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## Glossary

CALD	Culturally and Linguistically Diverse
DPCD	Department of Planning and Community Development
DHS	Department of Human Services
LGA	Local Government Area
LOTE	Language Other Than English
NHMRC	New Hope Migrant and Refugee Centre
VRC	Volunteer Resource Centre
VSG	Volunteers Support Grants
VITS	Victorian Interpreting and Translating Service
VMC	Victorian Multicultural Commission Services
VOMA	Victorian Office of Multicultural Affairs
Culture	'The sum total of ways of living built up by a group of human beings, which is transmitted from one generation to another' (Macquarie 1986)

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Connecting People – Connecting Communities Project is one of a number of programs funded by the Department of Planning and Community Development under the Volunteer Support Grant Program. The project aimed to build on capacity and strengthen volunteering involvement amongst existing culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) senior citizens groups from the local government areas of Kingston, Glen Eira and Monash.

The groups participating in the project are all run by volunteers and for many CALD senior volunteers the group activities have far greater implications than just a social event. They provide opportunities for interaction and participation with members reporting that the 'group keeps us active, involved and provides us with a sense of purpose and belonging'.

One key strategy of the Connecting People – Connecting Communities Project was to undertake community consultations with an emphasis on ascertaining skills levels to address issues in managing governance. However from the first informal conversations with volunteers and later in consultations it was apparent there were many other broader issues affecting the functioning of these volunteers. These issues range from inadequate access to transport, inadequate personal volunteer insurance coverage and limited local support to CALD senior's volunteers.

This report presents the findings of these consultations and a number of recommendations to further advocate for CALD volunteers, particularly those least heard, visible and valued.

There is limited research on issues specific to CALD volunteers and we do not know of other studies undertaken specifically targeting CALD senior's and their involvement in volunteering. To our knowledge this project has taken the first step to gain knowledge and insight on how to best assist volunteers from small incorporated bodies representing diverse communities. The New Hope Migrant and Refugee Centre acknowledges that similar issues are experienced by volunteers from English speaking senior's groups and in some instances by small local sporting clubs but due to the short term and specific nature of this project these groups have not been consulted.

## ORGANISATIONAL AND PROJECT BACKGROUND

The New Hope and Migrant Refugee Centre (NHMRC) is committed to providing settlement, welfare, employment and aged care services to refugee and migrants through the development and delivery of quality casework, community development and advocacy activities. The aged care program is comprised of a number of programs for ageing people of culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) background including the VSG Volunteer Project targeting Kingston, Monash and Glen Eira.

The organisation identified the need for support and recognition of the many volunteers who participate in the various seniors groups.

Culturally and linguistically diverse senior groups and clubs play an important role in maintaining the good health of their community members. These groups have been linked into opportunities which aim to enhance the quality of life of their community members and into opportunities for participation in recreational activities, thereby decreasing social isolation amongst the aged.

The New Hope Migrant and Resource Centre strongly advocates for the CALD elderly population and all the time seeks to ensure that this target group is able to actively participate in community life.

**The Connecting People – Connecting Communities Project's** overall aim is to build on capacity and strengthen volunteering involvement amongst existing culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) Senior Citizens Clubs operating from the local government areas of Kingston, Glen Eira and Monash. The project also seeks to assist CALD volunteers to explore other volunteering possibilities in the community with an emphasis on connecting potential volunteers with services that offer local volunteering options.

In addition to this report the following are project achievements accomplished to date:

- Establishment and maintenance of direct links with a number of local CALD senior groups in order to develop trust and create opportunities for discussion and promotion of concepts around volunteering and volunteering issues
- Community Engagement Strategies resulting in members of these groups beginning to define themselves as 'volunteers' consequently slowly starting to participate and contribute to the dialogue on volunteering and volunteering issues
- Support and referral of potential CALD volunteers to local services, eg.councils, information centres etc
- Organised recognition/thank you events targeting CALD senior's including an End of the Year Celebration for 2007, an Expo held in National Volunteer's

- Week and a Thank You event in May 2008 at the Clarinda Community Centre, Kingston
- Twenty four local volunteers including CALD seniors from older and newer communities completed a Certificate II in Community Services with an emphasis on volunteering. The accredited course was organised by the volunteer project worker. Delivery of the project required liaison with the course instructor regarding how to tailor the delivery of the course to participants taking into account individual adult learning styles, language and cultural issues. Participants in the course received their certificates on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of April 2008 in a graduation ceremony
  - In conjunction with community members, the NHMRC established an Action and Support Group for Volunteers. The group meets once a month to learn from each other, share information and discuss volunteering issues pertinent to their groups. Information sessions have been held on how to manage a senior's group and how to manage conflict within a group.

