



ANNUAL REPORT 2023-2024

**Strengthening Connections, Empowering Communities
A Year of Collaborative Growth and Cultural Engagement**

Acknowledgment of Country

Ballarat Regional Multicultural Council respectfully acknowledges the Wadawurrung and Dja Dja Wurrung people, their elders and community leaders, past, present and emerging – traditional custodians of the land on which we live and work.

Ballarat Regional Multicultural Council Inc. (BRMC) is the peak multicultural agency in the Central Highlands Grampians Region.

BRMC's Mission

To actively promote and develop goodwill, understanding and harmony within our culturally diverse community.

**BRMC actively promotes intercultural and interfaith harmony.
We help build inclusive and diverse communities and economies.**

We work with members and partners to strengthen diversity and social cohesion in regional Victoria.

Proudly part of:



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CHAIR REPORT

For those who have followed the growth of BRMC over the last 24 years, you may know that this is my third time serving as BRMC Chair. This reflects my passion and dedication to the work our organisation does for multicultural community members in our region. We aim to provide services and support that help them settle well, feel included, and live in harmony. In the past year, I've dedicated a lot of time to listening to communities and understanding their specific needs, especially those of the most vulnerable.



BRMC works closely with community leaders and members, and we're all adapting to new ways of communicating to provide accurate and helpful information. This includes information about settlement, social services, emergency preparedness and response, employment and education, food assistance, and health support.

It has been fantastic to witness the growth of the new Multicultural Leaders' Monthly Catch-ups. These gatherings have played a crucial role in facilitating communication and information sharing among various communities and BRMC.

Over the past 12 months, our organization has faced significant challenges, especially with impending program and core funding cuts. Advocating for a review and reintroduction of funding has been a top priority for us. I want to express my gratitude to BRMC's CEO Suzanne Ryan-Evers for her leadership, focus, and diligent efforts in addressing this issue and advocating for our needs. As CEO, Suzanne continues to regularly meet with community leaders to better understand their needs and establish and maintain effective partnerships with government, service providers, and local organizations that can support our multicultural communities. Suzanne is dedicated to ensuring the continuity of BRMC's essential role in Ballarat and the Grampians region into the future.

Despite the challenges of this past year, BRMC continues to provide consistent support to our diverse community. From delivering social support for seniors to supporting new arrivals, the team continues to have a positive impact on making Ballarat a welcoming and supportive place for people from across the globe.

Thank you to each of our wonderful volunteer Board members for their steady and mutual support in the face of the challenges facing our organization. My special thanks extend to BRMC's accountant, Paul Tant, and BRMC treasurer, Uphar Chhabra, for all their work in the last twelve months. As chair, I am proud to say that there has been a great working relationship between the operational team and board members over this period, and I see it continuing into the future.

Thank you to our dedicated staff and to all members and partners of BRMC for trusting the BRMC Executive Committee. Please stay in touch with us to share your priorities and concerns. We are eager to continue working for and with you.

TREASURER REPORT

As in previous years, the annual accounts for FY2023-2024 have been prepared in accordance with General Purpose standards rather than Special Purpose standards. There have been no significant changes to the Australian Accounting Standards applicable to BRMC, which means the financial reports for this year have been prepared similarly to previous years, with no new disclosures required.



For FY2023-2024, BRMC's revenue increased from \$1,290,808 in the previous financial year to \$1,594,418. However, program costs also saw an increase of \$66,422, rising from \$170,115 to \$236,537. Additionally, other expenses increased by \$33,171, moving from \$205,655 to \$238,826. As a result, BRMC reported a comprehensive (P&L) loss of \$104,938 for the year.

As explained in last year's Treasurer's report, this loss is largely due to the timing issue caused by accounting standards, where grants are recognised as revenue when received, but the related expenses are reported when they are incurred. BRMC fully acquits its grants, leaving little room for retained profit in any given period. Despite this, BRMC remains in a strong cash position. Our current ratio (current assets to current liabilities) stands at 2.23, an improvement from 2.10 in the previous year. This indicates BRMC's strong ability to meet its operational requirements.

Overall, FY2023-2024 was positive, with BRMC's retained surplus increasing by \$35,103, bringing it from \$229,523 to \$264,626.

