

Midwest Multicultural Association Inc



Festival of Lights 2023 Report



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Facebook: [Midwest Multicultural Association | Facebook](#)

Overview

The Midwest Multicultural Association Inc (MWMA)'s overarching aim is to promote and celebrate the rich cultural diversity in the Midwest region of Western Australia.

From small beginnings in 2008 the volunteers of the MWMA have developed:

- ❖ English as a Second Language (ESL) classes held weekly during school terms
- ❖ Harmony Festival held annually in March
- ❖ Festival of Lights held annually in November
- ❖ Multicultural concert held during Seniors Week celebrations in November

The Festival of Lights 2023, an accessible, family focused, free, cultural community celebration, was held at the Geraldton Multipurpose Centre, Stow Gardens, Geraldton on Saturday 4 November 2023.

The celebrations showcased multicultural music and performances by 19 local individuals and groups who supported the internationally acclaimed headline act ZAP Circus. In the lead up to the festival, ZAP Circus facilitated resilience and team building workshops, as extra-curricular activities, with ninety (90) primary school students at three schools considered to be in low socio-economic areas.

Team building continued at the festival with members of Fusion encouraging the crowd to 'keep the large ball in the air'. The young and the young at heart eagerly participated and after several practice runs were able to keep the ball afloat for over four minutes.

A recommendation from the 2022 Festival of Lights was successfully instigated with the creation of two 'Worlds':

- ❖ **Watoto (Kids) World** with pony rides, face painting, hover archery, bouncy castles, animal riders alongside workshop creating lanterns, making tea light stands from CDs with the new addition of the Teddy Bear & Doll hospital which had student nurses teaching basic first aid to pre-teens was a great success.
- ❖ **Remaja (Teens) World** with wheelchair basketball, silent disco and Fusion team activities caught the attention of teenagers. The silent disco had over 400 participants over the four hours of operation. At one time parents and their children were seen to be enjoying this novel activity together.

The main event space, decorated with cultural flags, was encircled by easily accessible cultural food and craft/gift stalls.



Birdlife Midwest – Geraldton celebrated '*Welcome to shore birds*' with a massive globe of the world to demonstrate the travel paths birds follow from Europe and Asia to nest along the west coast of WA during October/November. The birds return to their homelands early in the new year.



With representatives from more than sixty different cultures in the Midwest, the 2023 Festival of Lights emphasised and celebrated the rich cultural diversity of the Midwest region.

The Midwest Multicultural Association acknowledges the separate Indian community celebration of *Diwali* which is held at a similar time of the year.



- Stalls**
- ❖ Amenah Satay House
 - ❖ Australian Navy Cadets
 - ❖ Big Softy Ice Cream Vans Geraldton
 - ❖ Consulate General of India
 - ❖ Islamic Association Geraldton
 - ❖ Jodie Bradley Photography
 - ❖ Kitty Boyes Book author
 - ❖ Lickety Sticks Artisan Icy Pops
 - ❖ Marijke Travasso
 - ❖ Nimble Fingers
 - ❖ OMG Decadent Donuts
 - ❖ Remi's French Street Food
 - ❖ Scentsy
 - ❖ Tacos Loco
 - ❖ Talbot's Fairy Floss
 - ❖ Wandina Primary School P & C
 - ❖ Warda Hand Henna



Watoto (Kids) World

- ❖ Animal Riders
- ❖ Bouncy castles (for under 6 & over 6)
- ❖ Face Painting Magic
- ❖ Fairy Deb
- ❖ Hop Upon A Pony
- ❖ Hover Archery (Woorree Scout Group)
- ❖ Old MacDonald's Travelling Farm

Remaja (Teens) World

- ❖ Fusion Team Activities
- ❖ Wheelchair Basketball (Atlas)
- ❖ Silent Disco

Activities

Workshops

- ❖ Scrapbook House (Lantern making)
- ❖ Teddy Bear & Doll Hospital (WACHR trainee nurses)
- ❖ Ngala (Family support group) (Colouring in and games)
- ❖ Lara Dalton MLA Team (Making a black light with mobile)
- ❖ The Geraldton Project (Recycling CDs)
- ❖ Shine Today (Facepainting) Girl's education support program



