

FECCA e-NEWS

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

WELCOME TO THE MARCH EDITION OF FECCA'S e-NEWS

Welcome to the third edition of the FECCA e-newsletter for 2017. This month a major focus of FECCA's work has been the 18C debate where FECCA and its partner organisations have been at the forefront of the fight to maintain 18C and the protections from racial vilification and discrimination it provides to Australia's diverse community.

FECCA's major campaign on 18C allowed FECCA to lead the debate and attract broad coverage of our position across the media including in the Guardian, Australian, Australian Financial Review, ABC and SBS. FECCA also appeared in front of the Senate Inquiry into the *Human Rights Legislation Amendment Bill 2017* that attempted to introduce changes that would weaken 18C and the *Racial Discrimination Act*. FECCA was delighted when the Senate backed FECCA and other organisations including Indigenous bodies campaigning against changes to 18C by rejecting attempts to water down Australia's hate speech laws. I am saddened by the way that the Government

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(From left to right) Chair, Australian Multicultural Council, Dr Sev Ozdowski AM; Assistant Minister for Social Services and Multicultural Affairs the Hon Zed Seselja; Chair, FECCA, Mr Joe Caputo OAM; Chair SBS, Dr Bulent Hass Dellal AO at the launch of the Government's Multicultural Statement.

WELCOME TO THE MARCH EDITION OF FECCA'S E-NEWS *continued*

decided to revive this issues when the majority of multicultural Australia made its feelings very clear when it was first raised by the Abbott administration.

Alongside the work on 18C, FECCA has also kept up its advocacy in other areas. We have made submissions to inquiries on issues including the Omnibus Bill, Gender Segregation in the Workplace, the Strong and Resilient Communities Grants program, the Foreign Policy White Paper, the Administrative Appeals Tribunal Harmonisation Project, Elder Abuse and the Government's proposed changes to the Pension Portability Scheme.

This month the Government launched their Multicultural Policy Statement, "Multicultural Australia - united, strong, successful". FECCA gave a cautious welcome to the statement and looks forward to concrete

policy proposals and resources to follow on from the statement that will support and strengthen Australia's multicultural society.

Harmony Day was celebrated in Australia on the 21 March and communities across the country celebrated Australia's fantastic diversity. We celebrated our own diversity right here at FECCA holding Harmony Day celebrations in the office, with guests from the Settlement Council of Australia, the National Ethnic Disability Alliance and colleagues from local companies who share our building who brought along delicacies representing their cultural heritage.

We continue to plan for our conference in Darwin later in the year and our conference website will be launched later this month. It is shaping up to be an exciting event and we hope to see you all there.



Harmony Day at FECCA.

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The 18C debate and FECCA in the media

The debate over the *Racial Discrimination Act* (RDA) and changes to 18C came to a head late last month with the introduction of legislation that proposed to amend the words of Section 18C to replace “insult, intimidate and humiliate” with the word “harass”. FECCA was particularly disappointed that the Government chose to announce this on Harmony Day – also the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination.

FECCA appeared before the Senate Inquiry into the *Human Rights Legislation Amendment Bill 2017*. Despite efforts to prevent the FECCA Director making her opening **statement**, FECCA and our partner witnesses from the CMCF, Ms Diana Rahman OAM and Mr Harry Oppermann, gave powerful testimony on lived experience of racism the impact that changes to 18C would have on CALD communities.

FECCA is delighted that the changes to 18C were rejected by the Senate. FECCA had fought long and hard against the proposed changes to Section 18C and the RDA. FECCA strongly believes that, as it stands, the RDA provides protection for vulnerable communities against racial attacks while defending the right to freedom of speech.

Community Consultations

In the last month FECCA have been busy consulting with both government departments and our constituent communities. Earlier this month we attended the Sri Lankan Association of NSW Seniors’ Day Celebrations to consult on ageing and aged care. We were treated to a rich display of culture with food, music, dancing and some very informative talks from well-respected professionals from the community.

FECCA also met with members of the Chaldean community in Melbourne to discuss their challenges and successes, and particular issues around language and translators.

