

# ANNUAL REPORT

ANNUAL REPORT FOR THE YEAR  
ENDED 30 JUNE 2023

LODDON CAMPASPE



MULTICULTURAL  
SERVICES



LODDON CAMPASPE MULTICULTURAL SERVICES

# 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.





## SMOKING CEREMONY, 2022 ZINDA FESTIVAL





# CONTENTS

About Us	1	Community and Capacity Building	26
Chair's Message	2	Redress	30
Message from the Chief Executive Officer	4	LCMS Office Opening Celebration	31
Our Team	6	Diversity and Inclusion Focal Points	32
Our Values	11	Case Study	34
Our Vision, Our Purpose	12	Our Year in Pictures	36
Our Work	14	Financial Summary	39
Education	14	Governance	61
Employment	18	Elisangela's story	62
Cultural Diversity	22	Acknowledgements	64



# 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
- 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
- FAMILY LEARNING PARTNERSHIPS
- CULTURAL COMPETENCY TRAINING
- JOB MENTORING
- WORKPLACE PARTNERSHIPS

## **CELEBRATING CULTURE**

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

## **STRONG AND VISIBLE VOICES**

- ADVOCACY

**Harmony Day**



**Family Fishing Day**



**Play Group**





# Chair's Message

**I wish to acknowledge and pay my respects to the Traditional Owners of the lands we now call home: the Dja Dja Wurung, Taungurung, Yorta Yorta, Wurundjeri, Woi Wurrung and Barapa Barapa Peoples. I pay my respects and honour the many Elders, past, present, and emerging, their stories, cultures, languages and the generations who have cared for Country.**

## Welcoming, Embracing, and Thriving

Loddon Campaspe Multicultural Services (LCMS) has developed a culture that puts the multicultural and diverse communities it serves, at the centre of its work across the Loddon Campaspe Region. People who contact LCMS or walk through the doors are welcomed and embraced by staff who come from diverse backgrounds. The respect, integrity, and dignity with which staff greet and assist community members are so very positive that they return to LCMS time and time again because they feel it is a safe, welcoming, and inclusive space.

The LCMS Board is proud to provide direction and oversight to the valuable work of LCMS. Comprised of a diverse mix of experienced and skilled individuals, the Board draws on its strong multicultural composition, and professional knowledge to provide strong and confident governance to our thriving organisation.

## Endorsement of Programs

This year, the Board was proactive in supporting the CEO and LCMS in their participation in the following programs:

- The Voice to Parliament Referendum. The Board and LCMS are committed to standing alongside Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and support the 'yes' vote.
- Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) (still in development)
- Racism: It Stops With Me, campaign
- Committing to the implementation of the Rainbow Ready Roadmap

As Board Chair, it is a privilege to be part of an organisation that embraces inclusivity and diversity.

## Diversity and Inclusion Award

LCMS' culture of embracing diversity and inclusion was acknowledged when it was nominated for, and ultimately won, the Diversity and Inclusion Award at the Be Bendigo Awards held in August. Thank you to WestVic Staffing Solutions for sponsoring the Award and for endorsing the work done by LCMS. Receiving the Diversity and Inclusion Award was a public acknowledgment of the hard work the Chief Executive

Officer (CEO) Sonia Di Mezza, and the LCMS staff have done in embedding and celebrating inclusive practices in the workplace.

## Thank you to the LCMS Staff, and Stakeholders

The Board congratulates Sonia Di Mezza (CEO), and all LCMS staff for what they have achieved this year. The Board is proud of how LCMS staff met the needs of our communities by providing programs that focused on the current Strategic Plan Goals.

Thank you to the many multicultural communities for valuing LCMS and its work. Our aim is to support you, to hear your stories, and to advocate for you.

To the stakeholders who partner with LCMS – thank you. Your contribution makes our community a better place and helps LCMS undertake the work it does to support multicultural communities.

## Mid-Term Strategic Plan Evaluation

Currently, LCMS is midway through its 2022-2025 Strategic Plan. In May, following the mid-term review conducted by Engage for Change, the following was noted,

- Social Inclusion and Participation - 4 of the 6 action items are progressing with 2 items requiring further attention.
- Strong and Visible Voices – 3 of the 6 action items are progressing, 2 require attention and 1 has not started.
- Pathways to Jobs and Education – 5 of the 6 action items are progressing, and 1 requires attention.

- Celebrating Culture – all 4 action items are progressing.

The Board is committed to working with the CEO to ensure that all measures of success as recommended by Engage for Change are completed by June 2025.

## Governance

One of the roles of the Board is to implement transparent governance procedures. The Board sincerely thanks Clayton Utz for their pro-bono work in assisting in updating the relevant policies, Board Charter, and other legislative and governance requirements.



# Board of Directors 22/23



Andriy Kurtsev



Peter Watson



Annika Kearton



Anna Dorevitch



Bruno Spandonide



Salwa Dastgeer



Ian Patrick



Daniel Jose

## LCMS would like to recognise past 22-23 board members:

Thaera O'Brien  
Joby Sebastien  
John Murphy  
Ginny Tan  
Dianna Tran  
Rachel Vanstone

### LCMS' Footprint Beyond Bendigo

An aspect of the Strategic Plan is to broaden LCMS' reach to communities beyond Bendigo. It has been encouraging to read, hear, and see what has been happening in the Echuca and Castlemaine areas. Thank you to the staff who have been working with key people in these communities to identify their needs.

### Future Goals

This year saw a change in State Government policy. This meant LCMS was no longer eligible for funding through the Jobs Victoria Employment Scheme (JVES). To adjust to this change, LCMS underwent a restructuring that changed the roles of some LCMS staff. The Board thanks the CEO and Executive Team for sensitively and effectively managing this change and acknowledges the dedicated work of the former JVES staff. The Board is committed to working with the CEO to explore alternative ways of supporting and advocating for its multicultural communities.

### Board Directors

The Board thanks the following past Board Directors for their contributions. These include Dr. Thaera O'Brien (past Chair) for her strong leadership and guidance in 2022. Thaera led the Board toward becoming more professional and governance-focused. Rachel Vanstone, Joby Sebastian, John Murphy, Ginny Tan, and Dianne Tran, who stepped down from the Board at or after the last AGM. The Board also welcomes the expertise of Annika Kearton (December 2020) and Daniel Jose (May 2023).

Thank you to all Board Directors for bringing your professionalism, insights, and support to the Board and to me in my role as Chair. I would also like to thank our CEO, Sonia Di Mezza for her ongoing work and encouragement to me as Chair.

I look forward to seeing what achievements and developments will occur over the next 12 months for LCMS, its staff, and its communities.

*Merrilyn Gaulke*



# A Message From the Chief Executive Officer

This past year has been a busy one, as Loddon Campaspe Multicultural Services (LCMS) has worked hard to support the multicultural communities in the Loddon Campaspe region to enjoy and exercise their human rights. Our efforts have extended to outreach and connection to multicultural communities living throughout the region, beyond Bendigo, in support of both the refugee and migrant people seeking our supports. We have accomplished this with resounding success, across all areas of focus including our settlement services; our cultural diversity programs where we celebrated the cultural diversity of our communities; as well as our education and employment programs. During the year, LCMS has particularly focused on supporting people from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds who have experienced abuse via our Working Together project, which collaborates with domestic and sexual violence specialist agencies, as well as via the implementation of our National Redress Scheme program, for people from CALD backgrounds who have experienced institutional child sexual abuse. We have received funding to place an LCMS worker into the Orange Door, acting as a bridge between people who have experienced domestic violence and access to support services offered to them by this agency.

LCMS has furthermore worked tirelessly to ensure that people with multicultural backgrounds, experiencing intersectionality on various levels are well understood and supported. We have actively implemented a 'Tripartite of Diversity', consisting of three fundamental elements: working to create greater collaboration and connection with our local indigenous communities, via the creation of a Reconciliation Action Plan, and public, organisational support of a 'yes' vote to the Voice to Parliament; embarking on a Rainbow Ready journey of accreditation, where people from CALD communities who identify as LGBTQIA+ are welcomed, accepted, feel safe and supported by LCMS; and lastly, signing up

to the Australian Human Rights Commission 'Racism: It Stops with Me' campaign. The culmination of these efforts over the past year resulted in LCMS winning the 'Diversity and Inclusion' award at the Be Bendigo Business awards, in August 2023. We are truly humbled and honoured to receive this award, recognising our hard work to make LCMS a place where everyone feels that they are safe and belong.



The year has not come without its challenges and LCMS has been ready to confront them, head on. During the year, following significant budget cuts by the Victorian State government, despite implementing a stellar employment program for the benefit of CALD job seekers, LCMS sadly lost funding for the employment program, as Jobs Victoria chose to refocus diminished funds in alternate geographic locations. LCMS is working hard to explore other funding sources whereby we can reignite our highly lauded and popular employment program.

Cultural celebrations such as our much-enjoyed Zinda Multicultural Festival were reignited as we exited the harsh end of the COVID-19 pandemic, permitting large crowd events to once again take place. Our Zinda festival took place in a new location, at the Garden of the Future, in White Hills. Judging from participant feedback, this event was truly a great celebration of the diverse cultures of our region and was truly enjoyed by all who attended.







Advocating with members of the Federation of Ethnic Communities Council of Australia (FECCA) in Parliament on issues affecting our multicultural communities.

We look forward to hosting this popular event again in October 2023.

Raising the voice of people from multicultural communities to be heard on issues that matter to them is at the forefront of our advocacy. LCMS staff have worked hard to collaborate and consult with multicultural communities, to ensure that our programs are informed and guided by the people who benefit from them. We have worked hard to participate in, Parliamentary inquiries, meetings with local and federal politicians and other events to help amplify those voices even further.

Of course, none of this could be possible without the hard work of numerous individuals who contribute on a daily basis to the work of LCMS. Thank you to the outgoing Chair Thaera O'Brien for your dedication to ensuring the professionalism and governance of our board. I also wish to thank our current Chair Merrilyn Gaulke, who has provided dedicated guidance and support to me as the CEO, ensuring that the highest standards of governance are maintained at LCMS. Merrilyn's countless hours of hard work and dedication are truly appreciated. Thank you to the board of LCMS, a group of dedicated, volunteer professionals,

who are committed to ensuring that the multicultural communities are supported in the best way possible. None of our successes could be possible without the magnificent, talented, and culturally diverse staff members of LCMS. They have worked tirelessly to achieve the very best outcomes for our multicultural communities and do their work with passion and commitment.

And lastly, but not least, thank you to our multicultural communities of the Loddon Campaspe region. I believe it is a true privilege and honour for us to walk alongside you as you move towards a sense of settlement and belonging in Australia. We continue to dedicate ourselves to you now and in the future.

As I write this final message I have resigned from my role of CEO of LCMS. I will be returning to Canberra to reunite with my family to lead a similar multicultural NGO in the Canberra region. The past three years have been an extraordinary journey of multiculturalism in regional Victoria, and it has been a true privilege and honour for me to have been able to lead such a wonderful organisation. I wish the board, staff, and community members all the very best.

CEO Sonia Di Mezza with fellow Federation of Ethnic Communities Council of Australia (FECCA) in Parliament supporting the Voice to Parliament.

*Sonia Di Mezza*



# O U R



## **Sonia Di Mezza - Chief Executive Officer**

Sonia was born in Australia, to parents who migrated to Australia from Italy. Sonia has worked as the CEO of a domestic violence NGO, and Deputy CEO of a disability advocacy NGO, in Canberra. She has set up human rights projects in Sudan and Pakistan, for Afghan widowed women and their children, worked as a Resettlement Officer for UNHCR in Lebanon, for a child rights NGO in India, and as a refugee lawyer in Australia. Sonia is a solicitor, holds a Master of International Law, majoring in human rights law, and speaks five languages.



