



## 'Tis the season for community

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### Amicus Calendar

#### Office Closures

##### Christmas closure

The Amicus office will be closed from 1pm Friday 23 December, 2022 and will reopen 9am Tuesday 3 January, 2023.

If you haven't already arranged support for this time, please contact the office ASAP to ensure you have everything you need.

#### Important Dates

##### Christmas Day

Sunday 25 December, 2022

##### Boxing Day Public Holiday

Monday 26 December, 2022

##### Christmas Day (Public Holiday in lieu)

Tuesday 27 December, 2022

##### New Years Eve

Saturday 31 December, 2022

##### New Years Day

Sunday 1 January, 2023

##### World Braille Day

Wednesday 4 January, 2023

##### Lunar New Year

Sunday 22 January, 2023

#### Head office

113 Williamson Street, Bendigo 3550  
9:00am – 5:00pm Monday to Friday

Phone: (03) 5441 2666  
Email: [admin@amicus.org.au](mailto:admin@amicus.org.au)

Follow us on Facebook and Instagram  
  @AmicusCommunityServices

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

# A message from the CEO

Kevin Feeney



Festive season is upon us again, a time when we gather together with family and friends to enjoy each other's company and to reconnect.

After years of Covid, and our enforced separation, this gathering together takes on a special meaning, a celebration of our connectedness after a period when that was difficult.

So, this year the best gift we can give each other is companionship. However for others, the removal of COVID restrictions has not changed their lives, they are still isolated and unable to join in fully with our community.

To those we send out special greetings and promise that if you are part of the Amicus community we will do everything we can to work with you to break down the barriers you face. Everyone has the right to belong.

For myself, I have only been with Amicus for a short time and look forward to meeting as many participants, community support workers and staff as is humanly possible so I can understand them, their journey and how we can help.

We will continue to place everyone's health and wellbeing as a high priority making sure that we look after each other.

There are also areas we need to improve in, being more receptive and adaptive to people's very reasonable needs. I am confident that everyone will notice ever-improving services and culture, listening and always striving to do better.

This last year has not been without our challenges however it is pleasing to see us once again open up our services and welcome new participants.

Already in the second half of 2022 we have seen a significant number of new participants join us and we hope for many more new people in 2023 as there is plenty of room for everyone.

Thank you for choosing to trust us as a service provider and employer, we have much to look forward to in 2023 but more of that in the new year.

Wishing you all a happy, safe and inclusive festive season.

## Amicus AGM and 2022 Annual Report

Our Annual Report was released at our internal Annual General Meeting (AGM) on 28 November 2022. The Annual Report can be viewed online at [www.amicus.org.au](http://www.amicus.org.au)



# Living our best lives

## Amicus community in the spotlight



### Daniel has been cooking up a storm

Amicus participant Daniel has recently been working on his independence in the kitchen, being supported to attend occupational therapy sessions where he has been building his cooking skills.

Here you see Daniel proudly preparing and plating a meal he made for his whole family. He cooked a chicken schnitzel with chips and vegetables, which everyone thoroughly enjoyed.

Daniel has shown great strides in his confidence and ability within the kitchen and is eager to continue to build his skills!



### Check out Eddie's Men's Shed creations

The Marong & District Men's Shed has warmly welcomed Amicus participant Eddie into their community. He has recently been attending the Men's Shed with his support worker Rochelle, creating many incredible things out of scrap timber.

Together they made a duck which was painted with bright colours and big eyes, it sure has personality!

Eddie also made some garden stakes which were decorated with colourful birds on the top.

We can't wait to see what Eddie creates next!

## Tammy's Phillip Island adventure

Amicus participant Tammy and her support worker Kerrie recently had a wonderful trip to Phillip Island. They enjoyed their adventure around the island, taking in the amazing beach views.

Phillip Island is home to the largest little penguin colony in the world, so of course, the penguin parade was the highlight of the trip! They were so excited to watch many penguins waddle home from the ocean to their burrows on the shore.



## Jack's fabulous feedback

Community Support Worker, Jack, has received a Fabulous Feedback Certificate and has been recognised for his amazing work by one of his participants.

