

FECCAe-NEWS

The Newsletter of the Federation of Ethnic Communities' Councils of Australia

FROM THE FECCA CHAIRPERSON

Welcome to this edition of FECCA e-news that looks back over 2016—and looks forward to 2017.

FECCA, our members and our constituent communities faced a number of important issues and challenges in an eventful 2016—the Parliamentary Joint Committee's Inquiry into Freedom of Speech in Australia and threats to 18C; signs of growing intolerance and racism; a challenging fiscal environment at home and instability overseas; the continuation of offshore processing; and the longest Federal election campaign in history.

FECCA has worked hard to represent its constituents at all times throughout 2016.

There are, however, many positives to report from last year. FECCA has worked collaboratively with the Government to improve access to services for CALD communities particularly in aged care, health and social services. FECCA released its **report** proposing a strategic approach to language policy and practice in Australia. We contributed to policy development in areas including carers, education, migration, employment, inequality and family violence. There has also been positive community mobilisation and civil society partnerships in support of social cohesion and **against the proposed changes to 18C**.

The National Multicultural Women's Conference which FECCA hosted with Settlement Services International in November was a wonderful event. The key outcomes include: the need to work closely with Indigenous women's organisations, to develop



opportunities for CALD women in leadership, to share best practice in service provision and to support CALD women's employment. These issues will guide FECCA's work in 2017.

The team at FECCA worked up to the last days of 2016 making seven policy submissions in December to ensure that CALD Australians are represented on topics including the Government's Aged Care Legislative Review, the fifth National Mental Health Plan and the proposed "Fairer Paid Parental Leave Bill"—all of which have important implications for vulnerable CALD groups.

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FECCA also made its submission to the Joint Parliamentary Inquiry into Freedom of Speech in Australia. FECCA reiterated its firm opposition to any attempt to amend or weaken Section 18C of the *Racial Discrimination Act*. FECCA believes that the Act strikes a balance between the right to freedom of expression and the right to freedom from racial vilification as it currently stands. In formulating our submission, we consulted with our wider membership through a series of meetings and consultations. I would urge you to join the [#HandsOff18C](#) Campaign against changes to this important legislation.

Our relationship with SBS continues to deepen and FECCA made a comprehensive submission to the SBS Review of Radio Services which aims to ensure radio services represent the current demography of Australia's ethnic population. We look forward to continuing our consultative partnership with SBS in 2017.

I was proud to represent FECCA at the Australian Human Rights Commission's Human Rights Awards last month. The awards night recognised contributions made towards promoting and protecting human rights and an important celebration for the Human Rights Commission in its 30th Anniversary year. Congratulations to Pat Anderson, who won the Human Rights Medal, and the

National Ethnic and Multicultural Broadcasters Council, who were recognised through the Racism. It Stops with Me award. It was an important celebration for the Commission in its 30th year anniversary.

We are already starting to plan for FECCA's Conference to be held in Darwin on 8-10 October 2017. You will be hearing a lot more about this in the coming editions of FECCA e-news, as our planning progresses.

I wish you all the very best for the coming year as we recognise the diversity of Australians celebrating the holiday season and New Year with family and friends. I look forward to working with you all towards a harmonious and tolerant multicultural Australia in 2017!

Joseph Caputo



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FECCA's submission to the Parliamentary Inquiry into Freedom of Speech in Australia

FECCA and its members have been advocating against any changes to the racial vilification provisions in the *Racial Discrimination Act* (RDA). In December, FECCA made its submission to the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Human Rights arguing that section 18C of the RDA provides important protection against racially motivated attacks targeting members of Australia's CALD communities. This submission drew on ongoing consultation with FECCA's members and constituents about section 18C and protections from racial vilification.

In our submission, FECCA argues that the 2014 debate on this issue was extensive and does not need to be

re-opened. There was an overwhelming community response against changes to the RDA, with thousands of community members and their organisations expressing alarm that the then proposed repeal of 18C would strip protection from the most marginalised members of our society and threaten social cohesion in Australia.

FECCA believes that by re-opening the debate about Section 18C, the Government would be sending a message to the community that anything goes in the name of free speech and that racism is acceptable.

