

# ANNUAL REPORT

ANNUAL REPORT FOR THE YEAR  
ENDED 30 JUNE 2024

LODDON CAMPASPE







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# Acknowledgement of Country

We pay our respects to the Traditional Custodians of these lands we now call home: the Dja Dja Wurrung, Taungurung, Yorta Yorta, Wurundjeri, Woi Wurrung and Barapa Barapa Peoples.

We honour the many Elders, stories, cultures, languages, and generation who have cared for Country here: past, present and emerging.

We recognise the life-giving strength and power of the lands, waters, creatures, plants and sky. We acknowledge that sovereignty was never ceded by the First Nations Peoples.

We express our gratitude for the opportunity to live in these beautiful lands that provide us with safety, shelter and food.

We thank and stand in solidarity with the First Nations Peoples who have welcomed those of us who have had to flee or were compelled to leave our own homelands, and those of us who have chosen to make Australia home.

We promise to care for Country, which continues to care for us.

We hope to walk together with the Traditional Custodians, in the spirit of healing.



## Our Vision

A vibrant Loddon Campaspe region where people from multicultural communities are able to thrive, have a sense of belonging, contribute to society and are welcomed, celebrated and embraced.

## Our Purpose

To support 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.

## Our Values

Respect   Collaboration   Inclusiveness   Authenticity   Integrity   Reliability



# Message from our Chair

### CHANGES:

In December 2023, the Board appointed Dimity Fifer as CEO. Dimity brought her extensive CEO experience, knowledge, and analytical skills to LCMS. Dimity began in January 2024 and has since worked tirelessly to right-size the organisation while ensuring all programs are closely aligned with the current Strategic Plan.

### CHALLENGES:

Financial challenges have been a major concern since June 2023, when LCMS lost significant government funding due to a change in government policy. In 2024, the incoming CEO implemented processes to monitor closely income and expenditures. Sourcing grants remains a priority as does securing unencumbered donations to support LCMS' work and clients. I thank the CEO and her team for their work during this year.

### INNOVATIONS:

The CEO and her team are continually innovating and adapting programs to meet the needs of the multicultural communities they serve. Some examples are,

- The implementation of several levels of Digital Literacy classes (Education team).
- Online 'Let's Talk' Cross Cultural Awareness Training (CCAT).
- Two pop-up Zindas. The first was at Campbells Creek, the other at Echuca. Both were well attended, and some attendees also joined Zinda Bendigo as a result.
- Collaborative work with the other Regional Ethnic Communities Councils Victoria (RECCV) to advocate for funding initiatives.



### THE BOARD:

In July, the Board welcomed German Galvan, Nicole Petrucci, and Vitor Rocha.

I thank past Board members for their contributions to the Board - Andriy Kurtsev who stepped down in December 2023. Salwa Dastgeer who stepped down in February.

To the current Board members (who voluntarily give of their time), thank you for your dedication, diligence, and commitment to ensuring the good governance of LCMS throughout the year.

*Merrilyn Gaulke*



Peter Watson



Ian Patrick



Anna Dorevitch



Annika Kearton



Daniel Jose



Bruno Spandonide



Vitor Rocha



Nicole Petrucci

LCMS would like to recognise past 23-24 board members:

Andriy Kurtsev  
Salwa Dastgeer



German Galvan

## Message from the CEO

What a privilege it is to be part of the LCMS community since I arrived in mid-January 2024. I thank everyone on the LCMS Board, in the staff team and community for making me so welcome.

The organisation has a long and rich history walking alongside, celebrating and serving multicultural communities and the breadth of our work is extraordinary. Our staff do more than run award winning programs - they are listening to the needs of community members and helping navigate the complexity of services delivered by three levels of government as well as the breadth of civil society organisations.

The creativity and innovation embedded in our work is very clear and our new Zinda Pop Up events held this year in Echuca and Castlemaine are evidence of the deep connections that LCMS has with local communities, networks and organisations. We like to say that 'we work at the speed of trust' with our values being the foundation of our work and success. They are expressed in who we are, how we work not just what we do and testament to the success, goodwill and leadership role that LCMS has developed across the region.

## About Us

Loddon Campaspe Multicultural Services (LCMS) is the Ethnic Community Council and peak body for multicultural communities in central Victoria.

LCMS is a welcoming not-for-profit organisation that empowers people from migrant and refugee backgrounds to participate fully in Australian society.

By focusing on people's strengths, we are able to develop stronger communities, support other service providers and influence decision makers at local, state and national levels.

