



MiCare  
Helping you live in your world.

# MiCare Magazine 2022

This edition  
talks about  
Diversity in  
MiCare





# *The art & craft by our Elders*



# *Welcome to Volume 5 of MiCare Magazine 2022*

Organisations that make diversity a priority are set to prosper in ways that are unimaginable. Clients and Elders bring to the services and programs they participate in, a different perspective, one which broadens our views and helps us to grow. Staff offer a variety of ideas, and opportunities and are encouraged to share and learn from each other.

We are a rich organisation because of the diversity within MiCare, it is an organisation that speaks more than 40 languages and has staff and clients from more than 50 cultural backgrounds. We are a group of people who come together because we believe in connecting with one another, of exploring different ideas, being creative and experiencing a sense of belonging.

This year's magazine showcases MiCare's diversity. You will read about groups of people with their varied skills who come up with ideas to overcome a problem. You will also read about the many different services and programs we offer, and in some instances, you will learn about our successes. This sense of achievement brings with it a sense of hope and of positive progress. In other words, our cultural diversity creates a welcoming family for all where all are included.

**~Petra Neeleman  
Executive Director  
MiCare Ltd**







# The Student-Employee Loop



From a young age, I was interested in international health promotion because I genuinely believed that if everyone had great health, everything else would be okay. So after high school, I went straight into studying a double degree Bachelor of Applied Public Health & Bachelor of Global Studies. These degrees really opened up my eyes to the naivety of my initial beliefs as I quickly learned that it took a LOT more than adequate health promotion to improve livelihood.

Upon completion of my undergraduate studies, I really struggled to find full-time employment directly related to the public health field. Then, Covid-19 hit Australia and I was left feeling even more uncertain about my job prospects. So, I decided to further my studies, now with a lot more realistic perspective on things, with a Master of Social Work. A semester into this course, I began my second attempt at intensive job searching and came across the Community Employment Connector Program.

I currently work as MiCare's Senior Community Employment Connector and although I had applied for this position without knowing which organisation I would be working under, I could not have been more grateful it was MiCare. The workplace culture at MiCare, and my incredible supervisor, has really allowed me to flourish in this role as it's given me the space to observe and try on various

leadership styles, as I slowly formulate my own. I have also been able to explore so many opportunities I had not even considered before commencing this role. The most recent of these opportunities is the work-based placement I have been offered with MiCare's Settlement Team as the final placement of my social work course. I already know there will be so many learning opportunities with this upcoming role and I can't wait to see what they will be!

## ~ Rebecca Bogale

Senior Community Employment Connector



## Carrying on the tradition

After a holiday in The Netherlands and seeing bikes everywhere, even decorated ones, I decided that my little Dutch home at Prins Willem Alexander Village was the ideal place to display a decorated bike. This bike prompted visitors to stop and take pictures, in front of my Dutch (Volendam) style home. It proved so popular that others living in our village asked if I could provide more decorated bicycles. There are now 16 bikes, all different colours, throughout the village. Several of the families of Elders in the home requested a bike for the internal gardens, so now there is a Delft Blue bike in Mollee household and another in the garden of the John Scholtes building. I have a favorite bike; the family of an Elder who also lives in the home donated a bike, which I painted purple and unbeknown to me it was his late wife's favourite colour. He can see the bicycle from his room. This is why I decorate the bikes, it brings joy to all who enter our village. On any given day visitors will stop and take pictures of themselves with one of the many bikes.

## ~Marijke Lopez

Resident at PWA



Marijke with her beautifully painted cycles



# Diversity and inclusion within

Diversity and inclusion within our Volunteer Coordination at MiCare is very important. We want all volunteers, Elders and staff to be valued as respected members and to feel welcome at MiCare and in the community. At MiCare, volunteers, Elders and staff are recognized and respected for their different culture, interests, talents, and skills.

The things you do and the practices you were taught decide who you have become. Culture is a broad term that encompasses beliefs, values, norms and behaviours. At MiCare, you come into contact with people from different backgrounds.

The importance of cultural diversity is that we recognize that there are many different cultures, to respect each other's differences, and that all are valid. At MiCare, we encourage all diverse groups to contribute and celebrate the differences.

