

# KAREN COMMUNITY PLAN

2017-2021





## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF KEY PARTNERS

This plan would not be possible without the cooperation and support of our key partners. Council wishes to express sincere thanks to

- Australian Government
- Victorian Government, Department of Premier and Cabinet, Office of Multicultural Affairs and Citizenship, Victorian Multicultural Commission
- Ballarat Community Health
- John and Marg Millington
- Luv-A-Duck
- Nhill College
- Nhill Karen Community Organisation
- Nhill Learning Centre
- Nhill Lutheran School
- St Patricks Primary School
- West Wimmera Health Service (WWHS)
- Wimmera Uniting Care
- Wimmera Development Association

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>1. Introduction</b>	<b>4</b>
1.1 Multiculturalism in Australia	4
1.2 The Victorian Values Statement	4
1.2 2014 Plan - Update	5
1.2 Council's Vision - 2017 and Beyond	5
1.3 Objective	5
<b>2. Our Community Profile</b>	<b>6</b>
2.1 Hindmarsh Demographics	6
2.2 History of the Karen People	8
<b>3. Consultation Process</b>	<b>10</b>
3.1 Youth	11
3.2 Karen Community	11
<b>4. Karen Community Profiles</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>5. Karen Community Action Plan</b>	<b>16</b>





# FOREWORD



**HELEN KAPALOS**  
**CHAIR OF VICTORIAN MULTICULTURAL COMMISSION**

Our state is home to refugees from all over the world, with almost a third of Australia's refugees settling in Victoria. Our vibrant and welcoming community has much to offer refugees, including the experience and support of our well established migrant communities, and we are equally enriched by the contributions of our new arrivals.

For many refugees, adjusting to life in a new country can pose a number of challenges, so it is heartening to see Nhill's Karen community thriving in the place they now call home.

The Karen Community Plan continues to exemplify how diverse sectors and communities can work together to empower refugees to participate in our proudly multicultural state.



**CR. DEBRA NELSON**  
**MAYOR OF HINDMARSH SHIRE COUNCIL**

Hindmarsh Shire is Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD), being home to people from more than twenty five different countries around the world. Our rural Shire provides the opportunity to live in a friendly, safe environment and together with the abundance of natural assets, that provide many opportunities for recreational activities, our residents enjoy a high quality of life.

Our communities are welcoming and caring, accepting and respectful and we are proud of the very high rate of volunteering within our shire. CALD communities have been embraced by our residents and many, many hours of volunteering have been spent to support them and provide opportunities for participation which has benefited the whole community.

Since the development of the first Karen Community Plan in 2014, the Karen community in Nhill has gone from strength to strength. In partnership with the local community, the Karen community has made tangible and significant impacts on the local economy, as well as contributing to the cultural and social fabric of Nhill.

The Karen people's settlement in Nhill is a wonderful refugee success story, and an inspirational settlement model for other local communities to follow. I congratulate and commend the Hindmarsh Shire Council and the wider Nhill and Hindmarsh communities for their leadership in engaging with the Karen community. It demonstrates the Council's commitment to supporting its newest members, while at the same time empowering communities to celebrate their cultural traditions with pride.

The Victorian Multicultural Commission is proud to continue our support for the Karen Community Plan, and wish you every success for its implementation.

We are very grateful to the migrants and refugees who have made the choice to move to our Shire, often for employment in many different fields. The Karen Community is by far the largest ethnic group within our Shire and their settlement, which has become known worldwide, has had a significant economic impact, particularly in Nhill, allowing for business expansion, boosting numbers in kindergarten and schools and stimulating the local property market.

Many migrants are also working in our hospitals and aged care facilities undertaking the important work of caring for our sick and elderly, while others have shown confidence in our Shire by operating businesses. Regardless of employment status, every migrant or refugee is a valued member of our community and we encourage them all to recognise and celebrate their own culture and history for future generations to also appreciate.



# INTRODUCTION

## MULTICULTURALISM IN AUSTRALIA

Australia continues to grow as a culturally diverse nation, allowing those who choose to call Australia home the right to practise and share their cultural traditions and languages within the law and free from discrimination.

Over a quarter of Australians were born overseas and speak a second language, with over 300 languages spoken across the country.

Australian culture is as broad and diverse as the country's landscape. Australia is rich and diverse in cultural influences, reflected in the country's food, lifestyle and cultural practices and experience.

In 2017, the Victorian Government released its Multicultural Policy Statement, Victorian. And proud of it.

The policy is underpinned by the Victorian Values Statement, a set of shared values that the Victorian Government expects everyone to learn, respect and accept – and that Victorians should expect of each other.

These values are those that Victoria accepts and lives by to ensure that the state remains one of the world's most cohesive, multicultural societies.

## THE VICTORIAN VALUES STATEMENT

### ONE LAW FOR ALL

Everyone is equal under the law. All Victorians have the same legal rights, responsibilities and protections.

