

FECCA reiterates the importance of social cohesion

The *Australian Citizenship Amendment (Allegiance to Australia) Bill 2015 (Cth)* was introduced into Parliament last month, and has been referred to the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Intelligence and Security. The Federation of Ethnic Communities' Council of Australia (FECCA), the national peak body representing Australia's culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities and their organisations, is alarmed by the proposed changes to citizenship which are introduced by this Bill.

Last week, FECCA made a submission opposing the passage of the Bill in its current form. The submission raises concerns about the effect of automatic cessation or revocation of citizenship for dual nationals, including children. It also raises concerns about various procedural elements of the Bill which FECCA believes do not provide adherence to fundamental individual rights. You can read the submission [here](#).

FECCA Acting Chair, Eugenia Grammatikakis, said, "We are very concerned that this Bill may create two categories of citizenship, which has the potential to disrupt social cohesion in the Australian community."

We stress the importance of social inclusion to build a cohesive, accepting and unified Australia. Recently, there has been a rise in racially and religiously motivated attacks against members of the Australian culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) community.

"It is discouraging to see a rise in rallies and racist attacks that promote exclusion, distrust and fear in our communities," said Eugenia Grammatikakis. The rhetoric purported by the Reclaim Australia rallies and other similar groups is one that is at odds with Australian values of cultural diversity and multiculturalism.

FECCA highlights the importance of social cohesion in the Australian community including the role that citizenship policy can play, by giving a sense of belonging and acceptance. It is also important that the wider Australian society comes together to foster harmony and cohesion.

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