## METHODOLOGY

### Community Consultations

Community consultations were carried out with five very distinct and diverse CALD senior citizen's groups.

CALD senior's groups consisted of individuals who:

- Aged 55+ who were born overseas
- Spoke a second language
- A group of people born in Australia who identify with another culture (second/third generation migrants)
- Participated in cultural specific activities
- All of the above.

The following CALD senior's groups took part in consultations; Italian, Greek, Russian, Filipino and Chinese senior citizens' groups.

Due to the larger numbers of CALD seniors groups in the area targeted by this research, it was decided to select three main language groups for each surrounding council. The groups selected were:

- Italian senior's groups in the City of Kingston
- Greek senior's groups in the City of Monash
- Russian senior's groups in City of Glen Eira.

In order to increase the validity of the research it was also decided to consult two other CALD communities in the target areas:

- Filipino senior's group
- Chinese senior's group

Both of these communities were quite distinct to the original selected groups. The original group had origins in Europe and the latter came from Asia.

The different activities at each of the CALD senior's groups serve a common objective: to strengthen and foster cultural identity through activities which aim to alleviate social isolation amongst their own community.

Five main questions were asked to each of the groups. They were:

1. What kind of volunteer roles have you taken within your group/club?
2. What kind of things have you most enjoyed of your volunteering work?
3. What kind of things have been problems to you in volunteering?
4. What do you think may assist you in working as a volunteer more effectively?
5. Any other comments/ suggestions you would like to make?

The research questions were personalised to match the senior citizens groups' needs. All ethnic groups were asked the same questions. The questions had simple wording and were easily translated into all of the languages. A bilingual support worker or accredited interpreter was used in each of the community consultations.

### **Bilingual Support Workers**

It was decided that consultations in the senior citizens groups community language would create a more inclusive and comfortable environment for the participants to express their opinions. The intention was to minimise barriers for participation therefore providing a number of choices which included providing an interpreter and or conducting the session in community language groups.

Bilingual support workers were invited to assist the Italian and Greek consultations. Both bilingual workers were experienced in working with multicultural aged communities. The bilingual workers brought experience to the discussions and therefore lessened the prospect of the information being wrongly translated to the research team.

The Russian consultations were carried out in English and Russian with one portion of the members deciding not to use the available interpreter. These participants were confident in English expression and comprehension.

The Chinese consultation was conducted with a Cantonese speaking interpreter. The Filipino's consultation was conducted in English.

Consultations were conducted in an informal manner, mostly using open questions. When participants were unable to conceptualize a question further explanation was provided.

Some sessions were opened by a respected community member who shared with participants what it meant to be a volunteer and or a local service provider who spoke the same community language and shared information about their role in the community.

Additionally, the research team acknowledged key individuals in the senior CALD groups and celebrated their contribution towards volunteering in the community.

## **METHODOLOGY LIMITATIONS**

- Due to limited time and resources not all the existing CALD senior's groups were consulted. There are approximately 65 CALD senior's groups operating in the Kingston, Monash and Glen Eira area
- Through observation and dialogue we learnt that other Senior's Groups and Sports group volunteers are experiencing similar issues, however these groups were not included on this research
- As the emphasis was on qualitative data only limited quantitative data has been provided.

### **Other Sources of Information**

The consultation findings have been backed up by a number of contacts with volunteers from senior's groups both individually and in groups. For example, the discussions conducted within the Support and Action Support Group for Volunteers have been invaluable in providing additional quantitative data for this report. This group was established locally in May 2008 when the new graduates of the Certificate II Community Services (with an emphasis on volunteering) expressed interest in meeting monthly with the view to learn and support each other in their volunteer roles. They welcomed the opportunity to meet and discuss issues of volunteering as a multicultural group.

