



Our Multicultural Ambassadors

The City of Ballarat Multicultural Ambassador Program 2012 – 2014 aims to enhance community awareness and foster social acceptance for all in Ballarat. The Program provides leadership within the migrant community and recognises the commitment and contribution made by Ballarat's migrants.

Council is delighted to introduce Ballarat's 2012 Multicultural Ambassadors. To view the Ambassador's video stories visit www.ballarat.vic.gov.au

Get to know our Multicultural Ambassadors



Maryam Aghdaee (Iran)

Maryam finished medical school in her home country of Iran and dreamt of experiencing western culture and working as a doctor in another country. She first travelled to Australia in 2008 to pursue her dream, but returned home after some challenges. Maryam returned again in 2010, this time to Ballarat, and she has not looked back after finding employment, friendship, companionship and marriage.

As a Multicultural Ambassador, Maryam serves the community as a doctor and inspires and assists in the settlement of new migrants.

Contact Maryam via email on maryamaghae@ballarat.vic.gov.au



Catherine Toro (Chile)

After completing a degree in English Pedagogy (English teaching as a second language) in Chile, Catherine took some time off to travel. She moved to Ballarat soon after arriving in Australia in May 2009 and worked as an Au Pair for a local family before studying Beauty Therapy in Melbourne. Catherine married a Ballarat man in May 2012 and now works as a volunteer at Voice FM.

As a Multicultural Ambassador, Catherine aims to promote Ballarat as the ideal destination to make a home. She plans to continue to live and raise her family here and in return will contribute to the community to make a difference.

Contact Catherine via email on catherinetro@ballarat.vic.gov.au



Jessica Chuang (Taiwan)

Born in Taiwan, Jessica was the only daughter in a traditional Chinese family.

Jessica came to Australia to study and live in 1988 as a foreign student in Melbourne. She graduated and then returned to Taiwan to work in 1991. In 1992, she married her Australian boyfriend and now has two daughters of her own.

Jessica and her family spent 12 years in Taiwan before returning to Australia in 2005 and settling in Ballarat. Whilst it took some time to settle in, Jessica has now established strong bonds with the local community. Jessica is proud to represent Taiwan in her role as a Multicultural Ambassador.

Contact Jessica via email on jessicachuang@ballarat.vic.gov.au



Dimitri Dollard (Togo)

Ballarat has given Dimitri the chance to start life over again. He arrived in Australia in 2007 as a refugee from Togo, after spending seven years in a refugee camp in Benin.

Dimitri is an active member of the community; he is the President of the Ballarat African Association (BAA), has coordinated an eight month dance project with the Australia Council for the Arts, and has also organised the annual Ballarat African Day.

As a University of Ballarat graduate, Melbourne University Master student and committee member to the Regional Advisory Council of the Victorian Multicultural Commission, Dimitri offers Ballarat a great deal as a Multicultural Ambassador.

Contact Dimitri via email on dimitridollard@ballarat.vic.gov.au

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Aldona Kmieć (Poland)

Born in Poland, from an early age Aldona was inspired by her father's knowledge about the world and later her passion for languages and travel saw her leave her parent's farm at 19. She lived in Warsaw and then in London where she studied photography.

After some success with her photography, Aldona moved to Australia in 2009 and to Ballarat in 2010. She studied Small Business Management and now works as a professional photographic artist. Aldona works on a range of arts and community projects including Uniting Care 'Under the Floorboards' artist residency and Ballarat Arts Alive and is an active committee member of the Ballarat International Foto Biennale.

As a Multicultural Ambassador Aldona is passionate about people, storytelling and cultural diversity and is working on a pilot book project called 'My Australia', focusing on migrants stories.

Contact Aldona via email on aldonakmiec@ballarat.vic.gov.au



Jeme Liang (China)

Jeme came to Ballarat as an international student from China over eight years ago. Despite various challenges, Jeme studied hard to successfully complete IT and business degrees at the University of Ballarat.

Jeme set up his own Chinese gift and fashion accessories shop in Ballarat and has worked as an IT Systems Officer for local government. After years of living, doing business and working in Ballarat, he feels that he has made the right choice.

Jeme's passion for creating a better culturally diverse environment for both new migrants and other residents in Ballarat makes him a valuable Multicultural Ambassador.

Contact Jeme via email on jemeliang@ballarat.vic.gov.au



Ghulam Moqaddam (Afghanistan)

Ghulam is a young Hazara man from Afghanistan. He lived in a volatile area in Afghanistan where life was very difficult due to political instability and deteriorated living conditions. Searching for a better life, Ghulam migrated to Pakistan in 2009 and came to Australia by boat in early 2010.

After a year of detention at Christmas Island, Ghulam was sent to Ballarat in May 2011 where his life changed forever. He was accepted as a year 12 student at Ballarat Secondary College in 2011 and now sees the world in a different and positive way.

Ghulam is very proud to be given the opportunity to represent Afghanistan as a Multicultural Ambassador and hopes to create awareness and acceptance of Afghans and refugees in Ballarat.

Contact Ghulam via email on ghulammoqaddam@ballarat.vic.gov.au

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Meeta Narsi (South Africa)

Meeta, who is of Indian descent, migrated to Australia with her family in 1998 from South Africa. With no family or friends here to assist them, Meeta and her husband faced many challenges.

In 2007, when the Ballarat Indian Association was formed, Meeta volunteered and participated in Ballarat Regional Multicultural Council (BRMC) events. Over the years, Meeta and her family have made Ballarat their home. They have found Ballarat culturally exciting and the friendly and relaxed nature of Australians is something they enjoy.

As a Multicultural Ambassador, Meeta is pleased and honoured to represent South Africa. With vivid memories as a victim in the apartheid era, Meeta brings wisdom and understanding to the role.

Contact Meeta via email on meetanarsi@ballarat.vic.gov.au



Igor Zovko (Croatia)

In 1993, as an 18 year old boy, Igor moved to Australia when Croatia was going through uncertain times and civil war. He spent almost 16 years in Melbourne, before making Ballarat his home.

Being a young person in a foreign country was an amazing journey for Igor and the lessons learned, battles won and mountains conquered make him a wonderful and valuable Multicultural Ambassador.

Igor has a passion for helping young people. Inspiring them to dream big and one day achieve their goals is something he feels passionate about. He hopes to be part of the solution to the social, cultural and economic challenges the region faces.

Contact Igor via email on igorzovko@ballarat.vic.gov.au



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