Entertainers

- ❖ All Things Dance
- ❖ Batavia Marching Team
- ❖ Batavia Rockers
- ❖ Bluff Point Primary School Dance & Singing Groups
- ❖ Carly Markham Music
- ❖ Chung Wan Chinese School Midwest
- ❖ David Stinson
- ❖ Fusion
- ❖ Geraldton Bootscooters
- ❖ Geraldton Mabuhay Cultural Association
- ❖ Geraldton Yoga Club
- ❖ Hari Kumar
- ❖ Hawariyun (Malay Drumming Group)
- ❖ Karloo Rockers
- ❖ Melanie Brimson
- ❖ Midwest African Association
- ❖ Midwest Community Fusion Belly Dancers (Adults)
- ❖ Midwest Community Fusion Belly Dancers: Belly Sparkles & Super Novas
- ❖ Natthamon Weber & Saracha Leighton (Thai Community)
- ❖ Natya Classical & Bollywood School of Dance - Adults
- ❖ Natya Classical & Bollywood School of Dance - Kids
- ❖ Pesona Indonesia
- ❖ Todd Gray
- ❖ ZAP Circus

Volunteer Groups

- ❖ Australian Navy Cadets
- ❖ Midwest African Association
- ❖ Midwest Multicultural Association
- ❖ Sun City Youth Leaders
- ❖ Pesona Indonesia



FESTIVAL OF LIGHTS 2023 PROGRAM

Time	Performance
16:00	Welcome
16:05	Welcome to Country – Kathy Councilor National Anthem Bluff Point Primary School Dance and Singing Groups
16:10	Mayor Jerry Clune Damien Tully, CEO Mid West Port Authority
16:15	Batavia Marching Team
16:25	Bluff Point Primary School Dance Group
16:30	Natya Classical and Bollywood School of Dance Kids - Part 1
16:35	Bluff Point Primary School Singing Group
16:40	Midwest Community Fusion Belly Dance: Belly Sparkles and Super Novas
16:50	Melanie Brimson
17:00	David Stinson
17:10	Natya Classical and Bollywood School of Dance Kids - Part 2
17:15	Fusion Crowd Participation
17:30	Karloa Rockers
17:40	Geraldton Yoga
17:50	All Things Dance
18:00	Midwest African Association Performance
18:10	Midwest Community Fusion Belly Dance Adults
18:20	Pesona Indonesia part 1

Please scan and send us your feedback



18:25	Crowd participation Midwest African Association
18:35	Hawariyun (Malay Drumming Group)
18:45	Natya Classical and Bollywood School of Dance - Part 1
18:50	Chung Wah Chinese School Mid-West
18:55	Geraldton Bootscooters
19:05	Natthamon Weber & Sarocha Leighton from the Thai Community
19:15	Crowd participation led by Geraldton Bootscooters
19:25	Batavia Rockers
19:35	Carly Markham Music
19:45	Pesona Indonesia part 2
19:50	Geraldton Mabuhay Cultural Association
20:00	Natya Classical and Bollywood School of Dance - Part 2
20:05	ZAP Circus Remaja World – Rage Cage, Wheelchair basketball, Fusion Watoto World – Bouncy Castle, face painting, pony rides, Old McDonalds Farm and more.....





