



17  
18

Annual Report

*We, Diversitat, acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the land, the Wadawurrung people of the Kulin Nation. We pay our respects to the Elders both past and present. We thank the Traditional Owners for custodianship of the land, and celebrate the continuing culture of the Wadawurrung people acknowledging the memory of honourable ancestors.*



Photo: Phil Hines

Diversitat or the Geelong Ethnic Communities Council is the peak body for ethnic and multicultural communities in the Greater Geelong Barwon Region and the voice of Multicultural Geelong. For over 40 years we have been the link between multicultural communities, government, and the wider community. The GECC acknowledges the Wathaurong people as the traditional custodians of this land and we recognise the cultural, linguistic, social, and spiritual diversity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders Peoples and their rights as the First Peoples of Australia.

## Our Mission

Building on our proud history of migrant services, Diversitat aspires to provide an innovative and high quality response to the changing needs of a culturally diverse community.

## Our Vision

To empower individuals and communities to reach their full potential.

## Our Values

Dignity, respect and acceptance are basic values defining our humanity and must be afforded to every individual in our society. We value an ecologically sustainable environment and promote and celebrate harmony, cultural diversity, peace and social justice in our society.

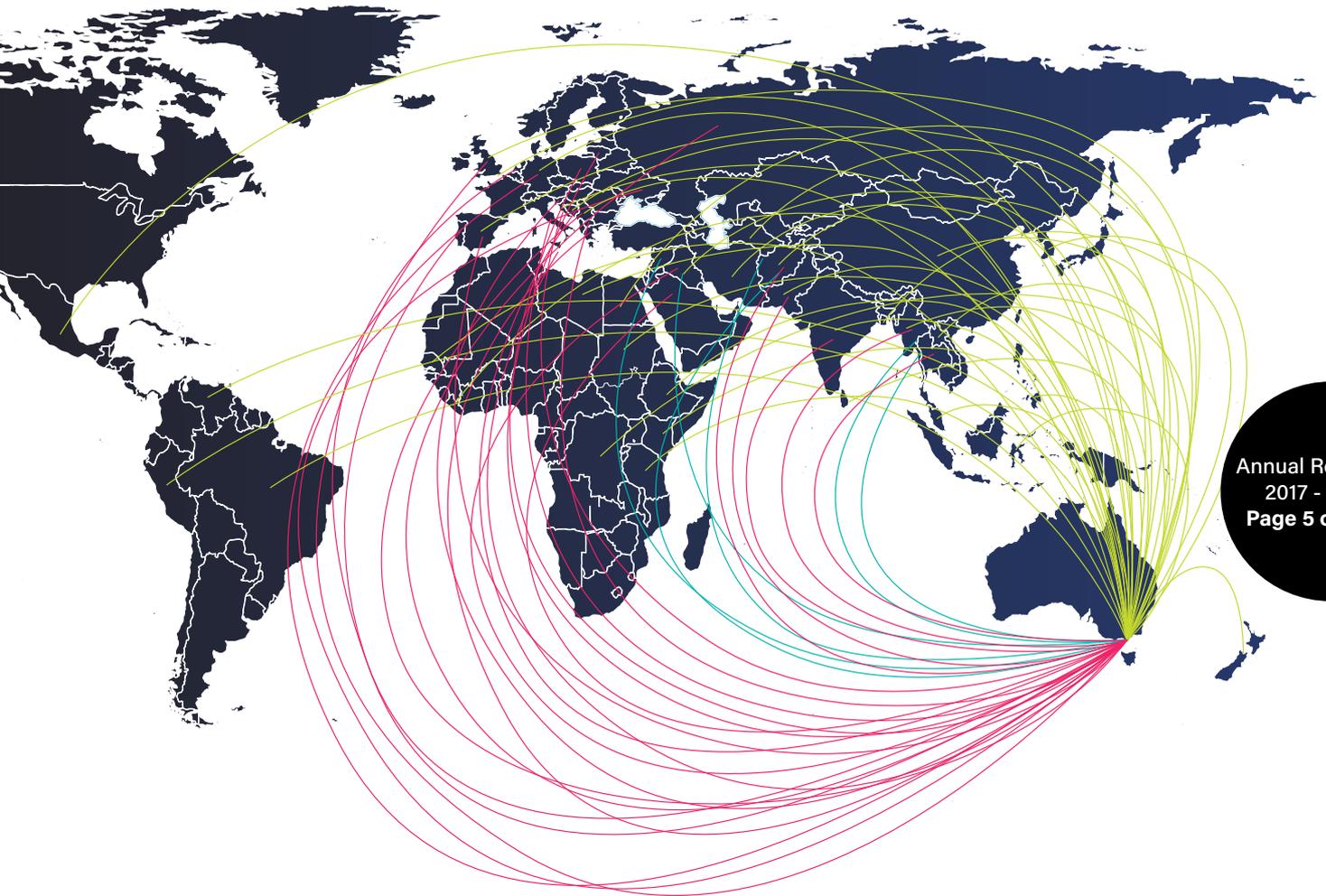


Photo: Paul Danyluk

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# Place of Origin



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- Training and Education clients
- Settlement Clients
- Aged Support Clients

## Settlement and Community

We were pleased to have several new programs funded aimed at strengthening our clients' capacity to engage with and settle in our community.

**Dianna Rice**

General Manager Settlement and Community

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## Training and Education

This year we have invested heavily in new staff, facilities and systems and we look forward to implementing many new initiatives to support our students to achieve their goals.

**Garry Gow**

General Manager Training and Education

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## Aged Support

Our staff are our greatest asset and continue to build trusting relationships with our clients and provide them with quality of life experiences.

**Robyn Martinez**

General Manager Aged Support

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## People and Organisational Development

Value added functions such as employee engagement, leadership, training & development and change management are a welcome introduction in the HR offer.

**Lisa McCarty**

General Manager People and Organisational Development

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## Fundraising

This year we have laid the foundations for new fundraising opportunities, reaching out to supporters across the organisation, corporate partners and the community.

**Rachel Gleeson**

General Manager Fundraising

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## 94.7FM The Pulse

The Pulse remains a truly unique community media based institution that broadcasts from Geelong to the world.

**Leo Renkin**

Station Manager 94.7 The Pulse

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## Projects

Projects – Welcomed the opening of the Healthy Living Centre for our Aged Support communities, a wonderful new addition to Diversitat's cultural precinct in Norlane. This site now boasts two community facilities, alongside the men's & women's shed and community garden that cover a wide range of services and programs for migrant and disadvantaged communities in the Geelong region.

**Bridgette Carey**

General Manager Projects

# President's Report

Knowledge and learning are key elements of our services and our clients and community are hungry for both.

**Dr. Linda Sydor Petkovic**  
President  
Geelong Ethnic Communities  
Council inc.



▲ Dr. Linda Sydor Petkovic with Fely Spikers from the Filipino Community  
Photo: Phil Hines

Geelong is experiencing a period of rapid growth and our organisation is an essential part of this. The census data is very clear showing that our emerging communities, particularly from Asia and the sub-continent, are growing rapidly, whilst our European migrant communities are declining. Our services reflect these changes and Geelong is an important centre for refugee settlement in regional Victoria. Whilst we are disappointed with the reduction in funding for our core refugee programs, the Executive and Council acknowledge the hard work and dedication of our staff during this time of stress and constant change.

Our cultural groups are a constant in these times and it is refreshing to see the interaction between our older communities and our emerging Diversitat members. There is always a plethora of events and activities put on throughout the year and I encourage you all to attend events where possible and experience the amazing colours of diversity that Geelong has to offer.

Knowledge and learning are key elements of our services and our clients and community are hungry for both. This is the traditional way for migrants and refugees and organisationally we maintain a strong focus on supporting the educational outcomes of our community. Our future plans around education are being developed and we hope to have an exciting story to tell in the future, always focussing on those who need our help and maximising our client services. Employment is another key outcome for us and we are delighted with our new My Maintenance Crew and the employment, training and mentoring opportunities this offers our young people. This is an exciting new community enterprise for Diversitat and congratulations to Garry Gow and the team on securing program funding and getting it working.

Our older migrant communities are ageing and this remains a strong focus for Diversitat. Our wonderful Healthy Living Centre is a fine example of our commitment to our clients and with the support of Federal, State and our philanthropic funders including Give Where You Live and the Geelong Community Foundation, this Living Centre has been embraced by our clients and is flourishing. Our Executive and Council have concerns around the future direction of Aged Care and we will continue to work hard to ensure that the needs of our older CALD communities are taken into consideration with the changes, as our CALD elderly are extremely vulnerable and deserve our support.

Volunteering remains the heart and soul of all our activities. If it were not for the efforts of our tireless volunteers and our community groups, activities such as the Oppe Shop and the Healthy Living Centre would struggle. We thank all our volunteers at the Pulse who turn up every week so that we can keep our community broadcaster thriving and our peoples' voices alive. The Pulse is one of the most diverse community radio stations in Australia and is recognised as such.

Our building works continue apace and we aim to open our Diversability wing at our Cultural Precinct in Norlane by the end of this financial year. Our projects team, headed by Bridgette Carey, has delivered again and the precinct is looking amazing with the garden and our exciting plans for the future.

I would like to acknowledge the efforts of our CEO, Michael Martinez, Financial Controller, Brian McMahon, and the entire Management and staff at all our sites across Diversitat who, on a daily basis, continue to deliver services and programmes that make a real difference to people's lives. You are the point of difference in our organisation and your respectful and caring approach to our clients is valued and appreciated.

I would like to thank my fellow executive members and, in particular, Rachel Schutze for her time as an appointed executive member. Our council is growing and it is encouraging to see so many new faces and cultural activities underway throughout our region. Our future is bright and I invite you all to be a part of this exciting journey that is Diversitat.

▼  
Pictured below: Equip! clients  
volunteering at the 2017 AGM.  
Photo by Phil Hines.



# Chief Executive Officer's Report

We are constantly developing new partnerships and finding ways to make a real impact for our clients and the community. As Geelong grows and develops we are positive about our region and its future.

**Michael Martinez**

CEO

Geelong Ethnic Communities Council inc.



▲ Michael Martinez cooking a Spanish Paella Dish.  
Photo: Cathy Harper

We have continued to deliver real outcomes for our diverse range of clients throughout the past 12 months despite working under difficult circumstances. The settlement sector across Australia is under huge stress and we are no different. The new HSP contract has been challenging, however we are adjusting how we operate and undertaking a planned restructure of our settlement and community programs to improve outcomes and strengthen our position for the future. In addition, our RTO has adapted training delivery to meet the changing, complex vocational education and training environment. The loss of the AMEP tender has slowly worked its way through out budgets and the impact has been felt more acutely over the past 12 months. Our future training options will focus on sustainable operations and we look forward to a number of new opportunities.

It is very pleasing to see the commencement of some new and innovative programs in particular "My Maintenance Crew" funded by the Federal Government through the Try, Test and Learn initiative. This is an exciting new enterprise for Diversitat and the broader Geelong region, which will provide young people with real work opportunities. We are looking forward to developing the business over the coming years. We have a great team of staff and participants and a growing data base of customers and partners. For our younger clients there have been a number of standout success stories such as our wonderful Equip pilot program which mentored young refugees in the workplace. Our Skills First Reconnect Program continues to provide high-needs learners with wrap around services to enable them to re-engage and succeed in further education and employment.

We have continued to receive strong support for our community programs from the Victorian Government and additional funding in areas of domestic violence and capacity building has been warmly welcomed.

We look forward to reviewing our strategic plan next year and the implementation of an outcomes based accountability framework across the organisation. We are constantly developing partnerships and finding ways to make a real impact for our clients and the community. As Geelong grows and develops we are positive about our region and its future.

It has been a very challenging year and we would like to acknowledge the hard work and commitment of our senior leadership team and our staff and volunteers in assisting us to deliver outcomes for our community. We thank our executive members and President Dr Linda Sydor Petkovic in particular for their guidance and support throughout the year. Our organisation can only operate and sustain our extensive services by the commitment of our dedicated volunteers which number in the hundreds. We thank our volunteers and respect their selfless support for our community.

