

Annual Report 2020-2021



DIVERSITY | INCLUSION | RESPECT



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Chairperson's Message

On behalf of the Multicultural Communities Council of Illawarra (MCCI), it is my great pleasure to present our Annual Report for 2020-21. The coronavirus pandemic continued to shape our lives throughout the year but, as always, MCCI was there for the community. I would like to acknowledge and thank our entire team for their incredible work.



COVID-19

The coronavirus pandemic continued to shape our lives throughout the past year. On behalf of MCCI, I would like to extend our deepest sympathies to anyone in our community who has lost a loved one to COVID-19 both here in Australia and overseas. Our thoughts are with you.

Throughout the first half of the financial year from July to December 2020 we were all living and working with uncertainty, hoping that our community would remain safe and well. Sharing information on public health orders, assisting local groups to write COVIDSafe plans, and educating young people was a big focus of our COVID-19 Resilience Project through most of last year.

A number of MCCI's services were impacted as a result of COVID-19 outbreaks and public health orders. And many of our community's valued and treasured events had to be placed on hold. While a number of our regular services and activities had to be suspended or postponed, essential services for the most vulnerable people in our community remained operational and alternative methods of service delivery were put in place.

The promise of a coronavirus vaccine was realised in early 2021, giving us all hope for the future and there has now been a strong take up of the vaccine after some early stumbles. The vaccine roll-out has been challenging and difficult for many CALD communities throughout Australia;

however, I would like to thank and acknowledge a number of organisations for their support, funding and partnership with MCCI to help with the communication efforts: Multicultural NSW, FECCA, COORDINARE, and Illawarra-Shoalhaven Local Health District. Thank you also to our wonderful health professionals and community workers who have gone above and beyond this year.

Vale Ludwik Ihnat OAM

Everyone knew Ludwik! Sadly, this year we lost one of our dearest friends, Ludwik Ihnat OAM, a Life Member and former Chairperson of the then Illawarra Ethnic Communities Council from 1983-1990. Ludwik was instrumental in establishing our first community aged care service for migrants in 1984 and a tireless advocate for multiculturalism and CALD communities. We acknowledge and thank Ludwik for his incredible community service and for laying the foundations for our work today.

First full year as a Company Ltd by Guarantee

Financial Year 2020-21 was MCCI's first full year as a Company Limited by Guarantee. As MCCI grows and diversifies services to help meet the community's needs, the board has strengthened risk management across the company and activated two committees to support the board's work:

- Audit, Risk & Compliance
- Human Resources & Governance

All directors have been actively engaged in the board's work throughout the year and I thank them sincerely for bringing their skills, expertise and perspectives to a cooperative, collegiate, and strategic board room. The Directors' Report for the year is contained in the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 30 June 2021 as a requirement of the Corporations Act.

Members

MCCI welcomed a number of new members this year, with our membership base now comprising of 52 local organisations representing CALD communities, 20 individual members and 10 life members. Throughout the year we have been reaching out to a number of other local organisations to join the MCCI family.

Unfortunately, due to COVID-19 we were unable to convene our new Members Forum during the year but we are hoping to do so in 2022. Throughout the year, we facilitated a number of online member events, including two engagements with public health experts from the Illawarra-Shoalhaven Local Health District. We regularly kept members informed of changing public health orders, distributed multilingual information as it became available, and published our CALDTalk newsletter and a monthly e-newsletter.

New Strategic Plan 2021-2024

A key piece of work for the board in the past year was to complete a new Strategic Plan for MCCI for the 2021-24 period. The plan was finalised in January 2021. The key elements of our strategic intent are:

- Representation
- Service Delivery & Quality
- Community Reach & Impact
- Sustainability
- People & Culture

Our Strategic Plan is published on MCCI's website and is supported by a number of detailed strategies, performance measures, and several focus areas for the future.

