



Cultural diversity and volunteering in Greater Bendigo

TOOLKIT FOR VOLUNTEER ORGANISATIONS





Cultural diversity in Australia

Australia is a multicultural country; from the diversity amongst first nations people and the number of Australians who were born overseas, to the many people in our community who speak languages other than English.

According to the latest census, half of Australian people were born outside Australia or have parents who were born outside Australia. Additionally, 78 per cent* of newly arrived migrants speak a first language other than English.

*ABS, 2016



Cultural diversity in Greater Bendigo

Over 25 per cent of people residing in Greater Bendigo have a parent who was born in a country other than Australia. This has increased by 5 per cent since 2011 and we are continuing to see this trend of people from culturally diverse backgrounds choosing to make Greater Bendigo home.

Living in a city rich in diversity and culture also highlights the need for us all to be equipped with knowledge to respond to our increasingly diverse workplaces and volunteer organisations.

The aim is for all volunteer organisations in Greater Bendigo to be committed to being inclusive and creating culturally safe spaces that promote and celebrate diversity.

Definition of volunteering

According to Volunteering Australia, the definition of volunteering is ‘time willingly given for the common good and without financial gain’.

Rights of volunteers

Volunteers in your volunteer organisation have legal rights and protections against harassment and discrimination. Anti-discrimination laws exist at both the state and federal level.

Under federal and state anti-discrimination laws, there is legislated protection on attributes such as age, race, disability, sex and protected areas of public life. Under organisational work health and safety laws and under the law of negligence, organisations have a duty to take reasonable care to avoid exposing workers, including volunteers, to reasonably foreseeable risks of injury which could include harm caused by discrimination. This includes supporting your volunteers to have equal access to information and opportunities, and that a reasonable effort has been made to ensure discrimination does not occur because of these differences.

Benefits of engaging volunteers from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds

- Organisations learn from new perspectives and experiences
- Increases access to a larger pool of potential volunteers
- Increases cultural awareness within the organisation
- Strengthens relationships with community groups in Greater Bendigo
- Organisations can better serve clients and customers from culturally diverse groups



What does it mean to be culturally competent?

Cultural competence is to respectfully interact and work effectively with people from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds.



CULTURAL COMPETENCY CONTINUUM*

How culturally competent is your organisation?

CULTURAL PROFICIENCY

The organisation promotes and celebrates diversity and understands benefits of having an unbiased and diverse team.

CULTURAL COMPETENCY

The organisation recognises cultural differences and will seek other perspectives.

CULTURAL SENSITIVITY

The organisation is open to learning about other cultures.

CULTURAL BLINDNESS

The organisation assumes all needs are alike and uses a blanket approach for everyone.

CULTURAL INCAPACITY

The organisation accepts the existence of other cultures but is unable to work effectively with other cultures.

CULTURAL DESTRUCTIVENESS

The organisation denies and rejects culture, offering privileges to the dominant group only.

**Adapted from Best Practice Principles: CALD Cultural Competency Standards and Frameworks, Lim and Mortensen, 2014*

Cultural safety audit

CULTURALLY COMPETENT PRACTICES AND STRATEGIES



Organisation level	Beginning	Developing	Advanced
The cultural diversity of Greater Bendigo is reflected in our volunteers and staff.			
Our organisation embraces the diverse cultural customs and beliefs of volunteers.			
Our orientation and explanations are in plain English, and other languages where appropriate.			
Our policies and procedures are written in plain English, and other languages where appropriate.			
Volunteer role descriptions are written in plain English, and other languages where appropriate.			
Position description of managers require knowledge and skills related to cultural diversity and competence.			
Staff and volunteers in our organisation have completed cross-cultural professional development.			
Our organisation has tasks available for volunteers with limited English language fluency.			



Team level	Beginning	Developing	Advanced
Volunteers from culturally diverse communities are treated as equal members of the team.			
We give demonstrations in person to assist with a greater understanding of tasks.			
We have a mentoring system available to support culturally and linguistically diverse volunteers.			
We consider religious and cultural dietary requirements when ordering food and refreshments (e.g. vegetarian diet, halal).			
Volunteer role descriptions are written in plain English, and other languages where appropriate.			
We consider various religious and cultural holidays when planning meetings and events.			
We take time to learn the correct pronunciation of volunteers' names.			
Volunteers and staff are aware of a quiet space that can be accessed for prayer if required			



Further information and resources

Bendigo Volunteer Resource Centre:
www.bgovolunteers.org.au

Justice Connect NFP Law – Volunteer Resources:
www.nfplaw.org.au/volunteers

Volunteering Victoria – multicultural volunteering:
[www.volunteeringvictoria.org.au/managing-volunteers/
building-an-inclusive-volunteer-program](http://www.volunteeringvictoria.org.au/managing-volunteers/building-an-inclusive-volunteer-program)

This resource was developed in partnership between Loddon Campaspe Multicultural Services, Bendigo Volunteer Resource Centre and the City of Greater Bendigo.

The City of Greater Bendigo is on Dja Dja Wurrung and Taungurung Country.

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