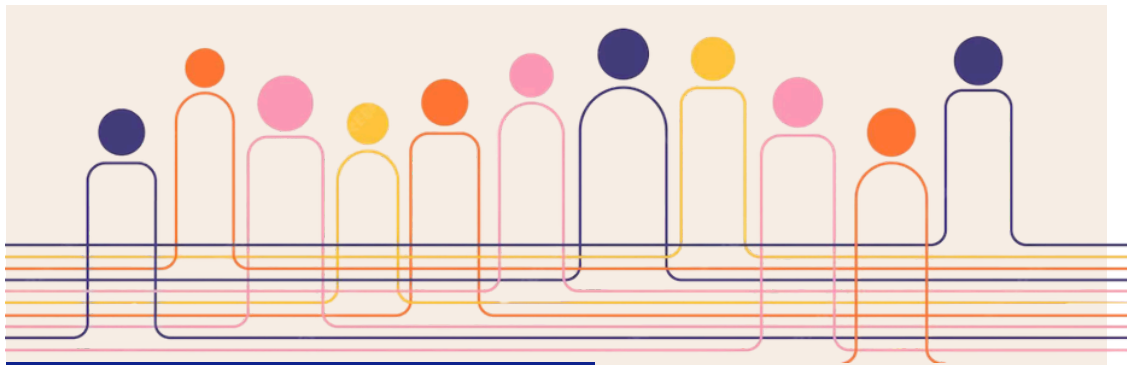


WELCOME TO OUR MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

CULTURAL INTELLIGENCE IN AGED CARE



Welcome to the May edition

This month, we celebrate the rich diversity of cultures, traditions, and community connections that strengthen inclusive aged care.

Across many communities, May is a time to recognise family, belonging, wellbeing, and the importance of caring for one another with compassion and respect.

In this edition, we explore cultural celebrations and traditions observed throughout May and share practical ways services can create meaningful and culturally inclusive activities for older people from diverse backgrounds.

We also highlight the importance of healthy ageing and share inspiring ideas that encourage active, connected, and healthy living at every stage of life.

In addition, this edition acknowledges the value of compassionate, culturally responsive care and meaningful conversations that honour dignity, choice, and connection.

We hope this newsletter inspires reflection, learning, and new ideas to support culturally inclusive practices across aged care communities.

IN THIS NEWSLETTER:

- A snapshot of cultural celebrations
- 1 May Celebrations in Greece are known as, May Day, Πρωτομαγιά (Protomagιά)
- National Healthy Ageing Day - May 6
- Healthy Ageing in CALD Communities: Keeping Culture, Connection and What Matters Most
- Living Life to the Fullest: Linda Fluhart's Healthy Ageing Journey
- National Palliative Care Week (10–16 May 2026)
- Mental Health Awareness Month
- Resource Spotlight - Multicultural calendar 2026
- Resource Spotlight - Library
- Your voice matters - More information!

How to Use This Newsletter:

- ✓ For frontline staff
- ✓ For managers
- ✓ For volunteers
- ✓ For community members

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Multicultural
Aged Care

A SNAPSHOT OF CULTURAL CELEBRATIONS

Vesak Day (Buddhist Festival)- 1 May

Vesak is one of the most important days in Buddhism, marking the birth, enlightenment, and passing of the Buddha. It is a time for reflection, compassion, and peaceful living.

Activity Ideas:

- Create a calm meditation or reflection space
- Make lotus flower crafts using paper or fabric
- Share simple teachings about kindness and compassion
- Encourage acts of kindness within the group



Cinco de Mayo - 5 May

Cinco de Mayo commemorates a historic Mexican victory and is widely celebrated as a day to honour Mexican culture, heritage, and resilience.

