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Welcome to this special Conference edition of the FECCA flagship magazine, the Australian Mosaic. This edition focuses on the FECCA 2017 National Biennial Conference which was a huge success. The Conference took place on the 8-10 October in Darwin 2017 and was organised jointly by FECCA and the Multicultural Council of the Northern Territory (MCNT). The conference theme Celebrate. Reflect. Advance. Our Multicultural Australia provided opportunities to share knowledge and best practice, while also highlighting challenges and exploring possibilities. We welcomed a range of stakeholders, organisations, civil society actors, politicians and media to the multicultural city of Darwin.

We were especially proud this year to introduce one day which was committed to focusing on Australia’s diverse young people. Young people came together to celebrate multiculturalism and discuss the advancement of Australia as a diverse and inclusive nation.

Talking to the delegates, I noted some themes that evolved throughout the three days of attending the conference—themes that were not only debated during the formal sessions but also during lunch, at social gatherings and informal discussions. First was the importance of including Australia’s First Peoples in the debates on multiculturalism. Multiculturalism must begin by recognising Australia’s First Peoples and the rich cultural heritage that their communities have long nurtured.

Second, a successful multicultural nation allows space to have the ‘difficult’ conversations. This includes discussing and exploring issues addressing mental health challenges in CALD communities, identifying and calling on racism and discrimination in all areas of public and personal life, and encouraging interactions between sections of society where mistrust and misunderstandings have created division and barriers. A sense of belonging develops through recognition and inclusion—this involves inclusion of the LGBTI community, people with disability, the ageing population, new and emerging communities and the religious diversity of Australia.

Third, as proven many times throughout my time with FECCA, civil society embraces reform and doesn’t stay away from change. Our sector has had many great achievements this year. While embracing change, we also actively participate in debates that are important. Only a few days after the conference the proposed Citizenship Legislation Amendment (Strengthening the Requirements for Australian Citizenship and Other Measures) Bill 2017 was scrapped from the Senate. Earlier this year the Australian Senate rejected attempts to change Section 18C of the Racial Discrimination Act. FECCA worked hard to oppose both the attempted watering down of hate speech laws as well as unfair new citizenship legislation. These successes underline the importance of civil society working together on keeping Australia diverse and inclusive—to keep fighting to improve our multicultural society. FECCA’s role cannot be underestimated in encouraging an inclusive and harmonious multicultural Australian society and protecting the interests of CALD Australians. FECCA will continue to work with the Government and others to find positive ways—rather than punitive ones—to make migrants feel welcomed and part of Australian society.

In conclusion and reflecting again on our conference, I would like to thank the Conference organising committee, in particular, our Conference co-host, Kevin Kadirgamar and MCNT. I also wish to thank the FECCA secretariat who were instrumental in bringing the whole project together, led by our Director Dr Emma Campbell and Senior Policy and Project Officer Dr Alia Imtoual. I would also like to extend my thanks to all our sponsors and partners for their support. In the end, my biggest thanks go to the delegates and speakers who turned the three days conference into a dynamic and rewarding FECCA National Conference. Again we were reminded that the future for multicultural Australia will be positive and inclusive of all people who have made the decision and commitment to make Australia their home.
The 2017 FECCA Conference, a collaboration between FECCA and MCNT, was an overwhelming success with presenters, delegates and attendees from across Australia visiting the beautiful and multicultural city of Darwin to celebrate our multicultural nation, to reflect on our achievements and to look forward to the future.

We were delighted to see so many people make the trip to the Northern Territory to see firsthand the multicultural success story in the Top End. This conference coincided with the 40th anniversary of the founding of MCNT and it was an honour for us to celebrate this important milestone with the wider FECCA family.

The MCNT, as a peak body, advocates for, provides advice and represents the interests of people from CALD backgrounds in the NT, in particular for new and emerging communities. As an organisation, we inform, mentor, consult and provide a forum and meeting place for clients and members. We undertake projects and programs aimed at addressing needs for clients from CALD communities across NT. The work we do is with the aim of building a successful and fair multicultural Australia for all people living in the NT, regardless of ethnic background, history, cultural, religious or sexual orientation.

In the region with the highest proportion in Australia of people identifying as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (25 per cent), we recognise the centrality of Australia’s First Peoples to discussions of multiculturalism. We develop programs that foster cross-cultural awareness and cooperation. We wish to create opportunities for constructive dialogue and enhance shared values of mutual respect, compassion, and acceptance within and between new and emerging migrant and refugee communities, Indigenous groups, established migrant communities and wider Australia society. We do this in recognition of the fact that true multiculturalism is achieved when we embrace our differences while celebrating a sense of shared identity.

The theme of the FECCA conference was clear throughout the presentations and plenary. During the conference I had some time to reflect on the outcomes with reference to the main theme: Celebrate. Reflect. Advance. Our Multicultural Australia:

1. Celebrate—let us celebrate the multicultural nation that we live in and the achievements we have made so far.
2. Reflect—let us reflect on how we can continue to remove barriers for Australia’s diverse population and create a strong multicultural society that benefits all Australians.
3. Advance—let us all join in advancing Australia as a multicultural nation by continuing to work together to ensure equity and access to government services, address racism and discrimination in all areas, and promote understanding, acceptance, cohesion and respect in our multicultural community for all Australians.

We are particular proud to have hosted the inaugural Youth Day as part of the conference in partnership with our youth wing, Multicultural Youth NT (MyNT). It was truly inspiring seeing young leaders from all over Australia sharing innovative ideas for multicultural Australia. It was clear that our future is in safe hands. We hope to see the Youth Day become a fixture in future conferences.

I wish to thank all the people involved in making this conference a success; the conference organisers, FECCA for a brilliant partnership, presenters, delegates and sponsors. I am excited about the future of Australia based on discussions held, networks created and friendships made at the 2017 FECCA Conference.
It gives me great joy to introduce our special summer issue of *Australian Mosaic* celebrating FECCA’s National Conference that took place in October this year. I am delighted to report that the conference was a great success and it gave representatives of multicultural Australia an opportunity to reflect on past successes, current challenges and future opportunities. I was inspired by the formal and informal discussions that took place throughout the conference. Delegates shared a wide range of experiences and perspectives on how to protect and advance multiculturalism in our contemporary Australia. It was wonderful that delegates came from a broad cross-section of experiences, from recently arrived communities to more established communities, service providers and advocates. I was proud that the first FECCA conference hosted during my time as Director of FECCA took place in Darwin—a city with a long history of successful migration, vibrant multiculturalism, and partnership and engagement with Indigenous Australians.

The conference began on Sunday 8 October with an exciting program for Youth Day where young CALD Australians discussed issues that matter most to them. The energy, intelligence and optimism shown by the presenters throughout the day demonstrated that the future of Australia’s multicultural leadership is very bright.

During the main conference, we had powerful plenary presentations from Senator the Hon Zed Seselja, Assistant Minister for Social Services and Multicultural Affairs, the Hon Tony Burke MP, Shadow Minister for Citizenship and Multicultural Australia, and Senator Richard Di Natale, Leader Australian Greens. We also had engaging, insightful and moving key note speeches from Dr Tim Soutphommasane, the Race Discrimination Commissioner and from Ms Djapirri Mununggirritj from Reconciliation Australia. The warm welcome from the Lord Mayor of Darwin, Kon Vatskalis—and his passion for a successful multicultural society—was much appreciated by the conference attendees.
The plenary panel discussions—one looking at storytelling, and the other, at contemporary multiculturalism—were informative and nuanced discussions of cultural difference in action. The delegates appreciated opportunity to interact with the high profile presenters who were generous with their time and responses. Similarly powerful was the lunchtime Q&A panel discussion on organ and tissue donation in migrant communities, which was followed by the launch of a special edition of Australian Mosaic focusing on engaging CALD communities in organ and tissue donation discussions. This was truly a contemporary solution based and positive discussion of a vital issue.

In some of the plenary sessions, there was a strong focus upon the Government's proposed Citizenship Legislation Amendment (Strengthening the Requirements for Australian Citizenship and Other Measures) Bill 2017. While the Bill was removed from the Senate debate list on October 18, we present these speeches as they were in order to reflect the national debate around the proposed changes at the time. FECCA and its members remain united in our determination to challenge efforts to reintroduce this legislation.

I am also very grateful for the support of our sponsors and partners: Multicultural Council of the Northern Territory, Department of Social Services, Fair Work Ombudsman, SBS, Translating and Interpreting Services (TIS NATIONAL), Anglicare NT, Australian Multicultural Foundation, NAATI, ACCESS Community Services, Settlement Council of Australia, 2M Language Services, and Relationships Australian NT. These collaborative relationships ensured a vibrant and enjoyable three days of interaction and idea-sharing.

One of the key questions which arose from the conference was how Australia remain a successful multicultural nation as it grows into the future? Other questions included: What is multiculturalism and how can we ensure its success? How do we ensure that we recognise, protect and respect intersectionality including religion, sexual orientation, migration journey, age and disability?

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The issues reflected in this edition of Mosaic are:

- Participation in the employment market for all migrants—including skills recognition of overseas qualifications
- Access and equity for all—including digital inclusion and language services
- Institutional change—create role models by hiring diverse employees and increased mentoring for people wanting to start their own business
- Inclusion of all—including CALD aging population and the CALD LGBTI community
- Fighting racism—including cyber racism
- Settlement—empowering settlement services to adapt to the changing needs of humanitarian arrivals.
Thank you Aunty Dorothy, Joe Caputo and Kevin Kadirgamar.

It’s a pleasure to be here this morning and I’d like thank the Federation of Ethnic Communities’ Council of Australia (FECCA) and the Multicultural Council of the Northern Territory (MCNT) for your kind invitation to speak at this conference.

I would also like to acknowledge my federal and territory parliamentary colleagues Tony Burke, Shadow Minister for Citizenship and Multicultural Australia and Richard Di Natale, Leader Australian Greens, Kate Carnell from Australian Small Business and Family Enterprise Ombudsman, and Tim Soutphommasane, the Race Discrimination Commissioner, distinguished guests, Ladies and Gentleman. I wish to express a special welcome to some local Canberra small business owners, Nipuni and Guyana who run GGs Flowers, a small business that employs people with disabilities. I also wish to acknowledge the many attendees who have travelled from around Australia to be here.

Darwin is a fitting host city for this conference because Darwin has always been one of the most diverse cities in Australia with a significant population living here with Filipino, Greek, Chinese, and German heritage along with people of British and Irish Heritage and Indigenous Australians.

These are just a few of the different cultural groups we can find in Darwin, there are of course many more, so there is no doubt Darwin provides us the perfect backdrop to address the themes of the Conference: Celebrate. Reflect. Advance.

CELEBRATE

We have a lot to celebrate. Our cultural diversity is a source of great social and economic strength and should be celebrated.

Just one of those celebrations is Harmony Day, celebrated on 21 March each year to coincide with the United Nations International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination. Since 1999, more than 70,000 Harmony Day events have been held across Australia in childcare centres, schools, community groups, places of worship, and workplaces.

Many of us also enjoy celebrations hosted by our diverse cultural and religious communities. Christmas and Easter have a long history in Australia from our British and Christian traditions. Regardless of our backgrounds, we are also taking part in Lunar New Year, Deepavali, Glendi and other celebrations in greater numbers.

There is nothing more welcoming than being invited to join in. Sharing a celebration. Sharing a meal. Breaking bread. A smile. A conversation. For some people, it can be the start of a journey towards understanding and acceptance.

Of course, this is not all that we celebrate. The Prime Minister often reminds us that Australia is the most successful multicultural society in the world. We provide world’s best practice in settling migrants and refugees. We also celebrate and acknowledge the many achievements of individuals, organisations and communities, and their contributions to Australia.

I would like to take the opportunity to acknowledge the recent appointments as Member in the General Division of the Order of Australia, in the Queen’s Birthday honours list, of:

- Mr Paris Aristotle AM
- Mr Michael Ebeid AM
- Mr Pino Migliorino AM
Of course, it is not just contributions to multicultural affairs that we should recognise. Over many generations, people of diverse cultural and ethnic backgrounds have contributed to Australia in all facets of economic, political and social life.

It is something about which we ought to reflect.

REFLECT

Earlier, I mentioned Darwin’s significant Chinese and Greek heritage. The Chinese were among the earliest settlers in Australia. Along with this heritage in Darwin, the Victorian gold rush of the 1850s also gave us one of the world’s oldest continuous Chinatowns in Little Bourke Street in Melbourne.

For many decades, the top two non-Anglo-Celtic ancestries nationally were Italian and German. These numbers, around a million Australians of Italian ancestry, and nearly a million Australians of German ancestry, also reflect their long history of migration.

Early Italian labourers and craftsmen helped in the building of Melbourne, which grew from goldrush wealth. Some stayed in Daylesford to build an Italian community there. A century later, the boom in post-war migration saw the Italian community thrive, particularly in Carlton and Brunswick in Melbourne, and Leichhardt in Sydney.

Until post-war migration, the largest non-Anglo-Celtic ancestry in Australia would have been German. This began with Old Lutherans who left German Prussia for religious reasons and settled in South Australia from 1838. South Australia, in particular Adelaide and the Barossa Valley, is still rich in German history and heritage, and, of course, became one of our great wine producing areas.

We don’t often, but ought to, reflect on these parts of our history when we talk about how migration has contributed to Australia.

This brings me to advance.

ADVANCE

We can celebrate. We can reflect. How do we advance? Can we do better? Of course, we can.

The world has changed. It is continually changing. Our demographic is continually changing. The Australian Government plays an important role in ensuring Australia continues to be one of the most socially cohesive nations in the world.

In releasing the Multicultural Statement earlier this year, the Prime Minister and I set out a shared vision for the future—a future where we remain united by a shared commitment to Australia, our democratic institutions and values.

Everyone in this room knows that we have had great success as a multicultural nation. That success is no accident. It’s been due to the work of governments and communities to promote and embrace our shared values and demonstrate a commitment to integrate into our unique Australian society.

The Multicultural Statement set out that what unites us as Australians is a commitment to freedom of speech and religion, equality of men and women, respect for the rule of law, and equality of opportunity. It’s through our commitment to these values that we have thrived and prospered as a nation. Our multicultural statement makes clear that our prosperity is due in no small part to our diverse cultural communities and their commitment and contribution to Australia.

To continue that success, the Government is committed to helping new Australians integrate successfully into our community. To ensure new migrants continue to get the very best support,
we recently announced the merging of the Humanitarian Settlement Services (HSS) and the Complex Case Support (CSS) programs to form the new Humanitarian Settlement Program (HSP). The HSP will build skills and knowledge for the social and economic wellbeing of humanitarian entrants through a needs-based case management approach. Its implementation will bring significant improvements to the way the Government delivers support services to humanitarian entrants. It will also:

- encourage innovation and increased efficiency in service delivery
- improve English language, education and employment outcomes for clients
- create clear links to the Adult Migrant English Program (administered by the Department of Education) and jobactive (administered by the Department of Employment)
- improve case management for individualised, needs-based support
- expand orientation to provide clients with foundation skills required for life in Australia
- introduce a new system to allow us to track client outcomes over time.

In addition, the Department of Social Services has convened an interdepartmental working group, which includes the Departments of Employment, Education and Training, Human Services, and Immigration and Border Protection, to look at improving employment outcomes for humanitarian entrants. Through this working group, we are improving our capacity to support humanitarian entrants into appropriate and sustainable employment, in line with their skills and experience.

The Government also acknowledges that integration and community harmony are whole-of-community efforts. That’s why we have recently run the Community Resilience grants round and the Inclusive Communities grants round to support local community organisations in their efforts to overcome disadvantage, solve complex social problems and build community harmony. A total of $45.2 million has been allocated over three years for these grants. The rounds closed last month and the Department of Social Services received a significant number of applications, which are currently being assessed.

I’m confident some truly innovative, community-driven projects will be funded through these programs as more and more groups across the country join together in efforts to build social cohesion and foster greater cross-cultural understanding.

CONCLUSION

I congratulate FECCA for its work as a peak body representing our important and valuable ethnic communities in Australia. And I would like to congratulate MCNT in hosting this year’s conference.

To the other speakers and attendees over the next two days, I hope after tomorrow, there will be even more on which to celebrate, reflect and advance. Thank you.
Thank you Dorothy for the extremely warm welcome to country and welcome to Larrakia land.

I acknowledge my Parliamentary colleague Zed Seselja, my friend and colleague and the local member for Solomon, Luke Gosling, Jane Kenan, Tim Southommasane, Kon Vatskalis; we used to work together as ministers some time ago it's good to see him now in a different role, Kate Carnell, Mary Patetsos who I actually appointed to the housing supply committee some time ago and I'm seeing here today.

