce (DQW) program was implemented as part of the Future Skills Fund in 2022 to create pathways to employment for underemployed and unemployed migrants, refugees and international students aged 18 years and over.

As part of the program, clients have access to individual career plans, support with resumes and job search, employment related information sessions, work readiness workshops – covering topics in Australian workplace expectations, employment skills, digital literacy, and networking, career mentoring, and referrals to work experience programs.

This year the program has been extended as part of the Good people, Good jobs: Queensland Workforce Strategy 2022-2032.

We deliver the program in Redbank Plains, Inala, Woolloongabba, Toowoomba and Rockhampton.



## Saeid's story

Saeid Amini is originally from Iran and came to Australia as a refugee with his wife in August 2022. Saeid has experience working as a welder in Turkey and in his home country. Prior to joining the Diverse Queensland Workforce program, Saeid had managed to secure some job interviews but none were successful.

As part of the Diverse Queensland Workforce program, the Employment team at Multicultural Australia supported Saeid with his resume and conducted interview practice. Once Saeid identified that he felt more confident and skilled in interviewing for jobs, he was supported to apply for a skilled welder role with Triple M.

At his interview, Saeid made a good impression on the employer and was offered a role. Saeid continues to work at Triple M and has reported being very happy with his role and states that everything is "going smoothly".

"I wanted to say thank you for helping me secure my position at Triple M." "Your support has been invaluable, and I truly appreciate it."



## Deen's story

Mohieddin (Deen) Alasali, originally from Syria, graduated from the Damascus University with a Bachelor of Electrical Engineering. Deen worked as an electrical engineer for two years in Syria after graduating. Before arriving in Australia in 2022, Deen worked as a volunteer in community services as a language interpreter and education project assistant to empower refugees and asylum seekers in Thailand.

Deen was referred to Multicultural Australia's Work & Welcome program and hosted by Padua College in an Admin Assistant role. This was an opportunity for Deen to further develop his skills in a supportive environment, while also continuing to apply for roles that aligned with his qualification and experience.

Equipped with Australian work experience, current references and the confidence to apply for jobs, Deen attended an event with Engineers Australia and Multicultural Australia as part of the Queensland Government Diverse Queensland Workforce initiative. Following this event, Deen was successful in securing his dream role as Electrical Engineer at SMEC.



# Asylum Seeker and Refugee Assistance Employment Program

Our employment team provides tailored support to the Asylum Seeker and Refugee Assistance (ASRA) program as part of Multicultural Australia's ongoing commitment to supporting people on temporary visas seeking asylum living in Queensland.

The temporary visas issued to individuals by the Australian Federal government includes Temporary Protection Visa (TPV), Safe Haven Enterprise Visa (SHEV) Bridging Visa E (maritime arrivals) and Bridging Visa A (air arrivals).

The team works with individuals and families living in the Logan, Brisbane and Gatton catchment area. ASRA employment is partnered with community-based stakeholders providing case coordination, health, legal and housing support.

Clients are supported through telephone, face to face employment sessions, individualised appointments and assessments for job readiness.

## Services include

- One on one job interview skills, resume and individualised job search support
- Digital literacy for employment inductions, job applications, employment licences and qualifications
- Self-employment advice including Tax File Number, Australian Business Number and start up business support
- Networking with employers in the local community
- Referrals to employment information sessions with stakeholders
- Referrals to mental health, housing, legal and emergency relief services



# Skilling Queenslanders for Work

A Queensland Government initiative focused on equipping underemployed and unemployed individuals from diverse backgrounds and lifestyles with work ready skills, the Skilling Queenslanders for Work (SQW) program is delivered by Multicultural Australia in Brisbane and Rockhampton.

The program focuses on youth, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander individuals, people with disabilities, mature jobseekers, women re-entering the workforce, veterans and ex-service personnel and individuals from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

Our two newest SQW programs in Inala and Toowoomba - Building Skills for the Future - have attracted participants from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse backgrounds who were looking to improve their basic language, literacy, numeracy and digital skills, to be able to enter the workforce or improve their study prospects for future.

Both programs focused on completion of Certificate II in Skills for Work and Vocational Pathways, which consisted of 1 day per week of study with Aurora Training (RTO 32237), 1 day per week job readiness, coaching and mentoring support workshops, with Multicultural Australia, and 1 day per week of study and tutoring support with Multicultural Australia.

Participants were also able to access driving lessons, Financial Literacy workshops, Small Business Workshops and individual career plans, as well as resume and cover letter support.

In Toowoomba, project has seen 14 women from Ezidi background obtaining their first Australian qualification and the project had 100% attendance and completion.

Gaining knowledge, accessing workshops and community assistance gets participants ready for their first or next job. Multicultural Australia is alongside of the participants to offer support every step of the way and provide a safe space to develop skills.