**LCMS' WORK SITS WITHIN FOUR PROGRAM AREAS: SOCIAL INCLUSION AND PARTICIPATION; STRONG AND VISIBLE VOICES; PATHWAYS TO JOBS AND EDUCATION; AND CELEBRATING CULTURE.**

### **SOCIAL INCLUSION AND PARTICIPATION**

- SETTLEMENT, ENGAGEMENT AND TRANSITION SUPPORT (SETS)
- COMMUNITY CAPACITY BUILDING
- HOUSING
- REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT
- SUPPORT FOR FAMILIES AND SOCIAL COHESION
- REDRESS SUPPORT SERVICES

### **PATHWAYS TO JOBS AND EDUCATION**

- ENGLISH LANGUAGE CLASSES
- PRE-EMPLOYMENT TRAINING PATHWAYS
- CULTURAL COMPETENCY TRAINING
- JOB MENTORING
- WORKPLACE PARTNERSHIPS

### **CELEBRATING CULTURE**

- ZINDA FESTIVAL
- COMMUNITY CULTURAL FESTIVAL AND EVENTS
- SOCIAL ENTERPRISE

### **STRONG AND VISIBLE VOICES**

- ADVOCACY



# COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND CAPACITY BUILDING

Another 12 months has flown by, and the Community Services Team continues to provide exceptional services to new and established multicultural community members. Our team members can confidently state that the last year was full of joy and challenges. We are in a privileged position to see and hear firsthand the impact that our work has on the lives of so many individuals, families and members of the community. This inspires us every day to keep giving our best in the work we do:

“*Your assistance in coordinating my food supplies, along with your invaluable help applying for Centrelink, has indeed lightened my burden a great deal. It's due to such generous gestures from truly kind-hearted people like yourself that individuals like us find the courage to persevere in life ...*”

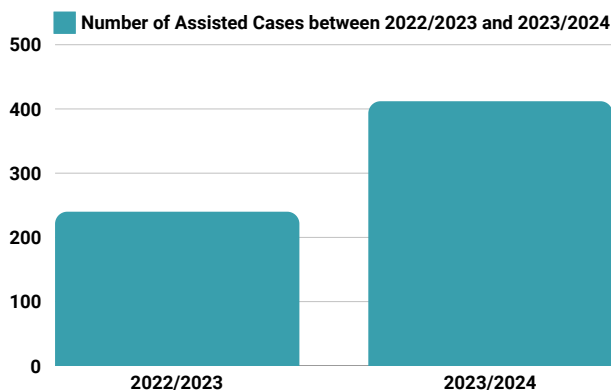
”

**100%**  
**INCREASE IN**  
**INFORMATION + ADVICE**  
**+ ADVOCACY +**  
**REFERRALS + PATHWAYS**

## CASE MANAGEMENT

One-to-one case management encompasses Settlement Engagement Transition Services (SETS) and general community support. It is designed to assist newly arrived refugees and migrant families with any issues related to their settlement.

Our case workers provide support with: Information and advice advocacy and referral on issues such as, but not limited to health, education, family and domestic violence and housing. During last year we had any increase of more than **100%** compared to last financial year. This situation can be associated with the trend of migration pattern to the region. We are welcoming more people on work visas who are settling here, particularly from India and Sri-Lanka.



## ACCESS TO INFORMATION

During the last financial year, we provided a range of information sessions and training workshops designed to fill the information gap regarding the knowledge of services and systems in regional Victoria. We have delivered over 10 information sessions on renting and voting rights, children and family relationship sessions and domestic and sexual violence preventive information and Tax Return and Centrelink support Clinics.

## COMMUNITY SOCIAL INCLUSION

**Women's Social Swimming:** Adult swimming safety is a huge issue amongst the multicultural community. Between November 2023 and February 2024, we delivered eight swimming sessions to a total of 72 participants representing diverse cultural groups. Afghan Hazara lead the participation in terms of numbers, but it's worth mentioning that an increased number of participants from the Indian community took part compared to the same period last year.





**YOGA SESSIONS**



**INFORMATION SESSION ON MANAGING COVID-19 AT HOME**



**HAZARA COMMUNITY: KIDS SCREEN TIME MANAGEMENT INFORMATION SESSION**



**WOMEN'S NETWORK: MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING SESSION**



**GRANT WRITING WROKSHOP**



**KAREN COMMUNITY: PACKING HEALTHY LUNCH BOX INFORMATION SESSION**



**CHILD SAFETY TRAINING SESSION**



**Our celebration of International Women's Day 2024**

was extra special, with a focus on the success stories of women from refugee and migrant backgrounds who have achieved great success at the social and professional level. Over 60 women attended, and we heard from three exceptional women, Hussnia (Afghan Hazara) Sher Mu La Wee (Karen) and Ginny Jeong (Korea). Over 60 women participated in the day'.

**Multicultural Futsal Tournament:** We delivered a Multicultural Indoor Soccer Tournament for over 120 community members representing the Karen, Afghan Hazara, Nepalese and African communities. The activity was a huge success and opened up opportunities and the appetite for more inclusive sport activities.