Activity Ideas:

- Host a colourful cultural day with music and decorations
- Play Latin music and encourage gentle movement or dancing
- Offer a food tasting experience (if suitable)
- Share fun cultural facts or short videos

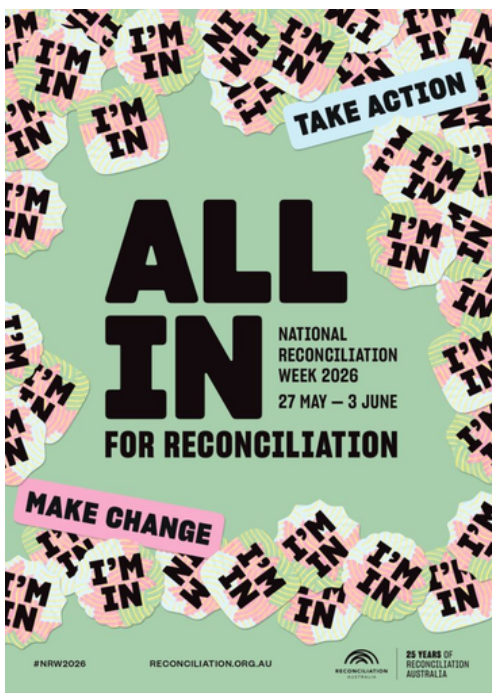
A SNAPSHOT OF CULTURAL CELEBRATIONS

Ascension Day - 14 May

Ascension Day marks the ascension of Jesus Christ into heaven, observed 40 days after Easter. It is significant in Christian traditions as a symbol of hope and spiritual connection.

Activity Ideas:

- Play uplifting music or hymns
- Facilitate a gentle group discussion on hope and meaning
- Create art inspired by sky, light, and nature
- Offer a quiet reflection or prayer moment



National Reconciliation Week (27 May – 3 June)

A significant time in Australia to reflect on shared histories and strengthen relationships between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and non-Indigenous Australians.

Activity Ideas:

- Begin with an Acknowledgement of Country
- Share First Nations stories, art, or music
- Create a group artwork using Aboriginal flag colours
- Host a yarning circle or storytelling session
- Encourage learning about local Aboriginal culture

1 May Celebrations in Greece are known as, May Day, Πρωτομαγιά (Protomagιά)

Πρωτομαγιά (Protomagιά) is a public holiday in Greece, combining 2 celebrations: firstly, Labour Day celebrations; workers' rights, dignity of labour, and social justice, celebrated with marches and rallies secondly, a celebration of Spring and Nature, with roots in ancient Greek traditions celebrating renewal and fertility, May Day, Πρωτομαγιά.

Families spend the day in the countryside, villages and parks welcoming Spring. People collect wildflowers and make wreaths called Μαγιάτικο Στεφάνι which are hung on doors, windows and balconies, symbolising health, protection and good fortune.

As a first-generation child, this day is still talked about each year with touching stories by my parents and extended family. A time of remembering their childhood memories of their village life, the excitement of wildflower collecting, wreath making and of course families and communities celebrating together with shared food and drinks.

Vicki Kanakaris



National Healthy Ageing Day – May 6

National Healthy Ageing Day, held annually on 6 May in Australia, is a growing national initiative led by iLA to encourage people to focus on living well as they age. More than just a health awareness day, it represents a shift in how ageing is understood—moving away from decline and dependency, and toward strength, independence, and meaningful living.

A New Approach to Ageing

At the heart of National Healthy Ageing Day is the message that healthy ageing is about living well, not just living longer.

The 2026 theme, “Keep doing what matters,” highlights the importance of maintaining the activities, relationships, and routines that give life purpose. Whether it’s spending time with loved ones, continuing a hobby, or staying involved in the community, healthy ageing focuses on enabling people to keep doing what they value most.

This approach recognises that ageing well doesn’t require dramatic changes. Instead, it is built on small, everyday actions that support wellbeing, confidence, and independence.

Turning Awareness into Action

National Healthy Ageing Day is not just about awareness—it’s about action. It encourages individuals, families, communities, and organisations to take simple steps that support long-term wellbeing.

For individuals, this might mean:

- Going for a daily walk
- Reconnecting with friends or joining a social group
- Trying a new hobby or learning opportunity

For organisations and community groups, it is an opportunity to:

- Promote inclusive, age-friendly activities
- Support social connection and participation
- Embed wellbeing and independence into programs and services

Activities and promotional resources to support healthy ageing.

Source: <https://www.ilaustralia.org.au/healthy-ageing-day>

Healthy Ageing in CALD Communities: Keeping Culture, Connection and What Matters Most

Healthy ageing means more than maintaining physical health—it is about continuing to live a meaningful, connected life. For people from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities, this includes staying connected to culture, language, traditions, and community networks that shape identity and wellbeing.