SCARF Merger

In June 2021 we were delighted to jointly announce that after a long period of due diligence the members of SCARF Inc voted to join forces with MCCI in a merger of our organisations. Formed in 2005, SCARF Inc helps humanitarian refugee entrants in the Illawarra to build a sense of belonging and navigate the challenges of starting a new life in Australia. As part of MCCI, the SCARF Refugee Support team will continue to deliver a range of community services to people from refugee backgrounds. We are excited to be working with SCARF's dedicated volunteer and staff teams to help build on their success as one organisation together.

Thank you!

On behalf of MCCI, I would like to extend our sincere thanks and gratitude to all of our members for their continued support and work this year to help keep our communities safe and well. I would also like to acknowledge the dedication of my fellow directors, MCCI's CEO, staff and volunteer team. They have all stepped up in so many ways during a difficult year to be there for our communities and for each other. Can I also acknowledge and thank all of our funding partners and community supporters who have assisted MCCI during the year.

The coming year will present new challenges for MCCI and the wider community. But I am confident that, together, we can and will continue to work towards our vision for a cohesive multicultural society that embraces, celebrates and values diversity.

Ken Habak OAM

Chairperson

CEO's Message

A new Strategic Plan has refreshed our focus for the next three years (2021-24) and, building on our recent achievements, the last twelve months has seen MCCI's team grow significantly and our operations continue to expand their reach and impact.



The operational tempo at MCCI during the past year has been very high. While navigating our way through COVID-19 and doing our best to successfully keep our teams, clients, and communities safe, we have also managed to continue the journey to modernise our operations, strengthen our planning, grow our team, and expand our reach and impact for the community.

In the past year we have welcomed nearly 50 new staff members to the MCCI team here in the Illawarra and Canberra. The passion, diversity, expertise and skills of our team is truly something to behold. In the past five years, we have grown our team from 38 to 98 staff and our reach from 27 to 57 individual service-types for the community in the Illawarra and Canberra regions.

This year our major focus has been on:

- developing new allied health services for seniors (exercise physiology, dietetics and occupational therapy),
- continuing to build our services in Canberra,
- multidisciplinary home care support,
- youth leadership programs, and
- COVID-19 community resilience.

Although a number of services were placed on hold in the July to December 2020 period, our essential work in the community continued and many of our projects were quickly mobilised to an online format. I would like to particularly acknowledge

our in-home care team who continued to support seniors at home throughout the year and all of our team for trialing new ways of staying connected.

Importantly, we made sure that CALD communities were kept informed about rapidly changing public health orders and shared a wide range of multilingual information resources as they became available. COVID-19 education sessions were delivered in schools and with seniors, in partnership with the Local Health District, and we spent many hours advocating for community support with governments at all levels.

As online services were not suitable for everyone, our teams remained connected to our community and clients by making thousands of friendly check-in welfare calls, volunteers and staff delivered freshly cooked meals daily, and we organised activity packs for young people. Throughout this Annual Report, you will see the amazing reach and impact of our work.

To support our teams and the work they do day in day out, we made a number of changes this year to our organisation structure. These changes included the introduction of an Executive Operations Manager (Sarah Wilson), People & Culture Manager (Joanne King), and Regional Care Managers in the Illawarra and ACT (Nicole Wray and Ally See). Alongside new management arrangements, additional roles were introduced to support the company's operations in the Illawarra and Canberra, and we have realigned our aged care teams to be ready for expected changes in the aged care system from 1 July 2022.

“ In the past year we have welcomed nearly 50 new staff members to the MCCI team

Throughout the year we continued our work to strengthen MCCI's planning, quality, risk and continuous improvement frameworks. An internal audit program has been introduced to strengthen our compliance, with positive results across a range of important business functions.

As we grow and diversify, these strategies and systems become increasingly important to support the sustainability and quality of our programs. They have also been necessary so that MCCI can appropriately resource and scale our work, be ready to respond to the next round of reforms, and to better support our teams into the future.

These changes have been received well across the organisation, with an 83% employee satisfaction rating, employee engagement sitting at 70% (against an international benchmark of 67%), and client satisfaction ratings above 90%. These results are important indicators that MCCI is supporting our people well through changing circumstances and that our clients continue to receive high quality services.