**“Multicultural Australia’s SQW project helped me improve my English skills, meet new people and improve my digital skills. I was able to pass my citizenship test, and I have clear pathway for the future!”**



# Future Leaders Advocacy Group

Our Future Leaders Advisory Group (FLAG) is an advocacy, empowerment, and professional development collective for young people by young people. Made up of young people from multicultural backgrounds, FLAG is a platform for youth to amplify the voices in their communities and seek positive change on issues affecting their peers.

Over the past year, FLAG have engaged with government, business, and community leaders on important issues affecting their communities and young people across Australia.



## July 2022 - Meeting with Hon. Andrew Giles MP Immigration, Citizenship, Migrant Services & Multicultural Affairs

FLAG leaders were invited to attend a lunch to meet with The Hon. Andrew Giles MP Immigration, Citizenship, Migrant Services and Multicultural Affairs.

## September 2022 - Multicultural Australia Youth Cup

The FLAG leaders provided support to the Youth Team at Multicultural Australia during our annual MA cup. Leaders had the opportunity to meet many young people to build further connections to understand needs across communities in relation to social sports, connections and cross community relationships.

## March 2023 - NRL Multicultural Round Brisbane Broncos

FLAG leaders were invited to participate in a pre-match Harmony Lap, either in their traditional dress or proudly carrying their nation's flag. Leaders also had the opportunity to consult with the Broncos community engagement team in providing feedback of the event.

## June 2023 - Canberra visit

Ten FLAG leaders embarked on an enriching trip to Parliament House in Canberra to deepen their understanding of leadership, resilience, and their new home country's history. They were provided a tour of Parliament House and heard from Rob Stefanik and his leaders team in the Australian parliamentary service. FLAG leaders also had the opportunity to meet with ministers and discuss issues facing their communities. They met with Hon Andrew Giles MP, as well as were hosted for morning tea by the Speaker, Hon Milton Dick MP where they had an opportunity to chat with the Treasurer, Hon Dr Jim Chalmers MP.

## August 2022 - Multicultural Queensland Awards

FLAG members were honoured to be recipients of the Highly Commended Award of the Minister's Multicultural Award by Hon. Leanne Linard Minister for Children and Youth Justice and Minister for Multicultural Affairs.

## November 2022 - Roundtable discussion on vilification and hate crimes

The FLAG members travelled to Multicultural Australia - Toowoomba, meeting with other young leaders in the region. Key highlights included the opportunity to build their networks as well as establish new friendships.

## May 2023 - 7news Young Achiever Awards

Three FLAG members were nominated for Young Achiever Awards with one FLAG leader becoming a finalist. Fardowsa Yussuf was nominated for her contribution to activities, initiative, events and/or mentor programs that helps support and strengthen community as well as inspiring others.

# Events

Our events are an opportunity to change the conversation about migrant and refugee communities in wider society and bring Queenslanders on the journey of welcome, care and support of people from diverse cultural backgrounds.

Through a series of iconic events that tell the stories of our clients and communities, we are creating a platform for the stories and contributions of individuals and families from culturally and linguistically diverse communities to be told and celebrated.

## Our Journey - 23 August 2022

A showcase of the lived experiences of resettled refugees in Queensland and around the world, Our Journey included the screening of the award-winning documentary, FLEE, spoken word and dance performances.

## Partners Lunch - 17 November 2022

Featuring a wide range of Walking Stories, our Partners Lunch showcases the breadth and depth of the impact we have been able to make thanks to the generous support from our corporate, sector and community partnerships.

## Culturability Accreditation Launch - 23 February 2023

We launched Australia's first accreditation for cultural diversity in the workplace at PwC's Brisbane Head Office, with a panel of corporate, community and government partners sharing their views on the importance of caring for CALD staff and customers.

## Changing the Conversation Launch - 28 March 2023

Our inaugural Changing the Conversation event, delivered in partnership with QPAC, opened with a thought provoking discussion about the Uluru Statement from the Heart and what a First Nations Voice to Parliament could mean for us all.

## Changing the Conversation Part II - 14 June 2023

Our second Changing the Conversation event focused on Cultural and Human Rights in the Digital Age, featuring a diverse panel and facilitation by author and journalist, Benjamin Law.

## MOSAIC - 18 September 2022

A celebration of the melting pot of cultures in Brisbane, MOSAIC showcases the creative and culinary arts of our culturally and linguistically diverse communities with a vibrant line-up of live music, dance, spoken word poetry, cooking demonstrations, food, and fashion. The 2022 event attracted nearly 9,000 attendees and engaged more than 25 different community groups to share their culture with our festivalgoers.

## Springfield Community Space Opening - 16 February 2023

The Governor of Queensland, Dr Jeanette Young AC PSM, officially opened our Springfield community and engagement space at the Brisbane Lions Brighton Homes Arena.

## Stand Up for Women - 8 March 2023

A sellout event supporting women from multicultural backgrounds affected by domestic violence, Stand Up for Women is a hilarious celebration of Queensland's female comics from diverse backgrounds.