Aligned with the message of National Healthy Ageing Day on 6 May, led by iLA, the focus on “keeping what matters most” is especially relevant in multicultural settings. What matters most can look different for everyone. For many older people from CALD backgrounds, it may include speaking their first language, participating in cultural or faith-based practices, preparing traditional foods, or maintaining strong family connections.

Why Culture Matters in Healthy Ageing

Culture plays a vital role in how people experience ageing. It influences values, beliefs, daily routines, and how care and support are understood. When these cultural elements are recognised and supported, older people are more likely to feel respected, safe, and connected.

Maintaining cultural identity can:

- Strengthen emotional wellbeing and sense of belonging
- Reduce social isolation and loneliness
- Support cognitive health through familiar routines and language
- Build trust and engagement with aged care and community services



Healthy Ageing in CALD Communities: Keeping Culture, Connection and What Matters Most

Supporting Healthy Ageing in CALD Communities

Healthy ageing in multicultural communities is supported through simple, culturally responsive approaches that enable people to continue doing what matters most.

This can include:

- Encouraging social connection through community groups, cultural gatherings, and intergenerational activities
- Supporting language and communication needs, including access to bilingual staff or translated information
- Incorporating cultural practices into daily routines, such as food preferences, celebrations, and spiritual practices
- Promoting physical and mental wellbeing through inclusive and accessible activities

The Role of Services and Communities

Aged care providers and community organisations play a key role in creating inclusive environments where diversity is respected and celebrated. Small actions—such as learning about cultural preferences, adapting activities, or engaging with families—can have a significant impact on a person’s quality of life.

Providing culturally safe and inclusive care is not an “extra”—it is essential to supporting dignity, independence, and wellbeing.

Moving Forward Together

As Australia’s population becomes increasingly diverse, healthy ageing must reflect the needs and experiences of all communities. **National Healthy Ageing Day** is a reminder that ageing well is a shared responsibility—one that involves individuals, families, communities, and services working together.

By recognising the importance of culture, connection, and identity, we can support older people from CALD backgrounds to age with confidence, dignity, and purpose—continuing to live the lives that matter most to them.

LIVING LIFE TO THE FULLEST:

Linda Fluhart's Healthy Ageing Journey



At 91 years old and turning 92 this July, Linda Fluhart is a shining example of healthy ageing in action. Full of energy, compassion, and positivity, Linda proudly describes herself as “a busy girl” — and her weekly routine certainly proves it.

Born in Miri, Linda comes from a rich multicultural background. Her mother was Filipino and her father was British, and she moved to Australia when she was 10 years old.

Staying active has always been an important part of Linda's life. Every Wednesday is her dedicated self-care day, where she enjoys playing golf and spending time outdoors. She also loves swimming and dancing and regularly keeps up her fitness with exercise classes. On Fridays, Linda spends 30 minutes at the gym followed by a 30-minute Zumba class, and on Saturdays she returns for another Zumba session. Every other Monday, she joins the Heart Foundation walking group, and each year she proudly participates in the City-Bay walk.

Alongside her active lifestyle, Linda is deeply committed to helping others. On Tuesdays and Thursdays, she volunteers her time in the community, something she truly enjoys. Whether it is supporting neighbours, helping friends, or simply checking in on people who may need company, Linda has a caring nature and always looks for ways to make a difference in someone's day.

Sundays are usually her quieter days, spent visiting family or friends living in nursing homes. She believes staying socially connected is just as important as staying physically active. Linda also enjoys travelling and embracing new experiences. Recently, she travelled to France and England to celebrate her grandniece's wedding, creating special memories with loved ones overseas.

For Linda, healthy ageing is about more than exercise — it is about staying engaged with life, maintaining friendships, giving back to the community, and continuing to do the things she loves. As she prepares to celebrate her 92nd birthday, Linda continues to inspire those around her with her enthusiasm, kindness, and active approach to life.

NATIONAL PALLIATIVE CARE WEEK

(10–16 May 2026)

National Palliative Care Week is Australia’s largest annual awareness campaign dedicated to improving understanding of palliative care and encouraging open conversations about end-of-life care. Led by Palliative Care Australia, the 2026 campaign runs from 10–16 May and invites all Australians to reflect on what matters most.