# Diversitat Executive Commitee and Affiliated Communities

## Diversitat Executive Commitee

### **President**

Dr. Linda Sydor Petkovic, Ukrainian  
Community

### **Vice President**

Vacant

### **Chief Executive Officer**

Michael Martinez

### **Secretary**

Mr Zoran Dimovski,  
Macedonian Community

### **Treasurer**

Mrs Fely Spikers  
Filipino Community

### **Ordinary Members**

Mr. Rumen Ginev  
Sophia Shen  
Milovan Arandjelovic  
Niraj Karanjeet

### **Pulse Elected Member**

Dr. John Lamp

### **Appointed Member**

Rachel Schutze

## Our affiliated communities

Afghan Community  
Austrian Community  
Geelong Arabic Iraqi Community Association  
Abrisa Brazilian Assoc  
Bulgarian Community  
Chinese Community  
Congolese Community  
Croatian Community  
Dutch Community  
Fijian Community  
Filipino Community  
French Community  
German Community  
Greek Community  
St Leonards & District Greek Senior Citizens Club  
Hazara Community  
Indian Community  
Indonesian Community  
Iranian Community  
Irish Community  
Italian Community  
Japanese Community  
Karen Community  
Karenni Community  
Liberian Community  
Lithuanian Geelong Community Inc  
Macedonian Community  
Malay Community  
Maltese Community  
Maori Community  
Geelong Maitri Inc  
Nepalese Community  
Nigeria Community  
Polish Community  
Portuguese Community  
Russian Community  
Barwon Sanatan Community Group Inc  
Scottish Community  
Serbian Community  
Sikh Community  
Slovenian Community  
Socio-Cultural Syriac Incorporated Association  
Spanish Community  
South Sudanese Community  
Sudanese Community  
South Sudanese Language School  
Lao-Thai Geelong Care Inc  
Ukrainian Community  
Wathaurong Aboriginal Co-operative

# Diversitat Financial Statement

## Extract from Diversitat Annual Financial Statement

Statement of Comprehensive Income  
For the Year Ended 30 June 2018

	<b>2018</b>	<b>2017</b>
	<b>\$</b>	<b>\$</b>
Government grants	12,098,472	13,256,842
Dividends	2,314	579
Other grants	405,766	373,989
Interest	168	1,093
Client Services Income	1,766,772	1,489,515
Other Income	278,140	254,650
<b>Total Income from Operations</b>	<b>14,551,632</b>	<b>15,376,668</b>
Employee expenses	(10,383,270)	(10,189,286)
Depreciation expense	(424,826)	(371,158)
Operating expenses	(3,999,046)	(4,351,970)
<b>Total Expenditure from Operations</b>	<b>(14,807,142)</b>	<b>(14,912,414)</b>
<b>Surplus/(Loss) for the year</b>	<b>(255,511)</b>	<b>464,254</b>

The complete financial statements including notes and auditors report are available from the Diversitat Finance department at Geelong West Town Hall, 153 Pakington Street, Geelong West.

**Brian McMahon ; C.P.A**  
Financial Controller



Refugee Week Dinner Fundraiser  
Photo: Phil Hines

Empowering, advocating for  
and responding to the needs  
of our clients.



Karen and Karenni youth enjoy the Arts as a part of the Holiday program and our partnership with First Call Vic Arts Centre.

## Humanitarian Settlement Service (HSS)

The Humanitarian Settlement Service assisted newly arrived humanitarian entrants to settle into the country from the day of arrival for the first 6-12 months. The program included casework-initial information and orientation, linking with essential services and short and long term accommodation support. Community Guides from the same cultural and language groups as the new arrivals were utilised to assist with orientation and settlement process. A comprehensive group orientation program was also delivered that the HSS clients attended soon after arrival. The HSS program transitioned to the Humanitarian Settlement Program on the 30th of October 2017. In the four month period 1/7/17 to 30/10/17 we had 93 HSS arrivals.

## Complex Case Support (CSS)

Complex Case Support (CSS) provided intensive case management services for people with complex needs. Often a client was dealing with more than one serious issue at the one time. This program was for clients who were unable to receive the amount of help they need from HSS or SGP, due to the difficulty of the problems they are dealing with. In order to be eligible for CSS, a person had to be impacted by one or more of the following:

- Disability
- Health needs that are severe, critical, long term and/or unmanaged
- Mental health issues that significantly impact daily life
- Homelessness or housing instability
- Domestic and family violence
- Child and youth welfare concerns.

Individuals that held one of the following visas were eligible for CSS:

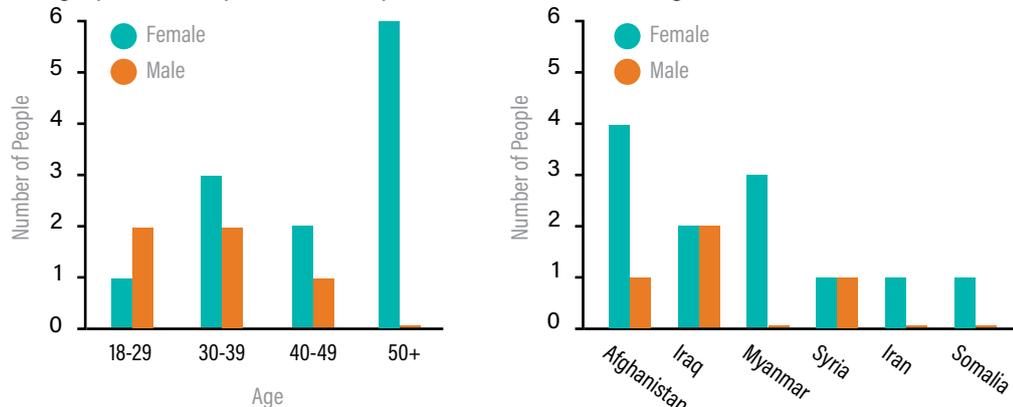
- Refugee status
- Special humanitarian program
- Permanent protection
- All temporary protection visas

**16** clients and their families supported

**COLLABORATION** working closely with key service providers, other settlement and community programs and participated in a number of forums

The CSS did not replace the HSS program, with service users of the HSS accessing CCS at the same time to meet their needs.

The graphs below provide a snapshot of clients accessing these services;



## Equip!

Equip! aims to help young people from a refugee background (aged 16 to 24 years) to develop their understanding of work, and consider their own strengths and interests. Young people participate in introductory training about vocational guidance, career planning, job search training. Participants were matched with a mentor who could offer individual support, work experience and support to volunteer.

The young people involved came from a hugely diverse collection of countries of origin including; Iraq / Arabic; Karen / Karenni / Sri Lanka/Tamil; Congolese/ Swahili; Afgah/ Dari; Iran/Farsi.

**80**  
young people

**61**  
participated in  
all phases

**55%**  
female

**45%**  
male

## Job Options For Asylum Seekers Program (JOASP)

JOASP assisted individuals seeking asylum by engaging with local employers and building on the knowledge and skills of 59 participants. The following results were achieved due to the participants' direct involvement in the program:

Resume assistance (new or updated resume produced)

32

Job search / application support (guided to search and apply for jobs)

39

Career guidance and advice (career / education pathway mapped out)

31

Workplace culture coaching (discussions surrounding expectations and requirements)

9

Volunteering / Work placement

4

Enrolled into further education

15

Employment

25

Employer engagement has been increasing steadily with over 60 employers now engaged. In February, a short video Knowing the Facts was produced to promote cultural awareness and increase employer engagement relating to individuals seeking asylum.

## Diversability

Diversability delivers high quality support coordination for participants with an approved NDIS (National Disability Insurance Scheme) plan. Our team of three experienced Support Coordinators assist participants to implement and monitor their NDIS plan; identify, and link with community, mainstream and funded NDIS supports; and achieve their goals with a focus on participant choice and control.

# 71

participants supported

# 45

participants from CALD background

# 12

new participants joined Diversability

Looking forward, Diversability will offer two part-time traineeships to workers with a culturally and linguistically diverse background. They will have the opportunity to gain on the job experience as a support coordinator at the same time as studying to complete their Certificate IV/Diploma in Disability.

## 'Welcoming Ways' Diversity Safe Place Project

The DSPP is a 12 month project funded by the NDIS across three states - Victoria (Geelong), NSW (Sydney) and Queensland (Townsville). It aims to address the low numbers of CALD people with a disability accessing community programs and activities. Implementing a co design framework, barrier mapping workshops have been completed across the three states and an organizational audit has been developed by CALD people with a disability in the Geelong Region. The 'Welcoming Ways' website, [www.waystowelcome.org](http://www.waystowelcome.org) features the co designed tools and products that have been developed across the three states to assist community organisations wishing to enhance their disability and cultural accessibility.

## Tenancy Assistance and Advocacy Program

In 2017/18 TAAP attended to;

# 387

client cases

# 154

VCAT hearings resulting from client cases

# 873

hours of casework delivered

Wait times vary depending on the situation. Urgent matters such as imminent illegal evictions or urgent repairs are given first priority. Other matters are triaged from there depending on the issue, whether a VCAT hearing is scheduled, as well as current workload.

### 2017/18 Highlights include:

- Negotiating agreements at VCAT for repayment of rent arrears to avoid tenancy termination. This has also included access to the Private Rental Assistance Program (PRAP) that Diversitat has access to.
- Engaging in processes and advocacy to encourage landlords to undertake repairs of an urgent and non - urgent nature at premises. Urgent repairs have included the facilitation of adequate heating at premises.
- Seeking a thirty day postponement of execution of warrants at VCAT possession hearings in the event that the tenant(s) has not secured alternative accommodation, and VCAT grants an Order of Possession on reasonable grounds. This has then provided a further timeframe to enable the tenant(s) to secure new accommodation therefore delaying or preventing imminent homelessness.

### Critical partnerships

Salvo Connect has been an important partnership. They administer the Private Rental Accommodation Program (PRAP). PRAP program for the Barwon region. This has been an important complementary service with regard to assisting

tenants with issues of rent arrears and assisting with one of the purposes of the TAAP program to assist individuals to sustain their tenancies. The PRAP program has also assisted existing clients to make the transition from one rental property to another rental property where they are required to leave a rental property or where they secure more appropriate accommodation. Such assistance has been in the form of rent in advance and / or bond.

## Financial Counselling

This year we farwelled some staff and welcomed others. We have also received funding through a State Government initiative which is managed locally by the Salvation Army to financially assist private tenants at risk of homelessness.

### Financial Counselling 17/18

**1956**

Number of individual cases

**4776**

Hours of casework delivered

The Diversitat Financial Counselling Unit also provides an Outreach program to Barwon Prison on a monthly basis and is has been acknowledged through research as an effective tool in the prevention of recidivism. Diversitat Financial Counsellor Kaye Norris has been delivering this service for 18 years. Kaye contributed to a recent publication by Financial Counselling Australia "Double Punishment" and is also an active member of a State based prison working group under the Federation of Community Legal Centres Inc (Vic) to continue to address barriers faced and systemic issues relating to incarceration.

Diversitat has two Family Violence Specialist Financial Counsellors who are co-located weekly at The Centre for Sexual Assault and Family Violence ("The Centre"). Our specialists work directly with clients and also provide secondary consultations to workers to provide support to clients experiencing family violence and more specifically economic abuse.

This year Julie Barrow, (Diversitat Financial Counsellor and Chair of Financial & Consumer Rights Council) travelled to Canberra to accompany other consumer advocates in lobbying politicians for responsible lending reforms in the wake of the Royal Commission. Julie shared stories from highlighting poor practices under responsible lending by the banks, including a lady who was lent \$400,000 by one of the major banks when her sole income was Centrelink.

## Diversitat Migration

Diversitat was successful in securing a contract from the Department of Home Affairs to become an Australian Proposing Organisations (APO) under the Community Support Program which provides a new avenue for skilled refugees to enter Australian under our Special Humanitarian Program (SHP).

Our no fee service funded through DSS enabled us to lodged 2 applications for refugee children split from their immediate family member, and we continue to monitor 4 outstanding split family matters. With the support of Russell Kennedy Lawyers we successfully challenged 2 refusals which have now been remitted back to the Department of Home Affairs to reconsider. It is hoped that the families separated by these refusals will be reunited soon. We have also run 10 information sessions about travel documents and family reunification through the general SHP. Advocacy for Afghan Subclass 866 visa holders who are still experience ongoing delays with citizenship and family visa applications, also remains high on our agenda.

Diversitat migration fee for service program snapshot:

# 230

telephone enquiries

# 60

initial consultations

# 61

contracts for service signed

# 73%

of fee for service applications were for family reunification

18% for partners

39% for refugee families under the special humanitarian program

13% family sponsored visitor visas

3% child/orphan relative

27% mixture of resident return visas, special intervention, and citizenship applications

## Diversitat Aged Support

### Diversitat Aged Support Access and Support

We continued to support vulnerable clients to access necessary services. The vulnerable clients we assist are mainly from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds but might also include those at risk of homelessness and suffering from dementia. Our Access and Support Worker assists clients to identify useful services and resources, primarily to improve access to community in-home services but may also assist linking with necessary financial or social welfare supports and facilitating social inclusion. The Access and Support worker assists the client to understand the healthcare service and to gain ability and confidence in accessing necessary services.

