

Macedonian Australian Welfare Association of Sydney Inc.



MACEDONIAN CULTURAL BRIEFING

Delivered by Sladana Nikolic

About MAWA

- Who is MAWA?
- What is the Community Partners Program (CPP)?
- Resources developed by CPP program;
 - Booklet of Traditional Folktales
 - Macedonian Recipe Book
 - Perceptions of Dementia in the Macedonian Community
 - List of Macedonian Common Words
 - Calendar of Significant Religious Events
 - Did You Know?
 - Macedonian Community Directory
 - Macedonian Cue Cards

2006 Census

Macedonians in Australia

By Ancestry	83,978
By Born in Republic of Macedonia	40,656
By Language	67,833

Largest Cities with Macedonian-born communities

Sydney	11,630
Melbourne	17,286
Wollongong	4,279

Macedonians in NSW by Language – 11th place of most common languages spoken at home and Rockdale takes 4th place of most common languages.

Macedonian Religion & Churches in NSW

- Macedonian Orthodox Religion
- Macedonian Calendar
- Religious Days
- The role of the Orthodox Church in family life

Macedonian Orthodox Churches in NSW

5 – Sydney

3 – Wollongong/ Illawarra Region

1 - Queanbeyan

1 - Newcastle

Diversity of Community

- Macedonians who arrived in the years pre and particularly post second world war who are now parents and grandparents of first generation born Macedonian
- There are two distinct groups:
 - Macedonians recently arrived resulting from a wave of skilled migration in the last 15 years as well as unfolding events in Macedonia.
 - Sub-group of Australian born Macedonians who were taken back to Macedonia as small children who have now returned to Australia as adults.

Language

- There are misconceptions with many service providers that the Bosnian, Macedonian and Serbian communities “all speak the same language and understand each other”. Within each language there are many dialects.
- The Macedonian language uses their own alphabet called Cyrillic. Also called *azbuka*, from the old name of the first two letters. Developed in the 9th Century the alphabet consists of 31 letters.
- There are certain dialects and religious terms which are used and necessarily understood by all.

Hints on Culture

- **Macedonian Society** - Predominately a Patriarchal society where the husband is the head of the family. Where there is no husband the grandfather or the oldest son can take on this role.
- **Family Dynamics** - Men were generally the bread winner while women traditionally provided the care of the home and family. It was regular practice for extended families to live in the same household. For example it was quite normal for three or four brothers to live in the same house with each others families including their elderly parents.
- Families today all would like to be included in the decision making process as they are quite close to each other.
- Families generally take shifts in taking care of elderly parents. Relocation to a nursing facility is seen as the last resort. This reluctance is related to the stigma attached to the need for a residential aged care facility. It can also be seen as the immediate family do not wish to support the elderly parents by the wider Macedonian community.

Hints on Culture (cont)

- **Nursing Home Placement** - Once placed in a nursing home residents would still like to be approached in the same way they are approach by their family. For example depending on their age they'd like to be referred to as a either aunty (teta), uncle (tetin), grandmother (baba) or grandfather (dedo).
- **Fasting** – Fasting was done regularly for religious holidays. Staff might like to discuss this with the residents family as they may wish to continue their religious rights.

History

- Macedonian occupation
- Vardar Macedonia
- Australian Government

Barriers to Accessing Services

- Language
- Lack of Access
- Cultural Barriers
- Geographic Isolation
- Lack of Knowledge

Information Dissemination

Media and Communication in Australia

The most effective methods of reaching the Macedonian community are;

- Macedonian Radio programs.
- Distribution of translated material in areas where high numbers of Macedonians reside and attend functions eg. Churches, Bakeries, Doctors, Pharmacies, Hairdressers, Schools etc.
- Macedonian and local mainstream newspapers
- Information sessions (ensuring appropriate time and venue)
- In consultation with the Macedonian Welfare Association to seek assistance with clients, current projects or working in partnership with bilingual/bicultural staff.

Bibliography

<http://www.naati.com.au>

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Thank you

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