

Australian Multicultural
Community Services

Annual Report

2022–2023



**we care,
we support,
we empower**



Australian Multicultural
Community Services

AMCS Mission, Vision and Values

Mission and Vision

The mission and vision of Australian Multicultural Community Services Ltd (AMCS) are to improve lives through care, support and empowerment and to create an equitable, just and compassionate multicultural society that is age-friendly and inclusive of diverse Australians.

Values



For 40 years, our commitment to the Victorian community and vision for an equitable, just and compassionate society have driven us to deliver quality holistic community services to improve people's lives.



We help people to access the support they need to live a better quality of life. AMCS is uniquely placed to provide inclusive, respectful, appropriate and reliable services. From supporting seniors to live safely at home to employment pathways and adult education, we strive to be your trusted multicultural community care organisation.

In the spirit of reconciliation, AMCS acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the country throughout Australia and their connections to land, sea and community. We pay our respect to their Elders past and present and extend that respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples today.

AMCS is committed to the health and safety of clients, employees and volunteers during the COVID-19 pandemic. We have adhered to COVIDSafe practices for all photos. Any images included showing people not observing social distancing and/or wearing masks were taken prior/post restrictions or during the phase of eased restrictions.



Our Sunshine West social support group celebrating Easter



Meet Jack, Our Youngest Volunteer

Our youngest volunteer, Jack, is a passionate and competitive sailor. He won the title of Australian Champion in Dec 2022



Our Eastern European respite group in Endeavour Hills enjoying a mosaic workshop



AMCS CEO Elizabeth Drozd OAM met with Carers Victoria CEO Judith Abbott to discuss AMCS' various carer support programs

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Board of Directors 2022–2023



Chairperson
Russell Howard



Company Secretary
Ron Horfiniak



Director
Peter Biedak



Chairperson's Report

The past 12 months have been one of substantial growth in the delivery of AMCS services and consolidation of our organisational structures and systems.

Our clients are our first priority as we continue to build and implement our in-home health care business model, providing pathways to support clients' diverse choices and needs.

The board, CEO, staff and volunteers have strived to maximise the efficiency and effectiveness of our services and programs. For 40 years, as a community organisation, we have provided quality services to support our culturally diverse seniors, community groups, families, individuals and new migrants and refugees.

In 2023, we experienced significant growth in our reach and impact. This growth has allowed us to serve more clients and members of the community, expanding our reach across Melbourne and Geelong.

In the future, we aim to expand our existing services and develop new ones. This includes the heritage restoration of Millennium House as a multicultural community hub, which will open in mid-2024. The next year will bring more change and challenges to the aged care sector as the federal government implements new legislation in July 2024.

We will meet these challenges in the same caring, supportive and professional way we have for the past 40 years. As I have said previously, our main priority will always be to put the needs of our clients and communities at the center of everything we do.

I am grateful for the hard work, passion and dedication of my fellow board members, our CEO Elizabeth and all of our professional staff and volunteers. Without them, we would not be the trusted and caring organisation that exists today.

Chairperson
Russell Howard



Director
René Blaszak



Director
(Prof.) Desmond Cahill OAM



Director
Barbara Swiatkowski



Director
Meena Vannitamby



CEO's Report

I am pleased to present our annual report for the last 12 months as we celebrate a significant 40-year milestone in providing care, support and empowerment.

This year, we have been able to provide care and support to clients and carers across many different programs and projects. These included home care, employment assistance, support for carers through wellbeing centres, and the Digital Piazza project, which assists seniors in gaining a better understanding of technology.

During this reporting period, I am also very pleased to have been awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia for my service to the Polish and multicultural communities. I am grateful to be recognised for my contribution to improving culturally and linguistically diverse access and equity and inclusion for all. Last year presented me with another highlight when I was honoured as the Winner of the Executive Leader award by Leading Age Services Australia, which, in my view, also recognises the dedication and selfless work of AMCS staff and volunteers.

Among several highlights and achievements is Volunteer West's successful integration into AMCS. We are privileged to carry the baton for volunteering in the Western Metropolitan area of Melbourne with the added support of Volunteer West's resources and considerable expertise.

The redevelopment of Millennium House has been progressing well this year, with the view to transforming it into a safe and inclusive space for all community members to enjoy by mid-2024.

I extend my heartfelt gratitude to our staff for their dedication and to our volunteers for their ongoing contributions. Without their unwavering support, our successes would not have been possible.

As we move forward, our dedication to our mission and to delivering value to clients, staff and volunteers remains unwavering. We care, we support, we empower.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth Drozd OAM, MAICD
Chief Executive Officer

40th Anniversary

On 10 May 2023, AMCS celebrated our 40th Anniversary. In 1983, the Australian Polish Community Services (APCS) was founded by a group of people led by Zbigniew Ben Dąbkowski to assist Polish people in Melbourne, particularly the aged and recently arrived Poles. Initially, there was no funding, and activities were hosted in members' homes.



Other migrant groups such as CO.AS.IT, an ethno-specific community services organisation catering to the Italian community, supported and helped to host APCS meetings at their offices in Carlton. In March 1985, APCS became an incorporated body and later that year was approved as an accredited organisation for the Emergency Relief Programme. APCS was one of eight ethnic communities funded and the only Polish organisation in Australia to receive accreditation and funds.

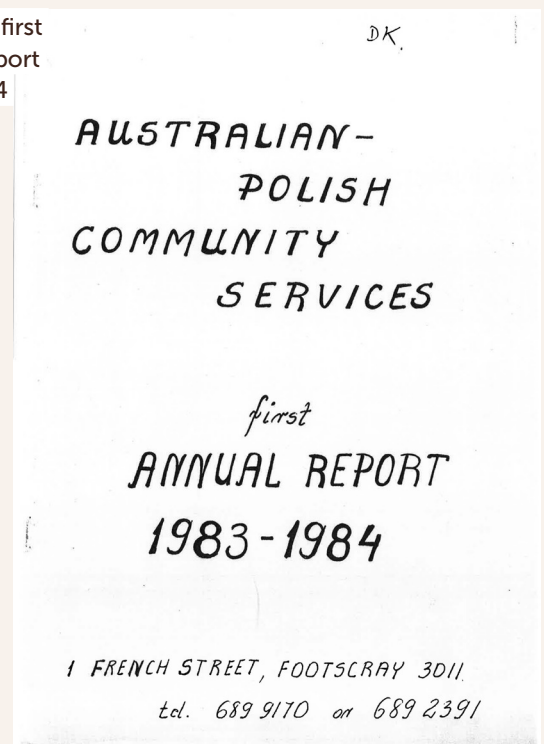
In 2011, our name was changed to 'Australian Multicultural Community Services' to service a broader base of migrants to Australia and expand our services and funding base.

Fast forward to May 2023, as we celebrate our 40th anniversary, we now support over 2,000 individuals and families every week through in-home care, social support, respite, employment services, adult education and emergency relief programs. With offices in Maidstone and Geelong and services provided throughout all of the

Melbourne metropolitan regions as well as the greater Geelong areas, we employ 248 paid staff members proficient in 45 different languages and collaborate with a dedicated group of more than 100 volunteers.

