

TERM THREE • 2024

# COMMUNITY VOICES



**Zinda Pop-up: Castlemaine**

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LODDON CAMPASPE





# MESSAGE FROM DIMITY FIFER

Welcome to our third e-mag where we share the energy of LCMS and celebrate the region's multicultural communities. The theme of this year's Refugee Week (16th- 22nd June) is 'Finding Freedom' highlighting the need for refugees to live life free on their journey to freedom and safety.

Refugee Week's rich history originated in Australia. First proposed by the president of the Refugee Council of Australia (RCOA), Major-General Paul Cullen, it began with a street parade and community celebration in Sydney in 1986. Since then, it has grown into a global celebration, now aligned with World Refugee Day on June 20, with countries including the UK, Malta, Greece, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Germany, Croatia, Ireland, Jordan, Lithuania, and Slovenia.

Settlement Services International (SSI) in Australia focuses on celebrating and finding ways to support the unique path each newcomer takes, before and after their arrival in their new home in Australia. Their call is for us to be part of, and create a community, that stands for equal opportunities for everyone.

This year, the Refugee Council of Australia (RCOA) is making a renewed call for a robust response to the global refugee crisis. The Refugee Council underscores the pivotal role of families in the lives of refugees and stresses the need for Australia to play an even greater role in constructively responding to the increasing displacement of people across the world.

RCOA's call to action is highlighted in excerpts from their Media Release below:

"According to the UNHCR, there are almost 12 million more people (almost half the Australian population) that have been forced from their homes than there were at the end of 2022. As the global refugee crisis intensifies, Australia is uniquely positioned to lead by example. By expanding its Humanitarian Program and increasing support for complementary pathways through education, business, and community initiatives, Australia can offer more refugees the opportunity to rebuild their lives in safety.

**"This year's Refugee Week theme focuses on the transformative power of familial bonds amidst adversity. Families provide solace, support, and a sense of belonging to those forced to flee their homes. However, Australia remains one of the few countries with stringent limits on family reunions, a policy that has a profound impact on refugee communities."**

"Families are the cornerstone of resilience for refugees," Mr Power said. "Whether it's the unwavering support of parents, the protective love between siblings, or the communal strength found in extended and chosen families, these connections offer hope in times of uncertainty. It's vital that our policies reflect the importance of these bonds."

"We have seen an increase in concern among the Australian public in response to conflicts in Gaza and Israel, Afghanistan, Ukraine, Myanmar, Sudan, and the Middle East," Mr Power said. "The overwhelming call is for Australia to do more."

This edition shares photos of LCMS staff celebrating Refugee Week with community members at the Long Gully Neighbourhood House.

**We all crave safety and a future. At the very least, Australia must allow everyone already found to be owed protection under the Refugee Convention a permanent home in Australia.**

ZAKI HAIDARI, REFUGEE RIGHTS CAMPAIGNER



# TERM THREE CLASSES

## WEDNESDAY



### DIGITAL LITERACY - LEVEL 1 (EXISTING STUDENT ONLY)

**Time:** 1:30pm - 3pm  
**Location:** LCMS Office  
(437 Hargreaves St, Bendigo)

“  
*An investment in  
knowledge pays  
the best interest -  
Benjamin Franklin*  
”

## THURSDAY



### WOMEN'S ENGLISH

**Time:** 10am - 12pm  
**Location:** Seventh Day  
Adventist Church  
(27 Bay St, Golden Square)



### DIGITAL LITERACY - LEVEL 2 (BEGINNER LEVEL)

**Time:** 1:30pm - 3pm  
**Location:** LCMS Office  
(437 Hargreaves St, Bendigo)



### INTERMEDIATE ENGLISH

**Time:** 5pm - 6:30pm  
**Location:** LCMS Office  
(437 Hargreaves St, Bendigo)

## FRIDAY



### DIGITAL LITERACY - LEVEL 3 (INTERMEDIATE LEVEL)

**Time:** 10am - 11:30am  
**Location:** LCMS Office  
(437 Hargreaves St, Bendigo)



### DIGITAL LITERACY EMPLOYMENT READY!

**Time:** 12:30pm - 2pm  
**Location:** LCMS Office  
(437 Hargreaves St, Bendigo)

## EDUCATION TEAM CONTACTS

Please contact Robyn or Vanessa if you have an enquiry regarding the classes.

