



# Cultural Diversity Toolkit

*Engaging with culturally and linguistically diverse  
communities in the Hume Region:  
A guide to assist service providers.*



# INTRODUCTION

This Cultural Diversity Toolkit aims to enhance the capacity of service providers to engage more effectively with people in the Hume region from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

With a view to promoting appropriate, respectful and responsive service delivery and a greater ability to understand the needs and preferences of clients, this resource offers information regarding country of origin, religious traditions and practices for a range of backgrounds. The information should complement, rather than replace, direct consultation with clients and carers with consideration of the individual needs of each service user remaining the primary focus.

It is strongly recommended that readers consult the ‘resources’ and ‘contacts’ sections when referring or introducing clients to services. The tools offered will help guide appropriate and sensitive recommendations. It is also important to view ethno-cultural leaders and members as valuable resources with much to offer toward efforts in bridging knowledge gaps and linkages to community networks.

We wish you every success in achieving positive outcomes and sustainable, supportive services for our diverse community members. With greater understanding of people’s needs, differences and similarities comes the ability to find innovative approaches that improve the quality of our work and the quality of our clients’ lives.

Kind regards,

The team at FamilyCare

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## 1. CULTURAL DICTIONARY

The cultural dictionary is a resource developed by the Migrant Resource Centre Canberra & Queanbeyan. For the purpose of this toolkit, only material pertaining to the largest locally diverse communities in the Hume region has been included.

The following country profiles have been prepared to assist service providers in becoming more aware of the cultural backgrounds of their clients. Whilst our community members have come from countries such as Albania, Greece, India, Italy, Lebanon and Turkey, their emigration may have taken place many years ago.

For some people it is very important to preserve their cultural identity, others however might maintain some aspects while adopting many of the ways specific to their new country. The level of acculturation will drastically vary between individuals. Making assumptions based on a person's country of origin can lead to misunderstanding the person's needs, create embarrassment or even offend.

Encouraging open communication with clients and their families is the best strategy in learning to build culturally respectful relationships and practices. The cultural dictionary can be used as a building block for service providers in gaining general cross-cultural knowledge.

## 1.1 AFGHANISTAN



### THE PEOPLE

#### Population

28,060,591 (Estimate 2002 GeoHive) Growth rate 3.48%

Ethnic groups include Pashtun (38%), Tajik (25%), Hazara (19%), Uzbek (6%). Minor ethnic groups include Aimaks, Turkmen, and Baloch.

#### Language

Dari (Persian) and Pashto are the official languages of Afghanistan. Although Pashto has quite an extensive literature, Dari is used for cultural expression and business and government transactions of the many dialects spoken. The Turkish Uzbek, Turkoman, and Kirgiz are most prevalent in the border regions.

#### Religion

More than 99% of the people of Afghanistan are Muslims, mainly of the Sunni sect. Most of the remainder, notably the Hazara, belong to the Shiite sect. Small colonies of Jews, Hindus and Parsis are scattered in the towns.



#### General Attitudes

Afghanistan has a rich cultural heritage, covering more than 5,000 years. The mode of living for Afghans who live outside of the city can be described as that of a peasant tribal society. Kinship is the basis of social life and determines the patriarchal character of the community. Religion plays a very important role in people's lives. Afghans are expressive and emotional and are well known for their hospitality.

#### Personal Appearance

Although Western style clothing is worn in Afghanistan,

the national dress (Afghani dress) *peran-n-tunban* is also worn on national days or religious days. Afghans who live in rural areas, wear traditional clothing. Most women completely cover their hair and bodies with a cloth called *chadari*. Men usually wear Western-style clothing. Because the people of Afghanistan are from a mosaic of ethnic and linguistic groups, every ethnic group has its own national dress for men and women.

### CUSTOMS AND COURTESIES

#### Greetings

A handshake is the customary greeting in Afghanistan. A slight bow or nod while shaking hands shows respect. A man does not shake a woman's hand unless she offers it first. Afghans of the same sex will often kiss each other on the cheek as a greeting and sign of affection. Afghans often ask about the family and the health of the other. Afghans generally stand when someone, especially an older or more prominent person, enters the room for the first time and again when someone leaves. When addressing others formally, professional titles are used.

#### Gestures

Objects are passed with the right hand or both hands, but not with the left hand alone. The soles of the feet should not point at any person. Slouching or stretching legs in a group is offensive. Out of respect and to maintain proper distance between genders, men and women do not always make eye contact during conversation. Men and women do not display affection in public, even if married.

#### Visiting

Afghanistan is a poor country, but it is rich in traditions and social customs. Hospitality is very important in the Afghan code of honour. The best possible food is prepared for guests even if other members of the family have to go without. A guest is always given a seat or the place of honour at the head of the room. Tea is served first to the guest to quench his/her thirst. Women and girls are always involved in the preparation of food. Afghan philosophy claims a guest is a gift from (or friend of) Allah. Visitors remove their shoes before entering carpeted areas of a home, although this is not often practiced in larger cities. Afghans accept gifts, but they do not open them in front of the giver. If offered gifts, refreshments, or invitations from a friend, it is polite to decline a few times before graciously accepting and thanking the host several times.

#### Eating

The traditional mode of eating in Afghanistan is on the floor. Everyone sits around on large colourful cushions, called *toshak*. These cushions are normally placed on the beautiful carpets, a *disterkhan* (table cloth) is



## 1.2 ALBANIA



spread over the floor or carpet before the dishes of food are brought. Food is usually shared communally; three or four people will share one large platter of rice and individual side dishes of stew (qorma), or vegetables. Home made chutneys, pickles, as well as fresh nan (bread) usually accompany the food. The traditional way of eating is with the right hand. Spoons may be used for puddings and teaspoons for tea. Because hands are used in eating, there is a hand washing ceremony before and after meals. Afghans rarely eat in restaurants.

### LIFESTYLE

#### Family

The family unit is strong in Afghanistan and provides its members with identity, security, and social organisation. The father is the undisputed head of the household. Large families with many children, especially boys, are preferred. The married sons remain until they are financially independent. Polygamy is permitted by Islamic law, but the man should provide for each wife equally, and he may only take a new wife after receiving permission from his first wives. The elderly are respected and cared for by younger members of the extended family.

#### Dating & Marriage

Dating, as practiced in the West, is not common in Afghanistan. Members of the opposite sex are rarely alone with each other unless married, related or engaged. Daughters are usually protected by their families to the point that they do not speak to strangers until married. Boys' schools have been separated from girls' schools, and many girls until recently received no schooling. Afghans love an excuse for a party. Births, engagements and weddings are celebrated in grand style. The birth of the first child, especially a male child, is a big occasion. Afghans view marriage as a union of two families as much as a union of two people. A Muslim holy man usually completes the marriage contract between the two families. Afghanistan has a low divorce rate.

#### Diet

The mainstays of the Afghan diet are rice, lamb, and bread (nan). Islamic law forbids the consumption of pork and alcoholic beverages. Tea is the most popular drink. Kebabs or fish grilled over charcoal and served with salads and hot fresh nan flat breads are very popular food for picnics.

### THE PEOPLE

#### Population

3,551,787 (Estimate 2002) Growth rate 0.88% Another 3-4 million Albanians live in neighbouring countries. 95% of the population is Albanian, descended from ancient Illyrians, 3% Greek, 0.5% Romanians, 0.4% Macedonians, 0.2% Montenegrins, the remainder Yugoslav and Gypsy.

#### Language

The Albanian language Shqip is descended from Illyrian. Albania adopted a Latin script in 1908. Two dialects, Gheg and Tosk were spoken in Albania, but the official language (adopted after 1945) is based on Tosk.

#### Religion

The majority (70%) of the population is Muslim (Sunni and Bektashi), while 20% are Orthodox Christians, and 10% Catholic.

#### General Attitudes

For Albanians, the family and ethnic heritage is of high value. Personal honour is also valued. Northern Albanians, particularly in the mountains, are known to be resourceful, courageous and hardy. They honour a tradition called the besa, (sworn truce). Continued social and economic turmoil has wearied the people.

#### Personal Appearance

Traditional, hand-made clothing is still worn in villages. Cotton and wool is preferred. Women in the north wear a headscarf and a fustancelle (a full, colourful skirt). Men wear a xhamadan (wool vest). Urban professional men wear suits and ties, while women wear dresses and skirts more than pants. Young people wear jeans, T-shirts and sneakers.

### CUSTOMS AND COURTESIES

#### Greetings

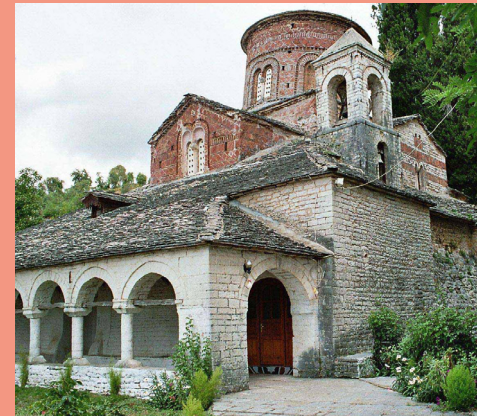
Albanians greet each other with a handshake, and a hug for friends. Women greet with a kiss on each cheek. Except for friends, the Albanians use: Zonja (Mrs), Zonjuse (Miss), or Zoteri (Mr).

#### Visiting

Visiting gives great pleasure to Albanians, and hospitality is a cultural event. Unplanned visits are frequent. Guests are greeted with: Mire se vini or Mire se erdhet (Welcome!). Visitors bring gifts for birthdays, but no gift is needed if they are invited for a meal. Gifts are only opened after the guests have left. Albanian hosts like to walk the guest some way down the road.

#### Eating

An Albanian breakfast consists of bread and butter, milk, eggs, jam, cheese and Turkish or espresso coffee. Lunch is usually the main meal, (1-2 pm). Vegetables are followed by rice soup flavour with veal or chicken, and salad. The main course may be gjelle (boiled beans with meat) or stuffed eggplants or peppers. Albanians eat with the fork in the left hand, knife in the right. The first toast is made to everyone's health and friendship.



### LIFESTYLE

#### Family

Urban families generally have one or two children, while rural families may have three or four. Usually, the father heads the family, while the women take responsibility for household work and caring for children. Men and women have equal social rights, and both parents usually work. Adult children often live with their parents, and take responsibility for the care of the elderly parents.