Our mission is to improve lives through care, support and empowerment with a vision for an equitable, just and compassionate multicultural society. To everyone who has been involved with APCS/AMCS over the past 40 years, we express our sincere thanks for your devoted and exemplary efforts to make a difference in people's lives.

The APCS' first Annual Report 1983-1984



Services

Australian Multicultural Community Services (AMCS) is a multicultural community care organisation with 40 years' experience in providing quality services and reliable support for older Victorians, families, community groups, individuals and carers.

Our culturally appropriate services are:



delivered by skilled, knowledgeable and caring staff



mostly free or low-cost, and



tailored to suit the diverse needs of clients

We are flexible and professional and aim to improve the community. Our support includes the following:

Home Care Packages

Home Care Packages (HCPs) are personalised packages to meet your individual needs through personal care, domestic assistance, transport and referrals to Allied Health.

Entry-Level Home Care Support

For a small contribution, our entry-level home care support serves as the first step in supporting you to continue living independently in the comfort of your home. This is ideal for seniors who require minimal aid or are on the waiting list for an HCP.

Volunteer Visiting Programs

Visits by our volunteers who speak your language and share your interests or hobbies. Our volunteers can visit your home or residential facility or take you on an outing.

Social Support Groups

These gatherings offer you opportunities to socialise with seniors from your own or other cultures while engaging in fun, physical and mental wellbeing activities.

Centre-Based Day Respite Program

This program is designed to give carers a well-deserved break, secure in the knowledge that AMCS is taking care of their family member or friend.

Information, Referral and Support

We assist you to understand, access and navigate the aged care service system and to connect you with the right service.

Support and Relief

Individuals and families receive free support during emergencies.

Help to Find Work

This service includes employment placement, career guidance, skills development, internship education and training.

Adult Community Further Education

We facilitate access to free pre-accredited and industry-recognised courses to help you gain new skills and improve your career options.



Snapshot

248

staff members
from 45+ different
countries

1,053

HCP clients
supported

287

entry-level home
care clients

273

volunteers

600+

support and relief
clients

13

social support
groups

7

free educational
short courses

500+

access and support
clients

3

volunteer visiting
programs

4

centre-based
respite groups

1,260+

jobseekers assisted

Quality and Compliance

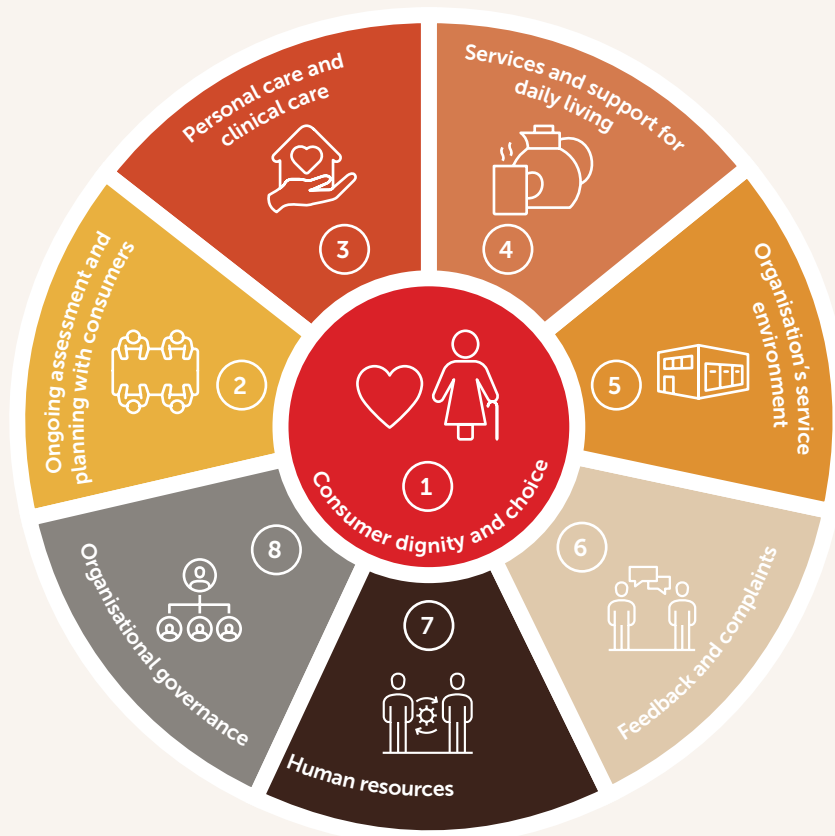
During the past year, the quality, governance and risk team has continued monitoring organisational safeguards to enhance client options and control while ensuring client-focused decision-making.

To support the organisation, the team implemented initiatives to improve the quality and safety of care, which included:

- introducing several new policies and procedures, including the Serious Incident Response Scheme (SIRS) and recruitment procedures related to the new Aged Care Banning Orders,
- compiling our client information into a handbook to accommodate our culturally diverse client base,
- enhancing our quality and safeguarding measures by introducing a new incident management system,
- strengthening our risk management framework, and
- improving clinical capabilities and outcome measures through the recruitment of nurses and the implementation of a clinical care management system.

We will continue working closely with clients and staff to find effective ways to enhance the delivery of our care and services. We eagerly anticipate the development of new and improved services in the coming year.

The Aged Care Quality Standards.



Digital Transformation Pathways

The past year has seen AMCS undertake the most extensive change in ICT in its history.

This entailed the migration of all files to a cloud-based communication platform, SharePoint, which involved file classification, clean-up of old and duplicate files, the introduction of naming conventions and the integration of all client documents. This significantly improved search functionality, access to relevant documents and consistency in record management. The AMCS intranet site added a nice finishing touch.

We also introduced a new application, ACE Community Care, as an extension to our current TurnPoint client management system. The ACE features include incident management (including SIRS reporting) and clinical assessment tools, which allow for holistic care planning and continued compliance with the Aged Care Quality Standards.

The rollout of additional language options for client statements was also an important improvement to our TurnPoint system. In addition, our ICT equipment underwent an upgrade to address the needs with regard to hybrid work arrangements and to maintain a state-of-the-art ICT setup in the office.

Home Care Packages

What a year 2023 has been. Though it has presented many challenges, we can proudly say that AMCS has faced these challenges head-on, thanks to the agility, teamwork and dedication of our staff.

Workforce shortages have proven to be our biggest obstacles and continue to affect our ability to support the number of clients who choose AMCS as their preferred provider. Despite this, the HCP program has grown significantly over the past 12 months. This growth is supported by a very robust recruitment strategy to attract and retain quality, skilled staff. We continue to work closely with several training organisations, the federal government and other agencies to expand the capabilities of our workforce. Throughout this process, we carefully take into account the nuances of delivering individualised, culturally specific care and services.

