



# Inclusive Community

## DID YOU KNOW?

**59,234 BM residents were born in Australia (2011 Census); 12,570 people who were living in Blue Mountains City in 2011 were born overseas, and 7% arrived in Australia within 5 years prior to 2011**

8.4% of our residents have come from a Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) population; and **3,863 (5%) residents speak languages other than English at home** (compared to 20 % nationally).

**51.3% of people in the Blue Mountains were in a registered marriage, and 9.5% were in a de facto marriage** (the 2011 Census for the first time identified numbers of same-sex couples (33,714 nationally).

In 2011, the age group with the highest net migration to Blue Mountains City was persons aged 35 to 44 years.

### In 2011 in the Blue Mountains:

- 9,220 families identified as 'blended' families
- 45.2% were couple families with children (compared with 44.6% nationally)
- 38.3% were couple families without children (37.8% nationally); and
- 15.6% were one parent families (15.9% nationally); with a slightly higher proportion of single female families (83.6%; 82.4% nationally).

## Our Goals

- 👁 Coordinate and communicate a welcoming and inclusive community that recognises the diversity of the Blue Mountains community.
- 👁 Recognising sexual orientation and gender identity as one of many cultural characteristics (along with age, disability, gender, language and ethnicity, etc.), to provide an inclusive environment where GLBTI people feel physically, spiritually and emotionally safe.
- 👁 Gain recurrent funding to support the CALD community specifically for the Blue Mountains (not regional – ie the Nepean generally).
- 👁 Foster community ownership of, and pride in, the diversity we enjoy in the Blue Mountains.
- 👁 Create a forum, and opportunities to engage the community, around specific groups and challenges they experience.
- 👁 Include government agencies, community organisations, commercial enterprise to encourage innovation, partnerships and sharing of knowledge and experiences.

## What We're Doing to Achieve Our Goals

- 📌 Since 2001, the Mountains Multicultural Interagency (MMI) has provided an opportunity for agencies to share information and referral; and to work collaboratively to organise events (such as Refugee Week), or provide resources to teachers in schools for Harmony Day:

📌 ensuring community organisations have policies around equality, particularly around diversity, that supports respect and understanding for differences and individuality in gender identity, age, ethnicity, culture, language, disability, status, beliefs and ability. Creating forums or opportunities within our community to contribute to, and participate in, new initiatives, thus sharing their strengths and resources and the needs or requirements they express.

📌 ensuring the funding community services receive is flexible enough to create strategies to celebrate and advocate for people in our community – eg generalist services supporting events such as Rainbow Flag raising; groups contributing to community events such as NAIDOC Week, International Day Against Homophobia, Harmony Day, Refugee Week, etc.

📌 **Refugee Week Event 2014** – featured presentations about the refugee experience, and high tea for the Blue Mountains community (by invitation) at Lillianfels Resort and Spa, held on 16th of June, 2014. The initiative, in partnership with the business and community sector, was to ensure that Refugee Week was a high profile event, which would reach a broad cross-section of the Mountains, attracting people who do not usually attend such events. There were representatives from various sectors on the day, including community, business, health, and government. The event was varied & informative and included personal refugee stories, 'myth-busting' facts & figures, and information on work being done in the BM to support refugees and migrants.

📌 develop resources and community directories that promote knowledge and networks of communities, such as Nepean Blue Mountains Local Health Service's resource 'East Meets West', Nepean Migrant Access, and MMI's Multi-Cultural Service & Resource Directory.

📌 **The Blue Mountains Multi-Cultural Playgroup** originated from increasing referrals received by BMFSS and Gateway Family Services. After consultation with local migrant and refugee groups, a partnership was formed between BMFSS and GFS to resource and facilitate the supported playgroup for migrant or refugee families from CALD backgrounds with young children aged 0-5 years. This playgroup has been in operation for 6 years and continues to collaborate with other local services (MOCS and Katoomba Community Gardens) or groups for special activities and events aimed at connecting the playgroup into the community. As funding has now ceased for this program, we are hoping that the project will be sustainable and are encouraging parents to manage the Playgroup themselves.

