GIPPSLAND MULTICULTURAL SERVICES



Annual Report

Gippsland Multicultural Services 2025/26

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Reporting period: 1 July 2025–30 June 2026.
Includes selected organisational updates to October 2026.

Cover Page Photo Credit: Matilda Riley, "Made by Matilda - No One Owns Colours"

Gippsland Multicultural Services Inc. acknowledges the Traditional Custodians and their ongoing connection to the land and waters that make up Gippsland.

We pay our respects to their Elders: past, present, and emerging.

We thank the Traditional Custodians for caring for Country and continuing the customs that maintain the longest practised culture in the world.

Gippsland Multicultural Services' head office is located on Gunai/Kurnai Land.



"5 Clans of the Gunai/Kurnai", painted by Donna Hood for the GMS Inc "Yarning Across Cultures" project.

We would like to acknowledge our funding bodies:

Australian Commonwealth Government, Victorian State Government, Cultura (Lead agency for Regional Victorian Consortium delivering Settlement and Transition Support Services), and Support at Home Providers sub-contracting GMS Inc for brokered service delivery across aged care and disability support.

Thank you also to Qualify Group, Regional Development Victoria and West Gippsland Healthcare Group for investing in GMS Inc (supported by CRSE) Cultural Humility and Inclusive Leadership Training and Development Programs in the 2025-2026 financial year.

STRATEGIC PLAN 2024 - 2029

Vision

An inclusive, connected and multicultural Gippsland

Mission

To empower and advocate for Gippsland multicultural communities through support and service delivery.

Values

Integrity | Compassion | Respectful
Cultural Sensitivity | Reliability

Goals	Objectives
1. To ensure the governance, infrastructure and resources support GMS into the future.	1.1 To have good governance systems to support the organisation. 1.2 To have information management systems to support the work of the organisation. 1.3 To ensure resources support the organisation's work.
2. To seek opportunities to grow the GMS business.	2.1 To seek fee for service opportunities. 2.2 To expand current services to include all regions of Gippsland. 2.3 Investigate business opportunities.
3. To develop and enhance networks, partnerships and communication with stakeholders.	3.1 To be seen as the expert in the field of multicultural communities and services in Gippsland. 3.2 To have good communication and feedback systems.

RISK APPETITE STATEMENT

A Risk appetite statement describes the amount of risk our organisation is willing to take in order to achieve our strategic goals. It is guided by our knowledge of our community and the sector in which we work.

We have low tolerance for risks that threaten safety, funding, service delivery, or compliance. We hold moderate tolerance for well-managed innovation and collaboration. We accept higher risks for advocacy and social change that do not harm our community or financial sustainability.

Letter from the Acting Board Chair

Ron Waanders - Acting Board Chair

Dear Members, Partners and Friends,

On behalf of the Board, I am delighted to present the Gippsland Multicultural Services Inc. 2025-26 Annual Report, highlighting our services, achievements, and contributions to the Gippsland community over the past year.

The last financial year has been a significant learning experience for me, with many challenges along the way. Since our last Annual General Meeting, the Board has experienced four resignations due to ill health and increasing work / family commitments. On behalf of Gippsland Multicultural Services, I sincerely thank Bosede, Rene, Remi and Tineke for their valued contributions to the Board and wish them every success in their future endeavours.

In March this year, I stepped into the role of Acting Chair. Thankfully, in recent months we have welcomed two new Board members in Marilou Ortega and Varun Joshi, enabling us to continue to operate effectively and focus on providing sound governance, strategic oversight and ongoing support to our CEO and staff team.

Despite the changes at Board level, GMS has continued to grow under the leadership of our new CEO, Carmel Riley. Carmel commenced her role in November last year and was introduced to members at the AGM held in December 2025. I would like to take this opportunity to formally welcome Carmel and acknowledge her hard work since joining the organisation.

Carmel has already made a significant contribution, particularly through leading the workplace structural review, strengthening our occupational health & safety and human resources compliance frameworks, enhancing engagement with the broader multicultural community and key stakeholders across Victoria, and working towards achieving the goals outlined in our Strategic Plan 2024-2029. As a Board, we look forward to continuing our partnership with Carmel as we work together to achieve the ambitions set out in that plan.

GMS is fortunate to have dedicated and enthusiastic staff at all levels, including our office staff, direct care workers and volunteers. I had the pleasure of attending last year's staff Christmas celebration, where I received a warm welcome from everyone present. Since then, I have visited the office on many occasions and have consistently witnessed our team's commitment to the values that define GMS: Integrity, Compassion, Respect, Reliability and Cultural Sensitivity.

Since assuming the role of Acting Chair, the Board has embraced the theme of unity. It is in the spirit of unity that the following combined report from the Acting Board Chair and CEO is presented to you. Thank you for your ongoing support of Gippsland Multicultural Services and the important work we do within our community.

Yours sincerely,



Ron Waanders
Acting Board Chair
Gippsland Multicultural Services Inc.

Combined Chair and CEO Report

Ron Waanders – Acting Board Chair

Carmel Riley – Chief Executive Officer

The past financial year has seen solid performance across our programs and services, alongside a significant period of organisational transition, renewal and growth.

We encourage readers to explore the program and service reports contained within this Annual Report, which highlight the breadth and impact of the work being delivered by our teams.

Despite the planned operating deficit associated with corrective wage costs and strategic investment, GMS retains a strong underlying financial position and forecasts a return to a modest surplus in 2026-27.

Our 2024–2029 Strategic Plan identifies three major goals. Over the past 9 months, significant work has been underway across each priority while concurrently stabilising and strengthening our 'business as usual'.

Strategic Plan Progress at a Glance

Strategic Priority	Strategic Objectives	Status
1. Ensure governance, infrastructure and resources support GMS into the future	1.1 To have good governance systems to support the organisation.	On track
	1.2 To have information technology systems to support the work of the organisation.	On track
	1.3 To ensure resources support the organisation's work	On track
2. Seek opportunities to grow GMS business	2.1 To seek fee for service opportunities.	On track
	2.2 To expand current services to include all regions of Gippsland.	On track
	2.3 Investigate business opportunities	On track
3. Develop and enhance networks, partnerships and communication with stakeholders	3.1 To be seen as the expert in the field of multicultural communities and services in Gippsland.	Strong progress
	3.2 To have good communication and feedback system	On track

Governance, Infrastructure and Resources

Since the last AGM, GMS has navigated significant leadership transition and governance renewal while maintaining a focus on trauma-informed leadership, communication, staff wellbeing, accountability and performance.

We would like to acknowledge Catherine Lambert. Still completing her induction as Manager Support Services when the previous CEO departed, Catherine stepped up as a conduit between the Board and operational team, maintaining service continuity while CEO recruitment was finalised. Following the workforce restructure, she now serves as Manager Service Delivery. We thank Catherine and the whole team for their resilience, grit and commitment throughout this transition.

Investment has included a fixed-term Governance and Risk Lead, a full-time Manager Business Services and Finance, and skills-based Director recruitment. Governance work has included review or development of the Board Charter, Board–CEO arrangements, Board induction, Instrument of Delegation and Constitution, alongside establishment of a formal clinical governance framework as part of our response to the Aged Care reform.

A workforce structural review has been approved; HR, OHS and knowledge-management reviews completed; and our IT transition and infrastructure uplift are supporting a growing multi-site organisation. A three-horizons workforce strategy has also been developed and is being implemented. We are closely monitoring changes within the NDIS and increasing compliance complexity as an associate provider under Support at Home. In response to growing demand and multiple provider agreements, GMS is planning an associated-provider agreement review and developing a procurement policy and stronger contracting capability.

Opportunities to Grow GMS Business

GMS secured $300,000 through the Victorian Government's Regional Settlement Support Fund (RSSF), commencing February 2026 through to June 2027. This funding was made possible via the Victorian Government's Community Support Fund. The program supports four streams: complex multicultural case management; social cohesion and sector development; enablement funding for grassroots and ethno-specific communities; and the Fair Futures Social Enterprise Scoping Project. Fair Futures is establishing foundations to explore solutions to three major barriers to regional settlement and retention: employment, transport and housing. This includes social enterprises — businesses that combine the heart of a charity with the commercial discipline of a business — alongside micro-enterprise and ethical real estate models.

GMS has also introduced a new cash-investment approach to improve diversification and returns, while reconnecting with our 40-plus-year history to strengthen our positioning in cultural humility, inclusion and person-centred care.
Fee-for-service activity has subsequently grown through our refreshed Cultural Humility and Inclusive Leadership training (in partnership with CRSE) across education, agriculture, health, renewable energy, local government and small business.



Develop and Enhance Networks, Partnerships and Communication

GMS has expanded into West Gippsland through a two-day-per-week presence at Warragul Community House, participation in West Gippsland employment and aged care expos, member of the 'Baw People at Increased Risk in Emergencies Action Group', a fundraising collaboration with Turnbull Motors, increased local recruitment and opened aged-care referrals.

An MOU with Warragul Community House also supports a fixed-term bicultural worker model combining community support with transitional employment.

Our partnership with West Gippsland Healthcare Group will deliver Cultural Humility and Inclusive Leadership training to 40 staff. Relationships with Federation University continue to strengthen, with an MOU in development.

In partnership with Regional Development Victoria and all six Gippsland councils, GMS will deliver place-based cultural humility training to 80 participants across the region. Our work with Community College Gippsland also extends this into the agricultural and dairy sectors.

Community Leadership and Advocacy

GMS continues its role as an umbrella regional organisation for multicultural and ethno-specific groups across Gippsland. Our role as a peak multicultural voice for Gippsland was validated through the Victorian 'Multicultural Review', completed in 2025 on behalf of State Government, by George Lekakis OAM.

As a trusted conduit between community and larger institutions, we aim to enable community leaders to deliver their own priorities, strengthen capability and have their voices heard. Support includes connections, enablement funding and planned training in governance, grant writing and leading in complex times.

Locally, GMS also contributes to broader sector leadership through chairing the Gippsland CHSP Best Practice Group (a combination of Support at Home Providers and Associate Providers), participating on the steering committee of the Gardiner Foundation and through governance group membership of the governance of Respectful Gippsland.

Through the Regional Multicultural Alliance Victoria, the RMA Victoria settlement-services consortium and relationships with ECCV, FECCA, SCOA and Ageing Australia, GMS continues to advocate for the particular realities of regional settlement to remain visible in policy and funding decisions. We have also contributed to consultation informing the Victorian State Disability Plan, bringing a regional and intersectional perspective to broader policy development.

Building Our Role in Gippsland's Transition

GMS is strengthening its position as a critical regional partner in shaping an inclusive energy transition.

Our engagement with government, proponents and regional stakeholders is strengthening connections between workforce diversity, employment pathways, inclusive workplaces and social procurement — whilst broader settlement needs such as housing and transport remain a central part of the regional conversation.

Our relationship with ABC Gippsland has expanded to statewide and national audiences. Our participation in the new Gippsland chapter of the Australasian Women in Emergencies Network is also extending our connections and reach within the regional emergency-management sector.

Together with speaking engagements across aged care, regional development, renewable energy, education and community settings, this reflects GMS's growing recognition as a regional source of expertise, advocacy and strategic partnership.

Looking Ahead

The next 12 months will bring significant opportunity while requiring careful navigation.