SPONSORS OF THE FESTIVAL OF LIGHTS 2023



Supported by
 Department of Local Government,
 Sport and Cultural Industries
 Office of Multicultural Interests



Community Bank
 Geraldton



Supporters

- ❖ 65 Thirty Events & Entertainment
- ❖ Atlas
- ❖ Bird Lige Midwest – Geraldton
- ❖ Fusion
- ❖ Kathy Councillor
- ❖ Kennards
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- ❖ Melissa Price MP
- ❖ Midwest Bounce & Fun
- ❖ Midwest Visuals
- ❖ Rob Dines – Ocean Air
- ❖ Sandra Carr MLC
- ❖ Shane Love MLA
- ❖ Supercheap Auto
- ❖ Total Toilets
- ❖ Veolia Environmental Services
- ❖ ZAP Circus



Promotion/Marketing

Mediums used to promote/celebrate Festival of Lights 2023:

❖ Newspapers:

- Midwest Times 25 October – Poster (estimate circulation 19,800)
- Geraldton Guardian 27 October – Poster (estimate circulation 6,000)
- Midwest Times – 8 November - Photos of festival – (circulation 19,800)
- Geraldton Guardian – 10 November – Photos of festival (circulation 6,000)
- Midwest Times – 15 November – full page Thank you to sponsors & community (circulation 16,000)

❖ Social Media

- MWMA Facebook reach 10,000 views
- Over 50's Life
- Committee networks

❖ Websites

- Midwest Multicultural Association
- Office of Multicultural Interests
- City of Greater Geraldton

❖ Radio Stations

- 96.5FM and ABC– promoting festival with interviews pre-event
- Radio MAMA – promoting festival pre-event and broadcasting from site between 4pm and 8.30pm including interviews with key sponsors and leaders of cultural groups

❖ Posters

- 80 on display at key locations in the City of Greater Geraldton
- Emailed to 32 schools in the region (public and private) with a request to be included in school newsletters
- Emailed to 300 contacts on the MWMA database and to the cultural group network
- Circulated to the Midwest Gascoyne region via Friday Circo, an email database with a reach of nearly 1,000 (at least twice in the lead up to the festival)
- Included in QEII Seniors monthly newsletter (reach over 600) as well as on display at the QEII Seniors & Community Centre – visitation over 2,000 per month

❖ Banners

- Seven (4 banners 3m x 1m and 3 banners 1.2m x 1.2m) on display at key locations, particularly the entry points to the city.



Evaluation

Surveys were available both on line and hard copy for the public, stall holders, contractors and performers. QR code was created for the online survey and included on the program. The event was assessed by community as well as the members and friends at a debrief held on 17 November in the form of a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) analysis. In summary:

Community evaluations: most were made aware of the event via social media or friends; all commented that the entertainment was good.

Suggestions for improvement included:

- ❖ Some of the acts just before ZAP Circus were too different in mood. It would be great to see the program “keep the party going”
- ❖ Additional activities for example: egg race, tug of war, dunking machine
- ❖ More social media advertising
- ❖ Information sent out a bit earlier
- ❖ More food stalls (variety)
- ❖ Coffee van
- ❖ Clear signage of the program of events
- ❖ Have good trailers spread out more so they are not blocking the stage from far back
- ❖ Have food and drink stalls between the gift stalls and activities
- ❖ A covering on the concrete stage to enable dancers to manoeuvre better during their dance routines
- ❖ Encourage people in front of the stage to sit down on the ground so those behind can see
- ❖ Keep line of sight from the stage to playground clear (don't line food trucks up around the main event space as a wall)

Stall holders / Performers / Contractors: overall were happy with the balance of stalls.

Suggestions for improvement included:

- ❖ Have more schools involved
- ❖ Workshops need to have signs stating “FREE” to attract participants
- ❖ Extend food stalls out (to edges of event space) to avoid congestion

Other comments included:

- ❖ Everyone enjoyed new attractions e.g. wheel chair basketball and silent disco
- ❖ Great festival, please continue
- ❖ Variety of performers getting better each year
- ❖ Program went overtime



Festival of Lights Committee recommendations for 2024:

Date Chosen	Saturday 2 November 2024
Site Plan	First Aid tent to be near the entry to event space (in vicinity of Stow Garden sign) to be more central to all activities
Stall holders	Encourage more to be involved
Contractors	Roving photographer to be given a more specific brief detailing area to be covered including a site map.
	The photo release template to detail the need for surnames and ages of children under 18 years with Parent/ Guardian approvals
Activities	Include more crowd participation events such as keeping large ball in the air and community dancing in program
	Continue with silent disco and wheel chair basketball in Remaja (Teens) World
	Have more workshops like kid's toy hospital (which taught basic first aid skills)
Performers	Reduce time for each performance to be able to fit variety of performers into the program for example 5 to 7 mins maximum
	Singers to perform only 2 songs
	Where possible, alternate acts on stage and on the grass in front of the stage to give time for stage set up for next performance
	Change Performers Agreement to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ All names of performers to help the photographer's assistant to aligned names with photos (photos complete with names, are needed by Monday after the event for the print media) ❖ Request for exact equipment requirements for a successful performance. For example, exact number of microphones for participants so they can be heard, especially for a choir
	More diversity in program - many cultures and style of performers to be included
Partnerships	Extend partnerships with other organisations to be able to deliver the festival for example, Australian Navy Cadets (assisted with set up/pack down) , Sun City Youth Leaders (supervised silent disco and wheel chair basketball)
MWMA Coordinator	Detail list of requirements to deliver a successful festival with more delegation of tasks to the team
	Be able to use radios to connect with key MWMA team members and first aid post.
Risk Management	Procedure for lost children to be clearly understood by MWMA team members. Also ensure that stall holders are briefed as well. (Children to First Aid marquee, advise MC to make announcement from the stage)

Festival of Lights Committee 2023

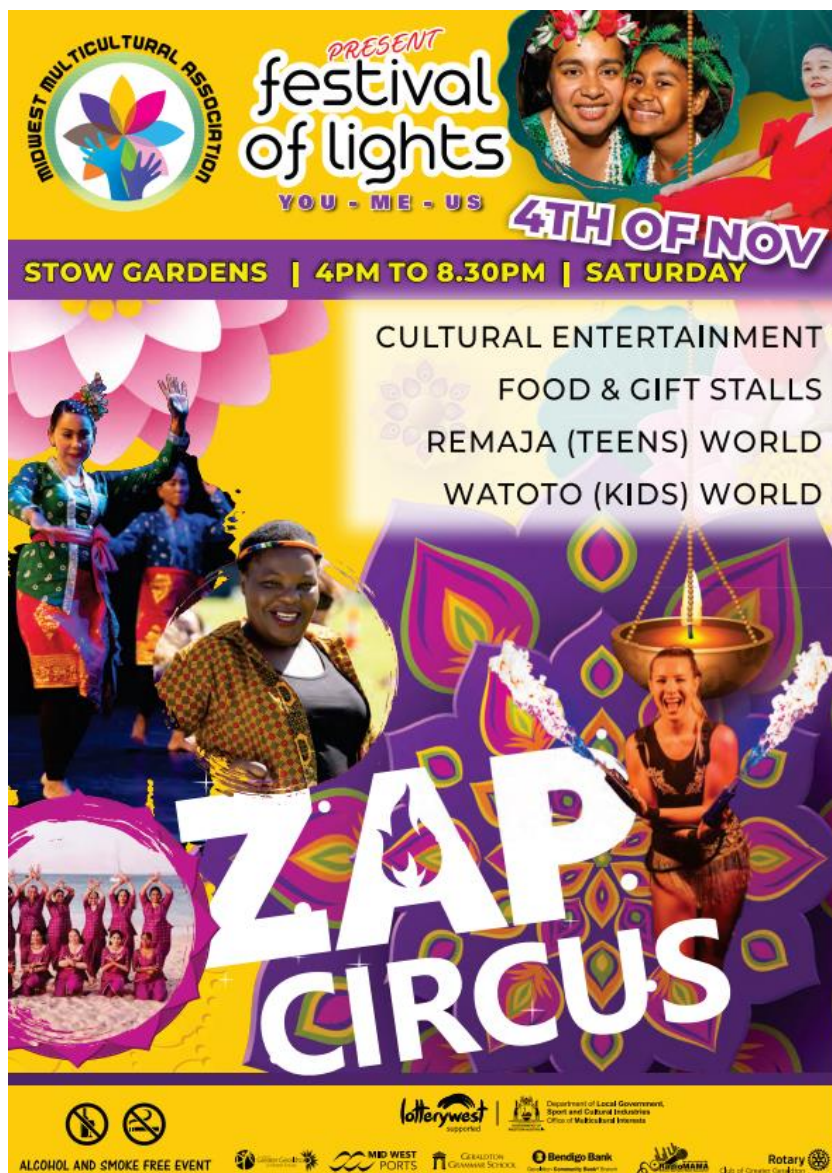
The Midwest Multicultural Association Committee which facilitated the celebrations, come from diverse cultural backgrounds. The committee of Yvonne Marsden, Janine Gerard, Vita Oktaviana, Jaye Allan, Noma Mahlangu and Yvonne Lovedee supported by Engagement Officer, Rose Weber met regularly to create and deliver a successful event.

