

# CALD Society



## Introduction

**The needs and issues faced by Australians from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds are complex. Culture impacts every aspect of the way we live. To be culturally aware is to recognise that we are all shaped by our cultural background (as individuals and organisations).**

CALD communities continue to experience a range of barriers in aged care services, disability, workforce participation, health, family, youth and children's services. Providing culturally and linguistically appropriate services is critical, if organisations wish to engage and adequately service the needs of people from CALD.

As a provider of aged care and family and community services across Victoria and Tasmania, Baptcare's approach to diversity is influenced by our commitment to equity and social inclusion, and by our roots in the Christian tradition which from its origin has been one of the world's great forces for cultural and linguistically diversity and inclusion.

## History and background

Since 1788 close to 10 million people have moved from across the world to start a new life in Australia. They have arrived in waves, encouraged by developments like the 1850s gold rushes, or to escape adverse conditions at home such as the Industrial Revolution's social upheavals in nineteenth century Britain, economic and humanitarian events following the two world wars, and the aftermath of the Vietnam War in the 1970s. Since the late 1990s increasing numbers of people seeking asylum fleeing conflict in the Middle East, Sri Lanka and Africa arrived in Australia. The Australian and New Zealand Governments have had arrangements in place since the 1920s to facilitate the free flow of people between the two countries. At 30 June 2013, an estimated 640,800 New Zealand citizens were present in Australia.

During the 20th Century, Australia moved from the White Australia policy, through migration from non-English speaking Europe, to one of the most culturally diverse nations in the world. With 40 per cent of Victorians either born overseas or with a parent born overseas, Victoria is the most multicultural state in Australia.

Indeed, by 2021, it is predicted that more than 30 per cent of senior Australians will be from CALD backgrounds. Many of these CALD seniors will also be financially and socially disadvantaged.

Culture impacts the way we conduct every aspect of our lives – our language, our values, codes of behaviour, our food, clothing, housing, art, music, crafts, leisure, rules of politeness, concept of humour, parenting and family relationships, expectations of work, interaction with the media, assumptions about the role of government and the law, our view of history, and our response to other races and cultures.

In seeking to understand each other, we should be cautious about merely accepting assumptions and cultural stereotypes about other groups, as these will rarely be adequate to understand the true measure of a person's life experience and their view of the world. Like individuals, organisations also have cultural roots. Many generalist service providers (such as Baptcare) were established within the dominant Anglo-Australian culture. Today, however, any serious effort to provide support services in culturally and linguistically diverse Australia will require us to embrace a more world diverse view.

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### *Current context and situation*

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Newly arrived migrants and refugees experience language barriers, financial hardship, social isolation and lack of community engagement, poor emotional wellbeing, difficulties in accessing affordable housing, difficulties in gaining employment and education (FECCA, 2014-2015; AGWS, 2014).

The rapid ageing of people from CALD backgrounds poses significant challenges. Some of those included lack of awareness and difficulties negotiating the complex service and support system due to limited communication in the English language, sourcing bilingual workers to establish a multicultural workforce, families from CALD backgrounds may play a key role in providing care, but broader family perspectives can be at odds with an individual older person's view and opinions within the family network (Lord Mayor's Charitable Foundation, 2014).

Despite some increase over the past decade, the proportion of older people from CALD backgrounds in residential aged care remains low. Those requiring home care may miss out due to inability of service providers to match them with an aged care worker who is of the same cultural and linguistic background.

Families experience difficulties coping with settlement issues in Australia as they are often not in a position to provide effective support for a child in school. Transitioning into Australia's primary and secondary education systems presents enormous challenges for recently arrived school aged children from CALD backgrounds, especially for those who arrive with minimal or no understanding of the English language.

These young people find it difficult to integrate into the regular classroom, struggle with the curriculum, their capabilities remaining unacknowledged and undervalued, some refusing to attend school and some younger children may be bed wetting for the first time in their life, requiring significant emotional support and counselling (AGWS, 2014).

Planning for, and responding to the needs of people from CALD backgrounds require a detailed understanding of their number and circumstances. Research to derive this information could assist governments and generalist service providers, such as Baptcare, in planning and developing support services that meet appropriately the needs of people from CALD backgrounds.