This participant said that Jack listens, is kind, and supportive and if this participant could have the opportunity to clone Jack, she would!

This participant noted that not only has Jack built a great rapport with her and her family but also with the family dog, who gets very excited on his arrival.

Jack is being recognised for upholding the Amicus value of Building Partnerships.

Wonderful work Jack!



## Michelle has found her home

Michelle recently moved into one of Amicus' new Specialist Disability Accommodation (SDA) units, after looking for specialist accommodation since 2004. We were so excited to catch up with her and see how it is going.

Her previous property was not wheelchair friendly, there was no space, she couldn't access the laundry or backyard and she couldn't use the oven. Michelle experienced lots of falls in her bathroom and even ended up in the emergency department with a cut foot.

In her new life in our Amicus SDA, Michelle says she:

- is more independent
- can go in the backyard
- has set up the garage as an art studio
- can use her kitchen and cook
- has had no further falls in her bathroom
- can have her mum who lives out of town visit and stay.

Michelle loves her SDA home and feels much happier. She says she is now free!



## Our work experience student Elly brought us pure joy!

Elly is currently studying for her VCAL certificate at Kalianna School and chose Amicus to complete her work experience placement.

We were delighted to support Elly with her work experience opportunity, so we quickly locked in arrangements for Elly to attend on Mondays for a total of five weeks.

Elly was placed with our front-of-house administrative team where she had the opportunity to meet and greet our visitors, complete the weekly banking, balance petty cash, attach staff ID cards to lanyards, take photos for our new on boarders and many other varied duties.

Although understandably nervous at first, Elly was warmly welcomed by our team and went from strength to strength as she became more confident to undertake any task she was given.

Elly's infectious laugh, high work ethic and interpersonal skills in building relationships were outstanding! Elly's enviable ability to remember and use people's names came naturally to her and is one of her major strengths she should be very proud of.

Elly filled in a daily journal with the skills she learnt and her reflections over the five weeks which she then presented to her class as a beautiful workbook.

On Elly's final day we celebrated her time at Amicus by presenting her with a card signed by everyone and her own special cake!

Seeing is believing! Amicus believes everyone deserves an opportunity to work and pursue valued roles and we are so pleased we had the opportunity to support Elly to explore a pathway post-school.

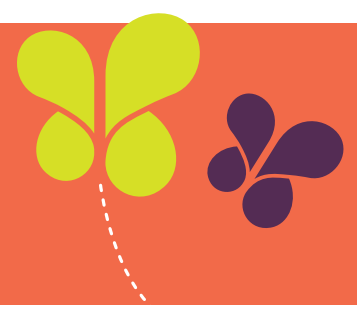
We would love to see more Amicus participants exploring work as a valued role (volunteer or paid). There are many options, if you don't know where to start please contact pathways or your team leader, we would be so excited to help.

We will all miss Elly's weekly visit but this was a classic example of knowing that you always get back more than you give.



# Catch up on the latest

## Community news



### Celebrating International Day of People with Disability (IDPwD)

IDPwD is a United Nations observed day celebrated internationally.

It aims to increase public awareness, understanding and acceptance of people with disability and celebrate their achievements and contributions.

We celebrated the day together at Bendigo Library Gardens.



### Introducing your Amicus Allies

Introducing our new Amicus Culturally Safe and LGBTQIA+ Allies! Billie and William are excited to guide participants and staff to feel safe, valued and respected in the Amicus community.

They want to be your champion and make sure Amicus is a safe and inclusive place to be.

They are here to listen, if you are a staff member and have any ideas about how the workplace can be more inclusive for you or an issue you would like support to raise, reach out.

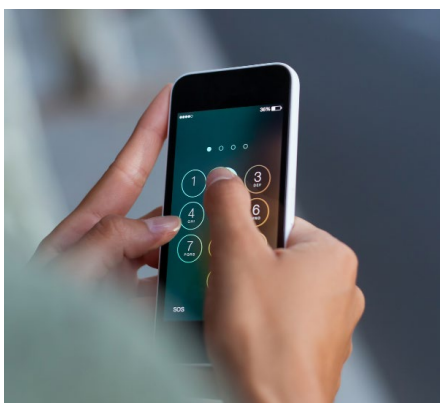


### It's in the bag

The Share the Dignity 'It's in the Bag' campaign has been collecting donations of adult, teen or mum and bub bags, filled with essential toiletries for vulnerable women, girls or non-binary people in our community.

