

# MOSAIC

CELEBRATING  
**30**  
YEARS





# CONTENTS

3	MAYOR'S FOREWORD
5	MOSAIC, THE CATALYST FOR GROWTH AND SUCCESS
6	INTRODUCTION
7	EARLY DAYS
8	MOSAIC AS A COUNCIL SERVICE
10	MOSAIC TIMELINE
11	SERVICE PROVISION
12	ACHIEVEMENTS TO DEVELOP AND SUPPORT DIVERSITY <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Volunteering</li><li>• Best Practice Model</li><li>• Caring Community</li><li>• Accountability and Transparency</li></ul>
14	IMPACTS ON THE COMMUNITY <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Empowering and Educating Communities</li><li>• Cultural Celebration and Cross-cultural Understanding</li><li>• Connection, Friendship and Support</li></ul>
16	COMMUNITY PERCEPTION



17	AWARDS AND ACCOLADES
18	CUSTOMER AND COMMUNITY FEEDBACK
19	SNAPSHOTS OF BEST CUSTOMER EXPERIENCES
22	SUCCESS FACTORS <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Strong Community Support</li><li>• Effective Volunteer Recruitment and Retention</li><li>• Clear Vision and Mission</li><li>• Strong Leadership and Management</li><li>• Collaboration and Partnerships</li><li>• Responsive to Community Needs</li><li>• Inclusivity and Cultural Sensitivity</li><li>• Effective Utilisation of Volunteer Skills</li><li>• Recognition and Appreciation</li><li>• Resilience and Flexibility</li></ul>
26	CHALLENGES <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Recruitment and Retention</li><li>• Program Sustainability</li><li>• Training and Skill Development</li><li>• Time Commitment</li><li>• Reliability and Accountability</li><li>• Program Coordination</li><li>• Diversity and Inclusion</li><li>• Risk Management</li><li>• Communication and Feedback</li></ul>
27	FUTURE HORIZONS AND POSSIBILITIES

# MAYOR'S FOREWORD

As we come together to celebrate the 30th anniversary of MOSAIC (Multicultural One-Stop Assistance Information Centre), we embark on a journey through time, celebrating the remarkable achievements, contributions, and the enduring spirit of this extraordinary institution.



Since its inception in November 1993, MOSAIC has been a beacon of diversity and inclusivity in Willoughby City. It was born as a grassroots initiative, a response to the growing needs of our vibrant migrant community. The support it received from the Council and the community was instrumental in shaping its trajectory. From those early days to becoming a fully funded Council service in late 1996, MOSAIC's evolution has been nothing short of remarkable.

MOSAIC's core mission has always been to empower and meet the needs of our ethnic communities, fostering a sense of belonging and ensuring their voices are heard in decision-making processes. Over the years, it has grown to become an integral part of Willoughby City Council's community services, particularly serving our culturally and linguistically diverse communities.

It is here at MOSAIC where everyone, regardless of their background, finds that sense of belonging. It is a place that our community is proud to be associated with, a testament to the values of diversity, unity, and community.

The journey of MOSAIC is not just a story of growth; it's a story of transformation and adaptation. From language classes to leisure activities, culturally-oriented social groups to information and referral services, and from cultural celebrations to school holiday programs for children, MOSAIC has diversified its service provision to meet the evolving needs of our community.

Central to MOSAIC's success has been its volunteer culture. More than 100 volunteers, representing diverse cultural backgrounds from 16 countries, aged 25 to 94, have selflessly dedicated their time to help run programs and events. Their commitment exemplifies the spirit of community and solidarity that defines MOSAIC.

In the past year alone, 13,868 attendees participated in MOSAIC events and programs, underlining the centre's significance in our community's lives.

As Mayor of Willoughby City, I extend my heartfelt gratitude to everyone who has been a part of MOSAIC's journey over the past 30 years. This includes the management, staff, and the incredible team of volunteers. Without your dedication and support, an institution like MOSAIC, which enriches the lives of countless individuals, would not exist.

So, here's to MOSAIC's remarkable past, its vibrant present, and a future filled with promise. Here's to another 30 years of fostering diversity, empowering communities, and creating a place where all are welcome.

Thank you for being a part of this incredible journey.