## **Robyn Matthews - Team Leader Education**

Robyn has over 25 years' experience teaching English as an Additional Language in a variety of settings in Japan, China, and Taiwan. She has a Bachelor of Arts (Honours) focusing on linguistics, a TESOL qualification as well as qualifications in massage and yoga. Robyn is also fluent in Japanese.



## **Alison Chapman - Business Manager**

Alison joined LCMS in January 2020 and has over 20 years experience working in Senior Administration positions at Tintern Grammar, The Royal Children's Hospital, The University of Melbourne, and La Trobe University. Alison holds qualifications in Finance and Bookkeeping, Community Services, IT, Kinesiology, Holistic Counselling and Natural Therapies.



## **Vanessa Feeney - EAL Teacher**

Vanessa is working part-time at LCMS as an English teacher. She is a qualified primary school teacher and is also working part-time at a local primary school. Vanessa is currently studying a post graduate diploma in TESOL and has been teaching for three years.



## **Lar Ka Paw Moo - Playgroup Coordinator/Bilingual Support Worker**

Lar Ka Paw Moo was born in Karen state. She has experience in community work over 16 years and has worked for AMES settlement for 5 years with newly arrived migrants and refugees as a support worker. In 2008, she completed Certificate III in Children's Services and joined LCMS in 2021, volunteering and working in Multicultural playgroup and other programs. Now Lar Ka Paw Moo is employed as Playgroup Coordinator and also assists in different programs as a Bilingual Support Worker.



## **Elisangela Couto - Team Leader Community and Capacity Building**

Elisangela Couto has a Bachelor of Tourism Planning and a Masters in Community Planning and Development from La Trobe University. Elisangela has worked all over Mozambique and South America and started as a Course Coordinator in a Polytechnic Institute in Mozambique. Born in Mozambique, she moved to Australia in 2015.



# T E A M

## **Jason Newton - Team Leader Cultural Diversity**

Jason is a qualified chef with over 20 years' experience. He has worked as head chef in both daily service and catering. Jason specialises in locally sourced produce and cooking with the seasons. Jason has been with LCMS since 2018.



## **Maha Sein - Communications Co-ordinator**

Maha joined LCMS in July 2020. He undertook a Certificate IV in Business Administration Traineeship and completed this at the end of 2021. After completing his traineeship he then moved onto the communication role. Maha is from a Karen ethnic group, born in Burma and moved to Australia in 2009. Maha enjoys portrait and landscape photography, cooking and supporting others in need. Maha speaks fluent Poo Karen, Sgaw Karen and Burmese.



## **Laila Hashimi - Community Development Worker/JVES Specialist Mentor**

Laila started working at LCMS in 2020 to help provide bilingual support in response to the pandemic. She provides settlement support and is part of the employment team as a JVES Specialist Mentor. Laila is Hazara from Afghanistan and her work directly assists local Hazara and Afghan communities. Laila has engaged in mental health and domestic violence training, to enhance her knowledge about local services that are available to communities.



## **Deanna Neville - Operations Manager**

Deanna's background is in local grassroots community development and government department projects. Her work has included a range of projects including youth, seniors, drought affected farmers, communities impacted by fires and floods, public housing and Indigenous community arts. She has travelled several times to Timor-Leste in a volunteer support role. Deanna has also engaged in health and fitness roles as well as in the visual arts. She holds a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Community Planning and Development and has trained in fine art photography and human movement.



## **Say Nay Htoo Moo - Settlement Worker**

Say Nay started working at LCMS at the end of 2021. He worked as an interpreter for several interpreting service providers for a few years. He worked with BCHS as a Bi-Cultural Worker for a one-off project. Say Nay was born in Karen State, Burma and settled in Australia in 2009 as a Karen refugee. He enjoys cooking at home and loves camping, fishing and travelling. Say Nay also works with Karen community in Bendigo and voluntarily helped community members during the COVID-19 lockdown.



## **Winne Htoo - Administration Trainee**

Winne joined LCMS in March 2022 as the Business Administration Trainee and completed her Certificate III in Business Administration at the end of May this year. Winne previously worked as a dental assistant. One of Winne's hobbies is playing volleyball with her community and the youth. Winne is from the Paku Karen ethnic group, was born in a Karenni refugee camp and came to Australia in 2010.





### **Mitchell Dean - Team Leader JVES Specialist**

Mitchell joined LCMS in May 2022, previously working with Central Victoria Group Training (CVGT) in various employment programs, supporting disengaged youth, people with disabilities and ex-offenders into employment over the last three and a half years. Mitchell has also worked with headspace as a Community Engagement Officer educating the community on the importance of looking after your mental health. Mitchell has a Bachelor Degree in Psychological Science.



### **Amanda Sam - JVES Specialist Mentor**

Amanda joined LCMS at the start of 2021 as a Job Mentor in the Employment Team. Amanda has a background in Project Management and Administration within the Health and Family Violence Sectors. Amanda has volunteered as a recreation support for multicultural and diverse communities in Melbourne whilst studying her Certificate in Project Management and Diploma in Recreation - Sports Administration. Amanda has travelled through parts of East, South and West Africa, UK and Europe and has lived and worked in the UK and Ghana. Amanda has a passion for supporting people from multicultural and diverse backgrounds to feel part of the community.



### **Melissa Moo - JVES Specialist Mentor**

Melissa Moo joined LCMS in 2022 as Jobs Victoria Employment Service - Job Mentor. She graduated from The Australian Catholic University in 2021 with a dual Bachelor of Applied Public Health and Global Studies. Melissa speaks Karen, Thai, English and a little bit of Laos. Having been born in a Thailand Refugee Camp, her family migrated to Australia 14 years ago. Melissa loves being able to advocate for people of migrant and refugee backgrounds and helps them have a culturally safe settlement, where every part of their journey is assisted according to their needs.



### **Silvia Moo - JVES Coordinator**

Silvia has a Bachelor of Business Administration and Commerce (Accounting) from the Australian Catholic University. Silvia is trilingual in Karen, Thai and English and was born in a Thailand Refugee Camp. Silvia moved to Australia in 2011 and commenced with LCMS in April 2022. Prior to that Silvia volunteered with LCMS in 2018, providing bilingual support to help her community, as well as supporting LCMS in a voluntary administration position. Silvia gained over 3 years' experience in employment services before returning to LCMS as JVES Employment Coordinator.



### **Eunmi Cho - JVES Specialist Mentor**

Eunmi joined LCMS as an employment mentor at the end of May 2022. She is from South Korea and came to Bendigo in 2006 where she completed her bachelor's degree in Human Resource Management. Eunmi has worked with the Chinese migrant community and supported international students at La Trobe University. Her passion is in helping people find their full potential, and that's why she loves working at LCMS. Eunmi enjoys playing piano and making music.



### **Rui Jeffrey - Cultural Diversity Community Development Worker**

Rui Jeffrey was born in Japan and has called Bendigo home for the last 20 years. She is an active local community member, with 10 years of experience as a qualified chef and a small business owner. She is currently undertaking a Diploma of Community Services course at Bendigo TAFE. Rui started working at LCMS from March 2023 and assists community members with their capacity building and cultural diversity including small business start-up and operation mentoring and cooking classes.



### **Sylvia Phan - Employment Program Manager**

Sylvia Phan has a Bachelor of Arts (Economics/Industrial Relations/Psychology) and a Masters of Commerce (Human Resources) from the University of New South Wales. Sylvia has worked in South East Asia and China and started her career as a Human Resource Manager. Born in Malaysia, she moved to Australia in 2014, the same year she started with LCMS. She believes that "anything worth doing, is worth doing well".



### **Yoko Vigor - Community Services Trainee**

Yoko has a Bachelor of Arts Degree and Associate Degree in Information and Technology from the University of Japan and is a qualified Japanese teacher in Japan, with over 15 years' experience. Yoko moved to Australia in 2019 with her family and started working at Loddon Campaspe Multicultural Services (LCMS) as a Community Service Trainee in April 2022. She assists with the coordination of the Multicultural playgroup and LCMS food share.



### **Karl Schaffarczyk - Team Leader Redress Support Services**

Karl moved to Bendigo and joined LCMS in December 2022, bringing twenty years' experience working in the community sector. Karl is a strong champion of human rights, and has worked as a solicitor in community legal centres. Karl holds qualifications in Law, and disability care. In their spare time Karl advocates for social change and researches family history.



### **Bu Gay Pah Thei - Jobs Victoria Employment Services (JVES) Coordinator (Maternity Leave)**

Bu Gay is a trusted Karen community connector, speaks Karen and has worked hard for LCMS. Prior to that Bu Gay volunteered for over five years to support her community to settle in Bendigo and studied a Diploma of Nursing. Bu Gay is secretary for the Karen Organisation of Bendigo.



### **PanMarLar Pah Thei - Specialist CALD Practitioner**

PanMarlar first started with LCMS as a casual bilingual support worker for the Karen community while studying law and policy at La Trobe university. She joined LCMS as a Specialist CALD Practitioner in 2022 and graduated with a Bachelor of Criminology the following year. PanMarLar is from the Karen community and is passionate about inclusivity and diversity. In her spare time, she volunteers her energy and efforts at Karen community meetings and gatherings to support with the organisation, planning and celebration of cultural and religious celebrations in community.



### **Pinar Teker - Redress Advocate**

Pinar has 25 years of experience in the Finance, Education, and Disability sectors. She holds a double degree in Bachelor of Arts in English Language and Literature/Letters and American Culture and a Bachelor of Business Management in addition to a Graduate Diploma in Professional Communication. Pinar joined LCMS as Job Mentor while studying for her Diploma of Community Services in 2022. The same year, after completing her studies, she moved on to her role as a Redress Advocate.







Volunteers Week - Morning Tea



# OUR VALUES

**RESPECT**

**INCLUSIVITY**

**INTEGRITY**

**COLLABORATION**

**AUTHENTICITY**

# 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.





Performance at 2022 Annual General Meeting



## EDUCATION PROGRAM

"Education is the most powerful weapon we can use to change the world."  
Nelson Mandela

### The Team



Our small education team grew a little bit this year, with Vanessa welcoming her first child, and Monica Santos stepping in to cover her maternity leave.

Whilst we remain a small team, our flexible ACFE funding allows us to create courses that play to our individual strengths and interests, and that can be moulded to serve the educational needs of the multicultural community. This year we have created some wonderful new courses in response to community interest and have welcomed over 280 students into our classes from more than 20 language groups!!

### Courses

With help from our wonderful volunteers and valued stakeholders, this year we ran the following pre-accredited courses:

#### Women's English:

Our longest running and most popular class continues to be a safe and inclusive class for women and their children to learn English.

[Mums and Bubs Class](#)

#### Beginner's English:

This class helped lower levelled learners to gain the confidence needed to join one of our other classes, or to seek employment.

#### Intermediate English:

This class is never dull, with a wonderfully diverse group of students learning, joking and laughing together every Thursday evening.





# W O R K

**Men's English:** This class provided an opportunity for men to study after work hours.

## **Citizenship study class:**

The citizenship exam is challenging! This class helps participants to understand the content needed to study for the exam and has led to more than ten new Australians receiving their citizenship!



Robyn teaching class

## **IELTS study class:**

The IELTS test is needed for some visa categories, as well as to enter university or to gain recognition of some overseas credentials. This class is an opportunity to study together and share tips and tricks for success.

## **Digital literacy:**

Thanks to 2 generous donors, we were able to gift laptops to graduates from this basic digital literacy course, allowing families to have better access to technology for home, school and work life.

Multicultural book club: A new course in Semester 1 2023, this class is a fun way to improve reading comprehension skills, as well as confidence in reading.