To read FECCA's full submission see [here](#).

FECCA 2017 National Biennial Conference: Save the date!

FECCA has confirmed that the 2017 National Biennial Conference will be held in Darwin on the 8-10 October 2017 at the Darwin Convention Centre – *save the date!*

This preeminent forum to discuss and debate issues related to Australia's multiculturalism will be held in partnership with the Multicultural Council of the Northern Territory (MCNT), FECCA's Northern Territory peak member.

FECCA Chairperson Joe Caputo said, "The FECCA Conference is an important national event that brings together the community sector to help shape future directions for Australia's multiculturalism. It provides a platform that encourages inclusive dialogue on the

challenges and opportunities that our ever changing cultural and linguistic landscape presents, as well as the far-reaching benefits of embracing diversity through agile policy and practice."

MCNT President Kevin Kadirgamar said, "The MCNT is proud to host the 2017 national conference. The conference will coincide with the MCNT's 40th anniversary, making it a significant milestone in our history. Darwin stands ready to host an insightful conference, exploring the role of multiculturalism in modern day Australia and the opportunities and challenges for the future."

We look forward to seeing you in Darwin!

Fairer Paid Parental Leave Bill 2016

FECCA joined with 25 organisations to make a submission in response to the Government's proposed *Fairer Paid Parental Leave Bill*. The submission expressed its concern about the proposed amendments and argued that they will have the effect of undermining the current attempts to address the gendered wealth gap, improve women's workforce engagement and ensure positive health outcomes for mothers and their children.

The OECD ranked Australia as third lowest in the 33 OECD countries which offered a Paid Parental Leave scheme, thus making our current scheme one of the least-generous in the world.

The Bill's shift away from inclusiveness and protection for parents and children will leave many CALD members of society without a social or economic safety net and a lack of access to crucial services. It will create a class of migrant and refugee women who struggle to regain employment and struggle to feel empowered to help their families. Allowing them the resources and tools to participate in Australian society is critical in fostering their economic and social contributions.

You can see FECCA's submission [here](#).

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Fifth National Mental Health Plan

FECCA welcomed the opportunity to make a submission in response to the draft of the Fifth National Mental Health Plan.

Pre and post migration experiences have a significant impact on an individual's physical, social and mental wellbeing and FECCA's submission emphasised the need to address the key challenges faced by migrants,

especially refugees, humanitarian entrants and asylum seekers as well as barriers to accessing mental health services experienced more broadly by people from CALD backgrounds.

More information on our submission and recommendations can be found [here](#).

Aged Care Legislative Review

FECCA's submission to the Government's Aged Care Legislative Review highlighted the rapidly growing representation of migrant communities in Australia's aged population. By the year 2020 thirty percent of people over age 65 will be from CALD communities giving an extra dimension of diversity to the future of aged care in Australia.

In this submission, FECCA continued to emphasise the importance of CALD representation at the most senior levels on Government committees and advisory groups

relating to ageing and aged care, including the Aged Care Sector Committee.

FECCA's recommendations include the need for a revised National Ageing and Aged Care Strategy for people from CALD backgrounds for 2017-20 that can sit under a broad diversity agenda with appropriate resources attached to the new Strategy to ensure its effective implementation.

Further detail about our recommendations to the Review can be found [here](#).

SBS Radio Services Review

SBS is re-examining the suitability of its radio language services in the light of new census data which emerged from the 2016 Census. SBS has historically conducted such a review after each national census. FECCA made a submission to the SBS review after consultation with its members which emphasised:

- Concerns around quality of the 2016 Census data for CALD communities
- The importance of SBS radio in strengthening community cohesion and in protecting the rights and interests of Australia's CALD communities; and

- That proportionality of population should never be the only factor in determining language broadcasting—the value to a community of the radio service must also be of high importance.

FECCA reiterated its wholehearted support for the excellent work of SBS Radio and encouraged SBS radio to maintain its broad reach and comprehensive language services.

Our full submission can be viewed [here](#).

STAKEHOLDER UPDATES

FECCA supports #HandsOff18C, a new campaign to preserve section 18C of the Racial Discrimination Act

This campaign sees multicultural communities stand with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to call on the Government to defend the safety of our communities.

