



Amicus Exchange

2023 ISSUE 02



It's time for the chilly season!

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Amicus Calendar

Office Closures

The Amicus office will be closed on the following public holidays. If you require support for these days, please contact us to ensure you have everything you need.

AFL Grand Final Eve Public Holiday

Friday 29 September, 2023

Important Dates

NAIDOC Week

2 - 9 July, 2023

International Day Of Friendship

Sunday 30 July, 2023

International Youth Day

Saturday 12 August, 2023

Fathers' Day

Sunday 3 September, 2023

National Child Protection Week

4 - 10 September, 2023

World Suicide Prevention Day

Sunday 10 September, 2023

Head office

113 Williamson Street, Bendigo 3550
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Follow us on Facebook, Instagram and LinkedIn



[@AmicusCommunityServices](#)

www.amicus.org.au

A message from the CEO

Kevin Feeney



I wanted to take a moment to reflect on and share with you, our collective achievements over the past financial year 2022 - 2023.

It has been a year filled with challenges and growth, and together we have made remarkable progress in our mission to provide exceptional support and care to our NDIS participants.

First and foremost, I want to extend my appreciation to our dedicated staff. Your unwavering commitment, passion, and tireless efforts have been instrumental in delivering quality services to the individuals and families who rely on Amicus. Your compassion and professionalism shine through in every interaction, and I am truly grateful for the positive impact you continue to make in the lives of our participants.

Throughout the last financial year, we have witnessed significant advancements in our systems and processes, enabling us to enhance the overall efficiency and effectiveness of our operations.

Our investment in technology and digital infrastructure has allowed us to streamline administrative tasks, optimise service delivery, and reduce paperwork burdens, ultimately freeing up more time for direct participant engagement.

These improvements have not only benefited our participants but have also lightened the load for our hardworking staff, enabling them to focus more on what truly matters – providing exceptional care.

In the coming financial year, 2023-2024, we are committed to building upon the foundation we have laid and implementing even better systems and processes. We recognise that continuous improvement is key to our long-term success and to meeting the evolving needs of our participants and the family and loved ones who support them. To support this mission, Amicus will continue to invest in streamlining our workflows, rostering and enhance our data management capabilities. These advancements will empower us to improve resource allocation, and optimise our service offerings.

In addition to our technological advancements, we are also committed to investing in our most valuable asset – our people. We will be launching an extensive professional development program that encompasses training, mentorship, and ongoing support to further enhance the skills and expertise of our staff. By investing in their growth and wellbeing, we aim to foster a culture of continuous learning and create an environment where every team member can thrive both personally and professionally.

As we embark on this new financial year, let us embrace the opportunities ahead with enthusiasm and a shared sense of purpose. Together, we will continue to make a meaningful difference in the lives of those we serve, honouring our commitment to providing exceptional support and care.

On behalf of the Amicus Board of Directors, staff and management, I would like to express our thanks for your unwavering dedication and remarkable achievements. Together, we have accomplished so much, and I am excited to witness the positive impact we will make in the months to come.

Warm regards,

Kevin Feeney
CEO

Living our best lives

Amicus community in the spotlight



Lisa's fantastic day at Bendigo Colour Frenzy

Recently Lisa participated in Bendigo Colour Frenzy, which is a fun run that aims to raise money for local animal rescues.

Lisa wanted to participate in the fun run not only to raise money for animal rescue but to also show that being a person with disability doesn't have to stop you from living your best life.

We commend and celebrate Lisa's great efforts and achievements!