## LUMINOUS - June 2023

Queensland's largest welcoming event, LUMINOUS South Bank attracted more than 17,000 festivalgoers in a beautiful show of support for Queenslanders from culturally diverse backgrounds.

In the lead up to LUMINOUS at South Bank, several LUMINOUS in the Neighbourhood, and LUMINOUS in the Regions events were held. LUMINOUS in the Neighbourhood, held at Inala, Zillmere, Mt Gravatt, Redbank Plains and Kingston East, attracted more than 1,000 people. LUMINOUS in the Regions events which were held in Eumundi, Lockyer Valley, Cairns, Rockhampton and Toowoomba saw nearly 2,000 people in attendance to share the message of welcome and inclusion across Queensland.



Diversity is  
our strength

#createbelonging #changetheconversation



25 years creating welcome  
and belonging

We're creating  
welcome

#createbelonging #changetheconversation



25 years creating welcome  
and belonging







**1** Our Journey | **2** MOSAIC Festival | **3** Partners Lunch **4** Culturability Accreditation Launch  
**5** Changing the Conversation | **6** LUMINOUS Lantern Parade



# Volunteering

Volunteers played a significant role in supporting Multicultural Australia's many causes during the financial year. Their invaluable contributions spanned across major events, internal consulting projects, settlement support work, and assistance to our internal staff.

Although our volunteers have different intentions and varying goals – including seeking work experience or giving back – they have played a significant role in ensuring effective service delivery for our clients.

We have seen our volunteers continue to show up to support with programs such as OzHarvest food distribution, a program that supplies clients much needed food hampers.

We have maintained partnerships with key volunteer bodies such as Volunteering Queensland and Volunteering Australia. These partnerships allow us to collaborate and ensure that the communities we work with, have access to formal volunteering.

We have also actively engaged in training community leaders to support their own communities' participation in formal volunteering.



## A breath of fresh air

Well-known in the community for his joyful nature and spirit, Ariya was intentional about the impact he planned to make from his early days in Queensland.

In 2013, soon after coming on board as a client of Multicultural Australia's Humanitarian Settlement Program, Ariya took a loan to purchase DJ equipment.

He took his DJ gear with him, wherever possible, to entertain refugee communities at cultural events and holiday festivities.

"When I got settled after completing (Life Skills) training, I said that this time is very good to help people," Ariya said.

He quickly saw an opportunity to share what he learned from the training and began helping newly arrived refugees with their studies and driver's license test preparations. '

He became a trusted go-to person to drive people with disabilities to their medical appointments, and pickup up young refugee students from after-hours classes at MA, to take them to their homes.

When the COVID-19 pandemic forced Queensland schools to close in 2020, Ariya was instrumental in making sure students from refugee communities were able to continue their studies remotely.

With MA understaffed during the time, Ariya stepped up to pick up refurbished, donated laptops and deliver those to the students' homes.

At the height of the lockdowns, as refugee households struggled to put food on the table with sudden loss of income, he helped deliver food supplies to these household as part of MA's partnership with OzHarvest. To this day, Ariya continues to deliver music and much-needed support to multicultural communities across Brisbane and Logan.

But, he says his volunteer work delivers him more dividends than he gives.

"It makes me happy – I'm fully charged for days. If someone asks me for help, [it means] I still have worth in this world," he reflected.

"You're always working and pay[ing] tax to the government. The volunteer job, honestly, is a tax of humanity. We all should pay this tax."

**"When I got settled after completing (Life Skills) training, I said that this time is very good to help people."**





# Connecting through sport

Our Connecting Through Sport (CTS) program wrapped up in April 2023. The program was a collaborative initiative with a range of sports, community, and tertiary partners, funded by the Department of Health.

A four-work sports program for young people, it focused on increasing participation of refugees, migrants, international students, and women in sport, while building the capacity of sporting and community clubs to be more inclusive and welcoming of diversity.

Delivered in partnership with AFL Queensland, Football Queensland, Rise Sport, and Netball Queensland, the program facilitated culturally safe engagement between the young participants and coaches and club staff.

The program has produced many successful graduates, some of whom went on to compete for an entire league season and play world-class arenas in Queensland.

The program also engaged nine partner clubs to create Diversity and Inclusion Action Plans, helping clubs build a framework that promotes diversity, inclusion, and equity.



**7,400+**

program participants



**775**

sport club transitions



**306**

members of sport clubs  
did Cultural Training



# Fit for the future

We will invest in our people and community so they have the right skills, knowledge and resources to achieve our vision. We will increase our impact and footprint, with a focus on inspired leadership, capability-building and fit-for-purpose resources.



## A shared and sustainable future

Be proactive and responsive to our clients and community, ensuring sustainability and opportunities for growth.

## Inspired leadership

Develop leaders at all levels of the organisation who act with compassion, curiosity, and accountability.

## Building capability

Recruit and retain skilled individuals with shared values and purpose, helping them reach their full potential.

## Resourced for success

Invest in secure, fit-for-purpose resources that ensure we can deliver on our vision.