Victoria is entering a period of change in multicultural affairs, alongside a State election cycle and increasingly polarised debate around migration, identity, multicultural and multifaith community.

The horrific attack at Bondi Beach in December 2025 must be condemned unequivocally. Its aftermath also demonstrated how violence, fear and polarised narratives can affect communities more broadly.

We stand firmly against antisemitism, Islamophobia, racism, xenophobia and religious hatred. Cultural humility asks us to choose curiosity over certainty, recognising that no individual represents an entire culture, faith or community. For GMS, this is practical as well as principled. Our workforce, and the community we serve, is multicultural and multifaith. Our staff, volunteers and communities deserve to feel safe and respected at work, at home and in community.

GMS remains committed to a non-partisan approach to political engagement: engaging respectfully across the political spectrum, advocating from evidence and community need, and remaining grounded in our charitable purpose and values.

Regardless of election outcomes, GMS remains a critical regional partner to the public sector and a bridge between government, services and multicultural communities. Victoria's changing multicultural architecture creates an opportunity to strengthen regional voices and ensure place-based experience informs policy, investment and service design.

A further priority for the coming year will be a renewed GMS membership strategy, strengthening member value, participation, connection and opportunities for members to contribute and be heard.

Our focus is sustainable growth, stronger systems, capable communities, trusted partnerships and meaningful impact.

We thank our staff, volunteers, members, Board members, partners, funders and community members for their contribution and commitment to a Gippsland in which people of all backgrounds can participate, contribute, feel safe and belong.

Carmel Riley
Chief Executive Officer
Gippsland Multicultural Services Inc.

Ron Waanders
Acting Board Chair
Gippsland Multicultural Services Inc.







Carmel and Ron at the Premier's 2026 Multicultural Gala Dinner

Advocacy with RMA Vic

Through Regional Multicultural Alliance Victoria (RMA Vic), GMS contributes to collective advocacy for stronger regional communities and sustainable multicultural services. The Alliance connects seven regional service areas, bringing trusted community relationships and local knowledge to issues including racism, employment barriers, access to essential services and emergency preparedness.

With current Victorian Government funding (RSSF) concluding on 30 June 2027, RMA Vic is seeking a commitment of $4 million annually across the seven regions throughout the next parliamentary term. It is also proposing a cross-party Friends of Regional Multicultural Communities group, supported by quarterly parliamentary briefings.

This work extended to national advocacy through GMS's October 2026 trip to Canberra, which included meetings with representatives across ministerial portfolios and participation in the Federation of Ethnic Communities' Councils of Australia (FECCA) AGM and Conference.

These meetings provided opportunities to bring Gippsland's community experiences and regional priorities directly into national policy conversations. Together, these efforts strengthen connections between regional multicultural communities and government, ensuring local experiences inform policy, service design and investment.











GMS at a Glance

Est. 1984

Multicultural by history. Cultural humility in practice. Person-centred for everyone.

369
Clients supported

25,266
Hours of service provided

15+
Partner Organisations

39
Financial Members of GMS Inc

15
Community events hosted

621
Attendances at GMS hosted events

6+
Student placements

125
Participants booked for cultural humility training to be delivered across next 12 months

7
Media Appearances - Radio and Digital Print

2
Keynotes delivered

3
Panel appearances

1,325
Social media followers

Social support group | Home or Community General Respite | Personal Care Domestic Assistance | Access and Support | Settlement Engagement and Transition Program | Community Connections | Training and Development Recognised Voice for Multicultural Communities across Gippsland

"One of the first things I recognised when starting in my role, was that people tended to recognise GMS as one of two things - either as a Migrant Resource Centre, or, as an Aged Care and Disability Service Provider.

The reality is we are both - and that is our point of difference.

Did you know that there are 140 nationalities and 138 languages other than English spoken at home in Gippsland?

Working across such diverse communities since 1984 has taught GMS to recognise that no two people are the same.

Cultural humility is part of our DNA. It describes a lifelong practice of self-reflection and open-minded learning that prioritises listening to others' lived experiences without assuming expertise over their culture.

It helps us understand each person's perspective, needs and what matters to them - shaping respectful, trauma-informed and person-centred care for the whole community."

~ Carmel Riley, CEO and Cultural Humility Training Co-Facilitator

Gippsland Region at a Glance



41,000 km²
6 local government areas[1]

313,600
people[1]

$24.5bn
gross regional product[1]

147,400
workers across Gippsland[1]

12.4%
residents born overseas[3]

27.7%
have one or both parents born overseas[3]

53%
of overseas-born residents are aged 60 or older[2]

138
languages other than English spoken at home[3]

5.3%
speak a language other than English at home[3]

12.2%
of other-language speakers speak English not well or not at all[3]

52%
believe multiculturalism makes life better[2]

Racism and health

National evidence reported by Gippsland PHN[2]

16%
of Australian adults report discrimination*

~1 in 3
of people from non-English speaking backgrounds report discrimination*

5x
more likely to have poor mental health among people experiencing racism

2.5x
more likely to have poor physical health among people experiencing racism

*Based on skin colour, ethnicity or religion. Health figures describe reported associations.

Migration and Gippsland's future workforce

Gippsland Migrant Recruitment and Retention Charter[6]

Guides employers and communities to welcome migrant workers and support them to stay in Gippsland.

50,157
new workers, all industries 2024-2034[4]

14,320
health care and social assistance new workers, 2024-2034[4]

15,000 / 7,500
potential offshore wind jobs: construction / ongoing[5]

Worker projections include employment growth and replacing retirees.[4]
Offshore wind figures are potential jobs, subject to project delivery; they have a different time basis.[5]

First Peoples: Kurnai clans

Bratowoloong
South Gippsland

Brayakoloong
Around the current site of Sale

Brabuwoloong
Central Gippsland

Tatungoloong
Near Lakes Entrance, on the coast

Krowathunkoloong
Near the Snowy River



Gunaikurnai clan-area map, GLaWAC
Howitt's approximate areas, 1880s

The clan names shown here use Kurnai spellings. We recognise and respect that people and families identify with different names and spellings.

Gippsland migration stories

Local books sharing stories of arrival, belonging and contribution













[1] RDV, Gippsland Regional Partnership (May 2026). [2] Gippsland PHN, Multicultural Health and Wellbeing (Aug 2025).
[3] ABS 2021 Census, Latrobe - Gippsland SA4 (205), calculated from parents' birthplaces.
[4] Victorian Skills Authority, Future job growth in Gippsland (March 2025), 2024-2034 projections.
[5] DCCEEW, Gippsland declared offshore wind area (January 2026), potential construction and ongoing jobs.
[6] Federation University / Gippsland Regional Partnership, Migrant Recruitment and Retention Charter (2024), via RDV.
Clan names: Kurnai Country. Map: GLaWAC, gunaikurnai.org/our-story/.
Data periods and geographies vary. National racism findings are not Gippsland prevalence estimates.

Our Board of Governance

1 July 2025 – 30 September 2026

Current Board Members



Ron Waanders
Acting Board Chair and Treasurer



Kenna O'Donnell
Acting Deputy Chair



Dr Christine Lee
Secretary



Malou Ortega
Board Member
Clinical Governance



Varun Joshi
Board Member



Board, CEO and Guest Speaker, Dr Daniel Jesuhorobo, Dec 2025 GMS Inc AGM

Outgoing Board Members



Dolores O'Dowd
Board Member



Bosede Adetifa
Board Chair



Rene Sundermann
Secretary



Tineke Westwood
Board Member



Remi Yusuf
Board Member

Board Membership and Attendance

Name	Appointed/ Resigned	Position	Number of Board Meetings Eligible to Attend 1/7/25 - 30/09/26	Number of Board Meetings Attended 1/7/25 - 30/09/26
Kenna O'Donnell	2022 - 2023 2023 - 2025 2025-2026 February 2026 April 2026 - present	Director Treasurer Deputy Chair Acting Chair Acting Deputy Chair	11	9
Ron Waanders	2025-2026 2025-2026 2026 - present	Interim Director Treasurer Acting Chair/ Treasurer	11	10
Dr Christine Lee	2025 - present	Secretary	7	5
Malau Ortega	July 2026 - present	Interim Director - Clinical Governance	3	2
Varun Joshi	August 2026 - present	Interim Director	2	1
Remi Yusuf	2023 - 2026* resigned June 2026	Director	8	4
Tineke Westwood	2025 - 2026* resigned May 2026	Director	4	2
Rene Sundermann	2019 - 2025 2025 - 2026* resigned February 2026	Secretary Chair	5	4
Bosede Adetifa	2022 - 2025 2025 - 2026* resigned February 2026	Chair Director	5	4
Dolores O'Dowd	2023 - 2025* completed term December 2025	Director	4	3

Strengthening Governance, Risk and Community Voice

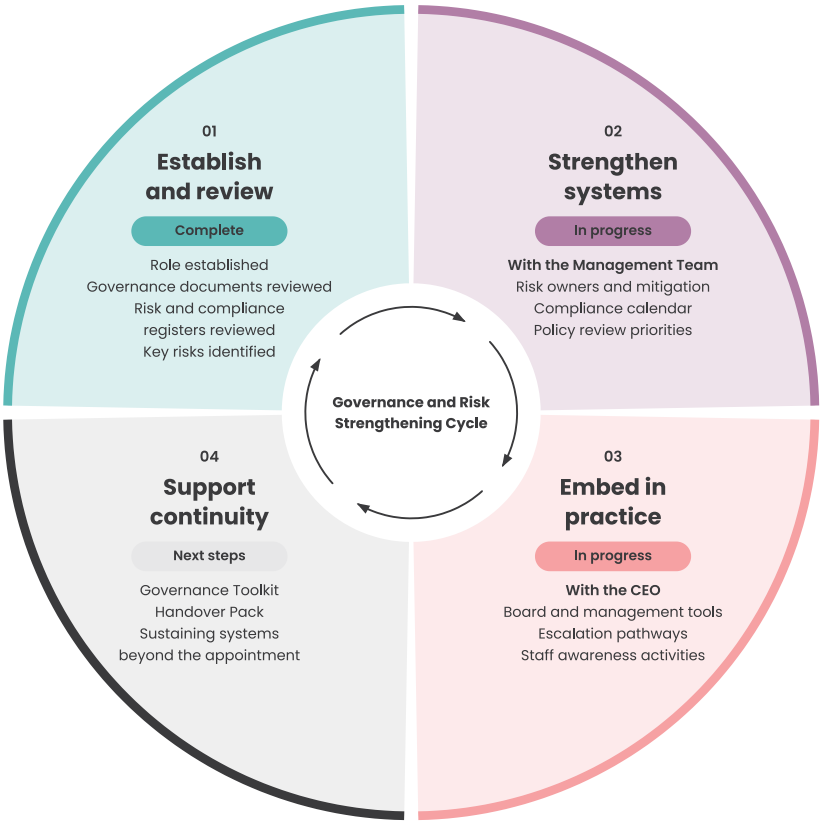
In order to expedite progress against strategic objective 1.1, GMS established a Governance and Risk Lead position to support the Board in its governance improvement priorities.

Derya Deniz Demirol brings approximately 15 years' professional experience as a lawyer, with qualifications in law and business law from Türkiye, alongside a Master of Health and Human Services from the University of Melbourne.

Her experience includes more than eight years supporting migrant communities across Gippsland, contributions to anti-racism research with Monash University, and delivery of cultural humility training and community capacity-building activities.