This year’s theme, “Getting to the heart of it: Big Questions. Real Answers,” focuses on breaking down misconceptions and making palliative care easier to understand through honest conversations and clear, compassionate information

Key Messages for 2026- the campaign highlights three important messages:

- Living well, your way – focusing on comfort, dignity, and what matters most to the individual
- Conversation changes everything – early discussions help reduce uncertainty and support better decision-making
- The heart of care – care should be personal, respectful, and centred on the person and their family

A CALD Perspective

For people from CALD communities, conversations about illness, death, and dying can be influenced by cultural beliefs, language, and family roles. Some cultures may avoid direct discussions about death, while others place strong emphasis on collective decision-making or spiritual practices.

Culturally responsive palliative care means:

- Respecting cultural values, beliefs, and traditions
- Supporting communication in a person’s preferred language
- Involving family and community in care decisions
- Recognising spiritual and cultural practices at end of life
- Creating safe spaces for these conversations is essential to ensuring that care is respectful, inclusive, and aligned with what matters most to each individual.



NATIONAL PALLIATIVE CARE WEEK

(10–16 May 2026)



Turning Conversations into Action

National Palliative Care Week encourages everyone—individuals, families, and organisations—to start conversations that are often delayed or avoided. Simple actions can include:

- Talking with loved ones about wishes and preferences
- Learning more about palliative care services
- Encouraging culturally inclusive approaches in care settings
- Supporting community awareness and education initiatives

Moving Forward

Palliative care is not just about dying—it is about living well, right to the end of life. By asking questions, sharing experiences, and breaking down stigma, we can create a more compassionate and informed community.

It reminds us that these conversations matter—and that by getting to the heart of it, we can ensure care that is respectful, meaningful, and centred on what truly matters most.

Source: <https://palliativecare.org.au/>



Resources from MAC:

Join us for The Community of Practice (CoP) Palliative Care – CALD Perspectives

This forum brings together professionals to share knowledge, build capacity, and support culturally responsive palliative care practice.

Recording of MAC National Symposium – 7 November 2024:

Palliative Care with a Focus on Dementia – Research, Innovations and Best Practice

Recording of Diversity in Palliative Care webinar

Recording of Culture in Ageing (CiA) Workshop

- PART 1: Caring Together: Family, Dignity, and Quality at the Heart of Palliative Care
12 Nov 2025
- PART 2: Voices from the Field: Exploring Real Experiences & Scenarios in Palliative Care
6 May 2025

Mental Health Awareness Month

Mental Health Awareness Month has been observed in May in the United States since 1949. Mental Health Awareness Month is an important time to raise awareness about mental health and wellbeing, encourage open conversations, and reduce stigma around mental illness. It highlights the importance of emotional connection, resilience, and support across all ages, including older people in aged care. Communities and services can support this month by promoting social connection, meaningful activities, and access to information that helps people maintain positive mental wellbeing and seek help when needed.

Supportive mental health resources:

[Supporting Emotional Wellness in Aged Care \(SEW\) – Relationships Australia](#)

[Digital Mental Health for Older Australians](#)

[You're not alone: Support for loneliness and isolation](#)



MAC National Symposium - Save the Date!

We're pleased to announce our upcoming MAC National Symposium on 23 June, focusing on mental health, wellbeing, and grief management. Further details will be confirmed soon.

Stay tuned for updates here:

[MAC National Symposium – Grief Management](#)

In the meantime, you can explore recordings from our previous symposium series:

[MAC Symposium Series Recordings](#)

We look forward to having you join us for another meaningful and insightful event.

RESOURCE SPOTLIGHT

MULTICULTURAL CALENDAR 2026

Multicultural Calendar 2026

Legend:
National public holiday (Yellow)
State and Territory public holiday (Green)

Notes:
*Dates in June and October months start at sunset the previous evening.
*Dates may vary from what is listed.
Information contained within this document was correct at the time of publication.

Logos:
QR code, PICAC alliance, Multicultural Aged Care logo.