Interacting with people who have diverse practices, beliefs, life experiences, and culture promotes empathy. While you can never fully understand someone's life without being them, you can learn, listen, and understand.

We have a total of 430 Volunteers within MiCare coming from 42 different countries and speaking 48 different languages. The same applies to our visiting programs.

MiCare is visiting a total of 204 Elders, coming from 37 different countries and speaking 53 different languages.

In our visiting programs, where possible, our Elders are matched with a volunteer who speaks the same language. Volunteers do weekly visits to the Elder's home where they talk over a cup of coffee, play games or where volunteers teach the Elder how to use an iPad to have video calls via zoom or skype with family. The volunteer groups that are in Victoria and Queensland organise volunteer meetings and social events where all volunteers and Elders can meet and socialise and where we celebrate and share our different cultures with food and music.

The world is filled with people who have different beliefs, religions, traditions, and ways of living. It is within our differences that we can find beauty.

At MiCare, we are always looking for more volunteers in Victoria and Queensland, who would like to visit Elders in the community.

We welcome volunteers who have a different background, speak another language and reminisce about their culture and background. We encourage our volunteers and Elders to build a special friendship with each other by visiting weekly.

# MiCare Volunteer Coordination

We also have volunteer work at one of our aged care homes, kiosks or café. If you are interested in joining as a volunteer, please give our friendly team a call to discuss the possibilities.

We hope to be able to welcome you to the MiCare Volunteer family soon.

~ Yvonne Philips  
Manager Volunteers



Our Volunteers from Victoria and Queensland





MiCare team at Eden Training

# Eden Training

MiCare is committed to the Eden Alternative™, creating a vibrant community where children, pets and plants are part of daily life. These are the things our staff said about their Eden Training experience:

“It was a wonderful experience to be involved in the 3-day Eden Alternative training. It helped me to understand that Eden Alternative can make a huge difference in the way we give and receive care to residents in an aged care and clients in community care. I also learned that independence can reduce helplessness, meaningful engagement can fight loneliness and boredom. Animals, plants and children can promote companionship in our services, our homes and our lives. Living a fulfilled life is a never-ending process. It is a lifelong journey and requires commitment from everyone involved.

The Eden Golden Rule: As Management do unto Staff, so shall Staff do unto the Residents / Client / Person” ~Lydia Chan

“The Eden Training was wonderful and really highlighted the need for person directed care for our Elders. I really enjoyed learning about the principles and how we can implement these across our homes.

~ Linda van Egmond

“After 2 years in lockdown it was wonderful to be able to meet with colleagues from across the organisation for 3 days of Eden Training. It was at times intense and emotional as we were asked to draw on our own life experiences in order to relate more closely to our Elders. The Eden Alternative identifies the 3 plagues of the human spirit as loneliness, helplessness and boredom. By the end of the 3 days we all felt energised and equipped to return to our work places, armed with the tools to implement the solution: To create a human habitat where life revolves around close and continuing contact with people of all abilities, plants and animals, loving companionship and the opportunity to give as well as receive.

~ Margaret Oudendyk



# Diversity is a real strength of our Workforce

At MiCare, we are proud of our highly skilled workforce and are strongly committed to Human Resources best practice, organisation wide. Our growing workforce of close to 800 employees, including our capable leadership team, is culturally and linguistically diverse and comes from a range of backgrounds, culture, language, gender, race, age and religion.

The clients that rely on our services are predominantly from a non-Australian background, including Dutch, Spanish, Chinese, Greek, Burmese and Congolese. Our practice of actively employing culturally and linguistically diverse staff to match our client demand definitely enhances our ability to deliver the optimum in quality client centred care. Our commitment to Cultural and Linguistic diversity is made visible through all our Recruitment processes that seek talent with an ability to communicate in another language and / or understand another culture. It is an approach that places MiCare as a provider of choice, particularly for migrant communities.

Our commitment is reflected organisation wide through our practices, policies and

procedures. We support our employees to achieve work/life balance by offering full time, part time and casual employment. We also offer a number of flexible working arrangements like purchased leave, ADO's, on top of the normal leave provisions (i.e. annual, personal, maternity, family violence, cultural) found in Awards and EAs, because we understand that these measures support the diversity of our workforce.

