

mcNews

March - April 2022 / Autumn Edition

multiculturalcare.com.au



Celebrating 30 years of MC!

Multicultural Care held an Open AGM (Annual General Meeting) on Thursday 9 December 2021 at Ashfield Town Hall. The event also celebrated a very important milestone for our organisation: 30 years of providing in-home support services to Sydney's multicultural community.

The 30 year celebration was attended by The Hon. Mark Coure MP, Minister for Multiculturalism; Mr Stephen Kamper MP, Shadow Minister for Multiculturalism; Ms Sophie Cotsis MP, Member for Canterbury, founding members of our organisation; as well as Board Directors, staff and volunteers of Multicultural Care.

Formal AGM proceedings were followed by celebrations that included the sharing of our 30-year story by MC's Board Directors, the launch of our updated branding by CEO, Dr Rosy Walia, and multicultural foods and entertainment. (story continues on p.3)

Did you know?

There are dedicated help lines that you can call for support with COVID-19:

- **NSW Health Isolation Support Line - 1800 943 553**
- **NSW Health COVID-19 Care at Home Support Line - 1800 960 933**
- **National COVID-19 Vaccine Helpline - 1800 020 080**

To speak to an interpreter in your language call 13 14 50.

Message from the CEO

Welcome to the Autumn edition of our newsletter. You may have noticed that we have given this newsletter a fresh new look for the new year. After reaching our 30-year anniversary as an organisation it was time to update our look!

Our logo has also been updated and we now have a slogan that better represents what we stand for: 'Over 30 years of Cultural Care and Connection'. We hope you like it!



You told us in our first client engagement survey that you would like to receive our newsletters more regularly. We have listened! I can confirm that this year we will be sending more newsletters to your letterbox to keep you updated on the latest news and information.

Our newsletters will also feature more of the things you would like to know about—such as the latest health and wellbeing advice, information on supports for carers, how to better navigate My Aged Care, and further news to encourage your continued independence at home (find results of the survey on page 5).

As COVID-19 continues to spread in the community and concern grows over the BA.2 sub-variant of Omicron, I would like to reassure you that all staff at Multicultural Care have received their three vaccines, or are in the process of doing so (this is mandatory in NSW). Staff who are awaiting their booster shots are being tested twice weekly.

At Multicultural Care, we have also reviewed our measures to minimise the spread of COVID-19. This has resulted in a COVID-19 Response Flowchart for the office that clearly guides staff on how to report and address COVID-19 related incidents at work. A HEPA air filter has also been installed in the office to reduce airborne bacteria and we are strictly testing all staff who have returned to work from taking sick leave, to ensure that they are fit to be at work.

What's more, Rapid Antigen Tests (RAT) are readily available for anyone to use in the office.

Our bilingual support staff (BSS) continue to wear Personal Protection Equipment (PPE)—such as face shields, gloves, aprons and masks, and to use hand sanitiser to help minimise any risk of spreading or contracting the virus. BSS are also being regularly tested (using RAT kits). We remain committed to doing our utmost to safeguard the health and wellbeing of our clients, participants and staff.

Are you using the Family Portal? It's a convenient way for clients to directly access their personal service delivery information online, in real time. The Family Portal allows you to view your care plans and payments, and to request changes to your services. If you have not yet received a password to access the Family Portal, please contact our office on (02) 9718 6199 and speak to Stephen Lowe or Sharon Kirkpatrick. They will be happy to assist with any support you may need.

Please remember to stay up to date with your vaccinations. We hope you enjoy your autumn edition! Your partner in care,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Rosy Walia". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above a horizontal line.

Dr Rosy Walia
Chief Executive Officer

Celebrating 30 years of care delivery

The story of Multicultural Care was proudly shared by Board Directors at our Open AGM and 30-Year Anniversary Celebration on 9 December 2021.

From our humble beginnings as a small aged care support service providing culturally-specific centre based day care services for frail aged and older people with disability from culturally diverse backgrounds, **Multicultural Care has become a leading multicultural care provider supporting more than 1,353 clients, who speak up to 42 different languages!**

At the event, Multicultural Care's updated branding was launched by CEO, Dr Rosy Walia, who also revealed our organisation's new slogan, 'Over 30 years of Cultural Care and Connection'.