### Robyn Matthews

**E:** r.matthews@lcms.org.au  
**P:** 0482 175 965

### Vanessa Feeny

**E:** v.feeny@lcms.org.au  
**P:** 0403 556 726

### Office

437 Hargreaves St, Bendigo  
T: (03) 5441 6644

# REGULAR WEEKLY PROGRAMS

## MONDAY



### **HOMEWORK CLUB (12-18 YEARS OLD)**

**Time:** 3:45pm - 5pm  
**Location:** Bendigo Library  
(259 Hargreaves St, Bendigo)



### **MULTICULTURAL STORY IN KAREN AND DARI**

**KAREN SESSION**  
**Time:** 10:30am - 11:30am

**DARI SESSION**  
**Time:** 4pm - 5pm

**Location:** Bendigo Library (259  
Hargreaves St, Bendigo)

## TUESDAY



### **LA PA TEA**

**Time:** 10am - 11am  
**Location:** Salvation Army  
(65-71 Mundy St, Bendigo)



### **MULTICULTURAL CARE & FOOD**

**Time:** 10:30am - 12:30pm  
**Location:** Salvation Army  
(65-71 Mundy St, Bendigo)

## THURSDAY



### **MULTICULTURAL PLAYGROUP**

**Time:** 10am - 12pm  
**Location:** Long Gully  
Neighbourhood Centre  
(52-54 Derwent Dr, Long Gully)



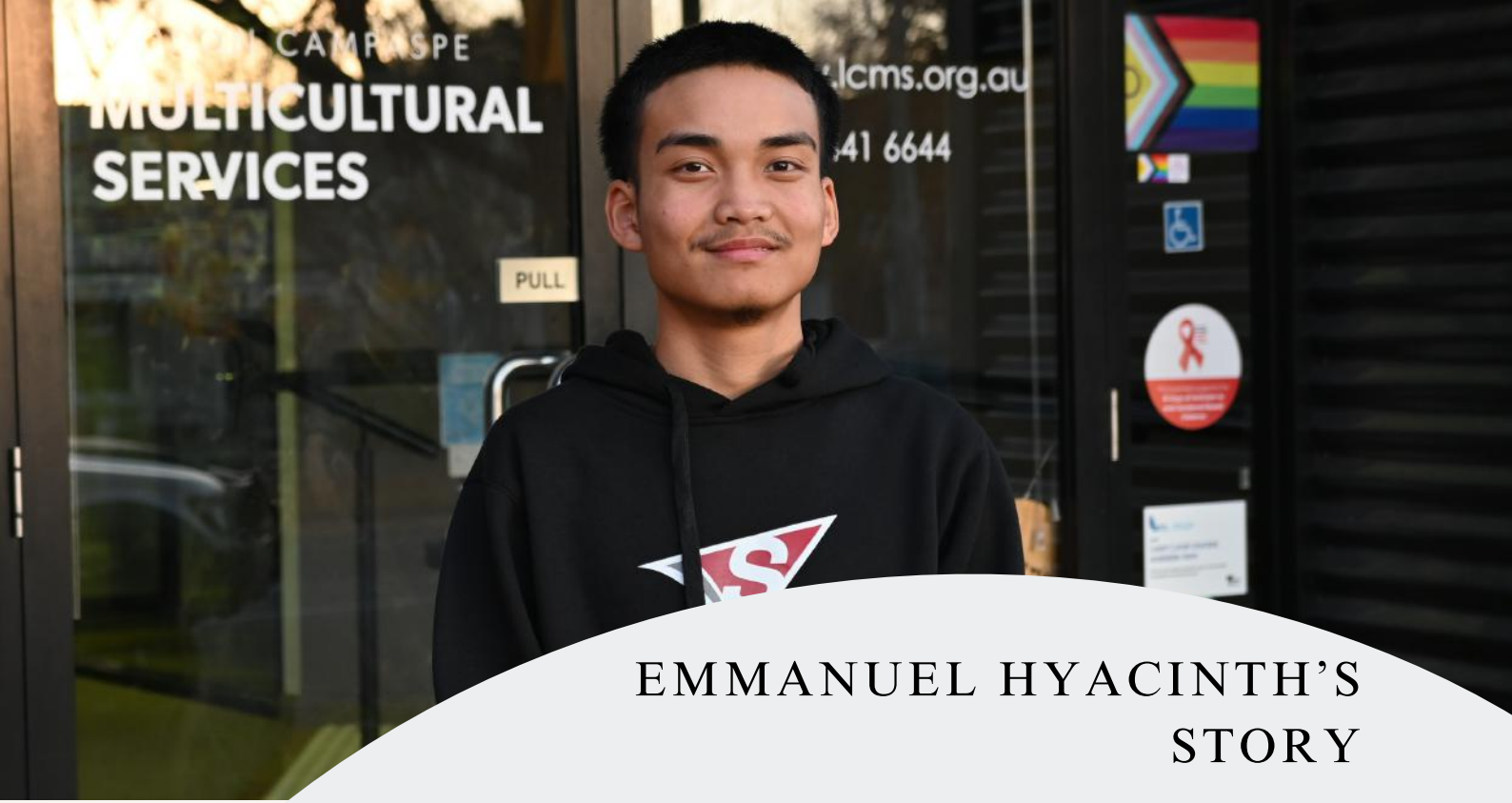
### **TAX RETURN SUPPORT (STARTING FROM 27TH JULY)**

**Time:** by appointment  
**Location:** LCMS Office  
(437 Hargreaves St, Bendigo)  
**Contact:** 03 5441 6644

“

*We are learning how to work together. We are learning what is different and we are trying to take the best part of each program to bring everything together. — Sergei Krikalev*

”



## EMMANUEL HYACINTH'S STORY

My name is Emmanuel and I was born in Australia. I live with my parents and siblings.

