Needs-Gap Analysis Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Communities (CALD) Grandparent Carers

West Moreton / Metro South and South Coast Areas

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Version 1

September 2012
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Needs-Gap Analysis on Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Communities (CALD)
Grandparent Carers West Moreton / Metro South and South Coast Areas

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Needs-Gap Analysis Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Communities (CALD)
Grandparent Carers West Moreton / Metro South and South Coast areas

While all reasonable care has been taken in preparing this report to ensure that the information is true and correct, it is acknowledged that the information is accurate only for the time that the Needs-Gap Analysis was conducted. In addition, based on the Needs-Gap Analysis’ scope and demographics it does have limitations and further major studies would need to be completed to provide more comprehensive data. However, this report provides an indication of the culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) Grandparent Carers’ hidden issues across West Moreton and South Coast areas.

Acknowledgement

The Blue Care Multicultural Services Manager, Mercedes Sepulveda, would like to convey thanks to the Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders and Multicultural Affairs (formerly Multicultural Affairs Queensland) for the grant contribution for the Needs-Gap Analysis and for their support and commitment to exploring the needs of the multicultural communities within Queensland.

The partnership of The Blue Care Multicultural Services and Commonwealth Respite and Carelink Centre West Moreton – South Coast would like to convey thanks to the Grandparent Carers, the CALD Communities and the service providers who participated with this Needs-Gap Analysis. It acknowledges that the expressed opinions are theirs and that they do not necessarily reflect those of the organisation for which people work and for all participants that privacy will be maintained.

The Blue Care Multicultural Services would like to convey thanks to Dana Farrell, Project Officer and Gaby Heuft, Project Officer CALD Forums for their efforts in conducting this Needs-Gap Analysis. Thanks to Helen Fraser, Multicultural Advisory Officer West Moreton, for her in-put and assistance with this report.
1. Executive Summary

The Commonwealth Respite and Carelink Centre West Moreton – South Coast and The Blue Care Multicultural Service Metro South / West Moreton and South Coast areas have collaborated to conduct this Needs-Gap Analysis and approached The Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders and Multicultural Affairs (formerly Multicultural Affairs Queensland) for assistance and received a grant contribution that demonstrates the commitment to exploring the needs of the multicultural communities within Queensland. The proposed Needs-Gap Analysis project for 'Exploring Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) Grandparent Carers’ Hidden Issues' was to identify issues and explore gaps of services CALD grandparents face when caring for their grandchildren (full-time or part-time) and potential actions needed to address these issues. The analysis of the social needs of CALD grandparents will contribute to the demographic data on the ‘hidden’ grandparents not accessing the system.

In 2003, Australia had 22,500 known Grandparent Carers caring for their 31,100 children who could not remain within their family unit of origin. This is often at a time when the grandparents are balancing their own aging with second-time parenting, because the parents either cannot or will not fulfil their parental responsibilities. According to the literature the reasons for grandparents becoming carers are documented as: apathy or indifference by the biological parents; child abuse, neglect and abandonment, parental death, parental or child disability, domestic violence, murder of the mother, murder-suicide of both parents, HIV/Aids, imprisonment, mental health, physical and chronic health, relationship breakdowns, parental absence for a variety of reasons, sole parent families and teen pregnancy where they cannot cope, the dominant issue of substance abuse (drugs and alcohol) and unemployment related issues.

The phenomenon of grandparents as carers has been growing globally in the last two or three decades as governments choose the ‘least intrusive’ care policy for children ‘at risk’ to be in Out-of-Home Care (OOHC). It has became the fastest growing care option for children removed from their family unit of origin and this can occur across international borders when children are sent either to or from Australia to be cared for by their grandparents. This large sub-group of grandparent-headed families have a range of unmet needs and their responsibilities may not be restricted to caring for their grandchildren as some may still be caring for their own children and / or ageing parents becoming ‘sandwich carers’ or conversely the grandchildren become ‘young carers’ to their grandparents as they age and become frail.

Despite having a significant presence in Australia, the available research on Grandparent Carers is limited and there is less information about CALD, refugee and asylum seeker Grandparent Carers. Australia’s overseas born population is 25.7% and Queensland is 20.5%, and although the culturally diverse communities are in contact with statutory authorities, such as Child Protection Services, they are invisible due to lack of acknowledgement of their diversity as no data is collected on ethnicity. The West Moreton – South Coast area where the Needs-Gap Analysis focussed, covers six Local Government Areas with a cultural diversity ranging from 12.1% to 27.9% indicating that some of these areas may have a higher concentration of culturally diversity than national levels. Grandparent Carers remain invisible with less than half of the care arrangements being organised formally through statutory
arrangements, indicating that available data is not providing an accurate representation of this family group. Many of these families may feel safer if they are invisible because of the parental substance abuse, violence, fear and safety concerns for their grandchildren.

Many care for the children because they fear them entering into the foster care system. Changing their role from grandparent to ‘parent’, they often experience their new role as physically, emotionally and financially draining. Their lives have been upended and they may experience losses of personal freedom, family breakdown and associated stresses. They can become overwhelmed and their own health deteriorates or exasperates existing health concerns. Other family members and friends either do not understand or resent their new role and the grandparents may experience a range of emotions and concerns including social isolation, shame, grief, loss, shock, resentment, fears, guilt or begin to feel stressed, exhausted, depressed, or experience physical illness. They may feel they have all the responsibility without authority and the financial support awarded to Foster Carers, in comparison to the informal Grandparent Carers receiving almost nothing. Many Grandparent Carers struggle financially as the age pension is insufficient to support family dependents. There are limited support services available and much needed legal assistance has strict eligibility criteria. There are issues around consent and how the children came into their care impacts of what can actually be accessed. The CALD Grandparent Carers experiences have been explored only marginally and may be similar to the general Grandparent Carer population though cultural aspects may add to their difficulties.

The physical and emotional health of the grandchildren may also be affected due to the changes and stresses of sudden relocation and loss of their home, school, immediate family and friends. The children may have experienced family trauma, abuse, been neglected which may produce challenging behaviours; they may have feelings of insecurity, anger, aggression, guilt, rejection, abandonment, anxiety, depression or physical health concerns, as well as school problems and attention seeking behaviours that may cause them to be vulnerable and likely to become further victimised.

Despite the possible negative impacts on the new situation for grandparents and their grandchildren there is the acknowledgement that there are also positive aspects. A sense of joy and satisfaction, of being able to love and nurture their grandchildren and help them thrive and develop, believing that the grandchildren keep them engaged and active, being needed is shared by many. The positive aspects of caring is what keeps grandparents determined to provide a safe and secure family home environment rather than expose the children to foster care.

Service providers recognise that there is limited information on CALD Grandparent Carers available and have stated during the consultations that further research needs to be conducted. It has been suggested that it may be normative in some CALD cultures for grandparents to provide care, that mainstream services are not able to meet their needs, that there is lack of information, that the barriers of language and the lack of understanding the Australian systems increase the problems CALD grandparents are facing. The Literature Research has shown work done in Australia on the cultural aspects of care and culture is mostly in relation to the Australian Indigenous context. The information indicates that Grandparent Carers are taking on enormous responsibilities when raising Australia’s next generation at a time when
their own health may be less than ideal. The majority of the available information on Grandparent Carers is generic and is not reflective of the multicultural nation that Australia is. It is imperative that the culturally diverse people of Australia need to be acknowledged and recognised for the contribution to the Nation they make and that includes the CALD communities.

The methodology used in consulting with the service providers was to approach a maximum of 100 key stakeholders among community and aged care services, children and / or grandparent support services and CALD specific services. It was preferred to meet face-to-face with the service providers, however, where there were time constraints then email was used. A supply of available resources for Grandparent Carers was provided to each of the service providers to raise their awareness to what services are available if Grandparent Carers should access their services in the future. A series of standard questions established prior to commencing the consultation and responses were collated and analysis completed.

The methodology used in consulting with the CALD communities was to approach the key CALD community members or leaders to promote the Grandparent Forums and seek involvement from their community members. The culturally diverse communities approached were to represent the continents of the world and consultations Forums were organised with the African, Asian, Spanish-Speaking, Middle Eastern, European and the Pacific Island and Maori communities. Community interpreters were available to assist at each Forum as appropriate. The majority of the Forums were held at the Logan Central Library whilst the Spanish-Speaking and Middle Eastern Forums were held at respective respite centres. Community interpreters were available to assist at each Forum as appropriate. A supply of available resources for Grandparent Carers was provided to the CALD community members attending to raise their awareness of services available. The resources distributed were the same as those distributed to the service providers. A series of standard questions was developed and guided the consultations and the information was collated and analysis completed.

Findings:

1. There is limited research on CALD Grandparent Carers which is contributing to their invisibility within this family-sub group.

2. There is no national peak-body inclusive of CALD grandparents to support grandparent carers or advocate on their behalf.

3. There is disparity in the financial and non-financial support provided to grandparent carers based on how they became carers either as formal (statutory), informal (non-statutory) or as foster carers. CALD Grandparent Carers are not only supporting their children and grandchildren, they are supporting the Nation as in their role as carers reduce the pressure on the Foster Care system.

4. CALD Grandparent Carers across cultures have identified that access to information which is accurate, complete, relevant and timely to their inquiries is often not provided, leaving them frustrated. Many cannot understand the system and processes involved, either because the systems in their countries
of origin were different, didn’t exist, or were less restrictive for maintaining compliance.