Warm regards,

**Tanya Taylor**  
Mayor of Willoughby City





# MOSAIC, THE CATALYST FOR GROWTH AND SUCCESS

**W**illoughby City Council's MOSAIC Multicultural Centre was recognised at the prestigious 2023 NSW Premier's Harmony Dinner, where the team received the Premier's Multicultural Community Medal for Local Government Business Excellence.

The Premier's Multicultural Community Medals pay tribute to exemplary work in the advancement of social cohesion and harmony throughout New South Wales. The Local Government Business Excellence Award is a testament to the exceptional accomplishments of a Local Government organisation in fostering the growth of services and assistance for culturally and linguistically diverse communities.







MOSAIC  
BEGAN AS A  
GRASSROOTS  
INITIATIVE

# INTRODUCTION

**W**illoughby City, located in Sydney's Northern suburbs, about 9 kilometres from the Sydney CBD, prides itself as a City of Diversity, with 46.5% of Willoughby residents born overseas, and 41% speaking a language other than English at home (Census 2021). The city's largest ethnic groups include Chinese, Indian, Italian, Korean and Japanese. At the heart of Council's multicultural service provision is the MOSAIC Multicultural Centre, located in Chatswood.

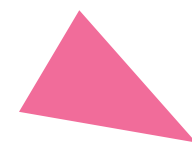
MOSAIC began as a grassroots initiative in response to the unprecedented growth in new migrants settling on the Lower North Shore. Since its establishment in 1993, MOSAIC has diversified its service provision to meet the needs of various community groups and provide a safe and welcoming place for all. In addition to language classes, leisure activities and culturally-oriented social groups, the Centre also provides information and referral, cultural celebrations and school holiday

programs for children. Over 50 regular activities attract strong visitation from all sections of the community, with 13,868 attendees during 2022.

Over three decades, Willoughby City Council's MOSAIC Multicultural Centre has built its reputation as the leading multicultural community hub in the Northern Sydney region, providing Willoughby's diverse community with accessible programs for learning, leisure and social connection.

2023 marks MOSAIC's 30th anniversary, a milestone achievement that is a testament to the incredible individuals and communities that make MOSAIC what it is today.

In this commemorative booklet, we aim to celebrate and reflect on MOSAIC's collective efforts for remarkable achievements, share the secrets of its enduring success and dream a brighter future together.