Gary's RSL outings

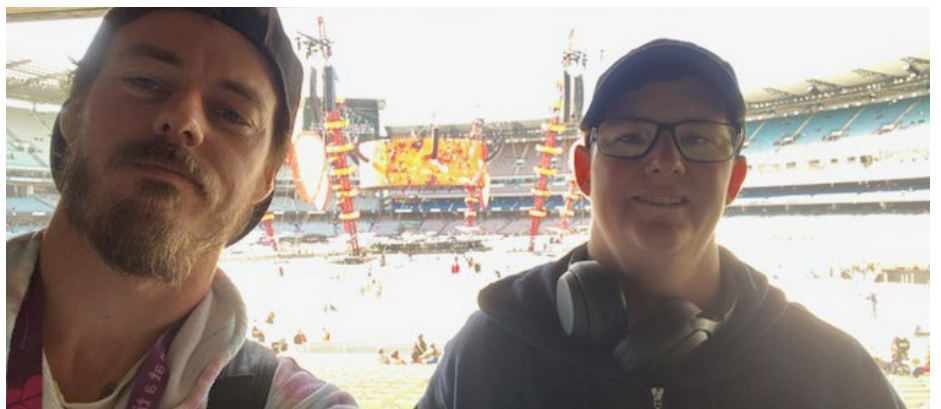
Gary loves visiting his local RSL in Bendigo, connecting with the community and living life to the fullest! Here's a happy snap of him enjoying a nice warm coffee.



Melinda's night to remember

Melinda and her support worker Jack were thrilled to attend the record-breaking Ed Sheeran concert at the MCG on Friday 3 March.

It was an unforgettable day filled with plenty of fun! Melinda highly recommends other participants consider different support options that will allow them to successfully attend concerts or other events that interest them.



Experiencing Bendigo Art Gallery

The Bendigo Art Gallery has been popular in recent weeks, and many of our participants have been enjoying the Australiana and Women’s Weekly exhibitions. Both Charmaine and Eddie enjoyed viewing all the wonderful artworks on display, especially the Australian ice creams!

Eddie expressed his appreciation for the opportunity to try something new and wanted to share the joy of embracing new experiences.



Meet Christine

She is new to the Amicus community and is really enjoying the support she is receiving from her support worker Kayla. We’d like to give her a big, warm welcome to Amicus!

She recently had a fantastic day out in the community, bowling with Kayla and finishing off with a delicious hot dog for lunch.



Charmaine’s office visits

Charmaine has been back in the Amicus office making and delivering nice warm cups of coffee and tea to the team.

Charmaine comes in every few weeks with her support worker to take orders, then makes and delivers them to each team member with a smile and a friendly chat. We are so grateful for this gesture.

Keep up the great work Charmaine!



Mario reconnecting

Mario's support worker Gab has recently spent some time supporting him to reconnect with his Greek heritage. Gab saw this need and together they went to a Greek restaurant in Ballarat, where they traditionally smashed plates.

They also celebrated Easter by visiting a beautiful Greek church. We love to see Mario connecting with his culture and the wider community.



Staff shout out!

We'd like to give a shout-out to Daylesford staff member Fiona! She is extremely dedicated to her job and the needs of the participants she works with.

This was recently demonstrated when she advocated for one of our participants, Ros, to NDIS.

The participant had been twice refused funding by the NDIS for a motorised scooter.

Fiona saw the need and called the NDIS contact many times and successfully advocated for the participant, who now will receive the scooter she badly needs.

This was a great result and we'd like to shine a spotlight on this great work!

Support worker gratitude

Anne-Marie receives weekday support from her support worker, Tori, who Cheryse, Anne-Marie's sister, would like to express sincere gratitude for.

Cheryse said, "I am so grateful for the job that Tori does with Annie, nothing is too much trouble and her calm, unflustered way of working with Annie is just great." She is very grateful for Tori's support and care for her sister.

Pictured right are Anne-Marie and her sister Cheryse.



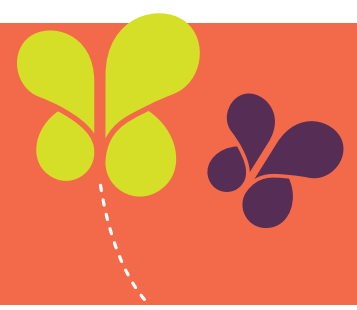
20 years of incredible service

Last week one of our long-term staff informed us that her journey at Amicus had come to an end. After 20 wonderful years, Elaine finished up her last week at Amicus.

We thank her for her many years of dedication and service and would like to wish her all the best for the future.