As Victorians, we all have rights under the law and responsibilities towards each other. By respecting our mutual rights and responsibilities, we can ensure a safe and cohesive society.

### FREEDOM TO BE YOURSELF

Everyone is free to be themselves and to feel safe in being true to themselves. The Government wants every Victorian to be able to celebrate their culture with pride, and practice their traditions in peace.

The freedom to be yourself includes freedom of speech, expressions of gender, sexuality and religion, and peaceful assembly; it does not allow people to break the law or to impinge on the safety or freedom of others.

### DISCRIMINATION IS NEVER ACCEPTABLE

Everyone has a responsibility to promote inclusion and participation and to reject exclusion, racism and all forms of violence. A society free of discrimination is better able to tackle problems like economic and social disengagement and improve health and wellbeing for all.

### A FAIR GO FOR ALL

Everyone deserves a fair go in life. That means giving every Victorian – no matter where they live, their circumstances, or their background – the support they need to enjoy the Victorian way of life. These include quality education and healthcare, accessible transport, equity in employment and a safe place to live.







## 2014 PLAN – UPDATE

The 2014 Karen Community Plan formed part of the Hindmarsh Shire Council Plan 2013 – 2017. It contributes to Council’s long term vision of developing “a caring, active community enhanced by its liveability, environment and economy”.

Developed in consultation with the Karen community, the 2014 plan was a balance of grassroots projects and strategic outcomes to ensure the Karen community of Nhill is supported and provided with opportunities to complete fulfilling lives in Nhill.

The plan has contributed to empowering Nhill’s community and encouraging an inclusive environment for all residents to feel safe. The three main themes of the plan were access, involvement and consultation. These broad themes allowed Council and other key stakeholders to work with the community to provide a long term direction in supporting the Karen community with increased access to settlement services, provision of information sessions for information sharing, increased employment and education opportunities, cultural events and strategic support at a local and regional level.

Council has worked on delivering the actions identified in the 2014 plan while collaborating with key stakeholders to build awareness of the Karen community on a local, regional and national scale. The plan has been an exceptional platform for Council and the wider community to support, advocate for and work with the Karen community of Nhill.

## COUNCIL’S VISION – 2017 AND BEYOND

The Karen Community Plan 2017-2021 has been developed with substantial consultation across a wide range of stakeholders in the Nhill, Hindmarsh and wider Wimmera community.

Aligning with the Hindmarsh Shire Council Plan 2017 – 2021, this plan will continue the long term strategic direction for Council to develop a thriving local economy through increased capacity and leadership within the Karen community of Nhill.

The key aim of the Karen Community Plan 2017-2021 is to build on the actions of the 2014 plan and support the Karen community in increasing their access to settlement services at a local and regional level, developing their leaders with training and education opportunities, increasing employment opportunities through employment and business development and providing new opportunities in sport, recreation, arts and cultural activities.

Empowering the Karen community through continued learning, via training opportunities and mentoring support will see increased capacity throughout the Nhill and Hindmarsh community in areas such as hospitality, tourism, health and agriculture.

## OBJECTIVE

This plan acknowledges the Karen community’s importance in Nhill’s cultural diversity, and the role they play in strengthening the local economy. It identifies key areas for improvement, change and growth that support and increase the capacity of the Karen community in Nhill through initiatives identified during consultations. In delivering the actions in this plan, Council and other local and regional stakeholders will continue to seek input from the Karen community in the future.





# OUR COMMUNITY PROFILE

## HINDMARSH AT A GLANCE

2016 Census Data

Towns: Nhill, Dimboola, Jeparit, Rainbow

Area: 7,527 km<sup>2</sup>

Population: 5,721



## HINDMARSH DEMOGRAPHICS

Hindmarsh Shire Council is home to 5,721 people. Of these, 2,184 people live in Nhill. According to 2016 Census data, Nhill's population has declined by 94 people since 2011, approximately 4% of the town's population.

82.8% (down from 88.4% in 2011) of Nhill's population were born in Australia, and English is the only language spoken in the homes of 86.1% (5% lower than 2011) of residents.

To create a picture of the town, the median age is 48 years, increasing from 46 years of age in 2011. Most people identify themselves as being Christian, own their home outright, and work in any number of areas within the agriculture sector.

At the 2016 Census, Nhill was home to 83 people who were born in Myanmar (Burma, previously known as the Republic of the Union of Myanmar) and 44 people were born in Thailand.

Over 17% (385) of Nhill's population had at least one parent born overseas, with 289 residents stating both parents were born overseas (13.2%). Of these 385 residents, 135 people living in Nhill at the time of the 2016 Census had one parent born in Myanmar.

The Karen population in Nhill is somewhat higher than the 2016 Census figures suggest. Surveying completed by Council and the local Karen community indicates that the number of Karen living in Nhill is at least 30% higher than the figures provided in the Census. This anomaly may be explained by members of the Karen community being elsewhere on the day of the Census.

