

A PLACE CALLED



**Term 1
March 2020**

Message from President

I would like to acknowledge and thank all of our staff and volunteers whose efforts have ensured we have been able to maintain a safe, productive and welcoming environment at LMCC this term, despite the atmosphere of fear and uncertainty posed by the coronavirus pandemic. In addition to their usual duties, Klaudia, Cindy and Neven have had a number of additional tasks thrust upon them to ensure that our regular classes and activities could go ahead as usual, including contacting all class members and volunteers to inform them of the delayed start to classes; monitoring the fluctuating numbers of students and contacting absentees; filling in for absent tutors; maintaining the supply of hand sanitizers and cleaning items, and working alongside our team of volunteers to wipe down the tables and chairs in the classrooms after every session! We especially need to thank our volunteer tutors who have maintained their enthusiasm and commitment throughout the term; turning up for class every week to provide their class members with a stimulating and inclusive learning program, despite the dishearteningly low numbers.

Despite all these efforts, the attendance rate at classes has hovered around the 40% mark over the first four weeks, before taking a dive in the past two weeks since the global pandemic was declared and further travel and quarantine restrictions were introduced.

In the final weeks of term, the Committee of Management has had to make some hard decisions about how to proceed for the rest of the year, in the face of the increasing threat of the COVID-19 pandemic to our staff, students and volunteers. There will be even more challenges that have forced us to consider whether or not we should remain open for classes:

- the duty of care that we owe to all members of our LMCC community, especially those volunteers, staff and students in the “highly vulnerable” category for infection and serious illness;
- the official advice that, in order to avoid infection, we should all practise social distancing and voluntary isolation; and
- increasing pressure for workplaces, schools, churches, theatres – any venue which brings groups of people together in a confined space for a lengthy period of time – to close, to reduce the rate of infection.

In addition, Whitehorse City Council has announced that Box Hill Town Hall will be closed to the public from Tuesday, March 24 until further notice so there will no access to LMCC for visitors and students.

After extensive discussion, the Committee of Management cannot see any alternative than to **suspend LMCC classes and activities from Tuesday, March 24 until the week beginning Monday, May 4.**

Our reluctance to suspend classes for a longer period at this stage stems from our recognition that visiting LMCC is an important source of social interaction and community involvement for some of our more isolated clients. So, while LMCC classes and activities are suspended, we are planning to maintain ongoing contact with class participants through phone and electronic media. We are hoping to be able to conduct some classes online and to establish a “phone tree” whereby volunteers or students will make regular phone-calls to other students or volunteers to check on their wellbeing, pass on information and “just call for a chat”. If you would be willing to be part of this “telephone tree”, please contact Cindy on 0423 910 278 or programs@louise.org.au or Klaudia on 0411 125 091 or manager@louise.org.au

Meanwhile, I want to thank you all – staff, volunteers, committee members and students – for your support and involvement at LMCC over this past somewhat challenging term and leave you with this message: We are all inter-connected. As members of the LMCC community, look after yourselves, your loved ones and everyone else by doing your best to avoid infection. And please stay in touch with us here at LMCC if you need support, information or just to hear a friendly voice.

-Jennie Seddon

Caryl Rowan's Advanced English Class

Ours is a very sociable group of people from varied nations and cultures. It is not unusual for words and phrases that we hear or read in our own week take over what our teacher may have planned for the class. Some words we don't feel happy to use again, this we know to when our teacher gets a bit embarrassed to explain it to us!

So many times there are words that sound similar to others but have many different meanings e.g.: saw, soar, sore, sew and sow. We also read and discuss issues that play a part on our daily lives, for example Post Office and Postal Box hours, insurance, fines, hiring trades people, issues with neighbours, describing issues to doctors and making ourselves understood in phone conversations.

Grammar also plays a valued part in our class discussions as well as learning about famous people and the history of Australia and its customs. Our valued discussions and topics are all interwoven with learning and laughter! (Caryl Rowan and students)



Would like to be on LMCC's Phone Tree?

LMCC is hoping to establish a "phone tree. If you would like to speak to other LMCC volunteers or students to check on their well-being, pass on information or just chat. Or if you would like to be the recipient of the phone call.

Please contact:

Cindy 0423 910 278 or programs@louise.org.au;
 Neven 0422 391 921 or info@louise.org.au;
 Klaudia 0411 125 091 or manager@louise.org.au



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Mon–Fri: 9.00am-4:00pm

www.louise.org.au