WHERE DO I GO WHEN…?

A COMMUNITY SERVICE GUIDE FOR THE NORTHERN SUBURBS OF MELBOURNE
INTRODUCTION

WHERE DO I GO WHEN...

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It was developed by the Centre for Culture, Ethnicity and Health (CEH) with funding from the Victorian Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS).

The Centre for Culture, Ethnicity and Health aims to improve the health and wellbeing of people from refugee and migrant backgrounds. We do this by working with services in health, community and local government to help improve the way they engage with their clients from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

The Victorian Department of Health and Human Services works to achieve the best health, wellbeing and safety for all Victorians so that they can lead a life they value.

To develop this resource, we consulted men, women and young people from Syria and Iraq living in the northern suburbs of Melbourne. Thanks to Faten Alhelow and Hiba Sadoon for their help with the consultation.

We also interviewed staff in the following agencies:

AMES (Dallas)
Australia Syrian Charity Association
Department of Health and Human Services
Foundation House
Refugee Health Program
Whittlesea Community Connections
WHERE DO I GO WHEN…

I NEED TO FIND SOMEWHERE TO LIVE?

PRIVATE RENTAL IS THE MAIN OPTION, BUT NOT THE ONLY ONE. THE VICTORIAN DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES (DHHS) PROVIDES INFORMATION ON THE DIFFERENT HOUSING OPTIONS AVAILABLE IN VICTORIA.

RENTING
Tenants Victoria provides information on how to rent a property, how to end a lease, and resolving disputes with your landlord/landlady. The information is also available in Arabic.

COMMUNITY HOUSING
Community housing is a way to get secure, affordable, long-term rental housing managed by not-for-profit organisations for people on low incomes or with special needs. It is different from Public Housing.

You can find more information about community housing on the Victorian Department of Health and Human Services website.

PUBLIC HOUSING
Public housing is available for people on low incomes, but the waiting list can be long depending on where you want to live and how big your family is. Tenants Victoria has information and advice about public housing in English and in Arabic.

The Public Housing Language Link of the Victorian Department of Health and Human Services has pre-recorded information in 11 languages, including English and Arabic, about:

> How to apply for housing
> How much rent you will pay
> How to arrange repairs
> Help with renting privately

English phone line
(03) 9280 0799

Arabic phone line
(03) 9280 0790

Looking for translated information about housing? You can find it on Health Translations.
I NEED HELP WITH THE REAL ESTATE AGENT OR WITH MY LANDLORD?

إلى أين أذهب عندما أحتاج إلى مساعدة عند التعامل مع وكيل العقارات أو مالك العقار الخاص بي؟

LACK OF RENTAL HISTORY AND BEING ON CENTRELINK CAN MAKE IT DIFFICULT TO GET A RENTAL PROPERTY. YOU CAN GET HELP PAYING YOUR BOND, AND ARRANGE FOR CENTRELINK TO PAY YOUR RENT DIRECTLY TO THE REAL ESTATE AGENT.

HELP WITH YOUR BOND (DEPOSIT)

If you are looking for a property to rent, most landlords will ask you to pay a bond before you move in. A bond is a security deposit in case there is any damage to the property. The bond money is returned in full at the end of your lease if there has been no damage.

If you cannot afford to pay the bond, you may be able to borrow the money for the bond interest-free from the Victorian government under the Bond Loan Scheme program.

> Phone: 1300 650 172

CENTREPAY

Your rent can be automatically deducted from your Centrelink payments and go straight to the Real Estate agent. You can also use Centrepay for many types of bills - for example child care or electricity. You need to give permission to Centrelink to pay your bills.

Ask a Centrelink officer about Centrepay, or check on the Centrelink website.

You can listen to information about Centrepay in Arabic.

KNOWING YOUR RIGHTS

Tenants Victoria provides information on how to rent a property, how to end a lease, and how to resolve a dispute with your landlord. All the information is available in Arabic.

> Phone: 9416 2577

Consumer Affairs Victoria provides information to business, consumers, landlords and tenants about their rights and responsibilities. They offer translated information about your rights as a tenant, in English and in Arabic.

> Phone: 1300 55 81 81

Looking for translated information about housing? You can find it on Health Translations
WHERE DO I GO WHEN…

PEOPLE LIVING IN VICTORIA WHO ARE ON LOW INCOME OR EXPERIENCING A HARD TIME FINANCIALLY AND NEED HELP MEETING THE COST OF LIVING MAY BE ABLE TO PAY LESS THROUGH ‘CONCESSIONS’. CONCESSIONS ARE A REDUCTION IN THE COST OF ESSENTIAL SERVICES SUCH AS WATER, GAS, ELECTRICITY AND MUNICIPAL RATES.

The Victorian Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) website has information about all concessions accessible for people living in Victoria.