# Fit for the future

Explore the programs of work aligning with our strategic pillar to remain fit for the future.

Cultural training	64
Culturability Accreditation	64
Results based accountability	65
Client Voice Reference Group	66
Research and advocacy	67
Diversity and inclusion	68
Partnerships and creative connections	70
Digital transformation	72
Leadership at all levels	73
<b>Financial reports</b>	<b>75</b>



# Cultural training

Our Cultural Training focuses on building organisational capacity to meet the needs of culturally and linguistically diverse individuals and communities. An introduction to the conversation about how we can create welcome, connection and belonging in our society in meaningful ways, Cultural Capability Training with Multicultural Australia is conducted by a facilitator with a depth of knowledge and skills, and a team member with lived experience as a migrant or resettled refugee.

Our staff engage in cultural capability training as part of our staff induction process. Apart from being a professional development opportunity for team members, the training creates a space for staff to learn about the lived experiences of their colleagues and broaden their worldview.

This year, we delivered several fee-for-service workshops to meet the unique needs of the organisations we engage with. Delivered in collaboration with each client, the workshops explore issues such as the case for diversity, tools to build cultural competence and strategies to create inclusion and equity in service provision and interactions with multicultural staff.

Organisations that have engaged with Multicultural Australia's cultural training over the past year include the Queensland Police Service, Sydney Festival, Compass Group, Suncorp and Football Queensland. 'Culture Collective' - a state government funded program, also concluded with the delivery of cultural schools-based training to 20 Queensland institutions including Staines College, Seven Hills State School, Trinity College and St Laurence's College.

# Culturability Workplace Accreditation

In February 2023, we proudly launched Culturability Accreditation, the first program of its kind in Australia for cultural diversity in the workplace. The Standards, comprised of 54 indicators under 5 key pillars, aim to provide a structured framework for organisations to reflect the communities they serve and are inclusive, welcoming, and intentional about creating a sense of belonging for staff and service users of diverse backgrounds.

Organisations aiming to achieve Culturability Accreditation undertake a process of self-assessment, document preparation, onsite assessment and response to assessment findings before their efforts are reviewed by an independent decision maker, and they are awarded accreditation for a three-year period.

## Program elements

- Web app for organisations to undertake their self-assessments in a streamlined and effective manner
- Resources and templates to support organisations undertaking accreditation
- Training plan for our team of Culturability Assessors

We look forward to welcoming our first Culturability Accreditation organisations at the beginning of FY23-24, and empowering organisations across Australia to better support cultural diversity and inclusion in their workplaces and communities. We believe that Culturability will contribute to building a society that is more equitable and culturally intelligent.





# Results based accountability

Measuring the difference we make in the lives of our clients and communities is vital. Results Based Accountability (RBA) is the framework that we have implemented to ensure the work we do has impact and we stay focused on our mission.

It gives us a clear picture of how much we have done, how well we did it, and whether our clients and communities are better off as a result.

RBA practices are helping our client service teams clarify the outcomes they aim to achieve with clients, design appropriate performance measures to collect valuable data, and use Turn the Curve exercises to develop action plans that improve outcomes.

## Data Dashboards

Closely linked to the Results Based Accountability measures, our data dashboard project is an important piece of work that involves the development of a suite of Power BI dashboards for the meaningful review and analysis of our performance measures.

Seven data dashboards are live, with five more in development. A leap in increasing our organisations data literacy and information maturity, data dashboards will enable future growth and development in data analysis to help Multicultural Australia keep fit for the future.





## Client Voice Reference Group

Multicultural Australia's Client Voice Reference Group (CVRG) comprises individuals with lived experience in line with our clients and communities.

The CVRG acts as an advisory group to Multicultural Australia to ensure our strategic priorities, program design and program delivery are informed by client voice.

The group plays an important role in the design of our programs and initiatives, research, and communication with clients to ensure that the language we use is accessible and inclusive.



# Research and advocacy

Research and Advocacy function of the organisation helps drive our core strategic focus. Drawing insights from lived experience and research, we work to support an evidence-based service delivery agenda for the organisation, develop strategies to respond to new and emerging issues for clients and communities, and identify opportunities for creating welcome, inclusion and belonging.

We prioritise the inclusion of lived experience in our work - seeking to highlight systemic barriers impacting clients and communities, raising awareness, and seeking response at appropriate levels.

## Key policy and research submissions

We engage in important national and state-level conversations – and support our communities in turn, to provide their voice to these conversations.