My family moved to Bendigo last year and my mum had a connection with Multicultural Services (LCMS) through employment and education with the organisation. My mum asked me to seek help for employment since I graduated last year having no job.

My mum encouraged me to contact LCMS regarding my employment and social connection with other youth groups and with different programs. The idea of getting help and connecting with people and using services where you sit down and talk about yourself and make connections with other young people from a service is not my alley. But once you settle into it, you realise that it is more than just that.

The employment staff and youth workers were friendly and active. There are a couple of employment staff who worked with me having one-to-one discussions and helping me find employment. For a while, I've wanted to get into the automotive industry, though it was a challenge to get phone calls and vacancy for apprenticeships.

One day LCMS called me to see if I would like to apply for work as a sign maker/installer because they were looking for a full-time worker, gladly they helped me send my resume. A week later I got a phone call and email from them for an interview. They put me up for a one-week trial and after that I got the job. Now I've been working here for nearly two months they are teaching me everything I need to learn, good staff and environment.

I felt like I matter and seeking help is normal. And it's not just seeking employment help and becoming a client on their list. It's life changing because I love what I am doing now, and I have so much interest in learning and getting better at this new job. You can't put a price on things like this. It is going to change a lot of people's lives in the future if they receive the right support for their needs. It reminds you that you do have a place in the world and society.



## DAY WAH - STUDENT OF THE MONTH

Congratulations to Day Wah, who is currently enrolled in several classes at LCMS. Day Wah is from a refugee background and arrived in Australia on December 2nd, 2022. He was born in Myanmar and took refuge at Karenni Refugee Camp Two—Ban Mae Surin in Thailand due to civil war in the year 2000 before coming to Australia.

Day Wah is a new student this year and having him in our classes is an absolute pleasure! He attends our Digital Literacy Level 3 class, Digital Literacy Employment Class and Introduction to Childcare course. He is a dedicated student and an asset to our group learning activities. His presentation on the Karenni history and culture in our Digital Literacy Class was brilliant! Everyone has learned a lot from his presentation about the Karen and Karenni.

Here are his thoughts and responses to our questions regarding his experience undertaking our classes.

### **What have you gained most so far from your classes at LCMS?**

- Resume and cover letter writing skills.
- Jobs search skills.
- ZOOM meeting skills.
- Skills and knowledge of working effectively with children.

### **What do you enjoy most about your classes?**

- Learning new skills, especially work-related skills and working with children.

### **What skills have you gained that you can directly apply to your everyday life?**

- I can confidently use the skills I've learned from both Digital Literacy classes, such as resume writing, job searching and sending emails.

### **Would you recommend classes from LCMS?**

- Yes, because we learn real-life skills that can be used, such as job searching and resume writing.

### **Are there any other classes that you wish LCMS taught?**

- More advanced digital literacy classes, such as printing and the use of different programs like Adobe.
- Administration skills.

Well done Day Wah, for your remarkable achievements! Your dedication, hard work, and commitment to excellence have truly set you apart as a standout student.

# P R O G R A M




## CROSS-CULTURAL AWARENESS TRAINING (CCAT)

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With some great feedback from the previous sessions and requests from a wide range of cohorts, we have launched the new Cross-Cultural Awareness Training (CCAT) opportunities to the public. These are the ticketed sessions where anyone can secure a spot and join in either a face-to-face or an online Zoom session. We cover topics such as what culture is and cross-cultural communication strategies. Each session includes a community member sharing a personal settlement story which is always a highlight of the session.

Upcoming Ticketed CCAT sessions:

### Face to Face:

 **Date:** July 1st, 2024  
 **Time:** 10:00 AM - 1:00 PM  
 **[Register Now!](#)**

### Online:

 **Date:** July 4th, 2024  
 **Time:** 10:00 AM - 12:00 PM  
 **[Register Now!](#)**

We are getting an increasing number of inquiries for organisational CCAT sessions as well. We delivered eight organisational sessions in Term 2 including RANCH (Regional Association of Neighborhood and Community Houses), Bendigo Volunteers Resource Centre, Campaspe Shire Council and Mount Alexander Shire Council.



