

Ballarat Regional Multicultural Council (BRMC)

Helping regional seniors from the CALD communities access My Aged Care services in 2018



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Teresa Azzopardi's parents migrated to Australia from Malta in the 1950s. Growing up in the suburbs of Melbourne with a large European family, her childhood was filled with love, laughter and lots of delicious food. As a child,

her favourite way to spend family gatherings was sitting on the lap of one of her many aunts' listening to stories of their journey to the "lucky country".

Teresa is an aged care professional with 8 years' experience in the community services sector. She has been a member of staff at BRMC Senior Services for two years. She describes her role at BRMC as "truly my dream job, as I have always had a passion for working with seniors and a deep interest in migrants and their stories".

Theresa sees her role as an opportunity to make a real difference in the lives of BRMC CALD seniors, supporting them to have the best quality of life as they age. Her personal goal is to ensure each senior feels supported through their journey to the end of life.

BRMC is the peak multicultural agency in the Central Highlands Region. Our members include 24 Cultural

Associations/Groups and numerous individual and associate members affiliated with BRMC.

Our mission is to work in partnership with other community organisations, Cultural Associations and members to actively promote multiculturalism, cultural diversity and the wellbeing of all migrant communities throughout the Region.

BRMC Senior Services

BRMC is funded by the federal government under the Commonwealth Home Support Programme to provide Social Support to seniors who are socially isolated and from a culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) background. We currently have 130 consumers that are actively attending, or other ways involved in our services including Multicultural Tucker (MCT), Social Hub, Health and Wellbeing Days, Bus Trips, Home Visiting and Telelink services.

MCT has our largest number of attendees with an average of 80 consumers attending each month. This service has been running for 15 years now and is enjoyed by many consumers from the Ballarat community. MCT is held every second Wednesday of each month where we offer a three-course sit down meal featuring a different cultural cuisine each month. We offer live entertainment, a birthday cake for all consumers who have celebrated a birthday during that month and more importantly the opportunity for consumers to converse in their cultural language.



Filipino women at BRMC Multicultural Tucker



Maltese client at the BRMC Multicultural Tucker

In April this year the Federal Government rolled out the new requirement that all CHSP funded services that have clients over the age of 65 must be registered and referred through My Aged Care to continue accessing these services at the subsidised rate.

BRMC Senior Services immediately recognised the need to develop a support plan to assist consumers to register, understand, and navigate the My Aged Care system.

To ensure the new requirement was delivered to consumers with accuracy and avoid creating concern and uncertainty, BRMC Senior Services developed a **My Aged Care Champions Committee**. The committee is made up of trusted members of the community from diverse cultural groups including, Croatian, Serbian, Maltese, Filipino, Iranian, Polish, Indian, and German. BRMC Senior Services worked in collaboration with the newly developed My Aged Care Champions Committee in successfully distributing the new requirement to all consumers.

BRMC Senior Services developed a My Aged care information pack that we distributed to all our clients with the assistance of our My Aged Care Champions. The information pack consisted of My Aged Care



Clients at Senior Services Health and Wellbeing Day in June 2018

information flyer, new client enrolment forms (which included information around My Aged Care registration, Home Care Packages, and Service provider details) this information is essential in establishing consumer eligibility.

Our My Aged Care Champions were essential in releasing the new government requirement to our consumers. We continue to collaborate with our My Aged Care Champions meeting every six weeks to discuss the progress of the task and any new processes that may help to navigate the system more effectively.

The My Aged Care Government requirement is proving to be challenging for our consumers in both understanding and navigating the system. We are working with consumers on a one-on-one basis assisting consumer to register on My Aged Care and access services. This process takes approximately one hour per client and is currently unfunded.

It is our observation that seniors, particularly CALD backgrounds, are left vulnerable with the new My Aged Care system. BRMC Senior Services is determined and committed to ensure consumers receive aged care services they require to assist them to live independently for as long as possible and enjoy a rich quality of life.

For more information contact Teresa Azzopardi, Senior Services Coordinator, Ballarat Regional Multicultural Council Inc. on 03 53 830 613, teresa@brmc.org.au or www.brmc.org.au



My Aged care Champions meeting