

CALD TALK BIANNUAL

2021 Autumn Edition



#MCCIHarmony



What is CALD Talk?

CALD Talk is a biannual print and online newsletter produced by the Multicultural Communities Council of Illawarra (MCCI) for our members, stakeholders and others who are interested in multicultural affairs, aged care, youth and community services. The aim of the newsletter is to promote multiculturalism and showcase the work that we do with culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities in the Illawarra, ACT and Queanbeyan. CALD Talk can be downloaded from our website.



About MCCI

Multicultural Communities Council of Illawarra (MCCI) is a non-profit organisation that supports people from multicultural communities. We believe in an inclusive society that embraces, celebrates and values diversity. Our services and programs are supported and funded by the Australian and NSW Governments.

Contact us

for more information about our services.

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Supporting multicultural communities for 45 years

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CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE



Welcome to the Autumn edition of CALDTalk for 2021. I hope this edition finds you and your communities safe and well.

Coronavirus update

On behalf of MCCI, can I begin by extending my deepest condolences to anyone in the extended MCCI family who has been impacted by COVID-19 in Australia and, particularly, overseas where the pandemic has had terrible consequences for many nations. These impacts are acutely felt by many of us here in Australia because our immediate and extended families back home have suffered greatly.

Since the beginning of the coronavirus pandemic in early 2020, MCCI has been working collaboratively with public health authorities and Multicultural NSW to support our communities, members, seniors, and young people through difficult times. Through our COVID Resilience Project, supported by the NSW Government, we've held a significant number of community education workshops and organised online member-forums to ensure that timely and relevant information is made available to communities and feedback obtained on current and emerging issues. I'd like to acknowledge and thank the officials from the Illawarra-Shoalhaven Local Health District for their input and involvement. In recent weeks our focus has been on distributing information about the vaccine rollout as it has become available from the Australian Government.

I am pleased to report that there have been no cases of coronavirus within the MCCI family of staff, volunteers, directors, or clients and we maintain active vigilance over our service delivery systems and processes to ensure ongoing safety. We urge everyone in our communities to maintain similar vigilance, stay up to date with the public health orders, and to seek advice from your GP about the COVID-19 vaccine rollout.

New Strategic Plan

In January, the MCCI board of directors approved a new Strategic Plan to guide our work for the next 3 years. The key elements of our strategic intent are:

- **Representation:** We are a voice for multicultural communities
- **Service Delivery & Quality:** We deliver high quality services that help people and communities to achieve their goals
- **Community Reach & Impact:** We pursue new opportunities and continuous improvements to meet community needs
- **Sustainability:** We build our capabilities to support communities for the long term
- **People & Culture:** We are a great place to work and volunteer

A copy of the new Strategic Plan will be sent to members in the near future and is available at our website. We're now reaching more people with support than at any time in our 45-year history and are proud of the commitment shown by our now 93 staff and 115 volunteers who assist communities every day. Having expanded our community reach and impact over the last 3 years, this new plan guides our work with communities both in the Illawarra and ACT.

Multicultural March

Due to our success as a country in managing the pandemic, it is wonderful to see communities starting to get back to normal and COVID-safe events starting to reoccur. Multicultural March was celebrated this year with a range of activities and

events by communities. This year, MCCI drew attention to Harmony Day by lighting up the Wollongong Lighthouse in orange at night.

New Projects & Services

Consistent with our Strategic Plan goals, MCCI is extending our service delivery for communities with a range of new projects.

COMPACT Alliance

A new youth initiative called 'Lead the Way' has commenced as a partnership with MCCI, SCARF, Illawarra Women's Health Centre, and the NSW Office of Sport under the NSW Government's COMPACT Alliance Program. This 12-month collaboration initiative is focused on working to develop the next generation of social cohesion advocates and champions in the Illawarra. Also under the COMPACT program, we are assisting Football NSW with a diversity and inclusion training program with a number of clubs in NSW.

Allied Health & Therapy Services for Seniors

Following a successful business case to the Department of Health, MCCI will soon be offering a range of allied health services for seniors under the Commonwealth Home Support Program. These services will focus on delivering accredited exercise physiology and nutrition programs for seniors at home and in group settings. As always, our aim is to support seniors from CALD backgrounds to be happy, healthy, and independent at home. Allied health services will extend our multidisciplinary service-offerings available to seniors and will be implemented from late-May to early June this year.