We also ran the following pre-accredited employment pathways courses:



Digital Literacy Graduation Day

## **Starting work in Cleaning:**

Run in collaboration with GROW Bendigo and Spotless at Bendigo Health, this course continues to place community members into work as cleaners, food service attendants and kitchen staff. With over 50 graduates now working at the hospital, you might see one of our graduates during your next visit.

## **Starting work in Childcare taster course:**

This 10 week pre-accredited course put together by Vanessa is designed to give students foundational knowledge and confidence needed to pathway into either a certificate 3 in Early Childhood studies, or as work as a Kindergarten Inclusion support Worker.

## **Starting Work in Childcare**



## **Starting work in Cleaning:**

Run in collaboration with GROW Bendigo and Spotless at Bendigo Health, this course continues to place community members into work as cleaners, food service attendants and kitchen staff. With over 50 graduates now working at the hospital, you might see one of our graduates during your next visit.

## **Starting work in Food Processing:**

This course ran in collaboration with GROW Bendigo and JL King and taught participants about their workplace rights and responsibilities, as well as what food processing work opportunities there are in our area. LEAP into manufacturing: In collaboration with Sisterworks, LCMS helped to deliver part of their starting work in hospitality course.

With such a diverse number of classes and students, it has definitely been a busy and fun year!





## Impact

Our employment pathways courses, with the support of our fantastic JVES team have been especially impactful this year. It is always fantastic when we can support community members into employment, but it is really wonderful when community members feel empowered to have greater control over their rights as a result of attending our courses focussed on work readiness skills as well as topics such as tax and superannuation. As a result of our courses we have had several students pass their citizenship tests, and many pathways from our pre-accredited courses into accredited study. Our Starting work in Cleaning course was chosen as one of four case study Learn Local courses and a short video was made showcasing the impact of the program.

As a teacher, there really is no greater satisfaction then helping your students to realise their dreams, then supporting them to follow them.

Robyn and Vanessa attending the Learn Local Awards



## Student Voices

"Hi Ms Robyn. I want to say thank you to you. Yesterday I received the job offer at XX and I am excited to start this job soon as possible. I only get this job because of your course so thanks to you for this. "

"Thanks Teacher Robyn. I am so happy for attending your classes and learning English. Thanks all of your care and teaching"

"Thank you Vanessa for your childcare course. I learn a lot and now I know I want to work childcare and how to do that work."

"Hello. I want to tell you that I passed my citizenship test! I am Aussie now. Thank you for your classes"

End of Semester Dinner







Women's English



End of Term Bowling



Digital Literacy



Women's English



Filming for video showcasing the success of the Spotless training program



# EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM

## The Team

---



"If LCMS has not been around, I would not have gotten this job. Thanks to you and your team for all the help and support. I am so happy and it has worked out well for me" – Jobseeker

The above quote captures the essence and effort the team has put in for the 257 participants of the program. We are very fortunate that LCMS has been helping multicultural communities find work since 2014 to create pathways to Employment.

In 2022-2023 employment was funded by the Victorian Government, the new Jobs Victoria Employment Services (JVES) program designed to offer personalised employment support to long-term unemployed jobseekers or jobseekers at risk of being long-term unemployed to secure work.

LCMS employs Jobs Victoria Mentors who work with jobseekers to get them work-ready and connect them to jobs.

Funding allowed LCMS to expand from 2 mentors to 7 mentors and this has been a game changer in LCMS's ability to offer a better and more intense case management servicing model for our jobseekers.

The team come from different multicultural backgrounds and collectively speak over 10 language and dialects.

## Key Successes

---

LCMS has met all project requirements including registrations, placements and outcomes and exceeded all deliverables.

LCMS has branded our employment program as M@work to differentiate as well as solidify our position as a specialist Mentor provider in this region for our multicultural cohort.

As at 30 June 2023, LCMS has:

- Engaged 207 eligible participants into the program and 50 non-eligible JVES participants.
- Placed 126 into employment.
- Reached 69 outcomes of 26 weeks in ongoing employment with 44 tracking towards an outcome.
- 10% had left after 26 weeks., 60 had remained in the same position/promoted/moved to another position within the same organization.

Participants ranged between 6 months to 10 years being unemployed (whilst in Australia). Many had never had formal work at the camp often resorting to farming to meet their needs.

The LCMS program, which had been able to assist these long term unemployed into work has created a major impact for the refugee community in Bendigo.

To achieve these goals, the M@Work team have shown true dedication, determination, and effort in helping community members find meaningful employment. A big appreciation to all the employers and other LCMS teams in collaborating with us to help us meet our goals.





Grow Bendigo Lunch

Likewise, a big round of applause to all the community members for their effort and resilience in trying to find employment in a country that is new and foreign to them. We truly believe that employment contributes to their sense of belonging in this country.

Special mention must go to our ongoing LCMS/ Spotless and GROW Bendigo collaboration.

Pre-employment Training (cleaning/Food process/ Childcare) has given prospective employers the confidence to hire and retain. This has been a game changer in the employment landscape which has often been fraught with too many processes and barriers to employment due to organisational requirements.

By proving that successes and retention can be achieved without having to go through the traditional recruitment process has been an eye opener, leaving many other organisations wanting to emulate this program. LCMS has been a trail blazer in this instance with Spotless wanting to replicate their success in South Australia and Metropolitan Melbourne.

With such great success with our partnership with Spotless, the GROW Bendigo program hosted a celebratory lunch for the Spotless staff who came through the program. Many of the staff were able to attend and it was a great chance for everyone to come together to celebrate the efforts of those staff who had

successfully gained employment. It was heart-warming to hear of many who had never worked in Australia prior to this opportunity, who have now gone on to become valued members of the Spotless team and the feeling of purpose and the value they get from their contribution to the community.

Word has spread far and wide about our continual work with Spotless, with Nationals Senator Bridget McKenzie requesting to visit LCMS to hear about the support that LCMS offers the community, and particularly how the relationship with Spotless formed to become such a successful program.

LCMS CEO, Sonia Di Mezza and Employment Team Leader Mitchell Dean along with Spotless Operations Manager Ben Dillon and GROW Bendigo's Petra McLoughlin met with Bridget McKenzie and local National Party representative Gaelle Broad at the new LCMS office.

Senator McKenzie had glowing reviews of our work, and felt that programs like this need to be further highlighted at a national level and wanted to use us as an example of successful support for multicultural communities in regional Australia.

It is a fantastic reflection of the success we have had, and we are grateful for the opportunity to speak to members of Federal Parliament about the work we do.



Silvia at Grow Bendigo

## Key Impacts

Quantitative and Qualitative data were collected from a semi-structured questionnaire. This final evaluation report outlined how community perceived their M@Work services with Bilingual Support as the key to success..

“Good services and I would like to recommend LCMS to others. When I came to ask for assistance at LCMS, the staffs were able to help me and solved my issues”  
one year unemployed

“I go more information and know more about other network. I love to introduce my friends to come to this office, if they have any problems or difficult for their future” two years unemployed

“I feel more comfortable to access LCMS services. The staffs are nice and willing to support. I always come to LCMS if I need help with anythings including education, utilities bills and other support. I would recommend LCMS services to others” 20 years unemployed

“Thanks a lot from employment team help me a lot”  
nine months unemployed-looking for work

“Thanks from LCMS. I have been in Bendigo for 10 years/. LCMS help me a lot when I always come to them. LCMS staff friendly and kind. Welcoming”.  
10 years unemployed

“I would recommend my friends to come to lcms if they need support. Thank you so much for helping me to get my current job. Without LCMS support, it would be difficult to find job on my own” ineligible participant- less than six months unemployed

“External services have not always been as supportive and understanding. And spend enough time to get to know what I really needed”  
Seven years unemployed

Apart from our continual work with community members in supporting them to find meaningful employment, we were also preoccupied by several other events.

## What's Next for Us.



Harmony Day

Our team member, Laila, was the face of Zinda 2022. Whilst Laila was busy ensuring the stage ran smoothly, the members of the team took turns in helping and making the LCMS marquee alive, vibrant and as informative as possible to the attendees of the event.

Eunmi Cho has also taken up the additional responsibility as an Intercultural Ambassador.

Amanda Sam furiously overseeing the Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) for LCMS.

Melissa Moo has decided to pursue her love for public health by taking up a nursing degree.

Silvia Moo is delving into the world of business and finance.

Bu Gay Pah Thei has taken a leave of absence and being mum to Baby Matthew.

Pinar Teker has moved on to the Redress program.

Mitchell and Sylvia are so proud of the team and supporting them in any way to make a difference!





Grow Bendigo Lunch



Assisting a community member



Zinda 2022



Site visit to Uniting Aged Care



The Team



# CULTURAL DIVERSITY

## The Team



## Zinda Festival 2022

After a two year break due to Covid19, we saw the much anticipated return of the Zinda Festival. There was a change in location, moving from Rosalind Park to the more purpose-built grounds of Garden for The Future, White Hills. Hosting the event in spring felt appropriate as a symbol of new beginnings, to reawaken and be alive, which is the meaning of 'Zinda'.



Zinda Festival created opportunity for community groups and individuals to share and showcase their traditions and culture through celebration of performance, art, music, dress, and food. The family friendly event provided an all inclusive and safe space for people to connect and re-engage with each other and offer happiness and hope after a long road of covid lockdowns and restraints which left many feeling alone and isolated.

With an attendance of roughly 3,000 people, members from various community groups including Karen, South Sudanese, Hazara, Indonesian, Filipino, Malayalee, Seek, Punjabi, Indigenous Australian, Korean, Japanese, Chinese, Malaysian, West Africa, Thai and more.

The list of 'What's On' showcased 14 different cultural performance groups, 8 authentic food vendors, 5 arts & craft stalls, 6 interactive stalls for children and families, 2 not-for-profit organisations, 3 multicultural small businesses and 5 sponsorship tents.

Bendigo Community Health Services, Bendigo Health and Women's Health Loddon Mallee were invited to participate



and provided health information, Covid19 updates and supplies for attendees, with free masks, hand sanitisers and rapid antigen tests. A mobile Covid19 vaccination clinic was also setup on the day by Bendigo Health.





The lead up to the event saw workshops and sessions for community members to build connection and capacity prior to Zinda.

A weekly venue was provided for the Indonesian Cultural Performance Dancers where they met to practice. Some new women attended so the opportunity for a safe and private facility was welcomed. The space, provided by LCMS partner organisation Thorne Harbour Country, came as a result of both organisations working together to address needs of each organisation in this partnership.



A weekly craft session was held at LCMS to provide support and to advise and encourage the multicultural craft group stall holders to hone their skills in the presentation and display of their crafts, as well as learning to use the Square Pay digital payment system.

Two sessions of craft activities were organised for mums and young children aged 2 to 4 years old during LCMS assisted play group to help develop their skills by making bunting and paper craft. Children's craft materials were used to help decorate the stalls at Zinda Festival.



A three-day accredited face painting course was delivered to a total of ten community members, over three weeks provided by The Connected Circus. The course was designed and delivered to build capacity of the participants as face painters to support children's activities for Zinda, but with long term sustainable outcomes. As part of their training the group has been provided with additional opportunities to practise their skills such as LCMS office opening party, LCMS assisted play group and the Women's Network.

Bendigo Food Share & LCMS coordinated a 'Cafes For A Day' food vendor stall, with a local Hazara woman, Zakia sharing her knowledge of Tandoor cooking and Bolani making and selling food at the festival. The program saw six youth engage in food preparation, tandoor cooking, health and safety standards, sales and customer service.



Photos: Zinda Festival



## Events

The Cultural Diversity team was involved in several community events this year by assisting the organisations with catering and helping build their capacity to run their own events and host them.