### **Promotional Material**

To promote the consultations two brochures were printed both in the community language of the CALD senior group and the other in English. The brochures were worded with very simple language and a large bold font was used.

In developing promotional material we responded to a recent research report which further supported the need to keep the promotional material simple. The report *Communication and Consultation with Kingston Ethnic Senior Citizens Clubs and*

*Associations - Developing a Communications Strategy for Kingston Council (March 2007)* found that some members of the senior groups had a limited spoken and written understanding of English, while some members had limited reading proficiency in their first language.

Brochures were posted to the key groups in the area and a follow up phone call and visit was made to most of the senior citizen's group committee of management further inviting and encouraging them to participate in the consultation process.

(Please refer to Appendix 3: Invitation Samples)

## KEY FINDINGS

(For consultation questions please refer to page 7)

### Motivation to volunteer

- Knowing that they are doing something worthwhile.
- Being active, socializing with people
- Helping members of their respective clubs
- Helping maintain own communities cultural identity
- Being valued within the group
- Enjoying social activities with people, music and dance events etc

### Volunteer Roles

- There are a number of different roles within the senior clubs; President, Secretary, Treasurer, Public Officer, cooking staff, cleaning staff, driver etc
- Many members of the committee of management held various roles within the social group. For example, the secretary would be responsible for collecting groceries on the day of the club meeting
- Most of the roles within the clubs roles were undefined without a position description. Many responsibilities in the clubs were passed on through word of mouth
- The committee of management would often spend at least two days per week volunteering on activities for their respective clubs. One day would be spent organizing and running the clubs social events while the other day would be sorting out correspondence, maintaining book keeping for club expenses, accessing new membership applications, seeking assistance for Council grants and other grants. Many of the groups would require assistance for these tasks
- Some committee of management volunteers sought assistance from organisations such as the New Hope Migrant and Refugee Centre in regards to responding to correspondence from the local council and other organisations such as the Victorian Multicultural Commission
- Regarding food preparation and cooking roles, women generally held traditional roles in the groups, preparing and serving food, setting and cleaning up, collecting and washing plates
- A cook would generally volunteer once a week. Shifts could vary in time, on average lasting between 3 to 6 hours. Cooking time would vary depending upon the size of the event, the number of people attending the event and the number of helpers in the kitchen
- The structure of kitchen staff varied from group to group. One Greek senior citizen's group had a team of 8 women cooking for a function of 80 members. An Italian club had 10 helpers preparing for a function of 150 members.

## Managing Governance

- Overall there is a perceived lack of knowledge about governance roles and responsibilities particularly in relation to lesser known roles such as that of the Public Officer
- Some long term volunteers in committee of management roles commented on their struggle in managing the legal aspects of their role particularly in keeping up with new policies and legalities for incorporated bodies
- Long term volunteers in committee of management roles, who are getting older, are concerned for their group's future as they are not attracting new volunteers who can take on their roles. They are finding the increasing complexity and demand of these roles are detracting potential volunteers
- Overall formal succession plans do not exist in many groups, however in some groups a mentoring system is in place to encourage new people to take up volunteer roles within the group
- Due to limited knowledge group members provide little assistance or support to the committee of management volunteers particularly in relation to governance
- Due to limited knowledge, time and resources committee of management volunteers find it difficult to keep abreast with new issues emerging, for example, the benefits of having volunteer personal insurance for their group volunteers
- Many volunteers felt that the demands on their roles have increased sharply and they are struggling to meet so many demands. One volunteer described his week; *"at least I spend two days per week volunteering for my group, one day I would be organising and running the meeting/lunch/event, the other day I would be sorting out correspondence, asking for assistance seeking funding for the group, shopping for the event, etc. I have been a president for my group for the last 14 years"*
- Overall these volunteers do not have a clear role/job description and 'handovers' to positions / roles within the club are conducted verbally.

## Transport

### **The issue of transport was mentioned in all the community focus groups**

- Regarding transport roles, some members were reliant on transport assistance to the club outside of the family network. There were a number of contributing factors which lead to members' dependency on other members to reach events
- Some members do not own a vehicle or have a driving license
- Some members were dependent upon their spouse but due to a change in circumstances, death or the ill health of a partner were unable to drive to events
- Some members held a drivers' license, but due to deteriorating health were now unable to drive to events.

