

Spanish Speaking Cultural Profile - older people

PLEASE NOTE: This profile provides an overview of some of the cultural information relating to the diverse groups of Spanish speaking people who live in the South Eastern Region of Melbourne. This description may not apply to all people as individual experiences may vary. However this profile can be used as a guide to some of the issues that may concern your clients. Information about relevant services & activities is also included.

We gratefully acknowledge the contribution of the various Spanish speaking organisations especially the Spanish American Welfare Inc. (CELAS) in preparing this profile.

Introduction

The Spanish speaking people who migrated to Australia have come from 23 different countries. According to ABS 2006 Census Victoria, there are approximately 24,506 Spanish speaking migrants in Victoria. In the South Eastern Region, the biggest Spanish speaking communities are people from Chile followed by Argentina, El Salvador, Spain and Uruguay. Generally speaking, the Spanish speaking people migrated to Australia because of economic and political upheaval, landlessness, poverty, high unemployment and civil war.

Migration from Chile

- In the late 1960's and early 1970's due to economic and political issues caused by the military disturbance in Chile a large number of Chileans fled to Australia and other countries to avoid persecutions by the new military regime.
- Even though there is political stability in Chile, Chileans still come to settle to Australia for economic reasons now.
- Because of the past social injustices and political history in Chile, many Chileans in Victoria maintain a passionate interest and involvement with social and political issues both in their homeland and in Victoria.
- There are 705 residents, 55 years and over in the SE region, who were born in Chile. (ABS 2011)

Migration from Argentina

- In the early 1970's the majority of the Argentinean immigrants came to Victoria because of military and economic instability.
- Between 1972-1981 the political and economic crisis in their homeland did not improve so a vast number of Argentinean immigrated to Australia and many of them stayed in temporary hostels in Victoria.
- There are 251 residents in the SE region, 55 years and over, who were born in Argentina.(ABS 2011)

Migration from El Salvador

- In the mid-1980's Salvadorian refugees came to Australia under the Special Humanitarian Program to help them escape the growing political unrest caused by the upsurge of violence between the right wing government and the left wing guerilla movement.
- Migration continued until around 1992 when the United Nations brokered a peace deal in El Salvador.
- There are 222 residents in the SE region, 55 years and over, born in El Salvador.(ABS 2011)

Migration from Spain

- In late 1950's the Spain-born immigrants dramatically increased in Victoria due to the Spanish-Australian Migration Agreement.
- Economic improvement in Spain has resulted in a decrease in migration in recent years.
- There were 3,107 residents , born in Spain, noted in 2011 Census.

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Migration from Uruguay

- The first Uruguayans arrived in Australia during the 1960's and 1970's because of political and economic problems at home. An estimated 400,000 people fled Uruguay in 1973, some settling in Australia 1,068 by 1976.
- Between 1981-1984, 500 Uruguay-born immigrants arrived in Victoria. 1984 saw democracy return to Uruguay but still the Uruguayan population in Victoria continued to increase.
- In the 2011 census the population of people 65 years and over, from Uruguay, in S E region was 143..
- Most Uruguayans live in Berwick and Dandenong in the South Eastern Region.

Local Demographics: Spanish-Speaking residents in the South East Region (ABS 2011)

	City of Greater Dandenong	City of Casey	Cardinia Shire
Total population of LGA	135,605	252,382	74,174
Total no of Spanish speaking residents	1,701	3,285	227
Spanish speaking population, 55+ years	666	809	40

Language

- Spanish is spoken differently in many different Spanish speaking countries however greetings in Spanish do not differ very much from country to country.
- 95% Spanish speaking residents in Victoria predominantly speak Spanish at home.
- Other languages they speak are Italian, English, French, Greek, Netherlandic and German.
- Lack of English language knowledge has forced some Spanish speaking communities to take unskilled employment working as labourers or trades people; although many are employed as professionals.
- Elderly people lack English proficiency due to their non-involvement in English education programs.
- Service providers are advised to always check the need for professional interpreters when communicating with a Spanish speaking elder.

