

**MIGRANT INFORMATION CENTRE (Eastern Melbourne)
Multicultural Equity and Access Program**

German Cultural Profile

PLEASE NOTE: This profile provides an overview of some of the cultural information relating to the diverse groups of German-born people who live in the Eastern Region of Melbourne. This description may not apply to all people as individual experiences may vary. However this profile can be used as a guide to some of the issues that may concern your clients. This is an update of the profile in the Home and Personal Care Kit developed by the MIC in 2004.

Introduction:

There are German speaking people living in the Eastern Region of Melbourne from Germany as well as from Austria, Estonia, Lithuania, Latvia, Switzerland, parts of Denmark, Poland, some former Yugoslavian countries and other countries. The majority of statistics available relate to the German-born population.

Migration:

- There is a long history of migration to Australia by people born in Germany. However, in the Eastern Metropolitan Region of Victoria, they largely arrived post World War II.
- 41% of the German-born community in the Eastern Region are aged over 65 years.

Local Demographics: German-born residents in the Eastern Region

Local Government Area	Total German-born Population	50-59 years	60-69 years	70-79 years	80 years and over	Total number of German-born people aged 65 and over	People aged 65+ as a % of the German-born population
City of Boroondara	745	203	153	95	69	230	31%
City of Knox	1340	270	366	286	154	638	48%
City of Manningham	670	162	192	129	50	282	42%
City of Maroondah	751	188	198	145	61	302	40%
City of Monash	1028	175	277	226	88	459	45%
City of Whitehorse	816	175	197	169	84	347	43%
Shire of Yarra Ranges	1269	356	333	196	67	439	35%
Eastern Region	6619	1529	1716	1246	573	2697	41%

(ABS Census 2006 & MAV Data 2006)

- The median age of the German-born population is 59 years compared to 37 years for the total Victorian population (Victorian Multicultural Commission 2008).

Language: German-speaking residents in the Eastern Region

Local Government Area	Total number of people speaking German at home	50-59 years	60-69 years	70-79 years	80 years and over	Total number of German speaking people aged 65 and over	German speaking people aged 65+ as a % of the German speaking population
City of Boroondara	693	83	88	79	82	203	29%
City of Knox	1294	150	282	283	244	692	53%
City of Manningham	499	61	116	110	54	227	45%
City of Maroondah	546	57	119	126	54	250	46%
City of Monash	843	81	193	210	73	409	49%
City of Whitehorse	732	91	125	163	78	323	44%
Shire of Yarra Ranges	982	136	217	154	69	356	36%
Eastern Region	5589	659	1140	1125	654	2460	44%

(ABS Census 2006 & MAV Data 2006)

- The national language of Germany is German.
- In the German-speaking area of Europe, various dialects are spoken in different regional areas. For example, Swiss, Austrian German and Frisian (North Germany), Bavarian and Schwabian in Germany.
- The English proficiency of the German-born population in Melbourne is very high. However, as individuals age conditions (such as dementia) can contribute to a loss of English capacity and a reversion to the mother tongue.
- 33.9% of the German-born population in Victoria assessed themselves as speaking English 'very well' and 10.5% as 'well' (Victorian Multicultural Commission 2008).
- 1.1% of the German-born population in Victoria identified as speaking English 'not-well' and 0.2% spoke English 'not at all' (Victorian Multicultural Commission 2008).

Religion:

The German-born population in Victoria identified as the following religions at the 2006 Census (Victorian Multicultural Commission 2008):

- Western Catholic – 29.0% (8,145)
- Lutheran – 28.0% (7,865)
- Anglican – 3.3% (919)
- Judaism – 2.4% (676)
- Presbyterian – 1.2% (337)
- Other religions – 10.8% (3,035)
- No religion – 17.4% (4,898)

Attitudes and Issues with Ageing:

- Older Germans prefer to stay in their own homes as long as possible. They highly value their independence.
- German-born people are very reluctant to enter nursing homes and would rather pay for services or depend on support of family members.

Attitudes to Disability and Mental Illness:

- In Australia, German-born people have similar attitudes to mental illness as Anglo-Australians. There is still some stigma attached to mental illness, but generally German-born Australians are accepting of people with mental illness.

