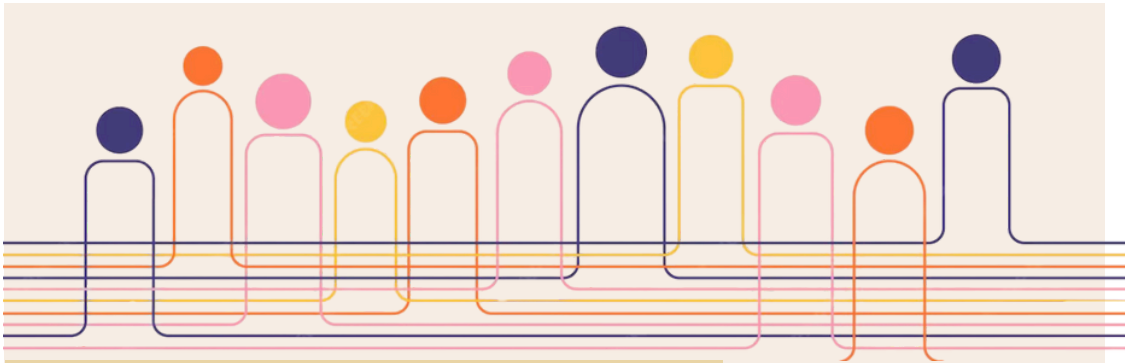


WELCOME TO OUR MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

CULTURAL INTELLIGENCE IN AGED CARE



February focus feature:

CONNECTION, BELONGING, AND CULTURAL INTELLIGENCE

February provides an important opportunity for many providers to reset service delivery following the holiday period. As staff return and activities resume, this is a critical time to reinforce culturally safe practice, strengthen engagement with older people, and embed the Strengthened Quality Standards — particularly in relation to dignity and choice, person-centred care, workforce capability, and inclusive service environment, embedding cultural and emotional intelligence in service delivery.

Across cultures, February often highlights themes of connection, relationships, care, and community. Love and belonging extend beyond romantic relationships to include family, friendship, elders, and community ties. For older people, a strong sense of belonging is essential to wellbeing, while for staff, feeling connected and respected strengthens morale, teamwork, and retention. February reminds us that belonging is built through everyday actions, not just special events.

IN THIS NEWSLETTER

- Why Cultural Celebrations Matter to Older People
- CQ checklist for Working with Older People
- A Snapshot of Cultural Celebration
- Lunar New Year- Year of the Horse — Meaning & Cultural Significance
- Dishes for Lunar New Year
- Understanding Islam: A Cultural and Religious Resource
- Resource Spotlight - Library
- Resource Spotlight - Micro-Learning Sessions
- Resource Spotlight - Multicultural calendar 2026
- Your voice matters - More information!

WHY CULTURAL CELEBRATIONS MATTER TO OLDER PEOPLE

Supporting cultural celebrations is an essential component of delivering dignified, person-centred and culturally safe care to CALD older people.

Dignity and Cultural Identity

Cultural celebrations allow older people to maintain connection to their identity, heritage, language, faith and life story. Recognising and supporting cultural traditions affirms personal dignity and acknowledges the whole person, not just their care needs.

This aligns with Standard 1 requirements that older people are treated with respect, recognition of identity and cultural safety.

Choice and Self-Determination

Participation in cultural celebrations supports the right of older people to make choices about how they live, celebrate, worship and connect socially. When services enable access to cultural events, traditional food, and religious observances, they empower older people to remain active decision-makers in their daily lives.

This reflects Standard 1 expectations that care is guided by the older person's preferences, values and choices.

Emotional Wellbeing and Belonging

For many CALD older people — particularly migrants and refugees — cultural celebrations provide continuity, emotional security and a sense of belonging. Participation reduces social isolation, strengthens community connections and supports mental wellbeing.

Standard 1 recognises the importance of emotional wellbeing, social connection and meaningful relationships as part of quality care.

Culturally Safe Practice

Supporting cultural celebrations demonstrates cultural safety by creating environments where older people feel respected, included and understood. It also promotes trust between services, older people and families.

This directly aligns with the MAC Diversity Framework principle of embedding cultural intelligence, respect and inclusive practice across service delivery.