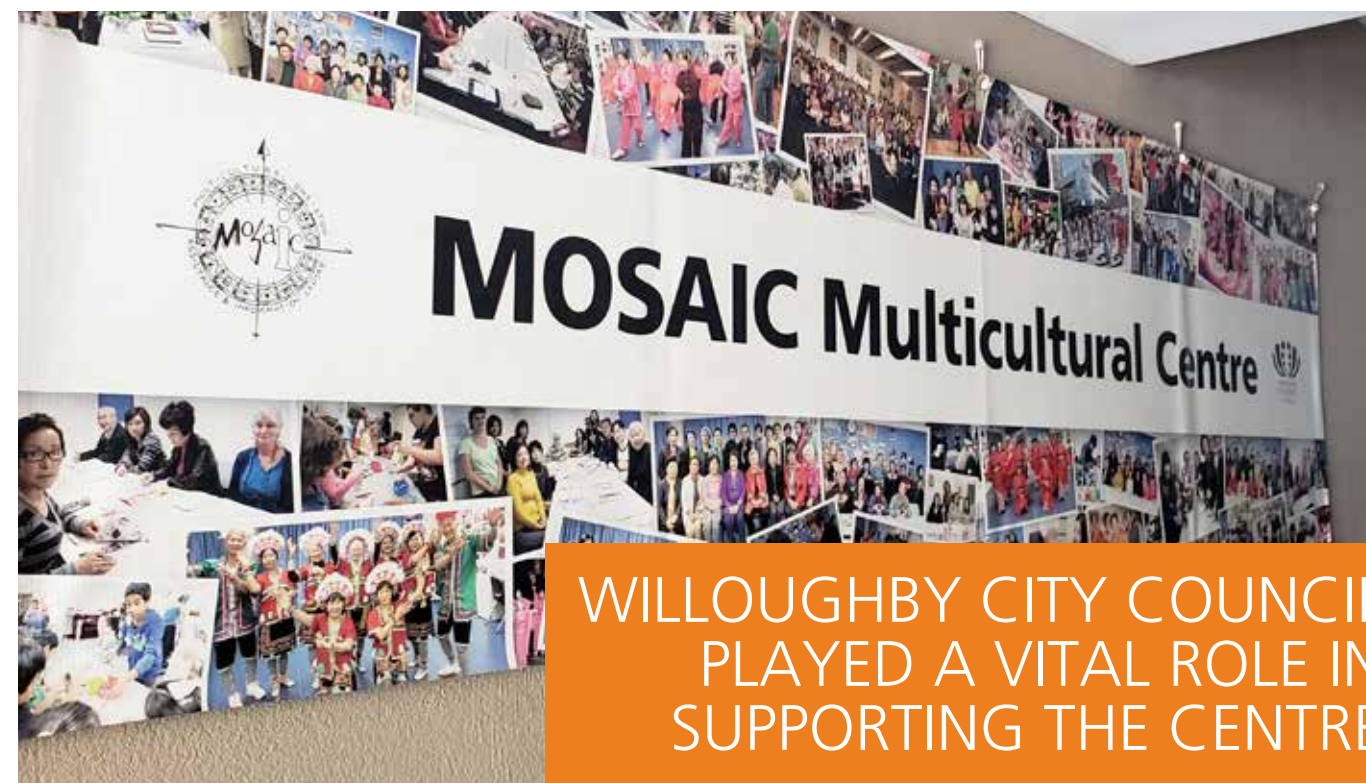
# EARLY DAYS

**M**OSAIC Multicultural Centre emerged in response to the growing settlement needs of migrants in the Lower North Shore. With an increasing number of non-English speaking migrants moving to the area, there was a lack of dedicated resources to support their integration. Recognising this gap, a group of service providers and community representatives came together as a community initiative to address the issue.

In early 1993, a series of meetings took place with strong support from Willoughby City Council, resulting in the inception of MOSAIC in November that year. Initially based at Chatswood Youth Centre, this innovative community-based migrant service was officially registered as an incorporated organisation on 18 January 1994.

Initially, operations were overseen by a community management committee and services were provided by volunteers. To further expand its reach, MOSAIC secured funding from Jobskills and the then Ethnic Affairs Commission, facilitating the creation of a Coordinator position. Willoughby City Council played a vital role in supporting the Centre by providing a venue and covering necessary overhead costs. MOSAIC shared the Youth Centre from 9am to 2pm on weekdays, delivering essential information and facilitating social group activities.

MOSAIC faced a critical challenge when funding from the Ethnic Affairs Commission ceased in July 1996. Maintaining the service without a paid coordinator became nearly impossible. In response, MOSAIC members made a strategic decision to dis-incorporate, allowing Willoughby City Council to fully fund the Centre. This crucial decision was made during a special meeting in September 1996.



WILLOUGHBY CITY COUNCIL  
PLAYED A VITAL ROLE IN  
SUPPORTING THE CENTRE





# MOSAIC

## AS A COUNCIL SERVICE

During the establishment process, Sue Alvarez, the Council's Community Services Coordinator, played an active role. The steering committee also included other Council staff, including Angelina Yeung and Suzanna Waller. Cr Mary Johnston, a sitting Councillor at the time, was deeply engaged with MOSAIC from its initial inception through to the agency's transfer to Council and its relocation to a new home at 12 Brown Street, Chatswood in 2000.

Over the next 22 years, MOSAIC strived to reach its maximum potential under the leadership of Rita Leung, Multicultural

