

Yarra Council's Bicultural Liaison Officers



Yarra Council has employed a team of casual Bicultural Liaison Officers (BLOs) that support Council and local organisations to engage with culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) residents and communities more effectively. The BLOs represent 11 culturally and 14 linguistically diverse backgrounds, and most are Yarra residents.

What is a bicultural worker?

'A **bicultural worker** is employed to use their cultural knowledge, language skills, lived experience and community connections to work with people whom they share a lived experience and mainstream organisations. Bicultural workers elevate community voices, advocate for their needs, co-design and deliver programs, share information and facilitate cultural safety.'¹

Alternatively, 'an **interpreter** is a qualified professional who enables communication between people who speak or sign a different language. Interpreters take a spoken or sign language and convert it accurately and objectively into another language to enable communication between two parties who do not share a common language ... Interpreters interpret everything that is said or signed and must not add, modify or exclude information.'²



Yarra's BLOs commonly use their **language skills** as part of their role, so it's important to understand the difference between a **Bicultural worker** and an **interpreter**

Languages spoken by the BLO Team

Amharic
Arabic
Cantonese

Dinka
Greek
Italian

Mandarin
Oromo
Serbian

Somali
Spanish
Tigrinya

Turkish
Vietnamese

¹ Cohealth (2019) [Bi-cultural work program](#)

² Victorian Government (2022) [Understanding language services – What is an interpreter?](#)

Skills and expertise

- Direct connections to Yarra's CALD residents and communities.
- Insight into a community's strengths, priorities, concerns and challenges.
- Experience engaging with CALD residents and communities in a culturally sensitive and responsive way.
- Proficiency in one or more community languages.

Supporting your program or project

BLOs can provide advice on:

- effective engagement strategies for a CALD community
- the development and accessibility of communication materials, including plain English vs. translations and written vs. audio-visual formats

BLOs can also support CALD residents and communities to participate in a community engagement project or consultation.

What you should provide

BLOs should be provided with a briefing about the assignment to help them prepare. For simple assignments this can be handled over email, while a meeting or phone call is recommended for more complex assignments.

A post-assignment debriefing with the BLOs can be facilitated by Yarra's Community Development Officer – Multicultural Partnerships and/or your team.

BLO availability

Each BLO works casually so their availability is varied and can't be guaranteed. We recommend planning ahead and providing as much notice as possible for an assignment.

Costings

- BLOs are paid **\$41.40 per hour** (Base rate of \$33.12 per hour + 25% casual loading).
- The total rate is **\$46.50 per hour** (including 5.10% oncosts).
- BLOs are to be offered a minimum of three (3) hours per shift (**\$139.50**).
- **Overtime rates apply** from 6pm weekdays and on weekends.

Timesheet administration and invoicing

Timesheets are administered and managed by Yarra's Community Development Officer – Multicultural Partnerships.

Local organisations will be invoiced by Yarra Council.

More information

For more information about the BLOs and how they may support your program or project, contact:

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– Multicultural Partnerships

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