Thousands turned out to get a taste of local Pacific Island culture at the first ever Pasifika Festival in July. The event featured dance, food, craft and cultural activities from a wide range of islands, including the Torres Strait, Samoa, NZ Maori, Cook Islands, Solomon Island, Vanuatu, Fiji, Tonga, Tokelau, Niue, Kirabati, Thursday Islands and more. Representatives from the local traditional owners were also in attendance. It was a great event which will be held again next year. The project received funding through the Regional Arts Development Fund, a partnership between the Queensland Government and Mackay Regional Council to assist with lighting, sound and the purchase of flags. Congratulations to all the community associations involved and to the Mackay Host Lions Pacific Island Community for their work coordinating and organising.
A message from our Mayor Deirdre Comerford

It gives me great pleasure to welcome you to the September edition of Migrant Voice.

One of my favourite events of the year is Global Grooves. The event will take place on Saturday October 24 from 12-8pm at Queens Park and it is our region’s largest multicultural event.

Global Grooves gives residents the opportunity to experience and celebrate a wide range of cultures in their own backyard.

I would like to encourage the whole community to come along to this fun, family-friendly event and enjoy the authentic food, music, performances, market stalls and cultural activities on offer.

I am grateful to live in a community that supports multicultural events and initiatives and I hope you enjoy reading this edition of Migrant Voice.

Cr Deirdre Comerford

Many of Mackay’s multicultural community members (including the Maltese Association who are pictured above) have contributed to the development of the UPon the Levee Wall community mural project, near Paxton’s Warehouse on River Street.

The mural visually tells the story of Mackay’s river port settlement, from the original Indigenous inhabitants to early European settlement, the ‘blackbirding’/introduction of South Sea Islanders to the region, other waves of migration, immigration and early industry through to modern-day Mackay. It incorporates a “river of text” and images depicting Mackay’s river port settlement history and was officially unveiled at a night market on August 28.

It is wonderful to see many languages and cultures woven into this artwork - we encourage you to go and have a look!

Levee wall mural unveiled

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Japanese students visit

Sister Cities Mackay and Mackay Regional Council welcomed a group of 15 Japanese students and two chaperones as part of the annual Mackay-Matsuura student exchange program.

The students and chaperones spent seven days exploring the region in August. The trip was an opportunity for the visitors to gain a better understanding of the Australian lifestyle and culture and during their stay they visited some of the region’s most iconic and beautiful locations. Students also had the opportunity to spend some time at a number of local schools where they met other students and experienced what life is like in an Australian classroom.

Date Claimers

Brown Sugar Festival
Date: Sunday, September 27
Time: 2pm Street Parade, 3pm start at Mackay Showgrounds
A celebration of Australian South Sea Islander culture. Free entry with market stalls and more!

Fiji Day
Date: Saturday, October 10
Time: 11am to 5pm
Where: Queens Park, Mackay
A family fun day open to all combining traditional food, dance and music with games and activities. Organised by the Fiji Association Mackay Region.

Global Grooves Multicultural Festival
Date: Saturday, October 24
Time: Noon to 8pm
Where: Queens Park Mackay
A free one-day open-air event. We encourage all of the Mackay region to travel the globe in a day!
Indonesian Independence

August 17 marked the 70th anniversary of Indonesian Independence and Mackay’s Indonesian community came out to celebrate. The day remembers when President Sukarno declared independence following the Japanese occupation during the Second World War ending Dutch control of the archipelago. Local Indonesians and their families and friends celebrated with songs, food, fun and some fantastic games at John Breen Park, North Mackay. It was a wonderful day and congratulations to all who contributed to making the day a success.

More than $6000 raised for Nepal

A big congratulations to the Mackay Nepalese Association and other members of the local Nepalese community, including some Nepalese Mackay Regional Council staff, who came together and raised $6232 for earthquake relief. The devastating 7.9 magnitude earthquake hit on April 25 and the effects are still being felt across the country. Well done to the community for their efforts, which included a friendly cricket match fundraiser, dumpling sales, a raffle and more.

Mackay Filipino Australian Society

Congratulations to the Mackay & District Italian Association who partnered up with city centre eateries Burp and The Dispensary to bring Mackay a “Taste of Little Italy”, the first Italian Street Party in Mackay.

The event was held on August 29 as part of the Twilight City Festival. Visitors enjoyed exquisite Italian food and wines, listened and danced to traditional music played by a professional accordion player, and mingled with the Italian community in Mackay. What a wonderful way to celebrate our local Italian community!

The Mackay Filipino Australian Society has had a busy couple of months. The Filipino Ambassador to Australia Belen F Anota came to Mackay for Philippine Independence Day in June, enjoying lunch with members of the community at Silver Bird restaurant (pictured), attending Sunday Mass at St Francis Church and an open forum at Victoria Park State School Gym.

The new committee was sworn in by Federal Member George Christensen in July and has been busy with activities. The first Filipino movie night at Birch Carrol and Coyle cinemas had more than 200 people attend and more movie nights are planned for the rest of the year. The Association’s first ever Sports Fest Family Fun Day at Victoria Park State School was also a huge hit and included competitions in basketball, volleyball, chess, sack race and tug-of-war.

The Association would like to thank everyone involved, including Edwin and Dory Nones, Edna de Guzman, Joy Mendoza, Art Clemente, Lexer Legazpi, Dany Delfin, Lou Shaw, Edith Heaney, Tony dela Cruz, Eroll Barrios, Jenny Bulaong, Adelfa Bajamundi, Sarah Almirez, Joel Almirez, Donny Sevalla, Reggie Hidalgo, Jun Santiago and Roberto Juani.
What’s on at George Street Neighbourhood Centre?

World Cafe
Do you want to meet people, make new friends while practicing your English and learning about different cultures? Come along to this free group where we do lots of activities like conversational games, cooking, craft and learning about the community. Contact: 4957 2626
When: Every Tuesday from 10.30am-12pm
Where: George Street Neighbourhood Centre Shed

Migrant Settlement Program
George Street Neighbourhood Centre offers free support to eligible migrants who have arrived in the last five years. This includes information about making appointments, English classes, driving, health services, schools, childcare, renting and more.
Contact: 4957 7222

Multicultural Playgroup
When: Fridays from 9.30am to 11.30am
Where: Shakespeare Child and Family Centre, 43 Shakespeare St. Cost: $3 Contact: 4957 7222

Multicultural Homework Club
When: Monday-Tuesday from 3.15pm to 4.15pm
Contact: 4957 7222 or multi@georgestreetnc.org.au

Community English Group (CEG)
The CEG is a group of Certificate II Written and Spoken English students that comes together to speak, read and listen to English in an informal setting. Child minding available
When: Wed (6pm-7pm) and Fri (10am-11am)
Where: Shakespeare Child and Family Centre, 43 Shakespeare St Contact: Kelly 4957 2626

Free English Classes
Did you know CQU’s Adult Migrant English Program (AMEP) provides up to 510 hours of free English language tuition to eligible migrants and humanitarian entrants?
Contact Alex at CQU on a.page@cqu.edu.au or 4940 3380 for more information about the course and eligibility requirements.

Helpful Links
For a full list of local Migration Agents and English Language Services visit the Settling in Mackay page at www.mackay.qld.gov.au - or contact council’s Multicultural Community Development Officer on 4961 9596.