

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

## Italian Cultural Profile

**PLEASE NOTE:** This profile provides an overview of some of the cultural information relating to the diverse groups of Italians 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:

Italians are one of the most well established ethnic communities and one of the largest non-English speaking birthplace group in Australia, particularly in Victoria (Victorian Multicultural Commission 2008).

### Migration:

- The first arrival of Italians in Australia can be traced back to the 1850s during the gold rush.
- In 1885 a group of Italian migrants from northern Italy established a traditional Italian community called 'New Italy' in northern NSW.
- "Chain" migration was a significant trend among Italian migrants. In which people from a particular village, town or district in Italy followed one another to Australia.
- Post World War II many Italians migrated to Australia due to economic and political upheaval. Most Italian migrants who came after World War II came from Sicily, Calabria and Veneto and settled in metropolitan areas.

### Local Demographics: Italian-born residents in the Eastern Region

Local Government Area	Total Italian-born Population	50-59 years	60-69 years	70-79 years	80 years and over	Total number of Italian-born people aged 65 and over	People aged 65+ as a % of the Italian-born population
City of Boroondara	1939	410	447	565	278	1094	56%
City of Knox	1317	398	308	228	83	478	36%
City of Manningham	3935	996	1143	1004	412	2025	51%
City of Maroondah	634	179	159	136	63	280	44%
City of Monash	3220	708	906	920	335	1782	55%
City of Whitehorse	1952	431	533	561	226	1075	55%
Shire of Yarra Ranges	1100	310	243	282	111	509	46%
Eastern Region	14097	3432	3739	3696	1508	7243	51%

(ABS Census 2006 & MAV Data 2006)

- Victoria is home to the largest population of Italian-born people in Australia, with 82,849 people at the last census (ABS Census 2006).
- The median age of the Italian-born population is 65 years compared to 37 years for the total Victorian population (Victorian Multicultural Commission 2008).

## Language: Italian-speaking people in the Eastern Region

Local Government Area	Total number of people speaking Italian at home	50-59 years	60-69 years	70-79 years	80 years and over	Total number of Italian speaking people aged 65 and over	Italian speaking people aged 65+ as a % of the Italian speaking population
City of Boroondara	3324	399	450	617	295	1170	35%
City of Knox	2212	347	320	242	81	507	23%
City of Manningham	6264	987	1181	1059	431	2139	34%
City of Maroondah	977	144	156	134	73	291	30%
City of Monash	4924	691	917	991	351	1895	38%
City of Whitehorse	3062	425	544	607	241	1156	38%
Shire of Yarra Ranges	1538	274	235	259	112	490	32%
Eastern Region	22301	3267	3803	3909	1584	7648	34%

(ABS Census 2006 & MAV Data 2006)

- Hundreds of dialects exist in Italy (for example Calabrese) however, 'formal' Italian is recognised by the majority of Italians in Australia. Some older or uneducated migrants may not be able to speak standard Italian.
- 21.7% of the Italian-born population in Victoria identified as speaking English 'not-well' and 2.3% spoke English 'not at all' (Victorian Multicultural Commission 2008).
- 27.9% of the Italian-born population in Victoria assessed themselves as speaking English 'very well' and 31.7% as 'well' (Victorian Multicultural Commission 2008).

## Religion:

- The Catholic Church plays a very important role within the Italian culture. 93.3% of Italian-born people in Victoria identify as being Catholic (Victorian Multicultural Commission 2008).
- Religion is a stronger influence with the elderly than the younger generation.

## Attitudes and Issues with Ageing:

- The Italian community is an ageing population.
- Traditionally, the family is responsible for looking after older parents and relatives. Italians are reluctant to utilise services available for the elderly and nursing home admissions are low.
- Language and cultural differences may cause generational issues to arise between older Italians and their Australian-born children and grandchildren.

## Attitudes to Disability and Mental Illness:

- In the Italian-born community people with a disability are rarely institutionalised.
- Mental illnesses tend to be stigmatised. Older Italian-born people are reluctant to access mental health services due to a lack of understanding of mental health issues.
- More often than not, Italian people with a disability and mental illness are cared for and protected by the family and community.

## Customs / Values:

- Many expectations and obligations in the Italian community are based on sibling status and gender roles. This is also related to the general belief that it is necessary to 'do one's duty'.
- The extended family structure is the traditional norm.
- Children are highly valued in the Italian community and are incorporated into most family activities.
- Food plays an important part in the Italian culture.

## Communication Styles:

- Italian-born people may display emotions openly, e.g. anger, despair and depression. Italians are generally highly expressive of joy, sadness and grief, both vocally and through body language.

## Naming Conventions:

- It is conventional to use titles, particularly with older Italians. Second generation Italians may not follow this convention.

