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Budget Policy Division
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FECCA's Budget Priorities 2017-18

The Federation of Ethnic Communities' Councils of Australia (FECCA) is the national peak body representing Australia's culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities and their organisations. FECCA's membership comprises state, territory and regional multicultural and ethnic communities' councils. FECCA has an elected executive committee and a professional national secretariat, responsible for implementing policies and work programs on behalf of its membership and stakeholders.

FECCA welcomes the opportunity to highlight its budget priorities for 2017-18. Budget priorities should include:

- Access and equity for CALD Australians to Government services
- Ensuring that people from a CALD background have the opportunity to fully participate in the Australian economy and society; and
- Protecting Australia's productive and harmonious multicultural society.

SBS

FECCA recommends that in the 2017-2018 Budget the Government:

- Provides appropriate resources to the SBS to support its distinctive and unique role in supporting CALD Australians
- Supports the broad range of delivery modes used by SBS to deliver content to Australia's multicultural communities
- Ensures that any shortfall in funding resulting from a delay in the Advertising Flexibility Bill being made law is provided for with an appropriate budget allocation.

SBS has a distinctive and unique role in supporting Australia's CALD communities and in the promotion of a vibrant and harmonious multicultural Australia. The continued relevance and importance of SBS is demonstrated by the current social and political climate, noting the recent Scanlon Foundation report *Mapping Social Cohesion* which highlighted a rise in the proportion of people experiencing discrimination on the basis of skin colour, ethnicity or religion.

SBS is critical to the provision of a broad range of information about government and community services to Australia's ethnic communities. It plays other important roles with regards to the CALD and broader Australian community including cultural and language maintenance and development, the provision of settlement information, the delivery of high quality domestic and international news content and the recognition and strengthening of multiculturalism and diversity. SBS is critical to ensuring that Australia's migrant communities do not bypass Australian media and consume international media via internet or satellite as this has repercussions for integration and a sense of belonging to the Australian community.

SBS provides these services through a broad range of delivery modes to ensure that all sections of the CALD community are reached. Alongside SBS's television channels, in-language radio is vital to CALD Australians, particularly new arrivals and older Australians from migrant backgrounds. SBS's off-air activities, including its settlement guide available in 30 languages and projects such as the SBS Diversity Talent Escalator (to promote diversity on and off screen), contribute to building a tolerant and inclusive society. Recent developments including SBS *Viceland* and *PopAsia* also show the relevance of SBS to broader audiences, to promoting multiculturalism to Australian society and to reaching young migrants as well as second and third generation CALD Australians. FECCA urges the Government to support SBS's breadth and creativity in its delivery of content.

Supporting CALD young people find a pathway to work

FECCA recommends that in the 2017-18 Budget the Government:

- *Support the introduction of additional assistance for CALD youth – in particular refugee and newly arrived migrant youth – to enable young people to develop the skills and acquire the experience needed to gain employment through, for example:*
 - *Appropriate support to ensure fair treatment and reasonable work conditions for CALD young people who are more vulnerable to pressure and exploitation*
 - *Flexibility in the Employability Skills training, rather than a fixed term program. For some CALD young people, Employability Skills Training may require longer periods*
 - *Culturally appropriate case management support during the intern and employment phases, particularly for those less familiar with Australian cultural and workplace systems and structures*
 - *Additional funding for the involvement of specialist youth or community organisations as part of the jobactive engagement process*
 - *Provision of information in preferred languages.*

Employment opportunities for migrants and refugees are a key issue for our members and those they represent. FECCA's community engagement indicates that many migrants and refugees face multiple levels of disadvantage, especially in relation to economic participation. The design of government employment programs needs to consider and address the particular challenges faced by CALD Australians.

FECCA supports the objective of achieving meaningful employment outcomes for young people through a combination of training, support and job exposure activities. However, in addition to the challenges that face all Australian youth in entering the labour market, such as lack of previous working experience and limited opportunities to secure entry-level jobs, young people from CALD backgrounds (and new and emerging community backgrounds in particular) face a series of additional intersectional disadvantages. These relate to their varying language proficiency and literacy levels, levels of educational attainment, incidence of pre-migration trauma, lack of local experience, lack of referees and often limited

knowledge of Australian workforce systems and cultures. In addition, they often face the challenge of having no networks to use in seeking out employment and real and perceived discrimination on the basis of their cultural, religious or linguistic background during recruitment and on-the-job.

Young people from a refugee and migrant background make up a significant proportion of the Australian youth population. Their engagement as active citizens in Australian society, including their meaningful economic participation, has significant and long-term benefits for them, their families and communities, and for a diverse, socially cohesive Australia.

