



flourish
AUSTRALIA

Where mental wellbeing thrives

Flourish

Flourish Australia leads by example, and wins a visit by Celebrity Chef, Fast Ed!

Flourish Australia is a unique not-for-profit organisation that provides a range of services to support people's mental health recovery. These services aim to help people find a home, make friends, get involved in their community, learn new things or find suitable employment.

There are 62 'sites' in the Flourish Network across New South Wales and South East Queensland and social inclusion is truly at its heart. First and foremost, all Flourish's 800 staff work according to the organisation's diversity policy which strives to ensure fair, equitable, and non-prejudicial treatment of all people with respect to a person's personal attributes, including age, race, national origin, colour, gender identity and expression and religion.

The organisation takes part in A Taste of Harmony each year. At Head Office, the team holds a lunch each year attended by over 50 staff who are asked to bring along a dish of cultural significance to share. The dish can be anything, but staff are encouraged to prepare something that evokes positive feeling or good memories for themselves. During the lunch, staff can share these memories with their colleagues.

Head office also encourages each 'site' to do what is appropriate for them, whether that be a picnic, cultural quiz, sharing stories, cooking a meal together and where possible, involve those who access the service in their celebrations. The HR team posts regular reminders on the staff intranet in the lead up to the two-week event and an annual message is sent by Chief Executive Mark Orr to inspire employees to take part.

Buckingham House, Surry Hills, NSW

Buckingham House, a member-run activity centre for people on their mental health recovery journey, has taken part for many years and this year acknowledged A Taste of Harmony by cooking dishes from four different countries which the members had selected and included an entree from Vietnam, main dishes from Israel and Italy and a dessert from South Africa. These dishes were shared with all members at a communal lunch. Information on the dishes was available and connections with members were strengthened at the lunch.

Hunter Street Wellbeing Centre, NSW

A Taste of Harmony was celebrated at the Hunter Street Wellbeing Centre with a variety of activities.

Staff decorated the centre and a menu of foods from various countries was served for lunch at the centre's café and Rachel, the chef, explained a brief history of each dish. Talks were given by people from three different countries of origin in front of the centre's staff and people who access the service.



A Taste of Harmony is important because it sets aside a special time to celebrate diversity, and while we are working towards respect every day, having a special event to acknowledge difference is important.



One staff member commented, "A Taste of Harmony is important in our workplace because one of the goals of our team is to enhance interactions with people who access the Centre. During one of the talks, some difficult questions were asked by people accessing the service because they felt safe enough to ask in that environment, and the staff member was able to answer them compassionately. Many commented on the talks saying that they had no idea about people's backgrounds and that it was interesting, but also humbling, to hear people's stories. A Taste of Harmony is important because it sets aside a special time to celebrate diversity, and while we are working towards respect every day, having a special event to acknowledge difference is important."

Figtree Conference Centre, NSW

Flourish Australia also runs the Figtree Conference Centre, a social enterprise that provides training and employment in hospitality to people with a lived experience of mental health issues.

Employees at Figtree hail from all over with current team members coming from a range of countries including Turkey, Mauritius, Indonesia, Greece, Iran, Burma and Scotland. Diversity and inclusion is kept at the front of team members' minds by being an agenda item at every Figtree team meeting, and employees are encouraged to suggest meal ideas from their cultures to become part of the catering menu.

Last year the Centre won A Taste of Harmony's early bird competition, by registering its event to celebrate cultural diversity. The sought-after prize was a workplace visit and lunch cooked by A Taste of Harmony hero ambassador and 'Better Homes and Gardens' chef, Fast Ed.

On the day, Ed prepared a Hungarian lunch for the Figtree team and shared with them his knowledge from cooking all over the world.

"Ed's passion and love for food is inspiring! Figtree staff learnt so many helpful kitchen tips and skills while helping Ed to prepare his delicious banquet. And we all really enjoyed sitting down together as a team with him to share and enjoy the feast! He was so generous with his time, so friendly and easy to talk with and so humble and gracious. It was a really memorable day for everyone at Figtree Conference Centre", says Sue.

Register your 2019 event by 14 February and you could win a workplace lunch with Fast Ed!

A Taste of Harmony is taking place from 18-29 March 2019. Register your workplace team event by 14 February and at the same time, enter our early bird competition for your chance to win a visit to your workplace by celebrity chef and Better Homes and Gardens presenter, Ed Halmagyi, aka Fast Ed!