Today is actually the 13th anniversary of my election to Parliament. I didn't actually realise until I woke up and Chris Bowen sent me a text this morning so we will work off the basis that that is true. In that time I've attended many of your events both as FECCA, the State organisations and many of constituent bodies you all represent.

There is a pattern to these speeches. We tend to exchange pleasantries, we talk about the importance of multicultural Australia, we say some nice things and then we sit down. We tend to not engage very much in politics and there's a good reason why we usually don't.

It's not in the interests of multicultural Australia that modern multicultural Australia becomes a political football. It would be naive of me to stand here without acknowledging that fight has already started. It would be naive of me in that situation to say 'well I'll just exchange the pleasantries and sit down'.

Because the current proposals to change Australian citizenship are the most direct attack on modern multicultural Australia since the abolition of the white Australia policy.

There are in fact two sorts of Australian stories that we all fit into. Either a story that goes back on this land to the first sunrise or a story that involves immigration. It is not good enough for people to make those sorts of statements and then support the attack on multicultural Australia that these citizenship proposals are.

Be in no doubt, citizenship law is different to any other law that we deal with in the nation because in our citizenship laws we define what it is to be Australian. That's the purpose of citizenship law.

The proposed delay by the Government is difficult and offensive and I'm opposed to the delay, but the university level English test is designed to prevent people from making a commitment to Australia. That's what it is designed for.

We need to have a think about what this proposal is doing.

Consider this, there is a group of people living here who Australia has already said you will live here as permanent residents. That decision has been made and that group of people say 'we would like to make a pledge of permanent commitment to Australia' and the Australian government says 'no'.

That is exactly where we are right now. Saying no to people who want to make a pledge of allegiance to Australia on the basis that they might have conversational level English. That they might have good enough English to pass the test which already exists and which is in English but they don't have level 6 IELTS. They don't have the level of English required for university entry. That is designed to permanently prevent people from becoming Australian citizens.

If anyone wants to question that it is just an across the board principle and that being an across the board principle therefore why am I talking about the white Australia policy? Well it's not an across the board rule.

The legislation before the Parliament right now provides an exemption from having to have a university level English if you come from the United States, Canada, New Zealand, the UK or Ireland. If you come from Asia you have to have university level English, if you come from England you do not. If you come from Africa you have to have university level English, if you come from North America you will not. That does not represent modern Australia.

Modern Australia and multicultural Australia are the same thing.

We need as a nation to be big enough to acknowledge that there is a difference between
having a test which encourages people to improve their English to a standard that everyone can reach and a test that is designed to exclude.

When these proposals were announced the department was instructed by Minister Dutton to do something very unusual. We have always had a principle in taxation law that when a tax proposal is announced it is implemented immediately on the presumption that the law will go through Parliament. If the law doesn’t go through then the money has to be refunded. It’s done that way for a sensible reason which is to prevent people the moment a new tax law is announced from suddenly reorganising their finances in a new way for tax avoidance. It’s a sensible approach we have adopted.

But we have never done that before with respect to laws like citizenship.

What it has meant is a whole lot of people who had the lawful entitlement under Australian statute right now to apply for citizenship are not having their claims processed. In a few weeks’ time the Senate will deal with this bill. I never call any outcome of a vote until it’s happened, I’ve been around long enough to see that these things are always unpredictable. But let me say this: if the Senate does reject the Government’s legislation then the Department must start processing every application and processing it immediately under the Australian law.

Of all the laws to say we will ignore what is on the statute, to think we are doing that with the law of citizenship. There are some countries in the world where you expect that, but not a country like Australia. The countries of the world where you expect that sort of behaviour are not known as democracies. In Australia we have every right to expect that citizenship applications will be assessed according to the law of the day and for it to have not passed the Parliament but be implemented anyway is something that has to end the day the Senate rejects this bill.

May I say that we attend conferences like this and we begin in the respectful way we should begin, with a welcome to country. It astonishes me how anyone can be unaffected by that. This is the First Australians, people whose heritage goes back to the first sunrise on this land, people who were given no choice, no laws to bar people from arriving, saying welcome anyway. Giving the generosity of that welcome. To hear that and then respond with a slamming of the door to refuse to welcome anyone else, to refuse to welcome other people based on whether or not they have university level English is an astonishing approach.

I was Minister for Citizenship for only three months and there are lots of tough things in that portfolio and aspects of the job that are emotionally heart wrenching but there is one part of that job that is truly wonderful. You get to write the citizenship message that is read out at every citizenship ceremony. There were two words that my message ended with and those words were taken out of the message the moment the Government changed. I hope one day to be able to put those words back in. Those two words I think encapsulate what this organisation (FECCA) is about, what modern Australia is about and what I want in our citizenship laws to reflect—those two words are simply this: welcome home.
ADDRESS FROM LEADER
AUSTRALIAN GREENS

SENATOR RICHARD DI NATALE

I acknowledge the traditional owners of the land—the Larrakia people—and pay my respects to their elders past, present and emerging. Let us also acknowledge that sovereignty of this land was never ceded.

Thank you for inviting me here today, to speak at the bi-annual FECCA conference. The theme for this conference is Celebrate. Reflect. Advance: Our Multicultural Australia.

CELEBRATION

Let’s start by celebrating. Let us celebrate that Australia’s cultural diversity is now recognised as a core part of our nation’s identity. With more than 190 different countries represented, Australia has evolved into a nation of people from a rich mix of cultural backgrounds. With one out of every four people born overseas, the diversity of our people is now our nation’s greatest strength.

Being Australian is no longer about looking a certain way, or talking a certain way. It’s not about the god that you pray to or knowing Don Bradman’s batting average. It’s about what’s in your heart. Being welcoming, inclusive and giving everyone a fair go.

Take the story of Hieu Van Le, who fled the communist regime of Vietnam in November of 1977 and arrived by boat in Darwin as a refugee, with his wife and about 40 other people. Fast forward 40 years and he is now the Governor of South Australia.

Or the town of Nhill, located in Western Victoria’s Wimmera region. In the late 90’s Nhill was experiencing a declining population with forced school closures and the withdrawal of essential community services on the horizon. Local businesses were under pressure including one of the region’s biggest employers, food processing business ‘Luv a Duck’.

These challenges forced the community to innovate and look further afield. They soon identified the Karen community in Melbourne as a group that had the potential to fill the labour shortfall and a great partnership began.

Luv a Duck has now employed more than 200 Karen refugees and the Karen community in Nhill have been welcomed with open arms. They are involved in all aspects of community life. They volunteer at the local neighbourhood house, and at the local football club. They share their language, their food and their customs with the community, and by celebrating the things that make them different, the community has become much closer.

My own story is one which echoes that of so many other Australians. My parents migrated from post war Italy, seeking a better life. My mum’s family set up a fruit shop in Brunswick, Melbourne and my father learnt English while doing his electrical apprenticeship.

It is these people and the millions just like them that have made Australia the nation we are today.

REFLECTION

One thing I’ve learnt is that the battles of the past are never completely over. You don’t need to look too far to see that the notion of Multiculturalism is still contested by some politicians.

Who would have thought that during this term of parliament we would have been consumed by the bitter fight to keep long standing protections against hate speech in the form of section 18C of the racial discrimination Act?

And of course there is Pauline Hanson and One Nation. There she was, a few short months ago, striding into the Senate Chamber wearing a burqa, a profoundly disrespectful and provocative act. Yes it was a stunt and just another example of her doing the only thing she knows, exploiting the politics of fear and division, but the collateral damage was enormous. More fear and anxiety and more hurt within our community.
When Pauline Hanson gave that hateful first speech in the Senate at the start of this term, we thought long and hard about how to respond and we decided we would take a stand. As the bile flowed, as she called Muslims terrorists and criminals, my team stood up en masse and walked out. We did it because we believe that those of us in leadership positions who aspire to an inclusive Australia have a responsibility to take a stand against racism and bigotry whenever it rears its ugly head.

In the words of David Morrison, the ex-Chief of Army Lieutenant, ‘The standard you walk past is the stand you accept’.

Of course we received some criticism from the media whose argument seemed to be that we were giving her more attention. Just think about that for a moment. The media criticised us for giving Pauline Hanson too much attention. But we didn’t do it for them. We did it for the thousands of people in the community who were stung by her words, people who over the next few days called and wrote to say thank you for showing us that we are not alone. I know that in the distant future, when I reflect on my time in the parliament, that walkout will be one of my proudest moments.

But Pauline Hanson isn’t the only problem. For well over a decade now we’ve had a toxic debate about how we respond to innocent people seeking asylum in Australia. That needs to change too.

After the Vietnam War, and under the leadership of former Liberal Prime Minister Malcolm Fraser, we resettled tens of thousands of people from South East Asia, who went on to strengthen the Australian community.

Yet deterrence is now at the heart of our refugee policy. Deterrence relies on the simple proposition that the way we respond to people needs to be as brutal as the conditions that people are fleeing. Otherwise it cannot work. And it breaches a fundamental compact, by harming the innocent to send a message to others. That is a line a civilised society should never cross.

It is time for a dramatic reset. The Greens believe it’s time to end mandatory and indefinite detention and abolish offshore processing. We believe that initial health, security and identity checks should be completed within a maximum of 30 days, and asylum seekers who are assessed as genuine refugees should be settled within the community. We believe in a permanent migration program that prioritises family reunion and facilitates migration or resettlement to Australia within a reasonable time.

Of course, the bipartisan policy consensus extends beyond our approach to asylum seekers to how we respond to terrorism. The government has passed increasingly draconian antiterrorism laws all with the support of the opposition and it seems we will soon be confronted with a new raft of legislation. I find it remarkable that we would even consider passing laws that allow police to round up a ten year old child, without charge, and detain them in a jail for two weeks.

We should always remember when giving sweeping powers to governments, that we are not simply giving that power to the government of the day, but to all future governments and we need to remember that a much worse one may be elected one day.

We will fight just as hard against the government’s proposed citizenship changes that would delay access to citizenship by four years and impose a tough English language test. These changes are just another example of this Government’s attack on migrants. How can the Liberal party stand up and say that they value a diverse Australia, when they require university level English?
The Bill proposes that the personal decision of Minister Dutton can no longer be reviewed by the Administrative Appeals tribunal, and the Department of Immigration and Border Protection has put a freeze on all applications. There is no regard for the legislative process, and far too much concentration of power in the hands of one minister.

In our last sitting week we had a huge win by striking the governments' bill off the notice paper. The government will now have to introduce new legislation if it wants to proceed with those changes. If this is one area that Labor stands with us I welcome their support.

It’s clear that the public debate in all of these areas is having a serious impact on people’s attitudes towards multiculturalism. The Scanlon Foundation’s Mapping Social Cohesion report for 2016 provides a detailed analysis of public opinion on multiculturalism and immigration and it’s a story of contrasts.

There continues to be a high level of positive sentiment regarding multiculturalism, with more than 80% believing agreeing that multiculturalism ‘is good for Australia’. Contrast this however to the experience of discrimination based on ‘skin colour, ethnic origin or religion’ which had increased from 15% to 20%. Unsurprisingly, of those who do experience discrimination people of the Muslim faith were impacted the most.

We need to understand what these statistics mean for the lives of real people. Like that of a young Muslim woman I had the pleasure of meeting a year ago. She was born and raised in Melbourne and was 11 years old when 9/11 happened. She had no idea that an event on the other side of the world, that had nothing to do with her, would turn her life upside down. She remembers the bullying about being a Muslim began from that day. As a newly educated engineer she got her first job where she experienced abuse by a colleague from day one. She also talked about experiencing abuse on the tram based on what she was wearing. This is the experience of just one woman. She’s only 27 years old. This country is her home. It’s no surprise that she wonders whether she is welcome here.

**ADVANCE**

So where to next? How do we advance our vision for an inclusive, welcoming, proudly multicultural Australia? It’s time for us to start having a new conversation. Not one where we find ourselves simply defending the institutions we’ve fought so hard to establish or where we are just reacting to the attacks from our opponents. It’s time for us to get on the front foot and to start arguing for the new structures and institutions that allow us to grow.

That was exactly the thinking behind the launch of the Greens Strengthening Multiculturalism Senate Inquiry. The mandate of the Inquiry was simple: *to investigate ways of not just protecting but strengthening Australia’s multicultural society.*

Throughout the process, I had the pleasure of hearing directly from a number of organisations, many of whom are here today. I heard about the challenges that threaten our multicultural society and about the practical steps that can be taken to ensure one of our nation’s greatest assets is protected.

Let me share with you a few of the recommendations from the report, along with some of my personal reflections throughout the process.

Australia’s settlement services are often heralded as some of the best in the world. Indeed, the support received by migrants and refugees upon entry into Australia is world class. However, with some additional resources, we can do even better. For example, we heard many examples of the barriers that culturally diverse young people face when entering the job market.

The youth unemployment rate is currently above 12%, and for culturally diverse young people this number is even greater, despite on average higher levels of education. There are a number of reasons for this. Unconscious bias in hiring, patchy English language skills and a lack of recognition of overseas qualifications and experience all contribute.

But is a 30 minute appointment with a job active provider really the best that we can do to overcome these barriers? We need a job active stream that works specifically to address the needs of migrants and refugees. We need a greater investment in services that are culturally competent, and can build upon the strengths that migrants bring with them to this nation.

We heard from so many people that the divisive politics that is all too common in Australia at the moment is having a negative impact on communities. The
Committee has therefore recommended introducing a Parliamentary Code of Respecting Cultural Diversity and I have moved a motion in the Senate to ensure that it is examined carefully by all parties.

Most people assume that such a code must already exist, but sadly it doesn’t. That is why the Senate was powerless in preventing Senator Hanson from wearing a burqa in the senate. Elected MPs should act in a manner that upholds the honour of public office. Rather than demeaning a whole religion, MPs should model the values of respect and a fair go for all.

The concept of cultural literacy was raised time and again. The ability to interact with people from different cultural backgrounds can have a profound impact. Communities are enriched and transformed by migrants and refugees. The skills, perspectives and traditions they bring facilitate a positive context for collaboration and understanding. This is why the committee has recommended that an intercultural and multicultural curriculum be developed and introduced into schools across Australia.

This curriculum would be taught across a range of disciplines, including history, geography and politics because multiculturalism is not a discrete concept, it is woven throughout all aspects of our lives.

I began my speech today with the statement that Australia’s cultural diversity is a part of our nation’s identity. If we believe that to be true then let us enshrine it in our laws. That is why today, I am announcing that the Greens will introduce legislation for a Multicultural Act into Parliament during the first half of 2018.

An Australian Multiculturalism Act is the scaffolding to support a genuinely multicultural Australia. The Act is important both symbolically, and to allow for the provision of supportive structures. This would include the establishing of an independent national multicultural commission with clear reporting requirements for Government Departments and Agencies.

We want your input into this important piece of legislation so we will be placing an exposure draft of the Bill on our website within the next month. We welcome feedback from all organisations working in the multicultural sector, no matter how big or how small.

We only need look at the horrific events that occurred in Charlottesville to know that we do not want Australia to tread the same path as the US, a path where hate and bigotry are seen as acceptable from our nation’s leaders.

When I hear comments like those of the immigration minister who says that we made a mistake by settling particular groups in Australia, or One Nation’s call for a Muslim ban, I hear echoes of the debate in the US. That’s not just an attack on one group but an attack on all of us.

Let us seize back the initiative so that we can celebrate once again that what makes us different is what makes us great.
I would like to acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the land of which we meet—the Larrakia people—and pay my respect to their Elders past and present.

I would also like to thank the Federation of Ethnic Communities’ Councils of Australia, or FECCA, for inviting me to speak for you today.

I am here today in a number of guises;

• as a Director of the Board of Reconciliation Australia
• as a senior Yolngu woman
• as a woman with a deep commitment to my own people and also to people from all backgrounds arriving in Australia, a woman with a wish to share my experience with all people that make up Australia—our beautiful country.

Consistent with the theme of the conference I would like to reflect on Australia’s reconciliation journey and talk about two areas where I believe we can work together to advance towards a reconciled and multicultural Australia.

In 2016, Reconciliation Australia commemorated its 25 years of formal reconciliation movement in Australia and the establishment of the Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation in 1991. It was an important time to celebrate and reflect on our progress to date and to think about the nation we want to be. Over the past 26 years many people from all backgrounds and walks of life have dedicated their energy, skills and knowledge to the reconciliation movement.