#### Dating & Marriage

Young people make their own choice of spouse, though rural families are still involved in the selection. Urban youth begin dating at about age 16, and go to movies or small cafe bars for social interaction. Men marry after age 26, while women tend to be in their early twenties.

#### Diet

The Albanian diet is strongly influenced by Greek, Turkish and Italian cuisine. Traditional dishes include fasule (boiled dried beans) cooked with onion, tomatoes and dried salt mutton or pastirma. Dairy products include yoghurt, cottage cheese, feta and kach kavall cheeses. Local fruits include apples, pears, peaches, figs and grapes. The alcoholic drink raki is often served before the main meal, and wine is served during or after a meal. Burek (bread stuffed with cheese and spinach) common throughout the region probably originated in Albania. Ice-cream is also popular, and Albanians living elsewhere are well known as ice-cream vendors.

## 1.3 DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO



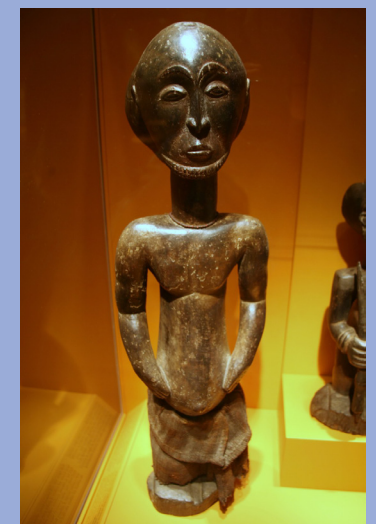
### THE PEOPLE

#### Population

55,847,279 (Estimate 2002 GeoHive) Growth rate:3.10%

#### Language

Although French is the official language and is used in larger businesses, education, and government administration, it is spoken by only about 10 percent of the population. Lingala is increasingly used as the national language. Regional languages are: Lingala, Kikongo, Tshiluba, and Swahili.



#### Religion

80% of the population is Christian. Fifty percent is Roman Catholic and 20% belongs to various Protestant organisations. Another 10% of the people participate in the indigenous Christian sect known as Kimbanguism. About 10% of the people are Muslim. The remaining 10% follow traditional beliefs.

#### General Attitudes

Most Bantu peoples share a common cultural heritage. Most distinctive, perhaps is the general politeness and genuine concern for the welfare of others. This politeness sometimes manifests itself as a gentle disposition and shyness with strangers, which outsiders occasionally interpret as reticence. Although they may seem shy, Zairians reciprocate open and sincere friendliness. In general, Zairians are careful not to offend. Individualism is acceptable only if it does not conflict with a group's needs. Because schedules are not as important as people, appointments may run 30 to 60 minutes late.

#### Personal Appearance

Western-style clothing is common in most urban areas. Zairian women wear a pagne, a long dress made of a five-yard length of fabric. Shorts and immodest attire are rarely worn by adults.



## 1.4 GREECE



### CUSTOMS AND COURTESIES

#### Greetings

In urban areas, men and women generally shake hands, smile, and greet each other verbally. Outside urban areas, men do not usually shake hands with women but will shake other men's hands.

#### Gestures

Pointing directly at a person with the index finger is impolite. Beckoning is done by waving all fingers. Objects are passed with the right hand or both hands.

#### Visiting

Visiting is important in Zaire and hospitality is traditional. Most visiting occurs in the home. Family and close friends often drop by unannounced, but strangers are expected to make arrangements in advance. When a person first visits a Zairian home, a gift is not appropriate. Small gifts, such as food or an item for the house, may be given after a relationship is established. If a Zairian offers to share a meal, the guest is first expected to show reluctance to join the host's table. But the guest should ultimately accept the offer. Not doing so is impolite. Zairians often judge the sincerity of their guests by the way they eat.

#### Eating

Meals are usually eaten with the fingers of the right hand only. When utensils are used, the continental style of eating is observed. Men and women eat from separate communal bowls. Hands are washed before and after each meal.

### LIFESTYLE

#### Family

The family is the most important focus in a Zairian's life. Although family structure varies greatly between the different ethnic groups, emphasis is placed on group goals and overall family welfare. Large extended families are the norm in Zaire.

#### Dating & Marriage

Casual dating habits only occur among the wealthy in large urban areas. Otherwise, if two young people meet and desire to date, the boy and his family seek permission of the girl's family for him to see her. Subsequent dating usually leads to marriage. Traditionally, marriage is a family affair and is at least partly arranged by parents.

#### Diet

Staple foods include cassava, rice, potatoes, bananas, yams, beans, corn, fish, peanuts, and various fruits and vegetables. Common fruits include mangoes, oranges, pawpaws, and coconuts.

### THE PEOPLE

#### Population

10,653,663 (Estimate 2002 GeoHive) Growth rate: 0.21%

#### Language

Greek is the official language of Greece. Turkish is spoken by 1% of the population and English and French are widely understood.

#### Religion

About 98% of the people belong to the Eastern (Greek) Orthodox Church, which is the official religion in Greece and quite powerful. About 1% of the population (mostly of Turkish origin) are Muslim.

#### General Attitudes

While women have gained greater prominence and rights in the last generation, Greek society is still male dominated. Men consider it a matter of honour to fulfil personal obligations to their families and others. They may attribute their failure to external circumstances rather than to personal inadequacies. Also, a man may praise the food served in his home as especially good, or be the hero of his own tales. Such self praise is not considered bragging. While Greece's older generations value family, religion, tradition and education, the younger generation tends to view status and friends as very important. Greeks like to "pass" time, not to "use" it. That is, they may not be prompt in keeping appointments and they consider it foolish to set a specific length of time for a meeting. Greeks are very proud of their cultural heritage, which they view as being central to Western civilisation.



#### Personal Appearance

Conservative dress is preferred. Traditional costumes are worn at folk festivals and on special occasions.

### CUSTOMS AND COURTESIES

#### Greetings

Greeks are often expressive in their greetings.

Friends and relatives hug and kiss when they greet one another. Otherwise, people shake hands. Young men often slap each other's back or arm at shoulder level instead of shaking hands. Close friends and family members are called by their first names, but acquaintances and strangers are addressed by their title.

#### Gestures

To indicate 'no', one can either tilt the head backwards or side to side. To indicate 'yes', one nods the head slightly forward. A Greek may smile not only when happy but sometimes when angry or upset. A puff of breath through pursed lips may be a sign to ward off the jealousy of the 'evil eye' after a compliment has been given or received. Hands are used a great deal in conversation, both to accompany and replace verbal expressions.

#### Visiting

It is very common for friends and relatives to drop by unannounced in small towns. This happens less often in large cities, but only because schedules are more hectic. Greeks enjoy having friends to their homes for dinner or for special occasions. If Greek hosts insist several times about anything (that a guest stay longer or eat more, for example), they usually mean it and guests try to accommodate them so as not to hurt their feelings.

#### Eating

Traditionally, the main meal of the day is lunch, served in the early afternoon. Due to changing work schedules, however, lunch is becoming less important, and dinner is the largest meal. It is impolite to leave the table before everyone has finished eating, or to leave food on the plate.



### LIFESTYLE

#### Family

It is vital that no member bring shame or dishonour on the family. If one's parents die, the family's older

siblings usually help the younger finish their education and get out on their own. The elderly are respected, addressed by courteous titles, served first and have much authority. Greeks care for their elderly parents at home when possible. If the parents must live in a home for the elderly, their children take care of all the arrangements and make frequent visits. Children are treated with firm discipline but their parents spend a large portion of their income to clothe, feed and educate them. Parents believe it is their duty to provide for a good education. They will always help their children, married or not, if they are able. Some newlywed couples live with their parents or in-laws until they can afford a home of their own.

#### Dating & Marriage

Traditionally, the man asks a woman's parents for permission to marry her. If the parents approve, the two date and become better acquainted during a long engagement. Such formalities have become rare, except among rural people. Young people socialise as they do throughout Europe and it is common for a couple to live together before or instead of marriage. The average age for marriage is between 20 and 26 for women and between 25 and 35 for men.

#### Diet

While tastes vary between urban and rural dwellers, certain foods are common to all Greeks, such as lamb, seafood, olives and cheese. Olive oil, garlic, onions and spices are widely used in cooking. Greek dishes such as souvlaki have become popular in Australia as fast foods. Everyday dishes include moussaka, bean soup, eggplant, stuffed tomatoes and pasta.





## THE PEOPLE

### Population

1,051,335,948 (Estimate 2002 GeoHive) Growth rate:1.55%

### Language

There are at least 300 known languages in India, 24 of which have one million or more speakers. Besides Hindi and English, there are 14 other official languages, including Bengali, Urdu, Punjabi, and Sanskrit. At least 30 percent of the population speaks Hindi. English is important for business and government and is the language of national communication. Hindustani, a blend of Hindu and Urdu, is spoken widely in northern India.

### Religion

India's constitution proclaims the country to be a secular state, which is particularly important in a society of such religious diversity. India is the birthplace of Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, and Sikhism - all of which believe in reincarnation. It is also the adopted home of most followers of Zoroastrianism. Slightly more than 82% of the people are Hindu. Hinduism is extremely diverse, polytheistic, rich in ceremony, and associated with the caste system. Although Hinduism lacks an authority structure, it does have clearly defined beliefs regarding the purpose of life. The caste system dictates that individuals must work their way up to the highest caste through reincarnation before they can exit life on earth to a better existence. Below the fourth caste (labourers) are the "Untouchables," with whom other Hindus are to have no contact, and who are usually poor and powerless. The caste system has been constitutionally abolished but continues to be practiced. It limits social and economic mobility for millions of Indians, and maintains the status of the privileged few. Almost 12% of the people are Muslim. Two percent of the people practice the Sikh religion, mostly in Punjab. The Sikh practice of tolerance is reflected in offers of free food and shelter to anyone who comes to their places of worship. Jains, though powerful in India, also make up less than 1%. Jains practice a reverence for life (ahimsa, literally "non-violence"), and self-denial (especially monks). Less than 3% of the population is Christian.

### General Attitudes

Indian people are religious, family oriented and philosophical. They believe strongly in simple material comforts and rich spiritual accomplishments. Abundant expressions of gratitude are typically saved for real favours rather than routine courtesies. Physical purity and spiritual refinement are highly valued. Fatalism is widespread in the country, as it is a component of the major religions of India. Indians are proud of a rich heritage that has produced numerous architectural

and artistic masterpieces. They are equally proud of being the world's most populous democracy where free elections have determined leadership since 1947.