Looking ahead, MCCI will continue to be guided by our values and community approach as we look to give effect to our new Strategic Plan. COVID-19 has exposed a range of underlying inequalities in our community and, as we emerge from the pandemic, there remains work for us to do in continuing to support community leadership, engagement, and being a voice for multicultural communities. We will continue the journey of strengthening and diversifying our core services to reach those who need help, and we will continue to support our people and communities through change.

Our focus areas for the next 12 months will be to:

- secure our aged care accreditation and navigate sector reform
- regroup and rebuild our services post-COVID-19
- secure new resources for youth and refugee programs, including from community fundraising efforts
- continue to grow our home care and allied health programs
- extend our work into the Nowra and Bay & Basin areas

Additionally, we will be focused on renewing community and member engagement, along with completing several organisation development projects on our people & culture systems, learning and development, impact measurement, and a reconciliation action plan to support our relationships with First Nations communities.

Thank you sincerely to all of our wonderful staff, volunteers and clients. And particularly to our board directors who generously offer their expertise, guidance and support to our work for the community.

Chris Lacey
Chief Executive Officer and Company Secretary

Governance

MCCI is a non-profit company limited by guarantee, registered charity and public benevolent institution. Details about MCCI's charitable status can be obtained at the Australian Charities and Not-for-Profit Commission website www.acnc.gov.au

MCCI's vision is for a cohesive multicultural society that embraces, celebrates and values diversity. The Company's short and long-term objectives are outlined in the company constitution. They are:

- (a) To promote the principles of multiculturalism in the Australian community, including promoting and protecting human rights, raising public awareness about the benefits of our multicultural community, and educating the public regarding the importance of ending racial discrimination in all its forms;
- (b) To develop a spirit of unity and cooperation among CALD communities and to promote public debate, services and education programs that foster mutual respect, social inclusion, diversity and harmony within the Australian community;
- (c) To preserve and advocate for the rights of people from CALD backgrounds including their effective participation in policy-making decisions which affect the community;
- (d) To advance social and public welfare by establishing and providing community services and assistance to people in necessitous circumstances;
- (e) To establish, maintain and develop community services and educational programs for people from CALD and other backgrounds to promote their health, well-being, life skills, community participation, individual and collective capacity, employment prospects, and general welfare in the Australian community;

(f) To ameliorate the difficulties and problems encountered by people from CALD backgrounds in Australia;

(g) To maintain an advocacy role on behalf of people from CALD backgrounds with local, state and federal government representatives and instrumentalities; and

(h) To promote access and equity for persons of CALD backgrounds.

MCCI's financial statements are published annually at the ACNC website, along with the Director's Annual Report as a requirement of the Corporations Act.

The board of directors for FY 20-21 were:

- Ken Habak OAM, Chairperson
- Leissa Pitts, Deputy Chairperson
- Tom Begic
- Angela Ljubic
- Nicholas Marin
- Dr Husayn Aly
- Lyn Cuell JP
- Duncan Brown

Directors held 11 board meetings during the year, supported by two committees which met on a further 10 occasions combined, focused on Human Resources & Governance and Audit, Risk & Compliance.

A full review of company policy was completed during the year, along with: a new Strategic Plan (2021-24), management restructure, strengthened internal audit & compliance systems, and the introduction of enhanced risk management controls.

Directors & CEO



Ken Habak OAM
Chairperson



Leissa Pitts
Deputy Chairperson



Tom Begic



Angela Ljubic



Nicholas Marin



Dr Husayn Aly



Lyn Cuell JP



Duncan Brown



Chris Lacey
CEO
&
Company Secretary



VISION

A cohesive multicultural society that embraces, celebrates, and values diversity

PURPOSE

We are a leadership voice for culturally & linguistically diverse communities, providing services that meet community needs, promote equity, harmony, social inclusion and build community capacity

VALUES

Diversity - Respect - Integrity
Empowerment - Collaboration - Hope

OUR STRATEGIC INTENT

Representation

MCCI is a voice for multicultural communities

Service Delivery & Quality

MCCI delivers high quality services that help people and communities to achieve their goals

Community Reach & Impact

MCCI pursues new opportunities and continuous improvements to meet community needs

Sustainability

MCCI builds our capabilities to support communities for the longer term

People & Culture

MCCI is a great place to work and volunteer

Strategic Plan 2021-2024

MCCI Supporting Communities

COVID Summits

Community leaders discussed how to best move forward together when they met online for the Illawarra Multicultural Communities COVID-19 Summits. The meetings highlighted how important it is for governments, organisations and communities to work together on sharing correct information and public health advice.