### BSW Diversity Planning and Practice 2017 – 2018

The Victorian community care sector is experiencing transformational change as a result of a range of Commonwealth and State reforms in relation to the aged care and the disability sectors. The Commonwealth Department of Health (DoH) and the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) Victoria have been working in partnership to establish a foundation for managing this change. The two departments are working with the Sector Development Team which includes the Diversity Advisers, peak bodies and other change enablers to assist the sector to prepare for and respond to the new "Change Management Strategy" and achieve the following vision:

*"The Victorian community care sector operates successfully within a national system, using a wellness-promoting, reablement and restorative care and diversity approach to ensure clients have continued access to relevant and appropriate quality community care services".*

### BSW Regional Planning

The Diversity Adviser worked with State and Commonwealth Government central personnel to design and implement Diversity Planning review procedures for a state-wide service provider response for 2017/18. Pre-populated templates were distributed to all CHSP/HACC-PYP organisations with a central office return deadline of 31/1/2018. The Diversity Adviser worked with State and Commonwealth central offices to collate BSW Diversity Planning review outcomes which informed a state-wide outcomes overview. The review outcomes produced a state-wide report which was designed from local regional findings. The BSW Diversity Plan review process produced a 92% received rate.

## BSW Regional Workforce Development

The BSW region Aboriginal/Forgotten Australians/Best Practice forum in Warrnambool in February 2018 was held with 19 participants which equated to 51% of BSW service providers being represented over two days.

The Diversity Planning & Practice forum held in February featured the new DHHS West Division Aboriginal Engagement Unit who presented a workshop outlining the current Korin Korin Balit Djak initiative which promotes the importance of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people's self-determination. Open Place representatives provided information relative to the specific needs of the Forgotten Australians cohort and Corangamite Shire provided a Health Literacy, best practice session. Dementia Australia were a late inclusion who provided an overview of their restructure from the previous Alzheimer's Australia identification and communicated the services and training opportunities they offer.

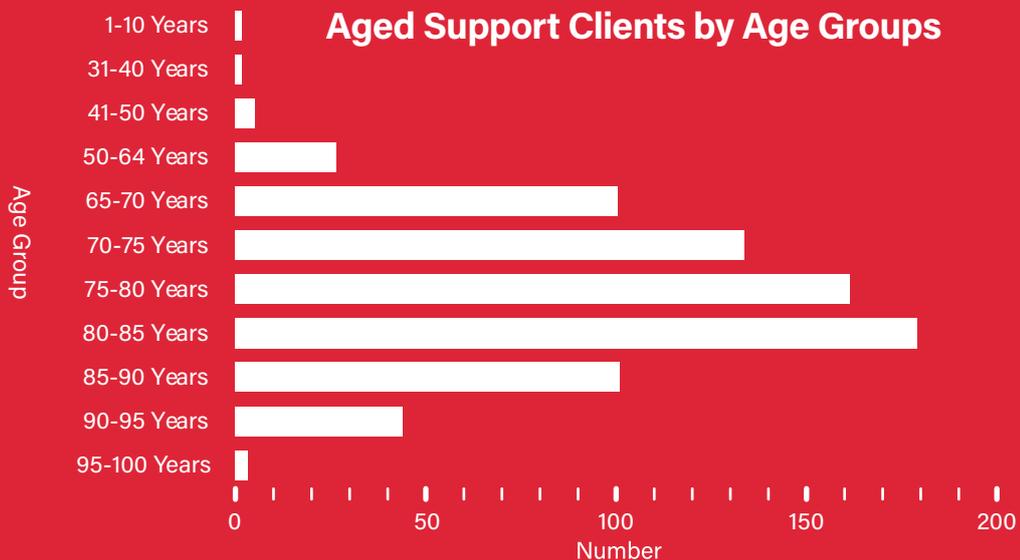
The two days were a great success and all participants were grateful of an informative forum.

## Café Style Support

The CSS program is a short term, group based social support and information based program which is funded by the Australian Government Department of Health. Diversitat Aged Support offers this program, which helps to explain the on-going changes in Aged Care, to all community members over the age of 65 and their carers (who can be under the age of 65) within the Geelong region. The program consists of six sessions per group, where participants are treated to a light lunch, a presentation about a service that could help them stay living at home independently, and transport from their club to the lunch venue and back again.

During the 2017/18 period, over 110 people signed up and participated in the program. During the sessions participants received information from: Barwon Health RAS team, BH Advanced Care Planning, BH Occupational Therapist (falls prevention), MACS respite care, Centrelink (assets, gifting and carer payments), Diversitat Access & Support role, Diversitat Aged Support Social Support groups.

I would like to thank all speakers for offering their professional knowledge and taking the time in supporting Diversitat's CSS program. We would also like to thank McHarry's Buslines for providing transport for all participants, and venues Fyansford Hotel, Gateway Hotel, Leopold Sports Club, The Lord Nelson, The Grovedale Hotel, and The Healthy Living Centre for having us at your establishments.



Improving long term outcomes  
for our clients.



Karen community member

## The Humanitarian Settlement Program (HSP)

The Humanitarian Settlement Program (HSP) commenced on 30th of October 2017. The HSP provides intensive settlement support to newly arrived community members who have been granted permanent visas under the Australian Government's Humanitarian Settlement Program. The program is provided to humanitarian entrants who have experienced persecution, substantial discrimination and violation of their human rights in their home countries.

The HSP program is designed and delivered around key outcome areas including: pre-arrival; on arrival; post arrival; 10 foundational outcome areas including: Housing; Physical and Mental Health and Wellbeing; Managing Money; Community Participation and Networking; Family Functioning and Social Support; Justice; Language Services; Education and Training and Employment; Review and Exit.

The HSP provides individuals and families with a range of services and support through a coordinated case management approach. The program is tailored to address client needs and is designed to strengthen the client's ability to participate in the economic and social life of Australia. It aims to equip them with the skills and knowledge to independently access services beyond the initial settlement period. Clients are considered eligible to access the program for up to 5 years after arriving in Australia, and can receive services for up to 18 months.

### New Arrivals

123 HSS clients transferred from HSS to HSP. The HSS client arrivals were assessed and given a Tier when they transitioned to the HSP program. There are currently three tiers of New Arrivals in Australia. The Tier Three cohort requires Specialised and Intensive Services (SIS) as they are experiencing multiple and complex barriers to settlement.



**93**  
HSS arrivals in four months between 1/7/17 - 30/10/17

**130**  
HSP arrivals in eight months between 1/11/17-30/6-18

**122**  
of the 130 clients were assessed as Tier Two and 8 were assessed as Tier Three

The countries of origin of those assisted with Tier Three - Specialised and Intensive Services (SIS) varied (Afghanistan, Myanmar, South Sudan, Syria, Iran, and Iraq) but the majority were from Afghanistan and Myanmar.

# TOTAL 223

new arrival clients (63 cases) for the financial year 2017-2018

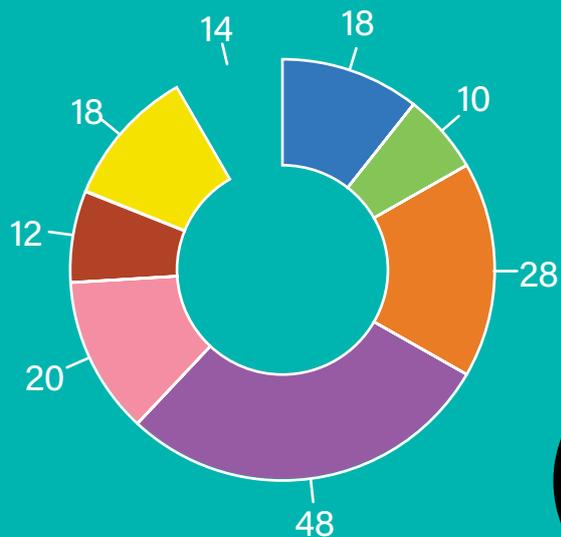
# 30

new arrivals were assessed as being Tier Three (SIS) clients for the financial year 2017-2018

In 2017 / 2018 the largest cohort of clients who stayed and settled in Geelong identified as Karen (48) and Karenni (20) and then Iraqi (28) and Syrian (18). 104 group Orientation Sessions were delivered in 2017-2018. Topics focused on the key areas of Settlement Services, transport, housing, health and wellbeing, health, law education, feeling at home in Australia, education, employment and money.

## HSS/HSP

ethnicity of clients



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## Status Resolution Support Services (SRSS)

SRSS is funded by DHA and Diversitat is subcontracted with AMES Australia. It has been slow progress this year waiting for the clients' Protection visa's to be assessed by the department of Home Affairs. Despite this, half of Diversitat SRSS clients have successfully exited the program for 2017/2018 financial year. At the beginning of financial year we had 75. At the end of financial year we had 31. This graduation is due to primarily to either Visa being granted, visa refusal or the client becoming engaged in full time employment and no longer requiring the SRSS payment.

In 2017 / 2018 the Department remodelled the SRSS program. It now emphasises that the SRSS program is not a welfare program for non-residents. The expectation is for people on a bridging visa with work rights to work to support themselves and their families.

## Asylum Seeker Program

The Asylum Seeker Program is now called; "Asylum Seeker and Over 5 Support". This program is not government funded. Diversitat supports asylum seekers, people with temporary protection visas, as well as people who came to Australia with Humanitarian Visas (200, 202 and 204) more than 5 years ago. In the last financial year this program secured some funds through the Diversitat End of Financial Year fund raising appeal. This was an encouraging acknowledgment of the work that is being done inside this program. Case workers at Diversitat

voluntarily provide their hours to provide referral and information based support to the cohort. In the last financial year we had 60 contacts.

This program would not be possible without the support provided by an extensive network of social assistance partners across the region. To this end we have established an official supporting/referral network through Asylum Seeker Network. This group includes;

- Barwon Child Youth and Family,
- Belmont Rotary Club,
- Cloverdale Community Centre,
- Corio Community Health Centre,
- Barwon CASA,
- Wesley Centre,
- Uniting care,
- Torquay Community House,
- Seeking Refuge Project (Barwon Community Legal Service),
- One Care
- Local church groups.

It has been great to promote ASO5 Support with this network. Through network meeting, we shared update information and were able to act on specific cases and concerns in a timely fashion.

## Training and Education

### Vocational Education and Training

The last 12 months has seen plenty of changes to the VET team, including a number of new Trainer faces, our VET Team moving to the Vines road location, advanced changes to our operational processes and the building of a new staffing and Coordinator Structure.

There has been plenty of advancement and opportunities in the VET team, including the opening of a new office in Warrnambool, exploring other regional locations for Diversitat opportunities while focusing on our market share in Geelong.

We have introduced, or well on the way of introducing technology into the VET team, the CANVAS platform will be up and running with the next 3 months, Using a Staff DASHBOARD to improve productivity and communication amongst all staff, and we are currently exploring the opportunities of introducing technology into our simulation environments, all the team can visualize Diversitat Training as being a market leader in the training and assessment industry close into the future.

We have had close connections and partnerships with over 200 local businesses for our students to experience their training work placements and we thank them all for their continuing support and encouragement. Our VET in school programs continue to grow year after year, and now in the position where many schools are approaching us to support their School-based New Apprenticeships (SBNA) and VET in school programs.

We look forward to the challenges that face us moving ahead, promoting and growing our courses, becoming market leaders in training and student first steps to employment, appreciation of staff commitment and professionalism and building a culture that is well recognized by the community.

**600+**

student enrolments in the VET programs over the past 12 months

**200+**

partnerships with local businesses for student work placements

**GROWTH**

and continuous planning of our Training and Assessment materials, along with the recognition of staff skills and enthusiasm has been used to our advantage

**CANVAS**

introduction of technology in the form of a learner management system (lms) to assist in learning and teaching

## School-based Programs (SbAT/VETiS)

We have a wonderful result for our SBATs at Western Heights with a 96% completion rate and with 2 Children's services students offered work at their placement centres and 2 Horticulture SBATS have accepted apprenticeships.

**99**

SbATs from over 42 schools across Geelong, Colac, Werribee and Manor Lakes

**70+**

VETiS students with our partners; Covenant College, Western Heights and Grovedale

**95%**

SbAT/VETiS completion rate, an increase of 4% from last year

**15%**

SbAT/VETiS higher completion rate than the region average

93% completion rate in our Children's Services program. 7 students have been offered casual and part time work in 2018 and this is a wonderful result for the class. Our Horticulture students have also had some wonderful results with 4 students offered apprenticeships upon their successful completion and class completion of 94%.

For the first time this year we ran Hospitality SBATS and we had a 98% completion rate in this class and 1 student has secured an apprenticeship and 8 students are going into patisserie in 2018.



Pictured right: SbAT Horticulture students work on a new garden and path at Western Heights College.

