

Introduction

Queensland is a culturally diverse state. At the 2006 Census, 40 percent of Queensland's population was born overseas or had a parent who was born overseas, and 7.8 percent spoke a language other than English at home. Queenslanders spoke more than 270 languages and about 50,000 people, or 1.2 percent of the population, were unable to speak English well, or not at all.

The increasing level of cultural diversity in the Queensland population means that to be safe, health services need to be culturally appropriate and responsive. Queensland Health's approach to building the cultural competency of the workforce is presented in [The Queensland Health Cross Cultural Learning and Development Strategy 2009-2012](#) and the [Queensland Health Cross Cultural Capabilities](#) documents. The Cross Cultural Capabilities define five areas where health care providers need to be capable to work effectively with a culturally diverse clientele and workforce.

[Practical tools and resources](#) are also available to assist health care providers to deliver culturally appropriate care. *Community Profiles for Health Care Providers* is one such practical tool that assists health care providers to better understand the health beliefs, pre-migration experiences, communication preferences and other aspects of their clients' culture.

However, it should be noted that people do not fit into a pre-determined cultural box or stereotype, and there are certain risks in summarising particular cultural issues and belief systems.

There is great diversity within the communities described, with sub-cultures, differences between rural and urban communities, and class groups apparent in all of these communities. As a result, the descriptions will not apply to all people from a particular cultural group.

These profiles should also be considered in the context of people's acculturation experiences. Both traditional health beliefs and the process of acculturation play an integral role in the health and well being of culturally diverse communities in Queensland.

These cultural profiles serve as a guide only, and provide an overview of some of the cultural and health issues that may concern particular communities. The profiles can be used as a pointer and may inform the health care provider of the issues that could be at play in the health care encounter. Health care providers should also consider their own cultural background and cultural beliefs as these are also at play in the health care encounter.