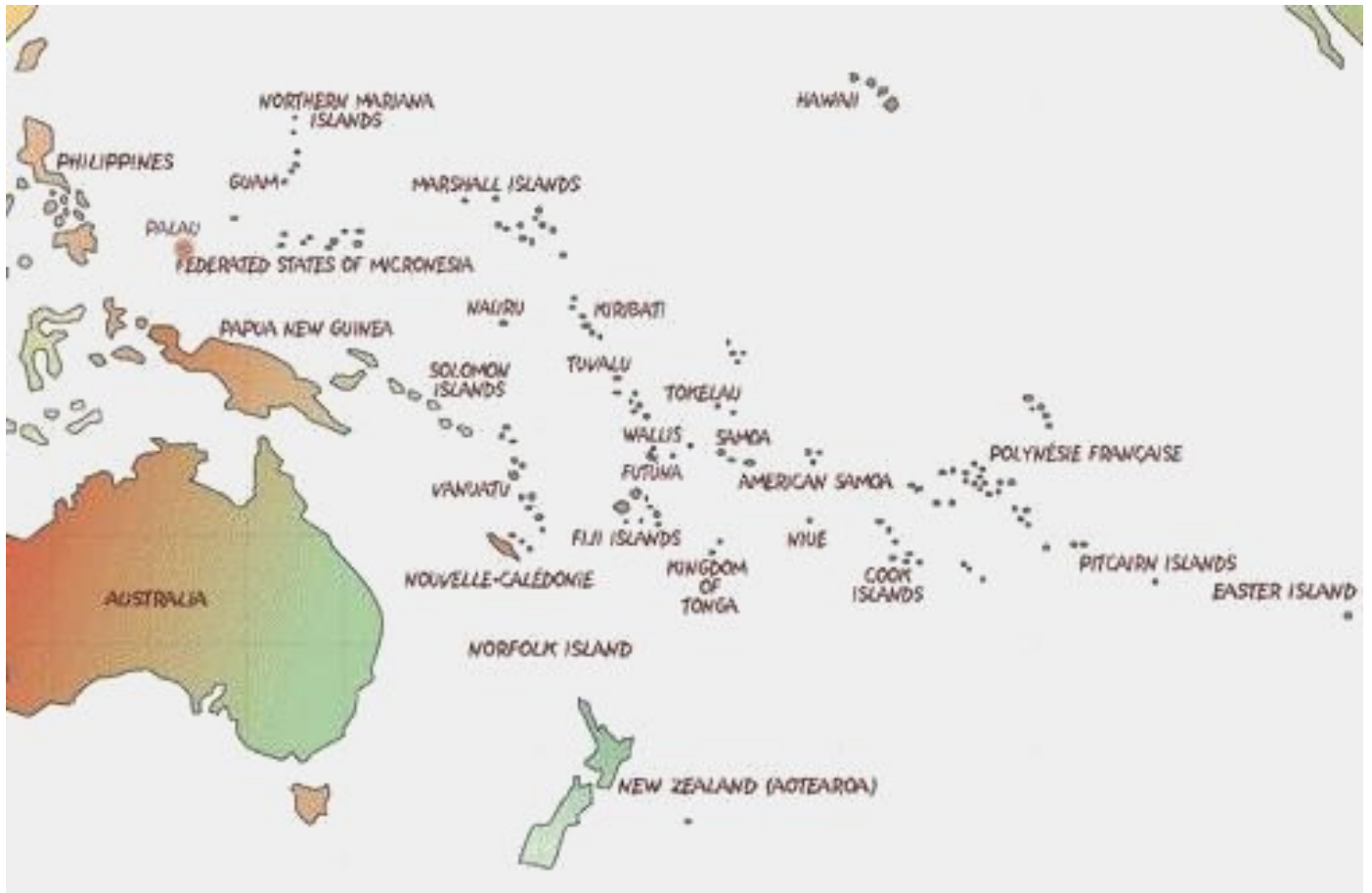


# ***Papua New Guinean Culture Profile***



***An initiative of  
Community Partners Program***

***June 2006  
Funded by Commonwealth Department of Health and Ageing***

Published 2006 by:  
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## Papua New Guinean Culture Profile



Thanks is given to Mrs Maggie Baison and to all those persons who have provided comment about this profile.

