



# **CELEBRATING 30 YEARS OF MULTICULTURAL CARE**

Our story from 1991–2021



From modest beginnings in 1991 as an aged care support service for the local migrant community, Multicultural Care has grown and transformed over 30 years to become a leading provider of in-home care for older people and people with disability from culturally diverse backgrounds across Sydney.



## FOREWORD

A lot of hard work and energy has gone into building Multicultural Care into the organisation it is today. The achievements and milestones we showcase in this report could not have been possible without the dedication and commitment of multitudes of people, from staff and management to community representatives and sector stakeholders.

We cannot hope to name you all and, indeed, publishing our 30-year history has come with inevitable challenges: accessing archived materials, finding sources and contacts, and relying on people's recollections and oral histories.

Our records unfortunately do not extend much before 2003, which means 14 years of our history—and the people involved—is undocumented. Thankfully, many people have good recollections of times gone by and we are grateful to those who shared their stories and memories to help us fill in missing information and clarify questions.

We did our best to research facts and locate and reach out to key people we believe may have been involved in the 1990s, but some did not respond or were uncontactable by the time of publication.

So, this first published edition of our history will inevitably contain some omissions and perhaps inaccuracies; they are unintentional, and we are happy to correct the record for the future. We encourage anyone with further information—documents, anecdotes, photos—on the Multicultural Care Story to contact us to help ensure future milestone publications are more complete.

In the meantime, we are confident this commemorative document paints an interesting and relatively accurate picture of Multicultural Care's evolution over the past three decades. On behalf of all the culturally diverse people we have cared for and supported over the past 30 years, I congratulate and sincerely thank everyone who has contributed to our story so far.



**Rosy Walia**  
CEO, Multicultural Care



# A true mosaic of cultures

Modern-day Australia is a true ‘melting pot of cultures’. According to the Department of Home Affairs: “Australia is the most successful multicultural society in the world, uniting a multitude of cultures, experiences, beliefs, and traditions. We owe our accomplishments as a nation to the contributions of more than 300 different ancestries—from the First Australians to the newest arrivals.”

In introducing the Australian Government’s Multicultural Statement, the Prime Minister at the time, Malcolm Turnbull, put it like this:

*“Australia is an immigration nation.*

*“Almost half of our current population was either born overseas or has at least one parent born overseas. And we come from every culture, every race, every faith, every nation.*

*“We are defined not by race, religion or culture, but by shared values of freedom, democracy, the rule of law and equality of opportunity—a ‘fair go’. The glue that holds us together is mutual respect—a deep recognition that each of us is entitled to the same respect, the same dignity, the same opportunities.”*

## Key times in Australia’s migration history

**During the Gold Rush of the 1850s**, people came to Australia in the hope of striking it rich or taking advantage of the growing prosperity to work in mining towns or on the wharves. This time was, for example, the first significant Greek migration to Australia, as well as Chinese people seeking their fortunes or fleeing civil disorder, famine and floods.

**After the first and second World Wars** there was a substantial influx of people from around Europe, seeking a safe haven, and determined to build a better life. Migration was actively encouraged by the Australian Government, which provided assisted passage to multitudes of new settlers.

Later, family reunion schemes meant parents, siblings and, indeed, entire extended families came to Australia.

1988

## Foundations set to serve community needs



Photo: Street scene, Beamish St, Campsie, 1988, donated by Canterbury Municipal Council

Detailed written records are scarce about the foundation of our organisation and its first decade, but we do know that our foundations were set and shaped around a community-led desire for culturally-specific aged and disability care services for people from non-English speaking backgrounds, particularly new migrants, in the Canterbury region of Sydney.

**Our groundwork was almost certainly laid in or around 1988 at the Canterbury Bankstown Migrant Resource Centre (CBMRC), known today as Metro Assist.**

CBMRC operated the Compañeros Multicultural Day Care service, providing ethno-specific centre-based day care services for frail aged and older people with disabilities from Arabic, Chinese, Italian, Polish and Vietnamese backgrounds.

Demand for these services was expanding beyond the organisation’s capacity to help, and **action was needed...**



1989

## Government funding seeds day care growth

Accordingly, in 1989 CBMRC applied to the Department of Health for funding through the Health And Community Care program. (HACC was the predecessor to the Commonwealth Home Support Programme, which helps senior Australians access entry-level services to live independently at home.)

The funding application was successful and a **CBMRC Aged Care Advisory Committee** was formed to support the growth of the **Compañeros Multicultural Day Care** service.

1991

## Home visiting + day care › CMADSS

Further HACC funding came through in 1991, enabling the CBMRC to expand the day care program even further and to sponsor a **Multicultural Home Visiting and Support Service** to provide companionship to clients and respite to carers.



*Multicultural Care client Milvio Mondolo and his wife Lauretta sailed on the 'Aurelia' from Friuli, Italy, to reach Australian shores in 1961.*

**During the 1960s and 1970s**, conflict and unrest in the Middle East and South East Asia prompted an influx of migrants from countries such as Lebanon, Syria, Vietnam and Korea.

**In the 1980s**, the Australian Government actively marketed educational services in Asia, leading to a rapid increase in the number of Asian-born students and their families coming to Australia. According to the 2016 Census, the China-born population is one of the largest birthplace groups in Australia.

**Australia's refugee and humanitarian intake** in response to war and natural disasters has also contributed significantly to our diverse communities, including significant numbers of people from countries such as Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Nepal, India, Iran, Iraq, Vietnam, Syria, Sudan and Ethiopia, to name a few.

**Migration trends—in combination with the ageing population—shape how Multicultural Care's services are delivered and tailored, as people from various diverse cultures become more or less prominent among our clientele.**

For example, in the organisation's early years—providing cultural-specific centre-based day care services—our main clientele were frail aged and older people with disabilities from Arabic, Chinese, Italian, Polish and Vietnamese backgrounds. In response to demand, a group for people of Greek background was later added. In 2021, we provided seven language-specific day respite groups in Sydney's south west and inner west for clients who speak Mandarin, Cantonese, Italian, Greek, Arabic, Macedonian or Vietnamese.

# Our ageing nation

The need for Multicultural Care's aged care services has grown over the past 30 years and is likely to escalate in the decades ahead.



*Day Care clients on an outing to the beach.*

The median age (the age at which half the population is older and half is younger) of the Australian population has increased from 35 years at 30 June 2000 to 38 years at 30 June 2020, according to the Australian Bureau of Statistics.<sup>1</sup>

It reports: "Like most developed countries, Australia's population is ageing as a result of sustained low fertility and increasing life expectancy. This has resulted in proportionally fewer children (under 15 years of age) in the population and a larger proportion of people aged 65 and over."

