

MCCSA

IMPACT REPORT
2025/2026



Contents

Chairperson and CEO Report	P2
Connecting, Strengthening and Empowering Communities	P7
Ageing with Dignity, Connection and Choice	P23
Improving Health, Wellbeing and Care	P29
Creating Pathways to Inclusion and Opportunity	P41
Building More Inclusive Organisations and Decisions	P51
Governance, People and Financial Accountability	P57

CHAIRPERSON AND CEO REPORT

Beyond 50 Years: Shaping South Australia's Multicultural Future



Reflecting on 2025–26

The 2025–26 year marked an important point in MCCSA's history. As we reflected on more than fifty years of service, we recognised the people and organisations that have shaped our work since 1975 and considered what MCCSA must become to remain relevant and effective in the decades ahead.

The South Australia we served during the year was significantly different from the state in which MCCSA was established. People from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds contributed across business, government, health, education, research, the arts, community services and civic life. Multicultural communities were not at the margins of our state; they were part of its social, economic and cultural foundation.

Throughout 2025–26, MCCSA continued to evolve alongside these communities. We represented our members, responded to emerging needs and created opportunities for people to participate. We also worked to ensure that systems, services and public policy better reflected the South Australia of today.

Multiculturalism in the Mainstream

During the year, we continued to challenge the tendency to treat multiculturalism as a separate policy area concerned mainly with migration, settlement or cultural celebration. While these areas remained important, they did not describe its full contribution. Multiculturalism influenced how South Australians worked, learned, cared for one another, participated in public life and built relationships across communities.

MCCSA therefore continued to advocate for multicultural considerations to be included in mainstream planning and decision-making. Our engagement across health, aged care, employment, education, consumer protection and community infrastructure reinforced a consistent message: services work better when they are designed around the people who will use them.

Our Equity by Design approach guided this advocacy. We encouraged governments and organisations to consider language, culture, trust, access and lived experience from the beginning, rather than attempting to address barriers after a service or policy had already been developed. This was both a matter of fairness and a practical way to improve participation and outcomes.

Our work remained grounded in MCCSA's vision of an equitable, cohesive and thriving South Australia in which every person can participate in the economic, political, social and cultural life of the state. Achieving this required more than recognising diversity; it required structures and services that allowed people to contribute and be heard.

Interculturalism in Practice

Throughout 2025–26, we saw that South Australia's communities did not simply live alongside one another. People worked together, raised families, volunteered, shared public spaces and responded collectively to local challenges. These everyday relationships were an important outcome of multiculturalism and central to social cohesion.

Interculturalism describes this exchange between people of different cultural, linguistic and faith backgrounds. It does not replace multiculturalism or diminish the importance of cultural identity. Rather, it recognises that a confident sense of identity can support meaningful engagement with others.

This was evident across MCCSA's membership and activities during the year. Community organisations collaborated on shared concerns, volunteers supported people outside their own cultural communities, faith and community leaders worked together, and young people formed connections that were not limited by the backgrounds of their families.

Our Multicultural Community Hub continued to make these connections possible. It provided a place where communities maintained their own cultural practices while meeting others, sharing knowledge and building relationships. This combination of cultural continuity and intercultural exchange remained central to MCCSA's work.

Turning Principles into Action

During 2025–26, MCCSA combined direct community support with research, policy advocacy, community development and organisational capacity building. The program reports that follow present this work across five themes and show how MCCSA responded to practical needs while strengthening participation, connection and belonging.

Across these areas, MCCSA worked with carers, older people, young people, people living with disability, volunteers, community leaders and people seeking stronger social connections. We also created opportunities for community voices and lived experience to inform research, policy and service design.

The work varied in scale and purpose but shared a consistent approach: listening to communities, understanding the barriers they experienced and developing practical responses with them. This enabled MCCSA to connect direct support with broader efforts to improve systems and services.

Our 139 member organisations remained central to this work. They provided knowledge, leadership and trusted connections across South Australia. Their experience informed our advocacy and helped us identify where systems were working, where gaps remained and where coordinated action was needed.

Leading the Conversation

MCCSA continued to contribute to public policy and public discussion during 2025–26. We advocated for multicultural organisations to be recognised as essential social infrastructure. These organisations created opportunities for participation, developed local leadership, reduced isolation and maintained trusted channels of communication, often well before formal services became involved.

We also promoted Equity by Design through our engagement with government and the broader sector, encouraging mainstream systems to respond more effectively to a population with varied languages, experiences and expectations.

One of the year's defining achievements was the inaugural Australia Today – Multicultural Oration, established as a lasting legacy of MCCSA's fiftieth anniversary. Delivered by renowned journalist and academic Dr Helen Vatsikopoulos on 20 August 2025, the Oration challenged the tendency to confine multiculturalism to debates about migration, settlement or social tension. It positioned multiculturalism as central to Australia's economic prosperity, social cohesion, innovation and national identity, and strengthened MCCSA's role in shaping public thinking about Australia's multicultural future.

This work reflected MCCSA's responsibility as South Australia's peak multicultural body: to represent community perspectives, test established assumptions and contribute practical ideas to policy development.

A Hub for the Future

The need for appropriate multicultural infrastructure became increasingly clear during the year. MCCSA's existing facility supported approximately 2,500 bookings and 37,500 visits, involving 58 communities and more than 5,300 hours of community use. Despite this level of activity, limited space meant that we could not accommodate every request.

Our proposal for a purpose-built Multicultural Community Hub responded to this demonstrated need. The aim was to provide accessible and affordable space for smaller and emerging communities while creating more opportunities for programs, services and intercultural activity.

The proposed Hub would be more than a building. As shared social infrastructure, it would support cultural practice, community development, volunteering, learning and collaboration. It would also provide government, service providers and other organisations with a reliable place to engage directly with multicultural communities.

During the year, we continued to build the case for the Hub and engage community leaders, government representatives and partners in seeking a long-term solution. We appreciated the growing recognition of the need for this investment. Securing a new facility will require continued collaboration and a shared commitment from the South Australian and Australian Governments.

Working in Partnership

Strong partnerships enabled MCCSA to extend its reach and influence during 2025–26. We thank the South Australian and Australian Governments for their investment in MCCSA and the communities we served. We also acknowledge the organisations that funded, delivered and evaluated programs with us and those that sought our advice when developing policies and services.

We particularly thank our Board, staff and volunteers for their commitment throughout the year. Their work was strengthened by the community leaders and member organisations that shared their knowledge, raised emerging issues and helped MCCSA remain accountable to the communities it represented.

Looking Ahead

The work undertaken during 2025–26 built on the foundations established over MCCSA's first fifty years and positioned us for the next phase. We will continue to represent our members, respond to changing community needs and advocate for systems that recognise multicultural communities as part of the mainstream.

The reports that follow demonstrate how this commitment was translated into practice across five connected themes. Together, they show an organisation that combined community knowledge with practical delivery, evidence, advocacy and policy engagement.

Our priorities for the years ahead are clear: strengthen the voice of our members, support equitable participation, build connections across communities and secure the infrastructure needed for the future. We approach this work with confidence in our communities and a clear understanding that MCCSA's effectiveness depends on the trust, knowledge and involvement of its membership.

The achievements recorded in this Impact Report were collective achievements. We thank our member organisations, community leaders, staff, volunteers, partners and supporters for their contribution throughout 2025–26 and look forward to continuing this work together.

Mrs Miriam Cocking
Chairperson

Ms Helena Kyriazopoulos OAM
Chief Executive Officer



Connecting, Strengthening and Empowering Communities

Strong communities are built through connection, shared spaces, capable leadership and access to practical support. MCCSA works alongside multicultural organisations, families and individuals to strengthen community capacity, encourage participation and ensure communities have the resources, knowledge and opportunities to shape their own futures.

We deliver this commitment through the following programs and initiatives...

Community Boards and Governance Program

South Australia's multicultural community sector is widely led by dedicated volunteer boards and committees who bring deep cultural knowledge and the trust of their communities, but often lack access to formal governance training, financial management systems, or the administrative infrastructure that larger organisations take for granted.

Without this support, organisations can struggle to meet compliance obligations, secure funding, and sustain leadership over time — risking the loss of vital community infrastructure built up over generations. MCCSA established the Community Boards and Governance Program (CBGP) to address this gap, building the skills and confidence needed for community organisations to govern effectively and sustainably.

This year marked the successful conclusion of MCCSA's pilot Community Boards and Governance Program (CBGP), a three-year initiative established in 2023 to strengthen governance capability across South Australia's multicultural community sector. Over its lifespan, CBGP supported 31 community organisations to build stronger, more effective and accountable governance structures. Training covered governance principles and board roles, financial management and record keeping, fundraising and grant applications, cultural intelligence, networking and collaboration, and the integration of AI tools to support community functioning. Participants also had access to ongoing 1:1 on-demand support from the program coordinator.

The program's final year of activity, 2025/2026, shifted focus to intensive, tailored support for four community organisations, selected to trial a more sustained model of capability development. Rather than group-based training, this involved in-depth, hands-on work delivered directly within each organisation, engaging the entire board or leadership committee rather than individual representatives. This whole-of-board approach allowed the program to work through each organisation's specific governance challenges in context — strengthening collective decision-making, shared understanding of roles and responsibilities, and confidence across the whole leadership group, rather than relying on knowledge being passed on second-hand. The trial demonstrated the significant value of this more sustained and individualised approach and proved highly successful, offering a clear model for how future support can be structured.

Building on the achievements and lessons of CBGP, a new and enhanced Community Boards and Governance Program will commence in 2026, with continued support from the Department of Human Services and a strengthened focus on tailored support for member organisations.

CBGP 2023–2026 laid the foundations for stronger governance capability across SA's multicultural community sector, and created a platform from which MCCSA can continue to build the capability, resilience and sustainability of community organisations. We look forward to building on this strong foundation through the new program and continuing to support community organisations to strengthen their governance, capability and confidence.

Here's what some of the program participants had to say:

"I've learned a lot from this session and I now feel confident and able to apply and inform others"

PROGRAM PARTICIPANT, FINANCIAL FITNESS

"As Chairperson, I feel confident relaying the information to others, as I now have a better understanding of managing finances..."

PROGRAM PARTICIPANT, FINANCIAL FITNESS

"I think doing this governance on how to run a committee. These are the benefits, because you're upskilling people to run the organisation properly, with what the law expects here. Because you're also trying to change people's way of thinking, how things were done back in their countries".

PROGRAM PARTICIPANT, FOCUS GROUP





Community Connections Program (CCP)

MCCSA is the Multicultural Coordinating Partner for South Australia's Community Connections Program, helping make sure multicultural communities can access the right support before problems become more complex.