I would also like to highlight a change concerning the lease of the BRMC Welcome Centre. The lease term ended on September 30, 2024, but included an option to renew for three further one-year extensions. In September 2024, BRMC exercised this option, extending the lease until September 30, 2025. To reduce overheads in the current economic climate, BRMC decided to relinquish more than half of the occupied space, including the main hall, back to the landlord, Central Highlands Group Training Inc. This adjustment reduced annual rent from \$58,465 to \$27,257. While we may lose some revenue from hall hire, the overall reduction in rent will significantly lower our overheads.

Under AASB 16, this change in lease terms is considered a new lease and therefore not required to be recognised as a "right of use" asset on the balance sheet. Although not required by accounting standards, BRMC's Board has opted to disclose this event in the financial notes, specifically under item 19, "Events Occurring After the Reporting Date."

Looking forward, BRMC's core funding from the state government concluded on June 30, 2024. This funding is crucial for the continued operation of BRMC. Although partial funding has been reinstated for 12 months, ongoing budget cuts mean that securing our financial future has become a priority. BRMC is actively exploring alternative revenue streams, but we continue to rely on the support of our community and the State Government. Our CEO, Suzanne Ryan-Evers, will provide further details on these efforts.

In closing, I want to extend my sincere thanks to the BRMC staff, CEO Suzanne Ryan-Evers, and our accountant Paul Tant for their dedication and hard work in ensuring the smooth running of our organisation.

CEO REPORT

The last 12 months have been busy for the Ballarat Regional Multicultural Council (BRMC) as we continue working hard to support multicultural communities across the Ballarat and Central Highlands Grampians region. As the region's multicultural population grows, diversity increases, and new needs arise. Each year presents new and ongoing challenges that shape our service and support delivery, and this period has been no exception. Throughout the past year, BRMC has focused on delivering programs and services that help new arrivals settle while continuing to support long-term residents.



We remain committed to ensuring all community members have access to the care and support they need to improve their quality of life. One of the most important projects we initiated in the second half of 2023 addressed family violence in multicultural communities. Funded by Family Safety Victoria and conducted in partnership with CHIFVC, Berry Street, WRISC, and Grampians Health, the project has successfully positioned BRMC as a primary point of contact for individuals seeking education or support related to family violence. It has been well received by the family violence service sector, underscoring the importance of this work. Community members have also expressed gratitude for having a safe place to seek help and access continued support through our programs.

BRMC is also proud of its Multicultural Emergency Management Program. This program builds on work started the previous year to strengthen connections and communication between emergency service providers and our multicultural communities. Six months into the new program, regular dialogues, workshops, and discussions have fostered stronger relationships and improved responses to a range of emergencies.

In early 2024, we introduced the Member Leaders monthly catch-ups. These gatherings, designed for cultural and faith-based community leaders alongside selected business and service organisations in Ballarat, provide valuable opportunities for networking and sharing information. After a successful first six months, we are pleased to see that both community leaders and the wider sector view these meetings as highly valuable, and are eager to see them continue.

BRMC continues to work closely with multicultural communities to understand the issues that matter most, what they need, and how we can support them. Our programs are designed and delivered based on these needs and remain central to our advocacy efforts.

This year has brought significant challenges. BRMC relies heavily on State Government funding for core operations, and recent program cuts have deeply affected us. The loss of the Community Employment Connectors program ended our ability to work directly with members on their employment journeys. Our Education Program, though still running, operates at a skeletal level, far below what is needed. We are actively pursuing alternative funding to restore both programs.

With further budget cuts looming, securing our financial future has become a priority. Over the past year, BRMC and the seven Victorian Regional Ethnic Councils have advocated for the State Government to reconsider its budget cuts and explore new funding models, given the essential role we play in supporting multicultural communities across regional Victoria.

CEO REPORT

In June 2024, the State Government announced it would not renew the funding that has supported our core operations for the past seven years, effective 1 July 2024. This announcement triggered intensive advocacy by BRMC, the Regional Ethnic Councils, and local Ministers. While partial funding was reinstated for 12 months, the period has been marked by uncertainty, with our organisation’s survival depending on securing this support.

Looking ahead, I will work closely with the Board to restructure, strategise, and plan for BRMC’s future. Though this temporary relief offers some breathing room, it also signals the need for bold, strategic steps to ensure our long-term sustainability, including diversifying our income streams and further essential advocacy work.

This challenging time has fostered extraordinary collaboration, compassion, and innovation. I would like to thank our Chair for providing invaluable guidance and support. A special thank you to Paul Tant, BRMC’s Accountant, for working with me to forecast, identify opportunities, and develop strategies for the future. I am also grateful to the BRMC Board—a dedicated group of volunteers—for their support, commitment to our mission, and focus on effective management and strategy.