**2184**  
PEOPLE LIVE IN NHILL

**34**  
NUMBER OF KAREN LIVING IN NHILL IN 2011

**180**  
NUMBER OF KAREN LIVING IN NHILL IN 2014

**182**  
NUMBER OF KAREN LIVING IN NHILL IN 2016

**535%**  
GROWTH OF NHILL'S KAREN POPULATION IN JUST FIVE YEARS









## HISTORY OF THE KAREN PEOPLE

The Karen people are an ethnic group from Burma (Republic of the Union of Myanmar). Traditionally, many are subsistence farmers, living in small villages in mountainous regions. Karen people are culturally and linguistically diverse, and commonly practice several religions, including Animism, Buddhism and Christianity.

Burma was historically a monarchy, however, this collapsed when it was colonised by Britain in the 19th century. After Burma regained independence in 1948, civil war broke out between the government and the minority ethnic groups. When the military took power in 1962, they established a brutal regime of persecution, extortion and forced labour. Killings, torture and rape are commonplace, forcing many to flee Burma and seek refuge in Thailand<sup>1</sup>.

Presently, approximately 140,000 Karen live in refugee camps on the Thai/Burma border, administered by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees<sup>2</sup>. Refugees in these camps can apply to the Australian Embassy in Bangkok to be resettled in Australia. They have medical checks and are interviewed by the government before they come to Australia.

So far, about 50,000 Karen refugees have been resettled in Europe, America, Canada, and Australia<sup>3</sup>.

The first Karen refugees arrived in Australia in the 1990s and settled in the Western suburbs of Melbourne. There is now a large Karen population in suburbs including Werribee and Truganina and regional cities of Geelong and Bendigo.

The first Karen arrived in Nhill in 2010, aided by the Nhill community and commenced work at Luv-A-Duck. In 2017, approximately 180 Karen refugees now call Nhill home with more families arriving regularly.

The Karen community has adapted to life in Nhill well and has become an integral part of the community. The community's resettlement has assisted Nhill and the Hindmarsh Shire in addressing a declining and ageing population. Nhill's newest residents have helped the community by boosting student enrolments across three schools, early years' services and real estate purchases.

In 2015, AMES (Australian Migrant Employment Services), with the assistance of Deloitte Access launched an economic report 'Small Town Big Returns - Economic and social impact of the Karen resettlement in Nhill', providing new and important insights into the economic and social value that can accrue through these initiatives, and identifying factors that contributed to success of the Karen people's resettlement in Nhill. These insights can both create the case for, and inform planning of, resettlement in other Australian communities. At the time, a total of 70.5 Full Time Equivalent (FTE) positions had been added to the regional economy over the five year period of analysis, representing approximately 3% of total employment across Hindmarsh. The economic impact of this increased labour supply, in terms of Gross Regional Product – as modelled by Deloitte Access Economics, is estimated to be \$41.5 million in net present value terms.

Since 2015, the Karen's journey to Nhill has been catapulted onto the international media stage and continues to be re-ignited as a 'success story' in the resettlement of refugees and migrants into rural Australia.

In 2016, Nhill's retail sector has been injected with diversity with the opening of the Nhill Karen Grocery Shop and Paw Po Products. The Nhill Karen Grocery Shop fulfils a need in the current grocery market for Asian-inspired cuisine, ingredients and homewares. The shop has built its customer base from the local Karen market, to the wider Nhill community. Paw Po Products was founded by the Nhill Learning Centre and has provided a retail and training space for the Karen women. These women are students of the Nhill Learning Centre studying and learning English, lifestyle and sewing which has assisted them in operating in the retail space. As the business grows, so have the ladies' repertoire of skills, now focusing on customer service, monitoring finances, implementing pricing and advertising effectively.

These new ventures are just two examples of how the Karen community participate in and contribute to the local economy. As the Karen community's confidence and capacity develops, so too will the economic and social impact on the Nhill community.





## 2010

**January** - First Karen People visit Nhill

**February** - First Karen people move to Nhill and five Karen People commence work at Luv-A-duck, First enrolment at Nhill College

**March** - First Harmony Day Celebration

**June** - Tha Kar is the first Karen employed outside Luv-A-Duck

First Karen enrol in English classes with Nhill Neighbourhood House

**September** - Ku Po Mya is the first Karen to buy a home in Nhill

## 2011

**January** - First Karen New Year celebrations

**November** - More than 70 Karen living in Nhill

Four Karen people bought their own houses

Toh Mae Pa is the first business registered by Karen community members in the Hindmarsh Shire