### **Disclaimers**

This profile is a synthesis of information from a range of sources believed to be reliable. Diversicare gives no warranty that the said base sources are correct, and accepts no responsibility for any resultant errors contained herein or for decision and actions taken as a result and any damage.

Please note there may be costs associated with some of the resources and services listed in this profile.

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# INTRODUCTION

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This profile of the Papua New Guinea culture community is one of the projects undertaken by the Community Partners Program (CPP). The Community Partners Program aims to promote and facilitate increased and sustained access to aged care support services by culturally and linguistically diverse communities with significant aged care needs.

Funded by the Commonwealth Department of Health and Ageing, the project in Queensland is managed by Diversicare under the auspice of the Ethnic Communities Council of Qld Inc.

Population trends within Australia are increasingly characterised by a diversity of people, languages and culture. Coupled with this trend is an ageing population, also with a rich diversity of languages and cultures.

It is not surprising then, that residential aged care service providers are faced with increasing demands for culturally responsive facilities and care.

This profile aims to assist by enhancing:

- staff knowledge of the cultural and linguistically diverse needs of persons from a Papua New Guinea background. It also seeks to facilitate the professional competence and development of staff in the provision of culturally inclusive care; and
- the organisation's compliance with the Residential Care Standards and National Aged Care Standards as they pertain to the issue of cultural and linguistic needs.

The profile provides useful information about a range of topics, resources including books, articles, audio-video aids, services, and so on.



This symbol is used to indicate a 'tip', which **YOU**, as the caregiver of a person who was born in Papua New Guinea, may find useful in your day-to-day support of that person.

In an effort to maintain the accuracy of this profile and improve its contents, for all stakeholders, we encourage readers to complete the feedback form on the last page to inform us of any inaccuracies or other resources available. It is considered that this feedback will assist us maintain a user relevant and quality resource.

Yours Sincerely

Margaret Hess  
Director

Dearne Mayer  
CPP Project Officer

# BACKGROUND

## Migration Experience

Papua New Guinea comprises a group of islands including the eastern half of the island of New Guinea between the Coral Sea and the South Pacific Ocean, east of Indonesia covering a total area of 462,840 sq km.



In the 1870's small numbers of people from Papua New Guinea visited Australia as boat crewmembers and mission sponsored villagers.

This number increased to more than 3,000 as labourers working in Queensland sugar fields during the early 1880's, with most returning home.

Although entry was restricted under the Immigration Restriction Act 1901, an average of 450 Papua New Guineans came to Australia each year under an exemption for pearl fisheries during the period 1905 – 1928.

In 1954 there were 1,723 Papua New Guinea-born living in Australia. The numbers grew due to the granting of movement for traditional purposes in 1975.

By 1976 there were 15,562 Papua New Guinea-born living in Australia. In 1986 indigenous Papua New Guineans made up approximately 9% of the Papua New Guinea-born community in Australia.

(Source: Papua New Guinea Community Information Summary, DIMIA, 2003)

## Australian Statistics

The 2001 census recorded 23,610 Papua New Guinea-born persons in Australia, with Queensland having the largest number (51.9%). Of this population:

- 17.4% aged 45 – 65 years;
- 4.3% aged over 65 years;
- 52.5% held an educational or occupational qualification;
- 45% were male and 55% were female;
- 55.6% were employed in a skilled occupation, 28.6% in a semi-skilled and 15.8% in unskilled jobs; and
- Their ancestry includes Papua New Guinean, Australian and English.

## Customs in everyday life

### Greetings

Many Papua New Guineans greet by shaking hands with the question "How are you?" (Yu orait?) in Melanesian Pidgin.

For some Papua New Guinea-born people when you know a person, it is appropriate to hug and kiss a person on the cheek when greeting them.

If greeting a person with an official status, it is important to use the appropriate title with their full name.