I extend heartfelt thanks to our program partners, sector stakeholders, and supporters. Your collaboration on projects, advocacy efforts, and events has ensured we deliver the services, information, and opportunities our members need.

Thank you to our multicultural members, especially community leaders, for engaging in meetings, dialogues, and information-sharing initiatives, and for welcoming us at your festivals and events. Your involvement helps us identify and respond to the evolving needs of multicultural communities.

I also deeply appreciate our volunteers for generously sharing their time, energy, skills, and talents. Your contribution enables BRMC to continue supporting multicultural communities across the region.

Finally, I would like to acknowledge the remarkable efforts of BRMC’s staff. Over the past 12 months, they have worked tirelessly with passion and dedication to achieve the best outcomes for our members, while supporting one another and the organisation through these challenges.

Looking ahead to BRMC’s 25th Anniversary, I am excited to celebrate our achievements and continue building the community and business relationships essential to our future. Together, we will pursue our vision for a vibrant, equitable, and inclusive intercultural community for all.



CEO's from the Regional Ethnic Councils of Victoria



Voice Referendum Information Night for Multicultural Community Members

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE



Dr Sundram Sivamalai
Chair



Syed Sami
Deputy Chair



Betty Mathew
Secretary



Meeta Narsi
Assistant Secretary



Uphar Chhabra
Treasurer



Dolma Tamang
Assistant Treasurer



Norizah Anuar
Public Relation Officer



Katrina Baraquiel
Women's Affairs Officer



Yaqoob Kazan
Youth Affairs Officer



Rajinder Singh Gill
Interfaith Officer



Jack Yang
Interfaith Officer



Charles Nani
Community Representative



Binsu Baby
Community Representative



Govinda Dahal
Community Representative



Joy Sawiche
Immediate Past Chairperson

BRMC STAFF



Suzanne Ryan-Evers
Chief Executive Officer



Teresa Azzopardi
Social Support
Program Manager



Heeyoung Lim
SETS /Family Violence/Storytime
Program Manager



Sarabjit Kaur
Education
Program Manager



Sangeeran Mithranandarajah
Strategic Engagement Coordinator



Helen Bennetts
Social Support Team Member,
HR/Finance



Caroline Parry
Social Support Assistant



Abrar Dham
Settlement
Support Coordinator



Nyibol Deng
Settlement
Program Worker



Quynh Tran
Community Employment Coordinator



Shipra Saini
Executive Assistant



Natalie Athayde
Social Support Assistant



Martha Yeich
Very Important Person



K'lu Say Say
Community
Employment Coordinator



Tahsina Tasneem
VACAP
Program Assistant