The MWMA volunteers contributed over 1100 hours to create, liaise with contractors and deliver the Festival of Lights and other cultural programs between 5 April and 15 November 2023. In calculating a monetary value to the volunteer input into multicultural activities at a standard value of \$30 per hour provides a total of \$33,000.

The volunteer hours were in addition to the 280 hours undertaken by the Engagement Officer who was paid from grant funds secured from the Office of Multicultural Interests.

Promotion of Festival of Lights

Poster circulated in the community, on MWMA Facebook and website and in the print media



Local newspapers

Advertisement prior to event
(13cm x 16cm)

- ❖ Midwest Times on 25 October
(Circulation 19,800 copies)
- ❖ Geraldton Guardian on 27 October
(circulation 6,000 copies)

8 NEWS Times
Wednesday, November 8, 2023

Thousands light up Stow



Emmanuel Obanjisu and Hari Kumar. Pictures: Muleimind Creative

JESSICA MORONEY

More than 4000 people celebrated the Festival of Lights at the weekend, and with more cultural groups than you could count on two hands and activities for all ages, there was something for everyone.

The Multicultural Festival of Lights lived up to its name in drawing together performers from many different cultures at Stow Gardens on Saturday afternoon.

Volunteering their time, groups chose music, rehearsed for weeks and picked out costumes to showcase their beliefs and traditions.

ZAP Circus duo Rusty and Tarabelle took playing with fire to a new level at the finale, but not before the youngsters enjoyed a raft of activities at Watoto World, from face painting, archery, Old MacDonald's Farm, bouncy castles and building. The silent disco, wheelchair basketball and activities by Kuson that made up Remaja World were also hits.

Watoto is Swahili for children and Remaja is Indonesian for youth.

Mid West Multicultural Association secretary Yvonne Lovodes said it was wonderful to see all ages, including some parents, joining in the fun of the silent disco,



Ethan Naughton, 11. Pic: Sylvia Vella



The ZAP Circus performance.

and children learning from the WACRH nurses at The Teddy Bear and Doll Hospital.

"Although we come from different corners of Australia and the world, in Geraldton we come together in celebration and together we can all make a difference in the community."

Times NEWS 9
 Wednesday, November 8, 2023 midwesttimes.com.au

Gardens party



Natyia Classical and Bollywood School of Dance.



All Things Dance: Bridgo, Charlotte and Opal.



Pesona Indonesia.



Natyia Classical and Bollywood School of Dance.

and makes it an awesome place to live," she said.

The Consulate General of India had an exhibit to India still promoting tourism in Kerala. The stall displayed artefacts from Kerala, nonpartisan — an ornament used to decorate elephants — and the ancient dance Kathakali.



ZAP Circus entertains.

Midwest Indian Cultural Society chair Hari Kumar said most migrants in the Mid West were from Kerala and tend to work in the health service industry.

Radio MAMA broadcast live at the event, allowing community members the opportunity to share their cultures and activities.

