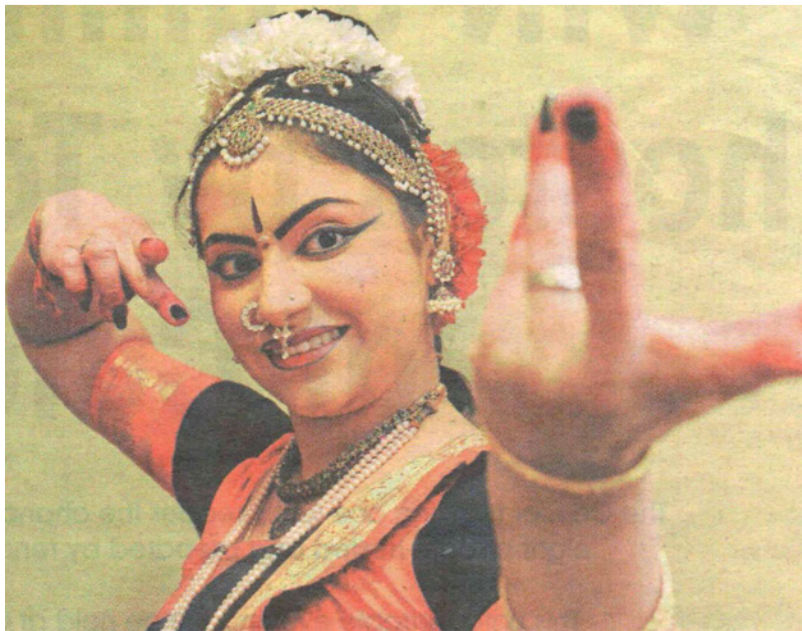




BALLARAT REGIONAL MULTICULTURAL COUNCIL

ANNUAL REPORT 2009

Golden Point Cultural and Learning Centre



BRMC's Community Centre

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BRMC's STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

To actively promote and develop goodwill, understanding and harmony within our culturally diverse community.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

- (1) To provide opportunities for people of all cultural backgrounds to come together
- (2) To provide advisory services, support and advocacy for the particular needs of people of various cultural backgrounds
- (3) To advocate on relevant government policy and practice at the local, state and federal level to ensure appropriate service provision
- (4) To provide government and other bodies or agencies in the Ballarat region with an open channel of communication with cultural groups and organisations
- (5) To promote a greater awareness of multicultural values, the contributions and the specific needs of community groups within the region
- (6) To advise relevant agencies in the region on the social, legal, cultural, educational, health and welfare needs of residents of culturally diverse backgrounds with an emphasis on equitable access to services
- (7) To develop programs which will encourage ethnic people of all ages within the region to retain their heritage and thus optimise the benefits of cultural diversity for all Australians

Committee of Management 2008-2009

Chairperson	Frank Williams
Deputy Chair	Farhang Afshar
Treasurer	Hassan ElHawary (until May '09)
Assistant Treasurer	Giancarlo Faustini
Secretary	Gerald Jenzen
Assistant Secretary	Talia Barrett
Youth Officer	Anushka Dhanapala
Inter-faith Officer	Fr. Gerald Loos
Publicity Officer	Ingrid Harris
Women's Officer	Georgina Vagg
Community representatives	Khushi Maharaj Henry Wang (until July '09) Emmanuel Aziawor
Immediate past Chairperson	George Fong

Member Groups/Cultural Associations

Ballarat African Association
Ballarat China Community Committee
Ballarat Chinese Association
Ballarat Indian Association
Ballarat Italian Association
Ballarat-Japan Community Committee
Ballarat Sri Lankan Association
Ballarat Sudanese Association
Ballarat Togolese Association
Central Highlands Asian-Australian Association of Victoria
Central Highlands Cultural Network
Circolo Pensionati Italiani Ballarat
Croatian Community of Ballarat
Filipino-Australian Association of Ballarat
German-Austrian Association
L'Alliance Francaise de Ballarat
NESB Links Inc.
Polish Association of Ballarat
Polish Senior Citizens' Club

BRMC Strategic Partnerships

Adult Multicultural Education Services (AMES)

Ballarat Community Health

Ballarat Regional Adult Council of Education (BRACE)

BEST Community Development

Central Highlands Community Legal Centre (CHCN)

Central Highlands Sports Assembly

Centrelink

Child and Family Services (CAFS)

Chinese-Australian Ballarat Cultural Association

City of Ballarat (CoB)

City of Ballarat Home and Community Care Services

Department of Education and Early Childhood

Department of Health and Ageing (DOHA)

Department of Human Services (DHS)

Department of Immigration and Citizenship (DIAC)

Direct Recruitment

Diversitat

Ethnic Communities Council of Victoria (ECCV)

Federation of Ethnic Communities Council of Australia (FECCA)

Football Federation of Victoria (FFV)

Office of Housing

Outreach Uniting Care

Relationships Australia

Salvation Army Emergency Accommodation

St Vincent de Paul

The Faith, Hope & Love Children's Foundation (Aust) Inc.

Victorian Multicultural Commission (VMC)

WRISC Domestic Violence Support Services

CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

Frank Williams

Ballarat Regional Multicultural Council (BRMC) is the peak multicultural organisation in the City of Ballarat and our services not only support migrants locally, but right throughout the Central Highlands/Grampians Region (CHGR). This also includes outreach services in the Shires of Hepburn, Moorabool and Golden Plains. BRMC's constant challenge is to work in partnership with all levels of government, plus community groups and agencies, to provide culturally sensitive, inclusive, equitable services to all our many and varied diverse migrants and 'New Arrivals'.