The amazing team at Lauren and Co Share Bendigo have collected hundreds of bags for the Christmas appeal, and have donated them to local charity partners and organisations.

We were so happy to be gifted all of these bags to share with our community. Keep an eye out for next year's campaign and how you can donate.



### Out of hours phone changes

The Amicus out of hours phone provides critical and emergency support outside of business hours, during weekends and on public holidays.

The new number for out of hours support is (03) 5441 2666, and is for calls only, not text messages. An out of hours staff member may call you, and then follow up with a text message.

When contacting the new number, you will hear a recorded message which provides two options in order to direct your call appropriately.

Please continue to use the out of hours number for critical support and emergencies only.

## Getting loud and colourful at Amicus

A couple of months ago Amicus raised funds for Loud Shirt Day! Our staff made noise and wore it loud in support of children with hearing loss. Here's to getting loud for a great cause.



## Melissa Court Community meeting room

Owned by Mount Alexander Shire Respite and Accommodation Group (MASARG) and operated by Amicus, Melissa Court is a beautiful state-of-the-art purpose-built respite facility set in a tranquil setting in Castlemaine. Melissa Court is available for people with a disability to enjoy a break away from their day-to-day routine.

There are four private bedrooms, two with private ensuites, a large all-abilities kitchen and living area along with a well-equipped community meeting space. There are many experiences available to visitors, including community activities, skills development for independence and experienced staff who provide one-to-one support.

Our community meeting room is also available for use by community groups. Please call Rob for all inquiries on **5441 2666** for further information or email on: [rgargano@amicus.org.au](mailto:rgargano@amicus.org.au)



## Lake Weeroona's new play space

**Due to be opened mid-December**

The City of Greater Bendigo is undertaking a \$1.527 million renewal of the Lake Weeroona play space, that will entertain people for the next 20 years. The new play space features:

- Secure fencing and two entrances.
- Junior and senior play zones with play equipment for all ages and abilities.
- A water play area to provide cooling water sprays in the hotter months.
- Native animal sculptures by Bendigo artist Yvonne George.
- An accessible ramp to a tall tower that provides views over the general surroundings.
- An accessible carousel.
- Play equipment includes a large pyramid climbing net, various swinging options, a mini inground trampoline, see-saw rocker and nature play opportunities for quieter experiences.

For more information, visit:

[www.bendigo.vic.gov.au/Services/Major-Projects/Lake-Weeroona-Playspace-Renewal](http://www.bendigo.vic.gov.au/Services/Major-Projects/Lake-Weeroona-Playspace-Renewal)

# Stay informed

## Updates for participants



## Volunteering at the 2026 Commonwealth Games

The Victorian Commonwealth Games will provide opportunities for our communities to be a part of the Games both in the lead-up to and during the event, such as volunteer opportunities, ticketing, and cultural programs. If you are interested and need some support to express an interest or to volunteer, please contact your Team Leader or Pathways.

[www.vic.gov.au/victoria-2026-commonwealth-games-get-involved](http://www.vic.gov.au/victoria-2026-commonwealth-games-get-involved)



Having a Say Forever!

### Having a Say Conference 2023

20<sup>th</sup> & 21<sup>st</sup> February 2023

Theme: *We're Still Here!*

## Having A Say Conference

The Having a Say Conference is coming back in February. Save the date and join in live at Deakin University, Waterfront Campus, Geelong or join in online. See the link below for more information and how to register.

[www.valid.org.au/valid-events/having-a-say-conference/](http://www.valid.org.au/valid-events/having-a-say-conference/)



## A new podcast to help understand NDIS

Reasonable and Necessary: Making Sense of the NDIS is a podcast series by the Summer Foundation, hosted by Dr George Taleporos.

