FECCAE-NEWS

The Newsletter of the Federation of Ethnic Communities' Councils of Australia

NSW GOVERNMENT FUNDING FOR FECCA CONFERENCE

NSW Minister for Citizenship and Communities Victor Dominello announced a grant of $50,000 for the Federation of Ethnic Communities Councils of Australia (FECCA)'s 2015 Conference—*Multiculturalism in Action: Building a better future for all Australians*—held in Sydney later this year. The conference is organised jointly with the Ethnic Communities' Council of NSW.

Minister Dominello meeting with ECC NSW Board members at the organisation's office in Waterloo.

The Federation of Ethnic Communities' Councils of Australia (FECCA) is the national peak body representing Australians from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

Issue

3

2015

FROM THE FECCA CHAIR

Hello, and welcome to FECCA's March 2015 update.

This month, we were pleased to receive the confirmation of the NSW Government's support for our 2015 national biennial conference organised jointly with the Ethnic Communities' Council of NSW (ECC NSW) and scheduled to be held on 5-6 November. We thank the NSW Government for its support for this preeminent multicultural forum. This year also marks the 40th anniversary of ECC NSW, the national multicultural policy, and SBS—it is only fitting that these milestones are celebrated in NSW, where the vision for nurturing greater social cohesion and community harmony is underpinned by the State's *Harmony in Action* plan and the *Multicultural NSW Act*. The details of the conference will be announced very shortly.

Last week, FECCA released its landmark *Review of Australian Research on Older People from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Backgrounds*. The report was launched by the Minister for Social Services, Scott Morrison MP, at Parliament House in Canberra, at an event hosted by the co-convenors of the Parliamentary Friends of Multiculturalism. The event will be covered in greater detail in the next month's edition this newsletter. In the meantime, to view the report, please click here.

Many of you will also be interested to review the summary of the *Translating and Interpreting Sector Roundtable Discussions*, hosted by the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Social Services, Senator Concetta Fierravanti-Wells, in November 2014. The summary report is available on the Department's website: https://www.dss.gov.au/our-responsibilities/settlement-and-multicultural-affairs/programs-policy/translating-and-interpreting-sector-roundtable

In March, FECCA welcomed a new associate member—the B'nai B'rith Anti-Defamation Commission (www.antidef.org.au), an organisation that works to combat anti-Semitism and racism in all its forms and to promote positive relationships between ethnic and religious communities. Their work includes interfaith programs, education, research, publications and media.

21 March was the Harmony Day—a great occasion to celebrate cultural diversity as one of Australia's great strengths. I encourage everyone to use this opportunity to reflect on the legacy of Australia's multiculturalism and the need for its continuous support into the future, as the foundation for dialogue, understanding, and social cohesion. On the occasion of Harmony Day, which coincides with International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, we would like to share with you some insights from three inspiring young individuals about challenging negative attitudes and building cohesive communities.

Finally, FECCA pays tribute to the late Malcolm Fraser. Fraser was a strong supporter of multiculturalism while he served in the Australian Parliament and through his contributions to public life after leaving office. Among his many achievements in this area as Prime Minister, Fraser established the SBS and Australian Human Rights Commission, supported large scale migration from Asia, increased support services for migrants and provided grants for community organisations and ethnic radio. With the passing of Malcolm Fraser, Australia has lost an outspoken defender of human rights and an important advocate for the rights of refugees and asylum seekers.

JOSEPH CAPUTO OAM JP

HARMONY DAY

HARMONY DAY:
STORIES OF BELONGING AND RESILIENCE

Alireza Naroui

"My name is Alireza Naroui, and I have been living in Australia for one year and seven months. I am a former refugee from Afghanistan. I am eighteen years of age and live with my family in the Illawarra.

In the country that I was born in there is a lot of conflict and many people are being killed. There is a lot of racism against other cultures. In Australia, we are showing that we have a good community and we respect each other. I love this about Australia and I am enjoying living here.

Harmony Day is a day to show that there are no differences between us. This day is important to show that in Australia, we celebrate a mix of cultures and we should do this every day, and not just on Harmony Day. It doesn't matter if you're black or white, we need show respect to each other. We can have a good community in our mixed culture that is Australia. Let's celebrate diversity to show that we are a friendly community."

