

Amicus Exchange



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Head office

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

A message from our CEO

Ann-Maree Davis



Hi everyone,

Well, hasn't it been another year full of challenges with COVID-19 continuing to affect our lives?

We are very pleased to provide a vaccinated support team, and continue to support our participants to also get their vaccine. It is really nice to have office staff returning from working from home, and enjoy connecting up in-person to collectively work in assisting our people to live their best lives.

In December, we are launching our new Strategic Plan, and this sets our goals for the next three years. More will come on this, but as a sneak peak, one of our Goals is to 'Have the best possible impact on people and places'.

Our Specialist Disability Accommodation units, to be completed in early January, speak to this goal as does Amicus' Community Inclusion and Consultation Framework and the Community Consultation Group who are contributing to its implementation.

You may notice that our name has changed to Amicus Community Services, resulting from the transition from an Incorporated Association to a Company Limited by Guarantee. We will still be known as Amicus, it is only our legal name that has changed to reflect a broader range of services that Amicus provides. Being a Company Limited by Guarantee also requires us to have rigour and strong governance over our operations.

As the end of the year approaches, we will be presenting our annual 'Living the Values' awards to participants at our staff professional development day.

These awards recognise and celebrate the achievements of several participants across the categories of Active Participation, Capacity Building, Individuality and Self-Direction. We can't wait to hear their stories of success!

Adult Services participants and their carers are warmly invited to attend our Christmas Party on Wednesday the 15th of December, and you can find full details later in this newsletter.

I would like to thank Team Amicus and our participants and families for their continued support during 2021. I look forward to working with you in 2022 to make some great plans for the future.

I wish you all a very special time with those you love over the Christmas and New Year holidays. Please be advised that Sophia Wight, our Services Manager is acting as CEO on my behalf until mid-January while I am on leave.

Cheers!

Ann-Maree Davis
Amicus CEO

COVID-19 information and updates

COVID-19 RESTRICTIONS UPDATE

Victoria has reached the 90% double-dose vaccination milestone, which saw nearly all remaining restrictions lifted statewide for fully vaccinated people.

Key changes to restrictions include:

- Masks are only required in limited indoor settings including retail, health care, aged care, primary schools, and public transport.
- There are no limits on how many visitors you can have in the home, or how many people can gather outside in a public space.
- There are no longer any capacity or density limits in place for hospitality venues.
- You will need to show proof of vaccination to enter or use many businesses or services across Victoria. You can show proof of vaccination with your digital or paper certificate. You will be able to access your digital vaccination certificate through myGov.
- Check-in everywhere you visit using the Service Victoria app, no matter how long you spend at a location.

Changes to quarantine and isolation periods

The 90% double dose vaccination rate means that there are changes to the way quarantine and isolation works.

- If you have tested positive to COVID-19 you will now only need to isolate for 10 days, instead of 14 from the date of your first positive test.
- If you live with someone who has tested positive to COVID-19 and you are fully vaccinated, you will only need to isolate for seven days. If you're not fully vaccinated you will need to isolate for 14 days.



VACCINE UPDATE

If you need help getting your COVID-19 vaccine or to get your proof of vaccination, Amicus will assist you.

We can help you by

- Providing information on the COVID-19 vaccine
- Providing locations of clinics to get your COVID-19 vaccine
- Assisting to arrange an appointment with your GP if you have questions
- Helping to book your appointment
- Supporting you to attend the appointment

Amicus is calling every participant to offer support. If we haven't called you and you would like help, please call the Amicus Pathways Team on **5441 2666**.

Get vaccinated.



Wear a mask.



Stay 6 feet from others, and avoid crowds.



Wash hands often.

Participant updates

AMANDA'S ARTS AND CRAFTS

Amanda enjoys being supported to make birthday and Christmas bags, as well as cards for any occasion. Amanda recently sent some over to Scotland for a family friend who can't wait to hand them out!



A DAY OF EXPLORING FOR SIMONE

Participant Simone recently ventured out for a day in the bush near Maldon with team members Rochelle and Ebony. Simone had a great time building a cubby house out of sticks and scrub bush and was fascinated by the old abandoned mining equipment that they discovered.