"Over the 20 years between 2000 and 2020, the proportion of the population aged 65 years and over increased from 12.4% to 16.3%. This group is projected to increase more rapidly over the next decade, as further cohorts of baby boomers (those born between the years 1946 and 1964) turn 65."

"Over the past two decades, the population aged 85 years and over increased by 110%, compared with the total population growth of 35%."

**Overall, the median age of people from overseas-born groups is older than the Australian population, meaning there is a particular need for culturally tailored aged care services.**

<sup>1</sup> *Twenty years of population change*, Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2020. [www.abs.gov.au/articles/twenty-years-population-change](http://www.abs.gov.au/articles/twenty-years-population-change)

With the day care and home visiting programs securely funded, the time had come for the Aged Care Advisory Committee to become independent of the CBMRC, and our first entity—Canterbury Multicultural Aged and Disability Support Service (CMADSS)—was conceived...

**Our formal starting point—and our official anniversary milestone—was our first annual general meeting, which was held sometime during 1991.**

Coincidentally, 1991 was the first year of the **International Day of Older Persons** (1 October).

## 1993–94

**On 21 June 1993**, CMADSS was incorporated as an association.



The federal government allocated further funds in 1993 under the Community Respite for Carers program (CRC) for CMADSS to **expand the Day Care service to include a Leisure Outings Project (LOP).**

**In May 1994**, CMADSS moved to its own premises at 19 South Parade, Campsie.

**Then in June 1994**, CMADSS sought and got its first 20 Non-English Speaking Background Community Aged Care Packages (NESB CACPs). **This enabled us to provide in-home care services for the first time... setting in stone what remains our core service three decades later.**

In 1996–97 CMADSS received more funding to extend the 20 CACPs to a total of 40 packages, **doubling the number of people we could assist to live independently in their homes.**

In 1999, Dr Anthony Pun became President of CMADSS.

Australia celebrated its first annual **Harmony Week**, a federal government initiative coinciding with the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination on 21 March.

In 2000 CMADSS made another successful submission for an additional 30 CACPs, bringing the total to 70 multicultural CACPs—a major milestone for the organisation.

In 2001 CMADSS purchased premises at 32 South Parade, Campsie, with the guidance of management committee member Henry Pan, an experienced property investor. This was to serve as our base for many years.

The Canterbury community's need for multicultural services was clear from the 2001 Census:

- ▶ **45% of people were from non-English speaking countries**, the highest of any local government area in Australia
- ▶ China was the most common overseas country of origin (13%), then Lebanon (12%), Greece (10%), Vietnam (7.5%), Korea (5%), Italy (4.7%)
- ▶ **Only 30% spoke English at home**
- ▶ It was **one of the top five most disadvantaged** areas in Sydney (Socio-Economic Index for Areas)



Client Eliana Fantini celebrating her 101st birthday in 2015.

According to the 2016 Census, the median age for all overseas-born people was 44 years, six years older than for the Australian population as a whole. For some cultural groups we serve, the median age is significantly higher:

#### Median age of some cultural groups we serve



**Lithuanian-born  
72 years**



**Greek-born  
71 years**



**Italian-born  
70 years**



**Polish-born  
59 years**



**Lebanese-born  
51 years**



**Australian population  
38 years**

Other converging age-related societal factors that have impacted (and will continue to impact) our services include:

- ▶ **ageing of the carer population**, which means more people requiring respite and support in caring for older people or loved ones with disability
- ▶ **increasing cost of living** impacting people's ability to reduce or give up work to care for others
- ▶ **ageing of the workforce**, placing increasing strain on a sector where recruitment and retention are ongoing issues.





## William Luong

William Luong was President of CMADSS for three years from 2004 to 2006. In addition to his accountancy and management expertise, William brought community services experience to the management committee, along with his insights and standing as a Chinese community leader.

He has served on the boards of the Ethnic Communities Council of NSW, the Chinese Australian Services Society and the Chinese Australian Forum. In 2018 William was honoured with a Community Service Award by the Multicultural Council of NSW and the Bayside Chamber of Commerce, for his contribution to fostering multiculturalism and harmony in society and work to bring people together from diverse backgrounds.

## From unsettled times to turnaround

Any organisation run by passionate people who firmly believe in their cause—and their way of advancing it—is bound to experience some internal frictions. CMADSS was no different.

In the late 1990s and early 2000s, the organisation experienced several periods of discord among management committee members, with minutes of a few Annual General Meetings noting robust discussions among those gathered. While CMADSS's ongoing operations were not compromised, the discord at leadership level impacted on morale and member sentiment for some time.

**Jack Passaris was elected as the new CMADSS Chair in 2003** and served one term, before internal division meant he was not re-elected the following year.

### 2004

**In 2004, William Luong (pictured at left) was elected President of the management committee.**

A colleague of Henry Pan's through Chinese Australian Services Society (CASS), William's background in business and accounting was seen as being vital to improving the health of the organisation.

The CMADSS 2003–04 Annual Report, the first under William's leadership, stated:

**“A significant outcome during this period [last financial year] was the results gained from the Commonwealth Health And Community Care (HACC) validation process on 8 June 2004, with a score of 15.4 taking us up to the ‘good’ category.”**

The HACC National Service Standards ‘scorecard’ evaluated funded agencies across seven areas. To improve from ‘basic’ to ‘good’ put CMADSS in a better position to gain funding.



As William noted: “We need additional funds to provide services to meet the significant growth of the NESB aged population and its demands...

“A common trend amongst the [centre-based day care] groups is that the **participants are getting older and older**. One-third of all of our clients were over 80 years of age, amongst these, 21% were over 85 years, and especially those from Chinese and Italian backgrounds.

An important issue for our service is that we have **long waiting lists for all language groups**, especially the Arabic and Italian groups.”

**During 2004 CMADSS received funds from the NSW Department of Health to set up language-specific Carer Support Self-Help groups for the Arabic, Chinese, Greek, Italian, Korean and Vietnamese communities in the Canterbury LGA for two years.**

In May 2004, **CMADSS also employed its first Executive Officer (EO), Georgia Zogalis**. (Although Georgia could not be contacted at the time of writing, it is believed she was instrumental in the formative years of CMADSS, including securing initial funding, and was involved with the organisation for several years.)