5. There are barriers to legal advice and legal support for visa, custody and access issues without an advocacy service for grandparents. Various visa issues for CALD grandparents or CALD grandchildren arise in the CALD communities. In some communities grandparents arrive in Australia on temporary visas without entitlements, required to raise the young children. After many years of caring responsibility, they are sent home. Issues of elder abuse have been highlighted in this context. Some families face considerable legal and migration agent bills. In other cases the Department of Immigration is not accepting kinship care arrangements such as the ‘Pasifika’ way, were non-biological children arrive here after ‘adoptions’ in a paper-less society, but do not necessarily get accepted to remain in Australia. Legal advice and legal support bills have to be borne by the individual or the community. There have been concerns over discrimination within the system.

6. Access to Child Care is a dominant issue for many grandparents and multifaceted. Often they are required to assist the family to save this considerable cost, and they have no access to subsidised child care when they need the children to be taken care of occasionally, or regularly. Access to childhood development opportunities for young children to teenagers are out of reach often due to cost, opportunity or transport issues.

7. Isolation and loneliness are recurring themes for many CALD grandparents, in part related to lack of transport options, language difficulties, lack of accessible information on what is available to them, dependency on family, child care responsibilities, and inflexibility of Aged Care providers, clubs, and community services. They yearn to speak their language and be involved in cultural activities, but see no opportunities.

8. The Department of Child Safety is seen as a service that has not the best interest of children and their carers at heart. Especially amongst the recently arrived grandparents. The rights and responsibilities for grandparent under Australian law are difficult to grasp and frightening for many, due to feared consequences that they are made aware of. Insecurity over parenting practices and questioning of the grandparents’ parenting skills, leave many grandparents wondering how to cope. Involvement of the Department of Child Safety with removal of children, sometimes into Australian families, rather than supporting their grandparents to take care of them seems to have left many affected and suspicious of the Australian system. The Child Safety system is understood as mono-cultural and inflexible, with workers that have no cross-cultural skills.

9. There is no data collection on relevant data on CALD clients by the Department of Child Safety and other government services.

10. CALD grandchildren who are removed from their families and placed with families from different cultural backgrounds are disadvantaged through loss of language, cultural connection, close contact with family and community.
11. Language issues appear in several guises. Lack of translated material; lack of interpreter use by service providers; lack of access to English classes for grandchildren who look after children; older people unable to acquire a new language; loosing the ability to speak English due to the aging process; and grandchildren not learning or maintaining the original language therefore not able to communicate successfully with the grandparents.

12. Problems with accessing transport is cited as a barrier to enjoy a full life, participate in activities in the community, support the children with social activities or transport to and from school, accessing aged care services. Problems with language, problems with technology and financial constraints are cited.

13. Grandparent carers are aging, often accompanied by their own health care issues, whilst they are looking after grandchildren. The required effort, time, energy, knowledge of systems and supports is often too much.

14. Grandparent carers have identified that employers are generally ignorant or not supportive if grandparent carers needs time off due to carer responsibilities. Many grandparents have to return to part-time work to provide for the needs for their grandchildren.

15. Technology is challenging many CALD Grandparents who experience barriers to using computers for a variety of reasons and are unable to search for information or forms on-line, or due to language barriers over the phone. They also highlight that many service providers seem to expect to be ‘found’, rather than finding the seniors in the community. Often grandparents become dependent on the grandchildren for help with technology they cannot master. Public transport also relies on coping with technology such as the managing of the Go-Card, which the many seniors find too difficult to do. Interestingly those CALD seniors who did not have the full benefit of comprehensive settlement support services seemed to be less confident with public transport or accessing information.

16. CALD grandparents see themselves as an untapped resource and want to be consulted and contribute to the younger generations in many different ways. Sharing language, culture, skills, food, knowledge and gained wisdom.

Recommendations:

1. Further in-depth research needs to be conducted into the situation of grandparents as carers, inclusive of the CALD experience. This will reduce their invisibility and vulnerability as a sub-family group. Raising awareness and disseminating knowledge gained will assist service providers and communities to have a better understanding and inform their responses in terms of service provision.

2. Establishment of a national peak body for Grandparent Carers, inclusive of all grandparents irrespective of cultural or linguistic background.

3. Financial support for grandparent carers is important, and should reflect that of foster carers or parenting benefits so they can provide adequately for the
needs of their grandchildren. The Carers Allowance should be made available grandparents regardless whether they are formal or informal carers.

4. Accurate and complete information and advice, available in community languages, and advocacy support for CALD Grandparents should be accessible. Phone, computer & print material need to be complemented by face-to-face advice, as well as information sessions for those who are less literate. A One-Stop-Shop at Centrelink with a ‘Seniors Worker’ who cannot only provide information and referral, but individual advocacy with the help of interpreters could be considered.

5. Legal advice and possibly free legal support for grandparents who are dealing with access, custody, child safety or visa issues. The grandparents who have spent years looking after their grandchildren on repeated visitor visas feel they deserve and should receive permanent visas once the children are raised. This would benefit the entire family and the general society, saving significant suffering.

6. Child Care and Child Development available not only to those who can afford it. Grandparent carers need access to regular or occasional child care when they feel unwell, or simply to help children get rid of excess energy. While grandparents feel that children are the responsibility of the individual family, the government is seen as charged with the responsibility of universal, equitable, accessible, high-quality education. That means Kindergartens, sport, art or interest groups should be obtainable by all children. Child and youth activities should be subsidised either low or no fee, and not leave these crucial services in the hands of the for-profit sector.

7. Isolation and loneliness are seen as related to problems with access to information and transport due to inability to navigate the public transport system, or being completely dependent on help from family members for transport. Some grandparents have great difficulties taking the children on outings or even to the playground as there is no transport. Flexibility of community services, clubs, Aged Care services, and Child and Youth services are called upon to provide solutions. Hubs for cultural activities were young and old can meet could be supported. Social and cultural activities that are supported can allow grandparents to socialise with their cultural and language groups.

8. The Department for Child Safety should be involving CALD grandparents and their communities in developing culturally sensitive and responsive family interventions and support. Grandparents and the community want to be consulted when child safety issues need addressing. Child Advocates should be available for all children at the centre of custody disputes. Located away from Child Safety, a mature and experienced counsellor who can accompany the child over the years of growing up can develop a trusting relationship with them. A true advocate who can detect when things are not going well, can support the child who wants to be in contact with a parent/grandparent or not, inform the parties including Child Safety and keep in contact, this way protecting the child appropriately.
9. Uniformity across all government funded services on collecting relevant data on CALD clientele.

10. The Department of Child Safety should be required to do what is possible to place CALD children with carers from the same cultural and/or language group.

11. Not every senior is able to continue learning a new language, however, those who wish to continue learning or maintaining their English should be able to do so, receiving assistance with their child care responsibility. Conversely, creative ways need to be explored to keep languages other than English spoken in the families and the community. The teaching of LOTE at schools or university is one option; another is to involve CALD grandparents from Child Care to adult experiences in the attempts to keep languages spoken. The value of these needs to be publically discussed and promoted.

12. Transport issues and solutions are multifaceted. Replacing the Go-Card and with a universal Seniors Card that does not require accessing technology should be explored. Assistance with community transport options at low or no-cost need to be on the agenda, especially getting children to and from school when other transport is not available, for instance when a child gets sick. Low cost or no cost. Flexibility is advised for Aged Care providers in regards to ‘boundaries of service’, and children accessing transport as well to join certain activities. Community buses could be accepting the Go-Card/Seniors Transport Card.

13. Development of a coordinated response from community services to support the needs of the CALD Grandparents Carers around the care need of their grandchildren, as well as their own needs. Aged Care service delivery needs to be flexible to respond to requests of assistance, and be considerate of grandchildren where possible.

14. Raising awareness amongst employers in regards to the Grandparent Carers in their workforce and the particular responsibilities they face. Providing training in regard to diversity in the workplace.

15. Technology is a barrier to locate and access services. Face-to-face services provided by a ‘Seniors Worker’ in an easily accessible agency such as Centrelink, would be a ‘One-Stop-Shop’ for much of the information, referral and advocacy required for all grandparents. The finding and filling in of Forms is another issue that could be assisted there. The Go-Card needs to be revisited and a Seniors Travel Card should be explored.

16. A National Grandparents Day, inclusive of CALD grandparents in recognition/celebration of grandparent's achievements and dedication linked to National Senior’s Week. Support activities for grandparents to be ‘formally recognised’ and praised for the work they do. This would increase respect for elders by the younger generation and the community in general, setting positive examples to emulate. Government/council/community grants to encourage ALL grandparents to feel appreciated, wanted, needed and rewarded.
Summary

The completion of this Needs-Gap Analysis is the culmination of several months of connecting with both service providers and members of the culturally and linguistically diverse communities in the West Moreton/Metro South and South Coast areas. The outcome of the consultations conducted have not only highlighted important issues and concerns raised by both groups, but have resulted in suggested ways forward to address some of the issues they face in the short and longer term.

The Needs-Gap Analysis reflects the fact that CALD grandparents are proud to be able to care and provide for the needs of their grandchildren, feeling confident of their abilities, and are motivated to contribute to a better future for them and the community they live in. However, it also shows, that many do so in difficult circumstances related to their unfamiliarity with systems and services, language and cultural issues, and with very little assistance from mainstream services that could support, but are sometimes unfamiliar with their particular needs.