Long-time bilingual support staff Biagia Malatino (born in Italy), otherwise known as 'Gina', and Nga Le (born in Vietnam), shared their personal stories of how they came to Australia and what interested them in a career in the care sector. Both expressed fulfilment from providing support to their communities, where to some clients they have become like members of the family!



Above: Care workers 'Gina' Malatino and Nga Le spoke about their rewarding work



From left to right: Board Directors Diana Chang, George Margelis, Jack Passaris OAM and Emanuel Valageorgiou (centre) are joined by CEO, Dr Rosy Walia; Sophie Cotsis MP, Member for Canterbury; and the Hon. Mark Coure MP, Minister for Multiculturalism. Below: Mr Stephen Kamper MP, Shadow Minister for Multiculturalism offered words of congratulations



The Hon. Mark Coure MP, Minister for Multiculturalism; Mr Stephen Kamper MP, Shadow Minister for Multiculturalism; and Ms Sophie Cotsis MP, Member for Canterbury delivered speeches in support of Multicultural Care's work, and congratuated

the organisation for 30 years of service to the community.

To mark celebrations, a special cake was cut, followed by music from Fernal Duo, who treated the audience to popular English and Latin American music, as they enjoyed multicultural foods and celebration cupcakes.





Above: Belly dancer, Andrea transported clients to the Middle East

Below: Bilingual support staff Li Mei Li, Petti Litirico, Jing Yi (Louise) Luo and Kudus Meskel brought along their festive cheer

Below right, and far right: clients enjoying the event and their time spent together



Dancing fun at Christmas party!

Spirits were high on Wednesday 22 December 2021, when 120 clients from our Arabic, Macedonian, Vietnamese, Greek, Italian and Chinese centre-based day respite groups gathered to enjoy Christmas celebrations at the Magpie Sports Club in Croydon Park.

Clients were treated to a three-course lunch including unlimited soft drinks, tea and coffee; and entertainment that featured music from Europe by accordionist and singer Phillippe Wittwer; belly dancing by Sydney belly dancer, Andrea; and a fashion show by the Dong Fang Yun Model Art Troupe.

New friendships were formed as participants from different cultural day respite groups intermingled. Multicultural Care's Corporate Services Manager, Grant Funded Services team, staff and volunteers were also there to lend their support and ensure that everyone was having a great time.

Some of the best client dance moves were witnessed on the dance floor! The merriment continued into the afternoon as the belly dancer transported everyone to the Middle East, inspiring clapping, cheering and shimmying!

All clients left the event with a traditional Christmas pudding to enjoy over the festive season.

Survey reveals satisfaction

In 2021 Multicultural Care conducted an independent Client Engagement and Communication Survey. 131 clients participated, providing valuable feedback on our communication, topics they would like to know more about, and how to better connect with them. Here are some of the findings:

- **75 %** of respondents are happy with information they receive from Multicultural Care
- **73 %** stated that they like to receive their information by paper newsletters (digital newsletters, surveys, as well as in-person events and activities were also noted as effective communication channels)
- **70 %** would like details on the HCP Manual
- **61 %** want to know more about My Aged Care, and how to navigate the system
- **41 %** are interested in receiving NDIS updates

Participants also indicated that their most preferred method of contributing to MC engagement strategies was through 'surveys', followed by 'telephone interviews', then 'workshops' and focus groups'.

Health & wellbeing

The top 5 health and wellbeing topics, as indicated by clients through the 2021 Client Engagement and Communication Survey are:

- 1. Active body**
- 2. Active brain**
- 3. Carer Supports**
- 4. Common Health Issues**
- 5. Technology and equipment**



Georgia, Frankie and Matthew's story

Finding friendship and companionship with 'their' NDIS support worker has been a happy bonus for Georgia and her adult son Frankie.



Fotios 'Frankie' Xirocostas is 52 years old and lives at home in Sydney with his mother Georgia, 74. He's Australian-born with Greek heritage from both his parents, who arrived from Greece in the mid-1960s, when migration from Greece was at its peak.

Since her husband died 16 years ago, Georgia has been her son's sole carer.

Pictured above: Matthew Siu (left) with 'Frankie' (centre) and Georgia Xirocostas

Frankie lives with schizophrenia, a mental illness that causes someone to have an altered experience of reality. It causes psychosis, when people experience delusions and hallucinations.