Our engagement has spanned a range of themes and issues:

- Submission to the Queensland Housing Summit 2022
- Submission to the Legal Affairs and Safety Committee Inquiry on Domestic and Family Violence Protection (Combating Coercive Control) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2022
- Submission to the Legal Affairs and Safety Committee on Criminal Code (Serious Vilification and Hate Crimes) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2023
- Submission to the comprehensive review of Australia's migration system – A Migration System for Australia's Future
- Submission to the Joint Standing Committee on Migration – Migration, Pathway to Nation Building
- Family Law Amendment Bill 2023
- Engagement with the National Principles to address Coercive Control
- Submission to the Select Committee on Workforce Australia Employment Services – ParentsNext
- Submission to the Inquiry into Workforce Australia Employment Services
- Submission to the Senate Standing Committees on Community Affairs - The extent and nature of poverty in Australia
- Contribution to the National Stigma and Discrimination Reduction Strategy – Consultation Draft
- Inquiry into the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Voice Referendum – submission to the Constitution Alteration (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Voice) 2023 Bill
- Submission to Australia's Humanitarian Program 2022-2023
- Review into Appropriate cost-model for Commonwealth Anti-Discrimination Laws
- Submission to the Legal Affairs and Safety Committee on Births, Deaths and Marriages Registration Bill 2022.

## Amplifying the voices of our clients and communities

A priority through our submissions and papers has been to increase the power and influence of community voice.

- We partnered with the Community Leaders' Gathering (CLG) to provide a joint submission to the Inquiry into a Human Rights Framework for Australia.
- We supported the Community Leaders' Gathering (CLG) and the Future Leaders' Advocacy Group (FLAG) to provide their joint submission to the Inquiry into Workforce Australia Employment Services.

## Partnership in research

We work with external research partners to drive and coordinate research to benefit our clients and communities. Multicultural Australia was a proud Industry Partner in the ARC Linkage project - 'Settlement Outcomes of Syrian conflict Refugee Families settling in Australia'.

This longitudinal study led an exploration of the settlement, employment and education experiences of refugee families from Syria and Iraq in metropolitan and regional areas of QLD, NSW and VIC (with a control group of refugee families from Afghanistan). This research provides the "most extensive contemporary data base and evidence-based research from which to evaluate refugee settlement outcomes in Australia".

The Final Research Report (Refuge and Family Futures in Australia: Settlement Outcomes of recently arrived refugees from Syria, Iraq and Afghanistan\*\*) - provides overwhelmingly positive findings about Australia's capacity to receive and resettle refugee families and strong positive findings for refugee families themselves who feel safe living in Australia and very optimistic about their future in Australia.

\*\* Collins, J., Reid, C., Groutsis, D., Hughes, S., Watson, K., Kaabel, A. 2023. Refuge and Family Futures in Australia: Settlement Outcomes of recently arrived refugees from Syria, Iraq and Afghanistan: Final Report, University of Sydney Business School and the MERCI@WRResearch Group

# Diversity and inclusion

Multicultural Australia's internal working groups have progressed a number of key diversity and inclusion initiatives in the past 12 months. Along with our LGBTIQ+, Child Safe, and Reconciliation and Solidarity working groups, this year we have also initiated an LGBTIQ+ Ally Network, and an Intercultural working group, with the aim of contributing to the organisation's strategic direction around the inclusion of culturally and linguistically diverse staff, clients, and communities.

Excitingly, we were also awarded with Rainbow Tick and White Ribbon accreditation, for our work on LGBTIQ+ inclusion and the awareness and prevention of domestic and family violence respectively.

## Children and young people

We work alongside children and young people both directly and indirectly across a number of programs within the organisation. This year, with the support of the Child Safe Organisation working group, we have had the opportunity to work more closely to the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations through the coordination of several pieces of work:

- Creation of multiple internal training modules around child safety and wellbeing in our organisation and our work
- Development of child- and youth-friendly resources such as a Youth Service Charter
- Revision of our Child Protection policy suite, including a revamp of our Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy
- Launch of a new internal resource hub for working with children and young people, and maintaining a child safe environment

## Cultural diversity

This year saw the creation of our very own Intercultural working group. While still in its initial stages, the Intercultural working group has already highlighted several key areas for future projects, including:

- Learning about, sharing, and celebrating the diversity of cultures and languages within our workplace and our local communities
- Developing a network of organisational champions
- Exploring professional and career development opportunities for culturally and linguistically diverse staff

## First Nations Peoples

The leadup to the Referendum has shined a spotlight on the experiences of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in our communities this year, and this has been reflected in the significant amount of work we have undertaken as an organisation around progressing First Nations understanding and inclusion.

Our Reconciliation and Solidarity working group has been hard at work on a new Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan, taking the time to conduct internal and external consultation with our staff, clients, and communities to ensure that our RAP will be meaningful and strongly linked to our vision, work, and the people we work alongside.

Additionally, this year Multicultural Australia was fortunate to be able to attend the NAIDOC Awards Luncheon in Toowoomba. It was a privilege to share in celebrating the hard work and successes of local community members and groups, and to reflect on their significant contributions to the empowerment of and reconciliation with First Nations Peoples.





### **LGBTIQ+ communities**

This year we are very proud to say that we have been awarded with Rainbow Tick accreditation. This means that Multicultural Australia has been identified as an organisation that is safe, inclusive, and affirming for LGBTIQ+ clients, staff, and communities.