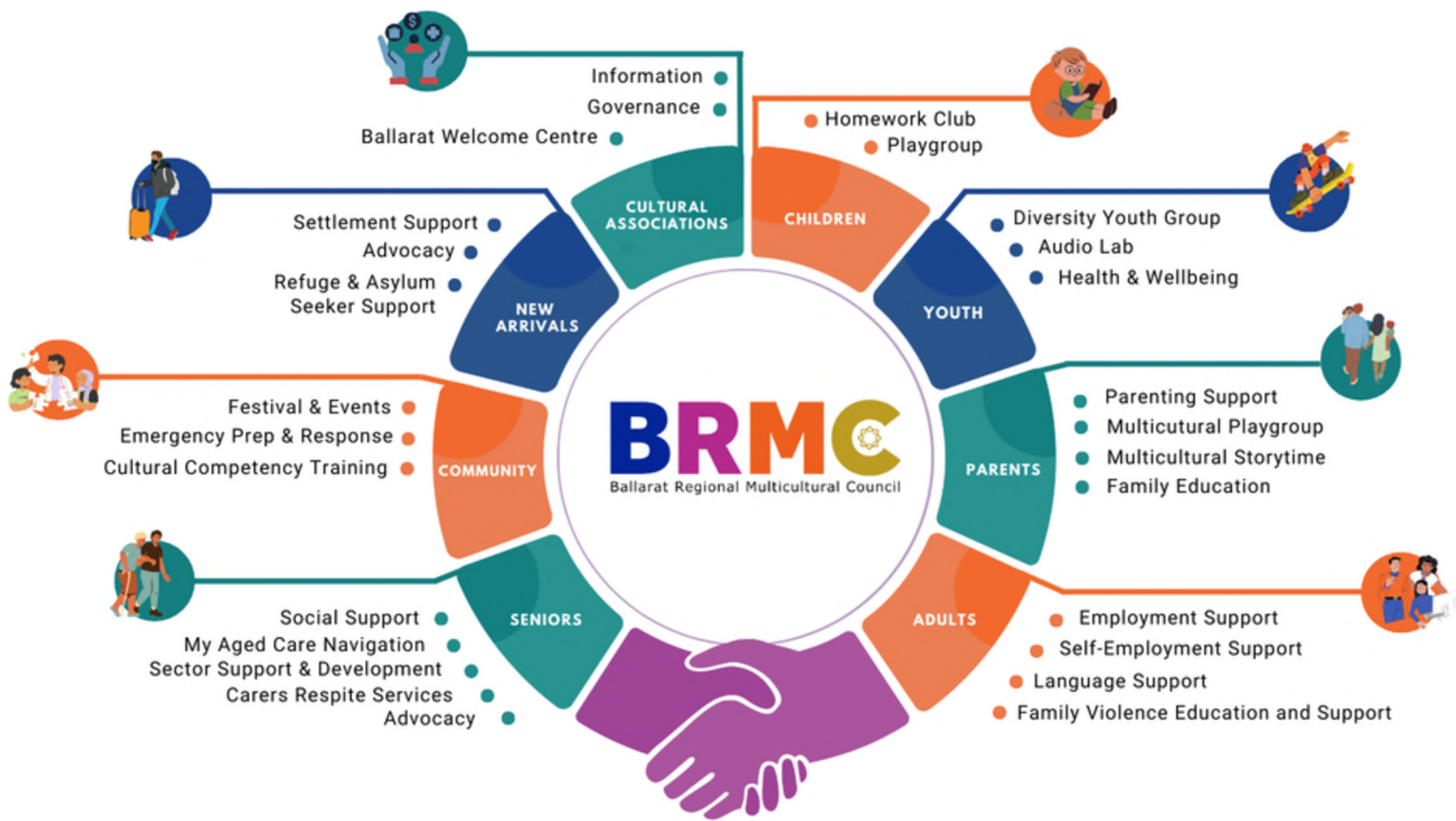
Shinto K John
Community
Employment Connector



Kelly Baghirli
Community
Employment Connector



AT A GLANCE



OUR YEAR IN REVIEW



80+

People from 21 different countries benefit out of our Welcome bus tours around Ballarat



200+

Multicultural and faith group leaders from 30+ backgrounds engaged in our multicultural dialogues and information sessions



80+

Multicultural Playgroup supported cultural and social welfare of mothers and their children of multicultural backgrounds.



110+

Students participated in Diversity Homework Club and Diversity Youth Group



400+

From 30+ different cultural backgrounds participated in the 10 Welcome Morning Teas held across the year.



168+

From 27 different cultural backgrounds supported via The Settlement Engagement and Transition Support program



56+

Women friendships facilitated and social isolation and loneliness reduced – through sharing traditions, cultures and values.



250+

Multicultural Seniors from 36+ different cultural backgrounds supported through the Social Support services.



290+

COVID and Flu vaccinations provided to the multicultural communities

BALLARAT WELCOME CENTRE

A Year of Engagement, Social Cohesion, Capacity building and Inclusivity

The Ballarat Welcome Centre has continued to be the central hub for our community-driven activities. It remains a welcoming space for cultural exchange, learning, and support for the diverse communities in Ballarat. This year, we have seen a variety of programs and initiatives that cater to the needs of our multicultural community.

Programs and Activities

Welcome Morning Teas, Drop-in Tuesday Sessions, and Pop-up Clinics and Vaccination Hubs have provided accessible community engagement opportunities. These sessions offer social support and essential health services, mainly through vaccination hubs that have been crucial for community wellbeing.

Community Cultural Events and training workshops have enriched the lives of community members, fostering a greater sense of belonging while providing skills development and cultural sharing.

The Multicultural Dialogue Series is a significant focus, addressing critical issues like family violence, community safety, and other matters affecting our communities.

The Voice Referendum Information Session: Community Engagement. BRMC organised an information session with the help of experts, including Aboriginal representatives, to provide the community with in-depth insights into the referendum and foster meaningful dialogue.

The BRMC Peace Pole Launch at Barkly Square, held in partnership with Interfaith Ballarat and Compassionate Ballarat, celebrates a shared commitment to peace, unity, and cultural understanding within the community.

