

TERM ONE • 2024

# COMMUNITY VOICES



**In this Community Voices magazine:**

- Statement from the LCMS Chair
- Welcome from the Chief Executive Officer
- Term One Classes
- Regular Weekly Programs
- Soe Soe Eh's Journey into Early Education
- 'Karen Lady House' - A success story
- LCMS program updates

LODDON CAMPASPE



**MULTICULTURAL  
SERVICES**



**HAPPY INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY  
8 MARCH 2024**

“If we are to ever break the cycle of inequality, we must invest in women and girls.” - Melinda Gates

Let's celebrate this years International Women's Day with its theme of *Count Her In: Invest in Women. Accelerate Progress.*

*Let's 'Inspire Inclusion'*



# WELCOME FROM CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER



As the new CEO of Loddon Campaspe Multicultural Services (LCMS), I am honored and excited to lead an organisation dedicated to empowering multicultural communities in the Loddon Campaspe region. With my background in nonprofit management and a passion for advocacy, I am committed to amplifying the voices of underrepresented groups, fostering inclusivity, and creating opportunities for the next generation of multicultural leaders.

Collaborating with our dedicated team and supporters, I am eager to drive positive change with you and make a lasting impact in our community. In line with our mission to strengthen and support multicultural communities, I am thrilled to announce the launch of our new initiative, the "Community Voices" magazine. This quarterly publication will replace our monthly newsletter and will feature a diverse range of content, including engaging stories, updates on our programs and initiatives, upcoming events, and inspiring community activities.

We believe that this transition to a magazine format will not only offer you more enriching and meaningful content but also help foster a stronger sense of community and connection with our cause. By sharing the stories and experiences of individuals within our community, we aim to promote understanding, celebrate diversity, and showcase the impact of our work.

We are confident that this new approach will enable us to communicate our mission and vision more effectively and engage our supporters in a more compelling way. Your continued support and feedback are invaluable to us as we embark on this exciting new journey together. Thank you for joining us in our commitment to building a more inclusive and supportive community for all.

**Dimity Fifer**

# STATEMENT FROM THE LCMS CHAIR



LCMS is committed to supporting people from multicultural communities to exercise their human rights across the breadth of social, cultural, economic, and civic life.

We have a vision of a community where people thrive, have a sense of belonging, contribute to society, and are welcomed, embraced, and celebrated. Racial discrimination has no place in such a community.

The International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination was established by the UN General Assembly in 1966 with the aim of raising awareness about the need to combat racism and promote equality.

The UN Secretary-General, Antonio Guterres, in his 2023 message was firm in his condemnation of racial discrimination, saying that it is a "deeply damaging and pervasive abuse of human rights and human dignity" and that "it is one of the most destructive forces dividing societies."

International war and crises can exacerbate these tensions and in our multicultural community, here in Australia, these events and their impacts are felt deeply. Advancing equality, and combating racism, xenophobia and related intolerance go hand in hand as we strive for the social cohesion that underpins successful multicultural communities like Australia. This is not just a one day a year event, at LCMS this is our daily work and commitment.

We join with the UN Secretary-General in his call "to commit to root out racism and racial discrimination and uphold the dignity and rights of all people, everywhere", and call on everyone to join us in this cause.

**Merrilyn Gaulke**

# TERM ONE CLASSES

## WEDNESDAY



### DIGITAL LITERACY - LEVEL 1 (VERY BEGINNER LEVEL)

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

“

*Education is the most powerful weapon  
which you can use to change the world.*

”

## 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)



### CITIZENSHIP STUDIES

Time: 3pm - 4:30pm  
Location: LCMS Office  
(437 Hargreaves St, Bendigo)



### INTERMEDIATE ENGLISH

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

## FRIDAY



### WELLBEING CLASS

Time: 9:15am - 12pm  
Location: Seventh Day  
Adventist Church  
(27 Bay St, Golden Square)



### IELTS STUDY CLASS

Time: 10am - 12pm  
Location: LCMS Office  
(437 Hargreaves St, Bendigo)