Mental Health and Dementia Community Engagement

Working with our partners COORDINARE and Dementia Australia, our team is implementing community education, advisory support, information workshops, and referral pathways in the areas of mental health support and dementia. A key focus of this work is to help overcome stigma and reduce barriers for those who need company, advice and support in response to mental health concerns or experiences with dementia in their families.

Canberra Seniors Groups

Our work with communities in the ACT continues to build, with in-home care, friendship groups, transport, meals and Home Care Packages. New partnerships have been formed with the Vietnamese, Italian, Korean and Serbian communities to deliver social support groups for seniors.



MCCI will soon be offering a range of Allied Health services for seniors under the Commonwealth Home Support Program. These services will focus on delivering accredited exercise physiology and nutrition programs for seniors at home and in group settings.

Seniors Week

We have just concluded Seniors Week at MCCI with several community events focused on physical exercise and wellbeing. They included Walk & Talk activities and Zumba in the Park. All were well attended. Can I also take the opportunity to acknowledge the many communities who organised events for their seniors and particularly thank ITSOWEL and the Greek Orthodox Church in Wollongong for their recent hospitality.

Links to Learning

It is with much sadness that I have to report the imminent closure of our highly successful Links to Learning program, which has operated for more than 20 years in the Illawarra. Regrettably the program will not be funded by the NSW Government after June 30 this year. The program has delivered significant outcomes for young people and I'd like to acknowledge the efforts of our wonderful Links to Learning staff, both past and present, for their work. We'll be working hard to design new programs for student engagement and school-partnerships for the future, with the hope of securing new funding sources over the next 12 months.

Ken Habak OAM, Chairman

LIGHTING UP IN ORANGE TO MARK HARMONY WEEK



By illuminating Wollongong Harbour Lighthouse in orange during Harmony Week, MCCI drew attention to the Illawarra's history of welcoming migrants.

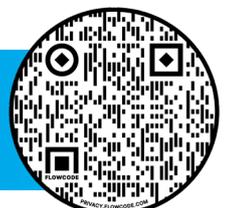
Harmony Week is about inclusiveness, respect and belonging for everyone. It's an annual celebration of cultural diversity in Australia.

"It's an important marquee week for our work each year in celebrating multiculturalism. The lighthouse is symbolic as it brings us together and helps us navigate, move forward and overcome challenges", said MCCI's CEO Chris Lacey.

Harmony Day is also the UN's International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination which is marked annually on the day the police in Sharpeville, South Africa, opened fire and killed 69 people at a peaceful demonstration against apartheid 'pass laws' in 1960.

People celebrated Harmony Week by taking and sharing photos on social media with the tag #everyonebelongs #MCCIHarmony

Support our work by donating at
<https://www.mcci.org.au/donate/>



MULTICULTURAL FOOTBALL IN MARCH



MCCI's free football program has been recognised with an award and praised by visiting A-League players.

Football South Coast's Community Partnership Award recognises the football program's great contribution to young people and the wider community.

About 35 people aged 12 to 24 from culturally diverse backgrounds attend 'Football @ The Frat' which is a collaboration between MCCI and Football South Coast. It runs at the Fraternity Club in Fairy Meadow on Thursdays.

During Multicultural March, A-League players from Wellington Phoenix, who are based in Wollongong this season, had the honour of meeting some of the talented young players and share their experiences.

The Multicultural Futsal Tournament was also a great success with four teams, made up of people from all over the world, putting on an impressive show.





YOUNG ARTISTS DONATE TO MCCI



68 young artists from the childcare centre Boombalee Kidz have kindly donated all the money they raised from a Harmony Day art exhibition to MCCI.

“It’s been a bit of a sad year with COVID so this Harmony Day we wanted to do something special. We decided to do an art exhibition and raise money for a local organisation. We share the same values as MCCI and thought it was important to educate the children and raise money for a really good cause, says Shannon Love, Director of Boombalee Kidz.

Boombalee Kidz come from various cultural backgrounds, including Indian, Greek, Chinese and Middle Eastern.

