

Vietnamese Cultural Profile

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

There are over 150,000 Vietnamese-born people living in Australia including people of Chinese (usually Cantonese) ancestry and ethnic Vietnamese as well as a number of smaller minority groups including the Khmer and Hmong. As a result there are many different cultural influences on people who were born in Vietnam.

Migration:

- There have been three main waves of migration to Australia. The first wave began in 1975 and comprised mainly of an educated and privileged sector. The next commenced in 1978 with the large-scale exodus of 'boat people' from Vietnam, initially arriving directly in Australia, but later via refugee camps in Malaysia, Indonesia, Thailand, the Philippines and Hong Kong.
- From 1992 onwards, family reunions resulted in a third wave of arrivals.

Local Demographics: Vietnamese-born residents in the Eastern Region

Local Government Area	Total Vietnamese -born Population	50-59 years	60-69 years	70-79 years	80 years and over	Total number of Vietnamese -born people aged 65 and over	People aged 65+ as a % of the Vietnamese -born population
City of Boroondara	1,977	374	198	54	27	151	8%
City of Knox	1,252	351	179	48	16	125	10%
City of Manningham	1,022	277	184	59	30	161	16%
City of Maroondah	441	77	81	28	4	64	15%
City of Monash	2,808	621	387	101	68	299	11%
City of Whitehorse	2,353	494	409	140	64	355	15%
Shire of Yarra Ranges	132	13	7	3	3	8	6%
Eastern Region	9,985	2,207	1,445	433	212	1,163	12%

(ABS Census 2016)

- There were 80,787 Vietnamese-born persons in Victoria at the last census (ABS 2016).
- The median age of the Vietnamese-born population is 45 years compared to 37 years for the total Victorian population (ABS 2016).

Language: Vietnamese-speaking people in the Eastern Region

Local Government Area	Total number of people speaking Vietnamese at home	50-59 years	60-69 years	70-79 years	80 years and over	Total number of Vietnamese speaking people aged 65 and over	Vietnamese speaking people aged 65+ as a % of the Vietnamese speaking population
City of Boroondara	2,050	241	140	36	20	110	5%
City of Knox	1,186	214	65	21	11	66	6%
City of Manningham	719	105	80	29	14	72	10%
City of Maroondah	431	55	43	13	6	31	7%
City of Monash	2,982	410	240	57	55	199	7%
City of Whitehorse	2,068	281	259	79	39	213	10%
Shire of Yarra Ranges	149	13	11	0	0	3	2%
Eastern Region	9,585	1,319	838	235	145	649	7%

(ABS Census 2016)

- The national language of Vietnam is Vietnamese.
- At the 2006 Census, 83% of the Vietnamese population in Victoria spoke Vietnamese at home, 10.7% spoke Cantonese, 0.9% spoke Mandarin and 3.3% spoke only English (ABS 2016).
- Depending on their ethnic background, Vietnamese-born people may speak Chinese (usually Cantonese), English, French and Khmer.
- 32.7% of the Vietnamese-born population in Victoria identified as speaking English 'not-well' and 7.1% spoke English 'not at all' (ABS 2016).
- 21.1% of the Vietnamese-born population in Victoria assessed themselves as speaking English 'very well' and 34.7% as 'well' (ABS 2016).

Religion:

- A large proportion of Vietnamese-born people are Buddhists (47.1%) (ABS 2016).
- 19.6% of Vietnamese-born people in Victoria identify as being Catholic (ABS 2016).
- Vietnamese also practice Taoism, Islam, Protestantism, Cao Dai, and Hoa Hao.
- Vietnamese Buddhists may fast on specific days in the lunar calendar months. Catholic Vietnamese may fast on Good Friday and on Ash Wednesday.

Attitudes and Issues with Ageing:

- Traditionally elderly parents are taken care of by the family.
- In Vietnam, elders were the leaders in families and had a strong influence in decision-making. In Australia the elders no longer have power, money or land, and become financially dependent on their children, creating a role reversal.
- Older Vietnamese people can become socially and culturally isolated from the younger generation.

Attitudes to Disability and Mental Illness:

- Some Buddhist Vietnamese people may believe that they reap what they sow, or that disability is the result of misdeeds done in past lives.
- Traditionally, mental illness is a shameful thing within the Vietnamese culture. Mental illness is often feared or denied, and those who are ill are hidden away by their families until the family can no longer care for them.