With the demand for in-home care still growing, technology offers a possible solution for improving client care and services. AMCS's Digital Piazza project aims to assist seniors to become tech-savvy and take full advantage of technology-enabled care.

In the face of numerous obstacles, these past 12 months have also presented us with new opportunities that will help contribute to the continued success of AMCS.

147,390+
hours of support

1,053
clients serviced

59
countries of birth

271
new clients

38
languages spoken

HCP client Ignazia Guzzardi
learning loom knitting with
AMCS Support Worker
Tina Parisi





HCP client Marija Kovač and AMCS Support Worker Helen Daboul during a home visit



HCP client Caterina Cardamone enjoying the beach for the first time in years



I had my first entry-level service today, and the support worker who attended was amazing and did a fantastic job.’
(Entry-level home care services client)

Entry-Level Home Care Support

It is incredible how much people can achieve with a little support.

Our entry-level services support seniors to live independently in the comfort of their own homes for as long as possible and assist them in achieving their goals and addressing their care needs.

6,689

hours of domestic assistance

1,205

hours of personal care

129

transport services

287

clients supported

654

hours of Allied Health services (occupational therapy, podiatry, physio and other services)

Social Support for Seniors



AMCS' social support and centre-based respite team continued to aid seniors and their carers to prevent social isolation and to reduce their stress by providing activities that create social connections and improve physical health and wellbeing.

The activities are tailored and designed to cater for the different care and social needs and to meet the cultural preferences of seniors. AMCS' Wellness and Respite Centre in Rye, Victoria, continues to provide a pleasant experience for seniors and carers who need a break from home.

AMCS was thrilled to launch a fresh initiative, the Staying at Home program, along with AMCS Dementia Friends Wellbeing Centres. These three respite centres located in Hume, Casey and Greater Geelong are dedicated to offering personalised support to carers and their loved ones living with dementia. We extend a special thank you to the Australian Government for providing funding for this initiative.

Social Support Groups

AMCS' social support groups (SSGs) are located in different Metro Melbourne and Greater Geelong locations. AMCS' SSGs encompass a wide range of cultures and provide support to seniors from multicultural backgrounds, such as Arabic, Chinese, Eastern European, Filipino, Italian, Polish, Sri Lankan and Ukrainian. The seniors in these groups enjoy building connections with one another through tailored physical and wellbeing activities that are designed to align with their specific care requirements and preferences. These activities may include physical exercise, line dancing, social outings, arts and crafts and cognitive games. This year, we were pleased to see the establishment of four new SSGs, which include a new Social Group for Home Care Package clients in Sunshine, Victoria.

Our Polish SSG in Sunshine West celebrates International Women's Day with AMCS SSG Coordinator Ewa Lenartowicz



39,000+
hours

13
social support groups

15+
countries of birth

216
clients

Centre-Based Day Respite Program

AMCS’s centre-based day respite program continued helping carers to help reduce their stress by providing short breaks. Meanwhile, at the Respite Centre, their loved ones participated in different physical and wellbeing activities to expand their social connections.



Some of AMCS’s clients celebrating Christian Easter.



International Women’s Day was special; the ladies recounted their memories from when they were still living in Poland and were later presented with a rose. In Poland, on International Women’s Day, you can see men on the streets buying bunches of flowers to take home to their mothers, partners and sisters as a thank you for their dedication, hard work and contribution to society.’

(Ewa Lenartowicz)

109
clients

17
countries of birth

4
groups

18,000+
hours

In May 2023, the Eastern European respite group enjoyed an outing to the Royal Botanical Gardens



Volunteer Visiting Programs

AMCS' Social Support Individual (SSI) and Community Visitor Scheme programs provide support to seniors from multicultural backgrounds by matching them with a volunteer who may share a similar culture, language, or interests. The program coordinators and volunteers remain committed to engaging seniors in the community or residential aged care.



This entails offering companionship and shopping assistance, as well as involving the seniors in mental and physical games. These efforts are all directed towards alleviating loneliness and tending to the seniors' individual needs.



AMCS volunteers Stan Okis and Linda DeMarco celebrate being finalists in the Volunteer of the Year Awards, 2022 with AMCS Social Support Group Coordinator, Ewa O'Brien



AMCS volunteer Elsa celebrating SSI client Eulalia's birthday



National Volunteer Week, May 2023



45

countries of birth

25

different client languages

58

new clients

210

clients

127

volunteers

23

different volunteer languages

Access and Support Services



Our access and support services assist individuals from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds, those with lived migrant experience, and other diverse individuals who require specific support to understand, access and navigate different service systems, including home care.

Multicultural and other specialised organisations provide niche services that empower seniors and others who need assistance to live more independently at home with the required support.

Our access and support programs are aimed at providing the necessary assistance for people facing barriers in accessing services to ensure that they receive the help that they require and are entitled to.

600+ hours of community engagement activities

1,413 hours of direct client support

400+ referrals to support services

500+ clients supported

30+ countries of birth and languages spoken

80% of clients were from diverse backgrounds



“

Since your support and involvement, me and my elderly mother felt empowered and more informed, and everything is taking a positive turn! Thank you!

(Specialised Support Client)

Specialised support clients
Lydia and Olga

Support and Relief Services

Our support and relief program (Emergency Relief Programme) continues to aid people who are experiencing financial hardship.

We assist individuals by providing food and petrol vouchers, partial payment of overdue utility bills or rent and referrals, among other things. We proudly assist people to address financial challenges and get back on track as we deliver our services with understanding and empathy.



Thank you so much for the food vouchers. Now I can drop off and pick my husband up from chemo sessions without worrying about food.'

(Support and Relief Client)

600+

clients supported

763

services delivered (food packs, hygiene packs, food vouchers, partial payment of overdue bills or rent)

50%

of clients supported were from CALD backgrounds



An AMCS emergency relief worker delivering food packages to financially disadvantaged individuals and families during the festive season.

Career Support



Adult Community Further Education

We continue to support Victorians with free pre-accredited online or face-to-face short courses to improve their career pathways. Our government-funded courses are designed to be flexible, meet learners' needs and empower them to maximise their potential.

We currently offer the following courses:

- Digital Essentials Level 1 and 2
- Navigating Microsoft Office
- Introduction to MYOB Software
- Careers in Aged Care
- Multicultural Leadership
- Skills for Work and Study

Help to Find Work

The year 2022–2023 has been a rewarding year for the employment team, despite many challenges encountered throughout the year. Jobs Victoria Employment Services' (JVES) partnership with AMCS and Apex Institute, which is called Australian Multicultural

Employment and Careers Services (AMECS), received support from various community and business organisations.

This year, the project assisted over 1,200 severely economically marginalised jobseekers from CALD backgrounds to obtain employment, education and training. The program assisted jobseekers in securing more than 1,000 employment placements. In this way, our JVES program, which is funded by the State Department of Jobs, Skills, Industry and Regions (DJSIR), concluded another successful year. In addition, the AMCS-led partnership has been conducting the Jobs Victoria Advocates program since March 2021. During this period, our jobs advocates have successfully connected hundreds of jobseekers throughout the Western Region with employment, training and other service providers.