Awareness has been raised. Relationships with numerous sectors and industries have been built. Commitment and plans have been put in place. And as a result, we have taken steps, large and small, towards reconciliation, or, what the Council described, as a ‘United Australia that respects this land of ours; values the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders heritage; and provides justice and equity for all’.

When the Council came to the end of its term, one of its final recommendations was to establish an
independent body to continue its work and to be the nation’s custodians of reconciliation. And so, in 2001, Reconciliation Australia was born.

Reconciliation Australia’s vision is for a reconciled, just and equitable Australia. Our purpose is to inspire and enable all Australians to contribute to reconciliation by creating strong relationships built on respect and trust between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and the wider Australian community. As we all know, the Australian community is now more diverse than ever—a third of all Australians were born overseas, with almost 20% of these having arrived since 2012.

During its decade of action, the Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation identified strength in this diversity and recognised the need for all Australians, regardless of how recent their arrival to this nation, to be involved in our shared journey towards reconciliation. In its final report, the Council described the strong partnerships it had formed with ethnic communities and referred particularly to its cooperation with FECCA.

In the lead up the 1997 reconciliation convention, the Council and FECCA conducted seminars around the country to enable ethnic communities to fully explore and accept the special relationship of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to the land. 20 years later, culturally and linguistically diverse Australians continue to play a key role in the reconciliation of the nation.

**Five Dimensions of Reconciliation**

Since the Council began, we have refined a holistic concept of what reconciliation means in this country. Last year, we released the State of Reconciliation in Australia, the first report of its kind since the Council's final report in 2000. The report highlights what Australia has achieved in 25 years of a formal reconciliation process, and where we still have to go. Importantly, and for the first time, it defines **five critical dimensions**—a roadmap—for achieving our vision of a just, equitable and reconciled nation that together represent a holistic and comprehensive picture of reconciliation.

Today we use these five dimensions of reconciliation as a framework for discussion, action, and measuring progress. To understand reconciliation, is to understand the inter-relatedness of the dimensions. We will only see progress towards a reconciled nation when we experience mutual progress across each of these five dimensions.

The State of Reconciliation report highlighted two dimensions of reconciliation that were not progressing as well as others: race relations and historical acceptance. These are the two areas I would like to focus on today.
RACE RELATIONS

Since 2008, Reconciliation Australia has been conducting a national biennial research study, the Australian Reconciliation Barometer. The Barometer surveys Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as well as a nationally representative sample of the general population. Reflecting the demographic makeup of Australia’s population, of these respondents, 30 percent were not born in Australia and 48 percent identified their cultural heritage as something other than British or Irish.

The Barometer measures attitudes and perceptions towards reconciliation, and maps our progress across the five dimensions of reconciliation. In some areas, the Barometer provides evidence of progress and cause for optimism for our national journey towards reconciliation. In others, it exposes how far we still have to go. One area where we still have far to go is in race relations and the experience of racism.

The Barometer shows us that racism, both perceived and actual is increasing. In the six months prior to the survey, 37 percent of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participants experienced verbal racial abuse compared to 14 per cent of the wider Australian population. This is a 6 percent increase from 2014.

Based on these results, if all of us in this room were Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander people, every 2nd or 3rd person would have been verbally abused at least once since Christmas. I am sure many people in the room can relate to that experience.

The Scanlon Foundation’s annual Mapping Social Cohesion Report this year similarly reported an increase in respondents’ experiences of discrimination. 20 percent of respondents reported that they had experienced discrimination because of their skin colour, ethnic origin or religion, the highest proportion ever recorded in Scanlon Foundation surveys.

Of great concern is the fact that the highest level of discrimination was reported among respondents aged 18-24, the youngest age bracket surveyed.

In the colourful mosaic of the Australian population, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and culturally and linguistically diverse people have shared experiences as minority groups in Australia. It is a national shame that a key shared experience of our communities is that of racial vilification. And it is unsurprising that a greater percentage of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people agree that Australia is a racist country (57%) than (39%) the general community.

Reconciliation Australia is a proud supporter of the Racism. It stops with me campaign but like many people in this room we know more needs to be done to reduce discrimination and create a zero tolerance to racism across Australia. We believe more resources need to be devoted to these efforts and that strong legal protections against racial discrimination, like the Racial Discrimination Act, need to be maintained and strengthened. To achieve a reconciled and multicultural Australia, we must have zero tolerance towards racism and discrimination and replace existing prejudices and intolerances, with positive relationships based on trust and respect.

On the flip side of these experiences of racism, the Barometer research shows cause for optimism in this regard. Our research shows that there is wide agreement amongst Australians that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures are important to Australia’s identity as a nation. Pride in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures is also increasing. And significantly the majority of Australians believe it is possible to become united.

We need to harness this goodwill and ensure that these sentiments become the day to day reality of minority groups in Australia.

HISTORICAL ACCEPTANCE

Another area fundamental to reconciliation and where progress is needed, is historical acceptance. If Australia is to achieve true reconciliation, we must first have a greater knowledge about our history. And importantly tell the truths of our history.

The State of Reconciliation in Australia report tells us that Australians have a low level of knowledge and understanding about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures and that we have some way to go before many Australians fully understand and accept the wrongs of the past and how these wrongs continue to impact Aboriginal and Torres Strait people today.

Despite the low levels of knowledge, in the 2016 Barometer, well over 90 per cent of Australians felt that it was important for all Australians to know about the history of Australia. Over 80 per cent of Australians felt that it was important for all Australians to know about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures.
Again we need to translate these good intentions into tangible outcomes because unless we can recognise and heal historical wounds, they will continue to diminish Australia’s capacity for a reconciled future.

While the true story of Australia’s history has many wounds it also has many positive stories which remain untold. For example, the dominant narrative of multiculturalism in Australia tells the story of:

- British and Irish convicts arriving on Australian shores, to be followed by free settlers
- the gold rush that brought thousands of Chinese immigrants, while ‘blackbirding’ brought South Sea Islanders to the sugarcane plantations of Queensland
- waves of immigration that were followed by post-World War Two Europeans and South East Asian boat arrivals
- skilled migrant and family reunion programs that have seen an influx of migrants from India and China.

But there is much, much more to this story. 65,000 years in fact. Diversity in Australia started long before the arrival of British colonisers. Over 250 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander nations lived and thrived on this continent before 1788. The fact that Australia is home to the longest containing cultures on earth is so often forgotten and left out of our nation’s story is a sad indictment because we have so much to gain and to be proud of.

TRUTH, JUSTICE AND HEALING

There are many challenges that lie ahead for a reconciled Australia that accepts the full truth of our history. We believe that it is the responsibility of each and every individual to understand and accept our history, to engage with both the difficult stories of racism and positive stories of achievement and cultural pride and to actively participate in building our nation’s future. We also believe it is important for the nation as a whole to undertake a process of truth-telling, justice and healing.

Recently, the Referendum Council undertook extensive consultations with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples around Australia on constitutional reform to recognise Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in the Australian constitution. The consultations culminated in the Uluru Statement from the Heart calling for constitutional reforms to empower Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to take a rightful place in our own country through as First Nations voice to the Australian Parliament enshrined in the Constitution.

The Constitution is our founding document and it is the set of rules by which Australia is run. The document came into effect in 1901, after the Australian colonies agreed to form the nation of Australia. Before the Australian Constitution was written, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people had lived here for more than 65,000 years, maintaining the oldest living culture on the planet. Yet the Constitution doesn’t recognise this and still allows for racial discrimination. As it stands, the nation’s founding document makes no mention of the First Australians and more than sixty-five thousand years of Australia’s history, prior to British colonisation.

Reconciliation Australia supports efforts to correct this wrong, and meaningfully recognise First Nations’ people in the Australian Constitution. Reconciliation Australia has long advocated for genuine reform that is based on the participation and perspectives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. And so, we support the aspirations of Indigenous Australians, as detailed in the Uluru Statement. Importantly, the statement also called for a Makarrata commission to supervise a process of agreement-making between governments and First Nations and truth-telling about our history.

Makarrata is a Yolngu word meaning the coming together after a struggle.
A NATIONAL DAY OF UNITY AND CELEBRATION

Another area related to truth, justice and healing of our nation is our national day of celebration—Australia Day. National discussions about January 26th present an opportunity for both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and culturally and linguistically diverse people to influence our national character into the future. Australia Day has only been celebrated as a national public holiday since 1994—well within our memories. The day has many meanings, reflecting the many perspectives of Australia’s diverse population. As a young public holiday in Australia, its significance has always been the subject of national debate.

January 26th marks the arrival of Arthur Phillip at Sydney Cove, in the Country of the Gadigal People of the Eora Nation. The day, marking the start of a period of violence and trauma for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, is evidently a painful day for the descendants of those people dispossessed by colonisation who still feel its effects today. The day has been reframed to increasingly acknowledge Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the original peoples of this continent, seeking to simultaneously celebrate our nation’s future and mourn its past. For many first and second generation Australians, the day marks the anniversary of their citizenship ceremonies, when our nation welcomed them as Australians, with all the freedoms and rights, and responsibilities this entails.

Reconciliation Australia advocates for a day of national unity that is inclusive for all Australians. We believe that our national day cannot be cohesive and a matter of pride for all Australians if it reminds Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and all of us of invasion, dispossession and loss of culture. Australia Day could be a day that celebrates our future, and our potential to be a nation that values and supports the diversity that strengthens our national character.

We look to FECCA and culturally and linguistically diverse people in Australia to collaborate with us to shape our national identity to improve race relations and promote acceptance of our shared history.

RECONCILIATION AUSTRALIA STRATEGIC DIRECTION 2022

Reconciliation Australia has recently finalised its strategic plan for the next five years. We are looking forward to continuing the nation’s reconciliation journey, in cooperation and collaboration with all Australians. As we have said for many years, reconciliation is everyone’s business and our key focus areas for the next five years are race relations and historical acceptance.

In five years, we hope that:

• Australians experience less racism and there is a deeper level of cultural understanding across Australian society; and

• More Australians have a greater knowledge of our shared history, the wrongs of the past, and their impact on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

We will achieve our goals through our two core programs—The Reconciliation Action Plan or RAP program and Narragunnawali: Reconciliation in Schools and Early Learning. The Reconciliation Action Plan program provides a framework for organisations to realise their vision for reconciliation. Through the program, organisations develop a RAP—a business plan that documents what an organisation commits to do to contribute to reconciliation in Australia. Each RAP is comprised of commitments to build relationships, demonstrate respect and provide opportunities. Two-way mutually beneficial relationships facilitate increased respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, and underpin the creation of meaningful opportunities. Since 2006, over 900 corporate, government, not-for-profit and Indigenous organisations have developed a RAP.
Narragunnawali: Reconciliation in Schools and Early Learning, provides a framework for schools and early learning services to foster a higher level of knowledge and pride in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories, cultures and contributions. *Narragunnawali* is a word from the language of the Ngunnawal people, Traditional Owners of the land on which Reconciliation Australia’s Canberra office is located, meaning alive, wellbeing, coming together and peace. Narragunnawali: Reconciliation in Schools and Early Learning aims to create a community of positive and engaged schools and early learning services that are committed to promoting reconciliation between the wider Australian community and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Culturally and linguistically diverse Australians have a key role to play in reconciliation. A great example of alignment between the interests of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and culturally and linguistically diverse people is the roll-out of cultural learning across many national institutions and organisations.

As part of its Reconciliation Action Plan or RAP, The Department of Human Services has implemented an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural learning strategy. The strategy includes:

- providing online cross-cultural training to 95 per cent of staff
- enabling one third of all staff to complete face-to-face Indigenous Cultural Awareness Training
- ensuring that all senior executives complete the Exploring Our Culture: Senior Executives programme.

Utilising its experience implementing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural learning, the Department is currently in the process of rolling out multicultural awareness training, including to service delivery staff that operate in areas with a high culturally and linguistically diverse population.

This commitment to cultural learning echoes a trend amongst organisations and schools to proactively take an educative approach to Australia’s diversity for the benefit of employees and the communities in which they operate.

This undoubtedly contributes to the improved race relations that we are all working towards.

**CONCLUSION**

The message of reconciliation, of truth-telling and acceptance, is critical to our nation’s success and prosperity. The foundations for all Australians to prosper are respect and relationships. If now is our moment to ask who we want to be and if the answer is a prosperous and harmonious nation, then we must all take action towards reconciliation. We must understand and respect one another in order to create a national story of success and a history our children will be proud of.

Thank you.
What does it mean to be Australian? What does it mean to say we are multicultural? And how must we respond to racism, bigotry and intolerance?

These are questions that remain asked in our debates. They remain central to our national conversations. The voice of Australia’s ethnic and multicultural communities remains more important than ever. FECCA must continue to play its role in defending and strengthening Australian multiculturalism, and to contribute to that perennial project of Australian nation-building.

It has been a busy period in policy and legislative developments. Those of us who follow these things appreciate how FECCA has been tireless in advocating on behalf of multicultural communities. This includes FECCA’s contribution to the inquiry into freedom of speech and the Racial Discrimination Act conducted by the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Human Rights, which reported earlier this year. And, of course, it includes FECCA’s contribution to parliament’s proposed changes to citizenship laws, including the citizenship test administered to those applying to naturalise as Australians.

I’d like to reflect on citizenship, multiculturalism and anti-racism. In the past two years, we have seen some changes in the global political climate. Developments in the United States, United Kingdom and Europe point to how intolerance and xenophobia appear to be on the rise and have found expression through far-right nationalist populism. There are signs of similar trends taking effect here in Australia.

Amid all this, it is vital that advocates for multiculturalism have clarity about what is happening, how they should respond and how we must work together.
1. Citizenship

The idea of citizenship is foundational to a successful Australian multiculturalism. It has been said that we have multicultural citizenship: we practise our multiculturalism not as a way of rejecting or superseding Australian citizenship, but rather as an expression of it. In a multicultural country, the common identity can’t be defined in ethnic or racial terms. A multicultural Australia is not defining who we are exclusively by blood or ancestry. How can we? We are a nation of immigrants. Apart from our Indigenous brothers and sisters, either our forebears or ourselves have arrived here as migrants. Even many Aboriginal Australians will themselves have within their family history ancestors who have come here as migrants.

The things we share as Australians is not defined by our geography, nor is it even defined by lifestyle. What defines our membership of the Australian community is, rather, our public culture: an Australian liberal democracy and the institutions, history and traditions that come with it.

From the very moment that multiculturalism was introduced to the Australian vocabulary in the 1970s, it has been made clear that, for all the differences in our racial and ethnic backgrounds, our cultural beliefs and practices, there remain some things that we all have in common. All of us must commit to parliamentary democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, equality of the sexes, freedom of speech, freedom of religion. These tenets of our multiculturalism remain foundational, and they go to the civic rights and responsibilities of our society.

In April this year, the Federal Government proposed some changes to Australian citizenship laws through the Australian Citizenship Legislation (Strengthening the Requirements for Australian Citizenship and Other Measures) Bill 2017. Among the proposed changes: migrants would need to be permanent residents for four years before being eligible for citizenship, they would need to demonstrate English proficiency at a more sophisticated level of ‘competent English’, and they would need to demonstrate they had integrated into the Australian community.

The Australian Human Rights Commission did not support the passage of the bill in its current form. It is important to affirm a number of things about our citizenship laws. One is that Australia is a remarkable success story as an immigration nation. It is a multicultural society and a model for integrating immigrants that many countries in the world look to as an exemplar. In that sense, Australia starts from a position of strength and success. If there are to be departures from current citizenship laws and practices, then it should be justified by a compelling rationale.

The Commission does have concerns about extending the general residency requirement, as it would create significant disparities between different groups of migrants in relation to citizenship. We also believe raising the English language requirement to equivalent to the IELTS Level 6 is too high. The impact of such a change would likely be considerable.

As for integration, we must recognise that the path of integration can traverse more than one generation. It would be misplaced to measure integration only by the contribution that migrants currently make to Australian society, without recognising the future contribution they and their children will make. The task of civic integration also isn’t confined to aspiring citizens. There is considerable scope, for example, for improving the civic literacy of Australian-born citizens. It would be anomalous to hold naturalised citizens to a standard that is significantly more stringent than the standard expected of Australian-born members of our society.

No one here would dispute that our citizenship laws must help serve the interest of creating a strong and well-integrated Australian national community. But care must be taken to ensure that the wrong signal isn’t sent, if there is to be a change to the status quo. It has been a characteristic of Australia’s success as a nation of immigration that those who arrive in Australia have been able to become Australian citizens within a reasonable amount of time. We have always said to migrants that the most important criterion of citizenship is not command of a tongue, but commitment of the heart.
2. MULTICULTURALISM

There is a sense, though, that liberal democracies around the world—namely, in the West—are undergoing something of a shift. In those democracies with which we often compare ourselves, liberal democratic norms are coming under some challenge.