Service Responsibility and Workforce Practice

Providers have a responsibility to ensure policies, workforce training and service planning support cultural inclusion. This includes recognising key cultural dates, enabling flexible support arrangements, and building staff capability to deliver culturally responsive care.

This meets Standard 1 governance and practice expectations that organisations actively support diversity, inclusion and dignity in everyday service delivery.



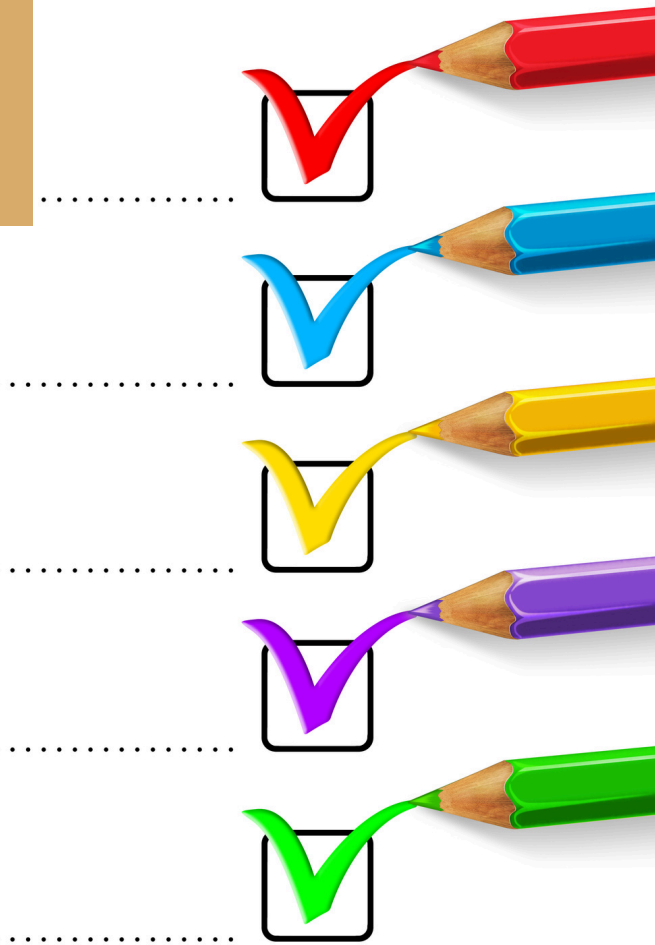
CQ WELLNESS CHECKLIST FOR WORKING WITH OLDER PEOPLE

This checklist is a practical guide to support culturally safe, wellness-focused and reablement-aligned care for older people.

It helps workers and services reflect on how person-led decision making, cultural identity, family partnership and strengths-based practice are embedded across assessment, goal setting and daily support.

The checklist promotes dignity, independence, communication, and community connection, while ensuring cultural preferences and values are respected throughout the care journey.

[Download the checklist here](#)



A SNAPSHOT OF CULTURAL CELEBRATIONS

15 February – Parinirvana day (Buddhist)

Parinirvana Day commemorates the passing of the Buddha and his attainment of Parinirvana, marking the end of the cycle of birth and rebirth. It is observed by many Buddhist communities as a time of reflection, remembrance, compassion, and acceptance of impermanence. Observance is typically quiet and contemplative rather than celebratory.

Common traditions may include:

- Meditation, prayer, or chanting
- Reflecting on impermanence and compassion
- Acts of kindness and generosity
- Simple or vegetarian meals

Activity ideas:

- Short guided mindfulness or breathing session
- Quiet reflection time with soft instrumental music
- Reading a short passage about compassion or impermanence
- Nature-based activity such as looking at photos of gardens or trees
- Offering a calm, peaceful space for those who wish to observe privately



17 February - Lunar New Year

It is one of the most significant cultural celebrations for many communities, including Chinese, Vietnamese, Korean, Malaysian, and other East and Southeast Asian cultures. It marks the beginning of the lunar calendar and symbolises renewal, family, luck, and prosperity.