With a working title ‘I belong to me’ the preschool children learned about cultural backgrounds and how it shapes us. They made self-portraits and each art work came with the artist’s description. The younger children made ‘hearts in hands’ and talked about what it means to be loved and belong. Family was a central theme in all the artworks and lollies were also mentioned.

“It was a special day for us and a tradition that we hope to do every year”, says Shannon.



WHAT WILL *your legacy be?*

By leaving a gift to MCCI in your Will, you can help transform the lives of many.

Contact MCCI on 4229 7566

COOK-OFFS IN NORTH & SOUTH



It is one of MCCI's annual highlights, when year 9 students and cooking volunteers team up for Cook-Off events to celebrate cultural diversity and world cuisine.

"Cook-Off enables generations from different cultural backgrounds to come together and in a fun and safe space share stories and their passion for food", says Allyson Pazos, MCCI's Youth & Community Manager.

The Intergenerational Multicultural Cook-Off started in 2013 with the aim of connecting people from diverse cultural backgrounds and different ages who would share stories, experiences and passion for cooking. It is a collaboration between Lake Illawarra High School

and MCCI which is supported by The Shellharbour Club. For the first time this year, Corrimal High School also took part in the program, with support from the Fraternity Club.

The cooking teams provided the best of Turkish, Portuguese, Spanish, Indian, Greek, Croatian, Sri Lankan, Italian and Peruvian cuisines, including various fusion dishes with Indigenous ingredients.

The recipe books will soon be available on our website.



VISION

A cohesive multicultural society
that embraces, celebrates,
and values diversity

PURPOSE

We are a leadership voice for
culturally & linguistically
diverse communities,
providing services that meet
community needs, promote
equity, harmony, social
inclusion and build
community capacity

VALUES

Diversity - Respect - Integrity
Empowerment - Collaboration - Hope

OUR STRATEGIC INTENT

Representation

MCCI is a voice for multicultural communities

Service Delivery & Quality

MCCI delivers high quality services that help people and communities to achieve their goals

Community Reach & Impact

MCCI pursues new opportunities and continuous improvements to meet community needs

Sustainability

MCCI builds our capabilities to support communities for the longer term

People & Culture

MCCI is a great place to work and volunteer

SENIOR ZUMBA MOVES IN THE PARK



There were some impressive Zumba moves among the 40 seniors who took to the park to dance, socialise and celebrate the NSW Seniors Festival.

“I’m a bit rusty. I have not danced for 60 years, not since I left Spain at the age of 17”, Josephina said.

Josephina tries to move around as much as possible and stay active.

“It was really good. It was very energetic, it warms up the whole body, all the pieces.”

Zumba in the Park, a collaboration between MCCI and Berkley Neighbourhood Centre, was one of several outdoor activities inspired by this year’s Seniors Festival theme ‘In our nature’.

With a focus on improving mental and physical wellbeing, people also enjoyed ‘Walks & Talks’ at Wollongong Harbour and Windang.

After a year of limited social interaction it was good to catch up with old friends and meet new people for a chat about the olden days in different countries and have lunch together.

The events were part of NSW Seniors Festival and supported by Multicultural NSW.

**Contact MCCI on 4229 7566 for
in-home care services and social support groups**

PLANNING AHEAD

When Thit's mother May reached an age when she needed her family's support, she had all her wishes in writing. It made it easier for her family to care for her.

"It was so wonderful that we were able to do everything the way she wanted, and that really made her happy. The Advance Care Directive meant there were no arguments between the siblings as well", says Nyan Thit Tieu who is best known in the Illawarra for establishing the Sisters' Cancer Support Group.

"Having an Advance Care Plan is actually being kind and loving to yourself, as well as to your family that is caring for you."

In her mid-seventies, Thit is in the process of putting together an Advance Care Directive for herself in consultation with her children. She wants to give them the peace of mind her mum gave her.

"My husband will be doing one too. We are healthy and well now but it's good to have our wishes clearly in writing for our children", Thit says.

Contact MCCI if you would like to know more about Advance Care Planning.



MORE WELLBEING SUPPORT

MCCI's free aged care information service has expanded to provide information about dementia and mental wellbeing.