The role sits across communities, services and systems. MCCSA works with Regional Coordinating Partners and Community Connections partners to strengthen culturally responsive practice, improve referral pathways and connect people with opportunities, services and community networks that can help them build independence, belonging and participation.

People do not always arrive at a service with a clearly defined problem or know which part of the system can help them. Language, unfamiliarity with services, limited networks and different expectations of how support works can make navigating those systems even harder. MCCSA's role is often to identify what is getting in the way, connect the right organisations and people, and help services respond in ways that work better for multicultural communities. This also means looking beyond individual referrals to the broader barriers that cause people to fall through gaps in the first place.

During 2025–26, MCCSA strengthened this coordinating role through direct community connections, referrals, regional engagement and capacity building across the Community Connections network. Work ranged from supporting newly arrived and skilled migrants to navigate services and employment pathways, to helping partners strengthen their engagement with culturally diverse communities and using Flexible Funding to respond to practical barriers. MCCSA also built new connections with organisations including RAA, Engineers Australia, universities, local services and community organisations, while expanding regional engagement in areas including the Fleurieu Peninsula and Kangaroo Island. CulturalQ training and advice supported partners and other organisations to build their capability to work more effectively across cultures. All this work has helped position Community Connections as more than a referral pathway: it is an early intervention network that connects people, communities and services while also identifying where systems themselves need to work better.

Connection, Culture and Belonging

Throughout the financial year, MCCSA continued to support a range of community-led social and cultural groups, providing welcoming spaces where people could maintain their culture and language, build friendships and participate in community life.

Our Russian, Armenian, Hispanic, Korean and Iranian groups each brought their own traditions, interests and experiences to MCCSA. While every group was different, they shared a common purpose: creating trusted environments where people felt welcomed, valued and connected.

During the year, participants came together regularly through art, literature, conversation, cultural activities and shared experiences. These gatherings provided opportunities to form new relationships, strengthen existing friendships and remain actively involved in community life. For older people and those who arrived in Australia without established family or social networks, regular participation played an important role in reducing isolation and building confidence and purpose.

Cultural expression remained central to the groups' activities. Armenian miniature painting helped preserve and share a distinctive artistic tradition. Korean-language art activities made creative participation accessible to people who may otherwise have experienced language barriers.

Russian-speaking groups used literature, writing, art and other cultural activities to maintain language, exchange experiences and develop new interests.

Regular gatherings for the Hispanic and Iranian communities provided trusted spaces where participants could speak in their own language, exchange information and offer one another informal practical support. Participants were also connected with information, referrals and community networks to assist them in navigating life in South Australia.

Over the course of the year, these groups continued to demonstrate that they are much more than activities on a calendar. They have developed into communities in their own right—places where people are known, relationships grow and participants look out for one another. The benefits also extend to families, who see the positive difference that regular participation and strong social networks can make.

MCCSA was proud to continue providing the welcoming, accessible and culturally responsive environment in which these groups could grow and thrive. By supporting people to come together in ways that were meaningful to them, we helped preserve cultural identity, strengthen participation and foster a deeper sense of belonging in South Australia.

"I have been attending this group since 2018. I have found friendship and connection and feel more connected to the local community."

ARMENIAN GROUP PARTICIPANT

"Every time our parents return from a session, they are in wonderful spirits and are already looking forward to the next meeting. It is heartwarming to see how much joy, friendship and purpose the group brings to their lives."

RUSSIAN COMMUNITY FAMILY MEMBER OF PROJECT TOGETHER PARTICIPANTS

Keeping our Communities Connected

MCCSA Community Bus Service plays an important role in helping people and community organisations across Adelaide and South Australia stay connected, participate in activities and access opportunities that might otherwise be difficult to reach.

The fleet includes three minibuses accommodating up to 11 passengers, as well as a wheelchair-accessible bus. The accessible vehicle helps ensure that people with mobility needs can participate in community activities.

During the past year, we have continued to provide affordable, reliable and flexible transport for a wide range of community needs. From community groups attending events and activities to organisations supporting their members, MCCSA's buses helped make participation more accessible.

Our fleet of 4 minibuses has supported 331 trips, transporting 2,464 passengers and travelling an impressive 31,559 kilometres across South Australia.

While these numbers demonstrate the reach of the service, the true impact can be seen in the people behind every trip.

Access to dependable transport can make the difference between being able to join a social activity, participate in a community event or simply spend time with others.

Volunteer drivers are an essential part of making this possible. Their time, commitment and willingness to support community organisations help turn a bus trip into an opportunity for connection and participation. Every journey is more than simply getting from one place to another, it helps people remain involved in their communities and reduces the barriers that transport difficulties can create.

MCCSA is proud to support community organisations and individuals with a service that is practical and affordable. Whether transporting a group to an event, supporting regular community activities or providing accessible transport, every trip contributes to building stronger and more connected communities.

Looking ahead, MCCSA remains committed to maintaining and strengthening this valuable service and continuing to work with community organisations, volunteers and participants across Adelaide and South Australia.



331
TRIPS SUPPORTED



2,464
PASSENGERS TRANSPORTED



31,559
KILOMETRES TRAVELLED



4
MINIBUSES INC 1 WHEELCHAIR-ACCESSIBLE BUS

The dream:

A new multicultural hub for our communities



A Place for Community
MCCSA's Multicultural Community Hub

Throughout 2025–26, MCCSA's Multicultural Community Hub at 113 Gilbert Street continued to provide vital shared space for South Australia's multicultural communities.

During the year, the Hub accommodated approximately 2,500 bookings and 37,500 visits, with 58 multicultural communities using the facility for meetings, cultural activities, workshops, training, information sessions, programs and events.

For many smaller and emerging communities, access to free, accessible and centrally located space is essential. Without the resources or capacity to establish and maintain facilities of their own, these communities rely on MCCSA for a place where they can meet, organise, celebrate their culture, strengthen their organisations and connect with the wider South Australian community.

The Hub is much more than a collection of meeting rooms. It is a place where relationships are built, cultural connections are maintained and people participate in community life. It also provides a trusted environment in which communities can engage with government, service providers and, importantly, one another.

The diversity of activity at Gilbert Street reflects this role. In any given week, the Hub may accommodate community meetings, English classes, health and wellbeing programs, governance training, cultural activities, playgroup, consultations, women's and men's programs, volunteer activities and engagement between communities and government.

Through this work, the Hub makes an important contribution to social cohesion by strengthening participation, trust and belonging across South Australia's multicultural population. Strong and connected communities also contribute socially and economically.

They mobilise volunteers, share information, create pathways to education and employment, and provide informal support that can assist people before their needs become more complex and costly.

Investing in Shared Community Infrastructure

There is a strong case for government investment in expanding this successful model. Rather than individual communities being required to establish and maintain separate facilities, one highly utilised shared asset can support many communities, reduce duplication and provide equitable access to infrastructure that smaller organisations may otherwise be unable to afford.

Independent analysis undertaken by BDO confirmed the strong demand for MCCSA's existing facilities and identified the significant long-term social and economic benefits that could be achieved through an expanded Multicultural Community Hub.

The current facility is already heavily utilised, and demand continues to grow. Additional investment would enable MCCSA to provide more free and affordable community space, accommodate a greater range of programs and activities, and extend the benefits of this shared model to more South Australians.

As MCCSA enters its next 50 years, our vision is to ensure that South Australia's multicultural communities have access to contemporary, inclusive and sustainable facilities that reflect their contribution to the life of our state.

Investment in MCCSA's Multicultural Community Hub is not simply investment in a building. It is investment in social cohesion, participation and belonging—and in the shared foundations that strengthen communities and contribute to a stronger South Australia.



MCCSA Multicultural Playgroup

Throughout 2025–26, the MCCSA Multicultural Playgroup provided a welcoming and inclusive environment where families with young children could meet, build friendships and participate in learning and cultural activities.

Held weekly during school terms, the playgroup welcomed 27 families and 28 children from a range of cultural backgrounds. The group reflected considerable linguistic diversity, with nine languages spoken by participating families.

The program was supported by 11 volunteers, whose contribution was central to creating an environment in which families felt welcomed and able to participate. During the year, volunteers completed Safe Environments: Through Their Eyes and MCCSA's cultural intelligence training, strengthening their understanding of child safety and culturally responsive engagement.

Play, Learning and Connection

Activities were designed around the ages and developmental needs of the children, most of whom were toddlers. Sensory play, creative activities and an indoor obstacle course supported early learning, coordination and movement in a safe and engaging environment.

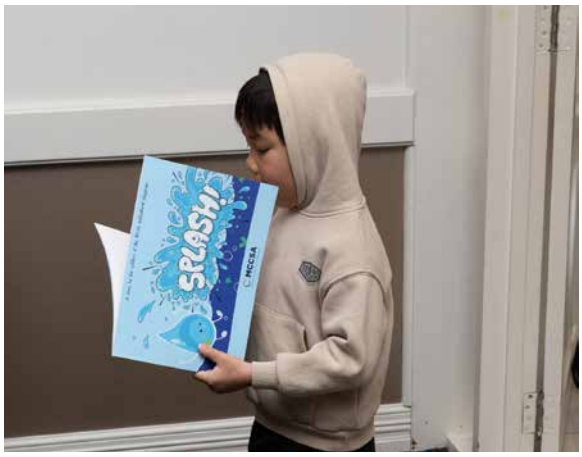
Seasonal celebrations, including Halloween, Christmas and Easter activities, provided further opportunities for families to come together. At the end of each term, families shared food from their cultures, encouraging cultural exchange and helping relationships develop across the group.

Splash! Multicultural Water Storybook Project

A highlight of the year was the Splash! Multicultural Water Storybook Project, funded by SA Water. Through water play, storytelling, sensory activities and art, children learned about the importance of water while developing their creativity and early literacy skills.

With the support of author George Gouzounis, the children's ideas and artwork were brought together in a professionally published multicultural storybook. The completed book was launched at a special event attended by participating children and their families.

The project gave children the opportunity to see their ideas and artwork reflected in a published book, building confidence and a sense of achievement. It also demonstrated how play-based learning can support early childhood development while strengthening cultural inclusion, family relationships and belonging.



Community Voices: Amplifying Multicultural South Australia

Throughout 2025–26, MCCSA's Community Voices magazine and radio program continued to provide culturally and linguistically diverse South Australians with platforms to share their stories, celebrate their cultural heritage and explore the issues that matter to them.

Settling in a new country is about more than finding employment or a place to live. It is also about establishing connections, developing a sense of belonging and having opportunities to be heard. Community Voices supports this journey by enabling people to share their experiences and perspectives in their own words and on their own terms.