South Sudanese Independence Day was celebrated at Strathdale hall and was attended by over 50 community members. Traditional food was made at the Salvation Army kitchen by 4 of the women and Jason made a South Sudanese flag cake.



South Sudanese Flag Cake

Bastille Day was celebrated at Old Church on the Hill and attended by over 40 of the French community. LCMS supported the coordination of the event and organised a commercial kitchen to create some delicious dishes.



Bastille Day Celebration

## Kids Fun Day

To celebrate the beginning of the new term and bring the community back together again after the long school holidays and New Year's break, we held our first inaugural Kids Fun Day at the Long Gully Splash Park.

The return to school coincided with a new Covid wave, and there were concerns amongst the community about school based transmission. The event, which was funded under our Covid19 information funding, was an opportunity to share the latest Covid19 information with community members, and to give them back to school packs containing kids masks and mini hand sanitisers.

The event was a great success with perfect weather and over 150 parents and children attending.



Kids Fun Day

## Flood Recovery & Psychosocial Support

After the devastating floods of October 2022, LCMS was able to secure two grants to provide support to affected multicultural communities within the 6 LGA's that we work within.

With this funding, we have worked closely with other support services such as Anglicare, Headspace, and local neighbourhood houses to reach flood affected multicultural community members and provide them with support, connect them to services, and share information about workshops or events that may be relevant to their individual situations. We have provided outreach to numerous communities in the regions, including to Maryborough, Echuca, Rochester, Boort, Pyramid Hill. These grants are still ongoing with more events planned.





Maryborough Meet and Greet



Solomon Islander flood recovery



Zinda Workshop



Cook book launch

Harmony Week





# COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND CAPACITY BUILDING

## The Team

---



Community Development and Capacity Building comprises a range of services and programs designed to inform, engage and equip community groups and individuals with tools and skills to allow them to fully live and embrace the life that they choose. To help provide these services we are funded by a range of government and other programs through which the Community Development and Capacity Building team have delivered a range of civic, financial and health information services as well as social inclusion and youth activities.

## Access to Civic, Financial and Health Information

---

Our team provided support in a wide range of services. For example, during the tax return period our team supported a volunteer to provide 16 weekly tax support clinics during July and October 2022. This support provided refugee and CALD communities in the region with their tax lodgement process. We also supported 250 community members with their Australian citizenship applications.

For women, we provided five trauma informed yoga sessions and four sessions about healthy relationships, including a session describing the characteristics and forms of domestic violence which was held during the 16 Days of Activism program. Also for women, two sessions were provided on water and sun safety. These were presented and discussed during our women's and children's social swimming programs. Further, three sessions were delivered providing information on kinder enrolment processes, including the promotion of the new free kinder government support.

In the last financial year have assisted 471 individuals, including 131 with SHEV Visas residing in Australia for less than five years. The most requested support was for assistance with Australian citizenship applications,

followed by housing support, employment, and social engagement.

As part of our Healthy Families Program, three consultation sessions were delivered to Hazara, Karen and South Sudanese community members. These consultations sought to understand the key learnings and outcomes for each of the participating community groups who participated in our program; encouraged collective feedback and engagement about the program content; provided an opportunity for participants to explore additional themes and issues within their unique cultural contexts and perspectives; explored the extent to which participants may like to be engaged in future participation with the program; and identified co-design ideas, options and themes that would be of benefit and interest in future program activities and initiatives. The consultations resulted in self-identified activities to address healthy family issues including communications between kids and parents and also community concerns of racism.

## Social Inclusion and Outreach Activities

---

LCMS delivered a number of swimming programs during the 2021/2022 swimming season. This was due to the increased need for supporting water safety through the



support of funding from partners that include Life Saving Victoria.

The Swim Aware program was developed and implemented in partnership with Golden Square Pool in Bendigo. The role of LCMS in the partnership was to recruit community members and to provide bilingual support. The program provided a safe and engaging space for men and women to access swimming and safety skills development from professionally trained swim instructor volunteers. A total of 10 community members from the Karen community attended the program.

As part of a children's swimming program, also in partnership with Golden Square Pool we supported 20 children aged six to 12 years of age. These were weekly swimming classes delivered over 10 weeks over the summer season.

Women only social swimming activities took place at the Bendigo East Pool where we were able to book a weekly after-hours session time for women only swimming sessions. These sessions were held for an hour each session over eight weeks. During the 2022/2023 season the program delivered a total of 168 individual sessions to 52 participants from Karen, Hazara, Dinka, Ghanian, Bengali, Nepalese and Chinese communities.

An opportunity for women to connect has continued with our weekly women's network. LCMS has held 24 sessions named 'La Pa Tea', meaning 'Morning Tea' in Karen language. An average of 17 women attended per week with a total of 46 registrations. We have conducted several themed information sessions within this program, including a special session on 14th March in celebration of International Women's Day which was delivered in partnership with Catholic Care with the participation of 35 women, who came together to share food, laughter and dance.



La Pa Tea

Another activity held during La Pa Tea was the celebration of Refugee Week where 14 women shared a meal over conversations about the meaning of Refugee Week

and reflected on their own personal journeys as former refugees and now Australian residents.

At our Multicultural Assisted Playgroup we have held 37 sessions to provide a culturally safe space for mums and their toddlers from migrant and refugee backgrounds to connect and learn from each other. Within this program we have also provided opportunities for social engagement including four visits to a local community garden, visits to the museum, participation in a circus in Bendigo and two sessions of mums and bubs swimming classes.



Mums and Bubs Swimming

Within LCMS Women's Network in partnership with Catholic Care and Women's Health Loddon Mallee Services, we were able to organise a women's dancing workout to promote dancing as a way to exercise, connect, and to encourage self care. The program was conducted by a professional dance teacher attended by 43 women over 10 weekly sessions with representatives from Filipino, Indonesian, Hazara, Karen, Indian and Dinka communities.



Dancing Group

With their passion and experience for fishing, a family fishing competition event was organized for the Karen community. The activity was developed to present a healthy families session about how to better improve communication between parents and children, including how to negotiate and establish healthy barriers.

An anti racism session activity was delivered to the South Sudanese community in Bendigo and Castlemaine identifying racism as a key priority concern for this community during our consultation process.



Karen Fishing Competition

There were deep discussions on themes around the concepts and perceptions of racism, the social and health impacts of racism, healthy coping mechanisms towards negativity and a review of existing support services and the law.

### Capacity Building

During the last financial year, the community development team has provided a range of opportunities for community capacity building, including a session on event planning and organizing delivered to five community groups, information sessions about support delivered by professionals to youth and women.

We supported the Hazara community with their celebration of Nowruz Festival, in response to the community's request for an opportunity to come together to celebrate their culture during this eventful celebration. The event was organized and lead by the community with the participation of around 200 people, including 180 from the Afghan Hazara community.

We supported two community groups with grant applications and event organization. This was provided for the Filipino Community in Pyramid Hill in Loddon Shire for their Independence Day celebration and the North Indian community in Bendigo for their Diwali celebration. The Bendigo Malayalam community's grant application for Onam celebrations was also supported by LCMS.

The team also provided ongoing support for two women from Karen and Afghan Hazara communities respectively, with their participation in the Bendigo Health Community Advisory Committee. The team has supported a group of six young people from South Sudan and Mozambique to participate in the Camp for the Future Climate Ready youth project offered by DELWP. Support was also provided to three community members to take part in a barista coffee making workshop provided by Yo Bendigo. Two young members were supported with their applications for the Bendigo Youth Council and support and venue relating to performance rehearsals was provided to communities to prepare for their participation in our 2022 ZINDA festival.

### Multicultural Youth Activities

LCMS' Multicultural Youth Network (MYN) work is continuing to build the capacity, confidence and leadership skills of young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds to support theirs and their communities' future. We commenced Homework Club in February 2023 with weekly sessions provided to young people at secondary school level. We ran 24 sessions of the program over Terms I and II. LCMS, in partnership with Catholic Care also held a swimming and movie night for our youth program members from CALD communities. The program was attended by 19 young people from the Karen, Dinka and Mozambican communities. There has also been four volleyball sessions provided with 48 participants in total and netball coordinated for young people with five participants attending the four sessions. We are very proud of the connections LCMS has with the multicultural communities and this can only happen thanks to the connections, commitment and dedication of our staff.



Future Ready Camp





South Sudanese Information Session



Karen Fishing Day



Nawroz Festival



Playgroup



Climate Ready Camp



Women Dance Class



# REDRESS

## The Team

---



The new National Redress Scheme Support Service team has had a busy year establishing the new Redress Support service. Our Redress Support Service exists to provide help and support to survivors of institution-based child sexual abuse. We provide this help to people who are from a multicultural background, and people from any background who are in the Loddon Campaspe region.

Efforts to ensure the accessibility of support services have been paramount. The Redress Support Service team has implemented innovative measures to cater to the diverse needs of survivors, including offering remote sessions, multilingual support, and specialised assistance for survivors with disabilities. These initiatives have not only improved access but have also contributed to more inclusive and responsive supports.

Our focus is on mental health and well-being. We have a trauma-informed “no wrong door” policy where we support people to access the most suitable service for them, whether that service is provided by us or from another provider.

One of the key achievements of the Redress Support Service team has been the expansion of our outreach efforts. Throughout the reporting year, we have actively engaged with various survivor communities, advocacy groups, and relevant stakeholders to ensure that more survivors are aware of their rights and the support services available to them. In the coming year, we will continue

our outreach efforts to give options to survivors to find support.

The LCMS Redress Support Service team has formed new collaborative partnerships with other redress support services to strategically cross-refer clients to ensure that clients’ experience is one of a prompt and suitably attentive response. By working together, we have been able to share best practices and streamline processes to deliver more effective and holistic support.

We continue in our ongoing commitment to aiding survivors on their journey towards healing, justice, and restitution.

### Bendigo Afghan Migration Clinic

During the year, LCMS continued to provide guidance and support to members of the Afghan Hazara community living in the region, who wanted to submit Offshore Humanitarian Visas on behalf of family members living either in Afghanistan or neighbouring countries, fearing persecution from the Taliban regime. Assistance was provided to clients with statement preparation and completing application forms, with applications being referred to Refugee Legal for finalisation before submission to the Department of Home Affairs. The community was appreciative of the free support provided to them in this process by LCMS.





# SUPPORT WITH FAMILY AND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

## The Team

---



It has been established that there are levels of complexities in accessing support and education around family violence and child wellbeing for community members that are from a multicultural background and living in regional and remote areas. The cultural considerations that can act as barriers to education and support include the ability to communicate-written and verbal communication, cultural family dynamics, caring responsibility and roles, migration trauma and journey, accessibility to transport and residency status. These cultural consideration can individually shape how our community members experiences and accessibility to address concerns around family violence child wellbeing.

We have built trusted relationships between the Karen community and service support at The Orange Door to promote education and access to such support. We were also responsible for driving culturally targeted practice responses across the Hub and provide specialist practice and advice to the Hub workforce on cases. We worked closely with the Hub management Team, Practice Leaders, and Team Leaders to lead the delivery of high quality, safe and effective services to members of the

Karen Community that are seeking support at The Orange Door.

For the duration of her time at the Orange Door, PanMarLar has written and conducted an internal research study around what concerns practitioners within The Loddon Orange Door are experiencing or have in regard to supporting members from the multicultural communities and what they want to achieve and understand about the multicultural communities in the local area. She is also providing consultations for practitioner in Child wellbeing, family violence and supporting men who uses violence.

In addition to the consultations and research, PanMarLar organised small workshops with community members from the Karen community and professionals working closely with multicultural communities. These workshops are aimed to encourage accessibility and engagement with The Orange Door and its support services. It also aims to provide some education around family dynamics, family violence and child wellbeing with practitioners.



# DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION FOCAL POINTS

## RACISM IT STOPS WITH ME



**Racism It Stops With Me is a national anti-racism campaign of the Australian Human Rights Commission. It is one of many campaigns and initiatives working to increase awareness of racism, and equip more Australians with tools to address it.**

Equality, equity and anti-racism are at the core of everything that LCMS represents and we are proud to be a supporter of the “Racism it stops with me” campaign.

As part of our commitment to this work, LCMS has appointed Robyn Matthews as the focal person for this initiative. Robyn is extremely passionate about the anti-racism space and, in particular, the link between education and racism.

Since 2020, Robyn has been working on empowering community members to know their rights with regards to racism through her Family Learning Partnership program within local primary schools. This program saw the implementation of 4 community consultations to identify instances of racism, in particular unconscious bias, that multicultural youth are experiencing within the primary school setting, and then worked with Sylvia Phan to turn those experiences into an unconscious bias specific anti-racism training that has so far been successfully delivered to 3 primary schools this year.

LCMS has also delivered 15 cross cultural competency training sessions to a range of employers and community organisations this year, furthering our commitment to this space.

In addition to this, we have put the Human Rights Commission’s anti discrimination reporting tool on our website. Robyn is available to meet with any person who has experienced discrimination to support them in a trauma informed way to report their experiences and understand their options and rights.

LCMS says no to racism.

## LGBTQIA+



For Loddon Campaspe Multicultural Services, the principle of universal human rights is the foundation for supporting the LGBTQIA+ community by upholding those rights for all individuals, regardless of sexual orientation, gender identity, or expression.

As part of our commitment to this work, LCMS appointed Pinar Teker as the focal person for the initiative.

We are a safe organization, committed to empowering all individuals, regardless of their sexual orientation or gender identity, who are entitled to the same fundamental human rights and freedoms. Intersectionality may create additional challenges for people identifying as LGBTQIA+ and who come from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

Therefore, we started our LGBTQIA+ Road Map Ready journey to Rainbow Ready accreditation this year and LCMS has strengthened its LGBTQIA+ inclusion in the following indicators; Understanding, Inclusion, Visibility, and Safety. We acknowledge the importance of addressing intersectionality when addressing the needs of multicultural communities.

LCMS has provided training to staff to ensure staff and volunteers understand the experiences and needs of LGBTQIA+ service users. LCMS has also engaged with a couple of LGBTQIA+ service users to plan, implement and evaluate improvements to the service. LCMS has recognized and keeps supporting local LGBTQIA+ events and commemorations such as Bendigo Pride Festival, IDAHOBIT Day, Wear it Purple Day.

LCMS has implemented LGBTQIA+ inclusive language and images on service materials and on our website.



## RECONCILIATION ACTION PLAN



LCMS is furthering its dedication to inclusivity by working on embedding actions and words into a Loddon Campaspe Multicultural Services (LCMS) Reconciliation plan.

Amanda Sam has been appointed as the focal point person for this initiative and has been working toward staying true to the Strategic Plan for LCMS. Our goal is to be inclusive in our work with multicultural communities along with working and contributing to national reconciliation with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples.

The aim of our Reconciliation Action Plan is to help build relationships, respect and opportunities for change towards a better future for all peoples living in the Loddon Campaspe area, with the guidance and consultation of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

We aim to start by using the Reflect process which refers to Scoping capacity for reconciliation. This type of RAP fits well with our organisation as although we already have a relationship with the Dja Dja Wurung Clan (Bendigo, Castlemaine, Chewton, Maldon, Newstead, Harcourt) we are at the beginning stages of reaching out to other communities within the Loddon Campaspe Region.

The other clans we refer to are:

**Wurundjeri, Woi Wurrung** - Kyneton, Macedon, Hanging Rock, Woodend, Gisborne, Riddells Creek, Lancefield, Romsey

**Barapa Barapa** - Boort, Dunolly, Pyramid Hill, Inglewood, Wedderburn

**Taungurung** - Echuca, Heathcote, Kyabram, Rushworth, Tongala, Rochester

**Yorta Yorta** - Echuca, Kyabram, Rushworth, Tongala, Rochester

Committing to a Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan, means deciding on our vision for reconciliation and exploring our sphere of influence.

We want to support the Multicultural Community to understand how Australia is moving toward a stronger connection to the community, we want to continue to improve our listening, how we can walk alongside Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders to feel safe, respected and heard within their own homelands.

## VOICE TO PARLIAMENT

Loddon Campaspe Multicultural Services is deeply committed to improving the lives of migrants and refugees settling in Central Victoria. We work within the lands of the Dja Dja Wurung, Yorta Yorta, Barapa Barapa, Woi Wurrung, Wurundjeri, and Taungurung Peoples.

This year 2023, Australia will vote on a referendum to recognise the voice of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

This will mean that an independent, representative body can advise on the issues, policies, and laws that affect our indigenous people. We believe that we need to recognise and affirm the voice of the knowledge holders of these beautiful lands and cultures that have been preserved for over 65,000 years and that provide so many of us with safety, shelter, and food. We want to walk together with the traditional owners to promote meaningful and respectful communication between our diverse communities.

LCMS pledges its support to the Uluru Statement from the Heart and believes in its principles of sovereignty, justice, and self-determination through voice, treaty, and truth.

This is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to call for change and to continue the journey that was started long before 1967 when Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples were first counted on the census. We are committed to standing alongside Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and saying YES to a VOICE for the traditional custodians of these lands.

# CASE STUDY

## Spotlight on our Jobseekers!

One of our M@Work participants from the South Sudanese community visited the office as they were experiencing some personal hardships. With the support of the M@Work program, they were able to address their barriers to employment, including stable housing and reliable transport, and to find work in the food processing industry.

It was a fantastic outcome for them, and have been working over 30 hours a week for 5 months. M@Work Mentor Amanda Sam, has been a major support on their journey, and was amazed at the willingness of them to achieve their end goal of employment.

"This participant has been a delight to work with always turning up when required in the earlier process. Managing to supply necessary documents when requested. Started well in the position the participant did not drive but always managing to be at work on time.

The participant has been provided support with driving and hopes to get his license as soon as possible, and now they are also looking into further study and all in all the participant is a star."

It is a fantastic reflection of the importance of how that extra support can make such a difference in a person's journey.



## Jobseeker from a Ukranian Background - Name has been changed.

Steve came to LCMS in early July 2022 supported by his wife Helen and his sponsor Ramon. Ramon is a distant relative of Steve, both being Ukrainian. Ramon had been trying to support them to settle into the region, however, navigating services such as Centrelink, plus Ramon's lack of digital literacy meant that he was often of little assistance, when so much of what was needed to be done had to be submitted online. Steve was able to start employment in August, six weeks after his initial meeting with LCMS. LCMS helped Steve gain steady employment and since then has supported him to get his Victorian driver's licence.

Steve was able to move with Helen to a unit in Castlemaine, closer to their work, as well as a community contact in the area that speaks Ukrainian. LCMS assisted with reporting to Centrelink, as well as linking them to complete a tax return with a volunteer accountant for free.

Steve is still employed by Don KR currently, and his wife Helen is enrolled in a Women's English language class with LCMS. They turn to LCMS for all support as they feel comfortable and safe.

They are extremely thankful for the support, and are now building a network in the region with fellow Ukrainian community members in Western Victoria, and are exploring permanent residency in Australia.

## Jobseeker from a Ukranian Background - Name has been changed.

This is a story of a husband and wife who moved to Bendigo and tried looking for work but was unsuccessful. Mar has been unemployed for more than six months. She tried to enhance her skills by working at PepperGreen Farm as a volunteer but due to her caring duties and limited work experience and English language skills, she struggled to find jobs on her own. Mar has a car and driving licence. Through fierce advocacy for her due to her restricted availability, LCMS was able to assist her into work at Spotless.

Her husband, Min registered with the M@Work program on 16/03/2023, and worked with the team to be supported into employment with Spotless through our GROW program.

Unfortunately for Min, four months into work with Spotless, he injured himself as a result of a home maintenance accident. Min's fingers were severed by a lawn mower blade and required several months off work to undergo rehabilitation as he was unable to hold a broom or undertake many of his other tasks in his employment. The responsibility fell on his wife to manage the household duties and finances.

With the support of his employer in holding his position for him, as well as welfare checks from both LCMS and Spotless and the added assistance in accessing jobseekers payments during the time off work, the family was able to ride through this crisis. Min returned to work after 4 months and has returned to his previous hours, working since.

LCMS supported the employer with their conversations with Min with bilingual support to ensure that he was understanding all that was being discussed and mediating between them where necessary. With a genuinely supportive employer and efforts from the M@Work team at LCMS, Min was able to focus on his rehabilitation, and return to work once ready.



# LCMS OFFICE OPENING CELEBRATION

In September 2022, LCMS moved into it's new location at 437 Hargreaves St, Bendigo.

A smoking ceremony and Welcome to Country was performed by Auntie Peta Hudson from Dja Dja Wurrung.

Some of our community members, John Murphy from the LCMS board and and The Honorable Maree Edwards cut the ribbon to officially open the new office.

We had members from the Chinese Association do a Lion performance to bring good luck to the business and remove/scare away any negative energy.

After the more formal part of the opening, everyone was invited to join in a multicultural lunch.

It was a great day and the start of a new era for LCMS.





# OUR YEAR IN PICTURES

















# FINANCIAL SUMMARY

**Loddon Campaspe Multicultural Services Inc.**

**ABN 73 504 356 907**

**Financial Report - 30 June 2023**



**Loddon Campaspe Multicultural Services Inc.**  
**Committees' report**  
**30 June 2023**

Your committee members present their report, together with the financial statements, on the incorporated association for the year ended 30 June 2023.

**Committee members**

The names of each person who has been a committee member during the year and to the date of this report are:

	Position	Appointed	Resigned
Marilyn Gaulke	Chair	December 2022	-
Peter Watson	Treasurer	-	-
Annika Kearton	Secretary	November 2022	-
Bruno Spandonide	-	-	-
Ginny Tan	-	-	-
Ian Patrick	-	-	-
Anna Dorevitch	-	-	-
Salwa Dasigeer	-	-	-
Andriy Kurtsev	-	-	-
Daniel Jose	-	May 2023	-
Rachel Vanstone	Secretary	-	November 2022
John Murphy	-	-	November 2022
Thaera O'Brien	Chair	-	December 2022
Joby Sebastien	-	-	April 2023
Dianne Tran	-	-	April 2023

Committee members have been in office since the start of the financial year to the date of this report unless otherwise stated.

**Principal activities**

The principal activities of the association during the course of the financial year were the provision of settlement services, education programs, case management and referrals, cultural awareness and celebration of our cultural diversity.

**Significant changes**

No significant changes in the association's state of affairs occurred during the financial year.

**Operating Result**

Operations have continued to perform in line with expectations. The surplus of the association for the financial year was:

	2023	2022
	\$	\$
	1,855	3,810

The committee's report is signed in accordance with a resolution of the members of the committee.

  
 Mrs Marilyn Gaulke  
 Chair

  
 Mr Peter Watson  
 Treasurer

18 September 2023

**Loddon Campaspe Multicultural Services Inc.**  
**Contents**  
**30 June 2023**

Committees' report	2
Statement of profit or loss and other comprehensive income	3
Statement of financial position	4
Statement of changes in equity	5
Statement of cash flows	6
Notes to the financial statements	7
Committees' declaration	18
Independent auditor's report to the members of Loddon Campaspe Multicultural Services Inc.	17



Andrew Frewin Stewart  
61 Bull Street, Bendigo VIC 3550  
ABN: 65 084 004 390  
af@actsbendigo.com.au  
(03) 5443 0344

## Lead auditor's independence declaration under Section 60-40 of the *Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012* to the Directors of Loddon Campaspe Multicultural Services Inc.