In 2024, she was recognised on the Victorian Multicultural Honour Roll.

Working with the CEO and Management Team, Derya combines legal expertise with regional knowledge and community experience to support practical improvements in governance and risk.



Additional priority

Associate provider subcontract review

Ongoing across the workplan

Advice on emerging governance and risk matters

Looking Ahead to 2026–27

A key priority for 2026–27 is establishing a Community Advisory Committee to the Board, centring the voices and leadership from multicultural/ethno-specific community backgrounds across the region.

Membership would draw on both lived experience and community leadership—including presidents and chairs of local committees and associations, alongside informal leaders who can demonstrate trusted community relationships and a meaningful contribution.

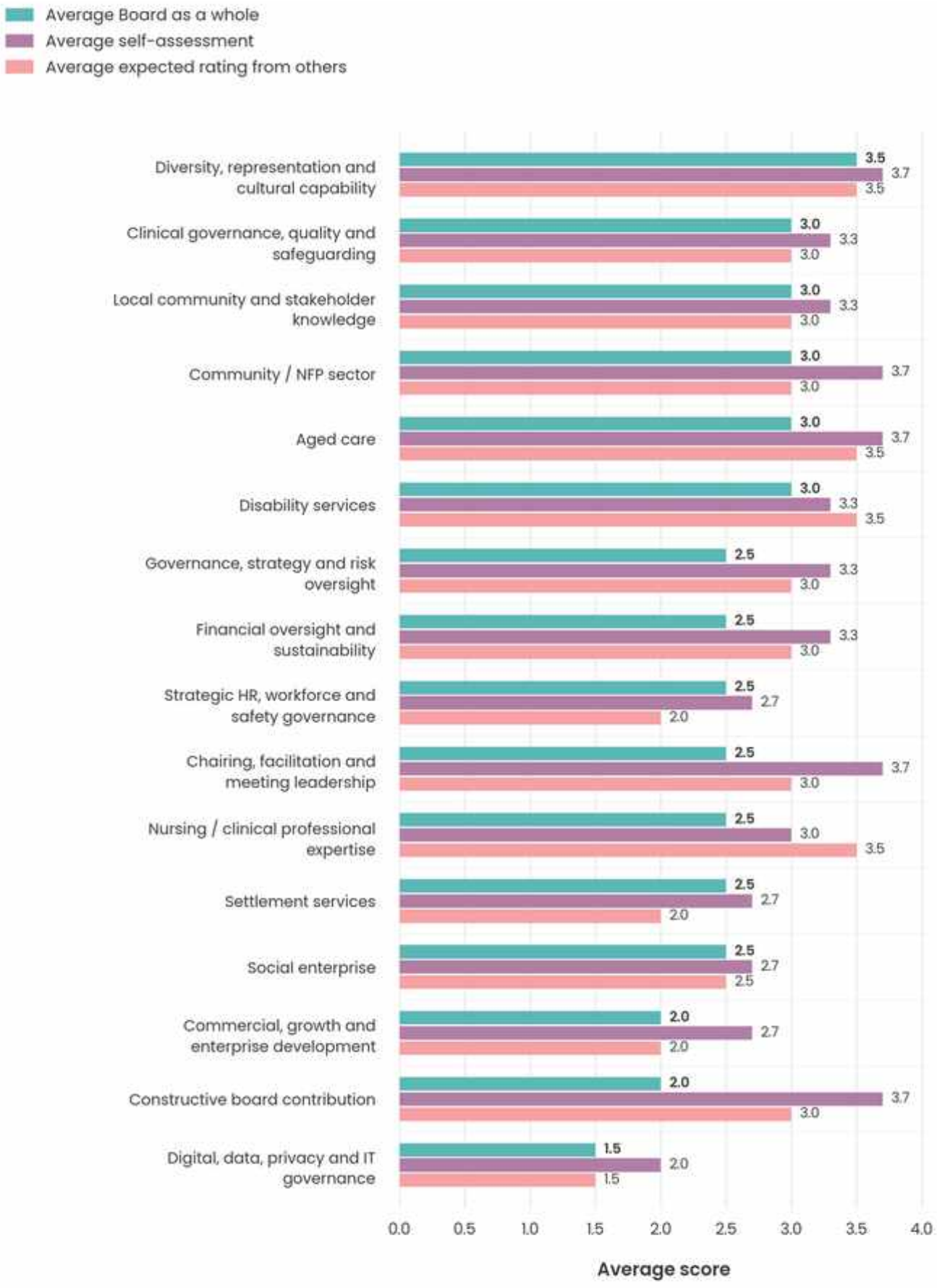
The aim is to broaden the nationality, language and geographic perspectives informing GMS's strategic decisions and regional advocacy priorities for multicultural communities.

The committee would bring a strong settlement perspective, including lived experience of racism, barriers and success stories relating to housing, transport and economic engagement, alongside the experiences of people accessing aged care and disability services.

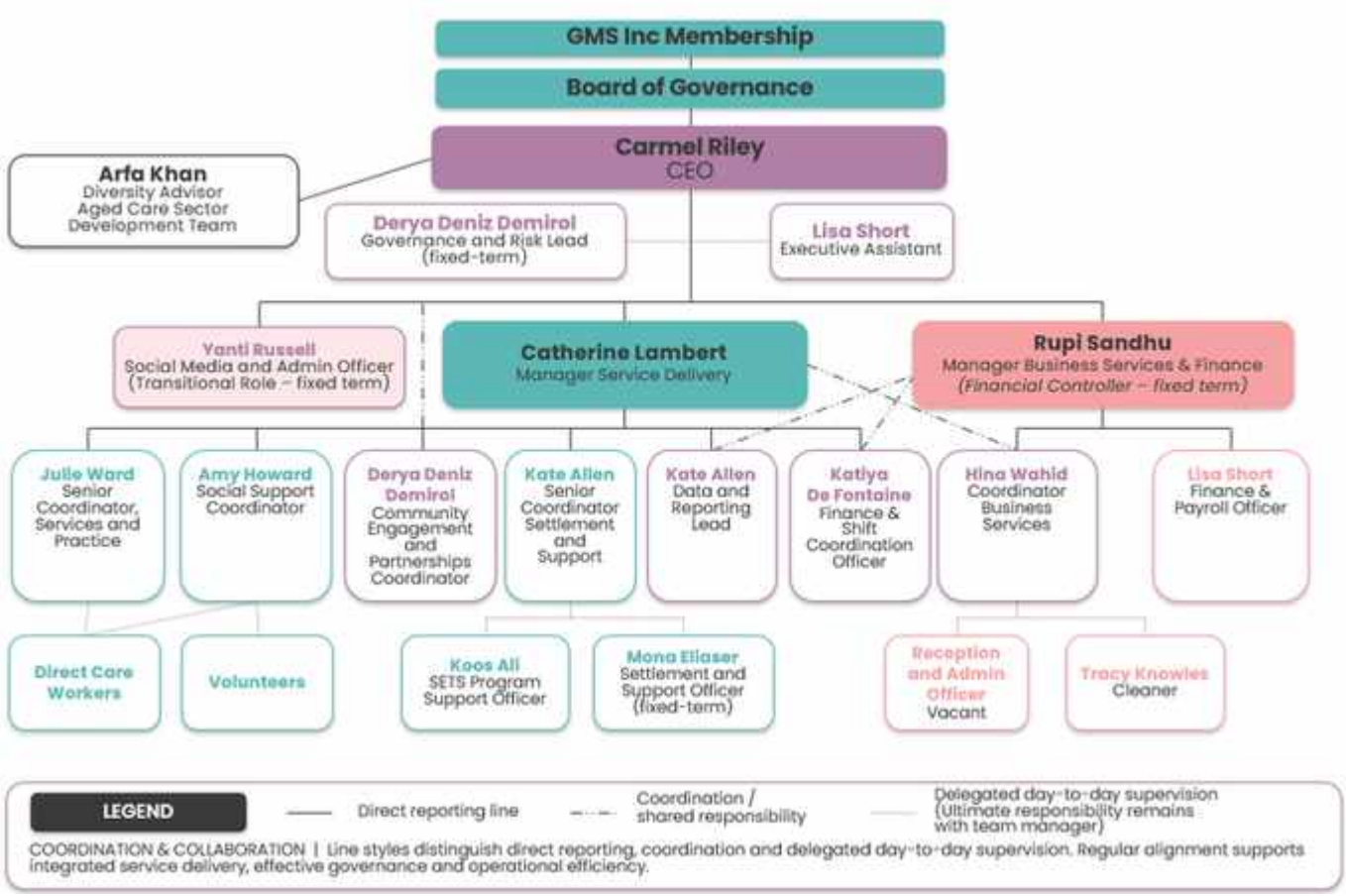
An intersectional approach would consider age, disability, gender, First Nations identity and other aspects of identity and experience, while respecting First Nations peoples' distinct place and connection to Country.

Moving Towards a Skills Based Board

Baseline Board Self-Assessment April 2026



Organisational Structure October 2026













Office Staff



Carmel Riley
Chief Executive Officer
Commenced 7 Oct 2025



Arfa Khan
Diversity Advisor



Rupinder (Rupi) Sandhu
Manager Business Services and Finance
Commenced 17 Jul 2026



Catherine Lambert
Manager Service Delivery
Commenced 21 Jul 2025



Derya Deniz Demirol
Governance and Risk Lead
Community Engagement and Partnerships Coordinator
Commenced 27 Jan 2026



Julie Ward
Senior Coordinator Services and Practice



Kate Allen
Senior Coordinator Settlement and Support
Data and Reporting Lead



Hina Wahid
Human Resources and Administration Officer



Amy Howard
Social Support Coordinator



Koos Ali
SETS Officer



Mona Eliaser
Settlement Support Officer
Commenced 19 Feb 2026



Lisa Short
Finance and Program Support Officer



Katiya De Fontaine
Finance and Shift Co-ordination Officer



Yanti Russell
Social Media and Admin Officer
Commenced 16 Sep 2026



Tracy Knowles
Office Cleaning Staff
Commenced 6 Jan 2026

Outgoing Staff



Sally Gafa
Outgoing CEO 2022–2025



Sueying Turnbull
Community Engagement Officer



Cody Hood
Access and Support (CALD) Worker
2 Dec 2019 – 1 May 2026



Dao Nguyen
Finance and Marketing Officer
3 Apr 2023 – 17 Jul 2026

Direct Care Workers Team

Current Staff Members



Dragica Radic



Marifi Wise



Elena Brown



Filomena Lea



Mercy Premdas



Wendy Anderson



Martin Quigg



Nataliia Davis



Joyce Dickason



Lawrence Emmanuel



Anna Fascio



Geoff Mather



Trent Baldwin



Margaret Interlandi



Alena Kaneuskaya



Suzanne King



Maria Armatas



Pamela Milenkovich



Nucharee Nania



Lowana Nelson



Anna Hatzikosta



Dianne Feenstra



Helen Perikkentis



Giovanna Talerico



Hui Yi Lei (Winnie)



Jennifer Atienza
Commenced 28 Oct 2025



Sony Samuel
Commenced 15 Oct 2025



Yi-Chiao (Vita) Cha
Commenced 5 Aug 2026

Current Volunteers



Virginia Swan



Lucy Calabrese



Collin Stilburn



Maree Tortora



Jennifer Barfoot



Carmen Cuschieri
Volunteer from 19 Feb 2026

Farewells and Retirements



Giovanna Tumino
Retired DCW
3 Oct 2012 – 25 Nov 2025



Giuliana Di Sisto
Retired DCW
26 Nov 2014 – 25 Nov 2025



Carmen Cuschieri
Retired DCW
1 Jun 2012 – 6 Jan 2026



Fiona Antonelli
Resigned
9 Aug 2023 – 1 Jul 2026



Mario Villalobos
Resigned
13 Nov 2015 – 10 May 2026



Susi Slocombe
Resigned
11 Jun 2024 – 13 Jan 2026

Priya Kandhan
Resigned
16 Jan 2025 – 5 May 2025

Gurpreet Kaur
Resigned
5 Aug 2026 – 26 Sep 2026

Alvena Cook
Outgoing

Jaqui Findlay
Outgoing

Nestor Penaflor
Outgoing

Paige Corry
Outgoing

Elijah Gray
Outgoing

Jason Tomkins
Outgoing

Vicky Khan
Retired volunteer
23 May 2023 – 28 Feb 2025

Joyce Lade
Retired volunteer
5 Jun 2024 – 3 Dec 2025

Erum Mathew: 22 Jul 2025 – 30 Sep 2025 (resigned).