**Family Fishing Competition:** Our community Fishing Competition was held on 10th of November at Cairn Curran Reservoir, in Baringhup, located 45 minutes from Bendigo. The event included fishing competitions and information on how to organise family activities, including tips on the best fishing seasons, the materials and costs to organize the activities.

**Family Bush Walk:** LCMS organised and hosted a community bush walk to a popular park in Bendigo, Crusoe Reservoir Park. The activity was delivered in partnership with the Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action (DEECA) and the Department of Biodiversity Engagement from City of Greater Bendigo. A total of 32 people from the Karen and Hazara communities participated in the day.

**COMMUNITY CAPACITY BUILDING**

**Grant Writing & Event Management Workshop:** A grant writing workshop was held in August 2023 to build the capacity of cultural leaders and organisations on grant writing processes. The program saw seven local community groups participate.

**Driver Program:** The program saw the delivery of two in-language road safety sessions and 159 driving lessons to 27 community members on Learner Permits who, as part of this program accumulated driving hours toward their driving tests. The driving program provides between five and eight sessions per participant, subject to client needs. Of all the participants nine passed their driving test and secured their driver licence.

**Strengthening Family Violence / Sexual Responses for Multicultural Communities - Loddon Campaspe:** This Family Violence Services (FVS) funded project focused on building the awareness, skills and capacity of LCMS, Annie North and Centre Against Sexual Assault Central Victoria (CASACV) on how best to support multicultural communities. The work included training and experience sharing between the three organisations resulting in the creation of a best practice guide for the three partner organisations and other service providers in the domestic and sexual violence service sector.

# 120+

PARTICIPATED IN

**FUTSAL TOURNAMENT  
WHERE GENDER INCLUSION  
WAS A FOCUS**

# 9

PARTICIPANTS IN

**DRIVER PROGRAM  
SECURED THEIR  
DRIVERS LICENCE**





**FAMILY FISHING COMPETITION**



**BUSH WALK**



**WOMEN SOCIAL SWIMMING**



**PLAYGROUP VISIT TO ART GALLERY**



**FUTSAL TOURNAMENT**



**FOOD SHARE**



**INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY LUNCH**



## REDRESS SCHEME

**ACHIEVEMENTS:** Over the past year, the LCMS Redress Team has made significant strides in supporting survivors of institutional abuse in the Loddon Campaspe region through the National Redress Scheme. Our team has successfully assisted numerous clients in navigating the complex application process, providing trauma-informed support that respects the diverse cultural backgrounds of those we serve. We have focused on creating a safe, inclusive environment where survivors can share their stories and seek redress without fear of judgment or re-traumatisation.

One of our notable achievements includes the development and implementation of a cross-cultural trauma-informed framework, specifically tailored to deliver sensitive information to clients from various cultural backgrounds. This framework has been instrumental in ensuring that our clients feel heard, respected, and supported throughout their journey with the Redress Scheme.

**CHALLENGES:** Despite our successes, the Redress Team has faced several challenges. The complexity of the Redress Scheme itself often presents barriers for our clients, many of whom are already navigating the effects of trauma and systemic discrimination. Additionally, the need for culturally competent and sensitive communication strategies has been a constant focus, requiring ongoing training and development for our team members.

Furthermore, the departure of key team members, Karl and Pinar, has been a significant transition for our team. Karl's expertise in law practices and Pinar's deep understanding of community dynamics have been invaluable to our work. Their dedication and commitment have left a lasting impact on our team and the clients we serve. We are grateful for their contributions and wish them the best in their future endeavours.

**NEW TEAM MEMBERS & CONTRIBUTIONS:** As we move forward, we were excited to welcome new team members who bring fresh perspectives and valuable experience to our work.

Eh Kha joins us with a robust background in working with children and a steadfast commitment to community safety and child protection. Her experience will be instrumental in expanding our services to better support younger survivors and their families.

Dulce brings her experience and expertise in working with multicultural communities, ensuring that our processes are trauma-informed and culturally sensitive.

Her background in advocacy and support for diverse communities allows us to approach each case with a nuanced understanding of cultural dynamics, further strengthening our team's ability to provide comprehensive support to all clients.

**FUTURE PLANS & ADVOCACY:** Looking ahead, our focus will be on advocating for improvements to the National Redress Scheme to better meet the needs of survivors in the Loddon Campaspe region. We recognise that the current framework does not always provide adequate support or acknowledgment of the diverse experiences of survivors, particularly those from multicultural communities.

Our team is committed to empowering our clients to become advocates for change, ensuring their voices are heard in the ongoing discussions about the Redress Scheme's future. By fostering a culture of empowerment and advocacy, we aim to contribute to a more just and equitable system that truly reflects the needs and experiences of all survivors.

