A woman in traditional Indonesian dance attire is performing a dance. She is wearing a yellow and red floral headdress, a yellow and green patterned top, and a long pink sash. Her arms are extended in a graceful pose. The background features a stone wall with a decorative pattern and a bamboo structure with a large floral arrangement.

Indonesian Cultural Profile

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Indonesian Cultural Profile

Thanks is given to the following people:

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Lisa Liputra.

... and to all those people who have provided comment about this cultural profile.

Author/Editor: Amanda Moffatt

Disclaimer

This cultural profile is a synthesis of information from a range of sources believed to be reliable. Diversicare gives no guarantee that the said base sources are correct and accepts no responsibility for any resultant errors contained herein or for decisions 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 document.

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This profile of the Indonesian cultural community is one of the projects undertaken by Diversicare's Special Projects and Services Development Team with funding from the Home and Community Care Program.

One of the aims of the HACCC Program is to provide resources for aged care service providers to better meet their clients' needs from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. This booklet is about ensuring that needs of older people from an Indonesian background are met.

This profile is intended to provide some insights into the Indonesian culture.

Two things are important to notice. First, each person is unique and has his/her own individual necessities which need to be considered when planning care. Second, Indonesian culture in Australia differs a lot from the Indonesian culture in modern Indonesia, and features from both cultures are evident in Australia today.

The profile provides useful information about a range of topics and resources including books, articles, visual aids, and services.



This symbol is used to indicate a “tip” which you as the caregiver of a person who was born in Indonesia 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 to maintain a user relevant and quality resource.

Yours sincerely

Vivienne McDonald

Director

Background

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Indonesian Cultural Profile

The Republic of Indonesia is the world's fourth most populated nation with 203 million people. With over 17000 islands of which 600 are inhabited, it is home to 300 ethnic groups. The four major cultural groups are the Sundanese in West Java; the Javanese in Central and East Java; the Madurese on Madura and in East Java; and the Balinese in Bali.



Indonesia is located across the equator in the humid tropics and extends some 3700 kms east-west. Indonesia has five main islands: Sumatra, Java, Borneo (known as Kalimantan in Indonesian), Sulawesi, and New Guinea; two major archipelagos Nusa Tenggara and Maluku Islands; and sixty smaller archipelagoes. It shares land borders with East Malaysia, Papua New Guinea, and East Timor.

Indonesia is part of the “ring of fire” and has the largest number of active volcanoes in the world. Indonesia has a tropical climate with monsoons usually generating from the south and east in June through to September, and from the northwest in December through to March.



Tip: This profile gives a very broad and general look at Indonesian culture. The specific cultural needs of Indonesian-born clients will vary greatly and need to be discussed with individuals as part of their care plan.

Migration

From the 1870s, Indonesians were recruited to work in the pearl and sugar cane industries in northern Australia. By federation around 1000 Indonesians were living in Australia mostly in Queensland and Western Australia. With the introduction of the White Australia Policy in 1901 many of these workers returned to Indonesia. In 1942, thousands of Indonesians fled the Japanese occupation of Indonesia and took refuge in Australia although many were repatriated after the war. In the 1950s roughly 10,000 Indo people (Eurasians of mixed Indonesian and European descent) who had previously settled in the Netherlands and held Dutch citizenship remigrated to Australia and bypassed the White Australia Policy. The end of the White Australia Policy in the early 1970s saw increasing numbers of Indonesians arrive in Australia. Between 1986 and 1996 the community increased four-fold to 12,128. Many of the new arrivals were students on temporary visas; others came under family reunion or skilled migration programs. Large numbers of Chinese Indonesians began migrating to Australia in the late 1990s fleeing the political and economic turmoil in the aftermath of the May 1998 riots and the subsequent fall of Suharto.