Then, management committee member Raymond Cheung acted as EO until consultant the Hon John Dowd QC was employed on an interim basis on 1 July 2006.

According to long-serving management committee member/board director, Henry Pan, this unsettled environment also made it challenging to recruit and retain management committee members beyond a one-year term. Any friction aside, **being a committee member meant taking a hands-on role in running the day-to-day affairs of the association**, requiring significant time and effort on the part of unpaid volunteers with multiple other responsibilities.



## Henry Pan OAM

Henry Pan OAM served as a management committee member of CMADSS and then board director of Multicultural Aged Care from September 1997 until his retirement in July 2015.

Henry brought extensive experience in management and community services to CMADSS, in particular from his work with the Chinese Australian Services Society Limited (CASS). He was the founding Chairperson of CASS and held that position for 25 years, and has been the Executive Director on a volunteer basis since 2008. He has also served as Commissioner of the Community Relations Commission; Australia Day Ambassador appointed by the NSW Australia Day Council; member of the NSW Community Languages Schools Board; and member of the Equal Opportunity Division of the NSW Administrative Decisions Tribunal.

For his outstanding contributions to the community, Henry was honoured with the Order of Australia Medal in 1997; Outstanding Community Services Awards from Canterbury City Council and Rockdale City Council in 1997; the Centenary Medal from the Federal Government in 2000; and the prestigious Quang Tart Life Achievement Chinese Community Service Award in 2007.



*Henry Pan (centre) is farewelled at the 2015 AGM with, L-R: Rosy Walia, Marta Aquino, Jack Passaris, Michael Hawatt, Emanuel Valageorgiou, George Margelis.*

Existing members were fortunately able to encourage people from their professional and volunteer circles to step into the breach. Several can clearly recall the individual who introduced them into the CMADSS fold, persuading them to nominate for membership and stand for election to the management committee to ensure the organisation's continued success and stability.

**Henry Pan recalls meeting Dr Tony Pun in January 1997 on a memorable day for both of them: while waiting in line to receive their Order of Australia medals. They found they shared common interests and a passion for serving the community, and Henry later urged Tony to become involved with CMADSS. He duly did, serving as President from 1999–2003.**

Tony Pun introduced Jack Passaris (President in 2003 and 2007–2020), who introduced Emanuel Valageorgiou in 2007 (Chair 2021–), known to each other through the Ethnic Communities' Council of NSW.

At times, this inter-connectedness led to the seven-person management committee having a majority of members from particular cultural backgrounds, such as Chinese, which attracted rumblings about a lack of diversity. But, says Henry Pan, if others were reluctant to serve, what was the alternative? And what did ethnicity matter, so long as the organisation was competently managed by people with a community service ethic?

2006–07

## A very significant year

2007 marked the return of **Jack Passaris to the board and as President** and the appointment of **Dr Rosy Walia as Executive Officer** (later CEO).

In the 2007 CMADSS Annual Report, Rosy's first, she noted:

"Increased demand for our services due to an increased ageing population has been a challenge for us. For example, there were 60 people on the waiting list for our centre-based day care program, which provided services to 117 clients and respite to 99 carers.

**"Another big challenge is to cope with community care reforms. These impact adversely on the workforce issues already faced by our industry. As such it is hard to find bilingual field staff; these reforms ask for a lot more paperwork to be done, which makes it harder to recruit and retain staff."**



2007–08

## A Year of Change

A major highlight of this year was the development and implementation of the **organisation's first comprehensive Strategic Plan**, which would guide CMADSS towards achieving its goals over a three-year period.



Our plan was launched to community acclaim in March by local MP and former Minister of Fair Trading, Youth and Volunteering, the Hon. Linda Burney (pictured centre). With L-R: CMADSS Vice President Marta Aquino, CEO Rosy Walia, Treasurer Catherine Stofka and President Jack Passaris.

CMADSS participated in the independent review conducted by the Department of Health and Ageing via consultants KPMG. The aim was to consider the performance of CMADSS for the delivery of Community Aged Care Packages (CACPs) and service under the National Respite for Carers Program (NRCP).

**The findings confirmed that clients were very happy with the quality and level of services they were receiving and believed that CMADSS was responsive to their needs.**



## Dr Anthony Pun OAM

Dr Anthony Pun OAM served as President of CMADSS from 1999 to 2003 and then remained on the management committee until 2006.

Alongside his working career as a haematology scientist focused on blood transfusion and bone marrow transplantation, Tony has always been an active member of the Chinese Australian community.

He is currently National President of the Chinese Community Council of Australia, Chair of the Multicultural Communities Council of NSW, and President of the Australian Health Reform Association.

Previously, Tony has served on: Australian Chinese Community Association (President); Immigration Review Tribunal; NSW Administrative Decisions Tribunal; Ethnic Communities' Council of NSW (Chairman); Australian Pharmaceutical Advisory Council; NSW Ministerial Advisory Committee on Hearing; Drug and Alcohol Multicultural Education Centre (Chair); NSW Education Department's Sydney Region Multicultural Committee; and the Shanghai International Culture Association. He has also been an Ambassador of the Australia Day Council of NSW.

Tony received the Medal of the Order of Australia in 1997 and three NSW Premiers Awards for Community Services.

## Fresh perspectives help turn CMADSS around

**In 2006, various issues came to a head for CMADSS in the form of industrial relations matters, staff and union disputes, negative media coverage and generally poor staff morale.**

The management committee engaged the Hon John Dowd AO QC, a retired judge, as Executive Consultant to Multicultural Care in July 2006 to look into and help resolve matters. At the time, John was Chancellor of Southern Cross University. He had a background in dealing with people with disability, for

example, through the Spastic Centre, and had worked with local organisations and individuals during his 16 years as the Member of Parliament for Lane Cove.

His brief at CMADSS was to: “examine the organisation’s workplace systems, governance and administration, and to make recommendations and to implement changes, as approved by the management committee, to the services provided.”

**During his seven-month appointment (July 2006–Jan 2007), John acted as the first Chief Executive Officer of CMADSS.**

In addition to reviewing the organisation’s administrative and workplace processes, John sought to resolve staff management difficulties that had brought CMADSS before the Industrial Relations Commission. Although CMADSS was in a sound financial position, John noted some difficulties with partly unfunded services, and undertook discussions with its major funders: the Department of Health and Ageing and the NSW Department of Ageing, Disability and Healthcare.

