



# STAYING SAFE IN A NEW CULTURE:

A Guide for Young Refugees and Migrants



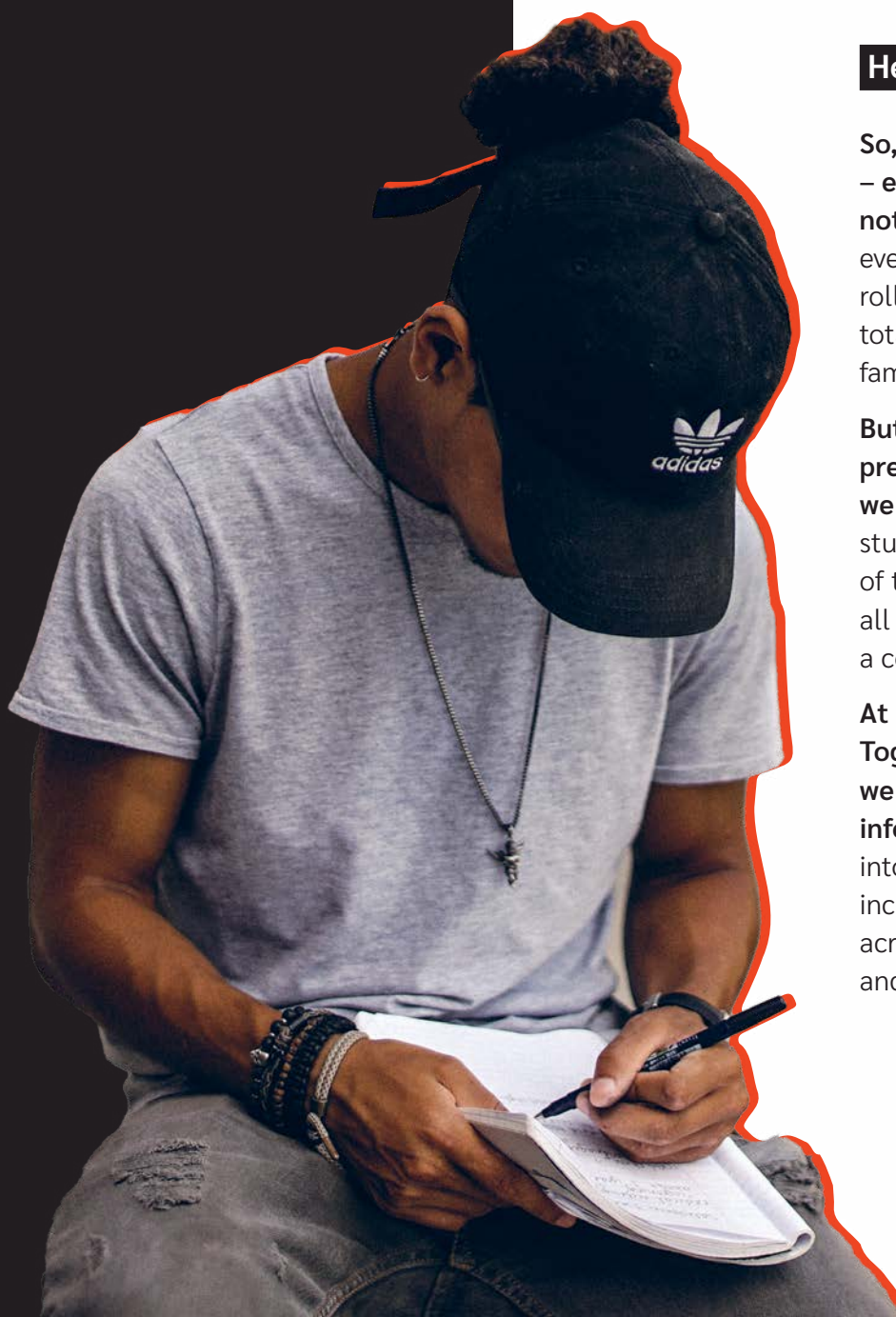
## Acknowledgment of country

Spectrum acknowledges First Nations Peoples as the Traditional Custodians of the land and acknowledges and pays respect to their elders past and present.