Access and Equity

FECCA recommends that in the 2017-18 Budget the Government:

- *Continue to support relevant peak body organisations to represent CALD communities to ensure that CALD Australians have equality in access and experience of Government services*
- *Ensure the digital access and equity gap to Government services is bridged for CALD users:*
 - *Recognise diversity of users and continue to improve accessibility of online government service delivery through simple and consistent icons for translated materials and interactive technologies to improve access*
 - *Provide multiple ways for community members to interact with government service delivery*
 - *Implement targeted communication strategies to reach ethnic communities to improve awareness of online services and reduce concerns*
 - *Ensure ongoing community engagement in the development of digital platforms to ensure they are inclusive of CALD communities*
- *Provide appropriate financial support for co-production and design of government policy and services*
- *Allocate appropriate funding for feedback and complaints mechanisms—which drive quality and improvements to systems—including supports to allow CALD individuals to access these mechanisms*
- *Implement cultural competence training across all Government agencies and organisations funded by the Commonwealth*
- *Cater for the language needs of all migrants accessing government services through the provision of language services, whether through interpreting, translating or bilingual work.*

As the provision of human services moves to a market-based structure, ensuring that consumers of these services are informed and empowered becomes critical. At this stage in time, many consumers—and particularly those from CALD backgrounds—are not yet fully informed about the services available to them or empowered to make choices and exercise control over service delivery.

Effective advocacy plays a key role in assisting individuals to navigate the services available and empowering them, their families and carers, to be competent and confident in accessing services. This also includes educating them on their rights, entitlements and complaint mechanisms. Systemic advocacy also plays an important role in promoting system wide quality of service by uncovering systemic failures, petitioning for service improvement, disseminating information on best practice to service providers, promoting public awareness, and representing the interests of particular groups such as those from a CALD background.

To improve access and equity, consumers should be a core consideration when planning and delivering a service rather than an after-thought. To ensure that it will work, they need to be involved in the design of a system, rather than placed into a pre-designed system. A diverse cohort of consumers and their representatives, should be included in the co-design—or co-production—process.

Co-production is the delivering of public services that have been designed and created with the involvement of the people using those services as well as families, carers, community and faith-based organisations, service providers and community leaders.

The concept requires involvement of people with lived experience in the decision making process, implementation and review of policies and practices. Engaging all relevant stakeholders, at the initial design stage of policy and service delivery will result in increased cost-effectiveness and improved outcomes for stakeholders including, the Government.

Promotion of Multiculturalism

FECCA recommends that in the 2017-18 Budget the Government:

- Support the finalisation and release of a Multicultural Policy Statement and fully fund its implementation to realise the Government’s commitment to strengthening cultural diversity, social cohesion and cultural competency in Government services
- Make allowances to set in motion the required processes toward the introduction of a Multicultural Act into Parliament to underpin infrastructure supporting cultural diversity in Australia
- Adequately resource the Racism Stops with Me campaign to ensure broad community reach and meaningful outcomes with regards to tackling discrimination, racial and religious intolerance.

The National Anti-Racism Strategy was developed through a partnership led by the Australian Human Rights Commission. The primary awareness raising and engagement activity within the National Anti-Racism Strategy is the *Racism. It Stops With Me* campaign, which aims to:

1. Ensure more Australians recognise that racism is unacceptable in our community;
2. Given more Australians the tools and resources to take practical action against racism; and
3. Empower individuals and organisations to prevent and respond effectively to racism.

The National Anti-Racism Strategy was evaluated in June 2015. The evaluation found:

[T]he Commission has done ‘a lot with a little’ by creating a network of partners and supporters taking action against racism and encouraging communities to use the campaign to support their individual and organisation efforts... With greater resources, more could have been achieved, such as broader reach and great systemic change. However, our approach has been to share responsibility and resources and to use our status and leadership to encourage and support local initiatives.¹

In order to cement ongoing institutionalised support for multicultural, functional and inclusive society, it is FECCA’s position that the Australian Government should embed the ideals, processes and infrastructure of a multicultural system in Commonwealth legislation through the development of a Multicultural Act. Such legislation would need to ensure disability, youth, women’s and aged care services were provided in a culturally and linguistically appropriate way.

A positive step would be the completion and release of the Government’s Multicultural Policy Statement and appropriate support for the implementation of its initiatives and goals.

¹ Australian Human Rights Commission, *National Anti-Racism Strategy and Racism. It Stops with Me: Summary Evaluation and Future Direction* (June 2015), 11.

Domestic and family violence

FECCA recommends that in the 2017-18 Budget the Government:

- Give priority to the following actions in the Third Action Plan (2016-19) of the National Plan to Reduce Violence Against Women and their Children:
 - Development of appropriate visa arrangements for temporary residents who are experiencing violence
 - Review of eligibility requirements to enable more victims of violence to access support
 - Work with service providers to improve access of temporary residents to available support services.