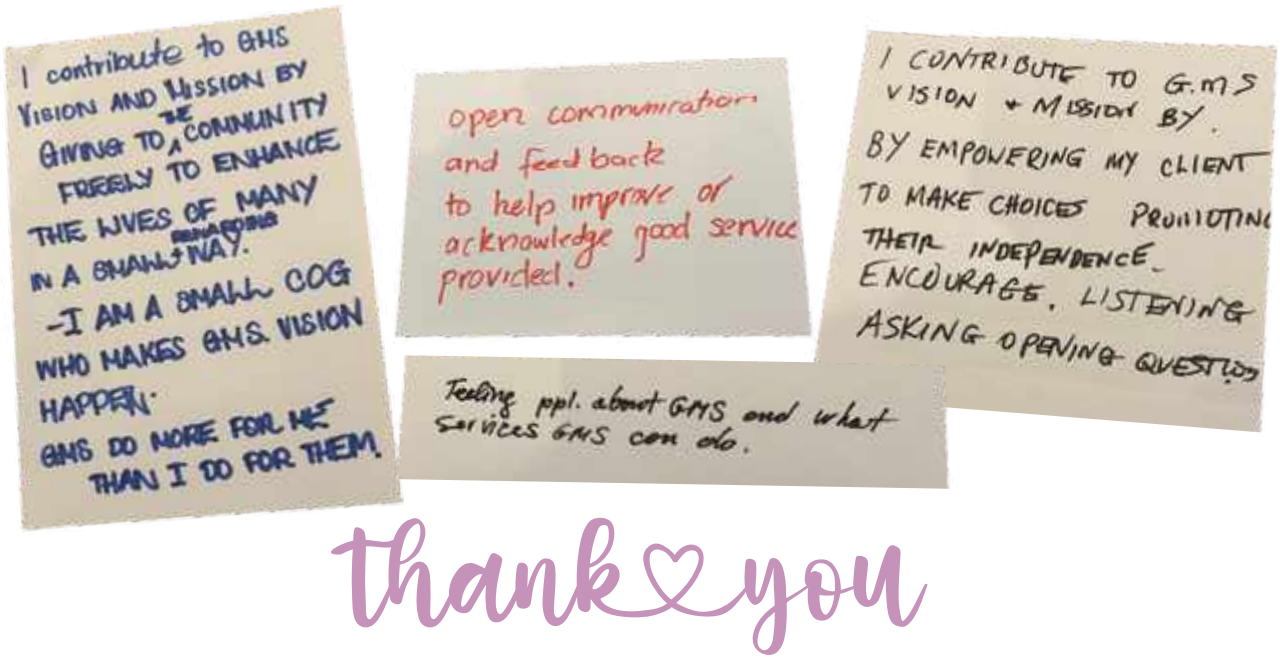
Learning from Our Staff: "How does your role contribute to the Vision and Mission of GMS?"

At the first all staff meeting for the year, our new CEO took the opportunity to learn from the team, asking them how they understand and contribute to the vision and mission of Gippsland Multicultural Services.

The strongest theme that appeared, is that staff and volunteers connect GMS's vision and mission to the small, everyday actions that make a difference in people's lives.

The main themes were:

- **Dignity, Respect and Cultural Understanding**providing care with kindness, respecting cultural beliefs and helping people feel comfortable and understood.
- **Choice and Independence**: supporting people to make their own decisions, work towards their goals and remain at home and connected to their community.
- **Relationships and Belonging**: listening, checking how people are feeling, offering companionship and creating opportunities for social connection across cultural backgrounds.
- **Safety and Wellbeing:**recognising that reliable transport, clean environments, welcoming spaces and practical daily assistance all contribute to quality care.
- **Every Contribution Matters:** staff and volunteers see their individual roles as part of GMS's wider purpose. Pride, commitment and a sense of receiving something meaningful through their involvement also emerge.
- **Learning and Improvement**: participating in training, communicating openly, providing feedback, maintaining standards and adapting to change.



Service Delivery Report

Carmel Riley, Chief Executive Officer
Catherine Lambert, Manager Service Delivery

Transition and Aged Care Reform

This year has been a period of significant transition and growth for GMS. Catherine joined in August 2025 and, following the departure of previous leadership, worked alongside the Board to maintain business continuity while a new CEO was recruited.

Carmel's arrival in late October coincided with the aged care reforms commencing on 1 November 2025, impacting our CHSP services and our brokerage agreements in place as a Support at Home associate provider. The changes required at that time were significant across our referral portal, Turnpoint, our brokerage agreements and our fee structures - to name but a few! A huge thank you to our whole operational team - who navigated these changes, kept us moving forward, kept us on track with recruitment, inwards goods, accounts receivable, accounts payable, payroll, compliance requirements and managed the ever complex rostering process!

Settlement and Community Connection

Securing the Regional Settlement Support Fund has also created opportunities for service delivery pilots, community engagement, sector development, social cohesion initiatives for and with our multicultural community. Together with Derya and Koos, we are establishing our ways of working across the varying aspects of the work and providing project governance to guide us and connect it with our broader organisational priorities. This funding has also allowed us to explore innovations to directly improve access to housing, transport and economic engagement - we are excited to share outcomes from this work next year.

Bringing Our Services Together

As part of the organisational restructure, the Manager Support Services role transitioned to Manager Service Delivery. This change signified a deliberate move to better connect both sides of our GMS identity as a migrant resource centre and an aged care and disability support service: Multicultural by history, Cultural humility in practice, and Person-centred care for everyone.

Wellbeing, Workforce and Leadership

Together, we recognised the importance of making space for the whole team to pause, reconnect and re-energise. Our team reset and wellbeing day, held in April at the Wellness Studio in Trafalgar, was a wonderful opportunity to do just that. Thank you to Board members Ron and Kenna for joining us for morning tea to help start the day.

Change is never easy and sitting in uncertainty is exhausting - but we are better together. Our shared goals have helped us maintain our focus on the future while undertaking substantial work to strengthen our services and student program. Clinical governance, workforce development and extending our geographical reach remain our largest service delivery priorities moving forward.

Our recently established "Coordinators Unite" movement is a deliberate investment in leadership development and collegiality within our strengthened coordinator team. It creates space for coordinators to learn together, support one another and build shared approaches across services. Coming together for shared meals is another important part of our team culture and the spread of food is always amazing!

Thank you to the Board, leadership team and all our staff for your commitment, flexibility and care during a significant period of transition and growth. We hope you enjoy the team's reflections on the year that was.

Team Reset and Wellbeing Day











Student Placements

Learning Partnerships

During 2025-26 we have collaborated with TAFE Gippsland, Federation University, Monash School of Rural Health, Holmesglen Institute of TAFE, Partners in Training and Box Hill Institute. Our student program is run by Catherine and Kate.

As well as student placement opportunities, we also collaborate with these multiple educational institutions in community engagement and education for their students more broadly, delivering information sessions and attending expos to expose students to work in the community services sector.

Practical Experience Across Services

This last year, as well as hosting an external student completing their 200-hour placement toward their Diploma of Community Services, we hosted one of our own direct care workers completing the same.

These students seek practical experience and skills development in areas such as case management, work health and safety and analysing the impacts of sociological factors on clients accessing community-based services.

Our students participate in all aspects of client intake, assessment, support plan development and implementation, case management, and advocacy across our aged, community, disability, and settlement services.

We also try to find service review or improvement projects for them to work on to further develop relevant workplace skills.

Community-Based Health Placements

Twice a year we host two post graduate medical students from Monash Rural Health completing their Community Based Placement (CBP) Program.

The Program aims to develop students as professionals and individuals in their understanding of the social determinants of health. The program also helps to facilitate students' acquisition of knowledge about the effects on health of being disadvantaged while they work interprofessionally in the community. The placement fosters communication and teamwork in a professional setting and contributes to the development of cultural awareness and behaviours in working with diverse populations.

In addition GMS hosts a group of 2nd year physiotherapy students from Federation University each year, providing information and working with them to complete a community services project. Student placements also bring valuable contributions to our team and community. Students support research, data entry and service improvement projects, and help create a welcoming environment at our Diversity Group lunches. Their fresh perspectives and enthusiasm enrich our work, while placements help build our future workforce pathways—including volunteering, qualified direct care work and case management across aged care, disability and settlement support.



GMS Inc Christmas Party 2025

Food Brings People Together

Sharing Food, Culture and Connection









Team Connection



Farewelling Dao



Farewell Dinner for Cody



Warragul Community House Multicultural Friendship Group Visit



Social Dinner





Celebrating Koos Becoming an Australian Citizen

Commonwealth Home Support Program (CHSP)

Catherine Lambert, Manager Service Delivery
Julie Ward, Senior Coordinator Services and Practice

Over the last year, we have seen an increase in CHSP client referrals, delivering over 15,000 hours of care to 210 clients. We continue to work with our direct care team to explore reablement principles in our practice of aged care service delivery.

	Clients	Hours
Home or Community General Respite	94	5,063
Social Support and Community Engagement	77	1,195
Personal Care	31	1,108
Group Social Support	58	8,100

In addition, we experienced some workforce challenges including long-term staff retirements and recruitment difficulties in a highly competitive market for qualified Direct Care Workers. Focusing on recruitment and engaging and supporting our existing workforce, promoting opportunities to transition from casual to part-time, we have been able to strengthen our workforce and enhance our capacity to respond to increasing demand while maintaining the delivery of high-quality, person-centred care.

The positive impact of our services continues to be reflected in the heartfelt feedback received from clients and their families. Their comments consistently acknowledge the compassion, professionalism, and dedication demonstrated by our Direct Care Workers and Services Team. This valued feedback reinforces our commitment to delivering respectful, responsive, and culturally inclusive care that makes a meaningful difference in the lives of the people and communities we support.

"He does his work from the heart."

"She is such an asset for your service, respectful, listened to everyone."

"It's been a relief to me and my family knowing there are genuine caring people who come to see Dad each week."

"She is the best support worker I have ever had."

"My care workers make me feel comfortable and never judged."