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## Hey there,

So, you've arrived in this new country – exciting, right? Let's be real, it's not all sunshine and rainbows. Leaving everything you know behind can be a rollercoaster of emotions. From feeling totally lost in translation to missing the fam back home, we get it.

**But guess what? Us young folks, we're pretty good at this stuff. Studies say we adapt like champs.** Yeah, we might stumble a bit at first, but that's all part of the adventure. And hey, navigating all those new services? It's like cracking a code, but we're up for the challenge.

**At Spectrum, we've got your back. Together with young people like you, we've put together this resource with info to keep you safe** and plugged into all the services you need. We've included some terms that you'll come across that will help you understand and talk about issues you might face.

# ABOUT THIS GUIDE

Welcome to *Staying Safe in a New Culture: A Guide for Young Refugees and Migrants*. Included are six topics followed by useful links and contacts.

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*“... many young people from refugee backgrounds and new arrivals face ... complex processes and unrealistic expectations and to be honest it can be quite discouraging and overwhelming. As someone with a refugee background myself, I deeply understand the challenges we face.”*

*“Let’s ensure no young person is left behind because the path to success is made too complicated. By making resources accessible, we pave the way for a generation that can confidently achieve their goals.” - Zainab*



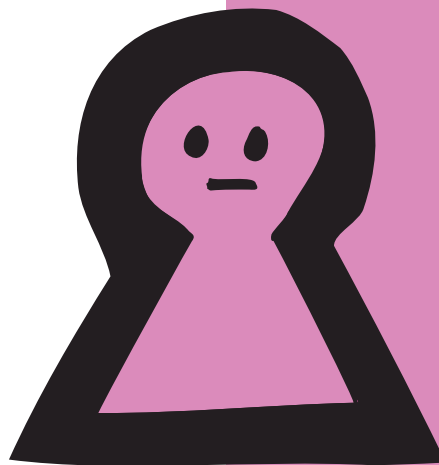
# CONSENT

Thinking about consent helps us understand if everybody feels comfortable and safe.

**Consent** means agreeing to something freely and willingly. It's important in many situations, like medical procedures, sharing personal info or images, and physical or sexual interactions.

**Communication with partners should be open and honest.** Ask for and give consent clearly and respectfully. Pay attention to non-verbal cues and body language to understand comfort levels.

**Continuous and Revocable Consent:** Consent is needed throughout sexual activity. It's important to understand that someone can change their mind at any time, and you must respect that decision right away.



## **Sexual consent:**

*"...in our culture as a woman if something sexually happened to you it's your fault and if you talked about it, they would judge you, learning about the consent and your rights in this context is important to keep us safe and to learn how to speak about your rights." - Sara*

**Incapacity to Consent:** Recognize when someone can't give consent, like when they're drunk, unconscious, or underage. There are legal consequences for having sex with someone who can't consent.

**Age of Consent Laws:** In Victoria, the legal age of consent is 16. If there's a big age gap between partners or if one has power over the other, there are extra legal rules. Make sure to check your state or territory's laws for more details and exceptions.

# LEGAL RIGHTS

## Interacting with the Police and Criminal Law

- **Providing personal information:** It's against the law to refuse to give your name and address, or to give them a fake or false name or address.
- **Your Rights:** You have the right to ask why you are being arrested, and the right to contact a lawyer.
- **Searches:** Police can search you if they have a warrant, or if they reasonably suspect you have illegal items.
- **Arrests:** You must be informed of the reason for your arrest. You should avoid resisting arrest.
- **Videoing:** You are allowed to record interactions with police.
- **Protective Service Officers (PSOs):** Work on public transport and have similar powers to police.



Understanding your legal rights and responsibilities helps you look after yourself and your friends. It's important to know laws that can affect you.



