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OUR OFFICE

18 Myers Street, Bendigo 3550
9:00am – 5:00pm Monday to Friday
(03) 5441 2666

amicus.org.au

A MESSAGE FROM OUR CEO

ANN-MAREE DAVIS

Hello everyone! Welcome to the Spring edition of our Amicus Exchange

What an interesting couple of months we have had since our last newsletter! In this edition you will find news with the latest COVID-19 information, a welcome to some new staff, some new opportunities for some of our existing staff and a farewell to others.

Firstly I wanted to thank everyone for their continued support of Amicus and working with us to keep everyone at Amicus COVID-19 free. There have been so many changes and new information that we have all had to learn about and live with very quickly.

At the end of June our Committee of Management approved a new budget and business plan for the Leadership Team to implement in 2020-21.

There were some key projects approved and new positions funded, most of these informed by your feedback and I would like to take you through these now so that you are aware of some exciting changes ahead!

The Key Projects identified are:

Separation of Children's and Adult Services to our Child Safe.

This will see the creation of a Children's Services Team which will be led by Sophia Wight as the Children's Services Manager. All children and young people we provide direct support to will transition to this team regardless of how they are funded.

This transition will occur in September and participants' families and staff have already been provided with communication regarding this and are preparing for transmission. Existing participants who will turn 18 in the next 12 months will stay with the NDIS Service Delivery Team which will also be renamed the Adult Services Team.

Adult Services Team.

This team will support our NDIS direct service delivery for adults including SIL, CHSP, COS and HACC PYP. The NDIS Operations Manager role that was Shayne's has recently been advertised as Adult Service Manager, and Donna Casey has been successful in her application for this position and has recently commenced. Donna has been acting in Shayne's role for the past seven months.



Single point of entry across the organisation to streamline access to all of our services

The new Pathways Engagement and Capacity Team will replace our Intake Team and will be the first point of call for Adult and Children's Services, NDIS Support Coordination and Behaviour Support Services.

They will support new and existing participants in a range of supports including maintaining service agreements and bookings and improving the experience of all participants, some of whom receive more than one service from us.

In addition, the team will undertake capacity building and community engagement and will also have a newly created Incident Reporting and Incident Investigation Officer within this team to streamline our processes across the organisation.

Develop a Centralised Complaints process and response

We are currently working on this and hope to have this work finalised in the coming weeks.

Implementation of a Competency Framework across the organisation

We are currently implementing a framework that will support all staff to be qualified by the end of 2022.

Transition to Company Limited by Guarantee

To provide a more robust governance framework to the way that Amicus operates and provide opportunities for services like our Behaviour Support and Support Coordination teams to respond to unmet needs and referrals in NSW Border towns like Moama and Mathoura.

Construction of our SDA units on Lot 23 Webdon Drive

Our Planning permit is approved and we are currently selecting a builder. Construction will start in a couple of months and we need to establish vacancy management processes, SDA property and tenancy management arrangements.

New Positions

There are a number of new positions that have been recently advertised and we are finalising recruitment.

Some of the successful candidates are announced later in the newsletter.

Pathways Engagement and Capacity Team

- Pathways Engagement and Capacity Manager
- Pathways and Engagement Manager
- Pathways Officers x 2
- Pathways and First Response Officer x 1
- Incident Reporting and Investigation Officer x 1
- Community Inclusion and Capacity Building Officer x 1

Adult Services

SIL Manager

Will have direct responsibility for all SILs delivered by Amicus and our Short Term Accommodation at Melissa Court to provide support to SIL Key Workers and teams regarding operational, regulatory and maintenance requirements.

Behaviour Support Coach

Will provide training, coaching and practical assistance and support to teams working with participants who have behaviours of concern. This role will initially focus on those who currently have a BSP.

Corporate Services

Business Development Manager

To develop an options paper that identifies unmet needs in our community and opportunities for future development and growth.

Corporate Services Assistant

- **Shared Admin Resource** across Support Coordination and Behaviour Support Services.

Behaviour Support Service

- **Behaviour Support Practitioner**

We have also been very busy transitioning to our new systems Lumary and Skedulo which will go live from mid-September. We have prepared all the data which has now transitioned and we are currently training all staff so they can use the systems when we go live.