During the year, three editions of Community Voices magazine were published, featuring 52 articles contributed by community organisations and partners. Contributors included Adelaide Fringe Inc.; the Brazilian Association of South Australia; Filipinos iConnect SA Inc.; the Latvian Association of South Australia Inc.; MOSAIC Adelaide Inc.; the Non-Resident Nepali Association Inc.; Prima Nota Inc.; Radio Italiana 531am; the Russian Women's Association of South Australia Inc. "Fire-Bird"; The Greek Museum of Adelaide Inc.; and TwinView Health.

The articles explored migration and settlement, culture and identity, access to services, community participation and belonging. For contributors sharing their experiences publicly for the first time, seeing their words published provided meaningful recognition and reinforced that their perspectives have an important place in South Australia's broader story.

The Community Voices radio program extended this reach, broadcasting 92 episodes hosted by seven MCCSA member organisations: the Arabic Language and Cultural Association of South Australia; Arta Iranian Cultural Centre; Colombian Community Adelaide; Korean Community of South Australia; Russian Women's Association of South Australia Inc. "Fire-Bird"; Turkish Association of SA; and Vishva Hindu Parishad of Australia Inc. (SA).

The Colombian and Korean communities joined the program during the year, establishing new radio programs and creating further opportunities to share community information, stories and cultural perspectives.

Community Voices also provided an important bridge between multicultural communities and the broader service, research and community sectors. Government agencies, service providers and researchers used the platforms to share information about services, community initiatives, research and consultation opportunities. In turn, the experiences and perspectives contributed by communities helped stakeholders better understand their priorities and supported more informed and culturally responsive engagement.

Distributed through MCCSA's member organisations, community networks and the wider South Australian community, Community Voices ensured that important information and community stories reached beyond individual organisations and networks. Together, the magazine and radio program continued to build an evolving record of the cultures, experiences, achievements and perspectives that shape contemporary South Australia.

Most importantly, Community Voices ensures that multicultural South Australians are not simply being spoken about—they are speaking for themselves.

MCCSA thanks every organisation, presenter and contributor who supported Community Voices throughout the year. Copies of the magazine are available on the MCCSA website.

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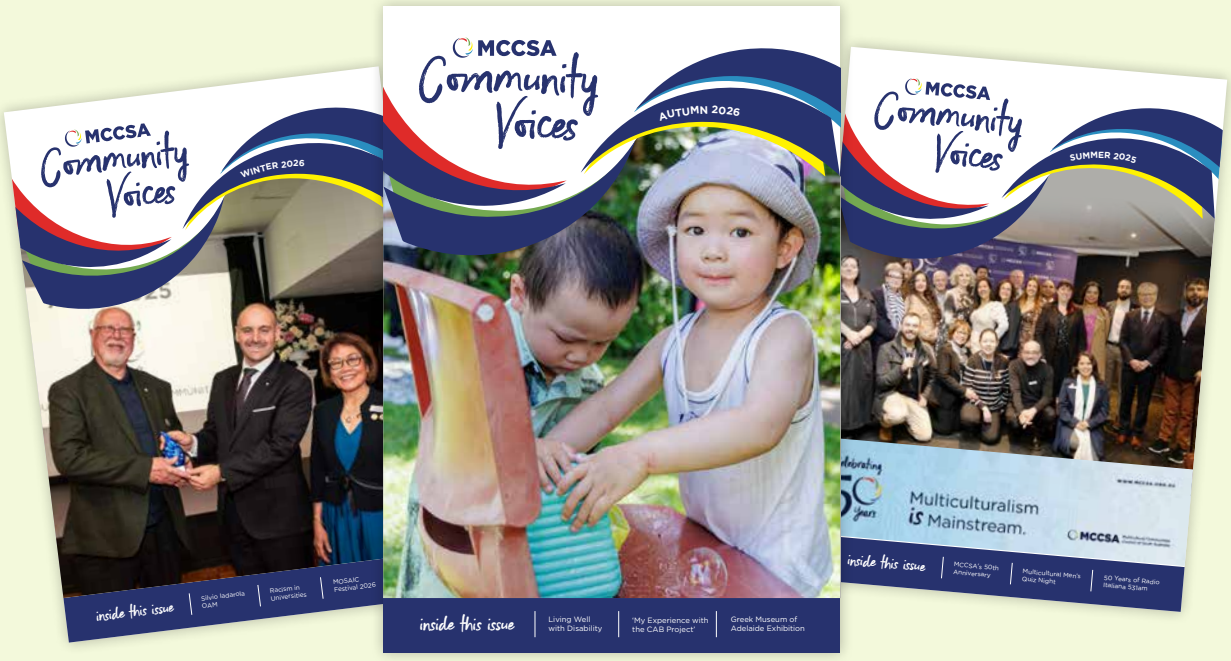
Voices from the Community

“We love contributing to MCCSA Community Voices Magazine. For many international students in our community, they often feel overlooked, underrepresented and unheard. We also contribute pieces that cover a range of important issues from identity and belonging to racism in universities. The magazine gives students and people in our community a chance to be visible, to elevate their voices, showcase what we do and encourage others to be involved.”

ARUN RAMANATHAN, MOSAIC ADELAIDE INC. ON MCCSA COMMUNITY VOICES MAGAZINE

“For the Colombian community the radio program has been very successful, the program has been able to reach families and it’s been easy for them to share our message between each other. Even to know more about our own culture as well, we talk about traditions, dances and rhythms - and the history behind it. It’s been great as well to share our culture not just with the Colombian community but also other South American communities as well - even non-Spanish speakers listen to the program because they enjoy our music. We’re so grateful for the MCCSA Community Voices radio program, it means so much to us.”

BLANCA JOHANA RIAÑO, COLOMBIAN COMMUNITY ADELAIDE INC. ON COMMUNITY VOICES RADIO PROGRAM



Media Literacy Program

MCCSA's Media Literacy Program helps multicultural communities build the confidence and skills to understand, question and check the information they encounter every day.

The program responds particularly to the growing risks of misinformation, disinformation and scams, recognising that people who rely on information in languages other than English, overseas media, social media or informal community networks may experience these risks differently. The focus is not on telling people what to believe, but on strengthening critical thinking and the ability to make informed judgements.

The first stage of MCCSA's work in 2025–26 was listening directly to multicultural communities about how they access and trust information. Consultations explored where people obtain news, experiences of misinformation and scams, representation of multicultural communities in the media, and the relationship between media, identity and belonging.

"I get messages pretending to be from Centrelink or the ATO and sometimes it is hard to know what is real. Now I know what warning signs to look for and where I can check."

MEDIA LITERACY PROGRAM PARTICIPANT

MCCSA engaged 60 people across five consultation sessions. This included a Mandarin-language roundtable with 15 participants, two Arabic-language sessions involving 13 participants, and two sessions with 32 English-speaking participants from culturally diverse backgrounds. The latter group included people from backgrounds including Vietnam, Latvia, Poland, Colombia, Kurdistan and Greece.

These community insights feed into a broader three-stage model: community discovery, education through a Train-the-Trainer approach, and community-led activities. Trusted community members are equipped to help others question information, navigate conflicting media and create safe spaces for informed discussion, allowing the learning to extend beyond a single workshop and remain within communities.

"Before this, if something came through WhatsApp from someone I trusted, I would usually believe it. Now I know I should stop, check where it came from and look at other sources before I share it."

MEDIA LITERACY PROGRAM PARTICIPANT

Understanding Coercive Control in Multicultural Communities

In March 2026, MCCSA commenced a partnership with Flinders University on ***Understanding and Addressing Coercive Control in Multicultural Communities in SA***, supported by the Law Foundation of South Australia.

The project is examining how coercive control is experienced, understood and addressed within multicultural communities as South Australia prepares to implement its new legal response. Its purpose is to help bridge the gap between legislative reform and community readiness by developing culturally safe, community-led approaches to prevention, legal education and intervention.

The research focuses on Indian, Italian and Chinese communities and engages people from Hindu, Muslim, Sikh, Christian and Buddhist faith traditions. It considers how migration status, financial dependence, racism, language barriers, limited awareness of legal rights, cultural and religious expectations, restrictions on movement and employment, and technology-facilitated abuse can shape experiences of coercive control and access to assistance.

MCCSA has played a central role in recruitment, community engagement and the organisation of fieldwork. Our relationships with community organisations, leaders and bicultural workers have helped ensure that discussions are accessible, respectful and culturally appropriate. Their knowledge is also assisting researchers to distinguish coercive and controlling behaviour from cultural or religious practices without stereotyping communities or overlooking gendered and structural inequalities.

During the year, all planned focus groups and stakeholder interviews were completed. Recruitment concluded after the research reached data saturation, with clear patterns emerging across the discussions. Early findings indicate that understanding of coercive control remains limited and that considerable community education will be required before the legislation becomes fully operational.

The next stage will include detailed analysis, community validation of the emerging findings and the co-design of plain-language and multilingual education resources, early-recognition tools and capacity-building materials for community leaders, bicultural workers and service providers.

This work will help strengthen legal literacy, encourage earlier help-seeking and ensure multicultural perspectives inform the implementation of South Australia's coercive control reforms.



Ageing with Dignity, Connection and Choice

Ageing well means having the information, support and opportunities needed to remain independent, connected and confident. MCCSA works directly with older people and communities while also strengthening the capability of aged care providers and influencing how services respond to South Australia's increasingly diverse population.

We deliver this commitment through the following programs and initiatives...

Aged Care Volunteer Visitors Scheme (ACVVS)

Throughout 2025–26, MCCSA's Aged Care Volunteer Visitors Scheme (ACVVS) continued to create meaningful connections for older people from multicultural communities across metropolitan Adelaide.

For older people living in residential aged care or experiencing social isolation, a regular visit from a volunteer provides much more than an hour of conversation. It offers a familiar face, an opportunity to share memories and experiences, and the reassurance of knowing that someone will return.

Language, culture and shared life experiences play an important role in the wellbeing of older people. Being able to speak with someone who understands their first language and cultural background can provide comfort and familiarity, while helping them maintain a strong connection with their identity and heritage.

During the year, MCCSA's dedicated ACVVS volunteers continued to visit older people across residential aged care and community settings. Our volunteers come from diverse cultural backgrounds and bring language skills, compassion, patience and a genuine willingness to listen.

Through regular visits, they develop trusted relationships that reduce loneliness, support emotional wellbeing and strengthen links between older people, aged care services and the wider community.