Domestic violence service providers report that the principal concern experienced by migrant women on temporary visas at risk of family violence is that these women have no source of income. Many temporary visa holders are not eligible to access services through Centrelink. Without income, they cannot meet their basic needs and the needs of their children. Many women on temporary visas return to their abusive partners because of a lack of financial resources.

Women on spousal visas who can access the family violence provisions of the *Migration Act* often wait up to 12 weeks or more for their visa to change to a more permanent visa with access to the social security safety net, during which time they have no access to Centrelink payments. Migrant women on temporary visas who do *not* have access to the family violence provisions are often left indefinitely without income and rely on charities to get by.

Safety from domestic and family violence should not be contingent on an individuals' visa status. In 2016, FECCA and 134 organisations signed an open letter urging the Government to ensure that migrant women on temporary visas who seek to escape violence are entitled to crisis payments regardless of their visa status.²

Ageing and Aged Care

FECCA recommends that in the 2017-18 Budget the Government:

- A dedicated grants fund be established to support the implementation of the National Diversity Framework for Ageing and Aged Care and its Strategic Goals through innovative projects and collaborations
- Allocates resources for the development and implementation of an 'Ethical Framework for Ageing Research with CALD Communities'.
- Invest more resources to build capacity of older CALD Australians through a consumer support platform to navigate aged care services in a consumer centred, market based aged care service landscape.

While older Australians are making up an increasing proportion of our population overall, significantly, migrant communities are ageing at a much faster rate than the population at large. The 2011 Census indicated 20 per cent of Australians over the age of 65 were born in non-English speaking countries. On current projections, 30 per cent of the population aged over 65 will be from CALD backgrounds by 2030.

The *National Ageing and Aged Care Strategy for People for CALD Backgrounds*, which clearly identified the needs of this cohort, will soon come to an end. FECCA is pleased that the Government is undertaking work towards a National Diversity Framework for Ageing and Aged

² See further: <http://fecca.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/Open-Letter-Australian-Government-must-support-vulnerable-migrant-women-escaping-family-violence6.pdf>

Care, which will include strategies for meeting the needs of diverse groups including older people from CALD backgrounds, the LGBTIQ community, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Communities. It is imperative that resources are attached to the new Framework to ensure its effective implementation. FECCA recommends that a dedicated grants fund be established to support the implementation of the Framework.

It is clear that older people from CALD backgrounds have a right to be included in research where the outcomes of that research will be applied to them or other members of their community. However, older CALD Australians are often excluded or underrepresented in mainstream research in ageing due to language barriers, research not being funded for translations and interpreters, and acknowledging that more time is required to translate information and/or to use interpreters. The Framework will add an additional and strengthened focus on the importance of trust, recognition and cultural values when researchers engage with CALD communities. It is recommended that funding is available for the development of the Framework as well as for the implementation of the guidelines therein.

Market-based human services are premised on the existence of informed and empowered consumers. At this stage in time, many consumers, especially those from CALD backgrounds are not yet informed about the services available to them or empowered to make choices and exercise control over service delivery. The Consumer Support Platform will highlight the existing gaps and barriers for a range of priority groups with additional needs in navigating the aged care system and identify solutions to address same. FECCA recommends developing a dedicated funding programme to implement services recommended by the Consumer Support Platform to be implemented through community organisations.

Disability

FECCA recommends that in the 2017-18 Budget the Government:

- *Ensures sufficient funding to multicultural sector organisations to develop and implement strategies aimed at empowering and strengthening capacity of culturally and linguistically diverse communities to participate in the NDIS.*

CALD people with disability are considerably underrepresented in the NDIS. Despite the Government's continuous acknowledgement of the minimal participation of people from CALD backgrounds in the NDIS³, as of 30 June 2016, the participation rate of people from CALD backgrounds within the NDIS remained 4 per cent.⁴ This is considerably low considering that participants from CALD backgrounds should represent between 18 to 25 per cent. The underrepresentation of people with disabilities from CALD backgrounds within the NDIS may be a result of inadequate allocation of resources to engage people from CALD backgrounds.

Multicultural sector organisations are best placed to assist people with disability, their carers and family members to navigate complex support services to address underrepresentation of people with disabilities from CALD backgrounds in the NDIS as well as broader underutilisation of disability and support services. Therefore, FECCA suggests targeted funding for multicultural sector organisations to provide culturally appropriate advocacy and related services.

³ Joint Standing Committee on the National Disability Insurance Scheme, *Progress report on the implementation and administration of the National Disability Insurance Scheme*, November 2015 and National Disability Insurance Agency 2013-2014 Annual Report, 23.