John also determined CMADSS needed to better serve particular communities, including people of Lebanese and Korean backgrounds, and set about forming connections and inviting community leaders to become involved in CMADSS. This included Councillor Michael Hawatt of Canterbury Council (who recalls being hesitant at first but deciding to “give it a go”... and remains on the board to this day) and Nada Roude, both prominent in the Muslim community. John also asked Jack Passaris to return (after several years’ absence) to bring his vast experience of community service to the organisation.

**It is widely acknowledged by committee/board members that things started looking up for CMADSS with the appointment of Dr Rosy Walia as Executive Officer in July 2007. Not only did performance and revenue improve, but there was also a growing sense of hope and confidence among staff, management and stakeholders.**

The review found that CMADSS was meeting funding and regulatory requirements in relation to the level and quality of care provided to clients. There were however, a few housekeeping issues where CMADSS could improve.

Due to some governance issues, we lost a critical funding agreement in October 2007 with the NSW Department of Ageing, Disability and Home Care for our **Day Care Services and Home Visiting and Support Service**. The total funding loss was \$350,000, which was significant for a small organisation.

Later, in December 2007, DADHC offered this funding via an open tender process; CMADSS was unsuccessful. This was extremely disappointing for an organisation that had been providing the service successfully for 14 years, but especially disappointing for the clients who were the beneficiaries of these services. CMADSS had to make some difficult decisions to ensure its ongoing viability.

Accordingly, we reduced staff numbers through redeployment and natural attrition, changed staff rostering, applied for new revenue sources, and reduced the frequency of some services e.g. fortnightly instead of weekly day care.

Thankfully, we had cause for celebration when **our NRCP funding was extended for Day Care Services and Leisure Outings**.



2008–09

## A Year of Consolidation

CMADSS remained focused on Continuous Quality Improvement and we reported our first surplus since the loss of key state funding in 2007.

We procured our first Client Relationship Management (CRM) system. We were an early adopter of CRM in the community care sector.

2009–10

## A Year of Empowerment

The highlight this year was the successful completion of the **Community Care Quality Reporting Process**. The Quality Assessors from the Department of Health and Ageing noted:

“CMADSS has put a lot of effort in continuous quality improvement during the last two years. A number of changes have been made. The systems are consistent and sustainable. The department did not identify any gap.”

The **CMADSS six-monthly newsletter** started in July 2009 to improve communication with clients, carers and their families.

On 28 October we held our **first Open Day**, where stakeholders and the public could meet staff, find out about our services, and provide feedback.

Michael Hawatt recalls witnessing the rising professionalism within CMADSS over time, with increased staff proficiency, better administration, improved compliance and governance, and consequently, additional government funding enabling CMADSS “**to extend our hands to help more people in need**”.



**Dr Rosy Walia**

Dr Rosy Walia joined CMADSS as Executive Officer (EO) in 2007 with a mission to ensure older people, people with disability and their carers from culturally diverse communities continued to receive excellent in-home care and services. Her title changed to CEO in 2014 when the organisation became Multicultural Aged Care. Prior to this, Rosy championed quality management in the community and health care sectors as State Manager NSW/ACT with Quality Management Services, a leading national accrediting body.

Rosy has a doctorate in social science and is a recognised authority in the delivery of multicultural services. Over her career, Rosy has gained experience in liaising with a diverse range of individuals, community groups, service providers and government departments. It is her belief that effective public relations skills are essential in achieving appropriate outcomes.

Rosy has held numerous representative and advisory roles. She is currently on the Workforce National Committee of National Disability Services (NDS). Since 2011, she has been involved in the Community Care Advisory Committee of Aged & Community Services Australia (ACSA). In 2019, she was appointed to the NSW Division Council of ACSA and was elected as NSW State Committee member of NDS. Rosy has also served on numerous not-for-profit boards.

# Strong community connections

Although care services have always been the organisation's key business, our worth and our contribution are also measured by the overall wellbeing of the people we serve and the communities in which they live.

From its beginnings, the organisation has valued strong connections with local and multicultural organisations representing the diverse communities it serves, in order to:

- **consult, engage and learn** about various communities' needs so we can provide targeted, tailored services
- **provide community development activities** such as information and health education sessions, Seniors' Week and Carers' Week activities, art therapy classes, day respite
- **help deliver our services** e.g. local venues, community transport
- **help spread the word about our services** to prospective clients and their families
- **share expertise and insights** through working parties, research initiatives, local forums and sector organisations
- **advocate for our client communities.**



*City of Canterbury's 2016 Australia Day Awards recipients—Multicultural Aged Care was nominated by clients and community members.*

2010–11

## A Year of Commemoration

We proudly celebrated CMADSS's 20 years of service to the community.



*Management and staff celebrate our 20th anniversary.*



*CEO Rosy Walia and CMADSS Secretary Emanuel Valageorgiou at the 20th CMADSS AGM.*



*CMADSS staff—in their new uniforms—receive their Certificate III/IV in Home & Community Care in 2011.*

The CMADSS staff uniform was introduced as a result of feedback from staff.

2011–12

## A Year of Reform

Home and Community Care (HACC) aged care services transitioned entirely to the federal government, which had full responsibility of funding, administration, policy, management and delivery from July 2011.

The Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission was established during the year.

**Most importantly, the federal government's ten-year aged care reform package 'Living Longer, Living Better' was announced in April 2012. (The section on Consumer Directed Care provides more information).**



Such community and sector networks and public awareness have also assisted in attracting staff and management. CMADSS management committee members—and board members, once the association became a company—were often known to each other through their service with like-minded organisations, peak sector bodies, local councils or state or federal government.

**Here are some of our many valued connections that have contributed to the success of the organisation over the years, helping us to make a difference.**

### Peak bodies

- Aged & Community Services Association of NSW
- Community Relations Commission (formerly Ethnic Affairs Commission of New South Wales)
- Ethnic Communities Council of NSW (ECCNSW)
- National Disability Services (NDS)

### Culture-specific organisations

- Australian Korean Welfare Association
- Chinese Australian Services Society (CASS)
- Chinese Australian Union (CAU)
- Co.As.It.
- Greek Orthodox Community of NSW
- Greek Welfare Centre
- Muslim Women's Association
- Tripoli and Mena Association
- Vietnamese Seniors Association

### Local councils (as at 2021, after amalgamations)

- Bayside Council
- Burwood Council
- Camden Council
- Campbelltown City Council
- Canterbury-Bankstown Council
- City of Canada Bay Council
- City of Sydney Council
- Fairfield City Council
- Georges River Council
- Inner West Council