Catch up on the latest

Community news



Pride month

This month is a time to celebrate our diversity as a community. We should all feel safe to express ourselves and we all have a part to play in making sure that we all feel accepted and valued for who we are.

Coming out can be really tough for people, they can be worried about how their friends and family will react. Love and compassion are free to give, and can make someone's journey to being themselves so much easier. Pride is for everyone.

At Amicus, we are proud to have Will as our dedicated LGBTIQ+ advocate. Will is here to support anyone who requires assistance in connecting with services. His door is always open for a friendly coffee and a chat, providing a safe space for open dialogue and support.

Resources and support

For those seeking additional resources and support, QLife is an excellent online platform with information, a webchat and the ability to arrange counseling services through their network. QLife aims to provide comprehensive support to individuals who identify as part of the LGBTIQ+ community.

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

Rainbow Door is a free specialist LGBTIQ+ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Gender Diverse, Intersex, Queer, Asexual, BrotherBoys, SisterGirls) helpline that provides information, support and referral to all LGBTIQ+ Victorians, their friends and families.

www.rainbowdoor.org.au

Remember, pride is for everyone. Together we can make a positive difference in the lives of our LGBTIQ+ community members.

Heathcote and District Employment Expo

During May we attended the Heathcote and District Employment Expo.

Melissa, Des and Brandy spoke with potential community support workers and local job providers about our fantastic Amicus community.

Thank you to those who stopped by to talk with us and find out about our community.



Helpful resources for business

Vision Australia has put together some fantastic resources for people with vision loss, carers and family, and healthcare professionals. These resources help make spaces and interactions more accessible for people who are blind or have low vision.

www.visionaustralia.org/services



Melissa Court donation

A very big thank you to the Clark Family for the generous donation of a Samsung 51-inch TV to Melissa Court. This will be enjoyed for many years to come.



Stay informed

Updates for participants



Quiet hour shopping

Coles and Woolworths supermarkets continue to offer a low-sensory shopping experience on Tuesdays from 10.30 - 11.30am. The Quiet Hour offers dimmed lighting, reduced announcements and volume to create a sensory-friendly shop visit.



NDIS early childhood age change

From 1 July 2023, the age range for the NDIS (National Disability Insurance Scheme) early childhood approach will be changing to include children younger than nine. Currently, the NDIS early childhood approach supports children younger than seven and their families.

Changing the age to include children younger than nine, ensures these children and their families are supported by an early childhood partner during and after their transition to primary school.

www.ndis.gov.au/news



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, cultural programs and of course spectators.

Bendigo will host six sports including 3x3 Basketball, 3x3 Wheelchair Basketball, Cycling (Track and Para Track), Lawn Bowls, Para Lawn Bowls, Netball, Squash, Table Tennis and Para Table Tennis. So far there have been nine Para-Sports confirmed and Victoria is proposing the addition of more. If you are interested in volunteering and need some support to express an interest or to volunteer, please contact your Team Leader or sign up to their mailing list below.

www.victoria2026.com.au/community/sign-up

Vision Australia

Reading plays a key role in the learning and development of every child, and the Vision Australia Felix Library helps children who have vision loss to learn and develop in a unique, sensory way to support their lifelong literacy and learning. The Felix Library is a free service and is available across Australia to children who are blind or have low vision.

Story kits include:

- A picture book with clear braille overlay
- An audio recording of the book
- A tactile book that tells the story through touch
- Tactile toys and objects that relate to the story

www.visionaustralia.org/services/library/feelix-childrens-library

Auslan

Did you know Auslan is used by over 20,000 Australians? Now is the perfect time to learn Auslan as the Victoria government has added the following courses to their 2023 free TAFE courses:

- Diploma of Auslan
- Diploma of Interpreting (Auslan)
- Advanced Diploma of Interpreting (Auslan)

What a fantastic initiative that provides people with the tools to be inclusive and accessible.