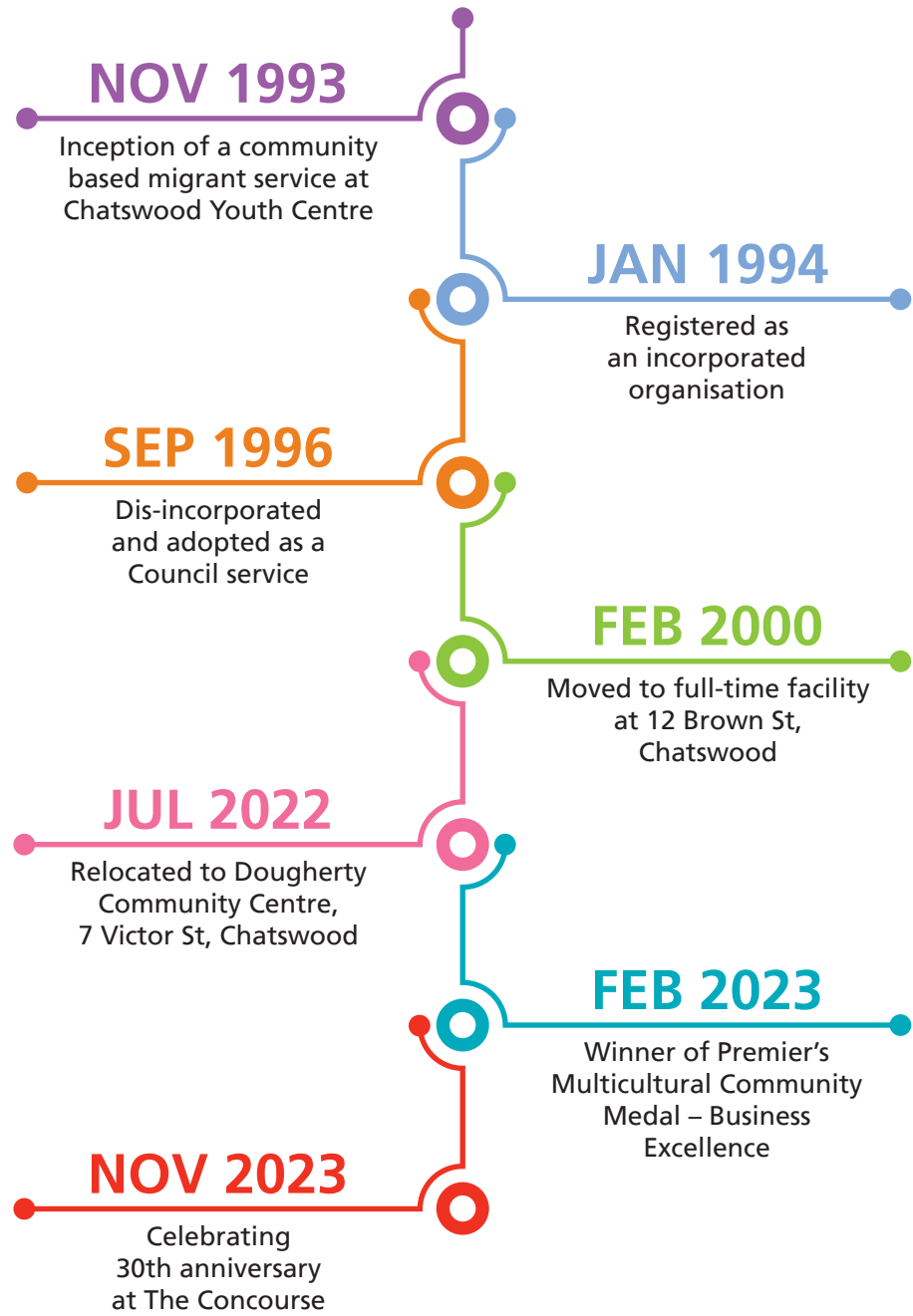
Services Team Leader and Sun Hae Kim, MOSAIC Centre Supervisor. The size and scope of services grew exponentially, doubling the number of volunteers and programs offered to the community. Councillors Wendy Norton and Judith Rutherford, alongside various community leaders, offered their valuable support as members of the MOSAIC Advisory Committee until its dissolution in 2021. In spite of MOSAIC's growth, conducting operations from the Brown Street location proved challenging due to constraints in space, accessibility, and safety of staff and volunteers. To address these issues and aid further expansion, the

decision was made to rehouse MOSAIC to a larger and more centralised location. Thus, MOSAIC reopened its service to the community at its new home, Dougherty Community Centre, Chatswood in July 2022.





# MOSAIC **TIMELINE**



## SERVICE PROVISION

INFORMATION & REFERRAL	SOCIAL GROUPS	LANGUAGE LEARNING	LEISURE ACTIVITIES	HOLIDAY & CULTURAL EVENTS
Settlement Counselling Aged care Centrelink Service NSW Legal & Police Domestic family violence Tax return Schools Vocational studies Technology for Seniors	Chinese Chinese Seniors Indian Iranian Italian Japanese Korean Malaysian / Singaporean Taiwanese Men	English Level 0 English Level 1 English Level 2 English Level 3 English Level 4 Cantonese French Japanese Korean Mandarin Spanish	Chinese Folk Dance Japanese Folk Dance Korean Folk Dance Chinese Modern Dance Tai Chi Qi Gong Line Dance Painting Ukulele Korean Calligraphy Multicultural Singing Jewellery making Flower making 3D Card making	School Holiday program Lunar New Year Harmony Day Holi (Colour) Festival Multicultural Dance Party Emerge Street Fair Mid-Autumn Festival Christmas Party