It is hoped that this Needs-Gap Analysis has not only provided the opportunity for CALD grandparents and service providers to voice their views, concerns, raised awareness of hidden issues and gaps in service provision, but that this serves as a starting point for funding bodies to support further research and lead to funding of services to support all grandparent carers in a multicultural society.
2. Introduction

2.1 Background

The Commonwealth Respite and Carelink Centre West Moreton – South Coast and The Blue Care Multicultural Service Metro South / West Moreton / South Coast collaborated to conduct this Needs-Gap Analysis. The Blue Care Multicultural Services developed the proposed project for ‘Exploring Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) Grandparent Carers’ Hidden Issues’ through conducting a Needs-Gap Analysis to identify issues and explore gaps of services CALD grandparents face when caring for their grandchildren either full-time or part-time. The project will also identify actions needed to address these issues. The analysis of the social needs of CALD grandparents will contribute to the demographic data on the ‘hidden’ grandparents not accessing the system. The Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders and Multicultural Affairs (formerly Multicultural Affairs Queensland) was approached for a grant contribution for the Needs-Gap Analysis which was successful and supports The Departments commitment to exploring the needs of the multicultural communities within Queensland.

2.2 Aims of the Needs-Gaps Analysis

To identify the unmet services, social and information support needs of the culturally diverse Grandparent Carers in the WM-SC HACC Region. The proposed project will potentially provide opportunities to identify culturally appropriate actions that may assist CALD seniors (grandparents) to meet their needs while caring for their grandchildren. In a multicultural society, the experiences and outcomes of grandparental care for all grandparents needs to be recognised. An analysis of the social needs of CALD grandparents will contribute to the demographic data on the ‘hidden’ grandparents not accessing the system. This project will assist services to understand the unique needs of CALD Grandparents Carers and the structure of family care relationships.

2.3 Overview

Blue Care has been operating for almost 60 years and has managed The Commonwealth Respite and Carelink Centre West Moreton / South Coast for up to 15 years. In 2011 it established the Blue Care Multicultural Services Metro South / West Moreton / South Coast. The two services have formed a collaborative partnership and have been supported by The Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders and Multicultural Affairs (formerly Multicultural Affairs Queensland) to conduct the Needs-Gap Analysis on the Unmet Needs of Grandparent Carers in the CALD communities of this area.

It has been acknowledged throughout the years that people from the culturally diverse communities often do not access services for a variety of reasons and although CALD Grandparent Carers are mentioned in available research, it is often to focus on the need for further research on this particular group. (Families Australia,
Choosing to focus on this group of carers was an opportunity for both services to support these carers through raising awareness and where possible practical support. Blue Care is well placed to be innovative and to advocate a community service response based on the Needs-Gap Analysis’ recommendations. While grandparents generally care and support their families, in 2010, Grandparent Carers were acknowledged as a distinct group of carers, capacity in decision-making and the development of The Grandparent Carers Charters. (State of Queensland, 2010a; State of Queensland, 2010b:8) In supporting their families, contemporary grandparents are continuing to do what grandparents have been doing historically. However, it has been generally acknowledged that cultural differences may impact on the individual’s experience of being a Grandparent Carer. (Hamkung, 2010:4, 9; Matson, 2003:3) We recognise the limitations of this study due to scope and demographics, and suggest further major studies would need to be completed to provide more comprehensive data.

In 2003, when the initial Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) commenced collating data on Grandparent Carers, there were 22,500 Grandparent Carers who cared for 31,100 children. This was a rise from 12,000 in 1997 and was later surpassed to 36,000 children in 2011. (AIHW 2011:30; Horner et al, 2007:71) Grandparents, great-grandparents and step-grandparents can be the primary carer of their grandchildren who cannot remain within their family unit of origin. This is at a time when the grandparents are balancing their own aging with this second-time parenting role, because the parents either cannot or will not fulfil their parental responsibilities. (Backhouse, 2006:7; COTA NSW, 2011; Families Australia, 2008:4; Families Australia, 2007:10; Horner et al 2007:77, 78; O’Neill 2011:97; NSW Committee of Ageing and COTA (NSW), 1997:36) Many grandparents are suddenly required to fill the role of carer, unprepared as they may not have been aware of any concerns or the extent of those concerns. (Ballock 2007:77)

Over the last two to three decades Grandparent Carers as an Out-of-Home Care (OOHC) option has become an international phenomenon. Australia has not been exempt. Nationally almost 93% of care is provided by OOHC and over 47% are cared for by their grandparents. (Backhouse 2003:1 Boetto, 2010:60) Grandparent Carers as parental substitutes for ‘at risk’ children, as a preferred placement option for the Government services using the ‘least intrusive’ care policy option rather than foster care. From 1996 to 2005 there was a 70% increase in families having to take on this responsibility. (Errington 2010:9; COTA NSW and NSW MACA, 2010:12)

In 2003, when the initial data collection on Grandparent Carers was conducted, the exact numbers of Grandparent Carers in Australia was still unknown due to limited data, lack of awareness, acknowledgement and support available for Grandparent Carers. Even less information was available on carers from CALD migrant and refugee backgrounds. (Backhouse, 2006:1, 2; COTA, 2003:13; Horner et al, 2007:77) There is more information on Australian Aborigines, Native Americans and Canadian First Nations, the indigenous cultures of their relevant countries, and their Grandparent Carers than there is available on Grandparent Carers from culturally diverse backgrounds in Australia. (Frontiers Education Centre, 2004:1)

Many Grandparent Carers would prefer to be a ‘normal’ grandparent knowing their grandchildren were living with their family unit of origin. The grandparent could be enjoying the benefits of being a grandparent without the responsibility of actually raising the grandchildren. (Backhouse et al, 2009:32; COTA, 2003:9)
Whilst children may be a national focus, Australia has no national peak body to represent the needs of Grandparent Carers, nor a National Action Plan to address the needs. (Hodge, 2010: Families Australia and Grandparents Australia, 2010) These are further contributors to the invisibility of Grandparent Carers.

The intent of this report is to raise awareness within the community and have this report available to be utilised for further exploration of the issue and potentially gain assistance in responding to the needs of the Grandparent Carers in the CALD Communities. (Matson, 2003:4)

Overall Australia has a large sub-group of families (grand-families) headed by grandparents who have a range of unmet needs and would benefit with further assistance from the community, whilst fulfilling their responsibility in raising the next generation of Australian citizens.

2.4 Literature Review

The literature review was conducted to identify available information on the Grandparent Carers focussing on the culturally diverse grandparents, and although Grandparent Carers have a presence in Australia the research available is limited and contains even less information about CALD Grandparent Carers.

It appears that many grandparent-headed families are also be caring for their own children and/or their own ageing parents, effectively becoming ‘sandwich carers’. Conversely, the grandchildren may become ‘young carers’ to their grandparents as these age and become frail. (Backhouse, 2009:40; Cass, 2007; Moyle, 2008; Sims, 2010) The Out-of-Home Care (OOHC) is the fastest growing option for children removed from their parents care and this is often when the grandparents step up. A grandparent can become a carer across international borders when children are sent either to or from Australia to be cared for by their grandparents. (ISSA, 2008:2, 3, 5; McHugh, 2009:9; Mirabel Foundation, 2004:5)

Grandparent Carers remain invisible as less than half of the care arrangements are organised formally (statutory) and able to be counted, while the informal (non-statutory) are anticipated to be almost half the arrangements made. (AIHW, 2011:6, 9, 30) Many people do not recognise themselves as a carer while others prefer to remain ‘hidden’ because of their personal situation. This may be due to parental substance abuse, violence, fear or other reasons. Child Protection Services has no mandatory requirement to collect cultural diversity data despite overseas born population totalling 25.7% in Australia and 20.5% in Queensland. In Queensland, each of the Local Government Areas (LGA) within the West Moreton – South Coast area have significant overseas born populations being Gold Coast 27.9%; Ipswich 18.7%; Lockyer Valley 12.4%; Logan 26.1%; Somerset 12.1% and Scenic Rim 14.9%. (AIHW, 2011:6; OESR, 2011; QCOSS and MDA, 2005:6) Despite this CALD Children are under-represented within OOHC, though the NSW Child Protection Service estimates 4% of children are from a CALD background, whilst Sawrika (2009) believes it to be 15% representation. (Hodge, 2010; MDA, 2010: 3, 4; Sawrika, 2009:8)

Internationally, in 2000, 4.5 million American grandchildren were cared for by their grandparents, a 78% rise over 10 years. Britain (2011) had 200,000 children, Canada
(2006) had 66,000 children and New Zealand (2005) had almost 5,000 children. (COTA, 2003:14; Collett, 2011; Frontiers Education Centre, 2004:1; McHugh, 2009:24) The grand-families are composed mainly of single grandmothers caring for the children, and who are dependent on government pensions. This is reflective of women traditionally accepting these responsibilities, and the majority of these women are likely to be the maternal grandparents. Similarly in CALD communities, women are more likely to be the carer. (Backhouse, 2006:3; Horner et al, 2007:71)

Child Protection Services often ask grandparents to assist during a crisis due to the lack of foster carers. It is considered to be beneficial to the child’s welfare for placement with family to occur as soon as possible, in these circumstances (Wood 2008). The family-centred model aims to preserve and maintain a connection to family, promote cultural identity, provide stability, increase the chance of siblings remaining together and not place the children with ‘strangers’. (Boetto, 2010:60: 61; Kiraly, 2011)

The sceptic would consider the Government response to be an economic one rather than for the welfare of the children. Falling foster carer registrations, reduced use of residential care, more children with more complex care needs sees the use of kinship carer rising. Estimations indicate that it costs 52% more to raise a child in foster care than with family and sees the support move from the public to the private sector responsibility. (Boetto, 2010:61; CFWAA, AFCA, and the ACWA, 2002)

According to a variety of different sources, the Grandparent Carer phenomenon is related to a number of reasons affecting the family (see table below).