## EMPLOYMENT

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Employment mentors are working hard to support jobseekers to find employment.

Each month our small but committed employment team support more than 50 jobseekers with job applications, resume writing, NDIS checks, Working with Children checks, enrolling in further education and job searches.

In May more than 15 jobseekers found employment!

If you would like to access our employment support mentorship, please contact the office. Please be patient as we do have a waiting list for support but we will help you as quickly as possible.

## EDUCATION

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Our education classes and courses continue to be very busy and exciting!

Particularly noteworthy is our Digital Literacy course, where students are progressing through levels with great success. Recently, we celebrated the graduation of five students—Eh May Paw, Hai Gay Hay, Paw Ger P'Wah Say, Rohana Zainal, and Shar Poe Wah—from level 1 to level 2. Congratulations to them and all our diligent students!

Additionally, on June 19th, we were honored to host Sheryl Batrouney from Gecko I.T. Solutions and Ari from Bendigo South East College, who generously donated laptops for our digital literacy class. This contribution will significantly enhance our community's access to technology, aligning perfectly with our mission to promote digital inclusion for a brighter future.





# U P D A T E

## MULTICULTURAL CARE AND FOOD

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LCMS runs a food relief program every Tuesday for people from multicultural backgrounds, called Multicultural Care and Food, serving around 60 families each week. Food is provided by Bendigo Foodshare and Foodbank Victoria. The content varies each week, and many people are happy to receive it because of the rising cost of living. We also receive weekly donations of freshly picked vegetables from community members.

LCMS is grateful to the many volunteers and your goodwill for making this program possible.

'La Pa Tea' is also held at the same location and is a lively weekly event.

'La Pa Tea' is a Karen word meaning morning tea. Both clients and staff look forward to meeting once a week and enjoy greeting each other in their own language, such as 'Salam', 'Oshuwa', and having a chat. We often see members of the community helping each other, and the morning tea has become an indispensable part of the community for both the clients and staff.

LCMS Multicultural Care and Food is collecting cash and food donations. If you would like to help, please contact the LCMS Office.

Multicultural Care and Food  
Time: Tuesdays, 10.30am-12.30pm  
Place: Salvation Army

La Pa Tea  
Time: Every Tuesday from 10am to 11am  
Place: Salvation Army

The programme also runs during the school holiday period, so please take advantage of it.



## HOMEWORK CLUB

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LCMS holds a Homework Club for students from multicultural backgrounds every Monday in Bendigo Library. It is held during the school term only. Term 3 is scheduled to start on Monday 15 July.

There are currently 11 registered students, run by five volunteer teachers and LCMS staff. Students read books, discuss the content, and do maths work with the volunteer teachers. Each session sees serious faces engaged in learning, and much joy as they chat with the volunteer teachers.

The Homework Club is looking for volunteer teachers. No qualifications are required. The focus is to read books with the children and have them do maths work. Work will be provided by us. If you are interested in this activity and would be willing to sign up as a volunteer, please contact the LCMS.

We are proud to be able to support the learning of children who are the future. We look forward to meeting as many of you as possible.

LCMS Multicultural Homework Club  
**Time:** every Monday from 3:45pm to 5pm  
**Where:** Bendigo Library (259 Hargreaves St, Bendigo)  
**Target:** Year 5 to Year 12  
**Subjects:** English support for all year groups, maths support up to Year 10.

\*Children from Year 4 and below are also welcome if they are accompanied by a parent or guardian.

If you are interested in volunteering in LCMS homework club, please put in an expression of interest, by contact Yoko at [y.vigor@lcms.org.au](mailto:y.vigor@lcms.org.au) or call (03) 5441 6644



## MULTICULTURAL YOUTH NETWORK

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LCMS Youth Network works daily to support young people from multicultural backgrounds. This term, we organised weekly Thursday volleyball, a fundraiser at Zinda Castlemaine, and a Movie Night at Bendigo Cinema.

Volleyball is played on Thursdays at La Trobe University Sports Centre. Participants get together with friends after school or work to exercise and have fun. Young people with no or little volleyball experience practice under the guidance of Lar Ka Paw. The group practice at their own pace with new people arriving each week. The students' parents appreciate having this weekly gathering. We are currently discussing the next activity.

At Zinda Castlemaine, we held a fundraiser for the LCMS Care and Food Exchange, and five LCMS youth ambassadors sold homemade chai and Thai milk tea. They had a great time and enjoyed interacting with the community, and we plan to do the same at Zinda Festival in October here in Bendigo.

The LCMS Network has eight Youth Ambassadors who support our work, contribute ideas to Youth Network activities and volunteer at events such as Zinda Castlemaine and Movie Night. At the fortnightly meeting with the Youth Ambassadors, we promoted the City of Greater Bendigo Intercultural Ambassador program, in the hope that one of the LCMS Youth Ambassadors apply.

