

# CONFERENCE TO SHAPE THE FUTURE OF MULTICULTURAL AUSTRALIA KICKS OFF IN HOBART

The 2019 Federation Ethnic Communities' Councils of Australia (FECCA) National Conference kicks off today, with around 500 leaders from Australia's diverse multicultural communities converging on Hobart for the two-day event.

The conference, titled *PURPOSE. LEADERSHIP. PROGRESS: 40 years and beyond*, will put in place a strategy for advancing the cause of multiculturalism over the coming years.

Conference speakers include Senator Eric Abetz, Shadow Minister for Multicultural Affairs Andrew Giles and Greens Leader Richard Di Natale, as well as activists and community leaders including Craig Foster, Faustina 'Fuzzy' Agolley and Tim Costello, and scores of other speakers over the two days.

Prime Minister Scott Morrison has also sent a video message that will be played at the conference and Shadow Minister for Home Affairs Kristina Keneally will address the conference dinner.

FECCA Chair Ms Mary Patetsos said this year's conference comes at a critical juncture in the history of multicultural Australia.

"Advocacy groups such as FECCA have achieved so much over the decades to bring Australia's diverse communities closer together," she said.

"However as we celebrate the achievements of FECCA and its affiliate organisations over the past 40 years, we are mindful of how much work there is yet to do to advance the cause of a fair and inclusive society.

"We have seen an increase in racism and hate speech in public discourse in recent times, amplified by the evolving nature of social media, which is a major challenge for advocates.

"The conference will discuss a broad range of contemporary issues facing CALD Australians, including data collection of CALD communities, media engagement, mental health, youth and women's employment and regional settlement.

"This conference is an incredible opportunity to discuss these and other challenges with community leaders and political stakeholders and to set a course for the years ahead."

For more information visit <https://fecca2019.com.au/>

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