The AMECS team has had the opportunity to help some of the most disadvantaged members of our community to secure employment, training and other much-needed community services.

We are grateful to the JVES team of the DJSIR for their invaluable support in achieving these remarkable results.

1,200+
jobseekers
assisted

1,000+
employment
placements



Carers Employment Support Program (CESP)

AMCS has provided tailored support to assist unemployed carers from multicultural backgrounds in finding employment opportunities and navigating educational pathways. This assistance, which was offered via the CESP, included one-on-one

support, referrals to services, resume and cover letter writing classes, workshops on confidence-building, interview preparation and digital literacy. The program provided pre-employment, post-employment and educational support to carers to ensure a smooth transition from unemployment to employment or further study.

60+ carers assisted

1,100+ hours of support provided

Carers attending an employment education workshop



Advisory Services

Supporting Regional Aged Care Services (NintiOne Ltd.)

AMCS continues to support indigenous organisations with capacity building via the federally funded Remote and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Aged Care Service Development and Assistance Panel (SDAP). During the past year, our quality manager was fortunate enough to again visit Hope Vale Aged Care Services provided by Hope Vale Aboriginal Shire Council. Hope Vale

township is located 46 kilometres north-west of Cooktown in a valley surrounded by tropical native bushland, mountain ranges, coastal and diverse flora and fauna. Hope Vale has a population of approximately 1,300 people and is home to 13 clan groups who mostly speak Guugu Yimithirr and other related languages, as well as English.

Kay ('Nana Kay'), Coordinator of the Hope Vale Commonwealth Home Support Programme (CHSP), on site delivering home care due to staff shortages



Community Engagement Projects

Through various grants, AMCS initiated projects to improve the health and wellbeing of individuals, families, carers, seniors and women from multicultural backgrounds.



Hi AMCS, thank you for sharing the "Getting Started with Aged Care in Australia" information. The flowchart is perfect for clients and carers looking for an explanation of the steps involved in the two-pronged process of applying for support services. One page, step-by-step, no unnecessary information, easy to read, easy to understand. PERFECT!

(Service Provider)

Sector Support and Development

AMCS works to enhance aged care providers' capability to improve service delivery for diverse groups. As part of our multicultural advisory services, we extend our wideranging knowledge and expertise to CALD community leaders, government departments and service and health providers.

- 10+ organisations supported to embrace better practices for supporting diverse groups
- 10+ information sessions delivered to CALD communities
- 10+ providers encouraged to engage in the reform process of the Support at Home Program. Additionally, various resource materials were developed to assist both providers and clients to understand the relevant processes



Representatives of various community groups attending a home care information session

38+ professionals supported to provide more culturally and linguistically appropriate support to their clients

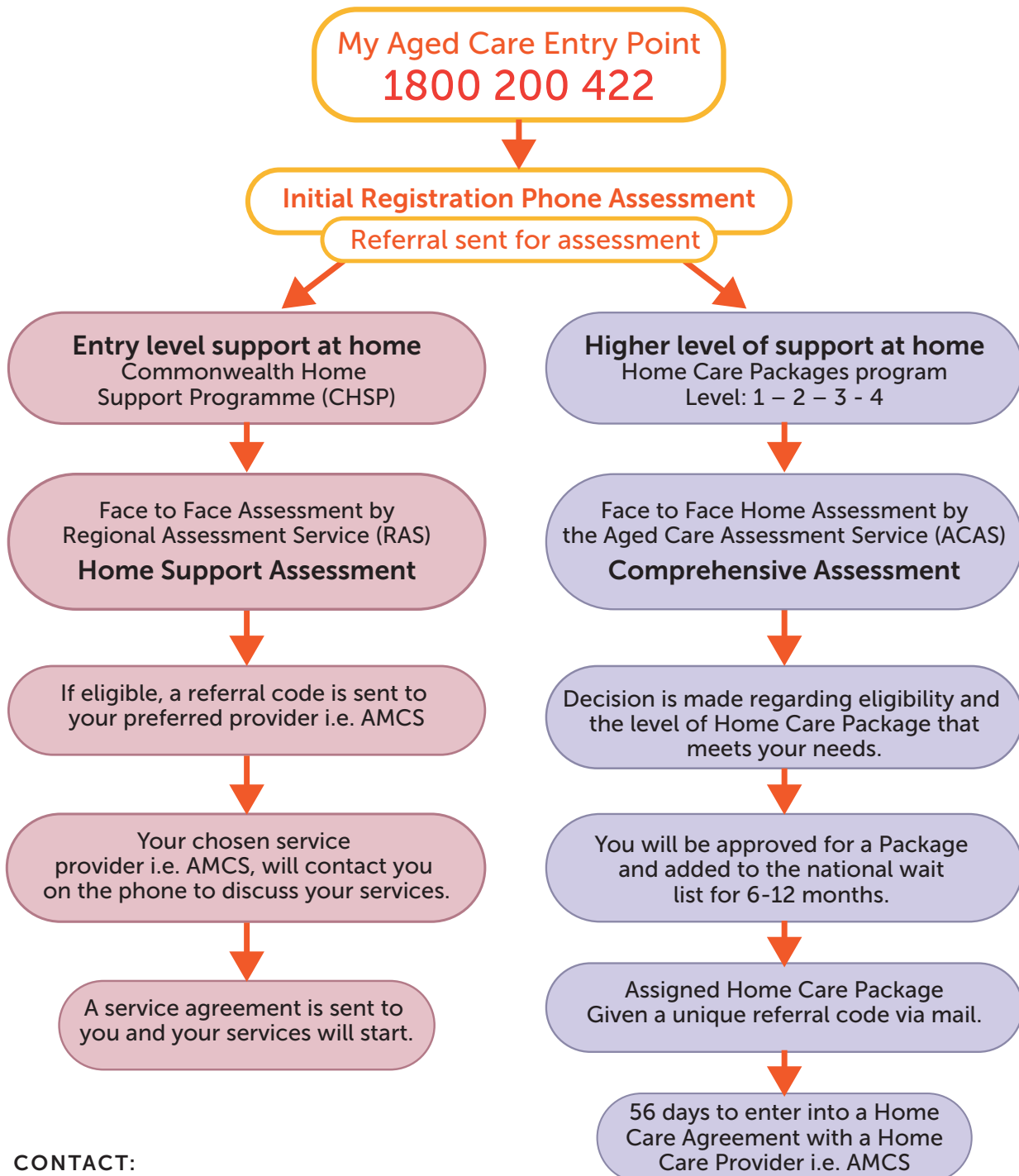
20+ professional consultations

A 'Getting Started with Aged Care in Australia' flowchart was created to help provide people with a clear step-by-step guide to care. The resource was also translated into Arabic, Greek, Italian and Polish to help make the information more accessible.