The LCMS Youth Network is always active so please check regularly for announcements on the LCMS Facebook page.

If you have any questions or inquiries about our Youth Network programs, please feel free to contact Yoko Vigor at [y.vigor@lcms.org.au](mailto:y.vigor@lcms.org.au)



## MULTICULTURAL FUTSAL TOURNAMENT

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On Saturday, May 18th, our Multicultural Futsal Tournament returned for another epic showdown at the Bendigo Major League Multisport Centre. This was made possible through the Strategic Partnerships Program, the Department of Social Services, and the unwavering support of Sports Focus!

Originating in 2022, this initiative is fueled by the shared goal of bringing diverse communities together, not just for thrilling matches but for deeper conversations.

Our aim? To ignite discussions about gender equality and the pivotal role boys and men play in combatting violence against girls and women. It's about using sports as a platform for meaningful change.

With a whopping 92 players across 12 teams, which included Karen, Afghan-Hazara, Nepal, African and Indian cultural groups, the energy on the court was electric! Each match was a testament to the power of unity amidst diversity.

Check out the [Bendigo Advertiser's](#) coverage of our Futsal Tournament, where one of our staff beautifully summed up the spirit of the event: 'We thought we'd bring the community together to connect among themselves and do something that's meaningful for them.'

It was a day filled with sportsmanship, camaraderie, and meaningful connections.



## TAX RETURN SUPPORT

Are your tax affairs straightforward? Do you earn \$60,000 or less? Don't wait! Check your eligibility for this service by visiting or calling our office. Prepare early for tax return season to avoid last-minute stress and ensure accuracy. Need assistance linking ATO to MyGov or organising your information? Contact LCMS for support and to schedule an appointment.

We are now taking bookings for Tax Return Support.

**Date:** Every Thursday, starting from 27th July

**Time:** By Appointment Only

**Location:** LCMS Office (437 Hargreaves St, Bendigo)

## NEW MULTICULTURAL STORY TIME PROGRAM

On Monday, June 3rd, we were thrilled to host our new Multicultural Storytime Program at Bendigo Library. It was proudly launched by Maree Edwards MP, State Member for Bendigo West! This initiative brings the magic of storytelling to our community with stories and songs in Karen and Dari languages.

The program strengthens children's connection to their language and culture.

It also

- Improves health literacy for Victorian parents with young children and
- Provides culturally appropriate health information to families.

The 2023/24 Victorian State Budget has allocated \$6 million over four years to support this program, and LCMS is grateful to receive \$200,000 in funding to make this vision a reality.

Maree Edwards MP told us that, *"Reading and storytelling is vital for all children, no matter what their cultural background. It is fantastic that this program celebrates and recognises the importance of storytelling in our many community languages."*

Read the article of the launch [HERE!](#)



## CHILD SAFETY STANDARDS TRAINING

Child Safety Standards Training workshop was crafted to support the vibrant South Sudanese Community in Castlemaine, focusing on essential legal guidelines for interacting and collaborating with children. It was a valuable session tailored for parents, professionals, and community associations, drawing a total of 20 enthusiastic participants. The event took place on the 17th of May, fostering engagement and learning in a dynamic setting.

## CAFE FOR A DAY

We are happy to announce another Café for a Day session, which is open to the public, as part of the LCMS school holiday program.

Jas will once again lead the youth team and assist them with their pathway into the hospitality industry. We recommend pre-ordering, as the meals made on the day do sell fast. Walk-ins are welcome too.

**Venue:** Salvation Army Hill Top Café (enter gate 2 on the corner of 65 Mundy St & Bramble St)

**Date:** Friday, 12 July

**Time:** Dine in or takeaway between 12pm - 2pm

## MENU - \$15

- Jollof Rice w Grilled Chicken
  - Long grain rice with tomato, peppers, garlic & ginger cooked in authentic herbs & spices served with marinated grilled chicken.
- Jollof Rice w Spinach & Peanut Stew (veg)
  - Long grain rice with tomato, peppers, garlic & ginger cooked in authentic herbs & spices served with a traditional West African spinach and peanut stew.



To Pre-order scan the QR code or click [HERE!](#)



## THE NATIONAL REDRESS SCHEME

We are deeply honoured to provide Redress Support Services at LCMS for the Loddon Campaspe community. The National Redress Scheme was established following recommendations by the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse. This vital initiative aims to hold institutions accountable for the harm suffered by individuals in their care and to offer meaningful support to those affected by institutional abuse.

The National Redress Scheme offers comprehensive support, including access to counselling, a direct personal response from the responsible institution, and a monetary payment to acknowledge the suffering endured.