## Fines

### Myki Fines

**Infringement Notices:** Issued for not having a valid ticket or failing to produce a valid concession card.

**Your options:** Pay the fine, request a review if you believe it was unjust, or dispute it in court.

**More information:** Transport fines | Public Transport Victoria ([ptv.vic.gov.au](http://ptv.vic.gov.au)) Protective Services Officers.

### Police Fines

**Types:** Issued for various offenses such as traffic violations, public transport offenses, etc.

**Your options:** Pay the fine, apply for an internal review, or contest the fine in court.

**More information:** Police powers and my rights | Youth Law Australia ([yla.org.au/vic/topics](http://yla.org.au/vic/topics)).



## Employment Law

### Bullying at Work

**Definition:** Workplace bullying is repeated unreasonable behaviour directed towards an employee that creates a risk to health and safety.

**Your options:** Report bullying to your employer or your supervisor within the organisation. If unresolved, contact Fair Work Commission.

### Underpayment

**Pay:** you must be paid at least the minimum wage or the award rate for the type of work you do. If you get paid cash, you have no legal protections and it's against the law.

**Identification:** Check your pay slips and compare them with your employment contract and the relevant award or agreement.

**Your options:** Raise the issue with your employer. If unresolved, contact the Fair Work Ombudsman.

## Unfair Contracts and Debts (Gyms and Phones)

### Unfair Contracts

**Definition:** Contracts that create a significant imbalance in the rights and obligations of the parties, to the detriment of the consumer.

**Your options:** Review the terms, seek legal advice, and dispute unfair terms.

### Debts

**Issues:** Unauthorised charges, hidden fees, difficulty in cancelling contracts.

**Your options:** Contact the service provider to resolve disputes, lodge a complaint with the Telecommunications Industry Ombudsman (for phones) or the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (for gyms).



**Legal rights:** “I really wanted to know about my rights in school, work and in daily life when I first came to Australia. Without knowing your rights, you are lost.” - Omar



# MENTAL HEALTH

and wellbeing awareness

## Understanding Mental Health in the Context of Resettlement

Mental health is feeling good enough to handle life's ups and downs, work well, and help your community. For refugees, keeping mentally healthy is tough because of the difficult times they've been through and the challenges of starting over.

### Important Terms

**Trauma:** Emotional and psychological response to deeply distressing events, often experienced by refugees due to conflict or displacement.

**Culture Shock:** The feeling of disorientation experienced when encountering a new culture.

**Resilience:** The ability to recover from or adjust easily to adversity or change.



**Mental health and wellbeing:** “In our culture it’s rare to talk about it and if something mentally bad happened to you it’s preferable to stay quite or else you will be judged by the community and the people around you. Especially for men we are not expected to show our emotions even in stressful situations, so it’s good to learn about the services that could help with that.” - Ahmed





## Things That Affect Mental Health After Moving

**Language Problems:** It's hard to understand and be understood in a new language.

**Cultural Shock and Identity:** Struggling to fit in with a new culture while still being yourself.

**Homesickness:** Feeling sad about leaving your home and people you love.

**Being Treated Unfairly:** Experiencing unfairness or being looked down on in a new place.

## Ways to Cope and Be Strong

**Talk to Others:** Talk to friends, family, or groups who can help you feel better.

**Stay Connected to Your Culture:** Keep doing things that are part of your culture or religion to feel connected.

**Do Things You Like:** Do things that make you happy and proud of who you are.

**Relax Your Mind:** Use techniques like deep breathing or focusing on the present moment to calm down when you're stressed.

MEN  
ALL  
CRY

MEN  
ALL  
CRY

MEN  
ALL  
CRY

Be strong

Be kind

Be bold

Be

Be Proud

## Family Violence

Understanding Family Violence:

- **Definition:** Includes physical, sexual, emotional, and psychological abuse by a family member.
- **Actions:** Report to police, obtain a Family Violence Intervention Order (FVIO), seek support from specialized services.