MiCare's merit-based recruitment processes offer pathways to migrants and students on to employment, internal progression and promotion and opportunities for scholarship programs. MiCare's commitment to diversity is further reinforced by mandatory training in courses such as cultural diversity and is celebrated in organisational events like Harmony Day. We strongly and emphatically believe that workforce cultural and linguistic diversity is one of our main strengths.

~Melita  
HR Advisor



My name is Sharon. I cared for my mother-in-law, Lin Hong, who had dementia before she passed away in 2021 at the age of 91. We are from a Malaysian background, and Lin spoke Mandarin and Cantonese only. She was very quiet at home and did not talk much, but when she joined the Chinese social support group at MiCare, she made some friends and really enjoyed her time there. The group went out for lunch each Monday, and she loved it very much. The staff took the group to try different foods each week, and this gave her and other participants so much joy.

From a carer's perspective, this gave me valuable time to take a break, as well as care for my son who has disability.

The team of staff at the group is very caring and are always receptive to our needs. For example, when I was unable to provide transport for Lin, they accommodated her by organising transport and making sure Lin could participate. Lin attended a few groups



Lin Hong at the social support group

but the MiCare group was the best because of their flexibility to accommodate our needs, listen and support us in the journey of caring for someone with complex needs.

Their staff speak our language, and they always respond to our enquiries promptly, and provide professional advice when needed. The MiCare team is led by Angela Ng who has many years of experience in delivering culturally appropriate care to diverse communities. I highly recommend their services to those who need support, either in aged care or in disability.

~Sharon Lee 11 MiCare Magazine 2022




# Cultural Diversity in MiCare


This report highlights the Cultural Diversity in MiCare across all its services\*


In determining the cultural diversity of MiCare, a few indicators relating to Elders, clients, staff and volunteers are considered. The quantitative data includes country of birth, language/s spoken and religious affiliation. The data collected is from the organisation's Care system, Leecare and other organisational data sources.



## > Residential Aged Care

 264 Elders in Residential Aged Care are from 27 different countries of birth.

 They speak 13 different languages. Main languages English, Dutch, German, Italian & Spanish among others.

 17 different religious denominations. The major religious denominations practiced amongst our Elders are Roman Catholic, Church of England, Christian, Uniting Church, Anglican and Reformed Dutch. 18 Elders practice their own beliefs.



The majority of Elders were born in Australia and in The Netherlands, followed by United Kingdom, Indonesia, Germany and Italy.



## > Volunteers Team

**496**  
Registered volunteers.

Volunteers are from **62** different countries of origin.

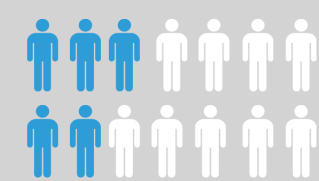
The majority are from The Netherlands, Australia, China, Italy, India, Indonesia, New Zealand, Vietnam and United Kingdom.

Amongst them, **57** languages spoken, the majority speak English, Dutch, Spanish, German, French, Italian, Mandarin, and Cantonese.



## > MiCare Staff

**752** Staff with MiCare are from more than **40** different countries of birth.





The majority of Australian born staff speak English only. Significant number of staff are bilingual, many trilingual and other quadrilingual.



## > Home Care Packages

 1365 Clients - Veterans & Home care clients.

 Of the total number,  66% speak 44 different languages other than English.

 Only  20% of clients disclosed their affiliation to 21 different religious denominations. The Major religious denominations are are Greek Orthodox, Roman Catholic, Christian, Buddhist, Church of Christ, and Muslim.



## > Migrant Services



Migrant Services programs assists approximately 1,000 clients.



The majority clients are from Burma, Ethiopia, Iraq, Tibet, Somalia, Afghanistan & Congo.

Clients from the Senior Clubs are from 29 different countries of birth and they speak 25 different languages including, Tagalog, Lebanese, Italian, Bosnian, Hindi and Arabic.



\*The data has been collected from February -April 2022



# The Knitting Queen



Our Elder Janine knitting



From the commencement of an Elder's arrival in residential care, time is spent getting to know each individual person. They are supported to be involved in a range of activities and lifestyle choices to enhance their day to day lives.