At LCMS, our Redress Team is dedicated to implementing trauma-informed practices and providing cross-cultural support for our diverse community. Our Redress Advocates whose primary role is to support individuals seeking to make an application to the National Redress Scheme.

You may be eligible to apply for the National Redress Scheme if:

- You experienced sexual abuse under the age of 18
- The abuse occurred before July 1, 2018
- An institution was responsible for bringing you into contact with your abuser
- You will be 18 years old or older by June 30, 2028
- At the time of your application, you are an Australian citizen or a permanent resident

At LCMS, we are here to assist you throughout the application process, ensuring your safety and well-being at every step. If you would like to learn more about our Redress Support Services or start your application, please feel free to call us anytime at 03 5441 6644.

Your healing journey is important to us, and we are committed to standing by your side.

## NEW REDRESS TEAM MEMBERS



Dulce



Eh Ka

## RECONCILIATION ACTION PLAN (RAP)

In a significant effort to foster connections with Country and First Nations peoples across the Loddon Campaspe Area, LCMS has been actively engaging in initiatives during Reconciliation Week, celebrated from 27 May to 2 June.

During this pivotal week, LCMS proudly displayed the "Respect for Djarra Country" sign on our front door, symbolising our dedication to understanding, respecting, and celebrating First Nations peoples. A resource table was set up for staff and clients, encouraging everyone to deepen their knowledge through informative materials.

Highlighting the week's events was Castlemaine Zinda at Campbell's Creek, a vibrant community gathering on Saturday, 1 June. The event drew hundreds of attendees, who were treated to an inspiring Acknowledgement of Country by Uncle Paul Chapman, a respected Wakka Wakka man from Queensland. Uncle Paul also led an engaging Didgeridoo performance and workshop, enriching the event with cultural significance and interactive learning.

LCMS's efforts during Reconciliation Week underscore our ongoing commitment to building meaningful relationships and promoting cultural understanding within the community. Through events like Castlemaine Zinda, we continue to pave the way for greater inclusivity and respect for First Nations peoples across the region.



# VOLUNTEERS SPOTLIGHT

## HONOURING VOLUNTEER WEEK

### PRAMITHA WATUTHANTRIGE

Pramitha, originally from Sri Lanka, came to Australia in 2016 and settled in Melbourne for three years. In 2019 he relocated to Bridgewater and eventually moved to Bendigo in 2020. Shortly after moving to Bendigo, he heard about LCMS and decided to visit the office to learn about the programs and activities LCMS offers.

Impressed by LCMS's programs and activities, Pramitha joined Robyn's class and became part of the LCMS community. He quoted, *"I come from overseas. Once you come to a different country, you are very vulnerable, and you don't know what's out there, but places like LCMS, they do a good thing for us, for people, for community"*.

Pramitha currently volunteers at the Youth Volleyball program, assisting kids with learning to play volleyball. He finds much joy in his role, seeing it as a *"very good thing for young kids because these days young kids are attracted to many wanted but unnecessary things."* He believes teaching youth sports like volleyball is a positive influence on getting them more active and giving them less screen time.

When asked about his thoughts on volunteering, Pramitha shared, *"It is a good place for people like us, coming from overseas and getting to know the culture, what's happening around you, and it is really good things, and I'm so proud that I'm volunteering."*

### ROBYN WEEK

Robyn Weeks began volunteering with LCMS at Bendigo East Swimming Pool's Women's Social Swimming program because of her love for swimming. She enjoys helping people of all ages, from teenagers to seniors, learn how to swim. *"It's really rewarding to see non-swimmers become confident swimmers"* she says.

Working in a diverse community, Robyn sometimes found it challenging when people spoke languages she didn't understand. *"They often talk in their own language, which can be tricky for me,"* she explains. Despite this, she empathises with those who struggle with English in their daily lives. *"It makes me aware when we speak just in our own language, and they don't understand. I empathise with them not knowing English and the difficulties they face in their everyday life,"* she adds.

Robyn Weeks's dedication to helping others through LCMS' swimming programs shows her commitment to inclusivity and making a positive difference in her community.

### HSER OH BU HTOO LWAH

Hser Oh Bu Htoo Lwah, a member of the Karen community, is one of LCMS' youngest volunteers. She loves spending time with kids at the playgroup, where children from different backgrounds come together.

*"After I finished high school with no experience, I started working full-time in childcare,"* Hser says. But the job became tough for her. She wanted to understand childcare better, joined LCMS's childcare taster course and began volunteering at the playgroup. *"Being with the kids really makes me happy,"* she says.

Volunteering has taught Hser a lot about childcare. *"Now I understand the work much better,"* she says. Her love for working with children motivates her to learn and grow in the field.

Hser encourages other young people to volunteer too. *"You learn so much, and it's like gaining work experience for your resume,"* she explains. Her dedication shows as she inspires others to join community service.