## **Financial Viability**

- Overall participants felt that it is becoming very difficult to keep up with the increasing cost of volunteering. The most mentioned issue was the cost of transport for volunteers and group members. Volunteers transporting members to the groups are finding it increasingly difficult to cover extra costs as out of pocket expenses are not reimbursed to group volunteers (Informal volunteering)
- Overall there is concern about the increasing costs to keep the group operating effectively and according to the standards of current members
- There is an overall concern about the limited funding opportunities for senior's groups and the complexity of local funding submission processes. The majority of volunteers on the committees of management are unable to complete the funding submissions and accountability requirements and seek the assistance of organisations such as the New Hope Migrant and Refugee Centre to complete funding submissions, accountability forms, incorporation and insurance renewal etc

## **Ageing and Health**

- Some volunteers feel at times they have less energy, patience and enthusiasm. Others said their volunteer roles provides them with energy and a reason to 'wake up in the morning'
- Drastic health changes for volunteers and group members affects their ability to remain a volunteer
- Volunteers are ageing as is their group membership base. Hence it will become increasingly difficult to encourage new people to take up voluntary roles within the groups.

## **Training Needs**

- Overall participants welcomed the idea of receiving training particularly on issues related to governance, finances and group work. Participants expressed a lack of confidence in attending training due to literacy and limited English skills
- Most participants felt that any training provided would have to cater for their particular needs, that is, it needs to be in ones own language or in very simple English language. Training needs to be ongoing, local and free
- Some members expressed the view that local information sessions or forums on volunteering issues may also be useful. Again discussions on volunteering would need to be in simple language
- According to the increasing expectations of their roles some members expressed concern that they have not been provided with the necessary information and support by mainstream providers on issues such as conflict resolution, finances and technology
- Some long term volunteers felt that providing support and training to younger group members could act as an enticement in encouraging them to take up volunteering roles.

## **The Future of Seniors Clubs**

Some participants are concerned about the future of the groups and welcomed assistance and support from others. Some of the ideas suggested by the participants included:

- Local training provided in community languages and/or simple English language to current and younger group members
- Information sessions and forums provided on volunteering issues for CALD volunteers
- More contact, support and acknowledgment from local community agencies such as councils and volunteer resource centres
- One participant suggested exploring the idea of local TAFE apprentices providing cooks for senior' groups
- Viable and strong transport systems to both enable ageing volunteers to continue volunteering but also for group members to attend community meetings and events.

## **Perceived Cultural Issues Peculiar to CALD Volunteers**

- CALD volunteers find it difficult to recognise themselves as 'volunteers' and do not conceptualize different forms of volunteering such as formal and informal volunteering
- Lack of confidence in attending training due to literacy and limited English language skills
- CALD seniors would often cross local government boundaries in search of cultural specific activities. For example, many members of the Italian community of Moorabbin (City of Kingston) would regularly travel to another Italian club in Keysborough South (City of Greater Dandenong). Groups usually had a representation of members coming from the surrounding local government areas.

## DATA ANALYSIS

### Volunteer Roles

Identified volunteer roles within senior groups include; President, Secretary, Treasurer and in some groups Public Officer. The project also found there were a number of 'informal' roles that appeared outside this formal context. In general there is an acceptance of the most known traditional volunteer roles but limited acknowledgment or recognition of the informal roles. Comments like '*I just help out in the kitchen, not important*' or '*I help those who are unable to attend by themselves by driving them to the event*' were often heard in the focus group conversations. Informal volunteering roles included:

- Transporting volunteers or members to events
- Cooking and cleaning at group events
- Setting up function area for group events.

Formal and informal volunteering roles are pivotal to the functioning of CALD senior groups. There was a tendency to undervalue 'volunteering' in general by all groups consulted and this sentiment correlates with the wider CALD community where the line between being a volunteer and a good 'Samaritan' is blurry.