The impact of ACVVS is often found in simple but important moments: the smile that greets a volunteer, a conversation in a first language, a shared cultural memory or the comfort of knowing that someone has made time to visit. These relationships can make a profound difference to an older person's wellbeing and sense of belonging.

The program also provides volunteers with an opportunity to give back, share their own experiences and develop meaningful intergenerational relationships. In this way, ACVVS strengthens not only the lives of individual participants but the broader multicultural community.

MCCSA extends its sincere appreciation to every ACVVS volunteer who gave their time, compassion and friendship throughout the year. Each visit contributed to a more connected and caring community in which older people could continue to experience dignity, companionship and cultural connection.

ACVVS is about more than visiting. It is about friendship, belonging and ensuring that no older person feels forgotten.

5,580
VISITS DELIVERED

416
CARE RECIPIENTS

33
CALD LANGUAGES

216
VOLUNTEERS

174
NEW MATCHES

80
NEW VOLS ONBOARDED

Aged Care Sector Support

The Aged Care Sector Support and Development project, funded by the Australian Government Department of Health, Disability and Ageing, works to improve aged care for older people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

It does that by supporting the organisations who deliver the care — helping Commonwealth Home Support Programme (CHSP) providers across Australia understand the communities they serve and respond to them properly.

2025–26 was a year of upheaval for the sector. The new Aged Care Act came into effect and providers began the shift to the Support at Home model, changing how services are funded, assessed and delivered. Most were working out what that meant for their clients and their own operations at the same time. MCCSA's job was to help them prepare, with attention to what the changes mean for an older person who needs an interpreter, who relies on an adult child to deal with the system, or whose expectations of care were formed long before they arrived in Australia.

Providers were supported on more than 3,300 occasions across the year. MCCSA presented at national forums hosted by Ageing Australia, Invox and other sector organisations in SA, Victoria and Queensland, and worked directly with individual organisations through one-on-one and small group consultations on the questions they were facing.

With Ethnic Communities Council NSW and Ethnic Communities Council QLD, MCCSA delivered training on engaging a culturally diverse workforce, and on what shifting client demographics mean for the way services are designed. Through the National Compliance and CHSP Business Practices Working Group, MCCSA contributed to a national training series on governance, the new Act and the quality standards, reaching more than 130 providers nationally.

In June 2026 together with the City of Salisbury held The Art of Ageing Well, a community expo at the Salisbury Community Hub. More than 500 people came through the doors and spoke directly to over 20 aged care providers about what is available and how to get it, and more than 70 volunteers and jobseekers were connected with work in the sector.

Demand for this support was steady all year and shows no sign of easing. As the reforms continue into 2026–27, MCCSA will keep working to ensure the providers making those changes are thinking about every older person on their books.



Ageing Well in CALD Communities

Throughout 2025–26, MCCSA's Ageing Well in CALD Communities project continued to support older people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds to age with dignity, independence and a stronger understanding of their rights.

Funded by the South Australian Government through the Office for Ageing Well, the project challenges ageism and stereotypes, improves access to information and helps mainstream services better understand and respond to the experiences of multicultural seniors.

During the year, MCCSA worked with the Brazilian Association of South Australia, the Turkish Association of South Australia and the Czechoslovak Club of South Australia. These partnerships enabled information and resources to be delivered through trusted community networks and adapted to the language, cultural context and needs of each community.

The project uses a successful train-the-trainer model. Designated community representatives participate in expert-led sessions covering aged care navigation, elder abuse prevention, rights advocacy, online safety, advance care planning and digital literacy. These trusted leaders then share their knowledge, service connections and resources with older people, families, community workers and volunteers in culturally appropriate ways.

MCCSA's role is central to the project's success. Language barriers, limited digital access, unfamiliarity with service systems and a lack of trust can prevent older people from engaging with mainstream information channels. MCCSA's longstanding community relationships enable important information to be delivered by people who are known and trusted, making it more accessible, relevant and likely to be understood and acted upon.

The project reflects the strong and longstanding partnership between MCCSA and the Office for Ageing Well. At the centre of this partnership is the Office's trust in MCCSA's community knowledge, relationships and ability to engage older people through established and culturally responsive networks.

Since the project began in 2017, MCCSA has partnered with more than 30 culturally diverse communities to strengthen knowledge, resilience and social participation while improving access to essential services and support.

By investing in trusted community leadership and strengthening relationships between multicultural organisations, service providers and government, the project builds lasting capability within communities. It helps ensure older South Australians are informed, connected, able to advocate for themselves and supported to age with confidence, independence and dignity.



AI Adoption in Aged Care

MCCSA chairs the AI Adoption in Aged Care Workgroup, a national group of sector support organisations working to build provider capability in artificial intelligence and technology.

The Workgroup met every two months across 2025–26 to decide what providers most needed and to build it.

Two problems shaped the year's work. The first was that AI had arrived in aged care workplaces ahead of any guidance about it. Free tools are easily available and genuinely useful for drafting a report or getting through administration, and staff were reaching for them because the work needed doing. What was missing was an organisational position: staff had no way of knowing what their employer considered acceptable, because most employers had not yet worked it out. The second was that providers wanting to use the technology properly had no way in. Making the most of AI means understanding something about how it works, and there was little that translated that into steps an aged care organisation could actually follow.

The Guidelines for the Responsible Use of Generative Artificial Intelligence in Aged Care answer the first. The Guidelines are a template organisation adapt into their own internal rules, setting out what staff are responsible for when they use AI in their work. An implementation guide takes providers through tailoring the guidelines, discussing them with staff, turning them into policy, and reviewing them over time. More than 120 aged care providers around Australia have now adopted them. They were updated in June 2026.

Integrating AI into Support at Home answers the second. The toolkit gives providers a pathway: working out where AI might genuinely help, weighing the value against the risk, reviewing the ethics, and setting priorities, with templates a team can work through together. It makes adoption a series of manageable decisions rather than a leap. Both resources are free at aiadoption.au

MCCSA delivered four national webinars during the year, each accompanied by resources providers could take away and use, along with a session on AI integration with Ageing Australia and a number of hands-on sessions in South Australia and Victoria on working with AI in day-to-day aged care operations.

The interest has been consistent, and the questions are getting more practical: less about whether to use AI and more about how to use it without losing sight of the people being cared for. MCCSA will continue chairing the Workgroup in 2026–27.

"The workshop delivered absolutely practical value from start to finish. Within three weeks from attending the session, we were able to launch our own AI projects with the tools that were showcased."

ALICE WANG, CLINICAL SERVICES MANAGER, AUSTRALIA VIETNAMESE WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION (VICTORIA)


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CITY

Improving Health, Wellbeing and Care

Good health and wellbeing depend on people being able to understand, trust and access the services and support available to them. Through community-led education, prevention, connection and advocacy, MCCSA addresses barriers to care while helping health and wellbeing systems become more accessible, inclusive and responsive.

We deliver this commitment through the following programs and initiatives...

Addressing Gaps in Health Literacy

In 2025, MCCSA commenced the Addressing Gaps in Health Literacy project, funded by Preventive Health SA to improve health literacy among multicultural communities across South Australia.

Health literacy is the ability to access, understand and use health information to make informed decisions about health and wellbeing. It is a recognised social determinant of health and a key driver of equity. This two-year project aims to address gaps in preventive health by strengthening community capacity, improving access to culturally appropriate information, and supporting more inclusive health systems.

In its first year, MCCSA listened to the experiences of over 100 community members, including skilled migrants, refugees, international students and parents of young children. Consultations identified health system navigation, language, digital exclusion, and stigma around mental health as key barriers to health literacy. These insights are shaping the development of a Wellbeing Navigation Toolkit to help newly arrived migrants navigate health services and supports. MCCSA also partnered with Diabetes SA to adapt diabetes education resources for Arabic, Chinese and Hindi-speaking communities, and delivered a pilot initiative with the Child and Family Health Service to support families attending MCCSA's Multicultural Playgroup, improving their awareness of available services, including helping one family book a child health and development check.

Alongside these community-level initiatives, MCCSA has worked to embed health literacy and equity into the systems and policies that shape health outcomes. This included delivering a culturalQ Masterclass to Preventive Health SA leadership staff on applying a cultural intelligence and equity lens to health policy and practice, and developing an Equity by Design Position Statement advocating for equity to be built into systems from the outset. MCCSA has used, and will continue to use, this Position Statement to advocate to Ministers, government departments and other partner organisations for stronger action on equity.

Together, these efforts establish a strong foundation for year two, as co-designed initiatives move further into implementation and MCCSA continues to influence systems-level change, supporting lasting improvements in the health and wellbeing of multicultural communities across South Australia.

"There isn't enough health information shared at university. I have health insurance but I don't know what it covers so I don't use it."

INTERNATIONAL STUDENT

Medicare Mental Health Kids Hubs

MCCSA is proud to be part of the consortium delivering the Medicare Mental Health Kids Hubs across metropolitan Adelaide. Led by Sonder, the consortium brings together KWY Aboriginal Corporation, Kudos Services and MCCSA, combining complementary expertise to provide accessible, early mental health and wellbeing support for children aged 0–12 years and their families.

The Southern Adelaide Kids Hub commenced in December 2025, with services delivered from Marion and Aldinga. The Northern Adelaide Kids Hub commenced in June 2026, with services based at Elizabeth Vale.

MCCSA's contribution - MCCSA brings its extensive experience and established relationships with culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities to the Kids Hub partnership, with a particular focus on strengthening culturally responsive access and engagement for multicultural children and families.

Two MCCSA practitioners work across the Kids Hubs, with one based in the South and one in the North. Each practitioner has a dual focus encompassing Multicultural Family Practice and Community Engagement.

Through family practice, MCCSA provides culturally responsive support to families engaging with the Kids Hubs, helping families understand and navigate the service, identify their needs, strengthen their understanding of children's mental health and wellbeing, and connect with relevant supports.

Community engagement is an important part of MCCSA's contribution to the partnership. Building on MCCSA's existing community networks and relationships, practitioners are establishing connections with multicultural community leaders, associations, faith groups, schools and other organisations across Northern and Southern Adelaide.

Engagement activities include visiting community groups and trusted community spaces, participating in multicultural networks and events, sharing information through community organisations, and engaging with multicultural media and radio programs.

CALD engagement and reach - Since opening, the Southern Kids Hub has received 641 referrals, with 11% of referrals identifying as CALD. The Northern Kids Hub has received 100 referrals, with 7% identifying as CALD.

MCCSA practitioners have recorded 66 service contacts involving 45 clients across the Northern and Southern Kids Hubs. Beyond the numbers, feedback from families also demonstrates the value of being able to connect with practitioners who understand and reflect diverse experiences:

Information about Kids Hub and referral links can be found on the Medicare Mental Health Kids Hub and MCCSA websites.

