

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

## German Cultural Profile

**PLEASE NOTE:** This profile provides an overview of some of the cultural information relating to the diverse groups of German-born 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. This is an update of the profile in the Home and Personal Care Kit developed by the MIC in 2004.

### Introduction:

There are German speaking people living in the Eastern Region of Melbourne from Germany as well as from Austria, Estonia, Lithuania, Latvia, Switzerland, parts of Denmark, Poland, some former Yugoslavian countries and other countries. The majority of statistics available relate to the German-born population.

### Migration:

- There is a long history of migration to Australia by people born in Germany. However, in the Eastern Metropolitan Region of Victoria, they largely arrived post World War II.
- 41% of the German-born community in the Eastern Region are aged over 65 years.

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

| Local Government Area | Total German-born Population | 50-59 years | 60-69 years | 70-79 years | 80 years and over | Total number of German-born people aged 65 and over | People aged 65+ as a % of the German-born population |
|-----------------------|------------------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------------|---|--|
| City of Boroondara    | 745                          | 203         | 153         | 95          | 69                | 230   | 31%  |
| City of Knox          | 1340                         | 270         | 366         | 286         | 154               | 638   | 48%  |
| City of Manningham    | 670                          | 162         | 192         | 129         | 50                | 282   | 42%  |
| City of Maroondah     | 751                          | 188         | 198         | 145         | 61                | 302   | 40%  |
| City of Monash        | 1028                         | 175         | 277         | 226         | 88                | 459   | 45%  |
| City of Whitehorse    | 816                          | 175         | 197         | 169         | 84                | 347   | 43%  |
| Shire of Yarra Ranges | 1269                         | 356         | 333         | 196         | 67                | 439   | 35%  |
| Eastern Region        | 6619                         | 1529        | 1716        | 1246        | 573               | 2697  | 41%  |

(ABS Census 2006 & MAV Data 2006)

- The median age of the German-born population is 59 years compared to 37 years for the total Victorian population (Victorian Multicultural Commission 2008).

## Language: German-speaking residents in the Eastern Region

| Local Government Area | Total number of people speaking German at home | 50-59 years | 60-69 years | 70-79 years | 80 years and over | Total number of German speaking people aged 65 and over | German speaking people aged 65+ as a % of the German speaking population |
|-----------------------|--|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------------|---|--|
| City of Boroondara    | 693  | 83          | 88          | 79          | 82                | 203   | 29%  |
| City of Knox          | 1294   | 150         | 282         | 283         | 244               | 692   | 53%  |
| City of Manningham    | 499  | 61          | 116         | 110         | 54                | 227   | 45%  |
| City of Maroondah     | 546  | 57          | 119         | 126         | 54                | 250   | 46%  |
| City of Monash        | 843  | 81          | 193         | 210         | 73                | 409   | 49%  |
| City of Whitehorse    | 732  | 91          | 125         | 163         | 78                | 323   | 44%  |
| Shire of Yarra Ranges | 982  | 136         | 217         | 154         | 69                | 356   | 36%  |
| Eastern Region        | 5589   | 659         | 1140        | 1125        | 654               | 2460  | 44%  |

(ABS Census 2006 & MAV Data 2006)

- The national language of Germany is German.
- In the German-speaking area of Europe, various dialects are spoken in different regional areas. For example, Swiss, Austrian German and Frisian (North Germany), Bavarian and Schwabian in Germany.
- The English proficiency of the German-born population in Melbourne is very high. However, as individuals age conditions (such as dementia) can contribute to a loss of English capacity and a reversion to the mother tongue.
- 33.9% of the German-born population in Victoria assessed themselves as speaking English 'very well' and 10.5% as 'well' (Victorian Multicultural Commission 2008).
- 1.1% of the German-born population in Victoria identified as speaking English 'not-well' and 0.2% spoke English 'not at all' (Victorian Multicultural Commission 2008).