MY AGED CARE GETTING STARTED



Australian
Multicultural
Community
Services



CONTACT:

For further information and support please contact Sinisha Krstov on **0487 202 560** or Reception on **(03) 9689 9170**

Multicultural Communication Outreach Program 2 (MCOP 2)

AMCS collaborated with 11 Victorian community groups representing multicultural backgrounds (including Sri Lankan, Sinhalese, Indian Tamil, Vietnamese, Afghan, Lebanese, Palestinian, Maltese, Sri Lankan Tamil, Indian Hindu and Egyptian communities) to create informative content focusing on COVIDSafe messages.

These materials were produced in their respective languages and disseminated within their communities to promote safe practices.

We presented a co-design workshop that was attended by more than 100 ethnic community leaders and members. The goal was to help each community group to identify the COVIDSafe messages that were most relevant to their community. During the workshop, the groups selected COVID-19 vaccine hesitancy and dispelling misinformation about long COVID as the most relevant topics.

COVIDSafe messages by the Victorian Afghan Associations Network. (Artist: Farah Zahidi).



The project generated 24 items with COVIDSafe messages, including:

- 5 posters
- 7 videos
- 1 TikTok
- 2 pieces of craftwork
- 1 cartoon
- 1 podcast
- 3 songs
- 3 drawings
- 1 photo book

AMCS conducted seven 'train-the-trainer' programs that offered meaningful and long-term skills development opportunities for community members from 11 different ethnic groups.

Over 100 community members were directly involved in content creation, and the materials that they created were disseminated to at least 2,500 community members who view them as trusted and reliable sources of information within their community. We extend our gratitude to the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing for their support in funding this project.

COVIDSafe messages by the Maltese Seniors' Club. (Artist: Amanda Neville).

Ibqa 'sigur mill-COVID

It-tilqim jaghmilha sigura

Dejjem zomm id-distanza soċjali ġewwa l-hwienet

Jekk thossok marid toqghod id-dar

Dejjem ilbes maskra fil-hwienet u l-avvenimenti

Ahsel idejk regolament ghal 20 sekonda

Ilbes maskra fuq it-Trasport Pubbliku

Soghla fil-minkbejn tieghek

Dan il-kontenut inholoq bi-appo mis-Servizzi tal-Komunità Multikulturali Awstraliana (AMCS) taħt il-finanzjament mill-Gvern taħt-isat ta' Victoria

Digital Piazza

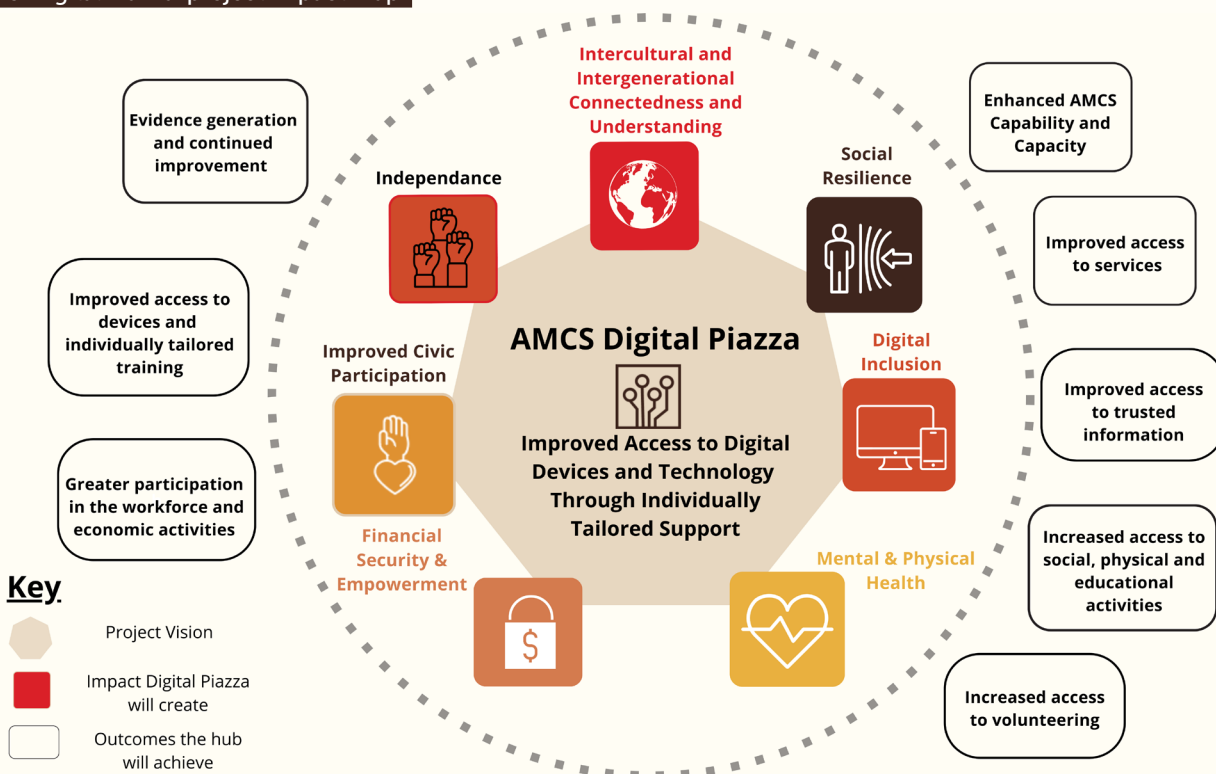
The Digital Piazza project was established by AMCS and funded by Perpetual, an organisation that was set up by the Ian Rollo Currie Foundation. The AMCS 'Digital Piazza' model aims to expand digital inclusion and outreach to multicultural seniors and their communities, enabling them to access a range of health, community services and social connections to improve their general health and wellbeing. We aim to expand our pilot 'Digital Piazza' program into a self-sustaining model.

AMCS trained more than 100 digital mentors and 40 digital buddies and connected them with over 500 CALD seniors who will receive ongoing support and access to online information and services.

The project is based on four pillars:

1. Train seniors from CALD groups, peer supporters and leaders in the use of digital technology.
2. Train young digital volunteers (buddies) to support CALD seniors in using digital devices.
3. Run online presentations on topics like physical activity, culture and links to social events.
4. Develop a social impact evaluation and monitoring system to share the lessons learned.
5. Our social impact monitoring and evaluation tool allowed AMCS to learn from experiences, improve service delivery, plan and allocate resources. It also assisted in keeping the project on track.

The 'Digital Piazza' project impact map.



'Be Connected' Capacity Building

Thanks to 'Be Connected', an Australian Government initiative committed to increasing the confidence, skills and online safety of older Australians, we were able to expand the work of the 'Digital Piazza' project.

We held weekly sessions for our AMCS respite and social support groups in Wantirna, Endeavour Hills and Sunshine. We also joined forces with various community groups and facilitated ongoing technology sessions with a Spanish community group in Doveton, a Catholic Multicultural group in Sunshine and an Italian Women's group in Coburg.

Seniors were provided the opportunity to receive advice and instructions on how to use their digital devices effectively and were also made aware of potential scams and how to avoid them. The 'Be Connected' portal also provided a platform for open discussion between participants. This reduced anxiety among project participants as they were reassured that assistance would be readily available if required.



