



FEDERATION OF ETHNIC COMMUNITIES' COUNCILS OF AUSTRALIA

STRATEGIC PLAN 2015-17

INTRODUCTION

The Federation of Ethnic Communities' Councils of Australia (FECCA) brings a unique voice to the multiculturalism debate in Australia. FECCA's policy and advocacy at the national level is underpinned by its leadership role, which extends beyond FECCA's membership comprising various multicultural and ethnic communities' structures across the country, to include a wide network of sector collaborators, academics and advocates.

At the heart of FECCA's work is promoting multiculturalism, embodied in equitable policies and non-discriminatory practices for all Australians, regardless of their cultural, linguistic, ethnic, racial or religious backgrounds. Toward this end, FECCA strives to ensure that the needs and aspirations of various cohorts of Australia's culturally and linguistically diverse population are heard by policy and decision makers, as well as the broader public. These cohorts include women, youth, older people, new and emerging communities, communities living in rural and regional areas, and people with disability. In each of these areas we strive to present a representative and informed voice.

FECCA advocates for the need to overcome both the overt and implicit systemic barriers facing Australians from multicultural backgrounds at all stages of settlement, in order to realise a truly equitable and inclusive society.

OUR PHILOSOPHY

FECCA's mission is to foster social justice and community harmony in Australia's multicultural society by facilitating the full participation of people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. On behalf of its constituency, FECCA identifies issues, advocates on concerns,

promotes matters to the broader community through education and awareness-raising, and contributes to the development and capacity-building of the multicultural sector.

Operating Principles

- FECCA acknowledges the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples as the First Peoples of Australia and is committed to promoting harmony among, and equity for, all Australians.
- FECCA acknowledges the diversity of organisations and structures that represent multicultural communities in Australia and is committed to working with them in partnership in any areas of shared interest.
- FECCA maintains its status as a non-party political organisation and seeks to ensure bipartisan and multiparty support for multiculturalism, for the benefit of all Australian people.
- FECCA opposes all forms of racism and discrimination and seeks to promote equality and non-discrimination across all areas of its work.
- FECCA supports human rights, advocates for full access and equity, and promotes community harmony.
- FECCA promotes multiculturalism as central to the present and future social, economic and cultural wellbeing of Australia.

ABOUT STRATEGIC GOALS FOR 2015-17

This strategic plan was developed by the FECCA Executive, in consultation with key stakeholders and the FECCA Secretariat. It builds on the strengths of the organisation with over 30 years' legacy, and enhances FECCA's capacity to respond to the current changing and demanding environment.

1 - Policy and Advocacy

- Exemplify leadership and purpose in promoting cultural diversity and social cohesion
- Promote the meaningful recognition and reflection of the needs, contributions and aspirations of culturally and linguistically diverse communities in all areas of Australia's policy and practice

2 - Awareness Raising

- Facilitate an informed debate on cultural diversity and social cohesion by raising awareness throughout the broader community on the experiences of culturally and linguistically diverse communities

3 - Capacity Building: Supporting the Multicultural Sector

- Engage with sector organisations and structures to address identified needs and to enhance their capacity to advocate for their interests and support their communities

4 - Leadership and Representation

- Provide a unified national voice by maintaining and enhancing productive relationships with members and the broader diversity sector

5 - Outreach and Partnerships

- Complement State/Territory/Regional membership by building significant extended networks and collaborations to enhance FECCA's representation
- Strengthen partnerships with the broader community and private sectors

6 - Governance and Sustainability: Building Our Internal Strength

- Secure FECCA's position as a sustainable, professional, accountable and transparent organisation

1 - POLICY AND ADVOCACY

FECCA develops policy solutions and advocates on a broad range of issues affecting various cohorts of people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, including access to programs and services, experiences of racism and discrimination, principles of human rights and social justice. Through thematic expert committees, we specifically focus on women, youth, older people and ageing, new and emerging communities, communities living in rural and regional areas, and people with disability. FECCA's work on multicultural access and equity across a broad range of issues includes extensive community consultations, with a view to providing independent feedback and input on behalf of diverse communities into government policy development and service delivery.