Attitudes to Death and Palliative Care:

- For further information please see resource:

Palliative Care for Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Communities: Cultural profiles to assist in providing culturally sensitive Palliative Care, 2009, Migrant Information Centre (Eastern Melbourne),

http://www.miceastmelb.com.au/documents/pdaproject/Palliative_care_resource_for_workersAug2009.pdf

Customs / Values:

- Respect for elders is an important cultural value. Insults to elders or ancestors are very serious and can often lead to severed social ties.
- In general, the Vietnamese culture values respect for authority and avoidance of conflict.
- The traditional Vietnamese family is patriarchal; the mother is considered the home minister (noi tuong) and is responsible for family harmony, the family budget and family schedules.
- In the Vietnamese community the benefit of the family and community comes before the individual.
- Vietnamese people tend to be polite, guarded and non-confrontational. Disagreement may be expressed in the form of non-compliance, or not answering a question.
- Modesty and privacy are important cultural values.

Communication Styles:

- To show respect, Vietnamese people bow their heads and don't look a superior or elder in the eye.
- Generally Vietnamese women do not shake hands with each other or with men. Many may greet by bowing slightly to each other.
- It is disrespectful to touch another person's head. Only an elder can touch the head of a child.
- Vietnamese people may say 'yes' to indicate that they are listening, this may not indicate that they agree. If a Vietnamese person does not understand something they may also smile or laugh to hide this and mask their embarrassment.
- Speaking in a loud tone with excessive gestures is generally considered rude.

Naming Conventions:

- Vietnamese names are traditionally written with the surname first, followed by their middle name, with their given name last. Most names can be used for either gender.
- Vietnamese people prefer to be addressed, using their title. For example, Dr. Mr. and Mrs.
- Many Vietnamese people have also adopted western names.

Health Beliefs and Practices:

- Self-medication in the Vietnamese community is common.
- Many use traditional remedies in conjunction to western health care. Chinese medicines such as herbal remedies, tonics and massage are used. Acupuncture, pinching, pulling on the skin, rubbing oiled skin with the edge of a coin or spoon (cao gio), or cupping may also be used. These practices may result in bruises or marks.

Greetings:

English Greeting	Vietnamese	Closest English Pronunciation
Hello	CHA `O Ô / Ã	CHJOW ONG / BAA
Yes	DA	ZAA
No	KNÔNG	KHYONG
Thankyou	CÁM ON	KOME -EARN

Key Vietnamese Festivals / Significant Dates:

- Vietnamese follow the lunar calendar.
- Vietnamese Catholics celebrate Easter from Thursday to Saturday, concluding with a family gathering on Saturday night. Vietnamese Catholics celebrate Christmas with a family gathering after midnight Mass.
- Chinese (Lunar) New Year *1st day of the 1st Lunar Month (Jan/Feb)*
- Ancestor's Day *April*
- Commemoration of the fall of Saigon *30th of April*
- Doan Ngo *June*
- Wandering Souls Day *August*
- Lantern Festival *15th August in lunar calendar*

Local services useful for Vietnamese-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 (Eastern Melbourne) (MIC) Aged & Disability Services

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

Ph: (03) 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 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	Information
Australian Vietnamese Association (AVA) Boroondara Senior Citizen Club	Boroondara	533 High Street Kew, 3101 Ph: 0411 614 456	A range of activities including talking, sharing stories, news, skills, experiences. Gentle Qigong exercises for Health and wellbeing. Internet sessions.

Other Social Support Groups for Vietnamese Seniors

Name of Organisation & Contact Details	LGA	Venue	Information
Vietnamese Senior Cultural Association	Boroondara	Ashburton Seniors Centre 296 High Street, Ashburton, 3147 Ph: 0412 157 228	Members enjoy fun exercises and cultural activities to maintain good physical, mental health and preservation of Vietnamese culture.
Indo-Chinese Planned Activity Group	Whitehorse	Mountain View Cottage 25 Mountain View Rd, Nunawading Ph: (03) 9429 1307	Available first time to older Indochinese community in 1989, the IERA-VIC's Planned Activity Group (PAG) is outreach programs that assist frailly aged and disabled Indochinese in various forms.
Indo-Chinese Elderly Association in the Eastern Suburbs Inc.	Whitehorse	2 Holland Road, Blackburn South, 3130 Ph: (03) 9878 6409	Assist frail older people be more independent at home and in community. Exchange and share life experience in Australia. Share cultures. Support people.

Other Key Contacts

Australian Vietnamese Women's Association Inc.

Address: 30-32 Lennox Street, Richmond North VIC 3121 (Head Office)

Ph: (03) 9428 9078

Provide information about Vietnamese community. Specific services include Planned Activity Groups for older people from Vietnamese background in central area.

Indochinese Elderly Refugees Association Victoria

Address: Ground Floor, Suite B, 108 Elizabeth Street, Richmond VIC 3121

Ph: (03) 9429 1307

Website: <https://iera.org.au/>

The Indochinese Elderly Refugees Association Victoria (IERA-VIC) is a not for profit and state-wide organization. The IERA-VIC focuses on assisting the Indochinese elderly persons in their resettlement process and helps to preserve and promote the members' cultural heritage. Particularly, through services and activities.

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