# ACHIEVEMENTS TO DEVELOP AND SUPPORT DIVERSITY



## Volunteering

MOSAIC's foremost achievement is its effective engagement of a skilled and dedicated volunteer workforce to deliver its wide range of services and programming. More than 100 volunteers aged 25-94 form the lifeblood of the Centre. They consider MOSAIC a second home, with one third having volunteered for longer than 10 years, while 13 have volunteered for over 20 years. In the period of January-December 2022, our volunteers contributed 7,440 volunteer hours to MOSAIC's program delivery. Our oldest volunteer, Kay Tang, received the 2019 Premier's Harmony Medal and became the 2021 NSW Senior Volunteer of the Year.

## Best Practice Model

MOSAIC has been recognised for its leadership in addressing the changing needs of the local multicultural community. MOSAIC is regularly visited by overseas government delegates from Japan and Korea to benchmark its best practice multicultural service model.

## Caring Community

MOSAIC volunteers and members continuously work together to assist local communities as well as others in need. In 2022, MOSAIC's jewellery-makers raised \$2,200 for regional flood-affected communities through a Mother's Day Jewellery Sale. MOSAIC members have also generously donated new and pre-loved goods to be sold at the Bingara Op Shop in Gwydir Shire, who are one of Willoughby's sister cities.



## Accountability and Transparency

All Council staff and volunteers are carefully governed by the Council's Code of Conduct as well as relevant policies and procedures to maintain a high standard of work ethics, integrity and professionalism.



# IMPACTS ON THE COMMUNITY

## Empowering and Educating Communities

Multicultural communities are empowered through active partnership and collaboration in strategic planning, facilitation and delivery of services. MOSAIC builds community capacity by giving voice to cultural groups, training community leaders, and facilitating community-led programs as well as providing in-language, culturally appropriate community information on issues of concern.

## Cultural Celebration and Cross-cultural Understanding

MOSAIC showcases Willoughby's rich cultural diversity through its events and programming. In conjunction with external community groups, MOSAIC celebrates cultural and community festivals, featuring food, performances, activities and workshops.

Through cross-cultural collaboration and learning, these events break down barriers and foster mutual understanding, trust and friendships across diverse groups.

## Connection, Friendship and Support

MOSAIC's social and recreational groups provide a welcoming environment in which countless meaningful connections have been forged. Many stories of isolation and disadvantage have been transformed into stories of friendship and belonging. These enduring connections extend beyond the walls of MOSAIC, permeating the lives of its members and their families. During the COVID-19 pandemic, MOSAIC became a critical hub of support among the local CALD community, providing connection to counselling, emergency relief, family support and other crucial services.





# COMMUNITY PERCEPTION



## AWARDS AND ACCOLADES

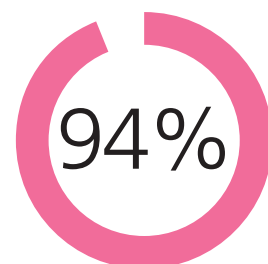


**E**arly 2023, MOSAIC received the NSW Premier's Multicultural Community Medal for Local Government Business Excellence. Before attaining this notable achievement, MOSAIC had been recognised when it received the Good Practice in Centres' and Local Councils Award from the Council on the Ageing (COTA) in 1999. Additionally, the Centre received a highly commended award in the Multicultural Australia – Cohesive Communities category of the 2019 National Awards for Local Government.