Pramitha Watuthantrige



Robyn Week



Hser Oh Bu



# Z I N D A P O P - U P :

W H E N T W O C R E A T I V E E N T I T I E S



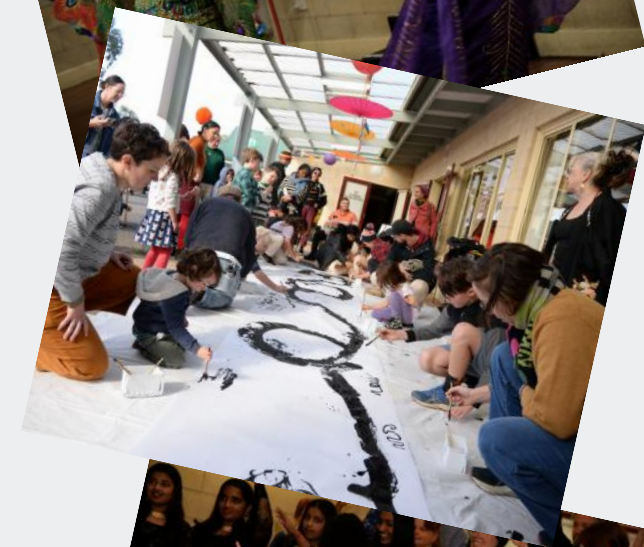
What do you get when you take a cultural festival of music, colour and life and inject it into a town known for its creative arts vibe, family values and a rich history of diversity?

What you get is an explosive buzz of people, sounds and energy and a unique multicultural festival coming to life.

Organised by Loddon Campaspe Multicultural Services (LCMS), Zinda Multicultural Festival was introduced to Castlemaine for the very first time on Saturday 1st June at the Campbells Creek Community Centre. As a family-friendly event, the Centre was quickly filled for the Acknowledgement of Country with Wakka Wakka Man Uncle Paul Chapman, a master didge player, educator, musician and storyteller, sharing heart of culture and actively engaging the growing crowds with dance and sharing of instruments.

What followed was a colourful array of song and dance, movement and colour and the audience participation for which the Castlemaine community is so well known. Call it an all-ages event; people young and young at heart were wowed by the rhythms and style of a wonderful array of entertainers, including music and performance by Mugi Rahayu which is Central Victoria's Indonesian Gamelan Ensemble presenting exquisite Javanese gamelan melodies and dance. A visual feast followed with local Japanese artist Isabelle Kawai Vincent who painted an enormous seven-metre two-headed dragon in traditional calligraphic style on Japanese Hosho paper, accompanied by the transcending improvised rhythms on guitar by the young and talented Oliver Vigor. Isabelle invited the crowd to contribute to the art piece and it was adorned with the creative touches of many.

Back inside, the stage came alive as the Asian Women's Collective wowed the room with the moves and flamboyance of Bollywood and classical dance.



# CASTLEMAINE

COLLIDE, MAGIC HAPPENS

The crowd was on their feet with the dynamic and highly theatrical combination of dance that includes traditional Indian, folk, salsa and belly-dance with the wild and free contemporary western forms akin to hip hop and jazz. As a beautiful fusion of tradition and modernity, the Asian Women's Collective presented the elegance of the cultural landscape of India.

And before anyone could take their seats, the crowd were back on their feet to the rhythmic sounds and rich traditions of West African percussion group, Mamba Negra. This powerful ensemble is dedicated to reviving and honouring the ancient art of traditional West African percussion, and through the rhythms and melodies of their music they not only entertained, but inspired the crowd and etched a deep appreciation for the cultural heritage of their music.

The movement and sound, colour and rhythm of Castlemaine Zinda was complemented by the flavours and tastes of the Food Truck area, thanks to Jas' Indian Kitchen, Ice Cream Republic and Soul de Espana to whet the appetite and recharge the dance moves of many. LCMS provided the café flavours of traditional Arabic coffee and Japanese sencha (green tea).

Zinda Castlemaine was supported by Victorian Government and Castlemaine Rotary Club and partners Mount Alexander Shire Council and Castlemaine Community House.

*"It's a fantastic idea to bring Zinda to the regional area. It helps to [connect] people from different communities, background, socio economy and cultures to connect each other. Also, having the opportunity to watch and enjoy the folklore of different cultures, give to all of us the opportunity to open our hearts and expand our minds in a beautiful way". Gianni Boragine, Mamba Negra*



# Z I N D A P O P - U P :

P L A Y T H E M U S I C A N D



In crisp late morning sunshine, a crowd of parishioners gathered at St Mary's Hall in Echuca, following morning service. Another joyful community event was soon underway as Zinda Echuca assumed centre stage!

