

FECCA encourages community organisations to make submissions to Senate inquiry into changes to citizenship laws

The Federation of Ethnic Communities' Councils of Australia (FECCA) welcomes the referral to a Senate inquiry of the *Australian Citizenship Legislation Amendment (Strengthening the Requirements for Australian Citizenship and other Measures) Bill 2017*.

This Bill will dramatically change the rules determining qualification for Australian citizenship by:

- Extending the waiting period for permanent residents from one year to “at least four years” before eligibility for citizenship
- Increasing the English language requirement to qualify for Australian citizenship
- Widening Ministerial discretion to deny citizenship in individual immigration cases.

FECCA believes that this Bill will create a permanent underclass of Australian residents denied the rights and opportunities of being welcomed and included as Australian citizens.

The changes to citizenship proposed in the Bill run counter to Australia's long-standing immigration policy, which has created a successful and harmonious multicultural Australian community.

FECCA encourages individuals and community organisations representing Australia's culturally and linguistically diverse society to make submissions to the inquiry, detailing how the new rules will affect members of their community.

FECCA also invites individuals to submit case studies to the inquiry of migrant Australians who came to this country with limited or no English, but who have subsequently enriched this nation through their cultural, economic, familial and social contribution.

Details of how to make a submission to the Senate Inquiry can be found [here](#).

A range of submissions made to the initial consultation paper on these changes *Strengthening the test for Australian citizenship* are available [here](#).

If community organisations or individuals would like further information please [contact](#) FECCA.

FECCA is the national peak body representing Australians from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. FECCA's role is to advocate and promote issues on behalf of its constituency to government, business and the broader community.

Media contact: (0424) 910617 / emma@fecca.org.au