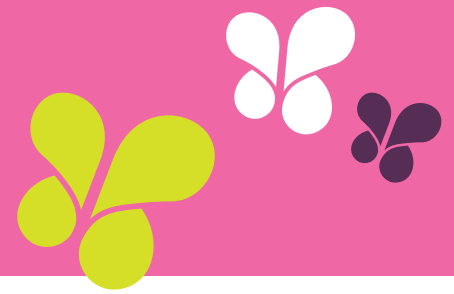
www.vic.gov.au/free-tafe

Another great resource is Key Word Sign Australia. Key Word Sign is a tool and strategy which can be used to support children and adults with communication difficulties to understand and get their message across to others. It provides a way to learn basic Auslan and to ensure your interactions with others are more accessible.

www.kwsa.org.au

Keep healthy and safe

Seasonal health updates and reminders



Rise in COVID-19 cases

We have had a rise in COVID-19 cases recently and want to ensure we slow the spread and keep our community safe. Please ensure you collect any PPE required from the Amicus office.

To reduce the spread of colds, the flu, COVID-19 and other illnesses, it is important to practice good hygiene. This will minimise the risk of spreading and contracting illness during the cooler months ahead.

Remember to:

- Wash your hands frequently with soap and water, before and after eating and after going to the toilet
- Social distance and avoid contact with people when you or they are sick
- Use alcohol-based hand sanitiser
- Cough and sneeze into your elbow and dispose of used tissue
- Importantly make sure you are up to date with the latest COVID-19 vaccine to boost your immunity.



Get outdoors

It's especially important during Winter, when we have less sun and UV rays, to get outside every day. Getting your daily dose of vitamin D has many benefits such as:

- Reducing stress levels
- Improving your memory
- Enhancing your immune system
- Helping with strong bone health



Winter is here!

As we approach the colder and darker months ahead it is important to stay connected and support each other. Here are some ways you can support yourself, friends, family and the wider community this Winter:

- Check-in with people regularly
- Offer a listening ear and give people the time to talk to someone in a safe space
- Connect with the wider community by making plans to regularly attend events
- Practice self-care through enjoying hobbies, exercise and mindfulness
- Get outside for fresh air, vitamin D and a change of scenery
- Be understanding and empathetic

Remember, small gestures of support can go a long way in making someone feel cared for and less alone during the Winter months.

Let's be there for one another and spread warmth and kindness.

Flu season preparation and vaccination

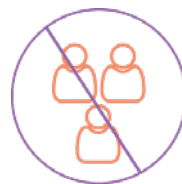
As we enter the peak flu season (June - September) it is important to stay prepared. The flu is a highly contagious virus that can cause mild to severe illness, which the flu vaccine can help prevent.

Flu vaccinations are recommended for anyone six months and over from mid-April onwards, ahead of the flu season.

There are other things you can do to decrease your risk of getting the flu, like increased hand washing, mask-wearing and social distancing. Remember, if you do get sick this Winter, stay home, rest and seek help if your symptoms become severe.



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



Social distance and avoid contact with people when you or they are sick.



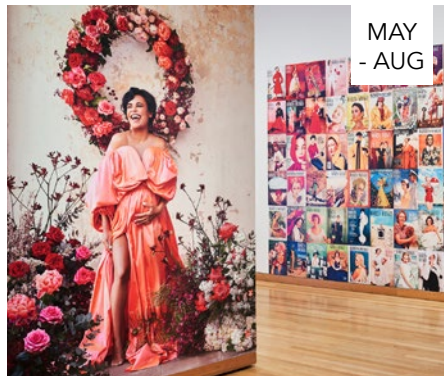
Use alcohol-based hand sanitiser often.



Cough and sneeze into your elbow and dispose of used tissues.

Get out and about

Upcoming community events



MAY
- AUG

Australian Women's Weekly Exhibition

27 May - 27 August, 2023

This exhibition marks the 90th anniversary of The Australian Women's Weekly through a look back at some of the inspiring women who have been part of the magazine's history and the changing eras of fashion and style brought to life on its pages.