Minnie Vo

"Growing up, I've encountered my fair share of racism. Even though I was born in Australia, speak English well, and much to the dismay of some people, I'm not as 'foreign' as they had thought - the remarks remain the same.

Despite this, I find that educating others and challenging assumptions is one of many ways to combat racism. People find that their fears, doubts, and negativity about certain groups transform into sharing their courage, trust, and positivity, and into building better, stronger communities. It can be scary at first to challenge negative beliefs, but I think that with open arms, we can do anything."

Sidique Bah, Project Officer at Multicultural Communities Council of South Australia, community leader and producer of Salt Magazine

"I haven't been attacked personally but I still feel confronted when I see other people attacked online, in news articles, comments or on Facebook, because I relate to it. It feels like it's also directed at me. Racism that used to be what occurred in daily life has just extended due to the internet, where people can remain anonymous which gives them more freedom to express their hurtful views. Sometimes people just try to provoke on purpose to get a reaction.

I am aware that cyber racism exists but I do not let it affect me. I believe that we need to talk to our children and young people, to empower them, lift their confidence, and support them to be self-aware, because at the end of the day you can't stop people behaving this way.

It's all about the mindset. Go out there with an open mind—you will encounter all kinds of things, and take it all with some perspective because you never know who that person is that is attacking you, you don't know their state of mind, their history and their personal situation. Someone else's opinion should make no difference to your everyday life. If someone makes decisions that will negatively impact their own lives, and cause them to be angry and disengaged from society then you are only harming yourself.

It's not easy to handle online racism correctly—if you're quiet and don't respond, it doesn't make a difference. But if you do respond, it doesn't deter them—rather you can easily get caught up in the anger and hatred. I believe that people really need to rise above it and realise that people that do these sorts of aggressive things have their own problems, because regular people just don't behave like that—they appreciate their fellow humans."

FECCA NEWS

CHALLENGES FOR NEW AND EMERGING COMMUNITY ORGANISATIONS

The 2014 FECCA New and Emerging Community Organisations Survey revealed that some of the most pressing issues for many small multicultural organisations were the lack of adequate funding, inability to meet community needs and heavy reliance on volunteers and their commitment, as the only human resources that many organisations have.

In February and March, FECCA met with new and emerging community leaders in Brisbane and Melbourne to discuss the challenges and opportunities they face in applying for private and public funding.

In Brisbane, we spoke with emerging leaders from Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Myanmar, Nepal, Iran, Iraq, Jordan, Congo, South Sudan, Somalia and Zimbabwe. We learned that some of the biggest barriers were the lack of accessible information about available grants and a lack of familiarity with the Australian grants and funding systems. Difficulties with understanding bureaucratic jargon and addressing complex selection criteria, as well as having to invest significant resources in research to provide evidence that supports an application, were some of the other key issues identified by this group.

In Melbourne, we heard about similar issues, but also about difficulties in demonstrating experience as an organisation, as well as a lack of opportunity for emerging community organisations to compete against larger and more established organisations, or organisations that have a broader agenda and coverage. New and emerging community leaders felt trapped in a vicious cycle whereby the government acknowledged the need for capacity building for their communities but failed to provide adequate support and opportunities for empowerment.

All the feedback gathered through the survey and the consultations will be compiled in a discussion paper which will suggest potential solutions. The paper will serve as the basis for a workshop that aims to bring together government representatives, community leaders and community funding experts to discuss about the above issues and propose solutions to address them.

We thank Rose Brown from the Ethnic Communities' Council of Queensland and Sylvia Daravong from the Ethnic Communities' Council of Victoria for their assistance with this project. We also thank the community leaders for talking to us and providing their most valuable feedback.

FECCA meeting with representatives of new and emerging communities in Brisbane, March 2015

FECCA NEWS

ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION ON THE NDIS

FECCA's Disability Advisory Committee held a roundtable discussion on 27th February 2015 in Melbourne with the participation of a number of representatives from government and non-government sectors. The focus of this meeting was to discuss engagement of people from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds in the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS/the Scheme). The discussion focussed on the current structure of NDIS and engagement strategies of CALD people in the NDIS.