Our screen and media students have been recognised for their contribution to the Geelong Community Foundation Philanthropy Project creating the introduction shorts for the candidates.

Our Australian Catholic University (ACU) pathway into Bachelor of Primary Education program continued into 2018 and we will have 4 graduates who have an alternative entry pathway directly into ACU for their Education program in 2019. This program is the first program of its kind and we are looking at building further pathway programs with other tertiary providers.

This has been a fantastic SBAT and VETiS team effort to get these students completed and achieving their qualifications.

Special thank you goes out to our trainers, our support aids, placement support, administrators, reception staff and management for their constant support of the programs.

We also acknowledge:

- Geelong Wholefoods with the Hospitality students. This year has seen a real growth in the students and the access to Wholefoods and the support Elissa and the team have given our students has been truly amazing.
- The Pulse for their continued support of our screen and media SBATS and the opportunities and events our students have exposure too. Leo, Simon and the crew have been a wonderful support for these students and the results are speaking for themselves this year.

We are looking forward to 2019 with full programs in Screen and Media, Horticulture, Hospitality, Children Services and Community Services.

## My Maintenance Crew

### Helping young people help you

My Maintenance Crew, an initiative to address the high youth unemployment rates in the Greater Geelong Region, commenced in April this year with the appointment of the Operations Manager and the Engagement Co-ordinator. With the assistance of the General Manager, Training and Education, initial preparations and stakeholder engagement commenced. Not long after the first two team leaders also commenced.

**13**

young people employed who were at risk of long-term unemployment

**20**

young people engaged in My Maintenance Crew internship

In late May, we commenced our very first group of young people. Nine young people participated in the four week internship. During this internship the young people undertook vocational training and mentoring. From the need to adhere to policies and procedures, workplace behaviour, punctuality and team work whilst also revitalising the Diversitat Helm Street site. This sites previous use was as an age care facility and had lay dormant for approximately 18 months. The interns, under the guidance and assistance of the Team Leaders, transformed the site into a wonderful and inviting space.

My Maintenance Crew is continuing to grow both with internal and external customers. The skills and work ethic of many of the young people has been dramatic and seen many flourish in their new roles.

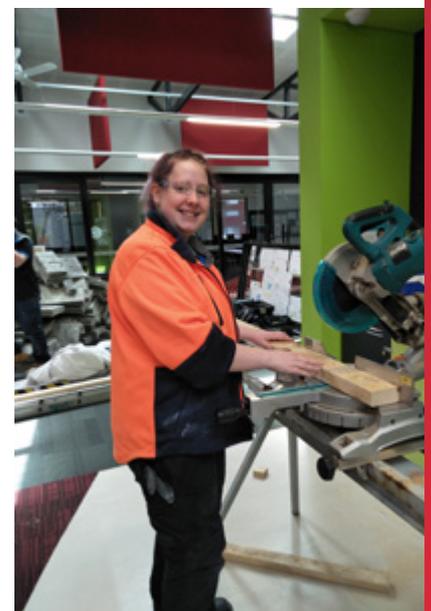
## Highlights

- First interns commencing
- Observing young people actively working and developing as a team
- Interns transitioning into trainees
- Skill development
- Moving into new premises in Furner Ave.



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► Pictured right: My Maintenance Crew are now based at Furner Ave, Bell Park.



► Pictured right: My Maintenance Crew interns.  
Pictured far right: Naomi Bavington working on the Vines Rd renovation.

# Strengthening communities.



The Japanese Association of Geelong Inc  
at their first Pako Festa, February 2018.  
Photo by Chrissie Francis.

## Boys on the Move

Boys on the Move is an important program that brings boys from Afghanistan, Iran and Pakistan together for social and sports oriented experiences. This year the project was generously supported by Mens Shed Queenscliff, Uniting Church Queenscliff, COGG BCYF; GWYL. It was also the recipient of a generous grant of support from the Barlow Foundation.

## Men's Shed

There are 13 Karen and Karenni men who participate in the Men's Shed. They come together to create chopping boards, tables and sewing machine holders. This program has been supported by the Shine On Foundation for staff and equipment.

## Equal and Strong

Equal and Strong consisted of two programs over ten sessions for each program. The focus on for the program was on building respectful relationships, the role of women, women as carers and financial independence. As part of the program, twenty three women were invited to visit Parliament House by Christine Couzens MLA.

## The Community Development Recreation Program

The CD Program provided a huge array of activities and experiences including; School Fun Day; Tennis; Arts Centre; Water Safety; Melbourne Zoo; Lorne Picnic, Sorrento; Vixens Netball, Soccer; Deakin Feast of Food Welcome Dinners, Vic Market, Backgammon, Licola Camp. Queenscliff camps, Stand Up Paddle.

Additional programs include Women's Health and Pamper Day, Women's Yoga, Women's Zumba and Jamie's Ministry of Food Cooking Program

## Geelong Active Diverse Seniors

Diversitat Aged Support run a daily program for Geelong's Active Diverse Seniors, or GADS as we like to call them! The GADS are our wonderful multicultural participants who attend on different days of the week. Participants are welcome to attend as many or as little days as they would like too. We have clients who attend five days, whereas others may attend one or two. We have people of Croatian, Italian, Macedonian, Indian, Afghan and Spanish descent to name a few! We run the GADS group from Monday to Friday between around 9:30-3:30. The staff here can drive the buses to come and pick people up from their homes, and we bring them along to our Healthy Living Centre for activities and social outings. We cater for people with limited mobility, limited access to transport and services, dementia and socially isolated in the community. Camille our chef provides a wonderful lunch for this group.

We organise and run all sorts of multicultural related activities, as well as facilitating craft, gardening, cooking and easy moves for active ageing activities. We often go for coffee/morning tea outings, as well as going to GPAC to watch 'Musical Melodies.' We also provide musicians and multicultural entertainers for our participant's enjoyment. The staff at Diversitat's Healthy Living Centre are specifically trained to work for elderly people and culturally competent when working with people of different cultural backgrounds. Our program delivers fantastic programs for elderly people in the Geelong community to branch out socially, and be welcomed into our community at Diversitat Aged Support.

## A Voice in the Community

The Pulse building remains a thriving hub that acts as a meeting space for community groups, organisations, performers, artists, Teachers, Trainers, student's, business people, politicians and members of the public who regularly visit the Pulse to discuss the important issues affecting our community and the world.

With hard working staff, 170 volunteer's, School Based Apprentice Traineeships (SBATs), University Interns, Work Experience students and Work for the Dole participants. The Pulse alongside Diversitat Youth and Reconnect programs and our regional ABC tenants ensures we remain deeply embedded in the community.

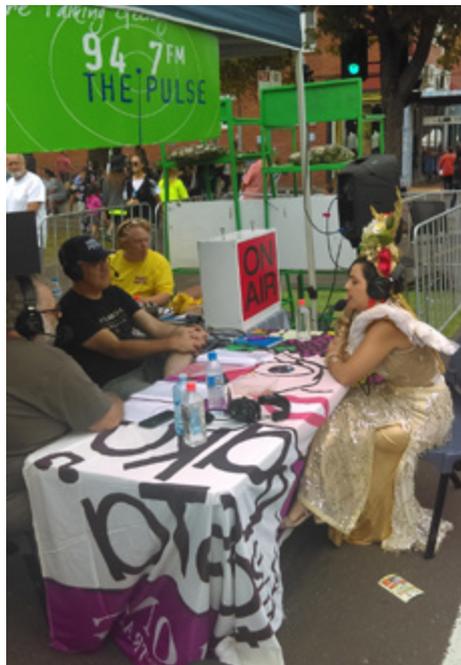
In the last year the Pulse has participated in numerous outside broadcasts including regular weekly GDFL football and Fortnightly Mitchells Front Page Broadcast. Live Broadcasts also took place at the Pako Festa; Pumpkin Festival; G21 Forum; Light of Day Parkinson's fundraiser; Diwali Festival and Geelong After Dark Festival.

This year we said goodbye to Simon Finch our former Sponsorship and Community Engagement Coordinator who left us to recommence his university studies. Welcomed Samantha Balazs and Hannah Hall on board. We have also lost two of the long term Pulse legends of broadcasting sadly Fred Beard who passed away and John Wilson who after 29 years of broadcasting retired to Tasmania. We will miss both with their smiling faces and positive attitude around the station.

The pulse would like to thank all students and volunteers who have given up countless weekends and late nights to plan, produce and deliver the most diverse range of programming found on community radio. Special thanks also goes to the Pulse Board Members, loyal listening public, subscribers and business supporters who all came out to support us this year through difficult times. The Pulse remains a truly unique community media based institution that broadcasts from Geelong to the world.

**170**  
Volunteers

Weekly Multicultural programs Persian, Lithuanian, Serbian, Chinese, Russian, Bosnian, South African, Macedonian, Filipino, Indonesian, Croatian and South Sudanese keep their local communities up to date with what going on in Geelong and around the world.



Pictured right: The Pulse live broadcast from Pako Festa with Carmen Miranda.

Dignity, respect and acceptance belongs to all individuals.



The Macedonian Women's Group meet at Geelong Waterfront.

## Move to the Health Living Centre

Our Aged Support Services move to the new HLC building - the culmination of a lot of hard work by many people at Diversitat over many years. It is a beautiful and functioning space that has allowed us to try new programs and services for our clients. We have also been able to hire out the space for other user groups.

We are incredibly lucky to have such a wonderful venue to work in. (Thanks again to Bridgette and Sara for securing the funding) Diversability are now sharing the site with us until their building is made. This has been great for our work practices and how we work with clients who use both services. It is also great to be onsite at the Hub with other Diversitat departments - Settlement services, the language classes, Men's shed, Hope garden, Training and other programs and groups. We have many opportunities to share resources and help each other.

### Garden

We have worked with Horticulture students and staff to plant the HLC garden. It is a mostly edible garden. And its beautiful.

### The Water Feature - Frog Drum

Come and see it and read the book about how it was made and by whom.

### Volunteers

We have many volunteers - about 18 regulars here at the HLC. We thank each and every one for their amazing contribution to our programs and helping the centre work so well.

### Yoga

We have really embraced the opportunity the new space presents to get more active. On Wednesdays 40 people enjoy doing yoga here. Except for the ones who don't!  
i.e. "I'm not a child! Don't tell me how to breathe in and out!"



► Pictured right: Feeling good in nature.

## International Womens Group

The International Women's Wednesday Group provides a great opportunity for older women to connect with their community. Our current cohort consists of 15 wonderfully diverse women, and a gentleman that has been warmly welcomed by all! The group meets every Wednesday from 11am to 1pm and includes people with dementia and frail people participating in a variety of engaging and rewarding programs and activities, both at our Healthy Living Centre and in the Community. Transport is also provided for those that require it.

Our group attends various outings - visiting beautiful gardens, experiencing wonderful art galleries and museums, and participating in fun games such as tenpin bowling. To exercise our mind and body we participate in Easy Moves for Active Aging (EMAA) exercise, Brain Gym, Yoga, Gardening, Quizzes and Discussions. To get our creative juices flowing we have fun with Morning Melodies, Arts and Crafts, Cooking, and special visits by entertainers and guest speakers. Our activities are delivered by professionally trained, caring and approachable staff at our brand-new state of art Healthy Living Centre. For more information visit us at [diversitat.org.au](http://diversitat.org.au) or call: 5222 7275.