Each podcast episode aims to simplify the NDIS for participants, their families and anyone supporting NDIS participants to work their way through the system.

You can watch the video podcasts on YouTube and also listen to episodes on SoundCloud, Apple Podcasts or Spotify.

[www.summerfoundation.org.au/resources/reasonable-and-necessary-podcast-series](http://www.summerfoundation.org.au/resources/reasonable-and-necessary-podcast-series)



# Keep healthy and safe

## Seasonal health updates and reminders



### Mosquito risk

The recent flooding and heavy rainfall have increased the risk of viruses transmitted by mosquitoes in northern areas of Victoria this season.

Here are some things you can do to avoid mosquito bites:

- Limit outdoor time if lots of mosquitoes are about, especially at dusk and in the evening.
- Cover up as much as possible with long, loose-fitting clothing when outdoors. Mosquitoes can bite through tight clothing.
- Use mosquito repellent on all exposed skin. Don't forget your ankles, feet and scalp.
- Make sure there is no stagnant water around your home

Protect yourself against mosquito-borne diseases such as Ross River virus and Barmah Forest virus this summer. Go to the Vic Health website for more information.

[www.health.vic.gov.au](http://www.health.vic.gov.au)

### Summer heat

Warmer weather is coming our way and it is important to stay safe in the heat. During extreme heat, whether it's one hot day or a heatwave, remember:

- Drink plenty of water and keep a bottle with you always.
- Hot cars are dangerous. Never leave kids, older people or pets in cars. The temperature inside a parked car can double within minutes.
- Keep cool by using wet towels and by taking cool showers. Seek out air-conditioned buildings, draw your blinds, use fans and dress in light, loose clothing.
- Plan ahead by scheduling your activities in the coolest part of the day and avoid exercising in the heat.

### Staying sun smart

Ultra Violet (UV) levels are on the rise at this time of year and when the UV index is three or above, you need to protect your skin from sun damage.

The free SunSmart app tells you what the UV levels are and what time of day sun protection is required. Remember to slip, slop, slap during the coming months.

**When UV is 3 or above be SunSmart**



### Snake bite first aid

Snake activity has increased throughout the Loddon Mallee region following the floods.

If you find a snake, do not panic. Step back from it slowly and allow it to proceed on its way. Do not touch the snake. Call the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning on 136 186 for a list of snake catchers in your area.

If you are bitten by a snake:

- Do not wash the skin around the bite.
- Keep still and get urgent medical help by calling 000.
- Lie down or sit with the bite below the level of your heart.

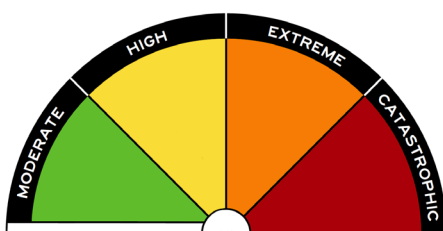
Cover the area with a clean and dry dressing. If available, a firm bandage around the area where the bite occurred is also recommended.

Note the time of the bite and when the bandage was put on.

Do not apply a tourniquet, cut the bite to release the venom or try to suck the venom out of the wound.

[www.healthdirect.gov.au/snake-bites](http://www.healthdirect.gov.au/snake-bites)

### New fire ratings



Fire danger ratings tell you how dangerous a fire could be if one was to start on that day.

They are important because they help you decide what actions to take to protect yourself and others from bushfires and grassfires.

The fire danger ratings in Victoria have changed to be in line with the Australian Fire Danger Rating System, which will

<b>MODERATE</b> Plan and prepare	<b>HIGH</b> Be ready to act
<b>EXTREME</b> Take action now to protect life and property	<b>CATASTROPHIC</b> For your survival, leave bushfire risk areas

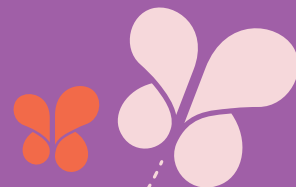
be the same in every state and territory across Australia.

Ratings are forecast four days in advance, based on weather and other environmental conditions such as vegetation. See the daily fire danger ratings via the link below.