Announcements and updates

SDA HOUSING UPDATE

Amicus directors Paul (Chair) and Ben recently joined Ann-Maree (CEO), Georgena, Bonny and Shayne, to pay a visit to Amicus' new Specialist Disability Accommodation (SDA) units in North Bendigo, for a progress update from the construction team. While COVID-19 has led to some delays, the SDA units are now at the fix out stage, with completion expected in February 2022.



AMICUS AGM AND 2021 ANNUAL REPORT

Our Annual Report was released at our virtual Annual General Meeting (AGM) on 29 November 2021. The Annual Report can be viewed online at www.amicus.org.au

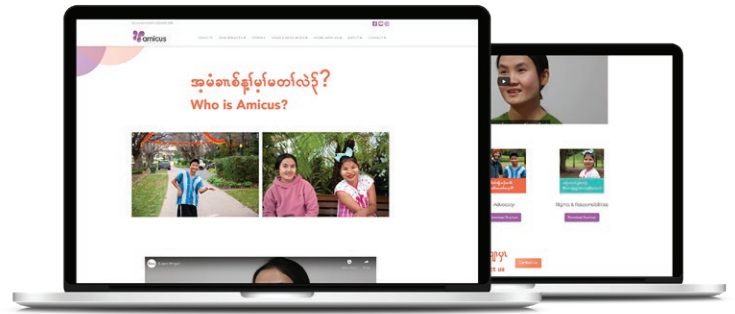
If you missed our virtual Annual General Meeting, you can watch it via our Facebook page. Visit www.facebook.com/AmicusCommunityServices to find the Amicus AGM recording.



NEW WEBPAGE FOR KAREN COMMUNITY

Amicus supports a number of individuals within the Karen community in and around Bendigo. Amicus employs workers from the Karen community who, through their unique skills, cultural background and understanding, provide individually tailored supports.

These Amicus staff are able to break down barriers to help their community to access health care, further education and learning, building confidence with learning English and accessing services within the community. Some have also been assisted to obtain their driver's licence.



To further Amicus' accessibility for the Karen community, Amicus now has a dedicated page on our website with videos and translated information. Thank you to all those who were instrumental in developing this web page which will no doubt be a great support into the future.



Christmas and New Year office closures and important dates

Office Closures

All Amicus offices are closed from 5pm Thursday 23 December, 2021 and will reopen at 8.30am Tuesday 4 January, 2022.

For emergencies only, Amicus On-Call can be contacted on 0400 840 420.

Christmas Day

Saturday 25 December, 2021

Christmas Day Public Holiday (in lieu)

Monday 27 December, 2021

Boxing Day

Sunday 26 December, 2021

Boxing Day Public Holiday (in lieu)

Tuesday 28 December, 2021

New Years Day

Saturday 1 January, 2022

New Years Day Public Holiday (in lieu)

Monday 3 January, 2022

Australia Day

Wednesday 26 January, 2022



Amicus updates

A MESSAGE FROM PATHWAYS

The Pathways Capacity and Engagement team would like to thank you all for the past year and are really looking forward to continuing to support you in 2022.

We have loved getting to know you, assisting you with your service agreements, About me support plans and setting goals. We are here to help with anything you may need, even if it doesn't relate to your Amicus services.

We know sometimes it can be challenging to navigate the service system or know where to go for things you may need in the community. If you feel like you get the run-around, please call us and we will always do everything we can to assist you and find the answers you need.

We also have lots of expertise in understanding the NDIS and how to use your plan to meet your goals.

We can help you:

- understand your plan,
- answer any questions you may have, and
- connect you to the right places.

There are no silly questions, we are here to help.

We believe in being a village, it's not only about the services we can deliver, it is about how we support you in any way we can, so that you can live your best life.

We wish you a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

Anything we can do to assist you, please contact us during business hours on **5441 2666** or email us at pathways@amicus.org.au



Above (Left to right):

Rebecca, Nicole, Nana, Caitie, Melissa, Billie and Maddi

A MESSAGE FROM SUPPORT SERVICES

What a year it has been for all of us! Covid has tested us and we acknowledge your patience, support and understanding over the last year and beyond!

We look forward to continuing to support you in 2022 to achieve your goals in living your best life!

Wishing you a safe holiday period from all us!

The Adult & Children's Services Team



MEET THE TEAM



Meet Nanna

Nanna has recently joined the team as a Pathways Officer at 18 Myers Street. As a qualified social worker, Nanna has a strong background in youth, disability and employment. She is very excited to join the Amicus team.