We also had the opportunity to speak with some wonderful members of Goulburn’s diverse cultural communities through the Goulburn Multicultural Centre (GMC).

FECCA thanks everyone who attended and who took time out of their day to discuss their experiences and those of their communities. We look forward to many more opportunities like these to hear directly from CALD communities.



(From left to right) Deputy Chair, Canberra Multicultural Community Forum (CMCF), Mr Harry Oppermann; Chair, CMCF, Ms Diana Rahman OAM; Director, FECCA, Dr Emma Campbell; Disabilities Chair, FECCA, Mr Victor Marillanca JP.

FECCA gained wide coverage of its campaign. From its **media release**, noting its disappointment that the Government chose Harmony Day and International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination to our opening statement to the committee, FECCA has frequently appeared in the national media including the **Guardian**, **ABC**, and the **Conversation**.



Members of FECCA meet with members of the Goulburn Multicultural Centre for a Community Consultation

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Submission to the Administration Appeals Tribunal Harmonisation Project

The AAT Harmonisation Project seeks to provide a new set of principles which apply across the Tribunal's jurisdictions to improve, simplify and make more efficient its processes. The AAT hears appeals on a number of federal issues including immigration decisions. FECCA made a submission that focused on ensuring that the rights of individuals from CALD communities appearing

at the AAT are protected throughout the process. The submission noted, for example, the importance of applicants having access to all of the information provided to the Tribunal by both sides; the availability of language services; the importance of procedural fairness; and flexibility in lodging an appeal.

More information on the submission can be found [here](#).

Submission on the Redesign of the Strengthening Communities Grants Program

The Strong and Resilient Communities Grants Program, formerly the Strengthening Communities Program, provides funding for organisations which seek to create social cohesion and address emerging community need. The program recently went through a redesign process, to which FECCA made a submission. FECCA emphasised, for example, that priority should be given to proposals that make cultural expression a key element of their program and which specifically address cross-cultural

misunderstandings and misconceptions in innovative ways. We also highlighted that smaller organisations often lack capacity for sophisticated data management and that evidence provided anecdotally – the articulation of a communities' shared experience – should be given appropriate consideration.

The full text of FECCA's submission to the Strong and Resilient Community (SARC) Grants Program can be accessed [here](#).

Foreign Affairs White Paper

The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade called for submissions to the Foreign Policy White Paper, the first since 2003. FECCA submitted that Australia's Foreign Policy should be underpinned by conscious reference to, and understanding of, the multicultural nature of its population. FECCA highlighted that it is important that the Government engage and consult with communities regarding policies that affect their regions of origin and they must also be cognisant of the likely impact of any decision on cohesion between communities. Further, Australia is home to communities of people from every nation on Earth. Many of these people are highly skilled in a broad spectrum of industries and are from places

with whom Australia intends to maintain, or in some cases increase, its cultural and economic connections. Policy makers should search for innovative ways to harness the resource represented by these persons and their communities.

FECCA also highlighted that Australia should give close consideration to its obligations to the global community as expressed in the international instruments to which it is a signatory.

FECCA's Foreign Policy White Paper submission can be accessed [here](#).

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Social Services Legislation Amendment (Omnibus Savings and Child Care Reform) Bill 2017

The Social Services Legislation Amendment better known as the 'Omnibus Bill' includes a number of reforms and cost savings measures which will impact many of the communities that FECCA represents. FECCA made a submission highlighting our concerns with a number of proposals contained in the bill including changes to the portability of benefits in relation to the Age Pension. FECCA argued that there is a substantial equity issue with a measure, such as pension portability, that will disproportionately impact Australia's migrants.

FECCA also highlighted our concerns regarding the proposal to impose a four week waiting period for a person under 25 assessed as job ready to be able to access income support. In many cases younger members of CALD communities are important providers to family units and the gap created by the waiting period will cause significant hardship.

A version of the Bill was passed a short time later but the provisions we opposed were separated from that piece of legislation. A copy of the submission is available at FECCA's website [here](#).