Schizophrenia affects people's thoughts, perceptions and behaviour and interferes with their ability to function at work or school or relate to other people. People with schizophrenia often experience stigma in the community, which can be one of their biggest problems.¹

The severity and impact of schizophrenia vary, but generally it is a long-term illness and, in Frankie's case, causes enough difficulties in his everyday life to qualify him for support for a psychosocial disability through the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS).

A stable living environment, supportive relationships and meaningful work or activity are essential ingredients to help people with schizophrenia achieve their best state of wellbeing.

This is where support worker Matthew Siu comes into the picture. Matthew is a 50-something, Cantonese-speaking, Hong Kong-born Bilingual Support Staff member (BSS) with Multicultural Care, who works with the organisation's aged care and disability care (NDIS) clients.

Not too surprisingly, Matthew does not speak Greek, and Frankie and Georgia do not speak Cantonese (although they can now say a few words in their respective languages!).

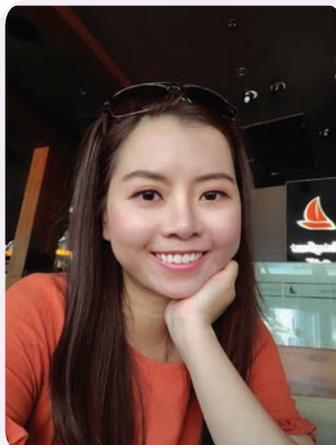
And while it is desirable for BSS workers to share a common cultural heritage with their clients, what's more important is their professional skills and the rapport they can build.

What the trio do share (other than a common language in English) is a warm, comfortable bond built over the four years that Matthew has been visiting to support Frankie—and by default, Georgia too—for two hours a day, most week days.

His work may involve assisting Frankie with personal care activities, helping with household tasks like cleaning, tidying and meal preparation, doing shopping, or simply providing company and conversation, a smile and a laugh.

1. www.healthdirect.gov.au/schizophrenia, accessed 7 October 2021

10 Minutes with ... Alyssa Nguyen



Tell us about yourself. What do you do at MC?

-I am currently working as an Assistant Accountant.

You haven't always been in that role. Is that right?

- Yes. I previously worked as an Administrator, Roster Coordinator and took my maternity leave from

July 2019. I came back early in April 2020 when the organisation needed a Roster Coordinator for the Sydney Local Health District (SLHD) project. I decided to step down from the role in November 2020 because I felt like I needed to spend valuable time with my daughter while I could... I really didn't want to miss out on those precious early years with her.

What made you decide to come back to MC?

- I am completing a Diploma in Community service and returned for a work placement. I was offered the Assistant Accountant position, as I have a background in Finance (Bachelor in Banking & Finance) and had previously worked as an Accountant in Singapore—so I was quite suited to the role. ...Also, I felt it was time to come back to work!

What do you think makes Multicultural Care different to other care service providers?

We provide services to people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds whose needs are increasingly critical due to language barriers that they face. Coming from a culturally diverse background myself (I am of Vietnamese origin) I really appreciate and value the difference our services can make to people's lives.... Also, the flexible working conditions is another factor that makes MC different from other care providers - flexibility really helps when you have a young family!

Thanks for your time, Alyssa! We wish you all the very best for your future.



Did you know?

We now have a Hindi and Vietnamese Aged Care Connector.



Kiran Pongulati can help both existing and potential CALD clients to access free information on aged care supports.

As an EnCOMPASS

Connector the information he provides is accurate and independent. Aged care supports include: social activities, help with shopping, help with showering, meal delivery, nursing care and more.

How do I get in touch with MC's Aged Care Connector?

Contact Kiran Pongulati:

Phone: 02 9718 6199

Mobile: 0451 885 676

Email: connector@mc.org.au

As an EnCOMPASS Connector, Kiran can provide you with independent, accurate information. The service is free.

The EnCOMPASS Program is a partnership between the Federation of Ethnic Communities' Councils of Australia (FECCA) and local EnCOMPASS organisations across the country. EnCOMPASS organisations have EnCOMPASS Connectors—people who are there to help you find support in your preferred language.

For more info: <https://fecca.org.au/encompass/>

Contact us

Our friendly staff are here to help



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