The new systems will better support us with all aspects of our work with you including preparation of service agreements and bookings, staff matching, rostering, billing and statements.

This new solution is long awaited and we weren't going to let COVID-19 get in the way, so I particularly wanted to thank the many who have worked behind the scenes to make this happen during such challenging times.

Whilst there have been challenges for everyone as we work through the crazy pandemic times, there is light at the end of the tunnel. Take care everyone!

Cheers!

Ann-Maree



COVID-19 INFORMATION AND UPDATES

WHAT TO DO IF YOU ARE UNWELL

If you are feeling unwell do not go to work or school and if your direct supports with Amicus are not essential please call us to cancel support.

Check your symptoms - you may have COVID-19 if you have any of the following; fever, chills or sweats, cough, sore throat, shortness of breath, runny nose and loss of sense of smell or taste.

- Let Amicus know that you are going to get tested.
- Get tested at a nearby testing location if you have any of the symptoms. Return home immediately.
- Wait for your test results. Do not go to work, school or receive non-essential supports or go out shopping, stay at home. It usually takes between 1-3 days for your results to be returned to you. If you are worried your results are taking too long you can call a service provider for more information.
- Let Amicus know the result.
- If you work and are worried you will lose pay while you wait for your results you may be eligible for a \$450 COVID-19 Test Isolation Payment.

- If you test negative, go about your normal activity, following the restrictions for your location.
- If you test positive we will contact you. You will need to self-isolate for 14 days. Do not go to work. If you work and are worried you will lose pay you may be eligible for a \$1500 COVID-19 Worker Support Payment.
- If your condition worsens contact your doctor or a health professional. If you become very unwell and are having trouble breathing contact triple zero (000), you may need to be admitted to hospital.
- If you have tested positive, you must isolate until you receive clearance from the Department of Health and Human Services. Once you have been cleared you can resume your normal activity, following the restrictions for your location. Isolation for positive test result of COVID-19 is at least 10 days – however this depends on how long your symptoms persist.

Let Amicus know when you have received clearance from DHHS. There are two ways you can contact us to let us know. By email covid19@amicus.org.au or phone to Todd Foster on **5441 2666**



RESTRICTIONS AND MANDATORY MASKS

We are all hoping that by mid September some restrictions will have reduced, but for now Regional Victoria remains in Stage 3 restrictions with mandatory masks.

There are only four reasons to leave your home, which include:

- Shopping for food or other essential items
- To provide caregiving, for compassionate reasons or to seek medical treatment
- For exercise (outdoor exercise only, with only one other person or members of your household)
- Work or study, if you cannot work or study from home

This means that you must carry a face covering with you when leaving home. You can take your mask off to drive, but if there is someone in the car that is not from your household, you must wear a mask.

The NDIS have implemented temporary changes to funding of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for personal care where COVID-19 is active, and the use of PPE is consistent with current health advice.

You can now recover the costs to purchase PPE items using your NDIS funds, if you receive an average of at least one hour a day of face-to-face daily living supports.



DISABILITY INFORMATION HELPLINE

If you have a question about COVID-19, or need help because things have changed, you can contact the Disability Information Helpline on 1800 643 787. (If you are deaf, hard of hearing or have a speech impairment, you can also call the National Relay Service on 133 677.)

The helpline provides information and referrals for people with disability who need help because of COVID-19, and can also assist families, carers, and support workers.

The helpline is available Monday to Friday 8am to 8pm (AEST). It is not available on national public holidays.

Email covid19@amicus.org.au or phone Todd Foster on **5441 2666**.



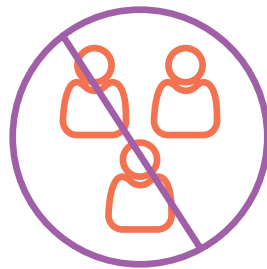
REMINDER TO KEEP PRACTICING GOOD HYGIENE

Whilst it's great to see that cases are slowly dropping in Victoria, it's vital to do everything you can to continue to protect yourself and others from COVID-19 by remembering to wear your face mask in public, maintain good hygiene and social distancing by keeping 1.5m away from people in public.