As lead auditor for the audit of Loddon Campaspe Multicultural Services Inc. for the year ended 30 June 2023, I declare that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, there have been:

- no contraventions of the auditor independence requirements of the *Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012* in relation to the audit, and
- no contraventions of any applicable code of professional conduct in relation to the audit.

Andrew Frewin Stewart  
61 Bull Street, Bendigo VIC 3550  
Dated this 18<sup>th</sup> day of September 2023

Jessica Ritchie  
Lead Auditor

## Loddon Campaspe Multicultural Services Inc. Statement of profit or loss and other comprehensive income For the year ended 30 June 2023

	Note	2023 \$	2022 \$
<b>Revenue and other income</b>			
Revenue	3	2,101,419	1,381,317
Other income	4	143,021	56,293
		<u>2,244,440</u>	<u>1,437,610</u>
<b>Expenses</b>			
Employee benefits expense		(1,773,424)	(1,098,398)
Program expenses		(207,083)	(207,827)
Occupancy expenses		(102,418)	(21,965)
Depreciation and amortisation expense		(28,282)	(4,624)
Finance expenses		(20,427)	(19,628)
Administration expenses		(100,630)	(75,635)
Other expenses		(110,620)	(5,822)
		<u>1,655</u>	<u>3,810</u>
<b>Surplus before income tax expense</b>			
Income tax expense	1	-	-
		<u>1,655</u>	<u>3,810</u>
<b>Surplus after income tax expense for the year</b>			
Other comprehensive income for the year, net of tax		-	-
<b>Total comprehensive income for the year</b>		<u><u>1,655</u></u>	<u><u>3,810</u></u>



Loddon Campaspe Multicultural Services Inc.  
Statement of changes in equity  
For the year ended 30 June 2023

Balance at 1 July 2021  
Surplus after income tax expense for the year  
Other comprehensive income for the year, net of tax  
Total comprehensive income for the year

Balance at 30 June 2022

Balance at 1 July 2022

Surplus after income tax expense for the year  
Other comprehensive income for the year, net of tax  
Total comprehensive income for the year

Balance at 30 June 2023

Retained Surpluses \$	Total equity \$
198,937	198,937
3,810	3,810
-	-
3,810	3,810
200,747	200,747
Retained Surpluses \$	Total equity \$
200,747	200,747
1,655	1,655
-	-
1,655	1,655
202,402	202,402

Loddon Campaspe Multicultural Services Inc.  
Statement of financial position  
As at 30 June 2023

	Note	2023 \$	2022 \$
<b>Assets</b>			
<b>Current assets</b>			
Cash and cash equivalents	5	779,248	810,258
Trade and other receivables	6	50,051	22,100
Prepaid expenses	7	6,740	10,110
Total current assets		836,039	842,468
<b>Non-current assets</b>			
Property, plant and equipment	8	10,147	4,595
Total non-current assets		10,147	4,595
<b>Total assets</b>		846,186	847,063
<b>Liabilities</b>			
<b>Current liabilities</b>			
Trade and other payables	9	192,160	155,857
Grants in advance	10	348,488	223,501
Employee benefits	11	101,873	65,873
Total current liabilities		642,521	445,231
<b>Non-current liabilities</b>			
Employee benefits	11	1,283	1,085
Total non-current liabilities		1,283	1,085
<b>Total liabilities</b>		643,794	446,316
<b>Net assets</b>		202,402	200,747
<b>Equity</b>			
Retained surpluses		202,402	200,747
<b>Total equity</b>		202,402	200,747

The above statement of changes in equity should be read in conjunction with the accompanying notes

The above statement of financial position should be read in conjunction with the accompanying notes

**Loddon Campaspe Multicultural Services Inc.**  
**Statement of cash flows**  
**For the year ended 30 June 2023**

	Note	2023 \$	2022 \$
<b>Cash flows from operating activities</b>			
Receipts from grants, donors and customers		2,502,296	1,548,509
Payments to suppliers and employees		(2,300,077)	(1,422,815)
Interest received		806	276
Net cash from operating activities	12	202,824	123,970
<b>Cash flows from investing activities</b>			
Payments for property, plant and equipment		(33,834)	-
Net cash used in investing activities		(33,834)	-
<b>Net cash from financing activities</b>			
Net increase in cash and cash equivalents		168,990	123,970
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the financial year		610,258	486,288
Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the financial year	5	779,248	610,258

**Loddon Campaspe Multicultural Services Inc.**  
**Notes to the financial statements**  
**30 June 2023**

**Note 1. Significant accounting policies**

**Financial reporting framework**  
The financial statements are special purpose financial statements prepared in order to satisfy the financial reporting requirements of the *Australian Charities and Not-for-profit Commission Act 2012*. The committee has determined that the association is not a reporting entity.

**Statement of compliance**  
The financial report has been prepared in accordance with the mandatory Australian Accounting Standards applicable to entities reporting under the *Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012*, the basis of accounting specified by all Australian Accounting Standards and Interpretations, with the exception of AASB 115: *Revenue from Contracts with Customers*, AASB 18: *Leases*, AASB 1058: *Income of Not-for-profit Entities*, and the disclosure requirements of Australian Accounting Standards:

- AASB 101: *Presentation of Financial Statements*
- AASB 107: *Cash Flow Statements*
- AASB 108: *Accounting Policies Changes in Accounting Estimates and Errors*
- AASB 1031: *Materiality*
- AASB 1054: *Australian Additional Disclosures*.

**Basis of preparation**

The financial statements, except for the cash flow information, have been prepared on an accrual basis and are based on historical costs unless otherwise stated in the notes. Material accounting policies adopted in the preparation of these financial statements are presented below and have been consistently applied unless stated otherwise. The amounts presented in the financial statements have been rounded to the nearest dollar.

**Income tax**

As the incorporated association is a charitable institution in terms of subsection 50-5 of the *Income Tax Assessment Act 1997*, as amended, it is exempt from paying income tax.

**Current and non-current classification**

Assets and liabilities are presented in the statement of financial position based on current and non-current classification.

An asset is classified as current when:

- it is either expected to be realised or intended to be sold or consumed in the incorporated association's normal operating cycle
- it is held primarily for the purpose of trading
- it is expected to be realised within 12 months after the reporting period
- or the asset is cash or cash equivalent unless restricted from being exchanged or used to settle a liability for at least 12 months after the reporting period.

All other assets are classified as non-current.

A liability is classified as current when:

- it is either expected to be settled in the incorporated association's normal operating cycle
- it is held primarily for the purpose of trading
- it is due to be settled within 12 months after the reporting period
- or there is no unconditional right to defer the settlement of the liability for at least 12 months after the reporting period.

All other liabilities are classified as non-current.

**Financial instruments**

**Initial recognition and measurement**

Financial assets and financial liabilities are recognised when the association becomes a party to the contractual provisions to the instrument. For financial assets, this is the date that the association commits itself to either the purchase or sale of the asset (i.e. trade date accounting is adopted).

The above statement of cash flows should be read in conjunction with the accompanying notes



**Note 1. Significant accounting policies (continued)**

The association uses the simplified approach, as applicable under AASB 9, where material. The expected credit losses were not considered material and therefore were not brought to account.

**Impairment of assets**

At the end of each reporting period, the association reviews the carrying amounts of its tangible assets to determine whether there is any indication that those assets have been impaired. If such an indication exists, the recoverable amount of the assets, being the higher of the asset's fair value less costs of disposal and value in use, is compared to the asset's carrying amount. Any excess of the asset's carrying amount over its recoverable amount is recognised in profit or loss.

Where the assets are not held primarily for their ability to generate net cash inflows - that is, they are specialised assets held for continuing use of their service capacity - the recoverable amounts are expected to be materially the same as fair value.

Where it is not possible to estimate the recoverable amount of an individual asset, the association estimates the recoverable amount of the cash-generating unit to which the asset belongs.

**Goods and Services Tax (GST)**

Revenues, expenses, assets and liabilities are recognised net of the amount of associated GST, unless the GST incurred is not recoverable from the tax authority. In this case it is recognised as part of the cost of the acquisition of the asset or as part of the expense.

Receivables and payables are stated inclusive of the amount of GST receivable or payable. The net amount of GST recoverable from, or payable to, the tax authority is included in other receivables or other payables in the statement of financial position.

Cash flows are presented on a gross basis. The GST components of cash flows arising from investing or financing activities which are recoverable from, or payable to the tax authority, are presented as operating cash flows.

**Provisions**

Provisions are recognised when the association has a legal or constructive obligation, as a result of past events, for which it is probable that an outflow of economic benefits will result and that outflow can be reliably measured. Provisions are measured using the best estimate of the amounts required to settle the obligation at the end of the reporting period.

**Comparative figures**

Comparative figures have been adjusted to conform to changes in presentation for the current financial year where required by accounting standards or as a result of changes in accounting policy.

**Economic dependence**

Loddon Campaspe Multicultural Services Inc. is economically reliant upon revenue from grants from government departments, such as Department of Premier and Cabinet, Department of Social Services and Department of Education and Training, for funding a significant proportion of its operations. At the date of this report the committee members believe the Department will continue to support Loddon Campaspe Multicultural Services Inc.

**Note 2. Critical accounting estimates and judgements**

The committee members evaluate estimates and judgements incorporated into the financial statements based on historical knowledge and best available current information. Estimates assume a reasonable expectation of future events and are based on current trends and economic data, obtained both externally and within the association.

**Annual leave**

For the purpose of measurement, AASB 119: *Employee Benefits* defines obligations for short-term employee benefits as obligations expected to be settled wholly before 12 months after the end of the annual reporting period in which the employees render the related service. The association expects most employees will take their annual leave entitlements within 24 months of the reporting period in which they were earned, but this will not have a material impact on the amounts recognised in respect of obligations for employees' leave entitlements.

**Note 1. Significant accounting policies (continued)**

Financial instruments (except for trade receivables) are initially measured at fair value plus transaction costs. Trade receivables are initially measured at the transaction price if the trade receivables do not contain a significant financing component.

**Classification and subsequent measurement**

**Financial liabilities**

Financial liabilities are subsequently measured at amortised cost using the effective interest method.

The effective interest method is a method of calculating the amortised cost of a debt instrument and of allocating interest expense in profit or loss over the relevant period. The effective interest rate is the internal rate of return of the financial asset or liability. That is, it is the rate that exactly discounts the estimated future cash flows through the expected life of the instrument to the net carrying amount at initial recognition.

A financial liability cannot be reclassified.

Loddon Campaspe Multicultural Services Inc. recognise trade and other payables in this category.

**Financial assets**

Financial assets are measured at amortised costs if both of the following criteria are met:

- the financial asset is managed solely to collect contractual cash flows, and
- the contractual terms within the financial asset give rise to cash flows that are solely payments of principal and interest on the principal amount outstanding on specified dates.

Loddon Campaspe Multicultural Services Inc. recognise cash and cash equivalents and trade and other receivables in this category.

**Derecognition**

Derecognition refers to the removal of a previously recognised financial asset or financial liability from the Statement of Financial Position.

**Financial liabilities**

A liability is derecognised when it is extinguished (i.e. when the obligation in the contract is discharged, cancelled or expires). An exchange of an existing financial liability for a new one with substantially modified terms, or a substantial modification to the terms of a financial liability, is treated as an extinguishment of the existing liability and recognition of a new financial liability.

The difference between the carrying amount of the financial liability derecognised and the consideration paid and payable, including any non-cash assets transferred or liabilities assumed, is recognised in profit or loss.

**Financial assets**

All the following criteria need to be satisfied for the derecognition of a financial asset:

- the right to receive cash flows from the asset has expired or been transferred
- all risk and rewards of ownership of the asset have been substantially transferred and
- the association no longer controls the asset (i.e. has no practical ability to make unilateral decision to sell the asset to a third party).