BRMC is indeed fortunate to have the excellent financial support of three major funding authorities that enable us to service and assist culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) clients. The Department of Human Services (DHS) is invaluable in its direct support to Home and Community Care (HACC) agencies and services throughout the region. Then too, the Department of Immigration and Citizenship (DIAC) is very significant in its support for settlement services and community development, for our 'Recent Arrivals'. The Department of Health and Ageing (DOHA) is a new strategic partner of BRMC. This funding will provide a complimentary program for our rapidly ageing migrant communities via training of a number of Migrant Mentors and a series of Cultural Briefings, over the next two years.

Likewise, BRMC is also most appreciative of a range of small grants from the Victorian Multicultural Commission (VMC) that underpins our operations, as well as assisting with a range of Annual Festivals, Celebrations and Special Events. Some additional grants from the Ballarat Foundation, VICNET, Telstra and so on were also greatly appreciated by BRMC/GPLACE, again this year.

Given this brief background, as in previous years, BRMC is proud of its achievements and there are a number of noteworthy milestones that should be highlighted. Ballarat was selected by the Federal Government as the second Victorian city (following Shepparton) in 2007 to have a Pilot Project to settle a number of Refugees. Initially it was proposed to settle 10 families over a 12 month period. The Togolese Project, under DIAC's International Humanitarian Settlement Support (IHSS) program, has very successfully resettled 13 families over a 3 year period, with the tremendous support of AMES, the Central Highlands Regional Settlement Planning Committee (CHRSPC) and Ballarat Regional Settlement Support Network (RSSN). The latter group has been outstanding with the practical and material levels of assistance that have been provided to each family.

BRMC is also most appreciative of the excellent co-operation and material aid from the Office of Housing, Centrelink, Ballarat Real Estate firms, Ballarat Community Health Centre, Ballarat Health Services, St Vincent de Paul, the Salvation Army, Central Church of Christ and many other local Churches; for their invaluable contributions and support to our Refugee families.

As well as assisting the Togolese Community, BRMC has obviously had a key role in supporting our Sudanese Communities and other families/individuals, under the Settlement Grants Project (SGP). Again, a significant grant from DIAC has been critical for case management, settlement services and community development, over an extended 3-5 year period. The terrific support by our Migrant Mentors plus the Volunteer Tutors, has been invaluable in the settlement process for our 'New Arrivals'. Furthermore, such wonderful

individual contributions, generous assistance and ongoing support reinforces the importance of the community education development role of BRMC and enhances Ballarat's recognition as a welcoming community.

At long last, the transformation of the former historic Golden Point Primary School into a "Community Centre/Hub" – or "Cultural and Learning Centre" has now been completed. The Golden Point Consortium that is composed of Mt Clear College, U3A and BRMC has worked tirelessly with the excellent support of BEST Community Development, to achieve the "Golden Point Cultural and Learning Environment" (GPLACE) which has now been very successfully operating for almost a year.

The Consortium is also most appreciative of the terrific contributions of the Victorian Government, the City of Ballarat, Greg Walsh Constructions and so on for their invaluable support. Also, the work of Mr Ron Pickford, Work for the Dole crews, plus Federal Government funding and many other local organisations have all been integral to this wonderful outcome.

A new development and very successful initiative this year has been the introduction and launch of our Public Internet Access Program (PIAP) at BRMC. Funded for a two year period by a grant from VICNET, the two computers plus printer are valuable additions to the services provided to our CALD communities, and the general public.

Some other important initiatives this year have included 'Workshops/Seminars on Good Governance of Community Organisations, and the new Australian Workplace Relations Act.

Another dimension of the work of BRMC has been the very active participation with our peak bodies. Thus, BRMC was invited to have representation on the Victorian Multicultural Commission (VMC) to contribute to statewide planning and policy development. Allied with this, monthly teleconferences with the other seven Regional Councils via ECCV have enabled us to lift the profile of BRMC. Representation at the Annual FECCA Conference this year at Shepparton is vitally important to network, gain new knowledge, insights and understandings, as well as seek 'best practices' for all BRMC's activities.

As in other years, BRMC has been very active in conjunction with our Cultural Groups and various community organisations in facilitating many different events and activities. There was terrific involvement in the Annual Begonia Festival Parade from the Indian, Filipina, Korean, Thai, Italian, Japanese, Sudanese, Togolese and Chinese communities, as well as a social gathering or 'party' at the VRI Hall. BRMC's Open Day at GPLACE, supported by the City of Ballarat as part of Cultural Diversity week, was a great success with over 170 people in attendance. Congratulations to the Anglican and Central Church of Christ for their activities, especially involving the African Communities as part of Refugee Week and Migrant Refugee Sunday. Then too, the International Women's Night was another highlight, with a sumptuous Chinese Banquet at the Inn of Khong, as part of Harmony Week. We anticipate ongoing support for our Annual Film night and the screening of 'Hope'. This excellent film about the tragic SIEV X disaster as revealed by Ms Amal Basry is an inspirational story to all Australians.

BRMC's Gala Ball and Black Tie Night at the Mining Exchange was a great success with over 160 people supporting this major fundraising event. Congratulations and many thanks to Ms G. Vagg and her small subcommittee on the enormous amount of work in organising this very special event.