## 2012

**January** - Ah Nee New is the first Karen baby born in the Wimmera

**February** - Karen workforce at Luv-A-Duck exceeds 50

**April** - First Karen members join Nhill Sporting Club

**August** - Hal Loo is the first Karen to start an apprenticeship

**September** - Tha-Hser Bleh Deh wins 2012 Victorian Learn Local Award - Outstanding Learner

## 2013

**August** - Largest Citizenship ceremony at Hindmarsh Shire Council with 19 people

**December** - First Karen students complete VCAL at Nhill College

## 2014

**January** - Nine families have bought their own homes

**February** - Karen enrolments exceed 20 at the Nhill Learning Centre  
Hindmarsh Shire Council launched the 2014 Karen Community Plan, Settlement Officer and Migration Officer commence at Hindmarsh Shire Council, Nhill English Second Language (ESL) Homework Club starts with Wimmera Development Association (WDA) and Foundation for Rural and Regional Renewal (FRRR) funding

## 2015

**January** - Karen New Year

**March** - Harmony Day

**April** - Water Festival

**August** - Nhill Neighbourhood House receives AMES diversity Innovation Award  
Nhill Community Garden expands to incorporate two new garden beds

## 2016

**May** - Refugee Health Nurse commences one day a week

**May** - Migrant Employment Co-ordinator commences at Hindmarsh Shire Council, Interpreter commences at West Wimmera Health Service (WWHS), the Nhill Karen Grocery store opens

**October** - Nhill Learning Centre officially opens the social enterprise Paw Po Products, Hal Loo completes training as a mechanic, is nominated as Apprentice Trainee of the Year and receives the Special Judges Commendation in the Young Apprentice of the Year, at Wimmera Business Centre. Three families arrive in Nhill

**December** - Paw Po Products expands to sell flowers from Australian Wildflowers Pty Ltd based in Laharum

## 2017

**February** - Third class of Karen Language Classes at Nhill Learning Centre (NLC), NLC offers four different types of English classes

**May** - Karen cooking classes at Nhill Learning Centre, Refugee Health Nurse commences two days a week at West Wimmera Health Service





## CONSULTATION PROCESS

In preparing this report, Council consulted with many members of Nhill's Karen community. A brief analysis of the feedback collected throughout this process is included in the following pages.

In reviewing the consultation process during the development of the 2014 plan, it was determined that additional high level strategic consultation was required with external stakeholders to ensure that the revised and updated 2017 plan provided the next level of direction for not only Hindmarsh Shire Council, but all stakeholders who support and engage with the Karen community.

During the consultation process there were three main groups forming numerous consultations across Nhill. Students at Nhill College provided feedback on growing up in Nhill, future aspirations of the migrant youth and ideas on how to improve the town's facilities, services and activities for young people.

The Karen community met with Council staff at the Nhill Learning Centre for an open-invitation facilitated session to discuss the long term goals of the community in terms of employment, infrastructure, social activities, health and wellbeing. The session provided insight into the aspirations of the Karen community and the cultural significance of such.

The third consultation was held with an extended group of external stakeholders from local and regional service providers, community organisations and individual community leaders that have a direct role in supporting, engaging and working with the Karen community of Nhill.

Hosting three consultations allowed Council to engage a diverse range of the Karen community and other stakeholders to ensure that the plan for supporting and growing the Karen community is accurate and will provide for their long term sustainability within the community.





---

## YOUTH

### *What do you like about living in Nhill?*

- Peaceful
- Not too many people, rural community where everyone knows each other
- Big lake to swim in
- Friends are really close
- Playing netball, football and tennis

### *What don't you like about living in Nhill?*

- Far away from friends in Werribee
- Can't get pizza seven days a week

### *What do you want to be when you grow up?*

- Go to university
- Help the poor people and build schools especially in Thailand
- Auto electrician
- Motor mechanic

### *What can be improved in Nhill?*

- Bounce centre, heated indoor pool, mini golf course, laser skirmish, gym
- More new homes
- Bigger lake
- Paint/art wall
- Youth centre (stage, games, weights, coffee machine, tv, wifi, table tennis table)

### *Will you stay in Nhill after school?*

- Some will leave Nhill to go to university
- A gap year working at West Wimmera Health Service is attractive to young people
- Get a job locally

### *What would you like to see more of in Nhill?*

- Soccer team, social soccer/round robin for girls and boys
- Volleyball, table tennis, girls soccer, girls football
- Gaming events and opportunities for gaming tournaments
- Movie marathons at Nhill Cinema

### *If you could pick any job in the world what would it be?*

- Governor General of Australia
- Neuro Surgeon
- Teacher

### *If you had one million dollars what would you buy?*

- An army tank
- Bank it or invest in business
- Invest in Google

---

## KAREN COMMUNITY

### *What do you like about living in Nhill?*

- I feel like I am at home
- I can drive or walk everywhere, there's a community garden
- We feel safe, there's no traffic
- I like the teachers at Nhill Learning Centre, they are friendly and teach us all we need to know.
- Mentally and physically everything is happy, local people are very helpful.
- Living in Australia is a good thing, I can work for a few years and buy a house and car; all those freedoms are good.