Specialised Support Services / Access & Support

Kate Allen, Senior Coordinator Settlement and Support
Data and Reporting Lead

The 2025-26 financial year marked the final year of GMS funding for Specialised Support Services, also known as Access & Support program under CHSP.

Our role often went well beyond providing information or making a referral. We built trusted relationships, communicated with providers, coordinated services, advocated for clients and helped resolve practical barriers that might otherwise have prevented people from receiving the support they needed.

Supporting Clients Through the Transition
Throughout the final year, GMS remained committed to Access & Support participants while progressively preparing for the program's closure. Existing cases were carefully reviewed and each client's circumstances considered individually. Cases were closed where support was no longer required, while clients with continuing needs were assisted to explore alternative services and pathways.

GMS continued providing support up to and including the final day of the program, working to ensure that clients understood the changes and were connected with alternative supports wherever possible.

Service Navigation Gap
The conclusion of Access & Support leaves a significant gap. The need for trusted, flexible and culturally responsive assistance has not disappeared simply because the funding model has changed. There remain people in our community who require more than information or a referral to successfully access and navigate the services available to them.
GMS has actively advocated for the importance of this type of support, engaging with government stakeholders, peak bodies and local networks to highlight the value of specialised navigation and advocacy.

Looking Ahead: Social Support and Community Engagement – Individual Social Support
It is through this service that GMS will continue to support older people from multicultural communities to understand their options, exercise choice, remain connected and access the support they need.





Ageing Australia Conference

Home and Community Care Program for Younger People

Supporting younger people if their capacity for independent living is at risk due to chronic illness, mental health issues, disability or other conditions. Throughout 2025-26, GMS maintained a steady level of service delivery to 28 clients, continuing to provide essential support within available resources.

Our Service Delivery

Throughout 2025-26, GMS delivered 206 hours of domestic assistance and 26 hours of personal care adapted to the participant's individual circumstances and needs.

· GMS delivered 425 hours of flexible respite in 2025-26.

· GMS staff supported clients with 396 hours of access and support in 2025-26.

· Clients attended 324 hours of group social support in total in 2025-26.

In community, flexible respite ensures people stay connected with their communities, including attending appointments and activities.

Many require support in understanding different programs, eligibility requirements, funding streams, and providers, or in identifying where to seek help when their circumstances change.
Our focus remains on helping people maintain their independence, wellbeing, and community connection for as long as possible, while ensuring that limited HACC PYP resources reach those who need them most.

National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS)

Participants with approved NDIS plans can elect GMS to provide supports as part of their plan for household tasks, personal care, community participation and social activities provided at GMS.

During the 2025–26 financial year, GMS supported 5 NDIS participants to implement their approved plans, delivering a total of 548 hours of individualised care and support.

We maintain close, trusting relationships with participants and their families, working alongside them to understand their goals, preferences and changing circumstances and tailoring supports to their individual needs.

Our work also involves ongoing monitoring and review, allowing us to respond when participants' circumstances changed and ensure that their supports continued to reflect their current needs and goals.

Social Support – Group Social Support and Planned Activity Groups

Amy Howard (Social Support Coordinator)

Katiya De Fontaine (Rostering and Administration Officer)

GMS offers Group Social Support under the Australian Government's Commonwealth Home Support Program (CHSP) and Planned Activity Group as part of the Victorian Government's Home and Community Care Program for Younger People (HACC PYP).

10,237 hours of social support were provided by our amazing staff and volunteers.

GMS is blessed to have a very dedicated group of staff and volunteers who regularly support our social clients with transport, meal preparation and support in group so that our clients can fully access and experience the planned activities.

Our Service

Activities include:

- Trivia
- Bingo
- Craft
- Client led cooking demonstrations
- Movies
- Dancing
- Exercise
- Singing

Special mentions for our Christmas celebrations in July and at the end of the year with our kitchen staff and volunteers preparing a 3-course Christmas lunch, sharing of gifts, games and Christmas carols.

Also, noting our small craft group for clients with cognitive/sensory issues. We create a quiet, contemplative space with soothing meditation music, one-on-one interaction with staff and a light lunch

We celebrate our staff and volunteers at every opportunity, especially in Volunteer Week and Aged Care Worker Appreciation Day.

Community Support

We provide materials to our clients who are keen crafters who make knitted items that GMS then donate to other health, wellbeing and community organisations including Latrobe Community Health Service, Latrobe Youth Space and Latrobe Regional Hospital.

Blankets, jumpers, beanies, scarves, and very adorable teddy bears made their way to families and children in need.

Social Support – Group Social Support and Planned Activity Groups



Christmas in July



Fishing Trip



Fishing Trip



Fishing Trip



Christmas in July



Crazy Hair Day

Settlement Engagement and Transition Support Program (SETS)

Supporting migrants and refugees as they settle into their new communities, providing tools and guidance to enhance social participation, economic independence, personal wellbeing, and community connectedness.

SETS is funded by the Commonwealth Department of Home Affairs.

Whether assisting a newly arrived mother to enrol her children in school, helping a skilled migrant navigate the job market, or guiding a refugee through the NDIS system, SETS is there in the early stages, when the challenges of language, isolation, and system complexity can feel overwhelming.

47
SETS Clients

185
Sessions of Service

17
Countries represented

23
Languages spoken other than English

By far the majority of our SETS clients are women. However, in providing support for our listed client, the support extends to the whole family, including partners, children and sometimes extended family.

Case Complexity
Our team tends to stay on board when other services cannot help, coordinating and case managing multiple services and balancing the clients' most pressing needs.
This program has continued to combine individual case management with community connection and group activities, creating opportunities for clients to build relationships, access information and develop greater confidence in their new community.

Client Capacity Building
The impact of this work is not only measured by the services accessed or referrals completed. It is also seen in the increased confidence of clients to make appointments, communicate with services, understand their rights and responsibilities, advocate for themselves and make decisions about their future. For some clients, a small amount of practical assistance has been the first step towards greater independence.







The Unseen Pressures of Flexible Respite and Home-Based Services

The impact of global conflict on access to fuel was a significant challenge across 2026. Beyond price, there were a number of petrol stations in Latrobe Valley that regularly ran out of supply. Our Direct Care Workers demonstrated great resilience and grit across this period, and we are proud to have maintained service delivery with minimal disruption. Thank you, team.

Across 2026 our team travelled on average **10,000 km per month** across flexible respite, home based care and case management.



Our fleet vehicles lined up after transporting our clients to social support group.



A typical travel path - This route demonstrates 2.5 hours / 200km+ travel to meet the immediate needs for 1 client (source: google maps)



Poowong Farmland, South Gippsland. Photo credit: Lifegames Photography CC

Regional Settlement Support Fund (RSSF)

The Regional Settlement Support Fund, thanks to the Victorian Government Community Support Fund, brings together four work packages for GMS to better work with and for our multicultural communities across Gippsland:

1. Complex settlement case management and brokerage;
2. Sector development and community connection;
3. Our West Gippsland partnership; and
4. Fair Futures innovation - Exploring avenues to create social enterprise solutions for housing, transport and employment.

Early Achievements Include:

- Establishing case management, brokerage and funding administration frameworks, with complex case support now commenced.
- Establishing enablement funding framework and commencing the enablement program:
  - We have supported Morwell Neighbourhood House's Refugee Week event;
  - Alay Kapwa's Green Runway project; and
  - Many more applications being processed
- We have coordinated five Diversity Lunches which attracted 177 attendances;
- We have formalised our Warragul Community House partnership via a Memorandum of Understanding and funding agreement to support weekly multicultural friendship activities and enable recruitment planning for a bicultural worker to progress engagement across the shire
- Two multicultural emergency management network events strengthened connections between communities, emergency agencies and service providers.
- ABC Gippsland coverage and statewide radio interviews extended recognition of this work and advocacy for accessible emergency information.
- Cultural Humility Training was delivered, with our subsequent RDV–RSSF collaboration engaging all six Gippsland councils for three in-person sessions and one online session to occur by early 2027.
- Our successful Inclusive Employment Keynote at the Federation University Innovation Breakfast was repeated at the Gippsland New Energy Conference in August, alongside panel participation on inclusive employment in renewable energy.





RSSF Cont.

The reality check:

- Transport, language, work and caring commitments remain barriers to participation.
- Regional distances and differing community-group capacity also require sustained coordination and trust building.

Next steps include expanding community-led funding and education, strengthening service pathways and emergency preparedness, and building on West Gippsland participation. Fair Futures concepts addressing employment, enterprise, housing and transport have progressed to an RFQ for independent feasibility advice.

We look forward to reporting on the full project following its completion at the end of the 2026–27 financial year.















Community Connections

Community engagement and partnerships remained a key focus for Gippsland Multicultural Services (GMS) throughout 2025-2026.
To achieve our community connection objectives GMS continues to work with multicultural communities, community organisations, government agencies and local service providers to improve access to information, services and opportunities across Gippsland.

Diversity Group - Multicultural Lunch, Conversations and Connections (MLCC)

Delivered 11 Diversity Lunches, recording approximately 447 attendees in total.
Delivered community information sessions on topics such as health, legal services, emergency preparedness and wellbeing and community participation

Community Participation

Participated in community events and celebrations including:

- Harmony Week activities
- Baw Baw Islamic Network Australia (BINAI) and United Muslim Sisters of Latrobe Valley (UMSLV) Iftars
- UMSLV Eid Festival
- Zimbabwean Community in Australia (ZIM) Festival
- Yoruba Language School Cooking Competition
- Refugee Week
- Filipino Independence Day
- Community information sessions with Breast Screen Victoria and local palliative care services









Community Connections Cont.

Through these events and initiatives, GMS reached approximately 1,200 community members and created opportunities for people to connect, celebrate cultural diversity and participate in community life.

Partnerships and Community Capacity Building

- Worked with more than 15 partner organisations across the community, health, education, local government and emergency management sectors.
- Partnered with Neami National to deliver Older Person Mental Health First Aid Training in September 2025. The training involved 18 participants from more than 10 cultural backgrounds.
- Held the GMS Storybook Launch on 27 August 2025, bringing community stories together and celebrating the contribution of multicultural communities.
- Gippsland Multicultural Regional Emergency Management Network (GMREMN): strengthening engagement, relationships and trust between emergency services and CALD communities. The network comprises members from emergency services, local government, health services and CALD community group leaders/representatives.
- Coordinated 4 GMREMN meetings during the reporting period, engaging approximately 174 attendees in total.
- Supported culturally inclusive emergency planning and information sharing across Gippsland.
- GMS participates in the Respectful Gippsland movement, supporting gender equity and collective action to prevent gender-based violence.
- GMS is also involved in the Gardiner Foundation's Accelerating the Engagement of CALD Workforce into Victorian Agricultural Communities project.

Learn More

gardinerfoundation.com.au/people-in-dairy/culturally-and-linguistically-diverse-cald-projects/
gwhealth.asn.au/respectful-gippsland/









Work in Progress: Describing Our Practice

GMS has started bringing together our practice wisdom, lived experience and professional expertise to develop a **practice framework** that articulates our point of difference: multicultural by history, cultural humility in practice, and person-centred for everyone.

This work connects five elements:

The steps we take? - What do our episodes of care look like across our service types?