**Table 1: Reasons Associated with Becoming a Grandparent Carer**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Apathy or indifference</td>
<td>Biological parental indifference to the welfare of their children.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child abuse, neglect and abandonment</td>
<td>Many children who are abused and neglected may be as a result of their parent’s substance abuse problem.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Death of a parent</td>
<td>Some parents have died due to health, accidents and increasingly substance abuse. The latter is increasing significantly in recent times.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disability</td>
<td>The physical or intellectual disability of the child or parent.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Domestic violence, murder of the mother and murder - suicide</td>
<td>Domestic violence is high and significant numbers of homicides involving partners’ results in the woman being murdered or the woman murdered and the man committing suicide. A CALD woman’s exposure to domestic violence may not be higher than others in the community however she may be vulnerable because of cultural practices.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HIV/Aids</td>
<td>In Australia HIV/Aids is not a significant concern, However in 2005 the infected population was 16,000 people.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Imprisonment</td>
<td>In 1995 it was estimated 85% of women prisoners were sole parents with children. In 1999 CALD women were 10% of the prison population. Substantial increases in female prisoners population has occurred since the 1960s. When released from prison a woman is 27 times more likely to die an unnatural death than a man.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mental health</td>
<td>It is estimated a 1/3 of women using at mental health services have children.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Needs Gap Analysis on Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Communities (CALD)
Grandparent Carers West Moreton / Metro South and South Coast Areas

### Physical health

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Physical health</th>
<th>Physical and chronic health conditions.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Relationship conflict and breakdown / parental absence / sole parent families / difficulty raising children / teen pregnancy</td>
<td>Teen pregnancy and sole parent families find they are unable to raise their children alone. Australian relationships are failing at a rate of 43% of first time marriages and 55% second time marriages. Whilst CALD divorce is lower in cultures that have strong religious values they do have higher rates of divorce in Australia than in their homeland. Currently 40% of divorces granted have either one or both parents born overseas and is higher in cross-cultural marriages.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Substance abuse (drugs and alcohol)</td>
<td>This is a major contributor for children at risk, parental absence, illness, death and imprisonment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployment</td>
<td>The effects of poverty on families.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


### Impacts of Changes on the Grandparents

- Re-establishing a home that includes growing children takes significant efforts affecting grandparents physically, emotionally and financially. Many fear that the children will enter into the foster care system if they do not care for them. The children often arrive unexpectedly and needs have to be met immediately, amongst them food, clothing, transport, school costs, uniforms or even home modifications. (Backhouse 2003:3; 46; COTA 2003:31, 50; Families Australia 2007:12; Baldock 2007:76)

With their lives upended grandparents may experience losses of personal freedom, family breakdown and associated stresses. They can become overwhelmed and their own health deteriorates or exasperates existing health concerns. Changing their role from grandparent-to-parent, they often experience their new role as being physically, emotionally and financially draining. (Backhouse, 2006:3; COTA, 2003:8; Doblin-MacNab, 2006; Errington, 2010:25; Families Australia, 2007:3; Families Australia, 2008:4)

Their relationships with other family members or friends may be impacted as siblings may feel resentful that their children not having their grandparent's time. Their friends no longer socialise with them. They may experience a range of emotions and concerns including social isolation, shame, grief, loss, shock, resentment, fears, guilt or begin to feel stressed, exhausted, depression or have physical illness. (COTA, 2003:7, 34, 35, 47; Carlini-Marlett, 2010:8; Errington, 2010:23; Baldock, 2007:72; Sims 2010; Mirabel Foundation, 2004:11) They may feel that they have all the responsibility without authority, and the financial support awarded to Foster Carers seems inequitable when the informal Grandparent Carers receiving almost nothing. The CALD Grandparent Carers experiences have been explored only marginally and may be similar to the general Grandparent Carer population though cultural aspects may add to their difficulties. (COTA, 2003:8, 24; Families Australia, 2007:10; Families Australia, 2008:12)
Some grandparents face either retiring from work or returning to work to support the grandchildren though the majority are receiving income support from the Government. Many find their superannuation and retirement savings are used for legal fees to gain custody of the grandchildren or for the grandchildren’s medical, dental and education needs. (Backhouse, 2006:1; COTA, 2003:319, 8 Errington, 2010:22; Squire et al, 2007:186)

Regardless of the negative impacts that the Grandparent Carers face they acknowledge that there are also positive aspects, such as, feeling a sense of joy with having their grandchildren, believing that the grandchildren keep them active and provide them with feelings of being worthwhile. (Backhouse, 2006:1, 3, 9) The love for their grandchildren gives them the determination to keep them safe and protect them, nurturing them and providing them with security in a family home environment rather than in a foster care one. (COTA, 2003:8, 33, Baldock, 2007:73; Kiraly, 2011)

Impacts of Changes on the Grandchildren  The physical and emotional health of the grandchildren may also be affected due to the changes and stresses of the sudden relocation and the loss of their home, school, immediate family and friends. (ADCQ, 2006:120, 121; Backhouse, 2006:8; COTA, 2003:7) The children may have experienced family trauma, abuse, been neglected which may produced challenging behaviours, they may have feelings of insecurity, anger, aggression, guilt, rejection, abandonment, anxiety, depression and have physical health concerns, as well as, school problems and attention seeking behaviours that may cause them to be vulnerable and likely to become further victimised. (Backhouse, 2006:9, COTA, 2003:33, 36; COTA, 2010:8; Doblin-MacNab, 2006)

The grandchildren may feel they do not understand their grandparents though they are protective of them and they have a sense of gratitude for the care they are providing them. Despite this, the grandchildren may still feel like intruders in their grandparent’s lives and homes. (COTA, 2003:46; Families Australia, 2007:19 Mirabel, 2004:11) Whilst the children benefit from a closer connection to their family, of being loved, valued and being cared for they may still miss their parents. (Backhouse, 2006:3, COTA, 2003:37, 42; Baldock, 2007:78)

The grandchildren, in turn, can become carers of their grandparents as time progresses and Cass (2007) explored the situation where the Young Carers and Grandparents Carers have either exchange roles or co-care for each other.

Access to Services - Access to legal assistance through Legal Aid is often difficult for grandparents to receive due to its eligibility criteria, which many feel is an injustice and inequitable especially when the parents are able to access legal assistance. Many grandparents’ spend their savings or go into debt for legal assistance. Grandparent Carers also have difficulty in obtaining or providing consent for services such as medical, dental and education. (Backhouse, 2006:7; COTA, 2003:23; Council of Ageing NSW and NSW MACA, 2010:19)

CALD grandparents have limited understanding of these legal complexities and may fear the removal of children from their care. (MDA, 2010:8) This is because of the complexity of the Court Systems and Child Protection Agencies especially when the jurisdictions across the Nation have differing laws which may impact on the Centrelink support available. (COTA, 2003:25) This is further complicated for Grandparent Carers in the CALD Communities who do not have meaningful
information available in their own language or interpreters offered or being accessed appropriately. (QCOSS, 2006)

Whilst Foster Carers are financial renumerated above formal Grandparent Carers the informal Grandparent Carers receive almost nothing. Many Grandparent Carers are reliant on Government support and recognise that the age pension was not designed to support family dependents. (Families Australia, 2008:5; Hodge, 2010) Centrelink now has 6 Grandparent Liaison Officers across Australia who will assist Grandparent Carers to navigate these complexities especially the more vulnerable ones including people from a CALD background. (Families Australia, 2008:8; Families Australia, 2007:14)

Many of the grandchildren need specialised services for their care and support however therapy services are either limited or expensive, do not exist or not easily accessible. (COTA, 2003:31, 38) A child’s disability is not always recognised and therefore maybe unable to access the available support, examples are Acquired Brain Injury (ABI), Foetal Alcohol Syndrome (FAS), neurological damage, delayed development, hyperactivity, and behavioural problems. There are indicators that the children of drug users are likely to have poor physical, cognitive and psychosocial development. There is concern that conditions such as Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHA) are increasingly being diagnosed and there is information that the children are being wrongly diagnosed, as it could be the parental lifestyle and environment that is impacting on the children rather than the condition. (Baldock, 2007: 71; COTA, 2003:20, 21, 39)

There are a few specific Grandparent Carer supports services available although there is lack of continuity between them due to the variety of services and systems that Grandparent Carers face in Australia. The disparity is noticed when families relocate to another State. (COTA NSW and NSW MACA, 2010:13) Grandparent Carers have reported that they feel that the workers they are dealing with make them feel as though they are part of the problem and therefore treat them with less courtesy and offer less assistance. (Families Australia, 2007:36) Recently in Queensland, The Queensland Council of Grandparents Incorporated has been established to advocate for grandparents. (QCOG: 2012)

**Cultural Considerations for Grandparent Carers** - It is known that carers from some cultural groups may experience particular difficulties and challenges in their caring roles and responsibilities. The CALD Grandparents may experience misinterpretation and misunderstanding of the available information and communications because of their cultural background. (HREOC, 2007:186; Squire et al, 2007)