### Personal Appearance

Women in India generally wear a saree, a long length of fabric draped in variations that can represent socioeconomic status and religious affiliation. They may also wear a colourful type of pantsuit with a long shirt that extends to the knee. Women wear considerable jewellery. Hindu women may wear a Bindi or red dot, on their foreheads. Traditionally this was a sign of femininity, gracefulness, and marital status, but in modern times it has become more often an optional beauty aid, with the colour of the Bindi frequently matching the wearer's outfit. After marriage, the Bindi, accompanied by white powder on the forehead (or vermillion powder in the part of her hair), signifies the woman's husband is alive; widows do not wear a Bindi. Men who are Sikhs wear turbans and specific items with religious significance, while Hindus and Muslims may wear a long shirt with pants, sometimes accompanied by a jacket or a vest.



## CUSTOMS AND COURTESIES

### Greetings

The namaste is the traditional greeting used in India. One's palms are pressed together (fingers up) below the chin and the term namaste (in the south, namaskaram) is spoken. For superiors or to show respect, a slight bow is added. "Hello," and "Hi" are also acceptable. Indians do not usually shake hands with or touch women in formal or informal gatherings. This is a sign of respect for a woman's privacy. It is polite to

use titles such as professor, doctor, Mr, Shri (for men), Shreemati (married women), Kumari (single women), or the suffix ji with a last name to show respect. The right hand is used for the salaam gesture of greeting and farewell with Muslims. Indians usually ask permission before taking leave of others.

### Gestures

Whistling is very impolite. Women do not wink or whistle; such behaviour is considered unladylike. Postage stamps are not licked, but water is provided to moisten them. Grasping one's own ears expresses repentance or sincerity. One's feet or shoes should not touch another person, and if they do, an immediate apology is necessary. Beckoning is done with the palm turned down, and pointing is often done with the chin. A person must cover the head when entering a Sikh shrine.

### Visiting

Most visiting occurs in the home, and visits between friends or family are often unannounced. The need for prior arrangements is increasing in large cities. At social gatherings guests are often adorned with a garland of flowers, which should be immediately removed and carried in the hand as an expression of humility. Guests repay the host's hospitality by giving gifts, such as specialty foods (fruits, sweets) from other areas of the country, or something for the children. Guests invited for a meal customarily bring sweets, flowers, or fruit for the hosts. Many Indians do not wear shoes inside the home. Most at least remove shoes before entering the living room. When visitors are ready to leave, they often indicate it by saying namaste. Among the more traditional elements of society, women may not be involved in social functions. Indians are too polite to say "no" to an invitation; if they cannot attend, they will more likely say "I'll try."

### Eating

Eating habits vary sharply between traditional and modern settings. Modern (most often urban) families will eat together and follow many Western customs. Traditional families may use the right hand instead of utensils for eating their food. Also, women may eat after other members of the family and any guests. Diners might drink from a communal cup; if so, the lips never touch it. A gesture of namaste can indicate one has had enough to eat. Some Hindus object to having their food handled by members of lower castes.

## LIFESTYLE

### Family

The basic social unit in India is the family, which takes precedence over the individual. Families are generally large, but the government is actively encouraging family planning to curb rapid population growth. Extended

families often live together or near each other. The elderly are respected and cared for by their families. The father is head of the household. A middle or upper-class father expects to financially take care of the children until they have finished their education and taken a job - regardless of how long it takes. Few women work outside the home. However, a growing number of urban women are part of the workforce, making important professional contributions to Indian society.



### Dating & Marriage

Dating practices of Western countries are not common in India, although urban residents are affected by Western standards. Traditional marriages are still arranged by parents, often with the consent of the bride and groom. Marriage is sacred to most Indians and is considered to endure beyond death. Chastity is the most treasured virtue of womanhood. Weddings are times of great celebration, expense and feasting. Ceremonies are often elaborate and vary widely from region to region. In many, the bride and groom exchange garlands and or words before they circle around a fire three to seven times to solemnize the marriage. Bright clothing, jewellery, and flowers are part of nearly every type of ceremony. Giving a dowry (money, land etc.) to the groom is still common for the bride's parents, even though the practice is illegal. Divorce rates are very low.

### Diet

Foods vary widely in India, depending on the culture and region. For example rice is a staple in the south, while wheat bread (roti) is the staple in the north. Indian meals are usually very spicy. Different types of curry (eggs, fish, meat, or vegetables in a spicy sauce) are popular. Vegetarianism is widely practiced, often for religious reasons. All castes have different food laws and customs, as does each religion. The Hindus consider cows to be sacred and will not eat beef or even use anything made of leather. Muslims eat no pork and drink no alcohol. Betel leaves and nuts are commonly eaten after meals to aid digestion.



## 1.6 IRAQ



### THE PEOPLE

#### Population

24,217,910 (Estimate 2002 GeoHive) Growth rate: 2.84%

Ethnic groups include Kurds (one-fifth of population), Chaldeans, Assyrians, Armenians, Turkomans, Iranians and Bedouins

#### Language

The majority of Iraqis speak Arabic, with variations in dialect according to region.

Modern standard Arabic is spoken by educated Iraqis and is the written language. Other languages spoken include Chaldean, Armenian, Syriac, Turkish dialects and Persian. English is the most widely used foreign language and is taught in Iraqi schools.

#### Religion

Islam is the recognised religion of Iraq, and 95% of the people practise Islam. There is no distinction between church and state. The two forms of Muslims in Iraq are the majority Shias (Shiites), and the minority Sunnis. The Sunnies were considered the orthodox branch of Islam. A small percentage of Iraq is Christian, and minorities include Yazidis and Kurds.



#### General Attitudes

Generally, reserve is the norm, and respect for the older generation is a key.

People always give up seats on the bus for older people. Men will offer a seat to women, especially if they have children. There is intense pride in national sovereignty, expressed in solidarity shown in national events. The level of women educated to university level has dropped over the last ten years.

#### Personal Appearance

The urban population dress conservatively, and most women wear a scarf or head shawl. In rural areas, men wear the galabea and loose pants. Effort is made to be clean and neat even when conditions are difficult.

### CUSTOMS AND COURTESIES

#### Greetings

Men greet other men with a kiss, and commonly hold hands. This is not the case for men and women.

Women do not shake hands with men. They may say

Salaam Alaykom (Peace be with you) or similar. First names are only used for greeting family and friends.

#### Gestures

Objects are always passed with the right hand or both hands, and it is impolite to point with the finger or signal to another person with the hand. Gesturing with the left hand is rude. The sole of the foot should never point toward someone. Crossing the legs is generally not considered polite.

#### Visiting

Friends and relatives visit unannounced, but otherwise warning is appreciated. Shoes are removed at the door, and usually slippers are provided. Guests wait till the host shows them to their seat. People often sit on cushions on the floor. It is polite to take a gift of flowers, wine or other small item. The hosts may decline several times before graciously accepting. The male host usually talks.

#### Eating

Women may eat in a different area, and serve the men. Food is prepared in abundance for the guests. The right hand is used only to eat, and food is often eaten in the hand.

### LIFESTYLE

#### Family

Couples can live either with the husband's extended family, or in a nuclear unit. Due to economic hardship, the extended family prevails. The oldest male heads the group, manages property and makes final decisions about issues like education, work and marriage. Women are likely to retain all domestic and child-rearing responsibilities even though they may work outside the home. Older women exercise authority over their son's wives and children. Male children are often given privileges over female children. A man inherits twice as much as a woman.

#### Dating & Marriage

In urban settings, women and men have more choice over their partner, but introductions (and outings) are often set up by members of the family. Arranged marriages used to be the norm, but not now. Since the Gulf war, the government decreed that men can marry war widows. Women are forbidden to marry non-Iraqi men. Divorce is accepted, but only if it is initiated by the man.

#### Diet

Devout Muslims do not eat pork, and eat only halaal meat. The Iraq diet is based around rice, unleavened bread, spiced meat dishes and stuffed vegetables. Strong coffee or tea is served before all meals. The main meal is usually mid-afternoon.

## 1.7 ITALY



### THE PEOPLE

#### Population

57,733,807 (Estimate 2002 GeoHive) Growth rate: 0.07%

#### Language

Italian is the official language. There are significant French and German-speaking minorities, and Slovene is spoken by some. Many Italians are bilingual.

#### Religion

Of the 85% professing a faith, nearly all Italians are Roman Catholic.

#### General Attitudes

Italians in the warm south enjoy a leisurely life and take their time to accomplish business. In contrast, those of industrialised northern Italy feel more pressure and view time as something not to be wasted. Television and other media unite regions so their identities, dialects and traditions are melting into one. Also, as standards of living rise and traditions disappear, social relations suffer and people find less time for one another.

#### Personal Appearance

Italians believe it is important to dress well at all times, regardless of where one goes. Dark glasses are not worn inside buildings. Italy is a major centre of the European fashion industry.

### CUSTOMS AND COURTESIES

#### Greetings

In Italy, guests are always introduced first. The handshake is the most common greeting. Persons of the same gender often walk arm in arm in public. Good friends may appear to greet each other with a kiss on both cheeks.

#### Gestures

The mouth should be covered when a person yawns or sneezes. Men remove their hats when entering buildings. It is impolite to remove one's shoes in the presence of others. Italians are known for their use of hand gestures during conversation, especially in the south. Hands are often used in communication instead of words.

#### Visiting

Italians enjoy visiting one another, especially on holidays and Sundays. Guests invited to dinner often take a bottle of good wine, a box of chocolates, or flowers to the host. Unless they are told otherwise, guests wait for the hosts to sit before they are seated, and they also wait for the hosts to begin eating before they eat.

#### Eating

When eating with guests, Italians do not usually hurry; a meal may last one to four hours. Compliments on the home and meal are appreciated by the hosts. It is appropriate for guests to give some attention to children in the family. The continental style of eating is used. During the meal a person's hands are kept above the table; to have hands in the laps is improper. At the table, it is impolite to stretch, even if the meal is over. Utensils are placed parallel to each other on the plate when a person is finished eating. A person does not leave the table before everyone is finished eating. Guests do not volunteer to help clean up.

### LIFESTYLE

#### Family

Strong, traditional ties bind the Italian family together. Family association is of great importance. A faster pace of life is affecting the extended family. With more family members working, fewer families can care for their elderly members.



#### Dating & Marriage

Dating is much the same as in other Western countries and is done either in groups or as couples. Marriage ceremonies follow general Catholic traditions. Divorce is now only granted after at least three years of legal separation.