AMCS Digital Project Support Officer Bianca Glazebrook presented a scam awareness session to an Italian women's group in Coburg.



Polish-speaking Digital Mentor Rafat Borowiec assisting Krystyna Jones to become digitally literate.

200 seniors were trained to use the internet and technology
75% of the participants reported a decrease in isolation and loneliness

20 ethnic community groups/clubs were linked to digital mentors for ongoing support
75% of the participants reported improved health, wellbeing, a feeling of belonging and autonomy

Priority Response to Multicultural Communities (Phase 4)

AMCS' 'Multicultural Social Innovation Hub' aims to rebuild community ties, foster social inclusion and increase access and participation in the social and economic recovery of multicultural seniors, including faith groups and new and emerging communities in Victoria. We established three different hubs, namely the 'Social Friendship Café', 'Health and Wellbeing Café' and 'Friends for Recovery Café' to provide targeted, culturally relevant support to multicultural communities.

Through the cafés, we provided emergency relief support that included food, access to social/physical activities, physical and mental

health information, technology and digital device training, referral support and links for participants to essential services, including counseling.

AMCS helped more than 500 CALD seniors to stay connected and active during the project through a range of face-to-face and online interactive physical activities that included gentle exercise, line dancing and social activities, including knitting, macramé, gardening and cake decorating. This project was made possible by funding from the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing.



Emergency relief packages being distributed.

824

hygiene packs provided

794

food kits provided

590+

families received emergency relief

3,400

face masks distributed

1,600

hand sanitisers distributed

Support For Carers

Our person-centred 'Care for Carers Hub' model provided integrated services and all-inclusive support for more than 220 carers. Individual needs assessments were initially conducted with carers to understand their needs, challenges and barriers. We then collaborated with each carer to design a flexible service delivery schedule tailored to their specific needs.

Within this program, carers were given the opportunity to access health and wellbeing activities of their choice (e.g., gym, counselling, spending time on a hobby, virtual events, spa visits). They were provided vouchers, tickets and/or transport, while at the same time, the care recipient received respite support.

We ensured prompt responses to aid carers experiencing crisis, distress and/or urgent need. This included offering emergency respite, vital support like mental health and/or financial counselling, addressing family violence or elder abuse concerns and providing emergency food relief and essential items for carers from low socio-economic backgrounds.

We developed and facilitated education and awareness workshops on various topics to address carers' identified skills gaps and needs. Topics included navigating service systems, digital technology skills, mental health support, carer roles and responsibilities, financial literacy and money management, first aid and group-based counselling. This project was supported by the Victorian Government.



Members of the St Paul's elderly support group dancing during an outing.

223

carers supported

20

community groups supported

4,500

hours of support provided

98%

of carers supported were from culturally diverse backgrounds

Additional Respite for Carers

AMCS supported over 200 carers through the Additional Respite for Carers program.

Support services included:

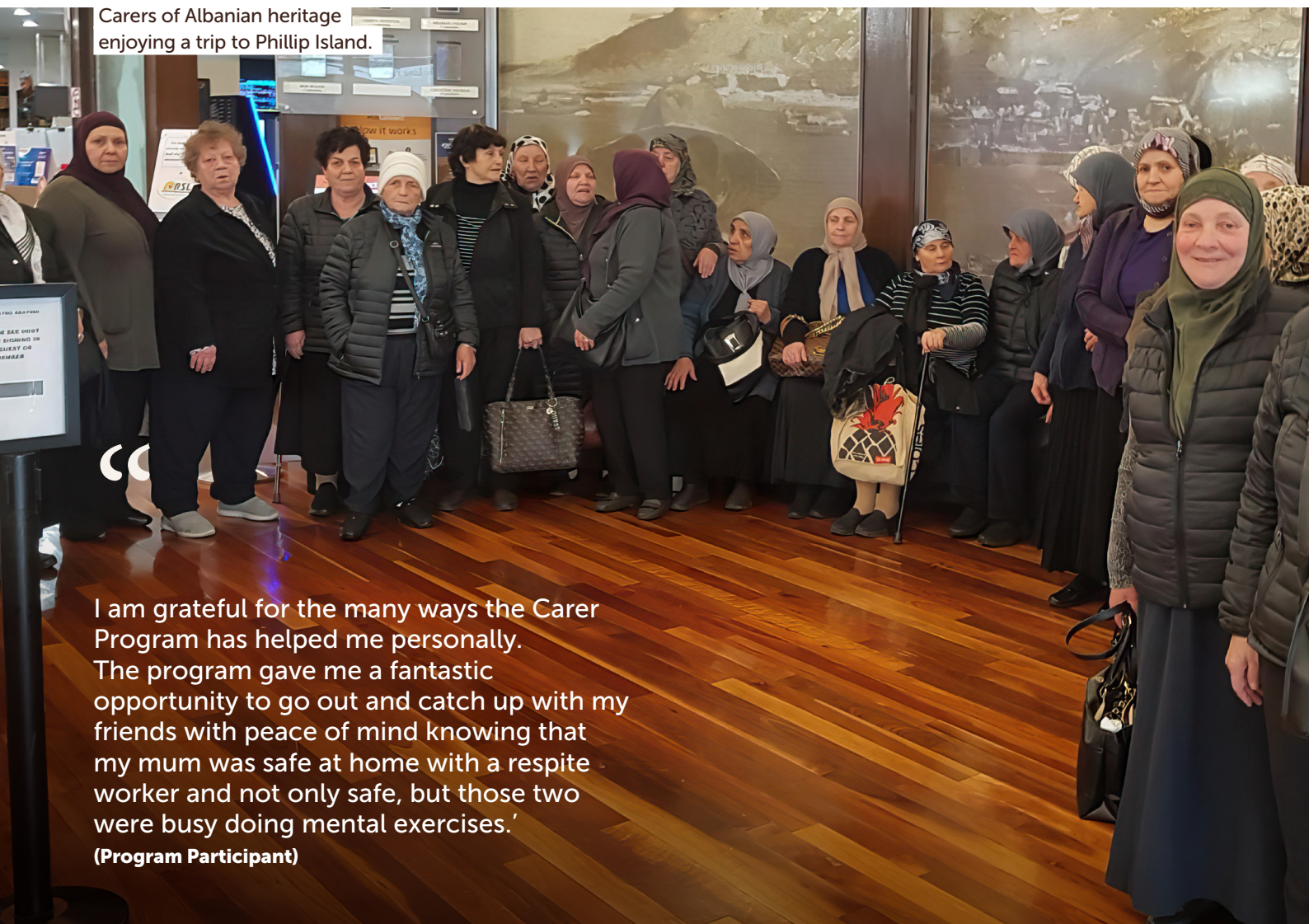
- Group activity day respite
- One-on-one support
- In-home respite
- Overnight respite

Engagement activities included:

- Day trips/excursions
- Access to physical and wellbeing activities, like yoga and chair exercises, arts and crafts, line dancing and wellness activities

Free education sessions on topics including:

- Legal rights (wills, power of attorney and guardianships)
- Self-care
- Governance
- Elder abuse
- Services Australia
- My Aged Care
- Support services for carers



Carers of Albanian heritage enjoying a trip to Phillip Island.