Elder Abuse Inquiry

The Australian Law Reform Commission held an inquiry into existing Commonwealth laws and frameworks which seek to safeguard and protect older persons from misuse or abuse by formal and informal carers, supporters, representatives and others.

FECCA made the following contribution to that inquiry supporting the proposal to develop a National Plan to address elder abuse. We encouraged the adoption of specific measures to address challenges faced by people from CALD backgrounds and the development of culturally appropriate responses.

For example, FECCA recommended that older people are educated about their rights, provided with access to culturally appropriate advocacy services and with opportunities to confidentially discuss their concerns with legal professionals. FECCA emphasised the importance of adopting measures to ensure professionals working with older people from CALD backgrounds are culturally competent.

FECCA continues to work on this important area. The report from that inquiry is yet to be released but the full terms of FECCA's submission is available on FECCA's website [here](#).

Better Management of the Social Welfare System Initiative

The Better Management of the Social Welfare System Initiative is an initiative of the Department of Human Services aimed at collecting overpayments of benefits made to individuals by way of automated data matching that has resulted in the sending of letters of demand.

FECCA made a submission to the inquiry regarding this system of debt-collection.

This inquiry is still considering the submissions made to the Committee, but FECCA's paper can be accessed on the website [here](#).

STAKEHOLDER UPDATES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Seeking your views – new quality standards and streamlined assessment

You are invited to share your views on two components of the Single Aged Care Quality Framework:

- the draft single set of standards and
- options for a streamlined approach for assessing provider performance against these standards.

The call for submissions will close on **Friday 21 April 2017**.

The Department of Health wants to hear from consumers, their families and carers, aged care organisations, staff of organisations, and other professionals in the aged care sector and related sectors.

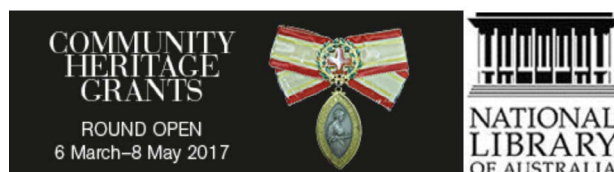
For information and to complete a submission, visit the [department's Consultation Hub](#).

For information and updates on the single aged care quality framework visit the [department's website](#).

Community Heritage Grants

Community Heritage Grants 2017 is now open for application from 6th of March until 8th of May 2017. CHG is a federally funded grants program offering grants of up to \$15,000 to assist in preserving cultural heritage collections of national significance. Not-for-profit migrant community groups throughout Australia, are encouraged to apply. We urge all our constituent organisations to apply for this and any other of these

types of grants. More information can be access here <http://www.nla.gov.au/awards-and-grants/chg>



Carers Australia 7th International Carers Conference

Carers Australia announced that registrations for the 7th International Carers Conference being held from 4-6 October at the Adelaide Convention Centre are now open. The conference will feature high-profile national and international speakers, thought-provoking presentations, challenging debates, interactive workshops and a cutting-edge exhibition zone. You can register here for what promises to be a thought

provoking and informative event <http://www.carersaustralia.com.au/international-conference/registrations/>



STAKEHOLDER UPDATES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Department of Human Services celebrate International Women's Day



To celebrate International Women's Day the Department of Human Services have released a video featuring Tanya Kaplan (Multicultural Service Officer, South Australia), who shares her heart-warming story focused

on the challenges she experienced as a migrant and single mother and how she uses those experiences to help culturally and linguistically diverse customers. FECCA acknowledges the great work DHS Multicultural Service Officers do within the community. The video can be watched on youtube here <https://youtu.be/Yc25oZSlRg> You can also find Tanya's and many other stories on the Department's Media Hub, which you can access here <http://mediahub.humanservices.gov.au/> as well as helpfully provided resources in the *information in your language* page which includes videos and fact sheets about some of the services the department offers, located here

<https://www.humanservices.gov.au/customer/information-in-your-language>

The Inaugural African Diaspora Women Summit

The Inaugural African Diaspora Women Summit in Victoria is being held on June 26th and 27th at Victoria University Convention Centre, 300 Flinders St, Melbourne. The theme this year is to be 'Celebrating African Women, Their Voices'. The organisers confirm that representatives from the African Union and NASA, USA will be in attendance.