Year of arrival	
Arrived 2006	2,629
Arrived 2000 - Arrived 2005	16,398
Arrived 1990 - Arrived 1999	15,012
Arrived 1980 - Arrived 1989	7,541
Arrived 1979 or earlier	7,208



Statistics

The latest Census in 2006 recorded 50970 Indonesian-born people in Australia with Queensland being the fourth largest state behind New South Wales, Victoria and Western Australia. Of the total of the Indonesian-born population in Australia:

- 8.2 % were aged over 65 years
- 44% are males and 55% females
- 27.2% were employed in a skilled occupation, 16.8% semi-skilled
- 48% had tertiary qualifications and 6.9% had certificate level qualifications
- their ancestry includes Chinese 40.7%, Indonesian 39.8%, and Dutch 7.2%

Of the 50970 Indonesian-born people who spoke a language other than English at home, 89.8% spoke English very well or well and 9.3% spoke English not well or not at all.

(Source: Indonesian-born Community Information Summary Department of Immigration and Citizenship, 2008)



Flag of Indonesia



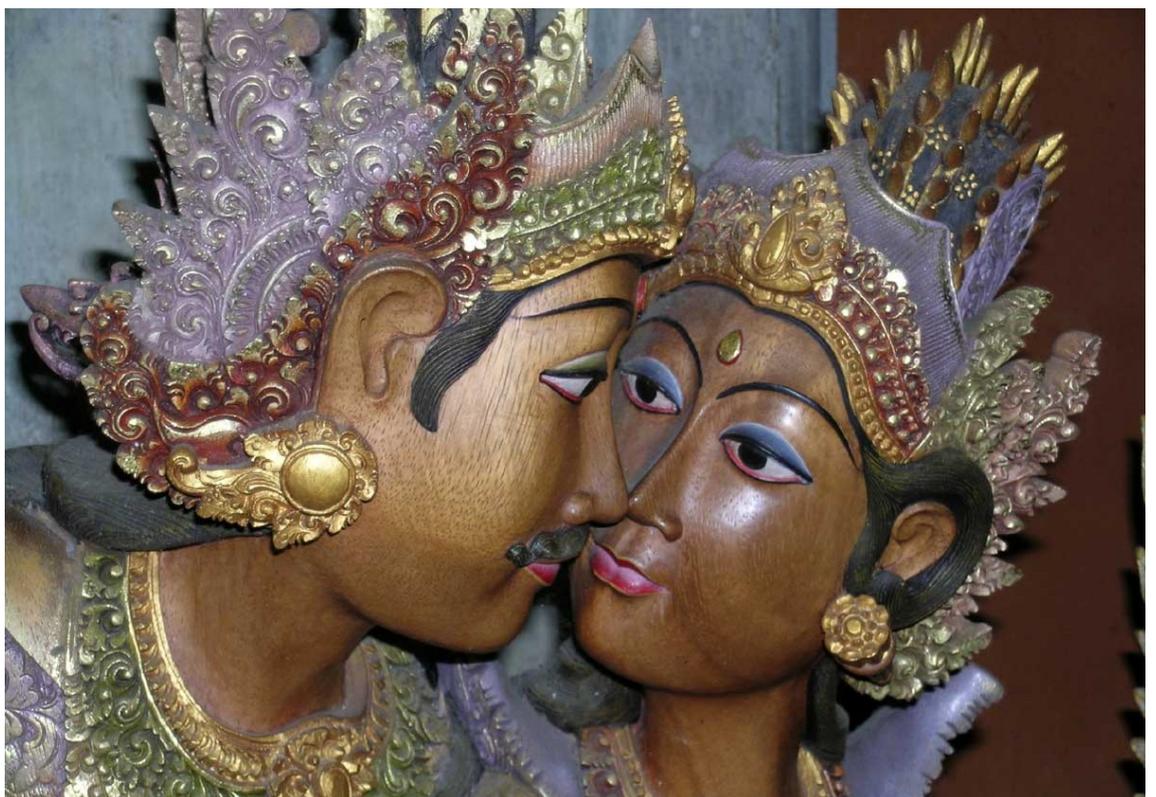
Greetings

- A handshake is the most common greeting accompanied with the word "Selamat".
- Greetings can be rather formal as they are meant to show respect.
- Many Indonesians may give a slight bow or place their hands on their heart after shaking your hand.
- If you are being introduced to several people always start with the eldest or most senior person first.
- To beckon someone, extend your hand with the palm down and make a scratching motion with your fingers.
- Titles are important in Indonesia as they signify status. It is important to use someone's title when you are talking with or about them.