### *What don't you like about living in Nhill?*

### *What is the biggest challenge for you living in Nhill?*

- Kids have to leave Nhill after Year 12 for Tertiary Education. We like to stay together as a family and will have to leave to support our children.
- Prices are high and variety of local goods and services are limited. The basic food is here but for choices we have to go to Horsham once a week.
- Building a house and connecting services is very expensive on outskirts of town.
- Not as many job opportunities available for limited English in recent years.

### *Would you like any training on a specific topic/information session?*

- How to care for environment and animals, to build the skills necessary to care for them and what to feed them.
- Information on further/ Tertiary studies available online and through video conferencing
- How to start a business / enterprise
- Dental services and how/ why to quit Betel nut
- Maternal and Child Health Services and ongoing health checks for children
- Cooking classes at Nhill Learning Centre

### *If you could choose any job in the world what would it be?*

- Hands-on farm jobs
- Karen inspired restaurant
- Online shopping
- Chicken farm
- Mushroom farm and factory
- Builders
- Carrot farm
- Local Councillor
- Pop up café at Nhill Lake
- More variety of jobs at Paw Po





# COMMUNITY PROFILES

Settlement of Karen people in Nhill is also providing significant benefits to the Nhill community. The Karen people are assisting in arresting the decline of Nhill's population, increasing the workforce and making a valuable contribution to the local economy. This section profiles six Karen community members working in Nhill.

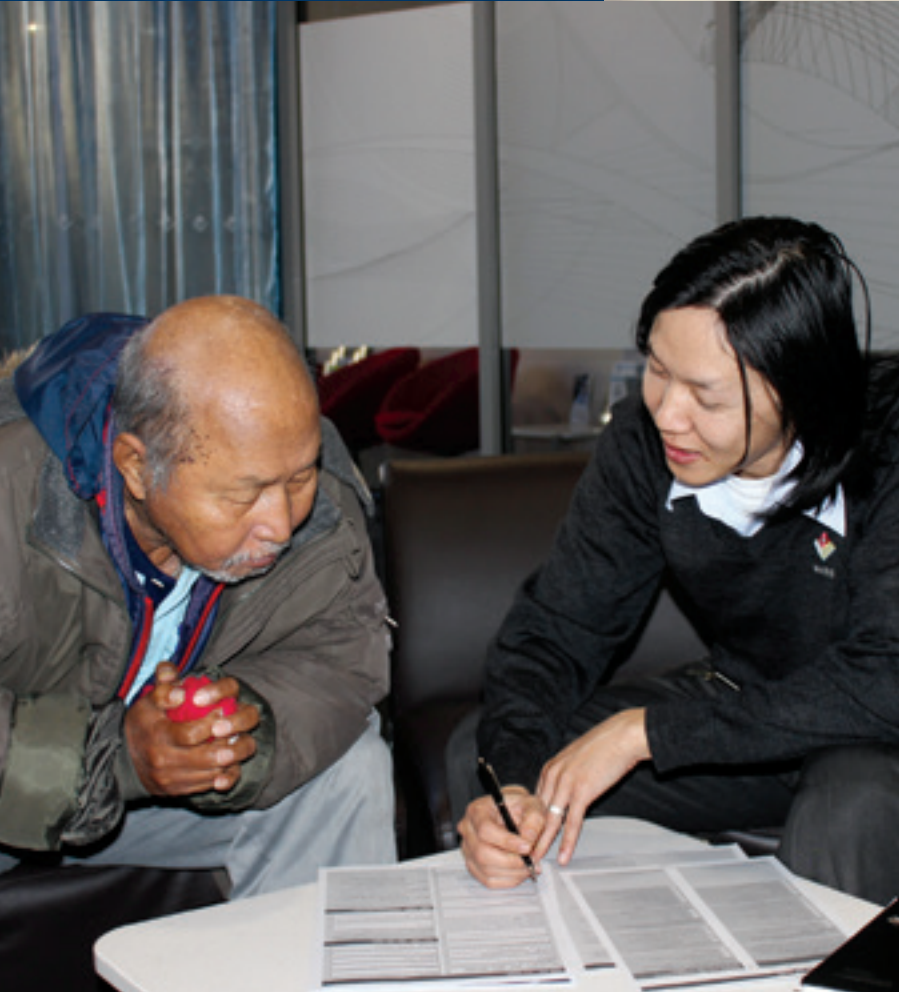




## NAN MYA MYA SOE – [ASOE]

“(I am) Happy, very happy and lucky to be with my husband here. We like everything - the people, the quiet and safety, unlike the city.”

“I have lived here for six months. I moved here to be with my husband who works at Luv-A-Duck as a forklift driver. I am happy, very happy and lucky to be living here with my husband here. I didn’t believe my husband. I thought he was joking when he said I needed a licence to go fishing. In Thailand anyone can fish anywhere. I work at Clever Stitch and teach sewing at Paw Po.”



