

# Summary analysis of key Federal Budget measures that impact on CALD Australians

The Federation of Ethnic Communities' Councils of Australia (FECCA) has provided an analysis of the budget measures and how it will impact people from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds. While welcoming particular positive measures around employment and participation, FECCA is disappointed over the lack of targeted and specific resourcing and funding measures in portfolios to achieve meaningful and lasting change for CALD Australians.

## Migration Program

The Permanent Migration Program for 2016-17 will have up to 190,000 places, including up to 128,550 places for skilled migrants and 57,400 for family migrants. An additional 565 places will be provided outside of the managed Migration Program under the Special Eligibility stream. Up to 3,485 child category migrants will also be provided outside of the managed Program, continuing the transition of this category to a fully demand-driven model by 2019-20.

The 2016-17 Humanitarian Program will have 13,750 places. By 2018-19, the program will increase to 18,750 places.

## Support for asylum seekers and refugees

The Government has assured support for asylum seekers and refugees, with \$39.8 million in 2016-17 to fund the provision of asylum seeker assistance to support eligible non-illegal Maritime Arrivals while their immigration status is resolved.

A further \$12.1 million will be provided in 2016-17 and 2017-18 for the supervision and welfare of unaccompanied minors under the Unaccompanied Humanitarian Minors program.

The Government will also deliver \$10.9 million over 3 years from 2016-17 to offer additional support to recently arrived humanitarian migrants to strengthen their sense of belonging to Australian society and to increase their social and economic participation. This includes increased funding for the National Community Hubs Program, supporting the establishment of new hubs in settlement locations, and a pilot project to assist newly arrived humanitarian migrants of working age and with vocational English proficiency to find work that reflects the skills and experience they have gained in their home countries. FECCA welcomes the funding earmarked for this pilot project, with many migrants and refugees facing higher levels of unemployment due to education background, skills recognition, language barriers and lack of Australian work experience.

## NDIS

FECCA welcomes the Government's commitment to funding the NDIS, however we echo concerns raised by disability organisations regarding measures that tie funding to cuts to welfare spending. The Government's decision to subject 90,000 people on the Disability Support Pension (DSP) over three years to review and place many on Newstart will mean CALD people with disability will be financially worse off.

## Ageing and Aged Care

The Government continues to be committed to a consumer-centred and driven aged care system, with reforms also aimed at improving access in rural and remote areas. There has also been a \$136.6 million investment in the My Aged Care website and Contact Centre to meet growing demand. While we are encouraged by this injection of funding, FECCA would like to see funding specifically targeted to assist CALD people to become empowered to make decisions for their aged care by having information provided in a culturally appropriate manner and in their preferred language.

## Health

The Government has pledged \$21.3 million for the design, operation and evaluation of trials for the new Health Care Home (HCH) model of chronic care, which is to be rolled out across seven sites across the country, over two years from 1 July 2017. FECCA is very pleased by the introduction of this model and encourages the government to ensure that the trial sites are representative of the diverse Australian population.

## Mental Health

Ground breaking mental health reforms will be established at nine demonstration sites in 2016-17 period, as well as support for

the first stages of a national mental health digital gateway. FECCA emphasises the importance of ensuring that the trial sites are representative of Australia's diverse population.

## Digital Transformation and Service Delivery

Additional funds have been allocated to the Department of Human Services and the Digital Transformation Office to support the operations of the myGov service, including a joint team to identify future developments to meet user needs.

The Government will reform the Visa and Migration Framework by improving automation in visa processing, providing self-service options and using more sophisticated assessment capabilities.

FECCA is also concerned about the implications of administrative efficiencies at the Department of Human Services on CALD families. Vulnerable cohorts will require high level support, and must be provided with opportunities for face-to-face engagement.

## Youth Employment Package

FECCA welcomes the Government's focus on youth employment, and reiterates the importance of providing culturally appropriate and competent services for young people from migrant and refugee backgrounds.

The New Enterprise Incentive Scheme (NEIS) will be expanded to allow access to self-employment training and mentoring for job seekers who are not on income support, including those who are not in employment, education or training. An additional 2,300 NEIS places each year will also be funded, making a total of 8,600 places available annually.

