

FECCA reiterates its strong opposition against the watering down of vilification laws

The Federation of Ethnic Communities' Councils of Australia (FECCA) believes that last year's debate on the issue of section 18C of the *Racial Discrimination Act* was extensive and does not need to be re-opened; with an overwhelming community response against changes to the Act. Reinvigorating this conversation has the potential to deeply and harmfully impact on diverse communities in Australia. Last year, thousands of community members and their organisations expressed fear that the proposed repeal of 18C would strip protection from the most marginalised members of our society and threaten social cohesion in Australia.

FECCA Chair Joe Caputo said, "Strong protections against racial vilification are needed, especially now as we are seeing negative rhetoric being used towards certain communities. This matter was wholly debated during 2014 and the overwhelming majority of communities rejected the watering down of the anti-discrimination legislation".

In 2015 we are commemorating the 40th anniversary of the *Racial Discrimination Act (RDA)*. The RDA is a landmark piece of legislation that underpins the essence of our multicultural society and is integral to preserving Australia's identity as a diverse, inclusive and democratic nation.

FECCA reiterates its strong opposition to weakening the provisions that are critical in eliminating intolerance and nurturing harmony in Australia's culturally diverse society through effective protections of vulnerable groups.

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