- › Liverpool City Council
- › Randwick City Council
- › Strathfield Council
- › Sutherland Council
- › Waverley Council
- › Woollahra Municipal Council



*Officially launching the new MAC name on 9 April 2014, L-R: Bankstown Mayor Khal Asfour, Member for Banks David Coleman, Canterbury Mayor Brian Robson, Federal Member for Watson Tony Burke.*

### Local community organisations

- › Bankstown Community Transport
- › Collaborative Against Abuse of Older People in the Sutherland Shire
- › Connect: Inner West Community Transport Group
- › Inner South-West Community Development Organisation
- › Inner West Take a Break (TAB) project
- › Metro Assist (formerly Canterbury-Bankstown Migrant Resource Centre)
- › Newtown Neighbourhood Centre Social Support Group
- › Riverwood Canterbury Aged and Disability Support Service
- › Riverwood Community Centre



*Greek Centre-Based Day Respite clients enjoy a bus trip to Katoomba.*

## 2012–13

### A Year of Anticipation

The organisation prepared for expansion with the coming reforms, including conducting a pilot of Consumer Directed Care with selected clients.

We received 30 CDC Packages for the inner-west area at all four levels of care, bringing our packages for in-home care to 100.

## 2013–14

### A Year of Augmentation

**In November 2013, we changed our name to Multicultural Aged Care (MAC) Inc.** to more accurately reflect what services we provided at the time—a move that chair Jack Passaris said signalled the organisation was ‘spreading its wings’ to other regions.

**During the year we expanded our services to the Inner West, South East and South West areas of Sydney.**

This included obtaining 30 additional Home Care Packages (levels 1–4) for the Inner West on a consumer directed care basis, and successfully tendering to provide Home And Community Care services to deliver domestic assistance, transport and respite care services in South East and South West. **This resulted in a 46 per cent increase in our revenue.**



2014–15

## A Year of Reformation

The year marked a dramatic change in the Australian aged care sector with the advent of Consumer Directed Care—the government-mandated reform to enable customers to choose their service provider, once they were approved for a Home Care Package or Commonwealth Home Support Programme.

In 2015, we converted 70 Home Care Packages (formerly CACPs) to Consumer Directed Care packages.

We also reformed our policies, practices and systems to position ourselves for and beyond 2017, when (from Feb 2017), a part of aged care (packaged care) would be deregulated and funding for a home care package would follow the consumer.

As CEO Rosy Walia commented in the 2014 Annual Report:

“Being a niche provider, I believe by using the right ingredients like customer-focused culture, use of technology, and workforce planning and development, we can adapt ourselves to face these challenges and grab the opportunities.”



## Partnerships

- Aged Care Industry Information Technology Council: CARE-IT Research Project
- Australian Community Care Outcome Measures (ACCOM)
- Bankstown TAFE
- End of Life Direction for Aged Care (ELDAC)
- Pathways to Inclusion South-Asian Women's Project
- Skills Training and Resource Service (STARS)
- The Australian Centre for Social Innovation (TACSI)



*Bankstown TAFE graduates at their Multicultural Care orientation.*

## Aged Care/Health services

- Aged Care Rights Service
- Australian Hearing
- Australian Tinnitus Association
- Bankstown Hospital
- Beyond Blue
- Cancer Council
- Canterbury Hospital
- Dementia Australia
- Diabetes Australia
- Guide Dog Association
- Inner West Medicare Local
- Northern Sydney Local Health District



- NSW Fall Prevention and Healthy Ageing Network
- South Eastern Sydney Local Health District
- South Western Sydney Local Health District
- Sydney Local Health District
- Sydney South West Area Health Service

#### Working groups and forums

- Active Canterbury Together (ACT) reference group
- Australian Aged Care Quality Agency (AACQA) Standards Guidance Reference Group
- Canterbury/Bankstown CACP Providers
- Canterbury Carers' Week Working Party
- Canterbury Marrickville HACC Forum
- Canterbury Squalor and Hoarding Network
- Canterbury Seniors Week Working Party
- Canterbury Service Providers Network
- Combined Pensioners and Superannuants Association (CPSA) Health Promotion Service for Older People
- Connections: Reducing Social Isolation among Older People in Bankstown Working Party
- Healthy Communities Initiative working group
- Inner West Area HACC Forum
- Inner West Carers' Week Working Group
- Inner West Dementia Network
- Inner West Disability Network
- Inner West Mental Health Working Party
- Multicultural Packaged Care Forum
- NSW Health End of Life/Palliative Care Reference Group
- Respite Care Providers Meeting
- Workforce Development Working Group

2015–16

## A Year of Rejuvenation

We successfully transitioned all our packaged care clients to Consumer Directed Care packages from July 2015. The majority of clients embraced this change with enthusiasm.

**Multicultural Aged Care was proud to be nominated for Organisation of the Year in the City of Canterbury's 2016 Australia Day Awards in recognition of our contribution to the community.**



*Federal MP Tony Burke with Multicultural Aged Care CEO Rosy Walia and Chair Jack Passaris.*

Another reform that impacted us during the year was receiving Commonwealth Home Support Programme (CHSP) referrals from the My Aged Care portal, an initiative of the Department of Social Services to help the community navigate the complicated aged care system as a one-stop shop.

In February 2016, ACATs (Aged Care Assessment Teams) were transitioned to this portal too.

**We commenced providing weekly Centre-Based Day Respite service for five language groups.** This community need had been brought to our attention constantly over the past five years, so we were delighted to finally be in a position to fulfil this demand.

**In December 2015 we relocated to new commercial premises on Canterbury Road, opposite Canterbury Hospital.** This not only accommodated additional staff, but it also provided our existing and potential clients with a dedicated space to wait, and interview rooms to have confidential discussions.

**The premises were officially launched in March 2016, attended by many dignitaries.**



*CEO Rosy Walia with the Hon. John Ajaka MLC, Minister for Ageing, Minister for Disability Services and Minister for Multiculturalism at the launch.*

**As CMADSS/MAC/MC has extended its geographic reach around the Sydney region, we have forged connections with new communities, cultural groups and organisations in those areas. Our service footprint—and our network—has grown far beyond our origins in Canterbury 30 years ago.**

As incoming 2021 Chair Emanuel Valageorgiou says:

**“Looking ahead, Multicultural Care is keen to connect more effectively with various community organisations serving emerging ethnic groups: to ensure their members know about the help we can provide, and the employment opportunities we offer.”**



### **Emanuel Valageorgiou**

Emanuel Valageorgiou joined the Board in 2007 and was appointed Chair in December 2020, having also served for several years as Secretary. He is an experienced not-for-profit (NFP) board director and was formerly a senior executive with TransGrid. Until recently he provided human resources and change management consulting services to not-for-profits and small businesses. He has extensive experience in voluntary organisations dealing with multicultural issues, aged and disability care, youth, and sport. Emanuel has been a Director of the Ethnic Communities' Council of NSW since 2005, serving as Secretary and Chair and is currently its Treasurer. He serves as a member of Multicultural NSW's Western Sydney Regional Advisory Council. Emanuel is also President of the Samian Brotherhood of NSW and a Founding Director of Riverwood Glory Football Club.