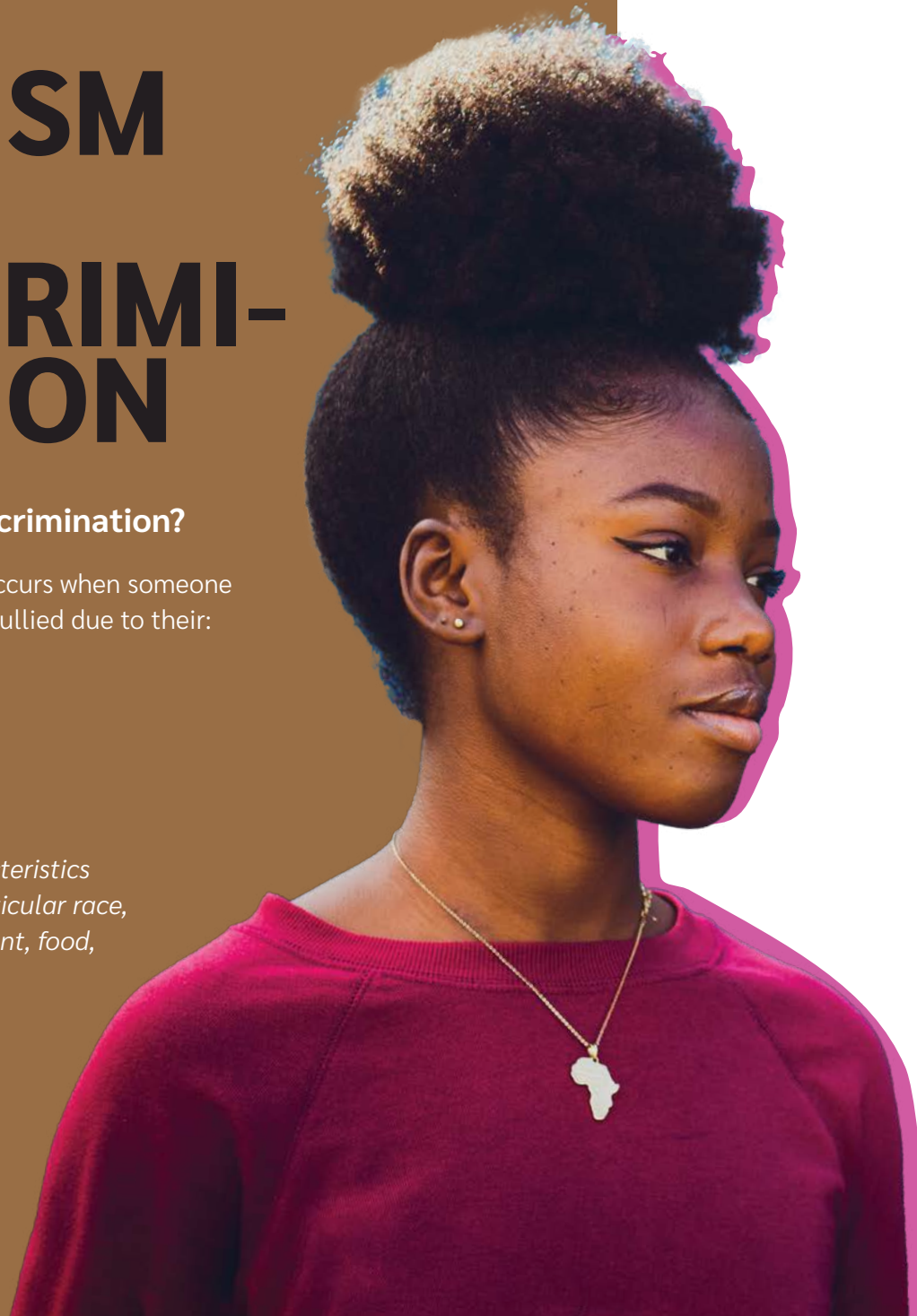
# RACISM AND DISCRIMINATION

## What is Race Discrimination?

Race discrimination occurs when someone is treated unfairly or bullied due to their:

- Ancestry
- Ethnic background
- Nationality
- Race\*
- Skin colour

*\* This includes characteristics associated with a particular race, such as clothing, accent, food, or cultural practices.*



## Types of Discrimination

**Direct Discrimination:** When someone is treated less favourably because of their race or ethnicity.

**Indirect Discrimination:** When a policy or practice applies to everyone but disadvantages a particular racial group.

### Microaggressions

Subtle, often unintentional, discriminatory comments or behaviours directed at a marginalized group.