Exemplify leadership and purpose in promoting cultural diversity and social cohesion

Over the next three years, FECCA will enhance its proactive leadership on advancing the recognition of, and respect for, multiculturalism and its underpinning principles in Australia.

- Increase work on identifying issues and gaps, and developing innovative policy solutions on the issues affecting various cohorts of culturally and linguistically diverse Australians, based on evidence developed through effective consultation, engagement and research with the constituency.
- Provide a progressive, informed and representative voice on the issues that impact on the recognition of, and support for, diversity nationally.
- Lead advocacy, consultation and research towards legislative initiatives to adopt a national multicultural policy based on the principles of equality and full participation.

Promote the meaningful recognition and reflection of the needs, contributions and aspirations of culturally and linguistically diverse communities in all areas of Australia's policy and practice

FECCA will enhance its policy and practice development by communicating the views and needs of multicultural communities with a view to ensuring that the measures are equitable, inclusive and reflective of the diversity within Australian society.

- Promote the interests of FECCA's constituency to national policy developers and decision makers.
- Continue to advance FECCA's access and equity work across a broad range of policy issues by strengthening community consultation mechanisms and engagement with relevant government agencies.
- Maximise the expertise of FECCA's thematic expert committees and their ability to contribute to and lead policy discussions, including through review of their working methods.
- Enhance FECCA's engagement and evidence-based input into relevant international human rights processes.
- Review and enhance FECCA's representation on government and non-government advisory groups through targeted consultative mechanisms and collaborative strategies supported by the development of a stronger evidence base.

2 - AWARENESS RAISING

FECCA produces information and awareness raising events and resources that target a number of audiences, such as multicultural communities, the government, civil society organisations and the private sector.

FECCA's biennial conference provides a forum through which to gather leading thinkers and practitioners in multicultural affairs, settlement services, cultural diversity and immigration. FECCA's flagship magazine, *Australian Mosaic*, is published three times a year, covering issues relating to cultural and linguistic diversity, multicultural communities and Australian society more generally. Our communications program promotes the issues, concerns and developments of our constituents to other interested parties.

Facilitate an informed debate on cultural diversity and social cohesion by raising awareness throughout the broader community on the experiences of culturally and linguistically diverse communities

Over the next three years, FECCA will review its audience reach to maximising its impact as the national representative voice on matters of concern to multicultural communities and organisations in Australia. We will broaden our information reach to people from culturally and linguistically diverse - and particularly new and emerging – communities, their leaders and organisations to ensure that they are fully informed of FECCA's work at the national level. We will also review how we tailor our communications to target the government, policy makers, diverse media and civil society.

- Review and implement FECCA's communications strategy.
- Review the readership for *Australian Mosaic* magazine to ensure its broad reach to representatives and organisations of culturally and linguistically diverse, and particularly new and emerging, communities.
- Continue enhancing the quality of the publication by addressing the topical issues and developing editions in collaboration with relevant peak civil society organisations.
- Continue promoting FECCA's biennial conference as the key national event bringing together a wide range of stakeholders and raising the level of the debate on Australia's multiculturalism by reviewing the format and content.
- Build awareness about multicultural issues through further forums, conferences and publications.

3 - CAPACITY BUILDING: SUPPORTING THE MULTICULTURAL SECTOR

FECCA has been supporting the work of the multicultural sector through information tools and resources, as well as community and expert forums and consultations. FECCA's monthly E-News bulletin promotes multicultural news, events, issues, and initiatives of the sector to the readership. FECCA has established and supports the National Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Ageing

Network (NCAN), designed to facilitate communication within the multicultural ageing and aged care sector. The bimonthly NCAN News bulletins provide regular updates on policy and issues relevant to the stakeholders involved in the sector. Other tools include resources on community advocacy, good governance, and specific issues, including promoting women's leadership, and workforce participation and diversity.