This accreditation is the result of hard work and dedication across the entire organisation, and we were commended particularly on our whole-of-organisation effort towards improvement.

We were privileged to engage in several significant events this year:

- Our first representation at the Brisbane Pride Rally, marching with a number of our community members turning out to show support.
- Opportunity to present, connect and learn from pioneers in LGBTIQ+ displacement work across the globe at the Forcibly Displaced People Network (FDPN) Queer Displacements Conference.
- Continued contribution to the Coalition for LGBTIQ+ Asylum and Migration Justice and other advocacy networks on behalf of our clients and communities.



# Partnerships and creative connections

Our partnerships and creative connections help us make a real difference in the lives of our clients and communities across Queensland.

## **Suncorp**

Our longstanding partnership with Suncorp enables the delivery of our flagship events – MOSAIC Festival and LUMINOUS Lantern Parade, comprising LUMINOUS South Bank, LUMINOUS in the Neighbourhood, and LUMINOUS in the Regions.

While these events engage the broader community and help change the conversation about migrant and refugee communities in Queensland, they also enable capacity building and opportunities for meaningful engagement with new, emerging, and established community groups.

Suncorp also provided professional development opportunities for our staff, including train-the-trainer financial literacy training which provided staff with financial management training to empower communities.

## **Queensland Performing Arts Centre**

Preceding the official launch of our partnership with QPAC in May 2023, we have collaborated on a number of projects to increase arts access for the multicultural community and engage the broader community on the benefits of multiculturalism.

Our Changing the Conversation series, a four-part discussion unpacking big issues, has created a space for non-traditional voices to be heard on the QPAC stage. Our live translation of the QPAC production of the Australian children's classic, *Are We There Yet?* made the much-loved story of journeying across our country accessible to an Arabic speaking audience.

## **Brisbane Lions**

A key partner of the Connecting Through Sport program, the Brisbane Lions have made a significant impact on the lives of our clients – young people in particular – through a program of work that has helped youth from multicultural backgrounds learn Australia's favourite sport, make new friends, and feel a greater sense of belonging.

Following the launch of their new Brighton Homes Arena stadium in December 2022, the Brisbane Lions have provided us a community and engagement space on site.

The space has already been used for employment forums and client engagement events that provide direct support and services to the multicultural community in Springfield.

## **Deloitte**

Our valued partnership with Deloitte has grown over the past year, through participation in our career mentoring program and providing valuable pro bono assistance and advice.

Deloitte have helped us develop our internal capability and the capability of our clients.



# Partnerships and creative connections

## Corporate partners

- Anglicare
- Brisbane Lions
- Brisbane Catholic Education
- Brisbane City Council
- Brisbane Festival
- Carers Queensland
- Commonwealth Bank
- Cultural Perspectives
- Deloitte
- Governance Institute of Australia
- Hastings Deering
- Ipswich City Council
- JMC Academy
- KPMG
- La Boite Theatre company
- Logan City Council
- Moreton Bay City Council
- PwC
- Queensland Government
- Queensland Performing Arts Centre
- Queensland Hotels Association
- Queensland Police Service
- Queensland Theatre
- QUT
- SBS
- Study Queensland
- Suncorp
- TAFE Queensland
- Toowoomba Regional Council
- Trade & Investment Queensland
- University of Queensland

## Program partners

- AFL Queensland
- Aitkenvale State School
- Anglican Church Grammar School
- Aspley State High School
- Best Western Hotel Spring Hill
- Brisbane Roar
- City Star Lodge
- Dakabin State High School
- Department of Health
- Department of Home Affairs
- EY
- Firebirds Queensland
- Football Queensland
- Harristown State High School
- John Holland
- Lourdes Hill College
- Mabel Park State High School
- Milpera State High School
- MTA Queensland
- Mt St Michael's College
- Netball Queensland
- Nudgee College
- Queensland Rail
- Ray White
- RISE Sport
- St Laurence's College
- St Patrick's Shorncliffe
- St Rita's College
- Stone Realty
- Thrive Refugee Enterprise
- Toowoomba State High School
- Villanova College
- Welcoming Australia
- Woodridge State High School
- WISE Foundation
- Yeronga State High School