Time: 10am - 5pm

Location: Bendigo Art Gallery

Price: Free

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



JUN
- JUL

Electric Wonderland

23 June - 9 July, 2023

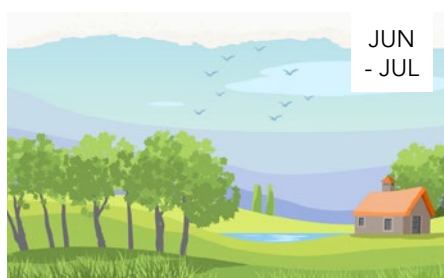
A brand new after-dark experience with enchanting sound and light show, Electric Wonderland delivers interactive exhibits, immersive light installations and magical projections.

Time: Sunday - Thursday 6pm - 9pm and Friday - Saturday 6pm - 10pm

Location: Rosalind Park, Bendigo

Price: Adults \$12, Child \$8

www.electricwonderland.com.au



JUN
- JUL

Sensory Sanctuary

24 June - 7 July, 2023

Showcasing our rich history & traditions through the Machinery, Vehicles and Trades.

Location: Various events and locations across Castlemaine

www.sensorysanctuary.net.au



JUN
- JUL

Maldon in Winter Festival

Saturday 24 June - Sunday 10 July, 2023

The Maldon In Winter Festival is a celebration of darkness and of Winter's light with candlelit recitals, a community bonfire and fairy-lit shop windows. There'll be music and theatre, poetry and markets across many locations and dates.

Location: Various locations throughout Maldon

Price: Free or low cost

www.maldon.org.au/maldon-in-winter



Moama Lights

30 June - 23 July, 2023

An immersive sound and light trail with state-of-the-art installations, projections and cutting edge moving-light. A low sensory session is running on Thursday 6 July at 6pm.

Location: Kerrabee Soundshell, Moama

Price: \$17, Children under 5 free

www.moamalights.com.au



Enlighten

Saturday 8 July, 2023

An immersive light experience that transforms Peace Park into a unique lightscape. Light displays shimmer on the Great Stupa, light sculptures throughout the garden, roaming performers and delicious food.

Location: Great Stupa of Universal Compassion

Cost: Adults \$15, Children \$6

www.stupa.org.au/enlighten



Winter Pop-up Market

Saturday 15 July, 2023

Coming out of their Winter break early the Bendigo Moonlight Market will bring you a magical evening of shopping, food and fun.

Time: 3pm - 8pm

Location: Hargreaves Mall, Bendigo

Cost: Free

www.moonlightmarketbendigo.com.au



Echuca Moama Winter Blues Festival

Thursday 27 - Sunday 30 July, 2023

Echuca Moama has established itself as the place to be for heart-starting blues music and the perfect antidote for a bad case of the Winter blues with its annual Winter Blues Festival. The festival will be in various local pubs, clubs, cafes and restaurants.

Location: Various locations throughout Echuca and Moama

www.winterblues.com.au



Castlemaine Sunday Farmers Market

First Sunday of the month

Find fresh fruit and vegetables, excellent meats and cheeses, delicious homemade cakes, jams, preserves and chocolates as well as plants, livestock and much more.

Time: 9am - 1pm

Location: Western Reserve Forest Street, Castlemaine

Price: Free

www.castlemainefarmersmarket.org



The Yarn Bomb Tram

Winter 2023

Bendigo Tramways' beloved Tram No. 15 has been struck by the infamous Yarn Bombers, bringing back the Yarn Bomb Tram for another exciting Winter season! The Yarn Bomb Tram, decorated inside and out with hand-made crochet bunting, seat covers and blankets, has been a beloved attraction throughout Winter, thanks to the anonymous group of needling ninjas.

Location: Bendigo Tramways

Cost: Adult \$12.50, Child \$7.50

www.bendigotramways.com



Discovery Centre Planetarium

Ongoing

Located near Discovery's main entrance is a high-tech and state-of-the-art dome theatre, screening an enormous variety of entertaining, educational and creative shows.

Time: School holiday sessions at 11am, 1pm and 3pm

Location: Discovery Science and Technology Centre, Bendigo

Cost: Adult \$22, Child/Concession \$18

www.discovery.asn.au