



Australian  
Multicultural  
Community  
Services

# Dream

## Q2 Edition 2022



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We care, we support, **we empower**

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## Welcome

This newsletter's theme is "dream," in views of moving forward and reaching our goals. Life throws many curveballs. The pandemic has taught us that. However, if we stop learning, we're going backwards.

In March, we celebrated 10 years of partnership with Uniting Vic. Tas for the Centre-based Day Respite Program. In May, we welcomed a \$1.8m election pledge by A Matthew Guy Liberals and Nationals Government to assist with the renovations of Millennium House. Minister for Multicultural Affairs, The Honourable Ros Spence MP and Katie Hall MP, Member for Footscray and Parliamentary Secretary for Multicultural Affairs, also announced a \$500,000 grant. These accomplishments will help AMCS

continue to improve the lives of the most vulnerable in our community.

We could not have attained these milestones without the support and dedication of staff, volunteers and clients. Thank you.



Deborah D'Costa  
Manager — Quality and Care  
Coordination

## Nurse's corner — preparing for COVID-19 in winter

As Australia learns to live with COVID-19, winter may present challenges. People with acute respiratory symptoms should stay home until symptoms resolve, regardless of diagnosis.

### Vaccination

Being up-to-date with COVID-19 and influenza vaccinations protect against severe illness and infection. Vaccinations are available through your GP, selected pharmacies and vaccine hubs.

### Testing

People with respiratory symptoms should continue testing for COVID-19 via Rapid Antigen Tests (RAT) or Polymerase Chain Reaction (PCR).

### Current COVIDSafe settings in Victoria

Face masks are no longer required in most indoor settings, but they are still recommended especially if you:

- have COVID-19 symptoms
- are with people vulnerable to COVID-19
- cannot physically distance.

Keep 1.5 metre distance from others, use hand sanitiser and practice good hygiene. Ventilation and air filtration helps. Open windows for fresh air or catch up with friends outside. As we prepare for the cooler months, check or service your home heating systems.



## A dream that surpassed my expectations

by Home Care Package client,  
Blanka Nowacka

I had always dreamt of taming an Australian magpie. My garden was full of them. They flew among the trees, ran over the lawn and sang, sang, sang! The kingdom once belonging to my fifteen-year-old cat, Mini, had ceased to exist and the cheeky birds clearly ignored her. Confronted, Mini did not know what to do — hunt or pretend not to see them. As a smart cat, she chose the latter — the beginning of an idyllic understanding. I sighed in relief. Magpies can be aggressive during breeding season. However, I did not observe such behaviour. Instead, I became convinced of another truth: when they love, they love with the whole heart.

My garden is full of song, full of life. Magpies chased away other birds. Time to time, a lonely crow or a pair of myna birds accompanied them. As birch tree seeds ripen, beautiful parrots arrived. With many curious things to observe, I almost lived on my porch. I ate my meals there, causing great interest to my winged friends. One watched closely. The moment I cut my tuna sandwich, she dove for it, nonchalantly ate her prize, cleaned her beak and flew away. I was indignant at the ingratitude.

However, the next moments astounded me. She returned with five friends. On the railing, they performed the most beautiful concert. My tears flowed



**"I have not one but a flock of tamed magpies."**

freely. Although without a conductor, the harmony was perfect. They synchronised their trills and throwing back their little heads. For the finale, they flew to my plate in an expertly choreographed show.

Now, I have not one but a flock of tamed magpies. Life keeps giving us extraordinary experiences regardless of age. We remain open to our dreams.

## AMCS is recruiting

AMCS aim to be the employer of choice with flexible working conditions, health and wellbeing initiatives, salary packaging and professional development programs.

To express your interest, please email your resume and a short cover letter to [hr@amcservices.org.au](mailto:hr@amcservices.org.au) or call (03) 9689 9170.

## Happy 99<sup>th</sup> birthday, Anna

On 12 April 2022, Home Care Package client Anna Solinas turned 99. During her career, she was a brilliant seamstress. In her spare time, she enjoys keeping updated with Italian news, watching animal documentaries, making sauces and sausages, looking for food at the beach like mussels, and locating snails in bushy areas when raining. On her special day, she celebrated with cake and family.



## A life on survival and courage

Gemma Mendonez  
*Home Care Package client*

Despite the life challenges Gemma has faced, she counts her blessings. She shares her experience with violence to raise awareness and help others.

### Family ties

Born in the Philippines, Gemma was one of six children. After meeting her future husband at a temple, she migrated to Australia in 1984 and sponsored her parents and one of her sisters to move.

"I was meant to come in 1983 but I didn't want to leave my friends. We didn't need money because my parents had a Doctorate of Education. I never knew how to clean because we employed servants," Gemma explains.