In Europe, we have seen the resurgence of many far-right, anti-immigration political movements, in France, Austria, Germany, Scandinavia and elsewhere. In the United Kingdom, we had Brexit—a result many regard as reflecting, to a significant degree, discontent with British immigration policy.

Across the Atlantic, we have seen President Donald Trump regularly use muscular anti-immigration rhetoric—as crystallised in his calls for immigration bans, mass deportations and proposals for a wall to be built along the US-Mexico border. On race, he appears to have sympathy with white nationalist movements that have coalesced under the banner of the ‘alt-right’.

There is clearly cultural anxiety about race, diversity and immigration. In many western liberal democracies, there are some who are anxious about cultural and racial differences: who are feeling as though they are losing their country, or at least their place in it. Such anxieties exist here as well.

There are signs that prejudice and intolerance are on the rise. Last year’s Scanlon Foundation (2016) social cohesion survey found a statistically significant rise in the proportion of people who reported they had experienced racial or religious discrimination: the figure was 20 per cent, up from 14 per cent the previous year. This year, we have seen numerous incidents of neo-Nazi propaganda being distributed in schools and universities.

We must be careful not to overstate any trend, at least if we’re talking about the state of public support for multiculturalism. The annual Scanlon Foundation survey into social cohesion has found largely stable and strong support for multiculturalism. Well above 80 per cent of Australians believe multiculturalism is good for the country. To put things into some global context, last month, an international survey across 25 countries involving 18,000 people found that 48 per cent of Australians agree that migrants make the country a ‘more interesting place to live’—well above the international average of 31 per cent. About 40 per cent agreed immigration ‘generally had a positive impact’ on the country—well above the 20 per cent internationally.

This isn’t to say that multiculturalism in Australia can’t be strengthened. It can. Often, our support for multiculturalism isn’t translated into muscular practice and many domains of Australian life appear relatively untouched by our multicultural character.

For example, the media representation of multicultural voices and faces remains lacking. We are yet to see our diverse society reflected on our television screens, or heard on our radios, or even in our print media—at least, not in the way you would expect in a society frequently feted as the most successful in the world.

Across our organisations and institutions, there remains a significant under-representation of cultural diversity in positions of leadership. The Leading for Change report, which the Australian Human Rights Commission co-authored in 2016, found that the ranks of CEOs and equivalent in business, government, and universities—as well as our federal parliamentarians—remain disproportionately Anglo-Celtic in background. While at least 14 per cent of the Australian society has a non-European or Indigenous background, only 5 per cent of CEOs in the ASX 200 have either background. This number is even lower among federal parliamentarians, government departmental heads and university vice-chancellors.

Few of us would regard the status quo as reflecting a perfect meritocracy in action—not when you look at the cultural diversity represented within our leading achievers in school and university graduates. Progress will require attention not only to the issues of conscious and unconscious bias within organisations, but also to that of professional and leadership development. Recognising this, next month, in partnership with the University of Sydney Business School, the Commission will be piloting a cultural diversity and leadership scheme among some leading Australian corporates, professional services firms and government organisations.

To continue our conversation on this and ensure sustained advocacy from senior leaders, I also earlier this year launched a Leadership Council on Cultural Diversity, which brings together leaders from business, government, media and academia as champions for more diversity in leadership.
There also needs to be more attention to strengthening the policy machinery around Australian multiculturalism. FECCA has, of course, for many years argued for a federal Multicultural Act. Earlier this year, a select committee of parliament conducted an inquiry into the issue of multicultural policy machinery and recommended some enhancements, such as the creation of a Commonwealth multicultural commission or agency. Whatever the vehicle, there does appear to be scope for better research on multicultural issues and better collection and monitoring of data on cultural diversity.

3. ANTI-RACISM

Strengthening multiculturalism must be accompanied by continued efforts to counter racial discrimination. In Australia, the Racial Discrimination Act serves not only to prohibit racial discrimination and racial hatred; short of us having a dedicated Multicultural Act, in guaranteeing equality before the law, the RDA is the de facto legislative expression of Australian multiculturalism.

There has, as you all know, been significant debate about the RDA—in particular, section 18C, which makes it unlawful to offend, insult, humiliate or intimidate someone because of their race. Last year, the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Human Rights began an inquiry into freedom of speech and the RDA. The inquiry took hundreds of unique submissions, many from ethnic communities who argued there was no case for changing the provisions of the Act. That Committee reported in March this year, as I mentioned, and there followed the introduction of a bill in the parliament to amend the words of section 18C.

Those proposed changes were voted down by the Senate at the end of March and in the end there was no change to section 18C. It is important that we do nothing to embolden any racial hatred or discrimination. In the public debate about the issue, Australians sent a clear message that racism is unacceptable.

Laws such as the RDA only go part of the way to combating racism. No law on its own can ever eradicate a social ill. Laws set the standard, but changing attitudes takes time. And it requires education.

That’s one reason we run our Racism. It Stops with Me campaign, an awareness campaign aimed at empowering people to speak out and stand up against prejudice and discrimination. Since 2012, more than 400 organisations have been supporters of the campaign. FECCA has been a member of the partnership group that guides the campaign’s work, along with a number of civil society organisations and government departments.

We have released two anti-racism videos as part of the campaign. They deal with scenarios of everyday and casual racism and highlighting how racism needn’t always be overt. They reflect research which finds there are some groups that experience significantly higher rates of racial discrimination, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, and those from African backgrounds. They also reflect our own experience at the Commission. They find that nearly 40 per cent of our racial discrimination complaints last year involved either employment or the provision of goods and services. But they aim to help people find the courage and confidence to respond to racism if they see it occurring.

We need to start a conversation. But as we all know, a conversation about racism isn’t always easy. It can be fraught, it can be met with resistance; it is something that requires tact and nuance. Here are some general principles that can guide us on talking about race and racism.

First, it’s not just about racial superiority. Racism refers to prejudice, discrimination or hatred directed at someone because of their race. It is something that creates disadvantages for some, and confers privilege on to others. Expressions of racism don’t always need to involve a belief in racial supremacy or even racial malice. It can come from ignorance or anxiety.
Second, words can do damage. Something needn’t involve physical harm in order to count as racist. We know that when racial violence does occur, it is often enabled by racist language. The Holocaust Memorial Museum in the US said in response to the recent surge in white nationalism: ‘The Holocaust did not begin with killing; it began with words.’

Third, let’s not get too defensive. We know that race can be an uncomfortable topic. Often people say we make too much of a fuss about racism in Australia when racism is much worse in many other countries. We shouldn’t divert in this way. Australia is, by international standards, a highly tolerant society. But that doesn’t deny that those who experience racial discrimination experience a real harm to their dignity and equality.

Fourth, we must avoid saying that coping racism must be part of some initiation rite for any immigrant group. Some say that just as the Irish, Italians, Greeks and Asians copped ugliness, so too must newer groups, that racism in the past only served to make migrants more resilient. That amounts to normalising racism. As for resilience, no doubt there were many who were tough enough to tough it out. But for every story of resilience, there would be many more stories where racism has broken a migrant. We mustn’t think that our society must repeat old ways.

Finally, racism matters to all of us. It implicates all of us. Racism mustn’t be an issue that matters only to minorities. Those fortunate not to experience racism must understand they have a part to play—that social progress happens only when society is big enough to stand alongside those who are mistreated or experience injustice. We say, ‘Racism. It Stops with Me’, because racism diminishes all of us, and because all of us can help stop it.

CONCLUSION

This is my third FECCA conference as Race Discrimination Commissioner, and it will also be my final conference in this role, as my term concludes in the second half of 2018. Over the past four years I have enjoyed the privilege of working with FECCA. I would like to thank Australia’s ethnic communities for the support I’ve received in the cause of anti-racism. I thank you for the work that you all do in advancing our cultural diversity. It has been an honour to stand in solidarity with so many of you.

I would like to conclude with three reflections on what I see as challenges for Australia’s multicultural communities.

First, advocacy for multiculturalism must constantly update itself for the times. It is essential that our ethnic and multicultural communities are part of a peak body such as FECCA. We know that our immigration program has evolved over the years. The typical migrant profile in 2017 is very different to what it was in 1967 and 1987. Today, the two largest source countries of migrants to Australia are China and India. Those ethnic communities that have been in Australia longer must work with and support newer ethnic communities. I know this work is already being done, but I believe there must be more of it. Communities speak most effectively when they speak together. We saw a powerful example of this when ethnic communities spoke in unison in defence of the Racial Discrimination Act.

Second, we must build the multicultural leadership of the future. We need to see more of a new generation of leaders who will speak on behalf of ethnic and multicultural communities. It is encouraging and very timely that FECCA had sessions at this conference dedicated to youth. Again, the work is being done, but more of it must be done.

And third, we must continue having strong voices from within Australian civil society on race and multiculturalism. In particular, there is a need to strike the right balance between having voices from community organisations who deliver services and voices from community advocates who are able to speak truth to power. We need to ensure that advocacy on the issues that matter doesn’t rest on the shoulders of those who also provide services to communities—those who may understandably refrain from speaking out because they fear consequences for their work in delivering services. Perhaps there needs to be a better division of labour within Australian multiculturalism between service provision and policy advocacy.

I am confident that multicultural communities can meet these challenges. Very simply, you must meet these challenges—because the times ahead are unlikely to be easy.
ADDRESS BY MYNT CHAIR AND FECCA YOUTH CHAIR

KRISHNA CAPAQUE AND WAQAS DURRANI

It was with great honour and pride that we welcomed a range of young people to our first FECCA Conference Youth Day in Darwin this year. On this day, hundreds of students, campaigners, and activists came together to discuss the future of Australian multiculturalism—a future that they will be responsible for creating. We had many wonderful presenters and an audience eager to discuss the issues that matter to them.

The day started with a beautiful Welcome to Country and song by Ali Mills, a Larrakia Elder. With SBS’s Patrick Abboud as the host, it was bound to be an exciting and interactive day. We were honoured to have a presentation by writer, performing artist and movement director, Jenevieve Chang, who talked about how ‘Your Story Matters’. Other presenters spoke eloquently on themes and issues concerning the multicultural youth of Australia: leadership, media, innovation and creativity, participation and representation.

A theme that kept coming up throughout the day was using your own stories to create change. The presenters highlighted the importance of getting youth involved in matters concerning them, and the challenge of getting policy makers to listen to the next generation. Everyone has a story to tell and by sharing these stories we can reach a greater understanding of our differences. We can recognise that we are all the same, with hopes and dreams for a future where equity, participation and recognition are accessible to all.

As representatives of the MyNT and FECCA Youth Advisory Committee, we were excited to be a part of the debates led by such resilient youth leadership. We are positive and hopeful about the multicultural future of Australia.

We sincerely thank all those who attended this very important event, and the presenters who made it an exhilarating and informative day. We look forward to exciting things happening in the future.
I’d like to acknowledge the Larrakia people as the Traditional Owners of the Darwin region and pay my respects to the Larrakia elders past and present.

When I was invited to speak with you today, I was incredibly honoured.

There comes a time in life when you realise you may have graduated from being a misfit to a role model, and this is one of those times. Certainly, my memoir The Good Girl of Chinatown is far from being a treatise on good behaviour. The title itself is ironic. The story is about the knots and twists we get ourselves into when we lose sight of who we are and the community we belong to.

Today I’m here as a fellow storyteller. All I have to offer is a road map of some of the things I discovered about owning my narrative when writing a book.

Make your story matter. In the telling of it, identify the universal in the personal. When that happens, your audience becomes invested in the outcome, as if they can imagine it happening to them. The best stories are the ones that remind us of our common human experience.

Hook people in. Look at television. The cliff-hanger gets us to imagine all the different possibilities a story could go so that we tune into the next episode. People are born problem-solvers. They want to use their imagination to complete the story for you. By not giving away too much—by drip feeding details and creating anticipation—you hook your audience in.

Pay attention to structure. Ask yourself: what do you want your audience to take away from your story? Every story has a beginning, middle and an end. With my story, I decided to start close to the end. I’m at my lowest point. I’m in a strange country and I’ve woken up alone. I don’t remember what happened the night before. I’m completely lost. I then take the reader back in time—to the beginning—so that together we relive the moments that brought me to rock-bottom. And together, we just might be able to find our way back. I invite them on the journey with me.
When I started writing my story, I thought it was about me. But the more I wrote, the more I questioned who I was, the more I realised that this wasn’t just my story, it was the story of my family. Everything that happened to me could be traced back to something that happened to my parents, or my grandparents or even my great grandparents.

I learnt about my great grandmother who had been wealthy at the wrong time, in the wrong place. When Mao and the Communist Army swept through China, he seized everything she had, and locked her up in a wheat silo where he starved her for three days and nights.

My grandmother was forced into a hasty marriage while her boyfriend was far away fighting in this war. When her boyfriend returned for her, she had to tell him that he was too late, because she was now somebody else’s wife.

Through digging through my story, I realised that my father hadn’t always been an angry and violent man. Once he had been young as well, with hopes and dreams for a better life.

Even as a little girl, I loved to dance, perform and tell stories to anyone who would listen.

**STORYTELLING**

When I started doing this research, my memoir took on a whole different dimension. My family’s stories are a clear example of how the personal is political.

What is your story really about? It took me a while to realise that my story was actually about running away. Not only was I running away from my family, but my grandmother had been running away from the Communists. My father had been running away from the guilt of his sister’s death.
And all the other characters in my story became about people who were running away. People, who had run away from love, from the global financial crisis, people who were running away from themselves.

Another of the themes in my story is racism. Growing up Asian in 1980s Australia, I’m no stranger to racism. But when I got married, my battles with racism were no longer with those outside the family, but those inside the family. In my narrative, racism is the most toxic obstacle—the kind of fear that entrenches itself in the mind to boil hate down to something as innocuous as skin colour. But it’s not a simple enemy. It does not come in a one-size-fits-all model. The way it exudes its toxicity is a product of a specific time and place and set of experiences.

I’ve written about my parents’ racism towards my husband. That, despite the fact that—or because of it—they had been on the receiving end of racism themselves, they found it all too easy to project that same social prejudice onto others. And I realised that this too fit into my overall theme: how racism can sometimes become a vehicle for people to run away from their own humanity.

In your story, how you deal with conflict becomes what defines you. It’s the inner motivation that drives you in your journey. The acting teacher Judith Weston calls this the character spine, Stanislavski called it the super-objective.

A character like Batman’s motivation would be to avenge his parents’ murder. Superman’s however would be to protect and serve his adopted Homeland. His is the ultimate refugee story.

Different character spines, different stories. When you’re telling your story, treat yourself as a character, and know yourself in the context of struggle.

The role of fear as part of the human condition is a strong driver in my story. But what became even more important was its oppositional and more transcendent force working in juxtaposition at all times, and that is love. Love doesn’t always win out—it is a real story after all—but as I came into my own as a writer, I realised that this is what becoming master of your own narrative ultimately affords. To see the light you may have missed stumbling around in the darkness the first time.

The thing about all art—and storytelling is no different—is that you have to tell the truth. I’m not talking about the difference between fiction and nonfiction. I’m talking about capturing a truth from your experience and expressing your values. You cannot—and should not—hide from yourself. Be the truest you, and then shine a light into your darkness.

Great storytellers don’t judge their characters, they celebrate human flaws. Stories create a desire for change. It’s an antidote to what normally happens in life when we shrink away from change.

Good stories map transformation and the more we are trained to understand that change is a part of life, the more we are training ourselves to see not the world for what it is, but to harness the power of the community to imagine it for what it could be.
Leading By Example

Pritika Desai, Founder and Project Leader, ShoutOut!

Living with mental illness and struggling with the negative stigma surrounding it, Pritika Desai began publicly sharing her own journey with Borderline Personality Disorder and thoughts of suicide. It wasn’t too long before other young people began sharing their own mental health stories and realised the importance of building community understanding of mental health issues and promoting help seeking. As a result, in 2013, Pritika and her peers founded the youth-led mental health movement, ShoutOut!, a project of Multicultural Youth NT. ShoutOut! is run by young people, for young people between the ages of 15 and 28. The project empowers young people to change community perceptions of mental illness and advocate for more relevant services. ShoutOut! values the power of story and individual experience to inform community and system change. Pritika is the 2015 Young Achiever of the Year, 2016 Darwin Young Citizen of the Year and 2016 Australia India Business and Community Awards Young Community Achiever of the Year.