Through the #HandsOff18C campaign, multicultural communities are demanding that the Federal Government preserve the protections of the Racial Discrimination Act.

Racism and discrimination is on the increase in Australia. The #HandsOff18C campaign says that as members of multicultural communities, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, this directly affects our lives, and our safety.

The #HandsOff18C campaign expresses deep concern about the renewed attack on section 18C of the Racial Discrimination Act.

To find out more or to join the campaign see [here](#).

Australian Law Reform Commission seeks CALD communities' submissions into Elder Abuse Inquiry

As Australia's population ages, the frequency of elder abuse increases. Older people from non-English speaking backgrounds may be more vulnerable to elder abuse due to a range of factors, including access to appropriate information and services, dependence on family members for support and cross-generational expectations in relation to care. There may also be cultural factors that affect how elder abuse is perceived and responded to in different communities.

Elder abuse usually refers to the abuse or neglect of older people by family, friends and carers.

Psychological and financial abuse are common types of elder abuse. The Australian Law Reform Commission is looking at how Australian laws can better protect older Australians, and has just released a Discussion Paper—[Elder Abuse \(DP 83\)](#).

The ALRC is calling for submissions from organisations and individuals and is particularly interested in hearing from people from CALD communities or backgrounds.

The discussion paper is available at www.alrc.gov.au. Submissions are due to the ALRC by the 27 February 2017.

STAKEHOLDER UPDATES

Conference announcement: Improving policy, practice and public support

22-23 February, UNSW, Sydney



This two day conference, in conjunction with UNSW, will bring together a range of expertise covering topics of displacement; protection; cooperation; wellbeing; resilience; education; advocacy; and unity.

A broad range of topics from across the local, national and international space will bring extensive and complimentary expertise to the Conference discussions, notably and vitally, that of lived experience. Speakers will include Elizabeth Ferris, Research Professor with the Institute for the Study of International Migration at Georgetown University's

School of Foreign Service and Non-resident Senior Fellow in Foreign Policy at the Brookings Institution and Emeritus Professor Gillian Triggs, President of the Australian Human Rights Commission.

For more information on the conference see [here](#).



New *beyondblue* webpage

The new *beyondblue* webpage brings together a series of reputable translated resources covering a range of topics including pregnancy and new parents, information for families, general mental health information, and information for health professionals.

These resources are now available in one location on the multicultural section on the main [beyondblue website](#).

Inquiry into Migrant Settlement Outcomes

The *Joint Standing Committee on Migration* is inquiring into, and reporting on, migrant settlement outcomes. The Committee will give particular consideration to social engagement of youth migrants, including involvement of youth migrants in anti-social behaviour such as gang activity, and the adequacy of the Migration Act

1958 character test provisions as a means to address issues arising from this behaviour. The Committee invites interested persons and organisations to make submissions addressing the terms of reference by Tuesday, 31 January 2017.

Find out more about this inquiry [here](#).

STAKEHOLDER UPDATES

New Senate Inquiry: Strengthening Multiculturalism Senate Inquiry

A new Senate inquiry will look into the ways that Australia can strengthen multiculturalism, as well as strategies to better protect communities and individuals from attack.

The Strengthening Multiculturalism inquiry will hear from diverse communities across Australia about:

- Whether services and resources available to recently-arrived migrants and more established communities are adequate
- The effects of racism and bigotry, and what happens when politicians and media outlets fan the flames
- Ways to improve the public conversation about issues of race, culture or religious belief

- Whether the Parliament should enshrine the principles of multiculturalism into legislation, or create a Multicultural Commission
- How to better recognise and celebrate the valuable contribution that diverse communities make to Australian life

In preparation for this inquiry, the Australian Greens will embark on a national listening tour in April-May 2017.

To ensure your voice is heard as part of this tour, please email senator.dinatale@aph.gov.au

NEMBC wins human rights award

The National Ethnic and Multicultural Broadcasters Council (NEMBC) won the prestigious Australian Human Rights Commission's: ***Racism. It Stops With Me Award***.

The award reflects the work of more than 4,000 volunteer ethnic community broadcasters that on a daily basis produce radio programs around Australia that help to build social cohesion, a voice for multiculturalism and in combating racism.