Welcome back Caralyn

Caralyn has come back to Amicus in her dream position as a Behaviour Support Practitioner. Some long-term staff may remember Caralyn when she was the Service Coordinator at Amicus during the period where Amicus was based at Cecil Street and 100 Queen Street.

Caralyn is looking forward to working with a range of participants, staff and families to help improve someone's quality of life with positive and proactive supports

FABULOUS FEEDBACK

To showcase our amazing team, we have been awarding Fabulous Feedback to staff who receive feedback from outside of Amicus.



Congratulations to Caitlin

Caitlin is the acting Children Services Manager and was pleased to be provided feedback from a participant's informal support around the support she has provided to the family in her role.

The informal support noted that 'Caitlin's support and work ethic has been nothing short of epic,' and also noted that the participant and informal support would not have had such a wonderful outcome without her support.



A great team effort

Congratulations to Hannah Jakob, Sean Gurnett, Pedro Jose, Connor Beaman, Daniel Anderson, Heath Austin, Sahkapru Htoo, Riley Wiltshire, and Gavin Hicks.

This team of staff support the participant daily and the Support Coordinator was pleased to provide feedback to the whole team around the amazing support, care, and consideration that the team provide.



Congratulations to Madelaina

Madelaina is a Community Support Worker in the Children Services Team. We were delighted to receive feedback from a representative of a participant stating that Madelaina provides amazing support!

The representative noted that Madelaina has made such huge progress in engaging with the participant in such a short amount of time. The participant noted that she has been enjoying her support hours with Madelaina!

Seasonal health information

BUSHFIRE SAFETY

Not everyone thinks clearly in an emergency. Taking steps to prepare before the fire season, means you will know what to do when at risk of fire.

If you are in quarantine or isolation due to Coronavirus, you can leave your home in an emergency or if your home is unsafe, but try to get back into self-isolation as soon as you safely can.

There are some simple steps you can take to get ready for bushfire season:

- Learn about what fire danger ratings mean and check them everyday during bushfire season.
- Have a fire plan so that you and your family are on the same page about what you will do, in case of a fire. Just as every family or household is unique, every plan will be different.
- If you live in a regional area at risk of bush or grass fires, be prepared to leave early on very high risk days or if a fire starts. It is the safest option.
- Add to your emergency kit additional face masks, hand sanitiser and antibacterial wipes.

Visit the CFA website for more information and tips on how you can plan and prepare for bushfires:
www.cfa.vic.gov.au/plan-prepare

STAYING SUNSMART THIS SUMMER

Make sure to protect your skin from the summer sun by following these SunSmart tips:

- If you are heading outside always apply sunscreen and reapply it every two hours, even if it's a cloudy day.
- Check the UV levels in your local area on the SunSmart website, or via the free SunSmart app. Ultra violet (UV) levels can still be high even when the temperatures are low and it doesn't feel like a day you could get sunburnt.



Slip



Slop



Slap



Seek



Slide



PEAK THUNDERSTORM ASTHMA RISK PERIOD

October through to December is peak thunderstorm asthma season in Victoria. For people with asthma and Spring hayfever, thunderstorm asthma can be sudden, serious, and life-threatening.

The symptoms of asthma, hayfever, and COVID-19 can be similar, and it can be difficult to tell the difference between them. If you are experiencing symptoms different from your usual asthma and hayfever symptoms, get tested for COVID-19 and stay home until you receive a negative result.

For more information on how to prepare for and manage thunderstorm asthma symptoms, please visit www.health.vic.gov.au/environmental-health/epidemic-thunderstorm-asthma

You can protect yourself and those in your care, by following the below steps:

- Monitor the epidemic thunderstorm asthma risk forecast. You can do this via the Victorian Health website or the VicEmergency app.
- If you can, avoid being outdoors before and during a thunderstorm.
- Take any preventative medication as directed, even when you're symptom-free.
- Carry your reliever and know how to manage an asthma attack by following your asthma action plan or asthma first aid.
- If your asthma suddenly becomes worse and you cannot manage symptoms, or are struggling to breathe, seek urgent medical help.