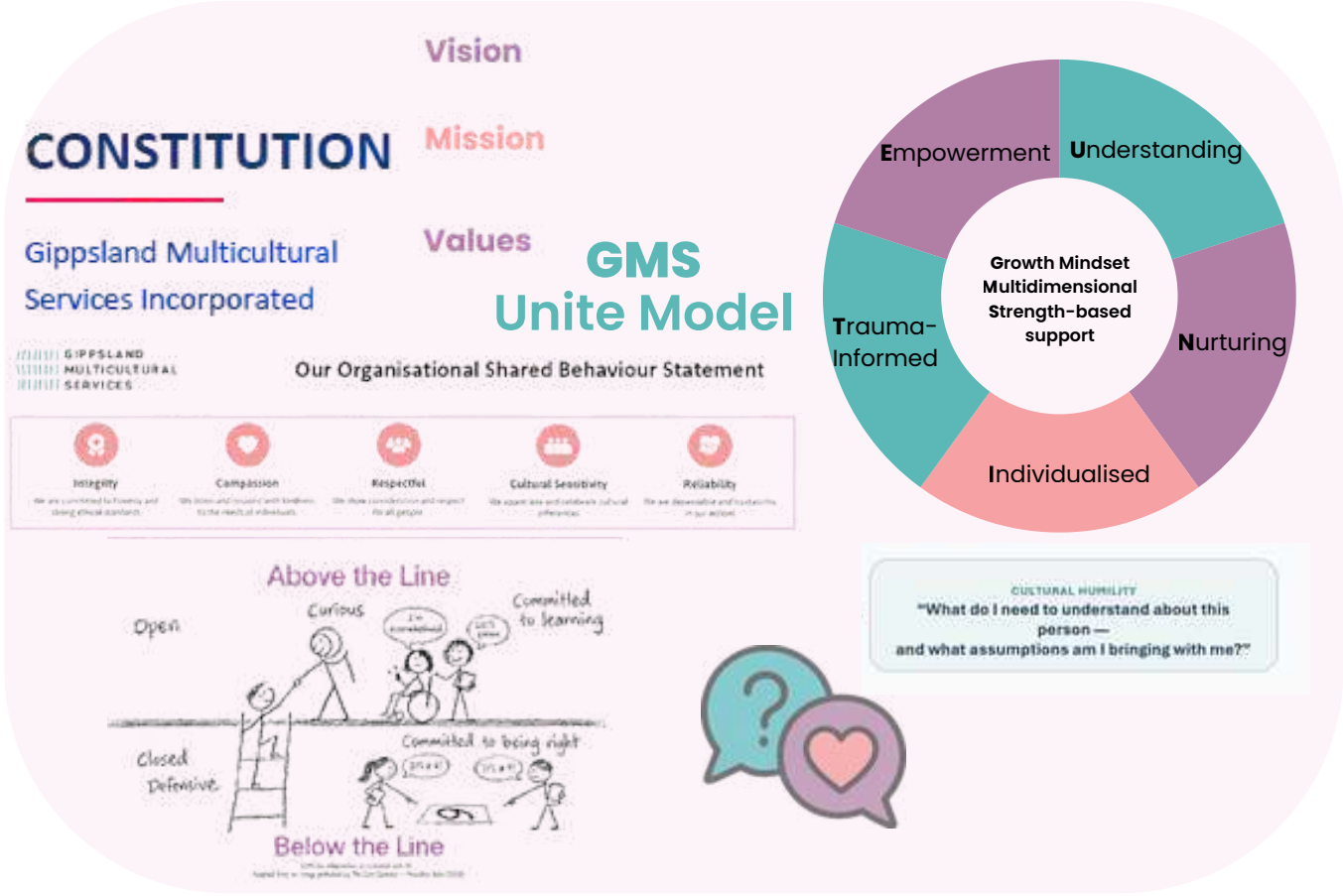
What grounds us? — Our GMS UNITE Model: Articulating the support we provide through Understanding, Nurturing, Individualised and Trauma-Informed practice, and Empowerment.

The why? — Our history, constitutional purpose, vision and mission: Grounding our work in our origins, purpose and aspirations for the communities we serve.

The how? — Cultural Humility: Curiosity over certainty

The 'so what'? — Our draft Shared Behaviour Statement: Bringing these elements together through our organisational values, with a proposed road map for how they show up in our team's everyday communication, decisions and actions.

As the framework develops, it will give us a shared language for the wisdom already embedded in our work, alongside clearer expectations for learning, collaboration and accountability. The draft Shared Behaviour Statement is being developed to support curiosity, self-compassion and growth, while holding safety and respect as non-negotiable.



Work in Progress - The building blocks of our Practice Framework

Work in Progress: Growing Our Gippsland Footprint

Baw Baw Shire | West Gippsland



Joining Turnbull Motors Warragul Token Program, 2026



GMS Participation: BINAI Iftar, Warragul Mosque, 2026



GMS Participation at UMSLV Palliative Care: Muslim Perspective | Trafalgar, 2026



GMS Office Space – Mondays and Fridays at Warragul Community House, 2026



GMS Participation at Baw Baw Shire Jobs Expo, 2026



West Gippsland Senior Retirement Living and Lifestyle Expo, October 2026



GMS Presentation to Warragul Multicultural Friendship Group, 2026

Speaking Engagements and Keynotes 2026

Presenter – National Cultural Diversity and Inclusion Symposium

Strengthening Connections

Communicating Effectively Across Cultures and Identities



Keynote and Panellist – Federation University and RDA Gippsland Innovation Series

Workplace Diversity – The Competitive Edge

Repeated by popular request as a standard presentation at the Gippsland New Energy Conference (GREC).



Keynote Speakers and Panellists – Gippsland Renewable Energy Conference: Powering Gippsland – Building an Inclusive Workforce for New Energy

Looking Back to Find Our Way Forward

The Missing Pillar of Lived Experience and Cultural Humility in Energy Transition



GMS in the News

Multicultural communities still struggle with emergency messaging in times of crisis



In short:

Some multicultural community leaders say they struggle to understand critical alert messaging during floods and fires.

They say due to trauma, some communities do not trust messaging from authority figures.

What's next:

Multicultural community leaders say it is not just about communication, there needs to be connection and context behind the messaging.

Though her autism was undiagnosed at the time, Ms Riley realised after founding CRSE Group that being self-employed was working well for her and her needs.

Last year, the federal government released Australia's first National Autism Strategy, a document that sets out a path to improve the lives of Australians with autism.



Carmel Riley says she learnt how to create psychologically safe workplaces during her period of self-employment. (ABC News: Danielle Kutchel)

Multiple cultures, multiple opportunities



Announcement: Member for Eastern Victoria Region, Tom McIntosh with the Gippsland Multicultural Services team Aileen Formaran, Aria Khan, Carmel Riley, Catherine Lambert, Julie Ward, Dao Nguyen, Lisa Short and, Kaitlyn De Fontaine. Photograph supplied

MEMBER for Eastern Victoria Region, Tom McIntosh recently paid a visit to Gippsland Multicultural Services.

There, he announced the organisation was the successful recipient of $300,000 as part of the state government's Regional Settlement Support Fund (RSSF).

RSSF focuses on helping new Victorians build the skills, confidence and connections needed to find work, access services and establish their lives in the region.

"Gippsland has always been a welcoming region, this support ensures new Victorians can build a life here, connect with our diverse community and help us continue to grow and thrive," Mr McIntosh said.

By breaking down barriers to work and participation, families can get ahead and contribute to thriving, local economies.

Services supported by RSSF include:

- English language classes;
- Job support;
- Mentoring safety education;
- Social participation programs; and,
- Health literacy initiatives.

Gippsland Multicultural Services already has strong community ties, and was selected as a recipient for its strong track record supporting migrant communities, local knowledge and partnerships.

Regional Victoria plays a significant role in welcoming new Victorians, with multicultural communities strengthening local businesses, services and community life.

Gippsland Multicultural Services Chief Executive, Carmel Riley, welcomed the funding.

"This funding recognises the real experiences of multicultural families in Gippsland and allows us to pilot more consistent support for those navigating complex situations without access to formal support over time," she said.

"This support allows us to strengthen our presence in fast-growing areas like Baw Baw and respond to local needs with our partners. It also allows us to explore social enterprise and workforce pathways. This work supports a more inclusive, connected and multicultural Gippsland as the region navigates the energy transition."

The RSSF also supports connecting local groups and services, such as the Gippsland Multicultural Emergency Network.

Express

HOME NEWS SPORT COMMUNITY TRIBUTES PUBS



The Express also attended sessions around the future of air technology with drones and other aviation systems by Professor Joanne Porter.

Another session attended was on the $1.5 million Morwell ElectriFAIRcation project. The project by AusNet and Gippsland Climate Change Network (GCCN), is designed to assist households facing financial difficulties to switch from gas to an all-electric home. Another session of interest was around the steps taken to build an inclusive workforce for new energy. On the panel was Gippsland Multicultural Services (GMS) Chief Executive, Carmel Riley, GMS Community Engagement and Partnerships Coordinator, Derya Deniz Demirol, Department of Employment and Workplace Relations Program Officer, Farhat Firdous, Director of Victorian Renewable Energy at TAFE Gippsland, Holly Perriam and General Manager, Strategy and Performance at SEC, Marcus Leong.

Shadow Minister for Energy and Emissions Reduction David Davis also had a session where he spoke about the Coalition's energy and gas plans.

Other political members present throughout August 19 was National members Melina Bath (Member for Eastern Victoria Region) and Martin Cameron (Member for Morwell).

Regional Sector Support and Development (SSD)

Arfa Khan (Regional SSD Officer / Diversity Advisor)

Strengthening Regional Voices, Building Sector Capability and Connecting Local and National Aged Care Practice

The Regional Sector Support and Development (SSD) and Diversity Advisor role continues to provide an important link between aged care providers, communities, sector networks and government across Gippsland and beyond. The role supports Commonwealth Home Support Programme (CHSP) providers to strengthen their capacity to deliver inclusive, culturally responsive, accessible and person-centred services, while contributing to broader sector development through the sharing of knowledge, resources and emerging practice.

The role operates at both a local and broader sector level—working directly with Gippsland providers to understand local needs and challenges, while contributing to statewide and national SSD networks to share information, resources and regional perspectives.

This two-way exchange ensures that national and sector developments are translated into practical support for local providers, while Gippsland experiences and insights contribute to wider aged care discussions.

The Regional SSD role has also been extended for a further financial year, providing valuable continuity during a period of significant aged care reform and enabling the work to build on established relationships, partnerships and sector knowledge.