#### Diet

An Italian breakfast is very light, consisting of a cup of coffee, and a roll. Lunch, the main meal, is around 1 p.m. A light dinner is eaten in the evening. Wine is a common drink at meals and is also widely used in cooking. Meat and tomato sauces are popular with various types of pasta. Veal is a favourite meat. Cheese is important in the diet, including ricotta, mozzarella, parmesan.

1.8 LEBANON



THE PEOPLE

**Population**  
3,694,708 (Estimate 2002 GeoHive) Growth rate:1.38%  
Ethnic groups are Arab (95%), and Armenian, Kurdish, Assyrian, Turkish, Greek.

**Language**  
Arabic is the official language and is spoken by all. French also enjoys official status. It and English are widely spoken by the educated. The Armenian minority also speaks Armenian and some speak Turkish. It is common for people to speak more than one language, even three or four.

**Religion**  
Lebanese society is based on religion. Every citizen carries an identity card on which their religion is listed. While over half of the people were Christian two decades ago, Christians only account for 25% of the population today. Most of the rest of the population is Islamic. The largest groups are the Shi'ite Muslims and Sunni Muslims. A significant number of Palestinian refugees remain, most without citizenship. There is a small Jewish minority.

**General Attitudes**  
Lebanon has had a long association with the West and has been deeply influenced by it. At the same time, traditional values and attitudes that differ from Western culture remain. Therefore, attitudes vary greatly among the people. Life in Lebanon is still fairly relaxed and slow paced. People tend to care more about personal relationships than time schedules. The Lebanese are very proud of their culture, heritage, and country.

**Personal Appearance**  
Western-style clothing is the standard in Lebanese cities. However traditional Muslim clothing, such as a woman's chador (long dress that covers the entire body and often worn over other clothing) is also worn. It is important to people of all classes to be clean, neat, and stylish. Conservative suits and modest attire are appropriate.

CUSTOMS AND COURTESIES

**Greetings**  
Lebanese people take social amenities seriously. When meeting strangers, acquaintances, or friends, it is important to exchange greetings, to inquire about the person's health and family, and in general to make polite small talk before getting down to business. Handshakes are common for both men and women. Close friends and relatives often appear to kiss each other on both cheeks upon meeting or departing. Titles such as "Dr." or "Professor" are used consistently where appropriate. In Arabic, these titles are commonly

used with a person's first name, but Lebanese are accustomed to hearing titles in English and French. Personal space is more limited

**Gestures**  
Pointing or beckoning with the index finger is impolite. To beckon another person, all fingers wave with the palm facing down. Objects are not handed to another person to hold, as this implies servant status. A closed fist should never be waved in the air. For many, it is offensive to pass or receive objects with the left hand. The right hand or both hands should be used. Knees may be crossed, but crossing an ankle over a knee risks offending any person toward whom the bottom of the foot is pointed. The soles of the shoes or feet should always face the earth and never another person. Eye contact is important. Men never curse in front of women. Public displays of affection, even between married couples, are not acceptable.



**Visiting**  
Hospitality is a prized tradition in Lebanon. People feel honoured to have guests in their homes, and they also love to visit others. Hosts always serve guests something to drink; usually tea or coffee is prepared and served without asking the guests. Hospitality requires that it be accepted, so a word of polite explanation is in order if it is refused. If invited to a meal, guests might bring flowers, a plant, a special dessert, or something for the home. Guests invited for lunch generally do not leave until after 4:00 pm and dinner guests are expected to stay the entire evening. It is extremely impolite to leave directly after eating.

**Eating**  
Unspoken rules of hospitality require the host to make guests feel completely welcome. Offering food is one way to do this and Lebanese hosts will be very insistent that their guest eat even if the guest refuses the food initially. Because it is often customary to refuse an offer a couple of times before accepting it, the host assumes the offer will eventually be accepted. Guests should at least try the food, but they can politely decline a full meal or more refreshments without offending the host. It is not appropriate to discuss business during a meal.

LIFESTYLE

**Family**

Lebanese families tend to be strong and closely knit. Cousins and other relatives are expected to have close personal relationships. In fact, cousins are generally as close as brothers and sisters. Discipline is strict, and children show respect for their parents and other elders. The father is head of the family. Mothers generally take care of the home and children. Many women who work outside the home do so out of necessity, not choice. Family loyalty is important. Lebanon has a class based society. The wealthy have access to fine education, good jobs, and luxuries, while the poor do not.

**Dating & Marriage**  
Traditionally, neither Christians nor Muslims dated. All marriages were arranged by the family. Today, Christians and many urban Muslim families follow Western dating habits. Because financial independence is customarily a prerequisite for marriage, men often wait to marry until their late 20s or early 30s. Women usually marry in their early 20s. Christians are generally opposed to divorce, although it is allowed by Islamic law for Muslims. Lebanese law provides for each religion to have a separate court system to handle matters of marriage, divorce, inheritance, and other such concerns, according to the different customs.

**Diet**  
The main meal of the day is eaten between noon and 3.00 pm. This meal may last two or more hours. Various stews are Lebanese specialties. The cuisine is often spicy and hot. But because of the warm climate, many dishes are also light, that is, they are vegetarian. A traditional meal for special occasions is the Meza. Kibbeh is a popular beef dish that can be baked, fried, or eaten raw.

1.9 SUDAN



THE PEOPLE

**Population**  
The population is 37,426,240 (Estimate 2002 GeoHive) Growth rate:2.79%

**Language**  
Arabic is spoken by about half the people, but it is the official language. Many dialects are spoken throughout the country. Arabic Juba is a unique dialect used in southern urban areas for communicating between different ethnic groups. Other languages spoken are Nubian, Dinka, Azanda, Bari, Nuer and Shilluk. Those with education speak good English.

**Religion**  
The majority of Sudanese are Sunni Muslim (70%), living mainly in the central and north areas. 5% of the population, living in the south, are Christian. Some of the population follows indigenous animist beliefs. Religious loyalties have a significant role in Sudanese politics.

**General Attitudes**  
Sudanese from the north are inclined to be polite, reserved, and cautious. They view whatever happens as the will of God presenting challenges. Sudanese value good humour, courtesy and strong family ties. The society is highly stratified , with respect given to those with wealth and status. Power may be reflected in having a government position, coming from a respected family, being a religious leader or being a chief (in the south). Rural wealth is measured by the size of one's herd (cattle among Africans, sheep, goats, camels for Arabs). Educated people earn respect as they are likely to obtain good positions.

**Personal Appearance**  
Western clothing is worn by urban men in the north, but traditional jalabia (long white robes) and imma (turbans) are worn in the towns as well as rural areas. Women need to cover themselves from head to ankle when in public (hijab). Southern men and women wear Western attire, and jewellery is a sign of affluence. Most women wear attractive locally made earrings and beads.

CUSTOMS AND COURTESIES

**Greetings**  
The northern Sudanese tend to be more formal than those from the South. Arabs greet with a light handshake to members of the same sex, and friends often embrace. A Muslim man does not touch a Muslim women in public. The common greeting is salaam aleykom (Peace be with you). Good friends sometimes exchange a casual Salaam. In the south, friends or relatives shake hands when greeting.





Generally, a verbal greeting is used. However, both men and women shake hands. The Bari phrases are 'do pure' (good morning) or 'do parana' (good afternoon).

#### **Gestures**

The left hand is never used for eating, and both hands should be used for passing items between people. Pointing with a finger is not polite, and in the north it is rude to point the sole of one's feet towards someone. Nodding the head downward means 'yes', and nodding up means 'no'.



#### **Visiting**

In the north, visiting among friends and relatives is seen as important in building and mending relationships. Visiting usually takes place in the home, with close friends and family visiting spontaneously. Arrangements are made if the person is less known. Religious holidays and special events offer the best opportunity for relaxed gatherings. It is considered best to visit mid-morning or evening, because at other times people may be sleeping or eating. Men and women generally socialise separately. Children are requested to play away from adults to enable conversation. Guests are served tea, coffee, soft drink or water, and when visiting for the first time, short stays are best.

For Sudanese in the South, visiting is extremely important in maintaining the extended family and social networks. Hosts will sometimes prepare a meal of goat, sheep or chicken for valued guests. In most cases, light refreshments are served. Short, casual visits are commonly exchanged between relatives and friends. Men and women often socialise together at social functions.

#### **Eating**

Two meals a day is the norm across Sudan, though urban residents eat three meals when they can afford to do so. Dinner (evening) is the main meal, and it is shared by the family. Men and boys generally eat separate from girls and women. People wash their hands before and after a meal, and only the right hand is used for eating.

Families do not often eat at restaurants. The food is often expensive, and of a lesser quality.

#### **LIFESTYLE**

##### **Family**

The Sudanese family is based around the extended family, and is headed by males. Three generations of males and their wives and children live in the same household or compound. Men are responsible for the herd, earning an income and leading the family in discipline. Children are punished harshly if they shame the family. Women clean and cook, look after young children and help with the farm and garden. They may also collect firewood and water. Women do not leave the house for 40 days after giving birth. Southern women in general have more equality with men than women in the North.

##### **Dating & Marriage**

Northern marriages are still arranged between cousins within families. A couple may usually however, refuse the match. The groom's family must pay a dowry to the bride's family, preferably as cash. Wedding celebrations last for days, and both families host feasts and parties. Young people in the south meet at markets, dances, schools and church functions. They are often permitted to go out together, but parents become involved when engagement takes place. Grooms also pay a dowry, often cattle or cash. The divorce rate is very low in Sudan.

##### **Diet**

Where possible, Sudanese people like to eat beef, chicken, goat or mutton to supplement the staples of millet, sorghum, and maize. In higher rainfall areas, cassava, potatoes, peanuts, mangoes and papaya are eaten. Other locally grown foods include guavas, grapes, bananas, okra, carrots, tomatoes, onions, cucumbers, citrus and pineapples. A thinly layered food made from flour paste (kisra) and thin bread with lentils, peas, tomatoes and cheese is called fatta. Although alcohol is officially prohibited, southern Sudanese often drink a sorghum beer called marisa. Many families suffer from malnutrition in some regions.

#### **THE PEOPLE**

##### **Population**

67,596,349 (Estimate 2002 GeoHive) Growth rate: 1.24%  
Ethnic groups are Turkish 85%, 12% Kurd, 3% other.

##### **Language**

Turkish is the official language of the country. Some people of Kurdish origin speak Kurdish. A small number of people also speak Arabic. English, German and French are spoken as the second language in cities and more often German in small towns.