Since the inception of the VSG program in April 2007 there have been a number of opportunities for these volunteers to be involved in dialogues specifically related to volunteering, this included the community focus groups. A shift has been noted in that they now identify themselves as 'volunteers'. From a researchers' perspective it has been a rewarding process to witness some of these changes, however we understand that for any of these changes to be maintained further changes need to occur. Promoting and supporting CALD volunteers must be a continuous practice.

### Why CALD Senior's Volunteer?

Overall the motivation for CALD senior volunteers is very similar to volunteers in the general community, that is volunteering provides opportunities for interaction, socialisation and feeling valued were often cited as motivators. It is important to note that cultural issues were also strongly mentioned as many of these volunteers see the social groups they work for as one way to maintain their cultural identity. The project found that CALD seniors often cross local government boundaries in order to participate in culturally specific activities. It is not uncommon for volunteers to live outside the CALD senior group's local government area. Some volunteers travel many kilometres in order to participate in culturally specific clubs. Lamentably groups are funded accordingly to member's place of residence, presenting a stressful situation for committee of managements as their main objective is to cater for all regardless from which LGA area members are coming from.

## **Managing Governance**

A major concern within senior groups is the challenge of managing governance.

The complex nature and ever increasing legal responsibilities for committee of management volunteers are taxing and restricting. Most of them indicated that the time provided by volunteers is mainly spent on running the groups meetings and event and little time and energy were left to issues such as attracting or training new volunteers, succession plans and the future of these groups.

According to Jenny Warburton and Melissa Lowell (2005) in *Productive Ageing 'Occupational health and safety, risk management and legal liability are all integral part of new volunteering culture'*. The unfortunate situation is CALD senior groups are struggling to comply with new policies and legislation around volunteering. Consequently, the consultations found that there were a number of senior groups who had limited understanding and or could not keep up with issues pertinent to their group's such as volunteer personal insurance. Sadly, without such cover groups were unable to tap into potential volunteer resources such as volunteer resource centres in local areas.

One major issue voiced across the group consultations was that many members within the groups felt they did not have the skills or knowledge to step into committee of management positions. In some groups this forced existing volunteers to remain in their positions for a longer period of time than they had originally intended. In our view the issue is not necessarily about lack of skills but the absence of mentoring practices nurturing new potential volunteers within their own groups.

Another issue that was constantly referred to is the inability of the committee of management to recruit new volunteers. The project felt the difficulties arise from group members ageing, older volunteers grappling with the complexity of roles and some group members attending these groups for social reasons only.

Other reasons impacting on attracting new volunteers from outside the group are possibly related to the emerging changes on the face of volunteering such as changing work patterns, changing lifestyles of the baby boomers and rapid changes in technology.

According to Judy Osmond (2006) in *Volunteers – More Ideas* the best people to assist in recruiting new volunteers are the volunteers themselves. Positive feedback about their experiences as volunteers is the best promotion to encourage timid and or unsure potential volunteers.

## **Financial Cost of Volunteering**

The financial cost of volunteering was mentioned in nearly all the consultations as a concern not only in jeopardising the group functioning but also restricting volunteering involvement. For example the increasing cost of petrol is impacting on volunteers transporting members to the meetings as they do not receive any reimbursement. In some instances volunteers were required to attend a food-

handling course at their own expense. Transport cost to attend meetings, for volunteers who do not drive, is also a concern. In addition the increasing costs of operating a CALD senior group are placing extra reliance upon the members. The main financial costs identified were the cost of petrol and food. One participant said that *'there used to be reimbursement in the past', 'if you had to pick someone up the group would reimburse you'*.

Many groups have all expressed a concern over the complexity of local submission processes for funding and the limited funding opportunities to support their groups.

Governments need to address the issue of transport. During the consultation it was found a large number of volunteers were engaged in transporting members to group events. Those members usually were unable to access their own transport due to frailty in ageing or they had limited mobility. One participant said *'if costs increase and groups cannot fund the expenses I will not be able to drive some of the members to events'*.

Another area of concern was that many volunteers and group members would travel to cultural specific activities or events outside of their local government area. Presently there is limited inter council transport network for the frail elderly travelling across council boundaries in search of culturally appropriate social events.