Aged Care Reform and CHSP – Key Developments

The 2025–2026 year has been a significant period of change across aged care. The Aged Care Act 2024 commenced on 1 November 2025, establishing a rights-based framework centred on the dignity, choice, independence, safety and wellbeing of older people. For CHSP providers, this has brought changes to provider responsibilities, service arrangements, reporting and accountability, requiring organisations to adapt while continuing to deliver quality services. (health.gov.au)

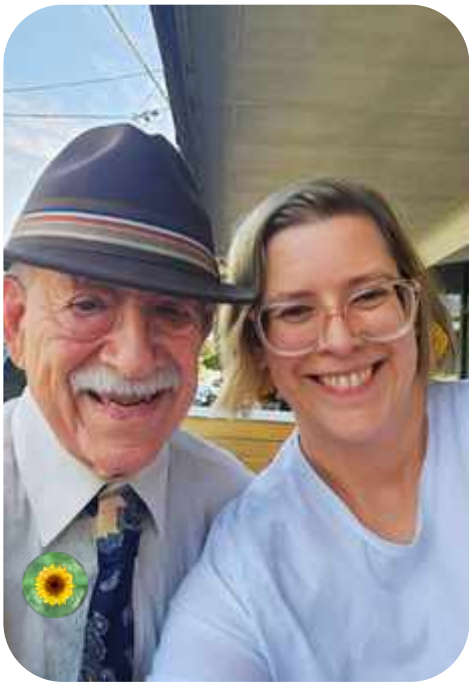
A further significant development came on 20 August 2026, with the Australian Government confirming that CHSP will continue as a separate program and be extended to 30 June 2029. This provides greater certainty for providers and communities and creates valuable time to strengthen CHSP, address emerging challenges and ensure regional experiences continue to inform the future direction of in-home aged care. (health.gov.au)

Diversity, Inclusion and Person-Centred Practice

Gippsland is home to older people from many different cultural, linguistic and social backgrounds, as well as people with diverse identities, life experiences, abilities and circumstances. Ensuring that aged care services are accessible, welcoming and responsive to this diversity is essential to achieving meaningful person-centred care.

During the year, providers were supported to consider the practical barriers that may prevent older people from accessing or engaging with services and to identify opportunities to improve their approach. This included strengthening diversity and inclusion planning, improving culturally responsive practice, supporting community engagement and developing safer and more welcoming service environments.

The focus has been on embedding inclusion into everyday practice rather than treating diversity as a separate activity. This approach aligns strongly with the rights-based principles of the new aged care framework.





Left: Carmel Riley with her father, Richard, aged 89, sharing lived experience of complexity and neurodivergence in community aged care. Right: A community connection event.

Provider Support and Sector Capacity Building

The Regional SSD/Diversity Advisor provided targeted support to approximately 30 aged care service providers across Gippsland during 2024–2025, assisting organisations to strengthen their diversity and inclusion practices, respond to emerging sector requirements and connect with relevant expertise and resources.

Cont.

Support was tailored to the needs of individual providers and informed by the realities of regional service delivery, including workforce pressures, geographic distance, access to specialist services and the changing needs of older people.

The focus remains on building sustainable capability rather than providing one-off support, enabling providers to better respond to change, share learning and continuously improve the quality and accessibility of services across Gippsland.

Collaboration and Partnerships

Strong relationships and collaboration remain fundamental to effective sector development. Throughout the year, the Sector Development Team maintained connections with these organisations and other relevant community and sector organisations:

- Elder Rights Advocacy
- VAL LGBTI Ageing and Aged Care
- Gippsland Primary Health Network – Local Health Authority
- Centre for Cultural Diversity in Ageing
- Housing for the Aged Action Group
- Dementia Australia
- Meaningful Ageing Australia
- Ethnic Communities Council of Victoria
- OPAN/COTA
- Senior Rights Victoria.

These partnerships provide access to specialist knowledge, resources, training, advocacy and community perspectives. They also create opportunities for providers to strengthen referral pathways, develop their professional networks and learn from organisations with particular expertise.

The Regional SSD/Diversity Advisor works collaboratively with the Aboriginal Regional Development Officer and Wellness and Reablement Consultant as part of the Gippsland Sector Development Team. This combined approach brings complementary expertise together and strengthens the team's ability to respond to the broader needs of the regional aged care sector.

Strengthening the Sector for the Future

Over the coming year, the focus will remain on supporting providers to navigate the new aged care framework, strengthen diversity and inclusion, build organisational capability and respond to emerging local needs.

Ultimately, the role remains focused on supporting providers to deliver aged care that is inclusive, culturally responsive, accessible and person-centred, while ensuring that the voices and lived experiences of older people remain at the heart of service development.

Training and Development

GIPPSLAND MULTICULTURAL SERVICES

supported by CRSE

Cultural Awareness • Cultural Humility • Inclusive Leadership

Training Options	Foundations	Applied Practice	Whole-of-Organisation
Duration	4 hours	8 hrs + Debrief	10 hrs + 6-month mentoring
Best For	Early-stage awareness	Applied capability development	Sustained culture change
Core Focus	Awareness	Practice & Reflection	Leadership & Systems Alignment
Includes	•Diversity & identity • Bias & assumptions • Access to privilege • GMS Unite Framework	**Everything in Foundations, plus:** • Cultural humility • Reflective toolkit • Applied scenarios • Intersectionality • Power & positioning • 90-min group follow-up	**Everything in Applied Practice plus:** • Complexity-informed decision-making • Navigating competing priorities • Self-leadership capability • Structural conditions for behaviour change • Executive alignment session • 6-month mentoring - either: Group or 1:1 for a nominated participant (3 x 90 min or 6 x 45 min online sessions)
Corporate Rate	$4,000 + GST	$5,800 + GST	$7,500 + GST
NFP/Community	$2,000 + GST	$2,900 + GST	$3,750 + GST

Minimum engagement includes up to 10 participants. 11–20 participants: +$20 per person (+GST).

All pricing includes printed materials and travel within 50km of Morwell.

Venue hire and catering are additional where applicable.

Training can be delivered:

- *At an agreed accessible venue*
- *At your venue (space for movement and projector required)*
- *Online (live)*

We do not offer hybrid sessions.

Travel beyond 50km may incur additional fees.



Exploring cultural humility together



Learning through workplace case studies

Participant Feedback

Cultural Humility in Practice

Feedback combines prior CRSE inclusive leadership delivery and more recent GMS/CRSE cultural humility training across three years. It includes participants from small and medium enterprises and large organisations across Gippsland, Hume City and statewide audiences.

95%
would recommend the training

95%
were satisfied with the training

90%
could apply their learning at work

84%
said they gained new skills

Feedback includes participants who chose to attend and those nominated or directed to attend by their employer.

TRANSFERABLE SKILLS

"The skills we explored helped me listen to different perspectives without judgement, understand diverse ways of thinking, and work through complex discussions alongside people from all walks of life. It was amazing to see how transferable these skills were and how they helped us achieve positive outcomes."

Participant – applied the learning during Jury Service the following week

STRONG RECOMMENDATION

"Just quietly, in my opinion, this training should be mandatory no matter what workplace you work in!"

Participant – after recommending the training to colleagues

INDUSTRY RELEVANCE

"In the spirit of inclusion, it was also great to discuss these important issues with fellow industry members... keep going – and we will come with you!"

Industry participant

DEMONSTRATED DEMAND

"We surveyed all business members of our SEED program in Hume City, and your training was rated the most needed for our community."

SEED program feedback – Hume City

Practical skills for working, leading and communicating across diverse groups.

Treasurer's Report

Ron Waanders - Treasurer

It is my pleasure to present the Treasurer's Report for Gippsland Multicultural Services (GMS) for the financial year ended 30 June 2026. I would like to sincerely thank Carmel Riley, CEO, and Rupinder Sandhu, Manager Business Services and Finance, for their significant contributions to this report.

Rupinder joined GMS in July 2026, and we are delighted to welcome her to the team. Her extensive background in accounting and auditing has already proven to be a valuable asset to the organisation. I am confident that GMS will be strengthened by her expertise, experience, and insights, and I look forward to the positive impact she will continue to make.

The 2025/26 financial year has been a year of continued growth and change for GMS. Throughout the year, the organisation remained focused on delivering high-quality services and support to multicultural communities across Gippsland, while maintaining sound financial management, accountability and governance.

Financial Performance

GMS recorded total income of $2.52 million during 2025/26, representing an increase of 9.7% from the previous year's $2.30 million. This growth was supported by new funding received under the Regional Settlement Support Fund (RSSF), as well as income generated through the refreshed Cultural Humility Training, which GMS delivers on a fee-for-service basis.

Total expenditure increased to $2.58 million, compared with $2.25 million in 2024/25. The increase was primarily attributable to staff wage back pay incurred during the year, as well as additional investment in strengthened Human Resources and Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) capability and a 12-month Governance and Risk Lead position.

As a result, GMS recorded an operating deficit of $64,556 for the financial year. While the deficit reflects these additional wage costs and investments in organisational capability, GMS continues to maintain a sound financial position and remains committed to the careful and responsible management of its financial resources.
Funding received from government and other sources has been managed and utilised in accordance with funding agreements, program requirements and organisational priorities

Financial Sustainability

GMS continues to take a prudent approach to cash flow and reserve management. Available cash reserves and term deposits provide an important financial buffer, supporting the organisation's ability to meet ongoing operational commitments and respond to unexpected changes in funding or expenditure. The extension of Commonwealth Settlement and Transition Support (SETS) funding until 30 June 2028 and Commonwealth Home Support Programme (CHSP) funding through to June 2029 provides greater funding certainty and supports GMS's longer-term financial planning.

Financial Governance and Accountability

Strong financial governance and accountability remain key priorities for GMS. Throughout the year, the Board and management continued to strengthen financial oversight through regular financial reporting, budget monitoring, cash-flow reviews and oversight of expenditure.

In July 2026, GMS undertook a restructure and appointed a Manager Business Services & Finance, further strengthening the organisation's operational oversight, strategic planning, organisational development and continuous improvement initiatives.

The new role also provides greater oversight of all financial aspects of the organisation, supporting the development of more comprehensive and timely financial reporting, enhanced budget and cash-flow monitoring, improved financial processes, and clearer financial information to assist the Board and management in making informed and effective decisions.

GMS has also continued to meet its financial and regulatory obligations, including payroll, taxation, grant acquittals and other statutory and funding requirements. The annual financial statements have been prepared in accordance with applicable accounting standards and regulatory requirements and were independently audited by Alpine Tax.

Acknowledgement

I would like to acknowledge and thank the outgoing CEO, Sally Gafa, as well as the new CEO, Carmel Riley, management team and staff for their commitment to responsible financial management and their continued dedication to delivering valuable services to our communities.

I also extend my appreciation to the Board for its ongoing oversight, guidance and commitment to sound governance, accountability and financial stewardship.

GMS enters the 2026/27 financial year with a strong focus on financial sustainability, accountability and continuous improvement. I look forward to supporting the organisation as it builds on its achievements and continues to strengthen its financial foundation for the future.



Ron Waanders
Treasurer
Gippsland Multicultural Services Inc.

Financial Statements

For the Year Ended 30 June 2026

This printed report includes the full Profit & Loss, Balance Sheet (Statement of Financial Position), Statement of Cash Flows, signed Directors' Declaration and Independent Auditor's Report.

The complete financial report, including the compilation report, notes and disclosures, is available through the QR code and link below.

Scan to read the complete financial report

https://canva.link/u9fgbl1xt78v2k7

Gippsland Multicultural Services Inc.
ABN 81 922 755 143

GIPPSLAND MULTICULTURAL SERVICES INC

ABN 81 922 755 143

Detailed Profit and Loss Statement

For the year ended 30 June 2026

	2026 $	2025 $
Income		
Commissions received		1,026
Client Contributions	41,187	48,962
Non Recurring	39,299	36,182
Recurring	1,695,754	1,586,413
Hire income	54	450
Brokerage Fees (Respite)	595,844	475,396
Brokerage Fees (SSG)	35,610	15,213
Contracted Services		21,000
GMS Fee For Service	29,920	29,345
NDIS Services	35,583	33,254
Interest received	40,997	46,269
Other	146	
Photocopying	54	48
Training Provided	3,500	1,500
Catering		300
Membership Dues	315	840
Donations	635	391
Total income	2,518,898	2,296,589
Expenses		
Accounting Expenses	30,634	26,790
Advertising & promotion	1,083	8,320
Bad debts	140	4,574
Bank fees & charges	222	220
Board Governance	17,094	9,618
Cleaning & rubbish removal	2,302	
Computer & IT Support	23,349	28,185
Consultants fees	14,087	31,509
Depreciation - Plant	23,900	26,107
Electricity	10,690	6,186
Insurance	5,046	2,923
Lease payments	2,069	3,344
Licences & Permits	238	

The accompanying notes form part of these financial statements.