### Entering a room

Upon entering a room Papua New Guinea-born people greets any visitor and offers a cup of tea and something to eat. It is common for Papua New Guinea-born people to visit people anytime and their visit would not be a surprise.

Food is always shared, even if there is only a small amount of food available. Older Papua New Guinea-born people also enjoy chewing betel nuts.

### Attire

It is important for Papua New Guinea-born people to be well dressed, although older people tend to dress more casually.

## Taboos

Women are only to be provided personal care by women.

## FAMILY

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### Family structure

Traditionally, extended families live in the one house. The family ties are very strong with younger family members, especially women, returning to Papua New Guinea to care for their elder relatives. Fundamental to Papua New Guinea society is family obligation and reciprocity.

Women are often given the responsibility for gardening, childcare and tending animals.

### Attitudes to residential care

There are no nursing homes in Papua New Guinea as family care for their older relatives occurs in the family home.

## PERSONAL HYGIENE

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The routines and preferences surrounding personal hygiene activities greatly impact on the person's sense of self, pride, dignity and confidence.

### Bathing

It is very important that women only provide women with personal care. Women however can give men personal care, as women are considered mothers to everyone and all males are born from a mother.

### Dress

It is important for Papua New Guinea-born people to be well dressed, although older people tend to dress more casually.

### Grooming

Coconut oil is very important for Papua New Guinea-born people's hair and skin. Traditionally, coconut oil is prepared by grating the coconut flesh and boiling it. Today it can be purchased at pharmacies or in skin product shops, such as the Body Shop.



It is important each person's preferences in their dress, bathing, grooming etc are established as part of their care or support plan.

## PENSIONS

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Australia may have reciprocal arrangements in place with Papua New Guinea regarding the payment of pensions.

If such an agreement is in place, the Australian Government supplements that payment if it falls below the level of the Australian pension. Problems with Centrelink can arise for the person if he/she fails to notify Centrelink of any increase in the foreign pension amount. In this situation the Australian supplement is reduced according to the increase amount. Failure to notify Centrelink can result in a debt and fine being imposed by Centrelink.



For information on claiming a pension from another country, call Centrelink on 13 1673.

## LEISURE AND RECREATION

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Papua New Guinea-born people enjoy tending their vegetable gardens and in coastal areas both men and women would fish and hunt. As a people they are very active and hard working, especially the women.

At night women create string figures using handmade string. The patterns of the strings tell stories, such as how to dig out yams. Sitting and story telling is an important leisure activity for many Papua New Guinea-born people.

Many men, and some women, also enjoy playing cards or making useful items such as billum bags or weapons.

### Social groups

Three groups that meet in the Townsville and Thuringowa area, each with a different emphasis:

#### Papua Niugini Friendship Group

A contact group for newcomers and residents of Townsville with a PNG background.

Mrs Fide Bale (President), Phone 4778 2882

Address: PO Box 4155, Parkside, Kirwan, 4817

## Queensland – Papua New Guinea Association

Umbrella organisation representing the various Australia - Papua New Guinea social groups in Townsville including the Kumul Dancers, the Papua Niugini Friendship Group and the Logohu Dancers.

Abel English (President)

Phone 4723 9531 Mobile 0418 888 250

Address: c/o 23 Young Street, Kirwan, 4817

## Townsville Papua New Guinea Logohou

Support for PNG visitors & immigrants & patients staying in Townsville. Regular social events & craft stall at multicultural events.

Maggie Baison Phone 4778 2615 Mobile 0415 129 776 Fax 4778 2615

Ms Lvania Martin Phone 4729 0806

Address: 130 Abbott Street, Oonoonba, 4811

## Television

There are no known television programs for Papua New Guinea-born people.

## Radio

ABC's Radio Australia's Tok Pisin broadcasts can be downloaded at the following website:

<http://www.abc.net.au/ra/tokpisin/>

## Newspapers

Papua New Guinea has two daily newspapers, both in English, The Post-Courier and The National and both of these are available on line at the websites:

<http://www.postcourier.com.pg/>

<http://www.thenational.com.pg/>



If the person can't use a computer, you can access the internet and load these newspapers and print all or some pages and give to the person to read at their leisure.