## A Q&A with the Macedonian Womens Group

### **What do you like about our program?**

"We enjoy the physical activity, social interaction, and the new experiences the program offers. It's nice to come to a place where care and safety is already worked out. It's something we can look forward to, where we are able to receive emotional wellbeing and peer support. It's also lovely to be able to have tasty and nutritious meals in an enjoyable social setting" - Lila

### **What have you gained and what can you appreciate from attending the program?**

"The social interaction and the enjoyable times with others is something that we would not experience often if this program was not made available. We feel appreciated and accepted as individuals, and we enjoy the laughter and conversation. We also get an opportunity to increase our physical abilities if we choose" - Danica

### **Do you enjoy the activities organized?**

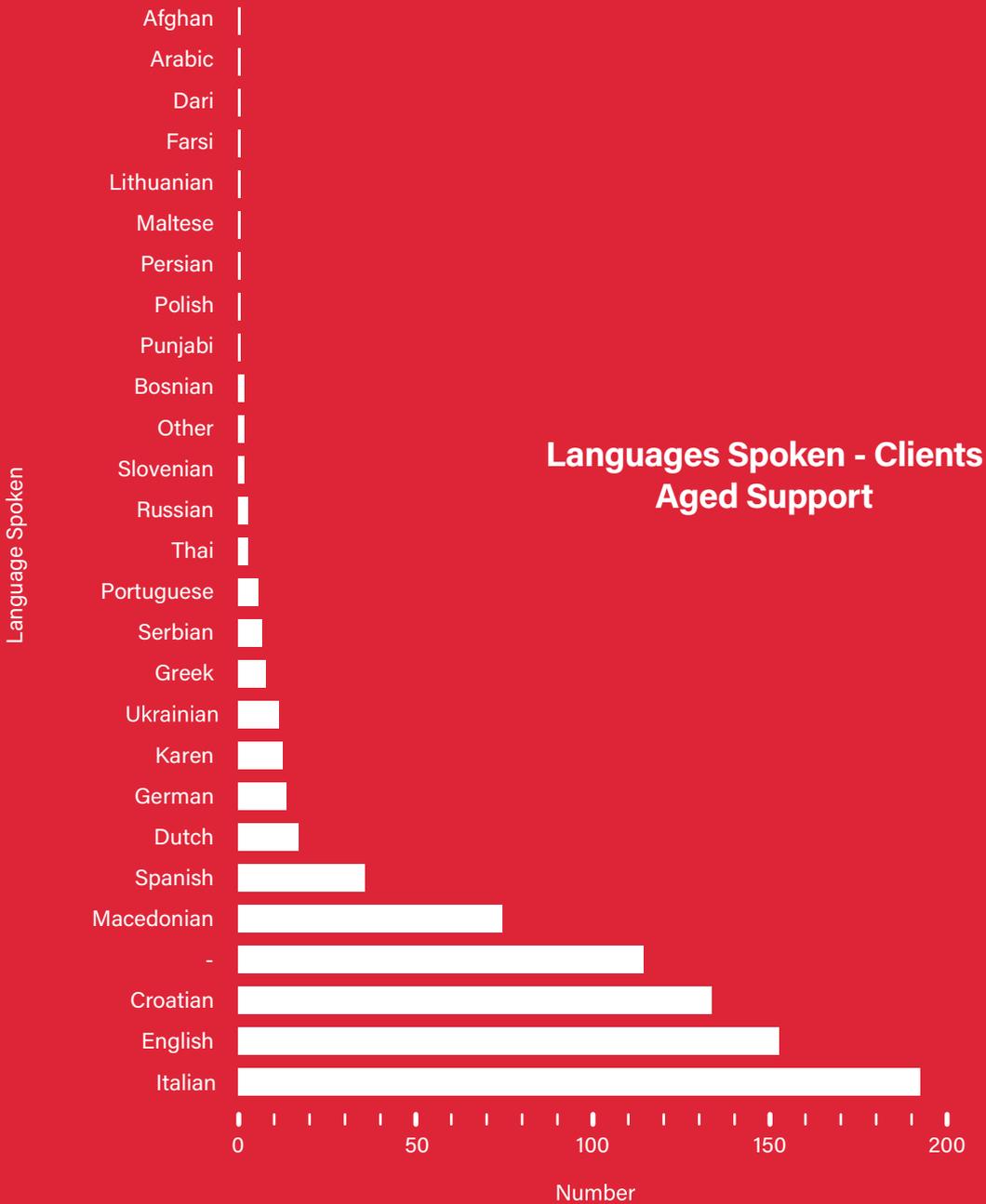
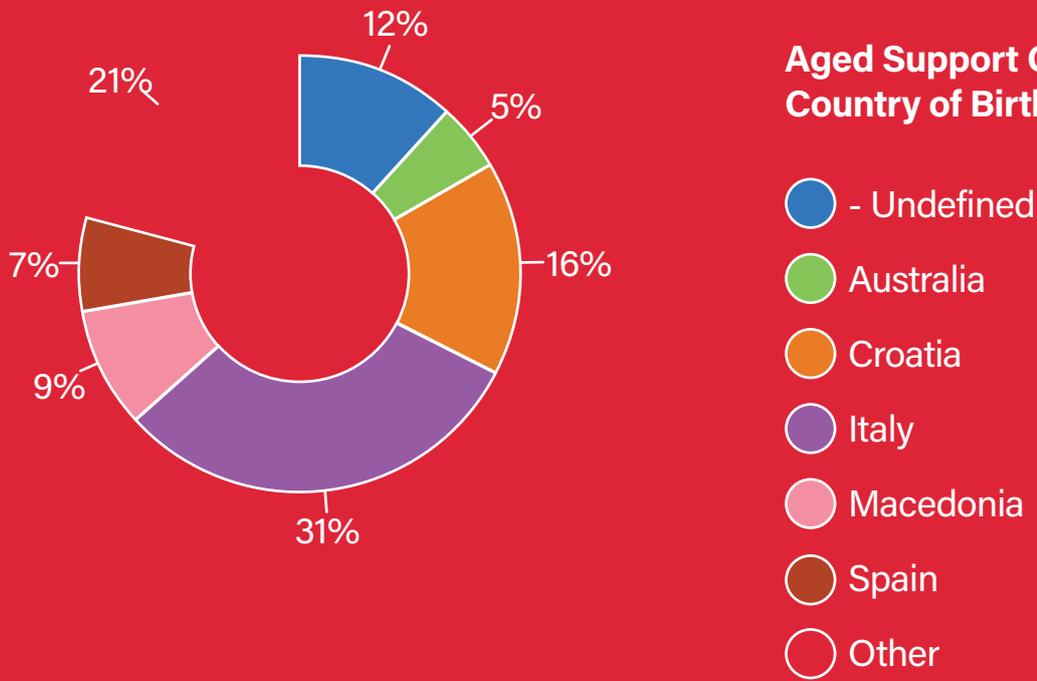
"We love tenpin bowling! It's a very new and interesting activity for us and all of us can participate, even if it's in a small way. It gives us both physical and social benefits" - Lena

### **What do you like about Easy Moves for Active Aging (EMAA) and Brain Gym exercise?**

"The EMAA exercise helps us focus on flexibility, strength and balance. It helps to keep us mobile and active and we find that it encourages us to go for a walk on the other days. The exercise is mostly chair based but also includes exercises whilst standing, but most importantly it's accessible to all of us no matter our differing physical abilities" - Nada

The Macedonian Women's Group is held every Monday from 10.30 am to 12.30 pm. For more information visit us at [diversitat.org.au](http://diversitat.org.au) or call us on 5222 7275.

### Aged Support Clients Country of Birth



# Growth and sustainability.



Looking across from the Northern  
Community Hub to the Healthy Living Centre.

## Refugee Week Fundraising Dinner

It was a room full of emotion and goodwill at Diversitat's 2018 Refugee Week Fundraiser Dinner. The historical dining room of The Geelong College provided a beautiful setting, as attendees enjoyed delicious Iraqi cuisine prepared by Siham Al-Naseri and Abdul Al-Dabbas with support from our Healthy Living Centre kitchen team.

All were deeply moved by our own Farah Al-Dabbas, as she shared her family's emotive story of heartache and peace.

There was much generosity and laughter too as our auctioneer encouraged guests to support the cause and bid on some fabulous items. With your help we raised over \$27,000 for our 'Asylum Seekers, Refugees and Migrants over 5 Years Assistance Program'. It is heart-warming to know there is a huge amount of support for our clients and the work we do at Diversitat.

We would particularly like to thank our key sponsors of this event: Adroit, Deakin University, Worksafe, Maurice Blackburn Lawyers, Rendine Constructions, Filipino Australian Friendship Association, and Coulter Roache. Following on from the success of the evening, we intend to make this an annual fundraiser targeting particular programs in need at Diversitat. We already have some ideas for 2019 and hope that you may join us.



## Royal Geelong Show

It is always exciting when new opportunities come our way and this year we had such an occasion when the Royal Geelong Agricultural & Pastoral Society asked us to participate in the 2017 Royal Geelong Show.

With thanks to our wonderful volunteers, Deakin corporate supporters, students from our Equip and SBAT (Student Based Apprenticeships and Traineeships) programs, and the culinary skills of Wholefoods; we operated the 'Diversitat Diner' from the old 'Lions Den' Pavilion.

On offer were scrumptious scones, tummy warming toasties, a range of vegan slices and fun conversation. For some of our students it was the first time they had sampled a scone with jam and cream.

This was a wonderful new fundraising opportunity for Diversitat with proceeds going to support our Settlement Programs and Services. In addition, our communities were also invited to present a cooking demonstration highlighting some traditional and cultural cuisine. Both our Indonesian and Iraqi communities took up this opportunity.

## Highway Collections

On Sunday 18th of February, 12 volunteers donned high-visibility vests and held a highway collection on the corner of Pakington and Aberdeen Streets to help support Diversitat's Pako Festa. The generosity of Geelong drivers was great- and there were many tired volunteer legs at the end of the day. Next time we will be popping on a pedometer to see how far we all walked!

## Bunnings BBQs

We wouldn't be a fundraising team if we didn't hold a BBQ! Our wonderful volunteers gave up their time on Easter Monday and then again in June to raise funds to support various Diversitat programs and services. Over the course of the two BBQs held at Bunnings Leopold and Bunnings Waurin Ponds we sold approximately 110kg of sausages and approximately 33kg of onions - that equates to about 1,760 tasty serves of barbecue goodness! A special thanks also goes to the Lions Club of Geelong Corio Bay for the loan of their well-equipped BBQ trailer.

**110KG**

Sausages sold at  
Bunnings BBQs

**33KG**

Onions cooked at  
Bunnings BBQs

**1,760**

tasty serves of  
BBQ goodness.

## Oppe Shoppe & Yellow Door

From the 1st of December, the Oppe Shoppe and Yellow Door transitioned to fall under the guidance of Fundraising. I have been very grateful for the support of our 30+ retail volunteers who not only provide customer service within the shop, but also help to sort and manage the donations.

**30+**

Retail volunteers

**5,307KG**

of unsaleable clothing and shoes  
recycled and saved from land fill

Diversitat recognises and values the need for an ecologically sustainable environment and embraces the idea of ethical fashion. The bargain prices of op shops naturally appeal to many, but the importance of recycling clothing exceeds far beyond this. Last quarter alone (April-June) our staff and volunteers sorted an astonishing 5,307kg of unsaleable clothing and shoes; these were saved from landfill and recycled. We do however receive some items that simply can't be sold or are beyond our ability to recycle; one outstanding example was a porcelain toilet! Unfortunately, we then bear the cost of such rubbish to be removed. While the Oppe Shoppe continues to grow in popularity, unfortunately the trial of an additional store - Yellow Door; in Pakington Street, was not financially successful. Although efforts were made to increase profitability by extending hours and recruiting further volunteers, the difficult decision to close was made in May. All stock has now been consolidated at Belmont.

## In Memory Giving

We were truly moved by the kindness and generosity of the family and friends who made a special tribute at the passing of their loved one (a long-time supporter and advocate of Diversitat), by donating to Diversitat in their memory. On behalf of Diversitat I would like to once again sincerely thank the family and those individuals who gave on the occasion. Gifts such as this allow Diversitat to continue to provide a range of support services across Greater Geelong, Barwon and Colac in many areas including: refugee settlement, aged support, migration, youth services, and disability support.



► Pictured right: Volunteers for the Equip! program help at the Geelong Show.

**\$400K+**

Funding Grants Raised

**800M<sup>2</sup>**

Healthy Living Centre  
completed

**100+**

Visitors daily pass through  
the new Healthy Living  
Centre



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► Pictured right: The New Healthy Living Centre is a warm and welcoming place for our clients and community.

## Funding and Grants

Total funding amount applied for in the period	\$617,500
Successful funding grants raised	\$407,500
Unsuccessful	\$10,000
Outstanding	\$200,000

### Breakdown of Grants received:

Department of Premier & Cabinet Office of Multicultural Affairs & Social Cohesion Community Infrastructure & Cultural Precincts Program towards the Diversability Centre	\$211,500
Geelong Community Foundation towards the Diversability Centre	\$40,000
Percy Baxter Charitable Trust towards the Diversability Centre	\$150,000
City of Greater Geelong Healthy & Connected Communities Grant towards the Stitch Social Enterprise	\$6,000

## Years Highlights

- Opening of the Healthy Living Centre. The new 800m2 Community Centre provides social support programs and services for the older culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) community that are designed to promote independence to remain in their home longer and to encourage social engagement on a weekly basis. The centre is run by Diversitat's Aged Support Department and receives over 100 visitors daily. The facility is also available for other groups use and since its opening has had a number of government, organisations and students visit.
- The final design of the Diversability Centre which will be an extension to the Hub that will house our Diversability team. This team work closely with Diversitat's Settlement and Community Department supporting newly arrived and longer term migrants with disabilities. They help navigate the NDIS system and other available support services.

## Looking Forward to the next 12 months

- Construction and opening of the Diversability Centre
- Development of the outdoor Amphitheatre entertainment and performance space
- Completion of the Shed Extension
- Housing project design completed
- Northern Community Hub site - Solar project completed

Pictured right: Karenni Community perform a Gonging ceremony at the new Healthy Living Centre opening.

