

FECCA urges fairness in citizenship

The Federation of Ethnic Communities' Councils of Australia (FECCA) today urged the Federal Government to maintain fairness and justice in any proposal to increase the English language requirements for Australian citizenship.

The Chairperson of FECCA, Ms Mary Patetsos said that FECCA had always recognised that English language skills are critical to integration but that new arrivals should be treated fairly and justly.

"FECCA strongly supports the integration of new migrants into our society through employment and education as well as English skills," Ms Patetsos said.

"We support the Government in providing adequate resources to support these goals.

"Integration has been successful where people have been invited to be citizens early in their migration journey and where families are encouraged to join them.

"Migrants need to be supported not just in their efforts to learn English but to get an education and find jobs. Measures that make it harder for them to become citizens are counter-productive.

"FECCA believes that if English language tests are too stringent, many current Australian residents who have functional levels of English will, unfairly, be denied the rights, opportunities and protections that are enjoyed by citizens.

"The fact is that for many decades, a great number of migrants have arrived here with limited English skills but have contributed hugely to Australia as citizens," Ms Patetsos said.

"Given the bipartisan commitment of Australia's political leaders to multiculturalism over many decades, we urge the Government to ensure that we remain a fair and humane society, inclusive of all."

FECCA is the national peak body representing Australia's culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities and their organisations. FECCA provides advocacy, develops policy and promotes issues on behalf of its constituency to Government and the broader community.

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