📌 **Pink Mountains** (auspiced by MCRN) is an online community information guide and 'pink pages' business directory for Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex and Queer (GLBTIQ) people, their friends and supporters, living in or visiting the Blue Mountains. The aim of this website is to provide GLBTIQ information in the Mountains such as: social & support group information & links; GLBTIQ resources; up-coming social events; GLBTIQ owned/friendly affordable local Business Listings; free Community Noticeboard.

📌 *'Anna', a mother of two young children under 6 attended a 'drop in' service of Blue Mountains Family Support Service (BMFSS) for emergency financial assistance. 'Anna' had moved to Australia with her husband and children 6 years before and had only lived in the Mountains for 2 years. During her visit, 'Anna' became distressed, explaining that her husband had left the family 6 months prior, and she didn't know where to go for help. She felt very isolated and was not confident speaking or understanding English, and she had not made friends in the community. 'Anna' also told the worker she only receives money from her husband sporadically to buy food and supplies for the household. 'Anna' struggled with understanding notes from school and supporting her son with his homework. The worker discussed other groups and services that could assist 'Anna' and her family. Among them was the Multicultural playgroup where she and her youngest child could meet other people from CALD backgrounds. This could provide 'Anna' with an opportunity to socialise and share experiences of life in a different culture. 'Anna' continues to attend the playgroup and has utilised the other services offered by the worker. She feels more stable in providing for her small family and their growing needs. 'Anna' sometimes accesses financial assistance, and is growing in confidence - she has said that she and her family now feel part of their community.*

📌 Blue Mountains Refugee Support Group (auspiced by BMFSS) has been supporting refugees and asylum seekers since 2003. The aims of the BMRSG are to:

- provide financial support to asylum seekers and refugees in the community;

- provide practical assistance to those released from detention e.g. Interest free loans;
- provide support to asylum seekers in detention;
- raise public awareness of refugee and asylum seeker issues;
- work with other groups and organizations, including public events (such as screening the documentary *Between the Devil and the Deep Blue Sea*, Springwood Foundation Day, Bunnings BBQ), and *Blue Mountains' Gazette* features.

## ✓ **How is State Government Contributing to These Achievements?**

✓ **Multicultural NSW** promotes community harmony and social cohesion. It is the lead agency for implementing the policy and legislative framework to support multiculturalism in NSW. Their Grants Program aims to engage with all sections of society and break down barriers to participation; enable equitable access to services and programs; and enrich social and economic capacity through cultural diversity as an asset of our state (the first state in Australia, and the second in the world, to introduce a deliberate policy that welcomes cultural and linguistic diversity as a social and economic advantage).

✓ **Aboriginal Artists in BM Schools** is a collaborative project between MOCS, Marra Mob Aboriginal Artists group, ANTaR, TAFE & local schools. The project has run for 4 years, supporting the **NSW Reconciliation Council's schools art challenge**. Local Aboriginal Artists go into schools, sharing their personal stories, culture and art practices and work with students to produce their own art works, many of which are entered into the state competition. Students' art is displayed at a local exhibition/cultural sharing event. A total of 17 schools have participated in the project, with an average of 300 students each year.

### ✓ **The Nepean Blue Mountains Local Health District:**

1. **NBMLHD Refugee Health Implementation Plan** - 2011-2016 outlines priorities and includes a best practice model for refugee healthcare; this plan supports the seven principles outlined in the NSW Refugee Health Plan.
2. **Refugee health nurses:** in 2011-12, the NSW government allocated an 0.42 FTE of outreach services to the NBMLHD.
3. **NSW Health Policy & Implementation Plan for Culturally Diverse Communities 2012-2016:** this new Policy provides an opportunity for all levels of the NSW Health system to revise strategies and service models to better meet the contemporary health needs of culturally and linguistically diverse patients and clients in NSW, and includes priority actions and strategies to achieve specific outcomes.