On derecognition of a financial asset measured at amortised cost, the difference between the asset's carrying amount and the sum of the consideration received and receivable is recognised in profit or loss.

**Recognition of expected credit losses in financial statements**

Expected credit losses are the probability-weighted estimate of credit losses over the expected life of a financial instrument. A credit loss is the difference between all contractual cash flows that are due and all cash flows expected to be received, all discounted at the original effective interest rate of the financial instrument.

**Loddon Campaspe Multicultural Services Inc.**  
**Notes to the financial statements**  
**30 June 2023**

**Note 2. Critical accounting estimates and judgements (continued)**

**Impairment**

The association assesses impairment at each reporting period by evaluating the conditions and events specific to the association that may be indicative of impairment triggers. Recoverable amount of the relevant assets are reassessed using the value-in-use calculation which incorporates various key assumptions.

**Useful lives of property, plant and equipment**

The association reviews the estimated useful lives of property, plant and equipment at the end of each annual reporting period.

**Note 3. Revenue**

	2023	2022
	\$	\$
Grant revenue	2,057,724	1,315,277
Revenue from services	43,339	65,553
Memberships	356	487
	<u>2,101,419</u>	<u>1,381,317</u>

**Accounting policy for revenue recognition**

Non-reciprocal grant revenue is recognised in profit or loss when the association obtains control of the grant and it is probable that the economic benefits gained from the grant will flow to the association and the amount of the grant can be measured reliably.

If conditions are attached to the grant which must be satisfied before it is eligible to receive the contribution, the recognition of the grant as revenue will be deferred until those conditions are satisfied.

When grant revenue is received whereby the association incurs an obligation to deliver economic value directly back to the contributor, this is considered a reciprocal transaction and the grant revenue is recognised in the Statement of Financial Position as a liability until the service has been delivered to the contributor, otherwise the grant is recognised as income on receipt.

Revenue from the rendering of a service is recognised upon delivery of the service to the customers.

All revenue is stated net of the amount of goods and services tax.

**Note 4. Other income**

	2023	2022
	\$	\$
Other income	15,811	37,888
Interest income	605	276
Donations	1,388	1,128
Sponsorships	64,745	17,000
Government incentives income	60,462	-
	<u>143,021</u>	<u>56,293</u>

**Accounting policy for other income**

Interest revenue is recognised using the effective interest method, which for floating rate financial assets is the rate inherent in the instrument.

Sponsorships, government incentives income, donations and other income and recognised as income when received.

**Loddon Campaspe Multicultural Services Inc.**  
**Notes to the financial statements**  
**30 June 2023**

**Note 5. Cash and cash equivalents**

	2023	2022
	\$	\$
<i>Current assets</i>		
Cash on hand	810	93
Cash at bank	688,892	501,938
Short term deposits	108,576	108,227
	<u>779,248</u>	<u>610,258</u>

**Accounting policy for cash and cash equivalents**

Cash and cash equivalents include cash on hand, deposits held at call with banks and other short-term highly liquid investments with original maturities of three months or less.

**Note 6. Trade and other receivables**

	2023	2022
	\$	\$
<i>Current assets</i>		
Trade receivables	50,051	22,100

**Accounting policy for trade and other receivables**

Trade and other receivables includes amounts due from customers for services performed in the ordinary course of business. Receivables expected to be collected within 12 months of the end of the reporting period are classified as current assets. All other receivables are classified as non-current assets.

Trade and other receivables are initially recognised at the transaction price and subsequently measured at amortised cost using the effective interest method, less any provision for impairment.

**Note 7. Prepaid expenses**

	2023	2022
	\$	\$
<i>Current assets</i>		
Prepaid expenses	6,740	10,110

**Accounting policy for prepaid expenses**

Prepaid expenses include expense items paid for in advance for which the company will receive a benefit in the following reporting period. The carrying amount of prepaid expenses approximate their fair values at balance date.



**Note 9. Trade and other payables**

	2023	2022
	\$	\$
<i>Current liabilities</i>		
Trade payables	26,883	43,700
Accrued expenses	71,029	42,838
Superannuation payable	12,704	-
Other payables	18,184	16,376
Net GST payable	83,380	52,945
	<u>192,180</u>	<u>155,857</u>

**Accounting policy for trade and other payables**

Trade and other payables represent the liabilities for goods and services received by the association that remain unpaid at the end of the reporting period. The balance is recognised as a current liability with the amounts normally paid within 30 days of recognition of the liability.

**Note 10. Grants in advance**

	2023	2022
	\$	\$
<i>Current liabilities</i>		
Grants in advance	348,468	223,501

**Accounting policy for grants in advance**

Grants in advance represent the company's obligation to transfer goods or services to a customer and are recognised when a customer pays consideration, or when the company recognises a receivable to reflect its unconditional right to consideration (whichever is earlier) before the company has transferred the goods or services to the customer.

**Note 11. Employee benefits**

	2023	2022
	\$	\$
<i>Current liabilities</i>		
Provision for annual leave	94,533	61,712
Provision for long service leave	7,340	4,161
	<u>101,873</u>	<u>65,873</u>
<i>Non-current liabilities</i>		
Provision for long service leave	1,283	1,085
	<u>103,156</u>	<u>66,958</u>

**Accounting policy for employee benefits**

**Short-term employee benefits**

Short-term employee benefits include the total amount accrued for annual leave entitlements and the amounts accrued for long service leave entitlements that have vested due to employees having completed the required period of service. Based on past experience, the association does not expect the full amount of annual leave or long service leave balances classified as current liabilities to be settled within the next 12 months. However, these amounts must be classified as current liabilities since the association does not have an unconditional right to defer the settlement of these amounts in the event employees wish to use their leave entitlement.

**Note 8. Property, plant and equipment**

	2023	2022
	\$	\$
<i>Non-current assets</i>		
Computer equipment - at cost	24,702	16,786
Less accumulated depreciation	(17,650)	(14,680)
	<u>7,152</u>	<u>2,126</u>
Office equipment - at cost	5,837	4,617
Less accumulated depreciation	(2,642)	(2,148)
	<u>2,995</u>	<u>2,469</u>
Motor vehicles at cost	24,899	-
Less accumulated depreciation	(24,899)	-
	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>
	<u>10,147</u>	<u>4,595</u>

**Accounting policy for property, plant and equipment**

Each class of property, plant and equipment is carried at cost less, where applicable, any accumulated depreciation and impairment losses.

**Plant and equipment**

Plant and equipment are measured on the cost basis and are therefore carried at cost less accumulated depreciation and any accumulated impairment losses. In the event the carrying amount of plant and equipment is greater than its estimated recoverable amount, the carrying amount is written down immediately to its estimated recoverable amount and impairment losses are recognised either in profit or loss.

Plant and equipment that have been contributed at no cost, or for nominal cost, are valued and recognised at the fair value of the asset at the date it is acquired.

**Depreciation**

The depreciable amount of all fixed assets is depreciated on a straight line basis over the asset's useful life to the association commencing from the time the asset is held ready for use. The depreciation rates are consistent with the prior year. The depreciation rates used for each class of depreciable assets are:

Office equipment	10-20%
Computer equipment	33%
Motor vehicles	25%

The residual values, useful lives and depreciation methods are reviewed, and adjusted if appropriate, at each reporting date.

Gains and losses on disposals are determined by comparing proceeds with the carrying amount. These gains or losses are included in profit or loss.

**Loddon Campaspe Multicultural Services Inc.**  
**Notes to the financial statements**  
**30 June 2023**

**Note 11. Employee benefits (continued)**

**Long-term employee benefits**

The association classifies employees' long service leave as long-term employee benefits as they are not expected to be settled within 12 months after the end of the annual reporting period in which the employees render the related service. Provision is made for the association's obligation for long-term employee benefits, which are measured at the present value of the expected future payments to be made to employees. Expected future payments incorporate anticipated future wage and salary levels, durations of service and employee departures, and are discounted at rates determined by reference to market yields at the end of the reporting period on high quality government bonds that have maturity dates that approximate the terms of the obligations. Any remeasurements for changes in assumptions of obligations for long-term employee benefits are recognised in profit or loss in the periods in which the changes occur.

The association's obligations for long-term employee benefits are presented as non-current liabilities in its Statement of Financial Position, except where the association does not have an unconditional right to defer settlement for at least 12 months after the end of the reporting period, in which case the obligations are presented as current liabilities.

**Long service leave portability**

From 1 July 2019, the association registered its employees under Victoria's Portable Long Service Leave Scheme, which makes it fairer and easier for the association's employees working in the community services sector to access long service leave benefits. Since registration, the association has submitted a quarterly return to the Portable Long Service Leave Authority, which is based on each employees ordinary pay multiplied by 1.65% (being the levy applicable to the community services sector). The levy is equal to the minimum long service leave entitlement to which the association's employees are eligible for under their relevant award.

In measuring the provision for long service leave, the provision has been crystallised at 30 June 2019 as long service leave benefits accrued by eligible employees since 1 July 2019 have been contributed to the authority (or recorded as a payable at balance date) by quarterly returns. The provision for long service leave therefore reflects leave entitlements accrued by eligible employees prior to registration, which is revised annually based on anticipated future wage and salary levels and changes in full time equivalent hours worked by employees at balance date.

**Note 12. Cash flow information**

Reconciliation of surplus to net cash provided from operating activities:

	2023	2022
	\$	\$
Surplus after income tax expense for the year	1,065	3,810
Non cash items:		
Depreciation	28,282	4,524
Change in assets and liabilities:		
(increase)/decrease in trade and other receivables	(27,063)	79,841
(increase)/decrease in prepaid expenses	3,370	(10,110)
(increase)/decrease in trade and other payables	36,305	91,061
(increase)/(decrease) in provisions	124,987	27,181
increase/(decrease) in grants in advance	36,188	(72,737)
Net cash from operating activities	202,824	123,970

**Note 13. Capital commitments**

No capital expenditure commitments existed at year end. (2022: Nil)

**Note 14. Contingent assets and liabilities**

The committee are not aware of any contingent liabilities or assets as at the date of signing this financial report. (2022: Nil)

**Loddon Campaspe Multicultural Services Inc.**  
**Notes to the financial statements**  
**30 June 2023**

**Note 15. Events after the reporting period**

No matter or circumstance has arisen since balance date that has significantly affected, or may significantly affect the incorporated association's operations, the results of those operations, or the incorporated association's state of affairs in future financial years.

**Note 16. Committee member and related party disclosures**

Transactions between related parties are on normal commercial terms and conditions no more favourable than those available to other parties unless otherwise stated.

No committee members have entered into any material contract with the association since the end of the previous financial year and there were no material contracts involving committee members interests subsisting at year end. There were no loans to committee members.

**Note 17. Registered office and principal place of business**

**The registered office and principal place of business of the association is:**  
Loddon Campaspe Multicultural Services Inc.  
120 McCrae St  
Bendigo Victoria 3550





Andrew Frewin Stewart  
81 Bull Street Bendigo VIC 3550  
Abk 65 864 904 390  
afsf@lcsbendigo.com.au  
(03) 5443 0344

## Independent Auditor's Report to the Members of Loddon Campaspe Multicultural Services Inc.

### Report on the audit of the financial statements

#### Our opinion

In our opinion the accompanying financial report of Loddon Campaspe Multicultural Services Inc., being a special purpose financial report, is in accordance with the *Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012*, including:

- giving a true and fair view of the association's financial position as at 30 June 2023 and of its performance for the year ended on that date, and
- complying with the accounting policies described in Note 1 of the financial report.

