



# Community Connections

## Issue 4, 2024

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## From the CEO



### Strengthening Social Cohesion Amid Economic and Social Pressures

This year's Scanlon Foundation Research Institute Social Cohesion Report has unfortunately highlighted shifting attitudes toward immigration, multiculturalism, and economic challenges in Australia. The findings highlight the critical need to keep addressing growing concerns while we champion inclusivity and combat discrimination.

**The key findings indicate:**

**Rising Concerns About Immigration:** Nearly half of Australians (49%) believe immigration levels are too high, a substantial increase from 33% last year. However, this sentiment is largely because of economic pressures like housing affordability and the cost of living, rather than a direct anti-migrant sentiment.

**Support for Multiculturalism has dropped:** While 71% of respondents believe that diversity strengthens our country, support for multiculturalism has slightly declined. Alarmingly, negative attitudes toward specific groups, including Muslims (34%) and Jewish people (13%), have increased, fuelled by global conflicts.

**Social Cohesion is at Risk:** Social cohesion in Australia is at its lowest since the survey began in 2007. Financial stress is a major factor, with those facing economic hardship feeling less connected and less accepting of diversity.

**Views on migration remain humane:** Despite rising concerns about immigration levels, most Australians reject discriminatory immigration policies and welcome refugees and migrants from regions of conflict.

These findings paint a picture of a population that struggles with economic and social pressures, where the risk of division always looms. Yet, the enduring support for multiculturalism and opposition to discrimination still holds strong. What can we do to safeguard our nation's identity as an inclusive and ethnically vibrant nation?

We need to invest more in social cohesion. All levels of government need to prioritise policies that build trust, belonging, and understanding within communities. Keep supporting initiatives that address economic inequities and promote a constructive dialogue.

We need to stand strong against discrimination. Strengthen anti-discrimination efforts to counter growing negative attitudes toward specific groups, ensuring that we all feel respected and valued. The 'Anti Racism Framework: The Experiences and Perspectives of Multicultural Australia' need to become everyone's responsibility.

We need to foster constructive migration conversations and encourage discussions about migration that are keeping xenophobia separate from economic concerns. Let's keep emphasising the benefits of diversity, inclusivity and productivity our nation has to showcase.

The challenge before us is to keep uniting and inspiring trust in a time of uncertainty. As diversity advocates we should never stop having engaging conversations and identifying new ambassadors to keep leading the charge and creating a safe and equitable nation.

Elfa Moraitakis  
CEO



L-R: Gabriella Antelmi (Activity Facilitator), Helen An (Support Facilitator), Marina Markos (Participant), Mark Cristovao (Participant).

## Croydon Centre Open Day - A Heartfelt Thank You for Joining Our Open Day at Croydon Centre!

We want to extend our deepest gratitude to everyone who joined us for the Open Day at Croydon Centre, the headquarters and activity hub of our disability division, Participate Australia.

We were delighted to welcome over 100 NDIS participants, their families and friends, community and provider partners, and even a federal member to our event. This day was not only a celebration

of Participate Australia and our work but also an opportunity to reflect on our approach to support, our values, and the impact we make.

We were honoured by the visit of [Sally Sitou MP](#), the federal member for Reid, and thrilled to showcase the incredible art of [Bridget Kelly](#). It was also inspiring to hear from one of our participants, Nel, about PrideAbility, and to listen to our team share the amazing work we do at Participate Australia and SydWest Multicultural Services.

Looking ahead, our doors will remain open as we host an artists' evening celebrating talented artists with disabilities from the Inner West. This event is part of the Inner West Council's Inclusion Festival, celebrating the International Day of People with Disability.

Stay tuned for more details by following our [Instagram \(@participateaustralia\)](#).

We look forward to seeing you at our upcoming events!

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## Culinary Collaboration: Cooking Program Teams Up with Canterbury League Club

In October, Participate Australia (PA), the disability division of SydWest, partnered with [Canterbury League Club](#) to deliver the Canterbury Cooking Club.

Over a 6-week program, five PA participants were guided by Stephanie Azar, General Manager of Food & Beverage, and her team of chefs. They learned food preparation techniques, hygiene and safety practices, and chef skills in a commercial kitchen at the club.

