FECCA 2015 NATIONAL BIENNIAL CONFERENCE
Multiculturalism in Action: Building a better future for all Australians
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Welcome to a special Conference edition of Australian Mosaic magazine. This edition focuses on the FECCA 2015 National Biennial Conference which was a huge success. The Conference took place from the 5-6 November 2015, and was organised jointly by FECCA and the Ethnic Communities’ Council of NSW (ECC NSW).

With nearly 120 speakers and facilitators, the conference drew together leading decision makers, thinkers and practitioners to discuss and debate key issues that related to Australia’s multiculturalism. We talked about a huge range of topics and themes about diversity, its legacy, impact on identity, value and strength, and access, equity and participation.

These topics were all under the umbrella of our Conference theme: Multiculturalism in Action – building a better future for all Australians.

Throughout these two days I looked for key areas that we could take forward and develop into real actions, and I identified three themes in particular.

The first was languages, and the importance of encouraging the development of language education and preservation in Australia, and the promotion of an integrated national policy framework.

At FECCA we strongly believe that one of our best strengths derived from being multicultural is the language capacity that people bring to this country. The very fact that we speak over 300 of the world’s languages is the greatest asset that we have in social and economic terms. If there is one message that we should take from the conference, it is that Australia’s greatest social and economic future relies on our capacity to speak to the world.

With around 20 percent of Australians speaking a language other than English at home, we cannot discount the benefits of bilingualism and multilingualism.

Migrants from non-English speaking backgrounds bring their language with them to Australia. Maintaining language from home countries provide benefits such as the preservation of important relationships, traditions and cultural identity. Second generation Australians can gain a strong sense of culture and community by learning their language and culture from their parents.

The second theme I identified was harnessing productivity through diversity.

Those who know me would be aware that I have been a strong advocate for the rights of migrant workers. Australia’s immigration program, particularly since World War II, laid the foundations of dramatic change in Australia’s demographic profile; and for the better.

Historically, not all Australians accepted the immigration program. For instance, some Australian workers were fearful that new arrivals would destroy their working conditions or steal their jobs. The development of huge infrastructure programs, such as the Snowy Mountains Scheme in NSW, provided wonderful opportunities for migrants. Not only financial stability, but independence, self-esteem, development of English language skills, and belonging to the broader community.

By the early 1970s, migrant workers began to organise themselves to achieve better wages and conditions, particularly in the manufacturing sector.

The First Migrant Workers conference was held in 1973, followed soon after by the Second Conference for which I was privileged to be the Secretary. These conferences paved the way for improved safety and job security.

We have come a long way since then, in terms of recognising and utilising the range of skills and experiences available from migrants to maximise the capacity of Australia’s workforce.

The final theme taken from the conference is the importance of having a national legislative framework on multiculturalism.

What we are still missing in Australia is a national legislative framework on multiculturalism. I believe this would support a sound whole-of-government approach for the longer term, that would achieve both recognition of diverse cultures that co-exist in Australia, and close interaction between the diverse cultures based on principles of reciprocal respect and equality.

I would like to conclude by thanking the Conference organising committee, in particular, our Conference co-host, Peter Doukas and ECC NSW. My thanks also to the FECCA Office who were instrumental in bringing the whole project together, led by our Director, Gulnara Abbasova. I would also like to extend my thanks to all our sponsors and partners for their support. My biggest thanks to the delegates and speakers who made the two days the most dynamic, rewarding and forward looking FECCA National Conference of all.
The FECCA 2015 National Conference was filled with the energy and good will of the participants. It was buzzing with networking, learning and the sharing of ideas.

We were humbled to have been welcomed on the land of the Gadigal People of the Eora Nation, and we respectfully acknowledged the traditional owners and custodians of the land, in recognition of the disposessions of the past and the enduring struggle for justice and reconciliation.

The conference was a busy two-day event, packed with thematic sessions. With so many concurrent sessions to choose from, the plenary sessions were an opportunity for everyone to come together. Welcome addresses by the conference co-convenors, Joe Caputo and Peter Doukas, took stock of our achievements and glanced over the major challenges ahead. Insightful messages by the Hon John Ajaka MLC, NSW Minister for Multiculturalism, and the Chairperson of Multicultural NSW, Dr G.K Harinath OAM, could not provide better context for choosing Sydney, NSW, as the host for this year’s conference.

One of FECCA’s goals is to secure multiparty support for multiculturalism, and it was with great interest that we listened to Senator the Hon Concetta Fierravanti-Wells, Assistant Minister for Multicultural Affairs, officially representing the Prime Minister; the Hon Tanya Plibersek MP, Deputy Leader of the Opposition, officially representing the Leader of the Opposition, and Michelle Rowland MP, Shadow Minister for Citizenship and Multiculturalism; and Senator Richard Di Natale, Leader of the Australian Greens.

Our keynote speaker, Professor Klaus Neumann, noted historian, left us with an important message — that finding solutions for emerging challenges requires us to put the issues and the ensuing responses into perspective, to be more critical and less parochial, to pay closer attention to the context globally and historically.

In the presence of our partners and collaborators within and across the sectors, we launched our 2020 Vision for Older CALD Australians. Articulating FECCA’s commitment to support better outcomes for older people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, the vision statement sets an overarching framework and provides for a two year consultation on the priority actions underpinning it.

This edition of Australian Mosaic is to ‘document’ some of the key messages of the conference, and particularly to share them with those who could not attend the conference. We see the conference as an important platform for a national debate on the now and the future of multicultural affairs in Australia, and this publication is an opportunity to engage with our broader audience.

The success of the conference is very much owed to the zeal of the Conference Committee, and the support of our generous sponsors and partners: Multicultural NSW, Australian Government Department of Social Services, City of Sydney, SBS, 2M Language Services, Carers Australia, National Accreditation Authority for Translators and Interpreters (NAATI), Access Community Services, Australia Post, Alfred Deakin Institute for Citizenship and Globalisation, Deakin University, Settlement Services International, Translating and Interpreting Service, TIS National, AMES Australia, Australian Multicultural Foundation, Cricket Australia, and VITS (Victorian Interpreting & Translating Service).

To every delegate, thank you for listening, debating, challenging ideas, and sharing insights. We could not have achieved such a productive and engaging conference without you.
A MESSAGE FROM CHAIR OF ETHNIC COMMUNITIES’ COUNCIL OF NSW

Peter Doukas has been Chair of ECC NSW since 2013.

The 2015 FECCA Conference, co-hosted as a joint venture between ECC NSW and FECCA, was one of the most successful events hosted by ECC NSW in recent memory. It included a collaboration of ECC NSW, FECCA and the NSW government agency responsible for multiculturalism, Multicultural NSW.

This Conference was a timely event as it marked the auspicious year in which the Racial Discrimination Act, SBS Radio and the Ethnic Communities’ Council of NSW all held their 40th anniversaries.

Achievements of the ECC NSW and FECCA

In this 40th year as a state peak body it is noteworthy to acknowledge and appreciate the many achievements of the Ethnic Communities’ Council of NSW, and to recognise the significance of the national body, the Federation of Ethnic Communities’ Councils of Australia. Indeed, since its inception in 1979, the FECCA Conference is a key achievement in itself, providing a strong platform for ideas and deliberation in the multicultural space.

It is important that these achievements be recognised and celebrated. The following achievements are a result of working in collaboration with ECC NSW and FECCA:

• Assisting in the creation of the Racial Discrimination Act
• The Australian Multicultural Foundation
• Lobbying for the establishment of the Special Broadcasting Service
• Migrant Resource Centres in every state
• The Ethnic Affairs Commission, which later became the Community Relations Commission, and is today Multicultural NSW
• Anti-Discrimination Act NSW, and its successful application of it becoming unlawful for a person to discriminate against a person on the grounds of race
• Lobbying for and drafting the definition of Multiculturalism included in the Community Relations Commission Act
• Coordinating community responses to the Cronulla Riots
• Environmental projects for which we were awarded a Premier’s Award

• Coordinating response to Federal Government’s proposed changes to section 18C of the Racial Discrimination Act, whereby over 100 ECC NSW members took action
• Always, and without hesitation remaining independent of any and all inter community conflict.

Challenges

I have consistently maintained that we must not fall into complacency. The Australian multicultural project is far from complete and current events show us all that the challenges remain within this delicate framework. These include:

• The radicalisation of young Australians
• Islamophobia
• A resurgence in Anti-Semitism
• Social mobility among migrant communities
• Challenges of increased racism among more established immigrant communities
• The continued and illegal incarceration of children in Australian detention centres
• The outward growth of the large metropolitan areas
• Ever increasing economic disparity between rich and poor.

Achievements of the FECCA Conference

Over 500 delegates from every state and territory attended the conference. Furthermore, contributors to the content of the deliberations were sought deliberately from the widest possible grouping. This has had the effect of people recounting to me that the 2015 FECCA Conference was the most rewarding experience, and the best they had ever attended.

The most important aspect for delegates was the integration of scholarly philosophical discussions of the future of Australia through the prism of multiculturalism and grass roots reviews of life in Australia in 2015.

In this world of ever increasing complexity, the FECCA 2015 Conference proved that the role of the Ethnic Communities’ Councils is more important now more than ever. Furthermore, their relevance to the preservation of a harmonious, open and pluralistic society has increased tenfold.

I acknowledge the important work of the dedicated Boards and the staff of the Ethnic Communities’ Council of NSW and of those in the Federation of Ethnic Communities’ Councils of Australia.

I also wish to pay a special tribute to the work of Chairperson Joe Caputo for his leadership over the last two years and wish him well as he takes on the role as Chairperson for a further two years.
Hakan Harman is Chief Executive Officer of Multicultural NSW.

It was in 1976 that it all started. The NSW Government of the day commissioned a report entitled “Participation” which came up with over 300 recommendations. One quickly adopted was the permanent establishment of the Ethnic Affairs Commission of New South Wales under the chairmanship of Paolo Totaro AM. This made New South Wales the first state in Australia to introduce ethnic affairs legislation to establish the Commission. The Community Relations Commission Bill 1999 was introduced to maintain the position of New South Wales at the forefront of policy development in the area of cultural diversity.

There was general acceptance that the term “ethnic affairs” had served its purpose well, but had reached its use-by date.

Having considered feedback from consultations, the Community Relations Commission of NSW was considered the most appropriate name for the new organisation.

Fast forward 15 years to November 2014. After eight months of extensive consultation, the NSW Government introduced the Multicultural NSW Legislation Amendment Bill 2014. This bill amended the former Community Relations Commission and Principles of Multiculturalism Act 2000. It brought to life Multicultural NSW and the Multicultural NSW Act 2000 as its governing legislation.

It gave greater emphasis to the need for all citizens of New South Wales – regardless of nationality, cultural origin or religious affiliation – to have a collective responsibility to work together for our common welfare and future as Australians.

After extensive community consultation, Multicultural NSW developed what has been widely acknowledged and recognised as an outstanding vision; our strategic plan – Harmony In Action 2014-2017.

We should continue to celebrate the unique cultures, traditions and languages of our ancestors but we need to do more to promote initiatives that bring people from diverse backgrounds together as Australians. And that is what Multicultural NSW’s new direction is about – Harmony In Action.
Senator the Hon Concetta Fierravanti-Wells is the Assistant Minister for Multicultural Affairs.

Thank you Peter. Can I start by adding my acknowledgement of country.

Can I also acknowledge my parliamentary colleagues, The Hon Tanya Plibersek MP, Deputy Leader of the Opposition, representing the Leader of the Opposition, and my Senate colleague Senator Richard Di Natale, Leader of the Australian Greens.

Can I also acknowledge FECCA Chair, Joe Caputo; Ethnic Communities’ Council of New South Wales Chair, Peter Doukas; many distinguished Guests; Ladies and Gentlemen.

As Assistant Minister for Multicultural Affairs, I am pleased to be here to represent the Prime Minister of Australia, the Hon Malcolm Turnbull MP.

Can I firstly thank FECCA for your work and most especially, the work that you have done in the culturally and linguistically diverse or CALD ageing space which as you know, is very dear to my own heart.

This morning I have been asked to reflect on the achievements of multicultural affairs in Australia today and importantly and timely, the vision for its future.

Since September, I now ‘straddle’ three Government portfolios.

As Assistant Minister for Multicultural Affairs, I have responsibilities within the Department of Social Services, the Attorney General’s Department and the Department of Immigration and Border Protection.

This is a unique hybrid that presents an opportunity to harness the innovation and ongoing support that our Prime Minister wishes for our diverse and socially cohesive country and is the direct result of our rich multicultural legacy.

All three portfolio responsibilities are very relevant to the delivery of a new multicultural affairs policy in Australia since 2015.

Australia is one of the most culturally diverse nations yet socially cohesive nations on earth. Migration is a feature of our past, our present and our future. We have had 7.5 million migrants come to Australia since World War II and that has included 825,000 under our humanitarian programme.

And we will continue to demonstrate this legacy with the arrival of the first of the 12,000 Syrian refugees in Australia at the end of this year.

As you would be aware, two families have already received visas. The process is methodical, for some not as fast as they would like, but this is essential to ensure security and health checks are precise.

Migration in Australia today is very different to when FECCA was established in 1979 as the national peak body representing Australians from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

In Australia we talk of waves of migration. Today, the top three countries of birth for humanitarian entrants are now Iraq, Afghanistan and Iran. Humanitarian entrants are young with about half under 24 years of age.

In 2013-14, the leading country of birth for immigrants was India with 21%, followed by China with 14%. Seven of the top ten countries of origin are from Asia and only 27% of the total migrant figure is from OECD countries.

The CALD constituency that FECCA has to represent to Government and the broader community has changed.

In 2015, our country is more diverse than ever and yet it remains socially stable and economically sound. Today, almost half, 47% of Australians were either born overseas or have at least one parent born overseas.

Today, I represent the face of contemporary Australia as indeed do Tanya and Richard, both the children of migrants to Australia.

We identify with about 300 ancestries and we speak almost as many languages, including Indigenous languages. Most of the world’s religions are practised in Australia, with increasing numbers evidenced in the 2011 Census.

Diversity can result in greater innovation, encourage creative problem solving and help our businesses — small, medium and large — reach their full potential. In short, our productive diversity adds great value.
The Joint Standing Committee on Migration Inquiry into Migration and Multiculturalism in Australia 2013, found that 30% of small businesses are owned by migrants in Australia.

Our dual citizens or Australians of a particular background have formed close business and trading ties to their country of birth or origin. They act as an important bridge to furthering Australia's trade ties and build on the benefits of trade agreements.

Our cultural and linguistic diversity is considered an asset and source of great social and economic strength.

The latest Scanlon-Monash Index of Social Cohesion released recently confirmed that social cohesion in Australia is at an eight year high. The Scanlon-Monash Index of Social Cohesion has been mapping social cohesion since 2007.

This is a good result in difficult times and I am pleased that Australia remains a stable and cohesive society. The report also showed that Australians continue to overwhelmingly support a multicultural Australia.

Australia's approach to bringing out the best in our cultural, linguistic and religious diversity – ‘a multicultural Australia’ – has bipartisan acceptance.

However the index does confirm challenges for contemporary Australia.

One major one is concern for ‘national security and terrorism’ has significantly increased from less than 1% in 2014 to 10% in 2015.

Also, about 22% of respondents expressed negative attitudes towards Muslims — down from 25% last year. However, this is still too high.

A lower number of respondents had ‘experience of discrimination’ which was 14.5% in 2015, down from its peak at 19% in 2013 and 18% in 2014.

Of course, despite our efforts and best intentions, challenges will always arise.

While social cohesion remains strong at the national and local levels, there are issues which warrant ongoing attention, including experiences of social disengagement and marginalisation.

Overseas conflicts such as the violence in Syria and Iraq are causing tensions in Australian communities and threaten community cohesion.

Our social cohesion is the glue that holds us together and makes us the envy of the world. I believe that it has shielded us to some extent from recent challenges, but we must not ignore the issues which need attention.

Strong social cohesion is critical in combating extremism and providing a framework for our national unity.

As Parliamentary Secretary to the Attorney-General my responsibilities have included community engagement in support of the Government's efforts to counter violent extremism.

In recent weeks, I have called for efforts in countering violent extremism to adopt a greater focus on the social policy end of the CVE spectrum — not just concentrating on the national security end, important though it is.

I am pleased that the CVE summit last month recognised that greater efforts in this space are needed.

As the Prime Minister indicated earlier this week in welcoming the NSW package of measures, our most effective defence against terrorism is to prevent people from becoming terrorists in the first place.

In short, prevention is better than cure. We need to stop the feeder cycle of young people to the airport.

Regrettably, while we have seen young people of different backgrounds preyed upon by those bent on radicalising
them, the most affected cohort have been our young Muslim Australians.

As I mentioned in my address to the National Press Club recently, I believe that the tragic Parramatta incident is a turning point — a crossroads moment.

We need to deal with the reasons for the disengagement of young Australians.

To meet these challenges, we need to understand the cultural complexities of the problem. With hindsight, I do not believe that we have done so in the past, but we very much need to do so if we are to succeed in the future.

We also need to ensure that recent challenges do not undermine the positive legacy of our migration story. The legacy of successful waves of migration must be protected.

Indeed, interaction between established and emerging communities is important, not just as a means of understanding how to deal with challenges, but as a continuation of this positive legacy.

Interfaith dialogue is also essential. Last week I attended the 50th anniversary of Nostra Aetata, the Declaration on the Relation of the Church with Non-Christian Religions of the Second Vatican Council.

The keynote addresses were given by Archbishop Anthony Fisher and Rabbi Dr Benjamin Elton at the Great Synagogue in Sydney. Joining us on this occasion was the Grand Mufti of Australia Dr Ibrahim Mohammed, Melkite Bishop Daniel and many other faith leaders.

This is the important interfaith framework that we have in Australia and its continuance is vital to good social cohesion.

Citizenship is also a key foundation of multicultural policy.

Another measure of our migration success is that a recent OECD report found that Australia has one of the highest levels of citizenship uptake in the world, with over 80% of eligible migrants becoming citizens.

The recent consultation on Australian citizenship that I led with Philip Ruddock found that Australians hold dear their citizenship.

However Australians are concerned that citizenship is undervalued by some in our community. This concern is most acute in the cases of Australians who by their conduct have chosen to break with the values inherent in being an Australian citizen.

There was also a strong theme of the consultations for the importance of English language to being a citizen and full integration in Australian society.

There was support for raising the minimum standard of English required to sit the Citizenship Test from ‘basic’ to ‘adequate’.

Indeed, our consultation has reinforced the importance of the Government’s focus on the three E’s – English, education and employment.

Australians also see citizenship in a deeper sense - of having a stake in our future as a prosperous and diverse nation and in the values that underpin this.

The Government has been developing a multicultural policy. There has been consultation with the Australian Multicultural Council.

Like citizenship, we believe public input is very important, especially at this time. Accordingly, we will shortly be releasing a draft multicultural policy for public comment.

This will ensure that Australians have the opportunity to provide their views on this important issue. Our social cohesion is the sum of millions of successful settlement journeys. They have combined to form the rich fabric of contemporary multicultural Australia.

Whilst it is important that we continue to celebrate and promote our social cohesion, we must be cognisant of the challenges we face today.

I would like to conclude by encouraging FECCA to consider more broadly the contemporary character and needs of our cultural and linguistic diversity.

I trust that they will ensure a positive difference in people’s lives in contemporary Australia as they have done to earlier migrants.

I know there can be no greater incentive to continuously strive for the best possible results. Thank you.
The Hon Tanya Plibersek MP is the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, Shadow Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Development, and Member for Sydney.

Australian multiculturalism is both a matter of fact and a question of choice.

It’s a matter of fact, because we are a nation whose non-Indigenous citizens are drawn from all corners of the world.

It’s also a question of choice, because we’ve chosen to celebrate and encourage and make the most of this diversity, not feel threatened by it, or strive for homogeneity.

We have built, and maintained, a richly diverse community.

Government does not create community: community comes from our willing acceptance of what we owe each other, and what we gain from each other.

But Government provides at least part of the framework on which community grows: our citizenship, our institutions, our civic organisations and our shared spaces and associations.

Providing that framework takes leadership. It takes thoughtful policy and it takes resources.

All Australians know we are lucky to live in this country. I am conscious, however, that I am lucky twice over.

My parents were given the chance to build a better lives for themselves and their children – and had the courage to take that opportunity, to leave behind everything they’d known in the hope that things would be better here.

It’s the experience of millions of Australians.

They were grateful to come to a peaceful country, where they could work hard and raise their children to be responsible contributors – to repay the great gift of Australian citizenship.

My parents were proud to call themselves “new Australians”.

Of course, they experienced discrimination and even racism, but the deal was that if they obeyed the law, they were free to practise their faith, argue for their political views and raise their children to know the culture, language and traditions of their country of birth as well as their country of choice.

I was only a few years old when the Whitlam Government was elected and Al Grassby introduced the word ‘multiculturalism’ to our national conversation about identity and community.

I am fortunate to have had the opportunities and the advantages of growing up Australian, in a multicultural Australia.

The success of the post-war migration program is one of the things that underpins Australia’s self-image as an open, tolerant, welcoming society.

In the decades since, successive governments have committed themselves to the ongoing enterprise of building a strong, united nation enriched by many cultures.

86% of Australians now agree that ‘multiculturalism has been good for Australia’.

We did not drift into our current success.

Just as we can’t expect to drift into a successful future.

Of course, it needs thought and effort from government. We need to help build the framework that sees multiculturalism, inclusion and cohesion flourish.

I look forward to this government releasing a policy on multiculturalism. I hope, after more than two years in development, it will be a good one.

But policy must also be backed by action.

Multiculturalism is more than ethnic food festivals and parades. It is drawing strength from our diversity, socially and economically.

It means recognising both the fact and choice of this diversity, and including in our policy making an understanding of what strengthens cohesion and inclusion.