## **Training Needs**

The majority of participants felt that lack of training opportunities was an issue affecting their senior groups. However, some of the more established groups expressed ambiguity in relation to training needs as they felt their current volunteers had enough expertise to perform their specific duties. Other groups had limited knowledge although some of these volunteers have been performing their roles for an extended period of time. One of the groups consulted was fairly new and it was apparent that they were grappling with some aspects of their roles.

There maybe a number of reasons why training issues were mentioned by the majority, such as most of the handovers are done verbally, there is no written job descriptions and very few examples of mentoring practices amongst group members.

CALD seniors were encouraged to describe why they would like training to be provided. In order to have this discussion training was discussed in a broader context, for example information sessions, one day workshops, or a short course on volunteering.

The majority of participants felt a training model should be tailored to their specific needs. Participants expressed the following criteria for any training:

- Training must be provided locally
- It must be affordable to members and volunteers
- It is preferable that it is conducted in community languages to increase participation of members with low levels of English or it must be presented in English that is easy to understand and simple

- Part time or casual sessions are preferred, taking into consideration these volunteers have other commitments.

Others expressed an uneasiness attending 'training' due to a perceived lack of confidence and experience in formal training. One participant said '*I don't know about training, I think you are trying to teach a primary level student into a university student*'; another said '*it is like trying to teach an old dog new tricks*'.

In our view the possible training models should be based upon adult learning principles and practices:

- Significant learning takes place when the subject matter is relevant to the personal interests of the participant
- Learning which is threatening to the self, for example new attitudes or perspectives, are more easily assimilated when external threats are at a minimum. This can be addressed by training being conducted in community languages and in a friendly, less formal environment
- Training must be highly interactive, fun and specific to the needs of the participant. (Rodgers, Carl 1969 Freedom to Learn – Adult Learning Principles)

## OPPORTUNITIES

Addressing these community issues may result in having a *healthy, diverse* and *robust* community volunteering in 20 years time. Supporting, resourcing and funding an infrastructure for volunteers is essential. When consulted some volunteers sadly expressed concern for the future of their groups as they are getting older. Some long term volunteers feel '*responsible for their groups*' and although they would like to 'retire' they would not do so unless they are sure their group will continue to function. We believe these groups are essential for the maintenance of the local social fabric of the community.

This belief is strongly supported by studies from leading academics who have indicated that volunteering helps to build a strong and cohesive community. According to S. Cordingley (2001) '*volunteering is not just about saving money but the intrinsic value of the volunteer's role and the benefit for the community and the individual*'.

## **CONCLUSION**

Culturally and linguistically diverse background volunteers working for their senior's groups face a number of challenges in ensuring appropriate processes and procedures are established and in reviewing all activities relating to their groups volunteers. In general there has been the assumption that volunteering 'just happens' due to the good of people. For CALD volunteers working for their groups, Volunteering/Civic Participation is more likely to occur once trust amongst group members and with local services has been established, therefore it is essential to promote, communicate and inform these groups regularly. According to the findings of this project one of the most important concepts to promote amongst these volunteers is that they 'are' volunteers and that local support is available to assist them in performing their roles as volunteers. Many of the current volunteers, particularly committee of management members, are getting older and frailer with fewer new members wanting to take up these roles, with governance issues raised as difficult to understand and follow. Supporting the active participation of CALD group's representatives is closely linked with appropriate local infrastructure and resources.

New models of delivering services to volunteers need to incorporate small incorporated bodies into the volunteering discourse. This is essential if we are to effectively respond to existing diversity, interest and local needs. These social groups contribute greatly to community strengthening and in improving people's quality of life. Meaningful engagement can only result in creating robust and healthy communities.

## **KEY ACTION AREAS**

The analysis of all the information provided by the volunteers consulted has revealed five critical issues. These issues noted below are followed by five proposed recommendations that would see a significant improvement in the practices and outcomes for CALD volunteers and seniors.

1. There is limited infrastructure, encouragement and support to CALD volunteers particularly in the City of Kingston and surrounding local government areas
2. There is inadequate access to ongoing and suitable opportunities for learning particularly for CALD volunteers running small incorporated organisations
3. There is inadequate personal insurance coverage for CALD senior volunteers
4. There is inadequate local transport and or other mediums of transport for the elderly including volunteers

5. Funding to groups is limited to narrow geographical boundaries without the consideration of cultural needs.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### Recommendation 1

Create and resource new models of service delivery to support older volunteers with an emphasis on cultural diversity and small incorporated bodies including senior citizens groups particularly in the Cities of Kingston, Monash and Glen Eira.