The program brought immense confidence, pride, and joy to both students and staff. Stephanie noted that some attendees have participated for several years, showing remarkable improvement in their kitchen skills and confidence. Initially needing knife gloves and assistance, they are now enthusiastic and self-assured in the kitchen.

One participant, Georgie, who moved into her own apartment last year, shared that this course significantly impacted her ability to live independently.

The program concluded with a graduation dinner where students invited friends and family to enjoy a meal they prepared, celebrating their achievements at the beautiful Canterbury League Club venue.

We look forward to the next Canterbury Cooking Club!

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## Nurse Facilitates Essential Palliative Care

### A moving story of the importance of trust and relationships

Inka Patel, a dedicated registered nurse with SydWest's Aged Care services, ensures the safety and well-being of our aged care clients at home. She provides a range of services and crucial support to families.

Recently, Inka helped a family access palliative care for their relative, Nan, who is bed-bound with life-limiting illnesses. Initially reluctant about palliative care, the family contacted Inka after a hospital visit. Thanks to the trust she had built, Inka was able to explain the benefits of in-home palliative care. The family agreed, and a community palliative care team quickly provided the necessary support.

SydWest's role was vital, as the family's trust in Inka and SydWest facilitated timely palliative care. Throughout, SydWest continued to offer essential services like personal care and respite. Inka and our clinical team are indispensable in supporting our aged care clients, especially during end-of-life care.

Visit <https://sydwestms.org.au/services/aged-care/> for more information on our Aged Care services.

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## End of life a celebration of life

### Aged care initiates special memory-sharing event

Our Aged Care team hosted a special celebration of life event recently to honour the memory of SydWest clients who had passed last year.

Care Coordinators, Care Workers and family members attended to connect, share memories and place a note on our Memory Tree in remembrance of those we've lost.

This event was an important opportunity for everyone to recognise the special relationships that are developed in Aged Care. It provided an opportunity for family members to also share how SydWest supported them through difficult times.

[Click here to watch a short video snippet from the event](#)

Following the success of this event, it has been decided that our Celebration of Life event will be an annual event into the future.



# AGM 2024

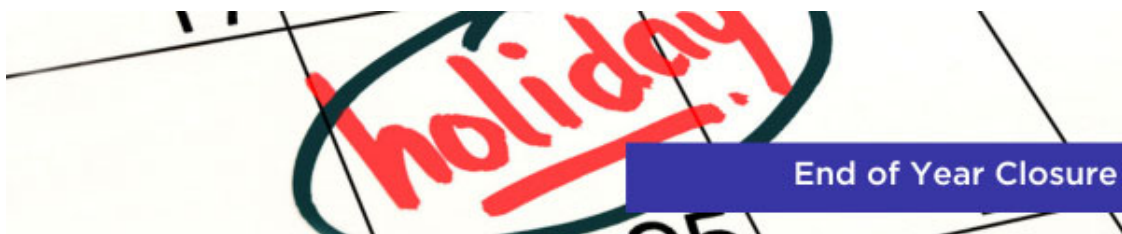
This year's Annual General Meeting (AGM) was held on 26 November 2024 and all agenda items were approved.

At this meeting, we officially welcomed three new Board members who joined during the previous year:

- Sandra Casinader
- Kim Heng
- Brent Pitts

All [Board members](#) remain the same for the coming year.

We are pleased to share with you this year's [Annual Report](#), which provides a colourful and lively summary of our work over the last 12 months.



## Holiday office closure notice - SydWest Group

This year, all offices in the SydWest Group will be closed for two weeks from Monday, 23 December 2024, until Friday, 3 January 2025.

We will reopen on Monday, 6 January 2025.

Service continuity arrangements are planned and implemented for the aged and disability divisions.

If you have questions, please contact us on [info@sydwestms.org.au](mailto:info@sydwestms.org.au) or (02) 9621-6633.

## For the diary

- Dec 3 - International Day of People with Disability
- Dec 5 - International Volunteer Day

[Submit email enquiry](#)

We hope you enjoyed catching up on SydWest news, events and personal success stories of our clients and customers.



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