To minimise the risk of contracting COVID-19 you should continue to:



Wash your hands frequently with soap and water, before and after eating and after going to the toilet.



Avoid physical contact with others where possible (touching, kissing, hugging etc.).



Use alcohol-based hand sanitiser often.



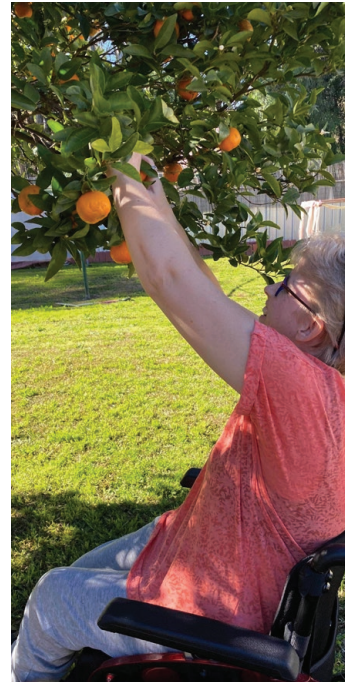
Cover your mouth and nose when you cough or sneeze, dispose of tissues and use alcohol-based hand sanitiser often.

PARTICIPANT UPDATES IN ISOLATION

WHEN LIFE GIVES YOU MANDARINS, MAKE MARMALADE!

Mary picked so many mandarins she and her husband Andy didn't know what to do with them all! Support worker Jillian suggested she could make jam and marmalade for them to give to friends and family.

Andy peeled the mandarins, peeling almost a total of 3kg of mandarins! Looks delicious!



HEATHER CHANGES UP HER ISOLATION EXERCISE

Heather and her support worker Lee have been enjoying getting outdoors for some walking exercises - with face masks on of course!

Heather found the initial change of activity from her usual swimming a bit challenging during COVID-19, but with positive support she has adapted well and is now loving her walks.

Heather always looks forward to her long walks at a variety of areas including the Crusoe Reservoir loop, Strathfieldsaye bush tracks and around the lakes in Bendigo.



GETTING THE KICK OF IT

Recently, a young participant was supported to engage in their first game of Auskick! They had a great time wearing all brand new Western Bulldogs gear that was purchased for them on their birthday. We believe we have a brand new AFL superstar on our hands!



HORSE PLAY IN ISOLATION

While Simone is unable to attend Riding for the Disabled (RDA) to see her favourite horse Dougy, Simone has been able to visit a few ponies in the local area with her support worker Rochelle.



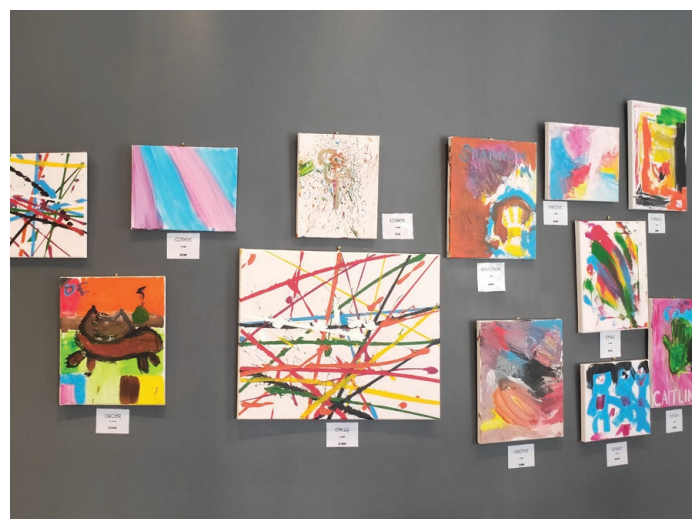
TCP WALL BECOMES A BEAUTIFUL ART GALLERY

Children and young people involved in the TCP program were asked to do a painting for the new office wall gallery.

The art they did was amazing and the TCP Team are extremely proud of the participants and their artwork.

If you come into the office do yourself a favour and take a few minutes to admire the paintings which are on the wall as you enter.