There is limited information available on CALD Grandparent Carers and this evidenced by the various reports that have generic responses or statements calling for further research to have the cultural gaps to be addressed. The literature mention that the cultural links are being maintained if the child is placed within CALD families, as caring for family is normative amongst the culturally diverse communities, that mainstream services cannot meet their needs, that there is lack of information available, that there are barriers of language and a lack of understanding the Australian Court Systems are all to be considered to be as part of the complexities surrounding kinship care amongst the people from culturally diverse backgrounds. Predominately when Australian literature mentions cultural aspects of care they are referring to Indigenous Australians Grandparent Carer cultural needs. (Backhouse,
2006:3; Boetto, 2010:60; COTA NSW and MACA, 2010:8, 22, 23, 26; Families
NSW Committee on Ageing and COTA (NSW), 1997:39, 41; O’Neill, 2011:96; Patton,
2003:5) The Background Paper on CALD Young Carers identifies that informal caring
is more common amongst Indigenous and CALD youth and that they could be caring
for their grandparents who are the primary carers of them. (Al-Mousa, 2010:3; Cass,
2007)

It has been raised that the multicultural sector is concerned that the Crime and
Misconduct Commission (CMC) Report ‘Protecting Children: An Inquiry Into Abuse of
Children in Foster Care’ and the subsequent Blueprint for implementing the
recommendations for the CMC Report in January and March 2004, that neither had
made specific reference to the CALD communities around their needs, achievements
or challenges. The lack of recognition and consultation at any level in major inquiries,
including the above mentioned one, reflects an urgent need to consider this issue in
Queensland. (QCOSS and MDA, 2005:6, 14, 15; Ramios et al, 2007:9, 13) It would
be beneficial for the Carmody Inquiry into Queensland’s Child Protection System to
be inclusive of the CALD communities and their needs. (Skynews, 2012) In
comparison NSW appears to have developed appropriate service responses to
CALD children and families in contact with their Child Protection System and
assessment guide for those requiring out-of-home-care. (NSW Department of
Community Services, 2008:4-10; NSW Human Services Community Services,
2010:1-6)

There is reference to the CALD Grandparent Carers in connection with the Centrelink
Grandparent Liaison Officers established for Grandparents from CALD and
Indigenous Australian backgrounds or others who are vulnerable and who need
support. (Families Australia, 2007:14)

The information indicates that Grandparent Carers are taking on enormous
responsibilities when raising Australia’s next generation at a time when their own
health may be fragile. The majority of the available information on Grandparent Carer
is generic and is not reflective of the multicultural nation that Australia is. It is
imperative that the culturally diverse people of Australia need to be acknowledged
and recognised for the contribution to the Nation they provide and including the
Grandparent Carers of the CALD communities who are raising their grandchildren.
3. Methodology

3.1 Service Providers Consultation

The methodology used in consulting with the service providers was to approach a maximum of 100 key stakeholders among community and aged care services, children and / or grandparent support services and CALD specific services. The preferred method would have been to meet face-to-face with the service providers, however, where there were time constraints then email was used. A supply of available resources for Grandparent Carers was provided to each of the service providers to raise their awareness to what services are available if Grandparent Carers should access their services in the future. When conducting the consultation there was a series of standard questions established prior to commencing the consultation and the responses were collated and analysis completed. The six questions were:

Q1. Does your service assist CALD grandparent carers? If yes: Could you identify how many there are and from which country of origin they identify with?
Q2. What kind of service do you provide to this particular group?
Q3. Could you identify the referral source of how the CALD Grandparent Carers came to the service you provide. (i.e. self-referral, other services providers or their Community Leaders)
Q4. Have you identified any barriers/challenges while assisting a client from a CALD background? If yes, how did your service address them?
Q5. Do you have any other comments?
Q6. Can you make any recommendations about other services or community leaders that may be able to assist with this Needs-Gap Analysis?

The resources that were distributed to service providers were sourced and printed off from the Internet or provided by the services themselves and included:

- ‘Are you a Grandparent or Relative Carer Raising Children’ Centrelink
- MyTime for Grandparents (MyTime For Grandparents Brochure, 2011)
- KinKare Monthly Newsletter (KinKare, 2012)
- Grandparent Day Magazine (Grandparents Day Magazine)
- Grand Matters Newsletter (Time for Grandparents 2012)
- Time for Grandparents Brochure and Factsheet
- Booklet ‘Grandma, You make me want to touch the sky!’
- Queensland Council of Grandparent Carers brochures

3.2 Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Communities Consultations

The methodology used in consulting with the CALD communities was to approach the key community members and Leaders to promote consultative Forums and seek involvement from their community members. The culturally diverse communities approached here were to represent the continents of the world. The Forums were organised with the African, Asian, Spanish-Speaking, Middle Eastern, European and the Pacific Island and Maori communities. Community interpreters were available to assist at each Forum as appropriate. The majority of the Forums were held at the Logan Central Library whilst the Spanish-Speaking and Middle Eastern Forums were
held at respective respite centres. A supply of available resources for Grandparent Carers was provided to the CALD community members attending to raise their awareness to what services are available. The resources distributed were the same as those distributed to the service providers. A series of standard questions was developed and guided the consultations and the information was collated and analysis completed. The five questions were:

The questions were:

Q1. What do you think is the best thing for you taking care of your grandchildren?
Q2. What are the most difficult things about taking care of grandchildren?
Q3. What works best?
Q4. What does not work?
Q5. What is needed to address the issues you have?
4. Consultation Analysis

4.1 Service Provider Consultation Analysis

The aim of consulting with the service providers in the Needs-Gap Analysis was to determine if the service providers were aware of or able to identify CALD Grandparent Carers who may be receiving services. The results of the consultation can be found in Appendix A: Grandparent Carer Service Provider Consultation.

In response to the first question: ‘Does your service assist CALD grandparent carers? If yes: Could you identify how many there are and from which country of origin they identify with?’ There were 100 service providers contacted representing the community and aged care services, children and / or grandparent support services and CALD specific services. There was a 60% participation rate from those contacted. Amongst the participating service providers only 23.3% had an awareness of Grandparent Carers or provided services to Grandparent Carers. Some of the service providers who had this awareness were funded to support Grandparent Carers.

There were a significant number of Grandparent Carers identified across the community including CALD, ATSI and non-CALD Grandparent Carers, however the CALD Grandparent Carers were over a quarter (1/4) of those identified, indicating that there are CALD Grandparent Carers in the community. Over 5% of those identified as Grandparent Carers were actually service providers’ staff members and volunteers or alternatively there were staff that had been raised by their Grandparents.

Some of the service providers who had responded that they were not aware of Grandparent Carers receiving their services were later identified as having CALD Grandparent Carers amongst their clientele. This was not because of any intentional concealment as it is more a reflection of their service funding source and therefore information collection and disclosure criteria requirements for client support. Home and Community Care (HACC) services support those who are frail aged and those with a disability and is the funding source of many of the aged care services contacted for the Needs-Gap Analysis.

The Needs-Gap Analysis did not focus on the reasons as to why the grandparents came to be caring nor those grandparents who are denied access to their grandchildren however feedback on both areas was received. These reasons seem not to have been previously identified whilst conducting the Literature Search however may have been included in ‘other’ where this was mentioned. Two of the reasons highlighted for a Grandparent to be caring was that of a daughter who was living and studying at University interstate and had left the child with her mother. Another case was a son who was living and working interstate whilst seeking to find a new wife and had left the four grandchildren with his mother.

It was not the aim of the Needs-Gap Analysis to venture into grandparents denied access though many grandparents are. This is often caused by relationship breakdowns though in some instances legislation can an impact on the situation.
Grandchildren born as a result of a cross-cultural marriage or relationship between people from a CALD background and Australian Indigenous background, grandparents may face additional challenges on being able to have access to their grandchildren. It must be stated that there is no evidence that this is the cause of any grandparent being denied accessed, however when conducting the Needs-Gap Analysis there was a grandparent with a grandchild of this heritage identified. It may be difficult for someone from a CALD background to understand the potential impacts of this legislation when a child is to be placed in an out-of-home care situation. The Indigenous Child Placement Principle requires that there is consideration for placing Indigenous children, within the Indigenous Child Placement Principle (Section 83) Child Protection Act 1999, requires the consideration and priority of placement and support within the Indigenous family and / or community before others. It must be recognised that this Act alone is not the cause of the denied access however it may contribute depending on who is caring for the child and where the child is then located.

Many service providers were unable to assist Grandparent Carers because of their funding body Program and the service provision criteria’s which impact on their ability to do so, therefore this data is not collected nor reported on and is not a priority of the service providers to respond to.

In response to the second question: ‘What kind of service do you provide to this particular group?’ The service providers contacted were community and aged care services approximately 50%, children and / or grandparent support services approximately a quarter (1/4) and the CALD specific services were approximately (1/4). Despite children and grandparent support services being a quarter of the services (1/4) over half of the grandparents accessing services and support came through them. Primarily many of the service providers supplied information on their funded Programs and where eligible people could access services under their Program Guidelines.