## Health Beliefs and Practices:

- There is no cultural objection to taking western medicines, although some older Italian-born people may supplement this with their own home remedies.
- Some traditional health beliefs may still be practiced, i.e. belief in the 'evil eye', this is more prevalent for migrants from rural areas.
- Some older Italians may practice coining. This is used for a range of ailments and is usually performed on the forehead, the abdomen, on the base of the nose, between the eyes and on the neck, chest or back. This practice can result in bruises or marks, it is important not to mistake the resulting marks as a sign of abuse.
- Among older Italian migrant women, awareness of women's health issues tends to be poor, with low rates of women having a Pap test, breast examination or a mammogram, or even having heard of these screening measures. They may only seek services for serious illness, not for screening.

## Greetings:

English Greeting	Italian	Closest English Pronunciation
Hello (How are you?)	Ciao / Salve	CHI-OW / SALVE
Goodbye	Arrivederci	ARRI-VA-DER-CHI
Yes	Sì	SEE
No	No	NO
Thankyou	Grazie	GRATSEE

## Key Italian Festivals / Significant Dates:

- Liberation Day *25th of April*
- Republic / Constitution Day *2nd of June*
- St Anthony of Padua *13<sup>th</sup> of June*
- Festa del Redentore *3rd Sunday in July*
- Joust of the Quintana *1st Sunday in August*
- Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary *15th of August*
- Palio Del Golfo *2nd Sunday in August*
- St. Francis of Assisi *4th of October*
- All Saints Day *1st of November*
- Epiphany, Easter and Christmas are also celebrated.
- Many local towns also have a public holiday on the feast day of their patron saint.

\*For other significant dates related to religious observances, refer to the Christian religious profile.

\* 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 and activities useful for Italian-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, Vic 3128	Ph: 9285 4888
New Hope Migrant and Refugee Centre	18 Chester Street, Oakleigh, Vic 3166	Ph: 9563 4130

### Aged Care & Disability Support Services

#### **CO.AS.IT. Italian Assistance Association**

Address: Level 1, 189 Faraday Street, Carlton, 3053

Ph: 9349 9000

Provides aged care services (CACPs, EACH, Linkages, Disability) and information regarding services to the Italian community. The following **Planned Activity Groups** are also available in the Eastern Region:

Name	Address	Contact
Co.As.It Planned Activity Group ( <b>Knox</b> )	Knox Italian Community Club 99 Karoo Road, Rowville, Vic 3178	Ph: 93499081 Fax: 93499024
Co.As.It Planned Activity Group ( <b>Whitehorse</b> )	Whitehorse Community Club 298-336 Burwood Highway, Burwood East, Vic 3125	Ph: 93499081 Fax: 93499024

## Italcare Home Support Agency

Ph: 9349 9005

Email: [italcare@coasit.com.au](mailto:italcare@coasit.com.au)

Italcare is a fee for service agency. Services can be provided to individuals and community organizations on a brokerage basis including personal care, respite, transport, companionship. All carer workers are bilingual.

## Manningham City Council Italian Planned Activity Groups

Address: 203 Church Road, Doncaster, Vic 3108

Ph: 9848 9454

Contact: PAG Coordinator, Vanda Paris

The Council offers three Italian Planned Activity Groups at Church Road. Groups are run on Tuesday, Thursday and Friday from 10.30am until 3pm.

## Migrant Information Centre Aged & Disability Services

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

Ph: 9275 6905

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.

## Shire of Yarra Ranges – Planned Activity Group

Address: Wandin Senior Citizens Centre, Warburton Highway, Wandin, Vic 3139

Ph: 1300 368 333

Meeting Details: 10:00am – 2:00pm (Wednesday)

Provides a wide range of social and recreational activities for the older Italian community.

## 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
Associazione Amica Pensionati Italiani di Hawthorn	<b>Boroondara</b>	Hawthorn Peppercorn Club 584 Glenferrie Road Hawthorn, Vic 3122	1:00pm – 5:00pm Friday
Circolo Pensionati Italiani Kew – Hawthorn – Camberwell	<b>Boroondara</b>	Phyllis Hore Room Kew Library Complex Civic Drive, Kew, Vic 3101	1:30pm – 4:30pm Every second Tuesday
Avellino Italian Senior Citizens Club	<b>Knox</b>	194 Scoresby Road Boronia, Vic 3155	10:00am – 4:00pm Monday to Friday
Knox Italian Senior Citizens' Centre	<b>Knox</b>	99 Karoo Road Rowville, Vic 3178	1:00pm – 5:00pm Thursday
Doncaster Italian Senior Citizens Group	<b>Manningham</b>	284 Thompsons Road Lower Templestowe, Vic 3107	8.30am – 2.30pm every weekday