You can't help but smile and feel happy when you see them!



SEASONAL HEALTH INFORMATION

HAY FEVER

Seasonal hay fever occurs mainly in spring and summer, affecting people allergic to pollens. Hay fever is very common and can affect up to 30 per cent of children.

Signs and symptoms of hay fever:

- frequent bouts of sneezing
- a runny nose
- blocked nose
- itchy ears, nose, throat and mouth
- red, itchy, swollen or watery eyes
- headaches

If hay fever is left untreated it can lead to poor sleep, and tiredness. In some cases, hay fever can also make asthma more difficult to control and increase the chance of sinus infections.

Hay fever can't be cured, but there are a number of ways you can improve the symptoms.

The best way to reduce the frequency of hay fever is to identify what causes your allergic reaction and then try to avoid contact with it.

If you're allergic to pollen, checking the pollen count for your region can help you be aware when your hay fever might be worse.

Your doctor may suggest using medication to help relieve your symptoms, such as non-sedating antihistamines or low-dose steroid nasal sprays.

Your doctor or pharmacist can give advice on which medication may be best for you and how they might interact with your other health conditions and medications.



SUN SMART IN SPRING

The arrival of Spring brings out the beautiful sunshine and gorgeous florals, but ultra violet (UV) levels also begin to rise! UV levels can still be high even when the temperatures are low and it doesn't feel like a day you could get sunburnt.

You can check the UV levels in your local area on the SunSmart website or via the free SunSmart app.

The best way to avoid any sunburn and protect your skin from UV levels is:

- Slip on clothing
- Slop on sunscreen
- Slap on a hat
- Seek shade
- Slide on sunglasses



AMICUS UPDATES

MEET THE TEAM

Melissa Zera

Pathways Engagement and Capacity Manager

We are pleased to announce that Melissa Zera is joining the Leadership Team at Amicus. She will be managing our newly established Pathways Engagement and Capacity Team who will provide centralised intake across all of our business units, including establishment and monitoring of service agreements and bookings.

The team also has an important role in building opportunities for participation in mainstream and community, as well as strengthening capacity and self-direction of Amicus participants.

Melissa may already be known to some of you as she has extensive experience in the disability and community services sector locally, including with DHHS as Disability Client Services Manager, Manager of Disability Intake and many years of involvement in Intake and the FFYA program.

Melissa has strong networks developed through these roles and projects including Loddon Connect where she was based at Centre for Non-Violence for the trial.



For the past 3.5 years Melissa has been the Assistant Director of NDIA Victoria Tasmania, and we are looking forward to the expertise that she will bring to participants and families at Amicus, and our team.

Melissa highly regards the values of Amicus and is extremely excited to join the team and work hard for the participants of Amicus.

Melissa is pictured here with her beautiful dog Frankie, in her favourite place Anglesea. I am sure that you will all join me in giving her a warm Amicus welcome!



Noelene Karlsen

Supported Independent Living (SIL) Manager

Noelene Karlsen will also be joining the team in the newly created position of SIL (Supported Independent Living) Manager.

Noelene will oversee all of our SILs and Melissa Court and provide support to our participants and families, SIL Key Workers and staff to ensure that NDIS plan goals are achieved and that our participants are living their best lives in their own home.

Noelene moved to Castlemaine to be closer to her sons and their families in Melbourne. She is an active community member with a background in human services, including the disability sector and has also been a business owner, employing people with a disability in her team.

For the past three years Noelene has worked in Ballarat where she managed Accommodation Housing with McCallum Disability Services.

Noelene loves spending time with her family (with a son now living in Sweden!) and running with her two dogs. She enjoys challenging herself and when she lived in



Townsville she organised the Mother's Day Classic for Cancer event. She loves participating in a wide variety of running and trail walk events and has completed two Oxfam Trail Walks (100km) and was in training for another in March 2020 but unfortunately this was cancelled due to COVID-19.

It certainly sounds like Noelene will have plenty of stamina for the new role and we know you will also give her a very warm Amicus welcome.

FAREWELL

Janet Gregory, Danni Bradley and Anthony Murphy have all finished up in their roles in the Intake Team.