GIPPSLAND MULTICULTURAL SERVICES INC

ABN 81 922 755 143

Detailed Profit and Loss Statement

For the year ended 30 June 2026

	2026 $	2025 $
Meeting Expense		286
M/V car - Other	15,324	15,554
Postage	2,019	2,237
Printing & stationery	6,139	5,721
Rent on land & buildings	46,613	56,814
Repairs & maintenance	1,735	4,109
Pregram Equipment	326	3,122
Program expenses	47,500	35,563
Security	6,410	2,375
Staff amenities	4,470	6,173
Staff training	14,471	10,634
Staff Uniform	2,413	908
Subscriptions	27,694	5,668
Sundry expenses	4,278	
DS Superannuation	110,326	
Admin Superannuation	137,929	195,725
Admin - Accrued Super	1,278	1,463
Telephone	9,131	7,969
Travel, accommodation & conferences	6,623	1,559
Volunteer Expenses		150
SD Wages	689,256	626,337
SD Accrued Wages		(10,205)
SD Annual Leave Exp	4,781	1,131
SD Long Service Leave Expense	52,912	36,667
Admin - Wages	1,184,880	1,044,220
Admin - Accrued Wages	12,658	18,237
Wages Reimbursements Parental Leave		(15,719)
Workcover Payments	63,436	50,164
Workcover Reimbursements		(1)
Total expenses	2,583,454	2,254,637
Profit (loss) from ordinary activities before income tax	**(64,556)**	**41,951**
Income tax revenue relating to ordinary activities		
Net profit (loss) attributable to the association	**(64,556)**	**41,951**
Total changes in equity of the association	**(64,556)**	**41,951**

The accompanying notes form part of these financial statements.

GIPPSLAND MULTICULTURAL SERVICES INC

ABN 81 922 755 143

Detailed Profit and Loss Statement

For the year ended 30 June 2026

	2026 $	2025 $
Opening retained profits	1,314,794	1,272,842
Net profit (loss) attributable to the association	(64,556)	41,951
Closing retained profits	**1,250,238**	**1,314,794**

The accompanying notes form part of these financial statements.

GIPPSLAND MULTICULTURAL SERVICES INC
ABN 81 922 755 143
Detailed Statement of Financial Position as at 30 June 2026

	Note	$ 2026	$ 2025
Current Assets			
Cash Assets			
Cash at bank		219,113	240,587
WBC Debit Card		1,599	1,041
WBC Holding Acc		124,573	99,076
WBC - GMS Mgmt Acc		495	721
WBC - RN - HACC		1	1
TD - 220067- May 26		200,000	200,000
TD - 222062 - Nov 25		200,000	200,000
TD 222070 - Jun 26		75,000	75,000
TD 225239 - Feb 26		200,000	200,000
TD - 454598 Aug 25		207,770	207,770
TD - 484316 - June 26		250,000	250,000
WBC - DGR			
Cash on hand		199	199
Undeposited funds		995	1,643
		1,479,744	1,476,037
Receivables			
Trade debtors		91,801	61,408
		91,801	61,408
Current Tax Assets			
Taxation		26	(11)
		26	(11)
Other			
Bond (Tarwin St)		3,333	3,333
		3,333	3,333
Total Current Assets		**1,574,904**	**1,540,767**

The accompanying notes form part of these financial statements.

GIPPSLAND MULTICULTURAL SERVICES INC

ABN 81 922 755 143

Detailed Statement of Financial Position as at 30 June 2026

	Note	2026 $	2025 $
Non-Current Assets			
Property, Plant and Equipment			
Buildings (cost)		37,401	37,401
Plant & equipment (cost)		131,630	121,750
Less: Accumulated depreciation		(116,761)	(92,862)
		52,269	66,289
Total Non-Current Assets		**52,269**	**66,289**
Total Assets		**1,627,173**	**1,607,056**
Current Liabilities			
Payables			
Unsecured:			
Trade creditors		23,246	8,169
Accrued Expenses		71,064	64,548
Security Deposit - Hall		150	220
		94,461	72,937
Current Tax Liabilities			
GST payable control account			
Input tax credit control account		(988)	
GST clearing		82,415	64,715
		81,427	64,715
Provisions			
Employee entitlements			14,853
Provision for Annual Leave		101,391	96,610
Provision for Long Service Leave		29,217	15,947
		130,608	127,410

The accompanying notes form part of these financial statements.

GIPPSLAND MULTICULTURAL SERVICES INC
ABN 81 922 755 143
Detailed Statement of Financial Position as at 30 June 2026

	Note	2026 $	2025 $
Other			
Inc In Adv		36,262	9,552
RSSF - Regional Settlement Support Fund			
		36,262	9,552
Total Current Liabilities		**342,757**	**274,614**
Non-Current Liabilities			
Financial Liabilities			
Secured:			
Telstra Headset Contract		1,280	
		1,280	
Provisions			
Provison for Long Service Leave		32,897	17,648
		32,897	17,648
Total Non-Current Liabilities		**34,178**	**17,648**
Total Liabilities		**376,935**	**292,263**
Net Assets		**1,250,238**	**1,314,794**
Members' Funds			
Accumulated surplus (deficit)		1,250,238	1,314,794
Total Members' Funds		**1,250,238**	**1,314,794**

The accompanying notes form part of these financial statements.

GIPPSLAND MULTICULTURAL SERVICES INC

ABN 81 922 755 143

Statement of Cash Flows

For the year ended 30 June 2026

	2026 $	2025 $
Cash Flow From Operating Activities		
Receipts from customers	2,447,359	2,341,325
Payments to Suppliers and employees	(2,473,944)	(2,143,466)
Interest received	40,997	46,269
Interest and other costs of finance	(2,069)	(3,344)
Income tax paid	(37)	17
Net cash provided by (used in) operating activities (note 2)	12,306	240,800
Cash Flow From Investing Activities		
Payment for:		
Payments for property, plant and equipment	(9,880)	(5,895)
Net cash provided by (used in) investing activities	(9,880)	(5,895)
Cash Flow From Financing Activities		
Proceeds of borrowings	1,280	
Net cash provided by (used in) financing activities	1,280	
Net increase (decrease) in cash held	3,706	234,905
Cash at the beginning of the year	1,479,371	1,244,466
Cash at the end of the year (note 1)	1,483,077	1,479,371

The accompanying notes form part of these financial statements.

GIPPSLAND MULTICULTURAL SERVICES INC

ABN 81 922 755 143

Directors' Declaration

The director has determined that the company is not a reporting entity and that this special purpose financial report should be prepared in accordance with the accounting policies prescribed in Note 1 to the financial statements.

The director of the company declares that:

1. the financial statements and notes are in accordance with the Corporations Act 2001:
   (a) comply with Accounting Standards described in Note 1 to the financial statements and the Corporations Regulations; and
   (b) give a true and fair view of the company's financial position as at 30 June 2026 and of its performance for the year ended on that date in accordance with the accounting policies described in Note 1 to the financial statements.
2. in the director's opinion, there are reasonable grounds to believe that the company will be able to pay its debts as and when they become due and payable.

This declaration is made in accordance with a resolution of the director.

Dated:

RON WAANDERS
ACTING CHAIR
28.9.2026.

Reina O'Donnell
Acting Deputy Chair
26/09/2026

GIPPSLAND MULTICULTURAL SERVICES INC

ABN 81 922 755 143

Independent Auditor's Report

Report on the Audit of the Financial Report

Opinion

We have audited the financial report of GIPPSLAND MULTICULTURAL SERVICES INC (the association), which comprises the Statement by Members of the Committee, the Income and Expenditure Statement, Balance Sheet as at 30 June 2026, a summary of significant accounting policies and the certification by members of the committee on the annual statements giving a true and fair view of the financial position and performance of the association.

In our opinion, the accompanying financial report presents fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of the association as at 30 June 2026 and [of] its financial performance for the year then ended in accordance with the accounting policies described in Note 1 to the financial statements and the requirements of the Associations Incorporation Act 1991.

Basis for Opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Report section of our report. We are independent of the association in accordance with the ethical requirements of the Accounting Professional and Ethical Standards Board's APES 110 Code of Ethics for Professional Accountants (the Code) that are relevant to our audit of the financial report in Australia. We have also fulfilled our ethical responsibilities in accordance with the Code.

We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

Emphasis of Matter – Basis of Accounting

We draw attention to Note 1 to the financial report, which describes the basis of accounting. The financial report has been prepared to assist the association to meet the requirements of Associations Incorporation Act 1991. As a result, the financial report may not be suitable for another purpose. Our opinion is not modified in respect of this matter.

Responsibilities of the Committee for the Financial Report

The committee is responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of the financial report in accordance with the financial reporting requirements of the Associations Incorporation Act 1991 and for such internal control as the committee determines is necessary to enable the preparation and fair presentation of a financial report that is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial report, the committee is responsible for assessing the association's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the committee either intends to liquidate the association or to cease operations, or has no realistic alternative but to do so.

GIPPSLAND MULTICULTURAL SERVICES INC

ABN 81 922 755 143

Independent Auditor's Report

Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Report

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial report as a whole is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with the Australian Auditing Standards will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of this financial report.

As part of an audit in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards, we exercise professional judgement and maintain professional scepticism throughout the audit. We also:

- Identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial report, whether due to fraud or error, design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks, and obtain audit evidence that is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control.

- Obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the association's internal control.

- Evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates and related disclosures made by the committee.

- Conclude on the appropriateness of the committee's use of the going concern basis of accounting and, based on the audit evidence obtained, whether a material uncertainty exists related to events or conditions that may cast significant doubt on the association's ability to continue as a going concern. If we conclude that a material uncertainty exists, we are required to draw attention in our auditor's report to the related disclosures in the financial report or, if such disclosures are inadequate, to modify our opinion. Our conclusions are based on the audit evidence obtained up to the date of our auditor's report. However, future events or conditions may cause the association to cease to continue as a going concern.

- Evaluate the overall presentation, structure and content of the financial report, including the disclosures, and whether the financial report represents the underlying transactions and events in a manner that achieves fair presentation.

We communicate with the committee regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit and significant audit findings, including any significant deficiencies in internal control that we identify during our audit.

Signed on :

Peter Ahne, FCPA
AlpineTAX
91 Standish St Myrtleford, Vic 3737.






Thank You

Thank you for taking the time to read this report. If you have questions or are looking for help, please don't hesitate to contact us using the details below.

26 - 28 Tarwin Street, Morwell, VIC, 3840
5133 7072 | reception@gms.org.au | www.gms.org.au

GIPPSLAND MULTICULTURAL SERVICES