In response to the third question: ‘Could you identify the referral source of how the CALD Grandparent Carers came to the service you provide. (i.e. self-referral, other services providers or their Community Leaders)’ This was to identify the referral pathway that CALD Grandparent Carers and others use to access services. Predominately the referral pathway is through other service provider or self-referral by the individual. There were a few who were referred through their Community Leaders from amongst the CALD communities however this was very limited and as one service provider stated: ‘If I did not know of these services to support Grandparent Carers then how can the Grandparent Carers know of the services?’ (Community and Aged Care Service, Redbank)

In response to the fourth question: ‘Have you identified any barriers/challenges while assisting a client from a CALD background? If yes, how did your service address them?’ The barriers and challenges for the CALD communities accessing services have been well documented and identified within the Literature with many aware of these. The feedback provided covered a range of topics inclusive of language concerns, family and personal concerns of the people involved, the culturally diverse community expectations and family structure, financial concerns, information access and personal health concerns.
Addressing and overcoming the barriers and challenges may not be simply require solutions being presented that enhance accessibility for the people who are from culturally diverse backgrounds.

The full listing of feedback on solutions and enablers that service providers have used to support CALD accessibility is located in Appendix A: the following example is one of those presented:

- **This service has a significant number of Spanish-Speaking people attending including Grandparent Carers and to achieve this success we have:**
  
  - Spanish-Speaking workers and volunteers supporting those clients
  - Spanish-Speaking clients feel that the fees (for the centre-based respite) are too expensive, so they are reduced
  - Trying to match the volunteers to the clients language and culture
  - Provision of the preferred food
  - Flexible service provision and preferred outings
  - Having the Spanish-Speaking radio programs on throughout the day
  - Trying to employ the Eden principle in providing the service to the community
  - Having the Murri (aboriginal) school children from the area attend the Centre
  - Running concurrent sessions of Spanish-Speaking and disability groups
  - They choose to interact though it could be because of the disabled Spanish-Speaking client
  - Allowing the grandchildren to attend (the centre-based respite) in holidays assists in supporting the clients.
  
  (Community and Aged Care Service, Brisbane)

In response to the fifth question: ‘**Do you have any other comments?**’ Many of the service providers welcomed the opportunity to provide further input.

The full listing of feedback on these comments that service providers have used to support CALD accessibility is located in Appendix A: the following examples are some of those presented:

- **Grandparent, kinship and foster carers are in certain situations treated the same whilst in other situations they are not, for example, when allegations or complaints around care are raised they are treated the same as foster carers however they do not receive the same financial and non-financial support. There are no Centrelink Grandparent Advisors in this area. There are concerns about general Centrelink staff adherence to maintaining privacy raised by some Grandparent Carers.**
  
  (Children and Grandparent Support Service, Gold Coast)

- **Grandparents are now recognised through the Carers Recognition Act they are not through the Centrelink Act. Although The Act talks about decision-making it does not reflect that grandparents often do not have decision-making ability even though they are caring for the children as parents still hold this responsibility. Many new and emerging CALD communities are quite young aged and do not have grandchildren yet and will not for a**
significant time yet. Many grandparents are living in poverty and may be able to access financial assistance. However because of the parental substance abuse and tendency to violence the Grandparent Carers are reluctant to claim. This is because the parents of the children have the right to remove the child which can:

- disrupt schooling and education further disrupted
- health
- social well-being
- reoccurrences of physical, sexual and emotional abuse
- may then witness substance abuse and violence
- many children have mental illness or foetal alcohol syndrome

(Children and Grandparent Support Service, Gold Coast)

In response to the six and last question: ‘Can you make any recommendations of other services or community leaders that may be able to assist with this Needs-Gap Analysis?’ Many of the service providers supported the Needs-Gap Analysis with referrals pathways to other appropriate service providers who may and often were interested in participating. These referrals enabled the Project to contact and reached 100 service providers.

Appendix A: Grandparent Carer Service Provider Consultation provides qualitative and quantitative data for further review.

4.2 Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Communities Consultations Analysis

The 56 participants in the 6 CALD Grandparent Forums self-identified as coming from 23 different countries of origin (Iceland, Norway, Germany, Egypt, Iraq, Afghanistan, Bosnia, Burundi, Congo, Sierra Leone, Burma, India, Sri Lanka, China, Fiji, Samoa, Kirribati, Tonga, El Salvador, Chile, Argentina, Peru, Spain). The grandparents attending the consultations were all caring for their grandchildren either as main carers, caring for them while the parents were not in the home, periodically having the children stay with them, or living in with the extended family.

The aim of the consultations was to enable CALD grandparents to communicate their experiences caring for their grandchildren in the Australian community, to highlight the difficulties they face in their grand-parenting roles, and to contribute their ideas of possible solutions to some of the needs and issues they are faced with. The feedback showed that the participant appreciated the opportunity to contribute to this Needs-Gap Analysis, enjoyed the process of information sharing, and expressed hope there would be future opportunities to contribute to the development of solutions for some of the issues they face.

While there is much common ground around the issues many CALD grandparents are facing, there are some marked differences. Grandparents from collective societies, such as countries in Africa or the Pacific Islands, view their role and the resulting issues somewhat different to CALD grandparents from more individualistic societies, such as Norway or Germany. Overall collective societies view the grandparents’ role as carers as a commonly expected ‘duty’, while northern European parents for instance commented they see their role as a ‘complementary’ parenting role with less responsibility. CALD grandparents also find it generally difficult to understand the term ‘carer’ and do not identify as a carer even if looking after children full time for long periods of time. Anecdotally, children in some African
communities may spend weeks, months, sometimes years living between parents and grandparents, often on a full-time basis.

More recently arrived grandparents with refugee experience, or those belonging to emerging communities experience their carer role somewhat different to the more established migrant groups. Their carer role is seen as contributing to the family’s success in the process of settlement, and they expect some help and guidance from the general community. It has been apparent, that there is also a recognisable diversity within each CALD community depending on levels of education, English language acquisition, socio-economic status, migration and settlement experience.

The opening question of “What do you think is the best thing for you taking care of your grandchildren’ showed many similarities in the responses across all cultures and individual family situations. There is a shared desire to be close to and helping their families, taking a role in raising the next generation, ‘spoiling children’ with quality time, love and attention to their needs and emotional well-being, especially when their own parents are often too busy in their lives.

The grandparents place great importance on the sharing of values, knowledge, wisdom and life-experience, and are almost unanimously the dominant and valued teachers in their families of cultural and family traditions, language, and spirituality. In the collective societies they often command respect and status for their grandparent role. Grandparents find it very rewarding to continue to be an important part in their family, which they state gives them a reason to continue living, keeps them young and involved in life, and brings respect from their community.

To the question of ‘What are the most difficult things about taking care of grandchildren’ the dominant responses cited were lack of access to accurate and translated information for CALD grandparents, support services for CALD carers, language and transport issues. Amongst the ‘difficult things’ named were issues around health and aging, which makes it hard to cope with energetic young children. Most grandparents have no access to regular or even occasional affordable child care if they need it. Often the grandparents are the carers of the children to save that cost to the family, or a not eligible to access subsidised child care.

Isolation and loneliness are seen as related to problems with access to information and transport due to inability to navigate the public transport system, or being completely dependent on help from family members for transport. One CALD grandparent, who looks after four very young children, has to walk for long distances with a baby on her back to take the older children to school, and has to do that trip a few times per day on the frequent occasions she gets called to pick up a child due to sickness. Other grandparents state they cannot take the children to outings or even to the playground as there is no transport.

Lack of access to social and cultural activities or Respite activities due to child care responsibilities are cited as a difficult issue, and many seniors feel ignored or not understood by Aged Care Services, clubs, community groups and their own friendship circle. Some grandparents are forced to take up paid work again to provide financially, others had to give up work to take on child care responsibility. Those in work stated that employers are not prepared to be considerate in regards to child care responsibilities.
Language barriers appeared in several guises. Lack of translated material; lack of interpreter use by service providers; lack of access to English classes for grandparents who look after children; losing the ability to speak English due to the aging process; and grandchildren not learning or maintaining the original language therefore not able to communicate successfully with the grandparents.

Technology presents itself as another barrier to grandparent carers. As mentioned, many seniors experience barriers to using computers for a variety of reasons and are unable to search for information or forms on-line, or due to language barriers over the phone. They also highlight that many service providers seem to expect to be ‘found’, rather than finding the seniors in the community. Often grandparents become dependent on the grandchildren for help with technology they cannot master. Public transport also relies on coping with technology such as the managing of the Go-Card, which the many seniors find too difficult to do. Interestingly those CALD seniors who did not have the full benefit of comprehensive settlement support services seemed to be less confident with public transport or accessing information.

Not a single consulted CALD Grandparent was aware of their rights or any services they could access to support them, and almost every person complained that they did not know where to find information. One of the reasons is, that they are often guided to research information ‘on-line’, which is challenging to most of them. Access to legal advice and support in case of problems around access and custody, problems with the Department of Child Safety were difficult to understand and manage for those affected.

Visa issues came into play for grandparents from various countries, such as India and the Pacific Islands. Some are on visas without entitlements arriving here to assist with child care responsibilities and are completely dependent on their children. Abusive relationships can develop within the families and complete dependency on their children leaves little choices other than to remain carers. The question was raised and discussed, whether Australia discriminates or differentiates between cultures when it comes to adopting or fostering grandchildren. One grandmother present shared her experience over adopting a fourth grandchild the ‘Pasifika way’. Despite the biological mother giving her child up to be raised by this well known community member due to her own inability to raise the child, this is not recognised by Australia, often due to the difficulty dealing with ‘non-paper-societies’. Expensive legal bills in this particular case have to be covered by the Pacific Island community to help this grandmother deal with the expensive legal costs. She was told by her barrister, that some African refugee families or Muslim families are doing the same, however do not face the same complications and costs she has as they deal with the Department of Immigration and Citizenship.