Customs / Values:

- German-born people may ask visitors to their home to remove their shoes.
- Punctuality is considered a virtue.
- Cleanliness and order in actions and life are valued.
- Family structure is organised around the nuclear family.
- German-born people have a relatively open attitude towards equal roles for men and women, but more so among the younger generation.

Communication Styles:

- German-born people will almost always let you know what they really think.
- German - born people can use a very direct style of communication.
- Assertive.
- Hand shaking is practiced whenever people meet or part.

Naming Conventions:

- German-born people prefer if titles are used when addressing them. For example, Mr, Mrs or Dr. unless otherwise directed.

Health Beliefs and Practices:

- Western model of medicine is used in conjunction with alternative therapies.
- Homeopathy or Naturopathy may be used as alternatives.
- German-born people are disinclined to complain and therefore medical conditions may go undetected. They are also reluctant to go to hospital.

Greetings:

English Greeting	German	Closest English Pronunciation
Hello	Hallo	HALLO
Goodbye	Auf Wiedersehen / Tschuess	AUF VEEDERSEIN / SHUSS
Good Morning	Guten Morgen	GOOTEN MORGEN
Good Afternoon	Guten Tag	GOOTEN TAAG
Yes	Ja	YAA
No	Nein	NINE
Thankyou	Danke Schoen	DANKE SHERN
Please	Bitte	BITTE

Key German Festivals / Significant Dates:

- Tag der Arbeit (Workers Day) 1st May
- Tag der Deutschen Einheit (National Day) 3rd October
- Allerheiligen (All Saints Day) 1st November
- Heiligabend (Christmas Eve) 24th December
- Sylvester 31st December

* To search for exact dates of key cultural and religious events, festivals and national days for this year, visit: <http://www.immi.gov.au/living-in-australia/a-diverse-australia/calendar-australia/>

Local services useful for German-born residents in the Eastern Region

Settlement Services

Provide information, referral and casework for refugees and family migrants who arrived in the last five years.

Name	Address	Contact
Migrant Information Centre (Eastern Melbourne)	Suite 2, Town Hall Hub, 27 Bank Street, Box Hill, 3128	Ph: 9285 4888
New Hope Migrant and Refugee Centre	18 Chester Street Oakleigh, 3166	Ph: 9563 4130

Aged Care & Disability Support Services

Migrant Information Centre Aged Care & Disability Services

Address: Suite 2, Town Hall Hub, 27 Bank Street, Box Hill, 3128

Ph: 9285 4888

The aged and disability team aims to increase access to aged care and disability services for CALD communities in the EMR through working with CALD communities to promote those services, provide information and referral and supporting organisations to provide culturally appropriate care. The team also receives funding for specific projects in this area.

Tabulam and Templer Homes for the Aged

Address: 31-41 Elizabeth Street, Bayswater, 3153

Ph: 9720 3711

Tabulam and Templer Homes for the Aged is strongly committed to the principle of ensuring that all older German speaking individuals have access to and are provided with services relevant to their needs and choices, including those with special needs. They provide residential high and low level care, independent living units, respite care, a day care program, Home and Community Care (HACC) Planned Activity Groups and Community Aged Care Packages (CACPs) packages.

Other Support Services

Association of German Speaking Communities

Address: PO Box 1043, Camberwell, 3124

Ph: 9215 7151

Australian German Welfare Society

Address: 4th Floor, 24 Albert Road, South Melbourne, 3205

Ph: 9696 0907

Provides assistance to people of German background in Victoria.

Senior Citizens Groups

For more information please contact local councils or the Migrant Information Centre (Eastern Melbourne) on 9275 6905.

Name of the Club	LGA	Venue	Time / Day
German Senior Citizens Club	Boorondara	St Christopher's Hall 595 Riversdale Road, Camberwell, 3124	10:00am – 3:00pm 2 nd Tuesday of month
German Club Ringwood Inc.	Maroondah	Maroondah Masonic Hall 24 Warrandyte Road, Ringwood, 3134	7:00pm 1 st Saturday of month

References:

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Victorian Multicultural Commission, 2008, *The Germany-Born Community in Victoria*, Fact Sheet No. A-24, viewed 20 April 2010, <<http://www.multicultural.vic.gov.au/images/stories/pdf/germanyfs-24apr08.pdf>>.