BRMC has organized a series of events aimed at empowering Hazara communities and celebrating their rich cultural heritage, fostering a deeper understanding and connection within the broader Ballarat community.



BALLARAT WELCOME CENTRE

We have also continued to celebrate our community through vibrant cultural events that reflect the diversity and creativity of Ballarat's multicultural communities.

We remain deeply grateful for the ongoing support from the Victorian Government and our strategic partners. BRMC is committed to promoting inclusivity, intercultural harmony, and the well-being of all communities in the Ballarat region. We look forward to building on this year's successes and continuing to foster a more connected and supportive community.



MULTICULTURAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

The Ballarat Regional Multicultural Council (BRMC) is instrumental in addressing multicultural communities' unique challenges during emergencies in the Ballarat, Grampians, and Wimmera regions. With Victoria experiencing a 20% increase in multicultural populations over the past decade, some communities are particularly vulnerable due to language barriers, cultural differences, and unfamiliarity with local emergency services. The growing migrant settlements in regional areas further underscore the need for tailored emergency response plans, as highlighted by the Refugee Council of Australia.

BRMC's Multicultural Emergency Management Program is a collaborative effort that directly addresses the challenges multicultural communities face. It works by empowering community leaders and providing hands-on training, going beyond the dissemination of information to equip individuals and families with the necessary skills to act effectively before emergency services arrive. This approach fosters community support during times of crisis.

BRMC's effectiveness in providing accurate and timely emergency information and services to multicultural communities is greatly enhanced by its close collaborations with key emergency service providers. These partnerships with organizations such as the Country Fire Authority (CFA), Fire Rescue Victoria (FRV), Victoria State Emergency Service (SES), Victoria Police, Ambulance Victoria, Red Cross, City of Ballarat, Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), and Grampians Health are essential. They provide crucial insights into the needs and challenges of multicultural populations during emergencies, thereby contributing to developing culturally sensitive and effective emergency responses.

In addition, BRMC delivers multicultural emergency information sessions focused on significant hazards such as storm events, heatwaves, bushfires, house fires, and open water safety. These sessions offer practical, hands-on training and build trust between multicultural communities and emergency services, ensuring better cooperation during emergencies.



MULTICULTURAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

Furthermore, BRMC's program emphasizes community engagement and support by empowering community leaders from diverse backgrounds to disseminate vital emergency preparedness knowledge within their communities. This approach ensures that multicultural communities are prepared for emergencies and can support each other during critical moments, especially when professional help may be delayed due to overwhelmed emergency services.

BRMC's partnership with Municipal and Regional Emergency Planning Committees ensures that emergency management policies are inclusive and diverse, integrating multicultural perspectives into all emergency planning and response aspects. This involvement influences how emergency services engage with diverse communities, ensuring equitable treatment during disasters.

Funded by the Ethnic Communities Council of Victoria, BRMC's Multicultural Emergency Management Program continues to be a cornerstone in the region's effort to promote inclusivity, preparedness, and community support in handling emergencies.



STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM (SPP)- EVOLVE AND STRATEGIC ENGAGEMENT COORDINATOR PROGRAM (SEC)

BRMC made significant strides over the last 12 months through the Strategic Partnership (Evolve) and Strategic Engagement Coordinator Programs (SEC) funded by the Victorian State Government. These two programs were pivotal in fostering community engagement, leadership development, social cohesion, and inclusion across Ballarat's multicultural communities.

A notable achievement was the establishment of the Ballarat Monthly Multicultural Members Catch-ups, which create a platform for cultural associations, service providers, and BRMC to share information and ideas, address challenges, and build partnerships. The introduction of community podcasts provided in-language messaging for communities facing barriers to traditional media, offering accessible information on a range of topics, including health care, education, and community events.

The newly established Drop-in Tuesday Sessions at the Ballarat Welcome Centre provided a safe space for community members to seek support, referrals, and social connection, with weekly participation averaging 15-20 people.

BRMC continued to work closely with Ballarat Community Health and the Grampians Health ensuring messaging and advice was delivered in language as required. Whilst the incidence of COVID is decreasing, upon advice, BRMC still staged one Vaccination Hub organized in May 2024, administering over 120 flu and COVID-19 vaccinations, contributing to public health efforts within the multicultural community.