Pictured far right: The Hon John Eren - Minister for Sport, Minister for Tourism and Major Events, Minister for Veterans' Affairs; Sarah Reid, Diversitat; Michael Martinez, Chief Executive Officer of Diversitat; The Hon Sarah Henderson - Member for Corangamite; Bridgette Carey, General Manager - Projects hold the plaque for the official opening of the new Healthy Living Centre.



# Celebrating culture and diversity.



Photo: Chrissie Francis

## The blending of cultures, civic pride and community

Pako Festa 2018 saw about 100,000 people getting together to embrace and celebrate our fantastic ethnic diversity. From 9am when the first people arrived until 6.00pm when the last tired revellers headed home, the event provided a fabulous showcase of our cultural diversity. People danced, they sang, they participated, and they enjoyed. They feasted on a smorgasbord of cultural food, folk dancing, workshops, art exhibitions, multicultural craft displays and entertainment on four world music stages. It was a day of peace, joy and "feel good" fun that appealed to participants of all ages and all backgrounds.



**64.3%**

People come for the food

**64%**

People come for the Parade

**44%**

People come for the Performers

**35%**

People come for the Stalls

**11.5%**

People come for the Ch 7 Stars

But the greatest thanks we save for the people of Geelong. It is the people who attended Pako Festa who made it such a magnificent day. So, thank you for attending in such impressive numbers, thanks for celebrating in such peace and harmony, and thanks for helping us to send a powerful message to the broader community - multiculturalism is alive and well and living in Geelong!

The 2018 Diversitat Pako Festa was delivered by Diversitat and is supported by The Victorian State Government, Victorian Multicultural Commission, Channel 7 and the City of Greater Geelong. In addition it could not be delivered without the support of many other local and non-local organisations and businesses thank you once again for your amazing support and see you once again February 2019.

**75%**

attendees were female, 25% male

**83%**

people had attended before

**98%**

of people who came would return

**88%**

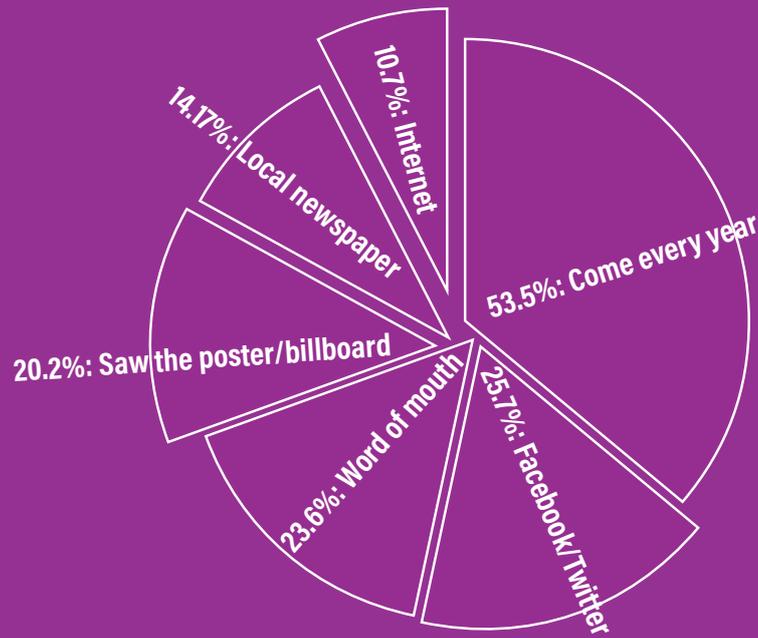
came from Greater Geelong, Surfcoast & Bellarine Peninsula

“

We really appreciate the great relationship we have built with Pako Festa over the past many years. It's a fantastic event with much colour and a great community spirit. We look forward to many years to come  
 – Food Stall Vendor

”

### How they heard about Pako Festa

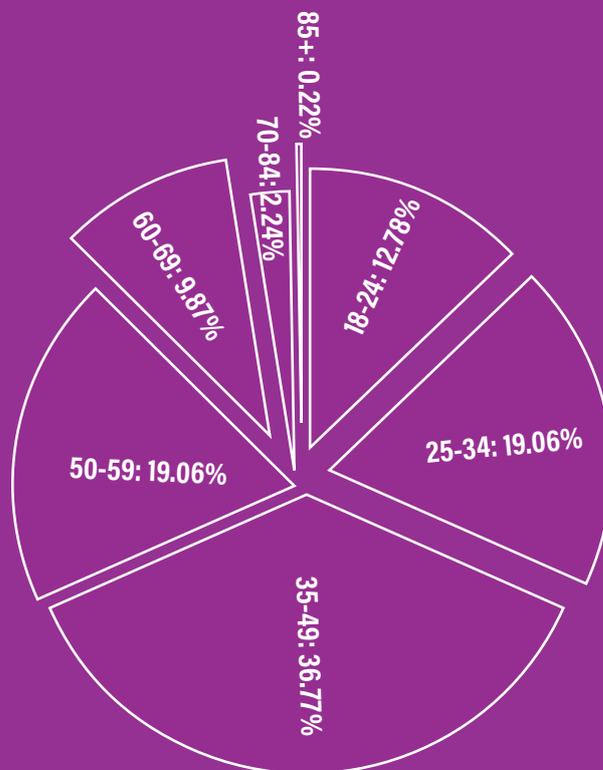


“

Just wanted to say a BIG THANK YOU for allowing us to be involved in the Pako Festa on Saturday. We were blown away with what an amazing culturally rich event this was, and we are privileged to be apart of it. Our product was well received by the public and the feedback was lovely! Everyone on the day was extremely helpful and it was one of the most well organised events that we have been involved in. Once again, WELL DONE on the success of this amazing event and hope to see you again in 2019!

”

### Attendance by age group



# PAKO FESTA



## Events

Diversitat's Aged Support department hosts a lot of events throughout the year. These events help to celebrate the diverse cultures which make up our client base, families and friends of the department. A snap shot of the wonderful events that have been had during the 2017/2018 period are:

- Men's BBQ
- Geelong Seniors Festival, A Concert Amid History
- The Healthy Living Centre's House Warming/Christmas Party
- Tomato & Chilli Competition
- Official Opening of the Healthy Living Centre
- Unveiling of the Water Feature
- Monthly Friday Meals Program

We would like to thank all of the communities that have involved themselves in the Friday Meals Program, and have volunteered their time to showcase their traditional food fair: Men's Community Kitchen, Spanish Community Geelong, Te Arahina Maori Culture Community of Geelong, Chinese Community Geelong, Cypriot Community, Serbian Community Geelong, Thai Community Geelong, Maltese Community Portarlington, Croatian Community Members Geelong, Dutch Community Geelong, Macedonian Orthodox Community Centre, Sri Lankan Community Members Geelong, Greek Community Members Geelong. We would also like to thank Geelong High School for their involvement in our Seniors Festival Contribution. And also, thanks to Bunnings (North Geelong), Faggs Mitre 10 (South Geelong), Van Loons Nursery, and Wombat Gully for donating wonderful prizes to our Tomato & Chilli competition.

▼  
Pictured below: Cooking  
lamingtons - Australia Day.



Creating relevant programs  
and services to meet our  
clients needs.



## English Language Programs

Over the past 12 months a number of changes have happened in the English (EAL) area. We have expanded our programs to include other languages and have introduced an ACFE English evening class running twice a week to cater for clients in employment. All trainers have moved from the main Hub work space to what was called the Shed which we have now renamed The Languages Centre. The Arabic class is now well underway every Tuesday night for 10 weeks per course. We are still advertising and enrolling for Adult Literacy, Dari and Karen classes.

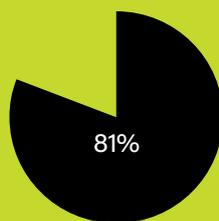


Pictured right: One of the EAL trainers Sonia Nayyar presents awards to her students. The General Manager Garry Gow giving some encouraging remarks to staff and students

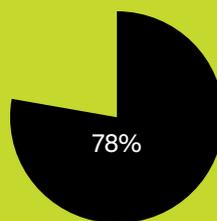
We have continued to actively monitor student satisfaction and academic progress. At our end of term 2 celebration students received various awards to celebrate achievement in a number of areas.

To ensure that we keep an eye on student engagement and progress, the Student Support officer has interviewed every student and every teacher to discuss students' progress. Measures have been put in place to support students identified as being at risk of not completing their courses or needing any other identified support. Students have been moved from accredited courses to Pre-accredited ACFE English or the other way round depending on their identified learning needs. We have also conducted 2 student satisfaction surveys and are very pleased with the results.

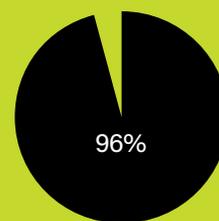
### Brief summary of survey results



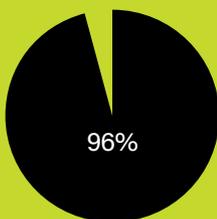
Made significant improvement in speaking



Made significant improvement in listening comprehension skills



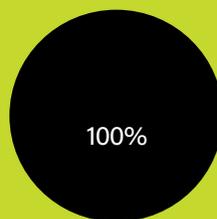
Assessment process was clearly explained by the teacher



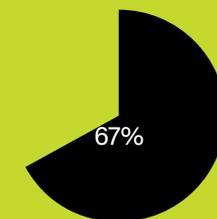
Had enough time to learn new things



Assessments matched skill level



Teacher understands learning needs



I like my timetable the most

We have also successfully launched our quarterly Newsletter: Hello. This is where we celebrate our students' success and share all the latest things happening in Languages. The next edition of Hello is due out in September.

## Adult and Community Further Education (ACFE)

Due to the innovation and growth of our ACFE programs, we have been awarded the 2018 Learn Local Legend Award in recognition of our outstanding contributions to improving participation in education and training for disadvantaged learners in the region. In partnership with The Department of Justice and Regulation we have developed three new training programs for students completing community corrections orders. The Introduction to Hospitality program has been very popular and seen attendance rates for learners serving community corrections orders jump from 40% - 79%. The Introduction to Horticulture program has transformed The Hub Community Garden and grows fresh produce for use in the Hospitality course. The Skills and Empowerment for Women program has produced 100s of handmade, environmentally aware boomerang bags for community use. The Community Connectors program delivered in partnership with our Settlement Services and Community Development team is assisting learners from CALD refugee and migrant backgrounds to gain employment within the Disability and Aged Care industries.

*Diversitat acknowledges the support of the Victorian Government.*



## Reconnect

The Skills First Reconnect Program assists high needs learners with additional support to engage with and succeed in education and training. Provided through regular one-on-one mentoring with a Reconnect mentor, the support is holistic and covers all aspects of a participant's life, with a focus on education to gain employment.

Our final report for our first Reconnect program was submitted in May and we have been very pleased with our program outcomes - we surpassed our allocated number of participants and assisted 69% (exceeding the 60% target) into education and training.

We support participants to complete their studies, before pathwaying them into further education or linking them with employment - through employment brokers, Jobactive providers or other agencies.

Our second Reconnect Program is progressing well and we have expanded the team to be able to deliver support to more participants in Geelong and Colac.



► Pictured right: Reconnect participants assisting in the community. Far right: Reconnect participants share their story at the All Staff Day.



## People and Organisational Development

On top of Human Resource functions, People and Organisational Development includes value added functions such as employee engagement, leadership, training & development and change management etc, which are a welcome introduction in the HR offer.

### Highlights

For the past 12 months, the function has been working on two levels, ensuring sound and effective administrative, operational processes and information, and adding new programs in order to develop our staff and continue to provide a positive and supportive working environment with opportunities for departments to work together. Welcome to Lisa McCarty our new General Manager and Jake Spadoni who joined as an Administration Officer.

### Looking Forward

- Diversitat is looking to implement a new Human Resource Information System (HRIS) which will help to maximise access to information and efficiency.
- Diversitat internal Leadership and Management courses for current and aspiring leaders will finish.
- Diversitat will also be offering further staff development opportunities.

