



Ethnic Communities' Council of NSW Inc.

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Committee Secretary
Senate Standing Committees on Community Affairs
Community Affairs Legislation Committee
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Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

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ECCNSW Submission

The Ethnic Communities Council of NSW (ECCNSW) welcomes the opportunity to make a submission to the Community Affairs Legislation Committee regarding the planned Social Services Legislation amendment (Encouraging Self-sufficiency for Newly Arrived Migrants) Bill 2018.

The ECCNSW is a state peak body for culturally and linguistically diverse communities. Established in 1975, our core activities include advocacy, education and community development.

Our more than 300 ethnic associations, community organisations, CALD service providers and individuals are increasingly concerned with the proposed amendment to increase the waiting periods (NARWO) from 2 years to 3 years for various security payments and concession cards for existing newly arrived residents; and, the introduction of a 3 year NARWP for widow allowance, carer allowance, bereavement allowance, parenting payment, parental leave payments, family tax benefit (FTB) and dad and partner pay.

ECCNSW believes that this plan will be a detriment to vulnerable migrants including, women and their families experiencing domestic violence; single parents and their children; and, children in households where the main breadwinner experiences job loss.

The proposed Bill would place considerable hardship that would result in an adverse effect, both economic and psychological, on many migrant individuals and families as they try to settle in Australia. Extending the waiting period would unduly disadvantage those skilled migrants seeking to find employment, as well as women experiencing domestic violence seeking financial support when leaving their partner, and those who unexpectedly find themselves out of a job wanting to engage with Centrelink to maintain their livelihood.

Many of the current benefits provide much needed support for many of the migrants and their families, and the impact of an increase in waiting periods will only

exacerbate the challenges and financial stresses already endured by so many newly arrived migrants as they transition to the Australian way of life.

To this end the ECCNSW advocates the recommendation for the Social Services Legislation amendment (Encouraging Self – sufficiency for Newly Arrived Migrants) Bill 2018 be rejected as it is currently worded.

The ECCNSW would be pleased to provide additional information or further comment, and eagerly awaits further developments.

Ms Marta Terracciano
CHAIR