## Books

Every council library in Queensland borrows from the Queensland State Library. The State Library has Papua New Guinea resources, which your local library can arrange to borrow for a small fee.



You can search the State Library resources (which will list the resource, type of resource and call number) at the following web address:

<http://www.slq.qld.gov.au/find/cat>



You can also search the Townsville or Thuringowa City Council library catalogue for Papua New Guinea subjects at the following website :

<http://www.townsville.qld.gov.au/libraries/spydus.asp>

<http://library.thuringowa.qld.gov.au/>

## Music

Papua New Guinea music features hymns, dance music, singing and Christmas carols. There is a selection of music from Papua New Guinea available at The African Bazaar shop in Flinders Street Mall, Townsville, phone 4771 2172.

## For more information

Refer to Diversicare's Cultural Diversity Resource Directory (2004) for more detailed information about sources and other options.

# RELIGION

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## Profile

The 2001 census identifies the major religions of Papua New Guinea-born people were Western Catholic (32.9%), Anglican (14.5%), and Uniting Church (10.9%).

Many people from Papua New Guinea enjoy attending church services and appreciate visits from their local priest.

## Important days

There are a variety of special events celebrated in Papua New Guinea.

Festivity	Month / Date	Customary practices
New Year	January 1 <sup>st</sup>	A big celebration to say goodbye to the old year and welcome the new year in. This may be celebrated in the village with drumming.
Easter	Good Friday	There may be fasting before Good Friday. For many it is important to attend a Church service. Afterwards groups of family and friends may have a feast. No meat is eaten. There may also be a street procession with someone carrying a cross through the village/streets.
	Easter Sunday	Attending a church service is important. Often there is a feast after the service.
Independence Day	September 16 <sup>th</sup>	Independence from Australia in 1975. This is celebrated with a great feast and dancing.
Christmas	December 25 <sup>th</sup>	Christmas is a significant celebration and attending Church is important, as is sharing meals and exchanging gifts and being with family and loved ones.
Boxing Day	December 26 <sup>th</sup>	A day for family and loved ones to gather together, share food and have a 'sing song'.



The above listing is not intended to be exhaustive; rather it lists the major shared 'special days', you should check with the person or his/her family if there are other special days, which is important to that person.

## FOOD AND DIET

### Meals

Traditionally coastal areas of Papua New Guinea cooked their food in clay pots or used layers of hot stones and banana leaves to cook meat and vegetables. Throughout Papua New Guinea pigs are raised and eaten at feasts.

Traditional cooking is quite plain and in the coastal areas important foods are - coconut, fish, sago, bananas, PNG cabbage, taro, cassava and sweet potato.

In Australia most Papua New Guinea-born people have adapted to the Anglo diet and enjoy eating breads, cheeses, vegetables, meat, fish and fruits. Sharing food is important as is ensuring that you do not overeat

### Breakfast

Often consists of either Weetbix; scones; boiled bananas; taro or sweet potato.

### Lunch

Lunch is very important and common foods include coconut, cabbage, shallots, tomatoes

### Dinner

Dinner is the main meal and is hearty.

### Afternoon tea.

Afternoon tea often consists of a cup of tea or perhaps lemon or grass tea, followed by chewing betel nuts.



It is important to establish each person's food preferences, cooking style (eg fried versus poached), quantity and timing of meals and recorded as part of their care plan.

## Food sources

Below is a list of known suppliers of foods in Townsville:

Taro	Available in Townsville, but the best source is Cairns.	Contact Maggie Baison Ph 4778 2615 from the Townsville Papua New Guinea Logohou Group for details
PNG cabbages and curry leaves	These are grown locally and often found at the various markets in Townsville	

The following shops in Townsville stock some Papua New Guinea foods:



The Asian Supermarket  
Shop 3/116 Charters Towers Road  
Hermit Park Qld 4812  
Phone 07 4772 3997

Jeannie's Corner Store  
39 Dearness Street  
Garbutt Qld 4818  
Phone 07 4779 5170

## HEALTH

### Attitudes to illness and pain

There is a belief that evil spirits or a sorceress can make people sick and even kill them with only a medicine man able to make the person recover.

