

CALD COMMUNITIES TO LEAD COVID MESSAGING

The Federation of Ethnic Communities' Councils of Australia (FECCA) is working closely with the Federal Government to support multicultural community groups provide important COVID-19 health messages to their communities.

Under a Commonwealth-funded Small Grants Fund, FECCA will work with multicultural communities to assist them deliver critical health information and advice on the coronavirus pandemic and vaccination rollout. The small grants program is supported by the Settlement Council of Australia (SCOA), Migration Council Australia and the Multicultural Youth Advocacy Network (MYAN).

FECCA Chief Executive Officer, Mohammad Al-Khafaji, said the program will support culturally appropriate and relevant information regarding COVID-19 and the vaccination delivery.

"This program will deliver small grants to community groups to undertake and lead targeted communication activities on COVID and the vaccinations at the grass roots level," Mr Al-Khafaji said.

"These grants will support local community leaders to ensure information and messages are delivered to their communities by trusted members and in the best form to be understood and acted upon. We thank multicultural communities who have done their part in tackling this pandemic, and we hope these small grants can support their important work."

Minister for Health and Aged Care, Greg Hunt said it is essential that the Commonwealth partner with multicultural communities and support them in promoting the uptake of vaccinations.

"As increasing numbers of Australians become eligible to receive a COVID-19 vaccine, the Australian Government is ensuring everyone can have confidence in the vaccination program," Minister Hunt said.

"Today we are launching a program to encourage their involvement in reaching out to their own communities about the COVID-19 pandemic and the vaccination rollout."

Migration Council Australia CEO, Carla Wilshire, said the grants program was a major step in building effective partnerships between communities and government to lead COVID-19 prevention.

"The grants program is a significant step in building effective partnerships between communities and government to lead COVID-19 prevention at the grassroots level," Ms Wilshire said.

Settlement Council of Australia CEO, Sandra Elhelw-Wright, welcomed the program and said working at the grass roots level will ensure properly tailored, accurate and impactful information is supplied to communities.

"Targeted programs and methods are needed to maximise reach in migrant and refugee communities. This grant program is essential in making sure communications can be tailored to different cultural groups and communities across the country," Ms Elhelw-Wright said.

MYAN's National Manager, Rana Ebrahimi, said the program would ensure health messages effectively targeted the needs and contexts of young people.

"COVID-19 pandemic has demonstrated that the wellbeing of all young people living in Australia is interconnected more than ever before which makes it essential to ensure everyone has access to information that they can comprehend and act on appropriately," Ms Ebrahimi said.

The Small Grants program aims to achieve the following:

- Foster community involvement and participation;
- Overcome language and cultural barriers to accessing information on COVID 19 and the vaccination program;
- Provide opportunities for the community to identify local issues and respond to them; and
- Encourage partnerships among community organisations.

FECCA, SCoA, MCA and MYAN are calling for applications from eligible community groups to undertake this information activity.

The program opens today. Visit www.fecca.org.au/grants for further information.

FECCA is the national peak body representing Australians from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

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