"I am very satisfied with the Kids Hub and the service. I am happy with what we talk about and what we have been doing in our sessions. I have found it very useful to be able to talk to someone from a diverse background."

CALD PARENT ACCESSING THE KIDS HUB

MCCSA Men's Council and the Multicultural Community LDAT

The MCCSA Men's Council gives men from culturally and linguistically diverse communities a stronger voice in the issues that affect their health, wellbeing and participation in community life.

Established as part of MCCSA's commitment to community-led practice, it brings together multicultural men with lived experience, community knowledge and leadership capability to identify emerging needs, strengthen advocacy and ensure that programs are shaped with communities rather than for them. In doing so, the Council acts as a bridge between grassroots community experience and the services, researchers and government bodies that influence men's health and wellbeing.

The Council's main vehicle for turning that voice into action is the Multicultural Communities Local Drug Action Team (LDAT), delivered in partnership with the Alcohol and Drug Foundation.

Working across the Men's, Women's and Youth Councils, the LDAT implements community-led prevention that strengthens the protective factors around alcohol and other drug harm. Its 2025/2026 Community Action Plan focused on social connection, belonging and purpose, embedding prevention within trusted cultural settings rather than treating it as a stand-alone health message. This approach matters most for communities where stigma, language or unfamiliarity with services can make conventional health promotion less effective.

Across the year, MCCSA worked with partner communities to deliver a broad program of connection and prevention. Multicultural Men's and Women's Social Nights and Family Fun Days paired social connection with practical prevention: smoking and vaping education with Cancer Council SA, alcohol and other drug awareness, breast screening information with BreastScreen SA, and physical activity from Tai Chi to yoga and meditation,

35+
COMMUNITY EVENTS AND SESSIONS DELIVERED

1000+
ATTENDANCES ACROSS THE YEAR'S ACTIVITIES

30
YOUNG MEN PARTICIPATED IN OUR 20-WEEK FUTSAL PROGRAM

100
PARTICIPANTS, MULTICULTURAL SOCCER CARNIVAL

250+
PARTICIPANTS ACROSS THE SOCIAL NIGHTS AND FAMILY FUN DAYS

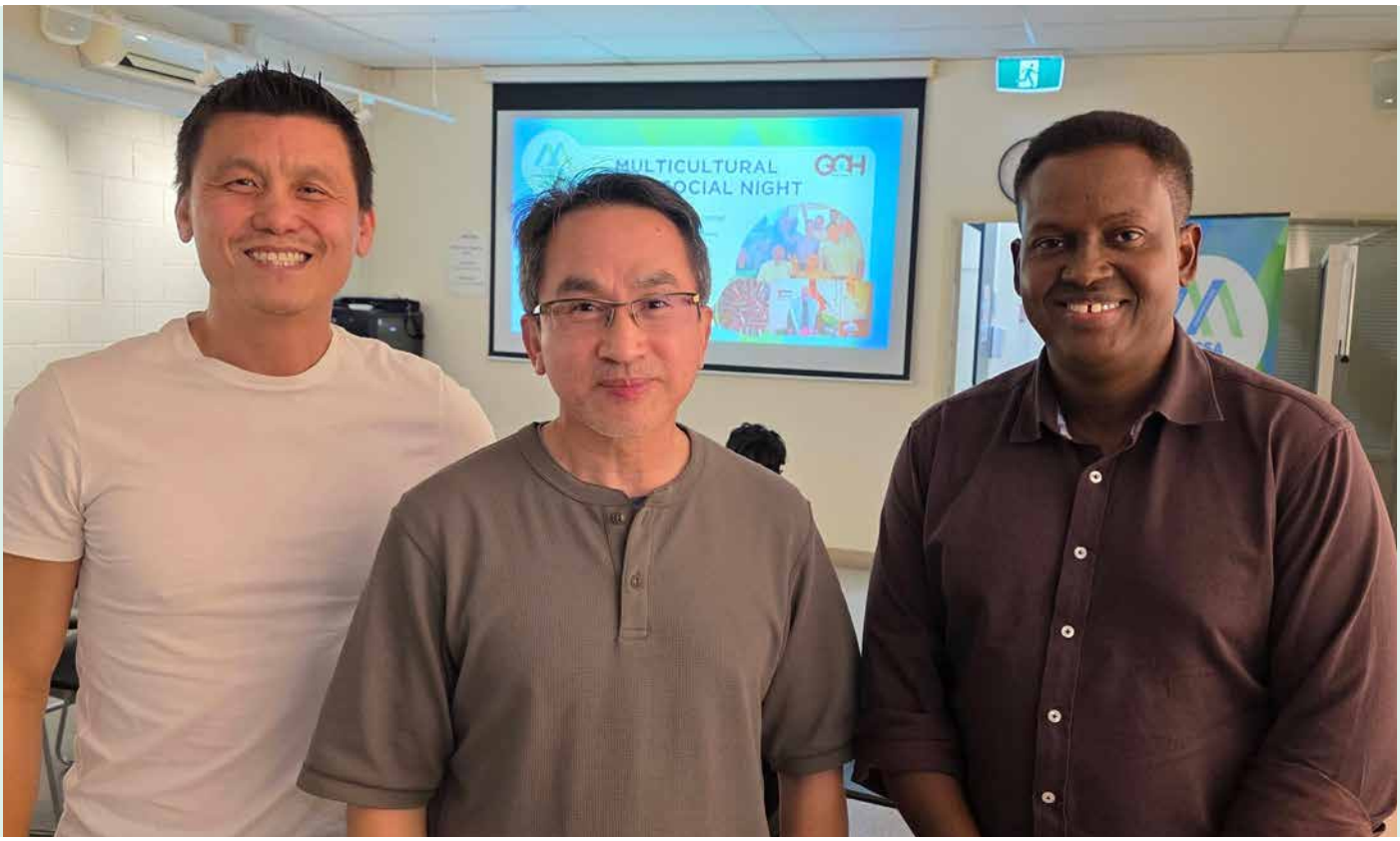
6
QUIZ NIGHTS WITH STEADY ATTENDANCE

alongside shared meals and lived-experience testimonials. Sport and recreation gave young men a regular reason to gather, including a 20-week futsal program drawing around 30 people each week, six quiz nights averaging 30 participants, two community bowling sessions, and a multicultural soccer carnival that brought 100 people together. Partner communities led from within, hosting activities in their own spaces and languages, among them Glimmer of Hope, the United Indians Association of SA, the Kurdish Association of South Australia, Prima Nota with the Russian-Speaking Women's Association of SA, and Australian Sikh Support.

A highlight of the year was the Men's Health Week and World Refugee Day event, Healthy Men, Connected Communities, delivered with the City of Charles Sturt. It brought CALD community leaders together with Professor Gary Wittert from the Freemason's Centre for Male Health and Wellbeing, to name the systemic barriers facing multicultural men, and connected the LDAT's prevention work to MCCSA's broader men's health agenda under Taking Care of Me.

The response was consistent across every community. Where participants were asked, more than nine in ten reported feeling more comfortable seeking support from local health services, and more connected to their community, after taking part. It is clear evidence of a simple principle that runs through all of this work: for multicultural men, connection itself is prevention.

Building on the success of the Men's Mental Health project, the Fay Fuller Foundation selected MCCSA for their Strategic Partnership 2024-26. One of the key successes of the collaboration and partnership was the release of the Connection is Prevention report which can be found on the MCCSA Website.



Mind Care Digital

Mind Care Digital is a long-term collaboration between MCCSA and La Trobe University focused on improving access to dementia prevention information and support for culturally and linguistically diverse communities in South Australia.

The project runs from 2025 to 2029 and combines research, cultural adaptation, community engagement and participant recruitment to help ensure dementia prevention approaches are relevant and accessible to multicultural communities.

MCCSA's role brings community knowledge and a multicultural lens into the project. During 2025–26, this included contributing to the cultural adaptation process, preparing and supporting community workshops, and helping shape how the project engages with CALD communities. Two community workshops formed part of the early project milestones, alongside ongoing Advisory Group involvement.

The partnership is designed to continue over several years, with MCCSA supporting participant recruitment and engagement as the research progresses. Recruitment milestones extend across 2026 and 2027, followed by ongoing retention support and continued Advisory Group participation through to 2029.

The project reflects the importance of involving multicultural communities in the design and delivery of health research from the beginning, rather than expecting communities to engage with approaches developed without their cultural context in mind. Through Mind Care Digital, MCCSA is helping ensure that dementia prevention research is informed by the experiences, needs and perspectives of the communities it is intended to reach.



Multicultural Reconnect

Multicultural Reconnect is a free, voluntary and confidential service established to support young people aged 12 to 18 years from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds.

Delivered across metropolitan Adelaide, the program provides outreach support to assist vulnerable young people experiencing or at risk of homelessness, family conflict, school disengagement or other issues. The program aims to promote stability in the lives of participants, support them to re-establish connections with their families, schools and communities, and in identifying and working towards well-being goals. MCCSA provides practical assistance with accommodation and financial matters, in addition to emotional support, counselling, family mediation and referral to specialist services.

Reconnect accepts referrals from a broad range of sources, including family members, teachers, school counsellors, service providers and other concerned parties. This inclusive referral process enables the program to identify and support the greatest possible number of young people requiring assistance.

This year, the Multicultural Reconnect program provided support to 49 young people from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) background, including 31 females and 18 males, ranging in age from 13 to 18 years, representing 20 different cultural backgrounds. Common and recurring issues young people presented with this year included homelessness, income support, unemployment, relationship breakdowns with parents and family, domestic and family violence, mental health, legal issues, alcohol and other drug use, school disengagement and attendance, and undiagnosed disabilities. Most referrals this year came from our networks, including schools, the community, government agencies and other service providers that support young people.

“Reconnect helped me do things I couldn’t do on my own. The worker helped me by speaking up for me when I felt I wasn’t heard. As things improved, I gained a better understanding of how to deal with my issues and where to go for support when I need it. ”



Supporting Multicultural Carers

Through its partnership with Carers SA, MCCSA continued to deliver Carer Gateway services during 2025–26, helping carers from multicultural communities maintain their health, wellbeing and resilience while caring for others.

Caring for a family member or loved one can be rewarding, but also physically and emotionally demanding. These pressures may be compounded by language barriers, limited awareness of available services, cultural expectations surrounding caring responsibilities and difficulties navigating complex service systems.