During the years, she experienced abuse from someone with a "Jekyll and Hyde personality. I never knew what I would get."

As a result of declining mental and physical health, she sent her only son to live with her sister in Western Australia because, "she married a good man."

"I was afraid...the abuser threatened my friends and family," Gemma recalls. "I contacted the police and took out an AVO."

Gemma calls for more understanding on violence against women so survivors feel less alone and can build support networks. If you are in immediate danger, please call 000. For counselling, please visit [1800respect.org.au](http://1800respect.org.au) or call 1800 737 732.

### Life as we know it

For 17 years, she worked as a typist. Lonely in her marriage, she learnt the skill. Her husband did not work, and she desired to be



social. Afterwards, she became a Buyers Assistant until retirement. Over the years, she loved holidaying in America to visit her brother and sister. The latter followed their parents' footsteps in achieving a Doctorate in Education. Sadly, her younger of the two sisters living in Perth died of cancer last year.

"I'm still grieving but trying to move on with life. I enjoy walking with friends. My two dogs are therapeutic. I also attend the Filipino Senior Citizens Club regularly and participate in the AMCS Volunteer Visiting Programs," Gemma describes.

AMCS match older adults and volunteers with shared cultural backgrounds, hobbies and interests. For more information, please contact [volunteer@amcservices.org.au](mailto:volunteer@amcservices.org.au) or ask for a Volunteer Coordinator at (03) 9689 9170.

### AMCS experience

"I only leave the house after taking painkillers because of my arthritis. My Support Workers are caring and helpful. I don't need to tell them what to do," Gemma says. "Marila is the most industrious Support Worker I've ever met. She is dedicated to her work and an excellent example. I always recommend friends to AMCS."

For information on Home Care Packages, please contact Eloina, Intake Coordinator, on [homecare@amcservices.org.au](mailto:homecare@amcservices.org.au) or 0432 099 225.

## Staff profile

Rex Obtinalla, *Support Worker*

### How long have you worked at AMCS?

Four years.

### Tell us about your role.

As a Support Worker, I assist clients with showering and dressing, meal preparation, household chores, and driving or accompanying to medical appointments, shopping and walking.

To help build clients' self-confidence, I encourage them to be more active. I like working with older people from different cultures, because I understand their perspective. We build understanding and trust. I also teach them how to use technology like mobiles and internet.

The AMCS office team are helpful and supportive, making my job easier and more enjoyable. Being a Support Worker is not only a profession but also a vocation.

AMCS is looking for more Support Workers. For information, please contact Kristy, Senior Support Worker Officer, on [kristy.harris@amcservices.org.au](mailto:kristy.harris@amcservices.org.au) or 0401 219 609.



**"Being a Support Worker is not only a profession but also a vocation."**

### Tell us a bit about yourself.

I am a friendly person, easily adapting to people. My interests include listening to music, playing the guitar, singing karaoke and blogging. Originally from the Philippines, Tagalog is my first language. I speak a little Arabic. My wife of 17 years, Arlin, is also Filipino.

## AMCS and Uniting Vic. Tas 10-year partnership

On 23 March 2022, AMCS celebrated 10 years of partnership with Uniting Vic. Tas for the Centre-based Day Respite Program at Knox Gardens Community Hall in Wantirna South.

The program encourages carers to look after their health and wellbeing, with the comfort of knowing AMCS is supporting their dependants through various activities.

Janice Parfitt and Alina Urbanczyk were special guests at the event as two of the people who established the collaboration.



The relationship would also not be a success without AMCS Respite Team Leader Marek Smalec and his wife, AMCS Respite Worker, Malgorzata Smalec. We are grateful to have important and long-lasting partnerships to deliver essential care.

## Party promises \$1.8m to Millennium House

On 2 May 2022 at Millennium House in Footscray, The Honourable Matthew Guy, Leader of the Opposition in Victoria, pledged \$1.8m to assist with the venue's renovations. The support will help upgrade the not-for-profit community centre for diverse groups to hold meetings, workshops, education and training, information sessions and cultural celebrations.

"...We want to show future new communities of Australia that it's important to keep your roots as an Australian and to preserve and keep your community going at a place like this," Mr Guy says.



Mr Craig Ondarchie MP, Shadow Minister for Multicultural Affairs and Citizenship, and Mr Bernie Finn MP, Member for Western Metropolitan Region, were also in attendance and enjoyed performances by the Melbourne Polish Children's & Youth Choir.

## A visit from Members of Parliament

Minister for Multicultural Affairs, The Honourable Ros Spence MP and Katie Hall MP, Member for Footscray and Parliamentary Secretary for Multicultural Affairs, announced a \$500,000 grant towards Millennium House's structural upgrades.

