

MIGRANT INFORMATION CENTRE (Eastern Melbourne)

Korean Cultural Profile

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

Introduction:

- Korea is a country with unique cultural and artistic history.
- It is divided into Northern (Democratic People's Republic of Korea) and Southern (Republic of South Korea) regions.
- The South Korean community is increasing in the Eastern Metropolitan Region of Melbourne.

Migration:

- Koreans started migrating to Australia after the Korean War (1950-1953).
- In the following decades Koreans migrated primarily under the family and skilled migration streams.
- 63.2% of the South Korean-born persons arrived over a 20 year period (2006-2016) in Victoria (Multicultural Affairs and Social Cohesion Division 2016).

Local Demographics: South Korean-born residents in the Eastern Region

Local Government Area	Total South Korean-born Population	55-64 years	65-74 years	75-84 years	85 years and over	Total number of South Korean-born people aged 65 and over	People aged 65+ as a % of the South Korean-born population
City of Boroondara	697	35	13	3	0	16	2%
City of Knox	150	7	7	3	3	13	9%
City of Manningham	77	12	11	3	0	14	18%
City of Maroondah	253	12	19	6	0	25	10%
City of Monash	2,036	130	48	15	4	67	3%
City of Whitehorse	1,095	60	19	6	0	25	2%
Shire of Yarra Ranges	71	14	0	0	0	0	0%
Eastern Region	4,379	270	117	36	7	160	4%

(ABS Census 2016)

- At the 2016 Census, there were 14,797 South Korea-born persons in Victoria (15.0% of Australia's total), ranked 30th among the overseas born communities in Victoria.
- According to the 2016 Census, there were the South Korea-born increased by 45.2% (4,605) from 10,192 persons in 2011.
- The median age was 32 years, compared to 37 years for total Victoria (ABS 2016).

Language:

- Korean is the official language of both North and South Korea.
- Koreans speak different dialects however they are similar enough that speakers/listeners do not have much trouble understanding each other.
- Korean language is written in a phonetic alphabet called Hangeul which was originated in the mid-15th century. Hangeul comprises of ten vowels and fourteen consonants that are combined to form syllabic groupings.
- 22.8% of the South Korean-born population in Victoria identified as speaking English 'not well' and 2.0% spoke English 'not at all' (ABS 2016).
- 26.6% of the South Korean-born population in Victoria assessed themselves as speaking English 'very well' and 37.2% as 'well' (ABS 2016).

Religion:

- The values and beliefs reflected in Korean culture can be regarded as a blend of Buddhism, Confucianism, Shamanism, Christianity and other religions.
- The branch of Buddhism most commonly practiced by Koreans is 'Mahayana Buddhism'. Christianity was introduced in Korea by Catholic and Protestant missionaries. South Korea has higher percentage of Christians of any country in East Asia and many people outside of Christianity have been deeply influenced by the traditions which are Buddhism and Confucianism.
- There are approximately forty Korean churches in Victoria and majority of Koreans have a strong relationship with these churches.
- The South Korean-born population in Victoria identified as the following religions at the 2016 Census (ABS 2016):
 - Western Catholic – 16.7% (2,476)
 - Uniting Church – 10.9% (1,613)
 - Presbyterian – 9.9% (697)
 - Buddhism – 4.1% (608)
 - Other religions – 7.9% (1,172)
 - No religion – 43.2% (6,396)

Attitudes and Issues with Ageing:

- Growing old is viewed in a positive way in Korean culture and the society gives respect, reverence and honour for the wisdom that older people have acquired from lifelong experiences.
- In Korean culture there is more emphasis on "independence" and older adults with or without disabilities reside at home with their families. In many cases the eldest son has special duties and responsibilities to look after his parents. Caregivers are usually spouses, daughters-in-law, daughters and sons. It is often considered the responsibility of the children to care of ageing parents in the Iranian culture. Traditionally the younger members of the extended family care for the elderly.

Attitudes to Disability and Mental Illness:

- In general, views and attitudes towards people with disabilities and mental illness are negative. Some Koreans believe lifelong disability is a payback for something they did wrong in the past, the fault of an ancestor, a result of misfortune or bad luck.

- A child with an illness or disability is often cared for by parents, who usually expect them to outgrow their illness/disability.
- People generally accept illness and disability due to ageing as a fact of life.

Attitudes to Death and Palliative Care:

- Koreans honour their dead parents and grandparents on the anniversaries of their death, New Year's Day and other holidays through worshipping their ancestors and offering food.
- Palliative care is a relatively new concept in Korean society and as a result there is lack of understanding and government support for palliative carers. The majority of palliative carers are volunteers and attract little attention by members of Korean society.

Customs / Values:

- Koreans regard family as the basic social unit and consider harmony at home as the first step toward harmony in the community. The eldest son inherits the family leadership and wealth and has the responsibility of caring for his parents.
- The family relationship has been strongly influenced by Confucianism which emphasises independence and order within a system of prescribed roles for family members.
- Korean parents emphasise the value of education. They invest enormous amounts of money in preparation for entrance exams for secondary schools and universities. They would prefer to see their children employed in an office environment.
- Gift giving or food sharing is a common cultural practice in the Korean community and is considered to be a symbol of appreciation or friendship. Gifts are given and received with both hands and the gesture of giving is more important than the price of a gift.

Communication Styles:

- Greetings and introductions tend to be formal with older people being greeted first. Touching between strangers or casual acquaintances, especially between people of the opposite sex is considered inappropriate.
- Based on Confucianism, Koreans are comfortable with prolonged silence and meaningful conversation is highly regarded. Direct expression of feelings is discouraged and assertiveness of children and individualism is not regarded as a virtue.
- Open criticism or public disagreements are not appropriate in Korean society. It is sometimes considered to damage a speaker's own reputation. Koreans will choose to be indirect while expressing their negative impressions or opinions.