⁴ National Disability Insurance Agency, *Quarterly Report to Council of Australian Governments Disability Reform Council 30 June 2016*, 22, accessible at: <https://www.ndis.gov.au/about-us/information-publications-and-reports/quarterly-reports>

FECCA further recommends expediting the development of the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Strategy, and allocating adequate funding and resources to achieve the outcomes set out in the Strategy.

Mental Health

FECCA recommends that in the 2017-18 Budget the Government:

- *Provide targeted funding for a national multicultural mental health structure that would provide an informed, representative and legitimate leadership that ensures that mental health reforms achieve positive outcomes for culturally and linguistically diverse individuals and communities.*

The mental health needs of people from migrant and refugee backgrounds are often distinct to those of the general population. Despite the fact that migrants and refugees are considered a high-risk category for mental and physical health problems, mental health services were found to be underutilised by these groups, especially those with limited English skills.⁵ The experiences of racism and discrimination of people from CALD backgrounds, especially the growing negative attitudes towards specific cohorts including African and Muslim communities⁶ may result in increasing mental health issues among people from CALD backgrounds.

There is limited accessible information about culturally sensitive suicide prevention strategies and support services for people from CALD backgrounds. The Senate Community Affairs Committee recommended implementation of a suicide prevention and awareness campaign which focusses on the provision of culturally sensitive and appropriate information and services.⁷ These highlight the need to incorporate a specific and adequately resourced mental health framework for people from CALD backgrounds.

Language services

FECCA recommends that in the 2017-18 Budget the Government:

- *Funds a one year program of the proposed interpreter training and accreditation model in 2017 up to a maximum of \$50,000 (100 participants) to increase the supply of trained and credentialed interpreters in new and emerging community languages.*

The provision of language services, whether through interpreting, translating or bilingual work, can enhance access to social services for migrants, assist to alleviate isolation and lead to better connection with the community. Quality language services can also improve health outcomes and enable access to crucial rights, such as the right to a fair trial.

Training options for interpreters in new and emerging community languages are limited. The availability of tertiary courses in Australia's recent humanitarian intake languages remains low, which presents significant challenges for the National Accreditation Authority for Translators and Interpreters (NAATI) accreditation at paraprofessional and professional levels and the subsequent provision of services in these languages.

⁵ Michael Leach and Fethi Mansouri, *Life in a Limbo: Voices of Refugees under Temporary Protection*, (2004), p. 100.

⁶ Scanlon Foundation, *Australians Today*, (2016) accessible at <http://scanlonfoundation.org.au/australians-today/>

⁷ See: Senate Community Affairs Committee, *The Hidden Toll: Suicide in Australia*, (2010).

Based on the review of various models across jurisdictions and the identification of good practice elements, FECCA recommends the conceptualisation and implementation of a national, multi-jurisdictional program to increase the quantity and quality of language services to meet the language services needs in new and emerging languages.⁸

The model would comprise a three-stage process:

<p>Stage one: Skill set program</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • VET-delivered Skill Set of four (non-language specific) units from the Diploma of Interpreting (100 nominal hours in total) complying with the Australian Qualifications Framework and providing a pathway to completing the Diploma of Interpreting at a later date • Participants recruited by engaging with community organisations • Flexible course delivery—either face-to-face or online—taking into account the needs of students from new and emerging communities, who may be working and require part time study and options for evening classes • Access to stage two and three of the program through successful completion of stage one. • Funding by State Governments to reduce the financial burden on participants.
<p>Stage two: Additional training and test preparation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Screening of participants, following successful completion of Stage One, prior to moving onto attaining a NAATI credential • Training would include: practical work including practice via scenario-based case studies, understanding of the profession, and exam technique • Additional support to improve English language proficiency • Inclusion of a special component focusing on family violence.
<p>Stage three: NAATI testing</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funding assistance from the Commonwealth Government for participants to undertake NAATI testing, supplemented by small investment by the participants and discount from NAATI.

FECCA recommends that the Government funds a one year program of the proposed training and accreditation model in 2017 up to a maximum of **\$50,000** (100 participants) to increase the supply of trained and credentialed interpreters in new and emerging community languages.

Following evaluation of the 2017 program, and subject to review, the Commonwealth could expand the model to other states and territories in 2018. This would involve work in 2016-2017

⁸ FECCA, *Australia's Growing Linguistic Diversity: An opportunity for a strategic approach to language services policy and practice* (2016), accessible at: <http://fecca.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/feccalanguagesreport.pdf>

with NAATI and state and territory governments to develop support for the model in states where the Skill Set is not currently offered, and identify suitable VET providers to deliver the course.

More detailed recommendations have been submitted to the Department of Social Services on this matter.