### Racial Profiling

When law enforcement or other authorities target individuals for suspicion of crime based on their race or ethnicity.

### Structural Racism

When organisations (like companies, governments, or businesses) have policies, laws or rules that disadvantage or exclude certain ethnic or racial groups.

## Legal Protections in Victoria

Victoria's laws protect your right to equal treatment, regardless of your background, appearance, beliefs, or language. No one should endure racism in their home or community.

## Hate Speech and Vilification

The *Racial and Religious Tolerance Act (RRTA)* prohibits vilification, which includes any behaviour that incites hatred, contempt, revulsion, or ridicule against a person or group based on race or religion. This applies to conduct in public, such as in the street, at community events, and in the media.

## Reporting Racism

If you experience or witness racism, it is important to report it. The Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission ([humanrights.vic.gov.au](http://humanrights.vic.gov.au)) can assist with this.

### Reporting racism can help to:

- Hold people accountable for their actions
- Stop racist behaviour becoming normalised
- Prevent other people from having to experience racism in the future



### **Racism and discrimination:**

*“I wasn’t introduced fully to these terms before I came here, and as someone new to the country and who goes to school, everyone has different cultures and there’s a lot of bullying and racism, so I think it’s important to know and detect if I was being discriminated against and what’s my rights and how to make the right action.” - Ruth*



# CYBER SAFETY

## Cyberbullying

Cyberbullying involves using the internet to harass or bully someone, causing them emotional distress. It can occur on social media, games, apps, or any online platform. Cyberbullying includes posts, comments, messages, chats, livestreams, memes, images, videos, and emails.

### How to Protect Yourself

**Block:** Block the person who is bullying you.

**Report:** Report the abuse to the platform where it occurred.

**Seek Support:** Talk to a trusted adult, friend, or use support services like eSafety.



## Image-Based Abuse

Image-based abuse involves sharing or threatening to share intimate photos or videos without consent. It is illegal and not the victim's fault.

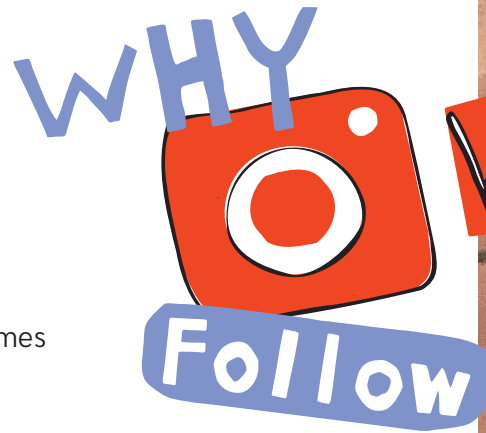
### Actions to Take

- **Collect Evidence** - Save screenshots, recordings, usernames, and web addresses.
- **Report It** - Report to the media service first; if unresolved, report to eSafety.
- **Safety Concerns** - Contact local police or call triple zero (000) if you're in physical danger.
- **Stop Contact** - Cease all contact with the abuser, but do not block them until advised by eSafety or police.

### Blocking Intimate Images or Videos

**Under 18** - Use [takeitdown.ncmec.org](https://takeitdown.ncmec.org) to prevent sharing on major social media platforms.

**18 and Older** - Use [StopNCII.org](https://StopNCII.org) for the same purpose.



WHEN YOU  
CAN LEAD

## Online Dating Safety

Online dating can be enjoyable but comes with risks.

Tips for Staying Safe:

- **Limit Information:** Be cautious about the personal information and location you share online.
- **Move Slowly:** Don't rush into moving to different communication platforms.
- **Inform Others:** Let a trusted person know your plans.
- **Screenshot Profiles:** Share the profile of the person you're meeting with someone you trust.
- **Stay Public:** Meet in busy, public places.
- **Create an 'Out':** Have a pre-planned reason to leave if needed.
- **Trust Your Instincts:** If something feels off, it probably is.