The Whitlam Government did not only say that Australia was open, inclusive, multicultural. That Government also brought in the Race Discrimination Act, a concrete expression of government commitment to a tolerant and fair Australia.

I was glad to see, after much campaigning by groups such as yours, this government abandon its policy to scrap section 18C of the Racial Discrimination Act last year.

No society should say that people have a right to “offend, insult, humiliate or intimidate another person or a group of people” because of their race or ethnicity.

It very much surprises me that government members are now being given free rein to support a private members bill in the Senate with a similar effect to the government bill amending section 18C.
What's more, Prime Minister Turnbull is allowing these divisive endeavours to continue instead of asking government members to support government policy not to amend 18C.

At the same time a new offence of 'inciting genocide' is being introduced – in National Security legislation.

Inciting genocide is clearly wrong. We already have provisions in our laws that have been used against Holocaust deniers. But if we agree that words matter, why are government members allowed to back weakening the Racial Discrimination Act?

The government as a whole should be saying clearly that advocating genocide is wrong, and so is offending and insulting on the basis of race. Or gender or religion, for that matter.

The right words – and the wrong words – send a powerful message about a government's priorities. And of course, so does a government's budget.

It was disappointing to see that one of this Government's first acts was to cut $11.5 million from the Building Multicultural Communities Program – initiated by the last Labor Government – cutting away at programs that contribute so strongly to our social cohesion.

At the same time, they announced cancellation of the Migrant Communities Employment Fund, also a Labor initiative.

They went on to cut $53.7 million from SBS in their first budget – SBS, which has enriched the cultural experience of all Australians since it was introduced by the Fraser Government in 1978.

In that budget, a further $33 million was slashed from Strengthening Communities, endangering multicultural, diversity, and social cohesion programs.

The Building Community Resilience Program was axed, replaced by the much smaller Living Safe Together Grants Program which initially had funding for only one year.

While I welcome the government's reconsideration and extension of funding for a further year, successful programs will still miss out, and have no certainty for their future.

Many of the programs affected by these cuts have been doing invaluable work. They both serve the needs of their communities and work to build the bonds of trust between Australians of different backgrounds.

They bring us together.

They are part of the framework that supports our multicultural community, and government should play its part in supporting them in turn.

Without that framework, it is all too easy for groups seeking to divide Australians for their own ends to foster hostility and cultivate alienation.

Those groups, whether they be Hizb ut-Tahrir or Rise Up Australia, have, thankfully, miniscule support.

Australians of every culture and every faith roundly reject them. We embrace the national ethos expressed so well in our citizenship oath:

“From this time forward, I pledge my loyalty to Australia and its people, whose democratic beliefs I share, whose rights and liberties I respect, and whose laws I will uphold and obey.”

These Australian values unite us in our common commitment to each other.

As Australians we’ve won life’s lottery, but it comes with an obligation:

To participate fully in our democracy;

To defend not only our own rights and liberties, but those of all our citizens;

And to obey the law. Every time.

It’s the deal we all sign up to, whether by birth or by choice.

Honouring and supporting these values is every individual citizen’s responsibility in our multicultural country.

But government does have a role.

We can provide the framework: respecting and celebrating the diversity of our community – in our language, in our policies, in our priorities.

That’s our part of the deal.
Address From the Leader of the Australian Greens

Dr Richard Di Natale is the leader of the Australian Greens.

Multiculturalism is one of Australia’s enduring successes that should be sustained and protected.

I grew up in a migrant family. My mother and her parents left San Marco, a small village in southern Italy, to board a ship for Australia in the late 1950s. They didn’t speak any English, but my grandfather opened a grocery shop in Brunswick in Victoria, took mum and her sisters out of school and put them to work in the shop. My father left Sicily for Australia when he was 29. He did an electrical apprenticeship here and worked his life on building sites, but I think he was always frustrated that had he been born at a different time; would have been an academic. When he retired he did an arts degree in languages and a thesis on the Renaissance. Their stories are just two in the wide diversity of experiences that created our multicultural Australia. It is on their shoulders, and those of millions of families just like theirs, that this nation has been built.

The Greens see multiculturalism as a core part of our vision for Australia’s long-term identity. Rather than dividing us, it compels us to be clear about those things that unite us as a community: respect for our democratic institutions, for universal human rights, and for equality of opportunity.

Celebrating and sustaining our diverse community means actively working for social inclusion through access to health, education and other services. As politicians we need to facilitate full participation – making sure that public services are accessible to the entire public. This means translation of these values into our schools and making sure culturally and linguistically diverse kids are being supported.

In terms of hospitals and health, we need to think about what we can do to improve translation services, to make sure that medical practitioners understand the importance of professional translation services to good outcomes. I know this is an issue FECCA is well aware of.

We need to carefully examine the barriers that are making it difficult for people with limited English skills to access social assistance and government services. FECCA’s Multicultural Access report highlighted the community concern that currently exists about Government moves to shift services delivery to online platforms. As the report noted, “the push to use online services to obtain or provide information is based on the flawed assumption that everyone accessing these services is computer literate, has access to the internet, and can speak English.”

We need to make sure that in reforming our systems, we don’t disenfranchise whole sections of our community in the process.

As FECCA has proposed in its Multicultural Access and Equity report, the Greens are committed to a whole-of-government approach to implementation and evaluation of the Multicultural Access and Equity Policy. Our Government works on behalf of all Australians, and needs to be accessible to all Australians. This is an important way of achieving that goal.
Our ethos of multiculturalism is precious and needs protecting. As a community we are facing a challenge from a small number of people who would act without respect for human life. I believe in the strength that comes from community, from connections between people. That we must look to why young people are getting caught up in extremism and act at the community level.

Mothers shouldn’t have to fear for their kids. Let’s recognise that prevention is the way we build a unified and harmonious nation.

We need to make sure that we look at why young people are being caught up in some of these acts of extremism. The social isolation, the disconnection, the marginalisation that exists amongst some of our young people.

I am alarmed at Government proposals that would further erode civil liberties and human rights, and further alienate the young people and communities we need to be reaching out to. Draconian legislation doesn’t make us safer, and it doesn’t prevent violent acts. To date, the Government has been far too focused on punitive measures – fundamentally, we need to shift this to focus on prevention. It is hard work to engage with young people feeling isolated and alone, but it is necessary work.

There’s been a large community campaign in defence of section 18C of our Racial Discrimination Act and the Greens are very proud to have been part of that. This is an unpredictable issue that keeps rearing its head – there are many people in the Liberal party that want to water down the law to give a green light to racism and discrimination.

As a community, we already work hard to put a stop to this ugliness, and our laws help us to do that – on our streets, on our football fields, in our schools. We’ll continue to fight to protect our community against the legalisation of vilification.

Now I’m going to talk about refugees because the Australian story is one of many diverse people and backgrounds coming together to enrich our shared experience. It’s a story of open doors – not turn-backs.

We are strong enough, and our humanity large enough, to welcome the persecuted with open arms. To that end we were encouraged by the Government’s recent increase in refugee settlement numbers in response to the growing humanitarian crisis in Syria. But we need an equitable humanitarian program that is responsive to the refugee situation occurring across the world and that meets growing global needs for resettlement.

We cannot laud our openness and understanding whilst we continue to detain in horrendous circumstances those who have fled to Australia for safety and a new life. We must close the detention camps on Manus and Nauru, stop trying to offload our responsibilities onto other nations, and work towards a genuine regional response that respects the lives of asylum seekers.

And for those asylum seekers who are here in Australia, we need to make sure we provide clear pathways to citizenship. As one asylum seeker reported, “If you are an asylum seeker you don’t have a life. On bridging visas we have no future, no plan. In detention you are in a compound surrounded by bars. But when you live in a society without basic rights, it is just another detention but bigger and wider.”

It is incumbent on all politicians and public figures to try to protect communities from vilification and isolation and to help redress the misplaced fear that some people hold towards other cultures and religions. This is a question of leadership.

Recognising that multiculturalism is one of our country’s greatest assets, I look forward to working with those gathered here and the broader community to promote inclusion, acceptance and community harmony. We are better because of our diversity, because of families like mine and yours that have chosen to make Australia their home. Know that you have an ally in protecting your communities from vilification, from social isolation, and in tackling head on those misplaced fears that many people would use against different cultures and religions, and let’s celebrate. Let’s celebrate the great thing that is Australian multiculturalism, because we are a better nation for it.
The Hon John Ajaka MLC is the NSW Minister for Ageing, Minister for Disability Services, and Minister for Multiculturalism.

I acknowledge the traditional custodians of the land on which we meet, and pay my respects to their elders past and present. I would also like to acknowledge:

- Mr Joe Caputo, Chair of FECCA;
- Mr Peter Doukas, Chair of the Ethnic Communities’ Council of New South Wales;
- Professor Klaus Neumann of the Swinburne Institute for Social Research;
- Dr Hari Harinath and Hakan Harman, the Chair and CEO of my agency, Multicultural NSW;
- And the many distinguished guests that are with us for this conference.

It’s a great pleasure to be here today for the biennial conference of the Federation of Ethnic Communities’ Councils of Australia.

The NSW Government is proud to support the FECCA Conference in Sydney, and to welcome delegates from all over Australia to the number one city and state.

Every two years, community representatives, academics, researchers and government organisations seize the chance, through this FECCA conference, to assess multicultural policy and practice across Australia.

This ensures that we, in state and federal governments, put our cultural diversity at the forefront of all our decisions, helping our nation to continue to enjoy the status of the world’s most harmonious multicultural society.

Australia has undoubtedly been built on migration. We have and continue to welcome migrants from every corner of the globe.

As new migrants settle on our shores, we welcome and support them in their efforts to be an inclusive part of the fabric of Australia. Our legislation, societal norms and social infrastructure enables everyone to maintain their traditional cultures, religions and languages.

We do this in the context of a shared and unified commitment to Australia.

Connected and united communities are a key ingredient for our continued prosperity and high levels of social cohesion and harmony.

This year’s theme of the conference is Multiculturalism in Action: Building a Better Future for all Australians.

I thought I’d share with you what the NSW Government is doing to promote Harmony in Action.

We are committed to cultural diversity through many ways:

- Multicultural principles are a policy of our state and reflected in the core activities of Multicultural NSW and in the legislation that guides its work.
- We have a framework to ensure our public sector agencies develop their corporate plans with a cultural diversity lens.
- We support community organisations and cultural events through the Multicultural NSW Grants Program.
- We provide language services in over 100 languages which ensures equitable access to government services and programs. And I am proud to say that I had the privilege to launch the expansion of these services through Service NSW earlier this year.
- We have an elaborate Community Engagement Strategy to listen to our citizens and capture their feedback in future policy development.

Our nation’s cultural diversity is a unifying force, and consistent with the theme of this conference, “to build a better future for all Australians”. It is incumbent on all Australians to safeguard what we have achieved and to participate in continuing to build and promote our peaceful multicultural and harmonious way of life.

Australians have spoken out on many occasions for peace and unity in our diversity and we must continue to do so as often as possible.

In NSW – where we have more than 245 ancestries represented, practise around 125 religions and speak over 200 languages – we are truly the champions of diversity.

The New South Wales Government aims to become a global centre of excellence in multicultural policy and practice.

I am of the view that, Government cannot do all of this on its own.

We rely on the collaboration and engagement of organisations here present, to ensure multicultural practice in this state is innovative, responsive and inclusive.

This conference is a great chance for us all to share our experiences, learn from each other, once again reaffirm the fabric of our society being built on migration and our multicultural principles, and to chart a course for the continued prosperity and cohesiveness of Australian society.

On behalf of the NSW Government, I am delighted to officially welcome you all to Sydney for this premium multicultural conference.

Thank you all for the great work you do.
Dr G.K Harinath, MBBS, DTM&H OAM has been the Chair of Multicultural NSW since September 2014.

For me it is an absolute pleasure to be here today as the Chair of the Multicultural NSW Advisory Board to address and welcome delegates from all over Australia to the second day of the biennial conference of the Federation of Ethnic Communities’ Councils of Australia.

As most of you would know, Multicultural NSW has undergone a radical change over the past 18 months and continues to be transformed.

As a major sponsor of this conference, you will already have seen my fellow Advisory Board Members and the senior executive of Multicultural NSW who are speaking, facilitating and documenting the outcomes, discourse and recommendations of this conference.

In fact we have incorporated our Annual Symposium into this national event.

Multicultural NSW exists to build and maintain a cohesive and harmonious multicultural society that enriches the lives of all the people of NSW.

Can I quote that: “All human beings are born with equal and inalienable rights and fundamental freedoms”. This is the starting point of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

The preamble starts with the statement: “Whereas recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family, is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world…”

And peace is an essential prerequisite to our continued social cohesion and community harmony.

Can I also quote from the Institute for Economics and Peace – Positive Peace Report 2015 which articulates: “Humanity is now facing challenges unparalleled in its history. Most challenges are global in nature, such as climate change, ever decreasing bio-diversity, increasing migration and over population. These global challenges call for global solutions and these solutions require cooperation on a scale unprecedented in human history. In a globalised world, the sources of many of these challenges are multidimensional, increasingly complex and span national borders. For this reason, finding solutions to these unprecedented challenges fundamentally requires new thinking.”

Many of that new thinking will emanate from Australia and from conferences such as these.

We do lead the world in many ways through harnessing the power of cultural diversity.

This FECCA conference gives us all a chance to share our successes, understand what we can do better, and work together to ensure that diversity and multicultural policy is at the forefront of all that we do.

It’s wonderful to see delegates from all over the country come together under the umbrella of FECCA, and to welcome representation from Federal and State governments.

After the success of yesterday’s opening sessions and dinner at Sydney Town Hall, I hope you all have a terrific day learning from the experts in their fields.

On behalf of Multicultural NSW, thank you all for being here.
Klaus Neumann is professor of history at Swinburne University of Technology in Melbourne.

I have been invited to talk to you today about Australia’s response to asylum seekers and refugees.

I have just returned from three weeks in Europe, where I tried to gain a first-hand impression of the current refugee crisis. I spent most of my time in Germany, but also went to the Slovenian-Austrian, and Austrian-German borders.

The situation in many European countries – from Greece in the south to Sweden in the north – is volatile. In Germany, it is not yet certain whether chancellor Angela Merkel’s line, “Wir schaffen das”, “We will be able to do this”, was anything but wishful thinking. In the course of the past two months, it has become apparent that Germany is a divided country. Many Germans are greeting refugees at train stations, taking them into their homes, welcoming them into their sports clubs and teaching them German. But there are probably as many others who deeply resent the arrival of refugees. In the southeast of the country, where non-Germans make up less than 2% of the population, locals have blockaded roads to prevent refugees from settling, even temporarily, in their midst. But in other parts of the country, Germans have taken to the streets in their thousands to publicly welcome refugees and to protest against xenophobia and racism.

The numbers are daunting. According to Germany’s interior minister, there’ll be 800,000 new arrivals this year. This seems to be an unrealistic estimate, given that in September alone, at least 160,000 and possibly as many as 270,000 people arrived. Late last month, Angela Merkel reportedly told her EU counterparts that Germany would need to accommodate at least one million arrivals this year. Austria expects 85,000 new arrivals in 2015, or one for every one hundred Austrian residents. Sweden, with a population just short of 10 million, expects 190,000 – or about two new arrivals for every one hundred Swedish residents.

The overwhelming majority of the people who are currently entering Austria, Germany or Sweden are fleeing from something – be it war, persecution or extreme poverty. Yet strictly speaking, they aren’t refugees because they haven’t yet been recognised as such.

In Germany, the media and most mainstream politicians are nevertheless using the term “refugee” because the term “asylum seeker” has negative connotations. In the early 1990s, asylum seekers were widely considered to be dishonest about why they had moved countries, and were often referred to as “Scheinasylanten”, “bogus asylum seekers”. That was at a time when hundreds of thousands of people were fleeing war-torn former Yugoslavia. Their
arrival prompted much anxiety, and some xenophobic violence, which culminated in 1991 and 1992, in two pogrom-like attempts by racist mobs to attack hostels for asylum seekers and non-German guest workers. In 1993, in an attempt to curtail the number of asylum seekers allowed to remain in Germany, parliament voted to modify Article 16 of the German constitution, which guarantees the right to asylum.

I began my talk by saying that I have just returned from Europe. But you shouldn’t assume that I have been talking about Europe simply because I want to share with you some of my recent experiences. Indirectly, I was also talking about Australia. Sweden expects to take in 190,000 asylum seekers this year, I said, and left unsaid something many of you would be aware of: namely that in 2013, Australia, which has a population that’s almost two and a half times the size of Sweden’s, couldn’t cope with 20,000 so-called “boat people”. And yes, that’s the highest number of asylum seekers arriving by boat that Australia ever had to deal with in a calendar year. Maybe even one of the architects of the government’s punitive response to asylum seekers, former prime minister Tony Abbott, now realises that 20,000 does not seem a particularly high number; for in his London speech last week, he claimed: “The second wave of illegal boat people was running at the rate of 50,000 a year – and rising fast.”

In Germany, I said, newspaper editors and politicians are now careful not to use words that have acquired pejorative connotations, not to mention inflammatory or denigrating language. That may have reminded you of the vocabulary widely used in Australia: “illegals” and “queue jumpers”, who comprise a “flood” or whose arrival amounts to an “invasion”.

One last comparison: In September, the Abbott government decided to accept an additional 12,000 refugees from Syria and Iraq. The decision had been prompted by the public outcry that followed the publication of a photo. That photo, taken by Turkish press photographer Nüüfer Demir, depicted the body of a young boy who had drowned during the crossing from Turkey to Greece.

The public response in Australia was no different from that in other Western countries, such as the UK and Canada. Political leaders, including Barnaby Joyce and New South Wales Premier Mike Baird, spoke out. “Who thinks watching a child drown is a good outcome?” Joyce asked, demanding that Australia resettle more Syrians, provided this was done through “proper and legitimate channels” – “otherwise you can see what happens when there are no controls on the border.”

In a Facebook message posted a couple of days after the publication of Demir’s photographs, Baird wrote:

I don’t know how you felt when you saw the image of three-year-old Aylan Kurdi lying lifeless, face down in the sands of a Turkish beach. I felt sick with overwhelming sorrow. And despair. And anger […]. I found that as the feeling of anger dulled, my next response was […] surely we can do more […] And we should do it now.

In Germany, the warm and very public welcome extended to refugees largely predated the publication of Demir’s photographs. The event that changed German attitudes happened in Heidenau, a small town in the East German state of Saxony, on 21 and 22 August. Over these two days, Heidenau witnessed racist riots in front of a former hardware store which had been converted into emergency accommodation for refugees. The violence caused much consternation in Germany. It also prompted many spontaneous displays of solidarity with refugees.

Vice-Chancellor and Social Democratic Party leader Sigmar Gabriel referred to the people who had tried to attack the facility as “scum” and said that it was important not to concede even one millimetre to “the most un-German characters I could imagine.” Angela Merkel visited Heidenau on 26 August, when she told locals opposed to the asylum seeker accommodation that there would be “no tolerance towards those who question the dignity of others.”

Dignity resonates powerfully in Germany. Article 1(1) of the Basic Law of 1949 begins with the words, “Die Würde des Menschen ist unantastbar”, “Human dignity shall be inviolable”. This and the next eighteen articles of the Basic Law constitute a German bill of rights; for West Germans, in particular, the rights enshrined in the Basic Law have been an important part of what it means to be German.

In this case, the reference to Germany is instructive because it highlights the weakness of a rights-based discourse in Australia (which shouldn’t come as a surprise, given that Australia does not have a bill of rights). The reference to the German discussion about dignity could
also serve as a reminder of the rather dubious role of a politics of compassion in Australia; public displays of compassion by Baird, Joyce and others swayed the federal government to increase Australia’s humanitarian intake by 12,000, but compassion has also been used as a justification for what surely must be the Western world’s harshest policies towards asylum seekers. Tony Abbott reiterated that justification last week: “There are no more deaths at sea”, he said. “That’s why stopping the boats and restoring border security is the only truly compassionate thing to do.”

References to what’s happening in, say, Germany, could of course be used to suggest that elsewhere, the response to refugees is better (or worse) than in Australia. I don’t think comparisons that try to rank national responses to refugees are particularly helpful. Rather, references to what’s happening elsewhere are useful because they put Australia’s response into perspective. They also demonstrate that refugee movements are a global phenomenon and that whatever happens in Australia must not be seen in isolation. Take, for example, the claim that off-shore detention and turn-backs save lives. That may be true if we ignored the world beyond a rather small part of the Indian Ocean. But the Hazara man whose life was supposedly saved because he was prevented from making the perilous crossing from Indonesia to Australia, and who still fled Afghanistan or Pakistan because his life was not safe there, might then try another, no less dangerous route to safety: via Iran to Turkey, and from there to Greece.

More importantly for my argument this morning, by contrasting what is happening in Australia with what is happening elsewhere we are able to get a sense that Australia’s response to refugees and asylum seekers is by no means normal. And that it is specific. Seen from afar, it may also appear to be peculiar. Commenting on Australia’s response to asylum seekers in the online version of Le Monde in July 2013, one reader remarked: ‘Ils sont étranges ces Australiens, étrangers au Monde’. ‘They are strange those Australians, strangers to the world’.

References to what’s happening elsewhere in the world aren’t the only means of refocusing our attention on what is happening in Australia, and of recognising what is specific and perhaps peculiar about Australia. Because I’m a trained historian, I tend to go backwards, rather than elsewhere, when I want to argue that present circumstances are neither self-evident nor normal.

History can unsettle our view of the present in a number of ways. It can help us understand how the present is historically contingent: how it is the outcome of a combination of particular circumstances. History can also allow us to realise that not too long ago, the present appeared to be only one of several potential outcomes. History can allow us to imagine alternative futures. And finally, history can highlight the specificity of the present, and sometimes also its peculiarity.