#### What we have audited

The association's financial report comprises the:

- statement of financial position as at 30 June 2023
- statement of profit or loss and other comprehensive income for the year then ended
- statement of changes in equity for the year then ended
- statement of cash flows for the year then ended
- notes comprising a summary of significant accounting policies and other explanatory notes; and
- the certification by members of the committee that the annual statements give a true and fair view of the financial position of the association.

#### Basis for opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the *Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Report* section of our report.

We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our audit opinion.

#### Basis of accounting and restriction on distribution

Without modifying our opinion, we draw attention to Note 1 to the financial statements, which describes the basis of accounting. The financial report has been prepared to assist the association to meet the requirements of the *Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012*. As a result, the financial report may not be suitable for another purpose.

### Loddon Campaspe Multicultural Services Inc. Committees' declaration


30 June 2023

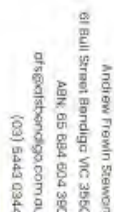
In accordance with a resolution of the committee Members of Loddon Campaspe Multicultural Services Inc, the committee Members declare that:

- The financial statements and notes, as set out on pages 3 to 15, are in accordance with the *Australian Charities and Not for Profits Commission Act 2012* and:
  - comply with accounting policies disclosed at Note 1 to the financial statements
  - give true and fair view of the association's financial position as at 30 June 2023 and of its performance for the year ended on that date.
- In the committee members' opinion there are reasonable grounds to believe that the association will be able to pay its debts as and when they become due and payable.

  
Mrs Merrilyn Gaulke  
Chair

18 September 2023

  
Mr Peter Watson  
Treasurer



The association may prepare an annual report that may include the financial statements, committee's report and declaration and our audit report (the financial report). The annual report may also include "other information" on the entity's operations and financial results and financial position as set out in the financial report, typically in a Chairperson's report and reports covering governance and other matters.

The committee members are responsible for the other information. An annual report has not been made available to us as of the date of this auditor's report.

Our opinion on the financial report does not cover the other information and accordingly we will not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon.

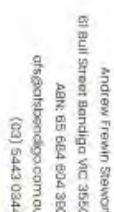
Our responsibility is to read the other information identified above when it becomes available and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the financial report or our knowledge obtained in the audit, or otherwise appears to be materially misstated.

If we identify that material inconsistency appears to exist when we read the annual report (or become aware that the other information appears to be materially misstated), we will discuss the matter with the committee members and where we believe that a material misstatement of the other information exists, we will request management to correct the other information.

We are independent of the association in accordance with the auditor independence requirements of the Accounting Professional and Ethical Standards Board's APES 110 Code of Ethics for Professional Accountants (the Code) that are relevant to our audit of the financial report in Australia. We have also fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with the Code.

The committee of the association is responsible for the preparation of the financial report that gives a true and fair view in accordance with the accounting policies described in Note 1 of the financial report and the *Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012* and for such controls as the committee determines is necessary to enable preparation of the financial report that is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing this financial report, the committee is responsible for assessing the association's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the committee either intends to liquidate the association or cease operations, or have no realistic alternative but to do so.



Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial report as a whole is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with the Australian Auditing Standards will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatement can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of this financial report.

A further description of our responsibilities for the audit of the financial report is located at the Auditing and Assurance Standards Board website at: <http://www.auasb.gov.au/home.aspx>. This description forms part of our auditor's report.

**Andrew Frewin Stewart**  
61 Bull Street, Bendigo, 3550  
Dated this 18<sup>th</sup> day of September 2023

*J. Ritchie*  
Jessica Ritchie  
Lead Auditor









Harmony Fair - Solomon Islander Performance



# GOVERNANCE

Loddon Campaspe Multicultural Services is an incorporated association governed by a voluntary Board of Directors, which is formed of ordinary members and office bearers. Our Directors come from an array of culturally diverse backgrounds and lived experiences and bring a wide variety of expertise and skills, including community engagement and development, business management, finance, risk, legal, HR and people management, education, communications and governance.

The Board is driven to ensure strategy is carried out to align with the organisation's purpose whilst overseeing a framework for how the organisation works with and empowers the multicultural community in the region.

Together they are deeply committed to improving the lives of migrants and refugees settling in the Loddon Campaspe Region.

## BOARD MEETINGS AND SUBCOMMITTEES

Name	Office bearer position and sub-committee participation	# Meetings attended	Appointed	Resigned
Merrilyn Gaulke	Board Chair / People and Culture	8	-	-
Andiryu Kurtsev	Deputy Chair / Finance, Audit, Risk and Compliance (Committee Chair)	9	-	-
Peter Watson	Treasurer / Finance, Audit, Risk and Compliance	4	-	-
Annika Kearton	Secretary / Finance, Audit, Risk and Compliance	4	DEC 2022	-
Bruno Spandonide	People and Culture	7	-	-
Salwa Dastgeer	People and Culture	6	-	-
Anna Dorevitch	People and Culture (Committee Chair)	9	-	-
Ian Patrick	Finance, Audit, Risk and Compliance	6	-	-
Daniel Jose	Finance, Audit, Risk and Compliance	2	MAY 2023	-
Ginny Tan	-	2	-	SEP 2022
Rachel Vanstone	-	0	-	SEP 2022
John Murphy	-	4	-	NOV 2022
Thaera O'Brien	-	5	-	DEC 2022
Joby Sebastien	-	5	-	APR 2023
Dianne Tran	-	0	-	APR 2023

# ELISANGELA'S

## Elisangela Couto

Elisangela Couto, was born in Mozambique, in a small country town called Tete.

I grew up in a traditional African family with three siblings, me being the youngest so I was very spoiled. During elementary school, I remember being picked up from school by my elder brother who would carry my school bag and sometimes even piggy back me! Growing up in Mozambique was very simple, small houses and a lot of free time and space to run and have fun.

Like any small town in a big country, we were lower class moving to the middle class in a very small economy. Growing up I remember being very close to my paternal grandmother, she was a typical African women and loved telling stories about her culture and ancestors, she would gather all the children in a circle and engage them with family stories. Activities like storytelling instilled me with pride in my family, culture, and community. My grandmother ensured that I knew how to speak our native language, Nhungue. She pretended not to know how to speak Portuguese (official language in Mozambique) so we could use our dialect. I obviously did not appreciate her efforts at that time, but now I'm so grateful. While my family spoke Nhungue at home we used Portuguese at school.

I lost my parents when I was 11 years old, and my middle sister and I went to live with my grandmother. My grandmother was muslim, and a great mentor, however she belived that woman's role was to get married and bring up a large family, she taught me how to take care of the house, today, I am grateful for that. Considering my grandmother's cultural beliefs, it was hard for me to study and to convince her to let me get a degree. But after a lot of discussions, I managed to convince her to let me persue a university degree.

At 19 years old I started a degree in International Relations, which for my traditional grandmother wasn't too bad, considering that I would became a diplomate and travel the world. However, a year later I cancelled my course and I applied for a scholarship in Tourism Planing, which I got!

My grandmother didn't agree with my second choice because she thought that I would spend my time "In beaches and wearing swimming suits". But I managed, once again, to convince her, and eventually she came to agree that Tourism was as good as Diplomacy.

After receiving my Diploma in Tourism Planning, I was sent on a month-long internship at Gorangosa National Park, where I worked with small communities in developing business plans for community tourism. While doing this work, I found myself passionate about working with the community so not long after that I start working as a university teacher for Ecoturism and Wildlife management.

I spent eight years working in the Tourism and Community AID, were I had opportunity to visit amazing places, including Brasil, China and Botsuwana. After this period, I received a scholarship from the Australian Government to complete a Masters Degree in Community Planning and Development in 2015, which marked the beginning of my journey to Australia.

I really wanted to get more education. Australia had always been the primary option for me, and for many (other) Mozambicans, going to Australia was a popular choice so, I was lucky to be granted the scholarship. I studied at La Tobe University, earning a Masters of Community Planning and Development in 2017. As a student, my visa allowed me to bring my family to join me in Australia. For all of us this was an opportunity, but above all a great adventure! Before coming to Australia, I tried to prepare myself, by doing extensive research about the culture and I took intensive English classes. Like many other migrants I thought I was ready! But the reality was so differently. When I got here, I felt a bit lost and out of my environment.

Settling into a new country was not easy, we had to adapt to an unfamiliar environment and lifestyle, while trying to maintaining our former culture and way of life. Of all the struggles, language was the main one. Luckily, we could access local agencies for support, and LCMS was one of them. Through LCMS, my husband managed to secure a management position and get a sponsor visa that allowed us to stay and live here, in Australia, permanently. After years living here, we are still adjusting but we absolutely love the journey.

I can't speak about my Australian journey without metioning LCMS, which was part of it since the beginning. First, as a newly arrived International student, seeking English Language and Employment support for me and my husband. Secondly, as volunteer on the Welcome Dinners Project and Multicultural Festival (Zinda). Thirdly, as researcher writing about motivations and expectation of volunteers in social initiatives. And



# STORY

lately as an employee, starting in 2020.

My work with LCMS started in the middle of the Covid19 Pandemic, as a social worker to provide extensive support to Multicultural communities during that time. After a few months, I applied for the Team leader position for Community Development and Capacity Building. For me this was an act of courage, as I wasn't very confident, considering that I had a great deal with

experience elsewhere, but little experience in Australia, however, with the organisation support I found myself striving.

During the three years that I have been with LCMS, I have learnt more than all my work career. My current work is a perfect match for my passion, the very reason that brought me from the other side of the world.



# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

## FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

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

## VICTORIAN GOVERNMENT

Department of Education and Training  
Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions  
Department of Premier and Cabinet  
Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning

## LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Council of the City of Greater Bendigo  
Mount Alexander Shire Council

## COMMUNITY PARTNERS

Access Australia Group  
AFS Auditors  
Annie North  
Ballarat Regional Multicultural Council  
Be Bendigo  
Bendigo Art Gallery  
Bendigo Chinese Association  
Bendigo Community Health Services  
Bendigo Filipino Foundation  
Bendigo Friends and Mentors  
Bendigo Interfaith Council  
Bendigo Islamic Association  
Bendigo Islamic Community Centre  
Bendigo Malayalee Association  
Bendigo Senior Secondary College  
Bendigo South East College  
Bendigo Kangan Institute  
CatholicCare Sandhurst  
Castlemaine Community House  
Central Goldfields Library  
Centre Against Sexual Assault  
Centre for Non Violence  
Clayton Utz  
Crusoe College  
Corporation Dutch - Australian Friends  
Country Women's Association  
Curium Legal  
Diversitat  
Dja Dja Wurrung Clans  
East Bendigo Pool  
Ethnic Communities Council of Victoria  
Ethnic Council of Shepparton and District

Gandel Foundation  
Golden Square Primary School  
Golden Square Pool  
Goldfields Library Corporation  
Grandmothers ADRC  
Hare Krishna Bendigo  
Kangaroo Flat Primary School  
Kangaroo Flat Library  
Karen Organisation of Bendigo  
La Trobe University  
Lifeline Central Victoria and Mallee  
Multicultural Centre for Women's Health  
Orange Door  
Punctum Inc  
Pyramid Hill Neighbourhood House  
Refugee Council of Australia  
Regional Multicultural Consortium  
Rural Australians for Refugees Bendigo and Castlemaine  
Salvation Army Church, Bendigo  
Settlement Services International  
Settlement Council of Australia  
Seventh day Adventist Church, Bendigo  
Sisterworks  
St Pauls Cathedral Bendigo  
Skills and Job Centre  
Spectrum  
Sunraysia Mallee Ethnic Communities Council  
The Great Stupa of Universal Compassion  
United Filipino Association Pyramid Hill  
Victorian Inclusion Agency  
Victorian Multicultural Commission  
Violet St Primary School  
Welcoming Australia  
Westvic Staffing Solutions  
White Hills Primary School  
Women's Health Loddon Mallee  
Worksafe