18 NEWS **Guardian**
Friday, November 10, 2023

Huge multicultural buzz for



JESSICA MORONEY

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A silent disco, wheelchair basketball and activities by Fusion that made up Reimaja World were also hits. Watoto is Swahili for children and Reimaja is Indonesian for youth.

Mid West Multicultural Association secretary Yvonne Lovelace said it was wonderful to see all ages, including parents, joining in the fun of the silent disco, and children learning from the WACHH nurses at The Teddy Bear and Doll Hospital.

"Although we come from different corners of Australia and the world, in Geraldton we come together - in celebration and together we can all make a difference in the community and make it an awesome place to live," she said.

The Consulate General of India had an incredible India stall promoting tourism in the Indian state of Kerala.

Midwest Indian Cultural Society chairperson Hari Kumar said most migrants in the Mid West were from Kerala and tended to work in the health service industry.

Harik Kumar with Natya Classical and Bollywood School of Dance kids. Pictures: Mulletmind Creative.



Chung Wah Chinese School.



The Natya Classical and Bollywood School of Dance.



The Batavia Rockers dancers.



Sarah Chapman, Anna Frahm and Chloe Marcus. Picture: Sylvia Vella



Karloos Rockers.

Guardian Friday, November 10, 2023 **NEWS 19**

spirited festival



Fusion ball play.



A choir entertains the crowd.



ZAP Circus performance.



Hovarian (Malay drumming group): Libyan, Joey, Jazz, Mo, Mike, Awdal and Shah.



Dan Brierley, Sara Tonelli, Sylvia Barracci, Jesse Steele, Sylvia Pohl, Enza Sasone, Maurizia Sasone and kids.



FESTIVAL OF LIGHTS 2023

Midwest Multicultural Association would like to thank the sponsors, supporters, entertainers, volunteers, stall holders and Geraldton community for helping to make this year's celebrations so special



Supporters

65 Thirty Pty Ltd
 ATLAS
 Birdlife Midwest - Geraldton
 Fusion
 Kathy Councillor
 Kennards
 Kick Solutions
 Lara Dalton MLA
 Melissa Price MP
 Midwest Bounce & Fun
 Midwest Visuals
 Rob Dines - Ocean Air
 Sandra Carr MLC
 Shane Love MLA
 Supercheap Auto
 Total Toilets
 Veolia Environmental Services
 ZAP Circus

Performers

All Things Dance
 Batavia Marching Team
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Stall holders

Amenah's Satay House
 Australian Navy Cadets
 Big Softy Ice Cream Vans Geraldton
 Indian Consulate
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 Jodie Bradley Photography
 Kitty Boyes Author
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 Marijke Travasso
 Nimble Fingers
 OMG Decadent Donuts
 Remi French Street Food
 Scentsy
 Taco Loco
 Talbot's Fairy Floss
 Wandina Primary School
 Warda Khan Henna

Activities

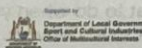
Atlas
 Birdlife Midwest - Geraldton
 Face Painting Magic
 Fairy Deb
 Fusion
 Hop Upon A Pony
 Hoverball Archery (Woorree Scouts)
 Lara Dalton MLA
 Midwest Bounce & Fun
 Ngala
 Old MacDonald's Travelling Farm
 Scrapbook House
 Shine
 Sun City Youth Leaders
 The Geraldton Project
 WA Centre for Rural Health (Teddy Bear & Doll Hospital)

Volunteers

Midwest African Association
 Pesona Indonesia
 TS Morrow Australian Navy Cadets
 Midwest Multicultural Association

Next Event: Harmony Festival 16 March 2024
 Follow us on Midwest Multicultural Association | Facebook

Sponsors





Harmony Festival 16 March 2024

Planning is well underway for our Harmony Festival so mark your calendar for Saturday 16 March 2024 to be at Stow Gardens for an awesome, free, inclusive family event to continue celebrations of our rich cultural diversity in the Midwest region of WA.

Confirmed supporters for Harmony Festival 2024:



Country in focus for
Harmony Festival 2024

BRAZIL



You-Me-Us!

All together we make
COMMUNITY!