Australia’s current policy towards asylum seekers has the support of both major parties. The bipartisan approach extends to the excision of Australian territory from the migration zone (a concept I had great trouble explaining to people during my recent visit to Europe), to the turning-back of boats, to extraterritorial processing, and to the decision never to resettle people in Australia who tried to reach Australia by boat. But what is now considered normal, is a very recent development. Less than ten years ago, for example, after the experience of Baxter, Woomera and Nauru, it was widely recognised that prolonged incarceration has such detrimental effects on detainees’ health that it better be avoided. Only twenty-five years ago, mandatory detention was unheard of.

It’s instructive to look closely at the early 1990s when Australia began to tighten its approach to asylum seekers, when the government rejected suggestions of an amnesty for overstayers, and when deportations were replaced by removals. At the time, “boat people” could hardly be blamed for the flurry of legislative activity. Between 1 January 1989 and 31 December 1991, only nine boats carrying a total of 438 people reached Australia – not enough to cause a panic, one would have thought.

But numbers did not necessarily matter. In 1991, parliament passed an amendment to the Migration Act to prevent a single refugee from being released into the community. This man had been resettled in Australia in the early 1980s, had been convicted of assault and – after having served out a custodial sentence – was deported (despite or maybe because he was suffering from a mental illness). After spending months in the transit zone of Singapore Airport, and criss-crossing the globe in search of a country that would take him in, the Singaporeans decided to return him to Australia.

How could we make sense of the climate that prompted parliament then to urgently legislate to ensure that this man would be kept in prison after his return to Australia, and that prompted the government soon afterwards to introduce legislation providing for the mandatory detention of asylum seekers arriving by boat? The explanation, I think, has much to do with the decision to provide temporary residence to Chinese students, irrespective of their individual circumstances, after the Tiananmen Square massacre. That decision was seen by many in the immigration department as a monumental error, because it undermined the assertion “we decide who comes to this country, and the circumstances under which they come”. So in a sense the department was trying to claw back ground they thought they had lost.

The bureaucrats were supported by politicians who shared the belief that it was time to re-assert control. And some of them conflated the boat arrivals and the Chinese students. “There followed an ill-disciplined debate, introduced by Hand, about the definition of a ‘refugee’”, Neil Blewett, Minister for Social Security in the Keating government,
noted in his diary about a Cabinet meeting in February 1992. “Hand provided little analysis of the problem but rather told a series of anecdotes about the Chinese boat people. He described the latest boatload as ‘not a pretty mob, mostly gangsters and madams’. Hand attacked any proposal to allow the post-Tiananmen Square Chinese students, as a group, to stay because this could ultimately produce up to a million Chinese immigrants.” There are echoes of the dreaded Yellow Peril here, but immigration minister Gerry Hand’s concerns were also reminiscent of the angst of November 1977, when prominent Labor leaders attacked the Fraser government over its decision to allow Vietnamese “boat people” to land in Darwin.

Revisiting the early 1990s could allow us not to take current anxieties as a given.

Here is another historical snippet – this one to show that the present is not a seamless continuation of the past, and that it may be worth revisiting episodes that we tend to gloss over because they don’t fit when we look at the past only from the perspective of today, through a kind of inverted telescope. In 1975, a Senate hostile to the Whitlam government established an inquiry into the resettlement of Vietnamese refugees. Soon after the committee began its work, the government changed. So did the focus of the committee. While it had initially been largely concerned with the government’s failure to facilitate the evacuation of Vietnamese who had worked with the Australians in Vietnam or who had family in Australia, it soon began to focus on the availability of government services that could foster the successful settlement of refugees in Australia.

The committee found that refugees from Vietnam required special assistance, and that such assistance was not provided by the government. In a question directed at a senior official of the immigration department, the committee chair, Western Australian Liberal Senator Peter Sim, summed up one of the key insights the committee had gained: “Is it a fact,” he asked, “that the intake criteria are varied for refugees, but that the settlement criteria are rarely varied at all?”

The lack of adequate settlement services became so apparent in the case of Vietnamese refugees because of a dramatic shift in the way Australia selected refugees offshore. For good reason, Gough Whitlam has been criticised for his reluctance in April and May 1975, immediately before and after the fall of Saigon, to open Australia’s doors to Vietnamese refugees in addition to the 283 orphans who had been brought to Australia in two so-called baby lifts in April. What is usually not remembered is that during the last months of his government he authorised the admission of Vietnamese refugees from Hong Kong, Singapore and Malaysia.

Their selection was carried out by two senior government officers – the private secretary to the Minister for Labour, Wayne Gibbons, and Whitlam’s private secretary, Michael Delaney. According to Gibbons, they selected “people who would not receive a settlement opportunity, or were not likely to receive a resettlement opportunity, from another country, and who were most in need of the humanitarian assistance that resettlement in Australia would provide;” in fact, Gibbons said that 95% of those selected did not meet Australia’s standard criteria.

Al Grassby, Frank Galbally, Malcolm Fraser, Jerzy Zubrzycki, Gough Whitlam…and Peter Sim? The history of Australian multiculturalism is bound up with the history of Australia’s program of humanitarian resettlement, which began in 1975 with Gibbons and Delaney’s mission to Hong
Kong. Peter Sim, the Liberal senator from Western Australia who chaired the committee that looked into the Whitlam government’s admission of Vietnamese refugees, ought to feature in narratives about the origin of ethnic affairs, post-arrival services and multiculturalism.

An even more unlikely figure in such a history is another politician from Western Australia, the ALP’s Kim Beazley senior. In 1976, he chaired a Joint Committee on Foreign Affairs and Defence, to investigate Australia’s response to the Lebanese refugee crisis. The committee found that Australia had no coherent refugee policy, and that the lack of such a policy put Australia at a disadvantage: “The Committee believes that a world which appears to be increasingly intolerant will continue to create refugee situations for many years to come, and that Australia is well placed to be imaginative in policy and generous to refugees,” Beazley and his co-authors wrote. “Indeed, the world has the right to expect that countries like Australia should express ideas and adopt policies which enlightened and humane people would want adopted wherever possible.”

In 1977, the government responded to both parliamentary inquiries by announcing – for the first time in Australia’s history – a detailed refugee policy. Immigration Minister Michael MacKellar told parliament that Australia’s response to refugees would henceforth be guided by four considerations: that Australia acknowledged its responsibility to admit refugees for resettlement; that the government retained the ultimate say over who would be resettled; that some refugee settlers required special post-arrival assistance; and that the needs of some refugees were best met by solutions other than resettlement in Australia.

At the time, MacKellar’s announcement marked a big step forward, as this was the first time that the government had formulated a response to refugees in general, rather than to a particular refugee crisis. But in many respects, the policy was deficient. Significantly, it did not link Australia’s policy to its international legal obligations, and it made no reference to the rights of displaced people seeking Australia’s protection. First-class settlement services notwithstanding, almost forty years after Peter Sim and Kim Beazley submitted their reports, Australia still has no comprehensive refugee policy. And Beazley’s call for an imaginative policy has also not yet been met.

One aspect of the Fraser government’s new refugee policy received very little public attention at the time. Cabinet decided that the Minister for Immigration, rather than the Foreign Minister, was responsible for refugee and asylum seeker issues. This meant a significant increase of power for the department that over the previous thirty-two years had developed a strong corporate identity as the agency entrusted with selecting Australia’s migrant intake, and whose culture of control was to become increasingly problematic. This brings us once more to the early 1990s, when the immigration department, aided by its all-too-willing minister, embarked on a process that would greatly enhance its ability to control “who comes to this country, and the circumstances under which they come”.

In conclusion, I would like to urge you not to accept Australia’s refugee and asylum seeker policy as normal, self-evident, or unchangeable. Let’s not take for granted that people who sought Australia’s protection need to be imprisoned under often appalling conditions on Manus and in Nauru. Let’s not accept as self-evident that Australia couldn’t possibly resettle 30 or 40 or 50,000 refugees a year.

We need to reboot the conversation about Australia’s response to refugees.

In order to reboot that conversation, we need to pay more attention to what’s happening elsewhere, and to the past. Let’s stop being so parochial! History and global comparisons and contexts allow us to consider the present not as self-evident or normal. They could allow us to focus on questions we have largely failed to ask: to what extent should Australia’s response to refugees be informed by its capacity as one of the most affluent countries in the world? To what extent should Australia’s response be informed by the human rights of displaced people?

Of course such a rebooted conversation should also engage with the anxieties that seem to restrict Australian policy options – without, however, condoning sentiments that do not respect the human dignity of refugees and asylum seekers.
40 years of the Racial Discrimination Act: Are We Still Protected?

In partnership with the Australian Human Rights Commission, the session was facilitated by Anna Reynolds from the Multicultural Council of Tasmania. Les Malezer, Co-Chair of the National Congress of Australia’s First Peoples gave his reflections of the early days of the Racial Discrimination Act (RDA) and the lead up to its implementation. Les also felt that the RDA was vital for Mabo and native title to succeed. Simon Rice from the Australian National University’s College of Law, spoke about whether the RDA still protects; or was that even its intent? Simon said it was important to live in a society that cares about human dignity. For the RDA to be effective it must genuinely reflect the public view. Finally we heard from David Knoll, Multicultural NSW Advisory Board Member, who said a society is truly civilised only when all people are accorded respect. He said the RDA has been a mainstay of building a non-racist multicultural society.

David Knoll AM on 40 Years of the Racial Discrimination Act: Are We Still Protected?

David D Knoll AM is currently an advisory board member of Multicultural NSW and also serves on the External Advisory Board of the Macquarie University Faculty of Business and Economics.

A society is only truly civilised when it accords all her minorities respect, understanding and acceptance. The goal of diverse, respectful workplaces continues. The cold, hard reality is that the number of racial discrimination cases is not dissipating when compared to 10 years ago.

Studies undertaken within the Macquarie University Faculty of Business and Economics demonstrate that a racially and culturally diverse workforce can be more productive and profitable than a homogenous one, but only when workplace trust and cross-cultural respect are valued and nurtured. The Racial Discrimination Act makes that goal easier to achieve, but because prejudice is often so deeply rooted, much human effort is required.

The Racial Discrimination Act expresses values that are central to being an Australian citizen. Citizenship is, and should be, a pathway to enhanced human dignity through education, employment and participation in society at every level, but citizenship rightly requires an explicit embrace of the values that underpin it.

Australia’s adherence to the values of democracy, human rights, a fair go and the rule of law has made Australia one of the world’s most stable, just and peaceful democracies. Our laws against racial discrimination, including anti-vilification provisions, are widely accepted as legitimate, precisely because they fall squarely within those values, and are a part of the bedrock of fairness of Australian society.

When Adam Goodes, an Indigenous footballer, is the subject of racist vitriol even after he retires from his sport, this doesn’t pass the fairness test.

When the NSW Government gives a free pass to a preacher who calls for the killing of a racial minority group, this too doesn’t pass the fairness test.

Although freedom of expression is a cherished Australian value, it does not include the freedom to harass, intimidate or threaten harm to others. That is why ethnic communities banded together last year to save the racial vilification provisions of the Racial Discrimination Act. We must remain vigilant against ongoing attempts to misrepresent these laws and water them down to the detriment of our social cohesion.

Vilification of others on the basis of race is just wrong. The many leaders of our diverse cultural, ethnic and religious communities must accept responsibility to make the goals of the Racial Discrimination Act a reality. We cannot call for respect, understanding and acceptance from others when we do not extend it ourselves.

If we reach out across our cultural, social and religious boundaries, then we practise, and not just talk about, multiculturalism. We reinforce the noble goals of the Act when we lead by example.

When we discipline ourselves to engage respectfully with, and importantly, about, those of another race, faith or culture with whom we disagree, when we avoid generalisation, polemics and vitriol, then we exemplify true mateship and Australian values.

The Racial Discrimination Act has been a mainstay of building a cohesive Australian society. Now, through our own conduct, we all must embed respect, understanding and acceptance into the way we live and engage in this wonderful Australian society that we are privileged to call our home.
Women’s Leadership

FECCA Senior Deputy Chair Eugenia Grammatikakis facilitated the session. Maha Abdo OAM, CEO of the United Muslim Women Association, spoke about the diversity of ways that individuals can lead; in their families, communities and organisations. Rebecca Ball from the Western Australian Office of Multicultural Interests made a presentation about the work that the Western Australian government is doing to recognise the benefits that CALD communities bring to organisations, the value of diverse perspectives and experiences in leadership, and the need to increase the numbers of people, particularly women, with CALD backgrounds on public boards and committees in the State. The session was wrapped up by Gail Ker OAM who spoke about the important leadership role that refugee women play in the settlement of new communities in Australia.

Creating Lead Ladies from Adversity

Gail Ker OAM is the CEO of Access Community Services, an innovative and successful not-for-profit organisation based in Logan City, one of Australia’s most disadvantaged and highly populated migrant areas.

‘If you educate a man you simply educate an individual, but if you educate a woman you educate a whole nation’. James Emmanuel Kwegyir Aggrey.

Our experience has shown that while women from CALD backgrounds traditionally present as being determined, resilient, passionate, optimistic and aspirational, through a combination of their pre-arrival experiences and challenges, they require specialised support to gain skills and build confidence to participate fully in the community.

Access has invested in a multi-faceted approach to develop practical strategies that engage and empower CALD women to uncover their unrealised potential and to breakdown gender barriers that may have established prior to their arrival in Australia. These include:

- Leading and participating in research projects
- Consultations and Community Engagement
- Social Enterprise
- Pilot Programs
- Education, Training and Employment Pathways
- Social Participation Programs.

Through our involvement in the Australian Research Council’s Women at Risk Study, we are developing a clearer understanding of the determinants of psychological wellbeing for women at risk which is informing our development of best practices approaches to addressing barriers. The study is focussed on individuals arriving on subclass 204 Women-at-Risk visas. Participants are interviewed 6 and 18 months after arrival. The data collected from the study is being used to develop best practice models and service delivery strategies for working with women at risk, and to develop innovative solutions to responding to the human needs of this vulnerable cohort.

In April 2015, Access Community Services along with like-minded organisations in South-East Queensland, including the Multicultural Community Council of Gold Coast, Multicultural Families Organisation and Youth and Family Services took a proactive action to convene a high level strategic think tank aimed at exploring the following questions:

- How do we begin to contribute in real terms to the gaps identified in family violence prevention and responsiveness as it relates to CALD women?
- How do we progress beyond problem identification to sustainable and long term solutions aimed at an integrated response inclusive of the voices of communities?

The think tank is working with the purpose of sustainable and long term solutions that integrate the voices of CALD communities.

To address the significant social barriers that face women escaping adversity, Access has created the Spice Exchange, a social enterprise developed in recognition that amongst newly arrived refugee women, there is a wealth of culinary knowledge and experience that could be used to generate a self sustainable business and to provide employment opportunities for the women themselves. The Spice Exchange provides practical skills development and workplace experience to assist refugee women to engage in the workforce, whilst also offering opportunities for flexible and part-time work that enables them to still perform their duties as parents and caregivers.
Mandi Wicks is the Director of Audio and Language Content, SBS Radio.

Absolutely yes! But it’s easier said than done.

SBS’s purpose is to inspire social cohesion and every day we use all our channels and platforms to be that conduit, or pipeline; to inform, educate and entertain in order to inspire cohesion.

However, the role of multicultural broadcasting, like all media, is becoming increasingly complex.

SBS Radio has 74 language programs on its schedule, broadcasting on radio (AM/FM and digital radio), online, on digital TV, on mobile and via social media.

More than ever before, audience engagement means a two-way conversation.

So, to truly engage and be an effective conduit, multicultural media has to be on every platform and device that audiences are choosing to use. The content must be relevant and we need to understand our audiences, including their life stage and stage of migration.

Perhaps the best way to demonstrate this is by using an example. Let’s take one of the most challenging issues facing us today - asylum seekers and refugees. This issue is never far from the headlines and the role of multicultural media is critical to the way it’s portrayed - an issue which can unite us and divide us.

SBS’s role is to be a conduit on many levels:

- For asylum seekers who are contemplating boarding a boat to Australia, we know some have changed their minds after hearing about the Federal Government’s ‘stop the boats’ policy through SBS Radio programs.
- For those who come to Australia, we provide settlement information in their language. We provide Australian news and information, we give a voice to their issues and we celebrate their culture.
- We use all our other language programs to educate – we provide a balanced and impartial perspective on the issue, encouraging all communities to have their say and to encourage understanding. Recently, eight language programs collaborated to tell the story of a Kurdish woman, Ronak, and her trek from Syria through seven countries to Germany. The project tells the story from Ronak’s perspective, and explores the situation in each country she journeys through including Syria, Turkey, Greece, Macedonia, Serbia, Hungary, Austria and Germany.
- And finally, SBS uses its English language platforms to engage all English-speaking Australians. World News Australia informs, Insight educates, The Feed on SBS 2 uses satire and comedy to inform and entertain, and landmark series’ such as Go Back to Where You Came From, focus on real people and real journeys to engage a broader audience.

This is just one issue – there are so many others, so many platforms, devices and languages – and this complexity will continue to intensify.

One thing remains the same - the power of storytelling cuts across all cultures. The power of one story can break down barriers and inspire understanding.

As Australia’s national multicultural broadcaster, SBS’s goal is to be a conduit for all Australians, to help each and every one of us feel at home in Australia. With nearly 50% of us either born overseas, or with one parent born overseas, there is no doubt multicultural broadcasting is a necessary conduit, and indeed there is a role for all media to be a necessary conduit, in a multicultural world.
Legislating Multiculturalism: A Case for a National Multicultural Act?

The session was facilitated by Eddie Micallef from the Ethnic Communities’ Council of Victoria. Hakan Harman from Multicultural NSW raised that NSW was the most culturally diverse State in Australia. Dr Sev Ozdowski OAM, Chair of the Australian Multicultural Council who spoke on this subject in his personal capacity, would prefer a ‘Bill of Rights’ over a Multicultural Act. Professor Andrew Jakubowicz from the University of Technology Sydney, expressed his support for a National Multicultural Act. He pointed out that since the (first) Rudd Government, Multicultural Affairs had not been brought to Cabinet. Helen Kapalos (Victorian Multicultural Commission) highlighted the important role of media in promoting a multicultural community. Dr Ozdowski pointed to the need for Government and Ministry support for a Multicultural Act, such as through a Department of Multicultural Affairs. During the discussions it was suggested that there needs to be political will and drive for a Multicultural Act.

LEGISLATING MULTICULTURALISM: A CASE FOR A NATIONAL ACT?

Taking as an example the NSW Community Relations Commission and Principles of Multiculturalism Act 2000 (the Act) it establishes six principles of multiculturalism as the policy of the state:

- The people of NSW are of different linguistic, religious, racial and ethnic backgrounds who, either individually or in community with other members of their respective groups, are free to profess, practise and maintain their own linguistic, religious, racial and ethnic heritage;
- All individuals in NSW, irrespective of their linguistic, religious, racial and ethnic backgrounds, should demonstrate a unified commitment to Australia, its interests and future and should recognise the importance of shared values governed by the rule of law within a democratic framework;
- All individuals in NSW should have the greatest possible opportunity to contribute to, and participate in, all aspects of public life in which they may legally participate;
- All individuals and institutions should respect and make provision for the culture, language and religion of others within an Australian legal and institutional framework where English is the common language;
- All individuals should have the greatest possible opportunity to make use of and participate in relevant activities and programmes provided or administered by the Government of NSW; and
- All institutions of NSW should recognise the linguistic and cultural assets in the population of NSW as a valuable resource and promote this resource to maximise the development of the state.

Legislating Multiculturalism: A Case for a National Multicultural Act?

Dr Sev Ozdowski OAM is the Chair of the Australian Multicultural Council.

Australia as a multicultural nation

There is no doubt that Australia is one of the most diverse nations on earth; yet our social cohesion and community harmony remain high.

The key to our success has been our commitment to giving everyone a fair go and maximising the benefits of our diversity.

Indeed it is our multiculturalism that has contributed to Australia’s success both economically and socially. Multiculturalism is an integral part of the fabric of our nation. It is therefore reasonable to consider whether multiculturalism should be legislated at the national level.

I, along with everyone here, am supportive of the general principles of multiculturalism. In fact, I am a product of Australia’s multiculturalism, arriving in 1975 from Poland. The question at the heart of this issue is whether or not legislating multiculturalism would result in positive change.

Legislating for multiculturalism

There are a number of examples where legislation was enacted to deal with aspects of multiculturalism. For example, internationally, the most quoted example of legislation is the Canadian Multiculturalism Act 1985. The principles espoused in the Canadian legislation include equality, participation and inclusion among others, as well as affirming the government’s recognition of the benefits of diversity.

In Australia, New South Wales, Victoria and South Australia have specific multicultural legislation in place. Western Australia enacted a Multicultural and Ethnic Affairs Commission Act in 1983; however this was repealed in 2006. A new Multicultural Recognition Bill was introduced into the Queensland Parliament on 27 October 2015.
The Act also creates the Community Relations Commission for a multicultural NSW to fulfil a range of functions, including to support multicultural communities; advise government on multicultural affairs issues; and report annually on community relations and the effectiveness of government agencies in observing the principles of multiculturalism. To support the Commission's work, the Act also provides for the establishment of Regional Advisory Councils covering all regional areas of the state.

The principles of multiculturalism established by the Act are implemented through the NSW Multicultural Policies and Services Program, which requires government agencies to develop plans to show how they will conduct business within a culturally, linguistically and religiously diverse society. Under the state's annual reports legislation, agencies are also required to report publicly on their multicultural performance through their annual reports. The Department of Premier and Cabinet compiles annual reports of agency performance.

While NSW, Victoria and South Australia are the only Australian states or territories with specific multicultural legislation in place, other states and territories have anti-discrimination and human rights legislation which include multicultural considerations. All states and territories have now enacted anti-discrimination legislation which makes racial discrimination unlawful. Additionally, both the Australian Capital Territory and Victoria have enacted human rights acts that support their broader multicultural frameworks.

All states and territories have in place policies and coordinating agencies for multiculturalism.