Religion

- Majority of the Spanish speaking community in Victoria are Catholic although other religious beliefs are accepted such as other forms of Christianity.
- Catholicism is taken seriously and plays a large role in the lives of much of Spanish speaking community.
- Religious practices and significant religious festivals and celebrations are well observed.

Attitudes and issues with ageing

- The Spanish speaking communities have a high regard for their elders.
- The elders are respected for their wisdom, although some believe, depending on the family, that the respect for their elders has declined in recent years due to the influence of Australian culture.
- There is a very high expectation that the family should look after their parents at home.
- Some children financially support their parents as they age, although families are thankful that the elders receives pension from the government to survive.
- It is common for elderly people to look after their grandchildren while their own children work. The Australian culture has not changed this particular tradition of caring for their young.

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- Because of lack of proficiency in English and lack of transportation, there is a tendency for the elderly person to be isolated, lonely and depressed and many are not motivated to join social groups or community support groups.
- Many Spanish speaking elders prefer to be with their family and relatives, church groups and social clubs rather than with other ethnic groups. Many elders find it uncomfortable to speak English in an English speaking meeting or gathering, because of their lack of English proficiency.
- Some of the Spanish speaking families may find it hard and difficult to seek professional help in order to care for an elderly person because they feel it is their responsibility and obligation to care for them.

Attitudes to disability and mental illness

- The Spanish speaking communities do not regard mental illness or disability as shameful.
- The family remains centrally involved in the primary care of a family member with mental illness or disability.
- Majority of them are not reluctant to access mental health services from a health professional.

Responding to Professional Care and Services

- The Spanish speaking communities lack full understanding of the HACC and Community Health Centre systems.
- Accessing assistance or support from service providers is a foreign idea to some of the families.
- The majority of the Spanish speaking elders will consult with their children prior to accessing the services.
- The elders have strong preference for their family members to assist them with home care and personal care because they fear of the social stigma attached to seeking assistance will label their children as people who cannot look after their elderly.
- The elders feel more comfortable to meet with a bilingual Spanish speaking worker and they will often request for a Spanish speaking worker to provide HACC services.
- Some elders are suspicious of the HACC services and therefore reluctant to sign any forms.
- It is important to have a professional interpreter to visit with a HACC Officer/Worker when they assess/visit a Spanish speaking elder.

Customs/Values

- The family in the Spanish speaking community is the centre of their social structure. The family relationship includes the nuclear family, aunts, uncles, grandparents, cousins and honorary relations such as godparents, sponsors and close family friends.
- Respect for the elderly is a highly esteemed value of the Spanish speaking community.
- Hospitality to a guest or neighbour is also a famous value of the Spanish speaking communities.

Communication Styles

- Spanish speaking communities will often warmly greet each other with a kiss on one cheek (not two cheeks) followed by the word “Como esta (how are you)?”
- It is important to maintain eye contact when speaking to a Spanish speaking person to show that you are paying attention to them.
- Some Spanish speaking people may interpret assertiveness as aggressiveness.
- It is acceptable for the Spanish speaking community to handshake.

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Health Beliefs and Practices

- The Spanish speaking people will consult their family members on matters of health, illness and treatment before they seek professional medical advice.
- The Spanish speaking people will expect a medical provider to take personal interest (like a family friend) when dealing with their medical problems.
- It is important for the doctors or nurses to gain the trust and confidence of the patient and to respect their dignity when providing treatment or services.
- Some of the Spanish speaking people believe in spiritualism, meaning their health and well being can be affected by good and spiritual beings of the spiritual world.

Naming Conventions

- Most Spanish speaking people have one or two given names followed by two surnames. The primary surname is inherited from the father's first surname, the secondary surname is from the mother's first surname.
- The parents usually name their child from the names of the saints.
- Women usually keep their names when they marry.
- In honour of the Virgin Mary, girls are often called Maria, Dolores, Rosario, Luz.
- Many Spanish names can be shortened into affectionate nickname forms.
- It is conventional to use titles particularly for older Spanish-speaking people.