BRMC with the support of the City of Ballarat, actively participated in both the Premier's Gala Multicultural Night, plus the enormous Harmony March in Melbourne. Two contrasting activities that brought cultural groups together in unity to celebrate our amazing cultural diversity and multiculturalism, throughout Victoria.

BRMC was pleased to join with NESBlinks to highlight International Harmony Day at their multicultural evening at Cooinda Community Centre, again this year. We have also supported various Cultural Associations with their annual celebrations including the Chinese New Year, Filipina Independence Day, Indian Independence Day, Africa Day, Italian Film Festival, Diwali Festival of Lights, Togolese Dance Troupe and the Ballarat Interfaith Groups' Activities and so on.

Congratulations to all Cultural Groups on the excellent array of functions and activities that enrich the Ballarat Community by celebrating our cultural diversity. Then too, to all the Cultural Associations who support their array of members; and especially our older migrant communities.

As well as these examples, the terrific contributions by all the other Associations for their members, like the Ballarat Italian Association, the Polish Seniors, Croatian and German-Austrian Association and the Circolo Pensionati Italiani Ballarat, etc are all vital to the wellbeing of our older established migrant communities.

Congratulations also to the City of Ballarat on the appointment of the Cultural Diversity Officer, Ms Frances Salenga. The MARS Strategy will be linked directly to the Cultural Diversity Strategy, plus be integral to the Multicultural Ambassador program. The vision of Ballarat as an "Intercultural City" must be applauded and it will recognise our diverse, cosmopolitan population and historical legacy; from the gold mining era of the 1850's to the present time.

As always, BRMC's Project Co-ordinators have worked tirelessly to support our migrant communities and deliver an array of culturally rich programs. The Committee of Management therefore recognises the excellent work of our dedicated and hardworking staff in delivering a range of culturally sensitive services and programs to assist all of our clients who have established their homes in Ballarat.

BRMC Executive has worked hard to stabilise our staff with the employment of a dedicated and hard working Coordinator/Administrator. We have also supported the Coordinator with two part time Admin Assistants in the 'front office'. All of this augers well for the future of BRMC and its clients, as well as the diverse projects and services it provides, to the wider community.

We also recognise the utmost importance of all of our strategic partners, along with all our great volunteers, in assisting and complementing the work of BRMC and thereby supporting a diverse range of settlement services and ESL programs, throughout the region.

Now, although there are many achievements that should be recognised; there are also a number of challenges that need to be addressed. Significant changes to the Committee of Management, previous staffing and turn-over of volunteers, limited funding and increasing demands on BRMC's scarce resources all present different but equally important challenges.

BRMC has presented these 'Key Issues' to the Ministerial Secretary, Hon. Laurie Ferguson, and various DIAC managers, as well as to the CEO of Ballarat City Council (Mr Anthony Schinck), VMC Chairperson Mr George Lekakis and local politicians. We desperately need a full time Co-ordinator/Administrator, more Settlement Services (SGP funding), greater support for our ESL/VTP or 'Special English Programs', and the like. BRMC also needs to consolidate its existing organisational framework and structures. Thus, BRMC is constantly seeking additional expertise and support to enhance the overall effectiveness of its policies and operations.

Indeed, any small organisation faces similar challenges and dilemmas to become even more robust and resilient. Only by forming strong alliances and strategic partnerships, and working in a supportive and collaborative manner can we optimize our outcomes. Another new challenge will be to ensure that GPLACE becomes a thriving 'Community-Hub' for all cultural groups and the wider Ballarat Community. More combined cultural events and activities will enrich multiculturalism throughout the region, and thereby add greater understanding and mutual respect for our diverse cultures, as well as enhance the harmony and wellbeing of all our people.

Consequently, although much has been achieved, there is still a great deal to be accomplished. Be sure to read carefully all the other reports that are included herewith and note the terrific array of great contributions being made at all levels to assist our older established migrants as well as our 'Recent Arrivals', to integrate into the broader community.

As well as this, please consider how you might contribute to the diverse and far ranging programs and activities that are facilitated by BRMC, as well as the dynamic Cultural Associations. As we embrace Globalisation, we all need to strive to assist all our migrants and thereby contribute to making Ballarat an even better place to live and nurture our children. For there is little doubt that as more migrants come to the region, BRMC will continue to provide a pivotal and critical leadership role in settling all our 'New Arrivals' and emerging communities more successfully.

I therefore wish to conclude by recognising and thanking everyone who has contributed to the overall success of another extremely busy year. Furthermore, with the range of ever increasing challenges and demands, everyone can rest assured that BRMC will continue to assist and advocate on behalf of all migrant communities, throughout the wider region in an attempt to proactively achieve the best possible outcomes for all our clients.

Frank Williams,
Chair of BRMC.

TREASURER'S REPORT

2008-09 was another very successful fiscal year for BRMC. Following various recommendations from our Auditors (Kearney & Crowe), Busy Book Keeping was contracted to provide all MYOB entries, plus financial reports for BRMC. The whole financial situation was revised and the Finance Subcommittee agreed to a range of important changes to the organisation's financial records.

As a result, total current assets of \$360,836 were recorded at BRMC as at 30 June 2009. At the same time, total liabilities of \$174,959 were noted resulting in total net assets of \$185,877, an increase of \$500 on the prior year. Included in the liabilities were relocation expenses to GPLACE, an \$8,500 loss for SGP, \$7,000 for Administration Staff from 'Reserves' and DHS Advance Deposits of \$120,790 which need to be allocated to HACC Programs as part of agreed funding arrangements. Overall after accounting for all expenses and capital items we achieved a \$540 operating surplus.