Summer community events

DJAARA LIGHTS

7 November 2021 - Ongoing

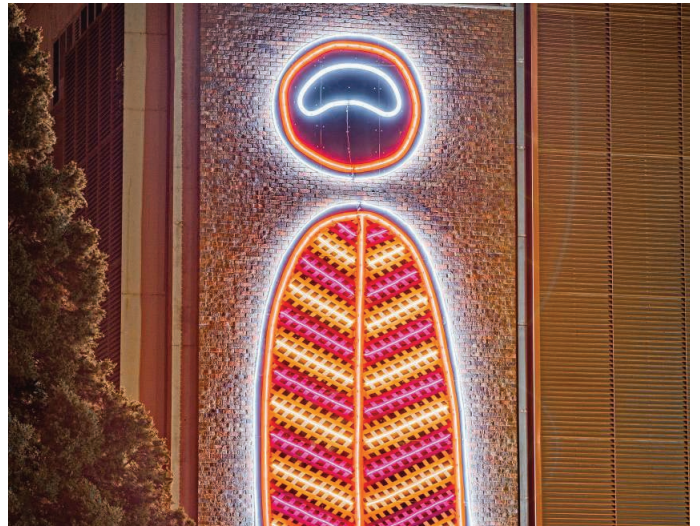
Djaara Lights highlights Dja Dja Wurrung culture in the Bendigo region through the display of Djaara artwork and augmented reality experiences. A sequence of activations tells stories of the Dja Dja Wurrung six seasons on Djandak (Country) from Dja Dja Wurrung People, the Traditional Owners of Bendigo.

Time: 7pm - 11pm daily

Location: Oscars Walk and Bath Lane Precinct, Bendigo

Price: Free

www.bendigoregion.com.au/explore-bendigo



CHRISTMAS SQUARE

12 November - 25 December 2021

Make merry at Melbourne's Christmas wonderland at Federation Square. Christmas comes to life with festive decorations and the city's iconic 16-metre light-up tree. As the sun sets, the dazzling structure lights up with a festive glow.

Time: 8am - 11pm daily

Location: Federation Square, Melbourne

Price: Free

www.whatson.melbourne.vic.gov.au



DOCKLANDS CHRISTMAS MAZE

27 November - 24 December 2021

Santa's lost his elves! Can you help find them? Make your way through this giant present-themed maze for a chance to win one of four amazing prize packs thanks to The District Docklands.

Time: 11am - 6pm daily

Location: NewQuay Central Park
429-437 Docklands Dr 3008

Price: Free

www.whatson.melbourne.vic.gov.au



SUMMER IN THE PARKS

3 December 2021 - 25 February 2022

Bendigo's beautiful parks come alive with outdoor cinema entertainment, live music from local acts, and community activities.

Time: Various times

Location: Various locations

Price: Free or low cost

www.facebook.com/BendigoSummerInTheParks/



ELF ACADEMY

16 - 23 December 2021

The surface of Central Deborah Gold Mine will be transformed into a Christmas wonderland where carols, baubles, reindeer and candy canes are all part of the festivities. Through a series of different craft activities, games and challenges children will discover all of the skills required to become a qualified elf.

Time: Various times

Location: Central Deborah Gold Mine

Price: \$20 per person

www.central-deborah.com/tours/the-elf-academy



CASTLEMAINE CHRISTMAS TWILIGHT MARKET

18 December 2021

This year you can buy your gifts and the ingredients for Christmas dinner from local makers. The market features a selection of more than 120 makers. Plenty of delicious food will be on offer, as well as some fun kids' activities. Punters will also be able to enjoy a local beer or wine, while enjoying fantastic live music.

Time: 3pm - 7pm

Location: Western Reserve, Castlemaine VIC, Australia

Price: Free

www.commontimes.com.au/events



INCLUSIVE COMMUNITY SPORTS DAY

21 January 2022

People with disabilities and their families are invited to come and try a range of accessible and inclusive sport and recreation activities in a supported community environment.

Time: 12pm - 3.30pm

Location: Ballarat Badminton Association, Dowling Street Wendouree, VIC 3355

Price: Free

www.eventbrite.com.au/e/inclusive-community-sports-day-ballarat-tickets



Amicus Christmas Party 2021



The Adult Services Participant Christmas Party will be held on

Wednesday 15 December, 2021 from **11.30am to 1.30pm**

At the **Bendigo Botanical Gardens** in White Hills

Free sausage sizzle and cans of soft drink will be provided

Feel free to BYO your own food if you have dietary requirements

Please bring a chair (Carers are welcome to attend)

Please **RSVP by 10/12/2021** by calling **5441 2666** and advising reception you will be attending