The New Hope Migrant and Refugee Centre recommend that:

- New models to service local CALD volunteers are explored and prioritised in order to strengthen community based activities such as senior citizen groups
- Support for volunteers is provided within a community development framework with a strong emphasis on access to learning and participation for elderly volunteers
- Support for volunteers is a combined effort of all local agencies with a strong emphasis on partnerships, avoiding duplication and better use of local resources
- Support for CALD volunteers is adequately resourced to redress the disadvantages these groups face
- Implement local strategies to further advance the volunteering prospects of older volunteers.

### Recommendation 2

Volunteers are not a homogenous group. Strengthening capacity building via the provision of a welcoming and knowledgeable environment for *diverse volunteers* is seen as fundamental in improving the management and retention of volunteers for these groups:

Different ways of understanding 'volunteering' and limited English language comprehension was the most common barrier mentioned by older CALD volunteers to attend training delivered in English only.

The New Hope Migrant and Refugee Centre recommend that:

- The local volunteer sector is supported and resourced to develop and implement a local volunteer training strategy based on *community needs identified in consultations*
- In collaboration implement a local and innovative way to systematically and comprehensively provide knowledge in a culturally appropriate way on governance, recruiting and managing volunteers.

### **Recommendation 3**

Most of the senior's group volunteers are inadequately insured placing the individual and the groups in a vulnerable position.

The New Hope Migrant and Refugee Centre recommend that:

- Government and state-wide organisations address the issue of volunteer personal accident coverage
- A system is developed for the provision of volunteer personal accident coverage for those most at risk.

### **Recommendation 4**

The issue of transport was mentioned in all the community focus groups as a significant barrier for volunteering and participation. Due to the enormity of the problem it is difficult to make a specific recommendation likely to bring about change however it is essential that the relationship between limited transport *opportunities for the elderly and volunteering is at least on the agenda.*

- A viable and strong transport system to both enable ageing volunteers to continue volunteering but also for group members to attend community meetings and events.

### **Recommendation 5**

With the objective of decreasing isolation for CALD elderly, continue to support and adequately fund CALD senior citizen's groups with a strong emphasis on community engagement and participation.

CALD seniors often cross local government boundaries in order to participate in culturally specific activities. It is not uncommon for volunteers to live outside the CALD senior group's local government area. Some volunteers travel many kilometres in order to participate in culturally specific clubs.

The New Hope Migrant and Refugee Centre recommend that:

- Opportunities are re-examined for these local groups to be recognised as active members of their local communities
- Local government develop funding criteria that reflects and acknowledges the fact that members of seniors clubs come from a number of surrounding local government areas in order to meet. Groups should not be financially disadvantaged because they do not meet in a particular local government area.

## **Social and Economic Outcomes**

The research from this project has led us to believe that should our recommendations be followed favourable social and economic outcomes can be expected:

### **Social Outcomes**

- Increased number of CALD volunteers participating locally
- Access to a wider pool of local volunteers
- Creation of accessible and inclusive volunteer programs that reflect the diversity of the local community
- Improved compliance of government requirements particularly in relation to governance and risk management
- Enhanced communication with volunteers from CALD backgrounds adding a new perspective to volunteering
- The potential of developing mentoring and support programs for local volunteers
- All involved contributing to local Positive Ageing strategies with the overall aim to promote well being amongst the elderly including volunteers
- An opportunity for the sector to work together on issues related to volunteering and improving the use of local resources.

### **Economic Outcomes**

(Please refer to Appendix 1: Estimated Cost of Volunteering)

## APPENDIX 1: Estimated Cost of Volunteering

- There are approximately 65 CALD Seniors groups in the areas of Kingston, Monash and Glen Eira
- Each group has an average of 10 volunteers including formal and informal volunteer roles (= 650 local volunteers)
- An hour of volunteering has been costed by the Independent Sector in US by \$19.51 in Australia \$20.83\*
- Each volunteer works approximately 16 hours per week for 40 weeks.