Common traditions may include:

- Family reunions and shared meals
- Symbolic foods representing luck and longevity
- Red decorations, lanterns, and greetings
- Respect for elders and ancestors

Activity ideas:

- Sharing stories or photos of the traditions
- Red-and-gold themed art or craft activities
- Playing traditional or contemporary Lunar New Year music
- Offering small tastings of symbolic foods (where appropriate)
- Writing simple wishes or blessings for the year ahead

A SNAPSHOT OF CULTURAL CELEBRATIONS

18 February – Ramadan starts (Muslim)

Ramadan is the Islamic holy month. It is a time of spiritual reflection, self-discipline, compassion, and community. Many Muslims fast from dawn to sunset, focusing on prayer, generosity, and strengthening relationships. Observance can vary depending on age, health, and personal circumstances. Some older people may not fast but still observe Ramadan through prayer, reflection, or community connection.

Common traditions may include:

- Daily prayers and reading of the Quran
- Fasting from sunrise to sunset (where health allows)
- Acts of charity and kindness
- Breaking the fast (iftar) with family or community

Activity ideas:

- Quiet reflection or mindfulness time
- Listening to gentle spiritual or instrumental music
- Discussion prompts such as “What does reflection mean to you?”
- Adjusting activities to accommodate energy levels during fasting hours



18 February – Lent starts (Christian)

Lent is a significant period in the Christian calendar, observed by many Christian traditions as a time of preparation leading up to Easter. It is a season of reflection, prayer, self-discipline, and compassion, encouraging people to slow down, reflect on their faith, and focus on caring for others and their community.

Common traditions may include:

- Prayer, reflection, and attending church services
- Fasting or giving up certain foods or habits
- Acts of kindness, charity, and helping others

Activity ideas:

- Quiet reflection or prayer time
- Group discussion about kindness, gratitude, or forgiveness
- Listening to gentle or sacred music



A SNAPSHOT OF CULTURAL CELEBRATIONS

23 February – Great Lent Begins (Eastern Orthodox Christian)

Great Lent is observed by many Eastern Orthodox Christian communities and is a period of deep spiritual preparation leading up to Pascha (Orthodox Easter). It is a time focused on reflection, prayer, humility, and spiritual renewal, often observed more quietly and solemnly than Western Lent.

Common traditions may include:

- Increased prayer and attendance at church services
- Fasting or dietary restrictions, depending on health and tradition
- Reflection, repentance, and spiritual reading
- Acts of kindness, generosity, and forgiveness

Activity ideas:

- Quiet reflection or prayer time
- Listening to Orthodox or Eastern European sacred music
- Gentle group discussion about renewal, hope, or compassion
- Providing calm spaces for individual observance



LUNAR NEW YEAR YEAR OF THE HORSE — MEANING & CULTURAL SIGNIFICANCE



The Year of the Horse in the Lunar Zodiac symbolises energy, strength, independence and progress. It is associated with movement forward, resilience, and a strong spirit of optimism.

Key qualities of the Horse include:

- Vitality & Action – A year linked to momentum, activity and new opportunities
- Independence & Confidence – Encourages personal growth and leadership
- Hard Work & Determination – Represents perseverance and commitment
- Freedom & Positivity – Symbol of open-mindedness and adaptability

Lunar New Year Family Dinner Gatherings — Cultural Significance

The Lunar New Year reunion dinner is one of the most important family traditions across many Asian cultures. It symbolises togetherness, respect for elders, renewal, and shared prosperity. Families gather to welcome the new year with food, gratitude and good wishes for the months ahead.

Why it matters culturally:

- Family unity – Brings generations together in one shared space
- Respect for elders – Elders are honoured through seating order, serving traditions and shared blessings
- Prosperity and good fortune – Symbolic dishes represent wealth, health and longevity

For aged and community care services, recognising Lunar New Year family gatherings supports culturally safe practice by:

- Encouraging family-inclusive care planning and engagement
- Supporting cultural identity and belonging (Quality Standard 1 – Dignity & Choice)
- Creating inclusive service environments and celebrations (Quality Standard 7)
- Strengthening community connection and social wellbeing

Lunar New Year family dinners are a powerful symbol of connection, respect and renewal. For many older people, these gatherings reinforce cultural identity, strengthen family bonds, and support emotional wellbeing — values that align with MAC's commitment to culturally inclusive care.