A powerful story can create leaders and inspire those that follow them. The greatest leaders use their experiences to take people on a journey towards change. In doing so, they provide a platform for others to do the same.

I grew up as, what you would call, an average child living a pretty average life. Fast forward to today and I am living with a mental illness called Borderline Personality Disorder. Borderline personality disorder (BPD) affects 2-5% of the population in Australia. The symptoms commonly appear in late adolescence and early adulthood. I didn’t know much about BPD before my diagnosis and what I know now is that it makes me confused about how I feel all the time. While I was diagnosed with BPD in 2013, my symptoms appeared long before this.

I had my first thoughts of suicide at the age of 10—I didn’t think much of it as I thought this must be how everyone thinks and feels. At 13 I began self-harming after an awful experience, it was a way for me to cope alone. When I was 16 I was finally discovered and was convinced to see a psychiatrist. I went to one session, and didn’t go back due to the stigma I experienced from my community—I just pretended that I was cured.

There are a number of reasons or barriers as to why I didn’t seek help during all those years. This led me to becoming progressively worse. The first barrier was the stigma I experienced from my own community and also from health professionals. I decided not to ask for further help to avoid the negative feedback I was already experiencing. I experienced a lack of understanding of my own illness, particularly when I was diagnosed with BPD. At the time, I felt there were very few services available and those that were available were very difficult to navigate and I didn’t understand how to access them. The services that were available were often very expensive, and I didn’t realise there were free or subsidised options.

After many years of struggling with my mental health issues, I only started to recover when I finally asked for help. I thought, surely I can’t be the only person who experiences this; surely there are other young people in the community who are facing the same barriers and stigma as I had and who are living in agony with no support.
As it turned out, after some research, this is what I found:

Numbers in these statistics are taken from ‘Gone too soon: a report into youth suicide in the Northern Territory’, Scrymgou, Marion; Walker Lynne; Gunner Michael; Purick, Kezia; Styles, Peter, Legislative Assembly of the Northern Territory, 2012 and from Primary Health Network Needs Assessment Reporting Template, Northern Territory Primary Health Network on https://www.ntphn.org.au/needs-assessments-and-plans

One of the most alarming statistics is the fact that the Northern Territory's youth suicide rate is the highest in the nation, at 3.5 times the national average, and the very high rate of mental health disorders among our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (ATSI) youth. In a nutshell, mental illness and suicide has an enormous impact on young people in the Northern Territory and youth are not seeking support for themselves. This means a lot of young people are struggling in silence.

It was clear from my experiences and the experiences of others that the main barriers for young people with mental health issues were:

- stigma
- access to relevant services
- seeking help

These are issues that need to be addressed so that young people can take control over their own mental wellbeing and be supported through recovery.

In 2013 I ran an event together with other young people, the event was called ShoutOut! This was meant to be a one-time event to bring young people together to talk about their experience with mental illness. It was also going to be an opportunity to provide youth with information about mental illness and where to get help. We were hoping that open dialogue and providing a platform to be heard would lead to a sense of empowerment among the youth attending and provide an opportunity to:

- build community understanding of mental health in youth
gain access to support services
advocate for more relevant support services
create a space where help seeking was encouraged and facilitated.

The feedback was incredible. Young people wanted more!

We ran more events under the name ShoutOut! and became a new voice for young people in the mental health sector. We also empowered youth to create change in their community and in the system.

Today, the aim of ShoutOut! is to change community perceptions of youth mental health and to advocate for more relevant and accessible services for young people. We have also designed a mindfulness and empowerment mobile app—‘in the zone’—and we had input from youth, organisations and health practitioners in the design, development and content of the app. We received funding from the Northern Territory Government and Samsung to develop the app and are also being supported by Multicultural Council NT. The app is currently in development and we look forward to launching it soon.

I continue to use every opportunity to promote ShoutOut’s messages through capturing people not just with my own story but also with stories of other youth that I engage with. Stories are powerful. Every experience is powerful. Through your own story you can lead others by inspiring them to create change.

Throughout my life I have used the ‘Ripple Analogy’ as a guide for how change occurs across a community. A drop creates a ripple and a ripple creates waves—our experiences can inspire others to use their experiences to again inspire more people. And through these movements, positive change moves across the community as individuals address the issues.

So, how did I go from a person with a struggle to creating change in the community? There are eight universal steps that can guide you in using your experience to lead change. I used these same steps in my own journey:

1. Why? Why are you doing this? Why does it matter? Why should people care?
   You need a reason to create change. For me there were two reasons, the youth suicide rate in NT and the barriers youth are meeting in accessing services.

2. Realise your potential
   In order to break barriers in the community you must first break the barriers within yourself. Don’t hold yourself back.

3. What? What do you know? What needs change? What can be changed?
   What needs to be changed and what can realistically be changed—you need to know exactly what needs to be addressed.

   Knowing who you are advocating for and who should listen can help you focus your efforts and create change. Find like-minded people and find different people—having different opinions and skills is very valuable.

5. Where? Where are the opportunities? Where is your target audience?
   At first it is easier to go to people—find places where your target group hang out and share information.

6. Be resilient
   This is where why you are doing what you are doing is so important? Knowing this will keep you strong and resilient when things get hard.

7. Collect stories
   Collect other people’s stories to supplement your own story. Share them and create a bigger voice.

8. Provide platforms
   Use your own experiences to create platforms for others so they can do the same.

By following these steps I have been able to use my own, sometimes terrible, experiences to hopefully make things better for other young people. These steps have given my experiences worth and I can now look back at them in a more positive light. Ultimately, these steps have changed my life.

Numbers in these statistics are taken from ‘Gone too soon: a report into youth suicide in the Northern Territory’, Scrymgou, Marion; Walker Lynne; Gunner Michael; Purick, Kezia; Styles, Peter, Legislative Assembly of the Northern Territory, 2012 and from Primary Health Network Needs Assessment Reporting Template, Northern Territory Primary Health Network on https://www.ntphn.org.au/needs-assessments-and-plans
My philosophy in life has always been fairness. It is often mentioned that equality is the goal for a cohesive society. It is important to remember though, equality and fairness is not the same thing. Equality is about sameness, it promotes fairness and justice by giving everyone the same thing. But, this can only work if everyone starts from the same place. Equity on the other hand, is about fairness. It is about making sure people get access to the same opportunities. Sometimes our differences and/or history can create barriers to participation so we must ensure equity before we can enjoy equality.

However, there is something even more powerful than equity and that is when systemic barriers are removed. We cannot stop after one solution, even if it is an equitable one. We have to keep working until we understand—and remove—the systemic barriers. I came to Australia as an international student in 2005 to study accounting and finance. During my 12 years in Australia, I have witnessed all the emotions, challenges and opportunities that come with being an international student, a migrant and a new Australian. These emotions and experience have shaped who I am today and while I today consider myself a very privileged beneficiary of all the good that this country has to offer, I never take it for granted. I understand that the progress that we have made as the number one multicultural nation in the world has not happened by accident but is a result of careful planning and accepting immigration as a nation-building project. Australia’s multiculturalism is based on a well-ordered immigration program and a shared concept of citizenship. Cultural differences are to be embraced, but only when they are consistent with living in an Australian democracy and our shared values. While Australian multiculturalism has been a success, we cannot be complacent and we must always continue to work towards positioning cultural diversity as our competitive advantage and to embrace the fact that cultural diversity is now mainstream. One avenue to embrace our diversity is through sport.

The Role of Sport in Multicultural Australia

Kashif Bouns, General Manager, Western Bulldog Community Foundation

A migrant from Pakistan, Kashif has over ten years of experience in management, marketing and community development in the not for profit, corporate and sports industries. He played an instrumental strategic role in managing the expansion of AFL’s multicultural programs nationally, winning the Virgin Australia Sports Leadership Award at the 2015 Australian Migration and Settlement Awards. Currently the General Manager of the Western Bulldogs Community Foundation, Kashif has received a number of awards for his work in community development, including most recently the International Alumnus of the Year at the 2016 Victorian International Education Awards.
SPORT AS A UNIFYING ACTIVITY

Nelson Mandela realised the transformative and unifying power of sports and used this power to make changes that protests and diplomacy could not. ‘Sport has the power to change the world’ Mandela said: ‘It has the power to inspire. It has the power to unite people in a way that little else does. It speaks to youth in a language they understand. Sport can create hope where once there was only despair. It is more powerful than government in breaking down racial barriers.’

The above quotes point to the power of sport beyond the playing arenas and while this is a global phenomenon, Australia is widely regarded as both characterised and united by sport. Sport has an elevated place in Australia’s official and popular national culture and its reputation as a ‘paradise of sport’ has become a largely unquestioned aspect of Australian identity. It is not surprising that sport should play such a large part in Australian life; in fact sport is essential to the Australian way of life. But, sport is more than just sport—it provides a common identity for people from all sorts of backgrounds. It can be used to engage people arriving in this country, in particular people from refugee backgrounds and others, who may, at some stage, struggle with settling and feeling at home.

Research tells us that sport can:

• contribute to community identity, as a focal point for personal interaction and community engagement
• be used to address social inequities and disadvantage
• reach a wide cross-section of community members who may otherwise be hard to engage.

Some of the key moments in Australia’s history that defined us as a nation took place in sporting fields such as Cathy Freeman winning 400m at Sydney 2000 and parading with the Aboriginal and Australian flags; the greatest batsman of all time, Sir Donald Bradman taking apart English attack and the legend of the Ashes; Aboriginal Australian Football League (AFL) player Nicky Winmar standing defiantly in front of opposition spectators who had been hurling racial abuse at him, shouting ‘I’m black and I’m proud to be black’. In most recent history, Adam Goodes was catapulted to the centre of an ugly racism row after he singled out a 13-year-old girl sitting in the crowd of Collingwood fans during a game against the Sydney Swans in the AFL’s Indigenous Round in 2013. Both the Winmar and Goodes incidents sparked debates around racism and identity and placed Australian Rules football, Australia’s only Indigenous sporting code, in the centre of an important public discourse.

AUSTRALIAN FOOTBALL LEAGUE (AFL)

In Australia, AFL is the largest sector in the sport and recreation industry. Some numbers show that:

• AFL attracts more than 15 million spectators
• more than 27,000 school teams and 13,000 club teams are playing each week
• $1 invested in a community football club results in $4.40 returned in social value, health and education
• 169,000 volunteers contribute 13.6 million working hours—equal to $277 million in labour
• AFL has more than 1,017,835 participants
• AFL supports more than 6,000 jobs, excluding players and umpires
• AFL contributes with $5.26 billion to the Australian economy each year.

AFL currently consists of 18 teams spread over five of Australia’s six states and I currently work for the Western Bulldogs football club which prides itself as the community club of the AFL.

Through several community programs, we have a strong visibility in Victoria and a broad member and fan base covering all gender, age and social backgrounds (58% men and 42% women, from the very young to the over 65s, employed, retired and students). Numbers also show that our fan base has gone up in recent years, now with 2.4% of all AFL fans supporting the Western Bulldogs.

Our mission is to be the community where people are at their best. Our vision is to be 1 million strong and an inclusive and active community, and our spirit is: we are off the leash, we are kin, we believe, we are us.
Western Bulldogs Football Club and the Community Foundation

More than just a football club, the Western Bulldogs have a long and proud history as the Community Club of the AFL, delivering capability building programs with real outcomes. The Club is central to the community of Victoria’s west and plays a pivotal role in helping our people reach their full potential and ensuring they are accepted regardless of their background, gender, race or faith.

We celebrate diversity as an integral part of a united and cohesive community and aim to engage with multicultural, indigenous and all abilities communities via innovative programs.

The mission of the Western Bulldogs is ‘to be the community where people are at their best,’ and this extends beyond the field, beyond membership numbers and beyond gate receipts.

The Western Bulldogs Community Foundation (WBCF) (formerly Spirit West) is the community services arm of the club that seeks to fulfil the club mission by providing people living in our backyard, the western suburbs of Melbourne and the western region of Victoria, with the tools to succeed. It is registered as a Public Benevolent Institution with DGR (Deductible Gifts Recipient) status and has its own Board.

The Foundation works closely with the club and utilises the Bulldogs brand as a platform to engage a wide range of participants and positively influence their lives. We deliver innovative and engaging community services for individuals and families who live and work in the west. Like our players, our community is courageous, strong and resilient, but for some, support is needed to guide them, to empower them in finding the strength they need to face life’s challenges, and to overcome fear and doubt.

That’s where we come in. We work in partnership with government, corporate and community agencies to deliver services and programs to over 5,000 people annually through four streams:

- Health and Wellbeing: where the aim is to address some of the predominant health concerns through co-designed health and wellbeing programs
- Diversity and Social Inclusion: where the aim is to build self-reliant and connected communities that participate in and contribute back to our diverse society.
- Youth Leadership and Development: where the aim is to provide young people with hands on opportunities to become engaged in a learning pathway and grow as social leaders.
- Community Advocacy: we believe in, stand for, and work to promote community harmony and work with the entire community to promote inclusiveness and equality for all, regardless of race, faith, gender or disability.

Cultural diversity is a key focus across all of the WBCF programs, we are committed to ensure that all our programs reflect our community which is one of the most culturally diverse community in the country. I would like to provide some further details on our Diversity and Inclusion programs below.

The diversity and social inclusion program includes the Ready SETTLE Go program that has, since 2007, delivered settlement services to over 18,000 newly arrived migrants and refugees residing in Melbourne’s inner west. Currently funded by the department of Social Services, the program supports approximately 2,000 new Australians per year across 35 different venues in accessing mainstream services. We utilise the unifying power of recreational activities and sports as the way to introduce Australian culture and values whilst promoting personal wellbeing and social connectedness. The program offers a range of community programs focusing on health education, leadership, youth and employability. We have delivered over 250 empowerment and community development sessions, and we have 46 different settlement sub-programs. The client groups are permanent residents who have arrived in the last five years such as humanitarian entrants and family stream migrants with low English proficiency. In the future we plan to have additional pilot programs for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, people with disabilities and other communities who face barriers to participation in mainstream society.
The Ready SETTLE Go program includes a set of key subprograms, all focusing on refugees and migrants recently arrived in Australia:

- **CALDplay Program**: 24 week term-based programs intro-to sports program for adults
- **CALDplay Junior Program**: 24 week term-based programs intro-to sports program for young people
- **Healthy Living**: Migrant and Refugee specific health literacy program
- **Employability**: A half day employment pathways tour of the Western Bulldogs Offices
- **Leaders of the Pack**: Supporting young leaders from new and emerging communities
- **Young Women’s Program**: Empowering young women to tackle local community challenges
- **School Holiday Program**: 16 free school Holiday programs for primary school students
- **Youth Camp**: New Australians get to discover their new home country’s regional suburbs through a 3 day leadership program
- **Exposure Tours**: Participants are supported to attend and experience different events including their first game of AFL at the Western Bulldogs own Backyard
- **Other Programs**: Calm Mind Program, Family Talent Sharing etc.

YOUTH DAY
Citizenship, the pinnacle of a migrant's settlement journey in Australia, holds special meaning and brings enormous benefit both for the individuals upon whom it is bestowed, and also for the nation as a whole. It represents a person's full and complete legal acceptance under Australian law and brings with it a range of rights and responsibilities that extend beyond those enjoyed by non-citizens. In 2017, the Australian Government embarked on an ill-fated attempt to revise aspects of the Citizenship Act. The proposed changes represented a significant shift in policy, argued by the government to be intended to enhance ‘Australian Values’ and promote integration. These developments have brought discussions of citizenship to the centre of public debate and, fueled by the dual citizenship fiasco plaguing Federal Politics as we speak, highlight the need to give careful thought to what citizenship means: both for future generations of Australians and also for the nation as a whole.

BUILDING A NATION

Australia is a nation of immigrants. As a successful beneficiary of successive waves of migration, the nation thrives on the inclusion of people from diverse backgrounds, skills and experience. However, Australia has not always welcomed such people, and its history of questionable immigration policies is well documented. Despite this history, Australia's population has increased significantly in the second half of the twentieth century and as a result of the relaxation of those policies, immigration now represents over 50% of our population growth.

The success of Australia's migration program has been achieved through the maintenance of a suitable balance between economic and social objectives. On the one hand, government is committed to the attraction of significant numbers of highly skilled entrants who contribute to the economy as soon as possible following their arrival. On the other hand, it is accepted that certain classes of migrants,
including those from a refugee background, need more assistance to achieve their full potential. This is to be expected because these migrants have not been chosen on the basis of their economic characteristics; these streams meet broader social obligations, supporting social cohesion and Australia's role as a global citizen, and are not intended to yield an immediate economic gain.