Papua New Guinea-born people may be very vocal with their pain. Although pain relief is traditionally in the form of herbs, it is quite acceptable to use Western medicine for pain relief.

### Perception of health professionals

Today Papua New Guinea-born people are comfortable visiting a doctor or other health professional.

However, there are many traditional herbs, sourced from the bush or garden that Papua New Guinea-born people use to cure fevers and other illnesses and these may be used if Western medicine fails.

## DEATH AND DYING

### Palliative Care

It is important to Papua New Guinea-born people that a constant vigil is maintained when a person from their culture is ill.

Often more than one person stays with the sick in hospital or nursing homes. These people take turns to visit, give massages and keep the person company.

The disease 'cancer' was not known traditionally in Papua New Guinea. People are very scared of this disease. If a person is diagnosed with cancer that person is not told of the diagnosis, and all their relatives are contacted so that they can visit the ill person before they pass away. If a family member dies of cancer only their family would know this information, as it would not be talked about outside of the family. Some Papua New Guineans believe that you can tell if a person is about to die by the look of their eyes and that only God and not the health professional knows when death will occur.

### Death & Dying

Once a person has passed away it is customary to straighten the limbs. Funerals are an important part of Papua New Guinea-born people's culture.

There is usually a very large attendance at funerals with all relatives and friends attending. Each Papua New Guinea-born person who knew the deceased is expected to contribute money towards the cost of the funeral. Cremations are common, with burials being seldom done.

For coastal-born Papua New Guinea people it is important to wear black when a person from your immediate family passes away.

Also, black mourning beads are worn and not removed until all relatives can meet together and have a feast. This feast lasts for three to seven days and involves sharing food and dancing. The feast signals the end of mourning, and the mourning beads are removed plus the person is allowed to dance and celebrate again.

For up to one year a person in mourning may continue to cover their head with a black cloth when outside of their home.

## LANGUAGE

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Of the Papua New Guinea-born people in Australia at the 2001 census, 78.9% spoke English at home, 7.3% spoke Tok Pisin (Melanesian Pidgin), and 6.5% Chinese-Cantonese.

While Melanesian Pidgin serves as the lingua franca of Papua New Guinea, there are approximately 715 indigenous languages spoken, many of them unrelated.



YOU need to be aware that just because a person once spoke English, this does not mean:

- a) he/she necessarily spoke it fluently or extensively OR
- b) he/she has retained these skills as he/she aged OR
- c) that it is their preferred language as speaking English can be tiring to the elderly.

Various language guides (including Pidgin) targeted at health and everyday activities is available at a cost from:

**HENDRIKA (HEalth aND Rapport Interactive  
Kommunication Aid)**

P O Box 326, Beaudesert, Qld, 4285  
Phone (07) 55446606

# KEY WORDS

Greetings	Melanesian Pidgin (Tok Pisin) words	Phonetic ( <b>bold</b> = where to place emphasis)
Hello	Yu orait	Yoo <b>orait</b>
Good morning	Moning	Mohn-ing
Good evening	Good evening	Guhd <b>eev</b> -ning
Yes	Yes	Yes
No	Nogat	<b>No</b> ogat
Please	Plis	Plees
Thank you	Tenkyu	<b>Tenk</b> -yoo
My name is ...	Nem bilong mi	Nem bilong mee
Good bye	Gutbai	Goot- <b>bai</b>

Conditions		
Hot	Hat	Hat
Cold	Kol	Kol
Noisy	Pairap	<b>Pair</b> ap
More	Moa	Mo-a
Less	More liklik	Moar liklik
Hungry	Hagare	<b>Hag</b> are
Thirsty	Nek I drai	Nek ee drai
Wet	I wet	Ee wet