Cook-Off

Young people and volunteers have celebrated world cuisine through the annual Multicultural Intergenerational Cook-Off events since 2013. This year there were two feasts – at Lake Illawarra High School (supported by the Shellharbour Club) and Corrimal High School (supported by the Fraternity Club). The cookbooks are available at the MCCI website.



End of an era

More than 1200 young people in the Illawarra have participated in Links to Learning with MCCI over the past 20 years. The last students graduated in June.



School holiday fun

MCCI's free School Holiday Programs have enabled young people from multicultural backgrounds to get out and stay connected during the pandemic. They included painting by the seas, swimming lessons, basketball training, football tournaments and bush walks.

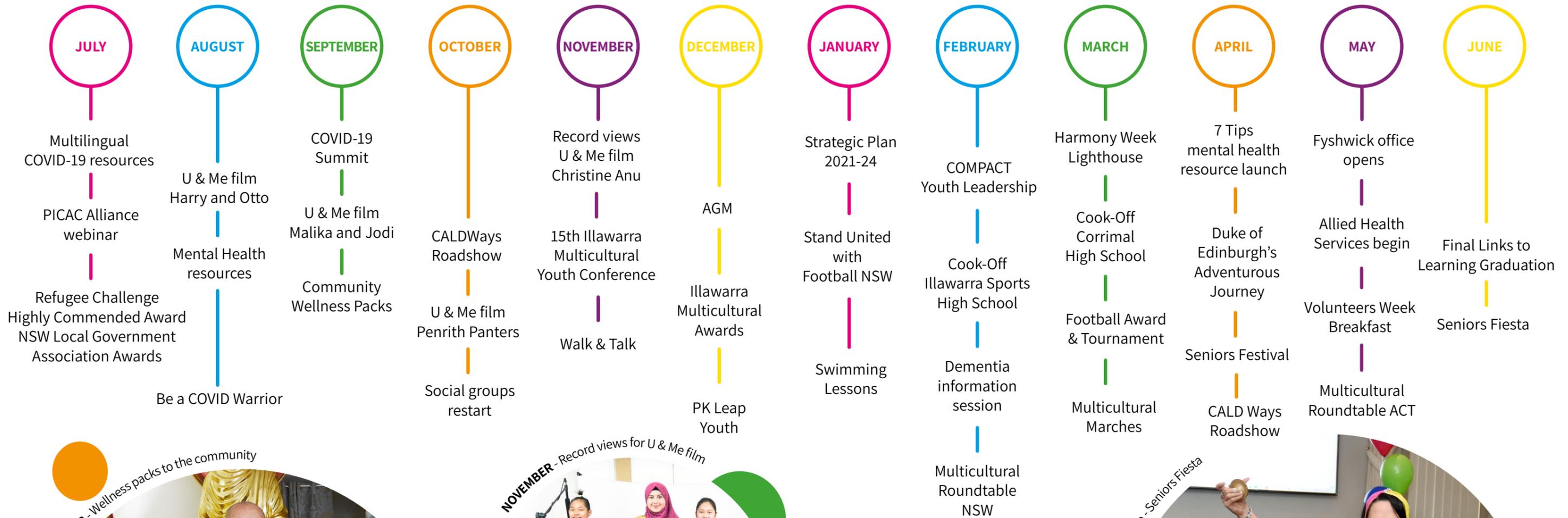


Multicultural March

MCCI's social groups had lots of fun enjoying sunny walks and picnics along Lake Illawarra, the Botanic Garden and other parks in Wollongong during Multicultural March. Some enjoyed the playgrounds as well.