There has also been a considerable increase in income with additional Grants from DHS and a new Grant for \$121,500 for 2 years from DOHA. However, these Grants are committed along with the PIAP Grant of \$7,500 for designated projects for 2009-10.

Overall, 2008-09 was an extremely busy fiscal year as there has been a complete review of all our operations. The Committee of Management is both thankful and appreciative of the skill and expertise of Ms Jenny Boag (Accountant/Busy Bookkeeping) and Mr Shigekazu Yamawaki for the enormous amount of work that has been dedicated to reviewing and updating all aspects of BRMC's financial reporting, plus its records and operations.

BRMC has progressively implemented Program Budgeting to devolve some responsibility to our Project Coordinators and add to the overall accountability of the organisation.

BRMC has also been more innovative in relation to strategic partnerships with Direct Recruitment and BEST Community Development and so on with some employment initiatives and sponsorship, etc. We will also look at some Short Term Deposits to provide some additional income to support our Admin-Assistants and thus the more effective operation of BRMC.

Audited statements have been remitted to both our major funding agencies in DHS and DIAC. Timely financial acquittals have also been remitted to VMC and other Grant agencies, as required.

All members are thus assured of the vastly improved financial system now operating at BRMC, plus the timely payment of all creditors and suppliers.

Therefore, with the relatively large cash reserves in our Operating Account, plus the new Grants and the required commitment of funds to specific projects, Members are assured of BRMC's financial stability and viability in the coming years.

Assistant Treasurer,
Mr Giancarlo Faustini



BRMC Coordinator's Report

Shigekazu Yamawaki

As Coordinator / Administrator in charge of the overall administrative duties at BRMC, one of my most important responsibilities is to create a working environment where all the paid staff and volunteers can work happily and comfortably. Bearing this in mind, I have been especially focusing on creating a sense of “working together as a team” and doing whatever I believe is important including tending to matters outside of my job description, in order to carry out the daily activities of BRMC since I commenced working at BRMC in December 2008.

In this organisation, no one can work by themselves. No one could achieve without receiving support from others. I am proud that everyone in the office helps each other and works in harmony. Our morale is high.

In order to run an organisation effectively and efficiently, it is crucial to have solid and robust fundamental systems. They include accounting and human resources management (HRM). BRMC has been very fortunate to have been receiving invaluable support (technically and mentally) from Mrs. Jenny Boag, our outsourced bookkeeper and HRM specialist. Jenny has thoroughly revamped our bookkeeping and accounting systems to best suit the current circumstances of BRMC. She is now engaged in the improvement of our HRM system. Without her assiduous work ethic, extreme dedication, and professionalism exerted behind the scenes, we could not have set up the systems we currently possess. However, the improvement is an ongoing and a never-ending process. We are striving for improvement at all times. We must keep this momentum.

Since moving to Golden Point Learning & Cultural Environment (G Place), our opportunities and the occasions to interact with people from the wider Ballarat community has increased. I feel that it is now time to review and re-define once again our vision (direction), mission and objectives based on what is expected of BRMC in the community. We have to maintain, reinforce and strengthen our relationships with all the stakeholders. As a first step, we have distributed our questionnaire asking stakeholders for their comments on BRMC. I have also submitted a report analysing BRMC's current situation hoping that it would be used as a springboard to introduce a strategic management system into the organisation.

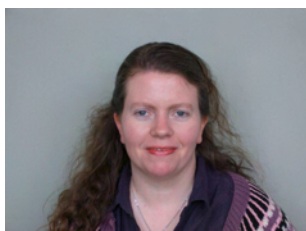
BRMC has grown over the past 10 years and will continue to evolve into the future. BRMC is endowed with people with various backgrounds and talents, which is the organisation's core competency. In order for BRMC to make the most of our resources, I propose that BRMC restructure the make-up of its organisation, which would enable it to:

1. Meet the diversified needs and requirements of all the stakeholders.
2. Manage the organisation in a professional manner as well as being accessible to the community.
3. Allow each person to develop their full potential, nurture their ideas and put them into practice promptly.

By incorporating the profound knowledge and valuable networks the long-standing members of BRMC have acquired and created, and the ideas and expertise of new members and staff, I believe that BRMC has immeasurable potential to positively grow into the future. All the staff of BRMC would like to work in unity with the executive members moving forward with common goals. I am very positive about the likelihood of this occurring.



The Administration Team & its activities



Kathryn Miller



Kim Romeo

Both Kathryn and Kim have been invaluable in developing the administration systems of BRMC over the last year. Just how they have contributed should be detailed.

Kathryn, in particular, has developed BRMC's first Office Procedures manual, updated the Volunteer Manual and a "Settlement Services Guide to Ballarat" manual in both French and English. She also assisted with the second edition of BRMC's Newsletter for 2009, which has since been made available online via BRMC's website. She has been supervising and training the reception volunteers, which is quite a long process, as they are from many different nationalities and varying abilities, from absolute beginners to intermediate and, since July, BRMC has recruited 5 new reception volunteers who on average do one ½ day shift per week. They are: Madhu from Fiji, Thoai from Vietnam, John from Sudan, Kate (Australian studying at Ballarat Uni) Kook from Thailand. Kathryn also organized BRMC's first admin Volunteer Training 3 hour workshop on September 22, for all new and existing volunteers. Approximately 14 people attended and Litsa delivered the training on the subject of Confidentiality. Another workshop is planned on Cultural Awareness, hopefully for October, as well as tentative plans to visit Footscray Market by minibus one Saturday morning for a practical Cultural Awareness excursion for both Settlement staff and volunteers.

