

Macedonian Cultural Profile

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

Introduction:

- Macedonians in Australia may come from the former Yugoslavian Republic of Macedonia, (now the Republic of Macedonia), northern Greece (Aegean Macedonia), Bulgaria (Pirin Macedonia) and Albania (Mala Prespa).
- Traditional village rivalries and the divisions between Macedonians caused by divisions of land occupied by Macedonians have generally receded within the Australian community in recent years. However, there are still some political and identity issues within the community.

Migration:

- There have been four main waves of migration of Macedonians to Australia.
- In the 1920s mainly Macedonian-born men immigrated with the intention to work for a few years, save money and then return to Macedonia. This is known to the Macedonian people as *pechalba*. These men worked in market gardens as labourers as they were often from rural backgrounds with little formal education.
- From 1946 to 1949, during the Greek civil war, displaced persons emigrated from Macedonia.
- In the 1960s and 1970s immigration restriction laws relaxed, and many Macedonians immigrated to be reunited with family. Many Macedonians who migrated during this period worked in industry and manufacturing as labourers.
- In the Late 1980's and 1990's smaller numbers of Macedonians migrated under the skilled and business visa classes.

Local Demographics: Macedonian-born* residents in the Eastern Region

Local Government Area	Total Macedonian-born Population	Total number of Macedonian-born people aged 65 and over	People aged 65+ as a % of the Macedonian-born population
City of Boroondara	138	61	44%
City of Knox	57	25	44%
City of Manningham	253	120	47%
City of Maroondah	31	6	19%
City of Monash	104	38	37%
City of Whitehorse	79	34	43%
Shire of Yarra Ranges	44	19	43%
Eastern Region	706	303	43%

(ABS Census 2016) *COB identified as 'Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM)'

- It is generally acknowledged that statistics based on citizenship or country of birth does not truly reflect the number of people who identify as Macedonian.
- There were 17,631 Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM) persons in Victoria at the last census (ABS 2016).
- The median age of the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM) population is 58 years compared to 37 years for the total Victorian population (ABS 2016).

Language: Macedonian-speaking people in the Eastern Region

Local Government Area	Total number of people speaking Macedonian at home	50-59 years	60-69 years	70-79 years	80 years and over	Total number of Macedonian speaking people aged 60 and over	Macedonian speaking people aged 60+ as a % of the Macedonian speaking population
City of Boroondara	239	54	35	27	26	88	37%
City of Knox	118	10	30	12	4	46	39%
City of Manningham	542	92	84	107	64	255	47%
City of Maroondah	70	4	15	3	4	22	31%
City of Monash	202	36	43	22	27	92	46%
City of Whitehorse	169	22	42	31	26	99	59%
Shire of Yarra Ranges	54	13	4	9	0	13	24%
Eastern Region	1394	231	253	211	151	615	44%

(ABS Census 2016)

- The Macedonian language belongs to the Slavonic group of languages together with Slovenian, Serbian, Croatian and Bulgarian.
- Macedonians who arrived in the first three waves of migration generally have lower levels of English proficiency.
- At the 2016 Census, 79.5% of the FYROM-born community spoke Macedonian at home (The State of Victoria (Department of Premier and Cabinet) 2018).
- 24.2% of the FYROM-born population in Victoria identified as speaking English 'not-well' or 'not at all' (The State of Victoria (Department of Premier and Cabinet) 2018).
- Not all people who identify as Macedonian can read Macedonian.

Religion:

- According to the 2016 Census, the FYROM-born population in Victoria identified as the following religions (Victorian Multicultural Commission 2008):
 - Eastern Orthodox - 53% (9,336)
 - Christian – 26.6% (4,693)
 - Islam – 10.6% (1,861)
 - Catholic – 0.4% (76)
 - No religion – 4.5% (797)
- Highly ritualistic religious practices are used to mark major occasions such as births, marriages and deaths.
- Some Orthodox Macedonians observe fasting periods.

Attitudes and Issues with Ageing:

- Traditionally older people are highly respected and are incorporated into decision-making structures and to mediate disagreements.
- Traditionally in Macedonia it is the responsibility of the family to care for their older family members.
- Older Macedonian-born people may be reluctant to accept services such as home and personal care or respite care because it may be seen as shameful and as a failure to fulfil ones duty to the family.
- Macedonians may have some concerns about unknown people coming into their homes.