More information about this exciting event can be found here <https://africandiasporawomensummit.org.au/>



Homelessness and Domestic Violence

The Public Interest Advocacy Centre has released a report, based upon two years' worth of consultations with women at risk of homelessness, which argues that more resources are needed to address the complex legal needs of women escaping domestic violence. According to the Report's author, Louis Schetzer, participants' stories illustrated the difficulties faced by women in finding safe, stable accommodation following the physical and emotional trauma of domestic violence. They also highlighted the importance of specialist legal services to address complex and interrelated legal needs. In a related context when community

legal centres, which are at the front line of providing legal assistance to the most at-risk members of the community, are facing a Federal funding cut of almost 30% from 1 July.

FECCA opposes the cuts and reminds our members that Community Legal Centres do so much for ethnic communities around the country. The legal centres need our support now more than ever. FECCA also highlights that women from CALD communities can be at an increased risk of the issues raised by the report. Find a copy if it [here](#).

STAKEHOLDER UPDATES AND OPPORTUNITIES

The Australian Youth Affairs Coalition (AYAC) is pushing for a discussion in Parliament next week about youth

Young people want to be heard on many issues, from tax and justice to marriage equality and climate change.

Youth Week (31 March – 9 April) is a chance to celebrate young people, but also to make your opinion count. AYAC is asking people to contact their Member of Parliament (MPs) and make sure young people are a part of national decisions. Here's how AYAC suggest getting involved:

1 Find out who is your local Member of Parliament here: http://www.aph.gov.au/Senators_and_Members

2 Copy and paste the wording below, and send them an email. Change it up, or use it as is – it's up to you; we're grateful for your help. If you want some more tips – [check out this toolkit](#)

3 Let AYAC know that you sent your MP an email! It's really important. Email admin@ayac.org.au

Youth Week 2017 is an opportunity for young people to engage with their local community, express themselves and their ideas, to increase awareness of issues that are important to them and participate in the decisions that affect their lives.

ACOSS Post Budget Breakfast 2017

ACOSS Post-Budget Breakfast 2017: Housing affordability, climate change, poverty & inequality and community services in focus

The ACOSS Post Budget Breakfast is a **key event for civil society in Australia**. Join us and a **high profile panel of expert commentators** in Sydney at UTS on Monday 15 May as we move beyond short term analysis and apply a focussed critical lens on four **key areas of budget impact: Poverty and Inequality, Housing Affordability, Climate Change and Community Services**.

Early Bird Registrations have just opened, so you can now register to take advantage of discounted rates.

Registration includes an a la carte cooked breakfast, fresh baked pastries, tea, coffee and juice.

Visit the [ACOSS Post Budget Website](#) for more information

In order to ensure robust and inclusive discussion at ACOSS events it is imperative that people with lived experience of the issues discussed are in the room and contributing to the conversation. It is also important that community sector organisations of all sizes are equally represented. For this reason, ACOSS and partners establish a bursary fund for all ACOSS events. [To find out more and apply visit the event website here.](#)



STAKEHOLDER UPDATES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Give feedback on the CALD Ageing and Aged Care Strategy

The department invites you to share your thoughts and feedback on the National Ageing and Aged Care Strategies for people from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds

The department is currently reviewing progress against the Strategies. As well as highlighting achievements, we need to identify any gaps where more needs to be done. Your feedback will contribute towards the review and inform the development of a new Aged Care Diversity Framework.

The survey will take around 10 minutes to complete, with the option to provide more detailed responses available through the relevant submission links below.

- Complete the [CALD Strategy Review survey](#)
- Provide a [detailed submission to the CALD Strategy Review](#)

- Read the [National Ageing and Aged Care Strategy for people from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse \(CALD\) Backgrounds](#)

Please email ageing.and.diversity@health.gov.au if you have any questions.

Surveys close at **5.00 pm AEST on 28 April 2017**.

Submissions close at **5.00 pm AEST on 12 May 2017**.



The
Department
of Health