

31 January 2018

Senate Finance and Public Administration Committees  
PO Box 6100  
Parliament House  
Canberra ACT 2600

Email: [fpa.sen@aph.gov.au](mailto:fpa.sen@aph.gov.au)

### **Inquiry into the arrangements for the Postal Survey**

The Federation of Ethnic Communities' Councils of Australia (FECCA) is the peak body representing Australia's culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities and their organisations, and promoting issues on behalf of its constituency to government and the broader community. FECCA strives to ensure that the needs and aspirations of various cohorts of Australia's CALD population are heard by policy and decision makers, as well as the broader public.

FECCA commends the Senate Finance and Public Administration Committees for providing this opportunity to comment on the arrangements made for the postal survey to collect views of all Australians on the electoral roll on whether or not the law should be changed to allow same-sex couples to marry.

#### **Key message:**

FECCA is writing with particular regard to the efforts made by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) to attend to the needs of Australia's CALD communities. The ABS consulted FECCA as the peak national body representing CALD Australians to seek advice on the relevant key issues such as:

- ensuring information about the postal survey was distributed through channels used and trusted by CALD Australians (such as SBS and FECCA's extensive network),
- ensuring that in-language options were available for assistance in filling out the postal survey via a multilingual telephone advice service,
- ensuring that information was provided in ways that were accessible to a range of literacies (eg English language literacy, civic literacy) and abilities.

FECCA was impressed with the seriousness and importance that the ABS placed on the ability for *all* Australians to be able to participate fully in the postal survey regardless of their background. It was gratifying to see the ABS put into practice the solutions to access and equity challenges which face many Australians from migrant and refugee communities.

FECCA continually advocates for these solutions to a range of government departments and agencies via our annual Access and Equity report and through direct consultation and advocacy. The high rates of CALD communities' participation in activities coordinated and managed by the ABS (such as the Census) is testament to their cultural competence and commitment to equity in civic participation for all Australians.

FECCA would like to commend the ABS for their role in ensuring that Australians from CALD backgrounds were able to fully participate meaningfully in what has been a historic process. We look forward to working with other government departments and agencies to ensure that in all other areas of civic participation or service provision that Australians of CALD backgrounds have the same access as their fellow Australians.

For further information please contact FECCA Director Dr Emma Campbell [emma@fecca.org.au](mailto:emma@fecca.org.au) or 02 6282 5755.