Under the heartfelt sharing of Wakka Wakka Man Uncle Paul Chapman, an Acknowledgement was shared with respect to the Yorta Yorta People on whose Country we were gathered as we prepared to celebrate Zinda. The name Zinda means to be alive in many languages, including Dari, Bengali, Farsi, Hindi, Hazaraghi and Urdu, and our festival is everything that being alive can be!

The soulful sounds of the didgeridoo began to awaken the attention of the growing crowd as the participants of Uncle Paul's didge class, a dozen men from as many cultures explored this ancient instrument, albeit in contemporary plastic pipe form.

This was followed by the beautiful voices and rhythm of the Anointed Band from Shepparton, a West African Gospel ensemble whose songs of spirit uplifted the voices in the crowd. Their voices and instruments connected everyone in the Hall with a sense of peace and love. The peace and love then took a more upbeat turn when the stage became a group workout of dance, music and laughter.

As the crowd grew hungry, a feast was prepared and shared, featuring a range of delicious healthy tastings from the Sri Lankan and Filipino communities. We thank Loddon Mallee Public Health Unit for the opportunity to bring these tastes to Zinda Echuca.

With spirits high, Zinda erupted into a maze of movement and song, as the Traditional Dance of the Philippines graced the stage. Three dances were presented - the Philippine Jota, adapted from a Spanish folk dance, a ceremonial worship dance called Subli-Subli performed in homage to the holy cross and Tinikling-Tinikling which originated prior to Spanish colonialism and involves the beating, tapping, and sliding of bamboo poles with one or more dancers stepping over between the poles. What a vibrant showcase of culture and colour, followed by more vibrance with Anju's Bollywood dance fusion, with the two dancers' stylized showcase of Indian tradition versus modern.





# E C H U C A

## PEOPLE WILL COME

What followed next was the reflective offerings of Afghan Hazara woman, Laila Hashimi. Laila read an Acknowledgment of Country in Hazaraghi followed in Dari language her poem for all women, especially women in Afghanistan who have been denied the opportunity and freedom to work and be educated. This meaningful poem from Laila speaks from the heart and to the hearts and minds of all women refugees around the world.

Then the most exquisite performers made their way to the stage. Two rows of children in cultural dress from four years to eight years of age, were from the Sri Lankan Youth Ensemble and their movement and expression brought the show to life. And this wasn't the last we would see of this petit ensemble...

Because, to finish the afternoon, Zinda Echuca was graced with the presence of instruments, costumes, colour and flare of Mugi Rahayu and their Indonesian Gamelan Ensemble. In addition to their exquisite Javanese gamelan melodies and dance, Mugi Rahayu entertained the crowd with their character performance play and storytelling, which didn't only thrill the crowd, it enticed the young Sri Lankan performers to sit at the towering instruments. Zinda Echuca witnessed the beautiful and enriching nature of cultural connection. This is what Zinda is all about.

Zinda Echuca was supported by the Victorian Government and Loddon Campaspe Public Health Unit and partners Campaspe Shire Council, St Mary's Parish Echuca and Two Tribes. Loddon Campaspe Multicultural Services is proud to have brought Zinda to these communities and looks forward to growing our engagement, partnership opportunities and connections with multicultural communities in the region and with the services and allies that support them.

*"It was great to connect with so many new community members; we already have a vision of how we could start assisting communities and collaborating together". Lachlan Cozens from Campaspe Shire Council.*



# PAKORA

SUBMITTED BY JAGJEEVAN KAUR

## INGREDIENTS:

- 1 cup besan flour
- 1 tablespoon rice flour
- 2 cups oil
- 1 onion
- 1 potato
- 100gm spinach
- 120gm cauliflower
- 1/2 teaspoon kashmiri chilli powder
- 1/2 teaspoon garam masala
- 1 teaspoon cumin powder
- 1 teaspoon coriander powder
- 2 tablespoon kasturi methi (fenugreek leaves)
- Aamchur powder (dried mango powder) for garnish
- 1/2 cup to 1 cup water

## METHOD:

1. Cut and sliced onion, potato, cauliflower and spinach and put aside.
2. In a bowl combin besan flour, rice flour and all spices along with salt and mix well.
3. Put all the veggies in the flour mixture and add 1/2 cup of water. Mix all the ingredient together to a nice thick batter consistency. Add more water if required, make sure it is not very runny and put aside.
4. In a pan heat up the oil and when it's ready take a big spoon and fry both side until it's nice and crispy.
5. On a serving plate, put all the pakoras and sprinkle aamchur powder on it and serve hot with yoghurt dip or tamarind sauce.



SCAN THE QR CODE FOR JAS'S  
COOKING DEMONSTRATION







## Zinda Pop-up: Echuca

LCMS supports people from multicultural communities to participate and belong in our community and exercise their human rights across the breadth of social, cultural, economic and civic life.

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