Taboos

There are many taboos care providers need to be aware of when providing culturally appropriate care to elderly Indonesians:

- Avoid eating, passing dishes, and giving or receiving objects with the left hand which is considered unclean.
- Though shaking hands is normal with introductions never shake with the left hand.
- Indonesians regard the feet as the least sacred part of the body so avoid pointing your feet at anyone.
- Avoid touching anyone on the head, even young children.
- Pointing with a forefinger is considered impolite.



- Due to the diverse nature of Indonesian society where each province has its own language, ethnic make-up, religions and history, most people will define themselves locally before nationally.
- Group harmony and cohesiveness is highly valued.
- Hierarchical relationships are respected, emphasised and maintained and superiors are often called "bapak" or "ibu" which means the equivalent of father or mother, sir or madam.
- Friendliness is valued in Indonesia. Indonesians are known to hide negative feelings and avoid confrontation, rarely raising their voices.
- Indonesians may also place less emphasis on punctuality. Be patient, as it is considered disrespectful to show signs of annoyance. A popular Indonesian phrase 'term jam karet' means "time that stretches like rubber".
- Many Indonesian cultures are underpinned by a traditional lore known as Adat. Originally stemming from religious beliefs and adapted over many years, Adat is an unwritten and unspoken code of conduct that explains many Indonesian customs and laws, even today.

Communication Style Concept Face to Face

- To avoid being the cause of shame, Indonesians can be very careful with how they speak and interact.
- To save face and avoid shame, Indonesians may not directly disagree or say "No." Bahasa Indonesian actually has 12 ways of saying "No" and several other ways of saying "Yes" when the actual meaning is "No!"
- Blame should never be publically aimed at any individual or group.
- Indonesians appreciate people speaking softly. Loud people may be interpreted as aggressive.



Indonesians can be indirect communicators. They may not always say what they mean. Care providers may need to read between the lines or pay attention to gestures and body language to get the real message.

Family Structure

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Indonesian Cultural Profile

Family is very important in Indonesia and it is very common for extended families, including grandparents, aunts, uncles and cousins, to live together in one place; however, as with many cultures, the nuclear family is becoming more popular in contemporary urban areas. That said, elders and unmarried siblings will often reside with their families, even in modern culture.

Generally speaking, most Indonesian families are close and work hard to help each other. People have a responsibility to their families and especially to their elders. Indonesians are expected to respect the experience of their elders and follow their advice. They are also expected to look after their parents in old age.

Children learn from an early age how to help around the home. In rural areas they may work on farms when they are not at school. In the cities they may try to find a job such as selling clothes at the market.



Newspapers

A monthly Indonesian newspaper called 'Berita Tanah Air' is published by the:

Indonesian Community of Queensland

PO Box 598, WYNNUM QLD 4178

Editor: Mr Tommy Liu

Indonesian newspapers can be accessed online at:

www.seasite.niu.edu/indonesian/Berita/



Tip: If the person can't use a computer, don't forget you can access the Internet and load these newspapers and print all or some pages which can then be given to the person to read at their leisure

Television

The SBS television network is available in major cities across Queensland.

SBS 2 provides Indonesian news Monday - Saturday at 6:40am, and on Sundays at 3:30pm.



Tip: Check your TV program guide or the SBS website for local viewing times.
www.sbs.com.au/television

Radio

Broadcasting in Indonesian occurs on SBS Brisbane radio 93.3FM on:

Tuesday: 2:00pm to 3:00pm

Thursday: 10:00pm to 11:00pm

Friday: 2:00pm to 3:00pm
3:00pm to 4:00pm



Go to www.sbs.com.au/radio/ to check your local radio program. You can download various broadcasts in Indonesian.

Leisure and Recreation

Daily Routine

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For many older Indonesian-born people in Australia, daily routine is determined by personal preference, rather than cultural norms.

Religious beliefs and customs can play an important part of daily activities including prayer and food preparation, particularly during times of religious significance observed by the various faiths.

For many Indonesian people in Australia their faith provides community connections and a variety of social activities including playing cards, games' evenings, shared lunches, and outings.