Janet, Danni and Anthony have all been in various roles with Amicus over the years and have all made many valuable contributions in their time with us - they will all be missed!

We wish them all the best and thank them for her commitment to the lives of vulnerable people and those living with disability.

We would also like to warmly welcome Maddi Dajcic and Caitlyn Williamson to their new roles with the newly formed Pathways Team.

We are also sorry to see some members of our Quality Team leave the organisation over the last few months - Judy Bish, Anette Kortenhaus and Diane Ryan.

They have had key roles in developing our systems, policies and procedures and ensuring that we comply with all requirements. We appreciate their work with Amicus and wish them all the best for the future!



AMICUS STAFF HIT THE ROAD

Five Amicus Support Workers recently completed The Salvation Army Supervising Driver Mentor Program and can now take eligible participants for driving lessons.

The L2P program aims to provide the opportunity for young people who face a significant barrier or disadvantage, to successfully obtaining their licence.

The Program enables young people 16–21 years, in the Bendigo region who would otherwise have difficulty obtaining their driver's licence, the opportunity to obtain their 120 hours of driving practice in a safe, friendly and encouraging environment.

The L2P Program is designed to provide access to driving practice on public roads for learner drivers under the supervision of a fully licensed driver.



ACCESSIBLE MAKEOVER FOR 18 MYERS ST

Keep an eye out for the new automatic door that has been installed at the office reception of 18 Myers St that has been added to ensure the office is more accessible.



INVESTING IN OUR TEAM

During 2020, building skills and competencies of our staff had been a big focus for Amicus. Donna Casey has set new foundations for learning and development and after Donna moved across to the role of Operations Manager, now titled Adult Services Manager, Georgena Stuckenschmidt has joined Amicus to continue the focus on developing the skills of our workforce.

Collectively over 200 hours of support workers' time has been spent on training to provide special needs/high-intensity supports to participants.

Over 18 days in August alone were spent by staff accessing modules on Amicus's new online Learning Management System.

The focus is continuing with the roll out of Amicus Core Competency Framework that will not only guide recruitment of staff who meet the competencies required, but will also assist in planning and delivery of continuing professional development that is relevant and meets our core competency objectives.

Definition of Core Competencies

Strategic	Operational
<p>Visions, develops and implements strategy to deliver high quality services to support people with a disability of all ages, and vulnerable children to dream big and to live a good life.</p>	<p>Create distinctive value for participants of Amicus by applying a range of technical and professional capabilities to deliver quality outcomes.</p>
Interpersonal	Personal
<p>Collaborates with others and values their contributions. Skilled at building strong and authentic relationships and passionate about providing exceptional service to participants, families, partners and community.</p>	<p>Aligns with Amicus' values and manifesto, respect and values diversity, has a learning mindset, maintains a positive attitude, and supports self-direction and individuality.</p>

Learning and development at Amicus is focused on one of the Personal Competencies listed in the table above - having a learning mindset.

As an organisation we hold a learning mindset, meaning that we are determined to remain dynamic and flexible to meet the individual needs of our participants.

Core to this is employing the right people, and providing flexible training opportunities so that staff are

building their capabilities, and are skilled to support the individual needs of our participants.

The focus is continuing with the roll out of Amicus Core Competency Framework that will not only guide recruitment of staff who meet the competencies required, but will also assist in planning and delivery of continuing professional development that is relevant and meets our core competency objectives.

MORTEN

Our Children's Services Team would like to introduce Morten!

Morten is a friendly, sensitive monster. He has many feelings that he shows through the various facial expressions. He keeps his different expressions in his pouch so they are always there to change around if he starts to feel differently.

Morten is a very expressive monster that just wants to be accepted. Sometimes Morten feels like people are scared of him. People sometimes get the wrong idea about monsters like him. Morten is working on ways to feel better about himself and he just wants to fit in with everyone around him.