Negative impressions or traumatising experiences with Department of Child Safety was a point to mention for a number of different CALD participants. Especially amongst the recently arrived grandparents. The before mentioned term ‘carer’ is differently understood in different cultures. The rights and responsibilities for grandparent under Australian law are difficult to grasp and frightening for many, due to feared consequences within the family and/or their communities. The insecurity over not being able to punish children and not being provided with alternatives to physical punishment was raised in almost every consultation. Involvement of the Department of Child Safety with removal of children, sometimes into Australian families, rather than supporting their grandparents to take care of them seems to
have left many affected and suspicious of the Australian system. Even European grandparents have stated that this Department lacks in its duty of care and ought to have ‘a change in culture’ as it is ‘fraught, corrupted, too Anglo-Saxon – culturally completely insensitive – with workers that could be our children and have no idea of parenting’.

**Asking ‘What works best?’** had the participants reflecting on trials and errors. Generally they strongly agree with each other on the fact that there is a clear difference in the power relationships when a grandparent lives with the extended family. Living away from the grandchildren often involves negotiating the roles grandparents’ play, while by living together it is often assumed that grandparents have to take automatically such responsibility. Rarely is there a negotiation. At the basis of satisfying and successful grand-parenting, it is paramount to engage in positive communication with the parents of the children around expectations, boundaries, rules and shared values. Grandparents can be generous, but should not allow themselves to be taken advantage of.

Guiding the grandchildren on the issues they face, have their trust, being confidential are important in the relationship with the youngsters, however, grandparents felt they should not interfere in their relationship with their parents. Equally, grandparents agree that interfering in the life decisions of the children or their parents will always have negative consequences for the grandparent.

Grandparents see themselves as important pillars, guardians of culture, language, skills, values, wisdom and knowledge. The grandparents feel they have the skills to teach, guide, advise, resolve conflicts and be recognised figures in family and community. They feel under utilised by educators and community alike.

**‘What does not work?’** resulted in an extensive list related to the difficulties mentioned in the first question, (see appendix B). Worth mentioning here is the fact that limiting HACC services to exclude grandchildren does not work for grandparents with carer responsibilities.

Despite a policy to the opposite, Child Safety’s practice in regard to not involving CALD grandparents or their CALD community elders in the discussions of care, custody or foster care needs to be revisited. An example was provided from the African community, where a child was removed from the parent for two years and came back no longer speaking and understanding the mother’s language. The grandmother, who lived with her daughter, could have taken on the care of that child if provided with housing & financial support elsewhere.

Affordable housing options are claimed to be very limited for seniors. To be able to support their grandchildren, grandparents need to be able to either live close to them, or afford renting appropriate housing to have the children live with them. Either is a challenge.

When grandparents take on a role of support as a carer, they feel they do not have access to appropriate, culturally sensitive advice from an experienced person. Often they take on more responsibilities than they can cope with due to their age or health conditions. Their own children make big life decisions, such as having another baby, or getting a bigger mortgage without consulting with their parents. Grandparents feel they are ‘budgeted into the life choices of their children’. Issues that trouble them
come up unforeseen, and could have been prevented in a timely manner if there would have been advice or guidance. This includes being taken advantage of financially. Grandparents who are carers feel they need to be financially supported. The benefits they live on are often not sufficient to provide for the increasing needs of growing children.

‘What is needed to address the issues you have?’ was an important final question, and maybe the most satisfying for all participants. The CALD grandparents had very clear ideas what was needed to prevent, assist and solve issues in the short, medium and long term. It has to be pointed out here, that while there is much common ground amongst all CALD grandparent carers, there are differences based on cultural understanding, tradition, migration and settlement experience, levels of education, socio-economic status and English language acquisition. Following, without assigning an order of importance, some of the suggested needs are summed up:

- **Accurate and complete information and advise, available in community languages, and advocacy support for CALD Grandparents.** Phone, computer & print material need to be complemented by face-to-face advice and information sessions for those who are less literate. Grandparents suggest a One-Stop-Shop, at Centrelink with a ‘Seniors Worker’ who cannot only provide information and referral, but individual advocacy with the help of interpreters. Information sessions at settlement stages and in community settings are also seen as useful.

- **Aged Care Services** need to accommodate children of grandparent carers in activities, or seek to explore creative ways to have the children cared for while grandparents attend their services. Additional assistance by HACC services should be explored to assist grandparents with their carer responsibility (some grandparents said they are well able to care for the grandchildren, but require help with some domestic chores).

- **A National Grandparents Day** in recognition/celebration of grandparent’s achievements and dedication. Support activities for grandparents to be ‘formally recognised’ and praised for the work they do. This would increase respect for elders by young and the general community, setting positive examples to emulate.

- **Child Care and Child Development** available not only to those who can afford it. Grandparent carers need access to regular or occasional child care when they feel unwell, or simply to help children get rid of excess energy. While grandparents feel that children are the responsibility of the individual family, the government is seen as charged with the responsibility of universal, equitable, accessible, high-quality. That means Kindergartens, sport, art or interest groups should be obtainable by all children. Child and Youth Activities should be subsidised either low or no fee, and not leave these crucial services in the hands of the for-profit sector.

- **Child Advocates** for all children at the centre of custody disputes. Located away from Child Safety, a mature and experienced counsellor who can accompany the child over the years of growing up can develop a trusting
relationship with them. A true advocate who can detect when things are not going well, can support the child who wants to be in contact with a parent/grandparent or not, inform the parties and keep in contact, or protect the child appropriately. ‘Empower the child. True child safety’, as one grandparent carer stated.

- **Child Safety** it was suggested, should have a complete change in culture around child safety and custody issues. ‘Best to close it and start again…’. It is seen and experienced as corrupt, culturally insensitive, with high turn-over workers that are inexperienced and too young. The focus there is on law, not the wellbeing and interest of the child. Grandparents and the community want to be consulted when child safety issues need addressing, not largely ignored as is currently the fact.

- **Continued English Classes for grandparents** which offer child care support.

- **Financial Support for Grandparent Carers** should reflect that of foster care or parent benefit, or be a percentage of the care they provide. This can also assist in obtaining adequate housing and meeting children’s needs. It is important to recognise, that grandparent carers save considerable cost for the taxpayer and benefit children immeasurably. Supporting grandparents is an investment into the future of a healthy next generation.

- **Government/council/community grants** to encourage ALL grandparents to feel appreciated, wanted, needed and rewarded.

- **Grandparents Support Groups and Newsletters** for peer support, exchange, information, learning from each other, guest speakers, courses, news, skill development, building community, and supported social activities.

- **Legal advice and possibly free legal support** for grandparents who are dealing with access, custody, child safety or visa issues. The grandparents who have spent years looking after their grandchildren on repeated visitor visas feel they deserve and should receive permanent visas once the children are raised. This would benefit the entire family and the general society, saving significant suffering.

- **Multicultural Hubs** for the CALD community to utilise to come together, support each other, and conduct cultural activities. This would benefit youngster to elders. Communal activities can support cultural learning and language maintenance.

- **Schools and Child Care** to recognise the importance of involving grandparents in the multicultural education, language acquisition and maintenance for children.

- **Transport** issues and solutions are multifaceted. Get rid of Go-Card and have a universal Seniors Card that doesn’t require accessing technology. Assistance with getting children to and from school when other transport is not available, especially when a child gets sick. Low cost or no cost. Flexibility
by Aged Care providers in regards to ‘boundaries of service’, and children accessing transport as well to certain activities. Community buses could be accepting the Go Card/Seniors Transport Card.

Appendix B: Grandparent Carer CALD Consultations provides qualitative and quantitative data for further review.

4.3 Findings:

1. There is limited research on CALD Grandparent Carers which is contributing to their invisibility within this family-sub group.

2. There is no national peak-body inclusive of CALD grandparents to support grandparent carers or advocate on their behalf.

3. There is disparity in the financial and non-financial support provided to grandparent carers based on how they became carers either as formal (statutory), informal (non-statutory) or as foster carers. CALD Grandparent Carers are not only supporting their children and grandchildren, they are supporting the Nation as in their role as carers reduce the pressure on the Foster Care system.

4. CALD Grandparent Carers across cultures have identified that access to information which is accurate, complete, relevant and timely to their inquiries is often not provided, leaving them frustrated. Many cannot understand the system and processes involved, either because the systems in their countries of origin were different, didn’t exist, or were less restrictive for maintaining compliance.

5. There are barriers to legal advice and legal support for visa, custody and access issues without an advocacy service for grandparents. Various visa issues for CALD grandparents or CALD grandchildren arise in the CALD communities. In some communities grandparents arrive in Australia on temporary visas without entitlements, required to raise the young children. After many years of caring responsibility, they are sent home. Issues of elder abuse have been highlighted in this context. Some families face considerable legal and migration agent bills. In other cases the Department of Immigration is not accepting kinship care arrangements such as the ‘Pasifika’ way, were non-biological children arrive here after ‘adoptions’ in a paper-less society, but do not necessarily get accepted to remain in Australia. Legal advice and legal support bills have to be borne by the individual or the community. There have been concerns over discrimination within the system.

6. Access to Child Care is a dominant issue for many grandparents and multifaceted. Often they are required to assist the family to save this considerable cost, and they have no access to child care when they need the children to be taken care of occasionally, or regularly. Access to childhood development opportunities for young children to teenagers are out of reach often due to cost, opportunity or transport issues.