LUNAR NEW YEAR YEAR OF THE HORSE MEANING & CULTURAL SIGNIFICANCE



Activity Idea for providers

- Serve dumplings and spring rolls for shared lunch
- Invite older people to share stories and traditions
- Display symbolic foods and decorations.

Chinese cultural resources such as red packets and lantern making templates are available at MAC library

- Invite MAC to be guest speakers on cultural celebrations

Lo Hei (Prosperity Toss / Yu Sheng)

Lo Hei, the first course is a traditional prosperity toss where families and communities gather around a shared platter and toss the ingredients high into the air while calling out wishes for:

- Success
- Good health
- Wealth
- Harmony

Lo Hei Ingredients: shredded vegetables (carrot, radish, cucumber), raw salmon (or vegetarian alternative), pickled ginger, pomelo, crushed peanuts, sesame seeds, crispy crackers, plum sauce, and sesame oil. The higher the toss, the greater the luck and blessings for the year ahead.



DISHES FOR LUNAR NEW YEAR

Lunar New Year is a special celebration for many people around the world. During this time there are a multitude of important dishes that have a lot of cultural significance. It is important to remember that many countries celebrate Lunar New Year and they all celebrate it in their own way. In China for example, some dishes may hold more significance in one part of the country than in other parts.

We have compiled ideas of 5 different dishes that represent some of the more common beliefs and traditions. Additionally we have sourced some recipes that may help you in exploring the various cuisine's that are prominent during Lunar New Year!



DUMPLINGS

Dumplings are a popular dish around the world. Every culture has its own version of a stuffed dumpling. Dumplings are symbolic of good fortune during the Lunar New Year, and their circular shape mimics gold ingots from ancient China. The image above is an example of dumplings known as 'money bag dumplings' as the shape represents both gold ingots but also money bags.

If you would like to try and make these dumplings [click on this link](#) for a simple recipe.

Source: [Today](#).

PORK TONGUE PORK HOCK

The pig is regarded a particularly auspicious animal since it represents strength, honesty, riches, and fertility. They are always well fed and bring joy and prosperity to the home and family. Pork tongue is important because it sounds like/resembles the words for wealth. Sometimes the dish will also have pork hock or pigs hand/feet as it represents the idea of giving money to the hands of people since the other ingredients represent wealth too.

We have found a great recipe for a pork hock dish also known as Ti Pang, this page gives a more detailed explanation of pork hock and gives further insight to the significance of pork in China. To read more [click here](#).

Source: [Passion for Pork](#)



ORANGE ROAST CHICKEN

For Chinese New Year, it's customary to offer a complete animal, such as a whole fish or a whole duck. The entire animal is a symbol of unity and completeness - in some regions serving a whole animal also represents the coming together of a whole family. Oranges are also symbolic because their colour is golden orange, which represents "gold" thus reflecting wealth and prosperity.

For a recipe to make orange roast chicken please [click here](#).

Source: [Today](#)



STEAMED FISH

Steaming a whole fish is said to be an important part of Lunar New Year celebrations as it signifies abundance and plenty. The whole fish is prepared to ensure a nice start and conclusion to the New Year (head-to-tail), as well as good fortune throughout. The picture above is similar to Cantonese-Style steamed fish with ginger and scallion and is a classic dish that can be ordered at many Chinese restaurants around the world.

For a recipe to make this dish please [click here](#).

NOODLES

Long Life Noodles or yi mein are a staple on the buffet table at Chinese festivals, as they represent longevity. These noodles are typically long and are therefore associated with the idea of living a long life. However, while yi mein noodles are the most common representations of this, it is said that any type of long noodle can symbolise longevity. Noodles are also a symbol of prosperity and good fortune, therefore offering any type of noodles for Chinese New Year is a fantastic choice.

The recipe for yi mein can be accessed by clicking here.

Source: [The Woks of Life](#)



UNDERSTANDING ISLAM: A CULTURAL AND RELIGIOUS RESOURCE

This resource provides an overview of Islam, one of the world's major religions, to support understanding, respect, and cultural inclusion.