**Common aspects of legislation & policy**

When we look at the countries and states that have legislated multiculturalism, there are generally some consistent aspects of the legislation, including:

(i) general principles of multiculturalism;

(ii) access and equity principles; and

(iii) provision for the government to establish an independent advisory body or commission.

These aspects of multicultural legislation are broadly present in current policy and practices at the national level. In fact, successive Australian governments have demonstrated a commitment to a multicultural Australia since the 1970s, through:

(i) multicultural agendas or statements such as the Galbally principles (1978), Hawke's National Agenda for a Multicultural Australia (1989) or Howard's New Agenda for Multicultural Australia (1999) or Gillard's The People of Australia statement (2011);

(ii) access and equity policies;

(iii) support for multicultural advisory bodies, such as the Australian Multicultural Council; and

(iv) many other measures such as SBS, support for languages, community grants.

This commitment demonstrated by governments has withstood various threats (real or perceived) to our social cohesion, including the Pauline Hanson One Nation movement, overseas unrest and economic downturns. Policies have been created to allow flexibility and delivered
in accordance with the views of successive governments and the strategic directions of different times; however the general principles have remained consistent.

**Current legislative mechanism**

There are also various checks and balances in the current legal system to ensure the continued protection and implementation of our multicultural principles.

Internationally, Australia is a party to the seven key human rights treaties and submits periodic reports on measures taken to implement these. The treaties include: The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights; The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights; The Convention on The Rights of The Child; The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women; The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities; The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination; and The Convention against Torture.


The Australian Human rights Commission has statutory responsibilities to investigate and conciliate complaints of alleged discrimination and human rights breaches lodged under these laws.

The themes of multiculturalism are also embedded in the Australian Citizenship Act 2007 under which “Australian citizenship is a common bond, involving reciprocal rights and obligations, uniting all Australians, while respecting their diversity.” and in other legislation.

Although it needs to be acknowledged that regrettably Australia does not have either a constitutional or legislative bill of rights, Australia’s constitution includes a small number of limited rights, including: the right to vote (section 41); the right to a trial by jury (section 80); freedom of religion (section 116); and others. In addition, as mentioned earlier, various states and territories have successfully implemented multicultural acts and human rights bills.

However, at the national level, successive governments did not appear to see the necessity to create a multiculturalism act mainly due to the architecture that is already in place.

**Policy advantages**

In fact, some people would argue that there are some advantages of having our multicultural principles established in policy rather than legislation. They would say that:

(i) Australian multiculturalism is not ideology but simply a set of government policies and programs that aim at effective integration of migrants and refugees to achieve egalitarian, economically robust and politically inclusive society.

(ii) Policies and practices can change depending on the strategic directions of different times.

(iii) Policy allows for a degree of flexibility and adaptability that cannot be found with legislation.

(iv) There is also a reduced level of red tape and reporting under policy, which ensures that efforts can be focused on improving outcomes.

**Support for multiculturalism.**

They also would point out that support for multiculturalism is more or less constant and that at a national level genuine commitment by Australian governments will not be achieved through legislation. The government commitment to multiculturalism is present because of the success of and public support for Australian multiculturalism.

The Scanlon research into social cohesion in Australia has found that 85 per cent of people agree that cultural diversity is good for Australia. The survey showed that 92 per cent felt a strong sense of belonging and 88 per cent expressed a sense of pride in the ‘Australian way of life’. Furthermore, our cultural and linguistic diversity is considered an asset and source of great social and economic strength. In fact, migrants are estimated to contribute $1.6 trillion per annum to the Australian economy by 2050.

**Conclusion**

There would obviously be some advantages and some disadvantages in having a national Multicultural Act. National multicultural legislation would demonstrate Australia’s support for multiculturalism.

However, at the national level there is already legislation and policy in place that is successfully supporting the principles of multiculturalism and maximising the benefits of our diversity to our society. Furthermore, Australia has a long history of supporting multiculturalism and the Scanlon research shows that this support remains stable under the current system.

Due to the success of the current national system, there is little political will to legislate in this area. If we decide to go for the establishment of an Australian Multiculturalism Act, timing would be also of importance.
WHY AUSTRALIA NEEDS A MULTICULTURALISM ACT AND WHY MALCOLM TURNBULL SHOULD DELIVER ONE

Andrew Jakubowicz is Professor of Sociology and co-director of the Cosmopolitan Civil Societies Research Centre at the University of Technology Sydney.

When Australia’s Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull in early November opened a speech justifying increased penalties for ever-younger potential jihadis through celebrating Australian multiculturalism, he made two rather profound statements. For the first time since Bob Hawke an Australian Prime Minister centred multiculturalism as a potential strength in building national security. In the same breath he demonstrated that it had failed in that task, as punitive sanctions were required because by implication multiculturalism had not been successful.

The reason for the failure was left to us to discern. I argue that the key reason for multiculturalism not providing “the cement for all Australians” that Prime Minister Howard had derided in 1988, lies in the refusal of national government after government since Hawke to legislate for its application to public life. Unlike the major states that have had no problem with multicultural legislation, the Commonwealth has surrendered the territory that effective multicultural policy should occupy, by pre-emptive buckling to nativist right-wing populists, and more recently, to jihadist ideologues with no interest in Australia.

So surveillance, stripping of citizenship, trace bracelets and close policing are ever more necessary because the national government has never wanted to include the full diversity of Australia’s population in the national narrative. Today we pay the consequence of that failure in threats of hostile violence and thousands of alienated youth, who see nothing for them in the story people like Abbott and Turnbull tell of the nation.

Unlike Canada, which has had inclusive rights-based multicultural legislation since 1985, we have few federal politicians of non-Anglo immigrant or refugee background. We have no High Court judges of colour. The ABC Board has been stubbornly Euro-Australian for decades. Our national advisory bodies are overwhelmingly bleached, and Australian Story is only very occasionally inclusive.

Yet the national Scanlon Report once more in 2015, despite the depths of the moral panic over Islamism, found that 86% of Australians believe multiculturalism is good for the country. The NSW Liberal Government in 2013, even before the election of the Abbott government, had reframed its language (watered down under Carr’s Labor government to make a small target in the days of Howard’s crusade against the term) to once more call the agency and the law under which it operated Multicultural NSW.

No Federal government since Hawke’s first floated the idea in a discussion paper in 1989, has had the courage or the principled commitment to draft, debate and pass legislation asserting and implementing Australian multiculturalism. Indeed the situation has been even more dramatic than this pre-emptive buckle to the opponents of multiculturalism would suggest. Government inquiry after inquiry has refused to even recognise that such an issue exists, declining to take note of any submission or component of submission that proposes federal legislation in any area of multiculturalism.

The 1999 Howard era report on multiculturalism (known in the trade as “Arthur’s ploy” as proponents of it slowed its progress through the bureaucracy until Arthur Sinodinos, then Howard’s adviser and the only force likely to prevent the total abolition of multiculturalism, returned from an extended honeymoon) made no reference to a legislative model for multiculturalism. In this, it specifically avoided the proposals from the previous decade made under Hawke.

The 2010 advice from the Multicultural Advisory Council to the Rudd Government avoided any mention of legislation, despite submissions. The 2012 Review of Access and Equity specifically discussed the question of legislation in its meetings, but then decided to make no mention of these discussions in its report, leaving Access and Equity the continuing lame duck that it is.

However the most notorious case must be the parliamentary Joint committee report of 2013, brought down unanimously (but toothlessly) under Rudd 2, to which I made a specific submission (among other people) proposing a version of the Canadian legislative model. In discussions with members of the committee at a public hearing it was clear to me that they (both sides of politics) would do anything to avoid having to mention legislation. And indeed that’s what happened. The logic of the report pointed towards the necessity of a legislative base, the politics of it steered it towards denial.

Parallel to the withdrawal from any fashion of legislative institutionalisation, governments slung the multiculturalism portfolio further and further down the ministerial food chain. Hawke had kept it close to him, pushing its priority in any area of multiculturalism. Indeed the situation has been even more dramatic than this pre-emptive buckle to the opponents of multiculturalism would suggest. Government inquiry after inquiry has refused to even recognise that such an issue exists, declining to take note of any submission or component of submission that proposes federal legislation in any area of multiculturalism.

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Parallel to the withdrawal from any fashion of legislative institutionalisation, governments slung the multiculturalism portfolio further and further down the ministerial food chain. Hawke had kept it close to him, pushing its priority in 1989 (and in the process accelerating its manager Peter Shergold’s rise through the public service). Keating preferred Indigenous issues (which Hawke did not). Howard disliked both and demoted the idea, the policies and the management, firstly by ejecting Multicultural Affairs
from his Department, and then by grudgingly allocating it to the lowest end of the ministerial outriders, where it has remained.

So from an apogee of salience for government in 1989 it dropped (in the wake of the long wash from the Blainey affair and in the surge of xenophobia occasioned by Hanson) to a perigee of denial by 1997. Multiculturalism only resurfaced as a significant issue when Attorney General Brandis in 2014 sought to implement the IPA proposal to remove section 18C of the Racial Discrimination Act. Somehow, I assume unintentionally, he managed to galvanise a dormant coalition of opponents, that saw the sharp end bringing together Chinese, Jews, Indigenous, Greek, and Arab (but not Muslim) leaders in a sustained defence of this one area of legislated civility in the whole Commonwealth pantheon.

What might we then conclude from the research evidence that underpins this narrative? Australians in general like the idea of a culturally diverse society – not surprisingly given the high proportion of overseas born and their immediate descendants. They recognise both the creativity that comes from the interaction of different ideas and viewpoints, and the comfort that comes from sharing intimacies within a communal tradition. They are happy with individual cultural traditions being retained so long as the consequences do not breach social harmony. They really do not like inter-group vilification, though they want to affirm a common bond of fairness and respect, words used repeatedly by Malcolm Turnbull.

When multiculturalism and these principles are marginalised as they were during the Howard, Abbott and Rudd periods, then social cohesion unwinds. When the allocated political champion of multiculturalism of the day has no legislative lever from which to shift prejudice and encourage engagement, the society suffers. Given the sustained avoidance of legislated multicultural goals and practices by governments and the evident consequences in pockets of alienation and fragmentation, it should be time for a debate on what form of legislative framework Australians would like to see in support of their desires for a fair and multicultural public sphere.

This means an Australian Multiculturalism Act, and a ministerial remit for the whole of government. Even Sev Ozdowski, chief government advisor, agreed at the FECCA conference with this logic. It remains to be seen whether either FECCA or the Australian Multicultural Council have the fortitude to press home the case, and whether our newly sensible PM recognises its import.
LIVING AND BREATHING MULTICULTURALISM: YOUNG PEOPLE FROM REFUGEE AND MIGRANT BACKGRONDS

Nadine Liddy has worked in the youth and multicultural sectors for over 20 years and is the inaugural National Coordinator of the Multicultural Youth Advocacy Network (Australia).

One in four Australian young people are from a migrant or refugee background. This group of young people have enormous potential to be active participants in and contributors to Australian society, but face a range of barriers in doing so. These include culture, language, and migration experience, and they often face additional and more complex transitions than their Australia-born counterparts. This group of young people need targeted support to overcome barriers and fulfil their potential. Their engagement as active citizens in Australian society has significant and long-term benefits for individual young people, their families, communities, and for building the future of a diverse and socially cohesive multicultural Australia.

The MYAN is Australia’s national peak body on multicultural youth issues – the only national voice promoting the unique needs and interests of young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds. Our vision is for a multicultural Australia where all young people can access the support and opportunities they need to be active citizens.
Between 2010 and 2015, young people aged 18-24 comprised 20% (155,245) of the total number of arrivals through Australia’s Family, Skilled and Humanitarian Programmes. This while 89% arrived through the Family and Skilled Migration Programmes and 11% (19,320) arrived through Australia’s Humanitarian Programme. Young people comprised approximately 30% of total intake of the Humanitarian Programme.

In 2014, the MYAN commissioned the CALD Youth Census Report, providing Australia’s first analysis of the CALD youth population using census data. The Report focuses on the education, employment and living arrangements of young people and key findings include: 925,015 people, or 25% of all youth aged 12-24 in Australia, are from a CALD background; in all Australian states and territories the CALD youth population has grown at a faster rate between 2006 – 2011 compared to the total and Australia-born population aged 12-24; in all states and territories, over 95% of CALD young people aged 12-17 are enrolled in full or part time education, although the CALD youth population has lower rates of employment compared to the Australia born, non-CALD youth population and; most CALD young people are living in a single family household.

Acknowledging the diversity of the migrant and refugee youth population group, and the specific barriers they face in accessing services and opportunities, particularly in the settlement context, the MYAN has developed a National Youth Settlement Framework (YSF) - Australia’s first national framework for understanding and responding to the specific needs of young people in the settlement context. The YSF provides the foundations for improvements in policy and service delivery, including both conceptual information and practical tools and resources, to support a targeted approach in youth settlement. The YSF will be formally released in early 2016 and the MYAN will work with the government and NGO sectors to support its implementation across all sectors. This will include national training.

In addition to our policy and sector development work, the MYAN also supports young people to engage in advocacy and influence the national agenda. In 2014, the MYAN hosted Australia’s first-ever national multicultural youth event – FUSE. Working with the themes of ‘Connect’, ‘Ignite’ and ‘Trail-blaze’, FUSE brought together 40 young people from across Australia to equip them with the skills, confidence and networks to create change and become influential Australians. Over 3 days, workshops and panel presentations provided opportunities for young people to learn from each other, build human rights awareness, hear from experienced advocates and present and discuss their priority issues with MPs and other decision-makers.

An exciting spin-off from FUSE is MYAN WA’s ‘Catalyst Youth Summit’, to be held in Perth in February 2016.

Catalyst has been organised by the FUSE participants who formed the MYAN WA. Catalyst will host over 50 young people from metropolitan and regional WA to explore issues of importance, participate in leadership and advocacy training and work together to create solutions. Young people will also have an opportunity to speak directly to politicians and decision makers about key issues and solutions.

For a full list of references please contact: Nadine Liddy on nadine@myan.org.au.
Concurrent Stream 2: Diversity and Identity

Changing Face of Racism and Discrimination

Kenneth Hong from the Multicultural NSW Advisory Board facilitated a dynamic session on the changing face of racism and discrimination. Writer and film-maker Ruby Hamad began the session by giving an overview of contemporary racism, which is not about individual acts but instead the systems and institutions which perpetuate certain views and lack of diversity. Mariam Veiszadeh addressed the increasing incidence of Islamophobia in Australia and spoke about the establishment of the Islamophobia Register Australia, which allows incidents of racism to be reported and tracked.

A number of speakers spoke about initiatives aimed at increasing social cohesion and reducing racism. Dr Jacqueline Nelson and Priscilla Brice introduced the audience to the Everyday Racism app which seeks to raise awareness and give people the tools to address racism when they experience it. Anna Boland from Hume City Council made a presentation on the National Community Hubs program, which provide an opportunity for migrants to make friends and connections, learn English and develop skills for employment. Finally, Benjamin Waterhouse spoke about the development and implementation of the City of Whittlesea’s Anti-Racism Strategy and the important role that local government has to play in fostering social cohesion.

Everyday Racism: An Experiment to Encourage People to Speak Up When They Witness Racism

Dr Jacqueline Nelson is a Chancellor’s Postdoctoral Fellow at the University of Technology Sydney.

While the media tend to focus on obvious experiences of racism, in reality racism occurs everyday in both blatant and subtle forms.

Researchers refer to these types of behaviours as ‘everyday racism’. Racist talk, including name-calling and insults, is widespread, with nearly one in 5 people experiencing racist talk such as name-calling or racist jokes.

People who are most likely to experience everyday racism are Muslim Australians (35%), Indigenous Australians (29%) and those born in South-Asian countries (27%). Further research indicates that people who are regularly targets of racism may experience anxiety, depression, high blood pressure and diabetes among other health effects.

To address these issues All Together Now – the national organisation for racial equality – collaborated with researchers at Western Sydney University, Deakin University and Melbourne University to create an evidence-based solution.

When a person says something racist, social psychologists suggest one of the reasons they do so is because they overestimate the number of people around them who agree with their point of view. So, by providing education about everyday racism to people who are positive about cultural diversity (around 50% of the population), everybody benefits:

- The perpetrator’s views are challenged, and they are less likely to say something racist in the future;
- The target feels more connected to the community;
- When a witness does not speak up in the face of racism, they are likely to repeat the incident over in their mind for up to two weeks afterwards so by speaking up the bystander benefits.

To do this, the team created Everyday Racism: a mobile phone app that teaches people about everyday racism and effective responses over seven days.

When a player downloads the app, the player must first choose an avatar: a Muslim woman, an Aboriginal man or an Indian student. Each day, the player receives around
four messages in various formats such as a comic strip, a short video scenario, or a social media post that relays a scenario of everyday racism.

The player is then presented with three responses to choose from. Each choice results in a consequence for the player, thereby educating them about the challenges and consequences of responding to everyday racism.

The app won an Intercultural Innovation Award presented by the United Nations Alliance of Civilisations (UNAOC) and BMW Group, and a PEACEapp prize. It has been downloaded over 25,000 times.

In a survey completed by 210 people after using the app:

- 3 in 4 people were more aware of racist talk and actions
- 3 in 4 people were more willing to respond and/or intervene when they witness racism
- 3 in 5 people learned new strategies or ways to help when they witness racism
- 3 in 5 people have spoken up against racism since completing the app.

These statistics demonstrate the app’s efficacy. The app is available for free download from the Apple iTunes store or via www.everydayracism.org.au.

For a full list of references please contact: Priscilla Brice and Dr Jacqueline Nelson at www.alltogethernow.org.au.
Interpreting Social Cohesion in a Multicultural Context

Alphonse Mulumba of the FECCA Executive facilitated this session on interpreting social cohesion. Shadow Minister for Citizenship and Multiculturalism, and Shadow Minister for Small Business, Michelle Rowland MP took to the lectern and discussed the current challenges we are faced with, the benefits of migration and diversity and proposed solutions. Samina Yasmeen from the Australian Strategic Policy Institute, University of Western Australia, followed with the need to consider social cohesion in a holistic way. Professor Greg Barton from Deakin University focused on the need to speak about social cohesion in positive terms. Finally before the Q&A panel discussion Mohammad Al-khafaji, CEO of Welcome to Australia, reiterated Professor Barton’s notion of positive messaging and the idea of welcoming one another. He said that communities need to come together and actually understand each other’s differences.

ADDRESS FROM THE SHADOW MINISTER FOR MULTICULTURALISM

Michelle Rowland MP is the Shadow Minister for Citizenship and Multiculturalism and the Shadow Minister for Small Business.

Thank you ladies and gentlemen.

Let me begin by acknowledging the Traditional Owners of the land and pay my respects to their Elders past and present.

We meet at a time of global tension and debate about the challenges of social cohesion.

As we find ourselves immersed in the biggest movement of people since the Second World War, far too many nations have seen the unity and harmony of their citizens strained by the poisonous language of xenophobia and recrimination.

It would be misguided to view these dangerous trends as simply isolated to one nation’s experiences - these attitudes breed widespread intolerance and hostility and pose a serious risk of eroding hard-earned progress and pulling us back into a darker, more divisive era.

And yet, here in Australia, the recent ‘Mapping Social Cohesion’ survey from the Scanlon Foundation found that our differences are dwindling, and a broad consensus and genuine appreciation of our diversity is emerging.

The survey found an overwhelming 86% of Australians believe multiculturalism has been good for the nation - a strong endorsement which follows similar high levels of support in 2013 and 2014.

The survey also found just 35% believed that our immigration intake was ‘too high’ - the lowest number ever recorded by the Scanlon Foundation.

Even more encouragingly, 19% of respondents considered our immigration intake as ‘too low’ - the highest percentage ever recorded in this category and nearly double the result in 2010.

If we need further proof at how positive these statistics are, we need to only contrast them with the United Kingdom, where a ‘British Social Attitudes Survey’ in 2014 found that 77% of Britons favoured a reduction of immigration.

Australia’s refusal to submit to such negativity is testament to everyone gathered here. By breaking down barriers and fostering diversity, inclusiveness and social cohesion, this organisation, and forums such as this, serve to reaffirm and advance our nation’s unity.

However, although we can draw strength from the Scanlon Foundation’s findings, it would be disingenuous to suggest that our cohesion as a nation is absolute.

Challenges

The voices of those determined to foster division amongst us, whilst less endemic in many respects than in other nations, are nevertheless real and must be addressed.

We must acknowledge that these voices cannot simply be wished away and concede that their rhetoric can indeed be persuasive and inviting to some.

Their intent is to galvanise existing sentiments within parts of our community - sentiments which may not always be expressed publicly, but which can quickly rise to the surface in the right circumstances.

To simply dismiss these voices offhand, therefore, would be naive and counterproductive.

We have already seen how beguiling they can unfortunately be.

I recently had the opportunity to travel to the United States on a Parliamentary delegation and every day I was there you could find a local newspaper carrying a headline about communities decrying the arrival of migrants – specifically Syrian refugees – into their local area. The commentary about these prospective arrivals recorded the xenophobic and negative attitudes of many of those interviewed.
Similarly, the rise of UKIP in the UK and the National Front in France as well as the increased vote of Parties right across Europe on explicitly ‘anti-immigration’ platforms highlights a deep cynicism and detachment amongst European citizens towards their Governments’ multicultural policies and institutions.

It is fundamental to understand that Australia cannot simply insulate itself from the spread of this type of discord.

Indeed, too many of our elected officials have already used the threat of terrorism and the growing humanitarian crisis as an opportunity to demonise others - shamefully attempting to amplify and exploit misguided feelings of fear and anxiety within the community to score cheap political points - even if it fundamentally damages the notion of an inclusive society.

It reflects, in part, the shortcomings of our own multicultural policies to adequately address the challenges of a diverse society and, if we’re truly honest with ourselves, have often been constricted (at least in the minds of some politicians and their advisers) to serve as mere symbolic gestures to acknowledge from afar or tick off a list.