##### **Religion**

98% of Turkey's population is Sunni Muslim. The remaining is Orthodox Christian and Jewish.

##### **General Attitudes**

Turkey is often described as a bridge between East and West. Due to centuries of interaction with Europe and Asia, Turks have incorporated features from both areas into their lifestyle and thinking. At the same time, they are patriotic and have developed a unique society. The people are proud of the achievements of their modern state as well as the accomplishments of their ancestors, who ruled great empires. Individually, Turks prize a good sense of humour; it is considered a sign of intelligence. Group orientation is valued over personal assertiveness or aggression, and honesty and intelligence are admirable qualities. People value a good education, secure employment, social status, and an honourable heritage.

##### **Personal Appearance**

Western-style clothing is most common. European fashions are especially popular among the youth. Some traditional clothing is still worn in rural areas or for special occasions. Costumes differ according to region. The design of the costume's headdress and the type of material used signify a person's social status.

#### **CUSTOMS AND COURTESIES**

##### **Greetings**

When greeting friends or strangers, one shake hands and says Nasilsiniz (how are you?) or Merhaba (Hello). Greetings are followed among friends by polite inquiries about one's health, family, and work. Among close friends of the same, and sometimes opposite, gender, Turks clasp hands and kiss on both cheeks when greeting. To show respect to an older person, their hands may be kissed and touched to the greeter's forehead. The youth often greet each other with Salam. Upon joining a small group, one greets each person in the group individually. When addressing others formally, professional titles are used. In urban areas, strangers passing on the street are not generally

greeted, but rural people are more likely to greet the person.

##### **Gestures**

Turks generally use their hands a great deal during conversation, forming gestures that add meaning and emphasis. Social courtesies are valued in Turkey. One does not put feet on a desk or table, point the sole of the foot toward another person, smoke without asking permission, or cross the legs while in the presence of an older or superior person. It is not proper for adults to eat or smoke on the street. Public displays of affection are not acceptable.



##### **Visiting**

Turks enjoy visiting one another in their homes, and hospitality is an integral part of the culture. Many Turks remove their shoes when entering a home and replace them with slippers. Guests are expected to do the same at homes where this custom is followed. Visitors are expected to bring a pleasant presence to the home; bad news or accounts of problems are saved for other occasions and locations. It is not polite to ask personal questions of hosts. First-time visitors to a home may bring a small gift, such as candy, fruit, or flowers. Turks work hard to make their guests feel comfortable.

##### **Eating**

Breakfast is usually eaten around 7am, although earlier in rural areas. Lunch is at midday and dinner is around 7 pm. Dinner is the main meal, and the family generally expects to sit down together for this meal. Many foods are eaten with the fingers. When utensils are used, the continental style of eating is followed.

#### **LIFESTYLE**

##### **Family**

The primary social unit in Turkey is the family. An individual is loyal to and dependent upon the family. The Turkish household is often extended, consisting of a mother and father, their unmarried children and

in some cases, married sons with their families. The married sons remain until they are financially independent. It is uncommon for a person to live alone, mostly for economic reasons. Polygamy, as permitted by Islamic law, was abolished in 1930. Women gained the right to vote and the right to divorce in 1934 when civil marriage contracts were introduced. Urban women frequently work outside the home.

***Dating & Marriage***

Except perhaps at universities or in large urban areas, dating in the Western sense is not common. Young people associate more in groups. It is against the law for women to marry before age 15, and men before age 17. The average age for marriage is 22 for women and 25 for men. Most Turks expect to marry and have children.

***Diet***

Turkish cuisine is among the finest in the world. Lamb and rice are served with many meals. Turkish bread is popular in countries across the world. The famous kahve (Turkish coffee), a thick brew served in very small cups, is served with nearly every meal. Breakfast is usually light, consisting of tea, white cheese, bread, butter, marmalade or honey, and olives. The main meal of the day is eaten in the evening and may consist of several courses. Shish kebabs (chunks of lamb on a skewer) are a favourite, as are vegetables prepared in olive oil.

## 2. RELIGIONS

Religious freedom and mutual respect for different religions is an important underlying principle of multiculturalism and democracy. Service providers who recognise, value and promote cultural and religious diversity can more fully address the needs of their clients. Respecting the roles of religion in various cultures is part of courteous, ethical and professional behaviour, which promotes a just and equitable society. This section provides a basic outline of the following religious traditions:

- Islam
- Sikh
- Hinduism
- Christianity

It is important to understand that this information can not accurately capture the beliefs, customs or values of followers to faiths described here. Each individual is unique and direct consultation should always be sought out with regard to preferences for service engagement and delivery.

***Further Enquiries***

This information has been prepared by the Western Australian Office of Multicultural Interests. For more information visit [http://www.omi.wa.gov.au/OMI\\_guidelines.asp](http://www.omi.wa.gov.au/OMI_guidelines.asp)



## 2.1 ISLAM



### Demographics

There are approximately 1.3 – 1.8 billion adherents to the Islamic faith world-wide. In Australia between the 2001 and 2006 censuses, the number of people who identified themselves as Muslim increased by 58,823 or 21% to 340,401.

### Background and Origins

Muslims follow the teachings of the Qur'an (Holy book) and their last Prophet Muhammad, who was born in 570 AC in Makkah (Mecca) in Arabia. He came of a noble Arab family, the Quraysh, the descendants of Abraham through his first son, Ishmael. He received the first revelation at the age of forty. As soon as he started preaching Islam, he and his followers were persecuted and had faced severe hardships. He was therefore commanded by God to migrate to Madinah (Medina), a city north of Makkah. During a short span of 23 years, he completed his prophet hood and died at the age of 63. He was put to rest in the city of Madinah, leaving no wealth or property. Muslims believe that he led a perfect life and set an example for all human beings. His biography illustrates in real life, the meaning and implications of the Qur'anic teachings.

### Key Beliefs

Muslims believe in one, unique, incomparable God; in angels created by Him, in the prophets through whom His revelations were brought to mankind; in the Day of Judgement and individual accountability for actions; in God's complete authority over human destiny and in life after death. Muslims believe in a chain of prophets starting with Adam and including Noah, Abraham, Ishmael, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Job, Moses, Aaron, David, Solomon, Elias, Jonah, John the Baptist, and Jesus, peace be upon them. But God's final message to man, a reconfirmation of the eternal message and summing-up of all that has gone before was revealed to the Prophet Muhammad S.A.W (peace be upon him); through Gabriel.

### The Five Pillars of Islam

The above beliefs or articles of faith are considered the foundation of Islam, the structure of which is supported by the following pillars:

1. The Declaration of Faith, which is the testimony 'I bear witness that there is none worthy of worship except Allah (God the Creator), and that Muhammad is His servant and Messenger.'
2. Five Daily Prayers, which are prescribed five times a day as a duty towards God. They are: (1) Subuh or Fajr Prayer (between dawn break and sunrise); (2) Zuhur Prayer (Midday or early afternoon); (3) Asar Prayer (during late afternoon before Sunset); (4) Magrib Prayer (at Sunset before the evening twilight disappears); (5) 'Isha' Prayer (after the twilight has disappeared until

- late at night).
3. Zakaat (the poor due), which is an annual payment of 2.5% of one's net savings as a purifying sum to be spent on the poor and needy. Zakaat implies that everything people possess belongs to God and therefore anyone in need has a share in it.
4. Fasting, which is observed once each year during the month of Ramadan (the 9th month of the Muslim Lunar Calendar). Fasting means abstention from food, drink and sensual pleasures from dawn to sunset, and also from all evil intentions and desires.
5. Pilgrimage (Hajj) to Makkah, which is obligatory only once in a lifetime, provided one has the means to do so.

### Greeting

- Devout Muslims do not shake hands with the member of the opposite sex.
- Muslims do not expect any non Muslim to greet them with the Islamic greeting "assalamu 'alaikum" meaning "Peace be upon you", with the response "wa 'alaikumus salam" meaning "and upon you be peace." So it is not necessary for a non Muslim to learn the Islamic way of greeting, since it is acceptable to greet Muslims with normal English greetings such as 'good morning' or 'good evening'.

### Names and Titles

There is no uniformity in Muslim naming systems as Muslims come from different cultural backgrounds. There are however, three naming systems by which Muslim names can be categorised and it is advisable to check with each individual if you require this information:

1. Muslims who have a surname or family name.
2. Muslims whose fathers' names or second names are treated as surnames.
3. Muslims who have only single names.



### Seating

- Muslim clerics prefer not to be seated next to women.
- Muslim men and women prefer to sit in two separate groups to avoid mixing with one another, men on one side and women on the other.

### Dress and Appearance

- The Islamic dress code for males and females is prescribed to be modest.
- Muslims can wear any national or chosen dress code if it loosely covers certain parts of the body, consisting of the area from the navel to knee for the male, and the whole body with the exception of the face and hands for the female. These areas of the body are referred to as Awrah.
- The wearing of the Niqab or Purdah (face cover) by Muslim women is not considered essential by most Muslims.

### Body Language and Behaviour

- Beckoning 'come here' with the palm upwards or pointing to a person or object with your index finger, hand or foot is offensive to certain Muslim ethnic groups.
- For certain Muslim ethnic groups, especially the Malays, the head is sacred, so never touch someone's head, as that act is considered humiliating. However, this does not apply to Muslims coming from the Middle East for whom rubbing the head is considered a sign of love and respect.

### Food, Drink and Fasting

- When hosting people from diverse religious and cultural backgrounds, as a matter of good practice, always serve a selection of vegetarian and meat foods on separate trays.
- Islamic tradition does not allow the consumption of alcohol.
- During Ramadan, the name of the ninth and holiest month of the Muslim calendar, Muslims do not eat or drink from dawn break to sunset.
- Be sure to provide foods that are 'halal' (permitted). Muslims are not allowed to eat pork and any meat which has not been slaughtered by Muslims. Similarly, Muslims do not eat any food that contains animal fat or animal by-product, unless it is derived from animals slaughtered by Muslims.

### Interpreter Considerations

- The arrangement should be made according to the sex of the person: male interpreter for a man and female for a woman, if available. The interpretation can also be done by a male interpreter in the presence of her male relative.

### Family and Marriage

- In Islam, 'family' does not denote merely the nuclear family, but includes, in addition to husband, wife and children, other close relatives as well.
- In Islam, the strong bond between parents and children is always maintained. Muslim children are not expected to leave the parents to live on their own until they are married.