"We help people understand the aged care system and get the information and support services they need. Call us, stop by our office or we can visit you at home to talk to you and your family about how to get help", says MCCI's Patricia Laranjeira.

MCCI works closely with different communities in the Illawarra and bring people together regularly for information sessions. Toula and Odilia met recently in Cringila for a carers workshop about dementia (photo). For them it was an opportunity to have a break and share their experiences with others in a similar situation.

Contact MCCI on 4229 7566 if you know someone who need help to access information, multilingual resources and support services.

BRINGING BACK MEMORIES



Culturally tailored sensory packs from different countries are bringing back memories for older people from all over the world.

Inspired by ITSOWEL's Interactive Sensory Project with the Italian community in Wollongong, MCCI has teamed up with Mindful Generation to create packs with sensory items from more than ten different countries.

“The packs can help engage clients through touch, sight, hearing or smell, and can be a starting point for conversations. They can be particularly useful for clients from culturally diverse backgrounds who face language and other barriers”, says MCCI Care Advisor Michelle Phillips who has long experience using the packs.

When Michelle visited Marinko from Croatia, a photo of a Croatian music band led to a guided tour of his house looking at old family photos on the walls and stories from when he was younger.

The sensory packs are aimed at older people and include flowers and culturally specific items that were typical at the time they migrated to Australia. The packs can be used in residential and in-home care settings as a talking point to get to know new and existing clients better.

BACK TO STEEL TOWN



Memories came flooding back when the steelworkers from the Men's Shed in Coniston went on a special research tour of their former workplace.

The men who arrived from Chile in the 1970s are part of a research project by Mirjana Lozanovska, Deakin University, about migrants' contribution to nation-building in Australia after the Second World War.

The men spoke about how they walked into employment at the Steelworks in Port Kembla within hours or days after arriving in Wollongong and quickly became part of a truly multicultural workforce.

The best memories were from the camaraderie which resulted in lifelong friendships. MCCI's Men's Shed Facilitator Sam, who is of Turkish background and left the Steelworks in 2009, describes it as a family.

“Action, lively, laughter, joy. Surely the environment was not the best place – there’s dust, heat and noise – but when you work there for so long you don’t see any of that. What you remember is the good times and the mates.”

The men also went on a walk in Wentworth Street to look at its architectural beauty and discuss its history and rich nightlife.

Read about the research project here: <https://msd.unimelb.edu.au/research/projects/current/architecture-and-industry-the-migrant-contribution-to-nation-building>

FROM FOOTBALL @ THE FRAT TO SOUTH COAST FLAME



The popular free football program has been a proven pathway of newly arrived young talents to local football clubs. Zinah is one of 30 players who have used it as a steppingstone.

“Playing football has taught me how to be confident, strong and outgoing with no fears”, says Zinah who was born in Iraq, grew up in Syria and moved to Australia as a 10-year-old.

Growing up as a single and shy child, football made it easier for Zinah to make friends when settling in a new country.

“As I was forced to flee both of my home countries because of war, I feel that football is one of the important things I have had a choice at. Playing football has become part of who I am.”

After attending MCCI’s school holiday programs, Zinah and her friend joined the football program as the

only two young women when it started in 2018. Now three years later, she plays for the South Coast Flame Women’s Division 1 team.

“The best advice I can give others is to go for it, try it and never give up or back down. Football can be a tough sport that requires a strong mindset and hard work but it is rewarding at the same time. To be part of the football community will help you gain confidence and be fearless too”, says Zinah.

Football @ The Frat on Thursdays from 4pm is for young people aged 12 to 24 from multicultural backgrounds. It is a collaboration between MCCI and Football South Coast.

Join us! Football @ The Frat on Thursdays at 4pm

YOUNG WOMEN LEADING THE WAY



60 young women from multicultural backgrounds will take part in ‘Lead the Way’, a new collaborative youth leadership initiative which will support the next generation of community leaders.

“It’s great to see communities, private business, industry, government and not-for-profit organisations work together for young women to make successful life transitions and pursue their dreams and aspirations”, says Allyson Pazos, MCCI’s Youth & Community Manager.