## Consumer Directed Care: a game-changing reform

Change has been a constant in the community care sector since our beginnings—and will continue into the 2020s in the wake of the Royal Commissions into Aged Care Quality and Safety and into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability.

Over the past thirty years, key government reforms of Australia's aged care and disability support systems have resulted in:

- non-government organisations being tasked to deliver public services in the community
- the federal government assuming more funding responsibilities from the states
- consumers being given more say in how they are cared for and supported.

So-called consumer directed care is a game-changing reform to aged care and disability support services.

As EO Rosy Walia reported in the 2012 and 2013 CMADSS Annual Reports, Australian Government reforms to the aged care sector have sought to improve and streamline the provision of services to older Australians—in particular, the 'Living Longer, Living Better' (LLLLB) aged care reform package announced in April 2012 in response to the Productivity Commission report 'Caring for Older Australians'.

"LLLLB provides a ten-year plan for aged care reforms. Some of the key elements for community aged care include the expansion of support in the home by introducing two new levels of packages and, from July 2013, all new Home Care Packages will need to be offered to consumers on a Consumer Directed Care (CDC) basis, with existing community care packages to be converted by July 2015.

**"The elementary intent of the 'Living Longer, Living Better' reform is to create a consumer-led and directed care service system. The challenge is to translate this philosophy into practice. It is a cultural change for all stakeholders involved including management, staff, consumers and their families.**

2016–2017

### A Year of Transformation



**In February 2017, we became a registered National Disability Insurance Scheme provider,** delivering personalised disability care services to people with disability who wish to remain living independently and safely in their own homes.



We were proud to be among the few successful organisations invited to be present at the **announcement of the CHSP Growth Funding Round** on 10 March 2017, by the Minister for Aged Care, Ken Wyatt AM (pictured above, centre, with CEO Rosy Walia and board member George Margelis).

**We started delivering a new flexible care initiative in April 2017: the Short Term Restorative Care Programme,** which provides in-home care and support for older people who want to return to an earlier or improved level of physical ability following a period of ill health or decline.

**In June 2017 we officially changed our name to Multicultural Care** and transferred the organisation from an incorporated association to a company limited by guarantee and adopted a new constitution.



As CEO, Dr Rosy Walia, remarked:

“It has been a very significant year for our organisation. We have successfully launched a new brand, transformed the way we work and diversified our services to align with our varying target communities and the reforming sector in which we operate.”

## 2017–18

### A Year of Diversification

We continued to expand our services in the open deregulated aged care market.

In December 2017 we were appointed to the **NSW ComPacks Program Panel**, from which Local health Districts can select service providers to provide short-term non-clinical care packages to patients following discharge.

### We were chosen as a preferred provider for Veterans' Home Care in November 2017.

Community Resilience Grant funding enabled us to develop a 12-week **art therapy workshop program**, *Delightful Colours of the World*, which began in May 2018.



**“CDC is a way of delivering services that allows consumers to have greater control over their own lives by empowering them to make choices** about the types of care and services they access and the delivery of those services, including who will deliver the services and when.

“Under a CDC approach, consumers are encouraged to identify goals, which could include independence, wellness and re-ablement. The consumer decides the level of involvement they wish to have in managing their package, which could range from involvement in all aspects of the package, including coordination of care and services, to a less active role in decision-making and management of the package.”

Along with our increased geographic reach, the advent of consumer directed care was a key rationale for us to change our name and brand to better promote our services: from Canterbury Multicultural Aged and Disability Support Service to Multicultural Aged Care, officially launched in April 2014.

**By July 2015, Multicultural Aged Care had transitioned all its packaged aged care clients to Consumer Directed Care packages, reporting that “the majority of clients embraced this change with enthusiasm”.**

In a further, ‘game-changing’ stage of the reform, from 27 February 2017, all Home Care Packages transferred to consumers: once approved for and allocated a Home Care Package, consumers had the freedom to select and also change their provider. This open market with portable HCPs meant providers now had the opportunity—in fact, the imperative—to market their services directly to consumers.





## Jack Passaris OAM

Jack Passaris OAM was elected to the board of Multicultural Care in 2003; he held the position of Chair in 2003 and again from 2007 until December 2020. He is extremely proud of what Multicultural Care achieved during this time and continues to serve as a Director on the Board. Jack has extensive experience on not-for-profit boards and community organisations. He has always had a strong passion for multiculturalism and for the development of a culturally diverse society. Jack is also a board member of the Ethnic Communities' Council of NSW and a Foundation and Life Member. Jack is a former Deputy Mayor of Marrickville Council, where he served for 19 years as a Councillor. He is President of the Greek Orthodox Parish of Newtown and Treasurer and Trustee of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of Australia Consolidated Trust. Jack is a Trustee of the Foundation for Hellenic Studies (UNSW). In 2009, Jack received the Order of Australia Medal for his services to the community and he has demonstrated his ongoing dedication to multiculturalism in Australia and community life. In 2014 he was awarded the Premier's Lifetime Multicultural Community Service Medal.



**Also in May 2018 we were funded to implement the Multicultural Weavers Project**—partnering with the Australian Centre for Social Innovation to adapt and trial their peer-to-peer support model (known as Weavers) specifically for carers from CALD backgrounds. It pairs experienced carers with others who are currently caring for a loved one to share experiences and advice.

**We expanded our services under the Commonwealth Home Support Programme** to include allied health and flexible respite care services, including three new Centre-Based Respite Day Care groups in south west Sydney.



Despite Home Care Packages becoming portable from 2017 (meaning clients can take their funding to their provider of choice), **we maintained and grew our client numbers.**

Our first biennial staff survey was facilitated through external provider, the Voice Project found:

**“A highly engaged workforce with a strong understanding and attachment to Multicultural Care’s mission and values, solid understanding of their roles, and a positive work-life balance.”**

2018–2019

## A Year of Growth

We expanded our services to include the **Community Visitors Scheme**. This provides friendship and companionship by matching older people who are socially isolated or lonely with volunteer visitors, who visit them at home or within a group in aged care homes.