Kim Romeo has also played a crucial role in the daily running of BRMC's administration such as assisting with revising office routines, sending out large amounts of emails and communication to staff and members, not to mention the generic day to day duties required while being at the reception desk. She has also been helping Judy Brumby to develop an effective database to enable the Volunteer Tutor program to run more smoothly and has been recording statistical data for Litsa Chung's SGP program. Kim also has been invaluable in her assistance with BRMC's grant applications by helping with word processing them into a professional format. She has also been word processing BRMC's newsletter bi-monthly. Kim's other contributions have been to assist with the Public Internet Access Program (PIAP) that has been running at the Golden Point premises this year, as well as the Multicultural Tucker program as required. What should be acknowledged here for both Kathryn and Kim is

the huge amount of time they have been committing over the year to various Executive members in enabling the members' activities to run as smoothly as possible. In addition, BRMC has two students, Jessica Bellman and Kate Bellman, who are Visual Arts students at University of Ballarat continuing with the construction of BRMC's website during their semester breaks. It should be noted that Jessica Bellman won the DSG Student Design Competition for 2009.



Program Coordinators: Virgie Hocking, Judy Brumby, Jason Shorter & Litsa Chung





BRMC HACC (Home and Community Care) Services Report

Jason Shorter

BRMC HACC Cultural Diversity Project Coordinator

BRMC plays a very important role in the lives of Ballarat's aging, culturally diverse community and in the lives of culturally diverse people across the Grampians region. This role is played out in two very distinct ways: Firstly by providing services within Ballarat; services like the Multicultural Tucker Program, the Friendly Visiting program and the Telelink program. Secondly, and less visibly, we provide assistance to agencies throughout the Grampians region in creating and implementing their Cultural Action Plans. This helps to ensure that people from diverse cultural and linguistic throughout the region have access to culturally sensitive services.

Having only been in the position since March of this year, much of my time and energy has been invested in learning my role, learning about BRMC, different ethnic communities in Ballarat as well as learning about agencies throughout the region. I feel very privileged to have commenced work with the staff of BRMC and the volunteers that support the programs we provide; they are two wonderful groups of people who display great professionalism and dedication.

In spite of the shortness of the time I have spent here, I do feel that I have achieved much and that I am well on the way to making my own unique contribution to BRMC.

I am very pleased with the progress of the Multicultural Tucker program on many fronts:

- The **“Volunteer Day”** held on the 23rd of July of this year. Multicultural Tucker simply wouldn't happen without our volunteers and it is becoming widely accepted that volunteer acknowledgement is vital. “Volunteer Day” provided a very important opportunity for volunteers to talk about why they volunteer; to receive thanks and acknowledgement for their efforts and to bond together as a team. I am happy to report that since “Volunteer Day” working relationships between team members have improved and that we have become stronger as a team. I look forward to continuing this work of acknowledging and supporting our volunteers.
- We have a new **Volunteer policy** that is more relevant to the current team, includes a comprehensive grievance procedure, well defined roles and a set of ground rules endorsed by the volunteers themselves. The policy has benefited from contributions from the volunteers themselves.
- The Multicultural Tucker team is growing both in numbers and cohesion. Our team is made up of members from many different backgrounds including: Polish, Chinese, Ukrainian, Serbian, Dutch, German, Vietnamese and Filipino. We have members of different age groups and have recently re-engaged the involvement of the Mount Clear

students. Consultation has been a key factor in our cohesion; volunteers are consulted about their roles and new people entering the program. Recently, special care was taken for a group of us (current members of the Multicultural Tucker team) to speak with the Mount Clear Students to explain the nature of our program and how we work so they have a greater appreciation of what Multicultural Tucker is and how they are contributing.

- Reporting on the MCT program has increased greatly, alerting the Department of Health to the demand for our services. When I commenced my role in March of this year BRMC only reported 59% of the total number of clients attending Multicultural Tucker (41 of 69 clients reported), this figure has risen to 87% in September of this year (63 of 72 clients reported). I aim to improve this reporting to above 90% in the near future.
- Occupational Health and Safety is being addressed. I have acquired resources on Emergency Action plans from the CFA and I have also acquired Material Safety Data sheets for all the chemicals used in the kitchen. I believe OHS is very important and plays an important part in legitimising our volunteer workforce and in ensuring their safety.
- Volunteer recruitment will be improving now that the “Crimcheck” system is up and running. This will enable volunteers not only for the MCT but for all programs in BRMC to be processed much faster and at much less inconvenience to the volunteers themselves.

In relation to my role in assisting agencies throughout Grampians regions with their CAPS, my work has been a little less straight forward; this has been in part due to the changes that the Department of Health (formerly the Department of Human Services) has been going through with regards to its policy on Cultural Action plans. However I have still managed to remain proactive in this role by:

- Meeting with representatives of agencies from across the region.
- Reading through the previous years’ CAPS. Thus familiarising myself both with the issues faced by these agencies and some of the innovative strategies they employ in the provision of services to people from Culturally and Linguistically diverse backgrounds.
- Networking with state-wide Equity and Access workers, arranging to attend cultural training sessions throughout the state. I am presently working on developing my own set of resources for training Cultural Awareness and believe that the training I am currently undertaking will come to benefit the Grampians region as a whole.
- I have done some work with BRMC’s executive committee on recognising what constitutes cultural action and on highlighting the committee’s potential role within a Cultural Action Plan.