This group comprises some of the most vulnerable of Australia's migrant intake, often having been forced from their homes due to war or unrest, and having suffered trauma, unemployment and/or interrupted schooling as a result. This can make their settlement journeys particularly uncertain, long and difficult. This does not, however, mean that these entrants and their families cannot, and do not, contribute to Australia. Indeed, considerable research has been undertaken which demonstrates the capacity of migrants from a refugee background to become fully engaged with Australia on economic and social levels, provided they receive adequate support and assistance in the settlement process.

SETTLEMENT IN AUSTRALIA

It is well understood that visa grant is only the beginning of a migrant’s settlement journey. At the Settlement Council of Australia our focus is on ensuring effective settlement outcomes and creating the foundation for a successful life in Australia for all migrants who make their homes here. The prevailing consensus amongst government agencies, the settlement sector and migrants themselves is that settlement is multifaceted and complex. It is clear that effective settlement is not an economic process alone. It also has social and personal elements. The Settlement Council suggests that a migrant can only feel truly settled in their new home when they are independent, accepted and secure in their various interactions. Bearing this in mind, SCOA views citizenship as a crucial element of the settlement journey.

THE VALUE OF CITIZENSHIP

A person’s citizenship entitles them to various rights and obligations as defined by the laws of Australia. Australian law is more likely to recognise and protect the rights of “legal” citizens than it is the rights of others.

Citizenship is much broader than just this legal approach however and covers a range of concepts that impact individuals, community and the state. Traditionally, the concept of citizenship evolved in a normative context which focused on broader notions of society. They reflect the sharing of a common bond, or community, and in this regard tend to focus more on matters of the heart than the application of legal processes.

The conferral of citizenship has special meaning, not only for migrants, but also for Australia as a nation. There are numerous benefits of having a vibrant multicultural society. The contribution of migration must not be undervalued. Migration contributes to the social and economic vibrancy of Australia in numerous ways and the success of Australia’s multicultural population can be seen across the country in our strong and vibrant economy as well as the rich and diverse fabric of our society. The Migration Council of Australia has conducted economic modeling of Australia’s migration program, which has found that by 2050 migration will be contributing 1.6 trillion to Australia’s GDP.
CITIZENSHIP IN 2017:
PRESERVING THE BENEFITS

In January 2017, the Minister for Immigration and Border Protection commenced calls for changes to Australian citizenship. In April 2017 the government announced a suite of changes to Australian citizenship laws. This was followed by the introduction of a bill in parliament which sought, among others, to introduce an English language requirement, raise the residency requirement and to enhance the citizenship test to assess applicants’ adherence to ‘Australian values’ and their allegiance to Australia.

There arose numerous concerns about these proposed changes, their impact on migrants (and particular groups of migrants) and the manner in which they would be implemented. Critics argued that these changes had the potential to forever deny citizenship to whole cohorts of permanent residents, creating a social divide between those who are eligible, and those who are not.

Following a Senate Inquiry into the bill, it was recommended by coalition members of the Senate Committee that elements be watered-down, while the Labor Opposition, Greens and NXT parties expressed strong opposition to the bill in its totality. Without the numbers to pass the Senate, the bill lapsed in October 2017.

THE VALUE(S) OF CITIZENSHIP

A major argument in favour of the proposed changes was that they would strengthen Australian society by promoting a set of shared values. Few would argue against the types of values that have been described at various points, including ‘shared values of respect, equality and freedom’. The question, rather, is whether a citizenship exam is the appropriate way to test this. SCOA believes that citizenship, and the very process a migrant takes to achieve it, represents the adoption of those values. Our members report the significant weight placed by many clients on their acceptance for citizenship and the value this holds for them.

Importantly, SCOA believes that English language must not be used as a barrier. Instead, the adoption of English skills must be facilitated by funding inclusive and accessible English language training programs—both formal such as AMEP and informal conversation classes—so that new migrants can bond with our language, not face it as a hurdle to their inclusion.

The purpose of citizenship should not be to exclude people; rather, it must be about fostering unity through cultural diversity so all Australians have the opportunity to celebrate and enjoy the benefits of one of the world’s leading multicultural nations. It is SCOA’s strong belief that Australian citizenship can achieve a harmonious and beneficial balance between the needs of individuals and the needs of the state, but that government must adopt an inclusive, welcoming approach so that successive generations of migrants can continue to settle here, and Australia may continue to reap the many benefits they bring.

For a full list of references, please contact: Nick Tebbey on ceo@scoa.org.au
AMES Australia has identified the necessity to address systemic issues acting as barriers to the economic participation of women from refugee backgrounds aged 18 to 50. In particular women who are beyond the early stages of re-settlement, having lived in Australia for more than 3 years.

In the last quarter of 2016 and first quarter of 2017 AMES Australia in partnership with the Horn of Africa Communities Network (HACN) undertook a consultation and co-design process with over 300 women from the following communities: Somali, Karen/Myanmar, Chin/Myanmar, South Sudanese, Eritrean, Iraqi and Iranian.

The aim was to build an understanding and response consistent with the lived experience of what could be identified as some of the underlying problems. Women from refugee backgrounds face specific barriers to economic inclusion post arrival, having experienced profound, traumatic and often long term disruption to their lives pre-arrival. As a direct consequence of long term displacement, significant numbers of women from these communities have arrived in Australia with highly disrupted formal education and limited vocational skills or formal work experience commensurate with opportunities within the Australian labour market.

Maria Tsopanis is Senior Manager Volunteer and Community Development with AMES Australia. She brings to the role over 25 years’ experience working in a variety of Employment, Education and Community programs at the Federal, State and local levels. Throughout this time Maria has developed, implemented and managed a range of programmes which address the needs of local communities, build capacity and foster self-reliance.

Chris Pierson has worked a wide variety of roles over a 20 year period supporting the settlement and integration of new arrivals to Victoria. Currently, Chris is employed at AMES Australia as the Senior Manager for Social Participation a role that focuses on increasing social, economic and civic participation opportunities for people from migrant, refugee and asylum seeker backgrounds in Victoria. Prior to his current role Chris worked at the Victorian Foundation for Survivors of Torture for 9 years on their senior manager team.
Labour market forecasts developed by the Commonwealth Department of Employment for the period 2015-2019 indicate a continuing decline in entry level opportunity for new arrivals. Manufacturing jobs in particular are forecast to continue to decline in all sectors. Employment opportunity has and will continue to grow most strongly in areas of requiring university degrees or higher level vocational and on the job training (Commonwealth Department of Employment).

In the consultations women from the target communities identified the following barriers in relation to economic participation:

- English language proficiency
- Lack of formal qualifications
- Absence of bridging capital—sustained relationships with people outside their immediate communities
- Absence of vocational training and support programs offered at a level consistent with existing language competence
- Few local employment opportunities consistent with women’s existing capabilities
- Family priorities.

The women participating in the consultations felt strongly that barriers to economic participation were also barriers to participation more broadly in many domains within the Australian community.

Acknowledging that employment acts as both an indicator of successful settlement/integration and the means through which longer term integration is achieved (Ager & Strang: 2008).

Ongoing structural changes in the Australian labour market has resulted in the continued decline of entry level jobs that have traditionally supported long term settlement and integration of generations of new arrivals. Compounded with the women’s pre-arrival experiences and their English language levels, women from refugee backgrounds are increasingly unable to maintain social and economic participation pathways into the Australian community.

Through the co-design process undertaken in early 2017 AMES identified three cohorts consistent across the engaged communities:

1. Women who want a job
2. Women who want to increase their vocational skills and use these to get a job or start a small/micro business
3. Women specifically interested in starting a small/micro business.

The determinant of interest was predominantly age: women aged 18 to 35 year wanted employment; women 35 to 45 were the majority of cohort 2; women over 45 were predominantly interested in small/micro business pathways.

The women also expressed a strong desire to support their children and improve their English.

THE PILOT

In addition, the consultation process established 3 areas of vocational interest also consistent across the communities. These reflected areas in which the women had existing skills and knowledge and where some have established, or are trying to, micro enterprises to meet existing demand within their cultural communities:

1. Catering, food retail, hospitality
2. Hair and beauty
3. Clothing and textile production.
Based on existing resources two locations were identified to commence a pilot program. One in Hoppers Crossing centred on clothing production while the other based at the Sorghum Sisters African Catering and Training based in Kensington and focussed on hospitality. Three groups of 15 women commenced in April 2017 at Hoppers Crossing and a further 3 groups of 15 women commenced in July at Kensington. The groups will provide pre-accredited contextualised training by qualified industry trainers.

The aim of the programme is to develop a community based bridging program for women from refugee backgrounds which will:

- increase vocational skills and social confidence of women through contextualised training
- improve English language proficiency
- incorporate small business skills
- explore alternative pathways
- build cultural knowledge of Australian workplaces through brokered work experience and job placement
- develop the capacity of grass roots community leaders through the engagement of Community Convenors.

Groups are supported by trained volunteers from the Australian community who work with the women to enhance English language competence, increase social confidence and assist participants to identify and clarify personal goals and outcomes.

Community convenors are women from the engaged communities who play an important role in the facilitation of the groups. They encourage and support participants to maintain consistent attendance, ensure training is consistent with the participant’s aspirations and identify group members who are able to undertake additional training and support to achieve their goals or are ready to exit the group to take up a specific opportunity.

**WHAT’S NEXT?**

While the initial groups were formed on ethno-specific basis as the women develop and clarify their goals, groups will be formed along interest and skill level by adding elements and components that will continue to progress their pathway to economic inclusion including:

- short accredited modules
- work placements /internships
- business incubation
- microfinance
- bridging Capital/ Social Links/language and cultural knowledge
- job search skills and linking work ready participants to Job Active providers.

**OUTCOMES TO DATE**

One of the sewing groups based at Hoppers Crossing has registered a business name ‘Raised Made’ and undergone training with Global Sisters in business planning. The group at this stage produces garments to meet the needs of its own community. They continue to explore opportunities in the market and have a concept to reach the broader community.

At Kensington, 12 women from across the three groups have just completed accredited barista training. Another woman has developed a product that she would like to position into a particular market segment but first requires skills in small business planning and development.

A review of the programme is to be conducted in late November to understand the development needs of each group and what elements need to be added to continue to progress the women’s pathway to economic inclusion.
Although as a country and community we are talking more and more about mental health issues, it is still an under-researched area. The challenges for Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) communities and non-English speakers (NES) to access services in this area remain high. We know that at least 45% of us will experience a mental illness during our lives. If we combine this statistic with the number of people who don’t speak English or have a low proficiency in English we have a perfect storm. The latest census data reveals that among our population there has been a 54% increase over 10 years in non-English speakers and those with a low provision of English has increased by 76% over the same period.

We also know that 33% of Australians are now born overseas and 1 in 5 of those who were born overseas have arrived since 2012, so it is no wonder we are struggling to not only understand the needs of our CALD communities but also to ensure mental health services are accessible for all.

To generate greater knowledge in this area, VITS LanguageLoop funded an Australian first piece of research, conducted by Dr Jim Hlavac at Monash University, investigating interpreting in mental health settings.

Within health care, mental health interactions are different from those in which a patient requires treatment due to his/her general or physical health condition. Firstly, mental health interactions are reliant on spoken or signed communication from a patient, as well as other forms of behaviour in order for mental health professionals to work with patients: there are often no physical or visible symptoms of a patient’s condition that facilitate a diagnosis and course of treatment.
The relationship between a mental health professional and a patient is, in many ways, different from the relationship that a patient has with other health professionals by the behavioural forms, verbal or signed communication that characterise mental health interactions. Elicitation and demonstration of symptoms, initial diagnosis and further monitored testing, therapy, recovery and/or management of symptoms all occur via interactions where the ability to openly communicate, build rapport, gain the trust and confidence to have a working relationship are critical. The role of the interpreter in facilitating this interaction is vital.

Based on this new research recommendations have been developed with practices and protocols that seek to guide the interpreter so that s/he can work optimally in mental health interactions with both mental health professionals (clinicians) and patients. Although interpreters are not expected to be experts in mental health—they are experts in linguistics—the more informed they are about the general forms of mental illness, the more effective the three way interaction between the NES, clinician and interpreter will be. A general understanding of forms such as anxiety, bipolar disorder, borderline personality disorder, depression, obsessive compulsive disorder, post-traumatic stress, psychosis and schizophrenia will be extremely beneficial for the success of the interaction.

Interpreters should also be aware of the common forms of treatment and medication in mental health settings for example antidepressant and antipsychotic medication, complementary therapies, electroconvulsive therapy, psychotherapy, general treatments for mental illness and involuntary treatments.

Further, the research by Dr Hlavac identified a number of ways that the interaction between the NES patient and clinician can be further enhanced. Steps such as ensuring there is a pre-briefing session between the interpreter and clinician, that the role of the interpreter is clearly understood between all parties (including family members of the patient who may be attending the consultation), awareness around the form of speech, for example how to interpret if the language of the patient is incoherent or is a stream of consciousness, rather than logical speech—all these elements will improve the interaction. As already outlined, the interpreter should also have a solid understanding of mental health discourse. The research has indicated that a post-briefing session with the clinician will also be beneficial to clarify any areas of discussion, especially if there is incoherence or a lot of behavioural forms to understand.

This research will now be used to develop a specialist course for interpreters so they have the skills and knowledge base to effectively work in these highly challenging settings. In early 2018, Monash University will deliver a specialist course in interpreting in mental health settings for interpreters of VITS LanguageLoop. If you have any questions about the research or how to book an interpreter with specialist mental health experience please contact us at: info@languageloop.com.au. The guidelines can be downloaded at www.angageloop.com.au.
The Hon Ken Wyatt AM MP, Minister for Aged Care and Minister for Indigenous Health, has asked the Department of Health (DoH) to co-design an Aged Care Diversity Framework by December 2017. To inform the development, the Minister has established an Aged Care Sector Committee Diversity Sub-Group. The Federation of Ethnic Communities’ Councils of Australia (FECCA) has two representatives on the Diversity Sub-Group.

Australia has a diverse population and older people display the same diversity in race, religion, language, gender, sexuality, health, economic status and geographic location as the broader population. This diversity and intersectionality means that it is difficult to determine the total number of people that will be covered by the Framework however, the available information shows that:

• there are over 100,000 older people from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities
• Over 36 per cent of older Australians were born outside of Australia and one in three older people were born in a non-English speaking country
• more than one in ten people have diverse sexual orientation, gender identity or intersex characteristics

The Diversity Framework will reflect this reality, assist providers and enhance the capacity to better meet the diverse needs, circumstances and life experiences of older people and thereby ensuring inclusive aged care services. The Framework will be co-designed with the health care sector and will include:

• a succinct vision statement that provides the strategic direction or core intent of the Framework
• overarching imperatives to drive change and make the aged care system more equitable, accessible and inclusive for older people with diverse needs, circumstances and life experiences

Cristina is an aged care professional who has in the last few years been working in various areas of aged care; including policy, advocacy, training and business development, particularly concerning culturally and linguistically diverse communities. She has throughout her time in aged care worked with various CALD ageing communities to inform them of the age care reforms. Cristina has managed a large community aged care business where she was responsible for leading over 60 staff comprising clinicians, allied health professionals, case managers and carers. Cristina has also had experience in training aged care and health professional staff in the cultural perspectives of ageing. Cristina holds a Bachelor of International Studies (Dean’s Scholar) with Distinction. Cristina holds an executive position on the committee of the Dante Alighieri Society of Canberra and is also a board member of an Italian foundation aged care residential facility in Canberra. She is fluent in the Italian language.
• strategic priorities that apply to all older people from diverse groups and identify the roles of Government, providers, peak organisations and consumers in realising the intent of the Framework. It will give particular considerations to catering to the diverse needs of consumers from different backgrounds.

Initial action plans will be developed to focus on the particular needs of three diverse groups:
• Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communities
• CALD communities
• Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Intersex (LGBTI) elders.

The Framework will be developed by December 2017 and the initial action plans by May 2018.

CONSULTATIONS TO DATE
To inform the development of the framework, the Diversity Sub-Group has held public consultations through online surveys and issued the first online consultation paper on 8 May 2017. They received 128 responses; 84 (56%) from organisations and 44 (35%) from individuals, including carers.

In August and September 2017, members of the Diversity Sub-Group held targeted consultations with their networks on the draft Framework. From November 2018, Sub-Group members have been consulting with their particular constituencies to inform the development of the action plans.

DIVERSE CHARACTERISTICS AND LIFE EXPERIENCES
Responses from the consultations raised important issues for consideration for all three groups—Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders people, people from CALD backgrounds and LGBTI peoples.