Consequently, the political failure to meet this challenge has allowed a vacuum of misunderstanding and anxiety to be filled by a profoundly distorted view of immigration - a view which seeks to highlight perceived differences and peddle a great untruth - that immigration is somehow a drain on our economy.

This fallacy is not new. The emergence of Pauline Hanson in the 1990s is testament to that. Her recent re-emergence in our media and in our communities, however, is deeply troubling and underlines the stubborn persistence of bigotry and just how volatile public opinion can be.

But how do we respond to these movements in Australia?

I don’t believe we should necessarily fear the formation or re-emergence of political parties with anti-multicultural agendas. Fear is exactly what these groups want – they are formed from fear and attract votes through fear. But the ballot box can be a great disinfectant, and I have confidence in Australians and their ability to see through racist and ignorant posturing for votes. And if you want recent proof of my view, consider this: the Rise Up Australia Party received less than half the number of votes than the Sex Party in my electorate of Greenway in the 2013 election.

Indeed, it has been widely established that support for immigration is highly sensitive to the stability of a country’s economic situation.

Recent evidence of this can be seen in a 2014 survey which found that Spain and Greece, two of the countries worst hit by the European debt crisis, had the highest negative attitude towards immigration with 77 and 75% disapproving respectively.

Our task therefore is to uncouple immigration and economic security and forcefully debunk the myth that immigration is a burden which can only be supported during times of economic prosperity.

Benefits of diversity

And we only need to compare the bogus claim that migrants are burdensome to an analysis undertaken by the Migration Council of Australia earlier this year to realise the opposite is true.

The findings in The Economic Impact of Migration report conclude that by 2050 migration will have added over 15% to our workforce participation rate, nearly 22% to after tax real wages for low skilled workers and, significantly, added close to 6% in GDP per capita growth.

Moreover, skilled migrants generally receive less government entitlements, including the age pension, and have often had the cost of their education met by their home country.

In other words, skilled migrants contribute more to the government in taxes than they consume in government services. Indeed, the report concludes that by 2050 each individual migrant will be contributing, on average, 10% more to Australia’s economy than existing residents.

It is a net winning outcome for the economy as a whole.

The Migration Council of Australia’s report, therefore, provides a compelling case for migration and the economic benefits to an ageing Australia.

It is estimated that by 2050, almost a quarter of our population will be aged over 65, compared to the 14% recorded at the 2011 census.
The large number of baby boomers is set to cause a great drop in workforce participation rates as their retirement looms, and this cohort is further expected to increase demands in both health and aged care services.

The evidence, therefore underlines immigration as a sensible economic decision which will allow us to maintain our standard of living and care for our ageing population.

Given this, our task is to ensure all Australians value and enable the economic contribution of migrants.

The way forward
The path to this, however, demands a significant political shift.

It means confidently embracing immigration and moving away from the misguided notion that the Australian public won’t support or accept an increase in migration levels.

I also note the recent ABS data which highlighted the entrepreneurial nature of humanitarian migrants who, according to the data, “displayed greater entrepreneurial qualities and reported a higher proportion of income from their own unincorporated businesses and this income increased sharply after five years of residency.”

So we must place multiculturalism at the centre of both social and economic policy making in this country, and actively work to promote our cultural diversity as a fundamental pillar of our nation’s prosperity.

How do we do this?

By returning to the ‘Productive Diversity’ model of the Hawke/Keating years - which sought to advance global economic integration matched with policies designed to emphasise the benefits of a culturally diverse society - seen in the creation of the Office of Multicultural Affairs in 1987.

The model had three objectives. Firstly, “cultural identity: the right of all Australians, within carefully defined limits, to express and share their individual cultural heritage, including their language and religion”. Secondly, “social justice: the right of all Australians to equality of treatment and opportunity, and the removal of barriers of race, ethnicity, culture, religion, language, gender or place of birth”. And thirdly, “economic efficiency: the need to maintain, develop and utilise effectively the skills and talents of all Australians, regardless of background”.

Whilst all of these objectives must be advanced, it is the emphasis on the economic virtues of diversity which broke new ground and is something which has, for too long, been ignored by successive Governments.

As Paul Keating stated at the time: “We are a nation rich not only in natural resources, but in human resources as well. If we are to maximise our potential, to achieve all that we are capable of achieving, we need to harness these resources. In doing so, we will achieve our twin aims of economic development and social justice for all Australians”.

Conclusion
Make no mistake, the choices that we make in the coming years will determine whether the future will be shaped by friction or by harmony.

This issue goes to the very core of who we are as a nation, and what kind of Australia we want to leave to our children and grandchildren.

We simply cannot accept the status quo as a solution. Everyone here understands what will happen if we do nothing.

Unless we work together to address the policy failings which have allowed for groundless claims to appear legitimate, the rising tide of prejudice and disharmony we have seen in other parts of the world will reach our shores and our progress, as a society, will be halted.

This organisation was created because it was understood that the unity of our nation is more secure when we actively promote the benefits of our diversity, and advance the cause of cooperation over conflict.

FECCA continues to be at the forefront of conveying this message and it is imperative that it be bolstered by tangible government support and action.

The time is now. The momentum the Scanlon Foundation survey has highlighted must be sustained and converted into common-sense policies which foster social cohesion and ensure every Australian values and benefits from the full measure of contributions from all our citizens.
Greg Barton is a Research Professor in Global Islamic Politics at the Alfred Deakin Institute for Citizenship and Globalisation, where he leads research on social inclusion and pluralism, Islam and civil society, democratisation, and countering violent extremism.

Australia’s multicultural, plural, society is one of its greatest assets. Many years of hard work by a rich diversity of individuals, groups and communities across Australian society has produced awareness that social cohesion and resilience in the context of multiculturalism represent the foundational elements of modern Australian society. Elected officials at all levels, and from across the political spectrum, broadly support this, as does Australian society in general.

What is not so well understood, however, is the role of religion. Australians have long had a tendency towards scepticism about organised religion. But this does not mean that Australians don’t value religion or spirituality. Although many things have changed, and continue to change, religion is not going away. In the second half of the 20th century it became popular, at least amongst university graduates, to argue that modernisation would lead to secularisation; and if not the disappearance of religion at least its retreat into the private sphere of the personal.

By the 21st century, however, it had become very clear that religion was not going away. Modernity does not mean the end of faith. Indeed faith is deeply bound up with culture and identity. Whatever the place for institutionalised religion, spirituality lies at the centre of what it means to be human. This does not necessarily mean a theistic belief system. But it does mean that we live and die by the values that we believe in.

Building a rich multicultural society that has genuine cohesion and resilience depends upon building mutual respect. Respect, like tolerance, is never sufficient when it depends upon grudging submission. True respect depends upon not just understanding each other but also enjoying each other.

We need to respect the humanity of each other and to do that we need to understand each other by coming to know everyone on their own terms. For most people this means coming to understand their particular approach to belief spirituality or religion. In that sense any sustained exercise in building multiculturalism depends upon some form of interfaith dialogue.

This does not have to be, nor should it be for the most part, an academic exercise. But it does mean we have to learn to open ourselves up to learn from each other. Done properly, this is not a chore or hardship. True dialogue depends upon true friendship, and as both develop, we come to enjoy each other’s company.

For some people the challenge to thinking about multiculturalism in the context of interfaith dialogue is the perception that their own faith and spirituality may be challenged or thrown into question. In reality the opposite is true. The more we understand each other and appreciate different traditions and approaches to faith and spirituality the more we understand and deepen our own position. Not only do we learn to appreciate the other better and find enjoyment in difference we also come to a deeper understanding of ourselves.

One of the barriers to thinking about religion, whether in our own tradition or that of somebody else is that religion so often appears to have been commandeered for political projects. One of the great barriers to understanding Islam and the aspirations of young Muslims is concern about Islamist extremism. The powerful narrative, and confident rhetoric, of the Islamic State (IS) movement is deeply disturbing to most Australians, Muslim and non-Muslim alike. And yet at the same time it succeeds in drawing a small minority in to engage with its radically alternative political position.

If we are to understand why this is so, and how we can best engage with those who are being drawn towards movements such as this, we need to understand not just the power of the narrative but also the felt needs that it engages with in those who come under its sway.

Strong beliefs and convictions, and even radical ideas – that is to say the desire to completely transform systems - are not in themselves wrong, dangerous or unacceptable. They become all those things, of course, when the argument of the
ends justifying the means’ is employed to support violence and intimidation. That is certainly the case with IS. If we are to counter its appeal then we need to first understand its appeal and to engage with those who are responding to it.

Young people are by nature idealistic and naturally driven to want to change the world and make it a better place. And we live in a world that is full of human need. Australia is not exempt from this but it is nevertheless a world away from the suffering of parts of Africa, Asia or the Middle East. But in the globalised community of the 21st century being a world away does not mean being unconnected. Young Australians in particular are highly globalised. Using not just the Internet in general, but social media in particular, they tune into particular news sources aligned with their social circles. They are quick to travel and think nothing of spending 24 hours crossing the globe on cheap air tickets.

Their insatiable curiosity, idealism and wanderlust are all inherently good things. But as with all such things, that which exposes us to growth also exposes us to risk and it is probably partly the highly globalised nature of Australian youth that explains why the rates of radicalisation to the IS movement in Australia match those of France and Britain, despite us not facing the same economic and social challenges.

Humanity moves us to care. It is only human to ask why bad things happen to good people. It is right and proper that young Australians are struggling to make sense of the civil war in Syria or the suffering in Iraq.

The appeal of groups like IS is primarily a positive appeal. It is couched in terms of answering the question of why bad things happen to good people. And it recognises that belonging is a human need. We all need to belong and to be part of a social group that affirms us and respects us.

Young people in particular have an acute need to belong. Looking for ‘likes’ on Facebook posts is more than just a passing fad or a curious obsession, it reflects a deep human need. Healthy social, cultural and religious communities meet the needs for spirituality, values, purpose and belonging. That is why so very few young Australians are drawn to IS but the fact that a small but significant number - several hundred in fact - have been caught up in the promise of false friendship and cynically manipulated is something that should concern us all.

As we think about how best to build our communities and make more resilient our social networks we need to recognise these basic truths. Religion may not be important to all but it is important to many. And what is most certainly generally true is that those who don’t feel that they belong and are connected are vulnerable to exploitation by those who prey upon their basic human needs.

We need to work hard to ensure that everyone feels respected and valued for who they are as human beings. We need to develop our social networks to reach out, affirm, include and look after each other.

In general Australian communities do this well but all communities struggle with intergenerational dynamics and when it comes to matters of religion hard work by committed, caring, community leaders is not always successful in inadequately engaging the youth. To the extent that we fail and allow some to fall through the gaps they become vulnerable to exploitation and radicalisation. In recognising this we can begin to better protect our youth and better respect and value each other.

The relationship between security and individual liberty and freedom to practice one’s convictions and culture often seen to be in tension. The good news is that when we do the important things we need to do to protect young Australians and make every member of society more secure we actually enrich our society and build stronger communities. If we properly understand what we’re doing then the good work we do in one area will enrich every other area.

Australia is safest and strongest when we build mutual respect and understanding, when we engage with youth within communities and across, when we provide avenues for healthy activism and contribution, and when we listen to each other and respect one another.
Towards Reconciliation: Constitutional Recognition of Australia’s First Peoples

This session was facilitated by Pino Migliorino from the FECCA Executive and focused on the Constitutional Recognition of Australia’s First Peoples. The session was in partnership with Recognise. Speakers for this session were Tanya Hosch, Recognise; Tim Goodwin, Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission; Maria Dimopoulos, MyriaD Consultants; and Cass Goodwin, Recognise. Speakers discussed strategies to achieve Constitutional Recognition, the barriers and possible solutions. Tim Goodwin made a point that any referendum campaign has to be an education campaign about the Constitution as well.

CONSTITUTIONAL RECOGNITION OF AUSTRALIA’S FIRST PEOPLES

Tanya Hosch is the Joint Campaign Director for Recognise, a position she shares with Tim Gartrell.

Recently I had the privilege of speaking at the national FECCA conference in Sydney. I shared the panel with good friends and advocates, one of whom was Maria Dimopoulos. Of the many insightful things she said, these stood out to me particularly.

There is no doubt that as migrants we have played a crucial part in nation formation, but this is a settler nation whose borders extend to absorb Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people without regard for their sovereignty.

“So how might non-Indigenous people, particularly those from minority ethnic backgrounds, move towards reversing the pattern of prejudice that is entrenched in the master narrative of Australian history...?”

“Changing the Australian Constitution to recognise Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and to address racial discrimination is something we must do together, no matter our cultural origins...”

I was deeply heartened to hear Maria express these sentiments - she captured a couple of critical elements of the campaign we at RECOGNISE are running to achieve that Constitutional recognition.

Australia is a nation of migrants, we often hear, but this is only half true. Certainly modern Australia is a remarkably diverse, successful and largely harmonious collection of peoples, cultures and languages from every corner of the earth. But this has only been the case recently.

The first waves of migrants began with the British in 1788 and successive ones have followed continuously ever since. That’s a mere couple of hundred years.

Before the arrival of people who speak Italian, Greek, Arabic, Hindi, Mandarin, Serbian or English, Australia was already home to at least 250 distinct languages, each emblematic of a unique culture and set of traditions. This has been the case for upwards of 40,000 years - for all practical purposes in the context of human cultural history, forever. It makes these cultures the oldest continuing human societies on earth.

When those two parts of Australia’s story are weighed together, logic would indicate that the part comprising hundreds of languages and highly evolved cultures - and what amounts to eternal occupancy of this land - would count for at least as much as the British monoculture subsequently enriched by big infusions of diversity; i.e., the one that has been here for 10 minutes, relatively speaking.

But in the formal and official depiction of our modern Australian democracy, it counts for no such thing. It counts, rather, for nothing.

When those European men got together to draw up our national Constitution, all of those people, all of those languages, all that cultural diversity, all of those eons of history were made to disappear.

It purported to establish a new nation out of a group of British colonies and confer rights, regulations and voting privileges upon those deemed to be its new citizens. Its authors conveniently ignored the people who were here all along, the people who, in their own ‘British law’ framework of understanding the world, would have to have been considered the owners of the place.

Unless you didn’t consider them at all. So that was the solution embedded in the foundations of modern Australia - they’re not here, they were never here, we found the place empty.

This means that a fundamental pillar upon which our entire national legal framework rests is an enormous falsehood.

All this should be obvious to modern eyes and Maria is correct, fixing the Constitution to right this egregious and absurd wrong has to be a job for all of us, together.

I like to think this truth and the critical importance of repairing this appalling omission in our national blueprint may be even more apparent to people, the more recently they themselves have arrived to make their homes here.

Constitutional change can only carry with overwhelming support at a referendum and that means support from every part of society, every cultural, ethnic and linguistic grouping.

We need every Australian of goodwill to support our campaign, to become active, to talk about recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australia with their families, friends and workmates, in all the myriad languages of modern Australia.

And when the time comes for a referendum, we need them to turn out in their millions and vote YES to rid our Constitution of race-based discrimination and to recognise the people who were the only Australians from before recorded history until really very recently.
Associate Professor Ludmila Stern is the Convenor of the Masters program of Interpreting and Translation at UNSW Australia.

As in many other multicultural countries, interpreting and translation are vital in many areas of day-to-day life in Australia, especially with it being the destination of an ongoing flow of migrants, refugees and asylum seekers. Associated with public spheres such as health, social services, education, immigration and law, the community interpreting sector has been an instrument of inclusion and access. Federal and State governments have been active users and providers of interpreting services.

**Australia’s community interpreting: achievements and challenges**

Since the 1970s, Australia has undertaken significant steps toward professionalising community interpreting. Among them was the foundation, in 1977, of the National Accreditation Authority for Translators and Interpreters (NAATI), the world’s first such organisation, that regulates the profession, sets professional standards and provides a credentialing and revalidation system. Interpreter training by TAFE, RTOs and Universities, some NAATI-accredited, highlight the fact that interpreting and translation are indeed professions that require specialised education and training, and the creation of a professional association of interpreters and translators (AUSIT), has set standards of ethical professional behaviour through its code of ethics and oversees professional development. Short professional courses offered for interpreters, for example, in Health Interpreting services, and the Commonwealth-run New Interpreted Project (NIP), have tried to address areas of need. The need to improve the quality of community interpreting has been recognised by the rest of the world, with steps such as the introduction of the ISO 11361:2014, setting educational and professional standards for community interpreting.

These steps, however, do not mean that community interpreting has entered the stage of professional maturity and that its infrastructure adequately supports the service providers, interpreters and clients. In fact, much more needs to be done before community interpreting in Australia can adequately develop and mature as a profession, gain its professional status in society and efficiently respond to emerging areas of need. While government and other interpretation users rightly expect professional services to be of a high level of accuracy, there seems to be an ongoing lack of awareness within the wider community about interpreters’ professional challenges and requirements and the role of the users themselves, and also a chronic lack of funding to support the infrastructure necessary to provide such services. Today, interpreters’ working conditions remain largely unsatisfactory, and the remuneration well below professional. With interpreters feeling unsupported and disrespected by interpretation users, practitioners lack the motivation to seek training, and talent is often lost to other professions. This, in turn, leads to substandard interpreting quality, users’ lack of confidence in the interpreters’ work quality and reputational loss for the profession. Outside the

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**COMMUNITY INTERPRETING IN THE AGE OF SUPER-DIVERSITY: WHERE TO FROM HERE?**

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Australia’s community interpreting: achievements and challenges

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Super-diversity in Australia: the ‘new and emerging communities’

This picture has been complicated by a worldwide influx of migrants, humanitarian refugees and asylum seekers from countries that have previously not been a source of mass migration, and which has led, over the past 15 or so years, to the emergence of new migrant communities. The term ‘superdiversity’, introduced by the British linguist Steven Vertovec in his 2006 paper ‘The emergence of superdiversity in Britain’ with regards to the UK, offers a new perspective on migration and multiculturalism, highlighting the ‘diversity of diversities’ within multicultural societies. As Vertovec notes, migrants within one community may vary in more than one way, including the time of arrival and settlement areas; legal statuses, ranging from established legal migrants to more recently arrived humanitarian refugees, asylum seekers, temporary and overdue visas holders; different generational, socio-economic and educational ‘cohorts’, and, in case of communities coming from the same country, a divergence of languages and dialects spoken, and different religions practiced. These variations all raise different settlement and integration issues. The forthcoming uptake of the Syrian refugees in Australia illustrates such an example.

However, another set of characteristics raised within the concept of superdiversity is the emergence of numerous smaller-sized communities, with the numbers significantly below than those of the older, established ones, and bearing no historical links with the host country. In Australia, this phenomenon is reflected in the emergence of the so-called ‘new and emerging communities’, originating from countries that indeed have had no historical migration ties with Australia: Sudan, Somalia, Ethiopia, West Africa and other countries and regions. Defined as having less than 10-15,000 population within each community and over 30% having arrived in the past 5 years, several communities exemplify this phenomenon: the Somali community has 9,914 speakers, Shona - 8,004 and Swahili 6,885. Compared to the older, well established and large Chinese, Vietnamese, Italian and Greek communities, ‘new and emerging communities’ lack infrastructure and representation, are less empowered and are more dependent on interpreting to access health, social services, training, legal sphere and other services.

Facing challenges

The large number of these languages that are new to Australia has created an area of need, involving interpreting. On the one hand, agencies, government and private, have addressed it, with their home pages displaying large numbers of languages in which interpreters can be provided remotely and on-site: TIS lists 160 languages and dialects, and some private agencies around 75, with ‘new and emerging’ community language being in high demand. However, it is unclear how interpreting agencies can ensure high quality, professional interpreting services in these languages. There are no training opportunities for the majority of ‘new and emerging’ languages, and NAATI has been unable to provide testing or accreditation for many of them. Furthermore, the pool from which to source future practitioners may not be large enough to generate the necessary capabilities for a future profession.

The experience of Indigenous languages interpreting

The predicament of interpreting in ‘new and emerging community’ languages, the complexity and challenges of the interpreting process itself and the risks of using unprofessional interpreters is not dissimilar to the one that has been voiced in relation to Indigenous languages interpreting: an insufficiently high level of English as a second language in interpreters; lexical and conceptual difficulties to communicate concepts that have no equivalents in Aboriginal languages, especially in fields such as government, legal and health; lack of interpreting skills, and lack of training opportunities and infrastructure to support their development (Trends in Migration: Australia 2010-2011, Department of Immigration and Citizenship). Much of it was voiced in the 2012 Senate submission, for example in relation of the Yolngu language, addressing such crucial questions as training infrastructure, adequate funding and language resources development.

Our experience is that interpreters are not being trained in Yolngu language to a level where they can interpret complex concepts. As a result they are interpreting complex concepts using very basic training, without reference tools such as dictionaries or professional development courses to able to achieve this level of understanding of Yolngu Matha. Language centres need to be funded which are able to pay people to explore language at a deeper level and use resources to reach a level of language for professional use. The creation of dictionaries and e-learning self- training tools for Indigenous people with English as a Second Language must also be supported to enable them to access these important language tools themselves.
The similarity with the problems faced by ‘new and emerging’ language services is remarkable: the pool of potential interpreters in the communities is small and not necessarily suited to source interpreters; English-language proficiency is generally low; there are no trained, qualified or certified I & T practitioners in some languages, no accreditation is available, nor are there opportunities for training and self-training. The risks, as a result, are significant. To quote an Indigenous interpreting advocate, R. Trudgen (Committee Hansard: Darwin, 2 May 2012),

We are flat-out breaking the UN regulation that says that people should be able to understand the charges they are charged with and the language of court in their first language. We are breaking it every day in Australia; as bad as any other country or regime in the world past or present, unfortunately, but we do not know about it.

