

# TODAY'S AUSTRALIANS...WHO ARE WE?

Aboriginal Australians are the traditional owners of the land with a continuous history of ownership for more than 40,000 years. European settlement dates from 1788. Australia is one of the most diverse countries in the world.

## At the 2006 Census...

- Australia has a population of 19,855,288
- People from more than 250 ancestries live in Australia
- 4,416,037 (22.2%) were born overseas

The main countries of birth are:

- Australia 14,072,944 (70.9%)
- United Kingdom 856,939 (4.3%)
- New Zealand 389,463 (2.0%)
- China 206,591 (1%)
- Italy 199,121 (1%)
- Vietnam 159,850 (0.8%)

The main languages spoken at home in Australia:

- English 15,581,333 (78.5%)
- Chinese 465,154 (2.3%)
- Italian 316,890 (1.6%)
- Greek 252,220 (1.3%)



*Over 6 million immigrants have come to Australia since the end of World War II*

In 2006, the top 10 countries of immigration to Australia were:

- United Kingdom 17.9%
- New Zealand 14.6%
- India 9.1%
- China 8.1%
- Philippines 3.9%
- South Africa 2.8%
- Vietnam 2.5%
- Sudan 2.3%
- Malaysia 2.2%
- Afghanistan 2.1%

Australia took immigrants from the following categories

- Migration program 48,736
- Humanitarian program 6,500
- Non-program arrivals 12,864

**Total 68,100**

29,670 were skilled migrants, of these:

- 38.7% were professionals
- 13.4% were tradespeople
- 12.8% were managers and administrators

97% of Humanitarian program arrivals are from North Africa and the Middle East (42.2%), Sub-Saharan Africa (29.9%), Central Asia (15.9%) and South East Asia (9.9%)

**In Victoria...**

- Population 4,932,422
- 30,141 are indigenous (0.6%)
- 21% of Victorians have at least one parent born overseas
- 233 counties are represented
- 116 religions are celebrated
- 24.5% of immigrants settle in Victoria including 1700 refugees in 2006

***In 2006, 16,685 immigrants settled in Victoria***

**Immigrants to Victoria came from:**

<b>Oceania</b>	1985	Fiji, New Zealand, Samoa
<b>Europe</b>	2645	Serbia & Montenegro, Croatia, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Macedonia, Germany, Ireland, United Kingdom
<b>North Africa &amp; Middle East</b>	1667	Egypt, Iran, Iraq, Lebanon, Sudan, Syria, Turkey
<b>South East Asia</b>	3094	Burma, Cambodia, Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Vietnam
<b>North East Asia</b>	2159	China, Hong Kong, Japan, Korea, Taiwan
<b>Southern Asia</b>	3334	Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka
<b>Central Asia</b>	448	Afghanistan
<b>North America</b>	241	Canada, USA
<b>South America</b>	176	Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Peru
<b>Sub-Saharan</b>	865	Eritrea, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Liberia, Mauritius, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Somalia, South Africa, Zambia, Zimbabwe
<b>Former USSR &amp; Baltic States</b>	71	Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Estonia, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Lithuania, Moldova, Russia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, Uzbekistan

## Do your play experiences support newly arrived children?

### Can you answer 'YES' to the following?

#### TIME

Is there a real balance of time for indoor and outdoor experiences?

Is there as much time and effort put into observing children and planning for them outdoors as there is for indoor play?

Do the children determine how long they will stay at an experience?

#### EXPERIENCES

Are natural, sensory experiences always on offer? (Examples include: sand, clay, water, sawdust, gravel, dirt.)

Are recycled materials offered in preference to purchased materials?

Are the majority of experiences open-ended?

Are the experiences on offer culturally relevant to the children in the group?

Do you avoid the use of food as a play material?

#### SPACE

Is the space set up to allow for free, largely, unhampered play?

Are there spaces and experiences available for children to release strong feelings and emotions?

Are there different types of spaces to allow for different types of play?

(Examples include: Soft areas for quiet play; large areas for constructions that can be left up, rather than packed away.)

#### CHOICES

Are experiences set up to allow for children to play individually and in small groups?

Are the majority of play-experiences initiated by the children?

Are there many opportunities for children to choose their own play experiences and playmates throughout the day?

Are children offered alternatives to large group times?

# Working with Parents

by Christine Cook

## A Checklist

Read the following and consider their implications. Tick those you feel you are doing consistently and leave a question mark for those you address occasionally.

### Setting the scene

- Do first impressions of your service indicate equal acceptance of all families in the community?
- Is your service advertised in community languages at venues accessed by communities from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) backgrounds?
- Does your service have staff/carers and/or other families from CALD backgrounds?
- Are posters, notices etc. representative of a multicultural/multilingual community?
- Does your service say 'welcome' in different languages?
- Do staff/carers welcome all families in an equally friendly way?
- Do service policies encompass a multicultural perspective in terms of employment of staff/carers, program development and equal access or priority of access?

### Settling Families In

- Are the enrolment forms of your service bilingual?
- Do you encourage parents to bring a support person to an initial interview?
- Do you ensure communication is clear by using an interpreter if necessary?
- Do you seek information related to parents' views on child rearing practices and beliefs, values and past experiences of families?
- Are service expectations and practices communicated clearly both visually and verbally?

- Are staff/carers photographs and names in entrance to allow easy identification?
- Do bilingual staff/carers speak to parents in their own language about the service, the child's day etc.?
- Does your service have an orientation procedure which encourages parents to stay and settle their child and observe the service's program?
- Are grandparents welcomed to see the service their grandchild attends?

## The Programs and Management

- Are there a variety of ways parents can be involved? e.g.
  - management
  - parent meetings with interpreters
  - involvement in the program
  - contribution of ideas, materials related to their culture
  - maintenance of service/materials
- Is the importance of this involvement conveyed clearly to parents?
- Are parents asked about their skills and preferences?
- Are there processes for ongoing evaluation?

## How do you Score?

If you have a majority of ticks - well done, you will be enjoying a positive partnership with parents.

If you have some ticks - it seems you are going in the right direction and by reading the newsletter you may feel more confident to do more.

If you have few or no ticks - hopefully whatever motivated you to continue to the end of the questionnaire will encourage you to incorporate some of these ideas in your program.

Please remember the MRC can assist you with your work with parents from CALD backgrounds.

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