The NDIS is one of the most important social support schemes in recent times. However, this is an evolving process and there are some lacunas in the system when it comes to the application of the NDIS, especially with regard to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and CALD communities. Two major issues were raised during the discussion, namely, those pertaining to the structure of the NDIS, and issues in relation to engagement of CALD communities. It was discussed that the issues faced by CALD communities with regards to the NDIS are similar to those experienced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

The structure of the NDIS

One of the gaps in the NDIS trial is the lack of representation of CALD people with disability. The trial sites selected by the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA/the Agency) do not adequately represent the diversity of the Australian population. This is more evident in trial sites such as Hunter Valley (NSW), Barwon (VIC), and Tasmania, where the representation of CALD people with disability is minimal. Thus, it is arduous to understand the difficulties and issues that are faced by the CALD communities in engaging with the NDIS. This lack of proper and meaningful involvement of CALD people at trial stage could potentially result in minimal engagement of CALD communities in July 2016 when the NDIS is rolled out nationally, as well as cause financial and resource management difficulties in the long run. Limited involvement of CALD communities in the decision making process of the NDIS was also discussed, along with the lack of understanding and knowledge about the NDIS among CALD communities.

In States or Territories where there are similar programs to the NDIS there is a general inclination towards the State Government program. For example, in Western Australia, the State Government is operating 'NDIS My Way' in Cockburn and Kwinana and the Commonwealth Government the NDIS model in Perth Hills. It was contended that the inclination is more towards the State Government project as it is more engaging and responsive to the needs of the stakeholders, especially CALD communities. One of the main issues in choosing a state based model is that it could be inflexible in certain instances. The concern here is for people in one state engaged in a state based NDIS model who wish to settle or travel outside the state. Under a national scheme, the support model chosen by the recipient would be flexible to accommodate changing circumstances. Thus, it would be more advantageous for people to engage with the Commonwealth Government NDIS.

Another important concern with regard to the structure is the terminology used in the planning process and legislation. For example, the word 'self' would have different connotations in different communities, where 'self' would also mean family or a family member. The NDIS structure

ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION ON THE NDIS
CONTINUED

should be robust and flexible at the same time to accommodate these cultural aspects of each individual. Concepts such as 'family', 'individual', etc. vary according to the beliefs of each community, therefore, definitions of such terms in legislation and regulations should allow for some flexibility, to reflect the non western ideologies. In view of these factors, there needs to be a shift in the NDIS focus from 'process' to 'people' as the Scheme is about fulfilling the needs of individuals.

Coordination and collaboration among government service providers are critical for the sustainable structuring of the NDIS. Since the NDIS will be built on and draw assistance from the existing disability support schemes of the States and Territories, the information and knowledge of the previous and current service providers will be invaluable in delivering services to the CALD communities. The organisations working with the communities at the grass root level have a thorough understanding of diversity and needs of the CALD communities. Therefore, it is imperative for the NDIA to devise a plan to engage these organisations. However, in engaging with community organisations, NDIA should also ensure that all practical endeavours are made to engage the communities that are not prevalent in certain parts of Australia.

With the national implementation of the NDIS next year, the workforce of NDIA and the service providers are bound increase by a considerable margin. It is important to ensure that the NDIA workforce understands the concepts and degrees of disability, and is reflective of the Australian cultural diversity as far as possible. All necessary steps and precautions should be taken to ensure that those who are employed in the process have been properly trained and understand different types and degrees of disabilities as well as cultural sensitivities. NDIA's main responsibilities also include ensuring that services are rendered by people who are qualified to do such work.

People with disability are inherently more vulnerable to be subjected to duress and undue influence. This risk is even higher when it comes to people from CALD backgrounds as these people may not be able to understand or exercise their rights and advocate for themselves. In view of the structure of the NDIS, there is a risk that people who are more articulate and have a better understanding about rules and regulations will be able to obtain a better outcome from the Scheme, whereas those who are not familiar with the NDIS or understand the processes will not get the same benefit. This will create a system where a group of people will be further disadvantaged and their voices may not be heard in the decision making process.