For help in your language call the Concessions Information Line on 1800 658 521 (toll free) and ask to speak to an interpreter.

I HAVE TROUBLE PAYING MY BILLS?

WHAT IS THE UTILITY GRANT SCHEME?

The Utility Relief Grant Scheme provides help to pay an electricity, gas or water bill that is overdue due to a temporary financial crisis. You need a Health Care Card from Centrelink to apply for the grant.

> Call the Concessions information line: 1800 658 521

If you do not have a Health Care Card, talk to a Centrelink Officer or check the information on the Centrelink website.

You can also watch a video in Arabic.
WHERE DO I GO WHEN…

I NEED TO FIND A SERVICE FOR A FAMILY MEMBER WITH A DISABILITY, OR WHO IS OVER THE AGE OF 65?

إلى أين أذهب عندما أحتاج العثور على خدمة لأحد أفراد الأسرة الذي يعاني من إعاقة، أو يزيد عمره عن 65 عامًا؟

**DISABILITY**
The National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) is the funding system for disability services in Hume and Whittlesea. If you have a disability, or are caring for someone who has a disability, you can check if they are eligible for NDIS funding by contacting the Brotherhood of St Laurence in Broadmeadows and South Morang:

> Phone: 1300 275 634
> or email NDIS.Info@bsl.org.au

Or you can contact the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) directly on: 1800 800 110.

You can find information about the NDIS in Arabic on the NDIS website.

If your child has a disability, there is funding for them under the Early Childhood Early Intervention (ECEI) program for children under 6 years old.

For more information contact the Brotherhood of St Laurence

> Phone: 1300 275 323

Hume and Whittlesea Councils offer services for people with disability. You can find them here:

**HUME**
> Call the Disability Services Intake Officer on 9205 2839

**WHITTLESEA**
> Call 9217 2028 or email access@whittlesea.vic.gov.au

**OLDER PEOPLE**
My Aged Care is the Australian Government website and phone line to help you find out what aged care services may be available to help you. This includes information in Arabic.

> Phone: 1800 200 422 (if you would like someone to call My Aged Care for you, you will need to give them your consent).

Local councils also provide support and care for older people, including help at home and activity groups.

**HUME**
> Call the Aged Services Intake Officer on 9205 2839.

**WHITTLESEA**
> Phone: 9217 2028 or email access@whittlesea.vic.gov.au

Looking for translated information about disability or aged care? You can find it on Health Translations.
RAISING CHILDREN IN A DIFFERENT CULTURE CAN BE DIFFICULT. MANY SERVICES ARE AVAILABLE IN VICTORIA TO HELP FAMILIES WITH SMALL CHILDREN AND TEENAGERS THROUGH MATERNAL CHILD HEALTH NURSES, KINDERGARTENS, CHILDCARE AND SCHOOLS.

General practitioners, community health centres and hospitals can also help. For more information about health care in Australia, you can check the Western Refugee Health Partnership Pocket Guide for New Arrivals (available in English and Arabic).

Having a baby in Victoria is a website providing advice and information about services available to help parents prepare for having a baby in Victoria.

Department of Education and Training - Early Childhood - this website includes resources on childhood learning, development, health and wellbeing, and kindergarten.

Beyond Blue is a non-government organisation that provides information and support about mental health. Their Healthy Families website gives information to help parents to support the young people in their life. Healthy Families also help with new parents' mental health and wellbeing. Beyond Blue has several resources in Arabic.

If you think a child is being neglected or abused you can make a referral to Child FIRST. Referrals can be made for vulnerable children, young people (0 to 17 years) and their families. Child FIRST may be the best way of connecting children, young people and their families to the services they need.

Child FIRST in:
> Hume: 1300 786 433
> Whittlesea: (03) 9450 0955

Victorian Arabic Social Services (VASS) runs a family service that can help to access social support and referral to local services.
> Phone: 9359 2861

Spectrum in Dallas offers support for migrant families.
> Phone: 9977 9000

Whittlesea Community Connections offers support to families through its settlement program.
> Phone: (03) 9401 6666

WHERE DO I GO WHEN...

I HAVE QUESTIONS ABOUT RAISING MY CHILDREN?

إلى أين أذهب عندما يكون لدي أسئلة حول تربية أطفالي؟

Looking for translated information about adolescent health? You can find it on Health Translations.
WHERE DO I GO WHEN…

I AM LOOKING FOR ACTIVITIES FOR MY CHILDREN?

There are many free or low-cost activities for children and young people during the holidays or after school, but it can sometimes be hard to know where to find the information.

Activities include:

- Holiday programs
- Sports
- Music and arts
- Help with school homework

You can find information about these activities:

- In libraries
- On your local council website
- By asking your child’s school
- By asking your caseworker and settlement support service
- These organisations all run activities for young people: Whittlesea Community Connections, Youth Central in Broadmeadows, Banksia Community Gardens, the Victorian Arabic Social Services or the Centre for Multicultural Youth.