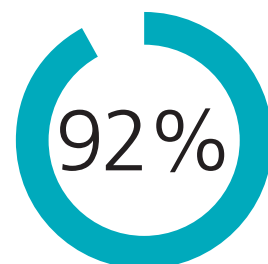


# CUSTOMER & COMMUNITY FEEDBACK

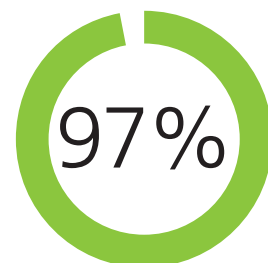
The Willoughby community has continually demonstrated that it appreciates and values the services that MOSAIC delivers. As part of the 2023 Customer Satisfaction Survey, MOSAIC reached out to 605 customers and 343 completed the questionnaire, revealing that 94% respondents reported a positive sentiment on the overall services provided by MOSAIC. 92% agreed/strongly agreed that they learned new things or skills; 97% agreed/strongly agreed that they met new people and made friends; 93% agreed/strongly agreed that group activities created a sense of belonging; and 91% agreed/strongly agreed that they felt more connected to the community.



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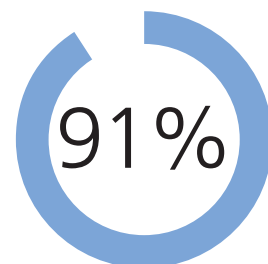
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agreed/strongly agreed that they felt more connected to the community.

## SNAPSHOTS OF BEST CUSTOMER EXPERIENCES



With the participants in various activities / classes as the respondents to this survey, the perception and sentiment of MOSAIC canvassed through the respondents' answers were overwhelmingly positive. Highlights include:

- Learning new knowledge and skills
- Meeting friends, developing social skills and social circles
- Developing a strong sense of belonging to community
- Building confidence
- Staying active and happy through activities
- Experiencing inter-cultural interactions
- Reasonable course fees
- Online learning option
- Good communication
- Friendly staff and volunteer teachers

The above are the areas that our respondents appreciate most through their experience and engagement across the activities, and which MOSAIC is committed to delivering to the community.









# SUCCESS FACTORS

## Strong Community Support

MOSAIC's success is built on the strong support it receives from the community it serves. The willingness of individuals from diverse backgrounds to volunteer their time and skills demonstrates the community's commitment to the Centre's mission. MOSAIC's volunteer-led courses attract a significant turnout of participants from both the Willoughby local government area and its surrounding regions. Courses such as tai chi, line dance, painting, and multicultural singing are especially popular, often resulting in extensive waiting lists due to high demand.

## Effective Volunteer Recruitment and Retention

MOSAIC has been successful in recruiting dedicated volunteers who are passionate about supporting migrants and their settlement needs. New volunteers are referred mostly through word of mouth and online expressions of interest. Volunteers undergo a thorough induction, attend team meetings, and are provided with training, mentoring and peer support. With one third of MOSAIC's volunteer cohort having served for more than 10 years, the Centre's ability to retain volunteers is a testament to the positive and rewarding volunteer experience it offers.



## Clear Vision and Mission

MOSAIC is committed to creating a connected and inclusive community that celebrates its diverse people, rich cultures and strengths. MOSAIC is guided by Willoughby City Council's Community Strategic Plan, *Our Future Willoughby 2032*, as well as state-wide strategies such as *Multicultural Policies and Services Program* and *Planning For a Multicultural Community*. The key principles of multiculturalism and social justice (access, equity, participation and human rights) are embedded in the Centre's service planning and delivery. Staff and volunteers look to its core mission and values for inspiration and direction in their work.

## Strong Leadership and Management

Effective leadership and management have been crucial in overseeing the operations and activities of the Centre. The presence of dedicated staff and supportive management helps to build unshakable trust between the local government and its community. The Council's Community Development Team actively supports MOSAIC, offering a valuable platform for the multicultural community to contribute to decision-making processes.







### Collaboration and Partnerships

MOSAIC has fostered collaborations and partnerships with various stakeholders, including internal Council business units and external government and community organisations. These partnerships bolster resources, funding, and support for the Centre's programs and activities. In recent years, MOSAIC has delivered numerous activities in collaboration with internal and external partners, including sessions on COVID vaccination, road safety, policing, stroke, falls prevention, resilience, sustainability, aged care, NDIS, mental health, sleep and nutrition, as well as Aboriginal bushwalks, community festivals and leadership programs.

### Responsive to Community Needs

MOSAIC's ability to adapt and respond to changing community needs has been instrumental in its longevity. By staying attuned to the evolving

needs of migrants and the community, the Centre has remained relevant and effective. During the COVID-19 pandemic, online learning was introduced to the community and new courses are constantly trialled, based on the community requests put forward through various community engagement channels.