### DIGITAL LITERACY EMPLOYMENT READY!

Time: 1:30pm - 3:30pm  
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](mailto:r.matthews@lcms.org.au)  
P: 0482 175 965

**Vanessa Feeney**  
E: [v.feeney@lcms.org.au](mailto:v.feeney@lcms.org.au)  
P: 0403 556 726

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

# REGULAR WEEKLY PROGRAMS

## MONDAY

### EXCITING NEWS!

*LCMS has been granted funding from the Victorian Department of Health to run 'Language Story Time'. This activity is set to start in Term Two with stories and play activities in Dari and Karen.*

*Watch this space!*



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

Time: 3:45pm - 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)



### WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP SESSION (FORTNIGHTLY)

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

## THURSDAY



### WOMEN'S DANCING & WELLBEING

Time: 1:15am - 3pm  
Location: Gurri Wanyarra Wellbeing Centre  
9 Browning St, Kangaroo Flat



### WOMEN'S SOCIAL SWIMMING

Time: 7pm - 8pm  
Location: East Bendigo Swimming Pool  
(31 Lansell St, East Bendigo)



### MULTICULTURAL PLAYGROUP

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



## SOE SOE EH'S JOURNEY INTO EARLY EDUCATION

In early 2023, Soe Soe Eh embarked on a transformative educational journey by enrolling in the LCMS 'Introduction to Childcare' course. From the beginning, his passion for the early education industry shone through as he actively participated in class activities and eagerly joined discussions.

Immersing himself in the world of early childhood education, Soe Soe Eh seized the opportunity to explore the field firsthand through industry visits to the esteemed Shine Bright kindergarten and the renowned Jenny's Early Learning Centre in the local area.

Upon completing the pre-accredited course at LCMS, Soe Soe Eh charted his course towards deeper knowledge and skill acquisition by enrolling in Certificate 3 in the Early Childhood Education program at Bendigo TAFE. He soon realised his desire to gain practical experience alongside his studies.

Determined to merge learning with real-world application, Soe Soe Eh connected with the dedicated employment team at LCMS. Through their guidance and support, he secured a traineeship at Jenny's Early Learning, where he commenced his professional journey in the Early Education Industry.

Presently, Soe Soe Eh is diligently advancing through his traineeship, demonstrating remarkable progress and a deepening commitment to his chosen field. His story stands as a testament to the power of passion, perseverance, and the opportunities that unfold through the dedicated pursuit of one's aspirations.





## 'KAREN LADY HOUSE' A SUCCESS STORY

Established by Paw Kee

Paw Kee has been in Australia for 13 years and has recently opened her restaurant 'Karen Lady House' at shop 8/10, Centreway Arcade, Queen St in Bendigo. She has a natural skill of combining flavours and creating traditional Karen dishes. She knows that a perfect way to showcase culture is through food. Paw Kee also sells traditional Karen clothing and has a leading role in the Karen Organisation of Bendigo.

Paw Kee's culinary journey began in 2019 when she joined the LCMS "Starting work in Catering" course, which led to her setting up her own catering business from her home kitchen in Epsom. What started as serving lunches to students and teachers at TAFE swiftly transformed into a renowned catering enterprise. Her culinary expertise has graced events for the City of Greater Bendigo, Loddon Campaspe Multicultural Services (LCMS), Bendigo Community Health Services (BCHS), Castlemaine State Festival, Women's Health Loddon Mallee, Reginal Victorians of Colour and Neighbourhood Collective Australia.