## Sector partners

- Centacare Far North Queensland
- Multicultural Communities Council Gold Coast (MCCGC)
- Unify Intercultural Australia (TMSG)
- AMES
- Melaleuca Australia
- ACCESS Community Services (SSI)
- Aged and Disability Advocacy Australia (ADA)
- AMPARO
- Australian Red Cross
- Buddies Supporting Refugees'
- Carer Gateway – Wellways Australia
- Catholic Justice and Peace Commission
- Caxton Legal Centre
- Chatloop
- Comlink
- Congolese Community of Queensland
- Department of Health and Aged Care
- Department of Social Services
- Downs Industry School's Co-Op Inc.
- Ethnic Communities Council of Queensland
- Eritrean Community of Queensland
- Fortitude Valley Housing Service
- Get Ready Queensland
- Headspace Toowoomba
- Iranian Society of Queensland
- Islamic Women's Association of Australia
- Islamic Council of Queensland
- Mater Integrated Refugee Health Services
- Metro South Health
- Moreton Bay Regional Council
- Multicultural Mental Health
- Multicultural Pastoral Care Brisbane
- Multilink Community Services
- Multicultural Youth Advocacy Network
- My Aged Care
- Nambour Community Centre
- Nature Freedom
- Open Doors Youth Service
- Queensland Advocacy for Inclusion
- Queensland Afghan Community Association
- Queensland African Communities Council
- QCOS
- Queensland Community Foundation
- Queensland Human Rights Commission
- Queensland Muslims Incorporated
- QPASTT
- Q Shelter
- Refugee Association of Logan
- Refugee Council of Australia
- The Refugee and Immigration Legal Service (RAILS)
- Services Australia
- Settlement Council of Australia
- Skills Hub Ltd
- Social Policy Group
- Somali Community of Queensland
- Tencare Disability Services
- Toowoomba Housing Hub
- True Relationships and Reproductive Health
- TRAMS
- Ukrainian Council of Queensland
- Women's Empowerment and Leadership
- World Wellness Group

# Digital transformation

There were a number of considerable achievements made across the technology sphere, with the two most significant being the attainment of certification under ISO27001 and the Right Fit For Risk (RFFR) accreditation.

ISO27001 is an industry leading standard that defines how an organisation should manage and protect data/information and is used widely across the world.

This achievement allows us to demonstrate to clients that we are committed to taking their information, and the security of that information seriously. It is also a certification that some clients find beneficial or even mandatory.

It was also a requirement for RFFR that we have ISO27001 certification. This was a critical deliverable with significant effort required across the organisation.

RFFR emerged as a legal requirement for Multicultural Australia once the ParentsNext program surpassed 2000 clients. Accredited by the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations (DEWR), RFFR imposes rigorous IT security standards for external service providers interfacing with the Department's IT systems.

To achieve this accreditation there was a significant amount of work performed to uplift the posture of Multicultural Australia IT systems and technologies in a short period of time.

In addition to these accomplishments, the organisation has invested in essential resources, including staff and equipment, to ensure the long-term maintenance of our certification. This commitment allows us to continually assess and adapt our security controls to effectively address evolving risks.





# Leadership at all levels

At Multicultural Australia, we understand that to achieve our strategic goals and fulfil our mission, we need our team of more than 400 to be passionate, skilled, and given opportunities to develop themselves personally and professionally.

We are focused on nurturing the talents and interests of our staff by promoting a practice of leadership at all levels, giving individuals true ownership of the work they do and opportunities to make decisions that positively impact their teams and the wider organisation.

## How we are developing future leaders

- Creating opportunities for staff to share their knowledge with their teammates and the wider organisation
- Developing the cultural, digital, and technical capabilities of staff
- Exploring opportunities for team members aspirations to be nurtured by involving them in projects of interest







## Pursuing a career with purpose

Ahmad Hosseini's career in humanitarian work was supposed to be temporary.

At age 12, having just arrived in Brisbane from Iran after fleeing his home country of Afghanistan, he knew that the person who regularly met him for a chat at school was providing support that was 'special and unique'.

But it wasn't until years later that he truly understood the impact this had on refugees when he became a support worker himself.

Ahmad was studying Bachelor of IT when he took a short-term role at Multicultural Australia as cultural support worker helping newly arrived Afghan refugees feel welcome and find their feet in a foreign land.

"The more I talked to them, the more my passion to pursue humanitarian work blossomed. When I started working in the asylum seeker space, it really reaffirmed my decision," Ahmad said.

"Because the work that I did with our clients, the memories stayed with them."

Ahmad recently crossed paths with a former client from 10 years ago. Coincidentally, at that very moment, the person was on a video call with another former client.

"I didn't recognise him. He said: Do you remember me? That started the conversation and [the memories] slowly came back to me," Ahmad recalled.

There were times when former clients returned the message of welcome and belonging to him.

"There are also these people at our local mosque who make sure that I have a space even if I'm not always there on time. It was because of the work I did for them."

"Some of them now have established businesses. I am glad that I was a part of their settlement journey, even if it was a tiny role. I'm really grateful for that."

Now working as MA's Group Facilitator and Client Services Officer, Ahmad looks back at a decade-long journey in humanitarian work and still wakes up with 'a renewed sense of purpose' every day.

"My aspirations extend beyond individual impacts. I dream of a world where refugees and migrants are welcomed with open arms, where their unique strengths and experiences are celebrated, and where they are given equal opportunities to thrive."



# Financial reports

Multicultural Australia's revenue for FY23 grew by approximately 28% compared to the prior year. This was mainly driven by increased government funding for humanitarian settlement and employment programs.

This revenue increase was tempered by a variety of challenges including the ongoing economic impact of the pandemic, underlying inflation peaking at almost 8% in December 2022, funding indexation falling below CPI, and a worsening housing crisis.