**106**  
new staff

**414**  
contracts requested

**17**  
enrolled in Leadership & Management course

**263**  
total staff

**7**  
bully & harassment workshops

**132**  
attended all staff meeting

**3.59**  
ave. years of service

**77**  
attended bully & harassment workshops

**76%**  
female employees

**8**  
orientation days

**70**  
attended orientation days

**4426**  
days of paid leave

# Thank You

## A

Adult, Community and Further Education (ACFE)  
Action on Disability within Ethnic Communities (ADEC)  
Adroit Insurance  
AMES Australia  
Aim Hire  
Aireys Open Mic Music Festival  
Air Radiators  
Alberto De La Cruz  
Andrew Thornton (Thornton Industries)  
Apco Foundation  
Araluen  
Arden Victoria  
Australian Lamb Colac  
Australian Muslim Women's Centre for Human Rights

## B

Bannockburn Aged Care Facility  
Barandeb Enterprises  
Barwon Child, Youth & Family  
Barwon Coast  
Barwon Community Legal Centre  
Barwon Legal Service  
Barwon Prison  
Barwon Valley School  
Barwon Water  
Bellarine for Refugees  
Bellarine Secondary College  
Belmont Rotary Club  
Bethany Community Support Inc  
Betta Electrical  
Barwon Health  
Barwon Health - Mental Health Carers Respite  
Barwon Health - Refugee Health Nurse  
Barwon Regional Aged Care Assessment Service/  
RAS  
Barwon Youth  
Batforce  
Bethany  
BEST  
Bike Safe Geelong  
Blairlogie  
Boatcatch  
Boomaroo Nurseries  
Boral  
Borough of Queenscliffe - Aged Care & Disability Services  
Breastscreen Victoria  
Brett Smith - Yoga instructor  
Brentwood Aged Care Facility  
Bunnings - North Geelong  
Burson Auto Parts  
Burke and Beyond

## C

Carer Respite Barwon  
Centre Against Sexual Assault  
Centre for Culture Ethnicity and Health  
Centrelink  
CFA Geelong  
Channel Seven Melbourne  
Channel 31 Geelong & Melbourne  
Child FIRST  
Chris and Sue Mackey  
Chris Mackey Psychology  
Christine Couzens MLA  
Christian College  
Christopher Szaday  
Clonard College  
Codeacious  
CoGG - Aged & Disability Services/RAS  
CoGG - Arts & Culture Unit  
CoGG - Community Development Unit  
CoGG - Geelong Major Events  
CoGG - Youth Development Unit, Local Cooida Hill  
Committee for Geelong  
Consumer Affairs Victoria  
Cotton On Foundation  
Colac Community Library  
Colac Neighbourhood House  
Colac Otway Shire  
Colac Otway Shire - Community Development  
Colac Otway Shire - Family Services Development  
Colac Otway Shire - Older People and Ability Support  
Corio Bay Cricket and Sports Club  
Colac Health  
Corio Bay Rotary Club  
Corio Waste Management  
Cottage By The Sea - Queenscliff  
Coulter Roache Lawyers  
Courthouse Youth Arts  
Covenant College

## D

Dal Wild Architects  
Davidsons Accounting  
Dawn Wade Foundation  
Davidsons  
Day and Night Pharmacy  
Deakin Medical Student  
Dementia Australia (Vic) Geelong Branch  
Deakin University  
Dept. of Education  
Department of Health - Commonwealth Home Support Program - Team 1  
Dept. of Health and Human Services (HACC PYP)

Dept. of Human Services Youth Justice  
Dept of Immigration & Border Protection  
Dept. of Justice (Represented by Consumer Affairs  
Victoria)  
Department of Premier and Cabinet  
Dept. of Transport, Planning and Local  
Infrastructure  
Dept. of Infrastructure and Regional Development  
Dept. of State Development, Business and  
Innovation

## E

Eco Waste Services  
Ethnic Communities Council of Victoria (ECCV)  
Eddy Kontelj  
Encompass Community Services  
Energy Safe Victoria  
Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission  
ESPOD Inc  
ESTIA Health Aged Care –Grovedale  
Ethnic Communities Council of Victoria  
Exide Batteries Geelong  
Eziclean

## F

Ford Australia  
Foundation 61  
Foundation House  
FECCA

## G

G21  
Gateway Support Services  
Geelong Advertiser  
Geelong Adolescent Sexuality Project  
Geelong Cats AFL  
Geelong College  
Geelong Community Foundation  
Geelong English Language Centre  
Geelong Food Relief  
Geelong Hospital Social Work Department  
Geelong Interfaith Network  
Geelong Local Settlement Planning Committee  
Geelong Mood Support Group Inc  
Geelong Men's Shed  
Geelong Mums  
Geelong Performing Arts Centre  
Geelong Rainbow Inc  
Geelong Regional Alliance (G21)  
Geelong Regional Library Corporation  
Geelong West Neighbourhood House  
GenU  
Gippsland & Gippsland East Aboriginal  
Cooperative  
Glastonbury  
GMS Rehabilitation  
Goodway Print Group  
Gordon Legal

## H

Headspace Barwon  
Helen McPherson Smith Trust

Hepatitis Victoria  
Highton Rotary  
Hodges  
Horizon House

## I

Ian Potter Foundation

## J

Jack Brockhoff Foundation  
Jigsaw  
John Laney Constructions

## K

Kalkee Community  
Kerley's Coastal Real Estate  
KFC Hosking Group  
KYO  
Koroit Health Services  
Kossies Free Range Eggs

## L

Laney Constructions  
Leisure Networks  
Leopold Primary School  
Life Saving Victoria  
Lions Club  
Lord Mayor's Trust

## M

Mackillop Family Services  
Marrngoneet Correctional Centre  
Mark Herd  
Matchworks  
Maurice Blackburn  
Mc Callum Industries  
MC Herd  
McHarrys Buslines  
Medicare Local  
Men's Community Kitchen  
MI Fellowship Barwon  
Mindworks  
Mitre 10 – Keith Fagg  
Mustang 7 Co  
Multicultural Aged Care Services  
Music Workshop

## N

NDIS  
Nelson Park School  
Netball Victoria  
Newcomb Secondary College  
Nook Architects  
Norlane Pharmacy  
North Geelong Secondary College  
Northern Bay College  
Northern Futures  
Novotel

## O

Occasions Party Hire  
Ocean Grove Surf Life Saving Club  
Office Multicultural Affairs & Citizenship  
Officeworks Waurm Ponds

## P

Pakington Street Traders  
Parks Victoria  
Phil Hines Photography  
Percy Baxter Trust  
Peter Doyle  
PPG  
Preston Motors

## Q

Quality Australian Farmed Rabbits  
Queenscliff Men's Shed  
Queenscliff Uniting Church and community  
Quota Geelong international

## R

Reid Engineering  
Refugee Council of Australia  
Rendine builders  
Richard Marles MLA  
Rod Collins  
Royal Children's Hospital  
Royal Geelong Agricultural & Pastoral Society Inc  
Royal Geelong Yacht Club  
Ryan Thompson, Third Ecology

## S

Sacred Heart College  
Saint Albans – Saint Andrews Uniting Church  
Saint Ignatius College  
Salvation Army Community Services Programs  
Salvos Connect  
Salsa Street  
Sawyers Arms Tavern  
SC Technologies  
Scanlon Foundation  
SCOPE  
Seaview Manor Aged Care  
Serbian Fishing Association  
Settlement Council of Australia (SCOA)  
Second Bite  
Shell Australia  
Shine On Foundation  
Sidchrome  
Signific Signs  
Signs t'go  
Skills Victoria  
Sleepy Hollow Blues Club  
South Valley Baptist Church  
Southern Star Windows  
Spectrum Migrant Resource Centre  
St Joseph's College  
St Luke's Uniting Church - Highton  
St Paul's Lutheran Church - Grovedale  
Stanley

Surf Life Saving Victoria  
SurfCoast Shire  
Surfcoast Shire – Aged & Family Services  
Supercats Basketball  
Sustainability Victoria

## T

Tannoch Brae Aged Care  
Transport Accident Commission (TAC)  
Telstra  
Tender Centre  
The Fagg Foundation  
The Potato Shed  
Timboon & District Health Services  
Time For Youth  
Trinity Aid for Refugees  
Total Tools – North Geelong  
Tuckers Funeral Services  
Turbovac

## U

U Can 2  
Uniting Aged Care Kalkee Day Respite  
Uniting Care  
Uniting Church - Queenscliff and Highton

## V

V2 Leadership – Kerim Nutku  
Valspar  
Viatek  
Vic Group Training  
VICC  
Vic Health  
VicRoads  
Victoria Police (Corio and Geelong)  
Victoria Regional Channels Authority  
Victorian Curriculum & Assessment Authority  
Victorian Legal Aid  
Victorian Multicultural Commission (VMC)  
Victorian Transcultural Psychiatric Unit  
Volunteering Geelong

## W

Water Well  
Wathaurong Aboriginal Cooperative  
Wathaurong Glass  
Western Heights Secondary College  
Westpac Bank  
Worksafe

## Y

Youth Approach to Pregnancy and Parenting  
Program  
Youth Connect  
Youth Justice  
Youth Law  
Youth Support & Advocacy Service (YSAS)

## Refugees dine on inclusivity menu

JEMMA RYAN

THE Geelong community has shown its support for newly settled refugees at a free public welcome event.

A community lunch held at the Western Heights Uniting Church on Saturday and run in partnership with Diversitat, drew a crowd of 90 people.

The colourful affair was complete with welcome signs in different languages and food from diverse backgrounds.

Volunteer organiser Paula Hurley said there were families from Syria, Iraq and Myanmar there, all of whom had made Geelong home within the last year, one arriving as recently as last week.

Many of those in attendance endured trauma, loss and violence in their long journey to settle in Australia, with one spending 24 years in a refugee camp.

"Geelong's long tradition of welcoming people from all corners of the globe was on full display," Ms Hurley said.

"Sharing a meal and a conversation or a smile is a



**WELCOME:** Ku Lay Paw, a Karen refugee, with Velma Oliver (right), at the community lunch for refugees who have recently moved to Geelong.

Picture: ALAN BARBER

simple, human common way to make a connection."

Ms Hurley said food and weather were popular topics of conversation but the children skipped straight to playing.

"My son said he had a great time with one of the little Karen children without really

talking at all. He would smile and point outside and to the soccer ball... kids are great at finding a way to play and not be too worried about language barriers," she said.

The afternoon was complete with an impromptu a cappella concert by Melbourne

University's Newman College Choir who were there, by coincidence, for rehearsal.

Each attendee wrote a message about the lunch on a jigsaw piece that will hang in the church as an ongoing symbol of acceptance for refugees in the community.

# Region's \$2m funding boost

**NICHOLAS PAYNE**

A CHILDREN'S therapy centre in Geelong's CBD, a migrant hub in Norlane and a community hall in Birregurra will become reality thanks to more than \$2 million in Commonwealth funding.

Corangamite MP Sarah Henderson announced the funding commitment yesterday as part of Round 1 of the Federal Government's Building Better Regions Fund.

It includes \$1.47 million for a purpose-built Kids Plus Foundation National Centre for Therapy, Research and Training, which will provide therapy programs to more than 250 children by 2022.

The centre will enable Kids Plus to triple its current services in the Geelong and greater Barwon region, helping more children than ever.

"I would like to congratulate chief executive Shaun Cannon and everyone from Kids Plus for their hard work in seeing this proposal come to fruition, and I look forward to seeing this project when it is completed," Ms Henderson said.

Refugee and migrant resettlement group Diversitat also received a chunk of Building Better Regions Fund cash, with \$314,000 to construct an expanded centre at its Northern Community Hub in Norlane.

The "Diversability Centre" will cost \$628,000, and provide National Disability Insurance Scheme support service to Diversitat clients with a disability, as well as their family and carers.

Diversitat pulled off a major coup last week, winning a Commonwealth contract to provide refugee and migrant resettlement across Victoria's southwest region in conjunction with AMES Australia.

The Commonwealth Building Better Regions Fund money will also support the Birregurra Community Group "I have a hall in my heart" project, with \$245,500 to transform the current Birregurra Mechanics Institute into a regional cultural facility and digital hub.

The project is also being supported by Regional Arts Victoria, Colac Otway Shire, Birregurra Art Show and Birregurra Community Group, who are contributing a combined \$491,000.

The finished product is expected to include a live performance and exhibition space, feature stage/exhibition lighting, live streaming/video conferencing capabilities, a cinema-grade projector, dressing room and storage space.

It will also make the hall all-access friendly, with a disability toilet, LED lighting, compliant seating and accessibility ramps.

# Groups help with language skills

by Ruby Manson

**Community groups from across the Colac region are working together to help people of all backgrounds improve language and job-seeking skills.**

Representatives from groups such as Diversitat, Colac Area Health and St Lawrence My Work met at Colac's Neighbourhood House last week to discuss programs hosted by their respective organisations.

Diversitat's Mabel Msopero said Diversitat was introducing two new programs in Colac and the meeting allowed different organisations to share their messages and programs.

"One is the AMEP, which is the Adult Migrant English Program, the other program is the Skills for Education and Employment, again it's free to all people within the working age group, which is 15 to 64, and people who are actively looking for employment," she said.

"It's for everyone really, people from 15 to 64, young people might have left school before they got any qualifications and are now thinking of going back to school or going back to further education.