2020 / 2021 HIGHLIGHTS



MCCI Supporting Communities

Supporting carers with wellness packs

As a response to the lockdown, in September MCCI took to the road delivering hot meals and wellness packs with essentials and information to 100 carers in the Illawarra. Thanks to funding support from Multicultural NSW COVID-19 Community Support Grants and Shoalhaven Older Abuse Prevention (SOAP).



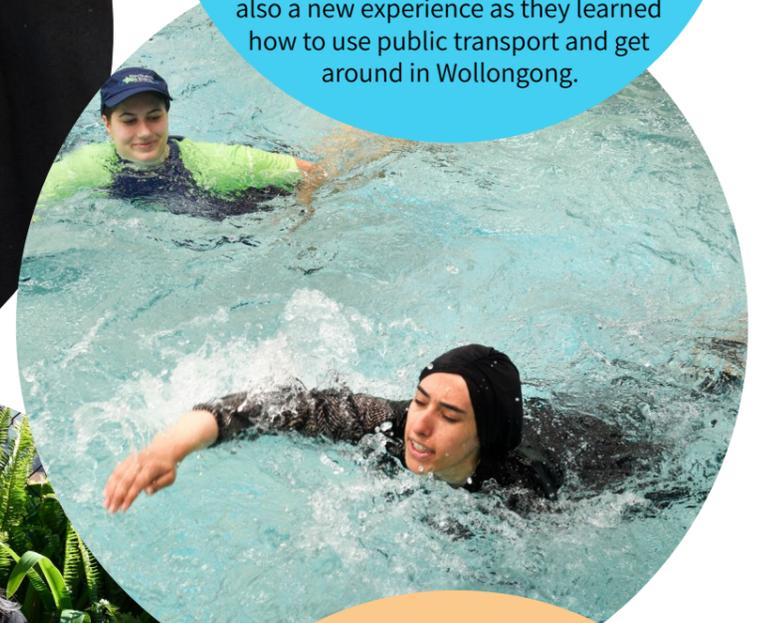
10 Years of Meals on Wheels

Trevor has enjoyed 2600 meals, 1000 soups and 100 sweets from MCCI's meals service the past 10 years. He is one of many long-time customers who relies on weekly MCCI home meal delivery. He had his first meals delivered on Tuesday 28 June 2011.



Learning to float and swim

There was much laughter and hard work when a small group of newly arrived young people learned to float and swim at an intensive five-day course with Northern Stars Swim School in January. Some of the participants had not been in a pool or at a beach before, and nobody knew how to swim. Catching the train to the pool was also a new experience as they learned how to use public transport and get around in Wollongong.



Sensory packs

Inspired by ITSOWEL's interactive sensory project with the Italian community in Wollongong, MCCI teamed up with Mindful Generation to create packs with sensory items from more than ten different countries. The packs are tailored for older people in different communities and include flowers and items that were typical from their homelands.



Vaccine session in 4 languages

It was a truly multilingual session when Dr Mon Tut and nurse Soe at Corrimal Family General Practice teamed up with MCCI's John and Sha to provide an information session in four languages: Burmese, Karenni, Karen and English. Soe sat down with MCCI's social group and together they made sure everybody understood what being vaccinated against COVID-19 involved.



Representation

As a voice for regional communities, we represent the interests of over 50 local associations. Our strategic relationships with government, stakeholders and communities seek to advance a proactive public policy perspective on multiculturalism that is constructive, respectful, and evidence informed. We work towards a more inclusive and equitable society by providing information and advice, developing resources, delivering training, systemic advocacy, brokering partnerships, and supporting our members to achieve their goals for communities.

“ MCCI are the ‘go to’ organisation for multicultural communities. It’s been wonderful to witness the organisation diversify and expand its services, while remaining true to their values grounded in diversity, inclusion and respect.

Paul Scully MP, Member for Wollongong

Snapshot

- 82 members
- 250 community engagements
- 51 networks / forums attended
- 118,071 social media reach
- 14 media opportunities
- 4 U & Me short-films

MCCI in Action



ACT Roundtable

There was no shortage of ideas on how to age well among those who attended the second Multicultural Roundtable for seniors in the ACT. Despite their different cultural backgrounds, including Chinese, Bangladeshi, Sri Lankan, Polish, Indian and Serbian, participants had much in common. They want to be seen and heard, be educated and supported to adapt to new technology, be part of society on their terms and enjoy life.