Out of the total responses, twenty-four included issues that are of consideration for CALD groups. Of these responses there was a strong focus on the importance of considering people from refugee backgrounds in the framework. Responses also indicated that different migration profiles will have different needs. Finally, the theme of diversity within diversity/intersectionality was raised as an issue common to people from CALD backgrounds.

‘Many CALD elderly have experienced extreme hardship with war, poverty and hardship faced when moving to a new country and working extremely hard to make a living, fit in/social inclusion, contributing to their community and getting ahead.’ (Provider)

DRAFT VISION STATEMENT
The initial vision statement included in the May/June public consultation was:

_all older people receive equitable access, treatment and outcomes and will experience a respectful and responsive aged care system that embraces their diverse characteristics and life experiences._

Overall, the respondents found the vision statement to be holistic and comprehensive. Some however, expressed concerns that:
• the vision statement was too long
• the elements may be confronting for faith-based groups
• it needs to highlight the value of respect and acceptance
• it needs to identify two different groups of consumers within diverse groups:
  — those who understand how to seek services and submit a complaint
  — those who do not understand the system and choose not to submit complaints due to fear or retribution.

Based on the feedback, the sub-group amended the vision to read:

_older people actively experience equitable access, service(s) and outcomes from an aged care system that embraces their diverse characteristics and life experiences._

IMPERATIVES
The Diversity Sub-Group has developed the following imperatives to guide the development of the action plans:

Empowerment: Older people with diverse characteristics and life experiences, their families, carers and regular representatives are respected and supported by the sector and have the information, knowledge and confidence to maximise their use of the aged care system.

Equity of access and outcomes: Older people have equitable access to information and services that are effective and appropriate to their needs, take account of individual circumstances and overcome any barriers.

Inclusion: Older people with diverse characteristics and life experiences, their families, carers and regular representatives are included in the development, implementation and evaluation of aged care policies and programs on an ongoing basis by providers and the Government.
Quality: Older people are treated with dignity and respect, and can maintain their identity, make choices about their care and services and how their care and services support them to live the lives they choose.

Responsive and accountable: Providers demonstrate they meet the diverse needs and expectations of older people, their families, carers and regular representatives by being responsive and accountable and having transparent reporting and activities.

Capacity building: Older people and their communities have the capacity to articulate their ageing and aged care needs, be involved in the development of service and workforce to meet their needs, and have diverse characteristics and life experiences embraced.

Communication was featured as a prominent theme under the imperatives in the consultations, particularly in relation to the accessibility of information, the availability of interpreters and the importance of engaging and collaborating with a wide audience.

‘Somewhere, the use of interpreters should be included. Young family members may not have sufficient language skills to properly support their relative(s). Also, the older person in care or receiving the service may need to talk about the family’. (Individual/carer response)

PRIORITIES

The Diversity Sub-Group has developed the following priorities for the framework:

Making informed choices: Older people are given information in a way that enables them to be well informed about aged care to enact their informed choice and control over the care they require.

Adopting systemic approaches to planning and implementation: Older people are partners in a systemic approach to planning and implementation. This must include the capture, monitoring, analysis and evaluation of data about their diverse characteristic and life experiences to ensure equitable access and outcomes.

Accessible care and support: Older people access aged care services and supports, regardless of location, that are appropriate and accessible and that meet their diverse needs and characteristics.

Supporting a proactive and flexible system: The aged care system is proactive and flexible aged care system and will respond to the needs of existing and emerging diverse groups, including an increasingly diverse aged care workforce.

Respectful and inclusive services: Providers meet the requirements of older people with diverse characteristics and life experiences, their families, carers, regular representatives, through respectful and inclusive services; ensuring specific needs are affectively addressed.

Meeting the needs of the most vulnerable: Older people can access safe and quality aged care services irrespective of their financial and socio-economic status.

OTHER SPECIAL NEEDS AREAS FOR FUTURE CONSIDERATION

In the consultations, people living with a mental illness were identified as a diverse group to be addressed in the framework. The mental illness groups that were mentioned were:

- people living with hoarding and squalor
- people with PTSD resulting from their line of work, such as police officers, nurses, doctors, and also through societal repercussions including refugees and survivors of torture and trauma.

It was mentioned that older CALD people are less likely to seek out mental health services.

‘I believe there needs to be more emphasis on mental health in the older person and their carer. Mental health is not listed as an Action Plan on its own but ensuring it features throughout the development of the Action Plans would be beneficial to clients and carers’. (Provider)

A final point to keep in mind is the current lack of consistent data on diversity in the ageing population and also on services which address diverse needs, particularly in home care. There is an opportunity to address this deficit in the forthcoming development of the action plans.

The action plans will support aged care providers, consumers, families and carers by focusing on solutions addressing specific barriers and challenges affecting each group’s ability to access mainstream and flexible aged care services. A draft action plan will be made available for comment in March 2018.
Living the Rainbow—
Interweaving Religious, Cultural, Sexual and Gender Diversity

IRENE TOH, NATIONAL COMMITTEE MEMBER OF AGMC INC

Irene is a member of the national committee of the Australian GLBTIQ Multicultural Council Inc (AGMC). She also organises activities and events to encourage building of social network for Yellowkitties, an Asian LGBTIQ women group. In her spare time, Irene enjoys hiking, camping, playing board games and connecting through food and non-metal music.

My name is Irene and I’m a Singaporean Chinese. I migrated to Australia 10 years ago and have since enjoyed living in this beautiful country. And yes, I should also mention that I’m a lesbian. It feels very odd to come out to so many people all at once but there’s always going to be a first.

I want to take you through the experience of my Australian migration application and when I had to go for a de facto spouse visa interview at the Australian High Commission in Singapore. Feeling pretty nervous yet upbeat (after all it means one step closer to migration) I went in thinking that it would just be a ‘tick in the box’ kind of exercise to satisfy the migration requirements. The friendly interviewer would then shake my hand and say ‘Welcome to Australia!’. 

I was wrong. I was instead confronted with the question: How do you know you like girls?

Yes, the interviewer asked me how I know I like girls. How bizarre is that? How was this question relevant to my application? And more importantly, would this question ever be asked of a heterosexual person? A question to prove my relationship with my partner would make perfect sense, but to justify my sexual orientation? It left me totally baffled.

My partner who is Caucasian was interviewed separately and that particular question never surfaced. Did the interviewer asked me this because I’m lesbian or was it because I’m Asian lesbian?

Gender-Normativity

I’ve always liked being Chinese Asian, not only because of the delicious oily stir fries, but also because of the ability to bask in wonderful stereotypical glories that I’m ‘entitled’ to (rightfully or not): ‘So, what sort of musical instruments do you play? Piano? Nope. Violin? Nope. Surely the flute then? Nope. Really?’ 

‘You must be great at math! What’s 199 x 19?’
Unfortunately though, as an Asian, I do receive unwanted racial abuse from others—like being yelled at to ‘Go back to China!’ or having a plastic bottle thrown at me from a moving car. I have felt unwelcomed, like a second-class resident. If anyone tells you that there is no racial discrimination in Australia, don’t believe them.

So, what does it mean to be Chinese Asian?

There are many aspects of being Chinese Asian but at its cultural core, it boils down to respecting one’s parents, elders and ancestors. To respect the family and community means doing things right by them and not bring shame—to ‘save face’. This can include the way we look, dress and behave.

I am not your traditional Singaporean Chinese girl. I don’t have long hair and I rarely wear a dress. When I was a kid, I was told multiple times to walk like a girl, sit like a girl and eat like a girl. I was so confused. I didn’t understand there was a ‘right’ way of being a girl. I only knew that I enjoyed playing sports and the outdoors—contrary to what the Chinese believed: girls should be fair skinned to be considered feminine. In fact, mum drank lots of soy milk prior to my birth in order to ‘whiten’ my skin—it didn’t help.

For a long time, I tried to ‘act’ like a girl and conform as much as I could. But it never truly felt right because it was not me.

This may seem like a trivial matter given that the West too has its own views on what it means to be masculine and feminine but unlike the Western culture, the Chinese culture demands us to act in a way that conforms to a fixed idea on how a man and woman should behave. In my culture, not conforming to gender expectations meant sticking out like a sore thumb. It is simply uncool.

HETERONORMATIVITY

Coming out is a very scary process, especially as many of us (LGBT) realise our sexuality when we are teenagers. The idea that we are gay is terrifying and it is a journey from: ‘what is wrong with me’, ‘am I normal’, ‘oh no! I am actually gay!’ to ‘how should I tell my family and friends. Will they accept me as who I am?’

The process of coming out to terms with our sexual orientation and coming out in a world that has not yet fully embraced diversity is challenging and daunting to many. We are not only coming out once to our family or friends, we’re constantly coming out when meeting new people at workplaces, sports clubs, neighbourhoods, schools, friendship groups and so on. Simple chats are not always simple for us. If someone asks me about my weekend, many thoughts will be racing through my head: ‘How much detail do I want to provide? Should I use the she pronoun for my partner?’

It’s a process that gets easier over time but it doesn’t mean that it comes naturally. Many are still in the closet and this is OK if coming out is not what they want. My coming out was easy—mum simply said it was just a phase and if I don’t get married and have kids, there won’t be anyone to look after me when I’m old.

Coming out is not easy for someone with homophobic parents. Because of saving face, the implied ‘Don’t ask, don’t tell’ policy can make LGBT people invisible. Yet, being authentic could mean rocking the boat, negatively changing the dynamics of the family, risking being ostracized and sometimes, breaking our highly valued family ties.

A CATCH 22 SITUATION

When one of my friends came out to her mum, the response she received was ‘I shouldn’t have sent you to university, it was a waste of money’, implying that being lesbian had made her less worthy than if she was straight.

It was as if she was doomed to fail in life because she did not conform to the majority. Our culture demands respect for our parents so Chinese children tend not to retaliate to such comments, which means that many LGBT Chinese children are on the receiving end of irrational homophobic comments and they simply live with it for years.

During the marriage equality plebiscite, we noticed there were a lot of appeals to the general public to vote no in Chinese newspapers. To provide a more balanced perspective, we decided to put up an advertisement stating reasons why the Chinese community should support marriage equality. We were rejected by a number of Chinese newspapers, citing sensitivities around this topic and the need to not alienate the community. Yet, some newspapers published articles and advertisements to vote no. How does that work? We were astonished, this was homophobia in action.

How can we engage the community to speak honestly about the issue if services are denied to us? How can we give the community opportunity to hear different perspectives? How to do so when the culture itself perpetuates heteronormativity? How do we give voice to the silenced community? We may take people out of Asia but we can’t take the Asian out of people. We have to work around it.
HOW DO WE REDEFINE WHAT IS THE ‘NORM’?

The new norm in China is for LGBT individuals to enter fake marriages. There are fake marriage events in speed dating style for gays and lesbians to marry the opposite sex to satisfy their family’s demands. This growing trend may be made worse by the one child policy where all the parents’ hopes and dreams are solely dependent on the one and only offspring.

Many may choose to hide their true selves to uphold family peace. When I say ‘hide’, it also means hiding from friends, work mates and social services. This anguish, resentment and loneliness felt by the individual, is exhausting. It is no wonder that compared to the general population in Australia, LGBT people are more likely to experience, and be diagnosed with, depression, anxiety and mental disorders. LGBT people have the highest rates of suicidality of any population in Australia. We are 14 times more likely to attempt suicide compared to heterosexual people. In fact, half of all trans Australians have attempted suicide at least once in their life time.

The statistics however, are not broken down by ethnic background. Because of culture and ‘saving face’ and of the continuous stigma around mental health issues, the numbers do not reflect how severe the problem is amongst LGBT multicultural communities.

MULTI-FAITH

I’ve never been particularly religious but my LGBT friends of multi-faith found it especially challenging to be who they are. Similar to culture, faith can be an easy excuse to shut out the LGBT communities.

My friend was a cradle Catholic. She is a migrant from Hong Kong and has always felt there was something wrong with her for having feelings for women. Her church is against same sex relationships. She found it hard to challenge the church’s stance because how can a church with thousands of years of history be wrong? When church leaders say that being gay is an abomination and a sin my friend felt isolated from the church, which provided her with comfort and support only when she did not reveal her true self. She felt conflicted and ashamed.

INTRODUCING AUSTRALIAN GLBTIQ MULTICULTURAL COUNCIL INC (AGMC)

We all live multi-faceted lives. In my case, I’m Singaporean Chinese, daughter, sister, volunteer, colleague, tax payer, partner, migrant and lesbian—all part of my identity. In a perfect world, they would all be in harmony with one another. However, we are not living in a perfect world. Not just yet.

To truly embrace diversity, we need empathy. We need to truly engage and dig deep into people’s experience of negotiating multiple identities, group allegiances and community belongings. When we implement multicultural policies and programmes, we must not expect LGBT people to self-censor and assimilate to one life-world at the expense of another.

The Australian GLBTIQ Multicultural Council Inc (AGMC) is here to bridge the gap and provide a much-needed voice to the marginalised community. We are an Australian peak organisation representing people who identify as LGBTQ from multicultural and multi-faith backgrounds. We provide a space, support and action for diversity between ethnic, mainstream and queer organisations, policy developers and service providers.

AGMC has a vision for a society in which people can live and love in all our diversities free from stigma, prejudice and discrimination. It is a very bold dream for a grassroots organisation run by volunteers but dream big is what we do.

WHERE TO FROM HERE

I will finish with three calls of actions:

1. Do not assume. We must reject the single story mentality. Next time you meet an LGBT individual from multicultural, multi-faith background, reach out to them to truly understand their experiences. Ask them how homophobia, biphobia and transphobia have impacted their lives and how they navigate their way around that.

2. We need to provide a strong voice and extend support to the already heavily persecuted multicultural and multi faith LGBT communities.

3. Get in touch with AGMC and discuss how to make a difference. We need to rely on people doing what is simply right to realise an Australia free of fear and discrimination.

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4 This article is based on work by Low, Lian and Pallotta-Chiarolli, Marie 2015, ‘And Yet We Are Still Excluded’: Reclaiming Multicultural Queer Histories and Engaging with Contemporary Multicultural Queer Realities
The Cyber Racism and Community Resilience (CRaCR) project

In 2013, researchers from five Australian universities joined with the Australian Human Rights Commission, VicHealth and Federation of Ethnic Communities’ Councils of Australia (FECCA) to start the CRaCR project. Our motivation was frustration with the lack of action on cyber racism despite conferences, forums and evidence of real social damage. We wanted to understand the extent and makeup of cyber racism, what draws people to ‘like’ it, and what impact it has on its targets, bystanders, and on the people who create it and promote it. Most importantly we wanted to work out what is being and can be done to erode its destructive effects on civility and democracy in Australia.

First the facts: at least one third of regular users of the Internet have encountered material that they describe as racist. Among young people the proportion is much higher. Responses on an online survey of over 2000 internet users ranged from disregarding it, to experiencing significant psychological harm and physical symptoms of distress. Socially, cyber racism normalises hate and incivility, creating huge swathes of the Internet where anger and viciousness rule without restraint. People scurry for the safety of private Facebook groups, withdraw from increasingly vicious debate and name-calling. They put up barriers so that they reduce the civil interaction between people of different backgrounds. They abandon media comments lists to those who reinforce each other’s prejudices and antipathies. So cyber racism significantly undermines democratic multiculturalism, whereas the Internet could be a source of greater beneficial interaction and intercultural understanding.
WHY CYBER RACISM HAS GROWN?

There are four major reasons why cyber racism has grown so dramatically in such a short time.

Firstly, the very algorithms or formulae that are used to create social media and their economic value create opportunities for racist posts to increase and be profitable; that is, it pays to be racist, both for the platforms and the posters.

Secondly, with both the US and Australia averse to restricting ‘freedom of speech’, the US as the biggest cyber nation and Australia as our own are perfect places to test out the rather weak boundaries to hate speech. It is easy to be racist in Australia.

Thirdly, human/computer interaction allows for social and psychological opportunities that would be far more difficult in the everyday world. So using the Internet intensifies ‘disinhibition’, by allowing sadistic, egoistic and manipulative behaviour to spread unchecked.

Fourthly, all this is happening in a world where inter-ethnic and inter-religious tensions are growing, old racisms are re-emerging, and the Internet has become an arena for battles over truth and post-truth. The social environment is much more violent, more fear-inducing and more fragmenting than for many decades, both globally and in Australia.

WHERE DOES CYBER RACISM SIT?