*"I love cooking most as it is my area of expertise and it's my passion. I love seeing the satisfaction and happy faces when people enjoy the food that I have cooked and created."*

With a deep-rooted dream of owning a restaurant, Paw Kee's has worked hard to gain a reputation within both the Karen and wider communities. Beyond cooking delicious meals, she also leads cooking classes, youth mentoring sessions, and promotes healthy eating habits. Her advice to others is:

*"Most importantly you need to have passion in our job and to not give up if things are difficult. Make good friends, connection and networks as English isn't our mother tongue and not perfect. Having such connection will help navigate you in the right direction and eventually a pathway to success like opening up a business just like I have. For me, there are people like Jason from LCMS and Linto from Regional Victorians of Colour who have supported me significantly with paper works, registration forms and much more. There are times I had people doubting that I could open my own restaurants and my advice is to never give up. Follow your dreams."*

As the pioneer Karen restaurant in Bendigo, 'Karen Lady House' is more than a restaurant, it is a cultural hub, offering a welcoming space for all, to savour authentic Karen flavours. It is also offers an opportunity for the Karen community to engage in meaningful conversations, and feel proud to share their language and culture. Paw Kee truly is an inspiration amongst the Karen and broader community.

# PROGRAM UPDATES

## EDUCATION

---

Robyn and Vanessa in our Education Team are very excited to be back facilitating our regular programs for 2024.

Their digital literacy classes are particularly popular this term and they are thrilled to be able to offer four different levels of classes. They are confident that there is a class suitable for everyone!

Please contact Robyn or Vanessa if you would like to join a class, as they have limited spaces available. These classes will also be running during Term Two.

Rui has also been busy preparing and delivering our Cross Cultural Awareness Training (CCAT). Please reach out if you would like to organise one for your organisation!

Watch this space for an exciting announcement coming soon!



## EMPLOYMENT

---

In our Employment Team, Bu Gay and Amanda have been busy providing mentoring for community members seeking employment. So far this year, they have assisted more than 12 people securing work and helping numerous others to complete Forklift and White Card training.

In collaboration, the two LCMS teams will be delivering their “Starting Work in Essentials” course in March and will be helping jobseekers to undertake an accredited cleaning course shortly after.

If you know of any organisations looking for cleaners, please let us know! We have an amazing group of jobseekers ready to start!

## SETTLEMENT PROGRAM

---

Settlement transition support provides tailored services to newly arrived communities. The program aims to equip and empower humanitarian entrants and other eligible permanent migrants and their communities to address their settlement needs. It focuses on improving social participation, economic well-being, independence, personal well-being, and community connectedness.

So far this year, the Community Development Team has assisted 31 settlement eligible clients.

## WOMEN’S DANCING AND WELLBEING

---

This program is in its second year after a successful turnout last year. This program provides a safe space for women to dance, work out and discuss ways of self-care and well-being.

On average, there are 12 participants attending the sessions, and we anticipate more will join the group.



## WOMEN’S SOCIAL SWIMMING

---

Women’s Social Swimming is an annual seasonal swimming program held every Thursday evening at East Bendigo Pool, with an average of 23 participants attending per session. The program ran for 8 weeks and came to an end on the 29th of February.

All the participants who attended the programs received a certificate as well as all the volunteers who gave up their time and supported the community members on their road to being water safe.



## LA PA TEA AND MULTICULTURAL CARE AND FOOD

---

Every Tuesday from 10am to 11am, we have 'La Pa Tea', which means morning tea in the Karen language. With a lively multicultural atmosphere, this weekly gathering offers a space for community members and staff to connect over morning tea, sharing stories and news in their native languages. On average, there are 13 participants who come along to our La Pa Tea.

Alongside La Pa Tea, our Multicultural Care and Food program provides much-needed support to individuals and families facing rising living costs at the Salvation Army from 10:30am to 12:30pm. Currently, are 45 families accessing the program, which is steadily increasing.

Due to the increased number of families accessing our Multicultural Care and Food, we are seeking donations and food items to meet the demand. If you would like to help, please get in touch with the LCMS office.

## MULTICULTURAL PLAYGROUP

---



Multicultural Playgroup program is continuing at Long Gully Neighbourhood Centre (LGNC). The program is now in its sixth year! The sessions are held weekly from 10am to 12pm each Thursday and all multicultural communities are welcome to participate.

This term's activities include information sessions, free sports vouchers and an Easter Egg Craft session in March, and we will be part of the *Play in the Garden* event in April.

## MULTICULTURAL HOMEWORK CLUB

---

Multicultural Homework Club has resumed this year and runs every Monday (during the school Term) from 3:45pm to 5pm at the Bendigo Library.