These observations highlight the urgency of strengthening the infrastructure that would ensure the quality of interpreting in the ‘new and emerging communities’ languages, and the need for training professional interpreters:

• ensure selection and pre-training of interpreter trainees with the purpose of strengthening their English proficiency and their understanding of the Australian government structures and services where interpreters are required;

• support and fund educational institutions to develop non-language specific or multilingual courses for aspiring practitioners whose language is not available as part of an existing certificate or degree;

• develop online courses for future and existing practitioners for easy access, especially those who live in remote areas, including training and self-training modules; they would include modules on interpreter ethics and professional conduct, as well as specialised courses, including in areas such as social services, health and law;

• support the development of electronic language materials;

• ensure supervised induction of new practitioners and mentoring, with the support of agencies and interpretation users.

This can be only achieved with a combined commitment. Contributions are necessary, in the form of financial and logistic support by both government and private agencies, with the active participation of educational and professional institutions such as NAATI and AUSIT. These activities require well planned, concerted and coordinated actions to avoid duplication and redundancies.
Karen Connelly is a University of Technology Sydney doctoral student whose research is part of the Cyber-Racism and Community Resilience (CRaCR) Project. The CRaCR project is funded by the Australian Research Council and is being conducted across several universities (University of Technology Sydney, Western Sydney University, Monash University, University of Sydney and Deakin University).

Events such as the recent bombings in Paris and elsewhere fuel the spread of cyber-racism on Facebook and Twitter. Racist groups such as Reclaim Australia take advantage of the fear that is generated to legitimize their messages of racial and religious hate, particularly against Muslims. These messages are spread on Facebook and Twitter, reaching not only their followers, but also the general population. For example over 100,000 people shared one recent racist Facebook post.

Research undertaken so far as part of the CRaCR project shows that almost 35% of Internet users have witnessed racism online with 40% being on Facebook. Those people most likely to experience cyber-racism are from an Indigenous, North African or Middle Eastern Background. The impacts on people are similar to those found in research into everyday racism, ranging from frustration and anger to humiliation and depression. People who witnessed racism are also affected, with many of them feeling disgusted at what they saw.

Cyber-racism can be subtle, occurring as part of everyday online interactions, or blatant, as a form of activism by white supremacist groups. Strategies used by racists include reframing the racist comment to appear moral or blaming the victim for the racism. For example one Facebook page justifies racism on their page by arguing that the values of some racial or religious groups do not fit in with ‘The Australian way of life’.

It has been demonstrated that events such as the Cronulla riots (in 2005) attract a higher level of racist activities. The racist activity on social media that forms around these events can be referred to as ‘sticky spots’. Racists feed sticky spots with constant attention creating emotional fuel that increases the wider public anxiety. This contributes to a higher level of online racist activity that reaches a wider audience and is in danger of normalising racism and spreading an intolerant worldview.

The development of strategies to mitigate the negative affects of cyber-racism is also a major part of the CRaCR project. Research shows that some affected community groups such as the Muslim Women’s Association are playing a pro-active role in challenging online racism by calling it out and educating the public. Partner organisation the Online Hate Prevention Institute (OHPI) have also developed an independent reporting tool FightAgainstHate.com for people to report racist hate on social media that is not removed even after reporting it to the platform (e.g. Facebook or Twitter). Their most recent campaign is a spotlight on anti-Muslim hate.

The proliferation of cyber-racism on social media in recent times creates an increasing risk to a socially cohesive multi-cultural Australia. The next phase of the CRaCR project will be focusing on ways to build resilient communities in the face of cyber-racism. As a partner organisation, FECCA is looking at developing a collaborative project that will particularly target social media resilience in young people. Research papers and a book due for release next year will report on findings from the CRaCR research project.
Dr Tim Soutphommasane is Race Discrimination Commissioner and commenced his five-year appointment on 20 August 2013.

This year has been one of anniversaries for Australian multiculturalism. It was in 1975 that SBS radio came into being, broadcasting ethnic languages over our airwaves. It was in 1975 that, here in Sydney, that the Ethnic Communities’ Council of NSW was established. In 1975, ethnic communities had found their voice. And the Australian nation found a new voice as well. In 1975, the nation spoke in announcing the arrival of multiculturalism.

As you all know, the Racial Discrimination Act came into effect on 31 October 1975. Passed with the support of both sides of politics, the Act was our first national human rights legislation. For the first time, it would be unlawful to discriminate against someone because of their race.

Today, looking back, we can fail to appreciate the profound significance of such legislation being introduced in 1975. It was only a few years earlier that the last remnants of the White Australia policy were removed; barely a decade had passed since that landmark 1967 referendum was carried.

To understand what I mean, consider this. Prior to 1975, if you were a migrant who had been refused service in a restaurant, or had been receiving lower pay at work, or if you were an Aboriginal person turned away from a hostel, there was little that you could do in response. The law was not on your side. Only with the instrument of the Act was racial discrimination unlawful – only then was it that every Australian, regardless of race, was given a right to equality before the law. For many who encountered racism, it was, as Peter Doukas’s grandmother (or yia-yia) would have said, ‘the law that changed everything’.

The Act was also a cultural instrument for what was then the new multiculturalism. Back in 1975, then Prime Minister Gough Whitlam described it as a measure, which ‘aimed to entrench new attitudes of tolerance and understanding in the hearts and minds of the people’.

We can say confidently that such attitudes are now firmly part of Australian sensibilities. The state of our multiculturalism is strong. The vast majority see multiculturalism as good for the country. It is only an angry, fearful minority that is hostile towards diversity.

No law on its own can ever change a society. Yet we can be in no doubt: the Racial Discrimination Act has been the backbone of racial equality and multiculturalism. It has been the law that has guaranteed equal opportunity that has set a standard for racial tolerance and cultural harmony.

Throughout this year the Australian Human Rights Commission and I have marked the Act’s 40th anniversary. We began in February with a conference where scholars reflected on the history and impact of the legislation. In June, we published a book, I’m Not Racist But…, based on speeches I delivered in my first year or so as Commissioner. And the week before last, Chief Justice Robert French of the High Court of Australia delivered the inaugural Kep Enderby Memorial Lecture – a lecture on race relations named after the Attorney-General who in 1975 introduced the Racial Discrimination Bill to the federal parliament.

This afternoon, I present to you a report on our anniversary activities this year, Freedom from Discrimination. We chose this title because it captures what communities told us about the value of the Act.

For most of the past two years, we have had much debate about section 18C of the Act. This is the section which makes it unlawful to offend, insult, humiliate or intimidate someone because of their race. Many of the Act’s critics have said that this section unreasonably restricts freedom of speech. Never mind that section 18D of the Act gives...
remain significant difficulties in remedying discrimination and vilification directed at Muslim Australians. This is also true of the systemic institutional discrimination Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people continue to experience. However, capturing the testimony of communities does give me and the Commission a start. The actions we will now take reflect that.

First, I will continue to give voice to the lived experience of racism by convening an annual national forum on racial tolerance and community harmony; the first forum will be held in 2016. Underlining the importance of education, I will advocate for the national school curriculum to ensure adequate education about racism, diversity and inclusion. Acknowledging community concerns, I will explore work to improve cultural diversity in the media. In continuing with the work of the National Anti-Racism Strategy, I will investigate how we can enhance connections between the Act and the educational efforts under the Strategy. And, building on this year, I will continue to hold the Kep Enderby Memorial lecture as an annual event to advance public understanding about racism, race relations and the Racial Discrimination Act.

With all this work, the basic task remains one of education. But education means nothing if we also don’t aim to empower others.

In the case of racial discrimination, education must be about empowering people to stand up for their rights. One of the things that struck me this year was hearing from members of the community that more needed to be done to inform people about the Act. That’s why the Commission has developed a video, along with a poster and postcard – all aimed to educate people about the legal protections they enjoy against discrimination.

As we see from this video, educating people about racism isn’t just about education in the strict sense of schooling. This is because you can’t be taught about racism and multiculturalism in the same way you can be taught grammar or arithmetic.

The education I’m talking about here is about sensibilities. On the one hand, it is about ensuring that every member of our society need not be unjustly burdened by their heritage or background, and that our multiculturalism sings with a strong communal voice. On the other, it is transforming how people understand Australian national culture and identity. It is, as Gough Whitlam said, about entrenching attitudes of tolerance and understanding into the hearts and minds of the people.

Friends, much has changed during the past 40 years. But a few things remain the same. The Racial Discrimination Act today remains as important today as it was in 1975. And 40 years on, the urgency of Australian multiculturalism remains. They say that the eternal price of liberty is vigilance. Friends, there remains every reason for us to be vigilant. But, with the support of your communities, with the voice that you bring to our debates, I know that the state of our multiculturalism will remain defiantly strong.
Joseph Lo Bianco is a Professor of Language and Literacy Education at the University of Melbourne.

Introduction

In this article I argue that FECCA, which has played a historically significant role in the development of language policy in Australia, but in recent years appears to have transferred focus to other issues. Because language education questions are often prominent in the media it is possible that people have overestimated what Australia has achieved in language policy. It might be that they have concluded that governments are already active in promoting language policy and there is no need for other voices to be heard, or have concluded that language education is a specialist issue for academics and educators to pursue. If so it would be regrettable, because debates in the media about language policy are typically very narrow and mostly ignore the multiculturalism and multilingualism of our community, and, occasionally, actually treat it as a problem rather than seeing community languages as a remarkable resource that immigrant and indigenous communities ‘gift’ to the nation.

I believe FECCA should return to the question of promoting and supporting language policy, not language policy narrowly promoting teaching and learning of ‘foreign’ or ‘trade’ languages, but a comprehensive approach to fostering Australia's communication resources. What does this mean? It means that the national approach to language education in the past two decades has stressed trade, international relations, security and diplomacy to the exclusion of language maintenance, intergenerational language use, community language resources, English for integration of immigrant communities, and related issues of this kind. Australia used to be a major world presence in comprehensive language policy. I believe that FECCA was once, and should be again, an advocate for a more inclusive language policy, one that includes notions of language rights and multiculturalism.

These dimensions of communication need to be re-inserted into the design of language education across Australia.

I do not believe a robust and serious approach to multiculturalism can ignore questions of multilingualism and language maintenance. A language policy that includes multicultural and language rights is a critical and indeed a fundamental part of a wider multicultural agenda for Australia. Of course the nation also needs skills in strategic languages, for trade, security and other purposes, but the so-called national interest must also focus on the astonishing language diversity of Australia's people and make sure these abilities are passed on to future generations. FECCA needs to be more active as a voice for what I call a comprehensive language policy.

FECCA's historic importance

On 30 November 1988 Prime Minister Bob Hawke gave the opening address at the FECCA conference (Hawke, 1988). The year 1988 was the Bicentenary of European settlement in Australia and the debates of the day were focused on how to celebrate or mark this momentous occasion, for many Indigenous people 1988 was a sensitive and troubling occasion for the nation to celebrate, for many mainstream Australians Hawke was the third, and I think last, Prime Minister to address a FECCA conference, all of 27 years ago. In his speech he affirmed the Federal government's commitment to multiculturalism in the way it was then understood, using the key concepts that would later go into the National Agenda for a Multicultural Australia (Australia, 1989).
The Agenda was a bi-partisan statement, as was the National Policy on Languages, adopted by the Hawke Cabinet in June 1987, (Lo Bianco, 1987), meaning in effect that Australia then enjoyed widespread consensus about these critical questions, general approaches to multiculturalism and the importance of language as a national issue. This degree of consensus is something that has not been repeated in the three decades since. The Agenda was based on 3 organising concepts: social justice, economic efficiency and cultural expression, and after elaborating on these the Prime Minister went on to make a critical statement about language policy.

"….under our National Policy on Languages, we are equally concerned with maintaining and promoting second language learning - not just for the ethnic communities but for all Australians. I want to make it clear that second language learning will remain a balanced program as long as this Government is in office. There will be no artificial distinction made between economic and community languages, or between Asian and non-Asian languages. …many community languages…are also vital for our economic future”.

What the then Prime Minister is referring to was the beginning of the push to make trade the dominant or even exclusive basis on which to develop language policy, and the approach he was defending was one in which FECCA was instrumental in designing. From 1980 FECCA had begun a long and very effective campaign to force governments to develop language policy at the Federal level, in a coordinated approach with states. The culmination of the FECCA’s efforts was the remit handed to the Senate Standing Committee on Education and the Arts under the government of Malcolm Fraser that preceded Hawke, in 1982. For two years the Senate Committee held hearings across the country in response to the pressure of successive FECCA congresses, and its many submissions, coordination with indigenous and professional interests in language policy as well as the work of many academics.

In 1984 the Senate report, A National Language Policy, was brought down, but unfortunately not adopted by government. It was left to languish until FECCA again took the leadership role and promoted a new writing of language policy, one that might gain government approval. I was the author of that policy and can vouch for the sustained, important and consistent presence of FECCA in these debates, and I consider it one of the finest moments in FECCA’s history.

Unfortunately in the years after Hawke’s 1988 speech to FECCA the “artificial distinctions” he warned against have been made regularly. In effect, there has been what Helen Moore (1996) who closely studied this period once called “divisive prioritisation” of trade languages over community language maintenance, and of “literacy” over specialist English teaching for immigrant and Indigenous children, and through this competition between different and legitimate language issues a general loss of direction, coordination, and integrity for language policy. It is interesting to realize too that trade focused language policy, which has received more than half a billion dollars worth Federal government investment, and has been endorsed by every Prime Minister since Hawke’s time, so it was never lacking high level support, is now generally considered to have failed (Lo Bianco and Aliani, 2013; Lo Bianco and Slaughter, 2009).
Why is all this a problem?

I believe that we can classify language problems or issues that face contemporary Australia, from the perspective that should be crucial to FECCA and that FECCA was instrumental in promoting as a series of language problems. I will mention each one only briefly, essentially to make the case for a comprehensive and not piecemeal or fragmented approach to language policy. I call these the:

- The 3-G problem
- The Extinction Problem
- The Teaching and Learning Problem
- The Policy Problem
- The Complacency Problem

The 3-G problem

Nearly all immigrant languages in Australia are being slowly but steadily eroded according to the classic three-generation attrition pattern. This means that on average, immigrant language loss varies between 3% and 20% between the 1st and 2nd generations, and increases to between 40% and 60% between the 2nd and 3rd generations. Because this loss occurs across generations many communities are barely aware that it is serious, but the end result is that communities transition to full use of English rather than the bilingualism, home language plus English, which is the ideal. We can call this process ‘subtractive bilingualism’ a term that comes to us from Canada and essentially means that English is added to the home language abilities of migrant communities, but eventually replaces the home language, so the bilingualism is a subtractive process, and not an additive one.

When immigrant languages are lost in processes similar to the one I am describing here this is an example of local language endangerment, these languages are endangered in Australia, but not globally, because if immigrant speakers of Greek or Punjabi in Australia cease active use of Greek and Punjabi, this while this is very unfortunately and a massive cultural loss for Australia at least Greek and Punjabi remain alive as languages spoken in other parts of the world. Unfortunately this is not true for Indigenous languages, which are both locally and globally endangered.

The Extinction Problem

I use this term to refer to the equivalent of the 3-G problem applied to Indigenous languages. These languages are of course unique to this national setting, and so when language loss occurs across the generations for Australia’s remaining indigenous languages they are not lost locally, or not just locally, but lost universally. This problem is very serious as a recent assessment has concluded: “At one extreme more than 70% of languages are extinct or moribund in Australia, Canada, and the United States, but at the other extreme less than 10% of languages are extinct or moribund in Sub-Saharan Africa. Overall we find that 19% of the world’s living languages are no longer being learned by children”. (Simons and Lewis, 2012, p. 1).

Reflecting on this problem in his “message” on 23 July 2008 for the International Day for the World’s Indigenous People, UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon described it as “the silent crisis confronting many of the world’s languages”. Language is not an isolated phenomenon and so the actions that will be needed to redress language loss for indigenous people’s across the world involve what the UN Secretary General linked to a struggle against marginalization, poverty, expropriation of traditional lands and human rights.

As you can see these questions, the 3-G and the Extinction problem, take us well beyond school based teaching of languages, but even here we see a major problem in Australian language policy today.

The Teaching and Learning Problem

The usual indicator of language study is the completion rate at Year 12. Only 10-14% of young Australians complete high school with a language (lower percentages in New South Wales and Queensland, and higher rates in Victoria but generally far from satisfactory in all cases). Linked to this we find that language provision is in trouble at primary level all around the country, with Victoria doing best but still unable to meet policy targets, and we find shifting and contradictory priorities. The net effect is that bilingualism not taken seriously in public education (Lo Bianco and Slaughter, 2009; Lo Bianco and Aliani, 2013).

The Policy Problem

Tied to this is the absence of a coherent national language policy, so that each incoming government tends to put its own stamp on the policy, ignoring or erasing what its predecessor had done, and setting targets beyond the life of the government, none of which since 1990 has ever been achieved. There is a lack of coordination across sectors and many other problems of design and technical focus. However, even if language policies for schooling were designed to perfection and were implemented well they would not on their own arrest either the 3-G or the extinction problems. To achieve that result we need a comprehensive approach n policy linked to the community and its actions. Policy is often designed only for education settings, that is, for teaching languages in schools, but, as extensive research proves (Lo Bianco and Peyton Kreeft (2013) teaching on its own will not reverse the 3-G problem and schooling can’t stop language extinctions. What is needed is community based action to create language use opportunities and domains and to stimulate desire in young people to want to be bilingual. In effect we need language policies that are comprehensive and “sociolinguistically informed with close collaboration between formal education, community or ethnic community managed schools, and the vast myriad of community based activities.
The complacency problem

The final problem, and already it is plenty, that I want to address is global English. It is true that English is the world’s main auxiliary language, and this represents many positive efficiencies from a narrow point of view of convenience for Australian exporters, travellers and education providers. Global English has had two main effects on language policies and language study. In English speaking countries it has tended to make many people complacent, and in non-English speaking countries it has tended to narrow their second language choices around only English. This means that bilingualism in English speaking countries, like Australia, is concentrated among immigrant populations (who face the 3-G problem), indigenous groups (who face the extinction problem) and professionals such as language teachers and linguists (who face the policy and teaching and learning problems). This is one of the main reasons why the narrow, trade based language policies of the 1990s and 2000s have seen such little success.

We need to direct the focus towards the cultural, intellectual, and identity reasons for bilingualism rather than on narrow prescriptions of trade alone. There are definite trade, security and other pragmatic reasons for promoting key languages of importance to Australia, but they should take their place within a comprehensive approach that includes language rights, language maintenance and language study for enrichment, identity and cultural exploration as well.

FECCA’s historically important role in LP

Through the 1980s FECCA was front line and critical in national campaigning for a comprehensive national language policy for all Australians in all settings, not just languages for schooling, but also interpreting and translating in the legal and health systems, in cultural maintenance, in family cohesion and generational contact, etc. As I pointed out earlier, FECCA was instrumental in encouraging the Senate to investigate language policy options. This resulted in the 1984 report by the Senate Standing Committee on Education and the Arts that recommended that a national language policy be written. When the Federal cabinet adopted Australia’s first language policy in June 1987 this was endorsed by both sides of politics, and was the first multilingual language policy in an English speaking country. It was this approach that Prime Minister Bob Hawke was defending at the FECCA conference in 1988, and it was in recognition of FECCA’s role that he attended the conference and spoke. Unfortunately, these achievements were progressively dismantled over the next two decades.

What’s needed today?

I believe we need to reinvigorate debate about the importance of language as a cultural, intellectual and community resource that enriches and benefits the whole community, immigrant, Indigenous and longstanding Australians alike. Of all the human differences that divide people languages are the most flexible and plastic, humans are capable of learning and using many languages and we should be pressing governments, but also taking our own action within our own communities, to strengthen language study, to bolster language use, and to foster language desire among young people. It is a mental, intellectual and cultural resource, a benefit to all, and it also has economic and national interest spin offs for the nation. I encourage FECCA to promote the development new policy settings that support multilingualism, language rights, and comprehensive view of our language and communication needs, English as a common and shared language, a second language for all, and support for endangered languages.

We need policy development to have bottom-up and top-down elements, push from below and coordination and support from above. We need the focus to be across all community institutions, and to promote multilingualism for all as a national as well as an individual asset. Community language schools and communities have indispensible role to play in what must be a partnership to cultivate the total communication resources for a more literate, more multilingual and more communication-aware society.

For a full list of references, please contact: Professor Joseph Lo Bianco at j.lobianco@unimelb.edu.au.
FECCA maintained a strong presence on social media throughout the Conference.

There were over 1600 tweets about the Conference using a combination of #2015FECCA, 2015fecca, @ifecca and ifeca.

Through these tweets, the FECCA Conference and #2015FECCA was able to trend on twitter on Thursday 5 November 2015!

We would like to extend our thanks to all our supporters on social media, and a warm welcome to our new followers.
The Federation of Ethnic Communities’ Councils of Australia (FECCA) has been working to promote better outcomes and improve access to services for older CALD Australians as they age and enter the aged care system in Australia. This includes either services in the home or residential aged care.

According to the 2011 Australian Census, over 1.3 million Australians aged over 50 were born overseas in a non-English speaking country. This represents almost 20 percent of all Australians in that age group.

FECCA Chairperson Joe Caputo said, “At FECCA, we needed to know more about the needs and aspirations of this group. Earlier this year I launched the review on Australian research on older People from CALD backgrounds. As a result of this research we know more about where the gaps are in policy, practice, and research, and have a broader sense of the issues, and where we would like to go.”

FECCA Healthy Ageing Reference Network Chair Mary Patetsos has been instrumental in the development of FECCA’s 2020 Vision for older CALD Australians. At the FECCA National Biennial Conference in Sydney today, Mary said, “It gives me great pleasure to formally launch the 2020 Vision for Older CALD Australians. We look forward to working closely with our colleagues in the area, many of whom are here today, to achieve better outcomes for older people from CALD backgrounds.”

FECCA established the Network to support its work in helping CALD older people living full and healthy lives.