### Medical

- Where possible, female doctors should be made

available for consultation and treatment of Muslim women, and male doctors for Muslim men.

- When a Muslim woman is in labour, she or her husband will always try to have a female doctor or at least a midwife available to deliver the baby.
- Muslims will normally take the placenta home, to be buried properly, as it is considered part of the body, although it is not compulsory to do so.

### Death and Related Issues

- A terminally ill Muslim patient should always have at least one of his or her relatives or Muslims by his or her side, to pray for him or her and remind him or her of the Islamic faith.
- When a Muslim patient has died, the family or Muslim community should be immediately informed, to enable them to make arrangements and necessary preparations for the burial, which should take place on the same day or as soon as possible, unless there is an impediment to it.
- Either while in hospital or elsewhere, the body of the deceased must not be left naked or uncovered.
- It is a collective duty of the Muslims that before burial, the body has to be ritually washed, wrapped in white cloth according to Islamic rites, and then a prayer will be offered over it.

### Counselling/Interviews

- For interviews involving Muslim women, service providers should attempt to allocate a female interviewer or at least have a female staff member present during the interview. Muslim women will often request the presence of a family member with them during any interview and this should be accommodated.
- Should advice on Islamic legal issues be needed during counselling/interview, an Imam or Muslim cleric should be contacted.

### Other Sensitivities

- Islam teaches the functional division between the right hand and the left hand. Each hand has different functions. The functions of the right are to give and take, to eat and drink, to shake hands and wave. Using the left hand for these purposes is offensive. The functions of the left hand are to remove dirt and filth or to remove dirty or filthy things and to wash and wipe the private parts after going to the toilet. Using the right hand for these purposes is offensive.
- Muslim women will often not make direct eye contact with members of the opposite sex.
- Gambling is strictly against the precepts of the Muslim faith and practising Muslims abstain from alcohol. Any venue used to host a function involving representatives from these communities should avoid being held at licensed clubs, hotels and casinos.
- Taking of photographs of adherents to Islam, particularly Muslim women, can be sensitive. Prior permission to take photographs and video footage should be obtained.



## 2.2 SIKH



### Demographics

There are approximately 25 million Sikhs around the world. They are predominantly located in western democracies (Canada, United Kingdom, United States of America, Australia, New Zealand) and East Africa, Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand and particularly the Punjab, India.



### Background and Origins

The Sikh religion is one of the youngest world religions and was founded more than 500 years ago (1469) in Punjab, North India, by Guru Nanak Dev Ji, in response to his spiritual revelation. Nanak and his nine successors are known as “gurus”, which is a term for a spiritual guide or teacher.

Guru Nanak emphasised constant mindfulness of God, meditating on the name and attributes of God and reflecting on God’s Power in all activities of daily life. Guru Nanak’s followers became known as Sikhs (from the Sanskrit word shishya), which means disciple. The Holy Book, the ‘Guru Granth Sahib’, is the ultimate spiritual authority for Sikhs. It contains the teachings and devotional compositions written and recorded by the Sikh Gurus and some contemporary Hindu and Muslim saints. The Guru Granth Sahib is at the heart of Sikh worship and its presence lends sanctity to the Sikh place of worship, the Gurdwara.

The main precepts of Sikhism include:

- Universal acceptance of all humanity;
- Belief in one God;
- The name of God is Truth, “Sat Nam”;
- Equality of all persons irrespective of their caste, colour, gender, nationality and religion;
- Equality of the sexes is emphasised.

### Key Beliefs

Sikhs believe that the ten Gurus were one with the Divine Being and each had divine attributes. The first Guru is Guru Nanak Dev Ji. and the tenth Guru is Guru Gobind Singh Ji. The tenth Guru anointed the Holy Book “Guru Granth Sahib” as the living eternal

Guru of the Sikhs.

The Sikh way of life is based on:

- Nam Japna - Remember God’s name with every breath;
- Kirat Karni - Work and earn by the sweat of the brow, live a family way of life and practise truthfulness and honesty in all dealings;
- Vand Ke Chakna - To share and live as an inspiration and support to the whole Community.
- Control of Kaam (desire), Krodh (anger), Lobh (greed), Moh (attachment) and Hankar (pride).

Sikhs believe that reincarnation (the cycle of life death rebirth) - is for those who do not attain attachment to God during the human life cycle.

### Greeting

- Sikhs in Australia follow the normal hand shake in greeting. The traditional preferred way of greeting is with folded hands. This is especially the case when greeting a person of the opposite sex. Sikhs say “Sat Sri Akal”, (God is the Truth) to greet.
- Sikh males or females who have family ties or are close may embrace one another. Sikhs do not exchange a kiss on the cheek.
- It is customary for elders to place the palm of their hand on the head of the younger generation which is symbolic of affection and the transfer of love/blessings.
- Certain Sikhs may bow and touch the feet of the elders as a gesture of respect of the elder’s position at home or in society.

### Names and Titles

All Sikh males carry the surname of Singh (which means lion) and Sikh females carry the name Kaur (which means lioness/ princess) respectively. In some cases the ancestral names are included after the surname. Referring to a Sikh male as Mr Singh and Miss/Mrs Kaur is acceptable but it would be preferred that the full name is used when more than one Sikh is present.

### Dress and Appearance

Baptised Sikh males and females (known as Amritdhari Sikh) always wear the following five signs of their faith (known as the Five K’s):

**KIRPAN:** a small sized sword placed in a shoulder belt (accepted by the VIC Police as a symbol rather than a weapon);

**KARA:** an iron bangle worn on the wrist;

**KACHERA:** special underwear, akin to boxer shorts;

**KANGA:** a small wooden comb;

**KESH:** - (hair) a Sikh must not cut hair from his/her body from birth to death.

An Amritdhari Sikh must not be asked to separate any of the Five K’s from his/her body. The cutting of hair or removal of the turban should not even be

suggested to a Sikh male as these form an important part of the Sikh faith.

Each of the five K’s has a special religious significance. The neatly tied turban over the unshorn hair represents a crown of spirituality while the Kara signifies bondage to Truth. Sikh youth normally wear a “patka” (cloth) on their head and with transformation into adulthood they start wearing a “Pugg” (turban). The colour of the turban is not normally significant except in the following:

- On occasions of death a white turban for males and a white “chunni” or scarf for females may be used.
- “Gyani” or priests generally wear dark blue, black or white.

Sikhs do not wear a helmet over the turban as it interferes with the crown of spirituality. Legal exemptions are issued from wearing a helmet for religious and cultural reasons on a bicycle but not motorcycle.

### Seating

At official functions, Sikhs prefer to be seated away from the bar and smoking area as Sikhism prohibits their use.

### Body Language and Behaviour

For Sikhs, the head or turban is sacred. A Sikh’s head or turban should never be touched or insulted in any way.

Winking to females is considered offensive as it may imply a sexual advance or harassment.

### Food, Drink and Fasting

- Observant Sikhs do not eat meat and do not consume alcohol.
- Sikhs who do consume meats prefer meat slaughtered with a single blow and not left to bleed to death.
- At multi-group functions it would be prudent to place beef or other meats in separate locations.
- Some observant Sikhs do not eat egg.

### Worship

A Sikh can worship at any time of the day or night but the expected prayer times are before sunrise and sunset and prior to going to bed at night. Generally a Sikh meditates on the Name of God by reciting His Name even while working.

Sikhs should visit the Gurdwara (place of worship) as often as possible to receive teachings from Guru Granth Sahib and seek the company of the holy congregation for spiritual guidance and upliftment through meditation, prayer, singing of hymns and rendering selfless service.

### Language and Communication

Most Sikhs in Victoria are fluent in written and spoken English and Punjabi (the mother tongue).

### Family and Marriage

- Whether living together or not, Sikh family members are expected look after each other in

time of need. The eldest person in the family is bestowed the appropriate respect and his/her views are strongly considered when making decisions on family matters.

- Adultery, by either a male or female Sikh, is taken very seriously. Divorce amongst Sikhs is very uncommon.
- The trend to have arranged marriages for Sikhs is still prevalent and significant in the first generation of families that originated from India.
- Sikh women have equal status and are regarded as a significant part of the Sikh community. A woman receives utmost reverence for her role in the family and society. She has an equal right to grow spiritually and to attend religious congregations and recite divine hymns in the Gurdwara. She is also eligible to participate and perform all ceremonies including Baptism.

### Medical

Only in life threatening situations should hair be removed from the body without consent from the individual or the family. In all other instances consent from the individual, if the person is an adult and able, or from the parents or family, if a minor or incapacitated, should be sought.

### Death and Related Issues

- Only family members or associates generally touch a Sikh woman even when she is grieving over a death.
- The body should be handed over to the nearest family member a few hours prior to cremation. This allows sufficient time for the corpse to be washed, dressed and to have the appropriate religious prayers recited over it. Cremation should occur as soon as possible after death and this often results in a sense of urgency regarding funeral arrangements. Cremation occurs with family members in attendance and the ashes must be handed to the nearest family member.
- During the official period of mourning (from 10 to 17 days following the cremation), the scriptures are read from beginning to end, either at the family home or at the Gurdwara.
- Elders and close associates may wear white (the mourning colour).

### Counselling/Interviews

It is appropriate for a female Sikh to speak to a female for interview or counselling purposes, however if the situation permits and the person being interviewed agrees, it is preferable for a married woman to be interviewed in the presence of her husband or the eldest person in the family.

### Other Sensitivities

- Observant Sikhs do not smoke.
- It is customary for Sikhs to cover their head in the presence of the Guru Granth Sahib.
- No alcohol, cigarettes or meat are to be in the vicinity of Guru Granth Sahib and Gurdwara.
- Police, airport searches, etc are best performed by a person of the same sex.



## 2.3 HINDU



### Demographics

There are about 80,000 Hindus in Australia, many of whom have migrated from countries such as India, Fiji, Malaysia, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Kenya, Uganda, Mauritius and the United Kingdom.

### Background and Origins

Hinduism is the world's third largest religious tradition after Christianity and Islam. It is somewhat misleading to refer to Hinduism as a religion. It is more an approach to upholding the principles of virtuous and true living. While Hinduism has numerous schools of thought, the tradition has no founder, no organisational hierarchy or structure and no central administration.

Hinduism is not confined to one book or one prophet. It originated in the prayers and philosophy of the Aryans embodied in Scriptures called Vedas or 'the Knowledge' and developed into a way of life. The basic principles outlined in the Vedas include:

1. God is one, the wise call Him differently;
2. The whole world is or should be a family;
3. Religion is for the happiness of many and welfare of all;
4. The soul is immortal and man is divine; and,
5. Man is never satisfied by wealth. Spiritual or self realisation should be the aim of life.