SPORTS

Leisure centres are cheap to access and you can use the gym, learn to swim, play basketball and other sports activities.

There are several leisure centres in the north and you can find the list on the Hume and Whittlesea councils’ websites.

If you want to join a sports club to play soccer, basketball, or learn how to play Australian Rules Football, there are many around you. You can find some information on the Hume City Council website and the City of Whittlesea website.

There will often be a cost associated with joining a sports club. Most of it goes to cover insurance in case you injure yourself while playing.

HOMEWORK CLUBS

The welfare officer at your child’s school will know of homework clubs in your area. You can also contact the Centre for Multicultural Youth as their Homework Clubs list includes over 250 Homework Clubs across Victoria for students in primary and secondary school.

- Phone: 9340 3700

Looking for translated information about the benefits of activity for children? You can find it on Health Translations.
NEIGHBOURHOOD HOUSES AND COMMUNITY CENTRES BRING PEOPLE TOGETHER IN THEIR LOCAL COMMUNITY TO CONNECT, LEARN AND CONTRIBUTE THROUGH ACTIVITIES. THEY ARE EITHER FREE OR AT LOW COST. JOINING A NEIGHBOURHOOD HOUSE IS A GREAT WAY TO MEET NEW PEOPLE.

They offer health and wellbeing activities (such as walking groups), computer training, community lunches, play groups for children, internet access, English as a Second Language, and more.

In Hume:

> Attwood House Community Centre
> Banksia Gardens Community Services (Broadmeadows)
> Dallas Neighbourhood House (Broadmeadows)
> Goonawarra Neighbourhood House (Sunbury)
> Meadow Heights Education Centre
> Roxburgh Park Homestead Community and Learning Centre
> Tullamarine Community House

In Whittlesea:

> Creeds Farm Living and Learning Centre (Epping)
> Greenbrook Community House (Epping)
> Lalor Living and Learning Centre
> Mill Park Community House & Adult Training Support Service
> Thomastown Neighbourhood House

Whittlesea Community Connections (WCC) runs groups for Arabic-speaking men and women, as well as a range of group activities for young people and programs for people learning English. Contact the WCC intake worker on 9401 6666.

Men’s Sheds are a great way to connect with other men from different cultures, including those born in Australia. Men’s Sheds are all different but they are about men working on projects together, making or repairing things (furniture, bikes, etc). There are Men’s Sheds in Glenroy, Tullamarine, Craigieburn, Lalor and Whittlesea.

> You can check the Victorian Men’s Shed Association website or phone: 0408 465 228

Looking for translated information about the benefits of an active lifestyle? You can find it on Health Translations.
Volunteering is a great way to do this, and there are many opportunities to volunteer in the northern suburbs.

The following organisations can help you find a volunteer opportunity.

- The Victorian Government Volunteering Portal
- Volunteer Victoria
- Seek Volunteer
- Indeed

Your local council also lists local volunteering opportunities:

- Hume City Council
- City of Whittlesea

Local organisations like Health Services and Community Services also use volunteers to run their programs. Some examples:

- Dianella Community Health
  Phone: 8301 67 36

- Banksia Gardens Community Services
  Phone: 9309 8531

- Whittlesea Community Connections
  Phone: 9401 6666

- Victorian Arabic Social Services (VASS)
  Phone: 9391 0195

- Spectrum
  Phone: 9977 9000

- Lentara Uniting Care
  Phone: 9351 3600
I NEED ADVICE ABOUT STUDYING OR FINDING A JOB?

WHERE DO I GO WHEN…

TO FIND A COURSE

The Skills and Jobs Centre at Kangan Institute in Broadmeadows can help you find the right course to study, get skills recognition, and offers workshops to improve your skills and meet with employers.

> Phone: 1300 100 606

To look for TAFE courses in your professional area, you can use the Victorian Skills Gateway.

The My Future website can help you understand industries and employment prospects.

FOR HELP LOOKING FOR WORK

There are many jobactive agencies in the Hume and Whittlesea area, funded by the Federal Government to help you find work. Your Centrelink office can refer you to a jobactive provider in your area.

For help to find work in Melbourne, also check:

> The Skills and Jobs Centre at Kangan Institute in Broadmeadows
> The Victorian Government Live in Melbourne website.

FOR SKILLS RECOGNITION

If you are a professional living in Australia as a permanent resident, you can have your qualifications assessed by the Overseas Qualification Unit.

If you have a trade from your country (electrician, plumber, carpenter, etc), VETASSESS in Broadmeadows can help you get your skills and abilities recognised.

> Phone: 9655 4801
WHERE DO I GO WHEN THERE IS VIOLENCE AT HOME?