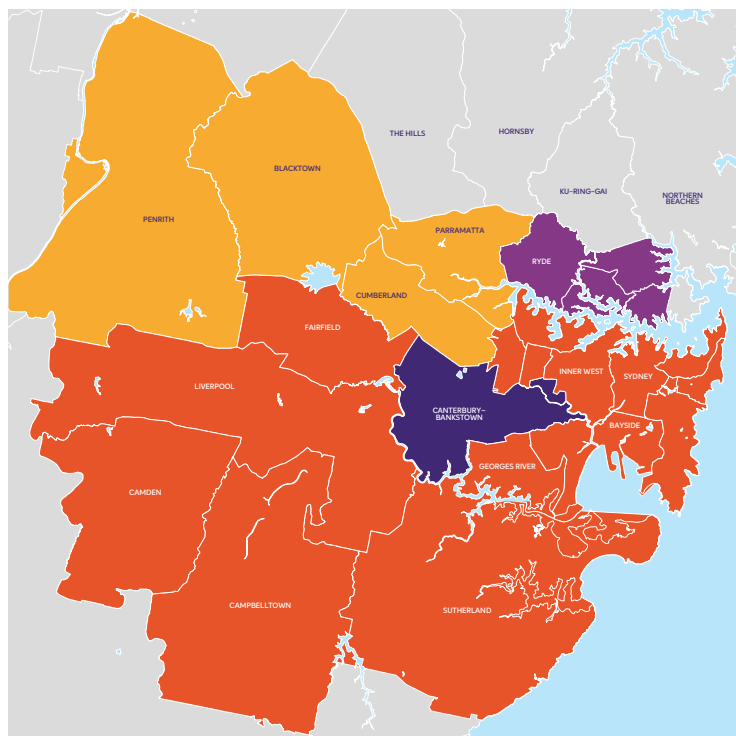


Our Veterans' Home Care services expanded into northern Sydney.

**The Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety was announced in September 2018;** Multicultural Care submitted a comprehensive response and attended the Bankstown community forum.

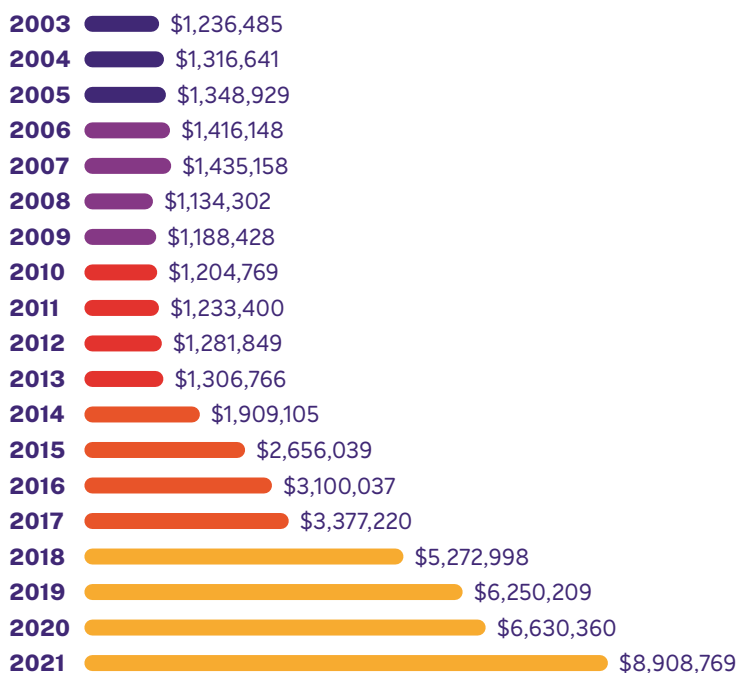


## Expanding areas of Sydney served by CMADSS/MAC/ Multicultural Care



● 1991 ● 2014 ● 2019 ● 2021 and beyond

## Snapshot of our operating revenue/income





# National Disability Insurance Scheme: another game-changer

The National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) grew from a 2010 Productivity Commission report that recommended extensive reforms to the care and support for people aged 7–65 living with permanent and significant disability.

Like aged care, the NDIS would operate on a Consumer Directed Care basis, providing funding directly to individuals so they could have a say in their services and their providers.



The need for support within culturally and linguistically diverse communities (CALD) was also clear:

- **1 in 5 Australians (5.14 million in 2020) live with disability**
- **1 in 4 people with disability (1.29 million) are from CALD backgrounds<sup>2</sup>**
- **approximately 20 per cent of NDIS participants would identify as CALD, according to the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA)**

The NDIS began on 1 July 2013 with trial sites. Early reports indicated lower participation by CALD participants than expected: 4.2 per cent according to the NDIA 2015–2016 Annual Report. Language and cultural barriers were cited as key barriers, providing further evidence to support the organisation's move into disability care.

<sup>2</sup> Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers 2015, Australian Bureau of Statistics 2016

**We welcomed the establishment of the Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission**, a one-stop-shop replacing the Aged Care Complaints Commissioner and Australian Aged Care Quality Agency. One of the first actions of the Commission was to develop the new Aged Care Quality Standards, which came into effect on 1 July 2019.

**Multicultural Care was named the Winner of the 2018 Canterbury Bankstown Local Business Awards—Health Improvement Services.**



*L-R: George Margelis, Emanuel Valageorgiou, Rosy Walia and Jack Passaris celebrate our win.*

## 2019–20

### A Year of Change

Following a successful tender application, Multicultural Care started providing in-home personal care, domestic assistance, flexible respite and assisted transport services through the **Sydney Local Health District (SLHD)** in May 2020. The services are provided to patients by referral through the Royal Prince Alfred, Canterbury and Concord Hospitals.



We were proud to be nominated in the **2019 HESTA Aged Care Awards**, and to be a finalist in the **2019 Canterbury Bankstown Local Business Awards**.

**The new Charter of Aged Care Rights** commenced on 1 July 2019 for all clients funded by the Department of Health.



Multicultural Care achieved a **Certificate of Excellence** in the Voice Project's 2019 Best Workplace Awards.

In October 2019, **The Royal Commission Interim Report into Aged Care Quality and Safety** revealed that older citizens are neglected by an aged care system that fails to meet their needs.