Multicultural Awards

It was a humble President of the Vietnamese Community In Wollongong, Teresa Tran, who received the award for Outstanding Community Contribution at the Illawarra Multicultural Awards 2020. The awards were open to individuals, groups and organisations in the Illawarra who have made an outstanding contribution to promote inclusion and cultural diversity. Presenting the awards at MCCI’s annual general meeting was Ken Habak OAM, Chairperson of MCCI.



Marking Harmony Week

This year, MCCI drew attention to the Illawarra’s proud history of welcoming migrants to the region by illuminating the Wollongong Harbour Lighthouse in the traditional harmony colour orange. This formed part of a range of Harmony Week activities including a futsal competition and the annual Intergenerational Cook-off feast day, celebrating inclusiveness, respect and belonging.



Service Delivery & Quality

Aged Care

MCCI's care services are delivered in partnership with our clients and communities throughout the Illawarra and ACT/ Queanbeyan. Our services are culturally intelligent, safe and responsive. This year we welcomed a team of allied health professionals, reflecting our increasingly multidisciplinary approach to services. COVID-19 has had a significant impact on our ability to deliver services, particularly in group settings. We have found innovative and individualised ways to support clients to maintain their health and wellbeing during this time.

“ It's a huge relief to the family that there is also somebody else who is concerned with and looks after mum when we are not there.

Zvoni, daughter of Ana, Home Care Package client

Snapshot

- 27,984 hrs of support at home
- 16,006 meals provided
- 450 hours of volunteer visiting
- 3,664 transport trips
- 20 social groups per week
- 70 carers supported
- 99% of clients would recommend MCCI to family and friends

MCCI in Action



MCCI's First Allied Health Team

The establishment of allied health teams in the Illawarra and ACT this year has enabled aged care consumers to be supported in their health goals. As Accredited Exercise Physiologists, Accredited Occupational Therapists and Accredited Practising Dietitians, the new rapidly growing teams were busy from the beginning as they provided group and one-on-one sessions to prevent falls and injuries and support independence and wellness goals.

Seniors Fiesta

Nearly 200 mature global citizens of the Illawarra met at this year's Multicultural Seniors Fiesta in Wollongong. While most of the seniors remained seated and enjoyed the spectacular dance moves from a distance, others took to the floor to find the rhythm of drums and samba, belly dance, Bollywood moves and traditional Vietnamese dance.



100th Home Care Package client

MCCI has been growing rapidly and is supporting more clients at home than ever. In February, Regional Care Manager Ally See in Canberra brought flowers and welcomed MCCI's 100th Home Care Package client Ji Hui Li, who is originally from China and speaks Mandarin. Together they designed a package of support to enable Ms Li to be safe, healthy and independent at home.

Service Delivery & Quality Youth & Community

MCCI's Youth & Community Programs are based on building resilience and empowering people to plan their futures and lead the way for others in their communities. To facilitate successful inclusion with strong community connections and local networks, we partner with education institutions, businesses and other services to have further reach and bigger impact. Through COVID-19 our services have been significantly impacted, and we have pivoted our programs and models in order to stay connected with and support young people in the community.

“Playing football has taught me how to be confident, strong and outgoing with no fears.

Zinah, joined the free football program in 2018

Snapshot

Worked with 1,108 young people

4,184 attendances

308 sessions

Links to Learning

1,200 graduates

over 20 years

MCCI in Action



Young women leading the way

Young women from CALD backgrounds participated in 'Lead the Way', a collaborative youth leadership initiative funded by Multicultural NSW's COMPACT Program. It aims to develop the next generation of community leaders. Social cohesion and community resilience are at the core of the year long program which includes workshops and coaching in personal development, self-care, education and skills development, physical activity, volunteering, networking and community engagement.