While some Elders like to embrace new pursuits, we also encourage the continuation of interests an Elder may have been involved in for many years before entering residential care. Jannie started knitting and crocheting when she was in primary school in the Netherlands. The first item she can remember making was a knitted baby jacket. After arrival in Australia in 1954, Jannie continued her knitting and crocheting pursuits as well as bringing up her children. She became something of an 'international craftsman', for many years donating her knitted items to overseas missions. This included knitting a very large number of squares to be made into blankets for the missions.

Jannie also continued to knit blankets and clothes for her grandchildren as well as for the Animal Aid in Coldstream and the Anglicare Opportunity Shop. Jannie and her husband were also involved in sponsoring migrants from the



Jannie's beautiful knitting work

Netherlands, enabling them to establish their lives in Australia. Since arriving at Overbeek Lodge, Jannie has continued with her knitting projects as well as being involved in her Church.

~ Debra Blake

Lifestyle Coordinator





# Harmony Day Celebration

From Left to Right: Marcela Castro, Mercedes Sepulveda, Paula Farley and Carola Van der Meer on Harmony Day

Every year, Harmony Week is celebrated during 21st - 27th of March. This is an opportunity for all Australians to celebrate our cultural diversity as well as the Australian values of inclusion and respect, most importantly, actioning and promoting the "Everyone Belongs" theme. Feeling that you belong is when you are accepted for who you are as a human being, and welcomed, respected and valued. It is important to be a part of a non-judgmental group, in which the main motivation strives for common goals, rather than individual ones.

Communication and acceptance of diversity in society are critical factors to value and respect the uniqueness of human beings. If we regularly reflect on how harmony in diversity and our communication style have contributed to the enrichment of our everyday life, the life of others and the culture of our organisation, perhaps then Harmony Day could be celebrated by everybody every day,

regardless of age, gender, cultural background, sexual orientation, disability or socioeconomic backgrounds.

In Brisbane, Prins Willem Alexander Lodge (PWAL) celebrated Harmony Day on 24th March. The 25 different countries of origin of our Elders were highlighted on a big world mural map at PWAL Reception. Cultural items from the diversity of countries were also displayed. Staff were encouraged to dress in orange (the harmony colour) and to share traditional dishes amongst their colleagues. Jasbir Singh, PWAL Assitant in Nursing, looked great in traditional customs, and she won the best appropriate innovative dress prize.



Jasbir Singh

~ Mercedes Sepulveda  
Cultural Services Advisor



## The language of friendship

Our Elders Carmen (Left) and Maria (right) enjoying each others company at Avondrust Lodge

Here at Avondrust Lodge, we have quite a few different nationalities. Where once we mostly had Elders with a Dutch background, these days we have many Elders from different places of birth.

Our Elder, Maria Kooyman was born in North Holland. Maria migrated to Australia before heading to New Zealand, and eventually returned to Australia to settle down. Maria has lived in Avondrust Lodge for seven years now. Our more recent Elder, Carmen Gonzalez was born in Galicia, Spain. Carmen migrated to Australia and has lived in Albury and New South Wales. Carmen has lived at Avondrust Lodge for a little over a year to date. Carmen doesn't speak very much English, although she understands English.

Carmen and Maria reside in different households, but share the same floor level. Every day, Carmen walks over to Maria's household to assist Maria with a snack. Carmen takes the time to help Maria eat this little treat. Together the ladies enjoy each

other's company. Neither Elder speaks the other's language, yet they get along like two old friends with a long past, with lots fond memories.

It can take just a look between the two ladies and before you know it, they'll both be laughing and they'll each have the biggest smiles on their faces.

Recently Maria was escorted over to Carmen's household, to Carmen's delight.

After they had their time to catch up and have a laugh, they happily sat next to each other to enjoy watching a music video on the tv. Each Elder smiling as she glanced over to her friend. Lots of smiles all around, lots of laughing and happiness, yet no words are spoken between these two friends. Only the language of friendship.