Multicultural Care welcomed the appointment of the first Ageing and Disability Commissioner in NSW, aiming to significantly reduce cases of abuse to the elderly and to people with disability.

We adopted the **Open Disclosure and Clinical Governance frameworks** to align with the Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission's (ACQSC) recommendations. With more clients accessing high-level packages, it was critical for us to adopt these frameworks.

Multicultural Aged Care had been exploring other avenues to diversify its income stream, and the board decided to extend the organisation's services to people with disabilities.

**On 1 July 2016 the full NDIS scheme began rolling out across Australia—available in Sydney from 1 July 2017**—when the newly renamed Multicultural Care started providing its culturally tailored care services to people living with disability. Commented CEO Rosy Walia at the official brand launch on 22 June:

*“By becoming Multicultural Care, we will not only continue to provide our culturally appropriate aged care services, but also will fill the gap being left by lack of culturally tailored disability care services.”*

In 2020, federal parliament's Joint Standing Committee on the NDIS recommended the NDIA review its CALD strategy. **The committee heard evidence that CALD people with disability faced difficulties obtaining support**, that cultural attitudes to disability prevented them from accessing the NDIS, that overall levels of cultural competency within the NDIA were insufficient, that CALD people were often confused by NDIS terminology due to language barriers, and that they had difficulty appealing NDIS decisions.<sup>3</sup>

By 2021, the gap was closing but still significant: the percentage of NDIS participants who identified as CALD in June 2021 was 9.5 per cent. Of the 466,619 NDIS participants as of 30 June 2021, 44,113 identified as being from CALD backgrounds.<sup>4</sup>



<sup>3</sup> SBS News, 25 October 2021

<sup>4</sup> NDIA 2020–21 Annual Report

## Responding to COVID-19

Multicultural Care faced unprecedented times in 2020 with the onset of the global COVID-19 pandemic. CEO Rosy Walia explains how the organisation adapted to the climate to ensure the continued safety of staff, volunteers, consumers, participants and their families.

I am very proud of the way our organisation rose to the challenge of COVID with a single-minded focus on maintaining services to those who rely heavily on Multicultural Care to continue living independently in their own homes with dignity.

We demonstrated our organisational agility through the fast and effective implementation of robust COVID-safe practices, in line with government advice and guidelines.

We developed and implemented an effective COVID-19 Response Plan, reviewed and updated our Business Continuity Plan and Risk Register, and enforced strict infection control measures for all staff—including escalated PPE (Personal Protective Equipment) protocols for frontline staff.

A spate of new policies were devised and implemented in response to the crisis climate. These include an Epidemic/Pandemic Policy and Procedure, and a Working from Home COVID-19 Policy and Procedure.

**We also re-designed the delivery of some of our services and programs to ensure continued client contact and care to those at risk of isolation and loneliness due to the pandemic.**



*Clients play bingo the socially distanced way.*

2020–2021

### A Year of Celebration



**We celebrated our 30th anniversary of service to the community and our continued achievements!**

In October 2020 we began using the **Australian Community Care Outcome Measurement Tool** as a pilot program.

Our new Client Relationship Management System (CRM) was launched on 7 December 2020.

Thanks to community recommendations, we were a finalist in the 2020 Canterbury Bankstown Local Business Awards.

On the services front, Multicultural Care was funded to expand its Commonwealth Home Support Program (CHSP) transport services to Sydney's south west and inner west regions, helping to meet client demand.

**We successfully tendered for the CHSP Growth Funding Round, enabling our CHSP services to extend to people living in northern Sydney for the first time (from 2021–22).**

Our successful Department of Health tender meant our support staff would be able (from 2021–22) to more than triple the number of Short-Term Restorative Care clients they visit on any one day.

Our Carer Investment Program (CIP) funding from the NSW Department of Communities and Justice (DJC) was extended for our **Weavers Program**, which provides support to carers.

Our Community Resilience funding from the Department of Social Services was also extended for 2021–22, enabling us to continue offering our popular **Art Therapy program**.

We were appointed as a south western Sydney partner in the **EnCOMPASS: Multicultural Aged Care Connector program**, run by the Federation of Ethnic Communities Councils of Australia and funded by the Department of Health. The program funds a specialist support worker or ‘connector’ to help seniors understand the supports available to them and access appropriate aged care services.

**In May 2021, Multicultural Care pledged its commitment to the Aged Care Voluntary Industry Code of Practice, developed by the Aged Care Workforce Industry Council (ACWIC).**

The Multicultural Care Strategic Plan for 2021–2023 was developed to guide the organisation through its next three years of service, growth, transformation and responsiveness to ongoing reforms.

**Here’s to our next three decades of award-winning cultural care and connection for older people and people living with disability, their families and carers!**

Our Art Therapy workshops and Centre-Based Day Respite Program were temporarily paused due to restrictions on gatherings from March 2020. These programs resumed in August and October 2020 respectively, with clients adapting well to the varying COVID safety measures such as checking in, wearing masks or social distancing.

During times when day respite was not an option (particularly during Sydney’s two prolonged lockdowns), Multicultural Care continued supporting clients by providing Flexible Respite to reduce the risk of social isolation. Our Bilingual Support Staff spent quality time with clients in their homes playing cards, reading books, playing board games, playing music and or just providing a listening ear to support them during lockdown.

National Harmony Week in late March is a major occasion on the Multicultural Care calendar for clients, families, staff and community members—but COVID forced the cancellation of our popular Mosaic Festival in 2020. In 2021, we postponed it until June when the situation was more favourable and client confidence to attend events was higher (more clients and staff had started to receive their first vaccinations). Two hundred people came together in a celebration of cultural diversity through music, dance and art. (Sydney went into lockdown again soon afterwards.)

There was an immense amount of information circulating during the pandemic. We were able to absorb, curate and communicate this in a concise and relevant manner to staff on a weekly basis, and to clients through our Bilingual Support Staff. Further supports included the creation of a ‘COVID-19 Updates’ page on our website, sharing latest health advice in multiple languages.

The lockdown saw a big change in our office culture too, with the majority of staff having to work remotely from home. Our IT server was reconfigured so that it could better meet the needs of staff.

**As an organisation we have been confronted, challenged and somewhat energised by these unforeseen events, but Multicultural Care has been well-managed over the last decade. We have clearly demonstrated we have the resources to navigate through uncertain times, and to continue effectively serving our clients now and well into the future.**

➤ Turn to the reverse cover for **Multicultural Care in 2020–21**







