

Croatian Cultural Profile -older people

PLEASE NOTE: This profile provides an overview of some of the cultural information relating to Croatian people originating from various regions of ex-Yugoslavia who live in Melbourne. This description may not apply to all people as individual experiences may vary. However this profile can be used as a guide to some of the issues that may concern your clients. We would like to acknowledge the contribution of the Australian Croatian Community Services and Croatian Catholic Welfare Association in developing this profile. Information is also provided about relevant services & activities for older people.

Migration:

- Croatian migration began in the 1850s with some Croat sailors arriving at the goldfields of Victoria and NSW.
- There were two major waves of migration. The first occurred between 1950s & 1970s and the second wave began in the 1990s as a result of the recent wars in Croatia and Bosnia & Herzegovina.
- Migrants were predominantly motivated to settle in Australia due to a combination of economic and political factors.
- The majority of migrants who arrived during the first wave, originated from rural regions and were mostly unskilled workers who lacked formal education.
- The new migrants, many of them refugees, who arrived in the 1990s, had completely different social backgrounds from the earlier migrants. These new migrants were mostly middle aged, married and predominantly professionals (Colic-Peisker & Walker, 2003).

Local Demographics (ABS 2006)

	City of Greater Dandenong	City of Kingston	City of Casey	Cardinia Shire
Total population of LGA	125,520	134,622	214,961	57,116
Total no. of residents born in Croatia	1,276	465	1,288	110
No. of Croatian born residents, 55 yrs +over	498	281	472	64
Total no. of Croatian speaking residents	1,046	524	1,484	137
No. Croatian speaking residents, 55 yrs + over	398	238	424	50

In Victoria, people over the age of 60 years, born in Croatia and Bosnia & Herzegovina, comprise a substantial population group. According to the Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs (DIMIA) Settlement Database 2001, in Victoria there were 7,620 people over the age of 60 born in the two countries. This number is expected to rapidly increase in the near future. By the year 2011, the Croatian-speaking 65+ population in Victoria is projected to increase by 234% and the 80+ population is estimated to increase by 285%.

Language:

- Gaining accurate figures for the Croatian community in Australia is difficult because place of birth does not accurately reflect ethnicity.
- Many Croatians were born in Bosnia and Herzegovina or in other parts of former Yugoslavia and speak the local dialects.
- When booking an interpreter, it is culturally appropriate to request a Croatian born, Croatian speaking interpreter. This is an important consideration as many clients experienced war trauma and find it difficult to interact with people of other ethnicities from former Yugoslavia.
- The Latin alphabet is used by Croatians, in terms of a written language.
- Many elderly Croatians do not have good English proficiency and some have lost their ability to speak English due to dementia.

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Culture and Religion:

- Croatian traditions are based on Western society.
- Croats are proud of their culture and celebrate annually cultural, political, historical and religious events.
- It is common for Croats to kiss on both cheeks as part of a greeting.
- There are different types of cuisines originating from various regions of Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina.
- There is a strong correlation between religion, traditions and culture in the Croatian community, especially for the elderly.
- The majority of Croats are of Roman Catholic faith, the minority being Islamic, Seventh Day Adventist, Jewish and Serbian Orthodox.
- An important tradition of Catholic Croats is to abstain from meat every Friday, though custom is slowly diminishing.
- When a family member passes away, it is a custom for relatives to wear black clothing as a symbol of mourning.
- Mass, rosary beads and prayer books highlight the importance of faith in the Catholic Croat community.

Attitudes and issues with ageing:

- High respect for Croatian elderly who are seen as a knowledgeable source of information on culture, traditions, history, etc.
- Younger generations appreciate the dedication and commitment of the elderly in establishing Croatian clubs, churches and social groups in Australia.
- Expectation on family members to provide care
- Fear of loss of one's independence and self sufficiency
- Social stigma related to mental illness

Attitudes to professional care and services:

- Lack of understanding and awareness of Australia's structures and systems
- For professional care, Croats have a strong preference for ethno-specific aged care services
- Reluctance to seek assistance
- Reluctance to sign papers and forms
- Traditional attitude - professional care is a foreign concept, people are suspicious
- Modern attitude - receptive to professional care, needs to be culturally and linguistically appropriate
- Polite to shake hands and have a few minutes of courteous conversation, if visiting client
- Highly likely that client will offer HACC Assessment Officer food and drink
- Clients may feel that questions being asked are too personal and may feel uncomfortable about answering
- Try to structure questions to be non intrusive

- **Health beliefs and practices:**
- Traditionally doctors & general practitioners are well respected and given great authority.
- Croatian-born people may use alternative therapies alongside mainstream medical treatment.
- Herbal medicines may be used.
- Croatian-born people tend to openly discuss their physical ailments and health conditions.
- Preventive health actions are not widely adopted by the Croatian community.