The NDIS is more about 'dignity of risk' which is embedded in the concept of 'choice and control' for people with disability, as opposed to a system of welfare and protection. These choices would include obtaining services that are peculiar to different cultures and societies. Therefore, the NDIS cannot portray a picture of multitude of choices and fail to have the proper services in place or not have the capacity to cater for the needs of the recipients.

It is vital to have proper oversight and support mechanisms in place, and ensure that these services are available for people from all backgrounds. The oversight processes should also be capable of recognising and understanding 'undue influence' within a cultural framework. For instance, involvement of family members would amount to overly influencing the decision of the recipient in some societies, and could be an accepted norm in some other cultures. Hence, there should be space to interpret these concepts in a more culturally appropriate manner.

Engagement of CALD Communities

In view of limited engagement of CALD communities in the NDIS during the initial stages, it is difficult to draw inferences as to what areas need more funding and/or allocation of resources. It is clear that the NDIS cannot be a generic system where the NDIA can adopt a *one hat fits all* policy. The staff of NDIA should have a clearer understanding about the diversity of communities they work in.

Language barrier is another reason for the minimal participation of CALD communities in the NDIS. Currently the NDIS cater for a limited number of mainstream languages. However, when this is implemented across Australia, it will be necessary

ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION ON THE NDIS
CONTINUED

to have materials in all languages and have appropriate translating and interpreting services to cater for the needs of the CALD communities. As mentioned above, it is important that the NDIA staff and the service providers represent the cultural diversity of Australian society, and understand and are able to appreciate the values of other cultures. This in return would encourage engagement of CALD communities.

The other important aspect is engaging CALD communities by using the most appropriate and effective communication mechanisms. Each community will have different ways of communicating with its members. Engaging communities through the existing community networks such as prayer groups, advertising in ethnic media (newspapers, radio, etc.), and when translating materials to other languages, using informal terminology to make the concepts easier to comprehend are some strategies that can be adopted by the NDIA.

Another major barrier for CALD people with disability is social stigma, fears and attitudes towards disability. In particular, people who have been subjected to persecution or faced mental or physical trauma before arriving in Australia would be reluctant to come forward and engage with the NDIS. Creating role models among ethnic communities would be one method of overcoming these barriers. People would better understand the system if a person they can relate to or identify with spoke about their experiences and how the NDIS assisted them to achieve their goals in life.

It is also important for the NDIA to engage communities through current networks, such as multicultural and settlement sector organisations, to reach out to new and emerging communities as people are more comfortable to work with organisations or individuals they are familiar with. NDIA should invest more time and resources to identify and engage the communities that are currently not benefitting from the NDIS.

Recommendations

- Take necessary measures to increase the participation of CALD communities in the NDIS trials to better understand the issues and flaws in the NDIS as a whole before the national roll out in July 2016, including through allocation of sufficient resources for engagement, education, equity of access and experience (such as catering for the 'choices' made by CALD participants), and workforce and service provider training in cultural competency.

- Ensure that the NDIS is more 'person' oriented and less 'process' oriented and that legislation, rules and regulations are not too stringent and flexible enough to be interpreted in a manner that accommodates cultural sensitivities.

- Establish oversight and accountability mechanisms within the NDIS and implement these in a culturally appropriate and effective manner.

- Use appropriate communication mechanisms to reach out to CALD communities and educate CALD communities through community leaders. Any such communication should be adequately supported through appropriate interpreting and translating services.

- Education strategies should include those aimed at alleviating stigma around disability and mental illnesses, including through educating CALD communities about the misconceptions with regard to disability in order to change their attitudes.

- Engage with the currently operating government and non-government programs and stakeholders to raise awareness about the NDIS and increase engagement of CALD communities.

FECCA NEWS

ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION ON THE NDIS
CONTINUED

On the same day, the Disability Advisory Committee met with Senator Richard Di Natale. Many issues affecting CALD people with disability were discussed at this meeting including employment, the health requirement for migration to Australia, education opportunities and lack of access to amenities for people with disabilities. Senator Di Natale pledged his support to the work of FECCA in promoting multiculturalism.

