



## FECCA Submission to the Immigration Bridge Australia Proposal

1. The Federation of Ethnic Communities' Councils of Australia (FECCA) welcomes the opportunity to submit to the inquiry into the Immigration Bridge proposal by the Joint Standing Committee on the National Capital and External Territories.
2. FECCA is the national peak body representing Australians from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds. We provide advocacy, develop policy and promote issues on behalf of our constituency to government and the broader community. FECCA supports multiculturalism, community harmony, social inclusion and the rejection of all forms of discrimination and racism. FECCA's membership comprises state, territory and regional multicultural and ethnic councils. FECCA has an elected executive committee and a professional national secretariat implementing policies and work programs on behalf of its membership and stakeholders.
3. Australia is a culturally diverse nation that has been built on immigration. 45% of Australians were either born overseas or have one or more parents born overseas. Thus nearly half of all Australians have a direct connection with the immigration experience.
4. Since 1945 nearly 7 million people have migrated to Australia from around the globe. Immigrants have profoundly enriched Australia economically, socially and culturally. Australians now come from 230 different countries, speak more than 200 languages and practice over 100 faiths.
5. As such it is important the Australian immigration and immigrant experience is respectfully honored in our national capital as proposed by the Immigration Bridge Australia. This is a superb concept which deserves the full support of the ACT and Federal Government and parliamentarians.
6. Immigration Bridge Australia is a not-for-profit organisation supported by many prominent and community minded Australians. Their Immigration Bridge proposal has strong support in the broader Australian community and is supported by FECCA.
7. FECCA recognises that the Immigration Bridge proposal should be respectful of the views and aspirations of Canberra residents including existing Lake Burley Griffin users and recreational users. This could include consideration of existing recreational boat use on the lake and also where a bridge would be best located to assist pedestrians making their way around Canberra.

8. FECCA also recognises the bridge should comply with Canberra/ACT planning laws, and its design should be respectful of Canberra's built and natural heritage-including local indigenous cultural heritage. The design should also be respectful of Canberra's existing architectural and ascetic qualities and the Walter Burley Griffin Canberra design plan.
9. FECCA would like the final bridge design to ensure easy access by Australians with disabilities.
10. FECCA would also like to see provision for Australians from immigrant backgrounds who do not have the financial capacity to reserve naming rights on the bridge, such as recent refugee arrivals and older pensioners, to be given the opportunity to have their names recorded on the bridge through alternative arrangements.
11. In conclusion FECCA fully supports the Immigration Bridge Proposal, subject to normal planning and community consultation requirements, and finding a suitable place on Lake Burley Griffin which ensures maximum local community support for the bridge.