Health issues:

- Diabetes
- High cholesterol
- High blood pressure
- Heart disease

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- Excess weight
- Mental illnesses (e.g. Schizophrenia, depression, post traumatic stress disorder & anxiety disorders)

Greetings: Note: Each letter in Croatian is pronounced as a singular sound.

English Greeting	Croatian Greeting	Closest English Pronunciation
Hello	Dobar dan	Do <u>bar</u> <u>dan</u>
Good Morning	Dobro jutro	Do <u>bro</u> <u>yootro</u>
Goodbye	Dovidjenja	Do <u>vee</u> <u>jenya</u>
Yes	Da	Da
No	Ne	Ne
Thank you	Hvala	H <u>vala</u>

Significant dates:

- Christmas is celebrated on 25th December
- Easter's date is to be confirmed each year

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Services & Activities useful for older Croatian people in Kingston, Greater Dandenong, Casey and Cardinia.*

<p>Australian Croatian Community Services</p> <p>Main Office: 40 Pickett Street Footscray 3011 Ph: 9689 5811 Fax:9689 8419</p> <p>South/East Office: 128-130 Walker Street, Dandenong. 3175</p> <p>Contact Jordana Duddovic Ph: 9791 6000 Fax 9791 6011</p>	<p>Services provided in the South East:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Aged Care Packages • Regular social & recreational activities for older isolated people • Croatian and English classes • Community Partners Program <p><i>Eligibility: Greater Dandenong, Kingston, Casey & Cardinia</i></p>
<p>Croatian Catholic Welfare Association</p> <p>798/808 Springvale Rd Braeside Ph: 9701 6131 Is connected to the Croatian Catholic Church.</p>	<p>Services provided include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HACC Social Support /Friendly Visiting Program • Community Partners Program • Information & Referral <p><i>Eligibility: Greater Dandenong, Kingston, Casey & Cardinia</i></p>
<p>South Eastern Region Migrant Resource Centre</p> <p>Level 1 314 Thomas Street Dandenong 3175 Ph: 9706 8933 Fax: 9706 8830</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multicultural PAG core Monday Dandenong and Friday Doveton • Multicultural PAG high Tuesday Noble Park • Multicultural PAG core-high Wednesday Noble Park • Carer Support Program • Volunteer Visiting Program <p><i>Eligibility: Greater Dandenong, Casey & Cardinia</i></p>
<p>New Hope Foundation</p> <p>40 Grattan Street Prahran 3181 Ph: 9510 5877 Fax:9510 8971</p> <p>Contact for PAG: Peter Kalathas. Contact for ESL Warren Brewer Ph: 9510 5877</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multicultural Planned Activity Group High needs people • Multicultural English Classes (Tues & Fri) • Seniors Gym <p>Venue: Moorleigh Multicultural Centre Bignell Rd, East Bentleigh</p> <p>Community Visitors Program <i>Eligibility: Kingston</i></p>

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<p>Vision Australia</p> <p>454 Glenferrie Road Kooyong. 3144 Ph: 9864 9533 Fax: 9864 9544 Contact for CALD Telelink Ph: 1300 847 466</p>	<p>Croatian Telelink</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Available for all HACC clients, sighted & vision impaired. • Conducted weekly. Free service. <p><i>Eligibility: Greater Dandenong, Kingston, Casey & Cardinia</i></p>
<p>Croatian Senior Citizens Club (Braeside)</p> <p>798/808 Springvale Rd Braeside Ph: 9701 6131 or 9769 1966</p> <p>Contact: Steve Kovacic</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meets Thursdays 10.00 am – 2.00 pm Weekly meetings with lunch, activities and outings. Mass is celebrated at 11.00 am for interested people.

***This resource list of services (other than Council HACC), has been prepared for aged care staff in the Council areas of Kingston, Greater Dandenong, Casey and Cardinia. Some services and activities listed are in fact available to residents beyond these four municipalities**