



Overview of the Multicultural Neighbourhood Centre

The Multicultural Neighbourhood Centre is a not for profit Government funded Neighbourhood Centre which caters specifically for the needs of Culturally and Linguistically Diverse people of all ages and is governed by an annually elected Board of Governance. Our objectives are:

- To direct the services, activities and resources of the Centre to those groups who are the most disadvantaged socially, linguistically, economically, geographically, and because of ethnic/cultural background have the least skills, knowledge and resources.
- To promote social and educational interaction among people of diverse backgrounds by providing a pleasant, informal, non-sectarian, non-political atmosphere at the Centre.
- To liaise and work cooperatively with and assist where possible other organisations whose objectives are similar or complement those of the Centre.
- To develop and maintain networks, services and activities that address the issues and concerns and promote the wellbeing of people of diverse backgrounds in the Newcastle and Lake Macquarie area.
- To assist people of diverse backgrounds to integrate into the community by providing an information, referral and advocacy service.

The Centre promotes harmonious social interaction among the various people who make up Australian society residing within the Newcastle area. We provide a pleasant informal Centre, which is inclusive, non-sectarian and non-political.

We assist migrants of all ethnic backgrounds to integrate into the local Australian community. People from many different countries attended English and Australian Conversation classes at our current Centre over the last year. Whilst we encourage individuals to maintain their cultural heritage we provide a place where everyone is welcome. They come to learn English, learn about Australia and learn to live peacefully within a multicultural society.

We promote and disseminate information on the cultural contribution of the various ethnic groups that make up the City of Newcastle. Local residents and their children, who are not from non-English speaking backgrounds are invited and are presently involved in a number of activities as volunteers, and help with computer classes, craft, parenting, citizenship and other "Aussie" lessons with our non-English-speaking clients. Their participation encourages understanding, tolerance, appreciation and acceptance of cultural differences.

Residents have a "local" place where they can participate in local activities as well as multicultural activities. They can obtain information and/or referrals to other mainstream

services around the City. We hold information on all types of services for all ages in English as well as other languages.

It is very important that our Centre be located in an urban area where we can maintain the mix of nationalities attending the Centre. Since its inception in 1983 the Multicultural Neighbourhood Centre has always been located in a house in a residential area. Firstly in Denison Street, Hamilton, from 1985 in Blackall Street, Broadmeadow, since 1993 to 2002 the centre was located at 161 Everton St Broadmeadow and then at 1, Victoria Street, New Lambton from 2002 to 2007.

The Multicultural Neighbourhood Centre (MNC) currently operates from our newly renovated premises at Lambton is located in an area with good public transport. Our new building consist of 3 offices, 3 large class rooms, large computer lab, modern kitchen, ladies, gents and children rest rooms, large activity room and a fenced area for the multicultural playgroup with child proof gate together with a huge backyard.

The MNC is funded by Department of Communities and Justice (DCJ) to provide the following services:

- Information / Advice / Referral
- Social Participation including:
 - Provide a meeting space for the community groups.
 - Allow the target group to use of computers, printers, photocopier, and other equipment.
 - Provide the garden for Multicultural Gardening group.
 - Provide a playgroup for 0 – 5 years old children and their parents.
- Community Support including:
 - Education and Skills Training (Free English Classes for CALD Background focusing on Conversational skills and pronunciation).
 - Opportunities for volunteers
- Social Participation including:
 - Social Groups, i.e., Arts / Crafts and cooking
 - Multicultural Services Expo
 - Harmony Day, Refugee Week, Youth Week, and other celebrations
- Advocacy and support
 - support and advocate for community members to ensure they receive the right services and / or refer them to the right service.
 - Supporting the target group to identify their needs and advocate for them.