**IMPORTANCE OF THE REDRESS SCHEME IN THE LODDON CAMPASPE AREA:** The Redress Scheme plays a crucial role in the Loddon Campaspe area, where many individuals and families have been affected by institutional abuse. It offers a pathway to healing and justice for survivors, acknowledging their experiences and providing them with the support they need to rebuild their lives. Our work at LCMS is vital in ensuring that the scheme is accessible and responsive to the unique needs of our community, and we remain dedicated to advocating for the rights and dignity of all survivors.

We look forward to continuing our work, advocating for improvements to the scheme, and empowering our clients to make their voices heard. Together, we can create a stronger, more inclusive future for all.

“

*Mate, I went into this thinking no one would give a damn about my story. Felt like I was just another bloke they'd pass over. But you listened, proper listened. Treated me like a real person, not just some number in the system. The way you stuck by me, didn't rush me, took the time to help—it's rare, you know? Even put me onto people and services that actually wanna help me get back on track. For the first time in ages, I reckon there's a bit of hope. Feels like someone's finally in my corner, helping me find a way forward. –*

*Redress Client aged 64*

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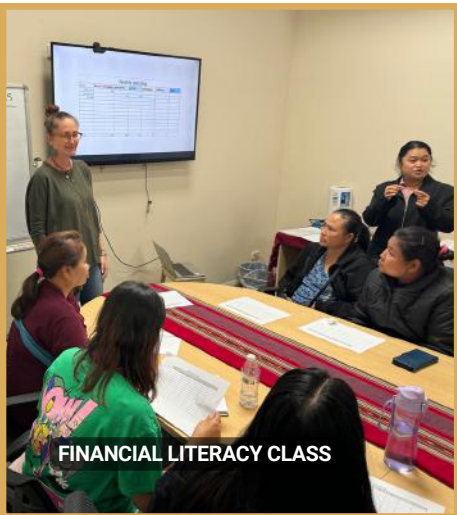
**LCMS CHOIR: END OF YEAR GRATUATION**



**FAMILY LEARNING PROGRAM (FLP) SESSION AT WEEROONA COLLEGE**



**STARTING WORK IN HEALTHCARE INFORMATION SESSION**



**FINANCIAL LITERACY CLASS**



**IELTS CLASS**



**CHILDCARE TASTER COUSE FIRST AID TRAINING**



## EDUCATION & EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM



*Education is one thing no one can take away from you - Elin Nordegren*



With Vanessa on maternity leave until the beginning of 2024, Monica joined Robyn in delivering our pre-accredited classes. Monica was able to bring her own flair to the classes, in particular by leading a fluency and pronunciation class with a strong focus on singing and music. The students from the class performed at Zinda and put on an impressive end of year celebration. We thank Monica for her support during Vanessa's maternity leave and wish her the best as she embarks on her own new journey into parenthood.

With thanks to several fantastic donors, our digital literacy classes have continued to grow. We have expanded our classes to now encompass support from the very beginner level to more advanced classes, as well as a class specifically for those wanting support with the skills required to find employment. This financial year we have supported 72 students to improve their digital literacy skills and have gifted more than 30 repurposed laptops to graduates, in turn, supporting their whole family.

Across our language classes (Women's English, Intermediate English, Conversation Club, Book Club and IELTS study group) we welcomed 152 students. Whilst each class has a different language focus, what they have in common is that they are a LOT of fun! Some might even say, rowdy at times! Which is just the way we love it!

Our pre-employment programs (Starting Work in Cleaning, Starting Work in Aged Care, Working in Australia Essentials, Small Business Mentoring courses and Starting Work in Childcare Taster Course) supported 132 community members to increase their employability skills, explore a new industry, or upskill. Many courses were run in collaboration with an employment partner and often led directly to student employment. Additional funding supported by the City of Greater Bendigo supported 45 of these participants to additionally complete accredited microcredentials in alignment with their studies or employment goals.

With the mentorship of Bu Gay and Amanda, close to 100 jobseekers found employment this year, many of them in upskilled roles or new industries.

Agnico Eagle funding continued to support the Engineering Apprenticeship students, as well as students attending the Starting Work in Childcare Taster course with their studies.

In addition to our language, literacy and pre-employment programs, this year was a big year for our capacity building courses such as the Citizenship studies course, the Financial Literacy (How to save money) classes, and our new Resilience – self care course. Over 70 students joined these courses and learnt valuable life skills, including how to make a budget, how to calculate bills, how to save for a goal, self-care techniques and study tips for the Citizenship test. The Financial literacy class in particular was hugely successful with an additional course delivered at the Bendigo Deaf Hub to members of the Deaf community.