Emotional states		
Happy		
Sad	Bel I pas	Be lee pas
Tired	Les	Les
Good	Gut	Goot
Bad	Nogut	Noagoot
Love	Laikim	<b>La</b> ikim
Sick	Sik	

Directions		
Right	Rait han	Rait han
Left	Lef han	Lef han
To come	Kam	Kam
To go	Go	Goa
To stand	Sanapim	<b>san</b> apim
Outside	Ausait	

Body	Bodi	
Leg	Lek	Lek
Foot	Fut	Fut
Toes	Pinga bilong fut	<b>Pinga</b> bilong fut
Arm	Han	Han
Hand	Han	Han
Fingers	Pinga	<b>Pinga</b>
Tooth	Tit	Teet
Throat	Nek	Nek
Stomach	Bel	Bel
Bladder	Pis pis	Pis pis

Activities		
Television	Lukim televisen	<b>Look</b> im tele-visen
Radio	Wailis	<b>Wai</b> -lis
Telephone	Telefon	<b>Tay</b> lefon
Music	Musik	<b>Mo</b> osik
Knitting	Nitim klos	<b>Nit</b> im klos
Church	lotu, haus lotu, sios	

Rooms		
Bed	Bet	Bet
Bedroom	Rum slip	Room slip
Toilet	Haus pekpek	Hows <b>pekpek</b>
Dining room	Rum kaikai	Room <b>kaikai</b>
Table	Tebol	<b>tay</b> bol
Chair	Sia	Si-a

Special occasions		
Birthday	De mama I karim yu	Day mama ee karim yoo
Christmas	Krismas	Krismas
Easter	Ista	<b>E</b> esta
New year	Nupela yia	<b>No</b> opela yi-a

<b>Clothing</b>	<b>Klos</b>	
Dress	Klos meri	Klos meree
Trousers	Trausis	Trowsis
Shirt	Siot	See-ot
Cardigans	Klos bilong kol	Klos bilong kol
Hat	Hat	Hat
Glasses	Aiglas	Aiglas
Pyjamas	Klos bilong slip	Klos bilong sleep
Sock	Sok	Sok
Shoe	Su	Soo

<b>Drinks</b>		
Tea	Ti	Tee
Coffee	Kopi	Kopee
Beer	Bia	Bee-a
Wine	Wain	Wain
Water	Wara	Wara
Juice	Wara bilong wanpela prut sapos yu krungutim	
Milk	Susu	soosoo
Sugar	Suga	sooga

<b>Meals</b>	<b>Kaikai</b>	
Breakfast	Brekfas	Brekfas
Lunch	Smolpela kaikai	Smol-pela kaikai
Dinner	Kaikai long belo	Kaikai long baylo
Snack	Snack	Snek

<b>Food</b>		
Bread	Bret	Bret
Toast	Tos	Tos
Butter	Bata	Bata
Jam	Jem	Jem
Cake	Kek	Kek
Biscuit	Biskit	Biskit
Meat	Abus	
Chicken	Kukaruk	kookarook
Fish	Pis	Pis
Pork	Pok	Pok
Fruit	Prut	
Vegetables	Sayor	
Salt	Sol	Sol
Pepper	Pepa	Pepa

<b>Utensils</b>		
Knife	Naip	Naib
Fork	Pok	Pok
Spoon	Spun	Spoon
Glass	Glas	Glas
Cup	Kap	Kap
Plate	Plet	Plet
Bowl	Dis	Dees

<b>Personal activities / items</b>		
Bath (ie to take a bath)	Waswas	Waswas
Deodorant	Deodorant	Dayo-dorant
Razor	Mosin bilong sev	Moseen bilong sev
Comb	Kom	Kam
Talcum	Paura	Powra
Toothbrush	Bros bilong tit	Bros bilong teet
Wheelchair	Wil sia	Weel si-a

<b>Relations</b>		
Father	Papa	Papa
Mother	Mama	Mama
Grandfather	Lapun papa	Lapoon papa
Grandmother	Lapun mama	Lapoon mama
Husband	Man bilong	Man bilong
Wife	Meri Bilong	Meree bilong
Mister	Man	Man
Mrs	Misis	Misis
Son	Pikinini man	Pikee-ninee man
Daughter	Pikinini meri	Pikee-ninee meree
Child	Pikinini	Pikee-ninee