Tip: You need to establish each individual's preferences with them regarding his/her daily routines and timing for their daily activities.



Social Groups

Indonesian Community of Queensland

PO Box 598, Wynnum Qld 4178

Mobile: 0416 155 030

Contact: Reverend Doctor Francis Song

Email: francis_song@hotmail.com

Gereja Kristus Brisbane Inc.

L1, 81 Elizabeth Street, Brisbane Qld 4000

Phone: (07) 3220 0611

Mobile: 0410 098 820

Contact: Pastor Mindjaja Tani

Metro Church Brisbane - Indonesia

308 Seventeen Mile Rocks Road, Seventeen Mile Rocks Qld 4073

PO Box 1067, Mount Ommaney Qld 4074

Phone: (07) 3375 4599

Phone: (07) 3375 4899

Contact: Mr Paul Geerling

Email: info@metrochurchbrisbane.com

Website: www.metrochurchbrisbane.com

Bethany Brisbane International Church

Indonesian Church Service Sunday 9am

Building No2 Cinema, Nathan QLD 4111

Phone: (07) 3349 4119

Mobile: 0412 776 191

Contact: Mr Hanny Yasaputra

Email: yhanny@yahoo.com

Website: www.bethanybrisbane.org

Indonesian Catholic Family

Jubilee Parish, St Joan of Arc, Herston

Contact: Ms Lisa Liputra

Email: lisaliputra@gmail.com

Indonesia's cultural and geographic diversity is reflected in its food. Most Indonesian food is prepared with contrasting flavours and textures. Hot and spicy dishes will often be served with crunchy peanuts or *krupuk* (crispy crackers), or a contrasting flavour such as a creamy gravy, palm sugar, or *kecap manis*, (a sweet soy sauce.)

Nasi: (rice), which accompanies every meal is Indonesia's most important food.

Bumbu: (basic spice paste) accompanies rice, and various meats such as chicken, goat, or beef. Food may be prepared through grilling, simmering, steaming, and stewing using coconut milk.

Some Indonesians may choose to eat a variety of small meals throughout the day rather than three larger meals. It is usual for prepared meals to be left at room temperature on the kitchen table for family members to eat whenever they are hungry.



Makan pagi: (breakfast) is normally a bowl of fried rice, noodles, or soto (soup) accompanied by Java coffee or tea. *Makan siang* (lunch) is often the main meal of the day followed by *makan malam* (dinner) after the workday has ended. When sharing meals, the dishes are placed in the middle of a table for everyone to share.

Selamatan: a uniquely Indonesian tradition of praying to a God before a significant event is still practiced by many Indonesian-born people. Following the prayer, *tumpeng* (a cone-shaped mountain of steamed yellow rice) is sliced at the top and served.



Tip: It is important to establish each individual's preferences and daily routine when it comes to mealtimes.



At the 2006 Census the major religious affiliations among Indonesia-born people were Catholic 28.5%, Islamic 17%, and Buddhism 10.9%.

Though Islam is the major religion in Indonesia, Muslims are the minority among Indonesians in Australia. More than half of the Indonesian population in Australia follows Christianity which is split evenly between the Catholic and various Protestant denominations.



Tip: Care providers need to remember there can be a difference between nominating a particular religion, to practicing that religion in his/her everyday life (or whether all or only some rituals/practices within that religion are observed).