"I think it's going to be a very good program, I see it as a program that brings meaning back into people's lives because now we are working towards getting people focused on getting employment or further education and all these are ways of enabling people, sometimes people fall into a space where

they give up.

"That was one of the reasons it was important to attend the multicultural networks meeting, so I could get the message through to the various community groups," Mabel said.

"I thought it was a very productive meeting because I got to meet the right people, when you communicate with people by email, you don't get to see them face to face and it usually takes time for them to understand what you are talking about.

"When I did my very brief presentation, the other organisations that also presented were very supportive and now they understand exactly what we're all about."

Mabel said she was glad the multicultural networks meeting had a representative from a local indigenous group, and hoped the Colac community would support the new program.

"I really was quite happy that there was a representative from an indigenous group, because we're also focusing on getting as many indigenous people as possible into this education and employment program," she said.

"I really would like to see the community coming up and supporting this because I believe that it is very important, and one of the things that I'm really keen to do is make sure that the staff that run the program in Colac are from Colac.

"I'm really hesitant to get in staff to teach from outside Colac, because I would rather have locals working with locals."



**NETWORKS:** Representatives at a multicultural networks meeting, back from left, Ebony Hickey, Christine Shuruell, Adam Fratantaro and Nikita Shields. Front from left are Mabel Msopero, Catherine Riordan and Caz Gatti.

Colac Herald, Wednesday 2nd August 2017

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## NATIONAL SKILLS WEEKS 2017 MORE THAN YOU KNOW



The new Diversitat training centre at Vines Road in Hamlyn Heights.

Picture: Glenn Ferguson

# School's in for new Diversitat

### Training provider takes over disused building in Western Heights College

**ABBEY KING**

HAMLIN Heights and surrounding suburbs' residents can now take advantage of a new Diversitat training site at Vines Road.

The training provider has taken advantage of a disused building at the Western Heights College, which was still new and pristine.

The new site offers more comfort with plenty of space for students and staff, as well as a welcoming foyer, with plenty of on-site parking.

It also forms part of the Vines Road Community Hub, being situated next door to the Vines Road Community Centre.

The new campus has eight classrooms with a mixture of vocational studies including

children's services, aged care and community services being offered, along with some English language classes.

Training and Education manager Garry Gow said the opening of the space meant they were able offer classes closer to home for many of their students.

It also provided students with more space and better equipment.

"We have opened Vines Road which is a phenomenal facility," Mr Gow said.

"We have invested heavily in this facility to allow us to provide the best for our students and teaching staff."

The Vines Road campus gardens were created by Diversitat's school-based apprenticeship and traineeship students (SbATs).

Horticulture trainer Jarrah Wilson worked with organisations around Geelong bring the project to fruition. Mr Wilson had plants

**"We have invested heavily in this facility to allow us to provide the best for our students and teaching staff."**

donated from Boomaroo Nurseries, reduced pricing on mulch through Danley landscaping supplies and also co-ordinated the site planning and integrating of the revamp into the horticulture program. A total of 16 students took part in the course.

Geelong Advertiser Tuesday 22nd August 2017

# Diversitat expands into the east

Geelong multicultural and disability support and training provider considers future use for the former Newcomb aged care facility after million-dollar deal, PETER FARAGO reports



The former Bupa Bellarine nursing home site has 51 single and double bedrooms on a 5637sq m site.

GEELONG multicultural and disability support and training provider Diversitat is set to expand into the eastern suburbs after securing a former aged care facility in a multimillion-dollar property deal.

The not-for-profit organisation has purchased the former Bupa Bellarine nursing home site at 117 Helms St, Newcomb, for \$2.8 million.

Colliers International, Geelong agent Andrew Lewis handled the sale for international health care provider Bupa in conjunction with Colliers' specialist medical group.

Mr Lewis said Bupa considered the Diversitat offer to be the best and cleanest, and the company was also attracted to selling to a not-for-profit organisation.

Diversitat chief executive Michael Martinez

said the organisation was still considering what might be the ultimate future use for the facility.

"We're looking at a supported residential service. We've yet to get into the building and have a look at it," he said.

**We're looking at a supported residential service. We're also looking at potentially for training in aged care and student accommodation." – Michael Martinez**

"We're also looking at potentially for training in aged care and maybe even as student accommodation."

Mr Martinez said Diversitat's existing

footprint didn't stretch into Geelong's eastern suburbs, despite the significant population from a non-English speaking background there and on the Bellarine Peninsula.

Aged care accommodation services for people with a non-English speaking background are concentrated in the northern suburbs.

"We think we got it for a good price," Mr Martinez said.

Mr Lewis said the property attracted a broad range of interest, including from investors, developers and other aged care operators.

Bupa closed its 51-bed aged care service at the facility in March, when it relocated residents to a new facility at the Bellarine Lakes Lifestyle Village at Moolap.

The property measures 5637sq m with the building taking up 2500sq m of the block, including a three-bedroom dwelling.

The building also includes a reception area, several internal courtyards, large commercial kitchen for on-site catering and a commercial laundry.

Each wing has its own lounge area with many of the rooms self-contained and other double rooms sharing an ensuite.

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# Web news confirms our biases

SOCIAL media channels such as Facebook and Twitter are distorting the way many Australians view important issues, a Deakin researcher says.

Associate Professor Matthew Sharpe said a generational shift towards using social media to access news meant a growing number of Australians were not being exposed to opinions which differ from their world view.

"Facebook is a big memory device that records your activity and uses algorithms to 'feed' news that it knows we will like and share often based on right or left perspectives," Associate Professor Sharpe said. "The news we like is not always the news we need. And that means the news we share with our friends and with whom we agree politically is likely to confirm our existing beliefs about the world."

Associate Professor Sharpe said this technological trend has created a 'filter bubble' where many social media users

only have access to what has been preselected on the basis of their likes and shares.

"The ability to consider the other guy's opinion is being eroded – or rather, the need for this ability, vital to democratic culture, is being removed," he said. Associate Professor Sharpe said despite the heated nature of social media debate, most Australians preferred to keep out of heated online arguments.

"On the one hand, many Australians are in favour of changing the date of Australia Day, given what it represents for Indigenous communities including death, disease and loss of land," he said.

"On the other hand, Australians defend the public holiday as a celebration of Australian culture."

"While most of the public debate falls into one of these two camps, in practice, most Australians don't mind if the date changes or stays the same."



Everybody benefits in volunteer partnership

Volunteers Rachel and El Zaw

YOUNG refugees are volunteering their time to help run programs for children with disabilities as part of an innovative partnership between two Geelong organisations.

Gateways and Diversitat both identified that the needs of their participants could be met by working together.

Gateways needed keen volunteers for holiday programs for kids with disabilities, particularly children with intellectual disabilities and autism.

Diversitat was seeking work experience opportunities for participants in its Equip Youth Mentoring Program, funded by the Department of Employment.

The collaboration has helped locally based refugees — from countries such as Afghanistan, Syria, Thailand and Iraq — increase their employability, strengthen their connections to the community and increase their confidence and self worth.

Rachel, 17, from DR Congo and El Zaw, 23, from Myanmar, came to Geelong with their families as part of settlement programs 7 years and 18 months ago respectively.

Both volunteered with Gateways this summer, participating in a range of recreational group activities where they were paired one-on-one with a child with a disability.

"I really enjoy getting to know the kids. I wasn't sure how they would be with me,

how they would react. I really enjoyed their company, the bonding is very good," Rachel said.

Diversitat project worker Neema Wright said the supervised volunteers help their child participate, stay engaged and be safe during activities.

"They go through training and the process of being interviewed, exactly as they would have to do when going for a job. They get good transferable skills," she said.

CELEBRATING DIVERSITY:  
Pakington St was transformed  
into a sea of colour as  
Australia's biggest multi-cultural  
festival, Pako Festa, returned  
on Saturday. Pictures: PAT SCALA



# Best of the Festa

A WAVE of foreign sounds, smells and colours washed over Pakington St on Saturday, to the rapturous delight of thousands of festival goers.

Geelong's 36th annual Pako Festa brought together more than 40 ethnic communities for a celebration of cultural life in the region.

The free festival kicked off with an extravagant parade, featuring about 90 floats and almost 100 performers marching, singing and dancing their

way from Waratah St to Autumn St.

Following the parade, performers took to six different stages for six hours of song, dance and cultural demonstrations.

The theme of this year's Festa was 'Reflections of a culture' and it was best embodied on the West Park Stage where 14 performances took place throughout the day — including those from Maori, Polish, Scottish, Sikh and the Nepalese communities.

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FOUR GENERATIONS MARCHING: (From left) Jasmine King, Jesus Blanco, Carmen Blanco, Monique King, Marta King, Sara King holding Oris and (front) Max Blanco and Lexi Blanco. Picture: PAT SCALA

## Proud family parades its Spanish tradition

HARRISON TIPPET

SINCE moving to Geelong almost 30 years ago Marta King and her family haven't missed a single Pako Festa. This year, four generations of the Spanish-heritage family slipped into their homemade flamenco outfits to march alongside more than 40 ethnic communities in the parade. "We're well seasoned," Marta King says with a laugh while waiting for the march to begin. "There are my parents, then there's myself, my three daughters and the oldest is bringing her son — he's nine months." "We moved from Melbourne to Geelong 28 years ago, so we got involved with the Spanish community then and this was something they did, and we've done it every year since." Ms King's parents both emigrated to Australia from Spain, bringing with them the traditions of their homeland.

"My mum is from Leon, which is a little further up from Madrid, and my dad is from Galicia, which is on top of Portugal," Marta said. "My mum has made new outfits for everyone — she's sewn all the costumes. My grandson will even have a little outfit on." "I'm also a dance teacher of flamenco, and my girls have all performed in the past. We're dancing today." For this Spanish family, and the hundreds — if not thousands — of local ethnic families taking part in the Pako Festa, it was a day of sharing their own cultures while embracing those of their neighbours. "We're extremely proud of our culture, and to keep it going the youth need to understand where our background's from," Marta said. "It's also an amazing international day of understanding different cuisines and dancing. It's just a smorgasbord of the absolute best bits of the world, in Geelong."

New healthy living centre

# Diversitat hub open

SHANE FOWLES

GEELONG'S migrant groups have celebrated the official opening of Diversitat's Healthy Living Centre.

Hundreds of people yesterday attended the \$2.3 million facility in Norlane, which will host a range of social, cultural and physical activities for the city's older migrants.

Diversitat had struggled to find a permanent home for its aged support services after leaving a council-owned building in Geelong West.

Projects general manager Bridgette Carey yesterday acknowledged the long path towards opening the site.

"It took more than four years of campaigning for funds to finally be successful in securing a permanent home," Ms Carey said. "This is a significant victory for older migrant communities."

The Arunga Ave property used to host the Norlane Mi-

grant Hostel in the 1970s, where it provided accommodation for thousands of new arrivals.

It now features a large community garden, men's and women's sheds and the Northern Community Hub.

Meanwhile, the new Barwon Community Alcohol and Other Drugs Hub in Geelong West has officially opened.

Barwon Child, Youth & Family board chair John Frame said the new facility would provide a range of counselling, education and treatment programs.

"The new ... hub brings together a suite of ... programs to support people ... whose lives are affected by drug and alcohol use, from the one convenient location," Mr Frame said.

The hub has been supported with a \$500,000 grant from the State Government.

Mental Health Minister Martin Foley was in Geelong yesterday for the ceremony.

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## Netballers come from across the globe to snare grand final victory

A GROUP of netballers from Geelong's diverse refugee communities celebrated World Refugee Day with a one-goal win in the Corio Netball Association's Wednesday night competition grand final.

The netballers play as part of Diversitat's netball program, which uses the sport as a means for girls from refugee backgrounds to develop confidence, teamwork skills, friendships as well as a

healthy interest in the popular sport.

The Diversitat I team comprises players aged 11-16, from Afghanistan, Myanmar and Rwanda.

Star player Gay Nay Moo was runner-up in the best-and-fairest for the competition after a string of strong performances.

Diversitat's netball program fields two teams from different age groups in the Corio Netball Association,

and works with Netball Victoria's Net Set Go program to introduce girls from refugee backgrounds to the sport.

Cindy Marshall, its settlement and community support services volunteer coordinator, said Diversitat was proud of the achievements of its young netballers.

"For many of these players, getting out on court is an important part of forming their lives and developing supportive communities

around them in Geelong," Marshall said.

"The biggest benefits of the program come from the self-esteem, the friendships, the lessons and the positive memories that come from playing netball. This team has had a great season and the grand final victory will be a memory that our players will treasure.

"It is a sign of how far these players have come in such a short time learning the game."



Diversitat's title-winning netball team.

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