The program supports students aged 12 to 18 and bridges the gap between language learning and real-life application to boost students' confidence in school.

Currently, with a team of four volunteers and LCMS staff, they are able to offer support focusing on math up to year 10 and English for all year levels.

If you are passionate about education, consider volunteering with us to make a difference in the lives of young learners. Contact LCMS now to learn more about becoming a volunteer and empowering students in a multicultural and inclusive environment at Bendigo Library

## YOUTH NETWORK

---

LCMS's Youth Network has started the year by electing nine Youth Ambassadors from the group. Congratulations to Deniz Noyan, Lovely Soe, Aastha Rana Magar, Gi Gi Kyiky Nwe, Deborah Chiam, K'Nynaw Htoo, Imaanot Bhangu, Jaismine and Saw Ta K'nyaw. These leaders have strong connections within their school and community and play a pivotal role in the direction of programs, activities and needs of youth.

The LCMS Youth Network staff & Youth Ambassadors meet fortnightly to discuss timely topics, take part in team building exercises and program planning.



They are given the opportunity to be involved in public events to build their leadership skills, practise public speaking, share culture and involvement and receive mentorship from the City of Greater Bendigo Intercultural Ambassadors.

In January, the Youth Network were invited to a consultation and movie day at The Star Cinema in Eaglehawk, where everyone took part in sharing their culture and their ideas for future programs in 2024. They also discussed their challenges and how LCMS can assist.

There were door prizes, interactive cultural clothing for youth to try on, catered lunch by the delicious Karen Lady House, interviews and the screening of 'The Boy and the Heron'. The event was well attended and helpful data was collected to help create a fun and progressive 2024 program for the LCMS Youth Network.

## YOUTH CAPACITY BUILDING WORKSHOP

---

Expressions of interest for youth 14-25 years old to attend an accredited *Food Handling Course* on Wednesday, 3 April are now open. It is free of charge.

The course covers the practical skills and knowledge required in understanding the importance of serving and storing food safely, the necessary measures for serving food to vulnerable persons and the safety requirements for commercial food operations.

This will follow with four participants from the course taking part in the *Café for a Day* program on Friday 5th April, where they will be preparing and cooking meals to be sold to the public.

LCMS is also organising a free *Barista Workshop* at the Yo Bendigo space for youth aged between 14-25 years old. The workshop will take place on Wednesday, 27 March, from 5:30pm to 8:30pm.

There are limited spots available for these courses, so don't press snooze!

For further information about the workshops, email Yoko [y.vigor@lcms.org.au](mailto:y.vigor@lcms.org.au) or Jason [foodsafari@lcms.org.au](mailto:foodsafari@lcms.org.au).

## THE LCMS GLOBAL PHOTO BOOTH

---

We have created a wardrobe of traditional clothing from community members which can be taken to events to celebrate diversity and culture. This is an interactive activity for the public to try on traditional clothing from various cultures, get their photo taken, and learn about its origins and when it may be worn.

The project called "*The LCMS Global Photo Booth*" will travel to events with a suitcase of slip-on outfits including information about each piece, a portable photo backdrop, collapsable clothing rack, and a polaroid camera for instant prints and memories.

Come check it out at:

- FEAST: Multicultural, Multi Faith, LGBTIQA+ stories on Sunday 24th March.
- Intercultural Ambassador tent at Bendigo Easter Celebration Rosiland Park on Friday 29th March and Saturday 30th March.

If you have any traditional clothing that could be donated for our wardrobe, we would love to add it to the collection. Just drop it into the office and share a brief description of the origins and if it is specifically worn for a celebration, particular age/marital status.

Expressions of interest for anyone who would like to volunteer at the photo booth on the dates & times below, please email Winne at [info@lcms.org.au](mailto:info@lcms.org.au) or drop into the LCMS office located on 437 Hargreaves St, Bendigo.

The LCMS Global Photo Booth at Bendigo Easter Celebration, Rosiland Park.