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### How to Report to eSafety Commission:

Go to the **eSafety website (esafety.gov.au)** for reporting forms and guidance.



**Leadership:** “The journey of being a leader starts with showing up and being curious. So search for networking events and leadership conferences near you. Trust me, that’s the best way to figure out what leadership’s all about.” - Sara





# GRATITUDE

We would like to thank the young people who helped guide this resource: Sara Mohamed, Ruth Haliemelecot, Ahmed Ishag, Omar Ibrahim, Khadija Ibrahim, Victor Bwenge, Yousra Idris, Abolfazl Feizi, Madona Ayad, Sakina Muradi, Zainab Muradi, Rahima Muradi

## Thanks to the organisations who contributed:

- |                                |   |
|--------------------------------|---|
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| Design by Albie                | Rainbow Muse  |
| Foundation House               | Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission |
| Kattattak                      | Westjustice   |
| Latin Stories Australia        |   |

# USEFUL RESOURCES AND CONTACTS

## Cyber safety

eSafety Commissioner [esafety.gov.au](https://www.esafety.gov.au)

Take It Down [takeitdown.ncmec.org](https://www.takeitdown.ncmec.org)

## General support services

Ask Izzy [askizzy.org.au](https://www.askizzy.org.au)

## Legal rights and responsibilities

West Justice [westjustice.org.au](https://www.westjustice.org.au)

Northern Community Legal Centre  
[northernclc.org.au](https://www.northernclc.org.au)

Fair Work Ombudsman [fairwork.gov.au](https://www.fairwork.gov.au)

Fair Work Commission [fwc.gov.au](https://www.fwc.gov.au)

Migrant Workers Centre  
[migrantworkers.org.au](https://www.migrantworkers.org.au)

Melbourne Activist Legal Support  
[mals.au/resources/rights](https://www.mals.au/resources/rights)

Legal Aid Victoria [legalaid.vic.gov.au](https://www.legalaid.vic.gov.au)

Police Accountability  
**Police Accountability Project – IMCL**

## LGBTIQA+ services

Many Coloured Sky [manycolouredsky.org](https://www.manycolouredsky.org)

Queerspace (the Drum) [queerspace.org.au](https://www.queerspace.org.au)

Minus 18 [minus18.org.au](https://www.minus18.org.au)

## Mental health and wellbeing

Foundation House [foundationhouse.org.au](https://www.foundationhouse.org.au)

Orygen [orygen.org.au](https://www.orygen.org.au)

Headspace [headspace.org.au](https://www.headspace.org.au)

## Multicultural family violence services

InTouch Multicultural Centre against Family Violence [intouch.org.au](https://www.intouch.org.au)

Centre for Multicultural Youth [cmy.net.au](https://www.cmy.net.au)

Drummond Street Services  
(the Drum) [ds.org.au](https://www.ds.org.au)

## Multicultural youth services

Centre for Multicultural Youth [cmy.net.au](https://www.cmy.net.au)

## Racism and discrimination

Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission [humanrights.vic.gov.au](https://www.humanrights.vic.gov.au)

## Water safety

Life Saving Victoria [lsv.com.au](https://www.lsv.com.au)

In an emergency, call 000

*Disclaimer\* All information in this booklet is correct at time of printing (July 2024)*



## About Spectrum

Supporting people with migrant and refugee backgrounds to feel at home in Australia

Founded in 1980, Spectrum Migrant Resource Centre is a not-for-profit organisation, delivering culturally appropriate and responsive services to people with migrant and refugee backgrounds living in Melbourne's northern and western regions.

Our service areas include migration and settlement, family relationship and parenting, social and economic inclusion, aged care, disability, and family carers.



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03 9300 8600

To find out how we can support you and your family, call us or visit [spectrumvic.org.au](http://spectrumvic.org.au)