It is designed for use in community services, aged care, education, and multicultural environments where staff and community members may support or engage with Muslim individuals and families.

Islam is both a faith and a way of life, shaping beliefs, daily practices, values, and community relationships. While Muslim communities are diverse in culture, language, and tradition, they share core beliefs and practices that are central to Islamic life.

By outlining key beliefs, practices, religious observances, and cultural considerations, this resource aims to build cultural awareness and confidence when working with Muslim communities. It supports respectful communication, culturally safe care, and inclusive service delivery.

This resource was developed by our Social Work student during her placement at Multicultural Aged Care (MAC), Bdoor Aljedaani from Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

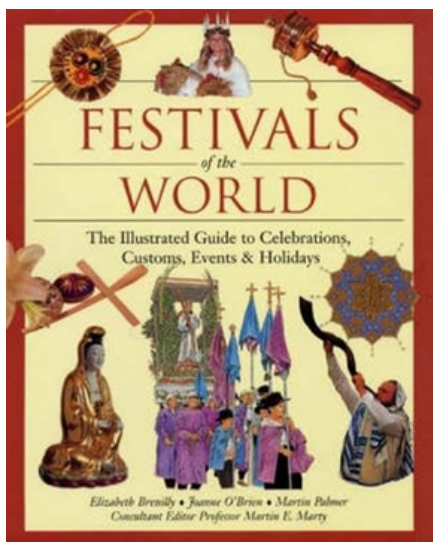
[Download the resource here](#)



RESOURCE SPOTLIGHT

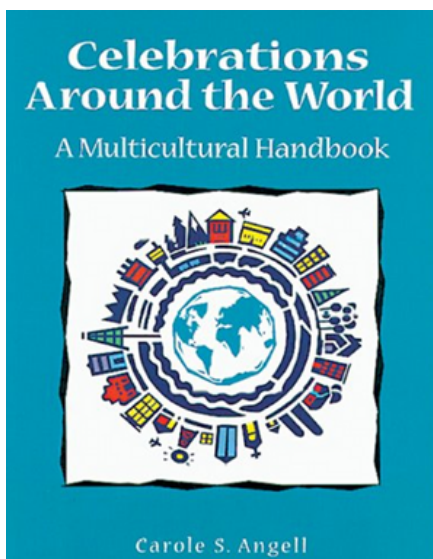
MAC LIBRARY

To access our library or borrow our books, [click here](#)



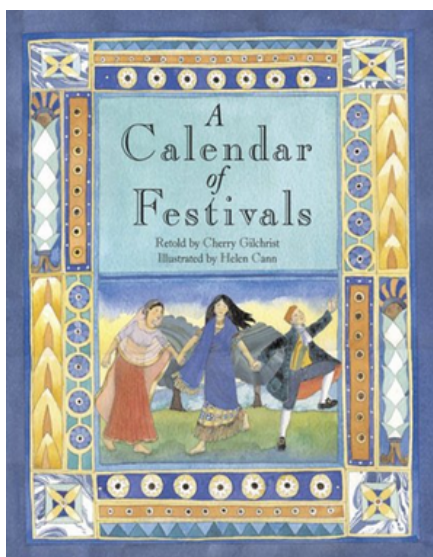
Festivals of the world: the illustrated guide to celebrations, customs, events & holidays. Elizabeth Breuilly, Joanne O'Brien, Martin Palmer & consultant editor Professor Martin E. Marty

Explains and explores the rich variety of festivals around the world. A colorfully illustrated introduction to festivals that are central to the major religions of the world identifies where each faith's calendar year begins, documents the history and significance of each celebration, and describes observance traditions.



Celebrations around the world: a multicultural handbook. Carole S. Angell

Choose any month in this in-depth resource and you'll discover at least 20 celebrations, festivals, or religious holidays observed by countries and cultures from Angola to Zimbabwe. Beginning with January, the author has described the background and context of more than 300 observations, providing activities for families or students to explore selected celebrations further. Celebrations Around the World will be invaluable to every teacher, youth leader, librarian, or parent who needs a convenient resource for exploring the rich heritage offered by the countries and cultures of the world.