I am grateful for the many ways the Carer Program has helped me personally. The program gave me a fantastic opportunity to go out and catch up with my friends with peace of mind knowing that my mum was safe at home with a respite worker and not only safe, but those two were busy doing mental exercises.'

(Program Participant)

Respite and Wellness Retreat

AMCS' Respite and Wellness Retreat in Rye, Victoria aims to enhance people's independence and quality of life. It provides carers and their loved ones with a wonderful opportunity to enjoy a short-term stay in a fully equipped home featuring three queen-sized bedrooms, allowing them a well-deserved break. The retreat, just a short walk from the beach, comes with convenient features, including accessibility options, two bathrooms, a spacious lounge and dining room, a modern kitchen, central heating, a split system for climate control, a fenced yard and parking space.

Women in Leadership Development (WILD)

Pathways to employment for women in volunteer-led organisations

The WILD program provided opportunities for 20 women from CALD backgrounds, working in volunteer-led organisations and living in Melbourne's Northern and Western regions to share their experience, form mutually supportive networks and be empowered by enhancing their leadership capabilities. The initiative focused on strengths and used positive mentoring to encourage participants to connect with others. The program successfully achieved its goals by creating new leadership and employment opportunities for the participating leaders. We extend our gratitude to the Victorian Women's Trust for funding this program.

The AMCS Respite and Wellness Retreat in Rye.



'We were recently offered a two-night stay at the AMCS property in Rye for two carers and care recipients. This was the ultimate respite we all needed. It was a home away from home. Change of environment and routine was enjoyed immensely, thank you.'

(Margie)



Senior Wisdom and the Mobile Information Hub (SWAMIH) Multicultural Tree

The Multicultural Tree was one of the activities included in the SWAMIH project. The SWAMIH project took its name from the Hindu word 'swami', meaning teacher. The tree-building was a collaborative activity between Men's Shed members at the Westvale Community Centre and approximately 20 students from Stevensville Primary School. The students learned new skills like sanding, painting and sewing.

This cross-generational project started in February 2020. While it was temporarily paused due to COVID-19 restrictions, it concluded in December 2022 with a 3D wooden tree decorated with flags representing 50 countries from around the world.



Students acquiring practical skills as they build the Multicultural Tree in 2020.



The unveiling of the Multicultural Tree in 2022.

Millennium House Upgrades

The primary mission of the Millennium House redevelopment project, which is located in Seddon, is to create a welcoming, inclusive and safe space where diverse communities can come together, share culture and build strong and lasting connections.

The centre will also host several programs that will be run regularly.

The redevelopment of Millennium House has progressed well this year. Despite delays in soil testing, in February 2023, the construction phase of the project began, with progress moving steadily.

We have been lobbying to raise funding for this project and appreciate the funding opportunities that we have received from the government, philanthropic organisations, businesses and community-minded individuals. Their contributions have been instrumental in bringing Millennium House to its current stage.

The project is on track to be completed by mid-May 2024.

For more information regarding this project, please visit [MillenniumHouse.org.au](https://www.MillenniumHouse.org.au)



Volunteer West

In February 2023, Volunteer West joined AMCS as our volunteer resource centre to enhance volunteer support and opportunities in Melbourne's Western region.

This partnership combined AMCS's 40-year history of aiding multicultural communities with Volunteer West's inclusive volunteering expertise. The transition aims to strengthen volunteer engagement and resilience within communities. Both AMCS and Volunteer West dedicated themselves to a seamless transition for staff, volunteers and stakeholders.

We are now seeing ongoing volunteering initiatives benefit from consistent, high-quality support and positive outcomes. Since February, the team has delivered the culturally inclusive volunteer toolkit, an online resource to support Volunteer Involving Organisations (VIOs) with multicultural inclusion. They continue to provide support to volunteers and VIOs in the West through their volunteer support services. The next 12 months promise to be very exciting as this expertise brings additional depth to existing community projects.

AMCS and Volunteer West announce their exciting partnership.

We have some exciting news!



The launch of the culturally inclusive volunteer toolkit. Volunteer West, in collaboration with volunteer managers and like-minded organisations, co-designed this resource on culturally inclusive volunteering practices.

2022 Art Against Ageism Competition

For the second year, AMCS challenged the negative stereotypes of ageing through the annual AMCS Art Against Ageism competition.

Members of the public were invited to submit their entries. The work of the winners and finalists was exhibited as part of the Victorian Seniors Festival on Ageism Awareness Day, 7 October 2022. Finalists were chosen based on their representation of challenging ageist stereotypes with bonus points awarded for promoting inclusivity and multiculturalism.



Regardless of age, Australians experience ageism as one of the most commonly accepted forms of discrimination. I am always excited to see entries come through; the creativity of the artists is amazing and thought-provoking.'

(Elizabeth Drozd OAM, AMCS CEO)

This year, AMCS partnered with the Commissioner for Senior Victorians Gerard Mansour, the Municipal Association of Victoria, the Council on the Ageing (COTA VIC), The LOTE Agency, and National Seniors Australia to bring this material to a broader audience. The finalist's artworks were also displayed in pop-up exhibitions at Footscray, Sunshine and Williamstown Hospitals as part of an awareness campaign for the Western Health Elder Abuse project. Based on its success, we look forward to continuing this competition in the years to come.

The winning entry in the 2022 Art Against Ageism Competition, titled 'Forever Caring' by Dabgraphixs, depicts the artist's grandparents and their zest for life.



The finalists' artworks were displayed as part of the 2022 Art Against Ageism Exhibition.