[www.bom.gov.au/vic/forecasts](http://www.bom.gov.au/vic/forecasts)

# Get out and about

## Upcoming community events



### Summer in the Parks

**December 2022 - February 2023**

The ever-popular Summer in the Parks program has returned with free or low-cost events and activities during the months of December, January and February. Summer in the Parks is the perfect excuse to have some fun in our great outdoors with Christmas Carols, fireworks, an outdoor cinema, live music and more.

**Location:** Various locations across Bendigo

**Price:** Free or low-cost

[www.bendigsummerintheparks.com](http://www.bendigsummerintheparks.com)



### Waterways and water activities

**All summer**

Check out all the great swimming and water locations around Bendigo. There are nine outdoor swimming pools, two indoor pools, one splash park and many waterways and lakes to explore. It's a great way to keep cool in the upcoming heat.

**Location:** Various locations across Bendigo

**Price:** Varies

[www.bendigoregion.com.au/explore-bendigo/waterways-and-water-activities](http://www.bendigoregion.com.au/explore-bendigo/waterways-and-water-activities)



### Christmas in Ballarat Art Trail

**1 - 31 December 2022**

The Art Trail is based on the children's book Christmas in Ballarat, written and illustrated by local artist Liv Lorkin. Pick up a map from the Ballarat Information Centre or online, follow the story through the Ballarat CBD.

**Location:** Start the trail in Doveton Street South (next to Target) and follow in order

**Price:** Free

[www.ballarat.vic.gov.au/celebrate-christmas-ballarat](http://www.ballarat.vic.gov.au/celebrate-christmas-ballarat)



### Peek under the creek

**Ongoing**

Bendigo Library is now home to a large native aquarium celebrating the Bendigo Creek. The aquarium builds on conservation efforts to renew the Creek and re-introduce native fish species that once populated the waters of the region.

**Location:** Bendigo Library

**Price:** Free

[www.ncgrl.vic.gov.au](http://www.ncgrl.vic.gov.au)

15-17  
DEC

## Cinema pop-up

**15 - 17 December, 2022**

The Castlemaine Cinema Pop-Up is an outdoor family event that is perfect for Summer. Grab a picnic and enjoy the candy bar while watching a movie. Tickets are limited and must be booked online. VIP tickets are also available which included a reserved spot, a covered bean bag and a small popcorn.

**Time:** 7.30 - 10.30pm

**Location:** 2 Walker Street, Castlemaine

**Price:** Adults: \$5, Children: FREE, VIP: \$25

[www.cinemapopup.com.au/castlemaine](http://www.cinemapopup.com.au/castlemaine)

16-23  
DEC

## Elf Academy

**16 - 23 December, 2022**

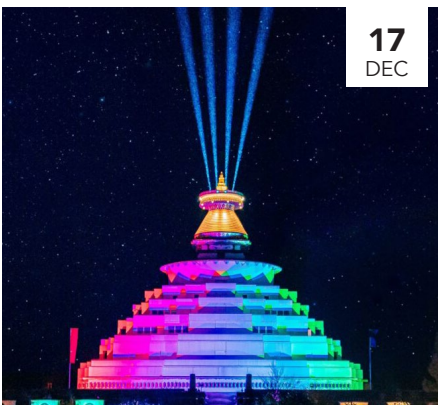
The surface of Central Deborah Gold Mine will be transformed into a Christmas wonderland where carols, baubles, reindeers and candy canes are all part of the festivities. Kids can join in a series of different craft activities, games, skills and challenges required to become a fully qualified Elf. There will also be a visit from Santa!

**Time:** 9am - 6.30pm

**Location:** Central Deborah Gold Mine, Violet Street, Bendigo

**Price:** Adults and children 2+ years: \$20

[www.central-deborah.com/tours/the-elf-academy](http://www.central-deborah.com/tours/the-elf-academy)

17  
DEC

## Enlighten Christmas at The Great Stupa

**Saturday 17 December, 2022**

Enlighten is an immersive light experience that transforms our Peace Park into a unique lightscape. There will be light displays that shimmer on the Great Stupa, spectacular light sculptures throughout the garden, roaming performers, delicious food and a visit from Santa.