MCCSA helps carers from a broad range of cultural backgrounds, with particular expertise in supporting Arabic-speaking communities. Carers may be looking after someone living with disability, mental illness, chronic illness, addiction or age-related frailty.

Services are tailored to each carer's circumstances and may include coaching, counselling, peer support, emergency respite and individual support packages. Practical assistance can include cleaning and gardening, transport, shopping support and essential household appliances. These services help ease the pressures associated with caring and allow carers to give greater attention to their own wellbeing.

Demand increased considerably during the year. By June 2026, approximately 350 carers were registered with MCCSA, compared with 210 in 2025—an increase of around 67 per cent. This growth reflects both the level of need and the value of delivering services through an organisation with strong cultural knowledge and established community relationships.

Carers can be of any age. Young carers aged between 5 and 25 may carry significant responsibilities themselves or assist a primary carer within their family. Recognising their contribution and responding to their particular needs are important parts of supporting the whole family.

MCCSA also delivered intensive assistance through two peer groups, holding five meetings during the year. These groups enabled carers to connect with others who understand the realities of caring, exchange information and experiences, and reduce social isolation.

Working closely with Carers SA, MCCSA's two dedicated Carer Gateway staff met or exceeded all contracted targets across carer intake and reviews, information and advice, intensive assistance, package coordination and peer group participation.

MCCSA is pleased to continue its partnership with Carers SA in 2026–27. By supporting carers, we strengthen not only the individuals providing care, but also the families and communities that rely on them.

"Hi Samer, I wanted to thank you for all the support you have given us, and the quality work provided from your end. A man came out today to do mums garden, she said he went above and beyond and did an amazing job, mum asked if he could be the one that comes out the next few times to do the gardens again, I've never heard mum talk so highly of someone like she did, thank you".

JIM, A CARER WHO LOOKS AFTER HIS SICK WIDOWED MOTHER

Women's Council – Voice, Connection and Action

Throughout 2025–26, the MCCSA Women's Council continued to strengthen the voice, participation and wellbeing of women from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

The Council provided a trusted forum for women to identify issues affecting their communities, share experiences and connect with information, services and opportunities. These conversations also informed MCCSA's broader advocacy and program development, ensuring the experiences of multicultural women were represented in discussions with government, service providers and decision-makers.

Women's health remained a significant priority. Building on MCCSA's work in this area since 2018, the Council continued to improve access to health information and create opportunities for women to discuss issues that are not always openly addressed within families or communities. Particular attention was given to menopause, mental health and wellbeing, helping to bring these conversations into culturally appropriate and accessible settings.

Domestic and family violence was another important focus during the year. MCCSA continued to strengthen its work with multicultural communities to increase awareness, build community capability and ensure culturally diverse perspectives are reflected in prevention and response strategies.

A key part of this work has been engaging community and faith leaders. These leaders are often trusted first points of contact and can play an important role in challenging attitudes, promoting respectful relationships and connecting people with appropriate support.

MCCSA has worked to strengthen their knowledge and confidence to recognise domestic and family violence, respond appropriately and understand where specialist support can be accessed.

Our engagement has also reinforced the importance of ensuring the voices and experiences of multicultural women are included in the design of domestic and family violence policy and prevention initiatives. Through consultations, community discussions and our contribution to broader policy processes, MCCSA has continued to advocate for culturally responsive approaches that recognise barriers including language, isolation, unfamiliarity with services and concerns about seeking help.

Beyond health and safety, the Women's Council created opportunities for women from different cultural backgrounds and generations to build connections, develop confidence and contribute their perspectives on issues including social isolation, participation and leadership.

Importantly, the Council provides MCCSA with a direct feedback loop. What we hear from women helps us identify emerging issues, expose gaps in existing systems and advocate for responses that better reflect the realities of South Australia's increasingly diverse population.

The outcome is broader than individual activities or events. Through the Women's Council, women are connected to each other, to trusted information and services, and importantly, to the conversations where decisions are made.

This is MCCSA's Equity by Design approach in practice: listening first, working alongside women and communities, and ensuring their knowledge and lived experience help shape more equitable, accessible and effective responses.

Taking Care of Me: A Health Literacy Project for CALD Men

Taking Care of Me is a two-year pilot health literacy initiative led by MCCSA to improve health literacy, prevention awareness and early help-seeking among multicultural men.

Co-funded by Preventive Health SA and The Hospital Research Foundation Group, and delivered in collaboration with Adelaide University, it builds on MCCSA's earlier Fay Fuller Foundation men's mental health work, with Professor Gary Wittert supporting the research and men's health education components.

At its centre is the Health Literacy for Men to Empower & Thrive (HELMET) program, delivered through a community collective approach. Rather than bringing communities into a predetermined program, MCCSA partners with established community organisations and supports them to lead from within, following a seven-step engagement model that keeps community ownership at every stage.

Six communities co-lead the work: The Men's Arabic Speaking Association, the Association of the Burundian Community of SA, the FARDA TV CALD Network, the Latin American Society of SA, the South Australian Chinese Community Language School, and Australian Sikh Support SA.

Each identifies trusted Men's Health Champions who are trained to facilitate health conversations, promote prevention and open pathways into care.

The year moved the project from design into community delivery. Co-design consultations were completed with all six communities, and the culturally adapted HELMET Train-the-Trainer program, developed with Professor Wittert, was delivered in December 2025.

Twenty Men's Health Champions were trained across Arabic, Swahili, Dari, Spanish, Chinese, Punjabi and Hindi-speaking communities. The results were striking. By the end of the training, every Champion agreed across all six measures that they had the knowledge and confidence to support men's health, up from as low as 70 per cent beforehand, with the largest gains in knowing where to seek men's health advice and how to navigate primary care. The project then launched on 6 February 2026 with Minister Chris Picton, alongside funders, partners and community leaders.

Community implementation followed across all six communities, with Health Champions leading the work themselves. They independently planned and delivered more than 20 sessions and activities, from health information sessions and group walks to social gatherings, typically drawing 10 to 20 men each and adapting the format to suit their community.



6

CALD COMMUNITIES LEADING THE PROJECT



20

MEN'S HEALTH CHAMPIONS TRAINED ACROSS 6 LANGUAGE GROUPS



24

COMMUNITY-LED SESSIONS AND ACTIVITIES DELIVERED



10-20

MEN PER SESSION

They engaged guest speakers, formed local partnerships and delivered information in community languages, reaching men in northern and outer suburban Adelaide who are not typically engaged with formal health services.

In June, the Healthy Men, Connected Communities event, delivered with the City of Charles Sturt, brought more than 60 representatives together to showcase the project, with Professor Wittert delivering the keynote, and the independent evaluator, Clear Horizon, reported early positive results.

The change is clearest in the men themselves. As one participant said after a session: "For the first time, I understood how the Australian health system works and where to go when I need help."

"This program has changed my life considerably. I now know how to advocate for myself and make the right lifestyle choices."

PARTICIPANT

"Because I'm from the community and speak their language, the men trust me, and that trust is what opens the door to talking about health."

HEALTH CHAMPION

"Before, I didn't know how to speak up about my own health. Now I make better choices each day, and I feel confident to look after myself."

PARTICIPANT




People with Disability

Creating Pathways to Inclusion and Opportunity

Genuine inclusion requires more than inviting people to participate; it requires identifying and removing the barriers that prevent them from doing so. These programs create practical pathways into community life, employment, learning and social connection, enabling people to build confidence, contribute their skills and pursue opportunities that reflect their goals.

We deliver this commitment through the following programs and initiatives...

Sew to Grow

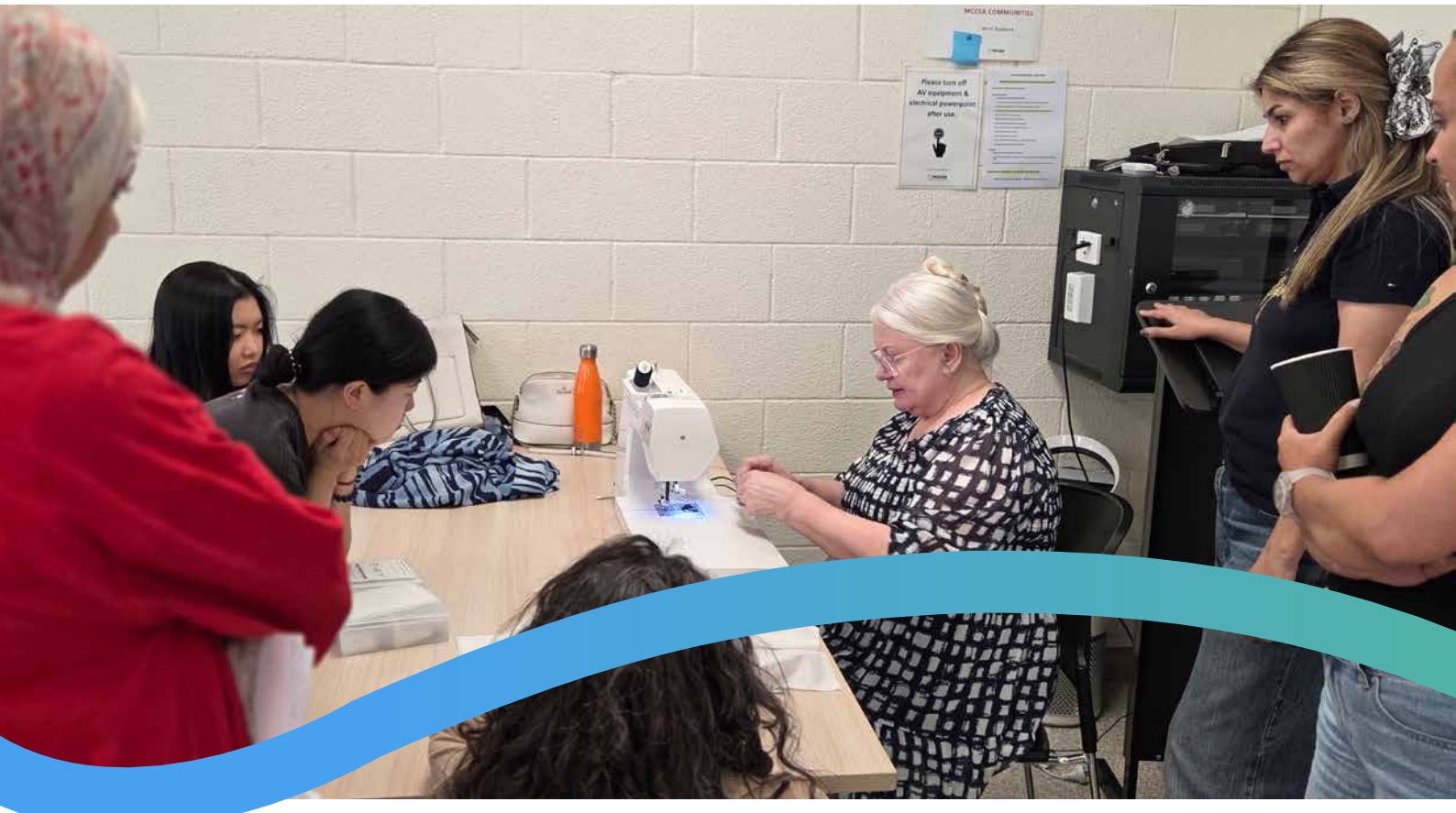
Sew to Grow uses something practical and familiar, sewing, as a pathway back into learning for adults from migrant and refugee backgrounds.