### Inclusivity and Cultural Sensitivity

The Centre's commitment to inclusivity and cultural sensitivity has created a welcoming and supportive environment for all individuals, regardless of their cultural backgrounds. Over 100 volunteers, aged 25 to 94, represent diverse cultural backgrounds from 16 countries: China, France, Greece, Hong Kong, India, Iran, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Singapore, Spain, South Africa, Taiwan, and Vietnam. A strong commitment to inclusion has facilitated trust and engagement among the community.



### Effective Utilisation of Volunteer Skills

MOSAIC has been successful in harnessing the diverse skills and expertise of its volunteers effectively. By aligning volunteer roles with individual strengths, the Centre maximises the impact of its services. Volunteers also receive training in-house or from external training consultants on cultural intelligence, communication skills, empathy, change management, dealing with difficult customers, first aid and other leadership enhancing skills.

### Recognition and Appreciation

Recognising and appreciating the contributions of volunteers is vital to maintaining their commitment and dedication. MOSAIC's acknowledgment of volunteers' efforts fosters a positive and motivated team. Outstanding volunteers are regularly nominated for various recognition programs such as NSW Volunteer of the Year Awards and the Premier's Volunteer Recognition Program. Volunteers are also invited to volunteer appreciation events organised by Council.

### Resilience and Flexibility

Over the years, MOSAIC has demonstrated resilience and flexibility in navigating key challenges and adapting to changing circumstances. Community groups have built their capacity to manage their own issues and support each other in times of difficulty. During the COVID-19 lockdowns MOSAIC played an instrumental role in upskilling the community to stay connected with digital technology. Volunteer teachers continue to have an option to teach online if they are prevented from commuting to MOSAIC due to health reasons or during overseas travel. This adaptability has enabled the Centre to sustain its operations and continue serving the community effectively.

MOSAIC's ability to adapt and respond to changing community needs has been instrumental in its longevity.







# CHALLENGES

Operating community programs with volunteers can offer numerous benefits, but it also comes with its set of challenges for a local council. Some of the key challenges include:

## Recruitment and Retention

Finding and retaining dedicated volunteers can be a challenge. Attracting individuals who are willing to commit their time and effort to the program may require significant outreach and engagement efforts. We overcome this challenge by turning to our members and students to refer new talent.

## Program Sustainability

Relying solely on volunteers to run community programs can be unsustainable in the long term. Council's commitment and support are vital for securing consistent funding or resources for program continuity.

## Training and Skill Development

Volunteers require training and supervision to effectively perform their roles. Providing adequate training and skill development opportunities can be resource-intensive, but in-house training and peer support have proven to be effective.

## Time Commitment

Volunteers often have other commitments like work, family, or personal responsibilities. Balancing their time with the program's requirements can be a challenge.

## Reliability and Accountability

Since volunteers are not employees, ensuring their reliability and accountability in fulfilling their roles and responsibilities can be challenging.

## Program Coordination

Coordinating volunteers and ensuring they work cohesively as a team requires dedicated staff and resources.

## Risk Management

Council must consider risk management related to volunteer involvement, such as ensuring the safety and well-being of volunteers and program beneficiaries. Complying with relevant laws, regulations, and policies related to volunteer management can be complex and time-consuming.

## Communication and Feedback

Effective communication with volunteers and providing regular feedback is essential but can be challenging, especially when dealing with a large number of volunteers.

# FUTURE HORIZONS AND POSSIBILITIES

Over three decades, MOSAIC has emerged from its grassroots beginnings into a flourishing community, offering an ecosystem of care and support to many. The Centre continues to grow from strength to strength, working to build the capacity and resilience of individuals and communities. With an ongoing commitment to its vision, MOSAIC will continue to serve as the leading multicultural hub in the region, leaving long-term legacies for future generations to come.

Having recently settled into its new home at Dougherty Community Centre, MOSAIC will look forward to its next era of excellence. Co-location with Dougherty services will see closer collaboration with services for seniors and people with a disability. MOSAIC will further look toward building relationships with external community organisations, working with the new and emerging cultural communities in our local area, as well as offering intergenerational programs to bring together the young and the young-at-heart.

Embracing a growth mindset and unwavering commitment to community wellbeing, there are boundless possibilities for MOSAIC to touch many more lives and stories throughout the Northern Sydney region.







WILLOUGHBY  
CITY COUNCIL  
*City of Diversity*

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