AMCS staff, board members and community members celebrated over morning tea and singing from Home Care Package client Francesca Catroppa.



## Let us help you find work

The AMCS Employment Program offers career guidance through skills development, education and training, and community services experience. Find your preferred occupation, and receive industry-specific professional growth, mentoring and post-placement support.

For more information, please contact Rohan on [rohan@amcservices.org.au](mailto:rohan@amcservices.org.au) or 0417 572 977.

## New social support for seniors

By popular demand, AMCS now has a weekly Arabic Social Support Group in Gladstone Park and an Albanian Centre-based Day Respite Program in Dandenong.

Although we are not taking new clients for the above, AMCS is accepting more participants from all cultural backgrounds for the Centre-based Day Respite Program in Endeavour Hills. If you are age over 65 and have a carer, please contact Barbara Obradovic on [barbara.obradovic@amcservices.org.au](mailto:barbara.obradovic@amcservices.org.au) or 0403 165 648.

## Free industry-recognised short courses

Learn new skills in MYOB, Microsoft Office, Multicultural Leadership, aged care and digital skills development. Discover opportunities and strengthen your employment options. Available to City of Maribyrnong and Brimbank residents.

Contact Vesna on [training@amcservices.org.au](mailto:training@amcservices.org.au), 0422 226 105 or (03) 9689 9170.

## Change of legal entity

Due to the organisation's rapid growth, AMCS has changed the legal status from an Incorporated Association to a Company Limited by Guarantee. The change improves AMCS' position to meet the opportunities arising from the Royal Commission's aged care recommendations.

## Turkish-inspired yoghurt and savoury granola

*A recipe by Ngaire Hobbins — dietitian, writer, aged care consultant*

A healthy breakfast with probiotic offerings of good-quality yoghurt, extra protein from eggs, nuts and LSA (linseeds, sunflower seeds and almonds), and oils for antioxidants and anti-inflammatory benefits.

Serves 1

### Ingredients

- 130 g (4½ oz/½ cup) probiotic Greek yoghurt
- ½ Lebanese (short) cucumber, chopped
- 3 – 4 cherry tomatoes, halved
- 1 tbsp LSA
- 2 tbsp savoury granola or handful of toasted and chopped almonds
- 1 soft boiled egg, peeled
- pinch of ground turmeric
- handful of small black olives
- handful of chopped flat-leaf (Italian) parsley
- a few chives, chopped
- olive, macadamia or flaxseed oil, to drizzle
- optional salt flakes and freshly ground black pepper

### Method

1. Spoon the yoghurt into a serving bowl or plate and sprinkle with turmeric.
2. Arrange the cucumber, tomatoes and olives over the yoghurt.
3. Sprinkle the LSA and scatter the herbs and granola over.
4. Cut the egg in half and place in the centre.
5. Add drizzle of oil and season with optional salt flakes and black pepper.

*Ngaire is a fully qualified, medically trained dietitian passionate about helping people to get the best from life and age well.*

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



# Staff and volunteers' anniversaries — February to June 2022

Thank you to our staff and volunteers for their incredible dedication and support to seniors in the community.

## Staff

### February

Kaczmarek, Jadwiga	5 years
Smalec, Malgorzata	10 years

### April

Distefano, Merlita	5 years
Farrugia, Jacquiline	5 years
Gonzales, Erna	5 years
Lopez, Iris	5 years

### June

Tzanis, Anthelia	5 years
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## Volunteers

### February

Bartkowicz, Bronislawa	13 years
Chalupka, Anna	3 years
Chierchia, Gerardo	4 years
Czajkowski, Jolanta	6 years
Ho, Dieu	2 years
Holod, Sophie	6 years
Iacono, Anna	3 years
Mifsud, Natalie	1 year
Mulcaire, James	2 years
Przybylkiewicz, Teresa	8 years
Seville, Annalisa	2 years

## March

Bashfield, Lucinda (Lucy)	1 year
Driscoll, Leanne	2 years
Kabala, Jackie	4 years
Lipski, Danuta	7 years
Riggio, Marco	1 year
Stepien, Anna	7 years

## April

De Frutos, Maria	1 year
Eighandour, Yasmin	2 years
Jones, Sally	2 years
Kuder, Zbigniew (Zibby)	2 years
Ozkan, Ozlem	4 years

## May

Civitico, Elizabeth	3 years
Eid Saade, Salwa	8 years
Groves, Stella	2 years
Harasimowicz, Julia	13 years
Krstov, Sinisha	4 years
Nunez De, Morena	5 years

## June

Boberska, Joanna	2 years
Diaz Alvarez, Sonia	3 years
Heales, Denise	4 years
Pysk, Irena	5 years
Skowronska, Marta	3 years



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