Attitudes to Disability and Mental Illness:

- Mental illness and disability are stigmatised and are not openly discussed within the community.

Customs / Values:

- The importance of Macedonian tradition is passed on from generation to generation.
- There is a strong focus on family life over the individual within the Macedonian community.
- Traditionally, the extended family is the norm. Sons are often encouraged to live with their parents after marriage.
- A patriarchal social structure is the norm, where women and men have specific and generally separate roles in decision-making processes.
- Traditional food is largely vegetarian, although meat consumption in Australia is high.

Communication Styles:

- Macedonian-born people value eye contact in conversation.
- Handshakes are an appropriate form of greeting for both men and women.

Naming Conventions:

- It is important to use titles such as Dr., Mr., Mrs, etc, particularly with older Macedonians.
- Within the Macedonian culture, other Macedonians may call older people 'Aunt' or 'Uncle'.

Health Beliefs and Practices:

- Generally Macedonian-born people have a fatalistic attitude to illness, believing it is 'meant to happen'. Older Macedonians may attribute causes of illnesses to the evil eye, a curse and witchcraft.
- Generally the role of western medicine is understood and well accessed by Macedonians. The advice of the doctor is highly respected.
- Herbal remedies or spiritual healers may also be used together with prescribed medication.
- Community services are generally not well understood and therefore they may not be accessed.

Greetings:

English Greeting	Macedonian	Closest English Pronunciation
Hello	Здраво	ZDRAVO
Goodbye	Пријатно	PRIJATNO
Yes	Да	DA
No	Не	NE
Thankyou	Благодарам	BLAGODARAM

- The Macedonian language is phonetic, which means it is spelt as it is said.

Key Macedonian Festivals / Significant Dates:

- St Ilijas Day (Ilinden Uprising Day) *2nd August*
- Independence Day *8th September*
- A variety of other cultural festivals and religious celebrations based around the Orthodox calendar are observed throughout the year. For example: Name Days (*Imenden*), when the person who bears the name of a Saint celebrates their patron Saint (this day is just as important as birthdays).
- Each village also has a patron saint and holds celebrations for their saint.

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

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

Aged Care & Disability Support Services

Migrant Information Centre

Aged & 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

Migrant Information Centre (Eastern Melbourne)

www.miceastmelb.com.au



other services so they can continue 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.

Senior Citizens Groups

For more information, please contact local councils or the Migrant Information Centre (Eastern Melbourne) on (03) 9275 6905.

Name of the Club	LGA	Venue	Contact
Macedonian Senior Citizens' Group of Manningham	Manningham	Ajani Centre 284 Thompsons Rd Lower Templestowe, 3107	Ph: 0412 815 818

Other Support Services

Macedonian Community Welfare Association (MCWA)

Address: Suite 312, 1 Thomas Holmes Street, Maribyrnong VIC 3032

Ph: 1800 988 767

Email: info@mcwa.org.au

The Macedonian Community Welfare Association (MCWA) is a statewide not-for-profit community based organization. Our aim is to provide a high quality and culturally sensitive service to the aging, elderly and people with disabilities of Victoria and provide wellness and re-enablement services through best practice and compliance.

Victorian Multi-Ethnic Slavic Welfare Association Inc. (VMESWA)

Address: 247-251 Flinders Lane, Melbourne VIC 3000

Ph: (03) 9639 1930

The Victorian Multi Ethnic Slavic Welfare Assoc. is a non-government, non-political and non-religious organisation which provides information and assistance to elderly people who have migrated from the Former Yugoslavia (Serbia, Macedonia, Croatia, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Macedonia, and Slovenia).

References:

Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2016, *Census of Population and Housing*, viewed 23 March 2022, <<https://auth.censusdata.abs.gov.au/webapi/jsf/dataCatalogueExplorer.xhtml>>.

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, Sydney, pp. 286-301.

Jupp, J., (ed.), 2001, *The Australian People: An Encyclopaedia of the Nation, its People and their Origins*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, pp. 571.

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 Victoria (Department of Premier and Cabinet), 2018, Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia-born: Victoria Community Profiles: 2016 Census, The State of Victoria, Department of Premier and Cabinet.

Victorian Multicultural Commission, 2008, *The Former Yugoslavia-Born Community in Victoria*, Fact Sheet No. A-22, viewed April 2010, <<http://www.multicultural.vic.gov.au/images/stories/pdf/fyr-of-macedoniafs-24apr08.pdf>>.