Football for inclusion

30 young talents have used the popular free weekly football program at the Fraternity Club as a stepping stone to local football clubs. Zinah joined when the program started in 2018 and plays today for the South Coast Flame Women's Division 1 team. The program is a collaboration with Football South Coast and Football NSW. It has also resulted in MCCI delivering cultural training at NSW football clubs, ensuring inclusiveness at all levels. MCCI was awarded the Outstanding Partnership Award by Football South Coast this year.



20 years of Links to Learning

An era is over with the end of the highly successful youth program Links to Learning. 1200 young people in the Illawarra have participated in the yearly youth program with MCCI over the past 20 years. In April, the last Duke of Edinburgh's Adventurous Journey along the Illawarra coast was completed with sore feet and muscle pain, followed by graduation in June. The program was awarded the NSW Youth Week award for excellence in 2013 and 2017.

Community Reach & Impact

MCCI is extending its community reach and impact by leveraging our strengths and working with communities and partners who share our vision and values. Our range of training programs, organisational support and resources promote inclusive service delivery to CALD consumers. In addition, we provide a variety of information, referral and one-on-one support to ensure older community members and their families are fully aware of services available and how to access the supports they need.

“ We couldn’t have done this without your help and encouragement.

Adolphine, Wellbeing Project

Snapshot

- 804 Cultural Training participants
- 3,987 resources distributed
- 900 COVID Warriors
- 10 CALDWays Roadshows
- 3 Multicultural Roundtables
- 1,473 informed about Advance Care Planning

MCCI in Action

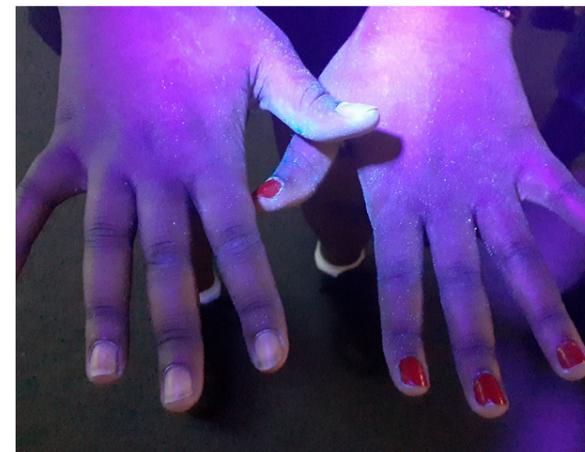
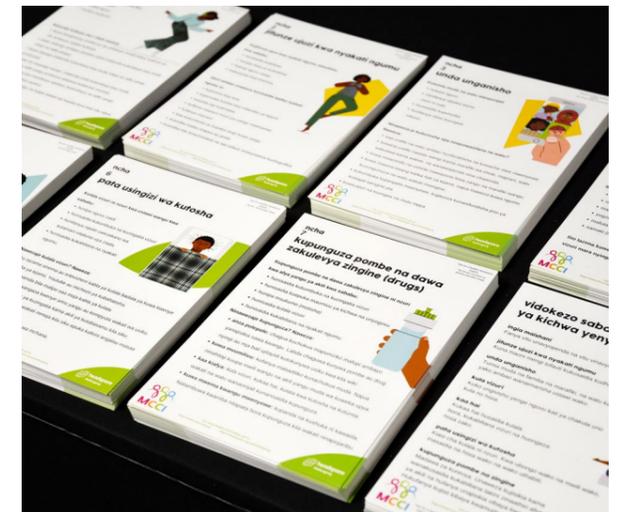


Supporting seniors

MCCI’s free information service, the Navigators, have helped people with questions about how to understand the aged care system and access support services. The team have provided face-to-face support and phone contact during lockdowns, information in language and referrals to other services. For many who struggled with little social interaction and limited movement, they have also been good to just chat with.

Wellbeing resources in Swahili and Arabic

A group of young people of African and Middle Eastern backgrounds from Wollongong translated the flyer ‘7 tips for a healthy headspace’ and made it culturally appropriate and more accessible for their communities. The resources were developed as part of a Wellbeing Project by headspace Wollongong and MCCI which set out to build the capacity of young people on mental health literacy, following a strength-based and co-design approach.