The Government will encourage entrepreneurship and self-employment by engaging young job seekers to explore self-employment as an alternative pathway to employment through 'Exploring Being My Own Boss' workshops, self-employment and entrepreneurship starter packs, and engaging inclusive entrepreneurship facilitators in areas of high youth unemployment.

Additionally, \$751.7 million will be allocated to established the Youth Jobs PaTH (Prepare – Trial – Hire) initiative over four years from 2016-17. The program will target job seekers aged under 25 years to improve youth employment outcomes, providing up to 30,000 young people each year with real work experience. The program will include industry-endorsed pre-employment training, internship placements of 4-12 weeks, and youth bonus wage subsidies.

Work for the Dole will be reformed to be better targeted and more cost effective. From 1 October 2016, the most job-ready job seekers (Stream A job seekers) will enter the Work for the Dole phase after 12 months of participation in *jobactive*, instead of the current 6 months.

## Child Care reforms

The Government's Child Care reforms will be deferred by one year to 1 July 2018 due to the Family Tax Benefit reforms required to fund the child care package not being passed by the Senate.

FECCA has previously raised concerns that the proposed three-tiered activity test will disproportionately affect migrant and refugee families, due to the high proportion of CALD workers, particularly women, in insecure, casualised and variable employment. FECCA reiterates its concerns about the way that the Child Care reforms will affect children from migrant and refugee backgrounds and calls on the Government to restore 24 hours of subsidised child care per week, irrespective of whether the parent is able to meet the activity test. See our submission [here](#).

The Inclusion Support Program will commence on 1 July 2016, with an investment of \$543 million over 4 years. FECCA holds concerns about how the Inclusion Support Programme will affect children from CALD backgrounds, and the delivery of bicultural support in early childhood education. See our submission [here](#).

## Early Learning Languages program

The *Early Learning Languages Australia* program will be expanded to all preschool services nationally from the 2017 school year, with an additional \$5.9 million over 2 years. The program will provide more preschool children with the opportunity to study a language other than English on an opt-in basis through play-based learning using mobile devices.

FECCA welcomes the expansion of this initiative, highlighting the importance of implementing mandatory second language education, facilitating quality and responsive language services and fostering individual, cultural and intellectual development in

our population.

## **SBS**

FECCA welcomes the provision of \$814.2 million for SBS over 3 years from 2016-17 in base operation funding. This funding is determined on a 3 year rolling basis for the operation of television, radio and online services. The Government will also provide \$6.9 million in 2016-17 to replace revenue that could not be raised (due to delayed passage of legislation on SBS advertising).

## **Adult Migrant English Program (AMEP)**

The Government will re-design AMEP to improve client participation, English language proficiency, and employment outcomes. Changes will include offering additional hours of English tuition to eligible clients, introducing better monitoring of improvements in client English skills and establishing two new AMEP service streams – Social English and Pre-Employment English. The cost of this reform will be met with existing Department of Education and Training resources.

## **Community Engagement**

The current *Community-Based Employment Advice Services Program* will be replaced by the *Community Engagement Grants Program* from 1 July 2016 to provide employment advice services with funding through a competitive selection process. The Government has committed \$7.3 million over 4 years from 2016-17 to establish this new program. The program will continue support for community organisations to provide employment advice to disadvantaged and vulnerable people in the workplace.

## **Domestic and Family Violence**

The Government has pledged \$100 million will be invested in initiatives under the Third Action Plan 2016-19 of the *National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children 2010-2022*.

FECCA reiterates the call for women escaping violence to be entitled to crisis payments, regardless of their visa status. Access to crisis payments will ensure that women on temporary visas are financially supported while they seek assistance following a violent relationship, this can include accessing legal and justice support and meeting the basic needs of their children. See the open letter [here](#).

## **Countering Violent Extremism**

The Government has reallocated \$5 million in 2016-17 to counter violent extremism, including:

- \$4 million for the Attorney-General's Department to establish and trial community support and advice services in conjunction with the States and Territories; and
- \$1 million for the Office of the Children's eSafety Commissioner to develop and distribute online resources promoting digital resilience.

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