# **Additional resources**

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## **Diversicare Resources**

Cultural Diversity Resource Directory for Residential and Community Care Agencies, 2005. Lists all known resources under chapter headings of – Communication, Cultural background, Health and Personal Care, Lifestyle, Legal, Management, Resources. Phone Margaret Hess, Director, Diversicare for these resources on 07-38491099

## **Useful Websites**

### **Western Australia**

[www.health.wa.gov.au/mau/](http://www.health.wa.gov.au/mau/)

### **New South Wales**

[www.mhcs.health.nsw.gov.au/health-public-affairs/mhcs/resources/index.html#top](http://www.mhcs.health.nsw.gov.au/health-public-affairs/mhcs/resources/index.html#top)

### **Victoria**

[www.healthtranslations.vic.gov.au/bhcv2/bhcv2.nsf/CategoryDoc/PresentCategory?Open](http://www.healthtranslations.vic.gov.au/bhcv2/bhcv2.nsf/CategoryDoc/PresentCategory?Open)

### **Federal Government**

[www.ageing.health.gov.au/publicat/multilin.htm](http://www.ageing.health.gov.au/publicat/multilin.htm)

[www.ageing.health.gov.au/publicat/pubindex.htm](http://www.ageing.health.gov.au/publicat/pubindex.htm)

### **Cross Cultural Health Program (USA)**

[www.xculture.org/resource/order/index.cfm?Category=Articles](http://www.xculture.org/resource/order/index.cfm?Category=Articles)

### **Centre for Culture Ethnicity and Health - Video Catalogue**

[http://www.ceh.org.au/video\\_catalogue.htm](http://www.ceh.org.au/video_catalogue.htm)

### **Alzheimers Australia**

[www.alzheimers.org.au/content.cfm?categoryid=14](http://www.alzheimers.org.au/content.cfm?categoryid=14)

### **Alzheimer's Australia NSW**

[www.alzheimers.org.au](http://www.alzheimers.org.au)

### **Queensland Health – Multicultural Health Publications**

[www.health.qld.gov.au/publications/restopicmaster.asp?Rec=40&frmHealthTopic=MulticulturalHealth](http://www.health.qld.gov.au/publications/restopicmaster.asp?Rec=40&frmHealthTopic=MulticulturalHealth)

### **Queensland Transcultural Mental Health Centre**

[www.health.qld.gov.au/pahospital/qtmhc/multilingual\\_resources.asp](http://www.health.qld.gov.au/pahospital/qtmhc/multilingual_resources.asp)

### **Cancer Foundation**

<http://www.cancerindex.org/clinks13.htm>

### **Nutrition Australia**

[www.nutritionaustralia.org](http://www.nutritionaustralia.org)

## **Information Lines**

Aged and Community Care Information Line:  
1800 500 853  
Carelink: 1800 052 222

## **Libraries**

### **Organisations must be registered to borrow**

Diversicare Phone: (07) 3846 1099

Blue Care Phone: (07) 3377 3327

St Lukes Nursing Service Phone: (07) 3421 2846

Queensland Transcultural Mental Health Centre Phone: (07) 3240 2833

HACC Resource Unit Phone: (07) 3350 8653

Alzheimers Association Phone: (07) 3857 4043

# Correction / Addition Form

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Please complete the following page if you are aware of either incorrect details or you know of additional resources that should be included.

## Correction

Listed item	Correction
Title:  Page:	

## Additional Resources / contact

Contact details	Description of resource
Title:  Publisher:  Address:   Phone:  Website:	(include whether Person contact, Book, tool, video, article, course)

## Send this form:

Post	Fax
<b>Diversicare            P O Box 5199            West End Qld 4101</b>	<b>Attention: Margaret Hess            Diversicare            FAX: 38461107</b>

Thank you for your assistance in keeping this document current