The NEMBC is the peak body representing and advocating for ethnic community broadcasting and represents a vast institution: 2,000 hours of language programs produced each week on 100 radio stations in over 110 different languages, with news and information delivered on a local level to those communities, as so many individuals and communities produce their programs on a daily basis making community radio so ubiquitous that it has become part of our daily lives and part of the media landscape.

Ethnic community broadcasting and community broadcasting in Australia is unique. Nowhere else in the world is there such a depth, breadth and



diversity of community media. The tireless work of all ethnic broadcasters and volunteers has helped to create a multicultural Australia that is accepting, diverse and non-racist.

www.nembc.org.au

STAKEHOLDER UPDATES

The NSW Parliament Select Committee on Human Trafficking

The NSW Parliament Select Committee on human trafficking has launched a new inquiry into human trafficking in New South Wales. It will report by September 2017 and in particular is looking at the role and effectiveness of New South Wales law enforcement agencies in responding to human trafficking including:

- How New South Wales law enforcement agencies respond to human trafficking, including slavery, slavery like practices such as servitude, forced labour, and people trafficking,

- the influence of organised crime in human trafficking in New South Wales,
- the prevalence of human trafficking in New South Wales,
- the effectiveness of relevant legislation and policies,
- the practical measures and policies including security measures to protect New South Wales identity documents that would address human trafficking in New South Wales,

For details or to make a submission see [here](#).

New fund to try, test and run programmes to help people move off welfare and into jobs

The Government has announced a \$96 million “Try, Test and Learn Fund” which will back innovative ideas that help move people from welfare into work. The fund will initially target groups of young people who are at-risk of long-term welfare dependency.

The fund is looking for ideas on how we can help people who may be at risk of being on welfare for the long term to find, retain and flourish in long-term employment.

Priority groups for this first round of the Try, Test and Learn Fund are young carers, young parents and young students at risk of long-term unemployment.

Ideas for the Fund can be submitted using a simple online form on the Department of Social Services’

(DSS) Engage website. Ideas will be published on DSS Engage for everyone to see, to encourage collaboration and innovation. A discussion forum will run alongside the ideas generation phase, to encourage people to share views about how to help people in our priority groups, through the Try, Test and Learn Fund.

More information about the Try, Test and Learn Fund and the Priority Investment Approach is available on the Department of Social Services website www.dss.gov.au/priority-investment-approach

To submit an idea for the Try, Test and Learn Fund, visit www.engage.dss.gov.au

Corporate leaders join cultural diversity council

A group of eight leaders from Australian business, academia and government have agreed to promote diversity in leadership through a newly-established Leadership Council on Cultural Diversity. Members of the Council include PwC Australia’s CEO Luke Sayers, Corrs Chambers Westgarth chief John Denton, University of Queensland vice-chancellor Professor Peter Hoj, EY

Oceania chief executive Tony Johnson, Emotiv founder and chief executive Tan Le, Department of Prime Minister & Cabinet Secretary Dr Martin Parkinson, ABC managing director Michelle Guthrie, and Commonwealth Bank of Australia CEO Ian Narev.

Read about this new initiative [here](#).

STAKEHOLDER UPDATES

Inquiry into the Status of the Human Right to Freedom of Religion or Belief

The Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade are holding an Inquiry into the Status of the Human right to Freedom of Religion or Belief.

The Committee invites interested persons and organisations to make submissions addressing the terms of reference by Friday, 10 February 2017.

For more information or to make a submission see [here](#).

Youth unemployment among CALD Australians

Youth unemployment is a growing concern in Australia, with the unemployment rate for those aged 15 to 24 more than twice the national figure. The Centre for Multicultural Youth's newest paper aims to develop a deeper understanding of the way in which young people

from migrant and refugee backgrounds experience social capital in relation to work transitions, particularly for those who are tertiary educated.

Find out more [here](#).

Cultural Competence Program

SBS, Multicultural NSW and International Education Services Limited have collaborated to launch a mobile app and online training tool created to help Australian organisations navigate and maximise the

benefits of cultural diversity in the workplace. For more information on the Program and to download the app (available for both iOS and Android) visit the [website](#).