‘Lead the Way’ seeks to inspire and empower young women aged 15 to 24 to exercise practical leadership and take action for themselves, their families and communities. The next generation of social cohesion community champions will be role models for generations to come.

Social cohesion and community resilience are at the core of the one-year long program which includes workshops and coaching in personal development, self-care and balance, skills development, physical activity and sports, volunteering, community engagement and networking activities.

The youth initiative is funded by the NSW Government’s COMPACT Alliance Program and managed by MCCI in collaboration with the Office of Sport, The Duke of Edinburgh’s International Award, SCARF Refugee Support and the Illawarra Women’s Health Centre.

ILLAWARRA MULTICULTURAL AWARDS 2020

were open to individuals, groups and organisations who work in the Illawarra and have made an outstanding contribution to promote inclusion and cultural diversity during the past year. Presenting the awards at MCCI's AGM at City Beach Function Centre in December was Chairman Ken Habak OAM.



Community Innovation Award - EmerCALD Project Team (UOW): for their work with 450 community members from seven language groups, organisations and the State Emergency Service to improve communication with CALD communities during natural disasters.



MCCI Award for Outstanding Community Contribution: Teresa Tran, President of the Vietnamese Community in Wollongong who is widely respected in her own community and by the region's civic leaders.



Excellence in Cultural and Community Events Award - TEAM 4 Refugees: for their work assisting and advocating for refugee community members to become self-reliant and active members of the Illawarra community.



Young Leader - Emerging Talent Award - Ernest Bukasa: a key member of the multicultural youth focussed organisation called 'Connect A' as well as being a member of TEAM 4 Refugees and a volunteer for the Red Cross.



Workplace Inclusion Award - Green Connect: the local non-profit social enterprise employs young people and former refugees in jobs that help the community and the planet.



Excellence in Community Engagement Award - SCARF Refugee Support: for their important work supporting more than 2000 refugee community members rebuild their lives in Wollongong.

COMMUNITY NEWS



How to move on, stay emotionally well and enjoy what Wollongong has to offer. These were the main themes discussed by 85 young people from five local high schools who met online for the fifteenth Illawarra Multicultural Youth Conference.



Last year's MCCI Links to Learning students have completed a 20 kilometres Adventurous Journey, the last component of The Duke of Edinburgh's International Award. For some, like Amar, it marked the beginning of Ramadan and the holy month of fasting.



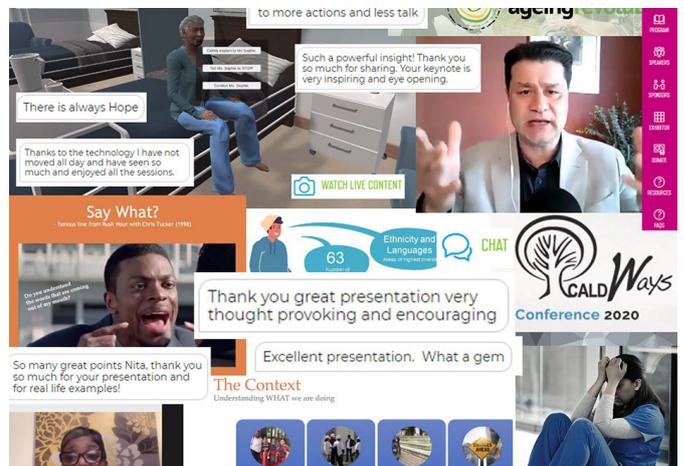
The 'Be a COVID Warrior' program by MCCI and Illawarra Shoalhaven Local Health District (ISLHD) Multicultural Health has reached 700 people of different ages from 18 different language groups face-to-face.



There was much laughter and hard work when a small group of newly arrived young people learned to float and swim at an intensive five-day course at Northern Stars Swim School in January. Some of them had never been in a pool before.



MCCI is growing fast in the Illawarra, ACT and Queanbeyan. Aged Care Coordinator Ally See in Canberra is welcoming Ji Hui, MCCI's 100th Home Care Package client who is originally from China and speaks Mandarin.



Extraordinarily powerful, thought provoking, encouraging and inspiring were some of the comments made about presentations at MCCI's 10th CALDWays Conference, Diversity & Inclusion – Less Talk More Action which was online for the first time.



Contact Us

For more information about our services.
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