



The Voice of Multicultural Victoria

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A newsletter for multicultural older people, produced by the Ethnic Communities' Council of Victoria, supported by the Victorian Government. Print post approved pp 328866/2055

Our Golden Years

A welcome from the editor

Dear Our Golden Years Readers

Welcome to the 2019 spring edition of *Our Golden Years*.

This edition includes articles about where to get assistance with utilities bills, the Multicultural Active Seniors Festival in Braybrook, and the Southern Migrant and Refugee Centre Ethnic Seniors' Leadership Forum that took place on 17 September.

Please contact ECCV if you would like to include an article of your groups' activities in the next edition of *Our Golden Years*.

Nikolaus Rittinghausen, *Editor*

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Michael Theophilus Masimbira, May 2017 (Source: HelloPoetry.com)

African Dawn

*Golden
Magnificent
Emboldening
Transcending
Emerging and engaging
Merging and integrating
I see my Africa
Rising as the sun
Ascending
After a seemingly endless night*

*Propelled by the rising sun
I glimpse the eclipse in the horizon
Compelled by the morning songs
of the African birds
I spread my wings ready
to fly like an eagle
Dark clouds dissipating
giving way to light
Just as I was anticipating
it's time to fly
To freely fly in the blue sky
Without treacherous clouds
threatening my graceful flight*

*Hovering in the heavens
Visualizing all inhabitants
Working towards one goal
As I play my spirit given role

Happy and at peace
I sing the African song
You have blessed the sun
Now in light, I swim
You have reduced the darkness
Now my light prevails

Development is imminent
Upon the African Continent*

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Assistance with Utilities Bills

If you are finding it hard to pay your electricity, gas or water bills, there is help available.

Under new regulations introduced this year, energy companies must help customers who are having difficulty paying their bills. By law, your energy retailer cannot disconnect you without first contacting you to discuss payment options. They must help you to find ways to lower your energy costs and advise you of the types of assistance that are available.



Concessions

If you hold a *Pensioner Concession Card*, *Health Care Card*, or a *Veteran's Affairs Concession Card* or *Gold Card*, you are likely to be entitled to concessions on your bills. Contact your energy retailer to make sure you receive your concession entitlements.

Victorian Default Offer

From 1 July 2019, the Victorian Government has set a fair price for electricity called the *Victorian Default Offer (VDO)*. If you believe that your electricity is unreasonably expensive, call your retailer and ask if the VDO will be cheaper. If it is, just ask them to switch you over to it.

Grants

If unexpected hardship makes it difficult for you to pay a bill, you can request financial assistance through the *Utility Relief Grants Scheme*. If eligible, you can receive grants of up to \$650 in a two-year period for each of electricity, gas and water.

Tell your energy retailer if you would like to apply for a grant, or call the Concessions Information Line for assistance on 1800 658 521.

Who Can Help You?

- The National Debt Helpline is a not-for-profit service offering free, independent and confidential financial counselling. You can call them on 1800 007 007 for advice.
- If you have lodged a complaint with your energy company and it cannot be resolved, the Energy and Water Ombudsman of Victoria (EWOV) can help you to reach a resolution. Call them for free on 1800 500 509 or if you would like to use their interpreter service call 131 450.



For more information, please contact ECCV Policy Officer, James Houghton, on 9112 5020.



FREE
FAMILY-FRIENDLY EVENT

MULTICULTURAL *Active Seniors Festival*

An open day event with a range of
FREE activities for seniors to try!

29 October

10:30 AM - 2:30 PM

RecWest

39 LILY ST, BRAYBROOK

CULTURAL DANCING • PRIZES

Senior Archery • Walking Sports • Rock 'n' Roll • Tai Chi

Plus **plenty of food** options and **spot prizes** including
merchandise from our sponsors – **Western Bulldogs.**

For more information, please contact:

Linzee Gordon - linzee.gordon@amcservices.org.au

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Seniors Leaders are bridge builders between the community and public institutions

The Ethnic Seniors' Leadership Forum on 17 September in Keysborough has brought together seniors, community organisations, service providers, and representatives from local, State, and Federal government to celebrate cultural diversity, strengthen community networks, and inform people about access to services.

Victorian seniors from the South Eastern metro region participated in Ethnic Seniors Leadership Forum, that was facilitated by the Southern and Migrant and Refugee Centre in partnership with the City of Greater Dandenong, the City of Casey, Monash Health and the Ethnic Communities' Council of Victoria.

The Ethnic Seniors Leadership Forum was an informative and entertaining event that included:

- Speeches by the Minister for Ageing, the Hon Luke Donnellan, and the CEO of the Southern and Migrant and Refugee Centre, Ramesh Kumar
- Cultural and dance performances
- Federal government and service provider information about navigating aged care services
- Acknowledgment of the contribution of Seniors' Leaders
- Stalls by organisations to exhibit information.

Ramesh Kumar from the Southern Migrant and Refugee Centre pointedly alluded to the key role that multicultural seniors' leaders play: "Your experience of seniors' leaders matter a lot, you are bridge to the community." It has been the third year that ECCV has supported the Ethnic Seniors' Leadership Forum.

Nikolaus Rittinghausen,
Golden Editor