Employment related issues for CALD people with disability were discussed in depth. Amongst many issues, lack of awareness among employers about government funded facilities that are available to employers if they provide more job opportunities

to people with disability was pointed out as one of the factors that contribute to low employment rates of people with disability. People with disability who obtain tertiary qualifications find it difficult gain employment and must, in some instances, take up a position that does not reflect their educational qualifications or area of interest. There is an absence of managerial level and middle managerial level job opportunities for people with disability.

Educating employers and provide examples of pilot programs where people with disability are successfully employed was considered to be one of the best solutions to the aforementioned issues. Considering the developments in information technology, it was decided that 'working from home' option for people with disability should be promoted throughout public and private sector.

Dinesh Wadiwel, Suresh Rajan, Angelo Cianciosi, Thushara Halnethilage, Senator Richard Di Natale, FECCA Disability Chair Zeliha Iscel, FECCA Policy Officer Dini Liyanarchchi and Christian Astourian (front row)

FECCA NEWS

MULTICULTURAL ACCESS AND EQUITY CONSULTATION IN SHEPPARTON

On 10-11 March, FECCA travelled to Shepparton, Victoria, to hear from local new and emerging community members about their experiences with accessing government services and programs and to discuss about their most pressing issues and settlement concerns. We were delighted to meet with members of the Iraqi, Sudanese, Afghan and Congolese communities who provided us with a lot of candid and insightful feedback.

We also met with a variety of local service providers and advocates to talk about how accessible, responsive and coordinated government services and programs are in the region. We thank representatives from the Shepparton Police, Red Cross, Department of Human Services, Kildonan, GOTAFE, Primary Care Connect and many others for their time and input.

Despite hearing about some reassuring good practice examples, we also came back with a number of stories of frustration. We heard about services not delivering the desired outcomes for migrant and refugee communities, about their lack of flexibility and cultural competence, gaps in communication and engagement, lack of accessible information, and even experiences of discrimination. Participants engaged with us in discussions about access to employment, education and training, language barriers, skills recognition, housing, Centrelink, and translating and interpreting services.

The consultation also attracted some interest from the local media. To read the *Shepparton News* article on our consultation please visit http://www.mmg.com.au/local-news/shepparton/migrant-problems-highlighted-1.89531 .

We gathered a lot of feedback, covering a variety topics and diverse perspectives and we look forward to our next consultation in Logan on Friday 20th March when we will meet with young migrants and refugees to talk about youth employment.

We thank all the staff from the Ethnic Council of Shepparton and District for their help with organising and running the consultation. It would have not been possible without their commitment and assistance.

FECCA Chair Joe Caputo, Rural and Regional Advisory Committee members Maria Brown-Shepherd, Ricardo Viana (FECCA Regional Chair) and Ron Mitchell, FECCA Policy Officer Laura Raicu, and ECC Sheparton Manager Chris Hazelman

FECCA NEWS

DONATELIFE: COMMUNITY CONVERSATIONS ABOUT ORGAN AND TISSUE DONATION

FECCA has enjoyed bringing to community leaders information about the importance of organ and tissue donation. During March, we held forums in Adelaide and Brisbane. Each forum featured a presentation from an organ recipient and a medical adviser, so participants heard personal stories as well as technical information about being an organ donor. Participants were informed about religious and faith considerations about organ and tissue donation. Here are some of the key messages from the forum presentations.

Key facts and figures

• Around 1,500 Australians are on organ transplant waiting lists at any one time.

• People may wait between six months and four years to receive a transplant.

• One organ and tissue donor can transform the lives of 10 or more people.

• Last year, 1,117 Australians received an organ transplant from 378 organ donors.

Donation and religious considerations

The 'DonateLife… the greatest gift' community education campaign was developed by the Organ and Tissue Authority (OTA) to ensure that people from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds can access culturally appropriate information about organ and tissue donation. Research commissioned by the OTA has consistently shown that Australians from CALD communities are less likely to have discussed or decided about organ and tissue donation. The campaign aims to increase informed decision making and family discussion in CALD communities.

A key part of the campaign has been ongoing consultation between the OTA and religious and cultural leaders. Some people are unsure whether their religion or culture supports organ and tissue donation, but the OTA has found through consultations with cultural and religious organisations that most support it as the ultimate act of generosity.

A video showing the support for organ and tissue donation from a range of faith leaders can be found at http://www.donatelife.gov.au/for-the-community/multicultural-resources.

