



# POSITION STATEMENT

## Cultural and Linguistic Diversity



Helping Hand

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

### 1. Introduction

Helping Hand Aged Care is committed to offering services based upon the principles of access and equity that are respectful of the needs of people from every corner of our community. It is also committed to the provision of flexible services, a consumer-centred approach and the promotion of community self-sufficiency. We recognise that everyone should have an opportunity to be involved in community life, to have access to high quality services that best meet their needs, to be treated fairly, and to receive information to make choices that assist in maintaining their wellbeing, health and independence.

Australia's population is increasingly culturally and linguistically diverse, illustrated by population statistics which show that, in 2006, approximately 25% of Australians were born overseas and a further 20% had at least one overseas-born parent. People from over 200 countries, speaking over 200 languages, following a diverse range of religions and faiths and with different arrival and settlement histories are represented in this group.<sup>1</sup> There are significant differences in the age profile of older Australians who were born overseas, eg, the median age of people born in Europe was 56 years, compared with 37 years for people born in Asia.<sup>2</sup> This reflects the different migration experiences of different communities.

People from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds will have different needs that require specific consideration to enable the provision of culturally appropriate aged care. While they share with other Australians the range of needs that occur from the ageing process, they may also have other life experiences which impact on their experience of ageing. For example, they have experienced separation from their place of birth, adopting English as a second language and adapting to a different culture. Some may have problems related to dealing with trauma-related grief and loss, dealing with a lack of appreciation and/or acknowledgment of their own culture by others, and coping with stereotyping and racist attitudes.

Helping Hand recognises that, more than ever before, aged care services must be culturally competent if we are to properly meet the needs of all Australians<sup>3</sup>. Further, while some ageing communities are able to develop culturally specific services, many of them are small and the establishment of specific services may not be a viable option. Hence, our commitment and focus will have two key components:

1. We will continually strive to be a culturally competent organisation, meeting the needs of all Australians; and
2. We will develop planned, flexible and culturally sensitive approaches that respond to the individual as part of the cultural community of their choice.

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<sup>1</sup> ABS 2009, pg 34

<sup>2</sup> Ibid, pg 35

<sup>3</sup> Helping Hand Policy



## 2. Cultural Competence

Cultural competence is a set of congruent behaviours, attitudes and policies that come together in an organisation to enable its staff to work effectively in cross-cultural situations. It is more than awareness of cultural differences but rather focuses on the capacity of the organisation to achieve outcomes by integrating culture into the delivery of services. It is underpinned by knowledge, conviction and capacity for action.<sup>4</sup>

Helping Hand identifies five dimensions of organisational cultural competency<sup>5</sup>:

- Systems
- Culture
- Workforce
- Service development and delivery
- Partnerships

Being culturally competent is an on-going process. Helping Hand is committed to pursuing those strategies which are necessary to build our cultural competence in response to the changing cultural needs of our clients. The five dimensions provide a framework for developing strategies to improve our cultural competence and for measuring our progress.

## 3. Systems

The organisation will have policies and procedures, appropriately resourced and monitored, which foster culturally competent behaviour and practice at all levels and support active involvement of CALD communities in matters concerning their health and wellbeing.

## 4 Organisational Culture

Cultural competency is valued as integral to core business and consequently is supported and evaluated. Management is committed to working with culturally diverse communities and clients and supports diversity in staffing.

## 5. Workforce

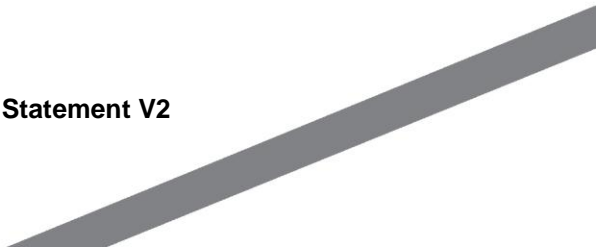
Our workforce is critical to our ability to provide culturally inclusive care and cultural safety at work. Emphasis will be placed on cultural competence and safety training for staff and volunteers to promote cross-cultural awareness and inclusiveness. This will complement general workforce development strategies which aim at building a strong values base, capacity to delivery individualised and holistic services and safe and respectful behaviours at work.

Individual staff and volunteers will be supported to work with diverse communities to develop relevant, appropriate and sustainable approaches to aged care. Conversely, individuals from CALD backgrounds will be supported to work in partnership with our staff in addressing their specific needs.

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<sup>4</sup> Based on NHMRC 2006.

<sup>5</sup> *ibid*, pg 30; Kate Barnett and Associates 1999





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## 6 Service development and delivery

Helping Hand services will be available to everyone who is entitled to them and free of any form of discrimination irrespective of a person's country of birth, language, culture, race or religion. This includes using strategies to inform eligible clients of services and their entitlements and how they can obtain them

Services will be developed and delivered on the basis of fair treatment of clients who are eligible to receive them. This includes acknowledging and upholding the rights of people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds and their carers to full and equal participation in Australian society.

At the service level, we will continue to plan, adapt and develop our services in response to changing demographic needs, within the funding parameters. Where we identify unmet or emerging needs, we will create partnerships with communities and other stakeholders to generate new opportunities and, as necessary, resources to meet those needs.

At the individual level, our services will be sensitive and responsive to the particular circumstances and perspectives of individuals with their own definition of their cultural needs and aspirations. We will do this by consulting with our clients regularly about the adequacy, design and standard of our services.

At the same time, our services will be monitored and, as appropriate, evaluated to ensure that they are effective for culturally and linguistically diverse clients and that they are accountable for implementing services in line with these principles objectives for clients.

## 7. Partnerships

We value collaboration and partnership as our preferred way of linking individuals with their community of choice and with services appropriate to their needs. This approach can be adopted with both large and small communities and may or may not involve the development of specific services, that is, it can apply in response to individuals or to larger groups or to whole communities.

Our approach to developing services for specific communities is based on working closely with those communities in six key areas.<sup>6</sup>

- Consultation that builds understanding of each other; establishes trust and forms the foundation of an effective relationship; communication that is open and ongoing; develops ground rules to avoid misunderstanding, defines roles and has a shared commitment..
- Developing relationships that are based on respect for diverse cultures and reciprocal respect for the knowledge and expertise of the partners.
- Planning processes that identify community needs by using demographic information; resources available; individual organisation expertise; and the service responses appropriate to the needs and resources (the roles and responsibilities, standards for care and cultural relevance).

<sup>6</sup> Based on the Linkages Model in Kate Barnett and Associates 1999



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- Effective participation of communities in the management of services including management; design and development of care planning and service delivery systems; service structures (eg staffing, training, food) and standards of care which support cultural relevance; facilitation to access assessment; advocacy by key community members
- Promotion of services through community intermediaries (eg community information-giving networks) and by developing community awareness and familiarity with the aged care system service/s.
- Identifying indicators of quality in culturally inclusive care and then developing a range of feedback strategies including reviewing the model and making changes as required, developing communication lines between Helping Hand and each community (eg regular meetings) and establishing a more formal process (eg advisory group) involving all partnership communities, which would meet twice annually.

## References:

ABS 2009. *A Picture of the Nation: The Statistician's Report on the 2006 Census*.  
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<http://www.helpinghand.org.au/Content.aspx?p=389> accessed 28/10/2009

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