“The strategies in the 2020 Vision aim to use available resources better, optimising what is available and proposing options that require further resource commitments”, Mary said. “All the work of FECCA is the result of collaboration and effort of many individuals. This Vision coalesces the ideas, experience and solutions from many people who collaborated and partnered with FECCA.”

To find out more about FECCA’s 2020 Vision for older CALD Australians visit: www.fecca.org.au.
This article has been co-authored. Natalie Jurisic has been a consultant on the DiverseWerks team for two years, and worked for its sister company CIRCA for eight years.

Natalie Anne Juresic has been a Senior Research Consultant for DiverseWerks since 2014 and has a strong background in working with CALD communities.

We (the two ‘Natalies’) were pleased to present a session on the impact of the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) on culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) individuals and communities at the 2015 FECCA Conference held in November this year. We both work as consultants at DiverseWerks, a multicultural consultancy and have had the privilege of working on a number of disability related projects over the last two years. Through these projects, we have developed a deep understanding of how the shift to a new disability market has, and will impact disability service providers, CALD people with disability, their families and carers.

To say that the NDIS has ‘shaken up’ the disability sector is an understatement. The NDIS is arguably one of the biggest social service reforms since the introduction of Medicare. As such, there are a multitude of challenges and considerations involved in the introduction of a reform of this size and scope. What this means for CALD individuals with disability, their families, carers and surrounding community needs to be fully understood by policy makers, and the wider disability service market.

Before we consider the impact of the NDIS on CALD people with disability, we need to acknowledge the historical deficit of a substantial lack of service access for CALD individuals in comparison to their Anglo-Australian counterparts. About one in four people with disability are said to be from a CALD background, however as many working with CALD communities will widely acknowledge, the numbers of people accessing services are substantially lower than this. We are therefore already ‘behind the eight ball’.

What we have also observed is that the concept of ‘choice and control’ may not be so clear cut when overlayed with cultural and religious factors. For example, having been outside the service system for so long, the concept of having one choice, let alone several, may be a confronting concept for some. Precisely who has control within a CALD family may also not be simply determined when considering familial roles and responsibilities. Information about the NDIS in a simple, multilingual and culturally appropriate format is also difficult to come by. The result of all of these factors can leave people feeling isolated, confused and even more unlikely to seek assistance.

Many organisations in the disability sector are feeling apprehension around the continuation of their funding in the move from ‘block funding’ to the individually funded NDIS. Although the information, linkages and capacity building (ILC) component of the NDIS may promise future funding for services, what this looks like right now is unclear. This inevitably hinders the ability for services to plan for the future.
What needs to happen? Partnerships between the multicultural sector and the disability sector are absolutely critical to ensure inclusion in this new ‘NDIS world’ for CALD people with disability. Both sectors need to start learning from each other, through sharing their knowledge and expertise. Ongoing investment and clarity around funding needs to be solidified sooner rather than later.

Community capacity building also needs to be elevated as a high priority in order to get CALD communities ready for this change.

We have an opportunity to get this right, and partnerships and information sharing will be integral to helping ensure that CALD people with disability, their families and carers don’t get left behind.
VALUE AND STRENGTH OF DIVERSITY: PRODUCTIVITY THROUGH DIVERSITY

Professor Lucy Taksa, PhD is now Associate Dean (Research) in the Faculty of Business and Economics at Macquarie University after 5 years as Head of the Department of Marketing and Management.

The notion of the ‘new mediocre’, coined by Christine Lagarde (MD of the International Monetary Fund) in 2014 in relation to the Global Economy aptly describes the current state of cultural diversity management (DM) in Australia. Following Lagarde’s lead, I suggest that a new policy momentum and multilateralism are needed to avoid this ‘mediocre’ state. In this way we could overcome the superficiality, which is reflected by the reduction of workplace DM to slogans and rhetoric promoted through the marketing strategies of both public and private sector organisations, and the selectivity based on a limited focus on the ‘productive diversity’ of cultural differences and skills.

In my view, this notion of productive diversity, often referred to as ‘the business case’, is underpinned by a particular value system. To my mind policy makers, business leaders, and managers focus on the extrinsic value of multiculturalism and cultural diversity – its capacity to increase productivity - and they fail to acknowledge the intrinsic value of cultural difference and identity. This stands in stark contrast to the Commonwealth Racial Discrimination Act 1975 (RDA) and other similar state laws. It has also done little to prevent racial discrimination and vilification even in organisations whose diversity policies ostensibly recognise cultural diversity as an asset and which employ the rhetoric of productive value. For example, while the Toll Holdings’ Diversity and Equal Opportunity Policy states that ‘Toll believes that a diverse workforce is a key competitive advantage’, a recent decision in Johnpulle v Toll Holdings LTD [2015] Fair Work Commission 3830 (17 June 2015) noted that ‘Toll has a multicultural workforce, but it would appear that the concept of multiculturalism has not evolved at the site. Rather than accepting and encouraging the variety of cultures, beliefs and values of every employee, some employees have taken on a role of intimidation, vilification, and harassment to try and assume some type of supremacy for their faith or culture’. Of equal concern, complaints cases before the Australian Human Rights Commission (AHRC) under the RDA Act have continued unabated (AHRC, 2012: 131, 133-34; AHRC, 2013a: 130-32).

It is noteworthy that the 2012 Report, Insecure Work in Australia, Lives on hold, found that Indigenous and culturally and linguistically diverse employees continue to be ‘trapped in insecure work’ resulting from social isolation, low English literacy, discrimination in the workplace. In short, we need more than online workplace cultural diversity assessment tools. What we need is a new policy momentum that includes appropriate employment policies which ensure intrinsic value is accorded to people from diverse backgrounds and structural reforms and public and private investment for strategies that go beyond the celebratory business case rhetoric that only gives weight to extrinsic value, and beyond simplistic and often erroneous assumption that heterogeneous teams ensure innovation. We need governments, policy makers and employers to engage with diverse employees and provide resources and time to enable the development of understanding and trust among people from different backgrounds. In this way we may well overcome the current state of mediocrity in the management of cultural diversity in our organisations.
Henry Sherrell works for the Migration Council Australia as a policy analyst, focusing on Australian migration policy and trends.

Immigration has a transformational effect on Australia. We rightly celebrate the social and cultural contributions of multiple generations of migrants. However for too long, the economic contribution of migration to Australia has been devalued.

Claims migrants steal jobs or undermine the labour market blur the public perception. Of course these claims are based on a premise that does not hold up. An economy is dynamic. In the first analysis in nearly a decade, the Migration Council earlier this year released a report on the economic impact of migration to Australia.

The verdict is clear: migration is central to Australia’s future prosperity. Based on current trends, Australia’s projected population will be 38 million by 2050 and migration will be contributing $1.625 billion (1.6 trillion) to Australia’s GDP. Moreover, migration will have added 15.7% to our workforce participation rate and 5.9% in GDP per capita growth. Without migration, the population would stagnate and our economy would go backwards. Overall, by 2050, each individual migrant will on average be contributing approximately 10% more to Australia’s economy than existing residents.

The economic impact of migration flows through into every aspect of the economy. It has a profound positive impact not just on population growth, but also on labour participation and employment, on wages and incomes, on our national skills base and on net productivity.

Too often, immigration gets dragged into a population debate where new migrants become the scapegoats for other policy failures. Transport. Infrastructure. Education. Healthcare. Migration does not take these policies backwards. This ignores the positive effects both fiscally and for the economy more broadly.

In addition, distributive effects get ignored. As Australia prioritises skilled migration, people who work in lower skilled occupations are rewarded. Increased domestic demand drives up wages at the bottom. One study estimates immigration accounted for up to 4% of wage growth for lower skilled workers in Australia from 1990 to 2000.

The world is becoming more mobile. Australia is already well placed on this front. Our diversity and social cohesion mean we can attract a unique population of migrants. But governments and policy makers should not rest easy as global competition to attract migrants will only increase in the future. Further, we can complement the economic contribution that migrants make by enabling better settlement support and promoting easier access to English language for those who cannot speak it. Hard work is required to build on our proud modern history of migration.
Liz Deep-Jones is an author, journalist, presenter, producer and public speaker.

My discussion on the cultural dividend of multiculturalism focussed on my personal and professional experiences as the daughter of Lebanese immigrants. My parents chose to come to Australia in the mid 1960’s to build a promising life for their family. My father, David Deep referred to his new home as the “land of milk and honey.” He was forever grateful for the opportunity to live in what he referred to as an inclusive and accepting society where people from all backgrounds lived in harmony and peace. He desperately wanted his five children, born in Sydney to be “Australian” so in order to integrate he didn’t want us to speak Arabic. He wanted us to learn about our heritage and respect the Lebanese culture but being an “Aussie” meant more to him. We lived by the beach side suburb of Maroubra in a house behind our Corner shop, where we led an Australian lifestyle mixed with our Lebanese culture. Growing up, Dad ensured we mixed with people from all cultures and it sparked my curiosity for storytelling. I became a journalist driven to share the stories of multicultural Australia and our First Australians.

I had a deep desire to share the world of our differences but highlight our sameness. Working as a TV reporter and producer for programs such as Mandarin News Australia (bilingual news) and Living Black (Indigenous news and current affairs) gave me a greater insight into the challenges different cultures face in this country and the similarities they share in craving understanding, acceptance and a fair go. Of course there are the positive aspects of their lives in Australia, and the invaluable contribution they’ve made to this country, and I must recognise the greater opportunities being created for Indigenous Australians who still face great injustice. I’ve experienced the positive aspects of our multicultural society and live it through my own family which includes partners who stem from across the globe – Ireland, Ghana, China, Chile and Greece. My mother Jeanette enjoys the wonderful mix of thirteen grandchildren all of whom are Australian with mixed backgrounds. This is Australia at its best and a great example to the world that our country can demonstrate a society which provides a safe, peaceful and inclusive environment for all. There are those currently trying to disrupt our core values but I think they’re making us stronger as we stand together in unity against evil. Germany’s Chancellor Angela Merkel caused controversy when she stated in a speech in 2010 that, “Attempts to build a multicultural society in Germany have utterly failed.” Australia has set the benchmark where people from all religions, race and backgrounds are free to practise their beliefs within the law of the land and live peacefully. That’s what my father loved. He’d say, “I love this country because I’m accepted here. I can be who I am, eat my Lebanese food, speak my language and be an Australian!” We must never forget that we are on the land of Indigenous Australians and we all came from elsewhere. We must respect each other and gain a greater understanding of one another to dispel ignorance. After all Australia is heaven on earth and we must do all we can to ensure that she remains the face of a successful multicultural nation… that’s what we’re built on and that’s what we must peacefully fight for.
Tony Romanelli is a second-generation Australian-Italian gay man, who experienced the complexities of successfully integrating his ethnicity with his sexuality. He is also a PhD Candidate at Deakin University.

Being a gay Italian man anywhere in the world challenges the cultural construction of heteronormative Italian masculinity, as well as the host culture’s constructions of hegemonic masculinity, and as such is met with homophobic attitudes. Publicly announcing one’s diverse sexuality challenges societal norms and relegates the individual to living a life on the borders of mainstream society. For an Italian man the coming out process is potentially more complex as it may be impacted by traditional constructions of gender, the construction of Italian families where collectivism takes precedence over individuality, a culture heavily influenced by the dogma of Catholicism, the threat of public disgrace to the family, and a culture which has the predominant belief that gay men do not exist in Italian society. Gay Italian men face the possibility of experiencing hostility, homophobia, silence, feelings of failure, and invisibility in a heteronormative society. These experiences can be made all the more difficult with the challenge of creating a sense of belonging and place in their families of origin, and within their Italian community. In Australia, Italian-Australian gay men must also find their place in a predominantly Anglo-gay culture while maintaining the integrity of the link to their family of origin and the values of the broader Italian community.

There is a vast amount of research documenting the experiences of gay men’s lives in various cultures around the world. However, research exploring these experiences in diasporic ethnic groups is limited. A comparative analysis of the experiences of Italian-Australian gay men with Italian gay men in Italy has not been undertaken to date, which makes this research a unique piece of work.

This research will involve 40 participants from a range of ages, beginning at age 18, enabling me to compare the experiences of young gay men living in contemporary society, with older gay men who experienced blatant homophobia and active discrimination.

Access to participants in Italy will be facilitated through an already established relationship with the University of Eastern Piedmont.

The purpose of my research is to explore how family, gender, culture, language, the Catholic Church, the gay community and the media impact upon being a gay Italian man in Australia and in Italy. It will examine the strategies and support required by gay men who successfully navigate these divides and borders, between and within one’s multiple identities, cultural heritage, family and belonging to Italian and gay communities.

I will use this research to tell the stories of gay Italian men in Australia and Italy who have integrated their ethnic and sexual identity to live successfully within their families of origin, their Italian culture, and their host culture. I will compile a list of strategies and recommendations that can be employed to support gay Italian men who are working towards embracing both their ethnic and sexual identities, to live fully integrated lives. In doing so I will challenge traditional constructions of dominant masculinity, shift heteronormative cultural attitudes, and confront an unwillingness to accept diversity both within Italian culture, and the broader host culture.
Cultural diversity in rural and regional Australia has flown under the radar for a long time – but is finally starting to attract attention. Diversity, mobility and “multiculturalism” are usually seen as the domain of our big cities, where the large majority of immigrants have traditionally settled. Increasingly, however, new arrivals in Australia are settling, or being settled, in non-metropolitan areas: Toowoomba, for example, has become home to more than 200 Hazara women and children over the past two years, while Albury-Wodonga has welcomed more than 1,000 people from Bhutan since 2008.

Cultural diversity in regional communities is not a new phenomenon, of course. But since 1996, government migration schemes have been channeling more and more migrants and refugees to areas outside the major population centres.

From a government perspective, motivations for this strategy include addressing labour shortages in existing industries; creating new businesses; and arresting regional population declines.

For the new arrivals, governments see the benefits as including:

- that there are more jobs needing only basic language skills – for example, picking fruit or working in an abattoir
- rents are cheaper and the cost of living generally is lower
- migrants and refugees may come from rural backgrounds and may settle more easily into smaller communities.

For several years now, the federal government has resettled one-fifth of all humanitarian entrants directly into selected country towns – that is, several thousand men, women and children each year. The recent introduction of the Safe Haven Enterprise Visa, which allows asylum seekers to work or study in regional areas for up to five years, will add to those numbers.

From a policy, planning and resourcing perspective, this changing migration landscape obviously has important implications. Most of what we know about “what works” in terms of multicultural programs and practices comes from metropolitan settings. However, the research shows we cannot simply take what we have learnt in Blacktown and Broadmeadows and transfer it to Bendigo, Bundaberg and Burnie.

Sarah Neal, a British academic, says cultural diversity may be perceived, interpreted and experienced quite differently in non-urban spaces for several reasons.

For one thing, most regional areas, notwithstanding recent demographic changes, are still extremely “white” – culturally as well as ethnically. Second, we tend to imagine the countryside as a place of tradition and cohesion – not change and diversity. So a dark-skinned person from Africa may be seen as “surprising” in a rural town, but entirely “normal” in an urban context. Then there is the fact that while there may be people from many ethnic and cultural backgrounds in a regional area, the numbers in any one group are very low. This creates a whole new set of challenges for service providers.

Finally, there is the fact that being accepted as a “local” in a country town can take a decades for any newcomer, Australian-born or not.

Twenty years would be a long time to wait to be invited for a cuppa.
The Hon Susan Ryan AO was appointed as Australia’s first Age Discrimination Commissioner on 30 July 2011 for a five year term.

Profile of Australia’s older population:

The 2015 Intergenerational Report projects that:

- The number of Australians aged 65 and over will more than double by 2055, when there will be around 40,000 people aged 100 and over.
- In 2055, men can expect to live on average to 95.1 and women to 96.6.
- Over the past 60 years the overseas-born population has increased from about 1.3 million to 6 million.
- A large proportion of our older population is born overseas. In June 2011, more than a third (36%) of Australians aged 65 and over were born overseas.
- The older, overseas born population in Australia is changing. In 2011, 73% of older people who were born overseas were born in Europe, many migrated after WWII. However when we look at slightly younger people – aged 55-64 – only 55% are born in Europe.

Healthy and Dignified Ageing

This session was facilitated by FECCA Senior Deputy Chair, Tina Karanastasis. Susan Ryan AO, Age Discrimination Commissioner, reminded the audience that we are facing massive demographic challenges including an increasing migrant population. The Commissioner stated migrants had made Australia the great country we are, and people had contributed with their cultural richness and through labour power. She made a point how some migrants who worked in factories didn’t have the opportunity to learn English, therefore, people needed care delivered in their mother tongue. Mary Patetsos, FECCA HARN Chair, highlighted that there was a paradigm shift taking place in aged care acknowledging that we were living longer. The aged care sector was moving away from Government being the main stakeholder towards the consumer being the main stakeholder. Everald Compton, Former Chair of National Seniors Australia, stressed that he wanted to turn ageing into an asset not a problem. He was involved in a project that provided incentives for older people to get back into the workforce. Rosa Colanero from Partners in Culturally Appropriate Care National Network, stated that older CALD people preferred ageing at home and that CALD communities had led the way towards embracing home care and consumer choice.

Address from the Hon Susan Ryan AO, Age Disability Discrimination Commissioner: Ageing as a Migrant

Access to services:

The Commission publication: Respect and Choice, Human rights approach to ageing and health (2012) looks at some of the issues for older people from CALD backgrounds. Australia has the advantage of a generous Age Pension system, home care packages for older people and good health system.

However there are some difficulties for older people born overseas in non-English speaking countries. They can face barriers in accessing appropriate health and aged care services, such as accessing information and services that are sensitive to their backgrounds, circumstances and language. Indeed, older members of culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds (CALD) frequently revert back to their first language as a result of the ageing process.

In the case of older people with dementia from CALD communities, culturally appropriate aged care services with first language support are particularly crucial as the language most recently acquired is lost first.

In December 2012, the Australian Government released the National Ageing and Aged Care Strategy for People from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) Backgrounds.

Your Rights at Retirement:

The Commission has also produced Your Rights at Retirement – a guide to help older people make decisions and navigate their entitlements in later life – which was translated into Italian, Greek and Mandarin.
One important topic set out in this publication is information about how to appoint a Power of Attorney or put in place an Advanced Care Directive.

There is still quite a low number of people putting advanced care directives in place. They are an important step for us to take before we age, by setting out our wishes in relation to medical care, particularly at end of life, we maintain control over this stage of our lives and help our families and doctors to understand our wishes.

Many older people are also not aware of the services available to them. This is particularly challenging where there are language barriers and it is important for older people to be aware of their entitlements.

**Employment:**

The effects of discrimination are compounded when age and disability intersect with other characteristics such as gender and ethnicity. The employment rate among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with disability is significantly lower than among Indigenous people without disability (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, May 2011).

A 2000 report by the Department of Immigration and Multicultural affairs found that among people over 55 living in Australia, workforce participation was lower – and unemployment rates higher – for those from CALD backgrounds (National Seniors, 2011).

More recent ABS Census 2011 data shows that people aged 55-64 with ‘other than main English speaking country’ backgrounds had lower participation rates (56%) than those with ‘main English speaking country’ backgrounds (68%).

Similarly, unemployment rates for people aged 55-64 with other than main English speaking country backgrounds (around 5½%) are higher than those with main English speaking backgrounds (around 4½%).

**Elder abuse:**

The World Health Organisation estimates that, globally, around 1 in 10 older people experience elder abuse each month.

Their figures also show that elder financial abuse occurs at a rate of between 1% and 9%.

Some of the issues for people from non-English speaking backgrounds are:

- Diverse attitudes to elder abuse among cultural or ethnic groups
- “For example, in many ethnic families there are differing intergenerational attitudes about how the older generation should be cared for. This may be due to the older generation holding on to cultural beliefs from their countries of origin, while the younger generation has often began to accept values and beliefs more like those of the host society (Ethnic Communities’ Council of Victoria 2009; Wainer, Owada, Lowndes and Darzins 2011).”
- Deny that financial abuse actually happens (even though at risk)
- Preference to sort out issues within the family
- Lack of access to outside help (lacking confidence)
- Social wellbeing dependent on family and community
- “Lack of multilingual and culturally appropriate information about legal entitlements and processes, and a lack of awareness of what constitutes ‘elder abuse’ in CALD communities”.

For a full list of references please contact: Australian Human Rights Commission Age and Disability Inquiry on ageanddisabilityinquiry@humanrights.gov.au.
Mary Patetsos is the Board director of the Multicultural Communities Council of SA and Chair of FECCA’s Healthy Ageing Reference Network.

Older CALD people are mostly well and able. As all people get older their roles may change and their lifestyle may adapt to circumstances.

Ensuring that older people have maximum opportunities to engage meaningfully remains a worthwhile challenge to modern societies. At the 2015 FECCA conference, the FECCA 2020 Vision for CALD older people was launched. Through it, FECCA articulates the importance of ageing with dignity, control and choice:

FECCA’s vision for older CALD Australians is that they live well, are able to contribute, engage, and enjoy their communities, and have access to support if and when they need it.

It is well understood and documented that aged care is one of the fastest growing sectors in Australia. Accordingly, the wider reforms in aged care signal a challenge for aged care service providers to think differently and to be innovative.

The aged care industry is in the midst of significant change and faces challenges affecting industry investors, providers and consumers. The 2015 Aged Care Financing Authority report highlights that financial sustainability into the future is a key theme and that “there have been some challenges for some providers and consumers through this transition” (ACFA, 2015).

On current projections, by 2020, 30% of the population aged 65 years and above will be of CALD background. These numbers are significant and together with the changes to the sector herald the need for providers of aged care to think differently in order to appropriately respond to the consumer expectations and preferences.

These increasing consumer numbers put us all on notice that the solutions of the past and the financing sources of the past may not be responsive enough to an emerging diverse and competitive market. Providers of CALD specific services will need to innovate and adapt to emerging new market trends. They need to be fully aware of emerging challenges and must be ready to capitalise on emerging opportunities. In this fast moving environment, with increasingly savvy consumers and demand driven growth it is clear that CALD services will need to anticipate and embrace change if they are to remain relevant.