### Key Beliefs

Hindu beliefs are totally non exclusive and accept all other faiths and religious paths. Hindus believe that each person is intrinsically divine and the purpose of life is to seek and realise the divinity within all of us.

The Hindu ethical code attaches great importance to values such as truth, right conduct, love, peace and non violence. All Hindu ceremonies, rituals and worships end with a prayer for universal peace and harmony.

An important principle in Hindu thinking is the law of Karma. It is the law of cause and effect in which each and every action has a reaction, generating conditions to be experienced within this lifetime or the next.

The reincarnation cycle of life, death, rebirth is seen to continue until the individual reaches its own divinity and emerges into the Absolute. Hindus believe that self realization is possible and attainable within one's own life time and indeed it is the goal and eventual destiny of all life.

Those outside the Hindu faith are often confused by the Hindu pantheon of Gods and Goddesses. A high degree of symbolism is used to convey the truth and to determine one's choice of path to attain self realisation. Gods and Goddesses are symbols depicting various attributes, functions and manifestations of the one Supreme Divine Absolute.

A Hindu is enjoined to seek personal purification on the path to self realisation through one of four or any combination of the four paths:

1. Ritualistic worship, chanting of prayers, devotional surrender to a higher ideal (the Deity representing the qualities);
2. Through service;
3. Through yoga and meditation; and,
4. Through inquiry (know thyself).

As a faith Hinduism is not dogmatic and does not rigidly impose beliefs and practices on an individual or a family unit. This observation is particularly valid for Hindus living in Australia. In all matters the wish of the individual or the family unit is paramount, and cultural and religious sensitivities and practices identified in this information sheet may not be relevant for a second or third generation Australian Hindus.

### Greeting

In greeting a Hindu, it is not customary to hug or kiss a member of the opposite sex. Handshakes or the Hindu Namaskar (clasping the palms together and holding them vertically near the chest ) are acceptable.

### Names and Titles

The use of family surnames is not universal among Hindus. The practice varies between regions in India. A male uses the initial of his father's name first, followed by his own personal name. For example, Vijay Thiruselvan is 'Thiruselvan, son of 'Vijay'. For legal purposes he would be known as Mr Thiruselvan. Hindu female names follow the same pattern: father's initial plus personal name. When an Indian woman marries, she usually ceases to use her father's initial; instead she follows her personal name with her husband's name.

### Seating

There are no special sensitivities with regard to seating arrangement for Hindus. However, in temples and prayer halls the males and females normally sit separately on different sides.

### Dress and Appearance

Dress codes amongst Hindus vary. The following dress codes are not generally applicable to all Hindus, however they provide some indication as to Hindu dress practices:

- A Hindu woman may put on marriage bangles at her wedding and breaking or removing these bangles is considered a bad omen and will greatly distress a Hindu woman.
- Married women may wear a Thali or Mangal Sutra, a necklace of special design around their neck and traditionally it symbolises marriage. The wearing of red powder in the parting in the hair also symbolises marriage.
- Married women may also wear a bindi or tilak (a red dot between and just above the eyebrows) on the forehead.
- Some Hindus wear a thread around their bodies which is worn at the Upanayana religious ceremony and signifies the assumption of responsibilities for becoming a link in transmission of knowledge and for maintaining cosmic truth and order. It passes diagonally across the body from the shoulder to about waist height and traditionally it should never be removed.

### Body Language and Behaviour

Some Hindus from India show agreement by moving their head from side to side which may be misinterpreted as 'no'.

### Food, Drink and Fasting

- Hindus believe in the interdependence of life and will not eat any food that has involved the taking of life. Consequently, vegetarianism is common amongst Hindus. In eastern India, however, fish is part of the staple food.
- Most Hindus do not eat beef or beef products. This is because the cow is held to be sacred and, generally speaking, taking of a life to feed a person is considered to be unreligious.
- Vegetarians would prefer to use separate dishes and utensils for vegetarian and non vegetarian foods.
- Orthodox Hindus and most vegetarians are unlikely to consume alcoholic drinks. Occasional fasting may be common amongst elderly Hindus.
- In a health care environment, the service provider has to be sensitive to the food and dietary needs of the patient.

### Family and Marriage

- Marriage continues to be a powerful and significant institution for a Hindu.
- Sexual relationships outside of marriage are not viewed favourably.
- In Hindu societies there is great respect for older family members.

### Medical

A disregard of modesty can cause considerable distress to Hindus and in particular to Hindu women. Even in a health care context, women are generally reluctant to undress for examination. If undressing is necessary, it is preferable for a patient to be served by a doctor or nurse of the same sex.

### Death and Related Issues

- Autopsies are considered objectionable and deeply disrespectful to the dead and his/her family. The preference is not to have autopsies unless required by law.
- Acceptance of death does not abrogate the sense of personal loss. Visible expressions of grief are common and are deemed helpful to cope with the sense of personal loss.
- Modesty remains important even after death. Corpses are bathed and dressed only by persons of the same sex. It is absolutely essential to handle the dead with dignity and modesty.
- Hindus are generally cremated, except for children under three, who are buried. Funerals are deemed most sacred. Ideally, the cremation should be within 24 hours of death.
- A Hindu family will usually want the body to be taken home at some stage before cremation, usually between the funeral parlour and the crematorium.
- The family of the deceased will want the ashes for future spiritual ceremonies or to scatter in a place of spiritual significance like the River Ganges.

### Counselling/Interviews

There are no special sensitivities with regard to counselling or interview arrangements for Hindus.

### Other Sensitivities

Footwear used outside is not generally worn inside Hindu homes. Removal of footwear before entering a Hindu home is therefore customary. Footwear must be removed before entering a place of Hindu worship.



## 2.4 CHRISTIANITY



### Demographics

Between the 2001 and 2006 Census, the number of people in Australia who identified themselves as Christian had decreased to 12,685,861, a decrease of 78,480 or 0.6 per cent.

### Background and Origins

Christianity commenced over 2000 years ago, in Israel. Christianity began with Jesus, a Jewish man who taught a group of disciples about a new concept of the Judaic religion. Jesus' teachings emphasised love of God and love for people. When Jesus was identified by religious and political authorities of the time as a threat, they arrested him on a trumped-up charge and executed him by hanging him on a cross. Three days later his disciples were surprised to discover an empty tomb where Jesus had been laid. Many resurrection appearances convinced the disciples that Jesus had been raised from the dead, and that this was God's validation of all he had taught them.

### Key Beliefs

The Christian religion and way of life is enshrined in the Bible. The Bible is a book of writings which are considered to be sacred by many Christians, and which includes the Hebrew Scriptures and a collection of writings from the early Christian Church. The Christian writings include 'gospels', or stories of the good news of Jesus, and letters from the church's leaders.

The word Christian means disciple or student of Christ. The Christian way of life is based on:

- Belief in Jesus as the Son of God; who is part of a Trinitarian God - Father, Son and Holy Spirit;
- Acceptance of Jesus' teachings;
- The significance of the life, death and resurrection of Jesus for the transformed life of the believer;
- Prayer and worship; and
- Social justice and practical assistance to others in need.

### Greeting

Christians usually shake hands when greeting one another. Some Christians will embrace. The religious leaders of some churches are greeted in a special way by their adherents, who will kiss their rings or the crosses they carry. Non-adherents are not required to do this.

### Names and Titles

- Many Christian leaders are given honorific titles. The most common is that instead of "Mr" or "Ms/Mrs/Miss" the word "Reverend" is used, such as "The Reverend Jones" or 'The Reverend John Jones'. The "Reverend Jones" may also be referred to as "Father Jones" if he is male.

- Female Christian leaders are not usually called "Mother", but "Reverend". The title "Mother" usually refers to a Christian female leader of a group of religious women called nuns.
- There are other honorific titles for Christian leaders who are in higher leadership positions in the Church. These titles may include: Archbishop, Bishop, Archdeacon, Moderator, President, etc.
- Other Christian leaders may prefer the word "Pastor" instead of "Reverend".

### Seating

Many Christian communities would be happy for men and women to sit together in a public meeting, but it is wise for the organiser of a meeting to check this with the participants, as some Christians from different cultural groups may prefer men and women to sit separately.

### Dress and Appearance

- Some Churches have distinctive dress to distinguish their leaders from others. Many churches use the 'clergy collar', a plain, often black, shirt with a white tab in the collar, as their distinctive dress. Others wear a cross or crucifix prominently, as a way of defining their role in the Church.
- Orthodox priests wear black tunics and distinctive headaddresses or hats.
- Many church leaders have specific garments for use when they lead worship. If a Christian worship service is being conducted, the leaders may require a room in which they can dress in their special liturgical garments prior to the service.

### Food, Drink and Fasting

- Many Christians have no particular cultural practices regarding food and drink.
- However some Christians do not drink alcohol. These include many members of the Salvation Army and other Protestant churches. It is wise to provide alternatives for these people.

### Worship

A Christian can worship at any time of the day or night but the expected worship time is Sunday mornings.

### Family and Marriage

- Many Christian churches allow divorce, but some do not.
- The family is seen as the basic unit of society.
- Churches advise members not to engage in sexual relations outside of marriage.
- Many Christian churches do not accept the validity of homosexual relationships.
- Christian singles are free to choose their own marriage partners but many Churches encourage Christians to marry other Christians.

### Medical Ethics

Many Christians have very strong views surrounding issues such as abortions, euthanasia and in-vitro fertilisation procedures.

### Death and Related Issues

For some Christians the following sensitivities are to be respected:

- The Last Rites for Catholics
- Baptism for dying infants
- Respect for the body.

Funerals may include either burials or cremations.

Some Christians have strong preferences for burials, and some Christians prefer crypts rather than graves. Funerals are always a Christian worship event, usually led by a Minister. They may occur in a church or at the cemetery.

### Counselling/Interviews

Christians wish to have a Christian counsellor for many issues. Many will ask their own religious leader to be called for them. Chaplains are provided in many institutions. These chaplains may work ecumenically, that is they will be available to any Christian no matter what denomination they belong to, though they would respect the ritual or sacramental practices of the individual.



### Other Sensitivities

- Most Christians object to the use of the name of God or Jesus in a non-respectful way. This is called "blasphemy".
- Christians have great respect for the Bible and for their religious symbols, including the Cross. They would be distressed to see them mishandled.
- Churches are places in which it is usual to be reverent and to behave appropriately.
- Most Christians will not worship in places where the religious symbols of other religious groups are prominent.