Naming Conventions:

- Koreans take pride of family heritage and Korean names are traditionally written with the surname first, followed by the given name.
- Use titles such as "Dr.", "Mr." and "Mrs." in order to demonstrate appropriate respect.
- A women's surname remains after marriage in Korea. Marriage between people with the same surname and place of origin has been customarily forbidden.

Health Beliefs and Practices:

- Traditional Koreans believe that illness can be attributed to the imbalance between the natural forces 'yin' and 'yang'. Such imbalance can lead to an individual becoming ill.

- Traditional medical/health-related practices include the use of herbs, acupuncture, cupping and moxibustion which is the burning of a soft material at specified spots on the skin.
- Diagnostic methods used are observing the patients, obtaining the histories of illnesses, taking their pulse, and then utilizing the metaphysical and cosmological means of treatment.

Greetings:

English Greeting	Hangeul	Closest English Pronunciation
Hello	안녕하세요	AN-YONG-HA-SE-YO
How are you?	어떻습니까	O-TTO-SHIM-NI-KKA?
Good Bye	안녕히 가세요	AN-NYONG-HI-GA-SE-YO
Yes	네	NE
No	아니요	A-NI-YO
Thankyou	감사합니다	KAM-SA-HAM-NI-DA

Key Korean Festivals / Significant Dates:

Koreans officially follow the Gregorian calendar however some of the holidays observed are based on lunar calendar. There are several festivals/events which are held by the Korean Society of Victoria throughout Victoria.

- | | |
|---|------------------------------------|
| • New Year's Day (Seol-nal) | <i>1st day of 1st Lunar Month</i> |
| • Buddha's Birthday | <i>8th day of 4th Lunar Month</i> |
| • Harvest Full Moon Festival (Chu seok) | <i>15th day of 8th Lunar Month</i> |
| • Independence Movement Da | <i>1st March</i> |

Local services useful for Korean-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 <u>and</u> 18 Bond Street, Ringwood Vic 3134	Ph: 9285 4888 (Box Hill) 9870 1351 (Ringwood)
New Hope Foundation	Grattan Gardens Community Centre, 40 Grattan Street, Prahran Vic 3181	Ph: 9510 5877

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: 9275 6901

Email: wzhang@miceastmelb.com.au

Website: <http://miceastmelb.com.au/our-services/elderly-people-younger-people-disabilities-carers/>

The Access & Support Program provides short term support to help people access aged care and other services so they can stay living at home independently. The Program provides information, referral, support and monitoring. The aged and disability team generally 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.

Senior Citizens Groups

For more information please contact local councils or the Migrant Information Centre (Eastern Melbourne) on 9275 6901.

Name of the Club	LGA	Venue	Contact
Monash Korean Senior Citizens Club	Monash	Oakleigh Hall 142 Drummond Street Oakleigh, 3166	Ph: 0403 695 047
Seniors Companion Club	Whitehorse	1010 Whitehorse Rd, Box Hill, 3128	Ph: (03) 9890 2993

Other

Korean Society of Victoria Australia

Address: 21-29 Railway Ave, Oakleigh, VIC, 3166

Ph: 0414 776 613

The Korean Society of Victoria Australia aims to promote welfare of and friendship among Korean community members in Victoria and aims to promote mutual understanding between Korea and Australia. It also promotes ethnic identity among Korean society members through education in traditional culture.

References:

- Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2016, Census 2016, viewed 6 Jan 2021, <<https://www.abs.gov.au/websitedbs/D3310114.nsf/Home/2016%20Census%20Community%20Profiles>>.
- Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2006, *Census of Population and Housing*, viewed 1 March 2010, <<http://www.abs.gov.au/websitedbs/d3310114.nsf/home/census>>.
- Countries and their Cultures, 2010, Korean – Religion and Expressive Culture, viewed 14 April 2011, <<https://www.everyculture.com/East-Southeast-Asia/Korean-Religion-and-Expressive-Culture.html>>.
- Kim, S.J. & Kang, K.A., 2003, Meaning of life for adolescents with a physical disability in Korea", *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, vol.43, no.2, pp.145-155.
- Kyung, M.H., Jang, Y.M., Han, K.H. & Yun, Y.H., 2010, Current Status and Activation Plan of Hospice Palliative Care in Korea - Based on Hospice Palliative Care Facilities Survey", *Korean Journal of Hospice and Palliative Care*, vol. 13, no. 3, pp. 143-152.
- Life in Korea, 2010, Cultural Spotlight, viewed 14 April 2011, <<http://www.lifeinkorea.com/Culture/spotlight.cfm>>.
- Migrant Resource Centre Canberra & Region Inc, 2003, The Cultural Dictionary, viewed 14 April 2011, <http://www.dhcs.act.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0017/5282/Cultural_Dictionary.pdf>, pp.102-104.
- Minnesota State University, 2010, „Korean Culture", viewed 13 October 2010, <<https://web.mnsu.edu/emuseum/cultural/oldworld/asia/koreanculture.html>>.
- Multicultural Affairs and Social Cohesion Division, Department of Premier and Cabinet, Victoria, 2016, Fact Sheet No. 45 The South Korea-Born Community in Victoria, Victoria, Australia.
- 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. Victorian Multicultural Commission, 2008, The South Korea-Born Community in Victoria, Fact Sheet No. A-59, viewed 14 April 2011, <<https://www.multiculturalcommission.vic.gov.au/images/stories/pdf/south-koreafs-24apr08.pdf>>.
- Yong-shik, Choe, 2010, Surnames: Microcosmic icon of Korea's Confucian order, viewed 14 April 2011, <http://www.holtinternational.org/korea/korean_surnames.pdf>.