Part of my role is the supervision of my co-worker Virgie Hocking. I am very happy with the progress she has been making during the time I have been here, for example:

- The development of the Hepburn-Moorabool Multicultural Lunch program: Thanks to Virgie’s hard work we now have carried out one luncheon and planned a further five for the ’09-’10 financial year. These lunches provide important social support for aged people from diverse cultural backgrounds throughout the Hepburn and Moorabool shires, cutting down on the social isolation experienced by these people. We have also been successful in engaging the services of Ballarat and Daylesford performing artists to add vibrancy and increase community involvement in the lunches. This activity also provides an important opportunity for BRMC to work with other HACC teams in the Central Highlands region.
- The establishment of a Filipino Telelink group in Ballarat.

- The continuing maintenance of the Friendly Visiting Service.

Apart from the above matters I also feel it is important to mention that both Virgie and myself are strengthening ties with the Volunteer Resource Centre here in Ballarat which I believe will only serve to benefit BRMC (being an organisation that depends heavily on volunteers in the undertaking of its programs). Earlier this year, I organised the window display at the Volunteer Resource Centre.

To date I have really enjoyed working here at BRMC and I look forward to continuing my work here and improving on it.



SETTLEMENT GRANTS PROGRAM (SGP) & MENTOR PROGRAM REPORT

Litsa Chung
Case Coordinator

In **2008-2009** the Settlement Grants program carried out duties of effective case coordination and information and referral services for Humanitarian Entrants and/or other eligible clients.

This program also conducted information workshops/training to enable client groups to participate in the wider Australian community by developing a shared purpose and promoting a sense of identity and belonging, developing partnership initiatives with mainstream community & government organisations to improve services, maintaining positive working relationships with relevant Service Providers and agencies to ensure that eligible clients receive the highest standard of service. I also recruited, trained, and supervised volunteers/mentors who supported eligible client groups.

Throughout the year, clients from Sudan, Togo, India, Iran, Iraq, Sri Lanka, China, the Philippines, Fiji and Greece were assisted by the program. The clients who sought help from the program for settlement were holders of Refugee visas, Global Special Humanitarian visas, Spouse visas, Permanent visas and Skilled Migration visas.

Humanitarian Visa holder's settlement needs were much greater than the other categories of visa holder but the issues of settlement needs had no differences within both categories. Accommodation, Migration, Language, Legal, Employment, Health, Childcare, Education, Sporting activities, Community networks etc are the major needs that were addressed through the program. The majority of clients were further assisted by referrals to NESB LINKS-Migrant Women's Support Group, NESB LINKS-Play Group, the BRMC English classes and Home Tutoring Program, other ethno specific organisations, namely; the Ballarat Chinese Association, Iranian, Indian, Filipino, African and Ballarat Sudanese Association.

Five new volunteer mentors have successfully completed the training and joined the mentor team. They have now linked with clients to provide further assistance. The training program included modules on communication skills, local services and referrals, identifying "*at risk*" clients, importance of Confidentiality & Privacy laws, and Cross Cultural training. The majority of trained volunteer mentors are themselves bilingual who are familiar with the

migration experience and transitional phase of settling into a new community. On an average basis a volunteer Mentor will contribute between 2-6 hours a week to the program. Volunteer mentors contributed considerable out of hour's time raising the profile of the program in the region as well as at festivals and events.

In conjunction with BRMC (RSSN) Refugee Support Service Network, we have provided monthly information workshops for all refugees, particularly from African countries, to participate and find out information relating to settlement issues in the region. The workshop topics addressed issues identified by service providers and the new emerging communities themselves. Last year's workshops were – **Driving & Road rules (6 sessions) - Health and children's Road Safety (2 Sessions) - Accommodation, Human Rights Consultation information forum - Job Qualification Assessment &- Free Internet Training for Beginners (2 sessions).** Topics are selected from requests made from the community itself and the feedback received was positive. BRMC through this coordination system has helped Refugees and Humanitarian settlers to the area soon after their arrived, to reduce anxiety and quickly rebuild their lives. Our main focus is to help them become self-sufficient and contribute to Australian society as soon as they are able. This gives them self confidence and the basic skills needed to build a new life in a new country. **Information on Refugee settlement in Ballarat & Cultural awareness was delivered to SMB Community /Welfare students, ACU Students and SMB Nursing students.** Community forums and cultural awareness delivery are very important. It helps the community grow and be aware, especially with issues related to the new emerging communities.

Family reunion – As a result of the SGP support and monthly free outreach immigration service to BRMC provided by Diversitat Geelong, a Togolese mother who was separated from her children due to the war was reunited with them in Australia after many years of separation and anxiety. The children have now met their sibling for the first time. Another Togolese family has now been reunited - a father who was separated from his 2 daughters due to the war since they were small. His daughters are now adults and both have a child each. In the meantime the father remarried and has a ten year old son who met his sisters, his nephew and niece for the first time.

Being the Case Coordinator of this program was very challenging and demanding but the job satisfaction received throughout the year compensated for the hard work put in to the program.