Community Resilience Project

The Community Resilience Project supported CALD communities through the COVID-19 pandemic by communicating Government messaging, building COVID-19 health literacy, and gathering intel on community needs. A key part of the project was the COVID Warrior workshops that were delivered to 900 participants in partnership with the Illawarra Shoalhaven Local Health District (ISLHD) Multicultural Health Unit.

People & Culture

With nearly 200 staff and volunteers, our diverse team reflects the people and communities with whom we work. Our growing team is being supported by a dedicated People & Culture Plan aimed at making MCCI a great place to work and volunteer. While the COVID-19 pandemic has affected every one of our programs and therefore our staff and volunteers team, MCCI is exceptionally proud of how everyone has adjusted, adapted and continued to be there for the community and each other.

“ MCCI has filled a void. I had nothing else to do. I needed to get out and about and meet people.

Raymond, volunteer bus driver ACT

Snapshot

- 200 staff & volunteers
- 3,485 volunteer hours
- 40 languages spoken
- 14% of staff started as volunteers
- 83% staff satisfaction
- 98% clients say MCCI staff are friendly and professional

MCCI in Action

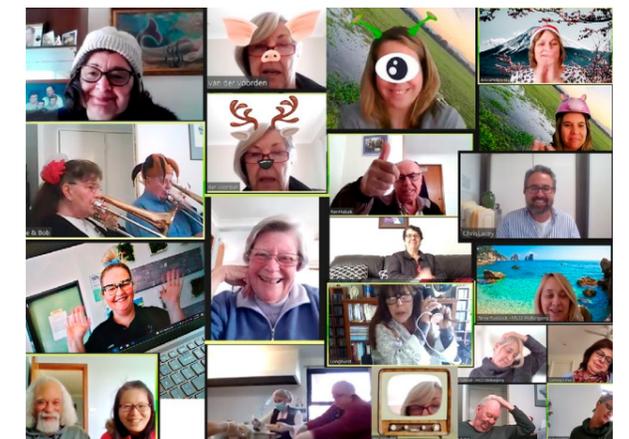


Long-serving employees celebrated

MCCI is a place to belong, learn and develop professionally. This year we celebrated Dimitra Sarakiniotis from Greece who has been with MCCI for 25 years, Gordana Spirovska from Former Yugoslavia for 15 years and Lebanese Hilda Youssif for 20 years. We thank them sincerely for their outstanding work and enduring commitment to MCCI. Their knowledge, skills, experience and community connections are invaluable assets for our work environment and growth.

Communication online

Virtual meetings have replaced the traditional staff development days for sharing knowledge, exploring new ideas and developing plans for moving forward together as one organisation in the Illawarra and ACT. With weekly online catch ups for volunteers and more frequent staff meetings, online platforms have enabled fun, quick and effective means of sharing information between more people across long distances.



Phone support

As the pandemic hit and social groups were put on hold, some volunteers were sidelined for safety reasons but others continued to deliver meals or took on new roles. Regular phone conversations between staff, volunteers and clients, as well as online activities, have been essential to stay connected and ensure that everybody is doing well. We have seen community members help their communities in various ways and new friendships form as the need for social interaction has been great.

Acknowledgements

MCCI would like to thank our many supporters and partners without whom our work would not be possible.

We would like to acknowledge the valuable and ongoing funding support provided by the following state and federal agencies and funding partners:

- Multicultural NSW
- Australian Government Department of Health
- Australian Government Department of Social Services
- Australian Government Department of Home Affairs
- ClubGRANTS NSW
- COORDINARE
- Council on the Ageing (COTA)
- Dementia Australia
- Duke of Edinburgh’s International Award Australia
- Good Things Foundation Australia
- James N. Kirby Foundation
- NSW Department of Communities and Justice
- NSW Department of Education
- NSW Office of Sports

We would also like to thank the MCCI members, local organisations, stakeholders, partners, elected representatives at local, state and federal levels, along with the many individuals and volunteers who have donated their time, resources and energy in working together towards our vision of an inclusive and respectful society.

We look forward to continuing our work together to support communities and to promote social inclusion and community harmony in 2022.





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