- Weekly - one volunteer contributes to the local community \$333.28
- Annually - one volunteer contributes \$13,331.20
- Annually the contribution for 650 volunteers equals to \$ 8,665,280.00

\*Source [www.probonoaustralia.com.au](http://www.probonoaustralia.com.au)

Please consider that these estimates **do not** include other associated costs for volunteering such as phone calls and fuel.

## APPENDIX 2: Facts and Statistics

**Social Inclusion Facts and Statistics from [www.vichealth.vic.gov.au](http://www.vichealth.vic.gov.au)**

### **Social activities**

Nearly 16% of Australian households cannot afford to participate in social activities such as family holidays, having a night out or having family or friends over for a meal.

### **Living alone**

The proportion of people living alone is increasing markedly, with projections indicating that by the year 2021 between 2.4 and 3.4 million people could be living alone, an increase of 52-113% from the number in 1996.

### **Stress**

While living and being alone can be a positive choice for many, studies indicate that the rates of mental and behavioural problems and psychological stress are higher among adults who live alone than in adults living in a household with at least one other person.

### **Education**

Participation in education is a key means of reducing the risk of social exclusion and poverty. However, people from lower socio-economic status backgrounds are more likely to leave school early, have lower rates of literacy and numeracy and comprise a declining proportion of enrolments in higher education.

### **Social trust**

Lower levels of social trust have been associated with higher rates of most causes of death, including heart attacks, cancer, stroke, unintentional injury and infant mortality.

A socially inclusive society is one where all people feel valued, their differences are respected, and their basic needs are met so that they can live in dignity.

### **What is the link between social inclusion and health?**

Belonging to a social network makes people feel cared for and valued and this has a powerful protective effect on health. People who get less social support are more likely to experience depression. The amount of social support available varies by social and economic status, and poverty can contribute to social exclusion and isolation.

### **How many people experience social isolation?**

Nearly 16% of Australian households cannot afford to participate in social activities such as family holidays, having a night out or having family or friends over for a meal (Saunders 2003).

## APPENDIX 3: Invitation Samples

# Διασύνδεση – Υποστήριξη Εθελοντών

Κοινοτική Συνάντηση Ανταλλαγής  
Απόψεων

(η συζήτηση θα γίνει στα Ελληνικά!)

Δευτέρα 30 Ιουνίου 2008  
από τις 2.30 έως 4.30 μμ

### Πρόγραμμα

- Παρουσίαση από την  
Ευγενία  
Γραμματικάκη από  
το Δήμο Monash
- Ομαδική συζήτηση  
στα Ελληνικά
- Απογευματινό τσάι

Είστε εθελοντής στη λέσχη  
ή στο σύλλογό σας;

Θα θέλατε να εκφράσετε  
τη γνώμη σας για τις  
εμπειρίες σας ως  
εθελοντής;

Τι νομίζετε ότι θα σας  
βοηθούσε για να  
συνεχίσετε να εργάζεστε  
ως εθελοντής;

Invitation Samples

Μέρος : Monash Volunteer Resource Centre,  
5 Myrtle Street, Glen Waverley (Available 2 and 4  
hours parking at the back of the Shopping

Ενημερώστε την Geraldina αν θα παρευρεθείτε στο  
τηλέφωνο 85511200

# Tenere collegati - Sostenere I Volontari

## Forum sul feedback comunitario (condotto in italiano! )

Giovedì 5 giugno 2008  
dalle 14.30 alle 16.30 pm

### Programma

- Presentazione a cura del gruppo di Cosenza
- Discussione di gruppo, in italiano
- Merenda

- Sei un volontario del gruppo o de club?
- Vorresti dire qualcosa della tua esperienza come volontario?
- Cosa pensi potrebbe aiutarti a continuare a svolgere il tuo ruolo di volontario?

Dove: Clarinda Community Centre  
58 Viney Street, Clarinda  
(Entrata della biblioteca)

**RSVP a Geraldina al numero 85511200**  
New Hope Migrant and Refugee Centre



This project is funded by the Department of Planning and Community Development under the Volunteer Support Grants.

## APPENDIX 4: References

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- ProBono Australia [www.probonoaustralia.com.au](http://www.probonoaustralia.com.au)