I would also like to acknowledge the hard work and dedication that all volunteer mentors have contributed towards the settlement program. It has been a pleasure working with all of you. Thankyou.



Volunteer Mentor Georgina Christofi keeping children engaged in activities while their parents are focusing on the information workshop.



Members of the African community participating in the information work shop



**SOCIAL SUPPORT/
TELELINK PROGRAM REPORT**
Virgie Hocking

The aims of the program are to help minimize the isolation for people who are of culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds and are aged or have disabilities

The Telelink program has been running since 2003. In the past we had the Dutch Telelink group running for quite sometime. Unfortunately most of the Dutch members have become older and frail and are now living in the residential home. This leaves us only one person who is still interested in participating in the Dutch Telelink program. To ensure that this person is supported, the coordinator has linked the client to the Dutch Care program, and they are now enjoying that.

The German client continues the link up with the German Telelink in Bendigo.

The program received a number of referrals and inquiries from the Grampians Health Services, Direct 2 Care, and City of Bendigo for Spanish, Sri Lankan and Polish clients who could benefit from the program. At present, there are no Spanish, Sri Lankan or Polish Telelink services running in Central Highlands region. The clients have been linked to other service providers in different areas that are running the Spanish, Sri Lankan or Polish Telelinks.

The program now has a Filipino Telelink group running in Ballarat every fortnight. The group is going well and all members enjoy the telephone conversation. The group plan their topics to discuss every week and are organizing a guest speaker.

In the **Friendly Visiting Program**, the Italian and Chinese clients have been visited regularly by the volunteer visitors and are going well. Our volunteers are doing a tremendous job and have made a big impact on our clients. The clients' well being has improved a lot.

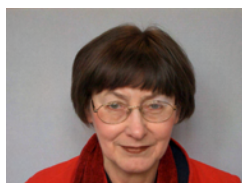
The program received a number of referrals from Aged Care and Ballarat Health services for a number of clients from Croatian, Dutch, Filipino and Italian backgrounds. The coordinator is on the process of getting a volunteer visitor for the Hungarian and the Italian clients. The members of the Filipino community in Ballarat have been visiting the Filipino client regularly.

Following the **European Morning Tea** run at Daylesford last year, the Social Support/Telelink Coordinator continued to run a Multicultural Social Support Program in Hepburn and Moorabool shires for people who are aged, have a disability and are culturally isolated. The program is now named "Hepburn /Moorabool Multicultural Program" and is run in conjunction with the Hepburn Shire, Moorabool Shire and Centacare. The aim of the program is to assist aged or disabled people who are of culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds to minimize the isolation and loneliness of living in isolated areas in Hepburn and Moorabool Shire. The program commenced with a barbecue lunch in April this year at the Daylesford Activity Centre where the clients were entertained by Filipino Dancers with a cultural dance presentation where everyone had a great time and enjoyed the day. The

program has run four functions already this year and the number of attendees is increasing. There will be another function running on December. The program will be run six times per year.

The Social Support/Telelink coordinator continued to assist Centacare in running the social support bus trips at least five times each year.

The coordinator also continues to provide assistance to Jason Shorter – HACC BRMC Cultural Diversity Project Coordinator in running the Multicultural Tucker program.



**CENTRAL HIGHLANDS
VOLUNTEER TUTOR PROGRAM (VTP)**

**Judy Brumby
Coordinator**

BRMC's Tutor Program is open to all our migrants who need help with English language. Individual tutoring is a very important support for many of our migrants and provides a unique opportunity to focus on their specific needs and goals, even though they may be attending formal classes with other providers. During the year 2008 to 2009, over 100 clients received help for a variety of needs including language for everyday settlement needs, help with English for trade courses and workplace communication, assistance with study in other courses, preparation for language tests for qualification requirements, permanent residency and citizenship. English language proficiency of our clients at entry to the program varies from beginner stage to reasonable fluency.

The program also provides a unique and interesting volunteering experience for our tutors, through the initial training provided, ongoing English teaching workshops, access to our TESOL library, ongoing support and meetings with the coordinator and each other, and of course the first hand experience with our clients from other cultures also the opportunity to become involved in various multicultural social events.

Currently, there are over 50 active tutors providing assistance, usually working in the clients' homes, or in BRMC's classes. Twenty new tutors were recruited during the year, 10 of which are about to complete our Tutor Training Course, and are currently being placed with our migrant clients. As new tutors come, some inevitably go as their personal circumstances change, so that tutor numbers have fluctuated around 50 during the last year. One of our very valued tutors, Isabel Gribble, who has been with us since the program began in 2002, will be having a break next year, however the class will continue with another of our very capable and experienced tutors. We are very indebted to Isabel for her dedication in providing an excellent Conversation Class that provides a casual yet invaluable service for small group work and communication (along with her individual tutoring assignments over the years). BRMC takes this opportunity to thank Isabel and wish her well. We are also indebted to Benard Bradbury, who continues to conduct a very successful Reading and Writing course for intermediate students.

Tutor Program Statistics as at October 2009

Our tutors continue to support our existing African community and newcomers arriving in Ballarat, many of whom are part of the Settlement Grants Program (SGP), or arrive under the Department of Immigration Integrated Humanitarian Settlement Strategy (IHSS) program. Close liaison with the members of the Settlement team - Ms Litsa Chung and James Abraham - enables the program to have closer understanding of the clients' needs.