Rather than teaching sewing as an end in itself, the program uses hands-on activities to strengthen the foundation skills people need in everyday life, further education and work: literacy, numeracy, communication and digital confidence.

Delivered through MCCSA's Adult Community Education work, the course was designed particularly for learners who may have low confidence in English or who have felt excluded from more formal education. Reading patterns and instructions develops literacy; measuring fabric and calculating quantities builds numeracy; working together develops communication; and using phones or tablets to find tutorials, materials and prices builds digital skills. The practical format allows learning to happen in a way that feels immediate, achievable and relevant.

The funded program was designed for 24 learners, with small-group, face-to-face delivery at MCCSA supported by a qualified trainer, bilingual assistance and shared equipment and materials. The learning environment emphasised encouragement and participation rather than performance, with plain English, visual instruction, peer learning and practical support used to reduce barriers to staying engaged.

Sew to Grow was also designed as a pathway rather than a standalone activity. Learners could explore further training, volunteering, enterprise and employment opportunities, including areas such as alterations, textiles, retail and home-based microenterprise. One participant, Stella, demonstrates how those pathways can extend well beyond the classroom. After joining Sew to Grow, she was connected through Community Connections to partners in the Adelaide Hills, where her idea for a Lunar New Year celebration developed into a community-led event attracting around 40 people from several cultural backgrounds.



Learning English, Building Confidence

Each week, MCCSA's English classes provide a welcoming and informal environment where people from multicultural backgrounds can develop their conversational English and become more confident using it in daily life.

An average of 10 to 15 participants from different countries attend each week to learn with Sylvia and Bill, MCCSA's dedicated volunteer tutors. Through patience, encouragement and a practical approach, Sylvia and Bill help participants strengthen their language skills, practise conversation and communicate with greater confidence.

For many participants, the motivation to learn English is deeply personal. It may be the desire to make an appointment, understand important information, speak with a child's school, ask for assistance or simply have a conversation with someone new. These interactions can make a significant difference to a person's independence and ability to participate in the wider community.

The classes allow participants to practise without fear of making mistakes and to learn at a pace that reflects their individual needs. Their informal and conversational nature is one of the program's strengths, helping participants develop language skills that are relevant and immediately useful.

The classes also create opportunities for people from different cultural backgrounds to meet, form friendships and become more socially connected. Over time, we see participants become more willing to speak, ask questions and engage with others. While these changes may appear small, they can have a lasting impact on a person's confidence, independence and sense of belonging.

MCCSA's English classes reflect a simple principle at the heart of much of our work: language creates connection. Whether that connection is with family, neighbours, services or the wider community, helping people find the confidence to communicate enables them to participate more fully and build a stronger sense of belonging in South Australia.

"My granddaughter is four years old and speaks German, English and Spanish. I want to improve my English so I can read to her, talk with her and communicate with her as she grows."

ENGLISH CLASS PARTICIPANT FROM COLOMBIA

Connect Access Belong (CAB)

Over the past year, the Connect Access Belong (CAB) Project has supported 78 people with disability and family members from 23 cultural backgrounds to participate in their communities in ways that reflect their interests, goals and circumstances.

At the centre of CAB is a team of Community Connectors, many with lived experience of disability and cultural diversity. Connectors work individually with participants to understand their goals, identify barriers and find suitable opportunities.

Participants have connected with more than 60 community activities, including swimming, tennis, inclusive football and dancing; sewing, painting and cooking groups; volunteering and leadership opportunities; cultural events; social groups; and employment and education programs. Activities have been accessed through community centres, councils, sporting clubs, multicultural organisations and mainstream services. Across the project, 81% of participants have increased their social participation.

For many participants, the benefits extend beyond taking part in an activity. One Venezuelan participant joined CAB after experiencing significant isolation and wanting to make friends. As language was a barrier, she was connected with a Spanish-speaking sewing group. She developed friendships, began attending independently and has since become a group leader, teaching sewing skills to others.

An important learning from the past year is that community participation is not always as simple as finding an activity. Participants can experience barriers including language, transport, cost, accessibility and social isolation, while some are managing significant challenges in other areas of their lives.

This is reflected in more than 500 referrals made through CAB. While 61% have related directly to community participation, the remainder have connected people with other services and supports. Connectors work alongside participants to address these barriers while building confidence and independence. We have seen people progress from requiring support to attend activities, to independently attending groups, volunteering and developing new social connections.

Alongside participant and family support, CAB has built relationships across disability, multicultural, arts and culture, sport, education, government and community sectors. Engagement has also extended into regional South Australia, including Whyalla, Port Augusta, Port Pirie, Mount Gambier and the Yorke and Mid North regions.

MCCSA's Multicultural Disability Inclusion Network was launched in September 2025 and has grown to 91 members, bringing organisations and people with lived experience together to share knowledge and explore inclusive practice. During the year, the Network welcomed its first interstate member from Queensland and launched a Microsoft Teams platform for members to connect and share resources.

CAB has also developed self-paced Intercultural Communication Training, collaborated with Purple Orange to connect organisations into their Disability Access and Inclusion Training, delivered Cultural Intelligence training and commenced preparations for a Disability Access and Inclusion Forum to be held in the next financial year.

The project was originally due to conclude in June 2026; however, CAB has received funding to continue for a further year. This will allow us to continue supporting participants and families while strengthening relationships with community organisations and supporting more inclusive practices.

CAB in Action:

After experiencing significant isolation, one participant was supported to attend the Hong Kong Festival. ***Being surrounded by people from familiar cultural backgrounds helped her feel comfortable and able to participate in a community event again.***

Community participation has also created opportunities for participants to contribute to others. One CAB participant ***became an aged care volunteer*** and now regularly visits an older person who looks forward to her visits and considers her a friend.

For one participant, attending a community workshop required some simple adjustments. His Connector worked with organisers to arrange priority seating and communication support, ***enabling him to participate fully and feel included.***

One participant had lost their home and belongings in a fire, was experiencing homelessness and was no longer accessing the NDIS supports they were entitled to. Their Connector helped them explore housing, reactivate their NDIS plan and advocate for a Support Coordinator. The participant later said: ***"It's like a weight has been lifted off my shoulders."***



Opening Doors: The BEC Project

For three and a half years, MCCSA's Building Employer Confidence and Inclusion in Disability (BEC) project has been opening doors.

Doors to workplaces. Doors to opportunity. And, for many people, doors to possibilities that had previously seemed out of reach.

Funded by the Australian Government Department of Social Services, BEC was established to build the confidence and capability of South Australian employers to recruit, train and retain people with disability, with a particular focus on people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds and women with disability. The project paired structured internships and mentoring for participants with hands-on, practical support for employers, from inclusive recruitment advice to workplace and policy reviews.

Over the past year alone, BEC delivered 14 internships, engaged 8 employers across South Australia, ran 6 culturalQ sessions, and provided workplace mentoring to 12 mentors. It was a year that saw the project's approach tested, refined and, in many workplaces, embedded well beyond the life of a single placement.

Through 30 internships across the life of the project, people with disability from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds and women with disability had the opportunity to bring their skills, qualifications, experience and lived knowledge into workplaces across South Australia. Around 80% went on to secure employment, turning an internship into something far more significant: a job, renewed confidence, professional connections and a pathway forward.

But the doors opened in both directions.

Employers gained the opportunity to see capability before assumptions. They adapted workplaces, improved physical and digital accessibility, reviewed recruitment and learning practices, and began to understand disability inclusion through the eyes of people experiencing it. In several workplaces, the changes went beyond the individual internship and became part of how organisations approached inclusion.

"I expected the project would primarily provide workplace experience. Instead, it became a truly reciprocal learning opportunity." "These experiences have genuinely changed how we think about capability, accessibility and inclusion. MCCSA's work and vision create opportunities, open doors, empower individuals and, ultimately, communities."

"The interns did not just participate in the workplace. They actively improved it."

For participants, the impact was deeply personal. Confidence grew. Professional identities were strengthened. New relationships were formed. Futures that had felt uncertain began to take shape.

"Not only have I gained knowledge, skills and confidence, I have also been presented with long-term employment possibilities — regardless of physical, racial or other differences."

"This internship didn't just help me grow professionally. It changed the trajectory of my life."

“Gaining confidence as a Data Analyst was a huge milestone — as a recent graduate, and even more so as an immigrant and a person living with a disability. It reinforced my belief that success is possible against all odds.”

And something shifted across the wider community too. Employers, government, disability organisations, multicultural communities and MCCSA came together around a shared understanding: inclusion works when people are given genuine opportunities to participate and shape the workplaces they enter.

The journey was celebrated at BEC’s end-of-project event, bringing together the people who made it possible. There was laughter, pride, reflection and, understandably, a little emotion.

BEC may have reached the end of its three-and-a-half-year journey, but the doors it opened remain. Behind them are new careers, greater confidence, changed workplaces, stronger connections and a deeper understanding of what genuine inclusion can look like. The hope is that those doors stay open, and that every workplace BEC touched continues to open more.





Speak My Language

MCCSA has worked in partnership with Ethnic Communities Council of NSW (ECCNSW) on the national disability inclusion Speak My Language program since 2021.

The program has produced podcasts and community radio broadcasts in a range of languages. People with disability have shared personal stories, information and advice about accessible places, activities and opportunities available to culturally diverse communities with a focus on accessible and inclusive mainstream and community-based places, activities, opportunities, and services. The National Disability Insurance Scheme NDIS is included but not the focus.

Speak My Language promotes living well through positive stories that challenge stereotypes and cultural taboos about disability, highlighting resources, developing networks, and strengthening skills.

During this year, 40 broadcasts were aired on Adelaide's 5EBI FM in Arabic, Bengali, Cantonese, Hindi, Korean, Mandarin, Nepali, Sinhala, Spanish and Vietnamese. All radio broadcasts were developed by ECCNSW and MCCSA from existing, pre-recorded Speak My Language (Disability) podcasts available on the SML website.