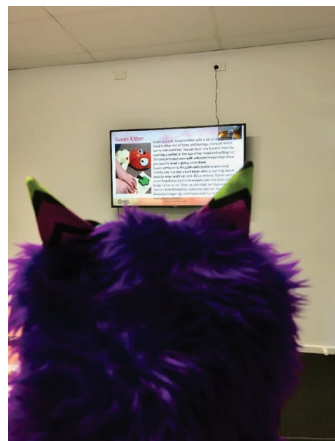
Morten's adventures - training

In July Morten attended Therapeutic Dolls training with the Children's Services Team. The training was through the Australian Childhood Foundation and we were able to meet Morten's other pals too.

His friend Ollie the monkey encourages exploration of nurturing through feeding, Sleepy Susan is designed to help children feel calm, and Ellen the caterpillar represents themes of transformation and containment.

Morten and his friends help us express how we are feeling. Sometimes we might not have the words but Morten can help us by letting us play with him and changing his facial expressions.

You might also just want to have a chat to Morten or to draw him to help explain how you are feeling. Morten is a very helpful guy and he wants you to feel safe when you are with him.



Morten's adventures - working from home

Since restrictions came back in for Victoria, Morten has been working from home. There have been lots of online meetings. Morten was a little disappointed to find out that Zoom was also inside the computer, he was hoping it might involve a red Ferrari!

Working from home means that we need to check in on our friends more and make sure that they are feeling okay. Morten is always her to lend a purple and green ear whenever someone may need it.

Working from home has also meant that Morten has new co-workers...ones that are furry like him!

LIFE IN ISO

BEER DAMPER

Some Amicus staff have used isolation as a good time to learn a new skill or hobby!

Ann-Maree has been doing lots of camp oven cooking in the backyard, joined a camp oven cooking page on facebook and is trying out lots of new recipes. She recently made some soup and beer damper for the small team still working at 18 Myers Street.

Here is the beer damper recipe for you to try at home:

- **3 cups** self-raising flour
- **1** stubby of beer
- **2 tbs** cream
- **½ tsp** salt
- Some milk to glaze the top and a sprinkle of salt

Mix together until all ingredients are just combined (don't over mix) and turn out onto a floured surface, sprinkle with a little extra flour as it is quite a sticky dough.

Knead very lightly for about 20 seconds until it is shaped like a ball, glaze with milk and put into a preheated camp oven lined with foil.

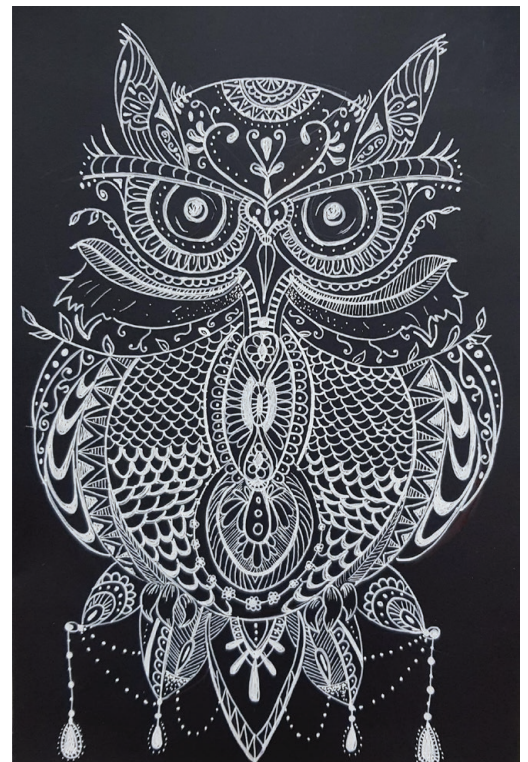
Put the lid on and put back on low coals with more coals on top of the lid and bake for 20 and 30 minutes depending on how hot your coals are.

You can also cook it in a BBQ with a hood, Webber or oven. Make sure they are preheated and place damper on a baking tray with foil.



NEW ART HOBBY

Amicus Support Worker Sam Purden is a creative person and is always looking for new ideas and outlets, so in isolation she started an incredible new art hobby. Sam has been making these stunning drawings for her kids and friends.