## *Baptcare's Mission & Christian Witness*

The Christian tradition is rooted from beginning to end in the values of equality, diversity, and inclusion of all peoples into God's family. The first book of the Bible, Genesis, presents a common origin for the human race (Genesis 1 & 2). Created in the image of God, all people are valuable and to be valued. The final book, Revelation, declares that people from every tribe, nation and language group will celebrate before God as part of his everlasting reign (Revelation 7:9, 14:6).

Reaching the point where one can embrace diversity requires that we divest ourselves of some of our closely held stereotypes of other peoples and nations. Though a Jew, Jesus accepted and related to the people of neighbouring Samaria in his ministry and teaching. The enmity and division between Jews and Samaritans was based on a history of ethnic and religious tension and at times violence. Religious Jews regarded Samaritans as heretics and unclean. Yet Jesus discussed theology with a Samaritan woman while accepting a drink at a local well and made a Samaritan traveller the hero of one of his best known teaching stories (the parable of the good Samaritan, Luke 10:25-37).

Baptcare's Mission of "Partnering for fullness of life with people of all ages, cultures, beliefs and circumstances" enshrines our Christian heritage. It reflects one of the definitive statements on Biblical diversity that was made by the Apostle Paul "There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus" (Paul's Letter to the Galatians, 3:28).

## *A better future / what needs to change*

Information provision has been identified as one of the key areas that still requires improvements, despite positive progress, as is awareness of the existence of relevant support services and how they can be accessed. As cultural and linguistic diversity in Australia increases, so does the delivery of individual experiences and needs, with respect to services and supports which are critical for maximising full and effective participation of people from CALD backgrounds and their communities.

As a generalist provider, Baptcare serves communities across Victoria and Tasmania. Our program areas aim to meet the needs of people across the age spectrum requiring some level of support through the provision of residential aged care, retirement living, in-home care, family and children's services, disability and asylum seeker support.

Baptcare has an ongoing commitment to diversity. We undertake diversity planning at a number of levels. These include listening to the individuals with whom we work to best shape service responses to their needs, consulting with groups, learning collaboratively with other service providers, and partnering with organisations that represent and advocate for diverse communities (Baptcare, 2014).

Baptcare's Diversity Plan Template 2016-17 includes a commitment to making information on diverse cultures available to staff, incorporation of cultural awareness as part of our workplace induction program, encouragement of cross-cultural professional development opportunities, ensuring relevant language flash cards are available at all Baptcare sites, ensuring relevant staff are trained in using interpreters, recruitment processes to include bilingual skills as an advantage to employment with Baptcare, and involvement in multicultural festival days.

## Policy position

- 1** Baptcare recognises that people from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds are a group with additional needs. Baptcare is committed to promoting equity of access to and outcomes in care and support for people of CALD backgrounds, as an outworking of our core values and our commitment to social inclusion.
- 2** Baptcare commits to a continuing process of culturally inclusive practice, including adopting culturally inclusive practice standards; targeted employment of bilingual staff wherever possible; and training in culturally inclusive practice and cross-cultural communication.
- 3** Baptcare commits to becoming a more culturally inclusive organisation, including undertaking an annual organisational audit; governance and committee structures to increasingly reflect the cultural and linguistic diversity of stakeholders; make our sites more culturally inclusive via design of the physical environment, relevant in language signage and items of cultural relevance; the use of ethnic media and community events in Baptcare promotional strategies.
- 4** Baptcare commits to building collaborative relationships wherever possible with ethno-specific and multicultural organisations.
- 5** Baptcare urges the Commonwealth Government and the Victorian State Government to continue to acknowledge and resource the role of ethno-specific and multicultural services assisting people from CALD backgrounds to better understand and access the aged, disability, family, youth and children's services, asylum seeker and other health and community services.

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Baptcare is a customer focused, faith centred and purpose driven organisation working across Victoria and Tasmania, providing residential and community care for older people and support to children, families, and people with disability, financially disadvantaged people and people seeking asylum.