### 3. LANGUAGE RESOURCES

### 3.1 TIPS ON USING TELEPHONE INTERPRETERS

Step	Action
<b>Identify Client's Preferred Language</b>	If you are having difficulty determining your client's language, try these suggestions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use the 'Find Your Language' index <a href="http://www.healthtranslations.vic.gov.au/bhcv2/bhcht.nsf/findyourlanguage?openform">http://www.healthtranslations.vic.gov.au/bhcv2/bhcht.nsf/findyourlanguage?openform</a>;</li> <li>• Ask what language s/he speaks at home; or,</li> <li>• Look up languages spoken in the client's home country/area of origin and then check with the client again.</li> </ul>
	Try to find out if the client speaks a specific dialect i.e. Scottish English, Maghreb Arabic, Afghan Persian (Dari).
	If the preferred language is not available through telephone interpreter services (TIS), check whether the client can speak other languages and is willing to use an interpreter in another language.
<b>Be Sensitive to Client's Background</b>	Ask the client if s/he has any ethnic, religious or gender preferences for working with interpreters. Note: Ethnicity is not necessarily the same as country of birth (e.g. Country of birth may be Sudan but the ethnicity could be Dinka).
<b>Prepare for Session</b>	Find out which interpreting service company is preferred by your organization. Note: <i>Pre-booking a call is generally more expensive. Consider pre-booking in cases where the client speaks a less common language or when it may be difficult to access an interpreter at the required time.</i> Translating of documents prior to an appointment may be beneficial.
	For office or home visits: Use a room that will enable telephone access or use a mobile phone on loudspeaker. Allow extra time for the session. Arrange the seating so that you will be able to maintain eye contact with the client.
	For telephone calls: Schedule a time with the client to arrange an interpreting session. You may want to call the client a few minutes in advance and let him/her know you'll call back with an interpreter on the line. The interpreting company will phone the client and there is no need for special phone equipment.
<b>Initiate the Call</b>	Call your interpreting company's phone number and provide them with your organisation's pin number.
	Let the interpreter know whether the client is with you or if s/he needs to be called on another line for a phone link. Then list the following information (all requests are subject to availability): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Language / dialect</li> <li>• Preferences i.e. gender, religion or ethnicity</li> <li>• Your name and contact number</li> <li>• Client's name</li> <li>• Client's phone number (if you are arranging a phone link to the client)</li> <li>• Do you require a telephone or face to face interpreter?</li> </ul>

Step	Action
<b>Communicate with the client through the interpreter</b>	Introduce yourself and the interpreter to the client. Provide the interpreter with the name of the client, the expected duration and nature of the session, and any other relevant information. If necessary, brief the interpreter on what to expect during the call; s/he may not be familiar with the topic and / or terminology.
	Speak to the client in the first person, i.e. "I'd like to ask you about..." Always speak to the client directly and not to the phone (interpreter).
	Speak clearly and avoid using jargon.
	Speak in short intervals allowing time for the interpreter to relay what was said.
	Do not talk with the interpreter and exclude the client. Everything that is said during the interview must be interpreted.
	Remember that you are in control of the interview. If you feel that the interpreter is interfering with the interview in a detrimental way, the interview can be stopped.
	Summarise discussion and provide opportunities for the client to ask questions.
<b>Close Session</b>	Check whether the client is ready to end the session and that there are no further questions. Debrief the interpreter if necessary.
<b>Provide Feedback</b>	Ensure any client feedback is documented and kept for future reference.
<b>Arrange Payment</b>	An invoice will be sent to your organisation.

### 3.2 PREPARING TEXTS FOR TRANSLATION

The following points may assist when preparing materials for translation:

- Literacy - Do not presume that everyone can read and write well in their first language. Don't include too much information and use short, easily understood sentences.
- Avoid 'inflated' words.  
*For example, the word 'advantageous' could be replaced with 'useful' and the word 'magnitude' with 'size'*
- Explain concepts introduced which may be unfamiliar to those from other cultural backgrounds, such as 'counselling,' 'case assessment' or 'referral process.'
- Consider the cultural and religious backgrounds of the target audience.
- Use diagrams, pictures or other visual representations when possible.
- Use specific rather than general terms.  
*For example, say 'community health centres, hospitals, doctors' clinics' instead of 'service providers.'*
- Use the active rather than the passive voice. For example, 'our staff can help you find work' rather than 'help with finding work is provided by our staff.'
- Repeat nouns rather than using pronouns. Pronouns can be grammatically ambiguous, as in the following example: There are also two family workers and two interpreters on duty. They speak Italian, Greek and Arabic. It is not clear whether the interpreters only, or the family workers too, speak these languages.
- Avoid metaphors, colloquialisms, and culturally specific references. These are usually untranslatable.
- Avoid lengthy titles - try to simplify them.  
*For example: 'Mental Health Division Early Childhood Team' is difficult to translate.*



4. USEFUL RESOURCES

4.1 LOCAL HUME CONTACTS

**Greater Shepparton City Council**  
90 Welsford Street  
Shepparton, VIC 3632  
Ph: **03 5832 9785**  
Web: <http://www.greatershepparton.com.au>

**Rural City of Wangaratta**  
Corner of Ford and Ovens Streets,  
Wangaratta, VIC 3676  
Ph: **03 5722 0888**  
Web: <http://www.wangaratta.vic.gov.au>

**City of Wodonga**  
104 Hovell St,  
Wodonga VIC 3690  
Ph: **02 6022 9300**  
Web: <http://www.wodonga.vic.gov.au>

**Ethnic Council of Shepparton**  
158 Welsford St,  
Shepparton, VIC 3631  
Ph: **03 5831 2395**  
Fax: 03 5831 3764  
Web: [www.ethniccouncilshepparton.com.au](http://www.ethniccouncilshepparton.com.au)

**Albury/Wodonga Ethnic Communities' Council**  
Provides information and referral services to multicultural communities and individuals in the district.  
10 Myall Place,  
Thurgoona NSW 2640  
Ph: **02 6058 6913**  
Fax: 02 6043 2239  
E-mail: [sinthong@netmatrix.com.au](mailto:sinthong@netmatrix.com.au)

**Albury-Wodonga Ethnic Communities Council  
Migrant Resource & Information Centre Inc.**  
522 Smollett St,  
Albury, NSW 2640  
Ph: **02 6021 1844**

**North East Multicultural Association (NEMA)**  
NEMA represents five municipalities - the Rural Cities of Wangaratta and Benalla and the Shires of Alpine, Indigo and Mansfield.  
PO Box 417  
Wangaratta VIC 3676  
Ph: **03 5721 2090**  
Mobile: 0409 018 111  
Web: <http://www.nema.org.au/index.htm>

**Vic Legal Aid**  
For all rural areas in Victoria phone 1800 677 402  
Hume Office Location  
36-42 High St,  
Shepparton VIC 3630  
Ph: **5823 6200**  
Fax: 5823 6235  
Web : <http://www.legalaid.vic.gov.au>  
Range of interpreters available.

## 4.2 GENERAL RESOURCES

### *Cultural & Social*

#### **A GUIDE TO ETHNIC NAMING PRACTICES**

Web: [www.publications.gov.au/?bookshop/agencis-c](http://www.publications.gov.au/?bookshop/agencis-c)  
Email: [Multicultural.Services.Net@centrelink.gov.au](mailto:Multicultural.Services.Net@centrelink.gov.au)  
Guide including a checklist to enable staff to correctly use ethnic names.  
Covers 36 languages.

#### **DIARY OF AUSTRALIA - DIARY OF MULTICULTURAL EVENTS**

Web: [www.immi.gov.au/living-in-australia/a-diverse-australia/diary-australia/](http://www.immi.gov.au/living-in-australia/a-diverse-australia/diary-australia/)  
This free diary highlights the range of important events, festivals and days that are celebrated throughout Australia, for most language and religious groups.

#### **MULTILINGUAL RADIO STATION**

3SBS Melbourne  
Web: [www9.sbs.com.au/radio](http://www9.sbs.com.au/radio)  
Australia's national multilingual radio network broadcasting across the continent in 68 languages, more than any other broadcaster in the world.

#### **NATIONAL LISTING OF RADIO AND TELEVISION**

Web: [www.nembc.org.au](http://www.nembc.org.au)  
National listing of all radio and television programs by languages, station and times. Can search by language.

#### **SBS TELEVISION AND RADIO**

Web: [www.sbs.com.au](http://www.sbs.com.au)  
SBS television and radio is a multicultural and multilingual service that provides an extraordinary mix of quality Australian and international programs.

#### **JEWISH COMMUNITY IN AUSTRALIA**

Web: [www.jewishaustralia.com](http://www.jewishaustralia.com)  
Website has extensive information about Jewish life and culture. Can access Hebrew songs and Israeli dances via the website address.

#### **CO.AS.IT. ITALIAN AUSTRALIAN WELFARE ASSOCIATION INC**

Web: [www.coasit.com.au](http://www.coasit.com.au)  
Programs provided are Community Visitor Scheme, Day Respite, Community and Individual Support Services (CISS), Emergency Relief, Community Partners Program (CPP) along with HACC and CACP services.

#### **ISLAMIC WOMEN'S WELFARE COUNCIL**

[www.islamicwomenswelfare.org.au/about.htm](http://www.islamicwomenswelfare.org.au/about.htm)  
Provides a range of information and support services.

### *Health*

#### **CATALOGUE OF MULTICULTURAL RESOURCES VICTORIA**

Web: [www.healthtranslations.vic.gov.au](http://www.healthtranslations.vic.gov.au)  
This website address lists a comprehensive range of health related information with translations in numerous languages.

#### **DOCTOR'S PRIORITY LINE**

Web: [www.immi.gov.au/tis/doctor.htm](http://www.immi.gov.au/tis/doctor.htm)  
DIAC provides:  
Doctor's Priority Line - **1300 131 450**  
Telephone Interpreting - **131 450**  
On-site Interpreting - **1300 655 082**

#### **HOME MEDICINES REVIEW – HELPING TO MANAGE YOUR MEDICINES AT HOME**

Web: [www.health.gov.au/internet/wcms/publishing.nsf/content/health-epc-dmmr.htm](http://www.health.gov.au/internet/wcms/publishing.nsf/content/health-epc-dmmr.htm)  
Information brochure translated into 18 languages.