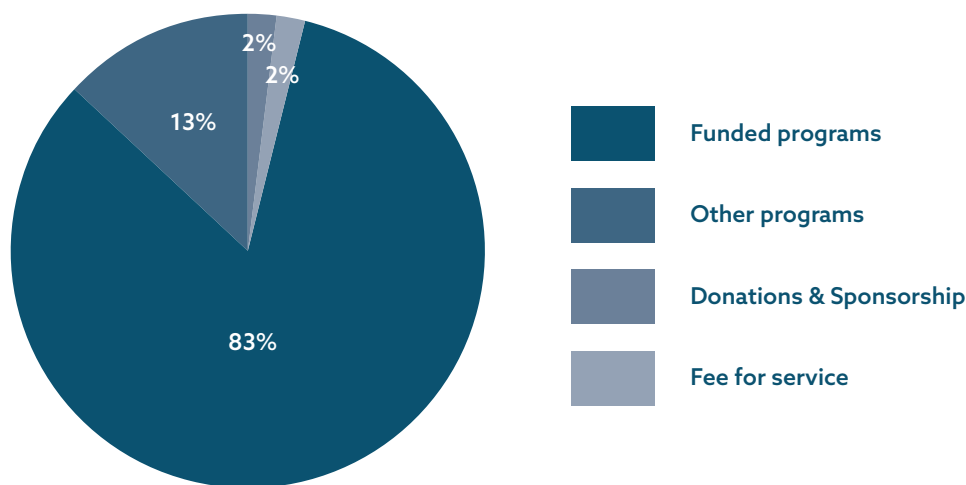
There were also many successes during the year, and it's important we acknowledge them. Of note are the opening of two new community support centres in Logan and Springfield improving our place-based service delivery, the implementation of a new Enterprise Resource Planning System, and the achievement of ISO 27001 - Information

security management certification. These investments have boosted the organisation's capability to achieve our mission as we move into a phase of increased refugee and migrant arrivals and capitalize on a variety of opportunities to broaden our revenue base over the coming year and beyond.

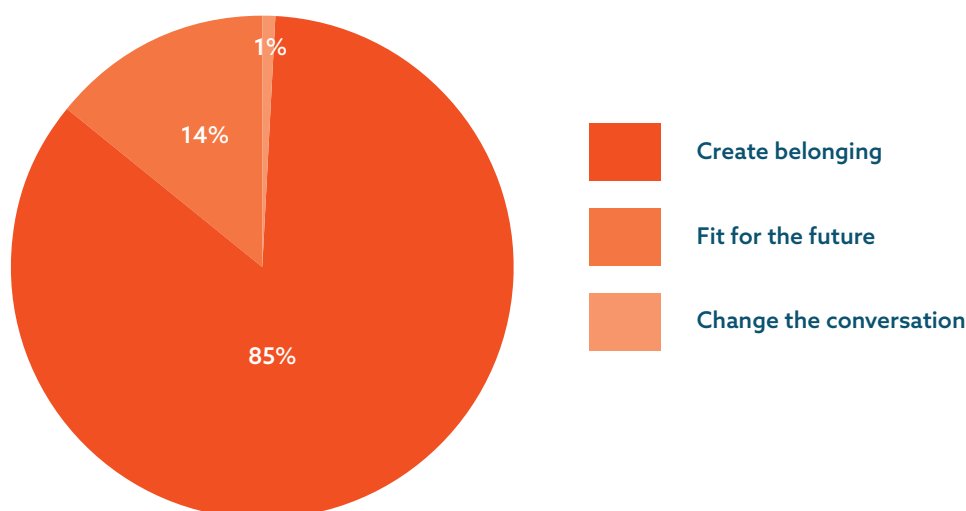
A program expense ratio of 76% and a 52% increase in activities connected with creating belonging, Multicultural Australia is demonstrating a commitment to focusing our efforts and resources towards the achievement of our strategic objectives.

We step into the new financial year with a clear focus on sustainability, so we are fit for the future, the provision of high quality services to continue creating welcome and belonging for new Queenslanders, and leveraging our strengths to change the conversation.

## FY23 Revenue Breakdown by Funding Source



## FY23 Expense Breakdown by Strategic Pillar





**MULTICULTURAL  
AUSTRALIA**  
*it's who we are*

**25** years creating welcome  
and belonging



### **Brisbane**

28 Dibley Street  
Woolloongabba QLD 4102  
07 3337 5400

### **Ipswich**

16 Eden Station Drive  
Springfield Central QLD 4300  
07 3337 5400

### **Logan**

55 Wembley Road  
Logan Central QLD 4114  
07 3198 2555

### **Rockhampton**

108 Alexandra Street  
Kawana QLD 4701  
07 4921 2222

### **Toowoomba**

107 Russell Street  
Toowoomba City QLD 4350  
07 4632 1466

### **Townsville**

67 Wotton Street  
Aitkenvale QLD 4814  
07 3337 5400