**Time:** 8am - 10pm

**Location:** The Great Stupa of Universal Compassion, Sandhurst Town Road, Myers Flat

**Price:** Adults: \$15, Child: \$6

[www.stupa.org.au/enlighten](http://www.stupa.org.au/enlighten)

18  
DEC

## Bendigo Carols by Candlelight

**Sunday 18 December, 2022**

Enjoy Christmas Carols in the beautiful Rosalind Park, a perfect way to start your Christmas celebrations. With fantastic live entertainment and your favourite carols to sing along to, food and drinks available to purchase and of course a visit from Santa! Candles are issued on entry, ensure to BYO chairs, blankets etc.

**Time:** 6.30 - 10.30pm

**Location:** Rosalind Park, Bendigo

**Price:** Gold coin donation

[www.bendigoregion.com.au/explore-bendigo/whatson/bendigo-carols-by-candlelight](http://www.bendigoregion.com.au/explore-bendigo/whatson/bendigo-carols-by-candlelight)



## Summer of Science

**17 December - 29 January, 2022**

Put your safety goggles on for the Super Science Show at The Discovery Centre! Running sessions daily, we take a look at some spectacular experiments. Get ready for amazing and surprising facts – and even some things you can try out at home. Featuring exciting demonstrations and loads of opportunities for you to get involved.

**Time:** 10am - 4pm

**Location:** Discovery Science & Technology Centre, Bendigo

**Price:** Adult: \$16, Concession: \$13.50,  
Child (5-16 years): \$11.50, Child (3-4 years) :\$5

[www.discovery.asn.au](http://www.discovery.asn.au)



## Moonlight Market

**Various Saturdays until April 2023**

The Moonlight Market has live music and art, specialty food trucks, street performers, a huge range of stalls featuring the work of artists, crafty creators, vintage finds, talented food producers and local businesses. All in one great location on a beautiful summer's night. It will bring the Dai Gum San precinct in Park Road to life every month.

**Time:** 5 -9pm

**Location:** Dai Gum San, Park Road, Bendigo

[www.moonlightmarketbendigo.com.au](http://www.moonlightmarketbendigo.com.au)



## Castlemaine Farmers' Market

**Monthly and Weekly Markets**

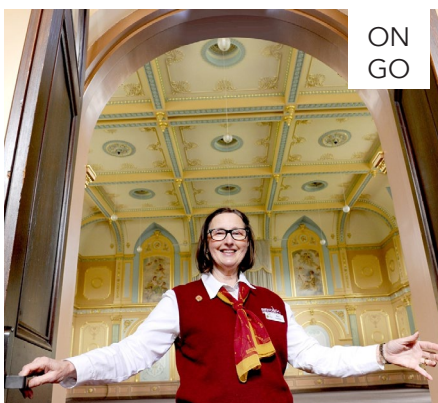
Castlemaine and surrounds has an abundance of excellent local producers. Find fresh fruit and vegetables; excellent meats and cheeses, delicious homemade cakes, jams, preserves and chocolates as well as plants, livestock and much, much more.

**Monthly market:** First Sunday of the month, 9am - 1pm

**Weekly market:** Every Wednesday, 3.30pm - 6pm

**Location:** Mostyn Street, adjacent to Castlemaine Market Building  
(Visitor Information Centre)

[www.castlemainefarmersmarket.org](http://www.castlemainefarmersmarket.org)



## Bendigo Town Hall Tour

**Every Sunday**

Immerse yourself in the rich stories of a golden past, explore stunning heritage architecture fashioned in a time when Bendigo was the richest city in the world!

**Time:** 11am - 12pm

**Location:** 189-193 Hargreaves Street, Bendigo

**Price:** Adults: \$15, Concession: \$10, Children: \$10

[www.bendigoregion.com.au/explore-bendigo/whatson/bendigo-town-hall-tour](http://www.bendigoregion.com.au/explore-bendigo/whatson/bendigo-town-hall-tour)