7. Isolation and loneliness are recurring themes for many CALD grandparents, in part related to lack of transport options, language difficulties, lack of
accessible information on what is available to them, dependency on family, child care responsibilities and inflexibility of Aged Care providers, clubs, and community services. They yearn to speak their language and be involved in cultural activities, but see no opportunities.

8. The Department of Child Safety is not experienced as a service that has the best interest of children and their carers at heart. Especially amongst the recently arrived grandparents. The rights and responsibilities for grandparent under Australian law are difficult to grasp and frightening for many, due to feared consequences that they are made aware of. Insecurity over parenting practices and questioning of the grandparents’ parenting skills, leave many grandparents wondering how to cope. Involvement of the Department of Child Safety with removal of children, sometimes into Australian families, rather than supporting their grandparents to take care of them seems to have left many affected and suspicious of the Australian system. The Child Safety system is understood as mono-cultural and inflexible, with workers that have no cross-cultural skills.

9. There is no data collection on relevant data on CALD clients by the Department of Child Safety and other government services.

10. CALD grandchildren who are removed from their families and placed with families from different cultural backgrounds are disadvantaged through loss of language, cultural connection, close contact with family and community.

11. Language issues appear in several guises. Lack of translated material; lack of interpreter use by service providers; lack of access to English classes for grandparents who look after children; older people unable to acquire a new language; loosing the ability to speak English due to the aging process; and grandchildren not learning or maintaining the original language therefore not able to communicate successfully with the grandparents.

12. Problems with accessing transport is cited as a barrier to enjoy a full life, participate in activities in the community, support the children with social activities or transport to and from school, accessing aged care services. Problems with language, problems with technology and financial constraints are cited.

13. Grandparent carers are aging, often accompanied by their own health care issues, whilst they are looking after grandchildren. The required effort, time, energy, knowledge of systems and supports is often too much.

14. Grandparent carers have identified that employers are generally ignorant or not supportive if grandparent carers needs time off due to carer responsibilities. Many grandparents have to return to part-time work to provide for the needs for their grandchildren.

15. Technology is challenging many CALD Grandparents who experience barriers to using computers for a variety of reasons and are unable to search for information or forms on-line, or due to language barriers over the phone. They also highlight that many service providers seem to expect to be ‘found’, rather than finding the seniors in the community. Often grandparents become
dependent on the grandchildren for help with technology they cannot master. Public transport also relies on coping with technology such as the managing of the Go-Card, which the many seniors find too difficult to do. Interestingly those CALD seniors who did not have the full benefit of comprehensive settlement support services seemed to be less confident with public transport or accessing information.

16. CALD grandparents see themselves as an untapped resource and want to be consulted and contribute to the younger generations in many different ways, when supported. Sharing language, culture, food, knowledge and gained wisdom.

4.4 Recommendations:

17. Further in-depth research needs to be conducted into the situation of grandparents as carers, inclusive of the CALD experience. This will reduce their invisibility and vulnerability as a sub-family group. Raising awareness and disseminating knowledge gained will assist service providers and communities to have a better understanding and inform their responses in terms of service provision.

18. Establishment of a national peak body for Grandparent Carers, inclusive of all grandparents irrespective of cultural or linguistic background.

19. Financial support for grandparent carers is important, and should reflect that of foster carers or parenting benefits so they can provide adequately for the needs of their grandchildren. The Carers Allowance should be made available grandparents regardless whether they are formal or informal carers.

20. Accurate and complete information and advice, available in community languages, and advocacy support for CALD Grandparents should be accessible. Phone, computer & print material need to be complemented by face-to-face advice, as well as information sessions for those who are less literate. A One-Stop-Shop at Centrelink with a ‘Seniors Worker’ who cannot only provide information and referral, but individual advocacy with the help of interpreters could be considered.

21. Legal advice and possibly free legal support for grandparents who are dealing with access, custody, child safety or visa issues. The grandparents who have spent years looking after their grandchildren on repeated visitor visas feel they deserve and should receive permanent visas once the children are raised. This would benefit the entire family and the general society, saving significant suffering.

22. Child Care and Child Development available not only to those who can afford it. Grandparent carers need access to regular or occasional child care when they feel unwell, or simply to help children get rid of excess energy. While grandparents feel that children are the responsibility of the individual family, the government is seen as charged with the responsibility of universal, equitable, accessible, high-quality education. That means Kindergartens, sport; art or interest groups should be obtainable by all children. Child and
Youth Activities should be subsidised either low or no fee, and not leave these crucial services in the hands of the for-profit sector.

23. Isolation and loneliness are seen as related to problems with access to information and transport due to inability to navigate the public transport system, or being completely dependent on help from family members for transport. Some grandparents have great difficulties taking the children on outings or even to the playground as there is no transport. Flexibility of community services, clubs, aged care services, and child and youth services are called upon to provide solutions. Hubs for cultural activities were young and old can meet could be supported. Social and cultural activities that are supported can allow grandparents to socialise with their cultural and language groups.

24. The Department for Child Safety should be involving CALD grandparents and their communities in developing culturally sensitive and responsive family interventions and support. Grandparents and the community want to be consulted when child safety issues need addressing. Child Advocates should be available for all children at the centre of custody disputes. Located away from Child Safety, a mature and experienced counsellor who can accompany the child over the years of growing up can develop a trusting relationship with them. A true advocate who can detect when things are not going well, can support the child who wants to be in contact with a parent/grandparent or not, inform the parties and keep in contact, or protect the child appropriately.

25. Uniformity across all government funded services on collecting relevant data on CALD clientele.

26. The Department of Child Safety should be required to do what is possible to place CALD children with carers from the same cultural or language group.

27. Not every senior is able to continue learning a new language; however, those who wish to continue learning or maintaining their English should be able to do so, receiving assistance with their child care responsibility. Conversely, creative ways need to be explored to keep languages other than English spoken in the families and the community. Teaching of LOTE at schools or university is one option; another is to involve CALD grandparents from Child Care to adult experiences in their attempts to keep their languages spoken. The value of these needs to be publically discussed and promoted.

28. Transport issues and solutions are multifaceted. Replacing the Go-Card and with a universal Seniors Card that doesn't require accessing technology should be explored. Assistance with community transport options at low or no-cost need to be on the agenda, especially getting children to and from school when other transport is not available, for instance when a child gets sick. Low cost or no cost. Flexibility is advised for Aged Care providers in regards to 'boundaries of service', and children accessing transport as well to certain activities. Community buses could be accepting the Go-Card/Seniors Transport Card.

29. Development of a coordinated response from community services to support the needs of the CALD Grandparents Carers around the care need of their
grandchildren, as well as their own needs. Aged Care service delivery needs to be flexible to respond to requests of assistance, and be considerate of grandchildren where possible.

30. Raising awareness amongst employers in regards to the grandparents in their workforce and the particular needs that arise for them. Providing training in regard to diversity in the workplace.

31. Technology is a barrier to locate and access services. Face-to-face services provided by a ‘Seniors Worker’ in an easily accessible agency such as Centrelink, would be a ‘One-Stop-Shop’ for much of the information, referral and advocacy required for all grandparents. The finding and filling in of Forms is another issue that could be assisted there. The Go-Card needs to be revisited and a Seniors Travel Card should be explored.

32. A national Grandparents Day in recognition/celebration of grandparent’s achievements and dedication. Support activities for grandparents to be ‘formally recognised’ and praised for the work they do. This would increase respect for elders by young and the general community, setting positive examples to emulate. Government/council/community grants to encourage ALL grandparents to feel appreciated, wanted, needed and rewarded.

4.5 Summary

The completion of this Needs-Gap Analysis is the culmination of several months of connecting with both service providers and members of the culturally and linguistically diverse communities in the West Moreton/Metro South and South Coast areas. The outcome of the consultations conducted have not only highlighted important issues and concerns raised by both groups, but have resulted in suggested ways forward to address some of the issues they face in the short and longer term.

The Needs-Gap Analysis reflects the fact that CALD grandparents are proud to be able to care and provide for the needs of their grandchildren, feeling confident of their abilities, and are motivated to contribute to a better future for them and the community they live in. However, it also shows, that many do so in difficult circumstances related to their unfamiliarity with systems and services, language and cultural issues, and with very little assistance from mainstream services that could support, but are sometimes unfamiliar with their particular needs.

It is hoped that this Needs-Gap Analysis has not only provided the opportunity for CALD grandparents and service providers to voice their views, concerns, raised awareness of hidden issues and gaps in service provision, but that this serves as a starting point for funding bodies to support further research and lead to funding of services to support all grandparent carers in a multicultural society.
5. Conclusion

5.1 Conclusion

The completion of the Needs-Gap Analysis is the culmination of several months of connecting with service providers and key community members / leaders from the culturally diverse communities in the West Moreton / Metro South and South Coast areas. This research has not only highlighted issues and concerns, but has collected and presented possible ways forward as suggested by CALD Grandparent Carers and service providers.

While Grandparent Carers are raising their grandchildren generally with limited assistance, often in the face of very difficult circumstances, the voice of CALD Grandparent Carers has rarely been taken into account. This Needs-Gap Analysis has contributed in a small way to a better understanding of the lived experiences of CALD grandparents, and of their ‘hidden issues’ while being a carer in an unknown / unfamiliar system.

Funding bodies, community care organisations and employers are encouraged to increase their understanding by investing in research and program development that responds in culturally sensitive and inclusive ways to support CALD Grandparents Carers in the raising of the next generation in a multicultural Australia. We need to more fully understand why Grandparent Carers are on the increase, and how the community needs to respond.