Reflecting on the many fantastic courses we have delivered this year, it is difficult to pick our favourite, or the course with the most impact. Each course and each student's journey is unique. Each course has had impact in one way or another, often in ways that are not measurable in the traditional sense. Many times a student has joined one class and then not returned for several months, even years. We strive to be an inclusive and welcoming space where the community know that they can come when they are ready. The journey to education is varied and brings many challenges, so, in our opinion, simply choosing education is a successful outcome.

Whilst we never teach for the accolades, it is always lovely to be recognised. This year our "Starting work in Hospital settings" course in collaboration with Downer (previously Spotless) at Bendigo Health, which saw more than 60 community members gain employment, won the 2023 Program of the year (large provider) at the Learn Local Awards. It was especially wonderful to share the moment with representatives from Downer.

Finally, thank you to all of our wonderful volunteers who tirelessly give their time to make our classes possible.





**END OF YEAR GRADUATION**



**CROSS-CULTURAL AWARENESS TRAINING SESSION**



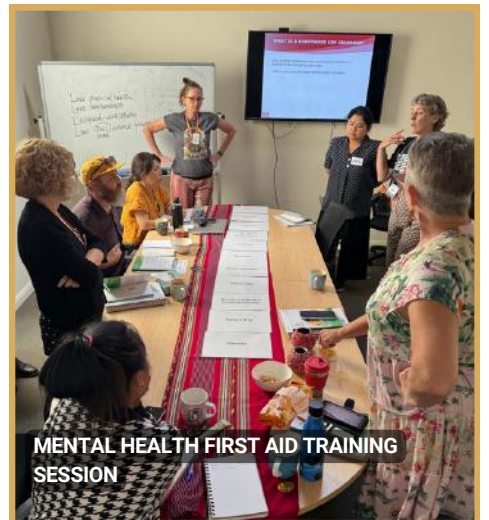
**ROBYN, DOWNER REPRESENTATIVES AND MERRILYN AT THE LEARN LOCAL AWARDS**



**LAPTOPS DONATION FROM GECKO I.T. SOLUTIONS**



**LEVEL ONE DIGITAL LITERACY CLASS**



**MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AID TRAINING SESSION**



**Cross Cultural Awareness Training:** LCMS delivered 16 Cross Cultural Awareness Sessions this year to representatives from seven sectors including community services, government, education, mining and mental health. LCMS plans to expand our CCAT offerings going forward in order to continue to meet the need for greater cultural safety within all sectors.

**Other Programs:** LCMS ran a successful Family Learning Partnership program in collaboration with Crusoe College, Weeroona College, Eaglehawk Secondary College and Bendigo South East College through which multicultural families were given information about the Victorian Education system and pathways beyond high school to TAFE and University.



**FAMILY LEARNING PARTNERSHIP**  
**4 BENDIGO HIGH SCHOOLS**  
 EXPLORING  
**TAFE AND UNI PATHWAYS**



**EMMANUEL CASE STUDY**

Emmanuel, who lives with his family in Bendigo, had been struggling to find work after finishing his studies last year, particularly in the automotive industry. Despite his efforts, opportunities were hard to come by. His mum, who had a connection with us here at LCMS through her class, suggested he reach out for support with the employment team.

Initially, Emmanuel felt uncertain about reaching out to LCMS. The idea of discussing his goals in a formal setting was unfamiliar. However, he soon found the LCMS team to be welcoming and genuinely invested in his success. They took time to understand his interests, offering one-on-one support that helped him focus his job search and consider new opportunities.

One day, LCMS contacted Emmanuel with an opportunity in sign making and installation. While not in the automotive field, it matched his interest in hands-on work. With LCMS’s help, he polished his resume and applied. After a successful one-week trial, he was offered a full-time position.

Reflecting on his journey, Emmanuel says, “I didn’t know where to start, but the LCMS team made everything feel possible. They didn’t just help me find a job—they helped me believe in myself again. I feel like I have a place in the workforce, and that’s made all the difference.”

The support from LCMS didn’t just lead to employment; it also boosted Emmanuel’s confidence, helping him feel he has a place in both the workforce and the community. His experience shows how the right support can make a significant impact on young people starting their careers, helping them build confidence and find purpose in their work.





**MAMBA NEGRA AFRICAN DRUMMING ENSEMBLE**



**ZINDA POP-UP CASTLEMAINE: ASIAN WOMEN'S COLLECTIVE**



**JAPANESE BRUSH ART WITH ISABELLE**



**ZINDA POP-UP ECHUCA: DENLIQUIN FILIPINO DANCE GROUP**



**MUGI RAHAYU INDONESIAN GAMELAN**



**ANOINTED WEST AFRICAN GOSPEL BAND**



**2023 LCMS MULTICULTURAL FASHION SHOW TEAM**



# CULTURAL DIVERSITY

## ZINDA FESTIVAL

Zinda Bendigo 2023 saw its biggest lineup to date with an extraordinary 20 community groups, individuals and musicians on stage and a total of 31 cultural performances, all sharing culture and tradition with a colourful array of clothing, dance and music.