<b>Name of the Club</b>	<b>LGA</b>	<b>Venue</b>	<b>Time / Day</b>
Italian Senior Citizen's Club of Manningham	<b>Manningham</b>	Ajani Centre 284 Thompsons Rd Lower Templestowe, 3107	10:00am – 2:00pm Friday
Croydon Italian Senior Citizens Club Inc.	<b>Maroondah</b>	15 Highway Drive Mooroolbark, 3138	9.30am- 2.00pm Wednesday
Maroondah Italian Senior Citizens Club	<b>Maroondah</b>	Bedford Park Bedford Rd Ringwood, 3134	10:00am – 2:00pm Tuesday
Associazione Piemontesi Victoria	<b>Maroondah</b>	Asissy Centre, 230 Rosanna Rd Rosanna VIC 3084	First Saturday 9.30am- 12.00pm
Associazione Pensionati Laziali di Monash	<b>Monash</b>	Fregon Hall Fregon Rd Clayton, 3168	9:00am – 5:00pm Monday
Avellino Circolo Pensionati di Springvale	<b>Monash</b>	25 James street Clayton, 3168	2 <sup>nd</sup> Sunday 12.00pm -5.00pm
Catanzaro Senior Citizens Club of Monash	<b>Monash</b>	Monash Community Inn 72 Clayton Road Clayton, 3168	8:00am – 4:00pm Friday
Circolo Italiani Pensionati di St Mary Magdelene	<b>Monash</b>	St Mary Magdalen's Church Baradine St Chadstone, 3148	10:00am – 4:00pm Tuesday
Circolo Pensionati Campani Italiano di Clayton	<b>Monash</b>	Clayton Hall 264 Clayton Road Clayton, 3168	11:00am – 4:00pm Thursday
Circolo Pensionati Italiani di Oakleigh and Clayton	<b>Monash</b>	Clayton Hall 264 Clayton Road Clayton, 3168	10:00am – 3:00pm Monday & Wed
Circolo Pensionati 'Don Bosco'	<b>Monash</b>	40 Houghton Road Oakleigh, 3166 (rear of the Oakleigh Youth Club)	10:00am – 4:00pm Wed 12:00pm – 4:00pm Fri
Italian Pensioner's Club of Waverley	<b>Monash</b>	Ashwood Hall 21A Electra Ave Ashwood, 3147	10:00am – 4:00pm Wednesday
Regiona Lazio Mont Lepini Colleferro Social Club Inc	<b>Monash</b>	Clayton Hall 264 Clayton Road Clayton, 3168	9:00am – 7:00pm Friday
Box Hill Italian Senior Citizens'	<b>Whitehorse</b>	Box Hill Senior Citizens' Club 79 Carrington Rd Box Hill, 3128	10:00am – 12:00 midday Thursday
Circolo Anziani – Whitehorse Club Limited	<b>Whitehorse</b>	Whitehorse Club 298-336 Burwood Highway Burwood East, 3151	Every Thursday 10:00am – 3:30pm

Name of the Club	LGA	Venue	Time / Day
Circolo Pensionati Italiani Nunawading	<b>Whitehorse</b>	North Blackburn Shopping Centre Community Room Blackburn North, 3130	9:30am – 2:30pm Friday
Lillydale Italian Senior Citizens' Club	<b>Yarra Ranges</b>	Lillydale International 471 Maroondah Hwy Lillydale, 3140	Monday 12.00pm-4.00pm

#### References:

Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2006, *Census of Population and Housing*, viewed 1 March 2010, <<http://www.abs.gov.au/websitedbs/d3310114.nsf/home/census>>.

Collins, J., Mondello, L., Brehency, J. & Childs, T., 2001, *Cosmopolitan Melbourne: Explore the World in One City*, Big Box Publishing Pty Ltd, pp.94-108.

Department of Disability, Housing and Community Services ACT, 2003, *The Cultural Dictionary*, viewed 1 March 2010, <[http://www.dhcs.act.gov.au/\\_\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0017/5282/Cultural\\_Dictionary.pdf](http://www.dhcs.act.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0017/5282/Cultural_Dictionary.pdf)>, pp. 93-94.

Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV), 2008, *Seniors from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Backgrounds*, Demography on the 50 years plus Victorian population from the 2006 census, Victoria, Australia.

The State of Queensland (Queensland Health), 2003, *Italians: A Guide for Health Professionals*, viewed 1 March 2010, <[http://www.health.qld.gov.au/multicultural/health\\_workers/italian.pdf](http://www.health.qld.gov.au/multicultural/health_workers/italian.pdf)>.

Victorian Multicultural Commission, 2008, *The Italy-Born Community in Victoria*, Fact Sheet No. A-34, viewed 1 March 2010, <<http://www.multicultural.vic.gov.au/images/stories/pdf/italyfs-24apr08.pdf>>.