## MOODY TU

“I came here for a new life. We visited friends in Nhill through the church and loved it. We wanted to get away from the traffic in Werribee. Nhill is like our hometown in Burma.”

“I lived in the Thailand camp for 24 years and I have been in Australia for eight years. I have lived one year in Nhill. I came to Australia for a better life, even though I was born in Burma I was a refugee and had no nationality. The first time I went to KFC I didn’t know how to eat a burger I had to look around and see how others were holding/eating it, I had never seen a burger before. In Nhill the roads are quiet, kids are safe and we can go to church. We love having a backyard for the children. We also love all the animals and seeing the animals in the wild in the area. I work at West Wimmera Health Service as an interpreter, translating the hospitals documents and attending appointments with migrants.”



## MURA HTOO

"I want to study a lot as you don't know what is going to be in the future. I want to work every day. It's safe to walk around Nhill, I love the boardwalk."

"I'm Excited as I've bought a block of land to build our family home on. My parents chose to move here as they wanted education and opportunities for us all. I first came to visit friends in Nhill and loved it. I want to buy a house for my parents, we love going to the community garden and can get help from the community. For 12 years I lived in the Thailand Border camp, eight years in Australia and 1.5 years in Nhill. I work at West Wimmera Health Service in general services working in the kitchen and cleaning."



## P'LEH BENYO

"I love Nhill and how we feel a part of the Nhill Community."

"I have lived in Nhill for seven years and my husband works at Luv-A-Duck. I have worked at West Wimmera Health Service at Olivers Café for two years as a Café staff/ kitchen hand/cook. I love Nhill, I feel a part of the Nhill Community. We saved up and bought a house."





## THA BLAY

"Nhill is quiet like our home in Burma and has the same country spirit. The community has welcomed us. I like everything about Nhill. We joke the community garden is mum's second home."

"I lived in a small village in the jungle until I was eight years old. We then lived in Mae La Refugee camp for seven years. I have lived in Australia eight years, five years in Nhill with my mum, dad and three brothers."

I am the Multicultural and Education Aide at Nhill College. I assist communicating between families and the school, translating documents and giving individual help to students. I help the kids and listen to them. We came to Australia for a better life. We applied and had to wait a few years to have medicals and be accepted into the country. Dad got a job at Luv-a-Duck and the family all came to Nhill."



## THA HSER

"We like country living over the city as we are used to living in small towns. Nhill is like my village, surrounded by fields and lakes. Having a house to live in, freedom, safety, education and good health system is why we're here. My kids can go further in education than I did and get a good job and have all the opportunities I didn't in Burma."

"I spent 13 years in Karen state and then 26 years in a Thailand refugee camp. It was limiting. I have lived in Australia for nine years, with seven years being in Nhill. It's a safe place to live and good future life."

I moved here as I got a job at Nhill Learning Centre and volunteered there, I also work at Hindmarsh Shire Council as the Migrant Settlement Officer, my wife works at Luv-a-Duck in processing."



# KAREN COMMUNITY ACTION PLAN

## LIFESTYLE

OBJECTIVE	ACTION	LEAD RESPONSIBILITY / STAKEHOLDERS	TIMEFRAME	OUTCOME
1.1 Support the development of early childhood services through increased participation, engagement and educational activities.	1.1.1 Playgroup 'Open Days' with Butterfly and community playgroups, encouraging participants to attend both sessions.	Lead: Hindmarsh Shire Council Support: Nhill Learning Centre / WDA	October 2017	Successful Open Days held, with increased participation in all playgroup sessions, including Karen involvement in traditional playgroup.
	1.2.1 Installation of raised garden beds.	Nhill Community Garden Committee	June 2018	Four raised garden beds installed and in use.
	1.2.2 Promote the Nhill Community Garden to wider community, attracting other cultures and community members to utilise garden space.	Nhill Community Garden Committee	March 2018	Increased participation and users of Nhill Community Garden.
1.2 Increase participation, awareness and opportunities available through the Nhill Community Garden.	1.2.3 Develop mentoring processes with established garden users for new garden users to build cross-cultural relationships and knowledge sharing.	Nhill Community Garden Committee	March 2018	Mentoring program established with anecdotal evidence of its success. Five mentor partnerships established.
	1.3.1 Support local sporting clubs in attracting new members and players from Karen community.	Lead: Sporting clubs Support: Hindmarsh Shire Council Settlement Officer	Ongoing	Promote sporting clubs who want to attract new members from migrant community through promotion in Karen community newsletter.
1.3 Increased participation in structured and non-structured sport and recreation pursuits.	1.3.2 Establish 'Come and Try' sessions for sports (not currently offered in Nhill).	Lead: Hindmarsh Shire Council Support: Wimmera Regional Sports Assembly	Ongoing	Two 'Come and Try' sessions held in Nhill each year.