Through A Video-Podcast component four videos were produced with four people with disability in two languages - Sinhalese and Spanish. The video podcasts feature storytellers conversing in language about a mainstream and inclusive place, activity or opportunity. Each pair of storytellers featured in two episodes, taking turns interviewing each other. The themes of a video podcast in each language were: Purpose and Meaning and Choice and Control.

Multilingual Podcasts sharing personal stories and practical advice about living with disability, available in 24 languages can be found on the MCCSA website, Disability Inclusion page. Video podcasts are available on MCCSA's YouTube channel.

"It was a privilege to be a part of the Speak My Language project and help capture the stories of people living with disability from different cultural backgrounds. I enjoyed listing to their experiences, the challenges they faced and how they found ways to overcome them. As a videographer, I believe storytelling can help people feel seen and heard. What I loved most was seeing how people felt good about themselves after filming and sharing their stories. It was also fun getting to know them beyond the shoot and sharing great moments. It was a meaningful experience, and I'm proud to have been part of it".

"Taking part in Speak My Language and sharing a little of my story reminded me that our circumstances don't have to define how far we can go. Sometimes, a small step from volunteering, to joining a dance class or trying a new sport, can create meaningful connections, build confidence and open new possibilities".




How can we build inclusive teams?

Building More Inclusive Organisations and Decisions

As diversity becomes increasingly embedded in every part of South Australian life, organisations must be able to understand and respond to the communities they serve. Through culturalQ and The New Mainstream, MCCSA builds organisational capability and ensures diverse perspectives and experiences inform policies, services, products and decisions.

We deliver this commitment through the following programs and initiatives...

From Awareness to Action: Building the Capabilities for Inclusion

Diversity awareness is an important first step, but creating genuinely inclusive organisations requires more than understanding difference. It requires the skills, confidence and organisational capability to translate awareness into everyday actions, decisions and practices.

As South Australia's population, workforce and communities continue to diversify, organisations across every sector are recognising that inclusion does not happen by chance, nor can it rely on the efforts of a few committed individuals. It is built through capable people, supported by leadership, systems and workplace cultures that enable everyone to contribute, participate and thrive.

During the reporting period, culturalQ engaged 978 participants across government, health, justice, local government, education, community services, aged care and industry. This included partnering with organisations such as the Attorney-General's Department, Preventive Health SA, Mayne Pharma or the Department for Correctional Services, while continuing to deliver the capability-building component of the Multicultural South Australia Ambassador Program.

Through these partnerships, culturalQ supports organisations to strengthen both individual and organisational capability. Cultural Intelligence (CQ) equips people with the skills to communicate across difference, navigate diverse perspectives and build stronger relationships, while organisational Cultural Competence supports organisations to embed inclusion into their systems, structures, policies and everyday operations.

Across every engagement, one message is clear: in an increasingly diverse environment, business as usual is no longer enough. Organisations must continue to evolve alongside the communities they serve, ensuring their workplaces, services and engagement approaches remain responsive, accessible and inclusive.

Importantly, this work is not only about recognising diversity. It is about creating the conditions where diverse perspectives, experiences and expertise are valued and can contribute to better decisions, stronger partnerships and improved outcomes.

Through culturalQ, MCCSA is supporting organisations across South Australia to move from awareness to action, building the capabilities needed to create more inclusive workplaces, more responsive services and stronger connections with the diverse communities that make our state thrive.

978
PARTICIPANTS ENGAGED

60+
ORGANISATIONS SUPPORTED

REPRESENTING:
GOVERNMENT, HEALTH, LOCAL GOVERNMENT, COMMUNITY, EDUCATION, AGED CARE, JUSTICE, CORPORATE AND SPORTING SECTORS

“So many concepts and practical ways to shift from cultural awareness to cultural intelligence.”

ANGLICARE SA TRAINING PARTICIPANT

“This is very important. It should be conducted in all councils in SA and must be attended by all staff and officials.”

LIBRARIES SA TRAINING PARTICIPANT

culturalQ





The New Mainstream

The New Mainstream is MCCSA's multicultural market research and community engagement service, connecting businesses, government agencies and researchers with the diverse communities that make up South Australia.

The service draws on MCCSA's extensive community networks and the relationships and trust built over decades. This enables organisations to hear from people who can be difficult to reach through standard research panels and consultation processes, ensuring a broader range of experiences and perspectives are represented in research and decision-making.

Clients come to The New Mainstream with a range of practical needs. They may want to test a product, campaign, policy or service before it is introduced, better understand how information will be received by different communities, or identify barriers that may affect access, participation or engagement.

Effective multicultural research requires more than translating existing research materials. Recruiting participants who speak another language at home, reaching people who do not participate in conventional research panels, and creating an environment in which people feel comfortable expressing their views requires established relationships, cultural knowledge and trust.

During 2025–26, The New Mainstream conducted 59 focus groups involving 518 members of the public. Research covered areas including health, insurance, ageing, energy and financial services, complemented by surveys, individual interviews and broader community consultations.

Participants were recruited primarily through community networks rather than commercial panels, helping to include voices that can otherwise be absent from mainstream research. The team works across more than 20 languages, with sessions conducted in-language where this supports stronger participation and more meaningful discussion.

Importantly, the value of The New Mainstream extends beyond participation numbers. The service provides organisations with insights into how people experience and respond to policies, services, products and information, including the factors that influence trust, access and engagement.

For MCCSA, this work is also an important part of ensuring that the diversity of our community is reflected in the evidence that informs decisions. As South Australia continues to change, The New Mainstream provides a practical bridge between organisations seeking better evidence and communities whose experiences and perspectives need to be part of that evidence.



Governance, People and Financial Accountability

Our Team

Patron

Hon Hieu Van Le AC

Board Executives

Mrs Miriam Cocking
Chairperson

Dr Ian Harmstorf OAM BVK
Deputy Chairperson

Mr Silvio Iadarola OAM
Treasurer

Board Members

Ms Gosia Skalban OAM

Ms Manju Khadka

Mr Nasir Hussain

Mrs Patrizia Kadis

Mr Suren Edgar

Mr Ranielson Santana de Silva

Mr Con Katsambis

Ms Zainab Jimie

Staff

Helena Kyriazopoulos OAM
Chief Executive Officer

Sharyn Mooney
Accountant

Annie Barone
Office Coordinator

Ling Giang
Finance Officer

Julie Hoare
Manager

Vicky Arachi
Manager

Alian Mohamed
Communications Officer, Design

Aveen Muhamad
Project Officer ACVVS

Ayma Acosta
Disability Inclusion Connector

Chinami Klenovsky
Disability Inclusion Connector

George Gouzounis
CHSP SSD Coordinator

Hanaa Grave
Coordinator, culturalQ

Ina Kail
Transport Administrator

Katherine Greer
Coordinator, Disability Inclusion Program

Katie Trinh
Principal Strategic Advisor, CALD Health Equity

Kwol Bol
Coordinator, Multicultural Youth Reconnect

Lena Gasparyan
Senior Project Officer

Lenard Schiancalepore
Communications and Project Officer

Liliana Rojas
Community Engagement Practitioner I Kids Hub South

Luis Cohen
Coordinator | ACVVS And Ageing Well

Maggie Assad
Coordinator | ACVVS and Carers Gateway

Mechell August
Disability Inclusion Operations Lead

Milan Andelkovic
ACVVS Officer

Omar Ahmad
Disability Inclusion Connector

Perrin Abbas
Inclusive Employment Lead

Samer Madbak
Project Officer | ACVVS And Carer Gateway

Santiago Montanez
Project Officer | Health And Wellbeing

Savry Ouk
Community Engagement Practitioner I Kids Hub North

Sisaleo Philavong
Disability Inclusion Coordinator

Somi Lindsay
Coordinator Community Development

Stefano Pratola
Project Officer ACVVS

Ukash Ahmed
Coordinator Programs

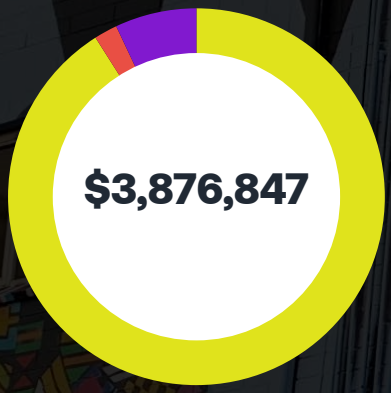
Ulisis Espul
Disability Inclusion Connector

Xiaohui (Abby) Liu
Project Officer, Disability Inclusion Connector And Playgroup Coordinator

Our Finances

Revenue

- Grants **91%**
- Bank interest **2%**
- Miscellaneous income **7%**



Expenditure

- Employee Remuneration **73%**
- Depreciation **1%**
- Operating expenses **26%**



For full audited results provided by HLB Mann Judd visit www.mccsa.org.au





Current MCCSA Board

Back row: Suren Edgar, Helena Kyriazopoulos OAM – CEO, Zainab Jimie, Patrizia Kadis, Manju Khadka, Con Katsambis, Nasir Hussain, Ranielson Santana de Silva

Front row: Dr Ian Harmstorf OAM BVK – Deputy Chairperson, Miriam Cocking – Chairperson, Gosia Skalban OAM, Silvio Iadarola OAM – Treasurer

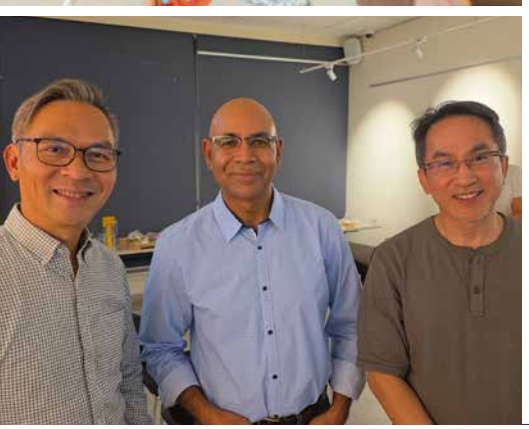


Around the Table- Panel Discussion




















MCCSA
50 years
OF
BUILDING
SUCCESSFUL
COMMUNITIES
1975 - 2025
PAVILION


MCCSA
Multicultural Communities
Council of South Australia


Celebrating
50 Years
MCCSA


MULTICULTURAL
MEN'S QUIZ NIGHT


Celebrating
50 Years
MCCSA Multicultural Communities Council of South Australia


















AGM 2025
Celebrating
50
years







MCCSA

Multicultural Communities Council of South Australia

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