Attendance at the Garden for the Future venue saw an increase from 2022, surpassing 3500 guests. The 2023 event welcomed members from various community groups, including Karen, South Sudanese, Hazara, Indonesian, Filipino, Malayalee, Seek, Punjabi, Indigenous Australians, Korean, Japanese, Chinese, Malaysian, West African, Thai, and more.

There were 11 local small business food vendors showcasing traditional flavours from all over the world. Also included in the day were 5 local arts & crafts stalls, 6 interactive stalls for children, 2 not-for-profit organisations, 3 multicultural small businesses, 5 sponsorship tents and 3 emergency services providing information to the public.

Our major sponsors for Zinda Bendigo 2023 included the Victorian State Government, Dja Dja Wurrung, Bendigo Tafe, Bendigo Marketplace, Win Network and Be Bendigo.

2024, the Zinda Multicultural Festival was also introduced to the regional towns of Castlemaine and Echuca for the very first time.

**Zinda Castlemaine** was organised by LCMS and funded by the Victorian State Government, the two new locations labelled as “Zinda Regional Pop-ups” both led to positive connection and engagement, with both local community and service providers.

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

The day saw around 500 community members attend to watch 8 performance groups set the stage from interactive Japanese art and music show, to an Indonesian Gamalen, to African drumming ensemble to Bollywood performance & dance workshop. 6 local services and community engagement stalls hosted activities and information.

3 local food vendors and volunteers run fundraising for LCMS care and food exchange program.

“*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*”

**Zinda Echuca** was organised by LCMS and funded by the Victorian State Government.

Supported by St Mary’s Parish and Father Novie, Campaspe Shire, Echuca Health, Loddon Mallee Public Health Unit and 2 Tribes Café. The event saw around 400 community members attend to watch, learn and enjoy the sharing of culture and tradition through performance, dress, and food. Traditional Sri Lankin and Filipino food were offered to cap off a very successful and heartfelt community event.

## CAFE FOR A DAY

With an ongoing partnership with Bendigo Food Share and LCMS, ‘Cafe For A Day’ gives youth the opportunity to gain hospitality experience in a commercial kitchen, whilst learning cultural diversity through food with knowledge shared of the dishes and their origins.

Customer service, safe hygienic practice, food costings and portion control are also covered during each session.





6 sessions were held, with 30 youth involved, one held at Zinda festival Bendigo and the others at Salvation Army Café. Northern Indian, Pakistani and Ghanaian cuisines were taught with a total of 300 meals were produced.

**LCMS YOUTH NETWORK**

**Sports Program:** Runs during the school term and is held at Latrobe University. LCMS facilitates weekly sports activities in which participants chose indoor volleyball. This program was supported by Catholic Care Victoria and Carers Vic.

**End of Term Celebration:** Movie nights have been a big hit with the youth as part of their end of term celebration. This gives the youth an opportunity to connect with others in the community, improves their wellbeing and social inclusion and gives those who are caring for others an opportunity to take some time out for themselves and their wellbeing. LCMS has partnered with Catholic Care Victoria and Carers Vic.

**Malo Lee Ley (Homework Club):** Is a weekly program held during the school term to meet the specific needs of primary and secondary students. The program is held at Bendigo Library, where students have one on one support from a group of volunteer tutors. There is also assistance with navigating and accessing the library’s recourses. We have an average of 8 students each week and are constantly looking for volunteers to support youth who are seeking assistance.

**School Holiday Program:** During the school break, LCMS offers activities for the youth to engage and learn. During this period LCMS has facilitated with Mirawara to host caring for country tour and workshop at Leanganook and rock climbing. Café for a Day, in conjunction with Bendigo Food Share, was also run through the school holidays, to give youth the opportunity to gain employable skills in a commercial kitchen setting. Learning safe food practice, recipes and recipe development, food costings and stock rotation and customer service.

**Youth Ambassador Program:** Is an initiative of LCMS to recruit a group of 8 members to offer leadership skills and support for active youth in the community. Public speaking workshops, Intercultural ambassadors mentor sessions, employment training opportunities such as barista and food handling courses, design and silk screen workshops.

Consultation sessions and volunteering opportunities at festivals and events were also offered and involved the members.

**MULTICULTURAL CARE AND FOOD EXCHANGE**

With cost of living at a high, there has been an increase in demand for food security during the 2023/24 financial year. LCMS currently has two major food donors, Bendigo Food Share and Food Bank (Melbourne) with a total of 13,033kg of fresh produce and dry ingredients received from Bendigo Food Share during 23/24 and a total of 3,640 kg of fresh produce and dry ingredients from Food Bank during 23/24.