Text:
Centre of Excellence In Cultural Diversity and Inclusion

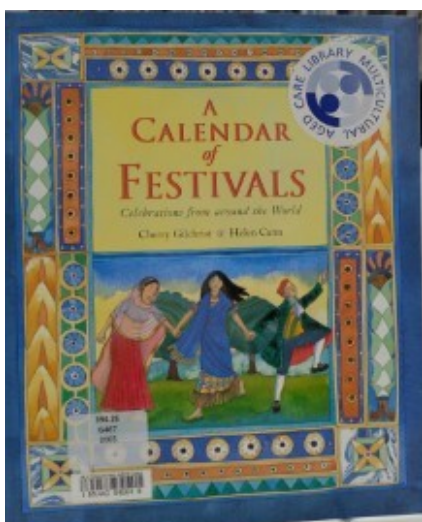
Introducing the Multicultural Calendar, your essential tool for embracing diversity and inclusion year-round! This comprehensive calendar is a vibrant tapestry of dates, celebrating various Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) events throughout the year. It's designed for anyone working with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

[Download our Multicultural Calendar 2026 here](#)

RESOURCE SPOTLIGHT

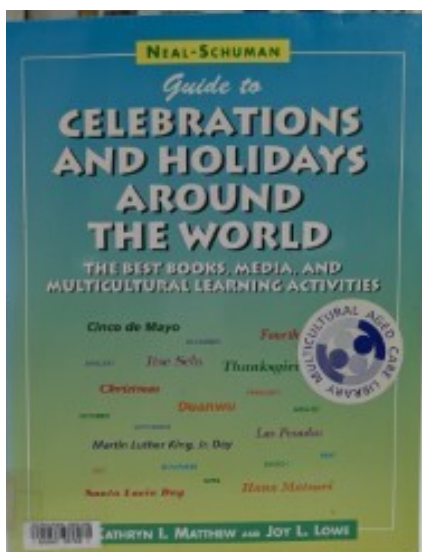
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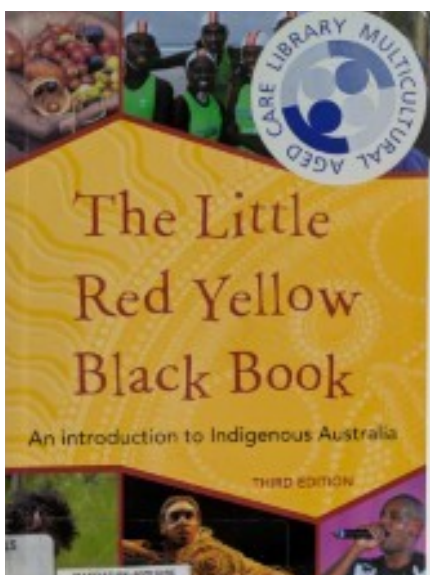
A calendar of festivals: celebrations from around the world. Cherry Gilchrist and Helen Cann

You can find stories about Krishna, Buddha, and Jesus in this book. These festivals bring the religious stories alive and remind us of the important truths that we often forget when we are busy with our everyday lives. In our modern world, where we usually live in small family groups, it's especially important to share our festivals and celebrate together. I hope these stories will help you to enjoy your own festivals and learn about new ones too!



Guide to Celebrations and Holidays around the world: the best books, media, and multicultural learning activities. By Kathryn I. Matthew and Joy L. Lowe

The authors have produced an equally comprehensive handbook containing the best materials, insights, and suggestions for teaching children about holidays celebrated throughout the world. Grouped by month, and with chapters on year-round special events, this innovative and easy-to-use guide provides grade-specific advice on books, media, and activities that allow children to learn how people of various nationalities and religions celebrate holidays. This valuable multicultural education tool can be used in libraries and classrooms to engage every child in discussing the rich varieties of tradition around the world.



The Little Red Yellow Black Book: an introduction to Indigenous Australia. (Third edition) Written by Bruce Pascoe with AIATSIS.

This book is the perfect starting point for those who want to know about Australia's rich Indigenous cultures, but don't know where to begin. It is the third edition of a popular book, and the many illustrations, attractive design and accessible writing make this book an invaluable pocket-sized guide.

It's written from an indigenous perspective, with mini-essays providing a range of views. The topics covered include history, culture, arts, sport, languages, population, health, participation in education and the workforce, governance, resistance and reconciliation.

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.

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