Like other consumers, CALD older people will be given unprecedented choice and control. Lower barriers to entry as a result of deregulation will see new entrants to the market, many of whom will be nimble, efficient and responsive to consumer expectations. The aged care sector will change and a possible scenario will be further consolidation amongst the larger providers who will then compete more with each other than with the plethora of niche providers who target market segments. As suppliers to niche markets we may seek to partner and collaborate with others; engaging with customers to build high quality services that have a social purpose.

CALD older people rightly expect that they will exercise informed choice and that their lives will be enhanced through quality care that builds their capability to live healthy engaged lives. Our role as policy makers and service providers, is to find ways through leadership, advocacy and capacity building to engage CALD communities in co-designing service delivery models that achieve best practice. These service models of the future will be different.
Responding to Australia’s Expanding Refugee Program

Paul Power has been the chief executive officer of the Refugee Council of Australia since 2006. 2015 was somewhat of a turning point for Australia’s refugee program. In September, the Federal Government announced a one-off allocation of 12,000 extra resettlement places for Syrian and Iraqi refugees. This announcement reflected the growth in public interest in assisting refugees, spurred by growing awareness of the plight of Syrian refugees.

Australia could receive more than 20,000 resettled refugees in 2016, depending on the pace at which visas are issued. In addition, some of the 30,000 asylum seekers who have arrived by boat and now living in the Australian community will get decisions on their refugee status as the year progresses. Here are a few quick observations about how Australians and their institutions and networks are responding.

1. The Australian public: Thousands of Australians of all backgrounds are already involved in a wide variety of voluntary efforts to support refugees and asylum seekers. However, as a result of the public attention during 2015, many more people are now offering support. The challenge for resource-poor refugee support agencies is how to make best use of this new interest and energy.

2. Government: The Federal Government’s approach to refugee settlement and language support has been enlightened for more than 35 years while its response to asylum seekers has been destructive and counter-productive, often damaging people who will remain in Australia for years. Outside of the immigration and social services portfolios, government agencies have often given too little attention to the needs of refugees, with employment policy often being a particular weakness.

3. Settlement sector: Agencies involved in supporting refugees and migrants have survived and even thrived, despite 20 years of disruptive change. The sector needs to do more to celebrate and promote its innovation, highlighting how agencies are responding to the opportunities and challenges of refugee settlement.

4. Refugee community organisations: The Immigration Department’s “Settlement of New Arrivals” study in 2011 showed that refugee entrants surveyed were 5-6 times more likely to seek support from a “cultural organisation or community group” than other migrants. Members of organisations formed by former refugees are typically available around-the-clock and their assistance to the newest and most vulnerable arrivals is vital – something the Refugee Council of Australia explored in a 2014 discussion paper, “The Strength Within”.

5. Migrant community networks: Ethnic communities’ councils (ECCs) and other migrant community organisations play some role in assisting emerging refugee communities but could certainly do more. Regional and state ECCs should be encouraged to review their level of engagement with new and emerging communities and established communities encouraged to go further in sharing knowledge and experience with newer communities.

The Refugee Council of Australia is focusing on three critical priorities as Australia’s refugee program expands. The first is to create more opportunities for emerging leaders of refugee communities to speak publicly, to lead community education about refugee issues and to work with us in analysing policy and advocacy. The second priority is to work with settlement agencies and peak bodies on the policy issues needed to improve refugee employment outcomes. The third is to seek a more constructive relationship between governments and NGOs on matters of refugee policy, repairing some of the damage caused by many years of battle between political parties. All three are, we believe, critically important for refugee communities and for the success of Australia’s refugee program.
Pallavi Sinha is Principal Lawyers with Solutions & Adjunct Lecturer at College of Law.

Australia is a peace loving nation, yet violence against women is a serious problem with at least one woman a week dying at the hands of her partner or former partner. Domestic or family violence (DV) is also the largest cause of death for women under the age of 45.

A woman gives birth to human beings, nurtures and cares for them. She may juggle many roles at work, home and society. It is appalling that DV still occurs in homes and intimate relationships, within which women should actually feel safe and loved.

It was timely for a panel discussion on Supporting Migrant and Refugee Women with DV to be held at the FECCA Biennial Conference. A panel comprising Paul Linossier CEO Our Watch, Charlie King OAM Sport’s commentator and Dr Eman Sharobeem CEO Immigrant Women’s Health Service, provided important information.

Paul spoke about the different forms of DV – physical, mental, emotional, financial etc. He cited the staggering costs of DV - more than $13.6 billion each year and projected to rise by a further $2 billion by 2022, if no action is taken. Charlie said that Indigenous women are two to five times more likely than other Australians to experience violence. As FECCA Women’s Chair, I made submissions to a Senate Committee on DV last year about the unique nature of DV experienced by culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities and FECCA’s recommendation for disaggregated CALD data, which has been subsequently adopted by the Federal Government.

Paul indicated that there is no single cause of violence against women and their children, but that key drivers relate to power differentials, attitudes and social norms (e.g. rigid gender roles and stereotypes) and other factors, such as childhood experience of violence, alcohol abuse or socio-economic disadvantage. Dr Sharobeem spoke about the ways in which women can get help and stigma faced by DV survivors from CALD backgrounds. Families, communities and community leaders must make sure they don’t perpetuate the cycle of violence by encouraging women to stay in abusive marriages to ‘save’ their family from shame.

Preventative action and education is integral to positive change. When I was on the panel of ABC Q & A last year I passionately spoke about the importance of the education starting from the family home, to the curriculum of schools and universities, to training being provided in workplaces. Paul mentioned pilot respectful relationships education in schools and prevention programs with CALD communities and with national sporting codes. Charlie added that sport can serve as an engaging environment to educate players, particularly young players, about the consequences of gender discrimination, and that sporting role models play a significant role in shaping attitudes.

An all-inclusive, preventative, educational and tailored approach to prevent violence against women is required which, incorporates all levels of Government, community representatives, legal and health professionals as well as social workers and service providers. It is only when we all stand up and make it clear that violence is not acceptable that any real change will occur.
Enabling Better Health

This session was facilitated by Helena Kyriazopoulos from the FECCA Executive. The session began with Dr Sara Javanparast from Flinders University providing information about her research into primary health care and program planning for new migrants, and some of the key issues affecting migrant health and their access to services. Dr Dinesh Wadiwala from the University of Sydney reflected on the right to health, how health status can lead to discrimination, how migrants with disability are denied services, and are routinely denied a residency visa on the grounds of potential health costs. Marion Lau OAM JP spoke in depth about health and wellbeing of migrants and refugees. Hamza Vayani from Mental Health in Multicultural Australia (MHIMA), discussed the National Review of Mental Health Programmes and Services from the National Mental Health Commission. He also talked about national standards in mental health and accreditation Rosemarie Draper from the Royal District Nursing Service (RDNS) presented the RDNS bilingual Vietnamese talking book on diabetes; a powerful information tool, which had English and Vietnamese on opposite pages.

PRIMARY HEALTH CARE ACCESS AND COORDINATION FOR NEW MIGRANTS AND REFUGEES IN AUSTRALIA

Dr Sara Javanparast is a Senior Research Fellow at the Southgate Institute, Flinders University. Co-authors: Professor Fran Baum, Dr Toby Freeman, Associate Professor Anna Ziersch, Dr Tamara Mackean.

Equitable access to high quality, affordable and culturally appropriate services for all population groups is the cornerstone of comprehensive primary health care (PHC). Although some evidence on advantaged health status of migrants upon their arrival, mainly due to ‘healthy immigrant effect’, which assumes only those with good health are selected for migration, a decline in physical and mental health is reported over time. With the growing number of migrants in Australia, improving access to PHC services is essential to reduce health inequity and improve population health.

This article describes the key issues emerged from a NHMRC project conducted by a research team at the Southgate Institute, Flinders University. We examined issues that new migrants/refugees face with in accessing PHC services and the role that regional PHC organisations should play to ensure improved health outcomes for this population group. Regional PHC organisations are funded by the federal government and are responsible for identifying community needs, undertaking health planning and filling the service gaps. The structure of these organisations has changed from 110 Divisions of General Practices to 61 Medicare Locals in 2011 and more recently to 31 larger organisations called Primary Health Networks.

Through engagement with Medicare Locals as well as migrant organisations across Australia, our research reinforced the many challenges that migrant population experience in accessing PHC services. Problems associated system navigation including the lack of knowledge about services available, and how to link with different health professionals is a major issue for new migrants/refugees. Language barriers, poor access to interpreting services and limited number of GPs trained or willing to use interpreting services also constrains access and utilisation of services. Service affordability is a barrier particularly for some categories of migrants who are not eligible for Medicare or other free services.

The study also highlighted the importance of social determinants on migrant health outcomes and equity. Poor housing conditions, unemployment, social isolation, lack of transport, cultural barriers, and stigma and discrimination are commonly experienced by new migrants/refugees which have huge impact on their health. PHC organisations have a clear role in understanding and addressing these determinants if any improvement in migrant health outcomes is to be achieved.

The key challenges found in our study in relation to PHC access include: lack of migrant health as a priority health policy agenda, focus on clinical care with less attention with disease prevention, health promotion and social determinants of health, and limited funding and resources allocated to migrant health.

To improve equity in access for migrants, PHC policies and practices should:

- Build a stronger collaboration and involvement with migrant community organisations in regard to health service planning, monitoring and evaluation;
- Migrant communities’ voice need to be heard with regard to their health needs and access barriers;
- Workforce capacity building is important to ensure culturally appropriate and high quality PHC are provided;
- Policy and political commitment to migrant health are essential to ensure PHC organisations receive adequate support in prioritising migrant health;
- Social determinants of migrant health should be considered in PHN planning, funding and actions.
Dina Petrakis works with Settlement Services International and is currently the Program Coordinator for Ignite Small Business Start-ups, supporting refugee entrepreneurs establish businesses in Australia.

The Ignite Small Business Start-ups initiative was established in 2013 based on the experience of Settlement Services International (SSI) that newly arrived refugees often had the entrepreneurial skills, passion and knowledge to run small businesses and, yet, faced significant barriers in a highly regulated Australian business environment.

Caught between finding employment or starting their own enterprise, humanitarian entrants can become “trapped in low income jobs in secondary labour market niches, or remain economically excluded as part of a social underclass” (Collins, 2014).

In recognition of this, the Ignite Small Business Start-Ups initiative was established, and was fully funded from SSI resources.

Ignite is founded on the principles and evidence-based Sirolli Model of Enterprise Facilitation, specifically adapted for people from refugee backgrounds. These principles allow entrepreneurs to work to their strengths and find support for areas which are not their passion.

Ignite enterprise facilitators’ work with refugee entrepreneurs to refine their business concepts, and link them to professionals and volunteers who can assist them with specific aspects of their enterprise. This assistance is mainly required for marketing and finance advice.

For newly arrived artists, who were well known in their home country, finding an audience and/or market for their work is often a difficult and humbling experience as they try and navigate the art market, gallery, exhibition scene. To this end, Ignite enterprise facilitators, SSI staff and resource teams, are constantly looking at ways to expand opportunities for artists involved in establishing their name and their art through a viable business.

Ignite entrepreneurs are provided with support to register a business, select and register a business name, create business cards and a simple web presence and more importantly work with volunteers, mentors and graduate students to complete marketing and finance plans for their business.

Following this rigour, artists are in a position to sell and show case their work through a registered business. Many are invited to show their product at exhibitions and galleries, as well as sell their art at festivals, events and as conference gifts.

While SSI staff and resource networks are dedicated to supporting each Ignite entrepreneur, and seeing them through to the establishment of a successful start-up, the enterprise always remains the responsibility of the entrepreneur. This means that while feedback and support is freely available to the entrepreneur; all decisions are for the entrepreneur to make; all risks are for the entrepreneur to manage; all rewards are for the entrepreneur to enjoy.

In the two years that the Ignite initiative has been operating, thirty-five small businesses have been established. These businesses include eleven artists plying their trade as: copper artists, painters, photographers, videographers, glass artists, hand-made leather craftsmen and illustrators.

The SSI Ignite initiative demonstrates how this model of enterprise facilitation can effectively support newly arrived refugees to tap into their talents in the creative arts and help them to reach their social and economic potential.
Professor Peter Shergold AC is the Chancellor of Western Sydney University.

Asked to contribute my thoughts on the narrative of multiculturalism I pondered awhile. What could make the account provocative but persuasive, gripping but reassuring, honest yet celebratory? How could I persuade those readers who fear that a commitment to ethnic or religious diversity might undermine social cohesion? I decided that our bestseller would require 3 major chapters.

Chapter One: “Say What You Mean to Say”

In our story the noun, multiculturalism, should be used infrequently. Any ‘ism’ has ideological undertones. It suggests social engineering: a political philosophy being foisted on an unwilling public. We need to treat our readers with emotional intelligence.

The adjective, multicultural, is both more neutral and more compelling. Multicultural Australia is a powerful description of the evolution of our national identity to which all of us are contributing in our everyday lives. Most of the time we don’t know we’re doing it.

We need to be clear on our message. What distinguishes Australia is not just our ethnic diversity but the extraordinary extent to which people of different cultural backgrounds work, play and form families together. Multicultural policies simply frame the process by which our cultural roots intertwine. Public policy interventions are necessary only to the extent that they ensure that barriers to equality of opportunity are removed and that the skills, ambitions and entrepreneurial drive of migrants can be harnessed for the benefit of all of us.

Chapter Two: “Strike a Delicate Balance”

It’s important to ensure that our narrative doesn’t lose direction. Pride in multicultural diversity must not slide down the slippery path of cultural relativism. We should not feel that we have to accept inappropriate behaviours for fear that criticism might cause cultural offence – or worse still, turn a blind eye to them.

We need instead to proclaim that our commitment to a multicultural future is firmly founded on distinctive liberal values and a framework of universal rights. Those principles include freedoms of speech and assembly, respect for dissent and for the views of others, equality
of the sexes and before the law and acknowledgement of individual property rights. They are the hallmarks of a secular society that extols a free press, an independent judiciary, democratic politics and voluntary philanthropy.

These are the values of reason not dogmatism. They liberate knowledge. They are the foundation of human freedom, personal liberty and political pluralism. Of course, Australia hasn’t always lived up to those standards, but they are the aspirations against which we measure our success. They underpin our rule of law and representative government.

Our narrative should affirm that these values lie at the heart of our multicultural ethos. We need to emphasise that the right to express one’s own cultural perspectives and beliefs imposes a reciprocal responsibility to accept the rights of others to express different views. That does not mean that we cannot argue about them. Multicultural policies do not require us always to hold back our criticisms for fear that they will be perceived as culturally insensitive or politically incorrect. Indeed open but polite public discourse should be the hallmark of civic engagement in a multicultural Australia.

Chapter Three: “Accentuate the Positive”

It is vital that multicultural policies protect all Australians from systemic discrimination or the public expression of personal prejudice whatever their race, religion, birthplace or sexual preference. All of us should have equal access to the government services we need to support and assist us and enjoy equal opportunity to build fulfilling and self-reliant lives.

But it’s equally important that we don’t convey our multicultural story only from the perspective of social deprivation and disadvantage. Instead we need to proclaim the economic benefits brought to Australia by skilled migrants and their families and the entrepreneurial energy that often characterises risk-taking refugees. Multicultural policies need to ensure that the education, skills, overseas qualifications and business acumen of newcomers can be fully employed. This is good for the well-being of individual families but it’s even better for Australia’s economic development.

We need to imagine a bigger story. In a world of global competition, it’s important to recognise and make use of the heterogeneous cultural and linguistic skills of migrants and their children. This is not just a matter of affording fairness to ethnic groups but of securing the future prosperity of our nation. In this most fundamental of ways, multicultural policies really are for all Australians.

Epilogue: “Back to the Future”

For me, this narrative is persuasive. I have to confess, however, that it’s not new. The thrust of the story has been told before in the late 1980s when I was head of the Office of Multicultural Affairs during the development of the National Agenda for a Multicultural Australia (which was accepted by all sides of politics). Perhaps, in 2015, we need to recharge our fusion home energy reactor and drive our DeLorean car back to the McFly’s 1985 driveway. By looking back to the future we can better inform our response to the challenges we face today.

Some things we did not anticipate a generation ago – the emergence of home-grown terrorism, for example, or the danger that low-cost satellite television can trap people in the digital ghettos of the countries they left. New responses are required to tackle those new dilemmas.

The story of Australia’s multicultural future needs to be informed by an understanding of the past. Those who do not know history’s mistakes are doomed to repeat them – but those who do not appreciate history’s successes are fated to ignore important lessons that are still relevant today.
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E: multiculturalofgriffith@gmail.com

Multicultural Council Wagga Wagga Inc
53 Trail Street Wagga Wagga NSW 2650
PO Box 222 Wagga Wagga NSW 2650
P: 02 6921 6666
F: 02 6921 6699
E: multicultural@mcww.org.au
W: www.mcww.org.au

Young & District Multicultural Association Inc.
62 Redhill Road Young NSW 2594
PO Box 92 Young NSW 2594
P: 02 6362 5469
F: 02 6362 3575

NORTHERN TERRITORY

Multicultural Council of the Northern Territory
Malak Shopping Centre
Shop 15, Malak Place Malak NT 0812
PO Box 299 Karama NT 0813
P: 08 8945 9122
F: 08 8945 9155
E: admin@mctn.org.au
W: www.mctn.org.au

QUEENSLAND

Ethnic Communities Council of Qld
253 Boundary Street West End QLD 4101
PO Box 5916 West End QLD 4101
P: 07 3844 9166
F: 07 3846 4453
E: administration@eccq.com.au
W: www.eccq.com.au

Ethnic Communities Council of Logan Inc.
PO Box 604 Woodridge QLD 4114
P: 07 3299 3377
F: 07 3402 3064
E: admin@eccli.org.au
W: www.eclli.org.au

Multicultural Communities Council Gold Coast Inc.
1 Dominions Road Ashmore
QLD 4214
PO Box 345 Ashmore City QLD 4214
P: 07 5527 8011
F: 07 5527 8531
E: mail@mccgc.com.au
W: www.mccgc.com.au

Townsville Intercultural Centre
Level 1, 360 Citilink Building
358 Flinders Street Townsville
QLD 4810
PO Box 1858 Townsville QLD 4810
P: 07 4772 4800
F: 07 4772 1840
E: farvardin.daliri@bigpond.com
W: www.townsvilieic.com.au

SOUTH AUSTRALIA

Multicultural Communities’ Council of South Australia Inc.
113 Gilbert St Adelaide SA 5000
P: 08 8345 5266
F: 08 8345 5277
E: mccsa@mccs.org.au
W: www.mccs.org.au

TASMANIA

Multicultural Council of Tasmania
McDougall Building
Ellerslie Road Battery Point TAS 7000
PO Box 798 Hobart TAS 7001
P: 03 6231 5067
F: 03 6231 5069
E: mcot@tassie.net.au
W: www.mcot.org.au

VICTORIA

Ethnic Communities’ Council of Victoria
Statewide Resources Centre
150 Palmerston St Carlton VIC 3053
P: 03 9349 4122
F: 03 9349 4967
E: eccvv@eccvv.org.au
W: www.eccvv.org.au

Diversitat (Geelong Ethnic Communities’ Council)
153 Pakington Street
Geelong West VIC 3218
P: 03 5221 6044
F: 03 5223 2848
E: diversitat@diversitat.org.au
W: www.diversitat.org.au

Ballarat Regional Multicultural Council
Golden Point Learning and Cultural Environment, Crrr Grant & English Streets
Golden Point VIC 3350
PO Box 1418 Bakery Hill VIC 3354
P: 03 5332 5941
F: 03 5332 5944
E: admin@brmc.org.au
W: www.brmc.org.au

Ethnic Council of Shepparton & District
158 Welsford St Shepparton VIC 3632
PO Box 585 Shepparton VIC 3632
P: 03 5831 2395
F: 03 5831 3764
E: ecshepp@mccmedia.com.au
W: www.ethniccouncilshepparton.com.au

Gippsland Ethnic Communities’ Council Inc.
PO Box 3492
Gippsland Mail Centre VIC 3841
P: 03 5126 2091
F: 03 5126 4027
E: gippslandECC@gmail.com
W: www.gippslandethniccommunities.council.websyte.com.au

North East Multicultural Association
47B Reid Street Wangaratta VIC 3677
PO Box 417 Wangaratta VIC 3676
P: 03 5721 2090
E: nema@nema.org.au
W: www.nema.org.au

WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Ethnic Communities’ Council of Western Australia
20 View Street North Perth WA 6006
P: 08 9227 5322
F: 08 9227 5460
E: eccwinfo@gmail.com
W: www.eccwa.org.au

ASSOCIATE MEMBERS

National Ethnic Disability Alliance
PO Box 971 Civic Square ACT 2608
P: 02 6262 6867
W: www.reda.org.au

B’nai B’rith Anti-Defamation Commission
306 Hawthorn Rd Caulfield
South Melbourne VIC 3182
P: 03 9272 5677
F: 03 9272 5671
E: reception@antidef.org.au
W: www.antidef.org.au

Life Without Barriers
352 King Street Newcastle NSW 2300
P: 02 4033 4500
F: 02 4927 5113
E: info@lwb.org.au
W: www.lwb.org.au
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Senior Deputy Chair

Mithun Alexander  
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Peter Doukas  
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Kevin Kadirgamar  
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Serge Voloschenko  
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Helena Kyriazopoulos  
Deputy Chair / MCCSA President

Alphonse Mulumba  
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Eddie Micallef  
Deputy Chair / ECCV Chairperson

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Hon Secretary

Siddique Panwala  
Hon Treasurer

Pino Migliorino  
Hon President

Hina Durrani  
Women’s Chair

Suzanne Graham  
Regional Chair

Mohammad Al-Khafaji  
Youth Chair

ABOUT FECCA

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 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.
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.

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