

FECCA welcomes budget measures for multicultural communities, but more is needed

The Federation of Ethnic Communities' Councils of Australia (FECCA) welcomes tonight's federal budget which aims to address cost of living pressures. We know that some of our communities have been disproportionately affected and these measures will help.

We are pleased there are several specific measures targeted at our communities such as:

- \$2.5 million to support multicultural media literacy
- \$15.3 million to establish a PHN Multicultural Access Program to support multicultural communities to access primary care services
- \$4.7 million to boost COVID-19 vaccination rates in multicultural communities

Many of the budget initiatives, whilst not targeting our communities specifically, will impact on them.

We need to ensure those with limited English proficiency understand and can access measures, such as cost of living relief, Medicare reforms including MyMedicare, and can engage with digital platforms across government agencies.

Leading up to this year's budget, FECCA urged the Government to invest in multicultural health, following the lessons learned from COVID-19. Tonight, there are clear signs that the Government is listening.

FECCA Chairperson, Mr. Carlo Carli said, "We are pleased with this budget and the increasing recognition that there needs to be more investment for multicultural communities."

"We welcome the announcement of \$2.5 million over four years for the Australian Multicultural Health Collaborative. This will further enhance our capacity to support our communities in engaging with health services and ensure that their voices are considered in the development of national policies and programs," he said.

The care workforce is increasingly dependent on a migrant workforce, and we welcome the 15 per cent wage increase from 30 June 2023 for many aged care workers.

There remain considerable access and equity issues for our communities in accessing culturally appropriate and responsive mental health, aged care, and disability services. This will require further investment.

We expect significant investment for our communities in next year's budget, following the outcomes of the Government's Multicultural Framework Review due to begin this year.

Mr. Carli confirmed "FECCA will be advocating for a Multicultural Budget Statement for next year's budget."

About FECCA

FECCA is the national peak body representing people from multicultural communities and their organisations across Australia. Through the membership of state, territory, and regional councils, we represent over 1,500 community organisations and their members.

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