A major challenge with the program is sourcing culturally appropriate foods to donate to our multicultural families. During the year we ran fundraising activities to enable the purchase of culturally appropriate foods.

Zinda T-Shirt sale proceeds and donations at the three Zinda events supported the program as well as monies raised at the LCMS Youth Ambassadors Tearoom at Zinda Castlemaine. An online end of financial year drive to raise funding for the program was posted on our socials, newsletter and sent out to stakeholders.

Funding for this program continues to be an issue for the organisation and any support or sponsorship would greatly help those in need.

**BENDIGO FOOD SHARE PROVIDED**  
3,640 KG  
FRESH PRODUCE + DRY INGREDIENTS

**FOOD BANK PROVIDED**  
13,033 KG  
FRESH PRODUCE + DRY INGREDIENTS

**JAN 24**  
34 Food Boxes Per Week  
135 People

**FEB 24**  
38 Food Boxes Per Week  
155 People

**MAR 24**  
52 Food Boxes Per Week  
221 People

**APR 24**  
54 Food Boxes Per Week  
235 People

**MAY 24**  
60 Food Boxes Per Week  
258 People

**JUN 24**  
63 Food Boxes Per Week  
276 People





T-SHIR SILK SCREEN PRINTING



MULTICULTURAL YOUTH AMBASSADOR MEETING



YOUTH ROCK CLIMBING



YOUTH CONSULTATION DAY



MULTICULTURAL HOMEWORK CLUB



MIRAWARA EARTH SKILLS EXPERIENCE



CAFE FOR A DAY WITH MULTICULTURAL YOUTH



## ADMINISTRATION AND COMMUNICATION

**A Year of Big Goals and Big Wins:** We kicked off this year with ambitious goals, and we're proud to say we've met many of them! From launching creative campaigns to expanding our digital footprint, Maha has played a key role in boosting visibility and engagement for our organisation. This report highlights what has been achieved, the challenges that were overcome, and what's next on the horizon.

**Meet the Powerhouse:** It's been a busy year, but thanks to our superstar Communications Coordinator, Maha Sein, everything came together seamlessly. As part of the LCMS team, which thrives on a shared passion for storytelling, Maha's organisation skills have been crucial in proving just how much we can accomplish when we work together.

**Digital Growth and Community Engagement:** This year, we set ambitious goals for our digital presence—and the results have been remarkable! Thanks to our creative content and strategic targeting, we reached a significant milestone in overall impressions. Under Maha's direction, our digital reach grew by an impressive 600%! In addition to expanding our digital platforms, a major focus was strengthening our connection with the community. We transformed our monthly newsletter into a fresh, quarterly magazine, which received fantastic feedback. Everyone has praised the updated design, and engagement has been stronger than ever.

**Overcoming Challenges and Learning Along the Way:** No year is without its hurdles, and we had our share of challenges. However, these obstacles have only made us stronger. Managing multiple projects with tight resources wasn't easy for Maha but by streamlining processes and working smarter, Maha made it work. In particular, he has become highly efficient and effective, handling all communication tasks with precision and creativity.

**What's Next for Us:** The future is looking bright! Next year, we plan to continue expanding our digital reach by creating more dynamic content. We'll be diving into videos, podcasts, and other interactive formats to engage new and diverse audiences. With a solid foundation and stronger media relationships, we're poised for even greater success in the coming year.

**A Year to Be Proud Of:** It's been a fantastic year for the communications team, and we're incredibly proud of everything that's been accomplished. Thanks to the strong media relationships we've built, we've laid the groundwork for future successes. A big thanks to Maha who made this year such a success—here's to even bigger wins in the future!

## THANK YOU TO OUR WONDERFUL VOLUNTEERS

For the 2023-2024 financial year, 26 dedicated volunteers supported our organisation across various programmes, each aligning with their interests.

Here is the breakdown of volunteer numbers by program:

- Homework Club: six volunteers provide academic support to students, assisting with schoolwork and skill-building.
- Food Share: four volunteers help organise and distribute food to community members in need.
- Youth Network: five youth ambassadors engage, advocates and provide advice to LCMS so that they better align with the needs of young people.
- Women's English and Conversation Class: six volunteers assist with childminding while mums learn English language and conversation practice.
- Women's Swimming: two volunteers coordinate swimming sessions, promoting fitness and community bonding.
- Playgroup: four volunteers facilitate social and educational play sessions for children and their parents.
- La Pa Tea: one volunteer organised cultural gatherings for community engagement.
- Tax Return Support: one volunteer offered assistance with tax preparation.

These 26 volunteers have enriched our programmes, ensuring their success and strengthening our community impact.

