



Libraries and CALD Community Organisations: Supporting Report

Cultural and linguistic diversity is viewed as one of Victoria's greatest strengths. According to the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (DEECD), Victoria is one of the most culturally diverse societies in the world:

- 23.8% of Victoria's population were born overseas
 - 43.69% Victorians have a parent who was born overseas
 - Victorians come from more than 200 countries
 - Victorians speak more than 230 languages and dialects.
 - Victorians follow more than 120 religious faiths
- DEECD, 2011, pg 2.

This rich tapestry brings with it many economic, social and cultural benefits to the Victorian community. Purposefully engaging culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities (including new and emerging communities) creates many exciting opportunities and valuable challenges for Libraries in providing facilities, programs and services that successfully meet the needs of *all* Victorians.

The *Toolkit for Collaboration* has been developed by a cross-disciplinary team to highlight and synthesise best practice for engaging CALD communities. It is sponsored by Chris Kelly and Christine McAllister of Brimbank Libraries, and supported through the 2014 Shared Leadership Program.

The Role of Public Libraries

Wyndham City Libraries (2013), suggest providing gateways to information, learning and leisure is an important key measure of an effective library service. Additionally, building individual skills, capability and wellbeing of members and developing social capital are also imperative. The *Toolkit for Collaboration* is designed with this measure of success in mind. The toolkit aims to support the Public Library's Victoria Networks (PLVN) strategic key result area; Collaboration:

“To facilitate collaboration and co-operation between Victorian public libraries and with other stakeholders to deliver best practice library services.”

Together, the framework is informed by State Library of Victoria's (SLV) vision as a Library:

“Where all Victorians can discover, learn, create and connect; a cultural and heritage destination for Victorians; and a leader in the discovery of information, enabling the generation of knowledge and ideas”.



Library and CALD Community Organisation Partnerships

A CALD Community Organisation (CCO) can be defined as any group, formal or informal, that works to service the needs of the CALD community. For example, playgroups, councils, migration information services and support groups may all be types of CCOs.

In the development of the *Toolkit for Collaboration*, partnerships are understood to be a cooperative arrangement of mutual benefit to shared members and stakeholders.

Partnerships often involve more than two stakeholders.

Partnerships between libraries and CCOs, aspire to raise awareness and increase access to collections, facilities and services, to improve the social and economic outcomes of individuals and the community.

Purpose

The *Toolkit for Collaboration* provides simple and practical tools, approaches and exemplars to foster and sustain positive relationships between CCOs and Libraries. By adopting this toolkit:

Libraries will understand how to effectively engage with CALD community organisations (CCOs) to achieve high quality outcomes for their community.

and

CCOs will understand how to work with library services to achieve high quality outcomes for their members.

A review of current literature in the area of community engagement, suggests effective CCOs-Library partnerships can:

- Improve the quality of the Library service, making it more practical and relevant.
- Ensure services are delivered in a more effective and efficient way for their members.
- Increase diversity of voices in decision making processes, thereby serving the needs of the broader community.
- Nurture the sense of belonging to the community.
- Exchange knowledge about the most effective ways of communicating with particular communities and also vital practical knowledge, such as where and how a particular group meets or their need for interpreters.
- Generate innovation and improvements in Library services.
- Reduce gaps and duplication in programs and services.
- Provide and promote pivotal information services to community members.
- Increase community access to digital literacy services, facilities and expertise.

“Working in partnership with a wide range of organisations and service providers is now core work for library staff. Prior to having a strategic commitment to creating a learning community, partnerships were the exception rather than the norm. They are a powerful way of connecting with communities.”

-Chris Kelly, Manager of Libraries & Learning, Brimbank City Council (pg 185, 2012).



Recommendations for Leaders

In addition to promoting the *Toolkit for Collaboration* across the Public Library Network of Victoria, Library leaders can ensure high quality outcomes for their communities by:

- Making a strategic commitment to engage CALD communities in your municipality.
- Being clear about what you want your service to achieve.
- Building the capacity of Library employees by providing training and development opportunities.
- Empowering staff with both a framework for success and the freedom to develop and deliver high quality engagement programs.
- Sharing and celebrating stories of successful partnerships.
- Understanding that effective partnerships take time to develop, nurture and maintain. Remember the benefits of effective partnerships.
- Allocating resources to Library-CCO partnership initiatives.
- Endorsing flexible outcomes and continuous improvement through qualitative measures of success and learning stories.

Conclusion

“Partnerships present libraries with new tools to bring the most effective services to their users at the most affordable costs” purports Watson (2012). The Library can be pivotal in sharing this knowledge and building community capacity by leveraging community skills, networks and resources and apply them in ways that achieve collaborative and positive social change.

The *Toolkit for Collaboration* provides Libraries with a framework to develop high quality programs *with* CALD communities, rather than developing programming *for* CALD communities. The intention of collaboration is ensure all members of the community feel a sense of belonging and experience the opportunity to learn and grow in Victoria.



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About the authors

Emma Reilly is the Education Programs Coordinator at the State Library of Victoria. Following many years in the classroom as a Primary Teacher, she joined the Library two years ago. In her role, Emma is responsible for researching, developing and evaluating school programs delivered by the Library's education team. All programs are designed around the strengths of the Library's collections and services, as well as the Victorian curriculum. In her time at the Library, she has been passionate about translating and applying the Library's vision as a 'place where all Victorians can discover, learn, create and connect; a cultural and heritage destination for all Victorians; and a leader in the discovery of information, enabling the generation of new knowledge and ideas'.

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Mojgan Sadighi is the Youth Services Librarian at Whitehorse Manningham Libraries (WML). She is enthusiastic about learning and has been following this desire by taking up as many formal and informal studies as she has been able to. In the past 14 years she has worked in many different libraries (mostly public) in Australia. Coming from a CALD background herself, Mojgan is passionate about helping this group in their transition to become active Australians, with a strong sense of belonging. In her current role she enjoys developing, organising and delivering a diverse range of programs for children and young adults in the library and loves interacting with her multicultural clients. As part of a strong team at WML she has been applying library's vision to make it "a vital service that strengthens community knowledge, understanding, engagement and connection".

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Emma Zeng is a library officer at Eastern Regional Libraries, who speaks both English and Chinese. She took the initiative and developed weekly library programs for Chinese speaking families living in the City of Knox. Since 2006, Emma has been successfully organising monthly information sessions to introduce various government and community services to the local Chinese community. Emma is passionate about promoting life-long learning and minimising the digital divide, especially for newly arrived immigrants and refugees using public library services.

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Kate Gilbert is Information Services Librarian at Stonnington Libraries where she is a keen participant in all aspects of service and program delivery. Since qualifying as a librarian five years ago Kate has worked hard to gain experience in varied library settings including the Victorian Parliamentary Library and several public library services. Kate is particularly passionate about community librarianship and the unique position public libraries occupy in the learning landscape. Most of all she enjoys meeting new people and sharing their stories; she hopes the group's work will help more communities engage and share experiences.

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Anna Burkey manages Reader Development at the State Library of Victoria, incorporating the Centre for Youth Literature and Family Programs teams. Anna's literary roots are in Edinburgh, where she spent six years as one half of the founding team behind the world's first UNESCO City of Literature. She lit up the city with poetry, gave away 93,000 free books through Scottish libraries and ran a national festival of song lyrics, *Let's Get Lyrical*. After a Creative Fellowship in South Africa's design industry, Anna adventured to Melbourne, where she's excited by the opportunities for collaboration and fresh perspectives that Victoria's diverse communities offer.