OBJECTIVE	ACTION	LEAD RESPONSIBILITY / STAKEHOLDERS	TIMEFRAME	OUTCOME	
1.4	Increase participation of Karen youth through targeted provision of youth activities.	1.4.1 Translated posters for school holiday program, promotion of youth activities in Karen community newsletter to encourage Karen participation in youth related activities and events.	Lead: Hindmarsh Shire Council Community Development Support: Hindmarsh Shire Youth Council, schools	Ongoing	Increased participation of Karen youth in Council coordinated and supported youth-related activities and events.
1.5	Increase health literacy among Karen community.	1.5.1 Facilitate a series of information sessions targeting health literacy and promoting the health services available in the region.	Lead: West Wimmera Health Service Support: Hindmarsh Shire Council, Nhill Learning Centre	Ongoing	Greater understanding of health services in the community, one information session held each year with health focus.
		1.5.2 Facilitate tours, visits and excursions with a health-related focus.	Lead: West Wimmera Health Service Support: Nhill Learning Centre		Greater understanding of health services in the community, successful attendance at tours/visits/excursions.



OBJECTIVE	ACTION	LEAD RESPONSIBILITY / STAKEHOLDERS	TIMEFRAME	OUTCOME
1.6 Support art and cultural pursuits.	1.6.1 Establishment of art wall / community painting project.	Lead: Hindmarsh Shire Youth Council Support: Hindmarsh Shire Council, Nhill Town Committee	December 2019	Completion of community based art project connecting migrants and the wider Nhill community.
	1.6.2 Establishment of cross-cultural, cross-generation community project.	Lead: Nhill Learning Centre Support: Hindmarsh Shire Council, Hindmarsh Shire Youth Council, schools	September 2019	Completion of a cross-cultural, cross-generation community project.
	1.6.3 Support the community in the coordination of social events that celebrate and share other cultures in the community.	Lead: Nhill Karen Community Organisation Support: Hindmarsh Shire Council	Ongoing	Increased leadership in the coordination, participation and attendance at the annual Karen New Year, Harmony Day and Refugee Week events.
1.7 Housing.	1.7.1 Undertake research for best practice principles for alternative living arrangements (elderly shared housing, kit home packages).	Lead: Hindmarsh Shire Council Support: Wimmera Development Association	September 2020	Housing report completed with recommendations for alternative living arrangements for all demographics within the community.

## EDUCATION, ENTERPRISE AND EMPLOYMENT

2.1 Retention of the existing migrant population in Nhill through the establishment of a strong strategy to retain and attract youth with appropriate employment and education opportunities.	2.1.1 Promote local employment opportunities, traineeships, apprenticeships and internships.	Lead: Hindmarsh Shire Council Support: Employment agencies, local employers, Nhill Learning Centre	Ongoing	Increased promotion of fortnightly employment vacancies list. Regular visits from employment network providers, Skill Invest to provide information sessions. Promote and advocate to local business about bursary/sponsorship of young people in health and agricultural sectors.
	2.1.2 Support and promote the use of technology in accessing education remotely.	Lead: Nhill Learning Centre Support: Hindmarsh Shire Council	Ongoing	Increase in migrant residents enrolling in courses through online education providers each year.



OBJECTIVE	ACTION	LEAD RESPONSIBILITY / STAKEHOLDERS	TIMEFRAME	OUTCOME
2.2 Identify gaps in business and employment, support existing and attract new residents in addressing these issues.	2.2.1 Increase participation in local certificate training to address local employment needs such as aged care, business, hospitality and interpreting.	Lead: Nhill Learning Centre Support: Hindmarsh Shire Council	Ongoing	Increase in migrant residents completing certificate training each year addressing local employment needs, and gaining local employment.
	2.2.2 Advocate for a General Practitioner in the Wimmera Region (with accreditation to undertake Refugee Arrival Health Assessments).	Lead: West Wimmera Health Service / Tristar Medical Clinic Support: Hindmarsh Shire Council	December 2020	General Practitioner engaged by Tristar Medical Group to service the needs of the migrant community of Nhill and Wimmera region.
	2.2.3 Expansion of current community enterprise Paw Po Products.	Lead: Nhill Learning Centre Support: Hindmarsh Shire Council	Ongoing	Expansion of Paw Po Products Enterprise to include tailor and dressmaking services and development of traditional weaving.
	2.2.4 Support new community enterprise opportunities to fill gaps in current business services.	Lead: Nhill Learning Centre / Hindmarsh Shire Council Support: Regional Development Victoria / Wimmera Development Association (WDA)	October 2018	Update of gap analysis for businesses in Nhill / Hindmarsh Shire Council and promote opportunities to migrant community.
	2.2.5 Establish a Karen Interpretative Centre to promote cross-cultural exchange with broader community.	Lead: Nhill Learning Centre Support: Hindmarsh Shire Council	December 2019	Establishment of the Karen Interpretative Centre in Nhill.