Key facts and figures about religious considerations

• Some people are unsure whether they are permitted to become a donor by their religion.

• Most religions support organ and tissue donation.

• Every effort is made to accommodate end of life practices related to the donor's religion or culture.

• The body of the donor is always treated with dignity and respect.

Remember you're never too old nor too young to have the chat about registering to be an organ or tissue donor. For more information visit www.donatelife.gov.au.

White Ribbon Australia – Diversity Program

White Ribbon is Australia's only national, male led Campaign to end men's violence against women. Our vision at White Ribbon is that all women live in safety, free from all forms of men's violence. The campaign works through primary prevention initiatives involving awareness raising and education, and programs with youth, schools, workplaces and across the broader community.

White Ribbon is enhancing engagement with Australia's many culturally and linguistically diverse communities through the White Ribbon Diversity Program. The Diversity Program will focus on making the White Ribbon Campaign more inclusive; build on existing strengths of the Campaign and progress through meaningful and respectful collaboration with communities across Australia.

The Diversity program will focus on; engaging culturally diverse, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander men as White Ribbon Ambassadors, community engagement activities to enhance understandings and action to prevent men's violence against women, developing culturally accessible and appropriate resources to support community engagement, eLearning and face-to-face training to build capacity to prevent men's violence against women.

In 2013 White Ribbon Australia partnered with the Migrant Resource Centre of South Australia and MyriaD Consultants to deliver a pilot training project *Engaging Men to Prevent Gender-based Violence in their New and Emerging Communities*. Forty five males from a range of diverse communities took part in the training that aimed to work with men on how better to actively advocate for the prevention of men's violence against women. The training is unique because it established an innovative and culturally responsive model for engaging men within diverse communities. It also recognised the positive and necessary role male leadership can play in new and emerging communities. This training has enabled these men as leaders to identify opportunities and develop key messages for engaging other men within their communities in preventing men's violence against women.

The White Ribbon Diversity program will build on this pilot training and seek to create and strengthen collaboration with culturally and linguistically diverse men and communities. Future training in engaging men from diverse communities as leaders in preventing men's violence against women will take place across Australia over the coming year. The increased active representation of White Ribbon Ambassadors from diverse communities will reflect the cultural diversity of Australia.

You can take action in your own community by:
- **hosting, supporting and participating in White Ribbon events in your community**
- **becoming a White Ribbon Ambassador or Advocate**
- **encouraging local schools and education departments to become involved in White Ribbon's Breaking the Silence Schools Program and Workplace Accreditation Program**
- **promoting and engaging the Campaign through social media**
- **driving the Campaign through personal and professional networks and fundraising to support White Ribbon's ongoing success.**

For more information please contact:
E: diversity@whiteribbon.org.au or White Ribbon Australia website www.whiteribbon.org.au P: 0290458420

MULTICULTURAL NEWS & EVENTS

COMMUNITY HERITAGE GRANTS 2015

'Trencho' board game
From the collection of the National Museum of Australia
Photograph: Jason McCarthy, NMA

GUIDELINES AND APPLICATIONS

Applicants should carefully read the 2015 Community Heritage Grants program guidelines before submitting an application.

Guidelines and the application form are available at nla.gov.au/chg/guidelines.

Applications for the 2015 Community Heritage Grants program close on 1 May 2015 at 5 pm (AEST).

For further information, or to discuss your application, please contact:

Coordinator, Community Heritage Grants
National Library of Australia
Parkes Place
CANBERRA ACT 2600
02 6262 1147
chg@nla.gov.au

HOW WE CAN HELP

Community Heritage Grants of up to $15,000 are available to assist in preserving cultural heritage collections of national significance. Not-for-profit organisations, such as historical societies, regional museums, public libraries and Indigenous and migrant community groups, are encouraged to apply.

ACTIVITIES WE SUPPORT

A wide range of activities may qualify for grants, including:

· significance assessments of collections
· preservation needs assessments of collections
· purchase of archival quality storage materials
· preservation training projects
· conservation activities, including cleaning, treatment or rebinding
· purchase and installation of environmental control and monitoring equipment
· copying of material once originals have been preserved
· cataloguing or collection management software.