A calendar of festivals: celebrations from around the world. Cherry Gilchrist & Helen Cann

Did you know that when you go trick-or-treating on Halloween you are taking part in an ancient Celtic festival? This intriguing collection of tales takes us back to the origins of many festivals which are celebrated throughout the world and traces some of the stories that are connected to them. Each of the tales in this anthology has an introduction which explains its origins and its significance for the people who celebrate it.

MICRO-LEARNING SESSIONS

WEBINARS

Our Micro-Learning Sessions provide flexible, bite-sized learning opportunities designed to support culturally inclusive practice in aged and community care. These sessions are developed to complement our broader training and capacity-building work, offering focused learning that can be easily integrated into busy workplace settings.

Sessions are delivered live or pre-recorded and are designed to be short, focused, and practical, drawing on the practice experience of our trainers gained through years of working alongside aged care providers and CALD communities.

All micro-learning content is underpinned by the Aged Care Quality Standards and the Aged Care Diversity Framework, and applies a Cultural Intelligence (CQ) approach to support providers to translate policy and regulatory requirements into everyday practice. Sessions usually include:

- Practical strategies to support culturally inclusive care
- Case examples informed by real-world service delivery
- Reflections on applying standards and the Diversity Framework in different care contexts

Target Audience

- Aged Care Staff and Volunteers
- Managers and Team Leaders
- Providers seeking flexible workforce learning options

[Click here to access our Micro-Learning](#)



RESOURCE SPOTLIGHT

MULTICULTURAL CALENDAR 2026

Multicultural Calendar 2026

National public holidays **State and Territory public holidays**
* Dates, Jewish and Muslim events start at sunrise the previous evening
† Dates may vary from what is listed
Information contained within this document was correct at the time of publication

The image displays a comprehensive Multicultural Calendar for the year 2026, organized into 12 monthly grids. Each grid lists the days of the week and specific dates, highlighting national public holidays (indicated by yellow boxes) and state and territory public holidays (indicated by green boxes). Cultural events and observances are also marked with small icons and text. The months are color-coded: January (blue), February (purple), March (blue), April (purple), May (blue), June (purple), July (blue), August (purple), September (blue), October (purple), November (blue), and December (purple). At the bottom of the calendar, there is a QR code, the PICAC Alliance logo, the Multicultural Aged Care logo, and the text 'Centre of Excellence In Cultural Diversity and Inclusion'.


Introducing the Multicultural Calendar, your essential tool for embracing diversity and inclusion year-round! This comprehensive calendar is a vibrant tapestry of dates, celebrating various Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) events throughout the year. It's designed for anyone working with CALD and multicultural communities, as well as anyone interested in broadening their cultural horizons.

[Download our Multicultural Calendar 2026 here](#)


WHAT'S ON IN ADELAIDE IN FEBRUARY 2026



Cyprus Festival 2026


 When: Saturday 7 Feb & Sunday 8 Feb 2026

 Where: Cyprus Community of South Australia Inc., 6-8 Barrapowell Street, Welland, Adelaide SA 5007


 What's on: Live music, traditional and modern dance performances, Cypriot food stalls, family activities and cultural showcases — free entry.

Link: <https://cypruscommunitysa.com.au/cypfest2026>

Asia Oasis Street Food Festival

 When: Thursday 13 Feb – Saturday 22 Feb 2026

 Where: Jimmy Melrose Park, Glenelg, Adelaide SA 5045

 What's on: A culinary journey across Asia, featuring street food stalls, live cooking demonstrations, cultural performances, music and interactive activities. Visitors can sample authentic dishes from countries like Thailand, Vietnam, Malaysia, Japan, Korea and more. Family-friendly and vibrant festival atmosphere.

Link: <https://asiaoasis.com.au/by-the-sea-2026/>



YOUR VOICE MATTERS!

We'd love to hear from you! Share your family traditions, favourite recipes, or special cultural stories so we can feature them in next month's edition.

📌 Callout for ideas:

- Tell us how your family celebrates!
- Share your recipe or story for next month's edition.
- Email us at macsa@mac.org.au with your ideas.

Subscribe here to receive our monthly newsletters:

<https://mac.org.au/contact/>

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