

Decisive action must be taken to recognise and support culturally and linguistically diverse women

The Federation of Ethnic Communities' Councils of Australia (FECCA) reiterates that decisive action must be taken by all major parties to tackle the challenges faced by culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) women.

We welcome the parties' policies and actions to support Australia's multiculturalism, but are disappointed by the lack of genuine commitment that would be underpinned by targeted policy and budget initiatives from the major parties to address the challenges faced by CALD women.

FECCA Chairperson Joe Caputo said, "We would like to see the parties make a sincere effort to address the very real concerns affecting CALD women."

FECCA strongly advocates for all the major parties to reinstate the National Migrant and Refugee Women's Alliance, and commend the Australian Labor Party's pledge to do so.

We also call on all parties to target the challenges faced by CALD women, with a view to ensuring that there is equitable representation of CALD women on boards and in senior leadership positions, including disaggregated data collection.

FECCA Women's Chair Hina Durrani said, "The level of representation of women from non-English speaking backgrounds in decision-making roles is extremely low. If the parties are genuine in their commitment to ensure true diversity on boards and in decision making, then a lot more needs to be done to address challenges experienced by CALD women. An inclusive approach to policy and practice is necessary to support and empower women from CALD backgrounds."

There is sufficient evidence and research to indicate that migrant and refugee women continue to face multiple disadvantages across a range of indicators, including social inclusion, access to services, employment and income equality, health and wellbeing, education, and housing. However, gender equality policies often don't consider the specific challenges or opportunities for women from multicultural backgrounds, or as a group that faces intersectional barriers and as having diverse needs.

"We know that when migrant and refugee women experience multiple disadvantage and social exclusion, this adversely affects not only the women themselves, but levels of social cohesion within communities. This impacts on the potential for increased and inclusive economic growth, and the future prosperity for Australian society," said Joe Caputo.

With the election just over a week away, FECCA calls on all the major parties to outline targeted policy directions and measures they would take to address the specific challenges impacting on migrant and refugee women.

FECCA is the peak national body representing culturally and linguistically diverse Australians.

FECCA's election priorities: [Governing for All Australians: A Policy Platform to Respond to Australia's Cultural and Linguistic Diversity](#).

Major parties' responses: [Federal Election 2016: Multicultural policy commitments from the major parties](#).

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