THERE ARE MANY SERVICES IN VICTORIA TO HELP PEOPLE WHO ARE EXPERIENCING VIOLENCE IN THEIR HOME, PARTICULARLY WOMEN AND CHILDREN. SEVERAL OF THESE SERVICES HAVE ARABIC-SPEAKING STAFF.

There are also housing options for women who need to leave their home urgently, with or without children.

If you or someone you care about is experiencing family violence and speaks limited or no English, do not hesitate to call for help.

IN TOUCH - MULTICULTURAL CENTRE AGAINST FAMILY VIOLENCE

In Touch is a program specifically for women of different cultures who need help with violence. You can get help in your own language.

Phone: 03 9413 6500
Free call: 1800 755 988

SAFE STEPS PROGRAM

Safe Steps (information in Arabic) has a number of multi-lingual staff or can arrange for a telephone interpreter to translate calls. All you need to do is call them and leave your phone number, your language and tell them when it is safe to call. A bilingual staff member or interpreter will call you back.

Phone: 1800 015 188
(24/7 Family Violence Phone line)

There are many other organisations that can help women and children experiencing family violence for example: Berry Street Family Violence Services - 9450 4700, and Child FIRST.

WHITTLESEA COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

Whittlesea Community Connections has published a booklet in Arabic about what family violence is and what services can help.

And remember, if you are in danger and need immediate help, call 000 for the Police.

SERVICES TO HELP MEN CHANGE THEIR BEHAVIOUR

Kildonan’s Men’s Behaviour Change Program provides individual and group counselling for men who use violence against their families.

Phone: 9457 0500
WHERE DO I GO WHEN...?

I AM IN CRISIS AND NEED TO TALK TO SOMEONE?

IF YOU ARE EXPERIENCING A CRISIS AND NEED TO TALK TO SOMEONE, NEED ADVICE OR IMMEDIATE HELP, THERE ARE MANY PHONE SERVICES THAT CAN HELP YOU. ALL THESE PHONE LINES ARE FREE AND CONFIDENTIAL.

**POLICE, AMBULANCE, FIRE BRIGADE: 000**
Emergency services are for very serious problems or sickness. If you are in this situation, do not hesitate to call them. Be aware that ambulances are free only if you have a Health Care Card.

**CHILD PROTECTION**
The Victorian Child Protection Service is for children and young people at risk of harm or where families cannot or do not want to protect them. 1300 664 977 (during the day) or After Hours Child Protection Emergency Service (5pm to 9am and on weekends): 13 12 78

**GAMBLERS HELP**
Gambler’s Help is a free service for people who are affected by gambling: 1800 858 858. In the north, both the Victorian Arabic Social Services (VASS) and Arabic Welfare offer counselling services in Arabic for people affected by gambling.

**KIDSHELPLINE**
Kids Help Line is a phone and online counselling service for young people aged 5 to 25. It is completely confidential: 1800 55 1800

**LIFELINE AUSTRALIA**
Crisis Support and Suicide Prevention. If you are feeling depressed or experiencing a personal crisis and need to talk to someone, you can call Lifeline 24 hours a day, 7 days a week: 13 11 14

**NURSE-ON-CALL**
Nurse-on-Call is a telephone helpline that provides immediate expert health advice from a registered nurse, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week: 1300 60 60 24. There is an interpreting service for callers who speak other languages.

**SEXUAL ASSAULT CRISIS LINE VICTORIA (SACL)**
SACL is an after-hours, confidential telephone crisis counselling service for people who have experienced both sexual assault recently or the past. You can call between 5pm weeknights to 9am the next day and all weekends and public holidays: 1800 806 292 (free call). There is a brochure in Arabic about their services.

Looking for translated information about crisis services? You can find it on Health Translations.
WHAT DOES MY LOCAL COUNCIL DO?

For instance, they look after:

> Roads and parking
> Maternal and Child Health services
> Community services (including children, family and young people)
> Waste management
> Recreation and culture

You can understand what councils do [here](#).

HUME CITY COUNCIL

> Phone: 9205 2200
> Email: contactus@hume.vic.gov.au

CITY OF WHITTLESEA

العربية The City of Whittlesea provides a free interpreter service to its customers. When you come to the offices, tell the receptionist that you speak Arabic and ask for an interpreter. They will check if a bilingual staff member is available or organise a telephone interpreter.

You can also call the council on the call line below and your call will be answered by an Arabic-speaking staff member.

> Call line in Arabic: 9679 9871
If you are looking for more information about Health and Human Services, Health Translations has more than 1,000 resources in Arabic about a range of topics.

To find a resource, search by key words and language.

Organisations such as Real Estate Agencies, Casework and Emergency Services or local councils may be eligible to register for the TIS Free Interpreting services to assist you with an interpreter in your language.