Day	Date	Customary Practices
New Year's day	January 1	
Chinese New Year	January	
Birthday of the Islamic Prophet Mohhamed <i>Mawlid Nabi</i>	Third month in the Islamic calendar	People attend street parades, read blessings, listen to religious lectures, and hang the colourful veils as a decoration on the streets.
Hindu New Year <i>Hari Raya Nyepi</i>	March	Also known as the Hindu Day of Silence. For 24 hours Hindus refrain from all activities.
Good Friday <i>Wafat Yesus Kristus</i>	March / April	A time for Christians to reflect and celebrate the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Families attend Mass and share a meal together.
Indonesian Independence Day	17 August	Celebrates Indonesia's independence from Holland on August 17, 1945. The highlight of the celebration is a flag-raising ceremony held at the State Palace, Jakarta.
Ramadan <i>Puasa</i>	Ninth month in the Islamic calendar	During Ramadan, Muslims fast between dawn (<i>fajr</i>), and sunset (<i>maghrib</i>). In the evenings they eat small meals and visit with friends and family. It is a time of worship and contemplation.
Day after Ramadan <i>Lebaran Mudik</i>	10th month of the Islamic calendar	Celebrates the end of Ramandan. Family and friends gather and enjoy foods such as <i>Keptupat</i> (steamed rice parcels wrapped in coconut leaves) and send <i>Kartu Lebaran</i> cards.
Feast of Sacrifice <i>Lebaran Haji</i>	Twelfth month in the Islamic calendar	Feast of Sacrifice. It is a special day for children because it is a day to socialise with family, friends and other children in celebrating. Many Muslims are united in prayer at mosques and make donations to the poor.
Islamic New Year <i>Tahun Baru Hijriyah</i>	First month of Islamic calendar	Muslims attend mosques to pray, listen to readings and reflect on how one is leading one's life.
Christmas day <i>Hari Natal</i>	December 25	Families attend Mass, share meals together and exchange gifts.

Djambu or *Jamu* is the traditional form of Indonesian herbal medicine. For some Indonesian-born clients, herbal medicine may still be preferred when treating many illnesses. However, the western system of medicine is also popular in Indonesia and many Indonesian-born people who have lived in Australia for an extended period of time will use conventional Western medicine.

Doctors and medical practitioners are viewed with respect in the Indonesian community.

Aged Care

Traditional aged care was seen as the responsibility of the family; however, the demands on modern families can make caring for an elderly loved one difficult.

The religious community may be a source of support in the care of the elderly.

For some Indonesian-born Australians the lack of knowledge about the Australian aged care system may lead to a reluctance to seek assistance or sign appropriate forms.



Death and Dying

The rituals surrounding death and dying are often closely linked to a person's belief and their religion. For people of Catholic faith, one of the main rituals performed at the time of dying is the administering of the last rites. The last rites is one of the seven sacraments of the rosary which is a prayer reflecting the important events of the life of Christ and Our Lady. The rosary is a mix of vocal and silent prayer. Rosary beads are used to aid people in prayer.



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Muslim families will read some verses from the Qur'an and pray for the peaceful departure of the soul once their loved one has passed away. They will turn their deceased member to face Mecca and completely cover their body with a sheet.

Muslim burials are performed as soon as possible after death, sometimes on the same day. For more information on these End of Life rituals, you can download Queensland Health's publication, 'Health Care Providers Handbook on Hindu patients.' This book is available to download at:

www.health.qld.gov.au/multicultural/health_workers/hbook-muslim.asp

Language

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Indonesian Cultural Profile

At the 2006 census, 66.2% of the Indonesia-born population in Australia spoke Indonesian, 17.3% spoke English and 6.4% spoke Mandarin. The official language of Indonesia is known Bahasa Indonesian. This language is a standardised dialect of the Malay language and was created when Indonesia declared independence in 1945. There are two to three languages spoken across Indonesia, so although Bahasa Indonesian is the official language, most people speak their regional dialects first.



1. Background

<http://www.infoplease.com/ipa/A0107634.html#ixzz1ti4HRTjl>

2. Migration

<http://museumvictoria.com.au/origins/history>

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Indonesian_Australian

3. Customs

<http://www.everyculture.com/Ge-It/Indonesia.html#ixzz1ti88jjga>

<http://www.kwintessential.co.uk/resources/global-etiquette/indonesia.html>

<http://visitasiaguide.com/visit-indonesia/indonesian-customs.htm>

4. Food

<http://www.foodbycountry.com/Germany-to-Japan/Indonesia.html#ixzz1tiAlfrkN>

5. Religion

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Indonesian_Australian

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Public_holidays_in_Indonesia

6. Language

<http://www.kwintessential.co.uk/resources/global-etiquette/indonesia.html>

7. Values

http://www.letsgo.com/22622-asia_and_pacific-travel-guides-indonesia-cultural_essentials-customs_and_etiquette-c#ixzz1vlalpwrj

Correction / Addition Form

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:	
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