Greetings

English Greeting	Spanish	Closest Spanish Pronunciation
Hello	Hola	oh-lah
Good Morning	Buenos Dias	bweh-nos dee-as
Good Afternoon	Buenas Tardes	bweh-nas tar-des
Good Evening	Buenas Noches	bweh-nas noh-ches
Goodbye	Adios	ah-dyos
Yes	Si	see
No	No	noh
Thank You	Gracias	grah-thyas
You are Welcome	De Nada	de-nah-doh

Key Spanish-speaking community Festivals/Significant dates:

Christmas Day
New years Day
Easter Season and other significant Catholic religious observations.
Labour Day
All Saints Day and All Soul's Day
Independence Days or Anniversary of Revolutions
Patron Saint Feast Days

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Services and Activities useful for older Spanish-speaking people in the S.E. Region*

Organisation/Contact	Service/Activities
<p>Southern Migrant and Refugee Centre Level 1 314 Thomas Street Dandenong 3175 Ph: 9767 1900 Fax: 9706 8830</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planned Activity Groups - Spanish Speakers - Social, recreational, information, outings Thursday for Casey residents. - Computer Class, weekly, Dandenong residents <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multicultural PAGs core and high • Positive Ageing Programs- strength training, warm water exercise and tai chi • Outing Groups • Carer Support Program • Volunteer Visiting Program • HACC Access and Support • Community Visitors Scheme <p><i>Eligibility: Greater Dandenong, Casey & Cardinia</i></p>
<p>City of Casey Home and Community Care 1-9 Regency Dr. Narre Warren 3805 Ph 9705 5444 Fax 8790 3754 Email: www.casey.vic.gov.au</p>	<p>Spanish speakers – Outing group</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monthly on Fridays. • Visit different places of interest • Provides social interaction for clients and respite for carers. <p><i>Eligibility: Casey residents</i></p>
<p>Ventana Hispana Inc (Spanish Windows) Co-located at: Southern Migrant and refugee Centre Level One, 314 Thomas Street Dandenong. Any day by appointment. Ph: 9767 1900 Lucy Salinas, Coordinator, Mobile 0422 657 121</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides welfare, social and cultural support, information and referral. • Learning opportunities to promote harmony and participation in the Spanish-speaking and general diverse community in Victoria. • Food bank • Activities i.e. computer lessons; English classes; Latin and traditional dance.
<p>Latino Spanish Senior Citizen’s Club Dandenong Senior Citizen’s Centre 10 Langhorne Street, Dandenong Post Mail to: 19 Agana Street, Noble Park 3174</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meets every Wednesday 12:30pm-6:00pm <p>Main activities: Latin dancing including learn how to dance, socialising, lunch.</p>

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<p>Italo-Spanish Club Inc Menzies Avenue, Dandenong North</p> <p>Mrs Rachel Pequeno (President) Narre Warren South Vic 3805 Home Phone 9705 0914 Club Phone 9705-9084</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides social support, indoor games, singing, dancing, cards, chatting, lunch and outing every month. • Meets every Wednesdays 11:00am-3:00pm
<p>The Spanish Friendship Club 1 A The Crescent, Springvale 3171</p> <p>Angelita Arriagada Ph 9706 9323 (contact Monday or Thursdays)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meets every Friday 9:00am-2:00pm • Social activities: Playing cards, dominoes, pool, tai chi, bingo and lunch provided.
<p>Amigos en Australia (Friends in Australia) Seniors Group</p> <p>Doveton Neighbourhood Learning Centre Oak Avenue, Doveton 3177 Ph 9791 1449 Contact: Monica Garrido (President) Ph 9702 4686</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meets every Wednesday 12:30pm-4:00pm • Provides social support, recreation, singing, dancing, lunch and drinks.
<p>Only Ladies Spanish Seniors Club</p> <p>Doveton Neighbourhood Learning Centre Oak Avenue, Doveton 3177 Ph 9791 1449</p> <p>Contact: Gladys Fuentes 0431 290 323</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meets every Thursdays 12:00pm-3:30pm • Provides social support, sewing, knitting, chatting and lunch.
<p>Sin Fronteras Spanish Speaking Seniors Group Pakenham Senior Citizen's Centre 38 James St. Pakenham</p> <p>President: Elisa Zuleta Ph: 0423 732 650 Or 0437 076 579</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meets Fridays

***This resource list of services 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 three municipalities.**