INFORMATION FOR PARTICIPANTS

BENDIGO COUNCIL OFFERING FREE MAINTENANCE FOR PEOPLE IN NEED

This service is available to vulnerable residents who have low income or limited family supports in the area.

The service includes cleaning up the yard, pruning, lawn mowing and whipper snipping - any job, big or small.

Plus the garden maintenance team has just started so there is not a long wait list for services.

If you or a family member could benefit from additional maintenance support from the Council please email homesupportwfvic@bendigo.vic.gov.au.



HAVE YOUR SAY ON THE DISABILITY GATEWAY WEBSITE

The Department of Social Services (DSS) is seeking feedback on the new National Disability Information Gateway pilot website.

The Disability Gateway is intended to help people with disability, their family and carers to access assistance and services relevant to them. The service will also support enquiries from those who support people with disability, including providers.

To have your say visit www.nds.org.au/news/have-your-say-on-the-disability-gateway-website



PUBLIC HOLIDAY OFFICE CLOSURES

Amicus offices will be closed on the following dates:

AFL Grand Final Eve Public Holiday

Friday 23 October 2020 - *public holiday to be confirmed*

Bendigo Cup Public Holiday (Bendigo Offices)

(we will observe cup holidays in your community)

Wednesday 28 October 2020

Melbourne Cup Public Holiday

Tuesday 3 November 2020

For urgent enquiries contact 03 5441 2666

COMMUNITY AND ONLINE EVENTS

Many events have been cancelled locally and nationwide due to COVID-19. While we're all hoping some events will start happening again by the end of the year, you can still check out some great free events online.

BENDIGO ANNUAL TULIP DISPLAY

Mid September - Mid October 2020

As the warmer days and clear skies appear, more than 50,000 of Bendigo's famed-tulips open to brighten the beautiful heritage streets from mid to late September to mid October.



PIINPI: CONTEMPORARY INDIGENOUS FASHION

3 October - 29 November, 2020

This exhibition brings together a selection of garments and textiles by First Nations designers and artists from around Australia. The first major survey of contemporary Indigenous Australian fashion to be undertaken in this country, Piinpi sheds lights on a growing industry which is blossoming and set to become Australia's major fashion movement.

Location: Bendigo Art Gallery

Cost: \$0 - \$15

www.bendigoregion.com.au/bendigo-art-gallery



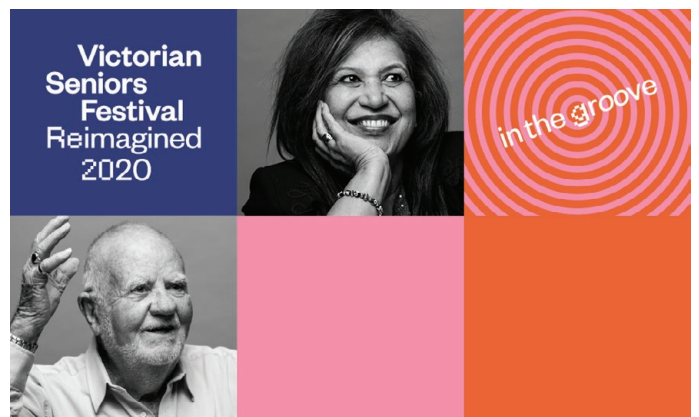
VICTORIAN SENIORS FESTIVAL REIMAGINED

June - October 2020

This important Victorian Government initiative celebrates older Victorians and the valuable contribution they make to our community.

This year the Festival is being brought straight to your home through online performances, zoom recorded interviews and story-telling.

www.seniorsonline.vic.gov.au/festivalsandawards



LIVE PENGUIN TV

Rather than driving to Phillip Island, you can now watch the penguin parade every night from the comfort of your own home!

Visit the Phillip Island Nature Parks YouTube or Facebook page to watch the cutest parade you'll ever see.

www.penguins.org.au/virtual/live-penguin-tv



MELBOURNE ARTS CENTRE - TOGETHER WITH YOU

The curtains are drawn at the Melbourne Arts Center but the show will go on with free digital experiences!

Find full length performances, artist interviews, family activities, podcasts, curated playlists and more regularly released on their website for your enjoyment.

www.artscentremelbourne.com.au