Our Elder Maria

~ Kim Dann  
Lifestyle coordinator



# Know more about



Pauline and Kerri-Anne

## Pauline

One of my highlights at Prins Willem Alexander Village is bingo at Jonkers. The Elders are keen to set up and love to play. I love seeing the enjoyment the Elders find in this and the interactions and fun times make me very happy too. I enjoy the one-on-one visits with Kerri-Anne - some Elders can't leave their rooms due to health issues. I feel that we brighten up their day by spending some quality time with them. We are very lucky to volunteer with the wonderful Lifestyle team consisting of Tania, Laetitia, Cassie and Marcela, who show their appreciation to us every time we are here. A THANK YOU says so much to us and to feel so appreciated makes our first volunteering experience at Prins Willem Alexander Village an amazing positive experience which we both love. So, if anyone is thinking of volunteering - just have a go. It's a very interesting and amazing experience.

## Kerri-Anne

I started this amazing journey with my good friend, Pauline. I met a lady who told me that she lives and volunteers at Prins Willem Alexander Village, and so our volunteering journey began. We volunteer together, two days a week. Each day is varied and a new adventure and a very positive one. One of my highlights is taking our Mollee Elders to the coffee shop for coffee, cake and a sing-a-long. Music makes them so happy - they shine and interact in such a wonderful way. I have been known to enjoy a "chat" with everyone. The Elders have amazing and funny stories to share and I love showing them photos of my grandchildren (yes! I am a proud nana). We love the company and interactions this brings one and all.



Pauline and Kerri-Anne

## Christiane Vogl

I always had the desire to volunteer, but there was never the right chance. I was born and raised in Germany, moved to Singapore in 2017, and finally touched down in Australia in February 2021. When I arrived in Australia last year, the perfect volunteering opportunity arose. Being from Germany, it didn't take me long to come across MiCare and its cultural diversity. I enrolled in the CVS program and since then have been regularly visiting Heidi, an elderly lady from Germany, in an aged care home. We have lovely chats, read German newspapers, and now and then we even do a beauty day and I paint her fingernails. She is so grateful which is extremely rewarding. After a few weeks as a CVS volunteer a job opportunity at the Volunteer Coordination Team with MiCare came up. I was lucky and got the job! Liaising with clients, volunteers, and colleagues from all around the world, learning about different cultures, and traditions, and hearing their life stories is something I enjoy. Volunteering with MiCare truly changed my life and helped me so much to settle here in Australia. I'm looking forward to continuing my visits with Heidi and many exciting experiences working with MiCare.



# our Volunteers

## About me

My Name is Willy. My birth country is Netherlands. I started working with MiCare from 2012.

### Why did you originally get involved in volunteering?

My mother was a resident at Dutchcare. I really liked the place and when the time came that I was looking for something, I thought it would be nice to chat to the Elders.

### What do you enjoy most about volunteering?

Giving time to the Elders, giving them a different face to see. Being able to have the time to sit and have a chat, coffee and a bit of a singalong with them.

### What is most challenging part of the role?

COVID - Not being able to see the Elders and do something I enjoy.

### What sort of activities do you do in your role as a MiCare volunteer?

As a kiosk volunteer I make coffees, chat a lot to the Elders and their family. It's very social.

### Highlight of volunteering so far?

Being shown appreciation from the Elders and staff. The delight on the Elders faces when you are able to sit and chat brings them joy and happiness. The respect the staff have for the volunteers and the care.

### What is your best quality?

My ability to make people smile, being able to communicate with people, I am always in a happy place.

### Where is the most interesting place you have been to?

Europe - I love all the history





# Get in touch with our MiCare family!

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## Thank you from the MiCare family!

Your support of MiCare and our mission is appreciated by those who need it most, such as clients within our social support groups, residents in our homes and to the people in our joint partner settlement projects.

None of our work would be possible without our incredible staff, volunteers, donors and supporters. Thank you for your ongoing dedication and support in helping MiCare improve the quality of life for the many migrants and refugees we support. Thank you for being a very important part of our growing MiCare family.

## How you can contribute

We sometimes need help so we can help others that rely on us. Ways in which you can contribute:

- donating
- volunteering
- becoming an associate member

For general enquiries and information please feel free to call us on 1800 MICARE (1800 642 273), email [info@micare.com.au](mailto:info@micare.com.au) or visit [www.micare.com.au](http://www.micare.com.au)





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