BRMC's communication strategy was also key to connecting with the community. Monthly newsletters and daily social media updates reached over 5,000 followers regularly with important information on such things as health care, well-being resources, community events, and educational opportunities. This proactive communication approach ensured that even the most marginalized members of the community remained informed and engaged.



STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM (SPP)- EVOLVE AND STRATEGIC ENGAGEMENT COORDINATOR PROGRAM (SEC)



The Strategic Engagement Coordinator (SEC) Program played an equally important role in enhancing emergency preparedness, building community leadership, and fostering strategic partnerships. One of the program's key events was the Winter Multicultural Dialogue on Home Fire Safety, which provided participants with practical fire safety training and hands-on experience with firefighting equipment.

Additionally, the Voice Referendum information sessions ensured that multicultural communities were well-informed about civic participation.



Both the SPP and SEC Programs were supported by strong partnerships with stakeholders such as Ballarat Community Health, the Grampians Public Health Unit, Catholic Care, Berry Street, WRISC Family Violence Support, and Victoria Police. These collaborations were critical in delivering public health campaigns, family violence prevention initiatives, and emergency preparedness efforts. BRMC's work with Wimmera Southern Mallee Development also contributed to the initiation of projects like the Nhill Community Youth Hub and the Harmony Multicultural Sewing Group, which will foster social cohesion and employment opportunities.



Looking ahead, BRMC aims to build on the success of these programs by continuing to foster connections between multicultural communities and local services.



SOCIAL SUPPORT

Social Support programs provide the Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) Community with health services that relieve social isolation and help keep people connected and informed. Our Social Support Team specialise in meeting the needs of people from CALD backgrounds and supporting people to age well. We are committed to providing high-quality services that are person-centred, and we take a holistic approach.



Programs

Our Social Support Programs enrich the lives of our clients by giving people the opportunity to celebrate their culture through meals, traditional dress, and sharing cultural artefacts, stories and traditions. Our Art and craft programs offer a therapeutic element helping clients express their creative side. We provide opportunities for carers to access respite while the cared for enjoy new friendships and improve and develop cognitive and physical skills while expanding on their capabilities for activities of daily living. This helps clients to live at home safely for as long as possible while enjoying a healthy and active lifestyle.

A large body of research shows that social isolation and loneliness have a serious impact on physical and mental health, quality of life, and longevity. The effect of social isolation and loneliness on mortality is comparable to that of other well-established risk factors such as smoking, obesity, and physical inactivity (World Health Organization).

BRMC Social Support programs service the Grampians region, covering the Ballarat area and surrounding rural towns of Ballan, Dereel, Rockwood, Scarsdale, Snake Valley and Bunkers Hill. We provide services to 222 culturally diverse clients from 31 different countries.



Supporting the Aged Care Sector

As part of our Social Support Services our team support the Aged Care Sector to be culturally aware and competent to ensure CALD seniors receive equity of access to high-quality aged care services. We provide aged care service providers, their staff and volunteers with free Cultural Competency Training and guidance around service provision.



SOCIAL SUPPORT



Advocacy

Together with our peak bodies, ECCV and FECCA, we actively advocate for the needs of CALD seniors nation-wide.

Navigation and information sharing

Our Team offer My Aged Care System Navigation, Aged Care Service information along with Aged Care Reform updates to Community Leaders, Individuals and their Families through one-on-one meetings or group sessions.

Resources

BRMC Social Support Services are resourced by the Department of Social Services under the Commonwealth Home Support Programme (CHSP) and the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing under the Home and Community Care Programs for Younger People (HACC PYP) along with client contributions.



Meet Maria

Maria joined social support programs in February 2024. Maria had recently become widowed and was her husband's carer. Maria was socially isolated, and was not confident speaking English and was experiencing high levels of anxiety. Maria expressed feelings of deep loneliness, depression and displayed severe social anxiety. Our team worked very closely with Maria, talking to her on the phone several times a day and visiting her weekly. Maria is a new person now, she states "We have changed her life, I have never found such happiness and joy". Maria consistently attends programs, she is always smiling and she dresses with pride, she dances and sings and has made lasting friendships.



"We are so fortunate to have such a great organisation to help us socialise especially when we are old and on our own"

"The support I received for my friend who needed help with My Aged Care has been vital in her ability to remain in her home" - Cecilia

MIGRATION AND SETTLEMENT SERVICES

Settlement Services

We are excited to announce the continuation of the Settlement Engagement and Transition Support (SETS) program, supported by the Department of Home Affairs, until 30th June 2027.