# TWENTY SIX

DEDICATED

VOLUNTEERS

SUPPORTED

ACROSS VARIOUS PROGRAMMES



# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

## FIRST NATION PARTNERS

- Dja Dja Wurrung Clans

## FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

- Department of Families, Fairness and Housing
- Department of Health and Human Services
- Department of Social Services Victorian

## GOVERNMENT

- Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action
- Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning
- Department of Health and Human Services
- Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions
- Department of Jobs, Skills, Industry and Regions
- Department of Premier and Cabinet
- Department of Transport and Planning

## LOCAL GOVERNMENT

- Campaspe Shire Council
- Central Goldfields Shire Council
- Greater Bendigo City Council
- Loddon Shire Council
- Macedon Ranges Shire Council
- Mount Alexander Shire Council

## COMMUNITY PARTNERS

- ABC Central Victoria
- Access Skills Training
- Adult, Community and Further Education
- AFS Auditors
- Agnico Eagle
- Ambulance Victoria
- Anglicare Victoria
- Annie North
- APM Group
- ARC Justice
- Australian Communities Foundation
- Axis Australia
- Ballarat Regional Multicultural Council
- Be Bendigo
- Bendigo Advertiser
- Bendigo Art Gallery
- Bendigo Australian Indonesian Klub
- Bendigo Chinese Association
- Bendigo Community Health Services
- Deaf Hub Bendigo

- Bendigo Filipino Foundation
- Bendigo Food Share
- Bendigo Friends and Mentors
- Bendigo Health
- Bendigo Health Unit
- Bendigo Interfaith Council
- Bendigo Islamic Association
- Bendigo Kangan Institute
- Bendigo Malayalee Association
- Bendigo Marketplace
- Bendigo Senior Secondary College
- Bendigo South East College
- Bendigo Times
- Castlemaine Community House
- Catholic Care Victoria
- Central Goldfields Library
- Centre Against Sexual Assault
- Centre for Non Violence
- Clayton Utz
- Coliban Water
- Connecting Home
- Country Fire Authority
- Country Women's Association
- Creek Street Christian College
- Crusoe College
- Cultura
- Curium Legal
- CVGT Employment
- Downer Group
- Drummond Street Services
- Eaglehawk Secondary College
- East Bendigo Pool
- Echuca Regional Health
- Ethnic Communities Council of Victoria
- Ethnic Council of Shepparton and District
- Federation of Ethnic Communities Councils of Australia
- Flora & Frank Leith Charitable Trust
- Food Bank Australia
- Frances & Harold Abbott Foundation
- Gandel Foundation
- Gecko IT
- Girton Grammar
- Gold FM
- Golden Square Pool
- Goldfields Library Corporation
- Grandmothers ADRC
- Gurri Wanyarra
- Hare Krishna Bendigo
- Hellers
- In Good Faith Foundation
- Jenny's Early Learning Centre
- Karen Centre Bendigo
- Karen Organisation of Bendigo
- Kerala Hindu Society of Bendigo
- Knowmore Legal Services
- La Trobe University
- Land Care Victoria
- Legal Aid Victoria
- Leith Charitable Trust
- Lifeline Central Victoria and Mallee
- Loddon Mallee Public Health Unit
- Long Gully Neighbourhood House
- Main FM
- Mount Alexander Resource Centre
- Multicultural Centre for Women's Health
- Murnong Mammias
- Noah's Ark
- Open Place Support Service for Forgotten Australians
- Orange Door
- Phoenix FM
- Punctum Inc
- Pyramid Hill Neighbourhood House
- Red Cross
- Refugee Centre
- Refugee Council of Australia
- Regional Multicultural Consortium
- Relationships Australia – Victoria
- Rural Australians for Refugees Bendigo and Castlemaine
- Salvation Army Church, Bendigo
- Sandhurst Castlemaine Community House
- SES Victoria
- Settlement Council of Australia
- Settlement Services International
- Seventh day Adventist Church, Bendigo
- Shine Bright Early Learning Centre
- Sisterworks
- Skills and Job Centre
- Spectrum
- St John of God hospital
- St Mary's Parish Echuca
- St Pauls Cathedral Bendigo
- Sunraysia Mallee Ethnic Communities Council
- The Great Stupa of Universal Compassion
- The Regional Association of Neighbourhood and Community House
- United Filipino Association Pyramid Hill
- Vic Health
- Victoria Department of Health
- Victoria Fire Rescue
- Victoria Police
- Victorian Fisheries Authorities
- Victorian Inclusion Agency
- Victorian Multicultural Commission
- Weeroona College
- Welcoming Australia
- Westvic Staffing Solutions
- Win Network
- Windemere
- Women's Health Loddon Mallee
- WorkSafe Victoria