Gender Distribution:

Females 90 % Males 10 %

Countries of Origin:

Africa: Sudan, Ethiopia & Kenya 30% Togo 25% China 15% India, Bangladesh & Pakistan 3% Japan 6% Korea 2% Vietnam 8% Cambodia 1% Thailand 5% Middle East 5%

Partnership & Funding:

The Volunteer Tutor Program is conducted in partnership with Adult Multicultural Education Services (AMES), who administer the VTP in Victoria. The tutors are trained by the Coordinator in a course designed by AMES, which is one unit of Certificate IV in Training and Assessment, namely 'Facilitate Individual Learning'.

The program receives some funding from AMES (for a limited number of clients who are eligible for Department of Immigration assistance). Other current funding is provided by the VMC grant received by BRMC.

Acknowledgements

It is very satisfying to have a group of very dedicated people with whom we are able to provide this invaluable service. Thanks are extended to all who have helped with the program: the tutors who have worked so diligently during the year with one or more of our migrants, the class tutors, and those who have given voluntary assistance in administration work. The work of all our tutors is very much appreciated, and enables the VTP to provide a significant service, both by providing help with English and by reaching out in friendship to many of our newcomers.



VTP Program Coordinator, Judy Brumby, with some of her volunteer tutors



**Integrated Humanitarian
Settlement Strategy (IHSS)**
James Abraham

The aims of the IHSS project are to assist recently arrived migrants, providing one to one support and referral. I also provide clients with cross-cultural training, mentoring and target the needs of the clients.

In the beginning of 2009 there were no clients, but since May I have been working with five IHSS clients and we are looking forwards to having more clients in the program.

Two families were reunited with their children after 15 years due to the war in the Togo. Both Litsa and I are working together with families to bring them together their loved ones.

I am further assisting the majority of these referred many of them to SMB English classes and the Volunteer Tutor Program at BRMC. All clients were also referred to ethno specific organizations, such as the Ballarat African Association, Ballarat Togolese Association and other communities.

The role of IHSS is to support the clients to be independent and take responsibility, e.g. after being in Ballarat for 40 days one of the clients got his learner's permit.

One of my clients has been sponsored by members of the Australian community since their arrival and have been staying with their sponsors.

The key issues affecting my clients are lack of job opportunities, lack of child care and lack of housing options.

BRMC is looking forward to further assisting our IHSS clients' needs and maintaining a good relationship with them. We also wish to build a good relationship with other service providers. I would like to express a big thank you to all service providers who support the IHSS program by giving of their time and talents so generously. I look forward to a productive year ahead.



BRMC Fundraising Activities

Georgina Vagg

Women's Officer & Fundraising Coordinator

On behalf of BRMC, it gives me great pleasure as your Women's Officer and Fundraising Co-ordinator to report on our activities for 2009. The last few months have been very busy attending several functions and meeting of various Organisations.

International Womens Day

In March, International Women's Day was held at the Inn of Khong, with Guest Speakers Miss Ashlea Vagg on Gallipoli and Mrs Myrna Dewar on her life experiences. The evening was huge and very successful event with wonderful food and lovely decorated tables. I was proud and I am looking forward to organising next year's event. Success of the first International Women's Day in 1911 around the world exceeded all expectations. Meetings were organised everywhere in small towns. The Village Halls were packed so full that male workers were asked to give up their places for women, Men stayed home with their children for a change and their wives went to meetings. So, make a difference! Think Globally and act Locally. Make every day International Women's Day and do your bit to ensure the future for girls/women is bright, equal soft and rewarding.

Gala Ball

After many hard months of organising our first Major Fundraiser "Black Tie Gala Ball", it was such a beautiful and successful evening. The Mining Exchange was in its glory, looked fantastic- beautifully decorated tables, spiral Candles, Flower Centres by 'Stems', great huge Candle Stand, lighting adding to the Glamour of the event. Local Entertainment was provided by children and music by the University Highland Band- so breathtaking. Mr Trevor Petrie was great as our Auctioneer. Our Special Guests were Hon Laurie Fergusson from Canberra; representatives from FECCA and DIAC; Mr Michael Van Vliet, VMC; Commissioner Elizabeth Drowd, VMC, The Mayor Judy Verlin; CEO Anthony Schink; Councillors Samantha McIntosh; Cheryl Broomfield and Guests; Ms Catherine King MP; Mr Geoff Howard MLA and Di Howard. Grateful thanks to Athalie and Luigi Bazzani and to everyone who has attended. My heartfelt thanks to David Vendy, Cr. Craig Fletcher and Mr Frank Williams for their great help. Also to Theresa and Roman, Helena, Kim, Rosie Vagg for their hard work to make the tables look stunning. For all the help in the office, I thank Kim, Dave,

Kathryn and Shiggy, I love you all. To my sponsors and the great people who donated for auctions, I am so grateful. May I thank you all for coming.

Film Night

Our Film Night “HOPE”- to be held on 13th November at the Brewery Theatre, SMB, will be exciting, as this will a beautiful film, put on by Scrine Films Brisbane. The Director will be attending and is followed by a lovely supper.

Recipe Book

Due to my accident, the Recipe Book was put back several weeks, but now on track and in its final stages – due to go to print shortly- very exciting.

To all my great friends, I thank you all. I have always been proud and dedicated to BRMC and hope I can continue to work with you again



Gala Ball: Laurie Ferguson MP, Georgina Vagg & Catherine King MLA



George Lekakis & Georgina Vagg