The SETS program is vital for newcomers who lack family and community support, empowering humanitarian entrants and eligible migrants to address their settlement needs. The program helps improve social participation, economic independence, personal well-being, and community connectedness. Over the past year, we have supported 168 individual clients from 27 different cultural backgrounds, providing crucial assistance with housing, employment, visa-related information, and Centrelink services. We have also collaborated with family violence services to support vulnerable women and their children.

Additionally, the BRMC Welcoming Project (BWP) has made a strong impact, with the Welcome Morning Tea and Ballarat Welcome Bus Tour becoming popular among newcomers to Ballarat. This period, 738 people participated in morning tea events, offering a meaningful introduction to Ballarat's culture for 158 participants to the bus tour.

Our group and individual support activities, including the Multicultural Women's Friendship Circle, Multicultural Playgroup, and the newly launched Multicultural Storytime, benefitted a total of 750 participants. Through these programs, individuals shared their cultural values and formed long-term friendships. Over time, many participants have become active contributors, sharing their skills and cultures. This year has been particularly significant as our programs have strengthened social connections, making participants feel that they are part of a supportive community in Ballarat.



"I could never imagine the amount of support I received from BRMC, it exceeded my expectation. The team members have been so kind, and generous with their time. They are great listeners. When I come back to Australia, I will definitely come back to BRMC for support."

"Thank you for always smiling. You have been so patient listening to me. I always feel good talking to you."

MIGRATION AND SETTLEMENT SERVICES



Family Violence, Multicultural, and Therapeutic Support Services

In August 2023 we were pleased to announce the launch of the Family Violence Multicultural and Therapeutic Support Services (FV-MaTSS) program in August last year. Supported by Family Safety Victoria, this program allows us to collaborate with local family violence experts, including WRISC, Berry Street, CASA, and CHIFVC, to provide safer living conditions for multicultural communities.

During this period, our role as a navigator has been crucial, connecting individuals in need with relevant services and offering consultations to help them access necessary support.

In addition, we conducted two "Building a Better and Safer Community Together" workshops focused on family violence prevention. These sessions were attended by 35 multicultural and faith leaders and aimed to raise awareness of family violence services within Ballarat's multicultural communities. The workshops demonstrated strong local interest from the family violence support and community service organisations that collaborated with us for these workshops. It was an important step toward enhancing the safety and well-being of multicultural families, and we remain committed to continuing these efforts.



"As a friend who supports an FV survivor, I have a better understanding and more confidence in saying the right thing and supporting her." - multicultural leader

"It brought people together to work together to change the levels of family violence & support each other." - multicultural service provider.

EDUCATION PROGRAMS



Diversity Homework Club & Youth Group

At BRMC, our Education Programs provided engaging learning experiences for students aged 5-18, blending online and in-person sessions to support academic success, personal growth, and respect for cultural diversity.

Through the Diversity Youth Group, we helped 13-17-year-olds develop skills in intercultural dialogue and personal growth. Our students participated in a global video conference with peers from Indonesia and India, where they discussed culture, beliefs, and values, fostering critical thinking and cross-cultural understanding. We also involved them in the Peace Pals International Art Contest on the theme of "Unity" and Positive Life Skills workshops with Ballarat Community Health.

In the Diversity Homework Club, we provided vital academic support to culturally diverse students, promoting literacy, numeracy, and life skills. Our STEM activities allowed students to engage in hands-on projects such as sustainability, exploring lung models and seed germination.

With the support of the Victorian Government and the Australian Communities Foundation, we have helped Ballarat's culturally diverse students thrive academically, socially, and emotionally. A special thank you goes to our volunteer tutors, whose dedication and support made all of this possible.



Connect Nurture Grow (CNG)

The Connect-Nurture-Grow (CNG) initiative at BRMC exemplified our commitment to fostering intergenerational and intercultural exchanges. This year, we focused on families sharing their cultural heritage and farming knowledge, which helped strengthen community ties.

Parents Workshop

As part of the CNG project, we conducted culturally informed parenting workshops in collaboration with Catholic Care, helping parents navigate the challenges of raising children in multicultural households. Topics like positive parenting, self-care, and cultural integration were covered, fostering a stronger, more cohesive community. We also addressed the challenges of technology overuse, helping parents find balance and better communication with their children and teens. Parents who completed the Tuning in to Teens program shared their insights and answered parents' queries, offering perspectives through a cultural lens.