- Friday, 29 March: 10am to 12pm | 12pm to 2pm | 2pm to 4pm
- Saturday, 30th March: 10am to 12pm | 12pm to 2pm | 2pm to 4pm

## ZINDA MULTICULTURAL FESTIVAL 2024

---



Planning for Zinda Festival 2024 has begun, so it's time to save the date.

Saturday 12th October 11am – 5pm at Garden for the Future, White Hills.

Sponsorship opportunities to be involved with the festival are open, so if this something your business or organisation aligns with, please get in touch for further information.

Performers and food vendors EOI will open shortly, too.

We had a fantastic day last year and look to make this year bigger and better! There are some new ideas to bring into the festival for 2024, along with plenty of the previous favourites.

In addition to our main event, LCMS will be hosting two Zinda Pop-ups, one in Mt Alexander Shire and the second in Campaspe Shire. Each event looks to bring cultural dance and song to the stage, delicious food, interactive workshops for the kids and local talent within the arts and craft space.

Keep an eye out for more info, as we look forward to expanding Zinda to the regions. The Castlemaine Zinda will be held in May, and the Echuca Zinda will be mid-June.

We can't wait to share the Zinda spirit. Contact Jason [zinda@lcms.org.au](mailto:zinda@lcms.org.au) for info or involvement.

## LCMS RAINBOW READY ROAD MAP

---

March is Pride Festival month for Bendigo!!!

LCMS is committed to celebrating, exploring, and promoting diversity and inclusion of LGBTIQ+ communities and people within the Loddon Campaspe Region. We have formed partnerships and organised staff training.

The Pride Festival presents a month-long program that includes various events everyone in the LGBTIQ+ community members and allies can enjoy. The link below gives detailed information about the events.

<https://bendigopridefestival.com.au/events/>

One of the events of the Pride Festival is FEAST: multicultural, multi-faith LGBTIQ+ stories.

It is a Free Q&A event followed by a multicultural lunch in which the experiences of LGBTIQ+ people of diverse cultural or religious backgrounds are shared.

The event is hosted by the Greater City of Bendigo. LCMS is one of the partners.



Registration is essential.

<https://events.humanitix.com/feast-multicultural-multi-faith-lgbtiqua-stories>

We have partnered with the Greater City of Bendigo and Centre for Non-Violence for LGBTQIA+ inclusive training to enhance our staff skills and knowledge on providing improved services for LGBTQIA+ community members. In March, the LCMS staff are attending the *LGBTQIA+ 101 for Culturally Diverse and Faith Communities Workshop*.

## THE NATIONAL REDRESS SCHEME

---

The National Redress Scheme is for people who experienced institutional sexual abuse as a child. Loddon Campaspe Multicultural Services provides Redress Support Services (RSS).

The National Redress Scheme:

- acknowledges that many children were sexually abused in Australian institutions;
- recognizes the suffering they endured because of this abuse;
- holds institutions accountable for this abuse, and
- helps people who have experienced institutional child sexual abuse gain access to counselling, a direct personal response, and a Redress payment.

If you are eligible to apply to the Scheme, an offer of Redress can mean access to:

- Counselling that is confidential and culturally safe, including:
- a direct personal response, such as an apology from the institution;
- a payment of up to \$150,000
- your own choice of what parts of the redress offer you want to receive.



### What are my options?

Loddon Campaspe Multicultural Services can assist you to discuss your options.

### How to Reach Us

If you or someone you know may be eligible for support under the National Redress Scheme, please contact us:

Email: [redress@lcms.org.au](mailto:redress@lcms.org.au)  
Phone: 0403 626 805 / 03 5441 6644

For more information about our Redress Support Services, visit our website:

<https://lcms.org.au/community-programs/national-redress-scheme-support-services/>



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.

437 Hargreaves Street  
Bendigo, VIC 3550  
(03) 5441 6644  
Email: [info@lcms.org.au](mailto:info@lcms.org.au)

[www.lcms.org.au](http://www.lcms.org.au)

Follow us:   

LODDON CAMPASPE