Awards Won

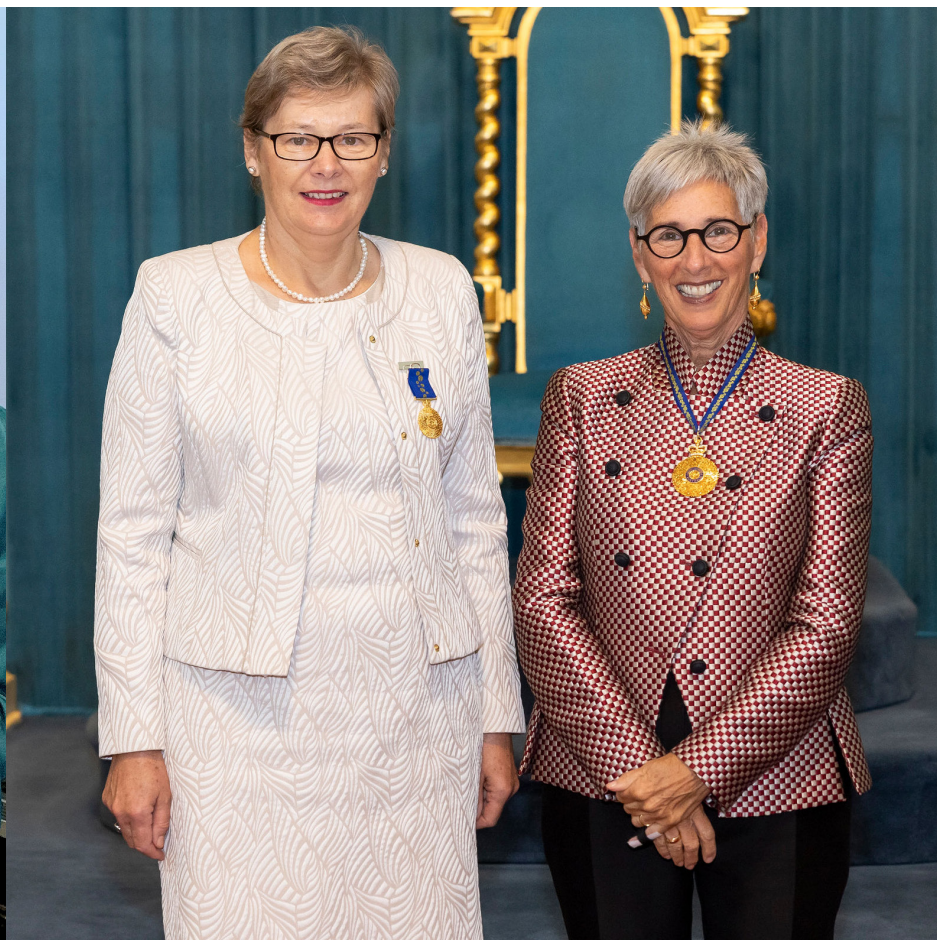
AMCS was very excited to announce that our 'Moving For Life — The Way I Like It' project received the 2022 AUSactive Victorian Award for Most Inclusive and/or Diverse Program. The program engaged over 2,500 older persons to participate in gentle exercise programs across 15 local councils in Victoria.

AMCS CEO Elizabeth Drozd received two prestigious accolades this year in recognition of her exemplary leadership and community contributions. She was honoured with the Leading Age Services Australia (LASA) 2022 Executive Leader Award, with the judges commending her extensive history in providing accessibility for individuals facing language barriers, championing anti-ageism and providing advocacy training to aid the vulnerable in our community.

Elizabeth was also bestowed the Medal of the Order of Australia (OAM) for her remarkable service to Victoria's Polish and Multicultural communities. Over more than 30 years in the community service sector, she has tirelessly worked to ensure equity and inclusivity for all.

AMCS CEO Elizabeth Drozd OAM was awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia (OAM) by the Governor of Victoria, Her Excellency the Honourable Linda Dessau AC CVO.

Medha Gunawardana, Manager — Community Strengthening, accepts the award for the Most Inclusive and/or Diverse Program on behalf of AMCS.





Financial year 2022–2023

Statement of Income and Expenditure

	2023	2022
Income		
Government Funding	8,610,217	5,161,152
Direct Services Income	19,676,965	16,563,184
Community Projects	1,148,427	577,912
Income from Investments	306,619	141,640
Members' Fees	–	95
Donations	97,202	5,595
Other Income	324,756	182,577
Total Income	30,164,186	22,632,155
Expense		
Fundraising and Promotion	151,129	83,388
Salaries and Oncoast	13,549,739	11,264,475
Property Expenses	283,701	274,226
Volunteers' Travel	32,895	22,232
Client Expenses	6,676,973	5,744,164
Administration and Other Expenses	8,285,411	4,637,810
Total Expense	28,979,848	22,026,295
Surplus/(Deficit)	1,184,338	605,860
Other comprehensive income	269,416	–269,727
Total Comprehensive income	1,453,754	336,133



Care Advisor Anna Roska represented AMCS at the Care & Ageing Well Expo held in February 2023.

Thank You!

A heartfelt thank you to the following organisations for their support over the past year:

Australian Government

- Department of Health and Aged Care
- Department of Social Services

Victorian Government

- Commissioner for Senior Victorians
- Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions
- Department of Jobs, Skills, Industry and Regions
- Department of Families, Fairness, Housing
- Seniors Online Victoria

Local Government

- Maribyrnong City Council
- Moonee Valley City Council
- Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV)

Non-Government Partnerships

- African Women's & Families Network
- Albanian Women's Association
- All Aged Care
- Anika Legal
- Apex Institute
- Association of Filipino Australian Families of Melbourne Social Club Inc.

- Australian Communities Foundation (ACF)
- Carers Victoria
- Centre for Cultural Diversity in Ageing
- commUnity Plus Services Ltd
- Coptic Orthodox Women's Association
- Council on the Ageing (COTA) Vic
- Dementia Australia
- Different Journeys
- Equity Trustees
- EveryAge Counts
- Federation of Ethnic Communities Councils of Australia (FECCA)
- FilCare Vic. Inc.

- Flinders University
- Foodbank Victoria
- Gandel Foundation
- Good Things Foundation
- Good360 Australia
- Google Ad Grants
- Human Services Skills Organisation (HSSO)
- HWL Ebsworth Lawyers
- Ian Rollo Currie Foundation
- Italian Senior Club, Coburg
- Lord Mayor's Charitable Foundation
- Macedonian Senior Citizens Group Kings Park
- Maranatha Seniors Club
- Maribyrnong Community Centre
- Melbourne Polish Children's and Youth Choir
- Merri Health
- Minter and Ellison
- National Ageing Research Institute (NARI)
- National Seniors Australia
- North Western Melbourne Primary Health Network
- ParKanDo
- Perpetual Trustees
- Polish Senior Citizen Club in Albion
- Polish Senior Citizen Club of Reservoir
- Powerhouse
- Ridniy Kray — Australian Ukrainian Senior Club
- SCATS (Sri Lankan Study Centre for the Advancement of Technology & Social Welfare Inc.)
- Stevensville Primary School
- Sunshine Polish Charity Association Inc
- The Edmund Strzelecki Melbourne Polish School
- The LOTE Agency
- The Polish Community Association in Geelong Inc — The White Eagle House
- Uniting AgeWell
- Victoria University
- Victorian Women's Trust
- Volunteer Victoria
- Volunteer West
- Western Health
- Western Region Aged Care Trust
- Western Region Ethnic Communities Council (WRECC)
- Westvale Community Centre and Men's Shed
- Wisdom Senior club
- Yarraville Community Centre
- Your Community Health

Memberships

- Aged & Community Care Providers Association Ltd
- Australian Institute of Company Directors
- Elder Abuse Prevention Network: West Metropolitan Region
- Ethnic Communities' Council of Victoria (ECCV)
- Leading Age Services Australia
- National Network of Multicultural Aged and Community Care Providers Inc
- Philanthropy Australia
- Rotary Club of Footscray
- Victorian Chamber of Commerce and Industry
- Volunteering Geelong



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 Australian Multicultural Community Services (AMCS)

**we care,
we support,
we empower**