Australian society does regulate content on the Internet, and in areas very close to or even overlapping with cyber racism. Yet there has long been reluctance by government to intervene in the spread of racist hate speech online, unless a direct threat to life or safety is present. Racism is framed differently in public policy to questions of cyber bullying, or child abuse, particularly where it does not apparently affect individual children. Racism is not conceived of as a public order or safety issue, unlike the emphasis placed on the Internet role in radicalising young people on religious or nationalistic issues. However, racism is often implicated in both of these areas of public concern and government action.

It is only in the very recent period, after the public confusion caused by the attempt of the Government to remove the protections of Section 18C of the Racial Discrimination Act, that the Child eSafety Commissioner has specifically extended its focus to include the impact of online racism on the well-being of young people.
WHAT ROLE CAN FECCA PLAY?

What we can see from around the world is that online racism can be reduced when three important factors are present. Firstly, there needs to be government commitment to reducing the impact of racism on social cohesion, usually expressed through both leadership and legislation. Secondly, there needs to be a national framework in civil society that can speak to both government and the Internet industry as equal partners. Thirdly, there needs to be an active program of support for people who are the targets of online racism, through active bystander intervention. In Australia today we have none of these factors present.

FECCA can insist, in conjunction with other bodies, across the spheres of government, business and industry, and civil society, that leadership be shown in calling out racism, and advancing the circumstances where racism is less and less acceptable as part of civil discourse. In particular such an umbrella body could push for national legislation such as the one that has been successfully introduced in New Zealand, which empowers the targets of online racism and their supporters to confront the major Internet platforms and have destructive material removed from the public sphere.

FECCA can play an active role in promoting and advocating for the building of such initiatives. FECCA can lead the development of a civil society umbrella body dedicated to the diminution of racism in Australian public life, foregrounding the dangers of online racism and demonstrating what can and should be done. There are many human and civil rights groups across issues of race, Indigeneity, ethnicity and culture, who could be attracted to such a movement.

FECCA can play a critical role in joining with other civil society bodies, especially those in the Indigenous communities, to support those people who are the targets of racism, and facilitate their resilience in the face of challenge. Such a program could be built reflecting the priorities of multiculturalism and anti-racism, including an extensive education strategy that enables people to recognise racism against others, and the importance of acting to reduce its presence and impact.

Ultimately FECCA represents a crucial stakeholder interest, while offering the capacity of national leadership. It can help create push-back strategies, provide effective information to members and the wider society, and demonstrate how to collaborate in best practice. It can demand government provide one part of the leadership required, while helping to ensure that civil society provides one of the others. With these two forces collaborating, the Internet industry might not be as reluctant as it has been to climb on board.

For readers who wish to read more about this research and its detailed findings, you should order the book through your university, college, school, employer or local library, or you can get your own e-copy online.

**CRACKING THE GLASS CULTURAL CEILING**

**DR JANE O’LEARY, DR DIMITRA GROUTSIS AND ROSE REMEDIOS**

Dr Jane O’Leary is DCA’s Research Director and oversees Diversity Council of Australia’s (DCA) mission to work in partnership with members to generate ground-breaking diversity research that enables Australian organisations to fully leverage the benefits of a diverse talent pool. Jane’s PhD thesis investigated how Australian managers can most effectively manage workforce diversity. Jane also has a Masters of Education degree, which focussed on the area of women in leadership.

Dr Dimitria Groutsis is the Program Director of the Dalyell Scholars Stream and Senior Lecturer in the Discipline of Work and Organisational Studies at the University of Sydney Business School. Her research focuses on migration, labour mobility and cultural diversity in the business context.

Rose Remedios is DCA’s Research Project Officer, she is completing her PhD focusing on religious diversity and expression in the workplace. She currently teaches Human Resource courses at the University of Newcastle.

Diversity Council Australia (DCA) is the independent not-for-profit peak body leading diversity and inclusion in the workplace. We provide unique research, inspiring events and programs, curated resources and expert advice across all diversity dimensions to a community of member organisations.

Since 2011, DCA has been investigating the experiences of culturally diverse leaders in Australian organisations. What we have seen time and time again, is that for people from culturally diverse backgrounds there is a ‘cultural ceiling’ in Australian organisations.

Earlier this year, DCA released the first study in Australia to show that the cultural ceiling was even tougher to crack for women from culturally diverse backgrounds.

DCA research shows that in 2015, if ASX directors were 100 people, approximately:

- 2 would be culturally diverse women
- 6 would be Anglo-Celtic women
- 28 would be culturally diverse men
- 64 would be Anglo-Celtic men

In this first-of-its-kind project, DCA talked with over 230 culturally diverse women who are leaders or aspiring leaders in Australian-based organisations about the following two key questions.

What are the organisational locks that prevent culturally diverse women in Australia from accessing leadership roles?

What are the organisational keys (actions) to unlock the talents and contributions of culturally diverse women?
Although organisations are increasingly investing in building culturally diverse and gender balanced leadership profiles, culturally diverse women are notably under-represented in leadership ranks, both here in Australia and internationally.

What’s worse, the representation of culturally diverse women in Australian Security Exchange (ASX) leadership looks unlikely to change anytime soon. Women are moving into ASX leadership roles only very slowly—between 2004 and 2015, the percentage has increased by 4% at the most. Moreover, the percentage of female ASX leaders who are culturally diverse appears to have plateaued between 2013 and 2015.

Such low numbers in top leadership positions indicates Australian culturally diverse women are experiencing a ‘double jeopardy’, that is, their gender and cultural background combine to make it ‘doubly’ difficult for culturally diverse women to access leadership roles when compared with non-culturally diverse women or culturally diverse men.

In organisations, this double jeopardy results in a ‘glass-cultural ceiling’ in which invisible organisational barriers lock out culturally diverse women from accessing leadership positions in their workplaces.

DCA wanted to understand what was happening to lock culturally diverse women out of leadership and how organisations could unlock that talent.

We talked with over 230 culturally diverse women who are leaders or aspiring leaders in Australian-based organisations to answer the following two key questions:

• Why do so few culturally diverse females reach top leadership positions in Australia?
• What can Australian organisations do to better recognise the skill and ambition of culturally diverse female talent?

What they told us helped DCA developing our landmark project Cracking the Glass Cultural Celing.

CULTURALLY DIVERSE WOMEN AS AMBITIOUS, CAPABLE & RESILIENT

Culturally diverse female talent working in Australia are ambitious, capable, and resilient, and well positioned to contribute to their own and their organisation’s success in the 21st century.

• Ambitious: 84% of culturally diverse female talent we surveyed planned to advance to a very senior role and 91% said that working in a job that offered mobility to leadership was extremely or very important.
• Capable: two thirds (66%) of culturally diverse female talent spoke a language other than English when at home, and over a third (37%) had a bi/multicultural identity, in which they identify with more than one cultural background and so are able to communicate or ‘broker’ across cultural contexts.
• Resilient: culturally diverse women reported that their personal resilience had been key to them retaining their leadership aspirations in the face of the career locks they had experienced.

‘Where there are no or limited culturally diverse women in the leadership ranks, it takes immense resilience to swim against the very strong tide and still maintain who you are.’

LOCKED OUT OF LEADERSHIP

‘I go knocking…but the doors are not as opened widely for me as a woman, and in particular as a woman with a culturally diverse background.’

Australian organisations could better value and leverage the ambition and capabilities of culturally diverse women. Participants in this research reported feeling invisible and undervalued when it comes to leadership opportunities, while others felt they were regarded as ‘high risk’ leadership contenders.

• Under-Leveraged: only 15% of participants strongly agreed that their organisation took advantage of workforce diversity to better service clients or access new markets.
• Under-Valued: while 88% of culturally diverse women planned to advance to a very senior role, only 10% strongly agreed that their leadership traits were recognised or that their opinions were valued and respected.
• Moving On: one in four culturally diverse women (26%) agreed that cultural barriers in the workplace had caused them to scale back at work (i.e. reduce their ambitions, work fewer hours, not work as hard, and/or consider quitting) and 28% stated it was likely they would seek a job with another employer within the next year.
To download a synopsis version of this report go to: https://www.dca.org.au/research/project/cracking-glass-cultural-ceiling

FRAMEWORK FOR ORGANISATIONAL ACTION

The career insights shared by culturally diverse female leaders and emerging leaders enabled us to craft an organisational framework for action which explains what is happening to lock culturally diverse women out of leadership and what Australian organisations can do to unlock that talent.

This framework for action is organised around six organisational talent locks and related keys, which consider:

• What are the organisational locks that prevent culturally diverse women in Australia from accessing leadership roles?

• What are the organisational keys (actions) to unlock the talents and contributions of culturally diverse women?
We all know and celebrate the diversity in Australia and its truly multicultural society. The 2016 Census data demonstrates that 28 per cent of Australia’s population was born overseas, and the percentage of Australians residents born overseas has increased every year for the last 15 years.5

People arrive in Australia in a myriad of ways and choose to come for many different reasons. Ultimately however, most are here for one reason: to create a better life for themselves and their family. Some of the new arrivals arrive through the Australian Humanitarian Program as refugees. Recent humanitarian arrivals in Australia have come predominantly from are from countries including Iraq, Syria, Burma, Afghanistan and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC).

Carine Kapiamba is a migrant who arrived in Australia through the humanitarian stream and arrived in Darwin, NT, in 2008 from the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). She was as one out of 13,507 refugees who arrived through the Humanitarian Program that year. She arrived as a refugee together with her husband and four children—the fourth born on her journey from the war-torn DRC to safety in Australia. With a family to care for, she was determined that her limited English language skills would not stop her from achieving her dream which was to start a new life with her family. She quickly began a Certificate I and III in Spoken and Written English at the Charles Darwin University (CDU). When finished, her teachers recommended further study to improve her English and also to gain practical business skills. She has now completed a Certificate II, III and IV in Business, a Diploma of Business Administration, a Certificate IV in Training and Assessment and a Bachelor of Commerce degree, majoring in Management and Human Resources.

And, she has just started her own business: International Cross-Cultural Integration Training (ICCIT).

### Humanitarian Programme Figures6

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6 Data taken from Department of Immigration and Border Protection, Fact Sheet: Australia’s
Carine’s work looks at bridging gaps in cross-cultural communications and to help others to avoid the breakdowns she herself experienced during her early days in Australia. She believes many migrants and refugees are experiencing similar difficulties when starting a new life in this country. In particular when it comes to employment there are many barriers for new arrivals. Examples include the cultural understanding and awareness of Australian workplace norms, rules and regulations for new arrivals and a lack of understanding of cultural differences among employers and workplaces here. These cultural barriers can prevent successful integration for migrants and refugees. Carine wants to foster the necessary mutual understanding between the different parts.

She explains: ‘people arrive with different human resources such as expertise, skills and experience. They often also have a different language, are from a foreign culture and each one arrive with a different migrant journey. When arriving in Australia, they all face the same expectations from the Australian society: integration and social cohesion. The reality migrants and refugees meet in Australia is however, sometimes one of humiliation, bullying and rejection and with limited rights. People experience that their skills are not recognised and at the same time they don’t understand the Australian work culture and environment. Very soon we see a divide between people’s early settlement support and their personal ambitions. This division is a challenge to successful integration, social cohesion and belonging.’

Carine also notes how people’s different migration story means that people meet diverse challenges when settling in Australia. ‘For people to succeed, it is necessary that access and support from their new society meet the personal qualities of the person. Migrants and refugees arriving in Australia are resilient people with a desire to integrate, contribute and participate. These qualities must be met with education and employment opportunities. People must be given access to applied learning and cultural education. The responsibility of the Australian society is to provide access to ongoing cultural mentoring both for newcomers and the established society.’

Carine has two recommendations to increase employment for new arrivals:

- recognise and invest resources in cross-cultural communication education
- develop a new model for cross-cultural mentorship on both sides—new arrivals and the established society.

If these two recommendations are implemented, Carine says it will increase the chances of

- mutual understanding
- social cohesion
- full engagement (both sides)
- increased productivity and economic growth.

The challenges and opportunities of integration of migrants and refugees worldwide are evident. It is the way we choose to handle it that will impact all of us. (Gurria 2016)

Carine is today a strong female community leader who fosters a vibrant, diverse and inclusive community. She frequently gets invited to speak at events as an inspirational and motivational speaker and is involved with the Multicultural Council of the NT and Melaleuca Refugee Centre as a settlement mentor to ensure community well-being. Carine’s achievements and performance is seen as an inspiration, not only for her own children but also migrants, refugees, women and others in the community. She is living proof of a successful resettlement and integration in a new country. ‘I worked hard’, she says, ‘to learn the language, the culture, and I am still working hard’. ‘Helping other refugees and migrants in those early days of settlement and in the long process of getting employment is a dream come through. To be able to inspire others to fulfil their potential in Australia is one of the most important aspects of successful integration. Education is important—education takes away the veil of the unknown and transforms people to useful instruments of community development,’ she says.

‘My business, ICCIT, is looking at exactly this gap between society’s and migrants’ own expectations and the reality that face new arrivals in Australia. Looking at academic, professional and community achievement, the aim is to see migrants go from zero to hero.’
THE FREE INTERPRETING SERVICE CAN HELP YOUR COMMUNITY CONNECT

Australia has a rich cultural diversity; the 2016 census revealed that Australians were born in almost 200 different countries and speak more than 300 languages. The Free Interpreting Service aims to provide equitable access to key services for Australian citizens and permanent residents with low English language proficiency. The Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS National) delivers the Free Interpreting Service on behalf of the Department of Social Services.

ELIGIBILITY FOR THE FREE INTERPRETING SERVICE

The Free Interpreting Service is available to a range of organisation types:

- **Medical practitioners**: when delivering Medicare rebateable services in private practice. Nurses, reception and other practice support staff can also access the service when working with the registered medical practitioner.

- **Pharmacies**: when dispensing Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme medications.

- **Non-government organisations**: when providing casework and emergency services, where the organisation does not receive substantial government funding to provide these services.

- **Real Estate Agencies**: to discuss any private residential property matter.

- **Local Government Authorities**: to communicate with residents about most local government services.

- **Trade Unions**: to assist members in accessing support and advice.

- **Parliamentarians**: for constituency purposes.

**APPLYING FOR A FREE INTERPRETING SERVICE CLIENT CODE**

To apply for a client code, complete the online client registration form on the TIS National website: https://tisonline.tisnational.gov.au/RegisterAgency, or allow a few extra minutes the first time you use the service.

You can also apply by contacting TIS National on 1300 575 847 or at tis.lpl@border.gov.au.

**MORE INFORMATION**


**Visit:** www.tisnational.gov.au to watch videos about TIS National services and how to work with interpreters. You can also find free promotional materials in the TIS National catalogue and order these from the website using the promotional materials request form.

**Contact TIS National:** 1300 575 847 or tis.lpl@border.gov.au.

*TIS National was a sponsor at the FECCA 2017 conference and met with CALD representatives to discuss free interpreting and TIS National services.*
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W: www.diversitat.org.au

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W: www.ethniccouncilshepparton.com.au

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W: www.nema.org.au

Gippsland Ethnic Communities’ Council
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FECCA is the national peak body representing Australians from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds. We provide advocacy, develop policy and promote issues on behalf of our constituency to government and the broader community. FECCA supports multiculturalism, community harmony, social justice and the rejection of all forms of discrimination and racism.

FECCA’s membership comprises state, territory and regional multicultural and ethnic councils. FECCA has an elected executive committee and a professional national secretariat implementing executive committee and a professional national secretariat implementing policies and work programs on behalf of its membership and stakeholders.

For more information and to read more about FECCA’s policies and program, please visit our website: www.fecca.org.au. Alternatively, please contact the FECCA office on (02) 6282 5755, or email: admin@fecca.org.au.

LIST OF FECCA CHAIRPERSONS

Mr Wadim (Bill) Begorow AM MBE  
(Inaugural Chairperson 1979–1983)

Mr W. George Wojack AO MBE  

Mr Carl Harbaum MBE  

Mr Victor Rebikoff OAM  

Mr Randolph Alwish AM  

Mr Nick Xynias AO BEM  

Mr Abd-Elmasih Malak AM  

Ms Voula Messimeri  
(2005–2009)

Mr Pino Migliorino  
(2010–2013)

Mr Joe Caputo OAM  
(2014–2017)

Ms Mary Patetsos  
(2017–Present)
Advertising in *Australian Mosaic* enables broad reach to an influential audience and the ability to effectively spread the message about your organisation’s work with CALD communities. Advertising costs as little as $350 + GST for a quarter page full colour placement or up to $1000 + GST for a full page colour placement.

Advertising in *Australian Mosaic* supports the work of FECCA in promoting the interests of CALD communities, strengthening Australian society as a whole.

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*FECCA National Biennial Conference 2017*