EDUCATION PROGRAMS

Enhancing Communication and Intercultural Skills

At BRMC, we hosted a 'Communication Skills' workshop led by Bobby Mehta, bringing together community members eager to enhance their communication abilities. Participants toured our audio lab and discussed topics for in-language content, including stories and podcasts. In another event, attendees from the Chinese and Nepalese communities recorded a conversation about 'Life in Australia' in Mandarin and English. Our School Outreach program promoted intercultural dialogue at St James Parish Primary School, encouraging students to think critically about creating an inclusive, intercultural city.



MEET LAM

Lam joined the Diversity Homework Club in 2020 and has been a regular attendee over the years. He takes pride in his identity as an Australian of African heritage and actively contributes to the Club's positive environment. Generous with his resources, Lam readily shares his space, materials, and device, encouraging his cousins and siblings to participate. His tutors commend his dedication and willingness to fully engage in each session. In recognition of his efforts, Lam was awarded 'Highly Commended Primary Student' at the MY Education Awards 2023.



Migrant English Program

The BRMC Migrant English Program (MEP) continued to support our diverse community of adult learners, including new arrivals, visiting parents, and international students, in achieving their language learning goals for social communication, education, and professional development.

In the past year, we observed a significant increase in requests for English tutors. Through our specialised tutoring in IELTS, OET, PTE, and TOEFL, many participants have successfully achieved their aspirations, securing dream jobs or enrolling in desired university courses.

This success is made possible through the unwavering support and dedication of our committed team of tutors, whose hard work ensures that the Migrant English Program continues to thrive and adapt to the diverse needs of our community.



In order to meet our mission and vision,
BRMC is grateful for the support we receive from our
Funding partners, stakeholders, paid members and community supporters.

BRMC Funding Partners



Industry and Program Partners and Stakeholders



Regional Ethnic Councils of Victoria



Thankyou also to:

BRMC Inaugural Paying Members

Organisations and Associations

- Filipino-Australian Association of Ballarat(FAABI),
- Wat Thai Bavana - Ballarat Buddhist Centre,
- Ballarat Malaysian Association,
- Ballarat Nepalese Samaj Inc. (BNS),
- Centre for Multicultural Youth (CMY),
- Circolo Pensionati Italiani,
- Djerriwarrh Community & Education Services,
- Child & Family Services,
- Ballarat Historical Association,
- Ballarat Italian Association,
- Ballarat Afghan Action Group,
- Ballarat Interfaith Network,
- Ballarat Bangladesh Association Inc,
- Ballarat Hindu Temple & Cultural Centre,
- Ballarat Malayalee Association,

Individual Members

- Dianne Hadden
- Maureen Doonan
- Meg Lee
- Maria Sozanski
- Paul Tant
- Elham Jamali

BRMC Community Members and Supporters

Australian Pakistani Community of Ballarat, A Tuk, Ballarat African Association, Ballarat and District Irish Association, Ballarat City Council, Ballarat Bangladeshi Association Inc., Ballarat Croatian Association, Ballarat Indian Association Inc., Ballarat Keralites' Foundation of Australia Inc., Ballarat Permaculture Guild, Ballarat Region Indonesian Community, Ballarat Tamil Sangam Inc., Ballarat West Police Complex, Centre for Multicultural Youth, Child & Family Services Ballarat, Chinese Australian Cultural Society Ballarat Inc., Dhan Shri Guru Nanak Inc., Emotional Well-being Institute, Geneva, Filipino Australian Sports Club of Ballarat Inc., German-Austrian Association, Grampians Community Legal Service, Islamic Society of Ballarat, Mat Tetni, Solomon Island Victoria Association, Sri Lankan Australian Association of Ballarat Inc., Thai Australian Association of Ballarat and Central Highlands Inc., Thai Cultural Group of Ballarat, Victoria Togolese Association, Virasat E Punjab Ballarat Inc., Voice FM 99.9 and Women of the Well.

BRMC Volunteers

We deeply appreciate our volunteers for generously sharing their time, energy, skills, and talents. They are important members who make significant contributions to the existence of our programs. Their contribution enables BRMC to continue supporting multicultural communities across the region.



Oh what a team!

In the last 12 months, we sadly farewelled a few of our beautiful team; Education Programs Manager Sarabjit Kaur, Community Employment Connector Kelly Baghirli, and EA to the CEO Shipra Saini. We thank them, we miss them, and we wish them all the best in their future endeavours.”

**Ballarat Regional
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