## Religion:

The German-born population in Victoria identified as the following religions at the 2006 Census (Victorian Multicultural Commission 2008):

- Western Catholic – 29.0% (8,145)
- Lutheran – 28.0% (7,865)
- Anglican – 3.3% (919)
- Judaism – 2.4% (676)
- Presbyterian – 1.2% (337)
- Other religions – 10.8% (3,035)
- No religion – 17.4% (4,898)

## **Attitudes and Issues with Ageing:**

- Older Germans prefer to stay in their own homes as long as possible. They highly value their independence.
- German-born people are very reluctant to enter nursing homes and would rather pay for services or depend on support of family members.

## **Attitudes to Disability and Mental Illness:**

- In Australia, German-born people have similar attitudes to mental illness as Anglo-Australians. There is still some stigma attached to mental illness, but generally German-born Australians are accepting of people with mental illness.

## **Customs / Values:**

- German-born people may ask visitors to their home to remove their shoes.
- Punctuality is considered a virtue.
- Cleanliness and order in actions and life are valued.
- Family structure is organised around the nuclear family.
- German-born people have a relatively open attitude towards equal roles for men and women, but more so among the younger generation.

## **Communication Styles:**

- German-born people will almost always let you know what they really think.
- German - born people can use a very direct style of communication.
- Assertive.
- Hand shaking is practiced whenever people meet or part.

## **Naming Conventions:**

- German-born people prefer if titles are used when addressing them. For example, Mr, Mrs or Dr. unless otherwise directed.

## **Health Beliefs and Practices:**

- Western model of medicine is used in conjunction with alternative therapies.
- Homeopathy or Naturopathy may be used as alternatives.
- German-born people are disinclined to complain and therefore medical conditions may go undetected. They are also reluctant to go to hospital.

## Greetings:

| English Greeting | German                     | Closest English Pronunciation |
|------------------|----------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Hello            | Hallo                      | HALLO                         |
| Goodbye          | Auf Wiedersehen / Tschuess | AUF VEEDERSEIN / SHUSS        |
| Good Morning     | Guten Morgen               | GOOTEN MORGEN                 |
| Good Afternoon   | Guten Tag                  | GOOTEN TAAG                   |
| Yes              | Ja                         | YAA                           |
| No               | Nein                       | NINE                          |
| Thankyou         | Danke Schoen               | DANKE SHERN                   |
| Please           | Bitte                      | BITTE                         |

## Key German Festivals / Significant Dates:

- Tag der Arbeit (Workers Day) 1st May
- Tag der Deutschen Einheit (National Day) 3rd October
- Allerheiligen (All Saints Day) 1st November
- Heiligabend (Christmas Eve) 24th December
- Sylvester 31st December

\* 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 useful for German-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 | Ph: 9285 4888 |
| New Hope Migrant and Refugee Centre            | 18 Chester Street Oakleigh, 3166                       | Ph: 9563 4130 |

### 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: 9285 4888

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.

## **Tabulam and Templer Homes for the Aged**

Address: 31-41 Elizabeth Street, Bayswater, 3153

Ph: 9720 3711

Tabulam and Templer Homes for the Aged is strongly committed to the principle of ensuring that all older German speaking individuals have access to and are provided with services relevant to their needs and choices, including those with special needs. They provide residential high and low level care, independent living units, respite care, a day care program, Home and Community Care (HACC) Planned Activity Groups and Community Aged Care Packages (CACPs) packages.

## **Other Support Services**

### **Association of German Speaking Communities**

Address: PO Box 1043, Camberwell, 3124

Ph: 9215 7151

### **Australian German Welfare Society**

Address: 4th Floor, 24 Albert Road, South Melbourne, 3205

Ph: 9696 0907

Provides assistance to people of German background in Victoria.

## **Senior Citizens Groups**

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

| <b>Name of the Club</b>     | <b>LGA</b>        | <b>Venue</b>   | <b>Time / Day</b>                                       |
|-----------------------------|-------------------|--|---|
| German Senior Citizens Club | <b>Boorondara</b> | St Christopher's Hall<br>595 Riversdale Road,<br>Camberwell, 3124  | 10:00am – 3:00pm<br>2 <sup>nd</sup> Tuesday of<br>month |
| German Club Ringwood Inc.   | <b>Maroondah</b>  | Maroondah Masonic<br>Hall<br>24 Warrandyte Road,<br>Ringwood, 3134 | 7:00pm<br>1 <sup>st</sup> Saturday of<br>month          |

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