Engage with sector organisations and structures to address identified needs and to enhance their capacity to advocate for their interests and support their communities

- Identify and implement initiatives to support its membership structures in responding to the needs of multicultural communities.
- Seek capacity development resources in key policy areas targeted at empowering multicultural communities and their organisations.
- Develop tools and resources in response to the needs of the communities and the sector identified through consultations.

4 - LEADERSHIP AND REPRESENTATION

FECCA provides a voice and mobilises support for its diverse constituency Australia-wide through its State/Territory/Regional members and extended networks across the country.

Provide a unified national voice by maintaining and enhancing productive relationships with members and the broader diversity sector

Over the next three years, FECCA will strengthen its engagement and collaboration with its State/Territory/Regional members and Associate members by advancing policy and advocacy coordination on issues of importance at the national level.

- Support engaged membership on national policy and advocacy initiatives.
- Scope members' perspectives on the targeted areas of engagement towards productive partnerships.
- Promote significant and emerging community leaders and representatives across FECCA's network.

5 - OUTREACH AND PARTNERSHIPS

FECCA's constituency, as well as that of its members, is very different now from what it was 30 years ago when FECCA was established. Over 20 years ago, the overwhelming majority of

migrants came from Europe, whereas in the past 10 years, the fastest growing birthplaces have been the Middle East, Southwest Asia, Central Asia and Africa.

Since FECCA's inception, the multicultural sector has become more complex and diverse, and now includes many organisations providing services and support to migrant and refugee communities across a broad range of issue areas. Various national structures have been developed by specific demographics or by specific area of interest, and ethno-specific representative structures have become more prominent.

Complement State/Territory/Regional membership by building significant extended networks and collaborations to enhance FECCA's representation

FECCA will strengthen its reach and engagement, particularly with new and emerging communities, to enhance representation of their views and needs.

- Increase its reach out to communities and their representative bodies beyond the scope of FECCA's membership to engage on the issues that affect them, and ensure representation of their views through FECCA's policy and advocacy work.
- Expand FECCA's networks to new and emerging community representatives and organisations through policy advisory committees and other consultative structures.
- Expand the audience of FECCA's communication tools to reach broader audiences.

Strengthen partnerships with the broader community and private sectors

Over the next three years, FECCA will continue strengthening its collaborations with organisations within and beyond the multicultural sector.

- Maintain and enhance productive engagements with multicultural, migration and settlement sector organisations through joint initiatives.
- Promote issues facing culturally and linguistically diverse communities to civil society organisations and the private sector broadly for the purposes of their work, with a particular focus on employment participation and equity, and productive diversity.

6 - GOVERNANCE AND SUSTAINABILITY: BUILDING OUR INTERNAL STRENGTH

FECCA is governed by an executive body that includes both elected mandate holders and *ex-officio* member delegates who bring to the organisation their extensive community advocacy and

representation experiences. FECCA's Secretariat implements policy, projects and advocacy to support the strategic directions set by the Executive.

Secure FECCA's position as a sustainable, professional, accountable and transparent organisation

In 2015-17, FECCA will reflect holistically on its governance and sustainability to ensure that our work is adequately supported by sound operational and management capacity.

- Improve internal governance structures to ensure equitable representation of States/Territories in decision-making.
- Review internal policies and procedures to ensure maximum accountability and transparency.
- Expand and diversify FECCA's funding opportunities to achieve sustainability for the future through ensuring legal compliance, establishing links with the philanthropic and social enterprise sectors.
- Support a dynamic and rewarding professional environment, allowing for the development of professional skills and progressive responsibilities.

MEASURING PROGRESS AND SUCCESS

FECCA Executive, who hold responsibility for setting strategic direction, will take stock of our progress, measure achievements and identify gaps in implementation of this plan on an annual basis. For the purpose of transparency, summary progress reports will be published in FECCA's annual reports.