# INCREASED LEADERSHIP

OBJECTIVE	ACTION	LEAD RESPONSIBILITY / STAKEHOLDERS	TIMEFRAME	OUTCOME
3.1 Empower Karen community members, including youth to assume leadership roles within the community.	3.1.1 Promote leadership opportunities within Local Government, including 2020 local Council elections and Youth Council elections	Lead: Hindmarsh Shire Council Support: Hindmarsh Shire Youth Council	Ongoing	Successful promotion of leadership opportunities for youth and the wider migrant community, including annual Hindmarsh Shire Youth Council election and 2020 Hindmarsh Shire Council election.
	3.1.2 Facilitate leadership training/workshops for Karen community members.	Lead: Hindmarsh Shire Council Support: Nhill Learning Centre, Wimmera Development Association	October 2018	Karen community members successfully completing leadership based training and/or workshops on building capacity and learning leadership skills.
	3.1.3 Develop a mentoring program for aspiring and future community leaders (with migrant background).	Lead: Hindmarsh Shire Council / Nhill Learning Centre Support: Wimmera Development Association, local businesses	October 2018	Mentoring program established and Karen community members successfully partnered with leadership mentors.
3.2 Facilitate leadership activities to build the community's capacity to identify and develop solutions for existing issues and future directions.	3.2.1 Organise a state-wide Karen community gathering to engage the broader community and encourage the exchange of ideas.	Lead: Nhill Karen Community Organisation Support: Hindmarsh Shire Council	October 2018	A successful event held in Nhill with attendees from across Victoria and South Australia meeting to discuss ideas and develop future directions.
	3.2.2 Organise bi-annual workshops to allow the community to interact and share information.	Lead: Nhill Karen Community Organisation Support: Hindmarsh Shire Council	Ongoing	Bi-annual workshops held with attendees from local Karen community.



# SERVICES AND SUPPORT

OBJECTIVE	ACTION	LEAD RESPONSIBILITY / STAKEHOLDERS	TIMEFRAME	OUTCOME
4.1 Advocate for increased access to services in Nhill and Wimmera region.	4.1.1 Advocate for increased access to Medicare and Centrelink services with face to face appointments in Nhill.	Lead: West Wimmera Health Service Support: Wimmera Development Association	December 2020	Medicare and Centrelink services available for face to face appointments at West Wimmera Health Service.
	4.1.2 Advocate for citizenship testing service in the Wimmera.	Lead: Wimmera Development Association Support: Hindmarsh Shire Council	December 2020	Citizenship testing services secured and available in the Wimmera Region.
	4.1.3 Advocate for appropriate, sustainable English as a Second Language (ESL) support at local schools.	Lead: Schools Support: Hindmarsh Shire Council, Wimmera Development Association	Ongoing	Sustainable approach to English as a Second Language (ESL) support to local schools.



OBJECTIVE	ACTION	LEAD RESPONSIBILITY / STAKEHOLDERS	TIMEFRAME	OUTCOME
4.2 Increased awareness of and pathways created to access available services.	4.2.1 Information session facilitated by Centrelink and held in Nhill on reporting methods and updates to system.	Lead: Hindmarsh Shire Council Support: Centrelink, Nhill Learning Centre, West Wimmera Health Service	Ongoing	30 migrant community members attend information session held by Centrelink in Nhill each year.
	4.2.2 West Wimmera Health Service to host Nhill Hospital tours.	Lead: West Wimmera Health Service Support: Hindmarsh Shire Council	Ongoing	Two hospital tours held per year for new residents and Karen community.
	4.2.3 Facilitate seminars and information sessions to inform the Karen community about services, rights and responsibilities.	Lead: Hindmarsh Shire Council Support: Nhill Learning Centre	Ongoing	One information session held annually about services, rights and responsibilities.
	4.2.4 Quarterly newsletter distributed to Karen community promoting services, topical news and events.	Lead: Hindmarsh Shire Council Support: Nhill Learning Centre, Wimmera Development Association, Schools, West Wimmera Health Service	Ongoing	Quarterly newsletter distributed to community with increased content provided by external stakeholders.

## ENDNOTES

- <sup>1</sup> <http://worldrelieffortworth.org/Burma-myanmar-karen-cultural-profile>  
[http://australiankarenfoundation.org.au/Karen\\_people\\_18.html](http://australiankarenfoundation.org.au/Karen_people_18.html)
- <sup>2</sup> <http://worldrelieffortworth.org/Burma-myanmar-karen-cultural-profile>  
[http://www.karen.org.au/karen\\_people.htm](http://www.karen.org.au/karen_people.htm)
- <sup>3</sup> [http://www.karen.org.au/karen\\_people.htm](http://www.karen.org.au/karen_people.htm)









**Hindmarsh Shire Council**

Telephone: (03) 5391 4444

Email: [info@hindmarsh.vic.gov.au](mailto:info@hindmarsh.vic.gov.au)

[www.hindmarsh.vic.gov.au](http://www.hindmarsh.vic.gov.au)

